

**DISPLAYING OVERT RECIPIENCY: REACTIVE TOKENS
IN MANDARIN TASK-ORIENTED CONVERSATION**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the interconnection between the linguistic forms of reactive tokens and their associated conversational actions in Mandarin conversation. It aims to show how reactive tokens are produced and interpreted by participants themselves as the display of an awareness of being a recipient in longer sequences. The central argument of the thesis is that participants display overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

This thesis shows that a consideration of the sequential organization of reactive tokens is as important as a consideration of their forms and functions in order to understand their prominent role in longer conversational sequences. Through sequential analysis, the investigation of reactive tokens shows that participants orient to and design a diversity of reactive tokens to construct and maintain mutual understanding and to create and secure recipient engagement. Through quantitative analysis, the frequency and distribution of six types of reactive tokens demonstrate their significant roles in first and second language interaction. Through deviant case analysis, the examination of miscues of reactive tokens reveals that reactive tokens might be a potential “barrier” in second language interaction, in contrast to being a “facilitator” in first language interaction.

I propose a framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences in Mandarin. The framework proposed here implies that the selection of one particular reactive token over another is more a question of varying degrees of recipient engagement, than of different linguistic forms. The use of reactive tokens in interaction is shown to be systematic, conversationally strategic, sequentially and socially organized. It can be concluded that seemingly trivial and random reactive tokens are more significant and orderly in Mandarin conversation than one may assume.

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1 Introduction

It is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs.

Harvey Sacks, “*Notes on Methodology*”

This thesis aims to provide an examination of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. It is mainly informed by the analytical framework of conversation analysis. With conversation analysis, researchers endeavor to understand what participants accomplish with language in the process of communication and how language is used socially. Within linguistics, this study is situated in the field of interactional linguistics (e.g., Selting and Couper-Kuhlen, eds., 2001; Hakulinen and Selting, eds., 2005) and pragmatics, where situated language use (e.g., Wu 2004) is taken as the focus of investigation. More importantly, this study affiliates with Szczepek Reed’s (2006: 1) view that “all analytical interpretations are made on the basis of the observed behaviour of the conversational participants themselves, rather than on the basis of linguistic intuition and/or introspection”.

Compared with the considerable body of qualitative research on reactive tokens in English conversation (see a survey of English reactive tokens in Chapter 2), there are a smaller number of studies of reactive tokens in Mandarin Chinese¹ (e.g., Tao and Thompson 1991; Clancy et al. 1996). Clancy et al. (1996: 384) call for a qualitative turn-by-turn analysis of reactive tokens in terms of timing of delivery, sequential contexts and the

¹ It is also known as “Mandarin”, “Standard Modern Chinese” and *pǔtōnghuà*.

associated conversational actions implemented. This project attempts to respond to their call by investigating the way in which participants themselves produce and interpret a wide range of reactive tokens to display an awareness of being a recipient on a turn-by-turn basis in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

The strong motivation for selecting the topic of reactive tokens as the focus of this study came from my own observations of the data. In eight map task conversations I recorded in 2004², a large number of yes/no questions such as *mingbaile ma* ‘Do you see what I mean?’ were found to be pervasive at ends of turns (see Chapter 3 for details of the map task). The main function of these questions was to pursue responses from co-participants in order to check and secure recipients’ understanding of the turn-so-far. In another set of eight map task conversations recorded in 2005, and another set of four in 2006, only a small number of yes/no questions in the data were produced by participants. However, a large number of reactive tokens were found instead. These observations had motivated me to investigate the phenomenon of the conversational action of “displaying overt reciprocity” through the use of reactive tokens. Hence, they made me think that one possible function of reactive tokens is to display recipients’ attention, understanding, alignment, interest, or stance towards floor-holding speakers’ extended turns in longer conversational sequences.

Without displayed reciprocity from co-participants, floor-holding speakers have to employ yes/no questions frequently as linguistic strategies to pursue responses from recipients, which was the prominent practice I noticed in the data recorded in 2004. This initial

² The data of Mandarin map task conversations were recorded in 2004 for my master thesis “The Prosody of Interrogatives at Transition-relevance Places in Mandarin Chinese Conversation” at the University of Nottingham. For comparative purposes, the 2004 data were used again in this PhD thesis. However, the map task conversations recorded in 2005 and 2006 were the primary data employed to investigate the interconnection between the use of reactive tokens and the display of overt reciprocity in this study.

noticing suggests that reactive tokens may play an important role in longer conversational sequences such as story telling, troubles telling, direction giving, and advice giving, amongst others. Thus, a systematic study of reactive tokens might broaden our understanding of the production and conduct of recipients in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

This project is significant in two aspects. First, a large number of reactive tokens emerging as natural occurrences in longer sequences provide a rare opportunity to examine the production and behaviour of recipients in human interaction. Compared with the research on production and behaviour of *speakers*, the speech behaviour of *recipients* is much neglected in most language research. Second, there is currently a growing interest in the interface between linguistics (e.g., prosody, lexis and grammar) and conversation (e.g., Lerner 1991; Ford and Thompson 1996). In the literature, much research on the linguistic resources used in conversation has been carried out in languages such as English, Japanese, Finnish and German (e.g., Sacks 1992; Tanaka 2004; Sorjonen 2001; Selting 2005), amongst others. The study presented here intends to contribute to a growing body of knowledge of the intersection between aspects of Chinese linguistics (e.g., reactive tokens) and Mandarin Chinese conversation (e.g., Tao 1996; Wu 2004).

1.1 Aspects of conversation

Currently, conversation, as the central or most basic kind of language use (Levinson 1983: 285), is investigated in three broad academic fields: sociolinguistics, philosophy and sociology. First, sociolinguistics is concerned with the analysis of language used in conversation in its social context. Next, Speech Act Theory involves the philosophical study

of meaning, and an utterance in conversation is conceived of as an “action”. Finally, conversation analysis is a sociological approach defined as “the systematic analysis of the talk produced in everyday situations of human interaction: talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 11). For the purposes of this study, I will adopt the theoretical and methodological approach of conversation analysis to investigate the interrelationship between forms and functions of reactive tokens in their sequential contexts in Mandarin conversation.

The definition of conversation I adopt here is important in relation to the data I employ in this study. Broadly, two approaches to defining conversation (Goffman 1974: 36) are available in the literature. The first considers conversation as casual talk in everyday settings. The second uses the term “conversation” loosely as an equivalent of “talk”, or “spoken encounter”. Similar to Goffman’s second definition of conversation, Warren (2006: 6) defines conversation as “ranging somewhere between casual talk in everyday settings and being equivalent to any form of spoken interaction”. This project follows the loose definition of conversation. The data I have collected from map task conversations can be understood as one specific form of spoken encounter rather than as casual talk in a strict sense. In terms of the conversational genre, the data are located somewhere between ordinary conversation and institutional talk.

For the purposes of this study, I am not interested in describing the generic features of Mandarin conversation. Rather, I attend to the sequential environments of a linguistic practice such as the production of reactive tokens as “seconds” to demonstrate the high degree of orderliness of Mandarin conversation.

1.2 Formulation of research questions

Existing research on the comparison of the use of reactive tokens between English and Mandarin Chinese has provided the foundation and inspiration for this project. In their study of backchannels (i.e., one type of reactive token in this study), Tao and Thompson (1991: 211) describe and analyse general features of reactive tokens employed by Mandarin speakers through quantitative analysis. However, their analyses do not focus on sequential contexts of actual deployment of each reactive token. In a paper regarding a comparison of reactive tokens among English, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese speakers, Clancy et al. (1996: 381) provide the definition and categorization of reactive tokens. Once again, they mainly center on quantitative aspects of reactive tokens. Similar to Tao and Thompson, they do not provide a qualitative analysis of each reactive token on a turn-by-turn basis.

Built on the previous work on reactive tokens used in Mandarin conversation, this study intends to contribute to a growing body of knowledge relating to the use of reactive tokens in human interaction in general and in Mandarin conversation in particular. Another aim of this study is to explore the role of reactive tokens in longer sequences in first and second language interaction. The potential finding of the importance of reactive tokens in longer sequences may indicate the possibility of re-defining “the speaking while listening skill” (McCarthy and Slade 2007: 866; Farr 2003: 82) in language pedagogical contexts.

My general research question is: How do reactive tokens serve as a resource for participants to accomplish responding actions in Mandarin conversation? In order to investigate this general question, some specific sub-questions are further explored as follows. How do I define a reactive token in Mandarin map task conversations? How do I categorize

reactive tokens? What linguistic forms of reactive tokens do Mandarin speakers use? In what types of context do Mandarin speakers feel it is appropriate to use this interactive resource (Chapter 4)? At a conceptual level, how do I define “reciprocity”? How do Mandarin recipients design and orient to linguistic resources such as reactive tokens to achieve different levels of reciprocity (Chapter 5)? In addition, how do participants select one particular reactive token over another to resolve information mismatches in Mandarin map task conversations (Chapter 6)? What role do reactive tokens play in first and second language interaction (Chapter 7)?

Throughout the whole thesis, I will show that participants display overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens. Before I provide sequential analyses of reactive tokens, my own definition of reactive tokens (see Chapter 4) will be provided as the object of study initially. Then I will move on to categorize reactive tokens on the basis of a discussion of Clancy et al.’s (1996) typology. Once the significant role of reactive tokens is established, a puzzle will emerge: why do recipients select one particular reactive token over another? In order to provide some clue to this puzzle, I first define the concept of reciprocity. As a next step, a framework is suggested to illustrate five levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens (Chapter 5). As this implies, the selection of a particular reactive token over another is probably more a question of varying degrees of recipient engagement, than of different linguistic forms.

Furthermore, the framework proposed in Chapter 5 will be applied to illustrating how reactive tokens are selected in information mismatch sequences to deal with conflicts in first and second language interaction in Chapter 6. As will be seen, the selection of a particular

reactive token in the local context is more sophisticated than one may assume at first sight. The level of reciprocity might be one of a wide range of factors that influence the selection of a certain reactive token in conversation. In addition, cultural values might play a part in the selection of a reactive token in the comparison of first and second language interaction. Finally, a quantitative analysis of reactive tokens and a deviant case analysis of non-default use of reactive tokens will demonstrate the significant role of reactive tokens in longer sequences in first and second language interaction (Chapter 7).

The examination of such a seemingly insignificant linguistic phenomenon as the production of reactive tokens might enrich our understanding of recipient behaviour in longer sequences of Mandarin conversation. More specifically, Chapter 4 is concerned with how features of reactive tokens are produced and interpreted by participants themselves (i.e., pure conversation analysis). On the other hand, Chapters 5 and 6 are concerned with how human relationships and context are constituted in the production and interpretation of reactive tokens in Mandarin map task conversations (i.e., applied conversation analysis)

1.3 Dichotomy in relation to reactive tokens

Below are five types of dichotomy introduced in order to provide a better understanding of my arguments, methodology and data analysis throughout the thesis. The first dichotomy is that of NSs versus NNSs in terms of linguistic identity/knowledge:

- The term ‘native speakers’ (NSs) refers to native speakers of Mandarin Chinese, i.e., linguistically knowledgeable participants (Kurhila 2005: 148).
- The term ‘non-native speakers’ (NNSs) refers to non-native speakers of Mandarin

Chinese, i.e., linguistically non-knowledgeable participants.

The second dichotomy is that of informed participants versus uninformed participants in terms of knowledge status of the correct route in the map task (see Chapter 3):

- The term ‘informed participants’ refers to Information Givers in the map task, who know the correct route from the “Starting Point” to the “Finish Point”.
- The term ‘uninformed participants’ refers to Information Followers in the map task, who do not know the correct route.

The third dichotomy is that of agreement-relevant environments versus disagreement/conflict-relevant environments in terms of the map task contexts:

- The term ‘agreement-relevant environments’ refers to the unmarked context in which an Information Giver and an Information Follower have identical information in relation to labels and locations of target landmarks on routes in map tasks.
- The term ‘disagreement- or conflict-relevant environments’ refers to the marked context in which an information mismatch emerges between an Information Giver and an Information Follower, which is a feature of a map task.

The fourth dichotomy is that of intra-cultural versus inter-cultural interaction in terms of cultural differences:

- The term ‘intra-cultural interaction’ refers to interactions between NS-NS (a Mandarin Information Giver and a Mandarin Information Follower) and NNS-NNS (an English Information Giver and an English Information Follower).
- The term ‘inter-cultural interaction’ refers to interactions between NS-NNS (a Mandarin Information Giver and an English Information Follower) and NNS-NS

(an English Information Giver and a Mandarin Information Follower).

The fifth dichotomy is that of transactional versus relational language (McCarthy 2003; O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007).

- The terms ‘transactional language’ refers to exchange of information (i.e., propositional content of conversation) between speakers and recipients.
- The term ‘relational language’ refers to language that serves to frame and sustain interpersonal relationships between speakers and recipients.

Relational language can be found in what are “ostensibly transactional interactions and vice versa” (O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007: 159). This perspective implies that co-participants employ both transactional language and relational language throughout the process of conversation.

1.4 The organization of the thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the project of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature on reactive tokens in English and Mandarin conversation. Chapter 3 details the methods of conducting my data collection and of analysing the data in this study.

The subsequent four chapters (i.e., Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) present the results based on a selection of representative fragments from the data and provide detailed discussions of the issues under investigation. In Chapter 4, I propose my own definition of reactive tokens and further categorize reactive tokens into six types. Further, a qualitative analysis of reactive tokens is provided to fill the knowledge gap regarding the study of reactive tokens on a

turn-by-turn basis. The data analysis will show that participants accomplish responding actions and activities through variation and selection of reactive tokens in longer sequences.

In Chapter 5, reciprocity is defined and then a framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens is proposed, with illustrations from Mandarin map task conversations. Chapter 6 deals with the application of the framework proposed in the selection of reactive tokens in information mismatch sequences to resolve conflicts in first and second language interaction.

Chapter 7 provides further empirical evidence to support my argument that reactive tokens play a prominent role in longer conversational sequences through quantitative analysis. A deviant case analysis of miscues of reactive tokens suggests that reactive tokens may be a potential “barrier” in second language interaction, in contrast to being a “facilitator” in first language interaction. Further, I discuss the implications of the value and importance of reactive tokens in longer sequences in the pedagogical contexts. Chapter 8 summarizes potential contributions and discusses limitations of this study, along with suggestions for further work in this field.

As a final note, I do not take into account the interrelationship between gender of the participants and the production of reactive tokens in this study. For this reason, I use the generic feminine pronouns “she/her/herself” for the NS of Mandarin Chinese and the generic masculine pronouns “he/him/himself” for the NNS of Mandarin Chinese throughout the thesis in order to avoid endless repetition of “s/he” or “her or his”. In the data, all the NNSs are male; however, some NSs are female, and others are male.

2 Reactive Tokens in English and Mandarin Conversation: A Review of the Literature

This chapter aims to review the existing literature on reactive tokens in English and two important papers on reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. First, I discuss previous studies of reactive tokens in general. Next, the survey of reactive tokens in English conversation is based on what is equivalent in relation to Mandarin data and will be presented with illustrations. Finally, I discuss two influential papers concerning reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. As will be noted, in the literature there are a smaller number of studies of reactive tokens in Mandarin Chinese, compared with the substantial body of research on reactive tokens in English. It is therefore not surprising that the literature on reactive tokens in English will be prominent in this chapter. However, this gap became one major motivation for this study.

2.1 Previous studies on reactive tokens

In the literature to date, there have been a long list of terms to describe the linguistic phenomenon of recipient responses, such as conventional signals (Fries, 1952), listener responses (Dittman and Llewellyn 1967), accompaniment signals (Kendon, 1967), back channel communication (Yngve 1970), assent terms (Schegloff 1972), feedbacks (Allen and Guy 1974), response cries (Goffman 1978, 1981), continuers (Schegloff 1982), acknowledgement tokens (Jefferson 1984a), minimal response (Coates 1986; Fellego 1995), assessments (Goodwin 1986), hearer signals (Bublitz 1988), listener responses (Roger, Bull

and Smith 1988), reactive tokens (Clancy et al. 1996), response tokens (Silverman 1998) and reaction tokens (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006), among many others. In this study, I adopt Clancy et al.'s term: *reactive tokens* throughout the thesis. My own working definition of reactive tokens can be found in Chapter 4.

Recipient responses can be further categorized. For instance, Duncan and Neiderhe (1974) identify five distinct types: (i) readily identified, verbalized signals such as 'yeah', 'right', and 'mmm'; (ii) sentence completion; (iii) requests for clarification; (iv) brief restatement; and (v) head nods and shakes. Among these five types, it is important to note that nonverbal communications such as head movements or gaze and "requests for clarification" as "firsts" or repair initiators will not be investigated in this study.

In broad terms, reactive tokens can be seen as linguistic resources available to recipients to accomplish responding actions and activities in longer sequences, and research clearly shows that they play an important role in English conversation. Their main functions are to display recipient interest, attention and understanding of the immediately prior turn (e.g., Fries 1952; Kendon 1967; Yngve 1970; Oreström 1983; Roger and Nesshoever 1987; Mott and Petrie 1995). To illustrate, Fries (1952: 49) shows that reactive tokens are used as signals displaying "continued attention". Kendon (1967: 44) suggests that reactive tokens appear to demonstrate that a recipient is "attending to and following what is being said."

In a similar vein, Zimmerman and West (1975) notice that reactive tokens can serve to display continuing interest and co-participation in the ongoing topic. Müller (1996: 136) claims that reactive tokens can be considered as "neutral monitoring responses and generalized acknowledgers". Mulac et al. (1998: 647) find that reactive tokens can signal

“attention, support or encouragement for, or even acceptance” of the floor-holding speaker’s message. In addition, at the level of interpersonal relationships, McCarthy (2002; 2003) notices that in English conversation reactive tokens can display affiliation and disaffiliation. This is concerned with cooperation and affect between participants in talk-in-interaction. All these studies indicate that reactive tokens are of great importance in English conversation.

The significant role of reactive tokens in conversation has attracted attention and interest from a large number of scholars, such as Sacks (1992), Jefferson (1984a; 1984b), Schegloff (1982), Heritage (1984), Goodwin (1986) and Yngve (1970), amongst others. To illustrate, Yngve introduces the term “backchannels” (i.e., one type of reactive token in this study) and describes the phenomenon as follows:

When two people are engaged in conversation, they generally take turns ... In fact, both the person who has the turn and his partner are simultaneously engaged in both speaking and listening. This is because of the existence of what I call the backchannel, over which the person who has the turn receives short messages such as yes and uh-huh without relinquishing the turn (Yngve 1970: 568).

Yngve provides one instance of a lexical item ‘yes’ and one example of a non-lexical item or a vocalization ‘uh huh’. He notes that backchannels may signal that the recipient is engaged in an ongoing topic. However, the problem is that the concept of backchannels covers a wide range of tokens and Yngve does not differentiate their conversational functions in relation to their interactional workings and sequential environments.

The following section will present the review of the literature regarding the linguistic forms and their core conversational functions of representative reactive tokens in English. Again, this will demonstrate the vital role of reactive tokens in English conversation, paving the way for a better understanding of a sequential analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation in Chapter 4.

2.2 A survey of reactive tokens in English conversation

As remarked earlier, literature has shown that there is much research on the core functions of reactive tokens in English conversation: reception/receipt and alignment, understanding, acknowledgement, interest, and attention to the incoming information of talk retrospectively, as well as continuers in a prospective sense. Below are ten individual reactive tokens in English conversation, which are also found in the Mandarin data (see Chapter 4). It is important to note that some forms of vocalizations in English are identical in Mandarin conversation, but some lexical forms are adapted to the characteristics of Mandarin Chinese. The following reactive tokens, studied by different scholars, will show that participants orient to and design a variety of reactive tokens to accomplish responding actions and activities in English. For each reactive token, I illustrate its interactional workings in different conversational contexts.

2.2.1 ‘*Mm*’

‘*Mm*’ can be seen as a reduced or truncated form of ‘*Mm hmm*’ (see Section 2.2.2). There are two main functions of ‘*mm*’ in English conversation: an acknowledgement token and a continuer. The important feature of ‘*mm*’ is that “its producer has nothing substantial

to add to the topic of the talk of the turn to which it is oriented” (Gardner 1998: 21). The ‘*mm*’ producer indicates that the prior turn has been heard or treated as adequate and fitted. Thus, there is no problem of understanding or hearing of the talk-so-far. Fragment 2.1 below illustrates ‘*mm*’ in the service of an acknowledgement token.

Fragment 2.1, Original transcript from Gardner 1998: 214

- 1 Ann: I keep it down to the hou- () dropped off
 2 a t, (0.9) hh but I mean, (0.4) the
 3 calcula tion at thirty percent us done
 4 on -ni ghts It’s done on ni ghts
 5 o nly [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
 6 → Bob: [M m] [-- RT (Backchannel), JX]
 7 Ann: [That’s no]t- () a ll the other ti me?
 8 (0.2)

The ‘*Mm*’ (Line 6) functions as an acknowledgement token at the complex transition relevance place (CTRP, see Chapter 3). It shows that Bob treats Ann’s prior talk as sufficient for his understanding at the perceptual level. By articulating ‘*Mm*’ as a minimal response, Bob does not make any further contribution to the ongoing topic. Notice that Ann’s further talk overlaps Bob’s ‘*Mm*’, but this overlapping is supportive rather than interruptive.

With regard to the prosodic resources involved in the use of ‘*mm*’ in English conversation, Gardner (1998: 214) notes that ‘*mm*’ has a falling intonation in unmarked

contexts, immediately following a speaking turn at the CTRP. On occasion, ‘*mm*’ can function as a continuer, when it displays a “falling-rising or rising contour” (Gardner 1998: 217) in marked contexts. In another study, Gardner (2001) addresses that “*mm*” is used as a weak and variable acknowledgement token. This implies that the production of ‘*mm*’ may exhibit a low level of reciprocity in the ongoing talk (see Chapter 5).

2.2.2 ‘*Mm hm*’

Similar to ‘*mm*’, ‘*mm hm*’ has two major conversational functions: an acknowledgement token and a continuer. According to Schegloff (1982: 83), ‘*mm hm*’ is a member of a set of “continuers”, whereas Jefferson (1984a: 200) regards ‘*mm hm*’ as a member of the class of “acknowledgement tokens”. She argues that ‘*mm hm*’ exhibits “Passive Reciprocity”, as she notes:

And roughly what I mean by ‘Passive Reciprocity’ is that its user is proposing that his co-participant is still in the midst of some course of talk, and shall go on talking (Jefferson 1984a: 200).

Fragment 2.2 below illustrates the core function of ‘*mm hm*’ in conversation.

Fragment 2.2, from Jefferson 1984a: 201

Emma and Lottie are sisters and have been alternate tellings from Line 1 to Line 14.

15 L: Yeah you just got to be careful We:ll see: hh Dwight only

16 has (0.2) u-one: ga:ll bladder? [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]

-
- 17 (0.7)
- 18 →E: °Mm [*hm,° [-- RT (Backchannels), JX]
- 19 [He had de-and then he has to be careful what he eats he
- 20 can't eat anything greasy or anything you [know? [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 21 →E: [°Mm-°]°Mhm.,°[--RT (Backchannels), JX]

They continue their tellings from Line 22 to Line 30.

As Jefferson notes, Emma delivers '*mm hm*' (Line 21) as a "continuer" in overlap with Lottie's telling, where Lottie is still in the midst of constructing a syntactic unit. It shows that Emma understands that Lottie is in the trajectory of a lengthy telling. It is important to note that Emma also produces the acknowledgement token '°Mm *hm°' (Line 18). Here, '*mm hm*' primarily exhibits "recognitional" work: the recipient indicates being adequately informed by the turn-so-far (Jefferson 1984a).

Following Schegloff, Gardner also views '*mm hm*' as one of the typical continuers. '*Mm hm*' is used "when there is some sense of non-completion or inadequacy in the action being performed by a floor-holding speaker's immediately prior turn" (Gardner 1998: 211). Fragment 2.3 below illustrates '*mm hm*' in the service of a continuer in a "big picture".

Fragment 2.3, from Gardner 1998: 212

- 1 Ron: Now then
- 2 (1.3)
- 3 Ron: This is where we'll be the weekend

delivers her weekend plan in a longer sequence. Ron does not seem to show any engagement or enthusiasm for Sal's plan by producing a succession of '*mm hm*'s. On the other hand, Ron's consecutive employment of '*mm hm*' seems to show that he remains uncommitted and unobtrusive to facilitate Sal to achieve her larger interactional goal: the delivery of her weekend plan.

In addition, Jefferson (1984a: 203) notices that the use of '*mm hm*' is different from that of '*yeah*', although both of them can serve as acknowledgement tokens. She stresses that the main distinction between '*mm hm*' and '*yeah*' is that '*mm hm*' displays "passive reciprocity", while '*yeah*' indicates the incipient speakership (see below).

2.2.3 '*Yeah*'/'*Yes*'

Just as the reactive tokens discussed above, '*yeah*'/'*yes*' can mainly accomplish two responding actions: an acknowledgement token and a continuer. Once again, Jefferson (1984a: 200) considers '*yeah*'/'*yes*' as one member of the class of "acknowledgement tokens". She suggests that '*yeah*' or '*yes*' mainly signal "topical shift" (ibid.: 199). As noted earlier, '*mm hm*' is systematically different from '*yeah*' in that '*mm hm*' exhibits "Passive Reciprocity" and '*yeah*' can demonstrate a preparedness to shift from reciprocity to imminent speakership. Put simply, '*yeah*' can preface a fuller turn, signal a topic shift, and move into speakership. Fragment 2.4 below illustrates distinct uses of '*mm hm*' and '*yeah*' in English conversation.

Fragment 2.4, from Jefferson 1984a: 203

1 L: I didn't have five minutes yesterday.

- 2 E: I don't know how you do i:t.
- 3 (0.3)
- 4 L: I don't kno:w. nh hnh
- 5 E: You wuh: work all day toda:y.
- 6 (0.3)
- 7 L: Ye:ah.
- 8 (0.2)
- 9 L: Just get well I'm (.) by myself I'm kind of cleaning up
- 10 from yesterday. [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 11→E: Mm: hm, [-- RT (Backchannel), JX]
- 12 (0.2)
- 13 E: t hhh [hhh
- 14 L: [°A-and° (.)°I was just g-washing the dishes, °
- 15 →E: Yeah [-- Yeah-prefaced turn (Incipieny speakership), JX]
- 16 we're just (.) cleaning up here too:.

As Jefferson (1984a) notes, this is a very clear instance where E employs '*mm hm*' (Line 11) to display "Passive Recipieny" in a freestanding format and '*yeah*' to display "Imminent Speakership" followed by a fuller turn (Lines 15 and 16). In this thesis, I will not make a distinction between '*yeah*' and '*mm hm*' in terms of speakership. The main reason is that I will not examine '*yeah*' prefacing a full speaking turn. Rather, I am only interested in a freestanding '*yeah*', sequentially in second position.

In addition, Goodwin (1995) studies an aphasic man, Rob, who can only produce “*Yes, No and And*”. He notices that Rob can use ‘*yes*’ through variations in the way he produces it. In so doing, Rob can “construct consequentially different objects that project alternative trajectories of future actions” (Goodwin 1995: 242). Further, Gardner (2001: 35) notes that ‘*yeah*’ is complex and can accomplish a range of conversational actions, such as doing acknowledging, affirming, agreeing, displaying surprise, appreciation, and assessment, among many other things.

From an alternative perspective, Hopper and Drummond (1990) do not differentiate acknowledgement tokens from continuers. Rather, they treat ‘*yeah*’, ‘*mm hm*’ and ‘*mm*’ as “continuers” in a “bigger picture”. Within a larger clarifying sequence, ‘*yeah*’, ‘*mm hm*’ and ‘*mm*’ can display neutral and continuing reciprocity in a longer sequence. Fragment 2.5 below illustrates that the use of continuers can achieve broader interactional goals, in addition to passing an opportunity to produce a fuller turn and encouraging the primary speaker to carry on talking. In this instance, Gordon is producing a longer sequence regarding his perspectives on his relationship with Denise as a delicate topic.

Fragment 2.5, from Gardner 2001: 31-32

- 1 Gor: We:ll. I got your card.
- 2 .
- 3 .
- 4 .
- 5 Gor: I’ve- actually we’d rather talk to you in person

- 6 but I don't think I'm gonna be able to make a
- 7 meeting cuz I (0.2) now have a headache and-
- 8 [fever and everything ·hhhhhhhh Bu:t u:m hhh
- 9 Den: → [Yeah hh [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 10 Gor: I think maybe u- u I w- (0.2) um would like
- 11 tuh- stop really goin ou:t at least for right
- 12 no:w [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 13 Den: → Yeah. [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 14 Gor: ·hhh U::m I jus- .hhhhhh (0.5) u::h hh I feel
- 15 really ba:d because I- u:m (1.0) ·snff I wish-
- 16 I think I just we don't have as much in common
- 17 as: I think we both tho:ught [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 18 (0.3)
- 19 Den: → Ye:ah. [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 20 Gor: Bu:t- u:m cause I know sometimes we're both at
- 21 just a lapse for words and [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 22 Den: → huh [huh ·hhh [-- RT (Backchannel), JX]
- 23 Gor: [·hh I'm a speech major I [juh(h)] [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 24 Den: → [Mm::] hm: [-- RT (Backchannel), JX]
- 25 Gor: U:m (0.3) ·hhhh bu:t- (0.2) and I wish I had
- 26 more time- and tu:h even to get- to know you
- 27 better [--Pre-token TCU, JX]

-
- 28 (0.4)
- 29 Den: → °Yeah° [--- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 30 Gor: U:m but I mean I'm- so busy and you're so busy
- 31 and I feel ba:d that I can't do anything and so
- 32 I'll ·hhh [--- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 33 Den: → M[m [--- RT (Backchannel), JX]
- 34 Gor: [I feel bad when I can't call you and ·hhhhh and
- 35 whatever and uh
- 36 Den: °I know°
- 37 Gor: Or go out and do anything with you even like
- 38 tha:t
- 39 Den: °Yeah I know what chyou me:an. °
- 40 (1.2)
- 41 Gor: But uh (1.2) I still wanna be in good frien:d
- 42 with ya hhh
- 43 Den: → Yeah [---Yeah-prefaced turn (Speakership incipency), JX]
- 44 (1.2)
- 45 Den: [I just-
- 46 Gor: [C'z I mea-
- 47 (0.7)
- 48 Den: I think part of it- (0.2) I think part of the
- 49 problem ...

As Hopper and Drummond (1990) note, Denise strategically employs reactive tokens such as ‘*Yeah*’ (Lines 9, 13, 19, and 29), ‘*Uh huh*’ (Line 22), ‘*Mm hm*’ (Line 24), and ‘*Mm*’ (Line 33) as continuers to remain neutral and uncommitted (Gardner 2001: 32) and avoid displaying any recipient engagement in the ongoing topic. That is, the recipient alternates the linguistic forms of reactive tokens in order to display continuing reciprocity. Further, Hopper and Drummond argue that the continuers, produced and oriented to by Denise, help establish her role as a good/co-operative recipient in a lengthy telling sequence. From Lines 1 to 33, Denise merely displays “recognitional” work at the perceptual level. Thus, Denise’s employment of continuers in this context shows her moral and co-operative stance toward Gordon’s tellings of his experiences and perspectives regarding their relationship as a delicate topic. Put differently, the floor-holding speaker designs the action of the lengthy tellings concerning the sensitive topic, and the action of displaying continuing reciprocity can therefore be seen as an alignment to the speaker’s designed action. The display of continuing reciprocity can fit into the local context and can be seen as the optimal option in this fragment. Subsequently, Denise uses ‘*Yeah*’ (Line 43) to preface her launch into a long and substantial sequence regarding her perspectives on the delicate matter under discussion.

In addition, Grivičić and Nilep (2004) note that the combination of creaky voice quality and the acknowledgement token ‘*yeah*’ can demonstrate “passive reciprocity”. This observation suggests that the prosodic configurations might contribute to the display of the level of reciprocity (see Chapter 5).

-
- 6 A Yup.
- 7 B: Now, yer standing onna corner. [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 8 A: → Mm hm. [-- RT (Backchannels), JX]
- 9 B: I live up here in Queens. [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 10 A: → Mm hm. [-- RT (Backchannels), JX]
- 11 B: Near Queens Boulevard.
- 12 A: → Mm hm. [-- RT (Backchannels), JX]

“Let me ask you this” (Line 1) can be considered as a pre-announcement, marking clearly that B is going to initiate an extended turn. A, as the uninformed recipient, confines his contribution to the ongoing talk by deploying ‘*uh :: uh*’ and ‘*mm hm*’ (Lines 4, 8 and 10). B appears to hold the floor and act as the epistemic authority over the topic under discussion. It is important to note that the token type (i.e., backchannel) remains constant in this instance, but the token forms alternate between ‘*uh huh*’ (Line 4) and ‘*mm hm*’ (Lines 8 and 10).

In addition, ‘*uh huh*’ in conversation has two basic uses (Schegloff 1982: 88). First, the ‘*uh huh*’-producer passes on an opportunity to deliver a fuller turn. Second, he also passes an opportunity to initiate repair relating to the immediately preceding talk. Note that the functions of reactive tokens are constrained by linguistic resources and the organization of turn and sequence. Specifically, the sequential placement of a continuer is in the midst of the construction of a syntactic unit in an unfinished turn. In Fragment 2.6 above, B is constructing a syntactically complete unit (from Lines 9 to 11), as can be illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

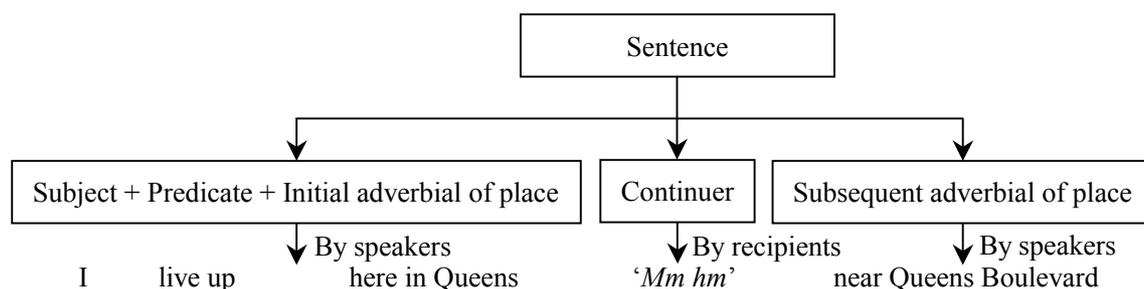


Figure 2.1 The placement of a continuer in English

Speaker B has produced a syntactically complete sentence in the structure of “Subject + Predicate + Adverbial of place (Prepositional Phrase)” (Lines 9 and 11). Speaker A produces ‘*mm hm*’ (Line 10) as a continuer, indicating that B may resume his description in an extended turn. Subsequently, B produces another adverbial of place (Line 11) as an adjunct. This can be seen as an expansion of the turn delivered previously (Line 9). Thus, the utterance (Line 9) can be treated as potentially incomplete in the sense that B intends to expand the turn (Line 11). In other words, continuers³ can be used prior to the point of possibly syntactical completion as well as the potential completion of the conversational action. Further, this fragment shows that phrasal breaks can be seen as a powerful linguistic strategy for a floor-holding speaker to solicit responses in longer conversational sequences.

In other studies of continuers, Goodwin (1986) points out that they are frequently produced at a particular point in the process of an extended turn: at, or near the end of one phrase or sentence and extending into the onset of another. As such, a continuer can act as a “bridge” between TCUs (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008: 100). Moreover, Jefferson (1993) and Drummond and Hopper (1993) provide more empirical evidence for the view that the use of

³ For the purposes of this study, a “continuer” is defined as a reactive token produced subsequent to a potentially incomplete conversational action as well as a potentially incomplete syntactic unit.

'uh huh' normally projects continuing reciprocity.

2.2.5 'Oh'

Heritage (1984a) contributes to the study of reactive tokens by introducing the term "change-of-state token" to describe 'oh'. In another study, Heritage (1998b: 291) notes that 'oh' can be used to acknowledge new information, such as answers to questions. When 'oh' is produced as a response to the unknown information, it registers a change in its producer's state of knowledge or information (e.g., Schiffrin 1987; Heritage 1984a). Therefore, 'oh' can demonstrate that "its producer has undergone some kind of change in his or her locally current state of knowledge, information, orientation or awareness" (Heritage 1984a: 299). As far as a recipient is concerned, 'oh' is different from 'yes'/'yeah'. According to Heritage (1984a), the production of 'oh' indicates that the immediately prior talk is newsworthy, but the use of 'yes' can show that the recipient has prior knowledge regarding the relevant information in the preceding turn.

In a similar vein, Schegloff (2007: 118) states that the core use of the freestanding 'oh' is to "mark or claim information receipt or highlight the sudden realization by a recipient". It appears that there are some changes from not-knowing to now-knowing in terms of a recipient's knowledge status. Furthermore, Heritage (1988b: 144) argues that reactive tokens such as 'mm hm', 'yes', 'oh', and 'uh huh' are not "undifferentiated", but they are "systematically differentiated in terms of their placements, valences and tasks". Inspired by Heritage's perspective, this study will attempt to extend our understanding concerning differences among a variety of reactive tokens produced in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

Similar to ‘*okay*’ (see below), Heritage (1984a) notes that ‘*oh*’ can be used in two different turn shapes. The first type is freestanding ‘*oh*’, referring to ‘*oh*’ designed as an utterance in its own right. This type of ‘*oh*’ displays its own intonation contour. The second type is ‘*oh*’ is employed in conjunction with other turn components to preface a fuller turn. Fragment 2.7 below illustrates the use of ‘*oh*’ in the freestanding format.

Fragment 2.7, from Heritage 1984a: 309

- 1 J: Okay then I w’z askin’ and she says you’re
 2 working tomorrow as well,
 3 I: Yes I’m s’pose to be tomorrow yes, [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
 4 → J: O[h::: [-- RT (Chang-of-state token), JX]
 5 I: [Yeh,

Heritage (1984a) notes the functions of ‘*oh*’ (Line 4) as information receipt by proposing a change of state of knowledge. He further points out that the production of a freestanding ‘*oh*’ is appropriately responsive to a prior turn’s informing or repair and that the sequential role is essentially backward-looking⁴. That is, the production of a freestanding ‘*oh*’ is commonly used to establish or confirm alignments with the floor-holding speaker. He further argues that “a freestanding ‘*oh*’ receipt is systematically insufficient to promote further talk from a floor-holding speaker or an ‘*oh*’ recipient” (ibid.: 329).

Heritage (1984a) further notes that freestanding ‘*oh*’ receipts are rare in his data and that

⁴ A deviant case has been found in NS-NS interaction where NSs employed the particle ‘*oh*’ in the midst of constructing a syntactically complete unit and hence in the midst of a conversational action of delivering news, i.e., forward-looking rather than backward-looking (see Fragment 4.19).

the particle ‘*oh*’ regularly occurs in conjunction with additional turn components such as assessments or requests for further elaboration or specification. However, for the purposes of the present study, I concentrate on a freestanding ‘*oh*’ and ‘*oh*’ in conjunction with other token types as a composite (see Chapter 4) sequentially in second position. Thus, I will not discuss ‘*oh*’-prefaced turns (cf. Heritage 1998b, 2002; Maynard and Schaeffer 1997) in detail in this thesis. In addition, Jefferson (1978: 221-222) proposes the term “disjunct marker” for ‘*oh*’ and finds that its use is associated with a display of sudden remembering. She also treats it as a token of special interest (1972: 313-314). In terms of prosodic configurations of “*oh*”, Roach (1983) and Local (1996) notice that “*oh*” as a change-of-state token typically occurs with rising-falling intonation in English conversation.

2.2.6 ‘*Okay*’

Unlike ‘*mm*’, ‘*uh huh*’, ‘*mm hmm*’, ‘*yes*’ or ‘*oh*’, ‘*okay*’ can serve as a pre-closing device in addition to a receipt marker or an acknowledgement token. In the literature, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) first discuss the use of ‘*okay*’ in telephone conversations and note that ‘*okay*’ can be deployed to initiate actions toward the termination of phone calls. Merritt (1984: 144) notices that ‘*okay*’ can be seen as “a bridge between two stages or phases of the encounter”. Condon (1986: 75) observes that ‘*okay*’ is treated as “a framing device occurring at decision points, where participants select among alternatives”. In a similar vein, Beach (1991) suggests that ‘*okay*’ can be used to initiate and manage actions such as a topic shift from the preceding topic to the next one. In another study, Beach (1993: 328-329) notes that ‘*okay*’ functions as “responsive and displaying state of readiness for movements toward the next positioned topics or activities” by analysing the use of ‘*okay*’ in different

sequential environments.

Similar to ‘*oh*’, ‘*okay*’ is used in two different turn shapes: “freestanding *okays*” and “*okays* + continuation/a fuller turn”. However, for the purposes of this study, I focus on the freestanding ‘*okay*’s. As a freestanding receipt marker, ‘*okay*’ can function as a display of acknowledgement, understanding, confirmation, agreement, affiliation and alignment in relation to the immediately prior talk, similar to ‘*yes*’ and ‘*mhm*’. Fragment 2.8 below illustrates that ‘*okay*’ can serve as a receipt marker.

Fragment 2.8, from Goodwin 1980: 676 (Cited in Beach 1993: 329)

- 1 Sha: Your mother wants you! [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 2 → Flo: Okay [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]

Beach notes that ‘*okay*’ (Line 2) simply indicates that Flo has received Sha’s information and displays her acknowledgement of the news at the perceptual level. In addition to being a receipt marker, ‘*okay*’ can be used to close down topics and activities as well. Fragment 2.9 below illustrates that ‘*okay*’ can function as a pre-closing device in a telephone conversation.

Fragment 2.9, from Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 314 (cited in Beach 1993: 335)

- 1 B: Alrighty. Well I’ll give you a call before we decide to come down. O.K.?
- 2 → C: O.K. [-- RT (Reactive expression: Pre-closing device), JX]
- 3 B: Alright.
- 4 → C: O.K. [-- RT (Reactive expression: Pre-closing device), JX]

-
- 5 B: We'll see you then [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 6 → C: O.K. [-- RT (Reactive expression: Pre-closing device), JX]
- 7 B: Bye bye
- 8 C: Bye.

This fragment shows that ‘*okay*’ (Lines 2, 4 and 6) functions as an alternative to “*alright*” and orients to the closing of the ongoing topic or activity (see section 2.2.7).

Jefferson (1984a) notes that “*Mm hmm* → *Uh huh* → *Yeah*” make progressive movements from “passive reciprocity” to “imminent speakership”. On the basis of Jefferson’s observation, Beach (1993: 341) suggests that ‘*okay*’ is much less frequently used in freestanding formats by a recipient as the only means to signal “passive reciprocity”, like ‘*mm hmm*’. He further argues that even when ‘*okay*’ occurs in a freestanding format, it does not signal that the floor-holding speaker should continue with the ongoing telling or informing. Rather, ‘*okay*’ functions as “momentary prefigurings of movements toward next-positioned activities or topics” (Beach 1993: 341).

Finally, in terms of the linguistic resources concerned, Beach (1993: 344) notes that ‘*okay*’ is frequently articulated at the CTRP. Fragment 2.10 below illustrates that ‘*okay*’ tends to be produced at the end of completed turns.

Fragment 2.10, from #28 Beach 1993: 343

- 1 A: =I couldn't get over after that anyway
- 2 I've got so many errands and stuff to run= [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]

-
- 3 → B: =Okay= [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 4 A: =that's perfect=
- 5 → B: =Okay well just ha:ve uh:m [-- Okay-prefaced turn, JX]
- (continues)

Beach notes that B's 'okay's (Lines 3 and 5) occur at the end of potentially syntactic, prosodic and pragmatic completions by reference to the prior speaker's utterances. He also notices that the first 'Okay' (Line 3) in a freestanding format does not signal "passive reciprocity". Rather, it can be treated as momentary and "on hold", because, subsequently, it is apparent that B moves towards a fuller turn (Line 5). In short, 'okay' has been shown to serve two main functions: a receipt token and a pre-closing token.

2.2.7 'Right'

Gardner (2004) identifies three major functions of 'right' as a reactive token in a sequentially second position: an epistemic confirmation token, a change-of-activity token and a connection-making token. The first two types are common in this study. Fragment 2.11 below illustrates that 'right' is employed as an epistemic confirmation token, which can be seen as a truncated form of "That is right".

Fragment 2.11, from Gardner 2004: 4

- 1 Don: They've gotta b- Instead of that tiny li'l, scrappy
- 2 desk in the cornuh? 'hh they've gotta hu:ge ca:rved
- 3 wooden. (0.1) desk in the vornuh.

-
- 4 (0.4)
- 5 Bet: 'N China [C i t y ?] = [-- First saying, JX]
- 6 Don: [Really sum-] =
- 7 Don: → =In China City. Right. [-- RT (Repeat + Reactive expression), JX]
- 8 Bet: hhm.=
- 9 Ann: ='S like a ba:r.
- 10 (1.5)

Don produces a composite (Schegloff 2007) in the clear after a brief overlap with Bet's understanding check question. The composite (Line 7) consists of a repeat of the check question (Line 5) in conjunction with '*right*'. Notice that Don has the epistemic priority over the information regarding the location. Here, '*right*' is employed as an epistemic confirmation token, being equivalent to "That is right". Fragment 2.12 below illustrates '*right*' as a change-of-activity token, being equivalent to "Alright".

Fragment 2.12, from Gardner 2004: 4

- 1 Gor: ↓Ahha:
- 2 (0.3)
- 3 Gor: .k.nhhhhh hu-Okay .h Well um
- 4 (0.7)
- 5 Gor: .lk I sh'l see you (0.3) uh:
- 6 (0.4)

- 7 Dan: Y[eh
- 8 Gor: [in. .t. kl ↓Well whenever
- 9 (0.2)
- 10 Gor: hO[kay? [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 11 →Dan: [Right [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 12 (1.0)
- 13 Dan: ([])
- 14 Gor: [Bye:?]
- 15 (0.2)
- 16 Dan: Bye[:
- 17 Gor: [kl ↓Bye.
- 18 ----- end call -----

Similar to ‘*okay*’, ‘*right*’ (Line 11) is employed to signal a potential shift to a new topic or activity: a change-of-activity token or a change-of-topic token. In summary, ‘*right*’ (with *dui* as the equivalent token in Mandarin Chinese) can mainly function as an epistemic confirmation token illustrated in Fragment 2.11 and as a change-of-activity token illustrated in Fragment 2.12 above. On the other hand, ‘*right*’ can function as acknowledging a strong “connection” between two prior utterances in Australian and British English (Gardner 2004). This function of ‘*right*’ is not further illustrated here, because it is rarely found in Mandarin map task conversations.

2.2.8 Confirmatory repeats

Previous research has shown that three terms are relevant to the practice of repeating what another speaker has said in the immediately preceding talk: repetition (e.g., Tannen 1987; Clancy et al. 1996), repeat (Schegloff 1996b), and echo utterances (Quirk et al. 1985). Repetition and repeat are adopted and used interchangeably in this thesis. In the conversation analytic literature, repeats function in a range of conversational environments: to initiate repair (Schegloff et al. 1977), to accept an other-correction (Jefferson 1987), to confirm an allusion (Schegloff 1996b), to express some form of uncertainty (Sorjonen 2001) and to display receipt of information (Svennevig 2004), amongst others.

Tannen (1987: 583-584) lists an array of functions of repetitions in conversation as follows: “claiming or keeping the floor, showing reciprocity, providing backchannel responses, stalling, gearing up to answer or speak, humor and play, savoring and showing appreciation of a good line or a good joke, persuasive effect, linking one speaker’s ideas to another’s, ratifying another’s contribution”, among other things. In short, repetitions can be seen as both a resource and a strategy by which participants co-construct a conversation, display alignments and interpersonal relationships.

In a study of repeats as displaying agreement through sequential analysis, Schegloff (1996b: 177-180) outlines seven constraints or requirements for confirmatory repeats in order to differentiate them from other varieties of repeats in conversation:

- (i) Confirmatory repeats are produced by other than the initial sayer of the repeated utterance.

-
- (ii) Confirmatory repeats are located in the next turn after the first saying.
 - (iii) Confirmatory repeats are used in second position in a sequence or a sequentially third position rather than sequence initiators.
 - (iv) Confirmatory repeats are identical repeats with deictic and speaker-change adjustments rather than transformations or paraphrases of the first saying.
 - (v) Confirmatory repeats stand alone or can be followed by other talk⁵.
 - (vi) Confirmatory repeats are located at the initial position of the turn and can be followed by an agreement token.
 - (vii) Confirmatory repeats respond to a candidate observation, interpretation, or understanding of the recipient's circumstances, current or past offered by the initial sayer.

All seven constraints described above serve to describe the formal characteristics of confirmatory repeats subsequent to a first saying in English conversation. In greater detail, Schegloff describes and analyses the confirmatory repeats, which are produced by another participant rather than the initial sayer. Fragment 2.13 below is drawn from an interview between Shreve and Edwards on National Public Radio concerning Shreve's recent novel.

Fragment 2.13, from Schegloff 1996b: 183

1 Edwards: Why do you write juvenile books.

2 (0.5)

⁵ Unlike repeats investigated by Schegloff (1996b), I only concentrate on freestanding repeats in sequentially second position in this project, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

- 3 Edwards: ['s that- b- (0.?) [hav]ing [children?]
- 4 Shreve: [Because I love child[ren]. [I really do :]=
- 5 =.hh I enjoy children:, .hh I started writing: (.)
- 6 juvenile books for entirely pra:ctical reasons, .hh
- 7 (.)
- 8 Shreve: [u- u-
- 9 → Edwards: [Making money::: [-- First saying, JX]
- 10 ⇒ Shreve: Making [money [-- Second saying, JX]
- 11 Edwards: [yes ((+laughter))
- 12 Shreve: that- that practical reason hhh
- 13 (.)
- 14 Shreve: I've been writing juvenile books for a lo:ng..

Shreve accounts for her interest of writing juvenile books as “practical reasons” (Line 6).

Grounded on this statement, Edwards makes it explicit in one phrase “making money” (Line 9), which may be described as “conveyed without being said” (Schegloff 1996b: 184).

Shreve’s repeat of “making money” displays her agreement on Edwards’s interpretation.

Further, Schegloff notices that avoidance or nonoccurrence of confirmatory repeats can provide more empirical evidence to explore the practice of agreeing by repeating at a deeper level. Fragment 2.14 below illustrates one nonoccurrence of this practice as a deviant case.

In this instance, A and B are talking about their recent trip.

Fragment 2.14, from Sacks 1992: 140; Schegloff 1996b: 195-196

- 1 A: Didge have a nice time?
- 2 B: Oh, wonderful.
- 3 A: Goo::d, [good.
- 4 B: [just wonder[ful.
- 5 A: [Where'dju go::.
- 6 (0.6)
- 7 B: We were in northern California, up- (0.2)
- 8 weh (hhh-) (0.4) way up in the mountains too.
- 9 (0.4)
- 10 A: Oh well we wen'up there oh:: about thr-. hh
- 11 I'd say about three weeks ago we was up at
- 12 Maripo:sa, .hh[hh
- 13 B: [Uh huh
- 14 A: an' up in the Mother Lode century en we
- 15 [wen' all through those ghost tow:ns.
- 16 B: [()]-
- 17 B: Oh:: I see, Well we were up uh. Hh intuh Red
- 18 (0.5) Red Blu: ff? [-- Pre-token TCU, JX]
- 19 (0.4)
- 20 A: Oh:: [-- RT (Change-of-state token), JX]
- 21 B: ([])

-
- 22 → A: [You wen' up further then.
- 23 ⇒ B: Yes. [-- RT (Reactive expression), JX]
- 24 A: Uh [huh,
- 25 B: [Uh huh,

This fragment shows that B does not repeat A's candidate understanding based on their foregoing discussions. Rather, B deploys the agreement token 'yes' (Line 23). Schegloff (1996b) argues that confirmation is different from agreement. By using an agreement token instead of a confirmatory repeat, B avoids the "one-upsmanship" that might have been heard to be associated with the repeat. This instance of nonoccurrence (i.e., a deviant case) suggests that confirmatory repeats can "convey a sort of stance toward the other and toward the matters being discussed in the talk: such as satisfaction, congratulations and mockery" (ibid.: 199), amongst others. This fragment provides evidence to show that a repeat can be heard or treated as more involved or engaged at the level of interpersonal relationships than a reactive expression such as 'yes' (see Chapter 5).

2.2.9 Collaborative productions

Similar to repeats, literature has shown that different terms are deployed for the same linguistic practice of producing clauses collaboratively by the conversational participants across turns: collaborative built sentences (Sacks 1992), sentences-in-progress (Lerner 1991, 1994, 1996), co-construction (Ono and Thompson 1996; Helasvuo 2004), collaborative finishes (Clancy et al. 1996), collaborative statement formulations (Díaz, Antaki and Collins 1996), collaborative productions (Szczepek 2000a, 2000b) and joint utterance construction

(Hayashi 2000). In this project, I adopt the term “collaborative productions” in the sense that this linguistic practice can display active reciprocity (see Chapter 5) through the candidate completion provided by a recipient in an unfinished turn.

From a syntactic perspective, Ono and Thompson (1996: 75-78) note that there are two syntactic types of collaborative production: expansions and completions. First, a recipient expands a primary speaker’s utterance into a new syntactic unit by adding an adverbial phrase (e.g., Prepositional Phrase) as an adjunct to an already completed clause. Second, a recipient completes a syntactic unit in a floor-holding speaker’s construction of a sentence-in-progress. In this project, I will concentrate on syntactic completion rather than syntactic expansion.

In her English conversational data, Szczepak (2000a, 2000b) identifies four broad conversational actions that are accomplished by the linguistic practice of collaborative productions in English: (i) duetting (Falk 1980), (ii) showing understanding, (iii) borrowing, and (iv) eliciting information. Further, collaborative productions involve an entry into a floor-holding speaker’s turn space to provide the final component of a syntactic unit as the candidate completion. By providing the candidate completion, a recipient attempts to make sense of a grammatically incomplete sentence initiated by a floor-holding speaker in terms of its syntactic construction and semantic content.

In terms of the turn organization, Lerner (1991, 1996) proposes the term “compound turn-constructive units”, which consists of two components produced by two different participants. A floor-holding speaker produces the preliminary component, and a recipient produces the final component. Fragment 2.15 below illustrates a compound TCU in the syntactic construction of a subordinate clause and a main clause produced by two different

participants.

Fragment 2.15, from Lerner 1991: 445

- 1 David: so if one person said he couldn't invest [-- Preliminary component, JX]
 2 (.)
 3 → Kerry: then I'd have ta wait [-- RT (Final component), JX]

Lerner (1991) describes the compound syntactic construction: “If X + then Y” (Lines 1 and 3). David produces the preliminary “if-clause” (Line 1), projecting the possible form of the final component “then-clause” of the compound TCU by the recipient. Note that the recipient can produce a variety of forms other than “then-clause” (Line 3) as the candidate completion. For instance, ‘*uh huh*’ or ‘*yes*’ can serve as a continuer to prompt the floor-holding speaker to provide the final component of the TCU-in-progress. In addition to “If X + then Y”, Lerner (1996) identifies other compound TCUs, such as “when X + then Y”, “She said + X” and “I thought + X”, which are linguistic forms of author attribution.

Furthermore, Lerner (1996) investigates the linguistic practice of collaborative productions in relation to preference structures in interaction, such as a preference of agreement over disagreement. Fragment 2.16 below illustrates that collaborative productions can be used to achieve agreement.

Fragment 2.16, from Lerner 1996: 310

- 1 A: but if you look at, say, the Ten Commandments, they really are

2 based on race survival.

3 B: I think so.

4 I really do.

5 A: If you do not obey those The Commandments, [-- Preliminary component, JX]

6 → B: the race is going to go to hell pretty damn fast. [-- RT (Final component), JX]

Speakers A and B have reached an agreement on the positive proposition under discussion (Lines 1, 2, 3 and 4), which can be understood as the establishment of shared knowledge in an agreement-relevant environment. A further pursues the topic in a negatively formulated proposition by producing the “if-clause” (Line 5). It projects the “then-clause” (Line 6) as the next relevant action to display agreement by the recipient. In other words, A creates an opportunity for B to enter his turn space to collaboratively produce a compound TCU rather than resume telling by offering the final component. The recipient’s action of completing the TCU-in-progress can be seen as an alignment to the speaker’s designed action to elicit the recipient’s display of agreement.

In summary, collaborative productions are considered as one type of reactive token in this study. From an alternative perspective, two participants collaborate to complete one syntactically complete sentence, which displays like-mindedness and togetherness in interaction. This can be seen as one of the reasons why collaborative productions might display higher level of reciprocity than backchannels and reactive expressions (see Chapter 5).

2.2.10 Laughter tokens

Jefferson (1979; 1984b) makes a significant contribution to the study of laughter in

interaction. A sequence involving laughter can be treated as a sequence of adjacently paired actions: invitation to laugh and acceptance/rejection. Specifically, a speaker may invite the co-participant to laugh by placing the laughter at the end of an utterance (Jefferson 1979). Subsequently, a recipient accepts the invitation by laughing along. Alternatively, the recipient can actively decline the invitation of laughter by producing utterances in the next relevant slot. As this indicates, the pursuit of a topic takes priority over the pursuit of laughter. In another study, Jefferson (1984b: 358) examines the organization of laughing activities in trouble telling sequences. She notices three orderings of laughter in trouble telling environments: (i) the teller laughs, but the recipient does not laugh; (ii) the teller laughs and the recipient laughs along; and (iii) the teller does not laugh, but the recipient laughs. First, Fragment 2.17 below illustrates the solo laughter in the trouble telling sequence: the trouble teller laughs first, but the trouble recipient does not laugh along.

Fragment 2.17, from Jefferson 1984b: 346

- 1 G: You don't want to go through all the ha:ssle?
- 2 S: hhhh I don't know Geri,
- 3 (.)
- 4 → S: I've I've stopped crying uhuh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh, [-- Solo Laughter, JX]
- 5 → G: Wuh were you cry::ing?

Speaker S sends out laughter tokens (Line 4) after producing a negative statement (Line 2), along with an assertion. However, G fails to join in the laughing activity. Rather, G

raises a further question concerning S's trouble. Next, Fragment 2.18 below illustrates a collaborative laughter: the troubles recipient joins in the laughing activity initiated by the trouble teller.

Fragment 2.18, from Jefferson 1984b: 348-349

- 1 D: I thought that was pretty outta sight didju hear
 2 me say are you a junkie.
 3 (0.5)
 4 →D: hheh heh= [-- Laughter (Invitation to laughing activity), JX]
 5 →E: =hheh-heh-heh [-- RT (Laughter token: Acceptance of laughing activity), JX]

Speaker D produces laughter tokens (Line 4) after producing utterances with a gap of 0.5 seconds. The trouble teller's laughter token can be seen as an invitation in an adjacency pair sequence. Without any gap or overlap, E accepts the invitation and laughs along (Line 5). It is important to note that laughing together is a "valued" occurrence. It is the product of "methodic and coordinated" activities accomplished through a recipient's laughing along in response to an invitation: a prior speaker's laughter (Jefferson 1984b: 348).

Finally, Fragment 2.19 below illustrates a different type of solo laughter: the trouble teller does not initiate laughter, but the recipient laughs without an invitation.

Fragment 2.19, from Jefferson 1984b: 360

- 1 M: and was tappi(h)ng m(h)e o(h)n the(h)e

2.2.11 Summary

The survey of reactive tokens in English has shown that participants accomplish responding actions and activities through a considerable variation of reactive tokens. Reactive tokens serve two main functions. First, they help construct and maintain mutual understanding, such as *'mhm'* and *'yeah'*. Second, they create and secure recipient engagement, such as repeats, collaborative productions and laughter tokens. Thus, reactive tokens play a vital role in English conversation. Assuming that the architecture of conversation is universal, will participants in Mandarin conversation accomplish the same responding actions through variations of reactive tokens? Will reactive tokens serve the same interactional functions in Mandarin conversation as they do in English? Will the role of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation be as important as that in English? All the above questions become the focus of Chapter 4.

In addition, previous studies of reactive tokens in English conversation have shown that a reactive token can implement a range of conversational actions in different interactional contexts. For example, *'okay'* can function as both an epistemic confirmation token and a change-of-activity token. On the other hand, one conversational action can be implemented by a diversity of reactive tokens. For instance, both *"mhm"* and *"yes"* can serve as acknowledgement tokens. Thus, it seems that there is not a one-to-one relationship between a particular reactive token and a specific responding action implemented in talk-in-interaction. Further, one question arises: why does a recipient select one particular reactive token over another to accomplish a given responding action in a longer conversational sequence? Previous studies of reactive tokens in English suggest that functions in conversational

contexts might contribute to the selection of a particular reactive token in a local context. However, it is interesting to find out how and why participants select a particular reactive token in a longer sequence such as direction giving in Mandarin conversation. This question becomes the main theme in Chapters 5 and 6.

Finally, the investigation of the interactional workings of reactive tokens in English considers both freestanding formats and those tokens prefacing a fuller turn. Nonetheless, this study centers on freestanding reactive tokens only, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

2.3 Reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation

Following a detailed search, two studies regarding the employment of reactive tokens have been identified in Mandarin conversation. In their study of Mandarin backchannels, Tao and Thompson (1991: 211) present the following findings: (i) only 8 per cent (10/119) of Mandarin speaker changes were backchannel responses; (ii) none of the 10 backchannel responses occurred in overlap; and (iii) none of the 10 Mandarin backchannel tokens were continuers. However, they do not analyse the actual deployment of each reactive token with regard to its sequential placement in interactional contexts on a turn-by-turn basis.

In a very influential paper regarding a comparison of reactive tokens among Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and English, Clancy et al. (1996) define a reactive token as “a short utterance produced by an interlocutor who is playing a listener’s role during the other interlocutor’s speakership” (ibid.: 355). Further, they distinguish five types of reactive token: (i) backchannels; (ii) reactive expressions; (iii) collaborative finishes; (iv) repetitions; and (v)

resumptive openers. Instances of all five types of reactive token can be found in the data. My own definition and categorization of reactive tokens can be found in Chapter 4.

Clancy et al. (1996: 359) define a backchannel as “a non-lexical form, whose functions are to serve as a continuer and to display an understanding, interest, attention and convergence in the floor-holding speaker’s talk.” Table 2.1 below presents some typical examples of backchannels used in Mandarin Chinese.

Table 2.1 Typical backchannels in Mandarin Chinese (Clancy et al. 1996: 359)

Uhm	<i>a</i>	<i>ao</i>	<i>ai=</i>
Eh	hum	mhm=/mh	En=

These vocalizations are lexically empty. They are employed as convergence tokens at CTRPs and continuers at non-TRPs to support a floor-holding speaker and to construct and maintain mutual understanding.

Second, Clancy et al. (1996: 359) define a reactive expression as “a short non-floor-taking phrase or a word produced by a non-primary speaker.” They argue that reactive expressions differ from backchannels in that backchannels only take the form of sounds, but reactive expressions have definite semantic content. Once again, Table 2.2 below presents some typical examples of reactive expressions used in Mandarin conversation.

Table 2.2 Typical reactive expressions in Mandarin Chinese (Clancy et al. 1996: 360)

这样好 <i>zheyang hao</i> ‘such PRT’	就是啊 <i>jiushi a</i> ‘indeed PRT’	是啊 <i>shi a</i> ‘COP PRT’
对 <i>dui</i> ‘right’	对, 对 <i>dui dui</i> ‘right right’	对, 对, 对 <i>dui dui dui</i> ‘right right right’

Similar to backchannels, the core actions accomplished through reactive expressions are acknowledgement tokens produced after finished turns and continuers after unfinished turns.

Third, Clancy et al. (1996: 360) define a collaborative finish as “the utterance produced by a non-primary speaker finishes a primary speaker’s utterance”. Fragment 2.20 below illustrates the use of a collaborative production in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 2.20, from Clancy et al. 1996: 360-362

1 A: ... 一 个 叫 什 么 的 ?

yi ge jiao shenme de

one CLF call what MM

“The one, what do you call it?”

2 叫 = ?

jiao

call

it is called

3 好像 = ,

haoxiang = ,

seem

something like

4 叫 国际 = ... Sh- 商 = 业 学院 吧

jiao guoji sh- shang = ye xueyuan ba

call interactional sh- trade college PRT

International Trade College

5 那 个 学校 , -- Pre-token TCU (preliminary component)

nei ge xuexiao

that CLF school

That school

6 → B: 热门儿 的 [-- RT (Final component), JX]

remer de

hot MM

is very popular

7 C: 最=,

zui=,

very

very,

8 最 热门儿

zui remer

very hot

very popular.”

Speaker A produces the noun phrase *neige xuexiao* ‘that school’ (Line 5) as the subject of the sentence-in-process. Speaker B finishes the syntactically incomplete sentence by providing the adjective phrase *remer de* ‘popular’ (Line 6) as the predicate. The syntactic construction of this collaborative finish can be illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

then

Then,

4 还是 没 人 报

haishi mei ren bao

yet NEG person apply

even so nobody is interested in applying (for this type of school).

5 A: 噢 [-- *ou*-prefaced turn, JX]

ou

oh

Oh

6 → 没 人 报 高中, [-- First Saying, JX]

mei ren bao gaozhong

NEG person apply high:school

Nobody is interested in applying for such schools.

7 今年

jinnian

this:year

This year.”

8 ⇒ B: 没 人 报 高中 [-- Repetition, JX]

mei ren bao gaozhong

NEG person apply high:school

Nobody is interested in applying to such schools.

- 9 那么
 na=me
 then
 So,
- 10 这样 一 来
 zheyang yi lai
 such once come
 in such a situation,

Speaker B repeats one important sentence *mei ren bao gaozhong* ‘Nobody is interested in applying to such schools’ (Line 8) from A’s utterance in the foregoing turns. Nevertheless, the repeat here is employed to preface a full turn and thereby cannot be treated as a reactive token in this project (see the working definition of reactive tokens in Chapter 4).

Fifth, Clancy et al. (1996: 363) define resumptive openers as “non-lexical elements employed at the beginning of a new turn and followed by a full turn”. They argue that resumptive openers are similar to backchannels in that they are both vocalic forms, but that they are different in that there is a fuller turn following the resumptive opener. They note that resumptive openers tend to appear as a separate intonation unit. Fragment 2.22 below illustrates the use of a resumptive opener in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 2.22, from Clancy et al. 1996: 363

1 S: .. 你们 那 个 房子

nimen ne ge fangzi

2PP that CLF house

“About the housing you have now,

2 ... 能 不 能 长期 住 下去 呀?

neng bu neng changqi zhu xiaqu ya

MV NEG MV long:term live down QP

Can you live there for long?”

3 T: ... (1.0) 那 当然 可以 啊

na dangran keyi a

that of:course possible PRT

Sure, it is possible

4 ... 你 只要 你 一直 .. 注册

ni zhiyao ni yizhi zhuce

2SG just 2SG continuously register

As long as you register (as a student).

5 [那 你 就 可以]

na ni jiu keyi

then 2SG then possible

you are fine.”

6 → S: [唉= [-- ai-prefaced Turn (Resumptive Opener), JX]

ai

那 挺 好 的 啊=]

ne ting hao de a
 that very good MM PRT
 that is great.”

This fragment shows that resumptive openers are located in turn-initial position, followed by additional turn components. In this instance, *ai* ‘oh’ (Line 6) is employed to mark news receipt in response to the statement *ni zhiyao ni yizhi zhuce* ‘as long as you register as a student’.

To summarize, the survey of previous literature has shown that much is known about the forms and functions of individual reactive tokens in English, such as ‘*uh huh*’, ‘*yeah/yes*’, ‘*mm hm*’, ‘*oh*’, ‘*okay*’, amongst others, as presented in Section 2.2. By stark contrast, there are few studies of reactive tokens as produced and interpreted by participants themselves in Mandarin Chinese through qualitative turn-by-turn analysis. Thus, a number of questions emerge concerning the study of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation: (i) Does Clancy et al.’s definition of reactive tokens fit my Mandarin data? If not, how do I define reactive tokens in this study? (ii) Does Clancy et al.’s categorization of reactive tokens fit my Mandarin data? If not, how do I categorize reactive tokens in this study? (iii) Compared to the prominent role of reactive tokens in English conversation, do reactive tokens play an equally important role in Mandarin conversation? And (iv) how do participants orient to reactive tokens as a resource to accomplish responding actions and activities in longer conversational sequences?

Thus, a knowledge gap emerges: there exists a lack of sequential analysis of reactive

tokens in Mandarin conversation. The general question is how Mandarin recipients employ reactive tokens as a resource to accomplish the responding actions and activities in interaction. Do Mandarin recipients behave in a similar way to English participants in terms of their use of reactive tokens? This becomes the major theme in Chapter 4.

Before I provide a sequential analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation in Chapter 4, the next chapter will deal with the methods of collecting the data for this study and the methodology employed to analyse the data in the subsequent chapters.

3 Methodology

This chapter aims to detail the specific research methods deployed in the data collection. It also discusses the methodology for data analysis presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, followed by a consideration of two important sequences and some preliminary concepts in this study. Specifically, the chapter will first present the details of data collection through the map task. Subsequently, the approaches to data analysis are discussed in detail. Finally, two sequences are considered and some preliminary concepts are introduced with illustrations from Mandarin conversation.

3.1 Data collection through the map task

In this study, the map task (Anderson et al. 1991) procedure was adopted to collect spontaneous speech data. The map task⁶ was designed by the Human Communication Research Centre (HCRC) of the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow. One typical application of map task data in conversation analysis is Caspers's (2003) investigation of the role of local melody in the turn-taking system of Dutch conversation.

3.1.1 The map task

In each map task conversation, two participants are involved in a collaborative task using prepared materials to complete a joint activity. They sit opposite one another on either side of a table, and each participant has a map. The designated Information Giver has a route marked on the map, whereas the Information Follower has no route at all. The Information Follower uses a pencil to draw a route based on the information provided by the Information

⁶ Details can be found at <http://www.hcrc.ed.ac.uk/maptask/maptask-description.html>.

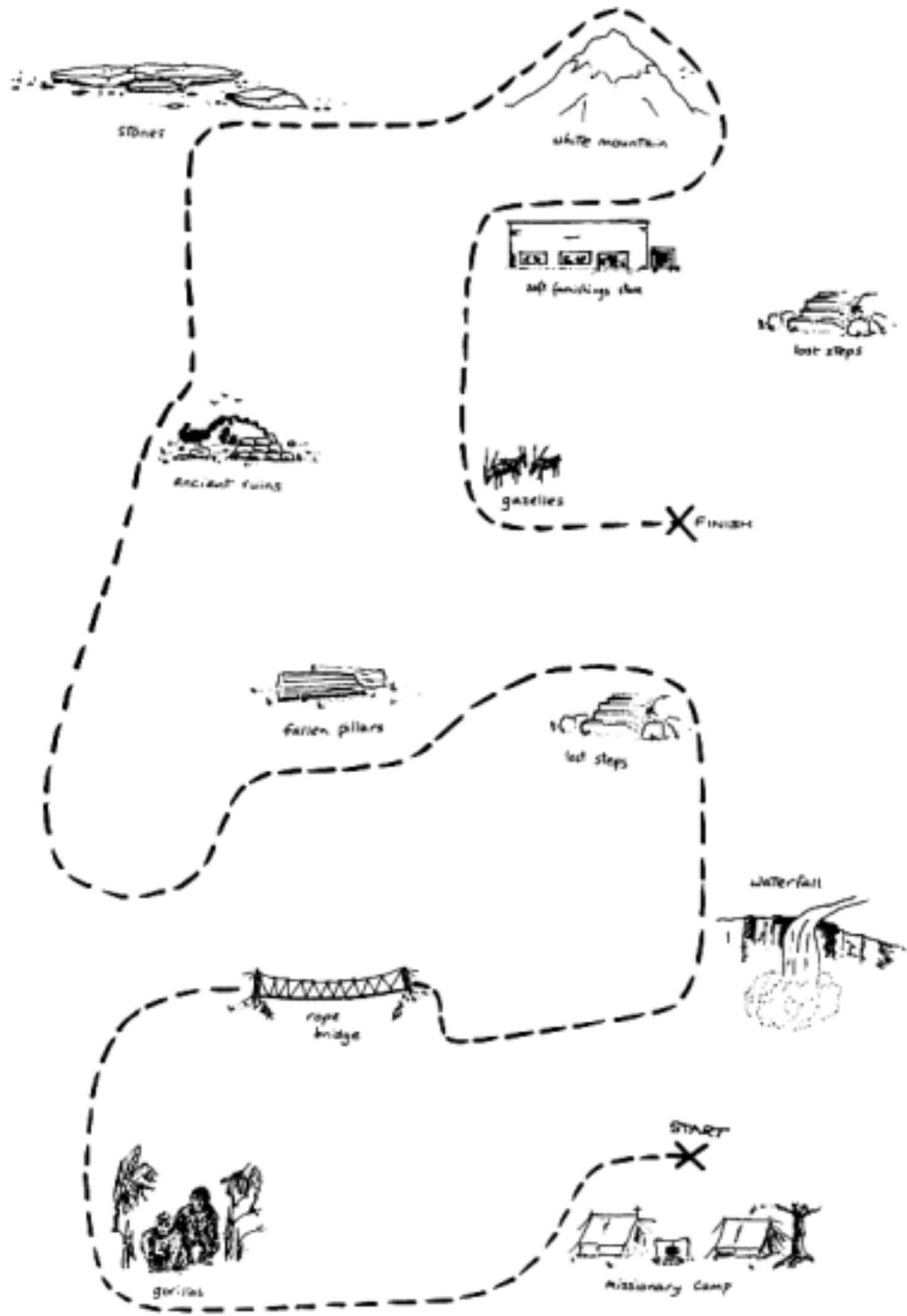
Giver. Similar to game explanation sequences (Kern 2007), direction-giving sequences can be seen as step-by-step knowledge transference from the Information Giver to the Information Follower.

Four points are particularly important, and thus are made explicit to the participants. First, the participants cannot see each other's map. Second, their ultimate goal is to transfer the knowledge of the correct route from the Information Giver's map to the Information Follower's map. Third, the maps are not entirely identical and the co-participants have to find out how the two maps differ and deal with the information mismatch in their conversation. Finally, participants are told at the very beginning that eye contact and other nonverbal communications are not allowed in the process of map task conversations.

All maps originally contained landmarks or features portrayed through line drawings, and landmarks are labelled with English names. For the purposes of this study, English names were translated into their equivalent Mandarin Chinese. They were covered and replaced with Mandarin Chinese. All map routes have the "Starting Point" marked on both the Information Giver and the Information Follower's maps. However, the "Finish Point" is only marked on the Information Giver's map. In other words, the Information Follower cannot know the "Finish Point" until the Instruction Giver tells the Follower that "we have arrived at the 'Finish Point'." It is important to note that the "Starting Point" and the "Finish Point" on both maps are adjacent to a common landmark. The difficulty is that information regarding labels and locations of target landmarks between the "Starting Point" and the "Finish Point" varies between the two participants' maps to some extent. This will give rise to potential conflicts between co-participants.

The notion of sharedness in the map task refers to the extent to which landmarks contrast, or are shared between pairs of maps⁷. The discrepancies between two maps can be seen as a design variable, which researchers can systematically manipulate. Landmarks are considered identical if the same forms and labels appear in the same locations on both the Giver's and the Follower's maps. However, landmarks can differ in three ways. First, some landmarks are identical in forms and positions, but different in labels on two maps (Label Change). Second, some landmarks are found on the Information Giver's map but not on the Information Follower's map (Absence/Presence) or vice versa. Finally, some landmarks appear twice, either on the Giver's map or Follower's map: once in a position close to the target route and once more distant; however, the other has only a distant and irrelevant one (Number Inconsistency). All these design features may give rise to some potential conflicts in the process of a joint task (see Chapter 6). Below are two sample pictures illustrating the content of the Instruction Giver's map in Figure 3.1 and that of the Instruction Follower's map in Figure 3.2. In total, sixteen pictures are available in map task conversations.

⁷ The relevant information is provided at <http://www.hcrc.ed.ac.uk/maptask/maptask-description.html>.



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Figure 3. 1 Sample for Instruction Giver's map



Figure 3. 2 Sample for Instruction Follower's map

3.1.2 Settings and participants

Settings and participants are two important components in my data collection. For detailed acoustic analysis in this study, I needed clear sound files. Thus, I aimed to choose quiet settings. The data were collected on three occasions. First, in 2004, I recorded audio files of eight map task conversations involving four native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Second, in 2005, I recorded audio and video files of eight map task conversations involving four other native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Third, in 2006, I recorded audio and video files of four map task conversations involving two native speakers (NSs) and two non-native speakers (NNSs) of Mandarin Chinese in mixed groups.

With regard to the participants, four science students in their penultimate year from Hunan University, China, attended eight map task conversations in 2004. Their real names were replaced by A, B, C and D. In 2005, four other students who then studied English at the College of Foreign Languages, Hunan University, China, participated in eight map task conversations. They majored in Translation and Interpretation. They were in their penultimate year when the conversations were recorded. Once again, their real names were replaced by E, F, G, and H.

In 2006, four members of staff who then worked at the Centre for English Language Education (CELE) in the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China, completed four map task conversations. All of the four participants were competent speakers of both English and Mandarin Chinese. Two of them were Mandarin NSs with advanced speaking English levels. The other two speakers were English NSs with advanced speaking Mandarin levels. The names of these four participants were replaced by X, J, K and L.

In this project, I do not take into account social factors such as gender, age, power, familiarity between participants, or nonverbal channels, amongst others. For the purposes of this study, I only differentiate between NSs and NNSs of Mandarin Chinese in terms of their linguistic identity. While I am aware that sociolinguistic, psychological and social factors as well as individual variations may have an impact on the way in which participants employ reactive tokens, such consideration will have to remain the topic of future research.

3.1.3 Instruments and procedures

Instruments are essential for the quality of the data I gathered for this study. The equipment employed was as follows: ECM-MS907, SONY ELECTRET condenser microphone for the audio files, and Panasonic MX500 for the video files. The computer software Cool Edit Pro 2.0 transferred the sounds into the WAV format simultaneously. Later on, it extracted any short or long sounds and utterances for a detailed prosodic analysis, provided that a reactive token displays prominent prosodic configurations. In addition, Praat 4.4.28 (Boersma and Weenink 2006) www.praat.org, was used for acoustic analysis of prosodic configurations of reactive tokens.

In terms of the procedure of the data collection, the data were gathered in three steps. First, at the stage of preparation, sixteen individual maps in eight pairs were downloaded from <http://www.hcrc.ed.ac.uk/maptask/>. Second, the settings of my recordings were selected and all the equipment was tested. The microphone was placed in the middle of the table, connected to the computer in which the software Cool Edit 2.0 was installed. Cool Edit was employed to monitor the sound effects of the recordings. In the room, there were four people: one designated Instruction Giver, one designated Instruction Follower, the researcher,

and one cameraman. My job as the researcher was to monitor recordings of the audio files.

Finally, all the sound files were checked and all the audio and video files were recorded onto CDs. Transcription of the eight map task conversations recorded in 2004 was completed in early 2005. At the end of 2006, preliminary transcriptions of all other map task conversations recorded in 2005 and 2006 were completed. All relevant fragments used throughout the whole thesis were checked repeatedly for accuracy.

3.1.4 A summary of the data

In this study, I employ three sets of data recorded in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Table 3.1 below presents details of the data. In the 2004 data, four NSs of Mandarin Chinese are labelled as A, B, C and D; in the 2005 data, four NSs are labelled as E, F, G and H; in the 2006 data, four participants (two NSs and two NNSs) are labelled as X, J, K and L.

Table 3. 1 Data details of Mandarin conversation (2004, 2005 and 2006)

Dialogues	Instruction Givers	Instruction Followers	Number of Speaker Changes	Duration (minutes)	Year of Recordings
1	A	B	52	7:46	2004
2	C	D	67	9:05	2004
3	D	A	106	12:54	2004
4	B	C	25	4:33	2004
5	D	C	62	7:06	2004
6	B	A	53	7:30	2004
7	A	D	64	8:21	2004
8	C	B	35	4:49	2004
9	E	F	150	4:40	2005
10	G	H	173	7:04	2005
11	H	E	165	4:46	2005
12	F	G	210	11:00	2005
13	H	G	182	6:23	2005
14	F	E	255	8:25	2005
15	E	H	130	3:29	2005
16	G	F	335	11:24	2005
17	X (NS)	J (NS)	188	11:47	2006
18	K (NNS)	X(NS)	764	34:56	2006
19	L (NNS)	K (NNS)	540	26:15	2006
20	X (NS)	L (NNS)	445	19:10	2006

3.1.5 Potential limitations of the map task

The map task has some potential limitations. I had to use prepared materials, i.e., the maps with forms, positions and labels of landmarks. The participants were told to reproduce the target route from the Giver's map to the Follower's map step by step. They thus had a

task to complete. The conversational topic was specific to the target route, the labels and positions of the landmarks as well as the movement from one landmark to another. This makes map task conversations differ from ordinary talk in that they follow a specific pattern. In other words, participants first identify the label and position of each relevant landmark in a “location descriptor” (Psathas 1991). Then, they move from one landmark to another in “route construction” (Psathas 1991) until they arrive at the “Finish Point”. In this sense, map task conversations are not entirely natural. On the other hand, the map task data are more natural than scripted talk, because participants do not read prepared words aloud under experimental conditions in the language lab.

There are different views on the notion of naturally occurring conversation (see Chapter 1). In broad terms, this study follows Rapley’s view on data and their natural occurrences:

Some people divide data into researcher-led or researcher-prompted – things like interviews or focus group – and naturally occurring data – things like audiotapes of family meal-time conversations or videotapes of consultations with doctors – which would have occurred without the researcher’s presence or actions. However, what I take a focus on naturally occurring data to mean is that you should use data to try to discover how some activity or interaction, be it a consultation or a qualitative interview, occurs as ‘natural’, normal or routine. In this sense, any data can be treated as ‘naturally occurring’ (Rapley 2007: 132).

In Rapley’s view, map task conversations in this study can be grouped into the category

of naturally occurring data. The direction-giving activities within the map tasks are shown to be collaboratively accomplished social interaction as a routine practice in human interaction. The data I recorded fall somewhere between everyday conversation and institutional talk in venues such as courtrooms, classrooms, hospitals, amongst others.

Another potential limitation is the presence of the microphone, the camera, the researcher and the cameraman. These could potentially have some effect on the verbal production and psychology of the participants involved in the map task. Thus, in the process of data collection, I attempted to minimize this potential influence. For instance, the researcher and the cameraman were as unobtrusive as possible in order to provide the participants with relaxed and friendly atmosphere. This made the production of the map task conversations as natural and spontaneous as possible.

3.1.6 Reactive tokens in relation to the map task data

In the direction-giving sequences of the map task conversations, the Information Giver⁸ can be seen as the primary speaker, while the Information Follower can be considered the non-primary speaker, mainly playing the role of recipient. In the data, the Follower initiates half of the number of speaker changes. On occasion, the Follower displays understanding, involvement, attention, agreement and alignment by articulating some vocalic sounds or lexical items to support the Giver. On other occasions, the Follower may provide her candidate understanding or raise questions to seek elaboration or clarification from the Giver. Thus, direction-giving sequences provide the participants ample opportunities to produce reactive tokens. In this regard, the map task conversation can be seen as a natural

⁸ In this project, the Instruction Giver, the one in the know, is also known as the Information Giver, the knowledgeable and informed participant. By the same token, the Instruction Follower can be the Information Follower, the nonknowledgeable and uninformed participant.

environment for recipients to produce reactive tokens, similar to story-telling sequences (Norrick 2000).

Between the co-participants, there is an asymmetry in terms of epistemic order. The Information Giver has a map that displays the correct route. She is therefore more knowledgeable or has more epistemic authority over the target route in the collaborative task. On the other hand, the Information Follower does not know the correct route, since there is no information about the correct route on her map. As such, this can be seen as an information gap between co-participants in broad terms. Furthermore, particular information mismatches do occur between Information Givers and Followers, because the labels and numbers of the landmarks on their maps are not entirely identical throughout their collaborative tasks. The participants have to collaborate, negotiate, discuss and resolve these potential conflicts to complete their tasks. In this sense, information gap also provides co-participants with a number of opportunities to produce reactive tokens for this study.

One feature of map task conversations is that participants are not allowed to use nonverbal channels such as eye contact, head nodding or shaking, facial expressions, amongst others. Participants are required to concentrate on their maps. Thus, they have to rely on the verbal channels to display reciprocity throughout their individual map tasks. In this regard, it is similar to telephone conversations. For instance, participants will produce reactive tokens to display agreement or disagreement rather than nod or shake their heads. On other occasions, they have to articulate reactive tokens to show their attention and active engagement rather than employ gaze movement (e.g., Goodwin 1981, 2007). There are, therefore, plentiful reactive tokens in the data, which provide rich materials for this project.

With the above points in mind, map task conversations can provide appropriate and adequate data for an investigation of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. It can be concluded that the production of reactive tokens is a natural occurrence and a routine practice in longer sequences in Mandarin map task conversations.

3.2 Approaches to data analysis

In this study, I follow the theoretical principles of ethnomethodology in general and conversation analysis in particular. Specifically, I attempt to provide a detailed empirical analysis of the use of reactive tokens with respect to their turn design, sequential placement, and timing of delivery. The strength of this qualitative method is that it helps researchers obtain a detailed understanding of how participants themselves produce and interpret a specific linguistic practice to accomplish a given conversational action in human interaction on a turn-by-turn basis.

Additionally, I have a quantitative interest regarding a comparison of the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens produced in first and second language interaction. The quantitative part of this research includes the counting of linguistic events, such as occurrences of different types of reactive token, the total number of occurrences of reactive tokens at complex transition relevance places (CTRPs) and those produced at non-TRPs. Most importantly, I provide my own working definition of the linguistic phenomenon of a reactive token before counting its occurrences (see Chapter 4).

In summary, in order to explore the way in which Mandarin recipients employ reactive tokens to accomplish responding actions and activities, a qualitative and quantitative approach

are incorporated with respect to different perspectives towards my research questions. The following sections will present considerations in relation to data analysis in this study.

3.2.1 Aspects of conversation analysis

Conversation analysis emerged as a distinctive aspect of ethnomethodology (Heritage 1987: 256). Generally, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis are similar in three ways: (i) the focus on how participants themselves produce and interpret each other's actions; (ii) the desire to treat ordinary events as worthy of serious analytic attention; and (iii) the preference for analysing naturally occurring interactions (Pomerantz 1988: 360-361).

Over the past forty years, conversation analysis has been employed as an important approach to studying the intersection between social interaction and language use. Sacks (1992) pioneered conversation analysis and made a great contribution to its development. In his view, conversation or talk-in-interaction can be treated as an object of analysis in its own right. Utterances may be considered as objects that speakers use to accomplish particular conversational actions within local contexts in interaction. For instance, Sacks was interested in how phone callers managed not to give their names at the help-line desk in the Suicide Prevention Center.

Goodwin and Heritage (1990: 287) describe conversation analysis as “an approach to the analysis of the practices of reasoning and inference that inform the production and recognition of intelligible courses of action from its inception.” According to Maynard and Clayman (2003: 181), conversation analysis is a “data-driven methodology and focuses on individual cases for a detailed analysis of the data available”. In short, conversation analysts are

interested in the production and interpretation of a linguistic practice by participants themselves, and they investigate the audio and video recordings of naturally occurring data.

With respect to basic theoretical assumptions of conversation analysis, Psathas (1995: 2-3) outlines the following points, which are essential in understanding conversation analysis:

- (i) Order is a produced orderliness.
- (ii) Order is produced by the parties in situ; that is, it is situated and occasioned.
- (iii) The parties orient to that order themselves; that is, this order is not an analyst's perception, not the result of the use of some preformed or preformulated theoretical conceptions concerning what action should/must/ought to be, or based on generalizing or summarizing statements about what action generally/frequently/often is.
- (iv) Order is repeatable and recurrent.
- (v) The discovery, description, and analysis of that produced orderliness is the task of the analyst.
- (vi) Issues of how frequently, how widely, or how often particular phenomena occur are to be set aside in the interest of discovering, describing, and analyzing the structures, the machinery, the organized practices, the formal procedures, the ways in which order is produced.
- (vii) Structures of social action, once so discerned, can be described and analysed in formal, that is, structural, organizational, logical, atopically contentless, consistent and abstract, terms.

The upshot of the basic theoretical assumptions is that social actions can be examined as ongoing practical accomplishments, which are locally produced, in situ, in the “there and then” (Schegloff 1996b), or the “here and now” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990).

In addition, Seedhouse (2005: 252) notes that the aim of conversation analysis is to “portray social action in interaction from an emic perspective”. The emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from within the system (Pike 1967). As this implies, it is not merely the participant’s perspective, but the perspective from within the sequential environment in which the social actions are performed. In conversation analysis, participants share the generic features of conversation, but they implement their conversational actions through a variety of linguistic practices in context-sensitive ways. To illustrate, displaying overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens in this project can be seen as universal in longer sequences. However, the way in which native and non-native speakers select reactive tokens to deal with conflicts is context-sensitive in disagreement-relevant environments (see Chapter 6).

In exploring the connection between applied linguistics and conversation analysis, Richards (2005: 1) notes that one of the strengths of conversation analysis as a research discipline is “its capacity to direct researchers’ attention to apparently tiny features of interaction and explode their dimensions beyond all expectations, revealing delicacies of design and management that resist the assaults of clumsier instruments”. He further points out that conversation analysis can deepen our understanding of social and professional life by identifying patterns and regularities in talk. This understanding can serve as an invaluable

guide to actions, but it is different from “laying down laws of behaviour” (ibid.: 4).

In terms of reliability of the sequential analysis, three key elements are “the selection of what is recorded, the technical quality of recordings and the adequacy of transcripts” (Peräkylä 1997: 206). From an alternative perspective, Bryman (2001: 29) states that the issue of whether the results of a study are replicable or not can be seen as one aspect of reliability. Thus, it is important to include the transcription of the primary data in conjunction with data analysis in the researchers’ reports and publications. In so doing, readers can judge the description and analysis of the phenomenon in talk-in-interaction themselves.

Broadly speaking, conversation analysts employ three devices to establish the pattern of an interactional phenomenon: single case analysis, deviant case analysis and quantification of an interactional event. Above all, single case analysis is a very important strategy. Conversation analysts frequently employ it to reveal participants’ orientations to a linguistic practice for a social action accomplished, as Schegloff observes:

There is a constitutive order to **singular** occasions of interaction and to the organization of action within them. This is the bedrock of social life—what I called earlier the primordial site of sociality. And social science theorizing, both sociological and linguistic, must be answerable to it. Whatever concerns for macro-social issues we entertain, our ways of dealing with them will in the end have to be compatible with a capacity to address the details of **single** episodes of action through talking in interaction (Schegloff 1988: 137).

Below, deviant case analysis and quantification of interactional phenomena within

conversation analysis will be discussed in greater detail.

3.2.2 Deviant case analysis in conversation analysis

As noted above, single case analysis plays an important part in investigating patterns and regularity in human interaction. However, the role of deviant case analysis is also significant in conversation analysis. It is developed from the method called “breaching experiments or demonstrations” (Garfinkel 1967: 38). “Breaching experiments” were designed to show what ordinary people would do if they violate the common sense methods. To illustrate, in “breaching experiments”, the participants were asked to explain and clarify simple utterances in casual talk such as “I had a flat tyre” or to say “hello” at the end of a conversation. Heritage (1990) notes that ‘breaching experiments’ are significant, because they show that the action itself plays a crucial role and they emphasize procedures of producing actions. By “breaching experiments”, Garfinkel’s main idea is that “background knowledge plays a key role in achieving mutual understanding between people to maintain their shared universe” (Heritage 1998a: 182).

With regard to deviant case analysis within conversation analysis, Maynard and Clayman (2003: 180-181) note that three ways of handling a deviant case are available: (i) to examine the consequences of its absence in relation to interactants’ orientation to the same considerations that produce the “regular” cases; (ii) to replace the initial analysis with a more general formulation that encompasses both the “regular” cases and the “departure”; and (iii) to produce a separate analysis of the deviant case, one which treats it as bringing about an alternate sequential “reality”. Among these three above-described methods, the first one will be mainly employed in deviant case analysis of the non-default reactive tokens in intercultural

communications.

One example of the second method concerning deviant case analysis is Schegloff's (1968) analysis of opening sequences in telephone conversation. He collected 500 instances of beginnings of telephone calls, and described 499 cases in the form of a rule: "answers speak first" (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 96) in telephone conversations. However, Schegloff's pattern could not account for Fragment 3.1 below, in which the caller spoke first.

Fragment 3.1, from Schegloff 1968; Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 96

(Police make the call. Receiver is lifted and there is a one-second pause)

1 Police: Hello.

2 Answerer: American Red Cross.

3 Police: Hello, this is Police Headquarters ... er,

Office Stratton ((etc.))

This fragment shows that the answerer does not speak first, which is not consistent with Schegloff's rule mentioned above. Accordingly, he reformulates his pattern in the form of an adjacency pair called "summons-answer sequences" (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 96), which can cover all the 500 examples in his collection. This instance reveals that "deviant cases" or negative cases play a key role in conversation analysis. A deviant case analysis provides an alternative approach to understanding the normative feature of members' conversational practices or structures of conversation at a deeper level. In this regard, the role of deviant cases cannot be neglected within conversation analysis.

3.2.3 Quantitative analysis within conversation analysis

This project generally follows Ford and Thompson's (1996) deployment of a quantitative analysis within conversation analysis and provides a working definition of each type of reactive token before counting its occurrence in the map task data. The quantitative analysis can lend effective support to the finding that reactive tokens play a vital role in first and second language interaction.

In the literature of conversation analysis, a range of quantifying expressions are found, such as "routinely" (e.g., Glenn 2003), "frequently" (e.g., Beach 1993), and "rare" (Heritage 1984a), "generally" and "often" (Psathas 1995: 2-3), among many other things. Further, ten Have (1990) stresses that a quantitative study tends to base the counts of instances on specified "objective" criteria. For instance, West (1984: 55) provides an "operational definition" of an interruption before counting its occurrence.

In a study of turn constructional units, Ford and Thompson (1996) first provide "operational definitions" for important notions such as syntactic completion, intonational completion, pragmatic completion, and speaker changes. Subsequently, they provide the quantitative analysis to describe how syntax, intonation and pragmatics as resources contribute to projecting turn completion. As such, their findings are effectively and statistically supported. This can be seen as a good example in applying quantitative analysis within conversation analysis.

In line with ten Have (1990), Schegloff (1993: 103) proposes three constraints or criteria to achieve desired results in a quantitative approach within conversation analysis: the denominator, the numerator and the domain or universe being characterized. Specifically,

the denominator refers to the context of a possible relevant occurrence. Next, the numerator refers to the set of types of occurrence whose presence should count as events and whose nonoccurrence should count as absence in an adequately defined context. Finally, the domain of interaction within conversation analysis suggests that the findings in interviews should be defined clearly, because the interview is different from ordinary conversation.

Further, it could be argued that singular episodes might establish patterns and regularities of a linguistic phenomenon in human interaction. Nonetheless, Schegloff (1993: 117) suggests that “the quantitative analysis might have its validity in the study of a comparison of turn and turn-taking organizations in talk-in-interaction across languages and cultures”. As will be seen below, there are a number of possible uses for a quantitative analysis within conversation analysis (Heritage 1995: 404):

- (i) As a means of isolating interesting phenomena.
- (ii) As a means of consolidating intuitions which are well defined, but where the existence of a practice is difficult to secure without a large number of cases.
- (iii) In cases in which independent findings about a conversational practice can have indirect statistical support.
- (iv) In almost all cases where a claim is made that the use or outcome of a particular social or psychological categories, such as gender, status, etc., statistical support will be necessary.

With respect to the role of quantitative analysis within conversation analysis, Heritage (1999: 70) argues that it is likely that “conversation analysis will become more quantitative

during the next period of its development”. Nevertheless, Schegloff (1993: 114) insists that quantification should not take the place of single case analysis. In summary, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data analysis tends to reinforce the credibility of my claims in this project.

3.2.4 The use of recorded data in conversation analysis

This study generally takes the stance of conversation analysis to depend on recorded data. The use of recorded data is very important in conversation analysis (e.g., Heritage 1995; Sacks 1984). Specifically, Heritage (1995: 395) states that conversation analysis comprehensively insists on the use of recordings of naturally occurring data as the empirical basis for data analysis. Audio and video equipments play a very significant role in the convention of conversation analysis. His view is aligned with Sacks’s description of the role of tape-recorded data of naturally occurring talk within conversation analysis:

It was not from any large interest in language or from some theoretical formulation of what should be studied that I started with **tape-recorded** conversations, but simply because I could get my hands on it and I could study it again and again, and also, consequently, because others could look at what I had studied and make of it what they could, if, for example, they wanted to be able to disagree with me (Sacks 1984: 26).

In a similar vein, Atkinson and Heritage (1984: 4) maintain that the use of recorded data has a number of advantages: (i) the recorded data enable repeated and detailed investigation of particular phenomenon in interaction; (ii) the recorded data provide readers with a distinct

access to the material about which claims are made; and (iii) the recorded data are cumulatively reusable and can be reexamined for new findings.

On the other hand, different perspectives emerge in terms of naturally occurring conversational data. For instance, Chomsky (1965) in the field of formal linguistics and Searle (1969, 1979) in speech act theory choose the invented data or idealized sentences as their linguistic data in their research. As Chomsky (1965) notes, “the actual talk is a degenerate sample of ideal linguistic competence that linguists should ignore entirely” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990: 285). This perspective of natural linguistic data is not followed in this study.

3.2.5 The procedures of conversation analysis

This project attempts to adopt the conventional procedures of conversation analysis. Previous research has shown that there are a number of accounts of the procedures of conversation analysis in investigating real conversational data (e.g., Heritage 1988; Pomerantz and Fehr 1997; Seedhouse 2004).

Heritage (1988: 143) provides a basic three-phase framework as the procedures of conversation analysis: (i) the inductive search for regularity; (ii) the deviant case analysis; and (iii) theoretical integration with other findings. This three-phase framework will be generally adopted to guide my data analysis. However, in single case analysis, more detailed research procedures presented below will be followed.

In greater detail, Pomerantz and Fehr (1997: 71) present the following five analytical tools of conversation analysis, which are helpful in this study as well.

- (i) Select a sequence of interest by looking for identifiable boundaries;
- (ii) Characterize the actions in the sequence by answering the question, “What is the participant doing in this turn?”
- (iii) Consider how the packaging of actions, that is, how they are formed and delivered, provides for certain understandings;
- (iv) Consider how timing and turn taking provide for certain understandings of actions and the matters talked about;
- (v) Consider how the ways the actions were accomplished suggest certain identities, roles, and/or relationships for the interactants.

All the above-described tools will be employed in data analysis in relation to the way in which co-participants employ reactive tokens to accomplish the display of overt reciprocity in longer sequences, in terms of their sequential positionings, timing of delivery, and associated conversational actions.

Building on the accounts of conversation analysis procedures proposed by Heritage (1988) and Pomerantz and Fehr (1997), Seedhouse (2004: 40-42) provides an account of the procedures of conversation analysis after recording, transcription and unmotivated looking in his research on the interaction in language classroom.

- (i) Locate an action sequence or sequences.
- (ii) Characterize the actions in the sequence or sequences.
- (iii) Examine the action sequence(s) in terms of the organization of turn-taking, focusing

especially on any disturbances in the working of the system.

- (iv) Examine the action sequence(s) in terms of sequence organizations.
- (v) Examine the action sequence(s) in terms of the organization of repair.
- (vi) Examine how the speakers package their actions in terms of the actual linguistic forms which they select from the alternatives available and consider the significance of these.
- (vii) Uncover any roles, identities, or relationships which emerge in the details of the interaction.
- (viii) Having completed a preliminary analysis which portrays the interactional organization and the participants' orientation, attempt to locate this particular sequence within a bigger picture.

Here, step (v) is particularly relevant to Seedhouse' study of the interaction in the language classroom, whereas repair is not the focus of this study. Rather, I will concentrate on the high level of orderliness of Mandarin conversation with the analytic focus on reactive tokens. In summary, all the above-mentioned procedures of conversation analysis will have a significant influence on the step-by-step process of data analysis at a general and specific level (see Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

3.2.6 Applications of conversation analysis in Mandarin conversation

Through a careful search, literature to date has shown that there is some research on spoken Mandarin Chinese. To illustrate, Ma (1996), Fong (2000), Zhu, Li and Qian (2000), and Chang (2001) examine Mandarin speakers on the basis of field notes, role plays, or

analysts' intuitions, but they do not analyse naturally occurring data in their own right. In addition, Tao (1996, 1999), Guo (1999), Li (2000), Clancy et al. (1996), Wu (2002) and Wang (2002) investigate aspects of Chinese linguistics in interaction such as adverbial clauses, reactive tokens, word order, and demonstratives in talk-in-interaction.

In terms of the application of conversation analysis to Mandarin conversational data, Zhang (1998) studies the sequential organization of repairs in Mandarin conversation and reports how Mandarin speakers implement repairs in talk. In subsequent studies, He (2001) and Chen and He (2001) apply the methodology of conversation analysis to the classroom interaction in Mandarin Chinese in the pedagogical contexts. Further, Wu (2004) presents a systematic investigation of how Mandarin final particles *a* and *ou* are deployed to display stances in conjunction with turn designs by applying the methodology of conversation analysis to Taiwan Mandarin data.

Thus, the present study can be seen as a continuation of the application of the conversation analytic approach to Mandarin conversational data. It aims to enrich our understanding of the way in which participants themselves display overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens as a routine practice in human interaction. Little research to date has focused on the integration of sequential analysis into linguistic data analysis of a reactive token in Mandarin conversation. The description and analysis of the use of reactive tokens provided in this study can therefore address this gap in our knowledge.

3.3 Two types of sequences: Adjacency pairs and direction-giving sequences

In this thesis, two types of sequences are of great importance: adjacency pairs and

direction-giving sequences. The following sections outline some features of these sequences.

3.3.1 Adjacency pairs

Adjacency pairs are “a basic unit of sequence construction” (Schegloff 2007: 9), and are therefore fundamentally relevant to this study. The main reason is that the sequence containing a reactive token can be seen as one type of adjacently paired action. In conversation analysis, it is well established that certain turns of conversations come in pairs: such as question and answer, greeting and a return greeting, invitation and acceptance/declination, amongst others. Sacks et al. (1974) note that one turn is related in predictable ways to previous and next turns. To illustrate, a question suggests the next turn will be an answer. A greeting suggests the next turn will be a greeting. An invitation also suggests the next turn will be either an acceptance or a rejection. Fundamentally, Schegloff and Sacks describe “adjacency pairs” as:

What two utterances, produced by different speakers, can do that one utterance cannot do is: by an adjacently positioned second, a speaker can show that he understood what a prior aimed at, and that he is willing to go along with that. Also, by virtue of the occurrence of an adjacently produced second, the doer of a first can see that what he intended was indeed understood, and that it was or was not accepted. Also, of course, a second can assert his failure to understand, or disagreement, and inspection of a second by a first can allow the first speaker to see that while the second thought he understood, indeed he misunderstood (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 296).

The authors note that a conversation can be decomposed into pairs of exchanges, which are connected but produced by different participants. Further, the two halves of an “adjacency pair” are referred to as the first pair part (1PP) and the second pair part (2PP). The first pair part is produced with the normative expectation that the second part will be due in the immediately following turn. Schegloff (1972: 76) describes such a property as “conditional relevance”. The first action makes the production of a second action interactionally relevant, and its nonoccurrence becomes a noticeable absence.

In this study, the turn containing pre-token turn constructional unit (TCU) can be considered as a first pair part (response/reciency initiation). The slot containing a reactive token is seen as a second pair part (response/reciency production) in second position sequentially. Thus, the concept of adjacency pairs is of great significance here. For the purposes of this study, “Pre-token TCU” and “RT” (i.e., reactive token) are used to mark the occurrence of a reactive token in each fragment throughout the thesis. “Pre-token TCU” refers to the reciency initiation as the first pair part, and “RT” refers to the actual production of a reactive token as the second pair part to display overt reciency.

Provided that adjacency pairs are basic structural units in conversation, Mandarin participants are sure to employ them to organize their turn taking in map task conversations. Fragment 3.2 below illustrates an adjacency pair sequence in the data.

Fragment 3.2, from Turns 99 and 100, Group 1, 2006

99 X: 有 双 实线 吗? -- Pre-token TCU

you shuang shixian ma

have double solid:lines QP

“Are there double solid lines (on your map)?”

100 J: 有。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

you

have

“Yes, there are.”

Speaker X deploys a yes/no question (Turn 99) as the first pair part to seek the target information in relation to her knowledge status about the map task. The positive answer (Turn 100) serves as the second pair part in the adjacency pair. In Mandarin map task conversations, the question/answer sequences are pervasive in the data I collected in 2004. Thus, they contribute to managing the turn-taking mechanism between Information Givers and Followers, particularly when the display of overt reciprocity through the use of reactive tokens is noticeably absent.

In summary, the adjacency pair is one of the most important concepts in conversation analysis (Heritage 1987: 259). The first pair part (e.g., reciprocity initiations) anticipates, invites and requests that a second, complementary action should be produced “next” by the recipient of the first. Further, “next” actions (e.g., reactive tokens as “seconds”) can be treated as a display of receipt and understanding of the first pair parts. As such, the concept of the adjacency pair is significant in this study in the sense that it contributes to a better understanding of displaying overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive

tokens as “seconds” in longer conversational sequences.

3.3.2 Direction-giving sequences

In this study, the spoken data gathered from map tasks can be grouped into the category of direction-giving interaction in the general sense. Psathas (1991) studies direction giving in interaction and suggests that the directions are also monitored for their coherence in terms of the progression of a sequence of operations⁹ with directional referents such as landmarks until the “Finish Point” is proposed. He also notes that insertion sequences are frequently emerging throughout direction-giving sequences. Thus, the sequenced production of operations will resume once co-participants agree to terminate the insertion sequence.

Research on direction-giving practices in English has shown that there might be a common pattern of “route descriptions” in direction-giving sequences: (i) the establishment of the joint task; (ii) identification of labels and positions of target landmarks (i.e., directional referents proposed by Psathas in 1991) as well as movement (i.e., operations proposed by Psathas in 1991) between landmarks; and (iii) restatement/review of directions (optional) at the end of direction-giving sequences. This pattern will be further explored in relation to topic organization in data analysis in Chapter 4.

In an influential study, Psathas (1991: 214) notes that the direction-giving interaction is “occasioned, sequentially organized and responsive to the particulars of the parties” (their knowledge, assumed knowledge, displayed understanding, etc.). It is therefore context sensitive. However, as a structure, it can be shown to have an organization that is “recurrent, orderly and patterned with organized modes of suspension and restorability and with

⁹ Operations can be defined as the production of a series of steps or procedures which are presented as implying or describing movement and which connect places and points along the route being constructed (Psathas 1991: 199), performed by such verbs as “go down” (*wangxia zou*), “go” (*zou*), “turn” (*zhuan*), “cross” (*chuanguo*), “get to” (*daoda*), amongst others.

recognizable beginnings and endings” (Psathas 1991: 214). It is therefore context free.

The structure of direction-giving sequences can be found across a number of direction sets and direction givers/recipients (i.e., Information Givers/Followers in this project). On the basis of the observations of direction-giving interactive data, below are the general characteristics of directions sets summarized by Psathas (1991: 198):

- (i) They are sequentially organized;
- (ii) They are undertaken in response to a request initiated by the recipient (direction-asker) or solicited by the direction-giver;
- (iii) They are designed for a recipient (direction-asker);
- (iv) They consist of a next turn(s) in which the set of directions is begun; and of
- (v) next turn(s) in which the recipient-asker co-participates as an active recipient with displays of understanding, acceptance, or requests for elaboration, repetition, clarification, etc., which are a coordinate part of the set of directions and not new topics; and of
- (vi) a next turn in which the direction-giver proposes “arrival” at the destination; and of
- (vii) a marked ending of the set with such possible moves to end as
 - an acknowledgement/acceptance/understanding display by the recipient and a move to a next topic or a closing, or
 - a request for confirmation by the direction-giver and a confirmation/ acknowledgement/appreciation by the recipient and a move to next topic or to a closing.

As a particular social action, giving and receiving directions or information in conversation has been shown to be a sequentially and socially organized phenomenon. These properties, (v) and (vii) in particular, can be further evidenced by the production of reactive tokens to display overt reciprocity in order to maintain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement in longer conversational sequences.

Directions or instructions are shown to be co-constructed. Recipients are actively involved in listening, showing understanding and alignment, and giving acknowledgement to the co-participants, amongst others. It is evident that opportunities are continually provided by direction givers for recipients to produce indications of understanding or non-understanding, requests for clarifications, and hence ample opportunities are created to produce reactive tokens. Once again, direction-giving sequences can be seen as a natural environment to investigate the employment of reactive tokens in human interaction. In this thesis, I will focus on a display of overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens in direction-giving sequences in Mandarin conversation.

Before moving on to a sequential analysis of reactive tokens in longer sequences, I will introduce some preliminary concepts in Mandarin conversation in the next section.

3.4 Some preliminary concepts

This section will present some preliminary concepts relevant to natural conversation in general and Mandarin conversation in particular. The concepts introduced here, such as turn constructional units (TCUs), transition relevance places (TRPs), complex transition relevance

places (CTRP), and syntactic, intonational and pragmatic completion, are important to understand the linguistic and sequential data analysis in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Previous research in interactional linguistics has shown that reactive tokens are closely related to turn-taking strategies and turn management (e.g., Yngve 1970; O’Keefe and Adolphs 2007). To illustrate, in an early study of recipient utterances, the definition of ‘backchannel’ is proposed in relation to the activity of “not relinquishing a turn” (Yngve 1970). Similarly, backchannels are described as linguistic non-floor-holding devices that a recipient may use to respond to the floor-holding message in conversation (O’Keefe and Adolphs 2007). In a study of turn taking in English conversation, two types of utterance are identified: speaking turns and backchannel items (Oreström 1983: 23-24). Speaking turns contribute to ongoing conversation by offering new information and topic expansion in terms of content. On the other hand, backchannel items signal continued attention, alignment, interest, stance and affiliation from recipients. Thus, reactive tokens cannot be considered to be a speaking turn in a strict sense, a view which is adopted in this study.

Further, local positionings of reactive tokens in terms of the turn design of the immediately foregoing talk seem to be closely related to their functions in ongoing talk. For instance, reactive tokens may serve to display understanding or convergence, when they are articulated at points where floor-holding speakers reach potential transition relevance places (TRPs). On the other hand, reactive tokens may serve as continuers (Schegloff 1982: 80), when they are produced at points where floor-holding speakers have not reached possible TRPs, thus indicating that recipients expect primary speakers to resume speaking. Therefore, a better understanding of reactive tokens cannot neglect their local placements relating to turn

design in conversation.

As noted above, notions of the transition relevance place (TRP), and with it turn constructional units (TCUs) are crucial to an understanding of the conversational actions accomplished by reactive tokens. Other relevant notions are those of intonational completion, syntactic completion and pragmatic completion, which are essential components of the concept of Complex Transition Relevance Places (CTRPs). The following will focus on TCUs and CTRPs.

3.4.1 Turn constructional unit in Mandarin conversation

The turn constructional unit (TCU) is an important concept in understanding TRPs. From a linguistic perspective, TCUs can be defined in terms of different types of syntactic unit used:

Unit types for English include sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions. Instances of the unit-types so usable allow a projection of the unit-type under way, and what, roughly, it will take for an instance of that unit-type to be completed. Unit-types lacking the feature of projectability may not be usable in the same way. (Sacks et al. 1974: 702)

Sacks et al. suggest that syntax has a strong link with the TCU. A TCU can be realized in the form of linguistic units at different syntactic levels. As Schegloff (1996a: 56) further notes, characteristics of grammar and organization of turns, in which TCUs are located, are closely related. At the same time, the turn containing TCU(s) can also be described in terms

of possible action(s) at every possible completion of a TCU (Schegloff 1996a: 58). Further, at a more comprehensive level, prosody, syntax, semantics and conversational practices all contribute to constitution, identification and projection of a TCU (Selting 2000). In addition to a linguistic unit, a TCU is closely related to turn-taking management (Selting 2005).

As discussed earlier, one important approach to defining the notion of the TCU is based on its syntactic feature (Sacks et al. 1974). For instance, a TCU can be a sentence, a clause, a phrase and a lexical item in talk-in-interaction. Fragments 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 below illustrate the features of TCUs at different syntactic levels with the empirical evidence from Mandarin map task conversation.

Fragment 3.3, from Turn 34, Group 1, 2006

34 → J: 我 听 不 懂。

wo ting bu dong

1SG hear NEG understand

“I cannot understand what you mean.”

This is a single-TCU turn (Turn 34), composed of one syntactically complete sentence: a negatively formulated assertion. J states explicitly that she has some difficulty in understanding the prior speaker’s instructions, thus treating the immediately prior talk as insufficient and problematic. In this instance, the TCU is a syntactically complete sentence.

Fragment 3.4, from Turn 100 and 101, Group 8, 2005

100 F: [[mm

101 → G: [[因为 也 要 走 这 个 ‘大教堂的 废墟’ 的 右面。

yinwei ye yao zou zhe ge dajiaotangde feixu de youmian

because too MV walk this CLF Ruined:Missionary MM right

“Because (you) also have to walk (from) the right of the ‘Ruined Missionary’.”

This fragment shows that Turn 101 is a single-TCU turn consisting of an adverbial clause of reason. In this instance, the TCU is a clause.

Fragment 3.5, from Turn 149 to 152, Group 1, 2006

149 X: [[对。

dui

right

“Right.”

150 J: [[哪 个 岩？ 哪 个 崩？

na ge yan na ge beng

which CLF rock which CLF collapse

“(How can I write the Chinese character for) *yan* and *beng*?”

151 → X: 岩石 的 岩。

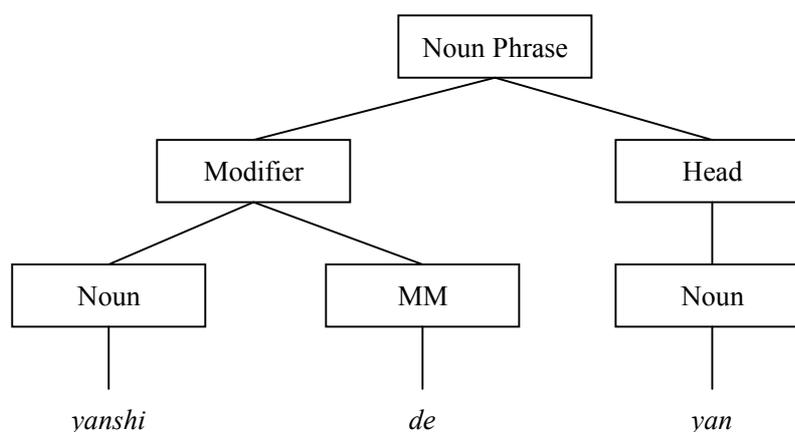
yanshi de yan

rock:stone MM rock

“*Yan* is the first character of the expression *yanshi*.”

152 J: Hu huh.

This fragment shows that the noun phrase *yanshi de yan* (Turn 151) is a TCU. Specifically, the noun phrase contains a typical “Modifier + Head” construction, as can be illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.



“*Yan* is the first character of the expression *yanshi*.”

Figure 3. 3 “Modifier + Head” construction of a noun phrase as a TCU

Sequentially, the TCU (Turn 151) in the form of the noun phrase is designed as the second pair part of a question/answer sequence in response to the question word question (Turn 150). ‘*Uh huh*’ (Turn 152) serves as the third turn confirmation, and it is not considered as a reactive token in this study (see Chapter 4). In this instance, the TCU is a noun phrase.

Fragment 3.6, from Turn 24, Group 1, 2006

24 → J: 所以,

suoyi

so

“So”

This fragment shows that a single lexical item *suoyi* “so” (Turn 24) can constitute a TCU in its own right in a single-TCU turn. As one form of connectives in Mandarin Chinese, *suoyi* ‘so’ is designed to project the follow-up review or summary of the talk-so-far. On occasion, it can serve to prompt more elaboration from the prior speaker (Lerner 2004a). In this instance, the TCU is a lexical item. Thus far, sentences, clauses, phrases and lexical items have been shown to constitute TCUs in Mandarin conversation.

3.4.2 Complex transition relevance places

The above discussion shows that turns at talk are composed of TCUs: single words, phrases, clauses, and sentences of variable length, and turn taking systems operate across these units. At the end of each TCU is a potential transition relevance place (TRP), a point at which speaker changes¹⁰ may occur. A TRP can be described as a place where a current speaker might come to a completion (Lerner 1989), but a speaker change does not necessarily occur at every point of syntactic completion.

The notion of complex transition relevance places (CTRPs) at ends of turns is a key concept in the analysis of placements of reactive tokens in terms of linguistic resources. CTRPs are defined as places that “intonation and pragmatic completion points select from among the syntactic completion points” (Ford and Thompson 1996: 154). The following

¹⁰ A speaker change can occur at any point, where another speaker takes a recognizable turn by producing a content-rich turn or a reactive token (Clancy et al. 1996: 359).

fragments illustrate notions of syntactic completion, intonational completion and pragmatic completion respectively, as they are essential constituents in defining CTRPs.

- **The notion of syntactic completion**

Recipients may produce a reactive token at a point of potential syntactic completion, but they may also articulate a reactive token in the midst of constructing a syntactically complete unit. Syntactic/grammatical completion¹¹ is defined as “an utterance being interpretable in its sequential context as a complete clause, i.e., with an overt or directly recoverable predicate but without considering intonation” (Clancy et al. 1996: 366).

According to Li and Thompson (1981: 26), no basic word order can be established in Mandarin Chinese. They suggest that Mandarin may be undergoing a change from an SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) to an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) word order. As Clancy et al. (1996) note, pragmatic particles, such as *la* (啦), *le* (了), and *ne* (呢), can follow a clause, a noun phrase and a variety of other grammatical elements. Thus, syntactical completion is judged by considering clauses or phrases with or without particles, as illustrated in Fragment 3.7 below.

Fragment 3.7, from Clancy et al. 1996: 367

A: .. 你 不要 到 澳门/ 去/ 啦。 /

ni buyao dao aomen qu la

2SG NEG to Macao go PRT

“Do not go to Macao.”

¹¹ Syntactic completions are marked by slashes (/) in Fragments 3.7.

It is worthwhile to note that syntactic completion is calculated incrementally in terms of its relationship with a previous predicate, which is recoverable. In the data, clauses or phrases with pragmatic particles are not very common. Further, Tao (1996: 177) identifies the following speech units in terms of grammatical structures: (i) NP (i.e., a nominal phrase); (ii) VE (i.e., a verb with or without its arguments and peripherals such as an adverb and a prepositional phrase); and (iii) XV (i.e., an abstraction of various types of argument-verb combination). As will be seen, these above-described units can be found in the data in succeeding chapters. It is noteworthy that syntactic completion does not necessarily co-occur with intonational or interactional completion, which will be discussed below.

- **The notion of intonational completion**

The notion of intonational completion is relevant in this study because Information Followers in Mandarin map task conversations may produce a reactive token at a point of potential intonational completion. The intonational completion is defined with respect to intonation unit¹² (e.g., Ford and Thompson 1996; Clancy et al 1996).

Mandarin Chinese is a tone language, in which every syllable has its underlying lexical tone. The tone system (Chao 1930) consists of four lexical tones and one neutral tone, as illustrated in Table 3.2 below.

¹² The 'intonation unit' is defined as a sequence of words combined under a single, coherent intonation contour, usually preceded by a pause (Du Bois et al 1993). For the same phenomenon, there are a variety of terms, such as the 'tone group' by Halliday (1967), the 'tone unit' by Brazil (1985), the 'intonation group' by Cruttenden (1986) and the 'intonational phrase' by Pierrehumbert (1980).

Table 3.2 The tone system of Mandarin Chinese

Tone	Description	Numerical Value	Examples
1	High level	55	妈 <i>mā</i> 'mother'
2	High rising	35	麻 <i>má</i> 'hemp'
3	Falling-rising	214	马 <i>mǎ</i> 'horse'
4	High falling	51	骂 <i>mà</i> 'scold'
5	Unspecified	Variable	吗 <i>ma</i> QP

As can be seen in Table 3.2, each syllable has its own underlying pitch value. Thus, it is interesting to investigate interplay between utterance intonation and lexical tone of a final syllable. Most research on the interconnection between the utterance-final lexical tone and utterance intonation has been based on prepared materials recorded in language laboratories. The utterance intonation has an impact on the realization of the utterance-final lexical tone, but it seems that the lexical tone tends to resist the effect of the utterance intonation to some extent (e.g., Shen 1990; Tao 1996).

It is noteworthy that the intonation indicating finality in Mandarin Chinese can be a fall, a rise or a level due to the interplay between lexical tone of an utterance-final syllable and surface utterance intonation¹³. For instance, Tao (1996) notes that there is final intonation with a rising ending and that a *ma*-question might end in a final fall in his Mandarin conversational data. In addition to a terminal rise and a final fall, a level tone is also found to emerge as a final intonation in the data, as illustrated in Fragment 3.8 below.

¹³ Cf. The description and analysis of the interplay between the underlying lexical tone of the final syllable and the surface utterance intonation can be found in Xu (2008) "The Prosody of Interrogatives at Transition-relevance Places in Mandarin Chinese Conversation".

Fragment 3.8, from Turns 149 and 150, Group 1, 2006

149 → X: 叫做 ‘岩崩’。 -- Pre-token TCU (First saying)

jiaozuo yanbeng

call rockfalls

“(It) is labelled ‘Rockfalls’.”

(0.1)

150 J: ‘岩崩’。 -- RT (Repeat)

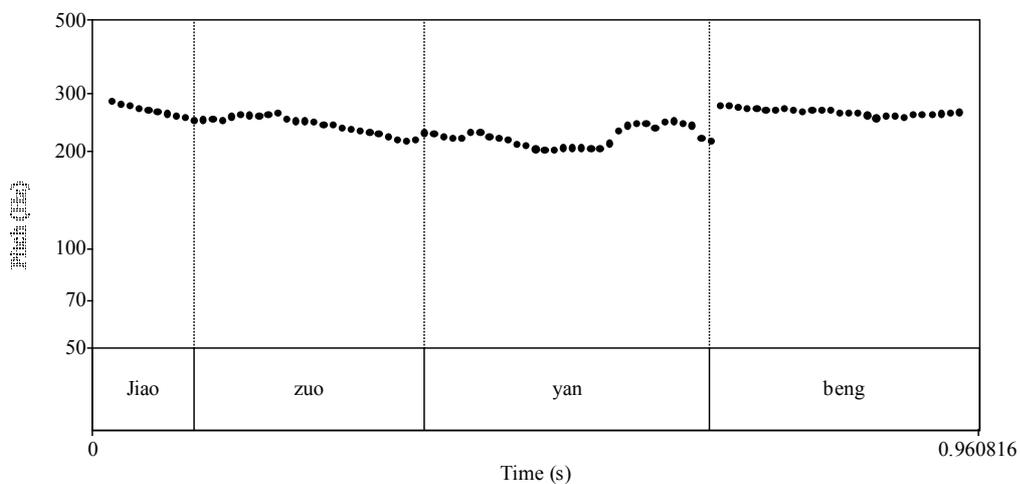
yanbeng

rockfalls

“Rockfalls.”

Speaker J repeats the label of the landmark as a reactive token in second position.

Graph 3.1 below shows that a level tone can also be used as a final intonation in Mandarin conversation.



Graph 3.1 A terminal level as the intonational completion

The frequency analysis shows that the pre-token TCU *Jiaozuo yanbeng* “It is labelled ‘Rockfalls’” has a terminal level tone as the intonational completion. The level intonation is evident in the figure: the F_0 fluctuates between 258 to 264 Hertz over the last syllable *beng*¹⁴ (Tone 1, a level), with a gap of 6 Hertz between the highest and lowest pitch. The features of this intonation unit are clear: the final syllable seems to be lengthened, before a pause of 0.1 second. Thus, a level tone can also be considered as one type of pitch pattern for intonational completion in Mandarin conversation. Similarly, Szczepek Reed (2004) notes that a level can be one type of pitch pattern at ends of turns in English. In sum, three different pitch configurations of intonational completion have been identified in Mandarin Chinese: a rise, a fall (Tao 1996) and a level.

- **The notion of pragmatic completion**

On occasion, a reactive token may emerge at a point of potential pragmatic completion. It is defined as “an utterance with a final intonation contour being interpretable as a complete conversational action within its sequential context” (Ford and Thompson 1996: 150). Fragment 3.9 below illustrates the notion of pragmatic completion in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 3.9, from Turns 105 and 106, Group 1, 2006

105 X: 那么, ‘耕地’ 的 位置 是 在
 name gendi de weizhi shi zai
 so farmed:land MM location COP in

“So, ‘Farmed Land’ is located

¹⁴ I define a gap of less than 10 (including 10) Hertz in pitch range as a level in this project.

→ 这 个 双 实线 的 右边。 -- Pre-token TCU

zhe ge shuang shixian de youbian

this CLF double solid:lines MM right:side

on the right side of the double solid lines,”

(0.4)

106 J: 好 的。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

hao de

good MM

“Good.”

Speaker X makes an assertion regarding the location of the landmark labelled *gendi* “Farmed Land” in relation to the double solid lines (Turn 105). In response to this assertion, J produces a reactive expression *haode* ‘good’ as an acknowledgement token to display “heard-and-understood” after a gap of 0.4 seconds. Thus, X’s descriptor is treated as adequate and unproblematic, indicating no needs for repair. The utterance (Turn 105) can therefore be seen as a point of pragmatic completion.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed some relevant considerations of data collection through the map task and outlined methodological aspects of conversation analysis. Direction-giving sequences in map task conversations provide ample materials to examine the use of reactive tokens as a routine practice in longer sequences in human interaction. The study of reactive

tokens is primarily inspired by conversation analysis, along with a consideration of a quantitative approach within conversation analysis. Finally, I have discussed two sequences, adjacency pairs and direction-giving sequences, and introduced some preliminary concepts with illustrations from Mandarin map task conversations.

The next chapter will provide my own working definition of a reactive token and my means of categorizing reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. In addition, I illustrate the way in which Mandarin participants themselves produce and interpret reactive tokens as “seconds” to accomplish responding actions and activities in two different contexts: agreement- and disagreement-relevant contexts.

4 A Sequential Analysis of Reactive Tokens

Through sequential analysis, this chapter aims to provide an alternative approach to understanding the production of a variety of reactive tokens in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation. First of all, I will propose a working definition of reactive tokens. Then I will consider why Clancy et al.'s categorization of reactive tokens is not adequate to cover the phenomena emerging from the data. I will also provide brief examples of reactive tokens that do not fit into their categorization. On the basis of this discussion, I hope to propose my own means of categorizing reactive tokens. This will be based on previous studies carried out in English and Mandarin conversation (see Chapter 2) and observations deriving from the data.

Later on, the chapter will also provide a qualitative study of reactive tokens in Mandarin map task conversations. This is an area where little work on a sequential analysis of reactive tokens has been carried out in Mandarin conversation. I hope to show that the use of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation shares a high degree of similarity with that in English conversation in the literature (i.e., context-free). Finally, I provide a summary of the conversational actions implemented through reactive tokens in map task conversations. The main argument in this chapter is that participants themselves produce and interpret a diversity of reactive tokens to maintain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

4.1 The working definition and categorization of reactive tokens

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are two main constraints in Clancy et al.'s (1996) definition of reactive tokens: (i) a reactive token is produced by recipients; and (ii) a reactive token is articulated in the process of the floor-holding speaker's continued speakership. These two constraints are not adequate to characterize all the reactive tokens emerging from the data. One obvious reason is that reactive tokens are so variable in their linguistic forms, and so flexible in their conversational functions as well as their sequential placements in the data. Examples will be illustrated in the discussion of my own definition below.

Building on previous research on reactive tokens in English and Mandarin conversation (see Chapter 2) and my observation of the data, I have identified six constraints for reactive tokens. These formal characteristics of reactive tokens aim to define the object of study. Below is my own working definition of reactive tokens.

- (i) A reactive token is a short utterance produced by an interlocutor who is playing the role of a recipient during another interlocutor's speaking turn within a longer sequence;
- (ii) It stands alone; that is, it does not preface a full turn;
- (iii) It responds directly to the immediately prior speaking turn;
- (iv) It can be an answer to a yes/no question or a tag question in question/answer adjacency pairs;
- (v) It is not in itself a speaking turn.
- (vi) It is sequentially in second position, rather than in first or third position.

The six constraints described above serve to delimit the range of reactive tokens investigated for this study. Constraint 1 can rule out the phenomenon of a reactive token produced by a floor-holding speaker rather than a recipient. Fragment 4.1 below illustrates that tokens produced by the floor-holding speaker at the beginning of a speaking turn are not treated as reactive tokens.

Fragment 4.1, from Turns 163, 164 and 165, Group 2, 2006

163 K: 9 个 厘米 , uh 北。
 jiu ge limi uh bei
 nine CLF centimeters uh north

“Nine centimeters, uh, north.”

164 X: 朝 , 朝 北 走。
 chao chao bei zou
 toward toward north walk

“Toward, walk toward the north.”

165 → K: uh, 对, uh: uh, 然后 , 你 , 看到 没 有 ?
 uh dui uh: uh ranhou ni kandao mei you
 uh right uh uh subsequently 2SG see NEG have

“Uh, right, uh: uh, subsequently, have you seen (it)?”

Speaker K (the Instruction Giver) employs a combination of ‘uh’ and *dui* ‘right’, in

conjunction with hesitation sounds ‘*uh*’ at the outset of his speaking turn (Turn 165). Then, a yes/no question is produced to solicit overt reciprocity. In terms of Clancy et al.’s (1996) typology, K deploys a resumptive opener ‘*uh*’ to preface a fuller turn. Unfortunately, such tokens followed by a fuller turn will not be examined in this study.

Constraint 2 can rule out the phenomenon of hesitation signals in the midst of speaking turns. Fragment 4.2 below illustrates that tokens produced in the middle of a speaking turn are not treated as reactive tokens.

Fragment 4.2, from Turns 219 and 220, Group 2, 2006

219 →K: 然后, **uh**, 你 要 到, **uh**:

ranhou uh ni yao dao uh

subsequently uh 2SG MV reach uh

“Subsequently, eh, you have to reach, uh:

北方 去, **uh**, 差不多, 7, 8 厘米。

beifang qu uh chabuduo qi ba limi

north go uh almost seven eight centimeters

Go to the north, uh, almost, seven or eight centimeters.”

220 X: mhm.

Apparently, K’s turn (Turn 219) is rather fragmentary, containing several hesitation signals or filled pauses. Three ‘*uh*’s in the midst of K’s turn can be understood as hesitation signals rather than three reactive tokens. Once again, this phenomenon is excluded from this

study by my definition.

On occasion, a primary speaker delivers some vocalizations in the pursuit of responses from a recipient at the end of a turn. They are called “post-completion” vocalizations (Ward and Tsukajara 2000: 1179) and are not treated as reactive tokens in this project, as illustrated in Fragment 4.3 below.

Fragment 4.3, from Turns 1 and 2, Group 4, 2006

1 → X: 现在 你 在 ‘出发点’。 **uh**

xianzai ni zai chufadian

now 2SG be:in starting:point

“Now, you are at the ‘Starting Point’. Uh”

2 L: mh, 对。

dui

right

“Mh, right.”

At the outset of the conversation, Speaker X produces ‘uh’ after she reaches the point of possible utterance termination. That is, ‘uh’ is located at the post-completion point of Turn 1. Thus, ‘uh’ can be seen as a device deployed to elicit response from a recipient, similar to the function of a tag question at the CTRP.

Constraint 3 can rule out the phenomenon of the tokens produced by one participant in response to the other speaker’s production of a reactive token, also known as

“back-backchannel” (Iwasaki, 1997). In other words, I focus on the reactive tokens in response to a speaking turn, which has propositional content in its own right. Fragment 4.4 below illustrates the use of back-backchannels in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 4.4, from Turns 135 to 140, Group 1, 2006

135 X: 就 是 , ‘裂谷’ 就 是 在 ‘车轮’ 的 右边,
 jiu shi liegu jiu shi zai chelun de youbian
 just COP rift:valley just COP in wagon:wheels MM right:side
 “That is, ‘Rift Valley’ is just on the right of ‘Wagon Wheel’,
 4 厘米。
 si limi
 four centimeters
 four centimeters.”

136 J: 这样子 , 非常 边上。
 zheyangzi feichang bianshang
 so very verge
 “So, (it is placed on the) verge.”

137 X: a:

138 J: 非常 边上。 -- Pre-token TCU
 feichang bianshang
 very verge
 “(It is placed on the) verge.”

139 X: 对 , 对 , 对 , 对。 -- RTs (Reactive expressions)

dui dui dui dui

right right right right

“Right, right, right, right.”

140 →J: ah, 行。 -- Third-turn confirmation

xing

all right

“Ah, (it is) all right.”

Speaker X produces reactive tokens (Turn 139): a succession of *dui* ‘right’ in response to J’s repeat of the position of the landmark labelled *liegu* ‘Rift Valley’. The landmark *liegu* is concerned with another landmark labelled *chelun* ‘Wagon Wheels’ (Turn 135). Subsequently, J produces a backchannel *ah* in conjunction with another token *xing* ‘all right’ (Turn 140) in response to X’s multiple *dui*. In this case, I do not consider *ah* in conjunction with *xing* as a reactive token. The main reason is that *ah xing* is not produced in response to the immediately prior speaking turn with propositional content. To iterate, I do not investigate such a token if it is produced in response to another reactive token.

In Constraint 4, following Gardner (2001), I treat the phenomenon of an answer to a yes/no question in a question/answer adjacency pair as a reactive token. Fragment 4.5 below illustrates that tokens in response to yes/no questions are also treated as reactive tokens in this study.

Fragment 4.5, from Turns 56 and 57, Group 2, 2004

56 D: 另 一 个 是 不 是 在 ‘ 东 湖 ’ 的 左 边? -- Pre-token TCU

ling yi ge shi bu shi zai donghu de zuobian

other one CLF COP NEG COP in east:lake MM left:side

“Is the other on the left of the landmark labelled ‘East Lake’?”

57 → C: 是。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

shi

COP

“Yes.”

Speaker B produces the affirmative particle *shi* ‘yes’ (Turn 57) in response to D’s yes/no question relating to the landmark labelled “East Lake”. This is a typical question/answer adjacency pair, and the linguistic item *shi* is used as the second pair part in such a sequence. Thus, following Gardner (2001), I also consider the linguistic items such as *shi* ‘yes’ or ‘*mhm*’ in response to a yes/no question for information inquiry as reactive tokens.

By the same token, *shi* ‘yes’ in response to a tag question is treated as one variation of a reactive token. One possible reason is that the tag question is deployed to elicit a response from a recipient to secure mutual understanding of the immediately prior talk. The tag question can be considered as one strategy for a floor-holding speaker to check understanding and seek confirmation from a recipient. Fragment 4.6 below illustrates that the token in response to a tag question is considered as a reactive token in this study.

Fragment 4.6, from Turns 46 and 47, Group 7, 2004

46 D: 你 说 你 那 , 路线 图 上 面 有 两 个 ‘ 耕 地 ’ 。

ni shuo ni na luxiantu shangmian you liang ge gendi

2SG say 2SG that route above have two CLF farmed:land

“You said that you, that, have two landmarks labelled ‘Farmed Land’ on the route,

是 不 是 ? -- Pre-token TCU

shi bu shi

COP NEG COP

don’t you?

47→ A: 对¹⁵。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

dui

right

“Right.”

This fragment shows that Turn 46 contains two TCUs. The first TCU is an assertion, which is concerned with the number of the landmarks in an information mismatch sequence: D has one landmark labelled *gendi* “Farmed Land”, whereas A has two landmarks with the same label. The second TCU is a tag question framed in the syntactic structure of COP + NEG + COP: *shi bu shi* ‘don’t you?’ In response to the tag question, A produces a reactive expression (i.e., one type of reactive token in this study) *dui* ‘right’ (Turn 47) as a second, which serves as an acknowledgement token in relation to the salient information in D’s talk.

¹⁵ The reply to the tag question in Mandarin Chinese is flexible. A does not necessarily have to answer the tag question with *shi* ‘yes’, but she can deploy a wide array of options to the tag question, such as *mhm*, or *dui* ‘right’ in this instance. Put simply, the reply does not have to agree with the auxiliary verb, as is the case for English tag questions.

With regard to Constraint 5, I take Oreström's (1983) view that a backchannel item is different from a speaking turn in that a producer of a reactive token does not intend to claim the floor to deliver a fuller turn. Rather, the recipient passes on the opportunity to do so by providing a minimal response.

Constraint 6 can rule out instances of confirmation sequentially in third position, as illustrated in Fragment 4.7 below.

Fragment 4.7, from Turns 98 to 100, Group 1, 2006

98 J: =没 有。 所以， 右 手 边 有 个 ‘ 耕地 ’。 -- Pre-token TCU

mei you suoyi you shou bian you ge gendi

NEG have so right hand side have CLF farmed:land

“No. so, (I) have the landmark labelled ‘Farmed Land’ on the right.”

99 X: 对， 对。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

dui dui

right right

“Right, right.”

100 → J: 好 的。 -- Third turn confirmation

hao de

good MM

“Good.”

In this three-part sequence (ABA pattern), both *dui dui* ‘right, right’ (Turn 99) and *haode*

‘good’ (Turn 100) can be assumed as reactive expressions, if their sequential positionings are not taken into account. Specifically, *dui dui* (Turn 99) delivered by the recipient is sequentially in second position in response (acknowledgement) to informings (Turn 98). This is one type of reactive token I will focus on in this project. However, *haode* (Turn 100) functions as confirmation sequentially in third position. As such, it is ruled out from my collection.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Clancy et al. (1996) categorize reactive tokens into five types: (i) backchannels, (ii) reactive expression, (iii) resumptive openers, (iv) repetitions, and (v) collaboration finishes. Unfortunately, their typology of reactive tokens is not sufficient to cover all the phenomena of the recipients’ production as “seconds” emerging in the data used for this study. Two important aspects will justify the above observation. In the first instance, Fragment 4.8 below illustrates that a recipient may produce a succession of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 4.8, from Turns 327 to 328, Group 4, 2006

327 X: uh, 下边 过去 之后 ,

xiabian guoqu zhihou

bottom pass after

“Uh, after passing its bottom,

uh, 你 再 向, 开始 向 西南 方向 走。

ni zai xiang kaishi xiang xinan fangxiang zou

2SG again toward start toward southwest directions walk

uh, again, you, toward, start to walk toward the southwest.”

328 → L: **ah**, **西南**。

xinan

southwest

“Ah, southwest.”

This is one of the recurrent phenomena in the data: the backchannel *ah* in conjunction with the repeat *xinan* (Turn 328). Unfortunately, Clancy et al.’s typology of reactive tokens does not contain such a common phenomenon in the data. When these two token types co-occur as one backchannel item (Oreström, 1983: 23) in Figure 4.1 below, what is the proper term for this linguistic phenomenon in conversation?

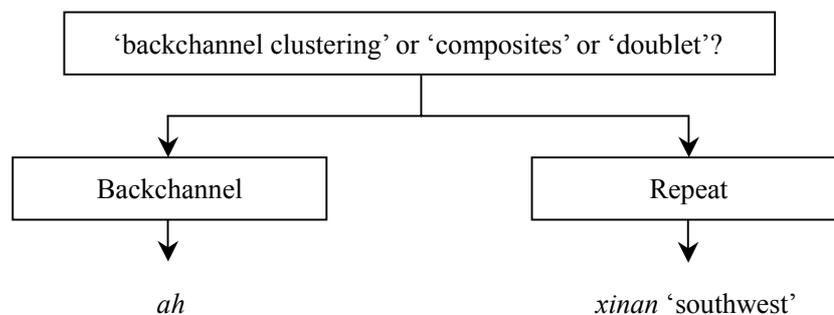


Figure 4.1 Two token types as a recipient response

Tao and Thompson (1991: 218-219) propose the term “backchannel clustering”, which refers to a repetition of the same token or a combination of diverse backchannel tokens. Tottie (1991) defines it as a “complex backchannel”, such as ‘*yeah*’ in conjunction with ‘*okay*’. In subsequent studies, McCarthy (2003: 54-55) employs the term “doublets” or “triplets”,

referring to the choice of ‘*great*’, ‘*lovely*’ and ‘*terrific*’ used in different combinations or a repetition of the same token. Schegloff (2007: 127) provides the term “composites” for this phenomenon. In this study, I adopt Schegloff’s term (i.e., composites) to refer to the use of a combination of various token types, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 above. The definition and illustration of a composite can be found in Section 4.2.3.

Another problem of Clancy et al.’s typology is the type of resumptive opener, which refers to the vocalic forms, such as ‘*mmhmm*’, ‘*uh*’, ‘*mm*’ and “*ou*”, followed by a full speaking turn. In the data, I notice that both backchannels (i.e., vocalizations) and reactive expressions (i.e., lexical items) can preface a fuller turn. The question is whether the reactive expression in Fragment 4.9 below can be categorized as a reactive expression or a resumptive opener.

Fragment 4.9, from Turns 47 and 48, Group 3, 2006

47 L: 有 一 种 ‘桥’。

you yi zhong qiao

have one CLF bridge

“(I) have one landmark labelled ‘Bridge’.”

48 → K: oh, 对, 一 个 ‘线桥’。

oh dui yi ge xianqiao

oh right one CLF rope:bridge

“Oh, right, one landmark labelled ‘Rope Bridge’.”

According to Clancy et al.'s (1996) typology of reactive tokens, 'oh' (Turn 48) can be seen as a resumptive opener because it is a vocalic form followed by a full turn in the light of its definition. However, between the resumptive opener and the full turn, there is a Mandarin reactive expression *dui* 'right' (Turn 48). The problem is whether *dui* 'right' can be considered as a reactive expression or a resumptive opener in this local context. Previous research has shown that a reactive expression such as *dui* has two turn shapes. First, it can stand alone as a backchannel item. Second, it can be followed by a full turn and becomes one component of a speaking turn. Thus, this phenomenon challenges Clancy et al.'s (1996) classification of reactive tokens. In this study, this type of resumptive opener (i.e., backchannels followed by a fuller turn) is ignored. Backchannels and reactive expressions are investigated in their own right. To repeat, I am only interested in a reactive token in a freestanding format as a "second", which does not preface a full turn at all.

Nevertheless, the categorization of reactive tokens in the data has some potential problems. To illustrate, there are many instances of laughter produced by a recipient in response to the floor-holding speaker's informings or tellings. The question is whether I should categorize laughter tokens as one type of backchannel (i.e., one form of vocalization) or treat them as one distinct type (Jefferson 1984a) in their own right. Clancy et al.'s (1996) classifications of reactive tokens do not mention the phenomenon of laughter. In addition, I encounter some instances of emotional expressions such as 'ou'/'ao' (similar to English 'oh') and *a::* in Mandarin Chinese. Another question is whether I should treat them as surprise tokens (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006) or backchannels. For the purposes of the present study, surprise tokens are considered as one variation of backchannels, because their

frequency is limited in the data. However, laughter tokens are treated as a type of their own, because they seem to be essential to differentiating the production and behaviour between native and non-native speakers as recipients in dealing with information mismatches in disagreement-relevant environments (see Chapter 6).

To summarize, in this study, I am not interested in hesitation signals deployed as cues for holding floor or emerging as a result of difficulty in utterance formulation, tokens prefacing a fuller turn, nor “post-completion” vocalizations in the pursuit of responses from a recipient. However, I am interested in six types of reactive token: reactive expressions, backchannels, composites, repetitions, collaborative productions, and laughter tokens, on the basis of the observations of Mandarin map task conversations.

Illustrations of the way in which each category of a reactive token is produced and interpreted by participants themselves can be found in the next section. I attempt to integrate sequential analysis into linguistic data analysis of each type of reactive token by Mandarin participants in two different contexts: agreement- and disagreement-relevant environments. As will be seen below, every fragment will be analysed from at least three aspects: (i) the turn and sequence organization; (ii) the recipient’s knowledge states; and (iii) the organization of topics. Provided that reactive tokens display prominent syntactic and prosodic features, these features will be further explored.

4.2 A sequential analysis of reactive tokens in agreement-relevant contexts

This section illustrates the way in which Mandarin speakers employ six types of reactive token to accomplish a range of responding actions and activities in agreement-relevant environments. In such contexts, the Information Giver and the Information Follower have

identical forms, labels and positions of the landmarks on their maps. This amounts to approximately 80 per cent of all the relevant information in each map task conversation.

It is interesting to note that the direction-giving sequence involving route construction can only be restored once the Giver and Follower have established a common ground with respect to some key issues in relation to the relevant landmarks in a location descriptor: (i) What is the label for the current landmark? (ii) Where is the current landmark located? (iii) What is the label for the subsequent landmark? (iv) Where is the subsequent landmark located? After the participants have achieved intersubjective understandings regarding the above four questions, they will concentrate on the following question: (v) How to move from the landmark of the moment to the subsequent one in relation to the route construction?

By integrating sequential analysis into linguistic data analysis, I would like to argue that reactive tokens play an important role in building and sustaining intersubjective understanding and securing recipient engagement between co-participants. More importantly, reactive tokens serve as interactional resources to allow participants to move in and out of a number of different subtasks within a direction-giving sequence. Below, a sequential analysis of representative reactive tokens of each type will show the prominent role of reactive tokens in three aspects:

- (1) Reactive tokens serve as a transitional device and allow recipients to accomplish responding actions retrospectively (i.e., acknowledgement tokens) and prospectively (i.e., continuers). Typical examples are backchannels and reactive expressions.
- (2) Reactive tokens serve as an important resource and allow participants to construct and maintain mutual understanding at the perceptual level in longer conversational sequences.

Typical examples are backchannels, reactive expressions and composites.

(3) Reactive tokens serve as an important resource and allow participants to create and secure recipient engagement at the level of interpersonal relationships in longer conversational sequences. Typical examples are repeats, collaborative productions and laughter tokens.

4.2.1 Backchannels

For the purposes of this study, backchannels are defined as vocalizations, which are semantically empty non-lexical forms, serving as continuers and acknowledgement tokens. They can display understanding, interest, attention, agreement, convergence and alignment to a floor-holding speaker's immediately prior talk. Considering the linguistic forms of backchannels, Gardner (2001: 16) points out that there exists a degree of inconsistency regarding the graphological representation of the non-lexicalised vocalizations in the literature, such as: (i) '*Mm*', '*M*', '*Hmm*', and '*Umm*'; (ii) '*Mm hm*', '*Mhm*', '*Mmhmm*' and '*Um hmm*'; and (iii) '*Uh huh*', '*Uh-huh*' and '*Unh-hunh*'. However, they represent the actual articulation and display recipients' linguistic creativity in spontaneous talk and accomplish two major functions: acknowledgement tokens and continuers.

- **'*mmhmm*': acknowledgement tokens or continuers**

One common form of backchannel is '*mmhmm*' ('*mm*' as the shortened form), which is the most frequently employed by co-participants in the data to secure mutual understanding. Fragment 4.10 below illustrates how Mandarin participants employ backchannels as "seconds" to display an awareness of being a recipient.

Fragment 4.10, from Turns 23 to 28, Group 1, 2006

23 X: 然后， 到 了 这 个 ‘水井’ 以后，

ranhou dao le zhe ge shuijing yihou

subsequently reach ASP this CLF well after

“Subsequently, after you have reached this landmark labelled ‘Well’,

mmhmm 要， 你 要 经过 ‘水井’。

mmhmm yao ni yao jingguo shuijing

mmhmm MV 2SG MV pass well

mmhmm have to, you have to pass the ‘Well’.

(3)

经过 ‘水井’ 以后， 往， 东边 走。 -- Pre-token TCU

jingguo shuijing yihou wang dongbian zou

pass well after towards east:side walk

After passing the ‘Well’, walk towards the east.”

(0.2)

24 →J: mmhmm -- RT (Backchannel)

(0.3)

25 X: 往 东边 走。

wang dongbian zou

towards east:side walk

“Walk towards the east.

走 大概 有 1 公分 的 距离。

zou dagai you yi gongfen de juli

walk roughly have one centimeter MM distance

Walk roughly about one centimeter.

再 向 北 走 1 公分 左右。

zai xiang bei zou yi gongfen zuoyou

again towards north walk one centimeter or:so

Again, (you) walk roughly one centimeter towards the north.

有 一 个 : 你 就 会 看 到 一 片 , 一 片 房 子 。

you yi ge ni jiu hui kandao yi pian yi pian fangzi

have one CLF 2SG just MV see one CLF one CLF house

(I) have one: you will see a block, a block of houses.

这 是 我 们 这 个 地 方 的 ‘ 住 宅 区 ’ 。

zhe shi women zhe ge difang de zhuzhaiqu

this COP 1PP this CLF place MM local:residents

This is the ‘Local Residents’ in our district.

(2.5)

所 以 , 你 刚 才 说 的 那 个 ‘ 起 重 机 海 湾 ’ ,

suoyi ni gangcai shuo de na ge qizhongji haiwan

so 2SG just:now say MM that CLF crane: bay

So, the ‘Crane Bay’ you mentioned just now,

应 该 还 在 ‘ 住 宅 区 ’ 的 再 北 边 。 =

yinggai hai zai zhuzhaiqu de zai beibian

MV still be:in local:residents MM further north:side

should be still on the further north of the ‘Local Residents’.”

26 J: =所以= -- Pre-token TCU

suoyi

so

“So,”

27 → X: =mmhmm -- RT (Backchannel)

28 J: ‘沙岸’ 往 南 走。

sha’an wang nan zou

sandy:shore toward south walk

(I) walk towards the south (from) the ‘Sandy Shore’.

你 说 直接 向 南 走。

ni shuo zhijie xiang nan zou

2SG say directly towards south walk

You said that (I) walked directly towards the south.”

This fragment shows that the ‘*mmhmm*’ displays a flexible location in the ongoing conversation. The same backchannel token is placed at the end of the syntactically complete utterance (Turn 23), whereas it is located in the midst of constructing a sentence-in-progress in an unfinished turn (Turn 26). First, Turn 23 containing the Pre-token TCU can be considered. In the antecedent turns, both X and J are fully aware that they share the landmark labelled *shuijing* “Well” on their maps. X starts her turn with the adverbial conjunction *ranhou* ‘subsequently’ (Turn 23), which indicates a topic shift and signals the

follow-up activities. This turn therefore can be understood as the continuation of the prior turn within the larger activity. In the first TCU, X produces an adverbial clause to show the relationship between two actions by reference to the same landmark: to reach and subsequently to pass the “Well”.

After the delivery of the first TCU (i.e., a grammatically complete utterance), there is a substantial pause of 3 seconds. The long pause can be seen as a legitimate possibility where J might be expected to come in and display overt reciprocity: attention and understanding (i.e., “heard-and-understood”). This pause seems to be a default product of a failure of uptake by J, after X has brought her turn to a possible completion. Or to put in another way, the failure of uptake by J yields a gap of silence. As a result of this, X extends her turn by adding another action: “to walk towards the east” in relation to “to pass the “Well”. She brings her turn to a second point of the possible completion or the re-completion. Once again, X pauses for 0.2 seconds, and then J sends out the backchannel ‘*mmhmm*’ at the end of the second TCU. According to Jefferson (1984a), ‘*mmhmm*’ (Turn 24) can be seen as an acknowledgement token, which indicates “passive reciprocity”. In this respect, participants in both Mandarin and English conversation appear to share the core features of using ‘*mmhmm*’ to show convergence at the perceptual level.

Next, consider the second ‘*mmhmm*’ as a continuer. Similarly, X produces six TCUs (Turn 25). The first TCU is actually the repeat of the last utterance (Turn 23), and this repeat helps organize the conversational activity in a coherent way. The follow-up TCUs are concerned with the measurements of the distance towards the next new landmark labelled *zhuzhaiqu* “Local Residents”. X stops at the end of the fifth TCU (i.e., a grammatically

complete utterance).

Once again, notice that there is a substantial pause, this time of 2.5 seconds. As a result of this, X extends her turn by relating this newly introduced landmark to the already-known landmark labelled the “Crane Bay”. At the point of the possible completion of the sixth TCU, J takes up the turn by producing a connective *suoyi* ‘so’, which projects the summary of the prior turn based on their intersubjective understanding and shared knowledge. When J is still in the midst of constructing the TCU-in-progress, X sends out the backchannel ‘*mmhmm*’ at the non-TRP. The syntactic constructions, in which ‘*mmhmm*’ emerges, can be illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

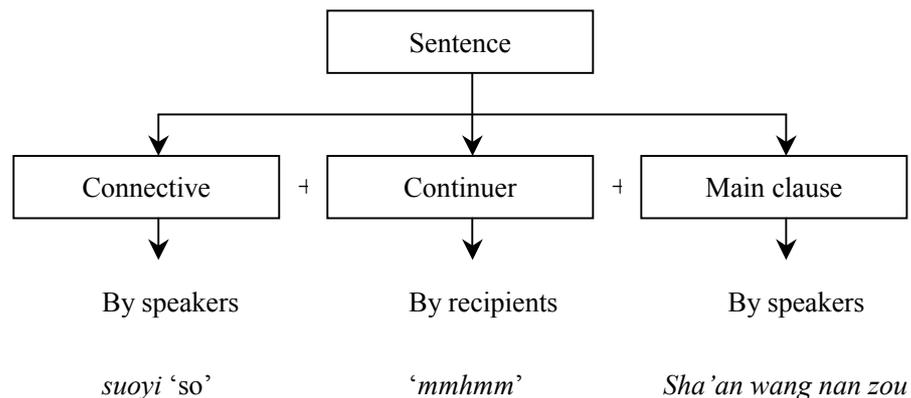


Figure 4.2 The placement of ‘*mmhmm*’ as a continuer by the native speaker between constituents

By contrast, ‘*mmhmm*’ (Turn 27) as a continuer has a different conversational function from that in Turn 24. The function of ‘*mmhmm*’ can be evidenced by J’s continuation of producing other relevant components to complete the unfinished utterance at the outset of the next turn (Turn 28). In terms of topic organization, ‘*mmhmm*’ (Turn 24) is articulated for the purpose of topic expansion regarding *shuijing* “Well”, whereas ‘*mmhmm*’ (Turn 27) is

produced for topic review in the clarifying sequence relating to the landmark labelled *sha'an* “Sandy Shore”.

In summary, by integrating sequential analysis into linguistic data analysis of ‘*mmhmm*’, Mandarin participants have been shown to orient to backchannels to achieve two core functions: a convergence token at the CTRP and a continuers at the non-TRP. Thus, backchannels can be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire, and they are produced and interpreted in situ by participants themselves. The way in which participants employ backchannels in Mandarin conversation has shown a high degree of similarity in the way English speakers orient to backchannels in English conversation (e.g., Jefferson 1984a; Gardner 2001), as surveyed in Chapter 2. Figure 4.3 below illustrates various forms of backchannels and the frequency of each form employed by Mandarin participants.

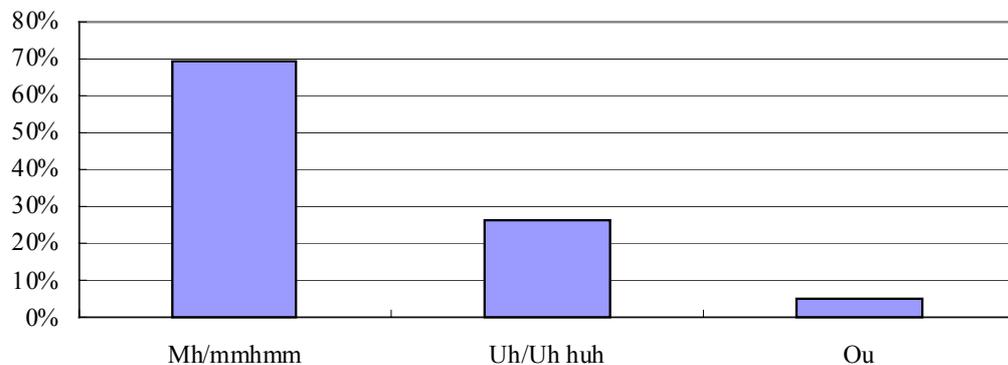


Figure 4.3 The frequency of typical backchannels by native speakers

As can be seen in Figure 4.3 above, ‘*mh/mmhmm*’ is the most preferred backchannel by Mandarin recipients (69 per cent), and ‘*uh/uh huh*’ ranks the second (26 per cent). However, ‘*ou*’ has the lowest frequency (5 per cent) in the list. It could be argued that individual

variations might affect the preference of one form of backchannel over another in conversation, which could be my potential further work.

4.2.2 Reactive expressions

For the purposes of this study, a reactive expression is defined as a short non-floor-taking phrase or lexical word produced by a recipient. Reactive expressions differ from backchannels in that backchannels only take the form of non-lexicalised vocalic sounds, whereas reactive expressions are not semantically empty, but contain some definite semantic content. Similar to backchannels, reactive expressions serve two basic functions: acknowledgement tokens and continuers. The way in which Mandarin recipients employ reactive expressions will be shown with illustrations below.

- ***hao* at CTRPs: acknowledgement tokens**

In the data, *hao* ‘good’ as well as its variation *haode* has been found to be the most frequently employed reactive expression. Biq (2004: 75) notes that a freestanding *hao* can accomplish diverse conversational actions such as expressing the speaker’s acknowledgement or agreement in relation to what the floor-holding speaker has said. In her spoken data of Taiwan Mandarin, she finds that about 100 freestanding *hao* tokens are employed as a response to a request or a marker for a topic transition. Fragment 4.11 below illustrates that *hao* serves as a convergence token in relation to the prior turn containing the negotiation.

Fragment 4.11, from Turns 9 and 10, Group 1, 2006

9 X: [‘沙岸’。 uh, 就 是 , 这 张 纸 ,
sha’an uh jiu shi zhe zhang zhi

sandy:shore uh just COP this CLF paper

Sandy Shore, uh, that is, this piece of paper,

这 张 纸 的 上 面 ,

zhe zhang zhi de shangmian

this CLF paper MM top

the top of this piece of paper

就 算 是 北 面。 -- Pre-token TCU

jiu suan shi beimian

just consider COP north

can just be considered as the north.”

(0.3)

10 → J:好。 -- RT (Reactive Expression)

hao

good

“Good.”

The statement at the end of Turn 9 as the final TCU can be seen as the Pre-token TCU or the primary speaker's invitation of eliciting responses from the recipient as the first pair part in the adjacency pair sequence. The key word here is *suan* 'consider', implying negotiation in Mandarin Chinese. This statement implicitly indicates that the reactive token is anticipated and projected in the next relevant slot. As expected, J sends out the reactive expression *hao* 'good' (Turn 10), displaying her acceptance of X's proposal in relation to

space specification. This token can be considered as action-related (i.e., doing acceptance/rejection), treating the immediately prior talk as adequate and unproblematic. In terms of the topic organization, *hao* ‘good’ (Turn 10) emerges for the purpose of topic initiation regarding the landmark labelled *sha’an* ‘Sandy Shore’.

In summary, a typical two-turn sequence (AB pattern) has been identified in an agreement-relevant environment in the data: (i) the speaking turn with propositional content ends at the CTRP, and (ii) a recipient produces the reactive expression as a “second” to secure mutual understanding, treating the immediately prior talk as sufficient and unproblematic. In addition, J has been shown to place the reactive token at the CTRP. There is a gap of 0.3 seconds between the Pre-token TCU as the initiation and the linguistic production of a reactive token as the structurally preferred action.

- ***hao* at non-TRPs: continuers**

Similar to backchannels, reactive expressions can emerge as continuers in the midst of the construction of TCUs-in-progress within constituents, such as noun phrases, in unfinished turns. Fragment 4.12 below illustrates that *hao* ‘good’ serves as a continuer.

Fragment 4.12, from Turns 169 to 172, Group 1, 2006

169 X: mh, 然后, 经过了 ‘岩崩’ 这个 图标 的
 mh ranhou jingguo le yanbeng zhe ge tubian de
 mh subsequently pass ASP rockfalls this CLF landmark MM
 “Mh, subsequently, pass the left of the landmark labelled ‘Rockfalls’
 左边 之后,

zuobian zhihou

left:side after

so (you)

(1.8)

这样 就 到 了 ,

zheyang jiu dao le

so just reach ASP

just reach,

就是 刚才 我们 这个 单 实线 图 的 ,

jiu shi gangcai women zhe ge dan shixian tu de

just COP just:now 1PP this CLF single solid:lines map MM

that is, the single solid lines on our maps just now,

最 下 角。 就 是 像 一 个 ,

zui xia jiao jiu shi xiang yi ge

most bottom angle just COP like one CLF

the angle at the bottom. That is, (it is) like one,

就 像 南 非 的 那 个 , 那 个 , -- Pre-token TCU

jiu xiang nan fei de na ge na ge

just like south Africa MM that CLF that CLF

just like (that) in South Africa, that, that,

(0.1)

170 → J: 好 =

-- RT (Reactive Expression)

hao

good

“Good.”

171 X: =hehe, 角 似 的。 Uh

jiao si de

angle sort:of MM

(sort of) angle. Uh”

172 → J: 是。

-- RT (Reactive expression)

shi

COP

“Yeah.”

Note that X is in the process of providing an analogy (i.e., the shape of the landmark resembles *haowangjiao* “Cape of Good Hope” in South Africa). The articulation of *nage*¹⁶ (Turn 169) ‘that’ seems to display that she is in the process of recollection and still struggling in a word search. Further, there is no noticeable gap (only 0.1 second) between the demonstrative pronoun as the Modifier and the anticipated noun as the Head.

Before X finds the target word, J inserts the reactive expression *hao* ‘good’ (Turn 170).

Apparently, X has not reached the potential CTRP, and *hao* ‘good’ here serves as a continuer.

Through the use of *hao*, J signals that X can resume her lengthy informings, because she

¹⁶ In Mandarin Chinese, intuitively, *nage* ‘that’ is a common expression used as a floor-holding cue in addition to being a demonstrative pronoun, indicating uncertainty and hesitancy in discourse. The reactive token (Turn 170) is made relevant not simply because of the use of the demonstrative pronoun *nage*. It is more like the hesitation displayed by the repeated use of the demonstrative pronoun that engenders the use of the reactive expression as a continuer. Typically, a single demonstrative pronoun is not enough to make a reactive token relevant in Mandarin conversation.

might have some difficulty in producing the proper target name herself. Figure 4.4 below illustrates the placement of this continuer within the syntactic construction.

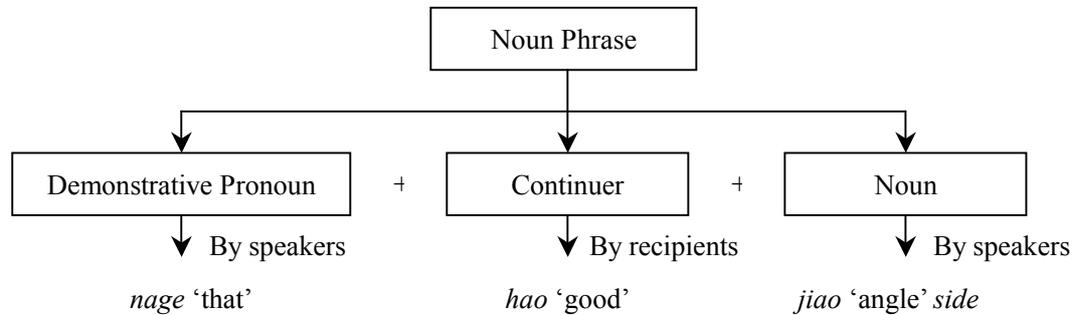


Figure 4.4 The placement of *hao* as a continuer by the native speaker within constituents

Figure 4.4 above shows that the locus of the reactive expression *hao* ‘good’ is not random at all. As Jefferson (1974) notes, the term “a recognition point” refers to a legitimate and expectable place for a recipient to produce a response in the ongoing conversation. In this regard, the point after the demonstrative pronoun can be seen as a legitimate place for a recipient to come in and insert a reactive token. Alternatively, in the same syntactic position, J can employ a collaborative production by providing the projected target noun phrase for X as a candidate understanding, provided that J knows the target name.

This observation can be further evidenced by X’s completion of her word search (Turn 171) after producing a laughter token singly, when she is in the trouble of searching for the target word. She finishes her paraphrase in the end, followed by a post-completion vocalization ‘uh’. Finally, J alters the token shape of reactive expressions to *shi* ‘yeah’ to acknowledge her full understanding of X’s paraphrase. It is interesting to note that Speakers X and J fail to obtain the target name in their word searches. In terms of topic organization, *hao* ‘good’ is articulated at the outset of the word search and *shi* ‘yes’ is uttered for the

purpose of topic completion in relation to the target label of the landmark.

To summarize, in this fragment, J has been shown to display her awareness of being a recipient in the form of two reactive expressions: one is placed at the non-TRP and the other emerges at the CTRP. These two reactive expressions are fitted in terms of sequential placements. This instance also shows that Mandarin recipients orient to reactive expressions as continuers in unfinished turns prospectively and reactive expressions as acknowledgement tokens in finished turns retrospectively in the data. Thus, reactive expressions can be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire, and they are produced and interpreted in situ by participants themselves.

Table 4.1 below illustrates various forms of reactive expressions produced by Mandarin recipients and their frequency and distribution in descending order.

Table 4.1 Reactive expressions by native speakers

Chinese	Pinyin	English	Frequency	Percentage
好	<i>hao</i>	Good	15/23	65%
好的	<i>haode</i>	Good	2/23	9%
Subtotal			17/23	74%
对	<i>dui</i>	Right	2/23	9%
对, 对	<i>dui dui</i>	Right, right	2/23	9%
对, 对, 对, 没错, 没错	<i>dui dui dui</i> <i>meicuo, meicuo</i>	Right, right, right. You are not wrong. You are not wrong.	1/23	4%
Subtotal			5/21	22%
是	<i>shi</i>	Yes	1/23	4%

Table 4.1 above shows that *hao/haode* ‘good’ is the most favoured reactive expression

by Mandarin recipients (74 per cent), and *dui* ‘right’ ranks the second (22 per cent), and *shi* ‘yes’ comes the last in the list (4 per cent). Once again, it could be argued that the preference of one form of reactive expression over another might result from individual variations and such factors as age, gender, power, amongst others, which are not considered in this study. In the literature, *dui* ‘right’ is reported as the most frequent lexical reactive expression in ordinary conversation (e.g., Clancy et al. 1996). The preference for *hao/haode* in Mandarin map task conversations could be due to the function of *hao* for task-oriented conversational interaction.

Further, the three-part sequence (ABA pattern) has been found to be typical of employment of reactive expressions and backchannels in terms of their sequential contexts in the agreement-relevant environment:

(i) A: A new topic is initiated at the CTRP.

(ii) B: A recipient produces a reactive token.

Or:

(iii) A: The third turn confirmation is articulated.

4.2.3 Composites

The term “composites” is borrowed from Schegloff (2007: 127) in his discussion of a particular common combination: ‘*oh*’ in conjunction with ‘*okay*’. In this study, a “composite” is defined as the use of two or more than two types of reactive token in response to the immediately prior talk. It excludes the repetition of the same token type, such as couplets *hao hao* ‘good, good’ and triplets *shi shi shi* ‘yes, yes, yes’. The following fragments will demonstrate the way in which Mandarin recipients employ composites to

display an awareness of being a recipient in longer sequences.

- **“Backchannel + *haode* (sequence-closing device)”**

The data show that one common variation of a composite is a backchannel in conjunction with a reactive expression. Fragment 4.13 below illustrates the characteristics of composites articulated by Mandarin recipients.

Fragment 4.13, from Turns 155 and 156, Group 1, 2006

155 X: 崩, 就是那个‘山崩 [地裂]’ 的 -- Pre-token TCU

beng jiu shi na ge shanbeng dilie de

fall just COP that CLF land:slides earth:cracks MM

“‘Beng’ (fall) is just in that idiomatic expression called ‘*shanbeng dilie*,’”

156 →J: [hu huh, 好 的。 -- RT (Composites)

hao de

good MM

“Hu huh, good.”

Speaker X produces the Mandarin idiomatic expression *shanbeng dilie* ‘land slides and earth cracks’ (Turn 155). Subsequently, two different types of token as a composite (Turn 156) seem to serve their respective functions in this word search sequence. First, backchannel ‘*hu huh*’ displays J’s recognition and understanding of the idiom, before X reaches the completion of the idiom in her turn. Second, the production of the reactive expression *haode* ‘good’ is relevant to the action embodied: acceptance of X’s paraphrase.

This token also signals the closure of the word search sequence relating to the label *yanbeng* “Rockfalls”. Note that X and J stop talking simultaneously after a brief overlap. X does not produce a syntactically complete utterance but terminates her turn at the particle word *de* (i.e., Modifier Marker), which projects the follow-up nouns or noun phrases as the Head.

In terms of topic organization, ‘*hu huh*’ in conjunction with *haode* ‘good’ as the composite (Turn 156) occurs for the purpose of topic expansion in relation to the landmark labelled *yanbeng* ‘Rockfalls’. It is interesting to note that the participants in this fragment are Mandarin native speakers but with the advanced speaking English level. Thus, it is not uncommon for them to produce English backchannels (i.e., *uh huh*) in interaction here. The issue of the effect of second language such as English on the deployment of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation will be a potential consideration for future research.

- **“Backchannel + repeat”**

The data reveal that another variation of composite is the backchannel in conjunction with the repeat. This type of combination possibly suggests a transition from a lower to a higher level of reciprocity (see Chapter 5). Fragment 4.14 below illustrates a backchannel and a repeat as a composite.

Fragment 4.14, from Turns 88 and 89, Group 1, 2006

88 → J: 有 , 有 一 个 ‘ 枯木 ’。 -- Pre-token TCU

you you yi ge kumu

have have one CLF dead:tree

“I have, I have one (landmark labelled) the ‘Dead Tree’.”

89 ⇒ X: uh 枯木 -- RT (Composite)

uh kumu

uh dead:tree

“Uh, the ‘Dead Tree’.”

Speaker J, as the Information Follower, produces a syntactically complete utterance to assert that there is one landmark labelled *kumu* “Dead Tree” on her map. The turn consists of a single TCU (i.e., a syntactically complete utterance). J brings her turn to the actual completion at the CTRP. X, as the Information Giver, delivers a response to what X has said. This response consists of two parts: the backchannel and the repeat. Similar to Schegloff’s (2007) observation, the backchannel, as the first part of a composite, can be seen as information-related, displaying receipt/reception of the incoming information retrospectively. As the second component, the repeat appears to be action-related in the service of closing an informing sequence regarding the landmark labelled *kumu* “Dead Tree”. The function of this repeat might be to serve as the epistemic confirmation. Probably, the reason is that the Information Giver (i.e., the informed participant) produces the repeat in the route construction. In addition, the use of repeats (see below) shows that the recipient attends to the detail of the immediately prior talk and can therefore display a higher level of reciprocity, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. As such, the composite consisting of a backchannel and a repeat seems to show a transition from a lower to a higher level of recipient engagement in this local context.

In terms of topic organization, ‘*uh*’ and the repeat as the composite (Turn 89) emerge for

topic initiation. To iterate, the two-turn sequence (AB pattern) has been found in the delivery of a composite in an agreement-relevant environment.

(i) A: A new topic is initiated at the CTRP;

(ii) B: A backchannel in conjunction with a repeat is uttered as the epistemic confirmation.

To summarize, in terms of the use of composites, participants themselves have been shown to orient to the following features of composites (see more discussion on English composites in Tao 2003).

- Each individual reactive token seems to play its own part in interaction. For instance, one component of the composite is retrospectively information-related such as *ou* ‘oh’, *mhm* and the other component is prospectively action-related such as ‘okay’ in English and *dui* ‘right’ in Mandarin Chinese.
- Mandarin participants seem to design and orient to two or three different types of reactive token in a certain order, such as a backchannel in conjunction with a repeat or a laughter token, which suggests a transition from a lower to a higher level of recipient engagement. However, this tentative observation still needs more support from empirical evidence in naturally occurring conversation.
- Composites tend to occur for topic initiation.

Thus, composites can be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire, and they are produced and interpreted in situ by participants themselves.

4.2.4 Repeats

In the data, the following phenomenon is recurrent: a recipient repeats a portion of the utterance produced by a floor-holding speaker. In this study, I generally use “repeat”

(Schegloff 1996b) to refer to one type of reactive token employed as a second to display an awareness of being a recipient. The repeats show that a recipient orients to registering the salient information/referent from the immediately prior talk by reproducing noun phrases, verb phrases or prepositional phrases, amongst others. Repeats are different from backchannels and reactive expressions in that they seem to show participants' orientations to the detail of the prior talk. Repeats involve a cognitive process of active filtering or selection of the salient information with rich semantic content (e.g., noun phrases, verb phrases, etc.) from the immediately prior talk. In addition, Schegloff (1996b) notes that a repeat in English can embody the producer's stance (e.g., satisfaction, congratulations and mockery, etc.) towards the person or the event under discussion, such as "one-upsmanship". The effect of repeat cannot be achieved by using 'yes' as an agreement token, as surveyed in Chapter 2. Thus, it suggests that repeats can contribute to interpersonal relationships. Fragment 4.15 below illustrates the use of a repeat in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 4.15, from Turns 7 and 9, Group 1, 2005

7 E: 然后, 在 那 个,

ranhou zai na ge

subsequently in that CLF

"Subsequently, at that,

uh, 应该 是 小溪 的 那 个,

yinggai shi xiaoxi de na ge

MV COP stream MM that CLF

uh, (it) should be that, of the stream,

uh, 转弯 的 那 个 地点。

zhuawan de na ge didian

turn MM that CLF place

uh, at that point where (you) turn around,

有 个 ‘水井’。 -- Pre-token TCU

you ge shuijing

have CLF well

(I) have (a landmark) labelled the ‘Well’.

8 → F: ‘水井’。 -- RT (Repeat)

shuijing

well

“The ‘Well’.”

9 E: 对。 -- Third-turn confirmation

dui

right

“Right.”

This fragment shows that the repeat of the noun phrase *shuijing* ‘Well’ emerges in the ABA pattern. E, the informed participant, describes a landmark for the first time and Turn 7 terminates at the CTRP. At the completion of producing its label as a new topic, F, as the uninformed participant, repeats the relevant lexical item from the immediately prior talk.

Through repeats, F registers the label and thus displays agreement (Turn 8), just as the same practice of repeating to show agreement in English. Sequentially, E produces *dui* ‘right’ (Turn 9) as an epistemic acknowledgement token in third turn. In terms of topic organization, the label of the landmark *shuijing* ‘Well’ is repeated for the purpose of topic initiation.

In the data, participants themselves have been shown to orient to the following features of repeats:

- Mandarin speakers repeat the lexical item as the salient information for confirmation. Repeats have been shown to be deployed to register the target information from the immediately prior talk, treating prior descriptions as adequate and unproblematic, i.e., repeating for confirmation.
- The majority of repeats are produced at CTRPs.
- Repeats are likely to occur for topic initiation.

Thus, repeats can be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire, and they are produced and interpreted in situ by Mandarin recipients themselves.

4.2.5 Collaborative productions

For the purposes of this study, a collaborative production is considered as one type of reactive token, which is employed to display an awareness of being a recipient. It is defined as a recipient’s utterance, which completes the floor-holding speaker’s sentence-in-progress. It can be seen as a conditional entry device on the part of the floor-holding speaker (Lerner 2004b) in terms of the turn-taking organization. I am interested in the following question: where do Mandarin speakers pause to provide an opportunity space for a recipient to display

overt reciprocity and collaboration in interaction in terms of syntactic resources? More fragments will be illustrated in the data to investigate placement of collaborative productions in addition to the syntactic constructions observed in Fragment 2.20 in Chapter 2: between the Subject and the Predicate within a single sentence (“Subject + Predicate” construction, Clancy et al. 1996).

- **“Modifier + Head”**: “(modifier) + noun”

As will be seen, the following fragments are intended to demonstrate the way in which Mandarin recipients provide a final component as a candidate completion to finish the sentence or the phrase initiated by a floor-holding speaker. The data reveal that one frequent placement of a collaborative production is between the preliminary noun with *de* as the Modifier and the subsequent noun as the Head within constituents (“Modifier + Head” construction). Fragment 4.16 below illustrates a collaborative production within a noun phrase.

Fragment 4.16, from Turns 107 and 108, Group 1, 2006

107 X: mh, 然后, ‘枯木’ 是在两条双实线的 -- Preliminary

ranhou kumu shi zai liang tiao shuang shixian de component

subsequently dead:tree COP in two CLF double solid:lines MM

“Mh, subsequently, the ‘Dead Tree’ is placed at the two double solid lines of,”

108 →J: =交叉口 -- RT (Final component)

jiaochakou

crossover

“crossover.”

Speaker X deploys the linguistic resources to provide the recipient an opportunity space of displaying collaboration and engagement, just after the Modifier. Note that there is no overlap or gap. J provides the noun just subsequent to X’s initial production of the Modifier ending with *de* (Modifier Marker). In the meantime, this instance shows that X and J have reached the point of mutual understanding and established the agreement-relevant environment regarding the landmark labelled *kumu* “Dead Tree”. The syntactic construction of this collaborative production can be illustrated in Figure 4.5 below.

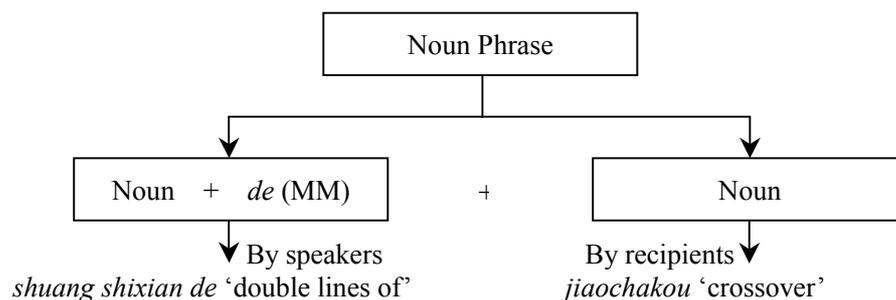


Figure 4.5 The collaborative production of a noun phrase by the native speaker

It is noticeable that the particle *de* (Modifier Marker) can be used to show the relationship between two nouns in Mandarin Chinese. In this instance, *de* seems to serve as a linguistic resource for the participants to display their intersubjective understanding of the issue under discussion. Syntactically, *de* “of” (Turn 107) is designed to project the follow-up relevant noun as the Head within the larger noun phrase. The use of *de* as the Modifier Marker thus creates an opportunity space for the recipient to enter into the floor-holding speaker’s turn space.

Alternatively, J can produce a backchannel or a reactive expression to prompt the floor-holding speaker to complete the noun phrase in progress. In other words, J's selection of the candidate completion over the backchannel or the reactive expression displays her active reciprocity (see Chapter 5). As noted earlier, the phrase boundary can be seen as one type of syntactic resource that speakers deploy to cue the display of overt reciprocity, in line with Kim's (1999: 426) observation relating to the phrasal unit boundaries in Korean conversation and Fellegy's (1995) finding in English. In terms of topic organization, this collaborative production (Turn 108) emerges in the route construction, after the co-participants have achieved intersubjective understanding of the location of the target landmark labelled as *kumu* "Dead Tree".

- **“Modifier + Head”**: “(adverbial clause) + main clause”

Within the syntactic construction of “Modifier + Head”, another frequent placement of a collaborative production is between constituents within a sentence: between the adverbial clause of time (i.e., subordinate clause) and the main clause. This type of syntactic construction is similar to the example in Japanese conversation (cf. Lerner and Takagi 1999: 54): “When-X, then-Y” construction (i.e., a compound TCU), as illustrated in Fragment 4.17 below.

Fragment 4.17, from Turns 129 and 130, Group 1, 2006

129 X: 从 那 个 地 方 往 下 两 公 分。

cong na ge difang wangxia liang gongfen

from that CLF place downwards two centimeters

“(Go) downwards two centimeters from that place.

都 是 笔 直 的 的 ou。

dou shi bizhi de ou

all COP straight MM PRT

All (of them) are straight, ou.

然后， 再 转弯。

ranhou zai zhuanwan

subsequently again turn:around

Subsequently, turn around again.

转 的 时 候， -- Pre-token TCU (Preliminary component)

zhuan de shihou

turn MM when

When you turn around,

130 →J: 向 左 转。 -- RT (Final component)

xiang zuo zhuan

towards left turn

“Turn left.”

This fragment shows that a collaborative production can occur at the sentential level between constituents, in addition to their emergence at the phrasal level such as in Fragment 4.16 discussed earlier. In this two-turn sequence (AB pattern), X produces a four-TCU turn relating to the detail of the correct route. In the fourth TCU, X produces the adverbial clause

of time as the preliminary component and reaches the recognition point. J completes X's sentence by producing the main clause (Turn 130) as the candidate understanding. The syntactic components can be illustrated in Figure 4.6 below.

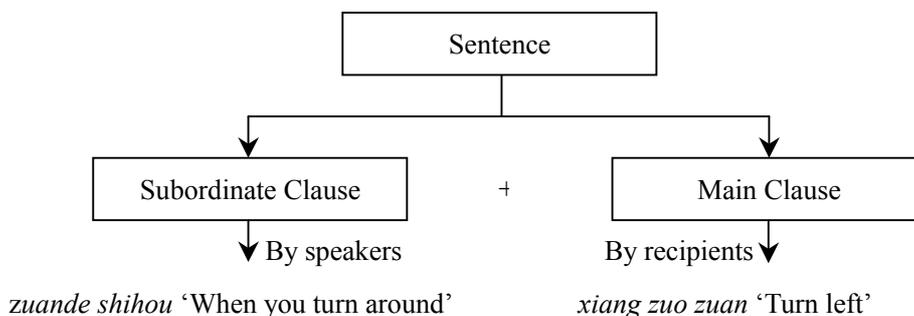


Figure 4.6 The collaborative production between constituents by the native speaker

Syntactically, provided that the subordinate clause is treated as the Modifier and the main clause as the Head, its syntactical construction can be simplified as “Modifier + Head”. In terms of topic organization, once again, this collaborative production (Turn 130) occurs in the route construction, after the co-participants have achieved intersubjective understanding of the landmarks concerned.

As discussed earlier, collaborative productions may occur at the phrasal and clausal level in the data. Regarding grammar¹⁷ and interaction in Mandarin conversation, six major types have been identified (e.g., Chao 1968; Zhu 1982; Luke and Zhang 2007): subject-predicate (SP); modifier-head (MH); verb-object (VO); verb-complement (VC); serial verb (VV); and coordination (XX). This taxonomy constitutes the basis for the investigation of the preferred syntactic constructions of collaborative productions in the data. Therefore, a further related

¹⁷ Following Hopper and Thompson (1980), Tao (1996: 109) identifies five types of Mandarin clausal intonation unit: (i) high transitivity clause, (ii) low transitivity clause, (iii) intransitive clause, (iv) stative clause, and (v) copular clause.

question is what type of syntactic structure Mandarin participants favour in collaborative productions in the map task conversations.

With respect to collaborative productions, Mandarin participants themselves have been shown to orient to dynamic syntactic resources to provide opportunity spaces for recipients to display overt reciprocity in appropriate positions in the process of the co-construction of TCU-in-progress. At the same time, a recipient enters the floor-holding speaker's turn space by providing the candidate completion to display an awareness of being a recipient, as illustrated in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Syntactic structures of collaborative productions by native speakers

Syntactic structures	Speaker's preliminary production	Recipient's subsequent production	Illustration	Frequency of occurrence	Type of syntactic construction
Noun phrase	(Noun Phrase + <i>de</i>) as Modifier	Noun phrase as Head	Fragment 4.16	1	M-H
Noun phrase	Demonstrative pronoun as Modifier	Noun phrase as Head	Fragment 5.5	1	M-H
Sentence	Subordinate clause (Adjunct) as Modifier	Main clause as Head	Fragment 4.17	1	M-H
Sentence	Noun Phrase as Subject	Adjective as Predicate	Fragment 2.20	1	S-P
Sentence	Prepositional phrase (Adjunct) as Modifier	Verb phrase (ellipsis sentence) as Head	Fragment 6.1	1	M-H

Table 4.2 above illustrates the representative uses of collaborative productions in Mandarin map task conversations. It is worth noting that “Modifier-Head”¹⁸ seems to be the most preferred syntactic construction as a linguistic resource for a collaborative production by Mandarin participants. Collaborative productions can thus be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire, and they are produced and interpreted in situ by participants themselves.

4.2.6 Laughter tokens

In the data, two types of laughter token have been identified: solo laughter (voluntary laughter) and collaborative laughter (i.e., the sequence of invitation of laughter and acceptance/rejection). Collaborative laughter seems to be most frequently employed in agreement-relevant environments.

As Jefferson et al. (1987: 158) note, “laughter is produced in an orderly fashion and that an occasion of laughing together can be seen as an achievement of various methodic procedures”. As will be seen, the way in which Mandarin participants produce collaborative laughter in Mandarin map task conversations is consistent with Jefferson’s observation in English conversation. Collaborative laughter is similar to what Jefferson’s (1979) analysis of the sequence of invitation of laughter as the first pair part and acceptance/rejection as the second pair part in “next” slots. In the data used for this study, the recurrent phenomenon can be found: a speaker delivers a laughter token at the CTRP as an invitation; in the next relevant slot, the recipient laughs along as an acceptance of the invitation. Fragment 4.18 below

¹⁸ This finding is tentative because of the limited number of occurrences of collaborative productions in the data. More empirical evidence from natural Mandarin conversational data is needed, which can be my further work. To avoid repetition, I analyzed the representative collaborative productions only and the investigation of other instances can also be my further work.

illustrates collaborative laughter in Mandarin conversation.

Fragment 4.18, from Turns 191 to 192, Group 1, 2006

191 X: Good. 对, 对, 对, 就是 这 个 地方。

dui dui dui jiu shi zhe ge difang

right right right just COP this CLF place

“Good, right, right, right. (It) is just this place (as the ‘Finish Point’).

啊, 太 好 啦。 就 是 那 儿。

a tai hao la jiu shi nar

a, too good PRT just COP there

Ah, (it is) really good. (That) is (the right place) there

那 你 好 好 玩 吧。

na ni hao hao wan ba

well 2SG well well play PRT

Well, have a good time.

Haha -- Pre-token TCU (Invitation to laugh)

192 → J: Hehe -- RT (Laughter token)

Following Jefferson (1979), the laughter at the completion of the fourth TCU (Turn 191) can be treated as the invitation of laughter. In the next relevant slot, the recipient accepts it and laughs along (Turn 192). In this fragment, the laughter is produced to display her excitement or celebration of completing the map task. This type of collaborative laughter is

different from solo laughter, in which the producer of the laughter has difficulty in dealing with the information mismatch (see below). In addition, collaborative laughter can help build strong bonds between co-participants and display affiliation and intimacy (i.e., the sense of like-mindedness and togetherness). In this regard, collaborative laughter contributes to interpersonal relationships, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. In terms of topic organization, the collaborative laughter occurs at the completion stage of the whole map task, indicating that both parties have succeeded in accomplishing the job and felt satisfied. Laughter tokens can thus be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire, and they are produced and interpreted in situ by participants themselves.

In summary, regarding the employment of laughter tokens, participants themselves have been shown to orient to the following features of collaborative laughter.

- It tends to emerge at the CTRP;
- It tends to occur in an agreement-relevant environment.
- It is likely to occur for topic completion.

All the above sequential analysis of six types of reactive token has shown that reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation are just as important as those in English. There exists a high degree of similarity between English and Mandarin conversation in terms of their forms and functions of reactive tokens in agreement-relevant contexts. In the next section, I will argue that reactive tokens are also of great importance in disagreement-relevant environments.

4.3 A sequential analysis of reactive tokens in conflict-relevant environments

This section centers on ‘*oh*’, composites, repeats and solo laughter token, which have been found to be oriented to by a recipient in a conflict-relevant environment, while the

previous section was concerned with agreement-relevant environments. The following fragments will demonstrate the way in which Mandarin recipients employ reactive tokens in information mismatch sequences through sequential analysis.

4.3.1 *Ou* ‘*Oh*’ as a continuer

In the data, *ou* ‘*oh*’ is the only form of backchannel employed by Mandarin participants in the disagreement-relevant environment. However, other forms of backchannels, which are common in agreement-relevant environments, are absent in conflict talk. More interestingly, the way in which the NS uses *ou* ‘*oh*’ in Mandarin conversation is different from the literature in English (see Chapter 2) as well as the way in which the NNS employs ‘*oh*’ in Mandarin conversation (see Chapter 6). Fragment 4.19 below illustrates the differences of *ou* ‘*oh*’ in two dimensions: the turn design and the prosodic configurations. In this instance, J and X are discussing the route construction. The information gap is that J has solid lines on her map, whereas X has dotted lines. They are at the completion stage of the information mismatch sequence.

Fragment 4.19, from Turn 68 to 71, Group 1, 2006

68 J: 因为 你 刚 讲 直接 往 下 走 ,

yinwei ni gang jiang zhijie wang xia zou

because you just say directly towards down walk

‘‘Because you told (me) just now that (I) walked downwards.

我 以为 是 ,

-- Pre-token TCU (Non-TRP)

wo yiwei shi

1SG assume COP

I assume,

(1.)

69 → X: ou= -- Reactive token (Backchannel)

70 J: =要 自己 另外 画 的 线。 -- Pre-token TCU

yao ziji lingwai hua de xian

MV self additionally draw MM line

“(I) should draw additional lines by myself.”

(0.1)

71 → X: Ou. (0.1) [OK. -- Reactive token (Composite)

72 J: [好。

hao

good

“Good.”

In this fragment, it is notable that *ou* ‘oh’ (Turn 69) is used in the midst of J’s construction of a complex sentence. In other words, it is placed at the non-TRP of Turn 68. In Turn 68, J starts her turn with the connective *yinwei* ‘because’ prefacing a causal clause, which indicates that she is going to provide some account of her comprehension of X’s prior talk. When she is coming to the main clause started with *wo yiweishi* ‘I assume’ indicating authorship of the utterance, she pauses for 1 second. This pause can be understood to be J’s pause. That is, it is safe and legitimate for her to pause between the main clause and the

follow-up subordinate clause as the object. At this recognition point, X comes in and sends out the token *ou*, displaying that she is interested in what J's further elaboration of her prior talk. In this sense, *ou* is treated or heard as forward-looking rather than backward-looking, because J has not completed her sentence-in-progress and hence her conversational action.

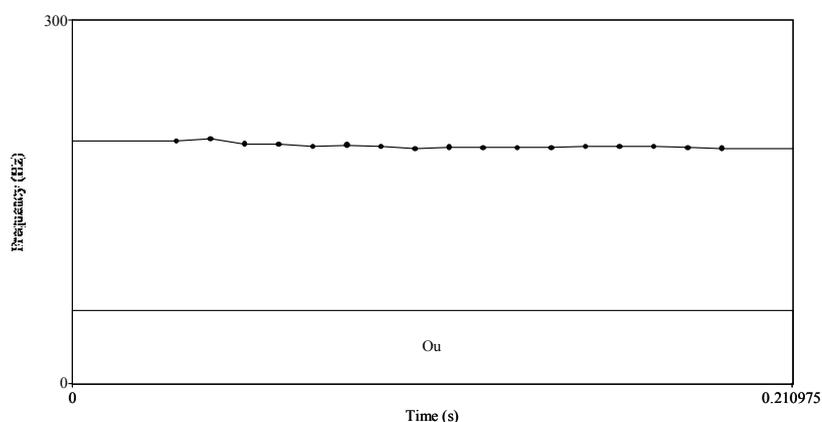
At the same time, the *ou*-producer indicates that J may continue with her extended turn. I observe a different configuration of the use of *ou* here: *ou* here is used as a continuer in terms of its placement within a turn and the incomplete conversational action. This *ou* is unusual, because *ou* generally functions as a 'change-of-state' token in response to the co-participant's articulation of a piece of news or information. In such instances, *ou* registers a change in its producer's state of knowledge or information. Considering the placement of *ou* in relation to syntactic resources, *ou* is typically located at the CTRP of prior turn rather than at the non-TRP in the literature.

The freestanding *ou* (Turn 69) can be considered as a deviant case, assuming Heritage's description and analysis of the employment of '*oh*' (see Chapter 2) as the norm in English conversation. In his study, Heritage argues that sequentially a freestanding '*oh*' is essentially backward-looking and that the '*oh*' receipt is "systematically insufficient to promote further talk" from the floor-holding speaker (Heritage 1984: 329). Even though there is only one such instance in the data, the presence of *ou* in the service of a continuer in Mandarin conversation can provide more evidence for the flexible placements and variable conversational actions implemented by *ou* in interaction.

The use of *ou* (Turn 70) as a continuer can be further evidenced by J's completion of her main clause after *wo yiweishi* 'I assume', which indicates authorship of the current utterance.

She provides her assumption as the salient information at the end of the sentence. In addition, X displays her interest in J's assumption. In Turn 71, X sends out the second *ou*, which functions as a 'change-of-state' token at the end of J's completion of her news after a gap of 0.1 second. This *ou* marks information receipt, consistent with the typical function of 'oh' in English conversation.

The typical intonation contour of 'oh' in English is a falling-rising intonation (Local 1996; Roach 1983). Here, the question is whether the prosodic features of *ou* produced by Mandarin native speakers are consistent with those of "oh" in English. Graph 4.1 below illustrates the prosodic features of *ou* as a continuer by the Mandarin participant in the midst of the floor-holding speaker's sentence-in-progress.



Graph 4. 1 A level of *ou* 'oh' as a continuer by the Mandarin native speaker

The frequency analysis shows that *ou* has a level as a continuer at the non-TRP. The level intonation is evident: the pitch fluctuates between 200 Hertz and 195 Hertz¹⁹. Note that the Mandarin participant delivers *ou* in a level intonation to signal that the floor-holding

¹⁹ Once again, I take the difference of 10 Hertz or less than 10 Hertz between the highest and lowest pitch as a level in this project.

speaker should continue telling her interpretation of the prior talk. As this implies, the recipient treats the prior talk as incomplete or inadequate.

In summary, it is important to note that Mandarin native speakers' employment of *ou* 'oh' as a continuer (Turn 69) can be seen as a deviant case to the general patterns in which 'oh' is used as a 'change-of-state' token in English conversation. This deviant case suggests that *ou* 'oh' can have flexible placements in relation to the turn design: as a continuer at the non-TRP and as a change-of-state token at the CTRP. In addition, the prosodic configurations of 'oh' by the NS are different from those of the NNS (see Chapter 6). Thus, *ou* can be seen as a linguistic resource available, and it is produced and interpreted in situ by Mandarin participants themselves in disagreement-relevant environments.

4.3.2 Composites

The data reveal that the majority of composites appear to be employed in an agreement-relevant environment, but there is one instance of the composite emerging in the following information mismatch sequence. Fragment 4.20 below illustrates one variation of the composite containing three distinct types of reactive token by Mandarin recipients: the backchannel plus the reactive expression plus the repeat.

Fragment 4.20, from Turns 59 to 61, Group 1, 2006

59 X: 有 一 个 虚 , 就 是 , 虚线 ,

you yi ge xu jiu shi xuxian

have one CLF dotted just COP dotted:lines

“(You) have one dotted, that is, dotted line,

弯弯曲曲 的 一 个 边界=

wanwanququ de yi ge bianjie

curved MM one CLF boundary

one curved boundary.”

60 J: =我 的 图 上 没 有 虚线。

wo de tu shang mei you xuxian

1SG MM map on NEG have dotted:lines

“I do not have dotted lines on my map.

我 的 图 上 只 有 实线。 -- Pre-token TCU

wo de tu shang zhi you shixian

1SG MM map on only have solid:lines

I have only solid lines on my map.”

61 →X: ou。 对。 实线。 实线。 -- RT (Composite)

dui shixian shixian

right solid:lines solid:lines

“Ou, right, solid lines, solid lines.”

The information mismatch in this fragment is concerned with two different types of line illustrated in two distinct maps. On the Giver’s map, dotted lines are used to indicate the correct route from the “Starting Point” to the “Finish Point”. However, on the Follower’s map, there is no correct route and solid lines are used to mark the boundary. The information mismatch as a potential conflict has been resolved by X’s selection of a

composite (Turn 61): *ou* + *dui* ‘right’ + *shixian* ‘solid lines’. Note that this composite is made up of three different types of reactive token, which play their individual parts in the local context. The format can be illustrated in Figure 4.7 below.

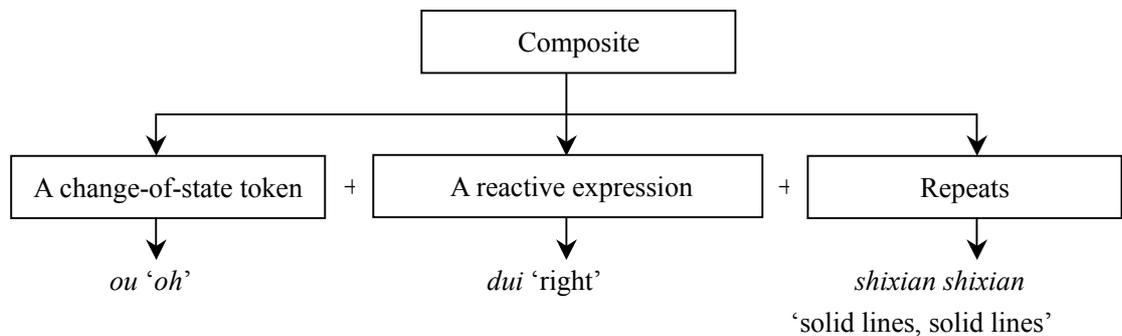


Figure 4.7 Components of a composite by the native speaker

First, *ou* indicates the co-participant’s receipt, recognition and unexpectedness of the incoming information regarding the absence of dotted lines (information-related) in a retrospective sense. This function is in line with Heritage’s finding that *ou* registers a change in its producer’s state of knowledge and that *ou*-producer treats the immediately prior talk as newsworthy. In this context, *ou* seems to be used to register a noticing and the object of the noticing is *shixian* “solid lines”. Subsequently, X produces the reactive expression *dui* ‘right’ to display her acceptance of J’s correction of X’s mistake (action-related). Thus, *ou* in conjunction with *dui* is similar to Schegloff’s (2007) analysis of the two-component composite: ‘*oh*’ (information-related) in conjunction with ‘*okay*’ (action-related) in English.

Finally, the third component of the composite is the repeat of the corrected information *shixian* “solid lines”, in line with Jefferson’s (1993) observation that the repeat is used to acknowledge the speaker’s authorship of the utterance being repeated. Through repeats, X confirms that the “solid lines” is the correct message accepted by the recipient. By using

this format of the composite, the potential conflict of information mismatch is strategically resolved in a particular way in the end. In terms of topic organization, this composite (Turn 61) is articulated for the purpose of topic completion regarding “Solid Lines”. In this composite, the most important component is the repeat, which is frequently employed in information mismatch sequences. The interactional workings of repeats will be further explored in greater detail below.

4.3.3 Repeats

In first language interaction, only one instance of the repeat as a reactive token has been found to convert disagreement into agreement in a conflict-relevant environment. Fragment 4.21 below illustrates the use of a repeat in a disagreement-relevant environment. In this instance, X and J are discussing the landmark labelled *yanbeng* “Rockfalls”.

Fragment 4.21, from Turns 148 and 150, Group 1, 2006

148 J: 叫做 ‘石地’ ?

jiaozuo shidi

call stone:slabs

“(Is it) called ‘Stone Slabs’?”

149 →X: 叫做 ‘岩崩’。 -- Pre-token TCU (First saying)

jiaozuo yanbeng

call rockfalls

“(It is) called ‘Rockfalls’.”

(0.2)

150 ⇒J: ‘岩崩’ -- RT (Repeat)

yanbeng

rockfalls

“Rockfalls”.

This fragment illustrates one type of information mismatch sequence within Mandarin map task conversations: there are two labels for the same landmark (i.e., label change), as previously mentioned in Chapter 3. Thus, both X and J will be engaged in some negotiation about the agreed label for the target landmark in the same location. J selects the most salient information (Turn 150) and intends to register the label. This repeat implies that she agrees to change the label of “Stone Slabs” into “Rockfalls” in order to be consistent with the Information Giver’s (X’s) map.

At the same time, this repeat shows J’s ratification of X’s prior turn and converts disagreement into agreement. The effect of this repeat cannot be achieved in the form of a backchannel or a reactive expression. This instance of repeat furnishes more empirical evidence to support my argument that repeats can be heard or treated more involved than backchannels and reactive expressions on the part of a floor-holding speaker, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. It is interesting to note that Mandarin recipients strategically select repeats of the label to achieve intersubjective understanding and to resolve the conflict. In so doing, the disagreement-relevant environment is converted into the agreement-relevant one, i.e., “the preference for agreement” (Sacks 1987). To iterate, this fragment shows that repeats can be treated as part of the human communicative repertoire and contribute to

interpersonal relationships.

4.3.4 Solo laughter

Solo laughter occurs frequently in a disagreement-relevant environment, similar to trouble talk in Jefferson's (1984b) study. Fragment 4.22 below illustrates that the solo laughter emerges in the finished turn, subsequent to the negative statement.

Fragment 4.22, from Turns 36 to 38, Group 1, 2006

36 J: 我 听 不 懂。 -- Pre-token TCU (Source of laughter)

wo ting bu dong

1SG hear NEG understand

"I do not see (what you mean)."

37 →X: [haha -- RT (Laughter token)

38 J: [是 在 那 个 '本地住宅区'。

shi zai na ge bendi zhuzhaiqu

COP in that CLF local:residents

(It is located) at the 'Local Residents'.

'水井' 离 '本地住宅区' 是 什么 地方?

shuijing li bendi zhuzhaiqu shi shenme difang

well away local:residents COP what place

What is label for the landmark from the 'Well' to the 'Local Residents'?"

The laughter token (Turn 37) emerges at the CTRP. In response to prior talk, J makes a

negative statement that she fails to understand X's instructions (Turn 35). This negation can be seen as the signal of the potential conflict. Confronting J's explicit way to inform the floor-holding speaker of her failure to follow, X produces the laughter token in overlap with J's continuing effort of accounting for her confusion. At this point, X terminates her laughter and attends to J's question (Turn 38). Thus, the laughter token can be seen as an alternative strategy to display the recipient's affiliation towards the Follower's failure in understanding rather than explicitly say *meiguanxi* 'It does not matter.' In terms of topic organization, the solo laughter occurs in the clarifying sequence as an insertion.

In summary, Mandarin participants themselves have been shown to orient to solo laughter as a resource to terminate conflicts in information mismatch sequences.

- Mandarin participants can employ solo laughter to show support or empathy to a floor-holding speaker, who has troubles or difficulties in understanding prior talk.
- The employment of laughter tokens by Mandarin recipients is in line with Norrick and Spitz's (2008: 1681) observation that laughter itself can mark the end of a conflict, even in the absence of humorous orientations.

It is noteworthy that the majority of backchannels, reactive expressions, collaborative productions and collaborative laughter are noticeably absent in information mismatch sequences in first language interaction. As this implies, reactive tokens are closely related with the interactional contexts. As such, conversational contexts can be seen as one factor affecting recipients' selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences. In conflict-relevant environments, Mandarin recipients can opt for repeats to convert disagreement into agreement. They can also produce solo laughter to resolve the conflict.

They can even utter *ou* as a continuer to display interest in the floor-holding speaker's forthcoming assumption regarding the information mismatch. It could be concluded that the role of reactive tokens cannot be neglected in disagreement-relevant environments.

4.4 A summary of conversational actions through reactive tokens

Thus far, I have provided sequential analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin map task conversations. The study reveals that there exists a high degree of similarity between English and Mandarin conversation in relation to the employment of reactive tokens in agreement-relevant environments. This finding suggests that reactive tokens play a prominent role in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

Reactive tokens have been shown to play a transitional role from a location descriptor to route construction in a direction-giving sequence. Further, the importance and value of reactive tokens in longer sequences can be demonstrated on the part of a floor-holding speaker in relation to her expectations. That is, reactive tokens are desirable and recipients are therefore expected to show it verbally and explicitly through reactive tokens: "Do you see what I mean?" or "Are you with me?" The linguistic resources equip recipients with a wide range of options of reactive tokens: backchannels, reactive expressions, composites, repeats, collaborative productions, and laughter tokens. As will be seen, an open list of responding actions accomplished through variation and selection of reactive tokens are possible in Mandarin map task conversations. This open list clearly demonstrates the worth and significance of reactive tokens in longer sequences:

In agreement-relevant environments,

-
- (i) provided that a recipient has *received the information*, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of finished turns;
 - By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
- (ii) provided that a recipient and a floor-holding speaker *have identical information* such as the label of the landmark on her map, how can the recipient show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of finished turns;
 - By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
 - By *repeating* the identical label (noun phrases) at the end of finished turns;
- (iii) provided that a recipient has *understood the incoming information*, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of finished turns;
 - By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
 - By *repeating* the identical label (noun phrase) at the end of finished turns;
- (iv) provided that a recipient is *interested* in the projected extended turn, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of finished turns;
 - By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
- (v) provided that the position of the same landmark on the floor-holding speaker's map *matches* a recipient's on her map, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of finished turns;

-
- By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
 - By *repeating* the phrase indicating the position (i.e., prepositional phrases) at the end of finished turns;
- (vi) provided that a recipient *agrees* to move from one already-known landmark to another, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of finished turns;
 - By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
 - By *repeating* the verbal phrase indicating the movement (i.e., verb phrases) at the end of finished turns;
- (vii) provided that a recipient intends to signal that she *does not have anything substantial* to contribute to the ongoing topic and that the floor-holding speaker can resume telling, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *backchannels* at the end of unfinished turns;
 - By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of unfinished turns;
- (viii) provided that a recipient intends to *terminate the sequence* involving a sub-task such as identifying one landmark and moving on to the next sub-topic or sub-task, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *reactive expressions* at the end of finished turns;
 - By producing *repeats* at the end of finished turns;
- (ix) provided that a recipient *feels excited and satisfied* with the completion of the map task conversation, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By initiating collaborative laughter at the end of finished turns;

-
- (x) provided that the Information Giver as the informed participant *has some difficulty* in describing one landmark, how can a recipient respond to it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *laughter tokens* at the end of finished turns to display empathy rather than say “It does not matter” or “No worry”;
- (xi) provided that a recipient has already *known what a floor-holding speaker intends to say next* when she is reviewing the already-known information and pauses within constituents or between constituents, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *collaborative productions* at the end of unfinished turns;
- (xii) provided that a recipient intends to display that she has *received the information* and will *terminate* the sub-topic or the sub-task of informing, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *composites*, such as backchannels in conjunction with reactive expressions at the end of finished turns;
- (xiii) provided that a recipient intends to *display overt reciprocity from a lower to higher level* of recipient engagement, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?
- By producing *composites*, such as backchannels in conjunction with laughter tokens at the end of finished turns;
- (xiv) provided that the floor-holding speaker *has difficulty in formulating* the target utterance by producing fragmentary turn constructional units, how can a recipient show her support to facilitate her verbally and explicitly?
- By producing backchannels, such as ‘*mhm*’ as minimal responses between

fragmentary TCUs to remain uncommitted and unobtrusive at the end of finished or unfinished turns;

In conflict- or disagreement-relevant environments,

(xv) provided that a recipient and a floor-holding speaker *do not have identical labels* on their maps, how can the recipient show it verbally and explicitly?

- By producing the negative particle *meiyou* ‘no’ (i.e., one variation of *reactive expressions*) at the end of finished turns;
- By producing surprise token *ou* ‘oh’ (i.e., one variation of *backchannels*) at the end of finished turns;

(xvi) provided that a recipient *fails to understand* immediately prior talk, how can she show it verbally and explicitly?

- By *repeating* the problematic item at the end of finished turns;
- By producing solo laughter to terminate the potential conflict;

(xvii) provided that a floor-holding speaker *fails to provide the correct description* of the target landmark, how can a recipient show her empathy and support verbally and explicitly?

- By producing solo laughter at the end of finished turns.

To summarize, from the above list, backchannels and reactive expressions have been shown to accomplish the majority of the work of displaying awareness by recipients. Their importance in first language interaction will be further supported through the quantitative analysis of reactive tokens in Chapter 7. In addition, the above list suggests that a reactive token may serve as a “facilitator” to move the conversation forward and “oil the wheels of

talk” (Hughes 2002: 37). Compared with the existing literature of forms and functions of reactive tokens in English (see Chapter 2), this chapter has shown that both Mandarin and English participants share the same recipient strategy of orienting to reactive tokens to construct and maintain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement. It could be concluded that reactive tokens are part of the human communicative repertoire and that they are produced and interpreted in situ by Mandarin participants themselves.

The qualitative analysis of reactive tokens in Chapter 4 attempts to fill the knowledge gap of their forms and functions in Mandarin conversation on a turn-by-turn basis. The sequential analysis of reactive tokens so far has shown that reactive tokens play a vital part in longer conversational sequences. However, one question emerging from the previous literature remains unsolved: why do recipients select one particular reactive token over another? The literature and the analysis of reactive tokens so far have shown that conversational and sequential contexts might play a part in the selection of a reactive token. A further question is arising: Are there any other factors that might account for the selection of a reactive token in addition to interactional and sequential contexts in longer sequences?

In the next chapter, I hypothesize that all the conversational actions implemented through variation and selection of reactive tokens are concerned with one core concept, i.e., reciprocity. I will further explore the intersection between reactive tokens and a display of overt reciprocity and suggest the framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation. The orientation to reciprocity in Chapters 5 and 6 suggests that the approach will move from “pure” conversation analysis to “applied” conversation analysis.

5 Displaying Levels of Reciprocity through the Selection of Reactive Tokens

This chapter aims to explore the interconnection between the production of reactive tokens and the display of overt reciprocity in Mandarin conversation. I will argue that the selection of reactive tokens is associated with levels of reciprocity in conversation. First of all, the concept of reciprocity is discussed in a variety of aspects. Then, the hypothesis of displaying overt reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens is proposed as a social action. In addition, I will discuss conversational identities of speakers and recipients in this study. Finally, I provide a turn-by-turn analysis of five distinct levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in a gradient manner.

5.1 The role of recipients

In broad terms, everyday conversation minimally involves speakers and recipients. The role of recipients has been somewhat neglected in most language study, because most research is concerned with the linguistic production and conduct of speakers (e.g., Goodwin 1986; Gardner 2001; McCarthy 2003). As a matter of fact, recipients play a very important role in achieving intersubjectivity and smooth conversational flow throughout the process of a conversation. Without displayed reciprocity, floor-holding speakers are left uncertain as to whether their talk is being understood or not, their ideas accepted or not, or their opinions agreed to by recipients or not. Recipients do not contribute new information or content to an ongoing topic. However, their role is significant in Mandarin conversation based on the

qualitative analysis presented in Chapter 4.

It could be argued that talk by a floor-holding speaker can be seen as an interactional product (Schegloff 1989: 140) in an extended turn such as story telling, advice giving and direction giving, among other things. In these sequences, a recipient can produce a reactive token at the right moment and precisely place them in the floor-holding speaker's continuing turns. The noticeable absence of such tokens may give rise to considerable modifications or even disruptions in a floor-holding speaker's subsequent contribution to the ongoing talk, as will be seen in Fragment 5.2 below. In addition, the important role played by recipients can be further evidenced by Sacks' (1992, vol. 2: 411-412) observation that if no reactive token is articulated at a recognizable complex transition relevance place (CTRP), a floor-holding speaker will attempt to find out whether the other party is listening or not. As my first noticing in the data recorded in 2004, a primary speaker will orient to linguistic resources such as a yes/no question to elicit a recipient to speak. What the speaker expects from the recipient might be that he is actually listening by simply producing such vocalizations as '*uh huh*' or '*mm*' to show attention or understanding at the perceptual level.

In this thesis, I will argue that the ability to listen (i.e., listening comprehension in the four conventional paradigms in language education such as listening, speaking, reading and writing) is not the same as the competence to display an awareness of being a recipient with appropriate responses in conversational sequences (see Chapter 7). Some recipients may assume that nonoccurrences of reactive tokens might mean that there is no problem in understanding of the talk-so-far. However, it seems that every floor-holding speaker expects a recipient to show alignment, interest, understanding or attention to her talk through the use

of reactive tokens rather than by being silent.

In conversation analytic research, reciprocity and speakership can be seen as two different concepts located at two ends of a scale. Furthermore, it appears that reciprocity can be further divided into different categories. For instance, backchannels such as '*mm hm*' can display "passive reciprocity" (Jefferson 1984a: 200); a collaborative production (i.e., one type of reactive token) can be seen as an "affiliating utterance" (Lerner 2004b). The use of "passive" and "affiliative" suggests that reciprocity seems to be a highly sophisticated concept, which will be further explored below.

5.2 The concept of reciprocity

The term "recipient" was first proposed by Sacks (1992: 445), who mentions "recipient design" as one of the generic features of everyday conversation. In this study, the notion of reciprocity is concerned with the linguistic production and speech behaviour of recipients or listeners in different contexts of human interaction. On occasion, participants may not show any form of overt reciprocity by being silent. However, the absence of reactive tokens does not mean that there is no reciprocity at all; only that it is not displayed through verbalization. Overt reciprocity can be displayed through vocalizations and lexical items by articulating reactive tokens such as '*mm*' (Gardner 2001), '*yeah*' (Jefferson 1984a), '*oh*' (Heritage 1984), '*okay*' (Beach 1993), and '*right*' (Gardner 2004), among other things. In face-to-face encounters, participants can also display overt reciprocity through nonverbal channels such as nodding or shaking heads, gaze movement (Goodwin 1981, 2007), and applause (Atkinson 1984). This study concentrates on reciprocity as it is displayed through the use of reactive

tokens and as part of the map task data. I do not investigate nonverbal channels because of the characteristics of the map task (see Chapter 3).

Reciprocity is an abstract and multifaceted concept, which is linked to participation, engagement, involvement, orientation, response, affiliation, stance and affect in talk-in-interaction. In addition, reciprocity cannot be understood on its own in the sense that the concept is essentially relational. In other words, reciprocity is meaningful only when it is understood in relation to speakership. For the purposes of the present investigation, reciprocity refers to participants' display of an awareness of being a recipient during ongoing turns by other participants. Reciprocity is thus presented in contrast to ongoing speakership, as displayed throughout the process of other participants' production of ongoing turns in longer conversational sequences.

5.2.1 Reciprocity and participation

Research has shown that the concept of reciprocity is routinely associated with participation (Goodwin 1984), engagement (McCarthy 2003), involvement (Gardner 2001) and orientation (Goodwin 1981). These terms involve different aspects of reciprocity and are used interchangeably here in relation to recipients' responding actions and activities.

At its simplest, participation refers to the co-participant's willingness to get involved in the ongoing topic in conversation. Language provides conversational participants with a wide array of linguistic resources such as reactive tokens and nonverbal forms such as gaze movement to demonstrate their participation in interaction. For instance, the use of '*mm*', as compared to other tokens such as '*yeah*' and '*mm hm*', displays a lower level of recipient participation in the current talk on the part of its producer (Gardner 2001). It seems that the

choice of vocalized forms of ‘*mm*’ over ‘*mm mh*’ or a lexicalized item of ‘*yeah*’ or laughter tokens may be heard or treated as different levels of recipient participation in terms of interpersonal relationships.

The notion of engagement refers to “the explicit verbal and nonverbal display of mutual orientation and co-participation of a floor-holding speaker and a recipient in interaction” (Goodwin 1981: 10). Further, the level of engagement is interpersonal and affective, and the signals an engaged recipient sends back by using a reactive token are typically the same as “those conveyed in longer stretches of phatic or relational talk” (McCarthy 2003: 59). As this suggests, the level of engagement (i.e., more engaged or less engaged) can be displayed through the selection of a reactive token that signals human bonds, social relations and affective convergence. This type of reactive token is different from that of displaying understanding and reception of incoming talk. Another related notion is involvement, referring to “the capacity of an individual to give, or withhold from giving, his concerted attention to some activity at hand – a solitary task, a conversation, a collaborative effort” (Goffman 1963: 43). Similar to participation, engagement and involvement can be displayed by co-participants through verbal or nonverbal channels in longer sequences.

In addition, the term of orientation seems to be an important aspect of reciprocity as well. For instance, reciprocity can be considered as “the display of orientation or nonorientation by one party toward another” (Goodwin 1981: 96) in a study of the mutual gaze as one device to display reciprocity to maintain recipient orientation within a speaker-recipient relationship. From an alternative perspective, orientation refers to that “speakers display in their sequentially ‘next’ turns an understanding of what the ‘prior’ turn was about” (Hutchby and

Wooffitt 1998: 15). This view is essential in this study in the sense that the investigation of reactive tokens is based on the sequential positions of the linguistic forms emerging in the “next” turn as “seconds” in response to the immediately “prior” turn. In addition, Szczepek Reed (2006) takes orientation to mean a display of awareness in talk-in-interaction in general, and investigates prosodic orientation in English conversation in particular.

In summary, throughout the course of a conversation, a participant seems to have the competence to display distinct levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in relation to participation, engagement, involvement and orientation. This competence provides a recipient with resources for making noticeable to a floor-holding speaker “not only their alignment to that talk but also their enthusiasm for it” (Goodwin 1981: 12).

5.2.2 Reciprocity and response

In studies of reciprocity in conversation analysis, I have found such terms as listener responses (Dittman and Llewellyn 1967), response cries (Goffman 1978, 1981), minimal response (Coates 1986), and response tokens (Silverman 1998; Gardner 2001). These terms suggest that response is a widely used term to describe reciprocity. McGregor and White address the interrelationship between reciprocity and response as follows:

The notion of reciprocity is inextricably tied to the notion of response since for us reception is response, and response is reception. In other words, we are not dealing here with discrete categories but simultaneous processes that are dynamically active as a consequence of individual creativity, selectivity and/or reactivity to language use in whatever medium or variety. We focus on the role of hearers because it is they as

receiver-responders, who are the actual arbiters of what becomes meaningful determinant in an interpretive sense (McGregor and White 1990: 1).

The authors suggest that reciprocity is concerned with both reception and responses. For one thing, reciprocity does not simply refer to reception in a sense of being passive. It does refer to aspects of reception of incoming talk at the perceptual level. For another, it also refers to responding actions at the level of social relations in human interaction.

Responses in conversation can be further categorized into minimal responses (Fellegy 1995) and non-minimal responses (McCarthy 2003) in terms of their different functions in conversation. The term “minimal responses” in American research on conversation refers to forms such as ‘*mmhmm*’, ‘*yeah*’, ‘*uh-huh*’ and ‘*right*’, which are articulated by a listener/recipient during a speech event to signal a certain level of recipient engagement with a speaker (Fellegy 1995: 186). On the other hand, the term “non-minimal responses” suggests that “speakers systematically select tokens that more than satisfy the minimal requirements of acknowledging receipt, showing understanding of the incoming talk and keeping the backchannel open” (McCarthy 2003: 43). Or to put it another way, minimal responses serve the default function of displaying attention, understanding, interest and alignment to the immediately prior talk at the perceptual level. However, non-minimal responses help build strong bonds between co-participants at the level of social relations, “achieving the function of small talk” (ibid.).

5.2.3 Reciprocity and affiliation

In addition to the above-described participation and response as aspects of reciprocity, the

concept of reciprocity is also closely associated with affiliation (Wright 1999), stance and affect (Goodwin 2007). For the purposes of this study, affiliation, stance and affect can refer to various aspects of reciprocity, and I therefore treat them equally as displaying affiliative reciprocity.

First, affiliation refers to “the tendency to associate with others in general” (Wright 1999: 11). Specifically, it can display a recipient’s “sameness” or solidarity with a floor-holding speaker rather than an indication of distance, indifference, inattention or nonorientation. Next, the notion of stance is concerned with “speakers’ indication of how they know about, are commenting on, or are taking an affective or other position toward the person or the matter under discussion in the selection of alternative ways of performing an activity” (Wu 2004: 3). In a similar vein, affect is considered as one dimension of affiliation embodied in the participants’ awareness of displaying overt reciprocity.

In conversation analytic research, stance is closely associated with reciprocity. However, displaying stance is more than displaying reception or understanding of the immediately prior talk. The display of stance can be seen as a social action at the level of social relations. To illustrate, the notion of stance can be further explored from five aspects in relation to the alignment of participants toward each other in the case of a father helping his daughter do her homework (Goodwin 2007: 70-71): (i) instrumental stance; (ii) epistemic stance; (iii) cooperative stance; (iv) moral stance; and (v) affective stance. In this study, instrumental and epistemic stance can be generally grouped into actions of displaying alignment, understanding, and attention at the perceptual level (i.e., self attentiveness). However, cooperative, moral and affective stance can be categorized into actions of

displaying overt reciprocity at the level of social relations (i.e., others attentiveness).

For instance, the display of surprise can be seen as one type of affiliative reciprocity performed through surprise tokens, such as ‘*O::h*’, ‘*wow*’, and ‘*golly*’ (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006) sequentially in second position. One relevant surprise token in this project is ‘*oh*’, signaling “the unexpectedness of the news or information imparted” (ibid.: 154). Another device deployed to display affiliative reciprocity is a laughter token in the pursuit of intimacy or affiliation in conversation (Jefferson et al. 1987). Similar to a surprise token (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006), two people cooperate in producing collaborative laughter. An “offerer” produces the invitation to the laughing activity and a “recipient” co-participates by laughing along in their joint activity. As will be discussed below, laughter tokens can be methodically employed to achieve intimacy or affiliation at a higher level of reciprocity in terms of interpersonal relationships.

5.2.4 Other relevant terms in relation to reciprocity

In previous studies, other relevant terms, such as hearers and addressees, are proposed in contrast to speakers in relation to reciprocity. The term “hearer” can refer to three quite different interactional roles: (i) it might designate the complementary position to “speaker” provided by the activity of conversation; (ii) it might refer to the addressee of an act by a speaker; and (iii) it might designate a party performing acts of their own relevant to the position of hearer (Goodwin and Heritage 1990: 291-292). In this categorization, Goodwin and Heritage make a distinction between hearers and addressees. Addressees can be seen as one sub-type of hearer. For the purposes of this study, I do not differentiate such terms as listeners, hearers, recipients, and addressees, because these terms refer to the same role in

opposition to that of speakers in Mandarin map task conversations.

In addition, listenership (McCarthy 2003: 43) and hearership (Schegloff 1968: 1093; Goodwin 1981: 103) are also relevant to reciprocity. “Listenership” refers to the active involvement with the floor-holding speaker that displays more than just “hearship” (McCarthy 2003). Furthermore, “good listenership” (McCarthy 2002) means that a listener plays an active role in receiving incoming information and contributing to interpersonal relationships in human interaction. As such, listeners contribute to creating and maintaining sociability and human bonds through the selection of reactive tokens. By contrast, hearership refers to a recipient’s neutral status of information reception and general alignment to the immediately prior talk. Since reciprocity can embody listenership and hearership, reciprocity is adopted to cover both of them in this study.

In contrast to a recipient, I take a speaker to be the current turn-holder in a turn of at least one turn constructional unit (TCU). According to Goodwin and Heritage (1990: 291), a “speaker” refers to “a party whose turn is in progress at a particular point in time”. In terms of turn-taking mechanisms, an alternation between speakers and recipients is a recurrent phenomenon in ordinary conversation. In his discussion of the “summons-answer sequence”, Schegloff explicates the relationship between speakers and hearers in conversation as follows:

[...] conversation is a ‘minimally two-party’ activity. That requirement is not satisfied by the mere copresence of two persons, one of whom is talking. It requires that there be a ‘speaker’ and a ‘hearer’. [...] Speakers without hearers can be seen to be ‘talking to themselves’. Hearers without speakers ‘hear voices’ (Schegloff 1968: 1093).

Schegloff's observation indicates that both speakers and recipients demonstrate coordination or collaboration with each other in conversational activities, and that they exhibit their awareness of continued speakership or reciprocity. The display of continued reciprocity can be seen as equally important as the display of continued speakership. In conversation analysis, reciprocity can be treated as an emergent product of a moment-by-moment interaction. It is a negotiated concept among participants and thus conversational identities of recipients and speakers are in the constant process of negotiation. Put simply, every participant in conversation is expected to be a competent speaker and recipient at the same time: "the speaking while listening skill" (McCarthy and Slade 2007: 866).

In summary, I have discussed that reciprocity is associated with participation, engagement, involvement, orientation, response, stance, affiliation, and affect. Throughout the unfolding process of a conversation, participants can be active or passive, more engaged or less engaged, and enthusiastic or indifferent. They can display a high or a low level of reciprocity in the moment-by-moment flow of interaction. As this implies, reciprocity can be further described at least at two distinct levels. At the perceptual level of interaction, reciprocity is concerned with showing reception and hearership of incoming information in a neutral position. This default level of reciprocity can achieve understanding, attention, interest and alignment to the immediately prior talk. It contributes to constructing and maintaining a smooth conversational flow in order to avoid impeding the floor-holding speaker's smooth flow of talk. At the level of social relations, affiliative reciprocity is concerned with displaying a recipient's affect or stance towards the person or the matter under

discussion by means of active communicative productions. The description and illustration of levels of reciprocity in longer conversational sequences can be found in Section 5.5.

5.3. Displaying overt reciprocity through reactive tokens as a social action

This section aims to present the hypothesis concerning the linguistic production of reactive tokens and the conversational action of displaying overt reciprocity. It is based on the earlier discussion of the concept of reciprocity and the previous description and analysis of the formal characteristics of reactive tokens in Chapter 4. As noted above, reactive tokens are closely associated with responding actions in conversation. Specifically, reactive tokens can be seen as part of the human communicative repertoire in longer sequences in human interaction. In this project, an “action” or a “social action” can be defined as “composing the moment-by-moment flow of daily life in – and outside – interaction” (Schegloff 1996: 164). For instance, invitations, rejections, requests, promises, insults, complaints and the like can be considered as instances of social actions. The best example is that the practice of agreeing with another by repeating what he has said can constitute the action of confirming an allusion: “conveyed without being said” (ibid.). Put simply, the practice of confirming by repeating can be seen as one form of social actions deployed by co-participants in a social and jointly accomplished activity.

The deployment of diverse reactive tokens seems to be correlated with the recognizable social action of displaying overt reciprocity in longer sequences. The approach, adopted in this study to find this correlation, is to develop an account of social action performed through the use of reactive tokens. An empirical account of the action of “greeting” can be

considered as an illustration: the action of “greeting” is accomplished by putting a greeting term in first/initial (i.e., greeting) position in a conversation (Sacks 1992, vol. 1: 97; Schegloff 1996: 168). Specifically, the delivery of the greeting term “hello” in American telephone conversations can be treated as the action of “greeting” only if the pattern of “greeting items” in ‘greeting places’ is employed by co-participants. On the basis of an account of the action of “greeting”, one method to describe a social action is “to characterize some form or practice of talking (i.e., some utterance) and some characterization of the place or the location in which that practice is employed” (Schegloff 1996: 169). This approach will be generally adopted in this study.

In the data used for this study, it seems that there is a level of correlation between the practice of producing a reactive token and the action of displaying overt reciprocity. Thus, I hypothesize that the action of displaying overt reciprocity can be accomplished by producing one or more reactive tokens sequentially in second position.

5.4 Conversational identities as speakers and recipients

This section aims to show that the display of continued reciprocity is as important as the display of continued speakership in longer sequences. First, the negotiation of conversational identities as speakers and recipients is contingent and thus locally managed. As this suggests, the identities of participants can be seen as an emergent product of moment-by-moment flow of interaction. However, in some longer sequences such as story telling, direction giving, advice giving, amongst others, the conversational identities can be fixed locally at any point in the ongoing conversation. It is noteworthy that interlocutors are

simultaneously both recipients and speakers in interaction (Yngve 1970: 568). Thus, the display of continued reciprocity is also an important conversational strategy for a competent language user.

Fragment 5.1 below illustrates that the display of continued reciprocity plays a vital part in a longer sequence. Notice that I employ two terms in Turns 3 and 4: back-backchannels (Iwasaki 1997) and a sequence-closing token (Schegloff 2007). They are not treated as reactive tokens investigated in this study in the light of the definition of reactive tokens (see Chapter 4).

Fragment 5.1, from Turns 1 to 6, Group 1, 2006

1 X: 你 也 ,

ni ye

2SG too

“You too,

(0.5)

今天 , 你 要 去 ‘海盜船’ ,

jintian ni yao qu haidaochuan

today 2SG MV go pirate:ship

You will go to the ‘Pirate Ship’ today,

是 吧 ?

-- Pre-token TCU

shi ba

COP QP

won't you?"

(0.8)

2 → J: ‘海盜船’. [Okay. -- RT (Composite)

haidaochuan

pirate:ship

“Pirate Ship. Okay.”

3 X: [mh -- Back-backchannels

4 J: 好。 -- Sequence-closing token

hao

good

“Good.”

5 X: uh 那 我 先 告诉 你 怎么 到 那儿 -- Pre-token TCU

uh na wo xian gaosu ni zenme dao nar

uh well 1SG first tell 2SG how get there

“Uh, well, I first tell you how to get there.”

6 → J: mmhmm -- RT (Backchannel)

This fragment is located at the outset of the direction-giving interaction. First, X makes a proposition to assume that the landmark labelled *haidaochuan* “Pirate Ship” is the “Finish Point” on J’s map (Turn 1), followed by a tag question to seek confirmation from the recipient. The initial observation is that X, as the informed participant, has the primary speakership and holds the floor. She contributes new information to the topic expansion and development of

this exchange. In other words, the turns produced by X can be seen as a typical example of displaying continued speakership.

On the other hand, J plays the role of primary recipient in this exchange. She only articulates reactive tokens to display her participation in the ongoing conversation. That is, she is displaying her awareness of being a recipient, rather than grab the turn by uttering a succession of TCUs in a speaking turn. As an uninformed participant, she does not have anything substantial to add to the content of the ongoing conversation. However, her display of continued reciprocity facilitates X, the Information Giver, to secure that they have the same landmark labelled “Pirate Ship” as their destination. Subsequently, X makes a statement “I will first tell you how to get there” (Turn 5), which initiates the route construction in direction-giving sequences. This assertion serves as pre-announcement (Terasaki 2004).

Fragment 5.1 above also demonstrates how a co-participant (J) deploys a wide range of linguistic resources as well as interactional resources to accomplish her role as an engaged recipient. It is interesting to note that *‘mh’* (Turn 3) and *hao* ‘good’ (Turn 4) seem to resemble reactive tokens in the same linguistic forms. Nevertheless, they are not treated as reactive tokens because of their characteristics of sequential positions in this study. Instead, I will concentrate on the composite (Turn 2) and the backchannel (Turn 6), which are sequentially located in second position.

The first recipient’s response from J is the composite: the repeat in conjunction with the backchannel (Turn 2), which will be further explored on a turn-by-turn basis below. Speaker X starts the talk in a straightforward manner and points out the destination of the map task, i.e., the landmark labelled “Pirate Ship”, followed by a tag question with a falling intonation

(Turn 1). The tag question can be considered as the first pair part of an adjacency pair, projecting an agreement as a preferred response in the next relevant slot.

Subsequently, J repeats the label of the landmark, followed by ‘*okay*’ in overlap with X’s token ‘*mh*’ (Turn 2). Note that there is a short gap of 0.8 seconds. In this adjacency pair sequence, J is expected to provide a reactive expression (*shi/bushi*) to answer the tag question. However, J does not answer the tag question immediately. That is, a second pair part may be suspended, absent or delayed. Instead of providing an answer to the tag question, J only selects the lexical referent *haidaochuan* “Pirate Ship” as the most salient information from her perspective, as an alternative way to provide the second pair part. Through the repeat, J strategically displays her attention and alignment retrospectively to the immediately prior talk.

On occasion, repeats can also function as repair initiations (Jefferson 1972; Schegloff 1996b). In this fragment, however, this repeat can be treated as a reactive token rather than a repair initiator, because it is immediately followed by another token ‘*okay*’. These two constitute a composite.

‘*Okay*’ is an English reactive expression (see Chapter 2), which is used by the NS of Mandarin Chinese with the advanced English speaking level. Note that J’s ‘*okay*’ subsequent to the repeat fulfills two functions. First, J acknowledges what was projected in the prior tag question. Second, the use of ‘*okay*’ paves the way for next-positioned matters, such as the next topic or activity. With regard to the sequential positioning of ‘*okay*’, Beach (1993) discusses two types: ‘*okay*’ in freestanding formats and ‘*okay*’ followed by a fuller turn. In the data, notice that ‘*okay*’ can also be used subsequent to the repeat in a composite. At this point, the sub-task of the location descriptor regarding the landmark labelled “Pirate

Ship” reaches its actual termination. The co-participants are ready to move on to the next activity or topic.

By contrast, note that X produces the token ‘*mh*’ in overlap with J’s ‘*Okay*’ (Turn 3). I do not treat this token as a reactive token in this study, because it does not respond to the prior turn with propositional content. Tokens in this position have been termed “back-backchannels” by Iwasaki (1997). In this case, the overlapping of these two tokens can be understood to display participants’ active collaboration in the map task. Subsequently, B produces the Mandarin token *hao* ‘good’ (Turn 4). Once again, *hao* ‘good’ is not treated as a reactive token in this study, because it follows the backchannel ‘*mh*’ (Turn 3). J deploys the second reactive token ‘*mmhmm*’ (Turn 6) to display her agreement to X’s statement relating to the initiation of the direction-giving sequence. Here, ‘*mmhmm*’ is one variation of backchannels in this study.

To summarize, J has been shown to display full recipient engagement in this exchange: producing the composite of the repeat in conjunction with the reactive expression, and the backchannel. Through the display of overt reciprocity in the form of composites and backchannels, she has accomplished her current and immediate sub-task: the establishment of “Pirate Ship” as the shared “Finish Point” on their individual maps. Once the co-participants have reached an agreement on this label, they are ready to resume the direction-giving sequence. In addition, Speakers X and J have been shown to have their distinct roles at this fixed point in this exchange: X acts as the primary speaker and J supports X as the primary recipient. Put simply, X displays an orientation to continued speakership, whereas J displays an awareness of being a recipient through variation and selection of reactive tokens.

5.5 A sequential analysis of displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens

Previous studies have shown that the display of overt reciprocity can be described by using a range of adjectives such as “passive” (Jefferson 1984a: 200), “neutral” (Müller 1996: 136; Kurhia 2006: 58), “appreciative” and “supportive” (Coates 2003), “active” (Hughes 1996: 9; Psathas 1995: 26), “affective” (McCarthy 2003: 50), and “affiliative” (Jefferson 1984b), among many other things.

Building on a collection of the map task data in 2004, 2005 and 2006, I propose that displaying levels of reciprocity and the selection of reactive tokens are correlated in longer conversational sequences. Further, the following framework is suggested, showing a continuum of displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in a gradient manner. I tentatively suggest that it may be a universal feature across languages to employ different types of reactive tokens in this way. The framework proposed can fit first and second language interaction in the data, as can be illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

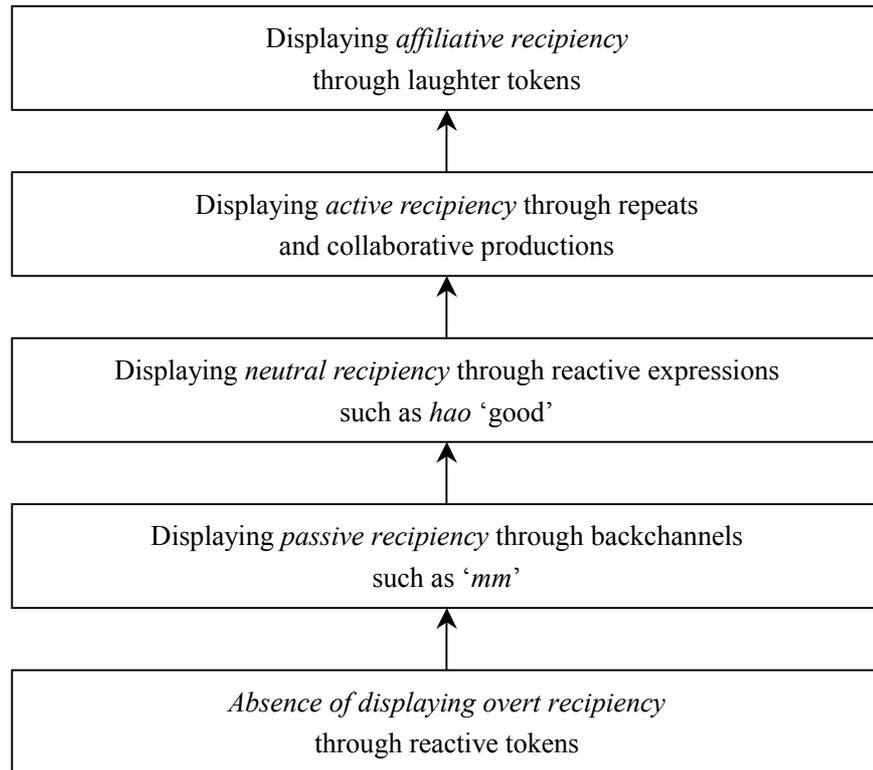


Figure 5.1 The framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens

As can be seen from the framework proposed above, some recipients may not produce reactive tokens to show overt reciprocity (nonspeaking reciprocity, Ehrlich 2002). Once again, the absence of reactive tokens does not mean that there is no reciprocity; only that none is being displayed through vocalizations. In addition, there are a variety of means to accomplish the display of overt reciprocity, in addition to the employment of reactive tokens, such as nodding and shaking heads (Duncan and Neiderehe 1974), gaze movements (Goodwin 1981, 2007), among other things. To iterate, I only concentrate on displaying overt reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens, primarily because of the characteristics of the map task conversations. The examples below are intended to illustrate

five levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation. Note that the following instances come from both first and second language interaction.

5.5.1 Absence of displaying overt reciprocity in the absence of reactive tokens

The first type is the one in which recipients do not produce any reactive tokens to display overt reciprocity, even though the floor-holding speaker employs a linguistically strategic device as the potential first pair part. This device makes the overt reciprocity display duly performed as the next relevant action in the adjacency pair sequence. Fragment 5.2 below from the 2004 data clearly shows that the display of overt reciprocity is noticeably absent. In this instance, Speakers D and A are discussing the position of the landmark labelled *pubu* “Waterfalls”.

Fragment 5.2, from Turns 73 and 74, Group 3, 2004

73 D: ‘瀑布’ 在 路线图 的 右边。 -- First TCU (first saying)

pubu zai luxiantu de youbian

waterfalls be:in route MM right:side

“‘Waterfalls’ is on the right of the route.

明白 不? -- Second TCU (first pair part)

mingbai bu

understand NEG

Do you see (what I mean)?

(.)

在 路线图 的 右边。 -- Third TCU (same-speaker first repeat)

zai luxiantu de youbian

be:in route MM right:side

(It is) on the right of the route.

明白 不？ --Fourth TCU (first pair part)

mingbai bu

understand NEG

Do you see (what I mean)?

(.)

在 路线图 的 右边。 -- Fifth TCU (same-speaker second repeat)

zai luxiantu de youbian

be:in route MM right

(It is) on the right of the route.

也就是，路线图 的 左边 是 路 -- Sixth TCU

yejiushi luxiantu de zuobian shi lu

that:is route MM left:side COP path

That is, the path is on the left of the route.

明白 了 吗？ -- Seventh TCU

mingbai le ma

understand ASP QP

Do you see (what I mean)?

74 A: 明白。

-- RT (Reactive expression)

mingbai

understand

“Yes, I do.”

Speaker A does not orient to any linguistic resources to display overt reciprocity, in response to D’s (the informed participant) description of the position of the landmark labelled *pubu* “Waterfalls”. The landmark is consequential in their joint activity of a location descriptor. After D’s delivery of the first TCU at the CTRP, A does not provide any form of reactive tokens to display reciprocity overtly. It is important to note that it is optional, appropriate and legitimate for a recipient to produce a reactive token to display overt reciprocity at the point of recognizable completion of each TCU.

Without demonstrable reciprocity, D deploys a linguistic strategy of a yes/no question as the first pair part in the second TCU for an understanding check in the pursuit of a response from A. Nevertheless, A does not provide any answer as the second pair part, which is noticeably absent and thus accountable. Once more, D repeats the description of the position of the “Waterfalls” for a second time, followed by another yes/no question. In the fifth TCU, D repeats the description, followed by further elaboration in the sixth TCU. A third yes/no question is produced as a linguistic strategy to elicit a response from the recipient. In the end, A provides a lexical item as confirmation (i.e., as a second pair part) in the question-answer adjacency pair sequence.

In this two-turn fragment, the floor-holding speaker has been shown to formulate and reformulate or even modify his utterances in the same pattern of “a declarative sentence of

describing the location (with additional elaboration) followed by a yes/no question” in three attempts, including two same-speaker repeats. In the end, the recipient provides the answer to acknowledge his attention and understanding of the incoming information concerning the location descriptor. As this suggests, the recipient has the potential power to shape and affect the progressivity of the ongoing topic and thus the trajectory of the subsequent talk. Without an overtly displayed understanding from the recipient, the floor-holding speaker has to repeat the salient information. She cannot proceed with the topic development or move forward to the next activity until the desired confirmation has been achieved.

In the absence of displaying overt recipiency in English conversation, Pomerantz notes that the floor-holding speaker can make three types of inference as follows:

- (i) A recipient may not understand because a reference is unclear or a term unknown; (ii) A recipient may be confused because a speaker, in referring to a matter, presumes that the recipient knows about it when he or she does not; and (iii) A recipient may be hesitant to respond coherently because he or she does not support, or agree with, the speaker’s assertion (Pomerantz 1984b: 152-153).

These three types of the floor-holding speaker’s inference seem to lend weight to my argument that the recipient has the possibility to affect or shape the trajectory of the primary speaker’s subsequent action(s) and thus contributions to the ongoing conversation.

In summary, this instance can be seen as one striking example of absence of displaying overt recipiency in relation to the ongoing topic in conversation. It is apparent that the

recipient does not produce any forms of vocalizations voluntarily in the legitimate positions at seven points of CTRPs. The final response is articulated, after the floor-holding speaker formulates three yes/no questions to secure the recipient's understanding of the description of the location of *pubu*. It seems that the recipient does not display his co-participation or engagement as a "good" recipient in this collaborative, co-operative and interactional conversational activity. In this regard, Speaker A can be heard or treated as disengaged and indifferent. Here, it might be interesting to explore the reasons why the recipient is heard so disattended or distant, which can be seen as another dimension of reciprocity for future research through an alternative approach.

5.5.2 Displaying passive reciprocity through backchannels

At the second level of reciprocity, the recipient can employ backchannels to display passive reciprocity toward the floor-holding speaker's immediately prior talk. For the purposes of the present investigation, passive reciprocity refers to a relatively low level of engagement in the production of a minimal response in the form of backchannels, which are semantically empty from linguistic perspectives. It could be argued that recipients are not totally passive in this case, because they are involved in interactional moves by producing sounds to show attention and understanding. Nevertheless, "passive reciprocity" in my framework is employed simply to differentiate different levels of reciprocity, compared with other linguistic forms such as reactive expressions, composites, repeats, collaborative productions and laughter tokens (see below).

Fragment 5.3 below illustrates that the recipient displays passive reciprocity through producing a succession of '*mhm*'s in a longer sequence. In this fragment, Speaker X is the

uninformed participant who has not got the access to the information of the correct route. However, K is the informed participant who knows the correct route in the map task and can therefore be regarded as the epistemic authority.

Fragment 5.3, from Turns 203 to 215, Group 2, 2006

203 K: 我 要 跟 你 说 , 什 么 地 方 要 转 。 -- Pre-token TCU

wo yao gen ni shuo shenme difang yao zhuan

1SG MV follow 2SG say what place MV turn

“I will tell you where to turn around.”

204 X: 好。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

hao

good

“Good.”

205 K: 转 到 北 部 , 北 方 去 。

zhuan dao beibu beifang qu

turn reach north north go

“Turn toward the north, and go to the north.

(0.5)

你 先 看 那 个 , 那 个 线 ,

ni xian kan na ge na ge xian

2SG first see that CLF that CLF line

You first look at that, that line.

从 那 个 ‘操场’, -- Pre-token TCU

cong na ge caochang

from that CLF playground

from that landmark labelled the ‘Playground’,”

(.)

206 → X: mhm -- RT (Backchannel)

207 K: 五 个 鸟。 -- Pre-token TCU

wu ge niao

five CLF bird

“Five birds,”

(0.3)

208 → X: mhm -- RT (Backchannel)

209 K: 这 个 地方, -- Pre-token TCU

zhe ge difang

this CLF place

“This place,”

(0.2)

210 → X: mhm -- RT (Backchannel)

(0.2)

211 K: 你, 你 要, 你 转 到 北方 的,

ni ni yao ni zhuan dao beifang de

2SG 2SG MV 2SG turn reach north MM

“you, you have to, you turn towards the north.”

(0.7)

212 X: ah, 五 个 鸟 的 上边 , = -- Preliminary component

ah wu ge niao de shangbian

ah five CLF bird MM upper

“Ah, above the five birds,”

213 K: =北方 走 -- RT (Final component)

beifang zou

north walk

“walk towards the north.”

214 X: uh, 五 , 从 , 线 从 五 个 鸟 的 上边 过= -- Pre-token TCU

wu cong xian cong wu ge niao de shangbian guo

five from line from five CLF bird MM top pass

“Uh, five, from, the line goes from the top of the five birds.”

215 K: =是 的, 是 的。 -- RT (Reactive expressions)

shi de shi de

COP MM COP MM

“Yes, yes.”

The initial observation is that K attempts to formulate his utterances regarding the route construction in a number of steps in order to segment the complicated task into small manageable jobs. At the first stage, K makes an explicit statement to inform the recipient

what he intends to accomplish in a longer sequence (Turn 203). This can be seen as a pre-sequence prior to one sub-task in the joint activity. Subsequently, X sends out the Mandarin reactive expression *hao* ‘good’ (Turn 204) to display her agreement to collaborate and follow the co-participant’s further instructions. Through the token *hao*, X achieves the display of overt reciprocity to maintain intersubjectivity and to secure recipient engagement.

At the second stage, from Turn 205, K initiates his turn by producing a verb phrase. The key information is the north as the target position of the moment. The second TCU is concerned with *xian* ‘route’, starting from the landmark labelled *caochang* ‘playground’, which does not reach a point of possible turn completion (i.e., at non-TRPs). Here, the prepositional phrase can be seen as an adjunct of the follow-up predicate in the next turn. It is noteworthy that the floor-holding speaker strategically deploys one syntactic resource of the phrasal unit boundary as the monitor space to cue overt reciprocity from the co-participant. As expected, K sends out ‘*mhm*’ in the service of a continuer.

Subsequently, K produces two noun phrases (NPs) (Turns 207 and 209), in the course of formulating his utterances, making it intelligible for the recipient. X delivers ‘*mhm*’ as a continuer at the completion of each noun phrase, after a gap of a slight pause. In terms of the syntactic construction, these two noun phrases in conjunction with the prepositional phrase at the end of Turn 205, serve as adjuncts for the subsequent main clause (Turn 211). By using the same backchannel ‘*mhm*’ three times (from Turns 205 to turn 211), the recipient supports and encourages the informed participant to complete his action of route construction in segmented utterance formulations in the longer sequence. Up to Turn 211, K has finally accomplished his job of informing X where to turn around: X is supposed to turn toward the

north from the landmark labelled “Playground”, where five birds are located.

There is a puzzle here: why does the recipient employ the same backchannel ‘*mhm*’, which emerges three times as continuers across the speaking turns? In other words, why doesn’t the recipient select different forms or types of reactive token such as ‘*uh*’, *hao* ‘good’, or *dui* ‘right’? In the literature, Schegloff (1982: 85) argues that the consecutive use of the same token may indicate “the recipient’s lack of interest or attention” in the ongoing topic in English conversation. In this fragment, however, the consecutive use of the same token across turns can be heard or treated as uncommitted, reserved and unobtrusive. The aim might be to avoid any form of interference or interruption of the floor-holding speaker’s ongoing utterance formulation and to achieve some larger interactional goal in the end. It is interesting to note that the floor-holding speaker is constructing one syntactically complete sentence across turns. Provided that I do not take into account reactive tokens produced by the recipient, the fragmentary TCUs in different speaking turns can piece together and constitute one syntactically complete sentence from Turns 205 to 213.

At the third stage, prior to Turn 212, the recipient can figure out the route construction by putting together the fragmentary TCUs from Turns 205 to 213. These turns serve to establish the common ground for the subsequent turns or actions. At the final stage, X reviews or rephrases K’s route construction (Turn 214) in an appropriate syntactic structure: *xian cong wuge niao de shangmian guo* ‘the route goes from the top of the five birds’. This can be understood as one variation of candidate understanding. Without any gap or overlap, K sends out the Mandarin reactive expressions *shide* ‘yes’ twice to display his confirmation of X’s candidate understanding as the epistemic authority. Thus, the sub-task of the route

construction regarding where to turn around has reached a possible sequence-closing point.

In summary, the recipient has been shown to design and orient to the same token form (i.e., ‘*mhm*’) repeatedly to display her continuous effort to support and encourage the informed participant. The consecutive use of ‘*mhm*’ can be considered as optimal and appropriate in this local context. However, this is not in line with Schegloff’s (1982: 85) observation concerning consecutive use of the same token in English conversation. It could be concluded that backchannels, such as ‘*mhm*’, display passive reciprocity and thus can be seen as part of the human communicative repertoire in human interaction.

5.5.3 Displaying neutral reciprocity through reactive expressions

At the third level of reciprocity, reactive expressions can be employed to display neutral reciprocity. For the purposes of the present study, “neutral reciprocity” refers to one particular level of recipient engagement in the form of reactive expressions such as “*yes*”, “*right*” and “*okay*”, amongst others, which can be heard more engaged than the form of backchannels (i.e., vocalizations). One possible reason is that reactive expressions at least have some definite lexical content, whereas backchannels are semantically empty. Fragment 5.4 below illustrates that the recipient orients to *dui* “right” to display neutral reciprocity in the information mismatch sequence.

Fragment 5.4, from Turns 97 to 100, Group 1, 2006

97 X: 然后 , 那 ‘耕地’ 呢 ?

ranhou na gendi ne

subsequently that farmed:land QP

“Subsequently, how about the landmark labelled ‘Farmed Land’?”

‘耕地’ 是 不 是 在 ？

gendi shi bu shi zai

farmed:land COP NEG COP in

Is the landmark labelled ‘Farmed Land’ at?

如果 面向 地图 的话，

ruguo mianxiang ditu dehua

if face map in:the:case:of

If (I) face the map,

‘耕地’ 应该 是 在 ‘枯木’ 的 右 手 边=

gendi yinggai shi zai kumu de you shou bian

farmed:land MV COP in dead:tree MM right hand side

‘Farmed Land’ should be on the right of the landmark labelled ‘Dead Tree’.”

98 J: =没 有。 =

mei you

NEG have

“No, there is not.

所以，右 手 边 有 个 ‘耕地’。 = -- Pre-token TCU

suoyi you shou bian you ge gendi

so right hand side have CLF farmed:land

So, there is (a landmark labelled) ‘Farmed Land’ on the right side.”

99 → X: =对， 对。 = -- RT (Reactive expressions)

dui dui

right right

“Right, right.”

100 J: = 好 的。 -- Sequence-closing token

hao de

good MM

“Good.”

This is a typical information mismatch sequence in the data: two labels for the same landmark: *kumu* “Dead Tree” and *gendi* “Farmed Land” (i.e., label change). Speaker X acts as the Information Giver (the informed participant). She informs J that there is a landmark labelled *gendi* “Farmed Land” (Turn 97) on the right of *kumu* “Dead Tree”. At the completion of delivery of the unknown information, J takes up the turn and produces a negation, in response to the last TCU (Turn 97). It states that the landmark labelled “Farmed Land” is absent on her map. Through the use of the connective *suoyi* ‘so’, J intends to expand her turn by adding another TCU, which rephrases X’s statement (Turn 97). In a conflict-relevant environment, the rephrasing registers the information that there is a landmark labelled “Farmed Land” on the right. This rephrasing implies that J realizes that she should have the same landmark with the same label in the same position as that on X’s map. It serves as a transition to convert the disagreement-relevant environment into the agreement-relevant one.

In an agreement-relevant environment, X (the informed participant) produces two

reactive expressions *dui* ‘right’ (Turn 99) as epistemic confirmation tokens in second position. There is no gap or overlap in this case. J produces the token *haode* ‘good’ (Turn 100) as the confirmation in third position and displays her preparedness to move on to the next landmark/topic in the larger direction-giving sequence.

In the above example, note that reactive expressions are placed at CTRPs to retrospectively display the recipient’s sense making and agreement of the immediately prior talk. They serve as the epistemic confirmation in the disagreement-relevant environment, where *gendi* is absent on J’s map. To iterate, I argue that reactive expressions can be deployed to display a higher level of recipient engagement in the sense that reactive expressions such as *dui* ‘right’ have clear and definite semantic content, compared with backchannels such as ‘*mh*’, ‘*uh huh*’, ‘*m hm*’, amongst others. It seems that information mismatches demand more engagement from a recipient. As a result, Mandarin participants do not normally orient to backchannels in disagreement-relevant environments, as previously discussed in Chapter 4.

5.5.4 Displaying active reciprocity through repeats and collaborative productions

At the fourth level of reciprocity, recipients can repeat the salient information and employ collaborative productions to show active participation in the ongoing conversation. Within the framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens, “active reciprocity” refers to the display of an awareness of being a recipient in the form of repeats and collaborative productions in longer conversational sequences. They can be heard more engaged than other two types of reactive token: backchannels and reactive expressions, as illustrated in previous sections. The rationale of the definition above is

presented as follows. First, the complete or partial repeat of the first saying can reflect the information filtering process by the recipient. The recipient attempts to select the most relevant and salient information from the immediately prior turn to reproduce and register it. The use of repeats shows a recipient's awareness of orienting to the detail of the immediately prior talk by reproducing noun phrases or verb phrases as the salient information. Next, collaborative production is based on the shared knowledge of the topic of the moment. The recipient is supposed to attend to the detail of the prior turn by recognizing the syntactic structure and coming into the floor-holding speaker's turn space at the right time and in the right place. The collaborative production thus demands a high level of recipient engagement and active participation. It is also known as "affiliating utterance" (Lerner 2004b). This perspective can be further evidenced by Sacks' observation of "a collaboratively built sentence":

Although that is certainly so to some considerable extent, the fact that there is a job that any person could clearly do by themselves, provides a resource for members for permitting them to show each other that whatever it is they're doing together, they're just doing together to do together. That is to say, if one wants to find a way of showing somebody that what you want is to be with them, the best way to do it is to find some way of dividing a task which is not easily dividable, and which clearly can be done by either one alone (Sacks 1992: 147).

Fragment 5.5 below illustrates the display of active reciprocity through a collaborative

production. In this instance, Speakers L and K are talking about the same location of the landmark labelled *pubu* “Waterfalls”, as in Fragment 5.3. Nevertheless, they initiate the discussion in a word search.

Fragment 5.5, from Turns 65 to 80, Group 3, 2006

65 L: 反正，你过了那个桥。

fanzheng ni guo le na ge qiao

anyway 2SG pass ASP that CLF bridge

“Anyway, you pass that bridge.

然后，到了那个： -- Pre-token TCU

ranhou dao le na ge

subsequently reach ASP that CLF

Subsequently, reach that:

66 K: 好。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

hao

good

“Good.”

67 L: 喷水那个东西。 -- A word search

pen shui na ge dongxi

spray water that CLF stuff

“Something can spray water.

怎么说？

zenme shuo

how say

How (can I) describe (it)?

不 是 喷 水。

bu shi pen shui

NEG COP spray water

It does not spray water.

那 种 ， 就 是 ， 河 里。

na zhong jiu shi he li

that CLF just COP river inside

That sort of, that is, inside the river.

68 K: ‘瀑布’。 -- Pre-token TCU (First saying)

pubu

waterfalls

“Waterfalls?”

69 L: 对。 ‘瀑布’。 -- RT (Composite)

dui pubu

right waterfalls

“Right, ‘Waterfalls’.”

70 K: 我 看到 那 个 ‘瀑布’。

wo kandao na ge pubu

1SG see that CLF waterfalls

“I have seen that landmark labelled ‘Waterfalls’.”

71 L: 有 一 个 ‘瀑布’。

you yi ge pubu

have one CLF waterfalls

“I have one (landmark labeled) ‘Waterfalls’.”

72 K: 要 经过 这 个, -- Pre-token TCU (Preliminary component)

yao jingguo zhe ge

MV pass this CLF

“You have to pass this,”

73 → L: ‘瀑布’。 -- RT (Final component)

pubu

waterfalls

“Waterfalls.”

74 K: uh, ‘瀑布’, ‘瀑布’, hehe -- Third-turn confirmation

pubu pubu

waterfalls waterfalls

“Uh, ‘Waterfalls’, ‘Waterfalls’, hehe.”

This fragment shows that three reactive tokens are methodically designed by recipients to display their participation in the ongoing talk. The Information Follower (K) displays an awareness of being a recipient and produces the reactive expression *hao* ‘good’ (Turn 66) in the midst of the TCU-in-progress, articulated by the informed participant (L). L elongates

the demonstrative pronoun *nage* ‘that’ to hold the floor, while he is in the process of searching for the target word. It is an incomplete syntactic unit, with the transitive verb projecting the anticipated noun phrase as the object (“Transitive Verb + Object” Construction). In this slot, the recipient can produce a backchannel or a reactive expression as a continuer to prompt the floor-holding speaker to provide a noun or a noun phrase to finish his own TCU-in-progress. Actually, K opts for the reactive expression *hao* ‘good’ to display his continued reciprocity, indicating that the speaker can go on with his informing.

Alternatively, K can opt for another type of reactive token such as a collaborative production. That is, the recipient can provide a candidate completion to enter the floor-holding speaker’s turn space. However, K does not employ a collaborative production, because this is the first time they are talking about the label of the landmark (i.e., *pubu*) and K does not know it yet. This nonoccurrence suggests that the use of a collaborative production is not accidental but more constrained. Collaborative productions can be seen as the consequence of intersubjective understanding between a speaker and a recipient in the local context, i.e., context-sensitive. Put differently, at the outset of the telling of the new landmark (i.e., topic initiation stage), it is not possible for the recipient to employ a collaborative production. This nonoccurrence might result from the fact that the speaker and the recipient have not established any intersubjective understanding of the ongoing topic. Once again, it seems that there are more constraints for the emergence of collaborative productions than backchannels and reactive expressions. Thus, the data reveal that the employment of collaborative productions is far less frequent than that of backchannels and reactive expressions, as will be illustrated through quantitative analysis in Chapter 7.

L, the informed participant, displays an awareness of being a recipient and produces the composite (the reactive expression in conjunction with the repeat in Turn 69) to display his active reciprocity. This composite can be heard or treated as a signal of active reciprocity, in which the recipient is hearable as excited and joyful to obtain the desired word in a word search sequence.

To iterate, the Information Giver displays an awareness of being a recipient and completes the speaker's utterance (Turn 73) in the same position as in Turn 65. In terms of the syntactic construction, this collaborative production consists of two parts: the demonstrative pronoun *zhege* 'this' as the Modifier and the anticipated noun phrase as the Head, as can be illustrated in Figure 5.2 below.

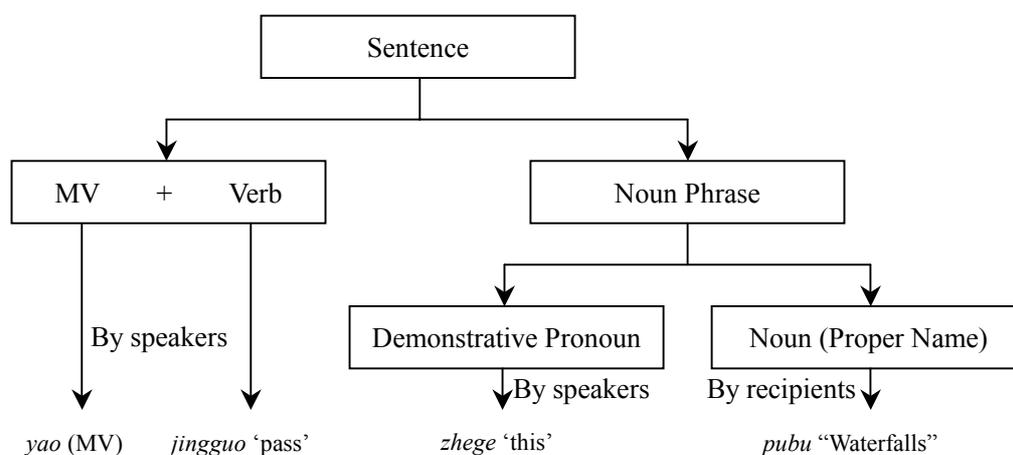


Figure 5.2 The collaborative production of a noun phrase within a sentence

In Turn 73, L does not produce another reactive expression to prompt the floor-holding speaker to finish his own sentence as he does in Turn 66. However, L produces the final component and completes K's TCU on the ground that both the speaker and the recipient have established intersubjective understanding regarding the label *pu-bu* "Waterfalls". Without

the establishment of their shared knowledge and intersubjective understanding, L can only produce a backchannel or a reactive expression to prompt K to complete his own TCU, as illustrated in Turn 65. In this local context, the use of collaborative productions can display higher level of reciprocity: his effort and enthusiasm for the ongoing topic.

In summary, this fragment has shown that a collaborative production can be seen as an interactional product of the establishment of the shared knowledge and intersubjective understanding between a speaker and a recipient at the termination of informings. It could be concluded that repeats (see Fragment 4.21 in Chapter 4) and collaborative productions display active reciprocity and thus can be seen as part of the communicative repertoire in human interaction.

5.5.5 Displaying affiliative reciprocity through laughter tokens

At the fifth level of reciprocity, a recipient can deploy laughter tokens to show affiliation or empathy in order to build strong bonds with a floor-holding speaker. For the purposes of the present investigation, “affiliative reciprocity” refers to the display of an awareness of being a recipient in the form of laughter tokens in terms of engagement convergence or the sense of “togetherness” between a speaker and a recipient. It is ranked at the highest level within the framework for displaying overt reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences. Fragment 5.6 below illustrates affiliative reciprocity through solo laughter in the disagreement-relevant environment.

Fragment 5.6, from Turns 35 to 38, Group 1, 2006

35 X: 对。 其实， ‘水井’ 那 个 位置 就 在，

dui qishi shuijing na ge weizhi jiu zai
 right actually well that CLF location just be:in

“Right. Actually, the location of the ‘Wells’ is just at,

你 看 那 个, 就 是, 它 自 己 的 那 个 地 图。

ni kan na ge jiu shi ta ziji de na ge ditu

you see that CLF just COP 3SG self MM that CLF map

You see that, that is, its own map,

地 图 的, 最, 最 下 角 的 地 方,

ditu de zui zui xia jiao de difang

map MM most most down corner MM place

the place at the downward corner

就 是, 怎 么 说 呢?

jiu shi zenme shuo ne

just COP how say QP

That is, how (can I) tell?

36 J: 我 听 不 懂。 -- Pre-token TCU (Trouble)

wo ting bu dong

1SG hear NEG understand

“I do not see (what you mean).”

37 →X: [haha -- RT (Laughter token)

38 J: [是 在 那 个 ‘本地住宅区’。

shi zai na ge bendi zhuzhaiqu

COP in that CLF local:residents

(It is located) at the 'Local Residents'.

‘水井’ 离 ‘本地住宅区’ 是 什么 地方？

shuijing li bendi zhuzhaiqu shi shenme difang

well away local:residents COP what place

Where is (it) from the 'Well' to the 'Local Residents'?"

This fragment represents a typical information-mismatch sequence. Speaker X, the Information Giver, displays her difficulty in a location descriptor by explicitly saying *wo zenme shuo ne* "How can I tell?" In response to the immediately prior talk, J makes a negative statement that she fails to make sense of X's route construction (Turn 35). It is apparent that both the Information Giver and Follower are in trouble at the outset of this fragment. Confronting J's explicit way to inform the speaker of her failure to follow, X produces the laughter token in overlap with J's continuation of the account of her confusion. After a brief overlap, X terminates her laughter and displays her attentiveness to J's question (Turn 38). It is voluntary and there is not any invitation from the co-participant, but the source of the laughter is clear: J's failure to follow X's instructions. In other words, the production of this laughter token is a response to J's failure to understand the floor-holding speaker. It is a methodic device to show X's empathy (i.e., sympathy) and awareness that the Follower is expectable and understandable to be confused in a conflict-relevant environment. In this regard, it can be interpreted as "Never mind." or "It does not matter." Thus, the laughter token can be seen as an alternative strategy to display the recipient's

affiliation towards the Follower's failure in understanding rather than explicitly say *meiguanxi* 'It is all right'. This is in line with Norrick and Spitz's (2008: 1681) observation that laughter itself can mark the end of a conflict, even in the absence of humorous orientations.

As discussed above, five individual fragments have been drawn from the data for detailed analysis to illustrate the framework proposed. All the reactive tokens as seconds in the data can fit the framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens. However, it is important to note that not all instances found in naturally occurring conversation in other languages will fit this framework because of the complexity and variety of human interaction. It could be argued that this framework is just oversimplistic. One challenge of this framework might be that the prosodic configurations of a reactive token occurring in ordinary conversation can add another layer of meaning or function to the token produced. For instance, 'mhm' in a particular prosodic configuration might be employed as a display of affiliative reciprocity at a higher level rather than that of passive reciprocity at a lower level in this study.

To summarize, the study has shown that the level of reciprocity plays a key role in co-participants' selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences. On the other hand, the organization of topics and conversational contexts have also been shown to play some part in the emergent reactive tokens as seconds in the smooth flow of conversation, as discussed in Chapter 4. It seems that the selection of a particular reactive token as a "second" is more sophisticated than one may assume. This chapter focuses on the interrelationships between the level of reciprocity and the selection of a reactive token in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation.

By sequential analysis, reactive tokens have been shown to be systematically employed to manifest different levels of reciprocity as a cline that moves from a simple continuer to a signal of engagement as one of the possible axes (Knight and Adolphs 2007). This finding is in line with Allwood et al.'s (1993: 4) observation that backchannels (i.e., one type of reactive token in this study) enable participants of a conversation to unobtrusively exchange information about four basic communicative functions: contact, perception, understanding and attitudinal reactions. It is worth noting that there seems no positive correlation between levels of reciprocity and levels of good listenership. Put differently, the framework I proposed does not intend to suggest that most proficient listenership equals highest level of reciprocity. Rather, knowing how to react by choosing the best reacting options on the basis of the current and ongoing interactive situation exhibits the most proficient listenership.

Furthermore, this study has shown that there is a hierarchy of the display of overt reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in a gradient manner: passive → neutral → active → affiliative. This newly constructed framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens can present a holistic view on the role of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences. This study thus departs from the majority of previous research on description and analysis of different functions of one single reactive token in different conversational environments.

The next chapter will deal with the selection of a reactive token by applying the framework I proposed to the information mismatch sequences in disagreement-relevant environments. It is a contrastive analysis of reactive tokens in first and second language interaction.

6 The Selection of Reactive Tokens in Information Mismatch Sequences

This chapter aims to present the selection of reactive tokens in conflict-relevant environments through contrastive analysis in first and second language interaction. I will argue that reactive tokens play a vital part in conflict talk in Mandarin conversation. Generally, recipients manage and orient to the chunks of incoming information from the informed participant. At the same time, they attend to their linguistic and sequential resources to articulate reactive tokens at the right time and in the appropriate place. In so doing, they can sustain mutual understanding, as discussed in Chapter 4, and secure recipient engagement, as presented in Chapter 5. Non-native speakers (NNSs) as recipients attempt to accomplish the same job with their limited linguistic resources in the target language. On occasion, they may revert to their knowledge of reactive tokens in their first language (i.e., English). Thus, it seems that reactive tokens contribute to participants' individual identity and culture in the context of a comparison between first and second language interaction.

As previously discussed in Chapter 5, the production of reactive tokens is associated with levels of reciprocity within the framework proposed in longer conversational sequences. In this chapter, however, the key issue relating to the selection of a particular reactive token by NSs and NNSs to solve the conflict will be further explored. Specifically, three paired fragments of information mismatches are investigated in first and second language interaction. I will focus on the way in which NSs and NNSs select reactive tokens to strategically deal with the potential conflicts.

6.1 Information mismatch sequences

In order to solve the question regarding the selection of reactive tokens in specific contexts, I will apply the framework proposed in Chapter 5 to investigating the information mismatch sequence in first and second language interaction. In broad terms, information mismatch can refer to any instance of one person's knowing and the other person's not-knowing. For the purposes of this study, the information mismatch refers to specific knowledge gap in relation to the labels and the locations of landmarks as directional referents as well as the operations between the fixed points of landmarks in a narrower sense. In greater detail, three types of information mismatch will be further explored in this section: (i) two different labels for the same landmark (i.e., label change); (ii) absence of the landmark on one participant's map (i.e., absence/presence); and (iii) one landmark with the same label on one participant's map but two landmarks with the same label on the other participant's map (i.e., number inconsistency).

In addition, an information mismatch can be considered to be one type of conflict talk (e.g., Coulter 1990; Gruber 1998; Norrick and Spitz 2008) in the general sense. More importantly, Norrick and Spitz (2008: 1681) note that, in their English data, laughter (i.e., one type of reactive token in this study) in itself can mark the end of conflict even in the absence of humorous orientations. Their finding suggests that laughter can play a part in conflict talk, which can be further explored in the analysis of information mismatch sequences below.

In terms of the termination of the conflict talk, four ways have been identified in the literature: submission, compromise, stand-off and withdrawal (e.g., Stein and Bernas 1997;

Vuchinich 1990). In this study, two common ways have been found to terminate information mismatch sequences in the data: submission²⁰ and withdrawal²¹. The subsequent sections illustrate the distinct procedures through which NSs and NNSs select reactive tokens to resolve each type of information mismatch. In each type, paired episodes from the map task conversations are investigated. One is between two NNSs, and the other is between two NSs.

6.2 Type I: Label change

As noted earlier, the first type of conflict is that the Giver and Follower have distinct labels for the same landmark on their maps. Their immediate task is to recognize the potential conflict and to agree on the proper label of the landmark.

6.2.1 Episode One by NNSs (17 Turns): *daxingxing* (大猩猩)

The first episode is concerned with NNSs in second language interaction. Fragment 6.1 below demonstrates the procedures through which NNSs resolve the information mismatch as a potential conflict with the analytic focus on the selection of reactive tokens. In this longer fragment, the conflict is that there are two different labels for the same landmark on the Giver's (L's) and the Follower's (K's) maps. On L's map, it is labelled *daxingxing* "Gorillas". On K's map, however, it is labelled *xiangjiaoshu* "Banana Trees".

Fragment 6.1, from Turns 17 to 33, Group 3, 2006 (NNS-NNS)

17 L: 走 到 那 个 ‘大猩猩’ 那 个 地方。

²⁰ The Information Follower (i.e., the uninformed participant) concedes and accepts the Information Giver's (i.e., the informed participant) position.

²¹ One party abandons the current topic triggering the potential conflict.

zou dao na ge daxingxing na ge difang

walk arrive that CLF gorillas that CLF place

“Walk and arrive at the place (labelled) ‘Gorillas’.

你的地图有没有‘大猩猩’？ -- First saying

ni de ditu you mei you daxingxing

2SG MM map have NEG have gorillas

Is there (a landmark labelled) ‘Gorillas’ on your map?”

18 →K: ‘大猩猩’？ -- Repair initiator

daxingxing

gorillas

“Gorillas?”

19 L: 就是那种动物，有点像人。

jiu shi na zhong dongwu youdian xiang ren

just COP that CLF animal a:little like human:being

“(It) is just that sort of animal, a little like human being.

有点像我爸爸，有毛的。

youdian xiang wo baba you mao de

a:little like 1SG father have hair MM

(It is) somewhat like my father (ancestor), who is hairy.”

20 K: 没有。没有。 -- RT (Reactive expressions)

mei you mei you

NEG have NEG have

“No, no.”

21 L: 你 没 有 ‘大猩猩’ ?

ni mei you daxingxing

2SG NEG have gorillas

“Don’t you have (the landmark labelled) ‘Gorillas’?”

22 K: 没 有。 在 这 个 地图, 没 有 ‘大猩猩’ 。

mei you zai zhe ge ditu mei you daxingxing

NEG have in this CLF map NEG have gorillas

“No. There is not (the landmark labelled) ‘Gorillas’ on this map.

有 一 个 ‘树蕉树’²²。

you yi ge shujiaoshu

have one CLF banana:tree

I have one (landmark labelled) the ‘Banana Tree’.

树, 你 知道 香蕉, ‘香蕉树’,

shu ni zhidao xiangjiao xiangjiaoshu

tree 2SG know banana banana:tree

“Regarding trees, do you know bananas, ‘Banana Trees’?”

知道 吗? -- Pre-token TCU

zhidao ma

know QP

Do you see (what I mean)?”

23 → L: oh -- RT (Backchannels)

²² This is the actual representation of the wrong pronunciation of the label produced by the NNS.

24 K: 我 有 , 香 , ‘香蕉树’。

wo you xiang xiangjiaoshu

1SG have *xiang*, banana:tree

“I have *xiang*, (a landmark labelled) ‘Banana Tree’.”

25 L: 但是, 里面 没 有 ‘大猩猩’。

danshi limian mei you daxingxing

but inside NEG have gorillas

“But you do not have (the landmark labelled) ‘Gorillas’ on (your map).”

26 K: 我 没 有 ‘大猩猩’。 Hehe

wo mei you daxingxing

1SG NEG have gorillas

“I do not have (a landmark labelled) the ‘Gorillas’, hehe.”

27 L: 但 , 不 对。 有 可能 ,

dan bu dui you keneng

but NEG right have possibility

“But, (that’s not) right. It is possible

它们 就 是 住 在 那 个 地方。

tamen jiu shi zhu zai na ge difang

3PP just COP live in that CLF place

that they just live there,

因为 ‘大猩猩’ 喜欢 吃 香蕉 ,

yinwei daxingxing xihuan chi xiangjiao

because gorillas like eat bananas

because ‘Gorillas’ like to eat bananas,

对 不 对? -- Pre-token TCU

dui bu dui

right NEG right

don’t they?”

28 → K: 是 啊。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

shi a

COP PRT

“Yes.”

29 L: 所以, -- Pre-token TCU

suoyi

so

“So,”

30 → K: hehe -- RT (Laughter token)

31 L: 就 是 , eh, 你 开 始 就 是 , 从 那 边 走。

jiu shi ni kaishi jiu shi cong na bian zou

just COP 2SG start just COP from that side walk

“That is to say, eh, you, at the beginning, walk from there.

然后 , 到 了 那 个 地 方 , 你 就 可 以 右 拐。

ran-hou dao le na ge difang ni jiu keyi you guai

subsequently arrive ASP that CLF place 2SG just MV right turn

Subsequently, when you arrive there, you may just turn right.

这样子, 从 北方= -- Pre-token TCU (Preliminary component)

zheyangzi cong beifang

so from north

So, from the north=

32 K: =到 : 到 香蕉树', 你的 '大猩猩' 地方。 -- RT (Collaborative

dao dao xiaojiaoshu ni de daxingxing difang production)

arrive arrive banana:tree 2SG MM gorillas place

"=Arrive, arrive at the 'Banana Tree', labelled 'Gorillas' on your map."

33 →L: 对。 -- Epistemic confirmation token

dui

right

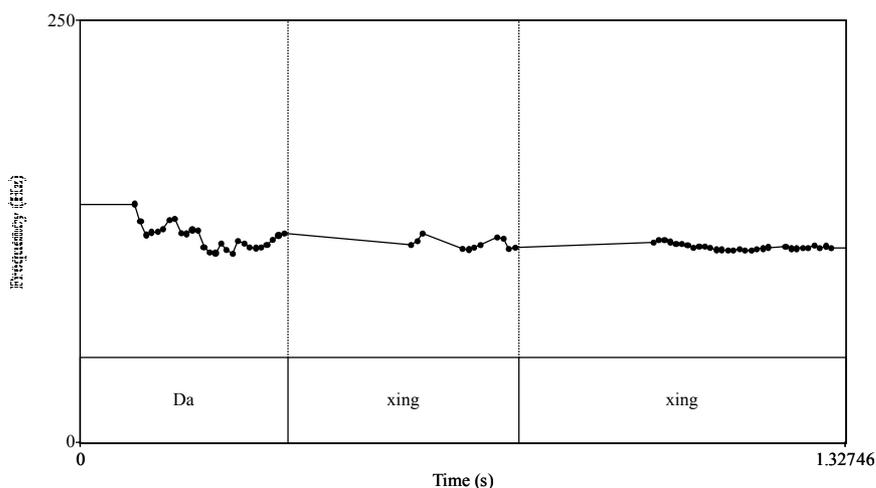
"Right."

In this fragment, three distinct stages have been identified in the clarifying sequence. The first stage is the launch of the information mismatch. The second stage is the development or continuation, where two participants are actively involved in clarification and attempt to deal with the conflict concerned. The third stage is the termination. When they have achieved intersubjective understanding and succeeded in bringing the clarifying sequence into an actual completion, co-participants resume the suspended direction-giving sequence. In every stage of the information mismatch sequence, reactive tokens play a transitional role in participants' joint effort to shift freely from a direction-giving sequence as

the base and a clarifying sequence as an insertion. At the same time, reactive tokens facilitate co-participants to achieve intersubjectivity and to secure recipient engagement.

At the outset of the information mismatch sequence (Turn 17), L makes an assertion and initiates a new topic regarding the label of the landmark: *daxingxing* “Gorillas”. Subsequently, L strategically articulates a yes/no question to elicit a response from K. In this way, L provides the first pair part of the question/answer adjacency pair, making the answer interactionally relevant in the next slot. Additionally, L’s turn ends at the recognizable point, where the syntactic, prosodic and pragmatic completions converge. Note that the first turn of the sequence involving the information mismatch is constituted by the description of a new landmark as a new topic, followed by a yes/no question for an understanding check.

Nevertheless, K does not provide a straightforward answer as the second pair part in the adjacency pair. The anticipated answer in the next slot is deferred and replaced by a repeat (Turn 18). What does the repeat function in this local context? One possible function of a repeat is to respond to the first saying and to register the salient information in second position. The repeat as a second can be seen as one type of reactive token, indicating participation and collaboration of co-participants to sustain intersubjectivity and to secure recipient engagement. Another possible function of a repeat can be to request for clarification, as a repair initiator in first position of a repair sequence. Two pieces of evidence show that this repeat is treated as a repair initiator. First, Turn 19 displays that L, the floor-holding speaker, treats this repeat as a repair-initiation device rather than a reactive token. Second, the prosodic features of this repeat can be illustrated in Graph 6.1 below.



Graph 6.1 A level of the repeat as a repair initiator by the non-native speaker

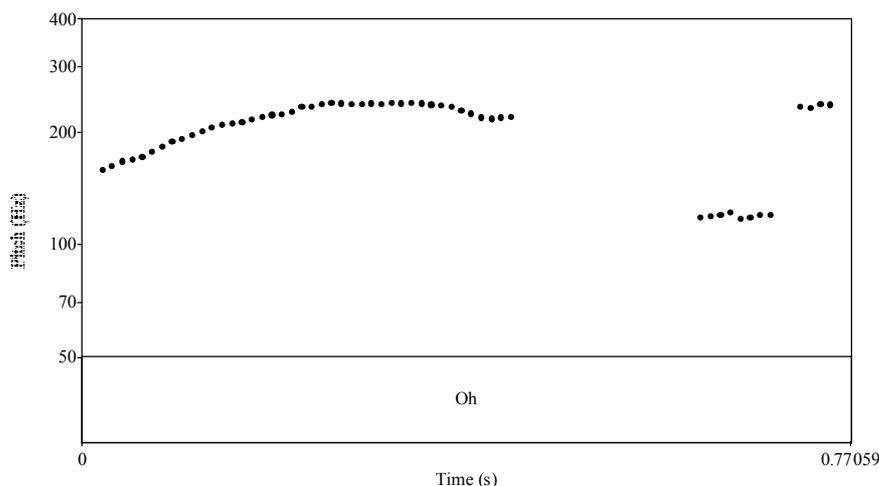
The frequency analysis shows that the repeat is articulated within a very low pitch range between 114 and 140 Hertz, and the final pitch displays a level, consistent with the last syllable of the repeat (55, level). In addition, the average intensity is only 39 dB. All these prosodic “non-matching”²³ features indicate that K repeats the label of the landmark in a sense of hesitation. That is, he is hearable as hesitant or unconfident in articulating the label. Thus, these prosodic features are designed by the recipient to show that he is searching for some further elaboration from the co-participant. The main reason is unfolded subsequently (Turn 22): the label of *daxingxing* “Gorillas” is absent on his map.

Next, L attempts to clarify by providing the paraphrase of *daxingxing* “Gorillas” in the vivid description as candidate understanding, such as *youdian xiangren* ‘like human begins’, *youdian xiang wobaba* ‘like ancestors’, and *youmaode* ‘hairy’ (Turn 19). All these detailed descriptions prove that L treats the repeat as the repair initiator by providing further clarification for the label.

²³ Szczepek Reed (2006: 57) notes that in some sequential environments a matching of prosodic design is expected and a next turn, which does not join in the prior speaker’s prosodic realization, can be analyzed as noticeable and non-matching.

K confirms that there is not such a landmark labelled *daxingxing* “Gorillas” (Turns 20 and 22). Note that the negative particle *meiyou* ‘no’ (Turn 20) is produced as an opposition marker without any delay or hesitation. In information mismatch sequences, it seems that disagreement does not exhibit any features of dispreferred “seconds” as observed in the literature (e.g., Pomerantz 1984a). However, this preference for disagreement in the data is in line with the observation of conflict talk in terms of preference organization (e.g., Gruber 1998). As such, note that “the preference for disagreement order” is established in a conflict-relevant environment. Further, K counterinforms that there is a landmark labelled *xiangjiaoshu* “Banana Trees” on his map, which can be seen as a turning point in the clarifying sequence.

In response to this information mismatch, L produces ‘oh’, indicating that there is a change of his status of knowledge from not-knowing to now-knowing. It is interesting to observe the prosodic features of ‘oh’ produced by the NNS. The question is whether the prosodic configurations of ‘oh’ by the NNS are the same or different from those described in the literature. In English conversation, ‘oh’ is generally described as a rise-fall (e.g., Local 1996; Roach 1983). Graph 6.2 below illustrates the pitch of the ‘oh’ produced by the NNS.



Graph 6.2 A rise-fall(-rise) of ‘Oh’ by the non-native speaker

The frequency analysis illustrates that the change-of-state token displays a contour intonation: rise-fall(-rise), in line with Local and Roach’s findings. It seems that the label of a different landmark on K’s map is treated as newsworthy on the part of ‘oh’-producer. The contour of the token (i.e., rise-fall) demonstrates his noticing of the information mismatch.

In the second stage of the information mismatch sequence (from Turns 24 to 26), L and K further re-confirm and re-acknowledge the conflict: *daxingxing* “Gorillas” and *xiangjiaoshu* “Banana Trees” are actually two different labels of the same landmark in the same location on their maps. L aims to account for the association between the two labels of the landmark by addressing that *yinwei daxingxing xihuan chi xiangjiao* ‘because Gorillas like to eat bananas’ (Turn 27). A tag question is followed as an understanding check to elicit a response from K. Here is the second question/answer adjacency pair. K articulates the affirmative marker *shi a* ‘yes’ (Turn 28) to confirm and appreciate L’s effort to associate *daxingxing* “Gorillas” with *xiangjiaoshu* “Banana Trees”.

In the final stage of the information mismatch sequence, L attempts to provide a review

of the previous turns in an insertion sequence and to bring the information mismatch into a possible completion. L delivers a connective: *suoyi* 'so' (Turn 29), initiating the candidate understanding. At the non-TRP, K produces a laughter token as a continuer, demonstrating recipient collaboration and engagement in the joint activity. Apparently, L is in the process of formulating his turn and this connective is designed to project the construction of a TCU-in-progress. This laughter token in the midcourse of L's turn-in-progress, produced by K, can be seen as supportive and affiliative, marking the triumph that these two co-participants have achieved intersubjectivity and resolved their information mismatch. This solo laughter can be considered as a possible termination of the insertion sequence involving the information mismatch. Once again, the employment of this laughter token is in line with Norrick and Spitz's (2008: 1681) observation that laughter itself can mark the end of a conflict, even in the absence of humorous orientations.

L resumes his route construction, which is suspended in Turn 31. At the end of Turn 31, L produces another connective *zheyangzi* 'in this way' that indicates the potential review, followed by a prepositional phrase as an adjunct. This unfinished turn provides K with a conditional entry into L's turn space. It is notable that collaborative productions emerge at the potential completion of L's clarifying sequence relating to a review of the already-known information. As such, the occurrence of collaborative productions can be seen as a product of L and K's establishment of their intersubjective understanding of the label of the landmark in question. This use is in line with the generic features of collaborative productions, as previously discussed in Chapter 4. K takes up a turn at the non-TRP and enters L's turn space by providing the predicate (Turn 32) as a candidate completion without any gap or

overlap. In addition, K deploys one special syntactic structure: apposition, indicating that “Gorillas” and “Banana Trees” are two different labels for the same landmark in the same position. Thus, the conflict of the information mismatch has been ultimately resolved and the clarifying sequence as the insertion is nearly terminated.

Finally, L produces *dui* ‘right’ (Turn 33) as the epistemic confirmation token in the recipient slot (Lerner 1995) to accept K’s candidate completion (Turn 32). Apparently, L, as the informed participant, retains the authority or authorship over the actual completion of the TCU-in-progress he initiates.

To summarize, both the Giver and the Follower have been shown to be actively involved in the collaborative activity. Specifically, participants have been shown to orient to a broad range of linguistic devices to elicit overt reciprocity, such as a yes/no question or a tag question at ends of turns from each other. At the same time, they have been displayed to orient to a wide variety of reactive tokens to achieve intersubjectivity and to secure recipient engagement. To illustrate, participants have been shown to employ laughter tokens, collaborative productions, change-of-state tokens, and epistemic confirmation tokens as “seconds” in a recipient slot.

In terms of the framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens proposed in Chapter 5, the reactive tokens produced and interpreted by NNSs themselves in this information mismatch sequence have been summarized in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens by the non-native speakers in Fragment 6.1

Displaying overt reciprocity through reactive tokens	Type of reactive token	Reactive tokens	Sequential positions	Location in relation to prior turn
Displaying affiliative reciprocity	Surprise tokens	'oh'	Turn 23	Subsequent to CTRPs
Displaying neutral reciprocity	Reactive expressions	<i>Shi a</i> ('yes')	Turn 28	Subsequent to CTRPs
Displaying affiliative reciprocity	Laughter tokens	'hehe'	Turn 30	Subsequent to non-TRPs
Displaying active reciprocity	Collaborative productions	<i>Daodao xiangjiaoshu nide daxingxing difang</i>	Turn 32	Subsequent to non-TRPs

As can be seen in Table 6.1 above, the NNS displays full engagement and thus a higher level of reciprocity by investing effort and enthusiasm into clarifying the potential cause of the information mismatch. There seems to be a possible association between those two different labels: "Gorillas" and "Banana Trees" for the same landmark on two different maps. This elaboration suggests that NNSs may take individual understanding or clarity as priority in interaction. NNSs appear to be more interactionally oriented by using a change-of-state token to signal the noticing of the conflict. In addition, the laughter token is produced to demonstrate the appreciation of the co-participant's effort to offer the clarification. Laughter tokens and collaborative productions are noticeably absent in the way in which NSs select reactive tokens to deal with the same information mismatch relating to label change (see

below).

6.2.2 Episode Two by NSs (4 Turns): *chazhuang xiliu* (叉状溪流)

For comparative purposes, Fragment 6.2 below illustrates the way in which NSs deal with the same problem/conflict. There are two different labels for the same landmark: *chazhuang xiliu* “Forked Stream” and *mimide xiliu* “Giggling Stream”. X and J deal with the information mismatch in the four-turn sequence rather than seventeen turns, as previously illustrated in Fragment 6.1.

Fragment 6.2, from Turns 85 to 88, Group One, 2006

- 85 X: eh , 然后, 再 往下 走 呢,
 ranhou zai wangxia zou ne
 subsequently again downwards walk PRT
 “Eh, subsequently, when you walk downwards again,
 又 经过 一 个 叫 ‘ 叉状溪流 ’ 。 -- First saying
 you jingguo yi ge jiao chazhuang xiliu
 again pass one CLF call forked:stream
 (you) pass a (landmark called) ‘Forked Stream’.”
- 86 → J: ‘ 汨汨的溪流 ’ 啊 , 是 吗 ? -- Initial mismatch
 mimide xiliu a shi ma
 giggling:stream PRT COP QP
 “(It is labelled) ‘Giggling Stream’, isn’t it?”
- 87 X: 它 叫 叉, ‘ 叉状 ’ , [‘ 叉状溪流 ’ -- Pre-token TCU

ta jiao cha chazhuang chazhuang xiliu

3SG call fork forked forked:stream

“It is called fork, forked, ‘Forked Stream’.”

88 → J:

[‘ 叉状溪流 ’

chazhuang xiliu

forked:stream

“‘Forked Stream’.”

好。 -- RT (Composite)

hao

good

“Good.”

Compared with Fragment 6.1, J does not provide any response to the new topic regarding the label of the new landmark initiated (Turn 85): the label of the landmark on J’s map is *chazhuang xiliu* “Forked Stream”. Specifically, the change-of-state token ‘*oh*’ is noticeably absent in NS-NS interaction to mark the emergence of the information mismatch. J counterinforms by providing a variant label for the same landmark: *mimide xiliu* “Giggling Stream” (Turn 86) on her map, followed by a tag question to seek for confirmation. The question can be seen as the first pair part of a question/answer adjacency pair, foreshowing an answer as a normative expectation in the next relevant slot. Turn 86 signals that the information mismatch emerges.

It is important to note that X does not respond to J’s tag question. The projected second

pair part is noticeably absent and thus accountable. X ignores J's question, but she insists on emphasizing the target label of *chazhuang xiliu* "Forked Stream" with three re-starts. This insistence implies that X rejects the counterinforming of the variant label provided by J. The implication is that J is supposed to accept the label of *chazhuang xiliu* "Forked Stream" as the correct message and to discard the variant label of *mimide xiliu* "Giggling Stream". Obviously, it is irrelevant to the correct route on the part of the informed participant.

Finally, J repeats X's label of the landmark in overlapping, followed by the sequence-closing token *hao* 'good'. Thus, the clarifying sequence comes to an actual completion. Consider the repeat and *hao* (Turn 88) as a composite. In addition, the overlapping repeat can be hearable as supportive rather than interruptive. As the second component, *hao* 'good' is designed to demonstrate that J has agreed to accept X's label of *chazhuang xiliu* "Forked Stream" as the correct label for the landmark on her own map. Also notice that the repeat in conjunction with *hao* is methodically designed and oriented to by the recipient to convert disagreement into agreement in a conflict-relevant environment in the pursuit of harmony and social solidarity. The information mismatch is therefore fully resolved in the four-turn sequence, which can be seen as an optimal and economical way to resolve a potential conflict in such a context.

In summary, Fragment 6.2 above shows that the J fails to respond to the prior speaker after the initiation of a new topic (Turn 85) and that X fails to provide the second pair part as a normative expectation. The sequential features of the information mismatch sequence produced by NSs can be illustrated as follows:

A: A new topic is initiated at the CTRP;

B: Counterinform a variant label;

A: Repeat the original label, implying the rejection of the variant label.

B: The repeat in conjunction with the *hao* as the composite is methodically articulated.

In first language interaction (i.e., Mandarin conversation), the two repeats have been shown to play a crucial role in resolving the information mismatch as a potential conflict. The first repeat by the Giver (Turn 87) accomplishes the action of rejecting the variant label provided by the uninformed participant (i.e., the Follower). However, it is not treated as a reactive token by my definition. The second repeat by the Follower, in conjunction with the *hao* as the composite, implements the action of accepting the original label as the correct information in terms of the Giver's epistemic authority.

With respect to displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens, NSs deploy only one composite containing the repeat and the reactive expression. The repeat displays acceptance of the original label of the landmark by changing the position (i.e., submission) and subsequently the reactive expression serves to terminate the information mismatch sequence.

By contrast, the procedures, through which NNSs resolve the information mismatch, have shown that their fourteen-turn clarifying sequence as an insertion and the laughter token as a signal of the termination of the conflict are absent in the NS-NS interaction. However, NSs have been displayed to orient to repeats of the label to achieve intersubjective understanding and to resolve conflicts. Thus, the disagreement-relevant environment is converted into the agreement-relevant one, i.e., "the preference for agreement" (Sacks 1987).

6.3 Type II: Absence or presence

The second type of information mismatch is concerned with the absence of the landmark on the Follower's map. When the Giver has one landmark on the route and the Follower does not, the Follower is supposed to add the same landmark with the same label in the same position in order to be consistent with the Giver's map.

6.3.1 Episode Three by NNSs (8 Turns): *shangdian* (商店)

This episode involves NNSs in second language interaction. Fragment 6.3 below demonstrates the way in which NNSs select reactive tokens to deal with the potential conflict regarding the label of the landmark *shangdian* "Shops".

Fragment 6.3, from Turns 313 to 320, Group 3, 2006

- 313 L: 然 , 然后 , 再 往 左边 走 一点。
 ran ranhou zai wang zuobian zou yidian
 sub- subsequently again towards left walk a:bit
 "Sub-, subsequently, walk towards the left a little again.
- 有 没 有 什 么 商 店 ,
 you mei you shenme shangdian
 have NEG have what shops
 Do you have any shops?
- 还 是 一 个 什 么 ? -- Pre-token TCU
 hai shi yi ge shenme
 or COP one CLF what

or something else?”

314 K: 没 有。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

mei you

NEG have

“No.”

315 L: 没 有。 就 是 那 个 ‘ 白 山 ’ 的 对,

mei you jiu shi na ge baishan de dui

NEG have just COP that CLF white:mountain MM opposite

“No. That is, opposite that landmark labelled the ‘White Mountain’.”

316 K: ‘ 白 山 ’ 在 北 部。

baishan zai beibu

white:mountain be:in north

“‘White Mountain’ is in the north”

317 L: 对 面 , 没 有。 -- Pre-token TCU

duimian mei you

opposite NEG have

“Opposite (‘White Mountain’), (you do) not have (a shop).”

318 K: 没 有。 -- RT (Repeat)

mei you

NEG have

“No.”

319 L: a , 那 个 , 那 , 好 难。

na ge na hao nan
that CLF that very difficult

“Ah, well, well, (it is) very difficult.

那，有 两 个 动物，三 个 动物 吧？
na you liang ge dongwu san ge dongwu ba
that have two CLF animals three CLF animals QP

Well, (do you) have two or three animals?

右边，右 拐。 -- Pre-token TCU

youbian you guai
right:side right turn

Right, turn right.”

320 K: 对，有 三 个 动物，hehehe -- RT (Composite)

dui you san ge dongwu
right have three CLF animals

“Right, (I) have three animals, hehehe.”

In this fragment, the information mismatch is shown to occur in the course of route construction. L provides route construction and initiates a new topic of the label of the landmark labelled *shangdian* “Shops” (Turn 313) for the first time. Subsequently, K immediately articulates the opposition marker *meiyou* ‘no’ (Turn 314) to acknowledge the absence of such a landmark on his map. Thus, the first information mismatch emerges. Once again, it is interesting to note that “the preference for disagreement” is further evidenced

by *meiyou* ‘no’ (Turns 314 and 318) in conflict-relevant environments.

L further produces a location descriptor of *shangdian* “Shops” (Turn 315) relating to another landmark labelled *baishan* “White Mountain”. K acknowledges that *baishan* “White Mountain” (Turn 316) is in the north on his map rather than in the center. At this point, the second information mismatch regarding the number inconsistency launches.

L and K further confirm the absence of *shangdian* “Shops” on K’s map (from Turns 317 to 318). In the end, L produces the first assessment concerning two instances of information mismatches in the direction-giving sequence: *haonan* ‘very difficult’ (Turn 319). This foreshadows his decision to abandon the conflict (i.e., withdrawal). Subsequently, L is shown to shift his topic to another landmark by producing another location descriptor. Thus, the sequence relating to the information mismatch arrives at a point of possible completion.

The data reveal that the NS and the NNS deal with information mismatches in distinct procedures (see Fragment 6.4) by means of selecting different reactive tokens. In addition, the display of levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens by NNSs has been summarized in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens by the non-native speakers in Fragment 6.3

Displaying overt reciprocity through reactive tokens	Type of reactive token	Reactive tokens	Sequential positions	Location in relation to prior turn
Displaying neutral reciprocity	Reactive expression	没有 <i>meiyou</i> 'no'	Turn 314	Subsequent to the CTRP
Displaying active reciprocity	Repeats	没有 <i>meiyou</i> 'no'	Turn 318	Subsequent to the CTRP
Displaying neutral + active + affiliative reciprocity	Reactive expressions + repeats + laughter tokens	对 , 有三个动物 , 'hehehe' <i>dui</i> , <i>you sange</i> <i>dongwu</i> <i>hehehe</i>	Turn 320	Subsequent to the CTRP

In Table 6.2 above, NNSs have been shown to orient to three types of reactive token to display different levels of reciprocity, such as neutral, active, and affiliative. In this information mismatch sequence, it is important to note that the floor-holding speaker discards the potential elaboration of the label regarding the absence of one landmark. The possible reason is that it seems to be too difficult for the NNS with limited linguistic resources to deal with a succession of information mismatches in a longer sequence. However, the reactive tokens articulated by NNSs display their full engagement in the ongoing conversation. In particular, the laughter tokens at the end of the composite serves to terminate the potential conflict in a strategic way.

To summarize, in the NNS-NNS interaction, the Follower acknowledges the absence of

the landmark on his map as the potential conflict. Subsequently, the Giver decides to move on to the next landmark by ignoring the information mismatch. Since the problem is not fully resolved yet, the accuracy of the results of the map task will be definitely affected to some extent.

6.3.2 Episode Four by NSs (4 Turns): *gendi* (耕地)

For comparative purposes, Fragment 6.4 below illustrates the way in which the NS selects reactive tokens to solve the similar conflict. In this fragment, the landmark labelled *gendi* “Farmed Land” is absent on the Follower’s map.

Fragment 6.4, from Turns 97 to 106, Group One, 2006

97 X: 然后, 那 ‘耕地’ 呢?

ranhou na gendi ne

subsequently that farmed:land QP

“Subsequently, (how about) the ‘Farmed Land’?”

‘耕地’ 是 不 是 在?

gendi shi bu shi zai

farmed:land COP NEG COP in

Is the ‘Farmed Land’ at?

如果 面向 地图 的话，

ruguo mianxiang ditu dehua

if face map in:the:case:of

If (we) face the map,

‘耕地’ 应该 是 在 ‘枯木’ 的 右 手 边= -- First saying

gendi yinggai shi zai kumu de you shou bian

farmed:land MV COP in dead:tree MM right hand side

‘Farmed Land’ is supposed to be on the right of the ‘Dead Tree’.

98 → J: 没 有。 -- Initial mismatch

mei you

NEG have

“No.

所以, 右 手 边 有 个 ‘耕地’。 -- Pre-token TCU

suoyi you shou bian you ge gendi

so right hand side have CLF farmed:land

So the ‘Farmed Land’ is on the right.”

99 X: 对, 对。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

dui dui

right right

“Right, right.”

100 J: 好 的。 -- Sequence-closing token

hao de

good MM

“Good.”

Similar to Fragment 6.2, this fragment shows that NSs deal with the information

mismatch in four turns. Once again, this four-turn sequence can be seen as an optimal and economical method to resolve it. Specifically, Turn 97 consists of three TCUs. The first TCU is concerned with the label of the landmark (i.e., *gendi* “Farmed Land”) after the adverbial of time *ranhou* ‘subsequently’, indicating the continuation of the route construction from the foregoing utterances. The second and third TCUs are concerned with the locations of the landmark in a location descriptor: *zai kumu de youbian* “on the right of the ‘Dead Tree’”. At the completion of the third TCU, J immediately articulates the opposition marker *meiyou*²⁴ ‘no’ to acknowledge the absence of the label of the landmark without any gap or overlap. As such, the information mismatch launches.

Further, J provides a partial cross-speaker repeat in response to the first saying: *youshoubian youge gendi* “‘Farmed Land’ is on the right” (Turn 97), followed by additional turn components. At this point, this repeat serves to resolve the information mismatch. Put differently, this repeat accomplished the action of J’s acceptance of X’s information relating to the label and the location of the landmark (i.e., submission), which is absent on her map. Through this repeat, J agrees to add the correct label in the target location on her map in order to be consistent with the Giver’s map. Note that this cross-speaker repeat plays a crucial role in resolving the information mismatch and achieving intersubjective understanding between the Giver and the Follower. To iterate, this repeat converts disagreement into agreement in a conflict-relevant environment.

X sends out doublet reactive expressions *dui* ‘right’ (Turn 99) as the confirmation in third position. Subsequently, J produces *haode* ‘good’ to close the sequence regarding the information mismatch, indicating preparedness to move on to the next topic or activity.

²⁴ Once more, this shows “the preference for disagreement” in a conflict-relevant environment.

Once again, the four-part sequence in the ABAB pattern has been identified in the information mismatch sequence in NS-NS interaction:

- A: A new topic is initiated by the informed participant;
- B: A negative particle marks the emergence of the information mismatch;
- A: A third-turn confirmation is delivered by the informed participant;
- B: A sequence-closing token is produced to terminate the information mismatch sequence.

In this fragment, the NS has been shown to orient to the negative particle to flag the information mismatch, along with the rephrasing to accept the Giver's information (Turn 98). Thus, the conflict-relevant environment has been converted into the agreement-relevant one, followed by further epistemic confirmation from the informed participant.

In summary, the contrative analysis of this pair of information mismatch sequences above has shown that the NS employs the reactive expressions (Turn 99) to deal with the information mismatch in the four-part sequence (ABAB pattern). However, the NNS fails to resolve the conflict and discards it by moving forward to the next landmark in Fragment 6.3. In the first language interaction, note that the NS as the Information Follower acknowledges the absence of the landmark on her map and then accepts the correct position of the landmark by rephrasing. As this implies, the NS orients to the detail of the immediately prior talk and agrees to add the same landmark with the same label in the same location on her map. This can be seen as a proper way to deal with the information mismatch, because the Giver, as the informed participant, holds the key to the correct route and thus has the authority and control over the joint activity.

On the other hand, the Follower, as the uninformed participant, is supposed to have the

same landmarks as the Giver's. Although NSs do not orient to any clarifying sequence to further elaborate the information mismatch, they have displayed a strong preference for repeats/rephrasing. Through repeats/rephrasing, they minimize the conflict and display a preference for agreement over disagreement in the pursuit of harmony and social solidarity.

By contrast, the display of levels of reciprocity through reactive tokens has been shown to be less frequently oriented to by the NS. Only one token type of reactive expression *dui dui* 'right right' is designed and articulated by the recipient to confirm the position of the landmark labelled *gendi* "Farmed Land", which is absent on J's map. It seems that NSs are more topically oriented in this sequence by grabbing the floor to produce speaking turns with propositional content. Unlike NNSs, they do not articulate a range of reactive tokens to pass on the turn to the floor-holding speaker with support to achieve a larger interactional goal in longer sequences.

6.4 Type III: Number inconsistency

The third type of information mismatch is concerned with the number of landmarks with the same label. Two aspects are crucial here: the label of the landmark and its position as essential components of a location descriptor. Consider another pair of episodes from the NS and NNS data in relation to the same landmark labelled "Lost Steps"²⁵.

6.4.1 Episode Five by NNSs (21 Turns): *louti* (楼梯)

This episode occurs between NNSs in second language interaction. Fragment 6.5 below illustrates the way in which the NNS selects reactive tokens to deal with the number

²⁵ As will be seen, the NNS misreads the label as *louti* "Steps" or *zhaobudaode louti* "Lost Steps" and the correct label is supposed to be *mishide jiaobu*. It is worthwhile to note that NNSs do not orient to any linguistic errors or even attempt to initiate repair sequences to deal with them in the data.

inconsistency relating to “Lost Steps”.

Fragment 6.5, from Turns 109 to 129, Group 3, 2006

109 L: uh, 我, haha, 算 不 起来。

wo suan bu qilai

1SG calculate NEG up

“Uh, I, haha, cannot figure (it) out,

但是, 就 是 过, 过 了 那 个 :: uh,

danshi jiu shi guo guo le na ge

but just COP pass pass ASP that CLF

but, just pass, pass that, uh,

那 种, 你 有 没 有 那 种,

na zhong ni you mei you na zhong

that CLF 2SG have NEG have that CLF

that, do you have that,

uh, ‘楼梯’? 就 是,

louti jiu shi

steps just COP

uh, the landmark labelled ‘Steps’? That is,

110 K: oh, 看到 了 一 个 ‘楼梯’。

kandao le yi ge louti

see ASP one CLF steps

“Oh, (I) saw a landmark labelled ‘Steps’.

对, ‘找不到的楼梯’, hehe. -- Pre-token TCU (invitation of laughter)

dui zhaobudaode louti

right lost:steps

Right, ‘Lost Steps’, hehe.

111 L: 对, hehe -- RT (Composite)

dui

right

“Right, hehe.”

112 K: hehe -- Activity-closing laughter

113 L: 英文 就 这样子 的 意思。

yingwen jiu zheyangzi de yisi

English just such MM meaning

“Such is its English meaning.

uh, 那个, 你 过 了, 然后, 马上 左 拐

na ge ni guo le ranhou mashang zuo guai

that CLF 2SG pass ASP subsequently immediately left turn

uh, that, you pass (it). Subsequently, turn left immediately.”

114 K: oh, 你 要, 我 要 过 那 个 ‘楼梯’。 -- Pre-token TCU

ni yao wo yao guo na ge louti

2SG MV 1SG MV pass that CLF steps

“oh, you have to, I have to pass that landmark labelled ‘Steps’.

115 L: 对。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

dui

right

“Right.”

116 K: 这 个 很 : 很 北 部 了。

zhe ge hen hen beibu le

this CLF very very north PRT

“This (is) in the far north.”

117 → L: oh, 不 是 , 没 有 , 不 是 那 个 的。 -- Initial mismatch

bu shi mei you bu shi na ge de

NEG COP NEG have NEG COP that CLF MM

“Oh, (it) isn’t. No, (it) is not that one.”

118 K: 在 ,

zai

in

“In ...”

119 → L: 我 有 , 我 有 两 个。

wo you wo you liang ge

1SG have 1SG have two CLF

“I have, I have two (landmarks labelled ‘Steps’).”

120 K: 你 有 两 个, ou

ni you liang ge

2SG have two CLF

“You have two, ou.”

121 →L: 一 个 在 非常 上面 , 一 个 在 中间。 -- Pre-token TCU

yi ge zai feichang shangmian yi ge zai zhongjian

one CLF be:in very up one CLF be:in centre

“One is located on the top, and the other is in the centre.”

122 →K: oh -- RT (Backchannel)

123 L: 你 中间 没 有 吗 ? -- Pre-token TCU

ni zhongjian mei you ma

2SG centre NEG have QP

“Don’t you have one in the centre?”

124 →K: 没 有。 [瀑 -- RT (Reactive expression)

mei you pu

NEG have *pu*

“No, *pu*”

125 L: [那

na

that

“That,”

126 K: ‘瀑布’ 到 : 到 你 的 ,

pubu dao dao ni de

waterfalls reach reach 2SG MM

“(From) ‘Waterfalls’ to: to your,

你 说 的 那 个 ‘ 楼梯 ’ 多 远 ？

ni shuo de na ge louti duoyuan

2SG say MM that CLF steps how:far

how far is that landmark labelled ‘Steps’ you mentioned?”

127 L: ah , 大概 :

dagai

roughly

“Ah, roughly.”

128 K: 这 个

zhe ge

this CLF

“This,”

129 L: 像 我 自 己 的 鼻 子 那 么 长。

xiang wo ziji de bizi name chang

like 1SG self MM nose that long

“(It is) as long as my own nose.”

Speakers L and K attend to a location descriptor of the landmark labelled *louti* “Steps” and its location. At the initial stage of the information mismatch sequence, L raises a yes/no question strategically (Turn 109) to check whether the Follower has the same landmark with the same label in the same location on the target route. Subsequently, L deploys an adverbial

jiushi ‘that is to say’, projecting further elaboration by providing candidate understanding.

The initial observation is that the three-turn laughing sequence (ABA) is an insertion within the larger information mismatch sequence. Specifically, K first confirms that he has the same landmark but with slightly different label: *zhaobudaode louti* “Lost Steps”. At the end of Turn 110, K designs and articulates a laughter token ‘*hehe*’, which can be seen as an invitation of the laughing activity, in the pursuit of intimacy or affiliation in the conflict-relevant environment. The source of the laughter is the label of the landmark.

It is interesting to note that L does not join in the laughing activity immediately. He first orients to the reactive expression *dui* ‘right’ to confirm that they share the same landmark. Subsequently, he accomplishes the action of accepting the invitation by laughing along. However, note that L delays laughing till the confirmation is achieved. This instance provides more empirical evidence that a composite containing a reactive expression and a laughter token (Turn 111) can show a transition from a lower to higher level of reciprocity within the framework proposed in Chapter 5.

K produces another laughter token as a “third” and then terminates the laughing sequence. In this laughing sequence, K (i.e., the uninformed participant) initiates and terminates the laughing activity within this information mismatch sequence. The laughing sequence (from Turns 110 to 112) can be seen as a case in point to demonstrate that NNSs seem to invest more enthusiasm and effort in dealing with the conflict. Thus, they have been shown to be more interactionally engaged in longer conversational sequences.

Speaker K first produces ‘*oh*’ (Turn 114) to preface the repeat of one movement: *guo nage louti* “pass that landmark labelled ‘Steps’”. In response, L produces the reactive

expression *dui* ‘right’ (Turn 115) as an epistemic confirmation token. Further, L provides elaboration of the information mismatch in three consecutive turns. First, L produces ‘oh’ (Turn 117) again as a change-of-state token, followed by three negative forms²⁶: *bushi* ‘no’, *meiyou* ‘no’ and *bushi nage* ‘not that one’. The varying negative forms seem to flag the information mismatch.

It is noticeable that K produces only the preposition *zai* ‘in’ as a single TCU, which is not syntactically, prosodically or pragmatically complete. As Lerner (2004a: 163) notes, the use of preposition alone can be seen as a device to prompt further elaboration or clarification. In this local context, K intends to know the position of “Steps” on L’s map, because he does not have the landmark labelled “Steps” in the far north on his map mentioned in Turn 116.

Next, L further accounts for the information mismatch relating to the number of the landmarks labelled *louti* “Steps” (Turn 119). That is, L has two landmarks labelled *louti*, whereas K has only one. Recognizing the number inconsistency, K repeats the number to highlight it. Third, L provides the most important component of the information mismatch regarding the location of the two landmarks labelled *louti*: one is located *shangbian* ‘on the top’, and the other is situated *zhongjian* ‘in the centre’. In response to this elaboration, K articulates ‘oh’ (Turn 122) as a change-of-state token to treat the immediately prior talk as newsworthy and flag the information mismatch. Up to this point, both K and L have achieved their intersubjective understanding that their maps are slightly different in relation to the number of the landmarks with the same label.

The recognition and negotiation of the information mismatch as the potential conflict

²⁶ To iterate, by articulating negative forms without any gap or overlap, NNSs demonstrate “the preference of disagreement” in a conflict-relevant environment.

reach a point of possible completion from Turns 116 to 122. The next important task is how they resolve such a conflict. In order to resolve the information mismatch, in the first place, L strategically designs and employs a yes/no question to check whether K has the same landmark with the same label in the centre of his map. This question can be seen as the first pair part of the adjacency pair sequence. As a normative expectation, K produces the opposition marker *meiyou* ‘no’ as the second pair part, showing “the preference of disagreement” in a conflict-relevant environment. Subsequently, K further raises a question-word question for specific information, but the first syllable occurs in overlap with L’s hesitation marker: *na* ‘that’. This overlap is not disruptive, but it displays that both K and L are actively engaged in resolving the information mismatch.

K restarts his question-word question and inquires about the distance between one landmark labelled *louti* “Steps” in the centre and another already known landmark *pubu* “Waterfalls” (Turn 126). Once more, this question can serve as the first pair part of the question/answer adjacency pair, thus making the next turn interactionally relevant. Note that L displays hesitation in measuring the distance and seems to have some difficulty in expressing the measurement in a proper way. He produces one adverbial *dagai* ‘roughly’ (Turn 127) as an adjunct, projecting the main clause as the next relevant component. However, K does not provide the proffered completion (Lerner 1995) as a collaborative production. Instead, K produces the hesitation marker *zhege* (this), because he does not know the measurement, as the uninformed participant.

Finally, L provides a metaphor to express the approximate measurement: *xiang woziji de bizi name chang* ‘as long as my own nose’ as the delayed completion of the TCU-in-progress

initiated in Turn 127. The delayed completion displays the NNS's sense of humour, which is absent in NS-NS interaction. Thus, it seems that the conflict is resolved, because K can locate the approximate position of the landmark relating to the label *louti* "Steps" on his map. In this instance, L (the informed participant) helps K (the uninformed participant) locate the absent landmark, when they recognize the information mismatch and realize that their maps are slightly different. This fragment illustrates a correct way to resolve conflicts in map tasks instead of abandoning them in Fragment 6.3.

To summarize, one important sequence in which the laughter tokens are employed in the ABA pattern has been identified in Mandarin map task conversations. This pattern is typical of NNS's way of resolving conflicts in information mismatch sequences, similar to Fragment 6.1 and 6.3. Specifically, K initiates and terminates the laughing sequence, in which L accepts the invitation and laughs along (Turns 110, 111 and 112).

In terms of displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens, three types of reactive token have been produced and interpreted by the NNS himself: the backchannels (Turn 122), the reactive expression (Turn 124) and the composite (Turn 111), as illustrated in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Displaying levels of reciprocity through reactive tokens by the non-native speakers in Fragment 6.5

Displaying overt reciprocity through reactive tokens	Type of reactive token	Reactive tokens	Sequential position	Location in relation to prior turn
Displaying neutral plus affiliative reciprocity	Composite (a reactive expression and a laughter token)	<i>dui, hehe</i>	Turn 111	Subsequent to the CTRP
Displaying affiliative reciprocity	A change-of-state token	<i>oh</i>	Turn 122	Subsequent to the CTRP
Displaying neutral reciprocity	Reactive expression	没有 <i>meiyou</i> 'no'	Turn 124	Subsequent to the CTRP

Table 6.3 above has shown that the NNS deploys *meiyou* 'no' as the reactive expression and one composite containing a reactive expression and a laughter token, indicating a higher level of reciprocity, and 'oh' (i.e., one variant form of backchannel in this study) as a surprise token. These three reactive tokens demonstrate that NNSs are interactionally engaged in the clarifying sequence as an insertion within a larger direction-giving sequence. Thus, the reactive tokens produced by NNSs seem to shape recipient participation in this conflict-relevant context. In addition, the insertion sequence of clarification in Fragment 6.5 shows that individual understanding or clarity seems to be as important as the map task itself in NNS-NNS interaction.

6.4.2 Episode Six by NSs (6 Turns): *mishide jiaobu* (迷失的脚步)

For comparative purposes, Fragment 6.6 below illustrates the way in which NSs select reactive tokens to deal with the same type of information mismatch. It is concerned with the number inconsistency in relation to the landmark labelled *mishide jiaobu* “Lost Steps”. In this fragment, the informed participant helps the uninformed participant locate the other landmark with the same label.

Fragment 6.6, from Turns 51 to 56, Group 3, 2004

- 51 D: ‘白山’ 在 路线图 的 右边。
 baishan zai luxiantu de youbian
 white:mountain be:in route MM right:side
 “‘White Mountain’ is located on the right of the route.”
- 是否 看到： ‘柔柔的饥饿 目光’？
 shi fou kandao rouroude ji’e muguang
 COP NEG see soft:famishing:stares
 Do you see the landmark labelled ‘Soft Famishing Stares’?
- 等 一 下， 你 那 个，
 deng yi xia ni na ge
 wait one CLF 2SG that CLF
 Hang on, your, that,
- 有 两 个 ‘迷失的脚步’， 好像。
 you liang ge mishide jiaobu haoxiang

have two CLF lost:steps seem

(It) seems that (I) have two landmarks labelled 'Lost Steps'.

刚开始，你那里有几个‘迷失的脚步’啊？

gang kaishi ni nali you ji ge mishide jiaobu a

just start 2SG there have how:many CLF lost:steps QP

At the beginning, how many landmarks labelled 'Lost Steps' on your map?

52 →A: 我上面的‘迷失的脚步’是在离纸的：

wo shangmian de mishi dejiaobu shi zai li zhi de

1SG up MM lost:steps COP in away paper MM

“The landmark labelled 'Lost Steps' on the top of my map is

正中央大概3厘米。

zheng zhongyang dagai san limi

right centre roughly three centimetres

roughly three centimetres away from the centre of the paper.”

53 D: 你在‘瀑布’的左端不远处

ni zai pubu de zuoduan bu yuan chu

2SG in waterfalls MM left NEG far place

“Where it is not far away from the left of the landmark labelled 'Waterfalls',

有‘迷失的脚步’吗？ -- Pre-token TCU

you mishide jiaobu ma

have lost:steps QP

do you have the landmark labelled 'Lost Steps'?

54 →A: 没 有。 -- RT (Reactive expression)

mei you

NEG have

“No.

‘迷失的脚步’是在‘瀑布’的正上方8厘米。

mishide jiaobu shi zai pubu de zheng shangfang ba limi

lost:steps COP in waterfalls MM right above eight centimeters

‘Lost Steps’ is located eight centimetres above ‘Waterfalls’.”

55 D: 那, 请 更改 路线。

na qing gengai luxian

well please change route

“Well, please change the route.

现在 从 ‘瀑布’ ... 那里,

xianzai cong pubu nali

now from waterfalls there

Now, from that landmark labelled ‘Waterfalls’...

那里 是 否 有 ‘石块’? -- Pre-token TCU

nali shi fou you shikuai

there COP NEG have stones

do you have the landmark labelled ‘Stones’?”

56 A: 没 有。 --RT (Reactive expression)

mei you

NEG have

“No.”

This fragment shows that the NS as the Information Giver tends to produce turns with a multiplicity of TCUs. To illustrate, D produces five TCUs, containing three different labels of three distinct landmarks (Turn 51): *baishan* “White Mountain” (in the first TCU), *rouroude ji’e muguang* “Soft Famishing Stares” (in the second TCU) and *mishide jiaobu* “Lost Steps” (in the fourth TCU). This multi-TCU turn seems to be absent in NNS-NNS interaction. In the fourth TCU, D asserts explicitly that he has two landmarks labelled *mishide jiaobu*. Subsequently, she methodically designs a question-word question to inquire about the number of landmarks labelled *mishide jiaobu* on A’s map. Once again, this question serves as the first pair part of the question/answer adjacency pair, making the answer interactionally relevant in the next turn. However, A does not provide the answer directly in the next relevant slot. Rather, she describes the location of the landmark labelled *mishide jiaobu* “Lost Steps”: it is on the top of her map but three centimetres away from the centre. Her description indicates that she has only one landmark with the same label on her map.

In addition, notice that Turns 51 and 52 constitute the first question/answer adjacency pair within the larger information mismatch sequence. Further, the question-word question for specific information is strategically designed and deployed as a linguistic resource to project possible speaker changes at the CTRP.

By the same token, D raises a different type of question: a yes/no question to check whether A has a second landmark labelled *mishide jiaobu* “Lost Steps”, adjacent to another

landmark labelled *pubu* “Waterfalls”. Once more, this question serves as the first pair part of a second adjacency pair, projecting the answer as the normative expectation in the next relevant turn. As anticipated, A answers the question with the opposition marker *meiyou* ‘no’, again showing “the preference of disagreement” in a conflict-relevant environment. Thus, the information mismatch launches: A does not have the second landmark labelled *mishide jiaobu*, next to another landmark labelled *pubu*. Subsequently, she restates the fact that she has only one landmark with the same label, but it is eight centimetres away from *pubu*, which is irrelevant to the target route.

Turns 53 and 54 constitute the second question/answer adjacency pair within the larger information mismatch sequence, in which they identify the information mismatch as a potential conflict. At the same time, they achieve their intersubjective understanding that D has two landmarks labelled *mishide jiaobu* and that A has only one landmark with the same label. After the identification and negotiation of the information gap, the next task is to deal with the conflict.

In order to deal with the information gap, D first suggests that A should change the route, implying that she will help A locate the second landmark labelled *mishide jiaobu* “Lost Steps” in the center. Subsequently, D deploys a third question (Turn 55): a yes/no question involving another new topic of the landmark labelled *shitou* “Stones”, projecting the answer (Turn 56) in the next relevant turn. As expected, A produces the opposition marker *meiyou* ‘no’, showing “the preference of disagreement” in a conflict-relevant environment. Once again, this negation indicates that another instance of information mismatch launches: the landmark labelled *shitou* is absent on A’s map.

Up to this point, it seems that there is not a manifest point of the possible completion of this information mismatch sequence. Note that the trouble of information mismatch regarding *mishide jiaobu* has not been completely resolved. However, a new conflict relating to another information mismatch concerning *shitou* emerges in the course of resolving the first conflict. Finally, Turns 55 and 56 constitute a third question/answer adjacency pair within the larger information mismatch sequence.

To summarize, it has been shown that NSs in this fragment employ two reactive expressions to display an awareness of being a recipient. Note that the Giver (the informed participant) deploys the syntactic resource of an interrogative as a linguistic device to solicit overt reciprocity from the uninformed participant at the end of each turn. In this regard, three question/answer adjacency pairs (Turns 51 and 52, 53 and 54, 55 and 56) are prominent in this fragment. With respect to displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens, the employment of reactive expressions seems to be prominent in this sequence. It seems that NSs orient to reactive expressions in conflict talk.

Thus far, an investigation of the three paired information mismatch sequences has provided two important aspects relating to the selection of reactive tokens to deal with conflicts. First, NNSs have been shown to be more engaged in the pursuit of individual clarity in map task conversations in terms of types and numbers of reactive tokens produced and oriented to. One piece of evidence comes from the solo laughter in Turn 26 in Fragment 6.1 and in Turn 320 in Fragment 6.3, as well as the collaborative laughing activity from Turns 110 to 112 in Fragment 6.5. In other words, laughter tokens emerge in all the three episodes of the information mismatch sequences in NNS-NNS interaction, as a conversational strategy

to resolve conflicts. By stark contrast, the laughter token is noticeably absent in three episodes in NS-NS interaction, as discussed in Fragments 6.2, 6.4 and 6.6. As Jefferson (1984b) notes, laughter is produced in the pursuit of intimacy or affiliation to establish strong bonds between co-participants. In this regard, NNSs seem to attend to interpersonal relationships as well as the target route as the task in the ongoing conversation. As this implies, affiliation between co-participants seems to be just as important as the task itself in NNS-NNS interaction.

Next, in terms of displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in all the above six fragments of information mismatch sequences, NNSs have been shown to orient to a wider variety of reactive tokens: laughter tokens, composites and change-of-state tokens more frequently to manage and organize their recipient participation. However, NSs have been shown to orient to backchannels, reactive expressions and repeats to sustain mutual understanding. Further, it is important to note that NSs may favour reactive expressions in conflict talk illustrated in Fragment 6.6. Once more, this contrastive analysis shows that NNSs have been more interactionally engaged with passion and enthusiasm in the pursuit of individual clarity. Nevertheless, NSs have been shown to be more topically oriented in a disciplined way in dealing with the potential conflict through repeating the correct information to show respect for the epistemic authority.

Despite all the above-mentioned differences of the employment of reactive tokens, it is noteworthy that both NSs and NNSs have been found to exhibit “the preference of disagreement” in conflict-relevant environments. They orient to opposition markers such as *meiyou* ‘no’ or *bushi* ‘no’ in response to the information mismatch, without any delay or

hesitation markers. However, in an agreement-relevant environment, rejection or negation is marked by delay, silence or hesitation (i.e., “preference for agreement”).

6.5 A quantitative analysis of displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in information mismatch sequences

By quantitative analysis, the display of overt reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens has been summarized in information mismatch sequences in first and second language interaction. Table 6.4 below shows the frequency and distribution of levels of reciprocity displayed through the selection of reactive tokens by NSs and NNSs in three different types of information mismatch sequence discussed in this chapter.

Table 6.4 A summary of displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens by NSs and NNSs in three paired information mismatch sequences

Displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens	Types of reactive token	Produced by NSs	Produced by NNSs
Displaying passive reciprocity through backchannels	Backchannels	0	0
Displaying passive/neutral and active or affiliative reciprocity through composites	Composites	1/4 (25%)	2/10 (20%)
Displaying active reciprocity through repeats	Repeats	0	1/10 (10%)
Displaying active reciprocity through collaborative productions	Collaborative productions	0	0
Displaying neutral reciprocity through reactive expressions	Reactive Expressions	3/4 (50%)	4/10 (40%)
Displaying affiliative reciprocity through laughter tokens	Laughter Tokens	0	3/10 (30%)

As can be seen in Table 6.4, NSs articulate only four reactive tokens in all the three information mismatch sequences: three reactive expressions to display neutral reciprocity and one composite containing the repeat and the reactive expression for a topic transition. NSs have been shown not to use reactive tokens as frequently as NNSs in conflict-relevant environments but to grab the floor and produce turns with a multiplicity of TCUs. Thus, the focus of the task seems to take priority over the display of an awareness of being a recipient.

By contrast, NNSs tend to employ a wider range of reactive tokens than NSs in the same disagreement-relevant environments. Specifically, NNSs employ ten reactive tokens: three freestanding laughter tokens and two laughter tokens in conjunction with reactive expressions and repeats, one freestanding repeat and four reactive expressions. The highest frequency of laughter tokens indicates that NNSs are more interactionally engaged with enthusiasm and passion to achieve affiliation in dealing with information mismatches. On the other hand, in NS-NS interaction, the limited number of reactive tokens in the same context shows that the information mismatch, as a salient topic, seems to take priority over the display of overt reciprocity, let alone displaying affiliative reciprocity in the form of laughter tokens.

To summarize, a contrastive study of the selection of reactive tokens in information mismatch sequences suggests that reactive tokens play an important part in conflict talk in first and second language interaction. For instance, NNSs have been shown to orient to laughter tokens alone or in conjunction with other types of reactive token in a clarifying sequence to pursue individual clarity (i.e., individualism). By contrast, NSs have been shown to employ repeats/rephrasing to convert disagreement into agreement in the pursuit of harmony and social solidarity (i.e., collectivism). This discrepancy seems to suggest that the

selection of reactive tokens is more sophisticated than one first assumed. In addition to the level of reciprocity, the selection of reactive tokens could be influenced by other factors, such as cultural values: individualism and collectivism, in the context of a comparative study of reactive tokens across cultures and languages. An investigation of the interpenetration between cultural values and the selection of reactive tokens could be my further work.

In the next chapter, the importance of reactive tokens in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation will be further explored in relation to the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens through quantitative analysis. More importantly, I will provide a deviant case analysis to discuss the role of reactive tokens in second language interaction.

7 The Role of Reactive Tokens in First and Second Language Interaction and its Pedagogical Implications

This chapter starts with a quantitative analysis of the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens in NNS-NS interaction and provides more evidence to support my argument that reactive tokens are of considerable importance in longer sequences in second language interaction. Then, I will employ another quantitative analysis to provide statistical backing for the argument that reactive tokens play a prominent role in first language interaction in Mandarin conversation. The result of the quantitative analysis is in line with that of the qualitative analysis of reactive tokens in Chapter 4.

Furthermore, assuming the way in which Mandarin native speakers use reactive tokens as the norm for Mandarin conversation, I will provide a deviant case analysis of the non-default use of a reactive token in second language interaction. The deviant case analysis will show that a reactive token might be a potential “barrier” in intercultural communications, in contrast to being a “facilitator” in first language interaction. Finally, the pedagogical implications are explored in relation to the selection of reactive tokens in first and second language interaction. It is hoped that the study of reactive tokens will help redefine the notion of competent language users relating to “the speaking while listening skill” in real-life interaction in pedagogical contexts.

7.1 A quantitative analysis of reactive tokens in NNS-NS²⁷ interaction

This section aims to offer a quantitative analysis of the use of reactive tokens in second language interaction. It will show the frequency and distribution of each type of reactive token in intercultural communications. The quantitative analysis will lend more weight to support my argument that reactive tokens also play a crucial role in second language interaction. It is important to note that the NNSs as the subjects had a good knowledge of Mandarin Chinese at high intermediate level. Thus, they were living in China at the time of data gathering and able to carry out ordinary conversation in the target language.

In the NNS-NS interaction, the NNS, as the informed participant, has the priority access to the correct route from the “Starting Point” to the “Finish Point”. As the uninformed participant, the NS is supposed to have ample opportunities to produce reactive tokens in the recipient slot. Table 7.1 below presents a summary of reactive tokens produced by both the NS and the NNS.

²⁷ The results of the quantitative analysis of the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens in NS-NNS (i.e., the NS as the Information Giver and the NNS as the Information Follower) interaction are similar to those in NNS-NS (i.e., the NNS as the Information Giver and the NS as the Information Follower) interaction in this study. To avoid repetition, the results of the quantitative analysis of reactive tokens in the NS-NNS interaction are not presented in this chapter.

Table 7. 1 The frequency and distribution of reactive tokens in NNS-NS interaction

Type of reactive token	Number of occurrences/Total of reactive tokens	Number of occurrences/Total of tokens ²⁸	Produced by NSs (Follower) /Total of reactive tokens	Produced by NSs (Follower) /Total of tokens	Produced by NNSs (Giver) /Total of reactive tokens	Produced by NNSs (Giver) /Total of tokens
Backchannels	117/206 (56.8%)	117/7335 (16%)	102/206 (49.5%)	102/7335 (14%)	15/206 (7.3%)	15/7335 (2%)
Reactive expressions	15/206 (7.3%)	15/7335 (2%)	4/206 (1.9%)	4/7335 (0.6%)	11/206 (5.3%)	11/7335 (1.4%)
Composites	27/206 (13.1%)	27/7335 (3.7%)	14/206 (6.8%)	14/7335 (1.9%)	13/206 (6.3%)	13/7335 (1.8%)
Repeats	27/206 (13.1%)	27/7335 (3.7%)	11/206 (5.3%)	11/7335 (1.5%)	16/206 (7.8%)	16/7335 (2.2%)
Collaborative productions	15/206 (7.3%)	15/7335 (2%)	9/206 (4.4%)	9/7335 (1.2%)	6/206 (2.9%)	6/7335 (0.8%)
Laughter tokens	5/206 (2.4%)	5/7335 (0.7%)	1/206 (0.5%)	1/7335 (0.1%)	4/206 (1.9%)	4/7335 (0.6%)
Total	206 (100%)	206/7335 (28%)	141/206 (68.4%)	141/7335 (19%)	65/206 (31.6%)	65/7335 (9%)

First, the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens produced by both the NS and the NNS in the NNS-NS interaction are illustrated in Figure 7.1 below.

²⁸ The term “tokens” refers to morphemes in Mandarin Chinese conversation in this thesis. For instance, *haode* ‘good’ is treated as a reactive token in second position. However, *haode* contains two tokens, i.e., two Chinese morphemes.

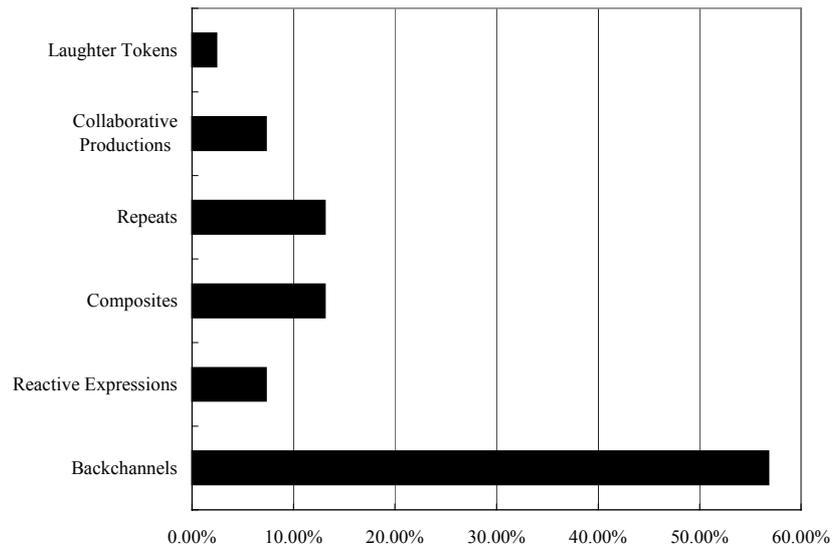


Figure 7. 1 The frequency and distribution of reactive tokens in NNS-NS interaction

As can be seen in Figure 7.1 above, backchannels have the highest frequency in the NNS-NS interaction, as high as 58 per cent of the reactive tokens in total. Repeats and composites have the second highest frequency, 13 per cent respectively. Reactive expressions and collaborative productions rank third with 7 per cent respectively. Laughter tokens have the lowest frequency, only 2 per cent. Thus, the frequency of reactive tokens by both the NS and the NNS in descending order is: backchannels > repeats/composites > reactive expressions/collaborative productions > laughter tokens.

Second, the distribution of reactive tokens produced by the NS in terms of the frequency is shown in Figure 7.2 below.

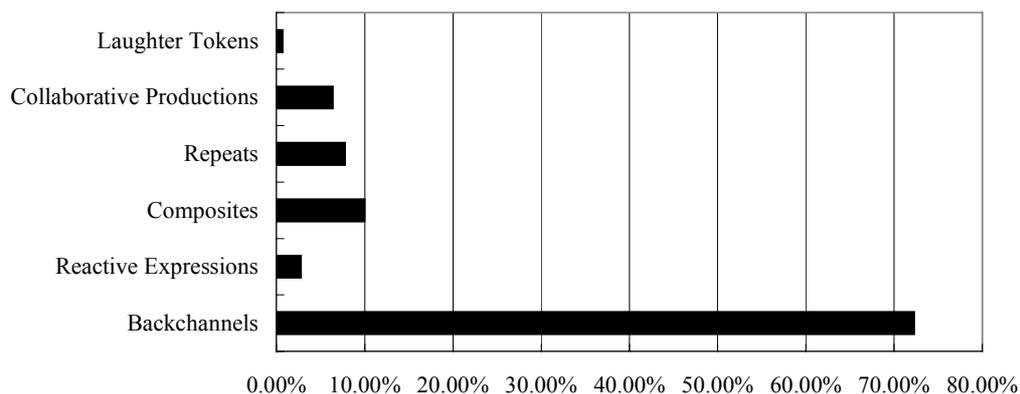


Figure 7. 2 The frequency and distribution of reactive tokens by NSs in NNS-NS interaction

Figure 7.2 above shows that the NS orients to backchannels most frequently in map task conversations, as high as 72 per cent. The second most frequently employed type of reactive token is the composite, accounting for approximately 10 per cent. Repeats rank third, collaborative productions fourth, and reactive expressions fifth. Laughter tokens have the lowest frequency: less than one per cent. Thus, the frequency of reactive tokens by the NS in descending order is: backchannels > composites > repeats > collaborative productions > reactive expressions > laughter tokens.

Third, the distribution of reactive tokens produced by the NNS in terms of the frequency is shown in Figure 7.3 below.

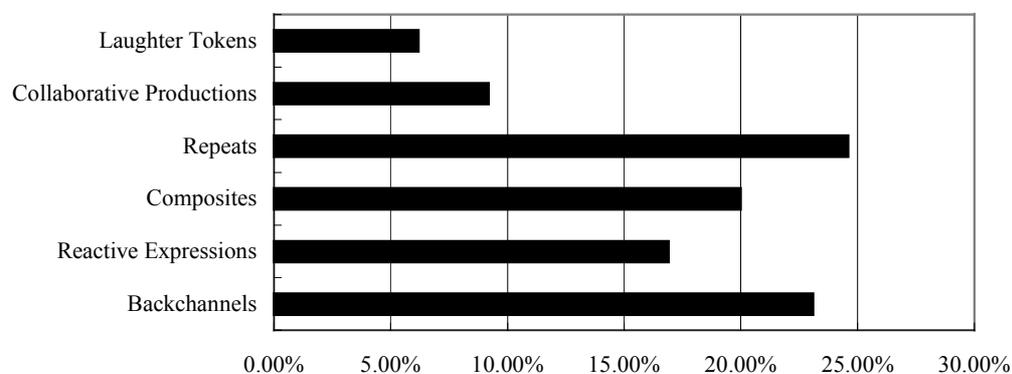


Figure 7. 3 The frequency and distribution of reactive tokens by NNSs in NNS-NS interaction

As can be seen in Figure 7.3 above, repeats have the highest frequency in reactive tokens produced by the NNS, as high as 24.6 per cent. In second language interaction, note that the NNS deploys repeats as imitation on occasion in second language interaction, similar to the role of repeats in first language acquisition process (Keenan 1975). Put differently, repeats can be understood as a learning device, in addition to the conversational actions implemented by repeats in interaction: repair initiators, second position responses and third position confirmation. As such, NNSs orient to repeats most frequently. Backchannels rank second, composites third, reactive expressions fourth, and collaborative productions fifth. Laughter tokens have the lowest frequency. Thus, the frequency of reactive tokens employed by the NNS in descending order is: repeats > backchannels > composites > reactive expressions > collaborative productions > laughter tokens. Differences between the NS and the NNS can be located in relation to the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens in Figure 7.4 below.

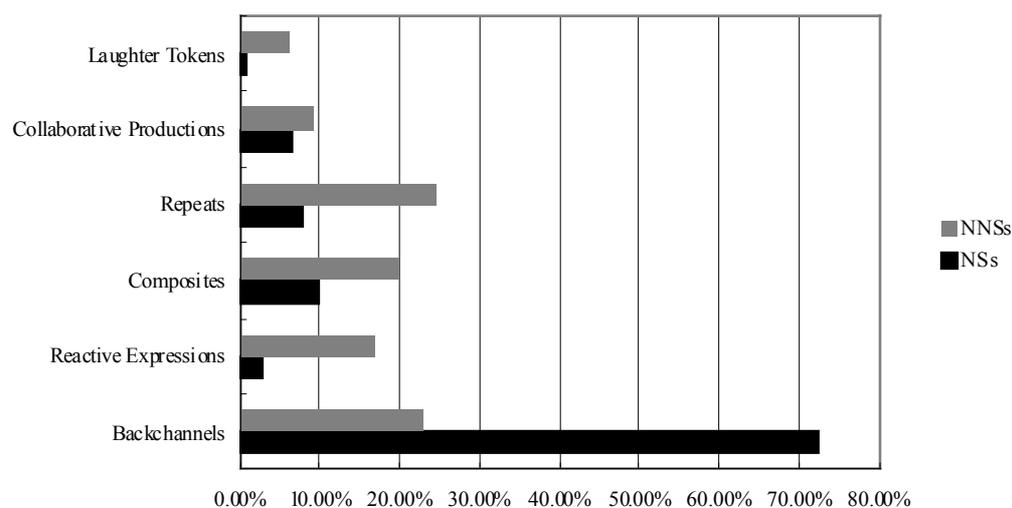


Figure 7. 4 A comparison of the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens by NSs and NNSs in NNS-NS interaction

Figure 7.4 shows that the NS orients to backchannels far more than the NNS does. Once again, backchannels lack definite semantic content and suggest a lower level of reciprocity in talk-in-interaction (see Chapter 5). The high frequency of backchannels by the NS indicates that the NS tends to employ reactive tokens to construct and maintain mutual understanding. Apart from backchannels, the NS orients to other five types of reactive token less frequently than the NNS does. This result shows that the NNS can employ a greater diversity of reactive tokens than the NS in one entire map task conversation.

In terms of the placements of reactive tokens in relation to their syntactic resources of the immediately prior turns, the results are presented in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7. 2 A comparison between NSs and NNSs in relation to CTRPs in NNS-NS interaction

Speakers	At CTRPs	At non-TRPs
The NS	95/141 (67.4%)	46/141 (32.6%)
The NNS	53/65 (81.5%)	12/65 (18.5%)
Total	148/206 (72%)	58/106 (28%)

The above table shows that both the NS and the NNS tend to place reactive tokens at CTRPs, at an average of 72 per cent. Comparatively speaking, the NNS displays a stronger tendency to place reactive tokens at CTRPs in second language interaction, i.e., 14 per cent more than the NS does in the NNS-NS interaction. On the other hand, the NS produces 32.6 per cent of reactive tokens in the midcourse of the NNS's construction of sentences-in-progress, more than the NNS does in the map task conversations. These results

are different from Tao and Thompson's (1991) findings. Possibly, this discrepancy may result from different data collected. At the same time, I acknowledge that individual variations of the participants involved may affect the results of the use of reactive tokens in the NNS-NS interactions.

In the light of the working definition of reactive tokens in six constraints, the quantitative analysis has shown that NSs and NNSs share a high degree of similarities in using reactive tokens as follows.

- Both NSs and NNSs as the Information Followers display a stronger preference of backchannels and reactive expressions to display an awareness of being a recipient in an agreement-relevant environment in order to secure mutual understanding.
- Both NSs and NNSs tend to place reactive tokens at CTRPs.

At the same time, NSs and NNSs have been shown to produce and interpret reactive tokens differently.

- In second language interaction, NSs orient to backchannels most frequently, as high as 72 per cent. However, NNSs employ repeats most, as high as 24 per cent.
- Regarding linguistic resources of reactive tokens in relation to their immediately prior turns, NNSs orient to placing reactive tokens at CTRPs more frequently than NSs in second language interaction.
- NNSs orient to a greater diversity of reactive tokens than NSs.

In summary, this section has provided a quantitative analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin map task conversations on the basis of the working definition and categorization of reactive tokens. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis of reactive tokens in second language

interaction has shown that both NSs and NNSs orient to reactive tokens as a routine practice to construct and sustain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement. It has also shown that NSs and NNSs orient to distinct reactive tokens in different frequency and show preference to particular types of reactive token. This study does not focus on the comparison of the use of reactive tokens produced by NSs and NNSs in first and second language interaction. Rather, I would like to argue that reactive tokens are also important in second language interaction. Thus, their prominent role must not be ignored in conversation across languages and cultures.

7.2 A quantitative analysis of reactive tokens in first language interaction

This section shows the frequency and distribution of different types of reactive token in one entire direction-giving sequence as statistical backing. The quantitative analysis aims to address the issue of the important role of reactive tokens in longer sequences, as a supplement to the sequential analysis presented in Chapter 4. The results of the qualitative analysis showed that reactive tokens could be seen as an important resource in longer sequences to sustain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement. As such, reactive tokens serve as a “facilitator” to move the conversation forward in first language interaction.

In one entire conversation between native speakers of Mandarin recorded in 2006, there are 57 instances of reactive tokens. They can be categorized into six types: reactive expressions (23/57), backchannels (19/57), composites (7/57), collaborative productions (4/57), laughter tokens (2/57) and repeats (2/57). Table 7.3 below illustrates the frequency and distribution of reactive tokens by Mandarin participants in descending order.

Table 7. 3 The frequency and distribution of reactive tokens by native speakers

Types of reactive token	Number of occurrences/Total reactive tokens by Mandarin participants	Number of occurrences/Total tokens by Mandarin participants
Reactive Expressions	23/57 (40.4%)	23/3809 (6‰)
Backchannels	19/57 (33.3%)	19/3809 (5‰)
Composites	7/57 (12.3%)	7/3809 (2‰)
Collaborative Productions	4/57 (7%)	4/3809 (1‰)
Repeats	2/57 (3.5%)	2/3809 (0.5‰)
Laughter Tokens	2/57 (3.5%)	2/3809 (0.5‰)

As can be seen in Table 7.3 above, Mandarin participants employ reactive expressions most frequently, as high as 40.4 per cent. Backchannels have the second highest frequency, accounting for 33.3 per cent. It is notable that both reactive expressions and backchannels together account for 73.7 per cent, nearly three fourths of the total of reactive tokens employed by Mandarin participants. As discussed in Chapter 4, there are two main conversational actions embodied in the form of reactive expressions and backchannels. Reactive expressions and backchannels can serve to display understanding and convergence with the immediately prior talk produced by a floor-holding speaker so far. Thus, they can be considered as backward-looking. At the same time, they can also serve as displaying continued reciprocity. A recipient displays understanding and attentiveness to prior talk and signals that the floor-holding speaker should continue talking and complete her ongoing turn. In this sense, they can also be seen as forward-looking.

Composites rank third in the total number of reactive tokens in the sample, making up

12.3 per cent. A composite has been shown to serve dual functions. On the one hand, Mandarin participants produce one component of a composite to display acknowledgement of immediately prior talk through the selection of one type of reactive token (information-related). On the other hand, they can articulate another component of the composite to indicate sequence closing and preparedness for the next action through the selection of another type of reactive token (action-related). The remaining three types of reactive tokens (i.e., collaborative productions, repeats, and laughter tokens) are mainly employed for the indication of active or affiliative recipient participation. It is apparent that Mandarin participants do not employ them very frequently, with 14 per cent in total. Thus, Mandarin speakers have been shown to display a strong preference for reactive expressions and backchannels to display an awareness of being a recipient and to secure mutual understanding in longer sequences.

The initial result supports one of Clancy et al.'s findings (1996: 381): reactive tokens produced by Mandarin participants are more likely to be lexically contentful (i.e., reactive expressions accounting for 40.4 per cent). Another finding is concerned with the placement of reactive tokens in relation to complex transition relevance places in Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4 The placement of reactive tokens by native speakers

Speakers	At CTRPs	At non-TRPs
The NS	72%	28%

Table 7.4 above shows that Mandarin participants have a strong tendency to place reactive tokens at CTRPs, as high as 72 per cent. This result is consistent with Clancy et

al.'s (1996) findings.

In terms of topic organization, six types of topic-relevant structure have been identified in the data: topic initiations, topic developments, topic completions, topic review, clarifying sequences and route construction (see detailed discussion in Chapter 4). Table 7.5 below illustrates the placement of reactive tokens by Mandarin participants in relation to topic organization.

Table 7. 5 The placement of reactive tokens in relation to topic organization

Type of reactive token	Topic initiations	Topic developments	Topic completions	Topic review	Clarifying sequences	Route construction
Backchannels	14%	14%	4%	32%	18%	18%
Reactive expressions	24%	14%	19%	9.5%	24%	9.5%
Composites	57%	14%	29%	0	0	0
Collaborative productions	0	0	0	0	0	100%
Laughter tokens	0	0	50%	0	0	50%
Repeats	100%	0	0	0	0	0

As can be seen in Table 7.5 above, backchannels and reactive expressions can occur in all six types of topic organization. This result is in line with the qualitative study of reactive tokens: backchannels and reactive expressions account for 73.7 per cent of the total reactive token articulated. In greater detail, Mandarin participants have been shown to employ

backchannels for the purpose of topic review, as high as 32 per cent. They favour reactive expressions for the purpose of topic initiation and in clarifying sequences, and they typically employ composites for the purpose of topic initiation. Laughter tokens are only found for the purpose of topic completion and in clarifying sequences.

By contrast, collaborative productions and repeats seem to have restricted placements. Collaborative productions tend to emerge in route constructions during the map task, after both parties have achieved intersubjective understanding of the landmarks concerned in a location descriptor. Repeats tend to occur for the purpose of topic initiation. When one party mentions a topic for the first time, such as the label and the location of the target landmark, the other party repeats it and treats it as newsworthy.

In summary, through quantitative analysis, Mandarin participants have been shown to orient to the following features of reactive tokens.

- A hierarchy of the use of reactive tokens by Mandarin participants has been found in first language interaction, in line with Clancy et al.'s (1996) observations.

backchannels	>	composites
reactive expressions		repeats
		collaborative productions
		laughter tokens

- Mandarin participants employ backchannels and reactive expressions to display an awareness of being a recipient and to secure intersubjective understanding in agreement-relevant environments.
- Mandarin participants tend to place reactive tokens at the end of completed turns.

-
- In terms of topic organization, Mandarin participants employ backchannels for topic review, reactive expressions for topic initiation and in clarifying sequences, composites for topic initiation, collaborative productions for route constructions, laughter tokens for topic termination, and repeats for topic initiation.

All of the above features have shown that reactive tokens can be seen as one of the important characteristics of recipient behaviour in longer conversational sequences. Thus, their important role must not be neglected in such a context. In the next section, I will show through a deviant case analysis that reactive tokens are also of great significance in intercultural communications.

7.3 A deviant case of ‘*mm*’: recipient expectations on the part of speakers

In this section, assuming that the way in which Mandarin native speakers orient to reactive tokens to sustain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement is the norm for Mandarin conversation, a deviant case analysis is applied to investigating non-default reactive tokens in second language interaction. Through deviant case analysis, the important role of reactive tokens can be further explored with illustrations from the data. All of the following instances show that the non-default use of reactive tokens may lead to misunderstanding between NSs and NNSs. Thus, the smooth flow of an ongoing conversation can be impeded and subsequently restored as the desired reactive token is articulated.

Only one instance of misunderstanding of a backchannel is available in the data: the ‘*mm*’. As illustrated in Chapter 4, ‘*mm*’ is a minimal vocalization and can be seen as the

truncated form of ‘*mmhmm*’. It can be heard or treated as uncommitted and indifferent. Fragment 7.1 below illustrates how an NNS treats an NS’s backchannel ‘*mm*’ as inadequate and problematic in response to his question in the pursuit of an understanding check from the recipient. In other words, the NNS does not treat ‘*mm*’ as an appropriate response in terms of his normative expectation of his co-participant. In the following transcript, K is the NNS, and X is the NS.

Fragment 7.1, from Turns 671 to 674, Group 2, 2006

- 671 K(NNS): 一直 走。
 yizhi zou
 continuously walk
 “Continue walking.
 知道 啦? --Pre-token TCU
 zhi-dao la
 know QP
 “(Do you) see (what I mean)?”
- 672 →X(NS): mm -- RT (Backchannel)
- 673 K(NNS): 知道 啦? -- Pre-token TCU
 zhi-dao la
 know QP
 “(Do you) see (what I mean)?”
- 674 X(NS): 知道 了。 -- RT (Repeat)

zhi-dao le
 know ASP

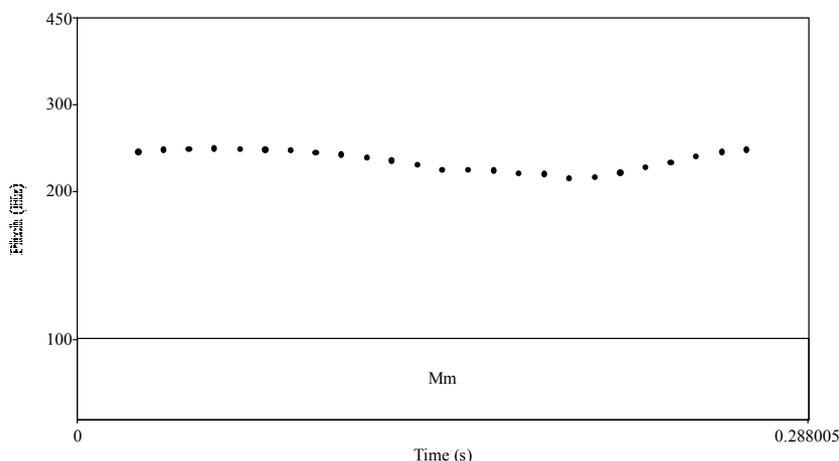
“(I) see (what you mean).

Similar to ‘*mm*’ in English, the ‘*mm*’ (Turn 672) is treated as a weak and variable acknowledgement token, indicating a lack of attention, interest and engagement in the ongoing conversation. By contrast, the recipient’s use of a repeat, such as *zhidao le* ‘I see what you mean’ (Turn 674), seems to display a stronger agreement and more active participation. The use of a repeat thereby shows a higher level of reciprocity and can be heard to be more engaged in the event under discussion than ‘*mm*’ (Turn 672).

In this local context, ‘*mm*’ produced by the recipient does not warrant agreement or secure intersubjective understanding on the part of the floor-holding speaker. One possible reason might be that ‘*mm*’ lacks definite semantic content, as previously discussed in Chapter 4. The inadequacy of ‘*mm*’ can be further evidenced by the NNS’s repeat of his utterance in the declarative form. Thus, the recipient changes the type of reactive token and repeats the main verb (Turn 674) as an appropriate response. This repeat can be heard to be a sufficient and appropriate response on the part of the floor-holding speaker. Put differently, the NNS expects the NS to provide the response with some definite semantic content rather than a backchannel such as ‘*mm*’ to sustain mutual understanding and to secure recipient engagement in longer sequences.

As Gardner (2004) points out, prosodic configurations may add a layer of function of the same token, such as ‘*mm*’ in this instance. Therefore, another possible reason for the ‘*mm*’ to

be heard as uncommitted or reserved may be its prosodic configuration, as can be illustrated in Graph 7.1 below.



Graph 7.1 A fall-rise of ‘*Mm*’ by the native speaker

The frequency analysis illustrates that ‘*Mm*’ displays a falling-rising intonation contour. It seems that one reason for the miscue of the ‘*mm*’ is its prosodic configurations: a fall-rise. In English conversation, Gardner (2001) notes that ‘*mm*’ displays a fall-rise when it is employed as a continuer in a marked context and that it has a fall when it is used as an acknowledgement token in an unmarked context. Thus, the NNS treats the NS’s response of ‘*mm*’ delivered in a fall-rise contour as inadequate and problematic and thereby redirects the same utterance in the declarative form back to the NS (Turn 673). It could be concluded that a reactive token might be a potential “barrier” in second language interaction, in contrast to a “facilitator” in first language interaction. As this suggests, reactive tokens might be significant in language pedagogical contexts, which will be discussed in greater detail in Section 7.4.

Further, it is noteworthy that the floor-holding speaker can adjust his subsequent action,

provided that he is not sure about the recipient's sense making of his immediately prior talk. In this instance, the NNS inserts a question/answer adjacency pair sequence, before he shifts to another landmark as a new topic within the larger direction-giving sequence. This question serves to seek confirmation to secure mutual understanding. In addition, this fragment can provide more empirical evidence to support my argument that a recipient has the possibility to shape or even reshape the trajectory of a floor-holding speaker's subsequent contributions.

7.4 Pedagogical implications

The prominent role of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences discussed in Chapter 4, and the selection of reactive tokens in Chapter 5 seem to suggest that it is necessary to reconsider the definition of communicative strategies in real-life interaction. Previous research has shown that three major reasons seem to be relevant to the absence of reactive tokens from most teaching programs (Gardner 1998: 205-206): (i) lack of a systematic account of reactive tokens; (ii) separation of listening from speaking; and (iii) variability and vagueness of reactive tokens. Both the literature and my research findings suggest that more work is still needed to bridge the gap between the results of the research on reactive tokens and their applications in pedagogical contexts. In this regard, the study attempts to address the research/application gap through redefining the notion of communicative strategies and considering how reactive tokens might be dealt with in speaking textbooks in relation to Mandarin conversation.

The findings concerning similarities and differences relating to the way in which NNS

and NNSs employ reactive tokens can inform both first and second language education, particularly in the notion of linguistic competence concerning communication strategies. Put differently, the integration of how to listen well and how to speak well in interaction seems to be a significant dimension in the notion of the speaking skill while listening in first and second language interaction. Every participant can be both speaker and recipient in any given conversation.

In terms of language education, more empirical evidence from the data has revealed that employment of reactive tokens seems to be proportional to the linguistic competence of the participants in Mandarin map task conversations. The statistical analysis of the three different sets of data produced by three different groups of participants has shown that there exists a level of correlation between the use of reactive tokens as the display of an awareness of being a recipient and participants' communicative competence, as illustrated in Table 7.6 below.

Table 7. 6 A summary of reactive tokens in three projects in 2004, 2005 and 2006

Participants	Number of reactive tokens in Group 1/Number of speaker changes	Number of reactive tokens in Group 2/Number of speaker changes/Number of speaker changes	Number of reactive tokens in Group 3/Number of speaker changes	Number of reactive tokens in Group 4/Number of speaker changes	Total number of reactive tokens/Total number of speaker changes
Non-English majors (2004)	1/52	5/67	7/106	1/25	14/250 (5.6%)
English majors (2005)	41/150	52/173	57/165	66/210	216/698 (31%)
Members of Staff in CELE (2006)	57/192	206/764	130/538	149/445	542/1939 (28%)

As can be seen in Table 7.6 above, the non-English majors are bilingual speakers with relatively lower language proficiency, while English majors and members of staff in Centre for English Language Education (CELE) can be seen as bilingual participants with a relatively higher level of linguistic proficiency (see Chapter 3). Notice that the employment of reactive tokens relating to their frequency of occurrences in map task conversations seems to be proportional to the linguistic competence of the participants. More specifically, there is a significant gap (i.e., at least 22.4 per cent) between non-English majors and both English Majors and members of staff in CELE. This gap implies that the ability to listen by articulating appropriate reactive tokens to display an awareness of being a recipient can be

understood as indices of speakers' communicative competence, through the quantitative analysis of the data.

In order to help participants become 'good' recipients in interaction, it is suggested that recipient's activities could be one of the key dimensions in the teaching syllabus of speaking courses or in the design of the textbooks of speaking skills in both first and second language education. This possibility will be further explored in Section 7.4.2.

7.4.1 A neglected dimension of communicative strategies

As noted earlier, the ability to employ appropriate reactive tokens can mirror the speakers' communicative competence. Thus, the role of recipients' linguistic production and behaviour should not be neglected in the notion of communicative competence in language education. In the literature, Hymes (1972b) proposes the notion of communicative competence in language education, in contrast with Chomsky's (1965) distinction between competence and performance. In applied linguistics, Canale and Swain (1980) suggest four key components as the modular framework of communicative competence as follows:

- (i) grammatical competence: words and rules;
- (ii) sociological competence: appropriateness;
- (iii) discourse competence: cohesion and coherence;
- (iv) strategic competence: appropriate use of communication strategies.

The data analysis has revealed that the employment of reactive tokens to display an awareness of being a recipient seems to be relevant in terms of all the above-mentioned

components. For instance, syntax (i.e., grammar) can serve as an important resource for recipients to articulate reactive tokens as acknowledgement tokens at ends of syntactically complete sentences or as continuers between or within constituents. Further, the examination of the way in which NSs employ reactive tokens has shown that there exists a higher degree of similarities relating to the display of overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens in English and Mandarin conversation. In other words, the use of reactive tokens can be seen as a conversational strategy as well as a social skill in longer conversational sequences in human interaction.

In addition, interaction has been considered as an important component in the assessment of the speaking skills. More evidence can be drawn from IELTS, which contains five analytic categories in oral interview tests: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary resource, fluency and interactive communication (Nakatsuhara 2008). Specifically, the nature of interaction is categorized into three phases: (i) questioning and topic nomination techniques; (ii) topic expansion and management techniques; and (iii) receipt tokens and feedback techniques (Brown 2003). Among them, Phase (iii), in particular, is obviously the most straightforward evidence to show that the use of reactive tokens for displaying overt reciprocity can be seen as a key aspect in assessing learners' communicative interaction, and thus speaking proficiency in language teaching.

The data analysis has shown that reactive tokens can be differentiated in terms of levels of reciprocity, as discussed in Chapter 5. This finding is consistent with McCarthy's (2002, 2003) view that listenership (i.e., reciprocity in this study) can be considered as the manifestation of recipient engagement in conversation. As McCarthy and Slade (2007: 866)

note, much teaching of the listening skill (while speaking) focuses on comprehension of the incoming information at the perceptual level and neglect the examination of appropriate reactions or communicative productions of recipients. This perspective thus suggests that the use of reactive tokens should be incorporated into teaching listening skills in interaction, redefining “the speaking while listening skill” in pedagogical contexts.

7.4.2 Value and importance of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences relating to communicative strategies

By combining sequential analysis and linguistic data analysis, the employment of reactive tokens in longer sequences has been shown to be indicative of levels of communicative strategies (Clancy et al.1996: 355) of competent language users. Figure 7.5 below illustrates the prominent role of reactive tokens in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation. To produce a reactive token or not to produce a reactive token can make a difference in terms of the assumptions and expectations of the floor-holding speaker in longer conversational sequences in real-life interaction.

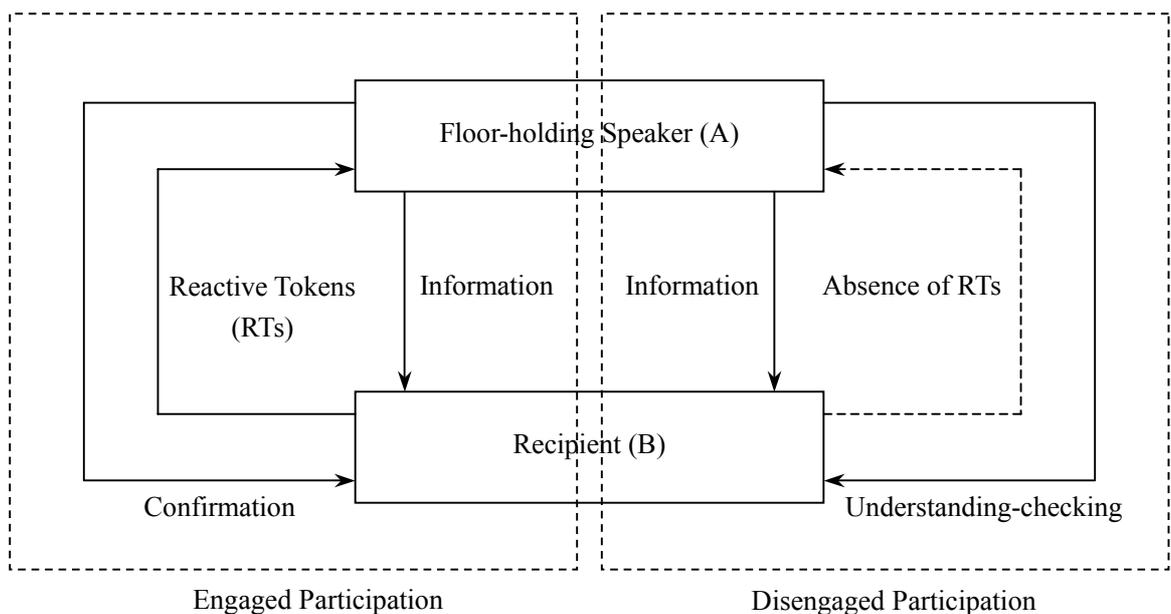


Figure 7. 5 To produce a reactive token or not to produce a reactive token

Information flow from a floor-holding speaker to a recipient;

A recipient may produce a range of reactive tokens to show distinct levels of reciprocity;

[associated with competent language users]

A recipient may remain silent and there is a noticeable absence of a reactive token

expected by a floor-holding speaker; [associated with less competent language users]

A floor-holding speaker may further confirm by producing some utterances;

A floor-holding speaker may repeat or recycle the message or she may employ a

linguistic strategy such as an understanding check or a confirmation-seeking question to

elicit a response from a silent recipient;

A-B or A-B-A pattern (- or - -): the organization of engaged recipient

participation through variation and selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational

sequences;

A-?-A pattern (- -): the organization of disengaged recipient participation in the

noticeable absence of a reactive token produced.

Figure 7.5 above suggests that the ability to organize and manage recipient participation through variation and selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences can be seen as indices of levels of communicative strategies of a competent language user in interaction, as Heritage observes:

Rights and obligations to speak and listen fluctuate accordingly and are accommodated

within a turn-taking system that administers opportunities to act without much reference

to the particular actors involved. In sequence organization, rights to mobilize response are available to all competent users of language on every occasion of its use (Heritage 2008: 312).

7.4.3 A gap between textbooks and authentic interaction relating to reactive tokens

In pedagogies of speaking, it is well established that there exists the issue of gap between authentic interaction and speaking materials (e.g., Hughes 2002; McCarthy and O’Keefe 2004; Tao 2005) in terms of the gap between research and application. An examination of two textbooks of spoken Mandarin Chinese with the analytic focus on the use of reactive tokens shows that this gap does indeed exist in the teaching of spoken Mandarin. For instance, there is an almost absence of employment of reactive tokens in longer sequences in spoken Mandarin textbooks. In an entire textbook entitled *hanyu kouyu jiaocheng* ‘A Textbook of Spoken Mandarin Chinese’ (Chen 2000), there is only one instance of reactive token in a total of 18 units of different topics. Fragment 7.2 below comes from Unit 14 entitled *jintian bi zuotian hai leng* ‘It is even colder today than yesterday’.

Fragment 7.2, from Unit 14, Chen 2000: 73

1 A: 我 怎么 觉得 今天 比 昨天 还 冷。 -- Pre-token TCU

wo zenme juede jintian bi zuotian hai leng

1SG somehow think today than yesterday even cold

“Somehow, I think it is even colder today than yesterday.”

2 B: 是 吗？

-- RT (affirmative particle + QP)

shi ma

COP QP

“Is it?”

3 A: 别 看 今天 有 太阳 , 可 气温 比 昨天 还 低。

bie kan jintian you taiyang ke qiwen bi zuotian hai di

NEG see today have sun but temperature than yesterday still low

“Although it is sunny today, the temperature is still lower today than yesterday.”

Speaker B, as the primary recipient of the incoming information, produces an affirmative particle *shi* ‘yes’ in conjunction with a question particle *ma* as a response sequentially in second position. In the data, *shi ma* ‘is it’ (Line 2) has not been found as a form of a reactive token. However, it is the only instance available in the entire textbook. One linguistic aspect of an utterance is important in real-life interaction: the intonation of this response. Research has shown that the role of prosody cannot be ignored in spontaneous flow of talk (e.g., Local 1996; Gardner 2004; Szczepek Reed 2006). Provided that a response is articulated in a rising intonation, it implies that the recipient might have a different perspective of the temperature of that day. On the other hand, provided that the same response is delivered in a falling intonation, it implies that the recipient might share the same view regarding the temperature.

In an authentic interaction, a third-turn confirmation sequentially will be expected, given that the recipient uses a rising intonation in delivering the reactive token. In this textbook, note that the floor-holding speaker does not attend to the response of the recipient, let alone

the prosodic configurations of this response. Rather, she ignores the confirmation as a “third” by resuming presenting her views on the weather in a longer sequence. This instance clearly illustrates a lack of authenticity of the language modeled in spoken Mandarin textbooks. This noticing is in line with findings in English textbooks: the two-part question-answer sequences often appearing in textbook dialogues are not the norm in real-life conversations (e.g., Carter 1997; Burns 2001).

Unfortunately, all the forms and types of reactive token emerging in Mandarin map task conversations have not been found in the same textbook. In other words, backchannels, composites, repeats, collaborative productions and laughter tokens are totally absent in this textbook. The design of the whole textbook ignores the fact of the value and importance of reactive tokens in longer sequences in authentic first and second language interaction, which is supported by the empirical evidence from Mandarin map task conversations.

A recent textbook of spoken Mandarin Chinese (Yang and Jia 2007) seems to be improved in terms of the number of reactive tokens emerging in a total of 16 units of dialogues in the entire textbook, as illustrated in Table 7.7 below.

Table 7.7 A summary of reactive tokens in the textbook of spoken Mandarin Chinese (Yang and Jia 2007)

Units	Types of reactive token	Number of Occurrences	Chinese	Pinyin	English
2	Backchannels	1	啊！	<i>a</i>	ah
3	Reactive Expressions	1	是吗？	<i>shima</i>	did they?
10	Reactive Expressions	1	好吧。	<i>haoba</i>	good
11	Reactive Expressions	1	对。	<i>dui</i>	right
11	Reactive Expressions	1	是啊。	<i>shi a</i>	yes
16	Reactive Expressions	1	那太好了。	<i>Na taihao le</i>	(That's) great(.)

As can be seen in Table 7.7 above, reactive expressions have been shown to be the preferred reactive tokens from the perspective of the textbook authors, although only six instances of reactive tokens have been found in the entire textbook. This number seems to be limited, compared with the frequency and distribution of the reactive tokens articulated by recipients in Mandarin map task conversations. This distinction suggests that the gap still exists between textbooks as application and authentic interaction in research relating to the employment of reactive tokens, as previously discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Fragment 7.3 below illustrates the use of a backchannel by the NNS in the textbook. In this instance, a Mandarin Chinese teacher as the NS and an overseas student as the NNS are discussing the taboos concerning the use of two lexical Mandarin Chinese characters with the

same pronunciation.

Fragment 7.3, from Unit 2, Yang and Jia 2007: 17

1. Teacher (NS): 更 让 人 莫名其妙 的 是, -- First TCU

geng ran ren momingqimiao de shi

more make person unintelligible MM COP

“More unintelligibly,

如果 你 乘 船 过 河, -- Second TCU

ruguo ni cheng chuan guo he

if 2SG take boat cross river

if you cross the river by boat,

不 能 说 带 “chén” 这 个 音 的 字。 -- Third TCU

bu neng shuo dai chen zhe ge yin de zi

NEG MV say take chen this CLF sound MM word

(you) cannot produce the word with the sound of ‘*chen*’.

因为 船主 忌讳 “沉” 这 个 字。 -- Fourth TCU

yinwei chuanzhu jihui chen zhe ge zi

because exercitor taboo chen this CLF word

because the exercitor regards ‘*chen*’ as taboos.

如果 有 人 姓 “陈”, -- Fifth TCU

ruguo you ren xing chen

if have person call chen

if someone has such a family name as ‘*chen*’,

在 船 上 人 家 问 你 姓 什 么 , -- Sixth TCU

zai chuan shang renjia wen ni xing shenme

in ship up people ask 2SG call what

On the ship, if people inquire about your family name,

你 就 不 能 回 答 说 “ 我 姓 陈 ” , -- Seventh TCU

ni jiu bu neng huida shuo wo xing chen

2SG just NEG MV answer say 1SG call chen

you cannot answer: ‘My family name is *chen*’.

要 说 “ 我 姓 耳 东 ” 。 -- Eighth TCU (Pre-token TCU)

yao shuo wo xing erdong

MV say 1SG call erdong

Just say ‘call me *erdong*’.”

2. Student (NNS): 啊 !

-- RT (Backchannels)

a

PRT

“Ah.”

This fragment displays similar features of turn design to NSs’ production in Mandarin map task conversations: eight TCUs within one turn in a lengthy telling, as previously discussed in NS-NS interaction in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. At the same time, the overseas student (i.e., the NNS of Mandarin Chinese) seems to be collaborative and patient to wait till

the teacher completes a lengthy story in a longer turn (Turn 1). In second position, the student as the NNS produces a backchannel ‘*ah*’ to display his change of status of knowledge from not-knowing to now-knowing. This instance illustrates one of the typical backchannel discussed in the data, but it is noteworthy that NNSs orient to ‘*oh*’ as a change-of-state token in the data rather than ‘*ah*’ used in the textbook. Further, it is worthwhile to emphasize that the aim of the textbook of spoken Mandarin Chinese is to prepare learners to use language in authentic interaction. Thus, the textbook authors should incorporate the results of research on talk-in-interaction, when they design or compile the content of a textbook of teaching a spoken language.

Finally, another possible solution to bridging the gap between textbooks and authentic interaction might be to provide learners with opportunities to record and transcribe a small amount of their own real-life conversation. Then, they can investigate particular features of a conversational phenomenon, such as the use of a reactive token, to raise an awareness of such conversational features in interaction (Burns, Gollin and Joyce 1997). It is important to bear in mind that reactive tokens play an important role in longer sequences in Mandarin conversation and thus needs more attention in language pedagogical contexts.

8 Conclusions

This chapter is organized as follows. First, the potential contributions and some interesting findings of the thesis are discussed. Next, limitations of the current study are presented, along with suggestions for future work.

8.1 Potential contributions

This thesis contributes to a growing body of research on reactive tokens in general and the sequential analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation in particular. It provides two insights into the study of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences. First, the thesis has shown that a consideration of the sequential organization of reactive tokens is just as important as a consideration of their form and function in interaction. Second, the data analysis has shown that the selection of reactive tokens is more a question of varying degrees of recipient engagement, than of different linguistic forms. I present these and other points for discussion in the following sections.

8.1.1 The importance of sequential contexts of reactive tokens

Above all, the sequential analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation has revealed that the overt display of an awareness of being a recipient through reactive tokens is managed and oriented to by participants themselves. Recipients articulate a broad range of reactive tokens sequentially in second position to serve two main functions: to maintain mutual comprehension and to secure recipient engagement, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Without the retention of a sense of the sequential positionings of the reactive tokens produced,

some essential differentiation among various types of reactive tokens would be neglected. This finding suggests that a richer understanding of reactive tokens and their conversational function(s) needs to be informed both by their forms and their sequential contexts.

In addition, it has been shown that the study of reactive tokens can reach a more thorough level of understanding by considering their linguistic forms and conversational functions in tandem with their sequential organization. For instance, through a sequential analysis, participants have been shown to display overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens in longer sequences. In particular, the sequential analysis suggests that the production of reactive tokens is associated with the level of reciprocity displayed in longer sequences. Thus, the sequential analysis of reactive tokens presented in this study can be seen as supplementary to the quantitative analysis of Mandarin reactive tokens available in the literature (e.g., Tao and Thompson 1991; Clancy et al. 1996).

Further evidence of the importance of the sequential context of reactive tokens comes from the working definition of reactive tokens (Chapter 4) as the object of study. The sequential placement of reactive tokens has been found to be a critical resource for recipients to display an awareness of being a recipient. To illustrate, the same token such as '*mm*' (i.e., one variant form of a backchannel in this project) is flexible in terms of its sequential placements and can accomplish a variety of actions in human interaction. On occasion, '*mm*' can emerge at turn-initial positions and preface a turn, followed by additional turn components, serving as a 'resumptive opener' in the light of Clancy et al's (1996) typology. Or '*mm*' can occur in the midcourse of a turn, in the service of floor-holding cues or hesitation sounds, which normally flag a problem in utterance formulations. Equally, '*mm*' can emerge

at the end of the syntactically complete turn, i.e., in the ‘post-completion’ position, as a signal pursuing a response from the recipient. It can also emerge in response to another backchannel item containing no propositional content in the service of the third-turn confirmation, which is optional.

Most importantly, ‘*mm*’ can be articulated sequentially in second position in response to the immediately prior turn with propositional content at the CTRP. It serves as an acknowledgement token, or at the end of an unfinished turn as a continuer to prompt more talk from the floor-holding speaker. In this project, I only concentrate on reactive tokens as acknowledgement tokens and continuers in second positions (i.e., “seconds”), rather than “firsts” or “thirds”. Thus, attention to the sequential context of a reactive token in this study is just as important as attention to its form and its function(s) in previous studies. Further, a sequential consideration of reactive tokens also helps explore the puzzle of the selection of reactive tokens in longer conversational sequences, as will be seen below.

8.1.2 The selection of reactive tokens

Previous studies in English conversation in Chapter 2 and the data analysis in Chapter 4 have shown that the function(s) in conversational contexts can affect the selection of a reactive token. More importantly, in this study, the selection of a particular linguistic form of a reactive token over another has been shown to result from the systematic differences in the display of distinct levels of reciprocity, as previously discussed in Chapter 5. In this regard, this study has extended our knowledge relating to a correlation between the selection of a reactive token and the display of the level of reciprocity in human interaction. This correlation suggests an alternative way of exploring the selection of reactive tokens in longer

sequences in Mandarin conversation.

Within the framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through reactive tokens, backchannels, such as *'mm hmm'*, are considered to work at a lower level of reciprocity, as they mainly display the receipt of the incoming information. This class of reactive tokens can mainly contribute to mutual understanding at the perceptual level. By contrast, laughter tokens can be ranked at a higher level of reciprocity to display affiliation at the level of interpersonal relationships. On occasion, laughter tokens are employed to terminate conflicts even in the absence of humorous orientations in a disagreement-relevant environment. As this implies, laughter tokens seem to be socially and interactionally consequential between co-participants, in line with Glenn's (2003) findings of laughter as a social skill. In this regard, laughter tokens contribute to social relations. Nonetheless, backchannels do not seem to have such an effect. This result is consistent with Sacks' (1984: 426) view that "it is extremely difficult to spread joy" (e.g., in the form of laughter tokens) and that "it is extremely easy to spread information" (e.g., in the form of backchannels and reactive expressions).

It could be argued that the interconnection between a reactive token and the display of overt reciprocity has long been identified in previous studies of individual reactive tokens in different interactional environments in English. For instance, in prior work, *'uh huh'* can be employed to display continued reciprocity; *'oh'* can indicate that the recipient has treated the immediately prior talk as informative; *'mm'* indicates a low level of recipient involvement, as the recipient has nothing substantial to add to the ongoing topic; in the trouble talk, laughter tokens can be seen as an affiliative response: "emotionally heightened talk following an

expression of sympathy” (Jefferson 1988: 428). The above-described forms and types of individual reactive token in English and the displayed reciprocity have also been found in the data. However, in previous studies, it is apparent that there is a lack of attention to the systematic differences between the production of reactive tokens and the display of levels of reciprocity in a gradual manner in conversational sequences. This study has suggested that reciprocity is not a simple construct in human interaction and participants can display levels of reciprocity or a continuum of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens. This finding implicates that reactive tokens can be seen as part of the human communicative repertoire and thus a social skill in human interaction.

Thus, this study suggests that the selection of one type of reactive token over another is not random or accidental, but systematic as well as sequentially and socially organized. Further evidence is that the organization of topics and the recipient’s status of knowledge (see Chapter 4) have also been shown to affect the selection of a reactive token, in addition to such factors as the function of a reactive token in the interactional contexts (see Chapter 2), the sequential organization (see Chapter 4), and the level of reciprocity (see Chapter 5). To illustrate, backchannels, reactive expressions and collaborative productions can emerge in the same positions in the light of syntactic structures either within constituents or between constituents. However, the selection of one particular type of reactive token over another has been shown to be a product of an interactional achievement, as previously discussed in detail in Fragment 5.5.

In terms of topic organization, backchannels and reactive expressions can be employed at all stages of the map task conversations: topic initiations, topic developments, topic

completions, topic review, clarifying sequences and route construction. On the other hand, collaboration productions normally emerge in route construction, after both speakers and recipients have achieved mutual understanding of the relevant landmarks on the route in a location descriptor. This factor of topic organization implies that the selection of a particular reactive token is more sophisticated than one may assume, particularly in longer conversational sequences.

Through contrastive analysis, it has been shown that NSs employ repeats to minimize the conflict in the pursuit of harmony and social solidarity, a typical trait often referred to as ‘collectivism’ in Chinese culture, as previously discussed in Fragments 6.2, 6.4 and 6.6. On the other hand, NNSs orient to laughter tokens in the clarifying sequences to maximize the conflict in the pursuit of individual clarity, typical of the kind of individualism prevalent in western culture, as previously discussed in Fragments 6.1, 6.3 and 6.5. This discrepancy poses a potential direction for future research relating to the difference between Mandarin and English spoken data: does the selection of reactive tokens reflect cultural values, such as collectivism versus individualism in Mandarin Chinese and English? In other words, one interesting emerging research question is whether cultural orientations have an impact on the selection of reactive tokens in ongoing turns or not and how cultural orientations and social interaction interpenetrate each other.

In summary, a range of factors that influence the selection of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation have been identified, such as their function(s) in the conversational context(s) as suggested in previous studies of reactive tokens in English conversation, topic organization and the recipient’s status of knowledge (in Chapter 4), the level of reciprocity (in Chapter 5)

and the cultural values (in Chapter 6). All these potential factors help enrich our understanding relating to the issue of the selection of a reactive token in human interaction.

8.1.3 Other discussions

This section presents a summary of interesting findings in this study, followed by some discussions.

Findings of the thesis:

- (1) Through sequential analysis, reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation have been found to be just as important as those in English conversation.
- (2) Recipients have been found to potentially have the power to shape and reshape the subsequent contributions of the floor-holding speaker in conversational sequences through the selection of reactive tokens.
- (3) It has been shown that reactive tokens might impede the smooth flow of second language conversation through deviant case analysis, whereas they facilitate the conversational flow in first language interaction
- (4) Recipients have been found to show the preference for disagreement through the selection of *mei-you* 'no' in information mismatch sequences.

Firstly, compared with the reactive tokens used in English conversation in the literature, the study has shown that Mandarin Chinese and English share a high degree of similarities in relation to the linguistic realizations of reactive tokens and their core functions in interaction. In both English and Mandarin conversation, participants display overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens. This similarity suggests that the production of reactive tokens is universal and routine in talk-in-interaction. It makes cross-cultural

communication possible in the map task conversations in NS-NNS and NNS-NS interaction.

Just as reactive tokens in English, reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation in Chapter 4 can serve two core functions. First, reactive tokens can serve to construct and sustain mutual understanding at the perceptual level. Second, reactive tokens can function to frame and secure recipient engagement at the level of interpersonal relationships. Thus, reactive tokens facilitate participants to move the conversation forward. To illustrate, backchannels and reactive expressions have been found to mainly accomplish two main jobs in Mandarin conversation: convergence tokens at CTRPs (i.e., backward-looking) and continuers at non-TRPs (i.e., forward-looking), similar to those surveyed in English conversation in Chapter 2. This transitional use of reactive tokens allows co-participants to shift freely between entry into and exit from route construction and the production of a location descriptor in direction-giving sequences (Chapter 4). At the same time, this transitional use of reactive tokens also allows the co-participants to transfer freely between direction-giving sequences as base sequences and clarifying sequences as insertion sequences in information mismatch sequences (Chapter 6).

Secondly, the sequential analysis of the selection of reactive tokens has demonstrated that the recipient has the potential power to shape and reshape the trajectory of the floor-holding speaker's subsequent utterance formulations, as previously discussed in greater detail in Fragments 5.2. Specifically, provided that a floor-holding speaker does not succeed in getting the desired response from a recipient at some important junctures (i.e., topic boundaries) in the course of route construction, she might assume that the recipient has some difficulty or trouble in understanding the incoming information or displaying overt reciprocity

through the use of reactive tokens. Thus, a floor-holding speaker will employ preference procedures to deal strategically with the noticeable absence of the display of overt reciprocity in an insertion sequence: by clarifying a potential problem first, or by checking the relevant facts of their shared knowledge next, or by changing her position finally to convert disagreement into agreement (Pomerantz 1984a). That is, a floor-holding speaker constantly orients to the display of overt reciprocity to frame and secure a recipient's understanding, attention and alignment to her own talk.

Thirdly, by examining the 'deviant' case of miscues of backchannels emerging in intercultural communications, the use of a reactive token has been shown to impede information communication from time to time in second language interaction. This finding is in line with Li's (2006: 111) observation that reactive tokens can occasionally be considered as "misleading feedbacks" in intercultural conversation. However, the miscues of reactive tokens are absent in first language interaction in the data. Thus, it seems that reactive tokens can be a "facilitator" in first language interaction, whereas they might be a potential "barrier" in second language interaction. This finding is significant in the sense that language awareness of the overt display of being a recipient through the selection of reactive tokens is essential in redefining the notion of communicative strategies in pedagogical contexts (see section 7.4).

Finally, in terms of the preference organization in information mismatch sequences, this study has shown that disagreement (*meiyou* 'no') does not exhibit any features of dispreferred seconds, as observed in the literature of conversation analysis (e.g., Pomerantz 1984a). This preference for disagreement, however, is consistent with the observation of conflict talk in

terms of the preference organization²⁹ (e.g., Gruber 1998). Thus, the “preference for disagreement order” has also been established in the conflict-relevant environments in Mandarin map task conversations. All the above-mentioned areas await further research and more empirical evidence in Mandarin conversation.

To summarize, in this pilot study, further empirical evidence from Mandarin map task conversations has been provided to support the claim that the production of reactive tokens can be seen as an interactional achievement (e.g., Goffman 1978; Schegloff 1982; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2006) and a routine practice in talk-in-interaction in first and second language interaction. In addition, further empirical evidence from Mandarin map task conversations has been shown to support the view that the production of reactive tokens is not random or trivial, but systematic, sequentially and socially organized: “order at all points” (Sacks 1992 Vol. 1: 484). The reactive tokens examined in this project, therefore, can be seen as individual products generated by the powerful machinery of conversation.

8.2 Limitations and further work

I acknowledge a certain number of limitations in my research. First, I am aware that the map task data do not represent entirely natural conversation in everyday settings. However, as I state in Chapter 3, I argue that reactive tokens emerging in the map task conversations are nevertheless natural and spontaneous occurrences. Second, the Information Giver, as the informed participant, mainly plays the role of primary speaker in the direction-giving sequences. Thus, the role negotiation between speakers and recipients in

²⁹ Gruber (1998) notes that the “preference for agreement order” of ordinary conversation is reversed, once a conflict is in progress. Participants orient to a structural preference for disagreement in the production and interpretation of turns.

the data is less frequent than that in ordinary conversation.

Third, I have not taken into account nonverbal channels of reactive tokens such as head nods and shakes, gaze movement, amongst others, because the participants are not allowed to use nonverbal channels in the map task. Fourth, there may be important characteristics and dimensions of the deployment of reactive tokens in natural conversation that are not reflected in my study because of the small data set of the map task conversations. Fifth, I find that the use of reactive tokens varies from one individual to another, and the results may therefore be limited because of participants' individual variations in Mandarin map task conversations. Finally, some social factors such as age, gender, and power may also affect the employment of reactive tokens in talk-in-interaction, but these have not been considered in this project.

With regard to the interpretation of the data, I am aware that the participant sample is small and hence the number of reactive tokens examined is limited in all categories of analysis. As such, more empirical data from naturally occurring conversation are needed to test the framework for displaying levels of reciprocity through the selection of reactive tokens in other conversational contexts. Future research should include both verbal and nonverbal channels of the overt display of an awareness of being a recipient.

To summarize, displaying overt reciprocity through variation and selection of reactive tokens has been shown to be part of the repertoire of social actions available to participants as competent language users. This practice has been found to be oriented to by participants as an interactional resource for constructing and maintaining meaning and relationship in longer sequences in human interaction. The use of reactive tokens can be seen as an essential component in defining "the speaking while listening skill" in pedagogical contexts. By

integrating sequential analysis into linguistic data analysis of reactive tokens in Mandarin conversation, this thesis has shown that seemingly insignificant and randomly selected reactive tokens are in fact more important and systematic than it may seem at first sight. The combination of sequential analysis and linguistic data analysis may be a promising direction for research on linguistic practices in Mandarin conversation.

Last but not least, this study has offered an alternative perspective on the production and conduct of recipients in human interaction. Being a recipient does not simply mean being able to understand the incoming information from co-participants. It also means being able to produce an appropriate reactive token as a response to frame and secure interpersonal relationship. Through variation and selection of reactive tokens, recipients can display a level of engagement: being distant, neutral or enthusiastic. In this regard, recipients can also take an active part in longer sequences in talk-in-interaction, as reactive tokens equip recipients with both engagement and disengagement strategies for human interaction.

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Appendix

Simplified Transcription Symbols and Abbreviations

I. Transcription symbols

The following transcription symbols are adapted from Silverman (1998: 197-198).

[Left brackets indicate the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by another's talk.

(1) From Turn 155 and 156, Group 1, 2006

155 A: 崩, 就 是 那 个 ‘ 山崩 [地裂’ 的
 beng jiu shi na ge shanbeng dilie de
 fall just COP that CLF land:slides earth:cracks MM

“‘Beng’ (fall) is just in that Mandarin expression called *shanbeng dilie* ‘land slides and earth cracks’.”

156 B: [hu huh, 好 的。
 hao de
 good MM

“Hu huh, good.”

= Equal signs, one at the end of a line and one at the beginning, indicate no gap between the two lines.

(2) From Turn 98 to 100, Group 1, 2006

98 B: =没 有。

mei you

NEG have

“No, there is not.

所以, ‘右手边’ 有 个 ‘耕地’。 =

suoyi you shou bian you ge gendi

so right hand side have CLF farmed:land

So, there is (a landmark labelled) ‘Farmed Land’ on the right side.”

99 → A: =对, 对。 =

dui dui

right right

“Right, right.”

100 B: =好 的。

hao de

good MM

“Good.”

(.3) Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence in tenths of a second.

(3) From Turn 98 and 99, Group 3, 2006

98 C: 我 现在, 在 ‘瀑布’ 左边。

wo xianzai zai pubu zuobian

1SG now be:in waterfalls left:side

“Now, I am on the left of (the landmark labelled) ‘Waterfalls’.”

(.3)

99 →D: 对。

dui

right

“Right.”

:: Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. The length of the row of colons indicates the length of the prolongation.

(4) From Turn 447 to 448, Group 3, 2006

447 D: 你：有：跟 开始 的 位置 一样。

ni you gen kaishi de weizhi yiyang

2SG have as start MM location same

“You: have: the same location as the starting point.”

448 → C: a:: u:: hehe

_____ Underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.

(5) From Turn 203, Group 3, 2006

203 D: [但是， 我 有 了 个 空 位置。

danshi wo you le ge kong weizhi

but 1SG have ASP CLF vacant place

“But I have a vacancy.

所以，有可能那个鸟就在

suoyi you keneng na ge niao jiu zai

so have possibility that CLF bird just be:in

So, it is possible that the bird is just in

[那个空位置上面。

na ge kong weizhi shangmian

that CLF vacant place upper

that vacancy

? Question marks indicate interrogative intonation.

(6) From Turn 224, Group 3, 2006

224 C: OK. 在，在左边还是右边？

zai zai zuobian hai shi youbian

in in left:side still COP right:side

“Okay, (is it) on the left or on the right?”

。 Periods indicate declarative intonation.

(7) From Turn 367, Group 3, 2006

367 D: 然后，再下来。

ranhou zai xialai

subsequently again come:down

“Subsequently, come down again.”

, Commas indicate flat or slightly rising intonation.

(8) From Turn 29, Group 3, 2006

29 D: 所以 , =

suoyi

so

“So,”

II. Transcription notations

- i. In the transcripts, the first line in italics is the original Mandarin utterance in Chinese characters; the second line is *pinyin* in Mandarin Chinese; the third line is a word-for-word gloss; and the fourth line is a vernacular English gloss.
- ii. Arrows in the left-hand margin of the transcript may be used to call the reader’s attention to particular parts of the transcript. The author will inform the reader of the significance of the referent of the arrow by discussing it in the text.

III. Abbreviations of grammatical terms used in the glosses

ASP	aspect marker (<i>le</i>)
CLF	classifier
COP	copula
MM	modifier marker (<i>de</i>)
MV	modal verb

NEG	negative
PRT	utterance final particle
QP	question particle
1PP	first person plural pronoun
2PP	second person plural pronoun
3PP	third person plural pronoun
1SG	first person singular pronoun
2SG	second person singular pronoun
3SG	third person singular pronoun