

Identity and authority in the lay-bureaucratic encounter: A case study in
Mandarin Chinese

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Abstract

Using Conversation Analysis (CA) as its research method, this thesis explores how Chinese citizens and officials manage and construct their relevant institutional identities in meetings where citizens are petitioning officials. In the CA literature, it is widely acknowledged that in institutional talk, rights to the floor are standardly asymmetrically distributed between lay people and institutional personnel (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Through analyzing 21 hours of videoed citizen-official interactions, this study investigates how, in terms of turn-taking organization, the co-interactants' institutionally asymmetric relationship is "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984b: 237).

It focuses on two types of directive actions that the speakers use to lay claim to the floor: 1) one party calling a halt to the other party's ongoing talk or course of action, and 2) granting the other the floor in second position, while the permission is apparently not sought by the prior speaker. By comparing how the two parties formulate these two actions with linguistic (e.g., lexis, syntax, Chinese particle *ba*) and bodily (e.g., hands, face, eye gaze) resources in various sequential contexts, this study illustrates that while the lead officials are oriented to by the citizens and the lead officials themselves as the authority in controlling the floor, the citizens do not submit to it in the first place; and that the lead officials do not claim absolute authority in taking the floor.

This thesis aims to show that identity, rather than being a static notion or a label attributed to an individual, is an interactional achievement, and deontic authority is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon but a negotiation that involves an initial claim to authority by one party and subsequent compliance or resistance by the other.

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1 Introduction

In human social interactions, interactants are in various social relationships, such as a hierarchical relationship between a superior and a subordinate, an institutional relationship between a social worker and a client or a government official and a citizen, and so on. Knowing how to talk in a socially appropriate way that suits co-interactants' relative identities so as to perhaps present a good self-image (Goffman, 1959) and avoid potential interpersonal conflicts is considered a very important social competence. Because of this centrality of identity in human social life and its close connection with language, linguistic research on identity has been increasingly central in many social disciplines, for instance, social psychology (Speer, 2012), linguistic anthropology (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, 2005), sociolinguistics (Dyer, 2007), pragmatics (Locher, 2008), discourse analysis (Bamberg et al., 2011), conversation analysis (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Pomerantz & Mandelbaum, 2005) and so on.

However, in sociolinguistics – especially in variationist sociolinguistics and politeness-oriented research – where researchers tend to take identity as a deterministic factor in affecting speakers' language use, participants are standardly selected and classified based on some social macro-categories, such as social class, rank, age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, education and so forth; and their data are often collected through interviews, surveys, questionnaires, artificial role-playing, etc. While this way of categorizing participants provides us a general understanding of the correlation between speakers' language variations and their social attributes on a macro level, these identity categories apparently are labels within an individual; that is, these identities are static and are traditionally used as external factors to explain certain linguistic behaviors of a social group or individuals in a community.

Hence, it is fair to say that their research focus is not on speakers' identity per se but mostly on language itself.

By contrast, this thesis studies identity in its own right and views it as dynamically negotiated, interactionally managed, and co-constructed by participants in social interaction. It investigates how participants themselves orient to their respective identities in naturally occurring face-to-face conversations – that is, how interactants, the actual users of language, use language and the body to manage and construct who they are to each other moment by moment in talk-in-interaction. Compared to the macro, quantitative analysis of language use in society in traditional sociolinguistic research, this thesis is a micro-analytic study of language and other conduct as they are used in social interaction, using Conversation Analysis (henceforth, CA), an inductive and predominantly qualitative method (Clift, 2016; Drew, 2014; Heritage, 1984b; Levinson, 1983), to investigate identity.

Specifically, in this thesis, videoed meetings between Chinese citizens and local government officials in Mainland China are particularly chosen to be studied. Since participants' institutional identities (i.e., citizen-official) are so obvious that it is so easy to take it for granted that they always talk as a citizen or a government official whenever they interact with one another at an institution. However, just as Schegloff puts it, “Not everything *in the setting is of the setting*. Not all talk at work is work talk” (1992: 117; italics in original). A citizen can address his/her matter to a government official at one moment and the next, ask about the official's kids' well-being if they are acquaintances or friends, and this talk can occur at work or, say, at a dinner party. So, if we analysts are to attribute respective institutional identities to participants, we have to ask – a question in itself being empirical, which has been neglected by most sociolinguists in the beginning – what is it that makes them ‘sound’ like a citizen or an official?; in other words, what are the details in their talk and other conduct that make them recognizable as a citizen or an official, not only for us

analysts but also for participants themselves? In Heritage's words, how are "specific contexts (e.g. particular social identities, purposes and circumstances) ... talked into being and oriented to in interaction" by co-interactants (1984: 237)? It is to find answers to this question that this case study is conducted.

The data was collected from a local government office in China, called *xin* ('letter') *fang* ('visit') *ju* ('bureau') 'Bureau for Letters and Visits'. In the citizen-official meetings, the citizens mainly petition the relevant local government officials (e.g., a president of a regional court, a police chief of a regional Public Security Bureau, etc.) to solve their matters, such as reversing a verdict on a criminal case, giving more 'land requisition compensation', solving 'unfinished buildings' problems, reinvestigating a suicide case from 20 years before and so on. The meetings selected for the analysis in this thesis usually involve one citizen (or two citizens as a couple), one lead official (who usually provides final solutions), one subordinate official (who is more familiar with the details of petitions), and staff from the Bureau for Letters and Visits (who organize the meetings, such as ushering the citizens to their seats, showing them out when the encounters finish).

As the first conversation analytic investigation of citizen-official interaction in Mandarin Chinese, this thesis attempts to provide some preliminary findings on the face-to-face interactions between Chinese citizens and government officials in this particular institutional setting. My analytic concern here is the interactions between the citizens and the lead official, as the lead official is arguably considered the authority who controls the interactional agenda (e.g., determines when to start and close a meeting) and provides a decisive solution. Thus, in this thesis I study how the citizens and the lead officials construct their identity as authoritative/powerful or not through implementing two types of directive actions: 1) an interrupting action by which one party calls a halt to the other party's ongoing talk, and 2) granting the other party floor to speak next. In the CA literature, it is widely

acknowledged that in institutional talk, rights to the floor are standardly asymmetrically distributed between laypeople and institutional personnel (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Hence, this thesis investigates, in terms of turn-taking organization (Sacks et al., 1974), how the two parties negotiate their rights to the floor at a given moment in interaction, thereby ‘talking their institutionally asymmetric relationship (i.e., one between a citizen and lead official) into being’ (Heritage, 1984).

Moreover, in contrast to most identity studies in linguistics that solely focus on language, this study also includes the participants’ body movements (including hand gestures, eye gaze, torso movements, and facial expressions) and explores how language and the body are finely organized in the service of social actions. This thesis, therefore, also aims to contribute to our understanding of the interplay between language and the body in face-to-face social interaction, especially during the moments of Chinese speakers’ negotiation and construction of their locally relevant identities.

In this introductory chapter, I first review two approaches in sociolinguistics to the relationship between language and identity in an attempt to give a sense of how CA distinctively investigates identity issues (section 1.1). I then briefly introduce some crucial linguistic features of Mandarin Chinese that are relevant to the current research (section 1.2), after which I situate this thesis with respect to CA research on institutional talk (section 1.3), identity negotiation and construction in social interactions (section 1.4) and embodiment in face-to-face interaction (section 1.5). The introduction concludes with an overview of the chapters that follow (section 1.6).

1.1 Approaching the relationship between language and identity

In sociolinguistics, there are two domains of research – variationist sociolinguistics and politeness research in pragmatics – investigating how *identities* (e.g., age, gender, social

class, power relations, social distance, etc.) affect or determine participants' linguistic behaviors. To distinguish the view of identity in this study from these two fields, in this section, I first discuss the variationist sociolinguistic approach with the main reference to Eckert's (2012) summary of the three waves of variation studies. I then review the politeness-oriented approach with a focus on Chinese politeness research. I conclude the section by briefly showing how CA views identity in social interaction and how it investigates this issue.

1.1.1 The variationist sociolinguistic approach

According to Eckert (2012), variationist sociolinguistics has developed in three loosely-ordered waves. The first wave began with William Labov's (1966) classic study on the stratification of English varieties in New York City, which paved the way for the development of the field during the late 1960s and 1970s. Labovian sociolinguistics use survey and quantitative methods to investigate the correlation between linguistic variables (e.g., the variation in the pronunciation of post-vocalic /r/ of New Yorkers studied by Labov (1972)) and the researcher-designated macro-sociological categories of class, sex, ethnicity, and age. The studies in this tradition viewed linguistic variables as marking social categories, or in Drew and Heritage's (1992: 19) words, some pre-established social framework was viewed as "containing" the participants' linguistic behavior.

The second wave was motivated by the awareness that these studies, as Eckert (2012: 90) remarks,

interpreted the social significance of variation on the basis of a general understanding of the categories that served to select and classify speakers rather than through direct knowledge of the speakers themselves and their communities.

Thus, some variationists started to adopt ethnographic methods to examine the relation between vernacular variables in some local speech community and participants-designed categories (e.g., Cheshire, 1982; Milroy, 1980). One of the classic studies was conducted by

Eckert (1989), who, based on her ethnographic observations, found two opposing categories ‘jocks’ (who actively engage in school life and activities and embrace middle-class values) and ‘burnouts’ (who are anti-school and authority and embrace work-class values) between adolescents in high schools in Detroit. These social categories were found to have a great influence on the use of vernacular variables. For instance, the ‘burnouts’ were found to overwhelmingly use nonstandard vernacular forms (e.g., double negatives, ‘I didn’t do nothing’), whereas the ‘jocks’ were found to frequently use standard forms. But similar to the first wave, the second wave also sees speakers’ categories as static (Eckert, 2012: 93).

However, studies in the second wave brought the indexical relations between variables and social categories to the fore, which gave rise to the third wave of variation studies, taking identity as practice (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). This emergent line of research views linguistic variation not only as a reflection of social identities and categories but also as “*constitutive* of social identities (in other words, a speaker can actively manipulate linguistic resources to create identities)” (Dyer, 2007: 106; italics in original). One of the representative research is Zhang’s (2005) study on Mandarin phonological variables and the construction of a ‘cosmopolitan’ identity by Beijingers. One of the examined variables is the rhotacization of finals (in which ‘flowers’ [hwa] is pronounced as [hwa.ɹ]), which is considered the most salient feature of local Beijing dialect but is endowed with “slippery” quality or “oily tone” (Q. Zhang, 2008: 201). Zhang interviewed 14 ‘yuppies’ (i.e., young managers who work at foreign companies) and 14 state professionals (who work at state-owned companies) in Beijing and found that yuppies used this variable significantly less than the state professionals did. She, therefore, argued that Beijing yuppies distinguish themselves from the state professionals by suppressing the use of the variable, thereby constructing a distinct identity.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that while variationists in the third wave have realized that linguistic variation can be a resource for identity construction, they still attribute external identity categories to participants, and their research interest often falls on “variation within one speaker (intra-speaker variation or stylistic variation), and with the various and overlapping constructions of identities within the individual” (Dyer, 2007: 102). That is to say, they are not interested in seeing how identity is constructed by interactants in social interaction. And, phonology or dialect/accent is still their primary focus.

In contrast to this macro-level research in variationist sociolinguistics, in this thesis, I am interested in examining the micro interactional moments where participants deploy various linguistic resources (e.g., lexis, syntax, Mandarin-specific linguistic features such as final particles, etc.) to construct their relative identities. I will show some Mandarin data in section 1.1.3 to illustrate this point, but now I turn to the discussion of the politeness-oriented approach in the next section.

1.1.2 The politeness-oriented approach

This thesis particularly investigates directive actions (i.e., calling a halt to the other’s ongoing talk and giving the other permission to continue his/her talk), which are also examined by politeness researchers in terms of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, in which these actions are called “face-threatening acts” (FTAs). So, in this section, I briefly discuss how the relations between language, identity, and FTAs are explored in this domain of research with a focus on politeness studies in Chinese.

A central concept in politeness studies is ‘face’, which is defined by Goffman as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (1967: 5). Based on this notion, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose the terms “positive face” (concerning the desire to be approved of by others) and

“negative face” (concerning the desire to be unimpeded by others in one’s actions). One of the central arguments is that when making requests, speakers tend to select an indirect or “off-record” form of speech to avoid threatening the addressee’s “negative face”. And whether to mitigate FTAs or not depends on three factors: power and social distance between speakers and hearers, and the ranking of imposition of an FTA (1987: 76).

Adopting this theoretical framework, many Chinese scholars start to investigate the relationship between Chinese speakers’ politeness strategies in making requests (e.g., Chen, He, & Hu, 2013; Gao, 1999; Hong, 1996; Pan, 1995; Rue & Zhang, 2008; Y. Zhang, 1995) and their identity categories (e.g., power, gender, age, social relations) (see Kádár & Pan, 2011 for a comprehensive review of politeness research in China). Similar to variationist sociolinguistics, this line of research also uses some pre-established frameworks to interpret speakers’ linguistic behavior. And most of these studies employ the methods of discourse completion tasks, interviews, and questionnaires to elicit participants’ reactions to some analysts-invented scenarios that involve politeness considerations, though some scholars within the field such as Pan (2011: 74–75) criticize that

such a methodological approach yielded little in terms of studying Chinese politeness at an interactional level or discourse level, because the data gathered through this method were based on prescribed and simulated situations.

An exception perhaps is Pan’s own (1995, 2000) studies on politeness in the naturally occurring interactions in Cantonese¹ between superior and subordinate government officials and customers and clerks in service encounters, respectively. However, the traditional pragmatic way of investigating single utterances in doing certain “speech acts” (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and using speakers’ external identities to explain certain linguistic behavior still remain in her studies. For instance, below is an example used by Pan to illustrate that when

¹ Cantonese is one of the varieties of Chinese, spoken mainly in South China, Guangdong province in particular. Please see section 1.2 for more background information.

talking to a superior, a subordinate (Yin here) tends to use a polite expression (*hou m hou* ‘is it all right?’ in line 2):

(1) (Pan, 1995: 467; Example 2)

→ 1 Yin: Ngo nidou gong gong xin ne.
I here speak speak first TW

2 hou m hou?
Okay not okay

I'll speak first, all right?

Indeed, the naturally occurring data demonstrates speakers' actual use of language in real life. But this example well demonstrates that the primary focus of politeness research is not on how participants' relative identities are negotiated and constructed by themselves in interaction. Instead, its research goal is to build a direct connection between interlocutors' social relations and their polite or impolite linguistic behaviors in doing certain FTAs.

By contrast, this thesis is interested in how identity is managed, negotiated, and co-constructed by interactants themselves through not simply what they say but also what they do (i.e., social actions) across utterances or turns in a sequence or sequences in interaction. Moreover, many politeness studies tend to fix their analytic attention on language, even though their collected data are face-to-face interactions (e.g., Harris, 2003; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Pan, 1995, 2000). This thesis, however, will show that body movements play an equally crucial role as language in formatting and mitigating directive actions (see Chapter 4 in particular).

Furthermore, especially in recent years, research on identity construction in Mandarin conversations or discourse from the pragmatic perspective has been increasing (e.g., X. Chen, 2018, 2021; Li, Ran, & Kádár, 2018). This thesis thus attempts to contribute to this line of inquiry by systematically investigating identity construction in Mandarin face-to-face interactions from the conversation analytic perspective.

1.1.3 *The conversation analytic approach*

I will describe the CA method in detail in Chapter 2, but in this section, I intend to give a sense of the material I will work on in the main chapters and show how CA views and studies identity in talk-in-interaction.

From the previous two sections, we have seen that while variation and politeness studies have different research topics in exploring the relationship between language and identity, they all appear to use researcher-designated or fixed identities or social relations to explain a range of linguistic phenomena. So, it appears that they are less interested in exploring how participants' identity is constructed through language use in social interaction. Nevertheless, CA views interaction or “talk-in-interaction” (i.e., talk and other conduct produced in the course of human interactions, Schegloff, 2006: 90) as structurally organized, “stand[ing] independently of the psychological or other characteristics of particular speakers” (Heritage, 1984a: 241) and, therefore, treats context and identity as “inherently locally produced, incrementally developed and, by extension, as transformable at any moment” (Drew & Heritage, 1992: 21). Thus, conversation analysts incorporate a distinction between status (concerning a “somewhat enduring feature of social relationships”, Heritage, 2013b: 377) and stance (concerning “the moment-by-moment expression of these relationships, as managed through the designs of turns-at-talk”, Heritage, 2013b: 377) into our conceptualizations of identity and social relationships (see Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2014; C. Raymond, 2016; Yu & Wu, 2021; see also section 1.4.2).

For example, consider the extract in Mandarin shown below, where Sha (citizen) interrupts Gua (lead official) and directs him to yield the floor at line 03:

(2) LXGs2e2_#18 (extract)²

² Please see the transcription conventions in Appendix I and the abbreviations used in glossing in Appendix II. The meetings in the data are recorded in a reception/conference room as shown in the Figure 1.1 and citizens usually sit on the left side and the government officials sit on the right side. Citizens enter and leave the room from the door behind the chairs on the left side, while the officials enter the room from the door on the right.

(Sha=citizen; Gua=police chief of regional Public Security Bureau & deputy district head)

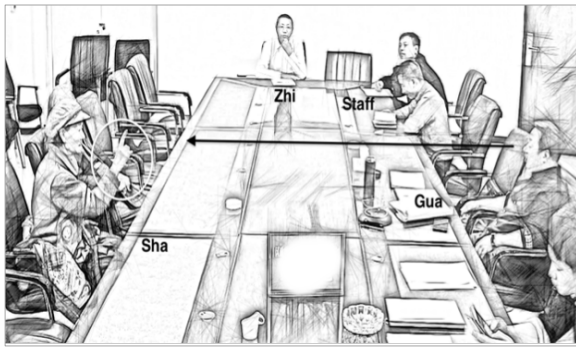


Figure 1.1 Sha's index finger point and Gua's gaze at the second *ni* in line 03

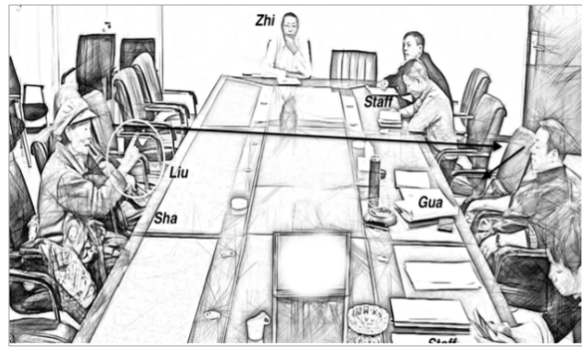


Figure 1.2 Sha's index finger point and Gua's gaze at the end of line 03

- Hand ~~~~~**
- 01 Sha: ↑这么 着,=
 ↑zheme zhe,=
 this CRS
How about it/↑this,
- 02 Gua: =那 你- 你- 你 [提出 异议 (就 等于 你-)]
 =na ni- ni- ni [tichu yiyi (jiu dengyu ni-)]
 then 2SG 2SG 2SG raise objection just equal 2SG
Then you- you- you raising an objection (is just like you-)...
- Gaze_{Gua} at Shaat Shaaway
- Hand ~~~~~*****
- 07 Sha: [你- 你 ↑这么 着 啊.(.)]您 听 我 说.
 [ni- ni ↑zheme zhe a.(.)]Nin ting wo shuo.
 2SG 2SG this CRS PRT HON.2SG listen 1SG say
You- you do ↑this way a.(.) You_{HON} listen to me say.
- 08 Gua: 啊,=
 ā,=
 PRT
Uh huh,

Sha's switch in address forms at line 03 from an informal second person singular pronoun *ni* 'you' to an honorific *nin* 'you_{HON}' illustrates that usage is not invariably tied to status. We will systematically examine the interactional import of this type of shift in address forms in Chapter 4 (cf. see Raymond, 2016 for a similar practice in Spanish). But the point here is such an in-the-moment switch in stance – from a form whose underlying semantics conveys social intimacy to one invoking social distance – demonstrates that speaker and hearer's relative identities can be momentarily invoked and dynamically adjusted by participants themselves through their situated language use in talk-in-interaction. Also, Sha's hand gestures are worthy of note. While she markedly displays a deferential stance towards Gua on

a linguistic level, on a bodily level, her ‘authoritative’ index-finger points-and-waving gesture (Figs. 1.1 & 1.2) visibly remains active throughout her production of line 3. We will examine such phenomena in Chapters 3 and 4.

This instance suggests that, as Clift points out,

while it is relatively straightforward to see that (although less so to explain how) speakers’ linguistic behaviour may be tied to *status*, it is less easy to capture the momentary and dynamic adjustments made by speakers to their interactional *stance* from one moment to the next. (2016: 25; italics in original)

In contrast to the aforementioned sociolinguistic approaches in which participants’ identities are externally given by the researchers, CA focuses on participants’ own displayed orientations to their relative identities in talk-in-interaction. Through adopting a meticulous³ method of transcribing naturally occurring conversations in which talk is captured in its temporal, online production based on a transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (2004b), we are also able to see “how aspect of identity are oriented to, and endogenously generated in, the incremental progression of the talk itself” (Clift, 2016: 25).

More importantly, CA focuses on two fundamental things when analyzing conversations: action – the things we do with words – and sequence – “a course of action implemented through talk” (Schegloff, 2007b: 9), of which the latter is commonly neglected in linguistics (see Clift, 2016: Ch. 1). A central tenet of CA is the view that actions do not occur in isolation but across sequences. These two fundamental concepts are particularly crucial for capturing how participants’ identities emerge out of what actions they do in

³ The transcripts in Excerpts 2 and 3 may look different from the conventional transcripts that simply include what is just said by the parties to the interaction. In fact, carefully and repeatedly listening to and viewing of recorded interaction so as to make detailed transcriptions of it, using Jeffersonian conventions is the core activity in doing conversation analytic work. This is because CA research has demonstrated that interaction is deeply orderly everywhere (Maynard & Heritage, 2005) and features such as silences (e.g., a silence occurs right after an initiating action (e.g., invitation, request) may be a harbinger of rejection, J. Davidson, 1984; cf. Kendrick & Torreira, 2015; S. Roberts et al., 2015), overlapping talk (Schegloff, 2000), sound stretches (Schegloff, 1984a), breathing (Ogden, 2013), clicks (X. Li, 2020a; Ogden, 2013), swallowing (Ogden, 2021) and so on have been found significantly interactionally meaningful and systematically organized. Hence, they all need to be transcribed as much as possible.

interaction turn-by-turn. For instance, consider an English example shown below, where Adam's request to sit down (line 1) is met with an apology from Mary (line 2):

(3) Clift: 22:20 (cited from Clift & Mandelbaum, ms)

1 A can I sit ↑do(hh)wn: is it al(h)right if I ↑sit, is it
 2 M→ oh pleas:e do I'm [↓sorry
 3 A [my legs: we:re:->no its o[kay<
 4 M [I'm sorry, [you were=
 5 A [(it's
 6 M =[standing there and I wasn't thinking ab[out it=
 7 A =[the) legs were gone because of (0.5) [cycling. S Uhh!=
 8 M =That was dreadful of me I'm sorry.

Why would someone ask permission to sit down, given that we sit many times a day without one's permission? Even without knowing the context (i.e., the relationship between Adam and Mary), we may still have a sense that this interaction happens very likely between a guest and a host based on their actions. Adam's asking for Mary's permission to sit down at line 01 displays his orientation to Mary as someone who has the authority to grant it, possibly an owner of a certain space; and Mary's vigorous assent and following apologies at lines 02, 04 & 08 reflexively confirm her status as being a host, who should have invited Adam to sit in the first place. This instance suggests that, as Clift and Mandelbaum (ms) remark, "actions across sequences reveal participants' orientations making particular identity categories relevant". So, in this thesis, to investigate the co-interactants' negotiation and construction of their relevant identities, I first look at what actions they are doing in a given sequence and then examine what kinds of linguistic and bodily resources they deploy to implement the given actions (in CA, it is called "turn design", see Drew, 2013).

To sum up, this section has aimed to illustrate how the view of identity in CA is distinct from the other two existing linguistic approaches – variationist sociolinguistics and politeness in pragmatics – and to briefly show how CA deals with identity issues in social interactions with some naturally occurring data. It is hoped that this study will shed a different light on the relationship between language and identity from an interactional perspective, especially for the pragmatic researchers who are interested in probing

interactants' identity construction in naturally occurring conversations in Mandarin. Now, I turn to provide some linguistic background to Mandarin Chinese in the next section.

1.2 Mandarin and its structure

As this thesis investigates naturally occurring conversations between Mandarin speakers, in this section, it is necessary to provide some information about the Chinese language, including its dialects/varieties spoken in different regions of China and some important linguistic features of Mandarin Chinese. A more detailed linguistic background with respect to examined phenomena will be provided in the main analytic chapters.

Mandarin Chinese or Mandarin (*Putonghua* or *Guanhua*, lit. 'officials' speech') is often referred to as the standard Chinese language, which is based on the Beijing dialect and is the official language of China. Although Mandarin is the most spoken dialect in China (with nearly 700 million speakers⁴), there are six other varieties of Chinese are spoken across the vast geographical area of China, including Wu, Gan, Xiang, Min, Hakka (or Kejia), and Yue (or Cantonese) (J. Yuan, 2001). The geographical distribution of the seven regional varieties is shown in Figure 1.3⁵. Even though in most Chinese linguistic literature (e.g., Kurpaska, 2010; C. Li & Thompson, 1981; Yuk-man & Yiu, 2013), these varieties are called "dialects", but the degree of mutual intelligibility may vary substantially across regional varieties. For example, Mandarin speakers and Cantonese speakers can hardly understand each other. Li and Thompson even compare the difference between Mandarin and Cantonese to the difference between the Romance "languages" Portuguese and Romanian (1981: 2). The data in this thesis was collected in the area near Beijing.

⁴ This number is taken from *Language Atlas of China* (1987). See also Yuk-man & Yiu (2013: 4).

⁵ The map is downloaded from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_Atlas_of_China#/media/File:Map_of_sinitic_languages_full-en.svg (14 August, 2022).

Mandarin has four tones, indicated by four diacritic marks in Pinyin (e.g., *mā* ‘mother’, *má* ‘hemp’, *mǎ* ‘horse’, *mà* ‘curse’), and a neutral tone with no diacritic mark (e.g., *ma*, a final particle). It is also an isolating language, in which each word consists of just one morpheme. For example, *huā* can refer to either ‘flower’ or ‘flowers’ in Mandarin. Plurality is typically expressed by a separate word, such as *xǐduō* ‘many’. An exception is the suffix *-men* that is required to mark the plurality of pronouns, such as the plural form of *tā* ‘s/he’ is *tā-men* ‘they’, *nǐ* ‘you’ is *nǐ-men* ‘you (plural)’, *wǒ* ‘I’ is *wǒ-men* ‘We’. In brief, Mandarin does not have inflectional markers of case, number, gender, mood, and tense (Chao, 1968; Charles Li & Thompson, 1981; C. Sun, 2006; Zhu, 1982). An exception is aspect morphemes, including *-le* ‘perfective’, *-guo* ‘experienced action’, and *-zhe* ‘durative’.

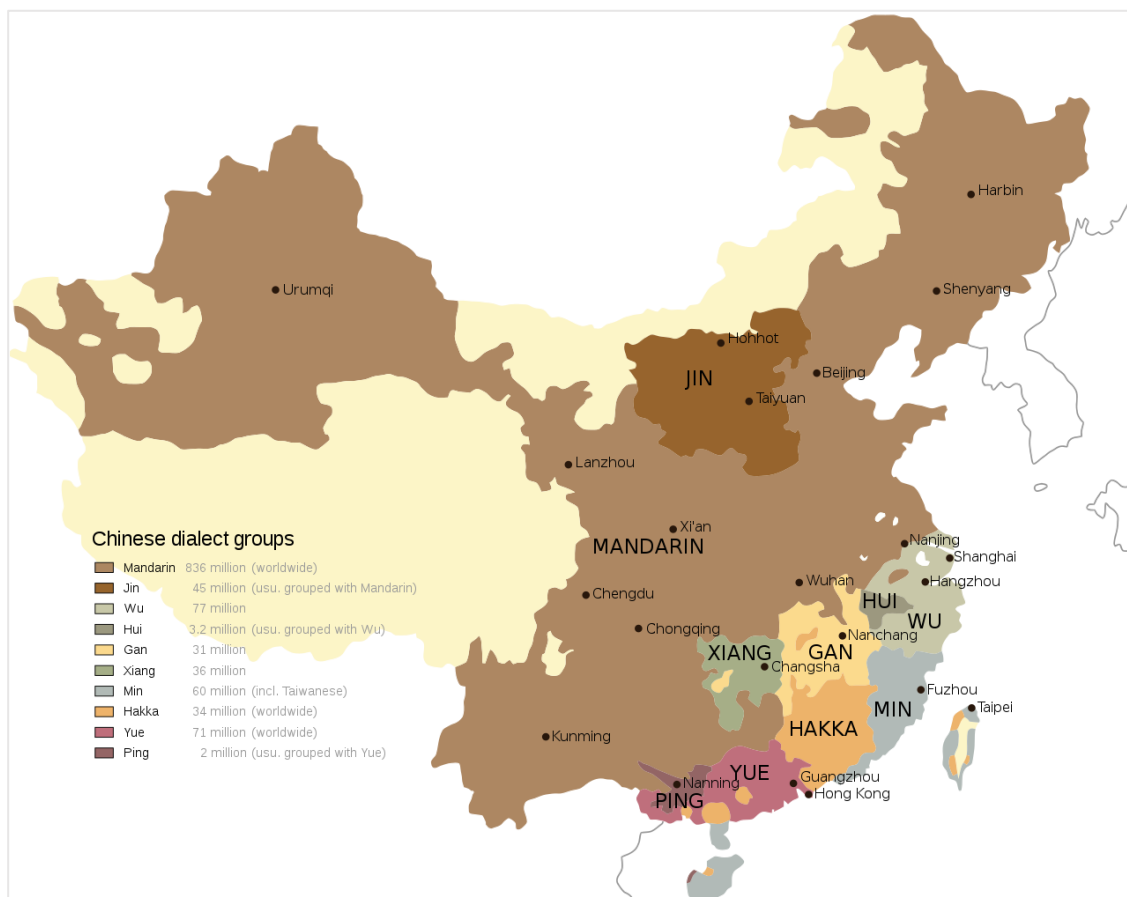


Figure 1.3 Geographical distribution of the seven major regional varieties in China

Mandarin is a well-known pro-drop language, in which subject is usually omitted in conversation. In spoken Mandarin, there are two types of word order – the SVO structure

(Subject-Verb-Object) and the SOV structure (Subject-Object-Verb) – with the SVO order being widely accepted as the basic order (S. Huang, 2013; Charles Li & Thompson, 1981; X. Li, 2014; C.-F. Sun & Givón, 1985). Consider the following example, where the subject pronouns in parentheses in idiomatic translations are omitted in the original:

(4) CJDs1e1_093151

(Hou=citizen; Fah=president of a regional court)

- 01 Hou: 知道 我的 ↑事儿 吧:¿=°你 知道 我的 案子 吧¿°
 zhidao wo de ↑shir ba:¿=°ni zhidao wo de anzi ba,°
 know 1SG POSS matter PRT 2SG know 1SG POSS case PRT
(You) know about my petition ba¿=°You know about my case ba¿°
- 02 (0.5)
- 03 Fah: 知道 点儿. (.)是. 嗯.
 zhidao dianr. (.)shi. en.
 know little be mm
(I) know a little. (.) Yes. Mm.
- 04 Hou: 得 彻底地 了解. 你 是 我的 包 案 人,
 dei chedide liaojie ni shi wo de bao an ren,
 have to thoroughly understand 2SG be 1SG POSS take on case person
(You) have to understand it thoroughly. You are the person who is in charge of my case.

We join the interaction at the beginning of the meeting between Hou and Fah, where Hou is seeking Fah's confirmation on whether he is familiar with her case. Three points can be made here from this excerpt. First, all the utterances shown here are in SVO structure with or without a subject pronoun. It is worth noting that this word order can be designedly reversed by speakers (e.g., object fronting) at a particular moment in interaction so as to accomplish specific interactional goals (we will investigate this in Chapter 3). Second, in conversation, speakers can choose whether to omit a subject pronoun or not. For instance, Hou starts her turn (i.e., a single stretch of talk produced by one speaker in conversation) with almost the same utterances in line 01, except that the first does not have the subject *ni* 'you' while the second does and the object *shir* 'matter' in the first is changed to *anzi* 'case' in the second; and in line 04, Hou can add the subject *ni* 'you' to the directive 'have to understand it thoroughly' but she does not. So, the question is why does she choose to deploy, or not to

deploy, the subject ‘you’ in producing line 01 and the directive in line 04 when both options are grammatically correct? In the words of Schegloff and Sacks, “Why that now?” (1973: 299) – what is being done by that (‘that’ refers to “a compositional element of the utterance (a word, an element of stress, some aspect of articulation, word order and so on)”, Clift, 2016: 94) at that particular moment or position in interaction. We shall investigate a particular use of the overt second-person pronoun *ni* ‘you’ in formatting imperatives in Chapter 3.

The third point relates to an important lexico-syntactic feature of Mandarin: utterance- or turn-final particles (e.g., the final particle *ba* in line 01), which are called *zhu ci* ‘helping words’ or *yuqi ci* ‘mood words’ in Chinese grammar (Chao, 1968; Lü & Zhu, 1953; L. Wang, 1955). There has been a number of CA studies on the interactional functions of specific final particles in conversations, such as *a* (R. Wu & Heritage, 2017; R. Wu, 2004), *ma* or *me* (Kendrick, 2010; Tsai, 2011), *ya* (Y. Wu & Yu, 2022), *ne* (Qin, 2012), *ou* (R. Wu & Heritage, 2017; R. Wu, 2004, 2005), and *ba* (Kendrick, 2018; Y. Wu & Yang, 2022). What is particularly relevant to the current study is the studies on the final particle *ba*. Building on CA research on epistemics and action formation (Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2005), Kendrick (2018) examines the use of *ba* in the sequences of answers to questions, informings, and assessments and finds that this particle serves to adjust the epistemic gradient between speaker and recipient, downgrading the speaker’s epistemic position. While very recently Wu and Yang (2022) explore the use of *ba* in action sequences of directives (i.e., request, proposal, and suggestion) and find its function in adjusting deontic gradients, their investigation is on mundane conversations in Mandarin. Chapter 5 in this thesis, however, will examine its use in the formation of giving permission in this particular governmental setting and show how it serves as an interactional resource for speakers to negotiate their deontic relationship with the recipients (I will discuss epistemics and deontics in section 1.4.2). More importantly, it aims to illustrate how interactants’ relevant institutional identities

emerge out of their use or nonuse of the particle *ba* in formulating permitting actions, which is a direction that the aforementioned studies have not understaken.

Another relevant distinctive feature of Mandarin is its topic-comment syntactic construction. The topic is the “subject matter” (Chao, 1948) of a sentence, which “sets a framework in naming what the sentence is about” (C. Li & Thompson, 1981: 86), and the rest of the sentence is the comment. Usually, a topic occurs in sentence-initial position and can be separated from the comment by a pause or a particle (e.g., *a*, *me*, *ne* or *ba*; also known as a “topic marker”, *ibid.*). For example,

(5) GRPs1e4_115845 (Ang=deputy district head; Lan=citizen)

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Comment</u>
01	Ang:	这 个 律 师 费 呢, 我 们 区 长 给 出 了. zhe ge lvshi fei ne, women quzhang gei chu le. this CL lawyer fee PRT our district head for pay PFV This legal fees ne, our district head has paid (for you).
02		(0.2)
03	Lan:	((Nods))

Such a syntactic structure enables a Mandarin sentence to be produced in a “fragmented” way (Tao, 1996). For instance,

(6) GJNe4 (Sha=citizen; Zun=secretary of regional Political & Legal Affairs Commission)

		<u>Topic</u>
01	Sha:	[而且 呢,=>我 想 跟 你] 说 啥 呢<,=尊 书 记, [erqie ne,=>wo xiang< gen ni] shuo sha ne<,=Zun shuji, and PRT 1SG intend with 2SG say what PRT NM secretary And,=>what I wanna say to you (is) ne<,=Secretary Zun,
02	Zun:	°嗯 [说.° °en [shuo.° mm say °Mm [go ahead.°
		<u>Comment</u>
03	Sha:	[您 ↑提到 了, 但是 我 也 是<那么 做 的.>= [nin ↑tidao le, danshi wo ye shi <name zuo de.>= 2SG.HON mention PFV but 1SG also be like.that do ASSC You_{HON} mentioned it, but I had also done so.
		<u>Comment</u>
04		我 ↑跟: 周 律 师, .hh 沟 通 的 <非:常的> 充 分,= wo ↑gen: Zhou lüshi, .hh goutong de <fei:changde>chongfen,= 1SG with NM lawyer communicate ASSC very fully Lawyer Zhou and I, .hh communicate <ve:ry> thoroughly,=

	Comment
05	=而且 <时间> (.) 沟通 多少 次 了. =erqie <shijian> (.) goutong duoshao ci le. and time communicate many times PFV =and (we) have communicated many times.

Here, the topic clause is *wo xiang gen ni shuo sha ne* (lit. ‘I wanna say to you what *ne*’, line 01), followed by more than one independent clause (lines 03-05), all of which are the contents of ‘what’ (i.e., the comment), constituting one sentential or interactional unit (X. Li, 2014). We shall examine and discuss how this particular syntactic structure becomes an interactional resource for speakers to effectively occupy the floor in Chapter 5. Now, I move on to the next section – a brief review of turn-taking organization and a discussion about the differences between overlapping talk and interruption.

1.3 Turn-taking organization

If we are going to name one thing that is most fundamental and omnirelevant in human communication, it is most likely to be the turn-taking system, for it is only through the orderliness of taking turns to talk that conversationalists can coordinate and cooperate in social activities. So in this section, I first lay out the turn-taking model for conversation proposed by Sacks et al. (1974) in section 1.3.1. As the relationship between turns produced by participants in terms of turn-taking figure so centrally in the analyses in the main chapters, I then mainly review Jefferson’s research on overlap/simultaneous talk, namely, the orderliness of overlap onset, and discuss the distinction between overlap and interruption by predominantly referencing Schegloff’s (2002a) and Drew’s (2009) work in section 1.3.2.

1.3.1 The turn-taking system

The turn-taking system for conversation fundamentally addresses two issues that are omnirelevant to participants in talk-in-interaction: ‘who speaks next?’ and ‘when do they start?’ (Sacks et al., 1974). A successful series of turn transfers between one speaker and the

next involves the finely local coordination of the current speaker completing their turn and the next speaker starting up. Thus, the turn-taking system consists of two crucial components.

One is a turn constructional component, concerning how participants construct their turns-at-talk out of the units including sentences, clauses, phrases, and lexical items – literally, turn-constructional units (hereafter TCUs). For example, a TCU can be a sentence:

(7) (Sacks et al., 1974: 721)

1 Keno:→I saw 'em last night [at uhm school.
2 Jim: [They're a riot

It can be a clause:

(8) (Sacks et al., 1974: 703)

1 A: Uh you been down here before [havenche.
2 B: [Yeh.
3 A:→Where the sidewalk is?
4 B: Yeah,

It can be a phrase:

(9) (Schegloff, 1996: 76)

1 Rog: They make miserable coffee.
2 Ken: hhhh hhh
3 Thero:→ Across the street?
4 Rog: Yeh

It can also be a lexical item:

(10) (Schegloff et al., 1977: 367)

1 F: This is nice, did you make this?
2 K: No, Samu made that.
3 F:→ Who?
4 K: Samu

It is important to note here that, as Clift (2016: 97) remarks, “Sacks et al. refer to ‘unit types of English’ (1974: 702), but no exceptions to these unit types for other languages have been found”. Mandarin speakers are found to also orient to these unit types when constructing their turns-at-talk in conversation (Li, 2014). In the preceding sections, we have already seen some of these. For example, the turn in line 01 *zheme zhe* ‘How about this’ in Excerpt 2 is a phrase, the utterance *zhege lvshi fei ne, women quzhang gei chu le*. ‘This legal fees *ne*, our

district head has paid for you’ in Excerpt 5 is a sentence, and the verb *shuo* ‘go ahead’ constituting the turn at line 02 in Excerpt 6 is a lexical item.

These syntactic unit types play a central role in the turn-taking model, because their projectability allows the projection of the shape and possible completion of a TCU and a turn (Sacks et al., 1974: 702). Such a process of projection is well explained by Sacks (1992a: 649):

... one feature of sentences is that their possible completion can be determined ... there are ways of producing and attending utterances such that if a sentence form is used, people can be listening while it’s happening, to see such things as: it’s not yet complete, it’s about to end, it just ended. They can do that while it’s happening. This is very very fundamental.

So, for instance, if a turn starts with ‘This legal fees *ne*’, it is hearably an incomplete utterance and is indeed treated so by the recipient Lan in Excerpt 5 by waiting for Ang to complete his turn with ‘our district head has paid for you’ and then producing an uptake (i.e., a nod). Such a place at which a next speaker may begin speaking or producing some kind of response (verbally and/or nonverbally) after the current speaker may have completed their turn is called a transition-relevance place (hereafter TRP).

With regard to turn projection, there are a set of practices or resources for projecting possible completion points of a TCU or a turn. The first fundamental resource for projecting turn finality is syntax, as Schegloff (1996b:87) argues,

From the point of view of the organization of talk-in-interaction, one of the main jobs grammar or syntax does is to provide potential construction- and recognition-guides for the realization of the possible completion points of TCUs, and potentially of turns.

So, for example, Lerner (1991) studies a type of ‘complex sentence’ (which he calls ‘compound turn-constructional units’) – *if X-then Y* and *when x-then Y*. He suggests that the initial clause (*if X* and *when X*) projects continuation with *then Y* and it is the production of this final component that constitutes a TRP. Such syntactic structures also provide another speaker or a recipient a place (i.e., “a projectable place at preliminary component possible

completion”, Lerner, 1996b: 240) to enter in the TCU-in-progress and collaboratively produce the final component of the sentence. Another type of resource is list structure. Jefferson (1990) finds that both speakers and recipients of lists orient to a three-part list (e.g., ‘God, she just kept lookin, an’ lookin, an lookin’) in that speakers tend to construct the list with three components and the recipients take turn transitions after a possible completion of the third component.

With regard to the language-specific features of Mandarin in relation to the signaling of a completion point, Li (2014) proposes that utterance final particles (e.g., *ma*, *a*, *ne*) are standardly used by speakers to project possible turn completion. She also examines a particular lexico-syntactic structure “NP+VP+*de*+*shi*+NP” (... that ... be) and argues that recipients may anticipate the point of possible turn completion after hearing the initial component “NP+VP+*de*” and only take a turn-transition after the speakers produce the second component “... *shi*+NP” (e.g., *yinwei shi ABCD shitang tamen yong de shi lüse de kuaizi* ‘That’s because the ABCD cafeterias use green chopsticks’, X. Li, 2014: 67).

In addition to syntax, there are also other equally important resources that enable participants to project possible completion points of a TCU or a turn. These include prosody (e.g., a low fall pitch) (Ford, Fox, & Thompson, 1996; Fox, 2001; French & Local, 1983, 1986; Local & Kelly, 1986; Local & Walker, 2004; Schegloff, 1998), hand movements (Duncan, 1972, 1974; Duncan & Niederehe, 1974; Streeck, 2009a), postural shift (Heath, 1984, 1986a; X. Li, 2013, 2014), and “a recognizable action in context” (Schegloff, 2007b: 4; cf. Ford, 2004; Ford et al., 1996; Fox, 2002;).

For example, Ford and Thompson (1996) describe two types of ending contours that signal turn finality – a marked fall in pitch at the end of an intonation unit, indicated by a period in transcripts, and a marked high rise in pitch at the end of an intonation unit, indicated by a question mark. Schegloff (1998) proposes that pitch peaks may be used by speakers to

project that a next syntactic possible completion is the end of the turn. Such phonetic prominence near the end of a TCU that is deployed and understood as projecting imminent completion is also found in Mandarin conversation (X. Li, 2014).

As to the relationship between gesticulation and projection of turn completion, there appears to be a consensus among researchers that relaxation of a tensed hand position (e.g., a fist) or a hand drop may indicate turn yielding (e.g., Duncan, 1972, 1974; Duncan & Fiske, 1977; X. Li, 2014) and initiation of gesticulation of a recipient at a transition space may signal turn-taking (e.g., Streeck & Hartge, 1992; Mondada, 2007). Schegloff and Sacks (2002) describe a sequential organization of body movements, that is, moves (e.g., “speaker gestures, grooms, sips, writing spurts, fidgets, cough covers, laugh covers”, Sacks & Schegloff, 2002: 144) end in the same position as where they begin. They call such a position “home position”. Such a pattern – home-away-home – can be a useful resource for speakers to project a turn completion or completion of multi-unit turns (see Schegloff, 2011).

In Ford and Thompson’s (1996) research on the relevance of syntax, prosody, and pragmatics or action-in-context for projecting turn completion, they acknowledge that though their judgments of pragmatic completion remain provisional and thus need further work, they propose that participants orient to it as an interactional resource. One type of pragmatic completion point is the place where speakers project more talk but expect some minimal, non-floor-taking response from the recipients, such as a continuer, display of interest, or claim of understanding (1996: 150). One typical example is a speaker projects an action (e.g., ‘I wanna ask you something’, see Schegloff, 1980). Such a practice appears to hold the floor and suspend turn-transition from the recipient until the projected action (e.g., ‘asking’) is brought to completion. This operation, in fact, relates to another type of projection – projection of continuation of a turn or multi-unit turns.

Schegloff (1982) finds that when approaching the possible completion of a first TCU, speakers may speed up their production of the talk and “rush” into the next TCU. He calls it “rush-throughs”, which can be deployed as a turn-holding device at possible completion points. In addition to the turn-holding device, there is a floor-holding device, which speakers utilize to project multi-unit turns. Story projection or story preface (Sacks, 1974) is just this type of device. Lerner (1992) describes how speakers use “reminiscence recognition solicits” (e.g., ‘Remember the guy we saw last night’) to invite co-participant’s recollection of a shared experience, while projecting that there is a story forthcoming that may constitute multi-unit turns, thereby suspending regular turn-by-turn talk until it reaches a point of completion. In the analytic chapters in this thesis, it will be seen that citizens use a similar device to occupy the floor for their narrative complaints.

Now that participants are able to project where a turn may end, they need to know when someone else may begin speaking. A smooth transition from one speaker to the next therefore involves another crucial component in the turn-taking model – turn allocational rules, which concerns how participants decide who speaks next.

The ordered set of rules is laid out as follows (Sacks et al, 1974: 704; cited in Sidnell, 2010:43):

Rule 1 – applies initially at the first TRP of any turn (C = current speaker, N = next speaker)

a. If C selects N in current turn, then C must stop speaking, and N must speak next, transition occurring at the first possible completion after N-selection.

b. If C does not select N, then any (other) party may self-select, first speaker gaining rights to the next turn.

c. If C does not select N, and no other party self-selects under option (b), then C may (but need not) continue (i.e., claim rights to a further TCU).

Rule 2 – applies at all subsequent TRPs.

Essentially, in ordinary conversation, the matter of who gets the speakership in the next turn has to be locally managed and negotiated turn-by-turn by participants as they design their varying lengths of turns-at-talk. Normatively, once a speaker has begun an utterance, s/he has

special rights to bring it to a point of possible completion, that is, the speaker is initially entitled, in having a turn, to one TCU (Sacks et al., 1974). So, while that one participant's talk overlaps that of another is very common in conversation, it is found that participants in fact orient to the rules that one speaks at a time, and speakership transitions should happen with no, or minimum, gap or overlap (Sacks et al., 1974: 696-706; Drew, 2009; Jefferson, 2004a; Schegloff, 2000). A violation of this one-speaks-at-a-time rule may be considered an interruption by participants in interaction (see the following section for a detailed discussion).

1.3.2 Overlapping talk and interruption

In this section, I first introduce three main types of overlapping talk systematically described by Jefferson (1984a, 1986), most of which are usually taken as interruptions by sociolinguists, while providing instances from my Mandarin data where applicable. I then discuss the differences between overlap and interruption.

Essentially, in CA, overlap is a 'technical' term that describes the turn-taking relationship between the prior and the next turn (Jefferson, 1984a, 1986; Schegloff, 2000). Turns constructed out of two or more TCUs are highly subject to overlap and are the key to the position of overlap onset (Drew, 2009: 77). The first place where overlap occurs is a possible transition space where the current speaker is seen as having arrived at a point of possible completion and the next speaker begins speaking, while the current speaker continues, which results in the next speaker's talk being overlapped with the current speaker's. Such a position is called 'transition space onset'. Consider the following example in Mandarin:

(11) CJDs1e3_#9

14 Fah: 回头 我 给 你 打 电话. 好 吧=
 huitou wo gei ni da dianhua. hao ba=
 later 1SG give 2SG make call good PRT
Later I phone you up. Okay,=

- 15 Don:→ =不是 光 打 电话。 [我 还 有 几 个 事 儿 我 得 说 一 说。=
 =bu shi guang da dianhua.[wo hai you ji ge shir wo dei shuo yi shuo.=
 NEG be only make call 1SG still have several CL thing 1SG have to say
**It's not only about making phone calls. [I still have several things
 I have to say.**
- 16 Fah:→ [你 说。
 [ni shuo.
 2SG say
[You go ahead.

Note that at precisely the point at which Fah begins speaking in line 16, Don has completed a unit *bu shi guang da dianhua* ‘It’s not only about making phone calls’ in line 15, which is potentially a complete response to Fah’s proposed arrangement ‘Later I phone you up. Okay,’ (line 14). It means that while Fah talks in overlap with Don’s continuation, he is entitled to start up at this exact place with respect to the turn-taking rules.

The second type of overlap is called ‘last item onset’. A next speaker or recipient starts up at the projected ‘last item’ (usually the last word or syllable) of a TCU right before the transition space. For example,

(12) LXGs2e2_#18

- 01 Sha: =谁 评 的 查:¿
 =shui ping de CHA:¿
 who evaluate ASSC check
Who did the inspection¿
- 02 Gua:→ (那) 专家 评 [查 (呀)
 (na) zhuanjia ping [cha (ya)
 that expert inspect PRT
The experts did (of course).
- 03 Sha:→ [哪 个 专↑家:¿ (.)有 我 专家 吗?
 [NA GE ZHUAN↑JIA:¿(.)YOU WO ZHUANJIA MA?
 which CLF expert have 1SG expert Q
WHICH EXPERT¿ (.)MORE EXPERT THAN ME?

In Excerpt 12, upon receiving an answer from Gua ‘The experts did of course’ (line 02) to her initial question ‘Who did the inspection¿’ at line 01, Sha produces a follow-up question ‘WHICH EXPERT¿ (.) MORE EXPERT THAN ME?’ at line 03, which overlaps just with the last word or item *pingcha* ‘inspect’ in Gua’s answer. Here, the word ‘inspect’ is a projectable item for Sha, as it was just used in her initial question, which gets repeated in

Gua's answer. Such overlapping talk are not regarded as competitive interruptions, because “[r]ecipients are not attempting to close the current speaker’s turn down; they can see (anticipate) that the speaker is about to complete their turn” (Drew, 2009: 82). We will come back to this point after introducing the third type of overlap onset: post-transition onset.

Besides overlapping talk that onset right in the transition space and immediately before the transition point (i.e., on the projectable last item of the current speaker’s TCU), it can also occur right after the transition point, just as the current speaker continues with a next TCU. For instance,

(13) GJNe2.100247

- 01 Sun: 我 就 是:: (.) 上 十 字 路 口 , (0 . 2) 执 勤 去 .
 wo jiu shi:: (.) shang shizilukou, (0.2) zhi qin qu.
 1SG just be go crossroad perform duty go
I just:: (.) went to the crossroads, (0.2) to perform the duty.
- 02 Dian: 啊 .
 a.
 PRT
Ah.
- 03 Sun: 文 明 指 引 去 . (0 . 3) 我 说 我 带 头 去 . (0 . 4) 你 们 还 -
 wenming zhiyin qu. (0.3) wo shuo wo dai tou qu, (0.4) nimen hai-
 civility guide go 1SG say 1SG lead head go 2PL still
To direct people to follow traffic rules. (0.3) I said I took the lead. (0.4) You got-
- 04 还 有 啥 可 说 的 . (0 . 3) 我 说 你 们 : > 哪 - 哪 - <
 hai you sha ke shuo de. (0.3) wo shuo nimen: > na- na- <
 still have what can say NOM 1SG say 2PL
got what else excuse to make. (0.3) I said >which- which-< of you
- 05 有 一 个 比 我 岁 数 大 的 吗 ? 没 有 .
 you yi ge bi wo suishu da de ma? mei you.
 have one CL than 1SG age older ASSC Q NEG have
is older than me? No one.
- 06 我 说 没 有 比 我 岁 数 大 的 , (0 . 3) 我 说 那 对 不 起 .
 wo shuo mei you bi wo suishu da de, (0.3) wo shuo na duibuqi.
 1SG say NEG have than 1SG age older NOM 1SG say then sorry
I said no one is older than me, (0.3) I said sorry.
- 07 → 你 [(就 得)
 ni [(jiu dei)
 2SG just must
You [have to-
- 08 Sha: → [您 还 上 那 儿 值 这 个 去 .
 [nin hai shang nar zhi zhe ge qu.
 2SG.HON still go there perform this CL go
You_{HON} really go there to do this.

09 Sun: 我[↑]去:, 我 每 次 都 带 人 去.
 wo [↑]qu:, wo mei ci dou dai ren qu.
 1SG go 1SG every time all lead people go
I [↑]do:, I take the personnel there every time.

The central characteristic of this type of overlap onset is that a recipient is seeing that the current speaker is going to continue with a next TCU, and yet if she did not start up right before the place where the current speaker is hearably moving on to the next topic, "an opportunity might be missed to respond in some appropriate way to whatever has (just) been completed in the current speak's turn-thus-far" (Drew, 2009: 85). This then results in the occurrence of overlapping talk right after the transition space. In Excerpt 13, it can be seen that just as Sun (lead official) is moving to a possible end of his narrating how he mobilized his subordinates to direct people to follow traffic rules at intersections by himself personally doing so (lines 01 & 03-07) and possibly transitioning to a next topic, Sha (citizen) starts up, displaying virtual disbelief, 'You_{HON} really go there to do this' in line 08. This remark is closely related to Sun's personally doing the job and thus makes his confirmation next relevant. And Indeed, he cuts off his incomplete turn at line 07 and emphatically confirms it in the next turn ('I [↑]do:, I take the personnel there every time', in which an extreme case formulation 'every time' is also used to legitimize his claim (cf. Pomerantz, 1986; Edwards, 2000). While in line 06, Sun's 'I said sorry' pragmatically projects more to come (e.g., 'you have to go there'), its syntax and falling intonation indicate a potential completion of the turn (Ford et al., 1996). So, immediately after a possible transition space, Sha comes in and produces an uptake that is still relevant to the topic-thus-far.

So far, the three types of overlap onsets described by Jefferson (1984, 1986) and summarized by Drew (2009) have been introduced with Mandarin examples. It also has to be noted here that these overlapping talk usually occur in an affiliative and supportive sequential environment. That is to say, a recipient or 'next' speaker producing a response immediately before or after, or in, the transition space is not to shut down the current speaker's turn so as

to compete for the floor. However, there is a special type of overlap – ‘interjacent overlap’ – that onsets in the middle of another’s turn – that is, being far from a transition point and therefore ‘interjacent’, which, once being endowed with moral connotations, may be regarded as interruption (Drew, 2009). Consider the following example:

(14) H (Hutchby, 2008: 227)

1 Caller: As you c’n imagine I wuz absolutely:
 2 livvi[d (h),
 3 Host: [We:ll did you- did yih then ekixplain that-
 4 yew- un:derstood. that, yihknow do:gs have the call of
 5 nature just as: er as people do:[: .hh] and they=
 6 Caller: [eYe:s,]
 7 Host: =don’t have the same kind of contro:l and so
 8 the[refore the- s- so]
 9 Caller: [No:: but dogs] cun be t[rai:ned,]
 10 Host: [m- I haven’t finished,
 11 so therefore the owner, .hhh er whether you train them
 12 or not is not rilly:, quite the point, but the owner, being
 13 there has thuh responsibility ...

In Excerpt 14, the caller calls in to a radio phone-in broadcast to complain about dog owners who take a laissez-faire attitude to their dogs freely running on grass verges outside her house. At line 9, the caller starts up in the middle of the host’s ongoing turn at a point in which the host has just begun a summative remark ‘and so therefore’ and thus syntactically has not yet arrived at a TRP. At the occurrence of the overlap, the host self-interrupts the turn at line 8 and does a ‘noticing’ of the caller’s violation of his right to take the current turn to a proper TRP, ‘I haven’t finished’ at line 10, and then resumes his prior incomplete turn ‘so therefore the owner ...’ from line 11. The action of ‘noticing the violation’⁶ and the resumption of the previously unfinished utterance demonstrate that the host treats the caller’s start-up at line 9 as a complainable and thus as an ‘interruption’.

However, such overlaps are not always picked up by speakers as ‘having been interrupted’. Consider Excerpt 15 shown below, in which a start-up in the middle of an ongoing turn is treated by the participant as legitimate:

⁶ For the relationship between ‘noticing’ and ‘complaining’, please see Schegloff (2007b: 75) and Sacks (1992b: 635–636) on actions of ‘noticing violations’.

(15) NB (Jefferson, 1986: 159; cited in Drew, 2009: 90)

- 1 Nancy: He's jist a ri:l sweet GU*:y. .h.h [.hhhhh
 2 Emma: [↑WONdelf*ul.
 3 Nancy: ↑So: we w'r [s*itting in]
 4 Emma: [YER LIFE] is CHANG[ing
 5 Nancy: [↑EEye::A:H

Here, Nancy is telling her friend Emma about a new guy she has just met and is producing a positive assessment about him at line 1. At a transition relevance place, given that Nancy's turn is syntactically, prosodically and pragmatically complete (Ford et al., 1996), Emma aligns with her and does an affiliative response with an exclamation 'Wonderful' (line 2) (Stivers, 2008). Having received a preferred response from Emma, Nancy produces a 'so' prefaced upshot ('So we were sitting in ...', line 3) (Schiffrin, 1987; Raymond, 2004) to project the possible completion of her previously initiated assessment sequence, and moves on to narrate further possibly about their first encounter. It is by seeing this projected sequence transition from the assessment sequence to a new narrating sequence that Emma intersects early in Nancy's just-launched storytelling turn, which has hearably not reached a TRP, and produces another assessment ('Your life is changing', line 4), which gets more than agreed by Nancy (a rather high-pitched and louder 'yeah', line 5).

In this excerpt, we can see that Emma has been affiliating with the positive stance that Nancy conveys in the storytelling, thereby exhibiting her attempt at collaboratively co-constructing the storytelling activity initiated by Nancy, even if it means sometimes it occurs at the expense of "alignment" (i.e., a recipient goes along with the activity-in-progress and only takes his/her turn until its completion, see Stivers, 2008: 34). Schegloff calls Emma's overlapping turn a "celebratory uptake" that registers "eager supportiveness" (2002a: 300). Evidently, no complaint from Nancy in the next turn indicates that she recognizes the solidarity indexed in Emma's 'interruptive' turn, thereby treating it as unproblematic.

In discussing the possible overlap aftermath in a spate of talk-in-interaction, Schegloff (2000: 32) proposes two phases in terms of what stances the parties can take toward its occurrence:

- a) It can be taken notice of, i.e. registered or not.
- b) If registered, it can be taken as problematic or not. The “not” may itself be differentiated into an unnoticed blip on the one hand, or a positively sought collaborative co-construction on the other hand, to cite but two possibilities.

So, overlap (including interjacent overlap) and interruption can be differentiated based on the following features:

- (1) what action(s) that participants are doing – actions with the hostile, argumentative, disputatious character or with the affiliative, supportive, cooperative character, and whether participants continue to speak simultaneously and thereby compete for the turn (Drew, 2009); and
- (2) whether one participant’s overlapping talk is taken notice of and oriented to by the other as a violation of the turn-taking organization and thus a complainable or sanctionable action.

Thus, overlap is an objective term that describes simultaneous talk without moral connotations, while interruption is a type of overlap with moral connotation. In Schegloff’s words, interruption is “a term of complaint” (2002a: 301).

Participants’ orientation to their own or the other’s action as an interruption or not, therefore, becomes an interactional matter. As Schegloff (1984b: 29) remarks,

Early work on the sequential organization of turn taking in conversation (especially that of my colleague Harvey Sacks) made occurrences of interruptions and interutterance gaps of special interest, as possible violations of the normative organization of the transition from one to a next. Given the recurrent management of that transition with no (or minimal) gap and overlap, and a regular respect for the rights of a speaker, having begun an utterance, to bring it to a point of possible completion ... interruptions seemed to warrant examination to find what was involved in departures from that normative practice.

Hence, the first two analytic chapters in this thesis are dedicated to probe how lead officials and citizens design their turns in calling a halt to the other party’s ongoing talk, how they treat their own and the other’s interrupting-like actions, and how their relevant institutional identities are therefore “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984: 237). Such orientations are

related to the “institutionality” (Heritage & Clayman, 2010) of the official-citizen interaction, about which I discuss in the next section.

1.4 Institutional talk in CA

In this section, I first describe the historical background of CA research on ordinary conversation and institutional talk and then provide a brief overview of conversation analytic studies on talk-at-work. Next, I discuss how the turn-taking systems in institutional interactions and mundane conversations differ (section 1.4.1). Finally, I talk about the issue of interactional agenda with regard to the overall structural organization.

In CA, ‘institutional’ talk or ‘talk at work’ is referred to as a form of “task- or goal-oriented” interaction, with at least one participant representing a formal organization of some kind (Drew & Heritage, 1992: 3). However, compared to the early CA work on ordinary conversation, research on various forms of institutional interaction was undertaken at a later time (in the late 1970s) in the history of CA development.

CA was founded by Harvey Sacks in collaboration with his colleagues Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s. The enterprise was initially established to uncover and describe the organizational features of conversation to which members of a culture orient in producing their own behavior and understanding the behavior of others (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997). So it was initiated predominantly on everyday, mundane conversations, for ordinary conversation was taken to be “a primordial site of human sociality” (Schegloff, 1995) and the basic form of language use (Fox et al., 2013). In further discussing the reasons for this choice, Heritage (1984a: 239) argues,

In the first instance, the social world is a pervasively conversational one in which an overwhelming proportion of the world’s business is conducted through the medium of spoken interaction. Speech, moreover, is among the most ancient of human social institutions. The spoken use of language antedates all other uses and its overwhelming preponderance among contemporary uses is plainly visible in syntactic structure itself ... Second, conversational exchange is the order of interaction through which ... the child is first exposed to the social world. It is the conventions of this communicative framework which the child

must master as a condition of his or her membership of society ... [So], it is the acquisition of interactional competence and the common-sense knowledge gained in and through such competence which constitutes the core of childhood socialization. These considerations are, in themselves, sufficient to warrant a commitment to the study of mundane conversation.

Hence, in the early stage of CA research, conversation analysts, rather than looking directly at the various forms of interaction that involve institutional identities – e.g., doctor-patient, teacher-student, news interview, courtroom, have focused on discovering the characteristic features of ordinary conversation between people of similar status. This preference is based on a consensus that

it is difficult, if not impossible, to explain specific features of such asymmetric interaction by reference to social attributes (e.g., status, power, gender, ethnicity, etc.) without a clear knowledge of what is characteristic of ordinary talk between peers. (Heritage, 1984a: 240)

With the groundbreaking paper of Sacks et al. (1974) on turn-taking in conversation having established the most fundamental work for the study of any interaction (Silverman, 1998), some analysts have started to examine turn-taking organizations in institutional settings, such as courtroom (Atkinson & Drew, 1979), classroom (Mchoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979), news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Greatbatch, 1988), and counselling (Peräkylä, 1995: ch. 2). One of the central observations of turn-taking is ‘one speaks at a time’ with transfer of speakership recurring with ‘minimal gap and minimal overlap’. This is also found in the institutional interactions, but at the same time, due to the institutional nature that topics, actions, and order of speakership are predetermined to some extent, special turn-taking procedures, which are systematically different from conversation, are also involved (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Such special turn-taking procedures are called “speech exchange systems” (Sacks et al., 1974: 729; cf. Drew & Heritage, 1992: 19), which restrict participants’ opportunities to talk (i.e., who speaks when) and ‘contents’ of talk (i.e., ‘turn

types' – kinds of action implemented through a turn or turns⁷) (cf. F. Chevalier & Moore, 2015). Thus, Heritage and Clayman (2010: 17) describe the relationship between ordinary conversation and institutional talk as that between “an encompassing “master institution” and its more restricted local variants”.

Later, a growing number of conversation analysts have started to investigate more kinds of institutional interaction, such as calls to the emergency services (e.g., Drew & Walker, 2010; Tracy, 1997; Zimmerman, 1984, 1992), classroom interaction (e.g., Davidson, 2015; Margutti, 2010), doctor-patient interaction (e.g., Heath, 1986; Heritage & Robinson, 2006; Peräkylä, 1998, 2002; Robinson, 2003), mediation hearings (Garcia, 1991, 1995, 2000), and a recent Ph.D. thesis on the interaction between citizens and Members of Parliament in the UK by Hofstetter (2016), to name only a few. However, whether it is the early CA research on ordinary conversation or the later studies on institutional interaction, they were overwhelmingly on English; it is only until later that CA work are conducted in other languages but still remain sparse till now (e.g., Tanaka, 1999 and X. Li, 2014 on turn-taking in Japanese and Mandarin conversations, respectively; Chevalier, 2011, 2015 on tourist-office talk in French; Heinemann & Matthews, 2015 on interactions in a Danish audiology clinic; Pino, 2015 on therapeutic community meetings in Italian, etc.). Nevertheless, compared to the relative abundance of conversation-analytic work on European languages, CA research on institutional talk in Mandarin Chinese is still in its infancy with only a few recent works on medical interactions (e.g., E. Guo, 2018; Ma, 2017; Wang & Zhang, 2020; Yu, 2011; Yu & Wu, 2022) and classroom interaction (e.g., S. Zhang & Yu, 2021). Possibly due to the relatively limited accessibility of lay-bureaucratic encounters in governmental settings, CA study on the interaction between government officials and citizens has been

⁷ For example, Frankel (1990) finds that in physician-patient encounters where physicians standardly initiate questions and patients answer them, patients are found to indeed orient to their asking doctors questions as ‘dispreferred’ (i.e., a certain degree of delay in producing a given action) by, for instance, prefacing their questions with a query (‘I wanna ask you som’n).

rarely conducted in either English or Mandarin. Thus, it is hoped that this thesis can contribute not only to the CA research on Mandarin interaction but also to the whole body of CA research on institutional talk.

1.4.1 Speech exchange systems

In section 1.3.1, I have discussed the turn-taking model for conversation proposed by Sacks et al. (1974). So, in this section, I focus on the turn-taking organizations in institutional interaction. Institutional talk, compared to the turn-taking system of ordinary conversation, is progressed with modified speech-exchange systems, for its organization of taking turns is constrained by certain institutional goals (e.g., business meetings) and/or guided by certain regulations and restrictions (e.g., courtroom and medical interactions) (Drew & Heritage, 1992). This kind of institutionality, or in Heritage and Clayman's (2010: 18) words, institutional "fingerprint", then brings two notions to the speech-exchange systems of institutional talk: pre-allocation of turns (Sacks et al. 1974: 729-30) and turn-type pre-allocation (Atkinson and Drew 1979, Heritage and Clayman 2010: 37). Specifically, as Peräkylä and Silverman note,

In institutionalized speech exchange systems, unlike ordinary conversation, some or all of the turns can be pre-allocated to the incumbents of particular roles (like judges, defendants, etc)... [And] the notion of *turn-type pre-allocation* [refers to] not only the right to a turn at a certain point in interaction but also the type of the turn can be pre-defined. Here specific types of turns (e.g., proposing and seconding, praying and responding) are pre-allotted to particular types of participant (e.g., chair persons, clergy etc.). (1991: 628; italics in original)

However, the degree of pre-allocation varies in different institutional settings and thus the restrictions on the pre-allocation of turns and turn-types may be looser in one setting than another. According to Sacks et al. (1974), three linearly arrayed types of turn-allocational arrangements can be roughly diagramed as shown below:

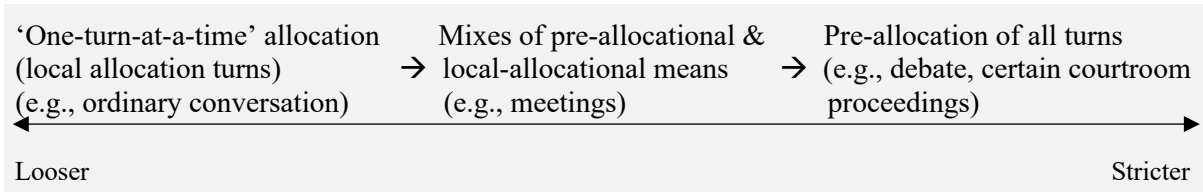


Figure 1.4 Spectrum of types of turn-taking systems

Based on this spectrum, the official-citizen interaction in this dataset appears to involve mixes of pre-allocational and local-allocational means. On the one hand, the citizens' main activity or agenda is to seek solutions or responses from the officials by presenting their problems (e.g., complaints about some non-present officials as well as the catastrophic impact on their mental and physical health due to the unfair treatment by some institution or individuals, a recount of the ins and outs of their matters, etc.), while the officials' agenda is to reassure them and provide solutions. And the sequence is progressed with the citizens rightfully presenting problems first (ideally with no interruptions) and then the lead officials propose solutions. Once the proposed solutions are accepted by the citizens, the encounter then can be brought to a close. So there are certain types of actions pre-allotted to the citizens and the officials, and they are conducted in an ordered way (see section 1.4.2). But on the other hand, as there are no time limitations on each encounter (the longest continues for 3 hours and the shortest continues for 5 minutes), and whether it is troubles-talk (Jefferson, 1988), storytelling (Mandelbaum, 2012) or complaints (Drew, 1998), they are all standardly conducted through multi-units in a turn or multi-turns, that how long the citizens can occupy the floor for presenting their problems becomes a locally managed and negotiable matter. Therefore, while both parties have special rights to implement their pre-allotted actions at certain moments in interaction, these rights are oriented to by the co-interactants differently. We shall investigate these orientations in the main chapters.

In the following, I continue the discussion with a focus on the issue of the interactional agenda in terms of the overall structural organization.

1.4.2 Overall structural organizations

Compared to ordinary conversation, institutional talk is task- or goal-oriented. Professionals or officials and lay persons, when interacting with each other, “generally show an orientation to institutional tasks or functions in the design of their conduct, most obviously by the kinds of goals they pursue” (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 22). This results in various kinds of institutional encounters characteristically organized into a “task-related standard shape” or “order of phases” (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 43). For example, Table 1.1 shown below briefly summarizes the standard shape or “overall structural organization” (see Robinson, 2012) of several representative institutional interactions in telephone calls or face-to-face visits.

Types of institutional interactions	Overall structural organization
911 emergency calls (Zimmerman, 1984, 1992)	Opening → Request (problem initiation) → Interrogative series (regarding whether assistance is warranted, the type of problem, its location, etc.) → Response → Closing
Acute care primary visits (Robinson, 2003)	Opening → Problem presentation → Data gathering (including history taking and physical exam) → Diagnosis → Treatment → Closing
Calls for airline services (Lee, 2006)	Opening → Requesting → Responding → Closing

Table 1.1 Overall structural organizations of different types of institutional talk

Clearly, one of the salient features of the organizational structures of these public service interactions is that they all consist of two main activities: one requests some sort of information or service/help and the other responds to it. Once the requested service/help or information is disposed of by organizational personnel, the interaction then is ready to move toward a closing. Just as Zimmerman (1992) argues in his observations on the sequential organization of 911 emergency calls that no matter how extended the interrogative series may develop, such calls are still organized in a sequence of a pair of actions – a request for help from the caller and granting or refusal of the request from the call-taker, and thereby the

provision of response is treated by the caller as the closing of the call. Such a sequence type is called an adjacency pair (Sacks & Schegloff, 1973; Schegloff, 2007b), in which an action initiated by a first pair part produced by one speaker makes relevant the other speaker's production of a second pair part that does a responsive action of the same type suggested by the first pair part. For example, a relevant next action to a request would be an action of granting or refusing the request; and an invitation makes an acceptance or a declination relevant next. Such a property of sequence is called conditional relevance⁸ in CA (Schegloff, 1968: 1083).

Likewise, the current official-citizen encounters also operate around the basic structure of a single adjacency pair – the citizens present their petitions, and the officials provide advice and solutions. So in this respect, the citizens' interactional agenda is to seek the officials' responses to their petitions through the actions of complaining, sometimes accusing, and requesting, while the officials' interactional agenda is to propose plans and solutions so as to accomplish this petition-receiving activity. However, as the citizens usually have more than one problem (or complaint) to address and sometimes additional concerns surface during the visit, the encounter is recurrently organized into several rounds of complaint-delivery and solution-provision. In this regard, doctor-patient interactions that have been largely studied in CA mostly approximate the institutional contexts I examine here, for it is found that the phase of patients' problem presentations is the place where doctors and patients frequently negotiate whether the patients continue their presentations or it is time to move to the next phase – history taking (see Heritage & Clayman, 2010: ch. 8). Thus, this thesis just captures the moments where the citizen's local agenda (e.g., to continue the delivery of complaints) appears to conflict with the official's local agenda (e.g., to provide

⁸ In his discussion of “conditional relevance”, Schegloff (1968: 1083) argues,

By conditional relevance of one item on another we mean: given the first, the second is expectable; upon its occurrence it can be seen to be a second item to the first; upon its nonoccurrence it can be seen to be officially absent – all this provided by the occurrence of the first item.

solutions so as to terminate the encounter) and then investigates how the two parties exert authority or agency by forcing the other to relinquish the floor and put their interactional agenda on hold at that precise moment.

It is empirically acknowledged that in agenda-based interactions it is standardly the institutional personnel (e.g., interviewers and doctors) who sets and controls the interactional agenda and directs the trajectories of the talk (e.g., Greatbatch, 1986; Heritage, 2003; Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994; Roberts, 2000). However, the lay persons, as individuals or agents, are also entitled to locally (re-)produce some actions that they believe are interactionally significant at a given moment in interaction, though it may mean that the trajectory of the talk is (temporarily) diverted. Therefore, these moments are good sites for us, analysts, to probe how the institution-relevant identities are interactionally invoked by the two parties and are used as a type of resource for arguing their category-bound rights and obligations (Psathas, 1999; Sacks, 1992a; see section 1.5.1) in relation to who has the right to call a halt to the other's (projectably) ongoing course of action.

Now, I move on to some relevant CA studies on identity in social interactions in an attempt to lay the conceptual foundations for the analysis in the main chapters and discuss what type of 'authority' this thesis focuses on in the next section.

1.5 Research on identity in social interactions

In CA research, participants' identity issues are mainly dealt with in two directions. One investigates participants' explicit use of some identity categories in performing locally relevant conversational actions or activities, such as legitimizing the actions participants performed or did not perform ('I'm only his grandma', Kitzinger, 2003), providing a warrant for the credibility of their reports in calls to 911 ('we got- uh this is security at the bus depot, Greyhound bus depot', Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990) (see also e.g., Kitzinger &

Mandelbaum, 2013 for the use of identity-related specialist vocabularies and Pomerantz & Mandelbaum, 2005; C. Raymond, 2019; Rossi, 2017; Whitehead, 2009; Whitehead & Lerner, 2021 for other uses of categories). The other direction studies how participants' relative identities (i.e., who is more knowledgeable and who is more 'powerful') are "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984b: 237) through their design of turns- and actions-at-talk (e.g., C. Raymond, 2016; G. Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). It is the latter direction that this thesis pursues.

So in subsequent sections, I first briefly summarize Harvey Sacks's pioneering work on membership categorization with a focus on the relationship between identity and social actions in section 1.5.1. Although the present thesis does not focus on the participants' explicit use of certain categories in their talk, this concept lays the foundations for the analysis conducted in this thesis. Then in section 1.5.2, I discuss two types of 'authority' in the domains of knowledge (i.e., epistemics) and power (i.e., deontics) by reviewing some of the most important studies to the analysis in the main chapters. Finally, I review conversation analytic studies on identity in Mandarin (section 1.5.3).

1.5.1 Identity and action: membership categorization

It is well known in experimental social psychology and behavioral science that humans think in categories. As Allport (1954) states, "categorical thinking is a natural and inevitable tendency of the human mind" (p. 171). So, as Sacks (1992a) observes, anyone who hears the utterance 'The baby cried. The mommy picked it up' may hear it as the 'mommy' is the mother of the 'baby', and once it is recognized so, the 'baby' and the 'mommy' are perceived to belong to the same 'family'; and then some category-bound rights and obligations (e.g., the mother should take care of the baby) are invoked. Here, the labels 'baby' and 'mommy/mother' are called membership categories, the 'family' is called a 'collection'

of categories⁹, in which other categories such as ‘father’, ‘grandma’, ‘grandpa’, etc. can be included, and the relationships that have a special social relation, such as mother-baby, which involve particular standardized rights and obligations regarding the activity of offering help, are called standardized relational pairs (Sacks, 1972a: 37). Other standardized relational pairs include doctor-patient, lawyer-client, official-citizen and so on.

The membership categories have three characteristics. First, categories are ‘inference rich’, which store a great deal of the common-sense knowledge that members of a society have about what people are like, how they behave, etc. (Sacks, 1992a: 40–41). Because of this type of presumption about certain categories, as Schegloff notes, “any attributed member of a category (that is, anyone taken to be a member of the category) is a presumptive representative of the category” (2007a: 469). This feature leads to another – categories are protected against induction. It means that if a member of a category infringes the knowledge about members of the category, instead of revising that knowledge, people will see the person as ‘an exception’ (ibid.). But what does the knowledge specifically refer to? Sacks suggests that common-sense knowledge consists of “kinds of activities or actions or forms of conduct taken by the common-sense or vernacular culture to be specially characteristic of a category’s members” (Schegloff, 2007a: 470), and all of these items are called category-bound activities (Sacks, 1992a: 248).

⁹ Hester and Eglin stress that a ‘collection’ of categories include “some membership categories [that] can be used and heard commonsensically as ‘going together,’ whilst others cannot be so used and heard” (Hester & Eglin, 1997: 4). For example, the ‘family’ is heard as a collection of membership categories such as mother, father, daughter, aunt, grandma, etc., but not of a judge, astronaut, nerd, business manager. However, the reality is always more complex than a definition. For instance, Psathas (1999: 157, fn 5) cites an example of ‘child’ and ‘dog’ from Sacks’s work in which party A attempts to obtain an apartment for rent but in the end, the application is rejected:

A: I have a fourteen-year-old kid.
 B: Well that’s alright.
 A: I also have a dog.
 B: Oh, I’m sorry.

He shows that despite how bizarre this interaction looks, ‘children’ and ‘dogs’ belong to one collection of “creatures which are not admissible to the apartment,” and are understood so by the co-participants. So, he argues that “category collections are locally occasioned and are constituted as relevant not that they are known in advance with regard to their various uses and constitutes” (1999: 157).

Psathas (1999) then extends the range of category boundedness by suggesting that “what is category bound is a class of predicates”, which reference motives, rights, entitlements, obligations, knowledge, attributes, and competencies that may be relevantly deployed by participants in describing the activities and conduct of those categorized in a particular way (p. 144). However, Schegloff (2007a) alerts that when analyzing the connection between category and action/activity, conversation analysts should bear in mind that it is “not restricted to someone’s *formulating* or *describing* an action in a certain way; doing some action, doing an utterance analyzable by recipient as doing some action, can activate the relevant invocation of a category” (p. 470; emphasis in original). This process is what Sacks calls membership categorization, by which members in a society interpret their own and other persons’ conduct as whether appropriate or not for incumbents of any membership category they locally invoke (1992a: 48). We have seen this point in Excerpt 3 in section 1.1.3, where Adam’s asking permission to sit and Mary’s recognizing so by granting it and apologizing for having forgotten to offer Adam a seat earlier demonstrate their orientations to the relevant guest-host category (see also Rossi and Stivers (2021) for cases of participants halting category-sensitive actions, e.g., handling one’s possession).

So in similar vein, in this thesis, I study how membership categories – citizen and lead official – become visible through the two parties’ design of their actions and turns-at-talk in real-time. In other words, I am to explore how their relevant institutional identities, in terms of turn-taking organization, are constructed by their category-bound actions. To be specific, Chapters 3 and 4 will respectively investigate the lead officials and the citizens’ formulations of their actions of calling a halt to the other party’s ongoing talk, by which they negotiate their relative rights to the floor at a given moment in interaction. Chapter 5 will study how they design their turns in granting the other party floor to speak next, thereby negotiating who is the ‘owner’ of the floor. Apparently, the performance of these two types of directive

actions implicates that speakers lay claim to a certain authority over the addressees. However, whether it is the addressees accept the speakers' claimed authority over them by complying or reject it by resisting, the interactional outcome is related to how they orient to the deontic relationship between them, and this is usually the moment where participants' negotiation of identity occurs. So now, I move on to the next section, talking about identity negotiations in the domains of knowledge and power.

1.5.2 Identity negotiations in the domains of knowledge and power

In CA research, the investigation of participants' authority is approached on two fronts, each of which has developed into a distinct research domain. One is epistemic authority, which concerns knowledge involving who has more or fewer rights to know, assess or describe certain things relative to others (Heritage & Raymond, 2005); and the other is deontic authority which relates to rights and obligations and is concerned with who can determine what should be done in a specific field of action (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). This thesis focuses predominantly on deontic authority. But, since the notions of deontic rights and deontic authority proposed by Stevanovic (2011) are heavily inspired and influenced by Heritage and Raymond's work on epistemic authority, in what follows, I first review some significant conversation-analytic research on epistemics (section 1.5.2.1). Section 1.5.2.2 then discusses deontic authority and lays the conceptual foundation for the analysis of the deontic practices in the main analytic chapters.

1.5.2.1 Epistemic authority

Epistemic claims have been argued to be ubiquitous to human social interaction and to be an inherent part of many specific actions (Stevanovic & Svennevig, 2015; Stivers, et al., 2011). For example, when a speaker assesses or expresses opinions about someone or

something (e.g., ‘Isn’t he cute?’), an agreement or a disagreement with it from the recipient(s) is normatively expected in a responding slot (e.g., ‘Oh he is adorable’) (Pomerantz, 1984). Heritage and Raymond (2005) examine such assessment sequences and propose that a speaker who produces a first assessment implicitly claims primary rights to evaluate what is being assessed, whereas a next speaker’s independence to assess is inevitably contaminated by ‘going second’. So they find that the second speakers resist this ‘secondness’ by upgrading their claims to knowledge (e.g., ‘They are, yes’; ‘Isn’t she pretty?’) and the first speakers downgrade (e.g., ‘She *seems* such a nice little lady’), or sometimes upgrade, their claims to epistemic primacy. With this systematic examination of the relationship between grammar and sequential position in respect of action, the authors provide us with a way to study ‘authority’ in terms of knowledge.

Raymond and Heritage (2006) further develop their observations concerning the relevance of identity categories in interaction by examining assessment sequences in a telephone call between two friends. By looking at how they manage their epistemic rights and responsibilities through the use of a set of grammatical resources that have been identified in their paper in 2005, they demonstrate how one’s identity ‘grandmother’ of the children whom they are assessing is demonstrably relevant to the participants themselves and thereby is consequential for, and are manifested in, the details of their talk.

Among institutional settings, medical interaction is considered a primary site for seeing how the asymmetry of knowledge between doctors and patients becomes visible through the actions they perform (e.g., Heath, 1992; Heritage & Maynard, 2006; Ruusuvuori, 2000). In the rest of this subsection, although the present official-citizen interaction appears not primarily informed by expert knowledge discrepancies between the officials and the citizens, I review two relevant studies conducted by Peräkylä on doctors’ displayed epistemic

authority and patients' claimed agency in the delivery of diagnosis in Finnish primary health care.

Peräkylä (1998) finds that while the doctors deliver diagnoses frequently with plain assertions (e.g., 'That's already proper bronchitis'), they sometimes deliver tentative diagnoses with evidential verbs (e.g., 'the prostate *feels* really perfectly normal') preceded by a talk about another examination to be performed. The reason for doing so, as Peräkylä suggests, is that the doctors treat the delivery of diagnosis as an accountable action that requires provisions of evidence to the patients on which their conclusions are based and thus that they "do not claim unconditional authority in relation to the patients" (1998: 301). More importantly, Peräkylä emphasizes that even though in most cases the doctors appear to deliver assertive diagnoses, these diagnoses are given along with some examination evidence that is visible and possibly fathomable by the patients. So this study, as Heritage (2005: 95) remarks, "revises our mind-set about the nature of authority. If we do not look at interactional data, it is all easy to see authority as an all-or-nothing phenomenon. Peräkylä reminds us that accountability goes with authority ...". We shall investigate this relationship in the lead officials' claim of deontic authority over the citizens in Chapter 3.

Later, Peräkylä (2002) examines the patients' extended responses to the doctors' diagnostic statements. Among the responses that include straight agreements, symptom descriptions (that display some misalignment with the doctor's diagnosis), and rejections of the diagnoses (by which the patients implicitly resist the diagnosis), he finds that the patients treat themselves as the agents capable of diagnostic reasoning, thereby assuming agency in the realm of medical reasoning. But at the same time, they also orient themselves to the doctors' ultimate expertise and authority in the domain. One of the examples is shown below:

(7) Dgn (Peräkylä, 2002, p. 234; extracted and modified)

11 Dr: As tapping on the vertebrae didn't cause any ↑pain
 12 and there aren't (yet) any actual reflection
 13 symptoms in your legs it corresponds with a

14 muscle h (.hhhh) complication so hhh it's
 15 only whether hhh (0.4) you have been exposed to
 16 a draught or has it otherwise=
 17 P: =right,
 18 Dr: .Hh got irrita[ted,
 19 P: [It couldn't be from somewhere
 20 inside then as ↑it is a burning feeling there so
 21 it couldn't be in the kidneys or somewhere (that
 22 p[ain,)
 23 Dr: [Have you had any tr- (0.2) trouble with
 24 urinating.=
 25 =a pa- need to urinate more frequently or
 26 any pain when you urinate,

To implicitly resist the diagnosis given by the doctor in lines 11-16, the patient first states speculation about alternative locations of the trouble with a question format preferring a negative answer ('it couldn't be from somewhere inside then', lines 19-20), which is followed by her medical reasoning ('as it is a burning feeling there', line 20). While then providing her best guess about the location ('it couldn't be in the kidneys', line 21), she still downgrades the certainty with 'or somewhere'. All of these epistemically downgraded turn designs exhibit the patient's orientation to the doctor's epistemic authority in the domain of medical reasoning.

In summary, Peräkylä's research inspires the current research in two ways. First, it demonstrates that while asserting their epistemic authority in making medical judgments, doctors also orient to the accountability of their claimed authority by laying out the evidence that their judgments are based on. Second, patients, as agents of seeking medical advice and treatment¹⁰, have the right to evaluate whether the diagnosis is adequate or not. So in the main chapters, we will see that in making the other surrender the floor, the lead officials do not claim "unconditional" authority, and citizens, though claiming high agency, still orient to the lead officials as the authority in controlling the interactional agenda.

¹⁰ It is found that patients frequently assert their agency in the phase of the treatment decision-making (Koenig, 2011; Lindström & Weatherall, 2015), as patients' acceptance of treatment recommendations is normatively required for closing the medical activity (Stivers, 2005b). Such a pattern is also observed in the current petition-receiving encounters. One way for the citizens to negotiate their rights to continue talking is to reject or resist solutions or arrangements provided by the officials (see Excerpt 3 in Chapter 3).

As stated before, this thesis focuses on the government official's deontic authority in controlling the interactional agenda and the citizen's exertion of their agency in resisting it. So, now I move to discuss the notion of 'deontic authority' in the next subsection.

1.5.2.2 Deontic authority

The notion of 'deontic authority' proposed by Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012) is inspired by Heritage and Raymond's (2005) work on epistemic authority. Epistemic authority concerns the aspect of '*knowing* how the world "is"', while deontic authority concerns the aspect of '*determining* how the world "ought to be"' (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012: 298; italics in original).

Deontic authority refers to someone's legitimate power to determine others' future actions (Stevanovic, 2013: 18). Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012) elucidate a distinction between the notions of 'authority' and 'power'. They argue that 'power' is someone's overall ability to bring about consequences regardless of the private judgments of its subjects, while 'authority' involves "the exercise of power that the subject of authority understands as *legitimate*", which outcome is contingent on "the subjects' free will to obey" (2012: 297; italics in original). In other words, as Stevanovic points out, "authority is not primarily about someone *claiming* authority, but it is about others *accepting* someone as an authority" (2013, p. 20, orig. emphasis). Therefore, by using CA as a method, we can see not only how speakers display deontic authority in making their recipients do something with certain linguistic, bodily, and sequential resources (e.g., the placement of declarative and imperative directives in a sequence, see Ch. 3), but also whether and how the recipients accept or resist this claimed authority.

In considering coparticipants' relatively fixed identities and social relationships vis-à-vis their "momentary relationship" at a local level in talk-in-interaction (Stevanovic &

Peräkylä, 2014: 186), conversation analysts make a distinction between epistemic/deontic ‘status’ and ‘stance’. As Heritage defines it, epistemic status is a relative positioning ‘in which persons recognize one another to be more or less knowledgeable concerning some domain of knowledge as a more or less settled matter of fact’ (2012: 32); whereas epistemic stance “concerns the moment-by-moment expression of these relationships, as managed through the designs of turns-at-talk” (2013: 377). Along a similar line, Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2014) propose that deontic status denotes ‘the position that a participant has in a certain domain of action, relative to his/her co-participants (p.190), while deontic stance denotes ‘the speakers’ public ways of displaying how powerful they are’, such as ‘Shut up!’ vs. ‘Would you please be quiet?’ (p. 191).

So to illustrate the relationship between syntactic formulations (i.e., interrogatives, declaratives, and imperatives) and their indexed deontic stance, I take the action of making the other stop talking, which is the main action that Chapters 3 and 4 will examine, as an example shown in Figure 1.5 below, in which D- refers to low deontic stance and D+ refers to high deontic stance.

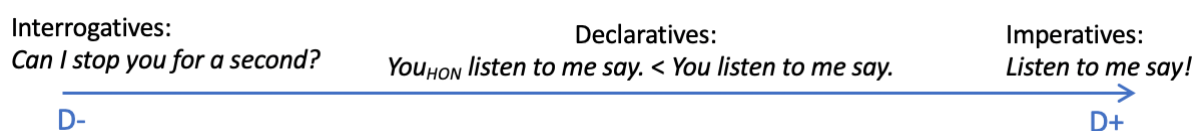


Figure 1.5 Spectrum of syntactic constructions in relation to deontic stance

With the interrogative format in implementing the interrupting action, the speakers orient to their relatively lower deontic status vis-à-vis their recipients and thus display a low deontic stance. Imperatives appear to be the most powerful weapon that once being used, the speakers (linguistically¹¹) display the highest deontic stance in stopping others’ talk.

¹¹ In directive sequences, there is of course embodied deontic stance. For instance, Craven and Potter (2010) study parents’ directives to their children regarding their behavioral manner. One case is that after a series of verbal directives failed (i.e., ‘KATH’rine, katherine don’t be: (-) dɔ:n’ be horrible. ↑come on, mo:ve back ple:ase.’), Mum physically moves Katherine back to the chair where she is supposed to be seated. Craven and Potter note that “it is hard to think of a stronger display of entitlement over the course of the other than to

Declaratives, however, compared to the other two formats, do not always delineate a clear deontic stance, as they can be used to do a variety of actions that may have a varying degree of deontic implications (e.g., announcements, informings, requests, complaints; see e.g., Fox & Heinemann, 2021; Rossi, 2018; Zinken & Ogiemann, 2011). For example, Stevanovic (2011) claims that in making requests for action, the deontic stance implied in the declarative ‘I’m sorry. I can’t hear the radio weather report’ is even weaker than the interrogative ‘Would you please be quiet?’ (p. 4). Nevertheless, in the declarative instance, ‘I’m sorry’ constitutes an apology and the statement is arguably doing a complaint that is standardly considered an indirect speech. Apparently, it is different from the declaratives such as ‘You should be quiet’ that are more direct and thus indexes a higher deontic stance. Hence, in Chapters 3 and 4, I only focus on this linguistic structure: *ni-ting-wo-shuo* ‘you-listen-to-me-say’, and I argue that the use of an honorific second-person pronoun in *nin ting wo shuo* ‘You_{HON} listen to me say’ indexes a relatively lower deontic stance than the one with an informal *ni* ‘you’.

1.5.3 Identity studies in Mandarin

As discussed before, compared to the relatively abundant conversation-analytic work in English and other European languages, CA studies in Mandarin are still in a very small number. In describing the status quo of CA research in China in a special issue on social actions in Mandarin conversations, Yu and Wu (2021: 290) remark:

Well-known worldwide, CA is still a “relatively little understood method” (Luke, 2019, p. 21) to Chinese scholars. On the one hand, few Chinese researchers have published CA papers or monographs. The authors of this introduction have just started publishing CA papers in international journals in recent years (Yaxin Wu & Zhou, 2020; Yu & Wu, 2015, 2018; Yu, Wu, & Drew, 2019); on the other hand, CA studies of Mandarin data claim a very small portion in CA literature in the world. Kang Kwong Luke (1990), Regina Wu

physically move them into place” (2010: 429). For more demonstration and discussion about the embodied display of deontic stance, please see Chapter 4.

(2004), and Robin Kendrick (2010) are the three conversation analysts we know who have based their studies on Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese.

Compared to conversation analytic studies of other languages, little has been discovered as to the organizational structures of Chinese mundane conversation, the practices and procedures used by Chinese speakers to implement various social actions, not to mention the studies of institutional talk.

Hence, CA work on Chinese conversation is very much needed and this thesis is part of a larger effort to contribute to the body of CA research on Mandarin conversation in general and institutional talk in particular.

In fact, while CA studies of Mandarin data appear to have started in the late 1990s (e.g., R. Wu, 1997; W. Zhang, 1998), there is an increasing number of CA work on Mandarin conversations either in telephone calls or face-to-face encounters in recent years. Besides the aforementioned studies on Mandarin final particles in section 1.2, there is a collection of work on the practices and procedures used by Mandarin speakers to implement social actions (e.g., Dong & Wu, 2020 on solicitude; C. Li, 2020 on teasing; Z. Li & F. Li, 2020 on information seeking; Liu, 2020 on accounts in request sequences; Y. Zhang & Yu, 2020 on assessments; Y. Zhang & Yu, 2016 on compliments, to name a few). There are also a few studies on the interactional functions of discourse chunks (Dong, 2018 on *wo zhidao* (lit. ‘I know’) as response to unsolicited advice; Yu & Drew, 2017 on *bushi* as a practice of premonitoring an everyday trouble or problem; Yu & Hao, 2020 on *yaobu* (literally “want not”) as a practice of proposal making, etc.). Moreover, by virtue of technological advancements in sound and video recording, a group of Chinese conversation analysts has started to examine the interplay between language and the body in Mandarin and Cantonese conversations (e.g., X. Li, 2014 on grammar and the body in turn-taking in Mandarin conversation; Luke & He, 2019 on the role of gestures in bidding for a speakership in Cantonese conversation; R. Wu on gestural repair in Mandarin, 2022).

However, CA work on identity construction in Mandarin conversation has been launched only very recently. To my best knowledge, Yu and Wu’s (2021) study appears to be

the first conversation analytic investigation on identity construction and negotiation in social interaction by Mandarin speakers. They investigate how two acquaintances (i.e., Chang and Wang) negotiate and construct their respective identities – expert and novice – through implementing given social actions in a telephone call, where Chang enlists Wang’s help to find him a native English language tutor. Yu and Wu find that Wang, as the one who possesses more knowledge (i.e., K+ status) in English language teaching and tutoring, may construct herself as an expert (i.e., K+ stance) by invoking such an identity through implementing the action of giving solicited or unsolicited advice; by contrast, Chang, as the one who has less knowledge (i.e., K- status) in this area, may display himself as a novice (i.e., K- stance) by doing the actions of requesting for information and seeking advice. More importantly, they also show that such a novice-expert identity construction is full of moment-by-moment negotiations between Wang and Chang as their talk unfolds. For example, Wang’s claimed K+ stance during a provision of a piece of information with regard to how expensive the tutoring fees can be as a way of advising Chang to abandon his idea of finding a native English tutor is resisted by Chang with a response *wo zhidao me* ‘I know it’, which clearly diminishes the newsworthiness of the informing and thus challenges Wang’s expert identity construction (Yu & Wu, 2021: 281-282). Thus, what their study demonstrates is that in contrast to the traditional view of identity as stable characteristics of social members, identities in CA are negotiated and co-constructed by interactants themselves through their design of turns- and actions-at-talk moment-by-moment in interaction, and that identity, therefore, is an interactional outcome rather than an *a priori* and fixed social attribute of individuals.

Nevertheless, while the authors have provided us a detailed analysis of how Mandarin speakers negotiate and construct their relative identities with respect to knowledge in talk-in-interaction, their data is an ordinary conversation in one telephone call between two speakers.

So, a systematic investigation of how Mandarin speakers actively invoke and negotiate their identities through their language and body in face-to-face interactions in an institutional setting is very much needed. In this thesis, I thus intend to fill this research gap and hope to contribute not only to CA research in Chinese conversations but also to the CA domain in general.

1.6 Embodiment in face-to-face interaction

During the first several years of CA research, conversation analysts have concentrated on examining the data of telephone calls, for in one respect it allows the analysts to exclusively focus on the details of speech in a still naturalist environment of talk and later to analyze non-vocal behaviors (Heritage, 1984b). But very soon, by virtue of the advancement of video and computer technology, repeatedly examining the bodies as well as the talk of participants in interaction becomes possible and thus many CA studies on the interrelatedness between linguistic practices and body movements in conversation have gradually emerged since the mid-1970s and have been very much on the rise since the 2000s (Deppermann, 2013) (e.g., Cekaite, 2010; Clift, 2020, 2021, 2014; Deppermann & Gubina, 2021; Drew & Kendrick, 2018; B. Fox, 1999; B. A. Fox, 2002; C. Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1995, 2000, 2003; M. Goodwin, 1980; Keevallik, 2013; Kendrick, 2021; Kendrick & Drew, 2016; X. Li, 2014, 2020; Schegloff, 1984; Zinken, 2015). Now, in CA research, language and the body have been proved and thus taken to be equally important for the organization of human social interaction, for social actions and activities are accomplished not only through linguistic means but also, even on some occasions, mostly or solely through bodily means (see e.g., Kendrick & Drew, 2016 on recruitment of assistance; Stevanovic & Monzoni, 2016 for a discussion about the hierarchy of the use of language and the body in doing joint activities). Even though a study on face-to-face interaction primarily focuses on linguistic practices,

embodied items such as gaze, gestures, and torso movements at least have to be simultaneously taken into consideration when any specific social action is analyzed that appears to be implemented through linguistic means in the first place¹². This is essentially because it has been shown in the early CA studies that the organizations of gaze and mutual monitoring (C. Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981; M. Goodwin, 1980), hand gestures (Schegloff, 1984a; Jurgen Streeck & Hartge, 1992), and the body departing from and returning to “home position” (Sacks & Schegloff, 2002¹³) are basic for participation in social interaction, turn projection (i.e., indicating when a speaker might be done with his or her turn) and turn construction. Thus, it has to be acknowledged here that though in this linguistic thesis I still mainly focus on language, embodied resources – as distinct from linguistic forms – including gestures, facial expression, gaze, head movements, body movements, postures, etc. (Mondada, 2014) will also be closely examined and transcribed wherever they are found interactionally relevant, especially when they are found to play a significant role in turn-taking.

In analyzing the turn-taking organization in the main chapters, I heavily draw on Li’s (2014) work on the role of syntax, prosody, and body movements in turn-taking organization in Mandarin Chinese conversation. Other studies, such as Schegloff (1984a), Sikveland & Ogden (2012), and Floyd et al.’s (2016) work on holding gestures that serve to indicate a turn is still in progress though it may be grammatically complete and thus work to visually hold a turn, Stivers & Rossano’s (2010) study on gaze in mobilizing a response, Lerner’s (2003) research on gaze in selection of a next speaker, Streeck & Hargte (1992), Streeck (2009a), Mondada (2007) and Luke & He’s (2019) studies on hand gestures (e.g., pointing, raising of

¹² In fact, as we will see in this thesis, Chapter 4 in particular, participants may deploy a specific grammatical construction – a declarative or an imperative rather than an interrogative – and an informal second-person singular pronoun in formatting a directive action, thereby displaying deontic authority in determining the recipient’s imminent course of action. However, at the same time, that displayed deontic authority may be underscored or mitigated by the participants’ accompanying hand gestures, body movements, and/or facial expressions.

¹³ In Deppermann’s (2013: 1) paper, he mentions that Sacks and Schegloff’s analysis of gestural “home position” is based on a paper in 1975, though it was published in 2002.

a hand) in indicating incipient speakership or bidding for next speakership and so on, are also frequently referenced.

With regard to identity studies on embodiments in CA, it is important to note that while there is an increasing number of studies on embodiments, research on how bodily resources are used to adjust the deontic stance claimed in language, thereby facilitating the negotiation and construction of identity is still less conducted. One exception is a very recent work conducted by Deppermann and Gubina (2021), exploring the temporal relationships between language and the body in request initiations in German. One of their central observations is that speakers, who use an interrogative format (*darf/kann ich?* ‘May/Can I?’) to launch a request for permission to do a manual action that linguistically indexes a lower deontic stance, are found to have initiated or even completed the requested action before the recipient’s response. They argue that with such moves, the speakers bodily enact high agency over the requested course of action, which, however, is at odds with the low deontic stance displayed in the linguistic form. So, one analytic import of this study is that it demonstrates the equivocality of the degree of agency and the deontic stance displayed in a participant’s linguistic and bodily actions in real time. Thus, this thesis attempts to contribute to this line of inquiry by examining how Mandarin speakers who have an institutionally asymmetric relationship mobilize and coordinate their linguistic and bodily resources in adjusting the overall displayed deontic stance in claiming the floor, thereby recalibrating their relative deontic relationship.

1.7 Overview of this thesis

In this chapter, I first showed how the CA approach that this thesis chooses to adopt to investigate the relationship between language and identity is distinct from the other two approaches in sociolinguistics. I then provided a brief overview of Mandarin Chinese

language and its relevant linguistic features. After reviewing some CA literature on institutional talk and studies on identity construction and negotiation in social interaction, I succinctly discussed CA research on embodiments. After each section, I stated the unique contributions and goals that this thesis aims to achieve and pointed out the phenomena examined in the main chapters. In this section, I provide an overview of the following chapters in this thesis.

In Chapter 2, I will introduce the method of CA and the data collection and transcription.

Chapter 3 examines the construction (*ni ting wo shuo* ‘(You) listen to me say’ used by the lead officials to call a halt to citizens’ (projectably) ongoing course of action. I ask under what kind of sequential circumstances – that is, what action(s) (e.g., narrative complaints, disputes with another official) the citizens have been doing, how long they have been doing it, and whether the lead officials have already initiated a closing of the encounter, etc. – that the lead officials obstruct the citizens ongoing talk; and facing the citizens’ resistance to yielding the floor, what other linguistic and bodily resources that they subsequently deploy. During the analysis, I also focus on the very first thing the lead officials say or do right after the directive and what interactional functions it serves. In this chapter, I will show that the participants’ orientations to their relatively institutional identities are manifested in their design of turns- and actions-at talk, and the lead officials’ deontic authority in controlling the local interactional agenda is oriented to and co-constructed by the two parties through their moment-by-moment negotiations of their relative entitlements to the floor. Therefore, I argue that authority is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon.

Chapter 4 is a comparative analysis that investigates the construction *nin ting wo shuo* ‘YOU_{HON} listen to me say’ deployed by the citizens to call a halt to the lead officials’ ongoing talk. Obviously, the use of the honorific form of address *nin* ‘YOU_{NON}’ exhibits the citizens’

orientations to their lower deontic status in interrupting the lead officials. However, this chapter will show that the citizens may display deference to the lead officials through some linguistic means, while they otherwise bodily accentuate their high agency in taking the floor. I call such a situation participants' linguistic-bodily mismatch in displaying deference (cf. Deppermann & Gubina, 2021). Following the argument made about authority in Chapter 3, I further suggest that language and the body – as two distinct, and yet interdependent, communication systems – can be mobilized by the citizens in the service of attending to the moral and deontic dimensions of their interrupting actions at the same time in talk-in-interaction.

Compared to Chapters 3 and 4 that concern the ways by which the participants formulate their interrupting actions, Chapter 5 studies how they, by granting the other party permission to speak next, lay claim to the floor at a particular moment in talk-in-interaction. In this chapter, rather than looking at the permission being apparently requested for, I focus on the situation where permission is granted when the prior speaker arguably has not asked for. I argue that such a type of action can be an interactional resource used by the participants to overtly assert their ownership of the floor. By comparing the lead officials and the citizens' varied turn designs in implementing this action, I will show that the lead officials are still oriented to by the lead officials themselves and the citizens as the authority in controlling the interactional agenda. This chapter is dedicated to address the issue of action ascription in CA that has gained more attention of conversation analysts in recent years (cf. Deppermann & Haugh, 2022).

This thesis concludes in Chapter 6 with a summary of the findings presented in Chapters 3-5 and a discussion of the implications of this study.

2 Methodology

In what follows, I first describe the CA method used in this thesis and its central concepts (section 2.1) and then introduce the data collection and transcription (section 2.2).

2.1 Conversation Analysis

In Chapter 1, I discussed some central tenets or principles of CA, such as utterances implement actions that emerge across sequences and analysis should be grounded in participant orientations not researchers' beliefs. In this section, I continue introducing some basic concepts of CA that are most relevant to the current study¹⁴.

CA is an approach to the study of social interaction that draws heavily from sociologist Erving Goffman's work on the "interaction order" – the institution of social interaction (1967, 1983) and ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel's (1967) standpoint that "social order is located in the very methodical procedures that people deployed *in situ* to render their local circumstances intelligible" (Hoey & Kendrick, 2018: 152; italics in original). So, the basic objective of CA is "to describe the procedures and expectations in terms of which speakers produce their own behaviour and interpret the behaviour of others" (Heritage, 1984: 241). Thus, it is neither designed for, nor aimed at, examining the production of interaction from a perspective that is external to the participants' own reasoning and understanding about their interactional circumstances; in other words, it "is interested in an *emic* social reality" that involves "members' knowledge-in-use", which refers to "members' methods or 'the procedural infrastructure of interaction'" (ten Have, 2007: 34).

So, what is at the center of the analysis is participants' action formation, which involves "the practices of talk and other conduct ... which have as an outcome the production

¹⁴ For more detailed introduction of CA including its historical background, philosophical commitments, and methodological approach, please see Clift (2016), ten Have (2007), Levison (1983), and Sidnell and Stivers (2013).

of a recognizable action X [e.g., offers, requests, invitations, proposals, and so on]; that is, can be shown to have been recognized by co-participants as that action by virtue of the practices that produced it” (Schegloff, 2007: 7), and action ascription that refers to “the assignment of an action to a turn as revealed by the response of a next speaker, which, if uncorrected in the following turn(s), becomes in some sense a joint ‘good enough’ understanding” (Levinson, 2013: 104). Levinson describes human’s ability to conduct conversation as a miracle and suggests that what is the most striking part is how speedily and accurately participants assign an action to a turn they have only heard part of so far and produce a response (2013: 103). He observes that standardly, it takes over 600ms to plan and deliver the shortest turn-at-talk (Levelt, 1989), while the gaps between turns are on average around 200ms (de Ruiter et al., 2006; Stivers et al., 2009), as illustrated in Figure 2.1:

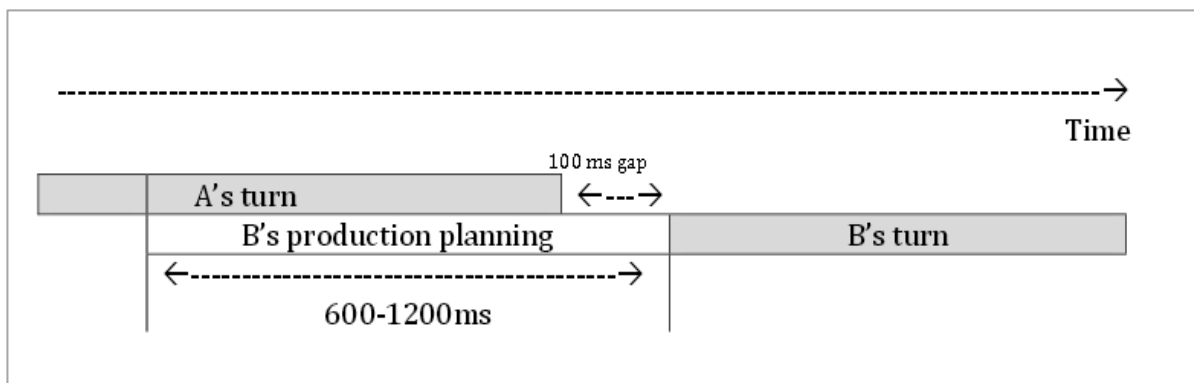


Figure 2.1 Overlap of comprehension and production processes in conversation (Levinson, 2013: 104)

These findings tell us that in order to produce some sort of response to A’s turn in a timely fashion, B has to plan his/her turn well before A’s turn has come to completion and anticipate what kind of action that A’s turn is projecting – that is, if A’s turn was a question, B’s turn is then expected to be an answer; if it was a request, a rejection or acceptance then is in order, and so forth. At the same time, A may construct her or his turn out of some unit-types, such as sentences, clauses, phrases, and lexis, which can project the shape and possible completion of his or her turn-in-progress (Sacks et al., 1974: 702), and B has to anticipate the

projected point of possible completion of A's turn so as to effectively start her or his next turn there with no gap and no overlap (Sacks et al., 1974). So, by virtue of this projectability of a point of possible completion of a turn, a recipient can start up much early before that point, thereby interrupting the current speaker so as to achieve some interactional goals. And due to the projectability of action types, recipients can choose either to go along or align with speakers' project or to disalign with it by responding in a certain way that either promotes or disrupts the progression of the speakers' performance of the action(s), respectively. For example, during citizens' narrative complaints, lead officials may produce "continuers" such as *en* 'Mm' or 'Mm hm' and *a* 'uh huh' to show their understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway and to indicate that they are passing an opportunity to produce a full turn at talk (Schegloff, 1982), and thus advance the complaint sequence. But they can also choose to obstruct the complaint sequence-in-progress and divert the trajectory of the talk by launching a sequentially disjunctive¹⁵ action (e.g., proposing a solution to citizens' overall petition). We will examine this type of phenomenon in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

Moreover, the findings that the average duration of gaps between turns are around 200ms are particularly important for conversation analysts to interpret participants actions at talk, for it has been found in CA research that the longer the gap, the higher the probability of the speaker receiving a disagreement or a rejection in response. Such types of responses are called dispreferred actions in CA, while response types such as acceptance (of e.g., an invitation, a request, an offer) and agreement (to e.g., an assessment) are called preferred actions (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013). Specifically, as Heritage (1984: 267) suggests,

Actions which are characteristically performed straightforwardly and without delay are termed 'preferred' actions, while those which are delayed, qualified and accounted for are termed 'dispreferred'. To avoid any confusion, it should be asserted immediately that these terms are not intended in any way to refer to

¹⁵ Here, by 'sequentially disjunctive' I simply mean that at a responding slot where a response to a complaint (e.g., some assessment about the reported misconduct, cf. Drew, 1998) is made relevant next from the lead officials, they otherwise implement a disjunctive type of action, e.g., producing a solution to citizens' overall matter/petition, which potentially leaves the immediate and local complaint sequence unresponded to.

the private desires, or psychological proclivities of speakers. On the contrary, we are here dealing with highly generalized and ... institutionalized methods of speaking.

So, Kendrick & Torriera (2015) and Roberts et al. (2015) find that short silences (<0.5 second) are equally likely to precede preferred/dispreferred responses, whereas longer silences (>0.5 second) are increasingly likely to precede dispreferred response, and they all find that 0.7 second silence is statistically significant. This is why silences are transcribed and accurate to milliseconds in CA. In this sense, silences that are longer than 0.2 second can be seen as a recipient perhaps delaying a response to a prior turn and thus may result in the speaker revising or reissuing the initial action after the gap (see Davidson, 1984). Due to the limited space, it appears impossible to fully describe the ‘preference organization’ here, so instead I emphasize that the action ‘calling a halt to one’s ongoing talk’ examined in this thesis are a type of dispreferred action, as it relates to the issue of progressivity. Schegloff (2007: 15) describes progressivity in this way:

Moving from some element to a hearably-next-one with nothing intervening is the embodiment of, and the measure of, progressivity. Should something intervene between some element and what is hearable as a/the next one due – should something violate or interfere with their contiguity, where next sound, next word, or next turn – it will be heard as qualifying the progressivity of the talk, and will be examined for its import, for what understanding should be accorded it.

The targeted action, apparently, is a typical action that impedes the progressivity of the talk, so we will see in the main chapters that participants indeed orient to this matter when formatting their turns in implementing such an action.

2.2 Data collection and transcription

This section describes the database used in this thesis (section 2.2.1) and clarifies the transcription system and conventions used in representing the data in the three analytic chapters (section 2.2.2).

2.2.1 The data

The data was collected from a local government office – the Bureau for Letters and Calls/Visits in the north of China in 2018. This institution is for receiving petitions and visits by citizens and channeling their complaints and grievances to the relevant government entities. The relevant local government officials are required by policy to come to the bureau to receive citizens on a regular basis. Citizens can visit the bureau as individuals or as a group¹⁶ (approx. 15-20 people in this dataset). Basically, the bureau is not only for citizens to deliver their complaints but also for them to receive replies from the relevant government entities.

The dataset consists of 21 hours of video recordings of naturally occurring encounters between officials and citizens. The recordings were made by the bureau itself with their video equipment set up in a reception room. In fact, the then head of the bureau was initially contacted for a request for filming the meetings between citizens and government officials at the bureau (see the request letter in Appendix III). But I was then told by the head that the bureau had been required to record the meetings by the municipal government and I was permitted to use some of the recordings. So, the citizens in the present data had been notified about being recorded by the bureau in the first place through a notice attached to the door of the reception room. All participants' names on the transcripts are transformed into pseudonyms and their faces are blurred, except that the officials' institutional titles are kept for the reason of providing relevant background information.

In my dataset, there are 15 videos recorded in 2017 and 2018, in each of which one lead official comes to the bureau to receive citizens for a day. Table 1.2 shown below is a summary of the recordings that have been examined (12 out of 15) in this research, and the

¹⁶ According to the latest provincial 'Regulations on Letters and Calls/Visits' (2015), a visiting group that contains more than 5 people needs to select no more than 5 representatives among the group members.

datum highlighted in grey are the places where the phenomena presented in this thesis are eventually found.

Data name	Year	Types of visits	Number of individuals or groups being received	Length (Approx.)
FSW	2017	Individual	1	2 hrs
GRP	2017	Group	1	2 hrs
YS	2018	Individual	1	1 hr
JLZ	2018	Individual	3	3 hrs
XGH	2018	Individual	1	55 mins
ZCH	2018	Individual	1	1 hr 12 mins
GJN	2018	Individual	3	2 hrs
LXG S1	2018	Individual	3	1hr 10 mins
LXG S2	2018	Individual	4	1hr 20 mins
WJ	2018	Individual & group	2	2 hrs
CJD S1	2018	Individual	10	2 hrs 40 mins
CJD S2	2018	Individual	5	1.5 hrs
Total				21 hrs

Table 2.1 Summary for the dataset used in the current research

In this dataset the official-citizen interactions last from 5 minutes to 3 hours. In most of them, a reception group consists of a lead official, some subordinate officials, and the working staff at the bureau. All of the collected meetings appear not to be the citizens' first-time coming to the bureau presenting their petitions. They come to the bureau to meet the lead officials and reiterate their complaints and seek solutions. Note that in this dataset the petitions have endured for at least 1 year and the longest, for various reasons, for 20 years. The matters include applying for reversing a verdict on a criminal case, looking for more 'land requisition compensation', asking for the authorities to solve 'unfinished buildings' problems, and requesting a reinvestigation of a suicide case from 20 years before.

2.2.2 Transcription conventions

The data are represented in four-line transcripts. As Mandarin has a large number of homophones and it is not easy for Chinese readers to immediately discern the meanings

without the help of Chinese characters (X. Li, 2019), the simplified Chinese characters representing the original utterance are provided in the first line. Then the second line is the Chinese characters annotated in *Hanyu pinyin* romanization system, ‘Chinese Phonetic Writing’, without tone marks. The third line is a word-by-word English gloss of the original talk as well as the abbreviations for grammatically functional words such as particles (PRT) and aspect markers (ASP). An idiomatic English translation of the original talk is offered in the fourth line.

This thesis mainly uses two transcription conventions: Jefferson Transcription System for capturing talk features (Jefferson, 2004), further exemplified in Clift (2016: 53-63) and the transcription symbols developed by C. Goodwin (1981), Heath (1984, 1986b) and Kendon (2004) for transcribing body movements that are adopted by Li (2014, 2019) in transcribing Multimodal Chinese interactions. (See the transcript conventions in Appendix I). Although the transcription conventions for embodied conduct developed by Lorenza Mondada¹⁷ are becoming the accepted norm for CA, for this thesis I have made the difficult decision not to adopt this system on basic grounds of accessibility and readability. In this respect, I am following Li (2014, 2019, 2020b) in her transcription of Mandarin interaction. My transcripts already consist of four lines. Putting the symbols indicating the body movements above the first line makes it easier for both Chinese and non-Chinese readers to quickly grasp the talk as well as the relevant gaze directions, gestures, and torso movements. In order to best present the interactionally relevant body movements in relation to talk, images of some crucial movements are also included in the transcripts.

¹⁷ The transcription convention is accessible at <https://www.lorenzamondada.net/multimodal-transcription>.

3 The construction of authority: The right to call a halt to the citizens' (projectably) ongoing course of action

“Not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men.”

(Goffman, 1967:3)

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the encounters between the government officials and the citizens in the present dataset are goal- or task-oriented. The citizens' goal is to seek solutions and reassurance from the officials through the actions of complaining (or, in a more neutral term, presenting problems) and requesting, and the officials' goal is to appease them and provide advice and solutions. If the citizens knew when their agenda was complete and were willing to terminate it at some point, and the officials recognized that completion and then provided solutions, the interaction would be progressed in a very smooth way. But this appears not to be the case in the current dataset.

This may be because, besides the accumulated grievances from the long duration of their petitions being unsolved, the citizens also standardly deliver their complaints in a form of an extended narrative that might be developed endlessly, if not brought to a close, for they seem to act in such a way as to suggest that a comprehensive recount of the ins and outs of their problems may enable the officials to solve their petitions more efficiently and perhaps engender their empathy as well so that their petitions may be dealt with more quickly. However, the citizens and the officials appear to have divergent standards about how detailed the presentation should be. So in the current data, there are some moments in interaction where the officials show that they have gathered enough information and are ready to provide

solutions, whereas the citizens display that what they have presented is not adequate and thus needs to be elaborated on¹⁸. One of these moments is illustrated in Excerpt 1(a).

(1a) CJDs1e3_#9 ‘Twenty thousand yuan’¹⁹

(Don=citizen; Fah=a regional court president; Ben=a director of a petition-receiving office at the regional court)

- 17 Fah: sha shihou gei ni da dianhua de?
When did (he) call you?
- 18 (0.8)
- 19 Don: wuyue::: (.) shi: (.) san hao.
On the::: (.) thir:(.)teenth of May.
- 04 Fah: >ni zheyang.< [(xian dao zhe)
>Look.< [(Stop here for today)
- 05 Don: [si ge yue de shir.=
It's been four months.
- 06 Fah: =hao ba?=
**=Okay?=
=°()°**
- 07 Ben:)°
- 08 Fah: huitou mashang jiu: Benfang (huiqu cui) yi xia.
Later, Ben will go and hurry them up right away.
- 09 Don: (shi)si ge yue le.
It's been four(-teen) months.
- 10 (.)/(Fah raises head to Don))
- 11 Fah: huitou wo gei ni da dianhua. hao ba=
**Later I phone you up. Okay,=
12 Don: =bu shi guang da dianhua[wo hai you ji ge shir wo dei shuo yi shuo.=
It's not only about making phone calls. [I still have several things I have to say.**
- 13 Fah: [ni shuo.
[You go ahead.
- 14 Don: =ni yuanzhang ↑liaojie yi xia.
You president get a bit of the picture.
- 15 (.)
- 16 Fah: ↑hai shuo shenme =[ni-
To still say ↑what=[You-
- 17 Don: [bu shi, ni liao↑jie-
[No, you get the-
- 18 Fah: >bu,< [liang wan duo kuai qian de shir (bu shi ma)?
>No<, [(it's) just a matter of twenty-thousand-yuan >isn't it?<
- 19 Don: [jiu ↑shi- jiu shi liaojie liaojie qingkuang
[Just- Just to get the picture.
- 20 Fah: liang wan duo kuai qian [de ↑shi:r ↓ma.
It is just a matter of twenty-thousand-yuan.
- 21 Ben: [°()°.(Raises head to Don))

Clearly, Fah's agenda (i.e., to provide a solution so as to terminate the encounter) is in conflict with Don's agenda (i.e., to continue his problem presentation). A social-interaction

¹⁸ Such misaligned orientations between participants are also found in out of hours calls to the doctor. Drew (2006) finds that as the primary task for the doctor in the call is to decide whether to make a home visit based on callers' description of the symptoms, during the phase of diagnostic questioning, the callers tend to describe the symptoms as serious, urgent, and alarming. But these symptoms that are regarded by the callers as abnormal are frequently viewed by the doctor as “normal” signs of a “normal” ailment, which needs only regular treatment by the carer in order for the patient to recover according to the usual course taken by such an ailment” (2006: 443).

¹⁹ A fuller transcript and detailed analysis of this data will be given in section 3.4.1, as Excerpt 4.

problem therefore emerges for the participants: whose agenda shall be proceeded at this particular moment that is, who should give way and put their project on hold. Working out this problem undoubtedly involves their locally negotiating their entitlement to the floor turn by turn in interaction, Excerpt 1(b) just shows such a negotiating process, which is the continuation of 1(a):

(1b) CJDs1e3_#9 ‘Twenty thousand yuan’ (continued)

- 22 Don: ↑duoshao shir de (shi wan) de ye [jiejue bu liao wa, dagai dou wa.
 [((Looks to Ben))
No matter how much money the matter is about ... A matter of one-hundred thousand yuan can't be solved either. Probably.
- 23 Ben: (-[]-)
- 24 Don: [jiu zheme jiandan, [ta bu shi mei you caichan.
 [((Looks to Fah))
It's just this easy. It's not that he doesn't have property.
- 25 Fah: °↓duo:: le.°
Too:: many (cases like this).°
- 26 Don: [ta bu: shi mei you caichan.(.) a:.
It's not that he doesn't have property.
- 27 Fah: [°()°
 28 (.)
- 29 Ben: xiang banfa [gei ni jie]jue.
(We) figure out a way to solve it for you.
- 30 Fah: [wo xianzai][[you-
[Now I][[have-
- 31 Don: [[ta-
 [[He-
- 32 Fah: ni ting [wo shuo.]
You listen to me say.
- 33 Don: [yinwei wo]shang ci wo gen ni shuo nage::[Zhen Yun-]
Because last time I told you about that::[Zhen Yun-]
- 34 Fah: [ni ting wo] SHUO:=
[You listen to me]SAY:=
- 35 Fah: =ni ting wo shuo.=
You listen to me say.=
- 36 Don:→ =en en en.
=Mm Mm Mm.
- 37 Fah: zhe shir huiqu mashang cha. yinwei wo lai xianzai-
**This matter (we) investigate as soon as (we) get back (to our office).
 Because since I've been working at the court-**
- 38 zhixingju xianzai yiwān duo jian anzi mei jie,
**There're more than ten thousand cases in the Bureau for Execution that
 haven't been concluded yet.**
- 39 Don: en en [en.
Mmm, yeah.

Here, it appears that the matter of ‘who gets the floor’ is (momentarily) settled by Don’s compliance (line 36) to Fah’s directive ‘you listen to me say’ in lines 32 and 34-35, which results in Fah’s continued production of resolution (lines 37-38) in the clear. The present chapter thus aims to examine this particular construction in Mandarin Chinese – *ni*

ting wo shuo (NTWS) ‘You listen to me say’ – used by the lead official (Fah) to call a halt to the citizens’ (e.g., Don) (projectably) ongoing course of action.

On the interactional level, in comparison with interrogatives (e.g., *neng daduan yi xia ni ma?* ‘Can I stop you for a second?’), the declarative NTWS implies that the speaker has a greater right to stop or obstruct the prior speaker’s talk-in-progress (Stevanovic and Peräkylä, 2012). And on the grammatical level, it is a second-person declarative directive with the agent and the recipient of the conduct clearly referenced, compared to other seemingly equivalent phrases such as *(ni) ting zhe* ‘(You) listen up’ and *ting wo shuo* ‘Listen to me’. Hence, in the present chapter, I explore:

1. Under what kind of sequential circumstances (one of them has been shown in Ex. 1 (a) and (b)) do the lead officials call a halt to the citizens’ (projectably) ongoing talk with this particular construction, and how do the citizens respond to it (e.g., to comply with it, resist it, or reject it)?
2. Facing the citizens’ (potential) resistance to yielding the floor, what other linguistic (and bodily) resources do the lead officials deploy?
3. How is the relevance of their relative identities ‘citizen’ and ‘lead official’ occasioned by their design of turns and actions, and how are the identities procedurally consequential for the outcome of this particular ‘floor bidding’ moment (Schegloff, 1992a)?

Moreover, in Chinese linguistics, grammarians tend to take the construction *ni ting wo shuo* ‘You listen to me say’ as an imperative with a dispensable second-person singular pronoun *ni* ‘you’ (Chao, 1968; Li & Thompson, 1981; Yuan, 1993; Zhu, 1982) and thus inevitably ignore the actual use of the second-person pronoun in real interactions. Hence, this study will show that the constructions *ni ting wo shuo* and \emptyset *ting wo shuo* are oriented to by the speakers as two distinct practices that serve to attend to different interactional

contingencies in talk-in-interaction, and that the second-person pronoun, far from being a dispensable item, is interactionally significant for accomplishing specific purposes in interaction.

The data presented in this chapter are multi-person two-party conversations that are chosen from the 21-hour video dataset, which consists of one citizen, one subordinate official (i.e. a director of a petition-receiving office at a regional court), one lead official (i.e. a president of a regional court), and staff from the Bureau for Letters and Visits (who organize the meetings, such as welcoming and showing the citizens to their seats, showing them out when the encounters finish). The collection of the data presented in this chapter is from two separate days of receptions by the same officials – one in September and one in November in 2018. They received 10 petitioners in one morning (data name: CJDs1) and 5 in the other (data name: CJDs2) (see Appendix IV).

In what follows, I first provide some background on the practice of overtly referring to the recipient in other languages (Section 3.2.1) and then briefly introduce the construction of *(ni) ting wo shuo* ‘(you) listen to me say’ in the grammar of Mandarin Chinese (Section 3.2.2). After a relatively detailed analysis of an initial case (section 3.3), the majority of the chapter is dedicated to the systematic examination of how the lead officials exert deontic authority over the citizens to yield the floor by using the declarative and imperative directives (Section 3.4). During the analysis, I will also show that right after the directive, the lead officials deliberately mark their continued talk as doing provision of a solution by prefacing it with a reference to the citizens’ overall petition, *zhe(ge) shir* ‘(Regarding) this matter’, indicating that they do not claim absolute authority in taking the floor (cf. Peräkylä, 1998). I conclude by discussing some implications of this study (Section 3.5).

3.2 Background

In this section, I start by discussing why in a pro-drop language such as Chinese the already-known/established recipient is referred to again by the speaker with a second-person singular pronoun. That is, are *nǐ ting wo shuo* ‘**You** listen to me say’ and \emptyset *ting wo shuo* ‘Listen to me say’ the same? Then I talk about a possible difference between ‘(you) listen to me’ in English and ‘you listen to me *say*’ in Chinese from a syntactic perspective.

3.2.1 Overt reference to recipient

It is well-known that Chinese is a pro-drop language. Unlike English in which pronouns standardly cannot be omitted from grammatical sentences, Chinese pronouns “are usually omissible (and are often more naturally omitted) from grammatical sentences, and understanding a sentence requires some work on the reader’s or the hearer’s part, which may involve inference, context, and knowledge of the world, among other things” (Huang, 1984: 531). In addition, since Chinese is also an isolating language that does not have verbal inflections or case markers, there is no way from the form of verbs or nouns in a sentence to tell what the subject and the object are (Li and Thompson, 1981). The Chinese pronominal system is summarized in Table 3.1.

		1st	2nd		3rd
Singular		wǒ	informal	nǐ (you)	tā
		(I/me)	formal	nín (you _{HON})	(he/she/it/him/her)
Plural	Exclusive	Inclusive	nǐmen ²⁰		tāmen
	wǒmen (we/us)	zánmen (we/us)	(you)		(they/them)

Table 3.1 The Chinese pronominal system

²⁰ Standardly, the use of the formal/honorific plural ‘you’ *nǐmen* in Chinese is considered problematic, for *nǐ* itself already embodies plurality (Chao, 1956). However, it is found that Beijingers use it significantly in the vernacular (Tang et al., 2015).

It is assumed that once the co-interactants recognize each other as speaker and recipient(s), whether in telephone calls or face-to-face interaction, an overt second-person reference (e.g., singular *ni* 'you') to the recipient can be grammatically and contextually omitted, for they are retrievable or inferable from the interactional context. However, in naturally occurring conversations, it is recurrently observed that despite the addressed recipient being already established, speakers may still use 'you' to overtly refer to their recipient(s). So, the questions are "why do speakers use this contextually redundant 'you' to refer to the recipient(s)?" and "what else does the overt second-person pronoun contribute to the current interactional moment?". This phenomenon has been examined by several researchers in CA.

For example, Hebrew is a verbal inflectional language that has suffixes attached to verbs indicating person, gender, and number. Additional "free-standing" pronouns, once used, are marked. Hachohen and Schegloff (2006) investigate Hebrew speakers employing overt first-person pronoun to refer to him/herself and overt second-person pronoun to refer to the recipient in conversations. They find that the speakers do so in two kinds of disaligning environments: 1) when disagreeing with the recipient's prior talk, the speaker uses self-reference 'I' and other-reference 'you' to highlight a contrast, and 2) the speaker overtly uses self-reference 'I' in reported speech to the recipient about his/her disagreement with a non-present party. Thus, whether it is overt self-reference or recipient-reference, they are used to indicate some dispreferred action is underway. Similarly, Oh (2007) finds that Korean speakers also use overt 'you' to highlight the contrast between oneself and the recipient in a disagreement sequence and use it to attribute responsibility to the recipient in a complaint sequence.

Of course, there is a special kind of sentence type that itself is assumed not to have a grammatical subject, for the subject is understood as being the recipient of the turn or the agent of the nominated action – that is, the imperative (Aikenvald, 2010).

Yuan (1993) explores imperatives in Chinese and claims that even though the grammatical subject of the imperative is usually omitted, there are two situations in which an overt ‘you’ have to be explicitly added. One is when the VPs have the semantic meaning of “assignment of tasks”, such as “You *organize* this event.” or “You *chair* the meeting”; and the other is when an accomplishment of activity involves multi-parties present, such as “You go buy tickets! And you go make a call! Hurry!”. Quirk et al. (1985) identify the ‘you’s in the latter situation as a “contrastive *you*” in the sense of addressee-distinguishing, while Lerner calls it a device for a current speaker selecting a next speaker in multi-party conversation, for “*you* combines the action of person reference with a form that can indicate a single participant is being addressed” (1996: 283).

Etelämäki and Couper-Kuhlen (2017), rather than examining the overt subject used in a single utterance, explore it in a particular sequential environment where having an imperative directive being resisted by the recipient, the speaker issues a subsequent version – a second-person present-tense declarative that usually lacks an overt subject in Finnish. They suggest that the subsequent second-person declarative enables the speaker to render the recipient’s resisted future action in the first place “*fait accompli*” in the present (2017: 233). Moreover, in comparing the initial imperative to the subsequent second-person declarative, they emphasize that the imperative makes an immediate implementation of the nominated action from the recipient relevant, whereas the declarative with explicitly referring to the recipient accentuates the agent of the intended action and thus in Etelämäki and Couper-Kuhlen’s words “bring[s] participants’ judgments, wills, and wishes to the fore” to recalibrate their deontic relationship (2017: 234).

Concerning the relationship between speaker and recipient, it is also worth noting that Chinese speakers' selection of second-person address terms from among several alternatives (e.g., informal 'ni', formal/honorific 'nin', title(+ surname), or zero form) demonstrates their various stance towards the recipient(s) vis-à-vis their relative statuses²¹. Fang (1999, 2000) claims that when the speaker claims absolute authority in commanding the recipient to do something, the second-person singular pronoun cannot be the formal/honorific *nin*, for it contradicts the authoritative stance indexed in imperatives; nevertheless, when *nin* is deployed in imperatives, the original action 'command' is then downgraded to a 'request' as the fulfillment of the latter is contingent on the recipient's free will, abilities, and evaluations about his/her relationship with the speaker (see Chapter 4). Such an operation that person reference forms do more than just refer is also found in Lao (Enfield, 2007) and Japanese (Tokieda, 1941 cited from Iwasaki & Yap, 2015).

In summary, from the aforementioned studies, we can see the following:

- In a complaint sequence, the additional subject 'you' can be deployed by the speaker to index some negativity towards the addressee(s) possibly for some misconduct by the addressee(s) in the past;
- When used particularly in imperatives or in the production of directive actions in a sequence, the overt 'you' implicates that, as Davies (1986: 147) claims, "the speaker is laying claim to a certain authority over his addressee"; and
- In multi-party interactions, the second-person pronoun 'you' is usually deployed as a device for the current speaker to select next speaker, which means that once being deployed by the recipient, the speaker is conversely selected as the next speaker.

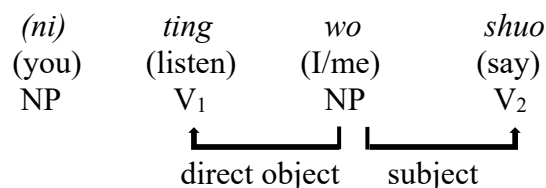
The latter two functions will be observed in this chapter.

²¹ As to this point, Raymond (2016) examines second-person reference T/V shifts in Spanish in the negotiation of identity and action. He shows how momentary shifts in second-person reference forms T/V enables a recalibration of the relationship between speaker and hearer at a particular moment in talk-in-interaction. Such a linguistic practice will be systematically examined in Chapter 4.

In the next section, I decompose the grammatical construction of *(ni) ting wo shuo* ‘(you) listen to me say’ with reference to some work on Mandarin syntax, and then I propose that this phrase is not pragmatically equivalent to the obvious English translation, ‘listen to me’. Finally, I briefly discuss my claim that the phrase ‘you listen to me say’ is a declarative sentence instead of an imperative ‘listen to me’ plus an address term ‘you’.

3.2.2 The grammatical construction of *ni ting wo shuo* ‘You listen to me say’

The sentence \emptyset *ting wo shuo* (lit. ‘listen me say’) which, although undoubtedly an imperative, cannot be simply translated as ‘Listen to me’ in English, for a sentence like *ting wo* ‘listen to me \emptyset ’ without the verb *shuo* ‘say’ is grammatically incorrect. It is a “serial verb construction”, referring to “a sentence that contains two or more verb phrases or clauses juxtaposed without any marker indicating what the relationship is between them” (Li & Thompson, 1981: 594). Li and Thompson categorize it into four groups in terms of the meanings of the verb phrases, and the construction of the sentence *ting wo shuo* falls into the category of “pivotal constructions”, which denotes a sentence “contain[ing] a noun phrase that is simultaneously the subject of the second verb and the direct object of the first verb” (1981: 607), as in



Here, the noun phrase *wo* ‘I/me’ functions as a “pivot” linking the two verbs. The sentence then may be roughly translated as ‘you listen to me by stop talking, and then listen to what I’m about to say’. This kind of interpretation is consistent with Li and Thompson’s argument that “the meaning of the first verb ... determines that the event expressed by the second verb is *unrealized*, that is, an event that *might happen*” (1981: 608, italics in original).

So, the next speaker's continuation of the projected talk depends on whether the prior speaker, who is subject to the obstruction, yields the floor. However, it has to be noted that in contrast to English 'listen to me', Chinese 'listen to me say' appears to also demand the prior speaker's attention to the content of the ensuing talk²². Just as Sacks (1992a: 683) remarks, people distinguish between

“having the floor” in the sense of being a speaker while others are hearers, and
“having the floor” in the sense of being a speaker while others are doing what they please.

Thus, it is for this possible reason that Chinese *ni ting wo shuo* is translated as ‘you listen to me say’ here. (Another reason will be discussed after the systematic analysis of this construction in interaction.)

With regard to the study of this specific construction in Chinese linguistics, there are surprisingly only two studies, of which the first is from the perspectives of pragmatics (Y. Chen, 2015) and the latter from functional and cognitive linguistics (S. Hong, 2020)²³. They both treat NTWS as a type of discourse marker that has an interceding character and serves to flag a topic shift and emphatically draw the recipient's attention to the informational content of the following talk. However, none of them examines its use in naturally-occurring conversations but in dialogues in some classic Chinese literature and TV series, and none of them studies its placement in a sequence but in a single utterance or an utterance pair (Clift, 2016), which undoubtedly gives their findings lack of empirical “bite” (Evans & Levinson, 2009: 475). So this chapter aims to fill this gap by looking at at what place in a sequence and in what kind of sequential context participants use NTWS. More importantly, in contrast to these studies, the present chapter investigates this construction as a directive format in the

²² This point deserves future empirical study by comparing the two in similar sequential environments. But see Excerpt 5 (Figs. 3.43 & 3.44 in particular) where with being directed to yield the floor by the lead official's ‘you listen to me say’, the citizen not only verbally withholds his turn but also leans his head and torso toward the lead official that appears to publicly display particular attention to the lead official's ensuing talk. So, for the sake of preserving this possible difference, the phrase is translated as such.

²³ This is according to one of the largest research database in China – CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) (www.cnki.net).

sense that once being produced, it requires some responsive action from the recipient (i.e., compliance, rejection, or resistance).

As for the identification of its grammatical format, the current study posits that it is a second-person declarative format, in which the subject *ni* ‘you’ is a compulsory unit, rather than being an imperative format with an optional address term ‘you’. In Chinese grammar, there appears to be no absolute consensus among grammarians that *ni ting wo shuo* is an imperative sentence. While Li and Thompson (1981), Chao (1968), and Zhu (1982) claim that it is an imperative, Sun (2006) classifies it under the declarative format. Thus, as it will show that the second person pronoun *ni* is a compulsory unit that serves particular interactional purposes, this study chooses to call this construction a declarative form so as to reserve the *fait accompli* element indexed in the declaratives and underline the indispensability of the subject pronoun.

In this section, I have clarified some linguistic aspects of the construction NTWS. Now, I move on to introduce the declarative NTWS as a sequential practice in next section 3.3.

3.3 The initial case: *NTWS* as a sequential practice

In talking about the relationships between projection and the turn-taking system and turn beginnings and turn-projection, Schegloff states

Achieving ‘one speaker at a time’ with a minimization of gap and overlap between any two turns suggests a very fine co-ordination involved in the turn-taking system, and clearly a large part of that builds on the projection of a turn’s shape and type; that is, the projection of some sense of where a turn will be being brought to a close, which will allow a possible next speaker to try to gear up to start at just such a point, thereby achieving a transition from one speaker to the next with always one, and never less and never more, across that transition. For a possible next speaker to start at completion of a prior turn precisely involves for them some projection, in the course of that turn’s development, of where it will be ending, so as to allow them to project their beginning for that point. So: projection is important to this turn-taking system,

and turn beginnings are important to turn-projection. turn beginnings are, then, in that sense, sequence-structurally important places. (1987b: 72)

Hence in this section, I present an exemplar to show that NTWS is placed at the very beginning of a responsive turn that projects not only an extended, multi-unit turn but also a somewhat disjunctively responsive action.

The context of Excerpt 2 is that citizen Hou's factory was sealed up by order of a local court in the 1990s. With national policy changed several years later, she could apply for national compensation by handing in an application to a court. However, her application was rejected by a local primary court and then an intermediate court (where President Xia worked at). With some new materials being collected, she applied to the regional court (of which Fah is now the president) to re-open the investigation. Thus, her main goal is to have Fah take the lead in arguing her case. The encounter has so far lasted about 18 minutes, in which before Excerpt 2, Hou has been delivering a complaint story for about 8 minutes with no interruptions from the officials. In lines 01- 08, she is complaining about how she approached President Xia in the past to reverse her verdict but was avoided by him. In line 13, she finally arrives at a possible completion point where some type of aligning/affiliative response from Fah is made relevant next (Stivers, 2008). But Fah produces a disjunctively responsive action instead (lines 15- 20), prefaced by *ni ting wo shuo xian zai* 'You listen to me say now' at line 14.

(2) CJDs1e2_#17

(Fah=a regional court president; Ben=a director of a petition-receiving office at the regional court; Hou=citizen; Wang Beifa and President Xia=non-present officials)

- 01 Hou: 王 北发 啊.现在 玄武 法院 院长 吧, ((Hou looks at Ben & Fah))
 Wang Beifa a. xianzai Xuanwu fayuan yuanchang ba,
 NM PRT now NM court president PRT
Wang Beifa, now is the president of the court in Xuanwu county, right?
- 02 王 北发 当年 也- 也 (接- 接-) 那 啥. .hh
 Wang Beifa dangnian ye- ye (jie- jie-) na sha. .hh
 NM those days also also receive receive that what
Wang Beifa also- also- (received petitioners) in those days. .hh

- 03 就给我- [‘侯姐你过来，你过来，我跟你唠，我跟你唠.’
 jiu gei wo- [‘Hou jie ni guolai, ni guolai, wo gen ni lao, wo gen ni lao.’
 then give 1SG NM sister2SGcome2SG come 1SG to 2SG chat, 1SG to 2SG chat
 [((Looks down w/ RH waving ‘come here’))
(Then said) to me, ‘Sister Hou, come here, come here. I chat to you, I chat to you.’
- 04 [就把夏院长放跑了啊。我- (.) [↑问夏院长啦， (.)
 [jiu ba Xia yuanzhang fang pao le a. wo- (.) [↑wen Xia yuanzhang la, (.)
 then BA NM president let run PFV PRT 1SG ask NM president PFV
 [((Looks up to Fah))
 [((Shifts gaze to B))
Then (he) led the president Xia escape. I- (.) had asked the president Xia, (.)
- 05 给夏院长放跑了。
 gei Xia yuanzhang fang pao le.
 let NM president let run PFV
(But Wang Beifa) led the president Xia escape.
- 06 我说上千万损失你脱不了干系。
 wo shuo shang qianwan shunshi ni tuo bu liao ganxi.
 1SG say over ten million loss 2SG remove NEG able responsibility
I said, ‘you cannot escape the responsibility for the over tens of millions of losses.’
- 07 我↑告诉你夏院长。
 wo↑GAOsu ni shuo Xia yuanzhang.
 1SG tell 2SG say NM president
I’m ↑TELLING you President Xia.

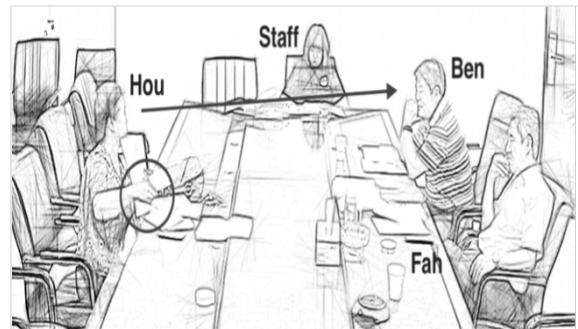
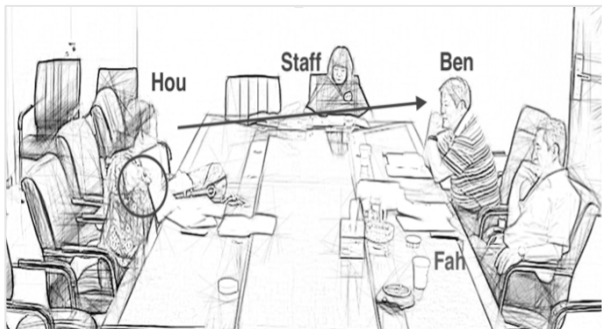


Figure 3.1 Hou’s gaze at Ben with her RH pointing to her right at *ta* in line 08 **Figure 3.2** Hou’s gesture and gaze in line 09

Hand | ~~~~~*****
 Gaze at Ben
 08 我就跟他这么翻脸说的。
 wo jiu gen ta zheme fanlian shuo de.
 1SG just to 3SG such fall out say PRT
I just fell out with him like this.

Hand_{Hou} .-.|
 Gaze_{Hou} at Ben
 09 (0.2)

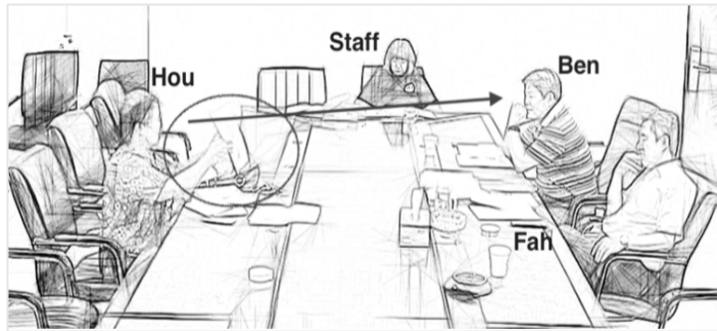


Figure 3.3 Hou's gesture at *xianzai*, gazing at Ben in line 10

Hand |~~~~~
 Gaze at Ben
 Torso H.....F
 10 Hou: 就 ↑现在, (.)我 这个 啊,
 jiu ↑*xianzai*, (.)wo zhege a,
 just now 1SG this.CL PRT
 Up to ↑*now* (.) My this,

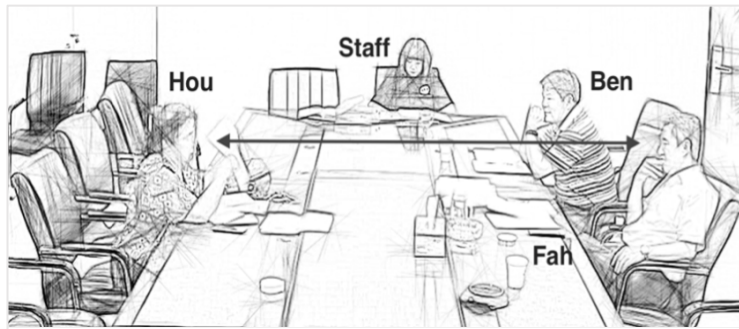


Figure 3.4 Hou's holding gesture & mutual gaze with Fah in line 11

Hand_{Hou} *****
 Gaze_{Hou} at Fah
 Torso_{Hou} F-----
 11 (0.8)

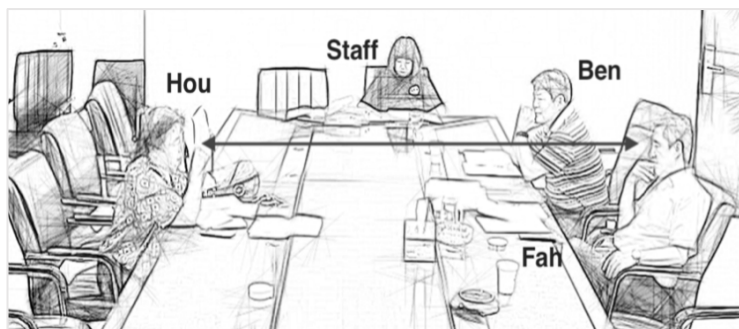


Figure 3.5 At line 12, Hou holds the paper to her left side and fixes her gaze on Fah

Hand *****
 Gaze at Fah
 Torso -----
 12 Hou: 我 不 服 这个,
 wo bu fu zhege,
 1SG NEG dissent this.CL
 I object to this,

Hand_{Hou} *****
 Gaze_{Hou} at Fah
 Torso_{Hou} -----
 13 (0.3)

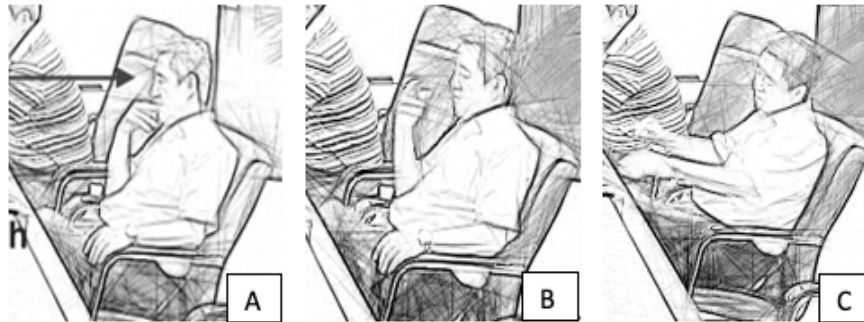


Figure 3.6 Fah’s gesture at the beginning of line 14 (A); his two fingers extended at *ting* (B); and his retraction of the finger at the end of line 14 (C)

Hand_{Hou} *****
 Gaze_{Hou} at Fah
 Hand |~~~~~|-----|
 Gaze at Houaway
 Torso H.....

14 Fah: 你 听 我 说 现在。
 ni ting wo shuo xianzai
 2SG listen 1SG say now
You listen to me say now.



Figure 3.7 Fah’s body movements from the start of line 15

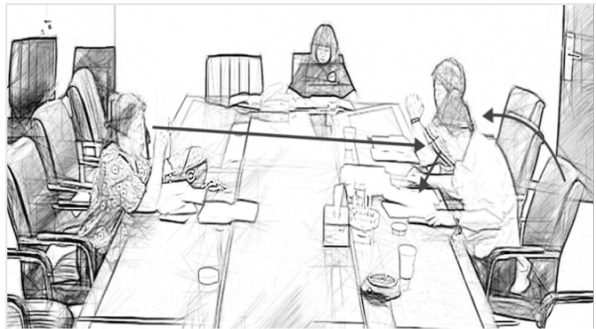


Figure 3.8 Fah’s body leans forward and hands are resting on the table at the end of line 15

Hand_{Hou} *****
 Gaze_{Hou} at Fah
 Gaze away
 Torso F-----
 15 现在 这个 事儿 啊,
 xianzai zhege shir a,
 now this.CL matter PRT
Now regarding this matter,

Hand_{Hou} *****
 Gaze_{Hou} at Fah
 Gaze_{Fah} away
 Torso_{Fah} F----
 16 (0.5)

Gaze away
 Torso -----|
 17 我 不 是 推。

wo bu shi tui.
1SG NEG be push
I'm not shirking.

Hand_{Hou} *****
Gaze_{Hou} at Fah
Gaze_{Fah} away
18 (0.7)

Gaze away
19 Fah: 你 这 事 儿 还 真 得 找 唐 八 骏 说 去。
ni zhe shir hai zhen dei zhao Tang Bajun shuo qu.
2SG this matter still really have.to find NM say go
You really need to address this matter to Tang Bajun.

Gaze away.....at Hou
20 他 是 管 这 个 的。
ta shi guan zhege de.
3SG be administer this.CL NOM
He is in charge of this.

21 Hou: 你 听 我- 你 听 我 跟 你 说, 啊. ((*Holding continues*))
ni ting wo- ni ting wo gen ni shuo, a.
2SG listen 1SG 2SG listen 1SG to 2SG say PRT
You listen- You listen to what I'm about to say to you, A.

22 Fah: °对 不 对, [(你-)]°
°dui bu dui°
right NEG right
°Right, (you-)°

23 Hou: [我 不 服 这 个 啊. ((*Holding continues*))]
[wo bu fu zhege a.
1SG NEG accept this.CL PRT
(So) I object to this.

24 Fah: 是 吧, >你 说- 你 要 说< (.)房 局 长 对 你 这 么 好,
shi ba. >ni shuo- ni yao shuo< (.)Fang juzhang dui ni zheme hao.
be PRT 2SG say 2SG if say NM general-director to 2SG so good
Right, >You say- (Now that) you say< (.) the general director Fang treats you well,

25 °你 说 唐 八 骏 什 么 的.°
°ni shuo Tang Bajun shenme de.°
2SG say NM what NOM
°(and) Tang Bajun or something.°

26 Hou: 不 是. 你 听 我 把 这 话 说 完. ((*Holding continues*))
BU SHI. ni ting wo ba zhe hua shuo wan.
NEG be 2SG listen 1SG BA this words say finish
NO. Let me finish what I was saying.

27 (.)

28 Fah: 现 在, 只 能 你 这 个 事 儿 ...
xianzai, zhi neng ni zhege shir...
now only can 2SG this.CL matter
Now, as for your matter, (you) can only...

During Hou's storytelling (lines 01-12), there are two places where Ben and Fah could provide alignments (e.g., *en* 'Mm', *a* 'Uh huh', or nods), at least showing that they go along with Hou's ongoing activity (Schegloff, 1982; Stivers, 2008), but they do not. One is the silence in line 09 where Ben is selected as the next speaker by Hou's sustained gaze (Lerner, 2003; Stivers & Rossano, 2010) and some uptake of the complaint story from him is thereby made relevant by Hou's summary of her confrontation with Xia at line 08 ('I just fell out with him like this'); but he otherwise withholds it. Hou then shifts the sequence from complaining about specific officials to talking about her verdict with a preface at line 10 (*jiu* [↑]*xianzai*, *(.) wo zhege a*, 'Up to [↑]now *(.)* My this,'); Fig. 3.3). However, during the substantial silence in line 11, rather than completing her turn, Hou, fixing her gaze at Fah and holding possibly her verdict with both of her hands (Fig. 3.4), appears to deliberately mobilize some aligning response from him (Stivers & Rossano, 2010), but she does not succeed. Such absence of alignment from Ben and Fah implicates at least their disinclination to go along with Hou's projected line of action.

Indeed, after Hou completes her turn with an assessment in line 12 ('I object to this'), Fah takes his allocated turn at a TRP by virtue of being selected as a next speaker by Hou's gaze (Lerner, 2003) (Fig. 3.5) and yet produces a directive *ni ting wo shuo xianzai* 'You listen to me say now' (line 14) with a quick pointing gesture (Mondada, 2007; Fig. 3.6). The adverb *xianzai* 'now' also appears to explicitly index that Hou has had the floor for some time. If we look at what follows it, we can see that it is an extended, multi-unit turn (lines 15-20) where Fah produces a response, not to Hou's local complaint about a specific official or her unjust verdict but, to Hou's reason-for-the-visit (i.e. asking Fah to take the lead in arguing her case) by directing her to another official Tang Bajun (line 19). Such a response is observably oriented to by Hou as sequentially disjunctive or irrelevant through her holding gesture from line 11 onwards. The 'frozen' hand gesture is found that speakers await a

relevant response from the selected next speaker and only retract the gesture once such a response becomes recognizable (Streeck, 2009a: 175). Together with Hou's later reclaim to the floor 'You listen- you listen to me say to you' at line 21 after Fah provides a solution (lines 15-20), and her resumption of line 12 at line 23 ('(So) I object to this'), we can see that Fah's responses are indeed not what Hou seeks and Hou has not yet completed her complaint sequence at line 12. So NTWS is deployed here by Fah to call a halt to Hou's projected continuation of her narrative complaint.

It should also be noted that what immediately follows 'You listen to me say now' is a reference to Hou's overall matter (*xianzai zhege shir a* 'Now regarding this matter', line 15), which demonstrates to Hou that the topic of the following talk, though being shifted, is still citizen-attentive²⁴ (Jefferson, 1984b) and that what he does here is nothing but providing her a solution (I will elaborate on this point in the next section). Such a practice thus gives Fah a particular warrant for stopping Hou's ongoing complaint sequence and implementing his institutional agenda at this particular moment. It is also observably successful in securing the floor because Hou could have resumed her interrupted talk at lines 16 or 18 but she instead accepts Fah's obstruction at these moments and only regains the floor after Fah appears to complete his projected turn at line 21. Therefore, I suggest that the construction NTWS is used to preempt a projected continuation of complaint or obstructs an actual continuation of

²⁴ Jefferson has observed that one of the devices that people recurrently use to depart from a troubles-talk is to deliver a talk that is "other-attentive" in the next position (1984: 194). For instance,

NB (Jefferson, 1984b: 193–194)

- 1 E: .hhhhhhh But hell if it costs five hundred bucks
 2 I'm gonna get- we:ll,
 3 L: Well don't you have insur[ance on that? [Huh?]
 4 E: [Yeah. [Yeah]::.=
 5 =Yeah.
 6 L: Oh:.
 7 (0.3)
 8 L:→ So you're coming down in Ma:rch hu:h?

As Jefferson (1984: 194) argues,

This recurrent other-attentiveness may constitute a special warrant for the activities that follow a troubles-telling. In effect, a breaking away from talk about trouble exhibits deference to it by preserving the interactional reciprocity that is a feature of such talk.

one (see Excerpt 4) for providing a locally disjunctive solution to citizens' overall petition that is realized in an extended, multi-unit turn. In such cases, I also argue that the immediate preface *zhe ge shir* 'regarding this matter' is to tacitly account for and legitimize lead officials' calling a halt to citizens' (projectably) ongoing complaint sequence and thus to work to further secure the floor. Such a pattern [*ni ting wo shuo* + *zhe(ge) shir*] can also be observed later in Excerpts 2-4.

Now, I turn to the examination of how the lead official mobilizes this specific construction to claim authority in controlling the interactional agenda, and how the citizens respond to it.

3.4 The construction of authority in controlling the interactional agenda

*“[A]uthority is not primarily about someone **claiming** authority, but it is about others **accepting** someone as an authority”
(Stevanovic, 2013: 20; Orig. emphasis)*

In the previous section, I showed that the construction NTWS appears in a potentially contested transition from a complaint phase to a resolution phase where citizens project a continuation of the complaint and officials move to the resolution despite the projection of continuation. In this section, I focus on its interactional import; that is, since NTWS constitutes a directive, it unavoidably involves the participants' evaluation of who relatively has greater deontic rights to halt the other party's (projectably) ongoing talk. Hence, in section 3.4.1, I first analyze how the lead official claims authority through the use of the declarative 'You listen to me say' and how the citizens respond to it. In section 3.4.2, I then examine how the lead official mobilizes the imperative *ting wo shuo* 'Listen to me say' to deal with the citizens' emergent resistance to surrender the floor. By the end of this section, I argue that the lead official's deontic authority in controlling the interactional agenda is sequentially and interactionally constructed by the two parties, and their relatively

asymmetric relationship in terms of the turn-taking system is locally achieved. More importantly, I also argue that the lead official does not claim, in Peräkylä's (1998) words, "unconditional authority" in taking the floor.

3.4.1 The 2nd-person declarative directive 'You listen to me say'

As discussed before, the construction NTWS is a second-person declarative. In this section, I demonstrate that what the lead official does with this particular format is to tell the citizens to stop talking and yield the floor, rather than asking them to do so (Antaki & Kent, 2012; Craven & Potter, 2010; Rossi, 2012). The main difference between the actions 'telling' and 'asking' is that the former makes compliance conditionally relevant next, whereas the latter makes granting next relevant. This is the distinction between requests and directives proposed by Craven and Potter (2010). They claim that "requests have to be accepted before they can be performed; directives just need to be complied with" (2010: 426), and they further remark that

The talk of the speaker who issues the directive ... is not oriented to acceptance; their talk orients entirely to compliance. Not only is the speaker displaying their right to impose on the recipient, they are also claiming the right to bypass the recipient's right to refuse that imposition. In a sense, the entitlement claimed is 'to tell', not just 'to ask'. (2010: 438)

However, most of the CA studies on requests and directives, concerning participants' orientations to their relative entitlements and obligations and anticipated contingencies associated with their requests, are linked to two main syntactic forms – imperatives and interrogatives (e.g., Antaki & Kent, 2012; Craven & Potter, 2010; Curl & Drew, 2008; Heinemann, 2006; Rossi, 2012, 2017; Zinken & Ogiemann, 2013). Even though there are a few studies that do examine declaratives as requests for action, they either investigate self-oriented declaratives (e.g., 'I need eleven of each of these pages', Vinkhuyzen & Szymanski, 2005; or 'I was wondering if ...', Curl and Drew, 2008) or declaratives with a modal verb

(e.g., ‘You should probably dry my back’, Lindström, 2005). Stevanovic (2013) studies statements in formulating requests. She claims that statements about the recipient’s future actions (e.g., from a mom to her son, ‘You are taking a bath now’) can be easily understood “in a deontic way” if the speakers have a high deontic status relative to the recipient. Later in her recent study, Stevanovic (2020) compares Finnish second-person declaratives with interrogatives used in violin instructions. She finds that the instructors use declarative directives when the students’ compliance is taken as given due to their already-established engagement, whereas they use second-person interrogatives to problematize the students’ compliance when their engagement is lacking.

Thus, by referring to Stevanovic’s (2011) exploration of declarative directives in terms of deontic rights, in this section I analyze the lead official’s use of the declarative NTWS to different citizens in different encounters. It is worth noting beforehand that in response to requests, silence from the requestee may be considered as a projection of some dispreferred response (e.g., rejection, disagreement) or resistance (J. Davidson, 1984); yet, silence to a request for the floor, as in this case, may be treated by participants as potential compliance.

Excerpt 3 happens about 2 minutes after Excerpt 2. Before the exchange below, Hou succeeds in resuming her previously interrupted complaint sequence and starts complaining about another government official Gan, a current president of an intermediate court, for his refusal to deal with her case. She tells Fah that Gan said to her that as it was an old case, it was not his responsibility. Hou happened to record what he said by cellphone. In line 01, Hou is recounting how she confronted Gan one day with this recording by inviting Ben (i.e. Director Li) to acknowledge it so as to increase the credibility (‘Director Li knew it ...’). However, not only does Ben not produce any form of acknowledgment (e.g., *shi* ‘yeah’ or

nodding), but also interrupts Hou's recounting by successively summoning her with a kinship term *da jie* 'Big sister' at lines 03, 05, and 08.

(3) CJDs1e2_#3 'Cellphone'

(Director Li=Ben)

Torso_{Ben} |H.....F
 Gaze_{Ben} at Houaway
 Hand @RH stretched out pointing to Ben@
 Gaze at Ben

01 Hou: @李 主任 知道 啊,@我 这么 拿 手机 问 的 他,
 Li zhuren zhidao a, wo zheme na shouji wen de ta,
 Li director know PRT 1SG such take cellphone ask PRT 3SG
Director Li knew it. I took the cellphone like this asking him.

Torso_{Ben} F-----
 Gaze_{Ben} awayat Houaway
 Gaze at Ben.....at Fah

02 Hou: 我 早: 就 知道 了. 我 早 就 (---)[(-----)啦,
 wo zao: jiu zhidao le. wo zao jiu (---)[(-----)a,
 1SG early just know PFV 1SG early just PRT
(He said,) I've known (it) much earlier. I've already ...

03 Ben: [大 姐,
 [da jie,
 big sister
Big sister,

04 (.)

Gaze at Hou

05 Ben: 大 [姐: .=
 da [jie: .=
 big sister
 [(Fah nods)
Big si:ster.=

06 (0.2)

Gaze at Fah

07 Hou: 对 吧;
 dui ba;
 right Q
Right;

Gaze away

08 Ben: °大姐.°=
 °da jie.°=
°Big sister.°=

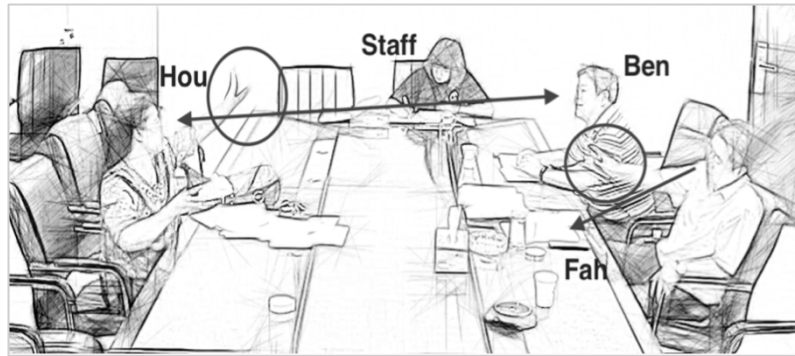


Figure 3.9 Hou's and Fah's gestures and gazes at Hou's *wo* in line 09

Gaze_{Ben} ..at Hou
 Hand_{Fah} |~~~~~*****
 Hand |~~~~~*****
 Gaze at Ben
 09 Hou: =[你 等 会儿 的 =我 这=
 =[ni deng huir de =wo zhe=
 2SG wait a.while ASSC 1SG this
 [((Fah tilts head to left w/ mouth open))
You wait a minute=I=

Hand **-. |
 Gaze at Hou
 Torso H.F-
 10 Fah: =诶,=
 =ei,=
 INJ
Hey

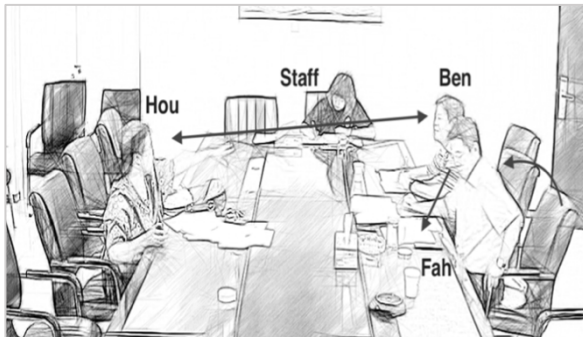


Figure 3.10 Hou's gesture and gaze at *rongyi* in line 11; Fah's body and gaze at Hou's *rongyi*

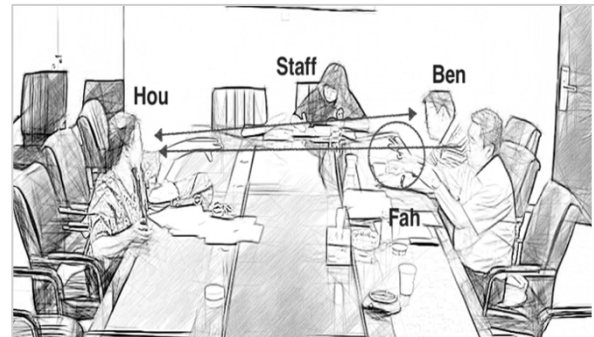


Figure 3.11 Hou and Fah's gesture and gaze at Hou's *ganhuo* in line 11

Hand *****
 11 Hou: =我 见 院长: 不 容易, 过 两 天 |我 要 干活 去 啦.
 =wo jian yuanzhang:bu RONGYI, GUO LIANG TIAN |WO YAO GANHUO QU LA.
 1SG see president NEG easy past two day 1SG must work go PRT
It's not EASY for me to meet the president. AFTER A COUPLE OF DAYS I HAVE TO GO TO WORK.

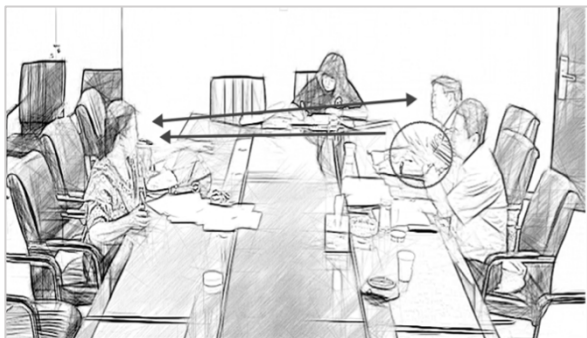


Figure 3.12 Fah's hands folded at the beginning of line 12; Hou's left hand is still stretched out



Figure 3.13 Hou's hands at home position and Fah & Ben's gaze at the end of line 13

Hand_{Hou} *****-.-.-.-.-
Gaze at Hou away

12 Fah: 你 听 我 说 你 >听 我 说 你 听 我 说<.
ni ting wo shuo ni >ting wo shuo ni ting wo shuo<.
2SG listen 1SG say 2SG listen 1SG say 2SG listen 1SG say
You listen to me say you >listen to me say you listen to me say<.

Hand_{Hou} -.-. |
13 → (0.2)

Gazeat Hou.....away

14 Fah: **这个 事儿.** (.)>(归根 结底)< 今天 你 这 说 半 天 我 就-
zhege shir. (.)>(guigen jiedi)< jintian ni zhe shuo ban tian wo jiu-
this.CL matter in.the.final.analysis today 2SG here say half day 1SG
Regarding this matter (.) >(After all of)< **what you've said here**
a half-day today, I then-

15 Ben: 咱们 [(在 这儿) 捋 出 一 些 思:路 是, 现在.
zanmen [(zai zher) lü chu yixie si:lu shi, xianzai.
2PL at here smooth out some train.of.thought be now
We are here figuring out some ideas, now.

Gaze away

16 Fah: [↑原来 我 知道-
[↑yuanlai wo zhidao-
originally 1SG know
Originally I knew-

Gazeat Hou

17 Fah: 思路 °(探讨)°, ↑啊.=
silu °(tantao)°, ↑a.=
train.of.thought explore PRT
To discuss some ideas, o↑kay.=

18 Ben: =对.
=dui.
right
Yes.

19 (0.6)
(Fah continues restating his previous suggestion in Excerpt 1, that is, steering Hou to another official Tang Bajun)

In fact, after Excerpt 2, just as Hou was attempting to relaunch the complaint sequence, she was signaled by Fah to stop there with the statement ‘I only tell you how to solve the problem’, and then was ordered to stop by Ben (*bie shuo le* ‘Stop’). Hou nevertheless outright rejects it (*bu xing* ‘No’) and proceeds until line 02 here. Ben this time, rather than using the bold imperative again, deploys a more social-affiliational form of address – a kinship term *da jie* ‘Big sister’ (Pan & Kádár, 2011a, 2011b; Wu, 1990²⁵) – to summon her, which gives Hou a space to decide whether to terminate her ongoing activity (Schegloff, 2002b). Hou immediately recognizes it, not as an attempt to secure her attention but an appeal to her to cease her ongoing talk by, upon its third attempt, directing Ben with *ni deng huir* ‘You wait a minute’ at line 09 (see also her hand gestures in Fig. 3.9). Having seen Ben’s failure to stop Hou, Fah comes in with the simplest attention-getter *ei* ‘Hey’ at line 10 to make a bid for speakership (see also his hand gestures in Fig. 3.9; Luke & He, 2019; Schegloff, 1984a).

However, this attempt gets “sequentially deleted” (Schegloff, 1987: 110) by Hou in the next turn with a follow-up account at a higher volume in her insistence on continuing the talk (‘It is not EASY for me to meet the president ...’, line 11). It is also accompanied by a directive hand gesture that is initially mobilized with the directive at line 09 (Figs. 3.10 & 11). It is in seeing Hou’s persistence in not conceding the floor at this moment that Fah starts up at a TRP and repeats *ni ting wo shuo ...* ‘you listen to me say ...’ three times to call a halt to Hou’s projected continuation of her complaint at line 12.

Note that in contrast to his NTWS in Excerpt 2, Fah rigidly repeats it three times here. In Excerpt 2, Fah, as a selected next speaker, is entitled to take his next turn. In other words, it is mobilized as an announcement of an imminent speakership (cf. Stevanovic & Peräkylä,

²⁵ Wu (1990:82) claims, “among acquaintances, using plain kinship terms (including the pattern ‘dà + kinship term’ without a surname or given name) to address one another shows more intimacy than using kinship terms preceded by surname or given name”. For example, Ben could address Hou with ‘Sister Hou’, but it is not as hearably affiliative as ‘Big sister’.

2012). But here, it is designed as a directive that particularly seeks Hou's compliance, especially with the repetition that appears to deal with Hou's resolute resistance to yielding the floor. This can be observed in the following silence (line 13) where Fah is hearably waiting for a sign of Hou's discontinuation of her talk, and it is only when seeing Hou starts to retract her outstretched arm²⁶ (Figs. 3.12 & 13) and hearing no further talk from her that Fah proceeds with his projected talk at line 14. But in Excerpt 2, Fah proceeds with his talk immediately thereafter.

It is also important to note that in either case, this second-person declarative embodies a blunt claim to deontic authority²⁷. This is arguably attributable to the specific use of the second person pronoun. Here, it is striking that Fah also repeats the pronoun *ni* three times. If its purpose is to select Hou as the recipient of the imminent talk, one is sufficient; and if it is to name Hou as the agent of the proposed action, one is also sufficient (see Sacks & Schegloff, 1979).

In fact, by repeating it three times, Fah claims a strong deontic stance in not only calling a halt to Hou's projected continuation of her complaint but also laying claim to a certain authority over Hou at this moment. That is to say, with the form of assertion, Fah displays deontic authority to decide upon the permissibility of his impending action and prioritizing his agenda over the citizen's, and with the repetition of the second-person pronoun, he displays particular authority in determining Hou's here and now course of action (i.e., to listen to what Fah is about to say).

²⁶ Here, Hou's retraction of her arm and Fah's treatment of it deserve special attention. Specifically, during Fah's production of the directive turn, Hou's left arm has been left stretched out to Ben (Fig. 3.12), and it is when Fah sees her starting the retraction of the arm (Fig. 3.13) that he changes his gaze direction from initially looking at her to looking down upon the completion of the third 'You listen to me say'. This gaze withdrawal indicates that Fah treats Hou's arm withdrawal as a sign of moving towards compliance (in Kent's (2012) words, an "incipient compliance") and thus treats the directive sequence as potentially complete (Rossano, 2012). Hence, we see that after the short silence at line 13 where Hou's arm is completely back to "home position" (Sacks & Schegloff, 2002), Fah continues.

²⁷ In Chapter 4, it will be seen that this format can be mitigated by the use of an honorific second person pronoun *nin*, as in *nin ting wo shuo* 'YOU_{HON} listen to me say'.

But note that similar to Excerpt 2, Fah also places a reference to Hou's overall matter *zhe ge shi* 'Regarding this matter' at the beginning of his responsive turn at line 14, which, as discussed before, tacitly accounts for his eligibility for obstructing Hou's ongoing complaint sequence. This eligibility comes from the fact that providing a solution is a "category-bound activity" (Sacks, 1992: 248), a pre-allotted action (Peräkylä & Silverman, 1991) that the officials, especially the lead officials, are highly entitled to do, after receiving some 'good enough' information from the citizens. Hence, Fah does not claim absolute authority in stopping Hou's ongoing course of action (cf. Peräkylä, 1998). A failure to mark the upcoming talk as doing provision of a solution may result in the failure of the obstructing action (see Excerpt 5).

Of course, as Stevanovic (2013) argues, "authority is not primarily about someone *claiming* authority, but it is about others *accepting* someone as an authority" (p. 20; Orig. emphasis). Hou's acceptance of Fah as an authority is demonstrably manifested in her compliance with the directive by withholding her next turn. But note that although Hou appears to surrender to Fah's authority, she still tacitly resists it by withholding a clear compliance response, such as compliance tokens *en* 'Mm' or *hao* 'Okay', which can be observed in the following Excerpt 4.

Before Excerpt 4, Don has been reading aloud a draft that details the ins and outs of his matter. It is about that the local court had ordered the defendant to return a loan of approx. £ 2000 to Don but the defendant defaulted on the loan. Don then applied to the court to take enforcement measures and has not heard back for four months since he was contacted by Zhen Yun – a responsible person who works at the court taking care of his matter – by phone. Before the conversation below, Don has complained that in that phone call Zhen Yun only told him to wait and then hung up the phone. After Don confirms that his case is in the hands of Zhen Yun in response to Ben's doubt that his case may be in the hands of someone else,

Fah initiates a possible pre-closing sequence with an information-seeking-question, ‘When did (he) call you?’ at line 01. The interaction so far has lasted for about 7 minutes.

(4) CJDs1e3_#9 ‘Twenty thousand yuan’

(Don=citizen; Benfang=Ben; Fah sits right in front of Don, Ben sits on Don’s front-left and Fah’s right hand)

- 01 Fah: 啥 时候 给 你 打 电话 的?
sha shihou gei ni da dianhua de?
what time give 2SG make call ASSC
When did (he) call you?
- 02 (0.8)
- 03 Don: 五月::: (.) 十: (.) 三 号.
wuyue::: (.) shi: (.) san hao.
May thirteen date
On the::: (.) thir:(.)teenth of May.
- 04 Fah: >你 这样.< [(先 到 这)
>ni zheyang.< [(xian dao zhe)
2SG such temporarily till here
>Look.< [(Stop here for today)
- 05 Don: [四 个 月 的 事 儿.=
[si ge yue de shir.=
four CL month ASSC thing
It’s been four months.
- 06 Fah: =好 吧?=
=hao ba?=
good PRT
**=Okay?=
07 Ben: =°()°**
- 08 Fah: 回- 回头 |马上 就: 奔放 (回去 催) 一 下.
hui- huitou |mashang jiu: Benfang (huiqu cui) yi xia.
later later immediately just NM back hurry one CL
|((RH extended to Ben))
Later, Ben will go and hurry them up right away.
- 09 Don: (十)四 个 月 了.
(shi)si ge yue le.
fourteen CL month PFV
It’s been four(-teen) months.
- 10 (.)/(Fah raises head to Don))
- 11 Fah: 回头 我 给 你 打 电话. 好 吧=
huitou wo gei ni da dianhua. hao ba=
later 1SG give 2SG make call good PRT
Later I phone you up. Okay,=
- 12 Don: =不是 光 打 电话. [我 还 有 几 个 事 儿 我 得 说 一 说.=
=bu shi guang da dianhua[wo hai you ji ge shir wo dei shuo yi shuo.=

NEG be only make call 1SG still have several CL thing 1SG have to say
It's not only about making phone calls. [I still have several things I have to say.

- 13 Fah: [你 说。
 [ni shuo.
 2SG say
[You go ahead.
- 14 Don: =你 院长 ↑了解 一 下。
 =ni yuanzhang ↑liaojie yi xia.
 2SG president understand one CL
You president get a bit of the picture.
- 15 (.)
- 16 Fah: ↑还 说 什么 =[你-
 ↑hai shuo shenme =[ni-
 still say what 2SG
To still say ↑what=[You-
- 17 Don: [不 是, 你 了↑解-
 [bu shi, ni liao↑jie-
 NEG be 2SG understand
[No, you get the-
- 18 Fah: >不,< [两 万 多 块 钱 的 事 儿 >不 是 吗<¿
 >bu,< [liang wan duo kuai qian de shir (bu shi ma)¿
 NEG two ten thousand more yuan money ASSC thing NEG be Q
>No<, [(it's) just a matter of twenty-thousand-yuan >isn't it<¿
- 19 Don: [就 ↑是- 就 是 了 解 了 解 情 况。
 [jiu ↑shi- jiu shi liaojie liaojie qingkuang
 just be just be understand understand situation
[Just- Just to get the picture.
- 20 Fah: 两 万 多 块 钱 [的 ↑事:儿 ↓嘛。
 liang wan duo kuai qian [de ↑shi:r ↓ma.
 two ten.thousand more CL money ASSC matter PRT
It is just a matter of twenty-thousand-yuan.
- 21 Ben: [°()° . ((Raises head to Don))
- 22 Don: ↑多少 事 儿 的 (十 万) 的 也 [解 决 不 了 哇, 大 概 都 哇。
 ↑duoshao shir de (shi wan) de ye [jiejue bu liao wa, dagai dou wa.
 how many thing ASSC ten ten thousand also solve NEG PRT probably PRT
 [((Looks to Ben))
No matter how much money the matter is about ... A matter of one-hundred thousand yuan can't be solved either. Probably.
- 23 Ben: (-[]-)
- 24 Don: [就 这 么 简 单,] [他 不 是 没 有 财 产。
 [jiu zheme jiandan, [ta bu shi mei you caichan.
 just such easy 3SG NEG be NEG have property
 [((Looks to Fah))
It's just this easy. It's not that he doesn't have property.
- 25 Fah: °↓多:: 了.°
 °↓duo:: le.°
 many CRS
°Too:: many (cases like this).°

26 Don: [他不: 是 没有 财产. 啊.
 [ta bu: shi mei you caichan. a.
 3SG NEG be NEG have property PRT
It's not that he doesn't have property. Okay?

27 Fah: [° () °

28 (.)

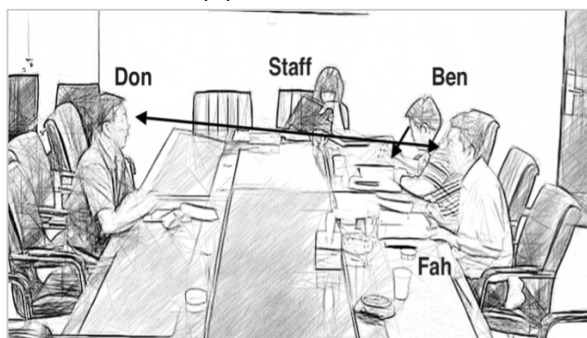


Figure 3.14 Yiqi, Fah and Ben's gaze at the beginning of line 29

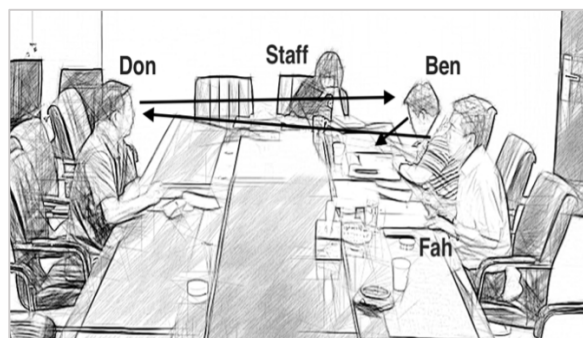


Figure 3.15 Ben keeps looking down when uttering l. 29; Fah keeps looking at Yiqi during Ben's l.29; Yiqi turns head to Ben at his *ta* in l. 31

Gaze_{Don} at Fahat Ben
 Gaze away

29 Ben: 想 办法 [给 你 解]决.
 xiang banfa [gei ni jie]jue.
 think way for 2SG solve
(We) figure out a way to solve it for you.

Gaze at Don
 Hand |~~~~~|

30 Fah: [我 现在] [[有-
 [wo xianzai] [[you-
 1SG now have
[Now I] [[have-

Gaze ..at Ben

31 Don: [[他-
 [[ta-
 3SG
[[He-

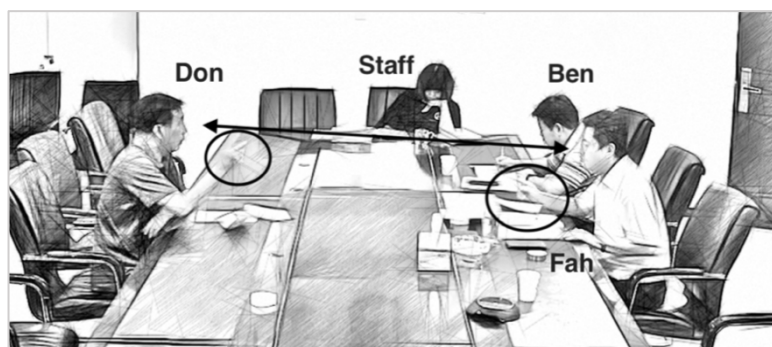


Figure 3.16 Don and Fah's gestures and gaze at the end of line 32

- Hand -.-.-.-. |
 Gaze away _____at Don _____
- 37 Fah: 这 事儿 回去 马上 查。 因为 我 来 现在-
 zhe shir huiqu mashang cha. yinwei wo lai xianzai-
 this matter back immediately investigate because 1SG come now
 This matter (we) investigate as soon as (we) get back (to our office).
 Because since I've been working at the court-
- Gaze. at Don _____
- 38 执行局 现在 一万 多 件 案子 没 结,
 zhixingju xianzai yiwan duo jian anzi mei jie,
 bureau-for-execution now ten-thousand more CL case NEG close
 There're more than ten thousand cases in the Bureau for Execution that
 haven't been concluded yet.
- 39 Don: 嗯 嗯 [嗯].
 en en [en].
 mm mm mm
 Mmm, yeah.

Similar to Excerpt 3, before Fah's directive NTWS at line 32, Don and Fah have already had some negotiation over whether Don should continue his problem presentation (lines 12-31). But in slight contrast to the sequential environments in Excerpts 2 and 3, Fah here has explicitly initiated an encounter-closing proposal at line 4 with *>ni zheyang<*. *xian dao zher* '>Look<. Stop here for today'. But this gets overlapped by Don's complaint about having not heard back from the court for 'four months' at line 5. So in response to this, Fah provides a future arrangement ('Later, Ben will ...') at line 08 that makes the closing still relevant (Button, 1987; Sacks & Schegloff, 1973). This response, however, is ignored by Don with an upgraded complaint at line 9, highlighting 'It's been fourteen months' without any response from the authorities since the first day he started the petition. Thus at line 11, Fah produces another response - committing himself to phone up Don later - in an attempt to advance the close of the encounter.

But this attempt is put on hold by Don's projection of extended talk at line 12 ('It's not only about ... I also have ...'). Don then necessitates his continuation by deliberately invoking Fah's responsibility with a double person reference *ni yuanzhang* 'you president' in the assertion 'You president get a bit of the picture' at line 14 (cf. Stivers, 2007). Yet, such a claim gets rejected by Fah with a challenge in the next turn ('To still say ↑what', line 16),

which results in a dispute between Don and Fah over the significance of Don's continued 'telling' (line 17-28) until Ben's interjectory commitment at line 29 ('We figure out a way to solve it for you'). Perhaps by virtue of seeing Don's gaze-shift to Ben at line 31 (Figs. 3.14 & 15), Fah starts up right after Don's cut-off *ta-* 'He-' in line 31 with the directive NTWS (line 32) to assert his authority to speak at this moment. Note that the force of this directive also gets underscored by Fah's accompanying index-finger point and waving gesture²⁸ (Fig. 3.16).

However, Don starts up in the middle of Fah's production of the directive NTWS ('Because last time ...', line 33), that is, he begins to speak in interjacent overlap position (Jefferson, 1986) and yet continues to speak regardless of Fah's directive. Upon seeing Don's insistence on occupying the floor for continuing his complaint sequence, Fah interjects at a point where Don is far from the point of completing his turn with another NTWS (line 34) in an attempt to shut him down. Note that this time Fah reasserts his authority with a prosodically upgraded directive *ni tin wo SHUO*: 'You listen to me SAY:' at line 34 followed by another one that is produced in the clear at line 35. Consequently, at line 36 Don complies with the directive by producing three beats of the compliance token *en* 'Mm'. Also, note that similar to Hou's retraction of her outstretched arm in Excerpt 3, Don's compliance is also embodied in his retraction of his extended index finger that was initiated as he started competing for the floor with Fah at line 33 (Figs. 3.16-18) and then the return of his right hand to the 'home position' (Sacks & Schegloff, 2002) (Fig. 3.19). This indicates that at this moment Don fully accepts Fah's displayed authority in controlling the interactional agenda.

With the success of halting Don's talk-in-progress, Fah relaunches the pre-closing sequence with a reiteration of the arrangement ('This matter (we) investigate as soon as (we) get back', line 37). It should be stressed here that the object *zhe shir* 'this matter' is deliberately fronted, as the default sentence is *Ø huiqu mashang cha zhe shir* '(we)

²⁸ The directive *you listen to me say* and the accompanying index-finger point and waving gesture will be systematically examined in Chapter 4.

investigate **this matter** as soon as (we) get back (to our office)’. So, again, placing the reference to Don’s overall matter at the very beginning of the responsive turn enables Fah to preface a response not to Don’s local complaint but to his overall petition, which tacitly accounts for and legitimizes his impeding action and thus further secures the floor.

In sum, in Excerpts 2-4, we have seen that one of the sequential environments, where the lead official mobilizes the directive NTWS to preempt the citizens’ projected continuation of a complaint or obstruct an actual continuation of one, is when the citizens resist concluding their problem presentation (or complaint). With the second-person declarative format, Fah is able to claim deontic authority both in determining the citizens’ here-and-now action of yielding the floor and controlling the local interactional agenda. Although in these examples, the citizens eventually accept Fah as an authority by complying with the directive, it is also important to note that they do not concede in the first place without an interactional battle (e.g. Hou’s holding gestures²⁹ in 2 and withholding of a clear compliance response in 3; Don’s floor competition with Fah in 4). This indicates that authority, far from being a static notion or an attribute of certain people, is an interactional achievement that co-interactants negotiate with each other moment-by-moment in talk-in-interaction. It is through these moments where Fah claims authority and the citizens (eventually) accept it that their relatively asymmetric relationship in terms of the turn-taking system is therefore “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984: 237). More importantly, the recurrent pattern [‘You listen to me say’ + ‘(Regarding) this matter’] also exhibits Fah’s orientation to the accountability of his impeding action.

²⁹ By holding her outstretched arm during and after Fah’s ‘You listen to me say’, Hou resists fully yielding the floor and implies that once Fah finishes his intervening talk, she may resume her prior interrupted course of action (Schegloff, 1984a).

3.4.2 Facing resistance: an upgraded imperative ‘Listen to me say’

In the previous section, I showed how the lead official displays deontic authority in stopping the citizens’ ongoing complaints with the construction NTWS and how the citizens transform their implicit (Ex. 2), potential (Ex. 3) and actual (Ex. 4)³⁰ resistance into a (temporary) acceptance of that authority through their embodied and linguistic compliance. In this section, I show how the lead official, facing the citizens’ resistance, upgrades the directive with the imperative *Ø ting wo shuo* ‘Listen to me say’ to underscore his authority.

In Excerpt 5 below, Hua is the citizen whose petition is about a judgment she has received that is the opposite of other similar cases. She comes to the bureau asking Fah to reissue the judgment. During telling the details of her case, she reports that she suspects one of the officials who are responsible for her case has not treated her case fairly, as he has been involved in some corrupt practices. Right before the conversation below, Ben is talking to Fah and the working staff of the bureau about how the situations that similar cases receive different judgments become more complex due to the judicial procedure, which, as it can be seen at line 2, is immediately and completely rejected by Hua.

(5) CJDs2e4.#4_Procedure

- 01 Ben: 它是你赶上这个程序上的事儿了。=
 ta shi ni ganshang zhege chengxunshang de shir le.=
 3SG be 2SG run into this.CL procedure ASSC thing CRS
It’s that you run into this procedure thing.=
- 02 Hua: =不是你赶上程序了,
 =bu shi ni ganshang chengxu le,
 NEG be 2SG run into procedure CRS
=No it’s not that you run into this procedure.
- 03 Ben: 那是↑政策上的[事儿 hheh hehh]
 na shi ↑ZHENGCE shang de [shir hheh hehh]
 that be policy on ASSC thing
That is a ↑POLICY thing hheh hehh

³⁰ By ‘implicit’ I mean in Excerpt 2 Hou’s holding gesture keeps static throughout Fah’s talking implicating her possible resumption of the previous intervened talk as soon as Fah finishes his turns (see also Floyd et al., 2016; Sikveland & Ogden, 2012 that discuss ‘holds’ as indicating something unresolved). By ‘potential’ I mean in Excerpt 3 before Fah’s ‘You listen to me say’ is a sequence in which Hou has just rejected Ben to stop talking and given an account for her persistence, which means Hou could also reject Fah in the next turn and insist on occupying the floor; and yet she has not done so. By ‘actual’ resistance I refer to Don and Fah’s competition for the floor with their pointing at each other during Fah’s production of the directive turns.

- 04 Hua: [>(呃)<不 是, >↑那- ↑那-<]
 [>(uh)<bu shi, >↑na- ↑na-<]
 NEG be that that
 >(Uh)< no, >↑That- ↑That-<
- 05 ↑让 你 说: [那个- °那个- 那个-°]
 ↑rang ni shuo: [nage- °nage- nage-°]
 let 2SG say that.CL that.CL that.CL
If it is the case as you said, then that- °that- that-°
- 06 Ben: [(-----)]
- 07 Ben: [↑大姐 (你看 早先 都 说),
 [↑DA JIE (NI KAN ZAOXIAN DOU SHUO),
 big sister 2SG see the past all say
 [((Ben looks up to Hua; Hua is looking at Ben))
 ↑BIG SISTER. (YOU SEE, IT WAS SAID IN THE PAST THAT),
- 08 (0.2) / ((Ben looks down))



Figure 3.20 B's gaze and posture at *yu* in line *jihuashengyu* in l. 09; H looks to B; and F looks down

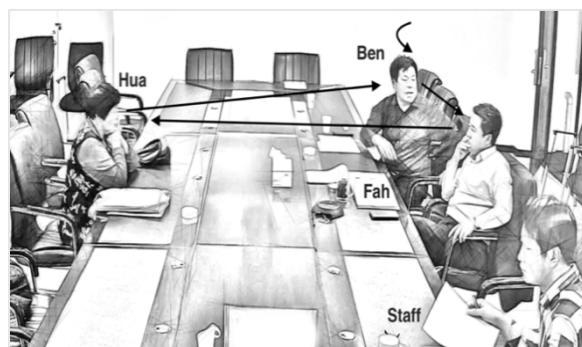


Figure 3.21 B's gaze and posture at the end of l. 09; F looks to H with his right hand covering his mouth; Staff is flipping papers

Hand_{Hua} | ~~~~~
 Gaze awayat Fah

09 Ben: 早先 都 包括 计划生育, (.) 都 不 让 生 二 胎,
 zaoxian dou baokuo jihuashengyu, (.) dou bu rang sheng er tai,
 past all include one.child.policy all NEG allow give birth 2nd child
Like the one child policy in the past, (.) (people) were not allowed to have a second child.

Gaze_{Staff}
 Gaze_{Ben} at Fah
 10 (0.2)



Figure 3.22 B’s gaze at the beginning of l. 12; Staff starts to pick up his glasses on the table

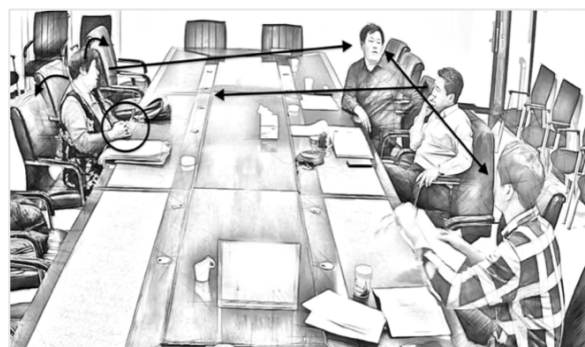


Figure 3.23 At *kaishi* in l. 12, H leans backward, dropping her hands on the table, tilting her head to her left and fixing her gaze at B; F still looks to the front; B and Staff look at each other; Staff picks up the glasses to wear

Hand ~~~-.....|
 11 Hua: .tch .↑HHh[hhh]
 Gaze_{Staff}at Ben
 Gazeat Staff
 12 Ben: [↑那 你 要] (---) 开始 生 二 胎 了,
 [↑na ni yao] (---) kaishi sheng er tai le,
 then 2SG if (---) start give birth second child PRT
 ↑So if you ... start to give birth to a second child,

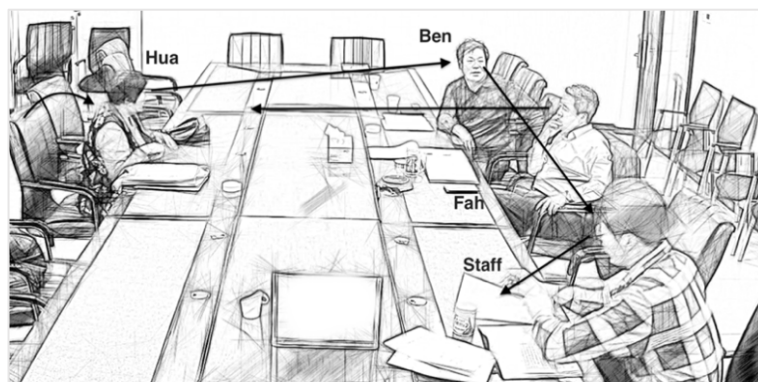


Figure 3.24 Participants’ eye gaze and H’s forward posture at the last syllable *shuo* in line 13

Gaze_{Staff}away
 Gaze at Staff
 13 |那 你 八 月 以 前 的 (按说)- =
 |na ni bayue yiqian de (anshuo)- =
 then 2SG August past ASSC normally
 |((Staff smiles while turning away from Ben))
Then before August you (normally)-

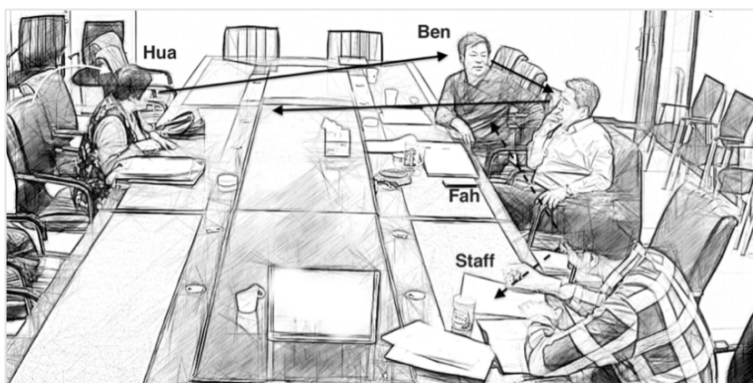


Figure 3.25 B looks at F while uttering his line 15; Staff possibly looks at the paper in front of him but he may also be able to look at Ben out of the corner of his eyes; F keeps looking to the front with his right hand covering his mouth

Gaze_{Ben} at Staffat Fah
 14 Hua: =>(↑不是)< 那 你 说 这 [不 对] 呗,
 =>(↑bu shi)< na ni shuo zhe [bu dui] bei,
 NEG be that 2SG say this NEG right PRT
No, what you said is incorrect.

15 Ben: [°(这- 这-)°]
 [°(zhe- zhe-)°]
 this this
 °(This- this-)°

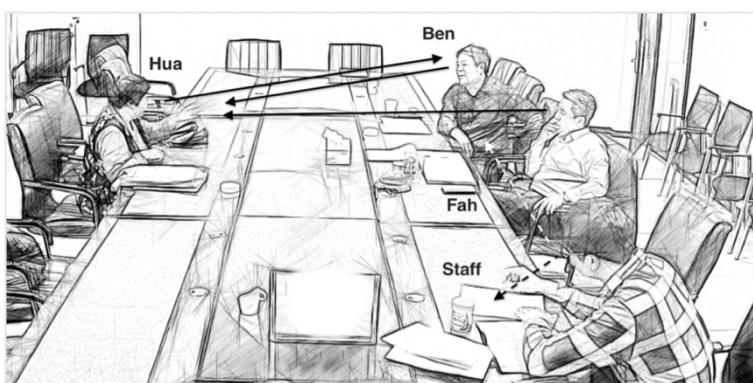


Figure 3.26 At *ni* in the beginning of line 16, B looks to H; and H starts fully launching into a dispute with B (see her palm up gesture); F’s hand gesture and eye gaze remain the same as before

Gaze_{Ben} at Hua
 Hand |~~~~~|
 16 Hua: 那 你- 那 你 说 你 这 个 法 律 程 [序 给 我 走 多 长 时 间,
 na ni- na ni shuo ni zhege falü cheng[xu gei wo zou duochang shijian,
 that 2SG that 2SG say 2SG this law procedure for 1SG go how long time
Then you- then you tell me how long this legal procedure has taken me,

17 Ben: [不,
 [bu,
 NEG
No,

Hand ~~~~~|
 18 Hua: >.hh< 我 从 两 千 零 五- 零 五 年 零 六 年 >开 始<,
 >.hh< wo cong liang qian ling wu- ling wu nian ling liu nian>kaishi<,

1SG since two thousand zero five zero five year zero six year >start<,
I had started (the appeal) since two thousand and five- five or six.

- Hand ~~~~~*****-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.|
- 19 .hh 你 给 我 整 到 两 千 零 九 年 去: ,
 .hh ni gei wo zheng dao liang qian ling jiu nian ↑qu: ,
 2SG for 1SG do till two thousand zero nine year go
(Then) you put it off till two thousand and nine for ↑me?!
- 20 这 法律 程序, 有 这么 走 的 吗, =让 [你 说 说.
 zhe falü chengxu, you zheme zou de ma, =rang [ni shuo shuo.
 this law procedure, have like. this go ASSC Q let 2SG say say
What a legal procedure could operate like this, =You tell me.

- Gaze at Hua..away
- 21 Ben: [°uh 不是°
 [°uh bu shi°
 NEG be
 °Uh no°

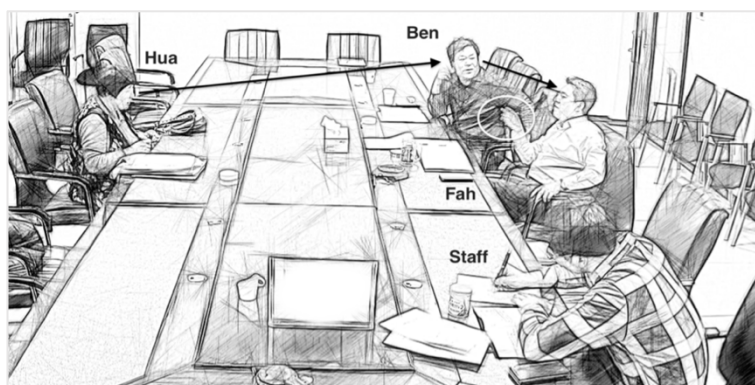


Figure 3.27 At B's second *na* in line 22 and H's first *ni* in line 23, B looks to F while F is extending his right hand with mouth open

- Hand_{Fah} |~**-.-.|
- Gaze awayat Fah
- 22 Ben: 那 你 是: (↑发 完 重审), [那- hehh heh [heh
 na ni shi: (↑FA wan chongshen), [na- hehh heh [heh
 that 2SG be send finish retrial that
**That's (because) your (case) is (↑REMAND for retrial), that- hehh heh
 heh**
- Hand |~~~~
- Gaze at Ben
- 23 Hua: [你- [你 不-
 [ni- [ni bu-
 2SG 2SG NEG
You- You not-



Figure 3.28 At F’s *wo* in line 24, H looks to F & F extends his RH

Gaze_{Ben} at Fah _____ at Hua _____
 Hand_{Hua} *****-.-.-.-.-|
 Gaze_{Hua} . . . at Fah _____
 Hand |~~~~*****-||~~~~*****
 Gaze at Hua _____ . . . away _____

24 Fah: 不, 你 听 我 说, 但是 [你 ()- ,
 bu, ni ting wo shuo, danshi [ni ()-
 NEG 2SG listen 1SG say but 2SG
No, you listen to me say, but [you ...

25 Hua: => [你(↑发 完 重↑审:) [[我 这 也]]不是:-
 [ni (↑FA WAN CHONG↑SHEN:) [[wo zhe ye]] bu shi:-
 2SG send finish retrieval 1SG this also NEG be
(Even if it’s) REMAND FOR RETRIAL, mine is not ...

Hand ~~~~~*****-.|
 Gaze at Hua _____ . .

26 Fah: [[听 我 说:.]]
 [[TING WO SHUO:.]]
 listen 1SG say
LISTEN TO ME SA:Y.

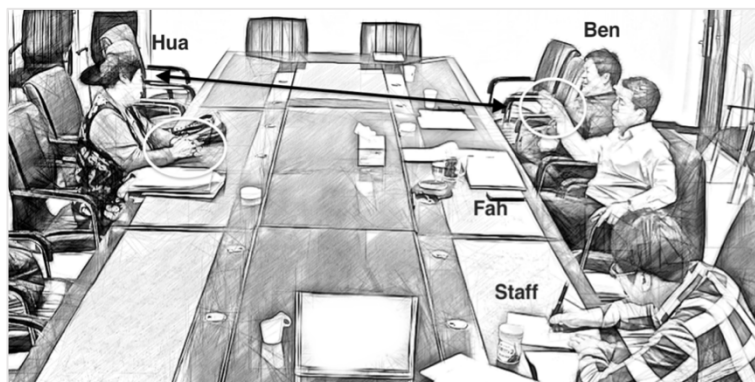


Figure 3.29 At F’s turn-ending *shuo* in l.26, H’s extended arm in Figure 3.28 is back to home position since line 24; F emphasizes the directive with a hand gesture

27 Ben: f°Xj.°f=
 f°dui.°f=
 right
 f°Yeah.°f=

Gaze away _____

- 28 Fah: =这个 [完::
=zhege[wan::
this.CL finish
=**This [later::**
- 29 Ben: [°(听 陶 [[院长 的 吧)°
[°(ting Tao [[yuanzhang de ba)°
listen NM president ASSC PRT
|((B raises chin towards Hua w/ LH outwardly pointing to F))
°(**Listen to the president Fah ba**)°
- Gaze away
- 30 Fah: [[听 我 说 啊, =这个[都江 给 我 打 电 话 了.
[[ting wo shuo a, =zhege[Du Jiang gei wo dadianhua le.
listen 1SG say PRT this.CL NM give 1SG call PFV
Listen to me say A, =Du Jiang called me.
- 31 Hua: → [嗯.
[en.
mm
Mm.
- 32 Hua: 嗯:.
en:.
mm
Mm hmm.
- 33 Fah: 这- 这个 事儿 说 你 包 什 么 的.
zhe- zhege shir shuo ni bao shenme de.
this.CL matter say 2SG undertake what NOM
Thi- This matter, (he) said that you undertake or something.
- 34 这个 事儿, 肯定 负责 我, 该 >协调 协调<.
zhege shir, kending fuze wo, gai >xietiao xietiao<.
this.CL matter surely responsible 1SG should coordinate coordinate
This matter, I surely will undertake. To coordinate it as I should.
- 35 但是 说 什 么 呢, (1.0) 你()那 属 于 他 个 人.
danshi shuo shenme ne, (1.0) ni()na shuiyu ta geren.
but say what TP 2SG that belong 3SG individual
But what (I'm) saying is, (1.0) The (matter) you just brought up involved another person.
- 36 Fah: ↑但是 现在 这个 事儿,
↑danshi xianzai zhege SHIr,
but now this.CL matter
↑**But now regarding this MAtter,**
- 37 (.)
- 38 Ben: °对.°
°dui.°
right
°Yes.°
- 39 Fah: 我 法 院 不 能 再 给 你 出- 出 东 西 了.
wo fayuan bu neng zai gei ni chu- chu dongxi le.
1SG court NEG can again for 2SG out out thing CRS
My court can't i- issue another judgment for you.

In lines 1-15, Hua is disputing with Ben about his diagnosis that her receiving a judgment that is the reverse of others is because she ‘run[s] into this procedure thing’ (line 1), ‘a ↑POLICY thing’ (line 3). In dealing with Hua’s absolute rejections in lines 2 and 4-5, Ben then takes ‘the one-child policy in the past’ (line 9) as an example to show that once policies are made on a certain date, some conduct becomes legitimate only after that date (‘People who are going to have a second child before August³¹ ...’ (line 12-13)). It is implied that as China adopts ‘statute law’ in the legal system (being discussed before this excerpt), which is written in the policy, similar cases receiving different judgments, such as Hua’s case, are inevitable. Such a claim, again, receives Hua’s rejection in line 14 (‘No, what you said is incorrect’). But rather than continuing to prove how Ben’s prior assertion is incorrect, Hua diverts to a complaint about the absurdly long period that this legal procedure has taken her (lines 16, 18-19) and calls Ben to account for ‘What a legal procedure could operate like this,=You tell me.’ (line 20).

Just as Ben is giving another diagnosis in his next turn (‘That’s because your case is ‘↑REMAND for retrial’, line 22), Fah extends his right hand to indicate incipient speakership (Fig. 3.27) (Luke & He, 2019; Mondada, 2007; Schegloff, 1984). This is indeed seen and registered by Ben through abandoning his incomplete turn and terminating it with several laugh particles in line 22. Fah then at line 24 starts up right after Ben and Hua’s cut-off and asserts his authority to speak at this moment with NTWS accompanied by another right-hand stroke that underscores the directive force (Fig. 3.28). Note that upon hearing this, Hua (temporarily) withholds her turn and starts to retract her outstretched right hand (Fig. 3.29).

But this excerpt is slightly different from the other three shown above, in that Fah’s line 24 also includes a turn-initial disagreement token ‘no’ and contrastive conjunction ‘but’.

³¹ In November 2013, China announced a relaxation on the one-child policy that permitted couples to have two children if one parent is an only child. What Ben left unsaid was people who are going to have a second child before August 2013 would be considered illegal because the policy was only relaxed in November.

This indicates that what Fah does here is not to provide a solution but to continue the current dispute with Hua. Having indeed heard this way, Hua preempts him and relaunches her argument with Ben ('Even if it's REMAND FOR RETRIAL ...', line 25), which sequentially deletes Fah's directive turn at line 24 (Schegloff, 1987: 110), thereby resisting his 'ticket' of joining in the dispute to oppose her (cf. Lerner, 1989).

Facing this resistance, Fah subsequently upgrades his claim to the floor from the declarative to an imperative TING WO SHUO: 'LISTEN TO ME SA:Y' (line 26) with greater volume and another right-hand stroke (Fig. 3.29). As a result, Hua cuts off her turn that she is supposedly entitled to complete in terms of the turn-taking system ('... mine is not', line 25) (Sacks et al., 1974). This embodies her incipient submission to Fah's authority at this particular moment. Then, in response to the series of directives – Ben's 'Listen to the president Fah' (line 29) and Fah's mitigated imperative with a mitigating particle *a* 'Listen to me say *a*' (line 30) (Y. Sun, 2013; Xu, 1998), Hua verbally produces a compliance token ('Mm', line 31) as well as a continuer ('Mm hmm', line 32) to Fah's pre-telling ('Du Jiang called me', line 30). This shows that at this precise moment she has fully surrendered to Fah's authority in suspending her ongoing activity.

After securing the floor at line 30, Fah proceeds, again, by deliberately placing the reference to Hua's overall matter – *zhege shir* 'this matter' (line 33), *zhege shir* 'This matter' (line 34), and *zhege SHIr* 'regarding this matter' (line 36) – at the beginning of each unit in his turns. By doing so, he displays to Hua that he impedes her ongoing complaint not to dispute with her but to respond to her petition, thereby further securing the floor. And note that his dispreferred response to Hua's local complaint about another official (line 35) is embedded in his commitment (line 34) and his response to Hua's ultimate request ('My court can't i- issue another judgment for you', line 39). It should also be noted that similar to Excerpt 4, the object 'This matter' in both lines 33 and 34 are also grammatically fronted.

Evidently, Fah's impeding action is successful. Therefore, this example attests that the practice ['You listen to me say'+'(Regarding) this matter] is an effective device for securing the floor.

Excerpt 6 shown below is sequentially different from the instances shown above, in that it is Fah who initiates a question-answer sequence. On hearing the citizen Yiqi potentially diverting the trajectory of the sequence to another direction, he commands the floor to maintain the initial agenda. But still Yiqi surrenders to Fah's authority in controlling the local interactional agenda.

The extract occurs two minutes after the encounter begins. This is not the first time that Yiqi has addressed his petition (i.e. reversing his daughter's verdict) to Ben and Fah. During the opening of the encounter, Ben has told Yiqi about a solution to his petition proposed by an intermediate court, but Yiqi has rejected it. Right before the exchange below, Fah has asked him what kind of 'help' that he expects him and Ben to provide *ni xianzai xuyao women-* (0.4) Ben (0.3) *xuyao wo* (.) *↑XIANZAI gan shenme*. 'Now what do you need us- (0.4) Ben (0.3) need me (.) to do NOW?' (not shown in the data). As Yiqi is a retired judge, Fah then launches another question at line 03, switching the exclusive first-person plural pronoun *women* 'we/us' to an inclusive first-person possessive pronoun *zan* 'our' ('What do (you) need our court to do.'). so as to obscure the default category of citizen-official between Yiqi and himself and establish a collective identity instead – judges.

(6) CJDs1e2.#10_Cut to the chase



Figure 3.30 Fah's palm-up gesture and gaze at the beginning of line 01

Gaze at Yiqi ...away.at Yiqi
 Hand |~~~~~*****~|
 01 Fah: 这个事儿呢, 你↑说- (1.0) 走程序 你都明白。
 zhe ge shir ne, ni ↑shuo- (1.0) zou chengxu ni dou mingbai.
 this CL matter TP 2SG say go procedure 2SG all understand
Regarding this matter, you see- (1.0) you know all the procedures.

02 Yiqi: 嗯。
 en.
 mm
Mm.

Gaze at Yiqi
 Hand ~~~~~*****~|
 03 Fah: <需要 咱 法院 ↑干 啥.>
 <xuyao zan fayuan ↑gan sha.>
 need 1PL court do what
<What do (you) need our court to ↑do.>

Gaze_{Fah} at Yiqi
 Hand_{Fah} *****
 04 **(0.4)**

Gaze at Yiqi
 Hand *****~|
 05 Fah: [对 吧; >(咱们 法院) <现在 <能: ↑干 啥.>
 [dui ba; >(zamen fayuan) < xianzai <neng: ↑GAN sha.>
 right PRT 1PL court now can do what
[Right; <What ca:n >(our court) < ↑DO now.>

06 (.)



Figure 3.31 Fah's closed-fist gesture at the end of line 07

Gaze at Yiqi
 Hand *****~|
 07 Fah: 咱 撈 干 的。
 zan lao gan de.
 1PL extract dry ASSC
We cut to the chase.

08 Yiqi: [啊, 行.]
 [a, xing.]
 PRT OK
Ah, okay.



Figure 3.32 Fah’s RH pointing to the entrance at *gen* in line 09



Figure 3.33 Yiqi’s hand gesture and Fah’s RH swaying ‘no’ at *dou* at the end of line 09

Hand_{Yiqi} |~~~~~*****
 Hand |~~~~~*****
 Gaze awayat Yiqi
 09 Fah: [也 就- 就-]跟 他们 我 都- (.)
 [ye jiu- jiu-]gen tamen wo dou- (.)
 also just just with 3PL 1SG all-
It’s just- just- to them I (don’t)- (.)

Hand_{Yiqi} ***
 Hand ***
 10 Fah: **诶,**
 EI,
 PRT
HEY,

Hand_{Yiqi} ***
 Hand_{Fah} ***
 11 (.)

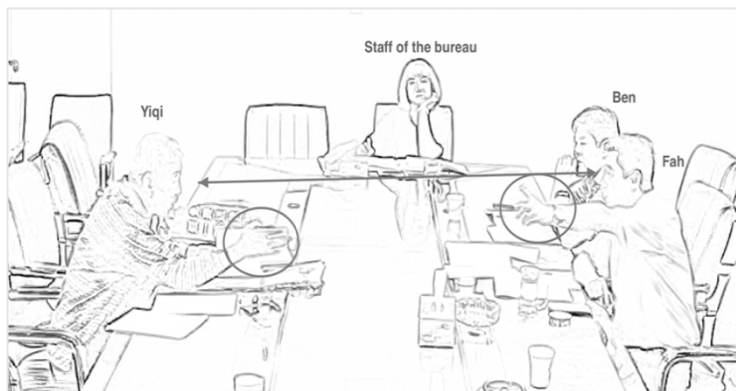


Figure 3.34 Yiqi’s hand gesture and Fah’s LH pointing to the entrance at *dou- dou:-* in line 12

Hand -.-. |~~~~~*****
 12 Fah: [跟 他们 我 都-] [都:-
 [gen tamen wo dou-] [dou:-
 with 3PL 1SG all all
To them I (don’t)-

Hand ~~~~~*****
 Torso H.F-----
 13 Yiqi: [领导 ↓啊:,] [领导.
 [lingdao ↓a:,] [lingdao.
 leader PRT leader
Leader ↓A:, Leader.

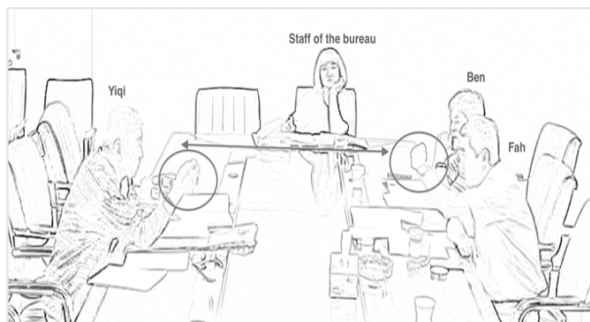


Figure 3.35 F's and Y's fingers back to home position form a closed-fist gesture at the end of first TCU in line 14

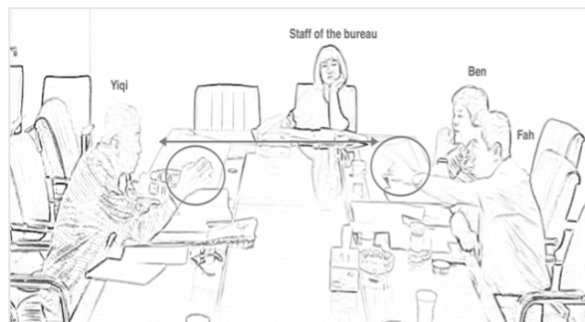


Figure 3.36 Y's and F's hand gestures at Y's *xin* in line 15

Hand_{Yiqi} *****~-.-.|. | ~*****
 Torso_{Yiqi} -----
 Hand ~~~~~*****~-.-.|. | ~~~~~
 14 Fah: 但跟: 你咱就捞干的。 >因 [为 你是 法院 人.<
 dan gen: ni zan jiu lao gan de. >yin[wei ni shi fayuan ren.<
 but with 2SG 2PL just extract dry ASSC because 2SG be court people
But with you we just cut to the chase because you used to work at a court.

15 Yiqi: [新:-
 [xin:-
 new
Ne:w-



Figure 3.37 Y puts down the RH at *dei* in line 16



Figure 3.38 Y retracts the RH at the end of line 16

Hand *****~-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.|. |
 Torso -----
 16 Yiqi: <新 [: 领导 得 捋 ↑旧 事儿.>
 <xin[:lingdao dei lü ↑jiu shir.>
 new (lead)er must attend to old thing
<Ne:[w leaders must attend to ↑old matters.>

Hand -.-.-. |
 17 Fah: [啊,
 [a,
 PRT
Alright,

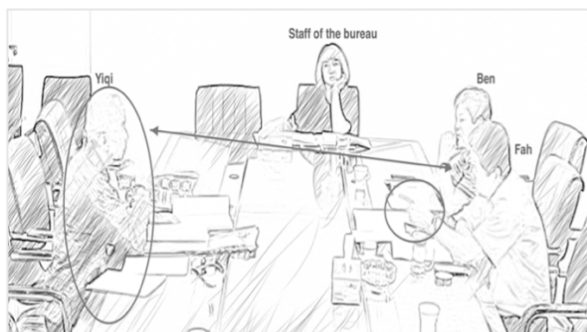


Figure 3.39 F's pointing gesture at *shir* in line 18 **Figure 3.40** F's closed-fist gesture at the end of line 19; Y's hand and torso are at home position

Hand |~~~~~*****-----|.---|. |

18 Fah: (捋 [旧 事儿,
(lü [jiu SHIR,
attend to old matter
(I) attend to [OLD MATTERS,

TorsoH

19 Yiqi: [你>↑旧 事儿 就得< 捋 呀:¿
[ni>↑JIU SHIR jiu dei< lü ya:¿
2SG old matter just must attend to PRT
You must attend to ↑OLD MATTERS ya:¿



Figure 3.41 Yiqi's gaze at Ben and palm-up gesture at *quanli* in line 21

Hand |~*****~|. |

20 Fah: (--该 [怎么 捋]-
(--gai[zenme lü]-
should how deal with
...how to attend to-

Gaze at Fah...at Ben

Hand |~~~~~*****-----|.---|. |

21 Yiqi: [应该- (.)] 权力 就得 义:务 啊,
[YINGGAI-(.)]QUANLI JIU DEI YI:WU A,
should power just must obligation PRT
(IT) SHOULD (BE)- (.) THERE IS A POWER THERE IS AN OBLIGA:TION,

Head_{Ben} |nodding |

Hand |~~~~~*****

22 Fah: 听 我 说:=
TING WO SHUO:=
listen 1SG say
LISTEN TO ME SA:Y=

2SG look look
You see if it's okay.

- 29 Fah: 啊.
 a.
 PRT
Mm.
- 30 Yiqi: 咱 就- 咱 捞 干 的.
 zan jiu- zan lao gan de.
 1PL just 1PL extract dry ASSC
We just- we cut to the chase.
- 31 Fah: 嗯.
 en.
 mm
Mm.

Here, in lines 01-07, Fah initiates a question-answer sequence – asking Yiqi to answer ‘<What do (you) need our court to ↑do.>’ and ‘<What ca:n >(our court)< ↑DO now.>’ (line 05) and puts a constraint on the length of Yiqi’s answer in a format of proposal (‘we cut to the chase’). So at line 08, Yiqi acknowledges the questions and accepts the proposal (‘ah, okay’); and yet, he does not get the chance to proceed with his response, as this turn gets overlapped by Fah’s turned-out-to-be-unfinished account for why he is making such a proposal to Yiqi specifically (‘It’s just- just- to them I (don’t)-’, line 9). This contingency then prompts a competition for the floor between the two in lines 10-14 with Fah’s success as a result (‘But with you ...’, line 14) (see Yiqi’s temporary retraction of his hand gestures in Figs. 3.33-3.35).

Upon Fah’s completion of his turn, Yiqi takes the floor. Perhaps orienting to Fah’s previous competition for the floor as indicative of unwillingness to attend to his matter, rather than answering Fah’s prior questions, Yiqi states a series of complaint-implicative assertions in lines 16, 19, and 21. Although Fah emphatically clarifies his position in the next turn (‘I attend to OLD MATTERS’, line 18; Fig 3.39) and attempts to refix Yiqi’s attention on answering the questions (‘... how to attend to-’, line 20), these two turns get overlapped and ignored by Yiqi. At this point, it is evident that Yiqi does not align with the agenda that Fah

sets for him and is potentially diverting the current question-answer sequence to a possible complaint sequence.

This complaint sequence becomes tangible when in line 21, Yiqi shifts his gaze from Fah to Ben (Fig 3.41) and receives Ben's affirmation (i.e. a nod, line 22) to his argument constructed in an idiom ('There is a power, there is an obligation'). It is by seeing this possibility that Fah issues the imperative *TING WO SHUO*: 'LISTEN TO ME SA:Y' (line 22) to impede this emergent sequence and vigorously stop Yiqi from straying further from the original agenda. By deploying this bald imperative with a remarkably high volume and stress on the word *shuo* 'say', Fah makes immediate compliance relevant next from Yiqi (Auer, 2017) and exerts high deontic authority on him to give up pursuing his agenda (i.e., complaining) at this particular moment. So, though this gets verbally resisted by Yiqi with another remark "It is what it is" (line 23), it is delivered in a soft tone, and his eye gaze is correspondingly redirected to Fah (Fig. 3.42), which projects incipient compliance (Kent, 2012).

Such a projectably low contingency of getting the floor (cf. Curl & Drew, 2008) is indeed registered by Fah through deploying a downgraded version of the directive – a declarative *ni ting wo shuo* 'You listen to me say' at line 24 – and directly continuing his talk that aims to resume the question-answer sequence ('↑but this matter ...'). Note that in response to the directive, Yiqi publicly displays concentrated attention on Fah's ensuing talk by leaning his head and torso forward (Figs. 3.43 & 3.44), which embodies his full compliance. In the following lines 26, 28, and 30, Yiqi starts to state the solicited 'answers', which demonstrates his return to the agenda set by Fah.

In sum, in dealing with the citizens' resistance either to comply with the initial declarative directive (Ex. 5) or to stick with the question-answer agenda (Ex. 6), the lead official can mobilize the bald imperative *ting wo shuo* 'Listen to me say' to assert his

authority over the floor. And through the citizens complying with the directive, the official's authority is then interactionally achieved and established and thus becomes consequential for his success in getting the floor.

3.5 Concluding discussion

This chapter has investigated the declarative NTWS and the imperative *ting wo shuo* 'Listen to me say' used by the lead official to call a halt to the citizens' (projectably) ongoing course of action. Such an impeding action is implemented when the citizens are doing an extended complaint (Ex. 2 and 3), a prolonged telling (Ex. 4), a dispute with another official (Ex. 5), or redirecting the local trajectory of the talk through protesting against the lead official (Ex. 6). It is evident that whether with the second-person declarative or the upgraded imperative directives, the official displays deontic authority in calling a halt to the citizens' rightfully ongoing activities and controlling the interactional agenda at a particular moment in interaction. The citizens' verbal and/or embodied compliance with the directive demonstrate that while initially resisting the official's claimed authority, they accept it eventually (though perhaps temporarily). And note that the citizens can arguably complain about being called a halt to their rightfully ongoing complaint activity, thereby challenging the authority, but they do not, which means that they tacitly accept that authority in determining their here-and-now actions. Therefore, this chapter argues that the participants' relative asymmetric identities in terms of the turn-taking system are locally managed and thus "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984: 237) through the official claiming authority and the citizens accepting it (Stevanovic, 2013: 20). Such an alignment between the official's claimed high deontic stance and the citizens' deontically congruent treatment of that claim by complying is called "deontic congruence" by Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012: 302).

More importantly, this chapter has also explored the lead official's return reference to the citizens' overall petition [*zhe(ge) shir* '(Regarding) this matter'] placed right after the directive and at the very beginning of their ensuing turn(s). It is argued that this type of preface is used to flag the imminent talk as doing an institutionally entitled activity – providing citizens a solution – and indicate that though the citizens' initiated sequence is being shifted, the ensuing talk is still citizen-attentive (Jefferson, 1984b). Such a practice, therefore, enables the official to tacitly legitimize their impeding action *in situ* and further secure the floor. As evidenced in Excerpt 5, failing to do so may result in a failure of the impeding action. In this sense, the officials orient to the accountability of their preempting citizens' projected ongoing complaint or obstructing an actual one and do not claim absolute authority over the citizens' independent territory. This corresponds with the distinction drawn by Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012) between 'power' and 'authority'. It is claimed that 'power' is someone's overall ability to bring about consequences regardless of the private judgments of its subjects, while 'authority' involves "the exercise of power that the subject of authority understands as *legitimate*", which outcome is contingent on "the subjects' free will to obey" (2012: 297; Orig. emphasis).

Through analyzing Excerpts 2-4, it can be found that the situation in which the lead official uses the directive NTWS is when the citizens' problem presentation (or complaint) is oriented to as either prolonged (Ben and Fah's withholding of alignments in Ex. 2; Fah's '...>(after all of)< what you've said here a half-day today...', line 14 in Ex. 3) or unnecessary ('To still say ↑what', line 16 in Ex. 4). As discussed in section 1.4.2 in Chapter 1, this petition-receiving encounter operates on a single adjacency pair – citizens present their problems and officials provide solutions. This means that once a proposed solution is accepted by the citizen(s), the encounter can readily be brought to a close. Thus, this study proposes that the recurrent practice [*ni ting wo shuo* 'You listen to me say' + *zhe (ge) shir*

‘(Regarding) this matter’ + solution] is deployed by the official as a device to sequentially implicate a termination of the citizens’ (projectably) unfinished talk and, through providing a solution, advance the closing of the encounter (see Figure 3.45 below).

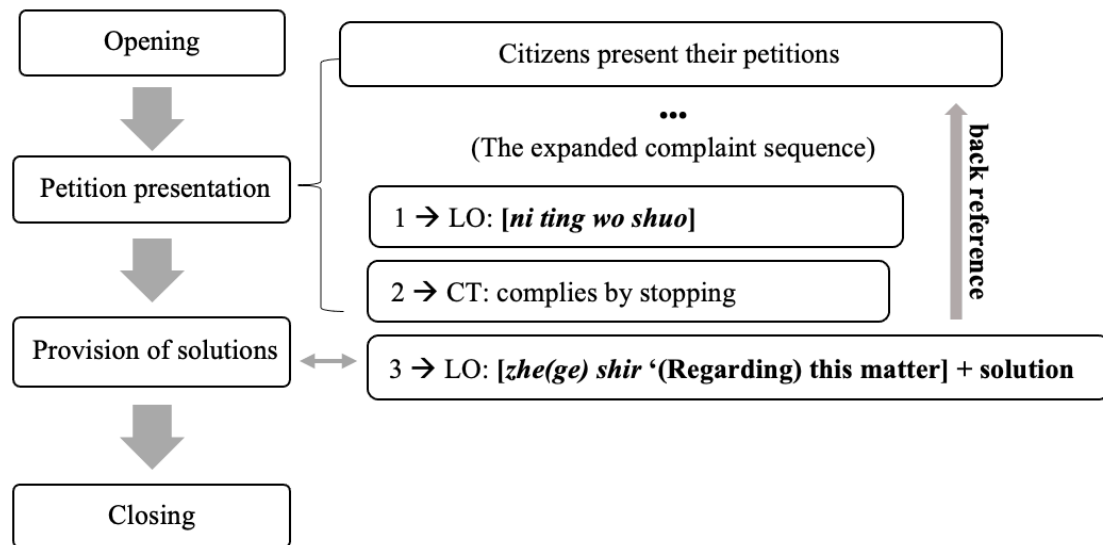


Figure 3.45 Schematic of the practice in the overall structure

However, this does not mean that this device is always effective in closing the sequence/encounter. This can be observed in Excerpts 2 and 3, where Hou resumes her previously interrupted talk after being given a solution by Fah in 2, and then after two minutes of Hou’s continued complaint, Fah obstructs her continuation again and reiterates the solution in 3; and yet, the encounter is ended in 7 minutes later. That is to say, this type of encounter may proceed with several sequences of citizens presenting problems and officials proposing solutions until a negotiated solution is accepted by the citizen(s). Of course, how they progress toward an accepted solution from one sequence to the next is beyond the scope of this thesis and could be a direction for future research.

This study also has implications for Chinese grammar. As acknowledged at the beginning of this chapter, most grammarians identify the construction *ni ting wo shuo* as an imperative form and take the second-person pronoun *ni* to be an optional item (Chao, 1968; Charles Li & Thompson, 1981; Zhu, 1982). The analysis of this construction used in actual interaction in this chapter has shown that *ting wo shuo* with and without *ni* are oriented to by

the participants as two distinct practices that index different deontic stance and deal with different interactional contingencies. So, indiscriminately labeling them as imperatives undoubtedly and inevitably obscures their actual use in naturally occurring interactions. In other words, the label ‘imperatives’ does not tell us much about how people *do* with them in real interactions. Just as Li and Thompson (1981: 451) admit:

The grammatical term *imperative* generally refers to the form of a sentence expressing a command. The dividing line between commands and noncommands, however, is not a clear one.

This is perhaps attributable to the fact that imperatives can be deployed to do a variety of actions, such as requesting, warning, complaining, and offering and so on (cf. Sorjonen et al., 2017; see also Kent & Kendrick, 2016). For example, consider the following excerpt:

(6) GRPs1e3_#36

(Gan=Deputy District Head; Hei & Lan=Citizen)

- 01 Gan:→1 因为- 在 市: 房产局 这 块儿 呢, .hh 正好 呢 也是-
yinwei- zai shi: fangchanju zhe kuair ne, .hh zhenghao ne ye shi-
because at city real estate council this area PRT by chance also be
Because- regarding the municipal Real Estate Council, .hh (I) also happen to be-
- 02 →1 >这< 我 也 是 房产局 副 局长.
>zhe< wo ye shi fangchanju fu juzhang
this 1SG also be real estate council deputy director
I'm also the deputy director of the Real Estate Council.
- 03 Hei: 嗯. ((nodding))
en.
Mm. ((nodding))
- 04 Gan:→1 区 里 这 块儿 呢 我 也 这个 分管 这 块儿.
qu li zhe kuair ne wo ye zhege fenguan zhe kuair.
district inside this area PRT 1SG also this.CL in charge of this area
Regarding the regional (affairs), I'm also in charge of it.
- 05 →1 .hhh 这样 呢, 然后 我 [就 推动 这个 °>事情<°=
.hhh zheyang ne, ranhou wo [jiu tuidong zhege °>shiqing<°=
such PRT then 1SG just push this matter
.hhh So then I just facilitate this °>matter<°=
- 06 Lan:→2 [(找你更好:)
[(zhao ni geng hao:)
find 2SG even good
[(Talking to you is even better)
- 07 Lan:→2 =两 边 都 找 了. 房产局 也 找 了, 这 也 找 了.
=liang bian dou zhao le. fangchanju ye zhao le, zhe ye zhao le.

two side all find CRS real estate council also find here also find
 =(as) we're talking to two authorities at the same time. The Real
 Estate Council and here (the regional government).

08 (.)

09 Gan:→3 你就- 你听我说啊。
 ni jiu- ni ting wo shuo a.
 2SG just 2SG listen 1SG say PRT
You just- You listen to me say a.

10 (0.2)

11 Lan: ((*Clearing throat*))

12 Gan: 然后呢, ...
 ranhou ne,
 then TP
And then, ...

Here, Gan is telling the citizens that he is not only a deputy district head but also a deputy director of the municipal Real Estate Council so as to reassure them that their matters about the housing dispute will be handled efficiently. However, Lan's interjecting remarks in lines 06 and 07 are treated by Gan as an interruption by his complaining about it at line 09 with *ni ting wo shuo a* 'You listen to me say a'. Note that the suffixed particle *a* implies a negative stance towards Lan's prior conduct (R. Wu, 2004). It is only after a short silence (line 10) that indicates Lan's yielding the floor that Gan continues his previously suspended talk. Lan's clearing throat is perhaps a form of implicit acknowledgment of his prior misconduct but also a possible resistance to yielding the floor.

The point here is that the construction NTWS is produced in third position in the sequence that is deployed by the participant to not only assert asymmetrical rights to speak but also complain about being interrupted. Just as Schegloff states, "an utterance's function or action is not inherent in the form of the utterance alone, but is shaped by its sequential context as well" (Schegloff, 1997: 538); or as Clift et al. appeal, "Don't leave out the position in composition" (2013: 211). Hence, this study has aimed to show that CA as a methodology that empirically investigates grammar-*in*-interaction will undoubtedly provide new insights to Mandarin Chinese grammar.

Last but not least, the analysis of the interactional and sequential features of the construction NTWS shows that NTWS appears to be more similar to ‘look’ in English than ‘listen’. As Sidnell observes, compared to the turns prefaced by ‘listen’, which is also used to launch a course of action, ‘look’-prefaced turns having an “interceding” character “results in an attempt at redirection” of the talk (2007: 405). He argues that “look-prefaced responses to questions typically involve a certain amount of redirection, [whereas] those prefaced by ‘listen’ seem specifically designed to definitely answer the question” (2007: 404). Such an “interceding” character is also found in ‘You listen to me say’. This is why this thesis inclines to translate *ni ting wo shuo* as such instead of ‘You listen to me’ or ‘You listen up’. However, how exactly they are similar to and distinct from one another deserves further empirical research.

4 *Nin ting wo shuo* ‘You_{HON} listen to me say’: citizens’ linguistic-bodily mismatch in displaying deference to officials

“By deference I shall refer to that component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient of this recipient, or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent. These marks of devotion represent ways in which an actor celebrates and confirms his relation to a recipient”

(Goffman, 1956: 47)

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated how the lead officials mobilize the declarative and imperative directives (*ni ting wo shuo* ‘You listen to me say’; *ting wo shuo* ‘Listen to me say’) to call a halt to the citizens’ (projectably) ongoing talk and claim the deontic authority to prioritize their own agenda over the citizens’ at a particular moment in interaction. I also investigated how the citizens who are subject to the interventions accept that authority by complying with it through their verbal acknowledgements and/or withdrawal of their body-in-progress. Then, I argued that the lead official’s authority in directing the trajectory of the talk is interactionally negotiated and co-constructed by the two parties on a turn-by-turn basis.

However, as noted previously, Chapter 3 only examined how the lead officials call a halt to the citizen’s ongoing talk and how the citizens respond to it. Hence, this chapter intends to continue exploring the action of calling a halt to other party’s ongoing talk and thus claiming the floor by this time addressing the following questions:

1. How do the citizens call a halt to the lead officials’ (projectably) ongoing talk?
2. What kind of linguistic and bodily resources do they mobilize to achieve it?
3. Do they still display some orientation to the lead officials as the authority when intervening in their talk and claiming the floor?

4. How is the relevance of their respective identities (i.e. citizens – lead official) demonstrably “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984) through their design of actions and turns in real time?

With these questions in mind, this chapter examines one particular practice that the citizens deploy to call a halt to the lead officials’ ongoing talk and claim the floor at a particular moment in interaction, that is, displaying deference to them with some linguistic and/or bodily resources while simultaneously claiming high agency in taking the floor with some other(s). Specifically, I call the situations – in which during stopping the lead officials’ ongoing talk and claiming the floor, at a place where the citizens’ embodiments can arguably align with their linguistic display of deference to the lead officials, they otherwise bodily accentuate their own agency with pointing-and-waving their index-finger (P&W) at them – as linguistic-bodily mismatch in displaying deference.

To illustrate, first consider the following Extract 1 (which was discussed as Excerpt 4 in Chapter 3) where the lead official Fah’s linguistic formulation is matched with his hand gestures (P&W) in commanding Don to yield the floor.

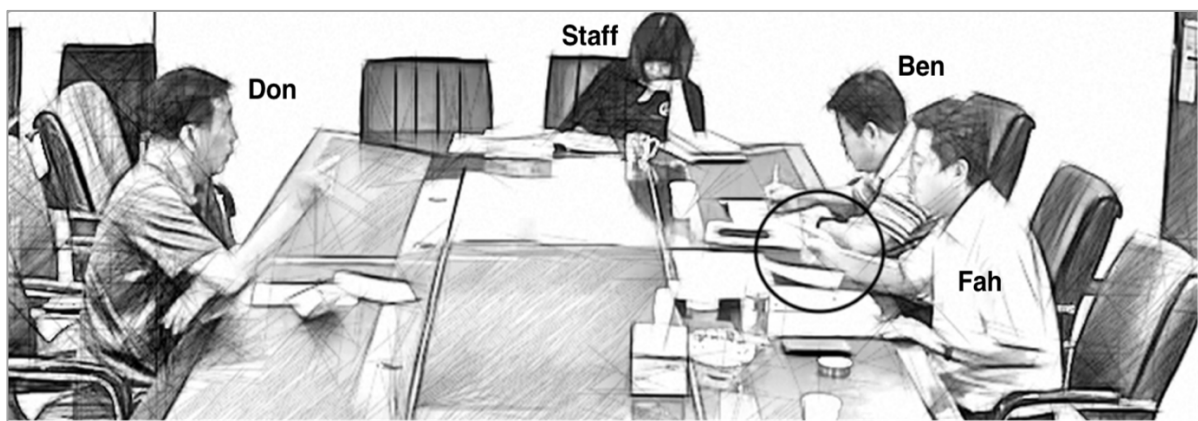


Figure 4.1 At 1.02, Fah points his index finger at Don & waves vertically across lines 03-06

(1) CJDs1e3_#9

(Don=citizen; Fah=President of a regional court)

Hand_{Fah} ~~
 40 Don: 他-
 ta-
 3SG
 He-

Hand ~~~~~~*****
 41 Fah:→ 你 听 [我 说.]
 ni ting [wo shuo.]
 2SG listen 1SG say
 You listen to me say.

Hand_{Fah} *****
 42 Don: [因为 我] 上 次 我 跟 你 说 那个:: [振云-]
 [yinwei wo]shang ci wo gen ni shuo nage::[Zhen Yun-]
 because 1SG last time 1SG with 2SG say that.CLF NM
 |((Points & waves his right index finger at Fah))
 Because last time I told you about that::[Zhen Yun-]

Hand *****
 43 Fah:→ [你 听 我]说:=
 [ni ting wo]SHUO:=
 2SG listen 1SG say
 [You listen to me]SAY:.

Hand *****
 44 Fah:→ =你 听 我 说.=
 =ni ting wo shuo.=
 2SG listen 1SG say
 =You listen to me say.=

Hand_{Fah} *****
 45 Don: =嗯 嗯 嗯.
 =en en en.
 mm mm mm
 =Mm mm mm.

In this evident floor competition sequence, Fah exerts his deontic authority over Don by not only deploying the unmitigated form of directive *ni ting wo shuo* ‘You listen to me say’ to call a halt to Don’s ongoing talk in lines 01 and 03, but also simultaneously extending his right index-finger to point and vertically wave at him along with his production of the prosodically escalated directives from lines 02 to 04 & 05. Thus, I argue that in this case, in claiming the floor, Fah’s embodiment (P&W) underscores his verbal enactment.

However, beginning to speak at other than a TRP, as discussed in section 1.3.2 that this may be treated by participants as an interruption, can be arguably a complainable, morally loaded action. It violates the norm of turn-taking procedures that once a speaker has begun an utterance, s/he has special rights to bring it to a point of possible completion (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). So in talk-in-interaction, participants can orient to themselves

being interrupted by complaining ('I haven't finished', Hutchby, 2008; see also Schegloff, 2002), while on some occasions, they may orient to their own talk as interruptive by apologizing ('Sorry to interrupt', Schegloff, 2005), explicitly formulating their upcoming talk as interruptive ('I want to interrupt', Weatherall & Edmonds, 2018) or, as this chapter will show, mitigating the interruption by showing deference to the recipient with a range of linguistic and bodily resources, as shown in Table 4.1.

	<i>Displaying deference</i>	<i>Claiming high agency</i>
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smiling/Grinning Head-bowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Index-finger points and wave (P&W)² (e.g. Ch 3, Ex. 4, L.32-35; Ch 4, Ex. 4, L.13; Ex 5, L.8-9; Ex 7, L.8) Hand stroke (palm down) (e.g. Ch 3, L. 24&26; Ch 4, Ex. 7, L.23-25)
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address form shifts from informal <i>ni</i> 'you' to honorific <i>nin</i> 'you_{HON}'¹ (e.g. Ch 4, Ex. 3(a), L.51 → 3(b), L.357; Ex. 4, L.13; Ex. 5, L.8-9 ← fn 19, L.10) Institutional address term (e.g. 'Secretary') Explicit formulations of doing interruption (e.g. 'I'm interjecting here') Temporal/numeric minimizers (e.g. 'for a second/moment', verb duplication) Smile voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal <i>ni</i> 'you' Declaratives (e.g. 'You_{HON} listen to me say') vs. interrogatives (e.g. 'Can I stop you for a second?')

¹Note that deference is not simply indexed by the use of an honorific reference form but is interactionally achieved by participants showing an orientation to it in talk-in-interaction (see Section 4.3).

²The highlights are the two types of resources that this chapter mainly focuses on. Other resources on the list are selectively used by the participants and will be analyzed case by case in Section 4.4.

Table 4.1 Resources for displaying deference to the recipient and claiming high agency over the floor

In Extract 1, we can see that Fah's unmitigated directive accompanied by the authoritative hand gestures P&W demonstrates that on both linguistic and bodily levels, he does not orient to his interruption at line 43 as morally inapposite but rather as an action that he is highly entitled to do, and that Don's compliance (line 06) with the directives also reflects his acceptance of Fah's claimed authority. By contrast, this chapter will demonstrate

that during formulating their floor-claiming actions, the citizens do orient to their ‘interrupting’ action as morally inappropriate with reference to their relatively lower deontic status vis-à-vis the lead officials by (including but not limited to) deliberately deploying the honorific 2nd-person singular reference *nin* to address the lead official. But at the same time, to underscore their bid for speakership, they also mobilize the index-finger P&W gestures to display or underscore some level of agency in taking the floor and directing the forward trajectory of the talk at a particular moment in interaction. Hence, this chapter aims to explore: how do they strategically mobilize and finely coordinate these linguistic and bodily resources (shown in Table 4.1) to achieve the goal of obtaining the floor while attending to the moral dimension of the interrupting action?

Therefore, in what follows, I first provide some linguistic background on Chinese informal and formal/honorific forms of second-person singular reference (*ni* ‘you’ and *nin* ‘you_{HON}’). Next I briefly review some literature on relationships between language and the body in displaying stance (section 4.2.2). The analysis in this chapter consists of two sections. Section 4.3 explores in doing what kind of actions the citizens switch the address forms from informal *ni* to honorific *nin* in addressing the lead official, and how their relatively asymmetric relationship is relevantly provoked by that *ni/nin* shift and procedurally consequential for the accomplishment of certain course of actions. Section 4.4 is dedicated to the detailed examination of various sequential environments where the citizens choose to either display deference verbally and/or bodily with and without underscoring their claimed agency through the P&W hand gesture or display no deference whatsoever. I conclude the chapter by discussing the implications that this study has for our understanding of the relative distribution of gesture and talk in relation to the interactive contexts.

4.2 Background

4.2.1 Linguistic studies on Chinese *ni* ‘you’ and *nin* ‘you_{HON}’

Studies in linguistic anthropology suggest that the use of *ni* and *nin* in Chinese has changed over the years. According to Fang and Heng’s (1983: 502-3) study, before the Chinese Revolution (also known as Chinese Civil War, 1927-1949) the rules of *ni* and *nin* are roughly summarized as follows:

<i>Nǐ</i> (‘you’, informal)	<i>Nín</i> (‘you _{HON} ’, formal)
1. <i>Familiarity</i> : e.g. classmates, fellow students, fellow workers, colleagues, intimate friends, etc.	1. <i>Special status</i> : e.g. chief of state
2. <i>Lower rank</i> : e.g. clerks, servants, workmen, peasants, soldiers, etc.	2. <i>Higher rank</i> : e.g. officials, judges, gentry, landlords, rich businessmen, etc.
3. <i>Equals of the family and kin</i> : e.g. husband and wife, brothers and sisters, cousin, etc.	3. <i>Celebrities</i> : e.g. famous scholars, professors, famous writers, etc.
	4. <i>Ascending generation</i> : e.g. grandparents, parents, parents-in-law, uncles and aunts, elders in the community, etc.
	5. <i>Strangers</i>

However, after 1949 when the People’s Republic of China was established, they observed that

nin has been replaced almost entirely by *ni* despite the fact that some text-books urge the use of the polite form, *nin*. In terms of the current trends, *nin* almost has gone out of use in daily greetings. A subordinate would say *Ni hao* ‘How are you’ or ‘Hi’ rather than *Nin hao* when he/she greeted his/her superior. A high-ranking official, even the premier of the State Council, would not expect anybody to address him/her as *nin* in a face-to-face conversation despite the fact that the dyad might deploy the title in order to avoid using the straightforward *ni*. (1983: 503)

Despite the fact that this ethnographic study is slightly outdated, and it is not known how much their observations capture the actual use of *ni* and *nin* by Chinese people in their daily lives, it is still valuable in a sense that at least it shows that the infrequent use of honorific *nin* by Chinese people after 1949 makes the situations in which Chinese speakers use honorific *nin* to refer to their recipient somewhat marked. That is to say, when a Chinese speaker deploys honorific *nin* in social interaction, its deferential semantics are in play.

Other linguistic studies on Chinese use of the second-person pronouns in different types of discourse including Song (2009) and Tang et al. (2015), who, through questionnaires

and interviews, sociolinguistically investigate the frequency of Beijingers³² using *nin* and *ni* in spoken Chinese based on their age, gender, social status, and regions. Chen (1986) explores the use of *ni* and *nin* in Beijing vernacular dialogues written in Chinese literature in terms of social constraints of power and solidarity. Guo (2008) studies the discourse functions of the second person pronouns by looking at naturalistic conversations among Beijingers from a discourse database created by Beijing Language and Culture University in 1980s and suggests that the function of demarcating the social distance by the use of *ni* and *nin* becomes less salient and thus they are usually used interchangeably by conversationalists. However, whether the data is written discourse or naturalistic discourse, none of this research examines the sequential contexts in which participants may choose one form over the other and so gives their arguments lack of empirical “bite” (Evans & Levinson, 2009: 475; cited in Clift, 2016). Hence, this chapter intends to address this gap in the research.

4.2.2 Relationships between language and the body in displaying stance

The initial observation of a linguistic-bodily mismatch in displaying a consistent stance in this chapter is inspired by Deppermann and Gubina’s (2021) recent study on the temporal relationships between language and body in request initiations. They observe that during the production of the German *darf/kann ich?*-TCU (‘May/Can I?’) in initiating requests, speakers are found to have initiated or even completed the requested embodied actions. What is at odds with the low deontic stance indexed in the interrogatives that appear to ask for the request recipient’s permission to carry out the requested bodily actions, as they claim, is the speaker has not waited until that permission is granted and yet bodily enacted high agency over the future course of action. In such situations they observe that “the body

³² Compared to the Chinese speakers in other areas in China, Beijingers are considered as the most frequent users of *nin*. This is why the studies of the use of second-person pronouns tend to select Beijingers as the target. The data collected in this thesis is from Hebei province that is near Beijing, where people are all considered as Mandarin speakers.

believes the words” (2021: 1). They argue that this standardly occurs when the speakers orient to and anticipate the high probability of their requested embodied conduct being permitted or granted by the recipients. So, one analytic import of this study is that it demonstrates the equivocality of the degree of agency and the deontic stance displayed in a participant’s linguistic and bodily actions in real time.

Similarly, Zinken (2015) examines a particular format for requesting a “shared good” *Can I have x* (the pepper grinder, the saltshaker, etc.) in British English everyday interaction among family and friends. He points out that the format *can I have x* is standardly used, not to request for permission to use an object but, to request to be given an object, and thus it appears to be endowed with an imperative stance that conveys the requesters’ high anticipation of their requests being bodily carried out (e.g. passing the saltshaker) by the request recipients (cf. Curl & Drew, 2008). Among the findings about the close connections between the selection of the request format and whether the request recipient has a (contingent) control over the relevant object, he emphasizes that that high expectation displayed in the language can be reinforced by the requester stretching her arm towards the object. This study highlights that some degree of deontic stance displayed in linguistic structures can be adjusted or underlined by the accompanying body movements.

Moreover, besides deontic stance, linguistic and bodily resources can also be exploited in displaying and adjusting epistemic stance, so as to satisfy some pragmatic purposes. For example, Enfield et al. (2007) investigate two types of pointing gestures along with speech that Lao speakers mobilize in describing locations (e.g. ‘The school is in the direction of the betel garden this way right here’). One type is B-points, which refers to a “large” movement of pointing that involves a full arm stretching, usually accompanied by eye gaze, while S-points refers to a “small” movement that only involves hands. They claim that speakers use B-points, when the point “carries primary, informationally foregrounded

information (for saying “where” or “which one”)) (2007: 1722), and use S-points, when linguistic references are believed to carry sufficient information for recipients to recognize the referents but the speakers are not completely confident that they will recognize them by the linguistic formulation solely (2007: 1733). So, they find that S-points are mobilized as an interactional practice that enables the speakers to bodily “adding extra information to an utterance without it being on-record that the added information was necessary”, and thus to simultaneously satisfy the social imperative, “Don’t over-tell” and the information imperative, “Don’t under-tell” (2007: 1722).

All of these studies illustrate one interrelationship between language and the body in formulating a conduct or course of action, that is, body, as one type of interactional resource, can be deployed by participants to adjust, reinforce, or complement the deontic and/or epistemic stance displayed in the linguistic formulations. By doing so, the participants are able to attend to the multidimensions of a social action (e.g. deontic, epistemic, moral/social, temporal, and spatial, etc.) *in situ*. However, although there are a number of studies that explore the interactional and sequential relationships between language and the body in implementing a course of action, most of them focus on manual movements as embodied directives, such as taking or giving an object (Rossi, 2014; Stevanovic & Monzoni, 2016; Tuncer & Haddington, 2020) or twisting a child’s locomotion from one place to another when a verbal directive (projectably) fails (Cekaite, 2010; Marjorie Harness Goodwin & Cekaite, 2013). Few studies examine body movements (e.g. P&W, grinning, and head-bowing) as an intensifier or a modifier, which is similar to prosody, that in accompanying a verbal directive, works to underscore or mitigate the deontic stance displayed in the linguistic formats, whereas the movement itself does not constitute a complete directive. Moreover, to display a certain stance (i.e. deference here), when and how participants choose to use the

language over the body, or the other way around is even less studied. Therefore, the present chapter intends to address these two directions of research.

Before moving on to the analytic section, it is also important to register one thing. That is, pointing (and waving) at someone with an index-finger is standardly considered as impolite and rude in Chinese society. Although whether its indexed ‘impoliteness’ is universal or not is unknown, Calbris studying the semiotics of French gesture suggests that “one designates another person with the forefinger ‘in order to command or accuse’ but ‘[t]he hand, which constitutes a surface rather than a line, presents or offers. Its concrete designations are polite and not imperative ...” (1990:128; cited in Kendon, 2004: 200). Likewise, in this chapter it will be seen that the citizens implicitly orient to the taboo nature of the index-finger points gesture by precisely using it when they claim the floor or implement some aggressive actions such as accusations, and retracting it when doing other types of social actions (see Rossi and Stivers, 2020 for participants halting category-sensitive actions).

Now, I turn to the first analytic section, in which the citizens are found to use the informal reference *ni* to address the lead official when doing an action that they are entitled to implement (e.g. requests for civil service), whereas shifting it to an honorific *nin* when doing some action that is oriented to as more or less morally inappropriate or less entitled conduct, such as interrupting.

4.3 The *ni* ‘you’/*nin* ‘you_{HON}’ shift to invoke an asymmetrical relationship

A systematic examination of how the relevance of participants’ respective identities are invoked by their momentary use of deferential and nondeferential forms of 2nd-person

singular reference in interaction is initially conducted by C. Raymond (2016)³³. He examines Spanish speakers' momentary shift from one form to another in ordinary and institutional talk. He argues that the underlying (non)deferential semantics in the forms enables the speaker to “grammatically recalibrate” her relationship with the hearer, the context that they are creating together, and the actions being attempted therein (p. 637). More importantly, he emphasizes that this is accomplished “not between the interactants ‘in general’, but rather *at that precise moment in the discourse*” (p. 637, emphasis in original). So, it is this conversation-analytic way of approaching participants' use of person reference forms in interaction that the analysis in this section draws on.

First, consider the following excerpt where a shift from one reference form to another occurs within a single turn. (A detailed multimodal analysis of this excerpt will be given in section 4.4.1).

The background to Excerpt 2 is that the daughter of the now-seventy-something couple Sha and Liu was found dead in the 1990s – a finding attributed to suicide. Sha questioned the finding and started a petition against the local public security bureau – of which Gua now is the police chief – about possible misconduct in the investigation. On this occasion, they have come to the bureau, asking for the past investigative process to be examined. The encounter has so far lasted about 13 minutes before the exchange below, in which Gua has told them that the investigative process has already undergone an inspection organized by three local government bureaus and the conclusion is there is no misconduct. So, in order to make Gua agree to reinitiate the inspection, Sha launches a series of challenges against the validity of the past inspection that in fact do not meet with success, because each receives a pushback from Gua (lines 01-08). This is followed by Sha's successive attempts to close and shift the sequence at lines 09, 11 and 13, in which in the last attempt Sha produces

³³ But see also Oh's (2010) study on Korean speakers' use of proximal and distal demonstratives in referring to a co-present party in order to invoke an emergent membership category that best suits their interactional purposes at that particular moment in interaction.

a preface to a possible request sequence *ni- ni* ↑*zheme zhe a*. ‘You- You do ↑*this way a*.’ and issues a directive *nin ting wo shuo*. ‘You_{HON} *listen* to me *say*.’ (line 13) within a single turn.

(2) LXGs2e2_#18 Expert

(Sha=citizen; Gua=police chief of regional Public Security Bureau & deputy district head; Zhi=general director of the Bureau for Letters and Visits; Liu=Sha’s husband)

- 04 Sha: =谁 评 的 查:¿
=shui ping de CHA:¿
who evaluate ASSC check
Who did the inspection¿
- 05 Gua: (那) 专家 评[查 (呀)
(na) zhuanjia ping[cha (ya)
that expert inspect PRT
The experts did (of course).
- 06 Sha: [哪 个 专↑家:¿ (.)有 我 专家 吗?
[NA GE ZHUAN↑JIA:¿(.)YOU WO ZHUANJIA MA?
which CLF expert have 1SG expert Q
WHICH EXPERT¿ (.)MORE EXPERT THAN ME?



Figure 4.2 Sha and Gua turn to Zhi; Sha points to Zhi with her right hand index finger at *le* in line 06

- Gaze at Shaat Zhi ...
- 07 Gua: 你:[:- 你 也 不 是] 专家, [[你(是 专)家 么¿
ni:[:- ni ye bu shi]zhuanjia, [[ni (shi zhuan)jia me
2SG 2SG also NEG be expert 2SG be expert PRT
You::- You are not an expert. Are you an expert¿
- 08 Zhi: [Huh ↑Hih hihh]
- Gaze at Gua ..at Zhi ...
Hand |~~~~~*****
- 09 Sha: [[别 乐:.
[[bie LE:.
NEG laugh
Don' t LAUGH.

- Gaze_{Gua} at Sha
 Gaze at Gua
 Hand ~~~~~*****
- 10 Sha: 专家 (结论) 有 吗?
 ZHUANJIA (JIELUN) YOU MA?
 expert conclusion have Q
IS THERE A CONCLUSION FROM THE EXPERTS?
- Gaze at Shaaway
- 11 Gua: 啊:? 你- [你- 你- 你- 你 (那个)-]
 a:? ni- [ni- ni- ni- ni (na ge)]
 PRT 2SG 2SG 2SG 2SG that CLF
Huh? You- You- You- You- Your-
- Gaze at Gua
 Hand *****-.||~*****
- 12 Sha: [这 个 说法- 跟 你 讲 啊,]
 [zhe ge shuofa- gen ni jian a,]
 this CLF explanation with 2SG tell PRT
This explanation- (I) say to you a,
- Hand_{Sha} -.||~*****
 Gaze_{Sha} at Gua
 Gaze awayat Sha
- 13 Gua: ↑评查 的 都 是-
 ↑pingcha de dou shi-
 inspect ASSC all be
The inspectors were all-
- Gaze_{Gua} at Sha
 Gaze at Gua
 Hand ~~~~~***
- 14 Sha: ↑这么 着,=
 ↑zheme zhe,=
 this CRS
How about it/↑this,
- 15 Gua: =那 你- 你- 你 [提出 异议 (就 等于 你-)]
 =na ni- ni- ni [tichu yiyi (jiu dengyu ni-)]
 then 2SG 2SG 2SG raise objection just equal 2SG
Then you- you- you raising an objection (is just like you)...
- Gaze_{Gua} at Shaat Shaaway
 Hand ~~~~~*****
- 16 Sha: [你- 你 ↑这么 着 啊.(.)]您 听 我 说.
 [ni- ni ↑zheme zhe a.(.)]Nin ting wo shuo.
 2SG 2SG this CRS PRT HON.2SG listen 1SG say
You- you do ↑this way a.(.) You_{HON} listen to me say.
- Gaze at Sha
- 17 Gua: 啊,=
 ā,=
 PRT
Uh huh,
- Gaze_{Gua} at Sha
 Hand ~~~~~***
- 18 Sha: =瓜 局长 啊, [咱们- (.) 不 要- =
 =Gua juzhang a, [zanmen- (.) bu yao- =
 NM bureau.chief PRT 1PL NEG want
Bureau Chief Gua a, we- (.) do not-

19 Gua: [嗯,
[en,
mm
Mm,

Here, the initial challenge sequence (lines 01-08) progressively goes awry in two stages. First, in response to Sha's inquiry 'Who did the inspection_i' (line 01), Gua does not simply answer 'who' but deliberately selects the word 'expert' – an epistemic authority – to imply that the inspectors are professional, thereby fully qualified, and thus the inspection conclusion is valid. This indicates that Gua recognizes and responds to Sha's inquiry as a challenge-implicative one. Moreover, the suffixed particle *ya* ('of course') also marks Sha's very launching of the question as problematic (Y. Wu & Yu, 2022)³⁴, though it gets overlapped by Sha's next turn. At line 03, Sha comes in at the first recognizable point after Gua's 'expert' is produced (Jefferson, 1984a) and escalates the challenge at louder volume by posing a more specific question 'WHICH EXPERT_i' so as to pick out an individual expert, which enables her to compare herself with regarding who is more knowledgeable ('MORE EXPERT THAN ME?'³⁵). Nevertheless, her claim to be the epistemic authority is exposed as counterfactual by Gua in the next turn ('You::- You are not an expert. Are you an expert_i', line 04), which also gets laughed at by another official, Zhi, at line 05. Up till this point, it is clear that Gua is not defeated by the challenge, and Zhi's mocking laughter inevitably more or less sabotages the seriousness of the challenge, even though Sha immediately orders him to stop laughing 'Don't LAUGH' (line 06; Fig 4.2).

However, Sha's restarted next challenge 'IS THERE A CONCLUSION FROM THE EXPERTS_i' (line 07) appears to be even more problematic, because Gua has just told her about the conclusion a moment ago. This is indeed registered by Gua through initiating an

³⁴ See Heritage (1998) for a similar usage in English – oh-prefaced responses to inquiry.

³⁵ A possible basis for Sha claiming to be equivalent to or even more knowledgeable than the actual experts is that she has been familiarizing herself with the laws and legal procedures for almost twenty years since the launch of the petition.

open-class repair *a*:? ‘Huh?’ (line 08) in the next turn (cf. Drew, 1997). Perhaps having also realized this contradiction, Sha immediately preempts Gua’s response by, unlike at line 04 where she lets him to complete the exposure, starting up right after Gua’s production of the repair initiation and the first second-person pronoun *ni* ‘you’, thereby competing for the floor. By prematurely³⁶ producing a projectable assessment ‘This explanation-’ (line 09), though being abandoned in exchange for obtaining the floor (*gen ni jiang a*, ‘(I) say to you *a*’³⁷), Sha is hearably initiating an attempt to close the current sequence (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1987). At line 11, upon hearing Gua’s resistance to moving out of the challenge sequence (‘The inspectors were all [experts]’, line 10), Sha directly projects a possible proposal with a preface \uparrow *zheme zhe*³⁸ ‘How about it/ \uparrow this’, which, however, is sequentially deleted by Gua with another response to the challenge, marked by a turn-initial conjunction *na* ‘then’ (line 12).

Thus, it is at this sequential juncture where Sha is hearably shifting to a new sequence while Gua is resisting it that Sha begins speaking in the middle of Gua’s turn at line 13, thus in interjacent overlap position, so as to shut him down with a turn that contains two TCUs – *ni- ni* \uparrow *zheme zhe a*. (.) *nin ting wo shuo*. ‘**You- You** do \uparrow this way *a*. (.) **You**_{HON} listen to me say.’. And Sha strikingly shifts her reference forms in addressing Gua from informal *ni* ‘you’ to honorific *nin* ‘YOU_{HON}’.

³⁶ By ‘prematurely’ I mean Sha assesses the ‘explanation’ that she makes out that Gua has produced, which in fact was not fully articulated by him by virtue of her own interruption.

³⁷ In Lim’s (2018) conversation-analytic study on the expression ‘I-say-to-you’ in Mandarin, he points out that its core function is to preface upcoming ‘delicate’ matters such as disagreements or disaffiliative turns. As a preface, it is also used to secure multiple turns space for delivering the ‘delicate’ matter.

The final particle *a* serves to draw the recipient’s attention to the speaker’s following talk (Xiong & Lin, 2004).

³⁸ In a Chinese dictionary (Social Sciences Academy of China, 2020), *zhèmezhe* is a demonstrative pronoun used to refer to action or situation. In conversations, it is found that when being placed in a turn-initial position, it functions as a preface projecting a future-related action, and standardly, it projects a suggestion or request. Here I translate it as ‘How about it /this’ in English, which is used to ask if someone will do something (Merriam-Webster dictionary 2020), as in *Well, how about it, are you coming?* However, it has to be pointed out that although they all appear to work as a preface to a suggestion or request, the deontic stance indexed in *zhèmezhe* seems more decisive than *How about it*. This can be seen in Sha’s subsequent turn *ni zhèmezhe a* ‘You do this way *a*’, in which the agent *ni* ‘you’ is overtly nominated and a mitigating particle *a* is suffixed, a decision is formulated. However, the nuanced difference between the two is rather an empirical question that needs future research.

Here, I argue that the two TCUs conduct two distinct actions, and this reference shift in particular invokes a momentarily asymmetrical relationship between Sha and Gua. Specifically, with the first TCU ‘You do ↑this way a.’³⁹, Sha projects a possible demand of some service from Gua, while with the second ‘You_{HON} listen to me say.’, she calls a halt to Gua’s apparently ongoing talk. The shift from the informal *ni* to the honorific *nin* demonstrates Sha’s orientation to her varied deontic statuses in launching these two actions. That is, with *ni* used in a declarative formulation, Sha claims to be highly entitled to the service that she is demanding (Tracy, 1997), while with *nin* or, in other words, a display of deference to Gua, she grammatically invokes and displays her low deontic status in interrupting and calling a halt to Gua’s ongoing talk⁴⁰. In this respect, the strong directive force indexed in unmitigated ‘You listen to me say’ (see Chapter 3) is downgraded⁴¹ with the honorific form. Such an operation reflects Sha’s orientation to the necessity of not only mitigating her here-and-now, morally inappropriate action – interrupting Gua’s turns in lines 08 & 12 and calling a halt to his ongoing responsive action – but also simultaneously claiming some degree of agency over the floor with the declarative formulation (I will elaborate on this in section 4.4.1). This practice of displaying deference, as we can see, is successful in the sense that Gua subsequently grants the floor with a permission token *ā*, ‘Uh

³⁹ It is worth noting here that this is basically a repetition of the prior prefacing turn (compare *zheme zhe* ‘How about it/this’ in line 11 and *ni zheme zhe a* ‘You do this way a’ in line 13), which is what Schegloff (1987) calls a “recycled turn beginning” that deals with “the possible impairment of turn beginnings by overlap” (p. 80). So, this first TCU is used to absorb the overlap so that the second TCU can be produced in the clear. In addition, the additional subject pronoun *ni* ‘you’ overtly nominates Gua as the agent of doing what he will be asked to do later, while the turn-final particle *a* mitigates this declaratively formatted directive (Sun, 2013; Xu, 1998). So, in comparison with the initial proposal ‘How about it/this’ at line 11, the recycled turn beginning is upgraded to a *demand* not only with the assertive tone embedded in the declarative construction but also with the use of the informal second-person reference *ni*.

⁴⁰ In addition, the use of honorific *ni* at this particular position signifies a stance shift from previously being assertive to deferential towards Gua, which sequentially implicates a “deferential pledge” that the upcoming talk will be disjunct from and possibly more benign than the preceding challenge sequence (Goffman, 1956: 480).

⁴¹ As Fang (1999, 2000) argues, when a speaker claims absolute authority in commanding the recipient to do something, the second-person reference form cannot be the formal/honorific ‘*nin*’, for it contradicts the authoritative stance indexed in imperatives; nevertheless, when ‘*nin*’ is deployed in imperatives, the original action ‘command’ is then downgraded to a ‘request’ as the fulfillment of the latter is contingent on the recipient’s free will, abilities and evaluations about his/her relationship with the speaker.

huh'⁴² (line 14), which also implicates his tacit acceptance of the deference that Sha deliberately shows to him, because otherwise he could reciprocate by addressing Sha with *nin*⁴³, such as *nin shuo* lit. 'You_{HON} say' ('Go ahead') in the next turn. Thus, we can say their asymmetrical relationship at this particular moment is co-constructed by both of them.

With this example, I intend to show that to mitigate their interrupting action, Chinese speakers can choose to display deference to the recipient by deploying the honorific second-person singular reference *nin*. But through a detailed analysis of the sequential environment where this person reference shift occurs, I also aim to emphasize that using an honorific person reference does not necessarily mean that the speaker is deferential to the recipient. It is in fact an interactional resource or a mitigation device that the speaker can mobilize at a particular moment in interaction so as to attend to the multi-dimensions (moral and deontic here) of, and thereby accomplish, a particular action. Excerpt 3 shown below is another example of a citizen using informal *ni* in formulating a request to the lead official and using honorific *nin* in claiming the floor when interrupting him. But this time the shift happens across turns.

In Excerpt 3 (a, b), Liu is Sha's husband, who this time has come to the bureau alone and is talking to the president of a regional court Fah⁴⁴. After some initial exchanges, Liu announces his reasons-for-the-visit and projects a request sequence at line 43.

(3a) CJDs1e1_#32 Help you coordinate

(Liu=citizen; Fah=president of a regional court)

- 43 Liu: 法 院[↑]长_: [↓_:] 我 就 今 天 来_:, (.)
 Fa yuan[↑]zhang_: [↓_:] wo jiu jintian lai_:, (.)
 NM president 1SG just today come
President ↑Fah_: [↓_:] I just come here today_:, (.)
- 44 Fah: [你 说]
 [ni shuo]

⁴² Note that the permission token *ā* 'uh huh' used by Gua is different from the citizens' compliance token *en* 'Mm' to the lead official's directive *ni ting wo shuo* 'You listen to me say' in Chapter 3.

⁴³ It is possible as Sha is at least 20 years older than Gua.

⁴⁴ This meeting is two months earlier than the meeting in Excerpt 2.

2SG say
You go ahead.

- 45 Liu: 重:点 就 是 两 个 事 儿.
 zhong:dian jiu shi liang ge shir.
 emphasis just be two CLF thing
for just two main things.
- 46 Fah: 嗯.
en.
 mm
Mm hm.
- 47 (3.2)/((Fah gazes down, picks up a pen & flattens a notebook, while Liu is gazing at him))
- 48 Fah: 说.
 shuo.
 say
Go ahead.
- 49 Liu: 第 一 个 ↑事 儿:: (0.7) 就 ↓是::uh:: (1.0)
 diyi ge ↑shir:: (0.7) jiu ↓shi:: uh:: (1.0)
 first CLF thing just be
The first ↑thing:: (0.7) is just:: uh:: (1.0)
- 50 上 回 咱 们 见 面 儿 嘞, (0.5)
 shang hui zanmen jianmianr lei, (0.5)
 last time 1PL meet PFV
Last time when we met, (0.5)
- 51 你 也 承 诺 给- 说- 给- 提- 提- 想 给 我 们 联 系
 ni ye chengnuo gei- shuo- gei- ti- ti- xiang gei women lianxi
 2SG also promise give say give put put want give 1PL contact
 联 系 这 个:
 lianxi zhe ge:
 contact this CLF
you also promised that- said that- (you) wanted to contact the: ∅ for us
- 52 (0.5)
- 53 Fah: 嗯.
en.
 mm
Mmm.
- 54 (0.2)
- 55 Liu: uh:: 有 关 领 导 的 事 儿.
 uh:: youguan lingdao de shir.
 related leader ASSC thing
uh:: the related leaders.
- 56 Fah: 嗯.
en.
 mm
Mmm.
- 57 (0.2)

58 Liu: 我就问问现在:- (0.5) ↑这:个有什么进展.
 wo jiu wenwen xianzai:- (0.5) ↑zhe: ge you shenme jinzhan.
 1SG just ask now this CLF have what progress
I just ask (until) now:- (0.5) how much this progress has been made.

Here, after the preface to the request (lines 43-56), Liu asks for information regarding the ‘progress’ (line 58) that Fah has made with ‘contacting the related (governmental) leaders for the couple’ as he has ‘promised’ (line 51) ‘since last time they have met’ (line 50). Similar to Sha’s demand ‘You do this way *a*’ in Excerpt 2, Liu also uses the informal *ni* ‘you’ in line 51 to preface a request, claiming his high entitlement to receive a response from Fah. Moreover, note that the preface (lines 49-51 & 55) is launched with a complaint-implicative construction *ni ye chengnuo* ‘you also promised that-’ (line 51) that appears to imply that Fah has made a promise but has failed to honor his pledge (cf. Sacks on ‘first verbs’, e.g. ‘I thought’ and ‘wanted to’, 1992b:181). Perhaps having picked up on that implication himself, Liu self-repairs and replaces it with a more neutral verb ‘said’ to move away that negatively valenced element (‘you promised that- said that- (you) wanted to contact the: \emptyset for us’, line 51) and thus to render these preliminary remarks less confrontational. So, whether Liu is simply prefacing a request or implicitly delivering a complaint as well, it is apparent that he has not selected honorific *nin* as the address form in constructing these actions at this interactional moment.

But somewhat later in the talk – indeed approximately three minutes later - in Excerpt 3b, Liu shifts the address form from the informal *ni* to honorific *nin*, while interrupting Fah’s turn and ongoing course of action. Before the exchange below, Ben (i.e. a director of a petition-office at the regional court) has answered Liu’s inquiry about the progress in contacting the related leaders. However, the response that in summertime the government leaders are so busy that they are hardly reachable prompts Liu’s direct complaint about Ben only using this as an excuse. This complaint sequence is nevertheless suspended with the general director of the Bureau for Letters and Visits entering the room. After some

greeting exchanges, Ben resumes his responsive activity by proposing a solution to Liu at line 344, and Fah then joins in by launching a commitment at line 349, which yet remains incompletely articulated (*wo zhe wo kending na shenme a* ‘On my part, I will definitely Ø a,’).

(3b)

344 Ben: 咱们这么着, 完了想办法帮你协调 °协调° 呗,
 zanmen zheme zhe, wanle xiang banfan bang ni xietiao °xietiao° bei,
 1PL this CRS later think method help 2SG coordinate coordinate PRT
Let's do this way - later (we) figure out a way to help you coordinate with (the related leaders).

345 (0.2)

346 Ben: 陶院长 既然 [把你()]-
 Tao yuanzhang jiran [ba ni ()]-
 NM president since BA 2SG
Now that the president Tao (is taking charge of) your ...

347 Fah: [()]

348 Liu: 啊, >那- 那-<=
 a, >na- na-<=
 PRT that that
Ah, >that- that-<=

349 Fah: =我 这 我 肯定 那 什么 啊,= 对,
 =wo zhe wo kending na shenme a,= dui,
 1SG here 1SG definitely that what PRT right
 (他) 是 大光 局 长 那 个 事儿.
 (ta) shi Daguang ju zhang na ge shir.
 3SG be NM bureau chief that CLF thing
On my part, I will definitely Ø a,= Right, his (petition) is about that case (handled by) the bureau chief Daguang.

350 你 还 真 是, 大光 局 长 以前
 ni hai zhen shi, Daguang ju zhang yiqian
 2SG still truly be NM bureau chief before
 他 接 访 你 见 着 过.=
 ta jie fang ni jianzhe guo.=
 3SG receive petition 2SG meet PFV
You really, you met him before when the bureau chief Daguang received petitioners.

351 Liu: =谁?
 =shui?
 who
Who?

352 Fah: 雷- 雷大光 啊.
 Lei- Lei Daguang a.
 NM NM PRT
Lei - Lei Daguang a.

353 (0.9)

354 Fah: 你 不 公 安 局 那 个 事 儿 吗?=
 ni bu gong an ju na ge shir ma?=
 2SG NEG public security bureau that CLF thing Q
Isn't your petition about that case (investigated by) the public security bureau?

355 Liu: =雷 大光 啊: ,=
 =LEI DAGUANG A: ,=
 NM PRT
LEI DAGUANG A: ,=

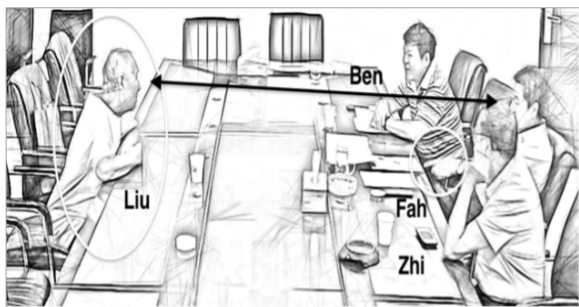


Figure 4.3 Fah and Liu's postures and gestures at *ta* in 1.356

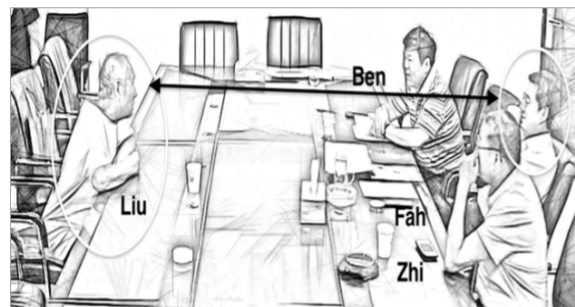


Figure 4.4 Fah retracts his left hand and places it on his mouth at *shir* in 1.357

356 Fah: =啊. 你 见 着 [他-
 =a. ni JIANzhe [ta-
 PRT 2SG meet 3SG
Yeah. Once you MEET him-

Hand

357 Liu: →

| ((Remains static))

[我- 我 跟 您 说 这 个 事 儿 .=
 [wo- wo gen nin shuo zhe ge shir .=
 1SG 1SG with 2SG.HON say this CLF thing
I- I tell you_{HON} this thing.

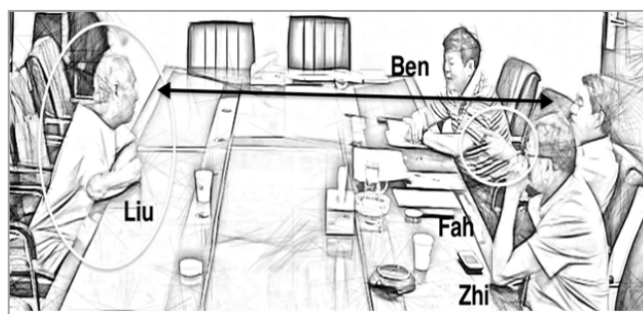


Figure 4.5 Fah points to Liu at *ni* in 1.358

358 Fah: =↑但是 [呢, 你 让 我 [[协调,] 我 肯定 是 .
 =↑danshi [ne, ni rang wo [[xietiao,] wo kending shi.
 but TP 2SG let 1SG coordinate 1SG definitely be
 [[((F points to Liu & retracts))]
 [[((body leans forward))]

↑But, you let me coordinate, I surely will.

359 Fah: 然后 Benfeng 呢, 也 是 在 给 你 (--)] 是 吧?=
 ranhou Benfeng ne, ye shi zai gei ni (--)] shi ba?
 then NM TP also be PROG for 2SG be PRT
 ((Body leans back to home position))

And Benfeng, is also (--) for you, right?

- 360 Ben: 是.
shi.
be
Yes.
- 361 Fah: >也 得< 跟:: 商林伟 我们
>ye dei< gen:: Shang Linwei women
also have to with NM 1PL
得 (说 说) [这 事儿.
dei (shuo shuo) [zhe shir
have to say say this thing
>Also< with:: Shang Linwei we have to discuss it.

Here, right after giving the evasive commitment in line 349, Fah publicly displays a sudden realization with *dui*, ‘Right,’ that Liu’s petition concerns a case handled by the bureau chief Daguang⁴⁵ who Liu has already met before (line 350), which seems to suggest that there is no need for him to contact other leaders, for Liu has already talked to the one who is considered to be the most familiar with his petition. Although the name of the bureau chief appears to cause a recognition problem for Liu (lines 351-355), soon after the recognition is achieved (*LEI DAGUANG A:*, line 355), Fah proceeds with a potential suggestion about possibly what Liu should do once he approaches Lei Daguang (*ni JIANzhe ta-* ‘Yeah. Once you MEET him-’, line 356). However, just at this particular moment, Liu starts up in the middle of Fah’s production of this suggestion, that is, in interjacent overlap position (Jefferson, 1986), with a declarative preliminary *wo- wo gen nin shuo* \uparrow *zhe ge shir* ‘I- I tell you_{HON} \uparrow this thing’ (line 357), in which an honorific *nin* is deployed, that prefaces an informing or a complaining sequence possibly about Lei Daguang⁴⁶. So what Liu is doing

⁴⁵ The bureau chief Daguang is the police chief of the local public security bureau Gua in Excerpt 2.

⁴⁶ In fact, the other-initiated repair sequence launched by Liu’s *shui?* ‘Who?’ at line 351 is initiated beyond simply achieving a recognition of the bureau chief Daguang. Specifically, Liu is resisting whatever action that Fah is doing or projecting by doing a remembering of Daguang’s responsible role in handling Liu’s case. This resistance can be observed in his repair-initiator ‘Who?’ that not only exhibits his failure to recognize the name of the bureau chief but also implies his unfamiliarity with him, which thus resists Fah’s prior implication that they must know each other because they have met before (line 350). And indeed in the next turn Fah still selects the minimal form of “recognitional” – a full name of the person *Lei Daguang* (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979) that displays his expectation of Liu still being able to recognize the person through the full name; and it is only until encountering a substantial silence (line 353) in which Liu does not produce any kind of uptake that he gives up on pursuing Liu’s recognition of the person in exchange for seeking his confirmation on whether ‘his petition is about that case investigated by the public security bureau’ (line 354). However, at line 355 we can see that in the next turn, rather than producing the relevantly next thing – a confirmation or disconfirmation, Liu finally

here is not only interrupting Fah's turn but also impeding his ongoing course of action in an attempt to divert the local trajectory of the talk and implement his own agenda in the next turn(s).

Clearly, similar to Sha's deployment of *nin* ('You_{HON} listen to me say') in Excerpt 2, Liu also orients to the necessity of mitigating his interruption through deploying *nin* to display deference to Fah ('I tell you_{HON} ↑this thing). This indicates Liu's orientation to his low deontic status in interrupting Fah and shifting the local trajectory of the talk. However, with the form of assertion, Liu still claims some degree of agency in shifting the current sequence to an informing, if not complaining, sequence. But with the honorific *nin*, the high deontic stance that is standardly conveyed in the announcement 'I tell *you* this thing' is downgraded to a hearable request for an opportunity to speak at this moment. Nevertheless, unlike Sha in Excerpt 2, Liu's attempt to initiate a new sequence gets sequentially deleted by Fah in the next turn through giving a clearer commitment ↑*danshi ne, ni rang wo xietiao, wo kending shi*. '↑But you let me coordinate, I surely will' (line 358) with a turn-initial contrastive-conjunction *danshi* 'but' that links to his prior unfinished talk at line 356.

Here it is worth noting that after Liu notably addresses him with the honorific *nin*, Fah could reciprocate with an honorific address form, for Liu is at least 25 years older than him, but he still uses the informal *ni* to address Liu at line 358. This indicates that what the participants orient to is not their age difference but their institutional identities. In other words, Liu shows deference to Fah and Fah implicitly accepts it. Thus, their relatively asymmetrical relationship is demonstrably invoked by their uses of distinct address forms and therefore their institutional identities (i.e. citizen-lead official) are co-constructed at this particular moment in interaction.

registers his recognition of the person with a loud repetition of the full name 'LEI DAGUANG' and a final particle *A*: that serves to mark the person as the topic of his possibly ensuing talk, which is very likely to be a complaint about the person (Fang, 1994; Wu, 2004).

Now, before summarizing this section, Liu and Fah's postures and gestures in Excerpt 3(b) deserve particular attention here. When competing for the floor in lines 356-8, Liu keeps his posture and gesture static throughout, whereas by virtue of Liu's interruption at line 357 Fah initially retracts his pointing gesture along with his verbal cut-off at the end of line 356 (see Fig 4.3 and 4.4) but re-launches the index-finger point to Liu in the next turn (Fig 4.5) immediately after Liu's completion of the interruptive turn at line 357. Such a point, along with his use of an informal *ni* 'you' in addressing Liu (line 358), suggests that Fah lays claim to the floor not only by linguistic means but also by bodily means. That is to say, in claiming the floor Fah's embodiment underscores the verbal enactment, which is similar to Excerpt 1. However, it is not always the case that the speaker's words match with his/her body in displaying certain stance, as we will see in some cases in section 4.4.

In summary, this section shows that when interrupting the lead officials and claiming the floor to implement their own project in the following turns, the citizens tend to shift the address forms from informal *ni* that they standardly use in making civil service requests to honorific *nin*. Its semantics of deference enables the citizens to mitigate their morally inappropriate interrupting actions and to downgrade the high deontic stance indexed in their declaratively formatted demand (Ex. 2) and announcement (Ex. 3b) that are used for claiming the floor. This mitigating practice demonstrates that the citizens still orient to themselves as having a relatively lower deontic status vis-à-vis the lead officials in terms of who has a greater right to stop the prior speaker's talk-in-progress, and that they still orient to the lead officials as the authority in controlling the interactional agenda.

4.4 The linguistic-bodily mismatch in displaying deference

*If language was given to men to conceal their thoughts,
then gesture's purpose was to disclose them.
John Napier (1980)*

In the previous section, it is shown that their own interrupting action is oriented to by the citizens as inapposite and is thus mitigated *in situ* by their momentary mobilization of the deferential semantics of the second-person singular reference *nin*. In this section, through examining their accompanying body movements, I first demonstrate how the citizens, when designing their actions in claiming occupancy of the floor, display a deferential stance with their language but display a seemingly contradictory stance with their body (i.e. P&W gesture), and what is systematically achieved by this practice (Section 4.4.1). Then, I illustrate how the sequential context is consequential for the citizens' choice as to whether to display deference with language or with certain body movements through examining an example in which the citizen deploys informal *ni* in addressing the lead official but visibly displays deference by grinning and bowing her head (section 4.4.2). In section 4.4.3, to further illustrate the consequentiality of the context for the citizen's choice as to whether to display deference at all when interrupting the lead officials or impeding their ongoing talk, a deviant case is provided, in which the citizen shows no deference whatsoever as she calls a halt to the lead official's continuing talk. I conclude the section by arguing that linguistic deference and embodied deference are not treated equally by the participants, for they are oriented to as carrying varying weight in displaying deference.

4.4.1 The linguistic display of deference

Excerpt 4 shown below is a partial reproduction of Excerpt 2 with more multimodal details included. We re-join the interaction right after Sha pointing an index finger to Zhi along with her prohibitive directive 'Don't LAUGH' (line 06) (see Fig 4.2). She then immediately redirects her finger to Gua to underline the strength of her continued challenge at line 07 (Fig 4.6).

(4) LXGs2e2_#18 Expert



Figure 4.6 Sha points to Gua at *ma* in 1.07



Figure 4.7 Sha's vertical palm gesture at *shuofa* in 1.09



Figure 4.8 Sha's pointing at *zhe* in 1.11

Gaze_{Gua} at Sha
 Gaze at Gua
 Hand ~~~~~*****

09 Sha: **专家 (结论) 有 吗?**
 ZHUANJIA (JIELUN) YOU MA?
 expert conclusion have Q
 IS THERE A CONCLUSION FROM THE EXPERTS?

Gaze at Shaaway

10 Gua: 啊:? 你- [你- 你- 你- 你 (那个)-]
 a:? ni- [ni- ni- ni- ni (na ge)]
 PRT 2SG 2SG 2SG 2SG 2SG that CLF
 Huh? You- You- You- You- Your-

Gaze at Gua
 Hand ~~~~~- .|| ~~~~~*****

11 Sha: [这 个 说法- 跟 你 讲 啊,]
 [zhe ge shuofa- gen ni jian a,]
 this CLF explanation with 2SG tell PRT
 This explanation- (I) say to you a,

Hand_{Sha} - .|| ~~~~~*****
 Gaze_{Sha} at Gua
 Gaze awayat Sha

12 Gua: ↑评查 的 都 是-
 ↑pingcha de dou shi-
 inspect ASSC all be
 The inspectors were all-

Gaze_{Gua} at Sha
 Gaze at Gua
 Hand ~~~~~***

13 Sha: ↑这么 着,=
 ↑zheme zhe,=
 this CRS
 How about it/↑this,

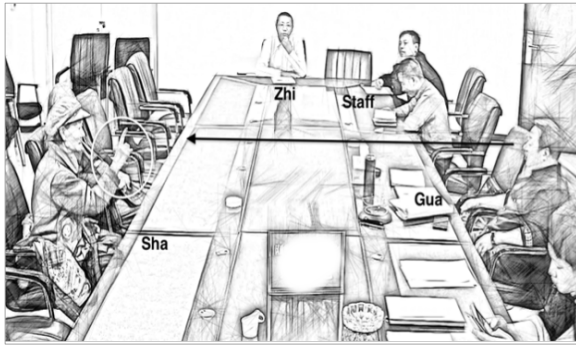


Figure 4.9 Sha's index finger point and Gua's gaze at the second *ni* in l.13

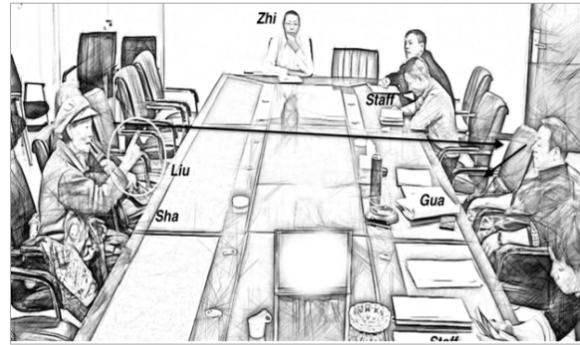


Figure 4.10 Sha's index finger point and Gua's gaze at the end of l.13

14 Gua: =那 你- 你- 你 [提出 异议 (就 等于 你-)]
 =na ni- ni- ni [tichu yiyi (jiu dengyu ni-)]
 then 2SG 2SG 2SG raise objection just equal 2SG
Then you- you- you raising an objection (is just like you-)...

Gaze_{Gua} at Shaat Shaaway
 Hand ~~~~~*****~~~~~
 15 Sha: [你- 你 ↑这么 着 啊.(.)]您 听 我 说.
 [ni- ni ↑zheme zhe a.(.)]Nin ting wo shuo.
 2SG 2SG this CRS PRT HON.2SG listen 1SG say
You- you do ↑this way a.(.) You_{HON} listen to me say.

Gaze at Sha
 16 Gua: 啊,=
 ā,=
 PRT
Uh huh,

Gaze_{Gua} at Sha
 Hand ~~~~~*****~~~~~
 17 Sha: =瓜 局长 啊, [咱们- (.) 不 要- =
 =Gua juzhang a, [zanmen- (.) bu yao- =
 NM bureau.chief PRT 1PL NEG want
Bureau Chief Gua a, we- (.) do not-

18 Gua: [嗯,
 [en,
 mm
Mm,

As mentioned before, Sha's resumed challenge at line 07 runs into some problems. She subsequently interrupts Gua's turn-in-progress at line 08 and changes her pointing gesture to an "open hand prone ('palm down')"⁴⁷ gesture (Fig 4.7; line 09) to bodily suspend his talk, thereby maintaining her occupancy of the floor. But, by virtue of Gua's resistance to

⁴⁷ In Kendon's (2004) study, Sha's gesture belongs to what he calls 'Open Hand Prone' family that "commands the *interruption* of something" (p. 226; italics in original) or "mark[s] 'stopping' in some way" (p. 262). And this type of "vertical palm" gesture is "used in contexts where the speaker indicates an intention to halt his or her current line of action ... or a wish that what is being done by the interlocutor should be halted" (2004: 251; see also Streeck, 2009: 193).

yielding the floor (line 08), Sha upgrades the competition for the floor by switching back to the pointing gesture (in line 10), holding it in the air and waiting until Gua's self cut-off at line 10 that she jump-starts her turn at line 11 with a high pitch and a stress on the turn-beginning (\uparrow *zheme zhe* 'How about it/ \uparrow this'). And significantly she waves the finger at Gua at the end of line 11 (Fig 4.8). However, this attempt to obtain the floor is ignored by Gua who continues his response to the challenge at line 12.

So in dealing with Gua's renewed resistance, Sha escalates the competition by interrupting him again with a "recycled turn beginning" (Schegloff, 1987) (*ni* \uparrow *zheme zhe a* 'You do \uparrow this way *a*'), in which the placement of the high pitch and stress remains the same as the prior, and then calling a halt to Gua's ongoing talk with *nin ting wo shuo* 'YOU_{HON} listen to me say'⁴⁸. Here, as noted earlier, on a linguistic level, Sha downgrades the directive force with the marked shift from the informal *ni* to honorific *nin* in addressing Gua at this particular moment. However, it is at this place where Sha could arguably align her embodiment with the linguistic practice in displaying deference, such as synchronously downgrading the strength of her hand movements by retracting her finger point when uttering *nin*, that she otherwise upgrades her embodiment by not only keeping the index-finger point at Gua but also waving at him throughout the line of 13 (Figs 4.9 and 4.10). That is to say, by waving her index-finger at Gua, Sha deliberately exerts authority on him to surrender the floor, which is congruent with her claim of high agency in directing the local trajectory of the talk through the declarative directive. But this undoubtedly results in a seeming mismatch between her semantic display of deference and bodily display of authority.

Thus, with this exemplar, I aim to show and argue that this seeming mismatch actually constitutes a multimodal resource that enables the participants to attend to the multi-dimensions of their here-and-now actions at this precise moment in interaction. In Excerpt 4,

⁴⁸ Note that there is no particular increase in volume, which is standardly found in turn competitions (French & Local, 1986).

we can see that in the course of competing for the floor, Sha sequentially escalates it in an embodied way so as to underscore her claimed high deontic stance in taking the floor, while momentarily de-escalating it in a linguistic way so as to mitigate her actions of interrupting and calling a halt to Gua's ongoing talk. As a consequence, Sha is able to successfully accomplish this specific goal of obtaining the floor and implementing her own interactional agenda in the following turns. Such a practice can also be observed in the next example.

The excerpt shown below is slightly different from Excerpt 4 in that in displaying deference to the lead official, besides the use of honorific *nin*, the citizen also smiles and deploys some temporal and numeric minimizers to mitigate her interruption.

Excerpt 5 is about a petition that Fen has started on her husband's behalf against a judgement that the siblings of her husband should receive a portion of the family inheritance, according to Fen, that should belong to her husband. Right before the exchange below, Fen has been complaining to Fah about how immoral the siblings-in-law have been and how dealing with them mentally and physically exhausted her. Upon hearing Fah's summons at line 01 foreshadowing a shift in speakership in the next turn, Fen brings the troubles-telling to a possible end with an assessment (C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987) that provides upshot of her current mental state 'I can't stand it' at line 02.

(5) CJDs2e2_#19 Family affair

(Fen=citizen; Fah=president of a regional court)

Gaze	<u>down</u>
01 Fah:	这个 谁 啊,= Zhege shei a,= this.CLF who PRT Uhm: you- uh::,
Gaze _{Fah}	<u>down</u>
Gaze	<u>at Fah till line 14</u>
02 Fen:	=我 受 不 <<vocal fry>了>. Hkhhh. =Wo shou bu <<vocal fry>le>. Hkhhh. 1SG bear NEG CRS I can't stand it.

- Gaze down
- 03 Fah: °老 芬 啊°, 两- 我 是 两个 意见, 啊,
 °lao Fen a°, liang- wo shi liangge yijian, a,
 old SURNAME PRT two 1SG COP two.CLF idea PRT
 °Old Fen a°, two- I have two suggestions.
- 04 Fen: [嗯.
 [En.
 mm
 Mm.
- Gaze down
- 05 Fah: [第[↑]一个 就 说 什 么 意 思 呢, 这 个 毕 竟 是
 [Di[↑]yi ge jiu shuo shenme yisi ne, zhege bijing shi
 first CLF just say what meaning PRT, this.CLF after.all be
- Gaze down...at Fen till line 14
- 你们 家 庭 的 事 儿, (.) 是 吧,=
 nimen jiating de shir, (.) Shi ba,=
 2PL family ASSC thing COP PRT
**What (I) mean by the [↑]first is that this is after all your family
 affair, (.) right,=**

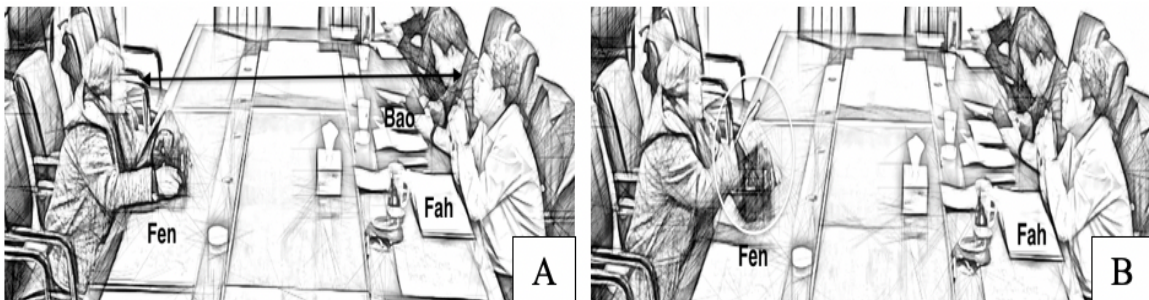


Figure 4.11 Fen opens her mouth and inhales at line 6 (A) and raises her right hand with the index finger extended at the first *wo* in line 8 (B)



Figure 4.12 Fen smiles and waves the finger at *duo* in line 8

Figure 4.13 Fen waves her finger at her first *shuo* in line 9

06 Fen: =.HH[h
 07 Fah: [都 |哥们 都 弟[兄 的 事儿.]
 [dou |gemen dou di[xiong de shir.]
 all brothers all brothers POSS thing
Of all brothers.

Hand | ~~~~~*****
 08 Fen: [我->我- 我-<]我 多 您 一 句 话,=
 [wo->wo- wo-<]wo duo nin yi ju hua,=
 1SG 1SG 1SG 1SG many HON.2SG one sentence words
I- I- I- I interject (you_{HON}) a remark,=

Hand_{Fen} *****
 09 =您 [先 听 我 说 说].
 =nin [xian ting wo shuo shuo.
 HON.2SG first listen 1SG say say
You_{HON} listen to me say say for a moment.

10 Fah: [°啊.°
 [°a.°
 PRT
Ah.

Hand_{Fen} *****
 11 Fah: >这 是 家 庭 内 部 矛 盾 <.
 >zhe shi jiating neibu maodun <.
 this be family inside conflict
>This is a conflict inside the family.<

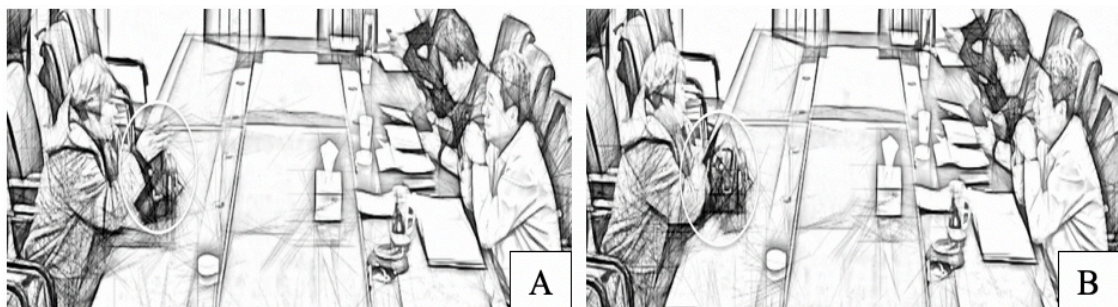


Figure 4.14 Fen switches from the pointing to open-hand gesture at the beginning of line 12 (A) and retracts her hand at the end of line 12 (B)

Hand_{Fen} - . | ~~~~~*****- . |
 12 Fen: 家:庭 内 部 矛 盾 吧, 他们 忒 霸道 了.
 jia:ting neibu maodun ba, tamen tui badao le.
 family inside conflict PRT 3PL too domineering CRS
It is a conflict inside the family, (but) they are too domineering.

13 Fah: 是 啊,
 shi a,
 be PRT
Really,

14 Fen: 嗯. 从 小:, .h 这 小 哥 仨 没 爹 没 妈...
 en. cong xiao:, .h zhe xiao ge sa mei die mei ma ...
 mm from little this little brother three NEG father NEG mother
Yeah. Since they were little, the three little brothers had no father and mother...

On hearing and understanding Fen's description of her feelings ('I can stand it', line 02) as a sequence-closure relevant remark, Fah first displays affiliation by addressing her with the format [*lao* 'old' + surname] *lao Fen* 'Old Fen' suffixed by a tone-softening particle *a* to display intimacy at the beginning of line 03, and then launches a responding sequence by prefacing two suggestions to give. However, his first suggestion ('What I mean by the first is that this is after all your family affair ...', line 05) does not receive any uptake from Fen until line 08 in which she yet starts up in the middle of Fah's turn and acknowledges that she is interrupting him ('I interject a remark'), thereby claiming the floor. This is perhaps because the suggestion is oriented to as more or less disaffiliative or, less agreeable, by Fen⁴⁹.

Specifically, as a response to Fen's previous troubles-telling, the selected adverb *bi jing* 'after all' (line 05) more or less indexes a disaffiliative stance in that it implicitly undermines and dismisses the difficult situations and conditions that Fen previously described that she had been through. And by underscoring through a particular morphosyntactic construction *Di ↑yi ge jiu shuo shenme yisi ne* 'What (I) mean by the ↑first is that' that Fen's matter is "after all a family affair" (line 05), it seems to imply that the matter, or "the conflict" that Fah points out later in line 11, should be resolved inside the family instead of, for example, going to a court. This sort of disaffiliation is indeed registered by Fen through withholding uptake when Fah's gaze in line 05 is explicitly mobilizing response (Stivers & Rossano, 2010) and visibly opening her mouth to heavily inhale (Fig 4.11-A) in response to the agreement solicitor *shi ba* 'right' at the end of line 05. Consequently, with anticipating an impending disagreement, Fah adds an increment "Of all brothers" at line 07, which appears to replace the 'family' affair with 'all brothers' affair, thereby removing one of the possible disagreeables, to provide himself an opportunity to be

⁴⁹ Here, in response to Fen's previous troubles-telling, that Fah proffers suggestions instead of, for example, siding with her (e.g. co-complaining about her siblings-in-law) constitutes the frame of the encounter as a "service-encounter" (Jefferson & Lee, 1981). Jefferson and Lee show that such a way of responding to troubles-telling is likely to be treated as disaffiliative by the troubles-teller and thus be rejected.

agreed with (Schegloff, 2016). However, this attempt is interrupted by Fen with an announcement of her imminent interruption (*wo- >wo- wo-< wo duo nin yi ju hua*, ‘I- I- I- I interject (you_{HON}) a remark’, line 08) and a follow-up declarative directive (*nin xian ting wo shuo shuo*, ‘You_{HON} listen to me *say say* for a moment’, line 09)⁵⁰.

Fen’s conduct here appears to be a combination of Liu’s (in Ex. 3b) and Sha’s (in Ex. 4) practices in displaying deference and claiming the floor, though with some differences. Firstly, Fen’s deployment of a statement to announce that she is going to ‘interject a remark’⁵¹ (instead of, e.g. ‘Can I interject a remark?’) is similar to Liu’s interruptive statement ‘I- I tell you_{HON} ↑this thing’ in the sense that they both claim some degree of agency in deciding upon their own conduct – to impede the lead official’s ongoing talk – and action-in-progress at that particular moment in interaction. Second, in making a claim to the

⁵⁰ In fact, 12 minutes earlier from Excerpt 5, Fen *complains* about being interrupted by Fah with an informal *ni*, as in *ni ting wo shuo a* ‘You listen to me say *a*’ in line 10.

[CJDs2e1_#35]

- 01 Fen: *dao Ma tingzhang na le, Ma tingzhang shi .hh (.)*
to NM chief judge there PFV NM chief judge be
(The case) was transferred to the chief judge Ma,
- 02 *qi:yuefen, yi si nian qiyuefen cai gei panjueshu pan wan le.*
July one four year July just PASS judgment judge finish PFV
the chief judge Ma .hh (.)didn't make a judgement until July 2014.
- 03 Fah: *en.*
Mm.
- 04 Fen: *.h pan wan le leng ya zhe bu gei wo.*
judge finish PFV wilfully press DUR NEG give 1SG
The judgement had been made (but they) refused to give it to me.
(0.7)
- 05 Fen: *.hh [dao::*
- 06 Fen: *.hh [Till::*
- 07 Fah: *[pan wan le, a,*
judge finish PFV PRT
The judgment was being made huh?
- 08 Fen: *(dao-)(.)qiyue::shiji hao pan wan de, qiyue duoshao hao?*
till July ten date judge finish PRT July what date
(Till-) (.) July 10th give or take, what date was it in July?
- 09 Fah: *panjue jieguo na za pan de?*
judgement result that how judge PRT
What's the judgment result?
- 10 Fen:→ *>ni ting wo shuo a,< wanlode:-(0.4)pan wan le shuo sha me:,*
2SG listen 1SG say PRT then judge finish PFV say what PRT
>You listen to me say a,< then:-(0.4)after the judgment (they) were saying something like ...

⁵¹ It is important to note here that although the English translation is ‘I interject a remark’, its more equivalent Chinese is *wo cha (nin) yi ju hua*, instead of *wo duo nin yi ju hua* here. The verb 插 *cha* literally means ‘interject’, whereas 多 *duo* is a verb meaning ‘be greater in quantity than intended’. So, although with *duo*, the inappropriateness of her interruption is also acknowledged by Fen, because the object pronoun *nin* can be dropped with *cha* but not with *duo*, she deliberately selects *duo* so as to introduce the honorific address form *nin*.

floor, Fen and Sha all use the declarative construction *nin-ting-wo-shuo* ‘You_{HON}-listen-to-me-say’ to claim to be entitled to call a halt to the lead official’s ongoing talk. And Fen also points her right index-finger at Fah right before her verbal interruption (Fig 4.11-B) and then waves at him through the production of the turn (Figs 4.12-13). However, in contrast to Sha, Fen displays extra deference to Fah in that besides the honorific *nin*, she also smiles as uttering the interruptive turn in lines 08 & 09 (Figs 4.12-13) and minimizes her interruption with numeric and temporal minimizers, such as the noun phrase *yi ju hua* ‘a remark’, the adverb *xian* ‘for a moment’, and the reduplication of the verb *shuo* ‘say say’ that “has the semantic effect of signaling that the actor doing something “a little bit”” (Li & Thompson, 1981: 29). More importantly, in explicitly formulating her upcoming talk as interruptive (line 08), Fen indicates that she orients to herself being less entitled to interrupt Fah, thereby treating her interruption as a departure from the turn-taking norms (cf. Weatherall and Edmonds, 2018; see also Heritage & Raymond, 2016 for naming the offense constitutes a part of an apology). In this sense, this practice can also be considered as a deferential feature. In sum, on a linguistic level, Fen displays a deferential stance to Fah to mitigate the interruption, while on an embodied level, she underlines her agency in taking the floor and (temporarily) diverting the trajectory of the talk.

It should also be noted that as soon as she appears to potentially obtain the floor after Fah briskly producing a summative remark at line 11 (>This is a conflict inside family<), Fen subsequently changes her authoritative index-finger point to an open-hand gesture as delivering a concessive agreement plus an implied disagreement (*jia.ting neibu maodun ba*⁵², *tamen tui badao le* ‘It is a conflict inside the family, (but)⁵³ they are too domineering’, line 12) (Figs 4.14-A&B). This move exhibits her orientation to the P&W hand gesture only as an interactional resource that serves to accomplish the goal of getting the floor. And indeed

⁵² The Chinese particle *ba* is used before a pause in a sentence to indicate a concession (Lü, 1980).

⁵³ Note that Fen actually does not articulate the contrastive conjunction *danshi* ‘but’ in Chinese. So the disagreement is made more “off-record” (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

successfully, having received a form of “news receipts” (Jefferson, 1981; Maynard, 1997) or “ritualized disbelief” (Heritage, 1984a: 339) from Fah (*shi a*, ‘Really,’ line 13) to her prior assertion, Fen continues her talk from line 14 onwards.

So far, both Excerpts 4 and 5 have shown that on the one hand, the citizens orient to themselves as having a low deontic status in interrupting the lead officials by mitigating their interruptions with varied linguistic means, and on the other hand they claim high agency in getting the floor with the directive *You_{HON}-listen-to-me-say* and the accompanying index-finger P&W gesture. But with Excerpt 5 I also aim to point out that that on both linguistic and bodily levels Fen appears to display more deference to the lead official than Sha does seems to relate to the nature of the contexts of their interactions. Sha’s interaction with Gua is an intrinsically disaffiliative challenge sequence, whereas Fen initially starts a troubles-telling sequence, in which though Fah displays some affiliation with her, he proposes a somewhat disaffiliative course of action, and thus it is essentially affiliative but with some disaffiliative elements. I will return to this point after examining the next example in next section, where this time the citizen neither uses the honorific *nin* to display deference nor calls a halt to the lead official’s ongoing talk with the accompanying index-finger P&W gesture, and I argue that it is because its context is demonstrably affiliative.

4.4.2 The bodily display of deference

Before Excerpt 6, the conversation has lasted for about 21 minutes, in which Wu (citizen) tells Hai (the deputy secretary of regional Party Committee) about how stressed she is since she lost the court case against her ex-husband over a property dispute. Right before the excerpt, Hai has suggested that Wu should drop the case and move on for her own good. Nevertheless, this proposed action is oriented to by himself as easily taken to be as self-serving, for Wu’s dropping the case means withdrawing the petition, which is presumably

what most governmental officials try to achieve. So in order to eliminate that possible interpretation and as if to take her into his confidence, Hai emphasizes that Wu has to listen to him (lines 01 & 02) because he is ‘not like other people’ (line 03) and he is ‘relatively frank and honest’ (line 09). Although he has not directly pointed out who the ‘other people’ are, by excluding himself from a certain membership category – that is, those people who are blasé (line 07) and are not as frank and honest as him (line 09), he implies that some conduct such as giving a self-serving suggestion to a citizen, which is something that that category of people may be very likely to do, is definitely not what he is doing here (Sacks, 1972, 1992a; see also Psathas, 1999; Schegloff, 2007; Whitehead & Lerner, 2021). Such an attempt is observably registered and affiliated with by Wu with nods (lines 06 & 08) at a place where Hai is providing her with access to his own stance towards ‘other people’ (Stivers, 2008).

(6) ZChE3_#20 Remarried

- 01 Hai: 我 是 觉[↑]得: (.) .ss
 Wo shi jue [↑]de: (.) .ss
 1SG be think
I do [↑]thi:nk (.) .ss
- 02 你 得 听 我 的 话. (.) 这[↓]个::
 Ni dei ting wo de hua. (.) zhe[↓]ge::
 2SG must listen 1SG ASSC words this.CLF
you have to listen to me. (.) ↓Uhhh::
- 03 (0.5)/((a noise from outside renovation))
- 04 呃:我 跟 别 人 (关系) 不 一[↓]样.⁵⁴
 E: wo GEN BIE REN (GUANXI) BU YI[↓]YANG.
 Uh 1SG and other people relation NEG same
Uh: I'm NOT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE.
- 05 (.)
- 06 Wu: (1.2)/((nodding twice))
- 07 Hai: 我 经 历 的 事 儿 (并 不 多)= [因[↑]为, (.)
 Wo jingli de shir (bing bu duo)=[yin[↑]wei, (.)
 1SG experience ASSC thing actually NEG many because
The things that I've experienced are not many=[↑]because (.)
- 08 Wu: [((Opens mouth & nods))

⁵⁴ The high volume in the talk is due to renovations being carried out outside of the reception room.

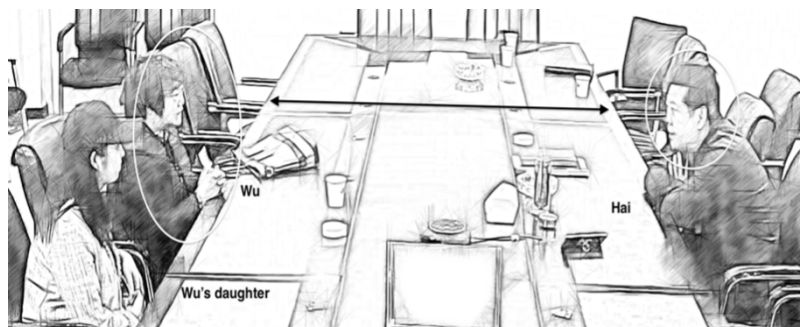


Figure 4.15 At the end of 1.09 Wu's body is at home position and Hai's mouth remains open

09 Hai: 我也比较耿直:,
 Wo ye bijiao gengzhi:,
 1SG also relatively upright
 I'm relatively frank and honest,

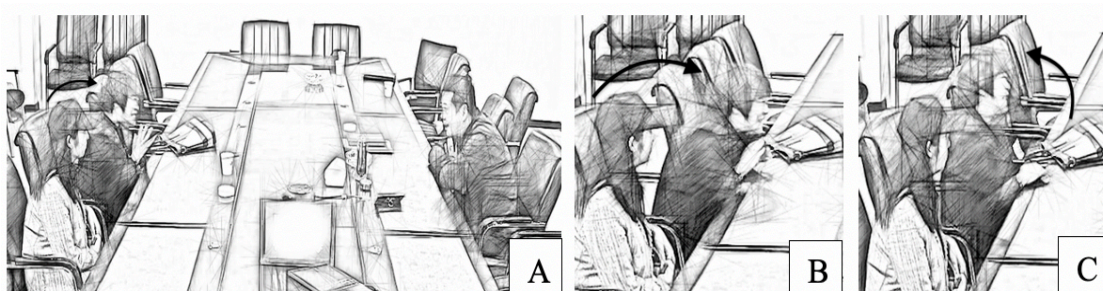


Figure 4.16 Wu starts smiling and bowing her head at the beginning of line 10 (A); her head bows at *wo* (B) and returns at the end of 1.10 (C); Hai's posture remains still & his mouth is kept open throughout 1.10

10 Wu:→ £书记, 我打断你一下.£
 £Shuji, wo daduan ni yixia.£
 secretary 1SG interrupt 2SG once
fSecretary, I interrupt you for a second.f

11 (.)

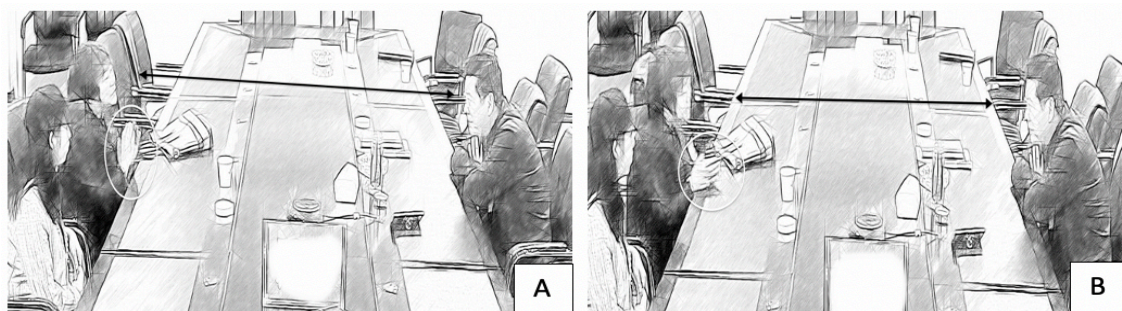


Figure 4.17 Wu raises her hand in a shape of 'pray' at *dui* (A), places it on the table at *nin* (B) in 1.12

12 Wu: 因为我对您啊:, 就是说, .hh [呃: 一说这(包案)是谁, (.)
 Yinwei wo dui nin a:, jiu shi shuo, .hh[e: yi shuo zhe (bao'an)shi shui, (.)
 because 1SG to HON.2SG just be say once say this undertake case be who
 [((Hai shuts his mouth))
**Because with regard to you_{HON} a:, I mean, .hh uh: once being told about
 who undertook (my) case, (.)**

- 13 我 对 您 对- (.) 做 进: 一 步 的 了 解.
 wo dui nin dui- (.) zuo jin: yi bu de liaojie.
 1SG to HON.2SG to make further one step ASSC know
I got to know more about you_{HON}.
- 14 我 现在 又- ↑又:- 就 是 说 再 婚 ↓啦.
 Wo xianzai you- ↑you:- jiu shi shuo zai hun ↓la.
 1SG now again again just be say again marry PRT
I'm now re- re-(I) mean, I'm remarried.
- 15 我 现在 的 丈夫 就 是 ↑您, (0.4) 就 是-
 Wo xianzai de zhangfu jiu shi ↑nin, (0.4) jiu shi-
 1SG now ASSC husband just be HON.2SG just be
My present husband was just your_{HON}-, (0.4) just-
- 16 原来 您 是 在 那 个- 市 热 力 公 司?
 Yuanlai nin shi zai nage- shi reli gongsi?
 originally HON.2SG be at that.CLF city thermal company
Originally you_{HON} were at the thermal company of the city?
- 17 Hai: °嗯.°=
 °en.°=
 CFM
 °Yeah.°

Unlike the previous examples where the citizens interrupt in varying levels of disagreement with the lead officials, Wu is indicating to Hai that even though she locally does a naturally disaligning action – an obstruction to Hai’s ongoing course of action at line 10 – she is not doing it in order to disagree or disaffiliate with him. In fact, she begins to speak during Hai’s ongoing course of action in order to seek solidarity with him in the service of achieving a larger interactional goal: asking Hai for a favor to find her daughter a job as an exchange for withdrawing the petition (not shown in the data). We join the interaction in the very beginning of the section where Wu is on her way to building a personal connection with him. So, upon hearing Hai is introducing his personal traits (lines 07-09), Wu takes this moment as a relevant place to also mention some information she gathered about him (lines 12-13), thereby, through disclosing that her present husband used to work under him (lines 15-16), establishing a closer relationship.

Here then is an interactional problem for Wu to attend to. That is, how to obstruct Hai’s action-in-progress and successfully obtain the floor at this particular moment but at the same time not to get it at the expense of the solidarity that they have already established

previously. So, in this excerpt, she is found to mobilize and coordinate a range of sequential, linguistic and bodily resources to mitigate her impeding action during claiming the floor and more importantly to clearly indicate to Hai that her upcoming talk is not disaffiliative.

First, Wu claims the floor by announcing *£Shuji, wo daduan ni yixia.£*. ‘£Secretary, I interrupt you for a second.£’ (line 10), indicating that a decision to take over the floor is already made by herself. And she particularly selects the informal form of address *ni* at this precise moment, exhibiting a high agency to interrupt Hai as the patient, though the institutional address term *shuji* ‘Secretary’ constitutes a deferential stance (Pan, 1995) (and note that she markedly shifts it to honorific *nin* when continuing her allegedly interruptive talk in lines 12-16). More importantly, Wu enacts her agency by continuing to launch the ensuing talk only after a micropause (line 11), disregarding the fact that Hai is visibly resisting it by keeping his mouth open that suggests a possible resumption of his turn (cf. Oloff, 2013; see also Floyd et al., 2016) (Figs 4.15-16) until Wu actually starts a next turn at line 12. Consequently, as we can see, she successfully obtains the floor and proceeds with her project in the following turns.

She also mitigates her self-alleged interruption with several resources. First, unlike the previous examples, Wu appears to avoid interrupting Hai’s *turn*-in-progress by only starting up right after Hai appears to have grammatically completed the causal clause in lines 07 & 09 (‘The things that I’ve experienced are not many=[↑]because ...’) and thus arrived at a possible completion point. This enables her to prevent violating Hai’s very right to bring one TCU to a completion point (Sacks et al., 1974). And by explicitly acknowledging that she is interrupting, Wu demonstrates that she has noticed Hai’s ‘continuing’ intonation and open mouth at the end of line 09 as an indication of continuation and thus actively registers her awareness of the problematic nature of her interruption (see Heritage & Raymond, 2016 on how naming the offense constitutes a part of an apology). The following account right at the

beginning of her next turn (*yinwei* ... ‘Because ...’, line 12)⁵⁵ also exhibits her orientation to her interrupting action as morally unacceptable, which thus needs to be accounted for (Heritage, 1990). Second, as Chinese is a pro-drop language, the statement without the subject pronoun *wo* ‘I’ is also grammatically correct (i.e., ‘Secretary, ‘Ø interrupt you for a second’), but with overtly naming herself as the agent, Wu actively takes the responsibility for doing the morally inapposite action. And the temporal minimizer *yixia* ‘for a second’ also minimizes the moral departure.

However, these deferential practices appear to be oriented to by Wu as neither sufficient to redress the moral misconduct nor clearly enough to project that her imminent action, far from being disaffiliative, is actually an appeal to Hai for something. This is indeed observable in her additional mobilization of her body (i.e., bowing her head) and facial expressions (i.e., grinning) to publicly and visibly display deference to Hai while announcing the interruption at line 10 (Fig 4.16), which not only displays a deferential stance but even a beseeching stance⁵⁶. Hence, compared to the linguistic display of deference in Ex. 4 & 5, these embodiments appear to be oriented to as less ambiguous⁵⁷, and thus as carrying a greater weight, in displaying deference, which enable Wu to not only mitigate the interruptive action here and now but also prospectively attend to the relation to the later sequence. So reasonably enough, the highly authoritative index-finger P&W gesture apparently does not fit in the affiliative context that Wu attempts to build and is thereby absent here. In addition, another remarkable difference between this excerpt and Ex. 4 & 5 is that Wu does not

⁵⁵ Note that the turn-initial phrase *yinwei wo dui nin a*: ‘Because with regard to you_{HON} a:’ appears to be what Jefferson (1984b) calls “other-attentive” talk that serves to accomplish a stepwise transition to a new topic, which constitutes a special warrant for the intervention to happen here.

⁵⁶ Such a beseeching stance is even visible in her hand gesture in her immediate next turn at line 12 (see Fig. 4.17). Also, this type of hand gesture seems similar to a conventional hand gesture in Italian called *Mani giunte* ‘praying hands’, which is being used along with speech to indicate that “the person ... is making an entreaty of some sort” and “[is] appeal[ing] to the listener to accept the logical consequences of what the speaker has been saying” (Kendon, 1995: 259).

⁵⁷ Indeed, sometimes the honorific *nin* can be used in formulating sarcasm. For example, when a student received an A but was found out to have cheated in the exam, the headteacher might say 您真行! ‘You_{HON} did a good job!’. It can also be used to formulate an accusation (see Excerpt 7).

explicitly call a halt to Hai's ongoing course of action or talk with the directive *YOU_{HON}-listen-to-me-say*. This reflects Wu's anticipation of the low contingency in getting the floor (Curl & Drew, 2008) that emerges from the substantially affiliative sequential environment. And it also reflects her orientation to the unfitness of the directive that implicates a sequence-disjunction (see Chapter 3), as she deliberately marks her interruptive talk as not a digression from but an addition to Hai's self-description with the turn-initial phrase 'Because with regard to you_{HON} a:' in line 12.

So, by comparing this excerpt with Ex. 4 & 5, we can see that in the course of calling a halt to or impeding the lead officials' ongoing talk, the citizens' choice of how much degree of deference that they are going to display to the lead officials and whether through linguistic or bodily means depends on what kind of context they are creating moment-by-moment in interaction and how much affiliation and social solidarity that they attempt to build with the lead officials. To further illustrate the consequentiality of the context for the participants' formulations of claiming the floor, we now turn to a deviant case where the citizen shows no deference to the lead official whatsoever as she interrupts and calls a halt to his continuing talk.

4.4.3 A deviant case

As we have discussed before, all citizens in the previous examples (Ex. 2 (4), 3, 5 & 6) orient to their low deontic status in calling a halt to or obstructing the lead officials' turns/actions-in-progress by displaying more or less deference to them with various linguistic and bodily resources, so as to mitigate the morally inapposite action as well as their claims to the floor. So this seems to suggest that the citizens always orient to such actions as morally unacceptable by reference to their low deontic status. However, this section will show that the citizens can select not to show this orientation

when doing a highly disaffiliative action, such as accusing the lead official in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 7 is taken from the same encounter as Excerpt 2 (4). It happens 3 minutes after the encounter starts and 10 minutes earlier than Excerpt 2. At lines 01-02, in response to Sha's prior request for reinvestigating the case, Gua asserts that all the controversial points that Sha has raised before have all been investigated. This assertion, however, triggers Sha to progressively accuse Gua of saying one thing and doing another.

(7) LXGs2e2_#1 Truly scummy

- 01 Gua: 这 你们 说 的 这 个 也 都 查 了。
zhe nimen shuo de zhe ge ye dou cha le.
this 2PL say ASSC this CLF also all investigate PFV
What you mentioned were all investigated.
- 02 不 是 没 查。
bu shi mei cha.
NEG be NEG investigate
It's not that they weren't.
- 03 (0.5)

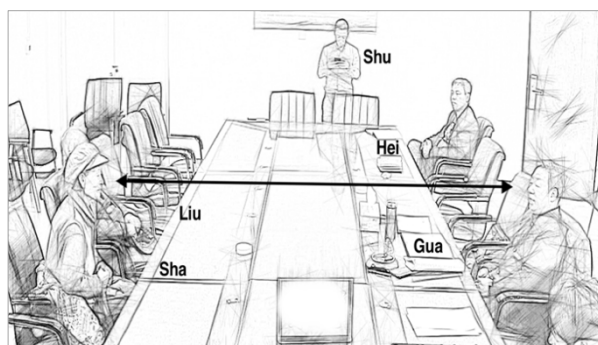


Figure 4.18 Sha and Gua's posture and gestures right after 1.02; Gua's posture stays still until 1.29

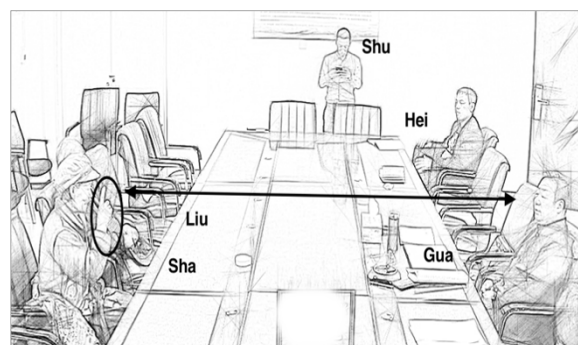


Figure 4.19 Sha's gesture at *zhe* in 1.04 and her RH is lifted throughout this bit of interaction

- Hand |~~~~~*****~~~~~
- 04 Sha: ↓嗯:: ↑这 个 [今- 今-]
↓en:: ↑zhe ge [jin- jin-]
uh this CLF today today
Mm:: ↑this to- today-
- 05 Gua: [呃: 也 都] 查 了.=
[e: ye dou] cha le.=
uh also all investigate PFV
Uh: all were investigated.=
- Hand ~**

06 Sha: =诶=
=ei=
INJ
=Well=
07 Gua: =但 ↑是: [:,
=dan↑shi:[:,
but
↑But:[:,

Hand ~***~
08 Sha:→ [↑好:, 这 是- 先 打住, 别 说了。
[↑hao:, zhe shi- xian dazhu, bie shuo le.
good this be first stop NEG say PRT
↑Oka:y, this is- Stop for a second, stop talking.

09 Gua: >°嗯嗯.°<=
>°en en.°<=
mm mm
>°Mm.°<

Hand ~~~~~
10 Sha: =都 查 了, 是 吧;
=dou cha le, shi ba;
all investigate PFV be PRT
All were investigated, yeah;

Head |nodding|
11 Gua: °对.°
°dui.°
right
°Yes.°



Figure 4.20 Index-finger gesture at *zai* in l.12



Figure 4.21 S's gesture is changed to an open-palm at *zhong* in l.12



Figure 4.22 Open-palm at *cheng* near the end of l.13; it is kept until line 28

Hand ~***~
12 Sha: .hh 呃::>现 在 今 天 我 就 着 重 想 说 <这 个 问 题.=
.hh e::>↑xianzai jintian wo jiu zhuozhong xiang shuo< zhe ge wenti.=
uh now today 1SG just emphasize want say this CLF problem
.hh uh::>↑now today I just want to stress< this problem.

Hand ~~~~~
13 =就 ↑说, .hh [您 多 些 承 诺,
=jiu↑shuo, .hh [nin duoxie chengnuo,
just say HON.2SG how long promise

That ↑is, you_{HON} have promised since a long time ago that

14 Gua: [嗯
[en
mm
Mm.

Hand *****~*****~*****~*****~*****

15 Sha: 就: 我们 赵书言, [死者 家属 提出来的 那些个
jiu: women Zhao Shuyan, [sizhe jiashu tichulai de naxie ge
about 1PL NM the dead family raise ASSC those CLF
for those ∅ that are raised by the family members of the deceased Zhao Shuyan

16 Gua: [嗯
[en
mm
Mm.

Head_{Gua} |nodding |
Hand *****~*****~*****~*****~*****

17 Sha: 相关 的 问题 和 疑 点,
xiangguan de wenti he yi dian,
relevant ASSC problem and suspicious points
(those) relevant problems and questionable points

Hand ~~~~~~*****~*****~*****~*****~*****

18 .ptk .hhh 呃: 要 [<一>] 查对 核实.=
.ptk .hhh e: yao [<YI YI>] CHADUI HESHI.=
uh need one by one check verify
.ptk .hhh uh: (they) will be [CHECKED AND VERIFIED <ONE BY ONE>].

19 Gua: [呃::
[e:
uh
Uh:::

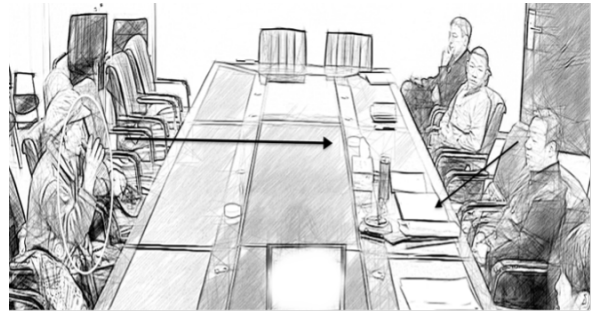


Figure 4.23 Sha forms an index-finger gesture at ge in 1.20

Figure 4.24 Sha switches back to open-palm gesture at the end of 1.20

Hand_{Sha} *****~*****~*****~*****~*****
Gaze away Sha ..at Sha ..away
20 Gua: =我 那 ↓个::[我 的:: 侦查员 们 说 了,
=ni na ↓ge::[wo de:: zhenchayuanmen shuo le,
1SG that CLF 1SG POSS investigators say PFV
My::- My:: investigators said,

21 Sha: [呃-
[e-
uh
Uh-

Hand_{Sha} *****
 Gaze awayat Sha
 22 Gua: 都能给你解决清楚咯.=
 dou neng gei ni jiejué qingchu lou=
 all can for 2SG solve clear PRT
 'all can be fully resolved for you'.



Figure 4.25 Sha's gesture at *ni* at the beginning of 1.23



Figure 4.26 Sha's gesture at *a* at the end of 1.23



Figure 4.27 Sha's another hand stroke at *shuo* in 1.25

Hand ~~~~~*****
 23 Sha: → =>你听我说, 你听我说< ↑啊,
 =>NI TING WO SHUO, NI TING WO SHUO <↑A,
 2SG listen 1SG say 2SG listen 1SG say PRT
 >YOU LISTEN TO ME SAY, YOU LISTEN TO ME SAY< ↑A,

24 Gua: ° 嗯 °
 ° en °
 mm
 ° Mm. °

Hand ~~~~~*****
 25 Sha: → 听我说。
 TING WO SHUO.
 listen 1SG say
 LISTEN TO ME SAY.

Hand_{Sha} **
 26 Gua: 嗯:.
 en:.
 mm
 Mmm.

Hand_{Sha} ****
 27 (0.2)

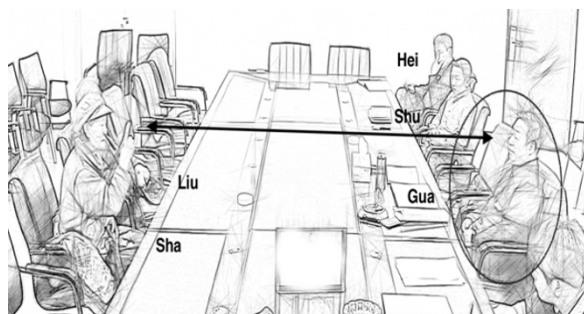


Figure 4.28 Sha's gesture changes from open palm to index-finger points at ZHEN ZHA in 1.28

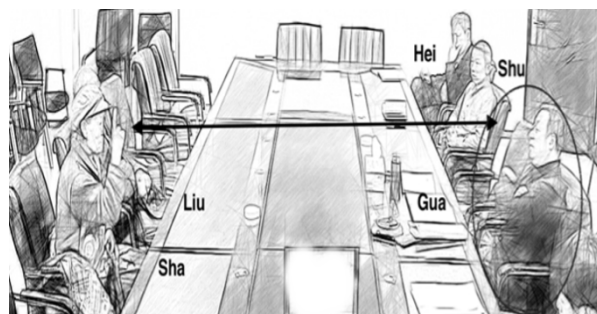


Figure 4.29 Gua crosses his arms right after Sha's ZHEN ZHA in 1.29

- Hand ~~~~~|*****
- 28 Sha: <↑这 才 是 (.) 真 渣.>
 <↑zhe cai shi (.) ZHEN ZHA.>
 this actually be really scum
 <↑This is (.) **TRULY SCUMMY.**>
- Gaze_{Gua} away.....at Sha
- Hand ~~~~~|*****
- 29 那 是 这 个 真 渣, 到 现在, 分↑局- (1.0)
 na shi zhe ge ZHEN ZHA, dao xianzai, fen↑ju- (1.0)
 that be this CLF really scummy until now substation
It is this TRULY SCUMMY that until now the (police) substation- (1.0)
- 30 Gua: 呃[::
 e [::
 uh
 Uh[::
- Hand ~~~~~|*****|~~
- 31 Sha: [没 有 任 何 [↑的:-
 [MEI YOU RENHE [↑DE:-
 NEG have any ASSC
HASN'T TAKEN ↑ANY:-
- 32 Gua: [呃:::
 [e:::
 uh
 Uh:::
- 33 Gua: 我 这 样 的, 我 的 (几[十 人 让 他们)-
 wo zheyang de, wo de (ji [shi ren rang tamen]-
 wo this PRT 1SG POSS dozens people let 3PL
I do this way. My dozens of people, let them-
- Hand ~****|
- 34 Sha: [行动.
 [xingdong.
 action
action.
- 35 Gua: 让 他们- 耐:心 的 跟 你们 解释 一 次.
 rang tamen- nai:xin de gen nimen jieshi yi ci.
 let 3PL patient ASSC with 2PL explain one time
let them- pa:tiently explain it to you.

It is evident that Sha baldly calls a halt to Gua's ongoing talk at two sequential places: one at line 8 and one at lines 23 & 25. At line 08, by virtue of her previous failures to initiate a sequence at lines 4 & 6, Sha launches a third attempt by deliberately closing up Gua's apparently incomplete talk ('↑But::', line 7) with a "sequence-closing third" token ↑*hao*: '↑Ok_a:y' (Schegloff, 2007) and imperatively ordering him to 'stop talking'. Such a bald injunction along with index-finger P&W gestures from line 4 until line 12 (Figs. 4.19 & 4.20) undoubtedly prefigure some highly dispreferred action towards Gua.

So, with receiving Gua's weak compliance to yield the floor at line 9 and further securing his confirmation on 'All were investigated, yeah_z' (line 10) at line 11 ('°Yes°' with a nodding), Sha at line 12 starts to preface an accusation sequence by topicalizing and problematizing this assertion ('.hh uh::>↑*now* today I just want to stress< this problem.'). Then she continues to build a case by reporting a promise that Gua has made to them long time ago (... *nin duoxie chengnuo* '... you_{HON} have promised since a long time ago ...' lines 13, 15, 17-18), implying that he has failed to fulfill his pledge (Sacks, 1992b:181)⁵⁸. Also, note that Sha's use of the honorific *nin* to address Gua is not to display deference but to single him out in particular in this accusatory context, not as anyone in the society who makes a promise but a government official who is held more accountable for keeping his promise⁵⁹. Such a use of the honorific form illustrates the equivocality of linguistic expressions in displaying deference.

⁵⁸ Note that this indirectly reported speech is deliberately constructed as a formal commitment that is more likely to be provided to a court as formal evidence, for Sha uses a legal description "the family members of the deceased Zhao Shuyan" to refer to herself instead of using, for example, pronouns such as 'us' or 'me'. Thus, it is in this sense that Sha is sequentially doing an accusation rather than simply a complaint or a blame. In addition, it is worth noting that the degree of how finely probing into the case is upgraded from a simple or conventional investigation that is implied in the verb *cha* 'investigate' that Gua has used previously to a more careful investigation that involves checking and verifying the relevant problems and questionable points one by one here (line 18). By doing so, Sha implies that even if it is true that all of the questionable points are investigated, it is not thorough enough.

⁵⁹ See Afshari's (2022) work on a similar usage in Persian, in which she argues that when using the Persian V-pronoun *shomā* to address one intimate co-participant, the speaker is holding the co-participant accountable for breaking some normative expectations, such as a question posed by the speaker to the coparticipant does not receive an answer in the first place.

However, just as Sha is on her way to articulate the ‘accusable’ at line 18 (‘(They) will be [CHECKED AND VERIFIED <ONE BY ONE>’), Gua begins to speak in the middle of her turn – in interjacent overlap position (Jefferson, 1986) – at line 19 (‘Uh:::’). Then, upon hearing it arrives at a possible TRP, he immediately produces a defense at lines 20 & 22 (‘My::- My:: investigators said, ‘all can be fully resolved for you’’). Clearly, Sha’s accusing action is not yet complete here, for an accusation is standardly made after provision of some evidence. So what Gua does here is not only interrupting Sha’s delivery of the evidence but also forestalling her enactment of the projectably accusatory action by prematurely putting up a defense in lines 20 & 22. In addition, in this defensive response, Gua appears to shift the blame onto the investigators by directly reporting their talk, thereby deliberately transforming his identity as the accused agent and thus being a ‘defender’ into an ‘animator’ here (Goffman, 1981). That is, the investigator now becomes the main ‘defender’, who is the “author” of the commitment ‘all can be fully resolved for you’(line 20) and the “principal” of having it realized (ibid.). Note that Gua also deploys a possessive pronoun *wo de* ‘my’ plus a group term *zhenchayuanmen* ‘investigators’ (vs. e.g. ‘the investigators’) to associate the referent with himself, thereby highlighting his responsibility or ‘role’ in the domain of leading the investigators to conduct the investigation (Stivers, 2007).

It is under such sequential and interactional circumstances that Sha at line 23 brusquely calls a halt to Gua’s ongoing talk by rapidly and loudly uttering the declarative directive twice with a series of ‘forceful’ hand gestures (>*NI TING WO SHUO, NI TING WO SHUO*<‘>YOU LISTEN TO ME SAY, YOU LISTEN TO ME SAY<’; Figs. 4.25 & 4.26). And note that the person reference is also switched from the prior honorific *nin* (line 13) to informal *ni* here. More importantly, by appending a particularly high-pitched particle \hat{A} to the end of the turn, Sha marks the actions that she is doing in the turn as not simply a directive but also a protest against Gua’s previous interruption (Wu, 2004). Yet in receiving a

weak compliance from Gua in the next turn (*°en.°°Mm.°*, line 24), Sha subsequently issues a bald imperative (*TING WO SHUO* ‘LISTEN TO ME SAY.’, line 25) with another ‘forceful’ hand stroke (Fig. 4.27) (cf. Kent & Kendrick, 2016), which consequently receives a clear compliance from Gua at line 26 (*en.*: ‘Mmm’).

Having finally regained the floor, Sha in her next turn escalates the previously interrupted accusation sequence into an insult (<*↑zhe cai shi* (.) *ZHEN ZHA.*> ‘<↑This is (.) TRULY SCUMMY>’, line 28). This escalation is not only realized in a linguistic way but also in an embodied way. First, Sha changes her vertical palm gestures to an index-finger points gesture as she utters *ZHEN ZHA* ‘TRULY SCUMMY’ in line 28 (Fig. 4.28). Then she continues to accuse the whole institution – the police substation including Gua and the investigators (lines 29, 31 & 34) – of doing one thing and saying another. And note that immediately after Sha’s ‘TRULY SCUMMY’ in line 29, Gua notably shifts his postures from being static throughout the accusation sequence that Sha initiates from line 08 to this moment to cross his arms on chest that appears to display a defensiveness at the very least (Fig. 4.29). This displays Gua’s demonstrable orientation to the current action as being escalated to a more aggressive one. Nevertheless, rather than responding to Sha’s insult, Gua provides a remedial plan in lines 33 & 35.

In summary, Excerpt 7 demonstrates that Sha’s choice to not mitigate her calling a halt to Gu’s ongoing talk through displaying deference to him, whether with her language or body, is tied to the actions that she is doing in this particular context moment by moment. It is apparent that the interactive context here is consistently antagonistic, which is different from the context in Excerpt 4. As we discussed earlier, in Excerpt 4 although Sha initially launches a disaffiliative challenge sequence, as it runs into problems, she abruptly shifts to a request sequence that requires Gua’s alignment and potentially affiliation later. Thus, to readjust the context from disaffiliative to less disaffiliative, Sha deliberately shows deference

to Gua by shifting the address forms from informal *ni* to honorific *nin*, so as not only to mitigate her directive action but also to shift the footing (Goffman, 1981). And at the same time, she also lays claim to the floor by deploying the declarative formulation of You-listen-to-me-say with an accompanying index finger P&W gesture. However, in Excerpt 7 far from readjusting the context, Sha's mobilization of these unmitigated directives and the 'forceful' hand gestures (i.e., 'index finger P&W' and 'vertical palm waving') is in fact to contribute to the establishment of, and thereby to maintain and enhance, the accusatory context. Hence, with this deviant case, I argue that Sha's bald directives and authoritative hand gestures are in fact designed as the components of the construction of the activity of accusing, and that by displaying no deference to Gua whatsoever, Sha invokes not her relatively low deontic status in claiming the floor but her moral authority in accusing Gua of being a government official having failed at fulfilling his commitments to the citizens.

4.5 Concluding discussion

This chapter has explored one of the possibly "seen but unnoticed" phenomenon (Garfinkel, 1967: 48) – participants' seeming mismatch between language and the body in displaying a consistent stance (here, deferential vs. authoritative) towards their recipient. It is assumed, for example, that when displaying deference to someone, one's body movements are expected to be aligned with their deferential language. However, by systematically examining the citizens' use of the deferential address form *nin* and the authoritative index-finger P&W gestures (Ex. 4 & 5), we have seen that language and the body – as two distinct, and yet interdependent, communication systems – are actually mobilized by the citizens in the service of attending to the varied dimensions of their actions in progress. That is, in calling a halt or impeding the lead officials' ongoing talk, the citizens orient to their interrupting action as morally inapposite by mitigating it with some linguistically deferential

practices and orient to their claiming the floor as an action that they are entitled to do by underscoring it through the mobilization of their hands. In brief, on some occasions, linguistic resources are exploited by the citizens to mitigate the morally unacceptable conduct whereas the bodily resources (i.e. hand gestures here) are exploited to complement and enhance the claimed high deontic stance that has been inevitably modified by the deferential practices.

With further examining the situations where during calling a halt or obstructing the lead officials' ongoing talk, the citizens either select to display deference to them through also bodily means (Ex. 6) or not to display deference whatsoever (Ex. 7), we have also seen that the citizens' choice of whether to mitigate their interrupting action and whether through linguistic or bodily means or both, if to display deference, is related to the nature of the interactive contexts that they are creating moment-by-moment in interaction. Their varied choices in relation to the nature of the interactive contexts are summarized in Table 4.2 shown below.

Excerpt	Context	Language		Body	
		Deference	Agency	Deference	Agency
#7 'Truly scummy'	Strongly disaffiliative (Accusation)	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You-listen-to-me-say ▪ Imperative 'Stop talking' 	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Index-finger P&W ▪ 'Vertical palm' waves
#4 'Expert'	Disaffiliative (Challenge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Honorific <i>nin</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You_{HON}-listen-to-me-say 	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Index-finger P&W
#5 'Family affair'	Less affiliative (Advice to troubles-telling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Honorific <i>nin</i> ▪ Explicitly acknowledging interruption ▪ Temporal & numeric minimizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Announcement of interruption ▪ You_{HON}-listen-to-me-say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smiling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Index-finger P&W
#6 'Remarried'	Affiliative (Request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explicitly acknowledging interruption ▪ Temporal minimizer ▪ Institutional address term ▪ Smiling voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Announcement of interruption ▪ Informal <i>ni</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grinning ▪ Head-bowing 	x

Table 4.2 The citizens' use of language and the body to display deference and claim high agency in relation to interactive contexts

It is evident that on the one hand, the more affiliative the context is, the more the citizens use linguistic resources to display deference and incline to increase the embodied display of deference, and on the other hand that the more disaffiliative the context is, the more likely they mobilize their hand gestures to increase the directive force. Such a pattern appears to suggest that whether to display a deferential or an authoritative stance towards the recipient, body movements in comparison to talk are oriented to by the speakers as carrying greater weight and perhaps genuineness in displaying a certain stance. This seems to more or less correspond with John Napier's (1980) depiction of the relation between talk and gesture: "If language was given to men to conceal their thoughts, then gesture's purpose was to disclose them". And indeed, the citizen's use of an honorific *nin* in formulating an accusation in Excerpt 7 has attested to the equivocality of the linguistic expressions in displaying deference.

This point is further manifested by the analysis of the citizens' use of the informal second-person singular reference *ni* and the honorific *nin* in doing different social actions (Ex. 2 & 3). In a single encounter, it is found that while doing an action that they are highly entitled to do (e.g. making requests that are related to their petitions), the citizens deploy an informal *ni* to address the lead official, whereas when interrupting the lead official, they switch to an honorific *nin*. Such a practice demonstrates that the deferential/non-deferential semantics of the second-person singular pronouns is mobilized by the citizens as an interactional resource that serves to accomplish a specific course of action and achieving a particular interactional goal. Hence, as stated earlier, using an honorific person reference does *not* necessarily mean that the speaker is deferential to the recipient. The honorific form here is used by the citizens as a mitigation device.

Returning to Table 4.2, we can also see that whether to claim the floor or to acknowledge their interruption, the citizens deploy a form of assertion, a declarative format (e.g. ‘You listen to me say’, ‘I interject a remark’, ‘I interrupt you for a second’). This implicates that in comparison to an interrogative format – a request-permission formulation, such as ‘Can I stop you for a second?’, whether it is the lead officials’ future action of yielding the floor or their own imminent interruption, they are formulated and treated by the citizens as a *fait accompli* (cf. Etelämäki & Couper-Kuhlen, 2017). This demonstrates that even though the citizens orient to their relatively lower deontic status in interrupting the lead officials by deploying some deferential practices, they do not fully give in to the lead official’s authority in controlling the interactional agenda, but rather claim their own agency in directing the local trajectory of the talk. Such conduct is congruent with their resistance to yielding the floor when being directed to do so by the lead officials in Chapter 3. Thus, whether it is the citizens or the lead officials, in order to achieve the goal of getting the floor, they have to mobilize certain linguistic and bodily resources to claim and negotiate their deontic rights to the speakership. Just as Heritage (2005: 95) remarks, “If we do not look at interactional data, it is all easy to see authority as an all-or-nothing phenomenon”. Likewise, subordination is neither an all-or-nothing phenomenon. Here, with the conversation-analytic approach to examine the real interactions between citizens and officials, we have seen that the citizens display deference to the lead officials when interrupting them in one way and claim high agency in taking the floor in another.

This chapter, as a continuation of Chapter 3, has again illustrated the citizens’ consistent orientation to the lead officials as the authority in controlling the interactional agenda by displaying deference to them with mainly a marked T-form shift when interrupting them and negotiating speakership. But at the same time they also orient to themselves as being highly entitled to obtain the floor at a particular moment in interaction by underscoring

their agency through the mobilization of a declarative format of directive and an accompanying index-finger points and wave gesture. Such a practice is demonstrably successful in a sense that the lead officials eventually, if not immediately, grant the citizens floor and implicitly accept the deference that the citizens display to them by keeping the informal form of address in addressing the citizens. Thus, it is in this way that their institutionally asymmetrical identities are “talked into being” and become procedurally consequential for the interactional outcome.

5 Granting permission in claims to the floor: *(ni) shuo (ba)* '(You) go ahead (*ba*)'

[A]ction ascription is itself a social action; recipients are 'doing' something when they treat a prior turn as having implemented a given action.

(Drew, 2022: 58)

5.1 Introduction

In the previous two analytic chapters, I centered on how the lead officials (chapter 3) and the citizens (chapter 4) mobilized certain linguistic and bodily resources to call a halt to or obstruct the other party's (projectably) ongoing course of action or talk so as to divert the line of action and implement their own interactional agenda in the next turn(s). With an empirical examination of how they formulated their directives and responses to such directives (e.g. complying, resisting, or rejecting), it became clear that the lead official's deontic authority in controlling the interactional agenda at certain moments in interaction was negotiated and co-constructed by the two parties at a turn-by-turn basis.

The present chapter will continue exploring how the two parties negotiate their deontic rights to the floor by this time looking at how the participants, by granting the recipient permission to speak next, lay claim to the floor at a particular moment in talk-in-interaction. Rather than looking at the canonical request form ('Can I') that grammatically indexes the speaker asking for a permission, this study focuses on a relatively equivocal form – declarative clauses or statements that the speakers use to assert imminent actions (e.g. 'What I wanna say to you is' and 'I tell you_{HON} this thing') – in a sense that the declarative form does not make relevant the action of 'asking' for permission but can be treated by the recipient as if it had done so (Drew, 2022).

To illustrate, consider the example shown below that Schegloff (1980) uses to demonstrate that when a 'telling' is projected at line 01, the next thing that the speaker

produces is not a ‘telling’ but a question, and he calls the action projection at line 01 “preliminary to preliminary”, or “pre-pre”.

(1) JSLR (Schegloff, 1980: 110; Modified)

01 Jn:→ Say Joe, I wanna tell you sump’n.
 02 (0.5) ((Edie and Rae talking to each other))
 03 Y’know (that- when we wen’ up t’that) place
 04 (to drive a) car?
 05 (0.2)
 06 So I went back [there?
 07 [(Leni talking))
 08 En d’you know something=
 09 =Listen to this Edie, you guys get this.
 10 Remember when we wen’tuh look et the cars?
 11 R: [Yeah,
 12 E: [Yeah,
 13 Jn: We wen’tuh see the fella the next day,
 14 t’drive the car, en he thought you were
 15 my son! eh hah hah hah hah!

Clearly, in response to the assertion ‘Say Joe, I wanna tell you sump’n’, Joe does not treat it as a request that makes his permission next relevant but as a pre-pre by waiting for Jn’s continuation of the projected talk with silence at line 02 (Schegloff, 2007b). By finding this responsive silence unproblematic and in fact acting as a ‘go-ahead’ (Schegloff, 2007: 30), Jn then continues with the preliminaries (i.e. the questions in lines 03-06 and 09-10) to the projected telling in lines 13-15. Here we can see that in response to such action projections, silence, or continuers such as ‘mm hm’ (see an example in Schegloff 1980: 107-108) can suffice⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ Hoey (2020) studies how the construction *let me X* (e.g. *Let me tell you what happened*) is used by speakers in English conversations to self-authorize some activity that serves to “advance the speaker’s interests and the initiatives” (p. 3). He finds that in response to such self-authorizing actions, it is uncommon in his data collection that the recipients explicitly grant permission, e.g. with *sure*; instead, the self-authorized action is usually carried out while the recipient waits or suspends their ongoing activities (2020: 21, fn5).

Similarly, in response to directives that only require immediate actions, even an acknowledgement token may appear to be redundant. For example, Weidner (2015) studies a particular Polish construction *Proszę mi powiedzieć* ‘Please tell (me)’ in doctor-patient interaction. She points out that in her data corpus there is only one instance in which the patient’s *Proszę mi powiedzieć* ‘Please tell (me)’ receives an overt acknowledgement ‘yeah’ from the doctor. It is argued that the patient’s ‘Please tell (me)’ is understood by the doctor as “testing the waters in preparation for a particular, contextually ill-fitted, course of action, which ..., is of a dispreferred sequential status” (p. 77) and thus the doctor produces a go-ahead to encourage its progression. However, maybe because of the lack of instances, she did not expand on how this instance is distinct from her other instances that do not have any verbal responses.

But on some occasions, such declaratively formatted preliminaries can be oriented to and treated by the recipients as a request for permission to advance the projected actions. Examples are shown below, of which the former (2) is a doctor-patient interaction and the latter (3) a political interview.

(2) LOG 10750 (Frankel, 1990: 241; modified)

Dr: Very good. (0.4) very good=lemme see yer ankle.
(2.2)
Dr: Pt. .hhh VERY GOOD
Pt:→ I wanna ask yih som'n.
Dr: What's that.
(0.6)
Pt: Pt. .hh (0.5) I have- (0.6) (this) second toe (.) that was broken. (0.4) But I wen' to the p'diatrist (.) becuz I couldn' find a doctor on th' weekend. (0.4) En he said it wasn' broken.=it was. So it wasn' (.) taken care of properly .hh N' when I'm on my feet, I get a sensation in it.=I mean is there anything (th't) c'n be do:ne?
Dr: How long ago d'ju break it
Pt: Mmh two years.
Dr: yih c'd put a metatarsal pad underneath it ...

(3) UK: Newsnight: Civil Unrest in China (Heritage & Clayman, 2010: 247–248)

01 IR: Well what do you think do you think this strengthen:s
02 (1.0) a great deal: the hand of Zhao Ze Young and the
03 reformers, the radicals.
04 DH: I think that (0.2) Jao Ze Young just as he was
05 responsible for bringing (.) China out of the turbulence
06 which followed the .hhh uh resignation of Hu Yao Bung as
07 General Secretary in=uh January nineteen eighty seven.
08 .hhh just as he (.) brought China out of that turbulence
09 he will bring Chi:na out of this turbulence. .hhh and I
10 think his stature has already been increased (.) by
11 recent events (.) .h and ah (.) I'll go out on a limb
12 and say: I think it's likely to be increased further
13 .hh by future events
14 → but I would like to make two very quick points.=
15 IR: =Very quickly if you would.
16 DH: There's a genera:tional thing he:re ...

Different from Excerpt 1, consent is expressly given by the doctor ('What's that') and the interviewer ('Very quickly if you would') in these two excerpts. Unlike silence and continuers, the responses here constitute a full turn at talk (Schegloff, 1982) and deliver the stance that the speakers are permitted to continue the projected extended unit of talk. So, not

only do this type of responses work as “go-ahead”⁶¹ that “promotes progress of the sequence” (Schegloff, 2007: 30), but also deontically establish the consent-givers as the authority who controls the interactional agenda at this particular moment. Moreover, that the patient and the interviewee do not carry on their projected course of action right after the production of the preliminaries until the consent is given demonstrates their expectations of some sort of acknowledgements or permission provided by their counterparts in the next turn. Thus, in this sense, the action of requesting for permission is made interactionally relevant by and demonstrably consequential for the conduct of both participants.

Note that the preliminaries in these three examples are all formulated with a form of preference statement (‘I wanna X’ or ‘I would like to X’), which, in Clayman and Heritage’s words, implicates a self-attentive action that “in context can endow the action with a “requesting” import” (2014: 60). But as we can observe here, similar compositions in similar sequence-initiating positions have not prompted the same responsive actions (i.e. silence in Ex. 1 and granting permissions in Ex. 2 & 3). This may be because, as Schegloff (1980) acknowledges, the interactions in Ex. 1 and Ex. 2 & 3 may involve different “turn-taking systems in which next-speakership, and rights to it, are (or may be) differently organized” (p. 144). Further, he argues that ‘request for permission’ seems to be another type of pre-delicate that marks some sort of delicateness – “not the character of the projected question or other action, but the possibly violative or special character of the party in question talking at all” (1980: 144-145). Thus, this chapter will examine how asymmetrical turn-allocations between

⁶¹ Note that the “go-ahead” response type is different from the imperative responses that this chapter examines. Schegloff (2007) claims that the “go ahead” response “promotes progress of the sequence by encouraging its recipient to go ahead with the base FPP which the “pre” was projecting.” (p.30). So, it is encouraging the recipient to go ahead instead of permitting to go ahead. For example,

BS (Terasaki, 2004: 209)

1 D .hh Oh guess what.

2 R → What.

3 D Professor Deelies came in, 'n he- put another book on iz order

D is encouraged but not permitted by R to produce the news in the next turn that he projects with ‘oh guess what’ at line 01.

the two parties are made locally relevant through their conduct and how it thereby affects their formation and ascription of a given action.

Also, it should be noted here that the cases this chapter examines are distinct from the examples shown above in two ways. First, with regard to sequential positioning, that the citizen either producing a preliminary and its sequelae in the same turn or proceeding to deliver the projected talk immediately after receiving some sort of continuers (e.g. *en* ‘Mm’ or *a* ‘Ah’) makes the lead officials’ responsive permission arguably redundant. Second, in some cases, the preliminaries are constructed with a topic-comment structure (e.g., ‘>And, what I wanna< say to you is, Secretary Zun’) that not only highly projects that the main clause or the comment is forthcoming but also displays that the projected action or talk is already on its way to being produced, at least in the grammatical sense.

Therefore, this chapter aims to explore: 1) in what sequential context and how the lead officials, through granting the citizens permission to continue projected talk, display authority over the interactional agenda, when ‘granting permission’ is not made relevant by the citizens’ prior turn(s), and 2) how the citizens in return use the responsive ‘granting permission’ as an interactional resource to resist the lead officials’ deontic authority displayed in their prior imperative directives. Specifically, a particular imperative construction that the participants use to implement granting permission will be examined: a bare verb *shuo* (lit. ‘say/speak’, meaning ‘go ahead’ here) and its variant – with a suffixed particle *ba* (*shuo ba* ‘Go ahead *ba*’).

In what follows, I first discuss action ascription from the perspective of the sequential and interactional significance of second position in relation to epistemic and deontic negotiations (section 5.2.1). Then, I briefly review some CA work on imperatively formatted responsive permission in other languages (section, 5.2.2). In section 5.3, the analysis focuses on the lead officials’ granting permission in claims to the floor with (*ni*) *shuo* ‘(you) go

ahead’. Section 5.4 will show how the citizens resist the lead officials’ authority by responding to prior directives with *shuo+ba* ‘go ahead *ba*’, as if they were requested for permission. I conclude by discussing the implications of the analysis on action formation and ascription in relation to participants’ deontic statuses (section 5.5).

5.2 Action ascription

5.2.1 Stance negotiation in second position

Action ascription is, according to Levinson (2013: 104), “the assignment of an action to a turn as revealed by the response of a next speaker, which, if uncorrected in the following turn(s), becomes in some sense a joint ‘good enough’ understanding”. This ‘good enough’ understanding emphasizes that actions are not unequivocally recognizable but rather often negotiated by participants. Such possible ambiguities in action formation and ascription concomitantly pose a challenge to the core of the turn-taking system – next-turn proof procedure (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974: 728).

I here quote Drew’s comment, in which he claims calling it ‘proof’ procedure is perhaps unfortunate,

because it suggests, and has been taken to mean, that whatever particular action a recipient ascribes to the prior turn, as displayed in their response, *proves* that that is indeed *the* action that the speaker enacted or performed, or conducted or however one chooses to describe *doing*. This is misleading; a response in a next turn’s talk displays *an* analysis of the action implemented by the prior speaker’s turn. The recipient’s response displays the way she takes or chooses to understand that prior turn. The recipient is in effect *selecting*, from among some possible understandings of the prior turn, the action implication that best suits their interactional purposes. (2022: 58; italics in original)

So, action ascription is not only about the recipients recognizing what the speakers were doing in the prior turn(s), but also about how they situationally formulate a responsive action so as to display some stance that “best suits their interactional purposes” (Drew, 2022: 58). In this sense, second position or next turn is a crucial place for not only the prior speakers to

check whether the recipients correctly understand what they were doing, but also for the analysts to see how the recipients take the prior speakers' conduct. And of course, in a minimal adjacency pair sequence (Schegloff, 2007: 22-27), if the recipient's response is found in some way divergent from what the speaker was doing in the prior turn, the speaker can expand the sequence and initiate a repair to correct the recipient's understanding in the third turn (Schegloff, 1992b).

A recipient in second position is able to do two things. First, this position provides the recipient an opportunity to deal with troubles of hearing and/or understanding of the prior turn by launching an other-initiated repair, such as the repair initiator 'What?' indicates one has not heard or understood a prior turn (Kendrick, 2015; Kitzinger, 2013; see also Schegloff, 2007: 149-151 & 217 for a discussion about other-initiated repair as a retro-sequence launched from second position). Second, one can ascribe an action to a prior turn by responding in a certain way by which some affect or stance in relation to the prior turn or action is expressed. Of course, on some occasions, the practice of other-initiation of repair itself can be used as a 'vehicle' for performing other actions and thus displaying additional stance – usually a negative stance – towards a prior turn or action (Drew, 1997; Kendrick, 2015; R. Wu, 2006).

However, 'stance negotiation' in talk-in-interaction mainly refers to two interactional dimensions participants orient to during organizing social actions and establishing social relations (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2014). The epistemic facet concerns the participants' relative rights and obligations to certain domain of knowledge or experience (Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2005), whereas the deontic facet denotes the entitlement participants have to impose on their co-participants in the doing of some actions (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012).

The groundbreaking work of Heritage and Raymond (2005) started an empirical exploration of how the participants mobilize certain linguistic resources to negotiate their epistemic stance in relation to sequential positioning. They found that, for example, in assessment sequences, in agreeing with the prior speaker's assessment ('that Pat isn't she a doll?'), the speaker in the second position, by deploying a negative interrogative ('yeh isn't she pretty?') to make the prior speaker to respond, asserts her "assessment as a "first positioned" evaluation" (2005: 28). Stivers (2005a) studies the practice of confirming with modified repeats (e.g. a response 'it was' to the prior assertion 'it was some black folks') and argues that in a sequential environment in which a (dis)confirmation is not made relevant by the prior assertion, the recipient nevertheless confirms it and thus asserts the primary rights to make the claim. Likewise, a recent study by C. Raymond et al. (2021) investigate situations in which following an initial referent (e.g., 'the ice'), where a subsequent anaphoric referent (e.g., 'it') might normatively be expected, the speaker produces a full noun phrase (e.g., 'the ice'). They show that in confirming or disconfirming the prior turn the speaker uses the non-anaphoric reference in responsive position to assert the epistemic authority over the content of the prior turn.

Based on the well-established work of Heritage and Raymond (2005) on epistemic authority, Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012) propose the deontic dimension of authority that participants orient to in formulating directive actions. For instance, they suggest that assertions (e.g., 'the flute band <O Consenso> will be playing there') can be understood as "mere informing" by the recipients with some information receipt (e.g., 'yeah'), but can also be perceived and responded to "in a deontic way" with compliance tokens (e.g., 'okay', 'alright') (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012: 305). They argue that when the speakers in second position display a commitment to future actions with the compliance tokens, it indicates that they treat the prior speakers' assertions as "announcements", as they "accept a constraint on

their future actions that has been posed by the first speakers” (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012: 304). However, in the case of where a compliance response to an announcement might be arguably expected, the second speakers otherwise treat it as a mere informing by responding with some information receipt. They call such type of response as a “mock” information receipt, which is used “strategically” by the second speakers “to resist the unfavorable deontic implications of the first speaker’s utterance” (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012: 309). Thus, what this study shows us is the truth of Drew’s claim that “[A]ction ascription is itself a social action[.] [R]ecipients are ‘doing’ something when they treat a prior turn as having implemented a given action” (2022: 58).

Such an operation can also be observed in the young adult daughters’ imperative responses to the mothers’ offers in Estonian. Keevallik studies how the daughters produce permissive orders (e.g., *no pane sis*. ‘Okay do that.’) in response to the mothers’ initiating offers (e.g., *ma seda .h dieet e kohupiimapasta-t pane-n kaks su-lle*. ‘This .h diet curd paste I(‘ll) **put** in two for you.’, 2017: 274-275). She suggests that by imperatively forming a response with a repetition of the verb used in the prior turn in second position (e.g., *pane* ‘put’), the young adult daughters challenge the mothers’ previously claimed deontic rights over the future course of action that involves both of them and “reclaim agency and rights to independently decide upon their future in the ongoing process of becoming a responsible adult” (Keevallik, 2017: 271).

However, despite the fact that there is a range of conversation-analytic research on participants’ negotiations of epistemic and deontic authority in interaction (e.g., Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Landmark, Gulbrandsen, & Svennevig, 2015; Mondada, 2013; C. Raymond, 2014; G. Raymond, 2000; G. Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Seuren, 2018), studies from the perspective of action ascription, that is, looking at how the recipients, through attributing some deontically inferior action to the prior turn, display deontic authority over the prior

speaker's intended course of action in second position, have been less studied. Hence, this chapter intends to contribute to this line of research.

5.2.2 The action of granting permission

Giving the prior speaker permission to do some intended action with imperatives is also found in a number of languages. Zinken and Deppermann (2017) study one type of imperative turns in Polish and German, which are directed to recipients who either have already announced an initiation of an action or are already beginning to carry it out. They call this type "responsive imperatives", of which the speaker "enacts the deontic authority to decide upon the permissibility of the relevant action" (Zinken & Deppermann, 2017: 33). Similar to the minimal form of the imperative *shuo* 'go ahead' examined in this chapter, they also find that the imperative turns are usually in a minimal form - an imperfective verb in Polish and an imperative turn without the modal particle *mal* 'only once' - which is very commonly used in imperatives - in German. They claim that such constructions index the quality of a go-ahead and respond to the deontic uncertainty that is disclosed in the prior speaker's turn.

Another relevant study to the current analysis is Heinemann and Steensig's (2017) research on two action formats in Danish - imperatives with the modal particles *lige* and *bare* that in some occasions can all mean 'just' but are not synonyms. They demonstrate that the imperative+*lige* format is used to *request* a recipient to perform a nominated action, whereas the imperative+*bare* is mobilized to *permit* a recipient to do a proposed action. For example, while a teenage daughter is already drawing some childish stuff on a paper, a mother (jokingly) gives permission to draw it by producing the imperative *tegn du bare løs* ('draw you *bare* 'all you like)'). It is important to point out here that an overt subject 'you' is also present. Heinemann and Steensig propose that the imperative+*bare* format, when occurring

with an overt subject, functions as a go-ahead to the permitted action that is already ongoing or about to be done,; but when occurring without it, it transforms the granted permission into a concession to the recipient. Likewise, in this chapter, it will be seen that the Mandarin speakers also orient to and distinguish whether the permission is a go-ahead or concessive by designing the permissive turns differently. But, instead of using the presence/absence of the overt subject in imperatives to make the distinction, the speakers are found to deploy the particle *ba* (i.e., ‘go ahead *ba*’) to mark a concessive stance.

The following analysis consists of two parts. I first show how the lead officials use the imperative permission (*ni shuo* ‘(you) go ahead’ to respond to the citizens’ declarative preliminaries to a continued or a new course of action in two sequential environments. One is where the closure of the encounter is made relevant by the lead officials in the previous turns (section 5.3.1), and the other is where the citizens not only project an extended unit of talk in the next turn(s) but also orient to the projected talk as somewhat delicate (section 5.3.2). The second part focuses on how the citizens resist the lead officials’ authority by mobilizing the imperative permission *shuo+ba* ‘go ahead *ba*’ as a response to the prior imperative directive *ting wo shuo* ‘Listen to me say’ (section 5.4).

5.3 The lead official’s imperative permission (*ni shuo* ‘(you) go ahead’

5.3.1 Responding to the citizens’ declarative preliminaries

The encounter in Excerpt 4 has continued for approx. 37 minutes before line 01. Right before the excerpt, the lead official Zun has been telling the legal aid lawyer Zhou to spare no effort in familiarizing himself with all the details of Sha’s case (i.e. Sha petitions against her daughter’s death conclusion – a finding attributed to suicide) and push through its settlement. On receiving Zhou’s compliance through a series of nods, the instructing sequence is potentially coming to a close (line 01). At line 02, Zun launches a possible pre-closing of the

encounter by giving Sha (i.e. auntie) the floor to bring up the “unmentioned mentionables” (Sacks & Schegloff, 1973: 80) (‘Auntie, is there anything else ...’⁶²).

(4) GJNe4_#31

(Zun=secretary of regional Political and Legal Affairs Commission; Sha=citizen; Zhou=Legal Aid lawyer; Liu=Sha’s husband)

10 (0.7)

Gaze_{zhou} at Zun _____ at Sha
Gaze _____ at Sha _____

11 Zun: 阿姨 你 还 有 啥 说 的?
a’yi ni hai you sha shuo de?
aunt 2SG still have what say ASSC
Auntie, is there anything else you’d like to say?

Gaze_{zhou} at Sha _____
Gaze at Zun _____

12 Sha: 尊: 书记 说 的 非常 到位。
Zun: shuji shuo de feichang daowei.
NM secretary say ASSC very satisfactory
Secretary Zun has put it very satisfactorily.

Gaze_{sha} . . . at Zhou
13 (----)

Gaze_{zhou} at Sha _____
Gaze at Zhou _____

14 Sha: 你 想 和 尊 书 记 沟 通, 现 在 沟 通 多 好。
ni xiang he Zun shuji goutong, xianzai goutong duo hao.
2SG want with NM secretary communicate now communicate how good
You want to communicate with Secretary Zun. Now is the best time.

Gaze_{zhou} at Sha _____ at Sha _____
Gaze at Zhou _____

15 尊 书 记 也 [亮明 观点. [↑多 好。
Zun shuji ye [liangming guandian. [↑duo hao
NM secretary also venture viewpoint how good
Secretary Zun also expresses (his) viewpoints. ↑How nice.

16 Zhou: [°°dui°°+((two nods)) [°dui°+(one nod)]
[°°Right°° [°Right°

Gaze_{zhou}
Gaze_{sha} at Zhou _____
17 (0.2)

Gaze_{zhou} at Sha _____
Gaze at Zhou _____

18 Sha: 是 不 [是, .hh=
shi bu [shi, .hh=
be NEG be

⁶² Note that even though it is in question-format in the English translation, in Chinese original, the turn-final question particle *ma* is omitted and the prosody being a low rise transforms the interrogative form into a quasi-declarative. In other words, the statement-like question implies Zun’s assumption that Sha has not much else to say. And the expression *hai you sha* (lit. ‘still have what’) tilts to a negative response (See Heritage et al., 2007 for an English example in which *any*-embedded-questions prompt *no* in response). It is in this sense that a pre-closing of the encounter is implicitly launched.

Isn't it, .hh

19 Zhou: [((Nods))

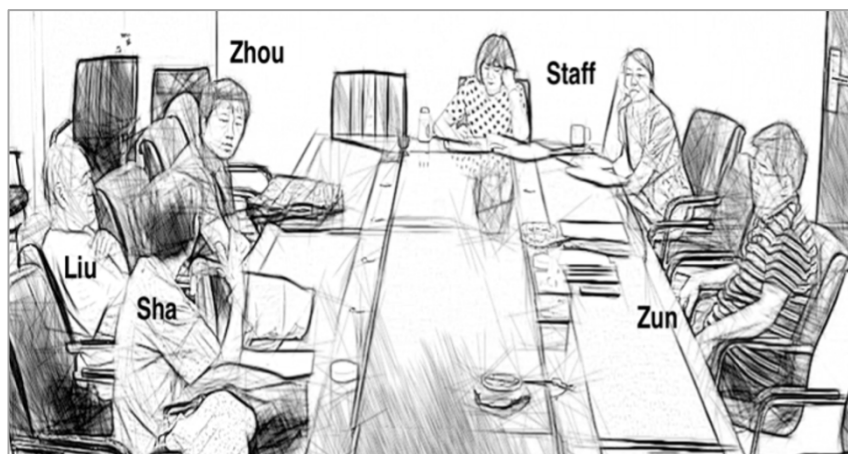


Fig 5.1 Sha and Zhou's mutual gaze at the end of l.09

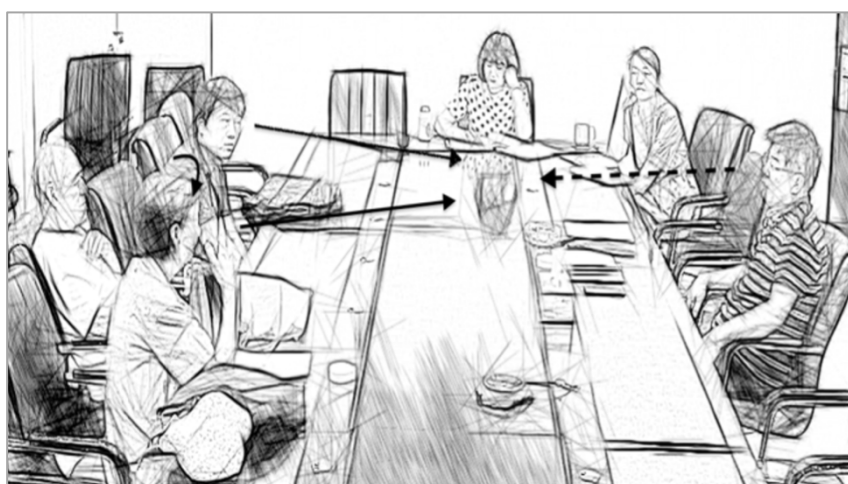


Fig 5.2 Sha's gaze at *xiang* in l.12

Gaze at Liu

20 Zun: =(对 [你] 有 帮:助 °就 (中).°)
 =(dui[ni]you bang:zhu °jiu zhong.°)
 for 2SG have help just okay
As long as it helps (you).

Gaze_{Zhou} AWAY at Zun at Sha
 Gaze at Zun

21 Sha:→ [而且 呢,=>我想 跟你] 说 啥 呢<,<=尊 书记,
 [erqie ne,=>wo xiang< gen ni] shuo sha ne<,<=Zun shuji,
 and PRT 1SG intend with 2SG say what PRT NM secretary
And,=>what I wanna say to you (is)<,<=Secretary Zun,

Gaze at Sha

22 Zun: °嗯 [说.°
 °en [shuo.°
 mm say
 °Mm [go ahead.°

23 Sha: [您 ↑提到 了, 但是 我 也 是<那么 做 的.>=
 [nin ↑tidao le, danshi wo ye shi <name zuo de.>=
 2SG.HON mention PFV but 1SG also be like.that do ASSC
You_{HON} mentioned it, but I had also done so.

- 24 我 ↑跟: 周 律师, .hh 沟通 的 <非:常的> 充分,=
 wo ↑gen: Zhou lüshi, .hh goutong de <fei:changde>chongfen,=
 1SG with NM lawyer communicate ASSC very fully
Lawyer Zhou and I. .hh communicate <ve:ry> thoroughly,=
- 25 =而且 <时间> (.) 沟通 多少 次 了.
 =erqie <Shijian> (.) goutong duoshao ci le.
 and time communicate many times PFV
=and (we) have communicated many times.

As the selected next speaker, Sha first produces a positive assessment about Zun's previous responses ('Secretary Zun⁶³ has put it very satisfactorily', line 03), which displays her high agency in evaluating the secretary's services. Then she shifts her gaze from Zun to Zhou (line 04) and makes another positive assessment of Zun that appears to invite Zhou to agree with her further praise of him (lines 05 & 06). Having received Zhou's full agreement in the form of nodding and agreement tokens (lines 07 & 10) (Stivers, 2008), she redirects her head and gaze to Zun (Figs 5.1 & 5.2) and continues with her agenda of stating the next mentionable item with the *and*-prefaced declarative preliminary that indicates her rightful answer to Zun's initial inquiry is not yet complete (*erqie ne=>wo xiang gen ni shuo sha ne<,=Zun shuji* 'And,=>what I wanna say to you (is)<,=Secretary Zun', line 12) (cf. Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994).

However, just at this point, Zun's self-selection and implicit acceptance of the compliments with an emphasis on the altruism ('as long as it helps you', line 11) (Pomerantz, 1978) implicates a potential reverse of speakership. That is, Zun, as the initiator of the Q-A sequence, has a special right in the third position, after receiving some 'good enough' second

⁶³ It is notable that Sha could have used the second-person pronoun *ni/nin* 'you/you_{HON}' to refer to Zun (e.g. 'You_{HON} have put it very satisfactorily'), as she is visibly talking to Zun, but she uses a third person reference form instead – an institutional form of address 'Secretary Zun'. As Schegloff claims, "it should be remarked that one regular alternative to "you" is a *third person reference form*, where the underlying issue may not at all be one of selection among alternative reference forms, but rather the choice of action which the speaker will implement, and/or to whom the utterance will be addressed" (1996a: 447-8; italics in original). Here, what Sha is doing with this assessment is that she is not only answering Zun's initial inquiry but also *addressing the others in producing the assessment*, a statement that is available to be agreed or disagreed with by other participants (i.e. Zhou). In addition, the deployment of the institutional title + surname, as Sacks (1992: I: 712) points out, enables the speaker, "while, e.g., talking to somebody or talking about oneself, to focus on some relevant identity category as, now, that categorial aspect of a person (yourself or another) that [she wants] to fix on". Thus, it can be argued that Sha and Zun's relevant, respective identities (i.e. citizen vis-à-vis official) are invoked by this usage, thereby giving Sha a special warrant to evaluate Zun's previous responses as a *citizen*.

pair part, to move to close the sequence (Schegloff, 2007). Such a strong sequence-closing implication is indeed oriented to by Sha in constructing her overlapping turn in three units: the turn-initial conjunction *erqie* ‘and’, the topic clause⁶⁴ ‘what I wanna say to you (is)’ and the turn-final address term ‘Secretary Zun’. It can be observed that upon hearing Zun’s first couple of syllables, Sha speeds up the production of the preliminary in managing the turn-competition (French & Local, 1986) and adds an address term in the format of [Surname+Title] to the end of the turn so as to re-establish reciprocity⁶⁵ with Zun and thereby maintain her speakership at this particular moment (Lerner, 2003).

Possibly having recognized the deference implied by the use of the institutional form of address, Zun in the next turn not only assumes a recipient role by producing a continuer *en* ‘mm’, but also grants Sha permission to continue her projected talk with the imperative *shuo* ‘go ahead’ (line 13). However, that Sha’s immediate delivery of the projected ‘comment’ (lines 14-16) right after Zun’s continuer results in an overlap at a transition space with his following permission demonstrates that Zun’s responsive permission was not sought by Sha’s prior turn. Moreover, in contrast to a complete clause (e.g., ‘I wanna tell you this thing’) that apparently shows the projected course of action will be conducted in the next TCU or turn, the topic-comment structure enables Sha, by having produced the topic already, to continue delivering the ‘comment’ within the same turn with a special right⁶⁶ (Sacks et al., 1974). In

⁶⁴ In English, this clause can be called ‘subject clause’ that functions as a subject of the sentence. But in contrast to the subject-predicate structure in English, the topic-comment construction is widely perceived as the grammatical feature of Mandarin Chinese (Her, 1991; Li & Thompson, 1981; Zhang & Fang, 1994). The phrase *wo xiang gen ni shuo sha ne* ‘what I wanna say to you (is)’ is the topic that functions as the “subject” of the clause and the rest of the clause that Sha projects is a comment. More importantly, the comment can be loosely constructed in many clauses and end up with a very long one, as in lines 14-16. And it is proved by Li’s conversation-analytic work that Chinese participants do orient to this structure as a complete unit in constructing a TCU and a turn (2014: 44). That is to say, once hearing a topic clause being produced, the recipient may wait for or produce a continuer for a comment to be delivered.

⁶⁵ Note that Zun’s gaze has been on Liu in line 11 and only shifts his gaze to Sha upon hearing the address term. Lerner calls such practice of adding an address term to the end of a turn “a ‘last-ditch effort’ to establish reciprocity that has not been adequately established by other means over the course of the turn” (2003: 186).

⁶⁶ It is also worth noting here that Sha’s interactive construction of her turn with a topic clause in line 21 projects a space for Zun’s response (i.e., *en* ‘Mm’, line 22) and it is after having received Zun’s acknowledgment that Sha completes her turn from line 23 onwards. Such a topic-comment structure enables the

this sense, such a structure is strategically used here to deal with the emergent turn-competition, and it grammatically implies that the unfurling of the projected telling is already underway. Therefore, with this declaratively formatted preliminary plus the topic-comment structure, far from doing a request for permission that indexes a low deontic position, Sha designs the turn at line 12 as doing an announcement of an imminent ‘telling’ and displays high agency⁶⁷ in directing the local trajectory of the talk (cf. Stevanovic and Peräkylä, 2012).

Then, why does Zun ‘voluntarily’ give permission at this particular position? It perhaps relates to the sequential environment here. This excerpt occurs in a possible pre-closing phase of the encounter. The sequence/encounter-closing relevant question (‘... is there anything else ...’) implies a preferred ‘no’ in response (Heritage et al., 2007). Sha’s responsive complimentary remarks could be normatively treated as the last mentionable item in this encounter, and with Zun’s acceptance of it in the third position, the interaction then could possibly move to a close (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). But Sha’s following announcement of mentioning a next item moves the sequence that could be closed here and now out of closing. This means that after Sha completes this projected telling, Zun has to re-initiate a pre-closing sequence. So, in the face of such interactional contingencies, by

speaker and the hearer to mutually construct the turn-at-talk within a TCU. This indicates as Goodwin (1979: 97-8) suggests, that

Sentences emerge with conversation. However, in traditional linguistics, it has been assumed that the analysis of sentences can be performed upon examples isolated from such an interactive process. In opposition to such a view it will be argued here that sentences in natural conversation emerge as the products of a process of interaction between speaker and hearer and that they mutually construct the turn at talk.

A similar operation has also been found in Japanese conversation. Units of conversational Mandarin and Japanese are both considered ‘fragmented’ and ‘segmented’ by interactional linguists (e.g., Shoichi Iwasaki & Tao, 1993; Tao, 1996). Iwasaki (2008, 2009) finds that Japanese speakers, while delivering a single TCU with an attempt to invite recipients to join in and co-construct the TCU before reaching a possible completion point, standardly use a noun-phrasal component such as general nouns and names of persons and places to start a turn with or without a particle and then pause. Recipients then begin to produce some response that indicates a recognition of a name or place or displays some affiliation with the action the speakers are doing. Thus, such seemingly “fragmented” grammatical structures enable Mandarin and Japanese participants to co-construct the turn at talk within a TCU. In later Excerpt 6, Liu also initiates his turn with a topic (‘President Tao, for why *ya* I wanted to tell you this thing’), which opens up a space for Fah’s aligning response (‘Ah why to tell this thing’), and it is after receiving such a response that Liu produces the comment and completes his projected TCU.

⁶⁷ It is also worth noting here that in constructing the declarative preliminary in line 12, Sha deploys an informal second-person reference *ni* ‘you’ in referring to Zun, whereas in the immediate production of the comment, she shifts to an honorific *nin* ‘you_{HON}’. This demonstrates Sha’s orientation to claiming high agency at this very moment of attempting to occupy the floor (Chapter 4).

granting Sha permission to continue, *as if* she had requested for it (Drew, 2022), Zun overtly claims the ownership of the floor and casts Sha's ensuing course of action as being conducted under his permission to go ahead within this still relevant pre-closing sequence. Hence, when this projected course of action is done, the interaction can smoothly move to close. In this sense, Zun's deontic authority in controlling the local interactional agenda is expressly asserted.

Such an operation is more apparent in Excerpt 5, in which the citizen's agenda (i.e. continue the encounter) and the lead official's agenda (i.e. close the encounter) is in conflict. In the excerpt shown below, having learned that one official has told Don that his petition is already attended to by a relevant department, Fah initiates a closure of the encounter with the imperatives '>Look.< °Stop here for today°' at line 01. But it gets overlapped by Don's complaint about having not heard back from the department for 'four months' since that official contacted him at line 02. In response to this, Fah provides a responsive solution, assigning Ben to 'hurry them up right away' at line 05 so as to advance the progress of closing the encounter (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). However, this attempt is sequentially deleted by Don with an upgraded complaint at line 06, highlighting 'It's been fourteen months' of having not received any response from the authorities since the first day he started the petition.

(5) CJDs1e3_#9

(Fah=a regional court president; Don=Citizen; Ben=a director of a petition-receiving office at the regional court)

- 01 Fah: >你 这样.< [°先 到 这°
>ni zheyang.<[xian dao zhe
2SG such temporarily to here
>Look.< [°(Stop here for today)°
- 02 Don: [四 个 月 的 事 儿.=
[si ge yue de shir.=
four CL month ASSC thing
[It's been four months.
- 03 Fah: =好 吧¿=

- =hao ba₂=
good PRT
Okay₂=
- 04 Ben: =°()°
- 05 Fah: 回- 回头 马上 就: 奔放 (回去 催) 一 下.
hui- huitou mashang jiu: Benfang (huiqu cui) yi xia.
later later immediately just NM back hurry one CL
Later, Ben will go and hurry them up right away.
- 06 Don: (十)四 个 月 了.
(shi)si ge yue le.
fourteen CL month PFV
It's been four(-teen) months.
- 07 (.)
- 08 Fah: 回头 我 给 你 打 电话. 好 吧,=
huitou wo gei ni da dianhua hao ba=
later 1SG give 2SG make call good PRT
Later I phone you up. Okay,=
- 09 Don:→ =不 是 光 打 电话. [我 还 有 几 个 事 儿 我 得 说 一 说.=
=bu shi guang da dianhua.[wo hai you jige shir wo dei shuo yishuo.=
NEG be only make call 1SG also have several thing 1SG have to say
=It's not only about making phone calls. [I still have several things I have to say.
- 10 Fah: [你 说.
[ni shuo.
2SG say
[You go ahead.
- 11 Don: =你 院 长 ↑了解 一 下.
=ni yuanzhang ↑liaojie yi xia.
2SG president understand one CL
You president get a bit of the picture.
- 12 (.)
- 13 Fah: ↑还 说 什 么 =[你-
↑hai shuo shenme =[ni-
still say what 2SG
To still say ↑what=[You-
- 14 Don: [不 是, 你 了↑解-
[bu shi, ni liao↑jie-
NEG be 2SG understand
[No, you get the-
- 15 Fah: >不,< [两 万 多 块 钱 的 事 儿 >不 是 吗<¿
>bu,< [liang wan duo kuai qian de shir (bu shi ma)¿
NEG two ten thousand more yuan money ASSC thing NEG be Q
>No<, [(it's) just a matter of twenty-thousand-yuan >isn't it<¿
- 16 Don: [就 ↑是- 就 是 了 解 了 解 情 况.
[jiu ↑shi- jiu shi liaojie liaojie qingkuang
just be just be understand understand situation
[Just- Just to get the picture.

Clearly, Don's resistance to acknowledging the arrangement at line 06 is heard and oriented to by Fah as a refusal to close the encounter by subsequently initiating another attempt to close by committing himself to phone up Don later (line 08). However, Don's immediately responsive statement 'It's not only about making phone calls' (line 09) implies his rejection not only of the arrangement itself but also to Fah's attempt to close the encounter at this particular moment. And indeed, the morphosyntactic structure *bu shi guang X* 'it's not only about X' projects a further negotiation over the arrangement in the following turn(s) and thus sequentially puts the implementation of Fah's interactional agenda (i.e. to close the encounter) on hold.

Similar to Excerpt 4, it is at this particular sequential juncture, where the sequence could be closed here and now if Don accepted the arrangements, that Fah gives permission with *ni shuo* 'you go ahead' at line 10. And it is clear that the responsive permission appears to be arguably redundant here in that after the production of the statement, Don's continued delivery of the second TCU ('I still have ...') within the same turn demonstrates he has not designed his first TCU as a request for Fah's permission to continue and neither has he expected any response from Fah to the first TCU. Nevertheless, as we can notice here, that Fah deliberately grants Don permission to go ahead enables him to attribute a somewhat deontically inferior action (i.e. request for permission) to Don's prior turn, so that his own deontic authority over the local trajectory of the talk is asserted.

Such displayed authority is to a greater extent manifested in Fah's subsequent injunction 'To still say ↑what' at line 13 and bold objection '>No<' at line 15 to Don's declarative preliminary 'I still have several things I have to say' (line 09) followed by a directive 'You president get a bit of the picture' at line 11. The point is Fah's permission at line 10 is specifically given to Don to continue the projected arrangement negotiation, because when the negotiation comes to a close or the revised arrangement is finally accepted

by Don, the interaction may readily move to close. However, finding that Don is in fact initiating a new telling sequence and attempting to move out of the closure, Fah immediately impedes its progression at line 13. In sum, Excerpts 4 and 5 show that the action of granting permission is mobilized at the service of keeping sequence-closure still relevant when the citizens indicate some extension that may potentially move the sequence away from closure.

This function, I claim, is related to the imperative permission that more or less puts a constraint on the types of the actions or content that the prior speakers are permitted to conduct or say in next turn(s). That is, by specifically placing the permission right at the point where the citizens have just completed the action projection, the lead officials exhibit a stance that the permission is only given to the citizens' proceeding with the action that they have just projected. And as we have observed in Excerpt 5, when it turns out that the citizen is doing some other action with the floor that they have just been granted, the official stops him. The following excerpt is a further case in point.

Excerpt 6 shown below is taken from the same encounter discussed in Chapter 3, where Liu and Sha were meeting with officials about a petition they had started, aiming to re-investigate their daughter's cause of death. But this needs the cooperation from three local governments including the Public Security Bureau, the People's Procuratorate and the People's Court (where Fah and Ben work). The police chief of the local Public Security Bureau Daguang, who is not present at this encounter, is the person leading the investigation. The interaction has been going for 4 minutes before the excerpt, in which, after greetings, Liu has been complaining about some officials having been using 'being busy' as an excuse to avoid meeting him,; and at one point, Fah interrupts him and offers responses regarding how to process Liu's requests. However, this disposal sequence is interrupted by the general director of the Bureau for Letters and Visits entering the room. After greetings, Ben at line 01 resumes this closing-implicative disposal sequence by giving a promise of assistance about

helping him to coordinate with those officials (Heritage and Clayman, 2010: 40 – 41). With a lack of response from Liu (line 02), Fah subsequently gives a somewhat evasive self-commitment and then insinuates that Liu should go to meet the police chief Daguang⁶⁸. However, his overt suggestion at line 13 gets noticeably overlapped at a place where he has just started a TCU, far from arriving at a completion point and thus interrupted by Liu with a statement indicating an attempt to launch a new ‘telling’ sequence (*wo gen nin shuo* ↑*zhe ge shir* ‘I tell you_{HON} ↑this thing’, line 14).

(6) CJDs1e1_#32

(Ben=a director of a petition-receiving office at the regional court; Fah=a regional court president; Liu=Citizen)

356 Ben: 咱们这么着, 完了想办法帮你协调 °协调° 呗,
 zanmen zheme zhe, wanle xiang banfan bang ni xietiao °xietiao° bei,
 1PL this CRS later think method help 2SG coordinate coordinate PRT
**Let's do this way - later (we) think of a way to help you
 coordinate with (other officials).**

357 (0.2)

((9 lines omitted in which Fah first gives a somewhat evasive commitment and then does a ‘remembering’ that Liu’s case should belong to the police chief of local Public Security Bureau Daguang. Liu indicates some problem with recognizing the name of ‘Daguang’, but finally the recognition is achieved with Fah providing more information))

13 Fah: =啊. 你 ↑见 [着 他-
 =a. ni ↑jian[zhe ta-
 PRT 2SG meet 3SG
Yeah. (When) You meet him-

14 Liu: → [我- 我 跟 您 说 ↑这 个 事儿.=
 [wo- wo gen nin shuo ↑zhe ge shir.=
 1SG 1SG with 2SG.HON say this CL thing
I- I tell you_{HON} ↑this thing.=

15 Fah: =↑但是 [呢, 你 让 我 [[协调,] 我 肯定 是.
 =↑danshi [ne, ni rang wo [[xietiao,] wo kending shi.
 but TP 2SG let 1SG coordinate 1SG definitely be
 [((F points his index-finger to Liu and holds))]
 [((body leans forward))]
=But, you let me to coordinate, I surely will.

16 Fah: 然后 奔放 呢, 也 是 在 给 你 (--)] 是 吧?
 ranhou Benfang ne, ye shi zai gei ni (--)] shi ba?
 then NM TP also be PROG for 2SG be PRT
 ((Body leans back to home position))]
Then Benfeng, is also (--) for you, right?

⁶⁸ 9 lines are omitted here, but see its full analysis in Chapter 4 (Excerpt 3b).

- 17 Ben: 是.
shi.
be
Yes.
- 18 Fah: >也 得< 跟:: 商林伟 我们
>ye dei< gen:: Shang Linwei women
also have to with NM 1PL
得 (说 说) [这 事儿.
dei (shuo shuo)[zhe shir
have to say say this thing
>Also< with:: Shang Linwei we have to discuss it.
- 19 Ben: [跟 云 书记, 是 吧, 帮着 协调 这 事儿.
[gen Yun shuji, shi ba, bangzhe xietiao zhe shir.
with NM secretary be PRT help coordinate this thing
**With Secretary Yun, right, to help you coordinate
this matter.**
- 20 Fah: ↑帮 你 [协调.]
↑bang ni[xietiao]
help 2SG coordinate
↑**Help you coordinate.**
- 21 Liu:→ [呃:]:法 局长 我 [为 啥 ↓呀: [<要 想 跟 您
[e:]:Fah juzhang wo [wei sha ↓ya:[<yao xiang gen nin
NM director 1SG for what PRT want want with 2SG.HON
说 ↑这 个 ↑事儿,>
shuo ↑zhe ge ↑shir,>
say this CL thing
**[Uh:] President Fah for why ↓ya: I <wa:nted to tell
you_{HON} ↑this ↑thing,>**
- 22 Fah: [啊_ [嗯.
[a_ en.
PRT mm
Ah_ Mm.
- 23 Fah: 啊 ↑为 啥 说 这 个 事儿, 你 [说
a, ↑wei sha shuo zhe ge shir, ni [shuo
PRT for what say this CL thing 2SG say
Ah ↑why to tell this thing, you [go ahead=
- 24 Liu: [因为 啥 呀,
[yinwei sha ya,
because what PRT
[It is because,
- 25 早先 刘匡宁 的 时候 啊::: (0.5)
zaoxian Liu Kuangning de SHIHOU A::: (0.5)
the past NM ASSC moment PRT
DURING THE TIME WHEN it was Liu Kuangning (in charge), (0.5)
- 26 在 办公室 当 我 面 就 打 电↓话.
ZAI BANGGONGSHI DANG WO MIAN JIU DA DIAN↓HUA.=
in office face 1SG face just call phone
(HE) WAS JUST MAKING CALLS IN FRONT OF ME.

- 27 Fah: =啊_=
=a_=
PRT
Uh huh
- 28 Liu: 就 跟 他们 联系.
jiu gen tamen lianxi.
just with 3PL contact
To contact them.
- 29 Fah: 你 看 看.
ni kan kan.
2SG look look
Look at it.
- 30 Liu: 这个 雷厉风行 的 精神 非常 可嘉.
zhe ge leilifengxing de jingshen feichang kejia.
this CL act.immediately.and.resolutely ASSC spirit very commendable
This spirit of acting immediately and resolutely is very commendable.

With the declarative preliminary at line 14, Liu makes a highly entitled claim in bringing up some issue that he displays is worth telling Fah at this particular moment and thus claims high agency in directing the trajectory of the sequence away from the possible closure made relevant by the disposal sequence. But note that the deferential 2nd-person reference *nin* ‘you_{HON}’ may endow the statement with a possible reading that it is formulated as a request for carrying on the projected telling in the next turns. Nevertheless, it gets sequentially deleted by Fah’s continuation of the disposal sequence in which he remakes commitments on behalf of himself (line 15) and Ben (line 16) and produces a future plan involving a discussion with another official Shang Linwei (line 18).

Apparently, that neither Ben’s nor Fah’s commitment receives any uptake from Liu since the disposal sequence being initiated indicates that Liu not only resists accepting any of those but also resists moving into a possible closure that is made relevant by the disposal sequence. Until line 21, having recognized Ben and Fah’s repetition of their initial promise of assistance ‘help you coordinate’ in lines 19 & 20 as a mark of a possible end of the sequence, Liu immediately starts up his turn, produced in terminal overlap (Jefferson, 1984b), to pursue carrying on the ‘telling’ sequence that he has previously projected at line 14. However, by virtue of his initial attempt being overridden by Fah, Liu this time projects an account to

warrant his intended telling, again, with a declarative topic-clause (*Tao juzhang wo wei sha* ↓*ya*: <*yao xiang gen nin shuo* ↑*zhe ge* ↑*shir*,> ‘President Tao for why ↓*ya*:⁶⁹, I <*wa:nted* to tell you_{HON} ↑*this* ↑*thing*,>’, line 21). Consequently, with receiving Fah’s continuers (*a* ‘ah’; *en* ‘mm’, line 22) and permission to go ahead at line 23, Liu carries on with the projected account from line 24 onwards (*yinwei sha ya*, ‘It is because ...’).

Again, with this declarative preliminary, Liu displays high agency in launching this new ‘telling’ sequence at this particular sequential juncture where if he accepted or agreed with Ben and Fah’s responses, the encounter might be ready to move to close. And the terminal overlap (Jefferson, 1984) or last item overlap (Drew, 2009) in lines 23 & 24 indicates that Fah’s permission *ni shuo* ‘you go ahead’ is not sought by Liu’s prior turn. But, slightly different from the stand-alone permissions in Excerpts 4 and 5, Fah’s permissive response involves a thematic constraint on what Liu has to say in the next turn. That is, the order of the imperative permission ‘you go ahead’ being placed after the partial repetition of Liu’s prior turn (↑*wei sha shuo zhe ge shir* ‘↑why to tell this thing’) underlines the permission being specifically given to Liu’s proceeding with the projected account. By

⁶⁹ This particle *ya* deserves a special attention here. In Chinese linguistics, some linguists take the particle *ya* as morphophonemic variant of the particle *a* (Li & Thompson, 1981: 313; Lü, 1980: 42), but some scholars suggest that in some contexts they may serve distinct discourse functions. One of the examples that Xu (2020: 20) shows is as follows:

- (1) *Zhe shi ni shuo de a, chu le shi ke bie guai wo.* [To remind the recipient]
Remember what you just said *a*. Don’t blame me when something goes wrong.
- (2) *Zhe shi ni shuo de ya, chu le shi zenme dao guai qi wo lai?* [To criticize the recipient]
It’s you who said it *ya*. Why am I the one to blame?

Xu claims that even though the clauses in the highlights are exactly the same except the particles, *a* and *ya* are not interchangeable in these contexts. She finds that *a* usually indicates “a stronger communicative intention of negotiation”, whereas *ya* delivers “a strong emotional color with one-way transmission characteristics” (Xu, 2020: 23). In Ex. (2), it is clear that *ya* conveys a negative stance towards the recipient.

So, here, with attaching the particle *ya* to *wei shen me* ‘why’, Liu also implicates a complaint about himself having to explicitly provide an account to legitimize his telling activity, to which he perceived himself as being fully entitled in the first place, where he used an assertion ‘I tell you_{HON} ↑*this* thing’ at line 14, which, however, got brutally ignored by Fah. Fah, indeed, in the next turn registers this implied complaint by acknowledging Liu’s turn with ‘ah’ and partially repeating it ‘↑why to tell this thing’ (line 23) so as to deliberately demonstrate that Liu now has his full attention as a remedy for his previous inattentiveness.

designing the turn in this way, Fah displays deontic authority in controlling the local interactional agenda and maintains his initiative in directing the forward trajectory of the talk.

In this section, I have illustrated that when their agenda (i.e. to close the encounter) conflicts with the citizens', the lead officials will assert their authority over the trajectory of the talk by giving the citizens unsolicited permission to continue their projected further talk or action. In the next section, I will show another sequential environment in which the permission is given to the citizen's pre-delicate that is also constructed with declaratives.

5.3.2 Responding to the citizens' pre-delicates

In his observations on preliminaries to preliminaries, Schegloff shows a special collection in which what comes after a question projection is the question, and that question is oriented to and marked by the speakers as a delicate one, and he called this type of preliminary "pre-delicates" (1980: 131). However, in the examples he shows, he does not distinguish the responses between continuers (e.g. 'yeah') and permissive directives (e.g. 'go ahead', 'shoot'). So, this section will demonstrate that in addition to their shared 'go-ahead' function, the "responsive imperative" *ni shuo* 'you go ahead' particularly displays a permissive stance, not only permitting the citizen as the next speaker but also enacting the deontic authority to decide upon the permissibility of the citizen's projected delicate action (Zinken and Deppermann, 2017).

First, consider the excerpt below from a TV show called *Zhuojian*, in which Yu Minhong (Hon), the president of the largest educational company in China, interviews the CEO of Sogou, an Internet search engine company, Wang Xiaochuan (Chu). It is not known what other delicate questions Hon has asked before Excerpt 7, as this excerpt appears at the very end of the interview as an excerpted clip.

(7) *Zhuojian*S1e1: Wang Xiaochuan

- 01 Hon:→ ↑那::↓: (0.2)Uh::m- 又- 又 有 一 点 点 私:密 的 问 题 啦 啊.
 ↑na::↓: (0.2)Uh::m- you- you you yi diandian si:mi de wenti la a.
 ↑We::11 (0.2)Uh::m- **there's another bit of private and personal question.**
- 02 Chu:→ 嗯:.. ((his eyebrows are raised and smiles))
en:.
Mm:.
- 03 (0.2)
- 04 Hon: 就 是 说, 那 你 生:命 中 间, (0.2)最 让 你 刻 骨 铭 心
 jiu shi shuo, na ni sheng:ming zhongjian, (0.2)zui rang ni kegumingxin
 的 这 个 爱 情 有 吗,
 de zhe ge aiqing you ma,
That is, during your lifetime so far, (0.2) have you experienced a memorable romance?
- 05 (0.5)
- 06 Chu: £有:£. ((nodding))
 £you:£.
£Ye:s£.

From Chu's responsive continuer en: ('Mmm:', line 02) to Hon's pre-delicate at line 01, we can see that after receiving the continuer, Hon delivers the projected delicate question in the next turn (line 04), and that Chu does use the imperative directive 'go ahead' indicating that he treats Hon's action projection not as a request for his permission to launch the delicate question. So, the point is to encourage the progression of a delicate question or action, a continuer is sufficient⁷⁰.

But in a third-party conversation – particularly in a sequential environment where a subordinate official and a lead official are talking to each other while a citizen attempts to initiate a new sequence, it will be seen that the lead official's "responsive imperative" is not only a permission given to the citizen to go ahead but also a signal to the subordinate official

⁷⁰ It should be noted that this excerpt is taken from an interview, which is distinct from the citizen-official encounters examined in this thesis in the sense that in interviews, interviewers normatively ask questions (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Greatbatch, 1988; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). The interviewer's orientation to his high entitlement to ask Chu questions is manifested in Hon's declaratively formatted preliminary ('... there's another bit of private and personal question') rather than, for example, an interrogative 'Can I ask you another ...'. However, Hon does orient to the nature of the projected question as being delicate and thus as inapposite, by delaying his production of the responsive turn by prefacing it with ↑na::↓: 'well' (see Heritage, 2015, 2018 for its indexicality of self-attentiveness in English), a pause and uhms. In addition, the turn-final particles *la* marks the action as an announcement (M. Fang, 2016) and *a* works to draw the interlocutor's attention to the indexed delicacy (Y. Sun, 2013; Xiong & Lin, 2004).

that the citizen now is the permitted next-speaker. This can be observed in Excerpt 8, which occurs three minutes after Excerpt 6.

Right before the conversation below, upon hearing Liu's complaint about the police chief Daguang having avoided him, Ben proposes to Fah that they can coordinate with the Bureau for Letters and Visits to make Daguang the responsible person for Liu's petition so that 'he has to meet Liu regardless of his willingness'. Although what Fah says at line 03 is inaudible, Ben's subsequent confirming response ('That's right he administers ...', line 04) appears to further legitimize the proposal, because other than taking a lead in the investigation of Liu's daughter's case, that Daguang also happens to be the responsible person for the area where Liu lives renders the proposal more practical. But note that just as Ben is turning and talking to Fah at line 01, Liu at line 02 begins speaking in the middle of Ben's production of his turn and initiates a new sequence with a prosodic accentuation on the time adverbial phrase *XIANZAI* ↓*A* 'NOW ↓*A*'⁷¹, which gets sequentially deleted first but then is visually acknowledged by Fah's redirection of his gaze to him after receiving Ben's confirmation 'That's right' at line 04.

(8) CJDs1e1_#33

Gaze _{Fah}		<u>at Ben</u>
Gaze	<u>at Liu</u> <u>at Fah</u>
01 Ben:	现在 是 包 片儿, 你 是 包 片儿 的 [(---)	
	xianzai shi bao pianr, ni shi bao pianr de [(---)	
	now be undertake area 2SG be undertake area ASSC	
	Now (the policy) is (one official) administers one certain area.	
Gaze		<u>at Ben & Fah</u>
02 Liu:		[现在 ↓啊:
		[XIANZAI ↓A:
		now PRT
		NOW ↓A:
Gaze	<u>at Ben</u>	
03 Fah:	([)	
Gaze _{Fah}	<u>at Ben</u> <u>at Liu</u>
Gaze	<u>at Fah</u>	

⁷¹ The particle *a* is a thematic marker that marks *xianzai* 'now' as the topic of the sentence and projects that the significance of the time will be stated in the following comment, and it also draws the co-participant's attention to it (M. Fang, 1994).

- 04 Ben: [诶 对: (他 管) 钉子 户 片儿, 刘 叔.£=
 [e fdui (ta gan) dingzi hu pianr, Liu shu.£
 right 3SG change nail household arear NM uncle
fThat's right he (i.e., Daguang) administers the dingzihu⁷²
area where Uncle Liu (lives).f=

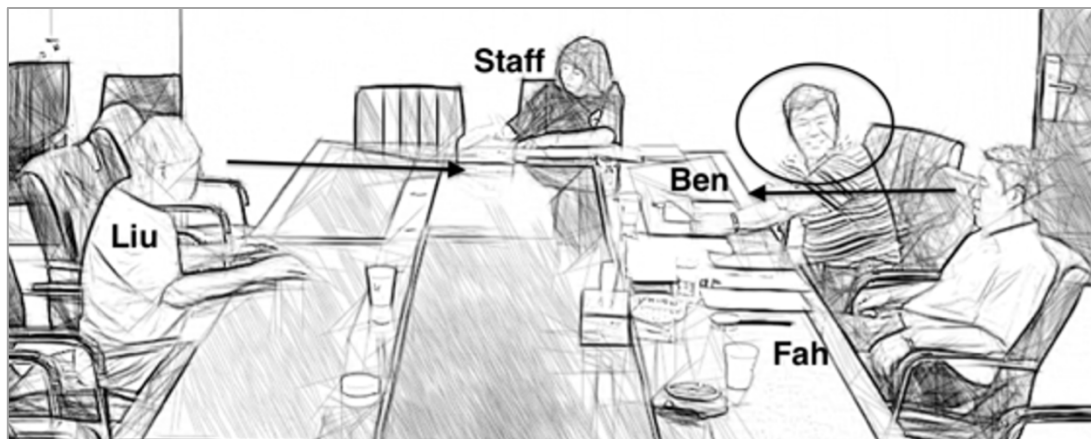


Figure 5.3 At Liu's *menr* in l.05, Ben laughs & looks at Fah; Fah's hands rest on the chair arms

Gaze_{Fah} at Liu
 Gaze_{Ben} at Liuat Fah
 Gaze at Fah & Ben

- 05 Liu:→ =法 局长 咱们 [得 (.) 关 着 门儿] 说话.
 =Fah juzhang zanmen [dei (.)guan zhe menr] shuohua.
 =NM bureau.head 1PL must close DUR door speak
General-director Fah we have to (.) talk about(this)
behind closed doors.

- 06 Ben: [heh heh heh heh heh]



Figure 5.4 Ben's disengagement and Fah's postural shift at the end of line 07

Gaze_{Ben} down
 Gaze at Liu

- 07 Fah: 你 说 你 说 (怎 么 的).=
 ni shuo ni shuo (zenme de).=
 2SG say 2SG say what ASSC
You go ahead you go ahead (what's that).=

Gaze_{Ben}at Liu

⁷² Household which refuses to relocate to make way for a construction project.

- 08 Liu: =(这- za- za -) 说 了 我- 我- 可能 (.)对 你们 来说 也 不 是
 =(zhe- za- za-)shuo le wo- wo- keneng(.)dui nimen laishuo yebu shi
 this at at say PFV 1SG 1SG perhaps to 2PL for also NEG be
 什么 起 好 作用。
 shenme qi hao zuoyong.
 what take good effect
**Well uh- what I- I'm about to say perhaps (.) won't do good to you
 guys.**
- 09 Fah: >↑不[不不,< 没 ↓事儿。
 >↑NO[NO NO,< MEI ↓SHIR.
 NEG NEG NEG NEG matter
 >↑NO NO NO,< NO WORRIES.
- 10 Liu: 我 说 啥 意思 啊,=
 WO SHUO SHA YISI A,=
 1SG say what meaning PRT=
WHAT I MEAN IS,=
- 11 Fah: =咋样 说 都 可以. =
 =zayang shuo dou keyi.=
 how say all can
=(You) can say whatever (you want).=

At line 05, Liu first explicitly draws Fah's attention with the address term *Fah juzhang* 'General-director Fah', and then he prefaces a delicate course of action with a statement *zanmen dei (.) guan zhe menr shuohua* 'we have to (.) talk about (this) behind closed doors'. Similar to the declarative preliminaries examined in the previous section, this statement does not delineate a clear deontic boundary – that is, at least in a formal sense, Liu did not ask for Fah's permission to carry out the projected delicate action in the next turn(s), such as *wo neng shuo dianr guan zhe menr de hua ma?* 'Can I say something just between you and me?'. Instead, he uses an assertion and a 1st-person plural pronoun *zanmen* 'we' to indicate that he has decided for both of them to have a delicate conversation. So, rather than simply aligning himself with Liu's project by producing a continuer, Fah in the next turn repeats the imperative *ni shuo* 'you go ahead' twice followed by a prompt *zenme de* 'what's that' at line 07. By doing so, he enacts his deontic authority to decide upon the permissibility of Liu's projected delicate action by treating Liu's pre-delicate as a request for his permission to continue.

More importantly, the pronoun *ni* ‘you’ in ‘you go ahead’ deserves a special attention here. One interactional contingency in this excerpt may arguably make the use of it particularly relevant. That is, as Ben has just finished his turn at line 04 while Liu immediately restarts a sequence-initiating turn at line 05, Fah and Ben’s gaze both remain on Liu, implying that their preceding sequence is potentially completed and that they accept Liu as the current speaker. However, Ben’s post-positioned interruptive laughter (line 06) along with his head turn to Fah (Fig. 5.3) appears to specifically invite Fah to laugh together and thus may steam-roll Liu’s bid to speak. So, in dealing with this contingency, Fah first resists laughing together by keeping his gaze at Liu throughout Ben’s laughter, and as Liu completes his prefatory turn at line 05, he subsequently re-selects Liu as the next speaker with the use of the 2nd-person pronoun *ni* (Lerner, 1996a). And note that during his production of the permitting turn, he also does a postural shift – the leaning forward and moving backward of his upper body (Li, 2014), tilts his head to the left side and clasps his hands together (Fig. 5.4). This series of body movements publicly displays his full attention to Liu’s projected talk and signals to Ben that Liu is the legitimate speaker at this point. Consequently, once seeing that the invitation to laugh has been resisted, Ben withdraws his eye gaze from Fah (line 05) and then publicly displays disengagement by reading a paper in his hand (Fig. 5.4) until Liu has already launched a turn (line 08).

In sum, this section has demonstrated that the imperative permission *ni shuo* ‘you go ahead’ can also be used as a response to the citizen’s pre-delicate. With it, the lead official displays deontic authority in the domain not only of controlling the interactional agenda but also deciding upon the permissibility of the citizen’s carrying out the projected delicate course of action. In a tripartite conversation, when the speakership between the citizen and the subordinate official is at issue, as we have seen in Excerpt 8, the 2nd-person pronoun is mobilized by the lead official as a next-speaker-selection device.

5.4 The citizen's resistance to authority with *shuo+ba* 'go ahead *ba*'

In section 5.3, I showed that the lead officials enact their deontic authority in controlling the interactional agenda by giving unsolicited permission (*ni shuo* '(you) go ahead' to the citizens' declaratively formatted action projections. In this section, I demonstrate how the citizens resist the lead officials' authority by mobilizing the imperative permission *shuo+ba* 'go ahead *ba*' as a response to the prior imperative directive *ting wo shuo* 'Listen to me say'. First, consider the following examples in which the citizens produce two types of compliance responses to the lead officials' directive *ni ting wo shuo* 'You listen to me say'.

The first type is to show compliance by gradually retracting in-progress body movements and withholding a next turn. In Excerpt 9, the citizen Hou is complaining to Fah about how a non-present official has kept avoiding her. As the complaining sequence has continued for quite a while, the subordinate official Ben summons her three times with a kinship term *da jie* 'Big sister'. Presumably having recognized it as signaling her to stop, Hou only attends to the third time summons (line 01) by ordering him to stop with a directive *ni deng huir de* 'You wait a minute' (line 02) accompanied by an embodied enactment (Fig. 5.9). Upon hearing her following account ('It's not EASY for me to meet the president ...', line 04) that strongly projects her continuation, Fah issues a declarative directive ('You listen to me say ...', line 05) three times, producing it in an urgent tone, to tell Hou to listen to him (Antaki & Kent, 2012; Craven & Potter, 2010).



Figure 5.5 Hou's hand gesture at *wo* 'I' in 1.02



Figure 5.6 H's hand retraction in 1.05

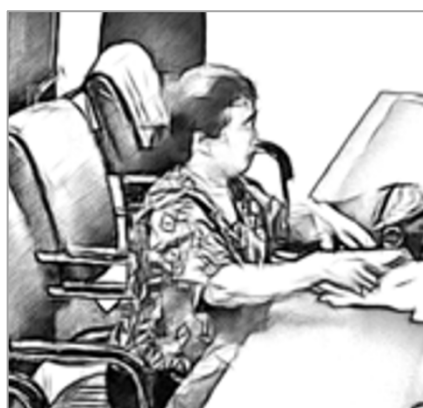


Figure 5.7 H's hand position in 1.06

(9) CJDs1e2_#3

(Ben=a director of a petition-receiving office at the regional court; Fah=a regional court president; Hou=citizen)

- 20 Ben: °大姐.°=
°da jie.°=
big sister
Big sister.
- 21 Hou: =你 [等 会儿 的 =我 这=
=ni [deng huir de =wo zhe=
2SG wait a.while ASSC 1SG here
[((H raises her left arm from the shoulder and extends the hand
to 'stop' Ben))
You wait a minute=I=
- 22 Fah: =诶,=
=ei,=
INJ
=Hey=
- 23 Hou: =我 见 院长: 不 容易, 过 两 天 |我 要 干活 去 啦.
=wo jian yuanchang: bu RONGYI, GUO LIANG TIAN |WO YAO GANHUO QU LA.
1SG see president NEG easy pass two day 1SG must work go SFP
**It's not EASY for me to meet the president. AFTER A COUPLE OF DAYS
I HAVE TO GO TO WORK.**

- 24 Fah:→ 你 听 我 说 [你 >听 我 说 你 听 我 说<.
 ni ting wo shuo [ni >ting wo shuo ni ting wo shuo<.
 2SG listen 1SG say 2SG listen 1SG say 2SG listen 1SG say
 [((H starts retracting her outstretched arm))
You listen to me say. You >listen to me say. You listen to me say<.
- 25 → (0.2)/((Hou's arm returns to home position))
- 26 Fah: 这个 事儿.(.)>(归根 结底)< 今天 你这 说 半 天 我 就-
 zhege shir.(.)>(guigen jiedi)<jintian ni zhe shuo ban tian wo jiu-
 this matter ultimately today 2SG here say half day 1SG then
(As for) this matter, after all of what you've said here, I then
(gathered)- ...

As Potter and Craven (2010) and Antaki and Kent (2012) suggest, the main difference between the forms of 'telling' (i.e. directives) and 'asking' (i.e. requests) is that the former makes compliance conditionally relevant next, whereas the latter makes granting next relevant. Clearly, Hou's visibly retracting her outstretched arm right after Fah's production of the first directive in line 05 (Fig.5.10) and apparent silence in line 06 (Fig. 5.11) are treated by Fah as a (potential) compliance by straightforwardly delivering his next turn (line 07).

Similar to Excerpt 9, the second type of response that the citizens may produce is to comply with the directive by not only visibly returning their body-in-progress to 'home position' (Sacks & Schegloff, 2002) but also verbally providing compliance tokens such as *en* 'Mm' in Excerpt 10 below.

(10) CJDs1e3_#9

- 46 Ben: 想 办法 [给 你 解]决。
 xiang banfa [gei ni jie]jue.
 think way for 2SG solve
(We) figure out a way to solve it for you.
- 47 Fah: [我 现在] [[有-
 [wo xianzai] [[you-
 1SG now have
[Now I] [[have-
- 48 Don: [[他-
 [[ta-
 3SG
 [((Looks to Ben))
[[He-
- 49 Fah:→ 你 |听 [我 说.]
 ni |ting [wo shuo.]
 2SG listen 1SG say
 |((Don looks to Fah))

You listen to me say.

50 Don: [因为 我] 上 次 我 跟 你 说 那 个 :: [振云-]
 [yinwei wo]shang ci wo gen ni shuo nage :: [Zhen Yun-]
 because 1SG last time 1SG with 2SG say that.CL NM
 |((Points & waves his right index finger at Fah))
Because last time I told you about that:: [Zhen Yun-]

51 Fah: → [你 听 我] 说 :=
 [ni ting wo]SHUO :=
 2SG listen 1SG say
[You listen to me]SAY::



Figure 5.8 Don and Fah's gestures and gaze at the end of 1.06

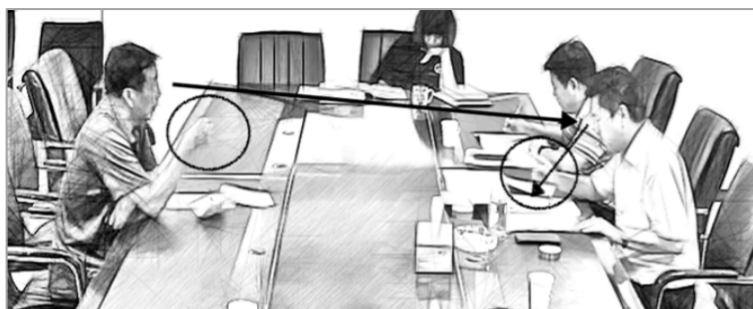


Figure 5.9 Don retracts his right index finger at Fah's *ting* in 1.07



Figure 5.10 Don retracts his extended hand and arm to "home position" at the end of 1.07

52 Fah: → =你 听 我 说 .=
 =ni ting wo shuo .=
 2SG listen 1SG say
=You listen to me say.=

53 Don: → =嗯 嗯 嗯 .
 =en en en .
 mm mm mm
=Mm mm mm .

54 Fah: 这 事儿 回去 马上 查. 因为 我 来 现在-
 zhe shir huiqu mashang cha. yinwei wo lai xianzai-
 this matter back immediately investigate because 1SG come now
(We) investigate this matter as soon as (we) get back (to our office).
Because since I've been working at the court-

Here, in dealing with Don's competition for the floor in lines 03 and 05, Fah initiates the directive 'You listen to me say' three times (lines 04, 06, 07) to call a halt to his continued course of action (i.e. delivering a complaint about a non-present official Zhen Yun, line 05). It is noticeable that during the floor competition, Don and Fah also point and wave their right index finger at each other to visually block the other from the floor (Fig. 5.12) (Li, 2014). So, before verbally surrendering the floor with the repeated compliance token *en* 'Mm' in line 08, Don visibly displays an embodied "incipient compliance" (Kent, 2012) by starting to retract his extended right index-finger during Fah's delivery of the third directive (Fig. 5.13) and by its end, returning the outstretched arm and hand to "home position" (Fig. 5.14) (Sacks and Schegloff, 2002).

In these two instances, it is clear that the citizens Hou and Don treat the lead official Fah's directives as making their compliance next relevant by either yielding the floor with silence or verbal compliance tokens along with retracting their outstretched arms and hands. Such types of responses demonstrate that they accept Fah as the deontic authority who determines their here-and-now action of yielding the floor (Stevanovic, 2013). However, the citizens can also resist this claimed authority by treating the prior directive as having requested their permission to take the floor. This can be observed in Excerpt 11a.

Before the excerpt, Liu has been complaining about how hard it is for him to get to see some government officials. Fah summons him three times (*lao Liu* 'Old Liu') in an attempt to make him stop with each time a greater voice in dealing with his resistance to stopping. Finally, Liu appears to arrive at a point of possible completion with a weak agreement elicitor at line 01 (*°dui bu duiç* ° "Rightç"). Fah then takes the next turn and projects an extended multi-unit turn with *liangge shir*, a 'Two things' at line 02. Possibly by

virtue of having not received any Liu's indication that he has given up taking a next turn, Fah and Ben successively exert authority on him to yield the floor with imperative directives *ting wo shuo* 'Listen to me say' (line 04) and *ting yuanzhang shuo* 'Listen to the president say' (line 05).

(11a) CJDs1e1_#2

- 01 Liu: °对 不 对¿°
 °dui bu dui¿°
 right NEG right
 °Right¿° ((Liu's posture remains the same throughout this excerpt))
- 02 Fah: 两个 事儿, 啊.
 liangge shir, a.
 two.CL matter PRT
Two things.
- 03 Ben: [°(你[别-])°
 [°(ni[bie-])°
 2SG NEG
 [((Bao raises his left hand facing down signaling Liu to stop))
Don't-
- 04 Fah:→ [听 我 说.=
 ting wo shuo.=
 listen 1SG say
Listen to me say.=
- 05 Ben:→ =°>(听 院长 说)<°
 =°(ting yuanzhang shuo)<°
 listen president say
 °Listen to the president say.°
- 06 (.)
- 07 Liu: 啊, 说 吧.=
 a, shuo ba.=
 INJ say PRT
Ah, go ahead ba.=
- 08 Fah: =()我 这 后面 好多- 好 多 人 呢,
 =()wo zhe hougou hao duo- hao duo ren ne,
 =()1SG here after very many very many people PRT
I have so many- so many people (to receive) after you.
- 09 来 一 回 我 就 给 他 [(那 什么).
 lai yi hui wo jiu gei ta [(na shenme).
 come one time 1SG just give 3SG [(that what)
Within one time of (reception) I just ...
- 10 Liu: [呃:↑今天 人 不 多.=
 [e: ↑jintian ren bu duo.=
 [uh today people NEG many
Uh:↑today there aren't many people.=

Similar to declarative directives, imperatives make immediate compliance next relevant (Auer, 2017). But in contrast to Hou and Don's compliance responses, Liu in fact treats the directives not as directing him to hand in the floor but as a request for the floor by granting it with an acknowledgement token *a* 'Ah' and a tit-for-tat response with the imperative construction *shuo ba* 'go ahead *ba*' (line 07). In doing so, Liu effectively pushes against the boundaries of deontic authority displayed by the officials to decide upon his here-and-now action of giving up the floor. It is also worth noting that Liu here repeating the verb *shuo* 'say' used in Fah and Ben's imperatives enables him to deontically re-establish himself as an independent agent who is free to determine his own conduct (cf. Raymond et al., 2021; see Keevallik (2017) for a similar practice in Estonian).

Such a resistance is also registered by Fah. In contrast to his continuations in Excerpts 9 and 10, he produces an account in the next turn ('I have so many- so many people to receive after you ...', line 08-09) that appears to cede his initial exertion of authority (Heritage, 1990; see also Antaki & Kent, 2012), which works to legitimize his prior action of making Liu stop talking and thereby to pursue the floor at this moment. In other words, Fah did not take Liu's *shuo ba* 'go ahead *ba*' as a compliance but a resistance that forebodes Liu's potential reclamation of the floor that he deliberately granted anytime after Fah seems having arrived at a point of possible completion. Indeed, Liu subsequently starts up in the middle of Fah's turn and bluntly disagrees with his account ('... today there aren't many people', line 10) based on his first-hand experience, as he just came from the reception room where all the petitioners were seated. And from the following lines in Excerpt 11b, it can be seen that in dealing with Liu's continuing resistance at line 12 ('>Not many<'), Fah first issues a mitigated imperative directive *ting wo shuo a* '... listen to me say *a*⁷³' (line 13), and with receiving a 0.3 silence at line 14, he then issues a declarative directive to further pursue or

⁷³ The particle *a* used with imperatives marks a negotiating and a persuasive stance in making the other party do something (Xu, 2020).

secure the floor (line 15). Though Liu still withholds verbal compliance in response at line 16, a nearly one second silence is understood by Fah as an indication of a high likelihood of his (temporary) success of obtaining the floor by carrying on his projected talk from line 17 onwards.

(11b) CJDs1e1_#2

- 11 Fah: =(总体 来 说 呢,)=
 =(zongti lai shuo ne,)=
 =total come say TP
 =(Generally speaking,)=
- 12 Liu: =°>人 不 多<°=
 =°>ren bu duo<°=
 people NEG many
 =°>Not many<°=
- 13 Fah:→ =(), [听 我 说 啊. ((Gazes down))
 =(), [ting wo shuo a.
 =(), listen 1SG say PRT
 [((F's index finger quickly points to Liu))
 =... listen to me say a.
- 14 (0.3)
- 15 Fah:→ 你 听 我 说. ((Gazes down))
 ni ting wo shuo.
 2SG listen 1SG say
 You listen to me say.
- 16 → (0.9)
- 17 Fah: 这 是 [刚才 回答 了. (0.6)
 zhe shi [gangcai huida le. (0.6)
 this be just.now answer PFV.
 [((Looks up to Liu))
 This has been answered a moment ago. (0.6)
- 18 Fah 我 的 事:儿 ...
 wo de shi:r ...
 1SG POSS thing
 (With regard to) the things in my (responsible domain) ...

So, by comparing the imperative construction to the aforementioned linguistic and bodily compliance in response to the directive, this section demonstrates at least two interactional functions in relation to the citizens' practice of granting the official permission to go ahead as if they had requested for it (Drew, 2022). First, the imperatively formatted response to the imperatively formatted directive reconfigures the power balance between the official and the citizen with regard to who has deontic authority over the floor at a certain

moment. And the participants' asymmetrical statuses in terms of turn allocations is therefore "talked into being" through their deontic formulations of the initiating-responsive actions – the official calling a halt to the citizen's ongoing talk, thereby occupying the floor and the citizen granting it in response (Heritage, 1984: 241).

But it has to be noted that the official's deontic authority, though being resisted, is still acknowledged by the citizen in the design of his turn. The key feature is the particle *ba* suffixed to the imperative here, which is noticeably absent in any of the permissive turns designed by the lead officials in the previous section. Essentially, the particle *ba* has epistemic and deontic connotations. When used in answers to questions, informings, and assessments, it serves to adjust the epistemic gradient invoked in the sequence and downgrade the speaker's epistemic position (Kendrick, 2018). Likewise, a number of grammars suggest that when it is used in imperative directives, it serves to soften the tone of voice (Li and Thompson, 1981: 307-11), convey a suggesting and negotiating stance in making the recipient do something (Z. Gao, 2010; Xu, 2003; Zhao & Sun, 2015), and implicate a compromise on the speaker's part in order to pursue an alignment with the hearer (Z. Gao, 2016)⁷⁴. Here, the particle *ba* works to mitigate the directive force, downgrade Liu's claimed deontic position, and highlight that his permission is given out of a concession to Fah. That is to say, distinct from the lead officials' (*ni shuo* '(you) go ahead', even though they both conduct 'granting permission', the citizens still orient to their lower deontic status in deciding upon the permissibility of the lead officials' conduct by deploying the particle *ba* to reshape the responsive action to the directive as concessive permission (cf. Heinemann and Steensig, 2017). Hence, the second interactional import of this practice is that the responsive

⁷⁴ Note that unlike Kendrick's work examining the use of *ba* in sequential contexts, the rest of the studies cited here solely focused on "the rationale behind the speaker's use of *ba*" (Han, 1995: 100) and thus left the recipient's orientation to it unanalyzed. But, with the current analysis of its sequential environment in Excerpt 12a, their claims are more or less attested from the interactional perspective. But also note that in their very recent study, Wu and Yang (2022) conduct a conversation-analytic research on the interactional function of the particle *ba* used in action sequences of directives in Mandarin Chinese mundane conversation. Their claim that *ba* is standardly deployed by the speakers to adjust deontic gradients is convergent with the observation documented here.

permitting action enables the citizens to underscore their authority in negotiating the rights to the floor with the officials, while the deployment of the particle *ba* equips them to downgrade the degree of the deontic authority they are claiming in the formulation of the permissive action.

Further, consider the following example. Note that Excerpt 12 shown below is the only instance in the collection in which the lead official (Wan) actually requests the citizens' permission to take a next turn. Possibly because a subordinate official's previous responding activity gets interrupted by different citizens in a group of 13 people many times, Wan finally joins in, claiming a speakership with a turn beginning 'Now look' at line 01, and after a 0.8 silence, he explicitly formulates a request for permission with the verb *rang* 'let'.

(12) WJe5_#27

- 01 Wan:→ 现在 你 看 这 事 儿 吧, (0.8)你 要 让 我 说 了, 我
 xianzai ni kan zhe shi er ba, (0.8)ni yao rang wo shuo le, wo
 now 2SG see this thing PRT 2SG if let 1SG say PRT 1SG
Now look, (0.8) if you let me speak, I then say a couple of words.
- 02 → 就 说 两 句. 不 让 我 说 呐, 那 我 就 听 (h) 你 们 说 说.
 jiu shuo liang ju. bu rang wo shuo na, na wo jiu t(h)ing nimen shuo shuo.
 then say two word NEG let 1SG say PRT then 1SG just listen 2PL say
(If you) don't let me speak, I just li(h)sten to you say.
- 03 CZ3: 说: ↓吧.
 shuo: ↓ba.
 say PRT
Go ahead ↓ba.
- 04 Wan: 你 这 个- 这 个 协 议 本 身, (1.1) 咱 们 原 来 就 看 着 过,
 ni zhe ge- zhe ge xieyi benshen, (1.1)zanmen yuanlai jiu kanzhe guo
 2SG this CL this CL agreement itself 1PL originally just see PFV
This- this agreement itself, (1.1) we have seen this before ...

In this excerpt, it is apparent that even if the lead official actually makes granting permission next relevant, the citizen CZ3 (who appears to be the leader of the group) still orients to their lower deontic position by mitigating the permitting action with the particle *ba*.

But more importantly, the action of requesting for the citizens' permission to take a next turn is oriented to by the lead official as inapposite by implementing a "composite action" here (Rossi, 2018), as it is incongruent with his high deontic status. That is, besides the

request, Wan is also doing an implicit threat with the construction of *If you let me X; I then Y; If you don't let me X, I then Z*, in which Z (i.e. 'I just li(h)sten to you £say£') implicates a negative consequence for the citizens (cf. Hepburn & Potter, 2011), because one of their ultimate goals is to receive Wan's response. Furthermore, the laughter also marks and reflects the delicacy of this utterance (Jefferson, 1984c; Potter & Hepburn, 2010). By doing so, it suggests that Wan has the power to engender the implied negative consequence (ibid.). So, in contrast to typical requests that standardly leave a space for the recipient to reject, the degree of imposing on the citizens to yield the floor is here much greater.

Therefore, the upshot of this excerpt including Excerpt 11a is that in order to accomplish a certain interactional goal at a particular moment in talk-in-interaction, the participants can underscore their deontic authority in one way and play it down in another. Here, we have seen that in Excerpt 11a, by deliberately treating the lead official's imperative directive as a request for his permission to take a next turn, the citizen is able to resist authority and underscore his own deontic authority through granting the floor with *shuo* 'go ahead', while mitigating the permitting action with the particle *ba*. In Excerpt 12, in dealing with the citizens' presumably high contingency of willing to give up the floor, the lead official strategically plays down his authority by formally requesting for permission to take the floor, while enacting the deontic authority to bring about a possible negative consequence if they refuse to yield the floor through implicitly threatening.

5.5 Concluding discussion

This chapter is essentially built upon Drew's argument, "[A]ction ascription is itself a social action[.] [R]ecipients are 'doing' something when they treat a prior turn as having implemented a given action" (2022: 58). The practice of the permissive imperative (*ni shuo* (*ba*) '(you) go ahead (ba)') deployed by the lead officials and the citizens has been examined

in a sequential environment in which granting permission to take the floor is apparently not made next relevant by the speaker's prior turn. By treating the citizens' declarative action projections as having requested their permission to continue, the lead officials are deliberately claiming the authority over the citizens' local conduct (i.e. to carry on their projected actions in the next turn(s)). It is found that such operations tend to occur in a context where the lead officials have initiated a pre-closing of the encounter through explicit cues (e.g., 'Look. Stop here for today' in Ex. 5) or sequence-closing relevant actions (e.g., providing arrangements in Ex. 6; or 'Auntie, is there anything else you'd like to say' in Ex. 4), whereas the citizens indicate there is more to talk about. One of its interactional consequences is that the citizens' independently initiated delivery of the projected talk is sequentially transformed into a conduct being implemented under the officials' authorization, and therefore the lead officials' initiative in directing the forward trajectory of the talk is maintained. When using it in response to the citizen's pre-delicate, the lead officials display the deontic authority in the domains of not only controlling the interactional agenda but also deciding upon the permissibility of the citizen's conduct of delicate actions. In contrast, by treating the officials' directive 'Listen to me say' as having requested the floor through granting it, the citizens are resisting the authority and underscoring their own authority over the floor.

This study has also examined the variants – (*ni*) *shuo* '(you) go ahead' and *shuo ba* 'go ahead *ba*' – deployed by the participants to fit in the local contexts and their deontic statuses. In general, in constructing the action of 'granting permission', the lead officials employ the unmitigated imperative '(you) go ahead', while the citizens use the particle *ba* to mitigate the directive force and display a concessive stance. This demonstrates that at first glance two parties appear to do a similar action, but with a closer examination on their turn designs, it is clear that the citizens still orient to the lead officials as the authority in

controlling the interactional agenda. Excerpt 12 has further illustrated the lead official's orientation to his own high deontic status by strategically making a formal request for the citizen's permission to take the floor while implicating a negative consequence of being rejected through threatening.

Although this chapter mainly focused on the participants' constructions of their responsive permitting actions in the course of claiming the floor, the citizens' action projections formulated with declaratives also deserves a special attention here. Instead of using a canonical request form 'Can I', they display high agency in initiating a new sequence at a given moment in interaction. In some instances (Ex. 4 & 6), by grammatically putting the preliminary and the projected talk in a single TCU through a topic-comment structure (topic='what I wanna say to you is' and 'for why *ya* I wanted to tell you this thing'), they equip themselves with a special right to produce the projected comment within a single turn without an interruption (Sacks et al., 1974). And it is remarkable that they even do not leave a space for the lead officials' permission or rejection to be produced. All of these interactional resources enable the citizens to negotiate their rights to the floor with the lead officials at a particular sequential juncture where a possible closure of the encounter has been made relevant by the officials. Hence, the citizens' ways of designing their action projections and 'granting permission' in response to the lead officials' directives is consistent with what Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012: 299) claim,

Speakers with strong deontic rights in a domain might not need to display those rights, for example, by "commanding," while speakers with fewer deontic rights might be willing to inflate their authority with more assertive directives.

In addition, besides the governmental context examined here, the practice of permitting others to do something through which the second speaker displays authority over the prior speaker's proposed action can also be observed in other settings. For example, consider Excerpt 13 shown below, extracted from a documentary reality show called 'Share

Life: Shanghai 2020-2021'. Jade, Cali, Carmon, and three others share a house in Shanghai, who are all in their twenties; they did not know each other before this show. One day, Carmon and Cali brought their dogs from their own homes to this house without asking for others' consent. Jade was upset and started a conversation with them. Before the extract, Cali has asked Jade to calm down and stop being aggressive. Carmon then apologizes and promises that if Jade still does not accept it after a discussion about how to keep the dogs away from her, she will take her dog back to her own home.

(13) *Share Life: Shanghai 20210106_49:00*

- 01 Jade: 是 这样, Carmon 的 意思 我 了解 了.
 shi zheyang, Carmon de yisi wo liaojie le.
 be this, NM ASSC meaning 1SG understand PFV
Okay, I got what Carmon means.
- 02 Cali: 嗯.
 en.
Mm.
- 03 Jade:→ 但是 我 要 就 你 刚刚 跟 我 说 的 话, (.)
 danshi wo yao jiu ni ganggang gen wo shuo de hua, (.)
 but 1SG need regarding 2SG just now to 1SG say ASSC words
But with regard to what you've just said to me, (.)
- 04 Cali: 嗯.=
 en.=
Mm.=
- 05 Jade:→ =提出 我 的 想法.
 =tichu wo de xiangfa.
 State 1SG ASSC thoughts
I'm gonna state my views.
- 06 Cali:→ 嗯 你 可 以 提, 没 关 系.
 en ni keyi ti, mei guanxi.
 mm 1SG can state NEG matter
Yeah you can state, that's all right.
- 07 Jade: 我 ↑知道 我 可 以 [提.
 wo ↑zhidao wo keyi [ti.
 1SG know 1SG can state
I ↑know I can state.
- 08 Cali: [嗯
 [en
 [Mm
- 09 Jade: 第 一 呢, 我 不 是 咄 咄 逼 人...
 diyi ne, wo bu shi duoduobiren ...
 first PRT 1SG NEG be aggressive

First of all, I was not being aggressive...

Clearly, Jade at lines 03 and 05 prefaces an extended response to what Cali has just said to her with a declaratively formatted preliminary. Syntactically, this form of assertion does not make Cali's permission relevant next, but he otherwise grants it with 'Yeah you can state' followed by a premature absolution 'that's all right' (line 06) (cf. Heritage et al., 2019). Similar to what the lead officials do in this chapter, Cali, by granting Jade permission to proceed with her proposed activity, as if she had requested it, lays claim to the authority over Jade's intended course of action. Evidently, at line 07, Jade pushes back against Cali's claimed authority over her and explicitly asserts her independence in determining her own conduct ('I ↑know I can state').

Cali's granting permission shows that anyone in the social world can construct themselves as being more or less deontically authoritative, while Jade's push-back indicates that "deontic authority is based on other people treating someone's power to determine action as legitimate" (Stevanovic, 2018: 4; italics in original). Thus, granting the other the floor in second position is an interactional practice that enables the speakers, whether in governmental settings or less institutional settings, to efficiently assert their authority over the floor from second position in a sequence.

6 Conclusions

This thesis has examined videoed petition-receiving encounters between Chinese citizens and officials. Through investigating how the two parties orient to their relative identities in relation to who has a greater right to take or occupy the floor at a particular moment in interaction, this study has aimed to show that 1) identity should be taken not to be a static notion but an interactional achievement and 2) authority/subordination is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. Hence, in what follows, I first summarize the findings of the study along with these two main arguments (sections 6.1 & 6.2). Then, I discuss the implications of the research for our understandings of the relationship between participants' deontic status and action formation and ascription and the issue of granularity of social actions and its implications for Chinese linguistics (section 6.3).

6.1 Identity is an interactional achievement

The thesis has aimed to argue that identity is not a static notion or some label that analysts externally attribute to participants, but an interactional achievement that is negotiated and accomplished by co-interactants through their design of turns and actions moment-by-moment in talk-in-interaction. To illustrate how the participants' institutional identities are made interactionally relevant at a particular moment in interaction, this study examined two types of actions concerning turn-taking organization: one party calling a halt to another party's (projectably) ongoing talk (Chapters 3 & 4) and granting the floor in second position (Chapter 5). It was shown that citizens and lead officials' orientations to their relative asymmetric rights to the floor associated with their institutional identities are demonstrably manifested in their action formation and ascription. It was, therefore, argued that it is such orientations that constitute the institutionality of the encounter.

Chapter 3 investigated how the lead officials construct themselves as the ‘authority’ in controlling the floor through the use of declarative and imperative directives (*ni ting wo shuo* ‘(You) listen to me say’ to call a halt to the citizens’ (projectably) ongoing course of action or talk. It showed that although the citizens may initially resist the claimed authority by the lead officials through verbal (e.g., competing for the floor in Ex. 4 & 5) and embodied (e.g., holding gestures in Ex. 2) conduct, they eventually accept it by complying through withholding a next turn (and retracting in-progress body movements). So it was argued that the participants’ asymmetric identities in terms of turn-taking organization are made interactionally relevant by the officials claiming authority in taking the floor and the citizens accepting it; and such orientations are procedurally consequential for the outcome of the officials having obtained the floor (Schegloff, 1992a).

In similar vein, Chapter 4 examined whether citizens deploy the same resources as the lead officials do when designing their interrupting actions. It showed that the citizens orient to themselves as having a relatively lower deontic status in calling a halt to the lead officials’s ongoing talk at a certain moment. Specifically, when doing such an action, they may display deference to the lead officials by shifting the forms of address from informal *ni* ‘you’ (which they standardly use in making a civil request) to honorific *nin* ‘you_{HON}’, as in *nin ting wo shuo* ‘You_{HON} listen to me say’. This shift deliberately invokes their asymmetric relationship, relative to one another (cf. C. Raymond, 2016), thereby effectively mitigating the directive action. Other deferential practices deployed include explicit formulations of doing interruption (e.g., ‘I’m interjecting here’), temporal/numeric minimizers (e.g., ‘for a second/moment’, verb duplication), smiling/grinning, and head-bowing. Nevertheless, a deviant case, where a citizen displays no deference to the lead official whatsoever while accusing him, stresses the point that the citizens’ choice of whether to mitigate their interruption is related to what kind of interactive context they are creating with the lead

officials moment-by-moment in the interaction. It therefore attests to the fact that participants' identity is not fixed in interaction but is dynamically invoked and managed through their design of turns- and actions-at-talk (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; F. Chevalier & Moore, 2015; LeBaron, Glenn, & Thompson, 2009; Schenkein, 1978). Sacks calls such identity-in-interaction "operative identity" (1992: 327).

In contrast to Chapters 3 and 4 which centered on the relationship between the two parties' relative deontic statuses and their formulation of interruption initiations and responses, Chapter 5 studied how their deontic statuses affect their recognition and treatment of one another's prior turn(s). It showed that citizens' declaratively formatted preliminaries (e.g., 'What I wanna say to you is') are treated by the lead officials as a request for permission to continue by granting it with a permissive directive (*ni shuo* '(You) go ahead'). This reflects the lead officials' orientation to the citizens as having a low deontic (D-) status, and that treatment reflexively renews the citizens' D- status (cf. Hiramoto & Hayashi, 2022). However, such preliminaries turned out to be not formally designed by the citizens as 'asking' for permission but an announcement to continue with their projected talk. This means that the citizens claim a high deontic (D+) stance to occupy the floor and independently produce their projected talk, whereas the lead officials, by subsequently granting the floor, recast the citizens as having a D- status. Likewise, by responding to the officials' imperative directive *ting wo shuo* 'Listen to me say' with a permissive directive *shuo+ba* 'Go ahead *ba*', the citizens treat the officials' prior turn as 'asking' for the floor and thus recalibrate their deontic relationship. Hence, it was argued that second position provides the second speaker an opportunity, through attributing some deontically inferior action to the prior turn(s), to assert deontic authority over the prior speaker's intended course of action and recalibrate who they are to one another.

In brief, the three analytic chapters have aimed to illustrate how citizens do ‘being citizens’ and lead officials do ‘being lead officials’ at the moments in interaction where they either call a halt to the other’s ongoing talk or overtly and designedly grant the other the floor in second position.

6.2 Authority/subordination is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon

Another objective of this thesis is to illustrate that the participants do not simply assert their authority or exhibit submissiveness while claiming the floor. In appreciating Peräkylä’s (1998, 2002) work on doctor-patient interactions, Heritage (2005: 95) remarks that

Peräkylä’s study does two things. It revises our mind-set about the nature of authority. If we do not look at interactional data, it is all too easy to see authority as an all-or-nothing phenomenon. Peräkylä reminds us that accountability goes with authority ...

In this thesis, we observed that both lead officials and citizens may deploy some linguistic and/or bodily resources to display authority or agency in calling a halt to or obstructing the other’s ongoing talk, while at the same time they may mobilize some of the other(s) to legitimize and/or mitigate this morally inappropriate action.

Chapter 3 demonstrated a recurrent practice deployed by the lead officials. That is, on the one hand, they display deontic authority in calling a halt to citizens’ ongoing course of action or talk with a directive and accompanying index-finger points (and wave) gestures (Ex. 1, 3 & 4). On the other hand, right after the directive, they always place a reference to citizens’ overall petition [*zhe(ge) shir* ‘(Regarding) this matter’] at the very beginning of their ensuing turn(s). It was argued that such a practice enables the officials to flag their upcoming talk as doing an institutionally entitled activity – providing the citizen(s) a solution – and indicate that though the citizens’ initiated sequence is being shifted or diverted, the ensuing talk is still citizen-attentive. By doing so, the officials are able to tacitly legitimize their directive action and further secure the floor. So I suggested that officials orient to the

accountability of their obstructing action (Peräkylä, 1998; Robinson, 2016) and thus do not claim absolute authority in taking over the floor.

Chapter 4 focused on citizens' linguistic-bodily inconsistency in displaying deference while calling a halt to or obstruct lead officials' ongoing talk. The phenomenon of focus was at the moment where the citizens overtly display deference by shifting the form of address from nonhonorific *ni* 'you' to honorific *nin* 'you_{HON}', but they otherwise accentuate their high agency in taking the floor by pointing and waving their index finger toward the lead officials. That is, the stance shift from nondeferential to deferential in language might arguably project a consistent stance with respect to bodily behavior. However, this is not the case. It was argued that this seeming inconsistency between language and the body in displaying deference is in fact a multimodal resource that enables the citizens to attend to the moral and deontic dimensions of their obstructing actions at the same time. That is, displaying deference to the lead officials exhibits the citizens' orientation to their directive actions as morally inapposite concerning their relatively lower deontic status, while the accompanying authoritative gestures and the form of assertion ('You_{HON}-listen-to-me-say' versus e.g., interrogatives 'Can I stop you for a second?') indicate that they do not fully submit to the lead official's authority. In other words, they also claim their own agency in directing the local trajectory of the talk at a particular moment in interaction.

In Chapter 5, we saw that although both citizens and lead officials use the imperative construction *shuo* 'Go ahead' to authorize the other taking the floor in second position to assert their authority over the floor, the citizens mitigate the directive force by using the particle *ba* (*shuo ba* 'Go ahead *ba*'). So, the authority that the two parties claim are different in degrees.

In sum, this thesis has attempted to show that deontic authority is an interactional process of negotiation between co-interactants, which is a dynamic identity that people in the

interaction can interactionally invoke or claim to be with their particular linguistic and bodily resources. But, as Stevanovic and Peräkylä suggest that ‘power’ is someone’s overall ability to bring about consequences regardless of the private judgments of its subjects, while ‘authority’ involves “the exercise of power that the subject of authority understands as *legitimate*”, which outcome is contingent on “the subjects’ free will to obey” (2012: 297; orig. italics), revealing the display of authority itself as an accountable action. This may be why in the naturally occurring citizen-official interactions in this research we have seen a lot of citizens’ resistance to the lead officials’ directives and the lead officials’ orientation to the legitimacy of their claimed authority.

6.3 Implications of the research

6.3.1 Deontic status and action formation and ascription

In contrast to sociolinguistic studies that participants’ identity is labeled by researchers, this conversation-analytic study focused on the participants’ own orientations to their deontic status relative to their co-interactants’ and how these orientations are manifested in their design of interrupting actions and granting the other the floor in second position. Its findings have implications for our understanding of action formation and ascription in relation to participants’ identities.

As discussed before, the lead officials’ formulation of a directive action with an unmitigated utterance *ni-ting-wo-shuo* ‘You listen me say’ in Chapter 3 exhibits their orientation to their D+ status in calling a halt to the citizens’ (projectably) ongoing course of action, and the citizens’ eventual compliance reflexively establish the lead officials as having the D+ status in determining their local actions. In Chapter 4, the citizens mitigate their directive actions by using a variety of deferential practices indicating their own orientation to their D- status in launching the interruptions, and the lead officials’ acceptance of the

displayed deference by, for example, maintaining the nonhonorific form of address to the citizens while the citizens have markedly shifted to an honorific form in addressing them thus confirms the citizens' D- status. Thus, participants' relevant identities can be detected in their ways of formulating social actions.

More importantly, the investigation of the action of granting permission in claims to the floor in Chapter 5 has a particular implication for our understanding of the relationship between co-interactants' relative deontic status and action ascription. Drew and Couper-Kuhlen (2014: 15-16) point out two criterial factors for participants recognizing a particular social action. One is distinctive linguistic formats that Couper-Kuhlen (2014) find that participants can use to distinguish between the initiating actions of proposal, offer, request and suggestion based on who is the agent of the future action and who benefits from it. However, this claim is empirically problematized by Clayman and Heritage's (2014) observation that a canonical permission-request form ('Can I go see [your script]?') can be treated as an offer by the recipient ('Oh that'd be great'), if the speaker has a higher benefactive status. They suggest that what happens here is that the speaker's benefactive status "trumps" the benefactive stance displayed in the linguistic format (2014: 79).

Likewise, Chapter 5 demonstrated that even though the citizens deploy declaratives to implement action projections (e.g., 'What I wanna say to you is'), which embodies a less clear deontic relation between the two parties, the lead officials otherwise recognize it as a request for their permission. In other words, this declarative format can be reasonably enough to be understood as an announcement. This therefore leads to the second criterial factor: the participants' deontic status.

In contrast to interrogatives and imperatives that may linguistically index a relatively clear deontic relation between the participants, declaratives or statements seem to be more equivocal in the recognition of directive actions. For example, Stevanovic (2011) examines

statements about the speaker's needs ('I need a spoon') and the recipient's future actions ('You're taking a bath now'). She argues that these statements can be heard and treated as an "innocent" informing or a deontic announcement of a decision (2011: 14). But she finds that these can be heard as a request for action "only in situations in which the speaker has a high deontic status relative to the recipient" (2011: 29).

So in Chapter 5, we saw that the high deontic stance claimed by the citizens in their declaratively formatted action projections is "trumped" (see also Heritage, 2012a) by the lead officials' judgements about the citizens' low deontic status, and therefore that these declaratives are reasonably enough to be dealt with as requests for permission instead of announcements. A similar line of research is also conducted by Zinken and Ogiermann (2011) on action recognition of the necessity statement 'One needs to X' in Polish and Rossi and Zinken (2016) on impersonal deontic statement 'It is necessary to X' in Italian and Polish. They all demonstrate that such linguistic formats give the recipients an opportunity to choose whether recognizing it as a request for their action by actively assuming the shared responsibility and doing the relevant action.

Therefore, this thesis has aimed to show that speakers' identity can be interactionally made relevant or (hintedly) invoked by their particular formulation of a social action or (deliberate) ascription of an action to a prior turn in a particular sequential position, and that their relevant identity can be an interpretive resource for the participants, and us analysts, to understand what action that an utterance does (cf. Sacks, 1992a: 595; Schegloff, 2007a: 473). In short, identity itself is an interactional resource.

6.3.2 The issue of granularity of social actions

Besides probing the participants' local construction and negotiation of deontic authority in interaction, this thesis also touched on the issue of granularity of social actions.

Chapter 5 illustrated one type of granularity of the general action – granting permission. In this chapter, we have seen that even though both citizens and lead officials grant each other the floor, their turn designs are different: the lead officials employ the unmitigated imperative (*ni shuo* ‘(you) go ahead’, while the citizens use the particle *ba* (‘Go ahead *ba*’) to mitigate the directive force and display a concessive stance. So, technically, what the citizens implement is concessive permission, which indexes their orientation to the lead officials as the ultimate authority who controls the floor. Such nuanced distinctions are made possible by the language-specific structure – final particles in Chinese. Moreover, in Chapters 3 and 4, we have seen that participants’ claimed deontic stance is grammatically recalibrated by Chinese T/V distinction.

In sum, this thesis, by empirically examining how Chinese speakers use language-specific structures to construct specific social actions in interaction, has diversified the inventory of general types of social actions (here, permission in particular) in Mandarin.

6.3.3 Implications for Chinese linguistics

The first implication that I wish to draw from the analytic chapters involves the Chinese-English translation. As Schegloff (2002: 263) states,

The translation needs to be rendered in a fashion sensitive not only to the detail and nuance of the material being studied in its language-of-occurrence, but also sensitive to the detail and nuance in comparable English language interactions as revealed in the already extant literature.

The systematic examination in Ch. 3 & 4 on Chinese speakers’ use of *ni-ting-wo-shuo* ‘You-listen-to-me-say’ in second position in talk-in-interaction revealed that it is a construction for not only claiming the floor but also implicating a sequentially disjunctive course of action implemented in the ensuing talk. By comparing it with English ‘look’-prefaced and ‘listen’-prefaced turns studied by Sidnell (2007), it appears that Chinese ‘you listen to me say’ is more similar to English ‘look’ rather than ‘listen’, as they both have the interceding

characteristic and the sequential implication for a redirection of the talk. But of course, Chinese ‘You listen to me say’ cannot be simply translated into English ‘Look’, for the former is a declaratively formatted directive that indexes particular deontic stance while the latter is a token that presumably does not have the same directive force. Moreover, as in some cases the second verb *shuo* ‘say’ is particularly stressed by the speakers (see e.g., Ex. 4 & 6 in Ch. 3), which appears to emphatically demand the prior speaker’s extra attention, the word-by-word translation is preserved. In sum, the point is empirical exploration of the true use of language in naturally occurring contexts will undoubtedly improve the accuracy and authenticity of Chinese-English translation of conversations.

The second implication involves the relationship between certain language use and its indexed “politeness” and “face” considerations (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In Sun’s introduction book to Chinese language and culture, he claims that although “Chinese does not have any grammatical means, such as subjunctive mood in English, to mark polite speech”, any direct speech can be softened by the use of *qing* (‘please’) at the beginning of a sentence (2006: 130). To elaborate, he takes the construction ‘(you) listen to me say’⁷⁵ as an example (2006: 130-131), summarized in Table 6.1.

	Chinese	English translation
a.	<i>ting wo shuo</i>	“Listen to me!” (imperative sentence)
b.	<i>ni ting wo shuo</i>	“You listen to me.” (declarative sentence, less direct than a)
c.	<i>nin ting wo shuo</i>	“You _{HON} listen to me.” (declarative sentence, more polite)
d.	<i>qing nin ting wo shuo</i>	“Please you _{HON} listen to me!” (declarative sentence, more polite than c)
e.	<i>qing nin ting wo shuo, hao ma?</i>	“Would you _{HON} please listen to me?” (question, most polite allowing a no answer)

Table 6.1 Versions of (you) listen to me say with varied polite degrees (adapted)

⁷⁵ Note that Sun did not translate the verb *shuo* ‘say’ in his version.

Based on the analyses in this thesis, two points regarding the table can be made here. First, it suggests that the declarative (b) is less direct than the imperative (a), but Ex. 6 in Chapter 3 shows that Fah primarily uses the imperative ‘Listen to me say’ to deal with Yiqi’s prior resistance to yielding the floor; but, once receiving Yiqi’s “incipient compliance” (Kent, 2012), he subsequently uses the declarative ‘You listen to me say’ to further secure the floor. This indicates that “politeness” is not the only way to interpret speakers’ selection of one form over the other. For example, Kent and Kendrick (2016) study everyday interactions in British and American English and find that imperative directives can be used by speakers to tacitly hold the recipients accountable for failing to have already relevantly performed the directed action. Hence, without examining how people do with their language in naturally occurring conversations, our interpretation is inevitably limited to a priori assumptions about the relationship between interlocutors’ identities and their language choice. However, as this thesis and other CA research (cf. Drew, 2017) has shown, a given linguistic expression can be mobilized not as an expression of politeness *per se* (even though it may be interpreted as polite) but, in the first place, to deal with local interactional contingencies.

Second, it argues that the declarative (d) with the adverb *qing* ‘please’ is more polite than the declarative (c) without it. It is worth noting here that in the overall collection of 29 variants of ‘(you) listen to me say’, none of them has *qing* ‘please’. In Chapter 4, we have also observed that, for instance, in Ex. 5, even if the citizen Fen attempts to be linguistically more ‘polite’, she does not use the politeness marker *qing* ‘please’ but other deferential means such as deploying honorific *nin* ‘you_{HON}’ and temporal minimizers (‘You_{HON} listen to me say say for a moment’). In Ex. 6, we have even seen that Wu displays deference to the lead official in an embodied way by grinning and bowing her head and she does not use *qing*

‘please’⁷⁶. The analysis in this study thus illustrated that the adverb *qing* ‘please’ is theoretically a politeness marker, while interactionally speaking the use of it is much less than other deferential practices as discussed in Chapter 4. Thus, this conversation analytic study undoubtedly contributes an interactional perspective to Chinese socio-pragmatic study of the relationship between politeness and identity, thereby supplying an empirical “bite” (Evans & Levinson, 2009: 475) to conventional linguistic studies.

The third implication concerns the use of video recordings of naturally occurring conversations in exploring how people mobilize the two distinct and yet interdependent communication systems – language and the body – to implement social actions and accomplish social activities. As discussed in Chapter 1, in most politeness studies, the institutional data (e.g., business meetings) examined are in fact face-to-face interactions, whereas their primary focus is on linguistic expressions. The investigation of the participants’ embodiments in Chapters 3 and 4 have shown that when formulating a directive action, the body can be mobilized to underscore or mitigate the deontic stance displayed in language. So, this study has aimed to suggest that though language is the primary research target for linguists, investigating how language and the body are coordinately used by interactants in face-to-face conversations will undoubtedly improve our understanding of language use in talk-in-interaction.

Overall, this research, as the first conversation analytic study of videoed interactions in a governmental setting in Mandarin Chinese, has attempted to examine how Chinese citizens and (lead) officials interact with one another so as to accomplish one particular

⁷⁶ In fact, courtesy terms such as ‘please’ also frequently appear in English, but it has been shown in Schegloff’s (2004) study that ‘please’ is usually dispensed with in a repair-supplying repeat. For example, Fire department (Schegloff, 2004: 112-113)

01 Dispatch: What is yer name please,
 02 Caller: Beg yer pardon?
 03 Dispatch: What is yer name?
 04 Caller: Barry Jackson

As we can see in this interaction between a caller and a dispatcher from a fire department, in line 3 the ‘please’ appearing in line 1 is dispensed with when the caller in line 2 asks the dispatcher to repeat.

institutional activity – how citizens present petitions and lead officials provide solutions. It is hoped that whether to CA or to the sociolinguistic study of the relationship between language use and identity, or linguistics in general, this thesis has contributed an interactional perspective in Mandarin Chinese.

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Appendix I: Transcription conventions

Temporal, vocal, and contextual aspects

- [] A left square bracket indicates the beginning of overlapping talk or accompanying body movements; a right bracket indicates the end of overlapping talk or body movements.
- = Equal signs, one at the end of a line and another at the start of the next line, represent a “latched” relationship, indicating no silence or break between them.
- (0.5) Numbers in parenthesis indicate silence in tenth of a second.
- (.) A dot in parenthesis indicates a silence less than two-tenths of a second.
- . A period indicates a falling intonation contour but do not necessarily mark the end of a sentence.
- , A comma indicates continuing intonation.
- ¿ An upside-down question mark indicates a low rise intonation.
- ? A question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
- A hyphen indicates a cut-off.
- ::: Colons indicate a lengthening of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the prolongation.
- hh Aspiration/exhalation. The more ‘h’, the longer the aspiration. It also indicates laughter particles within words, e.g.: li(h)sten.
- .hh A dot before ‘hh’ indicates inbreaths.
- £ Talk surrounded within pound sterling signs indicate a ‘smiling’ voice.
- 重音/word An underlined character or letter of the word indicates stress.
- 大声/WORD** The bold face on Chinese characters indicate that they are markedly loud. The louder sounds are represented in upper case letters in English translation.
- ° 小声 °/°word° Talk enclosed within degree signs is markedly quiet or soft.
- ↑ ↓ Upward and downward arrows indicate a marked rise or fall in pitch.
- >word< Talk between > and < symbols is compressed or rushed.
- <word> Talk between > and < symbols is markedly slowed.
- () Empty parentheses indicate inaudible word(s).

- (--)
 - (word)
 - ((word))
 -
- The number of dashes indicate possible number of characters that the transcriber might have heard.
- Words in parentheses are either a best guess of what was being said or not uttered in the original Mandarin but are supplied to make the English translation more intelligible.
- Words in double parentheses are the transcriber's description of contextual events.
- An arrow besides a speaker name indicates the lines of analytic focus.

Multimodal aspect

The multimodal aspect of the data in this study were transcribed according to Li's transcription (2014, 2019) where she adopted the symbols for gaze and gesture used by C. Goodwin (1981), Heath (1986b) and Kendon (2004). I also borrowed 'fig' from Mondada's multimodal transcription conventions at <https://www.lorenzamondada.net/multimodal-transcription>.

- ~ Preparation of gesticulation
- * Stroke of gesticulation
- * Holding of stroke
- . Recovery of gesticulation
- | Boundary of gesture unit
- F Forward movement
- H Home position
- Close dashes indicate the holding of the body movements
- A series of dots represent movement
- away Gaze away
- at Gaze at
- down Gaze down
- fig The exact moment at which a screen shot has been taken

Appendix II: Abbreviations used in glossing

1/2/3 SG	first/second/third person singular
1/2/3 PL	first/second/third person plural
ASP	aspectual marker
ASSC	associative (<i>de</i>)
BA	a transitivity marker (<i>ba</i>)
CL	classifier
CRS	current relevant state particle (<i>le</i>)
DUR	durative aspect (<i>zhe, zai</i>)
HON	honorifics
INJ	interjection
NEG	negator (<i>bu</i>)
NM	proper name
NOM	nominalizer
PASS	a passive marker (<i>bei, gei</i>)
PFV	perfective aspect (<i>le</i>)
POSS	possessive (<i>de</i>)
PROG	progressive (<i>zai</i>)
PRT	particle
Q	question particle (<i>ma</i>)
TP	topic marker (<i>ne</i>)

Appendix III: Letter seeking access to record

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Dear General Director Weng,

I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to give us permission to film the citizens and the institutional representatives at your workplace Bureau for Letters and Calls for a research project.

The aim of the research project is to explore the verbal authority in bureaucratic-lay interactions in Mandarin. We are particularly interested in the ways in which citizens report their problems and deliver requests to the authority and institutional representatives give feedbacks and offer solutions.

To carry out this research, we would like to film their encounters in one of your reception rooms with one camera and a table-top microphone. It is hoped that these studies will inform bureaucratic-lay interactions, provide language suggestions for better communications between institutional representatives and citizens, and contribute to social scientific research concerning Chinese citizens' and governmental officials' relations.

Initially the video will only be viewed by me and my supervisor Dr. Rebecca Clift. Participants' identities are anonymized in the data records whenever they are published. At the earliest possible stage, names on any transcripts are transformed into pseudonyms. Where possible, all reference to particular institutions and organizations will be anonymized. If any of the video is to be shown to a wider research audience then the identities of the citizens and the institutional representatives will be protected (their real names will not be used and their faces will be blurred).

We realize this is a very brief summary of the project, but would be happy to answer any questions you or your colleagues have in relation to it. I would be happy to visit you at your convenience to discuss our research in more detail. If you would like to talk please do not hesitate to contact me using the detailed above.

Yours faithfully,

Zehui Weng

Appendix IV: The data information shown in Ch. 3

Encounter 1: CJDs1

No.	Name	Time (A.M.)	Duration (mins)
1	Liu	09:11 – 09:30	19
2	Hou	09:31 – 09:59	28
3	Yiqi	10:00 – 10:20	20
4	Guo	10:20 – 10:30	10
5	Don	10:31 – 10:46	15
6	Yun	10:47 – 11:09	21
7	Bai	11:09 – 11:14	5
8	Hua	11:15 – 11:25	10
9	Mao	11:25 – 11:33	8
10	Peng	11:35 – 11:52	17
Total			153
Average duration			15.3

Encounter 2: CJDs2

No.	Name	Time (A.M.)	Duration (mins)
1	Fen	09:11 – 09:39	28
2	Hou	09:40 – 10:03	23
3	Zhou	10:07 – 10:13	6
4	Hei	10:22 – 10:30	8
5	Hua	10:34 – 11:05	29
Total			94
Average duration			18.8