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中文空殼名詞之互動功能:

以問題是、事實上、這樣(子)和什麼意思為例

Interactional Functions of Chinese Shell-Noun Expressions: A

Study on *Wentishi*, *Shishishang*, *Zheyang*(*zi*) and *Shemeysi*

謝承諭

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# 誌謝

終於。花了比想像中還要長的時間才走到這裡。

因為誌謝大概是唯一一個，可以完全照自己意志創造的部份，那我就來「隨心所欲」一下。剛剛試著寫了一下，結果越寫越八股，所以就決定全部砍掉重來。雖然下面這種條列式不是什麼創舉，但是也許會是現在在讀誌謝的你，比較少看到的形式。文長且雜，因為雖然要謝的人很多，但不能只謝天。不喜勿入，其實可以趕快跳過！

[1] shell noun: 這三年大概就像跟你談戀愛吧，你讓我參加了第一場的研討會，也讓我去了日本和西安。我對你不離不棄，你也帶給了我許多。不知道有多少電腦前的時光和回家的路上，腦子裡想的都是你。說是研究題目，其實更像是生活的一部份。所以第一個要謝的就是你，和你老爸 Hans-Jörg Schmid。

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[5] 江文瑜老師：上了老師的音韻學，和老師合作辦了幾場的 CLDC，從老師那裡學到很多正向樂觀的精神。

[6] 張顯達老師：一直覺得老師很酷又很可愛，總是很冷靜，指出大家沒想到的點，又會偷偷搞笑，能上到老師的課非常幸運。

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[38] 羅允佳：你也是大恩不言謝，要謝謝你的地方太多了，都不知從何謝起。我想妳會懂。

[39] 鄭棣仁：沒有你，這三年我想會完全不一樣。現在的謝承諭可能也會完全不一樣。

[40] 媽媽、爸爸、姊姊、姊夫、睿馨、柏安、外婆：謹將這本論文獻給你們。

好啦，最後還是要謝天。感謝老天的眷顧，讓我能和那麼多的貴人相遇，可以順利完成碩士論文。如果你很認真地看完這裡，也要感謝你花的時間。其他沒有謝到的，族繁不及備載，敬請見諒囉。最後一句老話：若有任何錯誤，一切由作者(也就是在下我本人)負責。

寫這本論文讓我學到很多，希望他也能帶給你，你所想要的。

# Abstract

In the past few decades, an increasing number of researchers have studied language as social action as opposed to a pure mental capacity. The use of language, based on this premise, is treated as a dynamic interactive process instead of a fixed cognitive state. This perspective enables researchers to account for a number of phenomena in the interface of language and social interaction, such as turn-taking and stancetaking. A variety of linguistic devices have been reported to serve such social interactive ends; however, abstract nouns or shell nouns (Schmid 2000), albeit their pervasiveness and importance, are rarely investigated under this framework. The aim of the present study is thus twofold: First, we intend to investigate the use of shell nouns or shell-noun-based markers in Mandarin conversations, and second, with such an investigation, we attempt to showcase the complexity and interrelatedness of different levels of language use as social action.

Using a database composed of naturally occurring Chinese conversations, we inspect the use of four shell-noun-based expressions, *wentishi*, *shishishang*, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*, in Mandarin conversations. Adopting the framework of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics, we reveal in great detail how linguistic devices such as shell nouns function at different levels of social interaction.

The present study first presents the structural and distributional patterns of each marker. We find that lexico-grammatical patterns other than those outlined in Schmid (2000) can help link shell nouns to a proposition, and the co-interpreted shell noun and shell content are not necessarily produced by the same speaker. We also advance the research of shell nouns by pinpointing the preference of each shell-noun-based

expression for particular turn locations, which is, as we argue, largely shaped by its structural and functional properties.

Based on the conversational data, we further put forth a new analysis for the interactional function of each marker, identifying the social act that they respectively support in interaction. We claim that while *wentishi* adjusts specific assumptions, *shishishang* marks generalizations that can strengthen one's argument and the solidarity between interactants; the response token use of *zheyang*(*zi*) allows the recipient to negotiate the boundary of information and activities, whereas *shemeyisi* expresses the second speaker's challenge against or doubt about the prior turn, prompting the prior speaker to make repair.

Finally, we propose that these markers most importantly function to facilitate the conversationalists' act of stancetaking in managing knowledge and pursuing cooperation. Adopting the taxonomy proposed by Stivers et al. (2011b) concerning the key elements in the study of knowledge exchange and cooperation in interaction, we argue that while each expression indexes a particular speaker-hearer knowledge state and certainty, they are all exploited to claim speakers' epistemic rights and disclaim their responsibility. Although most of them seem to imply a less cooperative stance in the course of interaction, they are in fact designed to save face and negotiate over "who agrees with whom", so as to achieve a great extent of social cooperation in the end.

The present research contributes to both the study of shell nouns and our understanding of language as social action. In terms of shell nouns, the current thesis is, to our knowledge, not only the first thesis-level effort that investigates the set of nouns in a non-European language, but also one of the few studies that inspect their use in spoken interaction. With respect to language as action, we distinguish between different levels of social action and manifest the use of shell nouns at each level. By

this study, we unveil the delicacy and complexity of language and social interaction.

# 摘要

　　近年來，許多學者開始將語言當作是一種社會行動，而非單單只是一個認知能力來研究。在這個前提下，語言的使用被視為是一個動態的互動過程，而非靜止的心理狀態。這樣的觀點讓研究者得以解釋許多語言與人際互動相互作用下所導致的現象。過去的文獻中指出許多語言表達的形式可以做為社會互動的工具，但卻鮮少有研究著墨於抽象名詞或空殼名詞 (Schmid 2000) 在人際互動中的功能，如對話輪進行與立場採取的影響。故本論文有兩大目標 ― 第一，我們將研究空殼名詞或空殼名詞標記在中文對話的使用；第二，希望能夠藉由本研究，來展現語言作為社會行動的複雜性與相互關聯性。

　　本論文使用自然產生之口語語料，來研究四個空殼名詞標記，「問題是」、「事實上」、「這樣(子)」與「什麼意思」在中文對話中的使用。運用會話分析與互動語言學之理論，本研究將深入探討空殼名詞在不同層次的社會互動中，所具有的功能與扮演的角色。

　　本論文首先將呈現每一個空殼名詞標記的結構組成與分布情況。研究發現除了 Schmid (2000) 所列之四大構式外，中文中仍有其他結構用來連結抽象名詞與語境中的命題訊息，名詞與命題也不需由同一位說話人產出。本研究同時呈現出不同標記由於結構或功能上的因素，而在話輪中傾向出現的位置，藉此也增進我們對空殼名詞使用的了解。其次，基於這樣的會話語料，我們更進一步分析各個標記之互動功能與其所作用之社會活動。我們認為「問題是」是用來調整對話中特定假設；「事實上」是用來標記概括性的言論；作為回應標記的「這樣(子)」，讓說話人能夠與對話的對象協商知識與活動的界線；最後藉由「什麼意思」，說話人可以對前一個說話人的發言，表達懷疑或挑戰，並促使前一個說話人對其內容進行修正。而四個標記最重要的功能在於協助說話人在對話中，對知識的處理

與合作的達到上，採取一特定之立場。基於 Stivers et al. (2011b)對於知識立場與互動合作概念的分類，我們主張，僅管這四個標記各自表達特定的知識狀態與肯定度，但其實都是用來讓說話人能夠聲明自己的知識權力，並同時躲避自身的知識責任。雖然這四個空殼名詞標記似乎大多表達較不合作的立場，但他們的使用事實上是為了要保存說話人的面子與協商是誰同意誰，藉此達到最後更高程度的社會合作。

本研究對於空殼名詞與語言作為社會行動的研究皆多有貢獻。就空殼名詞而言，本論文應為第一個對非歐洲語言的空殼名詞使用作出的研究，也是少數探討對話中空殼名詞使用的研究。就語言作為社會行動來說，我們區分了不同層次的社會行動，同時也討論了空殼名詞在各個層次的實現與應用。藉由本研究，我們揭露了語言與社會互動的微妙與複雜。

關鍵詞：空殼名詞；語言作為社會行動；會話分析；互動語言學；語輪組織；立場採取；互為主觀性；知識權力；知識責任；社會合作；面子

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# Transcription Conventions

**Units**

| | |
|---|---|
| Intonation unit | {carriage return} |
| Truncated intonation unit | -- |
| Truncated word | - |

**Speakers**

| | |
|---|---|
| Speaker identity | : |
| Speech overlap | [] |

**Transitional continuity**

| | |
|---|---|
| Final | . |
| Continuing | , |
| Appeal | ? |

**Terminal pitch direction**

| | |
|---|---|
| Fall | \ |
| Rise | / |
| Level | _ |

**Transcriber's perspective**

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher's comment | (()) |
| Uncertain hearing | <X X> |
| Indecipherable syllable | X |
| Phonetic transcription | (//) |

**Pause**

| | |
|---|---|
| Long (0.7 sec) | …(N) |
| Medium (0.2-0.6 sec) | … |
| Short (<0.2 sec) | .. |
| Latching | (0) |

**Vocal noises**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vocal noises | () |
| Inhalation | (H) |
| Exhalation | (Hx) |
| Glottal stop | % |
| Laughter | @ |

**Quality**

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality | <Y Y> |
| Laugh | <@ @> |
| Quotation | <Q Q> |
| Multiple quality | <Y<Z Z>Y> |

**Specialized notation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Codeswitching | <L2 L2> |
| Taiwanese | <T T> |
| English | <E E> |

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| BA | *ba* (把) |
| BEI | passive voice marker *bei* (被) |
| C/F | copula/focus marker *shi* (是) |
| CL | classifier |
| COM | complementizer *shuo* (說) |
| CRS | currently relevant state *le* (了) |
| GEN | genitive *de* (的) |
| JIU | *jiu* (就) |
| MAS | manner adverb suffix *de* (得) |
| NEG | negative morpheme |
| NOM | nominalizer *de* (的) |
| PF | perfective aspect *le* (了) |
| PN | proper name |
| PT | particle |
| SUO | *suo* (所) |

# List of Tables

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

In the past few decades, a growing body of studies has pointed to the role of language as social action (Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Austin 1962; Englebretson 2007a; Heritage 2012a, b; Ochs et al. 1996; Schegloff 2007; Stivers et al. 2011a). As opposed to the treatment of language as a fixed property of individual minds, this stream of researchers take a more dynamic perspective, focusing mainly on the interaction between linguistic devices and the social contexts in which they are implemented. Stance-taking, among various types of social activities carried out in the everyday interaction, is regarded as one of the most important functions that language serves (Du Bois 2007). However, since relatively little attention has been paid to how conversation participants dynamically take a stance in Chinese conversationi (cf. Wu 2004), the current study thereby aims to unveil how particular Chinese linguistic resources (e.g. shell nouns) are recurrently utilized to manage social action, especially stance-taking, in talk-in-interaction.

The term *social action* in the current thesis refers to three different types of activities and phenomena. At the structural level, language as social action refers to the management of turn-taking in conversation (Schegloff 2007). Ever since the seminal paper by Sacks et al. (1974), several studies have been devoted to investigating how conversation participants strategically negotiate the give and take of conversational floors (Ford and Thompson 1996; Ford et al. 2002; Hayashi 2003; Lerner 1991, 1996; Levinson 1983; Schegloff 1996b, 2007; Tanaka 1999, among

many others). The use of particular linguistic resources such as lexical items, grammatical patterns, pragmatic markers and even intonation contour has been reported to influence and be influenced by conversationalists' act of turn-taking (Auer 2005; Clift 2001; Ford and Thompson 1996; Ford et al. 2002; Hopper and Thompson 2008; S. Huang 2000; Kärkkäinen 2003; Tanaka 1999, inter alia).

Another way to treat language as social action is to investigate the speech act or adjacency pair formed by utterances (Austin 1962; Levinson 1983; Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Searle 1969, 1976). In addition to functioning as an individual act, adjacent utterances can, as put forth by Schegloff and Sacks (1973), be ordered into sequences, forming adjacency pairs in which the first pair part can trigger the next speaker's formulation of the second pair part. Accordingly, a considerable number of researchers, especially conversation analysts, have closely examined aspects of how language is designed as intended social acts (not restricted to the traditional speech acts listed in Austin (1962) and Searle (1976)) in adjacency pairs and other sequential contexts, such as repair (e.g. Schegloff 1979; Schegloff et al. 1977), complaint (e.g. Drew 1998; Drew and Holt 1988), challenge (e.g. Keisanen 2007; Koshik 2005); advice-giving (e.g. Heritage and Sefi 1992; Hutchby 1995), question-answer (e.g. Heritage and Raymond 2005, in press; Raymond 2003;), assessment-assessment (e.g. Goodwin and Goodwin 1992; Hayano 2011; Pomerantz1984), and informing-response (e.g. Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010; Gardner 2002; Golato 2010; Heritage 1984a), to name a few.

Finally, in a more abstract sense, the notion of language as social action relates to how speakers make use of certain linguistic resources to publicly position themselves in relation to their interlocutors and the larger socio-cultural system (Du Bois 2007; Scheibman 2007). Prior studies have cogently pointed out that daily language use is far from being objective and descriptive (Iwasaki 1993; Scheibman 2002; Thompson

and Hopper 2001); instead, it is subjective and intersubjective (Englebretson 2007a; Kärkkäinen 2003; Thompson 2002; Traugott and Dasher 2002; Verhagen 2005, among many others). In verbal communication, speakers not only express their own evaluation, but also co-construct their epistemic and affective stance with their co-interactants (Du Bois 2007). The language for stance-taking in the management of knowledge and the pursuit of social cooperation can and should thus be regarded as both socially motivated and socially consequential (Du Bois 2007; Heritage 2012a, b; Stivers et al. 2011a). A number of studies have also suggested that this level of social action constitutes the ultimate goal of social actions at other levels as mentioned above (e.g. Ford 1993; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Keisanen 2007; Pomerantz 1984; Stivers et al. 2011b).

Given the various definitions of language as social action, the present thesis, by investigating the use of four shell-content complexes (Schmid 2000) or shell-noun-based markers in Chinese spoken discourse, aims to (1) support the postulation that language can be and is designed as social action in these different senses; (2) detail how certain linguistic devices are recurrently utilized to serve particular interactive ends; and (3) manifest the complexity and intersubjectivity in the use of language as social action, especially in the act of stancetaking.

## 1.1. Why shell nouns

A variety of linguistic expressions have been found to function in or as social action, including verb phrases (e.g. Fox 2001; S. Huang 2003; Kärkkäinen 2003, 2007; Tsui 1991), adverbials (e.g. Clift 2001; Heinemann et al. 2011; Hsieh and Huang 2005; Stivers 2011), particles (e.g. Gardner 2002; Hayano 2011; Heritage 1984a, 2002; Wu 2004) and constructions like questions (e.g. Bolden and Robin 2011; Heritage and

Raymond 2005; Koshik 2005), conditionals (e.g. Lerner 1996; Ford 1997; Su 2005; Sweetser 1990), and causal conjunctions (e.g. Ford 1993; Ford and Mori 1994; Mori 1999; Song and Tao 2009). Nevertheless, relatively little attention has been paid to noun-based expressions. Related studies tend to focus either on the nouns' semantic content or their textual or cognitive functions (Francis 1986, 1994; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Mahlberg 2005; Schmid 2000). Few of them explore the use of particular nouns or noun-based expressions in interaction (except for Biq 2004; Günthner 2007; Helasvuo 2001). The current study intends to fill this gap.

To approach this topic, we will mainly adopt the notion of shell noun proposed by Schmid (1999, 2000), in which a shell noun refers to a semantically unspecific abstract noun that is deployed in particular lexico-grammatical patterns or "shell-noun constructions" (Schmid 2000) to serve particular functions in relation to a propositional message in the context. Schmid's (2000) framework is adopted here because of his emphasis on the role of collocating patterns in defining and shaping the use of shell nouns. This not only provides a structural definition for the research target, but also enables researchers to analyze the interaction between nouns and constructions in a more systematic way (e.g. Aktas and Cortes 2008; Charles 2003, 2007; Schmid 2001).

It is also found that recurrently used noun-construction combinations tend to grammaticalize into prefabricated expressions. For example, Aijmer (2007) suggests that the alleged matrix clause *the fact is* in English has been reanalyzed into a modality marker. Given that, another purpose of the current study is to examine the use of four shell-noun-based markers, *wentishi*, *shishishang*, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* in conversation, so as to showcase (1) how shell nouns in non-European languages such as Chinese work in spoken discourse, (2) how particular shell nouns and shell-noun constructions are recurrently used as a grammaticalized expression,

and (3) how shell nouns and shell-noun constructions both contribute to the functions that their combination derives in interaction.

## 1.2. Research questions

More specifically, the current thesis, by examining the use of four shell-noun-based markers in Chinese spoken discourse, attempts to answer the following research questions:

(1) How do Chinese shell nouns function in the shell-noun constructions listed in Schmid (2000) as well as those that also have the potential to support the functions of shell nouns?

(2) How does the structural characteristic of a particular shell-noun-construction combination influence its distribution in interaction, especially in turns and how does its turn position in turn reflect or even affect the function of the expression?

(3) What socio-interactional functions does each marker serve in spoken discourse?

(4) How does the context shape and how is it shaped by the use of particular noun-construction combinations as a prefabricated expression?

(5) How is the use of shell-noun-based markers involved in the management of knowledge and epistemic stance in conversation?

(6) How do shell-noun-based markers contribute to different levels of social cooperation in interaction?

The first two research questions, as will be addressed in Chapter 3, are mainly intended to advance our understanding of the structural and distributional patterns of shell nouns in Chinese spoken interaction. As alluded to above, previous studies tend

to be limited to written data and biased toward European languages. By exploring these two questions, we attempt to uncover these unexplored aspects of the topic and also respond to the first definition of language as social action presented above.

Questions 3 and 4 are, on the other hand, oriented to the second view on language as social action. To answer the questions, we will inspect in Chapter 4 the linguistic and social context in which the shell-noun-based markers are deployed. We will pinpoint the social acts that motivate and are composed of the use of particular shell-noun-based markers. Although prior research has proposed certain functions for each expression, we will put forth more in-depth analyses by inspecting their use in talk-in-interaction.

Finally and most importantly, in relation to the most abstract level of social action, questions 5 and 6 address the issues of epistemic management and social cooperation in conversation. It will be shown in Chapter 5 that the four shell-noun-based markers are designed to manage the process of knowledge exchange in interaction and support the interactants' pursuit of mutual agreement. Their use, more interestingly, reflects the complexity in stancetaking and social cooperation, which allows us to know better how speakers achieve these social ends in conversation.


## 1.3. Data and analytical framework

Our database is composed of two corpora of spoken Taiwan Mandarin: National Taiwan University (NTU) Mandarin Corpus and Spoken Mandarin Corpus of NTU Cognitive Pragmatics Lab (NTU CoPra). Both corpora comprise naturally occurring Chinese conversations in face-to-face interaction and radio talk shows transcribed according to the transcription system proposed by Du Bois et al. (1993). The length of the collected transcripts in this dataset amounts to approximately 15 hours in total.

We first manually scrutinized the transcripts in search for tokens of abstract nouns that matched Schmid's (2000) definition of a shell noun. We found 181 disyllabic Chinese shell nouns, which amount to 1716 tokens in the corpus. Due to the enormous amount of data and the limited scope of the current study, we decided to narrow our focus down to four recurrently found noun-construction combinations[1], each of which represents a certain type of the use of Chinese shell nouns in conversation: *wentishi*, *shishishang*, the response-token use of *zheyang*(*zi*) (cf. Liu 2002) and *shemeyisi*. We retrieved from the corpus in total 34 tokens of *wentishi*, 52 tokens of *shishishang*, 63 tokens of *zheyang*(*zi*) (44 *zheyangzi*s and 19 *zheyang*s), and 20 tokens of *shemeyisi*. Since the current study is more of a qualitative nature, the statistics are given here only as a reference. We will refer to the exact numbers only when it is necessary.

Our analysis is mainly based on the framework of discourse analysis in general (Brown and Yule 1983; Van Dijk 2011) and Conversation Analysis (Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Heritage 1984b; Levinson 1983; Psathas 1995; Schegloff 2007) and Interactional Linguistics (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001) in particular. All of these approaches emphasize the importance of real language use and develop or illustrate their arguments with collected data rather than constructed examples. The latter two further pay special attention to the patterns of naturally occurring conversations or talk-in-interaction. They both treat language as context-shaped and context-shaping, i.e. language is contingent and consequential to the dynamic process of interaction (Heritage 1984b). Researchers of this line are also the most prominent advocates for the idea of language as social action (cf. Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Englebretson 2007a; Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Stivers et al. 2011a).

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[1] These four combinations are all markers derived from shell-content complexes. We will elaborate more on this topic in Chapters 4 and 5.

## 1.4. Organization of the thesis

The rest of the thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 provides a quick review on the past literature of unspecific abstract nouns and on a number of key notions in the study of knowledge and social cooperation. Chapter 3 outlines the structural characteristics of the four shell-noun-based markers and their distribution patterns in different turn locations. In Chapter 4, we will first review the prior studies concerning the four expressions and then revisit them with data from spoken discourse. We will present a more interactionally oriented analysis for their usage. Based on the analysis put forth in Chapter 4, we will in Chapter 5 reveal how the markers are used to construct and co-construct the intersubjective stance in the management of knowledge and the pursuit of social cooperation as well as how complex this interaction process can be. Finally, Chapter 6 recapitulates the current study and pinpoints certain issues for future research.
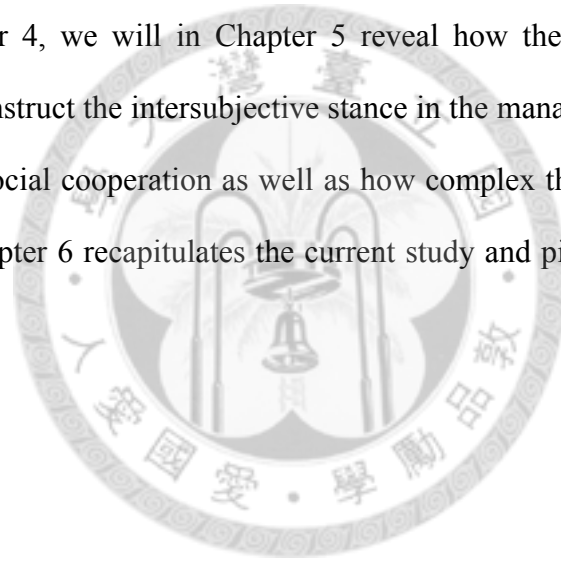
# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

This chapter sets out to review prior research pertaining to two topics that constitute the main focuses of the present study: Shell nouns (Schmid 2000), or unspecific abstract nouns, and certain notions in the study of language as social action, especially stancetaking in interaction.

The topic of unspecific abstract nouns has, for more than three decades, attracted the attention of some linguists. Despite the relative small number of works dedicated to the topic (in comparison with grammatical categories like verb phrases and adverbials), a variety of frameworks have been proposed to approach this set of nouns. We will in section 2.1 provide an overview of each approach and pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses. Further, we will account for the reasons why Schmid's (2000) framework is adopted in this thesis and elaborate on how we can advance the study of shell nouns.

Another line of research that will be reviewed in this chapter is the literature of stancetaking or, more specifically, that of knowledge management and social cooperation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, stancetaking amounts to the most abstract and probably the most important level of the use of language as social action. This complex act involves a dynamic process of interaction and different dimensions of social life (Du Bois 2007; Englebretson 2007b; Heritage 2012a, b). It may also constitute, according to previous studies, an integral part of the underlying mechanism and the ultimate goal of human interaction (Du Bois 2007; Heritage 2012a, b;

Levinson 2006; Stivers et al. 2011b). We will thus in section 2.2 review a number of
important notions that concerns the act of stancetaking in interaction.

## 2.1. Approaches to unspecific abstract nouns

The prior studies of unspecific abstract nouns can be roughly divided into mainly
three approaches, based on their research focus and assumption: textual, evaluative
and cognitive[2]. Although they also differ in the choice of words and analysis of the
chosen expressions, these approaches uncover certain aspects of the use of unspecific
abstract nouns. In what follows, we will briefly review each perspective and then
justify our preference for adopting the framework of shell nouns proposed by Schmid
(2000).

### 2.1.1. Textual approach

Earlier works concerning the topic of unspecific abstract nouns focus mainly on
their function in discourse organization. Despite the difference in the adopted labels
and targeted items, studies of this type put special emphasis on the textual use of these
nouns in written language. For example, investigating the cohesion strategies in
English, Halliday and Hasan (1976) coin the term *general noun* to refer to a large set
of unspecific nouns in English, such as *person*, *stuff* and *thing*, and propose that they
help to achieve discourse cohesion.

Arguing for the notion of *lexical signaling*, Hoey (1994) and Francis (1986), on
the other hand, emphasize the signaling or signpost function of particular lexical

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[2] Note, however, that this classification is only for descriptive convenience here. These approaches are
not mutually exclusive; instead, they may be influenced or inspired by the earlier ones.

nouns (mostly unspecific and abstract, such as *reason*, *accusation* and *conclusion*) or *anaphoric nouns* (Francis 1986) in English. They point out that these nouns can refer to a proposition in the context, functioning at both the discursive and metadiscursive levels. Using a similar set of nouns to illustrate[3], Francis (1994) further recognizes their potential to label and encapsulate stretches of discourse. In other words, these nouns not only signal the organization of a discourse, but help to compartmentalize, compress and also characterize a piece of information in the text.

Although this line of research blazes a path for subsequent studies of both theoretical and applied linguistics (Flowerdew 2003; Mahlberg 2005; Schmid 2000, among many others), certain limitations remain. First, most studies do not specify their selection criteria of the target nouns. This vagueness in definition may be one of the main factors that lead to the diversity in the scope of research and in the analysis for these nouns. Second, biased by the nature of written data, these studies may overemphasize the textual use of the target items and ignore their potential functions in spoken interaction. Third, although some of the researchers allude to the role that the co-occurring patterns take in supporting the discourse functions, most of them seem to downplay the importance of constructions in facilitating or even defining the functioning of the nouns[4].

### 2.1.2. Evaluative approach

In addition to the function of particular linguistic expressions in organizing a text, an increasing number of linguists have also started to pay attention to the language

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[3] Francis (1986) refers to these nouns as "anaphoric nouns" or "A-nouns," while Francis (1994) characterizes almost the same group of nouns as "labels," a distinction that seems to stem from the difference in the research focus.
[4] Nevertheless, later researchers adopting the framework of general nouns such as Partington (1998) and Biq (2004) do take into consideration the collocating constructions of the nouns in their analysis.

used to express personal attitude, belief and judgment, such as evaluation and stance (Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989; Biber et al. 1999; Finegan 1995; Hunston and Thompson 2000; Martin and White 2005). Hunston and Sinclair (2000) even propose a local grammar of evaluation, suggesting that a range of lexico-grammatical patterns are employed to serve the purpose of assessment. "Stance nouns", a label adopted in Biber et al. (1999), or certain general nouns, as argued by Mahlberg (2005), are instances of such a subjective or evaluative language.

In the chapter peculiarly devoted to the grammatical devices that can mark stance, Biber et al. (1999) refer to particular nouns like *possibility*, *fact, fear*, *claim*, and *expectation*, as stance nouns, along with the patterns in which these nouns can help express personal meanings. Following the taxonomy put forth by Biber and Finegan (1988), Biber et al. further advance that these nouns are mainly used to mark epistemic and attitudinal stances (1999: 972-975). Moreover, speakers/writers can exploit the device of stance nouns to either attribute the stance explicitly to themselves or leave it ambiguous (Biber et al. 1999: 976-978).

The work of Biber et al. (1999), albeit inspiring, also has several problems. First, they do not provide a specific definition of a stance noun. It is unclear what kinds of noun can be regarded as such. Second, despite their intention to present the grammar of both spoken and written English, Biber et al. (1999) do not seem to distinguish between the uses of stance nouns in different language modes. How exactly stance nouns are used in spoken discourse is unaddressed. Finally, despite their effort in taking into account the grammatical items that co-occur with the nouns, they fail to specify what role the patterns play in the use of stance nouns and how the noun and construction collaborate and interact.

Driven by corpus data, Mahlberg (2005) redefines Halliday and Hasan's (1976) general noun as nouns that are most frequently found in the corpus, and classifies the

nouns into three groups: Time nouns, people nouns and world nouns. Based on Hunston and Sinclair's (2000) research on the grammar of evaluation, Mahlberg (2005) manifests that world nouns, which include the most unspecific abstract nouns among the three groups, can be deployed in particular constructions to support the function of evaluation. The general noun *thing*, for instance, can be exploited not only as an evaluation carrier to which evaluative adjectives can be attached, but by itself also as an evaluative category that can "serve as a prototype to establish a standard of evaluation," as in the example of …*the thing to do is to ensure that…*(Mahlberg 2005: 154).

As such, Mahlberg (2005) is free from many of the prior research's problems. First of all, she provides a clear operational definition for general nouns. Although this frequency-based method of data selection may be controversial, it amounts to a more objective and consistent way to define the scope of research. In addition, Mahlberg (2005) explicates how grammatical patterns work in tandem with particular nouns to serve certain functions. She even points out the social meanings that the use of these nouns may imply.

Nevertheless, there still remain a number of problems. First, even nouns within the same category, e.g. world nouns, are too heterogeneous for generalization. For instance, both *thing* and *world* are included in the same group; however, they are rather distinct from each other in terms of both their meaning and pattern. Semantically, whereas *world* is more akin to the first-order noun, i.e. concrete objects, *thing*, in Lyons's (1977) taxonomy, is more of the second and third order, i.e. an event or an abstract proposition. In terms of the pattern with which the noun is used to support the function of evaluation, *world* tends to occur as "emphasis on evaluation," while *thing* serves as either an evaluation carrier or an evaluative category as described above (Mahlberg 2005: 153-154).

Second, although she cogently demonstrates the use of peculiar general nouns in the local grammar of evaluation, Mahlberg (2005) does not elucidate how the nouns and constructions are employed in a broader context, despite her adaptation of corpus data. None of the examples she presents is longer than a single sentence. It is not clear how general nouns function at the discourse level.

Finally, in spite of her attempt to take into account the macro-social elements involved in the exploitation of general nouns, Mahlberg (2005), akin to her predecessors, seems to ignore the role that micro-social factors play in determining the use. How unspecific abstract nouns shape and are shaped in conversational interaction is left unexplored.

In summary, apart from the discourse-organizing function of particular lexical nouns, a number of linguists have noticed their use in helping speakers express their subjective feeling. They conceptualize language or text as a medium for speakers to communicate their affect and attitude, instead of merely a well-designed impersonal artifact. Despite this significant shift in focus and conceptualization, studies of the evaluative approach seem to pay little attention to the interactive dimension of abstract nouns in particular and language in general.


**2.1.3. Cognitive approach**

Among all different approaches, the cognitive approach is of the greatest importance to the current study. In particular, Schmid (2000) is one of the earliest and most insightful works in the field of Cognitive Linguistics with respect to the investigation of unspecific abstract nouns. The notion of *shell noun* proposed in Schmid (2000) form a concrete basis in both methodology and analysis for subsequent research (Aijmer 2007; Aktas and Cortes 2008; Charles 2007; Günthner 2007; Schmid

2010, among others); thus, we will in the following review the framework of Schmid (2000) as the representative of the cognitive approach. We will argue that Schmid (2000) is the most systematic and comprehensive study of abstract nouns, and will thus be adopted in this research. We will elaborate on how Schmid (2000) defines shell nouns (section 2.1.3.1), why the framework should be considered cognitive (section 2.1.3.2), and what strengths and limitations Schmid (2000) has (section 2.1.3.3).

### 2.1.3.1. The definition of shell nouns

By *shell noun*, Schmid refers to "an open-ended functionally-defined class of abstract nouns that have, to varying degrees, the potential for being used as conceptual shells for complex, proposition-like pieces of information" (2000: 4). In other words, only when an abstract noun functions in relation to a propositional message can it be considered an instance of shell noun. Several criteria are outlined for defining a shell noun. According to Schmid (2000), a noun needs to be semantically both abstract and unspecific so as to be used as a shell noun. This criterion excludes unspecific nouns like *boy* or abstract nouns like *democracy*, neither of which can refer to any propositional context. This characteristic also enables the nouns to serve functions that define the notion of shell noun. Shmid (2000:14) proposes that every shell noun should be able to characterize complex chunks of information, to form a temporary concept in the discourse, and to link the nominal concept to the complex chunks of information mostly conveyed in the form of a clause or clauses.

What really distinguishes Schmid's (2000) framework from other similar studies is his emphasis on the role of the co-occurring constructions in the identification of shell nouns. One of the principal criteria for determining how typical a shell noun is

lies in how frequently it occurs in particular lexico-grammatical patterns that can help achieve the aforementioned functions. Schmid (2000: 22) further lists four shell-noun constructions and elucidates how the constructions support the functions of shell nouns. The patterns and their examples are as shown in table 2.1, which is largely adapted from figure 3.1 in Schmid (2000:22).

**Table 2.1 Shell-noun constructions listed in Schmid (2000: 22)**

| Pattern | Abbreviation | Example[5] |
|---|---|---|
| Shell noun + postnominal clause | N-cl | Mr. Bush said Iraq's leaders had to face the fact <u>that the rest of the world was against them</u>. |
| Shell NP + copula + complementing clause | N-*be*-cl | The advantage is <u>that there is a huge audience that can hear other things you may have to say</u>. |
| Referring item + shell noun | *th*-N | (<u>Mr. Ash was in the clearest possible terms labeling my clients as anti-semic.</u>) I hope it unnecessary to say that this accusation is also completely unjustified. |
| Referring item as subject + copula + shell noun (phrase) | *th*-*be*-N | (<u>I won the freshmen's cross-country.</u>) <u>That</u> was a great achievement, wasn't it? |

Each of the patterns links the shell noun to the shell content in a particular way and prefers certain co-occurring shell nouns (cf. Schmid 2000 for much more detailed discussion). The noun, the construction and the propositional content together are

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[5] The boldfaced words are the shell noun phrase and the underlined elements are the shell content.

referred to as "shell-content complexes" or "shell nouns" in short (Schmid 2000: 8).

### 2.1.3.2. The cognitive properties of shell nouns

Schmid's (2000) approach to shell nouns is cognitive in three ways. First and foremost, the construction-based definition of a shell noun is influenced by the framework of Construction Grammar proposed by Goldberg (1995), which is one of the most crucial syntactic theories in the field of Cognitive Linguistics. According to constructional grammarians such as Goldberg (1995, 2006), a construction is a cognitive unit, which is acquired and repeatedly exploited by native speakers of a language. Adopting this notion implies that shell nouns are not only useful in semantic characterization or discourse organization, but also representative of human cognition.

Second, by means of the study of English shell nouns, Schmid postulates the "From-Corpus-to-Cognition Principle [6]," suggesting that "frequency in text instantiates entrenchment in the cognitive system" (2000: 39). Put in another way, with shell nouns treated as a cognitive unit, the frequency of a particular abstract noun used as a shell noun and the frequency of it co-occurring with certain constructions reveal how these linguistic devices are stored and represented in the mind of English speakers. The higher the frequency, the greater the entrenchment[7].

Finally, the cognitive functions of shell nouns, Schmid (2000: 360) argues, constitute "their ultimate *raison d'être*". Having investigated 670 English shell nouns, Schmid concludes that they are mainly designed to serve three cognitive functions[8]: (1)

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[6] See Mahlberg (2005) for an argument against this principle.
[7] Since the target shell-noun-based expressions investigated in the current thesis are frequenttly found in the corpus, we will assume that they are all cognitively entrenched in Chinese speakers' mind. However, the exact frequency of each expression will not be the main focus of this study.
[8] Since the current study pays more attention to the interactional use of shell nouns, readers interested in knowing more about the three cognitive functions can refer to Chapter 17 of Schmid (2000)

conceptual partitioning, (2) reifying and hypostatizing, and (3) integrating (2000: 360-376). These functions reflect that the use of shell nouns is largely "motivated by properties of the cognitive system and its processes" (Schmid 2000: 304).

### 2.1.3.3. The strengths and limitations of Schmid (2000)

Schmid (2000) is better than the studies reviewed above for at least three reasons. First, he specifies a number of defining criteria for shell nouns, which also leads to greater homogeneity among the target nouns. Second, he explicitly involves the notion of construction in his research of shell nouns. In so doing, Schmid (2000) not only provides a structural index for shell nouns, but also underscores and expounds the collaboration between lexical nouns and grammatical patterns. Third, in addition to the semantic and pragmatic functions which have already been uncovered in the prior literature, the author further identifies three cognitive functions, relating the use of linguistic resources to the mechanism of human mind. As a result, we will in the present thesis adopt the notion of *shell noun* proposed by Schmid (2000).

Schmid's (2000) is nevertheless inadequate in his account for the interactive use of shell nouns in verbal communication. Follow-up studies such as Schmid (2001) and Günthner (2007) point out that shell-noun constructions like N-*be*-cl in English and German, can serve interactional functions such as expressing subjectivity and saving face. Moreover, Tuggy (1996), Aijmer (2007), and Günthner (2007) also observe that a particular noun-construction combination, such as *the fact is* in English or *die Sache ist* in German tends to be reanalyzed as a prefabricated unit employed for pragmatic purposes. More research should therefore be devoted to the interactional dimension of the use of shell nouns along with shell noun constructions.

To summarize, the term *shell noun* is coined by Schmid (2000) in attempt to

provide a cognitive account for certain unspecific abstract nouns linked to a proposition. He establishes clear rationales to define and categorize his research target. He moreover emphasizes the role of constructions in the use of shell nouns. Regardless of these contributions, Schmid's (2000) analysis seems to be restricted to the use of shell nouns in written discourse, ignoring the effects that they may have in spoken interaction. This thesis is therefore intended to fill the gap.

## 2.2. Stancetaking in social interaction

Despite the various approaches to the topic of shell nouns as reviewed in the previous section, little is known about the use of these nouns in spoken discourse, especially in talk-in-interaction. As several prior studies have suggested, stancetaking and social cooperation are two of the most important goals that language as social action is intended to achieve (Du Bois 2007; Enfield 2006; Englebretson 2007b; Heritage 2012a, b; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Jaffe 2009; Stivers et al. 2011a). Accordingly, in what follows, we will review a number of key notions in the study of stance, knowledge and social cooperation.

### 2.2.1. Intersubjective stance

Stance has been one of the most widely studied topics in different fields of social sciences for more than three decades (Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989; Englebretson 2007a; C. Goodwin 1986; M. Goodwin 2006; Harré and VanLangenhoeve 1991; Heritage 2012a, b; Jaffe 2009; Kärkkäinen 2003; Kockelman 2004; Wu 2004, inter alia). In earlier works by scholars such as Biber and Finegan (1988, 1989), stance is defined as "the overt expression of an author's or speaker's attitudes, feelings,

judgments, or commitment concerning the message" (Biber and Finegan 1988: 1). This line of research regards stance as static, personal, and mental.

Nevertheless, more recently, an increasing number of studies have pointed to the dynamic, socio-interactive nature of stancetaking (Clift 2006; Du Bois 2007; Fox 2001; Kärkkäinen 2003; Wu 2004, inter alia). For example, Du Bois (2007: 163) explicitly defines stance as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimensions of the sociocultural field." By this definition, Du Bois (2007) characterizes stance instead as a dynamic, public, social activity, which involves not only the speaker, but also another participating subject and an object on which the stance can be imposed. In taking a stance, the speaker or social actor does not simply express his own opinion; he also needs to position himself in relation to the co-conversationalists and the broader socio-cultural context, inasmuch as stancetaking is also socially consequential (Du Bois 2007; Englebretson 2007b). By means of the examples of found shell nouns or shell-noun-based markers, we will show in the following chapters that stance or stancetaking is complex and more akin to the intersubjective social action proposed by Du Bois (2007) and other researchers.

A number of linguistic devices have been reported to mark or index stance, ranging from the deployment of particular lexical items and morpho-syntactic patterns (e.g. Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989; Biber et al. 1999; Clift 2006; Kärkkäinen 2003, 2007; Keisanen 2007; Maynard 1993; Wu 2004, among others) to the design of prosody and sequential positions (e.g. Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 1996; Fox 2001; Gardner 2002; Heritage 1984a, b, 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Sorjonen 2001, among others). Despite this considerable amount of prior studies, little research is found to focus on how nouns or noun-based expressions support speakers' act of

stancetaking in interaction. Past research tends to pay attention only to nominals which semantically encode evidentiality, epistemicity or affect, such as *certainty*, *likelihood*, *fear* and *hope* (Biber et al. 1999; Holmes 1982; Schmid 2000). Nevertheless, as we will argue in Chapter 5, even nouns, especially shell nouns, without an epistemic or affective sense can also be deployed in particular patterns to help the conversationalist take an intersubjective stance, which is negotiated and co-constructed in the turn-by-turn interaction process (cf. Schmid 2001[9]).

### 2.2.2. Knowledge management and social cooperation

Apart from the intersubjectivity involved, recent studies also reveal the multifacetedness of stancetaking. In what follows, we will present a number of stance-related notions that will be largely relied on, especially in the discussion of Chapter 5. To begin with, Heritage postulates a distinction between "epistemic status" and "epistemic stance"; while the former refers to what one's knowledge state really is, the latter pertains to "how speaker positions themselves in terms of epistemic status" (2012a: 33). As he cogently justifies, this distinction is needed, inasmuch as the two can be incongruent with each other. That is, conversationalists may present themselves as more, or less, knowledgeable than they really are. This proposal also supports the argument that stance is public and social rather than private and mental.

Stivers et al. (2011b) moreover identify three other crucial notions in the research of knowledge or epistemic stance in conversation. The first and mostly studied dimension is *epistemic access*, which encompasses factors such as the knowledge states of the conversation participants, the degree of certainty, and knowledge sources.

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[9] Schmid (2001) also points out that shell nouns that do not encode a stance meaning can also be used to express stance, despite the fact that he is adopting the more static and personal definition.

Although it is often presented in a dichotomous fashion (e.g. K+ for knowing and K-for not knowing), epistemic access can in effect be graded (also see Heritage and Raymond forthcoming for their discussion on various degrees of epistemic access represented by different forms of interrogative).

On the other hand, *epistemic primacy* is, according to Stivers et al. (2011b: 13), "inherently relative". This second dimension of knowledge pertains to the asymmetries in co-interactants' rights to know or claim to know certain information and also their relative authority over it. In addition to the asymmetry stemming from the co-conversationalists' social roles or entitlement (Fox 2001), different linguistic devices have cross-linguistically been reported to help upgrade or downgrade one's relative rights (Bolden and Robinson 2011; Hayano 2011; Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Keevallik 2010; Kim 2011; Raymond and Heritage 2006, among many others).

Finally, while one may have epistemic rights over a certain piece of knowledge, the conversationalist also holds particular *epistemic responsibilities* for it. Stivers et al. (2011b: 17-18) posit that speakers tend to be held accountable for knowing certain information and regarded as responsible for knowing what is in the common ground. Speakers should also design their turns based on what they know about their co-interactants.

As can be seen in the above discussion, the management of knowledge or taking epistemic stance in conversation is, in line with Heritage (2012a) and Du Bois (2007), very much a social issue. Stivers et al. (2011b), as a result, further relate this issue to aspects of social cooperation in interaction. Following the contrast proposed by Stivers (2008), Stivers et al. (2011b: 20) refer to *alignment* as "the structural level of cooperation" and *affiliation* as "the affective level of cooperation". While the former concerns the speaker's acknowledgement of the prior speaker's information or his

support for the progress of the activity that his interlocutor initiates, the latter is associated with the current speaker's affective endorsement with the prior speaker's perspective (Stivers 2008: 32). Taking a particular epistemic stance, as Stivers et al. (2011b: 20-22) suggest, is both contingent and consequential to the level of social cooperation that is achieved at the moment and is intended to achieve throughout the interaction.

## 2.3. Chapter summary

Although the use of nominals, especially abstract nouns, has received less attention than it deserves, a number of studies, as have been reviewed in this chapter, have proved its importance and complexity. We have further divided these works into three types, each of which, although not exclusive from one another, has its own research focus and method. We have argued that Schmid's (2000) framework of shell noun amounts to the most systematic and comprehensive effort with respect to the investigation of this topic and thus will be adopted in the current thesis.

Inasmuch as the account of shell nouns provided by Schmid (2000) is rather comprehensive, we have also pointed out certain limitations of Schmid (2000), among which the interactive use of shell nouns, we believe, is one of the most important issues left unaddressed. As a result, by investigating the use of four shell-noun-based markers in Chinese spoken discourse, we intend to unveil the close link between shell nouns and social actions such turn-taking and stancetaking. We will show that the patterns of shell nouns in Chinese conversation are more complicated than described in Schmid (2000) and serve particular functions that contribute to the negotiation over and collaboration in the management of epistemic stance and the achievement of social cooperation.

# Chapter 3

## Structural and Distributional Patterns of Shell Nouns

This chapter aims to inspect the structural composition and distributional pattern of the four shell-noun complexes, i.e. *wentishi*, *shishishang*, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*, in spoken Chinese. By means of such an investigation, we intend to advance our understanding of the structural characteristics of shell nouns at the level of constructions and of conversational turns. We will show that certain Chinese constructions can support the function of the co-occurring shell noun and can also influence the turn location of the entire shell-noun complex as an interactional marker.

The first section of the present chapter sets out to depict how four noun-construction combinations, all of which have been reported to have grammaticalized into discourse/pragmatic markers, function like shell-noun complexes as presented in Schmid (2000). More specifically, we will identify the expressions' structural pattern and the ways that they link to the co-interpreted propositional content. In so doing, we not only showcase the use of shell nouns in a non-European language, but also further the understanding of the possible usage of shell nouns in spoken discourse.

After exploring how the shell-noun-based markers are employed in the local context, we will, in section 3.2, outline the turn locations in which each of the markers is found in our data. As previous studies have suggested, the use of an interactional marker is sensitive to its turn positions (Clift 2001; Heritage 1984a; S. Huang 2000;

Kärkkäinen 2003, among others). However, since previous studies on shell nouns are mostly limited to their use in written data, the deployment of shell nouns or shell-noun-based markers in turns remain uninvestigated. Section 3.2 will manifest how the use of shell nouns is involved in the management of turn-taking.

## 3.1. Shell nouns in constructions

As reviewed in Chapter 2, Schmid (2000) is one of the most comprehensive studies on the topic of abstract nouns both in terms of the number of nouns inspected and the scope of issues discussed. He puts forth four shell-noun constructions (cf. section 2.1.3), suggesting that these co-occurring patterns support the functions of shell nouns, linking them to the related shell content (Schmid 2000). As such, one should not only pay attention to the noun, but also take into account the lexico-grammatical patterns in which the noun is recurrently used, since it is the deployment in these constructions and the connection with the propositional content that define a shell noun. The subsequent research further advances that certain combinations tend to grammaticalize into prefabricated markers that serve particular pragmatic ends (Aijmer 2007; Hsieh 2010; Schmid 2001).

By investigating four prefabricated noun-pattern combinations, *wentishi*, *shishishang*, *zheyang*(*zi*), and *shemeyisi*, we intend to claim that (1) in addition to the constructions recognized in Schmid (2000), some other patterns are also found in Chinese conversation to found to trigger a "co-interpretation" of the abstract noun and its content; (2) the linking between the noun and the content is, put in the context of spoken interaction, in fact more complicated than it is depicted in Schmid (2000); and (3) the characteristic of the component prefabricated with the noun, despite the

prefabricatedness of these four noun-construction combinations, influences its distribution and function.

### 3.1.1. "Canonical" shell-noun constructions

Among the four target expressions examined in this study, *wentishi* and *zheyang*(*zi*) respectively correspond to two of the shell noun constructions put forth in Schmid (2000), namely N-*be*-cl and *th*-N, which are also the shell noun constructions most extensively studied (Aijmer 2007; Charles 2003, 2007; Günthner 2007; Schmid 2001, Tuggy 1996; among others). These are referred to as the "canonical" shell-noun constructions, since they are the constructions listed in Schmid's (2000) seminal research on English shell nouns. In section 3.1.2, we will present two other patterns that are not mentioned in previous studies and are thus "non-canonical" shlell-noun constructions.

Both *wentishi* and *zheyang*(*zi*) have been reported to grammaticalize into a multifunctional marker (Gao 2009; Li 2008; Liu 2002). In spite of these similarities, these two expressions are distinct from each other in a number of ways. First, the constructions co-occurrent with the shell noun are of different natures. To begin with, *wentishi* comprises a noun and a copula *shi*, an NP external element. This pattern forms a projector construction that suggests a following utterance (Günthner 2007; Hopper and Thompson 2008; H. Huang 2011). As for *zheyang*(*zi*), the pattern collocating with the noun is a proximal demonstrative *zhe* 'this', which is considered a NP-internal item. This combination thus structurally amounts to a noun phrase. As will be shown below, the difference in the structural composition will further lead to the divergences of the two expressions in other aspects.

The second difference between the two lies in the direction of linking between

the noun and the proposition. Inasmuch as a copula projects an upcoming element (Günthner 2007; Hopper and Thompson 2008; H. Huang 2011), *wentishi* tends to forwardly refer to a yet-to-be uttered proposition, as illustrated in example (3-1), with the marker underlined and the shell content italicized. On the other hand, since a demonstrative implies the givenness of information, *zheyang*(*zi*) is used to backwardly label the message, as shown in example (3-2).

(3-1)

628  A:  (0)林朝煌　　打　到　現在　　沒有　　　勝　過　一　　場.\

　　　　　linchaohuang da　dao xianzai meiyou　　sheng guo　yi　chang

　　　　　PN　　　　　play to　now　NEG.have win　pass　one CL

　　　　　'Chaohuang Lin so far hasn't even won once.'

629　　　@@

630  B:  (0)人家　　　　奧運　　　　銀牌　　　耶,_

　　　　　renjia　　　aoyun　　　yinpai　　　ye

　　　　　other.people Olympic.Games silver.medal PT

　　　　　'But he was a winner of an Olymplic silver medal.'

630　　　..<X 拿　過 十萬 X>.\

　　　　　Na　guo shiwan

　　　　　Take pass ten.thousand

　　　　　'He has even won one hundred thousand NT dollars.'

631  A: → ..問題是　　　他　太　耐　不　　住　了,_

　　　　　wentishi　　　ta　tai　nai　bu　zhu　le

　　　　　WENTISHI　he　too　bear NEG　live　CRS

　　　　　'the thing is he is too impatient.'

(3-2)

193. B: [啊 去] 的 時候 幾乎 人家 都 回來 了.\

    a qu de shihou jihu renjia dou huilai le

    PT go NOM time almost other.people all return CRS

    'When we got there, other tourists all came back.'

194. *..啊 都-- 別人 都 塞車 啊 我們 去 了 反而 比較*

    *a dou-- bieren dou saiche a women qu le faner bijiao*

    PT all other.people all traffic.jam PT we go PF instead more

    *沒有 塞 啊._*

    *meiyou sai a*

    NEG.have jam PT

    'All the other people had been stuck in the traffic. But we instead didn't encounter any traffic jam.'

195. A:→ ..[這樣子].\

    zheyangzi

    ZHEYANGZI

    'Oh.'


Finally, the structural tightness between the shell noun and the shell content also varies. Whereas *wentishi* and the associated utterances are mostly produced by the same speaker and often within the same turn, the targeted usage of *zheyang*(*zi*) and its corresponding message are always contributed by different interactants, a contrast well illustrated in (3-1) and (3-2).

Having outlined the similarities and differences between the two "canonical" shell noun constructions, we will, based on the findings, compare two expressions derived from "non-canonical" shell-noun constructions in the next subsection. As will

be shown below, some other shell-noun constructions can, akin to the "canonical" ones, link together an abstract noun and the related propositional information. A number of similiarities are also found between these two pairs.

### 3.1.2. "Non-canonical" shell-noun constructions

In addition to the "canonical" shell-noun constructions, other patterns have also been observed to facilitate the linking between an abstract noun and a proposition and to form a pragmatic prefab with a frequently co-occurring noun (Hsieh 2010, 2011a, 2011b). One of the examples is the locative particle *shang* in the adverbial *shishishang* (cf. Wang et al. 2010a), while another is the wh-question word *sheme* in the interrogative expression *shemeyisi* (cf. Zhang 1998). Although neither the locative particle nor the wh-question word is regarded as a shell noun construction in English, as demonstrated in examples (3-3) and (3-4), both of them anaphorically link an abstract noun to a proposition, triggering a co-interpretation between them (cf. Schmid 2000).

(3-3)

*19.* A:      ..事實上　　　這部　電影,

　　　　　shishishang　　　zhe bu　dianying

　　　　　SHISHISHANG this CL　movie

　　　　　'In fact, this movie'

*20.*　　　　..跟　我們　兩　個　一樣　喔,

　　　　　gen　women　liang　ge　yiyang　ou

　　　　　with　we　　two　CL　same　PT

　　　　　'is like us two.'

21.　　　　..是 <L2 LKK L2> 族　　這樣子.

　　　　　shi　　lkk　　zu　　zheyangzi

　　　　　C/F　　LKK　　tribe　like.this

　　　　　'It's a bit old-fashioned.'


(3-4)

208. B:　..<L2 Christmas L2> 她　　可能=,\

　　　　　christmas　　　ta　　keneng

　　　　　Christmas　　　she　　maybe

　　　　　'she may (not come back) this Christmas.'

209.　　　..我們　　是　要　跟　小薇　　說 叫 她　爸媽　不要

　　　　　women shi　yao　gen　xiaowei shuo jia ta　bama　buyao

　　　　　we　　C/F　want with　PN　　say ask her　parents NEG.want

　　　　過去　　了.\

　　　　guoqu　　le

　　　　go.over　CRS

　　　　'We plan to suggest Xiao-wei that she ask her parents not to go visiting her.'

210. A:　...什麼意思?\

　　　　　shemeyisi

　　　　　SHEMEYISI

　　　　　'what do you mean?'

211. B:　..這樣　　她　　可以　跟= 某人　　單獨　　相處　　　啊.\

　　　　　zheyang　ta　　keyi　gen= moren　dandu　xiangchu　　a

　　　　　like.this　she　can　　with　someone alone　　be.together PT

　　　　　'In that way, she can be with someone alone'

In example (3-3), the prefatory *shishishang* at line 19 characterizes the following proposition as a fact or truth at least in the literal sense, whereas in example (3-4), B's statement is prompted by the prior speaker's use of *yisi* and the question in which the abstract noun is deployed. Although occurring in a construction that is not recognized in Schimd (2000), both abstract nouns can function as a shell noun that encapsulates a piece of proposition-like information (Schmid 2000: 4).

Moreover, like *wentishi* and *zheyang*(*zi*), these two combinations have been found to derive particular pragmatic functions in previous studies (Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011; Zhang 1998), which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. With regard to their grammatical features, akin to the contrast between *wentishi* and *zheyang*(*zi*), *shishishang* and *shemeyisi* also differ in terms of their lexico-grammatical composition and the structural tightness between the abstract noun and the co-interpreted proposition.

With respect to the lexico-grammatical composition, *shishishang* combines a factual noun *shishi* and an NP-external particle, *shang* 'up' (Biq 2009). In contrast, *shemeyisi* consists of a shell noun *yisi* with an NP-internal wh-question word *sheme* (cf. Biq 2004). The former combination amounts to an adverbial, whereas the latter forms a noun phrase which alone can function as a wh-question in discourse.

As for the structural tightness between the expression and the proposition, *shishishang* is structurally much closer to the corresponding utterance than *shemeyisi*. The former marker is constantly produced with the co-interpreted proposition by the same speaker and within the same turn, while the shell content of the latter expression is mostly designed to occur in another speaker's turn due to its nature as a question, as also exemplified in examples (3-3) and (3-4).

Despite the similiarites between the two pair presented above, the latter also manifests at least two divergences from the former due to their difference in form and

meaning, which further complicates the linking relation between the noun and the content proposed by Schmid (2000). First, since *shishishang* inherits (Goldberg 1995) certain adverbial qualities from the prototypical locative construction NP-*shang*, it can occur in the position between a subject/topic and the predicate (Li and Thompson 1981), as illustrated in (3-5), while *wentishi*, which is derived from a subject-verb combination, cannot. In other words, by virtue of its syntactic flexibility of *shishishang* as an adverbial, the shell noun can be embedded in the shell content.

(3-5)

52    B:  ..結膜炎,_

jiemoyan

Conjunctivitis

'Conjunctivitis'

53        ..*結膜炎*        事實上                沒有            什麼\

*jiemoyan*        shishishang        *meiyou*        *sheme*

Conjunctivitis SHISHISHANG    NEG.have      what

'Conjunctivitis is in fact no big deal.'

Second, as shown in example (3-4), by virtue of the sense of *yisi*, 'meaning, intention,' the marker *shemeyisi* in fact links to the proposition formulated in line 211 not only the abstract noun, but also B's utterance in line 209. In contrast to the one-noun-to-one-proposition mapping presented in most examples of Schmid (2000), the use of this pattern involves and co-activates three components: (1) the noun *yisi*, (2) the meaning proposition elicited by the noun (e.g. line 211 in example (3-4)) and (3) the proposition that the question *shemeyisi* is targeted at (e.g. line 209 in example (3-4)). In other words, the semantic property of the shell noun may further complicate

the way that it interacts with the linguistic context, a feature that distinguish shell nouns from other referring expressions such as pronouns and demonstratives.

In summary, we have in the section presented the use of four markers composed of a shell noun and a different shell-noun construction. Both "canonical" and "non-canonical" shell-noun constructions have been shown to be able to trigger the co-interpretation. The same contrasts have also been found between the two pairs. Moreover, we have also pinpointed the complexity in the distribution of the shell noun and shell content, the direction of linking and the tripartite connection among the noun and propositions, which were not addressed in the prior research.

In the next section, we will treat the noun-construction combinations as a whole and reveal the broader contexts in which these shell-noun-based markers are implemented, i.e. their locations in conversational turns.

## 3.2. Shell-noun-based markers in turns

Turn-taking is one of the core elements of verbal interaction and also one of the most crucial activities that language helps achieve as a social action (Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff 1996b 2007). The position of a particular expression in a turn may reflect and also impact how it functions in the context (Clift 2001; S. Huang 2000; Kärkkäinen 2003, among others). Also, as shown in the previous section, different shell-noun-based markers may differ in the relative position of the shell noun and the co-interpreted message in turns. The current section thus aims to examine the positions of the four shell-noun-based expressions in conversational turns, which is an issue that has received little if any attention in the literature of shell nouns (cf. Schmid 2000 and also section 2.1.3 of this thesis).

We will first divide the distributional patterns into two major types: tokens with

other lexical components such as nouns and verbs in the same turn and tokens that

occupy a single turn by themselves. For the first type, three turn positions are further

identified, i.e. turn-initial, turn-medial, and turn-final. With such a classification, we

will in the following demonstrate that (1) each marker prefers to occur in particular

locations; (2) the preference of each marker, although the noun and the construction

have grammaticalized as a unit, may be partly rooted in the grammatical characteristic

of the original pattern; and (3) the pragmatic function of each marker may change

when it is deployed in different turn positions. These findings all point to the

importance of turn positions as a factor responsible for the subtleties and complexities

in the usages of shell nouns and shell-noun-based markers.


**3.2.1. Positions in a turn**

All the four markers are found to be used with other lexical components in the

same turn. It is thus necessary to zero in on where in a turn each of them prefers to

occur, inasmuch each location tends to relate to different social activities in the course

of interaction (S. Huang 2000). We will in the following present the distributional

pattern of each marker at turn-initial (section 3.2.1.1.), turn-medial (section 3.2.1.2),

and turn-final (section 3.2.1.3), respectively.


**3.2.1.1. Turn-initial**[10]

As illustrated in examples (3-6) to (3-9), the four items examined here can all be

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[10]  In addition to occurring at the very beginning of a turn, these expressions may also be prefaced by
another discourse marker or interactional particle like *na* 'then,' *ou* 'oh,' *danshi* 'but,' *yinwei*
'because' and the like. This position is still considered turn-initial in the present study in that the
preface is ususally produced closely with the shell-noun-based markers and also the markers still
function to respond to the prior turn and hold the present floor.

deployed in the turn-initial position, a juncture at which an expression is often employed to respond to the prior speaker's turn and/or to claim the conversational floor (cf. Clift 2001; S. Huang 2000).

(3-6)

215 S:　　...其實　書　　是　　你們　要　　[1 自己　去　看　　的 1].\

　　　　　　Qishi　shu　shi　nimen yao　　ziji　qu　kan　de

　　　　　　Actually book　C/F　you　need　　self　go　read　NOM

　　　　　　'Actually, you yourself should read the books'

216 F:　　　　　　　[1 問題是　　有　　去1]　看　啊.-　　　　　← turn-initial

　　　　　　　　wentishi　　you　qu　kan　a

　　　　　　　　WENTISHI　have go　　read PT

　　　　　　　　'The thing is I did read the books.'

(3-7)

85　H:　　..可能-

　　　　　keneng

　　　　　maybe

　　　　　'Maybe'

86　　　　..可是,_

　　　　　keshi

　　　　　but

　　　　　'But'

87 　　　　..這樣　　也　　學　　得　比較　　多.\
　　　　　zheyang　ye　xue　de　bijiao　duo
　　　　　this.way　also　learn　MAS more　many
　　　　　'You also learn more this way.'

88　J:　　(0)對.\
　　　　　dui
　　　　　right
　　　　　'Yeah.'

89　H:　　..事實上　　　　學　到　也　比[較　多].\　　　← turn-initial
　　　　　shishishang　xue　dao　ye　bijiao　duo
　　　　　SHISHISHANG learn　to　also　more　many
　　　　　'If fact, you also learn more.'

(3-8)

201. M:　..凱悅　的　義大利菜　不錯　　耶.\
　　　　kaiyue de　yidalicai　bucuo　ye
　　　　Hyatt　GEN italian.food　NEG.bad　PT
　　　　'The Italian food served in Hyatt is actually pretty good.'

202. G:　...這樣子　　　啊.\　　　　　　　　　　← turn-initial
　　　　zheyangzi　　a
　　　　ZHEYANGZI PT
　　　　'Oh.'

203.　　..我　沒　　去　吃　過　耶.\
　　　　wo　mei　　qu　chi　guo ye
　　　　I　NEG.have　go　eat　pass PT
　　　　'Actually, I haven't ever had it before.'

36

(3-9)

351 B:    ...(1.3)uhm,_

352      ...我　從來　　不　　解釋.\

         wo    conglai    bu      jieshi

          I    always    NEG    explain

         'I never explain it.'

353      ...(2.2)我　從來　　不　　解釋.\

              wo conglai bu     jieshi

               I    always NEG explain

              'I never explain it.'

354      ..我　　從來　　不　　解釋.\

         wo    conglai    bu    jieshi

          I    always    NEG explain

         'I never explain it.'

355 A:    ...什麼意思　　　　從來　　不　　解釋.\                    ← turn-initial

         shemeyisi          conglai    bu     jieshi

         SHEMEYISI    always    NEG    explain

         'What do you mean you never explain it?'

356      ..那　妳　在　　外面,_

         na    ni    zai    waimian

         that   you   at      outside

         'Then you are in the public'

357 ...家長會  的   時候,_

    jiazhanghui de   shihou

    PTA   NOM time

    'When you attend the PTA'

358 ..妳 要 去 家長會  吧.\

    ni yao qu jiaozhanghui ba

    you need go PTA   PT

    'You need to go to the PTA, don't you?'

Note, however, that the relationship between each marker and the subsequent turn components varies. What follows *wentishi* and *shishishang* tends to be their shell content, making the following turn components syntactically and semantically obligatory. The connection between the prefacing marker and the following components is thus strong. In contrast, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* are less frequently found to precede other turn components. Even if they do precede other utterances in the same turn, the following elements are neither structurally projected by the pattern, nor functionally co-referential with the shell noun.

For example, the *zheyangzi* token in extract (3-8) above refers to M's assessment in line 201. What follows *zheyangzi* is in fact speaker G's response to M's comment, an expansion that is neither syntactically nor semantically required by the preceding *zheyangzi*. With respect to the case of *shemeyisi*, as illustrated in extract (3-9), the subsequent elements are mostly the repetition of the utterance in the prior turn that the current speaker has trouble understanding. To justify his formulation of the wh-interrogative in line 355, speaker A further provides an account for his question in lines 356-358. Neither the repeat nor the account is required by the wh-question per se.

Despite the fact that all of the four expressions can be placed in this turn position, only *wentishi* is more frequently found here (47.05%, 16 out of 34 tokens), while other markers prefer other positions. This distribution pattern may be related to the major interactional function of each marker, which will be taken up in Chapter 4.

### 3.2.1.2. Turn-medial

Among the four markers in question, only *wentishi* and *shishishang* are found to occur at the turn-medial position, with the latter showing an even more skewed preference (80.77%, 42 out of 52 tokens). Consider the following examples:

(3-10)

73. A:    (0)所以    大    將軍=,_

          suoyi    da    jiangjun

          therefore big    general

          'So the general'

74.       …就    是..  埃及    公主    愛    大    將軍,_

          jiu    shi..  aiji    gongzhu  ai    da    jianjun

          JIU    C/F    Egypt    princess  love  big    general

          'I mean, the Egyptian Princess is in love with the general.'

75.       ..可是 大    將軍    愛    衣索比亞 公主.\

          keshi da    jiangjun  ai    yisuobiya  gongzhu

          but    big    general  love  Ethiopia    princess

          'But the general is in love with the Ethiopian Princess.'

76. →     ...問題是--                              ← turn-medial

     wentishi--

     WENTISHI

     'The thing is'

77.     衣索比亞   公主    又    是    埃及 公主      的,_

     *yisuobiyan gongzhu you    shi    aiji  gongzhu   de*

     Ethiopia     princess also   C/F   Egypt princess  GEN

     'The Ethiopian Princess is the Egyptian Princess's'

78.     ..女奴=,

     *nunu*

     female.slave

     'servant'

79. B:   ..女奴婢.\

     *nunubi*

     female.slave

     'servant'

80.     ..[就   是     三角]₁戀愛,-

     jiu   shi   sanjiaolianai

     JIU   C/F    love.triangle

     'It's a love triangle anyways.'


(3-11)

22. A:   ..<ARH 噫,

          yi

          PT

23.    ..那 個 聽眾    朋友 ARH>,

na   ge   tingzhong   pengyou

that CL   listener   friend

'Well, listeners'

24.    ..千萬    不要    以爲,

qianwan   buyao   yiwei

must    NEG.want think

'Don't take'

25. `   ..我們 的   尙   大哥,

women de   shang   dage

we   GEN   PN   big.brother

'Mr. Shang'

26.    ..年紀 有 多   大.

nianji   you   duo   da

age   have   much   big

'as an old man.'

27. →   ...[@事實上,                    ← turn-medial

shishishang

SHISHISHANG

'in fact'

28.    ..聽 他 的 聲音,

ting   ta   de   shengyin

listen he   GEN voice

'When you listen to his voice'

29.     ..就 知道   hoN(/how/)@ ](H).

        *jiu zhidao    hoN*

        JIU know    PT

        'you will know'

30. B:   ..我   裝   [出來  的].

        *wo   zhuang chulai   de*

        I    pretend out     NOM

        'I pretend to be like that.'

Deployed in the turn-medial position, the two markers often function as a juncture between two different, albeit not necessarily opposite, perspectives. They are designed principally to organize the same speaker's discourse, as opposed to responding to the prior turn. This may also account for the absence of *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* in this position, for both of them are occasioned by the utterances or actions formatted in the previous turn. Nevertheless, as will be discussed in later chapters, this turn-medial use of *wentishi* and *shishishang* is also contingent and consequential to the on-going interaction.

### 3.2.1.3. Turn-final

*Shemeyisi*, as a response token, is the only item that is recurrently found in the turn-final position. When used at this place, this marker tends to be deployed in two broader patterns: the second speaker can initiate the turn either by repeating the trouble source of understanding in the prior turn as in (3-12) or by adding a demonstrative like *zhe* or *na* and a copula *shi* prior to *shemeyisi* as in (3-13).

(3-12)

651L:     [你]  認為    說,-

          ni    renwei   shuo

          you   think    COM

          'So you think that'

652       ..反正      已經     這麼 多    十六歲,\

          fanzheng   yijing    zheme duo   shiliusui

          anyway     already   so       many sixteen-year-old

          'since there are so many sixteen-year-old (scooter riders) anyway'

653       ..就    應該    讓    他們     就地正法,\

          jiu   yinggai   rang   tamen    jiudizhengfa

          JIU   should   let      they    executed.on.the.spot

          'we should let them be executed on the spot.'

654       ..這樣子.\

          zheyangzi

          like.this

          'or something like that.'

655P:     ...什麼=,-

          sheme

          what

          'what?'

656  →    ...*就地正法*,\                        ← repetition of the trouble source

          *jiudizhengfa*

          executed.on.the.spot

          'Executed on the spot.'

43

657 → ..<u>什麼意思</u>.-　　　　　　　　　　← turn-final

shemeyisi

SHEMEYISI

'What do you mean by that?'

658L:　(0)啊,-

a

PT

'Oh!'

659　　..[<A 不是　　就地正法 A>],\

bushi　　jiudizhengfa

NEG.C/F executed.on.the.spot

'I didn't mean executed on the spot.'

(3-13)

6　S:　..我們　　　啊.\

women　　a

we　　　PT

'Ours, of course.'

7　　　因為　我　　一定　　要--

yinwei　wo　yiding　　yao

because I　certainly　want

'Because I must'

8　　　..可是　我們　很　　少　　贏　　他們.\

keshi　women hen　　shao　ying　　tamen

nut　we　very　few　win　　them

'But we seldom beat them'

44

9     ..幾乎  每次     都  輸    他們.\

      jihu   meici    dou  su    tamen

      almost every.time all    lose   them

      'we are almost always defeated by them'

10    ...那邊 有    一    個    人    啊.\

      nabian you    yi    ge    ren    a

      there   have   one   CL    person PT

      'They have a guy'

11  T:  ...[很     厲害].\

      hen     lihai

      very    shrewd

      'who is really shrewd.'

12  S:    [他  是]   日本人.\

      ya   shi    ribenren

      he   C/F    Japanese

      'He is Japanese.'

13  T: →  ...(0.7)*那  是     什麼意思*.\          ← turn-final

      *na    shi    shemeyisi*

      that   C/F    SHEMEYISI

      'What do you mean by that?'

14  S:  ..就  是    XX    學生.\

      Jiu   shi   xx      xuesheng

      JIU   C/F   XX      student

      'Actually it's XX.'

15  ..可是 他　只要--

　　keshi ta　 zhiyao

　　but　 he　 once

　　'But every time he'

16  …他　輸　了　都　會　哭.\

　　ta　su　le　dou　hui　ku

　　he　lose PF　all　will　cry

　　'loses the game, he cries.'

The preceding components in both patterns help pinpoint the trouble source in the prior turn, and the marker identifies the type of the problem (cf. Zhang 1998). To be more specific, the partial repeat overtly points to the utterance that the current speaker has difficulty understanding, whereas the demonstrative renders the scope of referents more or less ambiguous insofar as it can refer to either a noun or a clause. As for the wh-question, *shemeyisi*, functioning as either an information-seeking question or a repair initiator, it is designed to mobilize a response from the addressee (Stivers and Rossano 2010), which may account for its occurrence at this juncture of interaction.

With respect to the markers that tend not to occur in the turn-final position, especially *wentishi* and *shishishang*, this dispreference may be attributed to the restriction from their source construction of grammaticalization. *Wentishi*, for example, is reanalyzed from the combination of a nominal subject/topic and a predicative copula, a pattern that is observed to frequently project a following component (Günthner 2007; Helasvuo 2004; H. Huang 2011). This trait renders it less likely for the construction to occur at the end of a turn, where no further utterances are

expected from the current speaker[11]. Even if the marker does occur at the end of a turn (only 4 out of 34 tokens), it is because the turn is interrupted by the co-participant rather than intended by the speaker. The addressee does not analyze the marker as a sign for the end of a turn; instead, he will try to co-construct or help the prior speaker finish his turn. Consider the following example,

(3-14)

| 260F: | ..你 | 爲什麼 | 都 | 不 | 請 | 皓甯 | 去 | 看 | 電影 | 啊.\ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ni | weisheme | dou | bu | qing | haoning | qu | kan | dianying | a |
| | you | why | all | NEG | invite | PN | go | see | movie | PT |

'What do you never invite Hao-ning to go to a movie?'

261M: ...(1.43)我　想　啊.-

wo xiang　a

I　think　PT

'I want to'

262 ...(0.85)問--

wen

WEN

'The th-'

263 → 問題是=,-　　　　　　　　← turn-final

wentishi

WENTISHI

'the thing is'

264 ...(Tsk)

---

[11] However, in certain interactional contexts, the subsequent elements of a *shi*-ending item tend to be truncated, which contributes to its use in the turn-final position (cf. Wu and Biq 2011).

265F: ...(3.10) 是  什麼.\

    shi  sheme

    C/F  what

    'What is it?'

266M: ...<@問題是  不   知道  怎麼--  ← reformulating the utterance

    wentishi  bu   zhidao  zenme

    WENTISHI NEG  know  how

    'The thing is I don't know how to'

267    怎麼  找  他  去.\

    zenme  zhao  ta  qu

    how    find  he  go

    'how to invite him to go (to a movie).'

As can been seen in (3-14), the change of speaker should be attributed to the long pause after the production of *wentishi*, instead of the expression per se (cf. H. Huang 2011). Rather than occupy a full turn, speaker F formats a question to elicit the unsaid content foreshadowed by *wentishi*. Also as evidenced in speaker M's reformulation of his statement with *wentishi* as the preface in line 266, the use of the marker is both designed and understood to project other turn components rather than to suggest a change of speaker.

As for *shishishang*, which is regarded as an extended use of a pattern that prototypically identifies a spatial location (Biq 2009; Wang et al. 2010a), none of its 53 tokens is found in the turn-final position, a result that is also reported in Wang et al. (2010a). As put forth by Li and Thompson (1981: 398), except in the context of four particular types of verbs, locative phrases in Mandarin Chinese are mostly positioned pre-verbally. It is very likely that *shishishang* inherits this distributional feature from

the prototypical locative phrase, which contributes to its absence in the post-verbal and thus turn-final position.

### 3.2.2. As an independent turn

By contrast, only two of the markers, i.e. *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*, are found to be recurrently produced as an independent turn. In other words, they can by themselves suggest a transition relevance place (TRP) (Sacks et al. 1974). Consider the following extracts:

(3-15)

341 D:　[那　您=] 可能　要=,-

　　　　na　nin　keneng　yao

　　　　that　you　maybe　want

　　　　'Then perhaps you have to'

342　　..heNh,\

　　　　heNh

　　　　PT

　　　　'um'

343　　...跟=　醫師　講,\

　　　　gen=　yishi　jiang

　　　　With　doctor say

　　　　'tell the doctor'

344       ..就　是　說,-

       jiu   shi  shuo

       JIU   C/F  COM

       'that'

345       ..您　的　問題　可能　是　在於=,-

       nin  de  wenti   keneng  shi  zaiyu

       you  GEN problem  maybe  C/F  lie.in

       'Your problem perhaps lies in'

346       ..小孩子　發音　不好.\

       xiaohaizi  fayin      buhao

       child      pronunciation NEG.good

       'you kid's pronunciation.'

347 H:  ..mhm.\

       mhm

       PT

       'Mhm.'

348 M:  ..這樣子.\                ← an independent turn

       zheyangzi

       ZHEYANGZI

       'Oh'

349 D:  ..因為　有　些　人,-

       yinwei   you   xie  ren

       because  have  CL   person

       'Because some people'

50

350     ..他　可能　覺--

        ta    keneng jue--

        he    maybe jue

        'He may th-'

351     ..有　　些　醫師　　可能　會　認爲　　　說,-

        you     xie yishi    keneng hui renwei    shuo

        have    CL doctor    maybe will think      COM

        'Some doctors may think that'

352     ..ei?/

        Ei

        PT

        'oh?'

353     ..你　只是　來　檢查　　喉嚨　　　啊,-

        ni    zhishi   lai   jiancha    houlong    a

        you   only    come examine   throat      PT

        'You come only to examine your throat.'

354     ..或者　　是　說　　小孩子 感冒　　[這　種　　情況].\

        huozhe shi    shuo   xiaohaizi ganmao   zhe zhong qingkuang

        or      C/F   COM    child      cold        this CL    situation

        'Or it's just a case that your kid is simply under the weather.'


(3-16)

21F:    ...\<H 原來　　你　　是^ 兔=子 啊=H\>.-

        yuanlai    ni     shi    tu=zi   a=

        actually    you    C/F    rabbit   PT

        'Oh, so you are a rabbit, arent' you?'

51

22       ..好    高興      哦.\

         hao    gaoxing   ou

         good   happy     PT

         'I am so happy (to know that).'

23       ..你   是    兔=子.\

         ni    shi    tu=zi

         you   C/F    rabbit

         'You are a rabbit.'

24M: →   ...什麼意思.-                              ← an independent turn

         shemeyisi

         SHEMEYISI

         'What do you mean?'

25F:     ...haN?/

         haN

         PT

         'Well'

26       ...兔子 不是     還   有    另外  一   個 <@意思    嗎@>.\

         tuzi  bushi    hai  you   lingwai yi   ge      yisi     ma

         rabbit NEG.C/F still  have  another one   CL      meaning PT

         'Doesn't *rabbit* have another meaning?'


As illustrated in examples (3-15) and (3-16), both *zheyangzi* and *shemeyisi* alone can

occupy a turn without any other content words[12]. They both can backwardly respond

to the prior turn, while forwardly eliciting responses from the interlocutor.

---

[12] When *zheyang*(*zi*) co-occurs with a change-of-state token *oh* or an utterance-final particle *ou* or *a*, a
    situation that is also recurrently found, it is still considered an example of this category.

The difference between markers that can stand solely as a turn and those that cannot may again result from their source construction and the ensuing grammatical item that the pattern forms. To be more precise, the combination of a noun and an NP-internal component tends to form a nominal expression, which can stand alone as an independent turn or a turn constructional unit[13] (Ford and Thompson 1996), whereas markers composed of a noun and an NP-external element are more likely to function as a construction that projects further content (cf. Günthner 2007; Hopper and Thompson 2008). This finding, along with those discussed above, manifests how the internal structure of an emerging pragmatic marker may shape the item's distribution in a broader context and also its ensuing function in the organization of talk-in-interaction.

## 3.3. Chapter summary

In this chapter, we have examined the structural characteristics of four expressions that consist of a shell noun and a particular shell noun construction. As summarized in tables 3.1 and 3.2 below, these four items differ more or less from one another with respect to their internal composition and external distribution; each of them represents a particular type of shell-noun-based markers. By describing and comparing the patterns of these four markers, we believe that we have shed some light on the research of shell nouns in particular and that of pragmatic markers in general. First, we have identified patterns that can also support the linking between an abstract noun and a proposition other than those listed in (Schmid 2000). Second, based on

---

[13] This finding also corresponds to Tao's (1996) observation that NPs are one of the grammatical categories most frequently uttered as an intonation unit (IU) in Mandarin conversation. This distributional feature of NPs in Chinese may also be one of the factors that contribute to this tendency.

conversational data, we have presented the possible complexities in the linkage between the shell noun and the shell content, which is barely addressed in Schmid (2000) and other previous studies (Charles 2003, 2007; Francis 1986; Halliday and Hasan 1974, inter alia). The connection can be forward, backward or even bi-directional, and the entire shell-content complex can furthermore be co-constructed by the conversation participants. Finally, inspecting the use of these items in talk-in-interaction, we have pinpointed the positions that each marker tends to occur in a turn and highlighted the mutual influence between linguistic forms and human interaction.

In the next chapter, we will revisit the four markers respectively and specify the functions of each of them. We will demonstrate how the use of shell-noun-based markers are dynamically shaped by and shaping the context of talk-in-interaction

**Table 3.1 The structural and linking patterns of the four markers**

|  | *wentishi* | *shishishang* | *zheyang*(*zi*) | *shemeyisi* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Co-occurring element | NP-external (copula *shi*) | NP-external (locative *shang*) | NP-internal (demonstrative *zhe*) | NP-internal (wh-word *sheme*) |
| Direction of linking | forward | forward | backward | backward / bi-directional |
| Co-construction of linking | no | no | yes | Yes |

**Table 3.2 The turn locations of the four markers**

|  | *wentishi* | *shishishang* | *zheyang*(*zi*) | *shemeyisi* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turn-initial | yes | Yes | yes | yes |
| Turn-medial | yes | Yes | no | no |
| Turn-final | yes (but very rarely) | No | no | yes |
| Independent turn | no | no | yes | yes |

# Chapter 4

# Social Interactional Functions of Shell Nouns

In the previous chapter, we have addressed the structural and distributional characteristics of the four shell-noun-based markers. In what follows, we will elucidate their interactional functions respectively[14]. By identifying these functions, we also suggest the social acts in which each of them is involved. Section 4.1 argues that *wentishi* functions to project a specific utterance that adjusts the assumption conveyed in the prior discourse. Section 4.2 demonstrates that *shishishang* is used to mark a generalized statement that enhances the speaker's statement and establishes the solidarity between the conversationalists. Section 4.3 focuses on the response token use of *zheyang*(*zi*), revealing that in addition to marking the receipt of news, *zheyang*(*zi*) can help the speaker negotiate the boundary of information and activities. Finally, section 4.4 outlines different usages of *shemeyisi* and postulates that *shemeyisi* is designed to initiate repair and elicit further account.

## 4.1. Assumption-adjusting: *Wentishi*

This section aims to inspect the use of *wentishi* in Mandarin conversations. Via this investigation, we intend to claim that *wentishi* is employed to project information to which the speaker has special access, so as to adjust the assumption in the prior utterances formulated by either the same speaker or his interlocutor (cf. Keevallik

---

[14] How these shell-noun expressions derive such functions presented in this chapter, albeit worthy of more investigation, will not be the focus of the present paper.

2011). We will in section 4.1.1 review the prior studies on *wentishi* and detail our analysis in sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3.

### 4.1.1. Previous research

A number of past studies have pointed out the grammaticalized status of *wentishi* in Modern Chinese (Li 2008; Gao 2009). However, largely based on written data, previous researchers tends to focus on the semantic features and textual functions of this prefabricated unit. Li (2008), for example, claims that *wentishi* has derived into three different usages in Chinese according to its degrees of grammaticalization with the noun *wenti* in the most grammaticalized use losing its propositional meaning. The pattern as a unit, he contends, could function as a transition marker that signals an ensuing negative comment or undesirable event. Countering Li's argument, Gao (2009) instead contests that a number of positive propositions are also found after *wentishi*; this expression should therfore be analyzed as a pragmatic marker implying addition.

In line with Gao (2009), we also find in our data that *wentishi* is followed by neutral or even positive propositions. For example,

(4-1)

297. M:  ...或者　　是　　說　　hoN,_

huozhe　shi　shuo　hoN

or　　C/F　COM　PT

'Or'

298.  ...還是　說,_

   haishi shuo

   or　　COM

   'Or, well'

299.  ..比如　　　早上　　　時候,_

   biru　　　zaoshang　shihou

   for.example morning　　time

   'Like in the morning'

300.  ..請　　老林　坐　　那邊,_

   qing　laolin　zuo　nabian

   ask　PN　　sit　there

   'We can ask Mr Lin to sit there.'

301. F:  (0)m.\

   m

   PT

   'Mhm.'

302. M:  ...下午　　　再　回來　坐　　這邊,_

   xiawu　　　zai　huilai　zuo　zhebian

   afternoon　again return　sit　here

   'And he can return to the seat here in the afternoon.'

303.  ..這樣　　比較 好.\

   zheyang　bijiao hao

   This.way　more good

   'This way will be better.'

304. F:   ..早上      人--

   zaoshang   ren

   morning    person

   'In the morning, he'

305.    ...可是--

   keshi

   but

   'But'

306.    ..也  是   可以    啦.\

   ye  shi  keyi   la

   also C/F  can   PT

   'That'll be fine, too.'

307. →  ...但是    問題是,_

   danshi   wentishi

   nut     WENTISHI

   'But the thing is'

308.    ..我   覺得,_

   wo   juede

   I    think

   'I think'

309.    ...其實   他  坐   那邊,_

   qishi  ta  zuo  nabian

   actually he  sit   there

   'actually, if he sits there'

310.    ..也  蠻  好    的.\

         ye  man  hao   de

         also pretty good   NOM

         'it will be pretty good, too.'

311. M:  ..對不對.\

         dui-bu-dui

         right.NEG.right

         'Isn't it?'

Prior to this excerpt, speakers M and F are discussing the department's future policy about the deployment of the departmental staff. Speaker M then shares with F his view on the new arrangement as well as a possible alternative. In response to M, F first concedes with his idea but then prefaces her positive, albeit disaligning, assessment about another option with *wentishi*. The subsequent utterances extending from lines 308 to 310 per se can by no means be interpreted as a negative comment or an undesirable event, by virtue of F's use of a positive evaluative adjective *man hao de* 'pretty good' in line 310. In other words, the proposition does not have to be negative so as to follow *wentishi*. Li's analysis seems to be too narrow.

By contrast, Gao's (2009) account for the marker remains too vague. Although *wentishi* in extract (3-1) does not precede a negative comment, the construction apparently serves more than signaling an additional transition. In what follows, we will thus argue that *wentishi* functions for the speaker to adjust the assumption implied in the foregoing discourse by introducing a specific piece of contrasting information to which only the speaker has access.

## 4.1.2. Adjusting assumptions in one's own argument[15]

As discussed in Chapter 3, *wentishi* can occur in the turn-initial and turn-medial positions. Whereas the turn-initial use of this marker serves to challenge and modify the assumption expressed in the prior speaker's turn, the turn-medial use functions to mark a contrast in one's own argument. We will in this sub-section examine the latter while investigating the former in the next sub-section.

To begin with, *wentishi* is the most frequently found to co-occur with another contrastive marker, *danshi* or *keshi* 'but': 18 out of 34 tokens of the grammaticalized *wentishi* are immediately preceded by one of the markers. Second, the contrastive marker and *wentishi* are very often uttered within the same IU, reflecting the tight link between the two (Chafe 1979). Among the 18 instances prefaced by *danshi* or *keshi*, 11 of them are in the middle of a turn. In other words, *wentishi* usually needs a contrastive marker to make prominent its textual function. It also evinces that the principal function of *wentishi* is more than marking a transition; it is used, as we propose, to adjust the foregoing assumption.

With respect to the information that *wentishi* introduces, it mostly derives from personal knowledge accessible only to the speaker, e.g. their own reasoning, life experience, or other information that they have more authority over such as the preferences of their child (Enfield 2011; Heritage 2012a; Raymond and Heritage 2006). The frequently used linguistic resources to underscore this characteristic are evidential/epistemic fragments that include a first person singular pronoun, such as *wo juede* 'I think; I feel'. For example,

---

[15] Although the assumption is expressed in the speaker's turn, it is not held by the speaker; rather, it is the assumption that the speaker thinks the hearer or the general public may be holding.

(4-2)

93 L:    @@@

94       ..開玩笑 ,_

         kaiwanxiao

         crack.a.joke

         'No kidding.'

95       ..老子    撐腰 ,_

         laozi   chengyao

         father   back.up

         'He is backed up by his father.'

96       ..這   個   會中      啦 ,_

         zhe   ge   hui zhong      la

         this   CL   will be.elected PT

         'He will for sure be elected.'

97       ..這   個   今年   的   會長   了   啦.\

         zhe   ge   jingnian   de   huizhang   le   la

         this   CL   this.year   GEN president   CRS PT

         'This guy must be the president (of the student association) this year.'

98 C:    ..(TSK)..可是 我  不   太  想   選   給   國民黨      的.\

         keshi wo   bu   tai   xiang   xuang gei   guomingdang de

         but   I   NEG   too   think   vote   give KMT          NOM

         'But I don't want to vote for someone supported by KMT.'

99 L:　　...(1.2)再　不然　　就　女研社　　的,_

　　　　　zai　burang　jiu　nuyanshe　de

　　　　　again otherwise　JIU　female.club NOM

　　　　　'Or the one from the female club.'

100　　..女研社　　　的　那　個　女　的　　　可以　投　　給　　她.\

　　　nuyanshe　　de　na　ge　nu　de　keyi　tou　gei　ta

　　　female.club　NOM that CL　female NOM　can　vote　give she

　　　'You can vote for the girl from the female club.'

101　　..但是= ,_

　　　danshi

　　　but

　　　'but'

102→　..問題是,_

　　　wentishi

　　　WENTISHI

　　　'the thing is'

103 →　..我　覺得　我　不會　　投　　給　　她.\

　　　wo　juede　wo　buhui　tou　gei　ta

　　　I　think　I　NEG.will　vote　give　she

　　　'I don't think I will vote for her.'

104 C:　(0)不要.\

　　　buyao

　　　NEG.want

　　　'Don't!'

Notice that *wentishi* in this example is followed by an utterance prefaced by

another epistemic phrase *wo juede* 'I think; I feel' which supports the epistemic function of *wentishi* in two ways. First, although by using *wentishi* in this context, the speaker does not intend to confront the interlocutor, the assumption that he is arguing against may happen to be held by the co-participant. *Wo juede* here can serve as a hedge that mitigates the potential face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson 1987; Endo 2010). Second, since an internal feeling or reasoning falls totally into one's own territory of information (Kamio 1997), *wo juede* can make the adjustment of the foregoing assumption less challengeable.

Speakers may also adjust an assumption by referring to their personal experience. For example, speaker B in excerpt (3-7) tells A one of her touring experiences. She mentions that she and her colleagues happened to meet a cook and thus had two big feasts during the trip. She assumes that her addressee may think that ten dishes are already a huge amount of food. To contrast the first assumption, B then furthers the narrative with a *wentishi*-prefaced statement based on her personal experience. Before speaker B puts forth the key information, she employs a first-person quotative *wo gen ni jiang* 'let me tell you' at line 201 to underscore the knowledge source.

(4-3)

196. B: ..可是　　問題　　你　會　覺得,\
　　　　keshi　wenti　ni　hui　juede
　　　　but　　problem you will　think
　　　　'But the thing is you will think that"

197.　　..然後　　第一　道,\

　　　　ranhou diyi　　dao

　　　　then　　first　CL

　　　　'Then the first dish'

198.　　..第一　＜L3 TWAN L3＞ 的　　那　　個　　hoN,\

　　　　diyi　　　　　twan　　　de　　na　　ge　　hoN

　　　　first　　　　　CL　　　　　NOM that　　Cl　PT

　　　　'In the first feast'

199. A:　..m.\

　　　　m

　　　　PT

　　　　'Mhm.'

200. B:　..大概　只　有　　十　道　　　左右.\

　　　　dagai　zhi　you　shi　dao　zuoyou

　　　　around only　have　ten　CL　approximately

　　　　'There were only around ten dishes served.'

201.　　..也　是　　很　多　　了　　　啦.\

　　　　ye　shi　hen duo　le　la

　　　　also C/F　very much CRS PT

　　　　'That was a lot.'

202. →　..但是　　問題是　　　hoN,\

　　　　danshi　wentishi　　hoN

　　　　but　　　WENTISHI　PT

　　　　'But the thing is'

203.     ..我　跟　你　講,\

       wo   gen   ni   jiang

       I    with   you say

       'You know what'

204.     ..<@我 吃 光 　了 　兩 　盤 菜 　hoN@>.\

       wo chi guang   le    liang pan cai   hoN

       I    eat light    PF   two   CL dish   PT

       'I myself ate up two of them.'

### 4.1.3. Adjusting assumptions in the prior speaker's turn

In addition to making a contrast in one's own argument, *wentishi* can also be deployed in a second position to adjust the assumption expressed in the prior turn. To serve the function, the marker tends to be placed at the turn-initial position. Consider the following example:

(4-4)

207 S:    ...我　現在 　覺得 　hoN,\

       wo xianzai   zuede   hoN

       I    now    think   PT

       'Now I think that'

208    ..有　一　點　好　奇怪　喔.\

you　yi　dian　hao　qiguai　ou

have　one　point　good　weird　PT

'there is one thing really weird.'

209    ..因為　我們 <L2 salesman L2> 推薦　一　些 我們--

yinwei　women　salesman　tui-jian　yi　xie women

because　we　salesman　recommend one CL we

'Since we salesmen recommend some (books) that we'

210    大家　都　用　得　不錯　的　書 給　你們,\

dajia　dou　yong　de　bucuo　de　shu gei　nimen

everyone all　use　MASS NEG.bad NOM book give　you

'that everyone finds useful to you.'

211    ..可是　問題　你們　沒有　去 看,\

keshi　wenti　nimen　meiyou　qu kan

but　problem you　NEG.have　go read

'But the problem is you never read them.'

212    ..都　怪　我們 <L2 salesman L2>,\

dou　gai　women　salesman

all　blame　we　salesman

'And you blame us'

213    ..好像　騙　你們,\

haoxiang pian nimen

seem　cheat you

'as if we cheated you'

214      ..或　怎麼樣.\

huo zenmeyang

or　what

'or what.'

215      ...其實 書 是 你們 要 [1 自己 去 看 的 1].\

qishi shu shi nimen yao ziji qu kan de

actually book C/F you want self go read NOM

'Actually, you yourself should read the books'

216 F: →                [1 <u>問題是</u>　　有　　去 1] 看 啊.-

<u>wentishi</u>　　you　　qu　　kan a

WENTISHI have　go　　read PT

'The thing is I did read the books.'

217 S:    ...對　　啊.-

dui　　a

right PT

'Right'

218      ..[1 那　就　　好　　啦 1].-

na　jiu　　hao　la

that JIU　good PT

'Then that's fine.'

219 F: →  [1 <u>問題是</u> 1] 看　　了　之後,\

<u>wentishi</u>　　kan　　le　zhihou

WENTISHI read　PF　after

'The problem is that after reading the books'

220  ...所　　得　　跟　　原本　　　預期　的　　　不　　　一樣.\

    suo de gen yuanben yuqi de  bu  yiyang

    SUO get with originally expect NOM NEG same

    'I didn't get what I had anticipated.'

221 S:  ...當然　　　　啦.\

    dangrang la

    of.course PT

    'That's for sure.'

In the above excerpt, speaker F, a saleswoman of English books, alludes to her clients' previous complaint about the quality of the books recommended by salespeople. To defend herself as a salesperson, she argues in line 211 that if the customers find the book not as useful as they thought, it is because they did not read it in the first place. The fault is not theirs.

Faced with F's argument or even accusation, S makes use of the marker *wentishi* to take the floor and initiate her refutation that she did try reading the books, so as to defend herself as a customer in that episode of interaction. Hearing S's counterargument, F first shows her agreement by means of the token *dui-a*, conceding that it is okay then. Overlapping with F's concession in line 218, S again formulates a *wentishi*-prefaced assertion in lines 219-220, contending that even though she did read the books, she still found them not as good as she had expected. By means of *wentishi* in the turn-initial position, S manages to take her turn and modify the assumptions established in F's turns. Similar to the cases discussed in the previous sub-section, when *wentishi* is deployed to adjust the co-conversationalist's assumption, the information that follows the *wentishi*-prefacing also tends to be based on the speaker's private experience (lines 216) or personal assessment (lines 219-220).

Extract (4-5) is another instance of the turn-initial use of *wentishi*. Nevertheless, in this case, the current speaker does not exploit her personal knowledge to counter the assumption of the prior speaker; instead, she adopts information that she has access to by virtue of her social role as a talk show hostess.

(4-5)

151. B:　　你　總是　　要　　帶　點　　　東西 給 我們.\
　　　　　　ni　zhongshi yao　　dai　dian　dongxi gei women

　　　　　　you still　　want　bring CL　stuff　give we

　　　　　　'Still, you have to bring us something new.'

152.　　　　　..別　　　老是　　　呢,
　　　　　　　nie　　　laoshi　　ne

　　　　　　　do.not　always　　PT

　　　　　　　'Don't just'

153.　　　　　..介紹　　　節目　嘛.\
　　　　　　　jieshao　　jiemu　　ma

　　　　　　　introduce program PT

　　　　　　　'introduce your show'

154.　　　　　..是　　吧/ba/ ?/
　　　　　　　shi　　ba

　　　　　　　C/F　　PT

　　　　　　　'right?'

155. T:     oh.\

           oh

           PT

           'Oh.'

156.       ..就... 就   是,-

           jiu... jiu   shi

           JIU   JIU   C/F

           'Well'

157.       ..其實    很^  簡單     嘛,-

           qishi   hen  jiandan  ma

           actually very easy    PT

           'Actually, it's quite easy.'

158.       ..你= (0.6)   就   來^ 學    相聲          嘛.\

           ni= (0.6)   jiu   lai  xue  xiangsheng   ma

           you         JIU   come learn cross.talk   PT

           'You can just come and learn crosstalk.'

159. B:    uhm   na--

           uhm   na

            PT   PT

           'Uhm, well'

160. T:    oh=   [1@@@@1]

           Oh=

           PT

           'Oh.'

161.　B:　　oh=　[1@@@@1]

oh

PT

'Oh.'

162.　　　　..[2 你　說　的　　很 2]　簡單　　　uh.\

ni　shuo de　　hen　jiandan　　uh

you say　NOM　very　easy　　　PT

'It's easy for you to say so.'

163.　T:　　..[2@@@@@2]

164.　　　　因爲--

yinwei

necause

'Because'

165. → B:　^問題是　　說 ,-

wentishi　　shuo

WENTISHI COM

'The problem is'

166.　　　　..我們^ 朋友　　以

women pengyou yi

we　　friend　　with

'Our listeners are from'

167.　　　　..^南南北北　　　　　的,-

nannanbeibei　　　de

south.south.north.north NOM

'everywhere in Taiwan'

168.　　　　..有　很　多.\

　　　　　you　hen duo

　　　　　have very much

　　　　　'There are many of them.'

169.　T:　　[對].\

　　　　　dui

　　　　　right

　　　　　'Yeah.'

170.　B:　　[你] 也許 北部　　　　跑　　得　　比較^　快 ,-

　　　　　ni　yexu beibu　　　pao　de　　bijiao　kuai

　　　　　you　maybe northern.area run　MAS　more　quick

　　　　　'Perhaps it's faster for to go to Northern Taiwan

171.　　　　..uh.

　　　　　uh

　　　　　PT

　　　　　'Uh.'

172.　T:　　[uhm]

　　　　　uhm

　　　　　PT

　　　　　'Uhm.'

173.　B:　　[但是] ,-

　　　　　danshi

　　　　　but

　　　　　'But'

174.       ..南部          的         話,-

           nanbu          de          hua

           southern.area NOM   word

           'If the listener is from Southern Taiwan'

175.       ..您-- 您     說     這     要     他  找^ 資訊         na,-

           nin--nin   shuo   zhe   yao   ta   zhao   zixun       na,

           you--you   say   this   want   he   seek   information   PT

           'He has to do some research'

176.       ..^特地     還     從  臺北     來 ,-

           tedi     hai   cong taibei   lai

           especially also   from Taipei   come

           'He has to come from Taipei.'

177.       ..^翻山越嶺       的,-

           fanshangyueling      de

           over.the.mountains   NOM

           'come a long way here.'

178.       ..這   挺    不   容易   的,-

           zhe   ting   bu   rongyi   de

           this   pretty   NEG easy   NOM

           'That is not so easy.'

179. T:    uhm.\

           uhm

           PT

           'Uhm.'

180.       ..對   對    對.\

           dui  dui  dui

right right   right

'Yeah.'

181.        ..這　個　倒　　　是　比較　累.\

zhe   ge   dao        shi   bijia   lei

this   CL   conversely C/F   more   tiring

'This is indeed rather tiring.'

In this episode, the hostess B asks T to provide the audience some extra knowledge about crosstalk rather than merely advertise his shows. In response to B, T to some extent rejects her request by assessing the art of crosstalk as easy and suggesting that the audience should instead come to learn crosstalk in person. By making a comment on T's assessment in line 162, B makes public her counter-stance to T's. Before T even finishes his account for his statement, B cuts in with the *wentishi*-prefaced explanation that it may be difficult for those in the south to go to learn crosstalk in person due to the location diversity of the audience and the actor's preference to perform in North Taiwan. Since B is the hostess of the radio talk show, she has better access to and thus greater authority over the information concerning the audience.

## 4.2. Generalization-making: *Shishishang*

The second marker that will be discussed is the adverbial *shishishang*. Previous analyses of this expression tends to focus on the speaker's commitment to the factuality of marked propositions (Feng 2008) and/or the comparison between *shishishang* and its near synonym *qishi* (Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011). By examining its linguistic context, we will, based on Scheibman's (2007) study of

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generalizations in English conversation, propose that *shishishang* is mainly designed to signal a generalized statement made by the current speaker in order to achieve certain pragmatic ends, such as enhancing one's argument and establishing solidarity. The epistemic and interactional meanings suggested in past literature are derived from this process of generalization-making. Section 4.2.1 presents an overview of the prior efforts in accounting for the use of *shishishang*, and section 4.2.2 will outline the linguistic co-texts that indicate the generality in the proposition communicated by the *shishishang*-embedded clauses and identify the functions of this generality marker.

## 4.2.1. Previous research

Despite the amount of research pertaining to this marker, little work has been devoted to the use of *shishishang* alone. Most of the previous studies, following the studies concerning the comparison between *actually* and *in fact* in English (e.g. Oh 2000), focuses largely on the distributional and functional distinction between *shishishang* and its near synonym *qishi* (Feng 2008; Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011, among others).

With regard to their distributional pattern, Wang et al. (2010a) observe that both *shishishang* and *qishi* are more frequently found in radio/TV interviews than in daily talk. However, in comparison to *shishishang*, *qishi* is more often employed in causal conversation and other more interactive speech contexts, such as TV panel discussion (Wang et al. 2011). Regardless of the speech types, both *shishishang* and *qishi* prefer to occur at the utterance-initial position, with the former having a slightly higher tendency across speech contexts (Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011).

In terms of their pragmatic functions, *shishishang* and *qishi* are also reported to share many commonalities (Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011). Both of them can be exploited to indicate a forthcoming comment, contrast, and/or counterexpectation (Wang et al. 2010a). They are also deployed to preface an elaboration, modification, and/or justification of the previous statement (Wang et al. 2011). Both markers serve to strengthen the speaker's argument, express the actuality of the proposition and identify the speaker's epistemic stance (Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011). Their usages are context-shaped and context-shaping: They are sensitive to the upcoming disagreement and the ensuing FTA (Brown and Levison 1987), demonstrating speakers' involvement in the interaction and their concern of the co-participant's face; meanwhile, they contextualize the unfolding discourse (Gumperz 1982), making relevant the subsequent utterances with the foregoing context (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995). Accordingly, their uses in spoken discourse are not only subjective, but also intersubjective in nature (Traugott and Dasher 2002).

Previous studies have also identified, on the other hand, a number of differences between the two. Feng (2008) claims that while *qishi* signals the speaker's affirmation of the actuality of the proposition, *shishishang* pertains more to the speaker's commitment to the actuality of the proposition. Based on spoken data from radio/TV talks and daily conversation, Wang et al. (2010a) argues that although both markers are used subjectively and intersubjectively, *shishishang* tends to express the speaker's personal attitude, while *qishi* is more often exploited to serve the interpersonal end. Following the analysis of Wang et al. (2010a), Wang et al. (2011), by investigating the use of *qishi* and *shishishang* in formal speech settings, advances that while *qishi* is addressee-oriented, *shishishang* is by contrast more message-oriented. The former is a more involved with social activities such as agreement and disagreement, whereas the latter pertains to information, the cognitive

fact, and the speaker's want to demonstrate his/her expertise and objectivity (Wang et al. 2011: 254-256).

In spite of the detailed exploration of *shishishang* in comparison to *qishi* in the prior literature, it is still worthwhile to investigate this topic for at least two reasons. First, as can be seen in the review above, *shishishang* seems to be a considerably multifunctional unit in interaction. This analysis, albeit elaborative, may ignore the very core function that derives the variety of uses and may be cognitively too complicated for the speaker to apply in an ongoing interaction. Second, due to the overwhelming emphasis on *qishi* and the functions of the two markers in previous research, the collocates and cotexts of *shishishang* remain unclear. An inspection into the recurrent collocation patterns of this particular marker may contribute to a better understanding of it.

By virtue of these problems, we will in the next sections revisit the use of *shishishang* in spoken discourse. We intend to propose that *shishishang* is employed to foreshadow a forthcoming generalization, as opposed to providing further evidence (Wang et al. 2011), so as to strengthen the speaker's statement (Scheibman 2007). This argument is further evidenced by the lexico-grammmatical resources implemented in the context of *shishishang*, which have received insufficient attention in the past literature.

### 4.2.2. Making generalizations

Generalization, as put forth by Scheibman (2007), is one of the strategies that speakers adopt to strengthen their arguments and to index their stance. Conversationalists make generalizations not only to express their subjective assessment, but also to construct solidarity between them and the addressee, inasmuch

as the generalized statements refer to knowledge shared by the co-participants (Asmuß 2011; Scheibman 2007). As such, we argue that *shishishang* is a marker that functions primarily to introduce a generalization into the unfolding discourses.

Different lexico-grammatical items are found in the context of *shishishang* that signal the generality of the corresponding statement, including generic subjects, commonality adverbials and conditional constructions. These linguistic resources reflect and also support *shishishang*'s function of marking generalizations. Generic subjects, for example, are referred to by Scheibman (2007) as an integral indicator of a generalized statement. Our data show that quite a number of *shishishang* are accompanied by a generic subject/topic, such as a plural pronoun (4-6) (*women* 我們 'we'), a non-specific second person pronoun (4-7) (*ni* 你 'you (general)'), a general type or a collective noun (4-8) (*daren* 大人 'adults'), a general noun modified by a quantity determiner (4-9) (*hen duo ren* 'many people'), or a zero anaphora that refers to a generic subject/topic (4-10) (a zero anaphora referring to *zheyang de yao* 'this kind of drug' in line 219). Note that this tendency is by contrast not so robust with regard to the use of *wentishi*.

(4-6) plural pronoun

29. B: → ..事實上　　　　我們　的　從小到大　　　的　教育

shishishang　　women　zhongxiaodaoda　de　jiayu

SHISHISHANG we　　GEN　from.young.to.old NOM education

過程　　　之中.\

guocheng　zhichong

process　　in

'In fact, throughout the education that we receive since childhood,'

30.　　..我們　對　異性　　　　所　　知　　有限.\

women dui　yixing　　　suo　zhi　　youxian

we　　about the.opposite.sex SUO　know　limited

'we know little about the opposite sex.'


(4-7) non-specific second person pronoun

180　　F:　　..但是　　事實上,\

danshi　　shishishang

but　　　SHISHISHANG

'But in fact'

181　　　..(0.84)有　　些　時候,\

you　xie　shihou

have　CL　time

'sometimes'

182 →　　..你　不要　太　快　　的　　話,\

ni　buyao　　tai　kuai　de　hua

you NEG.want too　fast　NOM word

'if you don't hurry'

183　　　..那　個=,-

na　ge=

yhat CL

'then'

184　　　..業界=,-

yejie

industry

'The industry'

185        ..除非　說,-

          chufei shuo

          unless COM

          'unless'

186        ..你 不 快 的 那 個 利益 很 大 hoN,\

          ni bu kuai de na ge liyi hen da hoN

          you NEG quick NOM that CL profit very big PT

          'If you don't hurry, the large benefit'

187        ...它 會 停 一下子

          ta hui ting yixiazi

          it will stop a.while

          'will stop increasing for a while.'


(4-8) a general type or a collective noun

1. B: (0)那.. <u>事實上</u>,_

      na.. <u>shishishang</u>

      that SHISHISHANG

      'Then in fact'

2. → ..大人 或者 是 我們 的 政府,_

      daren huozhe shi women de zhengfu

      grownup or C/F we GEN government

      'Grown-ups or our government'

3. ..並 沒有 做 篩選 的 嗎.\

      bing meiyou zuo saixuang de ma

      also NEG.have do filter NOM PT

      'didn't make any selection?'

(4-9) a general noun modified by a quantity determiner

164. B:  ..XXX 他 講    的    就 是    說,_

      xxx ta jiang de jiu shi shuo

      PN he say NOM JIU C/F COM

      'What XXX was talking about is that'

165. →  ..很 多 人 他 <u>事實上</u> 他 喜歡,_

      hen duo ren ta <u>shishishang</u> ta xihuan

      very many person he SHISHIANG he like

      'many people in fact like'

166.  …喝 那 種=,_

      he na zhong

      drink that CL

      'to drink the kind of'

167.  ..就 是,_

      jiu shi

      JIU C/F

      'you know'

168.  ..感冒糖漿,_

      ganmaotangjiang

      cough.syrup

      'cough syrup'

169.  ..[感冒液].\

      ganmaoyi

      cough.syrup

      'cough syrup'

170.A:　　[對-　　eh 對],_

　　　　 dui-　　eh dui

　　　　 right　PT right

　　　　 'Yeah.'


(4-10) a zero anaphora that refers to a generic subject/topic

334.B:　..像　　大家　　會　　覺得 很　　驚訝　　就　　是　　　說,_

　　　　 xiang　dajia　　hui　　juede hen　　jingyia　jiu　　shi　　shuo

　　　　 like　　everyone will　　feel　very　　surprised JIU　C/F　COM

　　　　 'For example, everyone will be surprised that'

335. →　..像　　　這樣　的　藥　　是不是　　跟　　那　　個,_

　　　　 xiang　zheyang de　　yao　shi-bu-shi　gen　　na　　ge

　　　　 like　　such　　NOM drug　C/F.NEG.C/F with　that　CL

　　　　 'Are this kind of drug'

336.　　..嗎啡　　啦,_

　　　　 mafei　　la

　　　　 morphine PT

　　　　 'morphine'

337.　　..安非 – eNh 安非他命　　會　　是 一樣.\

　　　　 anfei – eNh anfeitaming　hui　　shi yiyang

　　　　 Amphe eNh Amphetamine will　　C/F same

　　　　 'and Amphetamine are the same.'

338. →　..[事實上]　　　　是　一樣　的.\

　　　　 shishishang　　shi　yiyang　de

　　　　 SHISHISHANG　C/F　same　　NOM

　　　　 'If fact, they are the same.'

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In addition to generic subjects, other linguistic resources also can imply the generality of the proposition conveyed by an utterance. One such device frequently found in the context of *shishishang* is the commonality adverb, *ye* 'also'. Inasmuch as that generalization amounts to a kind of categorization (Scheibman 2007: 117), by highlighting the commonality between entities by the use of *ye*, speakers can construct a class and thus, a generalization, in an ongoing interaction. Consider the following example:

(4-11) commonality adverb

429.   A:      ..其實      我      覺得,_

       qishi      wo    juede

       actually   I    think

       'Actually, I think'

430.          ..(TSK)怎麼    講,_

       zenme jiang

       how    say

       'How should I put it'

431.          ..像      我      跟      Y      這麼    熟,_

       xiang    wo    gen    Y    zheme shou

       like      I    with   PN   so      familiar

       'Even a person like me, who is so close to Y'

432.          ..可是,_

       keshi

       but

       'however,'

433.→        ..事實上         也    是=,_

          shishishang    ye   shi

          SHISHISHANG   also   C/F

          'in fact can also'

433.        ..<@ 一  片   空白 @>.\

             yi   pian   kongbai

             one CL    blank

             'write nothing'

434.        ...沒有      觀察     的     話,_

          meiyou    guangcha   de    hua

          NEG.have   observe    NOM   word

          'if I don't pay attention to his/her behavior'

435.        ..寫   不    出來   eh.\

          xie   bu    chulai   eh

          write NEG   out     PT

          'I still can't write anything.'

In the above extract, speaker A points out that given the familiarity between Y and herself, without any observation, she still could write nothing about Y. By means of *ye*, speaker A underscores the similarity between A herself and the general public, making a generalization to index her stance. At first glance, the speaker is discussing a specific case; nevertheless, the fact that she exploits a marker *xiang* 'like; such as' to preface the utterance in line 431 indicates that she is in fact referring to a general type of relationship that they represent (e.g. close friends). This analysis is further supported by the subsequent conditional construction that speaker A adopts in lines 434 to 435, as discussed earlier.

Finally, grammatical patterns such as conditional constructions can also be regarded as an index of generality. By means of a conditional, speakers can identify their epistemic stance (Dancygier and Sweetser 2000, 2005; Fillmore 1990) while establishing a specific condition in which a generalization can be made. As exemplified in examples (4-12) and (4-13), *shishishang* can preface either the protasis or the apodosis.

(4-12) prefacing the protasis

197. → A:    ..事實上,_

        shishishang

        SHISHISHANG

        'In fact'

198. →    ..如果　沒有^　　足夠　　的^　　誠意　　　的　　話,_

    ruguo　meiyou　zugou　de　　chengyi　de　hua

    if　　　NEG.have　sufficient　NOM　sincerity　NOM word

    'If you don't want to do this wholeheartedly,'

199.    B:    ..[對].\

      dui

      right

      'Yeah.'

200.   A:    ...(0.30)[你] 很 難 去^ 容忍 一 個 其實 跟

　　　　　ni    hen    nan    qu    rongreng yi  ge  qishi    gen

　　　　　you very  difficult  go  tolerate  one CL  actually  with

　　　　　你 ＜Marc 不(level tone) 一樣    的^      個體 Marc＞.\

　　　　　ni           bu      yiyang   de      geti

　　　　　you         NEG            same    NOM  individual

　　　　　'It's really difficult to tolerate a totally different individual.'


(4-13) prefacing the apodosis

257.A:   ..不管      是不是,

　　　　nuguan    shi-bu-shi

　　　　regardless C/F.NEG.C/F

　　　　'No matter if'

258.    ..對方           是不是        糟糠之妻,

　　　　duifang          shi-bu-shi    zaokangzhiqi

　　　　yhe.other.side   C/F.NEG.C/F wife.who.has.shared.her.husband's.hard.lot

　　　　'My wife has shared my hard lot'

259.    ..那麼,

　　　　name

　　　　then

　　　　'Then'

260.    ..只要 我 把   家 安頓   好,

　　　　zhiyao wo ba   jia  andun   hao

　　　　if      I   BA  home settle   good

　　　　'if I can settle everyt thing well.'

261.　　..照顧　　好,

　　　　zhaogu　hao

　　　　take.care good

　　　　'and take good care of the family'

262.　　..該　　給　　的　　我　　給,

　　　　gai　　gei　de　　wo　gei

　　　　should　give　NOM　I　give

　　　　'provide what I can'

263. →　..那麼　<u>事實上</u>,

　　　　name　<u>shishishang</u>

　　　　then　SHISHISHANG

　　　　'then in fact'

264.　　..我　在　外面,

　　　　wo　zai　waimian

　　　　I　at　outside

　　　　'Outside my family'

265.　　...(H)是不是　　應該　　有,

　　　　shi-bu-shi　yinggai　you

　　　　C/F.NEG.C/F　should　have

　　　　'Should I have'

266.　　..自己　的　一　份　空間,

　　　　ziji　de　yi　fen　kongjian

　　　　self　GEN one CL　space

　　　　'a space for myself'

267.    ..跟    紓解。

        gen    shujie

        and    relieve

        'and a way'

268.    ..一 個 壓力 的  一  個 方式.

        yi ge yali de  yi  ge fangshi

        one CL    stress NOM one    CL method

        'to release my pressure.'


So far, we have manifested the tendency of *shishishang* to occur in a general statement and the way different linguistic devices, such as nouns, pronouns, adverbials and constructions, are deployed in the context of this marker to index the generality. As suggested by Scheibman (2007), generalizations can enhance the speaker's argument, thus communicating his subjective attitude, while serving intersubjective ends like building solidarity between conversation participants. We will take up this issue again in Chapter 5.


### 4.3. News-marking: *Zheyang*(*zi*)

Despite the multiple functions proposed for the item *zheyang*(*zi*), the forthcoming section only concerns the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) as a newsmarker or a reponse token marking one's receipt of information (cf. Gardner 2002; Heritage 1984a). Revisiting this peculiar use, we claim that it not only indicates the speaker's receipt of new information or change of state (Heritage 1984a), but also enable the conversationalist to collaboratively determine the boundary of knowledge. We will in section 4.3.1 review Liu's (2002) analysis for the multifunctionality of the form

*zheyang*(*zi*) and argue that the newsmarking use of *zheyang*(*zi*) should be treated as an independent function rather than be lumped into a category with other uses as implemented in Liu (2002). Zeroing in on this specific use, we will in section 4.3.2 detail the linguistic and interaction context of this marker as a change-of-state token and in section 4.3.3 illustrate the boundary-negotiating function of *zheyang*(*zi*) in interaction.

### 4.3.1. Previous research

To our knowledge, Liu (2002) appears to be the only effort that is mainly devoted to the investigation of the prevalent expression at issue. Treating *zheyang*(*zi*) as an instance of Chinese proximal demonstratives, Liu (2002) claims that this expression serves six principal functions in Chinese spoken discourse. Used referentially, *zheyang*(*zi*) can function to be either an exophoric or endophoric deixis, whereas exploited as a non-referential marker, it can indicate the boundary of a quotation and/or a discourse, express the speaker's inference, or achieve interactive concerns in general. Since the purpose of the present study is to reexamine the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) as a reactive token, in the following, we will focus only on the category in which the use at issue is included, i.e. the interactive use of *zheyang*(*zi*) in Liu's (2002) term.

By "interactive function," Liu (2002: 77) refers to the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) that "serves to support or react to the other speakers". She contends that this function can be realized in two ways, i.e. either by the speaker's passive receiving of or agreeing with the information provided by the co-participant or by his active seeking confirmation or achieving co-completion with the co-interactant. Despite her effort in

establishing such a category, this analysis was in fact confusing and disputable in several ways.

First, in comparison with other categories proposed in Liu (2002), the interactive use includes the most diverse subtypes in terms of both form and function. Based on the examples proffered by Liu (2002), *zheyang*(*zi*) can occur in either the initial or the final position of that particular turn or utterance. The two major ways of realization, along with the subcategories, do not seem to be compatible with one another either. Lumping all these uses into one single category, Liu (2002) failed to notice the considerable heterogeneity among them.

Second, despite the difference in labels, three out of the four sub-categories in the interactive use (i.e. agreeing, co-competing and confirmation seeking) are in fact marking the boundary of one's own discourse. As illustrated in examples (4-14) to (4-16), which are provided by Liu (2002: 79-82), the tokens of *zheyang*(*zi*) all occur at the final position of one's own utterance. Whereas the utterances that *zheyang*(*zi*) in these examples relate to are indeed oriented to the co-participant's turn, the use of the marker in particular are formulated to end one's own words or turns rather than to respond to the prior speaker.


(4-14) [16]agreeing

1. H: 所以 對 柳公明　　來　　講,

   suoyi dui liugongming　lai　jiang,

   so　　to　PN　　　　come　say

   'So to Liugongming,'

---

[16] The transcription and glossing system in this example and the following two is based on Liu (2002).

2.　你　剛剛　唱　了　這個=,　你　剛剛　唱=

ni　ganggang chang le　zhege=,　ni　ganging chang=

you　just　　sing　PF　this,　　you　just　　sing

'You just sang the song of… You just sang…'

3. G: 我　的　　澎湖　灣.

wo　de　　Penghu wan

I　GEN　Penghu bay

'My Penghu Bay.'

4. H: 我 的　　　澎湖　灣　*這樣*,

*wo　de　　Penghu wan　zheyang*

I　GEN　Penghu bay　ZHEYANG

'My Penghu Bay, like this.'

5.　你　看　這　個　老　得=

ni　kan　zhe　ge　lao　de=

you　see　this　CL　old　CSC

我　連--　歌　名　都　記　不　起來　了!@

wo　lian--　ge　ming dou　jib　bu　qilai　le!@

I　even　song　name all　remember not　INC　CRS

'You see, it's so old that I can't even remember the title of the song.'


(4-15) co-completing

1. B: 然後　　因為　　同性戀　　　應該　　是,

ranhou　yinwei　tongxinglian　yingai　shi,

then　　because　homosexual　　should　be

'Because gays should be like,'

2.　你--　你　就是　　喜歡　跟　你　是

ni--　ni　jiushi　xihuan gen　ni　shi

you--　you just　　like　with　you　be

同　　一　個 性徵　　　的　人.

tong　yi　ge xingzheng　de　ren.

same　one　CL sexuality　AS　person

'you just like someone who share the same sexuality as you.'

3.　而　不　是　說　哪 一　個　人　特別　　說--

er　bu　shi　shuo na yi　ge　ren　tebie　shuo--

CO　not　be　CMP Q one　CL　person especially CMP

'instead of having one partner particularly…'

4. H: 像=　　女生　　　或 [像　　男生　　　這樣].

xiang=　　nüsheng huo xiang　nanshen *zheyang*

like=　　girl　　or　like　boy　　ZHEYANG

'like female or like male.'

5. B: [對　對　對].

[dui　dui　dui]

right　right right

'Yes.'

6.　對　啊,　我　之前　有　聽　　人家　　這樣　　說　啦.

dui　a,　wo　zhiqian　you　ting　renjia　zheyang　shuo la.

right PT,　I　before　have　hear　people　ZHEYANG say　PT

'Yes, I have heard people saying something like this.'

(4-16) confirmation-seeking

1. G: 對　啊,　就　　覺得,

   dui　a,　jiu　juede,

   right PT,　just　feel

   'Right. I felt..'

2. 　我們　那　　一　次　　讀書會　就　　感覺　好像,

   women na　yi　ci　dushihui　jiu　ganjue hoaxing,

   we　　that　one time　study-group just　feel　like

   'Our last study group meeting gave me the feeling that,'

3. 　喔,　我們　老師　　怎麼　突然　　變　　得　　好像--

   o,　women laoshi　zenme turan　bian　de　haoxiang--

   EX,　we　　teacher　how　suddenly　become CSC like

   'Oh, how come our teachers suddenly become..'

4. S: 啊?　老師　　跟　著　學生　　讀書會　　喔?

   a?　laoshi　gen　zhe xuesheng dushuhui　o?

   EX?　Teacher follow DU student　study-group　PT

   'What? The teachers join the study group along with the students?'

5. G: 對　啊.

   dui　a.

   right PT

   'Yes.'

6. S: 怎麼　會　這樣?

   zenme hui zheyang

   how　will ZHEYANG

   'How come?'

7.　　　　<u>就是--　請　　老師　　來　　　指導</u>　　*這樣子*?

　　　　<u>jiushi--　qing　laoshi　lai　　zhidao</u>　*zheyangzi?*

　　　　EL-　　　invite　teacher　come　instruct　ZHEYANGZI

　　　　'You asked the teachers to supervise?'

8. G: 其實--　本來　　是　　說--

　　　qishi--　benlai　shi　shuo--

　　　in-fact--　originally be　　say

　　　其實　　他們　是　　說　希望　　是　老師　　帶頭,

　　　qishi　tamen　shi　shuo　xiwang shi　laoshi　　daitou,

　　　in-fact　they　　be　say　hope　　be　teacher　lead

　　　'In fact, originally they were hoping that the teachers would take the lead,'

9.　　然後,　他們 希望　以後 報告　　的　都　　是-- 學生.

　　ranhou, tamen xiwang yihou baogao　de　dou　　shi-- xuesheng.

　　then,　they　hope　later　report　NM all　　be　　student

　　'and they hoped that later it is the students that do the report.'


The main focus of Liu (2002) being to outline the pragmatic functions of *zheyang*(*zi*) and to explore the relation between the emergence of the functions and grammaticalization, the turn design and other linguistic contexts of this marker were left unexamined. How and in what context one will use *zheyang*(*zi*) and how the addressee reacts remain unclear. As a result, we will reexamine here this expression by concentrating on the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) as a response token and argue that this particular use is employed to claim the speaker's receipt of information from the interlocutor and his change of epistemic state (Heritage 1984a). In so doing, the current speaker not only expresses his subjective stance, but also intersubjectively "co-constructs" the boundary of discourses and activities in interaction.

**4.3.2. Marking a receipt of information**

Despite her observation that *zheyang*(*zi*) can be implemented to signal the speaker's receipt of information, Liu (2002) fails to specify the context of this use, which in fact characterizes this function of *zheyang*(*zi*). In the following, we will thus pinpoint the sequential environments that occasion the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) and the linguistic collocates that strengthen the epistemic meaning of this token.

Sequentially, *zheyang*(*zi*) can be employed in response to three types of actions: informing (4-17), question-elicited informing (4-18), and advice-giving (4-19), as exemplified in the following extracts:

(4-17) informing

154　B:　　　..噢 噢,_

　　　　　　ou ou

　　　　　　PT PT

　　　　　　'Oh'

155　　　　　..然後　　誰　先　　打　到 四　分,_

　　　　　　ranhou　shei xian　da　dao si　fen

　　　　　　then　　who first　play to　four point

　　　　　　'The person who gets four points earlier'

156　　　　　..誰　　就　可以--

　　　　　　shei　jiu　keyi

　　　　　　who　JIU　can

　　　　　　'can'

157        ..就　是　誰　就　贏　了.\

　　　　　　jiu　　shi　shei　　jiu ying　le

　　　　　　JIU　C/F　who　JIU win　PF

　　　　　　'He wins.'

158　T:　　..噢.\

　　　　　　ou

　　　　　　PT

　　　　　　'Oh'

159　B:　　..然後　輸　的　那　隊　就　先　下去　　休息.\ ← informing

　　　　　　ranhou su　　de　na　dui　jiu xian xiaqu　　xiuxi

　　　　　　then　　lose　NOM that team JIU first go.down rest

　　　　　　'And the defeated team will take a rest first.'

160　T:　　..喔,_

　　　　　　ou

　　　　　　PT

　　　　　　'Oh'

161　　　　..這樣子.\

　　　　　　zheyangzi

　　　　　　ZHEYANGZI

　　　　　　'Oh.'


(4-18) question-elicited informing

212. A:　..這　　傢伙　這　種,\

　　　　　zhe　　jiahuo zhe zhong

　　　　　this　　guy　this CL

　　　　　'Someone like him'

213.     ..他 有沒有        你,\

         ta   you-mei-you    ni

         he    have.NEG.have you

         'Has he'

214.     ..你  有沒有       聽說      他 什麼 時候 會     回來?\← question

          ni   you-mei-you  tingshuo   ta sheme shihou hui    huilai

          you have.NEG.have hear       he what   time   will   return

          'Do you know when he is coming back?'

215.     ..他   有沒有       說?\

         ta    you-mei-you    shuo

         he    have.NEG.have say

         'Did he tell you that?'

216. B:  ...應該 是=,\

         yinggai   shi

         should    C/F

         'I think'

217.     ..暑假          才   會      回來 吧.\                    ← informing

         shujia         cai   hui    huilai ba

         summer.break CAI   will    return PT

         'He won't come back until summer break.'

218. A:  ..這樣       啊.\

         zheyang      a

         ZHEYANG PT

         'Oh.'

98

(4-19) advice-giving

405. H:   [還有]　長　　黑斑,-

　　　　haiyou　zhang　heiban

　　　　also　　grow　spot

　　　　'If you've got some spots on you face,'

406.　　..儘量　　　　　少　　曬　　太陽.\　　← advice-giving

　　　　jingliang　　　shao　sai　taiyang

　　　　as.much.as. possible few　　bask　sun

　　　　'You should avoid being exposed to the sun.'

407.　　...(0.6)[hoN.\]

　　　　hoN

　　　　PT

　　　　'okay?'

408. C2:　[哦=,-]

　　　　ou

　　　　PT

　　　　'Oh.'

409. →　..這樣子.\

　　　　zheyangzi

　　　　ZHEYANGZI

　　　　'I see.'

410. H:　(0)好不好.\

　　　　hao-bu-hao

　　　　good.NEG.good

　　　　'Is that okay?'

411. C2:     ..好     好.\

          hao     hao

          good    good

          'Okay.'


Similar to Heritage's (1984a) of the change-of-state token *oh*, *zheyang*(*zi*) is recurrently used in response to different types of informing. This tendency further reveals the epistemic asymmetry between the interactants and the change-of-state semantics in the use of this token. More noteworthy is that *zheyang*(*zi*) can also be used to respond to advice-giving, which is rarely discussed in the prior literature (Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010; Golato 2010; Heritage 1984a). The deployment of *zheyang*(*zi*) in this context treats the prior turn simply as a piece of advice without identifying if the current speaker accepts the prior speaker's suggestion. This vagueness in stance leads to the advice-giver's confirmation question in line 410. This issue will be taken up again in Chapter 5.

As noted in Chapter 3, while *zheyang*(*zi*) alone can occupy a turn as a response token, it is often preceded by another change-of-state token *oh* (Heritage 1984a) and/or followed by a confirming final particle like *ou* and *a* (Wu 2004), as exemplified in extracts (4-20) and (4-21) below. The former reinforces the change-of-state meaning of *zheyang*(*zi*), while the latter formats a pattern that elicits the prior speaker's confirmation for the information that he proffers. Meanwhile, since these particles tend not to occur independently as a turn (Heritage 1984a; Wu 2004), *zheyang*(*zi*) serves as a TCU to which they can be attached.

(4-20)

154. A: ..那　敏蘭　還　在　啊._

na　minlan hai　zai　a

that　PN　still　at　PT

'So Min-lan is still there?'

155. B: ...敏蘭　　吟育 意惠 啊=._

minlan　yinyu yihui a

PN　　PN　PN　PT

'Min-lan, Yin-yu and Yi-hui"

156. A: ..他們　都　還　在 啊=._

tamen dou　hai　zai a

yhey　all　still　at PT

'All of them are still here?'

157. B: ...對　啊=._

dui　a

right PT

'Yeah'

158. ..那　我 現在　會　　來,_

na　wo xianzai hui　lai

that　I　now　will　come

'So the reason why I came'

159. ..是 因爲　我 來　還　　這裏　書.\

shi yinwei　wo lai　huan　zheli　shu

C/F because　I　come　return　here　book

'is to return the books I borrowed from here.'

101
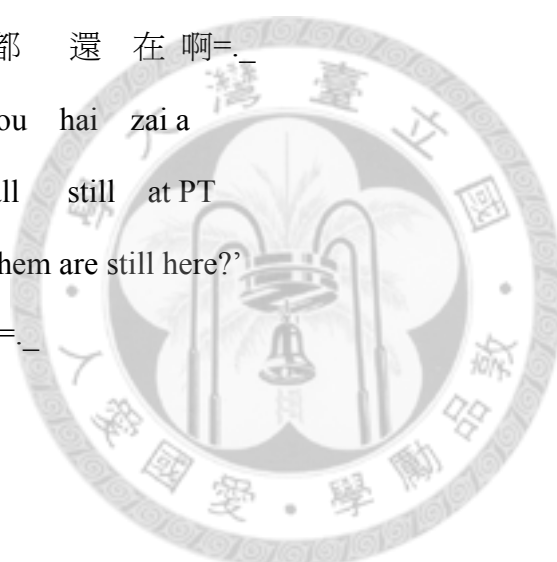
160. A:　　..喔.\

　　　　ou

　　　　PT

　　　　'Oh'

161.　　　..這樣子　　　喔.\

　　　　zheyangzi　　ou

　　　　ZHEYANGZI PT

　　　　'Oh.'

162. B:　　..對.\

　　　　dui

　　　　right

　　　　'Yeah.'

(4-21)

219. A:　　(0)喔　那　說　什麼　　時間　會　什麼,\

　　　　ou　na　shou　sheme　shijian hui sheme

　　　　PT　NA　say　what　time　will what

　　　　'Then why did you say that time will'

220.　　　..說明　　一切,\

　　　　shuming yiqie

　　　　explain　everything

　　　　'explain everything'

221.　　　..什麼　什麼　什麼　的.\

　　　　sheme sheme　sheme　de

　　　　what　what　what　NOM

　　　　'and so on and so forth.'

222.　　　..對　啊._

　　　　dui　a

　　　　right PT

　　　　'Yeah.'

223. B:　(0)我們　是,=\

　　　　wome shi

　　　　we　C/F

　　　　'We just'

224.　　　..打算　說　　寒假　　　應該　　沒　　　問題　　了　啦.\

　　　dasuan shuo　hanjia　　yinggai　mei　　wenti　le　la

　　　plan　COM　winter.break should　NEG.have problem CRS PT

　　　'thought we would fix everything by winter break.'

225. A:　　..喔 HHHHH.\

　　　　ou

　　　　PT

　　　　'Oh.'

226.　　　..這樣　　　啊.\

　　　　zheyang　　a

　　　　ZHEYANG PT

　　　　'Oh.'

227. B:　　..對　　呀._

　　　　dui　ya

　　　　right PT

　　　　'Right.'

Note that even when not ending with a confirmation particle, the *zheyang*(*zi*) turn can

also prompt the information provider to further confirm his statement, as in (4-22):

(4-22)

242.  T:      .. oh,

              oh

              PT

              'Oh.'

243.         ..你　　如果　說　到　這　　一　　　點,

              ni    ruguo shuo dao  zhe   yi    dian

              you   if     say   to    this   one   point

              'When it comes to this'

244.         ..那　　英國人　　　就　　不　　如　　　　　我們.

              na   yingguoren   jiu    bu     ru        women

              that  English    JIU   NEG   similar.to  we

              'English people are inferior to us.'

245.  M:     ..[oh].

246.  F:     ..[oh=].

247.  T:     ..而且　遠遠地^　　不　　　如　　　　我們.

              erqie yuanyuandi  bu       ru        women

              and    far        NEG   similar.to   we

              'and they are way inferior to us.'

248.  M:     ..@@@@

249.  F:     ..oh= 這樣子.

              oh= zheyangzi

              PT   ZHEYANGZI

              'Oh.'

250.   T:      ..對.

              dui

              right

              'Yeah.'

251.          ..eh eh.

              eh eh

              PT PT

              'Right.'

252.   F:      ..mhm.

              mhm

              PT

              'Mhm.'

In sum, *zheyang*(*zi*) can be occasioned to show one's receipt of new information in response to the actions implemented in the prior turn, such as informing and advice-giving. Despite its ability to stand alone as a newsmarker, *zheyang*(*zi*) is often accompanied by a preface *oh* or an ending particle *ou* and *a*, all of which help express the change-of-state meaning and format a confirmation-seeking pattern. In the next sub-section, we will further argue that the epistemic use of *zheyang*(*zi*) is not only cognitive but also socio-interactive (cf. Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010; Heritage 2005); that is, this change-of-state token is also used for the current speaker to co-construct or negotiate the boundary of the ongoing interaction.

### 4.3.3. Negotiating the boundary of interaction

In the present sub-section, we attempt to propose that similar to the

boundary-marking use of *zheyang*(*zi*) observed in Liu (2002), *zheyang*(*zi*) as a reactive-token also signals the boundary in conversation. What distinguishes this use from other uses is that it is employed to "negotiate" rather than simply "mark" the boundary of a topic or an activity initiated by the co-participant (cf. Hayashi and Yoon 2009; Heritage 1984a). In other words, although the information is provided by the interlocutor, by means of this marker, the current speaker can co-determine the organization of the unfolding discourse and the ongoing interaction.

Insofar as *zheyang*(*zi*) is occasioned by the information recipient to mark a boundary in interaction, it is often followed by a switch of topic or a change of activity, which can be initiated by either the same speaker or the co-participant. For example, the same speaker can ask questions to introduce a new topic or to adjust the focus of the unfolding conversation, as shown in (4-23):

(4-23)

352 T:    ...(1.5)那　你　　有沒有--

　　　　　na　　ni　　you-mei-you

　　　　　that　you　have.NEG.have

　　　　　'Have you'

353　　　..導師　　有沒有　　　　對　你　　這　　個 行爲　　　當場

　　　　　daoshi　you-mei-you　dui　ni　zhe　ge　xingwei dangchang

　　　　　teacher　have.NEG.have to　you　this　CL　behavior on.the.spot

　　　　　糾正　　　過?/

　　　　　jiuzheng　guo

　　　　　rectify　　pass

　　　　　'Has your teacher ever corrected your behavior?'

354 B:  ..就　　是,_

jiu　　shi

JIU　C/F

'well'

355  ..我們　把　那　個　　班牌　　當　　籃框　　　　啊,_

women ba　na　ge　banpai　dang　lankuang　　　a

we　　BA　that　CL　class.sign regard.as basketball.hoop　PT

'We took the class sign as a basketball hoop.'

356 T:  @@

357 B:  ..然後　老師　　說　碰　一　次,_

ranhou　laoshi　shuo peng　yi　ci

then　　teacher　say　touch　one　time

'So the teacher said every time we touched it'

358  ..罰 一百　　　塊,_

fa　yibai　　kuai

fine one.hundred dollar

'we would be fined one hundred NT dollars.'

359 T:  ..<@ haN @>?/

haN

PT

'What?'

360 B:  ..所以 就　沒有　　人　　敢 碰,_

suoyi jiu　meiyou　ren　gan peng

so　JIU　NEG.have　person dare touch

'So no one dared to touch it.'

361 ..跑 到 廁所 去 摸.\
   pao dao   cesuo   qu   mou

   run to   restroom go   touch

   'we all went to the restroom and touched the sign there.'

362 T: ..喔.\
   ou

   PT

   'Oh.'

363 → ..這樣子 啊,_
   zheyangzi   a

   ZHEYANGZI PT

   'Oh.'

364 ..那 你們 沒有 讓 老師 知道 說 你們,_
   na   nimen   meiyou   rang laoshi   zhidao   shuo   nimen

   that   you   NEG.have   let teacher   know   COM   you

   'Then did you let your teacher know that you'

365 ..^喜歡 這樣子.\
   xihuang zheyangzi

   like   like.this

   'liked to do this?'

366 B: ..老師 也 知道 啊.\
   laoshi   ye   zhidao   a

   teacher   also   know   PT

   'The teacher knew it, too.'

In lines 352 and 353, speaker T formats a question about the regulation of B's teacher

on the students' craze over basketball. After B's response, T produces a change-of-state preface *oh* in line 362 and a token of *zheyangzi* followed by a particle *a* in line 363 to express his receipt of information. Then T continues by asking another question in lines 364 and 365 and thus directing the topic of the conversation from how the teacher behaves the students to whether the students let the teacher know about their feelings.

Inasmuch as the *zheyang*(*zi*) indicates that the conversationalist considers the prior turn a completed act of informing, the prior speaker or the information provider may also spontaneously adjust the organization of his discourse after the *zheyang*(*zi*) turn, advancing the conversation by switching or changing the topic, as exemplified in (4-24):

(4-24)

57    B:        ..可是,_

         keshi

         but

         'But'

58              ..管　得　很^　嚴　啦,_

         guan   de    hen    yan   la

         control MASS very    strick PT

         'He has set a really strict regulation.'

59              ...也　不能　帶　球　來　學校　打.\

         ye     buneng   dai   qiu   lai    xuexiao  da

         also   NEG.can  bring  ball  come   school   play

         'We can't even bring basketballs to school.'

60  T:      ..噢.\

ou

PT

'Oh.'

61  B:      ..所以,_

suoyi

so

'So,'

62          ...球  帶    來   了   就    會 被^  沒收    啊.\

qiu dai    lai    le    jiu   hui bei    moshou    a

ball bring  come PF   JIU   will BEI   confiscate PT

'if we do, the ball will be confiscated.'

63 → T:    ..這樣子          啊.\

zheyangzi      a

ZHEYANGZI PT

'Oh.'

64 → B:    ..所以,_

suoyi

so

'So,'

65          ..只好   偷偷     把  球   放   在^  別    班,_

zhihao   toutou     ba   qiu fang   zai  bie   ban

only.can secretely  BA   ball put   at    other class

'we can only secretely put the ball in other classes.'

66          ..然後,_

            ranhou

            yhen

            'And'

67          ..要      打球      時候,_

            yao    daqiu    shihou

            want   play.ball   time

            'when we want to play basketball,'

68          ..再    拿      出來 打.\

            zai    na    chulai da

            again take   out    play

            'we then take it out.'

Again, the same speakers are talking about the teacher's control over the students' craze in playing basketball. From line 57 to line 62, B describes and comments on the strictness of the teacher's policy and the consequence of their violation. After the *zheyangzi* turn formulated by speaker T in line 63, B makes a switch, albeit not as dramatic, in his topic from the teacher's regulation to the students' strategy in face of the teacher's ban.

In addition to the change in topic, the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) may also lead to the change of activity, which may also be initiated by the same speaker as in (4-25) or by the prior speaker as in (4-26).

(4-25)

131. B:      (1.7)多少     錢?\             ← eliciting information

            duoshao   qian

            how.much money

            'How much'

132.       ...月薪          多少?\

        yuexin         duoshao

        monthly.salary how.much

        'How much is your salary?'

133. A:     ..她     說=,_

        ta     shuo

        she   say

        'She said'

134.       ..底薪,_                ← informing and reporting speech

        dixin

        basic.salary

        'the basic salary'

135.       ..一萬=       八   九   吧.\

        yiwan=      ba   jiu   ba

        ten.thousand eight nine    PT

        'would be eighteen thousand or so'

136.       ..然後    再   加   一點 福利  什麼    的,\

        ranhou   zai    jia   yi dian fuli    sheme   de

        then     also   add   a.bit  benefit what    NOM

        'plus some benefit'

137.　　　　..什麼　什麼　　獎金　什麼,\

sheme sheme　　jiangjin sheme

what　what　　　bonus　what

'and some bonus.'

138.　　　　..加　一　加　差不多,\

jia　yi　jia　chabuduo

add one add　about

'In total, around'

139.　　　　..兩萬=　　　　　　二　兩萬　　　　　　三.\

liangwang　　　　　er　liangwang　　　　　san

twenty.thousand two twenty.thousand three

'twenty-two thousand or so.'

140. B: →　　(0.9)這樣子　啊.\

zheyangzi a

ZHEYANGZI PT

'Oh.'

141. A: →　　..你　覺得　這樣--　　　　　　　　← eliciting B's assessment

ni　juede　zheyang

you feel　　this.way

'What do you think'

142.　　　　..怎麼樣?\

zenmeyang

how

'about it?'

113

(4-26)

7 M:     (0)你　姓　　什麼.\                          ← eliciting information

         ni    xing     sheme

         you   last.name what

         'So what's your last name?'

8 F:     ...uh=,-

9        ..我 不要　　講　全　　名　啊=.-

         wo bu.yao     jiang quan     ming    a

         I    NEG.want say    entire    name    PT

         'I don't want reveal my whole name.'

10 :     ..[1 我　是　　侯 1] 太太.\                 ← informing

         wo    shi    hou    taitai

         I     C/F    PN    Mrs.

         'I am Mrs. Hou.'

11 M:    [1 喔,-

         ou

         PT

         'Oh.'

12:  →   ..這樣子 1].\

         zheyangzi

         ZHEYANGZI

         'Oh.'

13:      ..喔,-

         ou

         PT

         'Oh.'

114

14: → ..侯　太太.\                           ← referring to the addressee F

　　　hou　taitai

　　　PN　Mrs.

　　　'Mrs. Hou.'

As demonstrated in the two examples above, there appears to be a recurrent pattern in which *zheyang*(*zi*) is implemented. That is, the first speaker will format a question to elicit the interlocutor's offer of information. After the interlocutor's act of informing, the speaker will produce the newsmarking token *zheyang*(*zi*), which is then followed by a progress from informing to other activities, such as assessment or referring.

This boundary-constructing function of *zheyang*(*zi*) that we have discussed so far evinces that the marker can be used not only to reveal one's own cognitive state but also to orchestrate the ongoing interaction. It is therefore involved in the dynamic management of socio-epistemic stance and rights, an issue that will be elaborated on in next chapter.

## 4.4. Repair-initiating: *Shemeyisi*

Finally, we will in this section investigate the interrogative use of a shell-noun phrase, i.e. *shemeyisi*, in interactions. Although, to our knowledge, no prior study is specifically devoted to the use of this wh-question, its interactional functions have been alluded to in Zhang (1998) and Hsieh (2010, 2011a). Based on the prior analyses, which will be reviewed in section 4.4.1, we aim to further pinpoint the multiple functions that the expression can serve and the environments in which it is deployed. Moreover, we will specify the role that the wh-question takes in the course of interaction.

**4.4.1. Previous research**

To the author's knowledge, there is no prior research specifically focusing on this particular wh-question in Mandarin Chinese. Most, if not all, of the previous studies only treat *shemeyisi* as an instantiation of the techniques for other-initiated repairs in Chinese conversation (Zhang 1998) or one of the patterns in which the abstract noun *yisi* is frequently deployed (Hsieh 2010, 2011a).

Investigating the phenomenon of repair in Chinese conversation, Zhang points out that wh-questions are one kind of question that, exploited with a partial repeat of the problematic content, can help identify the trouble source in the co-participant's turns, prompting the prior speaker to make a self-repair (1998: 109). The only instance that Zhang provides to illustrate this technique happens to include a partial repeat of the trouble turn and a token of *shemeyisi*, the wh-question at issue. She elucidates that whereas the repeat points out where the trouble source is, the framing question makes clear what type of problem the prior speaker needs to repair (cf. Chapter 3 of this thesis and Zhang 1998: 110).

Apart from this general observation, Zhang neither provides more examples in which wh-questions other than *shemeyisi* are used for the same purpose, nor expounds in what situations this technique is implemented. Moreover, although this wh-question, as demonstrated in Zhang's example (1998: 109), can be used to prompt the prior speaker's repair on or further explanation of a particular term in conversation, our data show that this question in fact is more frequently formulated without a repetition of the foregoing content in the same turn and tends to serve functions other than to initiate a clarification of the terminology.

In contrast to Zhang's (1998) treatment of *shemeyisi* as an instance of

wh-question, Hsieh (2010, 2011a), focusing on the usages of the abstract noun *yisi*, identifies the expression as one of the lexico-grammatical patterns with which the abstract noun recurrently co-occurs in both balanced and spoken corpora. He argues that this frequently used combination indicates the speaker's participation in the co-construction of stance and the intersubjectivity involved in the use of the abstract noun (Hsieh 2010, 2011a). Nevertheless, akin to Zhang (1998), Hsieh (2010, 2011a) does not detail the linguistic and interactional contexts of *shemeyisi* and to specify its interactional functions.

To fill this gap, the rest of this sub-section aims to examine the environments that occasion this wh-qeustion and thereby to pinpoint the expression's interactional functions in general and its epistemic meaning in particular. Based on Zhang's (1998) analysis of this question token as a repair initiator, we advance that *shemeyisi* is implemented in peculiar sequential contexts to request the prior speaker to tackle the questioner's problem of understanding.

### 4.4.2. Initiating repair and eliciting account

As noted in the prior literature, wh-interrogatives asking the meaning of an utterance, such as *shemeyisi* in Chinese or *what do you mean* (+X)…*?* in English, tend to function as a repair initiator or a challenge (Koshik 2005; Zhang 1998). In spite of this observation, at least four issues remain unaddressed. First, the same question form is designed to serve different interactional ends. What are the functions that this question can achieve? Second, what are the sequential contexts that occasion these usages of *shemeyisi*? Third, how does the interlocutor respond to the question? Finally, what does the implementation of the question reveal about the conversation participants' management of epistemic rights and responsibilities? In this section, we

will try to answer the first three questions and touch a bit upon the last one, an issue that will be further expanded on in the next chapter.

Our data show that, in general, *shemeyisi* can be formulated to serve at least four interaction ends: (1) to express the lack of knowledge about a particular term; (2) to identify the trouble in comprehending the implication or relevance of the interlocutor's utterance; (3) to show one's disagreement with or even challenge toward the acceptability of the prior speaker's assertion; and (4) to rhetorically confirm or establish the common ground between participants. Each use of the wh-question tends to be occasioned by particular sequential or interactional contexts, while individual tokens can often convey more than one meaning.

At the most literal or surface level, *shemeyisi* expresses the questioner's being uninformed or less informed of a particular term, mostly a foreign word or a professional jargon. Oftentimes the questioned term is also the topic or object of the interactants' joint attention, as is exemplified in (4-27):

(4-27)
140 Y:    ...那,_

          na

          that

          'Then'

141       ..那,_

          na

          that

          'Then'

142    ..你 覺得 你 自己 的 印象,_

　　　ni juede ni ziji de yingxiang

　　　you think you self GEN impression

　　　'So based on what you know'

143 X:  ..mhm.\

　　　mhm

　　　PT

　　　'Mhm.'

144 Y:  ..那 個 <E schema E> 是 什麼意思.\

　　　na ge schema shi shemeyisi

　　　that CL schema C/F SHEMEYISI

　　　'What does *schema* mean?'

145    ...(2.2)像 在 你 的=,_

　　　xiang zai ni de

　　　like at you GEN

　　　'Based on what you know'

146    ..印象 中 [的 <E schema E>],_

　　　yingxiang zhong de schema

　　　impression in GEN schema

　　　'about schema'

147 X:           [印象 中--]

　　　　　yingxiang zhong

　　　　　impression in

　　　　　'what I know'

148 Y:　..是　說　　　自己　最　　有趣　　　的 <E schema E> 像　什麼　　啊?/

　　　shi shuo　　ziji　zui　　youqu　　de　schema　xiang sheme　a

　　　C/F COM　　self　most　interesting NOM schema　　like　what　PT

　　　'Like what is the most interesting schema that you have?'

149　　..是 說,_

　　　shi shuo

　　　C/F COM

　　　'By the way.'

150　　..對　一 件　事件　的　　那 個　印象,_

　　　dui　yi　jian　shijian de　　na　ge　yingxiang

　　　to　　one CL　event　NOM that CL　impression

　　　'Is the impression about an event'

151　　..也　　算　　　是 <E schema E>,_

　　　ye　suan　shi　　　schema

　　　also count　C/F　　schema

　　　'also counted as a schema?'

152　　..是不是.\

　　　shi-bu-shi

　　　C/F.NEG/C/F

　　　'Is it?'

153 X:　...(2.9)這 我　就　　沒--

　　　　　zhe wo jiu　　mei

　　　　　this I　JIU　NEG.have

　　　　　'As for this, I don't really'

154 Y:     ...(1.5)我 [就     很     想     看,_]

                wo   jiu   hen   xiang   kan

                 I    JIU   very   think   see

                'I'd like to know'

155 X:          [<E schema E>  的--]

                schema     de

                schema     NOM

                'about schema'

156 Y:     ..你    的    那   個   書     裡面,_

                ni   de   na   ge   shu   limian

                you   GEN that   CL   book   inside

                'In your textbook'

160        ..前面        有沒有         <E schema E>    的    例子.\

                qianmian   you-mei-you         schema       de   lizi

                frontside   have.NEG.have   schema         NOM example

                'is there any example of a schema?'
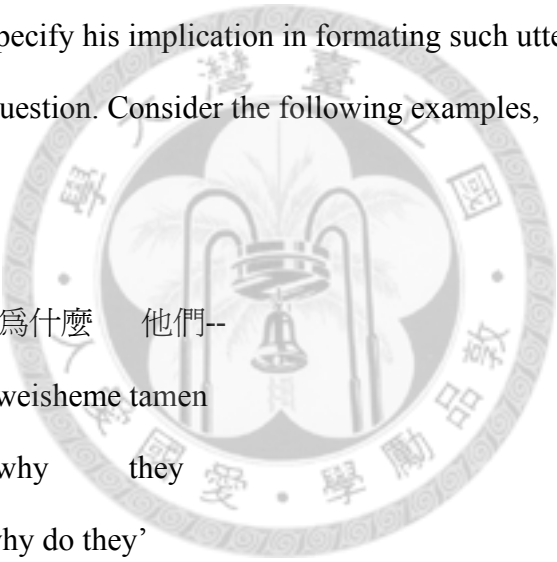
In (4-27), X, a social psychology major, and Y, a sociology major, are discussing the concept of schema in psychology. Prior to the extract, X has proffered Y a textbook definition, but Y still cannot grab the idea. As a result, Y formulates a wh-question in line 144 to elicit further clarifications from X, who is supposed to have better access to the psychological concept because of her major. The questioner adopts the wh-question to seek terminological information of the items that both participants' attention is oriented to.

Nevertheless, the use of *shemeyisi* illustrated above is rarely found in our corpus. Most tokens of the wh-question that we find are designed mainly to elicit the prior

speaker's account for his previous utterances or actions. That is, by means of *shemeyisi*, the second speaker are not inquiring about the denotational information but questioning the relevance or appropriateness of the prior turn. This is evidenced not only in the sequential context that shapes the use of the question, but also in the interlocutor's reaction to it. For example, as the first speaker formulates an informing or an information-seeking question as a first pair part (FPP), the second speaker, who ought to produce a corresponding second pair part (SPP), may alternatively exploit the wh-question as a non-type-confirming reponse (Raymond 2003) to identify his problem in finding the relevance of the prior turn. This repair initiator thus prompts the prior speaker to specify his implication in formating such utterances, i.e. to answer the "why that now" question. Consider the following examples,

(4-28)

1   S:   老師       爲什麼    他們--

         laoshi      weisheme tamen

         teacher    why       they

         'Teacher, why do they'

2       隊友    怎麼     都     這麼  爛,_

       duiyou   zeme       dou   zheme lan

       teammate how.come all    so       bad

       'have such bad teammates?'

3       然後--

       ranhou

       Then

       'and'

4          …我們　敵方 都　　那麼 強.\

women difang dou　　name qiang

we　　enemy all　　so　　powerful

'All of our contenders are so competitive.'

5    T:　…誰　　的　　敵方.\

shei　　de　　defang

who　　GEN enemy

'Whose contenders?'

6    S:　..我們　啊.\

women a

we　　PT

'Ours, of course.'

7          因為　我　一定 要--

yinwei wo　yiding yao

because I　　must　want

'Because I must'

8          ..可是 我們　很　少　　贏 他們.\

keshi women hen shao　ying tamen

but　we　　very few　　win they

'But we seldom beat them'

9          ..幾乎　　每次　　都　　輸　他們.\

jihu　　meizi　　dou　su　tamen

almost everytime all　　lose they

'we are almost always defeated by them'
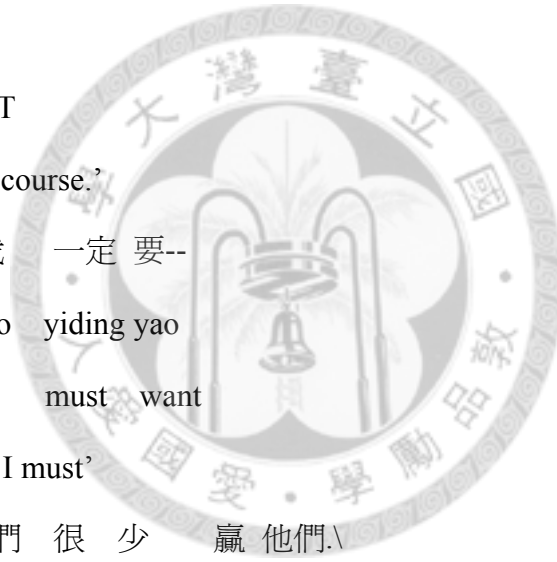
10        …那邊 有 一 個 人 啊.\

          nabian you yi   ge   ren   a

          there  have one  CL   person PT

          'They have a guy'

11   T:   …[很   厲害].\

          hen   lihai

          very   shrewd

          'who is really shrewd.'

12   S:   [他   是] 日本人.\

          ta    shi  ribenren

          he    C/F   Japanese

          'He is Japanese.'

13   T:   …(0.7)那   是   什麼意思.\

          na    shi   shemeyisi

          that   C/F   SHEME YISI

          'What do you mean by that?'

14   S:   ..就   是   XX   學生.\

          jiu   shi   xx   xuesheng

          JIU   C/F   PN   student

          'Actually it's XX.'

15        ..可是 他 只   要--

          keshi  ta   zhi   yao

          but    he   only  want

          'But every time he'

124

16      …他 輸 了 都 會 哭.\

        ta shu   le   dou   hui   ku

        he lose  PF   all   will   cry

        'loses the game, he cries.'

17  T:    …(0.8)haN./

          haN

          PT

          'What?'

18  S:  (0)有     時候   差     太     多,_

        you    shihou   cha    tai    duo

        have   time    differ   too   much

        'Sometimes when the score difference is too big,'

19      ..t-

20      …(0.8)就     會 大叫,_

        jiu     hui dajiao

        JIU    will scream

        'he'll even scream.'

21      ..<Q 啊 Q>,_

          a

          PT

          'Ah!'

22      他     就   哭   了.\

        ya    jiu   ku    le

        he   JIU   cry   PF

        'and then he starts to cry.'

(4-29)

82. B:　　　(0)他　是　寫　中文　　的　　題目　啊,/

　　　　　　ta　shi　xie　zhongwen de　　timu　　a

　　　　　　he　C/F　write Chinese　GEN　topic　PT

　　　　　　'He is working on a topic about the Chinese language.'

83.　　　　...[可是 像　　東炘　寫--]

　　　　　　keshi xiang dongxin xie--

　　　　　　but　like　PN　　write

　　　　　　'But like Dong-xin, he is working on'

84. A:　　　[ei　用- 如果.. 如果 用　　中文..　　寫],_

　　　　　　ei　yong ruguo.. ruguo yong　zhongwen.. xie

　　　　　　PT　use　if　　if　　use　　Chinese　　write

　　　　　　'If the thesis is written in Chinese,'

85.　　　　..跟　　用　英文　　寫　　會不會　　有　　差別　　啊?\

　　　　　　gen　yong yingwen　xie　hui-bu-hui　you　chabie　a

　　　　　　with　use　English　write　will.NEG.will have　difference PT

　　　　　　'is it different from that written in English?'

86. B:　　　...什麼意思?\

　　　　　　shemeyisi

　　　　　　SHEMEYISI

　　　　　　'What do you mean?'

87. A:　　　..就　是　　說,/

　　　　　　jiu　shi　shuo

　　　　　　JIU　C/F　COM

　　　　　　'I mean'

126

88.      ..那　個　[數量],_

        na　ge　shuliang

        that　CL　number

        'the amount'

89. B:       [字　數　啊]?

        zi　shu　a

        word　number PT

        'the number of words?'

90. A:    ..對=.\

       dui

       right

       'Yeah.'

91. B:    ...對 我　來　講,_

       dui wo　lai　jiang

       to　I　come say

       'As far as I am concerned'

92.      我　覺得　英文　比較 難　寫　到 那麼 多　字.\

      wo　juede　yingwen bijiao nan　xie　dao name duo　zi

      I　think　English　more difficult write to　that　many word

      'I think it is more difficult to write a thesis of such a length.'


At the beginning of extract (4-28), S is asking his teacher why they are almost always defeated by their contender despite the low quality of the players in the opposing team. He then attributes the contender's victory to one of the members in that team, who is a Japanese. This attribution made by S seems unexpected to T, who tries to co-complete S's comment in line 11. Having difficulty in understanding the relevance of S's

utterance in that context, speaker T formulates the wh-question in line 13 to prompt S to further elaborate. S then explains in the subsequent turns the reason why he thinks the Japanese student may bring about their competitor's victory.

In the second example, the wh-question *shemeyisi* is instead designed in response to the first speaker's question. Likewise, this responding question is formulated to address the trouble in finding the relevance of the prior turn. In extract (4-29), speaker A formats in lines 84 and 85 a yes-no question about whether writing one's thesis in English or in Chinese will make a difference. However, since speaker A does not specify the nature of the difference with which she is concerned, speaker B puts forth the wh-question to seek A's clarification. *Shemeyisi* in this case as well as the last one is deployed as a repair initiator in relation to the implication or relevance of the prior speaker's statement or action.

By way of contrast, when the first speaker formats a strong assertion or assessment about a social action or phenomenon, the second speaker can employ *shemeyisi* to question or even challenge the appripriateness or acceptibility of the prior speaker's statement. As put forward by Svennevig (2008), to initiate the co-conversationalist's self repair, the speaker tends to implement the interactionally easiest strategy prior to those that specify the real trouble source. That being said, since understanding problems, according to Svennevig (2008), are easier to solve than acceptibility problems, the deployment of *shemeyisi* in such a context to express the trouble in understanding can thus be regarded as a way to deal with the interactional problem with a less complicated remedy (Pomerantz 1984; Svennegvig 2008). For example,

(4-30)

651L:      [你] 認為 說,-

ni    rengwei shuo

you think     COM

'So you think'

652       ..反正       已經    這麼     多   十六歲,\

fanzheng   yijing   zheme   duo   shiliu-sui

anyway     already so        many sixteen-year-old

'since there are so many sixteen-year-old (scooter riders) anyway'

653       ..就    應該      讓     他們   就地正法,\

jiu   yinggai   rang   tamen   jiudizhengfa

JIU   should    let     they    executed.on.the.spot

'we should let them be executed on the spot.'

654       ..這樣子.\

zheyangzi

like.this

'or something like that.'

655P:      ...什麼=,-

sheme

what

'what?'

656       ...就地正法,\

jiudizhengfa

executed.on.the.spot

'Executed on the spot.'

657 ..什麼意思.-

shemeyisis

SHEMEYISI

'What do you mean by that?'

658L: (0)啊,-

a

PT

'Oh!'

659 ..[<A 不是　　　就地正法 A>],\

bushi　　　jiudizhengfa

NEG.C/F　executed.on.the.spot

'I didn't mean executed on the spot.'

660P: [就　　讓　　他們　　考=],-

jiu　rang　tamen　kao

JIU　let　they　test

'We should let them take the exam of'

661 ..還是　　說=,-

haishi　shuo

or　　COM

'or'

662L: ...不　　啊,-

bu　　a

NEG　PT

'No.'

663       ..<@就　讓　他們@>,-

        jiu　rang tamen

        JIU　let　they

        'We should let them'

664       ..<@讓　　他們@>,-

        rang　tamen

        let　　they

        'let them'

665       ..不是　讓　　他們　　就地正法,\

      bushi　rang　tamen　jiudizhengfa

      NEG.C/F let　they　executed.on.the.spot

      "not be executed on the spot.'

666       ..我　的　意思　　就　是　　說,-

      wo　de　yisi　jiu　shi　shuo

      I　GEN meaning JIU　C/F　COM

      'I mean'

667       ..(H)就　應該,-

        jiu　yinggai

        JIU　should

        'we should'

668       ...應該　要=　他們 就是=,-

      yinggai yao　tamen jiushi

      should　want they　JIU

      'we should let them be, you know'

669        ..就地合法,\

        jiudihefa

        legalized.on.the.spot

        'legalized on the spot.'

670        ..這樣子.\

        zheyangzi

        like.this

        'or something like that.'


Prior to (4-30), the radio talk show hostess L has brought in the topic pertaining to the problem of unlicensed teen scooter riders. Due to the number of unlicensed riders around the age of 16 and also the precocity of the teenagers nowadays, the call-in policeman P proposes that the administration can try to lower the legal age for obtaining a license as a solution. In the extract above, L, as a hostess, then tries to recapitulate the solution suggested by P and yet misuses a Chinese four-word idiom, *jiu-di-zheng-fa* 'execution on the spot' in line 653. Since this paraphrase amounts to a distortion of P's opinion, the policeman formulates a wh-interrogative *shemeyisi* to request further account from L. Notice that the formulation of this wh-question in fact derives from the speaker's fully understanding the meaning of the idiomatic expression. The relevance of using this item is also clear, as L launches her recapitulation by the cogntive verb phrase with a second person subject in line 651. The wh-question should therefore be analyzed as a repair initiator that addresses the problem of appripriateness and acceptibility. This is also evidenced in L's reaction, for she then changes her wording in the subsequent turns rather than proffer an explanation or a definition of the targeted term.

        Finally, unlike its English counterpart, *what do you mean*, which is regarded as a

"canonical wh-question challenge" (Koshik 2005: 64-67), the impersonalized nature of *shemeyisi* enables this Chinese wh-question to be exploited by a first speaker who has better knowledge to confirm or establish the common ground between him and questioned co-participants. In other words, *shemeyisi* can be designed as a rhetorical question without functioning as a challenge or a disagreement, as illustrated in extracts (4-31).


(4-31)

23　S:　　[他們　常常]　　　　贏　　啊,_

　　　　　tamen changchang ying　　a

　　　　　they　 often　　　win　　PT

　　　　　'They often win the game.'

24　　　我們　也　　常常　　　輸　　耶.\

　　　　　women ye　　changchang shu　　ye

　　　　　we　　also　often　　　　lose　PT

　　　　　'and we often lose.'

25　　　…(0.8)我們　都　沒有　　哭　　咧.\

　　　　　women dou meiyou　　ku　　lie

　　　　　we　　all　 NEG.have cry　PT

　　　　　'But we never cry.'

26　T:　..喔.\

　　　　　ou

　　　　　PT

　　　　　'Oh.'

27  S:   我   才   想     哭   咧.\
     wo   cai   xiang   ku   lie
      I    CAI   think   cry   PT
     'It is me who wants to cry.'

28  T:   沒有,_
     meiyou
     NEG.have
     'No.'

29      ..就   是 有   人     會   這樣       啊.\
        jiu   shi you   ren   hui   zheyang   a
        JIU   C/F have person will   like.this     PT
     'There are just people who would react like that.'

30      ..他   得失心       蠻   重     的.\
        ta   deshixin       man   zhong de
        he   fear.of.failure pretty   heavy NOM
        'He really cares a lot about winning and losing.'

31      ...(1.0)得失心     [你   知道   是]   什麼意思.\
         deshixin     ni   zhidao   shi   shemeyisi
         fear.of.failure you   know     C/F   SHEMEYISI
        'Do you know what *deshixin* means?'

32  S:                   [那   是     什麼].\
                na   shi   sheme
                that   C/F   what
                'What's that?'

134

33  T:  …就   是= 一定   要 t-[2 獲得 2] 的   那   種   感覺   啊.\

        jiu  shi= yiding yao  huode de   na  zhong gangzue a

        JIU  C/F  must  want  obtain NOM  that CL   feeling PT

        'It's the feeling that you must get something.'

34  S:                      [2hm   hm2].\

                            hm   hm

                            PT    PT

                            'Okay.'

35  T:  ..然後 如果 沒有   得    到   就   會   很    可惜.\

        ranhou ruguo meiyou  de   dao jiu  hui  hen   kexi

        then   if   NEG.have obtain to  JIU  will  very  regretful

        'You will feel really regretful if you don't get it.'

36      ..很   傷心    很  傷心.\

        hen shangxin   hen shangxin

        very sad       very sad

        'Very disappointed.'

While the student is complaining about their competitors that they are too prone to tears despite their frequent victory, the teacher explains with a Chinese idiom *ta deshixing hen zhong* 'he overemphasizes winning and losing' that some people just tend to take things too seriously and cannot bear to lose. Aware of the abstractness of the idiomatic phrase, the teacher then designs a *shemeyisi* question in line 31 to confirm the student's understanding of the term. By virtue of the student's lack of knowledge as evidenced by the wh-question he formats in line 32, T produces the subsequent turns to make clarification. In this context, *shemeyisi* is deployed as a strategy of self-initiated self repair to establish common ground among interactants.

As have been demonstrated so far, *shemeyisi* serves more complicated functions than depicted in the literature. It can be initiated by either the first or second speaker to address a problem in understanding or acceptability. Each use is designed and understood contingent to the particular interactional environment.

## 4.5. Chapter summary

In this chapter, we have reexamined the use of the four shell-noun-based markers in Chinese spoken discourse. We have not only specified the context in which they tend to occur, but also expounded the social activities that they respectively constitute and the interactional functions that each of them serves. While *wentishi* introduces a specific piece of information that only the speaker can access to, *shishishang*, collocating with a number of linguistics devices indicating generality, marks a generalized message that the speaker characterizes as a well acknowledged fact or a widely shared value. As a second speaker, the conversationalist can use *zheyang*(*zi*) along with other particles to indicate his receipt of information and to co-construct the boundary of an utterance or activity. Finding the prior utterance problematic or questionable, the current speaker can then use *shemeyisi* to suggest a repair or further account from the prior speaker. Each of the markers forms a particular social act that is contingent and consequential to the ongoing interaction. Hinging on the analysis presented in this chapter, we will in the next elucidate how the shell-noun-based-markers support interactants' act of stancetaking and their pursuit of social cooperation.

# Chapter 5

# Stancetaking via the Use of Shell Nouns

After uncovering the structural and functional characteristics of the four shell-noun-based markers, we now attempt to manifest how the use of these markers reflects the speaker's epistemic and affective stance and how they can support the interactants' management of epistemic stance and their achievement of social cooperation in talk-in-interaction.

In this chapter, we will first expound in section 5.1 how each of the four markers illustrates a particular epistemic stance in the collaborative construction of knowledge in conversation. Despite the distinctions among these items, they are all employed to identify speakers' epistemic position and to negotiate their relative rights over and responsibilities for particular information. In section 5.2, we will then discuss how these makers can be used in conversation in the pursuit of mutual agreement and social cooperation. In contrast to the more traditional view that agreement or cooperation is a static principle or a unidirectional action, we will, by way of the discussion, argue that agreement or social cooperation is in fact a dynamic process of constant negotiation and modulation between the stances of the co-participants in interaction.

## 5.1. Epistemic management

According to Stivers et al. (2011b), there are three key dimensions with respect

to the study of knowledge: Epistemic access, epistemic primacy and epistemic responsibility. Each of the dimensions moreover encompasses different elements that characterize the speaker and hearer's epistemic stances. We will in this section elucidate how the four shell-noun-based markers help the speaker position himself and his interlocutor with respect to these three dimensions.

In section 5.1.1, we will manifest how the markers are formulated to imply the conversation participants' epistemic access, which is further divided into two aspects: How informed the speaker claims he is of the message and how certain he appears to be about the information. Next, we will in section 5.1.2 expound how they can be exploited to claim or upgrade the speaker's epistemic primacy in the course of knowledge exchange. Finally in section 5.1.3, we will specify how the markers enable the speaker to strategically disclaim their responsibility for particular information.


### 5.1.1. Epistemic access

Epistemic access is one of the most frequently explored topics in the study of knowledge (Stivers et al. 2011b). In talk-in-interaction, speakers may adopt certain linguistic resources to establish or even negotiate the conversation participants' access to particular information. To achieve this purpose, speakers may identify whether they and their hearer have access to a piece of knowledge and how certain the speaker is about that information. We will, in the next subsections, touch on these issues and illustrate how these facets of epistemic access can be expressed by the four markers in question.

### 5.1.1.1. Access to knowledge

In the literature pertaining to epistemic access, a considerable number of studies have been devoted to the investigation of the way people convey their own epistemic status and reveal their assumption about their interlocutor's knowledge state (Galato 2010; Heritage 1984a, 2002, 2011, 2012a, b; Heritage and Raymond 2005, in press; Wu 2004, among many other others). Nevertheless, as rightly put forth by Heritage (2012a), the speaker's epistemic stance, i.e. how he publicly positions himself on the scale of informedness, may be incongruent with his epistemic status, i.e. how informed he really is. In this subsection, by examining the use of the four markers, we will thus demonstrate how various linguistic resources are deployed by a speaker to construct and negotiate his own "epistemic stance" and also that of his co-interactants.

The four shell-noun-based markers discussed in this thesis represent four types of epistemic positioning with respect to the speaker's and the hearer's knowledge state that the conversationalist intends to present. Each of the four types will be expounded below respectively. The first type of stance, i.e., a knowing (K+)[17] speaker with an unknowing (K-) hearer, is indexed by *wentishi*, whereas the second type, i.e., an unknowing (K-) or unknowing-to-knowing (K- $\rightarrow$ K+) speaker with a knowing (K+) interlocutor, is signaled by *zheyangzi*. The mirror correspondence in stance can be clearly observed in the following example:

---

[17] This [K+][K-] system is based on Heritage (2012a, b) and is adopted here only for the convenience of notation. However, as will be shown in the following analysis, the expression and neogotiation of the conversation participants' (un)knowingness or (un)informedness in talk-in-interaction is far more complicated than the system can represent.

(5-1)

76　F:　...(0.7)哦?/

　　　　　ou

　　　　　PT

　　　　　'Oh.'

77　　　..這　個^ <E KIDS E> 哇,_

　　　　zhe　ge　　kids　　wa

　　　　this　CL　　PN　　　PT

　　　　'As for Kids,'

78　　　...這　本　書　也　是　很　好.\

　　　　zhe　ben　shu　ye　shi　hen　hao

　　　　this　CL　book also C/F　very　good

　　　　'it's also a good book.'

79　　　...[可是]--

　　　　keshi

　　　　but

　　　　'But'

80　M:　[Eh],_

　　　　eh

　　　　PT

　　　　'well'

81　　　..<E KIDS E>] 是　　不錯.\

　　　　kids　　shi　　bucuo

　　　　PN　　　C/F　　NEG.bad

　　　　'Kids is not bad.'

82 → F:  ...可是　問題是,_　　　　　　　　← providing new information

keshi　wentishi

but　　WENTISHI

'But the thing is'

83　　..它　是%--

ta　shi

It　C/F

'it's'

84　　...(1)我　是　說　自己　在　家　　裡面,_

wo　shi　shuo　ziji　zai　jia　limian

I　C/F　say　self　at　home　inside

'I mean, when he is home by himself,'

85　　...他　就　沒有　　什麼　興趣,_

ta　jiu meiyou　sheme　xingqu

he　JIU NEG.have　what　interest

'he is not so interested,'

86　　..因為　　它　不是^　錄影帶.\

yinwei　ta　bushi　luyingdai

because　it　NEG.C/F video.tape

'since it is not a videotape.'

87　　[@@@]

88 → M:  [這樣子　　　哦].\　　　　　　　← receiving new information

zheyangzi　ou

ZHEYANGZI PT

'Oh.'

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89        ...你　喜歡　這　個=,_

           ni　xihuan zhe　ge

           you　like　this　CL

           'So you like'

90        ...(0.7) [錄影帶].\

           luyingdai

           video.tape

           'video tapes.'

In (5-1), F first mentions that a particular children's book is also good, immediately followed by M's agreement. Then F modifies her stance with the *wentishi* preface by proffering her knowledge about her child's preference for videotapes as opposed to books. In this conversation, since her child's preference is a piece of information that F, as a mother, has access to and authority over, the use of *wentishi* explicit signals her being more knowledgeable than M in this domain. Expressing his previous uninformedness, M makes use of the newsmarking *zheyangzi* to respond to F's comment. As can be seen from this episode of interaction, the asymmetry in the knowledge states of the conversationalists is overtly manifested by the deployment of the two shell-noun-based markers.

Nevertheless, as revealed earlier, the epistemic stance that the speaker holds may not always coincide with the epistemic status of the conversation participants (Stivers et al. 2011b; Heritage 2012a). For example, the third type of stance, illustrated by the use of *shishshang*, characterizes the subsequent message as if it is some shared knowledge that all the co-interactants can and should have access to. In doing so, the speaker renders the generalization indexed by this marker less challengeable, since the information is presented as a fact commonly acknowledged

rather than personally judged. It is illustrated in example (5-2):

(5-2)

276   F:      ...這　個=,-

            zhe ge

            this CL

            'Well'

277          ..台灣　這 次　　這　　個　選舉,-

            taiwan zhe ci      zhe   ge    xuanju

            Taiwan this time    this   CL    election

            'So the election in Taiwan this time'

278          ..不　　曉得　怎麼樣　　喔.\

            bu      xiaode zemeyang ou

            NEG    know   how       PT

            'is quite tight.'

279          ..你　　看.\

            ni    kan

            you   see

            'What do you think about it?'

280   C:      ...@@.

281          ...(1.54)   eNh=,-

               eNh=

               PT

               'Well,'

282    C:      ...換      換   做   啊.\

               huan    huan  zuo   a

               change  change do   PT

               'We should have someone new.'

283    F:      ...<@換      換    做@>.\

               huan   huan   zuo

               change change do

               'Have someone new.'

284    C:      ..<L2 換      人    做   看覓       啊    咧 L2>./

               uaN    lang   tso   khuaNmai   a     lei

               change person do    try         PT    PT

               'We really should let a different person try it.'

285    F:      ..<L2 換      人    做   看覓 L2>

               uaN    lang   tso   kaNmai

               change person do    try

               'We really should let a different person try it.'

286    C:      ..@@@

287    F:      ...(1.06)m.\

288    C:      ..eNh,-

               eNh

               PT

               'Well,'

289 →          ..事實上,\

               shishishang

               SHISHISHANG

               'in fact'

290              ..也   應該     這樣       啦.\

                  ye    yinggai   zheyang    la

                  also  should     like.this   PT

                  'it should be so.'

291    F:     ...m.\

In the extract above, speaker F inquires about C's opinion concerning the presidential election at that time. Since politics is always a sensitive topic in Taiwan, C first responds with a laugh at line 280, followed by a 1.5-second silence and a delay marker *enh* in line 281. After speaker C identifies his stance on this issue in line 282, F repeats what C utters without any explicit expression of agreement. To further confirm his own attitude, C switches to Taiwanese Southern Min to restate his comment. Again, F repeats without formulating an overt agreement, which, according to Pomerantz (1984), amounts to an index of a forthcoming disagreement. Consequently, speaker C makes use of the *shishishang*-prefacing along with a deontic modal verb *yinggai* 'should,' a similarity adverb *ye*, and a pro-form *zheyang* to re-present his opinion as a consensual, widely agreed view, to which F should also have epistemic access.

Even more complicated is the last type of stance, which is implicated by the use of the wh-question *shemeyisi*. As mentioned in the prior chapter, *shemeyisi* is mostly exploited as a response to a first pair part, such as a question or an assessment. Given that, the speaker who formulates *shemeyisi* is at first regarded as knowing (K+) to an extent by his prior speaker. Nevertheless, by means of this question, the speaker, at the surface, characterizes himself as unknowing (K-), while claiming his understanding of the prior turn as non-relevant or inappropriate. Echoing the analysis of Bolden and Robin (2011) on *why*-interrogatives, we also argue that the epistemic

stance that *shemeyisi* indexes is Janus-faced or deceitful.   Consider the following

example,


(5-3)

33.  B:  ..那　一般　站　在　業者　　　的　來　講　的　　話,_

      na　yiban zhan zai　yezhe　　　de　lai　jiang de　　hua

      that　normal stand　at　　business.runner GEN come say　NOM word

      'So from the hotel owner's point of view,'

34.  ..他　會　把　他=,_

      ta　hui　ba　ta

      he　will　BA　he

      'he'll allocate his'

35.  ...最--

      zui--

      most

      'the most'

36.  ...比方　　講　他　這　個　時段,_

      bifang　　jiang　ta　zhe　ge　shiduan

      for.instance COM　he　this　CL　period

      'for example, the period'

37.  ..是　很　好　的　時段,_

      shi　hen　hao　de　shiduan

      C/F　very　good　NOM period

      'is quite good.'

38.　　　...他　會　　把　　這　個　比較　不　　好　　的,_

　　　　　ta　hui　　ba　　zhe　ge　bijiao　bu　　hao　　de

　　　　　he　will　BA　this　CL　more　NEG　good　NOM

　　　　　'He'll allocate worse rooms'

39.　　　..配　　　　給　　比較=,_

　　　　　pei　　　gei　　bijiao

　　　　　allocate　give　more

　　　　　'to more'

40.　　　..他　認為　　比較　不　　重要　　　的　　　客人.\

　　　　　ta　rengwei　bijiao　bu　　zhongyao　de　　　keren

　　　　　he　think　　more　NEG　importantt　NOM　costumer

　　　　　'to customers that he thinks are less important.'

41. A:　(0.8)[對　　這　就　太]　過份　　了　　啊.\

　　　　　dui　zhe　jiu　tai　　guofeng　le　　a

　　　　　right　this　JIU　too　　undue　　CRS　PT

　　　　　'Yes. This is unfair!'

42. B:　　　　[因為　　　他　在],_

　　　　　　yinwei　　ta　zai

　　　　　　because　he　at

　　　　　　'because he is'

43. A:　這　　可以　告　　到　　消費者=　基金會　　去　啊.\

　　　　　zhe　keyi　gao　dao　　xiaofeizhe　jijinhui　　qu　a

　　　　　This　can　sue　to　　consumer　foundation　go　PT

　　　　　'We actually can sue them and report the case to the Customers' Foundation.'

44.　　　　..這　是　歧視　　　客人　啊.\
　　　　　zhe　shi　qishi　　　keren　a
　　　　　this　C/F　discriminate customer PT
　　　　　'This is discrimination.'

45.　B:　沒有　　　啊.\
　　　　meiyou　　a
　　　　NEG.have　PT
　　　　'No.'

46.　　　　..那　你--
　　　　　na　ni--
　　　　　that　you
　　　　　'Then how can you'

47.　→　..那　這　個　不　好　　的　　怎麼　辦　　呢?\
　　　　na　zhe　ge　bu　hao　de　zenme　ban　ne
　　　　that　this　CL　NEG good　NOM　how　deal　PT
　　　　'How can you deal with the worse rooms?'

48.　→ A: (.8)什麼意思　不　　好　　的　怎麼　　辦?\
　　　　　shemeyisi　bu　hao　de　zenme　ban
　　　　　SHEMEYISI NEG　good　NOM how　deal
　　　　　'What do you mean by deal with the worse rooms?'

49.　B:　(0)不　好　的　　房間　　他　還是　要　　賣　　出去　啊.\
　　　　bu　hao　de　　fangjian　ta　haishi yao　mai　chuqu　a
　　　　NEG good NOM　room　　he　still　want sell　out　PT
　　　　'He still has to sell out the worse rooms.'

50.  A:   (0)對.\

      dui

      right

      'Yeah.'

51.    ..但是　　你 不能　　因爲,_

      danshi   ni   buneng   yinwei

      but       you NEG.can   because

      'But you shouldn't assign him the bad room'

52.    ..看　人家　　　開　一　個　破　　　車　就　　這樣.\

      kan   renjia   kai   yi   ge   puo   che jiu   zheyang

      see   other.person drive one CL   broken   car JIU   like.this

      'only because he drives a cheap car.'

53.    ..可能　　　王永慶　　　　　來,_

      keneng   wangyongcing   lai

      maybe   PN             come

      'Maybe he is a billionaire,'

54.    ..他 開　　一　部　最　破　　的　　　車　呢.\

      ta   ka   yi   bu   zui   puo   de   che   ne

      he   drive   one   CL   most broken NOM   car   PT

      'but he drives the worst car that he has to your hotel.'

 

Speaker B in (5-3) is a call-in listener who works as a designer and manager for the hotel business. Following the topic initiated by the talk show hostess A, speaker B points out the fact that in particular periods of time, hotel managers tend to allocate their rooms according to the importance of the clients. Having heard this from B, A then criticizes this policy as unfair and discriminative. Taking a more sympathetic

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stance toward the hotel administration, B then formulates a wh-question *na zhege buhao de zenme ban* 'What else can be done with the bad rooms' in line 47 (the first arrow), which can be interpreted as unanswerable and challenging in this context (Koshik 2005). By means of this question, speaker B seems to suggest that there is no better room-allocation policy.

In response to speaker B's challenge, A likewise produces a wh-interrogative to display her difficulty in understanding B's question. At first glance, A may be taking a K- stance by virtue of *shemeyisi*; however, this question is in fact designed to achieve at least three purposes. First, by putting forth such a question, A, as a non-expert in the hotel industry, can shun from providing an explicit solution, which may in turn be attacked by B. Second, A can also refuse to conform to B's presupposition implied in his question by asking him to clarify his intention. Lastly, A can even challenge the legitimacy of B's question and stance by suggesting a repairable element in his utterance with the use of *shemeyisi*. In so doing, A can avoid appearing as really unknowing (e.g. offering a bad answer or simply admitting that she does not know any better solution), while implying that she in fact has better knowledge about the contingencies of the ongoing interaction and certain social norms (cf. Bolden and Robinson 2011 for their analysis of *why*-interrogatives in English).

To recapitulate, the four shell-noun-based markers investigated here can help express and negotiate if the speaker and the addressee are in a knowing or an unknowing state. The speaker can also exploit these markers to manipulate the epistemic position of the conversation participants with respect to the epistemic access each of them has. Furthermore, as we have manifested above, speakers not only index their access to the information that their interlocutor provides, but also reveal their access to related and more correct information or their knowledge of a broader socio-interactional context.

Although we have so far presented epistemic stance as knowing or unknowing, however, as rightly put forth by Stivers et al. (2011b), epistemic access is gradient rather than dichotomous in nature, especially in terms of the speaker's certainty about a particular piece of knowledge. In the next section, we will elucidate how each shell-noun-based marker signals a particular degree of certainty about the information that it relates to.

### 5.1.1.2. Degree of certainty

The four markers examined in this thesis form a continuum with respect to the degree of certainty that they index. This facet of epistemic access is also related to the knowledge state that the markers indicate. Consequently, as we will expound, the degree of certainty is not only subjective but also intersubjective in that how certain the speaker presents himself about a message hinges on not only his own cognitive state but also his assumption about that of his interlocutor.

For example, both *wentishi* and *shishishang* express a high degree of speaker certainty, but the latter indexes an even more assertive stance for at least three reasons. First, as previous studies suggest, the noun *shishi* 'fact' itself already offers a factual reading (Peng 2008; Wang et al. 2010a). Referring to a message as a fact signals the speaker's high degree of certainty about the information that he proffers. Second, as illustrated in last chapter, *shishishang* is recurrently deployed in the context of a generalized statement. In other words, implementing *shishishang* to preface an utterance, the speaker is certain about not only the factuality of the information but also the generality of the proposition. By contrast, when *wentishi* is used, the speaker is often projecting an utterance whose content is more specific and sometimes more private (e.g. one's own assessment or life experience, or specific knowledge that the

speaker has access to because of their social roles, such as parents or talk-show hosts). Lastly, as have been argued in the previous subsection, the use of *shishishang* underscores the (potential) sharedness of the knowledge inasmuch as it characterizes the information as general and accessible to everyone. As such, the speaker not only makes explicit his own belief, but also implies the interlocutor's epistemic stance.

*Zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*, in comparison, index a lower degree of speaker certainty due to the social actions that these markers are utilized to achieve. To illustrate, *zheyang*(*zi*), as observed in previous chapters of this thesis and Liu (2002), often co-occurs with a final particle *ou* or *a* to seek a confirmation response from the prior speaker (Wu 2004). Despite its newsmarking function, *zheyang*(*zi*), unlike other acknowledgement tokens like *dui* (Wang et al. 2010b), only indicates weak certainty about the information that the co-interactant offers. As a result, the information giver oftentimes needs to reconfirm or further elaborate on his statement. Additionally, akin to the case of *shishishang* discussed earlier, the semantics of the abstract noun may also contribute to the degree of speaker certainty that this maker signals. The noun *yangzi* 'appearance, manner' implies an outward impression mainly obtained from the visual sense. As have been shown crosslinguistically in the literature, expressions with this origin tend to grammaticalize into an evidential marker that indicate lower speaker certainty (Aikhenvald 2004). Employing a marker derived from a noun of such a meaning, the speaker can avoid expressing his full commitment to the proposition.

With respect to *shemeyisi*, the degree of certainty that it indexes is as complex as the knowledge state that it implies. Formatted as a question, *shemeyisi* on the surface expresses the lowest degree of certainty inasmuch as it presents the speaker as totally uninformed of the message that the coparticipant has conveyed. However, on the other hand, the questioner may be certain about the knowledge he holds which may

counter to that message. The incongruence between the questioner's knowledge and the prior speaker's stance prompts the use of *shemeyisi*. For example,

(5-4)

72    F:    ...(1.08) 我們　　社團　還 有　　人 <@嗎@>.\
              women　shetuan　hai you　ren　ma

              we　　　club　　still have　person PT

              'Is there still anyone in our club?'

73 → M:    ...<u>什麼意思</u>=.-

              <u>shemeyisi=</u>

              SHEME YISI

              'What do you mean?'

74    F:    ...就　是　　說　　我們,\

              jiu　shi　shuo　women

              JIU　C/F　COM　we

              'I mean'

75        ...易學社　　　　　　還　有　　人　　嗎.\

              yixueshe　　　　　　hai　you　ren　ma

              the.study.of.I.Ching club still　have　person PT

              'does the I Ching philosophy study club still have any members?'

76        ...[懷疑　呀].-

              huaiyi　ya

              doubt　PT

              'Any question?'

77    M:        [有    呀].-

           you    ya

           have    PT

           'Yes, we do.'

78              ..很  多      人    呀.\

           hen duo      ren    ya

           very many    person PT

           'There are many people,'

79              ..中午        來    的      時候,\

           zhongwu    lai    de      shihou

           noon        come NOM    time

           'if you come during the lunchtime,'

80              ..就  很    多    人    啊.\

           jiu    hen  duo  ren      a

           JIU    very    many person PT

           'you'll see a lot of people.'

Speakers F and M are members of the same club. In line 72, F formulates a reversed polarity question to imply that there seems to be very few members in the club. Since this negative stance goes against M's understanding of the current situation of the club, he produces *shemeyisi* to query for further clarification or repair in general. F then reformulates her question in lines 74-75, yet only by specifying the name of the club that she refers to. The uncertainty of M about F's opinion is sensed and identified by F in line 76. Since F fails to make self-repair even though M has produced a repair initiator, M decides to express a counter-stance explicitly in lines 77-80 with some elaboration. As illustrated in this example, *shemeyisi* manifests the complexity in not

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only the knowledge state of the co-conversationalists but also the questioner's degrees of certainty about the information that his interlocutor provides and that he himself holds. The case of *shemeyisi* along with that of *zheyang*(*zi*) has pointed to the fact that the degree of certainty is not only subjectively expressed by a single speaker concerning the information that he provides but intersubjectively co-constructed in the course of interaction. Both parties of conversation participants have rights to negotiate over their commitment to the focused information that both of them are attending to at the moment.

In summary, we have in this subsection elucidated how each of the four shell-noun-based markers indexes a particular degree of certainty about a piece of information that the conversationalists jointly attend to. This variety of degrees further manifests the gradedness in this facet of epistemic stance. The positions indexed by these markers form a continuum as shown in (5-5):

(5-5)   *shishishang* > *wentishi* > *zheyang*(*zi*) > *shemeyisi*

Note, however, that this continuum only provides a simplified picture of the factors involved. As have been shown in the foregoing discussion, to identify one's certainty about some information involves not only the speaker's commitment to how true the information that he produces is, but also (1) his intent to characterize the information as how generalized and shared it is, (2) his assumption about how certain his interlocutor should be (e.g. in the case of *shishishang*), (3) his commitment to how true the information his co-conversationalist proffers is (e.g. in the cases of *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*), and (4) his certainty about how true the information he holds is in comparison to the information that his interlocutor presents.

### 5.1.2. Epistemic primacy

In addition to epistemic access, another frequently investigated issue is epistemic primacy. By epistemic primacy, we refer to the asymmetry in interactants' relative right or authority over a particular piece of knowledge (Enfield 2011; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Stivers et al. 2011b). As pointed out by Enfield (2011), factors such as status, agency and knowledge state can contribute to this asymmetry. Sequential positions, for example, play a crucial role in claiming one's epistemic primacy; in general, first-position assertions tend to index a greater authority over the knowledge (Enfield 2011; Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Stivers et al. 2011b). As a consequence, studies show that speakers, when making a first-position assertion, often adopt mitigating devices such as tag questions or expressions like *I think* to downgrade the effect (Heritage and Raymond 2005; Kärkkäinen 2003).

Since the four shell-noun-based markers, as presented in previous chapters, tend to be designed as a response to a first-position assertion, we will in the present section focus on how these markers function to upgrade the speaker's epistemic right in such an inherently weaker position. Each marker represents a particular strategy that speakers adopt to establish their epistemic primacy in a second position of talk-in-interaction. Moreover, the strategies for claiming epistemic authority are also intertwined with other facets of epistemic stance that each of the markers indexes and the interactive functions that each of them serves.

First of all, *wentishi* underscores the speaker's proximity to the knowledge source, especially in comparison with the hearer. As pointed out in section 4.1, *wentishi* tends to introduce information that falls into his own territory of knowledge (Heritage 2011; Kamio 1997), i.e., knowledge pertaining to one's personal experience, feeling and reasoning, or domains that the speaker is entitled to access due to his

social role like parents or talk-show hosts. According to a number of prior studies (e.g. Enfield 2011; Fox 2001; Heritage 2012a; Stivers et al. 2011b), one's proximity to the knowledge source and entitlement to the information render the speaker more rights to know and claim the knowledge. As such, the use of *wentishi* in a second position can help the speaker claim his own territory of knowledge and thus his epistemic primacy.

In comparison, the epistemic primacy the user of *shishishang* claims comes from the generalization that the speaker makes in the context of the marker. Wang et al. (2010a) and Wang et al. (2011) both regard *shishishang* as a sign of objectivity and professionalism manipulated by the speaker. This sense of expertise as well as the ensuing epistemic authority, we argue, may derive from the general claim that the speaker puts forth along with the marker *shishishang*. Since it is usually the more experienced or professional person that is able and entitled to make a generalized assertion, the generality of the *shishishang*-marked statement enables the speaker to present himself as someone with relatively greater epistemic primacy.

Since the speaker who makes use of *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* is mostly the recipient of information, the two markers work differently from *wentishi* and *shishishang* discussed above in the process of negotiating one's epistemic rights. In Chapter 4, we have proposed that one of *zheyang*(*zi*)'s interactional functions is to negotiate the boundary of topics and activities in the course of interaction. In so doing, the information recipient is enabled to contribute to the process of knowledge co-construction despite his previous uninformed state. As suggested by Keevallik (2010), the act of boundary marking in interaction tends to indicate the authority of the interactant who can determine the boundary, since the act highlights the speaker's right in setting the agenda and deciding the timing of activity transition. Given that, although the producer of *zheyang*(*zi*) appears to be the less informed party, the use of the information-receipt token actually supports the speaker's claiming of his own

epistemic rights in several ways.

First, as pointed out earlier in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) as a response token allows the speaker to determine the boundary and newsworthiness of a particular piece of information provided by the prior speaker. In other words, the conversationalist, by employing this marker, can actively participate in the interlocutor's act of informing by validating the completion of the action and the tellibility of the knowledge, rather than passively receive it. Second, as mentioned earlier, *zheyang*(*zi*) is frequently deployed in a confirmation-seeking pattern, which not only displays the speaker's restrained commitment to the information at issue, but prompts the information giver to reconfirm or justify his statement in the subsequent turns. This demonstrates that *zheyang*(*zi*) can be designed to claim the speaker's rights of doubting or negotiating the factuality of the information. Lastly, the boundary marking function of *zheyang*(*zi*) makes salient the speaker's rights in determining how the knowledge can be exploited (e.g. as the starting point for the follow-up questions) and how the interaction is organized (by deciding the agenda and timing of transition as mentioned earlier) (cf. Keevallik 2010).

In a similar fashion, the speaker who formulates the question *shemeyisi*, although not the primary provider of the information, still expresses certain authority over the knowledge. As repeatedly noted in the previous sections, *shemeyisi* is mostly designed to question the relevance or appropriateness of the prior speaker's utterance. In formulating such an interrogative, the speaker by contrast challenges the prior speaker, while indexing his own authority over the knowledge of social interactive norms (cf. Bolden and Robinson 2011). As illustrated in (5-4) above, the implementation of this wh-interrogative may even suggest that the speaker who poses the question owns the primacy over certain knowledge which counters to the prior speaker's. In these ways, the speaker can pretend to be uninformed, while effectively upgrade his epistemic

rights in the course of interaction.

### 5.1.3. Epistemic responsibility

Finally, the four shell-noun-based markers also contribute to the management of epistemic responsibility in talk-in-interaction. In general, these four markers are occasioned to disclaim responsibility. More specifically, the speaker will exploit the shell noun to objectivize the information, backgrounding the knowledge source or avoiding full commitment, while implying the interlocutor's responsibility for knowing, confirming or repairing a particular message.

When providing information, the speaker is often assumed to have certain responsibility for the message he puts forth (Stivers et al. 2011b); as a result, the information giver tends to adopt certain strategies to avoid such a responsibility. One of the tactics that speakers often exploit is objectivization, whereby the speaker can de-focalize the source of the message, mostly himself, and present the information as impersonalized and presupposed (Brown and Levinson 1987; Caffi 1999). Shell nouns or shell-noun constructions, as Schmid (2001) suggests, can form an "objectivization shield," (Caffi 1999: 896) which serves such a function. In line with Schmid (2001), we also propose that *wentishi* and *shishishang* both function to objectivize the information, helping the speaker disclaim his responsibility. That is, by framing the following claims with the use of an abstract noun such as *wenti* 'problem' and *shishi* 'fact', the speaker can avoid identifying a particular person as the information source.

On the other hand, as a recipient of information, the addressee is also expected to endorse with the prior speaker (Stivers et al. 2011b). Shell-noun-based expressions such as *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* can lower the recipient's degree of commitment to

the information. The may-not-be-factual connotation of the noun *yangzi* enables the speaker to take the information as it is without full endorsement, while the use of *yisi* allows the conversationalist to point out the interactional problem without referring to any of the conversation participants (cf. *What do you mean* or *I don't know what you mean* in English).

In addition to disclaiming one's own responsibility, the speaker may also suggest the hearer's responsibility. *Wentishi*, due to its function in adjusting and constrasting assumptions, implies that the hearer should accept the new information and modify his own knowledge. *Shishishang*, as mentioned in section 4.2, marks a general fact or value that the speaker can and, in a sense, should be able to access to. As such, although *shishishang* may introduce new information into the discourse, the knowledge is also expected to be known and agreed with by the addressee. As for *zheyang*(*zi*), since it is recurrently used to seek confirmation, the use of this token characterizes the information giver as being accountable for the knowledge that he presents.

Finally, by formulating the wh-question *shemeyisi* as a way to respond to the prior speaker's turn, the second speaker avoids his responsibility for producing an appropriate response to the information and for endorsing the information that the co-conversationalist offers right at the spot; meanwhile, he can shift the responsibility from himself to his interlocutor. By virtue of the response-mobilizing power of a question (Stivers and Rossano 2010) and also the repair-initiating function of *shemeyisi* (Zhang 1998 and also section 4.4 of this thesis), the first speaker is then assigned the responsibility for dealing with the problem in the information that he has provided in the prior turn.

### 5.1.4. Interim summary

In this section, we have elucidated how the four shell-noun-based markers respectively index different epistemic stances with special respect to the dimensions of epistemic access, epistemic primacy and epistemic responsibility. As summarized in table 5.1 below, each marker is designed to imply a delicate set of rights and responsibilities for the knowledge constructed in the course of interaction and also the meta-knowledge concerning broader social-interactional norms. By inspecting the use of these items, we have not only showcased that Chinese shell-noun-based markers can contribute to the epistemic management in spoken discourse in different ways, but also demonstrated that taking an epistemic stance in fact is itself a multifaceted social action that involves not only the construction of a single speaker's knowledge state, but the constant negotiation of the relative position between the co-conversationalists (see also Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010). Each facet of epistemic stance, while discussed separately, is interwoven with one another. In the next section, we will, also with the examples of the four markers, reveal how the management of epistemic rights and responsibilities is closely tied to the issue of social cooperation in talk-in-interaction.

**Table 5.1 The set of epistemic stance that each marker indexes**

| | | *shishishang* | *wentishi* | *zheyang*(*zi*) | *shemeyisi* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| epistemic access | knowledge state | S[18]: [K+] vs. H: [K+] | S: [K+] vs. H: [K-] | S: [K- → K+] vs. H: [K+] | S: [K-] vs. H: [K+] |
| | degree of certainty | very strong | strong | weak | very weak (while strong for other information) |
| epistemic primacy (claiming)[19] | | making generalizations | providing specific information | marking boundaries | initiating repair |
| epistemic responsibility (disclaiming) | | S: objectivized H: should know it | S: objectivized H: should accept it. | S: objectivized H: should confirm it. | S: objectivized H: should make repair |

## 5.2. Social cooperation

The foregoing section discussed in detail how shell-noun-based markers are occasioned to index and negotiate epistemic rights and responsibilities in talk-in-interaction. Nevertheless, several studies have pointed out that the

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[18]  S here refers to the speaker while H the hearer.
[19]  All the four markers are used to claim epistemic primacy; therefore, listed in the table are the strategies that the speaker adopts when using the expressions

management of knowledge in conversation is mostly, if not always, implemented to achieve the goal of social cooperation (Enfield 2006; Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Stivers et al. 2011b, among many others). Prior research has also put forth different ways to approach the issue of social cooperation in talk-in-interaction (Enfield 2006; Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Stivers 2008; Stivers and et al. 2011, among others). In the rest of the section, we will, mainly based on notions respectively proposed by Stivers (2008) (section 5.2.1) and by Heritage and Raymond (2005) (section 5.2.2), expound how the use of the four shell-noun-based markers in taking epistemic stance is at the same time set out to achieve different levels of social cooperation and how this connection reflects the interactants' social need to manage face in conversation (Brown and Levinson 1987; Goffman 1959, 1967; Heritage and Raymond 2005).

### 5.2.1. Alignment and affiliation

Investigating the hearer's reaction in story telling, Stivers (2008) makes a distinction between "alignment", cooperation at the structural level, and "affiliation", cooperation at the affective level. Whereas the former refers to the conversationalist's acceptance of the premise constructed in the co-participant's utterances and his conformity to the constraints imposed by actions formulated in the prior turns, the latter involves the interactant's empathy and endorsement for the prior speaker's evaluative/emotive stance (Stivers et al. 2011b). In what follows, we will expound how the four markers indicate different levels of social (non-)cooperation.

*Wentishi* and *shemeyisi* are of the same kind in terms of the disaligning and disaffiliative stance that they both index. As detailed in section 5.1 and Chapter 4, the use of *wentishi* and *shemeyisi* poses a challenge to the assumption presupposed in the

prior turn. While the prefatory *wentishi* forecasts a forthcoming utterance that counters to the information presented by another conversation participant, the wh-interrogative *shemeyisi* puts a doubt even on the relevancy and legitimacy of the formulation of the utterance. In addition, the occasioning of the two markers also to an extent hinders the activity launched by the prior speaker from progress. The speaker that produces the markers may, for instance, compete with the first speaker for the conversation floor (Stivers 2008) or formulate a non-type-confirming response to resist the structural constraint (Raymond 2003; Stivers and Hayano 2010).

Take the use of *wentishi* in (5-6) below for example. As can be seen in lines 15 and 16, there is an overlap between the ending of the prior turn and A's utterance prefaced by *wentishi*. This marker not only helps A to claim her turn, but also introduces a question, which, despite eliciting further information for the development of the later conversation, is apparently a structurally dispreferred second pair part in response to B's turn.

(5-6)

4. A:      [他　大　我　一　年].\

          ta    da   wo   yi   nian

          he   big   I    one   year

          'He is one year older than I am'

5.          (1)他　大　我　一　屆.\

          ta    da   wo   yi   jie

          he   big    I   one school.year

          'He is one school year older than I am.'

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6.　　　　..我　　跟　　他　同　　　年.\

　　　　　wo　　gen　　ta　　tong　　nian

　　　　　 I 　　with　　he　　same　　year

　　　　　'We are of the same age.'

7.　　　　..[可是　他] –

　　　　　keshi ta

　　　　　but　　he

　　　　　'but he'

8.　B:　　　[oh…等　　　一下].\

　　　　　 oh…deng　　yixia

　　　　　 PT　　wait　　a.while

　　　　　 'Oh, wait a minute.'

9.　　　　..oh-　他　大　你　一　屆.\

　　　　　oh-　　ta　　da　　ni　　yi　　jie

　　　　　PT　　he　　big　　you one school.year

　　　　'Oh, he is one school year older than you.'

10.　　　..所以　他　比　妳　早　　一　　年　　畢業.\

　　　　　suoyi　ta　　bi　　ni　　zao　　yi　　nian　　biye

　　　　　So　　he　　than you early　　one　　year　　graduate

　　　　'So he graduated one year earlier than you did?'

11. A:　.. 　對　　對　　對　　[對　　對].\

　　　　 dui　dui　dui　　dui　　dui

　　　　 right right right　　right　　right

　　　　 'Yeah.'

12. B:                            [oh.. 好-- 那 就 沒有 錯].\

                                oh.. hao-- na jiu meiyou cuo

                                PT good that JIU NEG.have wrong

                                'Oh, okay. Then that makes sense.'

13.        ..我 就 /sh/-- 奇怪,_

          wo jiu sh-- qiguai

           I JIU sh weird

          'I thought'

14.        ..我 以為 他 –

          wo yiwei ta

           I think he

          'I thought he'

15.        你們 是 同 屆 [的].\

          nimen shi tong jie de

          you C/F same school.year NOM

          'You were of the same school year.'

16. A: →                           [問題]是 他 怎麼 那麼

                                    wentishi ta zenme name

                                    WENTISHI he how.come that

        快 就 要 退伍 了@@?\

          kuai jiu yao tuiwu le

          fast JIU will be.demobilized CRS

          'The thing is how come he is going to be demobilized so soon.'

Even clearer is the case of *shemeyisi* exemplified in excerpt (5-7). B's turn from

351-354 is designed as an informing elicited by A's question in lines 349-350. An

aligned response in this context should be a following mark of news or receipt of information. Nevertheless, A instead formulates a wh-question *shemeyisi* in line 355 to respond to B's assertion. In so doing, A violates the constraint imposed by B's turn, while obtaining more time for elaboration (lines 256-258).

(5-7)

349 A:      [那]  妳   怎麼    跟     朋友    解釋,_

            na   ni  zenme  gen   pengyou jieshi

            that you how    with   friend  explain

            'Then how do you explain to your friends'

350      ..妳  這 個  孩子  是  哪裏   來    的      呢?/

         ni  zhe ge  haizi shi  nali  lai   de      ne

         you this CL  child  C/F  where come  NOM     PT

         'where your kid is from?'

351 B:    ...(1.3)uhm,_

352       ...我   從來    不    解釋.\

          wo  conglai  bu    jieshi

          I   always  NEG   explain

          'I never explain it.'

353       ...(2.2)我   從來    不    解釋.\

          wo   conglai   bu   jieshi

          I    always   NEG  explain

          'I never explain it.'

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354  ..我 從來　不　解釋.\

    wo conglai bu jieshi

    I always NEG explain

  'I never explain it.'

355 A: →  ...什麼意思  從來　不　解釋.\

    shemeyisi  conglai bu jieshi

    SHEMEYISI always NEG explain

  'What do you mean you never explain it?'

356  ..那　妳　在　外面,_

    na ni zai waimian

    that you at outside

  'Then you are in the public'

357  ...家長會  的  時候,_

    jiazhanghui de  shihou

    PTA   NOM time

  'When you attend the PTA'

358  ..妳　要　去　家長會　吧.\

    ni yao qu jiazhanghui ba

    You need go PTA   PT

  'You need to go to the PTA, don't you?'

Furthermore, as shown in the two examples presented above, the speaker, by disaligning with the prior speaker, also implies his disaffiliation or non-affiliation with the prior speaker's stance. While *wentishi* expresses a more explicitly contrastive and thus disaffiliative meaning, *shemeyisi* constitutes a more implicit way to display one's non-affiliation.

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In addition to demonstrating dis-/non-affiliative stance via disalignment, one can appear cooperative at the structural level, while not necessarily so at the affective level (cf. Stivers 2005). *Zheyang*(*zi*) as a response token forms such an example. Consider the following example,

(5-8)

201. M:  ..凱悅　的　義大利菜　不錯　　耶.\

kaiyue de　idalicai　　bucuo　ye

Hyatt　GEN italian.food　NEG.bad PT

'The Italian food served in Hyatt is actually pretty good.'

202. G: → ...這樣子　　　啊.\

zheyangzi　　　a

ZHEYANGZI PT

'Oh, really.'

203.  ..我　沒　　去　吃　過 耶.\

wo　mei　　qu　chi　guo ye

I　NEG.have go　eat　pass PT

'Actually, I've never had it yet.'

Speaker M in (5-8) formulates a rather positive assessment on the Italian food served at Grand Hyatt Hotel. Since G has never had Italian food there, she first produces a newsmarking *zheyangzi* in line 202, treating M's evaluation as an informing, and next expands her turn by explicitly admitting her lack of such experiences, thus covertly justifying the absence of immediate agreement. As evidenced by such an expanded account, the response, although manifesting the speaker's acceptance of M's assessment to an extent, indexes the non-affiliative stance that he takes.

Finally, as alluded to in Chapter 3, *shishishang* tends not to occur at the juncture of turn transition; therefore, this marker does not seem to function as much in the process of passive alignment or affiliation (cf. Wang et al. 2010a; Wang et al. 2011). Nevertheless, it does not imply that *shishishang* is, as claimed in Wang et al. (2011), message-oriented as opposed to interaction-oriented. Instead, this marker, as well as those investigated earlier, enables the speaker to take the initiative or regain his agency in the pursuit of mutual agreement in interaction. A more detailed discussion will be presented in the next subsection.

## 5.2.2. Face and the terms of agreement

So far, we have revealed how the four shell-noun-based markers work at different levels of social cooperation. At first glance, these expressions mostly seem uncooperative or non-cooperative in the local context; nevertheless, in what follows, we attempt to argue, in line with Heritage (2002) and Heritage and Raymond (2005), that agreement or social cooperation in general should be regarded as a dynamic collaborative process (cf. Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Mori 1999; Schegloff 1996a, among many others). Agreement as well as social cooperation is thus not a one-way alignment or endorsement of one party with another; rather, it should be conceptualized as a social activity in which the co-interactants compete or negotiate over "who agrees with whom" (Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Schegloff 1996a). This negotiation is also enacted to fulfill the conversationalists' need of face in talk-in-interaction (Goffman 1967; Heritage and Raymond 2005). The four shell-noun-based makers, as will be shown later, are deployed to serve this greater pro-social end in conversation despite the disalignment or disaffiliation that they may enact at the very moment they are utilized.

To begin with, the example below, which was also examined in Chapter 4, clearly illustrates how *wentishi* is designed as a tool for conversationalists to win their interlocutors over to their stance. More specifically, as have been proposed earlier, *wentishi* is mostly designed to claim the speaker's epistemic rights by introducing a specific piece of information to which only he has access. This underscored asymmetry in knowledge often leads to the addressee's concessive or even agreeing response, as exemplified in (5-9). In so doing, the current speaker can claim his face while preserving his interlocutor's by objectivizing the disaffiliation (Brown and Levinson (1987).

(5-9)

207 S:  ...我 現在 覺得 hoN,\

wo xianzai juede hoN

I now think PT

'Now I think that'

208  ..有 一 點 好 奇怪 喔.\

you yi dian hao qiguai ou

have one point good weird PT

'there is one thing really weird.'

209  ..因為 我們 <L2 salesman L2> 推薦 一 些 我們--

yinwei women salesman tuijian yi xie women

because we salesman recommend one CL we

'Since we salesmen recommend some (books) that we'

210　大家　　都　用　得　不錯　　的　書　給　　你們,\
　　　dajia　　dou yong de　bucuo　de　shu gei　nimen
　　　everyone all　use　MASS NEG.bad NOM book give　you
　　　'that everyone finds useful to you.'

211 → ..可是 問題　你們　沒有　　　去　看,\
　　　keshi wenti　nimen meiyou　　qu　kan
　　　but　problem you　NEG.have　go　read
　　　'But the problem is you never read them.'

212　..都　　怪　　我們　<L2 salesman L2>,\
　　　dou　guai　women　　salesman
　　　all　　blame we　　　salesman
　　　'And you blame us'

213　..好像　　騙　　你們,\
　　　haoxiang pian　　nimen
　　　seem　　cheat　you
　　　'as if we cheated you'

214　..或　怎麼樣.\
　　　huo zenmeyang
　　　or　what
　　　'or what.'

215　...其實　　書　　是　你們 要 [1 自己 去 看　的 1].\
　　　qishi　　shu　shi　nimen yao　ziji　qu kan　de
　　　actually book C/F　you　want　self　go read　NOM
　　　'Actually, you yourself should read the books'

216 F: →                                            [1 問題是    有    去 1] 看  啊.-

                                           <u>wentishi</u>    you    qu    kan    a

                                           WENTISHI have    go    read    PT

                                           'The thing is I did read the books.'

217 S:        ...對    啊.-                                    ← agreement token

                dui    a

                right PT

                'Right'

218        ..[1 那    就    好    啦 1].-

                na    jiu    hao    la

                that JIU    good PT

                'Then that's fine.'

219 F: →    [1 <u>問題是</u> 1]    看    了    之後,\

                <u>wentishi</u>    kan    le    zhihou

                WENTISHI read    PF    after

                'The problem is that after reading the books'

220        ...所    得    跟    原本    預期 的    不    一樣.\

                suo    de    gen    yuanben    yuqi    de    bu    yiyang

                SUO    get    with    originally expect NOM NEG    same

                'I didn't get what I had anticipated.'

221 S:        ...當然        啦.\                                    ← concession

                dangran    la

                of.course    PT

                'That's for sure.'

In (5-9), both speakers make use of *wentishi* or its reduced form in the attempt to

defend their own stance while persuading the other. S at line 211 exploits *wenti*, the reduced form of *wentishi*, to preface his complaint that customers should not blame salespeople since the ineffectiveness of the recommended books in fact results from the customers' not spending time reading the books. In response to S's argument, F, taking a customer's role in this episode of interaction, also launches two *wentishi*-prefaced statements to counter to S's stance as a salesperson. As can be seen in S's responses to F's counterarguments, despite his efforts in maintaining her own epistemic primacy, S explicitly expresses a concessive agreement with speaker F immediately subsequent to the *wentishi* turns.

Similarly, although *shishishang* is not necessarily designed to confront the prior speaker viewpoint, this adverbial marker, along with the subsequent generalized statement, also upgrades the speaker's epistemic rights and thus prompts the interlocutor to agree. By means of this marker, both conversationalists' face can be saved. As illustrated in example (5-10) below, at first it is speaker B who puts forth the first assessment. As a second speaker in this context, A first responds in line 70 with an agreement token *dui* and then formulates a *shishishang*-prefaced generalization that most girls get married because of romantic love to elaborate on B's claim. Notice that speaker B, who is supposedly the primary speaker who initiates this topic, displays her agreement with A by means of an even more polite agreement marker *shi*, which may partly be attributed to the authority constructed by the use of *shishishang*.

(5-10)

64.　B:　　　...(0.74) (GULP)或許　　我　　進入^　婚姻,__

　　　　　　　　　　huoxu　　wo　　jinru　　hunyin

　　　　　　　　　　maybe　　I　　enter　　marriage

　　　　　　　　　　'Maybe when I get married,'

65.　　　　　...(0.37)我　　發現　　uh ,_

　　　　　　　　　wo　　fanxian　　uh

　　　　　　　　　I　　discover　　PT

　　　　　　　　　'I'll find that'

66.　　　　　...uh (0.53)<Marc 愛情　　很　　重要 Marc>.＼

　　　　　　　uh　　　aiqing　　hen　　zhongyao

　　　　　　　PT　　　love　　very　　important

　　　　　　　'well, love is important.'

67.　　　　　...(0.47)但是　　呢,_

　　　　　　danshi　　ne

　　　　　　but　　　PT

　　　　　　'But'

68.　　　　　...(0.31)它　不是　　一　　個　<@Marc 持續　的　　東西 Marc@>.\

　　　　　　　ta　bushi　yi　ge　　　　chixu　de　　dongxi

　　　　　　　it　NEG.C/F one CL　　　　constant NOM stuff

　　　　　　　'It's not something that will last forever.'

69.　　　　　..[@@@].

70.　A:　　　..[對＝(0.28)]._　　　　　　　　　　← agreement token

　　　　　dui

　　　　　right

　　　　　'Yeah.'

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71.            ..因為,__

           yinwei

           because

           'Because'

72.  →     ..＜Marc <u>事實上</u> Marc＞ hoN,_

                <u>shishishang</u>      hoN

                SHISHISHANG PT

                'in fact,'

73.            ...這　個(0.30) 結(level tone)婚　　之前,_

           zhe ge        jie(leveltone)hun   zhiqian

           This CL      get.married      before

           'before you get married.'

74.            ..可能　　　是=_

           keneng    shi=

           maybe     C/F

           'perhaps'

75.            ..我　　想^　大部分 的　　女孩　是　　因為^　愛情　才　會

           wo  xiang  dabufen de     nuhai shi   yinwei aiqing cai  hui

           I   think    most    NOM girl   C/F   because love   CAI will

           結婚.\

           jiehung

           get.married

           'I think most girls get married because of love.'

76. B:     ..是.\                                    ← agreement token

        shi

        C/F

        'Yes.'


　　Whereas markers like *wentishi* and *shishishang* enhance the strength of one's argument in order to negotiate for endorsement, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*, on the other hand, prompt the prior speaker to make repair, confirmation or elaboration, so as to construct sufficient common grounds for mutual agreement. The non-cooperative response at the moment is formulated for the purpose of achieving a higher degree of social cooperation in the long run (cf. Heritage 2002; Stivers et al. 2011b). For example, the non-affiliative stance implied by M's use of *zheyang*(*zi*) at line 348 in (5-11) below may be one of reasons that lead to D's further account for the advice that he provides in lines 341 to 346. After D's explanation, M immediately confirms her full acceptance in lines 357-358.　By using this non-affiliative response token, the speaker can avoid from appearing as a subordinate participant who can only rely on the co-participant for new information and reasoning, and meanwhile actively determine or co-determine the boundary and organization of the ongoing interaction.


(5-11)

341 D:     [那    您=] 可能    要=,-                  ← advice

        na    nin   keneng   yao

        that   you   maybe   want

        'Then perhaps you have to'

342        ..heNh,\

          heNh

          PT

          'um'

343        ...跟=    醫師    講,\

          gen   yishi   jiang

          with   doctor   say

          'tell the doctor'

344        ..就   是   說,-

          jiu   shi   shuo

          JIU   C/F   COM

          'that'

345        ..您   的   問題   可能   是   在於=,-

          nin   de   wenti   keneng   shi   zaiyu=

          you   GEN problem   maybe   C/F   lie.in

        'Your problem perhaps lies in'

346        ..小孩子   發音    不   好.\

          xiaohaizi fayin    bu   hao

          child   pronunciation NEG good

        'your kid's pronunciation.'

347 H:    ..mhm.\

348 M: →   ..這樣子.\                            ← receipt of information

          zheyangzi

          ZHEYANGZI

          'Oh'

349 D:  ..因為    有    些   人,-                    ← account for the advice

yinwei   you   xie   ren

because  have  CL   person

'Because some people'

350  ..他  可能    覺--

ta   keneng   jue

he   maybe   jue

'may th-'

351  ..有    些    醫師    可能   會   認為   說,-

you   xie   yishi   keneng  hui  rengwei shuo

have  CL   doctor  maybe  will  think  COM

'Some doctors may think that'

352  ..ei?/

ei

PT

'oh?'

353  ..你  只   是   來   檢查    喉嚨   啊,-

ni   zhi  shi  lai   jiancha  houlong  a

you only  C/F  come  examine  throat   PT

'You come only to examine your throat.'

354  ..或者   是   說   小孩子  感冒 [這   種   情況].\

huozhe  shi  shuo  xiaohaizi ganmao zhe  zhong qingkuang

or     C/F  COM  child    cold  this  CL   situation

'Or it's just a case that your kid is simply under the weather.'

355 M:      [不是,\

           bushi

           NEG.C/F

           'No.'

356        我　是--]

           wo   shi

           I    C/F

           'I mean'

357        ..如果　我　去,\                    ← acceptance of the advice

           ruguo wo   qu

           if    I    go

           'If I go to the doctor,'

358        ..我　一定　會　跟　他　講　這　種　原<@因　的@>.\

           wo yiding  hui  gen  ta  jiang  zhe  zhong yuanyin  de

           I   must   will with  he  say   this  CL    reason   NOM

           'I will for sure mention this reason.'

In comparison, *shemeyisi* elicits the speaker's repair in a more explicit way. In so doing, the questioner, as noted in Chapter 4, can not only adopt an easier and less face-threatening way to deal with the trouble in the prior turn (Brown and Levinson 1987; Svennevig 2008), but also establish a common ground on which greater social cooperation between the co-interactants can be achieved (cf. Keisanen 2007 for also a more positive interpretation of the act of challenging the prior speaker in conversation). Consider example (5-12):

(5-12)

228. A: ..<L2 Christmas L2> 是不是　　　就　不　太　可能　　了

    christmas　　shi-bu-shi　　jiu　bu　tai　keneng　le

    Christmass　　C/F.NEG.C/F JIU　NEG too possible　CRS

是不是?\

shi-bu-shi

C/F.NEG.C/F

'She is not coming back this Christmas, is she?'

229. B: ..<L2 Christmas L2> 她　可能=,\

    christmas　　　ta　keneng

    Christmas　　she　maybe

'This Christmas. Maybe she'

230.   ..我們　　　是　要　　跟　小薇　說　叫 她 爸媽 不要

    women　shi　yao　　gen　xiaowei shuo　jiao　ta bama　buyao

    we　　　C/F　want　with　PN　　say　ask　she parents NEG.want

過去　　　了.\

guoqu　　le

go.over　CRS

'We plan to suggest Xiao-wei that she ask her parents not to go visiting

her.'

231. A: → ...什麼意思?\　　　　　　　　　　　　　← repair initiation

   shemeyisi

   SHEMEYISI

'what do you mean?'

232. B:  ..這樣　　她 可以 跟= 某人　　單獨 相處　　啊.\　← account

zheyang  ta keyi gen=  moren  dandu  xiangcu  a

this.way  she can  with  someone alone  be.together PT

'In that way, she can be with someone alone'

233. A:　..TSK--

234.　..這　她　　媽媽　要　過去　　看　她　　是不?\

zhe  ta  mama  yao  guoqu  kan  ta  shibu

this  she  mother  want go.over  see  she  C/F.NEG

'Her mother is going to visit her there, isn't she?'

235. B:　(0)對　啊._

dui  a

right PT

'Yeah.'

236.　..他們--

tamen

they

'They'

237.　..家　　往年　　　就　是,\

jia  wangnian  jiu  shi

home  previous.years.  JIU  C/F

'Their family always does so.'

238.　..<L2 Christmas L2> 的　時候 全　　家　　會 過去　　啊　或是,\

christmas  de  shihou qian  jia  hui guoqu  a  huoshi

Christmas  NOM time  entire  family will go.over PT  or

'The entire family will go visiting her or'

239.       ..妹妹       會    過去    陪      她    這樣.\

         meimei      hui    guoqu    pei      ta    zheyang

         younger.sister   will   go.over   accompany  she   like.this

         'her sister alone will go there to be with her.'

240. A:   (0)這樣.\

         zheyang

         ZHEYANG

         'Oh.'

241.       ..哎,\

         ai

         PT

         '(sigh)'

242.       ...嘖,\

         ze

         PT

         'well'

243.       ..[根本    不      需要].\                  ← agreement with B

         genben   bu    xuyao

         at.all    NEG   need

         'It's totally unnecessary.'

Prior to (5-12), A asks B about when *Xiaowei*, their mutual friend, will return to Taiwan and B answers that she will come back during summer break. In line 228, A further confirms whether *Xiaowei* will come back around Christmas. In response to A's question, B then mentions that they want *Xiaowei* to ask her parents not to visit her around Christmas. Unable to find the relevance, A then produces *shemeyisi* at line

231 to elicit further account from B. After B's clarification, A formulates a comment in line 243 *genben bu-xuyaoi* 'it's totally unnecessary (that *Xiaowei*'s parents visit her so often)' to show her agreement and affiliation with B's opinion. As manifested in the example above, although the use of *shemeyisi* may seem uncooperative in the local context, it can in fact contribute to the later mutual agreement between co-interactants to a higher degree (cf. Heritage 2002 for a similar discussion on the use of a disaffiliative *oh* in English).

To summarize, although the four shell-noun-based markers may appear to index an uncooperative stance in the course of interaction, they may be used to pursue the mutual agreement in the long run. They may serve this purpose by upgrading the speaker's authority to win over their interlocutor to their stance or by prompting the prior speaker to modify or clarify their utterances. Both ways facilitate the co-conversationalists' constant negotiation for greater social cooperation.

## 5.3. Chapter summary

The management of epistemic rights and responsibilities and the pursuit for social cooperation have been two important, and also interrelated, issues in the study of human interaction. In the discussions put forth above, we have, with the examples of the four shell-noun-based markers, explored various aspects of epistemic stance and different levels of social cooperation. We have explicated how each of the four markers is deployed to negotiate a particular set of epistemic rights and responsibilities in the course of interaction. We have also pointed out that the management of knowledge in conversation is closely knitted with the pursuit for social cooperation, which is a constantly negotiating process rather than a mono-directional pro-social action. Moreover, as we have argued, although the

majority of the markers are designed to enact a non-cooperative stance, they are in fact intended to manage both the speaker's and the addressee's face and to facilitate the achievement of greater agreement. All of the above have lucidly manifested how language works sophisticatedly as a social action.

# Chapter 6

# Conclusion

This chapter sets out to summarize the findings of this research (section 6.1) and to identify possible directions for future research (section 6.2).

## 6.1. Recapitulation

By means of this study, we have advanced the understanding of two major topics: Language as social action in general and the use shell nouns in Chinese in particular. We have inspected how four shell-noun-based markers are employed in Mandarin conversation and shown how their deployment affects the process of interaction and reflects the interactive concerns of conversation participants. More specifically, we have in Chapters 3 to 5 delved into the use of Chinese shell nouns in support of social actions at different levels.

In Chapter 3, we made use of four noun-pattern combinations to illustrate different types of shell-noun constructions in Mandarin Chinese: *Wentishi* (N-*be*-cl), *zheyang*(*zi*) (*th*-N), *shishishang* (N-*shang*) and *shemeyisi* (*wh*-N). We showcased that both shell-noun constructions that are listed (e.g. N-*be*-cl and *th*-N) and not listed (e.g. N-*shang* and *wh*-N) in Schmid (2000) can help trigger the co-interpretation of the noun and a particular piece of propositional information in the linguistic context (cf. Schmid 2000).

By examining these shell-noun-based markers in Chinese conversations, we

further uncovered a number of complexities in the use of shell nouns in spoken interaction. First, shell nouns and shell content can be constructed by different speakers in different turns (e.g. *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*). It points to the fact that the functioning of shell nouns not only is cognitive, but can also be collaborative. Second, shell nouns can be embedded in the shell content, as have been shown in the example of *shishishang*. Third, nouns with peculiar semantic properties (e.g. *yisi* 'meaning') can co-activate more than one proposition (cf. Schmid 2000). These findings not only problematize some aspects of Schmid's (2000) definition of shell nouns, but also reflect certain characteristics of spoken interaction and of the Chinese language.

More importantly, we also identified the preference of each noun-construction combination for particular positions of a turn. All the four combinations can be used turn-initially, but only *shemeyisi* is found to occur turn-finally. While *wentishi* and *shishishang* prefer the turn-medial position, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* often occupy an individual turn by themselves. This pattern of distribution manifests the correlation between the use of certain linguistic devices and the management of turns and between language and turn-taking as one of the central parts of social action

After having examined the structural distribution of the four shell-content complexes, we analyzed how they, as a prefabricated unit, function to serve certain interactional ends. In particular, *wentishi* is designed to introduce new and contrasting information into the discourse, so as to adjust the assumption implied in the prior utterance or the prior turn. The projected information is mostly based on the speaker's personal experience, feeling or reasoning. Frequently found to co-occur with lexico-grammatical patterns that index high generality such as plural pronouns, adverbs of commonality and conditionals, *shishishang*, in comparison, often marks a generalized statement which can enhance the speaker's argument while, to some

extent, establishing the solidarity between speaker and hearer. As for *zheyang*(*zi*), in addition to its function as a response token, it can also co-construct the boundary of the ongoing interaction. Finally, speakers' use of the wh-interrogative *shemeyisi* can prompt the prior speaker to repair or reformulate his own words. This question enables the speaker to solve the interactional problem with an easier, less face-threatening solution.

Apart from their functions, we also revealed the interactional context of these expressions, i.e. to what action they are employed to respond and how their co-conversationalist responds to the turn embedded with these expressions. We have shown that the use of these markers is not only motivated by the context (i.e. responding to a certain kind of prior turn), but also consequential to the context (i.e. motivating particular responses from the hearer).

Based on the analysis presented in Chapter 4, we further claimed in Chapter 5 that the four shell-noun-based markers are indexical of particular epistemic and affective stances and are greatly involved in the management of knowledge and the achievement of social cooperation. Following the taxonomy put forth by Stivers et al. (2011b), we discussed in section 5.1 how conversationalists use the four markers to construct and co-construct their epistemic stance with respect to three different but related dimensions: Epistemic access, epistemic primacy and epistemic responsibility.

In terms of epistemic access, speakers can present themselves as knowing or informed of certain information by means of *wentishi* and *shishishang* and as not knowing or uninformed with the use of *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi*. Meanwhile, the speaker, via these markers, can also characterize the hearer as informed or uninformed. While the use of *wentishi* suggests that the hearer may not be knowledgeable about the forthcoming information, the rest of the markers treat the co-conversationalist as informed.

In addition to whether they have access to a peculiar piece of knowledge, speakers can also and oftentimes do express how certain they are about the knowledge. Each of the four markers represents a particular spot on the continuum of degree of certainty. *Shishishang* indexes the strongest degree of certainty, inasmuch as it implies that both speaker and hearer should be able to access to this information. *Wentishi* also expresses a strong degree of certainty, since the information mostly falls within the speaker's own territory of information. In contrast, *zheyang*(*zi*) and *shemeyisi* indicates the lower commitment to the message at issue. The former is often formulated with a final particle to seek confirmation, while the latter is itself a wh-question, eliciting the interlocutor's repair or account.

The second element of epistemic stance that speakers often take into concern is the issue of epistemic primacy, i.e. their relative right or authority over the knowledge. We argued that all of the four markers are formulated to claim or upgrade one's primacy, albeit in different ways. As the primary information provider, speakers may utilize *wentishi* to introduce more subjective information or *shishishang* to index a generalization; both strategies help speakers to claim their own epistemic primacy. On the other hand, when the current speaker is the information recipient, he may exploit *zheyang*(*zi*) or *shemeyisi* to pose a doubt or challenge to the information giver. In so doing, the current speaker upgrades his own primacy by resisting from immediately acknowledging the asymmetry in their knowledge state. That is, the second speaker does not simply receive the information without any agency; he, as a participant in the ongoing interaction, can take a role in constructing the knowledge (Heritage 2002).

Lastly, as a social actor, conversationalists not only have rights, but also need to take responsibility; as a consequence, speakers often make use of particular linguistic devices to disclaim their responsibility. We proposed that the four shell-noun-based markers all serve to objectivize or impersonalize the related proposition. By doing so,

the speaker can distance himself from committing to the information. Meanwhile, he may also suggest that his hearer take responsibility for knowing, confirming or repairing the message that both of the interactants are focusing on at the moment.

Via this research, we have contributed to the study of knowledge in at least three ways. First, following Heritage (2012), we distinguished between epistemic status, i.e. how much the speaker really knows about certain information, and epistemic stance, i.e. how knowledgeable or informed the speaker presents himself to be. Linguistic devices are not only reflective of one's cognitive state, but also effective in shaping one's social image. Second, we suggested that epistemic stance per se is multifaceted. Speakers can position themselves in relation to a message with respect to various but related dimensions of it. Third, we supported the idea that stance is not only subjective, but very much intersubjective. Both the speaker and hearer have rights over and responsibilities for a particular piece of knowledge and thus constantly negotiate and co-construct their stance toward it. When one party is taking a stance, the other one needs to be taken into account.

In section 5.2, we further pointed out that these markers of epistemic stance also take part in the interactants' collaborative effort for social cooperation. Each expression has its own effect to the structural level of cooperation, i.e. alignment, and the affective level of cooperation, i.e. affiliation. Despite the fact that these markers at first glance tend to express an uncooperative stance, they are, as we have argued, designed to achieve a more dynamic and symmetrical kind of cooperation. They enable the conversationalists to negotiate over "who agrees with whom" (Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Schegloff 1996a) and to fulfill their need for face (Goffman 1967).

In this thesis, we have delved into how linguistic expressions such as shell nouns can be deployed in and as a variety of social action from turn-taking to stance-taking.

By this investigation, we have manifested that language cannot be reduced to a fixed mental system; rather, it is dynamic and social, designed to deal with all the complexities and contingencies in both the macro- and micro-interactional contexts.

## 6.2. Future studies

For future research, there are a number of directions that can be further pursued. With respect to the study of shell nouns, although the current research is corpus-based, it is more of a qualitative and illustrative study. Accordingly, more quantitatively oriented or larger scope research can be conducted to examine the broader tendency of their use in spoken discourse. Different kinds of potential shell nouns and shell-noun constructions can be included in future research. For example, the current study did not investigate patterns that tend to occur at the clause-final position like noun-modifying constructions in Mandarin Chinese, e.g. *de-yisi* 'the meaning of' (cf. Hsieh 2010, 2011a); it will be interesting to see if the structural characteristic will lead to any different distributional patterns or pragmatic functions. Also, how the use of shell nouns interacts with other resources such as gestures and intonation patterns will be a research direction worth pursuing (cf. Hayashi 2003; Keevallik 2010.)

Further, studies comparing the uses of shell nouns in different languages and across different genres can be done to test if our analysis is applicable. Although this research made use of spoken data in Mandarin, we did not explicitly identify the similarities and differences between shell nouns in Mandarin and English and between those utilized in spoken language and written language. It is worthwhile to investigate if and how cultural values, typological features, and text types influence the deployment of shell nouns.

In terms of the exploration of language as social action, there are also several

potential issues for future research. First, we found in our data that the use of certain linguistic devices like *wentishi* can shape or frame the context. How particular expressions contextualize the ongoing interaction and what kind of frame can they set up for subsequent turns call for more inspection. Second, as we discussed in Chapter 5, epistemic stance can be further decomposed into different facets. Different linguistic resources for indexing epistemic stance can be investigated to see if our framework needs further modification or can also be found in the use of other expressions. Finally, future researchers can try to uncover what other potential social activities in which these four expressions and other shell-noun-related markers are involved. It will be a great contribution if one can discover other aspects of language as social action.

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