

Nonverbal Affiliative Phenomena in Mandarin Chinese Conversation

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Abstract:

Based on naturally occurring audio-video data collected from university campus settings, this study has identified four nonverbal actions $\frac{3}{4}$ *zhùshì* “gaze”, *diǎntóu* “head nods”, *wēixiào* “gentle smile” and *shǒuchù* “hand touch” employed by Mandarin Chinese speakers in their interpersonal communication. Detailed data analysis and discussion reveal how Mandarin Chinese speakers manage their affiliation and attachment nonverbally with the co-participants in conversations. Finally, the significance of the study is discussed.

Key Words: affiliation, Chinese communication, conversation analysis, nonverbal communication

1. Introduction

This paper will explain how Mandarin Chinese speakers nonverbally express affiliation and involvement in interaction. Affiliation refers to “the tendency to associate with others in general” (Wright, 1999:11) and from our point of view makes a display of “sameness” or solidarity with *zìjǐrén* “insiders” rather than expression of distance or indifference. Involvement means shared attention and focus. Both affiliation and involvement indicate engagement in the activity.

In this study, nonverbal affiliative devices are nonverbal actions (NVAs) like *zhùshì* “gaze”, *tóushì* “head gestures”, *wēixiào* “gentle smile”, *shǒuchù* “touch”, as well as *biǎoqíng* “facial expressions” participants use to demonstrate their connection and closeness to each other. Two concepts are important to the discussion. First, engagement, proposed by Goodwin (1981:10), refers to the explicit verbal and nonverbal display of mutual orientation and co-participation of speaking party (SP) and listening party (LP) in interaction. Second, involvement, according to Goffman (1963:43), refers to “the capacity of an individual to give, or withhold from giving, his concerted attention to some activity at hand – a solitary task, a conversation, a collaborative work effort”. Engagement and involvement, either verbal or nonverbal or both, displayed by SP and LP in talk-in-interaction present their emotional status and level of participation. Nonverbal interactional engagement and involvement also

integrate with talk to display affiliation. The audio and video data in this study show that Mandarin conversation participants tend to be *Other*-oriented and commit themselves verbally and/or nonverbally to the current interaction. Every interaction they undertake with *zìjǐ rén* “insiders” provides an opportunity to enhance their connection and affiliation with one another and deepens mutual (possibly life-long) friendships (Anderson, Martin & Zhong, 1998:121)[P1].

The preference for long-term social connection among the Chinese results from the minimal population mobility and their strong sense of identity gained from their cultural *gēn* “roots”. From cradle to grave, many Chinese live their lives in the same place and display strong orientation to their connection to their *gēn* “roots”, even when they travel. This is best expressed in the Chinese idiom: *Yè luò guī gēn* “the falling leaves settle on the roots”[2]. Thus they have to keep weaving, maintaining and updating their social network (see 2). Whenever they have potential difficulties, members of their social network (e.g. their parents, relatives, colleagues and friends) care for them and go to their aid, which makes them socially confident and committed to one another. Gudykunst & Lee (2001:77) point out that:

in collectivistic cultures, in contrast, individuals tend to learn collectivistic values (e.g. harmony) and to think about themselves as interconnected with other members of their intergroups (e.g., they tend to develop interdependent self-construals).

They continue that “individuals who emphasize interdependent self-construals view their communications as being based on the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of those with whom they are connected” (ibid., p. 79). As there is a great degree of perceived physical or psychological closeness between SP and LP in interaction, it is important to demonstrate strong affiliation and high involvement. Mandarin interaction is more than just the talk and is an interactive process in which they establish and renew mutual affiliation and strengthen connection. Li, et al. (2001) find the same emphasis on relationship in their study of Chinese conversational management and involvement strategies in business negotiation with the British. They observe a Chinese participant of junior position displays high verbal involvement in the interaction and provides enthusiastic support of talk by another Chinese participant of senior position. To add to their observation, I focus more on the role of NVAs than that of verbal actions (VAs) contributing to high involvement and full engagement and displaying strong affiliation in Mandarin conversation.

Although strong affiliation and high involvement are embodied and displayed in the participants’ VAs and NVAs, NVAs present special properties. NVAs can, to some degree, contribute more social meanings than VAs in interaction. This is explained by McNeill (1992:19):

...the linear-segmented character of language is a property that arises because language is undimensional while meanings are multidimensional. Language can only vary along the single dimension

of time – phonemes, words, phrases, sentences, discourse: at all levels, language depends on variations along this one axis of time. This restriction forces language to break meaning complexes into segments and to reconstruct multidimensional meanings by combining the segments in time.

He then continues to comment on gesture in relation to language. “Gestures are different in every way. This is because they are themselves multidimensional and present meaning complexes without undergoing segmentation or linearization” (McNeill, 1992:19). He argues that gesture is a richer source of information and meaning because of its multiple dimensions.

NVAs seem to contribute more than VAs to the strong affiliation and high involvement embedded in Mandarin interaction. Indeed,[\[P2\]](#) the NVAs executed by SP not only overlay each other and overlay VAs accomplished by the same person, but they also overlap LP’s NVAs and VAs. Further, I have demonstrated that NVAs of one participant can also exert influence on and regulate VAs and NVAs of another participant in interaction, functioning as turn-yielding, turn up-taking, and turn-maintaining signals (Yang, 2003[\[P3\]](#)). Therefore, studies of NVAs together with VAs can reveal a fuller view of interaction. In the same way, studies of the NVAs related to strong affiliation and high involvement can add to our insight into Mandarin speakers’ need for building and maintaining an appropriate social network within which to survive.[\[P4\]](#)

In Western research, the most common display of full engagement and high involvement representing strong affiliation is reflected in the use of nonverbal immediacy cues like eye behaviours, smiling, touch and head nodding (Richmond, McCroskey & Payne, 1987:210)[\[P5\]](#). Similarly, Mandarin participants execute NVAs like *zhùshì* “gaze”, *tóushì* “head gestures”, *wēixiào* “gentle smiles” and *shǒuchù* “touch” to closely affiliate themselves with other members of the group. As will be seen in the following discussion, nonverbal engagement and involvement are part of the speaking and listening roles.

However, it should be noted that because of the basic socio-cultural differences between individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1990) as well as low-context culture and high-context culture (Hall, 1976), the implication emitted from some of NVAs of Mandarin speakers is culture-specific and differs in essence from other language speakers, such as English speakers (Yang, 2003). This paper will focus on the affiliative phenomena in Mandarin Chinese nonverbal interaction. I will first discuss network of interpersonal relationships in Chinese context, then touch upon research methodology, under which transcription notations and procedures (participants, data collection and data analysis) are described,[\[P6\]](#) and further discuss how Mandarin

Chinese speaker employ affiliative style of nonverbal communication in talk-in-interaction. [\[MUL7\]](#)

2. Network of Chinese Interpersonal Relationships

Members of collectivist societies work to build social networks of interpersonal relationships, maintain and upgrade them as times go by. In such social networks, the Mandarin Chinese interpersonal relationships rely heavily on family and social ties, which function as cornerstones of their interpersonal relationships (Yang, 1996). The guiding principle underlying the Mandarin Chinese interpersonal relationships can be best described in a saying: *Zài jiā kào fùmǔ, zài wài kào péngyǒu* “You rely on your parents at home and on your friends when away from home”. Such close family and social ties are presented in Figure -1 below.

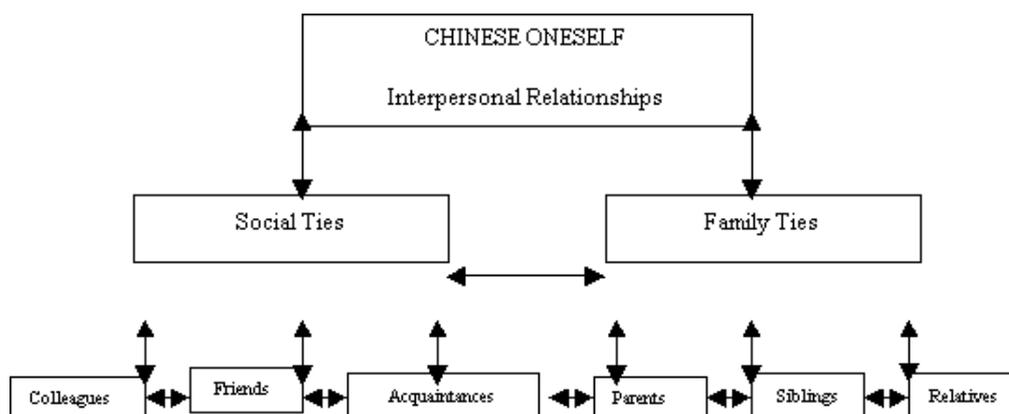


Figure-1: Social Network of Mandarin Chinese Interpersonal Relationships

Family and social ties play a crucial role in Mandarin interpersonal relationships. First, social ties may extend to colleagues, friends and acquaintances. Typically, most people in China live and work in one place for long periods, as did their parents, and as they grow they continue their social network of interpersonal relationships through school and work. The friend-making process takes years and depends on whether the other party is “qualified” enough to be a friend who is ready to come to his/her aid when in need. A real friend is willing to share hardships and joys with the rest of the group. Triandis (1990:60) points out that “the emphasis within the ingroup is on sharing, concern for ingroup members correspondence of outcomes with ingroup members, common fate, acceptance control by the ingroup, and importance of proper action”. Ingroup membership is overtly maintained by visiting and exchanging gifts on special occasions. Friendships between families set up lifelong obligations and extend to the next generations. Second, family ties extend part of immediate family members

to relatives. Parents are responsible for being social and moral role models for the younger generations. Children must consult their parents and respect them. Confucius (1994:56) said, *Shì fùmǔ jǐ jiǎn. Jiàn zhì bù cóng, yòu jìng bù wěi, láo er bǐ yuàn* “In serving one’s parents, one should dissuade them from doing wrong in the gentlest way. When the advice is ignored, one should remain reverent and obedient. One should not complain even when one laden with anxiety.” Confucian teachings reflect the Chinese parent-child relationships.

The social network of Mandarin Chinese interpersonal relationships presented in Figure-1 is largely *zìjǐrén* “insiders” bound and monoculture based. People within such social network find themselves prepared for interaction with others from the same cultural background, but possibly “unprepared for the cultural expectations placed on them to enter new social groups and to gather a diverse network of friends” (Hornsey & Gallois, 1998:324). They build their social network not for its own sake but for one’s next step in life’s path. As Gabrenya & Hwang (1996:311) comment, “group memberships involving education, occupation, and residence will provide new opportunity for expanding this network”. Terms like “relation-oriented personalism” or “relational personalism” (ibid.) are used to describe the prototypes of the Chinese practice of social interaction (Yang, 1996). As members of a collectivist society, Mandarin Chinese speakers package their verbal and nonverbal behaviour in relation to their recipients. They have to make appropriate judgments about participants in interaction so they can approach them in a mutually acceptable manner.

3. Research methodology

This study used conversation analysis (henceforth CA) approach with qualitative method to analyze aspects of nonverbal communication process in natural Mandarin Chinese interaction with emphasis on the integration of NVAs[P8] into VAs[P9]. This method can reveal “the subtly contexted nature of conversational interaction as well as the sorts of turn by turn displays of understanding and repair that have been effectively used in conversation analysis” (Potter, 1997:149). But quantitative methods like “content analysis which involves the kind of coding and counting” (ibid.) may hinder representation of such a natural picture. Naturally occurring video data will be fully transcribed to provide a true picture of what is happening in the real social interaction settings.

Compared with the approach of social psychologists, CA researchers are engaged in more down-to-earth job of data analysis of conversation fragments. As for methodological approach in conversational analysis, Have (1986) notes:

[P10]But a CA report will not generally have an a priori discussion of the literature to formulate hypotheses, hardly any details about research situations or subjects researched, no descriptions of sampling

techniques or coding procedures, no testing and no statistics. Instead, the reader is confronted with a detailed discussion of transcriptions of recordings of (mostly verbal) interaction in terms of the 'devices' used by its participants.

The current project will use CA research method stated above and substantially focus on the nonverbal communication between conversation participants. Based on careful and repeated observations of natural data, I will study the sequential organization of Mandarin interaction contributed to by dynamic nonverbal actions in particular, thus revealing nonverbal affiliative phenomena in Mandarin Chinese conversation and in turn the cultural values and norms reflected in the interaction process.

3.1. Transcription Notations

[P11]

As this study focuses on the nonverbal [P12] aspects of Mandarin Chinese interaction, with special emphasis on gaze and gesture, I made full use of the notational symbols available and also designed others. Apart from detailed verbal utterance transcription symbols, Jefferson (see Schiffrin, 1994:424-432 and Atkinson & Heritage, 1984:ix-xvi) has provided a sound transcription system concerning gaze, gestures and applause studies. Some of Schiffrin's (1994) notational symbols were used in my audio and video data transcription. However, some symbols which I think are inadequate were revised or created to better represent non-verbal information. Take encoding gaze in talk for example, a line above the utterance indicates that SP [P13] is gazing toward LP [P14]. The absence of a line indicates lack of gaze. Dots mark gaze transition during talk-in-interaction. Dots before the line mark the transition movement from non-gaze to gaze and those immediately after the line mark the transition movement from gaze to non-gaze. The point where gaze reaches the other is marked with an "X". A line below the utterance indicates that LP [P15] is gazing toward SP [P16]. The nonverbal actions are always in the shaded areas. The idea of indicating different layers of nonverbal integration and overlapping is motivated by Rieschild (1996). Some transcription conventions also follow those that were used in Li & Thompson (1981), because they provide some symbols applicable to the some auxiliary and category words in Chinese. Part of them can be found in use by Chen (1996).

3.2. [P17] Procedures

In the following section, I will present background information of the participants and describe the procedures in which audio and visual data were collected and analysed, including the equipment used to collect and analyse such data and the notational system used to study the data.

3.2.1. [P18] Participants

Eighteen dyads and one triad from four universities [Capital Normal University (CNU), Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA), and Graduate School of University of Science and Technology of China (GSUSTC) in Beijing in Dec 1998 and Macquarie University (MU) in Oct 2001] participated in the project and were recruited on a voluntary basis. Twelve dyads and one triad were same sex and six dyads were mixed sex (more details see Yang, 2003). In this exclusive study of nonverbal affiliation of Mandarin Chinese speakers in talk-in-interaction, I selected eleven conversation fragments by three dyads and one triad. Two dyads (one of the same sex and the other of different sex), of similar age in their early 20s, come from CNU and study BA in English language and literature in their second year with two dyads. The third dyad of different sex come from MU, with one in her late 30s studying postgraduate diploma in accounting and the other in his early 30s pursuing a Ph D in education. The triad were academic staff from GSUSTC and his friends with university degrees. Each conversation dyad and triad was self-selected based on the participants' familiarity with their partners and all participants speak fluent and standard Mandarin Chinese.

[\[P19\]](#)

3.2.2. [\[P20\]](#) Data Collection

Before collecting data, I informed participants of the general study purpose and the audio/video recording. I told them that this study was designed to investigate the nature and meanings of a wide range of nonverbal communication norms used among Mandarin speakers in P. R. China and examine the role played by nonverbal communication in signalling relationships between the participants. Those who agreed to participate in the project read and signed *Information And Consent Form* [\[3\]](#) and they each kept a copy.

The participants were asked to sit comfortably close to each other, with the video camera placed about 2 meters away on a tripod. Having been told not to prepare their topics, all participants just felt free to choose topics of their own interest or whatever came into their mind at that moment. Some dyads seemed to be able to target their topics more quickly than others and only one pair were initially not sure of what to talk about, but they soon found a topic. As time went by, they did not show too much awareness of being videoed. Their facial expressions and manners were natural and relaxed. Each conversation episode lasted for about 10-15 minutes. But in this study, only conversation episodes of 5 – 10 seconds are analysed for illustration as indicated in each fragment.

3.2.3. Data Analysis [\[P21\]](#)

Availability of better facilities has made it possible to analyse video data more accurately and efficiently. A video capture card (FlyVideo' 98) and an MS movie maker were available for video data analysis and presentation. I installed the video capture card (VCC) into the PCI slot of the computer. With this VCC, both still and full motion and live video images could be captured from a VCR (VHS) or handycam and viewed on the computer. They could be saved as AVI files and played back at desired speed. The pictures could also be snapshot to clipboard and copied, pasted and saved as MS word documents (see Picture-1, Picture-2 and Picture-3). As the sound quality was not good enough, I turned to the MS movie maker with the same VCC used to capture audio and video and it captured both sounds and pictures well. The video could be played frame by frame up to 15-30 frames per second. This facility could capture what was happening within 0.04 second and this made it possible to analyse fine details of sequential organization of nonverbal actions. See Figure-2 and Pictures-1, -2 and -3 for examples of timing and snapshot production.



Figure-2: Time Intervals between Nonverbal Actions



Picture-1: Before the speaker's (right) gaze

Picture-2: During the speaker's gaze

Picture-3: After the speaker's gaze

In the data analysis, I could determine and show (where necessary) how long eye-contact or gaze-away/down lasts. The time for gaze and gaze-away/down is calculated to start from the moment when such action moves into the boundary between the previous and present state and end from the moment when it moves into the boundary between the present state to the next. Take Picture-1, Picture-2 and Picture-3 for example, it takes 0.28 second for the speaker to move from non-gaze into gaze state and another 0.04 second to move from gaze into non-gaze state. His gazing time lasts 0.32 second.

4. Nonverbal Affiliative Phenomena in Mandarin Chinese Talk-in-Interaction

[\[P22\]](#)

Detailed data analysis and step-by-step examination of sequential organization of reveal how Mandarin Chinese speakers manage their affiliation and attachment nonverbally with the co-participants in conversations. Four nonverbal actions $\frac{3}{4}$ *zhùshì* “gaze”, *diǎntóu* “head nods”, *wēxiào* “gentle smile” and *shǒuchù* “hand touch” have been identified in Mandarin Chinese talk-in-interaction.

4.1. *Zhùshì* “Gaze”

In dyadic conversation, one party gazes at the other party to receive or seek information (Argyle, 1972:303). In Mandarin interaction, *zhùshì* “gaze” is primarily important for both SP and LP, but it plays a different role for each. SP can direct *zhùshì* “gaze” at LP indicating that LP is the person currently spoken to, to monitor whether LP is paying attention to SP, to prepare to exit turns and to hand over the floor to the potential next-turn speaker. LP uses *zhùshì* “gaze” to signal that the channel is open (ibid.). Further, LP indicates that he/she is paying attention to SP as a co-participant in interaction and also shows interest in the current talk.

Argyle & Dean (1972:302-304) and Leathers (1997:54-60) both discuss eye behaviours based on the relevant research in the West and explain the important communicative functions (see Table-1). It is not my intention to cover all these functions here, but I want to point out that the functions of eye behaviour have one common point in that they all centre around affiliation and involvement in the interaction and such affiliative behaviour is seen in both monitoring and regulatory processes of the conversation.

Table-1: Communicative Functions of Eye Behaviours

Argyle and Dean (1972)	Leathers (1997)
Information-seeking	Indicate degrees of attentiveness, interest, and arousal
Signalling that the channel is open	Help initiate and sustain intimate relationships
Concealment and exhibitionism	Influence attitude change and persuasion
Establishment and recognition of social relationship	Regulate interaction
The affiliative-conflict theory	Communicate emotion
	Define power and status relationships
	Assume a central role in impression management

Although Argyle & Dean (1972) and Leathers (1997:54-60) use the general term ‘eye behaviour’, in this study I narrow it down to *zhùshì* “gaze”, which [P23] is one of the most useful NVAs LP uses to assist in providing SP with feedback and adjustment. The significance of *zhùshì* “gaze” is clear in contrast to *bù zhùshì* “non-gaze”, which can further be classified into “gaze-away” and “gaze-down” (Yang, 2003 [P24]).

Analysis of the Mandarin data showed that the recipient can also execute *zhùshì* “gaze” to indicate the request for speaker change, eagerness to participate in the current talk and involvement in interaction with SP. SP uses *bù zhùshì* “non-gaze” at the beginning of the turn to organize what to say next (Line 2, Fragment-1), but later returns *zhùshì* “gaze” to LP to monitor or gain feedback. Most often, LP maintains the state of *zhùshì* “gaze” for co-participation and to monitor the possible transition relevant places (TRPs). By and large, *zhùshì* “gaze” is one of the essential nonverbal actions accomplished by LP in his/her listening role.

This raises the issue of cultural expression of the listening role. Ability to listen, especially attentively, is significant in Chinese communication. Listening-centredness is emphasized in the family situation, in classrooms, at meetings, in workplaces and on many other occasions. Listening role is an important part of Chinese NVC. Chinese speakers are trained to be able to listen in their childhood and they later learn how important it is to listen with full attention. Gao, et al. (1996:286) argue that “Chinese communication appears to be ‘passive’ in speaking, but it emphasizes ‘activeness’ in listening”. While paying attention to SP, LP is not only directing *zhù shì* “gaze”, but also thinking actively and working out appropriate ways to be engaged and involved in the current interaction. The next three sections will explain how Mandarin participants execute *zhùshì* “gaze” to implement interactive attentiveness, conduct mutual monitoring and regulate interaction in conversations [P25].

4.1.1.1. Interactive **Attentiveness**

In dyadic conversations, *zhùshì* “gaze” executed by SP can serve different interactive and pragmatic functions from that executed by LP. SP can use *zhùshì* “gaze” to check LP’s attention and signal co-presence, while LP can maintain the state of *zhùshì* “gaze” displaying full attention to and visual engagement with what SP is talking about.

Fragment-1 (P1; F1-1; 12/1998; CNU; F/F)

Situation: *Zhōu* (left) and *Zhāng* (right) are classmates of the same age. *Zhōu* tells *Zhāng* what she chatted with one of her neighbours. And *Zhāng* tells *Zhōu* that the latter mistakes Chinese *Dāngdài* (a business name) for Korean Hyundai (a car brand).

Picture-4

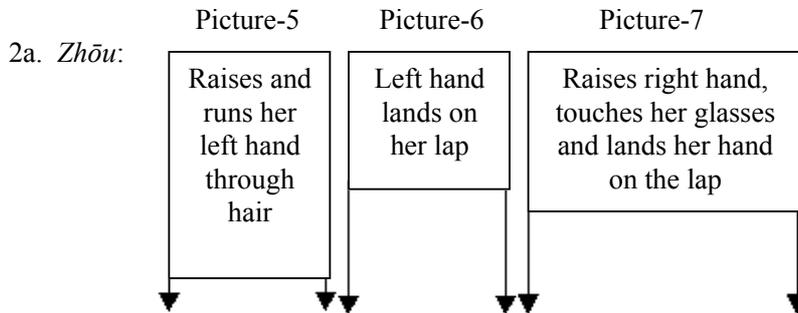
1a. *Zhōu*:

Starts to gaze away

1b. *Zhōu*: _____/_____ /

1. Zhōu: **Wǒ nà tiān gēn jiēfāng liáo.tiān**,(..)
 I that day with neighbour chat
 “That day I chatted with my neighbour”

® 1c. Zhāng: _____



2b. Zhōu: / _____ / ...x _____ ... / _____ /

2. Zhōu: **ránhòu tā jiù shuō:: nà: gè: (0.3) shénmō**(.),
 then he then say that CL what
 “and then he talked about something “

® 2c. Zhāng: _____

Picture-8

Raises her left hand, opens the palm, holds it and looks at her fingers

- 3a. Zhōu:
 3b. Zhōu:
 3. Zhōu: **bǐrúshuō (0.3) hǎo de gōngsī, (0.2) shénmō**(.)
 for example good PRE-M company what
 “some good companies such as”

® 3c. Zhāng: _____



Picture-4



Picture-5



Picture-6



Picture-7



Picture-8

Symbols used in this fragment:

/__ / Looking to the right in relation to the addressee.

Zhōu firstly makes a “pre-announcement” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998:48)[P26] by introducing the upcoming topic with the stressed *liáo:tiān* “chat”. *Zhōu* assumes that *Zhāng* does not know what she and her neighbour talked about. Thus *Zhōu*’s pre-announcement takes on a “telling format”. Initially, *Zhōu* gazes at *Zhāng* to check that she is attending to her speakership (Line 1b). Then *Zhōu* looks downwards to the right with two self-adaptors in preparing for the telling. She runs her left hand over her hair (Picture-4) and then touches her glasses with her right hand (Picture-7). Between the two self-adaptors, *Zhōu* directs another brief *zhùshì* “gaze” at *Zhāng* (Picture-6) before focusing on her finger-counting visually and mentally.

When she raises the topic of conversation, e.g. her neighbour’ talk, in Line 2, she returns her *zhùshì* “gaze” to *Zhāng*, but finds herself uncertain about what to say. Her uncertainty is evident in the use of a pause filler *nà:gè*: “that”, with stretched first vowel, followed by 0.3-second pause and *shénmō* “what” (Line 2), an instance of word or idea search. *Zhōu* utters another *shénmō* “what” (Lines 3) in her word search and each time her search is facilitated by her absence of *zhùshì* “gaze” at *Zhāng*.

As a listener, *Zhāng* has been playing the typical ‘good listener’ role. She listens to *Zhōu*’s whole telling (Lines 1–3) displaying full physical attention. At first, she visually attends to *Zhōu*’s shift from *zhùshì* “gaze” to *bù zhùshì* “non-gaze” (Line 1b). While mentally engaged with *Zhōu*’s telling, *Zhāng* visually observes *Zhōu* performing two self-adaptors (Picture-5) and Picture-7) with a *zhùshì* “gaze” check (Picture-6) in between. Then she continues her visual orientation to *Zhōu*’s search for an expression. Throughout the talk, both *Zhāng* and *Zhōu* use *zhùshì* “gaze” to achieve the interactive attentiveness to each other. As *Zhōu* is the primary SP who takes on a telling form, she switches between *zhùshì* “gaze” to check LP’s orientation and *biānshì* “gaze-away” to organize her telling.

4.1.2. Mutual Monitoring

By looking at LP’s bodily poses and shifts, SP can monitor the effectiveness of interactions. This visual attention means SP has access to information about whether LP is attending, has a positive or negative response to what SP is saying or doing, and whether LP intends to take over the floor. This is obviously important as the interaction process is typically cooperative and optimally mutually oriented. When finding a negative response, SP can make appropriate changes in his/her talk to become more

cooperative (Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996:316-317). Such changes include use of different or flexible communication strategies, such as making the current talk short and moving on to the next task. This can be seen in the following fragment.

Fragment-2: [P/3; F/5; 10/01; MU; M/F]

Situation: *Zhào* (right) tells *Chén* (left) about his research project.

1a. *Zhào*: \ _____ \...x
 1. *Zhào*: **Yàngběn shì wǔwàn xuéshēng** (0.7)
 sample be 50,000 student
 "The sample is 50,000 students"
 1b. *Chén*: _____ **enn**

2a. *Zhào*: _____...
 2. *Zhào*: **xuéshēng, bāokuò jiā** (0.4) **jiāzhǎng**..
 student include pare parents
 "including pare.. parents"

②b. *Chén*: _____ ↕ ↕ ... ↘ _____ ↘...x
 ↑ ↑
 Picture-9

2c. *Chén*: _____
 Glances at the paper on her knee.

3a. *Zhào*: \ _____ \...x...
 3. *Zhào*: **bāokuò nàgè xuéxiào xíngzhèng bùmén**,
 include that school admin department
 "including that school administration department"
 3b. *Chén*: _____

Picture-10
 4a. *Zhào*: _____
 Glances at the paper on the table Glances at the paper on the table

④b. *Zhào*: ↘ ↘ ↘ ...x _____ ... ↘ ↘ ↘
 4. *Zhào*: **tā yǒu nà gè dàde nà gè yàngběn lai lai.. nà gè**
 it has that CL big that CL sample CL come come that CL
 "Such a large sample is used."

4c. *Chén*: _____

5. (0.8)

Picture-11
 6a. *Chén*: (Looks and points at the paper on her knee)
 6b. *Chén*: ↘ _____ ↘
 6. *Chén*: **Nà zěngmō jiù: kàn = zhè ge ?**
 that how just look this CL
 "Let's just look at this?"
 Glances at the paper on the table

7a. *Zhào*: ... \ _____ \... ↘ _____ ↘... (Looks at LP)

7b. Zhào: (Right hand on the cassette)
 7. Zhào: =*Hǎo. kěyǐ kāishǐ le shì.*
 good may start be
 “OK, let’s start.”

Symbols used in this fragment:

- ⚡ nodding his/her head for agreement/acknowledgement.
- ▼ casting his/her eyes down at the paper.



Picture-9



Picture-10



Picture-11

Zhào explains why he used a qualitative rather than quantitative research method. One of the reasons is that much work has been completed by others using quantitative methods with very large samples. When he comes to this point, he not only stresses the large number of subjects *wǔwàn* “50,000” (Line 1), but also shifts from *biānshì* “gaze-away” into *zhùshì* “gaze” at Chén in order to see her response. LP has been engaged in SP’s talking with full visual attention (Line 1b). To show her response to his emphasis on the large sample and his visual change to the state of *zhù shì* “gaze”, she murmurs with an acknowledgement marker *enn* followed by a few reinforcing *dǎntóu* “head nod”, which displays her attention, understanding and cooperation in the role of LP. Kendon (1990:82) points out that the speaker seems to direct his gaze “at those points in his discourse where he may well be expected to be looking for a response from his interlocuter, by which his subsequent behavior may be guided”, and the data in this fragment supports his claim. LP turns to the question paper on her knee and glances at it (see Picture-9) just for 0.70 second (Line 2b), but it is significant in this interaction.

Short as her *biānshì* “gaze-away” is, it obviously exerts immediate effect on the speaker, because he immediately cuts his talk short and ends the ongoing topic and moves onto a new one. Such is the effect that while still talking with LP gazing at him, he, subsequently shifts into *xiàshì* “gaze-down” for 0.44 second at the question paper on the table (see Picture-10). For the next 3.26 seconds, he continues with the same topic until he again turns his attention to the question paper for 0.32 second before a new task is initiated (see Picture-11). Each time his glance is shorter than the last. In fact, he is in such a hurry that he leaves his sentence unfinished (Line 4) before ending the current topic and proceeding to the next one. His utterance of *hǎo* “OK” (Line 7) overlaps her *zhè ge* “this” (Line 6) demonstrates his expression of cooperation as a result of SP monitoring. At the same time, LP’s change of state from *zhùshì* “gaze”

into *biānshì* “gaze-away” has significant effect on regulating interaction, which is the focus in the next section.

4.1.3. Regulating Interaction

Whether singly or mutually directional, gaze can be regulatory. SP’s brief *biānshì* “gaze-away” from LP before beginning a long utterance signals his/her “intentions and expectations” (Kendon, 1990:84), hoping to convey the message that the speaker is about to hold the floor, organize the telling. At the same time LP needs to pay attention so as not to miss the message. By gazing at SP at the outset of a long utterance, LP can make readily accessible comments and responses and can assist him/her to find out the appropriate slots to cut in and take over the floor. Kendon (1990:84-85) points out that in a sustained gaze with which long utterances are so often ended, SP can indicate to LP that the former is going to hand over the floor and take over the listening role.

Fragment-3: [P/3; F/8; 98/12; CNU; M/F]

Situation: *Wáng* (female) and *Qiáo* (male) are classmates of similar age. *Wáng* is telling *Qiáo* what happened between her and her teacher.

- 1a. *Wáng*: _____ ☺ _____ ☺
- ①1b. *Wáng*: ▼ _____ ▼ _____ ☺
- ①1c. *Wáng*: _____ ...x _____
1. *Wáng*: *Tā jiù guòlái le, > lǎoshī shuō < aiya, èr le jiù chī ba,* =
 he then come over teacher say EXCL hungry then eat BA
 “Then came over and said, ‘Oh, if you’re hungry, just eat’”
- 1d. *Qiáo*: _____
- 1e. *Qiáo*: ☺ _____ ☺
- 2a. *Wáng*: ☺ _____ ☺
- ②2b. *Wáng*: _____ ... ▼ _____ ▼ ...x _____
2. *Wáng*: =*búyào dǎng zhele, bǎ zhè gē xiàlái, ránhòu zài zhèer chī* =
 NEG cover this get this put down then in here eat
 “‘and don’t cover it up.’ I put it down and ate in here.”
- 2c. *Qiáo*: _____
- 3a. *Qiáo*: ☺ _____ ☺
- 3b. *Qiáo*: _____
3. *Qiáo*: =*nǐmén bānzhǔrèn?* =
 your class adviser
 “Is he your class adviser?”

Symbols used in this fragment:

▼ casting his/her eyes down.

☺ smiling.

☺ laughing

Kendon (1990) finds that speakers tend to look away at the beginning of an utterance as there is a need to plan his/her ideas or get organized. At the beginning of her long utterance in Line 1b, *Wáng* does not look at *Qiáo*, but looks downwards. By so doing, she succeeds in getting the beginning of her story organized and proceeding with her description of what happened next.

Kendon (1990:83) also maintains that “the glances that take place during the long utterance, perhaps are in the nature of ‘current control’”. After *Wáng* has her beginning part of her story-telling organized, she starts to return her *zhùshì* “gaze” to *Qiáo* (Lines 1c and 2b). Though not very long, *Wáng*’s *zhùshì* “gaze” occurs twice with the purpose of checking *Qiáo*’s feedback and controlling the situation. Before *Wáng* wants to hand over the speakership, she maintains a sustained *zhùshì* “gaze” at *Qiáo*. Aware of the turn-exit signal, *Qiáo* takes over the floor without delay.

4.2. *Tóushì* “Head gesture”

Tóushì “head gesture” is frequently observed in the data and is most often performed as a single or serial of *diǎntóu* “head nods” by LP in interaction. In the role of a listener, LP can simply nod his/her head indicating his/her attention to SP. These *diǎntóu* “head nods” are sometimes accompanied by “minimal responses” (Zimmerman & West, 1975:108), which serve to show “continuing interest and co-participation” on the part of LP in interaction. *Diǎntóu* “head nods” may also be performed together with “reactive tokens” (Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki & Tao, 1996:359) like *ao* “yeh”.

Diǎntóu “head nods” can serve different pragmatic functions and have different meanings based on the situation in which they occur. They[MUL27] are largely performed by LP to show the affiliative actions of acknowledging (4.2.1), affirming (4.2.2) or agreeing (4.2.3), which will consecutively be discussed in the following.

4.2.1. Acknowledging

While attending to SP’s utterance or accompanying gestures, LP cooperates by producing verbal and/or nonverbal reactions only like *diǎntóu* “head nods”. LP executes *diǎntóu* “head nods” at micropauses to affiliate himself/herself with SP as well as indicating that he/she pays attention to and understands SP. Even more significant than that, LP uses *diǎntóu* “head nods” to communicate his/her nonverbal involvement, affiliation, and co-participation.

Fragment-4: (P19; F5-2; 2001/10; MU; M/F)

Situation: *Chén* (female) and *Zhào* (male) were friends of similar age. She is telling him about her son's age and schooling information as requested.

- 1a. *Chén*: ∇ _____ ∇
 1. *Chén*: **Duì , shí suì bàn ,** (0.3)
 right ten year half
 "Right, he is ten and half years old."
 ①1b. *Zhào*: ∇ _____ ∇
 1c. *Zhào*: _____ $\updownarrow\updownarrow$
- 2a. *Chén*: ∇ _____ ∇
 2. *Chén*: **ránhòu nèn wǒmén jiā: jiù zhènmō yī gè hái zǐ** (0.4),
 then Part our family only this one CL child
 "Then he is the only child in our family."
 ②2b. *Zhào*: ∇ _____ ∇ ...x _____ ∇ _____ ∇
 ②2c. *Zhào*: _____ $\updownarrow\updownarrow$
- 3a. *Chén*: ∇ _____ ∇ ...x _____ ∇
 3. *Chén*: **ránhòu, tā zài(..) Eastwood Public School, shì wǔ niánjí =**
 then he in be five grade
 "And he is attending Eastwood Public School, Year 5."
 3b. *Zhào*: ∇ _____ ∇ ...x _____
- 4a. *Zhào*: _____ ∇ _____ ∇
 ④ 4b. *Zhào*: _____ $\updownarrow\updownarrow$
 4. *Zhào*: _____ $\updownarrow\updownarrow$ = **wǔ niánjí**
 fivegrade
 "Year 5."
 5. _____ (0.5)
- 6a. *Chén*: _____
 6. *Chén*: **en shì (0.1) nà gè..OC Class=**
 yeah be that CL OC class
 "Yeah, and he is in an OC class."
 7a. *Zhào*: ∇ _____ ∇ ...x _____
 ⑦7b. *Zhào*: _____ $\updownarrow\updownarrow$
 7. *Zhào*: _____ = **Ao, jiǎng dào zhè yī diǎn ne,**
 Yeh speak about this CL point
 "Yeah, speak about this point,"

Symbols used in this fragment:

\updownarrow head nods.

∇ gaze down at the paper.

Diǎntóu “head nods” are basically LP’s business in the form of co-participation reaction. LP executes *diǎntóu* “head nods” in response to SP as a display of affiliation and involvement in the current talk. In this fragment, *Zhào* executes a series of *diǎntóu* “head nods”, four times all together. When *Chén* starts talking about her son as *Zhào* requests, *Zhào* respectively makes the first two head nods at *Chén*’s TRPs. When *Chén* makes a pause for 0.3 second in Line 1, *Zhào* performed the first *diǎntóu* “head nods” (Line 1c) and the second *diǎntóu* “head nods” (Line 2c) while *Chén* makes another pause for 0.4 second in Line 2. *Zhào* does not make verbal utterances but only head nods to nonverbally acknowledge his reception of *Chén*’s output of information and this nonverbal acknowledgement signals *Zhào*’s wish not to interrupt *Chén* but continue his role of LP in order to have more information about the current topic. Seeing *Zhào*’s *diǎntóu* “head nods” which conveys his acknowledgement, *Chén* continues talking which invites *Zhào*’s second two *diǎntóu* “head nods” achieving a stronger affiliative effect than the first two.

The affiliative *diǎntóu* “head nods” do not occur singly but are assisted by other NVAs. [MUL28] First, just before his execution of *diǎntóu* “head nods” (Line 4b), *Zhào* returns *zhùshi* “gaze” (Line 3b) incurred by *Chén*’s (Line 3a). Second, as repetition of *Chén*’s previous statement can be used as a reactive token (Clancy et al., 1996:359), *Zhào*’s repetition of *Chén*’s utterance *wǔ niánjǐ* “year 5”, accompanied by *diǎntóu* “head nods” in Line 4b, indicates his strong acknowledgement. Further, this verbal action schedules *Zhào*’s request of the turn and paves the way to take over the floor. *ǎo* “oh” can be used as a “resumptive opener” (ibid.). The LP uses the “resumptive opener” *ǎo*^[4] “oh” (Line 7) as a reactive token, achieving the effect of emphasizing his acknowledgement. The 0.5-second pause (Line 5) that comes between *Zhào*’s utterance (Line 4) and *Chén*’s (Line 6) seems to be her nonverbal reaction to his request of floor and in turn is an indication of her intention to give up the floor.

Both *Zhào* and *Chén* understand that a TRP is coming into play after her “listing” format allows requested information to be projected. Seeing that *Chén* has already provided the required information (her son’s age, year of schooling and OC class), ready and willing to hand over the floor, *Zhào* takes immediate action (his verbal action latches with hers) to take over the floor since it is a right moment (a brief pause after his verbal action with head nods indicates a nonverbal mutual agreement) to do so.

Although the second two *diǎntóu* “head nods” (Lines 4b and 7b) are accompanied by VAs while the first two (Lines 1c and 2c) are not, they are the same in that they are all executed at the end of the TCUs, i.e. at TRPs. LP’s first two *diǎntóu* “head nods” follow the end of SP’s TCUs at talk, indicating expression of interest and claim of reception and understanding, which displays his affiliation with and involvement in the current talk. The second two *diǎntóu* “head nods” are accompanied by VAs, displaying LP’s stronger affiliation with and higher involvement in SP’s talk.

Each time LP allows SP to finish her utterances before applying his head nod(s) and VAs. This not only demonstrates LP's appropriate affiliation with and involvement in the talk, but also his interactional strategies to avoid intruding into the *Others'* turn territory and imposing *Other-miàanzi*-threatening acts (OMTAs) (Yang, 2003).

4.2.2. Affirming

Affirming, the opposite of negating, is here used in the sense of declaring “yes” rather than “no”. *Diǎntóu* “head nods” can be used to accompany the verbal affirmative reply to a question. Such an affirmative response indicates a shared experience between SP and LP, lends psychological support to SP and projects an image of positive engagement in the current talk, thus achieving affiliation and immediacy between SP and LP. The next fragment will show how LP successfully manages her affiliation with SP and involvement in the talk.

Fragment-5 (P1; F1-1; 12/1998; CNU; F/F)

Situation: *Zhāng* (female) and *Zhōu* (female) were classmates. *Zhāng* tells *Zhōu* what had happened on the university campus last night.

1a.
1. *Zhāng*: Zuówǎn tīngjiàn dà fēng le ma ?=
last night hear big wind PFV Q
“Did you hear the strong wind last night?”

1b. *Zhōu*: _____

Ⓜ 2a. ↕_↕
2b.
2. *Zhōu*: =*Enn*::, (0.2) zhīdào=
yeah know
“Yeah, I heard it.”
2c. *Zhāng*: _____

Symbols used in this fragment:

↕ head nodding.

Before telling her story, *Zhāng* makes a pre-announcement (see discussion of Fragment 1) by raising a question (Line 1), which initiates a topic and displays her intention to inform *Zhōu* of what happened. In the role of LP, *Zhōu* initially acknowledges the information received by uttering a lengthened acknowledgement

token *enn* “yeah” (Line 2). After a short pause, she reinforces her affirming reply to *Zhāng*’s question by quickly giving her a “yes” answer. Understanding that *Zhāng* has made the pre-announcement and wishes to expand it as a topic focus, *Zhōu* takes an affirming action acknowledging that she recognizes *Zhāng*’s need for an extended turn. In this way, *Zhōu* displays her potential to support *Zhāng* and this support helps establish the common ground on which their topic of interest unfolds.

At the same time, *Zhōu*’s affirming reply is accompanied by *diǎntóu* “head nods” (Line 2a). Her reinforced verbal and nonverbal response indicates her readiness and willingness to act as a cooperative LP, rather than an active SP. Further, *Zhōu*’s head nods are oriented to *Zhāng*’s utterance and demonstrate her immediacy to her conversation partner, which shows *Zhōu*’s strong affiliation with and involvement in the ongoing talk. Lastly, their sustained mutual gaze helps increase the affiliative and immediacy effect throughout this conversation.

4.2.3. Agreeing

‘Agreement’ denotes sharing viewpoints, opinions and feelings, claiming understanding and involvement in the ongoing activities. One nonverbal agreeing token is *diǎntóu* “head nods”, which can build up and maintain SP-LP affiliation with and involvement in interaction.

Fragment-6 (P1; F1-2; 12/1998; CNU; F/F)

Situation: *Zhōu* and *Zhāng* are classmates of the same age. *Zhōu* told *Zhāng* about a Korean car, but mixed up its brand name with something else. *Zhōu* agrees with *Zhāng*.

- 1a. *Zhāng*: _____
 1. *Zhāng*: =*Xiàndài Lǎo Hǔ Duì*.
 Xiandai Old Tiger Team
 “It’s Modern Old Tiger Team.”
- 1b. *Zhōu*: _____
2. (2.0)
- 3a. *Zhōu*: _____
- ®3b. *Zhōu*: ↕ _____ ↕
- 3c. *Zhōu*: _____ ./ _____ / _____ ...x
3. *Zhōu*: *En* (0.3), *duì, duì. hùi: zhè fāngmiàn: zhīshī: pínfá.*
 right right EXC this aspect knowledge poor
 Yeah, right, right. My knowledge in this aspect is poor.
- 3d. *Zhāng*: _____

Symbols used in this fragment:

👤 nodding his/her head.

👇 casting his/her eye sight down.

Zhōu successfully recalls *xiàndài*, e.g. *hánguó dàyǔ* (Korean Deawood) in association with *Xiàndài lǎohǔ* “*Xiandai Tiger*”^[5]. It seems that *Zhōu* is not very familiar with *Xiàndài lǎohǔduì* “*Xiandai Tiger Team*” because *Zhōu* hesitates with a 2.0-second gap (Line 2). Meanwhile she is searching for what has been suggested in her mind and as it starts to emerge, she utters an *en* (indicating agreement) followed by a short pause (Line 3). Then, she executes *diǎntóu* “head nods” (Line 3b) uttering *duì, duì* “right, right” (Line 3). The moment she starts *diǎntóu* “head nods”, she begins to move into *biānshì* “gaze-away” (Line 3c). Actually she executes *xiàshì* “gaze-down” (Line 3a), followed by an utterance of *hài*: (Line 3), an interjection of regret, which is a sigh of self-denigration. A continued utterance *zhè fāngmiàn: zhīshī: pínfú* “my knowledge in this aspect is poor” supports her denigration. *Zhōu*’s *diǎntóu* “head nods” coordinates with her verbal utterance of agreement. This coordination maintains her affiliation with *Zhāng* in the form of a combined verbal and nonverbal agreement, through which *Zhōu* indicates her acceptance of *Zhāng*’s correction and implies her praises for *Zhāng*’s knowledge of topics by lowering herself.

4.3. *Wēixiào* “Gentle smile”

Wēixiào “gentle smile” generally presents an image that means to be *héshàn* “harmonious and gentle”, so it is best to gloss it here as “gentle smile” to distinguish it from smile of other types, such as *kǔxiào* (wry smile) and *jiǎnxiào* (sinister smile). Smiling behaviour can vary from culture to culture. In American culture, for example, “there are dozen of smiles, each different in appearance and in the message expressed” (Ekman, 1992:150). Smiles can signal positive emotions like enjoyment, physical or sensory pleasure, contentment, and amusement and negative emotions like miserable smile, fear smile, contempt smile (Ekman, 1992:150-161). *Wēixiào* “gentle smile” generally displays one’s friendliness and kindness and thus can establish and maintain affiliation and involvement, and achieve interpersonal closeness between participants in interaction. But the meaning conveyed through such facial expression may differ from situation to situation. The following discussion focuses on the activities Mandarin speakers engage in with *wēixiào* “gentle smile”.

4.3.1. *Xiétiao* “Coordination”

Xiétiao “coordination” refers to the act of behaving as one conforms to group norms, which is significant in collectivistic cultures. *Xiétiao* “coordination” has the related

expression *bù diào yí zhì* “act in unison”, which emphasizes team work and ingroup behaviour. Both *xiétiao* “coordination” and *bù diào yí zhì* “act in unison” focus on group identity, support and understanding. *Wēixiào* “gentle smile” is a commonly used style of communication to achieve such focus. If LP wishes to express interest in what SP is talking about, the former may simply display *wēixiào* “gentle smile” in a gazing state to achieve such effect. A sequence of coordinated *wēixiào* “gentle smile” behaviors are observed in the following fragment.

Fragment-7 (P19; F5-2; 10/2001; MU; M/F)

Situation: *Zhào* (male) and *Chén* (female) were friends of similar age. The former asked the latter to say something about her son’s age and schooling.

- 1a. *Zhào*: ▾ _____ ▾...x
1. *Zhào*: **Tā shì** (0.5) **duō dà niánlíng**, **xiànzài dú jǐ niánjí?**
He be how old year now read which grade
“How old is he and which year is he in?”
- 1b. *Chén*: ▾ _____ ▾
- 2a. *Chén*: ▾ _____ ▾^ _____ ^...x _____ ...
2. *Chén*: **Er, <duō dà niánlíng>, shí suì..(0.2) <shí suì bàn>=**
inter how old year ten year ten year ten year half
“Er, how old is he? Ten, ten and a half.”
- 2b. *Zhào*: _____x _____ [MUL29]
- ③3a. *Zhào*: ☹ _____ ☹
- 3b. *Zhào*: _____
3. *Zhào*: =**Shí suì bàn hērr hērr**=
ten year half laughter
“Ten years and a half.”
- 3c. *Chén*: ▾ _____ ▾
- ④4a. *Chén*: ☹ _____ ☹]
- 4b. *Chén*: ▾ _____ ▾
4. *Chén*: =**Duì, shí suì bàn, ránhòu nēn. wǒmén jiā jù zhèmo yī gè**
right ten year half then Part our family only this one CL
Right. Ten years and a half. He is the only child in our family.
- 4c. *Zhào*: _____x
- 4d. *Zhào*: ▾ _____ ▾
- ④4e. *Zhào*: ☹ _____ ☹
- 4f. *Zhào*: ⇕ _____ ⇕
5. (0.2)
- 6a. *Chén*: ▾ _____ ▾
6. *Chén*: **háizi ránhòu,**
child then

- 6b. Zhào: —...
 6c. Zhào: ▼ _____ ▼
 6d. Zhào: ⇄ _____ ⇄

Symbols used in this fragment:

- ⇄ nodding his/her head.
 ▲ raising his/her eye sight.
 ▼ casting his/her eye sight down.
 ☺ smiling.

In this fragment, Zhào's (LP's) *wēixiào* "gentle smile" plays a significant role in coordinating self-*wēixiào* "self gentle smile" with other-*wēixiào* "other gentle smiling". Chén's (SP's) *wēixiào* "gentle smile" (Line 4) by reference to LP's *wēi xiào* "gentle smile" (Line 3a) and *xiào* "laughter" (Line 3) followed by LP's *wēixiào* "gentle smile" (Line 4e) together with SP's (Line 4a) is observed. The nature of simultaneous *wēixiào* "gentle smile" (Picture-12) behaviors, similar to what Jefferson (1984:348) comments on laughing together, is an indication of mutual agreement on "valued occurrence" of "methodic, coordinated activities".

Relevant sequence of nonverbal cues from Lines 1a to 4f can be represented as follows:

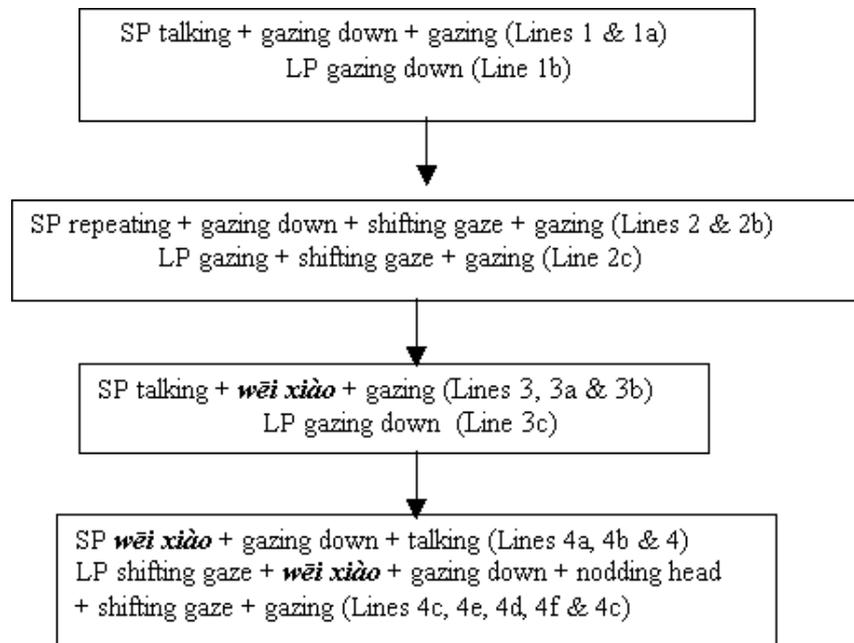


Figure-3: Sequence of SP's and LP's *wēixiào* "gentle smiling" in interaction



Picture-12: Smiling together as a coordinated activity

LP (left) does not express interest until SP (right) says her son is *shí suì bàn* “ten years and a half” (Line 2). Immediately following this, he can’t help repeating *shí suì bàn* “ten years and a half” (Line 3). This repetition in itself indicates his involvement in and affiliation with the talk. His expression of affiliation is strengthened by his *wēi xiào* “gentle smile” which is in turn followed by laughter. Upon hearing LP’s laughter, SP displays *wēixiào* “gentle smile”. At the same moment, LP is observed to maintain the state of *wēixiào* “gentle smile” with *zhùshì* “gaze” at SP. Although he looks down at the question paper for a second, his *wēixiào* “gentle smile” and *diǎntóu* “head nods” assist his maintained interest in her topic and affiliation with the SP’s activity.

4.3.2. *Tōnggǎn* “Empathy”

Tōnggǎn “empathy” refers to specific behaviours that indicate one’s understanding of other people’s needs, sharing their mood and emotional closeness (Hall, 1984:33). Young children in China are trained in their early life to control their affect display, to “learn to interpret adults’ facial expression and to act according to parental wishes” (Wu, 1996:145). This has been considered as part of the education in good manners for young children. Their ability to decode and encode nonverbal cues is refined in later social interactions in family, and school situations and their nonverbal communicative competence is fully developed by the time they enter workplace situations.

However, such nonverbal communicative competence is not the same for males and females. Compared with males, females are better at decoding nonverbal cues, recognizing facial expressions, and expressing emotions in response to incoming nonverbal signals (Hall, 1984; Haviland & Malatesta, 1981; Mayo & Henley, 1981). Their faces are more active and they use both facial expressions and body movement, such as hand and head gestures, to indicate their affiliation and involvement in interaction with others. Above all, they often display *tōnggǎn* “empathy” by executing *wēixiào* “gentle smile”.

Zhōu also shows her *tōnggǎn* “empathy” by displaying *wēixiào* “gentle smile” when *Zhāng* volunteers to talk about soccer. *Zhōu* believes that *Zhāng* must have known the soccer news well and is able to contribute to the conversation. *Zhōu*’s *wēi xiào* “gentle smile” conveys her agreement with *Zhāng*’s topic focus and her understanding of *Zhāng*’s choice of the topic. If one can understand another person’s moods, one is capable of empathizing with him/her (Hall, 1984:33). Understanding *Zhāng*’s current moods, *Zhōu* lends her nonverbal support needed by *Zhāng* in carrying on the conversation. *Zhōu*’s support is evidenced in her NVAs to display her willingness to be a genuine addressee, ready to be informed of the soccer news. And *Zhōu*’s response to *Zhāng*’s offer is immediate and positive. In addition, displaying empathetic contribution and involved orientation to the other party (Hall, 1984:148), *Zhōu*’s NVAs demonstrate her affiliation with *Zhāng* and interest in the topic. Thus, as a SP, *Zhōu*’s *dǎntóu* “head nods” and *wēixiào* “gentle smile” in particular are nonverbally expressive and effective and are typical of the Chinese style of communication in maintaining *tōnggǎn* “empathy” with LP.

4.4. *Shǒuchù* “**Hand Touch**”

Shǒuchù “hand touch” includes hand-to-hand contact and hand-to-body contact and does occur in this corpus, though not very often, and only between participants of the same gender. Touch has communicative functions and have been discussed by Heslin (1974, cited in Richmond, et al. 1987:128-130). They may occur in professional-to-client interaction like doctors and patients, as a social involvement to indicate politeness like cheek-kissing and hand-shaking, between friends as a signal of warmth, between lovers and family members as a token of intimacy. As the conversation dyads and triad in my data are classmates and friends, one touches the other to fulfill his/her need for closeness and warmth (Guffin & Patton, 1974). Three types of touch are observed in this category: self-touch, other-touch and mutual touch.

4.4.1. Self-touch

Self-touch is a self-adaptor. Poyatos (1988:40) claims that self-adaptors

“...depend on the articulatory possibilities of the human body to touch itself, serve to adopt different postures, to facilitate or conceal certain semantic needs, to groom and cleanse the body, to preen oneself, to display or conceal emotional states and reactions, to engage in mental activities. (ibid, p. 66)

It may also occur when LP wishes to respond without any verbal utterance. Both males and females use self-touch as a signal or as self-adaptors.

Fragment-9 (P1; F1-1; 12/1998; CNU; F/F)

Situation: *Zhāng* (right) and *Zhōu* (left) are classmates of the same age. *Zhāng* cautions *Zhōu* that she mistakes Chinese *Dāngdài* (a business name) for Korean Hyundai (a car brand).

Picture-14 Picture-15

Picture-13

1a. *Zhōu*: ↘ ↘

1b. *Zhōu*: ⇅ ⇅

1c. *Zhōu*: .../ / ...x

1. *Zhōu*: **En** (0.3), **duì, duì.** **hài:** **zhè fāngmiàn:** **zhīshī:** **pínfá**
 yeah right right EXC this aspect knowledge poor
 “Yeah, right, right. My knowledge in this aspect is poor.”

1d. *Zhāng*: _____

® 1e. *Zhāng*: 🖐️ 🖐️

Symbols used in this fragment:

/_/ Looking to the right in relation to the addressee.

⇅ nodding his/her head.

🖐️ touching his/her hair with hands.

↘ casting his/her eye sight down.



Picture-13



Picture-14



Picture-15

Zhōu admits that she is wrong and that she has limited knowledge of Chinese *Dāngdài* and Korean *Xiàndài* (Hyundai). While *Zhōu* criticizes herself for mixing up two things (Korean *Xiàndài* and Chinese *Dāngdài*) due to insufficient knowledge, *Zhāng*, as a recipient, performs self-adaptors without verbal utterance, i.e. touching her hair (Line 1e), to keep herself busy with something so as to make the atmosphere relaxed and easier for LP and herself.

4.4.2. Other-touch

In the corpus, other-touching is limited to one participant's hand contact with the arm and leg of another participant. But it occurs not between cross-sex dyads but between same-sex participants only.

This is similar to Japanese touch behaviour in that "same sex touching, particularly among the young, is virtually neutral behaviour among Japanese..." (Brosnahan & Okada, 1990:21), while different gender touching is traditionally tabooed in public places in Japanese culture. In the similar way, the Chinese are influenced by Confucianism, which "places great emphasis on probity, rectitude, and prescribed social deportment" (McDaniel & Andersen, 1998:70). This still restrains cross-gender touch between people, familiar or unfamiliar, in the public places, but it can occur between people of intimate relationships, which is not the focus of this study.

Fragment-10 (G1; F1-1; 12/1998; CNU; F/F)

Situation: *Zhāng* is telling *Zhōu* what happened on campus last night.

- 3a. *Zhāng*: (Moves her left hand up.)
- Ⓜ 3b. *Zhāng*: (Pats the other party on the left leg.)
3. *Zhāng*: =**tè**: **kěpà**, <lóudào lǐ de bō::lǐ: suì:: le>
 rather frightening lobby in POS glass broken ASP
 "It was rather frightening and the window glass in the lobby broke."
4. *Zhāng*: [tè
 rather
 very
- 4a. *Zhōu*: ⇔ _____ ⇔
- 4b. *Zhōu*: [**Zhè wǒ méi tīngjiàn**=
 this I NEG hear
 "I didn't hear it."

Symbols used in this fragment:

Ⓜ nodding his/her head to indicate knowledge of a relevant event.

⇔ shaking his/her head for indication of no knowledge of a relevant event.

In this fragment, *Zhāng* initiates her topic by asking a question. When *Zhōu* says she heard the noise produced by the strong wind, *Zhāng* makes an assessment of what happened the previous night. While *Zhāng* does so by saying **tè: kěpà** (rather frightening) in Line 3, she raises her left hand up to her chest (Line 3a) and pats the left leg of the recipient party (Line 3b). As she utters **pà** (frightening), *Zhāng*'s hand touches *Zhōu*'s left leg (line 4). The synchronization of her verbal and NVAs reinforces each other in her account of the happening.

Zhāng's touch has two implications. One is that it helps to stress her feeling of fright, for which the strong wind at night is responsible. To add to the fright, the window

glass crashing on the floor produced frightening noise at the otherwise quiet night. The other is that the speaker means to convey what she says is not an overstatement.

4.4.3. Mutual Touch

Mutual touch occurs when both parties have the intention to contact each other physically for communication purpose. Like *Other-touch*, mutual touch does not occur often as China is one of the members of low-contact cultures. However, one mutual touch is observed in the data corpus. That is handshake, for communication purpose, between two parties who have just been introduced to each other by a third party.

Fragment -11 [G6; F6-1; 98/12; 10”; GS-M/M]

Situation: A group of friends are having a get-together. *Gě* (Middle) is introducing his friends *Liu* (Left) and *Mǎ* (Right) to each other (see Picture-16).

1a *Gě*: [(Left hand touches *Mǎ*'s upper right arm)

1b. *Gě*:

1. *Gě*: [Zhè. wèi.. shì... Mǎ Qiáng, = Mǎ zǒng =
 this CL be NAME, SUR-N boss
 “This is *Mǎ Qiáng*, Mr. *Mǎ*.”

2a. *Liu*: _____... (Gaze shifts to *Mǎ Qiáng*)

2. =Mǎ Qiáng = Mǎ zǒng.
 NAME SUR boss
 “*Mǎ Qiáng*, Mr *Mǎ* ?”

3a. [Rises, gazes at and extends his right hand to *Mǎ*)

3b.

3 *Liu*: [Xīng huì. =
 happy meet
 “Pleased to meet you.”

4a. (His right hand touches *Liu*'s left arm)

4. *Gě*: = Zhè shì = = Liu Xiǎoyáng, Liu zǒng =
 This be NAME SUR boss
 “This is *Liu Xiǎoyáng*, Mr *Liu*.”

(Gazes at and shakes hand with *Mǎ* across the table)

⑤5a

5b.

☺ _____ ☺

5. *Liu*: =Liu Xiǎoyáng = =Liu zǒng
 NAME SUR
 boss

5c. *Mǎ*:

_____ “I’m *Liu Xiǎoyáng*, Mr *Liu*. Mr *Liu*.”

- 5d. ☺ _____ ☺
 5e. ⇅ _____ ⇅
 5f. (Gazes at and shakes hand with *Liu* across the table)

Picture-16: *Gě* (left) introduces *Mǎ* (right) to *Liú*Picture-17: *Liú* (left) and *Mǎ* (right) shake hands

Symbols used in this fragment:

- ⇅ nodding his/her head.
 ☺ smiling.

In this fragment, mutual touch like hand-shaking (see Picture-17) occurs between *Liú* (left) and *Mǎ* (right) after *Gě* (middle) has introduced them. The conventionalized mutual touch of this kind is an immediate and efficient way of building up mutual involvement and establishing affiliation between the relevant parties especially at the dinner table where everybody present feels the need to talk to each other like friends. Hand-shaking is a starting point from which relevant parties are ready to express goodwill and warmth, and make friends. As *Liú* (left) and *Mǎ* (right) shake hands, both parties smile and gaze at each other. While *Liú* (left) is more diplomatic with verbal utterance, *Mǎ* (right) appears quieter and displays nonverbal cues that help do the job. Instead of responding verbally, he chooses to use nonverbal cues *zhùshì* “gaze”, *diǎntóu* “head nod” and *wēixiào* “gentle smiling” to convey his greeting and friendliness, which is typical of Chinese preferable channel of nonverbal communication.

It can be observed in Picture-16 that *Gě* touches the upper arm of the person he is introducing to others present. His other-touch indicates that this is the person he intends to introduce and that he has been familiar with him. While making the introduction, *Gě* mentions his name *Mǎ Qiáng* followed by *Mǎ zǒng* “Boss *Mǎ*”, which is said for humorous effect (“Boss” is used before a person’s surname though he is not a boss) and causes laughter on the part of all present. His humour and touch are acceptable as they are good friends. This will not cause any aversion but is a sign of their familiarity and friendship. It is also an indication of their mutual affiliation and involvement in the ongoing conversational activities for similar instance can be observed in Picture-17.

5. Summary

In this paper, I have discussed nonverbal affiliative actions used by Mandarin speakers in conversation. These nonverbal cues are *zhùshì* “gaze”, *diǎntóu* “head nods”, *wēixiào* “gentle smile”, and *shǒuchù* “hand touch”. Each cue possesses a couple of communicative functions characteristic of Mandarin Chinese nonverbal interaction. These nonverbal cues may supplement verbal messages via synchronization or convey nonverbal messages alone. The analysis of video data indicates that *zhùshì* “gaze”, *diǎntóu* “head nods”, and *wēixiào* “gentle smile” are the primary nonverbal affiliative means of Mandarin Chinese communication.

These nonverbal cues not only convey participants’ mutual interpersonal affiliation but also display their strong engagement and high involvement in talk-in-interaction. Although *shǒuchù* “hand touch” is executed by both sexes in different patterns like self, other and mutual contact forms, it is displayed as a secondary nonverbal affiliative means of communication and occurs only between or among participants of the same sex and not between or among participants of the opposite sex. Understanding of the nonverbal cues observed in Mandarin talk-in-interaction is significant because this knowledge facilitates intercultural communication with Mandarin speakers and helps prospective intercultural communicators interact with Mandarin Chinese speakers more effectively.

6. Significance of the Research

This study will add to the body of knowledge on non-verbal aspects of Mandarin Chinese social interactions, especially in the setting of mundane conversation. As China is becoming all the more open to the outside world, economic trade and cultural exchange with other nations will enormously increase. Cross-cultural contacts will follow and this may yield cross-cultural misunderstanding and shock due to insufficient knowledge of the target language and culture in particular

This study is of significance in four aspects. First, China is building up more and more political, economic, cultural contacts with many countries. Sino-foreign joint business ventures are rapidly increasing in Hong Kong and mainland China. Because of the cross-cultural differences, (Bjorkman & Lu, 1999) believe that there is a major challenge for foreign firms operating in China and they have to make decisions as to whether their global human resource management (HRM) policies should be implemented in China or it should be adapted to the local HRM practices as well as Chinese cultural context.

Second, overseas visitors to China as well as people learning Chinese as a second language are growing year by year. They may find a need to learn Chinese language system more efficiently with the knowledge of its nonverbal communication patterns. The analysis of non-verbal aspects of Mandarin Chinese interactions will both help the native Chinese speakers gain an insight into the properties of their culture and equip the CSL (Chinese as a Second Language) learners with a good understanding of the structures of everyday Chinese talk. The international academic people will have a clearer idea of the properties of the Mandarin Chinese talk-in-interaction and enable them to manipulate appropriate communication and negotiation strategies in the Chinese educational settings. The research results can be applied to second language learning/teaching situations, and will enhance foreign language learners' understanding of Chinese language and culture.

Third, the research methodology used in this study can serve as an example to demonstrate and justify what qualitative method functions in academic research, especially CA, and why it fits this analytic mentality. It seems that some researchers have an illusion that quantitative method is superior to qualitative method in all situations simply because it looks more statistical and scientific. However, I believe it depends on the research purpose the researcher has in his/her mind. CA cannot do without qualitative method with which empirical audio/video data from naturally occurring settings are meticulously examined to study the perspectives embedded in talk-in-interaction.

Fourth, the thesis has reviewed the developments of CA research and touched upon many areas relevant to the topic of study. In particular, it highlights the empirical nature of data in CA and draws upon naturally-occurring Mandarin Chinese data for CA analysis. This can introduce the new CA researchers in China to the "analytic mentality" (Potter, 1997) and detailed examination of a single case, but not limit them to the scope of research this thesis involves. Its focus on the analysis of natural data further distinguishes itself from other work on engineered data (Zhu, Li, & Qian, 2000). The author wishes that this study functions as a stepping stone for the interested readers and researchers in Chinese studies.

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[2] Cheng (2003) uses a revised version of a Chinese idiom *luò yè zhā gēn* “the falling leaves take roots” for *yè luò guī gēn* “the falling leaves settle on the roots” in the discussion of overseas Chinese literature although the latter applies to most Chinese.

[3]^[3] *Information And Consent Form* and the ethical aspect of this study had been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) before I went to China for data collection.

[4] Clancy et al. (1996) classify *ào* as a back channel because it does not initiate a turn point in their data. Here I consider it as a resumptive opener because it is used at a turn-initiating point and followed by a full turn (see Line 7).

[5] A popular singing and dancing group in China.

[P1] A comma has been deleted after Martin.

[P2] A change has been made here.

[P3] This in-text citation has been shortened.

[P4] This has merged with the foregoing text.

[P5] A comma has been deleted after McRroskey.

[P6] Changes have been made here

[MUL7] The claim of culture-specific implications in Mandarin Chinese conversation is deleted because the data I selected for this paper is not representative. To make this paper short, this claim will be discussed in a separate paper.

[P8] Abbreviation is used instead.

[P9] Abbreviation is used instead.

[P10] This quotations has been shortened.

[P11] This part comes from Appendix with an updated title level.

[P12] Replacing “kinesic”.

[P13] Replacing “the prior speaker”.

[P14] Replacing “the recipient”.

[P15] Replacing “the recipient”.

[P16] Replacing “the prior speaker”.

[P17] A title level has been updated.

[P18] An updated title level.

[P19] This part has been elaborated with more details.

[P20] An updated title level.

[P21] This part with updated title level has been created with more details.

[P22] An updated title level with a new title.

[P23] Replacing ‘and *zhùshì* “gaze”.’

[P24] A new in-text citation.

[P25] This has merged with the foregoing text.

[P26] An in-text citation for a terms introduced for the first time in the discussion.

[MUL27] Replacing *Dǎntóu* “head nods”.

[MUL28] A paragraph in between has been deleted due to redundancy.

[MUL29] Transcription has been made shorter by showing basic and relevant nonverbal cues.

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