Talking Metalingually: Meaning Negotiation in Mandarin Conversation

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Abstract

In a casual conversation there are times when what the speaker says becomes a problem to the addressee because the expression is unknown to him/her or the application of the expression to the situation under description is unclear to him/her. This paper examines how participants of Mandarin conversation interact to resolve such metalingual problems of coming to agreement on how an uttered expression is interpreted. In other words, this paper applies conversation analysis to the understanding of linguistic pragmatics as it is manifested in conversationalist's sorting out each other's speech. The following aspects of meaning negotiation are addressed: (1) its metalingual characteristic as negotiation of the use of language, (2) the types of target to be negotiated and the significance of meaning negotiation as a routinized socialization mechanism, and (3) the notion of sequentiality and procedularity in relation to meaning negotiation, and the implication of meaning negotiation for human interactional intelligence.

1. Introduction

In a casual conversation there are times when what the speaker says becomes a problem to the addressee because the expression is unknown to him/her or the application of the expression to the situation under description is unclear to him/her. This paper examines how participants of Mandarin conversation interact to resolve such metalingual problems of coming to agreement on how an uttered
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expression is interpreted. The following aspects of meaning negotiation are addressed: (1) its metalingual characteristic as negotiation of the use of language, (2) the types of target to be negotiated and the significance of meaning negotiation as a routinized socialization mechanism, and (3) the notion of sequentiality and how meaning negotiation is procedurally accomplished, and the implication of this study for human interactional intelligence.

2. Meta-Talk About Using Language

The foremost characteristic of meaning negotiation is that it is primarily talk about the use of language. Different from other negotiations commonly seen in conversation (and in other forms of communication), meaning negotiation is only secondarily about negotiation of the extra-linguistic "matter" that is being talked about. Consider the following segment, which is recognized as a meaning negotiation sequence (please see the Appendix for the transcription conventions for cited data):

滿牆風動
man qiang feng dong
'Breeze all over the walls'
1. B: ... (0.9) 這個畫的就是給你感覺就是滿牆風動.
zhe ge hua de jiu shi gei ni ganjue jiu shi man qiang feng dong
this M painting DE just be give you feeling just be full wall breeze move
'The painting made you feel the breeze is all over the walls.'


3. A: .. [滿牆風動.
   man qiang feng dong
   full wall breeze move
   '[Breeze all over the walls.'
4. B: ... [就有一點,  
   jiu you yi dian  
   just have one bit  
   'just,'

5. B: ... yeah [就有一點,  
   jiu you yi dian  
   just have one bit  
   'Yeah [just,'

6. A: [這麼活.  
   zheme huo  
   so lively  
   ['So lively.'

7. B: ... 就是那個衣服的帶子都飄得起來.  
   jiu shi na ge yifu de daizi dou piao de qilai  
   just be that M clothes DE belt all float DE up  
   '(It's like) the belt over the clothes was floating.'

8. A: ... 你看得到風.  
   ni kan de dao feng  
   you see DE at breeze  
   'You can see the breeze.'

9. B: ... Yeah.

10. B: ... 滿牆風動.  
    man qiang feng dong  
    full wall breeze move  
    'Breeze all over the walls.'

In line 1 speaker B (let's call him Brian) uses the expression 滿牆風動 man qiang feng dong 'the breeze is all over the walls' to describe the vividness of some mural paintings he saw in China. This expression is new to speaker A (let's call her Amy). She utters a reactive token ('Uhm', line 2) (Clancy et al. 1996) and follows up with a repetition of the key expression (line 3). This response overlaps with Brian's attempt on explaining what he means by this expression (lines 4 & 5). Before he comes up with anything substantial, Amy offers her interpretation (這麼活 zhenme huo 'So lively', line 6). Brian then goes on to provide his own elaboration (就是那個衣服的帶子都飄得起來 jiu shi na ge
yifu de daizi dou piao de qilai (It's like) the belt over the clothes was floating.', line 7). Amy follows to offer another paraphrase (你看得到風 ni kan de dao feng 'You can see the breeze.', line 8). By now, both interlocutors know that Amy has understood how the expression should be interpreted in the mural painting context, because Brian responds to Amy's second offer with an agreement ('yeah', line 9) and confirms the appropriateness of his use of the key expression, 滿牆風動 man qiang feng dong 'Breeze all over the walls', by reiterating it once again (line 10).

In this segment the two interlocutors devote themselves to making sure that the addressee (Amy) does understand how the expression should be interpreted in the context under discussion in the same way as the speaker (Brian) has intended when he first uttered the expression. What we have here is a discussion, or negotiation, on the justifications of the use of the key expression to describe the vividness of the mural painting. While through this negotiation further information about the mural painting has been revealed (e.g. 就是那個衣服的帶子都飄得起來 jiu shi na ge yifu de daizi dou piao de qilai (It's like) the belt over the clothes was floating.), it is the analysis -- the addressee's probe and conjecture and the speaker's defense and elaboration -- of the appropriateness of the application of the expression to the described situation that renders the segment in its sequential context. Thus, in contrast to "ordinary negotiations" in conversation, where interlocutors negotiate over "the matter" via language, meaning negotiation is metatalk by which interlocutors negotiate, via language of course, their use of language.

Using language to talk about use of language is a phenomenon widely noted and discussed in literature on semiotics, linguistics, communication, anthropology, and sociology (Lucy 1993). Among others, Jakobson (1960, 1971) points out that one of the six functions of language is the metalingual function, which, in the structuralist tradition where code (C) and message (M) are deemed the two components of linguistic communication, refers to the use of either of
the two to refer to itself or to the other (i.e. C/C, C/M, M/C, M/M). Bateson (1972) distinguishes the denotative, metalinguistic, and metacommunicative levels of abstraction in verbal communication and argues that messages from the latter two levels remain mostly implicit in discourse. Goffman (1974, 1981) further establishes the notion of frame of discourse and discusses the use of language by speakers to organize, and to shift between, frames of talk. In like fashion, Gumperz (1982) proposes the notion of "contextualization cues" to account for speakers' (often implicit) use of linguistic means to signal how utterances are to be appropriately interpreted in their context.

In the last decade or so, various scholars in discourse analysis have advocated for the view of language as a dynamic construct constantly negotiated and reshaped through the interaction of discourse participants (Becker 1988, Biq 1995, 1996, Chui 1994, Du Bois 1987, Hopper 1987, 1988, Liu 1993, Huang 1995, Tao 1996, Wang 1996). Specifically, Becker coins the word "languageing" to emphasize language as an ongoing process, rather than as a static end product. Following this line of conviction, Maschler (1994a, b) develops the notion of "metalanguageing" as opposed to languaging. Languaging is using language to talk about the "world", whereas metalanguageing is using language to talk about using language itself. Maschler points out that every act of using language involves both languaging and metalanguageing. Or, to put it in another pair of terminology, all language use takes place at both the lingual level and the metalingual level. However, depending on the context where it is situated, utterances vary in the impact with which they take place at these two dimensions. Some utterances are particularly intense in the metalingual dimension. For example, Maschler (1994b) proposes that discourse markers should be seen as metalingual expressions marking the frame of discourse (cf. Chafe's notion of regulatory intonation units (1994)), and Maschler (1994a) argues that language alternation (between Hebrew and English) is a metalingual strategy used by bilinguals in conversations with each other to talk about their process of
communication and to negotiate the semantics of terminology when they have disagreement.

Of course, negotiating the semantics of terminology does not occur only when interlocutors have a disagreement. Talking metalingually to do meaning negotiation is also commonly seen when interlocutors misunderstand (Schegloff 1987, Linell 1995), or simply when they sense that there is a gap between their respective understandings of their talk so far. Using data from Mandarin, this paper examines meaning negotiation in monolingual conversation, regardless whether there is an overt, sequentially manifest disagreement or misunderstanding going on. Our database consists of segments of meaning negotiation extracted from naturally occurring Mandarin conversation between two anonymous native speakers and their anonymous American mutual friend, who also speaks fluent Mandarin.

3. Targets of Meaning Negotiation

In this section we examine the types of target of meaning negotiation. Before we discuss targets of meaning negotiation we have seen in our data, let us first briefly review what previous studies have identified as likely "trouble sources" of misunderstanding in talk, since meaning negotiation often takes place when misunderstanding or miscommunication occurs. Schegloff (1987) distinguishes interactionally exogenous factors from interactionally endogenous factors. The former refers to factors such as cultural/linguistic/social differences among interlocutors. For interactionally endogenous factors he provides two categories as examples: problematic reference and problematic sequential implicativeness. Since he is particularly interested in the sequential characteristic of verbal interaction, a substantial portion of his article is then devoted to the discussion of cases of problematic sequential implicativeness. Recently, Linell (1995) lists the following as the "objects/matters" of a misunderstanding or miscommunication event: (identity of) words spoken vs. apprehended,
references and referential perspectives, meaning specifications (aspects of semantic potentials activated), cognitive, emotive or conative attitudes towards things talked about, levels of intentionality (e.g. seriousness vs. joking), and frames, perspectives adopted in interpretation.

Just like the object of a misunderstanding event, targets of meaning negotiation can be distinguished into several groups in terms of the aspect of meaning that is negotiated of the uttered expression. From what we have observed in our data, we suggest that typical targets of meaning negotiation can be of the following categories: (1) the naming and the referring -- the word-world match, and (2) the conversational implicature -- the word-context fit.

3.1 Negotiation of the Naming and of the Referring

Negotiation of the word-world relationship is about the agreement between interlocutors regarding how some object or some situation is best called, described, or referred to. Two subtypes can be further recognized, although the distinction is by no means clear-cut: the negotiation of the naming is about the choice of the linguistic form, and the negotiation of the referring is about the identification of the referent.

3.1.1 Negotiation of the Naming

Negotiation of the naming -- the choice of the linguistic form representing the "object" the speaker refers to -- is best exemplified by the metalinguistic negotiation that occurs when non-hearing or mishearing takes place. Consider the following segment, in which Brian's initial utterance (twice, in lines 3 and 4) of the personal name, 张雁 Zhang Yan, is misheard as zhang ye by Amy: ¹

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¹. The personal name appearing in this segment is a pseudonym, although the phonetic relationship between the original syllable and the mishearing of that syllable is to the same effect as that of the real case in the data.
張雁
Zhang Yan
1. C: ... (5.7) 這是哪,
   zhe shi na
   this be where
   'Where was this,'
2. C: ... 這是哪來的?
   zhe shi na lai de
   this be where come DE
   'Where was this from?'
3. B: ... 張雁-
   zhang yan
   (personal name)
   'Zhang Yan -,'
4. B: ... 張雁帶回來的.
   zhang yan dai hui lai de
   zhang yan bring return come DE
   'Zhang Yan brought it back.'
5. A: ... (2.3) /Zhanye/?
6. B: ... [張雁.
   zhang yan
   (personal name)
   ['Zhang Yan -,'
7. C: ... [張雁是=XX
   zhang yan shi
   Zhang Yan be
   ['Zhang Yan is=XX'
8. B: ... 張雁[XX
   zhang yan
   (personal name)
   'Zhang Yan [XX'
   oh wo yiwei ni shuo di ming
   oh I thought you say place name
   ['Oh I thought you meant the name of some place.'
10. A: ... (2.3) 我以為他說是從甚麼地方,
    wo yiwei ta shuo shi cong shenme difang
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I thought he say be from what place
'I thought he was saying (the thing) was,'

dai hui lai
bring return come
'brought back from some place.'

Negotiation of the naming also occurs when there are discrepancies in the cultural/social/linguistic background between the interlocutors (i.e. Schegloff's exogenous factors in talk-in-interaction). Consider the following segment, where Amy and Brian call the same minority people with different names. This naming discrepancy can be accounted for by their different sociolinguistic upbringing: Amy was from Taiwan and Brian was from Mainland China.²

白 vs. 擺
Bai2 vs. Bai3

1. B: ..雲南比較大的幾種民族,
yunnan bijiao da de ji zhong minzu
Yunnan more big DE several kind people
'The more populous (minority) peoples in Yunnan,'

2. B: ..彝族,
yi zu
Yi people
'Yi,'

3. B: ..傣族,
dai zu
Dai people
'Dai,'

4. B: ..白族,
bai2 zu
Bai people
'Bai2,'
5. B: ... (1.9) 語言都完全不同.
   yuyan dou wanquan bu tong
   language all completely NEG same
   'their languages are completely different.'

6. A: .. 擺族.
   bai3 zu
   Bai3 people
   'Bai3.'

7. B: .. 白族.
   bai2 zu
   Bai2 people
   'Bai2.'

8. A: .. 就是那個提手旁那個,
   jiu shi na ge ti shou pang na ge
   just be that M raise hand radical that M
   '(You mean the character) with the "raise-hand" character,'

   yaobai de bai3
   wiggle DE bai3
   '[(the character to write) the bai3 in the word for "wiggle".]

    bai2
    bai2
    '[Bai2.'

    bai2
    bai2
    'Bai2.'

    bai2
    bai2
    'Bai2.'

    bai2 se de bai2
    white color DE white
    'The bai2 for the color white.'

    oh bai2 se de bai2
Oh white color DE white
'Oh the bai2 for the color white.'

15. B: .. 白族.
    bai2 zu
    Bai2 people
    Bai2 people.'

A subtler kind of negotiation over the name results from the
discrepancies between interlocutors in regard to, in Linell's term, the
cognitive, emotive, and conative attitude towards things talked about.
This type of negotiation is geared more toward the idiosyncratic
differences among individuals regarding the semantics of comparable
expressions rather than their "macro"-cultural/social/linguistic differ-
ences. In the following segment, Amy's offer, 家常菜 jiachang cai
'down home food', is accepted by Brian as an alternative to call the type
of dishes he is going to make in the evening.

家常菜
Jiachang cai
'Down home food'

1. B: .. 我給他們,
    wo gei tamen
    I for them
    'I will,'

2. B: .. 包餃子.
    bao jiaozzi
    wrap dumpling
    'make dumplings for them.'

    gei tamen zuo ji ge cai
    for them do several M dish
    'make some dishes for them.'

4. B: ... (0.8) 不是甚麼大菜.
    bu shi shenme da cai
    NEG be what big dish
    'They are not grand dishes.'
Although 家常菜 jiachang cai 'down home food' is, strictly speaking, not necessarily a small and/or cold dish, as Brian's own term, 小凉菜 xiao liang cai 'small cold dishes', has suggested, it is apparently a satisfactory alternative for Brian to denote what he has in mind, as evidenced by his agreement at line 7.

Negotiation of the name also takes place when a speaker does word search. In the following segment, Amy is trying to recall a phrase from the classical teachings, which presumably "says" what she wants to say "in a nutshell". Brian offers two alternatives to help. After Amy rejects the first one, 食色性也 shi se xing ye 'It's human nature to want to have food and sex' (line 7), Brian proposes the second one, 民以食为天 min yi shi wei tian 'It is natural that people take food as their first priority in life' (line 14). However, Amy appears to be hesitant in ratifying this second offer as the phrase she was searching for.

食色性也
shi se xing ye
'It's human nature to want to have food and sex'

1. A: .. 原文怎麼說不知道,
yuan wen zenme shuo bu zhidao
original text how say NEG know
'(I) don't know the original way of saying it,'
2. A: .. 就是說，
   jiu shi shuo
   just be say
   '(It's) just that,'

3. B: .. [Uhm.]

4. A: .. [要吃飽喝足了才能談文化．]
   yao chi bao he zu le cai neng tan wenhua
   want eat full drink full only then can speak culture
   ['culture will be considered only when there is enough food for everyone.'

5. A: ... 那，
   na
   then
   'Now,'

6. A: .. 大陸普通的一個窮字．
   dalu pupian de yi ge qiong zi
   mainland throughout DE one M poor character
   'throughout Mainland China people are still poor.'

7. B: (0) 食色性也=．
   shi se xing ye
   food sex human nature PRT
   '(It's the saying) "It is human nature to want to have food and sex".'

8. A: .. 那個食色性也是另外一個，
   na ge shi se xing ye shi lingwai yi ge
   that M food sex human nature PRT be another one M
   'It's not (the saying) "It is human nature to want to have food and sex",'

9. A: .. 就是說，
   jiu shi shuo
   just BE say
   'It's that,'

10. B: .. 就是吃嘛．
    jiu shi chi ma
    just BE eat PRT
    'It's (about wanting to) eat, right?'
11. A: (0) /Yeah/啊,
   yeah a
   'Yeah,'

12. A:...就是說他的衣食溫飽以後才能談,
   jiu shi shuo tade yi shi wenbao yihou cai neng tan
   just be say his clothes food warm full then only then can speak
   'It means that only after one has enough food and shelter,'

13. A: ... (1.5) [才能談=,
   cai neng tan
   only then can speak
   ['only then can one speak,'

14. B: ... (1.5) [民以食為天嘛.
   min yi shi wei tian ma
   people take food as heaven PRT
   ['(It's the saying) 'It is natural that people take food as their first priority in life'.

15. A: ...文化就對了.
   wenhua jiu dui le
   culture then right PRT
   'about culture.'

16. B: .. Um.

17. B: ...民以食為天.
   min yi shi wei tian
   people take food as heaven PRT
   '(It's the saying) 'It is natural that people take food as their first priority in life'.


19. B: .. 就是說先得吃飽飯,
   jiu shi shuo xian dei chi bao fan
   just BE say first have to eat full rice
   'It means people have to be fed first,'

20. B: .. 別的再做.
   biede zai zuo
   other then do
   'then can other things be done.'
22. A: .. 那你=,
   na ni
   then you
   'Now,'

23. A: .. 現在是連,
   xianzai shi lian
   now be even
   '(the situation is that) even,'

   chi fan dou cheng wenti
   eat rice all become problem
   'the food is not enough (to feed people).' 

25. A: .. 那,
   na
   then
   'Then,'

   huanjing weisheng na xie genben jiu bu yao shuo
   environment hygiene that M completely just NEG want
   speak
   'how will things like environmental hygiene [be paid
   attention to?'

27. B: .. [那是啊所以 XX,
   na shi a suoyi
   that be PRT so
   '['You're right so XX,' 

Some meaning negotiations do occur in the form of a repair but take place well before a misunderstanding is formed. On the other hand, the recipient (of the key expression) is not the only party that can initiate meaning negotiation. The speaker of the key expression can also take the initiative. In the following segment, Brian metalingually remarks on the key expressions, 老公 laogong 'husband', at the same time when he utters it. He comments that 老公 laogong 'husband' is an expression originated from Taiwan (拿台灣話說 na taiwan hua shuo in Taiwanese slang', at line 2), thereby displaying his awareness of and
attentiveness to the sociolinguistic differences between himself and Amy.

老公
Laogong
'Husband'
1. B: ... 我認識很多朋友都是=,
    wo renshi hen duo pengyou dou shi
    I know very many friend all be
    'Many friends of mine are,'
2. B: .. 拿台灣話說這老公,
    na taiwan hua shuo zhe laogong
    take Taiwan speech say this husband
    'their husband -- which is called laogong in Taiwan
    slang --';
3. B: ... 做菜,
    zuo cai
    make dish
    'can cook,'
4. B: .. 都比太太強.
    dou bi taitai qiang
    all compare wife better
    'better than their wives.'
5. A: .. 嗯真好.
    en zhen hao
    en real good
    'That's great.'

3.1.2 Negotiation of the Referring

The negotiation of the referring in conversation occurs in two situations: (1) when interlocutors have discrepancies in interpreting the referent of the use of an expression, or (2) when the recipient does not have the (world) knowledge of the referent.

The first situation is what Schegloff (1987) calls problematic reference. It often occurs with uses of pronominals and demonstratives, of which the recipient may cast an interpretation different from that of
the speaker. Consider the following segment, in which the recipient, Brian, initially interprets the demonstrative expression, 這邊 zhe bian 'here', as referring to the United States when in fact the speaker, Amy, San Francisco:

那你要在這邊待多久
na ni yao zai zhe bian dai duojiu
'So how long are you going to stay here'

1. A: .. (2.1) 那你要在這邊多,
   na ni yao zai zhe bian duo
   so you want at this side much
   'So you're going to be here for how,'

2. A: .. 待,
   dai
   stay
   'stay (here),'

3. A: .. 多久?
   duojiu
   how long
   'for how long?'

4. B: .. 我們是=決心不回去了.
   women shi juexin bu hui qu le
   we be determined NEG return go PRT
   'We've determined not to return (to Mainland China).'</n
5. A: .. 喔.
   oh
   'Oh.'

6. A: .. 決心.
   juexin
   determined
   'Determined.'

7. A: .. 不是.
   bu shi
   NEG be
   'No.'

   wo shi shuo zai sanfan shi
I be say at San Francisco city
'I meant [at San Francisco.]

zai jiujinshan
at San Francisco
['at San Francisco.]

oh
'Oh.'

wo mingtian jiu che
I tomorrow then leave
'I will leave tomorrow.'

The second situation is less context relevant compared with the above one. The negotiation is rather a conceptual inquiry on the part of the recipient of the encyclopedic information about the referent of the expression uttered by the speaker. Consider the following segment, in which Amy inquires about the concept of 絲網印 si wang yin 'silk screen print' after Brian mentions this term:

絲網印
siwangyin
'Silk screen print'

1. B: 也也有那個=,
   Ye ye you na ge
   Also also have that M
   'There's also that=,'

2. B: un=,

si wang yin
   silk screen print
   'silk screen print.'

si wang yin
   silk screen print
   'Silk screen print.'
5. B: ... 絲網印.
si wang yin
silk screen print
'Silk screen print.'

6. A: ... 甚麼東西?
shenme dongxi
what thing
'What is it?'

7. B: ... 它也就是叫印畫.
ta ye jiu shi jiao yinhua
it also just be call print
'It's also called prints.'

8. A: ... 絲-
si
silk
'Si-,'

9. A: ... 網-
wang
screen
'wang-'

10. A: ... 印.
yin
print
'yin.'

11. B: ... 對一種特殊的印畫辦法就是,
dui yi zhong teshu de yinhua banfa jiu shi
right one kind special DE print method just be
'Yeah it's a special kind of printing method it's that,'

12. B: ... 它印出來跟你這個原畫很像.
ta yin chulai gen ni zhe ge yuan hua hen xiang
it print out and you this M original painting very alike
'it looks almost identical to the original painting.'

13. A: ... 你就說也是一種複製.
ni jiu shuo ye shi yi zhong fuzhi
you just say also be one kind replica
'You mean it's a kind of replica.'
ye shi fuzhipin danshi jiu shi ne yi ge shi yishujia benren qian ming
also be replica but just be PRT one M be artist oneself sign name
'It is a replica but it's just that it will be signed by the artist.'

15. A: .. Oh.

16. B: 再一個呢就是,
zai yi ge ne jiu shi
also one M PRT just be
'Another point is,'

17. B: 它,
ta
it
'it,'

18. B: 印刷呢,
yinshua ne
print PRT
'when it's printed,'

19. B: ...它,
ta
it
'it,'

feichang jiejin nide yuan hua
very close your original painting
'looks very similar to the original.'

ni bu zixi kan ba fen bu tai qingchu
you NEG carefully look PRT distinguish NEG too clear
'If you don't look carefully you can't tell.'

22. A: .. Um.

23. B: ...是原畫還是印刷品.
shi yuan hua hai shi yinshuapin
be original painting or be print
'whether it's the original or a print.'
The negotiation of the ambiguous reference (e.g. as in the 那你要在這裡多待多久 na ni yao zai zhe bian dai duojiu 'So how long are you going to stay here' example) is clearly meta-talk. That is, interlocutors talk about the use of certain pronominal/demonstrative just uttered in order to clarify the speaker's intended reference. However, the metalingual nature of the negotiation of the encyclopedic information is relatively less conspicuous, because what is being discussed is information about the "object" or the "matter" in the extralinguistic world. This process is similar to the usual process of requesting further information on a conversational topic. Compare the 絹網印 si wang yin 'silk screen print' segment and the 出版公司 chuban gongsi 'publishing company' segment in the following:

出版公司
chuban gongsi
'Publishing company'

1. B: ... (1.2) 我們現在只想搞一個, women xianzai zhi xiang gao yi ge we now only want do one M 'Now we only want to set up a,'

2. B: ... 出版公司.
   chuban gongsi
   publish company
   'publishing company.'

3. A: ... (1.4) 出版公司.
   chuban gongsi
   publish company
   'Publishing company.'

4. B: ... 對.
   dui
   right
   'Yes.'

5. A: ... 出版,
   chuban
   publish
   'To publish,'
   bu zhi shi hua de dongxi
   NEG only be painting DE things
   'not just paintings.'

7. B: .. 不.
   bu
   NEG
   'No.'

8. B: .. 是,
    shi
    be
    'It's,'

9. B: .. 主要是--,
    zhuyao shi
    mainly be
    'mainly,'

10. B: .. 主要是--,
    zhuyao shi
    mainly be
    'mainly,'

11. B: .. 小小小小的--,
    xiao xiao xiao xiao de
    small small small small DE
    'small,'

    hua ce
    painting book
    'art books'


14. B: ... (0.7) 就是兒童讀物.
    jiu shi ertong duwu
    just be children reading
    '(I meant) children's books.'

15. A: .. 等於說 um=,
    dengyu shuo
    equal say
    'It's the same as um=,'
16. A: 自,
   zi
   self
   'yourself,'

17. A: 自己不做,
    ziji bu zuo
    self NEG do
    'you don't do (paintings).'

18. B: ... (0.7) 自己也畫,
    ziji ye hua
    self also paint
    'I'll [still paint,'

19. A: ... [不是只是,
    bu shi zhi shi
    NEG be only be
    '(You're) not just,'

20. B: ... [自己也畫.
    ziji ye hua
    self also paint
    'I will also do the paintings.'

21. A: ... [只是畫.
    zhi shi hua
    only be paint
    'doing the painting only.'

22. B: ... 自己也畫.
    ziji ye hua
    self also paint
    'I'll also do the paintings.'

    ranhou ziji ye jingying
    then self also run
    'and you also run the business.'

24. B: 對.
    dui
    right
    'Right.'
In both segments further information is demanded for a newly established conversational topic. However, we argue that (from what we retrospectively know as analysts who get to see how the two interlocutors interact) the 絲網印 si wang yin 'silk screen print' segment is still primarily a meta-talk while the 出版公司 chuban gongsi 'publishing company' segment is an "ordinary" inquiry for further information. What is being negotiated in the 絲網印 si wang yin 'silk screen print' segment is the word-world match between the key expression, previously unknown or unfamiliar to the recipient, and (the identity of) the referent of this expression, which presumably is also unknown or unfamiliar to the recipient previously. In other words, the negotiation is an inquiry on the part of the addressee, and a defense and justification on the part of the speaker, on why a particular linguistic term is used to refer to some object/concept in the extralinguistic world. In the 絲網印 si wang yin 'silk screen print' segment the two interlocutors temporarily suspends their ongoing conversation and sidetrack to straighten up the word-world match. In the 出版公司 chuban gongsi 'publishing company' segment, on the other hand, the interlocutors do not sidetrack but rather continue to develop the ongoing conversation by discussing more information on the topic. The 滿牆風動 man qiang feng dong 'the breeze is all over the walls' segment provided at the beginning of this paper is another metalingual example of the negotiation of encyclopedic information about the referent of a key expression. While the encyclopedic information about how vivid those mural paintings were is conveyed "lingually", the taking place of this exchange of information at this particular juncture of the two participants' interaction is metalingual because both want to make sure that the recipient knows how the speaker wants her to understand his use of the key expression.

3.2 Negotiation of the Conversational Implicature

Meaning negotiation of the conversational implicature (Levinson 1983) largely corresponds to what Schegloff (1987) refers to as
problematic sequential implicativeness, but it may also be dealing with footnoting (Goffman 1981, Schiffrin 1987, Levinson 1988, Scheglof 1988, Antaki et al. 1996), i.e. the participation status, or "voice", with which the speaker utters the key expression. It is the negotiation of whether the use of the expression -- together with what is implied by the utterance of this expression -- fits in well with the context of the talk. Usually, the sequential relationship between interlocutors' turns exhibits this type of negotiation. In talk, 'next turn can display the analysis its speaker has made of prior turn and can thereby trigger an effort by initial speaker to initiate repair if a misunderstanding is claimed' (Scheglof 1987:206). For example, Scheglof points out that if a joke is not taken by the addressee as such, the expected next turn, a laughter, will be missing, and the initial speaker who made the joke would recognize, by the absence of this expected next turn, that his/her interlocutor has taken the joke "seriously" and may thus set out to repair this misunderstanding. Just as a joke may be taken with the face value of the utterance rather than with the intended humor, an expression may be taken "literally" rather than with its conventional, idiomatic meaning, or vise versa (cf. the constructive vs. composite distinction and the favored action interpretation in Scheglof (1987)).

The following segment from our Mandarin database presents an example of meaning negotiation of the (particularized) conversational implicature. In order to understand this example, a little background about the relationship between the conversation participants is required. Both Amy and Brian were guests of Charles', their American mutual friend who lived in a boarding house. Brian came to visit from another town and was staying with Charles but Amy was Charles' local friend. Prior to the following segment, Brian announced that he would make dumplings for dinner that evening. He did not elaborate, but the food was presumably prepared for himself and Charles, and he also asked Amy if she was going to stay for dinner. Amy said half jokingly that it would depend on whether Charles, the host, would grant her an invitation. Then they sidetracked to talk about other things such as their
respective cooking skills, during which time Charles left the conversation for other things. After realizing that Amy also knew how to make dumplings, Brian had the following conversation with her:

留客 1
liu ke
'Ask the guest to stay' 1
1. B: ... (5.8) 如果你會做,
ruguo ni hui zuo
if you know how to do
'If you know how to make (dumplings),'
2. B: ... 更好啊.
geng hao a
even good PRT
'that's even better.'
3. B: ... 你可以幫忙嘛.
ni keyi bangmang ma
you can help PRT
'You can be a help.'
4. A: ... 好啊.
hao a
OK PRT
'Sure.'
5. A: ... 算是留客囉.
suan shi liu ke lo
count be keep guest PRT
'So this counts as your request for me (the guest) to stay.'

There are several layers of meaning in Brian's utterance at line 3, 你可以幫忙嘛 ni keyi bangmang ma 'You can be a help'. First, taken literally, it is an assessment of Amy's worthiness if she were to be put in the kitchen that evening. However, it also carries a (particularized) conversational implicature that Brian is asking Amy to stay to help. Notice that Amy's reply at line 4, 好啊 hao a 'Sure', indicates that she has taken Brian's talk as such, i.e. a (indirect) request (or invitation) for
her to stay to help preparing the meal.

Now, Brian's request for help with the meal does not logically warrant that Amy can stay to eat the meal. However, given the occasion, which is a social one, the prior text, in which it was revealed that Amy had not yet gotten an invitation (from Charles), and the fact that Brian was "the" cook, it is reasonable for Amy to infer Brian's utterance at line 3 with a "further" (particularized) conversational implicature, i.e. that Brian is inviting her to stay to share the dinner. Given the politeness situation here where Amy would commit a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson 1987) if she stayed to eat the dinner without really being invited to do so, it is reasonable that Amy wants to confirm the invitation "on record". Thus, through an assessment at line 5, 留客囉 suan shi liu ke lo 'So this counts as your request for me (the guest) to stay', Amy explicitly seeks Brian's agreement on her inference of Brian's utterance at line 3 as an invitation (to eat the dinner). Amy's speech at line 5 is an example of meta-talk about the negotiation of (particularized) conversational implicature, because she is talking about the implied meaning of Brian's utterance at line 3 as it is sequentially situated in their talk.

3.3 Meaning Negotiation as Routinized Socialization Mechanism

To someone who participates in conversation -- which means virtually every human being--, meaning negotiation is a routinized socialization mechanism that facilitates his/her continuing (re)definition in daily life about self and the "world" at large (Ochs 1996). Through meaning negotiations constantly and ubiquitously occurring in our verbal communication with other people, we update and renew our knowledge, perception, and views about the "world" and our relationship with this "world". The negotiations of the naming and of the referring are straightforward examples. The metalinguial negotiation of the naming in conversation is a process in which
speakers display their own socio-cultural upbringing, ideology, and linguistic aptitude/sophistication. On the other hand, they are also exposed to their interlocutor's ways of using language which may be different from their own due to their varied social/cultural/linguistic background. The metalingual negotiation of the referring works in like fashion. Through such a negotiation, a conversation participant becomes acquainted with new realms of knowledge (i.e. "objective" information and "subjective" views and perceptions) and acquires (partial) membership to the circles of discourse previously closed to him/her. As one's "world" is constantly revised and updated, one's relationship to this world and his/her own identity are also reshaped and redefined in a continuous process.

The metalingual negotiation of conversational implicature is also a mechanism for socialization but with a more specific focus. When participants metalingually negotiate about how some utterance is said with implicated meanings, they are jointly constructing, following, and/or revising the conventions of how the language is to be used (by the people of the community that speak this language and in the particular speech setting). What they essentially negotiate are, for example, what is a politeness situation and how such a situation should jointly be handled by parties involved, or, what a joke is and how a joke should be initiated and received. Through this metalingual negotiation the conventions they already know are confirmed, rectified, or challenged, and, in like fashion, the conventions that they were not aware of are ratified or dismissed. Inasmuch as that metalingual negotiations of the naming and of the referring are mechanisms for socialization through which one (re)defines the "world" and self, the metalingual negotiation of the conversational implicature is a mechanism specifically for getting oneself socialized in linguistic communication. Needless to say, socialization in linguistic communication is a particular type of socialization in human life, since figuring out how to use language to communicate with other people constitutes part of one's relationship with the "world", and that understanding

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eventually contributes to the construction of the person's identity.

Arguably, languaging is itself already a routinized process for socialization. Metalanguaging, or using language to negotiate meaning, however, is a self-referential act. It provides a socialization channel that takes the advantage of the reflexive awareness of the interlocutors about what they are doing (Lucy 1993). In metalinguual talk interlocutors can check on any discrepancies which they suspect that will hinder their ongoing communication and therefore need to be dealt with explicitly and immediately. It is in metalinguual negotiation that interlocutors modify, update, or simply renew -- rather than confirm -- their current knowledge of the "world", including their knowledge of linguistic communication. Thus, the negotiations of the naming and of the referring appear to be done metalingually more often than not, since these types of negotiation typically involve the renewal of the individual's knowledge of the "world". The negotiation of the conversational implicature is, on the other hand, not necessarily done metalingually and perhaps not done metalingually as often as lingually. Indeed, in our 留客 liu ke 'ask the guest to stay' segment there is a case of languaging, rather than metalanguaging, about conversational implicature, at lines 3-4. As pointed out before, Brian's utterance at line 3 is an assessment but it conversationally implicates a request for Amy to stay to help. At line 4, Amy responds to that conversational implicature with an agreement token. The conversational implicature is thus negotiated between the two parties, and it is primarily done lingually, rather than metalingually. However, as discussed above about what happens at line 5, when interlocutors are uncertain about their mutual understanding regarding the word-context fit, they still resort to meta talk to resolve the problem.

4. Meaning Negotiation and Its Sequential Properties

In this section we want to examine how meaning negotiation is
procedurally achieved. We start with cases that have relatively more overt "formal" properties. We then move on to other cases that do not have apparent, readily manifest formal markings. We argue that the expectations and constraints that are projected onto the interlocutors' sequentially positioned turns are the basis that renders metalingual meaning negotiation possible.

4.1 Side Sequence

Many meaning negotiation occur in the form of a side sequence (Jefferson 1972) with relatively identifiable transition boundaries. Negotiations of the naming or of the referring are often executed in a side sequence. Such a side sequence is usually preceded by the utterance of the key expression by the original speaker. Given a dyadic setting, the side sequence is typically initiated by the recipient with a repetition of the key expression, or a formulation of the key expression based on his/her comprehension/understanding, which may sometimes be preceded or followed by, or embedded in, a confirmation-seeking format such as a question. The original speaker can then do a number of things to suggest his/her ratification or correction of the recipient's formulation of the key expression, such as repeating the key expression again, uttering a reactive expression to accept or reject the recipient's formulation, offering a collaborative finish (Lerner 1991, Clancy et al. 1996), or providing further elaboration on the key expression. The side sequence may be completed if the original speaker ratifies/accepts the recipient's formulation, but it may go on under two conditions. First, the recipient, after obtaining a satisfactory feedback from the original speaker, may reiterate the key expression once again or make some further comments on it. The original speaker may then either provide some more feedback (further elaboration, another paraphrase, or some agreement expression) and then go back to the ongoing conversation, or he/she simply go back to the ongoing conversation without responding to the recipient's comments/repetition. The second condition in which
the side sequence continues is when the original speaker rejects the recipient's first round of query. When the recipient attempts his/her second query, he/she typically ventures to offer a paraphrase, i.e. an interpretation of the key expression based on his/her understanding of the original speaker's rendering, rather than trying reiterate, according to his/her own comprehension, the key expression once again. The exchange then recyclces with the original speaker's ratification/rejection, etc. The following schema profiles a prototypical meaning negotiation sequence:

a. original speaker -- utterance of key expression
b. recipient -- query 1 -- sequence BEGINNING
   reformulation/repetition of key expression (optionally with confirmation-seeking format)
c. original speaker
   acceptance -- reactive expression, repetition -- OPTIONAL sequence EXIT 1
   rejection -- repetition, elaboration, etc.
d. recipient
   to original speaker acceptance -- repetition, comments -- OPTIONAL sequence EXIT 2
   to original speaker rejection -- query 2 (usually with own paraphrase)
e. original speaker
   to recipient further comment -- further comment (repetition, elaboration) --OPTIONAL sequence EXIT 3
   to recipient query 2 -- RECYCLE c-e

In the beginning of a meaning negotiation side sequence is not realized until the recipient utters his/her (first) query, the query's taking place requires the antecedent of the original speaker's (first) utterance of the key expression. On the other hand, while the exit of a meaning negotiation side sequence can be done in several ways, the original speaker's response to the recipient's first query is minimum requirement before the negotiation sequence can be said to have completed. The a-
b-c steps in the schema are reminiscent of the 3-step exchange structure (initiation, response, follow-up) proposed by Coulthard & Brazil (1981). However, in the exchange structure while the initiation predicts the response, in the meaning negotiation sequence, the binding relationship between the original speaker's (first) utterance and the recipient's (initial) query is the other way round, with the former being the antecedent of the latter but the latter not necessarily the predicted consequent given the former. In other words, the original speaker's utterance does not predict the recipient's query, or, the recipient's query is not something projectable from the original speaker's utterance.

4.2 Meta-Talk Devices

Many meaning negotiations are not done in the typical side sequence format with well delineated a-b-c steps and the antecedent prompt. However, the metalingual nature of these meaning negotiations is marked by either lexicalized regulatory elements that frame segments of discourse, or by mechanisms in the turn-taking system in conversational interaction (Sacks, Scheglof, & Jefferson 1974), or by both. In terms of the lexicalized regulatory elements, we notice that the verb of saying is often used in combination with first or second person pronouns to suggest the metalingual nature of meaning negotiation. Expressions such as 你是說 wo shi shuo 'you mean', 我是說 wo shi shuo 'I mean', or their equivalents, indicate that the speaker is doing meta-talk (as seen in the 張雁 'Zhang Yan' segment, at line 9, and in the 那你要在這邊待多久 na ni yao zai zhe bian dai duojiu 'So how long are you going to stay here' segment, at line 8). Furthermore, in the 老公 laogong 'husband' segment, the meta comment, 拿台灣話說 na taiwan hua shuo 'in Taiwanese slang', occurs as a parenthetical in the midst of the telling of the main point that Brian is trying to make, 我認識很多朋友都是這老公做菜都比太太強 wo renshi hen duo pengyou dou shi zhe laogong zuo cai dou bi taitai qiang 'I have many friends whose husbands cook better', and it involves the verb of saying,
說 *shuo* 'say', and a zero agentive pronoun presumably understood as denoting the speaker.

There are also many meaning negotiation cases that are carried out in terms of the mechanisms in the turn-taking system. These mechanisms include notions that define and delineate the interactional structure of the turn-taking system, such as repair, overlap, collaborative/anticipatory finish, and the significant silence between turns. In the *家常菜 jia chang cai* 'down home food' segment, for example, the negotiation is done in the form of an other-initiated other-repair, with a lapse preceding the repair (Amy's turn at line 6). The relatively long lapse before Amy starts to speak, as well as the status of her utterance, *家常菜 jia chang cai* 'down home food', as both syntactically an unattached nominal expression and semantically a term comparable to the very last nominal expression in Brian's preceding utterance (*小凉菜 xiao liang cai* 'small cold dishes', in line 5), must have indicated to Brain that this is a repair and an alternative on the naming offered by Amy. Indeed, Brian's agreement token in the next turn (line 7) is evidence of this understanding. Incidentally, the *家常菜 jia chang cai* 'down home food' segment can be seen as a side sequence in its "reduced" form, in which steps b and c are bypassed while the recipient goes directly to offer an alternative based on her understanding so far. In any case, the lapse and the repair at line 6 are procedurally the keys to the success of this incident of meaning negotiation.

4.3 Sequential Expectations and Constraints

While meaning negotiation segments can be identified in various ways as previously discussed, the factors that make interlocutors know that a meaning negotiation is going on are something more fundamental than formal delineation. Research in linguistic pragmatics in the past several decades directs our attention to what Levinson (1995a) identifies as the two heuristics that guide our reasoning process in order
to achieve mutual comprehension in human communication: the heuristics based on utterance types and the heuristics based on sequential expectations. The former set of heuristics primarily refers to the (revised) Gricean maxims underlying the efficient and cooperative use of language (Grice 1975, Levinson 1983, 1987, Horn 1984, Sperber & Wilson 1986): (1) Normal expression indicates stereotypical relation, (2) Abnormal relation warrants abnormal/marked description, and (3) If an informationally richer description applies, use it (Levinson 1995a, 1995b). The set of heuristics based on sequential expectations, on the other hand, refers to the 'feedback potential and sequential constraints of conversational exchange' (Levinson 1995a:238) that are established along the turn-taking system. As Levinson puts it, '[f]or a two-turn sequence A-B (like question-answer or offer-acceptance), each turn usually has rather restrictive specifications on form and content: the first turn because otherwise it will fail to be recognized as kicking off such a sequence, and the second because the first has been designed specifically to elicit it' (Levinson 1995a:235). Notions about the local management of conversation such as adjacency-pairs, (significant) silence, pre-sequences, and preference organization (Levinson 1983, Sacks 1987, Schegloff 1980, Schegloff & Sacks 1973) have been pointed out as potential sequential clues that interlocutors take into consideration in forming an interpretation of what their partner has just said, in making inferences on the partner's intention (based on his/her interpretation of the partner's utterance), and in taking action to respond to his/her reading of the partner's intention (Drew 1995).

The undertaking of metalingual negotiation relies heavily on the sequential expectations and constraints that exist between turns taken by interlocutors. In fact, it is precisely these clues that make us recognize a side sequence on meaning negotiation as such. For example, in a prototypical situation, the recipient's repetition of the key expression just uttered by the original speaker (as the recipient's initiation step in a meaning negotiation side sequence) suggests to the original speaker that the recipient has problems with the key expression
(metalingual or not, at this point), since the recipient is typically not expected to reiterate in the next turn what the original speaker has just said.

Perhaps examples lacking a clearly identified side sequence structure better illustrate the power of sequential expectations and constraints on the workings of metalingual meaning negotiation. We looked at the 留客 liu ke 'ask the guest to stay' segment above when we discussed the metalingual negotiation over the conversational implicature of an utterance. What immediately follows where the segment ended is another metalingual negotiation, again on conversational implicature. This time we will focus on how sequential expectations and constraints generate and warrant the success of this metalingual negotiation:

留客 2
liu ke
'Ask the guest to stay' 2

1. B: ... (5.8) 如果你會做,
rugo ni hui zuo
  'if you know how to do
'If you know how to make (dumplings),'

2. B: ... 更好啊.
geng hao a
even good PRT
  'that's even better.'

3. B: ... 你可以幫忙嘛.
ni keyi bangmang ma
  you can help PRT
  'You can be a help.'

4. A: ... 好啊.
hao a
  OK PRT
  'Sure.'

5. A: ... 算是留客囉.
suan shi liu ke lo
  count be keep guest PRT
'So this counts as your request for me (the guest) to stay.'

6. B: ... (2.0) 本來他們這就是一個,
   benlai tamen zhe jiu shi yi ge
   originally then this just be one M
   'This (gathering of theirs) was supposed to be a,'

7. B: ... um=,

8. A: .. 你是說,
   ni shi shuo
   you be say
   'You mean,'

9. A: .. 等-,
   deng
   wait
   'la-,'

10. A: .. 等會兒他們住在這裡的,
    denghui shi tamen zhu zai zheli de
    later be they live at here DE
    'later everyone who lives here,'

    dahu dou yiqi chi
    everyone all together eat
    'will eat together,'

12. A: .. 還是,
    hai shi
    or be
    'Or,'

    dui a
    right PRT
    'Yeah,'

    oh
    'Oh,'

15. A: .. 那很好.
    na hen hao
    that very good
'That's good.'

After Amy's explicit assessment (at line 5) of Brian's prior utterance as an (indirect) invitation, what we have is a classic example of dispreferred second. An assessment requires a second from the recipient of this assessment, which is preferably an agreement (Levinson 1983, Pomerantz 1984, Sacks 1987). A disagreement is dispreferred, and its delivery is typically marked with structural complexities such as being preceded by a significant delay or being executed with hesitation forms. Here, after a two second lapse Brian starts to say something that quickly turns out to be a non-agreement. While we have no way of knowing what actually went through Brian's mind at the time, we can safely say that, judging from the delay and his bypass of the preferred response (agreement), Brian probably did not want to, at least not on record, commit himself an invitation to Amy (to stay to have the dinner with them), since he was not the host after all. Had he done so, he would have been impolite to Charles, the host.

Brian's utterance at line 6 begins his attempt to resolve the dilemma he is facing, i.e. that he cannot on record issue an invitation because he is not the host, and that he cannot suggest to Amy that she is not invited because that would also be a socially face-threatening act to all parties involved (Amy, Charles, and himself) (Brown & Levinson 1987). Although he never finishes what he starts to say at line 6, we (as analysts) know, by learning that he later agrees with what Amy says, that he means to point out that an invitation is not even an issue here. He wants to explain that the dinner is going to be for everyone in the boarding house, including Charles' housemates (whom presumably neither he nor Amy was familiar with). Everyone "at the scene", so to speak, is invited. By implication, Amy, who is a friend of Charles', is more than welcome to join.

What we are interested in is how Amy and Brian metalingually deal with the assessment/disagreement pair in this sequence. Notice that after Brian barely starts, Amy jumps in when he demonstrates
disfluency/hesitation (line 7) to offer her formulation of what he was going to say, based on the few words he has just said. Notice also that she starts her turn with 你是說 *ni shì shuō* 'you mean', a lexicalized regulatory expression to frame her meta-talk. Now, what Amy says in lines 8-12 manifests interaction at both lingual and metalingual dimensions. At the lingual level, her words constitute a virtual rendition of what Brian wanted to say. (We know this since Brian later agrees with what she says.) More interestingly, however, is what Amy says at the metalingual level. There are at least two aspects to it:

First, by jumping in in the midst of Brian’s turn before Brian finishes his speech, with her own formulation to deliver what she believes is what Brian wants to say, Amy is metalingually telling Brian the following: 'I use what I am saying to "talk about" what you have just said and what you were about to say. I demonstrate, in my words (using of language), that I know what you meant to tell me, even before you complete your speech.'

Furthermore, by reformulating Brian’s sequentially dispreferred second, Amy is telling Brian the following: 'I use what I am saying, which is my formulation of what I believe is what you want to say, to "discuss" your utterance as a dispreferred second in our talk. Since I know what you want to tell me (which is derived from the discussion in the last paragraph), I understand the reason you say it. Since I am aware that you know that what you want to say is not a preferred second (i.e. a disagreement), your saying what you want to say and your not saying a (preferred) agreement are both strategically motivated. You want to explain the situation, i.e., an invitation isn’t even an issue. I now understand it. By inference I further understand that my assessment of your previous utterance as an invitation was irrelevant. I also understand that my seeking your agreement on that assessment is irrelevant, too.'

Amy’s anticipatory completion of Brian’s dispreferred second with her own formulation of what (she believes is what) he wants to say (lines 8-12) metalingually dismisses Amy’s agreement-seeking
assessment a few turns ago (line 5). In other words, by intercepting Brian's dispreferred second (in the form of a repair at the lingual level), Amy interrupts the completion of the adjacency pair -- assessment and disagreement, and thereby invalidates the assessment as an agreement-seeking first. What Amy does in lines 8-12 is an other-initiated other-repair (both by Amy) of Brian's speech (lines 6-7) at the lingual level, but it is also an other-initiated (à la Brian at lines 6-7) self-repair (i.e. by Amy herself) at the metalingual level, which "corrects" Amy's earlier assessment (at line 5) of the conversational implicature of Brian's words at line 3 as an invitation to eat the dinner.

As we can see from lines 13-15, Amy and Brian have eventually come to understand each other. Brian offers an early confirmation at line 13 on Amy's repair before Amy goes on to open up an alternative with a choice-type question (line 12) (Li & Thompson 1981). At lines 14 and 15, Amy provides reactive expressions noting Brian's confirmation on her repair. The negotiation about the invitation to eat the dinner is finally accomplished. Notice that from line 6 to line 15 we have a modified side sequence: (a) Brian's antecedent prompt at lines 6-7, (b) Amy's query with her own formulation at lines 8-12, (c) Brian's acceptance at line 13, and (d) Amy's follow-up comments after Brian's ratification at lines 14-15.

4.4 Meaning Negotiation and Human Anticipatory Interactive Planning

Finally, we need to note that meta-talk about language use is a manifestation of human anticipatory interactive planning. Goody (1995a) argues that 'effective social living requires anticipation of the actions of others, calculation of short- and long-term costs and gains, and close attention to signals about the consequences of one's own behaviour. The higher primates, and man, have the ability to model this interdependence of one's own and others' behaviour at the cognitive level' (2). She calls this kind of cognitive ability anticipatory
interactive planning (AIP).

In the longer 留客 liu ke 'ask the guest to stay' segment, we have seen anticipatory interactive planning manifested at both the lingual level and the metalingual level. The sequential relation between Brian's indirect request at line 3 and Amy's compliance at line 4 is an instance of AIP at the lingual level. More importantly, the other AIP instances in the segment involve meta-talk on meaning negotiation: (1) Amy's assessment at line 5 (regarding Brian's utterance at line 3) and Brian's response at lines 6-7, (2) Brian's dispreferred second at lines 6-7 -- which is part of the meaning negotiation started at line 5 -- and Amy's repair at lines 8-12, and (3) Amy's speech at lines 8-12 -- which is also part of the meaning negotiation started at line 5 -- and Brian's early confirmation response at line 13. When these locally managed AIPs are put into the larger sequence, we have an even better picture of how conversational implicature is negotiated in step-by-step interaction. Specifically, the sequential relationship among Amy's line 5, Brian's lines 6-7, and Amy's lines 8-12 manifests interlocutors' turn-by-turn anticipatory interactive planning regarding the negotiation of the conversational implicature of Brian's utterance at line 3. As pointed out above, Amy's other-repair at the lingual level (lines 8-12) is at the same time a self-repair at the metalingual level. Again, it takes the sequentially defined notions such as adjacency pair and dispreferred second, which project certain expectations and constraints on the next turns, for us to come to appreciate how one stretch of utterances (lines 8-12) conveys multiple messages at two interactional dimensions.

5. Concluding Summary

In this paper I have discussed a number of aspects of meaning negotiation as seen in daily conversation. Meaning negotiation is primarily meta-talk about the use of language. It is a self-referential act in language use that manifests the reflexive awareness in human communication. The targets of meaning negotiation include those about
the word-world match and those about the word-context fit. As a means to accomplish these matches and fits, meaning negotiation is a routinized socialization mechanism for the continuing process of (re)defining the world and self in human daily life. Procedurally, meaning negotiation can be accomplished primarily because of the sequential nature of conversational exchange and the assumptions, expectations, and constraints that sequentially pre-positioned speaker turns can project onto sequentially post-positioned turns. Given the reflexive, socializational, and sequential characteristics discussed here, this study of meaning negotiation in Chinese conversation provides support to the cross-linguistic cross-cultural study of human interactional intelligence (Goody 1995b).
Appendix: Conversation Transcription Conventions


- speaker identity and intonation unit :
- truncated intonation unit --
- truncated word -
- lengthened syllable =
- beginning of speech overlap [
- final intonation .
- continuing intonation ,
- appeal intonation ?
- long pause ...(N)
- medium pause ...
- short pause ..
- latching (0)
- indiscernible sound/speech XX
- sounds with no recognizable meaning /.../
References


Maschler, Yael. 1994a. 'Appreciation ha'araxa 'o ha'aratsa?' ['valuing or admiration']. *Text* 14.2:207-238.


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