

Increments in Mandarin Chinese

Emergent Units in Action

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If forms of increments are epiphenomenal to the action of retroactively modifying or extending utterances that are possibly perceived as complete, what sorts of contingencies might there be in conversations that motivate such an interactional practice? From *how* increments are done, we now transition into *what* increments may be doing in Chinese conversations. Chapters 2 and 3 detailed how the “mechanics” or “technology” of increments in Chinese differs considerably from English (and possibly other languages). In this chapter, we will take a closer look at the interactional work that Chinese increments can perform within actual sequential context. It will be shown that Chinese increments can also perform a multitude of functions that may generically be termed stance modulation, clarification, or pursuing recipient uptake (Schegloff, 2000b, 2016; Ford et al., 2002; Seppänen & Laury, 2007; Goodwin, 1979; Luke, 2012). On top of these already known functions, we also propose other possible functions or nuances that Chinese increments may be used to perform, such as reformulating the sequential action.

However, we take seriously the view that “continuations” may be deployed to deal with “[a]s many things, perhaps, as there are interactional junctures to be managed”,¹ and an undertaking to circumscribe all possible functions of increments is neither feasible nor desirable. This methodological point is well argued in Schegloff (1996b), where more nuanced actions such as “confirming allusions” underscore the granularity and multifariousness of action-types. Just as it is untenable to strictly categorize instances of Chinese increments into typological types, to strictly parse increments to be in pursuance of only a few compartmentalized functions is to also undermine the flexibility and creativity with which speakers can mobilize continuations to address moment-by-moment interactional contingencies within specialized sequential contexts. Therefore, our overview of interactional functions of Chinese increments in this chapter is only representative of the most commonly attested “gross” functions that can be distilled into generic labels and makes no claim to be an exhaustive description of what increments can do.

A central goal of this chapter is then to demonstrate that any single interactional function (albeit a “gross” one) may be accomplished via different types of increments given the right structural context, though some types of increments may be more suited to (and hence more frequently found to be performing) certain functional roles. In other words, our data do not seem to support a direct form-function

relationship in terms of how increments are used. To make this argument, the following sections will therefore have to use the terminology of both syntactic constituents and typological classifications in analysing forms of increments, but as we have made abundantly clear in the previous chapter, such uses of terminology are simply a convenient way of describing the increments and do not relate to any inherent properties of the increment.

Furthermore, for each interactional function described in the sections, we have taken care to display a selection of examples illustrating more than one type of increment, as well as different positions of increments (i.e. next-beat increments, post-gap increments and post-other-talk increments). While it is argued that certain functions are more inherently “susceptible” to being accomplished through specific types of increments, this is to be understood as a statement of probability and not necessity. In the end, we will attempt to provide an initial overview of how the interactional practice of incrementing and what it can do constitute a crucial resource in spoken Chinese for the organization and management of interactional contingencies.

4.1 Some common functions of increments

One recurrent formulation is that increments are often deployed to pursue lack of recipient uptake (Heath, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984b; Ford et al., 2002) by providing another sequential slot for responsive actions to be taken. Schegloff (2016) demonstrates that other possibilities include intensifying an action (upping the ante), backing down, projecting a telling, or even converting inter-turn (or TCU) gap into intra-turn pause to eliminate possible negative resonances. Schegloff further suggests that the positioning of increments within transition space (i.e. TRP), whether in the “next beat”, “post gap”, or even “post-other-talk”, is consequential in terms of what the increment is doing interactionally. Nonetheless, a common denominator in the functions mentioned is the use of increments to resolve problems stemming from interactional contingencies.

Further complicating the problem is how increments may also be used to deal with issues stemming from other paralinguistic variables of conversation, such as the number of participants. This is most poignantly seen in Goodwin (1979), where the motivation to do continuations stems directly from the change in reified recipient and the status of that recipient in relation to the speaker within a multi-party conversation framework. Through a video analysis of John’s utterance “I gave up smoking cigarettes. one week ago today. actually”, he shows how the increments “one week ago today” and “actually” are recipient-designed formulations, ostensibly done in concert with gaze shift, to locate a recipient who exhibits proper reciprocity (i.e. mutual gaze). Here, increments are used to deal with the contingencies that arise only in a multi-party participation framework, namely to restructure (by re-completing) an utterance such that it is adequately suited for an alternative recipient different from the one the utterance was originally meant for. Incrementing for this interactional objective would not have surfaced within a 2-party interactional framework, where the recipient of a speaker remains constant throughout every intersection of the conversation.

Therefore, what a particular increment does or can do is also implicated by myriad factors, such as the semantic formulation of the increment, the sequential context in which it occurs, where within the transition space it occurs, or even the number of participants in a conversational framework. Examining conversational data of other languages may further uncover unknown functions of increments or actions that are specific to a particular speech community. Preliminary studies of increments in languages other than English have shown this to be a possibility. Kim (2007) suggests that increments in Korean are often motivated by the allusive nature of the host-TCU. Field (2007), in a study of increments in Navajo, a Native American language, further proposes that eliciting uptake may not even be a factor in this speech community, given its cultural difference in language use. In sum, what increments can be doing, similar to how increments are formulated, may be language dependent.

4.1.1 Modifying stances with increments

The great majority of what increments are retroactively doing in our data can be generically termed *modifying stances*, grouped into either *downgrading* or *upgrading* the just possibly complete prior utterance. Admittedly, though the concept of “stance” has generated much interest in the past two decades (Scheibman, 2002; Fitzmaurice, 2004; Wu, 2004; Kärkkäinen, 2006; Englebretson, 2007; Du Bois, 2007; Lim, 2011; Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012), it remains an abstruse concept across many studies concerned with the use of interactive language. One reason for this abstruseness is that “stance” is often used as a cover term for a range of related phenomenon, such as *subjectivity* (Benveniste, 1971; Lyons, 1981; Langacker, 1985; Traugott, 1995), *evidentiality* (Chafe & Nichols, 1986; Willett, 1988; Fox, 2001b), *epistemicity* (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Simon-Vandenberg, 2008), or *evaluation* (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Nevertheless, it is widely agreed that the display of stance is a core feature of interactional talk. By *modifying stances*, I mean to capture generically the multifaceted and diverse ways in which increments may be able to *downgrade* or *upgrade* some aspect of the speaker’s “attitudes, feelings, judgements, or commitment”² as reflected in the host-TCU.

Downgrading with increments

In the following examples, we will first demonstrate how increments are used to achieve a variety of “downgrading”. Ex. (31) returns to the telephone conversation between two former classmates, Matt and Faye, who at the time of the conversation are graduate Ph.D. students at different universities. Before line 01, Faye was complaining to Matt about an issue troubling her recently: her supervisor is considering moving to another college, and she might have to move along with him. This presents a host of challenges affecting Faye’s future plans, such as the prestige of the new university and a new location and living conditions, as well as possible

physical distance from her husband, who was also at the time a Ph.D. student in her department. In this extract, however, the context leading up to line 01 involves Faye informing Matt on one of two possible universities that her supervisor is interested in moving to, with Matt giving a preliminary assessment of the possible move.

Ex. (31) Adverbial as insertable (Graduate Dilemma [2:26–2:51])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in “normative syntax”)

- 01 Matt: 那: 那 不 算 很 好 啊.
na: na bu suan hen hao a.
 DM DM NEG count very good SFP
 ‘Hmmm that’s not considered a very good (school).’
- 02 Faye: (要-) 胡老师 原来 最 早 出[国 (也 就)
(yao-) hulaoshi yuanlai zui zao chu[guo (ye jiu)
 want NM original most early out.country also DM
 ‘() When Teacher Hu originally left the country, he also only’
- 03 Matt: [对. 我 知道 那个:
[dui. wo zhidao nage:
 yes 1SG know that
 ‘Yes. I know that.’
- 04 不过 也 还 可以 那 地方.
buguo ye hai keyi na difang.
 but also still can that place
 ‘Actually that place is still okay.’
- 05 Faye: 对. <那 肯定 比 我们 学校 名次 高 一点. hh hh hhh 那-
dui. <na kending bi women xuexiao mingci gao yidian. hh hh hhh na
 yes. DM sure compare 1PL school rank high a.bit DM
 ‘Yes. Surely its ranking is a bit higher than my school. (laugh)’
- 06 → Matt: >我 觉得:< .hh 不 n: 那个:: Socrates @ 挺 好 的. <现在.
>wo jude:< .hh bu n: nage:: Socrates @ ting hao de. <xianzai.
 1SG feel NEG that NM quite good GEN **now**
 ‘I think. hh no. . . well. . . Socrates University is quite good. now.’
- 07 Faye: 诶. 我们 现在 排名: 我 今天 我 看到 我们 学校 报
ei. women xianzai paimi:ng wo jintian wo kandao women xuexiao bao
 INJ 1PL now ranking 1SG today 1SG see.COM 1PL school report
 ‘Oh. Do you know our school’s ranking. . . Today I saw a school report’

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- 08 就是 那个: 美国 的 那个: 科学院 的 >下属 一个<
jiushi nage: meiguo de nage: kexueyuan de >xiashu yige<
 that.is that America GEN that science.institute GEN subordinate one.CL
 ‘that says. . . A ranking by a subsidiary of the National Academy of’
- 09 机构 排. .hhh 我们 学校:: 你们 学校 好像 也 没
jigou pai. .hhh women xuexia::o nimen xuexiao haoxiang ye mei
 organization rank 1PL school 2PL school seem also NEG
 ‘Sciences. . . it says our school. . . I think I didn’t see your school’
- 10 看见 前 四名 没 你们的. 你 是 哪个 系 的.
kanjian qian siming mei nimen de. ni shi nage xi de.
 see.COM front fourth NEG 2PL GEN 2SG COP which department GEN
 ‘in the top four, it didn’t appear. Which department are you from?’

The announcement of the university that Faye may be transferring to prompts an initial assessment by Matt at line 01. However, this assessment is less than positive, seen not only in the predicate “*bu suan hen hao* (not considered very good)” but also in the delayed onset of the turn (Pomerantz, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007) instantiated by the protracted repetition of the pronoun “*na*”. An interpretation of line 01 as critical may have brought about Faye’s accounting at line 02. The most natural reading of line 02, where Faye mentions Teacher Hu’s³ first university after leaving China as also being the university she’s possibly going to, is an attempt at giving more credence to the university than Matt had accorded at line 01. This minor disagreement was quickly picked up by Matt even before the completion of line 02, resulting in the overlap at line 03–04 where he first acknowledges the information provided by Faye in line 03 and then quickly makes a reversal from being critical at line 01 to being more approving at line 04 with an assessment of “*hai keyi* (still okay)”.

The change is then seen to be aligned with Faye’s intentions at line 02, given Faye’s confirmatory token of “*dui* (right)” at line 05. Nonetheless, possibly due to Matt’s earlier disapproval, Faye latches on after *dui* to continue further accounting with how the new university’s ranking is higher than her current university. However, the contents of this turn can also be seen as a self-deprecatory remark because a further insinuation is that regardless of how critical Matt may be of the new university in question, its ranking is still, technically and officially, above that of her current university. This in turn suggests Matt is possibly less-than-approving and also critical of Faye’s current college. This is not only self-deprecatory but also hints at how Matt may have inadvertently committed a “face-threatening” act. The complex undertones of this one turn are further evidenced by Faye’s laugh tokens at the end of line 05, often produced to indicate less-than-serious talk or “touchy” issues (Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff, 1977; Jefferson, 1984).

It is towards these insinuations at line 05 that Matt is attempting to deflect at our focal line 06. The awkwardness of the situation and the difficulty in formulating an appropriate response are also seen in the fumbling and multiple restarts at the beginning of line 06 by Matt, before finally producing a positive assessment of Faye’s

current university in “Socrates *ting hao de* (Socrates University is quite good)”. However, immediately after *ting hao de*, which is a possible completion point, Matt appends the time adverbial “*xianzai* (now)” in the manner of an insertable.

The added element here is interpretable as an increment both prosodically and semantically. Prosodically, *xianzai* is done with subordinate intonation. Semantically, *xianzai* is dependent upon the host-TCU for it to be properly understood as a time adverbial restricting the predicate of *ting hao de*. Thus, in a sense, one could see the incrementing of *xianzai* as a *clarifying* action on scope of the predicate (which is to be discussed later as another function of increments). However, the retroactive introduction of *xianzai* into the TCU also sets up a comparative time frame between Socrates University of “the present” with that “of the past”, with the insinuation that the positive assessment of Socrates University pertains only to the present. Although Matt is generally saying that Socrates University “is now quite good”, from an interactional standpoint, the increment is functioning to downgrade the host-TCU’s original assertion. What *xianzai* has pragmatically introduces is a qualification on *ting hao de*, in that Socrates University has not always been well regarded but is now becoming better or is now much improved. By appending the adverbial *xianzai* as an increment in the manner of an insertable, Matt has retroactively mitigated the positive assessment at line 06 from Socrates University being well regarded in general to being well regarded within a specific time frame, which thereby functions to downgrade the just prior assessment.

A possible reason for such a downgrading of a positive assessment via incrementing is that Matt, in a rush to quickly dismiss Faye’s self-deprecatory remark in line 05, has indiscreetly produced an unadulterated compliment of Faye’s current university in “Socrates *ting hao de* (Socrates University is quite good)”. But this stance contradicts Matt’s prior criticism of the university Faye may be transferring to in line 01, which ranks higher than Faye’s current university, a fact established by Faye in line 05. Hence, Matt may have jumped the gun to provide a positive assessment in line 06 but almost immediately realized the need to mitigate an “all out” compliment lest it sounded too disingenuous to the recipient. In this sense, the production of the increment is addressed to concerns of recipient-design, where the speaker is doing online formulation of an interactionally appropriate action. In any case, Faye continues the topic of school and departmental ranking from line 07–10, which later turns out to be informing Matt on how well her department has done in a recent ranking exercise.

In Ex. (32), we see another frequently used adverbial disjunct, “*wo jue de* (I think)”, used as an increment, again in the manner of an insertable, to downgrade the prior action of the host-TCU. In this video recording, three friends and Ph.D. graduate students (Jun, Lin, and Hao) are having lunch together. In the middle of the meal, Jun commented that he might have been “canton-ized”, as he thinks all the dishes are too salty.⁴ Both Lin and Hao then disagree with Jun’s evaluation of the dishes by saying that they think the dishes were just right in terms of saltiness. From lines 01–04, Jun continues this topic of how taste in food is related to the region you’re from in China by relating a story about one of Lin’s fellow townspeople.⁵

Ex. (32) Adverbial as insertable (NTU-1 [15:14–15:27])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in “normative syntax”)

- 01 Jun: (个) 那个 (.) hh 你 的 老乡: 那个. 东北 的.
 (ge) nage (.) hh ni de laoxia:ng nage. dongbei de.
 CL that 2SG GEN fellow.townsmen that northeast GEN
 ‘() that. . . your fellow-townsmen. From Northeast.’
- 02 (0.5)
- 03 Jun: 每次 很 热情 试- 做 两个 菜 非要 拿 给 我 吃.
meici hen reqing sh- zuo liangge cai feiyao na gei wo chi.
 everytime very passionate try do two.CL dish must take give 1SG eat
 ‘He’ll often enthusiastically prepare a few dishes, insisting that I try them.’
- 04 (.) 我说 这 咋 吃(啊) . 我 实在 吃 不 下 了. (我说).
 (.) woshuo zhe zha chi (a). wo shizai chi buxia le. (woshuo).
 1SG.say this how eat SFP 1SG really eat NEG.LOC CRS 1SG.say
 ‘But I’ll say how am I to eat this. I really can’t eat this. I’ll say.’
- 05 Lin: @ 你::: (.) 吃 的 很 清 淡 的 呀.
 @ ni::: (.) chi de hen qingdan de ya.
 2SG eat GEN very bland GEN SFP
 ‘Your taste in food is very bland.’
- 06 (0.2)
- 07 → Lin: 我 觉得.
wo juede.
 1SG feel
 ‘I think.’
- 08 Jun: 嗯:::
e::n.
 AGR
 ‘Mm hm.’

At line 01, Jun relates the story by first providing Lin with some initial recognitional descriptors (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Stivers, 2007) to the story’s protagonist, in “*ni de laoxiang* (your fellow-townsmen)” and “*na ge dongbei de* (the one from Northeast)”. This, however, receives no uptake from Lin at line 02 as being recognizable. In spite of this, Jun continues at line 03–04 by describing how her fellow countryside people from northeast China (where Lin comes from) will often enthusiastically prepare dishes for Jun to try, only to be rejected. Though Jun did not explicitly mention why he was unable to eat the prepared dishes in line 04, it is

inferable from the context that Jun was probably referring to the high salt content of the dishes from northeast China. First, this story follows immediately from the sequence where Jun commented on the saltiness of the dishes on the table and his “Cantonese-ness”; as such, the story acts as further demonstration of how he is disinclined to take prototypical food types from other Chinese regions. Furthermore, by invoking the region where the story’s protagonist is from in line 01, Jun also provides the contextual clue as to why he “really can’t eat this”.⁶ But most importantly, “saltiness” is also what the story’s recipient, Lin, orients to as the reason behind Jun’s rejection of the dishes. Indeed, Lin’s summation of the morale of the story is that Jun’s “taste in food is very bland” at line 05.

As a response to the story from line 03–04, Lin’s line 05 also constitutes an initial direct assessment of Jun’s taste in food. But this assessment was subsequently mitigated with an increment in line 07 in the form of “*wo juede* (I think)”. *Wo juede* is typically known to be a highly frequent Chinese epistemic stance-marker that prototypically appears at the beginning of an utterance as a hedging device to accomplish various interactional functions (Lim, 2011). As a pre-posed adverbial disjunct or a complement-taking phrasal predicate (Thompson, 2002), it is semantically non-independent and laminates the entire utterance with a particular stance. However, this appended *wo juede* was produced with a subordinate intonation and could not be properly understood unless taken retrospectively with its host-TCU at line 05, thereby demonstrating its status as an insertable type of increment. As an increment, *wo juede* could still function as a stance-frame, by which it imposes a mitigative stance on the just prior utterance at line 05, thereby downgrading it (in terms of its epistemic value).

As for a pragmatic reason for why line 05 was mitigated or downgraded retroactively with an increment, it could be that Lin realized that she had overstepped her epistemic primacy by assessing Jun’s taste *for* Jun (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), and she therefore downgraded her own epistemicity in doing such an assessment. It is noted that *wo juede* was not latched upon the prior TCU or on the next beat (cf. next beat increment) but after a gap of 0.2 seconds at line 06 (cf. post gap increment) where a possible turn-transition could have occurred but did not. This observation is crucial not only because it provides further evidence that *wo juede* was retroactively added and not pre-conceived as a post-posed element from the outset but also points to the continuation at line 07 as possibly a result of, or being oriented to, the lack of uptake after the initial assessment at line 05 (Schegloff, 2016).

Furthermore, Lim (2011) has demonstrated that *wo juede* often acts as a response-mobilizing device or a “joint-assessment initiator”. In this sense, the increment here may also function to “pursue recipient’s uptake” (Heath, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984b; Ford et al., 2002), specifically using *wo juede* at line 07 to increase the response relevancy of the initial assessment at line 05. From this perspective, the increment here is therefore prompted by the lack of any uptake at line 06 and interactionally works to rectify such a situation with a hedging device. As expected, Jun then provides a minimal agreement token at line 08 after the increment.

A key take-away from this analysis is that the functions of an increment can be multifaceted, as *wo juede* can interactionally function to hedge the prior utterance or to pursue uptake, or both.⁷ Another way of thinking about this is to see the

appending of this adverbial disjunct increment as first performing a downgrade on the host-TCU, which then acts as a vehicle to accomplish other possible actions.

Moving from adverbials as insertables, in Ex. (33), we will show how a nominal phrase incremented in the manner of a replacement may also be used to downgrade an otherwise more certain stance. The interlocutors in the next extract were talking about the critical need for more psychological counselling centres in China's universities due to increasing stress levels among Chinese undergraduates, leading to instances of violence on campus. Before the extract begins, Zhan had opined to Wang that even if counselling centres were available, the problem would persist, as students felt embarrassed to be seen going to a counsellor, and that certain schools charge unaffordable fees for counselling services, even though it is the financially disadvantaged students who required the most psychological help.

Ex. (33) Noun phrase as replacement (ES-M-03 [5:08–5:31])

(* * marks portion that the increment is replacing)

- 01 Wang: =哦 我 以前 听说 是 免:费 的。
 = *o wo yiqian tingshuo shi mia:nfei de.*
 CFM 1SG past hearsay COP free GEN
 ‘Oh! The last I heard it was free.’
- 02 啊 现在 都 收费 了。
 a xianzai dou shoufei le.
 INJ now all charge CRS
 ‘Wow! (They’re) all now charging fees.’
- 03 Zhan: 有 啊 <收费:。
 you a. <shoufe:i.
 have SFP charge
 ‘Yes, they charge a fee.’
- 04 (.)
- 05 Zhan: 教授 现在 都 挣 钱 了。 .hhh hh hh
 jiaoshou xianzai dou zheng qian le. .hhh hh hh
 professor now all earn money CRS
 ‘Professors are now all into making money. (Laugh)’
- 06 [hh]
- 07 Wang: [挣 钱] 也 不 能h 挣 这个 贫困生 的 呀。
 [zheng qian] ye bu ne(h)ng zheng zhege pingkunsheng de ya.
 earn money also NEG can earn this poor.student GEN SFP
 ‘You can’t profit from poor students even if it’s business!’

- 08 → *这个::* 有 问题. <°这样 的话°.
 zhege:: you wenti. <°zheyang dehua°.
 this have question. **this.kind if**
 ‘That’s unacceptable. If this is the case.’
- 09 (0.8)
- 10 Zhan: 唉[:.
 a[:i.
 INJ
 ‘(sigh... .)’
- 11 Wang: [你 应该 挣 有钱 的 学h生h.
 [ni yinggai zheng youqian de xu(h)eshe(h)ng.
 2SG should earn wealthy GEN student
 ‘You should only make money from rich students.’
- 12 <或h者h 挣 外hh面:: 有钱 人 的 .hh 钱 (啊).
 <hu(h)ozh(h)e zheng wa(hh)imia::n youqian ren de .hh qian (a).
 or earn outside wealthy people GEN money SFP
 ‘Or from those rich people (out in society).’

At line 01–02, Wang expressed surprise on receiving the information that school counselling services were chargeable by first stating that he was under the impression that counselling services used to be free, with “*wo yiqian tingshuo shi mia:nfei de* (The last I heard it was free)” in line 01, and then started a new TCU in line 02 with an exclamatory particle “*a* (wow)” before saying “*xianzai dou shou fei le* (Now they’re all charging fees)”. This leads to Zhan re-confirming in line 03 the information he had priorly provided, emphasizing that schools were indeed charging for counselling services. After a micro-pause at line 04, Zhan insinuates at line 05 that a possible reason for charging fees for a previously free service could be that “*jiaoshou xianzai dou zheng qian le* (Professors are now all into making money)”, albeit in a non-serious manner evidenced by his laughter at the end of the utterance. Wang then joins in at line 07 to critique this practice as being unethical given the difficult financial situation of undergraduate students, before definitively stating in line 08 that this is “*you wenti* (questionable)” or “problematic”, where the situation or subject is encapsulated simply with the demonstrative “*zhege* (this)”. Our focal increment, in the form of a conditional nominal phrase “*zhe yang de-hua* (if this is the case)” is then latched on to the end of line 08. Besides being a semantically dependent conditional that requires the prior host-TCU for adequate understanding, *zhe yang de-hua* was also prosodically produced with lowered intensity and a lack of pitch reset, all indicative of its status as a continuation of the prior utterance. As a retroactive operation, *zhe yang de-hua* can be seen as a replacement of the subject *zhege* to form “*zhe yang de-hua you wenti* (If this is the case, it’s questionable)” and is therefore a nominal phrase type of replacement.

Technically, *zhe yang de-hua* can also be re-inserted back to the beginning of the host-TCU to form “*zhe yang de-hua zhege you wenti* (If this is the case, this is questionable)” as an insertable, though such an utterance would seem cumbersome and less in tune with the forcefulness that the speaker had priorly displayed. But more crucially, we are reminded that types of increments are an epiphenomenon of doing some sort of interactional work with the most germane constituent at that point of talk and thus are not actual concerns that speakers deal with at the moment of incrementing. For the speaker, as long as the continuation accomplishes the intended interactional objective, the strict delineation of types with which the continuation is done is of little consequence. In other words, while we are not free from the task of categorization as analysts, there is no real value in marking the boundaries of ambiguous cases such as Ex. (33) within an emic perspective.

In any case, with the retroactive addition of a conditional to the prior assertion, Wang had effectively changed a definitive statement of “*zhege you wenti* (That’s unacceptable)” to a more downgraded stance of “*zhe yang de-hua you wenti* (If this is the case, it is questionable)”. Note that Wang had initially made a strong claim that schools or professors charging for student welfare services is unacceptable in “*zheng qian ye bu neng zheng zhege pingkun sheng de ya* (You can’t profit from poor students even if it’s business!)” but did not have the relevant evidence or first-hand knowledge that this is in fact the situation. First, both assertions were initially posited by Zhan and not by Wang. Furthermore, Zhan’s musing at line 05 that professors charged for counselling services to make financial gains was clearly done as a non-serious matter (Schegloff, 2001). Therefore, in coming to an evaluative stance (i.e. *zhege you wenti*) based on information just priorly unknown to himself, and perhaps in deference to these assertions as made by Zhan, Wang then retroactively appends a nominal phrase conditional to index the indeterminate nature of the information that he was just provided with.

Besides adverbial insertables and nominal phrase replacements, downgrades may also be accomplished using various types of glue-ons. A prime example of this would be *tag-questions* such as Ex. (25a) and Ex. (25b) discussed in Chapter 3. To recap, it was shown in Ex. (25a) how tag questions clearly work to position the speaker as deferential to the recipient’s higher epistemic status. In Ex. (25b), a tag question was also deployed after a gap of silence as a form of back-down from a prior stronger statement. A common functionality of doing tag questions as increments is to retroactively position oneself as being of a lower epistemic status than one’s interlocutor (i.e. downgraded epistemic stance) and in turn pursue a response from the recipient via the interrogative format of such an action (Pomerantz, 1980).

But other forms of glue-ons can also be found doing downgrading of stance. This is specifically illustrated in our fourth and final example in this section, which shows a single adverbial adjunct incremented in the manner of a syntactically continuous glue-on, produced after talk by others (cf. post-other-talk increments). It will be shown that it is functioning to downgrade its host-TCU. This is the same extract shown as Ex. (24) in Section 3.1.4 when describing a verb-resultative complement structure for producing syntactically continuous increments, but we

are reproducing it here for ease of explication on the functions of increments. To recap, three Ph.D. graduate students (Jie, Wei, and Tao) are having lunch when Jie laments the difficulty in finding “*yangrou* (mutton)” in school. Wei and Jie then collaboratively recommend an Indian food stall in the canteen that does sell mutton, but Jie appears to be reluctant in accepting the recommendation after it is revealed that the mutton is cooked in curry. The extract begins in line 12 when Tao continues to persuade Jie on the merits of the Indian food stall.

Ex. (34) Adverbial adjunct as glue-on (NTU-2 [0:37–1:02])

- 12 Tao: [这边 它 的:: 印度] (sss-) 菜 还 不 错 啦. ↓其实.
 [zhebian ta de:: yindu] (sss-) cai hai bu cuo la. ↓qishi.
 this.side 3SG GEN Indian dish still NEG wrong SFP actually
 ‘The Indian food there is not bad. . . actually.’
- 13 Wei: 是 啊.=
 shi a.=
 COP SFP
 ‘Yeah.’
- 14 Tao: =canteen B 也 就 那个. hh 不过 我们 因为
 =canteen B ye jiu nage. hh buguo women yinwei
 NM also DM that but 1PL because
 ‘And that the only place in Canteen B with. . . It’s just that we’re’
- 15 很 少 吃 印[度 的 东西.]
 han shao chi yin[du de dongxi.]
 very little eat Indian GEN thing
 ‘not accustomed to having Indian food.’
- 16 Wei: [对 对] [对.]
 [dui dui] [dui.]
 right right right
 ‘yea yea yes’
- 17 Jie: [不是.]
 [bushi.]
 NEG.COP
 ‘It’s not that.’
- 18 → 那个 印度 的 那个 咖哩 我: <不 能 吃::>.
 nage yindu de nage kali wo: <bu neng chi::>.
 that Indian GEN that curry 1SG NEG can eat
 ‘It’s that curry, Indian curry exactly, that I’m unable to eat.’

- 19 Wei: 为什么 呢.
weishenme ne.
 why SFP
 ‘why?’
- 20 (.)
- 21 Wei: [哈.]
 [*ha.*]
 QP
 ‘ huh? ’
- 22 → Jie: [多.] 就是 它 [味道 很] 重.
 [*duo.*] *jiushi ta [weidao hen] zhong.*
much that.is 3SG smell very heavy
 ‘much. It’s just the flavour is too strong.’

Tao first endorses the recommendation by saying the Indian food at the stall is actually “not bad” at line 12, then further tries to assuage Jie’s reluctance at line 14–15 by acknowledging unfamiliarity with Indian cuisine as a possible but surmountable obstacle. Note that Tao’s endorsement is met with enthusiastic agreement by Wei at line 13 and 16. Up to this point in the sequence, it is clear that both Wei and Tao have, in a sense, collaboratively offered a recommendation to Jie with little indication of recipient’s acceptance, leading Tao to postulate unfamiliarity with Indian food as a possible reason. It is this postulation that Jie overtly rejects at line 17 before stating her specific misgivings at our focal line 18.

In this focal turn, Jie points out that it is specifically Indian curry that she has difficulties with in “*na ge yindu de na ge kali wo: <bu neng chi.:>*. (It’s that curry, Indian curry exactly, that I’m unable to eat.)”. Wei then jumps in at line 19 to enquire why this is so and further pursues this at line 21 with a shorter question particle. After talk by others, the focal increment “*duo* (much/many)”, an adverbial adjunct that qualifies *chi* (eat) in line 18, then occurs at the beginning of line 22. This increment is again semantically marked as being dependent, requiring its host-TCU to be properly understood, and prosodically marked with a subordinate intonation. However, in contrast to the last three examples, the occurrence of *duo* after *chi* is arguably grammatically fitted in normative Chinese syntax, presenting itself as a syntactically continuous verb complement or glue-on, as in “*wo bu neng chi-duo* (I can’t eat much)”. Effectively, by extending “*wo bu neng chi* (I’m unable to eat)” at line 18 to “*wo bu neng chi-duo* (I’m unable to eat much)” by line 22, Jie has mitigated from a total inability to eat Indian curry to a partial one of having limited ability to stomach the dish, hence downgrading her strong stance of rejection to one of partial acceptance.

Also different from the previous example is the position in which the increment occurs, namely in the third turn after talk by others (post-other-talk increment). As Schegloff (2016) argues, an increment that occurs after talk by others is

“normatively prompted by or addressed to” the actual ensuing talk of the host-TCU and its import. Indeed, it is analysable how Wei’s question at line 19 may have prompted Jie to “re-structure” line 18 with an increment at line 22. By the end of line 18, Jie has produced a definitive and total rejection of eating Indian curry. If such a stance is upheld, then an adequate answer to Wei’s question “*wei shenme ne* (Why?)” at line 19 would pragmatically require extremely well-founded reasons to justify total rejection, reasons that Jie did not veritably have, and the ensuing trajectory of talk might turn out to be problematic. As it turns out later, the real reason lies in Jie’s contention with the scent from eating Indian curry, a rationale incompatible with total rejection, as opposed to reasons such as health or religious concerns. Thus, it is upon the conditional relevancy of providing an interactionally appropriate response after talk by others at line 19 that Jie downgrades from “unable to eat” at all to “unable to eat much” at line 22.

As an interim summary, this section has shown four examples of different types of increments doing the work of downgrading some sort of stance of its host-TCU. In talking about why Chinese increments are predominantly syntactically discontinuous at the beginning of Chapter 2, it was suggested that the semantic class of adverbials as insertables are a highly productive group of increments particularly apt at modulating stances, as they are, by definition, constituents that modify the verbal clause of a predicate. However, other types of increments are clearly equally capable of doing downgrading given the right context. Additionally, such downgrading by increments can be done in positions immediately after possible completion by latching on to its host after a registrable silence where turn transition could have occurred but did not or after actual talk-by-others. The examples shown here have also argued how such positions are relevant in understanding how the increments are deployed to do downgrading due to concerns of recipient design and intersubjectivity (such as in Ex. (32) and (34)). The next section on upgrading with increments will provide four more examples where the host-TCU’s stance can be modified with even more complex forms of increments.

Upgrading with increments

In this section, another four examples will be discussed as illustrations of increments doing the work of modifying stance, but in terms of upgrading the prior utterance. Ex. (35) is another extract from the telephone conversation between Matt and Faye where Faye was grouching about a possible school transfer due to her supervisor changing universities. One of the complications involved is how Faye’s relationship with her husband, Dave, might be affected should a long-distance relationship have to occur. This is because Dave is also a Ph.D. graduate student in Faye’s department, albeit working under another supervisor. One of the solutions proposed by Matt is that Dave also go with Faye to the new university (shown later in Ex. (38)). However, this would lead to further complications for Dave, such as the need to re-start his Ph.D. program or a possible change of supervisor. The sequence in Ex. (35) thus begins at line 27, where Matt tries to elicit more information on Dave’s status in his current university.

Ex. (35) Compound adverbial as insertable (Graduate Dilemma [5:21–6:32])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in “normative syntax”)

27 Matt: 他 现在 定 老板 了 吗.
ta xianzai ding laoban le ma.
 3SG now book boss CRS QP
 ‘Has he decided on his supervisor yet?’

28 Faye: 他 当然 定 了. 他 一 进来 就 定 了.
ta danran ding le. ta yi jinlai jiu ding le.
 3SG definite book CRS 3SG one enter.come DM book CRS
 ‘Of course he has. It’s been decided since the start of the program.’

29 Matt: 喔 你们 跟 我们 不 一样.
o nimen gen women bu yiyang.
 CFM 2PL with 1PL NEG same
 ‘Oh. . . Your program is different from ours.’

30 你们 一- 进来 就 要 定 了 是 [吗:.
nimen yi- jinlai jiu yao ding le shi [ma:.
 2PL one enter.come DM want book CRS COP QP
 ‘You all have to decide immediately upon entering, is it?’

.....(lines 31-57).

58 Faye: =嗯. tsh 但 你说 我们 怎么 办 呢. eh hh eh hh. hhh 我-
=en. tsh dan nishuo women zenme ban ne. eh hh eh hh. hhh wo-
 AGR. but 2SG.say 1PL how solve SFP 1SG
 ‘Yes. But what do you think we should do? (laugh) I. . .’

59 → 我们 俩 就是 (>就是<)- 有 一 天 Dave @ 没
women liang jiushi (>jiushi<)- you yi tian Dave @ mei
 1PL two.person that.is that.is have one day NM NEG
 ‘We’re just. . . just. . . One day, Dave didn’t’

60 → 睡着:= 就. (.) 晚上 都. 想 这 事儿 很 烦.
shui-zha:o= jiu. (.) wanshang dou. xiang zhe shier hen fan.
 sleep.CTP DM night.LOC all think this matter very worry
 ‘even sleep. the whole night. It’s frustrating thinking about it.’

61 (.)

62 Faye: [()

- 63 Matt: [他 换 老板- 现在 不 行 吗。
 [ta huan laoban- xianzai bu xing ma.
 3SG change boss now NEG okay QP
 ‘Can’t he change a supervisor now?’

From lines 27–30, Matt tries to determine the possibility of a change in supervisor for Dave by asking Faye if Dave has confirmed his choice of mentor, to which Faye responds by saying that this was done the moment he entered the Ph.D. program in their department. From omitted lines 31–57, Faye and Matt continue to talk about how advancement to Ph.D. candidacy is determined in Faye’s department as well as some of Matt’s recent classes. Then, at line 58, Faye re-opens the topic of college transfer, by first lamenting “*dan ni shuo women zenme ban ne* (But what do you think we should do)” before illustrating how affected Dave is at focal lines 59–60. After abandoning an initial formulation “*women liang jiushi* (We’re just . . .)”, Faye reports on how Dave could not sleep during one particular night with “*you yi tian Dave mei shui-zhao jiu* (One day, Dave didn’t even sleep)”, due to the problems mentioned previously. Following a micro-second pause, Faye then appends “*wan-shang dou* (the whole night)”, which is a compound adverbial consisting of a time adverb “*wan-shang* (at night)” and a grammatical adverb indicating total inclusivity “*dou* (all)”. As increments, both these adverbials are thus produced as insertables that should have come before the main verb in normative Chinese syntax, as in “*you yi tian Dave wan-shang duo mei shui-zhao jiu* (One day, Dave didn’t even sleep for the entire night)”.

But most importantly, what the increment has functionally achieved here is to upgrade the severity of Dave’s one-time insomnia from not being able to sleep for an unknown length of time to Dave not sleeping for the entire night. The reason is provided subsequently in “*xiang zhe shier hen fan* (It’s frustrating thinking about it)”. As the description of Dave’s insomnia was done in service of portraying the level of effect the school issue has upon the family, upgrading the severity of Dave’s symptoms pragmatically also upgrades the degree of frustration conveyed by Faye. We suggest that one possible motivation for this upgrading may lie in the attribution of appropriate complainability to the situation at hand (Schegloff, 2005). By upgrading their level of affectedness and frustration, Faye may be interactionally oriented to recipient-design a portrayal of her situation for Matt as normatively complainable. Regardless, it is analysable that the increment, via a compound adverbial insertable, has worked to upgrade the stance of the host-TCU.

Besides compound adverbials as insertables, complex phrases as replacements may also be used to do upgrading of stances, as seen in Ex. (36). The context of Ex. (36) follows that of Ex. (32), where the three Ph.D. graduate students, Jun, Lin, and Hao, were talking about taste preferences in food by people from different regions of China. Before line 01 of this example, Hao was narrating a story on how he adds a huge amount of vinegar to whatever dishes his mom makes and then proceeds to drink it from the plate after the main contents of the dish are eaten.

Ex. (36) Complex phrase as replacement (NTU-1 [36:06–36:15])

(* * marks portion that the increment is replacing)

- 01 Lin: 那 你 喜欢 吃 醋-醋 是 吧.
na ni xihuan chi c-cu shi ba.
 DM 2SG like eat vinegar COP QP
 ‘So you like to take vinegar right?’
- 02 Hao: 那个: 我 爷爷 那边 是 山西 的 嘛.
nage: wo yeye nabian shi shanxi de ma.
 that 1SG grandfather that.side COP Shanxi GEN SFP
 ‘Uhhh Because my grandfather’s family from Shanxi.’
- 03 → 然后 *我* 从: 小 吃 醋. <家里 人 都.
ranhou wo co:ng xiao chi cu. <jia-li ren dou.
 then 1SG from small eat vinegar home.LOC people all
 ‘So I’ve taken vinegar since young. everyone in my family.’
- 04 (.)
- 05 Lin: 挺 好 的 啊.
ting hao de a.
 quite good GEN SFP
 ‘That’s quite good.’

Upon hearing Hao’s narrative, Lin then asks if he likes vinegar in general at line 01. Hao first responds by providing a relevant piece of background information in terms of his lineage, revealing that his paternal grandfather’s (*yeye*) family comes from *Shanxi*, famed for their noodles and locally produced vinegar. Following that in focal line 03, Hao then accounts for his taste for vinegar. Line 03 begins with a discourse marker “*ranhou* (then)”, signalling that the upcoming talk logically follows from the prior TCU, before asserting “*wo co:ng xiao chi cu.* (I’ve taken vinegar since young)”, which points to the revealed lineage at line 02 as the context for his habit of eating vinegar. Also observable in this utterance is the stress on “*cong* (from)”, emphasizing that the habit is already well developed from a young age. Immediately latched upon the possible completion of this assertion is the focal complex phrase “*jia-li ren dou* (everyone in my family)”, consisting of an agentive subject noun phrase “*jia-li ren* (family members)” and the inclusive grammatical adverb “*dou* (all)”, which works to encase and highlight *jia-li ren* as a large group. Again, this constituent as increment is semantically dependent, requiring a predicate to explain what “everyone in my family” does, as well as prosodically having a subordinate intonation. However, unlike in the previous example, *jia-li ren dou* cannot be retroactively inserted back into the host-TCU, as the host-TCU already possesses an agentive subject in the first-person pronoun “*wo* (I)”. To have this entire increment work in concordance with the host-TCU would necessitate

a change of subject (i.e. from “*wo* (I)” to “*jia-li ren* (family members)”) and the addition of an adverbial (i.e. “*dou* (all)”), from “*wo co:ng xiao chi cu*. (I’ve taken vinegar since young)” to “*jia-li ren dou co:ng xiao chi cu*. (Everyone in my family has taken vinegar since young)”, hence its status as a complex phrase increment produced in the manner of a replacement.

While technically categorizable as a case of replacement, it is analysable that the continuation is not really pragmatically functioning to substitute or replace *wo* with other agents who have taken vinegar since young but is using the increment to expand the range of agentive subjects besides those mentioned in the host-TCU. In fact, what Hao has done is “piggybacking” upon the action pursued in line 03 by saying not only has he himself been taking vinegar since he was young, but his entire family has also been doing so, pragmatically upgrading the forcefulness of the explanation for his love of vinegar. In keeping with Hao’s action of providing strong accounts for his extreme liking of vinegar, one possible interactional work that this increment is doing is to provide an upgraded justification by increasing the scope of family members who have been drinking vinegar since they were young.

In the next extract, we’ll see how nominal objects produced as syntactically continuous glue-ons may also be used to do upgrading. Before the extract begins in Ex. (37), both Chen and Wei, who are instructors at a Hong Kong university, were discussing the best time to organize overseas exchange programs with a partner university in London. A particular problem encountered is in scheduling the best possible time to visit such that the duration of the visit avoids holiday periods as well as the busy academic terms, to minimize interruption to the partner university.

Ex. (37) Nominal object as glue-on (ES-M-09 [8:51–9:02])

08 Chen: [一月 底: 比较 好 一]点.
 [yiyue di: bijiao hao yi]dian.
 January bottom compare good a.bit
 ‘It’s better during the end of January.’

09 <二 no- 二月 份 他 m[开学 嘛.]
 <er no- eryue fen ta m[kaixue ma.]
 two NEG February portion 3SG open.school SFP
 ‘Feb. . . erm no. . . February, that’s when they start the school term.’

10 Wei: [不- 但是 一月 底]
 [bu- danshi yiyue di]
 NEG but January bottom
 ‘No. . . But at the end of January, is there’

11 → 有 没有 新年:: <↓之 类. <你- 有 没有 查过 那个
 you meiyou xinnia::n. <↓zhi lei. <ni- you meiyou chaguo nage
 have NEG.have new.year GEN type 2SG have NEG.have check.EXP that
 ‘the Lunar New Year. and other kinds of holidays. You. . . have you checked the’

- 12 calen[dar. 是 新]年 的话.=
 calen[dar. *shi xin*]nian *dehua*.=
 calendar. COP new.year if
 ‘calendar. If it’s the Lunar New Year. . .’
- 13 Chen: [还 没有.]
 [*hai meiyou*.]
 still NEG.have
 ‘I haven’t (checked).’
- 14 Wei: =[就 会 麻]烦.
 =[*jiu hui ma*]fan.
 then will trouble
 ‘then there’s a problem.’

Before line 08, Chen was verbalizing her consideration with regard to avoidance of holiday periods and reasoned at lines 08–09 that an exchange visit to the partner university scheduled during the end of January would be the most appropriate period to conduct the exchange trip, as it would circumvent both the peak holiday period as well as the start of a new semester for the partner university in London. However, beginning from line 10 to our focal line 11, Wei brings up the issue of also having to consider the scheduling from the perspective of their own university in Hong Kong. She does this by signalling some disalignment with Chen’s opinion with the truncated negator “*bu-* (no)”, and then questions “*danshi yi yue di you-meiyou xinnia::n* (Is there the Lunar New Year at the end of January?)”, which comes to possible completion. The argument here is that “the end of January” might also clash with the “*xinnian* (Lunar New Year)” period in Hong Kong, an important family holiday where students would want to stay home instead of having to travel to a foreign country. Wei then latches on with a uniquely Chinese type of nominal object “*zhi lei* (GEN + type)” to the noun phrase “*xinnia::n* (Lunar New Year)” at line 11. *zhi lei* consists of the grammatical particle “*zhi* (GEN)”, a classical Chinese genitive case marker, and the noun “*lei* (type)”, making it a semantically dependent constituent. It retroactively subjugates the prior *xinnian* as the attributive constituent for complete understanding, thereby producing “*xinnian zhi lei* (categories of things like the Lunar New Year)”. Prosodically, *zhi lei* was also produced without pitch reset, marking it as a continuation from the prior utterance. In this case, *zhi lei* resembles a type of nominalizer-DE glue-on, except that the genitive marker DE did not initially occur in the host-TCU and was subsequently replaced by *zhi* in the increment.

In terms of the action pursued in lines 10–11, by incrementing with *zhi lei*, the speaker (Wei) retroactively transforms just one type of holiday that may occur at the end of January to an increased range of potential holidays in the Hong Kong calendar (besides Lunar New Year) to consider, thereby also upgrading the host of potential problems that might cause an obstacle in planning for an exchange trip at

the end of January. Lunar New Year, being the major holiday in the Chinese calendar, might have been the most obvious holiday to spring to mind, but Wei may have realized during the production of her turn that other kinds of holidays might also appear “at the end of January” to cause additional complications to the scheduling. By incrementing with *zhi lei*, such a possibility is highlighted by expanding on Lunar New Year as not the only holiday to consider.

Finally, in the last example of this section, we shall examine yet another type of increment that can also do upgrading of stance, an unattached noun phrase (unattached NP) added in the manner of a free constituent. It has been argued that unattached NPs do the work of pursuing recipient uptake by providing a second TRP at which the recipient can display proper reciprocity (Ono & Thompson, 1994; Ford et al., 2002), but in the example, we will demonstrate how unattached NPs can also function in other ways. Ex. (38) is another extract from the telephone conversation between Faye and Matt that occurs a little before the extract shown in Ex. (31). Just before the start of Ex. (38), Faye talks about problems arising from her supervisor moving to a new college, which leads to Matt suggesting that her husband, Dave, should transfer to her supervisor’s new college as well at line 05.

Ex. (38) Unattached NP as free constituent (Graduate Dilemma [3:58–4:19])

- 05 Matt: Dave 也 跟 他 走 呗.
 Dave *ye gen ta zou bei.*
 NM also with 3SG go SFP
 ‘Why don’t Dave leave with him as well?’
- 06 Faye: (>我们<) Dave >我们::< 我们 老板 不 喜欢
 (>*women*<) Dave >*wome::n*< *women laoban bu xihuan*
 1PL NM 1PL 1PL boss NEG like
 ‘Dave- Our- Our supervisor don’t like’
- 07 俩 口子 在 一起 上班.
liang kouzi zai yiqi shangban.
 two couple at together attend.office
 ‘couples working together.’
- 08 (0.8)
- 09 Matt: .hhhhh
- 10 → Faye: 我- 而且 Dave 他 老板 挺: 好 的. <我们 系 主任.=
w- erqie Dave ta laoban ti:ng hao de. <wome xi zhuren.=
 1SG furthermore NM 3SG boss quite good GEN 1PL department head
 ‘Furthermore Dave’s supervisor is quite nice. Our department chair.’

- 11 Matt: =那 你 就 别 走. 你 就 呆 在 那 儿 换 一 个 老 板.
 =na ni jiu bie zou. ni jiu dai zai naer huan yige laoban.
 DM 2SG DM NEG go 2SG DM stay at there change one.CL boss
 ‘Don’t leave then. You can change a supervisor where you are.’

After Matt suggests that Dave leave with Faye as well at line 05, Faye’s response to Matt’s suggestion comes in two parts, the first from lines 06–07, where she rejects the possibility of Dave switching to her current supervisor, as the supervisor does not approve of couples working together. After a long gap of 0.8 second, Matt produces a long in-breath at line 09, best characterized as expressing affiliation with Faye on the “thorniness” of the issue. Faye then provides further grounds for rejecting Matt’s suggestion in the second part at focal line 10. Beginning with the discourse marker “*erqie* (furthermore)”, Faye prefaces this turn as providing a second additional reason for the rejection before commenting that Dave’s current supervisor (different from that of Faye) is “quite nice”. While the first reason stems from the possibility that Faye’s supervisor may be reluctant to accept Dave, the second reason suggests that Dave himself may also be reluctant to switch supervisors. At the first possible completion point of line 10 after “*Dave ta laoban ti:ng hao de* (Dave’s supervisor is quite nice)”, Faye latches on the focal unattached NP “*women xi zhuren* (Our department chair)”, thereby further specifying the subject referent in the host-TCU (i.e. Dave’s supervisor). As an unattached NP, this increment is obviously semantically complete on its own and syntactically unrelated to the host-TCU, meaning it cannot be seen as an omitted or replaceable part of the prior utterance. Yet prosodically, it is produced with subordinate intonation, and pragmatically, the referent and action pursued by “our department chair” cannot be adequately understood without retrospectively taking the host-TCU into account and thereby its status as an increment in the manner of a free constituent.

One interactional consequence of such an increment here is clearly to further *clarify* the stature of Dave’s supervisor, which is also a common function of increments that will be further documented in the next section. But if we take the speaker’s prior sequential actions into account, then how such an unattached NP (that is ostensibly functioning to specify the stature of a referent) can also function to upgrade stance becomes clear. Observe that at lines 06–07, and then further at line 10, Faye is oriented to account for her rejection of Matt’s suggestion at line 05. Unlike adverbials whose grammatical meaning can do the work of stance modification, the categorial function of noun phrases such as *women xi zhuren* does not naturally lend itself to upgrade or downgrade a previous predicate clause. However, when seen as an extension of the turn’s action to justify Faye’s reluctance to accept Matt’s suggestion, an added noun phrase specifically aimed at specifying Dave’s supervisor as also being the department chair will be scrutinized for its possible import. Hence, the specification of Dave’s supervisor as being in a position of authority via the increment brings an added forcefulness to Faye’s rationale on top of the supervisor’s “nice-ness”. Therefore, Ex. (38) demonstrates a case where a noun phrase free constituent can not only *clarify* a referent in the host-TCU (cf. free constituents regularly being used to clarify nominal arguments) but through

such a specification act to *upgrade* the action or stance the host-TCU pursues. As with Ex. (36), such upgrading can interactionally function to provide strong and convincing justifications for the recipient. As expected, when presented with the reasons at lines 06–07 and 10, Matt backs down from his original suggestion of Dave tagging along and changes to suggesting that Faye stay at her current university instead at line 11.

As an interim summary, our collection reveals that modifying stances constitutes the majority of what increments are doing. While it may be difficult to specify what sort of exact stance is being modified, our examples have explicated in detail how the increments are accomplishing some sort of downgrading or upgrading work. This is congruent with Schegloff's (2016) proposition that increments may work to "up the ante" or "backdown". Moreover, while adverbials may be a grammatical class semantically well suited for the job of stance modification (see Ex. (31), (32), and (35)) and therefore do regularly appear as increments (primarily in the manner of insertables) to downgrade or upgrade the prior utterance, there is by no means an exclusive form–function relationship between adverbial increments and the function of modifying stances. In our examples, noun phrases (see Ex. (33)), complex phrases (see Ex. (36)), nominal objects (see Ex. (37)), and unattached NPs (see Ex. (38)) can all be used to do downgrading or upgrading of stances as replacements, glue-ons, or free constituents within the right sequential environment. Furthermore, in terms of when the continuation is appended after possible completion, increments that occur as prosodically latched on or in the next beat (see Ex. (31), (33), (36), (37), and (38)), after a hearable gap (see Ex. (32) and (35)), and after talk-by-others (see Ex. (34)) were all found to be possibly doing stance modification. This suggests that the motivation for retroactive downgrading or upgrading of stances can be either due to a self-initiated afterthought process or induced by the lack of appropriate responses by co-participants.

4.1.2 Clarifying with increments

Another common function found in our collection of increments is to clarify the prior utterance by appending continuations that contain additional information. Frequently, it is an ill-defined referent or nominal argument within the just-completed clause that is the element in need of clarification and therefore unsurprising that replacements and free constituents are regularly found to be the types of increment performing this sort of interactional work.⁸ As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the majority of replacements found are instantiated by nominal phrases that can be seen as replacing the topic, subject, or object constituent in the host-TCU and work to clarify the earlier constituents with a more well-defined nominal phrase. Similarly, we also see how free constituents are predominantly formulated with unattached NPs, which clarifies with more content when there is a lack of syntactic slots in the host-TCU for articulation of a certain topic, issue, subject, and so on. To recall some of these examples, Ex. (39) reprints select examples from previous discussions on replacements and free constituents to illustrate how clarifying is done with these types of increments.

Ex. (39) Replacements and free constituents

39a. Replacement: ES-M-02 [5:29–5:55]

(* * marks portion that the increment is replacing)

- 13 Lin: 他: (.) 他 我 觉得 *他* 比较 扎:实. °你 老公°.
 ta: (.) ta wo juede *ta* bijiao za:shi. °ni laogong°.
 3SG 3SG 1SG feel 3SG compare steady 2SG husband.
 ‘He’s. . . I think he’s more down-to-earth. Your husband.’

39b. Replacement: ES-M-01 [17:34–17:40]

(* * marks portion that the increment is replacing)

- 01 Chen: 但 我 想 一 下 我 很 可 能 还 是 要 到 *南京*.
 dan wo xiang yixia wo hen keneng haishi yao dao *nanjing*.
 but 1SG think a.bit 1SG very possible still want reach Nanjing
 ‘But in consideration I probably still have to go to Nanking.’

- 02 Lian: 哦:[
 o:[
 CFM
 ‘Oh.’

- 03 → Chen: [南京 师范 大学.
 [nanjing shifan daxue.
 Nanjing Normal University
 ‘Nanjing Normal University.’

39c. Free constituent: ES-M-06 [11:28–11:44]

- 06 Jian: 你 可 以 中 间 转 吗:? ↓科[大:.]
 ni keyi zhongjian zhuan ma:? ↓ke[da:.]
 2SG can middle transfer QP NM
 ‘Can you switch mid-way? (in) your university.’

39d. Free constituent: ES-M-01 [13:44–14:00]

- 09 Chen: 实际 上 再 一 等 就 快 到 七 岁 了.
 shijishang zai yi deng jiu kuai dao qi sui le.
 actual.LOC again one wait DM fast reach seven age CRS
 ‘Actually, a slight delay and (the child) will soon be seven.’

- 10 → <↓等 [第二年 的 时候.
 <↓deng [dier nian de shihou.
 wait second year GEN period
 ‘(if it’s) delayed till the next year.’

Ex. (39a) and (39b) are taken from Ex. (9a) and (9b) in our discussion on nominal phrases as replacements. Here, the nominal possessive “*ni laogong* (your husband)” and the proper noun “*nanjing shifan xuexiao* (Nanking Normal University)” are seen to be replacing the third person pronoun “*ta* (he)” and the city location *nanjing*, respectively. Clearly, both these replacements add more specificity to the subject, object, or topic in question and work to clarify any possible misconception. Ex. (39c) is an instance of a nominal phrase in the form of a free constituent, also seen in Ex. (17a). The addition of the nominal abbreviation “*keda* (NM)” after “*ni keyi zhongjian zhuan ma* (Can you switch mid-way?)” clarifies that the prior question seeks to specifically understand policy matters at *keda*, which is the recipient’s undergraduate university. Ex. (39d), taken from Ex. (19), is also another case of using free constituent to clarify but using a clausal phrase instead. In Ex. (39d), the free constituent consists of the transitive verb “*deng* (wait)” taking a complex nominal phrase “*dier nian de shihou* (the second year period)” as its object, which clarifies that the “*zai yi deng* (to wait again)” in the host-TCU simply refers to just transitioning into the next year for the child to be seven years of age.

While replacements and free constituents are the incremental manners most nominals are found in when doing clarification of ill-defined nominal arguments, this does not exclude the possibility of using other manners of incrementing from doing this sort of interactional work. In the next two examples, it will be shown that nominal phrases can also occur as glue-ons and insertables to clarify.

The next example in Ex. (40), which is the expanded sequence version of Ex. (23), illustrates that nominals in the manner of syntactically continuous glue-ons can also work to clarify some referent. To recap, Deng has been chiding Cai (both female students in the same university) for not accepting her previous invitations to a night club with a group of friends. Cai defends herself by questioning if the outing had to take place so late into the night and conveys her lack of understanding (perhaps even apprehension) of the activities that go on in the night club. Deng then responds by saying night clubs only open at around 9 p.m. and that they are simply there to drink, dance, listen to music, and “to look at guys”. Cai awkwardly laughs at this response and probes if Deng goes out with an all-girls group. Orienting to the gender profile of the group as key to Cai accepting future invitations, Deng then empathetically confirms that it is indeed an all-girls group. The extract begins with Cai further enquiring if the girls Deng went out with were all from Hong Kong. Orienting to the possibility that the profile of this group of friends is going to significantly impact whether Cai would join the group for future outings, Deng proactively endeavours to provide more information on this group in the sequence.

Ex. (40) Nominal object as glue-on (ES-M-07 [19:41–19:55])

01 Cai: [你 上次 跟] 你 去 他 是- 都 是 (.) 香 港 的。
 [ni shang-ci gen] ni qu ta shi- dou shi (.) xianggang de.
 2SG previously with 2SG go 3SG COP all COP NM GEN
 ‘[When you went] last time, he... they were all Hong Kong-ers?’

02 (0.3)

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- 03 Deng: > 没[有<, <上次] 我 没 去.
 >mei[you<, <shang-ci] wo mei qu.
 NEG.have previously 1SG NEG go
 ‘No. I didn’t go the last time round.’
- 04 Cai: [°香港-°]
 [°xianggan-°]
 NM
 ‘[Hong Kong. . .]’
- 05 Cai: 啊 你 没有 去 啊.=
 a ni meiyou qu a.=
 INJ 2SG NEG.have go SFP
 ‘Oh! You didn’t go.’
- 06 Deng: =就是::: (0.3) 上次:: 但是: 他们 有::: 五个 人 去 啦..
 =jiushi::: (0.3) shangci:: danshi: tamen you::: wuge ren qu la..
 that.is previously but 3PL have five.CL person go SFP
 ‘I mean. . . Last time. . . but they had five people that went.’
- 07 (0.4)
- 08 Cai: °>这么 多<°.
 °>zhome duo<°.
 so many
 ‘That many?’
- 09 (0.5)
- 10 Deng: 都 是:- 对.
 dou shi:- dui.
 all COP right
 ‘they’re all. . . yeah.’
- 11 (.)
- 12 Deng: 呃- 都 是 港大 的.
 e- dou shi gangda de.
 AGR all COP NM GEN
 ‘Uh-hmm. . . they’re all from Hong Kong university.’
- 13 (0.4)
- 14 → Deng: °女[生°]
 °nu[sheng°.]
 female
 ‘(and all) female [students.]’

After Cai initiates another enquiry on the profile of the group (“they were all Hong Kong-ers?”) at line 01, a 0.3-second gap ensues in line 02. Deng then reveals at line 03 that she did not actually participate in the last outing. At line 06, Deng further conveys that five individuals from the all-girls group participated in the last outing. Following another 0.4-second gap in line 07, Cai receives this information with an unenthusiastic and softly produced “*zheme duo* (that many?)” in line 08, perhaps hinting that strength in numbers does not particularly appeal to her as a pull factor towards joining the group. This is possibly picked up by Deng as well, as another gap in the talk prefacing disalignment ensues in line 09 before she attempts to formulate another piece of information at line 10. Here, Deng begins with “*dou shi* (they’re all)” before cutting herself off to produce an agreement “*dui* (yeah)”, ostensibly in response *zheme duo* in line 08. She re-starts at line 12 again with our focal host-TCU “*e-dou shi gangda de* (Uhhmm. . . they’re all from Hong Kong University)”, harking back to Cai’s initial question at line 01. When this is again met with more gaps of silence in line 13, Deng re-introduces the gender profile of the group in the form of a nominal phrase increment “*nu sheng* (female students)”. Note that this appended constituent is done with lowered intensity and in subordinate intonation. Furthermore, as the prior utterance in line 12 ends with a nominalizer-DE construction (“*dou shi gangda de* (all from Hong Kong University-DE)”), the addition of an appropriate nominal argument *nu sheng* constitutes a grammatically fitted increment in the manner of a glue-on, where “*gangda* (Hong Kong University)” before the *de* particle is retroactively rendered the attributive element of *nu sheng*. But most importantly, in the context of this sequence of talk, the appending of *nu sheng* is done after non-uptake by recipient in line 13 and evidently works to further clarify a gender profile on top of other information already provided on the group of friends.

Nominal phrases that clarify may also occur as increments in the manner of insertables, as is shown in Ex. (41). This example returns to the video recording where Ph.D. graduate students Jie, Wei, and Tao are having a snack and chatting. In this segment of the recording, they talk about how a linguistic professor in Wei and Tao’s department had switched to a different sub-discipline in linguistics as her research direction, prompting Jie to wonder if the shift is related to insufficient people (students and faculties) working on linguistics from their department. This line of reasoning is rejected by both Wei and Tao, after which Tao further comments that there are others within their department working on linguistics. Line 06 in the example begins with Wei aligning with Tao’s comment.

Ex. (41) Noun phrase as insertable (NTU-2 [6:19–6:40])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in “normative syntax”)

06 Wei: 对。 因为 那个: 像 比如 说:
dui. yinwei nage: xiang biru shu:o
 right because that resemble example say
 ‘yea. Because it’s like. . .’

Due to the ambiguity of *bu yiyang ma*, appending the noun phrase “*yanjiu lingyu* (field of research)” in the next beat of talk as an increment interactionally works to make clear that Jie is specifically referring to Teacher Zhang’s expertise as being disconnected from “linguistics”. Within this sequential context, this nominal constituent cannot be adequately understood unless taken together with the just-prior utterance, and it also carries a subordinate intonation. *Yanjiu lingyu* can also be re-inserted back into the host-TCU as an insertable, as it introduces a subject that was missing and unspecified in the first place, re-constituting “*yanjiu lingyu bu yiyang ma* (But their field of linguistics is different)”. The point is, it is relatively clear that the nominal phrase here is doing clarification of an otherwise ambiguous utterance, illuminating for the recipient that “that’s different” refers specifically to Teacher Zhang’s field of study. Indeed, immediately after the continuation, Jie follows up with another TCU at lines 09 and 11 that further displays her concern with specifying Teacher Zhang as being involved in “*gudai hanyu* (classical Chinese)”¹⁰ instead of linguistics. Wei then corrects this misconception of Teacher Zhang at lines 12, stating that it is historical linguistics that he specializes in.

Replacing, adding, or re-inserting original nominal arguments in the host-TCU with nominal phrase increments certainly is a commonly seen retroactive operation that clarifies the understanding of a turn. Nonetheless, non-nominal constituents as increments can also be used to resolve ambiguities inherent in certain expressions. The next two examples will again show how adverbials and even verbal phrases as increments can also function to clarify the host-TCU.

Ex. (42) returns to Faye and Matt discussing the reservations that Faye’s husband, Dave, has about a possible transfer to a new university together with Faye and her supervisor. The topic turns to how Dave is also concerned about the possibility of having to re-do a new Ph.D. programme under the new university’s requirements. Matt then rejects that consideration as a possibility by asserting that anyone “tagging along” with a supervisor to a new university should not need to repeat a Ph.D. program under the new university’s requirements. The example begins at line 18, where Matt asserts that Faye will also be considered a Socrates University student (her current university) wherever she goes.

Ex. (42) Adverbial as insertable (Graduate Dilemma [5:00–5:21])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in “normative syntax”)

18 Matt: 对 啊 .hh 你 反正: 还是 上 Socrates [的 呀。
dui a. ni fanzhe:ng haishi shang Socrates [de ya.
 right SFP 2SG anyway still attend Socrates GEN SFP
 ‘Right. You’ll still be attending Socrates (University) anyway.’

19 Faye: [@ 我: 是 肯定
 [@ wo: shi kending
 1SG COP definite
 ‘I’ll definitely’

- 20 → 是 算 的. <如果 我 过去. <我 不 管 去 哪儿.
shi suan de. <ruguo wo guoqu. <wo bu guan qu naer.
 COP count GEN if 1SG cross.go 1SG NEG care go where
 ‘be considered (their student). if I go. It doesn’t matter where I go.’
- 21 (.)
- 22 Faye: 我 都 是 Socrates 的 学生.
wo dou shi Socrates de xuesheng.
 1SG all COP Socrates GEN student
 ‘I’ll still be a student of Socrates (University).’
- 23 (0.4)
- 24 Matt: 对. Dave 也 可以 转 啊. <反正 他 现在 没有
dui. Dave ye keyi zhuan a. <fanzheng ta xianzai meiyou
 right NM also can switch SFP anyway 3SG now NEG.have
 ‘Right. Dave can transfer as well. He hasn’t taken his’
- 25 考 qualify 啊.
kao qualify a.
 test qualify SFP
 ‘qualifying exams anyway.’

After Matt asserts that Faye need not re-do a PhD programme with “you’ll still be attending Socrates (University) anyway”, Faye first concedes that is indeed the case with “wo: *shi kending shi suan de* (I’ll definitely be considered)” at lines 19–20, which at possible completion is then quickly followed by an increment in the form of a conditional phrase “*ruguo wo guo qu* (If I go)” produced in subordinate intonation. This focal turn was also illustrated in Ex. (6a). As a conditional phrase or adverbial disjunct, it is semantically dependent and in default syntax should occur before the host-TCU, as in “*ruguo wo guo qu wo*: *shi kending shi suan de* (If I go, I’ll definitely be considered)”, hence its status as an adverbial increment in the manner of an insertable. Crucially, the conditional phrase “if I go” pragmatically provides the background information for its host-TCU to make sense, for “*wo*: *shi kending shi suan de* (I’ll definitely be considered)” taken on its own does not provide the necessary context for its understanding, as Faye is still currently attending “Socrates University”. This is one sense in which this continuation can be taken to be an example of doing clarification.

Another possible sense of doing clarification can be gleaned if we consider the turn from lines 19–22 in its entirety. It is observed that at the very start of the turn at line 19, Faye stresses the first personal pronoun “wo: (I)”, thereby emphasizing that “I’ll definitely be considered” is in contrast with others, and in this context, specifically with reference to Dave. This emphasis on herself as being an exception is then pursued throughout the formulation of the turn, first through the adverbial insertable “if I go”, followed by two additional TCUs at line 20 “it doesn’t matter

where *I go*” and at line 22 “*I’ll still be a student of Socrates (University)*”. Notably, the Chinese first person pronoun *wo* is optional in these TCU but is nonetheless produced. From this perspective, the increment “*ruguo wo guo qu* (if I go)” is one of the many formulations in this turn that aims to highlight that her status might not be applicable to Dave. In this sense, then, the adverbial insertable can be seen to be working not only to clarify but perhaps even to reject Matt’s generalization that Dave is in the same position as Faye in terms of not needing to re-do a new Ph.D. programme. But as it turns out, Matt did not understand the turn in this sense, as in line 24–25, he continues to pursue his line of thought by clearly spelling out how this may be done (in that Dave may also switch to Faye’s supervisor since he has not taken his qualifying exams).

The final example of this section demonstrates how a verbal constituent produced in the manner of an insertable may also function as a clarifying resource. This focal turn was also earlier seen in Ex. (8c) as an example of a verbal phase used as an insertables and expanded upon in Ex. (43). The extract comes from another later segment of the telephone conversation between Faye and Matt. However, in this extract, the topic turns to how Faye’s husband, Dave, chipped off a piece of his front tooth and is now in need of dental surgery. After Matt enquires if Faye and Dave have insurance that covers dental surgery, Faye replies that they don’t and complains about how they have to spend a lot of money on the procedure. On hearing this, Matt reveals that he has contacts with a dentist from China (Matt, Faye, and Dave are all graduate students living in the U.S.), which is suggestive of a cheaper alternative. The extract then begins with line 11, where Faye provides further information on the extent of Dave’s chipped tooth.

Ex. (43) Verbal phrase as insertable (Graduate Dilemma [12:40–13:03])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in “normative syntax”)

- 11 Faye: [hh 他 不是 全: 的。
 [hh ta bushi qu:an de.
 3SG NEG.COP all GEN
 ‘But his (damage) is not complete.’
- 12 他 就 门 牙 有- 嗑掉 一 块儿。
 ta jiu men ya you- kediao yi kuair.
 3SG DM front teeth have knock.drop one piece
 ‘His front teeth just ha- chipped a piece.’
- 13 (0.2)
- 14 Matt: 我- (.) 对 呀。 我们 这边 我 上次 也 是 牙: hhh (.)
 wo- (.) dui ya. women zhebian wo shangci ye shi ya: hhh (.)
 1SG yes SFP IPL this.side 1SG previously also COP teeth
 ‘I- Yea. Here, I also previously had a tooth-’

equally capable of performing this sort of interactional work. Together with our previous demonstration of how modifying stances need not always be done with adverbial increments, these findings indicate that while there may be statistically preferential (or felicitous) constituents and manners of incrementing which can regularly perform certain functions, such statistical correlation does not point to any sort of structural primacy over interactional considerations of situated contexts, and speakers will still formulate the most apropos increment at the moment of talk.

4.1.3 Reformulating the sequential action with increments

The last two sections on modifying stances and clarifying turns have been devoted to illustrating the most common functions of increments found in our collection. In this section and the next, we turn to less frequent but equally plausible other functions that Chinese increments may have.¹¹ Here, another possible function of increments, that of restructuring while continuing a sequential action, will be discussed. By this, we mean to suggest that some increments may be retrospectively produced to either change an initial action in the host-TCU or link the action pursued by its host-TCU to be part of a larger chain of action sequences. Either function pertains to the reformulation of an action-type in the host-TCU via the increment. Such a function has not been well documented, as far as I know, in the extant literature on increments.¹²

The first example in Ex. (44) is reproduced from Ex. (21), which aimed at illustrating how the Chinese topic-comment structure facilitated incrementing in a syntactically continuous manner. Here, the extract is provided for ease of discussion on how a verbal clause in the manner of a glue-on can be used to tweak the original action in the just-prior TCU. To recap, the context here is about two friends, Chen and Lian, having a discussion on the best time in the year to have a baby, such that it would be able to enrol into the primary school system of mainland China at the youngest age possible. The issue is if a child does not reach the biological age of six by the final date for primary school admission in China, he or she will not be allowed to enrol until the next academic year. Hence, the month in which a child is born becomes a relevant point of discussion, as this will directly affect his or her ability to enrol as one of the youngest in a cohort. Before the extract, the interlocutors have agreed that it is best for a child to enter the formal education system earlier than later. Ex. (44) begins with Chen posing the question on the best month for a child to be born, given the school admission policy in China.

Ex. (44) Clausal phrase as glue-on (ES-M-01 [13:13–13:25])

01 Chen: 那 这么 说 小孩 几 月 份 出生 比较 好 呢?
na zheme shuo xiaohai ji yue fen chusheng bijiao hao ne?
 DM this.way say children how.many month CL born compare good QP
 'If that's the case, when will you say is a better month to give birth to a child?'

02 Lian: .hhhh

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03 (.)

04 Lian: [uh: <几 月 份 出生 啊:]>.
 [uh: <ji yue fen chusheng a:]>.
 how.many month CL born SFP
 ‘Mmm. . . with regards to which month would be better. . .’

05 Chen: [如果 说 想- 小孩儿 就是 说 六 岁.]
 [ruguo shuo xiang- xiaohair jiushi shuo liu shui.]
 if say think children that.is say six age
 ‘If we wanted to. . . for children. . . I’m mean, to be six years old?’

06 (0.4)

07 Chen: 九月 份 以后?
 jiuyue fen yihou?
 September CL after
 ‘(Maybe) after September?’

08 (0.5)

09 → Chen: 出生 好 一些.
chusheng hao yixie.
birth good a.bit
 ‘(as the) better (time) to give birth.’

10 (1.3)

11 Lian: ((contemplative tone)) <九月 [份>.]
 ((contemplative tone)) <jiuyue [fen>.]
 September CL
 ‘September. . .’

12 Chen: [或者 是]:: 就是 说:::
 [huozhe shi]:: jiushi shu:::o
 or COP that.is say
 ‘or maybe. . . I mean. . .’

13 (0.5)

14 Lian: 对. 九月 份:. <我 觉得 是 九月 份 左右
 dui. jiuyue fen:. <wo juede shi jiuyue fen zuoyou
 Yes September CL 1SG think COP September CL left.right
 ‘Yes. September. I think it’s around September’

- 15 好像 比较:: 比较 好.
 haoxiang bija::o bijiao hao.
 seems compare compare good.
 ‘that seems to be better.’

After Chen initiates the question in line 01, the recipient (Lian) finds it difficult to provide an accurate assessment, possibly due to the various complex issues in determining the best month for a child to be born. This is seen in line 02, where Lian audibly produces a lengthened in-breath, best described as the sort of response cry when one is thrown into a quandary. Further evidence of Lian having difficulty in answering the question is seen in the video data, as she turns her gaze sky-wards immediately after Chen’s question, displaying a look of contemplation as she verbalizes the in-breath. In fact, this upward gaze was maintained from line 02 to line 13 in the extract, when Lian repeats part of her interlocutor’s question in line 04 (“*ji yue fen chusheng a*: (with regards to which month would be better)”) and 11 (“<*jiu yue fen*> (September)”) or mutters inaudibly to herself in between. This embodied display makes it clear (to us as well as to the conversationalists) that Lian was engaged in working out “the sums” privately in her own thoughts in order to adequately answer Chen’s question at line 01 (“*xiaohai ji yue fen chusheng bijiao hao ne?* (when is a better month to give birth to a child?)”). At the same time, it is indisputable that Lian was also able to keep track of Chen’s contributions between lines 02 and 13, as evidenced in line 11 as she repeats part of Chen’s talk at line 07.

Seeing Lian’s dilemma in coming up with an answer, Chen attempts to “trouble-shoot” and clarify her question at line 05 with “*ruguo shuo xiang-xiaohai jiushi shuo liu shui* (If we wanted to. . . for children. . . I’m mean, to be six years old)”, which runs into overlap with Lian’s repeat at line 04. When this is further met with more gaps in line 06, Chen then proposes “*jiu yue fen yihou?* (After September?)” as a candidate answer with try-marked prosody in focal line 07, which is also the host-TCU in this example. With no forthcoming acknowledgement in line 08 occupied by a gap of half a second, she continues with a complex clausal predicate “*chu-sheng hao yi-xie* (better to give birth)”. Although this continuation was not done with subordinate intonation, the added constituent is both semantically and syntactically incomplete, clearly marking it as structurally dependent upon the just prior utterance. As such, with the earlier time period *jiu yue fen yihou* as the subject (or topic), *chu-sheng hao yi-xie* then comments upon it as a glue-on using a complex clausal predicate, utilizing the topic-comment structure common in Chinese. Crucially, in terms of interactional function, whereas Chen was offering a candidate answer with its try-marked prosody in *jiu yue fen yihou?*, the addition of the increment to form “*jiu yue fen yihou chu-sheng hao yi-xie* (It is better to give birth after September)” ends with a falling terminal intonation, therefore reformulating the original host-TCU from a more interrogative action into a declarative statement (albeit one that the recipient still has to affirm).

In the next example, it will be demonstrated how an adverbial conjunct “*erqie shi* (furthermore)” in the manner of a insertable is arguably re-formulating its

host-TCU to continue a sequence of affirmative endorsement on an interlocutor's "investment decision". Ex. (45) is another segment from the telephone conversation between Faye and Matt. This time, they have turned to a more light-hearted topic, namely the comparison of second-hand motor vehicles that both participants have purchased recently. Before this extract begins, Faye had asked Matt a series of probing questions such as the model, manufacture date, and mileage, as well as the price Matt paid for the vehicle, before revealing the corresponding specifications of her own second-hand purchase. It turns out that Matt had bought a 1987 Toyota Tercel for \$2300, whereas Faye bought a 1988 Toyota Corolla for \$3200. After both friends have revealed their recent purchase of second-hand vehicles, it becomes interactionally relevant for them to assess whether the second-hand purchase was a good buy. The extract begins with Matt's less-than-positive assessment of Faye's purchase of her Corolla as "quite expensive".

Ex. (45) Adverbial conjunct as insertable (Graduate Dilemma [22:52–23:45])

(@ marks the slot where the increment might be in "normative syntax")

- 43 Matt: 对。 <那个 corolla 是 挺 贵 的。
dui. <nage corolla shi ting gui de.
 yes that NM COP quite expensive GEN
 'Yea. The Corolla is quite expensive.'
- 44 (.)
- 45 Faye: corolla 的 车 是 很 经 跑 的。:=
corolla de che shi hen jingpao de:=
 NM GEN car COP very durable GEN
 'The corolla model is very durable!'
- 46 Matt: =>但是 我 觉得 你 那个 是 买 得 挺 好 的<。
 =>*danshi wo juede ni nage shi mai de ting hao de.<*
 but 1SG feel 2SG that COP buy PCM quite good GEN
 'But I think the one you bought is quite a good buy.'
- 47 Faye: 对。 我们~ 我们 买 得 还 行。
dui. wome~ women mai de hai xing.
 yes 1PL 1PL buy PCM still okay
 'Yes. (The car) we bought was a reasonable buy.'
- 48 (.)
- 49 → Matt: 你- 啊 @ 你- 比 我 早 一 年 买。 <而且 是。
n- a @ ni- bi wo zao yi nian mai. <erqie shi.
 2SG INJ 2SG compare 1SG early one year buy **furthermore** COP
 'y- oh you bought it a year earlier than me. as well.'

- 50 Faye: 对. 我: 是 在 dealer 那儿 买[的.
 dui. wo: shi zai dealer nar ma[fi de.
 yes 1SG COP at dealer there buy GEN
 ‘Yea. I bought it at the dealer.’

At line 43, Matt provides the first assessment of Faye’s purchase with “*nage corolla shi ting gui de* (The Corolla is quite expensive)”. Though semantically, this statement is unambiguous, action-wise, two almost conflicting interpretations could have been pursued here. One interpretation, by taking the referent *corolla* to generically mean cars of the Corolla model, is that Matt is attempting to reassure Faye. By saying that the Corolla model is generally more expensive, Matt is then validating Faye’s decision in having to pay a higher price for her Toyota Corolla (relative to his Toyota Tercel).¹³ The other interpretation takes a specific reading of the referent to mean Faye’s Corolla, which then implies that Matt has posited an unfavourable assessment by saying Faye has paid too much for her car. It is the latter interpretation that Faye takes to be the case in line 45, evidenced by how she indignantly provides a justification in “*corolla de che shi hen jingpao de*: (But the Corolla model is very durable)” with heightened stress on its onset. Following this strong counter, Matt then quickly latches on at line 46 to clarify in quick pace that the purchase was a good buy despite being costly. It is unclear if Matt’s explication at line 46 is a backdown due to Faye’s disagreement in the just prior turn or a genuine clarification of the action pursued in line 43. In any case, Faye then accepts Matt’s reformulated assessment in line 46 with a downgraded agreement of her own in “*women mai de hai xing* (the car we bought was a reasonable buy)” at line 47.

After a short beat of silence in line 48, we arrive at our focal turn in line 49 where Matt first produces a syntactically, prosodically, and pragmatically complete TCU in “*n-a ni-bi wo zao yi nian mai* (oh you bought it a year earlier than me)”. This is quickly followed with our focal increment “*erqie shi* (as well)” in the form of a semantically dependent adverbial conjunct “*erqie* (furthermore)” plus a copula “*shi* (be)”, produced in subordinate intonation. In normative syntax, the conjunct *erqie* would be positioned initial to the utterance, as in “*erqie ni-bi wo zao yi nian mai* (furthermore, you bought it a year earlier than me)”, thereby making the continuation an insertable. More importantly, *erqie* as a discourse marker that links the host-TCU to its prior context, such that “*ni-bi wo zao yi nian mai* (you bought it a year earlier than me)” is then understood to be an *additional* justification relative to an earlier justification in the sequence. While Matt said “*zao yi nian* (one year earlier)”, this could be a verbal error, when trying to express Faye bought her 1988 car (as opposed to Matt’s 1987 car) a year later than Matt and thereby has technically acquired a newer vehicle for use at an earlier date.

As an increment, *erqie shi* continues to act in the capacity of a linkage device, retroactively positioning the host-TCU as a continuation of a line of action or actions previously instantiated. In the context of this example, the increment *erqie shi* has then retroactively reformulated the action in line 49 to be construed as a continued agenda of either Faye’s line 47 or Matt’s line 46, both of which aim to validate Faye’s good buy of the Toyota Corolla. Note that had the increment not

been produced, the TCU “*n-a ni-bi wo zao yi nian mai*. (oh you bought it a year earlier than me)” on its own would appear to be a simple statement of sudden realization¹⁴ with little interactional import. The increment *erqie shi* has thus retroactively taken the host-TCU and placed it within a larger sequential context of providing validation of Faye’s purchase after Matt’s initial faux pas at line 43, in a sense re-organizing the host-TCU to serve a more interactional function. It is possible that this example is another case of the speaker quickly producing new content information, only to register other contingencies (such as the need to locate the turn within a sequence of providing validation) near possible completion of host-TCU, which is then followed by an increment to rectify interactional deficiencies.

In summary, this section has described two examples where increments can be used to reformat or reformulate the sequential action of the host-TCU. Again, the type of increment and constituent used to accomplish such a function can vary, with a complex clausal phrase glue-on in the first example and an adverbial conjunct insertable in the second. Furthermore, while further talk in the first example was produced as a post-gap increment, the increment in the second example was done prosodically as latched on. Though reformulating the sequential action is not a function as frequently found relative to other incremental practices (i.e. modifying stances and clarifying), it is nonetheless an equally valid and analytically plausible function that addresses interactional contingencies. In our final section on interactional functions of increments, another less frequent but highly interactional practice will be explored.

4.1.4 Securing recipient uptake with increments

In this last section on interactional functions of increments, we shall explore an example which gives a clear indication that the practice of incrementing is interactionally motivated, whose function is at its very core about addressing interactional contingencies. One frequently documented function of increments is that of pursuing recipient uptake (Heath, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984b; Ford et al., 2002), where the provision of a specifically formulated increment is seen to be providing an *additional* transition relevance place for the recipient to respond, particularly in the event of a gap occurring in the first TRP (or after possible completion of host-TCU) indicating some sort of obstacle towards proper uptake. Technically speaking, the production of any increment after a gap will in effect provide another TRP and in this way can always be seen to be providing another opportunity for recipients to respond. In fact, this seems to have been the primary way with which previous studies have analysed increments, such that other interactional functions previously described are seen as subsidiary roles or subordinated under the function of “pursuing recipient uptake”. In characterizing turn extensions found in their data, Ford and Thompson (1996, p. 167) discuss the function of “pursuing recipient responses” in the following manner (comparisons bolded and in parenthesis are my own additions):

In pursuing recipient responses, speakers may simply recomplete the previous turn, thereby recreating a transition relevance point. They may add on a

tag question, calling more clearly for recipient uptake. They may soften some claim or communicate uncertainty, thus revising the context for agreement or disagreement (**cf. downgrading**). They may add support to some prior claim, thereby strengthening the potential for agreement (**cf. upgrading**). Or they may treat the lack of response as a failure of understanding, addressing that failure by adding specification or elaboration (**cf. clarifying**). Such extensions fill in what could be the development of problematic gaps. In one way or another, an extension past a point of completion provides an additional opportunity for smooth speaker change.

It is illuminating that Ford and Thompson (1996) similarly found the three main functions of downgrading, upgrading, and clarifying in their collection of turn-extensions but treated them simply as means to an end. It is acknowledged that the deployment of any increments will necessarily provide additional opportunity for smooth speaker change, and in this sense, there is always the technical possibility that any increment can be used as a vehicle to pull off pursuing recipient uptake. But we do not believe this means that all increments therefore work to pursue recipient uptake as a general function. Whether pursuing recipient uptake is the central goal of an instance of incrementing is an empirical question that can only be answered on a case-by-case basis. Thus, we see downgrading, upgrading, clarifying, and other *prima facie* functions of incrementing as equally valid, and subjugating these other functions to be ancillary may not be totally justifiable.

There are, of course, instances of increments which seem to simply recomplete the previous turn and function specifically to secure or pursue recipient uptake without analyzably altering the host-TCU in any substantial way except to structurally gain that additional TRP for another chance at speaker transition.

Ex. (46) of this section illustrates one such instance where two consecutive increments are produced to “secure” and then “pursue” another recipient’s uptake. Different from previously documented examples, however, is how the first increment in this example was executed. First, as will be shown, an increment can also be utilized to provide a second TRP for a *different* recipient from the one selected at first TRP (or at possible completion of host-TCU), as opposed to pursuing the original recipient due to lack of uptake.¹⁵ Second, we can analyzably see such an orientation to “re-do” the turn for another recipient in the visible gaze shift of the speaker, done in concert with the increment, thus mutually elaborating to whom and for what purpose the increment is addressed (see Goodwin, 1979). In Ex. (46), we return to the lunch-time conversation between Jun, Lin, and Hao, last seen in Ex. (36). In this segment, the topic has turned to prototypical Chinese male behaviour. Before the start of the following extract, the participants were relating to each other (mostly between Hao and Lin) various personality flaws they have seen in their family members. In particular, Lin talks about how her dad would verbally agree to do household chores asked of him by her mom but make no physical action of actually doing them, and so her mom have to eventually do the work herself.

Ex. (46) Gluc-ons (NTU-1 [26:47–27:35])

- 19 Lin: 就: (0.5) 就-就 这个 比如说 hhh err 然后 告诉 他 了
ji:u (0.5) ji-jiu zhege birushuo hhh err ranhou ga:osu ta le
 DM DM this example.say then tell 3SG CRS
 ‘And. . . and for example. . . err when he’s been told (to mop the floor),’
- 20 他说 啊 行. 我 擦. hh 后来 他 也 不 会 擦. (.) 然后
tashuo a xing. wo ca. hh houlai ta ye bu hui ca. (.) ranhou
 3SG.say INJ okay 1SG wipe then 3SG also NEG will wipe then
 ‘and he said okay, “I’ll mop (it)”, but then he’ll not do it, and’
- 21 最后 我 妈 会 戴上- 胶皮 手套.
zuihou wo ma hui daishang- jiaopi shoutao.
 last 1SG mother will wear.LOC rubber gloves.
 ‘in the end my mom will put on her rubber gloves.’
- 22 Jun: 嗯.=
en.=
 CFM
 ‘Mmmm’
- 23 → Lin: =擦. <你 知道 吗. .hhh
=ca. <ni zhidao ma. .hhh
wipe 2SG know QP
 ‘(and) mop. y’know?’
- 24 (.)
- 25 Lin: 然后: 她 擦 的 时候 我 爸 可能 才 会 觉得 哎呀.
ranho:u ta ca de shihou wo ba keneng cai hui juede aiya.
 then 3SG wipe GEN period 1SG father maybe then will feel INJ
 ‘And when she’s mopping, my dad might then feel “Oh. . .”’
- 26 (0.4) tsk 自己 (.) 不 对 啊. 或者 怎么 样.
(0.4) tsk ziji (.) bu dui a. huozhe zenme yang.
 self NEG right SFP or how appearance
 ‘(sign) I’ve done something bad. or something.’
- 27 Hao: 嗯.
en.
 CFM
 ‘Mmm’
- 28 (.)

29 Jun: 嗯. ((clears throat))
en. ((clears throat))
 CFM
 ‘Mmm’

The focal increment in this example occurs in line 23. From lines 19–20, Lin first enacts the scenario where her mom will request help, and her dad will verbally agree with “*wo ca* (I’ll mop it)” in line 20. But, as Lin explains, her dad will not actually do the job (*houlai ta ye bu hui ca*). This leads to line 21 and 23, in which Lin describes her mom eventually giving in by putting on a rubber glove to finish the chore. Lin’s formulation of this description, however, comes in two parts, a host-TCU “*zuihou wo ma hui dai-shang-jiaopi shoutao* (in the end my mom will put on her rubber gloves)” at line 21, and the first increment “*ca* (mop)” at line 23. It is further observed that the end of “*jiaopi shoutao* (rubber gloves)” is oriented to by Jun as a possible completion point, as he responds with an acknowledgement token “*en* (CFM)” at line 22. As for the linguistic features of this first increment, it also exhibits prototypical features such as being pragmatically dependent and prosodically in subordinate intonation. Furthermore, the serial verb construction common in Chinese grammar is in play here to index syntactic continuity, where the first verbal phrase “*dai-shang-jiaopi shoutao* (put on her rubber gloves)” is followed by a second verbal element *ca* indicating the temporal sequence of physical actions, thereby indexing the increment as an instance of being produced in a syntactically continuous glue-on manner.

We now turn towards an analysis of the increment’s interactional function in this example. As it turns out, what is being visibly displayed before, during, and after the production of the increment is consequential to the analysis of what it is interactionally doing. Visual cues, specifically the speaker’s gaze, turn out to be crucially relevant in understanding how the practice of increment can be utilized in tandem with gaze to provide another TRP for other recipient(s) to do uptake. During the onset of the focal TCU “*zuihou wo ma hui dai-shang-* (in the end my mom will put on)” and before its possible completion, the speaker’s (Lin) gaze can be seen to be fixed on Hao, selecting him to be principal recipient of her talk. However, Hao is *not* ready to be a reified participant to the ongoing talk, as his gaze and displayed posture show him to be engaged in picking up food from the table (see Figure 4.1).

From the recording, it can also be observed that Lin produces a vocalization that sounds like a slight cut-off, immediately after “*dai-shang* (put on)” came out in the clear. This slight perturbation is another reflection of Lin realizing a problem of proper reciprocity, as she shifts her gaze towards Jun, the only other co-participant to the conversation, in search of another recipient. Therefore, as Hao is not sufficiently engaged to be a proper recipient to Lin’s ongoing talk, Jun is then selected to be the recipient as Lin comes to the first possible completion of the host-TCU after *jiaopi shoutao*. From peripheral vision, Jun is able to notice Lin’s gaze to be selecting him as recipient of her possibly complete turn and duly notes such possible completion with a confirmation token “*en* (CFM)” at line 22 (see Figure 4.2).

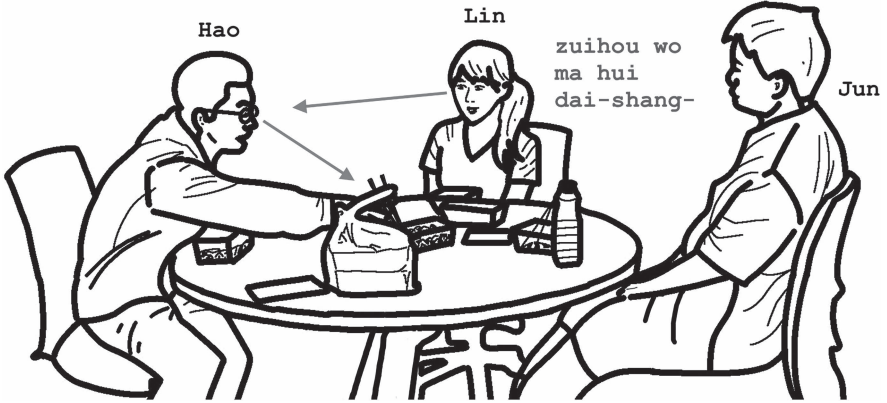


Figure 4.1 Selecting Hao with gaze at onset of TCU

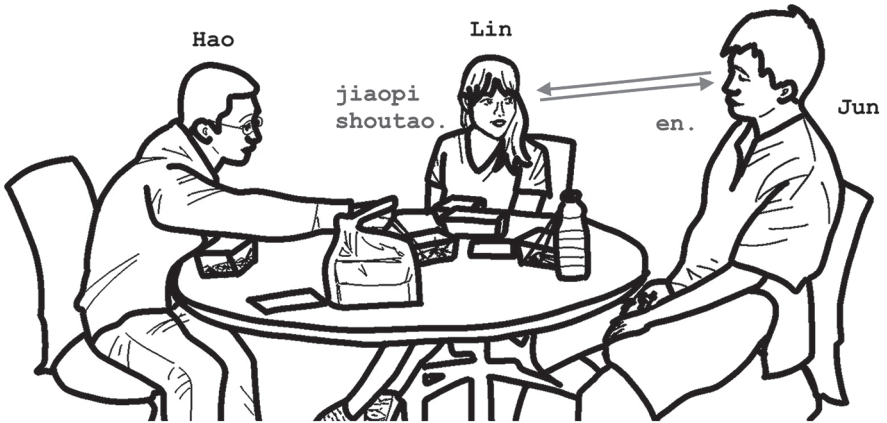


Figure 4.2 Shift in gaze to Jun by possible completion

Having secured Jun’s response as displaying attentiveness to her talk, Lin nonetheless then quickly latches on to the end of Jun’s token response to produce the increment “*ca* (mop)” as she shifts her gaze back towards Hao. This visible embodiment of selecting Hao as another recipient before an upcoming second possible completion at the end of the increment shows that the speaker (Lin) is oriented to using the practice of incrementing to provide another TRP (or in a sense re-doing the host-TCU) for a recipient (i.e. Hao) other than the one selected at the initial TRP (i.e. Jun). It is also noteworthy that immediately after the increment, Lin attempts to further *pursue* uptake from Hao by latching on with yet a second increment, this time in the form of a *tag question* “*ni zhidao ma* (y’know?)”. However, even with the provision of multiple opportunities to respond, it can be seen that Hao is still engaged with food selection and not ready to be a reified participant to Lin’s talk (see Figure 4.3).

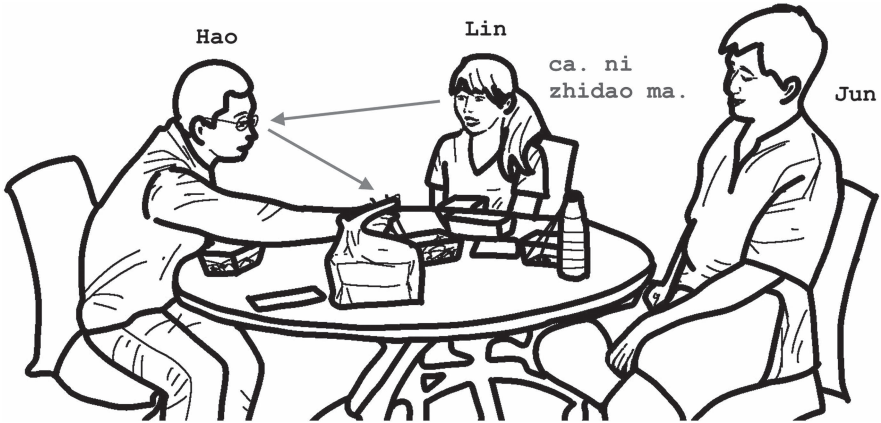


Figure 4.3 Second shift in gaze back to Hao with increments

After further non-uptake by Hao at line 24, Lin continues the story from lines 25–26 with further explication of what happened after her mom gave in to do the mopping herself, namely her dad feeling belated guilt. From the video recording, Hao is seen to be finally turning to face Lin in the middle of line 25; hence his long-awaited acknowledgment token is eventually delivered at line 27, followed by Jun’s at line 29.

As a summary, this multimodal analysis has amply demonstrated that another possible interactional function of Chinese increments is to provide a second transition relevance place, after an initial TRP at possible completion of the host-TCU, for a recipient to display uptake. While previous studies on increments have recurrently noted such a function under the heading of “pursuing recipient uptake”, what appears different here in our example is that the first increment is used to *secure* uptake from a *different* recipient to the one selected at initial TRP (i.e. possible completion of host-TCU), and a second increment then *pursues* uptake from the recipient selected (by gaze) in the first increment. Hence, the introduction of the term “securing recipient uptake” aims to capture this sense of a new recipient instead of pursuing one that has already been selected before. From another perspective, “pursuing recipient uptake” might also be an apt description in this example, as Hao began as the principal recipient of Lin’s talk on the onset of the TCU at line 21. That Lin chose to continue her line of talk by implementing an increment as she gazes back at Hao may have to do with recognizing Hao as being the original recipient of her talk. Hao being ill disposed to be a proper recipient during the progression of the TCU was what led Lin to construct multiple increments to re-engage him into the participation framework in the first place. Regardless, the function of the increment in Ex. (46) is clearly addressed to an interactional contingency of face-to-face conversation, namely the concern for proper reciprocity at possible completion of a TCU.

4.2 Multi-layered functions of increments

This chapter attempts to identify some key interactional functions that speakers work towards achieving by producing increments. As previously argued, the type of function Chinese increments may be employed to achieve can range from the more common downgrading or upgrading of prior stances and clarifying understanding of the host-TCU to less common functions such as reformulating the sequential action and securing recipient uptake. These described interactional functions are, of course, not exhaustive of the type of work that increments may be employed to do. Our survey simply represents the most frequent, discernible, and aggregated functions of increments analysable from our collection.

In curating the range of interactional functions that Chinese increments may be deployed to accomplish, it was observed that similar interactional objectives can be achieved through varied types of increments, including increments that were produced in the next beat, after a gap of silence, or after talk by others. For instance, while adverbials utilized in the manner of insertables may be the most germane type of grammatical constituent used to achieve modification of stances, such an interactional function can also be realized by unattached noun phrases and other sorts of compound lexical items in the manner of replacements, glue-ons, or free constituents. Another common function is attaching an increment to clarify an otherwise unclear host-TCU. Here, nominal phrases in the manner of replacements or free constituents seem to be the constituent most “fitted” to do clarifying, but again, other forms such as conditional phrases and even verb phrases as glue-ons and insertables have also been found to be able to do retroactive clarification. Another previously less documented function is to reformulate the original action in the host-TCU with an increment. This was shown to be pursued with a clausal phrase as glue-on or an adverbial conjunct as insertable in our examples. Finally, Chinese increments may also be used to resolve complications of interactional participation frameworks, such as securing recipient uptake, previously demonstrated with consecutive syntactically continuous increments using a verb and a tag question. A key insight from these analytic descriptions is that while there may be preferential types of constituents or manners of incrementing for the accomplishment of certain interactional functions, there is no exclusive form-to-function correspondence. This finding is unsurprising, as it hearkens back to and further supports the point that forms of increments are epiphenomenal to accomplishing some interactional goals with the most appropriate unit of talk. Hence, different situated context (including the emerging structural environment of ongoing talk) necessarily requires speakers to utilize contrastive forms of increments in pursuit of similar interactional objectives.

A more interesting observation, however, is how more than one task or function may be concurrently and subtly accomplished with the use of a single increment. It was already previously mentioned in the last section on securing recipient uptake how such a function is technically a function of all increments, as the production of any increment in effect provides another TRP and hence another opportunity for recipients to respond. Therefore, Ford and Thompson (1996) also argued that downgrading, upgrading, clarifying, and other functions of increments are

all means of pulling off pursuing recipient uptake. Our own investigation of Chinese increments, however, demonstrates that the multifunctionality of increments extends beyond simply being mechanistic vehicles for pursuing recipient uptake. One quick example of this is seen in Ex. (39a), where the nominal phrase “*ni laogong* (your husband)” as an increment is seen to be replacing the third person pronoun “*ta* (he)” in the compliment “*wo juede ta bijiao zashi* (I think he’s more down-to-earth)”, thereby adding more specificity and clarity to the subject. But besides functioning to clarify any possible non-understanding of who *ta* refers to, highlighting that it is specifically the recipient’s husband who is receiving such a compliment can also possibly work to build solidarity with the recipient. Another example is in Ex. (32), where “*wo juede* (I think)” is appended following an assessment “*ni chi de hen qingdan de ya* (Your taste in food is very bland)” of the recipient. One obvious function of this increment is in the use of *wo juede* to mitigate the possibly transgressive assessment, as declaring other’s taste in food is not a domain the speaker has epistemic primacy over. However, given that *wo juede* can also act as a response-mobilizing device (Lim, 2011), the increment can also concurrently work to secure recipient uptake. Here, the additional function of securing recipient uptake does not simply come from providing another slot to respond via incrementing but is built into the semantics of *wo juede* to portray limited access to the recipient’s personal preferences (Pomerantz, 1980). A third example is seen in Ex. (38), in which another nominal phrase “*women xi zhuren* (Our department chair)” as an increment is again clarifying the referent “*Dave ta laoban* (Dave’s supervisor)” in the host-TCU “*Dave ta laoban ti:ng hao de* (Dave’s supervisor is quite nice)”. But given that the action of the host-TCU is a justification of why the speaker’s husband (Dave) is reluctant to switch universities, further specifying with an increment that the supervisor is in a position of authority also upgrades the assertiveness of the justification. One way of understanding the multi-layered functionality of some increments is how a more nuanced interactional goal can be achieved by “riding on the back” of a more literal function of the increment. These duplex functions of increments may be termed *first-* and *second-order operations* following the terminology by Schegloff (2013) where he investigates what sort of repair operations same-turn repairs within the TCU may be doing. In examining these “functions” of same-turn repairs, he notes how “(f)irst-order operations are the... basic, *prima facie* job done on the TCU-or-turn-in-progress”, but there could also be second-order operations, that is, repair operations “which *could* be understood in the terminology of the first-order operations, but whose analysis would have missed the point if left at that”.¹⁶ The analysis of possible layered functions in increments reiterates the point that a simplistic form-to-function paradigm is untenable in understanding how interactional practices such as incrementing work to achieve communicative goals.

4.3 Incrementing as embedded transition space repairs

By outlining the possible common functions of Chinese increments in this chapter, it is clear that they all constitute some form of reparative action that operates upon the prior host-TCU, save perhaps for securing recipient uptake. But even for this

function, we have discussed how they are also accomplished through “riding on the back” of increments that are retroactively operating on the host-TCU in a more direct manner. Therefore, as was alluded to in Chapter 1, a central argument made in this monograph is that incrementing is essentially a type of repair mechanism which implements corrective action after a turn has hearably come to completion. But before delving into the relationship between increments and the organization of repair in conversation, it might be useful to first lay out some preliminary (albeit banal) comments on what *repair* is in conversation analytic terms.

Repair refers to the well-documented phenomenon (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1979; Zhang, 1999; Kitzinger, 2013) where speakers utilize “the set of practices whereby a co-interactant interrupts the ongoing course of action to attend to possible trouble in speaking, hearing or understanding the talk”.¹⁷ Such practices are overwhelmingly *self-initiated* by the speaker and occur within the same turn as the “trouble-source” or “repairable” element but may also be *other-initiated* and have the repair solution carried out in later turns.

One type of repair that closely resembles increments is the organization of repair at transition-relevance places, termed *transition-space repair*. First, both phenomena are clearly implemented in the interactionally sensitive position of post-possible completion, where speaker transition becomes a relevant concern for all co-interactants. Second, there is a huge degree of overlap in terms of the *prima facie* operations that increments and (self) repair impose on the preceding talk. Indeed, as previously mentioned, Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007) also call replacements a “subcategory of same-turn self-repair, comprising those instances where the self-repair is carried out during the transition space following a turn’s possible completion”.¹⁸ It is unclear why replacements were singled out in their study as a form of repair in comparison to other forms of increments, other than stating “some (increments) replace a part of the host and are *thus* repair-like”.¹⁹ Based on this, it seems that the authors had ascribed stronger “repair” features to replacements by virtue of a specific syntactic operation it performs on the host-TCU. However, in detailing the range of interactional functions that Chinese increments are seen to be commonly utilized for, they bear a striking resemblance to a larger range of work that self-repair is doing. While there are “no systematic study of transition-space repairs based on a substantial collection of cases”,²⁰ in characterizing the types of operations that “same-turn self-repair” can perform, Schegloff (2013) includes “replacing” (cf. replacements), “inserting” (cf. insertables), “recycling” (cf. repetitions), “reformatting” (cf. reformulating the sequential action), and others as the core types of operations speakers employ in same-turn repair to deal with a trouble source. Hence, if we were to take a broader perspective on conversational repair, there is no merit in favouring replacements over other increments (such as insertables) as being more “repair-like”.

Some have opined that “right dislocated constructions (i.e. syntactically discontinuous increments) cannot by any means be reduced to a (self) repair mechanism”,²¹ purportedly because these elements do other more *prospective* work such as providing a second TRP for pursuit of recipient responses. However, it was previously argued in the last section that there are no analytic or

classificatory merits in strictly delineating increments to be performing one function (i.e. pursuit of recipient responses) over clearly *prima facie* other functions. One could simply see more “repair-like” base operations (such as replacements) as the vehicle with which more “non-repair-like” functions (such as securing recipient uptake) are carried out. This argument is well exemplified in Drew (1997), where it is shown that the organization of repair (e.g. “open-class” repair initiators) can be used to address interactional problems other than a literal lack of understanding in the prior turn and that trouble-sources can be “sequential rather than sentential/utterance-based”.²² Hence, I argue that there are analytic merits in broadly treating increments as forms of transition-space repair, in that they all act to retroactively operate or add on to the host-TCU in some fashion.

On the other hand, the established “technology” or “mechanics” that are abundantly found in the delivery of self-repair is conspicuously missing in our collection of increments. In self-repair, the repair segment typically consists of “a repair *initiation*, marking possible disjunction with the immediately preceding talk, and a repair *outcome* – whether solution or abandonment of the problem”.²³ Such repair initiations are commonly marked by cut-offs and various other hitches in speaking, including *sound stretches*, *silences*, and *delaying* productions (e.g. “um” or “uh(m)”), which alert recipients to the possibility of upcoming repair. Also common are repair *prefaces* in the form of “well”, “I mean”, “no”, and “or”, which overtly mark some trouble in the preceding talk. The repair *outcome* itself also usually includes “frames” for recipients to locate the repairable or “reissued words or sounds that ‘frame’ the repair solution by repeating some of the talk around the trouble-source”.²⁴ In short, the “technologies” of prototypical self-repair clearly work to *bring attention* to the act of repair and saliently halt the progress of the ongoing talk.

While collecting instances of Chinese increments in our data, clear examples of such repairs occurring in transition space were also observed. In the three examples in Ex. (47), before the *repair solution* is presented, some sort of *repair-initiator* is provided to mark upcoming repair.

Ex. (47) Initiations in transition-space repair

47a. ES-M-02 [1:01–1:15]

- 05 Lin: 我 原来 准备 二十六 号 回去 然后:
 wo yuanlai zhunbei ershiliu hao huiqu ranhou:
 1SG original prepare twenty-six number return then
 ‘I was prepared to come back on the twenty-sixth but. . .’
- 06 然后 那 天 没 买到 (车-) 机票 嘛.
 ranhou na tian mei maida (ch-) jipiao ma.
 then that day NEG buy.reach car plane.ticket SFP.
 ‘But I failed to get a co- a plane ticket.’

07 (.)

08 → [啊] >不是< sh- 车票.
 [a] >bu shi< sh- chepiao.
 INJ NEG.COP car.ticket
 ‘Erm... No... mmm a coach ticket.’

47b. ES-M-01 [3:04–3:11]

02 Lian: =那 你 [得 (.) 给] 他 复发.=
 =na ni [dei (.) gei] ta fufa.=
 DM 2SG must give 3SG again.sent
 ‘Then you’ll have to re-send (the email).’

03 Chen: [mm]

04 → Lian: =<就是 [说 .hh] 嗯: 到底 你 去 还是 不 去.=
 =<jiushi [shuo .hh] e:n daodi ni qu haishi bu qu.=
 that.is say INJ eventually 2SG go or NEG go
 ‘I mean, erm, to say whether you’ll be going or not.’

47c. ES-M-06 [16:27–16:32]

03 Jian: 那 你- 觉得 你 还 挺 感 兴 趣 吗。 °就是 这 (方面)°.=
 na ni- jude ni hai ting gan xingqu ma. °jiushi zhe (fangmian)°.=
 DM 2SG feel 2SG still quite feel interest QP that.is this area
 ‘And you feel you’re still quite interested. I mean, in this area (of study).’

In Ex. (47a), Lin had initially started with “*ch-*” that was projectably going for “*che* (car)”, but ended up with “*ji-piao* (plane ticket)” in line 06. She then replaces *ji-piao* with “*chepiao* (coach ticket)” again in line 08 after a gap of silence in line 07. But before the candidate repair, Lin initiates it with multiple disfluencies in her talk, first with some form of delay in “*a* (INJ)”, then with the preface “*bu shi* (no)”, before doing a cut-off with “*sh-*”, all clearly indicating troubled talk. In Ex. (47b), Lian elaborates or parenthesizes the content of “*fufa* (re-send (email))” with a transition-space repair at line 04, by initiating the repair with a preface “*jiushi shuo* (I mean)” and a sound stretch on “*e:n* (INJ)”, before the repair solution of “*daodi ni qu haishi bu qu* (whether you’ll be going or not)”. Last, in Ex. (47c), Jian does an insertion repair by providing the grammatical subject in the form of a deictic expression “*zhe fangmian* (this area)”, again initiated with the preface “*jiushi* (I mean)”.

Frames were also observed to be a common feature in *bona fide* Chinese transition-space repair. Schegloff et al. (1977) note that in the vast majority of same-turn transition-space self-initiated self-repairs, “the trouble-locating is compacted into the repair-candidate itself, both being done by a single component”.²⁵ For instance, notice that the candidate repair in line 08 of Ex. (47a) also includes the

post-frame “*piao* (ticket)” that locates the trouble-source *jipiao* in line 06, and the transition-space repair replaces “*ji* (plane)” with “*che* (car)”. The use of frames in Chinese transition-space repair is further illustrated with two examples in Ex. (48).

Ex. (48) Frames in transition-space repair

48a. ES-M-01 [17:47–18:05]

- 06 Lian: [那 你 不是 说 原来 要 联系
 [na ni bushi shuo yuanlai yao lianxi
 DM 2SG NEG.COP say original want contact
 ‘Didn’t you say you originally wanted to contact’
- 07 → .hh 什么 北京 语言 学校 哇.=
 .hh shenme beijing **yuyan** xuexiao wa.=
 what Beijing **language** school SFP
 ‘some Beijing language school?’
- 08 Chen: =我 是 (.) [联系 就说-] 我 就 准备=
 =wo shi (.) [lianxi jiu shu-] wo jiu zhunbei=
 1SG COP contact DM say 1SG DM prepare
 ‘I... by contact, I mean I’m prepared’
- 09 → Lian: [语言 大学.]
 [**yuyan** daxue.]
language college
 ‘language college.’
- 10 Chen: =自己 亲自 到 那儿 去::
 =ziji qingzi dao naer qu::
 self personally reach there go.
 ‘to appear there in person, personally.’

48b. ES-M-01 [16:23–16:30]

- 01 Chen: 现在 在:: >好像< 会 喊 妈妈.
 xianzai za:i >haoxiang< hui han mama.
 now at seems know shout mother
 ‘Now it seems he knows how to say “mummy”.’
- 02 (0.3)
- 03 → Chen: t- 不 喊 爸爸.
 t- bu **han** baba.
 NEG **shout** father
 ‘(He) doesn’t know how to say “daddy”.’

- 04 (.)
- 05 → Chen: [喊 奶奶.
[*han* *nainai*.
shout grandmother
'say "grandma".'
- 06 Liang: [哦:::
[*o*:::
CFM
'Oh.'
- 07 (.)
- 08 Liang: 哦 [是 吗:[:?
o [*shi* *ma*:[:?
CFM COP QP
'Oh. . . Is that so?'
- 09 Chen: [他- [恩 他 喊 爸爸 也 喊 妈妈.
[*t-* [*en* *ta* *han* *baba* *ye* *han* *mama*.
2SG AGR 2SG shout father also shout mother
'He. . . Yea, he knows how to say "daddy" and also "mommy".'

In Ex. (48a), Lian replaces “*xuexiao* (school)” in line 07 with “*daxue* (university)” in line 09, pre-framed by “*yuyan* (language)” in both the trouble-source and the repair-candidate. In Ex. (48b), Chen misspoke in line 03 with “*bu han baba* ((He) doesn't say 'daddy')” when she actually meant that the child does not know how to say “grandma” yet. This was later rectified in line 05 by using the pre-frame “*han* (call)” followed by “*nainai* (grandma)”.

What the examples in Ex. (47) and (48) demonstrate is that when Chinese transition-space repairs do occur at TRP, they are *overtly marked* as such by various forms of repair-initiators or have the repair-candidate post- or pre-framed with some repeated element in the trouble-source. However, none of our identified Chinese increments exhibit any of these features that expressly work to signal repair or possible trouble in talk. Further talk in the form of insertables, replacements, glue-ons, free-constituents, or even non-add-ons does not use them to “repair” any *particular* trouble-source in the host-TCU. Even when the continuation is seen to technically operate on certain constituents or omissions in the host-TCU (such as insertables, replacements, or repetitions), such targeted areas of operation are not “brought to the surface” with frames but are left to the latent understanding of the recipient.²⁶

In fact, the most pervasive prosodic features of Chinese increments, such as *latched-on prosody* and *subordinate intonation*, are all geared towards *suppressing any saliency* that some form of retroactive operation or disfluency after possible

completion had, in fact, occurred. In the case of glue-ons, the perception of continuity is further supported with syntactic connectedness between the increment and its host-TCU. As such, the distinction here between overt cases of transition-space repairs and incrementing is akin to doing one sort of repair “out in the open”, whereas the other repair is maximally “hidden” as *ipso facto* being a form of repair. In a sense, transition-space repairs and increments are “exposed” and “embedded” forms of repair (Jefferson, 1983) that can respectively occur at TRP. In charting future directions for the study of repair, Kitzinger (2013) notes that “(s)peakers have ways of ‘correcting’ or ‘disambiguating’ their own talk and that of others without invoking the technology of repair . . . because there are interactional reasons to avoid drawing attention either to the trouble-source or to the correction of it” and that “(t)he various ways in which people ‘fix’ possible trouble in speaking, hearing or understanding, while keeping it from rising to the surface of the talk as overt repair, deserve much more exploration”.²⁷ As “post-possible completion is also one of the structurally provided and recurrently exploited positions for initiating repair”,²⁸ the use of increments to facilitate flow of talk (i.e. progressivity) at TRP, while simultaneously working to modify perceived inadequacies in the preceding talk, is argued to be one such regular and systematic practice of “embedded” repair in everyday conversation.

Notes

- 1 Schegloff (2000b, p. 13)
- 2 Biber and Finegan (1989, p. 92)
- 3 The recognitional address term of *laoshi* points towards Teacher Hu as possibly a respected former teacher of both Matt and Faye.
- 4 Jun is not from Canton (or Guangdong) in China but has studied in Canton for his undergraduate degree. Cantonese food is popularly known to be “light” in taste, consisting mostly of steamed dishes with little salt content.
- 5 Lin hails from northeast China, where the food is popularly known to be “heavy” in taste, often deemed greasy and salty.
- 6 Using the membership categorization device (Sacks, 1979; Stokoe, 2012) of “a person from northeast China” seems to be doing some work here.
- 7 Lim (2011) has argued that hedging and increasing response relevancy are often complimentary and simultaneous functions. Pomerantz (1980) makes a similar point when talking about “limited access” as a “fishing” device.
- 8 It seems that less than specific verbal elements in the prior clause can be readily modified or clarified with a range of adverbial insertables, which do not have to replace the verb in the host-TCU, whereas nominal items are more prone to be replaced entirely by a new nominal item posited as an increment.
- 9 Note that in the actual Chinese utterance, the demonstrative pronoun “that” doesn’t occur before “different”, as dummy subjects are unnecessary in Mandarin Chinese.
- 10 The understanding of “classical Chinese” as a field of study is that it deals with the hermeneutics of classical texts, which does not necessarily involve a scientific study of language.
- 11 “Securing recipient uptake”, otherwise known as “pursuing recipient uptake”, discussed in the next section, has often been documented as a core function of increments. However, this may have to do with how other first-order operations are seen as ancillary to pursuing recipient responses.
- 12 One exception is Goodwin (1979).

- 13 Matt has earlier revealed that his Toyota Tercel cost \$2300, whereas Faye later says her Toyota Corolla cost \$3200.
- 14 Observe that the “*a* (INJ)” in line 49 is doing the work of “Oh” in English, conveying some sort of change-in-state (Heritage, 1984) in the speaker.
- 15 The term “securing” recipient uptake is hence proposed instead of “pursuing” due to the change in selected recipient. However, as later analysed, the speaker in Ex. (46) may also be “pursuing”, in the sense that what was originally meant for one recipient changes to another recipient mid-way into the production of the host-TCU, and the increment then switches back to the original recipient at the onset of the turn.
- 16 Schegloff (2013, p. 64)
- 17 Kitzinger (2013, p. 229)
- 18 Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007, p. 519)
- 19 Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007, p. 515)
- 20 Kitzinger (2013, p. 255)
- 21 Pekarek Doehler (2011, p. 69)
- 22 Drew (1997, p. 98)
- 23 Schegloff (2000a, p. 207)
- 24 Kitzinger (2013, p. 239)
- 25 Schegloff et al. (1977, p. 376)
- 26 Replacements seem to be the most conspicuous of these operations that target specific constituents in the preceding talk for modification. Perhaps it is due to this trait that Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007) single out replacements as a subcategory of same-turn self-repair.
- 27 Kitzinger (2013, p. 256)
- 28 Schegloff (1996a, p. 91)