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Questions and Answers in a Chinese as a Foreign Language Speech Event

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Questions and Answers in a Chinese as a Foreign Language Speech Event

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Abstract

This paper reports the analysis of a stretch of classroom discourse using a Conversation Analysis (CA) approach to uncover the nature of how participants produce and respond to a particular question type - yes/no interrogatives (YNI) - within a student-led presentation. In this speech event, the analysis reveals how YNI, as proposed by Raymond (2003), produce constraints as well as expectations on the answers they structure. Using the basic CA unit of analysis, the turn-taking structure (where first pair parts make conditionally relevant elements within second pair parts), the data reveal that when non-type conforming responses are produced they are done so for cause - generally as a signal of some type of troublesome condition set by the YNI formation. In addition, non-type conforming responses are fashioned so as to provide accounts. Data support Raymond's view of type-conformity set by YNI as shown within a classroom speech event.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Classroom Discourse, Question/Answer Routine

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline data from a Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) classroom gathered at the university-level, and then focus on a particular speech event – a question/answer session following a routine student presentation – and how these particular English L1 learners of Mandarin Chinese employed questions to the presenter as a means of talking-into-being the speech event. Analysis will start by highlighting shortcomings in a common discourse analysis framework proposed by SLA Interaction researchers (e.g., Long, 1981; Pica & Long, 1986) to adequately account for participant behavior in the classroom. Analysis then presents a variety of excerpts that reveal how one presenter in particular responds to the constraints imposed by yes/no interrogatives (YNIs).

Data Collection

Two semesters of an intermediate CFL class held at a mid-sized American university were chosen for research (CHN 301/302). At various unobtrusive locations, a tape-recorder was used to record the class discourse. The classroom was small and no extraneous sounds other than those produced in a normal learning setting disturbed the recording process. Since the recording occurred each day, the data collection process resulted in little disturbance.

Rough transcriptions of the recordings were produced at the conclusion of both semesters, providing a macro perspective of class activities and showing the variety of *classroom speech events* present from class to class and the types of instructor and student interaction. Mitchell, Parkinson, and Johnstone (1981) describe a *classroom speech event* as “a stretch of lesson discourse, having a particular topic, and involving the participants...in a distinctive configuration of roles, linguistic and organizational” (p. 12). Each class began with either (a) a quiz on textbook vocabulary items, in which the instructor would produce words orally and students would write characters and corresponding *pinyin* with tone marks, or (b) a student presentation. Following this, the class covered homework either as a whole-class or in small groups. In the remainder of class, the instructor covered grammatical or cultural facets from the text, and students worked on tasks stemming from that day’s lesson.

After initial data analysis, a particular routine speech event was singled out for fine-grained transcription: the student presentation, which included a whole-class question/answer discussion session. This speech event provided a fair amount of peer-to-peer exchanges compared to more instructor-fronted class time. Resulting transcription notes were slightly modified from Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). This process required the data first be written into *pinyin* and then translated to English. Two native speakers of Mandarin Chinese reviewed all transcripts with the aid of the audiotapes.

Classroom Setting

The teacher was a female speaker of Mandarin Chinese originally from Taiwan with six years in-class experience. The stated course objectives were to improve the Mandarin language ability of students in the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Grades were based on being prepared with class homework, near-daily vocabulary quiz scores, essays, informal presentations, chapter tests, and mid-term and final exams — both of which contained a written and an oral component (i.e., partner role-play).

In the spring semester (from which all discussed data stems), sixteen students attended class; these students were heterogeneous in nature. As the Chinese language department did not administer placement exams beyond level 200, students entered 302 with varying skills. By appealing to the department head, students could circumvent the lower levels (100 and 200, or even 300), and for numerous students, this was certainly the case – those with in-country experience, previous high-school Mandarin classes, Defense Language Institute experience, and Heritage students. No issue, it seemed, was taken with the sometimes dramatically divergent student language skills – such as Heritage students with advanced listening and speaking abilities – occasionally in dialects other than “standard” Mandarin – but with limited literacy skills studying together with students more highly skilled in literacy – from grammar/textbook-based CFL classes – but not in oral communication practices.

There were nine Caucasian students (English L1), six Heritage students (English L1) with various amounts of Mandarin exposure from family members, and one Japanese L1 student employed by the university as a Japanese language instructor. Nearly half (n = seven) had some form of in-country language exposure in Taiwan, Mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macao. There were three females (all Heritage students) and thirteen males.

The textbook used, *Taiwan Today: An Intermediate Course* (Teng & Perry, 1992) is structurally based and divided into topic categories such as “Exercise in the Park” and “Strong Women.” Each chapter contains a text (written in both complex characters - *fantizi*, and simplified - *jiantizi*) followed by various subsections – vocabulary, grammar, and exercise (which are further divided into vocabulary drills, fill-in-the-blanks, speak-and-act role-play, and composition). Of these sections, only the text, the vocabulary, and the grammar were regularly covered in class.

The Speech Event: Student presentation and Q/A session

Students were assigned to give several five-to-ten minute presentations each semester relating to that week’s textbook topic. Some students chose their topics; others were given topics to present. Props could be used (e.g., photos, diagrams, power-point presentations, video-clips), and a script could be at hand but not read aloud from. The presentation consisted of a five-minute monologue followed by a Q/A session, whose duration depended on the amount of discussion generated by the audience members. At times this session lasted less than a minute, though, normally, it would continue for several minutes. There was no language requirement for the presentations. The lexical items, the syntactic structures, or the pragmatics of

interacting in Chinese were not controlled or constrained by the instructor. The blackboard could be used, and presenters were required to stand before the class. Although the presentation topics revolved around those covered in the textbook, nothing was said of using specific textbook material. What makes this important is that the linguistic resources from which participants drew during presentations were limited to audio input, with occasional characters or *pinyin* written on the board. The resulting group discussion was constructed largely as a Q/A session rather than a textbook lesson. The audience did not have handouts of the presentation providing them with the lexical or grammatical elements used in the presentation. Participants relied almost solely on oral input and their communicative skills.

The Three Presenters

For analysis, three audiotapes were chosen at random. On the three tapes were *Mao*, *Qing*, and *Wu*, three male students. *Qing* and *Wu*, both Caucasians, were enrolled at the graduate level in Asian Studies; *Mao*, a Heritage student, was enrolled as an undeclared first-year undergraduate. Of the three, only *Qing*, who had less than a year's worth of in-country experience, had taken CHN 301. *Mao* had no extensive in-country experience but had taken Mandarin classes in high school and was permitted to skip levels 100, 200 and 301. *Wu* had just returned from living for two years in Taiwan and had likewise skipped the lower levels.

The topics for the three presenters were as follows: *Mao* explained the situation regarding one of his relative's Chinese restaurant; *Qing* described a nudist dormitory at the undergraduate college he attended; and *Wu* told how his mother had graduated from university to go on for an advanced degree in Marine Biology. Interactions starting before the onset of student or instructor questions until the end of the Q/A session were transcribed (since this was the time when the majority of interaction occurred).

Turn-by-Turn Speech Event Organization - Question/Answer Adjacency Pairs

Classroom research has shown that formal classroom conversations are generally constrained by pre-allocated turns, where instructor-dominated question-answer routines drive classroom activities (Chaudron, 1988; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Research on classroom instructor-question behavior (see Brock 1986; Chaudron, 1988; Long, 1981) has looked into question types employed by instructors (i.e., open vs. closed, display vs. referential, and frequencies).

Much has been said about Q/A sequences in terms of which question types prompt what

kind of student production. In this relatively controlled interactional sequence, where both topic and next-turn speaker are generally preallocated, research has found that students are likely to produce more lengthy and syntactically complex responses following certain types of questions (Brock, 1986; Pica & Long, 1986). For example, opinion questions have been found to allow for a relatively open, next-speaker turn that may extend on and include not only the speaker's opinion but also an account for having it. In contrast, certain question types restrict next-speaker turns; examples of these closed-type questions would be 'yes/no' (YN) and 'or' questions, or those asking for specific responses (e.g., *what time is it?* and *how many bagels are in a baker's dozen?*). Research into Oral Proficiency Interviews has shed light on the fact that in certain contexts YN questions are designed to elicit elaborated answers (He, 1998; Ross, 1998). This research raises the issue of how participants employ question for purposes particular to specific institutional discourse.

Another aspect of question type is whether they are *display* or *referential questions*. Display type questions are questions whose answer is known by the questioner (e.g., an instructor asks, "*Who was the first president of the United States?*" not because she does not know but because she is checking to see whether her students do). Referential questions prompt answers unknown by the questioner. Research has shown that open-ended, referential questions promote more learner output, but that instructors are more prone to asking display questions (Brock, 1986).

In contrast to the Interaction framework of classroom discourse, CA methodology views Q/A turns as adjacency pairs, with a first pair/second pair conditional relevance, with the second pair part (SPP) designed by the first pair part (FPP). According to Heritage (1984), "questioners attend to the fact that their questions are framed within normative expectations which have *sequential implications* in obliging selected next speakers to perform a restricted form of action in the next turn, namely, at least to respond to the question with some form of answer" (p.249). The focus then is on the requirements placed upon the SPP (an answer) made relevant by a FPP (a question) within the on-going sequential turn-taking structure.

Within the CFL data, all interaction occurs within the Q/A session of the presentation, and so it would be expected that the data would be almost exclusively organized around this Q/A type turn-taking structure. In addition, one distinguishing characteristic of the present classroom speech event is that all audience participants – including the instructor as audience-member – formulate questions based upon previously unknown information (i.e., prior to having received a "telling" of it within the monologue section of the presentation); in other

words, audience members participate within the event by employing “referential” questions. In the first excerpts, this type of Q/A order is analyzed. Here, *Laoshi* and *Mao* talk about the *dimsum* at *Mao*’s family’s restaurant.

Excerpt 1 (Mao Data)

Chinese (lines 99 to 112)

- 99 Laoshi: *wo wen ni (**) dianxin dianxin eh, dimsum eh*
- 100 Mao: *yeah?*
- 101 Laoshi: *zhiyou zhongwu you ma? (.) ji dian dao ji dian? (.) ji dian you dianxin?*
- 102 Mao: *what’s that?*
- 103 Laoshi: *shenma shihou wo keyi qu?*
- 104 *(1.0)*
- 105 Mao: *uh (1.5) shidianban uh: (2.0) <erdian>-*
- 106 Laoshi: *-liang dian*
- 107 Mao: *liang dian*
- 108 Laoshi: *(Mao) (.) yi ke (.) yi fen (.) yi ke yi fen duo shao qian?*
- 109 Mao: *wo [wo bu pay money (.5) wo (eat for free)*
- 110 Laoshi: *[ni zhidao?*
- 111 Peng: *weishenma ni bu pang?*
- 112 Laoshi: *weishenma ni bu pang?* ((instructor laughter))

English (lines 99 to 112)

- 99 Laoshi: I have a question (**) dimsum dimsum eh, *dimsum* eh
- 100 Mao: *yeah*
- 101 Laoshi: it’s only mornings? (.) from what time to what time? (.) when is dimsum?
- 102 Mao: *what’s that?*
- 103 Laoshi: when can I go?
- 104 *(1.0)*
- 105 Mao: *uh (1.5) ten-thirty uh: (2.0) <two o’clock>=*
- 106 Laoshi: *=two o’clock*
- 107 Mao: *two o’clock*
- 108 Laoshi: *(Mao) (.) one dish (.) one dish (.) one dish one dish is how much?*
- 109 Mao: *I [I don’t pay money (.5) I (eat for free)*

- 110 Laoshi: [do you know?
 111 Peng: why aren't you fat?
 112 Laoshi: why aren't you fat? ((instructor laughter))

Excerpt 1 offers two question segments, each unique in their own development, organization, and completion. *Laoshi* asks both questions, the first in line 101: *zhiyou zhongwu you ma?* (.) *ji dian dao ji dian?* (.) *ji dian you dianxin?* (“it’s only in the mornings? (.) from what time to what time? (.) what time is dimsum?”); the second question in line 108: (*Mao*) (.) *yike* (.) *yifen* (.) *yike yifen duo shao qian?* (“(*Mao*) (.) one dish (.) one dish (.) one dish is how much?”). Within an Interaction approach to classroom discourse (i.e., Pica & Long, 1986), both of *Laoshi*’s questions are of the same type: closed, referential questions, asking for specific information unknown to the questioner (i.e., the time and cost of *dimsum*). However, a closer look shows how structurally distinct each is.

The second question, ‘how much the *dimsum* is’ is shorter, consisting of two turns (one adjacency pair) and occurs over the course of two lines, 108 and 109.

Excerpt 2 (Mao Data)

Chinese (lines 108 to 110)

- 108 Laoshi: (*Mao*) (.) *yi ke* (.) *yi fen* (.) *yi ke yi fen duo shao qian?*
 109 Mao: *wo* [*wo bu* pay money (.5) *wo* (eat for free)
 110 Laoshi: [*ni zhidao?*
 111 Peng: *weishenma ni bu pang?*
 →112 Laoshi: *weishenma ni bu pang?* ((instructor laughter))

English (lines 108 to 110)

- 108 Laoshi: (*Mao*) (.) one dish (.) one dish (.) one dish one dish is how much?
 109 Mao: I [I don't pay money (.5) I (eat for free)
 110 Laoshi: [do you know?
 111 Peng: why aren't you fat?
 →112 Laoshi: why aren't you fat? ((instructor laughter))

Two issues in CA connected to Q/A adjacency pairs are *recipient design* and *conditional relevance*. Though it is unclear in this excerpt whether *Laoshi* directly selects *Mao* before posing

her questions, CA rules of *recipient design* and *context-shaped* action state that questions are asked of individuals who are “likely to be informed” of the answer (Heritage, 1984; p.250). Here, *Mao* is the most likely to be informed of the answer, which is what *Laoshi* attempts to confirm in line 110 by asking *ni zhidao?* (“do you know?”). This confirmation overlaps *Mao* as he formulates his response in line 109. Though there is some issue as to *Mao*’s status as someone informed, the requirements of a Q/A adjacency pair are fulfilled – since offering an account of not knowing information to answer a question, in fact, constitutes a fulfillment of the SPP constraint.

As for *conditional relevance*, according to Mori (2002), “as a first pair part of an adjacency pair, delivery of a question sets the frame of reference for how the subsequent turn would unfold or should be understood. That is, the occurrence of an answer as the corresponding second pair part becomes relevant, and the lack thereof, or a seemingly unfitting utterance, is recognized as a noticeable problem of the normative second, and accounted for with reference to the ‘conditional relevance’” (p. 329). In line 109, in response to *Laoshi*’s question, *Mao* claims ignorance, followed by an account of why he is unable to answer, thereby both responding to *Laoshi*’s question and confirming *Laoshi*’s uncertainty about *Mao*’s status as one who is informed. Added to this is *Peng*’s self-selection in line 111, where he initiates a topic-switch by posing a new question. Within CA, turn-allocation (Sacks et al., 1974) proceeds as following: “[i]f the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a ‘current-speaker-selects-next’ technique, then self-selection for next speakership may...be instituted” (p.704). *Peng*’s self-selection reveals his orientation to *Laoshi*’s question having been “answered” and therefore his claims to the floor are justified. *Laoshi*’s repetition in line 112 shows she has accepted *Mao*’s answer, or lack thereof, and does not object to moving on to the next topic.

The second question, which is more involved, occurs over the course of seven lines.

Excerpt 3 (Mao Data)

Chinese (lines 99 to 107)

99 Laoshi: *wo wen ni (**)* *dianxin dianxin eh, dimsum eh*

100 Mao: yeah?

→101 Laoshi: *zhijiu zhongwu you ma? (.) ji dian dao ji dian? (.) ji dian you dianxin?*

102 Mao: what’s that?

103 Laoshi: *shenma shihou wo keyi qu?*

104 (1.0)

105 Mao: *uh (1.5) shidianban uh: (2.0) <erdian>*-

106 Laoshi: *-liang dian*

107 Mao: *liang dian*

English (lines 99 to 107)

99 Laoshi: I have a question (**) *dimsum dimsum eh, dimsum eh*

100 Mao: *yeah*

→101 Laoshi: it's only mornings? (.) from what time to what time? (.) when is dimsum?

102 Mao: *what's that?*

103 Laoshi: when can I go?

104 (1.0)

105 Mao: *uh (1.5) ten-thirty uh: (2.0) <two o'clock>*-

106 Laoshi: *-two o'clock*

107 Mao: *two o'clock*

In line 99, *Laoshi* initiates her question with the “question announcement,” *wo wen ni* (col., I have a question, or lit., I ask you), followed by the topic of her question – *dianxin dianxin eh*, (“dimsum eh”). *Mao* responds with “yeah,” acknowledging both his status as next-turn speaker and his comprehension of the question topic. *Laoshi* asks the question *zhiyou zhongwo you ma?* (“it’s only in the mornings?”), then, after a micropause, reformulates the question as *ji dian dao ji dian?* (“from what time to what time?”), only to immediately reformulate the question a second time as *ji dian you dianxin?* (“when is dimsum?”). With three questions given him in succession, *Mao* requests clarification in line 103, asking “what’s that?”, prompting *Laoshi* to simplify her question in a topic-prominent manner by placing the syntactically simplified question words *shenma shihou* (“when”) at the beginning, followed by *wo keyi qu* (“can I go”). These turns, lines 102 and 103, constitute a content-related *insertion sequence*, in that the SPP answer is momentarily postponed due to a repair prompt in the form of a clarification request. However, the overarching machinery of the Q/A adjacency pair – namely the requirements of a SPP answer – still applies and is satisfied in *Mao*’s turn in line 105 with *uh (1.5) shidianban uh: (2.0) <erdian>* (“uh (1.5) ten-thirty uh: (2.0) <two o'clock>-”).

What fine-grained analysis provides is the moment-by-moment organization of Q/A turn-taking. These excerpts show how two identical question types produced different resulting behavior, and reveal that there is more to questions than simply their categorization and the sum

of their type frequencies. By applying fine-grained analysis, such as CA, researchers are able to fill in the gaps where other, more classification-oriented research is limiting. When quantifying data such as this — a student presentation and Q/A session on information previously unknown to an audience — it would not be surprising to find mostly referential questions. A tally of the instructor's questions posed to students shows that only 1 of the 33 questions was a display type question; 11 others were procedural and the remaining 21 were referential. Although Interaction research of the type proposed by Long analyzes the types and frequencies of question behavior in the classroom setting, it ignores how this Q/A behavior occurs and is therefore incapable of analyzing the precise moment-by-moment actions because (a) a micro level of analysis is not the basic unity of analysis, and (b) questions and answers are displaced from their sequential environments. Failing to allow for a full analysis of how participants engineer their participation within talk based solely on the on-going sequences of utterances results in a means of categorizing occurrences cleaved from their situated meaning. Raymond (2003) states that what is primarily of importance for researchers of discourse “is not to dismiss what can be gleaned from the linguistic structures of sentences, utterances, or bits of discourse; rather ... because language is primarily used in temporally unfolding, sequentially organized interactions, analyses (and theories) of language that fail to take this into account risk producing impossibly inert accounts of human conduct” (p. 941).

Sequential Relevance/Preference Structure of Yes/No Interrogatives

How participants in interaction organize talk based on the constraints established by preference/dispreference structures manifested within particular utterances is a well-researched vein within CA (c.f., Sacks, 1973; Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). Non-institutional, naturally occurring talk has revealed how various preferred SPP (e.g., accepting an invitation) are produced immediately following the projected transition relevance place (TRP). SPPs also have been shown to lack delays, prefaces, or qualifications. These patterns, on the other hand, reveal SPP responses considered dispreferred (e.g., refusals and rejections). Raymond (2003) furthers this line of inquiry by analyzing in what ways an additional preference organization is made relevant through speakers' use of YN interrogative first pair parts - YNI FFP. This additive nature — in which a syntactic preference is applied upon the preference structure — seems intriguing primarily because CA researchers so seldom direct their attention towards grammatical elements within interaction as shaping talk — let alone preference. To accomplish this, Raymond (2003) includes within the analysis “polarity” in

which interrogatives make relevant the inclusion of either “no” or “yes” within the response. Raymond’s research “relates to (a) the alternative actions a YNI can make relevant next, and (b) the form those responses can take” (p. 943) in that beyond the action made relevant within the FPP (e.g., “You wouldn’t mind mailing this for me, would you?”) there is an additional alignment preference inserted within the grammatical formulation of the utterance – one that calls for either a “+ response” (i.e., plus response) or a “– response” (i.e., *minus* response). Plus responses – in which the hearer produces a preferred SPP (e.g., acceptance) following a speaker’s FPP (e.g., invitations, suggestions, offers) – effectively constitute a range of utterances that are not specifically in need of accounts. In contrast, minus responses, being of a dispreferred nature, call for an account, and are of such a nature that if an account is absent it is noticeably so and therefore provides a context relevant prompt for the speaker to pursue one. Raymond (2003), therefore, combines the CA insight into preference and the linguistic sense of +/- response polarity together with a third analytic focus – that the grammatical form of the interrogative itself further acts as a constraint on the SPP. It does so, Raymond (2003) argues, by building into the question form a narrowed response possibility. Responses that contain either “yes” or “no” constitute the “type-conforming” category of responses – which, as Raymond (2003) lists, may also contain other equivalents such as ““mmhmm,” “mmm,” “uh huh,” “yep,” “yup,” “yeah,” “nah hah,” “nuh uh,” “haheh,” “huh uh,” “nope,” etc”” (p. 945) – and those without linguistic elements compose the category of “non type-conforming” responses. Raymond (2003) argues that type-conforming responses are the norm and non type-conforming responses “are only produced for cause” (p. 947).

Chinese as a Foreign Language Context: Research Questions

As Mandarin Chinese does not contain lexical items equivalent to “yes” and “no” but offers speakers response tokens of a different variety such as *dui* (“correct”) and *bu dui* (“not correct”) and truncated repetition of the verb phrase within the interrogative either with negation (e.g., *mei, bu*) or without (e.g., A: *Ni quguo ma?* B: *Hai mei quguo*. A: “Have you ever gone?” B: “Not yet.”), how would Raymond’s concept of grammatical response conformity apply to Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) classroom setting? Do L2 speakers in the CFL database tend to produce type-conforming responses to YNIs within the Q/A session and therefore abide by this additional preference structure? If so, what linguistic resources do they employ to do so? And if not, what are the consequences for producing non type-conforming responses for the interaction; namely, do speakers who produce non type-conforming responses fashion accounts?

Data Analysis

In the four-and-a-half-minute stretch of talk following the conclusion of Qing's presentation, twenty-four questions were raised, produced (quite unequally) among three audience members – *Laoshi*, *Wen* and *Ming* – with *Laoshi* producing a majority (17) of the questions, which included three types: (a) YN interrogatives, (b) content or WH questions, and (c) procedural questions (employed as stock phrases to shape the on-going interactional burdens of the speech event as Q/A session). From this total of twenty-four questions, eighteen (75%) were of the YNI type. In response, *Qing* produced 13 (72%) type-conforming and 4 (22%) non type-conforming SPP turns. The data reveal that the first two research questions asked correspond to data presented by Raymond – that hearers of YNIs tend to produce type-conforming responses in which either a “yes” or a “no” type token is employed to satisfy the question requirements. In Mandarin Chinese, one manner in which YNIs are answered is by simply repeating the verb phrase or even just the verb. This is clearly revealed in excerpt 4 below.

Excerpt 4 (*Qing* Data)

Chinese (lines 19 to 21)

- 19 *Laoshi*: *ni quguo?*
 →20 *Qing*: *quguo.*
 21 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

English (lines 19 to 21)

- 19 *Laoshi*: have you gone?
 →20 *Qing*: I have.
 21 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

In line 19, *Laoshi* asks *Qing* if he has ever visited the nudist dormitory that he made mention of in the final comments of his presentation on the topic of “University,” saying, *ni quguo?* (“have you gone?”). *Laoshi*'s question is formed as a YNI, and *Qing*'s response displays a type-conforming “yes” answer in the repetition of the verb “to go” inflected with a past participle marker (i.e., experiential suffix) – *quguo*. This is the pattern that *Qing* employed for all thirteen of his type-conforming responses – a repetition of the verb from within the YNI.

The four instances comprising the non type-conforming SPP employed by *Qing* in response to YNIs will be discussed in more fine-grain detail below (excerpts 5 – 8), with the

focus directed on how his responses reveal misalignment with “the terms and presuppositions embodied in a YNI” (p. 949). The first example (excerpt 5) we see *Laoshi* form a YNI to better understand *Qing’s* knowledge of the nudist dormitory and its goings on – basically, whether he has experienced the nudist lifestyle.

Excerpt 5 (Qing Data)

Chinese (lines 12 to 18)

- 12 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))
 13 Qing: *suoyi* [:uhm]
 14 Laoshi: [ni zhu neige sushe ma?
 15 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))
 →16 Qing: *hum:: keshi ta- tamende xiawu jihui hen you yise*
 17 Wen: *dou bu kuai yifu?*
 18 Qing: (.5) *uh* (.5) *bu keyi*.

English (lines 12 to 18)

- 12 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))
 13 Qing: so [:uhm]
 14 Laoshi: [did you live in that dorm?
 15 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))
 →16 Qing: hum:: but th- their morning meetings are very interesting
 17 Wen: none of them wore clothes?
 18 Qing: (.5) *uh* (.5) *cannot*

Laoshi’s question in line 14 prompts laughter from the class, allowing for *Qing* to formulate a response, though one that he delivers in line 16 with a hesitation marker *hum::* followed by *keshi ta- tamende xiawu jihui hen you yise* (“but th- their morning meetings are very interesting”). By framing his response in this manner, *Qing* abides by the constraint of producing a SPP; however, the consequence of this is to misalign himself from the normative constraints exerted by *Laoshi’s* YNI. Two interesting features can be noted from his response. He not only indirectly addresses the issue of whether or not he lived at the nudist dormitory – by using *tamen* as the membership category to describe “them,” rather than a more inclusive pronoun such as “us”, and by not directly (i.e., without hesitation) stating *dui* (“correct”) or an inflected

repetition of the verb phrase *zhule* (“lived there”), but he also makes a claim of knowledge regarding being informed of specific dorm practices (i.e., “their morning meetings”) as well as having knowledge enough to provide an additional assessment (“very interesting”). *Qing*, having produced a relevant topic-addressing SPP to *Laoshi*’s question, however, fails to address its YNI requirements (with something such as *meiyou*, arguably the easiest “no” token to produce). Rather, *Qing* provides an account of his knowledge, in a sense intimating that though he did not live in the nudist dormitory he had, at least on one occasion, visited and was privy to certain practices of the nudists (i.e., meetings in which participants were naked). So by employing the token *keshi* prior to his account, *Qing* reaffirms an implied meaning previously stated regarding his not having the same membership category as those who live in the nudist dorm, and thereby manages the conditional trouble inherent within *Laoshi*’s YNI – without any direct and on-the-record statement of the trouble source itself. That which was treated as inadequate within the YNI is addressed within the account.

In Excerpt 6, *Ming* starts with a relatively drawn out question regarding the seasonal nudity of the dormitory. Just prior to this, the location of the university was established through a series of questions and repairwork as the Twin cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Ming*’s question in lines 47 and 48 has been shaped by this information just provided, which makes relevant additional inquiries into such conditions as to what nudists might do about the winter weather.

Excerpt 6 (Qing Data)

Chinese (lines 47 to 55)

- 47 Ming: *hum* (.) *qingwen* (.) *neige uhm meiyouchuanyifuderen* (.5) *tamen* ((audible
48 laughter by members of class)) *dongtian tamen meiyou chuan yifu?*
→49 Qing: *bu shi* (.2) *za:i uh::m* (.5) *susheli*
50 Ming: *oh* (.) *susheli*
51 Qing: *haishi* (1.5) *uh::m* (2.0) *uhm* (.5) *shenma shuo* (1.5) *zai:: uhm* (2.5) *uhm-*
52 Ming: *-sushe waibian chuan yifu?*
53 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))
→54 Qing: *shenma shihou* (.5) *keshi zai* (.5) *uhm* (.5) *uhm wanshang youshijhou qu* (1.5)
55 *tamen xihuan* (.) *da frisbee*
56 Laoshi: they don’t wear clothes?
→57 Qing: they don’t wear clothes [correct.

58 Ming: [<winter wint- wint>-

59 Laoshi: -winter

60 Ming: winter

61 Qing: winter (.5) correct winter very (.5) very cold

62 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

English (lines 47 to 55)

47 Ming: hum (.) excuse me (.) those uhm people who don't wear clothes (.5) they

48 ((audible laughter by members of class)) in the winter they don't wear clothes?

→49 Qing: not (.2) in: uh::m (.5) the dorm

50 Ming: oh (.) in the dorm

51 Qing: also (1.5) uh::m (2.0) uhm (.5) what do you say (1.5) in:: uhm (2.5) uhm-

52 Ming: -outside the dorm do they wear clothes?

53 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

→54 Qing: what time (.5) but in (.5) uhm (.5) uhm evening sometimes they go (1.5) they

55 like to (.) play frizbee

56 Laoshi: they don't wear clothes?

→57 Qing: they don't wear clothes [correct.

58 Ming: [<winter wint- wint>-

59 Laoshi: -winter

60 Ming: winter

61 Qing: winter (.5) correct winter's very (.5) very cold

62 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

In line 49, *Qing* provides an immediate type-conforming response – *bu shi* (“not”) – to the YNI *Ming* asks regarding whether the nudist leave the dorm during winter; however, he follows this with a brief pause, a preposition of place (*zai*, “in”), a hesitation marker, another pause and then adds *susheli* (i.e., “not (.2) in: uh::m (.5) the dorm”). *Ming* responds with the change of state token “oh” (Heritage, 1984) and repeats the final element of *Qing*'s prior utterance minus the pauses and hesitation marker in a manner similar to that of a register receipt. (At this moment one might question what, in fact, *Qing* had provided the negative token in regards to – whether the *bu shi* meant that the nudists did not go nude in the winter at all or whether they did not go nude in the winter while in the dorm, begging the question, then, of

where they did go nude if not in the dorm). *Qing* uses his next turn, line 51, to attempt to provide additional, related (i.e., “newsworthy”) information by starting with *haishi* (“also”). However, after several false starts, hesitation markers, and a display of candidate non-recollection through the use of a take on a routine word-search phrase *shenma shou* (“what do you say”), *Qing* is cut off by *Ming*, line 52, with a restated version of his initial YNI; this time he makes a specific reference to the location where he would like to know if the nudists dormers go nude (i.e., out in the winters of Minnesota).

Line 54 has *Qing* employing the same lexical token – *keshi* (“but”) – as he had in Excerpt 5 as a means of introducing an account rather than toward immediately tending to the preference requirements projected by *Ming*’s now reduced and reformulated YNI. This account allows for an analysis of how precisely *Qing* is attending to the conditions set by *Ming*’s question, and his management of an impending dispreferred response in light of the problematic constraints set by simply answering “yes” or “no.” Here, then, we see *Qing* maneuvering toward producing an account of when the nudists go nude during winter months. Rather than simply offer the type conforming affiliating response *meiyou chuan yifu* (“don’t wear clothes”) – which would align with both the polarity of *Ming*’s YNI and provide for the necessary preference structure requirements – *Qing*, instead, focuses on the trouble source within *Ming*’s YNI by starting out line 54 with a failed attempt at the lexical token *youshihou* (“sometimes”) by saying *shenma shihou* (“what time”). This qualification highlights the problematic condition set forth within the constraints of the YNI; namely, that special circumstances are at play regarding the when, where, and why of the nudists going nude – none of which align with the narrow constraints posed by *Ming*’s YNI. Once those conditions have been accounted for and clarified in lines 54 and 55 (“but in (.5) uhm (.5) uhm evening sometimes they go (1.5) they like to (.) play frizbee”), *Qing* is able to provide an immediate preferred type conforming response (line 57) to *Laoshi*’s reformulation of *Ming*’s original YNI, adding *dui* (“correct”) as a follow up. *Ming* continues in his appeal to have all conditions set forth in his original question addressed by repeating the still missing element – *dongtian* (“winter”) – as a YNI, to which *Qing* once again provides an immediate preferred type conforming response. This time, along with *dui*, *Qing* adds the assessment *dui dongtian hen (.5) hen leng* (“correct winter is very (.5) very cold”). Class laughter occupies the following turn, and after that nothing more is spoken of *Ming*’s winter nudity question.

In excerpt 7, *Qing* once again produces a non type-conforming response by prefacing an account with the token *keshi*. The recipient-designed YNI asked by *Laoshi* in line 109 implies

that *Qing* is “likely to be informed” of the continuing state of affairs of this particular dormitory and its goings on.

Excerpt 7 (Qing Data)

Chinese (lines 106 to 114)

106 Laoshi: (**) *neige* (**) *jiu shuo* (.5) *xianzai tamen hai zheyang zuo ma?*² *xianzai*

107 *xianzai*

108 Qing: *xianzai?*

109 Laoshi: *neige sushede ren (hai zai) duo bu chuan yifu?*

→110 Qing: *uh wo bu zhidao keshi wo shang daxue de shihou* (.5) *tamen* [(**)]

111 Laoshi: [huhuhuhuhu hao]

112 Qing: *keshi Mac- Macalester daxue you biede:-*

113 Laoshi: *-sushe*

114 Qing: *dui*

English (lines 106 to 114)

106 Laoshi: (**) what (**) you just said (.5) now they are still doing the same thing?

107 now now?

108 Qing: now?

109 Laoshi: those dormers (still) don't wear clothes?

→110 Qing: uh I don't know but when I went to university (.5) they[(**)]

111 Laoshi: [huhuhuhuhu okay]

112 Qing: but *Mac- Macalester* university has other:-

113 Laoshi: -dorms

114 Qing: correct

In line 110, *Qing* treats *Laoshi*'s YNI as problematic by producing a non-conforming response starting with the hesitation marker *uh* followed by a claim of no knowledge *wo bu zhidao* (“I don't know”). In so doing, *Qing* avoids any resulting action conditioned by an immediate type-conforming response. *Qing* employs the same method of managing the misalignment produced by this non-conforming response once again – *keshi* followed by work towards producing an account. However, in line 111 *Laoshi* halts the full account from being produced by accepting the partial account with a cutoff “huhuhuhuhu okay.”

The final excerpt diverges somewhat from the three prior excerpts in that *Qing* does not employ *keshi* followed by an account in order to reveal misalignment with the YNI. Here *Laoshi* is inquiring about the rules for teacher visits to the nudist dorm.

Excerpt 8 (Qing Data)

Chinese (lines 70 to 74)

70 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

71 Laoshi: *xuesheng (1.5) laoshi jinqu ye bu keyi chuan yifu?*

72 Qing: *ah (1.2) laoshi-*

73 Laoshi: *-laoshi (1.0) ruguo qu nide sushe?*

→74 Qing: *ah laoshi bu keyi jinqu*

English (lines 70 to 74)

70 Class: ((audible laughter by members of class))

71 Laoshi: students (1.5) when teachers go in they also cannot wear clothes?

72 Qing: ah (1.5) teachers-

73 Laoshi: -teachers (1.0) if they go to your dorm?

→74 Qing: ah teachers cannot go in

In line 71, *Laoshi* follows up a spate of classroom laughter with a self-selected turn to ask the YNI, *laoshi jinqu ye bu keyi chuan yifu?* (“when teachers go in they also cannot wear clothes?”). *Qing* produces a hesitation marker *ah* followed by a pause of 1.2 seconds before forming his response in a topic prominent construction: *Laoshi* (“teachers”). This, however, is halted by *Laoshi*’s rephrasing of her original question as *ruguo qu nide sushe?* (“if they go to your dorm?”). *Qing* then produces his non type-conforming response *ah laoshi bu keyi jinqu* (“ah teachers cannot go in”), which forms an on-the-record resistance to the condition that teachers (i.e., professors) are openly admitted to enter the nudist dormitory – an aspect of the YNI presumed by the hypothetical shape of the YNI.

Conclusion

Returning to the research questions posed, it can now better be understood how Raymond’s concept of grammatical response conformity applies to a CFL classroom setting. This L2 speaker tends to produce type-conforming responses to YNIs within the Q/A session and

therefore abides by the additional preference structure. Consequences for producing non type-conforming responses for the interaction are that speakers (i.e., *Qing*) produce non type-conforming responses fashioned to allow for the addition of accounts. These four excerpts confirm Raymond's claim that non type-conforming responses are produced for cause, and that cause is due to the respondent orienting to some troublesome aspect engineered within the YNI that is highlighted as the reason for the misalignment in the response. YNIs are displayed in this speech event within a language-learning context as being employed to accomplish institutional tasks as performed by participants.

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