



**Don't interrupt me while I'm speaking: Interruption in
Everyday and Institutional Settings in Chinese**

Yingnian Tao

Department of Linguistics and English Language

Lancaster University

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2022

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents.

“I am afraid I am interrupting you.”

“It does not follow that interruptions are unwelcome.”

— Jane Austen

Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this, or any other university. It is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration. The main body of this work has around 78,000 words, which does not exceed the permitted maximum 80,000.

Yingnian Tao

Lancaster University, UK

Acknowledgement

Born in a little town in the central east China near the Yangtze River, it is not common to pursue a doctorate study overseas. However, my parents fully support my pursuit of academic research mentally and financially. Most importantly, they have taught me the quality of being a responsible person: resilience, optimism, and humility. I am heavily indebted to my parents for their tremendously support and unconditional love of me throughout my PhD journey.

I could not have undertaken this fruitful and enjoyable journey at Lancaster without my supervisor Dr Vittorio Tantucci's excellent encouragement and support. Vittorio has enlightened me enormously with his insights in Pragmatics, Cognitive Linguistics, Semantics, and Corpus Linguistics. Moreover, I am absolutely amazed by his excellent command of complex statistics and application in linguistics. Vittorio has made innovative methodological contributions to linguistics by applying the various statistical functions in R (e.g., decision tree, linear regression, mix-method regression, multiple correspondence analysis) into studies of language in use. Taught and influenced by Vittorio, I included statistical analysis of the relationship pertaining to interruptions in my thesis. Above all, Vittorio has fully supported my pursuit of academic engagement by offering insightful comments on early versions of a manuscript that was submitted for journal publication as well as a project proposal for a fellowship application. I also would like to thank Prof. Jonathan Culpeper for giving me insightful comments and suggestions on my research during the critical stages of this thesis project. Jonathan's comments on the intersection of Pragmatics and Conversation Analysis have driven me to explore further the significance of my study. Jonathan has also amazed me by his dedication to research, nurturing of PhD students, patience, kindness, and speedy response to inquiries. Jonathan and Vittorio have demonstrated what a great and committed scholar is like. They have set a wonderful academic model for me to look up to. I am also grateful for Prof. Michael Haugh for agreeing to be my viva examiner, which has strongly motivated me during the writing up stage of this programme.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mark for coming to my life at the beginning of this unprecedented pandemic. His love, support, and inspiring discussion of my research are beyond what I ever dream of. I feel extremely content with both my academic research and personal life. Mark has taught me what romantic love is and what meaning life is, which has greatly motivated my study. I have benefited and enjoyed a lot

the regular couple presentation of our research on Sundays. Mark's invaluable comments has inspired me to reflect on the fundamental issues facing Conversation Analysis and Pragmatics.

Quite interestingly and spiritually, I was also inspired by the knowledge that Gail Jefferson, the seminal figure in Conversation Analysis, was interested in overlapping talk/interruption for a long time and explored the orderliness of this phenomenon intensively. I am shamelessly flattered by this coincidence and highly motivated to explore interruption in a new context in a language other than English.

My thanks also go to my colleagues in the linguistic department at Lancaster University. Thank you, Noah Zhu and my officemate Santi, for your kindness, discussion, and support of my research. I also thank Dr Huey Fen for the advice of writing the confirmation document and how to prepare for important panel meetings that were ahead of me in this PhD programme. I am also grateful for the teaching experience at Hua Xian Chinese Society offered by MBE Sam Moi Chan, from which I have applied some of research findings about Chinese talk-in-interaction to teaching Chinese to elementary school students.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to my MA supervisor Prof. Guojin Hou at Huaqiao University (China) who introduced me to linguistics in general and pragmatics in particular. Professor Hou's broad research into pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, and translation studies has greatly inspired me to maintain curiosity of interdisciplinary research. I am also grateful for Dr Xi Yan for his kind support and encouragement of my PhD application at Lancaster. I am thankful for Prof. Guoxiang Wu for giving me genuine advice when I was lost at the crossroads: PhD opportunity at home university or applying to study overseas.

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Yingnian Tao

Abstract

Interruption is a common phenomenon in conversation. Previous research of interruption has focused on three main aspects: the identification of interruption in relation to overlaps or overlapping speech, the categorisation of cooperative and disruptive interruptions, and the relationship between interruption and certain social factors, for instance, power asymmetry and gender differences. However, little attention has been paid to the degree of intrusiveness. Likewise, not much has been done to explore interactional factors that may intersect with interruptions. With these important research gaps in mind, I aim to explore the relationship between intrusiveness and interactional dimensions of interruptions in the Chinese context in this study. Two sets of conversational data were collected: telephone conversations and TV talk show conversations. The conversation analytic method was used to examine the fine-grained details of speakers' conversational interaction (Haugh, 2012). Statistical methods were used to test the relationship between factors related to interruptions.

Results from a linear regression model indicate that, in both settings, speakers tend to heed and boost the current information flow (e.g., supplementing further details) when expressing affiliative stances. More specifically, in the institutional conversation, speakers orient their interruption utterances towards their assigned institutional role and task (Goffman, 1981; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). In the telephone conversation, there are frequent early interruptions, affiliative interruptions, and unexpected cases where interrupters align their opinions with the other whilst disrupting the current information flow. Based on what emerged from these analyses, I argue that the Chinese speakers in the two corpora feature a *high involvement* (Tannen, 2005) conversational style, which means they prioritise relationship over the task in discussion. In other words, speakers tend to distinctively emphasise their enthusiasm and engagement with the other speaker, but pay less attention to the one-speaker-at-a-time turn-taking rule (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). The finding of relationship-focus of Chinese talk-in-interaction supports the argument that Chinese society largely adheres to the polychronic time orientation (Hall, 1984).

This study contributes to CA methodology by combining rigorous quantification methods with close examination of sequential organisation of interruptions. It is innovative in measuring intrusiveness by incorporating two aspects of interruptions: the interrupter's stance-taking and the interrupter's sequential alignment with the information flow of the prior utterance. In so doing, this study contributes to the understanding of interruption by demonstrating that intrusiveness is a gradient concept on a measurable continuum rather than a binary concept that is either cooperative or intrusive. This study contributes to the investigation into Chinese talk-in-interaction, particularly speakers' conversational style, by proposing a novel perspective: interruption.

Keywords: Interruption, intrusiveness, affiliation, information flow, interruption marker, interruption timing, Chinese talk-in-interaction

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List of abbreviations

AF	Affiliation orientation
AT	Address term
BC	Backchannel
CA	Conversation analysis
com	Commissives
dir	Directives
exp	Expressives
IC	Isolated characters
IF	Information flow
la	Laughter
mid	Middle
rep	Representatives
rog	Rogatives
pm	Pragmatic marker
um	Unmarked

List of glossing

CLV	Collective meaning, indicating a subjective social group, as expressed by the suffix <i>men</i> , 们
CLF	Classifier, as expressed by <i>ge</i> 个 between number and the modified, for instance 个 <i>ge</i> in 三个人 <i>san ge ren</i>
CRS	Currently relevant state, as expressed by the suffix <i>le</i> 了
DUR	Durative aspect, expressed by the suffix <i>zhe</i> , 着
EC	Expected continuation, as expressed by the suffix <i>a</i> , 啊, <i>wa</i> , 哇, <i>ya</i> , 呀
EMS	Emphasising the state of affairs, as expressed by <i>ye</i> 也
EXP	Experiential aspect, expressed by the suffic <i>guo</i> 过
EVP	Evidentiality particle, indicating that the fact or reason is obvious and easy to understand as expressed by <i>bei</i> 呗, or <i>ma</i> 嘛
HON	Honorific, as in the second person singular honorific pronoun <i>nin</i> 您
HYP	Hypothetical particle, as expressed by <i>dehua</i> 的话 at the end of a sentence to have the same meaning with “if”
PASS	Passive mode, as expressed by <i>bei</i> 被 and <i>ba</i> 把
PF	Perfective aspect, indicating an action been done, as expressed by suffix <i>le</i> 了 in 吃完了 <i>chi wan le</i>
PNHongqiao	Hongqiao as a proper name
RLV	Relevance, as expressed by <i>ne</i> 呢 which signals the relevance of the preceding expression for the context
Q	Query or question, as indicated by the interrogative suffix <i>ma</i> 吗
SUB	Subordination, expressed by the particle <i>de</i> 的 and <i>zhi</i> 之
SUG	Suggestion, as expressed by the particle <i>ba</i> 吧

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation of research of interruption

Interruption first caught my attention when I was watching a popular TV show broadcasted in mainland China, called the Jin Xing Show. Advertised as an entertainment stand-up comedy, the Jin Xing Show did not follow the format of a traditional stand-up comedy in which one comedian performs one-liners, stories, or observations to live audience or audience in front of TV sets. Instead, in the Jin Xing Show the host has got an assistant to help her with storytelling as well as other non-verbal assistance (e.g., acting out hilarious scenes in the storytelling). The audience often laugh at the assistant's speaking. Viewers also comment on streaming sites (e.g., YouTube), saying that the assistant's interruptions are very surprising, entertaining, and relaxing. As one of the entertained viewers, I began to wonder why and how the assistant (who is in a junior position) interrupts frequently to help the host (who is in a senior position) deliver series of storytelling, whilst making the audience laugh heartily.

After I enrolled in this PhD programme, my supervisor suggested that I consider interruption in a different setting from the talk show. That is how I turned to consider interruption in everyday conversation. Imagine when you are having a Christmas dinner with your family, everyone sits around the table, chatting, toasting, and eating cheerfully. People are taking turns to speak, alternating between speaking and non-speaking. However, it may not be infrequent that you hear more than one person talking at the same time. "Clashes" often occur when people compete for speaking in cases where they should undertake, primarily, listenership. Particularly, when a current speaker is approaching the completion of his/her turn, a potential next speaker is geared to speak as otherwise the turn floor may be taken by others as people are competing for the turn to speak. Overlapping speech hence arises in the transition of speakership. If you pay particular attention to this sort of interactional troubles, you will be amazed at how ubiquitous overlaps are. However, you may also notice that overlapping speech occurs briefly and then the one-person-at-a-time speaking rule resumes. The dinner table talk is a typical locus whereby interruption occurs.

The talk at family table and on broadcast talk show stand for two distinctive types of conversational interaction. The former typically stands for casual conversation, and the

latter for more constrained institutional interaction. I began to wonder how speakers interrupt differently in these two contrasting situations.

Regarding the data pool for this study, I settled on a telephone conversation corpus and a corpus of talk show conversation. The two environments where interruptions occur are quite different in terms of turn-taking (see Sacks et al., 1974). For instance, there is no pre-determined topics in the telephone conversations, whereas speakers converse under pre-defined topics in the talk show conversation. Speakers in the telephone conversations often have equal rights to speak and speak freely, whereas in the talk show the two speakers (host and assistant) have asymmetrical power in terms of what to speak and how long they can speak. Apart from turn-taking restrictions, speakers in the talk show are interacting for the good of the non-speaking audience which is not the case in the telephone exchanges. Therefore, several questions began to emerge: how interruptions are initiated in two contrasting environments? How intrusive are those interruptions? Are there any particular features about doing interruption in the Chinese context? These are the original ideas that motivated me to explore interruption in the Chinese context in the first place. Essentially, I want to explore the prevalent phenomenon of interruption in naturalistic interaction and measure the intrusiveness level of interruption by comparing interruptions in two different environments.

1.2 Research questions and scope of study

The present study is positioned in integrative pragmatics (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Haugh & Culpeper, 2018) which draws together a first-order user perspective and a second-order observer perspective, with a focus on interaction. The user perspective, informed by a conversation analytical method, focuses on analysing the locally situated understandings of participants. This approach focuses on examining how participants display their orientation to features of a phenomenon in interaction (Hutchby, 1996; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). The observer perspective, informed by quantitative analysis, focuses on providing grounds of certain qualitative claims from an observer's perspective. For instance, chi-square analysis is used to calculate whether information flow and affiliation orientation are significantly associated in the two selected corpora in this study. The two perspectives is elaborated in Chapter 3.1.

The current study focuses on examining two aspects of interruption: 1) the degree of intrusiveness of interruptions; and 2) the interactional features of interruptions. To this end, I collected two sets of naturally occurring conversational data: telephone

conversations between family members and friends, and conversations between a host and an assistant in a TV talk show programme. I then transcribed the two sets of conversations based on a simplified version of Jefferson's (2004b) transcription conventions. Built on integrative pragmatics, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the interactional features of interruption?
- 2) How can intrusiveness of interruptions be measured?
- 3) What interactional dimensions are most distinctively at play in interruption utterances?
- 4) Does interruption differ between everyday conversation and institutional interaction? If so, how are they different from each other?

The first two research questions are addressed in Chapter 4. The interactional features regard the four interruption dimensions, interruption timing, interruption markers, turn size, and speech acts. The measurement of intrusiveness is approached from two angles: how an interruption turn sequentially fits the prior turn (information flow) and how an interrupter positions their stance in relation to the other speaker (i.e., interruptee) (affiliation orientation). The third research question is addressed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 by analysing the relationship between intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions in both corpora using linear regression models. The analysis of interruptions in Chapter 5 is based on the telephone conversations as a locus of everyday interaction, and the analysis of interruptions in Chapter 6 is based on the talk show conversation as locus of institutional interaction. That is why the fourth research question regards a comparative study of interruption in different settings. The fourth question is answered in Chapter 7 by comparing the features that significantly emerge from the two corpora.

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

This study explored interruption in terms of intrusiveness of interruptions and interactional characteristics that intersect with interruptions. The remainder of this study is organised as follows: Chapter 2 gives an overview of up-to-date research on interruption. It starts out to scope different definitions and classifications of interruption. It then overviews interruption research in the Chinese context in everyday and institutional settings. Chapter 2 ends with overviewing topics that are frequently discussed in the literature of interruption, such as power asymmetry, gender differences,

and impoliteness. Chapter 3 outlines theoretical and methodological prerequisites of this study. It starts with the discussion of the two perspectives in integrative pragmatics: the user perspective (informed by Conversation Analysis) and the observer perspective (informed by statistical analysis). Then I introduce the technical side of this project: the two corpora from which I collected conversational data, the method of identifying starting and finishing points of overlapping speech, and the two kinds of interruptions identified in this study. Chapter 4 is dedicated to explicating the interruption framework, viz., the measurement of intrusiveness and the four dimensions of interruption. Intrusiveness is approached by analysing two aspects of doing interruption: the sequential context of an interruption and an interrupter's stance-taking. Chapter 4 lays the foundation for the analysis in the remainder of chapters.

Chapter 5 explores interruption in an everyday setting (i.e., the Callhome Mandarin corpus), and Chapter 6 explores interruption in an institutional setting (the Jin Xing Show corpus). The procedure of analysis in the two chapters resembles: I will first analyse the intrusiveness of interruptions by testing the relationship between the two intrusiveness factors – information flow and affiliation orientation, then I will calculate the dimensions which are closely associated with intrusiveness via multivariate linear regression analysis (Levshina, 2015) and chi-square analysis (Tantucci, 2021). I will also have one section in each chapter to discuss findings that stand out in that particular corpus. In Chapter 5 this special section is devoted to interruptions between parents and their adult children in Chinese family interaction. In Chapter 6 this special section is devoted to the use of address terms and stance-taking. In Chapter 7 I conduct a comparative study to explore similarities and differences in doing interruption across the two corpora. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes this study with significances, limitations, and orientations for future research.

CHAPTER 2 A survey of interruption research

This chapter overviews previous studies of interruption in Conversation Analysis. Interruption is a commonplace phenomenon in everyday interaction. In its everyday sense, interruption is seen as stopping another speaker from talking. Adopting this folk sense of interruption, some researchers see interruption as an act through which the interrupter deprives the current turn-holder of their speaking rights. For this reason, interruption is seen as a morally loaded practice (Bilmes, 1997; Hutchby, 2008; Jefferson, 1983). However, the academic sense of interruption is not the same as the ordinary sense. Researchers need to clarify which one they are referring to. Therefore, I will set out to distinguish the academic sense of interruption from its everyday definition. Then I will survey the literature regarding the perception of interruption in relation to the associated conception of *overlapping talk*. The debate about the perception of interruption in the literature focuses on two aspects: sequence organisation and speaker's rights. Then I will survey the literature on three key issues related to interruption: gender differences, power imbalance and impoliteness. Lastly, I will review previous studies on interruption in the Chinese context.

2.1 Traditional definitions of interruption

2.1.1 The folk sense of interruption

Interruption in this study concerns solely conversational interruption. This means that it does not comprise the notion of disrupting an ongoing activity, such as human interruption in human-computer interaction (George, Janssen, Heuss, & Alt, 2019; Mark, Gudith, & Klocke, 2008; McFarlane & Latorella, 2002), and suspension of treatment in healthcare research (Grundgeiger & Sanderson, 2009; Westbrook et al., 2010).

Interruption is a commonplace phenomenon in social interaction. In the Cambridge English Dictionary *interruption* means “an occasion when someone or something stops something from happening for a short period”. Based on this, a conversational interruption in its ordinary sense is defined as “the transgressive act of starting to speak ‘in the midst of’ someone else’s speech, not letting another person ‘finish’” (Hutchby, 2008, p. 226, original emphasis). This definition captures the

& West, 1975). In CA terms, this entails that the interrupter breaches the “one-at-a-time” turn-taking rule (Sacks et al., 1974), that the interrupter trespasses onto another speaker’s completion point and competes for the turn floor, as a result of which, the act of interrupting is “morally loaded” (Drew, 2016, p. 89). Interruption is often researched in comparison to its close notion *overlap* (Drummond, 1989; Jefferson, 1983, 1984; Roger, Bull, & Smith, 1988; Schegloff, 2000; Tannen, 1983; Weatherall & Edmonds, 2018). *Overlap* in interaction refers to talk by more than one person at a time (Schegloff, 2000). Comparisons of the two neighbouring notions are centred on two aspects: sequential differences and speakers’ rights.

To differentiate interruption from overlapping talk, and to examine speech sequentially, CA researchers refer to the notion of *transition relevance place* (TRP), viz., any potential completion point in an utterance whereby legitimate speakership may happen. Schegloff (1987, 2000, 2002) and Jefferson (1973, 1983, 1984, 1986) were among the early scholars who researched intensively on interruption and overlapping talk. Both of them agreed that the essential difference between the two notions lies in TRP. That is, if the speaker begins talking while another has reached and is still within their turn completion point, it counts as an overlap; if the speaker initiates talking while another has not yet arrived at his/her turn completion point, it counts as an interruption. In other words, an overlap denotes that the second speaker starts off within the turn completion point of the first speaker’s utterance. Interruption, however, means that the second speaker starts in the middle of the first speaker’s talking and long before the first speaker is about to finish. An extension of this TRP-based sequence view is that overlaps occur due to the inadvertent co-occurrence of the recipient wrongly projecting onto what they think will be the completion of the current speaking (Jefferson, 1983, 1984), whereas interruptions are a deliberate incursion into a transition place before the first speaker is yet to complete their current turn (Hutchby, 1992; Talbot, 1992; West & Zimmerman, 1983; Zimmerman & West, 1975).

While this TRP-oriented perception of overlap and interruption provides a means of distinguishing between the two similar concepts, it is still confined to the ordinary sense of interruption – speaking in the midst of another’s speaking. Moreover, it is proved to be problematic to precisely delimit or project a possible turn completion point in conversation. As Murray observes, “[t]here are no absolute syntactic or acoustic criteria available” either to the participants themselves or the analysts as observers (Murray, 1985, p. 33). Other resources, such as lexical, syntactic and pragmatic cues, are also

contestable. Moreover, there is inconsistency in arguments using a sequentially defined concept of interruption. For instance, Jefferson (1983, 1984) suggested using “interjacent overlap” to describe simple and technical occasions when a current speaker begins to speak at a point away from prior speaker’s turn completion. This seems to contradict the sequential criterion that Jefferson had used to distinguish interruption from overlap in the first place, which was their relative distance from the transition relevance place of the interruptee’s turn.

Applying the notion of sequential differences more strictly, West and Zimmerman (1983) define interruption as a deep incursion of more than two syllables from either the initial or the terminal boundary of the prior speaker’s turn. This empirical definition is attentive to the details of spoken interaction, though it is also somewhat problematic. The often-cited problems consist in the operationalisation of the two-syllable incursion in naturalistic conversations. The word and syllable counting as a way to identify interruption is rather “crude” (Talbot, 1992, p. 454). More specifically, Drummond noted that “it is too difficult to project two syllables prior to the completion of turn-unit” (Drummond, 1989, p. 158) and “it is methodologically complex to account for co-present participants making verbal references to nonverbal activities” (Drummond, 1989, p. 159).

One step further from the TRP perspective, other researchers claim that interruption is a way to deny the co-participant’s speaking rights (Hutchby, 2008). This perspective of interruption is closely related to how transition relevance place is perceived. For some researchers, a transition relevance space is the current speaker’s entitled space to speak. Speaking within another’s turn, especially prior to the transition space, is seen as an appropriation and violation of the current speaker’s rights (Baffy, 2020; Bilmes, 1997; Hutchby, 1992; Murray, 1985; Talbot, 1992). Hutchby (1992) argued that in confrontational talk interruption is an evaluative construct as the interruptee may display their perception of interruption as disruptive and illegitimate. Interruption, therefore, is seen as not only a sequential but also a morally loaded concept (Hutchby, 1992, 2008; Jefferson, 1986, 2004a).

To conclude, in its ordinary sense, interruption regards an intended action whose upshot is disruption of the prior speaking. This is an extreme case of what is meant by interruption in an academic context. Previous studies of interruption have based their arguments, to varying extents, on this folk sense. This is seen in attempts of distinguishing interruption from overlap and regarding interruption as the violation of speakers’ rights. These attempts limit the scope of interruption to a narrow concept of interpolating into

and disturbing the ongoing speaking. In light of this, I separate the academic sense of interruption from its ordinary sense. The definition of interruption adopted in this study is illustrated in the following section.

2.2 Categorisation of interruption

Closely related to different definitions of interruption discussed above, researchers categorise interruption into different types.

One type of categorisation is backchannel-based. A number of researchers exclude backchannels (e.g., uh-huh, hmm, yeah) from collections of interruptions or overlaps (Jefferson, 1983; Schegloff, 2000). The primary function of backchannel responses are to acknowledge the ongoing telling and provide feedback to the primary speaker (Goldberg, 1990; C. Goodwin, 1986; Heinz, 2003), as Schegloff argued that backchannels (in his words “continuers”) are “ALTERNATIVE to an independent and competitive spate of talking” (original emphasis). Backchannels are produced not out of usurping an ongoing turn floor; therefore, they are not counted as an interruption utterance.

The second type of categorisation is sequence-based. That is, some researchers categorise interruption from a more rigorous sequential perspective: in terms of the sequential organisation of who speaks first, whether the utterance is completed or not, etc. For example, Ferguson (1977) identified four types of interruption in dyadic conversation on the basis of three criteria, i) completion of a speaker’s utterance (both interrupter and interruptee), ii) presence of simultaneous speech, and iii) whether a floor change is successful or unsuccessful. Unlike Ferguson’s (1977) emphasis on the occurrence of simultaneous speech, Beattie (1981) looked more broadly at flows in speakership change. He added one more category, “smooth speaker-switch”, to the classification scheme (see Figure 2.1 below). According to Beattie (1981), a “smooth speaker-switch” occurs when a first speaker finishes speaking, and the second potential speaker starts talking. There is no overlap or gap between the speakers.

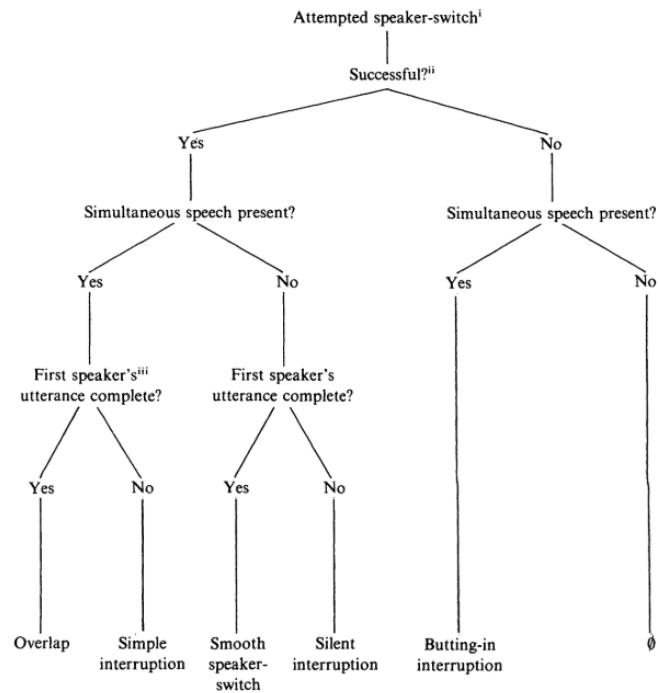


Figure 2.1: Beattie's (1981, p. 19) classification of interruption

As shown in Figure 2.1, the difference between overlap and simple interruption lies in whether the prior utterance has been completed or not. Simple interruption occurs when the second speaker breaks into the prior speaker's utterance and secures the floor successfully. Any attempt at capturing the turn floor with no speakership change is an unsuccessful interruption, the technical term for which is "butting-in interruption". Both Ferguson's and Beattie's perceptions of interruption recognise that simultaneous speech is not a necessary condition for identifying interruption. A second speaker may seize the turn when the first speaker is taking a breath between utterances, which occurs frequently in ordinary and institutional settings. To illustrate, consider the following example adapted from Ferguson (1977, p. 297).

- 01 A: It wasn't in ours actually it was bloke, and um...
- 02 B: But anybody who's a bit lazy I suppose, is it, that he used to pick on?

The filler *um* and conjunction word *and* indicate that A has not completed his/her utterance. B takes advantage of A's pause to launch an utterance and snatches the turn-floor without any simultaneous vocalisation occurring. This non-simultaneous interruption is classified as "silent interruption" by Beattie (1981) and "latched interruption" by Jefferson (1983).

The third type of categorisation concerns conversational participants. Murata's (1994) classification of interruptions as cooperative or intrusive is grounded on the inferred interrupter's intentions towards the ongoing interaction. In her view, topic-change, disagreement and floor-taking are considered as intrusive, as the interrupter is aiming to threaten the "territory" of the prior speaker. Goldberg (1990) referred to speaker wants (to be listened to and to feel that what s/he has to say is of interest to others) to categorise interruption as relationally neutral and relationally loaded. More integrally, Makri-Tsilipakou (1994) took the needs of both participants (i.e., interrupter and interruptee) and the interaction per se into account and distinguished between affiliative and disaffiliative interruptions.

To conclude, these approaches to interruption focus on a sequential or speakers' rights' perspective and highlight conversational participants' evaluation of interruption. However, the investigations along these lines fail to differentiate explicitly between incursive utterances which are interruptive sequentially speaking, but which may well be in some way cooperative interactionally speaking, and those which are interruptive in both sequential and interactional terms (Hutchby, 2008).

2.3 An overview of contributing factors of intrusiveness in literature

Previous studies of interruption have explored the various types of linguistics and contextual factors that may contribute to the cooperativeness or intrusiveness of an interruption utterance. Four recurrent factors are scattered in the literature of interruption: timing, turn beginnings, size of interruption, and speech act.

2.3.1 Timing and turn beginnings

Timing – the point at which an interruption is initiated in relation to a prior speaking – is one of the recurring issues discussed in the literature of interruption. A key feature of turn-taking that Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) designated is the precision timing of turn beginnings: whether a next speaker starts speaking after the prior speaker has finished, begins in overlap with the prior speaking, or allows for gaps (Ford, 2004).

The issue of interruption timing is addressed under different terminologies, such as *overlap onset* (Drew, 2016; Jefferson, 1983, 1986; Schegloff, 2000) and *the floor transfer offset* (Levinson & Torreira, 2015; Stivers et al., 2009), *deep or shallow interruptions* (Gnisci, Sergi, de Luca, & Errico, 2012; Hawkins, 1991; Talbot, 1992; West

& Zimmerman, 1983). Jefferson (1983, 1986) studied intensively the initiation of overlapping speech – overlap onset in her term – and categorised three types of overlap onset: transition-space onset, interjacent onset, and ‘unmarked’ next position. Overlaps of transition-space onset occur within the completion points of another speaker. Jefferson argued that an overlap is a byproduct of two activities: “(1) A recipient reasonably, warrentedly treats some current utterance as complete, 'transition ready', and starts to talk, while (2) the current speaker, perfectly within his rights, keeps going” (Jefferson, 1986, p. 154). Jefferson further located three subsets of ‘positions’ across the transition space – possible completion onset, terminal onset, and last-item onset – based on the depth of incursion into the transition space. Overlaps of interjacent onsets occur when a recipient starts whereby a current speaker has produced a clear indication of going on. In other words, a recipient starts speaking when the current speaker has not completed speaking and sends a clear signal of continuing speaking. ‘Unmarked next’ position refers to instances that permit space between the end of the prior and the start of the next. It is simply a smooth transition of speakership without overlaps. The first speaker is not latched onto. This ‘simply next’ overlap onset is “the most common, the usual, the standard relationship of one utterance to another” (Jefferson, 1986, p. 162). Other researchers have focused on the precision timing between a current speaking and that of the recipient. Stivers, et al. (2009) after examining the transition timing – the floor transfer offset in their term – across ten languages found that there is clear evidence of a general avoidance of overlapping speech and silence is one way of doing so. Corpus research shows that gaps of more than 700ms indicate dispreferred actions (Levinson & Torreira, 2015). For instance, an excessively long gap after a question may be taken to indicate that the recipient has some problem with the question.

Researchers also examined the timing of transition in different question types. Transition is faster in polar (*yes* or *no*) questions than in Wh-questions (Stivers et al., 2009). This is presumably because different levels of cognitive complexity is involved in processing information in polar questions and Wh-questions (Levinson & Torreira, 2015). Apart from question types, the timing of the transition between utterances is shorter on the phone than in face-to-face conversation (Ten Bosch, Oostdijk, & Boves, 2005).

“[T]he timing of turn initiation is an essential semiotic resource for human interaction” (Ford, 2004, pp. 27–28). The timing of interruption is an important factor to take into account when analysing the interruption in interaction, particularly how an interruption is perceived by the interruption recipient. This is why in this study

interruption timing is one of the four dimensions that are used to describe an interruption utterance and potentially how disruptive an interruption could be.

Discussion of timing of doing interruption is intrinsically connected to the organisation of turn beginnings – utterances in the turn-initial position. Turn beginnings are a principal spot where the connection between a current turn and a prior turn is displayed (Drew, 2013). Turns are designed in a way to let the recipient know how it is connected with what was just said. At turn beginnings, speakers may design their turn to show that the upcoming turn will be aligned or not be aligned with, affectively or epistemically, what the other has said. A typical example of turn-beginnings in conversation is turn-initial address terms. There are two recurring themes in the literature regarding the function of address terms: address terms are used 1) to manage the structural organisation of interactions, for instance, turn and topic transition (M. J. McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2003), and 2) to maintain the status of relationship and manage face concerns and stance (Butler, Danby, & Emmison, 2011; Clayman, 2010). A fuller survey of address terms in CA is presented in Chapter 6.3.

In this study, interruption timing is used to indicate the point at which when an interrupter cuts in the ongoing speaking, within the completion point, in the middle of speaking when the other speaker sends a clear signal of going on, or at the beginning of the other speaker’s turn. Timing is potentially an important factor to measure the disruptiveness of an interruption utterance. So does the consideration of turn-beginning utterances. What emerged across the two corpora are address terms (e.g., 姐, *Jie*, ‘Sister’), backchannels (e.g., 嗯嗯, *enen*, ‘mm’), and pragmatic markers (e.g., 也就是说, *ye jiushi shuo*, ‘that is to say’). Interruption timing is used to examine *where* an interruption turn is initiated, and an interruption marker is used to examine *how* an interruption turn – is constructed.

2.3.2 Size of interruptions

In their seminal paper, Sack, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) defined the basic building block of turns as “turn-constructive unit” and delimited the boundary of turns based on their syntactic units (i.e., single words, phrases, clauses, and sentences). Turns can be composed of one single utterance or several utterances; therefore, they are single-unit or multi-unit turns (Schegloff, 2009). A single turn is not necessarily the product of a single speaker, instead, a single turn can be co-completed by different speakers under

different circumstances. For instance, in collaborative completion, a TCU is initiated by one speaker and completed by another or by both speakers at the same time (Lerner, 2002).

“Turns constructed out of multiple turn units, that is two or more TCUs, are the key to the occurrence of overlapping talk – and to the position of overlap onset” (Drew, 2016, p. 77). Therefore, whether an interruption turn is composed of a single unit or multiple units is examined in this study so as to provide one more dimension to perceive interruption utterances and a measure of intrusiveness.

2.3.3 Backchannels

Backchannel responses are a part of basic human interaction (M. McCarthy, 2003). In order to have a productive and meaningful conversational interaction participants cooperate with one another. The term *backchannel* was first used by Yngve (1970) to refer to feedback messages such as *yeah*, *uh-huh*. Tao and Thompson further defined backchannels as “short, non-lexical utterances produced by an interlocutor who is playing primarily a listener's role during the other interlocutor's speakership” (H. Tao & Thompson, 1991, p. 210). In conversation when one person is speaking, the other person is providing listener feedback via minimal tokens. Backchannel responses appear to be a universal behaviour across languages (M. McCarthy, 2003). There are different types of backchannels. Goodwin (1986) distinguished two types of backchannels: continuers and assessments. Continuers, such as *uh-huh*, *yeah*, indicate that the recipient is listening and s/he acknowledges the other speaker has the floor (C. Goodwin, 1986; Heinz, 2003). Assessments, beyond *uh-huh* type continuers, are used to assess what was said by uttering short tokens like *wow*, *oh*. Both assessment and backchannels appear in the midst of the extended talk by another speaker and signal the recipient's response. Other researchers divided backchannels in a similar fashion but used different taxonomies: minimal tokens which are defined as short-utterances (for example *uh-huh*) or non-lexical vocalisation (for example *mm*, *hmm*) and non-minimal tokens which mostly are short comments (for example *lovely*, *wonderful*) (O'Keeffe & Adolphs, 2008). Other researchers expanded the list of backchannels by including non-verbal cues, such as head movement and laughter (Maynard, 1990), and smiles. Verbal backchannels are usually accompanied by non-verbal ones.

The main function of backchannel responses is to provide feedback to the primary speaker (Heinz, 2003), rather than to challenge or disrupt the primary speakership. Backchannels are not seen as gaining control of conversational process or content

(Goldberg 1990). For this reason, backchannels do not count as instances of interruptions by some researchers (e.g., Schegloff, 2002). Interruptions that include backchannels may demonstrate enthusiasm, empathy and affiliation with the other speaker, therefore, are more cooperative. In contrast, interruptions that exclude backchannel responses may function to take control over the ongoing turn floor or the topic in discussion, therefore, are more disruptive.

The use of backchannel responses may hinge on the medium and the setting of conversation. Backchannel responses are more prevalent in phone conversations as opposed to face-to-face talk, as participants can mainly rely on sound features and lack access to ongoing non-verbal evidence (Heinz, 2003). Backchannel responses are less frequently used in formal conversations, such as news interviews (Haddington, 2004; Heritage, 1985; Hutchby, 2011). For instance, in TV news interviews, presenters refrain from using backchannels or commenting on an interviewee's response in order to maintain neutrality (Goffman, 1981). In this study, backchannels are frequently used as stand-alone utterances as well as turn beginnings by speakers in the Callhome telephone conversation. They are counted as an instance of interruptions in this study.

2.3.4 Actions in interruptions

Drew (2016) stipulated three principles that shape the turn design in conversation: *where* a turn is being taken, *what* is being done in that turn, and to *whom* the turn is addressed. While the principle of *where* is clearly about connections with prior turns that are embedded in turn beginnings, and the principle of *whom* is about constructing turns that are appropriate to the recipient, the principle of *what* clearly denotes what is being done in the turn. Language delivers action. When uttering something, speakers are doing certain activities that connects with or responds to the prior turn.

Action in conversation is widely researched in the literature on interruption and CA in general. The terms that are used to denote action vary. Goldberg (1990) argued that power-oriented interruptions – aiming at usurping speakership – feature content control accomplished by assertions or statements, and process control accomplished by topic change. The control of conversational content is intrinsically concerned with actions in interruption. When comes to differentiating cooperative interruptions from intrusive interruptions, (dis)agreement is the recurring criterion used by researchers (e.g., Baffy, 2020; Gnisci, Graziano, Sergi, & Pace, 2018; Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994; Y. Tao, 2018; Tong & Xie, 2019). A volume edited by Sorjonen, Raevaara, and Couper-Kuhlen (2017)

examined imperative forms at turns-at-talk. The papers collected explored not only the issue of the choice of an imperative as opposed to other sentence types but also the design features of imperative actions in turns and where the turn is positioned in the sequence of actions. In the current study, action in interruption is made as one dimension to explore the design of interruption turns and its potential contribution to intrusiveness.

To conclude, previous researchers have explored several factors that are part of interruption turn design and that may affect the recipient's orientation of interruption as cooperativeness or intrusiveness. These important contributing factors, including the timing of interruption initiation, turn beginnings, the size of interruption turns, and the actions embedded in interruptions, will inform the four dimensions of interruptions in this study (i.e., interruption timing, interruption marker, turn size, and speech act).

2.4 Key topics in studying interruption

Interruptions has been studied from various perspectives, such as the indicator of power and dominance (Farley, Ashcraft, Stasson, & Nusbaum, 2010; Kroon, 2009; X. Liu, 2009; O'Reilly, 2008), gender differences (L. F. Robinson & Reis, 1989; West & Zimmerman, 1983), and connection with impolite speech acts (Culpeper, 2005; Hutchby, 2008).

2.4.1 Power and gender in interruption

In CA studies, interruption is often assume to be connected with control or dominance (O'Reilly, 2006, 2008; West & Zimmerman, 1983; Zimmerman & West, 1975). Zimmerman and West (1975) first proposed that in ordinary conversation men interrupt women more often than vice versa. They held that interruption is "a device for exercising power and control in conversation" because it involves "violations of speakers' turns at talk" (West & Zimmerman, 1983, p. 103). Nonetheless, they noticeably warned that not all "male-female conversations invariably exhibit the asymmetry pattern reported in this paper" and "a challenging task for further research is the specification on conditions under which they (conversations) occur" (Zimmerman & West, 1975, p. 125), that is, whether interruption is closely related to gender difference and power dominance should be examined in a specific context. For instance, Anderson and Leaper (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 43 published studies comparing adult women's and men's interruptions during conversations. They found that interruption behaviour is influenced more by situational factors than by gender differences. Relevant situational factors

include features of interaction (e.g., numbers of people involved) and activity structure (e.g., activity types and group size). They also suggest that speakers who are familiar with each other and ones who are strangers rely on different expectations to guide their interactional behaviours. The single factor of gender difference between interlocutors is insufficient to determine the frequency and distribution of interruptions in talk-in-interaction, as other factors may also influence speakers' interruption behaviours.

Interruption as an index of power and dominance is often discussed in studies of institutional interaction, for instance, in medical consultations where doctors as the dominant party interrupt more than patients (Heritage & Maynard, 2006; Menz & Al-Roubaie, 2008; Li, 2001). Sheng and Zhang (2013) find that doctors initiate more power-oriented interruptions in every stage of consultation. The asymmetry of doctor-patient power is also present in the way doctors treat adult and child clients. For instance, O'Reilly (2008) found that in family therapeutic conversations, therapists interrupt child-clients more frequently than parent-clients and show no apologies. In medical interviews, doctors as experts control the conversational flow and offer help and expertise; patients as laymen follow the conversational flow, cooperate with the doctor, and ask for help. As a result, interruption serves to fulfil institutional roles and achieve institutional goals, namely, to make a definite diagnosis and provide medical treatment. Likewise, in media discourse, interruption often occurs from the more powerful to the less powerful side. Such contexts include conversations in televised political interviews (Beattie, 1982; Bull & Mayer, 1988; Ilie, 2012), television dramas and talk shows (Kroon, 2009; Mooney & Lorenz, 1997; Song, 2016; Thornborrow, 2007, 2014) and radio talk (Hutchby, 1992, 1996; Li & Lee, 2013).

In casual conversation, interruption denotes a wider range of interpersonal functions than status and dominance. Lu et al. (2006) studied conversations between younger children and mothers and suggest that more interruptions are generated by young children due to their inability to project turn completion points. Mothers, on the other hand, initiate cooperative interruptions to show active listening and high involvement. Tannen (1994, 2005) investigated two-and-a-half-hour Thanksgiving dinner conversations between friends and found that overlapping speech is often used to show high involvement – enthusiastic listenership and active participation – in the ongoing talk.

2.4.2 (Im)politeness and interruption

In (im)politeness research the urge to move beyond monologic and speaker-oriented analysis towards politeness in the description of conversational structure and practice is widely acknowledged (Pirainen-Marsh, 2005). Culpeper (2005) states that impoliteness is “constructed in the interaction between speaker and hearer” and “the notion of intention is of central importance” (Culpeper, 2005, p. 39). However, Culpeper (2005, 2011) also warns that intention-recognition is highly problematic and has to be inferred from communication per se. The need for detailed explication of conversation per se rather than making assumptions about conversational participants’ intentionality is also emphasised by Brown and Levinson (1987), who proposed that in terms of building an analysis on an empirical basis, face-work in interaction is amenable to conversational analytic approaches. Conversation Analysis has developed a fully-fledged approach to examine in great detail the fundamental structure of conversational exchanges, which makes observable interactants’ understanding and intentions in ongoing communication. In other words, the conversation analytical approach reveals that participants themselves display orientations to others’ interruption as polite, politic, or impolite (see Watts, 2003).

Alternatively to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) face-work which favours a sentence-level, speaker-oriented model of analysis, other face theories have been developed by drawing upon approaches and findings in Conversation Analysis. For instance, Arundale’s (1999) Face-constituting Theory, informed by the social theory of Conversation Analysis, explores face-work from an interactional point of view. This co-constituting model views communication as an incrementally, interactionally, and jointly accomplished event in which both speaker and listener are mutually engaged in the process of co-constituting face and relationship in interaction (Pirainen-Marsh, 2005).

The concept of co-construction in interaction can be demonstrated by participants’ production and interpretation of utterances in interruption. Interruption in talk-in-interaction entails at least two speakers. The interrupter is “doing interruption” via cutting off another speaker’s talk, and the interruption recipient is “doing being interrupted” via framing up co-participant’s utterance as being impolitely intrusive (Hutchby, 1992, 2008). Bilmes (1997) elaborates that by “doing interrupting” the speaker not only performs an act that can be perceived as disruptive, but also an act that shows the interrupter’s orientation to his/her action as disruptive by initiating, for instance, a prefacing clause ‘*Sorry to interrupt you*’. Bilmes (1997) also proposes that the interrupted

speaker use several strategies to show that they are being interrupted: direct claims (s/he has been interrupted), interruption displays (that the other's talk impinges on his/her speaking right) and ignoring (what the interrupter has said). By carefully examining how interactants display orientation to their own acts, analysts can bring the underlying intentions of speakers to the surface of interaction. This provides a new perspective for researching impoliteness.

A handful of researchers have explored impoliteness in interruption as a social practice (e.g., Bangerter, Chevalley, & Derouwaux, 2010; Bilmes, 1997; Bousfield, 2008; Hutchby, 1992, 2008; Piirainen-Marsh, 2005). Most researchers view interruption from its everyday sense – speak in someone else's speech and not let another to finish – and therefore see interruption as much an impolite, interruptive act as rudeness. For instance, Hutchby (2008) argues that interruption is a speaker's evaluative construct which involves the interrupter “doing interrupting” (i.e., speaking in the midst of another's speech) and the interrupted speaker “doing being interrupted” (i.e., orienting to another speech as impolitely disruptive). In his earlier work, Hutchby (1992) treated interruption as a design feature of argument or confrontational talk. In a similar manner, Piirainen-Marsh (2005) explored impoliteness in adversarial questioning in political interviews using the conversation analytical method through explicating both interviewer's question design and interviewee's resistance; interruption is used as an adversarial questioning strategy by interviewer to pursue interview agenda. In contrast to both Hutchby and Piirainen-Marsh, Bousfield (2008) argues that not every interruption can be considered for impoliteness work as not all interruptions are, by their very nature, hostile. For instance, Bousfield (2008) analysed a type of supporting interruption which occurs in multi-party conversations when an interrupter supports a speaker to directly threaten the face of another. What is unique about this kind of supportive interruption is that it threatens the face of one speaker and saves the face of another, in which sense, it does both politeness and impoliteness at the same time. Once again, the relationship between interruption and impoliteness hinges on how interruption is operationally defined. When researcher's focus of interruption is on *not letting another to finish* (see Hutchby, 1992, 2008), it would seem that interruption is intrinsically connected with impolite, intrusive, and even confrontational act.

Other researchers focus on interruption as a morally and sequentially neutral construct which simply involves overlapping speech or a disrupt of talk due to situational constraints. For instance, Bangerter et al. (2010) found that when ongoing storytelling is

being interrupted by a third party, listeners behave more politely than speakers, yet both listeners and speakers were not more polite when interruptions took a long time. Ulijn and Li (1995), studying the temporal aspects of turn-taking in Chinese-Dutch and Chinese-Finn business negotiations found that the Chinese appear to interrupt more when interacting with both the Dutch and the Finns, however, this interruption behaviour is not necessarily impolite as Chinese interruptions are meant to display interest in the discussion and eagerness to get together. Ulijn and Li (1995) also brought up the question that (im)politeness may be culturally specific. While interruption in Chinese culture is a non-negatively evaluated behaviour, it is not acceptable or conventional in, for example, Dutch or Finnish society.

In this study, I will not explore specifically how (im)politeness is realised in interruption utterances in the collected data. But rather, I will focus on two undertakings. The first is to unravel several dimensions that intersect with interruption utterances. These dimensions can be, for instance, the size of an interruption utterance, the point at which an interruption is initiated, the prefacing token, if any, used to initiate an interruption utterance. The second is to measure the intrusiveness of an interruption utterance via the lenses of sequential coherence and affective stance. In so doing, I aim to present an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the pervasive phenomenon of doing interrupting in interaction. I will argue that interruption is a multidimensional interactional act and the intrusiveness of doing interruption is gradient on a measurable continuum. On the one end of this continuum is the highest degree of intrusiveness that features attacking the negative face of the recipient (therefore as impolite) through, for instance, speaking in the middle of another speaker's turn, and hindering the progress of the current speaking. On the other end is the lowest degree of intrusiveness that features strengthening the positive face of the recipient (therefore as polite) through, for instance, taking the same stance as the recipient. Somewhere in between the two far ends, interruptions can take the form of backchannel responses or repetition of (partially) prior speaker's utterances, the intrusiveness of which is neutral. Looking at intrusiveness of interruption on a gradient continuum, in turn, will shed new light on research into impoliteness in interaction. As will be elaborated in Chapter 4, two indicators (*information flow* and *affiliation orientation*) will jointly decide the degree of intrusiveness of an interruption which ranges from 2 to 6 with 2 as the least intrusive and 6 the most.

To conclude, while power imbalance, gender differences, and impoliteness are common topics that are discussed in interruption research, there is no consensus as to the argument that interruption indexes power asymmetry and male dominance in social interaction. The relationship between interruption and those social dimensions (e.g., power, dominance, gender difference) is contingent on the operational definition of interruption, contextual factors, (e.g., an everyday or institutional setting, private or public conversation, familiarity and relationship between speakers), and even cultural traditions.

Research of interruption extends beyond CA and pragmatics. In phonetics and in computer science, researchers explored the precise timing of overlaps and pauses in turn-taking (Heldner, Edlund, Mattias, & Jens, 2010), and found that the specific pitch height of an interruption is determined by many interactional needs, such as the need to attract attention, and the intensity of emotion (Yang, 1996). Studies in data science aim to develop a transcription system that can recognise overlapping speech (Li et al., 2009; Yoshioka et al., 2018).

2.5 An overview of interruption in the Chinese context

2.5.1 Interruptions in everyday and institutional settings in Chinese

Interruption in the Chinese contexts remains understudied, especially in everyday settings. In the current study, the *Chinese context* refers to conversations which take place between native Chinese speakers speaking Chinese as well as conversations which take place between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers speaking Chinese or other languages (cf. H. Z. Li, 2001). The first case concerns interruptions occurring within a single culture; the second concerns interruptions taking place in an intercultural setting. Zhang, Li and Zhang (2021) studied the phenomenon of a second speaker overlapping the final item of a sentence-in-progress when trying to co-complete the sentence in Chinese conversation. They argue that overlapping final-item completion is motivated by speakers' active participation and high involvement in conversation. Other studies, while claiming to be using CA methods, adopt non-naturally occurring data to analyse interruption sequences, for instance, dialogical exchanges in literary works (cf. Kuang, 2005). Several topics in everyday Chinese talk-in-interaction remain to be explored, for instance, interruption in family interaction, interruption and (im)politeness and impoliteness and gender differences.

Compared with the scarcity of research into ordinary conversation, there are a growing number of studies on interruption in institutional settings and in intercultural exchanges. Regarding institutional settings, previous studies have mainly focused on interruptions in courtroom interaction (Jiang, Li, & Yang, 2016; Liao, 2009; Lv, 2005) and medical consultations (X. Liu, 2009; Y. Wu, 2011). Interruptions in courtroom interaction are often associated with the power imbalance between participants. Liao (2009) found that interruptions in Chinese courtroom trials are “substantially asymmetrical in terms of the number, functions, and causes” (Liao, 2009, p. 175), in that prosecutors and judges interrupt the most, whereas defendants and defence lawyers interrupt the least. Prosecutors and judges employ interruption as a way of exercising their institutional power whereas defendants and defence lawyers tend to initiate cooperative interruptions or interrupt to defend their speaking rights. Other studies have found that in the judicial system interruption is not necessarily used to exercise power and dominance over the other party, but instead is employed to better fulfil the context-situated roles in order to achieve a better result. In the context of arbitration courtroom interaction, arbitrators may employ interruptions of different values (high, medium or low intrusiveness) in different stages of the arbitration in order to obtain information and enhance the efficiency of the trial (Jiang et al., 2016). In a similar vein, Lv (2005) argued that interruption can be an important discourse strategy in judicial mediation in that initiating a timely interruption adapted to the local context will boost the progressivity of the mediation. There are two kinds of power manifest in the judicial context, institutional power that is stipulated by the court and law in this specific context, and contextual power that is manifest by asymmetrical access to certain information and knowledge (P. Wu & Zhang, 2007).

Likewise, power imbalance features in interruptions in doctor-patient interactions in Chinese-speaking contexts. The inequality between participants is represented in the asymmetrical distribution of interruptions initiated by doctors and patients. Doctors are equipped with medical skills and solve patients’ problems via giving diagnoses and suggestions. Patients are eager to seek professional medical advice. The power imbalance is intrinsic to the fact that doctors are at the advice-giving end, while patients are at the advice-receiving end (X. Liu, 2009; Y. Wu, 2011). In general, doctors initiate more interruption turns than patients and use more non-marker interruptions with no buffering terms at all (Y. Wu, 2011; Zou, 2014). Researchers also try to explore strategies to ease

doctor-patient tension in the Chinese-speaking context via uncovering how participants engage in different interruption practices (cf. P. Wu & Zhang, 2007).

Apart from these two main loci (i.e., courtroom and medical interaction) of institutional settings in Chinese talk-in-interaction, there have been a handful of studies of interruption in television talk shows (C. L. Lee, Chen, & Tan, 2013; Y. Tao, 2018), television job-hunting interviews (Lin, 2016), prime-time television fiction (sitcoms and drama, Zhao & Gantz, 2003), and offline academic conference presentation (J. Zhang, 2017). In all cases, the power relations and institutional roles of participants are taken into account. For instance, Tong (2019) investigated university postgraduate students' interruptions of a guest lecturer and found that in this academic setting with an asymmetrical power imbalance between lecturer and students, students initiate both affiliative and disaffiliative interruptions operating as a form of ritualistic showing off.

2.5.2 Interruption in intercultural contexts

Researchers also want to know if culture plays a role in intercultural interactions between Chinese speakers and speakers of other languages. Researchers focus on the frequency of interruptions and the types of interruptions that are initiated by both participants. It has been found that Chinese speakers tend to initiate more interruptions and more cooperative interruptions in communicating with non-Chinese speakers, showing high involvement and eagerness in conversation. For instance, Ulijn and Li (1995) found that in business negotiations between Chinese and Dutch, and Chinese and Finnish participants, Chinese speakers tend to interrupt more often and interrupt in the middle of another speaker's sentence. This frequency and middle interruption occur when Chinese talk with both their fellow Chinese speakers, between Chinese and Dutch, and between Chinese and Finns. However, as Chinese speakers may interrupt to offer help and show eagerness to do business, it is therefore necessary to distinguish between positive and negative interruptions (Ulijn & Li, 1995). In the same vein, Li conducted a series of experiments comparing intra-cultural and inter-cultural interactions between Chinese and Canadians in simulated medical consultations (H. Z. Li, 2001; H. Z. Li et al., 2005) and also explored real-world medical interactions between doctors and patients (H. Z. Li, Krysko, Desroches, & Deagle, 2004). She and her colleagues found that Chinese participants display more cooperative interruptions than Canadian participants who display more intrusive interruptions; Chinese speakers adopt a more cooperative

interruption style in intracultural group conversation, but their style converges and becomes more intrusive in intercultural conversation with Canadian speakers.

Li (2001) argues that interruption may be a pancultural phenomenon, whereas interruption styles may be culture specific. Li (2001) also raised the issue of interruption convergence in intercultural settings. In a separate research project into intercultural business talk between Chinese and Americans using CA methods, Li, Zhu, and Li (2001) argued that, compared with American business communication, Chinese business communication style features a high involvement discourse strategy, because the Confucian cultural tradition emphasises “the communication of subtle aspects of feeling and relationship” (Wei Li et al., 2001, p. 145) whereas the Anglo-American cultural tradition places a high value on information transmission. While the growing body of research on Chinese interruption behaviours in intercultural settings can no doubt shed some light on how culture plays a role in speakers’ communication styles, it is nevertheless also not evident how Chinese speakers construct their interruptions differently from other language speakers linguistically, which is of great importance in understanding how interruptions are produced by different language speakers. In other words, the analysis of the different dimensions of interruptions should help distinguish cooperative interruptions from neutral or intrusive interruptions, for instance, how long an interruption lasts, whether metalinguistic interruption markers (e.g., “Excuse me”, “Sorry to jump in, but...”) are used to soften any abruptness the upcoming interruption may cause, or what kind of illocutionary act, is conveyed by the interruption (e.g., commanding or helping with a word search), etc. In this study, I will examine these interruption dimensions to present an in-depth understanding of how Chinese speakers interrupt others in everyday and institutional contexts.

To conclude, interruption research in contexts involving Chinese people has focused its attention on interruptions in specific settings, such as courtroom interaction and medical interviews. The argument is that participants with asymmetrical power tend to interrupt more and use specific types of interruptions (e.g., intrusive interruptions and interruptions with non-prefacing tokens). At the same time, studies have found that interruptions can be employed to assist the progressivity of the ongoing activity in order to achieve the intended situated goals (e.g., judicial mediation). Research on interruption in other contexts involving Chinese speakers remains understudied.

2.6 Operational definition of interruption in this study

As demonstrated above, interruption can be seen as a folk concept or a technical notion. Its folk sense emphasises the act of abrupt interjecting and stopping others from speaking. This study takes a technical sense of interruption. It draws upon the definition of speech interruption: “an interruption was defined as the occurrence of simultaneous speech and was assigned to the participant who initiated speech while not possessing the ‘conversational floor’” (Natale, Entin, & Jaffe, 1979). According to this definition, an interruption is the utterance produced by a participant who does not possess the “conversational floor” at the moment. I adopt its focus on conversational floor to distinguishing an interruption utterance and an interrupted utterance in interaction. However, an interruption does not necessarily involve simultaneous speech. Therefore, in this study, an interruption is defined as **a conversational act through which a speaker (i.e., interrupter) initiates an utterance when the conversational floor predominantly belongs to another speaker (i.e., interruptee)**. An interruption is assigned to the participant who initiates speech while the conversational floor predominantly belongs to another speaker.

Possessing a conversational floor is key to distinguishing the ownership of a certain utterance, which determines who is interrupter and who is interruption recipient. In this study, the ownership of an ongoing conversational floor begins with the first sound that a speaker produces and ends with the first sound produced by another speaker. Owning a conversational floor is also subject to taking turns to speak. In ordinary conversation, it is extremely rare that a speaker holds the floor all the time without giving the floor to another speaker. When interacting with others, regardless of in person or virtually, people take turns to speak with little laps (e.g., silence) and overlaps (e.g., taking simultaneous). The conversational norm of one-speaker-at-a-time (Sacks et al., 1974) determines that upon launching a turn and constructing their turn design (i.e., selecting what goes into building a turn, see Drew, 2013), a speaker has primary rights to the floor and rights to select a potential next speaker (Clayman, 2013b). This one-speaker-at-a-time norm, stipulated based on the English language (Sacks et al., 1974), is found to be universal cross-linguistically and cross-culturally (Enfield, Stivers, & Levinson, 2010; Stivers et al., 2009). A speaker-in-progress may employ different devices to hold the turn, signalling the incompleteness of ongoing turn, until their intended meaning or actions is delivered. For instance, the current speaker may compress the upcoming transitional

space so that a potential next speaker finds it difficult to *rush through* (Schegloff, 1982) or *abrupt-join* (Local & Walker, 2004) the ongoing turn (for discussion of devices on circumventing turn transition, see Clayman, 2013b). In two-part formats such as *if X-then Y, when X-then Y, instead of X-Y* (Lerner, 1991, 1996) when a speaker is completing the preliminary component (i.e., *if X, when X, instead of X*), the speaker is expected to hold the conversational floor and produce the second (i.e., *then Y, then Y, Y*). The speaker-in-progress has the primary right to transfer the floor to a next speaker by selecting a next speaker (e.g., addressing the name of the next speaker see Clayman, 2010, 2012) or opening up the floor for recipients to self-select. If none of the recipients self-selects, the current speaker may continue.

There are two important caveats regarding this definition. First and foremost, interruption is simply a conversational act wherein a speaker participating in the ongoing speaking. There are no presupposed moral judgments attached to the interrupter when joining in the ongoing speaking. That is to say, by doing interruption, an interrupter should not be seen, without further investigation, as deliberately usurping a co-speaker's conversational floor or infringing a co-speaker's speaking rights. Interruption can be initiated for various reasons and have various upshots, causing others to stop speaking being one of them.

Second, based on this definition, an interruption can occur when two speakers are talking simultaneously or talking with no overlapping speech. This is closely related to the two types of interruption that emerge from the two corpora in this study. The first is overlapping speech involving two speakers talking at the same time; therefore, I call it *overlapping interruption* in this study. All overlapping interruptions occur in Callhome corpus where more than one speaker talking at the same time. The second type concerns non-overlapping speech when a speaker pre-emptively cuts into the current speaker's pause, for instance, when the speaker is taking a breath. I call this *pre-emptive interruption* (cf. Chapter 3.3 for identification of the two types of interruption). A vast majority of pre-emptive interruption emerge from the talk show data where the assistant cuts in when the host apparently has not completed her turn despite no audible overlapping speech (cf. Chapter 3.3.2 for identifying pre-emptive interruptions).

2.7 Summary

This chapter has reviewed previous studies of interruption in the field of Conversation Analysis. It started by pointing out the folk sense of interruptions and the

problems of using this kind of definition of interruption in academic setting. Previous attempts to equate interruption with violation of speaker's rights via comparing interruption with overlap have fallen into the folk sense of interruption. I then overviewed the categorisation of interruption from a sequential and speakers' right perspective. Following that, I surveyed several factors that are intensively discussed in the literature of interruption regarding the turn design of interruptions and categorisation of interruptions (cooperativeness or intrusiveness). These contributing factors have greatly informed my choice of the four dimensions of interruptions in this study, namely, interruption timing, interruption marker, turn size, and speech act. Following the contributing factors, I reviewed key topics in interruption research in CA, namely, power imbalance, and impoliteness. As this project examines Chinese talk-in-interaction, I also gave an overview of research into interruption in Chinese. After surveying relevant literature of interruptions, I proposed a technical sense of interruption employed in this study: interruption as a conversational act through which a speaker joins in the ongoing speaking of another speaker, with no attached presumption-

CHAPTER 3 Data and methodology

This chapter introduces the theoretical and methodological approach to analysing interruptions in naturally occurring conversations in Chinese in this study. As this study is situated in integrative pragmatics (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Haugh & Culpeper, 2018), I will first briefly introduce this method and elaborate on how it was used to analyse interruptions in the Callhome and the Jin Xing Show corpora. The integrative pragmatics method draws together both user (participant) and observer (analyst) perspectives. The user perspective is informed by the rigorous examination of speakers' moment-by-moment interaction in Conversation Analysis. I will elaborate on the three key notions in this analysis: next-turn proof procedure, sequence organisation and turn-taking organisation. The observer perspective is informed by statistical analysis which tests the relationship between any two or more variables related to interruption. After elaborating on how integrative pragmatics was used in this work, I move on to discuss the two sets of conversational data collected for this study: the telephone conversation in the Callhome Mandarin Chinese corpus, and the talk show conversation in the Jin Xing Show programme. Specific attention was paid to discussing the institutional setting and the speakers' role in the talk show programme. Then I will elaborate on the identification of the starting and finishing points of overlapping speech. Finally, I will illustrate the two types of interruptions identified in this study.

3.1 Theoretical framework: Integrative pragmatics

This study adopts the integrative pragmatic method in analysing interruptions in everyday and institutional interaction. Culpeper and Haugh have developed and outlined the tenet of integrative pragmatics (see Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Haugh & Culpeper, 2018). As an integrative approach to language in use, integrative pragmatics is broadly defined as “[t]his emphasis on the critical role that interaction plays in shaping pragmatic phenomena and the perspectives of both users and observers on these can be broadly described as an integrative pragmatics” (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 266). This description includes several key features of integrative pragmatics. First, integrative pragmatics treats interaction as the primary locus of analysis. That is, it looks at interactional meanings that emerge and are shaped during interaction. Second, integrative pragmatics is strongly empirical and characterised by engagement with data. The data

include naturally occurring conversational data, elicited data that are encouraged by analysts in experiment settings, or corpus data. Third and most importantly, integrative pragmatics draws from both first-order and second-order perspectives in analysing fundamentally pragmatic phenomena. A first-order perspective refers to those users who are participating in the conversation. A second-order perspective refers to those observers who are analysing the interaction of users. An analysis of a user perspective can be implemented via conversation analytic method, that is “the analyst closely examines the fine details of conversational interaction, teasing out how participants themselves understand and experience action, and manage the mechanisms through which talk is accomplished” (Haugh, 2012, p. 252). On top of the user perspective, integrative pragmatics seeks to answer on what grounds a certain stretch of talk can be legitimately evaluated as such (e.g., impolite, offensive, intrusive). A second-order perspective usually leads to corpus-based analysis or statistical analysis. In this study, I adopted integrative pragmatics to examine interruptions in Chinese talk-in-interaction; the first-order user perspective was informed by the CA method, and the second-order observer perspective was informed by statistical analysis. In what follows, I will elaborate on the three key notions for the CA method, and briefly outline quantitative methods that were used to test relationships between dimensions of interruption.

3.1.1 User perspective: a conversation analytical method

As introduced outlined above, I employed the conversation analytical method to explore the user perspective of interruption in interaction. In this section, I will outline the three fundamental features of the CA method, viz., turn-taking organisation, sequence organisation, and next-turn proof procedure, and how these features have worked in the study.

3.1.1.1 Turn-taking organisation

One feature that underlies the orderly distribution of speaking opportunities in conversation is turn-taking organisation (Schegloff, 2000). This organisation of interactional practices hinges on a basic fact about conversation: overwhelmingly, there is one and only one person talking at a time (Sacks et al., 1974). The predominant or ideal state of affairs is that speakers smoothly take turns to speak with little gaps or overlaps. Empirically, speakers orient to the one-at-a-time rule and produce minimal friction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008).

At the core of conversation analysis, turn-taking organisation involves two simple and fundamental questions in talk-in-interaction: what constitutes a turn and how is the next turn allocated? The first question is answered by defining a turn in terms of its turn constructional components (Sacks et al., 1974). A speaker's turn is incrementally built out of *turn-constructional units* (TCUs). TCUs broadly correspond to syntactic units which can be individual words, phrases, clauses or sentences¹; these units are the building blocks of turns in conversation (Drew, 2016). It is important to note that in naturally occurring conversation these turn units may come in varying sizes: in a small size as an interjection (e.g., *huh*, *hmm*) or a large size constructed of several sentences (e.g., storytelling). Large or small sizes of turns are not defined by conversation analysts but are essentially an upshot of the interactional exchange between co-speakers. In particular, the termination of the current utterance is not entirely up to the speaker him/herself. The current speaking may be cut short sooner resulting from the hearer's jumping in. The size of the turn is, therefore, shorter than otherwise. Schegloff (2007, pp. XiV–XV) makes this point clear in the following lines:

The composition of a turn-at-talk – whether it be of single words, phrases, clauses or sentences – is shaped in part by the contingencies of turn production imposed by a turn-taking organization that will have other participants empowered or required or allowed to talk next, at points in the turn's development not wholly under the speaker's control.

The answer to the second question is a turn-allocational component which specifies how turns are allocated (cf. Sacks et al., 1974). Regardless of the number of speakers in interaction, the next speakership is allocated in three possible ways: either the current speaker selects the next speaker (*current-selects-next*), the next potential speaker self-selects him/herself (*self-selection*), or the current speaker continues (*current-continues*)². In the Callhome telephone conversations, the next speakership occurs randomly with little to no restrictions. In more restricted institutional settings, taking turns

¹ The Turn-constructional unit can be equated to the turn-constructional component (ten Have, 2007).

² In their seminal paper, Sacks et al. specified two turn-allocational techniques: “(a) those in which next turn is allocated by current speaker's selecting next speaker; and (b) those in which a next turn is allocated by self-selection” (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 703). The second technique, self-selection, is very concise and compact. It can be unpacked into two more techniques: the current speaker selects self to be the next speaker, that is, the current speaker continues speaking; and the co-participant self-selects to be the next speaker.

to speak is, to varying degrees, pre-determined. In the Jin Xing Show programme, Jin, as the host and the only storyteller in the programme, controls the turn floor. This means that, in terms of turn allocation, Jin legitimately continues to claim speakership after finishing the current turn via selecting herself as the next speaker. This is the default “setting” of turn allocation in this show. Nonetheless, Jin may also occasionally address Shen and hence offer him the next speakership. However, the offered chance to speak is not enough for Shen to perform. Shen proactively seeks chances to take the turn floor from Jin, hence doing next-speaker-self-selecting. Shen’s self-selecting accounts for most of Shen’s speaking in this programme, and it is this kind of utterance that is selected for further annotation and analysis in this study.

3.1.1.2 Sequence organisation and adjacency pair

What underlies CA research is that naturally occurring conversation, despite being disorderly on the surface, is sequentially organised. Sequence organisation is dedicated to explicating the orderliness of courses of actions, exploring any general patterns or general practices through the examination of moment-by-moment talk (Schegloff, 2007). The adjacency pair is the pivot of all sequences in talk. It occurs when given a first utterance, a particular kind of second is expected. The two utterances are closely related and are produced by different speakers in the form of *A: first pair part; B: second pair part*. For example, a greeting is normally expected to be paired with a response greeting, an invitation is paired with an acceptance/declination (Stivers, 2013). In some cases, the two pair parts can be separated by having another relevant. For instance, below is a simple example of an insertion sequence. Insertions 1 and 2 in lines 02-3 form a new question-answer sequence within the initial adjacency pair represented by lines 01 and 04.

01	A:	Can I have a bottle of Mich	Q1
02	B:	Are you over twenty-one?	Ins 1
03	A:	No	Ins 2
04	B:	No.	A1

Example from (Levinson, 1983, p. 304)

Nonetheless, in this study adjacency pairs are not often presented straightforwardly or closely – the first pair part is frequently disrupted by irrelevant utterances – especially in the ordinary telephone conversation. Take Example (2), in which A’s question-answer sequence is disrupted by a description that is not directly related to A’s question.

(2) callhome_0786, summer holiday (A is brother and B is sister. Yingying is their niece.)

01 → A: 呃, 英英 现在 【放假: 了?】 **First Pair Part**
E Yingying xianzai [fangjia: le]
E PNYingying now on holiday CRS

Huh, is Yingying on summer holiday now?

02 B: 【(.) 英英 没】他 吵 啊?
[(.) yingying mei] ta chao a
PNYingying no he annoying EC
[(.) Yingying is less annoying than him, excuse
me?]

03 A: 英英 放假 了?
Yingying fangjia le?
PNYingying on holiday CRS
Is Yingying on summer holiday now?

04 B: 英英 放假 了 **Second Pair Part**
Yingying fangjia le
PNYingying on holiday CRS
Yes, she is.

Here, A initiates a question, requesting information from A (line 01). B does not address the question in the immediately next turn, instead he initiates a description 英英没他吵 (*Yingying meita chao*, ‘Yingying is less noisy than him’) before A finishes his question, causing an overlap (line 02). Since any overlapped utterance is potentially unheard, A repeats his question to direct B’s attention to the question one more time (line 03). This time, without an audible overlap, B answers A’s question that was produced in the prior turn in line 01. It is apparent that the insertion in line 02 is not relevant to the first pair part question in the sense that the answer to the question is not contingent on the completion of B’s insertion. The insertion is occasioned mainly by interactional trouble, namely, B’s attempt to speak long before A has finished his turn.

In this exchange, the conversation undergoes a so-called breakdown in progressivity (Stivers & Robinson, 2006). The first pair part is not closely followed by a relevant second pair part nor a relevant insertion sequence, instead, an interruption occurs, and a repetition of the question follows the interruption. The disruption, largely due to the interactional trouble, is useful to exemplify the basic idea of *information flow* which is used to measure intrusiveness in this study (cf. Chapter 4.1 for a detailed elaboration of information flow).

Closely related to the notion of adjacency pair is preference (Pomerantz, 1984; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2012). For each adjacency pair, there is a preferred response. For instance, an invitation can be responded to with either an acceptance or a declination, and the preferred response is an acceptance. In the same vein, the preferred response to an inquiry for information is to provide an informative answer, whereas dispreferred ones would be to refuse to answer, evade or even ignore the question. The very notion of preference is related to *affiliation orientation* – a speaker’s stance-taking in relation to another speaker (cf. Chapter 4.2 for a detailed elaboration of affiliation orientation).

3.1.1.3 Next-turn proof procedure

It is a fundamental assumption of CA that speakers accomplish interaction in an orderly way, uncovering the orderliness being central to the CA enterprise. CA researchers aim to explicate the orderly properties of conversations from the perspective of how the participants display for one another their understanding of ‘what is going on’”(Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). What underlies the moment-by-moment analysis is not the analyst’s assumptions, but the basic *next-turn proof procedure* method. It means that a speaker’s ongoing speaking embodies his/her understanding of what the prior turn was about (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Sacks et al., 1974), “showing a subtle nature of the relationships between first and second actions” (Deppermann & Haugh, 2022, p. 3). In other words, the next-turn proof procedure concerns how the listener ascribes meaning to the prior speakers’ action and subsequently displays that information in their next speaking turn. As a basic tool of CA, the next-turn proof procedure is “a fundamental resource for grounding the analysis of actions in sequence” (Clayman & Heritage, 2021), involving as little of the analyst’s own speculations as possible. The following exchange between a mother and her son (Schegloff, 1988) is widely cited by conversation analysts to illustrate how next-turn proof procedure works in analysing interaction.

- 01 Mother: Do you know who's going to that meeting?
02 Russ: Who.
03 Mother: I don't know.
04 Russ: Oh:: Probably Mrs McOwen and
 probably Mrs Cadry and some of the teachers.
 (0.4) and the counsellors.

Adapted from Schegloff (1988, pp. 57–58)

Mother's question in line 01 bears two potential interpretations. It can be understood either as a request for information or as a pre-announcement (Schegloff, 2007; Terasaki, 2004) of transmitting information. Russ's reaction in line 02 shows that he takes Mother's question as a preliminary step for the immediately following action. In other words, he thought Mother knows who is going to the meeting and is waiting for the answer. Mother's next turn *I don't know* rejects Russ's interpretation and displays that her prior question is actually doing information seeking rather than prefacing an action.

Sometimes, it may take a few turns of talk before the speaker finally reveals what s/he understands the utterance in a prior turn would be. This delayed revelation is caused by speakers' interactional misunderstanding. For instance, in Example (3) below it took A a few turns to finally realise that what B meant by "black" is not the *black* (chaotic) Hong Kong society as a whole but the *black* (corrupted) company culture.

(3) callhome_0916 all crows are black

- 01 B: 香港 啊
Xianggang a
Hong Kong EC
Speaking of Hong Kong,
- 02 香港 反正, 反正 这种 也是 黑 社会
Xianggang fanzheng, fanzheng zhezhong yeshi hei shehui
Hong Kong anyway anyway this kind also black society
Anyway, Hong Kong, Hong Kong anyway is a black society governed by the Triad³.
- 03 ((@@@))
- 04 A: 是吗
Shima
Is that
Really
- 05 B: 呃, 就是 不是 就我 就说是 这种 啊,
E, jiushi, bushi, jiu wo jiu shuo shi zhezhong a
EC, that is not so me so say BE this kind EC
huh, no, no, what I mean is this kind of,

³ Triad (三合会, *sanhehui*, 'three union association') is a transnational Chinese organised crime syndicate. A triad usually involves dark forces, illegal trades, and crimes. There are geographically different kinds of triads. Nowadays, a triad society (in Mandarin Chinese 黑社会, *hei shehui*, 'black society') is often used to refer to a society or a certain area where law enforcement is extremely weak, and illegal groups are in conflict with local police.

- 06 反正 剥削 也 挺 厉害 的
Fanzheng boxue EMS ting lihai de
Anyway exploitation also quite serious SUB
Anyway, there is serious exploitation.
- 07 A: 啊, 这 没 办法
A, zhe mei banfa
EC this no way
Yeah, we can do nothing about it.
- 08 B: 呃, 这个 当然 没 办法 啦, 就 是 说
E, zhege dangran meibanfa la, jiushi shuo
EC this of course no way EC this is say
Yeah, we can do nothing about it, that is for sure.
- 09 但 机会 倒是 很多
Dan jihui daoshi henduo
But opportunity still many
But you do have a lot of opportunities.
- 10 就 是 你 要 受 得 了 这 个 么, 就 无 所 谓
Jiushi ni yao shoudele zhegemo, jiu wusuowei
That is you if bear it this one, so doesn't matter
That is to say, it won't affect you if you can put up with it.
- 11 A: 啊, 就 是 说, 不 是 就 是 说 你 到 时 候 做 大 了
A, jiushishuo, bushi jiushishuo ni daoshou zuoda la
EC so to speak, not so to speak you at that time become big
Yeah, so, so to speak, when you are doing well in your business,
- 12 就 会 有 人 来 找 你 麻 烦, 我 想
Jiu hui youren lai zhaoni mafan woxiang
So then someone come find you trouble I think
Then someone will find fault with you and get you into trouble, I think.
- 13 → B: 啊 那 个 啊 不, 不 是 说 那 个
A, nage a bu, bushi shuo nage
EC that EC no, not say that
No, I don't mean that kind of trouble,
- 14 我 说 是 这 种 都 很 黑 啊, 这 个 公 司 里 啊
wo shuo shi zhezong dou hen hei a, zhege gongsi li a
I say BE this kind all very dark EC, this company inside EC
What I mean is this kind of black, I mean in the company
- 15 A: 啊, 这 个 没 办 法, 这 个 [到 处 都 有, 天 下] 乌 鸦 一 般 黑

A, zhege meibanfa, zhege daochu douyou, tianxia wuya yiban hei
Ah, this no method, this everywhere all have, the world crow the same black
Yeah, there is nothing we can do. Corruption is everywhere. All crows are black.

16 B: [这个也没办法, 也没办法]
Zhege ye mei banfa, ye mei banfa
This also no method, also no method
Yes, there is really nothing we can do, nothing.

Prior to this exchange, A is saying that he may consider looking for company jobs in Hong Kong after graduation. B responds that Hong Kong is not a nice place to live in as it is kind of triad society out there (lines 01-2). Note that by commenting 黑社会 (*heishhui*, ‘black society’) B means the corrupt company culture rather than literally Hong Kong society as a whole. A is somewhat shocked at B’s comments, producing an inquiring tone (line 03). B may realise that A understood “triad society” literally as a corrupt, dark society, so he clarifies himself in the next turn, saying “what I meant is this kind of. Anyway, there is serious exploitation” (lines 05-6). In B’s later turn at line 13, arguably, B likens companies to society and think companies are sort of corrupted. However, it may be that B did not express himself very well or it is just that A did not comprehend B’s clarification in lines 05-6, A is still taking B’s “triad society” literally. In the next few turns, the two speakers exchange comments on “triad society”. Until in line 13, B finally realises that A is still dwelling on the corrupt society rather than companies, so he instantly corrects A’s misunderstanding, clarifying that what he meant by *corrupt* is business culture rather than society as a whole (lines 13-4).

This exchange illustrates that what the speaker means or understands in any particular turn may be made available to the other speaker in later turns if not the immediately following turn. A delayed revelation is mainly caused by interactional trouble: either the speaker is not doing a good job in getting himself across straightforwardly or the listener has trouble in understanding or hearing the moment-by-moment interaction. Informed by a potential of this delayed turn proof procedure, I will expand the range of turns to be analysed when identifying features related to interruption. For instance, when examining an interrupter’s stance-taking, I will examine both the interruption utterance, the prior utterance, and the reaction of the interruption recipient. It is not merely the immediate reaction but the extended reaction over a few subsequent turns that are relevant to analyses.

3.1.2 Observer perspective: quantitative analysis

Interruption cannot be fully explained through the lens of only a user perspective. It is necessary to understand on what grounds certain empirical claims of facts and relationships are significant. As Schegloff stated, “The quantitative analysis serves to provide reassurance that the candidate phenomenon is/was not an isolated, idiosyncratic usage of some local setting (a particular speaker or category of interactants), but has a *prima facie* robustness” (Schegloff, 2009, p. 389). Quantification comes to complement the traditional conversation analytical methods that focus on rigorous qualitative analysis of speaker interaction (J. P. de Ruiter & Albert, 2017; Kendrick, 2017; J. D. Robinson, 2007; Stivers, 2015). Therefore, in addition to a user perspective, this study adopts a quantitative analysis as an approach to observer perspective to examine interruption in interaction.

Quantification is realised in two ways in this study: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics focuses on the frequency or distribution of a certain interactional environment pertaining to interruption. This is in line with what Schegloff (1993) termed formal quantification as opposed to informal quantification (embedded in terms such as *massively*, *frequently*). In this study, descriptive statistics denotes basic frequency counting and calculation of mean score about facts of interruption. For instance, interruptions with disaffiliative stance (i.e., interruptions that affectively disalign with the interruption recipients, cf. Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation) account for 24% of all interruption instances in the talk show, while that percentage is only 3% in the telephone conversation. Mean score is illustrated and visualised via violin plots executed in R language. For instance, a violin plot of intrusiveness density of turn size clearly shows that interruptions comprised of isolated characters have the highest mean score of intrusiveness (see **Figure 6.2** in Chapter 6) in the talk show corpus. The calculation of frequency and mean score has aided my understandings of a certain interruption practice, and cemented analysis of candidate interruption phenomena throughout this work.

The method of frequency comparison does not prove whether or not any two group frequencies are significantly correlated with each other (J. D. Robinson, 2007). Therefore, apart from basic descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, for instance, Chi-square analysis and linear regression modelling, were employed to test or calculate

statistical relationship between two or more variables (aspects of interruption, e.g., intrusiveness, interruption timing).

The chi-square test of independence is used to determine whether or not two categorical variables are likely to be related. Test results were visualised using association plots via R. For example, in the first sub-section of Chapters 5 and 6, chi-square analysis was used to determine whether the two intrusiveness indicators – affiliation orientation and information flow – are significantly correlated in each corpus (see Figure 5.1 and Figure 6.1). In the compassion analysis in Chapter 7, it is found that the mismatch in distribution of turn size between the two corpora is statistically significant using Pearson chi-square test ($df=2$, $X^2=59.911$, $p<0.001$).

Apart from the relationship between two variables, I also tested how a variable is related to multiple variables. In this case, I used multivariate linear regression to predict the output of intrusiveness based on the four interruption dimensions. For instance, a linear regression model reports that interruption timing is associated with more intrusive interruptions, and particularly, that early timing is more intrusive in everyday telephone conversation (see e.g., **Table 5.1** for the effects of four interruption dimensions on intrusiveness in Callhome).

Quantification of social interactional practices often involves formal coding (J. P. de Ruiter & Albert, 2017; Stivers, 2015). De Ruiter and Albert (2017) distinguished coding of reflexively normative practices from coding of reflexively accountable practices in researching social interaction. The former refers to highly routinised patterns of interaction, such as “request for information”, whereas the latter refers to more subtle occasions where participants themselves maintain uncertainty towards the ongoing interaction. In a similar manner, Stivers (2015) contrasted non-CA-grounded formal coding with CA-grounded formal coding. The non-CA formal coding, characterised by a top-down process, was not based on understandings of how interactional behaviours of interest are realised in social interaction, how they are responded by coparticipants, and how these initiation-responses are shaped by the situated context. In contrast, CA-grounded formal coding takes into account both composition (i.e., what is said in a turn) and position (i.e., where a turn is sequentially situated) and is grounded in careful examination of speakers’ practice.

Coding in this study accords with the CA-grounded formal approach. I first identified all interruption instances (cf. Section 3.3 for a fuller explanation of interruption identification in both corpora), and then annotated each instance according to the four

dimensions (i.e., turn size, interruption timing, interruption marker, speech act) and two indicators of intrusiveness (i.e., information flow and affiliation orientation). Each of the six variables were classified into several sub-categories by taking account the position and composition of an interruption instance and speakers' orientation, for instance, what is in the interruption turn, is the interrupter stays on the ongoing topic or shifts the topic, when an interruption is initiated in relation to the prior speaker's speaking, etc. I will elaborate on the coding scheme and present a sample coding sheet in the next chapter (Chapter 4).

In a word, as an observer point of view, quantitative analysis (both the basic quantification and quantification on statistical relationships) have demonstrably informed as well as cemented the moment-by-moment analysis of speakers' orientation to interaction.

3.2 Data and transcription

This section reports data collection and interruption identification. I will first introduce the two corpora, viz., the Callhome Mandarin Chinese corpus and the Jin Xing Show corpus and discuss how speakers interact in the two settings. Following data collection, I will sketch how conversations in the two corpora were transcribed. Then, I will elaborate on the identification of interruption instances in the two corpora. The vast majority of interruptions in the telephone conversation are overlapping interruptions. For this reason, I will use a speech analysis software, Praat, to detect overlaps of any two speakers' turn, before submitting to further identification analysis. In contrast, all of the interruptions in the talk show corpus are pre-emptive interruptions with no overlaps. Therefore, I will discuss separately how to identify instances of interruptions in the two different corpora. I also outline three outlier cases that are not suitable for further analysis, and therefore excluded. In the final sub-section, I will briefly report the information on the two corpora.

3.2.1 Introduction to the two corpora

Conversation data examined in this study were collected from two sources: an extant telephone corpus called Callhome Mandarin Chinese (Canavan & Zipperlen, 1996), and a Chinese TV show called the Jin Xing Show. Conversations from both resources, opened sourced online, were spoken by native speakers of Mandarin Chinese.

Conversations in each source are dyadic⁴. The telephone conversations are audio only and the talk show conversations has both visual and auditory modalities. I collected 20 conversations from the Callhome Mandarin Chinese corpus to form the Callhome corpus used in this study; and 23 episodes from the Jin Xing Show programme to form the talk show corpus. Further information on collected corpora, such as time duration, number of interruptions identified, will be presented in the last section of this chapter, viz., Section 3.4.

The Callhome Mandarin Chinese corpus (henceforth Callhome or the Callhome corpus) was developed by the Linguistic Data Consortium (LDC) in 1990s. The corpus consists of 120 unscripted phone conversations between native Mandarin speakers, and of these, 80 are designated as training calls, 20 are development test calls, and 20 are evaluation test calls. All calls, lasting up to 30 minutes, originated from North America and were placed overseas. Most participants called their close friends and family members. Each of the calls was placed via a toll-free robot operator maintained by the LDC. Each of the 120 conversation was provided with transcripts of a continuous five- or ten-minute segment. I chose the audio recordings according in this range.

Unlike the other telephone speech corpus, for instance, Switchboard, conversations in the Callhome took place in an unprompted manner as no topics were specified for participants to follow. Participants (both the caller and the receiver) were free to discuss any topic as long as they talked in a designated language, in this case, Mandarin Chinese⁵. The conversations centre on study and campus life, research, job-hunting, social activities, migration, or application for study overseas, so on and so forth.

The Callhome conversations displayed strong features of spontaneity, such as repetition, disfluencies, hesitations (F. H. Liu, Picheny, Srinivasa, Monkowski, & Chen, 1996). Speakers were speaking in a rather relaxed manner as most of them called their parents or close friends, some did the call in the comfort of their home. Sometimes, one speaker was speaking first (e.g., husband) and then another speaker (e.g., wife) took over, and occasionally two speakers were on the same end of a call. The telephone conversations are largely motivated and structured for the goal of the participants and not

⁴ There are a handful of cases in which multiple speakers appear on one end of the call in the Callhome Mandarin Chinese corpus. All conversations in the talk show programme are dyadic.

⁵ Mandarin is the standard form of Chinese widely spoken across the Chinese Mainland and other regions in the world. Apart from Mandarin, there are six major regional dialects: Wú 吳, Gà 贛, Xiāng 湘, Mǐn 閩, Hakka 客家 and Yuè 粵 (Wiedenhof, 2015).

for that of the researchers. Therefore, conversations from this telephone setting are closer to authentic data as opposed to elicited data which are prompted by and exist for the goal of researchers (House, 2018). That being said, some contextual factors may have elicited participation in this linguistic data project developed by the LDC, such as the toll-free long distance phone calls and \$20 paid to each caller.

The Jin Xing Show, which aired weekly on the Dragon Television channel in China from 28th January 2015 to 30th August 2017, was among the most popular television talk shows in Mainland China. Marketed as a stand-up comedy, the Jin Xing Show is nothing like a typical stand-up show as, for instance, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Michael McIntyre's Big Show, or its Chinese counterpart Tonight 80's Talk Show, where the host acts as the comedian standing up and making monologue jokes. The Jin Xing Show is an untypical stand-up comedy in terms of two configurations. The first is the synthesis nature of the show. It consists of three sections, the talk show section, the question answer section, and the interview section. The current work only focuses on the talk show section. The second is the number of speakers in the show. It has one host, standing on the stage, dominates the show, and a sidekick, sitting behind a desk, assisting the host with her telling.

The Jin Xing Show covered a variety of widely discussed topics or news items, such as job hunting, weight loss, international travel, and cosmetic surgery. Each episode has a theme, which runs through a few stories told by the host Jin Xing. Jin Xing (金星, Jin for short) is transgender, a ballerina, modern dancer, and an actress. She is frequently on the TV screen and a well-known public figure. Apart from this show, Jin also hosts and is a guest on a few other TV shows on the mainland. On screen she projects a candid critical profile, implicitly reproaching other celebrities in the entertainment circle, the inaction and incapacity of local government, and other social problems. The stories told either originate from Jin's personal experiences (e.g., her transgender experience, her early dance career in the United States and in Europe) or other people's experiences that she has learnt of. The other speaker, Shen Nan (沈南, Shen for short), is in the role of Jin's assistant and a sidekick. He is a TV host by training and has not yet made his name known for the public, at least not to Jin's level. The spatial configuration of how the two speakers are physically positioned is necessary for understanding some of their utterances that will be elaborated in CHAPTER 6.



Figure 3.1: Physical positions of Jin and Shen of ep. 20150617 in the Jin Xing Show (the red line showing the direction of Jin's gaze, the green line showing that of Shen's)



Figure 3.2: Physical positions of Jin, Shen, and the audience of ep. 20150617 in the Jin Xing Show (the red line showing the direction of Jin's gaze, the green line showing that of Shen's, and the yellow line showing that of the audiences')

As shown in the two screenshots, Jin stands directly facing the camera which is positioned in the centre of the studio opposite Shen. Shen sits facing Jin behind a desk in the first row among the audience. By default, Jin faces the camera, delivering stories. Occasionally, Jin turns around, talking to Shen when she wants to ask Shen questions or his opinion on things in the ongoing telling. Jin may also turn around to face Shen when

Shen self-selects to speak, viz., interrupts in this study. In the latter case, Shen often initiates his interruptions with a vocative 姐 (*jie*, ‘sister’) which on many occasions functions to attract Jin’s attention. In this spatial configuration, Shen’s use of address terms may function to get Jin to turn her attention back to him so that Jin can hear his utterances clearly (please see Section 6.3 for discussion of the different uses of the address term ‘Jin’ at the beginning of Shen’s interruptions). Address terms were not identified in the interruption turns in the 20 telephone conversations in the Callhome corpus. The absence of address terms is arguably because the primary function of address terms is to get the co-participant’s attention so as to establish the listenership for the upcoming speaking, whereas in dyadic conversation there is no need to disambiguate the intended listenership so address terms are redundant (Clayman, 2010).

The two speakers have asymmetrical speaking rights. A long stretch of words coming from Jin, the host, who has been given an exclusive claim to the floor and an absolute control of the programme. Normally the show begins with Jin greeting the audience and introducing briefly the topic of the show. The topic runs through the few stories delivered in approximately 20-30 minutes. Shen takes the turn floor either when he is called to by Jin or when he obtains the turn by himself, viz., self-selects (Sacks et al., 1974). Self-selection accounts for the great majority of Shen’s utterances. Apart from these conversational exchanges, the two speakers also cooperate to occasionally perform brief ‘sitcom-style’ scenes related to the discussed topic. The conversation that takes place in such instances is not considered in this study. This is mainly because it simulates everyday - or quasi-everyday conversation which is not the main focus of the talk show programme. The two speakers’ interaction is primarily to entertain the audience both in the studio and at home. The assistant uses interruption as a way of fulfilling his dual role in this instructional activity: to help the host to deliver storytelling and to entertain the audience. The first role generally involves supplementing details to Jin’s narration, inquiring about the development of a certain story, and affiliating with Jin’s messages and stances in the telling. In contrast, the second role consists of Shen teasing or disaffiliating with Jin.

3.2.2 Data Transcription

The conversations in the two corpora were collected differently. For the telephone recordings, I first downloaded the transcripts available on the website and then cleaned up the errors in the texts. For instance, I corrected some homophones which do not fit the

local context. I also systematically modified some transcription symbols following Jefferson's (2004b) transcription conventions, for instance, changing the transcription of laughter from *&=laughter* to *@@@*.

As there are no available transcripts for the talk show conversations, I used the speech-to-text transcription software, Xunfeiyuji (<http://www.iyuji.cn/iyuji/home>), to first generate the texts. Then I manually revised the text by removing mis-identified words, tagging unrecognised speech such as laughter from multiple people, and correcting utterances that were produced concurrently.

I adopt the transcription symbols used by ten Have (2007), because Have's set of transcription conventions 1) covers the most commonly used symbols and 2) is a simplified version of Jefferson's (2004b) set. The transcription in this project follows the tenets of a *basic transcript*, which marks essential features that are seen as relevant (Ayaß, 2015), including overlapping speech, high or low pitch, pauses within or across speakers, background noise, and laughter. A detailed list of the transcription symbols used in this study is presented in Appendix 1. One thing worth noting is about the speaker annotation. In the Callhome corpus, the caller is always annotated as A and the receiver B. If there is more than one person at either end, a number is added to A or B to distinguish different speakers, for instance, A1, B1. Interruptions may occur in the turn of either participant. In the talk show conversation, the host is annotated "Jin" and her assistant is annotated "Shen". Only Shen's interruptions are considered for further analysis. This is largely because there are very few cases where Jin interrupts Shen's speaking.

3.3 Identification of interruptions

Identification of interruption is closely related to the definition of interruptions adopted in this study. As stated previously: interruption is defined as a conversational act through which a speaker (i.e., interrupter) initiates an utterance when the turn floor predominantly belongs to another speaker (i.e., interruptee). Two types of interruptions derive from this definition: overlapping interruptions (with overlaps) and pre-emptive interruptions (without overlaps). One striking feature pertaining to the types of interruptions is that the great majority of the interruptions in the Callhome dataset are overlapping interruptions, whereas all of the interruptions in the Jin Xing Show dataset are pre-emptive interruptions. Due to this asymmetrical distribution of interruption types in two corpora, I applied different approaches to identifying instances of interruptions. The identification of overlapping interruptions (all in Callhome) was grounded in Haugh

and Musgrave's (2019) combinatorial approach to searching for candidate instances in CA- annotated spoken corpora as well as assisted by a speech analysis software, Praat. For pre-emptive interruptions (most in Jin Xing Show), a synthesis of syntactic-pragmatic resources was used to determine candidate instances.

3.3.1 Identification of overlapping interruptions

I adopted Haugh and Musgrave's (2019) combinatorial approach to identifying potential instances of overlapping interruptions which all emerged from the Callhome corpus. This approach, acknowledging the context-sensitive nature of actions in interaction, combines two key aspects of practice in interaction: *composition* (the syntactic or prosodic form of a certain practice) and *position* (the preceding and following sequence of a certain practice). By taking the sequential position of a certain practice into account, the combinatorial approach provides methodological insights to collection-based conversation analytic research as it enables researchers to examine potential examples across a large-scale dataset and "to go beyond analysing them [practices] in single, isolated datasets" (Haugh & Musgrave, 2019, p. 279). While this approach is primarily used as a guiding principle to search for potential candidate examples in a corpus that is annotated with CA transcription conventions, the tenets (composition and position) behind this approach can still be employed to identify instances of interruptions in the Callhome corpus.

To put the combinatorial approach into practice, I went through two-step process. Firstly, I identified any overlapping speech via the waveforms in Praat (position), which yielded a collection of potential candidate interruption instances. Second, these candidate instances were submitted to a second round of examination to exclude irrelevant interruptions: simultaneous start (position), unrecognised speech and digressive utterances (composition).

3.3.1.1 Step 1: Identifying overlaps via Praat

In the Callhome corpus, the starting and finishing points of overlaps were detected via Praat (<http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>), a well-maintained and widely used computer software package for speech analysis (Zhou, Li, Yin, & Zong, 2010).

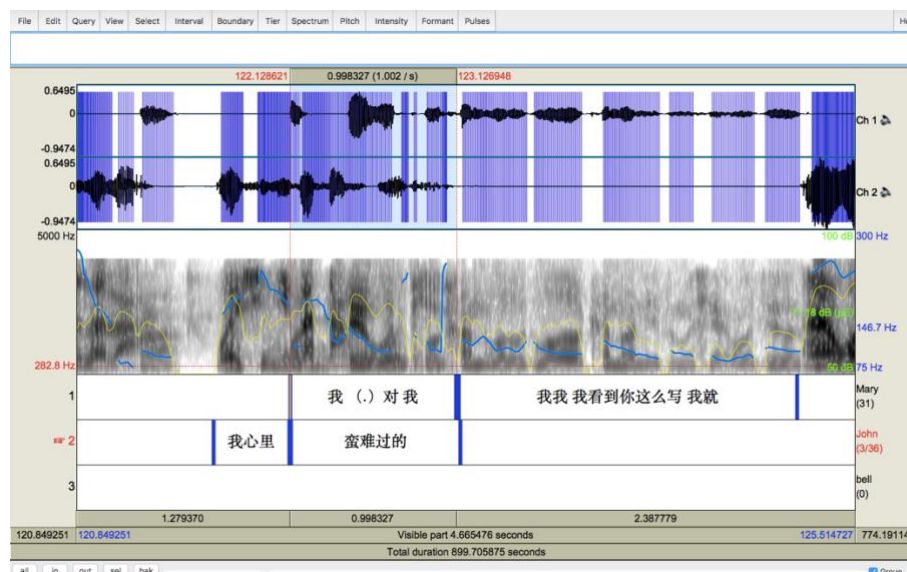


Figure 3.3 Annotation mode in Praat

(4) Callhome_0695 feel bad

- 01 A: [我(.) 对我]我 我我 看到 你 这么 写 我就
 [wo(.) dui wo] wo wo wo kandao ni zheme xie wo jiu
 [I(.) To me] I, I, I see you this write, I just
 I, I was-when I see your letters
- 02 B: 我 心里 [蛮 难过 的],
 Wo xinli [man nanguo de]
 I inside [vey sad SUB]
 Deep down, I am very sad.

As shown in **Figure 3.3** above, the TextGrid window displays three panels: at the top, the waveform of a sound; in the middle, sound features (e.g., spectrogram, pitch contour, intensity); at the bottom, the transcripts. The blue line at the top panel separates a caller (marked by Ch1) and a receiver (marked by Ch2) in a telephone conversation⁶. Speakers' waveforms are indicated by the black dots along the thin line. Interruptions are identified when the two speakers' waveforms overlap. Hence, the starting and finishing points of the overlapping waveforms indicate the starting and finishing points of a particular interruption utterance. For instance, as shown in the above figure, the caller's utterance 我(.)对我 and the receiver's utterance 蛮难过的 overlap. In the bottom panel,

⁶ Because the Callhome telephone data are stereo sound recordings, each speaker has an independent channel. The left track indicates a caller's voice (marked as Ch1), and the right track indicates a receiver's (marked as Ch2).

the bar labelled “Mary” denotes a caller’s speech transcription and the second bar labelled “John” denotes a receiver’s speech annotation. The annotation shown in **Figure 3.3** corresponds to Example (4) above, brackets [] indicating the onset and finishing point of overlapping speech.

3.3.1.2 Step 2: Excluding atypical overlaps

After being through the first step, candidate instances of interruptions were submitted to a second step check of atypical overlaps. That is, I excluded three types of overlaps from candidate examples collected via Praat. The three types are interruptions with simultaneous starts, unrecognised sounds, and digressive utterances that address a third party.

The first type of atypical interruption is overlaps with simultaneous start by two speakers. This refers to cases where two speakers initiate speaking at the same time (Auer, 2021; Schegloff, 2000), “neither of whom has special rights to the turn by virtue of preceding talk” (Schegloff, 2002, p. 293). Distinguishing an interruption turn and a turn that is being interrupted in the environment of simultaneous start is rather problematic and unequivocal. One important reason is that the audio-only telephone conversation lacks multimodal media (Mondada, 2007, 2016) that could help determine speakership change in social interaction.

Suppose in a dyadic conversation, both A and B claim a turn floor by starting to speak at the same time immediately after A finishes his/her turn. The next turn could arguably belong to B. The real practice, however, can be much more complicated. Other situational factors may be at stake in determining whose legitimate turn it is, for instance, the completion of A’s utterance. That is, B could mistakenly assume A has finished his/her turn and interpose the current speaking while A is actually taking an intra-speaker pause (e.g., inhaling). Other multimodal resources, such as topic continuation, prosodic features (inhalation and pitch), and eye gaze may signal an incompleteness of a speaker’s turn (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). However, the integrated resources used to project speaker’s turn completion are not accessible in the Callhome dataset. Apart from that, projecting a precise turn completion point with multimodal resources is beyond the scope of this thesis. To illustrate an interruption with simultaneous starts, consider the following example (5). Both speakers begin speaking at roughly the same time.

(5): callhome_4052 buying a house (A is daughter and B is father. ‘she’ refers to A’s elderly sister.)

01 (1.02)

02→ A: [也 买 下来 了]
 [Ye mai xialai le]
 [also buy down CRS]
[(She) also bought it.]

03 → B: [她 买 下来]
 [ta mai xialai]
 [she buy down]
[She bought it].

04 A: 所以 他们 现在 就 挺 大的 了
 Suoyi tamen xianzai jiu ting dade le
 So they now just quite big CRS
 So now they have a big (house).

Immediately prior to this excerpt, Daughter (A) was told by Father (B) that her sister has made an offer on a neighbour's house. There is a 1.02s¹ long pause between the speakers (line 01). In the next turn both speakers start to talk at the same time. Daughter utters the same message that she has been told by her father in the prior turn (line 02). Father is also speaking and reiterating his own message. That is, the overlapping speech in lines 02-3 contains the same propositional meaning. In the subsequent turn, A comments on the house purchasing. In this example, the two speakers begin to speak concurrently and finish their overlapping speech almost at the same time. It is rather difficult to decide, based on sound medium only, who is doing interruption and who is being interrupted. Therefore, this example was excluded from the collection of interruptions.

Simultaneous starts may take another form in which one speaker starts speaking just 0.1s earlier than the other speaker. The nuanced difference normally occurs when A produces audible inhalation before B's speech production. These differences are displayed and visualised in the waveforms in Praat. Despite so, they still count as simultaneous starts.

The second atypical interruption is unrecognised speech, such as coughing, audible breathing in or other background noise. These background noises are rather frequent in the telephone conversation, for example, noise from changes of speakers⁷,

⁷ In some recordings, there are more than one speaker at one end of the phone line.

children screaming, etc. They contained no propositional meaning and were excluded from further analysis.

The third and final type of atypical interruption is digressive utterances. That is, on certain occasions, a speaker may briefly talk to another person who are at the same end of the call and the utterances are recorded. This type of utterances does not address the other speaker over the phone and therefore is not considered for further analysis. Example (6) illustrates this point.

(6) callhome_0721 grandpa (A is granddaughter, B is grandmother.)

- 01 B: 这个 电话 够不着 你 爷爷 .
 zhege dianhua goubuzhao ni yeye
 this telephone can't reach you grandpa
 Grandpa can't reach the phone.
- 02 A: 哦【::, 是吗】
 O[:: shima]
 EC[is it?]
 Oh I see.
- 03 → B: 【你 起来】
 [ni qilai]
 [you get up]
 Try to sit up.

Grandmother (B) is talking with Granddaughter (A), saying that “Grandpa can't reach the phone” (line 01). Granddaughter responds with backchannel tokens, which is overlapped with Grandma's next turn. In the next turn Grandmother is trying to get Grandfather to sit up, so her utterance 你起来 (*ni qilai*, ‘Try to sit up’) is actually talking to Grandpa instead of Granddaughter. Therefore, the utterance in line 03 does not count as an interruption.

3.3.2 Identification of pre-emptive interruptions

Another type of interruption that is identified across the two corpora is pre-emptive interruption. As explicated earlier, pre-emptive interruptions occur when a speaker cuts in an intra-speaker pause of another speaker and pre-emptively produces something. The pre-empting utterance may either grammatically fit another speaker's prior utterance – anticipatory completion (Bolden, Hepburn, & Potter, 2019; Lerner, 1991, 1996) – or change the topic under way. Pre-emptive interruptions emerged mostly

in the talk show conversations with a few instances identified in the telephone conversation. Pre-emptive interruptions, with no audible overlapping speech, are more covert than overlapping interruptions. Pre-emptive interruptions were identified via two main channels.

One of them is through syntactic cues, such as conventionalised constructions, *if X-then Y; when X-then Y; or X said → Y* (Lerner, 1991, 1996). When a current speaker is uttering the first half of these constructions, the second half is expected to produce by the same speaker. For instance in the Jin Xing Show conversation, Shen often takes the initiative to co-produce the second half of Jin's turn. However, under the guise of helping Jin, Shen's pre-emptive completion often derails Jin's course of action (see subversive completion in Bolden et al., 2019) as in the immediately next turn, Jin will normally articulate an alternative to Shen's projection. Sometimes Jin's articulation and Shen's project are in stark contrast, which elicits laughter from the audience. To illustrate, consider the following example (7).

(7) jxx_20150729 chopsticks

- 01 Jin 我 一拍 桌子
 Wo yipai zhuozi
 I slam table
 I slammed the table
- 02 大声 呵斥 那个 阿姨
 Dasheng hechi nage ayi
 Big sound scold that maid
 Shouted at the maid
- 03 “阿姨 去” =
 Aiyi qu
 Maid go
 Please help me to =
- 04 → Shen =“把 菜 给我 倒 了”
 Ba cai geiwo dao le
 OBJ dish PASS me dump CRS
 = Dump the dishes!
- 05 → Jin “把 筷子 给我 拿来!”
 Ba kuaizi geiwo nalai
 OBJ chopsticks PASS me bring
 Bring the chopsticks!

Prior to this exchange, Jin is relating that her husband purposely tempted her with a lavish dinner when she was dieting. In the first three lines, Jin describes how she reacted to a table full of dishes in a series of action “I slammed the table, shouted at the maid, ‘please help me to –’”. This is basically a *X said* → *Y* construction with “shouted at the maid” being *X* and “please help me to –” being an unfinished *Y*. That is, the direct speech 阿姨去 (*ayi qu*, ‘Please help me to –’) is syntactically incomplete. In the following turn, Shen takes the initiative to present a candidate understanding of what Jin is going to do (i.e., “Dump the dishes!”) before it is actually articulated by Jin herself. Shen orients to the audience that he thought Jin said to her maid “please help me to dump the dishes”, which seems to be a sensible guess based on Jin’s telling of her strict diet plan. Contrarily, in the immediately subsequent turn, Jin rectifies that she actually asked the maid to “Bring the chopsticks!”.

Pre-emptive interruptions may also be detected through a combination of syntactic and pragmatic resources. That is, a prior speaker’s speaking could be deemed incomplete by taking into account the syntactic structure and the local context. I will illustrate this point in the following example.

(8) Callhome_0859 bed

- 01 B: 别 对 自己 那么, 那么 苛【刻 了】
 Bie dui ziji name, name ke[ke le]
 Don’t to yourself so so mean CRS
 Don’t be too frugal.
- 02 → A1: 【哎】 我们 还 .hh=
 [ai] women hai .hh=
 [yeah] we also .hh=
 [yeah] we also .hh=
- 03 → B: =我 跟 你 ((xxx)) 哎 .
 =wo gen ni ((xxx)) ai
 =I with you ((xxx)) EC
 I was going to say that ...

Prior to this extract, Daughter (A1) is telling her mother (B) that she has purchased a new bed. In line 01, Mother responds by asking them (daughter and son-in-law) to treat themselves well 别对自己那么, 那么苛刻了 (*bie dui ziji name name keke le*, ‘Don’t be

too frugal'). In line 02, Daughter starts her turn (哎 我们还 .hh= , *ai women hai. hh=*, 'yeah, we also .hh=') two characters prior to Mother's turn completion point. A's utterance 'Yeah, we also .hh' consists of an interjection 'yeah', a topic 'we also', and an in-breath '.hh'. A's turn could be syntactically incomplete as the comment of the utterance is missing. The inbreath notation at the end of Daughter's utterance also signals that she might be taking a pause in the speaking. A certain amount of information that people's mind contains can be activated at any one time in talk-in-interaction, and each temporarily active piece of information is bounded by a pause (Chafe, 1987). Contextually, as Daughter is talking about bed-purchasing in previous turns, her provisionally incomplete turn in 02 could mean that she also bought something else other than the bed. The daughter tells her mother that she bought a couch too, which is confirmed in subsequent turns not shown in this extract. To sum up, a synthesis of syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic cues indicates that A1 may have not yet finished her turn before B jumps in, despite no (audible) overlaps detected. Thus, B's utterance counts as a pre-emptive interruption.

3.4 Interruption data reported

The current study uses 20 conversations randomly selected from the Jin Xing Show programme and 31 conversations from the Callhome corpus. The disparity of the number of conversations is mainly because I intended to collect roughly the same number of interruption instances for each corpus. As shown in Table 3.1, eventually I identified 994 interruptions in total in the talk show corpus with an average of 33.2 interruptions in each conversation. The telephone conversations have slightly more interruptions, with 1,014 instances in total and 50.8 instances on average in each conversation. As reported earlier in the talk show, each episode of the talk show (20-30 mins) lasts longer than each telephone conversation that was provided with transcripts (5-15 minutes). Therefore, the talk show conversations in total amount to 681 minutes with an average of 22.79 minutes in each conversation. The telephone conversations are much shorter, with 155 minutes in total with an average of 7.75 minutes in each conversation. The number of relevant instances, as Schegloff calls them "environments of possible relevant occurrence" (Schegloff, 1993), provides the base for quantification in analysing interactional exchanges.

Table 3.1: Data information retrieved from two corpora

Corpus		Time duration (min)	No. of interruptions
Jin Xing Show	20150708	25	41
	20150715	24	44
	20150722	29	42
	20150729	23	38
	20151021	27	28
	20151202	24	33
	20160217	23	27
	20160406	22	28
	20160622	22	41
	20160713	18	23
	20160907	21	57
	20160914	23	27
	20161123	27	67
	20170111	22	20
	20170125	22	17
	20170329	21	22
	20170412	19	20
	20170705	22	43
	20170712	24	22
	20170802	22	14
	20170809	20	29
	20170816	19	30
	ep20	23	27
	ep39	24	34
	ep40	18	22
	ep42	22	21
	ep45	27	66
	ep48	20	48
	ep50	27	37
	ep81	21	27
	Total		681
Callhome	0003	5	37
	0022	5	40
	0030	5	30
	0104	5	45
	0695	10	109
	0721	10	37
	0742	10	25
	0758	10	74
	0761	10	106

	0766	10	72
	0786	10	53
	0840	10	62
	0859	10	99
	0916	10	55
	1396	10	55
	4025	5	4
	4052	5	14
	4064	5	58
	4083	5	17
	4090	5	24
Total		155	1,014

In the following section, I will explicate how the combinatorial approach (Haugh & Musgrave, 2019) was employed to identify the two collections of interruption instances of the Callhome corpus and the Jin Xing Show shown in Table 3.1 above.

3.5 Summary

This section has introduced the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study. The conversation analytical approach is used to analyse the speakers' interaction moment-by-moment. It is not the analyst who decides what the speaker intends to mean by certain utterances, but speakers self-orient to their intentions in the ways they interact with each other'. Praat is used to identify the onset and finishing point of certain overlapping speech. However, not all overlapping speech counts as interruption in this study. Based on an interactional point of view, interruptions are defined as taking a turn whenever the other speaker has not yet finished talking. Therefore, pre-emptive utterances that are inserted into intra-speaker pauses are also classed as interruptions in this study. I will describe the data annotation scheme in Chapter 4 along with the elaboration of interruption framework – the intrusiveness and the four dimensions – that underpins the analysis of interruptions in this study.

CHAPTER 4 Interruption design across the two corpora

This chapter explicates the investigation of interruption design across the two corpora. The interruption design concerns two parts: the degree of intrusiveness of an interruption utterance and the four interruption dimensions. The first two sections of this chapter, 4.1 and 4.2, aim to establish a framework to measure the degree of *intrusiveness* of interruption utterances in social interaction. Intrusiveness in this project is defined as how disruptive an interruption utterance is to the current conversation. The current framework, based on 20 telephone conversations and 31 talk show conversations, approaches intrusiveness in terms of two indicators: the flow of the current conversation and the kind of (dis)affiliation displayed towards the interruption recipient. The remainder of this chapter elaborates on four dimensions of interruption utterances. It starts with Section 4.3 on interruption *turn size* which concerns the number of complete meaning expression units in each interruption. Single- and multi-unit turns are identified. Elaboration of turn size is followed in Section 4.4 by *interruption timing*, which is segmented by the topic - comment structure of an utterance in Chinese. In general, early, middle, and final timings are identified. Section 4.5 examines the prefacing tokens present in any interruption turn, viz., *interruption markers*. Backchannel responses, laughter, and pragmatic markers are identified in both corpora. One additional type of marker, address terms, is used by the interrupter in the talk show conversation. The function of address terms in institutional conversation is discussed. Section 4.6 is about interruption utterances occurring via different kinds of speech acts. Searle's (1976) categorisation is adopted and adapted. Following explicating all the six notions, Section 4.7 briefly discusses the coding scheme. The last section summarises interruption design across both the casual and institutional conversation in the Chinese context in this study.

4.1 Measuring intrusiveness: Information flow

In naturally occurring conversation, an interruption may have different effects on the progression of an ongoing exchange. In the course of speaking, a listener may cut in to supply further details to the prior speaker's telling or help with a word that the prior speaker is searching for. In these cases, the interruption stays on the topic under discussion and helps to elaborate on it, thus boosting the flow of the ongoing conversation

Note that A's turn in line 03 consists of two turn-constructive units: 并且你不一定拿到资助 (*bingqie ni buyiding nadao zizhu*, 'and you may not get funding') and 因为 (*yinwei*, 'because'). The first unit expresses A's opinion and the second is about to explain why he thinks so. B jumps in and overlaps the second unit. The upshot of B's interruption is that A aborts his second TCU, leaving his turn unfinished. There is obstruction between B's first TCU and the hearable next one – the second TCU starting with 因为 (*yin wei*, 'because'). B obtains the turn floor which otherwise would remain in A's 'territory'. A does not resume his aborted turn in the following exchanges (not shown in this extract). In this sense, B's interruption disrupts A's turn production, and therefore B's information transmission at this point is obstructed.

I term the transmission of topical information between turns *information flow*. It involves a joint co-construction of course of action by two adjacent speakers: topic proposition by a prior speaker (interruptee) and topic continuity by a current speaker (interrupter). Information flow is about the status where, in the case of interruption, an interruption recipient (interruptee) successfully delivers intended utterances and is topically responded by the other speaker (interrupter). A precondition of smooth flow of information is that an interruption recipient delivers their utterance despite intervention of an interruption. Defining a smooth flow draws upon the notion of progressivity in Conversation Analysis, which I will explain in the immediately following section.

4.1.1 A smooth conversational flow: inspirations from progressivity

Taken from a sequential organisation viewpoint, I will demonstrate that a smooth delivery of an utterance requires a completion of utterance at a turn level and no "understanding check" (i.e., a speaker asks the other to clarify a certain point or confirm their understanding of a certain point) at a sequence level. This is inspired by the notion of progressivity (Heritage, 2007; Schegloff, 2007) in Conversation Analysis.

Progressivity is understood in the context of sequence organisation with a focus on adjacency or nextness of speakers' within-turn or within-sequence utterances in interaction. Schegloff framed the principle of progressivity in an often-cited passage in this way:

The default relationship between the components of most kinds of organization is that each should come next after the prior. In articulating a turn-constructive unit, each element – each word, for example – should

come next after the one before; in fact, at a smaller level of granularity, each syllable – indeed, each sound – should come next after the one before it. So also with the several turn-constructive units that compose a multi-unit turn; so also with the consecutive turns that compose a spate of talk; so also with the turns that compose a sequence, etc. Moving from some element to a hearably-next-one with nothing intervening is the embodiment of, and the measure of, progressivity. Should something intervene between some element and what is hearable as a/the next one due – should something violate or interfere with their contiguity, whether next sound, next word, or next turn – it will be heard as qualifying the progressivity of the talk, and will be examined for its import, for what understanding should be accorded it. (Schegloff, 2007, pp. 14–15)

From a CA perspective, progressivity is about the progression from some element to the hearable next. In other words, anything that occasions the disfluencies flow from A element to its adjacent B element is counted as disrupting the progressivity. The contiguity next can come as a smaller level of the next syllable, sound, word, or a bigger level of next turn (Schegloff, 1979, 2007). Heritage further summarises Schegloff's elaboration of progressivity as it operates both “at the within-turn level where the progression of an action is at issue” and “at the level of the sequence where progression involves a jointly constructed course of action” (Heritage, 2009, p. 308).

Progressivity has not been explored in its own right but as a supporting notion to explicate other principles in CA, for instance, the intricacy between intersubjective and progressivity in the matrix of repair practices (Heritage, 2007; Schegloff, 2007), backchanneling (J. W. Lee, 2021; Stivers, 2008), affiliation (Antaki, 2012; Iwasaki, 2015; Stivers, 2008). This line of literature on progressivity has one thing in common – looking at progressivity at the level of sequence where two speakers jointly construct a course of action. It involves examining two adjacent turns produced by different speakers instead of within-turn progression. Information flow in this study takes an integrated view combining sequence level of progressivity and topical coherence of turns.

Taking this sequential perspective, a smooth flow of speaking entails that a speaker undergoes a smooth progression from some element to the hearable next one despite the interruption from another speaker. This smooth progression can happen within-turn or at the level of sequence. At the turn level, a smooth progression entails

completion of prior speaker's turn. That is, a smooth conversational flow requires an interruption recipient to complete his/her ongoing turn despite interruption from another speaker. This is similar to what Ferguson (1977) termed *butting in* interruption, as shown here.

Butting-in interruption

01 A: _____.

02 B: _____.

B initiates an overlapping speech and finishes before A does⁸. In the meantime, A manages to finish his/her utterance with his topic agenda being transmitted successfully. A typical example of this kind of interruption is backchannel responses produced in the course of a speaker's storytelling. Example (10) *expenditure* is a good illustration of this point.

(10) callhome_0695 expenditure

- 01 A: 现在-. 【有资助】呢, 我们 又 放心 了,
Xianzai-, [you zizu] ne, women you fangxin le
Now-, [have fund] RLV, we again relieved CRS
Now, we are not worried (about our finances) as we are funded
- 02 又, 又, 又 敢 【【稍微 花点钱 啦, 知道 吧】?】
you, you, you gan [[shaowei huodianqian la, zhidao ba]]?
Again, again, again, dare [[a little spend money LA, know EC]]?
So now we don't need to worry about our finances, do we?
- 03 → B: 【嗯, 嗯, 嗯】
[en, en, ne]
[hmh, hmh, hmh]
[Yeah, yeah, yeah]
- 04 → B: 【【嗯, 嗯嗯 嗯】】
[[en, en, ne]]
[[mhm, mhm, mhm]]
[Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah]

⁸ There are cases in the Callhome corpus where B initiates an overlapping speech and breaks off before A finishes. In other words, B interrupts but does not finish his/her interruption. This kind of interruption is often small-sized, rarely more than a couple of words. Regardless of the completion of B's interruption utterance, A successfully transmits his utterances.

Here A is telling B that his financial situation has been improved a lot as he has been awarded a grant (lines 01-2). B responds with multiple acknowledgement tokens, 嗯 (*en*, ‘yeah’), to signal that she is listening and that A has the turn floor until the current speaking finishes (see Heinz, 2003; Lee, 2021; Stivers, 2008).

At the sequence level, a smooth conversational exchange requires that there is no hearing or understanding check from either speaker following an interruption. Otherwise, either speaker has to make an extra effort (e.g., initiating a turn to ask for clarification) to attend to the utterance that is not being clearly transmitted. To illustrate, consider the previous Example (2) summer *holiday*. A has to repeat his question that is not answered directly or partially due to the overlapping speech occasioned by B’s interruption.

(2) callhome_0786, *summer holiday* (A is brother and B is sister. Yingying is their niece. A and B are talking about Yingying’s summer holiday.)

- 01 → A: 呃, 英英 现在 【放假: 了?】
 E Yingying xianzai [fangjia: le]
 E PNYingying now on holiday CRS
Huh, is Yingying on summer holiday now?
- 02 → B: 【(.) 英英 没】他吵, ↑啊?
 [(.) yingying mei] ta chao a
 PNYingying no he annoying EC
[(.) Yingying is less annoying, excuse me?]
- 03 → A: 英英 放假 了?
 Yingying fangjia le?
 PNYingying on holiday CRS
Is Yingying on summer holiday now?
- 04 B: 英英 放假 了
 Yingying fangjia le
 PNYingying on holiday CRS
 Yes, she is.

This exchange begins with A seeking information about Yingying’s summer holiday (line 01). B’s utterance in the following turn is about Yingying being not as annoying as another nephew (line 02), which does not, at least not directly, attend to A’s question. The interruption comes before A has uttered what the *topic* of Yingying is about.

A’s question is met with a non-answer response (Stivers & Robinson, 2006) at the first attempt due to B’s overlapping speech, let alone offering any sign of an uptake. B may not have got what has actually been said about Yingying, so she adds a mild question

marker 啊 (*a*, ‘excuse me’) with rising tone (line 02), indicating that she may not hear clearly what is being overlapped (see particle *a* as a mildness marker in question or request in C. Li & Thompson, 1989; Wiedenhof, 2015). For this reason, A has to redo the question (line 03) and ultimately successfully elicits a response from B (line 04). That being said, B’s non-answering in line 02 impedes the progress of the question-answer pair as repair was initiated. The two pre-conditions of a smooth conversation – completion of utterances and no immediate need for an information check – set the foundation for a three-level information flow scheme which I will illustrate in the following section.

4.1.2 Information flow scheme in this study

The two prerequisites for a smooth conversational flow – completion of a prior turn and no immediate understanding or hearing check – are set to make sure the ongoing flow of speaking is smooth without interactional difficulties despite an interruption in place. This is key to defining a positive effect of an interruption on information flow: boosting information flow. The other two effects – maintaining and hindering information flow – are discussed below. Boosting, maintaining, and hindering forms the three-level information flow scheme, as an indicator of intrusiveness, used in this study.

- **Level 1 Boosting:** The flow of information is enhanced when the first speaker (interruptee) has successfully produced their intended utterances with no immediate understanding or hearing check and is responded to by the second speaker (interrupter).
- **Level 2 Maintaining:** The flow of information remains unchanged when the first speaker (interruptee) has successfully produced their intended utterance with no immediate understanding or hearing check and is responded to neutrally by the second speaker (interrupter), for instance, producing acknowledgement tokens or repeating prior utterances in the interruptee’s topic agenda.
- **Level 3 Hindering:** The flow of information is disrupted when the first speaker (interruptee) fails to produce the intended utterance or an immediate hearing or understanding check is occasioned because of the second speaker’s (interrupter) interruption.

There is one caveat regarding the information flow scheme. The precondition of a smooth flow of conversation, viz., completion of turn and no initiation of repair, takes

a sequential perspective of progression from some element to hearable next ones. However, whether or not an interrupter responds to a prior utterance hinges on topic relevance⁹, that is if an interrupter stays on the same topic as discussed by the prior speaker. The sequential perspective pays the way for consideration of topical coherence in determining an effect of an interruption turn on information flow. In the following section I will illustrate each level (boosting, maintaining, and hindering) with examples across the two corpora.

4.1.2.1 Boosting information flow

Interruption utterances boost the first speaker's ongoing information flow when the interrupter stays on and elaborates on the topic. The prerequisite is that the prior speaker (interruptee) completes his/her turn with no immediate repair from both sides. The interruption utterances in Example (11) *Kyoto University* and Example (12) *sentimental* boost the first speaker's information flow by elaborating on the topic and asking a further question, respectively.

(11) callhome_0695 Kyoto University (A and B are relatives, talking about the study plan of B's son.)

01	B	他	想	复习,	复习	功课
		Ta	xiang	fuxi,	fuxi	gongke
		He	want	review,	review	lesson
		He wants to review lessons and				
02		>继续<	考,	明年	想	考 ↓ <京都 大【学】>
		>jixu<	kao,	mingnian	xiang	kao <jingdu da[xue]>
		>go on<	test,	next year	want	take exam <Kyoto University >

⁹ I will not go into lengthy and unnecessary details about how *topic* is viewed differently between a CA approach and a discourse analytic approach. The general view is that in linguistics topic is seen as a product, adopted by form- and content-based approaches (G. Brown & Yule, 1983; Van Dijk, 1977), whereas in CA topic is seen as a process, adopted by a sequential organisation approach (Schegloff, 2007; Svennevig, 1999). A key distinctive feature between a CA approach to topic and a discourse analytic approach to topic is that the former focuses on topical actions (e.g., topic initiation, topic transition, and topic closure) and the latter focuses on delineating the content of topics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018)Y. Yang, 2019). Here in this study, I use *staying on the topic* as one of the criteria for distinguishing IF-boosting from IF-hindering. *Staying on the topic* is generally seen as the status where two speakers (interrupter and interruptee) are discussing the same thing, particularly, the interrupter is following up on what the interruptee has been speaking.

Continue to apply for other universities. He wants to apply to Kyoto University next year.

03 → A:

【京都】大学 是 好 学校

[jingdu] daxue shi hao xuexiao
Kyoto University be good school
Kyoto University is a top university.

The two speakers are commenting on the good reputation of Kyoto University. B initiates the topic, saying that her son is going to apply for Kyoto University (lines 01-2). Noticeably, the unit 京都大学 (*jingdu daxue* ‘Kyoto University’) in line 02 displays a marked falling intonation and is uttered at a much slower pace compared with the surrounding utterances. This falling intonation contour in line 02 may project an impending completion of the syntactical unit (Clayman, 2013b). That is, B is foregrounding this piece of information and waiting for A’s comments on that. As expected, in line 03 A praises Kyoto University as a prestigious institution. Despite a brief overlap (学 in line 02 and 京都 in line 03), B has completed her turn in line 01, so has A. A’s insertion also stays on the same topic as discussed in the prior turn, viz., application for Kyoto University, therefore, A’s interruption utterance in line 02 counts as IF-boosting.

(12) jxx_2010406 sentimental

01 Jin 从此 师徒 两人 割袍断义=
Congci shitu liangren Gepaoduanyi
hence master-disciple two persons break off connections
They’ve broken off all connections ever since

02 → Shen =听着 有点 伤感
Tingzhe youdian shanggan
Listening a bit sad
It is quite sad.
那 他 后来 发展的 怎么样
Na ta houlai fazhande zenmeyang
Then he later develop how
Well, how has he been doing?

03 Jin 后来 发展的 很好
Hulai fazhande Henhao
Later develop very good

He's been doing very well.

Here, Jin is telling the audience that a famous martial art performer broke off all connections with his master. Shen interrupts to first show his sympathy with the performer's misfortune (line 02); then he asks how the performer is doing afterwards (line 03). The interruption utterances are made up of two turns: the first turn responds to Jin's immediately prior telling and the second one asks a relevant further question. Jin responds to the question in the following turn. In this case, despite of Shen's insertion, Jin has completed the progression to hearable next one without any kind of repair. Shen, more than just staying on the topic that Jin has initiated, also expands on it by asking a relevant question. Therefore, the interruption in line 02 functions to facilitate the prior speaker's information flow.

4.1.2.2 Maintaining information flow

A speaker's information flow will be maintained when an interrupter produces backchannel responses or simply repeats a part or the whole of the prior utterance. The interrupter does not influence the flow of information initiated by the first speaker. Instead, in producing backchannel responses, s/he aligns with the ongoing speaking activity: that is, speaking is in progress and the speaker has the turn until completion (see Stivers, 2008). Regarding repetition of the first speaker's utterances, the interrupter selects the prior utterance as an uptake, without proactive commenting or discouraging the other speaker's speaking.

To illustrate this typical type of IF-maintaining (information flow-maintaining) – backchannel responses – consider once again the previous Example (10) *expenditure*. B's backchannels 嗯 (*en*, 'yes') (lines 02-3) are inserted in the course of A's extended telling about funding and expenditure. A manages to complete his utterance without initiating any repair. B's insertion demonstrates her listenership without claiming the turn (see Goodwin, 1986; Lee, 2021; Schegloff, 1982; Stivers, 2008).

Another type of IF-maintaining that is prevalent in everyday conversation is resonance (Du Bois, 2014; Du Bois & Giora, 2014; Tantucci, Culpeper, & Di Cristofaro, 2018; Tantucci & Wang, 2021a, 2021b, 2022) as interruption. That is, the interrupter selectively reproduces a part or the whole of the prior speaker's utterance in response to the prior speaker. This kind of reiteration does not add propositional contents to the ongoing information flow, but it maintains the flow to its original "course" as well as demonstrates the speaker's "interactional engagement and creativity" (Tantucci & Wang,

[Sometimes], I mainly BE say=

[Sometimes], it is just that=

05 A: =嗯 .
=en
=mhm
=Yeah

06 B: 它就是说 呢,我我 如果 改学 数学, 不合算, 不合适 .
Ta jiushishuo ne, wo wo ruguo gaixue shuxue, buhesuan, buheshi
it that's to say, RLV, I I if change to learn maths, not cost-effective, not suitable
That is, it is not suitable or cost-effective for me to change my program to maths.

This exchange begins with A's comments on B's sourcing PhD funding. A thinks that it is not realistic to source PhD tuition fees by relying on borrowing money from others (lines 01-2). A is responded to with a backchannel token 嗯 (*en*, 'yeah') (line 03). A continues adding that applying for funding is also next to impossible and he is about to explain why he thinks so (line 04). A's utterance is aborted as B cuts in. A has not finished his intended utterance in line 04, leaving his information flow disrupted. B takes the floor and inserts his utterance. To illustrate the second type of IF-hindering – understanding or hearing check – consider the previous Example (2) *summer holiday* below where the interrupted speaker (A) finishes his turn yet he has to repeated his prior utterance due to the overlapping speech occasioned by B's interruption.

(2) callhome_0786, *summer holiday* (A is brother and B is sister. Yingying is their niece. A and B are talking about Yingying's summer holiday.)

01 → A: 呃, 英英 现在 【放假: 了?】
E Yingying xianzai [fangjia: le]
E PNYingying now on holiday CRS

Huh, is Yingying on summer holiday now?

02 → B: 【(.) 英英 没】他吵, ↑啊?
[(.) yingying mei] ta chao a
PNYingying no he annoying EC
[(.) Yingying is less annoying, excuse me?]

03 → A: 英英 放假 了?
Yingying fangjia le?
PNYingying on holiday CRS

Is Yingying on summer holiday now?

04 B: 英英 放假 了
Yingying fangjia le

Yes, she is.

In line 01, A first asks a question. But it is not answered and is overlapped by B's inserted utterance. B at the end of her insertion initiates a self-repair signalling that she did not hear clearly what A has said (line 02). In response to the hearing check, A repeats himself (line 03). A's information flow is suspended due to the inserted utterance.

The third type of IF-hindering is peculiar to the Jin Xing Show corpus. It happens when the assistant challenges or opposes Jin's choice of a certain topic theme following the host's introductory speech. It normally entails a suspension of the topic in discussion. Example (15) illustrates how Shen questions the suitability of talking about *break-ups* on the show.

(15) jxx_20160217 break-ups

01 Jin: 情人节 刚 过 完
 Qingrenjie gang guo wan
 Valentines 'day just PF over
 We just celebrated Valentine's Day (three days ago)

02 咱们 正好 聊一聊 失恋=
 Zanmen zhenghao liaoyiliao shilian=
 We just-in-time chat break-up
 It is the best time to talk about breaking up.

03 → Shen: =等会儿, 姐
 =denghuier jie
 Wait Jie

Hang on, Jie

04 你 这 思维 太 跳跃 了吧
 Ni zhe shiwei tai tiaoyue le ba
 You this logic very jump PF BA

It makes no sense to me.

05 这 情人节 刚 过
 Zhe qingrenjie gang guo
 This valentine's day just over

We just celebrated Valentine's Day (three days ago)

06 你 跟 大伙儿 聊 失恋
 Ni gen dahuoer liao shilian
 You and we chat break-ups

Now you want to talk about break-ups with us

- 07 合适 吗
Heshi ma
Suitable Q
Is it suitable? (Are you crazy?)
- 08 Jin: 这 有 什么， 没错啊
Zhe you shenme, meicuo a
This have what, no wrong
What is wrong with this?
- 09 现代 人 的 爱情， 保鲜度 都 比较 差
Xinadai ren de aiqing, baoxiandu dou bijiao cha
Modern people SUB love, fresh degree all relatively bad
People are not good at maintaining a long-term relationship nowadays.
- 10 学会 好好 分手
Xuehui haohao fenshou
Learn well break-up
Learning how to deal with break-up,
- 11 可能 比 学会 怎么 谈恋爱 更 重要
Keneng bi xuehui zenme tanlianai geng zhongyao
Possibly cf. learn how develop relationship more important
may be more important than how to develop a relationship.

In the first two lines, Jin briefly introduces the topic: breakup. Shen jumps in to express his concern that the topic comes at an inopportune time as Valentine's Day had just been celebrated a few days before (lines 03-7). Instead of starting the first storytelling as she normally does after the introductory briefing, Jin responds to Shen's question by defending her choice of the topic (lines 08-11). In this case, Jin's progression to hearable next is disrupted as she suspends her intended speaking. Therefore, Shen's interruption counts as disrupts the ongoing information flow.

To conclude, information flow concerns the sequential progression from some element to hearable nexts and topic contiguity between turns. At the turn level, a smooth progression is manifest in the completion of a prior turn; at the sequence level, a smooth progression entails no initiation of repair. The smooth progression of information and topic continuity jointly determine the three-level information flow scheme: a smooth flow and active responding to topic (boosting), a smooth flow and with no contribution to topic develop (maintaining), or a disrupted flow of information (hindering). Next, in Section

4.2, I will elaborate on the other indicator of intrusiveness, viz., the interrupter's affiliation towards the recipient's stance.

4.2 Measuring intrusiveness: Affiliation orientation

In conversation, a speaker may cut into the ongoing speaking, proposing a *candidate understanding* of what the prior speaker has intended (Heritage, 1984), or offering to help the prior speaker to articulate their thoughts (Antaki, 2012). A speaker may interrupt to produce utterances that do not affectively align with the prior speaker (Butler et al., 2011; Rendle-Short, 2007). In all cases above, a speaker is registering their stance, whether affiliative or disaffiliative, in relation to that of the prior speaker. The display of stance towards co-participant in interaction is termed *affiliation orientation* in this study. In what follows, I will first give a brief overview of previous research on affiliation in CA. Then I will elaborate on the three-level affiliation orientation scheme with examples across the two corpora.

4.2.1 A survey of affiliation in conversation

In CA research, affiliation is interconnected with progressivity. In many CA studies, affiliation is used more or less synonymously with terms like 'alignment' and phrasal terms like 'advancing the progressivity'. For instance, Antaki (2012) argues that in some cases, a listener's candidate understanding (i.e., helping a co-participant to articulate a name that they are struggling to remember) is only a temporary and benign interruption to the progressivity of the co-participant's speaking, therefore affiliative; whereas some candidate understanding is a serious disruption of the progressivity, and hence disaffiliative. In so doing, the obstruction of progressivity is arguably treated as synonymous with speaker's display of stance-taking. Quite different from Antaki's (2012) approach, Stivers distinguishes progressivity from affiliation, maintaining that "the concepts of structural alignment and social affiliation are separate interactional issues" (Stivers, 2008, p. 31). Structural alignment concerns whether a story recipient supports the structural asymmetry in the telling-in-progress: the speaker has the right to hold the turn floor until completion. In contrast, *affiliation* refers to the story recipient's stance-taking towards the story teller's. Stivers (2008) warns that aligned utterances are not necessarily affiliative. For instance, the teller may treat the recipient's assessment in mid-telling as disaligning with the telling in-progress by treating the telling as complete when it was not.

Other researchers hold back from examining the intricate relationship between structural alignment and speaker's stance-taking, but focus exclusively on affiliation, and particularly, on the environment in which affiliative or disaffiliative actions occur. For instance, Butler (2011) explored how address terms are used to preface a stance that does not fit the affective stance of a client in a counselling interaction. Steensig and Drew (2008) edited a special issue of *Discourse Studies* exploring how questions can be employed to signal speakers' disaffiliation in interaction, for instance, to get information on record (Steensig & Larsen, 2008; Stokoe & Edwards, 2008), to make further disaffiliative moves (Halonen & Sorjonen, 2008), or to simply challenge the message or stance of a co-participant (Steensig & Drew, 2008). In family interaction in Chinese, disaffiliation and discord may be manifest through the use of the turn-initial exclamatory particle *aiya*, the turn-ending double particles *le ma*, *le ya*, or repair initiation (Yu, Wu, & Drew, 2019). In this study, affiliation and alignment (information flow) are differentiated and examined as different aspects of interruption. Alignment concerns sequential continuation of conversation; whereas affiliation concerns stance-taking embedded in interruption utterances.

4.2.2 Affiliation orientation scheme in this study

In this study, affiliation orientation refers to an interrupter's stance or stance-taking in relation to a co-participant (i.e., interruptee). Stance is the core term in this definition. Du Bois defines stance as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163). In this study, taking an interactive point of view, both stance and stance-taking are regarded as an intersubjective act¹⁰ in which interactants position themselves in relation to each other. Stance or stance-taking is understood as a dynamic, dialogical, social act whereby interactants collaboratively construct their evaluations, position their opinion, and align theirs with co-interactants (Haddington, 2004). This is best illustrated in the Stance Triangle formulated by Du Bois (2007), as shown in **Figure 4.1**.

¹⁰ In traditional discourse-functional point of view, stance and stance-taking are different. Stance is regarded as showing attitudes, and therefore, subjective; stance-taking is regarded displaying attitudes in relation to others', therefore, intersubjective.

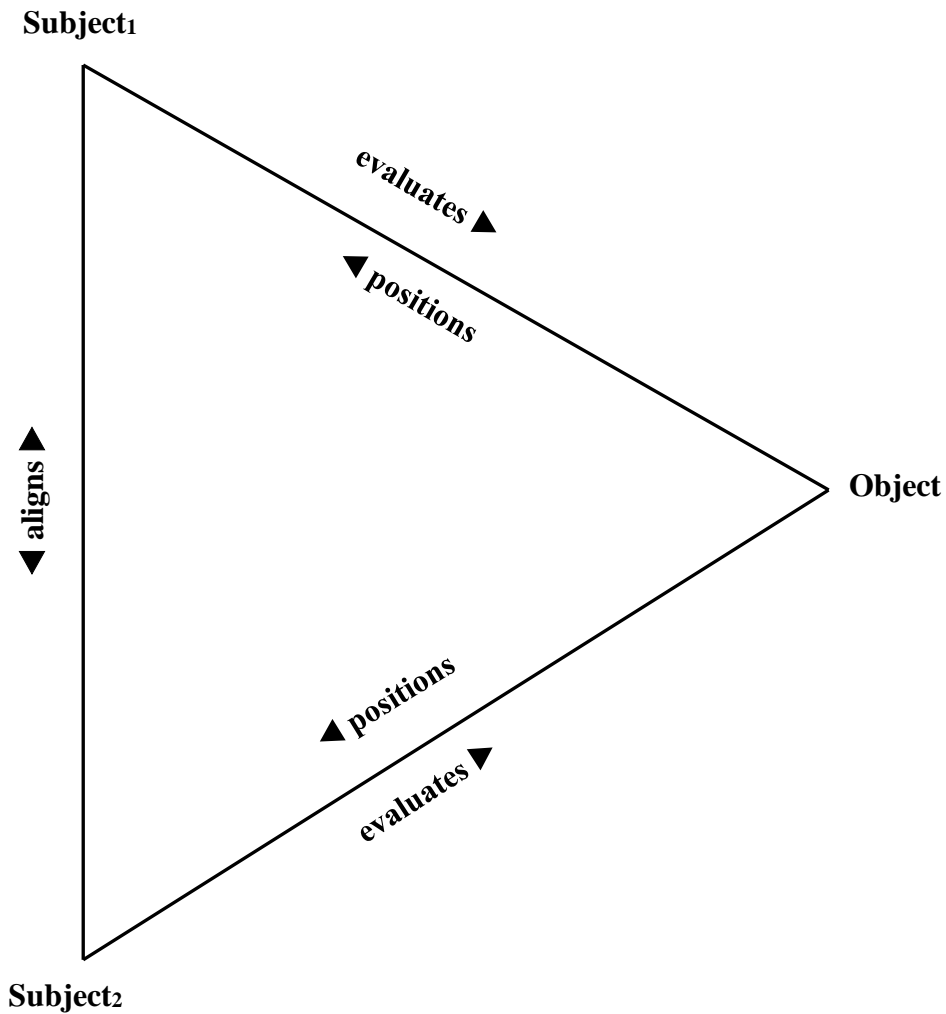


Figure 4.1: The Stance Triangle (Du Bois, 2007)

As **Figure 4.1** shows, Subject₁ introduces and evaluates a Stance Object. In so doing, Subject₁ takes a stance. Then Subject₂ evaluates the same Stance Object, position themselves in relation to the object, and thereby aligns with Subject₁. Note that *align* in the Stance Triangle does not mean *agree* or *affiliate*, but the act of calibrating the relationship between the two interactants. In the case of interruption, Subject₁ is normally the interruptee, and Subject₂ is the interrupter. The stance or stance-taking diagram in interruption is illustrated below in **Figure 4.2**.

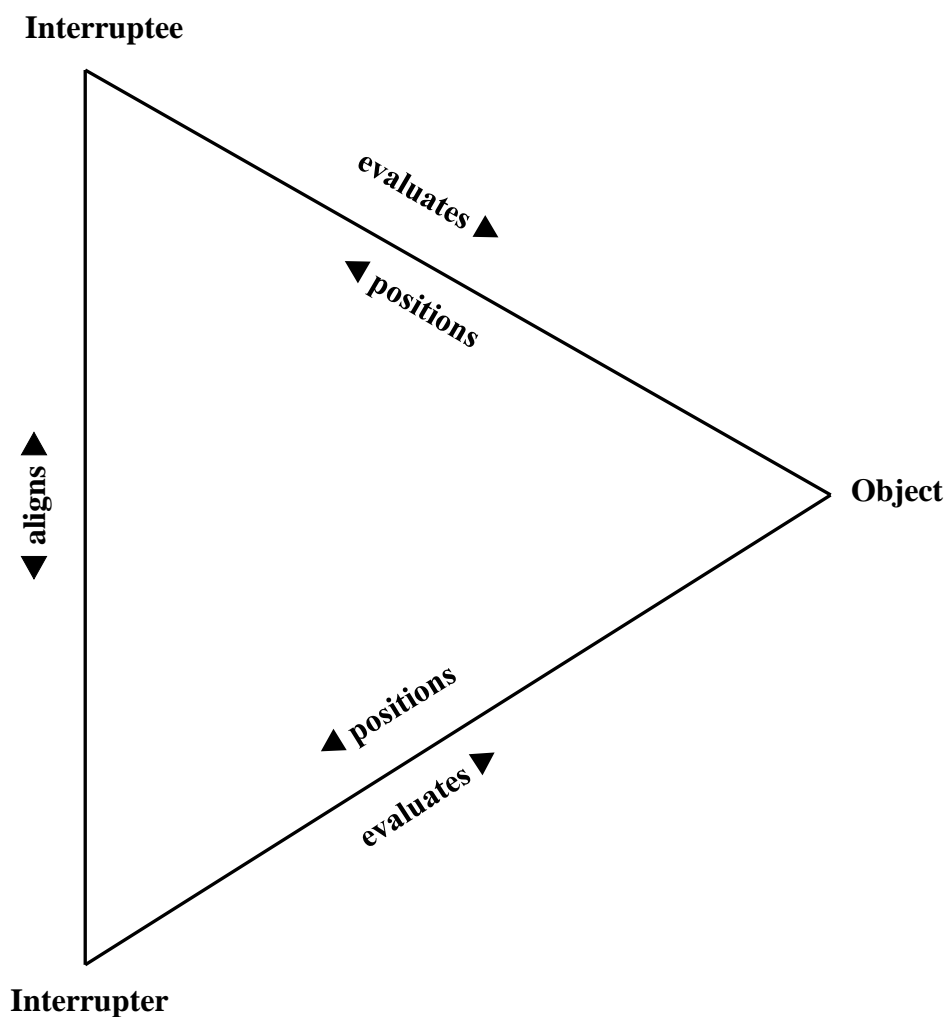


Figure 4.2: The stance triangle of interruption

As shown in **Figure 4.2**, an interruptee evaluates an object by producing an utterance. In so doing, s/he takes a stance. An interrupter also evaluates the same object and therefore aligns with the interruptee. Speakers may position themselves along an affective scale or an epistemic scale (Du Bois, 2007). That is, an interrupter when uttering their response to prior utterances may position their evaluations, epistemic or affective, in relation to that of the interruptee. An interrupter may or may not converge stance or stance-making with that of the interruptee, epistemically or affectively.

Affiliation orientation examines the status of alignment in stance-taking. Three kinds of stance alignment have emerged from the two corpora in this study: affiliative, neutral, and disaffiliative orientation. **Table 4.1** below summarises the three types. In affiliative orientation, an interrupter endorses the stance of the interruptee, thereby the stances of both speakers converge. Common interactional contexts for affiliative orientation may include fleshing out supporting details, asking information-seeking

questions to boost the progressivity, expressing sympathy or agreement, etc. In disaffiliative orientation, an interrupter conspicuously disaligns their stance with that of the interruptee. Affectively, disaffiliative orientation occurs when an interrupter displays apathy, teasing, or other affective disalignment with the interruptee. Epistemically, disaffiliative orientation occurs when an interrupter disagrees with the interruptee, questions the interruptee's stance, or shifts the ongoing topic. Both affiliative and disaffiliative orientations display salient and detectable stance-taking. Apart from this salient stance-marking actions, what emerges from the two corpora is a neutral status whereby an interrupter does not register conspicuous (dis)affiliation towards the interruptee. A recurring example for neutral orientation is backchannel responses. Backchannel responses are primarily used to signal listenership and knowledge that the other speaker is holding the turn and owning the speakership (Clayman, 2010, 2012; Stivers, 2008).

Table 4.1: *Affiliation orientation towards the interruption recipient's utterance*

Affiliative	
(Level 1)	<i>An interrupter endorses the stance of an interruptee.</i>
	Adding details
	Asking information-seeking questions that promotes the information flow
	Repeating prior utterances
	Expressing affiliative opinion, feelings, suggestions, etc
Neutral	
(Level 2)	<i>An interrupter does not register conspicuous stance towards an interruptee.</i>
	Backchannelling
	Aborted short-sized utterances constituted by two to three words whose propositional meaning is far from clear
Disaffiliative	
(Level 3)	<i>An interrupter disaligns with the stance of an interruptee.</i>
	Disaffiliative topic change
	Disaffiliative opinions, feelings, suggestions, etc

Different from information flow which focuses on the sequential aspect of intrusiveness, affiliation orientation concerns a functional aspect of interruption speech. This is because alignment through stance-taking is gradient. Disaffiliative interruptions incorporates both salient acts such as disagreement, teasing, and antipathy and less salient acts such as ignoring, or challenging the felicity of the topic that is proposed. The decisive element of affiliation is whether the interrupter prioritises the other speaker's needs over

their own, or in other words, whether the interruption is rhetorically advantageous to the interruptee. **Table 4.1** above lists some typical environments in which affiliative, disaffiliative, and neutral orientation can be realised in doing interrupting. Note that this is not intended to be exhaustive, but merely illustrative. In what follows, I will illustrate the three levels of affiliation with examples from the Callhome and the Jin Xing Show corpus.

4.2.2.1 Affiliative orientation

In affiliative interruptions interrupters show their agreement, support, and solidarity. Five types of affiliative orientation are identified across the two corpora: agreeing with the recipient, asking further questions, showing sympathy, elaborating on the topic-in-progress by supplementing details, and providing a word that the other speaker is searching for. I will focus on three types which occur most frequently in the two corpora: Example (16) concerns the elaboration of the topic in discussion, Example (17) displays affiliative information-seeking, and Example (18) shows the interrupter's sympathy towards the teller's misfortune. In all three extracts, interrupters display their endorsement or support of the stances or messages that have just been conveyed by the interruptees.

(16) jxx_20160914 crowded train (Shen's interruption features supplementing details)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|------------|--------|-------------|
| 01 | Jin: | 当时 | 还是 | 返乡 | 高峰 | | | |
| | | Dangshi | haishi | fanxiang | gaofeng | | | |
| | | At that time | still | return home | peak | | | |
| | | It was the peak of Spring Rush during the New Year | | | | | | |
| 02 | | 整个 | 车厢里 | 挤得 | 满满当当的 | | | |
| | | Zhengge | chexiangli | jide | manmandangdangde | | | |
| | | Whole | carriage | packed | extremely full | | | |
| | | Every carriage in the train was so crowded. | | | | | | |
| 03 | | 除了 | 送餐车 | 能 | 过去 | 人都 | 没法 | 走了= |
| | | Chule | songcanche | neng | guoqu | ren | dou | meifa zoule |
| | | Except | food trolley | can | go through | people all | no way | walk |
| | | No one could move freely except the food delivery cart. | | | | | | |
| 04 | → Shen: | =啤酒 | 饮料 | 矿泉水 | | | | |
| | | Pijiu | yinliao | kuangquanshui | | | | |
| | | Beer | beverage | mineral water | | | | |
| 05 | | Hey, beer, beverage, mineral water, | | | | | | |

	白酒	瓜子	花生米	
	Baijiu	guazi	huashengmi	
	Wine	sunflower seed	peanut	
	Wine, sunflower seed, peanut,			
06	来	腿	收一收	收一收
	Lai	tui	shouyishou	shouyishou
	Come	leg	put away	put away

Hey, please kindly make room for me

((Audience laughing))

((Jin Xing laughs along with the audience and then continues her telling))

Here, Jin is recounting her husband's unlucky train journey during the Spring Festival travel rush¹¹. Shen affiliatively responds to this message by elaborating on the scene in discussion – mimicking the common practice of a train conductor squeezing through the crowd while peddling goods. In the first three lines, Jin is providing the orientation of the story – the *where*, *when* and *what* (Thornborrow, 2014) – which sets the crowded scene for the development of the upcoming story. Seizing the right timing, Shen inserts an utterance illustrated with gestures and body movements acting out what a crowded train is like during the travel season – mimicking the common practice of a train conductor squeezing through the crowd while peddling goods (lines 04-6). Thus, Shen displays second position epistemic access (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) to the topic in discussion, viz., the scene of a crowded train during peak time, which aligns with Jin's first position narrative. In so doing, Shen affectively aligns his epistemic stance towards the message in discussion with Jin. The preferred response to storytelling in conversation is to show alignment with the teller (Jefferson, 1978; Stivers, 2008). The mimicking of the crowded train helps the audience to relate more to Jin's storytelling. Jin also shows her acceptance of this interruption by laughing with the audience. In so doing, Shen demonstrates his affiliative orientation in this elaborate utterance.

(17) jxx_20160217, Griffiths (Shen's interruption features seeking information)

01	Jin:	可是	格里菲斯	虽然	分手	很	委婉,
		Keshi	Griffiths	suiran	fenshou	hen	weiwan
		Griffiths broke up with me very tactfully,					
		但是	态度	还是	很	坚决	的=

¹¹ The Spring Festival travel rush is a period of travel in China with extremely high traffic load. It begins 15 days before the Spring Festival and lasts for 40 days. People may travel hundreds of miles back to their hometowns for family reunions.

Danshi taidu haishi hen jianjue de
His attitude is firm, though.

02→ Shen: = 姐, 那 你 后来 再 见过他 吗
Jie, na ni houlai zai jianguo ma
Sister then you then again saw himMA

Jie, have you seen him since then?

03 Jin: 见过
Jianguo
Have seen him
Yup
半年后 我 还 回到 德克萨斯 去找 格里菲斯
Banianhou wo hai huidao dekesasi quzhao gelifeisi
Half a year later I still go back Texas go find Griffiths
Six months later I went back to Texas to find him.

((Jin continues recounting how she met Griffiths after the breakup))

In this extract, Jin is recollecting her break-up with her ex-boyfriend Griffiths. Shen's utterance is inserted into Jin's extended telling, asking if Jin had ever met Griffiths again since the break-up. Shen's information-seeking question (J. D. Robinson, 2020), grounded on Jin's recollection of her past relationship, attempts to advance the storytelling. This is evidenced in the "next turn proof procedure" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 13; Sacks et al., 1974, p. 635) – in the next turn Jin answers the question immediately and continues her recounting of another episode of the story in which she tried to win Griffiths back. In other words, Jin's uptake following Shen's question shows that Jin views Shen's question as an "innocent" information-eliciting act which is considered a core function of asking questions and a preferred response from a listener in storytelling.

However, researchers warn that asking a question is not simply as innocent a thing as it seems (Steensig & Drew, 2008). Negatively polarised questions (NPQs) – negatively framed rogatives, declaratives, and other items – are associated with the questioner's stance that the state of affairs underlying the question is unlikely to be the case (Heritage & Raymond, 2021). Questions may also be used as preliminaries before making further disaffiliative moves (Heinemann, 2008) or conciliatory actions (Halonen & Sorjonen, 2008), or to get information on record (e.g., police interrogation, see Stokoe & Edwards, 2008). As elaborated in Chapter 2 on the methodology of this study, speakers in the sequentially next turn exhibit their understanding of what the prior turn is about (Hutchby,

2019; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). Therefore, in this study information-seeking questions will be assessed as genuine ones by looking at the subsequent turn. To this end, I will examine the sequential context of the speakers' question-answer pairs: Shen's question, Jin's uptake of the question, and Shen's response to Jin's uptake. The sequential context is illustrated as follows:

- 1 Shen: (Asking an information-seeking question)
- 2 Jin: (Responding to the question)
- 3 Shen: (Responding to Jin's answer)

Interruptions in the above two examples (16-7) show that the interrupter prioritises the interruptee's needs, supplementing details for the interruptee, and asking relevant questions relating to the topic in discussion. The interrupter may also do affiliative interruption by showing their sympathy and generosity.

(18) callhome_0695 my father

- 01 B: 都 蛮好, 我们 就是 我 父亲 去世 了 啦.=
 Dou manhao women jiu shi wo fuqin qushi le la
 All very good, we just be my father pass way CRS EC
 We are fine. It is just my father passed away.
- 02 A: =呃 .
 er
 EC
 Well
- 03 B: 我 也 心里 【蛮 难过 的 耶】.
 Wo ye xinli man nanguo de ye
 I also inside quite grieved SUB EC
 I am so grieving his death.
- 04 → A: 【我, 对, 我】, 我 看, 我, 我, 我, 看到 你, 这么 写, 我就-
 Wo dui wo wo kan wo wo wo kandao ni zheme xie, wo jiu-
 I yes I I see I I I see you, so write I then-
Yes, definitely, when I saw your last letter, I could feel that pain
- 05 B: 呃, 我 很 伤感 的 【啦】.
 E, wo hen shanghan de la
 Alas I very sad SUB EC
 I was so sad.
- 06 → A: 【哎】, 是 【啊】.
 Ai, shi a

Yeah yes EC

I am aware of that, you surely are.

Here A is sympathising with B's telling of her father's end of life. B says that she is grieving so deeply for her father's death (line 01 and line 03). Note that the overlap in lines 03-4 comes before B has actually uttered the propositional part of her turn: 我心里【蛮难过的耶】 (*wo xinli [man nanguo de ye]* 'I am so grieving his death'). It demonstrates that A is pre-emptively trying to comfort and show his sympathy with B on learning about her loss of her father, so keenly that this comfort comes in the *middle timing* of B's utterance (see Chapter 4.3 on interruption timing). A affectively aligns with B by showing his epistemic access to her loss and his sympathy. Despite the overlapping speech, B completes her current utterance and continues her expression of her feelings in the next turn (line 05). Once again, A comforts her by acknowledging, sympathetic with and understanding of what the recipient has been through. In so doing, A exhibits his affiliative orientation towards A's telling in his interruptions.

4.2.2.2 Disaffiliative orientation

A disaffiliative attitude occurs when an interrupter shows a dispreferred response towards the interruption recipient. This dispreference can range from changing the topic, ignoring the speaker's utterance or showing apathy, to expressing differing opinions and teasing. I will mainly focus on elaborating the two most frequent cases: topic change and teasing.

(19) callhome_0742, she (She is a common friend of A and B)

- 01 A: 对, 她 现在 也 挺忙 的, 就是说
 Dui, ta xianzai ye tingmang de, 'jiushishuo'
 Yes, she now also very busy DE, that is to say
 Yes, she is quite busy now. 'So to speak'.
- 02 A: 现【在-】
 'Xianzai-'
 Now
 [' Now ']
- 03 → B: ↑【她】好 吗?
 ↑[Ta] hao ma
 ↑She all right Q
 [Is ↑she] alright?
- 04 A: 她 还好 啊, 还好.

- Ta haihao a, haihao
 She all right EC, all right
 She's okay, she is okay.
- 05 (1s)
- 06 A: 不 就【是-】
 Bu jiu[shi-]
 No that is
 It is only-
- 07 → B: 【你们】 经常 能 见面 是 吗？
 [nimen] jingchang neng jianmian shi ma?
 You often can meet yes Q?
Do you often see each other?
- 08 A: 其实 没有 啊， 我们 很- 见面 很少， 很少。
 qishi meiyou, a women hen- jianmian henshao henshao
 actually no EC, we very meet very little very little
 Nah, not really, we rarely meet.

Here the two speakers are talking about a friend in common. A is updating B on their mutual friend, saying that she has been busy lately (line 01) and A is about to add one thing about the friend. A aborts his utterance (line 02) before producing any proposition about the topic 现在, *xianzai*, 'now' when B jumps in with a question (line 03). A drops his turn to respond to B's question, without reinstating what he was going to say. There is a one second pause after A's response (line 05). It seems that both speakers seem to be waiting for the other to take the turn floor. A breaks the silence but he does not finish his topic as shortly B jumps in. Once again, A yields his turn floor and attends to B's question. In this short extract, A is interrupted twice by slightly different topics and each time does not resume his interrupted turns. On the other hand, B seems to show the image of constantly disrupting and not attending to A's answers to her questions. Thus, B displays a disaffiliative stance in this exchange.

(20) jxx_20160914 rules for children

- 01 Jin: 所以 说 孩子 的 规矩 从小 就得 立，
 Suoyi shuo haizi de guiju cong xiao jiude li
 So say children SUB rule from young have set up
 So to speak, (you should) set up rules for the kids to obey when they are young
- 02 在 我们 家 我 算 规矩 多 的 了 吧=
 Zai women jia, wo suan gui ju duo de le ba
 At we home I count rule many SUB CRS SUG

- I set up many rules for my kids to obey at home,
- 03→ Shen: =说白了 就 你 事 多 呗
 Shuobaile jiu ni shi duo bei
 Bluntly only you trouble many EVP
Honestly, you are finding fault with kids out of sheer boredom.
- 04 ((Audience laughing))
- 05 Jin: 小南 这 叫 没 规矩 不成 方圆
 Xiaonan zhe jiao mei guiju bucheng fangyuan
 Xiaonan this call no rule no square or round
 Xiaonan, you know this is called “nothing can be accompanied without norms or standards”.

Prior this extract, Jin has been telling how her five-year old daughter was praised in a summer camp for voluntarily cleaning up her dishes after meal when the other classmates showed no sign of taking care of their own dishes. Based on this, Jin concludes that setting rules for kids to follow at home is crucially important (lines 01-2). Interestingly, Shen does not affiliate with Jin, but instead teases her for being fault-finding and setting unnecessary rules (line 03). Shen’s interjection triggers laughter from the audience immediately (line 04). Jin does not laugh along with the audience but defends herself by reiterating the necessity of setting norms (line 05).

Apart from topic-changing and teasing, an interrupter may also show disaffiliation in other ways channels, such as strong disagreement or absence of sympathy.

4.2.2.3 Neutral orientation

Neutral orientation occurs when the speaker exhibits no salient stance-taking (epistemic or affective) towards the other speaker. Two main cases underpin neutral interruptions: stand-alone backchannel responses and aborted short-sized turns. The core function of backchannels is to convey listenership without occupying the turn floor (J. W. Lee, 2021; Stivers, 2008). These backchannels indicate a short listener’s response to the speaker/teller that the speaking is being attended to and that the speaker has the floor until completion. But the listener does not express endorsement or disaffiliation towards the prior speaker, that is, no specific stance being conveyed in the ongoing speaking. Backchannel instances have been discussed previously in relation to information flow. For instance, in previous Example (2) *summer holiday* B produces two turns of minimal tokens 嗯 (*en*, ‘hmm’) during A’s storytelling (line 02 and line 05-3). Similar examples

appointment so she has to just wait for the next available time slot (lines 01-2). B affiliates with A, comforting her that one more month of waiting is fine as she is only one-month pregnant (line 03). At the same time, A is trying to utter something in the midst of B's speaking but fails to complete it (line 04). A only produces a two-character utterance before aborting it, largely due to B still talking. In a word, A gives up her insertion shortly, leaving her utterance incomplete and unable to register her affiliation status. This kind of unidentifiable case is also considered as a type of neutral orientation in this study.

4.2.3 Intrusiveness level

In this study, the notion of intrusiveness concerns the structural and relational aspects of doing interrupting in interaction. As overviewed in the previous literature, the sequential/structural alignment of a speaker's utterance is interconnected with a speaker's affiliation status. The two features regard different aspects of an interruption utterance. Information flow focuses on the formal aspect of speakers' utterances – how an interrupter's turns are sequentially aligned with or disjoined from the prior speaker's talk. Affiliation orientation focuses on the functional aspect – how a speaker interpersonally affiliates or disaffiliates with the messages and stance displayed in the prior speaker's talk. The intrusiveness of an interruption is thus measured both via sequential (formal) aspect and the interpersonal (functional) aspect of doing interrupting. Both the information flow and affiliation orientation of interruptions concur to measure the degree of intrusiveness of interruptions, as shown below in **Table 4.2**. IF consists of boosting (value 1), maintaining (value 2), and hindering (value 3); AF (affiliation orientation) consists of affiliative (value 1), neutral (value 2), and disaffiliative (value 3) orientation. The degree of intrusiveness of an interruption utterance can be measured as a continuous variable by adding up the values of information flow (IF) and affiliation orientation (AF). For example, a backchannel interruption is annotated as *maintaining* for IF and *neutral* for AF, so its intrusiveness value is 4 (2+2). Accordingly, the value of intrusiveness across the two corpora ranges from 2 to 6. The bigger the value, the higher the degree of intrusiveness, and hence the more intrusive the interruption. There are nine possible outcomes that can arise from these combinations of sub-categories of IF and AF, as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Degree of intrusiveness with nine combinations

	Information Flow	Value	Affiliation Orientation	Value	Intrusiveness Value
Combination 1	IF-boosting	1	AF-affiliative	1	2
Combination 2	IF-boosting	1	AF-neutral	2	3
Combination 3	IF-boosting	1	AF-disaffiliative	3	4
Combination 4	IF-maintaining	2	AF-affiliative	1	3
Combination 5	IF-maintaining	2	AF-neutral	2	4
Combination 6	IF-maintaining	2	AF-disaffiliative	3	5
Combination 7	IF-hindering	3	AF-affiliative	1	4
Combination 8	IF-hindering	3	AF-neutral	2	5
Combination 9	IF-hindering	3	AF-disaffiliative	3	6

In general, the higher the value, the more intrusive. Combination 1 (intrusiveness value 2) is the most cooperative which denotes that an interruption boosts the progressivity of another speaker's utterance and shows an affiliative stance. Contrarily, Combination 9 (intrusiveness value 6) as the most intrusive refers to an interruption that impedes the progressivity of another speaker's utterance and shows a disaffiliative stance. Combination 5 (intrusiveness value 4) stands in the middle of the intrusiveness continuum. An interruption of value 4 intrusiveness maintains the progressivity of another speaker's utterance and displays no identifiable stance.

4.3 Turn size

From this section, I will explicate the four dimensions that examine different aspects of doing interruption from an interactional point of view. The first dimension regards the length of an interruption utterance which I call turn size. Turns are the utterances that speakers produce when they occupy the conversational floor (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018). One striking feature of turns is that upon completion of a turn, the transition to a next speaker becomes relevant (Clayman, 2013b; Sacks et al., 1974). A speaker's turn can be composed of as small units as a backchannel 'hmm/uh huh', a short phrase as 'pretty good', a single clause, or 'long projects' such as stories (Ford, 2004). It is intuitively familiar that the smaller the chunk of an interruption turn, the less time needed to hold the turn. Researchers in CA have examined the construction of turns from both syntactic and phonological perspectives, as surveyed in the following subsection.

4.3.1 A survey of unit types

Researchers in CA have drawn on phonological concepts in transcribing everyday conversations, for example, breath groups (Couper-Kuhlen, 1986), intonation units (Chafe, 1994; Du Bois, 1991), informational phrases (Gumperz & Berenz, 1993), and intonation phrases (Reed, 2009; Truckenbrodt, 2005). All these units highlight prosodical or phonetic features instead of syntactic constructions. According to Reed (2009), an intonation phrase is "a spate of talk delivered as one recognisable overall pitch movement" (p. 351). This pitch movement consists of one pitch accent near the beginning and another more prominent pitch accent at the end; the whole phrase is followed by a pause. Gumperz and Berenz (1993) prefer *informational phrases* to intonation phrases, as they take a functional perspective on recognising the basic turn units in conversation. They specify an intonation phrase as a sequencing chunk that is rhythmically and prosodically defined and falls under a single intonational contour. This sequence chunk is bounded by a pause and/or a syntactic entity. Starting from an information flow perspective, Chafe (1987, 1994) proposed the notion of an *intonation unit*. He assumes that the human mind can only process and activate a certain amount of information at one time in talk-in-interaction. The piece of temporarily active information verbalised by a speaker is regarded as an intonation unit. It is "a sequence of words combined under a single, coherent intonation contour, usually preceded by a pause" (Chafe, 1987, p. 22).

Prototypically, an intonation unit features one or more intonation peaks and a cadence and is separated by pauses that last somewhere from a second to several seconds.

The abovementioned unit types (i.e., intonation unit, intonation phrase, and informational phrase) focus primarily on the intonational and prosodic features of speech utterances, particularly of a single unit turn. While they are insightful in uncovering phonological and distributional characteristics of conversational units, they are not designed to measure the size of a turn, nor do they capture the pragmatic and interactional nature of turn construction in conversation. The construction of a turn-in-progress can be influenced by the recipient uptake. For instance, when a speaker notices the ongoing speaking is frowned upon by another interlocutor, they may change the course of speaking. Another case for turns to be interactionally constructed is anticipatory completion, whereby a single turn is co-completed by two or more speakers (cf. Bolden et al., 2019; Jacoby & Ochs, 1995; Lerner, 1991, 1996).

4.3.2 Turn size in this study

In this study, the design of turn size draws upon the notion of turn-constructive units. In their ground-breaking paper, Sacks et al. (1974) explicated that turns are incrementally built out of *turn-constructive units* (TCUs), such as individual words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Each unit is potentially a self-contained utterance (Clayman, 2013b). One way of identifying TCUs is that each TCU established a transitional relevance place (TRP) where a change of speakership becomes possible. Turn size varies. After finishing ONE TCU, the speaker may or may yield the turn floor to another speaker. When a current speaker does offer the floor to another speaker (i.e., current-selects-next), only one TCU has been uttered, hence a single-unit turn (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018; Sacks et al., 1974). When a current speaker continues speaking (i.e., current-self-selects), more than one TCU has been uttered, hence a multi-unit turn (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018; Sacks et al., 1974).

Built on the fundamental notion of TCU, turn size is categorised by the number of units or TCUs with some modifications. A fuller version of the categorisation scheme is shown in **Table 4.3** below.

- Turns that are comprised of a single TCU or a combination of backchannel and other syntactic unit is termed single-unit turns.
- Turns that are comprised of more than one TCU is termed multi-unit turns.

As backchannels and single-character interruptions are prevalent in the two corpora, I decided to single them out from the category of single-unit types and make backchannels a separate class of turn size, viz., isolated characters. The term *isolated* does not mean that backchannels only incorporate single words/characters (e.g., 嗯, *en* ‘hmm’), but they also include longer phrases (e.g., 对的, *duide*, ‘right, that is right’) whose primary function is to signal listener’s minimal response to the ongoing speaking.

Prototypically, single-unit turns can be found in turns that are constructed out of individual units, including a single backchannel, phrase, clause, sentence, or even paralinguistic cues (i.e., laughter). As backchannels occur frequently in interruption turns across the two corpora, both as a stand-alone unit and an utterance preface, I decided to classify a combination of a backchannel and other unit as single-unit turns. Sometimes speakers may expand the turn-in-progress by repeating the same TCU, such as a repetition of the phrase 太热了 (*tai re le*, ‘too hot’), 太热乎 (*tai rehu*¹², ‘too hot, too hot’). I will illustrate the three categories of turn size in greater details in the next subsection.

Table 4.3: Single and multi-unit turns in spoken Chinese

Isolated characters	Small tokens primarily functioning as a listener’s response
Backchannels	嗯嗯 <i>en en</i> ‘hmmm, yeah’ 对 <i>dui</i> ‘yes’; 是的 <i>shide</i> ‘yep, yeah’; 好的, <i>haode</i> , ‘okay’
Single unit turns	A single syntactic unit or a combination of single units, with no units above sentence level
Phrases	太热了, <i>tai re le</i> , ‘too hot’
Clauses	医生怎么说呢 <i>yisheng zenme shuo ne?</i> ‘What did the doctor say?’
Compound sentences	你是玩游戏, 还是玩我? <i>ni shi wanyouxi, haishi wanwo</i> ‘Are you playing games or just teasing me?’
Laughter	@@@
Backchannels/single word + phrases/clauses	嗯, 不要太累哦 <i>en, buyao tailei o</i> ‘Yeah, don’t stress yourself too much.’
Aborted turns	她老爹- <i>ta laodie</i> - ‘her dad-’; 你千万- <i>ni qianwan</i> - ‘Please, don’t-’
Repetition of phrases	太热了, 太热乎 <i>tai re le, tai rehu</i> ‘too hot, too hot’
Repetition of clauses	我就在家打, 我就在家打的 <i>wo jiu zaijia da, wo jiu zaijia da de</i> ‘I am calling from home, I am calling from home.’
Multi-unit turns	Two or more sentence-level single unit turns

¹² In Mandarin, the phrase 热乎 (*rehu*, ‘hot’) conveys the same meaning with the single word 热 (*re*, ‘hot’). 太热乎 can be seen as roughly a repetition of 太热了.

single-unit turn + single-unit turn	只有她一个去考,@@@,我们班 100% 命中率啊 <i>zhiyou ta yige qukao,@@@, women ban 100% mingzhonglv</i> 'Only she sat the exam, @@@, so we had a 100% success rate'
-------------------------------------	---

4.3.2.1 Backchannels as isolated characters

Backchannels, under the category of single unit turns, also frequently occur in both the telephone and talk show data. They can take the form of a single interjection (e.g., 啊 *a* 'ah') or repetition of the same interjection (e.g., 对对 *duidui* 'yes'). These two types of backchanneling may appear as a free-standing turn unit with no attached host clause. They constitute an important category in studying another feature of interruption utterances – interruption markers. Thus, backchanneling, despite consisting of single unit turns, will be treated as a third category of turn size.

4.3.2.2 Single-unit turns

Considered syntactically, TCUs may be comprised of **words, phrases, clauses** or **sentences** (Sacks et al., 1974). Canonically, a single-unit turn equates to a single TCU consisting of either a single word, a phrase, a clause or a compound sentence, as shown in **Table 4.3**. There are also a few non-canonical categories of single unit turns. Turns consisting of **laughter** – marked as @@@ – are categorised as single unit turns. Laughter facilitates conversation between speakers. The combination of **backchannels/single word + another TCU** occurs frequently particularly in the telephone corpus. For example, the utterance in **Table 4.3**, 嗯, 不要太累哦, (*en, buyao tailei o* 'Yeah, don't stress yourself too much') consists of two units: a single word backchannel 嗯 (*en* 'hmm') and a single clause 不要太累哦 (*buyao tailei o* 'Yeah, don't stress yourself too much'). Backchannel responses can function as an utterance-initiator to acknowledge what has just been said by the previous speaker. The single clause that follows the utterance-initiator contains the main argument of the entire utterance, i.e., the proposition. It is the main clause that conveys the propositional meaning of the turn utterance. For this reason, the combination of **backchannels and a single clause** falls under the category of single unit turns. It is the same with the combination of *backchannels/single words* and *phrases*. For various reasons, interrupters may drop their utterances halfway before reaching a completion point. In these cases, the dropped or unfinished utterance is termed an **aborted turn**, marked by a dash symbol -. In **Table 4.3**, the aborted turn 她老爹- (*ta*

laodie- ‘her dad-’) is comprised of a topic; the comment – an element is used to modify the topic – is missing. This aborted turn, left incomplete, is seen as a single-unit turn. It is worth noting that, sometimes, aborted turns are resumed and completed subsequently, which makes it possible to recognise the full sentence of the aborted utterance. In the following example, A resumes her aborted utterance after B’s turn in line 02. A’s turn in line 01 regards a single-unit turn that features a combination of a backchannel and an aborted unit.

(22) callhome_1396 horse-riding

- 01→ A: 哎, 你 [千万-]¹³
 Ai, ni [qianwan-]
 Ah, you [please-]
Ah, please don’t-
- 02 B: 【空气】很好,
 [kongqi] henhao,
 [Air] very good
 It is nice.
- 03 A: 千万 不要 去 骑马 哦
 Qianwan buyao qu qima o
 please don’t go horse-riding EC
 Never ever try horseback riding.

The daughter, A, is rather concerned about her father’s safety, B, as he works at a horse-riding court. In line 01 A aborts her turn 哎, 你[千万-] (*ai, niqianwan-*, ‘please don’t-’) due to B’s interruption. The aborted utterance consists of a combination of an utterance-initiator backchannel and a verb phrase. According to the turn size classification scheme, the aborted turn is regarded as a single-unit turn. The turn lacks a predicate, which means it fails to convey a complete propositional meaning. A clarifies her meaning by resuming the aborted utterance in line 03 千万不要去骑马哦 (*qianwan buyao qu qima o*, ‘Please don’t go horseback riding’). Nonetheless, the turn construction changes slightly. In line 3, A does not preserve the utterance-initiator 哎 (*ai*, ‘ah’); instead, she goes directly to the main clause *Please don’t ever go horseback riding*. This example illustrates the fact that aborted utterances may be resumed in later turns, yet the resumed

¹³ Notably, turn size in this study only refers to the interrupter’s utterances, or the interrupting utterance. The analysis of the interruptee’s turn sizes here only serves the classification of an aborted unit.

turns are not necessarily syntactical continuations of the aborted ones. These turns reveal the uncompleted propositional meaning but do not necessarily preserve the original syntactic units in the aborted turns. This, on the other hand, shows that turns in talk-in-interaction are interactively constituted by both speakers and hearers. To sum up, the propositional meaning of the aborted turn in line 1 can be inferred from the context and latter turns, yet the turn's syntactic construction remains unknown. For this reason, aborted turns in spoken Chinese are labelled according to their recognisable part, which is often syntactically below sentence level. Therefore, aborted turns also belong to the category of single unit turns.

Another important category of single unit turn is **repetition**. Both phrases and clauses occur frequently in the two datasets. Repeated TCUs are constructed in the format of [A + A/A']. A is the main component. The replica (A/A') may preserve the syntactic structure of the primary component, or it may add particles, for example, clause-final particles (see Tantucci, 2017; Tantucci & Wang, 2020). The added particles facilitate conversational interaction, but do not change the propositional meaning of the primary component (see Chappell & Peyraube, 2016). As shown in Table 1, the replica component A' only repeats the main component A without adding new propositional meaning. The main argument of this turn is completed in the single clause of the main component; therefore, the entire turn is regarded as a single unit turn. It is the same with the repetition of phrases 太热了, 太热乎 (*tai re le, tai re hu*, 'too hot, too hot'). The first phrase 太热了, is the main component, the replica component 太热乎 preserves the syntactic structure.

4.3.2.3 Multi-unit turns

Multi-unit turns are much simpler. They include two or more sentence-level turns or independent clauses.

(23) callhome_0916 user-friendly

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 01 | B: | 对对对, 嗯.
Dui dui dui, en
Yes, yes, yes CFP
Yes, yes, yes, huh |
| 02 | A: | 呀, 这 这种 事情 【没 办法】
Ya, zhe zhezhong shiqing [mei banfa]
Ah, this, this thing [no way] |

Yeah, there is no way out of this kind of situation.

03 → B: 【我觉得】它还它的这个 还是挺好用的 嘛
你 觉得 怎么样？

[wo juede] ta hai tade zhege haishi ting hayongde ma
Ni juede zenmeyang?

[I think] it still its this still quite user-friendly CFP
you think how?

I think this is pretty useful. What do you think?

In this extract, two speakers are talking about the performance of different computer operating systems. A's utterance in line 2 comprises a sentence initial particle 呀, 'yeah' and a host clause 呀, 这这种事情[没办法](*ya, zhe zhezhong shiqing mei banfan*, 'There is no way out for this kind of thing'). The combination of a backchannel and a clause is classified as a single unit turn. Following A's utterance, B in line 3 initiates his comment with a clause 'I think this is pretty useful'. B has not reached his completion point, as he continues to ask A's opinion in another complete sentence *What do you think?*. B's utterance in line 3 therefore consists of two sentences, hence it is categorised as a multi-unit turn.

To sum up, turn size in this study is measured by how many units an interruption consists of, and therefore, is categorised into backchannels, single-unit turns, and multi-unit turns. A single unit normally conveys that a speaker cuts into the ongoing speaking with the least meaning expression and then returns the floor to the prior speaker. In contrast, a multi-unit interruption turn conveys the message that the interrupter is interpolating into the speaking and trying to keep the floor to their self for as long as they need to. In other words, what turn size measures is actually the number of meaning units in the interruption turn initiated in the course of another's speaking. In this sense, an interruption of a large turn size before the completion point of another's speaking is generally deemed to be less supportive. I will test the relationship between turn size and intrusiveness later in Chapters 5-6.

4.4 Interruption timing

This section examines another dimension of interruption utterances, interruption timing, which refers to the point at which an interrupter initiates their utterance in another's speaking. It examines whether an interruption is initiated when another speaker is finishing or has finished his/her turn, whether s/he is still in the middle or even at the early stage of the turn. A similar concept to interruption timing is *deep interruption* (Hawkins, 1991; West & Zimmerman, 1983). West and Zimmerman (1983) distinguished between two types of interruptions, *shallow* and *deep interruptions*. *Shallow* interruptions refer to simultaneous speech that is inserted within two syllables from the beginning or the end of a turn unit. Deep interruptions refer to simultaneous speech that is inserted more than two syllables either from the beginning or the end of a turn unit. Other researchers have approached the same concept with different terms, such as *early interruption* or *change of topic/subject* (Farley, 2008; Gnisci et al., 2018; Hawkins, 1991). The-counting-the-syllable approach to interruption has incited a lot of criticism for the difficulty in operationalising it in real cases. In this study, I approach interruption timing from a syntactic point of view by segmenting the meaning expressions in the interactional exchanges between participants. This segmentation is based on the syntactic feature of Chinese language: topic-comment construction (Chao, 1968; Shi, 2000; Xu, 2015). Topic denotes the main thing in a certain utterance, and comment indicates what is about the main thing. I will aim to measure the timing of interruption in relation to the position of topic and comment in an interruptee's utterance. In general, interruptions fall within the realm of the topic section will count as early interruption, and those within the comment section will count as middle interruption. A final interruption will be explained via the notion of transition relevance place. As the topic-comment structure of the Chinese language underpins the categorisation scheme of interruption timing that is used in this study, I will first elaborate on the topic-comment construction in Chinese in Section 4.4.1. In Section 4.4.2 I will move on to explicate and illustrate the three-level interruption timing scheme with examples from the two corpora.

4.4.1 Topic and comment

According to Chao (1968), Chinese speakers tend to first present the main thing they are about to talk about and then organise their thoughts to elaborate on the main thing. The main thing is termed the *topic*, and the thoughts that are used to elaborate on

the main thing are termed the *comment*. The Chinese language has been regarded as a good representative of a topic-prominent language by a few influential linguists, such as Hockett, Chao, Halliday, Li & Thompson, and Gundel among others. The subject-verb construction features topic and comment. Canonically the subject functions as the topic and the predicate functions as the comment (Chao, 1968; Gundel, 1988; C. Li & Thompson, 1976). The topic is what a sentence is about and the comment is what the predicate asserts (Gundel, 1988; Xu, 2015). Shi defines topic as follows:

A TOPIC is an unmarked NP (or its equivalent) that precedes a clause and is related to a position inside the clause; a topic represents an entity that has been mentioned in the previous discourse and is being discussed again in the current sentence, namely, topic is what the current sentence is set up to add new information to. The clause related to the topic in such a way is the comment. (Shi, 2000, p. 386)

Several important properties of a topic have been derived from Shi's definition (see Tsao, 1979):

- 1) A topic is a NP;
- 2) A topic invariably occupies the sentence-initial position;
- 3) A topic represents given/old information in relation to the comment which elaborates on the new information;
- 4) A topic is related to a position inside a comment, that is, the topic is part of the verb argument in the comment. The topic has no independent thematic role but relies on an element inside the comment, either a subject or an object;
- 5) There is an aboutness relationship between topic and comment.

A topic comment structure is illustrated in the following example:

1)	他	这个	人	喜欢	出风头。
	Ta	zhege	ren	xihuan	chufengtou
	He	this	person	like	out-wind-head

This guy likes to show off.

This sentence features a subject-verb syntactic structure, with the NP 他这个人¹⁴ (*ta zhege ren*, 'this guy'), as the topic and the rest of the sentence as the comment. The topic initiates the entire sentence. By initiating the topic with a combination of a pronoun (他, *ta*, 'he') and a noun phrase (这个人, *zhege ren*, 'this person/this guy'), the speaker

¹⁴ There are actually two NPs in the construction 他这个人. 他 and 这个人 can both function as an NP on its own without changing the proposition of the whole sentence. Both 他 and 这个人 refer to the same entity which is *he*.

assumes that the listener has basic knowledge of the person under discussion, at least of whom the person refers to. Hence, the topic functions as given information. By providing the given information, “the speaker intends to increase the addressee's knowledge about, request information about, or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E¹⁵” (Gundel, 1988). The comment 喜欢出风头 (*xihuan chufengtou*, ‘likes to show off’) elaborates what is relative to the topic. There is an aboutness relationship between the topic and the comment. The verb 喜欢 (*xihuan*, ‘like’) requires two arguments in a sentence: an agent and a patient. In the comment, the thematic role of the agent is preserved for the topic to fill in. In other words, the topic has no independent thematic role but relies on an element inside the comment.

Another property of the topic-comment construction is the frequent use of pause particles. For example, 1) can be rendered as:

2) 他	啊,	喜欢	出风头。
Ta	a	xihuan	chufengtou
He	EC	like	out-wind-head
He likes to show off.			

According to Xu (2015), unlike other topic-prominence languages such as Japanese, Chinese does not require topics to be marked morphologically, though they can optionally be separated from comments by one of the four pause particles *a/ya*, *ne*, *me*, and *ba* (Chao, 1968; P. Chen, 2004; C. Li & Thompson, 1976; Tsao, 1977). In (2) the pause particle *a* functions as a divider to separate the topic and comment. The pause marker indicates that the topic is what occurs before and the comment is what comes after. The comment provides new information based on what is given in the topic.

There are two predominant views regarding the classification of topics in Chinese. They both focus on whether the topic is associated with a gap in the comment. Li and Thompson (1989, 1976) proposed three kinds of topic: i) the first phrase in a so-called double-subject sentence as in (3); ii) the “gapped topic” that is associated with a gap in the comment as in (4); iii) the “gapless” or “dangling” topic that is not associated with a gap in the comment such as 5).

3) a. 那些树木	树身	长。
Neixie shumu	shushen	chang.
those tree	trunk	big
“Those trees, (their) trunks are big.”		

¹⁵ E refers to entity.

- b. 大象 鼻子 很 长。
Daxiang, bi-zi hen chang
elephant trunk very long
“Elephants’ trunks are very long.”
- 4) 张三 我 已经 见过 了。
Zhangsan wo yijing jian-guo le.
Zhangsan I already see Exp PF
“Zhangsan, I’ve already seen (him).”
- 5) 那场火, 幸亏 消防员 来的快。
Neichang huo, xingkui xiaofangdui lai de kuai.
that-Cl fire, fortunately firefighter team come-DE-fast,
“As for that fire, fortunately the firefighters came quickly.”

(C. Li & Thompson, 1989, p. 86)

In 3a), the sentence, initiated by a NP1 那些树木 (*neixie shumu*, ‘those trees’), is talking about NP2 树干 (*shushen*, ‘the trunk’). ‘The trunk’ (NP2) and ‘those trees’ (NP1) forms a part-whole relationship. The same applies to 3b). NP1 大象 (*daxiang*, ‘the elephant’) is the topic and the comment is about NP2 鼻子 (*bizi*, ‘the trunk’). Again, NP2 is a part of NP1. In 4), the main predicate 见过 (*jianguo*, ‘have already seen’) in the comment lacks an object argument to fulfil its semantic function, and the gap happens to be filled by the topic. Thus, the topic is related to a position inside the comment. There is no gap position in the comment in 5). That is, the topic of the sentence is not semantically related to a position inside the comment. This kind of topic is regarded as typical Chinese-style topic (C. Li & Thompson, 1976).

The topic-comment construction, derived from a syntactic analysis of sentence structures, is “a grammatical device used to fulfil certain discourse functions”(Shi, 2000, p. 386). The topic-comment construction is closely related to the discourse function as well as the context wherein the sentence is situated.

Due to the context-sensitive nature of spoken language, the perception of interlocutors’ utterances relies on more than syntactic and semantic analyses but extends to the context in which the conversation is situated. In this study, the timing of doing interruption draws upon the pragmatic and discourse functions of the topic-comment construction. Topic and comment are notions about how information is coded in syntax and pragmatics. The topic of a sentence represents given or old information, and the comment contains the new piece of information that the sentence is all about. Sometimes,

the topic in a sentence is not presented but is implied and known by both the speaker and the listener. Interruption timing is measured in relation to the interruptee's utterances and is further divided into three levels: *initial*, *middle* and *final*.

- An initial interruption occurs when the interruptee is cut off before s/he has successfully transmitted information in the *topic*;
- A middle interruption occurs when the interruptee is cut off before s/he has successfully transmitted information in the *comment*;
- A final interruption occurs when the interruptee is about to complete the current turn.

In what follows I will illustrate the three-level interruption timing scheme with examples from both corpora and I will also discuss two main non-canonical cases where the identification of interruption timing needs further elaboration.

4.4.2 Three-level interruption timing scheme in this study

4.4.2.1 Initial-timing interruptions

As stated above, an interruption is coded as initial timing when the interrupter cuts into the ongoing speaking when another speaker has not yet successfully transmitted information identifying his/her topic, as seen in Example (24) below.

(24) callhome_0104 100% admission rate

- 01 A: 天啦, 那 怎么 我们 班 才 一个人 去考 呢?
 Tianla, na zenme women ban cai yigeren qukao ne
 Oh my god, then how come our class only one person sit the exam RLV
 Oh my god, then how come only one student in our class took the test?
- 02 B: 哦 我 不知道 啊.
 O, wo buzhidao a
 Oh, i don't know EC
 Ah, I have no idea why that is.
- 03 → A: ((@[@@])大] 大家 都 比 懒 的
 ((@[@@])da] dajia dou bi lan de
 ((@[@@]) every-everyone all compete lazy SUB
 ((@[@@]) All are too lazy to take the test.
- 04 → B: (((@[@@]))
 ((@[@@])

05 B: ((@@@)) 对啊, 我们 百分之百 的 命中率 [((@@@))].
 ((@@@)) duia, women baifenzhibai de mingzhonglv [((@@@))]
 ((@@@)) right, we 100 percent admission rate [((@@@))]
 ((@@@)) yeah, our class got 100% admission rate ((@@@))

Here the two speakers are talking about their undergraduate classmates sitting a Master's entrance examination. A is surprised that only one fellow classmate sat the examination and wonders why (line 01). B responds that she has no idea why (line 02). Then A laughs and jokes that the whole class seems to compete in a *who-is-lazier* competition (line 03). B produces laughter at almost the same time as A's initiating her utterance. As a result, B overlaps with A's laughing, so that the two speakers seem to be laughing along with each other. B's laughing is uttered before A has made her point in this turn that the classmates are just too lazy. B's nonverbal interjection appears before A has produced the topic 大家 (*dajia*, 'everyone, all'), hence it is classed as an initial interruption (see Table 4.4 below).

Table 4.4: Initial timing in canonical cases

Topic	Comment
@[@@大] ¹⁶ 大家	都比懒的
@@@ All	are too lazy to take the test.

4.4.2.2 Middle-timing interruptions

An interruption is coded as middle-timing interruption when it is initiated before the information in the comment of another speaker's turn has been successfully transmitted. This entails that the interruption occurs before another speaker's turn completion point.

(18) callhome_0916

01 B: 对 对 对, 嗯
 Dui dui dui, en
 Right, right, right, hm
 Yes, yes, yes, huh

02 → A: 呀, 这 这种 事情 【没办-】

¹⁶ []: Square brackets indicate overlapping speech, with [indicating the onset of overlapping and] indicating the end of overlapping. [] appearing in the Tables helps to identify where an interruption occurs in relation to the topic-comment boundary.

Ah, zhe zhezhong shiqing [meiban-]

Ah, this this kind thing [no way-]

Yeah, there is no way out of this kind of thing.

03 → B: **【我觉得】** 它还它的 这个 还是 挺 好用的 嘛, 你觉得 怎么样?

[Wo juede] ta hai tade zhege haishi ting haoyongde ma, ni juede zenme yang

I think it still it's this still quite easy to use, you think how

I think this is pretty easy to use, what do you think?

The two speakers are talking about the performance of the operating systems in different computers. In line 01 A is sympathising that there is nothing they can do to improve the performance. B jumps in before A has finished his proposition, before A has made the *topic* 这种事情 clear and is about to produce the *comment* 没办法- (see Table 4.5 below). The dash – at the end of A's utterance indicates that A drops his turn largely because of B's interjection. This is a typical case of middle interruption.

Table 4.5: Middle timing in canonical cases

Topic	Comment
这种事情	【没办法-
This kind of thing	there is nothing (we can do).

The insertion of backchannels (e.g., 嗯嗯/啊/哦) are the most common type of middle interruptions particularly in the telephone corpus. It may occur in the midst of a single-unit or a multiple-unit turn.

4.4.2.3 Final-timing interruptions

In this study, interruptions of final timing correspond to the neighbouring concept of interruption, viz., overlap. As argued by many researchers the sequential difference between overlapping talk and an interruption is that the former is initiated in the turn completion point of another's speaking, while the latter is initiated beyond the completion point. Final interruptions are initiated when another speaker has successfully transmitted the information in the comment and is about to finish the turn.

(25) callhome_0758 too many computers

01 A: 这里 这个 计算机 太多

- Zheli zhege jisuanji taiduo
Here this computer too many
There are many computers here.
- 02 → A: 嗯【啊】一下子 没有 呃, 那个 计算机 就不行 了, 就 没事 干了 [就].
Ena, yixaizi meiyou er, nage jisuanji jiubuxing le, jiu meishi ganle [jiu]
Hm, suddenly without ah that computer simply don't work, simply nothing to do SFP
Huh, uh, things wouldn't go well if suddenly there were no computers, then we wouldn't know what to do.
- 03 B1¹⁷: [哦].
Oh
Oh
- 04 → B1: [离不开] 计算机 哦
Libukai jisuanji o
Can't leave jisuanji EC
(You) can't live or study without computers.
- 05 A: 对, 对, 对
Dui dui dui
Right, right, right
Yeah, yeah, yeah

Here A is telling his friend's mother B1 about his studies in the United States. A says his studies rely heavily on the use of computers¹⁸ (lines 01-2). B's utterances overlap with A's twice: the overlapping of a turn-beginning token 啊 (*a*, 'hm') and the sentence final particle 就 (*jiu*, 'right away') in A's turn. B's first insertion – the backchannel token – occurs in the course of A's extended telling about having many computers. The second interruption is launched at the completion point of A's turn. That is, A has almost finished his turn. Therefore, B's interruption in line 04 constitutes an instance of final timing, as seen in Table 4.6 below.

¹⁷ B1: In the Callhome corpus, the caller is labelled as A, and the receiver is labelled as B. Number 1 or 2 is attached to A or B to indicate there are more than one speaker at each end. In this case, B1 picked up the call after B had left.

¹⁸ This conversation took place in the 1990s when computers were relatively rare in mainland China.

Table 4.6: *Final timing in canonical cases*

Topic	Comment
一下子没有呃,那个计算机	就不行了, 就没事干了[就].
If suddenly there are no computer	things wouldn't go well; we wouldn't know what to do.

Two points in A's utterance in line 02 merit attention. The first is about the sentence final particle 就 which does not convey propositional meanings but functions to mitigate the absoluteness of the utterance. In the light of this, overlapping with 就 will not affect the expression of the meaning. The second is about the two similar constructions in the comment: 就不行了 and 就没事干了. The former means '(things) wouldn't go well', and the latter means 'we wouldn't know what to do. The two constructions syntactically resonate with each other. Semantically, the former describes a circumstance with no computers are available in general; the latter expands on the general circumstance and describes the circumstances specifically. That is the latter construction makes the former construction more concrete. Altogether, the two points strengthen the message that the propositional meaning of the utterance has actually been completed in the first construction, long before the sentence final particle 就. Hence, this interruption is identified as final timing.

4.4.3 Non-canonical cases of interruption timing in this study

In naturally occurring conversation, speakers may produce a big chunk of utterances with multiple units consisting of utterances, laughter, and other paralinguistic cues. Disfluencies, repetition, and repairs are prevalent in authentic conversational exchanges, which pose challenges for any scheme categorising interruption timing. I will discuss these challenges with examples from the two corpora as follows.

4.4.3.1 Turns with missing topic in topic-comment construction

In naturally occurring conversation, Chinese speakers may not speak in full sentences. Instead, speakers may only produce the main proposition (i.e., comment) instead, leaving vacant what is being talked about. The local context has elicited what is currently being discussed or referred to, therefore, the topic has become shared information between speakers. The reference of the topic is pragmatically optional. When it comes to interruption timing, the topic-comment segmentation still applies to the topic-missing turns. That is, when the interruption is initiated in the middle of the comment, it

the topic being elliptical. In this case, the interruption timing of A's utterance is coded as *middle*.

Table 4.7: *Missing topic in non-canonical cases*

哦, 哎	()	蛮[好的哦]	@ @ @ @
BC	(topic)	comment	LAUGHTER
unit 1	unit 2		unit 3

4.4.3.2 Turns with more than one unit

Another issue with the timing scheme that we need to consider is the impact of multi-unit turns, that is, interruptions that are comprised of more than one unit of which each unit has a topic-comment structure. When it comes to interruption timing, we need to consider all the units as a single entity instead of an individual unit. To illustrate, consider Example (27) which is extracted from the previous example (3). In this example, A's turn in line 02 consists of four units of which the third is overlapped. As A has produced a topic and not yet finished the comment of the turn, the timing of this interruption is labelled as *middle*.

(27) callhome_0916 all crows are black

- 01 B: 我 说 是 这 种 都 很 黑 啊, 这 个 公 司 里 啊
 wo shuo shi zhezhong dou hen hei a, zhege gongsi li a
 I say BE this kind all very dark ah, this company inside ah
 I think all is corrupt, in this company
- 02 → A: 啊, 这 个 没 办 法, 这 个 [到 处 都 有, 天 下] 乌 鸦 一 般 黑
 A, zhege meibanfa, zhege dao chu dou you, tianxia wuya yiban hei
 Ah, this no way, this everywhere all have, the world crow the same dark
Oh, There is no way out. Corruption is everywhere. Crows are black all over the world.
- 03 B: [这 个 没 办 法, 也 °没 办 法°]
 Zhege meibanfa, ye meibanfa
 This no way, also no way
 We can't do anything about it, noting about it.
- 04 B: 对 啊, 天 下 乌 鸦 一 般 黑, [((@ @ @))], 呃, 就 这 样
 Duia, tianxia wuya yiban hei, ((@ @ @)), er, jiu zheyang
 Right, the world crows the same dark, ((@ @ @)), EC, simply this
 That is right, Crows are black all over the world. ((@ @ @)) As simple as that.

Table 4.8: Multi-unit turns in non-canonical cases

啊	这个	没办法	这个	[到处都有	天下乌鸦	一般黑
BC	topic	comment	topic	comment	topic	comment
Unit 1	Unit 2		Unit 3		Unit 4	

Here the two speakers are talking about corrupt company culture in Hong Kong¹⁹. A’s utterance in line 2 is comprised of 4 units, as shown above in Table 4.8. Except for Unit 1 which is a single backchannel 啊 (*a*, ‘ah’), the rest all have a topic-comment construction. The interruption occurs in Unit 3. The topic is about the given information 这个 (*zhege*, ‘this’) – corrupt company culture; the comment, 到处都有 (*dao chu dou you*, ‘is everywhere’), regards the speaker’s attitude towards this common ground information (Abbott, 2008; Clark, 1996; Stalnaker, 2002). When examining exclusively Unit 3, A’s utterance occurs before A produces the comment, the interruption is therefore identified as a *middle*. However, there are more than one unit in A’s turn, and the interruption occurs within the third unit and somewhere in the middle of the whole turn. In other words, the interruption comes before A has finished all the comment about the topic, thus B’s interruption is classified as a *middle* interruption in this turn.

4.4.4 Interruption timing in Jin Xing Show

The categorisation of timing of interruption (i.e., initial, middle, and final timing) is prototypically based on the telephone conversation where a large number of interruption instances occur in overlapping speech. All the interruptions identified in the Jin Xing Show conversation, as stated before, occur in the environment of non-perceivable overlaps. However, the three-class timing scheme can also be employed in the talk show conversation.

The non-overlapping interruption (termed pre-emptive interruptions in this study) can be further divided into two types. The first and predominant type occurs when Shen starts to speaker after Jin has finished her current turn and before Jin is about to progress to the next. That is, Shen takes the turn by self-selecting before Jin continues to hold the turn to speak. In so doing, Shen cancels Jin’s self-selection as a turn-allocation strategy (Sacks et al., 1974). Viewed from the perspective of timing of interruption, Shen’s

¹⁹ As elaborated in the next-turn proof procedure in Chapter 3, A first misunderstood B’s comment of “corrupt” as referring to corrupt society, whilst what B really means is corrupt company culture. After a few turns, the confusion is resolved. Please go back to Chapter 3 for a fuller version of this excerpt.

interruptions in this case can be seen as final timing. This is because Shen's interruptions are latched on to Jin's turn. Jin has completed her current turn and come to the turn transition relevance place.

The second type of interruption in the Jin Xing Show, which occurs less often, takes the form of *anticipatory completion* (Lerner, 1991, 1996). That is, two speakers engage in conversation to jointly produce a single syntactic unit. In the Jin Xing Show case, it happens when Jin's utterances are characterised by two-part formats, such as *if X-then Y, when X-then Y*, quotation, parenthetical inserts, list structures (Lerner, 1991, 1996). Jin usually utters the first preliminary part (e.g., *if X*) and the second final part (e.g., *then Y*) can be anticipated and happens to be pre-emptively uttered by Shen. Essentially, an anticipatory completion is a practice whereby a single sentence is produced across the talk of two speaker. As Lerner (1991) stated the completion of a preliminary component is not turn transition place but is only a possible place for the final component to start. In other words, whilst Shen initiates his anticipatory completion, Jin is speaking in the middle of her turn, for this reason, Shen's interruption is classified as middle timing.

To sum up, in this study interruption timing is not measured by the precise timing of interruption onset. Rather, it is measured in relation to the information transmission of the interruption recipient. Canonically, information transmission is conveyed through a topic-comment construction. The topic is associated with given, old or shared information; the comment provides new information about the topic. A topic-elliptical construction is prevalent in spoken Chinese. Interruption timing draws upon the pragmatic nature of the topic-comment construction and is classified into initial, middle and final timing. An initial interruption occurs in the course of the transmission of given information in the topic by the interruptee; a middle interruption occurs in the course of the transmission of new information in the comment by the interruptee; a final interruption occurs when the interruptee is cut off before s/he arrives at a completion point. There are also non-canonical instances where interruptions have elliptical constructions or more than one unit. The identification of their timing still follows the topic-comment segmentation with slight adaptations. There are no overlaps in conversation in the talk show programme, and only two types of timing are classified: middle timing and final timing. The middle timing corresponds to Shen's anticipatory completion of Jin's sentence, and final timing corresponds to Shen's latched-onto interruptions when Jin has completed her turn and is about to move to the hearable next.

4.5 Interruption markers

When cutting into the ongoing speaking, the speaker may use certain prefacing tokens to announce their change of status – from a prior-listenership to a now-speakership – as well as to mitigate any abruptness for pre-emptively obtaining the turn floor. The most common type of prefacing token is a meta-interruption phrase, such as ‘Sorry to interrupt/chip in/jump in’. On a lexical level, an interrupter may address the prior speaker by name to establish speakership for the upcoming utterances (Butler et al., 2011; M. J. McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2003). The use of turn-initial tokens may indicate that the listener is aware of and acknowledges the speakership at the moment which necessitates an apology for or an advance warning of the upcoming intrusion (Schegloff, 1987). In this section, I will focus on the turn-initial place of an interruption turn, elaborating on one of the interactional features of doing interrupting – interruption markers – in naturally occurring conversation. I will first briefly overview the literature on turn beginnings in CA, then I will demonstrate how an utterance is comprised of two parts – the turn-initial token and the proposition – which sets the foundation for the categorisation of interruption markers in this study. Lastly, I will illustrate each of subcategories of interruption marker with examples from across the two corpora.

4.5.1 Turn-initial markers in interaction

There are two recurring themes within CA research about the use of turn-initial markers: managing structural relations – e.g., turn and topic transitions – and managing interpersonal relations – e.g., face concerns, stance. Schegloff (1987) gave a rigorous examination of the sequential aspect of turn-initial markers, stating that turn beginnings are “sequence-structurally important places” (Schegloff, 1987, p. 71) in conversation for two reasons. The first is that turn beginnings are an important initial resource for projecting the shape and turn of the upcoming turn. Such projection is crucial to minimalising gaps and overlaps between turn transitions and to achieve the one-speaker-at-a-time turn-taking. For instance, Rendle-Short (2007) observed that it is common within Australian political news interviews for politicians to begin talking before the journalist has finished his/her turn, and therefore, an address term at the turn beginning is used as a technique for ensuring a successful attempt at interruption. The second reason for the importance of turn beginnings is that the turn-initial position is where a variety of sequential markers are properly placed, such as ‘interruption markers’ (e.g., ‘Wait a

minute!'), that operate to show an interruption is upcoming, and 'misplacement markers' (e.g., 'By the way') that indicate that an activity is being done outside its proper place. In multi-party interactions, address terms at turn beginnings are regularly employed as a device to establish or verify the availability of a recipient in situations where reciprocity may be problematic (Lerner, 2003).

On the relational side, turn-initial markers are often associated with disjunction from another speaker in terms of affective stance. This is in contrast with sentence-final particles (SFPs) which are used as a procedural surplus of meaning at the end of a clause to facilitate conversational interaction, for example to mitigate disagreement with the prior speaker (cf. SFPs in Mandarin Chinese in Tantucci & Wang, 2020). Butler et al., (2011) found that in counselling interactions counsellors use address terms to display different stances from that of the client. Likewise, in political news interviews politicians address journalists by their first name as a way of demonstrating the power asymmetry between them, to evade questions or to disagree with the journalist's question (Rendle-Short, 2007).

4.5.2 The construction of 'turn-initial marker + proposition' in interruptions

The examination of the turn-initial *interruption marker* is informed by previous studies of pragmatic markers (Brinton, 2017; Fraser, 1996; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Traugott, 2016). While there is no consensus as to the definition of pragmatic markers (Brinton, 2017), the term *pragmatic marker* is "generally used as an umbrella term for different types of linguistic forms that have effect at the communicative level" (J. Chen, 2018, p.84). Pragmatic markers are analysed in relation to the rest of the sentence, utterance, or unit of talk they occur in, which is termed the host clause (cf. Brinton, 2017; Heine & Kaltböck, 2021; Rouchota, 1998; Traugott, 2016) or the ideational core (Onodera & Traugott, 2016). Building on previous scholarship, Brinton (2017) summarised the core properties of pragmatic markers as: 1) syntactically independent from the host clause; 2) of no, or diminished, propositional meaning; and 3) grammatically optional.

I draw upon the characteristics of pragmatic markers to identify the notion of *interruption markers*. In this study, the term interruption marker refers to **turn-initial tokens that are used to initiate interruption turns**. Interruption markers usually precede the host clause(s) which contain(s) propositional content.

In general, an interruption turn consists of an interruption marker and a proposition. Interruption markers can be backchannel responses (e.g., 嗯嗯, *enen*, 'mm'),

connectives (e.g., 但是, *danshi*, ‘but/yet’), or address terms (e.g., 姐, *jie*, ‘sister’). The turn-initial interruption markers are independent from their host clauses in terms of propositional meaning and syntax. They enact procedural meanings rather than literal meaning. For instance, address terms in conversation are used as vocatives to establish reciprocity and get the other speaker’s attention (Butler et al., 2011; Clayman, 2013a; Rendle-Short, 2007). The deletion of address terms will not affect the meaning being expressed, yet it might cause confusion as to whom the utterance is being addressed if no other paralinguistic cues are employed (e.g., gaze).

While interruption markers can be deleted without affecting the propositional content of interruption turns, they undertake multiple functions, for instance, highlighting the speaker’s attitude towards the proposition (Rouchota, 1998). I will examine the discourse and interpersonal functions of interruption markers in the casual talk in Chapter 5 and the institutional talk in Chapter 6. Therefore, interruption markers are identified when the tokens 1) occur turn-initially; 2) are syntactically non-obligatory – the grammaticality of the whole turn remains intact even if they are removed from the turn; 3) add no or diminished propositional meaning to the whole turn. Following this analysis, three types of structural arrangement of interruption turns are identified in the two corpora, as illustrated below in Tables 4.9-11.

Table 4.9: Prototypical construction: Turns comprised of marker and host clause

Pre-positioned tokens	Propositional content
Interruption marker	Host clause
呃,呃	校园 蛮大的
e e	xiaoyuan mandade
huh	campus pretty big
Yes	the campus is pretty big

Table 4.10: Turns comprised of marker only

Pre-positioned tokens	Propositional content
Interruption marker	Host clause
嗯嗯	N/A
en en	N/A
huh	N/A
hmm	N/A

Table 4.11: Turns comprised of host clause only

Pre-positioned tokens	Propositional content		
Interruption marker	Host clause		
N/A	听着	有点	伤感
N/A	Tingzhe	youdian	shanggan
N/A	Listen	sort of	sentimental
N/A	It is quite sad.		

The typical structure of an interruption turn comprises both a marker and a host clause, as seen in Table 4.9 above. The interruption marker 呃呃 (*e e*, ‘Yes’) occupies the pre-positioned place. The host clause contains the propositional meaning of the whole turn, which is a comment on the campus under discussion. The turn-initial marker does not add propositional meaning to the host clause. In Table 4.10, an interruption may only consist of turn-initial tokens without any propositions. The most frequent case is the use of a backchannel response as an independent turn. I will treat backchannel responses as turn-initial interruption markers. The host clause is vacant in such cases. In Table 4.11 turn construction, an interruption consists of propositions only, leaving the turn-initial place vacant. This is annotated as an unmarked interruption in this study.

4.5.3 Interruption markers in this study

The syntactical independence of interruption markers and the ‘turn beginnings + proposition’ structure lays the foundation for identifying tokens that appear at the turn-initial place as an interruption marker as well as for categorising different types of interruption markers in this study. Four kinds of interruption markers are identified across the two corpora: backchannels, address terms, pragmatic markers, and laughter. All of them are grammatically optional, syntactically independent from the proposition and convey little or no propositional meaning. In what follows, I will explain how each category works in the naturally occurring conversations in the two corpora.

4.5.3.1 Backchannels

In everyday conversation, it is common that one participant occupies the floor and assumes primary speakership, and others assume listenership. The listener may, in the course of the extended telling, produce short response messages, such as *as*, *ah*, *huh*, *yeah*, indicating that they are listening. Yngve (1970) was the first to propose that this kind of short message functions as, and be called, a *back-channel*. Researchers have identified

both verbal and nonverbal cues as backchannels. Verbal cues include brief responses, continuers (Schegloff, 1982), short assessments, e.g., *wow* (C. Goodwin, 1986), brief requests for clarification, e.g., *who* (Duncan, 1974), and information receipt tokens, e.g., *right* (O’Keeffe & Adolphs, 2008). Nonverbal cues include laughter and head movements. Backchannels do not normally challenge the speakership (C. Goodwin, 1986; Heinz, 2003; Schegloff, 1982; H. Tao & Thompson, 1991). Instead, the listener indicates that they are listening to the speaking and that they want the speaking to continue for the time being (Heinz, 2003; Stivers, 2008). The main function of backchannels is to provide feedback to the speaker (Heinz, 2003).

In this study, I adopt Tao and Thompson’s definition of *backchannels* as “short, non-lexical utterances produced by an interlocutor who is playing primarily a listener’s role during the other interlocutor’s speakership” (H. Tao & Thompson, 1991, p. 210). In line with this definition, there are two main features about backchannels in the current study. First, backchannel responses do not compete for the turn floor, but instead, they signal the listener’s acknowledgement of the speakership. Second, as non-lexical tokens, backchannel responses have little propositional meaning. Typical examples are one-word repetitive tokens, such as 嗯嗯(*en en*, ‘mm’), 哦哦(*oo*, ‘yeah’), and one-word tokens signalling acknowledgement like 对(*dui*, ‘yeah’). Therefore, backchannel responses in this project signal the interrupter’s acknowledgement of the ongoing speaking. They are grammatically optional and do not contribute to the propositional meanings of the whole turn being uttered.

4.5.3.2 Pragmatic markers

Pragmatic markers denote clausal markers that are positioned in the sentence initial position. They can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the rest of the turn utterance. They feature a) a linear relationship with but independent of their host clause, and b) (limited) mobility as they can occur in the beginning, middle or final position (Brinton, 2017, p. 8). Across the two corpora in this study, pragmatic markers are seen to be syntactically detached and conventionally entrenched. The following example illustrates how Shen uses a pragmatic marker 那就是说 (*na jiushi shuo*, ‘so, that is to say’) to initiate an interruption immediately following Jin’s speaking.

(28) jxx_20170809 German marriage

01 Jin: 沈南 你 不知道 吧?

- Shenan ni buzhidao ba
 PNShennan you don't know SUG
 Shen Nan, I guess you don't know that
- 02 德国 的 婚姻法 规定
 Deguo de hunyinf guiding
 Germany SUB marriage law stipulate
 According to German Marriage Law
- 03 离婚 后 只要 女方 没有 再婚=
 Lihun hou zhiyao nvfang meiyou zaihun
 Divorce after as long as woman side no re-marry
 After the divorce, as long as the woman does not re-marry,
- 04 男方 就 一直 要 提供 生活费 的
 Nanfang jiu yizhi yao tigong shenghuodei de
 Man side so all the time require provide stipend SUB
 The man will continue to provide living expenses
- 05 → Shen = ‘那 就是说’
 Na jiushishuo
 That that is to say
So that is to say,
- 06 如果 他 三个 前妻 就地 结婚 了
 Ruguo ta sange qianqi jiudi jiehun le
 If he three ex-wife locally marry CRS
 if all three of his ex-wives re-marry,
- 07 他 就 等于 解放
 Ta jiu dengyu jiefang
 He simply equal liberation
 He doesn't need to pay all their living expenses.
- 08 Jin 没错
 Meicuo
 No wrong
 That's right.

Here Shen and Jin are joking that a German guy married many times and all his ex-wives stay single. Jin is saying that in German men have to provide living expenses for all his ex-wives until they re-marry (lines 01-4). Shen jumps in, speculating that the German guy will be free from all financial burdens once all his ex-wives have got married (lines 05-7). Note that Shen initiates his turn with a conventionalised phrase ‘那就是说’ (*na jiushi shuo*, 'so, that is to say') which suggests explaining more clearly Jin's prior utterance. This sentence-initial token retains diminished conceptual meaning, but it is

syntactically independent from the immediate proposition. It, therefore, regards a pragmatic marker. Note that this phrasal token is uttered markedly softer than its subsequent talk in lines 06-7, indicated by two superscript degree signs. This shows that pragmatic markers may form a phonetically separate tone group (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg, 2011; Brinton, 2017).

Apart from conventionalised forms, pragmatically used conjunctions also occur frequently in the Callhome and the talk show interaction. In this study, conjunctions are classified as pragmatic markers when they retain no or diminished propositional meaning and are used primarily for pragmatic purposes. These conjunction type of pragmatic markers that are identified in this study include 所以, *suoyi*, ‘so’, 可是/但是, *keshi/danshi*, ‘but’, 那么/那, *name/na*, ‘then’, 然后, *ranhou*, ‘then’, 因为, *yinwei*, ‘because’, 还有, *haiyou*, ‘and’.

4.5.3.3 Address terms

In interaction, speakers may initiate a turn by addressing the co-participant’s name. Interestingly, address-term-prefaced interruptions only occur in the Jin Xing Show programme. Address terms are used during Jin’s talking to establish the “directionality” (Clayman, 2010) of the interruption that is thereby started – to address Jin as the recipient of the interruption. Specific to the Jin Xing Show because of the relative locations of the two speakers, address terms may operate to solicit the attention of the intended recipient, Jin. As demonstrated in Section 3.2.1, Jin is directly facing the camera placed in the centre of the stage and only facing Shen side-on when not addressing him. When Shen interrupts and speaks to Jin, she normally turns away from the central camera to face Shen. Therefore, in this spatial configuration, address terms function to get the recipient’s attention and is a tacit request that Jin needs to slightly change her posture to face the ongoing speaker. Address terms function as a turn prefatory token, followed by propositions in one or multiple turn units. The most frequently used address terms are 姐 (*jie*, ‘elder sister’) or 金姐 (*Jinjie*, ‘Jin Jie’). The following two short extracts give a glimpse of how address terms are used in the institutional setting in this study: a slight topic change in the form of a question, and teasing.

(29) *jxx_20150715* wedding ceremony

01 → Shen: =姐 那 有没有 人 请 你 主持 过 婚礼 什么的
 =jie na youmeiyou ren qing ni zhuchi guo hunli shenmede

=jie then have or not people invite you host PT wedding and the like
= Jie, well, have you ever been invited to host any wedding

(30) jxx_20170217 Texas

- 01 → Shen: =姐, 其实 这个 可以 理解
Jie, qishi zhege keyi lijie
Jie, actually this able understand
Jie, this is actually easy to understand
- 02 → 因为 他 毕竟 也 怕 死 嘛
Yinwei ta bijing ye pa si ma
Because he after all also fear death OBV
Because he is afraid of being killed soon, isn't he?

Prior to the first extract, Jin has been describing a recent trend in Northeast China of people wanting to invite TV celebrities to host their wedding ceremony (A fuller context of this extract will be presented in later in Section 6.2 in Example (43). Following the description, Shen interrupts to ask whether Jin has ever been invited, which stays on the topic but slightly shifts the attention towards Jin rather than the elaboration of the phenomenon per se. In (30), Shen initiates an interruption with an address term to tease Jin for being too intimidating in relationships. The address term in Example (29) is used to manage the structural organisation of interaction – i.e., managing topic transition or departure (Butler et al., 2011; M. J. McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2003; Schegloff, 1987). The address term in Example (30) is used to signal affective disjunction from another speaker (Butler et al., 2011). In Section 6.3 a statistical analysis of interruptions in the Jin Xing Show will reveal that address terms are associated with both affiliative and disaffiliative interruptions. I will explicate how these connections work in the talk show later in Chapter 6.

4.5.3.4 Laughter

Laughter-initiated interruptions occur in both corpora. They either stand alone as a complete turn unit (Type 2) or function as a turn-initial token that is followed by propositional content (Type 3). In the two corpora, laughter may be incurred as a reaction to the other speaker’s laughing or arises as self-initiated. Laughter positions freely, appearing in the turn-initial, middle or final stage. This study only focuses on laughter at turn-initial stage. Laughter is transcribed as @. The longer the laughter, the more @ signs.

To sum up, interruption markers focus on how speakers start off their interruptions, whether speakers use any linguistic devices to break into the ongoing turn and forestall any upcoming turns forestall as well as elicit attention from another speaker. They operate as a “road sign” announcing sequential and interpersonal (dis)alignment with the prior speaker’s talk. Both verbal (i.e., backchannels, pragmatic markers, address terms) and paralinguistic cues (i.e., laughter) are used by speakers in the two selected corpora in this study. Moving from the critical point of an interruption turn, in the next section I will examine interruption as a whole entity, focusing on the action that is embodied in any interruption utterance, viz., the speech act.

4.6 Speech act

It is fairly common that the listener may insert utterances that embody various kinds of action during the ongoing speaking. These actions may concern stance-taking, expression of personal feelings, description of a state of affairs, or simply a request to another person to do something. They generally fall into two categories: constative speech acts, viz., “utterances which are sayings” (Searle, 1976, p. 14), and performative speech acts, viz., “utterances which are doings” (Searle, 1976, p. 14). In other words, speakers perform various kinds of illocutionary acts through interrupting. With reference to Austin’s original classification of speech acts (Austin, 1962), Searle (1976) proposed an alternative taxonomy, which is the most widely accepted speech act classification. The five categories are briefly outlined here (see Croft, 2002, p. 460):

Representatives: an assertion of a proposition, e.g. *It is cold here*.

Directives: a request that the addressee do something, such as produce an utterance (*Who just came in*) or perform an action (*Please give that to me*).

Commissives: a commitment by the speaker to perform an action, e.g. *I promise to return by 5*.

Expressives: an expression of speaker attitude towards a state of affairs, such as *I am sorry to hear that*.

Declarations: a speech act which by virtue of being uttered causes a change in the world, e.g. *I now declare you husband and wife*.

4.6.1 Speech act taxonomy in this study: an adaptation of Searle’s (1976)

This study adopts the position that interruptions can be associated with multiple types of speech acts. Built on Searle’s five basic classes of speech acts, this study adopts a data-driven approach to annotating all speech acts that interruption instances display across the two corpora. Five types of illocutionary force are identified in this study, i.e., rogatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and representatives. A few modifications are made to Searle’s taxonomy in order to accommodate the naturalistic conversations in Chinese in this study. These adaptations are demonstrated below.

Interrogative speech acts are dependent from directives to form a separate category in this study: **rogatives** (Leech, 1983). In Searle’s basic taxonomy, questions are incorporated into directives as “they [questions] are attempts by S to get H to answer, i.e., to perform a speech act” (Searle, 1976, p. 11). As Croft commented, Searle has based

his classification of speech acts on “a priori intuitive analysis without much direct reference to the linguistic expression of illocutionary acts (let alone speech acts in actual conversational usage)” (Croft, 2002, p. 460). The large tracts of conversational data in this study requires a taxonomy of speech acts that could refer to linguistic expressions and conversational usage. Therefore, I decide to separate questions from directives and form a separate category: rogatives. This modification is also motivated by results of a pilot study which explored the relationship between intrusiveness and speech acts²⁰ in the two corpora. The pilot study shows that the rogative type of interruptions tend to be less intrusive, while the directive type of interruptions are more likely to associate with higher level of intrusiveness.

In this study, directives exclude interrogatives, incorporating both modest attempts such as offering suggestions and more demanding attempts such as ordering in this study. In the talk show data, directive interruptions are frequently used by the assistant to mock the host in a non-serious way (jocular mockery: Haugh, 2010, 2016), hence, entertain the audience. The following two examples illustrate how directive interruptions are used to achieve non-serious teasing effect in the Jin Xing Show corpus.

(31) jxx_20160217 ²¹ red clothes

Shen: 你 可以 穿个 红衣服 试试
 Ni keyi chuange hongyifu shishi
 You should dress red clothes try try
 You should try on a red dress (and dance in front of the cows).

(32) jxx_2016022 revenge

Shen: 姐 说说 后来 的 事 吧
 Jie shuoshuo houlai de shi ba
 Sister say say later SUB thing SUG
 Jie, tell us what happened later.
 你 用 什么 手段 报复 他 的
 Ni yong shenme shouduan baofu ta de
 You use what means revenge he SUB

²⁰ The pilot data analysis was presented in my confirmation panel document. It was based on 10 conversations in each corpus.

²¹ I only present a single speaker’s utterances instead of a conversational exchange between different speakers. The reason is that I am only focusing on the directive speech act conveyed in this utterance and not explicating the sequential structure of this extract.

Like how you retaliated against him.

Prior to (31), Jin has been recalling that she spent some time staying on her boyfriend’s ranch in Texas, attending to the cows as well as practising dancing. Jin said that she quickly felt tired of this kind of lifestyle. Immediately, Shen jumps in and suggests that Jin could try something different: 你可以穿个红衣服试试 (*ni keyi chuange hongyifu shishi*, ‘you should try on a red dress’). In so doing, Shen is hinting that Jin could dress in red dance and (possibly) fight with the cows if she felt so bored. A typical bullfighting image conjures up, which makes the audience burst into laughter.

Prior to (32), Jin is recounting how her ex-boyfriend orchestrated their breakup. Shen instantly picks up on that point, suggesting that Jin can move on to another piece of the break-up episode – how she took revenge in retaliation afterwards. Shen’s suggestion type of interruption (directive) contains the presupposition (Stalnaker, 1977) that Jin is just vengeful and too emotional to handle relationship breakdown, which hurts Jin’s positive face and is refuted by Jin. As with the first interruption instance, this example features Shen’s directive speech act and teasing of Jin. Both interruptions incite laughter from the audience for their jocular effect.

Commissive speech acts commit the speaker to some future cause of action to varying degrees. According to Searle (1976), the propositional content is always that speaker S does some future action. They express an intention to make the world fit the words. The deep syntactic structure of commissives is:

I verb (you) + I Fut Vol Verb (NP) (Adv).

For example, “I promise to pay you the money” is the surface realisation of “I promise you + I will pay you the money”. However, in Chinese, commissive verbs are not as detectable as their English equivalents. Commissive verbs, such as 保证 (*baozheng* ‘promise’), are syntactically optional for making a promise in Chinese. For instance, there are five grammatically correct and idiomatic ways to express “I promise I will pay you the money” in spoken Chinese, the choice of which depends on the context the utterance is situated in, as shown in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Chinese equivalents of “I promise to pay you the money”

a.	我	保证	会	还你	钱	的。
	wo	baozheng	hui	Huanni	qian	de
	I	promise	will	pay you	money	SUB
	I promise I will pay you the money.					

b.	我	会	还你	钱	的。
	wo	hui	huanni	qian	de
	I	will	pay you	money	SUB
	I will pay you the money				
c.	我	会	还你		的。
	wo	hui	huanni		de
	I	will	pay you		SUB
	I will pay you (the money).				
d.	我	会	还钱		的。
	wo	hui	huanqian		de
	I	will	pay money		SUB
	I will pay (you) the money.				
e.	我	会	还		的。
	wo	hui	huan		de
	I	will	pay		SUB
	I will pay (you the money).				

If detached from a certain context, the marker-free utterance *I will pay the money* can be interpreted as the speaker simply describing a future action that s/he is going to do, and that s/he will not necessarily get involved in committing that s/he will fulfil this promise. The simple description of a state of affairs may be identified as a representative speech act. Despite this, the difference between representative speech acts and commissive speech acts still exists. It lies in the future tense that commits the speaker to action. Normally, representatives consider the current state of a situation (represented by verbs such as describing, asserting, diagnosing, etc.) or the speaker predicts a future state of a situation (represented by verbs such as predicting). Commissive speech acts entail the sincerity condition that the speaker will deliver the future action or the speaker is responsible for the future action. In case an interruption denotes a future course of action, commissives will be annotated when the speaker assumes the responsibility of delivering the future action – either s/he will do the action or s/he will make others do the action; representatives will be annotated when the action in discussion will be delivered by persons other than the speaker. To illustrate, consider the following:

Representatives: *I predict he will come.*

Commissives: *I will come.*

A future course of action – somebody will come – appears in both cases. In representatives, the speaker *I* only assumes the role of predicting the future but does not

take responsibility FOR the action. In contrast, in commissives, the speaker *I* is responsible for the action as s/he commits to do so.

In Chinese grammar, the future tense is not marked by a tense marker in the predicate such as *will/be going to/be about to* in English, but instead, is indicated by the use of a time adverbial such as 明天 (*mingtian*, 'tomorrow'), 下周 (*xiazhou*, 'next week').

For example, instead of saying:

* 我	将要	下周	写信。
Wo	jiangyao	xiazhou	xiexin.
I	will	next week	write a letter

I will write a letter next week.

An idiomatic expression in spoken Chinese will be:

我	下周	写信。
Wo	xiazhou	xiexin.
I	next week	write a letter

I will write a letter next week.

To sum up, in the current study in order for an interruption utterance to be classified as a commissive type of speech act, it has to satisfy two conditions:

- a. The action has not yet been done and will be done in the future.
- b. The speaker is responsible for the action, directly or indirectly.

Expressive speech acts convey speakers' feelings, emotions, and attitudes towards the propositional contents which is being, or is about to be, delivered by the speaker or the hearer. Psychological states can be expressed via explicit expressive verbs such as *gongxi*/congratulate, *ganxie*/thanks, *baoqian*/apologise or implicit hints such as referring to the propositional context or using non-verbal resources (e.g., gestures and intonation). Liu (2011) conducted an experiment to determine which categories of expressive speech acts are frequently used by native Chinese speakers and identified ten expressive speech acts, as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: The 10 most frequent implicit expressive speech acts recognised by Chinese native speakers, adapted from S. Liu, 2011.

Speech acts	Prototypical utterances
<i>Ganxie</i> [thank]	Zhendeshi duokui le ni e! [We were really lucky to have your help!]
<i>Daoqian</i> [apologize]	Duibuqi, wo bushi guyide. [Excuse me, but it was an accident.]
<i>Zhuhe</i> [congratulate]	Gongxi gongxi. [Congratulations!]
<i>Huanying</i> [welcome]	Kuai jinlai zuo a. [Come in and sit.]

<i>Tongqing</i> [sympathize]	Hao keliande mao a! [How poor the cat is!]
<i>Fandui</i> [oppose]	Qu KTV taigui, wo butongyi zheme zuo. [I don't like to go to KTV because it is too expensive.]
<i>Baoyuan</i> [complain]	Zenme zhemeduo zuoye a, zhenshide. [How come there is so much homework, damn it.]
<i>Houhui</i> [regret]	Zenme zhemeduo zuoye a, zhenshide. [How come there is so much homework, damn it.]
<i>Guli</i> [encourage]	Zhongdian jiuzai yanqian, jianchi xiaqu. [The running terminal is approaching. Stick it out!]
<i>Anwei</i> [comfort]	Ni baba hui meishide, fangxi haole. [Your father should be fine. Take it easy.]

The current study will take this classification as a guideline in the course of detecting expressive speech acts in the dataset. Apart from the acts that are listed in the table, two more classes of expressives, viz., *peifu* or *xianmu* [envy/admire] and *jingtan* [surprise], are identified in the talk show data.

The illocutionary point of **representative** speech acts is to commit the speaker to the truth of the existing state of affairs. All representatives can be judged true or false and show a words-to-world fit. Searle (1976) warns that the recognition of this type of speech act is based on illocutionary point/purpose rather than on the use of certain performative verbs that may denote illocutions that are assessable in the true-false dimension. For example, “complain” denotes a representative with the added feature that it has something to do with the interest of the speaker. The illocutionary point of “complaining” is primarily to express a certain feeling and attitude towards the content under discussion (as do commissives).

The operational criteria for identifying a representative speech act are as follows:

- a. The speaker commits themselves to a certain existing state of affairs;
- b. The propositional content can be categorised as true or false;

A particular kind of representative, backchannels, is identified in this study. Backchannels are uttered normally during the current speaking, indicating that the listener acknowledges the ongoing speaking. Specifically, in the telephone conversation, producing backchannel responses may operate to assure the speaker that the other speaker is still on the line.

Table 4.14 below summarises the five modified speech act categories that are used in this study.

Table 4.14: Coding principles of speech act categories of interruption utterances

Representatives
Utterances that commit the speaker to the truth of the existing state of affairs, including backchannelling acknowledgement tokens e.g., <i>hmm/yeah/Okay, I get what you said.</i>
Rogatives
Utterances to get H (Hearer) to answer questions from S (Speaker), excluding rhetorical questions e.g., <i>What happened afterwards?</i>
Directives
Utterances designed to get H (Hearer) to do something, ranging from gentle attempts to strong ones, excluding question-asking e.g., <i>How about we charter two planes as well? / Bring me chopsticks!</i>
Expressives
Utterances that express S's (speaker) psychological attitude (e.g., admiring, sympathising, thanking, complaining) towards a certain state of affairs e.g., <i>Congratulations! / How poor your husband is!</i>
Commissives
Utterances that commit the speaker to some future course of action, with the action to be delivered in the future and the speaker responsible for the enactment of the action e.g., <i>I swear I will never do it again.</i>
*Declarations
Utterances that bring about change to the state of reality

**No instances of these have been found in the dataset so far.*

Representative utterances concern speakers' commitment to the truth of an existing state of situation, including backchannelling. Rogative utterances concern speakers' attempts to ask genuine questions. In delivering directive utterances, speakers expect the hearer to do something, either a suggestion or an order. Expressive utterances concern the speaker's psychological state (e.g., admiring, thanking, congratulating) in reaction to a certain state of affairs. Speakers express their commitment to a future course of action in commissive speech acts, in which two conditions are satisfied: a) the course of action is stated in the future, and b) the speaker is responsible for carrying out the action.

4.6.2 Interruptions as pre-sequence in this study

It becomes problematic to identify the speech act of a certain interruption when the interruption turn is used as a pre-sequence to introduce and prefigure a coming action (Levinson, 1983). In naturally occurring conversation, a speaker may utter something as

a preamble to something else that s/he is going to introduce in the immediately following turn. The *preamble* is termed a pre-sequence in CA terms. First, I will sketch the four-position pre-sequence structure (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1988) as follows:

A: Position 1 Pre-sequence

B: Position 2 Response to pre-sequence

A: Position 3 Intended action

B: Position 4 Response to intended action

In Position 1, Speaker A first initiates a pre-sequence (e.g., pre-invitation “Are you free tonight?”, pre-announcement “Guess what?”) to check the newsworthiness of a potential announcement in Position 3. Speaker B responds in the second position with *yes* or *no* in Position 2. Then Speaker A delivers the intended utterance (e.g., invitation, announcement, request). Speaker B receipts that in Position 4. Pre-sequences “are sequences produced to be specifically preliminary to determinate actions, projecting their occurrence, contingent on the response to the pre-sequence initiator” (Schegloff, 1988, p. 58). Pre-invitation, pre-announcement, and pre-request are the most common types of pre-sequence.

Speech act theory and CA interpret pre-sequences in interaction differently. Schegloff (1988) gave an often-cited example: imagine in a job interview the interviewee asking “Can I ask you a question”. From the standpoint of Speech act Theory, the question invites analysis as a request for permission to ask a question, because in this professional context interviewees are ordinarily positioned to answer questions instead of asking them. From the CA standpoint, the question falls into the category of pre-sequences. A “yes” to this utterance will elicit the question that the interviewee intends to ask; a “no” to this utterance will normally not.

What distinguishes the two types of interpretation of an utterance in interaction is the matter of the *sequential context* – i.e., the proceeding and ensuing talk in the conversation (Schegloff, 1988, 2007). As utterances inhabit turns, and turns are parts of sequences, the sequential infrastructure of talk-in-interaction underlies the understanding and analysis of utterances in naturally occurring conversation. In other words, speech acts are often delivered over a number of turns or composed of highly connected sequences. This entails that more than one utterance may work together to deliver the same speech act. In this case, these more complex strings of utterances are annotated with a single category of speech act in this study.

Position 2, Jin first cooperates with Shen by answering the question directly, then she points out that Shen's real intention is just to tease her for not yet gaining enough fame (lines 07-10). As a response to Jin's challenge to his implicature, in Position 3 Shen jokingly comments that she is a celebrity but is known in the countryside (line 11). In receipt of this, in Position 4 Shen asserts that she is not a 明星 (*mingxing*, 'star/celebrity') but a 金星 (*jinxing*, 'golden star/celebrity'), a term that is also, her name: 金星.

Shen's loaded question in Position 1 intends to make insinuations that the public might not view her as a celebrity. In Position 2, Jin recognises and points out the trap. In Position 3 Shen delivers the intended utterance, which is confronted by Jin in Position 4. Shen's utterance in Position 1, despite being delivered as a question, is actually prefiguring his intended utterance. The utterance in Position 4 is an assertion, which falls into the category of representatives. The utterance in Position 1 is attached to Position 4, therefore, Position 1 is also regarded as a representative speech act. To conclude, when annotating utterances in the two corpora in this study, interruptions functioning as a pre-sequence are annotated with the same speech act category as the intended utterance in Position 4. In so doing, this study shows that Speech Act Theory is compatible to CA in terms of its analysis of pre-sequences or indirect speech acts (see Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1988).

4.7 Intrusiveness framework and coding scheme

The aforementioned notions (e.g., information flow, affiliation orientation, interruption timing, interruption marker) are key for the operational framework that has been devised for this study. The framework is centred on a fundamental question – What linguistic features of interruptions intersect with intrusiveness and how? I will answer the two questions by measuring intrusiveness and elaborating the four linguistic features (i.e., turn size, interruption timing, interruption marker, and speech act). The detailed description and categorisation of different features of interruption will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

The intrusiveness framework provides the basis for conducting intensive coding of each interruption utterance in the two datasets (i.e., the Callhome corpus, and the talk show corpus). **Table 4.15** below shows an example of coding in the corpus.

Table 4.15: Sample of coding in the Callhome

corpus	episode	role	timing	marker	turn_size	speech_act	concordance	information_flow	affiliation_orientation	if	af	intrusiveness
Callhome	0695	fam_child	mid	um	sing_unit	rep	我,对,我] 我看 我我我看 到你这写, 我就-	boosting	affiliative	1	1	2

As shown in the above table, the interruption utterance is placed in the middle of the coding sheet, with its left side annotated with the utterance information and the four dimensions, and its right side the intrusiveness and converted value in numbers. The first column *corpus* specific which dataset the utterance is from, and the second column locates the specific conversation the utterance is. The third column indicates what kind of role the interrupter takes. In the Callhome dataset, the role refers to the social role of the speaker, such as a friend, a parent, whereas in the Jin Xing Show dataset, the role refers to the institutional role as the host or the assistant. The next four columns are about the four interruption dimensions, viz., interruption timing, interruption marker, turn size and speech act. The right-hand side of the utterance specifies information flow and affiliation orientation. There are three subcategories for each of two variables, and for the convenience of statistical calculation, I converted them into value 1-3. The sum of the value of information flow and orientation is the value for intrusiveness.

4.8 Summary

This section has described the intrusiveness framework that underpins the analysis in this work. The intrusiveness framework features two parts, the two indicators that are used to measure the degree of intrusiveness and the four dimensions that are descriptive of interruption and may intersect with interruption. In statistical terms, the former are dependent variables, and the latter predictors or independent variables. The two dependent variables the indicators that are used to measure the intrusiveness of an interruption turn are information flow (IF) and affiliation orientation (AF). IF focuses on whether the interruption utterance attends to what has just been uttered by the other speaker in the immediately prior turn, indicating the sequential and topical alignment between an interruption and its prior utterance that is being disrupted. AF focuses on the stance that the interrupter takes in relation to the interruptee's, indicating the affective alignment between the two speakers. The four dimensions focuses on four different potential features of an interruption utterance – i.e., the presence of turn-initial tokens (interruption marker), the size of an interruption utterance measured by the number of

TCUs (turn size), the timing of doing interruption in relation to the other speaker's topic-comment segmentation (interruption timing), and the illocutionary force that is conveyed in the interruption turn (speech act). The interruption framework also guides the coding scheme, that is, each interruption utterance is annotated with the subcategories of the above-mentioned dimensions. The large-scale annotation is made for the statistical analysis of the relationship between intrusiveness and interruption dimensions, which underpins the rigorous analysis of the range of interruption behaviours across the two corpora.

CHAPTER 5 Interruptions in Callhome

This chapter explores interruption in the Callhome corpus, drawing on the measurement of intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions discussed in Chapter 4, it aims to answer the following research question:

What interruption dimensions contribute to the disruptiveness of interruption utterances in everyday interaction?

Previous studies have acknowledged the correlation between interruption types and relevant social parameters, such as gender, familiarity between speakers, social status, and conversational style. As far as I am aware, there is no consensus regarding the relationship between gender and interruption in Conversation Analysis (CA). Zimmerman and West (1975) is the first to explore the relationship between gender and interruption and they claim by empirical analysis of everyday conversation that “males assert an asymmetrical right to control topics and do so without evident repercussions” (Zimmerman & West, 1975, p. 125). Contrastingly, in a study analysing telephone conversation, females speakers are reported to interrupt more than male speakers when talking with both familiars and strangers (Yuan, Liberman, & Cieri, 2007). Studies show that people interrupt less when talking with strangers than with familiar interlocutors (Truong, 2013; West & Zimmerman, 1983). Interruptions between friends in casual conversation represent an intense degree of engagement of the speakers (Tannen, 2005). Scholarship in CA has researched intensively the short, brief stretches of simultaneous speech (i.e., overlap), yet the longer stretches of simultaneous speech are understudied, particularly, research into the relationship between doing interrupting and the interactional features of interruptions (e.g., constitutional units, and illocutionary act). Research of overlap cannot reveal the nature of doing interrupting in conversation, as overlap is “unsuitable to encapsulate the characteristics of extended concurrent speech” (Zhu, 2016, p. 638).

This study shows that in casual conversations occurring between close friends and family members, the degree of disruptiveness of interruptions is closely related to the size of an interruption and the timing at which an interruption is initiated. Affiliation orientation and information flow, as the two indicators of intrusiveness, address the interpersonal facework and sequence organisation of interruption utterances in talk-in-

interaction. Interruptions that advance the current speech flow tend to show alignment with the other speaker.

The current chapter is structured as follows: Section 5.1 discusses the relationship between affiliation and information flow using chi-square test and association plots. Section 5.2 explores the relationship between intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions, viz., timing, turn size, marker, and speech act. It is found that timing, turn size, and speech act are associated with intrusive interruptions. Section 5.3 explores interruption being at work between parents and their adult children in terms of the four interruption dimensions. It is found that parents tend to initiate more interruption and earlier interruptions than their children. Section 5.4 summarises the findings pertaining to intrusiveness and its relationship with the four interruption dimensions.

5.1 The relationship between affiliation orientation and information flow in

Callhome

Affiliation orientation and information flow are two parameters that indicate the level of intrusiveness of an interruption. The two dimensions underpin different aspects of doing interruption in talk-in-interaction. Affiliation orientation concerns the interpersonal and social aspects of an interruption, whereas information flow pertains more distinctively to the sequential/structural issue of an interruption in relation to the prior utterance. As elaborated in Chapter 4, information flow (IF) is measured by the completion of the interruptee's utterance and the extent to which it maintains the current topic under discussion. IF-hindering occurs with utterances that cause the prior speaker/interruptee to drop his/her utterance, ignore the prior speaker/interruptee's immediate topic needs (e.g., asking questions), or abruptly change the topic. Conversely, IF-boosting is at play with utterances that cater to the prior speaker's topic needs via answering questions, making inquiries or supplementing details that expand on the ongoing topic. Affiliation orientation (AF) as the other parameter of intrusiveness, concerns the interpersonal stance-taking between the interruptee's utterances and the interrupter's responses. It thus corresponds quite straightforwardly to the interrupter's overt attitude, either endorsing, challenging or maintaining the interruptee's stance or message. Affiliative attitudes stand out when the interrupter cooperates with the interruptee via making further inquiries regarding the progression of the storytelling, and/or by showing agreement and sympathy. Disaffiliative attitudes are at play when interruptions are designed to disalign with the interruptee through disagreement, apathy,

or mockery. Topic shift has been deemed a strong indicator of turn-competitive interruptions, as it may alter the course of the talk that the other speaker was attending to (Goldberg, 1990; Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994; Murata, 1994). In order to measure and test the associations between the two categorical variables, I conducted a chi-square test, as reported in Figure 5.1.

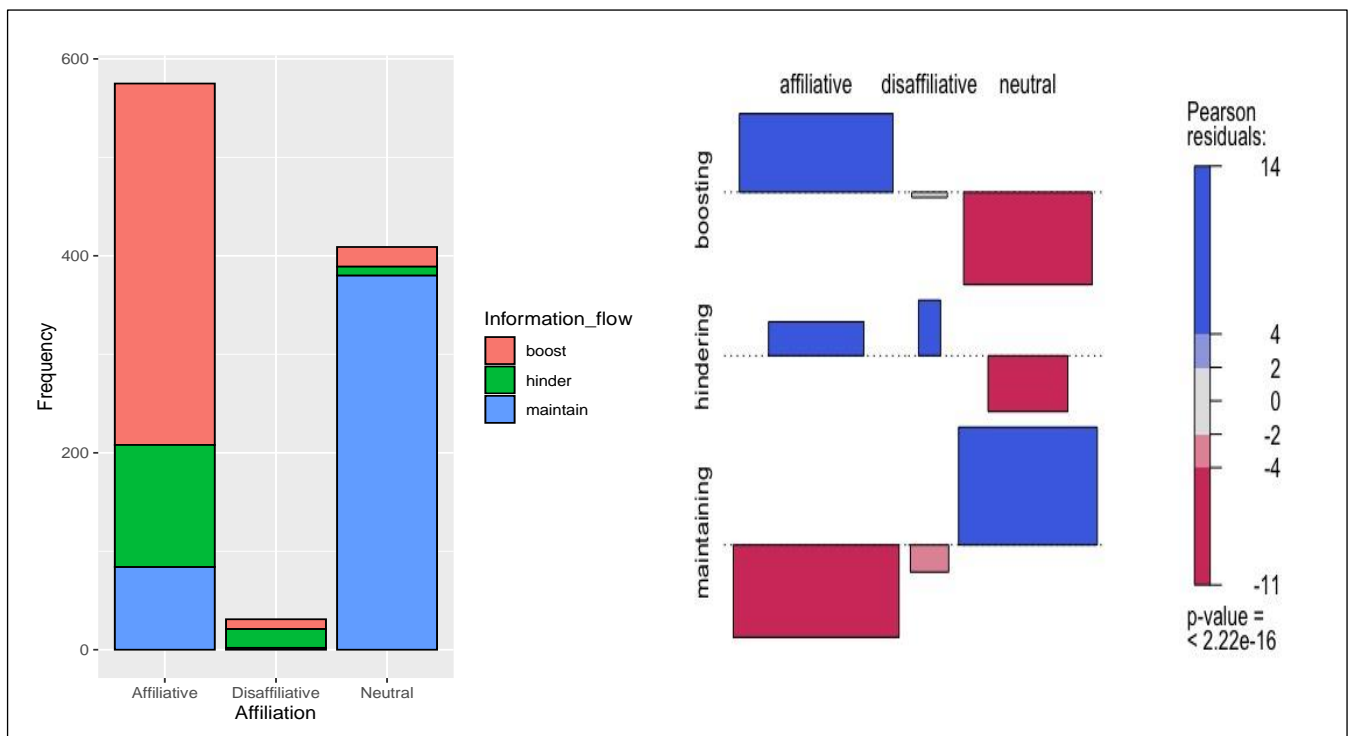


Figure 5.1: Stacked plots and significance of three categories of information flow in affiliation in *Callhome*

The bar plot on the left in Figure 5.1 shows the frequency of AF and IF in the telephone conversations. The bars represent the three subcategories of affiliation (affiliative, disaffiliative and neutral, identified on the x axis), the colours (identified in the key) represent the three subcategories of information flow, and the y axis represents the frequency of each combination of the subcategories of AF and IF. Affiliative interruptions (57%) and neutral interruptions (40%) occur the most frequently, whereas disaffiliative interruptions only make up 3%. The association plot at the right-hand side provides a visualisation of the Pearson residuals based on the chi-square differences between observed and predicted occurrences, with upper indicating positive residuals and lower indicating negative ones (Tantucci & Wang, 2020a). The p-value of the model is given at the bottom right corner ($p\text{-value} = < 2.22e-16$). A residual greater than 2 or less than -2 represents a significant association (Levshina, 2015). The darker the colour, the

stronger the association between two variables. The plot shows that AF and IF are significantly associated ($p\text{-value} \leq 2.22e-16$). Interruptions that show affiliative attitudes and either boost or hinder the IF (affiliative & boosting, affiliative & hindering), ones that show disaffiliative attitudes and hinder the IF (disaffiliative & hindering), and ones that show AF-neutral and IF-maintaining (neutral & maintaining) all have strong associations, as displayed in the upward cells in blue.

This indicates that, in general, the two dimensions of intrusiveness – information flow and affiliation orientation – are correlated with positive correlations. That is, interruptions that advance the information flow also register affiliative orientation towards the other speaker. Conversely, interruptions that disrupt the ongoing flow of topic also disalign with the other speaker. This is arguably because speakers’ stance-taking intersects with their treatment of information flow in naturalistic conversation. When a speaker displays affiliative attitude towards the co-participant epistemically or affectively, s/he presumably follows and advance the ongoing flow of information delivered by the co-participant. The advancement of flow can be realised in a few practices, for instance, expanding on it via fleshing out details voluntarily or under request, proffering positive evaluation, and requesting further information. The great majority of affiliative practices, in the meantime, entails paying attention to the current topic and making efforts that contribute to its progression (e.g., asking further inquiries), which explains the presence of IF-boosting, hence the strong association between affiliation and information flow.

5.1.1 Positive correlation between AF and IF in Callhome

As shown in Figure 5.1 above, AF and IF are positively correlated. Affiliative interruptions tend to boost the current progressivity in conversation, and vice versa. In the following, I will illustrate this positive correlation with three examples. The previous example (11) *Kyoto University* features affiliative AF and IF-boosting, Example (34) *letters* features disaffiliative AF and IF-hindering, and another previous example (10) *expenditure* is about backchannel interruptions with neutral affiliation and IF-maintaining.

(11) callhome_0695 Kyoto University (A and B are relatives, talking about the study plan of B’s son.)

01	B	他	想	复习,	复习	功课
		Ta	xiang	fuxi,	fuxi	gongke
		He	want	review,	review	lesson
		He wants to review the content of the lessons and				
02		>继续<	考,	明年	想	考 ↓ <京都大【学】>

>jixu< kao, mingnian xiang kao <jingdu da[xue]>
 >continue< sit, next year want sit <Kyoto University >
 continue to apply for other universities. He wants to apply to Kyoto University next year.

03 → A: 【京都】大学是好学校。
 [jingdu] daxue shi hao xuexiao
 Kyoto University be good university
 Kyoto University is a top university.

04 → A: 他现在在什【么学-】
 Ta xianzai zai shenm xue-
 He now at what sch-
Which university is he studying at?

05 → B: 【京都】大学是↑绝对名牌【啦】
 [jindu] daxue shi ↑juedui mingpai la
 Kyoto university be↑absolute famous EC
Kyoto university is definitely a top university

Here, A responds to B's message by expanding on it. In line 02, B says that her son is going to apply for Kyoto University. Noticeably, 京都大学 (*jingdu daxue*, 'Kyoto University') features a marked falling intonational shift as well as being uttered at a much slower pace in contrast with the surrounding utterances. B's falling intonation contour may project the impending completion of a syntactical unit (Clayman, 2013b). The notably diminished tempo marked at 京都大学 may signal that B is foregrounding this piece of information and waiting for A's comments. As expected, in line 03 A acknowledges that Kyoto University is a prestigious university. A's utterance briefly overlaps with B's final word 学, which shows A's high engagement in the stretch of talk (Yuan, Liberman, & Cieri, 2006). A's positive evaluation displays that he has recognised and understood B's message profiling Kyoto University and that it is top-ranking, and consequently, affiliates with the stance B has conveyed or implied. In so doing, A satisfies B's positive face by acknowledging the reputation of the university that B's son is going to apply for. A's insertion facilitates B's speech flow about her son's university application by adding his evaluation of the university. Therefore, A's utterance in 03 serves to boost the information flow and affiliate with B's utterance concurrently.

Interruptions that disaffiliate with the other speaker tend to disregard the flow of information, as seen in cases where the interruptee drops his/her utterance when overlapping talk occurs, the interrupter ends the current topic before it is actually

completed and shifts to another. In the following example, B1²² inserts a rhetorical question asking why A has not sent a letter to her uncle since it would take her merely ten minutes. B1 initiates his interruption when A has explained indirectly that she has to attend to another failed group task.

(34) callhome_0022 letters

- 01 A: 好的, 有空 等 我 放假, 现在 已经 放假 了.
 Haode, youkong deng wo fangjia, xianzai yijing fangjia le
 Alright, have time wait I on holiday, now already on holiday PF
 Alright, wait till the holiday comes. Actually, it is summer holiday now.
- 02 但是 我 有 一门课, 我们 七个人 做 project, 结果, 结果 全都 in[complete]
 Danshi wo you yimenke, women qigeren zuo project, jieguo, jieguo quandou
 in[complete]
 But I have one module, we seven people do project, result, result all incomplete
 But I had a group project marked as incomplete.
- 03 → B1: [你 写信] 不是
 挺 快 吗, 十分钟 就 可以 写 完
 Ni xiexing bushi
 Ting kuai ma, shifenzhong jiu keyi xie wan
 you write letter no
 quite fast Q, ten minutes just can write over
You are good at writing letters, aren't you? You can finish writing a letter within ten minutes.

This conversation occurred between Father (B1) and Daughter (A) who was studying in the United States. Prior to this extract, Mother had asked A to write a thank-you letter to her uncle. A said she was too busy to write it now. Mother insisted on it by suggesting doing it during the summer holiday. The daughter's response starts in line 01. What is interesting about the two unit in line 01 is that the first unit 好的, 有空等我放假 (*haode, youkong dengwo fangjia*, 'alright, wait till the holiday comes') seems to show that the daughter is affiliating with Mother's proposal of handling the letter during the summer; however, this affiliation is immediately cancelled as she soon realises it is actually the summer holiday at the moment. This change of state is reflected in the second unit in line 01 现在已经放假了 (*xianzai yijing fangjia le*, 'Actually it is summer holiday

²² There are two persons on the other side of the line, A's mother and father. A first talks to her mother, and then the two are joined by A's father. Therefore, A's mother is marked as B, and her father is marked as B1.

But it is too far to travel from America to China.

In this exchange A is talking about his financial situation in the United States: thanks to the funding, he and his wife no longer live on an extremely tight budget. B responds to A's description with two stretches of acknowledgement token 嗯 (*en*, 'hm') respectively in lines 02 and 03. B's *generic backchannelling* (cf. Bavelas, Coates, & Johnson, 2002) therefore provides an immediate response to the ongoing speaking without disturbing the current utterance or attempting to usurp the turn floor. A completes his utterance and shifts the topic in line 04 despite two stretches of short interjections. In this case, the completion of the first speaker's utterance and no hearing or understanding check allow the piece of information to flow smoothly. B does not contribute actively to the topic development or the attitude management. Therefore, B's backchanneling interjections demonstrate neutral evaluations and maintain the conversational flow.

As seen in the association plot in Figure 5.1, instances where IF-maintaining combines with neutral AF occur more frequently than expected. In other words, interruption utterances that maintain IF tend not be characterised by overt stance-taking towards the recipient. In the Callhome dataset, neutral evaluative stances cluster around one word or two-word repetitive continuers which "indicate activity alignment but do not indicate recipient stance" (Stivers, 2013, p. 201). The association between affiliative AF and boosting IF, disaffiliative AF and hindering IF, neutral AF and maintaining IF shows that there is a positive correlation between the two intrusiveness indicators.

5.1.2 "Unexpected" cases: IF-hindering showing affiliative stance in Callhome

Despite the strong positive correlation between IF and AF, there are "unexpected" cases where affiliative interruptions may disrupt the other speaker's transmission of information. This positive correlation is also statistically significant as shown in the blue cells in Figure 5.1. In telephone conversations, speakers may endorse the co-participant's conveyed stance via varied practices, such as praising, showing empathy, proffering supporting details and aligning with the other speaker. However, at the same time, speakers do not seem to show much concern about co-participant's rights to complete their current turn-in-progress. In the Callhome corpus, the great majority (82%) of hindering IF interruptions (152/1014) show affiliative stances towards the other speaker. IF-hindering comes when 1) the interruptee has to abort his/her utterance before completion resulting from a range of practices from the interrupter, or 2) the interrupter

does not show an immediate uptake of the current topic needs initiated by the interruptee, for instance, by not responding to a question from the interruptee, providing details to substantiate prior argument, e.g., Example (35), or making evaluative comments towards the status of affairs in prior utterances, e.g., Example (36) *borrow money*. The interruptee's utterances in Examples 35-36 below are incomplete due to the interruption from their interlocutor. The interruptions in Example (35) disrupt the flow by lingering on the elaboration of self's previously made argument, whereas the interruptions in Example (36) show a high degree of engagement with the prior speaker's disclosure by uttering affective evaluation. Interruptions in both examples show alignment and rapport with the other interlocutor but disrupt the progressivity of the prior speakers' speaking.

(35) callhome_0695 big city

- 01 B: 比较好一点, 【中等】城市, 不要到太大, 【【太大°城市°, 那-】】
 Bijiao hao yidian [zhogndeng] chengshi, buyao dao taida, [[taida chengshi, na]]
 relatively good a bit, medium city don't go too big, [[too big city, then-]
 It is better to live in a medium city. Don't go to too big cities. They-
- 02 A: 【对】
 Dui
 Right
 Yeah
- 03 A: 【【太大了, 呃】】.
 [[taida le, er]]
 [[too big PF, EC]]
 Yes too big
- 04 A: 不过 【美国人-】 (0.97s) 不过 美国 【人-】.
 Buguo [meiguoren] (0.97s) buguo meiguo[ren-]
 But American but American-
 But Americans -, but Americans -
- 05 → B: 【哎, 我也】不喜欢太大°城市° 【【就到】】中等 城市
 [ai, wo ye bu] xihuan taida chengshi [[[jiudao] zhongdeng chengshi,
 Yeah, I also no like too big city just go medium city
Yeah, I don't like big cities either. I want to go to medium cities.
- 06 → <住房>, 生活条件, <吃> 都可以, 我就觉得行啊
 <Zhufang>, shenghuotiaojian, <chi> dou keyi, wo jiu jue de xing a
 Housing, living conditions, eating all fine I just think okay

As long as the housing, living conditions and food are all fine, I think medium-sized cities are good options.

07 A: 对 对 对, 对 (hhh) 这个 【: 哎:】 .
 Dui dui dui dui (hh) zhege ai
 Yes, yes, yes, this one EC
 Yea, this is true, yeah

Prior to this extract, A has said that he wants to move to a big city upon graduation as the city he is based at now is too small. In line 01 B aligns with A, yet holds her opinion back slightly by adding that a medium-sized city but not too big one is a better choice. A expresses solidarity via first producing the one-word token 对 (*dui*, ‘yes’) and then repeating B’s evaluative term 太大 (*taida*, ‘too big’). A’s affiliative stance is intensified by preserving the syntactic format of the evaluative term 太大 (*taida*, ‘too big’) uttered by B in the prior turn (see discussion of agreement displayed by syntactic parallelism in Pomerantz, 1984). In line 04, A seems to expand on the topic about the ideal city to live in, but his utterance is cut off twice, as shown by the dash (-) at the end of each chunk 不过美国人- (*buguo meiguoren*, ‘yet Americans’). It seems that B has not finished her argument and is still pushing her idea about medium cities being better places to live with more evidence regarding food, accommodation, etc. B’s interjection in line 05 is possible partly due to the “free” turn-taking system in mundane conversations where “the order, size, and type of turns are free to vary” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 140). A fails to complete his turn due to B’s interjection and therefore, his intended speech flow in line 04 is delayed. B’s insertion, in the meantime, demonstrates that she is actively engaged in this discussion proposed by A and would like to contribute more. To conclude, B’s interruption utterance inhibits A’s speech flow, yet it shows B’s solidarity with A by showing enthusiasm for the discussion and willingness to bring more evidence to the topic. By the same token, Example (36) *borrow money* demonstrates another situation whereby interruptions can be affiliative and IF-hindering at the same time.

(36) callhome_0104 borrow money

01 B: 她的 钱 给 她 老爹 都 借去 了
 tade qian gei ta laodie dou jiequ le
 her money PASS her old dad all borrow CRS
 Her father borrowed all her money.
02 A: 喔 真的 啊.
 o zhende a.

- Wow true EC
oh, really?
- 03 B: 对啊 她 [老爹-].
Duia ta laodie-
Yeah, her old dad-
Yes, her father-
- 04 → A: [她 这么] 老实 干吗?
[ta zheme] laoshi ganma?
[she so] simple-minded why?
Why she was so simple-minded?

The two speakers are talking about their common friend Xiuzhen lending all her money to her father. Prior to this extract, A has asked why Xiuzhen is not coming to attend the Atlanta Summer Olympics even when she has got plenty of time and money. B reveals that all her money was borrowed by her father (Line 01). A seems quite shocked. In the following line, she initiates the utterance with the change-of-state token 喔 (*o* 'oh') (Heritage, 1998), which shows that she did not know that before asking B and B's telling afforded her with epistemic knowledge about what had recently happened to Xiuzhen. The sentence-final particle 啊 also shows A's affective reaction towards the revelation. The change-of-state token and the sentence-final particle together intensify A's interest in the current topic and signal that she may want to know more. B offers an involved response by revealing a further message about Xiuzhen's father (line 03), whilst A is inserting an evaluation type of question (line 04). B drops her utterance (line 03) after producing two words that overlap with A's. B has not yet completed her information transmission, whereas A is eager to demonstrate her evaluative stance after hearing the news by asking why Xiuzhen is so naïve as to have lent all her money. A's question shows that she has received B's message and is expressing her affective and evaluative stance towards this event. A's evaluation affiliates with B's overall stance-taking. To conclude, A's evaluative interruption utterance aligns with B through showing interest in the telling and building rapport with B. Therefore, A's interruption registers an affiliative attitude despite the fact that it deters B from completing her utterance.

The occurrence of interruption utterances that hinder the IF and, at the same time, display an affiliative stance towards the other speaker is frequent (82% of hindering cases as stated earlier). The negative association between affiliative stance and hindering is also statistically significant, as shown in the association plot in Figure 5.1. This association

demonstrates that in the Callhome telephone conversation speakers' establishment of affiliation with the other speaker is not confined to their treatment of the topic under discussion. This, in turn, shows that speakers' tendency towards affiliation building in conversation is relatively independent from their attention to sequence of utterances. The reason for this is arguably twofold.

First, it involves the nature of turn-taking organisation in casual conversations as opposed to conversations in institutional settings. In institutional interaction, speakers often undertake pre-assigned roles and have participatory rights in accordance with the context (Itakura, 2001), which is in stark contrast with the less constrained style in everyday interaction. Everyday conversation feature a less constrained style. This less constrained style means that speakers tend to talk freely without being assigned any specific topic or speaking role. The length of utterance varies and there is no fix pattern of turn allocation – the way the next turn floor is given or obtained. Speakers engage in various types of turn organisation with an unconstrained flow of speech, such as asking/answering questions, initiating/expanding/shifting a topic. There are no constraints in achieving these interactional goals within a certain number of turns or in continuous turns. For instance, in Example (35) *big city* B completes her idea about settling down in a medium-sized city in several discreet turns with several disruptions from the other interlocutor.

Second, this relative independence between speakers' stance-taking and attention to the propositional information of prior utterance may be related to the data coming from a cooperation-oriented society where cooperativeness and engagement in interaction is highly valued and much anticipated. Cooperativeness refers to speakers' orientation to showing interest in, agreement with and positive evaluation of the stances and messages other speaker or the telling (cf. propositional face work in Tantucci & Wang, 2018). According to Makri-Tsilipakou (2015), for certain culture groups such as Antiguans, New York Jews (see Tannen, 2005), African Americans, Italians, and Greeks, active engagement in conversation often results in collaborative floor sharing and simultaneous talk. This active engagement is also demonstrated by Chinese speakers in this study in their emphasis of solidarity and high involvement. In the Chinese society, harmony is regarded as one of its core cultural values (G. Chen, 2013). Maintaining harmony is the guiding principle in social interaction particularly when it comes to the practice of 礼 (*li* 'courtesy/politeness') in which people resort to the avoidance of aggressive behaviours and rejection (G. Chen, 2000). One way of deferring to this kind of harmony is to display

active engagement and interest in the ongoing speaking by utilising a variety of linguistic devices, such as pragmatic marking, reproducing prior utterances, and positive evaluations (see Tantucci & Wang, 2018, 2021b, 2021a; Y. F. Wang, Tsai, Goodman, & Lin, 2010). For instance, Tantucci and Wang (2021a) found that dialogic resonance – formal and phonetic affinities with prior utterances in conversation – is significantly correlated with interactional engagement in Chinese conversation. In Chinese interaction, the display of engagement and solidarity is prioritised over any formal turn-taking rules. This explains the occurrence of the identified unexpected instances in the Callhome corpus – speakers demonstrate active engagement via affiliative stance-taking while at the same time disrupt the information transmission of the prior speaker.

To sum up, in the telephone conversations, the speaker’s stance-taking (AF) and their attention to the information transmitted in prior utterances (IF) are positively correlated. Affiliative interruptions are more likely to sequentially align with the prior utterance, stay on the topic in discussion, and may expand on it. There are unexpected cases where the interrupter disrupts the information transmission of the prior speaker (IF-hindering) while expressing affiliative stance. The occurrence of these unexpected cases is largely because active engagement and expression of enthusiasm in the ongoing conversation are highly valued in Chinese interaction. The willingness to participate in and contribute to the speaking in discussion takes precedence over the sequential alignment with the prior utterance. To put bluntly, showing affiliative stances towards the speaker is more important than letting the co-participant finishes speaking or stay on and expanding on the ongoing topic. I will explain this feature of Chinese talk-in-interaction later in Chapter 7.

5.2 Intrusiveness and interruption dimensions in Callhome

This section tackles the research question regarding levels of intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions – timing, marker, turn size, and speech act. The degree of intrusiveness of interruption utterances is achieved by adding up the numeric values of affiliation (AF) and information flow (IF). AF falls into three subcategories: *affiliative* (1), *neutral* (2), and *disaffiliative* (3). Likewise, IF falls into three subcategories: *boosting* (1), *maintaining* (2), and *hindering* (3). For example, if a backchannel interruption is annotated as *maintaining* for IF and *neutral* for AF, its intrusiveness value is 4 (2+2). The higher the value, the higher the degree of intrusiveness, with its value in the Callhome corpus ranging from 2 to 6.

To test the effect of the four dimensions of interruption on intrusiveness, I fitted a multivariate linear regression model (cf. Fox & Weisberg, 2011). Multivariate regression is a machine learning algorithm used to predict the output of one dependent variable based on multiple predictors. Generally, the multivariate regression model deals with the issue that one dependent variable depends on multiple factors. In this case, the regression model is fitted with intrusiveness (add-up value of information flow and affiliation orientation) as the outcome variable and interruption timing (annotated as *timing*), turn size (annotated as *turn_size*), interruption marker (annotated as *marker*), and speech act (annotated as *speech_act*) as independent variable. I also tested the potential interaction effects between the independent variables viz., whether the four interruption dimensions interact with each other. A stepwise testing result is presented below.

Table 5.1: Effects of four interruption dimensions on intrusiveness in Callhome

Predictor	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	3.24295	0.38662	8.388	< 2e-16	***
timinginitial	0.04543	0.16908	0.269	0.78821	
timingmid	0.07627	0.1164	0.655	0.51243	
turn_sizemult_unit	-1.62292	0.15479	-10.485	< 2E-16	***
turn_sizing_unit	-1.33919	0.12309	-10.88	< 2E-16	***
markermul_la	0.05468	0.1785	0.306	0.75942	
markerpm	-0.21284	0.10654	-0.535	0.59265	
speech_actdir	1.43021	0.48495	2.949	0.00326	**
speech_actexp	0.7696	0.40137	1.917	0.05547	.
speech_actrep	0.62442	0.37237	1.677	0.09387	.
speech_actrog	0.61982	0.38133	1.625	0.10438	
timinginitial:turn_sizemult_unit	1.44822	0.3127	4.631	4.11E-06	***
timingmid:turn_sizemult_unit	0.50451	0.21984	2.295	0.02194	*
timinginitial:turn_sizing_unit	0.60102	0.1984	3.029	0.00251	**
timingmid:turn_sizing_unit	0.66502	0.13873	4.793	1.89E-06	***

N=1014, Adjusted R-squared: 0.3451, p-value: < 2.2e-16

The '*', '**', '***' indicate increasingly significant p-values, while '.' indicates a p-value marginally higher than 0.05.

As can be seen from the bottom of Table 5.1, the *p*-value of the F-statistic is <2.2e-16, which is highly significant. This means that at least one of the predictor variables is significantly related to the outcome variable (i.e., intrusiveness). The Adjust R-squared value (0.3451) in this case means that 34.51% of the variance in the measure of

intrusiveness can be predicted by interruption timing, turn size and speech act. The first column (Predictor) specifies the sub-categories of each predictor variable. The second column (Estimate) specifies the coefficient which can be interpreted as the effect on intrusiveness of a one unit increase in the predictor. For instance, the coefficient of *turn_sizemult_unit* (i.e., multi-unit turns size) is approximately -1.62; this means that every unit of additional multi-unit turn will decrease the average intrusiveness by 1.62. The intercept of this model is approximately 3.24 which means the expected value of the outcome variable (i.e., intrusiveness) when all the four predictor variables are zero and all subcategories of the predictors are at their reference levels.

As shown in Table 5.1, turn size and speech act among the four predictor variables significantly contribute to intrusiveness (p -value $< 2e-16$). Compared with isolated characters (mostly backchannels), interruptions with single-turn units and multiple-turn units are associated with lower levels of intrusiveness, which means that non-backchanneling interruptions tend to boost the ongoing information flow and affectively align with the prior speaker. Interruptions of directive speech acts are also significantly more intrusive than other types of interruptions. The interaction between turn size and interruption timing significantly contributes to intrusiveness as well. Interruptions of single or multi-unit size initiated at early timing are significantly more intrusive than backchannel interruptions produced at the turn completion point. Particularly, multi-unit interruptions initiated at the initial timing (*timinginitial:turn_sizemult_unit*) and single-unit interruptions initiated at the middle timing (*timingmid:turn_sizesing_unit*) are most intrusive.

In a word, degree of intrusiveness is significantly related to the formal and functional aspects of interruption utterances. Both interruption timing and turn size concern the formal aspect of doing interruption. As for interruption timing, the topic - comment structure of the Chinese language is utilised to categorise a certain interruption as displaying initial, middle or final timing. Length of turn concerns the unit types of certain interruption utterances: single units comprised of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Sacks et al., 1974) or multiple units. In contrast, the investigation of the types of speech act concerns the functional aspect of doing interrupting. It explores the action conveyed through the production of interruption utterances. In the following, I will elaborate how the three interactional features of interruption, viz., interaction between timing and turn size, turn size, and speech act are associated with intrusiveness. I will also examine why interruption markers show no significant association with intrusiveness.

5.2.1 Early timing with non-backchannel interruptions showing higher degree of intrusiveness in Callhome

The interaction of interruption timing and turn size has a significant effect on the intrusiveness level of a particular interruption utterance, as seen in **Table 5.1**. Interruption utterances are seen as more intrusive when interruptions are not backchannel tokens and initiated at the beginning or middle stage of the other speaker's utterance. This is largely because in the Callhome corpus most backchannels are produced to signal listener's response with little to no propositional meanings and with no attempt to take the turn floor; while they could be initiated at the different stages of another's speech (i.e., initial, middle or final timing), backchannel responses are still less likely to influence the information flow of prior speech or display affiliation orientation towards the prior speaker. Therefore, the influence of the interaction between the two variables (interruption timing and turn size) on intrusiveness actually comes down to largely the influence of the single variable, viz., interruption timing. Therefore, in this section I will focus on explicating the influence of interruption timing on intrusiveness in the Callhome corpus. Section 5.2.2 is dedicated to turn size in Callhome as turn size itself is associated with intrusiveness.

As elaborated in Section 4.4, interruption timing concerns the timing of making an interruption in relation to the syntactic segment of the recipient's utterance: inserting utterances within the realm of *topic* corresponds to initial timing; inserting utterances within the realm of *comment* and before the turn completion point corresponds to middle timing; and inserting utterances within the turn completion point, usually within three-word tokens, corresponds to final timing. Early interruption (i.e., initial and middle interruptions) means that the previous utterance is disrupted before the proposition is completed. The occurrence of early interruption in the Callhome dataset is attributed to different scenarios. In one, for instance, the interrupter focuses on the telling of prior utterance and adding details (cf. how Speaker B keeps substantiating living in a medium city in previous Example ((35)). In another, the interrupter prioritises his/her interest and high involvement in another speaker's telling (cf. Speaker B expressing her concern about their mutual friend being too naive in previous Example(36) *borrow money*).

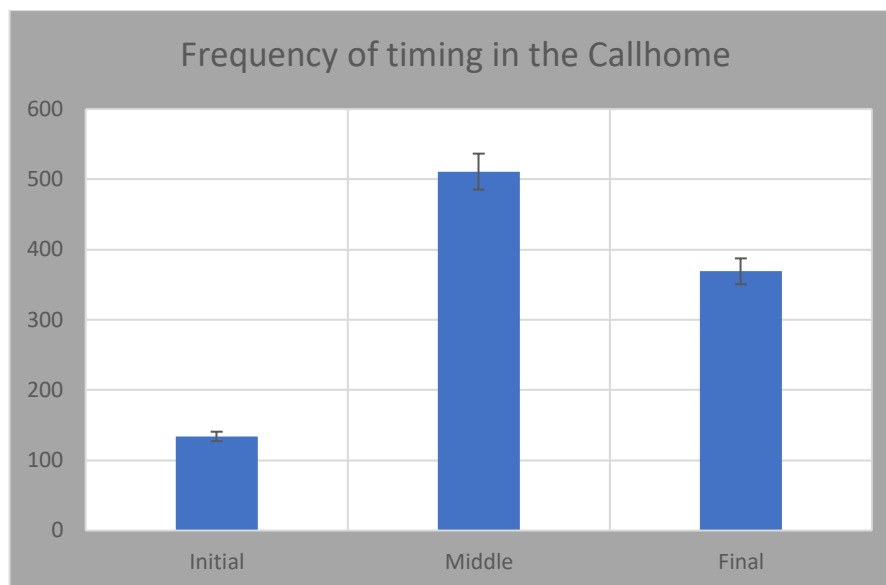


Figure 5.2: *Frequency of initial, middle and final timing of interruptions in Callhome*

The disparity between the different types of interruption timing reveals an interesting phenomenon in everyday talk-in-interaction between familiar speakers in Chinese. In the Callhome dataset, middle interruptions occur most frequently (50.4%), final interruptions come second (36.4%), and initial interruptions are the least common (13.2%), as shown in Figure 5.2. As elaborated in Chapter 4, final interruptions occur in the proximity of the other speaker's transition relevant place (TRP) where legitimate speakership change is expected to happen (Drummond, 1989; Heldner et al., 2010; Jefferson, 1984). In the CA literature, the TRP is used as a demarcation between overlap and interruption. Overlaps which occur in the proximity of the TRP are simply seen as a harmless or inadvertent error (Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994; Talbot, 1992) in conversations where the next speaker starts talking slightly before the current speaker finishes his/her turn utterance, whereas interruptions which occur before the arrival of the TRP are seen as a deliberate usurping of the turn floor and transgression upon the other's speaking rights (Hutchby, 1992). In this study, legitimate speakership change (final interruptions) only accounts for approximately one third of interruption instances. The rest of interruptions occur where speakership change is not expected to happen (initial and middle interruptions). This illustrates that the great majority of interruptions take place when the interrupter is clearly aware of the speaking in progress, rather than the innocuous outcome of one speaker taking turn floor within the prior speaker's transition relevance place. In other words, interruptions are initiated when the current speaking is clearly in progress and yet far from completion. The prevalence of early interruptions,

along with instances of IF-hindering and affiliative speaker’s stance, contributes to the “high involvement” (Tannen, 2005) conversational style that speakers have demonstrate in the two datasets in this study. I will explain this conversational style in Chinese talk-in-interaction in detail in Chapter 7.

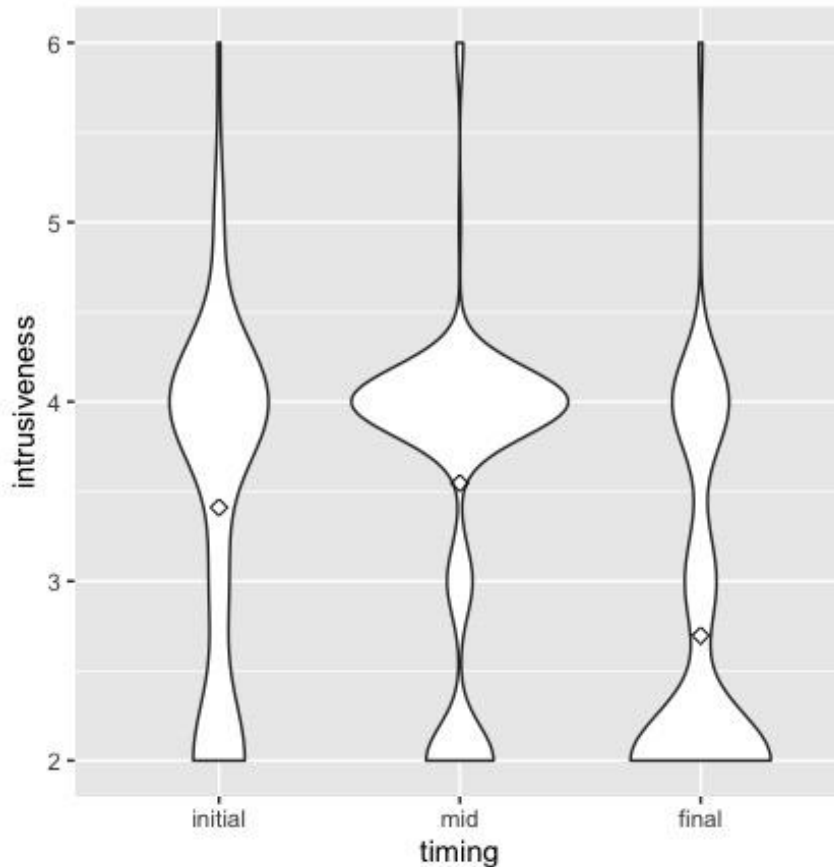


Figure 5.3: Violin plots of interruption timing with intrusiveness (2-6) in *Callhome* (N=1014)

The violin plots in Figure 5.3 above illustrate the density distribution of initial, middle, and final interruptions in relation to different intrusiveness values. The fatter the kernel the higher the density at a specific level on the y axis. The plots show that intrusiveness at level 4 is associated the most with interruptions of middle timing. Initial and middle timings are much less frequently associated with Level 2 intrusiveness than final interruptions. This entails that initial and middle timings of interruptions are less likely to be associated with an interrupter’s affiliation with the other speakers and to advance the current flow of information. All three levels of timing have a few instances that are identified as the most intrusive utterances (i.e., intrusiveness 6 as level 3 for both information flow and affiliation orientation). Jointly, this shows that interruptions occurring later are associated with lower levels of intrusiveness. In other words, taken

into consideration of the interaction between timing and turn size, non-backchannel interruptions that are produced at the turn completion point of the other speaker's utterance tend to show more alignment and solidarity.

It is worth noting that interruptions with level 4 intrusiveness account for half of all interruption occurrences (50.4%) in Callhome. There are two main patterns associated with level 4 intrusiveness in the Callhome dataset: backchannels inserted as butting in interruptions (66%), and non-backchanneling utterances inserted with propositional content (34%). Backchanneling utterances primarily signal listenership and acknowledge the ongoing conversation, rather than registering the listener's stance-taking towards the ongoing storytelling (C. Goodwin, 1986; Heinz, 2003; Maynard, 1990; M. McCarthy, 2003). Backchanneling interruptions do not actively impact on the current flow of information. With neutral values for both IF and AF, backchanneling interruptions score 4 for intrusiveness. The non-backchanneling interruptions are often proactive in registering listeners' affiliation (affiliative or disaffiliative) and their impact on the ongoing information flow (boosting or hindering). Example (37) illustrates how a middle interruption disrupts the other speaker's flow of topic organisation, while still displaying affiliation towards the ongoing narrative. Combined, this middle interruption scores 4 for intrusiveness.

(37) callhome_0742 driving

- 01 A: 哈 【噢,那】 中国 可能 开车 是 很 难, 我想.
 Ha o, na zhongguo keneng kaiche shi hen nan, woxiang
 Huh, [yeah na] China maybe driving be very difficult, I think
 Huh, then it is difficult to drive in China, I think.
- 02 B: ((【@@@】))
- 03 A: 现在 【你-】
 xianzai [ni-]
 now [you-]
 Now you-
- 04 → B: 【因为】人 太多 了 哈
 [yinwei] ren taiduo le ha
 Because people too many PF huh
 It is because there are too many people, isn't it?
- 05 A: 对啊, 对啊.
 Duia, duia
 That's right, that's right

- 03 B: 美国人 就 告诉 了
 Meiguoren jiu gaosu le
 American simply tell PF
 An American told me (it is a 15-minute toll-free call).

Prior to this exchange, B was confirming with A that this is a free call. In line 01 A says he reckons it is a free call. B starts to talk during A's third turn unit 它就是 (*tajiushi*, 'it is just') before A produces the topic and is about the comment on the topic, viz., mentioning why he thinks so. A drops his turn due to B's interjection. B's middle interruption aligns with A's claim as well as warranting why she also thinks it is a free call. In this example, B's display of engagement in the ongoing topic is twofold: 1) alignment with A's stance ("I think so too") and 2) bringing to the forefront the shared knowledge ("Just now an American guy told me") that could provide evidence for the stance. One thing worth noting is that B's interruption comes after A's second attempt at uttering the reason: the first being 因它呢 (*yin ta ne*, 'because it'), the second being 它就是- (*ta jiushi*, 'it is-'). B displays her engagement in the talk and solidarity with A through active interruptions at the expense of A's turn-completion rights. The projectability of turn utterance that is attributable to the subject-verb-object language structure may also explain the presence of evidence in B's interruption. The second turn unit 因它呢 (*yin ta ne*, 'because it') in A's utterance signals that he is about to tell why he thinks the call is free. The third turn unit follows the subject-verb-object (although the object is not produced due to B's interjection) language structure, so that B can project the turn in the third unit.

To conclude, interruption timing alone is not significantly correlated with intrusiveness. Non-backchannel interruptions that are initiated in the early phase of a co-participant's speech are more likely to be intrusive in everyday talk in Chinese talk-in-interaction. The prevalent early interruptions arguably demonstrate a Chinese mindset of engaging in conversation: the display of solidarity and enthusiasm takes precedence over the sequential queuing for turns. This mindset, in turn, contributes to the *high involvement* (Tannen, 2005) conversational style in Chinese talk-in-interaction

5.2.2 Backchannel turn size showing higher degree of intrusiveness in Callhome

As elaborated in Chapter 4, the dimension of turn size in this study generally concerns whether the interruption is comprised of one single-turn unit or multiple-turn units. According to Sacks (1974), turn-types in English include sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions. Turn size in this study falls into three categories: 1) those represented by isolated characters, mainly backchanneling tokens (e.g., 嗯嗯, *enen*, ‘uh-huh, hmm’), affective tokens (e.g., 妈呀, *maya*, ‘oh my’), or single word utterances (e.g., 对, *dui* ‘yes’); 2) single-unit types, made up of a single clause or a combination of a single clause and backchanneling tokens; 3) multiple-unit types, made up of more than one single clause. Each unit-type corresponds to an independent unit with propositional meaning regardless of its completion of meaning. For instance, the aborted sentential construction 她[老爹-] (*ta laodie-*, ‘her dad-’) in Example (36) and 美国人- (*meiguo ren-* ‘American’) in Example (38) does not represent a complete propositional meaning, though they count as turn units. Speakers in all three cases resumed their interrupted utterances, though. Therefore, utterances with a single unit-type are marked as a single-unit turn regardless of its syntactic structure at sentence, clause, phrase, or lexical level; utterances with multiple unit-types are marked as multi-unit turns. Interruptions with minimal acknowledgment tokens (e.g., 嗯嗯, *enen*, ‘uh-huh’) count as single-unit turns, whereas this category is singled out primarily for its high frequency of occurrence in telephone conversation. Its interaction with other interruption dimensions, timing for instance, will also reveal interactional features of the phenomenon of interruption in everyday Chinese talk-in-interaction. Overall, single-unit turns encompass all turns with single-unit types excluding backchanneling.

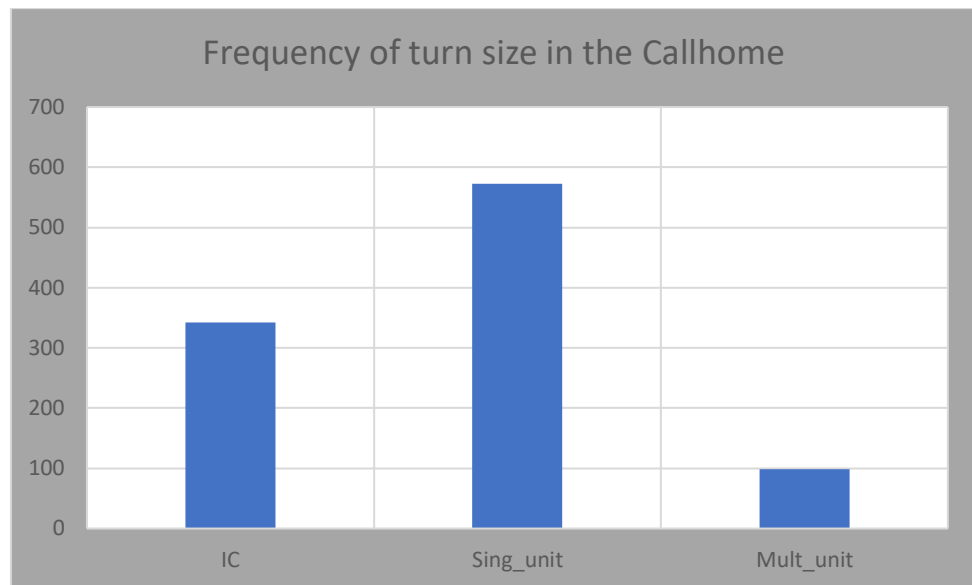


Figure 5.4: Frequency of different lengths of interruption turns in Callhome (N=1014)

The frequency of different unit-types in the Callhome dataset is illustrated in Figure 5.4 above. The two types of turn size, IC and single-unit interruptions, account for the great majority of all instances (90.2%) in Callhome. This disparity in the frequencies of turn size shows that speakers tend to use relatively short-sized utterances as opposed to long turns in informal talk with their close friends and family members. The smaller length of interruptions may facilitate the exchange rate of particular conversational topics, which may reflect the features of social interaction between people in close relationships.

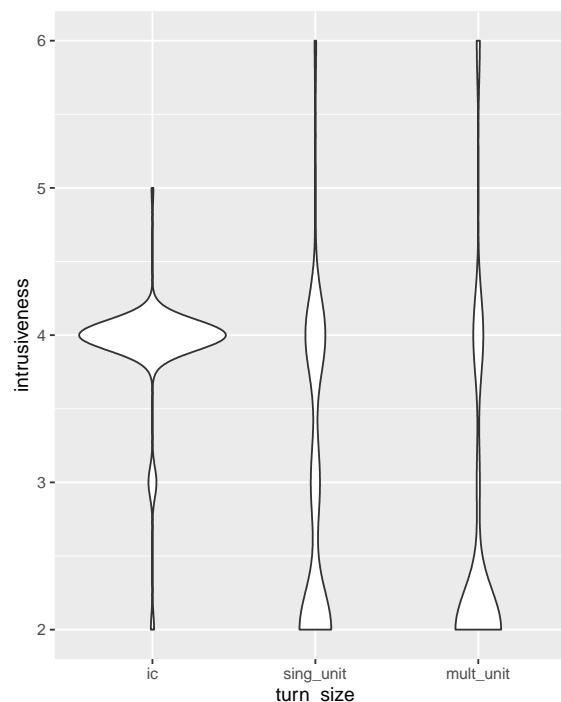


Figure 5.5: Violin plots of interruption turn size with intrusiveness (2-6) in Callhome (N=1014)

As shown in **Table 5.1** above, the dimension of turn size is significantly associated with intrusiveness of interruption utterances. In general, compared with isolated characters (*ic*), single-unit and multiple-units turns are associated with lower level of intrusiveness. In Figure 5.5 the violin plot shows that backchanneling interruptions cluster around level 4 intrusiveness, whereas single-unit and multi-unit turns show less density. While backchanneling interruptions are of very low density at level 2, which is the most cooperative type of interruptions, both single-unit and multi-unit turns are of greater density. The reason for the isolated characters (largely backchannels) to be relatively higher degree of intrusiveness is largely because most isolated characters are usually set for neutral impact on information flow (value 2) and neutral stance-taking (value 2), therefore, they are usually annotated 4 as the value for intrusiveness. On a scale of intrusiveness from 2 to 6, value 4 is situated in the middle position of the scale. Non-backchanneling turns are not usually set for one specific value for either information flow or affiliation orientation, instead, the value varies. As a vast majority of interruptions in the Callhome dataset convey affiliative stance-taking (value 1 for affiliative orientation) and more than half of them advance the ongoing speaking (value 1 for information flow), non-backchanneling interruptions have actually relatively lower degree of intrusiveness. Jointly, this disparity in density shows that backchanneling interruptions indicate a high level of intrusiveness compared with interruptions that express propositional meanings (i.e., non-backchanneling interruptions).

This is in contrast with previous scholarship about backchanneling in interaction which assumes that acknowledgement tokens are of minor importance in conversation and does not consider backchannel responses as interruption (Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994; Murata, 1994; Schegloff, 2000). Backchanneling interruptions, coming as short-sized one-word or two-word repetitive utterances, primarily serve as acknowledgement tokens. They have little effect on the current speech flow, as they normally do not push the topic further (e.g., by asking related questions, adding descriptive details or commenting) or delay the progression of the topic (e.g., by cutting off the current speaker's speech). For instance, in previous example (10) *expenditure*, A is talking about how he finally feels reassured to buy daily essentials after securing funding for his study. B's interjections in lines 02-03 only serve to acknowledge the ongoing speaking without requiring any information or displaying salient affiliation towards A. That is why backchanneling tokens are predominantly correlated with level 4 intrusiveness in this study.

Non-backchanneling utterances, however, often contain propositional contents, such as supplementing further information, commenting on a specific event. In delivering these utterances, speakers display salient attitudes towards the ongoing speech. The flow of information may be affected accordingly. The single-unit and multi-unit turns with either positive or negative correlations with intrusiveness further demonstrate that in everyday conversation, it does not matter whether speakers interpolate the current flow of speech with a one-unit short size utterance or a multiple-unit turn. What matters here is that backchanneling utterances do not seem to have a positive effect on information flow or speaker attitude. They do not register as positive speaker evaluation and hence, have no positive impact on information flow.

5.2.3 No association between interruption markers and intrusiveness in Callhome

Interruption markers address the sentence-initial tokens used to preface interruption utterances. Interruption markers in this study incorporate backchanneling (abbreviated as *bc*), laughter (*la*), and pragmatic markers indicating conjunction (*pm*). There are also occasions when interruptions are initiated with no prefacing tokens, that is, speakers go directly to the propositional content. For instance, in previous example (11) (*Kyoto University B* gives her comments on the reputation of Kyoto University 【京都】大学是↑绝对名牌【啦】 (*jingdu daxue shi juehui mingpai la*, ‘Kyoto University is definitely a top university’) with no markers as interruption “road signs”. In the Callhome dataset, prefacing-token marked interruption utterances (*pm*, *bc*, and *la*) account for 62%, within which 80% consist of backchanneling tokens. The disparity in frequency of markers shows that in talking with close friends or family members speakers tend to use markers to preface the upcoming utterance either habitually or out of the local context. The markers discussed are not meta-interruption markers which are used to linguistically warn the recipient that a certain interruption practice is about to be deployed. For example, speakers will not utter “Sorry, can I chip in?” or “Sorry, if I may ask a question”. Meta-interruption markers are prevalent in conversations in certain institutional settings (e.g., the talk show in this study which will be discussed in Chapter 6). The absence of meta-interruption markers may be primarily attributed to the nature of dyadic conversations. That is, both speakers seem obliged to contribute to the conversation flow, which entails that interrupting the ongoing conversation is also made obligatory by the mutual, tacit consent to be talking for the conversation’s good. Additionally, the immediate context of the intimate relationship between speakers may

eliminate the necessity for any formal types of meta-markers. Speakers talk freely and present high engagement via constant early interruptions with different unit types.

However, as shown in **Table 5.1**, interruption markers do not have a significant effect on the intrusiveness of interruptions. It seems that, in this Callhome telephone dataset, turn-initial tokens do not indicate an interrupter's stance-taking towards the ongoing conversation. What is at stake is the propositional content represented in the main part of interruption utterance. It is worth noting that, in the Jin Xing Show dataset, the interruption markers do have an effect on the intrusiveness level. Among them, interruptions prefaced with backchannels or address terms are generally associated with higher degree of intrusiveness than other types of interruption markers (cf. Section 6.2.2).

5.2.4 Directive speech acts being more intrusive in Callhome

The speech act of an interruption utterance in this study has to do with the illocutionary force behind interruption utterances, i.e., requesting information (rogative), requesting actions or demanding (directive), expressing statements or evaluations (representative), expressing certain emotions (expressive), or making a commitment (commissive). Declarative speech acts are not represented in the telephone corpus, which makes sense as the mundane talk concerns information transmission between two speakers and does not usually involve such impactful decision-making with immediate effect. In the Callhome dataset, interruptions containing representative speech acts account for the great majority of instances (83%). Representative interruptions comprise interruption utterances which feature descriptions, evaluations, and statements (cf. Examples 35-38). One thing worth noting is that stand-alone backchanneling tokens, coded as representative speech acts throughout the telephone dataset, make up 39% of all representative interruptions. The prevalence of representative speech acts may reflect the style of telephone conversations between friends and family members: speakers engage in information exchanges and give evaluative reactions towards the information transmission. This is in line with the context of the telephone conversations which these adult speakers were engaged in. Normally, adult students were calling their parents or close friends to exchange messages about their recent lives, often about their studies, examinations, or social events. Their parents or friends showed great interest in their recent overseas studies and life. A noteworthy feature is that rogative interruptions which primarily undertake an information-seeking role merely account for 9.5% of all

interruption utterances. It seems that speakers in Callhome conversations do not rely heavily on asking questions to acquire new information from each other.

Among the four types of interruption speech acts, directive interruptions are associated with higher value of intrusiveness and hence more intrusive. This is because these utterances impinge on the negative face of the other speaker by demanding some action to be performed. Directive utterances also often indicate interrupter's disaffiliation towards the interruptee.

5.3 Power relations in parent and adult child interactions in Callhome

In this sub-section, I will explore the interruption practices in family interaction between parents and children. An important point to note is that in this study the term *children* refers to *adult children* in their 20s, 30s or even 40s, rather than young children who are starting to acquire their first language or children under 18s who are economically dependent on their parents. Some research has been done to explore power relations in interactions between young children and their parents. For instance, based on the asymmetrical power relationship between adults and children, Culpeper and Tantucci (2021) propose that when parents are reciprocating with their children who have less relative power the value of the credit that is required to maintain the credit-debit balance reduces. O'Reilly found that child clients are largely ignored when they attempt to interrupt their parents during family therapy (O'Reilly, 2006) and are interrupted more frequently by their therapists with no apologies than their parents are (O'Reilly, 2008). It would be interesting to "examine the nature of interruptions, when adults are involved, in contrast to what happens in the case of children" (O'Reilly, 2008, p. 520). A great deal of work has been done in Sociology exploring solidarity and tensions (e.g., ambivalence, conflicts) between adults and their parents (Ferring, Michels, Boll, & Filipp, 2009; Guo, 2014) and the strategies utilised to mitigate the parent and child relationship (Spitze & Gallant, 2004). Less work has been done on conversational interactions between adults and their parents in Pragmatics or Conversation Analysis. Even less is known about interruption practices between the two groups, let alone an in-depth analysis of the construction of interruption in mundane settings.

With this research gap in mind, I decided to compare interruptions between parents and their adult children, specifically in terms of the four interruption dimensions and intrusiveness. I extracted all interruption instances in parent-child conversation in the Callhome corpus. There are 508 instances in total, with 290 parent-initiated interruptions

and 218 child-initiated interruptions. Table 5.2 lists the distribution of each dimension in parents' and children's interruptions.

Table 5.2: Interruptions between parents and adult children in Callhome (N=508)

		Parent	Child
Affiliation	Affiliative	166	132
	Neutral	10	7
	Disaffiliative	114	79
Information flow*	Boosting	97	103
	Maintaining	131	95
	Hindering	62	20
Interruption timing*	Initial	52	11
	Middle	144	108
	Final	94	99
Interruption marker	BC	145	103
	Laughter	11	6
	PM	12	22
	UM	122	87
Turn size	IC	102	68
	Sing_unit	166	120
	Multi_unit	22	30
Speech act	Rep	243	189
	Rog	30	19
	Exp	14	6
	Dir	1	2
	Com	2	2

(* with statistically significant p value)

As seen in Table 5.2, there are significant differences in interruption flow ($df=2$, $p<0.001$, $X^2=17.575$) and interruption timing ($df=2$, $p<0.001$, $X^2=22.196$) between parents and children interruption in the Callhome corpus, whereas no significant differences are found in affiliation, interruption marker, turn size, and speech act. Three major differences can be observed. First, parents initiate significantly more interruptions than their adult children. Second, parents differ from their children in the effect of their interruptions on the local information flow. As seen in **Table 5.2**, parents produce more IF-hindering and IF-maintaining interruptions than their adult children. Parents' interruptions tend to disregard the local information flow initiated by their children, which is demonstrated when parents change the current topic and cut off children's utterances.

In the family interaction between parents and their (adult) children, parents' interruption utterances arguably pay less attention to their cohesion with the first pair part – prior utterances, e.g., parents do not always attend a question asked in the prior utterance. That is, parents do not seem to be too concerned with the way adjacency pairs regulate the turn-taking system. Behind the defiance of turn-taking rules are speakers' local conversational priorities, viz., prioritising their own self's needs (e.g., asking questions, clarifying prior statements) over the current speaker's right to complete their utterances.

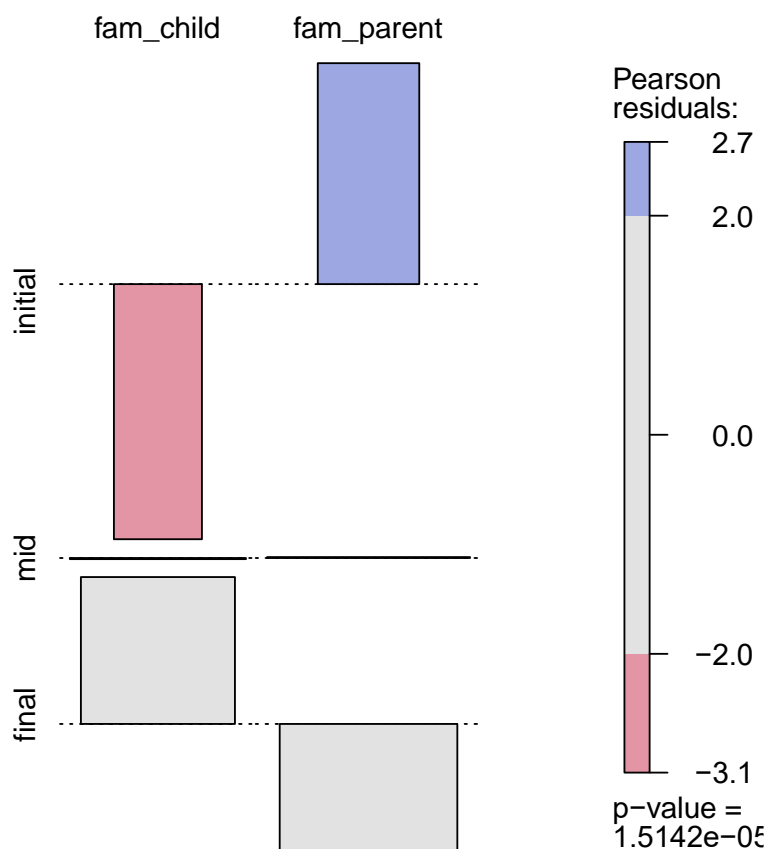


Figure 5.6: Residuals of different timings of interruption initiated by parents and children in Callhome (N=508)

The third difference of interruption between parents and their adult is timing (p -value $<1.5e-05$). As explicated in Section 4.4, syntactic segmentation between topic and comment divides utterances in Chinese talk-in-interaction into initial, middle, and final timing. It is worth noting that investigating interruption timing involves examining the point at which an interrupter initiates their interruption in relation to the prior speaker's utterance. According to Table 5.2, parents tend to interrupt more when their children are producing their topic or within the comment of their proposition. This is also represented

in the association plot in **Figure 5.6** above. The upward blue colour indicates that initial interruptions are overused by parents; the downward pink colour indicates that initial interruptions are underused by children. The two groups do not show significant differences when producing interruptions in the vicinity of another speaker's turn completion point, viz., final interruption. Final interruptions in this study correspond to what previous researchers have claimed to be overlap speech, seeing it as unintended conversational error rather than signalling the speaker's intention to usurp the turn. A further examination of earlier interruptions (initial and middle interruptions) shows that parents tend to produce more early interruptions than their children ($p\text{-value} < 1.44e\text{-}05$).

Interruption timing and information flow are, to a certain extent, interrelated. For example, an interruption using initial timing that is inserted when the recipient has not yet produced his/her comment on the turn is, more often than not, disrupting the prior utterance as the prior speaker may drop the turn due to overlapping speech. Therefore, interruption timing and flow inherently relate to the sequence of taking turns to talk. Parents' interruption behaviours demonstrate that parents disregard the "sequential queueing", e.g., waiting for others to finish before starting to talk. Parents not only show less regard to the sequence but also initiate more interruptions. However, parents' interruptions do not display any differences in affiliation behind the utterances. Altogether, this shows that whilst parents interrupt their children more, and interrupt more at the initial stage and, thus, disrupt the ongoing topic, parents do not display significant differences in speaker's affiliation.

To sum up, in the family interactions in the Callhome corpus, parents tend to interrupt more and interrupt earlier than their adult children. Parents' interruption utterances pay less attention to what is being said in the prior utterance and therefore do not contribute directly to the information flow initiated by their children. Despite the differences represented in the interruption practice, it is insufficient to claim that power asymmetry is at stake in family interaction in Chinese talk-in-interaction. More studies need to explore in depth the interruption practice between the two groups, e.g., including the uptake of interruptions by the recipients.

5.4 Summary

Chapter 5 addressed the research question about the relationship between interruption dimensions and intrusiveness in interruptions in everyday conversations based on instances from the Callhome corpus. The findings are fourfold. First, the

interrupter's affiliation is revealed by the way s/he treats the current conversational flow. Utterances that boost or hinder the flow tend to show speakers' affiliative or disaffiliative stances towards the other speaker respectively. Second, non-backchannel early interruptions and directive utterances are associated with a higher level of intrusiveness. Third, compared with their children, parents are more likely to adopt an active interruption style in the sense that they interrupt more and interrupt much early in the course of their children's speaking. Early interruptions take place in the course of the topic stage of the prior utterance, which means the intended information flow may be disrupted. The attempt of disrupting children's prior turns at their early stage may suggest that parents prioritise their own topical agenda over that of their children. Fourth, intrusive interruptions, particularly those that display speakers' disaffiliative attitudes, are infrequent in mundane talk in Chinese. Despite hindering conversational flow, speakers do not display acute disaffiliative stances in conversation.

These findings may hinge on the deeply entrenched cultural mindset of Chinese speakers, who prioritise high engagement in conversation to show interest and cooperativeness over ordered sequentiality across turns. Overlapping talk may be "generated systematically by participants' close attention to what another is saying and their attempts to fine tune transitions from one speaker to a next"²³ (Drew, 2009, p. 72). That is, speakers are closely monitoring the local interaction and insert their utterance when they deem relevant and necessary, which leads to the prevalent interruptions in the Callhome corpus. Speakers are entitled to build and enhance engagement with other speakers via enthusiastically participating in conversation, with the means of cooperative interruptions. Both interrupter and interruption recipients get along with blunt insertions in the course of speaking. Despite the fact that boosting the current information flow will almost always display interrupter's agreement, some utterances that disrupt the current flow may also convey affiliative stance.

²³ Note that Drew (2009) distinguished overlapping talk from interruption in terms of participants' intention of claim of speaking rights. As stated in early chapters, interruption in this study is defined broadly, incorporating overlapping speech and non-propositional utterances such as backchannel responses, certain features of overlapping talk are applicable to interruption speech.

CHAPTER 6 Interruptions in Jin Xing Show

This chapter explores interruption in the Jin Xing Show corpus. It draws on the measurement of intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions discussed in Chapter 4 and aims to answer the following research question:

What interruption dimensions contribute to the disruptiveness of interruption utterances in institutional interaction?

Unlike the telephone conversations presented in Chapter 5, the conversational exchanges in the talk show programme are a form of institutional talk (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Heritage, 2005; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). As stated earlier in Chapter 3, the Jin Xing Show is built around revealing and discussing topical and sometimes scandalous news and issues concerning various aspects of social life, such as education, tourism, health and entertainment etc. Each episode features a theme, running through and linking a few stories. Jin Xing (Jin for short), the host and a forceful character, controls the flow of storytelling. Shen Nan (Shen for short) undertakes a dual role: on the one hand, as Jin's assistant, Shen is obliged to support Jin's storytelling, on the other, Shen undertakes the role of audience proxy. That is, he acts as if he were one of the studio audience members instead of Jin's assistant, thereby affiliating with the needs and wants of the audience, of which being entertained is one among others. When acting out the role of stand-in for the audience, Shen's interruptions feature teasing and challenging Jin's authority and prying into Jin's personal stories. For instance, in one episode Shen asks Jin's salary for participating in a reality show – Running Man China – following Jin's telling of the high salary of reality show actors. Jin is reluctant to give an exact number of her salary.

When taking the side of the audience and teasing Jin, Shen is doing “entertaining impoliteness” (Culpeper, 2005) and is expecting the co-participant (Jin) will go along with such teasing (Chang & Haugh, 2021). Shen's teasing interruptions create tension between him and Jin, which entertains the audience. For the audience, observing the tension creating and escalating satisfies their *voyeuristic pleasure* (Culpeper, 2005, 2011). The audience enjoy the public exposure of Jin's private self, particularly the aspects that are deemed sensitive. Moreover, it satisfies the audience's *pleasure of feeling secure* (Culpeper, 2011). That is, the audience, as the bystanders, thrive on the tension that they are not involved in. Both the *voyeuristic pleasure* and *the pleasure of feeling secure* entertain the audience in this talk show programme.

This chapter is organised as follows: Section 6.1 examines the relationship between Shen's affiliation status towards prior utterances (affiliation orientation) and the topical coherence of interruptions in relation to prior utterances (information flow). A chi-square test shows that affiliation status is associated with information flow: an affiliative stance tends to boost the IF. Section 6.2 explores the relationship between intrusiveness and the four dimensions of interruption: interruption timing, interruption marker, turn size and speech act. A linear regression analysis reveals that interruption markers and the turn size of interruption utterances are associated with intrusive interruptions. In Section 6.3, I explicate in-depth two phenomena that stand out in the conversation of this talk show: the frequent occurrence of IF-boosting and the use of the address terms *Jie* or *Jin Jie*. The two phenomena are analysed in relation to interactional asymmetry in an institutional setting. Section 6.4 summarises the findings relating to intrusiveness and its relationship with the four interruption dimensions.

6.1 The relationship between affiliation orientation and information flow in Jin Xing Show

As stated earlier in Chapter 4, affiliation orientation (AF) and information flow (IF) are the two parameters that are used to measure the degree of intrusiveness of interrupters' utterances. AF addresses how an interrupter positions him/herself in relation to the other speaker's stance or message, and thus concerns the social aspects of "doing" interruption (cf. Baffy, 2020; Hutchby, 2008). Affiliative interruptions "match the prior speaker's evaluative stance, display empathy and/or cooperate with the preference of the prior action" (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011, p.21). In contrast to affective stance-taking, information flow concerns the topical coherence between an interrupter's utterances and an interruptee's utterance.

To assess the relationship between the two categorical variables (AF and IF) in Jin Xing Show, I fitted a chi-square test of independence, as shown in Figure 6.1. It is found that AF and IF are strongly associated (p -value $< 2.22e-16$): interruptions displaying affiliative stances are associated with IF boosting, interruptions displaying disaffiliative stances are associated with IF hindering, and neutral interruptions are associated with IF maintaining. The stacked plots on the left hand-side show the frequency of affiliation orientation and information flow in the talk show data. It is evident that affiliative stances account for over 57% of all instances, whereas disaffiliative stances account for only 25%, the remaining 18% being neutral. The great

majority of affiliative stances consists of IF boosting, as shown in the frequency of *boosting* in the stacked plot at the left hand-side. This association is also displayed in the association plot at the right hand-side: the first blue bar measuring IF-boosting and affiliative orientation indicates that there are more observed interruption instances of IF-boosting with affiliative stance than expected (cf. Chapter 5.1 for detailed interpretation of association plot).

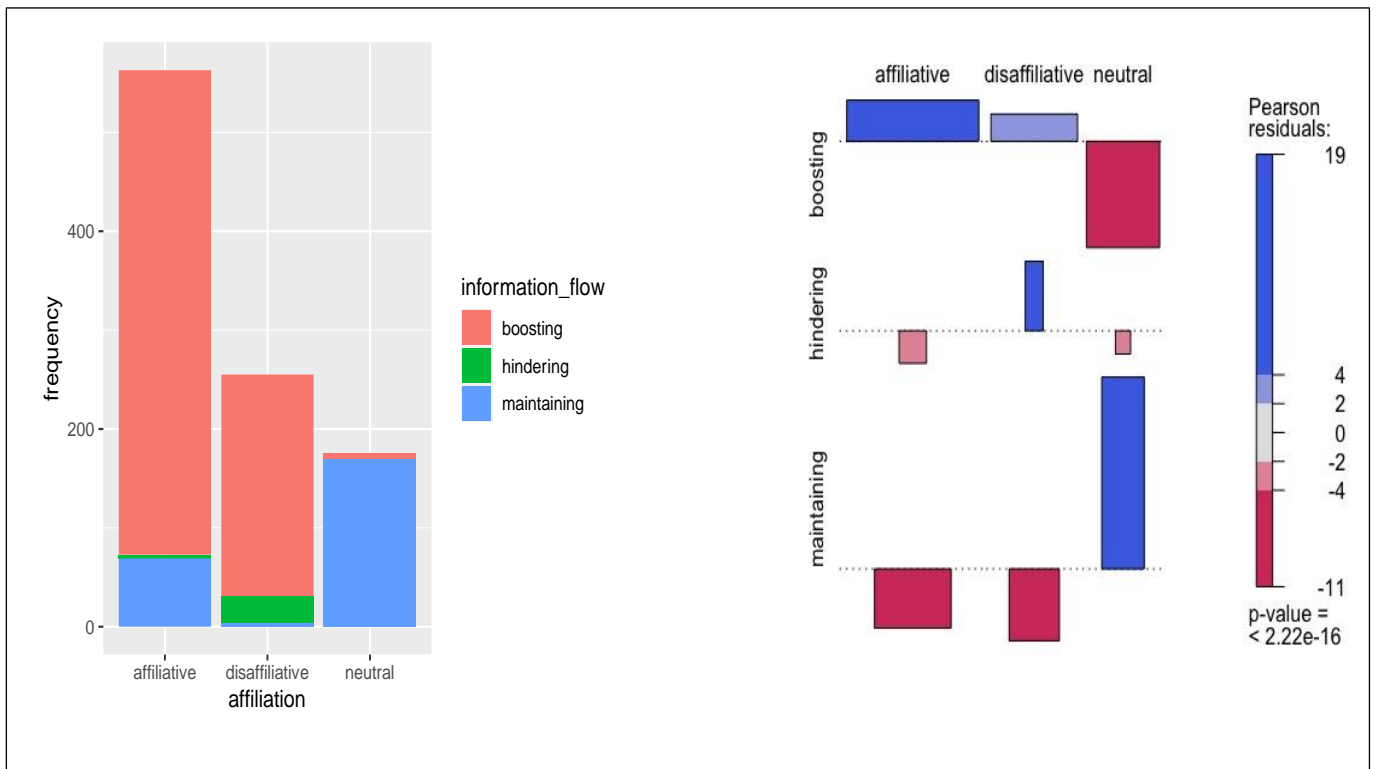


Figure 6.1: Stack plots and association plots of affiliation orientation and information flow in the *Jin Xing Show corpus*

That being said, disaffiliative interruptions are also associated with IF boosting, as seen the light blue cell of boosting-disaffiliative. Overall, the association plot on the right-hand side displays a positive correlation between AF and IF in the talk show conversations in the sense that affiliative interruptions tend to boost the information flow, disaffiliative interruptions tend to hinder the information flow, and neutral interruptions are used to maintain the information flow. Neutral interruptions are negatively correlated with both IF-boosting and IF-hindering. I will explicate these correlations in the following sections.

6.1.1 Positive correlation between AF and IF

Affiliative interruptions can be found in cases where the assistant, Shen, agrees with the host, Jin, shows sympathy, supplements Jin's utterances with details, or requests further details that facilitate the storytelling. These affiliative stances entail that Shen attends to Jin's prior utterances, elaborating on the topic in discussion. That is why Shen's affiliative instances are often identified to sequentially align with Jin's turns, therefore boost the IF. The following three examples show how affiliative interruptions boost information flow through supplementing details (previous Example 16 *crowded train*), requesting information (previous Example 12 *sentimental*), and expressing affiliative evaluations (Example 40 *oh my God*).

(16) jxx_20160914 crowded train

- 01 Jin: 当时 还是 返乡 高峰
 Dangshi haishi fanxiang gaofeng
 At that time still return home peak
 It was the peak of Spring Rush during the new year
- 02 整个 车厢里 挤得 满满当当的
 Zhengge chexiangli jide manmandangdangde
 Whole carriage packed extremely full
 Every carriage in the train was so crowded.
- 03 除了 送餐车 能 过去 人 都 没法 走了=
 Chule songcanche neng guoqu ren dou meifa zoule
 Except food trolley can go through people all no way walk
 No one could move freely except the food delivery cart.
- 04 → Shen: =啤酒 饮料 矿泉水
 Pijiu yinliao kuangquanshui
 Beer beverage mineral water
- 05 **Hey, beer, beverage, mineral water,**
 白酒 瓜子 花生米
 Baijiu guazi huashengmi
 Wine sunflower seed peanut
 Wine, sunflower seed, peanut,
- 06 来 腿 收一收 收一收
 Lai tui shouyishou shouyishou
 Come leg put away put away
 Hey, please kindly make room for me
 ((Jin Xing laughs along with the studio audience and then continues narrating))

Here, Shen substantiates the scene of a very crowded train carriage in response to Jin's ongoing narrative of her husband's train journey during the bustling Spring Festival travel rush²⁴. In lines 01-3, Jin is reporting the orientation of the story – the *where*, *when* and *what* (Thornborrow, 2014) – which sets the crowded scene for the development of the upcoming story. Shen seizes the right timing and inserts a turn illustrating what a crowded train is like during the travel season (lines 04-6). Shen's interruption features mimicking the common practice of a train conductor squeezing through the crowd while peddling goods. Shen's utterance maintains the topical issue that is initiated by Jin (i.e., a crowded train) and reinforces the scene that Jin intended to represent so that the audience can better relate to Jin's narration. In this sense, the information flow is boosted. Moreover, Shen's humour – the hilarious mimicking – entertains the audience and endorses Jin's narrative; thus, it affectively affiliates with Jin.

(12) jxx_2016406 sentimental

- 01 Jin: 从此 师徒. 两人 割袍断义=
 Congci shitu liangren Gepaoduanyi
 hence master disciple two persons break off connections
 They've broken off all connections ever since
- 02 → Shen: =听着 有点 伤感
 Tingzhe youdian shanggan
 Listening a bit sad
 It is quite sad.
- 03 → 那 他 后来 发展的 怎么样
 Na ta hulai fazhande zenmeyang
 Then he Later develop how
 Well, how has he been doing?
- 04 Jin: 后来 发展的 很好
 Hulai fazhande Henhao
 Later develop very good
 He's been doing very well.

In this exchange, Shen's affiliative interruptions boost the current conversation flow via asking further questions. After Jin relates how a theatre actor broke up with his master due to conflicting understandings of the traditional values pertaining to performing

²⁴ The Spring Festival travel rush is a period of travel in China with extremely high traffic load. It begins 15 days before the Spring Festival and lasts for 40 days. People may travel hundreds of miles back to their hometown for family reunions.

(line 01), Shen cuts in expressing his feelings about the breakup (line 02), and then asks what happened to the actor afterwards (line 03). Jin answers the question immediately in the subsequent line. The noteworthy feature about Shen's interruption turn is that it comprises two units. The first one 听着有点伤感 (*tingzhe youdian shanggan*, 'It is quite a pity') acknowledges what has just been narrated in the prior turns and sympathises with Jin. The second unit builds on the first one and expands on the story by asking further questions. The two interruption units are in response to the prior utterances and push forward the topical issues, thus they boost the information flow.

(40) jxx_20160406 oh my god

- 01 Jin: 为什么 这 小姐 叫 数字 小姐 呢
 Weishenme zhe xiaojie jiao shuzi xiaojie ne
 Why this madam call number madam RLV
 How did she get the nickname of "Miss Number"?
- 02 1234567
 ((Jin is imitating how "Miss Number" is only reading numbers instead of real lines in shooting TV drama))
- 03 她的 名字 就 这么 来的=
 Tade mingzi jiu zheme laide
 Her name just this come
 That is why she is called "Miss Number"
- 04 → Shen: =我的天, 这 都 可以
 Wodetain, zhe dou keyi
 Oh my god, this all okay
 Oh my God, how crazy is that!
- 05 Jin: 真的
 Zhende
 True
 Yes, it is exactly what is happening.

In this exchange, Jin is referring to how a popular actress does not recite lines at all during filming but merely utters numbers and then counts on the director to add the real lines afterwards (lines 01-3). Shen cuts in with a short-sized expressive token 我的天 (*wodetian*, 'oh my god') to indicate his complete shock (line 04). In line 05, Jin emphasises that the shocking scene is no exaggeration. In this sense, Shen's interjection reinforces the immediately prior description (i.e., Jin's turn in lines 01-3). Apart from that,

Shen's interruption suggests that he also thinks what the actress is doing is staggering, which affectively aligns with Jin.

The three examples above demonstrate how interruptions can embody affiliative stance and at the same time facilitate information flow by attending to and expanding on prior utterances. There are also instances of interruption that express disaffiliative stance and at the same time disrupt information flow. An overwhelming majority of interruptions (87%) that hinder IF manifest disalignment towards the other speaker, as illustrated by the green colour in *disaffiliative* in the stack plot in

Figure 6.1. A typical case of disaffiliative interruption with IF-hindering consists of the challenging of the suitability of the current topic. Due to the institutional constraints on topical coherence, Shen's turns to a greater extent structurally align with and expand on the ongoing topic that is narrated by Jin. There are few "deviant" cases of hindering the flow. For instance, in a previous example (15) *break-ups*, Shen stops Jin from proceeding with the topic as he questions its suitability.

(15) jxx_20160217 break-ups

01	Jin:	情人节	刚	过	完
		Qingrenjie	gang	guo	wan
		Valentines 'day	just	PF	over
		We just celebrated Valentine's Day (three days ago)			
02		咱们	正好	聊一聊	失恋=
		Zanmen	zhenghao	liaoyiliao	shilian=
		We	timely	chat	breakup
		It is time to talk about breakup.			
03	→ Shen:	=等会儿,	姐		
		=denghuier	jie		
		Wait	Jie		
		Hang on, Jie			
04		你	这	思维	太
		Ni	zhe	shiwei	tai
		You	this	logic	very
				jump	PF BA
		It makes no sense to me.			
05		这	情人节	刚	过
		Zhe	qingrenjie	gang	guo
		This	valentine's day	just	over

- We just celebrated Valentine's Day (three days ago)**
- 06 你 跟 大伙儿 聊 失恋
 Ni gen dahuoer liao shilian
 You and we chat break-ups
- Now you want to talk about break-ups with us**
- 07 合适 吗
 Heshi ma
 Suitable Q
- Is it suitable? (Are you crazy?)**
- 08 Jin: 这 有 什么, 没错啊
 Zhe you shenme, meicuo a
 This have what, no wrong
 What is wrong with this?
- 09 现代 人 的 爱情, 保鲜度 都 比较 差
 Xiandai ren de aiqing, baoxiandu dou bijiao cha
 Modern people SUB love, fresh degree all relatively bad
 Nowadays, people won't keep a long-term relationship
- 10 学会 好好 分手
 Xuehui haohao fenshou
 Learn well breakup
 Learning how to deal with breakup
- 11 可能 比 学会 怎么 谈恋爱 更 重要
 Keneng bi xuehui zenme tanlianai geng zhongyao
 Possibly cf. learn how develop relationship more important
 Is possibly more important than how to develop a relationship

This is a part of the opening remarks in this episode: Jin introduces what is about to be discussed in this specific episode, i.e., stories about romantic break-ups. Immediately after Jin's brief opening in lines 01-2, Shen interjects, saying that it seems inappropriate to talk about breakups when Valentine's Day was a just few days ago (line 03). Shen's interruption comes not as an expansion of the topic (e.g., whose story this is about) but instead, he questions why they should have this kind of topic in the first place. In the subsequent turn, Jin spends a few lines explaining why *breakup* is a suitable and much needed topic at this moment (lines 08-11). Normally, in the opening remarks of a new episode, Jin makes a short introductory comment and then proceeds directly to telling the first story. In this instance, however, Jin's topic flow has to be suspended as she has

to justify the choice of this particular topic before entering the narrative phase, as a result of Shen's interruptions.

The association of disaffiliation and IF-hindering in this talk show conversation serves the primary purpose of entertainment. The pattern of frequent disagreement builds up tension between the host and the assistant whose power over turn-taking in the show is otherwise asymmetrical. It entertains the audience to watch the tension develop, escalate, and dissolve between them. In this setting, Shen's institutional role as an audience proxy becomes salient.

6.1.2 "Unexpected" cases: IF-boosting show disaffiliative stance in Jin Xing Show

Despite the association between affiliation and information flow, there are unexpected cases that do not fall into this category. These are interruptions that hold disaffiliative attitudes towards the prior speaker/interruptee yet that boost rather than hinder IF, as shown in the association plot in Figure 6.1. In these instances, Shen stays on the topic that was initiated and discussed by Jin while also teasing Jin at some point, thereby conveying a serious and potentially face-threatening message (Schnurr & Chan, 2011). In this sense, Shen's teasing utterances are doing disaffiliative stance taking. Disaffiliative stances can be performed in various ways, for instance, expressing differing opinions, showing apathy, and teasing through asking loaded questions, as has already been outlined in Section 4.2.2.

Based on the analysis so far, the interrupter's affiliation orientation is associated with the information flow of the utterance. The orientation to institutional goal arguably underlies this association in this programme. That is, Shen undertakes a dual role in the talk show as both Jin's assistant and as an audience proxy (i.e., asking or answering questions from the audience's perspective). The former requires Shen to always elaborate on the topic (IF-boosting) and show affiliative stance (affiliative attitudes). The latter requires Shen to adopt the audience's perspective, which entails frequently expressing disagreement and teasing Jin. Nonetheless, it is still less clear how interruptions are formulated so that they appear more intrusive or less cooperative. In the next section, I will examine how intrusiveness intersects with the four interruption dimensions.

6.2 Intrusiveness and interruption dimensions in Jin Xing Show

As stated earlier, interaction in institutional settings is subject to constraints on participants' roles, tasks, and goals. These constraints, in turn, have effects on turn-taking

sequences between participants. For example, in *Jin Xing Show*, Jin undertakes the major role of storyteller; therefore, she often produces extended turns of talk via multiple turn units. As the host, it is the default situation for Jin to continue holding the turn floor after finishing her current turn rather than nominating Shen as the next speaker, for instance, by asking Shen questions. As a result, when Shen takes the initiative to claim the turn floor without Jin's permission, this counts as interruption. On the one hand, Shen interrupts to support Jin's narrative, in the sense that Shen provides additional details, asks questions to improve the storytelling, and so on. On the other hand, Shen interrupts to disaffiliate with Jin. The degree of intrusiveness of the different interruptions varies. This section explores whether the level of intrusiveness is influenced by certain interruption parameters, such as interruption timing, and so on.

To answer this question, I fitted a multivariate linear regression analysis (Fox & Weisberg, 2011) with intrusiveness as the response variable and the four interruption dimensions as predictor variables. Multivariate regression is a machine learning algorithm used to predict the output of one dependent variable based on multiple predictors. A further test shows the interaction between the four variables has no significant effects on intrusiveness. Eventually, results of the regression analysis are reported in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Effects of four interruption dimensions on intrusiveness in Jin Xing Show

Predictor	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	3.56062	0.56401	6.313	4.14E-10	***
timingmid	-0.07155	0.21907	-0.327	0.74404	
markerbc	-0.18199	0.11515	-1.58	0.11434	
markerla	-1.85062	0.69609	-2.659	0.00797	**
markerpm	-0.18197	0.13892	-1.31	0.19055	
markerum	-0.41611	0.1056	-3.94	8.71E-05	***
turn_sizemult_unit	-0.66083	0.11471	-5.761	1.12E-08	***
turn_sizing_unit	-0.80246	0.09611	-8.35	2.31E-16	***
speech_actdir	0.70717	0.57059	1.239	0.21551	
speech_actexp	0.29	0.56448	0.514	0.60754	
speech_actrep	0.35684	0.55894	0.638	0.52335	
speech_actrog	-0.21115	0.56127	-0.376	0.70685	

(N = 994, Adjusted R-squared: 0.1944, p-value: < 2.2e-16)

The '!', '**', '***' indicate increasingly significant p-values.

In the table of coefficients, the first row (Estimate) specifies the intercept, and the remaining rows indicate the slopes for each predictor. In this case, the intercept (3.56) is the expected value of the response variable (intrusiveness) when all subcategories of the predictor variables (timing, marker, turn size, and speech act) are zero and all subcategories of the predictors are at their reference levels. The p -value in the rightmost column indicates whether the coefficient of the slope for the predictor (e.g., a directive speech act leading to increasing level of intrusiveness) is significant. Each subcategory of the four interruption variables has a coefficient. For example, the coefficient of *markerum* (i.e., unmarked interruption) is approximately -0.42. This means that every additional unmarked interruption decreases the average intrusiveness by 0.42. The coefficient of interruptions consisting of directive speech acts is approximately 0.71. This means that for every additional directive interruption the average intrusiveness increases by 0.71. For the interruption marker variable, unmarked interruption (coded as *markum*) and laughter-prefaced interruptions have a p -value smaller than 0.05, thus, unmarked interruptions and interruptions constituted by laughter are statistically less intrusive.

Among the four interruption dimensions, only interruption marker and turn size are associated with intrusiveness. Specifically, regarding turn size, interruptions that are constituted by isolated characters (e.g., backchannels) are associated with higher level intrusiveness than non-backchannel interruptions (*turnsizing_unit*, *turnsizemulti_unit*). This is because the degree of intrusiveness of most of the backchanneling turns stays on 4 on an intrusiveness scale from 2 to 6 as they get value 2 for neutral affiliation and value 2 for IF-maintaining. Regarding interruption markers, interruptions with no turn-initial markers (*markerum*) are less intrusive. As will be elaborated in the next subsection, unmarked interruptions often occur when the interrupter (Shen) has supporting details to add to the ongoing speaking or ask a timely question to advance the information flow. In other words, the unmarked turns are more associated with affiliative stances and/or IF-boosting, hence the lower degree of intrusiveness. Likewise, when an interruption starts with laughter, it is likely that Shen laughs along with Jin or finds Jin's prior turn entertaining. The proposition following the laughter will often indicate Shen's solidarity and agreement. That is why interruptions that are initiated by paralinguistic cues such as laughter (*markla*) are also less intrusive.

I will illustrate the association in greater details in the rest of Section 6.2. First, I will elaborate on the associations between turn size and intrusiveness, and then I will explore the associations between interruption markers and intrusiveness. Finally, I will

examine why the other two parameters – interruption timing and speech act – are not associated with intrusiveness.

6.2.1 Turn size and intrusiveness: backchannels not cooperative

As elaborated in Section 4.3, turn size measures the number of turn units in an interruption utterance. The completion of each turn unit signals the transition relevance place where speakership legitimately happens. In this talk show's exchanges, Shen's interruptions may appear as one unit of meaning expression (*Jie, you are so mean.*) or multiple units (*Jie, you are so mean to say that. What happened to him afterwards?*). Once Shen's interjections have finished, the turn floor will be returned to Jin. In this vein, the interruption utterances are kept short and concise. This may arguably have to do with Shen's concern about his asymmetrical power relation with Jin: Jin has absolute power over the show and Shen plays a secondary role. As with the categorisation in the Callhome, turn size in the talk show data is divided into three sub-categories: isolated characters, single-unit types, and multiple-unit types. Isolated characters also belong to the single unit. They are singled out because of their prevalence in both corpora and their importance in ordinary conversation (cf. Bavelas, Coates, & Johnson, 2002; Heinz, 2003; Tao & Thompson, 1991). As displayed in **Table 6.1**, the intrusiveness of Shen's interjections is influenced by turn size. Specifically, interruptions that are classified as backchanneling are associated with a higher level of intrusiveness. This association is illustrated by the violin plots in Figure 6.2.

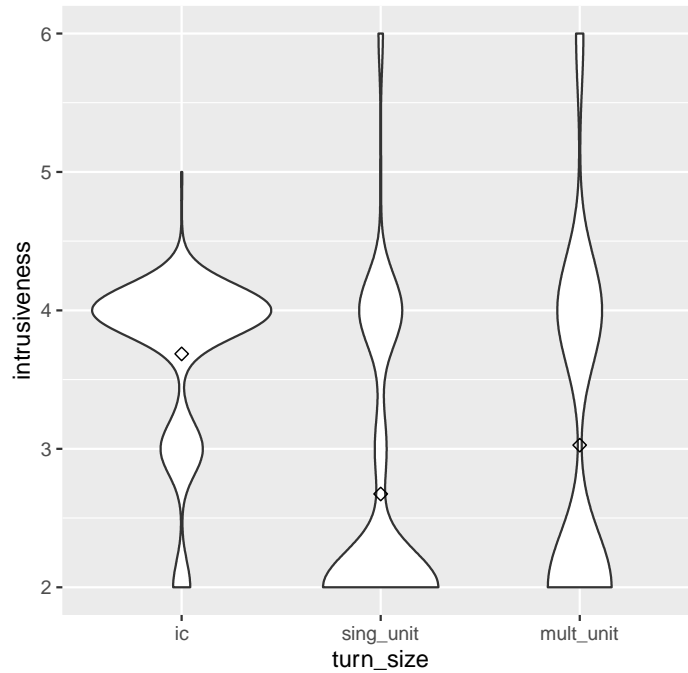


Figure 6.2: Intrusiveness density of subcategories of turn size in Jin Xing Show

The violin plots in Figure 6.2 show the relative distribution of turn size along the scale of intrusiveness (level 2 to 6). Within each category, wider kernels represent a higher frequency of doing interruption and the skinnier kernels represent a lower frequency. For instance, ic-4 (*ic* as turn size at the intrusiveness level of 4) has more interruption instances than ic-2 (*ic* as turn size at the intrusiveness level of 2) as ic-4 has a wider kernel than ic-2. The diamond-shaped dot shows the mean score of intrusiveness for each category of turn size. The mean intrusiveness level of *ic* is higher than for the other two categories, which indicates that throughout the talk show conversation, utterances made up of backchannels are more intrusive than utterances made up of non-response tokens. This is validated by the linear regression model in **Table 6.1**. Single-unit and multiple-unit turn utterances show lower intrusiveness levels.

Regarding the relationship between turn size and intrusiveness, two observations stand out from the violin plots in **Figure 6.2** and the linear regression in **Table 6.1**. The first observation is that backchannel responses are associated with a higher level of intrusiveness than non-backchannel interruption utterances (i.e., single-unit turns and multi-unit turns). As displayed in **Figure 6.2**, backchannel interruptions have a higher mean score of intrusiveness than single-unit and multiple-unit interruptions, as illustrated by the height of its respective diamond in Figure 6.2. This is largely attributed to more backchannel instances at intrusiveness level 4 than other two types of interruptions. This can be seen from the three kernel shapes at level 4. The shape of ic-4 appears fatter than

sing-unit-4 and multi-unit 4, which means there are more ic instances (157 instances) at level 4 than single unit and multi-unit instances. Likewise, there are also more backchannel instances at level 3 than the other two types of turn size. Both single-unit and multi-unit interruptions have instances annotated as level 6 for intrusiveness, whereas they are only a small number of instances (15 instances for single-unit turns and 12 instances for multi-unit turns). Overall, backchannel interruptions are identified as having a higher degree of intrusiveness than single-unit and multi-unit interruption; hence backchannel instances are more intrusive.

Backchannel responses are primarily used to provide feedback to the prior speaker while acknowledging the ongoing storytelling and speakership (Heinz, 2003; Tolins & Fox Tree, 2014). These short-sized tokens do not convey propositional contents that advance or hinder the progress of the topic. They often do not represent the speaker's affiliation orientation, either. Therefore, backchannel interruptions in most cases have a value of 2 for both information flow and affiliation orientation, resulting in a value of 4 for intrusiveness. To illustrate this, consider Example (41) *ticket tout* in which Shen interjects into Jin's recalling of an experience with a minimal token 嗯 (*en*, 'uh').

(41) jxx_20160622 ticket tout

- 01 Jin: 去年 我 记得 在 上海 人民 大舞台
 Qunian wo jide zai shanghai renming dawutai
 Last year I remember at PN shanghai people big stage
 I remember that last year at the PG Theatre
- 02 演出 金星 脱口秀 剧场版=
 Yanchu jinxing tuokouxiu juchangban
 Perform Jin Xing talk show movie version
 I gave the Jin Xing talk show
- 03 → Shen: =嗯
 En
 Mm
 uh
- 04 Jin: 因为 那场 演出 太 火爆 了,
 Yinwei nachang yanchu tai huobao le
 Because that performance very hot PF
 That was a hit performance,
- 05 到 后来 几乎 惊动 了全 上海 的 黄牛
 Dao houlai jihu jingdong le quan shanghai de huangniu

Till later almost alarm PF whole *PNShanghai* SUB ticket tout
So much so that all the ticket touts in Shanghai acted on it

This extract begins with Jin recalling an incident that happened in the previous year: a ticket tout tricked people into buying tickets for Jin's talk show at extortionate price. Jin starts the narration with the time and place of the event (lines 01-2); this sets the story orientation (Thornborrow, 2014). In line 03, Shen produces a continuer 嗯 (*en*, 'uh') during Jin's storytelling, giving a listener's response to the storytelling. Jin continues her storytelling in the next turn. In this example, the backchannel turn is inserted into the narration, "treat[ing] the structure of the telling as not yet complete and thus align[ing] with the telling activity as still in progress" (Stivers, 2008, p. 34). This is a typical example of a backchannel response with a neutral effect on information flow (maintaining) and affiliation orientation (neutral).

Throughout the Jin Xing Show dataset, almost three-fourths (74.7%) of isolated characters display neutral affiliations. The remaining backchannel responses denote clear-cut stances (i.e., affiliative or disaffiliative) and exert influence on information flow (i.e., boosting or hindering). They occur when the speaker expresses strong emotions at that moment in response to the ongoing storytelling. For instance, in the following example (42) Shen expresses his shock that a female doctor in a series of TV ads was lying about her profession to deceive customers.

(42) *jxx_20170705* maya

- 01 Jin: 大家 看, 在 这个 节目 里
Dajia kan, zai zheji jiemu li
Everyone see, at this programme inside
Watch out, in this commercial
- 02 她的 身份 是 一个 “苗医”
Tade shenfen shi yige miaoyi
Her identity BE one Hmong doctor
She appears as a Hmong doctor,
- 03 可是 假如 你 换 另一个 频道
Keshi jiaru ni huan lingyige pindao
But if you change another channel
But if you switch channels
- 04 她 就 变成 了 “蒙医”=
Ta jiu biancheng le “Mongolian doctor”
She just change PF Mongolian doctor

- She becomes a Mongolian doctor
- 05 → Shen: =妈::呀
 Maya
 gosh
Oh my gosh
- 06 Jin: 有人 帮 这位 “大师” 统计 过²⁵
 Youren bang zhewei dashi tongji guo
 Someone help this big master calculate
 Someone did research on this so-called “master”
 ((Jin is exposing how many roles of doctors the con artist has played in TV adverts.))

Here Jin is exposing a con artist who claims to be a renowned Hmong doctor²⁶ in one commercial but contradicts herself by presenting a different identity in other commercials. Shen’s interjection comes right before Jin reveals another hoax of the master fraudster. Shen utters 妈呀 (*maya*, ‘Oh my gosh’) to show his astonishment. In this expressive token, Shen affiliates with Jin via expressing disapproval and aversion to the fraud. The short-sized utterance backchannel response conveys the listener’s affiliative orientation towards the teller (Jin). The backchannel turn in this excerpt unfolds in a similar manner to the above example (41) *ticket tout*. Both are inserted during Jin’s telling of the story. In (41), Shen’s response token comes when Jin is still building up the background information to set the story. Here in (42) Shen’s expressive token comes after Jin has revealed part of the story. Therefore, whether a backchannel interruption represents an active affiliation orientation or not hinges on the local context, in particular, the development of the storytelling.

The second observation regarding the relationship between turn size and intrusiveness is that multi-unit interruptions are slightly more intrusive than single-unit ones. This is because large turn sizes are more likely to associate with disagreement or disaffiliation with the co-participant. In the talk show conversation, Shen’s disaffiliative stances are carefully conveyed. These disaffiliative turns are often constituted by an interruption marker signalling the upcoming stance-taking, a story preface showing the speaker’s stance, elaboration of the stance, and a short conclusion. This careful elaboration takes several turns to complete.

²⁵ In subsequent turns Jin is telling the number of roles the con artist had played in different commercials. The lines are left out here for brevity.

²⁶ The Hmong are one of the 55 minority ethnic groups in China. Hmong medicine is integrated into traditional Chinese medicine (Lor, Xiong, Park, Schwei, & Jacobs, 2017).

The association between multi-unit turns and high degrees of intrusiveness can be evidenced by the close distance between multi-unit interruptions (*mult-unit*) and disaffiliative stances (*disaffiliative*) in a multiple correspondence analysis (Tantucci & Wang, 2018) in Figure 6.3 below. Multiple correspondence analysis is a multifactorial visualisation of the relationship between turn size and the two indicators of intrusiveness (i.e., affiliation orientation and information flow) on a two-dimensional plane, conducted with R package: FactoMineR (Lê, Josse, & Husson, 2008). This modelling reveals associations between variables by calculating the chi-square distance between the values of categorical variables and individual observations. The closer the distance between variables/observations on the graph, the stronger their association. The two dimensions capture 80% of the variance, a good result for a two-dimensional representation.

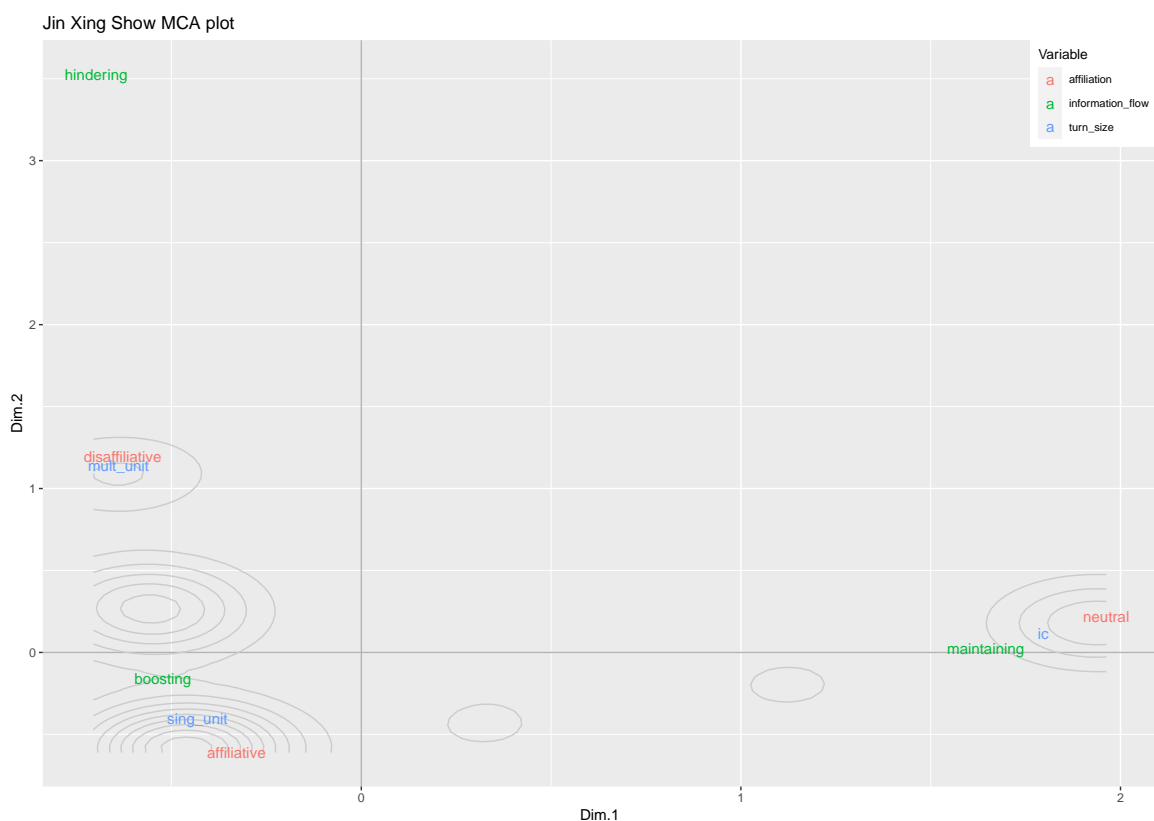


Figure 6.3: Multiple correspondence analysis of turn size, affiliation, and information flow in the Jin Xing Show corpus ($N= 994$)

In the bottom-left corner, single-unit turns (in blue) appear close to boosting (in green) and affiliative stances (in red). This shows that single unit interruptions in these institutional exchanges are more likely to be affiliative and positively affect the local information flow. In another cluster in the middle-left, multiple-unit turns (in blue) are associated with disaffiliative stances (in red). In general, when producing short-sized turns, an interrupter tends to facilitate the ongoing conversation and align with the other

speaker's stances or messages. On the other hand, interrupters tend to disalign with the stances or messages when the interruptions consist of multiple units. To illustrate this, consider once again Example (15), the description of which was previously presented in Chapter 6.1.

(15) *jxx_20160217 break-ups*

- 01 Jin: 情人节 刚 过 完
 Qingrenjie gang guo wan
 Valentines 'day just PF over
 We just celebrated Valentine's day (three days ago)
- 02 咱们 正好 聊一聊 失恋=
 Zanmen zhenghao liaoyiliao shilian=
 We timely chat breakup
 It is time to talk about breakup.
- 03 → Shen: =等会儿, 姐
 =denghuier jie
 Wait Jie
 Hang on, Jie
- 04 你 这 思维 太 跳跃 了吧
 Ni zhe shiwei tai tiaoyue le ba
 You this logic very jump PF BA
 It makes no sense to me.
- 05 这 情人节 刚 过
 Zhe qingrenjie gang guo
 This valentine's day just over
 We just celebrated Valentine's Day (three days ago)
- 06 你 跟 大伙儿 聊 失恋
 Ni gen dahuoer liao shilian
 You and we chat breakup
 Now you want to talk about break-ups with us.
- 07 合适 吗
 Heshi ma
 Suitable Q
 Is it suitable? (Are you crazy?)
- 08 Jin: 这 有 什么, 没错啊
 Zhe you shenme, meicuo a
 This have what, no wrong
 What is wrong with this?

- 09 现代 人 的 爱情， 保鲜度 都 比较 差
 Xinadai ren de aiqing, baoxiandu dou bijiao cha
 Modern people SUB love, fresh degree all relatively bad
 Nowadays, people won't keep a long-term relationship
- 10 学会 好好 分手
 Xuehui haohao fenshou
 Learn well breakup
 Learning how to deal with breakup
- 11 可能 比 学会 怎么 谈恋爱 更 重要
 Keneng bi xuehui zenme tanlianai geng zhongyao
 Possibly cf. learn how develop relationship more important
 Is possibly more important than how to develop a relationship

Here, Shen questions Jin's choice of an unseasonal topic. Shen's turn consists of several units. He initiates the interruption with an imperative phrase 等会 (*denghui*, 'hang on a second') and an address term 姐 (*Jie*, 'sister') to get the interruptee's attention as well as announce Jin's reciprocity (Lerner, 2003) in line 03. Then, this is followed by a story preface in the form of an assessment 你这思维也太跳跃了吧 (*ni zhe siwei ye tai taioyue le ba*, 'it makes no sense to me') (line 04). Shen explains that he is concerned that Valentine's Day was just a couple of days ago (lines 05-6). He concludes the turn with a rhetorical question, emphasising his stance (line 07). In this exchange, Shen cautiously designs this interruption turn, viz., using an attention-getter to initiate the interruption, using a story preface to signal the upcoming proposition, explaining his disagreement and then concluding the turn. In other words, Shen's disagreement stance is carefully expressed, which leads to a big-chunk turn.

Big chunk interruptions also occur when Shen is mocking Jin in a non-serious, playful frame (see *jocular mockery* in Haugh, 2010, 2014; Haugh & Bousfield, 2012). The teasing turns typically start with turn-initial markers (e.g., address terms) and proceed with one or multiple host clauses which carry the propositional contents of the particular turn (cf. Section 4.5.2 for a detailed elaboration of *host clauses* in this study). The jocular mockery achieved in multiple turns can be illustrated in Example (43) *Texas* below which is a fuller version of previous example (30). Shen teases Jin for being so bossy and capricious that her ex-boyfriend did not dare to break up in front of her, but instead did so over the phone.

(43) jxx_20160217 Texas

- 01 Jin: 我 说 你 既 然 想 分 手
 Wo shuo ni jiran xiang fenshou
 I say you since want breakup
 I asked if you were so eager to break up
- 02 为 什 么 在 德 克 萨 斯 不 提 出 来 呢
 Weishenm zai dekesasi bu tichulai ne
 Why in Texas no mention RLV
 Why not do it in Texas
- 03 为 什 么 不 当 面 跟 我 说 呢=
 Weishenme bu dangmian genwo shuo ne
 Why no in person to I say RLV
 Why not talk with me in person?
- 04 → Shen: =姐, 其 实 这 个 可 以 理 解
 Jie, qishi zhege keyi lijie
 Jie, actually this able understand
 Jie, this is quite understandable
- 05 → 因 为 他 毕 竟 也 怕 死 嘛
 Yinwei ta bijing ye pa si ma
 Because he after all also afraid of death EOF
 After all he is scared of being murdered soon, isn't he?
 ((Audience laughing))
- 06 Jin: 一 边 呆 着 去
 Yibian daizhe qu
 Aside sit go
 Get out of here!

In the first three lines, Jin complains that she was puzzled why her ex did not break up with her in person but chose to do so over the phone. Shen's interruption comes instantly in anticipation of Jin's revealing the motivation behind the phone breakup. First, he addresses Jin and announces that he knows the answer (line 04). The story preface instantly gets both Jin's and the audience's attention. Then Shen utters that it is because "after all he is scared of being murdered," which playfully implies that Jin is too domineering (line 05). The jocular mockery is incrementally built up through the sequence organisation (Haugh & Bousfield, 2012), viz., Jin's setting up the story and Shen's harsh response to it. The studio audience, as bystanders, enjoy watching the conflict potentially escalating and thrive on Shen's "entertaining impoliteness" (Culpeper, 2005). In this exchange, the teasing consists of two turns.

To conclude, the linear regression indicates that turn size is significantly associated with degree of intrusiveness in the talk show data. Specifically, backchanneling interruptions are positively correlate with middle-level intrusiveness (level 4). This is because backchannels primarily acknowledge the current speakership and signal that the current speaking status can continue. Backchannels do not affect propositionally the flow of the local exchange. They often appear as brief tokens without propositional contents and thus do not express specific stances towards the current telling. Additionally, compared with single-unit turns, interruptions with multiple units are more intrusive. What underpins this may be that the interrupter (Shen) employs a sequence of turns to express his disaffiliation (e.g., multi-unit turns comprised of address terms as an interruption marker, pre-sequence to signal the upcoming disalignment, and the propositional contents). This mindfulness is also manifest in the way Shen employs turn-initial markers to initiate interruptions. In the following section, I will elaborate on the association between intrusiveness and interruption markers.

6.2.2 Interruption marker and intrusiveness: unmarked interruptions showing lower degree of intrusiveness

As examined in Chapter 4, interruption markers are tokens that occur turn-initially and are syntactically independent from the rest of a turn, the host clause. In the current study, interruption markers may take the form of backchannel responses (e.g., 哦哦, *oo*, ‘hmm’), pragmatic markers (e.g., 那个, *nage*, ‘and hmm’), and paralinguistic cues (e.g., laughter). Some interruption markers may also occur as stand-alone utterances, for instance, backchannel tokens. Some inherently require the company of propositional meanings. For instance, the address term 姐 (*jie*, ‘sister’) normally precedes a host clause denoting what the turn is about. The turn-initial position is an integral component of turn design. It marks the location to project messages or stances on what was said previously and what is expected to be said (Heritage, 2002; Kim & Kuroshima, 2013; Smith, 2013; Tantucci & Di Cristofaro, 2020). As Clayman (2013a) argued, address terms can intensify the speaker’s engagement with the current topic or signal a departure from the stance that is embedded in previous turns. Situated in an institutionalised setting, four different categories of turn-initial interruption markers occur in the talk show conversation: backchannels (bc), laughter (la), pragmatic markers (pm), and address terms (ad). In what follows, I will examine the relationship between intrusiveness and

interruption markers in the talk show dataset. Table 6.2 below shows the frequency of interruption markers, and Figure 6.4 illustrates the density of intrusiveness of interruption markers.

Table 6.2: Frequency of turn-initial interruption markers in the Jin Xing Show (N=994)

Interruption marker	Frequency	Percentage
bc (backchannel)	378	38.00%
ad (address term)	167	16.80%
pm (pragmatic marker)	53	5.30%
la (laughter)	2	0.20%
um(unmarked)	394	39.60%
In total	994	100%

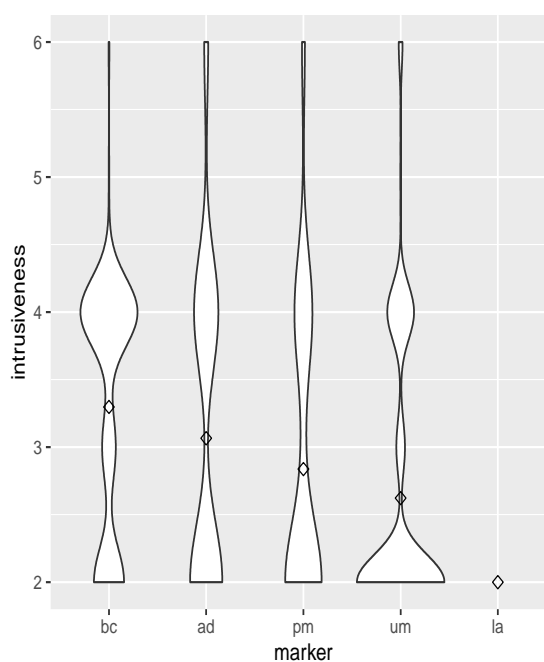


Figure 6.4: Interruption markers and their density of intrusiveness in the Jin Xing Show

Among the four types of interruption markers, backchannels and address terms are used most frequently; pragmatic markers and laughter are the least frequent. Among 378 backchannel-prefaced interruptions, 178 are followed by propositional content. In total, there are 167 address-term-prefaced interruptions. In this sense, address terms and backchannel responses are almost equally frequently used to initiate an interruption.

The violin plot in Figure 6.4 above displays the distribution of intrusiveness for each type of interruption marker. The kernel density indicates the frequency of instances for each category, and the diamond-shaped dot indicates the mean score of each type of

marker. Interruptions initiated with laughter (la) or with no prefatory marker (um) have the lowest level of intrusiveness and therefore are the most cooperative. This is also evidenced in the linear regression model in Table 6.1. In what follows, I will focus on examining how laughter-initiated interruptions and unmarked interruptions are associated with cooperativeness.

6.2.2.1 Less intrusiveness of laughter-initiated interruptions

I will discuss the two laughter-initiated instances briefly. There are only two instances of laughter-initiated interruptions in the collected talk show data. In one instance, both Shen and the audience laugh instantly as they hear the name of an obsessed super-fan who had made herself well-known on social media. The laughter even comes before Jin starts telling the character's story. Shen's laughter shows that he knows about this person and finds her story funny. In the other instance, Shen laughs along with Jin when she teases the other character, adding a short-sized verbal utterance to signal his affiliation with Jin.

6.2.2.2 Less intrusiveness of unmarked interruptions

In the talk show conversation, interruptions that are constituted by propositions only without any prefatory tokens are reported to be less intrusive. To explore the mechanism behind this, I extracted all unmarked interruptions from the Jin Xing Show corpus to form a sub-corpus of unmarked interruptions. I then examined the distribution of affiliation orientation, information flow and turn size in the sub-corpus, as seen the bar plots in Figure 6.5.

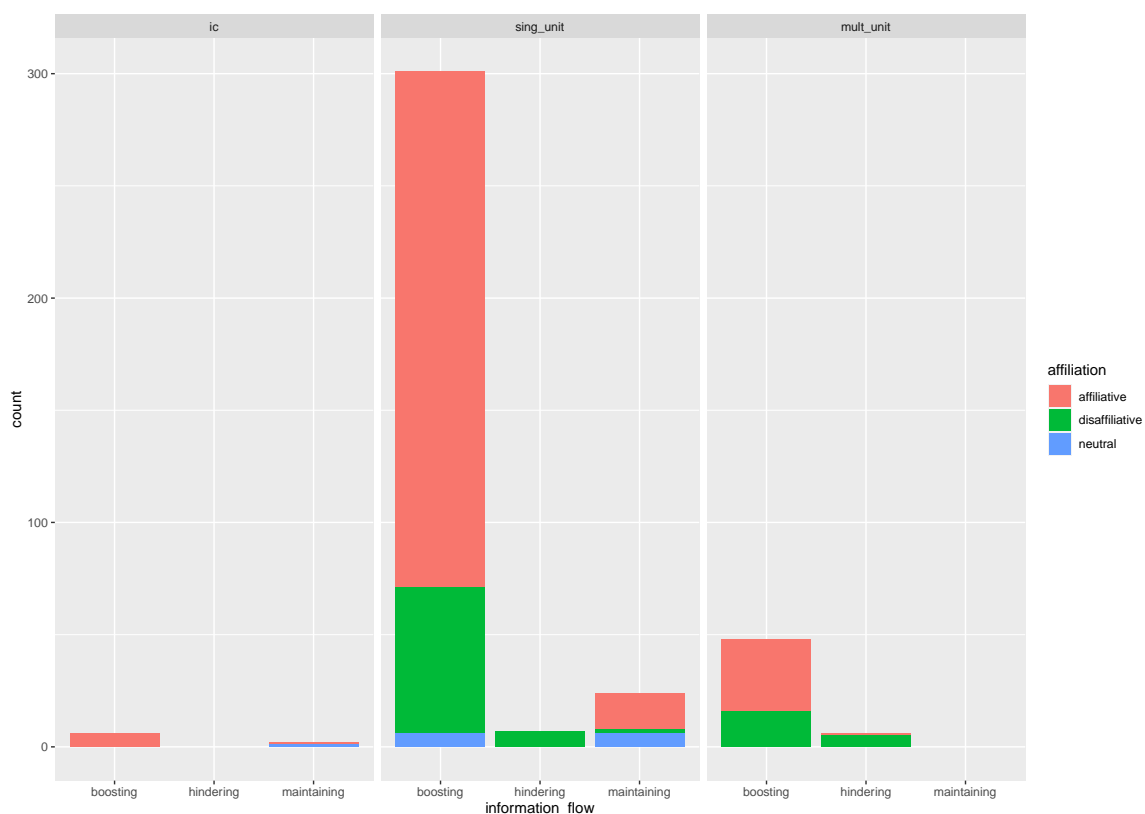


Figure 6.5: Bar plots of turn size, affiliation orientation and information flow in unmarked interruptions ($N=394$, count=frequency)

As seen in Figure 6.5, single-unit unmarked interruptions (*sing_unit*) are far more frequent than the other two types of turn size. Within single-unit interruptions, the great majority of turns boost the information flow and display affiliative stances (red bars). In other words, the great majority of unmarked interruptions tend to show affiliative stances and boost the information flow, therefore, they are on a lower degree of intrusiveness and hence more cooperative.

Unmarked interruptions are more likely to occur in certain environments. The strong association between unmarked instances and less intrusiveness can be illustrated in the three examples below: in previous example (12) *sentimental* Shen asks a further question related to the current telling, previous example (16) *crowded train* concerns proffering supporting detail, and Example (44) *eight words* concerns pre-emptive co-completion of utterances.

(12) *jxx_20160406 sentimental*

01 Jin: 从此. 师徒 两人 割袍断义=
 Congci shitu liangren. Gepaoduanyi
 Ever since master disciple two persons break off connections
 They broke off all connections ever since

- 02 → Shen: =听着 有点 伤感
 Tingzhe youdian shanggan
 Listening a bit sad
 It is quite a pity.
- 03 → 那 他 后来 发展的 怎么样
 Na ta houlai fazhande zenmeyang
 Then he Later develop how
 Then how has he been doing?
- 04 Jin: 后来 发展的 很好
 Houlai fazhande. Henhao
 Later develop very good
 He's been doing very well.

Prior to this extract, Jin is talking about how a famous actor, despite his great respect of his martial arts master, severed ties with his master mainly for their conflicting attitudes towards preserving traditional culture. Shen's interruption starts directly with the main proposition without any prefatory tokens. He first expresses his sympathy for the misfortune of the actor (line 02); then he goes on to inquire about the actor's recent situation (line 03). Shen's assessment 听着有点伤感 (*tingzhe youdian shanggan*, 'it is quite a pity') (line 02) displays the listener's response to the teller's big chunk telling; on the other hand, indicates that an epistemic gap has been closed – what happened between the actor and his master. The second turn unit (line 03), a question in search of information, prompts Jin to respond by bringing the story up to date, thereby initiating a new *question-answer* sequence (cf. Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). This request of information positions the requester (Shen) as unknowing [K-] and the recipient (Jin) as knowing [K+] (Heritage, 2012b). The cooperation – Shen's making the request and Jin's responding to the request – motivates the sequence of interaction, therefore, the information flow is boosted. In the meantime, Shen shows his interest in the telling. Questions from the listener in storytelling can function affiliatively when they allow the teller to stay on topic, thus continue his/her telling (Kupetz, 2014). Questions can also be produced to endorse the teller's affective treatment of the event (Stivers, 2008). The assessment (line 02), inserted before the question, sympathises with Jin's narration. Therefore, the unmarked interruption overall demonstrates an affiliative orientation towards Jin's telling.

That being said, not all question-answer sequences in the Jin Xing Show display affiliative stance. Shen may imply disagreement or be teasing Jin through asking insincere questions. Instead of addressing the question, Jin may tease him back. In these circumstances, the non-information-seeking questions display the speaker's disaffiliative orientation. In information-seeking questions, no interruption markers are used when the question concerns information regarding the character in the storytelling (e.g., Example (12) *sentimental*). Interruption markers are used when the question concerns Jin (e.g., Example (15) *break-ups*, Example (43) *Texas*).

Apart from asking affiliative questions, Shen interrupts to proffer details to support Jin's ongoing telling, for instance, by substantiating or testifying against Jin's argument or description. To illustrate this, consider once again Example (16) *crowded train*. Via verbal cues and body movements Shen acts out the scene of a steward selling snacks on a crowded train during the peak travel season.

(16) jxx_20160914 *crowded train*

- 01 Jin: 当时 还是 返乡 高峰
 Dangshi haishi fanxiang gaofeng
 At that time still return hom peak
 It was the peak of Spring Rush during the new year
- 02 整个 车厢里 挤得 满满当当的
 Zhengge chexiangli jide manmandangdangde
 Whole carriage packed extremely full
 Every coach in the train was so crowded.
- 03 除了 送餐车 能 过去 人 都 没法 走了=
 Chule songcanche neng guoqu ren dou meifa zoule
 Except food trolley can go through people all no way walk
 No one could move freely except the food delivery car.
- 04 → Shen: =啤酒 饮料 矿泉水
 Pijiu yinliao kuangquanshui
 Beer beverage mineral water
- 05 **Hey, beer, beverage, mineral water,**
 白酒 瓜子 花生米
 Baijiu guazi huashengmi
 Wine sunflower seed peanut
 Wine, sunflower seed, peanut,
- 06 来 腿 收一收 收一收
 Lai tui shouyishou shouyishou

Come leg put away put away

Hey, please kindly make room for me

Here, Jin is recalling her husband's first train ride during the busy Spring Rush approaching the Chinese New Year. In the first three lines, Jin introduces the background of the story, i.e., when, where and how, to build up the scene of a crowded train. Shen then mimics the steward's routinised practice – squeezing through the crowd while peddling goods – to remind the audience of the experience of taking a train during the peak season. In so doing, Shen's interruption helps to substantiate Jin's narrative. Moreover, Shen's turn is accompanied by hilarious body movements and hand gestures, which make the studio audience burst into laughter. No markers are used to preface the detail-supplementing turn.

Another type of unmarked interruption display as a subversive completion (Bolden et al., 2019), “whereby one speaker produces a grammatically fitted completion of another speaker's unfolding turn so as to subvert the action of the unfolding turn and the ongoing sequence” (Bolden et al., 2019, p. 144). In the Jin Xing Show case, Shen collaboratively completes the final part of Jin's turn, yet “wrongly” projects upcoming details of Jin's unfolding action as Jin articulates an alternative to what Shen is heading for. The following example (44) illustrates this point.

(44) jxx_20160713 eight words

- 01 Jin: 各种 各样的 招数 全 往上 忽悠
Gezhonggeyangde zhaoshu quan wangshang huyou
All kinds of ways all up fool
Using all sorts of ways to fool people
- 02 这样的 招聘 能 招到 人 吗
Zheyangde zhaopin neng zhaodao ren ma
This kind of recruitment can recruit people EOF
How can this sort of recruitment successfully recruit candidates?
- 03 我的 点评 是=
Wode dianping shi
My comment BE
My comment is
- 04 → Shen: =八个字
Bagezi
Eight words
Eight words

- 05 Jin: 不, 这回 换 十四个 字 了
 Bu, zhehui huan shisige zi le
 No, this time change fourteen words PF
 No, this time it is fourteen words.
 ((Jin continues her critiques of the recruitment advert))
- 06 ((Audience laughing))

Prior to this excerpt, Jin is commenting on all sorts of absurd requirements in job descriptions. Jin ends each of the job description with critiques in the format of *My comment is + eight-word verse*. Therefore, in this extract, after Jin announces her upcoming comment with a prefatory token 我的点评是 (*wode dianping shi*, ‘My comment is’) in line 03), Shen pre-emptively projects and completes Jin’s sentence: 八个字, (*bage zi*, ‘eight words’) (line 04). However, Shen’s projection is rejected by Jin as she corrects that the job description in discussion deserves a fourteen-word critique (line 05) as eight words cannot fully express how preposterous the job requirements are (not shown in this extract). In this case, Shen’s subversive completion (Bolden et al., 2019) has derailed Jin’s course of action; Jin’s correction is appreciated with laughter from the audience. Shen’s subversive completion (line 04) latches onto Jin’s preliminary component; therefore, no prefatory marker is uttered.

To conclude, in the talk show dataset, interruptions without any turn-initial markers tend to be less intrusive compared to other types of marked interruptions. This is because unmarked interruptions align with the recipient’s stances or messages and advance the local information flow. They are often short in size. Shen initiates interruptions without any markers where the interruptions concern inquiries about the ongoing telling, proffering supporting details or a pre-emptive co-completion of Jin’s turn. None of these actions require turn-initial markers to preface the interruptions. In so doing, Shen tends to demonstrate an affiliative, supportive role as an assistant.

6.2.3 No association between interruption timing and intrusiveness in Jin Xing Show

Interruption timing concerns the point when an interruption is initiated in relation to the other speaker’s utterance. As stated in previous chapters, interruption timing falls into three categories, viz., turn-initial, turn-middle, or turn-final position. In the talk show setting, the time of interruption display less flexibility. The majority of interruptions (98%) are initiated between the point when Jin has finished her current turn and is about to

produce the next (e.g., Examples 46-7), thus classified as final timing. There are few cases where Shen pre-emptively co-completes Jin's turn before Jin has come to her turn transition place, thus classified as middle timing. To illustrate, consider the above example (44) *eight words*. Before Jin is about to announce her critiques of the absurd requirements in job descriptions, Jin pre-emptively produces his projection of the comment on Jin's behalf. There are no perceivable overlaps near the interruption onset in both types of interruption timing, which is a salient timing difference between interruptions in the two datasets. This difference may also be attributed to the influence of interruption timing on the degree of intrusiveness. As examined in Chapter 5, interruption timing is associated with intrusiveness in everyday telephone conversation, with the earlier timings – initial and middle – being more intrusive. In the talk show dataset, however, the variable of interruption timing does not correlate significantly.

6.2.4 No association between speech act and intrusiveness in Jin Xing Show

As with interruption timing, the illocutionary force of interruption utterances does not correlate significantly with intrusiveness in the talk show conversation. That is, the intrusiveness of interruption utterances is not influenced by the speech act conveyed in the utterance. This is different from the findings in the Callhome dataset where utterances consisting of directives are more intrusive than interruptions of other types of speech acts. In the talk show dataset, directive speech acts, however, do not contribute to a higher level of intrusiveness, partly because the directive illocutionary force here is realised in a teasing frame rather than a serious one (Dynel & Poppi, 2019). That is, the speaker teases the recipient through directive speech acts to entertain the audience. The highly scripted nature of the show allows this intent tacitly shared by both the recipient and the audience. The previous example (6) *chopsticks* below shows how Shen's directive interruptions create a highly cooperative and collaborative interchange.

(6) *jxx_20150729 chopsticks*

01	Jin:	我	一拍	桌子			
		Wo	yipai	zhuozi			
		I	slam	table			
		I slammed the table					
02		大声		呵斥	那个	阿姨	
		Dasheng		hechi	nage	ayi	
		Big sound		scold	that	maid	

Shouted at the maid

03 “阿姨 去” =
 Aiyi qu
 Maid go
 Please, help me to=

04 → Shen: =“把 菜 给我 倒 了”
 Ba cai geiwo dao le
 OBJ dish PASS me dump PF
 = Dump the dishes!

05 Jin: “把 筷子 给我 拿来!”
 Ba kuaizi geiwo nalai
 OBJ chopsticks PASS me bring
 Bring the chopsticks!

06 ((Audience laughing))

Only a brief sketch of an analysis of this excerpt is necessary; I have given a fuller account of this exchange in Section 3.3.2. Here we only focus on participants’ reaction to Shen’s pre-emptive interruption in line 04. Jin is about to say how she reacted to a lavish dinner during her diet but was cut off by Shen’s timely co-construction of what he foresees coming next in Jin’s turn – “Dump the dishes!”. Contrarily, in the immediately subsequent turn, Jin reveals that she actually asked the nanny to “Bring the chopsticks!”. The co-completion interactionally and incrementally creates a dramatic humorous effect to make the audience laugh, which serves the entertainment nature of the show. The here-and-now of the conversational context has made it rather clear to the audience that the directive speech act occurs in quotative speech, so it does not directly target the current conversational participant. That is, the directive speech act which is in quotation mark should not be interpreted as an order to dump the food but instead seen as Shen’s set-up for Jin’s punchline (i.e., ‘bring the chopsticks’). Note that this dramatic effect is actually achieved by coordination of the two speakers instead of a single person.

Shen has used this kind of pre-emptive co-completion a few times for its entertaining effect. The institutional obligations – that Shen assists Jin’s storytelling to entertain the audience – may explain why co-completion is used frequently throughout the talk show conversation. Contrarily, in the private telephone conversation, directives occur less frequently and, when they do, index intrusive interruptions. The entertaining effect is the key feature in this kind of institutional conversation.

Based on the analysis so far, the institutional nature of the talk show conversation has played an important role in the relationship between the four parameters and intrusiveness. Among the four dimensions – interruption timing, interruption marker, turn size, and speech act, interruption timing is rather fixed. The great majority of interruptions are initiated when the prior speaker has completed their current turn, by the interrupter entering a transition relevance place (TRP). Backchannel responses are associated with a higher level of intrusiveness. They denote diminished propositional meanings and occur much less frequently in this kind of institutional talk. When the interrupter co-completes turns with directives, the directive act is produced in a humorous frame. Regarding turn-initial interruption markers, address terms are frequently used in the talk show setting, a feature which was not identified in the telephone conversations. Interruptions that are initiated by address terms convey clear-cut stances in the institutional conversation. In the next section, I will elaborate how interruptions prefaced with address terms are associated with affiliative and disaffiliative stances.

6.3 Address terms and affiliation orientation in Jin Xing Show

In this sub-section, I will explore how address terms are used to index an interrupter's affiliation orientation towards the co-participant. This elaboration is motivated by two reasons. The first is that address-term-initiated interruptions are not identified in the collected Callhome dataset whereas they are the second most frequent instances among the four types of interruption markers in the talk show corpus. The second reason is that address-term-initiated interruptions are almost equally associated with affiliative and disaffiliative orientations.

Address terms have been largely researched in institutional contexts, for instance, news interviews (Clayman, 2010; Rendle-Short, 2007) and telephone counselling (Butler et al., 2011). They can be positioned at any point within the sequence, viz., turn-initial, turn-medial, or turn-final stages. In multi-party conversations (more than two participants), address terms can be utilised to select the next speaker (Clayman, 2010; Lerner, 2003). In dyadic private conversations, such as medical interactions between doctors and patients, the turn-taking procedure is close to the private conversational pattern and the directionality of speaking is comparatively transparent (Drew & Heritage, 1992a), that is, the current speaker treats the other participant as the direct and sole recipient. This shows that, to some extent, addressing the intended addressees in dyadic interaction is redundant (Clayman, 2010). There are two recurring functions of address

terms in interaction: sequence and stance. The first function concerns managing the structural organisation of both topic and turn transition (Butler et al., 2011; Lerner, 2003). For instance, in political interviews journalists overwhelmingly address politicians in their turn-beginnings to introduce a new topic or close a sequence, while politicians address journalists to resolve overlaps when both of them are talking (Rendle-Short, 2007). The second function of address terms concerns managing relationships, for instance, displaying intimacy, expressing dispreferred comments and exercising power. Clayman (2010) states that politicians use address terms to solicit journalists' attention to their upcoming disagreement as well as to "speak sincerely", viz., expressing their feelings, beliefs, or opinions. Likewise, Butler et al. (2011) found that telephone counsellors use address terms to show stances that do not fit with their clients' stances. In political interviews, politicians may address the journalist by their first names to demonstrate their power asymmetry, particularly in adversarial environments (e.g., disagreement) (Rendle-Short, 2007).

Most of the CA studies have suggested that address terms used in institutional settings are "shift implicative" (Butler et al., 2011, p. 340), that is, signalling a change in sequential structures or a change in affective stances. However, in the *Jin Xing Show*, address terms are used to initiate interruption turns in a wide range of interactional environments: elaborating on the topic in discussion, suggesting a topic change, inserting an affiliative comment, or teasing another speaker. In summary, address terms display a variety of interactional goals in the talk show corpus.

To examine the interactional environment of address-term-prefaced interruptions, I extracted all instances of address-term-prefaced interruptions from the talk show corpus. Eventually, 167 interruption instances were gathered, as shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: *Address terms as interruption markers: Frequency of affiliation and information flow (N = 167)*

Affiliation orientation	Affiliative	83	49.70%
	Disaffiliative	84	50.30%
	Neutral	0	0%
Information flow	Boosting	156	94.50%
	Hindering	9	5.40%
	Maintaining	0	0%

As seen in Table 6.3, quite distinctively, there are almost an equal number of address-term initiated interruptions showing affiliative (83 instances) and disaffiliation

orientations (84 instances). In terms of sequential structure, address terms display an even stronger tendency to boost the information flow, with 94.5% of address-term-prefaced interruptions sequentially aligned with the prior speaker's topic. None of the address-term initiated interruptions display neutral affiliation orientation or maintain the information flow. That is, for interruptions prefaced with address terms, they demonstrate salient stance-taking, either affiliative or disaffiliative; they also have a salient effect on the information flow by boosting or hindering it.

In what follows, I will illustrate the environment in which AT-prefaced interruptions occur with examples from talk show conversation. From the examples emerge my argument about the relationship between epistemic authority and the affiliation status of the AT-prefaced interruptions. That is, interrupter's deference to another speaker's epistemic authority leads to affiliative interruptions, and interrupter's challenging of the epistemic authority leads to disaffiliative interruptions.

6.3.1 Address-term-initiated affiliative stances: deference to epistemic authority

Due to the institutional configuration of this talk show, Jin, as the host, is projected to be knowledgeable, critical, and impartial, whereas Shen is projected to be secondary to Jin in terms of knowledge of the storytelling and institutional rights. Deference to Jin's epistemic authority is manifest in different ways: genuinely requesting question relating to the progress of a certain telling (e.g., "Have you ever seen him after the break-up?") or launching second position assessment (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) or information assertion that is in line with Jin's. Deference to this kind of epistemic asymmetry is approved by Jin, hence affiliative interruptions. In Example (45) below Shen initiates a question with an address term requesting information on the look of the cheongsam that Jin dislikes. In Example (46) the address-term initiated interruption is about a slight topic transition requesting or prompting Jin to tell her experience of being invited to host a wedding ceremony.

(45) jxx_20170412 cheongsam

- 01 Jin: 她 不是 要 简洁 交流 吗
 Ta bushi yao jianjie jiaoliu ma
 She not ask concise exchange Q
 Isn't she asking for concise communication?
- 02 这 多 简洁, 就是 简洁 吗=
 Zhe duo jianjie, jiushi jianjie ma

- This so concise exactly concise EOF
Isn't my reply concise enough?
- 03 → Shen: =姐 我 好奇 一 个 事
Jie wo haoqi yi ge shi
Sister I curious one CL thing
Jie, I am really curious about one thing,
- 04 → 她 到底 设计 出 了 什 么 样 的 旗 袍
Ta daodi sheji chu le shenme yang de qipao
She on earth design out PFV what kind SUB cheongsam
What kind of cheongsam on earth did she design
- 05 → 可 以 秒 杀 你 的 旗 袍 ？
Keyi miaosha nide qipao?
Can second kill your cheongsam
that can outshine yours by that much?
- 06 Jin: 这 么 说 吧，
Zheme shuo ba
This say SUB
Let me tell you,
- 07 只 要 加 一 条 勋 带
Zhiyao jia yi tiao xundai
Only add one CL band
One more time,
- 08 我 就 直 接 可 以 做 站 在 门 外 的 礼 仪 小 姐 了
Wo jiu zhijie keyi zuo zhanzai menwaide liyi xiaojie le
I then directly can act stand-at door SUB etiquette lady CRS
I can be a proper courteous lady standing outside a restaurant.
((Audience laughing))

Prior to (10), Jin is recalling that she bluntly declined a proposal from a self-acclaimed international renowned fashion designer to provide cheongsams²⁷ for her to wear on the Jin Xing Show. Immediately, Shen inserts a question asking Jin to tell the audience how the cheongsam looks alike (lines 03-5). Shen first initiates the turn by addressing Jin, which captures the turn floor as well as attracts Jin's attention towards the upcoming proposition. The address term is followed by a prefatory construction showing

²⁷ Cheongsam is a tight silk dress with long neck and short sleeves that is worn by Chinese women on certain occasions. Jin appears wearing a cheongsam in every episode of the talk show and that is why cheongsam manufacturers approach her. Jin always turns them down.

the speaker's affective stance 我好奇一个事 (*wo haoqi yige shi*, 'I am really curious about one thing,') (line 03). Both the address term and the stance-marking unit together constitute the question. Shen's information-seeking question (J. D. Robinson, 2020) acknowledges Jin's first-hand experience or first access to the information that he is seeking. In so doing Shen implies that Jin is the only person in this studio who has access to that information. And now the floor is on Jin's to take the first position to describe what the design is look like. In so doing, Shen shows his subordination and deference to Jin's epistemic authority. Jin responds immediately, making fun of the tacky design of the cheongsam (lines 07-9), which makes the audience laugh. Shen's inserted question prompts her to explain why she turned down the cheongsam design that was proposed.

Shen's deference is not limited to the "knowables" from Jin's first-hand experience but also extends to the "knowables" that Jin have indirectly acquired from hearsay, reports, etc. (cf. (Pomerantz, 1980) for Type 1 knowables and Type 2 knowables). To illustrates, consider the Example (46) in which Shen requests further information on a story that Jin has no first-hand experience.

(46) *jxx_20170809* ex-wife

- 01 Jin: 他 最后 把 车子 也 给 卖掉 了，
 Ta zuihou ba chezi ye gei maidioa le
 He finally PASS car also PASS sold CRS
 Eventually, he even sold his car,
- 02 换成 了 骑 自行车 上班，
 Huancheng le qi zixingche shangban
 Cheng-to CRS ride bike go to work
 changing to a bike and going to work by bike
- 03 挺 健康 挺 环保 的，
 Ting jiankang ting huanbao de
 Quite healthy quite environment-friendly SUB
 Quite a healthy and environmentally-friendly lifestyle.
- 04 → Shen: 但是 姐 有 件 事 我 不 明白
 Danshi jie you jian shi wo bu mingbai
 But jie habve CLF thing I not understand
 But Jie, one thing I am not quite sure,
- 05 → 就 这个 四环男
 Jiu zhege sihuannan
 just this four-ring man

- as for the four-ring man,
- 06 → 要 养 这个 前妻 养 多久 啊?
 Yao yang zhege qianqi yang duojiu a
 Have to support this ex-wife support how long EC
- How long does he have to keep providing for his ex-wives?**
- 07 Jin: 沈南 你 不 知道 吧?
 Shennan ni bu zhidao ba
 PNShennan you not know SUG
 Shen Nan, you probably don't know that
- 08 德国 的 婚姻法 规定,
 Deguo de hunyinfa guiding
 German SUB marriage law stipulate
 According to the German marriage laws,
- 09 离婚 后 只要 女方 没有 再婚,
 Lihun hou zhiyao nvfang meiyou zaihun
 Divorce later as long as woman side no re-marry
 After the divorce, as long as the ex-wife has not yet re-married,
- 10 男方 就 一直 要 提供 生活费 的,
 Nanfang jiu yizhi yao tigong shenghuo de
 Man side just all the time have support living expenditure SUB
 The ex-husband has to keep providing for his ex-wife.

Here Jin is telling the story of a “four-ring” man – how a German guy she knows has ended up with marrying four times and therefore he has got four wedding rings. Jin is joking that the four marriages has cost him a lot of fortune (e.g., providing for the three ex-wives) so he ended up going to work by bike instead of driving. While Jin made it clear that she heard the story from his husband who is friend with his German guy, she is still regarded as the only authority at least in this studio on the state of affairs of the “four-ring” man. The “hearsay” knowledge does not prevent Shen from showing his deference to Jin’s epistemic authority and access to this story. That is why in the following turn Shen interrupts and asks Jin how many long the German guy has to keep providing for his ex-wives. This question acknowledges Jin’s epistemic access to the story or denotes Shen’s inference of Jin’s general knowledge about Germany marriage laws²⁸.

There are other cases where Shen’s address-term initiated second assessment affiliates with Jin’s assessment of a certain state of affairs in prior turns; in this sense,

²⁸ Jin’s husband is German, so Jin is arguably aware of some articles of German marriage laws.

Jin's assessment stands in the first position and Shen's assessment, in the second position, fits with Jin's epistemic stance.

6.3.2 Address-term-initiated disaffiliative stance: challenging epistemic authority

When Shen's address-term initiated interruptions do not acknowledge Jin's epistemic authority, but instead attempts to question or challenge the epistemic status and epistemic stance that Jin holds, the interruptions are disapproved by Jin and hence disaffiliative. A recurring pattern is to disagree with Jin, which amounts to counter Jin's epistemic stance. For instance, in Example (47) below, Jin talks about two girls who pester people on the subway to scan the QR code of their products. The two speakers' opinions differ on whether conducting business on public transportation is appropriate.

(47) jxx_20170329 Scanning the QR code

- 01 → Shen: =但是 姐
 Danshi jie
But sister
But, Jie,
- 02 → 你想 人家 小姑娘 也有 道理
 Nixiang Renjia xiaoguniang yeyou daoli
 you think other little girl also have sense
Why not think the salesgirls only did that for some reason.
- 03 → “扫码 就是 我的 工作 呀
 Saoma jiushi wode gongzuo ya
 Scanning code right is my job EC
“Scanning QR codes is my job
- 04 → 我 必须得 先 找 我的 工作”
 Wo bixudei xian zhao wode gongzuo
 I have to first find my job
I have to put my work first”
- 05 Jin: 没错 扫码 是 你的 工作
 Meicuo saoma shi nide gongzuo
 Not wrong scan code is your work
 It is your job, that is right
- 06 这是 公共 地铁 不是
 Zheshi gonggong ditie bushi
 This is public subway not
 The subway is a public space

07 不是 你家的 公共 营销 办公 场所
 Bushi nijiade gonggong yingxiao bangong changsuo
 not your family's public marketing office venue
 Not your marketing office.
 ((Jin raises her voice, pointing at Shen))

This extract illustrates how AT-prefaced interruptions can index a departure from the epistemic stance that Jin holds in the immediately previous turn. Prior to this exchange, Jin argues that asking subway passengers to scan QR codes is really annoying. In so doing, Jin displays her first position epistemic stance towards this state of affairs. Following Jin's stance-displaying, Shen expresses his disagreement in the second position. Note that Shen designs his interruption turn – challenging other's epistemic stance – in a cautious fashion. He first uses a transition marker 但是 (*danshi*, 'but') and an address term 姐 (*jie*, 'sister') to summon the recipient's attention to the upcoming proposition (line 01). The combination of the transition marker and the address term has the procedural function of signalling the interpretation of the upcoming propositional content (Brinton, 2017). In line 02, Shen produces a story preface (a summary of the upcoming turn, see Sacks, 1986) to demonstrate his stance towards the two girls' asking people to scan their QR code. Shen's disagreement culminates in the reported speech in lines 03-4 where Shen appears to cite the fact (i.e., the two girls are doing their job) to back up his disagreement with Jin. The turn-initial markers (但是 and 姐) and the story-preface incrementally build up disalignment, so that the recipient may not feel shocked when the disalignment is uttered.

A noteworthy feature of this exchange is the "cautiousness" that emerges from the disagreement. In line 02, after getting the recipient's attention, Shen signposts his stance. Instead of disagreeing explicitly (e.g., I don't agree with you on this point), Shen invites Jin to think of the issue from the girls' stance, 你想人家人家小姑娘也有道理 (*nixiang renjia renjia xiao guoniang yeyou daoli*, 'Why not think the salesgirls only did that for some reason'). In the next turn, Shen indirectly displays his stance via reporting the two girls' speech (lines 03-4). Shen shifts the *footing* (Goffman, 1981) from his viewpoint to the third party's stance (i.e., the two girls'). That is, Shen speaks on his own behalf in the first two lines, yet he speaks on behalf of the two girls in lines 03-4. By involving the third party's stance, Shen disengages himself from the direct confrontation of *you and me* or *your stance and my stance*, and at the same time expresses his disagreement. As a result, he avoids the tension which might result from disagreement and creates, to some extent, congeniality (Loeb, 2015). In disaligning his stance from

Jin's, Shen may also orient to his role as the proxy of the audience who may not affiliate with Jin's critiques of the two girls. The "delicacy" of disalignment may manifest the institutional power asymmetry between the two speakers.

In disagreeing with Jin, Shen is essentially challenging Jin's epistemic stance and proposing his opposing stance. Therefore, Shen is not showing absolute deference to Jin's epistemic authority. An even more pronounced form of disaffiliation is teasing (cf. Dynel, 2020; Dynel & Poppi, 2019; Schnurr & Chan, 2011), in which Shen disdain Jin's claim of the authority over a certain state of affairs or stance. As stated earlier, Jin's irritation and sharp tongue are the topic of teasing. To illustrate, consider the previous Example (43) *Texas*. Shen carefully designs the teasing turn, starting with an address term to get Jin's attention as well as signalling the upcoming disaffiliation.

6.4 Summary

This chapter explored the interruptions initiated by the assistant in the Jin Xing Show programme. As with interruptions in the Callhome corpus, speakers' affiliation and information flow are associated with each other. Affiliative interruptions are more likely to boost the information flow, disaffiliative interruptions are more likely to disrupt the information flow, and neutral interruptions maintain the flow. Due to institutional constraints on speakers' roles and tasks, the great majority of interruptions are initiated to maintain and expand on the prior speaker's topic. Very few interruptions are identified to hinder the ongoing information flow. The interrupter's stance is clearly demonstrated, with a great majority showing affiliative or disaffiliative orientation. Interruption markers and turn size of an interruption are associated with the degree of intrusiveness. Interruptions with more than one turn unit are reported to be more intrusive than those with smaller turn size. When prefaced by address terms, interruptions may signal polarised stance-taking, either affiliative or disaffiliative. The frequency of affiliative and disaffiliative orientation is almost equal.

Interruptions in this institutional setting are context-situated, audience-oriented, and representative of institutional asymmetry. The entertainment nature of this programme underpins a great number of face-threatening interruption instances whereby Shen disaffiliates with Jin, either disagreeing with Jin's statement, challenging Jin's choice of topic, or implicitly or explicating teasing Jin for being bossy, bad-tempered, and revengeful. All these "discords" between the two speakers spice up the storytelling which constitutes the entire talk show. Interruptions and responses to interruptions are

made to entertain the non-speaking audience. For this reason, Shen's interruption turns overwhelmingly boost the progressivity of the topic in discussion by attending to and expanding on Jin's prior utterances. That being said, it is evident that asymmetrical power over show lies between the host and the assistant. This explains why despite that the assistant interrupts the host a lot, he still tends to use short-sized interruptions usually constituted by a backchannel and a clause as opposed to big chunks of extended telling.

CHAPTER 7 Comparison of interruptions in everyday and institutional conversation

This chapter is devoted to a comparative study of interruptions in the Callhome and Jin Xing Show datasets. The Callhome telephone conversation is an example of an everyday interaction where speakers talk freely with no particular constraints on what and how should be talked about. The talk show conversation is an institutional interaction where activities take place with varying degrees of constraints on turn-taking, such as who should talk first, whose primary job is to ask questions and whose is to answer questions. Speakers in the two settings are engaged in culturally- and contextually-specific activity types (Levinson, 1992) or pragmemes (Mey, 2001, 2010). That is, in the Callhome interaction, speakers are involved in a phone call activity wherein the callers dial their families or friends, updating them on what happened to them recently, with verbal information as the primary resource they can rely on. Speakers in the Jin Xing Show programme are engaged in a broadcasting entertainment talk show based on semi-scripted storytelling (by the host, Jin) and interruption (by Jin's assistant, Shen). What is special about this institutional exchange is that the assistant frequently interrupts the host to fulfil his institutional duties – to entertain the audience and to support the performance of the host. All the interactions between the host and her assistant are observed by the non-speaking audience in the studio and in front of their TVs. The assistant either affiliates with or challenges the host whilst doing the interrupting.

The comparison of interruption in the two corpora is based on two aspects – the frequency of occurrence of the four interruption dimensions (i.e., interruption timing, interruption marker, turn size and speech act) and the relationship between intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions in the two corpora. I identified three major differences regarding interruptions in the two settings: 1) more interruptions are found in the Callhome corpus; 2) small-sized interruptions are prevalent in both corpora; and 3) compared with interruptions in the talk show programme, interruptions in the everyday interaction in Callhome display more cooperativeness yet less attention to a prior topic. Based on findings in the two interactional contexts, I argue that the speakers in the selected corpora prioritise engagement and enthusiasm over potential negative face

threats in social interaction. Most crucially, interruptions tend to be cooperative in nature in Chinese everyday talk-in-interaction.

In what follows, in Section 7.1 I will summarise basic information on the interruption instances across the two corpora. Quite surprisingly, although the Jin Xing Show programme is inherently based on semi-scripted interruption behaviours, there are fewer interruption instances in the talk show setting than in the Callhome telephone setting. I argue that two factors contribute to the interruption differences between the everyday and institutional interaction: the presence of a third-party audience and speakers' context-situated tasks and roles. In Section 7.2, I provide evidence to show that small-sized interruption turns are prevalent in both corpora, while fewer turn-beginning markers are used in the everyday interaction. In Section 7.3, based on the analysis of affiliation orientation and information flow across the two corpora, I argue that interruptions tend to be more cooperative yet less topic-focused in everyday interactions. In Section 7.4, I integrate all the findings related to interruptions and conclude that speakers in Chinese talk-in-interaction in this study adopt a *high involvement* conversational style (Tannen, 1994). That is, speakers in conversational interaction tend to emphasise affiliative stance-taking (e.g., displaying enthusiasm for the ongoing topic) and neglect the sequential/structural congruence with the other speaker's utterance (e.g., topic shift). Hence, I argue that relationship focus rather than task focus is a feature of Chinese conversational interaction. The examination of Chinese conversational style may contribute to the body of cross-cultural research into participants' social interactional practices (Cheng, 2003; Makri-Tsilipakou, 2015; Murata, 1994).

7.1 Interruptions more prevalent in the everyday setting

While interruptions are commonplace in ordinary conversation, they are constrained in various institutional settings, for instance, the talk between witness and attorney in courtroom examination (M. Atkinson, 1992; Drew, 1992), and the talk between journalist and guest in news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Heritage, 1985). In the Jin Xing Show programme – a case of institutional interaction – interruptions are produced at certain points by the assistant to fulfil his institutional role.

Table 7.1 summarises the time duration of conversations and the number of interruptions in the two corpora. The talk show corpus has more conversations (31 versus 20) and longer time duration (681min versus 155min) than the telephone corpus. Interestingly, there are slightly more interruption instances in the casual telephone

conversation (1014) than the talk show conversation (994). Overall, with more interruptions and shorter time duration, the Callhome corpus has more interruptions per minute (6.53) than the talk show corpus (1.46).

Table 7.1: Descriptive data analysis of time duration of conversations and interruption numbers in the two corpora

		Jing Xing Show	Callhome
Conversation NO.		31	20
Time duration	Total	681	155
	Min	18	5
	max	29	10
	Mean	22.70	7.75
	SD	2.78	2.55
Interruption NO.	Total	994	1014
	Min	14	4
	max	67	109
	Mean	33.20	50.80
	SD	13.50	29.91
Interruption per min		1.46	6.54

This shows that speakers in the telephone conversations interrupt more frequently than the speaker (the assistant) in the talk show programme. This is surprising as the talk show is based on interruption as an outstanding way to entertain the audience, which means interruption behaviours are expected. In effect, there are fewer and much less frequent interruptions overall in the interruption-based talk show interaction. These surprising differences are closely related to the characteristics of the two settings.

First, the differences are related to the presence of a third-party non-speaking audience, which involves a mismatch between *immediate intersubjectivity* versus *extended intersubjectivity* (Tantucci, 2017; Tantucci & Wang, 2020b). That is, when the conversation takes place privately – i.e., the conversation is meant to be understood, observed, and judged between interlocutors themselves without a third party – speakers only have intersubjective awareness of what one another’s potential reactions to what is being said (immediate intersubjectivity). Whereas when the conversation takes place publicly – i.e., the conversation is meant to be observed, understood and judged by a non-speaking third party – speakers activate intersubjective awareness of one another plus a third party (specific or generic), that is, the audience’s potential reactions of what is being said (extended intersubjectivity).

Frequent interruptions mean that an interrupter is likely to ignore or disrupt the information that the other speaker is producing (e.g., depicting a scene or asking a

question). Hence, constant disruptions may hinder the progressivity of ongoing information transmission. Participants, provided that they are actively engaged in the interaction, find it relatively easy to manage this interactional problem by, for instance, initiating a conversational repair²⁹ immediately after a problem arises (e.g., “Excuse me?”). In ordinary conversation, participants “freely alternate in speaking” (Levinson, 1983, p. 284) and “the order, size, and types of turns are free to vary” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 140). Speakers are more likely to solve any interactional issues by themselves on the spot. That is why, in the telephone corpus, speakers tend to initiate more interruptions and interrupt much more frequently.

By contrast, in *Jin Xing Show* the presence of audience arguably limits the turn-taking between the two speakers. Specially, the audience, who is at stake in the interactional exchange of the two speakers, is refrained from using the repair mechanism. The interaction between the host and her assistant is “grounded in an awareness of social cognition and collective intentionality” (Tantucci, 2021, p. VX) that is demonstrated by the non-participating audience. As elaborated earlier, the conversation between Jin and Shen is designed to be heard and understood by the non-speaking audience in the studio or in front of the TV. The audience cannot exhibit their understanding of the ongoing turns, nor can they initiate an understanding check by asking the two speakers to clarify themselves. Therefore, in order for the audience to clearly hear and understand what is going on in the exchange, the two conversational participants are obliged to manage their turns and sequences in a way that is accessible to the audience. This also applies to interruptions, which are carefully realised so as to have a function of entertainment for the benefit of the audience, hence their extended intersubjective dimension. As a result, the two speakers in many instances refrain from speaking on each other’s turn floor, hence fewer interruptions occur in the talk show corpus.

Second, context-sensitive tasks and roles underlie the frequency differences across the two corpora. In institutional settings, participants’ turn-taking organisation is “subject to functionally specific or context-specific restrictions or specialized practices or conventionalized arrangements” (Schegloff, 1999). Doing interruption is subject to two distinctive factors across both ordinary and institutional conversation: goal

²⁹ Repair in Conversation Analysis refers to “organised ways of dealing with various kinds of *trouble* in the interaction’s progress, such as problems of (mis)hearing or understanding” (ten Have, 2007, p. 133, original emphasis), see Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell, 2013; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977 for more information on conversational repair.

orientation and constraints on participants (Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Drew & Sorjonen, 2011; Heritage, 2005).

Regarding the goal orientation, speakers in the Callhome telephone conversations are not assigned context-specific tasks³⁰ so they can talk freely as the topic develops. By contrast, in the talk show exchanges, the two speakers are aware of their individual tasks – delivering the theme of the show and entertaining the audience. The themes are constituted by a series of stories and are delivered mainly through storytelling³¹, wherein Jin is the storyteller and Shen is the listener. Both speakers' roles are clear and complementary. The host, Jin, delivers a series of stories in a way that appeals to the audience, for instance, acting out the stories that she is recounting via exaggerated body movements or hand gestures. Jin controls the turn-taking, delivers the set of stories, and moves from one topic to another within the theme. Therefore, she holds the turn floor for the great majority of the time. The assistant, Shen, acts as an active listener who inserts assessments, questions, banter, or non-lexical backchannel responses amidst Jin's telling. As Shen's role is to assist the telling – rather than deliver the telling on his own – he often awaits Jin's storytelling to develop to a certain point before inserting a relevant comment. As a result, fewer interruptions are initiated than would be in an everyday setting.

Regarding the speakers' role, speakers in the telephone conversation are not tasked with context-dependent roles that are crucial for the conversational development. Unlike the storyteller and listener role assignment in the talk show, in the Callhome telephone conversation the caller and the receiver alternate speaking with no obvious constraints imposed on what they should say, and how long they can hold the turn floor³². Therefore, speakers are free to initiate topic, develop turns, shift topic, respond, or simply ignore the prior speaking. The conversations between the caller and the receiver in Callhome occur in a private space with no intended audience who watches or assesses the conversation (cf. discussion of private and public setting in institutional interaction in Drew & Heritage, 1992a). The choice of topic is subject to the immediate intersubjectivity of speakers' epistemic knowledge as well as speakers' concern of facework. The speakers

³⁰ Despite this, the free telephone conversation programme requires all participants to talk in Mandarin and within 30 minutes.

³² One thing worth noting is that, in certain conversations, one speaker is enthusiastically engaged in a lengthy recounting of his/her happenings, and the other speaker responds with backchanneling tokens, assuming a listener's role. Nonetheless, this adjustment to their respective storyteller-listener role is temporary.

are not concerned about getting themselves across to a non-speaking party or having them entertained.

To sum up, speakers are more likely to interrupt frequently in everyday interaction than in institutional interaction. The factors – the presence of audience, speakers’ roles and their institutional tasks – may contribute to the occurrence of interruptions across both speech-exchange systems. As Heritage noted, “the relationship between ordinary conversation and institutional talk can be understood as that between a master institution and its more restricted local variants” (2005, p. 108). Institutional interaction is viewed as a set of adaptations of the turn-taking organisation of ordinary talk (see Haugh, 2012). This study provides empirical evidence for this argument with respect to “doing interruption”. In both settings, interruptions are likely to occur. In everyday settings, free from context-dependent obligations and with no audience, speakers talk freely without the awareness of a non-speaking party and hence are more likely to talk simultaneously. By contrast, in an institutional setting where the exchange is (largely) aimed at a non-speaking audience, speakers orient their speaking to the understanding of the studio audience and TV viewers, hence simultaneous speech is less likely to occur, even in a context where interruption is semi-scripted.

7.2 Prevalent small-sized interruptions and less variety of interruption markers in Callhome

The two interruption dimensions – interruption marker and turn size – are arguably interconnected. When producing a long turn, speakers may use various strategies to indicate to the recipient that an extended turn is under way in order to secure the turn floor (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). One strategy involves the lexico-pragmatic level. Turn-initial tokens can be used to indicate that the speaker intends to continue speaking after the current TCU. For instance, Schegloff (1982) mentioned that *first of all* at the turn initial place signals that the speaker has not yet finished speaking. Hayashi (2004) pointed out that the demonstrative pronoun *あれ are* (“that one”) in Japanese projects further explanation of the current utterance. The turn size of an interruption, particularly in extended, multi-unit turns, may be connected with the lexical features of turn beginnings. In view of this, I closely examined interruption markers and turn size across the two corpora.

Table 7.2: Turn size with standardised residuals (R) in the two corpora

	Callhome			Jin Xing Show		
	N	%	R	N	%	R
IC	342	33.7%	3.8	210	21.1%	-3.8
Multi-unit	99	9.8%	-3.9	189	19.0%	3.9
Sing-unit	573	56.5%	-.7	595	59.9%	.7
Total	1014	100.0%		994	100.0%	

($df=2$, $X^2=59.911$, $p<0.001$, Cramer's $V= .173$)

Table 7.2 shows the distribution of turn size in Callhome and the Jin Xing Show. The standardised residuals (R) represent significant deviations from the expected values at a given level of significance. If a standardised residual value is greater than 1.96 or smaller than -1.96, the result is significant at the p-value level of 0.05 (Levshina, 2015). In this case, results of the chi-square test show that the mismatch in distribution of turn size between the two corpora is statistically significant ($df=2$, $X^2=59.911$, $p<0.001$), and hinges mainly on ICs and Multi-units. Single-unit interruptions are the most frequent turn size in both corpora. The multiple-unit interruptions are more prevalent in the talk show corpus. In general, the differences reveal that speakers in ordinary conversation tend to interrupt with small-sized utterances, usually in the form of response tokens such as 嗯 (enen, 'hm'), 哦哦 (oo, 'oh'). Speakers are less likely to produce more than one turn unit interruptions. In contrast, there are more multi-unit turns in the Jin Xing Show corpus (19.0%) than in the telephone corpus (9.7%). Despite this, interruptions comprised of a single TCU, including ic and sing-unit turns, account for the great majority in both corpora (both over 80%). This comparison demonstrates that in both settings speakers tend to interrupt with small-sized turns, usually consisting of one TCU. Speakers use relatively more multi-unit turns in the institutional setting.

Table 7.3: Interruption marker with standardised residuals (R) in the two corpora

	Callhome			Jin Xing Show		
	N	%	R	N	%	R
Address term	0	0.0%	-9.2	167	16.8%	9.3
Backchannel	501	49.4%	2.7	378	38.0%	-2.7
Laughter	49	4.8%	4.6	2	0.2%	-4.6
Pragmatic marker	79	7.8%	1.5	53	5.3%	-1.5
Unmarked	385	38.0%	-.4	394	39.6%	.4
Total	1014	100.0%		994	100.0%	

($df=4$, $X^2=232.574$, $p<.001$, Cramer's $V= .340$)

As seen in Table 7.3, the distribution of interruption markers is also statistically different between the two corpora ($df=4$, $X^2=232.574$, $p<.001$). This significance is mainly contributed by address term, backchannel, and laughter, as seen their standardised residuals are greater than 1.96 or small than -1.96. No address terms are identified in the collected telephone data, yet 16.8% of interruptions in the talk show corpus are initiated by address terms. Backchannel tokens and laughter are more prevalent in the telephone conversations vis-à-vis the talk show setting.

A stacked plot shows the intersection between turn size and interruption markers in the two corpora, as shown in **Figure 7.1** below.

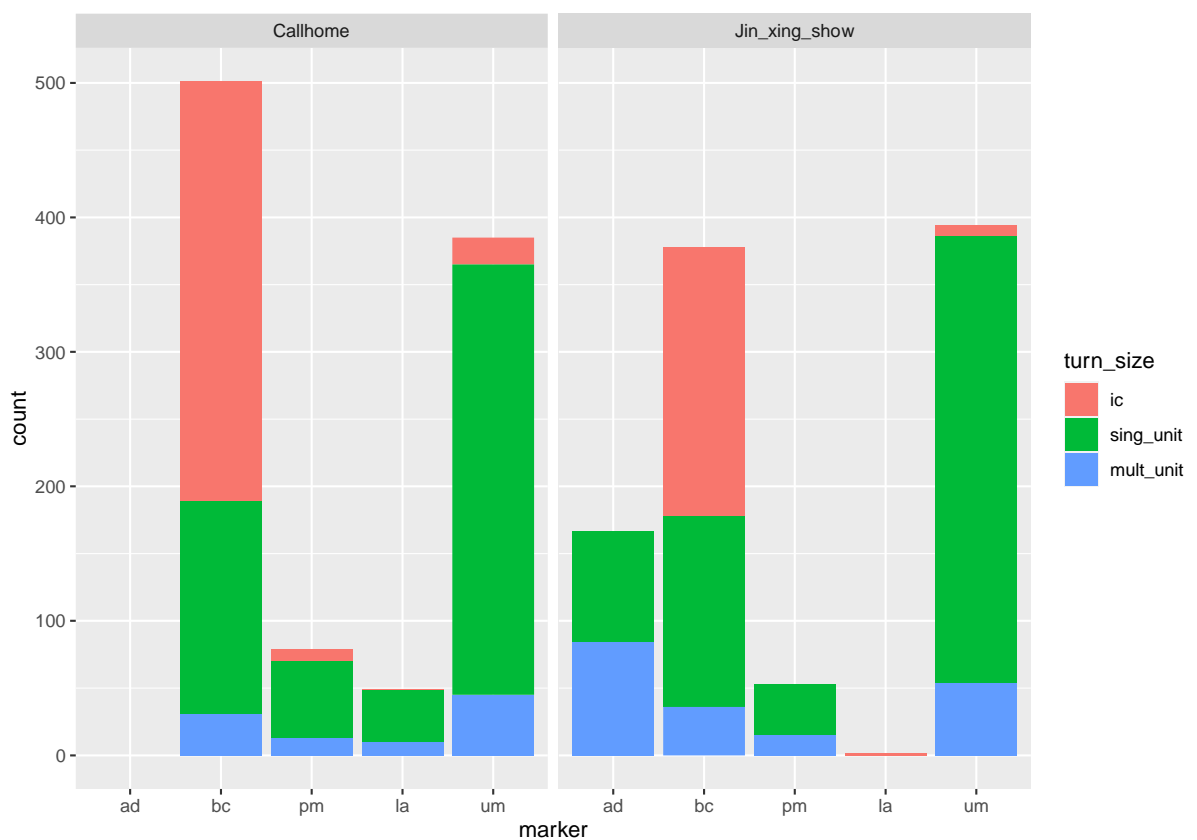


Figure 7.1: Stacked plot of interruption markers and turn size in the Callhome and Jin Xing Show corpora (Count: frequency; ad: address term, bc: backchannel; pm: pragmatic marker; la: laughter; um: unmarked)

It is obvious from **Figure 7.1** that the great majority of interruptions take the form of isolated characters (*ic* in red) and single unit turns (*single-unit* in green) in both corpora. In both corpora, backchannel-prefaced interruptions and interruptions with no turn-initial markers account for most of the instances. Single-unit interruptions are associated with unmarked interruptions in both corpora. One thing worth noting is that address-term-

initiated interruptions only occur in the Jin Xing Show corpus, almost equally divided by single unit turns and multi-unit turns.

Three major differences are at play regarding the frequency of interruption markers and turn size in the two corpora. First, no address terms are used in interruptions in the Callhome conversation, whereas address terms are frequently used in the talk show conversation. The absence of address terms in the collected telephone data may support the argument that address terms used between two speakers in a private setting are redundant (Clayman, 2013a). It should not be overlooked that the telephone conversations take place between participants who share “closeness”—close friends or family members such as parents and children. This “closeness” may rule out the necessity of addressing the other participant to their attention and establishing reciprocity. Apart from this generic function, address terms also do the “particular” tasks of signalling alignment or disalignment with utterances in the immediately prior turn. As elaborated in Chapter 6, Shen initiates affiliative interruptions with address terms to explore further details regarding the ongoing telling, or contrarily, signals upcoming disagreement with or challenge of the choice of topic. Based on this, I argue that address terms display a greater variety of functions in institutional interactions that take place in public contexts (institutional interaction may also take place in private settings, such as doctor-patient consultation, see Drew & Heritage, 1992a).

Second, backchannels and laughter occur more frequently as turn beginnings in everyday conversation. Backchannel responses account for nearly half (49.4%) of all interruption markers in the Callhome corpus. They may appear as a standing-alone interruption utterance or as a turn-beginning which is followed by further propositional content. Whatever position they take, backchannels generally function as information receipt tokens, viz., providing feedback to the speaker that they are listening, acknowledging that the speaker has the turn floor and that they want this to continue (Drummond & Hopper, 1993). In other words, backchannel responses, despite not indexing propositional content, indicate an active and engaging listenership.

The lack of visual medium in the Callhome data arguably contributed to the large number of backchannel responses, especially backchannels as stand-alone utterance which account for over 60% of all backchannel-initiated interruptions. While one person is speaking, the other participant is primarily listening. As speakers could not see each other during the call, taking a primary listenership may lead to the confusion that if the other speaker is still on the line. Therefore, backchannel tokens like 嗯 (*en*, *hmm*) could

also signal the speaker that the other participant is still at present, and there is nothing wrong with the line. Therefore, the lack of visual medium may contribute to the discrepancy of backchannels and particularly backchannels as stand-alone utterances in the two corpora.

Along with other findings (e.g., the association between hindering information flow and affiliation in Chapter 6.1), the prevalence of backchannels in everyday conversation provides empirical support for the claim that speakers in the Callhome telephone conversation prioritise involvement and engagement in social interaction over the one-speaker-at-a-time turn taking rule.

In the talk show setting the number of stand-alone backchannels and backchannels as turn-beginnings are almost equal. The primary institutional role of the assistant is to help the host to deliver her stories. This requires that Shen's utterances contain propositional meanings, such as asking further questions, making affiliative assessments. Despite this, Shen uses many non-lexical backchannels during Jin's extended storytelling. By uttering backchannel responses, a speaker does not intend to occupy the other speaker's turn floor (Goldberg, 1990; Heinz, 2003; Stivers, 2008; H. Tao & Thompson, 1991), but acknowledges that the speaking is in progress and the other speaker has the floor until story completion (Heinz, 2003; Stivers, 2008). Without the listener displaying responses to the ongoing speaking, a speaker may be uncertain about whether their speaking is being understood or is interesting to the listener (J. W. Lee, 2021). In light of this, the employment of backchannel responses is important for maintaining a successful interactional exchange in the talk show conversation. By uttering backchannel responses, Shen demonstrates his enthusiasm and participation in the ongoing telling.

Finally, speakers in the two corpora use different strategies to initiate multi-unit turns. As Figure 7.1 displays above, multi-unit interruption turns (in blue) are initiated by a variety of markers across the two settings. In the telephone conversations, more than half of multi-unit interruptions are produced with no markers whatsoever, whereas in the talk show conversation, multi-unit turns are initiated mostly by address terms and zero markers. This shows that the difference in ordinary conversation, is that speakers, when producing multi-unit turns, are more likely to produce the proposition directly, skipping any turn-prefacing token. In the more constrained institutional context, the speaker initiates interruptions via various turn-beginning tokens, in order to mitigate the abruptness of the interruption utterance.

All the aforementioned differences may be related to affiliation orientation in the two corpora. Speakers in the Callhome corpus tend to display cooperativeness and avoid disagreement with the other speaker. In the institutional setting, Shen sequentially aligns his turn with Jin’s prior speaking, and display transparent affiliative or disaffiliative orientation towards Jin. As elaborated in Chapter 6, Shen designs his disaffiliative turns with caution – usually in the form of a turn consisting of an interruption marker (e.g., 姐 *jie* ‘Sister’), a story preface (i.e., a turn signalling what to tell and what may be the teller’s stance, see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008), and the proposition. Affiliative interruptions generally have a simpler turn structure, which is constituted by a main clause with no prefatory tokens. This may explain why interruptions with no prefatory tokens are more co-operative as opposed to other marked interruptions.

7.3 More cooperative interruptions yet less topic-focused in everyday interaction

The mismatches of affiliation orientation, information flow, and interruption timing across the two corpora strongly suggest that interruptions are more oriented towards cooperativeness and less topic-focused in the everyday setting, while interruptions are more restricted to pre-assigned context-situated tasks and more topic-focused in the institutional setting. I will demonstrate these mismatches via a comparison of affiliation orientation and information flow between the two corpora in Tables 7.4-7.5 below.

Table 7.4: Affiliation orientation with standardised residuals (R) in the two corpora

	Callhome			Jin Xing Show		
	N	%	R	N	%	R
Affiliative	578	57.0%	.1	563	56.6%	-.1
Disaffiliative	31	3.1%	-9.4	255	25.7%	9.5
Neutral	405	39.9%	6.5	176	17.7%	-6.6
Total	1014	100.0%		994	100.0%	

($df=2$, $\chi^2=265.725$, $p<.001$, Cramer’s $V=.364$)

As can be seen in Table 7.4, the results of the Chi-square test show that the mismatch in distribution of affiliation orientation between the two corpora is statistically significant ($df=2$, $\chi^2=265.725$, $p<.001$), mainly attributive to disaffiliative and neutral interruptions as seen the standardised residuals. Disaffiliative interruptions occur infrequently in the Callhome conversation (3.1%) whereas they are rather frequent in the talk show conversation (25.7%). Neutral interruptions are the second frequent category

in the Callhome conversation (39.9%) whereas they are less frequent in the talk show conversation. Affiliative interruptions have much the same frequency in the two corpora. All these differences show that in the everyday telephone conversation speakers tend to avoid displaying opposing stances and are inclined to maintain harmony and engagement. In the talk show conversation, the speaker is inclined to display clear-cut stance (affiliative or disaffiliative).

Table 7.5: Information flow with standardised residuals (R) in the two corpora

	Callhome			Jin Xing Show		
	N	%	R	N	%	R
Boosting	398	39.3%	-7.0	721	72.5%	7.1
Hindering	153	15.1%	6.2	31	3.1%	-6.3
Maintaining	463	45.7%	5.7	242	24.3%	-5.7
Total	1014	100.0%		994	100.0%	

($df=2$, $X^2=243.228$, $p<.001$, Cramer's $V=0.348$)

As seen in Table 7.5, the results of the Chi-square test show that the mismatch in the distribution of information flow between the two corpora is also statistically significant ($df=2$, $X^2=243.228$, $p<.001$). All the three sub-classes of information flow (hindering, maintaining, and boosting) are significantly different across the two corpora as all the standardised residuals of the sub-categories are greater than 1.96 or small than -1.96. Interestingly, in the Callhome conversation only 39.3% of the interruptions actually boost the progressivity of the conversation, whereas in the talk show conversation that figure is 72.5%. Interruptions of IF-hindering occur infrequently in the talk show corpus (3.1%) whereas the figure is almost five times higher in the everyday conversation (15.1%). All these differences demonstrate that the interrupter in the institutionalised talk show setting tends to address and respond to the prior speaker's proposition. Conversely, speakers in telephone conversation are not concerned about proactively responding to the immediately prior utterance (e.g., answering question, making assessment), instead they tend to produce backchannel tokens as a listener response or hinder the progressivity of conversation. The context-dependent goal- and task- orientation arguably underlies the differences in IF-hindering in the two corpora.

Goal-orientation is interconnected with clear-cut affiliation orientation – either the affiliative or disaffiliative stances embodied in interruptions. The goal is something that participants are motivated by pre-assigned tasks and roles that are “conventionally associated with the institution in question” (Drew & Heritage, 1992a, p. 22). In the Jin

Xing Show programme, Shen often presents a supporting image via, for instance, acting out the scene Jin is narrating when requested, evaluating the topic affiliatively, or asking progress-advancing questions. But Shen also projects an image of an un-cooperative troublemaker who enjoys disapproving of or teasing Jin. This often creates tension between the two, which achieves the effect of entertaining the audience. Apart from displaying clear-cut affiliation, interruptions in the talk show setting align sequentially and topically with the ongoing turn. The interrupter (Shen) stays on the topic that is being developed by the teller (Jin), whereas in casual conversation, interrupters' utterances do not always show regard to what is being said in the current turn or in the immediately prior turn. For instance, interrupters may ask irrelevant questions, repeat what has just been said in previous turns, or make the other speaker abort their turns. As a result, the current speaker's topic is disrupted, or at least, not paid adequate attention to. This kind of hindering information flow utterance accounts for 15.1% of all interruption instances in the Callhome corpus. To illustrate the differences in information flow, consider two previous examples (39) *B plus* from the Callhome corpus and (46) *ex-wife* from the Jin Xing Show corpus.

(39) callhome_0022 *B plus* (A is daughter, B is mother and B1 is father. They are discussing A's examination.)

- 01 B1: 那么 你 最后 那个
 name ni zuihou nage
 then you last that
 well, that, your last
- 02 B1: 那个, 那个, 那个 作业 怎么做?
 Nage, nage, nage zuoye zenmezu?
 That, that, that homework how to do
 Your homework assignment, what was your final score?
- 03 A: 那个 [后来 得了 一个 B_plus.]
 Nage [houlai dele yige B-plus]
 That later got one B-plus
 On that one I got a B+
- 04 → B: [后来 那个, 那么 紧张,] 你 急死 了, 后来 怎么样?
 [houlai nage, name jinzhang,] ni jisi le, houlai zenmeyang?
 Later that, so stressful you nervous FP, later how about?
 You were so stressed about that homework assignment. What did you get?
- 05 A: 那个 得了 一个 B_plus((@)) 还好.

Nage dele yige B-plus((@)) haihao
 That got one B+ not bad
 On that one I got a B+, not bad.

In this exchange, two parents are talking with their daughter about an examination result. Father (B1) first initiates the question by asking his daughter (A) about her examination result (lines 01-2). Daughter immediately and clearly responds, saying that she got a B plus (line 03). Nonetheless, Daughter's turn is interpolated by Mother's speaking in line 04. Mother cuts in after Daughter has uttered the topic 那个 (*nage*, 'that') and is about to produce the proposition of her turn on the topic of the examination. Despite Mother's interruption, Daughter has managed to complete her turn in line 03. Interestingly, Mother is asking essentially the same question with Father. In other words, Mother is simply repeating a question that was asked a turn before and is being answered right at the moment. As a consequence, Daughter repeats her answer in the following turn (line 05). In this excerpt, the interjection (line 04) occasions a hearing check – a repetition of just-produced utterance – despite that the interruptee has completed her turn. Therefore, the interruption hinders the ongoing information flow – telling the result of an examination that is initiated by Daughter.

Mother's question appears to be not only interrupting the daughter, but potentially the father. As both parents are on the same end of the phone, it is less likely that Mother is not attentive to Father's question (i.e., results of the examination). Nonetheless, Mother chooses to repeat the just-asked question, which could mean that this question is important to Mother as well, and she is reiterating it. As Father asked the question in the immediately prior turn, and the recipient (Daughter) is not initiating any hearing or understanding check (e.g., 'Sorry, which examination?' or 'Sorry, I didn't get you'), there seems no need for Mother to reiterate it. In so doing, Mother could be potentially interrupting Father by repeating his question that is not interactionally or propositionally necessary.

Compared with the less-constrained turn-taking in the telephone conversation, interruptions in the talk show display more attention to the topic that is being discussed. In other words, Shen always pays attention to what Jin is narrating in the immediately prior utterance and inserts utterances pertaining to that.

(46) *jxx_20170809 ex-wife*

01 Jin: 是啊 只 可惜 激情 是 短暂 的,
 Shi a, zhi kexi jiqing shi duanzan de

- Yes only pity passion BE temporary SUB
 Right, it is a pity that the passion is temporary
- 02 婚姻 是 短命 的,
 Hunyin shi duanming de
 Marriage BE short-lived SUB
 Marriage is temporary too.
- 03 连 半年 都 没有 维持 下去,
 Lian bannian dou meiyou weichi xiaqu
 Even half year even ni sustain down
 This time, the marriage did not last even half a year.
- 04 这 段 感情 带来 的 唯一 后果 是=
 Zhe duan ganqing dailai de weiyi houguo shi
 This CL relationship bring SUB only consequence BE
 The only consequence of this relationship is
- 05→ Shen: =他 又 多 了 一 个 前 妻
 Ta you duole yige qianzi
 He again more one ex-wife
 (that) **He has got one more ex-wife.**
 ((Audience laughing))
- 06 Jin: 没错
 Meicuo
 Not wrong
 That is right.

Here, Jin is talking about the four marriages of her husband's friend A. Jin comments that A's recent marriage has been rather short-lived (lines 01-3) and that there is only one consequence of this temporary marriage (line 04). Before Jin utters the final component of her turn, viz., what is the consequence of this particular divorce, Shen initiates an anticipatory completion (Lerner, 1991, 1996), poking fun at A that A has got one more ex-wife now. Shen's anticipatory interruption is appreciated with audience laughter and approved by Jin in line 06. In this case, Shen's interruption stays on the topic under way and promotes the topic by pre-emptively co-completing the final component of Jin's turn.

In the Callhome corpus, speakers normally do not display disapproval with the immediately prior speaker despite that they sequentially disalign with the prior speaker's talk (e.g., shifting topic, making the prior speaker abort his/her ongoing utterance). Rather, speakers in the telephone conversation tend to show interest towards the ongoing

speaking and to show support and solidarity to the other speaker. In other words, interruptions are cooperativeness oriented. This cooperativeness is best represented in the affiliation orientation of interruptions. In Callhome telephone conversations, speakers rarely disalign their stances from those of the other speaker, as seen in the very low figure of 3% of disaffiliative interruptions in the Callhome corpus. More than half (57%) of Callhome speakers display affiliative stances.

Table 7.6: Interruption timing in the two corpora

Corpus	Interruption timing	N	%
Callhome	Initial	134	13.2%
	Middle	511	50.4%
	Final	369	36.4%
Jin Xing Show	Institutional	974	98.0%
	Latched	20	2.0%

The main factor relating to the cooperative feature of interruptions in this casual conversation is the speakers' conversational style. According to Table 7.6, interruptions that occur in the transition relevance place only account for 36.4% of instances in the Callhome corpus (i.e., final timing). More than half of interruptions (51.4%) are initiated when the other speaker is at the point of producing propositional contents (middle timing). Overall, the great majority of interruptions in Callhome are produced when the other speaker has not yet arrived at their turn completion point. In other words, speakers tend to interrupt early on before the other speaker has completed the proposition of their utterance. The large number of early interjections indicates that speakers are "eager" to participate in and contribute to the ongoing conversation. This "eagerness" is shown via expressing affiliative stances (e.g., agreement) or neutral stances (e.g., response tokens) in interruptions. This contrast, in turn, demonstrates that Chinese speakers place greater emphasis on relationship management (e.g., establishing rapport) rather than the interactional task (i.e., information transmission). In this view, Chinese speakers may subscribe to what Tannen (Tannen, 1994, 2005) has described as a high involvement conversational style, in which speakers produce more "cooperative" overlapping to show solidarity and active participation when they feel comfortable with each other. In terms of turn-allocation, speakers are actively engaged in the ongoing speaking by constantly selecting self as the next speaker despite of the potential sequential overlapping.

To conclude, interruptions in the Jin Xing Show conversation are more oriented towards context-dependent goals and tasks, whereas interruptions in the casual telephone conversation are more likely to display cooperativeness. The cooperativeness of interruptions sheds light on the interactional feature in Chinese culture: speakers display enthusiasm and engagement in conversation and prioritise the communicative needs over others. I will explicate this point further in the next section.

7.4 High involvement and co-operative interruption in the two corpora

As examined in Chapter 5.4, speakers in the telephone corpus show enthusiastic participation in conversational exchanges, as seen by the prevalence of early interruptions and small-sized response tokens. Even in the Jin Xing Show corpus with more constraints, the assistant frequently produces backchannelling tokens to align with activity in progress: signalling that the teller has the floor until story completion (Stivers, 2008). Interrupters in both settings produce more small-sized interruptions, showing their mindfulness of the potential repercussions of interrupting. The prevalence of interruptions as single TCUs or short-sized TCUs has provided empirical evidence for Sacks et al.'s (1974) turn-taking rule that more than one speaker talking is common but brief. It also accords with Stivers et al.'s findings obtained via statistically testing of the turn-taking system across ten different languages that turn transition with minimal laps and overlaps is universal. Furthermore, in the Jin Xing Show corpus the assistant (interrupter) largely aligns his turns with what is discussed by the host (interruptee) in prior turns so as to facilitate the progressivity of the ongoing speaking. The assistant also expresses a clear-cut affective orientation towards the host – either affiliating or disaffiliating with the host's stance. These commonalities in the interruption dimensions across the two corpora jointly demonstrate that speakers in both everyday conversation and institutional conversation in this study orient to a conversational style that prioritises active engagement over the observation of the one-speaker-at-a-time turn taking protocol.

This enthusiastic participation corresponds to the high involvement conversational style that Tannen (1994, 2005) observed in her study of New York Jews, that is, listeners talked along with speakers, and the first speakers did not stop (Tannen, 1994, p. 62, original emphasis). By analysing a two-and-a-half-hour Thanksgiving Dinner conversation between a group of friends including three New York Jews, two Californians and an English native, Tannen (1994, 2005) found that speakers with a high-involvement conversational style consider that talking along with another in conversation

is to display enthusiasm, active participation, and solidarity; whilst speakers with a high considerateness style favour pauses between turns and avoid talking simultaneously, and therefore, place emphasis on the need to preserve negative face (i.e., that only one speaker should talk at a time and that overlapping is interruption). The high involvement conversational style has also been identified among other language speakers, for instance, Italians and Greeks, “whose lively interactional style often involves simultaneous talk” (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2015, p. 2).

How interruption is perceived may vary drastically across cultures (Cheng, 2003; Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994). The enthusiasm and engagement in both settings in this study demonstrate that a small number of Chinese speakers in the selected corpora prioritise rapport building and relationship management over the negative face wants of speakers (i.e., as shown in letting others finish before speaking) in social interaction. In other words, interruptions in conversation may be welcomed and viewed as displaying the willingness to engage in the ongoing conversation in Chinese culture. Speakers in this culture may defer more to the “cooperative imperative” (Murata, 1994) wherein interruptions are used to build solidarity and maintain social relationships between conversational partners. However, speakers in other cultures may defer to the “territorial imperative” (Murata, 1994) in which conversational partners’ rights to finish the current turn is emphasised.

To conclude, conversational speakers in this study have demonstrated a high involvement conversational style in interaction. It appears that in the collected corpora, the Callhome corpus in particular, speakers defer to dynamic social relationship and flexible rapport management and are less concerned about observation of sequential rules on turn-taking. In the casual telephone conversation, speakers interrupt cooperatively, talking along with each other to establish rapport and solidarity. In a more constrained context of the talks show programme, the speaker largely align his interruptions with the information conveyed by the host.

7.5 Summary

In this chapter I compared interruptions across the two corpora and summarised three differences. The Jin Xing show corpus surprisingly has fewer interruptions in total and much fewer interruptions in each conversation than the Callhome telephone corpus. Despite this, small-sized interruptions are prevalent in both settings, though more multi-unit TCUs are employed in the talk show setting. In general, interruptions in the Callhome corpus tend to show speakers’ interest, solidarity, and support, whereas interruptions in

the talk show corpus are highly oriented to the context-situated goals and tasks – i.e., supporting the host and entertaining the audience. All these findings lead to the conclusion that speakers in the two settings adopt a high involvement conversational style. That is, they prioritise enthusiasm, active engagement or the demonstrating of enthusiasm and active engagement in conversation rather than deference to other speakers' speaking rights – i.e., no overlapping before turn completion.

It is worth exploring whether this high involvement style is a trait of Chinese talk-in-interaction. It remains to be explored whether Chinese speakers as whole largely prioritise engagement and relationship management over the one-speaker-at-a-time turn-taking rule in different interactional exchanges. This kind of conversational style which largely centres on overlapping speech is found in speakers of other cultures, for instance the New York Jews (Tannen, 2005) , Italians and Greeks (Makri-tsilipakou, 2015). It merits scholarly attention to explore interruption behaviours between speakers with high involvement style and speakers with high consideration style. The topics that can be investigated includes 1) how information flow and affiliation orientation of interruptions differ among different speakers of different conversation styles; 2) how speakers with different conversation style differ in their use of size of turns, turn-initial markers, timing of doing interruption; 3) do these differences become more (or less) salient in conversation occurring between two speakers with differing conversational styles.

CHAPTER 8 Conclusions

8.1 Summary of the findings

This work has been centred on the differences between interruptions in everyday vs. institutional settings in Chinese, with a focus on the relationship between the degree of intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions: interruption timing, interruption marking, turn size, and speech act. This work is built on distinguishing the folk sense of interruption from its academic sense: the former defines interruption as an act in conversation that disrupts the another turn floor and causes another to stop speaking; the latter sees interruption as an act that starts talking when another speaker is talking or prepares to talk. This work adopts the academic sense of interruption.

I approach the measurement of intrusiveness from two angles: the sequential context of interruption utterances, and the affective stance-taking in relation to the other speaker. The first angle regards how the interruption sequentially fits with the immediately prior utterance or whether the prior utterance is completed. The second angle regards whether the interrupter's stance-taking is affiliative or disaffiliative.

The intrusiveness of interruption utterances is influenced by certain interactional features, such as turn size and interruption timing. Both in everyday conversation and institutional interaction, turn size influences the intrusiveness of interruption utterances. Surprisingly, small sized interruptions that are comprised of backchanneling do not show affiliative stances but sit in between cooperativeness and intrusiveness. In ordinary conversation, early interruptions that are initiated before the other speaker's turn completion point tend to be more intrusive. This is because an early interruption often forces the interruptee to abort his/her ongoing turn instantly or after an overlap of a few words. This is when the other speaker fails to deliver the propositional content of his/her utterance and the information flow counts as disrupted.

However, in the Jin Xing Show in order for the non-speaking audience to understand the two presenters' interaction, interruptions are initiated at a relatively fixed point – i.e., when the host finishes her utterance. This 'almost' fixed interruption timing is closely related to the configuration of the programme itself. That is, the talk show creates a context in which the host controls the turn floor and performs the storytelling; the assistant helps with the storytelling whenever necessary. This activity type entails that all the self-selected turns of the assistant count as interruptions, despite that there are no

overlaps between the two speakers' utterances. This shows that identification of interruptions, to some extent, varies from the context in which interaction arises.

Apart from the formulation of intrusiveness, based on the definition of an academic notion of interruption and the data of this thesis, four generalisations pertaining to interruption in the Chinese context can be drawn.

First, interruptions are not necessarily disruptive or intrusive in Chinese social interaction, instead they can be facilitative or cooperative. Interruptions can be initiated out of the interrupter's epistemic and affective affiliation with the prior speaker, rather than intentionally usurping the turn floor and not letting another speaker to finish speaking. Therefore, doing interrupting is not necessarily a moral transgression of other's speaking rights (Hutchby, 1992).

Second, whether interruptions are intrusive or cooperative hinges on the specific local context whereby interruptions occur, specifically the activity type that speakers are engaging with, the specific role that speakers undertake, and the awareness that a generic or specific non-speaking party (e.g., audience) is at stake in the conversation. In casual telephone conversation, with no pre-assigned tasks and no audience, speakers tend to interrupt enthusiastically and cooperatively. In contrast, when speakers are placed in the specific context and assigned a specific task (e.g., storytelling and entertaining the audience), they tend to initiate interruptions in line with the institutional obligations (e.g., initiating interruptions to tease another). Apart from that, interruption practice could be influenced by speakers' awareness of a third party in terms of intrusiveness and the four dimensions of interruption. For instance, in *Jin Xing Show* a lot of teasing and disagreement interruptions are initiated to create tension between host and assistant, in a way to entertain the audience. In a word, interruptions are highly context-sensitive and contingent on the specific activity type that the conversation is situated in.

Third, Chinese speakers feature a high involvement conversational style. This kind of style is evident when speakers frequently talk over others, initiate early interruptions, and show disregard of the prior speaker's utterance, while at the same time they interrupt with small-sized utterances, showing affiliation, solidarity and interest. Chinese speakers are more concerned to display enthusiasm and active participation than to heed the conversation per se or potentially disrespecting the other speaker's speaking rights. In other words, Chinese speakers are more relationship-oriented than conversation- or task-oriented. Relationship building and maintenance is taken precedence over the ongoing conversation. They prioritise the interactional elements that

can showcase their personal engagement with the ongoing conversation and/or affiliation with the co-participant. What Chinese speakers are less concerned about is actually *composition* (i.e., what the turn is about) and *position* (i.e., where the interruption arises sequentially in relation to another's turn) which are the two elements that are used to identify candidate examples of a certain practice in action (Haugh & Musgrave, 2019). It is worth noting that this kind of conversational style (i.e., active engagement and less regard of other speaker's utterance) is largely drawn from interactions between people who have close relationship. It remains to be clarified whether unfamiliar participants in certain settings (for instance academic conference presentation as in (J. Zhang, 2017)) exhibit similar conversational style.

8.2 Significance of the study

This study has explored interruption behaviours of Chinese speakers in mundane and institutional settings. It contributes to the scholarly work in Conversation Analysis and Pragmatics on this topic on both theoretical and methodological level.

First, this study has attempted to unveil the multifaceted phenomenon of doing interruption: 1) doing interruption can be intrusive, cooperative, or neutral, 2) the intrusiveness of interruptions is measurable and gradient on a continuum, and 3) the degree of intrusiveness is associated with certain interactional factors. This study has adopted a broad concept of interruption which encompasses all kinds of overlapping speech and pre-emptive co-completion of turns without overlapping speech. Based on this broad definition, not all interruptions primarily function to disrupt the current speaker's speaking, but some of them display the interrupter's interest and enthusiasm in the local interaction or convey neutral affiliation (e.g., backchannel responses).

Second, related to the multifaceted nature of interruption, this study has demonstrated that interruption is contextually situated. This contextual situatedness is manifest in two main aspects: the location of an interruption across turns at talks, and the degree of intrusiveness of an interruption. The talk show programme is configured to be controlled by the host with the help of the assistant. As the assistant is in a junior position, any self-selected turn-taking counts as an interruption. Restrained by the context-specific roles that speakers undertake, interruptions are initiated to fulfil certain institution-related tasks. On the one hand, the assistant is institutionalised to help the host to deliver clear, amusing stories. Interruptions in this context are more likely to be supportive and affiliative. On the other hand, the assistant is there to make interesting conversation with

the host in order to entertain the audience. This is often realised through the strategy of “entertaining impoliteness” (Culpeper, 2005), for instance, making fun of or deliberately disagreeing with the host. Interruptions occasioned in this context are generally met with the host’s resistance and are more likely to be intrusive. However, this multifacetedness of interruption is not manifest in everyday conversation where speakers talk freely and engage with each other freely without any context-sensitive roles or tasks.

Third, this study provides a novel approach to combining CA with social interaction coding and quantitative methods which shies away from traditional CA research (J. P. de Ruiter & Albert, 2017; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Kendrick, 2017; Stivers, 2015). Traditionally, CA studies focus on rigorous qualitative analysis of speakers’ orientation to interactional details; reporting frequency and distribution of interactional practices is not the primary concern of CA (Antaki, 2011; Schegloff, 1993). In this study, I conducted intensive coding of various aspects of doing interruption, taking into account composition and position of each interactional utterance (dual reliance on composition and position in the analysis of interactional practice was proposed in Stivers, 2015). Prior to the moment-by-moment examination of participants’ turn design, I calculated the statistical relationship between two variables (e.g., information flow and affiliation orientation) via chi-square analysis. Similarly, I tested how the degree of intrusiveness is associated with interruption dimensions via linear regression analysis. Both statistical methods allow me to report the representativeness of certain interactional patterns which generalised from the rigorous analysis of speakers’ interactions. In so doing, this study demonstrates that CA research can combine rigorous examination of interactional phenomena moment by moment with quantification of instances.

Fourth and lastly, the claim about Chinese speakers in the selected corpora displaying a high involvement conversational style sheds new light on interruption behaviours in cross-cultural communication. The analysis of conversations in the two corpora shows that interruption occurs frequently in Chinese talk-in-interaction, both in everyday and institutional setting. Moreover, speakers tend to interrupt in the middle of the co-participant’s speaking, and therefore, hinder the co-participant’s propositional information making. Despite this, the great majority of interruptions are produced to express enthusiasm rather than attempting to usurp the other speaker’s turn floor.

8.3 Limitations of the study

The study aimed to make a significant contribution to understanding interruption behaviours in the Chinese context. Nonetheless, there are several aspects of this work that still need to be further enquired.

The first issue regards the self-reported data annotation process. As stated in Chapter 4, this study relies on intensive coding of categorical variables (i.e., two intrusiveness indicators and four interruption dimensions). I conducted two rounds of annotation, the pilot study using 10 conversations from each corpus and the main study using 20 conversations from the Callhome and 31 from the Jin Xing Show corpus). I then revised the coding and annotation three weeks after completing data collection for the main study. Despite rigorous way in which the data analysis was implemented, the current annotation of interruption utterances unavoidably includes an element of subjectivity.

The second issue concerns the claim I make about the conversational style of Chinese speakers in interaction. I argue that Chinese speakers display cooperation and prioritise enthusiasm and active engagement in doing interruption. This argument is largely built upon the elaboration of intrusiveness (information flow and affiliation orientation) and its intersection with turn size and interruption timing in the Callhome corpus. However, the argument could be even stronger if I could compare Chinese speakers with speakers of other language(s) under the same scheme for analysing intrusiveness. Comparative research could be designed to better measure the extent to which the high involvement conversational style of Chinese speakers is unique to them or shared with speakers of other languages.

The third issue that awaits further clarification relates to the role of the non-speaking audience in the Jin Xing Show programme. I maintained that there are two levels of roles played by the non-speaking audience (in the studio and in front of TVs): a fundamental role that has shaped the configuration of the Jin Xing Show programme and a role that is contingent on the sequential context of the ongoing storytelling and Shen's response to it (see the introduction to the talk show programme in Chapter 3 and the elaboration of address terms as turn-initial tokens in Chapter 6). However, the notions of extended intersubjectivity (Tantucci, 2017, 2020) and collective intentionality (Tomasello, 2019; Tomasello & Rakoczy, 2003), which are embedded in speakers' orientation to the presence of a non-participating audience, are underdiscussed in this study. The host and the assistant undertake their individual role to achieve a shared goal

– entertaining the audience – in a specific setting. The two speakers are mindful that their turn-taking is meant to be understood and assessed by the audience. The speakers' intersubjectivity is represented in the formation of turns and turn sequences in doing interruption. Due to the primary focus on intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions, this study did not elaborate sufficiently on the intersections between intersubjectivity and interruption or collective intentionality and interruption.

8.4 Orientations for future research

Related to the abovementioned limitations, there are a few points worthy of further investigation, including speakers' conversational style, interruption behaviours in family interaction, specific interruption dimensions and the association between interruption behaviours and polychronic culture.

The first point regards further research into the conversational style manifested in Chinese talk-in-interaction. In Chapter 7, based on comparisons of interruption practices in the everyday setting and institutional setting it is found that speakers adopt a high involvement conversational style. That is, they are actively engaged in conversation, the emphasis on relationship management and rapport building overrides technical turn-taking rules (e.g., start to speak after the current speaker has finished). However, as the current study is based on relatively small sample size (1014 instances of interruptions in the Callhome and 994 instances of interruptions in the Jin Xing Show) and on only two interactional contexts (i.e., telephone conversation and TV talk show conversation), it far from robust to draw conclusions that this high involvement conversational style applies to Chinese groups as a whole. This needs to be tested through rigorous methodologic design. The key point to the design is empirical studies that recruit large number of Chinese speakers and interactions in various types of interactional contexts. Another approach to the line of inquiries on conversational style is to explore interruption behaviours between speakers with a high involvement style (e.g., Chinese speakers) and speakers with a high consideration style (fewer interruptions and more attention to one-speaker-at-a-time rule, e.g., British speakers). The topics that can be investigated include 1) how information flow and the affiliation orientation of interruptions differ among speakers who hold different conversational styles; 2) how speakers of different conversation styles differ in their use of the size of turns, turn-initial markers and the timing of doing interruptions.

A second route for implementation of the present model concerns the power asymmetry that may be present in the interruption behaviours between adult children and parents in Chinese family interaction. In Chapter 5.4 I found that parents initiate more interruptions and more early interruptions than their children who are young adults in their 20s to 40s. Moreover, in doing interruption parents frequently show disregard of what their children's prior utterances are about. Based on the findings of this study, nonetheless, it is premature to claim that power asymmetry is the reason behind the different interruption behaviours. Arguably, several reasons may have led the parents' active interruption behaviours, for instance, parents' eagerness to hear as much information as possible from their children who are far away from them, the time limit (either 15 or 30 mins), the poor quality of the telephone communication. To rule out these concerns, future studies might need to collect face-to-face conversational data between family members engaged in different activity types (i.e., family dinner, playing cards, putting up couplets during the Chinese New Year). More detailed demographic information about the adult children (e.g., age, education level) might also be useful.

The third point that deserves further attention concerns address terms and stance taking. Previous research in social interaction shows that address terms are associated with disaffiliative stance taking in institutional settings (Butler et al., 2011; Clayman, 2010; Rendle-Short, 2007). For instance, in political interviews politicians address journalists by their first name to show their disagreement or to prompt a change of topic (Clayman, 2010). Address terms are "loci for formulating, maintaining and reformulating the status of a relationship" (Jefferson, 1973, p. 48). In this study address-term prefaced interruptions are associated with affiliative as well as disaffiliative stances. Interestingly, the two affiliation orientations were observed in almost equal quantities. This invites further studies to investigate the affiliative and disaffiliative environment in which address-term-prefaced interruptions occur, and how these address terms might be related to speakers' epistemic status (Heritage, 2012).

The fourth point concerns the (cross-disciplinary) application of the intrusiveness measurement model (i.e., the measure of intrusiveness and the four interruption dimensions) that was designed for this work. For its intricate relations with power asymmetry, gender differences and impoliteness, interruption may provide methodological insights for the study of wider socio-economic issues (e.g., racism, media bias) in institutional settings, for instance, in political talk or news interviews (Baffy, 2020; Ilie, 2012; Y. Tao, 2022). It would also be interesting to explore reciprocity

(Culpeper & Tantucci, 2021; Tantucci, Wang, & Culpeper, 2022) in interruption in everyday talk or institutional settings, in particular, whether speakers converge their interruption style, how an interrupter is reciprocated, if any, by co-participant in terms of interruption timing, interruption markers, speech act or the size of interruption utterances, and so on. Moreover, studies of (mock) impoliteness (Culpeper, 2005, 2021; Culpeper & Haugh, 2021; Haugh, 2022) may extend its interactional loci from everyday setting to institutional setting whereby asymmetrical power is exercised by speakers through the lens of interruption.

Lastly, the emphasis on relationship and the disregard of topical flow in Chinese talk-in-interaction may lead to further research on the intersection between interruption and polychronic/monochronic cultures. Hall (1984) distinguished two kinds of time orientations of human society: monochronic time and polychronic time. According to Hall (1984), people in monochronic cultures focus on tasks rather than relationships, undertake one task at a time, and display concern about each other's privacy. The United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Scandinavia are typical monochronic cultures (Bluedorn, 1998; Xu-Priour, Truong, & Klink, 2014). In contrast, people in polychronic cultures – e.g., Chinese culture – emphasise relationship more than task completion, engage in several tasks at the same time, and are subject to frequent interruptions (Bluedorn, Felker Kaufman, & Lane, 2011; Hall, 1984; Hall & Hall, 1990). As stated in Chapter 5 and Chapter 7, Chinese speakers prioritise relationship building – displaying enthusiasm and interest, showing support and solidarity to the other speaker – over the task or the conversation per se. The emphasis on personal connection in talk-in-interaction that was found in this study, therefore, provides a new angle to perceive polychronicity. Nevertheless, interruptions, particularly early interruptions that result in the other speaker aborting their turn, are essentially infringing the other speaker's territory, usurping their turn floor, and thus depriving them of their legitimate speaking rights. In this study, the frequent interruption in the course of the other speaker's speaking demonstrated that Chinese speakers tend to have smaller personal space parameters (see Bluedorn, 1998). In other words, Chinese speakers may not see the other's speakership as something personal or private, hence, they tend not to see interjecting the ongoing conversation as something that disregards the other's privacy. Rather, they may view interruptions as demonstrating two important properties of interaction – the opportunities it presents to make a willing contribution and participate actively on – that enhance the

positive face of the other speaker. This is represented by the large number of affiliative interruptions in the Callhome dataset.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Transcription symbols

Table: Transcription symbols	
Sequencing	
[A single left square bracket indicates the point of overlap onset
]	A single right square bracket indicates the point of resolution.
=	Equal signs, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no gap and no overlap between the two lines. Lines connected by equal signs are by different speakers or the same speaker.
Time intervals	
(0.5)	Numbers in parenthesis indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second; (0.5) is 5/10 seconds of silence. Silences may be marked within an utterance or between utterances
(.)	A dot in parenthesis indicates a micropause, a silence hearable but not readily measurable, less than 2/10 of a second
Speech delivery	
-	A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption
oh:	Colons indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching.
<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis.
WORD	Upper case indicates especially loud sound relative to the surrounding talk
°	The degree sign indicates that the talk following it was markedly quiet or soft.
↑↓	The up and down arrows mark sharper rises or falls in pitch in the utterance that immediately follows the arrow
><	Inward chevrons/arrowheads indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
<>	Outward chevrons indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably slower than the surrounding talk.
.hhh	A dot prefaced <i>hs</i> indicate in-breath, the more <i>h</i> , the more in-breath. It occurs inside the boundaries of a word; it may be enclosed in enclosed in parentheses.
hhh	An <i>h</i> indicates an out-breath. The more <i>h</i> 's the longer the breath.
heh heh	heh's indicate little laughter sound
@@@	This indicates loud laughter, the more @, the louder and longer time the laughter
,	A comma indicates the intonation contour as continuing;
.	A period indicates the intonation contour as final;
?	A question mark represents an appeal which is a high rise in pitch at the end of the intonation unit and often occurs in a yes-no question.
Transcriber's doubts and comments	

(word)	Parenthesized words are especially dubious hearings or speaker identifications.
()	Empty parentheses indicate the transcriber's inability to hear what was said. The length of the parenthesized space indicates the length of the untranscribed talk.
(())	Double parenthesis indicates transcriber's description rather than, or in addition to, transcriptions, for instance ((Audience laughing)) indicates that the transcriber describes the current turn is about laughter from the audience
ch4083	ch4083 indicates the name of the corpus and the precise collocation of the conversations,
→	An arrow indicates a focus of an analysis.

Appendix 2 Conversational data of the two corpora

Due to the large volumes of data in both Callhome and Jin Xing Show, it is not realistic to compile the two corpora and present them here.

Please click the following Google Drive link for the two datasets that I have collected for this study.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SSucxVWql1IHCDEFs-GXfha1ps0cWTFt?usp=sharing>