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# An Ethnographic Study of Chinese Adolescent Identity in Taipei, Taiwan : Franchise Hangouts

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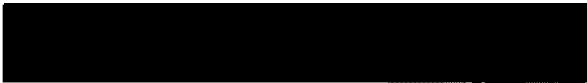
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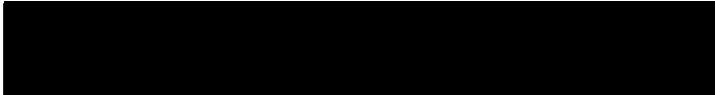
## THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Jui-fang Ruby Chen for the Master of Arts in Speech Communication were presented June 5, 1997, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.


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## ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Jui-fang Ruby Chen for the Master of Arts in Speech Communication presented June 5, 1997.

TITLE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CHINESE ADOLESCENT  
IDENTITY IN TAIPEI, TAIWAN : FRANCHISE HANGOUTS

One of the discriminating changes that Taiwan is experiencing is a shift in young people's view of "self," manifested in and through their daily activities within its cultural context (Yang, 1981). The question arises, how do Taiwan's adolescents shape their view of "self" within this contemporary context at the intersection of Eastern and Western cultures? This thesis examined on how Chinese adolescent identity was constituted symbolically in and through their speech practices within a public social context, a typical Westernized dining place--McDonald's, a U.S. fast food restaurant, and how such a locale both served and made sense by these urban adolescents.

The study utilized the ethnography of communication as a descriptive theoretical-framework to contextualize the phenomena studied, and to capture communicative patterns in the adolescent speech community. Symbolic interactionism was used to conceptualize the formation of "self" and "the other" through adolescents' interactions. An overview of Taiwan and the

cultural features of identity within Confucianism were illustrated to situate the object of inquiry and to capture the contextual richness of the study.

Field work was conducted in Taipei, Taiwan, lasting four-and-a half months. Research methods included in situ interviews, observations and collection of cultural artifacts. Findings revealed a set of salient events including “talking” and “eating.” The function of McDonald’s was perceived as a place “to talk,” “to eat,” “to take a break,” “to meet friends,” “to use free facilities”, “to study”, “to have a date”, and “to escape from the weather.” McDonald’s also served the function of providing working and learning opportunities for adolescents to enlarge their social world. Major emic categories of this urban fast food locale were identified as “comfortable,” “free,” “fun/happy,” and “relaxed.”

Features of adolescent identity emerged from their speech practices, including (1) freedom vs. restriction, (2) gender identity, and (3) individual competence. Adolescent identity was presented as “free,” “playful,” “relaxed,” and “fun.” The “free,” “playful,” “relaxed,” “fun” sense of self was found in individual adolescent customer-employees’ communicative behavior. This coincided with the concept of “I” in Symbolic Interaction theory. A Confucian view of self was found within the operational level between employee-customer interactions. In summary, the study discovered that both Eastern and Western views of adolescent identity were reflected through adolescent communication at the juxtaposition of cultural and social changes.

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CHINESE ADOLESCENT  
IDENTITY IN TAIPEI, TAIWAN: FRANCHISE HANGOUTS

by

JUI-FANG RUBY CHEN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Portland State University  
1998

DEDICATION

*To*

*My beloved father*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

At the threshold of entering the 21st century, Taiwan, a diminutive island off the coast of the Asian mainland, is facing dramatic cultural and social changes. At the juxtaposition of Eastern-Western, modern-traditional and local-cosmopolitan axes, a multifarious view of the island is emerging as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and Westernization over the last three decades (Fairbank, J. K., et al. 1974; Hsieh, 1990; Smith, 1992; Harrell & Huang, 1994). One of the discriminating changes that Taiwan is experiencing is a shift in young people's view of "self," manifested in and through their daily activities within its cultural context (Yang, 1981). New patterns and new configurations of teenagers' lives are emerging due to global-wide contacts with the world, especially with the U.S., through the influx of commodities, media mediation, and fashion.

The question arises, how do Taiwan's adolescents shape their view of "self" within this contemporary context, at the intersection of Eastern and Western cultures? My inquiry for the thesis focuses on how Chinese adolescent identity is constituted symbolically in and through their communicative practices within a local public social context, a typical Westernized dining place--McDonald's, a U.S. fast-food restaurant in

downtown Taipei, and how such a locale both serves and makes sense out of the urban youth's daily lives.

Observant researchers, like Smith Douglous (1992), points out that the advent of fast-food industry and the introduction of Western dining patterns are "an excellent symbol of the Westernization and urbanization of this island" (p.32). Since the arrival of the first U.S. franchisee in Taipei in 1982, the magnetism of Western-style fast-food restaurants had helped shape the lifestyle of Taiwan's youth (Chen, 1989; Wu, 1993). The setting of a fast-food restaurant serves as one of the naturally occurring, social situations where adolescents congregate after school and find employment during their free time (Chen, 1989; Smith, 1992; Wu, 1993). Adolescents spend hours at fast-food restaurants hanging out with friends, cramming for examinations, dating boy-/girlfriends, or escaping from the weather. Fast-food culture not only introduces a series of dining patterns and Western tastes, but also, according to Chen (1989) and Smith (1992), symbolizes a shift of social values and behavior among adolescents. However, little is known about how adolescents themselves perceive this context, how it influences their lives, and how they actually communicate in such a setting. This study explored these issues by using an ethnographic approach to understand patterns of adolescent communication in Taiwan.

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Chinese adolescents construct their identity through their social interactions. This study explored a symbolic view of adolescent identity within a Westernized fast-food restaurant, a speech situation which served as a social context for inner-city youth in downtown Taipei. This study sought to enhance understanding of (1) how adolescents themselves viewed such a context, (2) how they, utilizing such setting, created, developed and negotiated their identity in and through communication; and (3) what symbolic meanings were generated from their interactions in relation to the larger culture--the juxtaposition of Eastern and Western cultural traditions.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

**Adolescence:** Adolescence is commonly defined within anthropology, psychology, and sociology as a social stage midway between childhood and adulthood. The beginning of adolescence may be marked at age 10 or 11. It is determined by biological development, whereas the end of adolescence is socio-culturally or legally determined (Hall, 1904; Newman, 1976; Matthews & Serrano, 1981). Some authors estimate age 25 as the ending of adolescence (Hall 1905; Newman, 1976; Matthews & Serrano 1981; Seltzer, 1989). For the purpose of the study, the age perimeters were dependent on

the actual age of the sample available in the fast-food setting at the time the study was conducted.

**Fast food restaurant:** An internationalized U.S. restaurant that serves Western food, such as hamburgers, fried chicken, frenchfries or pizza. Such restaurants are characterized by self-service, convenience, and fast service (Love, 1986).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the foregoing, the following research questions were formulated:

1. From the perspective of Chinese adolescents, what functions does an American fast-food restaurant serve in downtown Taipei, Taiwan?
2. How is current adolescent identity symbolically developed, negotiated, and enacted communicatively in this speech situation?
3. In relation to the larger culture, the juxtaposition of the two different cultural traditions of East and West, what symbolic meanings are generated and shared in and through adolescent interaction in a fast food context?

## SUMMARY

Chapter I introduced the purpose of the study, to describe and understand how the identity of Chinese adolescents in Taiwan was created, negotiated, and developed in and through their speech practice at one of McDonald's franchisees in downtown Taipei. Chapter I also addressed key



concepts, definitions and the research questions. The following chapter presents the theoretical perspectives of the study, cultural background of the research field and the theoretical framework of the ethnography of communication. Chapter III delineates the research design of the study which includes the process of data collection, and the discussion of issues of validity and reliability. Chapter IV presents the analysis of data obtained from interviews and field observations by using the mnemonic of SPEAKING in the ethnography of communication. Finally, Chapter V discusses the findings and summarizes conclusions. It also addresses the significance and limitations of the study as well as implications for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical perspectives of the study and the cultural background of the phenomena examined. The chapter begins with a symbolic interactionism to understand how the concept of “self” is perceived theoretically as a socially constructed entity. Section two introduces the ethnography of communication as a descriptive theoretical framework to contextualize the phenomena studied, and to capture communicative patterns observed within a specific community. The third section is an overview of Taiwan’s cultural and social contexts during the time of this ethnographic study.

#### **Symbolic Interaction**

One of the theoretical perspectives that this study took was symbolic interactionist theory. The foundation of symbolic interactionism began with the work of Mead and his associates. The concept originated with William James, was advanced by Charles Horton Cooley, and transformed by George Herbert Mead (Farberman, 1985). It was Herbert Blumer who coined the term “symbolic interactionism” and brought it into a full-fledged dynamic study of human conduct and human group life (Blumer, 1969).

James introduced the social nature of “I” and “Me,” which was conceptualized by Cooley’s looking glass analogy (Farberman, 1985). Synthesizing both James and Cooley’s concepts of “self” and “I,” Mead generated a coherent theory based on a triad of society, self and mind. Mead investigated how communication became the means by which individual experience was shaped through the use of symbols within a social group. He contended that communication, in the sense of significant symbols, provided a form of behavior directed not only to others but also to the individual (Mead, 1934).

This study utilized the notion of shared meaning through the use of significant symbols within human interaction as a conceptual approach to investigate communicative events in adolescent social life. Blumer (1969) identifies three basic premises of interactionism that explain the centrality of meanings in social interaction. The first premise is that “human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them” (p.2 1969). The second premise is that “the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellow” (p.2, 1969). The third premise is “these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (p.2, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism sees meaning as arising in the context of interaction between people and also as a social product formed in and through the defining activities of people. The use of meanings by a person occurs through a process of conscious interpretation--"an internalized social process in an actor who is interacting with him/herself" (Blumer, 1969, p.5). This process of assigning meaning within oneself through significant symbols is viewed as conscious communication within oneself--a conscious "conversation of gestures" (Mead, 1934), which enables that actor to select, check, suspend, regroup, and transform meanings in light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction he is taking (Blumer, 1969).

A "gesture" is a stimulus which brings about the response of other forms of gesture, whereas a "gesture with shared meaning" is viewed as a significant symbol.

"Gestures become significant symbols when they implicitly arouse in an individual making them the same responses which they explicitly arouse, or are supposed to arouse, in other individuals, the individuals to who they are addressed; and in all conversations of gestures within the social process, whether external (between different individuals) or internal (between a given individual and him-/herself), the individual's consciousness of the content and flow of meaning involved depends on his/hers thus taking the attitude of the other toward his own gesture."  
(Mead, 1934, p.47)

The use of significant symbols by a group substantiates the existence of society; society arises among individuals, the self and the other, engaging in action through their interpretation of each other's behavior, the meaning of

which is presumed to be shared. Individuals and society are viewed as inseparable and interdependent; one acts toward the other according to one's interpretation of the other person's behavior and vice versa. Thus, the formation of society among self and the other is perceived as a process, instead of structure in symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934).

Mead (1934) posits that "self" serves to continue a conversation of gestures and to participate in communication in the sense of significant symbols. The "self" arises from the process of social interaction. Therefore "self" possesses a reflexive characteristic which indicates that it can be both subject and object: the "I" and the "me" (Mead, 1934). The two interactive facets of a "self" enable an individual to act toward oneself and toward others. The "I" is defined, according to Manis and Meltzer (1972) as "the undirected tendencies of the individual" and the "me" as the "organized set of attitudes and definitions, understandings and expectations common to the group" (p.10). The "me" is the "generalized other" which the individual sees in oneself by taking the attitude of others toward one's self.

"Anything--any object or set of objects, whether animate or inanimate, human or animal, or merely physical--toward which he acts, or to which he responds, socially, is an element in what for him is the generalized other; by taking the attitudes of which toward himself he becomes conscious of himself as an object or individual, and thus develops a self or personality." (Mead, 1934. p.154)

The “generalized other” is constituted by a complicated set of attitudes derived from outside, whereas the “I” can be turned in various directions, both inward and outward (Mead, 1934).

In summary, based upon the symbolic interactionistic view of the formation of self, this study investigated a functional interrelationship among adolescents and how the identity of adolescents emerged as well as negotiated in and through their socially created experiences.

### **Social Construction of Identity**

The self with which one enters a situation shapes the way one communicates. In turn, the way one communicates can also affect what one thinks about oneself. “One’s identity,” as Stone (1970) puts it,

is established when others place him/[her] as a social object by assigning him/[her] the same words of identity that he appropriates for him/[her] or announces. It is the coincidence of placements and announcements that identity becomes a meaning of the self. . . . (p. 399).

From the viewpoint of symbolic interaction theory, the “self” arises from and results in the processes of social interaction with the other (Mead, 1934; Perinbanayagam, 1985; McCall and Simmons, 1966). Thus, the formation of identity becomes a social product of that process shared by interlocutors.

McCall and Simmons (1966) contend that in the process of identity formation:

the learned cultural patterns, the perspectives engendered by social position, and the individual's personal history all enter into the determination of which . . . incoming stimuli one perceives and which one ignores" (McCall and Simmons, p.110).

Furthermore, Berger and Luckmann (1966) illustrate that "the social processes involved in both the formation and maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure" (p.159). Individuals are members of several social groups. In each social group, individuals carry out role-identities to achieve their plans of action as performers, and their enactment of these identities is evaluated by the group as audience. If an individual obtains support for the role this tends to increase the prominence of that particular identity. If there is not support for a particular performance of features, he/she must adjust his/her lines of action by going through a process of negotiation for that situation with his/her audience. It is through verbal and non-verbal channels of communication that the socially constructed identity arises within specific groups and contexts. "The process [of verbal and non-verbal practices]," said Perinbanayagam (1985), "identifies self to self and others, fills the role a person has been called upon to play. . . in the ongoing social processes of an individual" (p.199). Identity therefore arises through social interaction with others and is a product of the relationship of individuals in a social group within a social context. This study explored the ways in which Chinese adolescent identity was formed within a transitional social context of Taiwan.

## The Ethnography of Communication

This study utilized the Ethnography of Communication as a descriptive theoretical-framework to discover, describe and analyze adolescent ways of speaking (Hymes, 1962; Bauman & Sherzer, 1974; Philipsen, 1977; Saville-Troike, 1989; Braithwaite, 1991). The ethnography of communication aims to investigate the interrelationships among cultural systems, languages and social contexts within a community of speakers (Saville-Troike, 1989). The ethnographic approach builds its foundation upon a fundamental premise that speaking as a cultural system or as part of a cultural system is patterned within each society in cultural-specific, and cross-culturally variable ways (Hymes, 1964; Bauman, 1972; Bauman & Sherzer, 1975). Communities differ in their linguistic resources, patterns, functions, and values and these must be discerned in each instance. Thus, to understand the interrelationships among these features within a distinctive cultural context, the ethnography of communication, grounded in the axiom of particularity, serves as a descriptive model for discovering, describing and comparatively analyzing particular communication patterns and distinctive cases (Philipsen, 1989).

Hymes (1964) identifies two characteristics of this approach:

Firstly, [this approach] calls the attention to the need for fresh kinds of data, to the need to investigate directly the use of language in contexts of situations so as to discern patterns proper to speech activities. . . . Secondly, such an approach cannot take linguistic form, a given code, or speech itself, as frame of reference. It must



take as context a community, investigating communicative habits as a whole, so that any given use of channel and code takes its place as but one of the resources upon which the members of the community draw (p.2-3).

Philipsen (1977) points out that the descriptive-theoretical framework of the ethnography of communication combines a formal, general set of categories,

which guides discovery and provides a format for descriptive statement in any particular ethnography of speaking. Such a framework would consist of those descriptive units, and relationships among them, which are necessary and sufficient for description in any particular case (p.44-45).

The primary descriptive social unit of this theoretical framework is speech community. Hymes (1972) defines it as “a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety” (p.54). As Braithwaite (1991) points out we cannot automatically assume the existence of community by simply positing its existence. It must be identified in each case through a reflexive process of assessment.

The other three units of analysis which set recognizable boundaries on communicative activities are *speech situation, event, and act* (Hymes, 1972). Hymes (1972) defines the speech situation as a context within which communication occurs. It serves as a context of activities (Hymes, 1972); in the case of this research it is a franchised restaurant. Speech events are defined as aspects of activities, “that are directly governed by rules or norms

for the use of speech" (Hymes, 1972, p.56). An event is used as the basic unit for descriptive purposes, and usually comprises a unified set of components throughout (Saville-Troike, 1982). The third unit of analysis is a speech act which is the minimal term with a single interactional function (i.e. a greeting). Hymes (1972) explains that "[the] level of speech acts mediates between the usual levels of grammar and the rest of a speech event or situation in that it implicates both linguistic form and social norms" (p.57). The speech act functions as a minimal set of speech behavior implementing means for the conduct of speaking. Genres are the verbal products of that behavior employed in the construction of speaking. Speech acts and genres are analytically distinct, the former having to do with speech behavior, the latter with the verbal forms of speaking (Hymes, 1975). From a functional point of view, speech acts indicate "conventionalized ways of doing things with words, ready-organized building blocks with which to construct discourse" (Hymes, 1975, p.106).

In addition to the forgoing conceptual categories, Hymes' (1972) mnemonic SPEAKING, a heuristic framework, rather than a priori categories, was used to guide data collection and data analysis. Hymes (1972) identifies sixteen components grouped together under the mnemonic, that includes S (setting, scene), P (participants: speaker, addresser, receiver and addressee), E (ends: purposes--outcomes/goals), A (act sequences:

message form and message content), K (keys), I (instrumentalities: channel and forms of speech), N (norms of interpretation and interaction), G (genres). The mnemonic SPEAKING serves as an initial analysis of patterns and functions of speaking. My analysis evaluated the range of the adolescents' communication repertoire, that is "all varieties, dialects or styles used in a particular socially-defined population, . . ." (Gumperz 1977 in Saville-Troike, 1982, p.49). Once an adequate "thick description" of the study is given (see analysis, Ch. IV), the analytic moves can be taken to understand the "native view" of the phenomenon studied (Geertz, 1973; 1983).

### **Taiwan**

Taiwan, as one of the chain islands that marks the edge of the Asiatic Continental Shelf, is situated on the Tropic of Cancer between Japan and the Philippines. The island is 250 miles (394 km) long and 80 miles (144 km) broad at its widest point. It covers an area of 13,800 square miles (36,000 sq. km). Mountain ranges, running through the center from north to south, occupy two-thirds of the island; almost all of the arable land, one fourth of the total area, is cultivated or urbanized. Taiwan has a low fertile alluvial plain where the major cities have been built and most of Taiwan's people live. The primary economic base consists of capital- and technology-intensive

industries, export- and import-oriented industries and some heavy industries like iron and petrochemicals (Long, 1991).

The climate is subtropical except for the southern tip which is tropical. Summers are long and hot with the temperature reaching the ninety degrees of Fahrenheit on a regular basis and the humidity high in both winter and summer. The island receives abundant rainfall. The capital, Taipei in the north-eastern region, has more rainfall in winter than in summer.

The population of Taiwan is about 21 million. The population under 15 years of age is 23.8%; 7.6 % are over age 65. Sex Ratio (M:F) is 53:50. The most populous city is Taipei with 2.6 million (WWW. 1997).

Mandarin, standard Chinese is the official language. It is almost universally understood, and is used in most public institutions. But Mandarin is not the original regional dialect; Taiwanese and Hakka are the two primary dialects. Taiwanese is heard island-wide, spoken by about 70% of the people, while Hakka is spoken primarily in certain southern and northwestern regions. Aboriginal languages, such as Paiwan, Rukai, and Atayal are also spoken in limited areas by less than 2% of the population.

### **Conception of "Self" in Confucianism**

This section is a review of the historical and cultural conception of self in Chinese society on Taiwan. The Confucian tradition, as a mainstream

historical thread of Chinese culture, has been one of the predominant thought systems which sustained for 2500 years. Confucian ethics are institutionalized in the formal curricula of the educational system. Confucian classics--the Analects<sup>1</sup>--are required readings in the high school system in Taiwan.

The Confucian emphasis on sociality as a way of life is embedded in agrarian culture and economy (Smith, 1992). Confucian ethics provide a mode of thinking and a way of life which had significant effects on Chinese society and individual behavior. There are four principles regulating the right conduct of human relationships for the basis of a good society: (1) *Jen* (仁 humanism), (2) *I* (義 faithfulness), (3) *li* (禮 propriety), and (4) *chih* (智 wisdom or a liberal education) (Yum, 1988). *Jen*, the core of Confucian ethics is defined as "warm human feelings between people" (Yum, 1988, p.68). The second principle of Confucianism is *I*, which means "faithfulness, loyalty, or justice" (p.68). Human relationships, from the perspective of *I*, are intended to facilitate the betterment of the common good of the society, rather than to profit individuals. *Li* is an objective criterion of the social order, perceived as the rule of the fundamental regulatory etiquette of human behavior (Yum, 1988). Being considerate to others by returning to propriety, the principle of *Li*, one can reach humanness (*Jen*). Thus, in the Confucian

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<sup>1</sup> The Analects refer to the Lun Yu (論語), a collection of Confucius' teachings. It addresses Confucius' fundamental moral and political philosophy.

view, the self is presented as a humane person who builds bridges from oneself to other people for the betterment of society by following proper standards of etiquette and behavior. In traditional Chinese society, according to Pratt (1991), "one's identity is intimately linked to cultural values regarding family and relationships" (p. 287). The attachment to familial and relational social values are derived from Confucian ethics, which shape the Chinese views on various fundamental issues such as the idea of the self (Tu, 1985).

A question arises with regard to Confucian thought: how does an individual, situated in this web of social relations, perceive his/her identity as an autonomous being? In other words, how does the Confucian emphasis on sociality serve as a means of "self" formation in Chinese society? According to Tu (1985), Confucian man is seen as a social being whose identity is established in and through dyadic relationships. The notion of self is based on relationships and situations of a particular context rather than on some absolute good (Tu, 1976;1985). The self, within Confucian thought, is located in the center of the relationships within an open system, and partakes in a dynamic process of becoming or developing. (Tu, 1985; Pratt, 1991). He/she is one "whose social behavior is that of a relational being, socially interconnected with immediate, middle, and distant relationships" (Smith, 1992, p.7). The self is developed, cultivated, and substantiated in and

through interactions with others, according to the roles that individuals play in relation to each other, and the shared cultural values that they preserve (Pratt, 1991). The development of self, in the Confucian idea, entails the participation of the other in a web of social and interpersonal relationships. Relationships, even those between friends, are constructed in hierarchical patterns. (Smith, 1992).

To maintain one's identity is to be aware of the presence of the other through a normative practice of role relationships in involving a sense of duty and obligation. As it is said in the Analects "Wishing to establish oneself, one establishes others; wishing to enlarge oneself, one enlarges others," 「己達達人，己立立人」。 The sense of self is manifested in the way people relate to each other, and the way they relate to each other is directed by the patterns of their social roles. "To know what to do, in Chinese society, assumes an understanding and acceptance of the correspondence between a rational sense of duty and a moral sense of obligation," (Pratt, 288).

In Confucianism, familial and social relationships are indispensable and they engender an inexhaustible supply of resources for the formation of self. The self is viewed as a relational being whose behavior stays in accordance with the ideals of one's social roles and ascribed cultural values. This study investigated how the view of "self" among Taiwan's adolescents was performed symbolically within a Confucian society and how adolescent

identity was developed, negotiated, and enacted at the juxtaposition of the Confucian and Western traditions.

## SUMMARY

Chapter II has reviewed the theoretical perspectives utilized in this study. Symbolic interactionism conceptualizes the formation of “self” and “the other” through social interaction. The theory also delineates the process of how individuals assigned meaning of their worlds within and without the self with shared symbols. Furthermore, the symbolic interaction theory provides the foundation of social construction of identity that is developed, negotiated, and enacted within the boundaries of cultural, social and personal contexts. The ethnography of communication serves as a framework to guide description and analysis of communicative phenomena in the present study. Lastly, a brief overview of Taiwan and the cultural view of identity are presented to situate the object of inquiry and to capture the contextual richness of the study.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The focus of the study was on understanding and explaining how Chinese adolescents actively created, enacted and negotiated their identity within a Westernized American fast-food restaurant in Taiwan. In view of the mode of inquiry and the theoretical perspectives, this study took a qualitative approach--a naturalistic view of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The naturalistic inquiry provided a basis for capturing, describing, as well as formulating forms of symbolic discourse shared by this particular cultural community.

### QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

This study used the qualitative case study (qcs), a research approach particularly suited to the aim of collecting naturally occurring communicative behavior among a sample of Chinese adolescents. The nature of the qualitative case study is characterized as (1) "in situ," (2) "exploratory," (3) "openly coded," and (4) "participatory description" (Philipsen, 1982, p.2). In the qcs, observation is conducted "in situ," that is, "in the settings and at the times which are the usual contexts for the subjects' actions" (Philipsen, 1982, p.6), rather than in an artificially constructed laboratory setting. The second

feature is “exploratory,” which means that “manipulation of antecedent conditions is replaced by observing what the subject does when left to his or her own devices” (Philipsen, 1982, p.7). The third feature that the qualitative case study identifies is the use of “open coding” of data, that is, replacing a priori categories with open, exploratory coding emanating out of data on the observed phenomenon itself (Philipsen, 1982, p.9). The fourth feature, “participatory research” addresses the nature of the investigator’s involvement in the research process. In the qualitative case study, “the investigator deliberately uses his or her own responses to the phenomena under investigation as one source of data” (Philipsen, 1982, p.11). This allows the researcher to use him-/herself as an “instrument” by interjecting the researcher’s subjective voice “critically reflecting upon his or her experience vis-à-vis the subject of the inquiry” (McCracken, 1988, p.18; Philipsen, 1982, p.11). The outcome of a qualitative case study is a process description, of an instance of a specified class of phenomena, which is written so as to permit cumulative analyses and interpretations of multiple instances of the class (Philipsen, 1982, p.4).

## RESEARCH PROCEDURES

### Population

The primary study took place at one franchise of the McDonald’s corporation operating in Taiwan. I contacted McDonald’s headquarters in

Taipei for permission to conduct this study in one of their local restaurants in downtown Taipei where many adolescents spent their time (Appendix A). The sample was drawn from the population of adolescents participating in any activities occurring at this selected site.

### **Sample Type and Size**

Based upon two assumptions in field studies that (1) “a common culture is reflected in practically every person, event, and artifact belonging to a common system” (Honigmann, 1970, p.271), and that (2) “questions asked in the research can frequently be answered through samples selected by nonprobability methods” (Honigmann, 1970, p.271), this study used both judgment sampling and opportunistic sampling for informant selection. Adolescent informants were selected as the judgment sample by virtue of their experience, qualities and knowledge, i.e. adolescents who frequented the restaurant (Honigmann, 1970; Johnson, 1990). The principle of the selection of ethnographic informants, according to McCracken (1988), is that “less is more” (p.17). McCracken contends that “it is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than more superficially with many of them” (p.17). The other type of sampling that this study used was “opportunistic sampling” (Honigmann, 1970). Opportunistic sampling allows an investigator to study a phenomenon from varying vantage points afforded by different groups of informants.

I interviewed twenty-seven young people in groups, both male and female, one key informant, and three adults for informal interviews. I had a seventeen-year-old young man as my key informant throughout my field work. The key informant, who used to be an employee of McDonald's, provided me with rich insights and pertinent information on every aspect of adolescent life and the corporation. Other informants were drawn from adolescents who frequented McDonald's and who had experience with the fast food culture. Adolescent informants' ages ranged from 11 to 18 (See figure 1). In the actual sample, 13 and 19-25 year olds could not be recruited, due to the opportunistic sampling procedure. Among the twenty-seven informants, ten were male and seventeen were females. There were eight groups interviews with adolescents ranging in size from two to five participants; three female groups and five mixed groups. I also interviewed four informants who worked part-time at the McDonald's at the time the study was conducted. All interviewees were volunteers.

Age Distribution (figure. 1)

Age	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	total
Male	1	1	0	0	1	1	5	1	10
Female	3	0	0	1	2	7	4		17
Total	4	1	0	1	3	8	9	1	27

There were three informal interviews individually held with a primary

school teacher, a parent, and a sibling of one adolescent participant. These informants provided the study with relevant information about adolescent sub-culture in relation to the larger cultural context, for a more integrated picture of the specific case of speech situation at McDonald's.

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection included observations, in-depth interviews, and the gathering of cultural artifacts. Interviewing procedures, and issues of transcription and translation of interviewing data were addressed in this section. Transcription conventions used were listed in Appendix B.

### **Observation**

There are central and significant reasons in considering the use of observational methods in naturalistic settings when conducting a study of cultural communication. The purpose of observation is to capture the richness of a communicative phenomena on site. Within a larger cultural and social context, "settings are explored in an attempt to render relationship and rules, as well as to illustrate how cultural norms actually operate in [daily] social life" (Sarett, 1984, p.209). Behavior is viewed as associated with social relationships and is governed by cultural rules. Therefore, observation enhanced my ability "[to detect] unobservable aspects of culture as beliefs and values from the behaviors or things which are observed" in this

ethnographic study (Saville-Troike, 1989, p.123).

Observation is viewed as one of the few methods that permits inspection of unconscious social and cultural categories (Sarett, 1984). When people are not aware of their own behavior in taken-for-granted social situations, an observational method provides the opportunity to assess these features, as well as detail the physical setting and interrelationship of context with social action. Information generated from the context, the situation, and nonverbal cues does convey messages and generates meanings that would be unavailable from explicit verbal utterances (Hall, 1976). Verbal information can easily mislead interviewers into thinking that the non-verbal behaviors are less important for participants than the verbal one. In this case, observation maximized my ability to grasp motives, beliefs, and the unconscious behaviors of participants on the scene (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985). It also allowed me the opportunity to examine the context as participants interacted in it, and to build on tacit knowledge of the members of the cultural group.

I spent four and a half months in the field, beginning initial observations in mid-August, 1995. In the early stage of observation, I entered the field as a customer and observed adolescent interactions. The involvement of my role as an observer shifted between complete observation and full participation (Gold, 1958); e.g. the complete observer, the observer

participant, the participant observer, and the complete participant, depending on both the rapport established with participants and the permission obtained from the organization.

Observation times were selected according to the business hours of the restaurant, "at the times which [were] the usual contexts for the subject's actions" (Philipsen, 1982, p.6). The times were broken into shifts (morning, afternoon, and evening) to obtain a general schedule of the activities of the adolescent participants on the site. It took approximately three weeks to discover the times that adolescents visited most. The first and second weeks of the observation were near the end of summer break. Adolescents came to the site during any segment of the day. Depending on my physical availability and the mass transportation schedule, I frequented the site as often as possible. When school started, the time that adolescents frequented the site changed. They usually showed up either in the early morning or, most often, in the early evening. Subsequent observations were regularly conducted at the times when most adolescents frequented the restaurant.

Field notes were kept to ensure that the various types of data gathered related to the study. Field notes served as a reliability check, enabling me to examine patterns in the data over time as the study proceeded (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Notes were categorized as observation notes (ON), methodological

notes (MN), theoretical notes (TN), and personal notes (PN) (Corsaro, 1981). Observation notes contained “statements bearing upon events experienced principally through watching and listening.” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p.100). Theoretical notes recorded “self-conscious, controlled attempts to derive meaning from any one or several observation notes” (p.101). Methodological notes included “statements that reflect an operational act completed or planned: an instruction to oneself, a reminder, a critique of one’s own tactics.” (p.101). Personal notes served the purpose of capturing the researcher’s intuitive responses, experience, bias and assumptions.

### **Interviewing**

Interviewing was the second major method utilized in this study. For descriptive and analytic purposes, interviews provided me with an opportunity to understand adolescents’ communicative behavior and the meaning they ascribed to that behavior in their own terms. A basic assumption in the ethnographic interviewing method was “that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience” (Seidman, 1991). Thus, interviewing served as a means of understanding the context of adolescents’ behavior and allowed me to obtain descriptive details of participants’ experience. Interviewing also gave me an opportunity to clarify questions derived from observations. Finally, in-depth interviews with adolescents at McDonald’s also served as a speech event, containing



adolescent-adult interaction. Interviews were viewed as an encounter necessarily sharing many of the features of adolescents' everyday life (Baker, 1983).

The criteria for selecting an interview site was based upon the informant's convenience. Eleven out of thirteen interviews were conducted at the research site; one in another McDonald's; and the other one at a high school teacher's home. These interviews lasted anywhere from fifteen to ninety minutes, pre- and post-interview talks took up an additional amount of time. In the course of all interviews, there was food/drink that had been either purchased by informants themselves before I approached them, or I offered them in appreciation for their participation.

### **Interviewing Procedures**

I approached potential participants who were visiting at the McDonald's with an introduction of myself and my purpose for conversing with them. I requested a few minutes of their time to talk with them, briefly describing my role as a graduate student studying in the United States, and the purpose of my project. After the introduction, most participants expressed an interest in having interviews. Comments they gave included "This is interesting." 「這很有趣。」 "I've never come across this kind of thing; it's fun." 「這種東西我沒遇過，很好玩。」 Their tone was light-hearted, curious, and interested. However, obtaining parental consent from those who were under 18 was a

big obstacle for conducting interviews (Appendix C). Even with a thorough explanation of the purpose for the consent form, informants under 18 expressed concerns about parental involvement and their availability to come back for an interview. They anticipated how their parents might react to their talk with a stranger in public, and mentioned the uncertainty of time being available for revisiting the site. Some participants even protested against eliciting parental signature by saying “We can sign it ourselves a.” 「自己可以簽啊！」 “A signature is a serious thing. . . . It would cause a family revolution.” 「簽名很嚴重，. . . 會鬧家庭革命。」 “We don’t know when we will come again.” 「我們不知道什麼時候會再來。」 “[You] are not supposed to talk to strangers.” 「不能和陌生人講話。」 One young woman assured me that she could sign the form because “it’s a little thing. Don’t have to tell them.” 「這是小事，不用講。」 There were other comments and concerns about the uncertainty of obtaining parental consent and the consequences of being found out that they came to McDonald’s to hang out.

One of the purposes of a written consent was to ensure the right of participation and withdrawal. However, while “informed consent of participants is . . . not legally necessary, it is both ethically and methodologically desirable to seek it” (Seidman, 1991, p. 47). To ensure the right of participation and withdrawal in this study, I had negotiated with informants on the sequence of signing the form and interview, as well as

justified the wordings of the consent forms during the process of sampling. This provided participants with an opportunity to decide whether to participate in this study on the basis of sufficient information. Information about the extensiveness of the interview process and sample questions were given to provide participants with as much information as possible ahead of time. Verbal consent was obtained from informants over 15 years old in the beginning of each interview, along with a consent form. After the interview informants were left to decide whether to sign the form at their own will. Informants under 15 were asked to obtain parental consent; after that, an interview time was scheduled at their convenience. Confidentiality of the data and the informants were assured; informants' names would not be identified in the findings. An interview guide addressed features of the ethnography of communication (Appendix D), and other questions that were developed in the field. Tape-recording was conducted with informants' permission. Interview transcriptions, tapes and translation scripts were coded by numbers. Consent forms were kept in a separate file and only accessible to the researcher.

Studies of Asian students' communication behavior report that Asian informants were not accustomed to interviews that began with general issues, and that these kinds of questions were too broad to answer (Kawamitsu, 1992; Lu, 1992). For this reason, the interview format used an inverted

funnel structure to provide informants a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. Patton (1990) suggested using an alternative question format, such as a presuppositional question, or dichotomous inquiry, to make informants respond in a comfortable and appropriate way.

Each interview group had a different dynamic. (1) In all-girl groups, informants easily related with the interviewer as a "sister" or "auntie." They asked many personal questions of me, including age, schooling, current studies, and future plans. These questions were asked by most young women of all ages. An interview with young girls, age 12 and 14 happened to be close to a seasonal holiday, and informants exchanged Christmas presents, cards or addresses with me for seasonal greetings and future contact. (2) Questions from mixed groups focused on three types of information--personal information, information about McDonald's in the U.S., as well as what I, as an adult, thought about their talk about themselves. Male informants asked very few questions, in fact almost to none even when I invited them to. They briefly responded to my invitation by saying "no" or said that they had no questions. Interviews also revealed that (male) informants who had experience working at this McDonald's voiced more information about the organization than about themselves.

The informants' questions were different from what I expected. I went into the field expecting them to pose questions about my study; but interviews

revealed that it was viewed by adolescents as appropriate to ask personal information so as to reduce their uncertainty when interviewing by a stranger.

Another interviewing issue was related to the recruitment sample. As I checked the gender distribution of informants, I realized that I did not have any groups of male customers as informants. Thus, I realized that I was unconsciously responding to accepted social/cultural norms--it is not easy for a woman to walk up to a group of young men and initiate a conversation. To increase my trustworthiness with male informants and reduce discomfort, I resolved this issue through networking with a peer of my key informant.

### **Cultural artifacts**

I also collected artifacts in and out of the field throughout my field work. Some artifacts were provided by the organization, i.e. a sample of the employees' work schedule. Cultural artifacts included McDonald's fliers, photos, correspondent letters with informants and the corporation, as well as Christmas cards from informants.

## RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

### **Reliability**

Reliability refers to the degree to which research findings can be replicated by independent researchers when using the same method and data to obtain consistent results. (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). To

enhance reliability in this study, I explicated the theoretical premises, identified the methods used for data collection and delineated the analytic procedures. Data presented were drawn from informants' verbatim accounts, and field notes. Translations in transcriptions were checked by Dr. Pease, a bilingual professor, and by a bilingual peer to ensure reliability of data. Cross-checking data with other sources was used for insight as well as to provide information which helped guard against assumptions, biases, and possible influences (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

### **Validity**

Validity is the extent to which findings are interpreted in a correct way (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Obtaining validity requires ascertaining the extent to which reported findings represent empirical reality, and assessing whether the theoretical paradigm represents or measures the categories of phenomena that occur (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

Triangulation One way to enhance validity in ethnographic studies is triangulation. This method combines varied perspectives and multiple procedures to measure a single phenomenon, and to allow plausible interpretations from different participants' viewpoints (Sevigny, 1981). Since we assume that there is no perfect method, observational data was complemented with interview data in eliciting contextual information. Delineation of the physical, social, and interpersonal context within which

data were gathered (1) enhanced the potential for replicability of the studies (Sarett, 1984), (2) provided a means for bias checking and (3) served as a method of triangulation to strengthen reliability (Albrecht & Ropp, 1982).

Based on the assumption that the “weaknesses of any single method may be balanced by the strengths of the others,” triangulation enhanced the overall validity by using multiple data collecting strategies so that a single method’s vantage was maximized while “neutralizing” its drawbacks (Albrecht and Ropp, 1982, p.170).

As already noted, a range of complementary strategies were used in the data collection and analysis to enhance the validity of this study. These strategies included in situ observation, tape-recording when possible, field notes, formal and informal interviews, artifacts, and constant comparison the components of mnemonic, and other analytic means (e.g. code switching) (Glaser and Stauss, 1967; Hymes, 1972). Single-field-researcher effects were minimized by sharing findings with peers, and by self-reflecting on my perceptions and biases.

Transcription Six interviews were selected for transcription, five were mostly transcribed and one partially transcribed. Interviews were conducted in Chinese and transcripts were first written in Chinese. The five transcripts were from interviews with adolescent customers and included female, male, and mixed groups; the other was with a McDonald’s employee. The length

of the selected cassettes ranged from 50 mins. to 90 mins each. A basic inventory of transcription conventions was used (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Montgomery & Duck, 1991; See Appendix B).

Translation Translation has been identified as a key variable that affects the validity of any data gathered from translated material for cross/inter-cultural studies (Banks & Banks, 1991). An assumption of this approach is that translation serves as a way of interpretation; “the process of translating from one linguistic system to another is also the process that facilitates interaction between one culture and another” (Banks & Banks, 1991, p.174). Translation is viewed as an approach apt for understanding contexts in which cultural-specific meaning is embedded. The goal of translation is to ensure equivalency of cultural meanings while maintaining the meaning of the native view as well.

In this study, the issue of translation was mediated through discussion and collaboration with bilingual colleagues to maintain equivalence of cultural meanings (Brislin, 1986; Banks & Banks, 1991). Modifications of sentence structure from Chinese to English were justified to make the data readable to English speaking readers and still maintain the indigent voice. For example, added subjects were put in parentheses and Chinese particles were kept in italics. Colloquial expressions both in English and Chinese were thoughtfully investigated with references. Key terms were discussed and compared with



relevant literature. In addition, quotes and excerpts from interviews were presented in both English and Chinese to fill the translation gap.

### **Pilot Study**

To increase the validity and reliability of the project, a pilot study was conducted before formal interviews started. The aim of the pilot study was to test the appropriateness of the interviewing design with a small number of participants who were as close in characteristics as possible, to the expected sample of the final study. In this pilot study I networked a small sample of Chinese adolescents in the research site to evaluate the quality of my interview questions and my interview skills. I conducted an approximately forty-minute interview with three 17 year-old adolescents, one young woman and two young men. At the end of the interview, I invited their comments about the interview and their thoughts about issues of interviewing with young people. Informants remarked that the questions were “very common.” 「很普通，」 “too common/ordinary to answer.” 「太平常了，平凡得不知道怎麼說。」 They also provided me with information about how to approach adolescents.

Seidman (1991) points out several advantages of a pilot study. First, it enables a researcher to experience some of the practical aspects of establishing access, making contact, and conducting the interview. Second, the pilot serves as an opportunity for the researcher to sensitize his/her

interview techniques that support the objectives of the study. Third, the researcher can step back, reflect on his/her experience, and revise the research approach based on what one learns from the pilot.

The pilot study allowed me to observe and have direct contact with adolescents. From the pilot, I learned that not all informants were comfortable with talking. One young man gave brief answers and then kept smiling and giggling throughout the interview. Later I had a few contacts with him and he commented that when I asked him questions he didn't know what to say with me. In later interviews, I cautiously approached my potential informants to reduce the distance in adult-adolescent interaction by using casual, informal (if necessary) linguistic terms, and tones.

### **Analytic Methods and Process**

Methods of analysis consisted of transcribing verbatim interviewing data in Chinese and color coding the SPEAKING mnemonic as analytic categories for recurrent events and patterns throughout analysis. The analytic process was directed by McCracken's five-stage of analysis process (p.43, 1988.) First, each Interview transcript was first read through vertically on its own terms to capture the familiarity of the utterances itself. The second stage was to investigate any relationship or similarity suggested by the comments made alongside the utterances in the transcript. The third stage involved a refining process of horizontally checking other field note references to confirm

patterns or themes which emerged from the interview data. The fourth stage identified emergent themes among the comments generated throughout the process, as well as organized a hierarchical order among the themes. The fifth stage was to take the themes from each interview and horizontally investigate how these could be brought together into themes. During the process of analysis, multiple color coding served as a useful technique to identify terms that overlapped with multiple SPEAKING components.

### SUMMARY

Chapter III has delineated the rationale for the research design and the data collection procedures. This study was guided by the qualitative case study. Data collection methods included observation and in-depth interviewing and the collection of artifacts. This chapter also addressed issues of reliability and validity. Multiple methods were used to triangulate the phenomena studied and issues of transcription and translation were also discussed. A report of the pilot study was addressed at the end of the chapter. Through the informants' feedback, I was able to gather information about my interview questions and ways to strengthen my interviewing skills.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter IV described the components of the descriptive-theoretical framework of the ethnography of communication to describe and interpret data obtained from observations and interviews. The steps used in the description and analysis included identifying salient components of mnemonic SPEAKING, and the relationship among them (Hymes, 1972; Philipsen, 1977; Saville-Troike, 1982). I began with a description of the research site and participants followed by a discussion of the various activities that occurred in the McDonald's setting. The latter part of the chapter addressed the issues of code switching and genre analysis.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH FIELD

#### **McDonald's Setting**

McDonald's was situated in the heart of downtown Taipei, the center of both commercial and recreational attractions, especially eating and shopping. Surrounding the McDonald's were two high-rise department stores, bank buildings, hotels, shops, cafes, stores, as well as amusement attractions. Dining places and street vendors clustered in a six to eight block vicinity of the restaurant. At the time when the study was conducted, there were also

about ten other fast food franchises within a six block radius.

This neighborhood was surrounded by several high schools and supplementary schools, called buxibans (補習班)<sup>1</sup>. Buxibans were clustered on Nanyang Street<sup>2</sup>, a street populated with numerous supplementary schools. Because of McDonald's proximity to Nanyang Street, the restaurant attracted many buxiban students after their leisure time.

In addition, this particular McDonald's was also close by the City Central Railroad Station and was located on the corner of two busy streets that converged with numerous bus routes. The streets were busy with traffic at any time of the day and there was a constant stream of foot traffic on the sidewalks of the restaurant. Part of the sidewalks area were also constantly parked with motorcycles.

The McDonald's was located in a ten-story building with an extended basement. The restaurant's counter and dining areas were on the ground

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<sup>1</sup> Buxibans are supplementary schools which provide intensive tutoring for students planning to take high school or university entrance examinations (Selya, 1996). They offer a wide variety of courses such as languages, math, science, business, or the arts. Courses range from single-subject lessons to generalized subjects. Class size ranges from 10 to two or three hundred students. Students go to "buxiban" after their regular school hours. High school graduates who have failed to pass the annual Joint University Entrance Examination (JUEE) also attend an extra year of study at buxibans as full-time students in preparation for the annual examination.

<sup>2</sup> Nanyang Street is located three blocks south of the restaurant. It is known as Taipei's prime arena for buxibans. Since the 1970s, Nanyang Street has been famous for buxibans that provide programs parallel to school-taught subjects for students who want to succeed in their university entrance examinations. To this day, this is still the district where buxiban students congregate after school. Because of Nanyang street's proximity to the train station, many fast-food restaurants, shops, and small businesses such as cafeterias, diners, video game shops, street vendors, and private study halls have surrounded this particular street.

floor with easy access to the street; employee and staff offices were located in the basement. From the outside, the restaurant had a golden arch sign on a granite wall next to a sidewalk. On the very top of the building sat a huge golden arch neon which stood out in the dark when the city became a sea of glittering lights at night. The building itself was decorated with billboards highlighting advertisements of buxibans and stock investments.

On the first floor, the restaurant used full length glass walls as bulletin boards for store information, pictures of food, type of payment and ways of delivery available with the purchase of the food. During the observation phase, the restaurant was promoting their breakfast product. On the window was a cartoon of a chef introducing different combinations of meals with a fax line. From time to time banners and posters hung from the front ceilings over the sidewalks during special promotion periods. Pillars on the far end of the sidewalk carried recruitment announcements, pictures of food and the latest promotional items. Fast food artifacts and information of the corporation were fully displayed within the precinct of the restaurant. According to an employee, the purpose of hanging banners and posters was to “make information readily available”; “customers can immediately receive our messages as soon as they come into the restaurant.”

There were three pull-and-push manual entrances, located respectively

at the east, north, and south ends of the restaurant. At the east entrance stood a Ronald statue, waving and smiling at passers-by. The north entrance, an indoor entrance was next to the lobby of the building. There were two elevators in the lobby and during the buxiban hours the lobby was often packed with students waiting for their rides. At the corner of each door by the door handle, there were stickers displaying a sign for no-smoking, no cameras, and no food from outside allowed. There were also written cautions and a handwritten poster specified regular restaurant hours and extended summer and holiday hours on the door.

Inside, the restaurant was decorated with icons of Ronald drawn on the pathway ceiling with soft bright lights all the way across the hall. Toward the north end, there was a sign hanging down from the ceiling showing directions to the kids' playroom and restrooms. Each wall of the restaurant was decorated with a huge picture of locomotives. According to the account of an employee, these locomotives symbolized the location of the restaurant--near the Central Railroad Station. There was a jukebox playing pop songs in various languages: Chinese, Taiwanese, English, and Japanese. There was always music playing in the restaurant.

The dining area was divided into four sections (A, B, C, and D, See Appendix E), running counter clockwise starting from the south. Each section held 50 to 60 seats. Area A was near the south entrance. A

Compact Disc (CD) jukebox, owned by music companies was placed by the entrance. Area A was sectioned off from the pathway by a “T” shaped partition which connected A1 and A2. Alongside the front window by the entrance were three tables enabling customers to look out onto the sidewalk while eating. At the very end of section A was an exit marked with an “employees only” sign. This exit led to the stairway of the basement and was a doorway to the outdoors that was mostly used by employees.

The seating arrangement in Area B was similar to Area A. A partition divided the area into B1 and B2. At the center of the partition was a triangular space displaying McDonald’s flyers. An automatic teller machine (ATM) and a trash can were located at the entrance of Area B1. When I revisited the site a year after I conducted my study, Area B had been renovated. The partition had been removed and this area was converted into an open dining area which had at least 40 tables. Seating capacity was increased but with less privacy for patrons. My immediate reaction was that the change reduced the feelings of comfort and easiness for dining; no more seats for groups and no benches for resting one’s legs and laying back.

Area C was in the northeast corner next to the main entrance. By the entrance there was an exhibition box (about 4x3x3 feet) which featured legendary characters from the classic story, “Journey to the West”<sup>3</sup>, 「西遊

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<sup>3</sup> This was a classic Chinese legend about the journey of a monk and his three disciples going



記」 posting recruitment information.

A narrow sideway led to Area D. There was a bulletin board featuring a map of the city center at the entrance of the sideway. Across the bulletin board was the side entrance to the counter. Two trash receptacles stood against the wall of the side entrance. The space to the side entrance was used as a “backstage” where employees interacted with each others or with their acquaintances (Goffman, 1959).

Area D, in the back of the restaurant, contained restrooms and a children’s playground. A full-sized see-through window separated the dining room and the playground. Parents could either sit inside the playroom or watch their kids through the window. There were two low but big communal tables for groups and families in this area: one with six little stools and the other with three or four stools. A Ronald statue sat on one of the tables.

The counter for ordering food was situated between between Area C and Area D. There was ten cash registers, and the restaurant’s menu was up above them. Different colors on the menu specified different food items, e.g. green for salads, purple for desserts, blue for beverages and red for entrees. Both Chinese and English were shown on the menu. In the center of the menu was a large picture of the “Extra Value Meals” i.e., a hamburger or nuggets with medium fries and a medium soft drink.

The dining areas were illuminated with soft bright lights to enable customers to read newspapers, school texts, and the like. Heavy, concrete material, such as the floor, partitions, pillars, and hand rails were in black or red. Walls and ceilings were decorated primarily in bright light colors; yellow, white and lavender. The lighting, color and sound created a sense of liveliness. There was also a varied array of perpetual sounds, a mingling of the CD jukebox and constant conversation. Intermittent store broadcasts were heard during the rush hours. "It would feel weird without music. Maybe it's being used to it. Used to having a certain amount of noise. This is it." Said U (17 yr., male.), a former employee of the restaurant. 「沒有音樂反而覺得怪怪的。可能習慣，習慣有一定的程度的吵雜就對了。」 An employee also pointed out that the ongoing music kept employees, especially those working in the kitchen, from being bored with the repetitive cooking. (Z, 17 yr., male). There was, of course, the noticeable odor of food cooking in McDonald's, i.e. the aroma of french fries. The restaurant was temperature-controlled, with air-conditioning in the hot and humid summer, and heat circulated in the wet and cold winter. Through the messages of light, color, sound, smell, and room temperature, the restaurant conveyed a sense of a bright, lighthearted, clean and comfortable atmosphere. In short, the physical environment of the outskirts, the location of the restaurant, and the interior decoration of the restaurant made this McDonald's a multi-functional

locale attracting a variety of people.

### **Participants**

There were two major categories of participants in this setting-- employees and customers. The first category was the staff of the corporate, such as counterpersons, service persons, and managers. Employees at the counter wore identical uniforms--baseball caps bearing the McDonald's symbol (M) and either red shirts with white stripes or solid red shirts.<sup>4</sup> Management was in blue suits, while male servers were in blue shirts and females in red shirts. Both counter employees and management were positioned behind the counter.

The second major category was customers, which consisted of youths 14 and under, adolescents between ages 15-22, adults, and seniors. Although the target of the study focused on adolescents who frequented or were employees at this McDonald's, I will briefly describe each of the participant of the second category to give an overall sense as to who frequented this restaurant.

( A) Pre-adolescents/ Early adolescents The first were students from elementary schools and junior high schools ( 7th, 8th & 9th grades). Observations and interviews revealed that this age group usually visited the site on "holidays", "off-school days" and "half-school days" and were

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<sup>4</sup> The color of employees' uniform changed to bright blue in Jan, 1996.

accompanied by peers and/or family members. They used McDonald's as a place to "eat-out" or as a "rest place" on the way to shopping, movies, getting together with friends, outings, when transferring buses, or on field trips to a museum exhibit. In interviews with twelve and thirteen year-olds, both girls and boys reported that they visited the place "when feeling happy/great (開心的時候 Kai xing de shah ho)" and "to get rid of the pressure in studying". When asking how they defined "feeling happy/great", informants specified that it was when they "did a great job on exams/tests." They came and celebrated it. Other informants reported that they came here when they felt "bored", "when feet were sore", "feel hungry, thirsty", or "to use the restroom."

Categories of Customers (Figure. 2)

	Weekends & Holidays	Weekdays			
	Daytime	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Night
Pre-adolescents Early-adolescents (under 14 )	Pre-school Primary school Junior high				
Adolescents (15~22)		buxiban (full time)	1. Senior high 2. Vocational high 3. Jr. College	1. Senior high 2. Vocational high 3. Jr. College	1. Senior high 2. buxiban (full/part)
Adults		Business/ Office people		Business/ Office people	
Seniors	Expatriate	1. Stock investors 2. Social groups	1. Social groups 2. Expatriate		Expatriate

(B) Adolescents/Senior High and above This age group ranged from mid-teens to early twenties (15 ~ 22 yr.) and included both customers and many of the McDonald's employees. Participants in this category included students from senior high school, senior vocational high, junior college, buxiban<sup>5</sup>--full time and part time. They were typically observed frequenting the restaurant before and after school on weekdays, weekends and holidays. On weekdays, full time buxiban students came in the morning before class started; part time buxiban students came in the evening. They usually wore school uniforms. Buxiban students came in and got their meals before, during and after the supplementary classes. Between nine and ten p.m. they came back again for a quick meal before they headed home for the night.

Senior high students showed up at mid-afternoon with their school bags

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<sup>5</sup> There are three types of senior high school systems currently operating in Taiwan: the academic high school, three-year senior vocational high school, and five-year "junior colleges" (three years of high school followed by two years of college). Senior high schools prepare students for colleges and university by the Joint University Entrance Examinations (JUEE) after the 12th grade; vocational schools and junior colleges aim to build students' technical and vocational professions for the work force, and require less academic preparation than the former for the JUEE. Entrance to college and university is based upon completion of an academic high school and passing the JUEE. Even though all students in these three categories, theoretically, can enter college or university as freshmen by taking the JUEE, only the academic high school consists of three-year intensive academic course work enabling students to have an adequate academic base for passing the JUEE and for college education (Smith, 1986; WWW, 1997). Other students,--vocational high and junior colleges, and academic high school students who do not pass their first year of JUEE-- can enroll in a buxiban, a supplementary school to retake the exam. Relatively speaking, junior high students have carried a greater pressure under the present examination system than their counterparts, such as vocational high, and junior college students.

as soon as they got out of nearby high schools. The earliest flow moved in at 3:30 p.m., and hit its high at the “rush hours” around 5:00~6:30 p.m.; between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. the flow of incoming customers subsided, and then it went up again at 9:00 p.m., when senior high students came out of nearby bus stops. Most senior high students came to McDonald’s for quick meals before they went to bus stop. Some students used McDonald’s as a studying locale. They came with one or two classmates and studied for 2 to 3 hours. One informant who had joined his classmates to study here for a week, described his time spent at this McDonald’s, saying “if there is nothing, nothing specific that needed to be done (at home), I would keep studying here.” 「那如果沒事，沒事的話就會在這邊一直讀。」 (U age 17 yr, male.)

As for senior vocational high school students and junior college students, they mostly showed up in the afternoon. They stopped by the restaurant with friends or to work on school projects. One of the key features that drew these vocational and college students to this particular McDonald’s was the location itself--near the bus transfer stops and shopping areas. It was very common to see students congregate with their friends shortly before they got on the bus to go home.

(C) Adult/Seniors In addition to teenage customers, adult and senior customers were also part of this McDonald’s population. Because of the location (noted earlier), business people frequented the restaurant for their

meals or coffee breaks in the morning. Three types of senior customers were also observed frequenting the restaurant: (1) expatriates, who had spent part of their lives in the U.S.; (2) stock investors, who met their friends on weekday mornings, and (3) groups of senior customers who came in to socialize with their friends. Typically, groups of seniors came in mid-mornings or early afternoons, often sitting for hours visiting with their friends when the business of the restaurant was slow.

### SPEECH SITUATION

McDonald's, as a situation for speech, was comprised of various types of communicative events. McDonald's obviously provided a place for eating, but also served a number of other communicative purposes and functions for adolescents. This section begins by discussing the key speech events associated with eating at McDonald's. These include (A) ordering food, (B) looking for seats, and (C) dining. This is followed by a focus on other salient activities: (D) studying, (E) meeting friends, (F) leave-taking and (G) talk.

Speech events are discernible, discrete units with more or less defined boundaries between each, and are governed by different behavioral rules and norms, including varieties of language appropriate for the use of speech. A speech event occurs in sequence; but within a situation several events can occur simultaneously (Saville-Troike, 1989).

## Activities Enacted at McDonald's

### (A) "Ordering food"

Act sequence for ordering Food ordering at McDonald's was regulated through "Six Steps for Window Service," with standardized rules and messages for customers and employees (Leidner, 1993). Employees served customers by following a "six step" script, incorporating both verbal and nonverbal cues to create a sense of civility and helpfulness. The ordering sequence started with the employees' hearty greetings, followed by the act of taking orders, collecting payments, placing orders to the kitchen, gathering the requested items, and putting them on a tray or in a bag, followed by employees giving a loud and hearty appreciative utterance, e.g. "thank you for coming," and concluded with the act of customers' carrying their food away.

Walking up to the counter, standing in the line, reading the menu board in front of the counter, responding to the welcoming call from counter persons with an eye gaze, or responding to a server's offer for food ordering<sup>6</sup> could all serve as a signal, to self and others, of the beginning of this speech event. Verbal interaction was usually initiated by counter persons, and responded to

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<sup>6</sup> Off-counter ordering is available during rush hours. Servers intermittently come out and take orders from customers with pencil and paper. Customers pass the paper to the counterperson once when they approach up front. The purpose of pre-ordering by servers is to "save counterpersons' time" spent interacting with customers, and "to speed up" the flow (Employee Z, 17 yr.).



by customers. As one entered the front door right in front of the counter, one would hear a loud and clear hearty greeting from the counter, e.g. "Welcome to McDonald's," 「歡迎觀臨麥當勞！」, "Please order here," 「請這裡點餐。」

Scene The hour of a day changed the scene the counter. During rush hours, verbal interactions occurred occasionally among customers from the same groups when they were standing in the line while individual customers usually waited quietly for their turn unless interrupted by servers in the lines. However, at the slow hours, when the ordering pace slowed down, customers might even stand in front of the counter, look at the menu board before making up their minds on what they wanted to order. During rush hours employees were busily engaged at the counter waiting on customers, while during slow periods, employees just stood back behind the counter where it was common for two or three of them to exchange verbal messages among themselves accompanied by giggling.

Different days of the week also created different scenes at the counter. On weekends, holidays, or school breaks, there was a constant flow of people in and out of the restaurant. It was always packed on weekends and holidays. On weekdays, there were crowds of students wearing the same uniforms flooding in during the mid-afternoon when school was over.

In addition, scenes in the lobby shifted with the flow when the colors of

high school students' uniform changed. For example, students wearing uniforms with the school insignia on it came in at 4:25 in the afternoon, and in five minutes the crowd gradually moved toward the left entrance of the counter for the buxiban on the eighth floor of the building. At 4:39 p.m., customers standing in front of the counter became high school girls in green school uniforms and boys in white ones, the girls from T. F. G. high school and the boys from the high school of N.U. Most of them had take-out orders. A few minutes later, the scene changed again. As time moved on toward 6:00 p.m., the colors of the uniforms became commingled (ON).

Instrumentalities Mandarin was used in the "business" transactions at McDonald's. Once in a while I heard English being used with customers who were foreigners or English-speaking. Taiwanese was seldom heard at the counter during the observation phase. Adolescent and adult customers, as well as employees used Mandarin virtually all the time.

### **(B) "Looking for seats"**

Observations and interviews revealed that both acts of ordering and finding seating were interchangeable. The size of a group, the number of available seats, and customers' time available for dining affected the sequence of both events. Interviews revealed that informants perceived "ordering" (dian cian 點餐) and "looking for seats" (zhao wei zi; 找位子) as salient events along with "talking" (liao tian; 聊天) and "eating" (chi dong xi;

吃東西)。 When adolescents came as a group, one or two individuals were designated by the group to order the food at the counter while the rest of the group waited at the seats and proceeded with their activities,-- mainly talking with their peers.

1. R: As for ordering, how do you go about it?
2. Q: Everybody says what they want, and then assign a person to go to order.
3. T: Get whatever (you) want to eat.
4. Q: Assign a representative.
5. R: Oh. Just one person goes.
6. Q: And then the rest (of us) stay at the seats.  
(Silence 2 sec.)

1. R: 那點餐的話，都怎麼點？
2. Q: 就大家講一講，然後會派一個代表去講。
3. T: 看想吃什麼就吃什麼。
4. Q: 推派一個代表。
5. R: 喔，就一個人去。
6. Q: 然後其它的人在位子上。  
(Silence 2 sec.)

When asked how they went about finding their seats, two young informants said, “(look for) about enough seats for the number of people.

Because (you want to) find everybody a seat as much as possible a” 「人數差不多的。因為盡量讓大家都有位子坐啊。」 (S, 15 yr., female.). “To stick together as much as possible a” 「儘量湊在一起啊。」 (Q, 16 yr., female.).

When customers could not find enough seats to keep group members together, they would leave right away after having looking around in each dining area. Brief verbal exchanges about where to sit occurred during

“seat-finding”. Once customers found their seats, they put their belongings and food purchased on the seats, or physically sat down at the site to mark their territory. The acts of marking one’s territory served as a closure of the act sequence of finding a seat.

Another way of finding seats was through the assistance of McDonald’s servers. There were seven servers at this particular restaurant, and during rush hours, servers assisted customers in finding seats. Servers served as coordinators mediating the seating problems among customers. During the field observation, I was once asked by a server to move away from my table and to share another one with other customers to make room for two new customers. Not aware that this was a seating rule--to yield my seat for new customers after I was through my meal at the rush hours, I bluntly inquired about the server’s request by saying “Why do I have to move?” My response to the server’s request was viewed as a rule-violation by the employee.

The following was a server’s description of how he approached customers to obtain a seat for a new customer. The employee wore a uniform and a badge on his arm that legitimized his role as a server, especially when asking customers to move away or when seating customers during rush hours (see Appendix F-1 for Chinese transcript). The act sequence was described by Z:

Z: We’ll make an announcement first. Right a. “Excuse

(me) a second. This is our lunch/dinner hour. In order not to disturb the customers' right to enjoy their meal, please do not occupy the dining space too long, or spend too much time reading books and dozing." That's right *ah*, then, usually after most of the customers who have heard the message (they) will be a little bit alert. At this time we would come over and remind them a bit. And probably can . . . , can solve the seating shortage problem.

R: I have seen that there were . . . you had (point to a badge on the arm)?

Z: Yeah, that is a "seating badge." That's because there are customers who can't find any seats *ah*. That (It) is used for the purpose of operating this job *ah*. Asking customers to adjust their space a little bit, like that. "Move a little bit." (Taiwanese). So then, let the whole store, every space, get occupied. . . (Z, 17 yr., male)

Therefore, through this event of "seat finding," the role-identities for customers and servers were reinforced by the act enacted. During seat finding, customers mostly interacted with their groups--groups usually wanted to sit together. The closeness of the group was prioritized as one of the criteria for sitting together. Food ordering was pursued by one or two designated members and the rest of the group proceeded with their conversation while waiting for their food. The role of being customers were enacted through the process of finding seats by customers themselves.

The role-identity as a server was reinforced by the act of obtaining seats from customers at the rush hours. The legitimacy of the server's role enabled them to act as organizational authority to broadcast and to make customers yield their seats as a way of resolving a seating problem at this

particular restaurant. Customers who were about to finish their meal might be asked to yield their seats for other customers who were about to begin their meal. In other words, individuals--customers, were asked by an official-like figure to yield their right for the benefit of the organization in the name of the majority--"the customers' right" for their meals. In this particular restaurant, the rule of seat-yielding was viewed as culturally appropriate by employees and was known by the customers.

### (C) "Dining/Eating"

As one would expect, "eating" was one of the typical activities among young customers. The food consumed was McDonald's products. At the main entrance, dining rules were posted by the door. No food and beverages other than McDonald's were allowed inside. However, observations revealed periodic rule violations and "outside" food was consumed along with McDonald's products by customers across all age groups. For instance, tropical fruit was once seen consumed by a group of senior customers and occasionally students bought food on their way to McDonald's after school and then ate it in the restaurant. A former employee described that he had seen a paper box for a birthday cake in the trash can in the restaurant.

Celebration *ah*. That kind of thing perhaps is not usually done. Such as that kind of food, sort of *ah*. When I was here, I mean when I was working here, once when I was doing the cleaning, I found a box for a birthday cake. Yeah. I don't even know why. It was in the trash can where I saw a very huge cake box/container. And then. It was only once. (U, 17 yr., male.)

慶祝啊。慶祝那一類的，可能就比較不會做，像那食物啊，什麼的啊，我是在這，就是在這裡做的時候，有一次打掃，打掃到一個蛋糕盒，對啊，我也不知道為什麼，就在垃圾筒裡找到一個那個很大的蛋糕盒子。然後是，只有一次而已。(U, 17 yr.)

From some of my informal talks with employees, the issue of bringing “outside” food was viewed as a rule-violation, but was tolerated by employees. Their reasons for tolerating such a rule-violation was to keep a harmonious customer-employees’ relationship. However, I was unable to obtain the customers’ viewpoints on this issue during the data analysis process.

After-order talk Conversation usually temporarily focused on the food and cost when an order arrived at the table. Group members would comment on the food and drink, i.e. who ate what; the drink order was not right; or there was too much drink. Sometimes members would suggest to go back to the counter and get a new order, but if the food was eaten or drinks was touched, they would keep the meal.

Sharing food Sharing fries on the same tray was also a common scene among teenagers, i.e. one tray held all the drinks of the group, another held burgers or/and nuggets, and the other frenchfries. Groups using one tray for fries would pour out all of the fries on the surface and share it.

#### **(D) “Studying/Reading”**

It was a very common scene for customers to bring books, newspapers, or other reading materials to McDonald’s. One nearby McDonald’s, a

newly-opened one, had accommodated customers' needs by providing a "reading area" where students could sit and read as long as they wanted. Other newly-opened restaurants might even provide reading materials, such as newspapers, to encourage customers to spend time at the restaurant. However, neither of these features were observed in this particular restaurant.

There were two types of "regular" adolescent customers who did their reading in the restaurant. The first type was categorized based upon the observation data, and the second emerged from both interviews and observations. Those high school students who came alone or with friends to study and do homework belonged to type I. They spent hours studying, discussing their homework and chatting intermittently. Food or drink was set on the table along with books, and stationary was spread out all over their seating area. One informant happened to be one of the regular attendants. He came two or three times a week with classmates and studied in the evening, and occasionally on weekends.

The second type of "regular" adolescent customers who read at McDonald's were students who went to a nearby buxiban. Students came right after school, had their evening meal and spent a few minutes reviewing their homework.

In addition, there were other customers, mostly elderly people,



businessmen, and a few high school students who liked to read at McDonald's in the morning. "Because in the morning shift there are people who come here specially to read the newspaper. They come here to read everyday. Sometimes he'd buy a cup of coffee, sometimes he'd eat breakfast" (Z, 17 yr., male.). 「因為早班有的人，專門就來這裡看報紙，每天都來這邊看。有時後他喝一杯咖啡，有時候吃早餐。」

The "studying" activity reflected a significant role-identity of Taipei's urban youth, the identity as "high school students." The "student" identity was a symbolic role of Taipei's adolescents--a continuation of adolescent social identity transmitted by the current Chinese educational system, and reinforced by the larger socio-cultural and environmental factors. Under the current educational system in Taiwan, many adolescents were required to have extra hours of studying after school or take supplementary classes at buxiban in order to pass the annually held Joint University Entrance Examinations (JUEE). Under the circumstances of limited library and limited school hours in the evening, fast food restaurant such as McDonald's provided a place for its young consumers to study. The restaurant offered space, good lighting and food. While students came to have their meals, they could also study their school work at the same time. Though noisy, it was a convenient, safe, and fairly comfortable setting for reviewing school texts.

**(E) “Meeting with Friends” “Waiting for Friends”**

Young people often used the site as an easy-to-recognize landmark to meet up with friends. It was very common to see adolescents standing by or sitting in the restaurant waiting for their friends. McDonald’s was viewed as “a good assembly place.”

1. C: . . . McDonald’s is a good assembly place.
2. E: Right.
3. E: Right. Just mention the street, that’s is.
4. D: [ Very obvious *la*.
5. C: [ Right *ah*.  
Whichever, whichever McDonald’s is, then (we) just wait there.
6. [ The  
McDonald’s by Yuan-huan, the one by the train station.  
Wherever there is a McDonald’s. . . , this is it *ah*.
7. R: When you go out, (you) meet at McDonald’s. . . ?
8. C: [ There is more  
chance (to meet there). (See Appendix F-2 for Chinese transcript.)  
(Silence, 3.5 seconds.)

**(F) Leave-taking**

At leave-taking, topics shifted to the next destination adolescents were about to go to, or activities they were about to participate in. Adolescent customers began to check their personal belongings, groom their hair, use the bathroom facilities, and bus the table.

Observational data revealed that short dialogues on whose turn it was

to bus the trays occurred among young customers when they were about to leave. Accounts heard included "It's your turn." 「這次該你，」 "I just did it last time." 「我上次才倒，」 "Why is it always me?" 「爲什麼老是我？」 Then, after a short argument, one of the members would bus the tray and take care of the rest of the things. The following was a scenario of three high school girls' leave-taking. They shared one tray. Just as they were about to leave, they were arguing as to whose turn it was to bus the trash. Code-switching (Saville-Troike, 1989) from Mandarin to Taiwanese was used at the end of the dialogue to dramatize the duty-sharing scene, and also to reduce the tension among the participants by the person who code-switched the lines. Participant C agreed to carry the tray to the trash can. She lightened up the argument by role-playing as a waitress as a night-market vendor, and warned the other two to get out of her way (ON 18/9/95).

1. B: *Ei*, it's five. (indicating it's time to go.)  
...
2. B: It's me every time/it's always me dumping it. Now this time you dump it. (to A).
3. A: You *na*! (to C).
4. C: It's me every time/it's always me. And it's me again?
5. C: Then you take my bag.  
(C picked up the tray.)
6. C: Get away *ah*. This is hot! Get away *ah*. (In Taiwanese.)

1. B: 唉，五點了。  
...
2. B: 每次都我丟，這次該你丟。(to A).
3. A: 你哪!(to C).
4. C: 每次都我，這次還是我？

(C picked up the tray.)

5. C: 閃啊，熱啊，閃啊。(In Taiwanese.)

This short but dramatized scene conveyed the notion of duty-sharing and revealed how they resolved the act. Duty-sharing was one of the themes among this group members who shared common languages and personal experience in relation to the larger socio-cultural life. The leave-taking scenario--assigned a group task to a member either by arguing or volunteering, reflected this a common theme in adolescent social interaction. The theme was also found in the food-ordering activities. As group members, adolescent participants were aware of their obligation of sharing tasks, such as to go get food or bus the tray. Cooperation and carrying out the task harmoniously were the social norms accepted by group members and also evidenced in their verbal interaction. Arguments did occur in the process of negotiation, but were quickly resolved harmoniously in one way or another in a public social context like McDonald's.

### **(G) "Talk"**

Observations revealed that speech co-occurred with all on-site activities among customers, customer-employees, and employees. The majority of discourse took place among customers at the tables. Employees conversed with each other behind the counter when business was slow.

Servers interacted with customers with casual talk when serving “coffee” or doing “surveys”, and, once in a while, verbal exchanges occurred among unacquainted customers who happened to share the same table.

The talk patterns of the adolescent performed on the site reflected a shifting ground configuration (Poulsen, 1988). Verbal interaction co-occurred with eating, reading, playing games and the like, but primarily served as a background function. At other times, “talk” was foregrounded, as the specific focus of participants. The following quote suggested participants themselves observe and recognize the significance of talk in this setting.

When asked what they typically did at McDonald’s, informants across all age groups answered-- to “eat and talk” (chi dong xi, liao tian 吃東西，聊天); “shooting the shit” (da pi 打屁<sup>7</sup>); “talk” (liao tian 聊天); and “play” (wan 玩).

Probably the majority that (I) have seen are those who are coming along here to talk *la*; so then mostly come here to talk things over *la*; and then, the next to that probably could be studying *la*. And then, eating, also. . . , eating ought to also count as a, a kind of talking *ma* (U, 17 yr.).

大概最多的就是看到帶著來聊天的啦，然後就談事情最多啦，然後，其次大概就是讀書啦，然後，吃東西也，吃東西應該算是聊天那一，那一種了嘛。

The informant explained what “shooting the shit” meant to him. He

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<sup>7</sup> Da pi (打屁) might also be rendered as “farting around.” This term is suggested by Dr. Pease.

categorized “shooting the shit” as one type of talk, containing

“unconstructive stuff” in contrast to “discussion” on certain substantial topics like music, or chess.

R: You just said you are here to talk, to shoot the shit, right? What do you mean by “shoot the shit”? (Both U & X laughed. X, 17 yr., male. R indicates the researcher.)

U: It's . . . . *Ei*, how to say it, it's a kind of talking *la*. That is, talking about some stuff that is unconstructive, that's what it is *le*. *Ah* sometimes talking might be. . . two people together discussing some. . . some stuff *ah*. It could be music *ah*, or chess *ah*, whatever. As for “shooting the shit”, it is completely unconstructive talk. Like that. (U, 17 yr., male).

R: 你剛說你們在這邊聊天、打屁對不對，什麼叫做「打屁」？ (Both U & X laughed.) (R indicated the researcher.)

U: 算是，唉，怎麼講，算聊天的一種啦，就是聊一些沒有建設性的東西就對了，啊有時候聊天可能是，兩個互相討論一些，有些東西啊，可能是音樂啊，或者是棋啊，什麼的，打屁的話，就：完全沒有建設性的話，這樣子。

In this study of adolescent communication, the term “shooting the shit” was used to describe the nature of conversation that occurred in the public, social context--McDonald's. Both male and female informants in mixed groups and male informants used the term “shooting shit” to define their experience of being with friends in the restaurant. The tone of this term was articulated with a brisk, cheery sound by the youngest girl of a mixed group, and while in an interview with a single young man, the term was said in a “nothing serious” tone followed with the particle “ah.” In all-girl groups the term “shooting shit” was not heard; it was “talk,” or “chat” instead. “Shooting

shit,” “talk,” and “chat” can be used interchangeably by participants depending on the context of talk; however, the term “shooting shit” generally conveyed a higher sense of informality than that of the other two.

In Bell’s (1983) ethnographic study of communication of U.S black middle-class lounge talk, the term “talking shit” was used to capture the playfulness, the intimacy, and the difference of talk itself within Afro-Americans’ social life. “Talking shit” is defined by the community as:

to talk without pressure, without intention, without the need to determine the value of the words spoken and the gains that could be gathered from their use. To talk shit was to be released from the demands of the ordinary world outside the bar and to be concerned, instead, with the value of immediate experience (Bell, 1983, p.18).

The content and forms available at McDonald’s were compared and contrasted by adolescents with availability for talk in other social contexts. The first was at school; second, it was on the (school) bus; third, it was at home. Talk “at school,” and “on the (school) bus” were discussed in interviews. At school and on the school bus, the supervision by school authorities, the concern with other peers, and the limited physical setting and available time, constrained topics, forms, and sentiments of talk. The following are illustrations from the interviewees’ perspectives of the limitations of talking at school.

J: At school the teachers restrict (our) talking. L: If you say bad things about others, the teacher will blame you.

J: 在學校講話老師會限制， L: 你要講壞話，老師會罵人。(L, J 11

yr., female.)

There are some things (you) can't say in the classroom (X chuckled). No *ah*, just, just like what I said. Everyone says the same things. But, when (you) meet up with some pretty good friends, his, his topics are different. *Ah* (you) can't talk about that in front of everybody *ah*. You just, *ei*, come out and talk all by yourselves *ah*. Those times, it's just like that *la*. (U, 17 yr., male.)

有些話不能在班上講 (X chuckled)。沒有啊，就是，就像我說的，大家都講一樣的話，但是，遇到比較好的朋友，他講的話題，話題不一樣，啊不能在大家面前講啊，只是說，唉，獨自出來聊啊，那時候，就是這樣子啦。

Besides, in the classroom *ah*, classmates are just . . . bound within a certain area *ah*. *Ah* and 'going to the restroom *ah*', or do some other stuff. You can hardly get away from those few areas." (G, 17 yr., female.)

而且是，班上啊同學就是，在一個範圍內啊，啊「去上個廁所啊」，然後還是幹嘛的，幾乎都離不開那幾個地方。

Because of not being in the same classes. *Na* even though we see each other often, but the time for talking. . . there isn't that much time to talk (Q, 16 yr., female.).

因為不是同一個班級。那雖然常見面，但聊上聊的時間不是很多。

In fact, in fact when you, say you are talking at school, or talking on the bus, in that case, first, each person has one's own class to take in school. . . makes (one) feel tired. Like there are some people sleeping (in the class). *Na* so you can't say, have so much fun enjoying yourself at McDonald's *ah*. Joking sort of like, right? (C, 17 yr., female.)

其實，其實在你，你說在學校，或者是在車上聊天的話，第一個，每個人都有自己學校. . . 上課就會覺的很累，像有些人會睡覺的話，那你就不能說在麥當勞這樣那麼盡情的這樣玩啊，開玩笑幹嘛的對不對？

In addition, talk "at home" created a sense of inconvenience and restriction on young people's physical mobility and ability to "talk." Accounts obtained



from young adolescents pointed out such issues (J & L, 12 yr., female.; M, 13 yr., male. R, the researcher).

1. L: At home it seems that the parents' are there. Cannot have fun as much as (you want) *ah*.
- [
2. J: Right *ah*.
3. R: Oh, I see.
4. L: It is not convenient for talking, either.
5. J: *Um!*
6. M: Can't do any crazy things. Can't mess up everything.
7. L: Right *ah*. Turn the world all topsy-turvy.
  
1. L: 家裡好像有父母在，比較不能玩得那麼開心啊。
- [
2. J: 對啊。
3. R: 喔，這樣子。
4. L: 講話也不是很方便。
5. J: 嗯！
6. M: 也不能亂鬧，弄得亂七八糟得。
7. L: 對啊。翻天覆地。

Talk at McDonald's was viewed as "open" and "free" by young participants. Following are excerpts of the interviewees' accounts of how they viewed their talk at McDonald's in contrast to other social contexts, such as school.

I feel like at, at, at, when you are at McDonald's, because nobody knows each other; so when you come out here then you can have your meal on the one hand, as well as talk to your classmates like this (like the way we are doing) *ah*. It feels more open; and it is not, like when you are in school, or on, on the, on, on, on, on the bus like that. There you will have to care about, say, "*Ai-yo*, are we too noisy?". . . [At] McDonald's, say, however noisy you want to be, however rowdy, people won't interfere with you. ( C, 17 yr., female.)

我覺得在，在，在，你在麥當勞的話，因為大家都不認識嘛，那你

這樣出來的話，就可以一邊用餐，然後一邊又可以跟同學這樣聊天啊，比較放得開，不會說，像你在學校，或者在，在那個，在，在，在，在車上的話，那你還會顧慮到說，哎喲，我們這樣會不會太吵。... 麥當勞的話，你要怎麼吵，怎麼鬧，人家也不管你。

1. L: It's more . . . . No one makes restrictions *ah*.  
Whatever (you) think of, you say it. (L, 12 yr., female)
2. J: [ No one confines/restricts you. (It's) Free.
1. L: 就是比較- 沒有人限制啊，想什麼，就講什麼。
2. J: [ 沒有人限制啊，自由。
1. Q: *Um*, here talking is . . . . Even if (you) feel like *liao bei* [gossiping], no one would know it. (Q, 16 yr., female; S, 15 yr., female).
2. R: What? What?
3. Q: *Lai bei ah*. It means tattle-taling *la*. No one would know it.
4. S: [ Gossiping about others. Say anything at all, no big deal. Let off steam. . . .
5. Q: Yeah. To let off steam about one's own feelings. Then whoever you are not happy with *ah*, you just piss them off.<sup>8</sup> Like this. A whole lot *la*.
6. R: So here you can talk about . . .
7. S: [ Talk about anything.
1. Q: 噁，在這邊聊天的話，想要廖勃也不會被人家知道。
2. R: 什麼？什麼？
3. Q: 廖勃啊，就是打小報告啦。也不會被人家知道。
4. S: [ 講別人的閒話，盡量講沒關係，發洩一下。
5. Q: 對啊。發洩自己心情。然後看誰不爽啊，就罵啊，這樣子。很多啦。

<sup>8</sup> Other equivalent terms for "piss off" 罵 (lit. "scold") in Chinese can be translated into "rag on people" "get down on people" or "say a piece of our mind." These terms are suggested by Dr. Pease.

6. R: 所以在這邊可以講  
[  
7. S: 什麼事都可以講。

Observations also revealed that speech content was drawn from sources of adolescents' social world--both primary and secondary social contexts, as well as activities engaged in at that time. Information generated from the primary social context was related to school/ buxiban and the interlocutor's family. The secondary context included information obtained from the larger social context, media especially--fashion/sports magazines, comic books, movies, and soap operas, etc. For instance, news about celebrities, popular singers and movie stars were topics of interests to this sample.

Topics about school mostly focused on academic performance, parents' expectations of their performance, events that occurred among peers and the interlocutors' social relationships with peers and teachers, school activities both in the past and in the future. Talk about self could be intermixed within any topic. Topics about siblings with similar ages were mostly heard along with the subject of "school." Topics about parents and relatives, except parental expectations of participants' school performance, were shared once in a while in the participants' conversation. Group projects, sporadic discussions about school material, and plans for specific school or outing activities were also heard among young participants throughout their visit.

Side topics about the other sex, individuals of similar age, and school uniforms might be brought up with the immediate activities that the participants witnessed at the site.

The mode or **tone** of the talk associated with speech content about present occurring events was usually casual, easy, and relaxed. The intensity, pitch and intonation of talk varied depending on topics, time of visit, and the individuals' level of involvement in conversations. Observations and interviews revealed that not every participant spoke for the same amount of time, and on the same level of any given topic (These issues are discussed in the genre section.) Speech volume of interlocutors, commingled with clamorous music and noises, was very loud. Interlocutors employed high volumes of voice to override the overall sound in the room so that their messages could get across to their counterparts.

Talk was subject to the **norms** of interaction--behaving appropriately with participants in the context and to the norms of participating in conversation appropriately at different levels. Norms of appropriateness were governed by the cultural rules of who talked to whom in what manner, what degree of information one should disclose, and what kinds of information was appropriate to say and what was not (Hymes, 1972). In an interview with a group of sixteen and seventeen-year-old adolescents, comments on "being well-behaved in front of an outsider" 「在外人面前要斯

文一點」 and on “not to deviate too far from the topic” 「話題切不要切得太遠」 were heard (A, 17 yr., male). These two utterances signified the norm of appropriate behavior in front of an outsider. Members were warned by one of the group members when a topic went too far. In the same interview, while two members were comparing and arguing how their family prepared a special dinner for a festival, an older member of the group interrupted the two girls' conversation, saying “Don't deviate too far from the topic” to remind the girls to behave appropriately by not disclose too much in front of an outsider. Here is the dialogue of the group (See appendix F-3 for Chinese transcript):

1. D: But ours (our dinner) was not like yours cooked along with another (family).
2. E: We *na*, we *na* did cook with others. We had caterers prepared two tables for us *ah*. They were. . . .
3. D: [ It's not *ah*, it is *ah*, yours are kind of like, self. . . it's that kind of like . . . . *Ah* but ours is kind like, my sister-in-law they (cooked) upstairs *ah*, they cooked by themselves *ah*. Right, theirs were home cooked.
4. E: We had cooked by ourselves before.
5. R: That was. . .
6. C: *Ai-yo*, the big brother's gonna make a statement, *hi*, *hi*.
7. A: Do not deviate too far from the topic.
8. D: Ha, ha, ha.
9. A: (You) just, it's a little bit rushed *ba*.

When the norm of appropriateness in talk was violated in the public social context, it was viewed as “losing face” by adolescents. Talking “too loud” and not behaving oneself in front of others was viewed as violating the

norm of maintaining one's face. Instead of directly explaining what counted as "losing face," an informant threw a rhetorical question about what I thought of their behavior that I had observed before I interviewed them. She asked, "you were sitting next to us. Didn't you think we had lost quite a bit of our face already? (Girls giggling.) (Sitting) over here, giggling and chuckling. (chuckling.) So loud." 「剛你坐在旁邊，你不覺得我們已經夠丟臉的嗎？ (Girls giggling.) 在那邊嘻嘻，哈哈，(chuckling.) 那麼大聲。」 The comment of "losing one's face," when talking too loud in a public context, also signified how adolescents expected themselves to behave in this particular social setting.

The other norm revealed from the data was the norm of maintaining one's "image" in front of a group of people. This indicated the value of presenting a positive self by behaving oneself in front of people. "In front of so many people, (you) need to have some image" (A, 17 yr.) 「這麼多人面前，還是要有點形象。」

Norms of inclusion and participation during interviews were observed when members pointed out a member's quietness during interviews, i.e. "G: Silence of the Lamb (to H.). . . .G: In fact, she is not like this. (said to the researcher, and the rest of the group.)" 「 G : 沉默的羔羊。 . . . G : 她其實不是這個樣子的。」

In short, talk observed and discovered among adolescents' interaction

contained different types of interactional norms. Norms of interaction--losing face and maintaining one's image, signified how to present the "self" appropriately in front of others in a public social setting, and how the group relationship--both of ingroupness and outgroupness among interlocutors were strengthened when members were warned by their own peers. The calling of a member's attention to participate also indicated the norm of including all the others of the group.

### **Codes and Code-switching**

Code-switching conveys social meaning. "In some cases the social situation conditions the switch; in others it is the switch itself that provides the new social meaning to the verbal interaction." (Bauman and Sherzer, 1975, p.105). Blom and Gumperz (1986) categorized two types of code switching in their study of a Norwegian community: situational and metaphorical code switching. Situational code switching presumes "a direct relationship between language and the social situation" (p.424). Metaphorical code switching serves to redefine participants' role relationships with others such as formal/informal, official/personal, and serious/humorous (Blom & Gumperz, 1986) and conveys relational messages among participants" (Blom & Gumperz, 1986).

In this study sporadic code-switching occurred. This marked specific features of the adolescents interactions with one another. Languages







seems more formal” (X, 17 yr., male). This informant said that he used Taiwanese in an informal context among his male peers, i.e. among young men, but “not with young women.” When talking with girls, “it definitely is Mandarin” (See Appendix F-4 for Chinese transcript).

1. X: I feel if Taiwanese words are spoken in Mandarin, it is a bit strained.
2. U: [ Some stuff said in Taiwanese expresses the feeling [of the stuff]. Ah (if) you use Mandarin, that feeling just disappears.
3. X: It seems like that Taiwanese . . .
4. U: [ A friendly/closer feeling.
5. X: Could say that.
6. X: Speaking Mandarin . . . . It is closer to (your) heart when using Taiwanese *ah*. It is quicker. But when speaking in Mandarin, it's more, that kind of feeling, it seems more formal.
7. R: So what about if you talk with girls?
8. U: In Mandarin *ah*. (Immediately response.)
9. X: In Mandarin *ah*.
10. U: It is definitely in Mandarin *ah*.

In addition to the foregoing features, code-switching, from an ethnic perspective, conveyed one's ethnic identity of being a Taiwanese when it was used by a Taiwanese. In summary, situational code-switching served as a way of conveying one's emotional sentiment, while metaphorical code-switching marks gender differences for formal/informal occasions and on expression of one's ethnic identity.

### Genres

Genres, as verbal forms of speaking in adolescents' social world, reveal

specific forms of cultural talk by which members of a specific community organize their way of speaking (Bauman and Sherzer, 1975). Genres, as a conversational resource, reveal “significant information about a people’s world view, social institutions, and their social relations with one another . . . and thus serve a socializing function” (Poulsen, p.84-85, 1988). Moreover, genres also enable cultural members to display, enhance, and maintain individual identity as well as a shared sense of communal identity (Abrahams, 1968; Poulsen, 1988).

Previous researches affirm that genre resources vary in prominence depending on the situation within which genres are situated (Bauman, 1972; Leary, 1980; Poulsen, 1988). Speech genres discussed here were analytically categorized as “conversational” forms (Leary, 1980; Poulsen, 1988). Conversational genres abstracted from the data included joking talk, games, and discussion. Genres discussed in this section focused on the configuration of adolescent identity development, and how the presentation of “self” was displayed, enacted, and maintained in and through this form of sociable conversational talk.

### **Joking Talk**

Joking talk as an analytical category is one of the prominent genres revealed in interviews across all age groups. The content and forms were viewed as “playing” 「鬧、玩」, “fun” 「好玩」, “kidding” 「開玩笑」, and

“relaxing.” 「放鬆心情。」 Bauman and Sherzer (1975) found that words spoken in joking conveyed a metacommunicative messages that were interpreted not to be taken as seriously as what they might mean. Joking talk was interpreted as not being meant seriously.

Joking talk took the forms of **puns**, **teasing/taunting**, and **pranks**. Except for pranks, these forms of joking talk were embedded in a variety of speech forms, such as gossip, games, and news (Poulsen, 1988). Joking talk included a wide range of topics on individuals, participants’ physical attributes and behaviors, as well as hypothetical romantic relationships.

**Puns** were used to catch multiple meanings of words by shifting the denotative meaning toward connotative absurdity, e.g. “open”, “to honestly and sincerely disclose (to each other)” 「坦誠相見」, “We had done/had. . . before” 「我們曾經有過」, “New new youth” sounded like “ape youth” in Chinese. 「新新/猩猩人類」, “steady and solid” 「穩重」。 Participants used puns strategically to evoke wit and competition, as well as to create a playful atmosphere.

Act sequence of joking talk Interview data revealed that lines of joking talk occurred quickly and were either picked up or dropped by interlocutors anywhere in the talk. Frequency and length of joking talk varied among various groups. Length could range from a short line of cues to rapid turn-taking of collective jests on a specific target person or behavior. Sometimes

it went on for a few seconds, and lines were either dropped or resumed intermittently in later talk. This pattern was observed in mixed groups when boys and girls were joking with each others. For instance, the following were two examples of how participants went about joking with one of their group members. The first one was from a mixed group of sixteen and seventeen year olds. They were joking about one of the young men who was chubby. A short joking line--a pun mainly--was used through the quick and short joking practice. (R: the researcher; A, 17 yr., male; D & E, 16 yr., female.

Chinese transcript is located in appendix F-5a.)

1. R: What kinds of joking, you just said?
2. A: Um, like "being steady." (It is a pun describing a person who is chubby.)
3. D: Ah, "steady!" (Laughing and pointing at E.)
4. E: "Steady" is the word that we use to joke about him (B).
5. D: (Coughing purposely. The boys are pulling E's legs. And E kicks it back to B, whom they are joking to be "steady" and chubby.)
6. R: Steady and solid?
7. E: "Steady." (The word is emphasized in a short and heavy rhythm.)
8. R: Oh.

The second example was an excerpt from a twelve- and thirteen-year-old mixed group. When the boy (M, 13 yr.) was answering my question on when he felt like coming to McDonald's, the three young girls (L, J, K, 12 yr.) commented on his answer with a rapid succession of collective jests. (See appendix F-5b. for Chinese transcript).

1. R: O.K. Good. (You) just said when (you) feel good. Is it right? When is it that (makes you) feel good?



silence or new topics. Another form of terminating a joking act was when somebody was in an uncomfortable spot. The target person would directly request that the joking stop and change the subject. For instance, in a previous example of the talk on a group member's figure, the target person was switched to a sixteen-year-old young girl, E, when the interview question was about the jokers. E defensively requested to end the joking talk when she was the target of the talk. (See appendix F-5c for Chinese transcript.)

1. R: Is this a typical way that you guys play jokes on girls?
2. D: We do it to each other. (Laughing)
3. D: But it also depends on who is the funniest. For instance, she is: (laughing). She looks amusing so we joke about her.
4. E: I AM not a very funny person.
5. B: Just a typical funny person. That's all.
6. E: Let's not get into this. Pass.

In short, joking talk was a playful verbal form utilized in adolescent social lives. The sequence of joking talk entailed the formation of such talk and a shared joking relationship among the participants in this public informal social situation.

### **Teasing and taunting**

Teasing and taunting were enacted as forms of joking talk in adolescent conversation. Their form, content, frequency, and function varied from group to group. Common themes of teasing and taunting shared by adolescents included joking about members' unusual, deviated acts, one's violation of rules of participation, or one's boy/girl friends, (mostly hypothetical

ones). Forms of teasing and taunting contained questioning/requesting a target person to disclose personal information, improvising a hypothetical story of a dating scenario on a specific person, as well as making fun of a group member. The key of teasing was viewed as lightheartedness in a joking tone accompanied with chuckling.

An interview with twelve and thirteen year olds revealed that teasing and taunting were intertwined with the interview. The three twelve-year-old girls were classmates (J, K, L), and one thirteen-year-old boy (M), who was a sibling of L. M was invited by L, his sister, to the interview. The joking talk was on M, teasing about him and his hypothetical "girlfriend." The content was improvised during the interview. A sequential teasing and taunting cycle emerged from the data. The act of teasing and taunting cycle was found alternating with interviewing accounts: interviewing question-informants' answers-teasing or taunting. One of the girls (K) who was the boy's younger sister teased the boy about his hypothetical girl friend with the reference "you." "K: Otherwise we introduced our classmates (to you). Make you one (a girlfriend.) Give you both of them (as your girlfriends)."

「 K：要不然我們介紹我班的，泡個給你要不要，這兩個都送給你。」 "K: How many on earth do you have? Why don't (you) disclose it to us for a bit? It doesn't hurt to disclose for a bit." 「 K：你到底泡到幾個，爲什麼不跟我們大家宣佈一下呢？公佈一下也不會怎麼樣。」 The purpose of K's teasing was to



make M admit and disclose who the person was that he liked in front of the group so that it could create a fun-making atmosphere in the interview.

The other two girls called the boy “he” when they were talking to the group. They distanced themselves from the boy by calling him “he” and at the same time, to publicize the boy’s personal information to the group in front of an adult--the researcher--as a way of ridiculing the boy. “L: He always comes here with his chick during breaks.” 「 L : 他放假都約馬子來的。」 “L: There are forty-four (students) in his class. Only, forty-three of them are girls. All of them are his chicks.” 「 L : 他們班四十四。只有，四十三全部都是女生，全部都是他的馬子。」 The purpose of L’s taunting was to make fun, needle, or to ridicule the target person, M in this case, and to indirectly exclude him as an out-group member--boys vs. girls. It also indicated the violation of the norm of acceptable behavior -- M’s intrusion of being in the interview without notifying the other two girls in advance.

The fine line between teasing and taunting was differentiated by the ways that addressers addressed the boy, e.g. using pronouns “you” v.s. “he” , and by the purpose of speech content that female teasers intended to, e.g. making fun of the target person v.s. embarrassing the target. Most of the time, M responded by protecting or denying the girls’ teasing and taunting remarks: “Don’t do this /a. What are you up to do?” 「 M : 不要這樣啦，你們幹什麼？」 、 “Obviously she is the one who said that. I don’t care about

that at all. She's just like this." 「 M :明明是她講的，我跟本不會在乎，她就是這樣子。」 The researcher sometimes had to re-focus the group with interviewing questions, or probing terms emerging from teasing when repetitive teasing lines made the teased person speechless.

Teasing provided a pattern for ascertaining who likes whom, and acquiring self-disclosure in a lighthearted tone (Poulsen, 1988). It also served as a means of inclusion, acceptance, and liking among participants (Poulsen, 1988). Taunting, as a traditional verbal form, was used to isolate individuals who violated norms of acceptable behavior (Abrahams, 1968; Poulsen, 1988) Teasing and taunting reinforced the dynamics of group relations in terms of the norm of acceptable behavior. The contents of teasing and taunting also showed the adolescents' views of themselves in relation to their peers, their taken-for-granted heterosexual identity, and how they positioned themselves in front of their peers in the process of interaction within a social context. In short, teasing, in this instance, occurred in the familial group-- sister and brother whose biological relation served as a form of marking the boundary of in-groupness; while the other two girls' remarks on their friend's brother signified a way of distancing themselves from the boy as an out-group member.

### **Prank**

Pranks were reported by informants of 11 and 12 years old. Pranks

were enacted when the target person was absent or off guard at the scene, i.e. going to the restroom; wiping off ketchup under the table when servers were off guard. Store products, condiments and property were used as pranking resources to carry out the act. Pranks were viewed as “funny” 「好笑」; a particular target person was made fun of by other participants who conducted the prank. However, to those not participating, the pranksters’ behavior was judged with ethical remarks. Accidental mischievous events followed with a prank could dramatize the prankish effect and recreate another scenario among group members.

Informants J,K,L (female, 12 yr.) described a prank that occurred on one of their visits at a local McDonald’s. The prank occurred at the end of their meal. K went to the restroom. Her classmate, H.G.W. put ketchup into her coke when she was absent from the scene (See Appendix F-6a for Chinese transcript).

1. K: Oh, I know. It was like putting ketchup into my (other’s) (K chucked) . . .other’s, putting ketchup into other’s coke. While that person (I) went to the restroom, then. . . , while the person (I) went to the restroom, then all the ketchup was squeezed into the person’s (my) coke. And then, on purpose they make the person (me) drink it up. (L was chuckling while K was describing. K was smiling while talking.)
2. R: Did you do that *ah?* (Asked curiously)
3. L: H.G.W. (One of the girls’ classmates.)
4. K: He purposely (wanted to) made a person (me) have diarrhea (L chuckling). Ha, ha. And cream, and this, this, and the sweet-and-sour sauce. Putting all these into the person’s (my) coke. He made people drink it

so that they will have diarrhea to feel good/cool.

The purpose of the prank was to “make the target person have diarrhea” or to scare her away from the drink so that the player might feel good and that the audience might have fun at its most absurd. In this instance, the identities of the trickster and the target person were both known to the group. K, the target person, stopped the prank by taking the drink to the trash can. However, an accident occurred to K when she was on her way to the trash can--the drink poured all over the floor, which scared off K and the whole group of kids. “Afraid” of being caught, K dumped the tray into a trash can and realized that a server was standing nearby (See appendix F-6b for Chinese transcript).

1. L: It's like at that time her coke already has ketchup in it.  
She didn't dare to drink it. She wanted to throw it  
away. It was too heavy, so it spilt out.
2. K: Then, the tray seemed, seemed
3. L: [ threw it into the trash  
can. (Saying and chuckling simultaneously.)
4. M: Ah! (falling tone)
5. K: My tray was thrown into the trash can. It should have  
been placed on the top, right. I dumped it into the  
trash can.
6. L: Ha, ha, ha.
7. M: *Ah-ya*, you are really something else *oh--*,
8. R: [ Then, what did (you) do?
9. K: Then I quickly ran away. As soon as I threw it away, I  
ran. Then, that server was too stupid to see it.

Violating the regulated organizational dining rules --not putting the tray where

it was supposed to be, and being able to get away with it without being caught by a server nearby, created a sense of hilarity about the luck of not being caught. The episode became an amusing experience shared by the group, and the adult server's unresponsiveness was commented on as "that server was too stupid to see it."

Pranks restructured a hierarchical peer relation among the players; both the prankster and the target person (Poulsen, 1988). In the first prank, the purpose was to make fun of a specific member of the group. The prankster was one-up, and the target person one-down. As for the second prank, "role inversions" of the adolescents as pranksters, and the server as the pranked created a sense of success. The luck of the young participants in violating the organizational rule functioned as a means of indirectly challenging the server, who symbolized an organizational authoritative figure (Poulsen, 1988).

### **Games**

Games were the second prominent conversational genre among adolescent talk. Games were framed as "playing," and incorporated both written and verbal codes. They were formulated hypothetically to project a person's personality, ability of handling one's finances, foretelling one's future, interpersonal relations and/or the appearance of one's future partners, etc. There were various kinds of games. The most common games that

circulated among the adolescents were games with written numeral signs on a sheet of paper; such as that of one's hand-writing in numbers from 1 to 10, or filling in slots with written signs/symbols of some specific individual names.

The sequence of a game usually started with a person who took the lead and at least one acted as being analyzed. The person who led the game would give instructions and interpret the signs when the other had done the writing. The rest of the members functioned as an audience observing the game. There was silence among the audience while the game proceeded. The following game was an example recounted in an interview. The game was named "psychological test" by the players. There were five informants A, B, C, D, and E. C was the person who led the game; D the player; A, B, and E formed the audience. R was the researcher. The game started with a short instruction. The player, D followed the instructions. When an interpretation was given, comments or joking remarks were made by the group or by the player him-/herself on the interpretative messages. Negative comments were given in a lighthearted tone as an intentional put-down to tease the analyzed when the outcome of analysis was positive. Positive or complimentary comments were given by peers when the outcome was negative to console the person. Double put-downs of a negative analysis were viewed as an intentional motive of making fun at the player, or

framed as “playing”. Validity of the projection was asked about during or after the game (See Appendix F-7 for Chinese transcript). (B, 17 yr, male; female: C, 18 yr, D & E 16 yr.) .

1. R: As you were just saying, how do you go about conducting your psychological test?
2. D: Well, I ask a question *ah*, and you give me an answer.
3. B: [ Right *ah*.
4. D: [ And then, sometimes you can accumulate points, all right? Say, you answer this question, you get a point, then you add them up.
5. B: [ Well, basically (we) do not play that game here so much because we have to jot down a lot of numbers. (Chuckles) (We) usually play some easier ones.
6. C: [ Easier ones, which won't be that complicated.
7. R: Hey, would you mind demonstrating one for me?
8. E: How about that last one? Is it O.K.?
9. B: “Riding in the Vanguard”? No *le*.
10. D: [ We have already played it once. . . .
11. B: [ Last one was on “written num-.”
12. C: [ One to ten.
13. B: [ Yeah, yeah.
14. R: Then what?
15. D: Then you start testing *ah*.
16. B: [ Yeah, one, one is . . . *ah*.
17. D: [ (You) check each person's hand-

writing, like that.

18. B: [ Say, the number "1," the more straight it gets written, it symbolizes a righteous character. Right? If it's 2, then:, and then, l. . . .
19. D: That's O.K. That's O.K. Here, you can test mine. I'll write mine down.
20. D: I couldn't remember them all.
21. E: I have never done this before.
22. R: Come on, you guys go ahead.
23. B: If not 2. Is it O.K. to explain this right now?
24. C: You've never played it before?
25. E: SHE'S (D) never play it.
26. R: You've never play it!
27. D: "1" (D is anxious to play the game.)
28. A: She, She is the one who brought this up. (Pointing at C)
29. E: Yeah.
30. C: You write, you write your numbers down on that line. Just write in Arabic numerals from one to ten.
31. B: Hey, your "1" is in the wrong place.
32. D: I didn't hear it *ah*.
33. C: You just go ahead and write, just write the way that you usually do with the numbers. Then, (we) analyze it. (D passed her writing to C for analysis.) Ha, Ha. "1" is, say the more straight you wrote your "1", indicating the more independent the person you are, instead of, you know, being too dependent on others. And your "2", "2", say, the more parallel it looks, if it is parallel with this line, it indicates you're not interested in sex. (Suddenly C lowered her volume.) Number "3", you separate the numeral in the middle into two parts. It tells you about your dad in the top half, your mom in the bottom half *ma*--which one you like better.
34. D: So, which one (do you think) that (I) love (more)? (D interrupts.)
35. C: 50-50 *ah*. (C answers immediately.) You feel about an equal amount of attachment to both your dad and mom in your heart.
36. R: Is it accurate?
37. C: (I am) not sure.
38. E: Not sure.



39. D: I don't know.
40. C: Well, you're the one who wrote it *ah*.
41. C: (Kept moving to #4.) Then, with this one you check the top of the number. It tells you about your interpersonal relationships. The wider the top is, it demonstrates that you have better interpersonal relationships, right? (C ask D.)
42. D: The way you described it seems right.
43. A: Yeah, she's the one who's always going "Hey, hey," yells the loudest. (A is laughing.)
44. C: (Talked to D.) It's up to you (how you would put it) *ah*. Next, # 5, #5, #5, you check the bottom of its tail. The rounder it looks, the more handsome your other half is going to be.
45. C or D: [ Handsome.
46. C: *Aha--*, that is sure ugly *oh*. (Girls all laugh loudly.)
47. A: That's too mean *ma!*
48. D: (to A) It makes no difference whether it's a boy or girl.
49. C: Yeah, yeah. Then # 6, you look at the junction. If the junction gets tighter, it indicates that you have a much, much, much better concept of handling your finances.
50. D: (In this case,) I don't think I have that ability *ah*.
51. B: If you pass the point, then you will become a "paper rooster." (Meaning "become broke.")
52. C: Some people's "6" goes like this, half finished, right, which indicates that (they) spend a lot of money. Next, "7", nobody can explain what "7" means. *Um*, "8", you check here. The tighter you write the number, it demonstrates that you have a better ability to keep a secret.
53. D: To do what?
54. B & C: To keep secrets.
55. C: Besides (you) really are good at keeping secrets. Next one, "9". "9" you observe this part. The line here. The longer it is, it indicates that your future partner will be taller.
56. E: Wow, he's definitely gonna be real tall *oh*.
57. C: [ His body. It looks like his body might be tall and slender.
58. D: But, (it seems) he'll still be ugly, *oh!*
59. C: Though he'll look ugly, at least he'll be tall.

60. E: He'll definitely be tall *ah!*
61. C: Now "10", "10" says. If the number is closer to this line, it demonstrates that you have a steadfast personality. (You) won't get excited or agitated easily.
62. D: So. (Pointing at E)
63. C: O.K.
64. D: (To E) What's that attitude *ma?*
65. C: Well, it all depends on you whether you think these (predictions) are accurate or not *la.*
66. D: I don't know. I'll have to wait till I'm married before I'd be able to know about my partner *la.*
67. C: This is how the game goes *ah.* There are also some other games that we have played.

During the game, group members' interruptions revealed the degree of their participation as an audience. Their verbal comments and playful remarks on the predicted individual served as an inclusionary functions of the group's relationships. The content of the game conveyed a contemporary adolescents' world view of "self" and the ideal social world that one wanted to be in. An ideal "self" was to be viewed as an "independent" person who was "sexually competent," "had a better concept of handling finances," "had a better ability to keep a secret," and most of all, "had a steadfast personality." Regarding the ideal "self's" social relationship, the person was expected to "have good interpersonal relationships" with friends, have "an equal amount of attachment to both [one's] dad and mom" in family relations, and the future partner was expected to be "handsome," as well as "tall."

Ideal societal values at being an individual self were conveyed throughout the interpretation of the game. "Independence," "family

relationships,” “interpersonal relationships,” “future partner’s figure and appearance,” “one’s finances,” and reliable “personality” all counted as significant elements for a self in the social world of the adolescents that the study observed. In summary, the view of “self” found in the playing form of “games” encompassed features of western concepts of the self and eastern values of being a person in relation to the larger social context, as it was seen in this analysis.

### **“Discussion”**

Talk referring to “discussion” focused on issue-oriented forms about a certain specific subject. Group discussion about an outing project, school/buxiban assignments, specific personal problems, school projects, or holiday plans were typical subjects often heard among adolescents. The goal of “discussion” was to plan collaboratively for a specific event in the upcoming future. Discussions on outing projects like “school association” 「學校聯誼」 were held by high school students or college students. The criteria of a social outing was for participants to include both boys and girls, i.e. one was from an all-boys’ school, the other from an all-girls’ school. Outing activities were social-oriented meetings organized by students themselves. Such occasions were held in the beginning and end of the semester, holiday breaks, weekends, at the end of mid-terms/finals, or close to some high school anniversary. Project organizers met at McDonald’s or other fast food

franchises to discuss the details of an outing activity. The organizers were representatives of each group with a leader-like person in each group moderating the discussion. The leader-like persons conducted most of the discussion; others listened and chimed in once in a while.

The content of discussion included finding a location through group discussion, choosing the activities, and discussing any related technical issues, e.g. “go to Wu-Lai, or Turtle Mt.” 「去烏來、龜山」, “As for camping. . . it depends on the numbers of freshmen participants”, 「辦露營的話，. . . 因為要看新生人數是多少」, “As for us, we have 23 people”. 「我們這邊的話是二十三人」。 Discussion form was similar to conversational talk-- turn-taking among discussants. Joking talk and retrospective personal stories relating to the topic under discussion were intermixed with the discussion. When the amount of story telling, joking talk, as well as gossiping about boys and girls overrode the content of discussion, it indicated a time for the closure of the discussion.

Outing projects were viewed as social events in which adolescents extended their social life besides school. The form of discussion and activities served as an opportunity for adolescents to facilitate and organize a social events with their own peers. Thus, this presented themselves as competent cultural members who incorporated cultural, social and personal information as communication resources within their social world.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has described, analyzed and interpreted data obtained from observations and interviews. Analysis was focused on the patterns of recurrent events which occurred at the research site by using principally the components of the SPEAKING from the Ethnography of Communication. A description of the research field was presented in the beginning of the section. This was followed by a discussion the major categories of communicative events, features and themes. Salient events included (A) "ordering food", (B) "looking for seats", (C) "dining", (D) "studying/reading", (E) "meeting with friends/waiting for friends", (F) "leave-taking", and (G) "Talking." Analysis of occurrences of code switching, and the structure and function of genres were also presented as part of the findings in this chapter.

## Chapter V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter illustrated the speech community of fast food culture in downtown Taipei. It also discussed the emic views of McDonald's significance in the adolescent social world. With regard to the notion of "self," a specific model of the urban adolescent identity was developed, negotiated, and enacted in and through their patterned uses of speech within specific speech situations. This chapter also synthesized the negotiation of adolescent identity in relation to the larger context-- the McDonald's organization and the two cultural traditions--at the juxtaposition of the East and the West. Finally, both the significance and limitation of this study as well as a summary of the study's implication for future research were addressed at the end of this chapter.

#### **Speech community of the fast food culture in Taiwan**

It was a reflexive process to identify the presence of dimensions of a speech community in the study of fast food culture. Speech community presumes the basis of description as a social, rather than linguistic, entity (Hymes, 1972). Speech community is not exactly equated with a group of people who speak the same language, nor share a common geographical

boundary (Saville-Troike, 1988); rather, it is an analyst's discovery and description of the degree by which a group of speakers share aspects of linguistic variation, communication rules and norms, as well as meaning (Braithwaite, 1991).

The use of linguistic features in connection with references to the functions of McDonald's manifests itself in how the role of McDonald's was perceived and interpreted by adolescents. "Getting some food at McDonald's *ah*." 「麥當勞吃個東西啊。」 (T, 16 yr. female.) "Come to McDonald's and have a drink *ah*." 「來麥當勞喝個飲料啊。」 (B, 17 yr. male.) "It's like sometimes when boys and girls want to talk about things, it is not convenient at school. Then usually (they) meet at McDonald's, this kind of fast food." 「像有時候男生、女生談事情，那學校不方便，那通常都約麥當勞，這種速食店。」 (U, 17 yr. male) "McDonald's is a very good meeting place." 「麥當勞是一個很好的集合地點。」 (C, 18 yr. female.) "Where to go after eating at McDonald's?" 「吃完麥當勞要去哪？」 (K, 12 yr. female).

McDonald's was perceived among adolescents as a socializing locale separated from the normative routines at school and at homes.

Linguistic features were also used to indicate the atmosphere of the site as "comfortable," "convenient" and with "care-free"; characteristics of a comfortable sociable place that the urban youth could relate to. Participants commented that "the facilities of McDonald's are mainly as comfortable, and

convenient. . . .” 「麥當勞它的設備就是以舒適，比較方便為主，. . . .」

“. . . [at] McDonald’s, say, however noisy you want to be, however rowdy, people won’t interfere with you.” 「. . .麥當勞的話，你要怎麼吵，怎麼鬧，人家也不管你。」 (C, 18 yr. female) At McDonald’s, the sense of being “free,” “comfortable,” and not being interfered by other people was transformed and framed as being “noisy” and “rowdy” by the adolescents themselves. With such an image of what McDonald’s meant to them, members of the fast food community were able to perform the appropriate behavior in accordance to their view of the setting.

In addition, the degree of membership that an adolescent was involved in the fast food speech community conveyed familiarity with the linguistic name of the fast food restaurant and a preference for its products.

“McDonald’s” was translated, known and spoken of as “麥當勞” (mai dang lao) in Mandarin, the official language in Taiwan. Even though there were other dialects spoken and languages learned by adolescents, participants usually referred to McDonald’s as “麥當勞” and its products in Mandarin, i.e.

“Cheeseburger” as “吉事漢堡” (gi shih han bao), McNugget as “麥香雞塊” (mai xing ji kuai).

Teenage participants of the fast food speech community were able to identify categories of food products in Mandarin and to perform their communication within this fast food context. For example, informants



expressed their preferences of products in Mandarin and were able to make comments on the quality of the food. “I like McDonald’s fries.” “I don’t like McDonald’s hamburgers.” Membership of this fast-food speech community were discovered from their knowledge about the products, and their competence in ordering food with a specific language form--Mandarin.

A joke about food ordering at McDonald’s, heard during the initial period of data analysis, reflected how the degree of membership was manifested through the participants’ linguistic knowledge and performance capacity. This story was told by a Chinese student at a Chinese student party in a Northwest city of the United States. The joke was about miscommunication pertaining to ordering food in Mandarin and Taiwanese. It occurred between an elder customer and a young counter service person. The elder customer was a grandma who spoke Taiwanese. She came with her grandchild for breakfast at McDonald’s. The child made the order in Mandarin and grandma paid for the food. They ordered egg muffins. The counter person asked them “do (you) want to add eggs?” (yao bu yao jia dan) 「要不要加蛋？」 The child then addressed his “grandma” in Taiwanese and followed with this term “with eggs” in Mandarin: “Granny, with eggs?” (a ma , jia dan?) 「阿媽,加蛋？」 Grandma nodded her head, responded in Taiwanese “O.K. Wait here (hao, jia dan)” 「好, 這兒等。」 When the transaction was done, the counter person passed the food and said “with eggs” (gia-dan) 「加蛋」

and was ready to serve the next customer. But the grandma did not seem to know it was time to leave. The child said to her “Granny, let’s go.”

「阿媽，走啦！」 Grandma said immediately “Didn’t he/she say ‘wait here.’ Where else do we wait?” 「他/她不是說『這兒等，(jia dan)』不然去哪等？」

The grandson’s line of “Granny, with eggs?” (a ma, jia dan?) 「阿媽，加蛋？」 was meant as an inquiry relating to the grandparent’s preference for adding eggs in the muffin. But the grandma interpreted it in Taiwanese as “wait here.” This was how miscommunication occurred. Communicating in Mandarin was the rule for ordering food at the counter. The norm of being a customer was to know how to order in Mandarin and be familiar with the name of products. The joke indicated that the grandson, a member of the fast food community, was able to discern the interactive rule by using the shared language--Mandarin, whereas the grandparent, who spoke Taiwanese but not Mandarin, did not know about the rule of interaction as evidenced when the grandson asked her to leave. The miscommunication between the three indicated the non-membership of the grandparent in the speech community of fast food culture, whereas both the server and the grandson’s ability to interpret the shared rules of interaction through the terms of McDonald’s products revealed their membership within the speech community. It was use of a particular language--Mandarin and the participants’ way of communication in the fast food context that marked

membership in the speech community.

Moreover, the understanding developed by the person telling the story and the audience of the content, and the punch-line also served as an indicator of their being part of the community, even though they were physically on the other hemisphere far from Taiwan. Thus, those who told and listened to the joke could be viewed, to some extent, as members of the speech community in McDonald's in Taiwan, regardless of geographic boundaries.

### **Significance of McDonald's in Adolescent Social World**

This section discusses the significance McDonald's served in the adolescent social world. Based upon the descriptive analysis of observational and interview data in the previous chapter, findings revealed that this McDonald's served multiple functions and roles in the adolescent social world. McDonald's was viewed as a social, dining, and studying locale where adolescents used as a meeting place to "talk", "eat", "study", "take a break", "use free facilities", "have a date", and "escape from the weather."

As a customer interviewee described:

[McDonald's] is a place for gathering, for studying, for meeting people, for dating. It's similar to, other than school, the rest . . . , really. When you need to inter-, interact and communicate with other people, then you can come to McDonald's and hang around (speeding up this sentence). Reading and talking. Usually the

first thought that comes up is “fast food,” “McDonald’s,” “to find a place to sit,” to have a drink, and to talk. (Z, 17 yr., male.)

[麥當勞]是一個聚會的場所，是一個念書的場所，是一個與人家約會，約的場所，等於是上學以外，其它真的，你需要跟人家交，交流，溝通，就可以到麥當勞坐一坐 (speeding up this sentence)。看書帶聊天，大家通常第一個念頭「速食店」、「麥當勞」、「找個地方坐一坐」，喝杯飲料，聊聊天。(Z, 17 yr.)

The various functions of McDonald’s in adolescent life were embedded in the cultural, social, and environmental influences in relation to the urban youth’s life-style. Eating, along with other social or commercial activities, was one of the typical recreational activities for city people. For teenagers especially, eating and shopping were frequently combined. While they were out shopping or browsing through windows, a stop at the fast food restaurant made for some form of refreshment. In addition to the cleanliness of the restaurant, the convenience of the food, and the quality of the service were other potential attractions that drew young consumers to eat at McDonald’s or other Westernized fast food chains.

Moreover, the nature of the Chinese educational system has also generated a unique function for the establishment of fast-food culture in Taiwan: It has created a place to “study”. Places for studying and relaxation were difficult to find, especially in populated downtown Taipei. McDonald’s offered students a place to study. It was common to see teenagers in school uniforms studying with friends at a local air-conditioned fast food restaurant.

One could stay with a cup of Coke as long as one wanted, and did one's schoolwork without the pressure and interruption from one's siblings and parents. Many school students experienced pressure from both their schoolwork and their parents' expectations for them to succeed educationally. Thus, fast food restaurants such as this McDonald's, acted as a buffer, serving as a place for the teens to study and temporarily to escape from such pressures.

Another significant function of McDonald's was its "convenience." It was the quick and easy dining style that fast food restaurant served for adolescents as well as for business people.

C: In fact, I think, it should be said that it's not only popular among young people, but also among office people. First, it is convenient to have meals at any time. It's fast food that ordered. "Fast" food ma.

C: 其實，我是覺得，應該算，不只年青人歡迎，連上班族都很歡迎。第一個，用餐時間，很方便，要點的東西是速食，「速食」的嘛。

Fast food was popular with adolescents and office people, and viewed as "convenient"; it was "convenient" to buy at any time of the day. To urbanites, to be "convenient" was a way of saving time, which was a crucial element in their busy daily schedule. In this respect, fast food had helped to shape the dietary habits of inner-city residents of Taiwan.

In addition, the "price" was considered as economical between "typical restaurants" and "traditional vendors." As one informant had observed, it

was affordable for young people, “especially for those who [were] not in a good economic condition.”

M4: Fast food *ah*. Fast *ah*, convenient, delicious, and (you) can sit for a long time. I think it [McDonald’s; fast food] is between “traditional vendors” *ah*, “traditional vendors” and the typical restaurants. There is room for its adjustment. So it sure be very popular among young people. Especially to those who are not in a good economic condition. This is my personal viewpoint *la*. Maybe including me, I also make the same choice to come to this kind of fast food restaurant.

M4: 速食啊，快速啊，方便，美味，又可以坐很久，我覺得它是介於「傳統的小吃」啊，就是「傳統小吃」跟一般的餐廳之間，它可以做取捨的地方，所以它會很受年輕人歡迎。特別是年輕人在他們沒有足夠的經濟能力的狀況下，這是我個人認為的啦。也許包括我自己，我也會類似選擇這種速食店。

The purpose for frequenting the typical Chinese restaurants were different from frequenting the fast food restaurants. The primary purposes for patronizing a typical Chinese restaurant were to have meals with family or friends, or to socialize with friends while attending to business transactions. “Typical restaurants” were small business run by individuals or families. There were two types of such restaurants. The first type usually served communal meals for family or groups, and catered mostly to grown-ups. Customers came at specific lunch/dinner hours; seldom did customers linger around in the restaurant after their meal. Food was ordered at the table and served by the restaurant’s staff. Besides enjoying the food, other activities such as studying, playing games, or spending long hours with friends in the

restaurant were not frequently observed. Restaurants such as these were viewed by adolescents as higher-cost dining locales when compared with the less expensive and thus more economical prices of fast food restaurants.

The second type of a "typical Chinese restaurant" was "the food stand." The food stand was run by street vendors with very limited room to conduct business transactions between the vendors and the customers. The street vendors were found in neighborhoods or in any commercial area. Adolescents frequented them at lunch time or used them as a temporary stop for a meal before leaving for other destinations as soon as the meal was through.

During interviews, participants also identified the atmosphere at McDonald's as "comfortable." For instance, informant C commented that the feeling of dining at McDonald's was very comfortable. Its setting and arrangement were not "snobbish" and made customers feel a sense of ease.

C: I, basically, think the facility of McDonald's is mainly based on the criteria of comfort, and convenience. . . . It is not too fussy, say "ai-ya, here, . . .so. . . it is always like this, so run-down." All in all, there is a sense of comfort. That's it.

C: 我覺得基本上，麥當勞它的設備就是以舒適，比較方便為主，. . . ，它也不會去講求說，「唉呀，這邊，好，總是這樣子，破破爛爛」，都很舒服那種感覺就對了。

In addition to "convenient" and "comfortable," dining at McDonald's was

described as “free,” like “dining at one’s home.” As long as “one [did] not act too weird,” one could freely eat and talk, and not worry about table manners and being interrupted.

R: You just mentioned “feel comfortable.” Could you please describe your feelings of eating here?

D: Very free.

(Silence, 6 seconds.)

C: I feel it’s like dining at one’s home *oh*.

...

B: As long as you do not act too weird.

C: Anyway, it’s . . . *ah* when you are here, it doesn’t matter you. . . . Eat whichever way you like, using hands, or whatever. Anyway, people don’t bother you *ah*.

R: 你剛剛說的「舒服的感覺」，就是你能不能描述一下你們在這邊的感覺？用餐？

D: 很自由。

(Silence, 6 seconds)

C: 我覺得好像在家裡吃東西喔，

...

B: 不要太標奇立異就好。

C: 反正就-，啊你在這邊，你不管你-，隨便你怎麼吃，用手吃，用幹嘛，反正人家也不會管到你啊。

Culturally speaking, the advent of McDonald’s in Taiwan symbolized the presence of Western culture-- the U.S. mostly. “Free-spiritedness” of Western life was admired among the adolescents. Coming to McDonald’s was associated with the sense of being “free” and “open”, in contrast to school restrictions, the heavy duty of schoolwork and parental expectations.

The category of “fun/happy” was widely observed and revealed in interview data when informants reported their time spent with their peers at



McDonald's--mostly "talking" with friends (See Chapter IV). The enactment of a series of communicative events conveyed a playful mode of talk. Joking talk, and conversational talk were constantly heard during adolescents' visits on the site. Speech forms, messages, code-switching and tones animated the meaningful moments of the young people with their peers.

The last category was "relaxation." One of the typical functions that McDonald's provided was "a place where people can take a rest" when one was tired, or when one's feet were sore after hours of shopping. "What it [McDonald's] brings to us is, one thing that is 'relaxation'; a place where people can take a rest." 「它帶給人家的就是，一樣就是『放鬆心情』，讓人家休息的地方。」 (Q, 16 yr. female). Primary school and junior high students came to McDonald's when they were "in a good mood," when they were "feeling happy/great," or to "get rid of the pressure in studying"-- to relax.

Moreover, McDonald's also provided "part-time" jobs for youths. This signified a different dimension of McDonald's roles in young employees' social and working contexts. For the young employees, McDonald's not only offered a foretaste to economic independence, but also provided a joyfui working and learning environment for self-growth, as well as interpersonal communication skills.

M4: Part-timing is not only for. . . , first, I think McDonald's provides a more, more, it's "more", not "absolute," more

joyful atmosphere. . . . I think going out and having a part-time job is a job which makes you grow, and which also brings other benefits: making friends, and then making money, and self-development. Not to make you feel life is boring, and to kill your mornings. I think this is. . . , say if it is from my own perspective, surely I will choose such a way to lead my life.

M4: 打工不外就是爲了，第一個，我覺得麥當勞可以跟一個比較，比較，是「比較」，不是「絕對」，比較歡樂的氣氛。 . . . 我覺得去外面做一份 part-time 的工作，是一份讓你成長，而且就是有一些附帶的好處：認識朋友，然後有錢，然後成長，不會讓你生活至於枯燥，又可以消遣你早上的時間。我覺得這是，如果說以我一個角度的話，我當然會選擇這樣子的方式去過我的生活。

1. R: Such as you came here to get a part-time job, then say from your perspective, how do you think, say, young people working as part-timers in such restaurants, how do you think, is it good or not?

2. U: I think it sort of good /a. . . Money (short and fast), no, actually honestly speaking, students do not need too much money. Money is the second issue. What counts as the most important things is to make some friends ah. Then, to expand interpersonal, interpersonal relationships.

1. R: 像來這邊就是你來這邊打工嘛，那就是就你的，你的看法，你覺得就是說，你覺得年輕人在這種速食店打工，你覺得有什麼，你覺得好不好？

2. U: 我是覺得應該算是不錯啦， . . . 錢 (short and fast)，不，其實說真的啦，學生並沒有要非常多的錢，錢可能是擺在其次，最重要是說，啊認識一些朋友啊，然後拓展人際，人際關係。

This urbanized fast food context exhibited underlying cultural changes. The emergence of such a social context that was “convenient,” “comfortable,” “free,” “fun/happy,” and “relaxed” signified that McDonald’s has become popular and welcome to the life-style of Taiwan’s youths.

Working part-time in a joyful environment where adolescents made friends and learned about communication skills signified a shift in youth lifestyles. There were more and more adolescents, both young women and men, entering the job market as part-time employees in their free time. This led to a new dimension of adolescent social life that functioned as a transitional stage from the primary social context, such as family and school, to the secondary context-- a broader field where they extended their social knowledge. For the youths interviewed, McDonald's appeared to provide a healthy, joyful, and free environment to enlarge their social experience. This was a new trend as a result of Taiwan's urbanization, Westernization, and modernization.

### **Adolescent identity**

The formation and manifestation of adolescent identity enacted through communicative symbols within a trans-cultural context was another focus of this study. I examined the data, focusing how adolescent identity was symbolically developed, negotiated, and enacted communicatively relating to presentation of "self" that emerged from the data in this speech situation. This section addressed the prominent clusters. These clusters cut through the layers of cultural, societal/ organizational, individual, as well as situational realms. Participants made sense of their world, and demonstrated their view

of self in a complicated multi-layered relational web within their social environment. Both verbal and nonverbal codes were used with selected others in the speech situations at McDonald's. Various aspects of "self" presentation were found in adolescent communication patterns--they were (1) freedom vs. restriction, (2) gender identity, and (3) individual competence. A particular model of personhood was discovered in speech situations within the McDonald's -- a happy, free, open, and relaxed adolescent who temporarily retreated from structured institutional settings, such as school and family. The selves were heterosexually oriented; adolescents were competent to communicate and present themselves to others politely and nicely through verbal and nonverbal symbols within this particular trans-cultural public social context.

#### Freedom vs. Restriction

A major salient characteristic of personhood that emerged from patterned adolescent speech practices was the sense of freedom vs. restriction in this particular speech situation. Adolescent identity was presented as "free," "playful," "relaxed," and "fun" within their groups. This "free" sense of self was expressed through the unrestricted time spent in the setting, the stream of talk about "whatever one pleases" without interference by any on-lookers at the site, and speech forms enacted in the context. At one level, the "free" self was closely contextualized within the atmosphere

that the franchise exhibited: background music created a lighthearted dining ambiance, and the comfortable dining environment promoted a sense of ease.

In addition, the “free” social-oriented self was displayed through adolescent speech practices. Speech forms, such as “joking talk” and games (see genres analysis Chapter IV) revealed the sense of playfulness, lightheartedness, and fun within the social context as a way of connecting the “self” to the “other” within groups.

Code-switching as a form of verbal interaction was also implemented within group interactions. Participants either strategically or habitually exchanged verbal codes using Mandarin and Taiwanese. The diverse communicative contents and forms that adolescents employed to the speech situation enabled participants to release from social demands and pressures, such as schoolwork and exams, competition for college, and part-time work.

The “free” self was also discovered when compared and contrasted with the normative rules prescribed within the relatively serious social contexts with authorities at home, and at school (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). Having a spirit of “openness,” and “rowdiness” at McDonald’s contrasted with the inability to “turn the world all topsy-turvy” at home demonstrated the difference between McDonald’s and the contexts of school and parental authorities. Csikszentmihalyi & Larson’s study (1984) on adolescents’ social

interaction also found similar results on adolescent socialization:

“When students were asked when they enjoy themselves most, many chose to talk about times when they were having fun with a group of friends, apart from adults. Again and again, they described these occasions in terms of ‘being rowdy,’ being loud, crazy, and wild.” (p.167).

Adolescents in this speech situation enjoyed themselves by spending time with friends. This functioned as a time-out from the demands of their daily institutional contexts--school and family.

Furthermore, the symbolic meaning of a “free” self generated, enacted, and negotiated in and through the cultural juxtaposition of Eastern and Western traditions was configured by the symbolic setting-- an Americanized fast-food restaurant. Fast-food culture symbolized a “free,” “open,” and “relaxing” self derived from the tradition of the West. That Taiwan’s adolescents frequented the locale and spent a great amount of their leisure time indicated the changing life-style of the youths, and reflected the role of fast food franchises served in young people’s social world.

In addition, restrictions on “self” were observed from the mechanical process of the food ordering sequence, dining rules, and servers’ on-site supervision regulated by the franchisee in the fast food culture. Customers were expected to be in lines when ordering food. Even though food from outside and card-playing were restricted in the restaurant, competent customers would strategically hide their food or cards. Cultural shifts to a

modernized dining locale and a Westernized diet were reflected in customers' rule-following and violating behaviors, such as in smoking, card-playing, and bringing in food purchased outside. These three things had occurred constantly. The violations of the rules, to some degrees, exposed cultural conflict between the "free" sense of self and the "self" being restricted. However, the incongruity and incompatibility of restriction by organizational rules and norms needed to be contextualized so that we could better understand how members perceived the trend of changes.

### Gender Identity

In this study, adolescent identity was found to be heterosexually oriented. Participants often referred to their future romantic partners as belonging to the other sex in interviews; this indicated their heterosexuality. Gender identity is one of the primary features of adolescent development (Coleman, 1974; Erikson, 1968; Josselson, Greenberger, & McConochie, 1977; Thorbecke & Grotevant, 1982). The communication pattern of adolescent gender identity of Taiwan's adolescents was found to be parallel with the developmental attributes of adolescence in their social world as adolescents entering adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Thornbecke and Grotevant, 1982; Poulsen, 1988). However, specific forms of displaying gender identity were discovered to be culturally embedded from observations and interviews. Subjects of homosexuality was seldom heard of by the researcher in

discourse during the course of the study. Heterosexual identity, largely taken-for-granted as observed from the participants' interaction, was heard throughout their speech practices. Topics of participants' future romantic partners were given in joking forms, such as jokes, teasing, taunting, etc., to indicate one's sexual identity. Becoming involved in romantic relationship with the other sex showed relative advancement and mastery of one's heterosexual identity and autonomy. This indicated a man's manliness, and a woman's womanliness.

Another form of affirming one's gender identity was manifested through verbal interactions between young men and young women when they got together. To maintain a civil image as a heterosexually oriented individual in the presence of the other sex, young male adolescents, for instance, would strategically switch linguistic codes from Taiwanese -- a local dialect, to Mandarin, the standardized language. Code-switching was consciously applied, especially by young men who were aware of their manners in the presence of their counterparts. Besides, both sexes became more reserved in front of each other than as opposed to their same sex group members.

#### Individual competence

Personal competence is one of the major components to the development of adolescent identity. Personal competence refers to the capacity of functioning across individual, interpersonal, and social dimensions.



The expression of self discovered in this study comprised two aspects of this attribute: (1) the competence in interpersonal behavior, (2) self-control.

### *Competence in Interpersonal Behavior*

Presenting the self as competent in interpersonal behavior is one of the significant features in the formation of adolescent identity (Josselson, Greenberger, & McConochie, 1976; Newman, 1976; Thorbecke & Grotevant, 1982). Making, and maintaining one's interpersonal identity through relationships were one of the major concerns in adolescence as teens enter the social world of adulthood. This was true in the Taiwanese adolescents' social view of self--to be an interpersonally competent person. To extend one's social circle, adolescents used McDonald's as a place to study with their favored others, to meet friends, to work with peers from different schools, and to date the other sex. All these activities indicated the significance of adolescent interpersonal relations and the inter-dependence of self-presentation in relation to the presence of others. In other word, interpersonal interaction related individuals to the presentation of identity through connectedness and relationships within the participants' social world.

Interpersonal behavior generally includes either instrumental or expressive messages, or both (Newman, 1976). Instrumental acts focus on task achievement oriented behaviors and attributes; expressive behaviors emphasize socio-emotional acts and attributes (Newman, 1976; Thorbecke &

Grotevant, 1982; Poulsen, 1986). Previous literature associated gender difference as a variable for the outcome of each behavior (Newman, 1975; Thorbecke & Grotevant, 1982). However, this study observed both expressive and instrumental behaviors among young girls and boys in mixed-sex groups and single-sex groups. Such behaviors were also observed among adolescent employees and customers. Instrumental acts were found in events such as group discussion of school outings, the scheduling of recreational events, doing homework, and customer-employees' interaction; whereas joking talk, pranking, teasing, and so on consisted of social-emotional attributes. Instrumental achievement conveyed a sense of self as independent, competent, and cognitively knowledgeable in handling the tasks and interaction with peers through verbal and non-verbal messages. Expressive acts delivered affective messages of the self as interpersonally sensitive, having a sense of unity, and inclusion. The adolescents in the sample of this study strategically negotiated themselves within their social repertoire to displaying themselves as independent, competent, and knowledgeable of mastering their tasks on one hand; while, also presenting themselves as sensitive, inclusive, and friendly in interpersonal relationships on the other hand.

#### *Self-control*

Literature in adolescent identity development addresses the exercise of

self-control to maintain their autonomy. Self-control, a key feature of adolescent identity formation, is manifested through overcoming adverse conditions. (Josselson, Greenberger, & McConochie, 1976; Hauser, Powers & Noam, 1991). However, during the process of analysis, the researcher found the element of self-control, a key feature in adolescent identity formation in Western society, difficult to interpret in terms of the behavior of Taiwan's adolescents' within a Taiwanese social-oriented framework, i.e. the teachings of Confucianism. This element of self control was less salient than the other two elements in adolescent identity formation--the gender identity and the competence in interpersonal behavior. This could be attributed to the public social context, where the primary purpose was to enjoy oneself within adolescent social world and to maintain a cohesive and harmonious, jolly atmosphere by controlling and synchronizing one's own behavior with that of others. Self-control was found as the ability that adolescents used for coping with their needs in the immediate context. Self-control was observed from participants' normative practices of their role relationships involving a sense of duty and obligation in relation to others, such as peers or authority. Self-control was regarded as a sign of evidence of maturity and led to the goal of blending oneself into a system of other-oriented behavior; on one hand, one could present a positive image of the self through appropriate self-control on one's behavior to maintain the group

harmony, and one also could preserve one's and the group's face from losing in the public on the other hand. For instance, even at a light-hearted restaurant like McDonald's, adolescents were constantly aware of the presence of other customers -- by not talking too loudly or by behaving too wild in the eyes of others. Older adolescents often admonished their own friends to lower their volume when group members were too excited; young adolescents, like six graders or junior high students with less self discipline were admonished by employees to lower their voices in order not to disturb the other customers in the restaurant.

Self-control was guided by norms of appropriateness in public social contexts; to follow norms of appropriateness suggested the importance of self-control of one's behavior in the presentation of a positive individual identity. What governed the norms of appropriateness in disciplining one's behavior was however the embedded in the cultural beliefs which shape the dominant worldview of "self" in Confucian philosophy.

In Confucianism, the self was viewed as an on-going, self-cultivating process to maintain individual integrity, social order and societal hierarchy. Confucianism prescribes a particular order of human relationships and regulates how an individual is supposed to behave within one's social community or organization, so that all individuals are jointly involved in bringing out the good of the society. By communicating and sharing within a

social circle of human-relatedness, self-control leads to the cultivation of one's temperament and personal spiritual development (Tu, 1985). A disciplined self who conforms to the norms or rules of the society perceives the prescriptive rules as a way of cultivating one's "internal" self. Thus, the way in which the adolescents at McDonald's exerted their capacity of self-control over their own behavior for the harmony of their group, demonstrated a particular cultural view of the self as self-disciplined.

### **Cultural transition**

This section focused on the cultural transition drawing on symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is discussed in comparison to Chinese traditional cultural values--Confucian especially. Even though both schools of thought --Symbolic interaction and Confucianism--claiming "self" as a fundamental entity for the formation of society, each emphasizes different facets of the self.

Confucian doctrine values order and hierarchy in society. It prescribes the order of human relationships and regulates how an individual is supposed to behave within one's social community or organization. A disciplined self who conforms to the norms or rules of the society perceives the prescriptive rules as a way of cultivating one's "internal" self. The concept of conforming to society can be viewed as similar to the notions of "generalized others" and

the “me” as the “organized set of attitudes and definitions, understandings and expectations common to the group” in Mead’s theory of Symbolic interactionism (Manis and Meltzer, 1972, p.10). However, these two theories also posit different arguments. Symbolic interactionism perceives the self as an independent individual who possesses both internal and external facets, while Confucianism views the self as an entity which is affirmed by his/her social relationships to the larger world. In Confucian teaching, Mead’s “generalized other” is a first step toward enlarging the self into one’s community, state, and country. However, what counts as a person in a society in the Confucian world does not include the “undirected tendencies of the individual” which enables a person to express the inner “free” sense of self as a way of self-formation (Manis & Meltzer, 1972, p.10). In other words, the “I” that symbolizes a “free,” “open,” “undirected,” self posited in symbolic interactionism is not found in Confucianism. The way interactionists advocate how identity should be viewed as an “I” in the Western society is different from the Confucianistic view of “self.” In my study, I found that the attributes of “self” vis-a-vis Mead’s symbolic interaction permeated within this modern westernized social context--McDonald’s in the center of the metro area.

Nevertheless, the two distinct ways of framing the concept of self never discount the validity of the two theoretical traditions; the interface of the two in

the context of an Americanized fast food restaurant in Taipei, Taiwan, symbolizes the cultural encounterance of the East and the West at the level of the speech situation. The traditional Chinese culture values an “orderly,” “harmonious,” and “disciplinary” self in conformity to the society; while the Western view of self, in the case of symbolic interactionism, takes the inner side of self, “I”, into account and claims the “free” self as part of one’s identity. Such a “free” self is not mentioned in Confucian theories about the way the self is viewed but acknowledged as an “I” in the school of interactionism. This study claims that when observing individual adolescent customers’ and employees’ communicative behavior, it is the “I” as expressed in symbolic interaction that promotes the self as “free,” “open,” “relaxed,” and “being rowdy,” “let off the steam,” violate “dining rules”, and “play cards.” The “I” is found when adolescents interacted with their peers at the individual levels and is reinforced by the comfortable atmosphere that has been intentionally designed restaurant in this restaurant.

The Confucian self is found to be consistent with one’s role-identity when the self is located within a relational social context. Such instances were found in the role of servers as a representative of the organization when interacting with customers. Servers legitimized their role with a seating badge to help seat customers at rush hours and through broadcast announcements to customers before asking them to move. In the

announcements, the suggestion of moving one's seat was legitimized by the stated need for preserving other customers' right. The server's role was to maintain order in the store. The role-identity of the server over-rode his individual identity when he was on duty. Customers were expected to yield their seats for the benefit of others when approached by the server. These interactive norms and role identities performed by the servers and customers coincided with the concept of the Confucianistic "self" who has to maintain one's role identity appropriately to a specific situation and "is to be aware of the presence of the other through a normative practice of role relationships in the sense of duty and obligation (Tu, 1985). Within adolescent peer groups, features of addressing each other and the researcher as family members, such as "auntie", and "the big brother" (Ch. III & IV) demonstrated a hierarchical relationship between the self and the others in a web of social and interpersonal relational development ; for example, "meeting parental expectation in school performance", and performing one's duty and obligation in carrying out filial piety to their parents.

In conclusion, the findings revealed that the identity of a "free," "open," and casual self was emerging in individual adolescent perception of self across age groups with Taiwan's frequent contacts with the West through media mediation, traveling, and exchange scholars from the West--the U.S. especially. The self which advocated "order," "harmony," "discipline" in the



public context was found in one's role identity in the organization. The self embedded in the value of Confucianism entailed a normative practice of role relationships that related to duty and obligation. From this perspective, it is noted that adolescent employees with a duty and obligation to the organization and to customers were able to mobilize their sense of "selves" within the scheme of the Confucianistic view.

As a result of rapid social transformation and cultural change, individuals in Taiwanese society were concurrently experiencing both modern technology and Western values. The influence of the larger socio-cultural context of ongoing modernization and Westernization and that of individual experiences were significant for interpreting the meaning of being an adolescent in a Chinese-like Taiwanese society. Any attempt to measure the trans-cultural process with a linear developmental scale can thus be seen as simpleminded. A rise in global consciousness with an active attitude to participate in the economic, social, and cultural life of a modern Westernized community was observed as a powerful impulse that Taiwan's youth were facing. And as the study indicated, the meaning of being a Chinese adolescent was itself undergoing a major transformation from a traditional Confucianistic view of self to a free, interpersonally competent, and self-controlled individual, yet still subject, to some degree, to the traditions of the East.

## SUMMARY

This chapter synthesized the findings by reviewing the inquiry posited in the first chapter. The first research question investigated the significance that McDonald's served in the adolescent social world. Findings revealed that this specific McDonald's provided multi-functional roles in the urban communication environment. The second section described the dimensions of "identity" that emerged from the analysis. A "free" vs. "restricted" dimension of self was discussed in this section. This section also illustrated two other dimensions of adolescent "identity" in the adolescent speech practice: the negotiation of self as interpersonally competent and the self as capable of controlling one's behavior for the unity of groups. The third section posited the cultural shift within the public social context. A "free," "open", and "relaxed" sense of self was discovered in all age groups regarding adolescents individual identity, and a Confucian view of self was found within the operational level between employees' and customers' interaction.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The contributions of the study are reflected in three aspects: first, the research calls attention to urban adolescent communication at the juxtaposition of Eastern and Western traditions in contemporary Taiwan's

society. As Taiwan frequently interacts with the West through rapid industrialization, urbanization, and internationalization, new patterns and new configurations of adolescents' lives continue to emerge within the Taiwanese society. Even though, Taiwan had been studied by sociologists, linguists and anthropologists for decades, an communicative view of adolescents' identity within a trans-cultural context was inadequately understood. This study actually elicited adolescents' views on how adolescent identity was developed, negotiated, and enacted in their ways of speaking.

Second, the study also contributes to the understanding of the role that public contexts served in the social life of the inner-city community.

Communication in public contexts is increasingly important in adolescent socialization ever since the advent of urbanization of Taipei. Nevertheless, the role that public contexts played in adolescent social world has been under studied in the field of communication. This study aimed to better understand and document contemporary youth activities in such settings.

Third, this study utilized the ethnography of communication as a descriptive-theoretical framework to abstract the nature of adolescent discourse practices. The ethnography of communication served as an appropriate framework to discover, describe, and analyze the meaning structures of the speech practiced by Chinese adolescents in a public sociable context. Thus, this study was significant in its focus and method by

examining in situ communicative events, and discovering how adolescents construct their identities in such speech situation.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the limitations of this study is the generalizability of the findings to adolescent public social life in Taiwan. The sample was limited to a selected group of inner-city adolescents. Also, this study focused only on one of the many fast food locales which adolescents often visited. Their findings are not generalizable to adolescent communicative patterns occurring in all Americanized franchisees in Taiwan. McDonald's location in the urban area might serve different functions from other McDonald's locations in the suburbs. The clientele in both urban and suburban areas may also be different.

A second limitation of this study that may have affected the findings was my role as an adult researcher. There were facets of adolescent peer interactions that simply did not occur during the presence of an adult observer. Findings in adult-adolescent interactions may not have been the same as in adolescent-adolescent interactions. The limitation of a single adult researcher effect can be strengthened to certain degrees by (1) leveling the adult-adolescent power distance through trust building and rapport building; and (2) consulting with adolescent key informants for emic perspectives about

adolescents.

A third limitation was the spatial and time distance between data collection in Taipei and data analysis in Portland. This affected the availability of contacting informants for follow-up verification, changes and additions.

### IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The limitations of the study pointed to three directions for future studies of the ethnography of communication in adolescent culture in Taiwan.

First, the present study focused on one of the many fast food locales in downtown Taipei. Such restaurants located in the urban area provided different functions and clientele from those in the suburbs. It would be valuable for future studies to investigate adolescent communicative patterns that occur in franchisees other than those in the city of Taipei. An examination of the functions and roles of other fast-food restaurants that Taiwan's suburban areas pertain to adolescent life would also be valuable.

Second, even though the study provided valuable data and contextualizing descriptions about the process of communicative events occurring among adolescents within a fast-food setting, a single adult research effect did limit the scope of investigating the adolescent social world. It is necessary for future studies to be cautious of the interactional effect between the contact of an adult researcher and adolescent informants when

explicating adolescent communicative phenomena. The validity and reliability of future studies of adolescent peer interactions may be strengthened by employing a trained teenager for interviewing. Using a trained teenager for data collection may provide a closer look at adolescent peer interaction without the presence of an adult, and minimize the power distance between the researcher and the informants.

Third, findings revealed that informants responses to interviews were different between female groups and individual male informants. However, the study was limited in examining the issues of gender differences due to the spatial and time distance between data collection and analysis. One direction for future studies would be to follow up the speech patterns and linguistic forms utilized by single sex groups and mixed groups in like settings to further expand and enrich our knowledge of adolescent communication.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored adolescent communicative phenomena in a Westernized fast-food restaurant in Taipei. Investigation focused on how symbolic meanings of identity were generated and shared communicatively among inner-city adolescents within a contemporary cultural context that stood at the intersection of Eastern and Western cultures. A naturalistic approach--the qualitative case study (qcs) (Philipsen, 1982) and the

descriptive-theoretical framework of the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962) were utilized for data collection and data analysis.

Findings revealed that this particular fast-food locale served multiple functions in the adolescent social world. McDonald's was viewed as a locale where adolescents customers mostly, came to "talk", "eat", "take a break", "use free facility", "study", and "meet." A salient dimension of personhood that emerged from the patterns of adolescent speech practice was the dimension of freedom vs. restriction in this particular speech situation.

Findings also revealed that cultural transition in the context of an Americanized fast food restaurant had merged on every communicative levels at the cross-section of the East and the West. Adolescent identity was presented as free, playful, relaxed, and fun within their groups. The sense of the self of being "free," "open," "relaxed," as well as the ability of the self for "letting off the steam," of a self was found in individual customers and employees communicative behaviors and the physical attributes that the restaurant created.

In short, the study explored adolescent's social world located at the axes of Eastern-Western, modern-traditional, and local-cosmopolitan contexts. An emic view of contemporary Taiwan's adolescent identity was discovered to be emerging vividly at the juxtaposition of the two cultures-- East and West.

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APPENDIX. A

LETTERS TO MCDONALD'S

To: Mr. Wu  
McDonald's Restaurants (Taiwan) Co., Ltd.  
Taipei, Taiwan.

From: Ruby Chen  
Portland State University

Dear Mr. Wu:

My name is Jui-fang Ruby Chen. I am a graduate student in speech Communication at Portland state University, Portland Oregon, U.S. A. I had contacted with you by phone on April 17 regarding my research project in one of your local restaurant in downtown Taipei.

It was very nice of you to talk with me on the phone, and I appreciated your kindness in agreeing to introduce me to the local manager in Taipei for this research project once I get back to Taiwan. Attached to this letter is a brief description of the nature and procedure of the study. From our conversation, I understand McDonald's corporation has a great emphasis ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for customers. I would like you to know that I am happy to cooperate with your local restaurant by respecting its regular operation and the rights of consumers. I have addressed this issue in my "statement of purpose" and hope it may assure you that I too am concerned with both the rights of your corporation and McDonald's customers.

In addition, enclosed is a recommendation letter from my thesis committee chair, Dr. Susan Poulsen. If there is any other information you or others in the corporation would like to know, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you very much for your attention. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jui-fang Ruby Chen.



Mr. Eric Wu  
Taipel, Taiwan, R.O. C.

Dear Mr. Wu:

Ms. Chen has been a student in several of my graduate seminars and is currently working with me on her Master's Thesis research. She is a thorough and thoughtful student, and has carefully planned her project. The project she proposes is important, both for increasing our understanding of adolescent culture and communication in contemporary Taiwanese society, as well as the significance of McDonalds as a socializing setting.

All students must submit their proposals to a university committee that reviews their plans for safeguarding the rights of both the individuals and institutions who agree to participate in such studies. I believe this process and Ruby's commitment will adequately address these issues.

As her Advisor, I appreciate whatever aid you may be able to give Ms. Chen in carrying out her Master's Thesis research. Thank you for your consideration in this matter, and please extend my appreciation to others in the corporation who may also offer their help.

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Poulsen  
Thesis Advisor

## APPENDIX. B

### TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTION

## Transcription Convention

In the following transcription, names are replaced by capitalized Roman letters to protect participants' identities. English translation is attempted to be close to the original text in Chinese. Contextual information, whenever necessary, is given for readers' better understanding.

Each numbered segment can be considered a turn at talk.

- ( [ )                      Square brackets between lines indicate where overlap begins.
- ( - )                      A dash marks brief pauses within turns.
- ( . . . )                    Dots in the end of sentences denote unfinished and being interrupted turns.
- ( pause/silence )        "Pause/silence" indicates longer pauses of approximately one second or longer. Longer prolongation is measured by seconds.
- ( ??? )                    Question marks denote uncertain transcription.
- (     )                    Parentheses encloses contextual and/or interviewer's interpretation.
- ( : )                      Colon indicates prolongation of the preceding word.

APPENDIX. C

INFORMED CONSENT

## 波特蘭州立大學口語傳播學系

### 研究說明書

#### 研究員：

陳瑞芳 (Jui-Fang Ruby Chen)，目前就讀於美國奧瑞崗波特蘭州立大學口語傳播學系研究所 (Graduate Study of Speech Communication, Portland State University, Oregon)。

#### 研究主題：

青少年在公共場合 (如:美式速食店) 的溝通方式及生活經驗。

#### 研究目的：

此項研究是本人為完成碩士學位的一部份，目的在於實地了解青少年對公共場合 (如:美式速食店) 的感受和看法，以及他們在店內所從事的活動。你的參與將幫助我們進一步了解青少年本身對自己生活形態的看法。

#### 研究過程及受訪者的權益措施：

- (1) 此研究將佔用你的 ① 約 30~40 分鐘。訪談的 ② 及 地點 以受訪者的安全及方便為原則。
- (2) 受訪者的姓名和所提供的資料都將妥善處理，且將視為機密以確保受訪者的權益。
- (3) 在訪談過程中，研究員將非常 ③ 回答您任何有關此研究的問題，並且受訪者亦有權利 不回答任何不願回答的問題。

※本研究為保護未滿十八歲青少年受訪的權益，將於正式訪談前，預先徵求家長或監護人的同意 ④。

若你對此研究有任何問題，請洽：☎

研究員：          陳瑞芳          (02) 9121613 或  
論文指導教授：  蘇珊·保森  (Dr. Susan Poulsen) 002-1-503-725-3544

編號：\_\_\_\_\_

## 波特蘭州立大學口語傳播學系

## 同意書

我同意參加此研究：

參加者簽名： \_\_\_\_\_ 日期： \_\_\_\_\_

家長或監護人簽名： \_\_\_\_\_ 日期： \_\_\_\_\_

※ 年滿 15 歲，但未滿 18 歲的受訪者若無須父母簽名同意，此同意書將代表您個人對此研究的參與意願。

若你對此研究有任何問題，請洽：☎

研究員： 陳瑞芳 (02) 9121613 或  
論文指導教授： 蘇珊·保森 (Dr. Susan Poulsen) 002-1-503-725-3544

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

## Interview guide

1. 通常你/們什麼時候會來麥當勞？
  - a. 多久來一次？
4. 你們通常一待都待多久？
2. 你通常和誰來？ 會不會自己一個人來？
3. 你們來這兒都作些什麼？
6. 描述一下你在這兒聊天，通常談些什麼？
  - a. 講國語還是講台語？
  - b. 談話的內容。
5. 描述你通常一進麥當勞到出麥當勞其間所會做的事？
7. 你說你通常和\_\_\_\_\_來，你們在\_\_\_\_\_ (學校)不就可以聊了，那和出來到麥當勞聊有什麼不一樣？
8. 年青人的穿著，書包，制服和吊飾。
9. 在這一類的公共場合，那些事你覺得你會做，那些你覺得不會做？
10. 你有沒有去過 1)麥當勞以外的速食店？ 2)其他各國的麥當勞嗎？
  - a.說說看你在那兒作了些什麼？

### Distinguishing C/A cultural attributes:

11. 你覺得像麥當勞這類的速食店受不受年輕朋友的歡迎？
  - a.怎麼個的受歡迎法？ 為什麼？
12. 你知不知道麥當勞是從那裡引進的嗎？ 你能不能說說看在這速食店裡就你能看到的，你覺得那些是屬於美國化，那些是屬於中國化？
13. 你能不能說說看在這速食店裡就你所聽到的，你覺得那些是屬於美國化，那些是屬於中國化？
- 14.你能不能描述一下，你在速食店用餐的感覺？

### Music

15. 速食店放的音樂，對你們在這兒有什麼影響？
16. 如果麥當勞沒有音樂，會不會影響你來這兒的意願？
17. 這兒有台點歌機，什麼情況下你會去點歌？

### Part-timing

18. 麥當勞顧用很多工讀生，以麥當勞為例，你能否說說看你對年青人在速時店打工的看法？
19. 你覺得大人們對你們把時間花在速食店裡會怎麼看？
20. 現在的年輕人被說像是新新人類，你以年輕人的角度會怎樣定義「新新人類？」



## INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. At what time do you usually come to this McDonald's?
  - a. How often do you come here?
2. Who do you usually come with?
3. What do you do (at this McDonald's)?
4. How is your typical time-spent at McDonald's?
5. Would you please describe a typical time at McDonald's?
6. What kinds of topics do you usually talk about?
  - a. You use Mandarin or Taiwanese?
  - b. How do you chat with people? What are the contents ?
7. You say you usually come here with \_\_\_\_; can't you just talk with them at \_\_\_\_ (name of school); how does coming here make it different?
8. youth artifacts: clothing style, bookbags, uniforms, accessories, etc.
9. What are the things you think you might do are O.K. in a public place such as this, and what would you not do?
10. Have you ever been to other McDonald's.? How about those out of Taiwan?
  - a. Describe what you did there?

## Distinguishing C/A cultural attributes:

11. Do you think McDonald's. is popular among young people in Taiwan?
  - a. How popular/In what way?
12. Do you know where McDonald's. comes from? Describe whatever you see at McDonald's that you think is Americanized or Chinese-like?

13. Describe whatever you hear at McDonald's that you think is Americanized or Chinese-like.
14. Describe how you feel dining at McDonald's.

#### Music

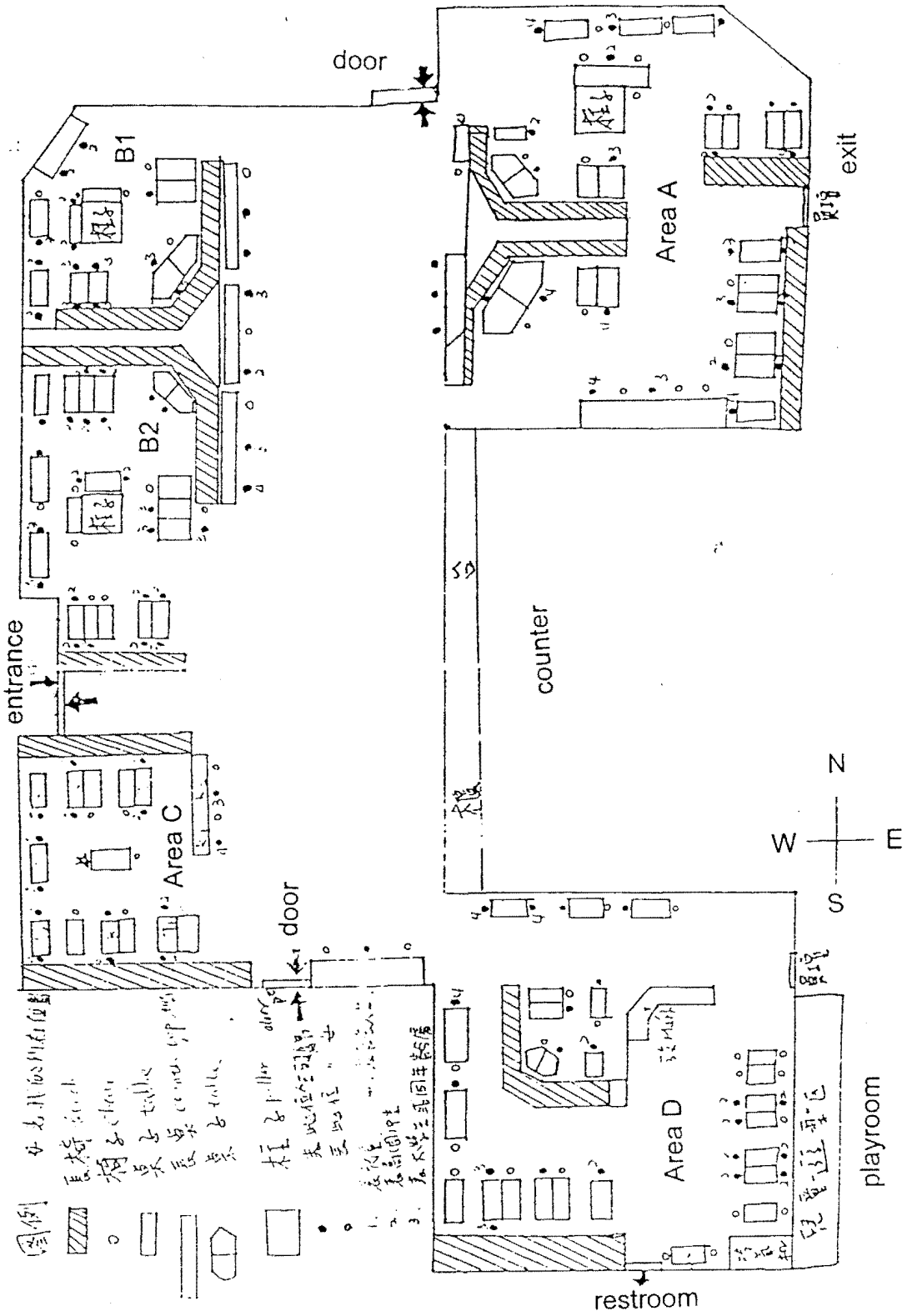
15. Does the music in this restaurant affect how you spend your time?
16. If there were no music, would it affect your desire to be here?
17. Under what circumstances would you use the jukebox?

#### Part-timing

18. McDonald's hires many students working part-time. What do you think about young people working at the fast food places, such as McDonald's?
19. What do you think of adults' views of your spending time at McDonald's?
20. Now young people are labeled as "new new people." How do you think from a young person's perspective, about the meaning of the term "new new people?"

APPENDIX. E

DIAGRAM OF THE MCDONALD'S



APPENDIX. F

CHINESE TRANSCRIPTS

## APPENDIX. F-1

- Z: 會先廣播，對啊，「抱歉一下，這是我們用餐時間，爲了不影響大家的用餐權利，請勿長時間佔用桌椅，閱讀及睡眠。」對啊，然後，通常大部份的客人聽到之後，會有一點警惕，這時候我們會過來跟他們提醒一下，大概就，能夠解決這個位子荒的問題。
- R: 我有看過，就是有... (point to a badge on the arm?)
- Z: 對那個就是「帶位臂章」。那就是因爲有客人找不到位子啊，那就是專門執行這個工作的啊。請客人稍微移一下這樣子。「移一下」(Taiwanese)。然後讓整個店，每個位子，都能夠坐到最好。...

## APPENDIX. F-2

1. C: ... 麥當勞是一個很好的集合地點。
  2. E: 對啊。
  3. E: 對啊，講那一條街就可以了。
  4. D: [ 很明顯啦，
  5. C: [ 對啊，在哪裡，哪裡的麥當勞，在那邊等就好了，
  6. E: 圓環麥當勞，台北車站麥當勞，那裡有麥當勞就這樣子啊-
  7. R: 你們出去的時候，約在麥當勞見-?
  8. C: [ 機會比較多。
- (Silence 3.5 seconds)

## APPENDIX. F-3

1. D: 可是我們不是像妳們是去跟人家辦的。
2. E: 我哪，我哪有跟人家辦，自己叫兩桌啊，是那種-。  
[
3. D: 不是啊，對啊，妳們是那種，自己，就是那種，啊可是我們是那種，我嫂她們在樓上啊，她們自己煮啊，對，她們是自己煮的。
4. E: 我們也有自己煮過。
5. R: 那是-
6. C: 哎喲，老大要發言了，嘻嘻。
7. A: 話題切不要切太遠。
8. D: 哈，哈，哈。
9. A: 剛剛，有點急吧！

## APPENDIX. F-4

1. X: 我是覺得，台語講的(若)用國語講，就有一點拘束。
2. U: [ 有一些東西用台語講就有那感覺出來，啊你用國語，那個感覺就不見了。
3. X: 台語就好像那個-  
[
4. U: 親切的感覺。
5. X: 可以這樣說。
6. X: 講國語-，你用台語講起來合意啊，比較快，那國語講起來，比較，那種感覺，好像比較正式的。
7. R: 那你們要是跟女孩子講話呢？
8. U: 國語啊。(Immediately)
9. X: 國語啊。
10. U: 這一定是國語啊。

## APPENDIX. F-5a

1. R: 你剛說開玩笑是怎樣？
2. A: 喔，那個「穩重」啊！
3. D: 「穩重」啊！（laughing and pointing at E）
4. E: 這樣子「穩重」是在形容他。（B）
5. D: (Coughing purposely. The boys are pulling E's legs. And E kicks it back to B, whom they are joking to be "steady" and chubby.)
6. R: 又穩又重？
7. E: 穩重！（The word is emphasized in a short and heavy rhythm.）
8. R: 喔-。

## APPENDIX. F-5b

1. R: O.K. 好，剛剛說，開心的時候，對不對，什麼叫開心的時候？
2. J: 考試考得好啊-，心情好啊，
3. L: [ 對啊。
4. J: { [ 來慶祝一下。
5. M: { [ 來表示，
6. R: 哼？
7. M: 選選那個，上課的那個-
8. J: [ 泡到馬子的時候。（J interrupts M. L giggling at J comment.）
9. M: 就是每天都在讀書啊，選舉那種，還掉那種讀書的痛苦-
10. L: 很用功喔，每天都在讀書。
11. J: 懷疑啊。
12. K: 他每天都在看漫畫，還在讀書。
13. M: ㄝ喝喝。（chuckles）



## APPENDIX. F-5c

1. R: 你們都常這樣子男生開女生的玩笑嗎？
2. D: 互開。(laughing)
3. D: 不過還是看那個好笑，像她就：(laughing)，她比較爆笑就開她的。
4. E: 我那有很爆笑啊！？
5. B: 普通爆笑而以。
6. E: 我們不要扯這個話題了，跳過啦。

## APPENDIX. F-6a

1. K: 喔,我知道了,就是把蕃茄醬加到人家的,(K chuckled) 別人的,把蕃茄醬加到別人的可樂裡面, 趁人家去洗手間的時候, 那-, 趁人家去洗手間的時候,那蕃茄醬全部都擠到人家的可樂裡面去,然後,故意讓人家喝下去。(L was chuckling while K was describing. K was smiling while talking.)
2. R: 你們有這樣做喔?(asked curiously)
3. L: H.G.W. (One of the girls' classmates.)  
(Pause 2 sec)
4. K: 他都故意要讓人家拉肚子的。(L chuckling). 哈哈,還有奶精,還有這個,這個,還有這個糖醋醬,全部都加在人家的可樂上,他都這樣喝起來讓人家拉肚子才爽快。

## APPENDIX. F-6b

1. L: 就是她那時可樂就已經有加蕃茄醬了,她不敢喝,她拿去丟,就太重了,就打出來了。
2. K: 然後,盤子好像,好像
3. L: [丟到垃圾筒裡。(saying and chuckling simultaneously)
4. M: 啊!(falling tone)
5. K: 我盤子丟到垃圾筒裡面去了,應該放在上面對不對,我丟到垃圾筒去。
6. L: 呵呵呵。
7. M: [唉呀,你好那個喔-,
8. R: [那怎麼辦?
9. K: 那我就趕快先跑掉,丟了就趕快跑,然後,那服務生太呆了,沒看到。

## APPENDIX. F-7

1. R: 你剛說那心理測驗是怎麼做？
2. D: 就問問題阿，那你回答，
3. B: [ 對阿。
4. D: [ 然後有的時候會累積分數有沒  
有，就說你回答這個問題，會有什麼分數，然後把它加起來:
5. B: [ 沒有，基本上來這邊比較少做那個，因為那個要記很多  
( chuckles )，通常都記比較簡單的。
6. C: [ 較簡單的，較不會那麼  
煩。
7. R: 唉，你們能不能玩一次給我看:
8. E: 上次那一個，不會吧。
9. B: 「一馬當先」嗎？ 不用了
10. D: [ 這個玩過了，
11. B: [ 那上次是玩一個就是  
寫號:
12. C: [ 一到十
13. B: [ ㄉㄟ，對阿。
14. R: 然後？
15. D: 就開始測了啊，
16. B: [ ㄉㄟ 阿， 1, 1 阿，
17. D: [ 看每一個人寫的，這樣。
18. B: [ 1 如果寫的越  
直，就是代表正直，對不對？ 2 的話:， 2 的話我就。
19. D: 沒關係，沒關係，測我的好了，我寫寫看。

20. D: 我都忘記。
21. E: 我從來沒寫過。
22. R: 來，你們測測看。
23. B: 2 的話，唉，要方便講嗎？
24. C: 你們沒有玩過？
25. E: 她 (指 D) 沒有玩過。
26. R: 你沒玩過！
27. D: (D is anxious of playing the game) 1
28. A: 她，她帶頭的。(pointing at C)
29. E: 對阿。
30. C: 你把那個，以那個橫線為基準，然後寫阿拉伯數字 1 到 10。
31. B: 那你的 1 不準了，
32. D: 我沒有聽到啊，
33. C: 你就照，你就照你平常寫的那個樣子寫就好了，然後就分析 (D passed her writing to C for analysis)·哈哈。1 是，如果你這個 1 越直的話，表示你這個人越獨立，不會說依賴性太重。那你 2 的話，2 如果說，越平行，越與這條線平行的話，表示你性冷感 (suddenly lowered her volume)；3 的話，就是以這中間開始分開，上下各一半，上面是對父親，下面是對母親嗎，就是說你比較喜歡誰-。
34. D: (interrupt) 那結果是喜歡誰？
35. C: (immediately) 一半一半啊。你父母在你心中佔份量應該都是差不多。
36. R: 準不準？
37. C: 不曉得。
38. E: 不曉得。
39. D: 不知道。(girls smiled)
40. C: 你，你-寫的啊。
41. C: (kept going to # 4) 然後這個是看你的開口，就是看你的人際關係，如果開口越大的話，表示你的人際關係越好，有嗎？(asked D)
42. D: 好像是這樣子，你算是這樣子。
43. A: 對阿，她到處就會嘿嘿，叫最大聲 (A laughing)
44. C: (talked to D) 看你啊；然後 5, 5, 5 的話，5 是看這個尾巴下面，如果 如果越圓的話，表示你未來另一半長得越-帥 (hesitate to say)。
45. C or D:

I

好。

46. D: 啊哈，好醜喔。(girls all laughing loudly )
47. A: 蠻狠的嗎！
48. D: (to A) 男生、女生都一樣。
49. C: 唉，對。然後 6 的話是看這個接縫，越密的話表示你對錢財的觀念越越越有那個理財觀念。
50. D: 那我就沒有啊。
51. B: 禿頭的話就是紙公雞。
52. C: [ 如果像有些人 6 都會: 這樣子都寫一半的有沒有，就表是比較會花錢；然後 7 沒有人會解釋；啊 8 的話是看這裡，如果你越密合，就表示你這個人越會守話。
53. D: 越會怎樣？
54. B & C: 守-話。
55. C: 而且是蠻守的；然後 9 ， 9 是看這個: 這個幹桿，越長的話，表示你未來另一半越: 比較高。
56. E: 喔，他一定好高喔。
57. C: [ 身材，身材可能是高高瘦的。
58. D: 可是他還是很醜啊！
59. C: 雖然醜了點，(C chuckling) 不過還蠻高的。
60. E: 一定很高啊！
61. C: 然後 10,10 的話，如果離這個線越接近的話，表示你這個人越穩重，比較不會心浮心浮氣燥的。
62. D: 那 \_\_\_\_\_ ( pointing at E),
63. C: O.K.
64. D: (to E) 那什麼態度嗎？
65. C: 你覺得準不準，看你自己啦。
66. D: 不知道，那要等我結婚之後，我才知道我的另一半啦。(giggling)
67. C: 就是這樣子阿，還有玩一些其他很多個，都玩過的。