TERMS OF (IM)POLITENESS

A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATIONAL PROPERTIES OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE (IM)POLITE TERMS OF ADDRESS

Terms of (Im)Politeness examines the features of traditional Chinese (im)polite vocatives, and applies the results gained to contribute to recent issues in the field of theoretical politeness research. Recent studies of linguistic politeness have shown that (im)politeness is realised in communication not so much by how speakers produce certain utterances, but rather how addressees contextually evaluate them. Opinions, however, vary as regards the means by which the addressees' evaluative process can be theorised: it is currently under debate as to whether addressees can freely interpret every utterance, and whether evaluation is a phenomenon that is similar in every language and culture. This book argues that evaluation is a universal phenomenon, but that its nature differs across languages. In order to prove this point, the author follows a bidirectional chain of thought. In the first part of the work **Dániel Z. Kádár** thoroughly examines the productional and interpretational aspects of traditional Chinese (im)polite vocatives. As these studies illustrate, both their production and interpretation is (socio)linguistically predetermined, a fact which affords few possibilities for contextual evaluation, compared with the (im)polite vocatives of other languages or cultures. Yet, in the second part of the work Kádár demonstrates that contextual evaluation can play a part in certain discourse settings, that is personal contextual interpretation is a phenomenon that exists in every culture and language. Including both linguistic politeness theories and historical Chinese pragmatics in its scope of analysis, *Terms of (Im)Politeness* will be invaluable to all those interested in politeness research, or linguistic communication in old China.

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DÁNIEL Z. KÁDÁR

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BUDAPEST MONOGRAPHS IN EAST ASIAN STUDIES

SERIES EDITOR: IMRE HAMAR

DÁNIEL Z. KÁDÁR

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DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES, EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY
BUDAPEST 2007

Terms of (Im)Politeness
A Study of the Communicational Properties of Traditional Chinese (Im)Polite Terms of Address

Dániel Z. Kádár

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(Requests for review copies should be directly sent to the author.)

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Cover illustration: a woodblock print portraying the dandy Ximen Qing who tries to seduce the shyly smiling married woman, Golden Lotus with polite words, being watched by the neighbouring procuress, Aunt Wang; from the Ming dynasty novel *Jin Ping Mei*, Chongzhen era (1628 – 1644) edition.

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To my wife Keiko

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FOREWORD

I am writing this foreword as a linguist with a long-standing fascination for eastern cultures, especially their philosophies, which increasingly come to us in the west in abridged and pre-packaged formats such as self-help books, or ten-lesson meditation courses. One of the stereotypes that in popular belief have almost become synonymous with eastern peoples is their famed 'politeness'. There are countless anecdotes on how shy, self-effacing and reserved the Chinese appear to their outgoing, vocal and self-promoting western counterparts.

This book gives us a key to unlocking the origins of 'polite' behaviour in China. In it, the author DÁNIEL Z. KÁDÁR takes us back to pre-modern China, a world where a strict social code of behaviour imposed by deference and respect for hierarchy regulated verbal expression in interpersonal relations. In order to be able to operate effectively in a highly stratified society, the Chinese developed a fascinatingly complex and intriguing system of polite (and impolite) address forms that have now largely disappeared, although, arguably traces of them remain in what is interpreted as 'politeness' by western observers. With the aid of Chinese philology and historical pragmatics, the author revisits the uses of pre-modern (im)politeness in a variety of original writings.

Contrary to the situation in other languages, studying current linguistic politeness in Chinese is not of great help to understanding the workings of verbal politeness in the traditional Chinese society. It may come as a surprise that 20th century philosophy (Pierre Bourdieu) and politeness theory (Richard J. Watts, Gino Eelen and Sara Mills), all feature in the gallery of western scholars whose work has directly influenced the author's analytical framework. This book is a bridge-builder: it bravely brings together ancient Chinese texts with modern European thinking, a social class system topped by the emperor and the imperial family with the recent 'evaluative turn' in politeness theory research.

KÁDÁR's analytical approach draws on evaluation-based theories of politeness, which are a relatively recent development alongside better known predictive theories. His main aim is to demonstrate that even in a highly-structured, hierarchical social system such as pre-modern China, interactants were able to exercise (limited) evaluation within a constrained discourse system. This would be evidence of the universality of the evaluation phenomenon, albeit with variations across cultures.

In pre-modern Chinese, polite address forms were inherently bound with expressions of other-elevation and self-denigration, which means that there was no neutral polite address system. The functional categorization of address forms proposed in this study opens an important historical window on the world of social relations which they helped maintain. The picture of the social stratification in traditional China presents us with a rank-ordered society where the powerful members (the emperor and his family, the imperial officers and the Buddhist and Taoist clergy) tower over the class of the commoners.

One of the peculiarities of the pre-modern Chinese system of address forms is that the address lexicon of the high-status members of society, whose rank did not demand self-denigration before 'commoners' was enriched by a wider range of honorific forms for use in peer relations. Such observations should serve as an invitation to delve into this book and read about the large number of polite address forms that KÁDÁR was able to identify and to the socio-cultural richness indexed by the excerpts from the historical writings. The sinologist will be able to savour this richness in full; the linguist without access to the Chinese language will still be engaged, puzzled or amused by the nature of the (translated) examples.

The reader will be even more intrigued by the unsuspected variety *and* use of impolite terms, only partly studied by Chinese philologists. Unlike other languages, impolite terminology in pre-modern Chinese tended to be interpreted as straightforwardly offensive, thus excluding interpretation of banter and teasing in strictly status-regulated exchanges. In spite of the funny semantic connotation carried by some of the terms, one needs to look closely at the nature of interpersonal relations in order to interpret the function of impolite terminology in Chinese. For example, banter could only be expressed through pre-determined terms in specific role relations, outside of which impolite denigrating address terms could only be read as insulting.

In the second part of the monograph, a new twist is introduced in the apparently consistent link between (im)polite address terminology and social status documented in ancient Chinese texts. When the author moves his analytical focus from everyday exchanges to institutional interactions,

drawing in particular on business interactions, he notices that asymmetrical relations are predicated not on social status but on a *negotiable* concept of power. True to its Confucian roots, pre-modern Chinese despised merchants and traders for pursuing profit instead of high ideals. This also transpires from the language only having euphemisms, albeit numerous, for the word 'merchant'.

Buyers and sellers seemingly engaged in interactions that contravened the strict addressing rules that governed the rest of Chinese society. The powerful person in this type of institutional exchange, which the author uses as a case-study, was the one who *controlled access to profit*; it could be the seller, if the buyer was very keen on obtaining the goods or services, but in a dynamic reversal of roles, the buyer could command control by playing the card of indifference to the offer tabled by the seller. At this point, unconventional politeness routines are activated in response to the evolving interaction; through their *ad hoc* use of address terms, the participants demonstrably deploy 'politeness' as a discursive resource rather than a social reflex.

This finding vindicates the author's claim that even in the status-governed social order of ancient China one could find instances of evaluative behaviour. More importantly, perhaps, the book tells us of the challenges and rewards of cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural research and takes us one step further along the path of mutual understanding.

Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini
Nottingham, 20th January 2006

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This book has been written on the basis of three years of research carried out between 2002 and 2005. Although it is an independent work and I have reviewed and modified many of my earlier ideas in it, it relies, in many points, on earlier papers. In particular, some of the ideas in Chapter One were published in Chinese in the *Qinghai minzu xueyuan xuebao* (*Journal of Qinghai Minorities Institute*) in 2005. The arguments of Chapter Two were discussed in a premature form in 2003, in the *Newsletter of the European Association of Chinese Linguistics*. Chapter Three is a reconsidered version of an article that was published in *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* in 2005, while Chapter Four is a fundamentally revised version of a paper that was presented at the 9th Conference of the International Pragmatics Association. Finally, Chapter Five is an expansion of an article that was published in the book *Asian Business Discourse(s)* in 2005 by Peter Lang, Berne. Thus, before moving on to personal acknowledgments, I would like to express my thanks towards the anonymous reviewers of the original papers, whose comments helped me enormously in the rigorous examination of my arguments for the final versions.

I would like to express my gratitude to the following persons, who helped me in the completion of this work. First and foremost my former doctoral supervisor, teacher, and friend, Huba Bartos, without whose wonderful and patient help and careful instruction this work could never have been completed. Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini kindly read this work in its earlier format, and generously gave encouragement and kind advice on how to improve my research. Imre Hamar's kind suggestions helped me to find the appropriate grants and scholarships that made it possible for me to carry out this research. I also owe Imre Hamar a debt of gratitude for inviting me to publish the work in the *Budapest Monograph in East Asian Studies* series. Yilun Dou did not only give me lessons in traditional Chinese politeness, but also exemplified in person how a Chinese gentleman behaves. Guoyue Peng kindly gave me advice and inspiration

on the research of traditional Chinese politeness, and also presented me with a large number of Japanese reference materials that I could not have acquired otherwise. Shaoyu Jiang drew my attention to the importance of studying the *Chengwei lu*. Imre Galambos kindly read the manuscript and gave me useful advice on its style.

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A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CHINESE DYNASTIES

Xia	ca. 2000 – ca. 1500 B.C.
Shang (Yin)	ca. 1500 – ca. 1100 B.C.
Zhou	ca. 1100 – 256 B.C.
Qin	221 – 206 B.C.
Han	206 B.C. – A.D. 220
The Three Kingdoms	A.D. 23 – 220
Jin	265 – 420
Southern and Northern Dynasties	316 – 589
Sui	589 – 618
Tang	618 – 906
The Five Dynasties	906 – 960
Song	960 – 1279
Jin	1122 – 1234
Yuan	1260 – 1368
Ming	1368 – 1644
Qing	1644 – 1911
The Republic of China	1912 – 1949 (Continuing in Taiwan)
The People's Republic of China	1949 –

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese (Im)Politeness[1] and Linguistic Politeness Research

> Only the Chinese can endure the unconditional, the absolute, and the fatal politeness, which already imbued the whole tissue of their body and soul …
>
> Sándor Márai: *Herbal*[2]

When researchers probe into traditional Chinese linguistic (im)politeness, they have to manage stereotypes. Chinese is often regarded as a *'polite language'* and the Chinese as a *'polite nation'* (though probably not as 'polite' as the Japanese). This is not simply a stereotype existing inside China itself, where even serious linguists tend to praise their country's politeness heritage using terms like 'ancient' or 'world-famous', cf. Chen (2001: 1). This is an 'international' stereotype, just as the above citation shows: the Hungarian author Sándor Márai, in his essay, compares the "Chinese", as people of stronger roots in politeness, with the "Europeans" and the "Americans" who have already lost such roots. In other words, non-native students of Chinese politeness, who in theory could take an objective stand by virtue of their foreign origin, encounter difficulties by inheriting prejudicial views from their own educational or cultural back-

[1] The present work studies *linguistic* (im)politeness: non-linguistic and paralinguistic forms like body language, ceremony, group-behaviour, prosody and other aspects of politeness are excluded from the inquiry. These would be relevant in order to gain a complex picture of the whole network of Chinese (im)politeness. Such an approach to Chinese (im)polite communication which includes anthropology, psychology and other scientific disciplines is still, however, in its infancy, compared with the research in communication in other cultures, see Brown and Levinson (1987: 56; 190), or Eelen (2001: 236–238); on the general research of gestures see Duranti (1997), or Kendon (2004). (Nevertheless some initial attempts have already been made within the research of modern Chinese politeness; see for example Xiang 2005.) This is why the present work focuses on Chinese verbal communication only.

[2] If it is not indicated otherwise, the English translations in this study are mine.

ground. Such prejudgement would probably not occur if one chose the (im)politeness of a less popular culture to study, but in the case of Chinese it seems to be inescapable. This problem is particularly valid when dealing with *traditional* Chinese politeness. In the case of modern Chinese politeness behaviour it is easy "to develop either a positive or a negative stereotype" (Pan 2000: 4), whereas traditional Chinese politeness behaviour is regularly discussed in markedly positive terms as it is easier to idealise the politeness of the distant past, under the influence of pre-modern literary pieces, woodblock prints, theatre performances, or historical television dramas.[3] The 'foreign' records of the old Chinese mentality further reinforce this stereotype; e.g., the Venetian traveller Marco Polo (1254–1324) in his travelogue praises the Chinese with the following words:

> The inhabitants of Cathay Province [that is China] are blessed with more beautiful and refined manners than others, because they continuously polish their minds with erudite studies. The common people talk in a refined style. They greet each other with gentle politeness, and they are very ceremonious. They behave with dignity like gentlemen, and they consume their meals very neatly. […]
> (*The Travels of Marco Polo* / Chapter 34)

Obviously, the stereotype of the old Chinese as a people who are 'more polite' than others is just as much a non-Chinese as a Chinese cultural view.

This phenomenon is not necessarily negative, because researchers can draw some ideas from such stereotypic beliefs. Their study in relation to the presentation of self and the interpretation of others can, furthermore, refine the understanding of (im)polite communication; see Mills (2003). However, accepting stereotypes without reservation leads to the loss of scientific objectivity. One of the basic aims of this work is to objectively discuss some basic characteristics of traditional Chinese (im)politeness, i.e. the linguistic (im)politeness of the period spanning the 11th through the 20th centuries (see more on the dates of the studied corpus in Chapter Two). In the subsequent chapters there will be points where I explicitly

[3] See Illustration One at the end of this introductory chapter, which shows the stereotypical ways in which traditional Chinese gestures and mien occur in graphical arts that strongly influence the modern perception of traditional Chinese politeness. Note that besides body language and mien, stereotypical traditional politeness is also emphasised with dramatic recitation, stressed backchannel signals, and other means in modern Chinese movies, or historical soap operas, which is supposedly rooted in the strong effect of traditional Chinese dramas on these performing genres.

challenge generally accepted stereotypes. Chapter Four, for example, discusses the characteristics of the traditional Chinese *impoliteness* system, which turns out to be just as complex as the polite side of communication, so the notion of 'the polite Chinese' may be eroded somewhat. Nevertheless elsewhere, in Chapter Three, Chinese politeness still occurs as a ritual system that strictly controls the social interactions in pre-modern Chinese society. In brief: this work refutes some points, while reinforcing – but also reinterpreting – in other points the established image of traditional Chinese politeness.

The separation of reality from myth concerning traditional Chinese (im)politeness, however, is not the only goal of this work. In the course of attempting to gain a realistic view of Chinese or other East Asian (im)politeness systems, researchers can come up against facts that challenge the established scholarly ideas based on 'Western' experience (to use a naïve Chinese term for research based mainly on Anglo-Saxon scholarly traditions, see Clifford 1998). As a general tendency, most of the East Asian-related findings in linguistic politeness research [4] are based on evidence which hinders the 'local' application of Western scientific theories. Traditional Chinese (im)politeness – a regrettably understudied topic – is no exception to this trend. Throughout the initial research of this work (see Kádár 2003), I encountered a series of questions, like:

– Why does the Chinese (im)polite lexicon seemingly resist universalistic research attempts?
– How can Chinese politeness define the particulars of everyday communication, whilst the Chinese also have the most elaborate impoliteness lexicon?

I approach these problems in the hope that their study will not only reveal some characteristics of Chinese (im)politeness, but also contribute to the ongoing inquiries in mainstream politeness research.

In the first half of this introductory chapter I discuss (a) the background and present state of linguistic politeness research, which is necessary to frame my later argumentation; and (b) some characteristics of traditional Chinese (im)politeness. I intend to show that studying Chinese (im)politeness provides data relevant to developing the proper understanding of discourse evaluation, which is one of the central issues in present-day

[4] In the present work, 'politeness research' denotes that linguistic trend which studies linguistic (im)politeness across languages and cultures in order to understand its general communicational workings on a theoretical level, rather than simply aiming to map certain linguistic phenomena.

politeness research. After discussing these points, in section 1.2 I introduce the specifically examined linguistic phenomenon, traditional Chinese (im)polite terms of address. I also discuss here the core concept of the present work, defined as the 'societal meta-message' (conveyed by (im)polite vocatives), and the main arguments of this book. A list of technical terms and abbreviations used throughout the study can be found in the concluding part of this chapter.

1.1 Traditional Chinese linguistic (im)politeness and politeness research

Traditional Chinese linguistic (im)politeness is an 'exotic' topic, its proper understanding requires a degree of sinological explanation. However, if one remained within the boundaries of oriental studies, the result would be a detailed and autotelic *account of* (instead of a systematic explanation of) Chinese politeness. And if non-native researchers attempted to follow this path, even the most determined efforts would be no match for the huge dictionaries and compendia written by teams of native researchers. Instead, a more fruitful method is to approach the investigation of Chinese (im)politeness with the help of the concepts and methodology of politeness research, and to apply the data gained from Chinese corpora to the study of politeness research issues. Such research, however, requires operation in a multidisciplinary field that involves both politeness research and Chinese linguistics. This is partly why the present sub-chapter, rather circumstantially, notes some basic information both about politeness research and Chinese linguistic (im)politeness, before coming to the ordered account of the main arguments of the work. First, I survey the development of politeness research to show its current directions of inquiry. Later on, I marshal some facts about the subject of this study: pre-modern Chinese (im)politeness. My aim in discussing these two topics together is to show why the study of the pre-modern Chinese corpus is relevant for politeness research.

1.1.1 Politeness research

For a long period, research in linguistics was largely influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure. In the Saussurian view, the system of language

(‘langue’) enjoys priority above parlance (‘parole’) as the only worthwhile domain within which to study (Saussure 1978). Although the scope of linguistic inquiry rapidly broadened in the 20th century, language use was not regarded as a topic worthy of scholarly research, and was therefore excluded from the scope of mainstream study. Both the so-called ‘structural linguistics’ of Leonard Bloomfield and the ‘generative grammar’ of Noam Chomsky treat language autonomously “as a self-sufficient system” (Spolsky 2001: 4; for more details see Robins 1997). In the Chomskian view, ‘competence’ (the linguistic capacity of an ‘idealised speaker’) and ‘performance’ (the actual language use) are opposed to each other, instead of ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ (e.g. Chomsky 1979). This terminological change indicates that Chomsky focused on the human realisation of language, i.e., he “sought to take account of creativity by conceptualising competence as a system of generative processes” (Thompson 1991). Yet generative grammar exclusively describes ‘competence’. As a result of this, ‘parole/performance’ only received attention in the newly emerging linguistic trends from the late 1960s onwards, see Wardhaugh (1992) or Leech (1983). These approaches, psycholinguistics, discourse and conversation analysis, sociolinguistics or pragmatics “have led to a remarkable shift of direction within linguistics away from ‘competence’ and towards ‘performance’.” (Leech 1983: 4).

With the opening vistas of studying ‘performance’, (im)politeness became relevant for those scholars who wanted to understand issues like when and why human beings deviate from the direct conveyance of information, or how such deviations work in cultures, languages, or communities. The two fields where the study of linguistic (im)politeness gained particular attention are (socio-)pragmatics (see this ‘socio-’ attributive for pragmatics in Leech 1983: 10–13) and sociolinguistics. Since space is limited in which to circumstantially determine these linguistic trends, let us restrict their descriptions to one-sentence definitions.

> Pragmatics is about how people make sense of each other linguistically. (Yule 2002: 4)

> Sociolinguistics takes as its primary task to map linguistic variation on to social conditions (Spolsky 2001: 4).

That is, pragmatics deals with how can (more) be communicated (than) what is actually uttered. Sociolinguistics concentrates on how factors like age, sex, educational level, or institutional status influence language use. Hence these fields approach (im)politeness from different perspectives. Generally speaking, (socio-)pragmaticians study (im)politeness as a lin-

guistic behaviour that assumes the control of interpersonal relationships by conveying social messages behind concrete linguistic forms. Sociolinguists, on the other hand, study how the expression and function of linguistic (im)politeness change according to the socio-cultural context. Note, however, that it is not worth strictly separating these disciplines because in politeness research they have gradually merged into one another. Instead, it would be more appropriate to refer to these two domains as the two 'pillars' of mainstream politeness research. It should also be mentioned that politeness research is not restricted to these fields – other disciplines also gradually gain ground in the research of linguistic politeness. For example, critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA), an analytic methodology which

> takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power (Wodak 2001: 11)

became a fundamental tool for politeness research; this is because CDA can effectively show how (im)politeness is utilised for exercising as well as resisting power in language interaction. In short, it is questionable that politeness research is still a domain subordinated to pragmatics or sociolinguistics.[5]

It is beyond the scope of this work to examine comprehensively the development of contemporary politeness research (see more on this issue in Held 1992). That would require an independent undertaking because, as Watts (2003: Preface) notes, the number of scholarly publications dealing with linguistic (im)politeness has become enormous. Here I discuss only six major frameworks that I consider the most relevant for the present inquiry. The order in which they are listed roughly shows the development of the field. It is not a 'chronological list' however, because I applied a principle different from their publication date when choosing these particular frameworks. I have ordered these politeness research theories according to whether they follow *predictive* or *evaluation-focused* approaches to (im)polite communication (though many other categorisations of politeness theories would be possible, cf. Werkhofer 1992). The above designations mean that some politeness theorists view (im)polite-

[5] Considering facts like (a) the growing number of specialised conferences and publications, or (b) the organisation of scholarly circles such as the Linguistic Politeness Research Group, or (c) the recent (2005) launch of the *Journal of Politeness Research* (Christie ed.) it would not be an overstatement to suggest that politeness research is gradually developing into an independent, multidisciplinary field in communication studies. As reference for these recent developments, visit the homepage of the Linguistic Politeness Research Group (see Bibliography).

ness as a socially pre-determined set of illocutions, while others argue for involving the evaluating addressee in the examination. I intend to show that the most essential task in present-day politeness research is to realise a shift from the former to the latter perception, in order to gain an objective overview of linguistic (im)politeness. This, however, is not a simple process, merely requiring a re-examination of the communicational relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Instead, this change is accompanied by

(a) the growing need to find a proper *social theory* that can become a basis for evaluation-focused researches;
(b) efforts to change the *analytic methods* of politeness research.

1.1.1.1 'Predictive' theories

'Predictiveness' means that most of the earlier politeness research theories approach linguistic (im)politeness by taking "the interactional position of the evaluating hearer and conceptualising (im)politeness in terms of speaker behaviour" (Eelen 2001: 107). In other words, these frameworks hold that the evaluation of certain utterances can be predicted because people 'normally' react to socially defined forms of (im)politeness in similar ways. Thus these theorists can be criticised for themselves adopting the position of the real hearer, by defining certain utterances as (im)polite, that is, they apply their *own* experience of 'proper' social communication when examining linguistic (im)politeness.

These predictive conceptions were mainly formed under the influence of the language philosopher Paul Grice's 'Cooperative Principle' notion (see Grice 1975; 1989). According to the Cooperative Principle theory, humans cooperate with each other in communication; this is why they can reach mutual understanding in situations that would otherwise be ambiguous. In the course of communication people adhere to the four major maxims of 'Quantity' (supplying the hearer with sufficient information), 'Quality' (supplying the hearer with true information), 'Relation' (being relevant), and 'Manner' (being perspicuous). The maxims have maximising/minimising mechanisms, for instance, the 'Maxim of Quality' prescribes that speaker maximise the communication of truth and minimise that of falsehood in speech. Speakers can 'normally' presuppose that their speech partners understand their meaning because the hearers adhere to the same (universal) maxims, and so they understand when and why the speakers flout these. Although Grice personally did not analyse linguistic (im)politeness to any great extent, this theory gave politeness research a

boost, because politeness can be described as conventionalised linguistic behaviour based on the flouting of Cooperative Principle maxims. To cite an example, when notifying a person of bad news, 'as a rule' speakers do not convey the given matter to the speech partners in direct words, i.e., they flout the 'Maxim of Manner'. But the hearers 'will' infer that the speakers have flouted a maxim with the particular aim of expressing concern towards them, and so they will understand that the speakers were polite.

Politeness theories based on the Cooperative Principle are predictive because Cooperative Principle itself is predictive – it presupposes a cooperative attitude in communication; see Eelen (2001). So these politeness research theories presuppose that the hearers, blessed with the talent of the Cooperative Principle, within regular circumstances interpret all utterances exactly according to the speakers' intention. And so the Cooperative Principle and the conventionalised flouts of its maxims work in 'standard' ways. This view has several manifestations in theories, like the idealised speaker-hearer relationship, or the use of generalising expressions regarding (im)polite behaviour, for example 'as a rule', or 'will' (I have marked them with quotation marks throughout the above paragraph). Consequently, deviations from what is defined as 'normal' are excluded from the scope of inquiries, this is partly why *impoliteness* also remained for a long time an understudied topic in politeness research, cf. Eelen (2001: 87–121).

Many theories, which were formed in the earlier stages of politeness research, are predictive in some way or another. Note that by no means do I intend to suggest that predictive views have lost their validity in the field. Not only are most publications that focus on the (im)politeness phenomena of given languages based on them, but they also represent a major scholarly effort that aims to help understand the systematic relationship between politeness and other areas of communication. These theories were primarily created as conceptions within universal pragmatics, and they have received a similar critique to the latter, that is, that they describe communication as "it might be in a better world" (Fairclough 2001: 8).[6] Of course, sociolinguistics, the other component of politeness research, also affected these theories, but sociolinguistic data appear in them in a stylised manner, like the 'cultural factors' in Lakoff's (1973) theory (see below). Therefore, such descriptions are adequate insofar as one intends

[6] This is because many pragmaticians tend to hold their field a complement of 'linguistics proper' (i.e. phonology, semantics and grammar), hence they exclude concrete social data from their inquiries.

to gain a 'static' view of politeness, without considering too many 'incorrect' counterexamples. In what follows, let us briefly list three very influential pieces of the 'predictive' frameworks.

1) Robin T. Lakoff (1973; 1977) carried out the earliest comprehensive, theoretical research of linguistic politeness. She connects politeness with the Cooperative Principle maxims, and defines it as a behaviour that serves conflict avoidance. In her theory, the Cooperative Principle maxims are flouted when a person expresses politeness. Since such flouts are conventionalised, both the speaker and the hearer are conscious of what is going on in such cases. Lakoff also sets up three politeness (i.e. conflict avoidance) rules, which control the flouting of the Cooperative Principle maxims: (a) 'Don't impose' (Distance), (b) 'Give options' (Deference) and (c) 'Make A feel good, be friendly' (Camaraderie) (Lakoff 1973: 298). This threefold distinction serves in her theory to categorise cultures, depending on which of the rules they thrust into prominence; thus she acknowledges intercultural differences in polite language and behaviour.
2) Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1978; 1987), like Lakoff, define politeness in terms of conflict avoidance, but they approach this consideration differently. They define a 'Model Person' who possesses the universals of 'rationality' and 'face'. 'Rationality' means the availability to the Model Person "of a precisely definable mode of reasoning from ends to the means" (1987: 58). So, as in Lakoff's model, every language user commonly recognises politeness because (s)he possesses 'rationality'. But the work of politeness is more complex, due to the notion of 'face'. 'Face', a term borrowed from Chinese culture (Goffmann 1967), is separated into 'positive' versus 'negative' needs in Brown and Levinson's interpretation. 'Positive face' denotes the wish to be appreciated by others, and 'positive politeness' is the fulfilment of this wish. 'Negative face' means the wish not to be imposed upon by others, and its accomplishment is 'negative politeness'.[7] Politeness is applied when a certain act threatens the 'face', that is, it has a redressive (conflict avoiding) function. In summation, although Brown and Levinson gave a more elaborated definition of linguistic politeness than Lakoff, they also base this on the Cooperative Principle by applying 'rationality' that predetermines the effect of utterances.

[7] Note that in Brown and Levinson's theory the terms 'positive' and 'negative' do not carry any value judgement.

3) Geoffrey N. Leech's works (1980; 1983) study general pragmatics, instead of focusing on politeness only. Just like the above theorists, Leech bases his inquiry on the Cooperative Principle, by framing certain linguistic behaviours like politeness, irony, etc. into principles, and locating these together with the Cooperative Principle in the domain of 'Interpersonal rhetoric' (Leech 1983: 16). The Politeness Principle, like the Cooperative Principle, is built on maxims such as 'Tact', 'Generosity', 'Approbation' or 'Modesty'. The Politeness Principle maxims work analogously to Cooperative Principle maxims: they have a maximising/minimising effect. Again, Cooperative Principle maxims are flouted by polite utterances, but the difference in this theory is that here flouting is based on other maxims – hearers recognise the conventionalised politeness maxims that are responsible for the flouting of Cooperative Principle maxims, so they can identify the contextual meaning of politeness. The maxim-(minimisation/maximisation)-based approach of politeness makes it possible to explain how a certain amount of politeness is provided depending on the speech-situation.

Obviously, all the aforementioned frameworks are predictive because they connect (im)politeness with the Cooperative Principle, i.e., they presuppose that the speaker and the hearer unconditionally play the same game: the hearer is supposed to evaluate an utterance according to the speaker's intention. Whilst the aim of politeness research is the theoretic synchronisation of politeness phenomena with (cooperative) communication, these theories are satisfactory. The problems that occur during their application to concrete linguistic data are explained in a large number of publications, written as modifications to these theories. But as understanding of linguistic (im)politeness deepened, several critiques emerged as scholars felt predictive concepts were inadequate to fully understand the complexity of (im)polite communication. Predictive theories can work only if they rule out some of the interpretations and representations of (im)politeness as 'incorrect', by virtue of their 'higher understanding' of the topic. That is, the data produced by 'laymen' go through a scholarly sieve, and if a 'layman' fails to interpret utterances according to how these 'should be' understood, then they are regularly accused of having a 'weaker command of language'. This view blocks theories in taking freely into account every possible communicator and speech situation. Therefore, some recent frameworks are based on the argument that, in order to arrive at a realistic picture of (im)politeness, not only the speakers' utterances but also the real hearers and their evaluations have to be examined.

I call these new theories 'evaluation-focused', although in reality they aim to *restore the balance* between production and evaluation.

1.1.1.2 'Evaluation-focused' theories

Focusing on evaluation is that core concept in some (so-called 'post-modern') politeness research studies according to which "in everyday practice (im)politeness occurs not so much when the speaker produces behaviour but rather when the hearer evaluates that behaviour" (Eelen 2001: 109). That is, researchers who agree with this statement also try to study the hearers' contextual evaluations, not only the speakers' productive work, hence enabling them to take every kind of interaction into consideration. This is accompanied by the need of change in levels different from narrow sense politeness research; one of these is the conscious change of the social view that serves as background for research. This is a crucial point because politeness research is a domain strongly bound to sociology, and only a realistic social model can help scholars to attain a realistic view of (im)politeness. Recent studies have shown that predictive models, even though somewhat unintentionally, follow the so-called 'Structural Functional Model' of the American sociologist Talcott Parsons (see Eelen 2001: 188–240). In the Parsonian social view culture determines society, society determines person, while person determines behaviour. These levels are hierarchical: the higher levels control the lower ones. Although effects can also occur in reverse, major changes in the 'system' can take shape only downwards from the upper levels. In short, in this system individual behaviour is determined by culture, that is, individuals are – to a certain extent – cultural 'robots'. Returning to politeness theories, this view coincides with predictive considerations where 'culture', 'customs' or other super-personal factors determine the predictability of certain utterances, independently from personal evaluations. If personal evaluations differ from the 'general', individuals can be – and indeed they often are – assessed as having a lesser command of language and a lower level of culture.

This social view, however, is not adequate for evaluation-focused approaches. Most researchers who criticise predictive theories have found that the social model of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu could offer a more appropriate basis for politeness research inquiries.[8] Bourdieu's

[8] Note that, besides Bourdieu's theory, the so-called 'community of practice' concept of Etienne Wenger (1998) has gained particular attention in evaluation-focused research. This theory studies the way in which humans form assemblages

model is regularly referred to as the *'Theory of Practice'*, after the title of his book (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*) that was published first in 1972 (see Bourdieu 2004 in the Bibliography). The 'Theory of Practice' is a sociological framework that places individuals into its focus, without denying the role of common social values in personal acts. Bourdieu explains the relationship of the person and the society through the concept of the so-called *'habitus'*. Every individual possesses 'habitus', which is formed by social factors such as family background, education, culture, and personal experiences of social life. Thus, socio-cultural norms are incorporated into the 'habitus' of human beings, but the way in which they are interpreted depends on the person. When individuals enter into new actions they act freely, but they rely on their 'habitus' in choosing the manner of action. And so the 'habitus' is not a constant, pre-determined factor because it is reformed by every action – experiences of the world are incorporated into it. The inner-world of 'habitus' is connected to the outer-world at the so-called *'fields'*, which denote the concrete social contexts of actions. In every 'field', attendants have a certain amount of *'capital'* that they can use. 'Capital' can be educational level, physical power, or whatever is important in a certain 'field'. So for example, during an application for an academic job, educational background (e.g. the command of standard language, slow and well-articulated speech, etc.) becomes 'capital'. And the 'fields' are not constant, unchangeable manifestations of cultural or social 'order'. On the contrary, they are sites of struggles for the redistribution of 'capital'.

Bourdieu's theory was originally developed as an attempt to create an objective (non-determinative) overview of social structures, but it also had a major impact on communication studies. Bourdieu himself exploited his theory's linguistic applicability in his work *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) but, in fact, his sociological considerations influenced whole domains in communication studies, like CDA, or politeness research. For politeness research theories, the 'Theory of Practice' can provide a realistic basis for approaching what is going on in (im)polite interactions. One can view (im)politeness as a social practice where the

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in a given society, which provides a more precise view than the vague notion 'society' when discussing manifestations of language use (like (im)politeness) in social assemblages. Besides Wenger, a socio-(linguistic) theorist of particular importance in politeness research is Michel Foucault (1972, 1980, 1981); see more in Mills (2003). Although in the present study I focus chiefly on Bourdieu's theory in relation to politeness research, it should be emphasised that Wenger's and Foucault's concepts have strongly influenced the development of evaluation-focused politeness research.

choice/omission of certain (im)polite formulae and strategies is a 'resource' of power, that is, (im)politeness is one kind of 'capital' applied in accordance with certain 'fields' (in this case, contexts). And the notion of 'habitus' explains why personal evaluations of (im)politeness can differ from person to person. Thus it becomes possible to restore the balance between the speaker and hearer, by equally focusing on both of them. Also, the communicative function of politeness can also be viewed from Bourdieu's perspective in terms different from conflict avoidance, because linguistic (im)politeness occurs as 'capital' in interaction that can be utilised for several purposes.

Quite apart from the sociological benefits that politeness research can gain from Bourdieu's social theory, 'evaluation-focused' politeness theories also give rise to a methodological change. It is typical for the predictive theories that researchers base their arguments on fictitious examples, and, moreover, they regularly apply sentence-units, instead of discourse fragments. Although there are counterexamples, as well, 'case-studies' of recorded, real interactions are relatively rare among predictive researches. This is paralleled by the fact that these theories focus on production only: the sentence-long fictitious examples are sufficient to explain theoretical points, while their effects on hearers usually remain untouched or presupposed. Evaluation-focused theories, however, have not confined themselves to describing production only, thus researchers try to enter the hearers' reaction on record by applying empirical data. This is why discourse analysis and CDA has become the fundamental analytic methodologies of politeness research, and this research tends to utilise longer literary texts, or recorded conversations as their corpora.

I consider the following three frameworks to most closely represent evaluation-centred thinking.

1) Richard J. Watts (1989; 1992; 2003; Locher and Watts 2005) developed an evaluation-focused model of English (im)politeness. He set up the two-fold categories of 'politic' and 'polite' behaviour. 'Politic' means "that behaviour, linguistic or non-linguistic, which the participants construct as appropriate to the ongoing social interaction" (Watts 2003: 21), while an utterance can be interpreted as 'polite' if it is more than being simply 'politic' in a given context. Impoliteness is the explicit breach of 'politic behaviour'. This system is built on evaluation: politic and impolite behaviours are commonly recognised according to the interactants' 'habitus', but politeness ('what goes beyond politic') is a matter of personal judgement. So, although participants' recognition of politic vs. non-politic appears normative, this

theory brakes radically with predictive frameworks because it endows language users with the right to evaluate politic/polite.

2) The title of Gino Eelen's book (2001, from many aspects based on Eelen 1999) is *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, and it is, in fact more a critical review of politeness research inquiries than an independent study of one definite politeness system. But since this work reconsiders the aims and methods of politeness research with a view to attaining an evaluation-focused perspective, and gives guidelines on how to apply Bourdieu's theory to politeness research, I still categorise it as a framework. Eelen's view is more 'radical' than that of Watts because Eelen proposes an *absolute* evaluative view, without accepting normative concepts (like the 'politic' notion) on a theoretical ('second-order') level, and he also claims that researchers "should avoid getting involved in the struggle over representations of reality, and instead incorporate these representations into reality by making the struggle over them the object of research" (2001: 46). Consequently, a difference between Eelen's and Watts' considerations is that Eelen's objective is to find an evaluation-based theory which is exempt from language and society-specific norms and representations that influence the 'first-order theories' of other researchers (hence Eelen's theory becomes universal), while Watts holds that while evaluation itself is a universal component in the politeness of every (sub-)culture, the norms of what is 'politic' has (sub-)culture and community-dependent definitions. In other words, Watts emphasises the need for studying 'first-order politeness', that is, how people in certain cultures and societies evaluate (im)polite utterances. Opposed to this, Eelen aims to elaborate a scientific, 'second-order' politeness theory, which "should be non-normative in nature" (2003: 46).
3) Sara Mills' (2003) work studies the relation between politeness and gender, but at the same time it is a general framework of linguistic (im)politeness. Mills argues that (im)politeness "cannot be understood simply as a property of utterances, or even as a set of choices made solely by individuals, but rather as a set of strategies which communities of practice develop, affirm, and contest, and which individuals within these communities engage with in order to come to an assessment of their own and others' behaviour and position within the group (2003: 9)." That is, Mills holds that the notion of (im)politeness is worked out in every social assemblage, so she applies the 'communities of practice' conception of Wenger (1998) when studying (im)politeness. Two developments which are essential from an evaluation-focused perspective are: (a) she strongly relies on contextual factors

when analysing discourse; and (b) she develops “a form of analysis which focuses on the judgement of both one’s own speech and that of others in relation to the notions of politeness and impoliteness” (2003: 10). It is also necessary to note that Mills does not accept the distinction between second-order and first-order politeness at all, because “politeness is always by its very nature a question of judgement and assessment” (2003: 8).

As is probably clear from the above summary of these evaluation-focused approaches to linguistic (im)politeness, researchers have – to a certain degree – different opinions of the possible linguistic work of evaluation, and the possibility of its study. Eelen (2001: 183–186) proposes a theory that can capture (im)politeness as an evaluative activity in general, and so he refuses to apply normative factors on a theoretical level. Watts and Mills, on the other hand, accept that the ‘politic behaviour’ or the ‘communities of practice’ unavoidably play a normative role in both the lay and the scholarly evaluations of certain utterances as ‘(im)polite’, and so they incorporate these normative factors in their scholarly theories of evaluation. In the present work I will try to support the view of the latter scholars, by showing that the personal discourse evaluation of traditional Chinese vocatives is of strongly restricted scope. I will try to focus on the (socio)linguistic aspects of Chinese that play a normative role in the (im)polite interpretations of vocatives: as it will be seen, there is a Chinese-specific normative factor that I define as the ‘societal meta-message’, which supports the view that evaluation is a universal phenomenon, but its nature differs from language to language (see more in the Conclusions).

It is necessary to note that the above description of the evaluation-focused theories is rather simplistic; studying the similarities/theoretical opposition of these outstanding frameworks would be a far more complex issue, requiring another book altogether. In the above description I only concentrate on the questions of (a) accepting norms on a theoretical level, and (b) the possibilities of elaborating a universally applicable theory of (im)polite evaluation. Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) discuss these issues somewhat differently from Eelen (2001), hence I categorise these frameworks together. However, this does not mean that they take similar views on linguistic (im)politeness in any other sense.

To sum up section 1.1.1: the two main theoretical approaches to linguistic (im)politeness that I distinguish in this book are the predictive and the evaluation-focused ones. In practice, these are not separate ‘schools’, but represent the stages of the development of theoretical politeness

research. Even so, predictive views still strongly influence politeness studies, particularly those monographs and papers that focus on particular phenomena in given languages. Predictive research is suitable from the point of general pragmatics, because it can easily relate (im)politeness to other theoretical perspectives of communication. But, in the long run, the 'post-modern' evaluation-centrism can provide a more realistic view of linguistic (im)politeness, so prospectively it will gradually become the leading tendency in politeness research. (Also, the understanding of evaluation can become a relevant topic for other areas of communication studies.) Present debates show that the most current topical issue in evaluation-focused politeness research is the modelling of the evaluative process in communication. The existing evaluation-focused theories concentrate on the English language, and they rely on Western social experience, thus they describe evaluation as it works in such contexts. But cultural differences must be considered in order to widen the proper understanding of discourse evaluation. The next sub-section will list some characteristics of pre-modern Chinese (im)politeness, which make it suitable as a corpus for an evaluation process-focused politeness research study. This also helps to sketch the central concept of the present work that will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.

1.1.2 The corpus studied: traditional Chinese (im)politeness

Traditional Chinese (im)politeness has not received much attention in politeness research, compared with modern Chinese politeness.[9] For example, the *Bibliography on Chinese Communication Theory and Research* (see Bibliography), an Internet collection that comprehensively lists works on Chinese communication in up to 2000 items, contains only three studies that (at least) touch on traditional Chinese politeness. The situation is similar in other topic-related internet homepages and bibliographies, such as that of the *China Pragmatics Association*.[10] Besides, only

[9] I intentionally write here 'politeness' because both the traditional and the modern Chinese *impoliteness* systems are understudied, while modern Chinese politeness has received somewhat more intensive scholarly attention. (The distinction between 'traditional' and 'modern' will be specified in Chapter Two.)

[10] A regular tendency in (mainland) Chinese pragmatics is that researchers focus on other languages, particularly English, see works such as He (1988), He (2000), or Jiang (2001). The few Chinese works that deal specifically with Chinese pragmatics discuss modern Chinese corpora only, see Qian (1997), or Shi and Cui (2002).

modern Chinese politeness has 'standard' politeness-theoretical descriptions, as in Yuling Pan's (2000) book which gives a high-level overview of Chinese linguistic politeness. As far as I know, apart from a few papers dealing with specific issues, for example, Yang (1999), or Skewis (2003), the only non-Chinese, comprehensive linguistic study of traditional Chinese politeness was written in Japanese by Guoyue Peng (2000). Yet, even though it is a high-level and essential reference material, Peng's work studies traditional Chinese politeness in order to contribute to cognitive linguistics, and there is not much discussion on the ongoing issues of evaluation-focused politeness research. And this situation is roughly similar in the technical literature written in Chinese: the only longer work worth mentioning from a scholarly point of view was written by Yuan Tingdong (2004). But, again this is not a politeness theoretical study but an examination of historical linguistics, and it holds value for the politeness researcher as an auxiliary material.

This difference in scholarly attention between 'modern' and 'traditional' is rooted in the fact that pre-modern Chinese (im)politeness is a 'difficult' corpus, as its politeness research-based study requires retrospection to old Chinese society and history. Also, its reconstruction cannot be done using the 'usual' methodology, such as tape-recording, which is widely applied in politeness research. This renders it difficult to discuss communication in it as effectively as in modern corpora. The examination of modern Chinese (im)politeness is less problematic: owing to the growing possibilities of intercultural exchange and data collection in China, the communicational application of modern (im)politeness has become accessible to researchers. Furthermore, modern Chinese (im)politeness is a more 'up-to-date' topic than its traditional counterpart because its research can be relevant for other areas in communication studies, for example, the study of political or business interactions (see Schoenhals 1992 for the former and Bilbow 1997 for the latter).

Traditional Chinese (im)politeness, however, deserves attention because from some perspectives it provides a more relevant corpus for theoretical politeness research than modern Chinese (im)politeness. This is because evaluation-focused politeness studies have one property open to criticism, which as yet has not been remedied: theorists focus mainly on the discourse interpretation of (im)politeness in English or other modern Western languages and societies. Although the aforementioned evaluation-focused frameworks use sources that study the (im)politeness of other cultures and languages, as well, they themselves carry out their empiric research on discourse evaluation in modern English. This implicitly, and probably unavoidably, leads to restricted scope in understanding contex-

tual evaluation. Yet, the way in which the evaluative process works in the discourses of societies and cultures that differ from contemporary Western Europe, and which furthermore are not egalitarian but totalitarian, can provide a somewhat different understanding of this issue. This is why traditional Chinese (im)politeness has been chosen as the main topic in this work. As I will try to show in later chapters, in old Chinese hierarchical society (see Ebrey 1981) honorific formulae are *(socio-)linguistically* unsuitable for free contextual evaluation, as both their production and interpretation are pre-determined. This does not mean, as a matter of course, that evaluation did not exist at all in traditional Chinese (im)politeness, but its nature has to be reconsidered.

Another advantage of studying traditional Chinese (im)politeness is that it provides a corpus exempt from *major* cross-cultural influences, compared with its modern counterpart, see Scollon and Scollon (1995). In the present work, 'major cross-cultural influences' mean that set of linguistic behaviours/lexical items/strategies which appear in the parlance of a certain community as influenced by a different culture or social group. So, for example, I do not count linguistic exchanges among several strata of one society as 'cross-cultural'. (Note that the definition of 'cross-cultural' differs between different authors. For instance, many feminist linguists tend to treat even the interaction of men and women as 'cross-cultural'; see Tannen 1990.[11]) Cross-cultural influences can become a disadvantage for evaluation-focused theoretical research: most of the contemporary 'modern' social communities are multicultural, due to the growing role of globalisation. Thus, it would be difficult to assert that a community like a family would be exempt from the effects of the media, modern education, etc. all of which factors bring different kinds of culture into human life. Yet, the final aim of politeness research should be to cover the widest possible range of different (im)politeness systems in its inquiry, in order to be able to form a theory that can describe all of these. Since cross-cultural effects make (im)politeness customs merge into one another, the original and unique characteristics of the (im)politeness of certain cultures change into more 'globalised' ones. To cite an example: in traditional Chinese impoliteness there were no verbal curses, such as modern oaths like the *cao-ma-pi* 肏媽屄 ('fuck your mother'), but there

[11] Cross-cultural research is a preferred topic in politeness research, because differences in (im)polite beliefs across cultures are also relevant for other fields, like TEFL (that is Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Chinese in relation to cross-cultural politeness has been studied by several researchers, like Lii-Shih (1986), or Scollon and Scollon (1995).

were nominalised oaths, see Kádár (2005a). This phenomenon would unavoidably escape the notice of the researcher focusing on modern Chinese, since verbal curses are already present in the modern language as a result of foreign influence. This is one of the reasons why the study of pre-modern Chinese (im)politeness – a system that developed 'hermetically' up to the 1800s (see Chapter Two) – is more advantageous for politeness research than that of the modern one. Note that I would not like to suggest that 'cross-cultural' impacts did not reach traditional Chinese (im)politeness at all – by no means would I deny the claim that the politeness and impoliteness systems of the neighbouring ethnic groups influenced traditional Chinese politeness and impoliteness.[12] But, as will be argued in Chapter Two, up to the collapse of traditional Chinese society (im)politeness served the maintenance of hierarchical social relations, and also the success of communication among such hierarchical relations (even though this view will be partly challenged in Chapter Five). And so the imperial dynasties, including non-Chinese ruling houses like the Manchu Qing dynasty, made efforts to conserve it in a relatively unchanged state.

Summing up 1.1.2, traditional Chinese (im)politeness formulae provide relevant corpora for politeness research because (a) hierarchical social roles and linguistic characteristics pre-determine both their production and interpretation; (b) they are free from major cross-cultural influences. So even if traditional Chinese politeness is a much less studied topic than its modern counterpart, from many perspectives it can contribute more to the universal understanding of evaluation. Relying on these general characteristics, in the following section I describe in detail how the study of traditional Chinese (im)politeness can contribute to the understanding of evaluation.

1.2 Main arguments, structure and terminology

This work aims to contribute to the understanding of the evaluative process of linguistic (im)politeness. It is not a critique of other politeness theories, neither it is a new theory in itself. Rather, it tests the applicability of earlier considerations to traditional Chinese linguistic data, and tries

[12] The several dictionaries of the Chinese lexicon, like Ji (2000), contain several polite terms of address of Manchu, etc. origin.

to draw conclusions from this experiment. The major linking of ideas will follow contrasting directions: (a) focusing on the *traditional Chinese (im)polite vocative lexicon*, first I show that its production and interpretation are sociolinguistically pre-determined; but (b) later on, I will show how evaluation still plays a part in the discourse application of this lexicon. Thus, I argue for the universal characteristic of evaluation, on the one hand, and for the diversity of its nature, on the other.

More specifically, in the first, larger part of this work I will elaborate on one specific concept of traditional Chinese (im)polite terms of address, the so-called *'societal meta-message'*. This refers to

> the secondary, societal message that every traditional (im)polite vocative formula expresses behind its 'surface' semantic meaning (though these often coincide), which strictly pre-determines its application and interpretation.

That is, because (im)polite terms of address convey elevating/denigrating secondary meanings, their application does not allow contextual interpretation in the traditional Chinese hierarchical society, compared, for example, to Western honorific vocatives (see more in Chapter Four). That is, (im)polite vocatives are of inherent interpretation, which exists not only in the polite, but also in the impolite register. This contradicts evaluation-focused interpretations, which do not generally accept that the interpretation of certain linguistic formulae would be inherent in any context. In the second part of this work, however, in contrast to the former chapters, I will argue that evaluation is still a universal phenomenon because in certain discourses, where social power is challenged by other power factors, the *application* of the vocatives can be contextually interpreted. So my conclusion will be that evaluation is a universal phenomenon, only its nature differs between languages and cultures, as has been also maintained by Watts (2003: 23) and Mills (2003).

It is necessary to mention in passing that I deal with Chinese vocatives in this work for two reasons. One of these is that vocatives are particularly important in traditional Chinese (im)politeness, as argued in 1.2.1 and also in other chapters. Another reason for choosing them, however, is that recent politeness research frameworks pay more attention to the 'difficult-to-capture' non-formulaic aspect of (im)politeness, rather than pure formulae. While (im)politeness formulae constitute a very important domain of (im)politeness, most scholars have been focusing on 'regular' discourse data rather than specific (im)politeness formulae. In doing so, they concentrate on the 'dynamic' aspects of (im)politeness (that is how politeness and impoliteness appear in discourse behind forms), while for-

mulae and their discourse application tend to become a topic of interest for more specialised inquiries than theoretical politeness research, for example, some studies on apology, see Suszczyńska (2005) and Kádár (2007). By examining Chinese terms of address (and their discourse application and interpretation), I endeavour to re-introduce formulaic politeness into politeness research. I deal with (im)polite terms of address, which are claimed to be among the most formalised linguistic manifestations. I intend to show how their examination can contribute to the research of discourse *evaluation* of (im)polite utterances.

In this sub-chapter, first I delve briefly into a paradox, which has led me to the study of (im)polite vocatives, and the previously discussed notion of the societal meta-message conveyed by (im)polite vocatives. Later on, I list the successive arguments of the chapters of this work. Finally, I specify the major technical terms and abbreviations.

1.2.1 'Addressing' versus 'Self-denigration'

This work studies the communicational use of traditional Chinese (im)polite addressing or *chengwei* 稱謂[13] lexicon. Most researchers believe that terms of address are of central importance in Chinese (im)politeness. Gu (1990: 249) refers to their significance as "in comparison with other [politeness] maxims, the Address Maxim can be seen as being essentially an expression of linguistic politeness." Because of their central role in (im)polite communication, both Chinese philologists and 20th century linguists examined vocatives. Yet, their research largely remained a task for Chinese sociolinguistics; see Chao (1976). This is probably because Chinese vocatives constitute a complex system, which is difficult to compare with other languages.

Chinese addressing appeared in politeness research by Yueguo Gu's *Politeness Phenomena in Modern Chinese*, a paper which exerted a strong influence, as late as 1990.[14] The basic paradox which has led to the elaboration of the societal-meta message is found in this work. Although this paradox will be analysed in the next chapter in more detail, let us

[13] Note that another Chinese term for 'addressing' is *chenghu* 稱呼. There is a semantic difference, however, between *chenghu* and *chengwei* because, as introduced by Yuan (2004: 9), the term *chengwei* has a much wider semantic coverage, it expresses the whole vocabulary of terms of address, while the term *chenghu* refers only to single terms.

[14] In fact, from many perspectives this work relies on Gu's earlier studies, see Gu (1985; 1987).

briefly introduce it here. Gu's writing integrates Chinese linguistic (im)politeness into a major politeness theoretical framework. Considering that Brown and Levinson's (1987) 'positive vs. negative politeness' theory is incapable of describing Chinese politeness, he thus applies Leech's (1983) 'politeness-maxim' consideration to capture its workings. This makes it possible for him to elaborate 'Chinese politeness maxims' to describe all of those phenomena that were not previously considered by politeness theorists. This is where addressing makes its appearance: within the four special Chinese maxims, Gu mentions *The Address Maxim*, which reads:

> address your interlocutor with an appropriate address term.
> (Gu 1990: 248)[15]

In Gu's description, the term 'address' covers every kind of polite addressing form. Gu relates this large category of terms to another special Chinese politeness maxim, 'Self-denigration'. This latter maxim

> consists of two clauses or submaxims: (a) denigrate self and (b) elevate other. (Gu 1990: 246)

According to Gu, these two maxims are closely related because the use of terms of address also adheres to the Self-denigration Maxim. But, in Gu's theory, addressing and self-denigration appear as two distinct phenomena, which co-operate in many cases. In such co-operation, addressing is subordinated to the 'Self-denigration Maxim'.

Although Gu's account of Chinese addressing is a valuable one, it separates 'addressing' and 'self-denigration' in a paradoxical way. If one examines Chinese historical terms of address, it is found that every (im)polite vocative form expresses some elevating/denigrating lexical

[15] At a first glance Gu's description is 'evident' because properly addressing the interlocutor is a must in every culture. But the elaboration of this maxim is fundamental, because

(a) by elaborating this maxim, Gu emphasises the importance of vocatives in Chinese. That is, by no means can the Chinese addressing phenomenon be categorised into other maxims, which could be considered in other languages; and

(b) Leech's (1983) theory does not deal with terms of address, while Brown and Levinson's (1987) work elaborately defines them in 'negative' and 'positive' terms. This would suggest that the latter framework is more appropriate for universally describing the communicational function of vocatives. However, Gu argues that the 'negative vs. positive politeness' theory cannot describe Chinese politeness (including vocatives), and recent research has proved their concrete inapplicability for the traditional Chinese addressing system, see Kádár (2005b).

meaning, while this is not the case with modern (im)polite terms of address. So, at least, a distinct line must be drawn between modern and pre-modern Chinese (im)politeness systems. But, rather paradoxically, Gu applies traditional Chinese denigrating/elevating terms throughout his paper, which are scarcely used in modern colloquial language. Such an amalgamation of modern with pre-modern would indicate that, in traditional Chinese politeness, self-denigration and polite addressing are different phenomena. Another related problem is that Gu involves some vocatives in the self-denigration maxim, while he categorises others as terms of address. Thus, the relation between the two phenomena becomes obscure.

The basic research, which has led to the re-examination of the scope of evaluation in the discourse application of traditional Chinese vocatives, is based on this paradox. The arguments of this inquiry are listed in Chapter Two, which unifies 'addressing' with 'self-denigration' in pre-modern Chinese politeness. As a result of this unifying attempt, the notion of societal meta-message – the inherent elevating/denigrating message of (im)polite terms of address – is elaborated. The discovery of this concept serves as a basis for inquiries carried out in the subsequent chapters.

1.2.2 The main arguments

Chapter Two, after shortly introducing the corpora and some Chinese-specific technical terms[16], deals with the above-discussed paradox; my aim is to show that *traditional Chinese polite terms of address compulsorily express denigrating/elevating meaning* or, vice versa, in polite register only elevating/denigrating address terms (henceforth EA/DAs, see more on his terminology in Chapter Two) are applied. This is rooted in the fact that (im)polite addressing is a product of a strictly hierarchical society (where the basic means of polite communication is the acknowledgment of social rank), and are applied and interpreted in such social context. The fusion of addressing and elevation/denigration will be proven by separating traditional from modern Chinese politeness: as will be argued for, in the traditional setting, as opposed to the modern one, there is no 'neutrally' polite addressing. Personal pronouns (henceforth PPs), which can express neutrally polite meaning in a modern context, are not

[16] I study these issues in Chapter Two, instead of the present chapter, because these are primarily related to the linguistic examinations carried out in the former, while here I focus on the main structure of the work.

used in traditional politeness at all. Furthermore, as the approaches to 'neutrality' (that is the lack of elevation/denigration) show, 'neutrality' is in general avoided, in the traditional polite context.

Chapters Three and Four base their arguments on the unification of denigration/elevation and addressing. Chapter Three examines the socio-linguistic characteristics of polite EA/DAs. Since Chinese polite vocatives inherently express some denigrating/elevating social meta-message, this property restricts which designations can become polite terms of address. There is no polite professional and/or social form of address for persons of low social status – such despised positions cannot be elevated politely or referred to modestly (in a self-denigrating sense). Also, people of higher social and/or institutional power cannot politely address interlocutors of lower rank, as polite addressing would inevitably convey an elevating message. This is in contrast to other historical cultures where higher-ranked persons could politely address interlocutors of a lower rank, cf. Mazzon (2003). So Chapter Three will try to elaborate a view, related to social power, according to which the address lexicon (and its social status-dependent application) can be categorised. As the analysis shows, the use of polite Chinese vocatives is governed by strict socio-linguistic rules (originating in the linguistic characteristics of terms of address), which do not allow much freedom for members of either the powerful or the powerless social groups in the choice (and so the interpretation) of vocatives proper. As result of this, a rigid picture of Chinese social interaction will be formed, which is exactly in accordance with regular stereotypes of Chinese politeness. This leads to a paradoxical issue. Even though the existence of this rigid 'system' is supported by the notion of a societal meta-message which defines the social application of the vocatives, it still resembles the Parsonian social model, where individuals are forced to act in culturally and socially predetermined ways. As Chapter Four shows, however, the production and interpretation of *impolite* EA/DAs is also strictly defined. That is, the notion of societal meta-message in fact defines every minute of (im)polite communication, since impoliteness cannot be accused of being prescribed by moral or idealistic concepts.

Chapter Four deals with the neglected field of Chinese impoliteness in the inquiry through the study of impolite EA/DAs (in this case, self-elevation/speech-partner-denigration) in contrast to polite ones. This chapter studies the aforementioned paradoxical 'strictness' of Chinese (im)politeness from perspectives different from sociolinguistics. Here my focus is rather on the contextual interpretational inherency of Chinese vocatives. It appears that, the societal (denigrating/elevating) meta-message does not

only define the *production*, but it also determines the *interpretation* of (im)polite EA/DA terms. The fact that the focused topic is impoliteness further underlines this assertion. If the use and interpretation of Chinese impolite addressing is as 'strict' as the polite case, this shows that the reason for such strictness originates in the language – Confucian prescriptive rules under no circumstances would define the use (and so the interpretation) of impoliteness. In short, it becomes possible to rule out that the 'rigid' picture of Chinese (im)politeness, which is contoured in Chapter Three, is predictive. This leads to the next issue, that is, how evaluation still plays a part in the use of Chinese vocatives.

Chapter Five is a 'case-study', where a special stratum of interactions, pre-modern Chinese business discourse, is studied via the methodology of CDA. This kind of institutionalised discourse type has been chosen because, in pre-modern Chinese business discourse, 'capital' and the power related to it are governed by material profit. This makes it a tractable illustration of Bourdieu's concepts, the application of which is the aim of contemporary politeness theories. Through the examination of some contextual changes in the use of (im)polite vocatives in pre-modern Chinese business discourse I intend to show that terms of address can become 'discourse resources' (i.e. strategically applied tools in interactions, cf. Thornborrow 2002), open for contextual 'evaluation', but that the role of discourse evaluation is more restricted in Chinese than it is in other languages. That is, the use versus omission of (im)polite vocative forms – or their substitution by other, non-polite forms – can become markers of contextual (meta-)messages that are different from the societal meta-message, according to which *the given utterance is evaluated as polite or impolite*. This study integrates the 'rigid' Chinese (im)politeness into Bourdieu's theory, and it also creates a vivid picture of Chinese (im)polite interactions, where every interactant strives to reinforce or gain power within discourse through (im)politeness.

The conclusion of this work deals with the contradictions of Chapters Three/Four and Chapter Five by stating that the discourse evaluation of (im)politeness is a universal phenomenon, but its nature and possible scope differs between communities, languages, and cultures.

1.2.3 The technical terms and abbreviations

In this section, I introduce the regular technical terms that will be used throughout the study (written in italics). As with technical literature, technical terms are not discussed comprehensively in this chapter, that is,

I list only the most basic ones, which regularly occur in politeness research. Other terms of more (Chinese-)specific use are introduced in chapters where they gain relevance. At the end of this section, I also list the main abbreviations of the work.

I use the term *'discourse'* instead of 'speech' or 'text' to denote linguistic interactions. Using this term provides some advantage for a politeness theoretical inquiry. For example, the term 'speech' would express a unidirectional relationship in communication: there is a person who utters and another who receives 'speech', that is it reflects active-passive communicational relationship. Also 'speech' indicates a simple information conveyance, where the speaker encodes and the hearer decodes the message, and where contextual meta-messages or the hearer's reactions are not relevant. The term 'text' is also inappropriate because text, either written or spoken, is "a product rather than a process" (Fairclough 2001: 20). And 'text' is an ambiguous term, which can refer to a grammatical unit (larger than a sentence), or can be used as a synonym for 'discourse'; see Szabó (1988: 36–41).[17] The term 'discourse', on the other hand, does not merely denote a product, but also describes the active process of production and interpretation of an utterance, and the social/contextual conditions of the interaction (Fairclough 2001: 21). So I have chosen this term because it denotes both the speaker's behavioural and the hearer's evaluative process.

Another two technical terms which are regularly applied in this work are *'interlocutor'* (when referring to the speech-partner) and *'interactant(s)'* (when referring to every participant in the discourse). These take priority over 'speaker' and 'hearer', although these latter terms also appear in the book. In predictive theories, which rely on the distinctions developed by Searle (1969; 1979), Lyons (1977) and others, the speaker and the hearer are strictly separated: the speaker is the active and the hearer is the passive participant in the interaction. But, in evaluation-focused frameworks, such strictly distributed interactional roles would cause confusion. So I prefer to use the terms 'interlocutors' and 'interactants'. Nevertheless, I do not refrain from using the terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' when it is necessary to clearly denote who says to whom a given utterance. But, in such cases, these terms are used in a 'neutral' sense, without

[17] It should be noted that the term 'discourse' is not exempt from ambiguity, either. For example, in the work of Van Dijk (1977: 3), 'discourse' and 'text' appear as parallel terms. Still 'discourse' is mainly accepted in the technical literature as a term denoting the communicational process. Furthermore, the expression 'discourse' is generally more accepted in PR than the term 'text'.

presupposing any active-passive relation between the interactants. Alternately I use the term 'addressee' to refer to the 'hearer' of a given interaction.

The sense in which I use terms like *'culture'*, *'language'* and *'community'* should also be mentioned. These terms regularly appear in predictive theories in a generalising sense, that is, researchers use them as standards for predetermined evaluation. Eelen (2001: 158–173) devotes a subchapter in his work to show how wide an interpretation the vague notion of 'culture' can have, spanning from religions to geographical boundaries. As Eelen mentions, researchers run into trouble when relying on such vague notions because

> […] in the practice of reasoning and exemplifying, the notion of 'culture' tends to become rather blurred. […] A notion that can simultaneously denote any group of people based on any (combination of) characteristic(s) loses its operational value. (2001: 173)

Bearing in mind this problem, it would be adequate to avoid using the term 'culture' (and subculture) in relation to linguistic (im)politeness. The same would seem to hold for 'language', which can be viewed as a 'standard' based upon culture. Nevertheless, in the present study I basically apply the term 'language' when referring to the linguistic characteristics of (im)polite terms of address. And the concepts of ('traditional' or 'Confucian') culture and society appear for example when explaining why certain applications of vocatives inherently correspond to/oppose the hierarchical social structure, which strongly defines interpersonal relationships (cf. Chapter Two).

Another key term of this work is *'inherency'*. Many politeness theories study the issue of inherency and, although some researchers deny its existence, it is mostly generally accepted that some utterances are inherently (im)polite in certain contexts. Yet politeness theorists, like Fraser and Nolen (1981), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987), or Culpeper (1996) give different explanations for this phenomenon. In my understanding 'inherency' has a twofold interpretation. On the one hand it involves the *production* of utterances. That is, (productional) inherency refers to the fact that, as also noted by Matsumoto (1988, 1989), Ide (1989), or Mao (1994), in many East Asian societies language users regularly apply certain (im)polite utterances in pre-determined ways, being appropriate to given social and power relations (although, in contrast to the view of these researchers, I list cases when the interactants strategically deviate from the aforementioned pre-determined or inherent ways when contextual power makes such deviations possible, see Chapter Five).

On the other hand, inherency is applied to the *interpretation* of Chinese vocatives, as well. In this sense, it refers to the fact that (im)polite EA/DAs are interpreted in pre-determined ways in traditional Chinese hierarchical society, as long as hierarchical power relations are not challenged by other power factors.

A key term that finally has to be clarified here is *'context'*. In this book the term context has a broader as well as a narrower interpretation. In the wider sense it denotes the macro level social circumstances of (im)polite language use, and so refers to the interpersonal relationship between the interactants which used to be strictly hierarchical in old China (see more on this issue in Chapter Two). In the narrower sense it denotes the micro level contextual factors that can influence a particular (im)polite utterance, including the relative power and the social distance between the interactants, as well as the ranking of a given imposition (see more on the sociological variables in Brown and Levinson 1987 and Marquez Reiter 2000). In the present work somewhat more attention will be given to context in its wider interpretation, because my aim is to study how (im)polite terms of address can be personally interpreted in the generally hierarchical old Chinese social setting. Concrete contextual factors will be examined, however, whenever it is necessary to take the micro level context into account to understand the use and interpretation of (im)polite vocatives.

There are some synonyms applied in this work, which have to be mentioned, as well. I use the expressions *'interpretation'* and *'evaluation'* as convertible terms. The same holds true for *'vocative'* and *(self/other) 'address'* terms. *'Honorific addressing'* is an equivalent of 'EA/DA'. In many works, 'honorific language' denotes formulae and registers that are used in reference to the interlocutor. Yet I am willing to view self-denigration as 'honorific language', an interpretation that can be regularly found in relation to Japanese politeness (see Chapter Two for similarities among traditional Chinese and Japanese/Korean politeness systems). Finally, the terms *'traditional'*, *'pre-modern'*, and *'old'* Chinese (im)politeness are used rather loosely, both refer to the historical Chinese (im)politeness data that I use for the analysis in this work.

Besides these general technical terms, there are some abbreviations used throughout this book. Although abbreviations are resolved where they first occur, for the sake of clarity I list them comprehensively in this introductory section. In what follows, they are listed in alphabetical order.

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis
DA = denigrating address (terms)

DV = denigrating verbal form
EA = elevating address (terms)
EV = elevating verbal form
PCBD = pre-modern Chinese business discourse
PP = personal pronoun

1.3 Summary

The present chapter has sketched a general picture of the inquiries that are carried out in this book. It does not contain a comprehensive survey of the technical literature, as each of the chapters studies the same phenomena, pre-modern Chinese vocatives, from different perspectives, so the related bibliography is introduced in every chapter. Instead, I have focused on evaluation, a major issue in contemporary politeness research, and the reasons why traditional Chinese (im)politeness provides sufficient data for its study. The final goal of this work is to show that Chinese vocatives express some inherent social meta-message, which, however, does not exclude evaluation from the sites of discourse interactions. The mapping of inherency, which is conveyed by EA/DA terms, can contribute to the universal understanding of evaluation because it supports those politeness theoretical frameworks where evaluation has a restricted role. Studying the Chinese addressing lexicon from a politeness theoretical perspective makes it possible furthermore to inquire systematically into the large bulk of traditional Chinese (im)politeness, and to exclude regular stereotypes. In the next chapter, I will unify the phenomena of denigration/elevation and addressing phenomenon, in order to show the concept of societal meta-message.

ILLUSTRATION ONE: THE 'POLITE CHINESE' OF OLD TIMES

This woodblock print portrays the Chinese heroine Mulan 木蘭, who ritually bows to her parents before going to war. The gestures and mien of the characters exemplifies the stereotypic ways in which the Chinese of old times occur in the representational arts: in spite of the dramatic moment (Mulan goes to battle!), every character adheres to politeness – the parents slightly bow and politely smile, while the smiling Mulan crosses her hands in her wide sleeves (similarly to her father) as a polite greeting.

The picture was supposedly drawn by the famous artist Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1509–1551); cited from the book *Wangshi Lienü zhuan* 汪氏列女傳, which was published first during the Wanli era (1573–1620) of the Ming dynasty.

CHAPTER TWO

CHINESE POLITE TERMS OF ADDRESS

The Societal Meta-message

Let us begin the examination of Chinese (im)polite vocatives with the polite side of communication. In the present chapter I focus on the relationship between the phenomena of polite address and denigration/elevation. Since Gu (1990) described first the relationship of these two phenomena within mainstream politeness research, I shall discuss their relational problem as it emerges in that work. I shall try to prove that in traditional Chinese politeness elevation/denigration and addressing belong together, that is, every traditional (im)polite form of address inherently conveys elevating/denigrating beliefs. This raises the notion of the 'societal meta-message', which means that (im)polite vocative formulae convey a secondary (inherent) message, in certain cases independently of their semantic meaning.[1] In traditional Chinese hierarchical interpersonal relations such a meta-message is necessary in polite address: through symbolically raising the interlocutor's rank and denigrating himself, the speaker conveys deference, which is fundamental in the aforementioned hierarchical relations (also see 2.2).

If one observes the morphological categories that Gu (1990: 248) applies to describe elevation/denigration, a relational ambiguity emerges between the denigration/elevation and addressing phenomena. (Note that the following listing is my creation as Gu does not deal with morphologic categorisations.) Gu (1990) sets up the following elevating/denigrating categories:

[1] This difference between semantic and meta-meaning gains particular relevance in the case of *impolite* terms of address, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Note, however, that such a difference occurs in the polite lexicon, as well, though it is rare, compared with its impolite counterpart. Consider the case of *pengyou* 朋友 (lit. 'friend') below, which is used as a polite EA in the traditional context, even though its semantic meaning is not elevating at all; see Ji (2000: 669). Similarly, the term *furen* 夫人 ('Madam'), which is used to elevate married women, does not carry any elevating semantic meaning; see Ji (2000: 263).

(a) Second person honorific PPs, like *nin* 您;
(b) Nominal expressions, which refer to the (group of the) speaker/interlocutor, comprising the two sub-categories of (1) adjectival-nominal compounds, like *neizhu* 內助 (lit. 'inner/domestic helper', referring to speaker's wife), and (2) nominal compounds, like *furen* 夫人 ('lady', it denotes the speech-partner's wife);
(c) Verbal expressions, like *baiye* 拜謁 ('visiting the superior with prostration', it refers to one's own visiting action) vs. the *shangguang* 賞光 ('giving one's brightness, refers to the visit of the other').[2]

As can be seen from this list, in Gu's (1990) account denigrating/elevating honorifics are constituted by vocatives (points a and b) and verbal forms (point c). Discussing polite vocatives in categorisation such as this is somewhat in contrast with the fact that Gu sets up another maxim for polite vocatives, 'The Address Maxim'. The notion of 'addressing' is used as

> an umbrella term covering the vocative use of governmental titles, occupational titles, proper names, kinship terms and what can be called 'address politeness markers', which include honorifics and solidarity boosters (e.g. tongzhi 同志, 'comrade'). (1990: 248–252)

This definition of addressing as an 'independent' politeness phenomenon is open to criticism, since many of these categories, like governmental and occupational titles, or kinship terms, express elevating connotations.[3]

[2] The morphology of the traditional Chinese elevating/denigrating lexicon is different from that of the modern one because:
(a) as will be discussed later in this chapter, second person PPs are not used in the polite register;
(b) traditional colloquial elevating/denigrating terms are not necessarily compound expressions, but monosyllabic nouns and verbs can also fulfil such a function, see *nu* 奴 (lit. 'slave', an EA used by women), or *ju* 舉 (lit. 'raise with two hands, an elevating verbal form). It is necessary to note that monosyllabic examples occur in vernacular texts, as well, contrary to the fact that in vernacular Chinese there is a strong tendency for using polysyllabic words.

[3] In this work I do not examine Chinese proper names. It has to be mentioned, however, that I do not agree with listing proper names among the *polite* way of addressing. Traditionally Chinese avoid using both family and/or personal names when politely addressing the interlocutor. Even in modern Mandarin discourse, as my Chinese interviewees reported, Gu's statement "The Chinese surname is a non-kin public term of address, and can be used alone by people outside the family […]" (1990: 249) is questionable. For instance, the nearly thirty informants,

This causes ambiguity between elevation/denigration and addressing. Nevertheless, it draws attention to a characteristic of modern Chinese politeness, namely, that there are some vocatives of non-elevating/denigrating meaning in modern Mandarin, which are open to being evaluated as 'polite'. See for example the terms *tongxue* 同學 (lit. 'schoolmate'), *pengyou* 朋友 (lit. 'friend'), or *tongzhi* 同志 ('comrade').[4] Thus, one can agree with Gu that modern elevation/denigration, and polite (= 'neutral') addressing are two distinct phenomena.

A problem emerges, however, if one reconsiders the sample terms that Gu uses for exemplifying self-denigration in Chinese. Most of the elevating/denigrating vocative terms that Gu applies, like the above-quoted *neizhu* ('domestic helper'), *hardly appear in modern colloquial Chinese*. Gu seems to be aware of this problem when he notes at the end of his paper that "the politeness phenomena this paper captures can be said to be generally prevailing among the (fairly) educated" (1990: 256). Even so, the situation is not so simple that members of educated classes understand and apply such pre-modern politeness expressions, while others do not. The case is, rather, that most traditional elevating/denigrating expressions have fallen out of use from the colloquial language, and they are used and understood mainly in written form. And even in such a form, they are only used in the so-called *yingyongwen* 應用文 ('practical writing') genres that require a neoclassical and grandiose style, like the exchange of letters between high-intellectuals, or in governmental corre-

who I asked, evaluated the following utterance impolite, and the application of the polite idiomatic phrase *qing* 請 ('please') 'improper' in it:

*李，請過來。

'Li, qing guolai.'

'Li, please come here.' (my example)

[4] Note that all of these three terms are of traditional origin (see more in 2.3.2), and, for example, *pengyou* is used as a direct elevating form of address in a pre-modern linguistic setting; see Ji (2000: 669). However, in the modern Chinese context, these terms express a neutral sense; cf. Ji (2000: 669; 928–929). Note that the term *tongzhi* is used relatively rarely in modern spoken language, approximately from the eighties of the past century onwards. This is not only because the political connotation of this term makes it unpopular in contemporary Taiwan, Hong Kong, or China, but also in modern colloquial Chinese (particularly in Hong Kong and Taiwan, though this phenomenon can recently be observed in Mainland China, as well) *tongzhi* has gradually become a euphemism for 'homosexual person'. See more information about this term in the Wikipedia website http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%90%8C%E5%BF%97.

spondence.[5] If, however, the self-denigration/speech-partner-elevation phenomenon has already become restricted to such an extent in Chinese, its real-life existence can be properly questioned. Note that I do not intend to suggest that the *practice* of self-denigration has died out in Chinese – rather I assert that its traditional lexicon has mostly disappeared.[6] This claim is supported by the modern Chinese findings of Pan (2000: 17), who states that "politeness in [modern] Chinese is expressed much more through discursive strategies than lexical items in face-to-face interaction."

Summing up, Gu (1990) uses traditional terminology for exemplifying elevation/ denigration, while he mostly applies modern expressions when describing the addressing phenomenon. This not only leads to confusion between traditional and modern Chinese politeness. A more problematic issue is that *it suggests that historically, addressing and denigration/elevation used to be distinct phenomena*. Even though Gu acknowledges that

[5] *Yingyong* genres preserve traditional politeness formulae relatively well, compared to other written genres, cf. Zhu (2005). See more on Taiwanese *yingyong* writing in Zhang (1979), Cai (1999), or Huang (2001); for the modern denigrating/elevating lexicon used in modern Mainland Chinese *yingyong* genres see Jiang (2003); for historical *yingyong* genres see Zhang (1995).

[6] Self-denigration is a regular practice in modern Mandarin, as well, but it is more related to *linguistic strategies* than to a specific lexicon. Compare the following two interactions:

您說的這句話非常有道理！
不敢當，我沒有什麼道理。
'Nin shuo de zhe ju hua feichang you daoli!'
'Bu-gan-dang, wo meiyou shenme daoli.'
'What you (*nin* respect pronoun) say is very reasonable!'
'How could it be (*bu-gan-dang*, a traditional expression for refusing compliments), I do not have any reason.' (my example)

賢弟高言明如鏡。
不敢當，小弟狂瞽無理。
'Xiandi gaoyan ming ru jing.'
'Bu-gan-dang, xiaodi kuanggu wu li.'
'My wise younger brother's (*xiandi*) precious words (*gaoyan*) are as clear as a mirror.'
'How could they be (*bu-gan-dang*); your worthless younger brother's (*xiaodi*) stupid blindness (denigrating form for the speaker's words) lacks any reason. ' (my example)

Although the act of self-denigration occurs in both interactions, a specific set of politeness words appears in the second, 'traditional' interaction only. The self-denigrating refusal of praise occurs in 'modern' discourse, as well, but there is no elevating/denigrating lexicon in it, except the collocation *bu-gan-dang*, a traditional form that still exists in modern colloquial Chinese.

there is some difference between traditional and modern politeness, he only mentions with regard to this issue that

> In ancient China, the distance between self-denigration and other-elevation was much greater than in modern China. Consequently, many classical terms sound either too denigrative or elevative to be used today. (1990: 248)

But, such an assertion does not indicate that there would be any major, systematic difference between traditional and modern Chinese politeness. What further underlines this problem is that Gu involves traditional *Confucian culture* in his inquiry. Although he mentions that the concept of 'politeness' has changed in new China, he still derives his (separated) maxims from Confucian moral concepts. This further strengthens the confusion between traditional and modern Chinese politeness. In short, Gu's paper suggests that elevation/denigration and addressing are two diachronically distinct phenomena.

The primary aim of the present chapter is to elucidate the relationship between addressing and elevation/denigration. I shall try to prove that while in modern Chinese politeness addressing and elevation/denigration are two distinct phenomena, in the traditional Chinese context every polite term of address inherently expresses elevating/denigrating beliefs. That is, no 'neutrally' polite addressing occurs in the old Chinese setting (or, in other words, vocatives that do not express elevating/denigrating meaning or connotation cannot be used in contexts which necessitate politeness), and so the addressing phenomenon has to be incorporated into self-denigration. This fact suggests that (im)polite vocatives necessarily carry a 'societal', elevating/denigrating meta-message, in order to show deference in traditional Chinese hierarchical social relations.

This chapter is structured as follows. In 2.1 I examine the relationship between 'traditional' and 'modern' Chinese politeness. Since these terms are regularly used in a lay sense in relation to Chinese, I shall try to formulate a politeness theoretical explanation for why they have to be differentiated when studying Chinese. The study of this issue helps separate traditional and modern denigration/elevation phenomena from each other, which is necessary for us to be able to re-examine Gu's (1990) categorisation, in a traditional setting. In sub-chapter 2.2 I discuss the issue of whether PPs that express a 'neutral' (non-elevating/denigrating) sense can be used in the traditional Chinese polite register. Then, I investigate whether a 'neutrally' polite nominal addressing phenomenon exists in general, in the traditional Chinese cultural context. This issue will be studied through the topics of (a) lexical and (b) discourse 'neutrality'.

As I shall argue, if polite address provably lacks 'neutral' connotations, then it has to inherently convey denigrating/elevating beliefs.

2.1 Some preliminary notes

Before studying the above issues, it is necessary to introduce briefly (a) the analytic methodology with the help of which traditional Chinese (im)politeness was reconstructed in this study, and (b) the technical terms used to denote the elevating/denigrating (addressing) lexicon in this work.

Since the present study investigates traditional Chinese (im)politeness, this necessitates the application of the analytic methodology of *historical pragmatics*. Several scholars have already addressed the issue of how to reconstruct spoken data from literary texts; cf. Culpeper and Kytö (2000), Jucker (2000), or Taavitsainen and Jucker (eds. 2003). During the reconstruction of traditional Chinese (im)politeness, I relied on the historical pragmatic methodology. Accordingly, the following two key points have to be observed during the reconstruction of historical Chinese (im)polite communication:

(a) *Choosing the most suitable corpora for the research*: As Taavitsainen and Jucker (2003: 7) note, there are differences in historical corpora with respect to their applicability for historical pragmatic research. There are two major written traditional Chinese corpora available, the Classical Chinese (*wenyan* 文言, lit. 'refined language') and the so-called 'pre-modern' or 'vernacular' Chinese (casually referred to as *baihua* 白話, lit. 'clear speech'). I examine the latter linguistic stratum, which includes the written vernacular of the period spanning the 11th through to the 19th centuries (see Lü 1985: 1). Pre-modern Chinese was chosen because the vernacular literary pieces record discourse interactions in a style that imitates everyday language, in contrast with the Classical (Zhang 1995).[7] When necessary, however, examples

[7] It should be noted that examining the vernacular is a general tendency in the few works that deal with traditional Chinese politeness, see for example the works of Peng (1998; 1999; 2000 a.), Ohta (1972), Skewis (2003), etc. Conversely, traditional Chinese politeness was partially studied first by the descriptive studies of the vernacular grammar, see Wang Li (2003), Lü (1985), Zhan (1972), Ohta (1985; 1988), Kōsaka (1992; 1997), or Shimura (1984). See Xu (2000), and Yuan

from Classical texts/lexicon are also cited, particularly in cases where I rely on traditional Chinese philological works (see Chapter Four and Chapter Five) that examine the Classical language.

(b) *Relying on a large number of vocatives, which are applied in texts of diverse genres, date, and place of compilation*: In order to provide reliable data, I collected (with the aid of computer databases) approximately five thousand polite and impolite terms of address, from more than thirty vernacular literary pieces written in different periods. These pieces include several literary genres, such as
   - Ming and Qing dynasty novels, for example, the *Shuihu quanzhuan* 水滸全傳 (*Water Margin Story*), or the *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (*The Red Chamber Dream*);
   - Yuan dynasty dramas, such as the *Dou E yuan* 竇娥冤 (*The Innocent Death of Dou E*);
   - Ming and Qing dynasty short-story collections, such as the *Sanyan* 三言 (*Three Speeches*) trilogy.

Besides diversities in genre and date of compilation, these works record the language use of different areas, or were compiled by authors who were born in different regions of the country and so applied 'local' linguistic features in their works. For example, as Kōsaka (1987: 13) notes, the parlance of several characters in the novel *Shuihu quanzhuan* reflects the Shandong province *patois*.

Because these texts show relative concordance in the studied issues, the general reconstruction of traditional Chinese (im)politeness has become possible.

As this study deals with historical data, in the discourse examples I do not apply the detailed transcription conventions used in most modern discourse analytic studies (see more details in Edwards 2001). Because in traditional Chinese literature no pauses, overlaps, or other kinds of discourse elements are marked, it becomes difficult to write about 'turn taking', 'high considerateness style vs. high involvement style' (Tannen 1984), or other characteristics of discourse. On the other hand, although turn-taking, etc. discourse elements could make some contribution to the understanding of how (im)politeness works in real interactions, these are not indispensable for the study of elevation/denigration in vernacular discourse. So I use my own discourse notation: as my focus – particularly in

(et al. 2001) as reference for the history of vernacular research: the extensive bibliographies of these works contain a few works that touch on traditional Chinese politeness issues.

Chapter Five – is on the points where elevating/denigrating terms appear, I frame them in the Chinese text, while I underline them in the *pinyin* transcription and the English translation. A regular example looks like the following:

(no.) 智深就問那漢道：「你這口刀那裏得來？」
那漢道：「小人祖上留下，[…]」

Zhishen jiu wen na han dao: "Ni zhe kou dao na li de lai?"
Na han dao: "Xiaoren zushang liuxia, [...]"

Zhishen asked that man: "Where did you (*ni*, second person PP) acquire this sword?"
The man said: "I, this worthless person (*xiaoren*, denigrating term of address) inherited it from my ancestors […]"
(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 7)

In those discourse extracts that are consist of more than two speech-turns, each of the turns is numbered. Note that I only number practical examples, while quotations from classical sources, etc. are not numbered. Also note that in the examples I only denote the title and chapter of the applied work; a more detailed description of the historical primary sources can be found in Appendix I.

Beside the corpora, the terminology and abbreviations used to denote the elevating/denigrating and terms of address should also be clarified here, in order to avoid confusion, which could emerge when discussing these phenomena because Chinese scholars use a wide range of technical terms to denote them, while they have no fixed politeness research terminology. If one observes Chinese studies on the topic, the term *zuncheng* 尊稱 (lit. 'respect addressing') in some cases denotes elevating terms of address, while sometimes it simply refers to 'respect' PPs, like the second person *nin*, or the third person PP *tan* 您 (a Peking dialect 'respect' PP, see Lü 1985: 38). Or, in some works, the terms *jingci* 敬詞 (lit. 'respect word') and *qianci* 謙詞 (lit. 'denigration word') denote verbal forms, while in other studies they cover both honorific vocatives and verbs. Furthermore, because Chinese politeness studies are influenced by Japanese politeness research, 'Japanisms', like *jingyu* 敬語 (lit. 'respect language', the translation of the Japanese word *keigo*) appear in Chinese works, which makes the jungle of terms more confusing.

To avoid ambiguity, I apply a distinct terminology that categorises addressing and elevating/denigrating terms according to their word class/morphology, instead of adopting and translating certain Chinese designations. Setting out from the concept of the societal meta-message (i.e. every

vocative expresses elevating/denigrating beliefs) whose existence I try to prove in this chapter, I merge elevation/denigration and addressing in the terminology. This yields the following two categories:

(a) Elevating/denigrating terms of address (*EA/DA*): *nouns and nominal/adjectival compounds*, which are used to refer to the (group of) self/other in elevating/denigrating sense. For example, the noun *jun* 君 ('my lord') elevates the interlocutor, while *qie* 妾 (lit. 'concubine') denigrates the speaker. The adjectival-nominal compound *gaojun* 高君 ('my high lord') elevates the interlocutor, while *jianqie* 賤妾 ('poor concubine') denigrates the speaker.[8] Beside direct examples, EA/DA also involves that group of expressions which indirectly refer to the animate or inanimate belonging of the speaker or the interlocutor.[9] (A difference between direct and indirect EA/DAs is that the latter are always constructed from adjectival-nominal forms.) *Xiaoquan* 小犬 (lit. 'small dog') denigrates the son of the speaker (animate belonging), *hanshe* 寒舍 (lit. 'cold lodge') denigrates his/her house (inanimate belonging) and vice versa: *xianlang* 賢郎 (lit. 'wise young gentleman') elevates the son of the interlocutor and *guifu* 貴府 ('your valuable court') elevates his/her house.[10] This dichotomy in reference necessitates the application of the *direct vs. indirect* distinction of EA/DAs.

(b) Elevating/denigrating verbal forms (henceforth *EV/DV*): *verbal compounds* which refer to the action of the speaker or the interlocutor in the elevating/denigrating sense. *Baidu* 拜讀 ('read the interlocutor's writing with kowtow') denigrates the action of the speaker, *fuzheng*

[8] For the sake of simplicity, I quote here examples that are monosyllabic nouns, or adjectival-nominal compounds. Note, however, that the morphology of polite EA/DA lexicon in the vernacular can be more complex: adjectives can further modify adjectival-nominal compounds, cf. *da-laoye* 大老爺 ('great old person', an EA used towards magistrates during the Ming and Qing dynasties, see Ji 2000: 144); or adjectives can modify polysyllabic nouns, too, e.g. *da-guanren* 大官人 ('great-official', an EA used towards the first-born child of wealthy families, cf. Ji 2000: 137).

[9] The above distinction between the group of the speaker vs. that of the speech-partner is identical with the notion regularly referred to in pragmatics with the Japanese terms *uchi* 内 and *soto* 外. Note that 'inanimate belongings' not only include material things like 'house' (cf. the *hanshe* vs. the *guifu* above), but also abstract entities like 'illness', cf. *qian'an* 欠安 below in 2.2.

[10] Note that in the present study I focus on terminology that is used among non-family groups. The EA/DA system between kin does not differ systematically from the non-family one, but has already been studied in great detail in the works of Feng (1989), and Lin (1998).

斧正 ('correcting [i.e. reading] with axe strikes the speaker's writing') refers to the action of the interlocutor.[11]

Since this study deals with the addressing phenomenon, its focus is on EA/DAs, even though EV/DVs are mentioned in some places throughout the work. Such morphology-based terminology is suitable for a politeness theoretical inquiry because these designations are freely applicable to the two poles of (im)politeness. This gains particular relevance in Chapter Four, which studies impolite denigration/elevation, that is, the issue of *re-versed* EA/DA application (where the speaker is elevated and the speech-partner is denigrated). Using such terminology helps to emphasise that in reality the same phenomenon can occur on the opposite sides of (im)po-liteness. The same could hardly be done with Chinese terminology, where *jingci*/*qianci*, etc. explicitly refers to the polite register, while *jiancheng* 賤稱 ('impoverishing addressing') denotes impoliteness (see Chapter Four) – such distinct terminology for politeness and impoliteness could conceal the situation that EA/DA is the same phenomenon, irrespective of the register where it occurs.

After discussing these points, let us return to the main topic of the chapter.

2.2 'Traditional' vs. 'Modern' Chinese politeness

In this sub-chapter I focus on the issue of how 'traditional' and 'mod-ern' Chinese impoliteness can be separated from a politeness theoretical perspective, as these two terms generally occur in lay and rather stereo-typical senses in the technical literature. Distinguishing them is necessary for underlining that, whilst in modern Chinese politeness 'neutral' voca-tives exist, this phenomenon cannot be automatically projected onto traditional politeness. The analysis shows, traditional Chinese politeness, where established politeness formulae dominate in polite communication (i.e. *formulaic politeness* has special importance, see below), systemati-cally resembles Japanese, or Korean rather than modern Chinese polite-ness. The only major difference between the traditional Chinese and Japa-

[11] Note that usually it is the first verb of the compound that conveys the elevat-ing/denigrating meaning, like in the case of *jinggao* 敬告 ('announce with re-spect'), although it is not a rule, as *fuzheng* ('correct with axe') above shows.

nese/Korean politeness systems (except, of course, grammatical differences) is that Chinese has no plain (non-elevating/denigrating) honorific style, which also coincides with the aforementioned fact that Chinese polite address is fundamentally elevating/denigrating. In other words, the case of 'neutrality' can be 'rightly' reconsidered in the domain of traditional Chinese deferential communication (that necessitates continuous adherence to hierarchical social relations), as traditional and modern Chinese politeness form two different linguistic strata. This leads to the inquiry of sub-chapter 2.3, where I try to prove the existence of the societal meta-message.

Traditional Chinese politeness is regularly identified, rather stereotypically, with a bulk of formal lexicon. Consider the following joke, which was published after the 'Cultural Revolution' (1966–1974), when traditional politeness had been banished from the colloquial.

甲：「你家父今年幾歲？近來可安然無恙？」
乙：「我令尊大人今年六十有二，雖是妙齡，但近來龍體欠安。」
甲：「那好，有功夫一定到你寒舍看望。」
乙：「歡迎你去，我們府裏賓客到來。」

Jia: *"Ni jia fu jinnian ji sui? Jin lai ke anran wuyang? "*
Yi: *"Wo lingzun-daren jinnian liushi you er, sui shi miaoling, dan jinlai longti qian'an. "*
Jia: *"Na hao, you gongfu yiding dao ni hanshe kanwang."*
Yi: *"Huanying ni qu, women fu li binke daolai."*

A: "How few years (*jisui* – questioning form used towards children – this gains impolite sense when used towards older people) your daddy (*jiafu* – a DA used to address the father of self) counts this year? Is he in good health recently?"
B: "My respected-ordering-great-man (*lingzun daren* – an EA used to address the father of the interlocutor) is sixty two this year, although he is in his blooming youth (*miaoling* – an EA used to respectfully refer to the interlocutor's young age), but recently his dragon body (*longti* – an EA that refers to the health of the interlocutor/the interlocutor's kin) lacks peace (*qian'an* – an euphemism refer to the other's illness)."
A: "All right, if I have time, surely I will come to your cold lodge (*hanshe* – a DA used to politely refer to the house of self) for a visit."
B: "Welcome to our court (*fu* – an EA used to address the house of the interlocutor) as our guest."

(Quoted from Wang 1988: 126)

This joke is self-mocking; it ridicules the Chinese who, after suffering a cultural break, lost their command of traditional polite language: the reversed elevation/denigration, (e.g. referring to the kin of self with the elevating euphemism *qian'an*) should be impolite in Chinese culture, the two interactants, however, do not even recognise their error. But irrespective of its concrete meaning, the above joke remarkably reflects that traditional (but not modern!) Chinese politeness is regularly associated with the application of a specific 'politeness lexicon'. In reality the case is not so simple, because politeness is manifested through a web of different factors in every language, including phonological or semantic changes, etc. (cf. Lakoff 2004: 199–214). But the quotation still exemplifies that traditional Chinese polite communication is seen as a bulk of politeness formulae.

In order to move from such impressions of traditional Chinese politeness towards real linguistic facts, it is necessary to reconsider the following questions from the perspective of politeness research:

(a) What are such 'fixed' formulae of linguistic politeness actually;
(b) What do their regular occurrence and central role in traditional politeness mean from a politeness theoretical perspective?

As can be seen below, these forms belong to the *formulaic* domain of politeness, which refers to that stratum of politeness which is regularly (but not always) applied according to sociopragmatically pre-determined ways in certain interpersonal or institutional power relations. As the analysis below shows, in traditional Chinese politeness – just as in Japanese or Korean – the formulaic aspect of politeness is of greater prominence than the non-formulaic (strategic, see an interpretation of the term 'strategy' in 2.2.1) one, which differs from modern Chinese politeness. This will be my main argument for separating traditional and modern Chinese politeness systems.

2.2.1 The (honorific) formulae-biased traditional Chinese politeness

In the joke above, traditional Chinese (im)politeness manifests itself as a collection of formal expressions. This originates in the fact that in traditional Chinese (im)politeness the 'formulaic' aspect of language is of weighted bias, compared with other expressions of polite behaviour. Formulaic utterances are defined by Watts (2003: 274) as "highly conventionalised utterances, containing linguistic expressions that are used in

ritualised forms of verbal interaction."[12] As a matter of fact, formulaic and semi-formulaic utterances exist in every language, they involve a wide range of linguistic expressions including the honorific forms and styles of languages like Japanese or Korean, up to semi-formulaic phenomena like 'hedges' or the 'Can I do X?' syntactic structure in English.[13] The difference between the formulaic politeness-based and other languages is – as will be explained below – that in the former formulaic expressions represent the primary manner of conveying deferential beliefs, even though this does not mean that these languages do not possess a wide *repertoire* of politeness strategies.

If one views traditional Chinese politeness from this perspective, the question emerges as to what peculiarities a formulaic or honorific-biased politeness system has. Originally, this issue was explained in pragmatics through the so-called 'discernment' vs. 'volition' distinction, elaborated by Japanese sociolinguists like Sachiko Ide (1989), Yoshiko Matsumoto (1989), and others. These researchers took as a starting point the fact that politeness appears in 'Western' politeness frameworks as a strategic act. This view, however, cannot describe some aspects of polite language, especially in the totalitarian East Asian societies, where the application of certain politeness forms is bound to social and/or institutional power, and the fundamental aim of politeness is to exhibit deference towards the interlocutor. To show this, Ide (1989) cites the following examples:

(1) * *'Sensei-wa kore-o yonda.'*
prof.-TOP this-ACC read-PAST
*'The professor read this.'

(2) *'Sensei-wa kore-o* ***o****yomi-****ni-nat****ta'*
REF. HONO. PAST
'The professor read this.' (Ide 1989: 227)

These examples are quoted as a counter-argument for Brown and Levinson's statement (1987: 382) that "when formal forms are used, they create a formal atmosphere where participants are kept away from each

[12] See a detailed bibliography of studies on formulaic politeness in Watts (2003: 270, footnote 14).

[13] In Chapter Four, I redefine the term 'formulaic', as I will also include impoliteness in its definition, which is quite irregular in the case of other languages.

other". As the quoted examples show, using formal forms in Japanese does not have any particular strategic aim. According to Ide, (1) is not appropriate at all when Japanese students talk about a professor, since using honorific forms is necessary when referring to the action of a person of higher status. That is, the use of honorifics is not a matter of personal decision, but it is "sociopragmatically obligatory" (Ide 1989: 227), controlled by the Japanese social concept of *wakimae* 弁え ('[social] appropriateness').

Even though the 'discernment' concept proved to be an effective critique of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, several scholars have criticised the claim that the use of honorifics was basically non-strategic. O'Driscoll (1996) has already raised this problem when criticising Hill et al. (1986), while Okamoto (1999) and Usami (2002) have shown that the usage of honorifics can be quite strategic in Japanese. The recent study of Pizziconi (2003: 1471) has even claimed that "the principles regulating the use of honorific devices in Japanese are not substantially different from those of English, both being similarly strategic." Furthermore, it was also demonstrated that honorifics are not always used to show 'politeness' and have other discourse functions, see Cook (1998; 2005). Finally, in a recent work (Kádár 2007), I have also criticised the applicability of Ide's (1989) original 'discernment' concept to traditional Chinese data, showing that the use of honorific formulae is often strategic in historical Chinese apologies. I will also challenge this view in Chapters Four and Five (although the detailed critique of the 'discernment' concept is beyond the scope of this work) by showing that changing power relations in fact cause transformations in the application of politeness formulae.

Considering the aforementioned problems with the regularly accepted discernment vs. volition (strategic vs. non-strategic opposition) concept, I apply a different terminology in this book to give an account on the opposition of traditional and modern Chinese politeness. Although Ide's (1989) theory is criticisable from many aspects, the above examples (1) and (2) still successfully demonstrate that in traditional East Asian cultures the idiomatic politeness expressions, basically controlled by social customs, are *of greater importance* than (or, at least, of equal importance to) personal politeness strategies. Without accepting the claim that students could only refer to a teacher in the way as described in (2), it is very probable that if they intend to refer politely to the teacher for some reason, or contextual factors make such polite reference necessary, they will use (2) instead of (1). It is not sure, and it cannot be claimed, on the other hand, that the use of the honorific expressions and/or inflection in (2) is not strategic in a given context, or the interactants do not deviate from

their regularly accepted application method. So, instead of applying Ide's 'discernment' vs. 'volition' dichotomy, I refer to traditional Chinese politeness and other traditional East Asian honorific systems as *formulaic politeness-biased languages*, which are in contrast to *strategy-biased* languages where polite beliefs are primarily expressed through linguistic strategies, for example using praising words to express politeness. It is necessary to note that in this theory the term 'strategy' has a twofold interpretation:

(a) It refers to the strategic application of language, which includes the strategic utilisation of honorifics, as well;
(b) It covers the non-formulaic linguistic strategies as opposed to the formulaic honorifics like the aforementioned utilisation of praises.

The concept of formulaic politeness-bias explains why traditional Chinese politeness appears in the joke as 'lexicon-related': respect is basically maintained by using honorifics throughout the polite discourse. Since Chinese has no morphosyntactic honorific change, the only way to express politeness is to use a broad honorific lexicon. Thus the traditional Chinese equivalent of the above Japanese examples would be:

(3) 他/教員讀了這篇。

'Jiaoyuan du le zhe pian.'

'He/The teacher (non-honorific form, denoting members of academic staff in a 'neutral way') read this [essay].' (my example)

(4) 先生斧正了這篇。

'Xiansheng fuzheng le zhe pian.'

'The professor (*xiansheng* – an EA for university teachers) read this [essay] (*fuzheng* – lit. 'correcting with axe', an EV for reading a person's writing).' (my example)

As with the Japanese example (1), (3) is somewhat difficult to apply in the traditional Chinese polite context, as honorific forms are required when students politely refer to a professor. On the other hand, example (4) is acceptable in a polite context: here the professor is referred to with an EA term, while his act (i.e. 'reading') is denoted with an EV. This example shows that in pre-modern Chinese, just as in Japanese or Korean, the formulaic aspect of politeness dominates when one politely refers to

another person of high(er) rank. The only difference in Chinese is that the linguistic *repertoire* of honorific formulae is restricted to an honorific lexicon, and there are fewer options for register change than in Japanese and Korean. In these latter languages, honorifics – particularly honorific vocatives – do not necessarily express elevating/denigrating meaning. In Japanese, the first person PP *watashi* わたし (non-self-denigrating, though some researchers treat is as a self-denigrating expression) is categorised into the honorific language, as noted by Ide (1989: 229). This difference is rooted in the fact that, according to Minami (1999: 1–30), Japanese linguistic politeness is constituted, in a narrow sense, from the triad of the registers *teinei go* 丁寧語 ('polite language', it denotes the most generally applied polite register), *sonkei go* 尊敬語 ('elevating language'), and *kenjō go* 謙譲語 ('self-denigrating language'). The case is similar in Korean, see Umeda (1974: 43–68), or Morishita and Chi (1989: 7–11). In Chinese, there is no way of attaining formal morphosyntactic changes that are required to practise the Japanese *teinei go*; therefore no corresponding register exists in traditional Chinese politeness.

The comparison of Chinese with Japanese shows that in pre-modern Chinese the formulaic aspect is of weighted bias relative to 'strategies' (in interpretation (b) above). Nevertheless, in the technical literature Chinese hardly ever appears when authors discuss formulaic politeness-biased politeness systems. This is because, when discussing Chinese, *traditional and modern politeness systems have to be separated*. This requires a brief explanation.

2.2.2 'Traditional' vs. 'Modern'

The term 'traditional' is not commonly applied in a distinctive sense to linguistic politeness. In the compendium *Sekai no keigo* 世界の敬語 (*Politeness in Various Languages*, Hayashi and Minami eds. 1974) only Chinese appears as where traditional and modern politeness systems are in contraposition, see Tōdō (1974: 139–162). Although Yamazaki (1974: 94–120) separates 'modern' from 'pre-modern' Javanese politeness, he does not describe pre-modern Javanese politeness as 'traditional'. This difference is rooted in how politeness develops in most societies. For example, in Western Europe the interpretation as well as the social role of 'politeness' have consistently changed throughout its history. The term 'politeness' of Greek etymological origin (Sifianou 1992) referred to different practices when it appeared in the conduct literature of the late Italian Renaissance (Montandon 1992), from when it was transmitted to the

court of Louis XIV (cf. France 1992), or to Britain in the 16th century (cf. Langford 1989). It would be, however, difficult to define in a European context what is 'traditional' politeness, and how it differs from 'modern' politeness.[14]

The social history of Chinese politeness endows the term 'traditional' with a special sense. Diachronic studies show that Chinese politeness developed without major changes from ancient to pre-modern times. As a matter of course, linguistic and social changes produced effects on it, so for example the quantity of politeness lexicon showed a decreasing tendency in the colloquial from the 14th century onwards (see Peng 1999; 2000: 190–192). Such changes, however, did not cause any definite break that would justify drawing a line between 'traditional' and 'modern' Chinese politeness. The social break, which made such distinction necessary, occurred in the period between the late 19th century and the early 20th century. During this time Chinese society underwent a rapid change which gradually led to the loss of traditional hierarchical social values.[15] This situation evolved because Western countries colonised China, and the Chinese responded with modernizing attempts. These years of rapid transformation are characterised by the intensifying negative assessment and extinction of old Confucian culture and society, see Fairbank and Reischauer (1989: 391–415).

The question emerges, however, of how the loss of certain social values can lead to the extinction of a certain politeness system. For example, in 18th century Britain it was claimed that politeness "is a natural attribute of certain individuals and not of others" (Watts 2003: 39, also see Watts 1999); still 18th century British politeness was not regularly assessed as 'traditional' when later social struggles changed the notion of 'politeness'. But traditional Chinese politeness is too inseparable from hierarchical, elevating/denigrating values that also became part of the ideology of Confucianism. The central, elevating/denigrating characteristic

[14] One would probably associate 'traditional' with earlier states of a language. For example, the use of formal pronouns by older generations vs. non-formal ones by younger ones could be associated with 'traditional' vs. 'modern' politeness contradiction, cf. Lehtinen (1963: 80). Such changes in application, however, are tendencies rather than permanent and non-reversible conditions, cf. Braun (1988: 18–46).

[15] Chinese researchers tend to blame the 'Cultural Revolution' for the disappearance of traditional politeness, cf. Chen (2001) or Yuan (2004). I, however, agree with Peng (2000: 190–192) who, relying on textual evidence, suggests that this problem had occurred earlier.

of traditional Chinese politeness served precisely the preservation of hierarchical social values, which is also manifested in that a politeness lexicon was formed as a linguistic instrument to separate traditional social classes from each other. (See more on this in Chapter Three.) This is why the disappearance of traditional values caused the demise of traditional politeness.

The difference between 'traditional' and 'modern' sheds light on why Chinese politeness does not occur in politeness research studies that discuss formulaic politeness: politeness research regularly deals with modern Chinese politeness only. In modern politeness, the quantity of traditional lexicon radically decreased, because these terms were seen as tools for maintaining social differences. So, modern Chinese does not function as a *formulaic politeness-biased* language any more, thus the weight in its politeness has gradually moved from formulaic politeness to the 'strategic' aspect. Compare example (4) with its following, modern 'transcription' (5):

(5) 老師讀了這篇。

'Laoshi du le zhe pian.'

'The teacher read this [essay].' (my example)

In modern colloquial Mandarin (4) cannot be used (and supposedly the same holds true for any Chinese dialect). Not only could it be understood only in written form (each of my Chinese informants reported that such an utterance is 'difficult' to interpret in spoken discourse), but its use would also express exaggerated solemnity even in a regular written context. Example (5) is the modern equivalent of (4), and it only has one formulaic element, the vocative *laoshi* ('teacher'), which cannot be omitted when referring politely to a teacher. *Laoshi*, however, has lost some of its honorific characteristics by becoming a rather widely applied expression, compared with *xiansheng* in (4): while the latter can only be used towards university professors in an honorific sense, *laoshi* can be freely applied towards any person who works in the field of education, includeing secretaries or administrators, as well. That is, the modern example (5) lacks honorific formulae, so politeness can be conveyed only with strategic devices, like modifying the act of 'reading' with attributives (e.g. 'generously read'). In short, the difference between traditional and modern Chinese politeness results in that only the former can be mentioned in relation to formulaic politeness-biased East Asian politeness systems.

This process is much in accordance with the changing concept of 'politeness' in China. As opposed to the modern term *limao* 禮貌[16], which is used to specifically denote polite behaviour similar to 'Western' concepts, in traditional China the term *li* 禮, which was involved in Confucian moral philosophy, has a wide interpretation.[17] The *Ciyuan* 辭源 dictionary (1998: 1241) states that *li* means 'rites', 'social rules', 'respect', 'present', etc. This semantic variety is rooted in the etymological origin of *li*, which is defined by the Han dynasty character etymological dictionary, the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*The Explanation of Simple and the Analysis of Compound Characters*) of Xu Shen 許慎 as:

> 禮，[⋯] 所以事神致福也。
>
> *Li, […] suo yi shi shen zhi fu ye*.
>
> Li [is …] through which spirits are served [in order to] give wealth. (*Shuowen Reprint Edition*: 4)

That is, the interpretation of li was originally 'religious rite or sacrifice' in ancient times. From many dictionaries, e.g. the *Guhanyu dacidian* 古漢語大辭典 (2000: 1899), it becomes clear that li gained its later '(linguistic) politeness' meaning from this original interpretation: through a sacrificial act, humans express respect (*jing* 敬) towards the spirits. Hence later when li gradually came to denote polite behaviour, its interpretation was still imbued with 'religious practice'. Thus, for the Chinese, 'politeness' means the adherence to a set of predetermined ritual rules that convey respect – this does not mean though that the use of politeness formulae could be strategic (see Chapter Five). This terminological fact can shed additional light on the reason why traditional Chinese politeness is formulae-biased.

Summing up section 2.2.1, I have argued that traditional Chinese politeness is formulae-biased. This is supported by the fact that it has a specific honorific lexicon, which has to be applied throughout polite dis-

[16] From an etymological perspective, the polysyllabic expression *limao* already occurred in the *Megzi* 孟子, the work of the ancient Confucian philosopher Meng Ke 孟軻, see the *Cihai* dictionary (1999: 1242). In this old locution, however, it refers to the countenance (mimic/proxemics) of a polite person, or, as Chen (2001: 3) explains, it means "the outer manifestation of a person's inner knowledge of rites". So it is not identical to the modern term *limao*.

[17] In this work I do not intend to discuss the concept of *li*, and its historical interpretations in detail, which would be more of a sinological than a politeness research study, but see Kojima (1996), Gou (2002), Zou (2002), and Liu (2003).

course. This proves that traditional and modern Chinese politeness constitute two different systems – modern Chinese politeness cannot be called formulae-biased. After separating traditional Chinese politeness from its modern counterpart, let us reconsider the relationship between elevation/denigration and polite address in a pre-modern setting.

2.3 The societal meta-message

In this sub-chapter I aim to prove that, in a traditional Chinese setting, Gu's (1990) two maxims in fact constitute one maxim. This also correlates with the fact that, as I noted above, Chinese lacks 'plain' honorific registers (cf. the Japanese *teinei go*), so polite vocatives are inherently elevating/denigrating. During the examination of this issue, first I study the traditional interpretation of PPs: as I will argue, while in modern Chinese politeness they can convey polite beliefs, this is not the case in the pre-modern context where they are basically evaluated as impolite or non-polite. This not only reconfirms that traditional and modern Chinese politeness are two different systems, but it also shows that in traditional Chinese politeness every polite term of address inherently expresses an elevating/denigrating (secondary) meaning. Since PPs convey 'neutral' (non-elevating/denigrating) beliefs, they cannot be evaluated as polite – this becomes the first argument for the existence of the societal meta-message. In the second half of the sub-chapter I reconsider the issue of 'neutrality' vs. the societal meta-message from other perspectives. I will show that in Chinese there is no neutrally polite addressing terminology at all, thus the Chinese avoid using neutral forms of address in polite contexts which inherently necessitate elevation/denigration in traditional Chinese hierarchical society. Based on the investigations carried out in this sub-chapter, my final conclusion will be that in the traditional Chinese hierarchical social context every polite vocative expresses elevating/denigrating beliefs to show deference; this is what I define as the societal meta-message.

2.3.1 PPs in traditional and modern Chinese politeness

A point that supports distinguishing traditional from modern Chinese politeness is the difference in the assessment that PPs gain in communication. In traditional discourse, PPs are open to being evaluated as impolite,

while in modern times they have become applicable in the polite domain of language. This means that in the traditional context there is no neutrally polite (non-elevating/denigrating) honorific addressing because the aim of politeness is to show respect by elevating others and denigrating oneself. In other words, PPs have to be excluded from the study of traditional formulaic politeness.[18] This is a fundamental proof for the existence of the societal meta-message conveyed by traditional Chinese polite forms of address.

Before investigating this issue, it is worth noting that it could be argued that modern PP application resembles the elevation/denigration phenomenon, see Liang (1998: 93). This is because in some contexts the second person honorific PP *nin* and the plain form *ni* are used non-reciprocally, depending on power relations. It could also be stated, or at least some hold the view, that the second person respect PP *nin* developed from the colloquial EA *ni-lao-ren-jia* 你老人家 ('you, this older [respected] one'), while the third person *tan* was in parallel formed from the EA *ta-lao-ren-jia* 他老人家 ('he, this [older] respected one'). That is, respect PPs probably developed from EA expressions, which is supported by the fact that unlike regular' PPs in modern standard Chinese they do not take the plural marker *men* 們. Note, however, that this theory is far from being widely accepted in vernacular Chinese linguistics, see Lü (1985: 38), or Feng (2000: 43). Whatever their origin is, I would argue that PPs have to be excluded from the traditional elevating/denigrating phenomenon because

(a) As I will show below in this section, such non-reciprocal application is not compulsory in contexts of power-difference, consider examples

[18] Note that it could be maintained that the evaluation of 'politeness' (or 'politic' behaviour, in Watts' 2003 interpretation) depends on the relation between the interactants, thus PPs can be interpreted as 'politeness' in non-formal interpersonal relationships. But, in traditional China, the Confucian concept of *wulun* 五倫 ('Five Social Bounds', the relationship between ruler-subject, father-son, elder-younger brothers, husband-wife, and friends) prescribes adherence to respect in every domain of social life, see Young (1994: 151). As shown in 2.3.3, this is valid even for the interactions between (power-equal) friends. So the application of PPs does not convey 'closeness' in Chinese social context, but it signals the breach of socially proper relations. 'Rigidity' to such an extent does not exist in modern East Asian societies. For instance, in modern Japan, male friends regularly use the first person PP *boku* 僕 towards each other, which expresses a kind of 'positive' politeness (Miwa 2000: 64–65). In China, in such relationships 'quasi-familiar EA/DAs' are used, which express respect on the one hand, and closeness on the other, see below.

(10) and (11), which is in contrast with the application of traditional elevating/denigrating lexicon;
(b) The first person PP *wo* 我 does not convey any self-denigrating meaning, so the twofold phenomenon of opposing elevation/denigration would have been re-interpreted as a one-sided elevating phenomenon;
(c) According to most of the researchers, respect second and third person PP applications only appear in modern Mandarin, see Lü (1985: 38), Yu and Ueda (2000: 272), or at best in the late vernacular, see Wang (2003: 56). (I intentionally write 'applications' because the character of *nin* existed earlier in the vernacular, but was used as a [plural] PP.) So they do not play any part in traditional Chinese linguistic politeness.[19]

In short, PPs cannot be identified with the traditional elevating/denigrating phenomenon.

Let us now examine the relation of PPs to traditional Chinese politeness. If one surveys technical dictionaries, like Xu (ed. 1999), Hong (2002), or Jiang (ed. 2003) it can be seen that the traditional honorific lexicon is constituted from the following categories:

(a) EA/DAs
(b) EV/DVs;
(c) euphemisms, like *hualiu* 花柳 ('flower of the willow quarter', used for bordellos and prostitutes); and
(d) idiomatic expressions used for certain speech-acts, for example *qing* 請 ('please') for asking.[20]

[19] Also note that the use of respect PPs does not count as a universal phenomenon in modern Chinese politeness. As Chao (1976: 312) notes in his early study, originally published in 1956: "the form *nin* is comparatively local for Peiping [that is Peking]". And the situation is not much different from that which he described in present times, even though due to centralised education *nin* has spread in the speech of some Northern intellectuals, businessmen, or private firm employees. Note that it is not the case that in areas outside Peking they widely use *other* respect pronouns: as Chao (1976: 312) notes, "outside of Peiping the proper term of address is often used instead of an honorific form of the second-person pronoun." In short, honorific PPs are not at all widely spread in Chinese.

[20] The study of euphemisms/taboos is beyond the scope of this work, although euphemisms occur in Chapter Five. See more on this topic in Huang and Tian (1990).

PPs do not appear on this list since most researchers of vernacular Chinese, like Lü (1985: 38), or Yuan (2004: 35), consider PPs inappropriate in the traditional polite context. This is because in traditional Chinese society politeness is strictly related to hierarchical interpersonal relations, as can be seen from examples (6) and (9) below. Since conveying denigrating/elevating honorific meaning (to show respect) is required in such a cultural context, PPs count as inadequate, as they do not convey this sort of message. So the use of PPs is evaluated as impolite, as shown by a large number of Classical and vernacular quotations cited in vernacular grammar books. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to deal with these quotations in detail, let us cite the following example:

(6) 見公卿不為禮，無貴賤皆‘汝’之。

Jian gong-qing bu wei li, wu gui-jian jie ‘ru’ zhi.

[When he] met with dukes and ministers, [he] did not adhere to politeness, did not [observe] ranks, but [he addressed] every person with *ru* (historical second person PP).

(*Sui shu* 隋書/78; *Yang Bo chouzhuan* 楊伯丑傳, originally quoted by Lü 1985: 35)

This quotation shows that second person PPs are regarded as impolite in the historical Chinese formal context because they do not denote the acknowledgment of the other’s rank. The case is similar with third person PPs, which also fail to convey elevating meaning, in contrast to indirect EAs. Note that this does not mean that second/third person PPs cannot occur in the polite register at all: they can accompany polite EAs, in order to facilitate the proper referential interpretation of the latter, cf. (7):

(7) 「大人，你明如鏡，清似水，照妾身肝膽虛實。」

“Daren, ni ming ru jing, qing si shui, zhao qieshen gandan xushi.”

“Sir (*daren*), you (*ni*) are light like mirror, clear like water, [I ask you to] inspect my, this concubine’s (*qieshen*) guilt or innocence.” (*Dou E yuan* 竇娥冤/Second stage)

As this example shows, PPs can co-occur with EAs in polite interactions, though it is not very common even in the vernacular, while it can seldom be seen in the Classical. But, as discourse examinations indicate, even in such an application PPs are only open to being evaluated as non-

polite, while they are evaluated as impolite when they occur without EA terms, as shown by (6).

The case of first person PPs is slightly different from that of the second and third persons. Traditionally the application of first person PPs is regarded as impolite, and in fact only DAs are used to refer to the self in strictly formal contexts. Even so, first person PPs can substitute for DAs in some polite speech situations, but then the EAs cannot be omitted, as discourse examples show, consider (8):

(8) 洪太尉道：「我直如此有眼不認真師，當面錯過！」

Hong taiwei dao: "Wo zhi ruci you yan bu ren zhen-shi, dang-mian cuo guo!"

Marshal Hong said: "I (*wo*) was so blind that I did not recognise the real master (polite EA, referring to an outstanding religious person), I made a mistake in front of you!"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 1)

Here the speaker applies the first person PP *wo* together with an indirect EA term to apologise in a formal context. But such instances are rare, and occur only in a restricted number of vernacular literary pieces. This is why Lü (1985: 35) considers it "relatively inappropriate" in the historical polite context: the first person PP does not function as an expression of politeness but only *substitutes for* the DA. This is why the application of first person PPs is irregular in polite discourse, since such application is open to being evaluated even as impoliteness, cf. (9):

(9) 賈魏公為相日，有方士姓許，對人未嘗稱名，無貴賤皆稱'我'，時人稱之'許我'。

Jia Weigong wei xiang ri, you fangshi xing Xu, dui ren wei chang cheng ming, wu gui-jian jie cheng 'wo', shi ren sheng zhi 'Xu-wo'.

In the days when Jia Weigong was minister, there was an official called Xu, who did not address [himself in his] personal name when talking with people, did not [observe] rank, but always called himself wo, so the men of those days called him 'Xu-wo' (ironically 'Xu who only uses *wo*').

(*Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談/Chapter 18.1, originally quoted by Lü 1985: 35)

This quotation shows that applying first person PPs is problematic in traditional Chinese discourse, since they do not have a denigrating mean-

ing, just as in the case of second/third person PPs, which do not convey an elevating message. As (9) shows, Xu should have addressed himself with his personal name, which expresses denigration (Wang 2003: 145–146). In short, the above examples (8) and (9) show that traditionally the first person PPs differ from the second person ones only because they are somewhat less open to being interpreted as impoliteness, but by no means can they be interpreted as expressions of politeness.

In short, although PPs can co-occur in the polite register with the EA/DAs, they do not belong to politeness formulae. Also, when they are used alone, they are open to being evaluated as impoliteness, but by no means can they be interpreted as explicit *politeness* in traditional Chinese culture. This is in contrast with modern Chinese, which has second (*nin*) and third person (*tan*) honorific PPs that are regularly categorised as politeness, see Liu (2001), or Gu (1990). And a noteworthy fact is that, while the use of EA/DAs is obligatory in the traditional polite register, the application of PPs is free in colloquial Mandarin, their plain forms, the second person *ni* 你 and the third person *ta* 他 do not convey impolite beliefs at all. In other words, the use of respect forms is optional rather than prescribed in modern social interactions, which underlines the notion that in modern Chinese politeness the strategic aspect gained priority over the formulaic one. Cf. the following two interactions:

(10) 「張總，您還忙着吶？」

"Zhang zong, nin hai mang zhe na?"

"Director Zhang, are you (*nin*, respect second person PP) still working?" (Quoted from Liang 1998: 93)

(11) 「經理，你不用說了，[⋯]」

"Jingli, ni bu yong shuo le, […]"

"Boss, you (*ni*, plain second person PP form) don't have to remind me that, […]"

(Quoted from the homepage *'People's Net'*)

In both discourses the employee is in a somewhat familiar but hierarchical relationship with the employer[21], still in the second interaction the speaker uses the non-formal PP *ni* towards her boss. This illustrates that

[21] In order to illustrate this latter point, I have chosen examples where the speakers (employees) also apply occupational titles beside PPs, which express some elevating sense in the Chinese cultural context (see the introductory section).

using *nin* is not determined in employer-employee relations. In short, it can be stated that in Mandarin, PPs made a jump from impoliteness/non-politeness to the domain of politeness, and they have become a tool that provides an optional choice between honorific/plain applications in a given context.

Summing up section 2.3.1, the traditional absence of, and the modern occurrence of PPs indicate a break between traditional and modern Chinese politeness. Since traditional Chinese politeness is based on the maintenance of hierarchical Confucian interpersonal relations, the use of PPs is inadequate, because PPs do not convey any elevating/denigrating message; this is why they do not appear in traditional politeness. Conversely, due to modern Chinese social changes, which resulted in politeness losing its originally 'rigid', respect-denoting function, PPs gained currency and EA/DAs were driven out of colloquial Chinese usage. Therefore, when studying traditional Chinese formulaic politeness, PPs have to be excluded from the inquiries. This is an important point because the projection of PPs to traditional politeness would indicate the existence of 'neutrally polite' (or, at least, politely interpretable) addressing terminology in the pre-modern context. The case of PPs has already shown that the re-examination of the relation between elevation/denigration and addressing is necessary, because in the traditional language PPs, which do not convey any elevating/denigrating meaning, are not used. In what follows, I extend this study to the addressing phenomenon in general.

2.3.2 'Neutrality' vs. traditional Chinese polite addressing

Above I have dealt only with the restricted data of PPs. In order, however, to show that addressing is entirely elevating/denigrating I examine the issue of 'neutrality' in the Chinese context from two perspectives:

(a) The lexical perspective: here I show that the historical Chinese polite lexicon has no 'neutrally' polite terms; vocatives of 'neutral' sense are substituted by EA/DAs in polite discourse; and 'neutral' terms only appear in polite interaction if they express elevating/denigrating contextual connotations;
(b) The discourse perspective: Chinese avoid 'neutral' forms of address in contexts which would require neutrality within a 'Western' logical framework.

These inquiries will also support the notion of the societal meta-message.

2.3.2.1 The lexical approach to 'neutrality'

One way to prove that polite addressing inherently expresses some elevating/denigrating sense is to examine its lexicon. If one studies the Chinese polite vocative lexicon, it appears that in the traditional setting there is no 'neutrally' polite addressing. For example, those polite vocatives that have been adopted from traditional terminology but express equal relationship in modern Chinese used to be EAs in the historical Chinese context.[22] *Tongxue* (lit. 'schoolmate', see the introductory part of this chapter), which is now a general term of address (or 'solidarity booster') used towards students from primary school to university level, was originally formed as an EA used towards men of letters in the Qing period, see Ji (2000: 929). In other words, a number of traditional EAs have been transformed into 'neutrally' polite vocatives in modern Chinese, so they have undergone a major semantic change; conversely, 'neutrality' appeared in the polite vocative lexicon in modern times. This fact even makes it reasonable to treat the pre-modern and modern uses of the same vocative forms as different terms. This transformation is underscored by the change in the applicability of the terms: these EAs can be used towards a wide circle of interactants, unlike their original application.

As an example, let us consider the short-lived popularity of the modern term of address *shifu* 師傅 ('master workman', see Chen 2001: 31–32 and Ju 1991) which was adapted from an EA form used towards clerical persons, cf. Ji (2000: 805). In the later period of the 'Cultural Revolution' – because of the coarse encounters between politic cliques – the use of the term of address *tongzhi* 同志 (lit. 'comrade'), which used to be most generally applied earlier in Mainland China, became literally dangerous because 'comrade' expresses fellowship with the addressee. Instead of using 'comrade', the term *shifu* gained growing popularity up to the early eighties because, by using this term, the speaker symbolically locates the

[22] Such an adoption of traditional terminology to modern application cannot be observed for DAs, because in modern colloquial usage the Chinese regularly refer to themselves with first person PPs. On the other hand, there are also instances that show the modern extinction of elevation/denigration in self-reference. This is the case of the self-referring *ren* 人 ('man'), which is applied as a general subject in Mandarin to express 'neutral' connotations. In the traditional context, it used to have a twofold function: (a) it was a general subject as in Mandarin; and (b) it was an honorific self-referring form, conveying self-deprecatory connotation. This latter use, however, has absolutely died out from modern colloquial Chinese, whereas traces can be still found in Japanese honorific language; cf. Kikuchi (1997: 351).

interlocutor in the class of workers, which used to be the only relatively 'safe' class apart from that of the soldiers in that period, without denoting any fellowship with the addressee. Therefore in those years *shifu* was used towards any non-familiar interlocutor (except party functionaries and soldiers), irrespective of his/her real profession. So, while in traditional Chinese politeness *shifu* is an EA term of fixed usage, in modern Chinese it became a 'neutrally' polite vocative of strategic application.

On the other hand, there are also terms of address of 'neutral' sense in pre-modern Chinese.[23] But these are not treated as politeness by Chinese sources, nor do they appear in polite discourse contexts. Considering this phenomenon in reverse: only terms of address that express elevating/denigrating meaning become settled (i.e. enter into the domain of the formulaic aspect) as politeness. Let us consider the case of the 'neutral' vocative *heshang* 和尚 (lit. 'Buddhist monk', a term of Sanskrit origin, cf. Ji 2000: 350), which is generally used to refer indirectly to Buddhists in the third person, but can also occur as a direct term of address when the speaker is of higher rank than the interlocutor, or the register is impolite or non-polite:

(12) 庄客道：「和尚快走，休在這裏討死！」

Zhuangke dao: "Heshang kuai zou, xiu zai zheli tao si!

The cottage servant said: "Get away quickly, monk (*heshang*); stop searching your death here!"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 5)

Here the house servant rudely refuses to give the monk lodging for the night, applying the term of address *heshang*. This example shows that the term *heshang* is 'neutral', it cannot be evaluated as politeness, which is also underlined by the fact that Chinese dictionaries of polite language do not mention this term. Instead, terms like *shifu* (see above), *daheshang* 大和尚 ('great monk'), or the 'quasi-familiar' *sengge* 僧哥, (lit. 'monk-brother' in friendly interactions, see 2.3.2) are used for politely addressing clerical persons. This shows that vocatives that do not express speech-partner-elevating/self-denigrating meaning are not included in the polite lexicon.

[23] Note that 'neutral' sense means that these terms do not carry any elevating/denigrating *meta-message*: as already mentioned in footnote 1, some polite vocatives that express neutral semantic meaning can simultaneously convey some elevating/denigrating meta-message, though this is more typical for impolite EA/DAs.

Another example that can support the above argument from a different angle is the case of *guanren* 官人 (lit. 'official') and parallel terms. In its plain form, the term *guanren* is not used in direct address toward officials because, as a rule, officials have to be addressed with their official title (which is evaluated as elevating in the Chinese context) [24], or with collective EAs, like the *daling* 大令 ('great magistrate', cf. Ji 2000: 144). But *guanren* becomes a direct EA when used towards interlocutors who are of common rank, or whose profession is not known; also, it functions as a direct EA when women address their husbands; cf. Ji (2000: 236). That is, as the symbolic enrolment of the non-official interlocutor to the respected class of officials conveys elevating meaning, the 'neutral' *guanren* gains elevating sense when it is used towards non-officials, so it can enter the polite language. This underscores again that polite terms of address had to express elevating/denigrating meaning in old China.

Note that such interlocutor-dependent examples, like *guanren*, are relatively uncommon; in most cases it is clear from their lexical meaning which term is elevating/denigrating (cf. footnote 1). Regularly both monosyllabic nouns and adjectival-nominal compounds express contradictory positive or negative values, which convey an elevating/denigrating sense in Chinese cognition (see the semantic-cognitive analysis of the elevation/denigration phenomenon in Peng 2000). Consider Table One on p. 59.[25]

In row one both the DA and the EA noun expresses elevation/denigration, while in row two it is the adjectival part of the adjectival-nominal compounds that (at least in the Chinese cultural context) explicitly conveys elevation/denigration.[26] In row three, both the adjectival and the nominal part of the compounds have explicit denigrating/elevating meanings. This shows that generally there is no major difficulty in defining which terms of address belong to elevating/denigrating sense. Note that the overwhelming majority of the polite terms of address I have examined have such obvious elevating/denigrating meaning, while the few remaining others belong to the above category of *guanren*, or the category of

[24] Note that *guanren* became an official title in the time of the Ming dynasty, as a title for lower-ranked eunuchs who worked at the imperial library, see Ji (2000: 236).

[25] Note that, for the sake of simplicity, I quote here direct terms of address only. Also, in order to properly exemplify the relation between denigrating/elevating lexicons, I apply semantically parallel EA/DA terms – nevertheless, there are many EA terms that do not have concrete DA parallels, and vice versa.

[26] See more on the relation of adjectival-nominal parts of EA/DA expressions in Chapter four.

TABLE ONE: THE SEMANTIC CONTRAST BETWEEN DA AND EA TERMS

	DA	EA
1	*chen* 臣 ('servant', a DA used by officials towards the ruler)	*qing* 卿 ('minister', an EA used by the ruler towards officials)
2	*xiaodao* 小道 ('worthless Taoist', a DA used by Taoists)	*gaodao* 高道 ('outstanding Taoist', an EA used towards Taoists
3	*yudi* 愚弟 ('stupid-younger-brother', a quasi-familiar DA used in friendly relationships	*xianxiong* 賢兄 ('wise-elder-brother', a quasi-familiar EA used towards friends)

terms that are used in the elevating/denigrating sense independently of their concrete lexical meaning (cf. footnote 1). To sum up: terms of all of these categories convey elevating/denigrating beliefs, which supports the view that every polite term of address inherently conveyed a societal meta-message in old China.

In the next section I approach the issue of 'neutrality' from a different perspective, the discourse of those situations where the equal and close social power relationship between the interactants would presuppose the application of 'neutrally' polite terms of address.

2.3.2.2 The discourse approach to 'neutrality'

The aim of this final section is to examine a specific set of polite discourses where the interactants are of equal rank and their relationship is familiar (I will refer to such relationships as 'quasi-familiar' because these interactants are not family members). Such a relationship is of particular importance in the study of 'neutrality', because in the 'Western' context quasi-familiar power-equality necessitates the mutual application

of plain (non-respect) forms of address. Although the systematic examination of addressing in the Chinese context is a task for Chapter Three, it can be mentioned in advance that, according to 'Western' understanding quasi-familiar power equals regularly apply direct forms of address, which as they convey intimacy are open to being evaluated as politeness in friendly relationships. Conversely, the application of respect vocatives expresses distance, thus their sudden use between quasi-familiar interactants can denote the breach of friendship, and so such application is even open to being interpreted as *impoliteness*. Projecting this notion onto the supposed 'neutrally' polite vs. 'elevating/denigrating' distinction in Chinese, quasi-familiar relationship between power-equals could entail the existence and application of 'neutrally' polite forms of address, as elevation/denigration seems to be inadequate in such contexts. After all, in the traditional Confucian prescriptive view of social relationships only the relationship between friends is seen as an equal one.

As the following interaction shows, however, rank-equality does not entail the existence of 'neutrally' polite address, as friends do not avoid using EA/DAs in interactions. Instead, they can apply a specific set of vocatives that I define as 'quasi-familiar EA/DAs':

(13) 1. 宋江道：「我也自這般尋思。若不是賢兄如此周全，宋江定遭縲紲之厄。」
2. 朱仝道：「休如此說，兄長卻投何處去好？」
3. 宋江道：「小可尋思有三個安身之處[…]」

Song Jiang dao: "Wo ye zi zhe ban xun-si. Ruo bu shi xianxiong ru ci zhou quan, Song Jiang ding zao leixie zhi e."
Zhu Quan dao: "Xiu ru ci shuo, xiongzhang que tou he chu qu hao?"
Song Jiang dao: "Xiao ke xun-si you san ge an-shen zhi chu […]"

Song Jiang said: "I (first person PP *wo*) also think so. If you, wise-elder-brother (quasi-familiar EA) did not take care of me, Song Jiang (self-reference with name as third person, expressing self-denigration) would meet with the fate of being arrested."
Zhu Quan said: "Stop speaking like this, where do you, superior-elder-brother (xiongzhang, quasi familiar EA) intend to go?"
Song Jiang said: "I, this worthless person (*xiao*) can think of three hiding places […]"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 滸全傳/Chapter 22)

This interaction occurs between the protagonist of the Ming dynasty novel *Shuihu*, Song Jiang, and Zhu Quan who helps Song escape from being handed over to the law. The relationship of the interactants is friendly. In the above interaction, it can be seen that there is a specific, quasi-familiar lexicon for friends, like, for example, the quasi-familiar EA *xianxiong* (lit. 'wise-elder-brother') that is used by Song when addressing Zhu. Quasi-familiar EA/DAs are neglected in the technical literature, yet they are noteworthy because they have a twofold function: they denote intimacy between the interlocutors, but they simultaneously elevate them. Also, when used towards oneself, like, for example, the term *yudi* (lit. 'stupid younger-brother') in Table One, they simultaneously denote intimacy and self-denigration. The existence of this specific lexicon shows that elevation/denigration is applied in friendly relationships, as well. This is further reinforced in (13) by other forms: besides uttering the first person PP *wo*[27], Song also applies his own name in the third person in the first speech-turn, when referring to himself, which conveys self-denigration. Furthermore, in turn two, Zhu responds to Song with another quasi-familiar EA, the *xiongzhang* (lit. 'superior-elder-brother'), and in turn three Song denigrates himself with the regular DA *xiao* (lit. 'worthless person'). In short, the above interaction shows that in the traditionally equal relationship between friends, the interactants also adhere to denigration/elevation by constructing the discourse via regular and/or quasi-familiar EA/DAs.[28]

[27] The presence of PPs is observable to a greater extent in quasi-familiar interactions than in non-familiar ones. This is because the style of quasi-familiar discourses is somewhat less formal, so PP application is more acceptable in such a context. Note, however, that PPs do not occur alone, but they are accompanied by EA/DAs for reasons already discussed in 2.3.1.

[28] As can be seen from the above discourse, the application of these two 'categories' is rather arbitrary, speakers switch between them to simultaneously maintain emotional closeness and formality. Furthermore, as is obvious from (13), quasi-familiar EA/DAs can be substituted by other forms that express the same beliefs. The following example provides an example for such forms:
朱仝道：「公明哥哥休怪，小弟今來捉你。」
Zhu Quan dao: "Gongming gege xiu guai, xiaodi jin lai zhuo ni."
Zhu Quan said: "Elder-brother Gongming (*Gongming gege*), do not be surprised, I, your worthless-younger brother (*xiaodi*) was sent to catch you."
(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/ Chapter 22)
This example is also cited from the interaction between Song and Zhu, where Zhu first tells Song that he was sent out to arrest him, but he intends to help him escape. Here Zhu applies the 'regular' quasi-familiar DA *xiaodi* (lit. 'I, your worthless-younger-brother'), and he applies the personal name + familiar EA

It is necessary to note briefly that in (13) there is no age difference between the interactants, yet they mutually address each other as 'elder brother'. This practice is regularly adhered to in quasi-familiar discourse, as the elder-brother is of higher and the younger brother of lower rank in the Chinese family. This is also manifested in the fact that nouns denoting the elder-brother, like *xiong* 兄, or *ge* 哥 (both mean 'elder-brother') appear in EAs, while nouns that refer to the younger brother *di* 弟 ('younger-brother') occur in DAs (this also holds true for nouns denoting elder and younger sisters); cf. row three in Table One. Nevertheless, there are cases when the age-difference is explicit between power-equal interactants, or the interactants intend to emphasise the age-difference in order to emphasise intimacy, rank in the group, etc. Thus one might suppose that in such relations the younger interactant cannot be elevated, as being a 'younger brother' is inherently denigrating. Chinese, however, provides a solution for such cases: the younger person is addressed with EA terms like the *xiandi* 賢弟 ('wise-younger-brother'). In this term, the adjective *xian* ('wise') expresses elevation, while the *di* ('younger brother') denotes a quasi-familiar relationship, (i.e., the elevating adjective 'deactivates' the denigrating sense of the noun). In short, EA/DA application works for every kind of quasi-familiar relationships, i.e. 'neutrality' is avoided in polite interactions.

Summing up, a specific quasi-familiar EA/DA application exists in traditional Chinese politeness. The fact that such specific application developed supports the view that polite addressing is elevating/denigrating in the Chinese context: even though the relationship between friends is regarded as an equal one in Chinese culture, there is no 'neutrally' polite way of addressing each other, because polite addressing is inherently elevating/denigrating sense.

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structure *Gongming gege* (lit. 'elder brother Gongming', the 'elder brother' expresses elevating beliefs in the Chinese context) when referring to Song. In this latter structure, the personal name, which can be used only between intimates, expresses familiarity, while the familiar EA *gege* expresses respect. That is, besides the 'regular' quasi-familiar EA/DAs, there are other ways of expressing the same beliefs. Also note that in some cases familiar EA/DAs are used in quasi-familiar settings, like *gege* 哥哥 ('elder brother') referring to the interlocutor, and *didi* 弟弟 ('younger-brother') in reference to oneself. This diversity of quasi-familiar expressions, compared with non-familiar ones, is supposedly rooted in the fact that quasi-familiar interactions provide quite a relaxed atmosphere.

Summary

Chapter Two has set out from the paradoxical fact that Gu (1990) applies the traditional lexicon to characterise the modern Chinese elevation/denigration phenomenon on the one hand, and implicitly projects the addressing vs. elevation/denigration distinction to the historical Chinese language, on the other. The examination in 2.2 has shown that traditional and modern politeness have to be separated, which is a peculiarity of Chinese. Traditional Chinese constitutes a formulae-biased system, where politeness is primarily practised via formulae, though strategic devices can of course be utilised. Thus, believing that statements valid for the modern system have to be reconsidered in the traditional context, I re-examined the relationship of elevation/denigration and addressing in section 2.3. As can be shown from the study of PPs, they cannot be applied in traditional polite interactions, as polite vocatives have to express elevating/denigrating meta-messages in order to show deference, which is also related to the fact that Chinese has no 'neutrally' polite honorific style.[29] In the second half of 2.3, I have studied the lack of 'neutrality' in relation to addressing, in general. As the lexical and discourse approaches to 'neutrality' have shown, polite addressing is inherently elevating/denigrating. This means that every polite form of address conveys a societal meta-message.

In this chapter I have, first of all, argued for the existence of the societal meta-message, a peculiarity of traditional Chinese politeness. The notion of a societal meta-message is this: when Chinese politely address each other in the hierarchical social context, they explicitly or implicitly convey the message of elevating the other's and denigrating self's symbolic social position. In Chapter Three, I will examine this meta-message in social practice: as will be shown, it pre-determines special rigidity in the social application of polite address, the basic function of which is to separate social classes from each other. This will (a) reinforce that addressing had to be a denigrating/elevating act in traditional China, and (b) raise the issue of how evaluation exists if every detail of the social application of Chinese vocatives is predetermined.

[29] Note that examining the phenomenon of why PPs are not applied in the polite register from a (socio)linguistic perspective can also help avoid prescriptive explanations. For example, Yang (1999: 99) explains the avoidance of PPs thus: "Since Confucian philosophy dictates that everything have a proper place by being assigned a correct name, therefore, a pronoun is not proper, because it is not a name in itself but rather stands for a name."

CHAPTER THREE

POLITENESS IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE SOCIETY

The Societal Meta-message at Work

As this book has already stated: addressing others has always had an important role in Chinese. This is strongly reflected in its popularity in prescriptive etiquette books – instructions on the correct use of polite vocatives already appeared in some pre-Qin dynasty works. Terms of address gained prominence in honorific language for several reasons, for example, their discourse application is simpler than that of other honorific formulae (e.g. EV/DVs or euphemisms). In fact, sociolinguistic inquiries into pre-modern texts have shown that people with only a basic education mostly adhere to the application of vocatives only, while neglecting other honorific formulae.[1] But the most fundamental reason for the relative

[1] Sociolinguistic analysis shows that the proper application of EA/DA is expected from basically educated Chinese, while, for example, the more refined EV/DV lexicon can be omitted. Consider the following example:

柴勝道：「[…] 相公不信，可將丈尺量過。如若不同，小人甘當認罪。」
Chai Sheng dao: "[...] Xianggong bu xin, ke jiang zhangchi liang guo. Ru ruo bu tong, xiaoren gan dang ren zui."
Chai Sheng said: "[…] If you, my lord (*xianggong*, an EA used towards officials) don't believe it, just measure it. If it differs [from what I said], I, this worthless person (*xiaoren*, a DA used by lower ranked persons) will plead myself guilty."
(*Longtu gong an* 龍圖公案/Shibei 石碑 [The Case of the Stone Stele])

This interaction occurs in a court setting, where Judge Bao (a famous detective of the old China) interrogates a criminal of lower origin. The suspect only applies the DA *xiaoren* (lit. 'worthless person') as referring to himself, and *xianggong* (lit. 'my lord'), an EA used towards officials. On the other hand, he does not apply EV/DVs. As Chinese courtroom interactions – similarly to other cultures, cf. Coterill (2003) – are regulated by strict rules (see Shapiro 1990), and the interrogatees are obliged to use 'exaggerated' politeness towards the judges, this shows that the appropriate use of terms of address is evaluated in itself as polite. In other words, the proper use of EA/DAs is expected from speakers in all circumstances, while the application of EV/DVs is more characteristic of refined speech. From this perspective, the use of Chinese honorific language is a kind of social 'self-presentation', just as it was argued for Japanese by Ide (1982: 378), with the

importance of terms of address in polite language is due to the fact that linguistic politeness in general has a specific function in China: the expression of deference towards the interlocutor by symbolically denigrating oneself and elevating the other on a symbolic social scale.[2] Since every polite term of address inherently expresses elevating/denigrating beliefs (the 'societal meta-message'), they have become the basic tools for conveying respect.

This property, however, predetermines some peculiarities of Chinese polite address as a social phenomenon:

(a) In the strongly hierarchical traditional Chinese society, there is a strict demarcation between the polite self and other reference of the powerful and powerless social groups. Members of well-esteemed groups can apply specific polite referring terminology that denigrates them according to some characteristic of the given social group. Conversely, these groups can be elevated in reference to their group-membership, since such reference conveys respect. The same does not work in the case of social groups of lower rank, thus these latter groups apply a different, less-specific terminology. For example, officials can politely refer to themselves as *xiaguan* 下官 ('worthless official'), and be elevated as *gaoguan* 高官 ('outstanding official'). But, beggars do not denigrate themselves as *xiaqi* 下乞 ('worthless beggar', my example), because their status cannot be politely diminished. Instead, they have to refer to themselves with the term *xiaoren* 小人 ('worthless person'), or similar general forms for low-ranked speakers. So Chinese polite addressing inherently 'frames' (cf. Goffman 1974) the interactants of polite discourse, that is, polite (self/other) forms of address become indicators of social rank.

(b) There is no 'downward' use of polite addressing, since a person of lower rank than that of the speaker cannot be elevated, and the speaker cannot denigrate him/herself in such a context. This means that EA/DA

exception that the use of forms of address has to be correct irrespective of educational level and other sociolinguistic factors – even though the refinedness/variability of terms of address is in proportion with educational level, as well.

[2] The notion of the importance of honorific vocatives is supported by Gu (1990: 238) who maintains that during the time of the formation of Confucian ideology, polite addressing was identified with the Confucian concept of *zhengming* 正名 (lit. 'correcting the names'). *Zhengming* refers to that intention of Confucius that 'names' (that is terms of address, as Gu interprets it) have to be applied exactly as they were used by the 'ancients', in order to restore and maintain traditional hierarchical relations.

can only be applied mutually in power/class-equal relationships. It can be used, furthermore, if the speaker is powerless and the interlocutor is powerful, in a non-reciprocal way – the powerful party cannot respond to politeness with mutual EA/DA, but must consider using a less polite form of address. Consider the following discourse:

(1) 主管道：「日後不來贖時，卻不干小人事。」
員外道：「不要你管，[…]」

Zhuguan dao: "Rihou bu lai shu shi, que bu gan xiaoren shi."
Yuanwai dao: "Bu yao ni guan, [...]"

The pawnbroker said: "If you do not come back later to redeem the money, it is not my, this worthless person's (*xiaoren*, a DA used by low-ranked persons) concern."
The official (*yuanwai*, denotes men of letters who do not take official posts) said: "You (*ni*, second person PP) don't have to concern yourself about, […]"

(*Pingyao zhuan* 平妖傳/Chapter 5)

This interaction of power difference reflects the seemingly 'rigid' character of traditional polite discourse: the higher-rank interactant, being broke, speaks with the pawnbroker, who reminds him of the conditions of business. Although the pawnbroker is in a position of power in the given context, he nevertheless applies the DA *xiaoren* ('worthless man') when referring to himself, while the official addresses him with the second person PP *ni* (which is not open to being evaluated as politeness, cf. Chapter Two). So, even though the pawnbroker has power in the given context, and he also warns the official about the time limit, they still address each other non-reciprocally for the benefit of the official. This non-reciprocal use is a result of terms of address expressing elevation/denigration. While the pawnbroker applies a polite DA that is proper to his position, the official cannot respond to this by using polite vocatives, because these would express the equality of their social ranks.

Thus, one gets quite a 'rigid' image of Chinese social communication when considering the above points, which noticeably coincides with stereotypes of 'the polite Chinese' (cf. Chapter One).[3] As will be shown

[3] Note that at first glance one could arrive at a similarly 'rigid' image when examining the historical polite terms of address of many other languages; see the diachronic examination of Taavitsainen and Jucker (ed. 2003). The peculiarity of Chinese, however, is not only that terms of address are much more numerous and

in this chapter, the societal meta-message works as a determining factor in the social distribution/application of terms of address: powerful social groups, which are esteemed in traditional China, have their own EA/DA lexicon, while powerless groups apply a common terminology. And polite conversation between interactants with a power differential is non-reciprocal, while rank-equals can use polite (self/other) address terms towards each other. Here the societal meta-message fulfils its fundamental task: the maintenance of hierarchical relations.

The aim of this chapter is to show this task of the societal meta-message as a factor that controls the social distribution and application of the polite addressing lexicon. I will examine how vocatives can be grouped according to the social power of the group they are used by/towards. This reinforces the idea that polite addressing is necessarily elevating/denigrating in China: if the difference between the polite vocative terminology/application of the powerful and the powerless social classes can be shown, this proves that addressing cannot be a 'neutral' phenomenon. Besides, such categorisation can also help solve the problematic issue of the classification of Chinese polite vocatives. Finally, the 'rigid' picture of Chinese polite communication built up in this chapter raises the issue of how evaluation rightfully exists in the social task of Chinese (im)polite addressing.

The chapter will study the following points. In 3.1 I discuss the problematic issue of the categorisation of polite Chinese vocatives, in order to show how a societal meta-message-based categorisation can contribute towards research into Chinese polite address. I also introduce the philological source which has led me to approach polite Chinese addressing as a phenomenon related to social power. Later on, in 3.2, I study how the polite vocatives work in Chinese society. In the final part of section 3.2, I sketch a model of polite communication and raise the question of whether this model is a Parsonian one. Before studying these points, it is necessary to mention that here I mainly deal with direct forms of address. Indirect EA/DAs work similarly to direct ones from a sociolinguistic perspective, but their number is much larger, and so including them would

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have a more elaborated application than they have in other languages, and self-reference is defined similarly to other-reference (which is an East Asian characteristic). More importantly in Chinese, impolite address works as 'rigidly' as politeness, and nor is there a free transition between politeness and impoliteness (e.g. irony/banter), as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four. This is why Chinese data prove to be particularly relevant for studying whether discourse evaluation works when honorific forms of address are applied. (See more in the Summary section.)

only complicate matters, without resulting in any further understanding of Chinese forms of address.

3.1 Approaches to the Chinese polite addressing phenomenon

Before focusing on the study of the social application of traditional Chinese polite address, it is necessary to survey the difficulties encountered in former attempts to categorise the polite addressing lexicon. As I will argue, a fundamental problem in most studies on this topic is that they merge polite forms of address with other vocatives, or they try to impose universalistic 'address theories' on the Chinese data. A new categorisation of the traditional addressing lexicon, based on the distribution of terms of address according to social power, can therefore shed light on categorizing issues. In 3.1.2 I jump from the modern to the traditional examinations of Chinese polite vocatives. I intend to show that the way in which philologists of the old China examined polite addressing can become, with some provisions, a starting point for a social-power based approach to polite Chinese vocatives.

3.1.1 Linguistic studies of Chinese addressing, and their insufficiency

Due to their central role in honorific language, traditional Chinese vocatives constitute a relatively complex system, compared to the situation in other languages. Linguists have on occasion examined some aspects of modern or traditional polite Chinese address since the beginning of 20th century, cf. Chao (1976: 341). A constant problem for researchers is that Chinese polite vocatives prove to be difficult-to-comprehend data. The problematic variety of polite vocatives has already been referred to in Chapter Two: Gu (1990) uses 'addressing' as an 'umbrella' term that involves a wide range of vocative categories, and addressing appears similarly in many other well-known works on the topic (Ohta 1972, Chao 1976, Chen 2001, or Yuan 2004). Other authors, like Zhu (1994), simply omit certain categories of polite address in order to give systematic accounts of its application. These problems are supposedly rooted in the fact that, instead of focusing on the common (denigrating/elevating) *function* of terms of address, these researchers apply two methodologies when

inquiring into the maze of address categories (official titles, kinship terms, indirect polite terms of address, etc.):

(a) they categorise polite vocatives as linguistic sub-groups of the address lexicon; or
(b) they try to apply the so-called 'address theories', based on primarily Western data, to Chinese polite terms of address.

Both of these approaches prove to be insufficient for the comprehensive study of traditional (or even modern) Chinese polite addressing phenomena.

The first approach to polite address, that is its treatment as a sub-category of the address lexicon, is feasible insofar as researchers do not aim to elaborate an (im)politeness theory. Chapter 23 of Y. R. Chao's (1976) well-known work *Aspects of Chinese Sociolinguistics* maps the Chinese vocative lexicon in general, and so honorific forms are integrated into the general addressing phenomenon. Also, polite forms are not systematised, for example, their relation to elevation/denigration remains relatively untouched. The same path is followed by Yuan (2004) in the case of traditional Chinese vocatives. This, however, is not a defect of these studies, since they examine issues other than politeness. Nevertheless, such treatment of polite vocatives becomes insufficient as soon as one applies it for politeness research purposes because it is *descriptive* and not *functional*: these studies do not approach polite address as a collective honorific phenomenon, but rather they describe some of its manifestations in relation to linguistic politeness. Some authors who follow this descriptive way are conscious of this problem, Gu (1990), for example, refers to it thus: "It is impossible in this paper to do full justice to the complexity of the Chinese addressing system" (1990: 249). And, as has been discussed in Chapter Two (cf. footnote 3), the complexity of terms of address leads Gu (1990), for example, even to apply impolite or non-polite categories to the study of polite addressing.

Other researchers approach polite Chinese addressing from functional perspectives: they apply universalistic 'address theories' to examine the Chinese corpus, cf. Zhu (1994), Tian (1997), or Chen (2002). In order to discuss the theoretical considerations of this second type of approach to Chinese polite vocatives, it is necessary to survey the so-called 'addressing theories' it relies on. The 'addressing theories' were initially developed in the late fifties and early sixties of the 20th century; see Gilman and Brown (1958), or Brown and Gilman (1960). Originally they studied the use of the second person PPs diachronically in those European languages

which have both a formal and an informal second person PP form. The distinction of formal and informal pronouns is generally known as the 'T/V distinction', from the French forms '*tu*' (= T = informal) and '*vous*' (= V = formal) (note that it is casually referred to as 'T/Y distinction', from the historical English *'thou'* and *'you'* = plain vs. honorific dichotomy). The 'addressing theories' have found that both the reciprocal and the non-reciprocal use of these forms can be connected with the semantics of 'power' and 'solidarity'. In the *relations of power*, there is a non-reciprocal use of V and T between the superior and inferior parties in a discourse, and there is a reciprocal use of V between power equals. This is because in European societies the mutual use of V used to be a privilege of the powerful social classes, while T was used mutually by the less powerful. In the *relations of solidarity*, T is reciprocally used between equals. During their development, the T form became the pronoun of either condescension or intimacy and the V form became the pronoun of formality and reverence.[4] The 'address theories' are universalistic, that is, they argue that the solidarity and power semantics control the application of forms of address in every language and culture similarly to the T/V system.

Although these studies gave an enormous boost to both the theoretical and the cross-linguistic research of the general/honorific addressing phenomenon, they received critiques from many perspectives. For example, during 'The Kiel research project' in the early 1980s when several scholars collected together data on the addressing of 17 languages, the applicability of the address theories was questioned even for the addressing phenomenon of European languages, see Braun (1988: 3–45; as a later general critique see Kroger and Wood 1992).[5] As a consequence of this,

[4] According to these theories, in the T/V addressing system solidarity can only play its role when it is not disturbed by power semantics. There are cases, however, where these two semantic factors conflict with each other. For example in the case of a child, his power relation with his parents makes him use the V form; their mutual intimacy, on the other hand, makes him use the T form. To see a reversed relationship, in the case of a customer, the power relation suggests that he should use the T form with a shop clerk of lower social rank than his; but because they are not in a solidarity relationship, he can also consider using the V form. Because of the social changes in the 20th century typical for most of the Western societies, it became a pragmatic custom that the superior but solidaristic person is not addressed with the V form, while the inferior but not solidary person is not addressed with the T form any more; see Brown and Gilman (1960).

[5] The case is not only that there are many historical and modern European languages which have more than two honorific pronouns that express different politeness values, but also researches have shown that the T/V dichotomy is a com-

researchers should not uncritically apply these to Chinese corpora. A general tendency, however, is that authors do not really take into account the critiques that address theories have received, but accept unconditionally their universal validity. As a result, instead of taking Chinese peculiarities into account, they impose these theories upon the Chinese corpus. Thus scholars ignore many linguistic facts, in order to keep their corpus 'proper' for universal considerations. For example, Chen (2002: 36), after acknowledging that "In using address forms, there is variation across cultures.", rather paradoxically writes the following when discussing the Chinese addressing phenomenon:

> The Chinese address system is mainly composed of proper names, titles, pronouns and kinship terms, like the English address system [my emphasis]. (2002: 47)

That is, the reliance on universalistic theories results in authors like Chen (2002), or Zhu (1994) having to play a twofold game: they try to take into account as many Chinese peculiarities as possible, yet they have to gloss over the fundamental, Chinese-specific denigrating/elevating aspect of honorific addressing, in order to remain 'universal'. In short, while the descriptive studies above are inclusive (i.e. the authors include every possible vocative form in the scope of their inquiries) but not functional, those that are based on 'address theories' are functional but quite exclusive.

As already mentioned, in this chapter I intend to categorise the polite addressing lexicon according to the social power of the persons they are used by/towards. Such an approach to polite Chinese vocatives can provide a new solution to the categorisation problem: it provides a functional but inclusive solution. I regard polite terms of address as formulae that convey the societal meta-message, which predetermines their social application. Let us consider for example the term *xiaguan* ('worthless official', see above). In the first, linguistic description of polite terms of address it would appear as an official self-addressing form that expresses honorific meaning, being a sub-category of official titles (which is also a sub-category of vocatives in general). So the basic, self-denigrating function of this term is lost in the forest of many categories. Other studies that rely on the 'address theories' would run into trouble because this term has no 'Western' honorific parallel. So, instead of applying these methods,

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plex issue, i.e. there are other factors besides power and solidarity that control the choice of pronouns (see Burnley 2003), and also the use of T/V pronouns is more dynamic than systematic (Stein 2003).

I will argue that the respected class of officials has a specific DA lexicon, and *xiaguan* is one of its items. Thus, I reinterpret the multi-stratal polite addressing lexicon as one EA/DA system, distributed among traditional Chinese social classes.

Summing up, in this section I have introduced the problems that occur during the categorisation of polite Chinese vocatives and have suggested a new categorisation based on social power that can resolve these problems. In the following section 3.1.2, I delve into traditional Chinese philology, and introduce my main source for elaborating the social power-based categorisation of polite vocatives.

3.1.2 Polite addressing in Chinese philology

Although traditional Chinese philology, the so-called *xiaoxue* 小學 ('minor learning') is a proto-scientific scholarly trend[6], the way in which Confucian scholars studied Chinese polite terms of address can reveal much about its characteristics. This is probably because

(a) the research of terms of address has a tradition of around two millennia in Chinese philology; and
(b) in the cognition of philologists, who themselves were inhabitants of the old China, polite vocatives implicitly appear as expressions of deference that serve the maintenance of hierarchical interpersonal relationships rather than independent linguistic forms.

With these considerations in mind, in this section I shall give a brief résumé of the history of traditional Chinese research of terms of address, up to my main source, the *Chengwei lu*稱謂錄 (*The Record of Terms of Address*). I intend to show that the *Chengwei lu* – the most refined traditional work on this issue – in accordance with philological tradition, studies the polite address lexicon as a phenomenon that is unequally distributed among Chinese social classes. This signposts section 3.2 where I, using the *Chengwei lu*, study the social task of the societal meta-message.

[6] This statement contradicts the view of some Chinese Marxist scholars, like Pu (2003), who argue that traditional Chinese language studies have to be categorised as 'linguistics' and not as 'philology'. I agree, however, with Cen (1958), Wang (1981), or Sun (2002) who treat traditional linguistic works as philology, analogously to European philology.

In traditional Chinese philology, polite vocatives received special attention because

(a) They were incorporated into the Confucian prescriptive ideology from its initial formation. The *Liji* 禮記 (*The Book of Rites*)[7], one of the Confucian classics, systematically deals with the proper application of the addressing phenomenon, and so the application issues of terms of address became a thrilling topic for Chinese scholars;
(b) From the earliest times on, scholars faced a fundamental problem: as the Chinese language, especially Classical Chinese, was extremely rich in addressing forms, it was difficult even for a well-educated person to use many of these forms correctly. Chinese philologists devoted much attention to this problem and, roughly from the Han dynasty onwards, several philological treatises on addressing appeared. As the early history of these studies has already been introduced in detail by Yuan (2004), it is sufficient here to mention that most of these early notes can be found in the commentaries written on the Classical works.[8] Such commentaries were required because it was already difficult for the Han dynasty readers to understand some of the ancient addressing forms of the Classical works. Other studies on this topic were included in independent works so, for example, the *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義 (*Debate in the White Tiger Hall*) of Ban Gu 班固 (A.D. 32–92) of the Han dynasty contains many parts dealing with addressing.[9]
(c) Finally, addressing was an important part of the education of young children, thus many traditional 'schoolbooks' written by well-known scholars contain chapters that prescribe how to use polite vocatives properly.[10]

[7] This book is a collection of forty-nine texts of varying date, which was compiled in the time of the Western Han dynasty by the scholar Dai Sheng 戴盛, cf. Haft and Idema (1997: 88). It was first translated into English by James Legge in 1885.
[8] For more detail on the commentary literature in general see Liu (1998).
[9] See also its commentary written by the Qing scholar Chen Lishu 陳立疏.
[10] On traditional Chinese education and the teaching of honorific language see Bi (1997). It is interesting to note that materials written for children regularly alloy the style of the philological works and etiquette manuals. The *Youxue jujie* 幼學句解 (*Explanations for Students*), a popular textbook for children in the Qing dynasty, in its *'On The Court'* (*chaoting* 朝廷) sub-chapter ('Qianlong era edition' 1757: 23) contains information both on historical terms of address and polite vocatives that have to be applied in a court setting. Children textbooks probably developed this twofold function in order to help children prepare for official

Addressing remained a topic of interest in traditional Chinese philology throughout its development, but it was only in the time of the Qing dynasty that independent – still extant – works studying this particular topic appeared.[11] The first important Qing dynasty philological study on addressing was the *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄 (*Record of Daily Knowledge*) by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682): the 23rd and 24th chapters of this work analyse the naming and addressing systems.[12] But the *Ri zhi lu* (as well as many other philological works, like Zhai Hao's 翟灝 *Tongsu bian* 通俗編 [*Popular Customs*], etc.) is still not a study devoted entirely to addressing. The first independent study on this topic is the *Chengwei kaobian* 稱謂考辯 (*The Study of the Terms of Address*) by Zhou Xiangming 周象明. This work, however, is relatively short, of one volume; it only discusses some major points of addressing, so in spite of its scholarly value it cannot be called comprehensive.

The real breakthrough in the studies of addressing was the *Chengwei lu*, a book written by the well-known Qing philologist, Liang Zhangju 梁章鉅 (1775–1849). This long and comprehensive encyclopaedia of 32 volumes was published in 1875 (see the publisher's preface written for the *Zhonghua* edition), and from that time on it was the basic source for studying addressing. The importance of this large compilation in traditional Chinese philology is demonstrated by the fact that the famous scholar-politician Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785–1850) wrote one of its prefaces (see Illustration Two at the end of the chapter). The following quotation from Lin's preface illustrates how the *Chengwei lu* was received by Chinese scholars:

> When I heard that you, Master Liang, compiled the Chengwei lu, I felt that you had chosen a very felicitous title. I think that the compilation of this work is a matter of great importance. When you started to work on it, you had to face the problem of gathering together a large amount of data […] Now you have sent, from afar, the whole manuscript of the work; I have just finished its reading

examinations by explaining classical forms of address on the one hand, and learn etiquette, on the other.

[11] An interesting fact is that a work called *Chengwei* 稱謂 (*Terms of Address*), written by Lu Bian 盧辯, appeared in the time of the Northern Zhou dynasty (Southern and Eastern dynasties); but this work has been lost. See the *Preface* of the *Chengwei lu* written by Liang Zhangju himself (*Zhonghua* edition: 2) and Yuan (2004: 9).

[12] Note that short discussions on the addressing forms also appear elsewhere in the *Ri zhi lu*.

> and feel as if I entered the Kitchen of Prince Xun[13]: there is nothing important which is not mentioned in this very detailed work, its brilliance enlightened my mind and my eyes. It is a writing that studies the past and the present, and I am inclined to think that no one else but you could have produced such a piece of work. If it was published as a book, it would be a matter of delight for the learned reader; and it is quite superfluous for me to say that it would occupy a place of honour and everyone would keep a copy on their bookshelves and take another with them wherever they go. I can only ask you to send it immediately to the publishers, so they can start carving the printing blocks, and then print the book for the pleasure of those who have not been so lucky as me to have read the manuscript. […]
>
> Written by Lin Zexu in the Xiaoyang Temple
> in the dingwei year[14]

Even though the *Chengwei lu* is not a specialised treatment of polite terms of address, its 32nd Chapter is the longest description of the (im)-polite vocative lexicon in traditional Chinese philology. If one examines the way in which politeness is treated in the work, it can be seen that Liang distributes polite terms among *social groups*, i.e. he observes the polite vocative lexicon as something that is connected to social class. In doing so, he in reality follows an *accepted methodology* of Chinese philology, which generally tends to categorise vocatives in relation to their user/addressee. But, while earlier studies deal with some terms only sporadically, Liang groups the polite address lexicon that he collected according to social classes that have their own terminology. He identifies the following distinct (non-familiar[15]) social groups with independent EA/DA terms[16]:

[13] Prince Xun lived at the time of the Tang dynasty, he was famous for this: everybody who ever entered his kitchen could find and eat the best dishes. Here 'entering Prince Xun's kitchen' is an allusion to the fact that Lin can find every important piece of data in the book.

[14] Traditionally Chinese used sixty-year cycles to count time. The *dingwei* year of the given era denotes 1847 in the Western calendar.

[15] Note that familiar addressing terms are also studied by the *Chengwei lu*, see the first eight chapters of the book.

[16] Note that the list of groups in the *Chengwei lu* is more complex. Here I do not deal with classification problems that make it difficult to interpret the 32nd chapter of the *Chengwei lu*, as these are only relevant from a Sinological perspective, but see more on this in Kádár (2005c). Here I only list, in a rather simplified way, those groups which I have found to have their own polite addressing lexicons.

(a) the emperor and the imperial family
(b) the imperial officers
(c) Buddhist and Taoist clergy
(d) commoners
(e) women.

At first glance this categorisation is rather confusing – it involves social groups without any obvious categorising principle. But if one considers the fact that every polite term of address expresses some elevating/denigrating meaning in relation to the hierarchical Chinese society, it becomes clear why Liang has chosen these particular groups. Since a group can only be specifically other-elevated and denigrate itself politely if it is a well-esteemed one, as was noted at the beginning of this chapter, there has to be a major difference between the addressing lexicons of the powerful and powerless social groups. And, observing the above categories from this perspective, a powerful vs. powerless distinction emerges among the above classes: groups (a) – (c) are well-esteemed ones, (d) is a collective group for low-ranked (that is powerless) persons[17], while the rank of (e), the women, depends on the rank of their family in patriarchal old Chinese society. That is, these separated groups with different polite vocative application show that the polite addressing lexicon can be categorised according to social power. This leads to the inquiry in section 3.2, where I study the application/distribution of terms of address in relation to social power. This inquiry will not only solve the categorisation problem of polite vocatives, but it will also show how the societal meta-message plays a part in polite communication. Besides, it introduces the 'hierarchical' nature of polite addressing application in traditional China, and raises the issue of how evaluation can work in such a context.

To sum up section 3.1: I have compared modern and traditional approaches to the polite vocative lexicon. One finds that while modern accounts prove to be inadequate for overviewing the linguistic function and the complicated categories of traditional Chinese polite addressing, philological works – particularly the *Chengwei lu* – give a realistic picture of it, because they generally treat terms of address as forms bound to social power. Let us now turn to the ways in which polite addressing works in the old Chinese society.

[17] Note that the term 'powerless' is not a synonym for being socially despised. E.g. the class of peasants is also 'powerless', but not despised in traditional Chinese society.

3.2 The societal meta-message at work

In the present section I focus on the work of the societal meta-message in polite communication. As will be shown in 3.2.1, the fact that polite terms of address inherently express elevating/denigrating messages predetermines their social application: there is a difference between the polite (self/other) addressing lexicon of the socially well-esteemed ('powerful') and the low-ranked ('powerless') classes. And because there is inherently no downward use of terms of address, the politeness between these classes is basically non-reciprocal, even though non-reciprocal applications can occur within the discourse of the 'powerful' or the 'powerless' classes, as well. So, polite terms of address inherently function as indicators of the social-group the referred person belongs to. This observation not only provides a new classificatory method for polite addressing, but it also produces a 'rigid' image of the working of terms of address in traditional Chinese polite communication, in the application of which personal (strategic) decisions play hardly any part. In 3.2.2, I raise the issue of whether this image is a Parsonian one: the regulated and production (rather than evaluation) focused communicative model can lead to the assumption that it reflects prescriptive Confucian social norms. This signposts Chapter Four, where I examine the work of the societal-meta message in Chinese impoliteness, which can hardly be seen as prescribed by societal norms, from evaluative-interpretational perspectives.

3.2.1 The 'powerful' and the 'powerless'

If one considers the categorisation of the *Chengwei lu* in relation to the function of the societal meta-message, the following major groups of independent honorific addressing terminology can be found: the 'powerful groups', the 'powerless groups', and the group of 'women', who can either be powerful or powerless, depending on the rank of their family.

3.2.1.1 The 'powerful' groups and their addressing lexicon

The powerful groups with an independent polite addressing lexicon consist of the groups of (a) the 'emperor and the members of the imperial family', (b) the 'officials', and (c) the 'clergy'. Clerical persons can be ranked among the powerful because, regardless of their actual social power, they have spiritual supremacy over ordinary people. Besides, there

are social groups which obtain power in certain conditions. Because there are special historical situations when such a social group becomes a member of the powerful classes, there are also 'temporary' EA/DA terms of these groups, i.e., these terms of address are used only in the historical period when the given group is powerful. Consider the following example:

(2) 智深 […] 謝道：「小僧不敢動問貴庄高姓？」

Zhishen […] xie dao: "Xiaoseng bu gan dongwen guizhuang gaoxing?"

Zhishen […] asked gratefully: "May I, this worthless monk ask the precious name of yours, the majestic head of the house (*gui-zhuang*)?" (*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水滸全傳/Chapter 5)

The term *guizhuang* 貴庄 is a typical 'temporary' term, which is usually not even included in the dictionaries of polite address. As the *Shuihu quanzhuan* records a period when the class of gentry became powerful in China (Fairbank-Reischauer 1989: 138–140), the term *guizhuang*, which is an EA used towards wealthy gentry, appears.

A common ability of the powerful sub-groups is that their members can mutually apply EA/DA both within the given groups (i.e., when the two parties of the discourse are the members of the same group and they use a common inventory of EA/DA terms) and outside the groups (i.e., the two parties of the discourse are members of different groups and they use a different inventory of EA/DA terms). Look at the following examples:

(3) 王舉人道：「你這位先生貴姓？」
周進知他是個舉人，便自稱道：「晚生姓周。」

Wang juren dao: "Ni zhewei xiansheng guixing?"
Zhou Jin zhi ta shi ge juren, bian zicheng dao: "Wansheng xing Zhou."

Wang *juren*[18] said: "May I ask your precious name?" Zhou Jin knew that he was a second-degree graduate, therefore he used the proper term of address to himself and said: "The family

[18] That is, a second-degree graduate in the traditional Chinese system of examinations.

name of mine, this later-born person (*wansheng*, a DA used by official towards others) is Zhou."

(*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史/Chapter 2)

(4) 少游微微冷笑道：「別個秀才來應舉時，就要告命題容易了。下官曾應過制科，[…]」

Shaoyou weiwei leng xiao dao: "Biege xiucai lai yingju shi, jiu yao gao mingti rongyi le. Xiaguan ceng yingguo zhike [...]"

Shaoyou said with a cold smile: "When any other *xiucai*[19] takes part in the exam, as soon as he receives the task, he will answer it easily. I, this worthless official (*xiaguan*, a DA used by officials) have already passed the exam [...]"

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言/Chapter 11)

(5) 佛印听說罷，大惊曰：「娘子差矣！貧僧夜來 […]」

Foyin ting shuo ba, dajing yue: "Niangzi cha yi! Pinseng ye lai [...]"

When Foyin heard that talk, he said with a great surprise: "I, this poor priest (*pinseng*, a DA used by Buddhists towards non-Buddhists) in the evening [...]"

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言/Chapter 12)

(6) 東坡道：「吾師何不留一佳作？」
佛印道：「請乞紙筆。」

Dongpo dao: "Wushi he bu liu yi jia zuo?"
Foyin dao: "Qingqi zhibi."

Dongpo said: "Why don't you, my master (*wushi*, an EA used towards Buddhists by non-Buddhists), write a beautiful piece of poetry?"
Foyin replied: "I beg then for paper and ink."

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言/Chapter 12)

In example (3), Zhou Jin uses the DA *wansheng* ('late born person') to his colleague, which – according to the *Chengwei lu* (*Zhonghua* edition: 503) – is a term used only between officials. Note that he could not

[19] That is, graduate of the first degree.

use this term if his speech partner was not an official. Likewise, in example (4) Qin Shaoyou 秦少游 (1049–1100), the Song dynasty man of letters, uses the DA term *xiaguan* ('worthless official') to the messenger of his bride, who is a non-official but counts as a power equal as she officially represents the high-ranked bride. In example (5), the clerical speaker uses the DA term *pinseng* (lit. 'poor priest') – a term which can only be used towards non-clerical persons – towards a non-clerical young woman. In example (6), the Song man of letters Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037–1101) uses the EA *wushi* (lit. 'my master') which is a term used to address Buddhist persons, that is, he uses an EA term not belonging to his own social group.

The above examples show that

(a) there are distinct polite (self/other) addressing lexicons for the several well-esteemed social groups;
(b) members of these powerful groups can mutually address each other with EA/DAs, which is supported by the fact that there are specific EA/DAs used within the groups and also there are EAs used towards group members by outsiders or DAs used by group members to refer to themselves towards 'outers'; but
(c) mutuality occurs only within these groups: when the powerful interact with low-ranked speech-partners, honorific vs. plain forms of address are applied non-reciprocally, cf. (1) above.

That is, from the perspective of the politeness lexicon, the above three social groups in fact form one 'powerful' group, the members of which can mutually apply polite addressing towards each other. This is also supported by the fact that there are specific EA/DAs that can be used by members of the imperial family towards officials who are of lower social rank:

(7) 則天問狄曰：「卿云朕自為君以來 […]」

Zetian wen Di yue: "Qing yun zhen zi wei jun yilai […]"

Zetian asked Minister Di: "You, my minister (*qing*, an EA used towards ministers by the ruler) said that from the time of my enthronement […]"

(*Lianggong jiujian* 梁公九諫/The 4th Admonishment)

In this example, Empress Wu Zetian (r. 695–705) speaks with her Minister-in-Chief, Di Renjie (630–700), and she is much more powerful

than Di. Both of them, however, belong to the ‘powerful’, so insofar as the Empress adheres to politeness, she can apply honorific forms. But such mutual application could not occur if the Empress interacted with a person who did not belong to the group of the ‘powerful’.[20]

In short, as a result of the societal meta-message, members of those groups which are well-esteemed in traditional Chinese society, and which have power over others, can be politely addressed in reference to their group membership, since in hierarchical Chinese society such reference expresses respect. Similarly, they can self-denigrate in reference to their group-membership, as only something that is esteemed can be politely denigrated. And they cannot address with polite vocatives other classes of a lower rank, because polite address is inherently self-denigrating/other-elevating. After discussing the powerful, let us turn to the powerless.

3.2.1.2 The ‘powerless’ group

Although, as historical sociolinguistic inquiries show, lower ranked people use honorific addressing in mutual relations more rarely than powerful language users with a better educational background, there are a number of (self/other) address terms that are used by members of those classes (like peasants, craftsmen, etc.) that are governed to some extent by powerful groups. These terms are ‘uniform’ in the sense that in their application the only relevant socio-pragmatic factor is the lack of social power, so the form of these EA/DA terms do not change according to social sub-group. Consider the following examples:

(8) 冉貴听得叫，回頭看時，卻是一個後生婦人。便道：「告小娘子，叫小人有甚事？」

Ran Gui tingde jiao, huitou kan shi, que shi yi ge housheng furen. Biandao: “Gao xiaoniangzi, jiao <u>*xiaoren*</u> *you shen shi?”*

Ran Gui turned his head and looked at her: she was a young woman. He told her at once: “Greetings, my young lady, why do you call <u>me, this worthless person</u> (*xiaoren*, a DA used by powerless speakers)?”

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言/Chapter 13)

[20] See imperial EA/DAs in more detail in Yuan (2004).

(9) 高贊道：「小人是洞庭山百姓，[…]」

Gao Zan dao: "Xiaoren shi Dongting shan baixing, […]"

Gao Zan said: "I, this worthless person (*xiaoren*) am a common one from the *Tongting* Mountain, […]"

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言/Chapter 7)

These two examples show that, besides EAs like the *guanren* 官人 (lit. 'official'; see Chapter Two), there are also specific DAs used by low-ranked persons only: here both of the two powerless speakers use the term *xiaoren* ('worthless person'), a 'powerless' DA. In example (8) the speaker is a merchant, while in example (9) the profession of the speaker is not mentioned but it can be seen from the context that he is not a merchant. As these examples illustrate, the 'powerless' EA/DA terms are uniform because, regardless of the particular social class of the user, their form does not vary.

This uniformity is a consequence of the elevating/denigrating meta-message conveyed by polite vocatives. In the polite addressing of the powerful, class-membership provides the central vocative value. But powerless classes cannot be elevated and they cannot denigrate themselves according to such notions: only if something is esteemed can it be self-diminished, or politely elevated. Instead, they have to apply some more general EA/DAs. By doing so, however, they also 'frame' themselves as low-ranked persons: hence, the societal meta-message fulfils its basic function by placing the 'powerless' in a lower place than that of the powerful in the social hierarchy.

In is necessary to note that non-reciprocal EA/DA use can also emerge among powerless interactants. For example in certain role relations some members of the 'powerless' group gain control over others. Like, as will be shown in Chapter Five, in pre-modern Asian business discourse, the seller stereotypically has a significantly lower rank than the buyer, so the EA/DA use of such discourse is non-reciprocal. In these situations, a specific terminology is applied:

(10) 酒家道：「客官要肉便添來。」
武松道：「我也要酒，也再切些肉來。」

Jiujia dao: "Keguan yao ruo bian tian lai."
Wu Song dao: "Wo ye yao jiu, ye zai qie xie ruo lai."

The inn-keeper said: "If you, my respected guest (*keguan*) want [more] meat, I will bring some for you."
Wu Song replied: "I also want wine, and also want some more meat." (*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水滸全傳/Chapter 23)

In this example, a non-reciprocal application can be observed. The inn-keeper addresses his guest, whose rank he does not know, with an EA, while the guest replies with the first person PP *wo* in a non-reciprocal way. But, just as with the EA *guanren*, *keguan* is an EA used towards commoners (or guests whose rank is not known), and it expresses elevation because it symbolically compares the interlocutor to the well-esteemed class of officials. And so it inherently 'frames' the 'powerless' interlocutor. If the speech partner belongs to the 'powerful' and politeness is adhered to, innkeepers apply different EAs:

(11) 智深 […] 叫道：「將酒來！」
賣酒的主人家說道：「師傅少罪，[…]」

Zhishen […] jiaodao: "Jiang jiu lai!"
Mai jiu de zhurenjia shuodao: "Shifu shaozui […]"

Zhishen […] shouted: "Give me wine!"
The owner of the wine-shop said: "You, my master (*shifu*, an EA used towards Buddhists) misunderstood slightly […]"
(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水滸全傳/Chapter 4)

Here the customer is a Buddhist monk, and the innkeeper uses a different, 'powerful' EA towards him. The difference between (10) and (11) shows that although non-reciprocal application occurs between the 'powerless', yet the 'powerless' position of the interlocutor is conveyed by EAs used in such situations. This also exemplifies how polite Chinese terms of address serve to maintain the social hierarchy.

Besides institutional roles in the narrow-sense, other factors like age (the older the person the more respected he is in the Confucian scale of values) can also produce non-reciprocal relationships within the 'powerless' group. Consider EAs like *laolao* 老老 (lit. 'elder'), which is used towards older commoners, cf. Ji (2000: 509). But, as Chen (2001) notes, in traditional Chinese society it regularly occurs that older, lower-ranked speakers address younger, powerful interlocutors non-reciprocally. This shows that such factors cannot change the basic, hierarchical (powerful vs. powerless) function of polite addressing. And so *laolao*, as with, for example, the above *guanren* 'frames' the older interlocutor as 'powerless', while *laoye* 老爺 (lit. 'old gentleman') is used towards older interlocutors who belong to the 'powerful'.

To sum up: due to the societal meta-message conveyed by the vocatives, members of lower social classes can mutually or non-reciprocally elevate/denigrate each other, while they cannot be politely (i.e. in an ele-

vating sense) addressed by the 'powerful'. Members of the 'powerless' class apply a homogenous polite (self/other) addressing terminology, which does not refer to their class membership. After showing the addressing terminology of this group, let us turn to the addressing of Chinese women.

3.2.1.3 The 'semi-familiar' group of women

In the patriarchal Chinese society women used to have low rank. As was defined by the *sancong* 三從 or 'Three Social Laws', the main duty of a woman is to be obedient to her father as a child, to her husband as a wife and to her son if her husband is dead. This subordinated position also manifests itself in the polite address used by/towards women, which is different from the clear 'powerful' vs. 'powerless' distinction of the honorific address lexicon of men. As in traditional China those women are honoured who fulfil their household duties, and follow the above 'three social laws', the societal meta-message forms the polite addressing application of women into a 'semi-familiar' one. That is, when politely referring to themselves, women denigrate themselves as family members, since the basic societal value they can denigrate is their family membership. On the other hand, they can be addressed according to their (or, rather, their group's) power.

In order to explain the above point, let us consider the application of some female self-referring polite terms. DAs, like *nu* 奴 (lit. 'slave') or *qie* 妾 (lit. 'concubine') do not only express familiar semantic meaning, but in their case the familiar/non-familiar distinction does not be apply, i.e., these terms can be used both in familiar and non-familiar contexts. Consider the following examples:

(12) 小永儿道：「哥哥！奴去鄭州 […]」

Xiao Yonger dao: "Gege! Nu qu Zhengzhou […]"

Little Yong'er said: "Brother, I, this maid-servant (*nu*, a female DA) am going to *Zhegzhou* [...]"

(*Pingyao zhuan* 平妖傳/Chapter 5)

(13) 唐妃跪告曰：「妾身代帝飲酒，愿公存母子性命。」

Tang fei gui gaoyue: "Qieshen dai di yinjiu, yuan gong cun muzi xingming."

Imperial Concubine *Tang* fell on her knees and said: "I, this concubine (*qie*, a female DA) will drink the wine instead of the

emperor, just request you, my lord, to spare the life of the dowager Empress and her Imperial Son."

(*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義/Chapter 4)

In example (12) the interactants are in a quasi-familiar relationship: the girl speaks in a family way; in (13) the context is family-external: the imperial concubine addresses a general, who wants to kill her husband, the emperor. This shows the fusion of familiarity and non-familiarity[21] in the female DA system, which indicates that linguistically women were treated as the property of a man or a family. Similar phenomena exist in other societies: as described by Lakoff (1975: 32–33), in many societies a woman loses her social rank when she does not belong to a man, that is why the term 'spinster' is of degrading meaning, compared with 'bachelor'. Family membership, however, is especially strongly reflected in traditional female polite self-referring terminology because, as was noted above, it is the basic value belonging to females that can be politely denigrated. This is also reflected in the fact that all women apply the same self-addressing terminology, irrespective to their worldly rank. In other words, women use the same vocabulary: a lady of the imperial family applies the same DA as a low-ranked woman. Compare example (13) with the following quotation:

[21] Resembling phenomena can be observed in discourses among male interactants. Let us consider the following example:

秦安到書房，秦相正在看書，[…] 秦安說：「奴才奉大人之諭，[…]」

Qin An dao shufang, Qin Xiang zhengzai kanshu, […] Qin An shuo: "Nucai feng daren zhi yu […]"

Qin An went to the library, Qin Xiang was just reading a book, […] Qin An said: "I, this servant (*nucai*, a non-familiar DA) received your order, my lord (*daren*, a non-familiar EA) […]" (*Jigong quanzhuan* 濟公全傳/Chapter 17)

Qin An is a close relative of Qin Xiang, but he uses the non-familiar DA *nucai* (lit. 'servant') and the non-familiar EA *daren* ('great man', i.e. 'my lord'). It is because he faces a very negative situation, he failed in the task which he received from the senior Qin Xiang. For the sake of successful apology, he uses non-familiar terms. Doing so, he verbally enlarges the social gap between himself and the speech-partner, and thus expresses respect (see more on such strategic applications of vocatives in Kádár 2007). This phenomenon is different, however, from the non-familiar DA use of women in a familiar context: women can use only DAs of familiar meaning in *any* context.

(14) 楊玉拜謝道：「妾一身生死榮辱，全賴恩官提拔。」

Yang Yu bai xie dao: "Qie yishen shengsi rong-ru, quan lai enguan tiba."

Jade Yang fell on her knees and said gratefully: "I, this concubine (*qie*) would have lived and died in the deepest sin, it was you, merciful officer, who lifted me up."

(*Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言/Chapter 17)

The imperial concubine of example (13) and the prostitute who was aided in example (14) use the same DA term. So, while (as a matter of course) they are politely addressed differently in discourse, that is, an empress is addressed as *bixia* 陛下 ('your highness', cf. Ji 2000: 41), while a woman of common rank can be politely addressed as *niangzi* 娘子 ('madam'), no power distinction exists in their self-reference. This makes women, in this respect, linguistically an even less powerful group than the 'powerless' group. While in China social mobility was possible for most members of the 'powerless' group, for example – at least in principle – nearly everybody could take the official exams, a woman if she adhered to the polite register could not escape from the fact that she was a woman (i.e. a secondary being, compared with men). Even if a woman could attain higher rank, for example if a powerful man married her, she was still obliged to use the same DAs as before. And while a group of men could become temporarily powerful, as was shown in example (2), the only case in traditional China when women could break their polite self-addressing bounds, was during the rule of empress Wu Zetian, when women could even take part in politics.[22]

To sum up, the term 'women' has to be defined as a 'semi-familiar' group: even though they can be addressed according to their rank, they politely refer to themselves in a familiar way. This shows that women of old China had a distinct polite register, much like Japanese women of today even, see Ide and McGloin (eds. 1990), a fact which is regularly not mentioned in Chinese sociolinguistics.[23] In spite of their 'semi-familiar'

[22] The only constant opportunity for women to become linguistically powerful was in religious life. If they entered a religious order, and gave up their Confucian obligation of bringing up children and being obedient wives, they could be involved in the powerful group of 'religious persons'. The *Chengwei lu* and other sources list many polite (self/other) vocatives of Buddhist nuns (*ni* 尼) and Taoist women (*nüdaoshi* 女道士).

[23] But it is necessary to note that Chinese women also had a distinct impolite vocabulary, somewhat different from the often idealised Japanese female speakers,

status, social power is manifested in the EA use towards women, so this group can still be divided into 'powerful' and 'powerless' subgroups, but the distinction between these groups is weaker than that between the 'powerful' and 'powerless' male groups because of the homogeneous DA application. That is, while the societal meta-message frames Chinese women as 'powerful' or 'powerless' when they are addressed, women convey their own, secondary social role in honorific self-reference, and thus 'frame' themselves into a fundamentally powerless position. This shows again how the societal meta-message maintains traditional social roles.

To sum up 3.2.1: I have studied how the characteristics of the societal meta-message, which were discussed at the beginning of this chapter, form the perspective of social application of polite address. Polite forms of address that convey elevating/denigrating beliefs inherently maintain traditional Chinese hierarchical relationships, by separating and pre-determining the polite vocative vocabulary/application of the several social classes. In what follows, relying on the data gained in 3.2.1, I will try to draw a model of the application of Chinese polite vocatives, and raise the question of whether it is a Parsonian model or not.

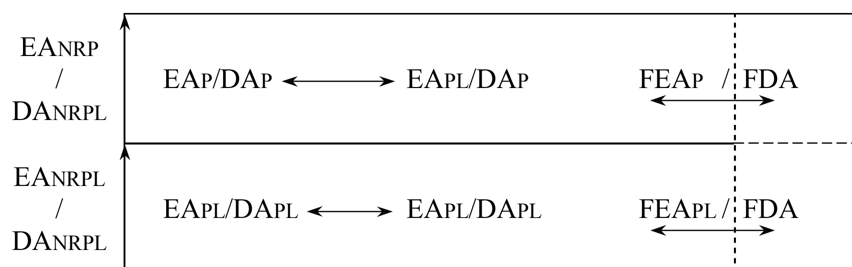
3.2.2 The Parsonian perspective vs. a descriptive model of Chinese polite communication

Surveying the communicational work described above regarding the societal meta-message, the application of polite terms of address can be modelled this way (see Table Two on p. 89).

The upper left rectangle denotes the 'powerful' group; the lower left rectangle denotes the 'powerless', while the upstanding rectangle which is divided into two squares refers to the group of 'women'. The heads of the arrows show the direction of EA/DA use, two-pointed arrows refer to mutuality, while arrows with one head (on the left-hand side of the graph) show a non-reciprocal relationship. The thick line between the 'powerful' and 'powerless' groups refer to the pragmatic impermeability between the EA/DA use of the two groups. The dotted line, which separates the female group from the other two groups, indicates the fact that from the perspective of 'power' semantics the 'powerful' and 'powerless' subgroups

see Chapter Four; for linguistic ideologies of 'polite' Japanese women see Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith (2004).

TABLE TWO: THE APPLICATION MODEL OF POLITE CHINESE EA/DAS



Abbreviations:
EAP/DAP: 'Powerful' EA/DA
EAPL/DAPL: 'Powerless' EA/DA
FDA: Female DA
FEAP: 'Powerful' Female EA
FEAPL: 'Powerless' Female EA
EA NRP: 'Non-reciprocal Powerful' EA
EA NRPL: 'Non-reciprocal Powerless' EA
DA NRPL: 'Non-reciprocal Powerless' DA

of 'women' are connected to the 'powerful' and 'powerless' groups, but still have a different, semi-familiar implication of DA. The non-reciprocal applications of EA/DAs, which are shown on the left-hand side of the graph, are also effective for the group of women. Finally, the broken line indicates that there is a distinction of 'powerful' and 'powerless' subgroups within the group of 'women', but these subgroups are still connected by their common DA use.

This model creates a somewhat 'regulated' image of Chinese polite address, where the production of vocative forms is inherent. This also raises the question of how evaluation can work in the same, hierarchical social context, where polite self/other addressing forms are applied according to the existing power relations. From the point of view of the politeness researcher the question may emerge whether this description resembles the predictive (Parsonian-like) approaches to linguistic politeness or not, as individual decisions and evaluations seem to be subordinated to the 'superior' ideology of maintaining hierarchical social relationships through addressing each other politely. Language users cannot avoid 'framing' themselves insofar as they adhere to politeness. In fact, this model is somewhat too general to be able to capture every fine detail of (im)polite communication: as I will argue in Chapter Five, the flux of

'local', or contextual power in Chinese discourse influences both the application/omission and the evaluation of politeness. But this is a realistic model in the sense that it shows the basic social distribution and use of polite terms of address, which owe their 'rigidity' to the societal meta-message, a sociolinguistic property of traditional Chinese vocatives, rather than some 'outer' notion. So the social picture that one gets when studying Chinese polite address is arguably not a prescriptive (i.e. Parsonian) one. From a Parsonian perspective, such communicational 'rigidity', i.e. inherent application should be formed like this:

> Confucian culture → Confucian society → fixed application of terms forced on individuals → personal resistance to this fixed application implies opposition to the social order.

The above points, however, suggest a different order:

> Polite terms of address are inherently EA/DAs, because in Chinese cognition the aim of using these honorific formulae is the polite maintenance of hierarchical interpersonal relations → this inherently implies rigidity in their application in the hierarchical Chinese society → this fact is idealised by Confucians → individuals can resist 'proper' applications according to their personal power, which is based on factors such as social position, personal abilities, etc.

That is, although social reality (hierarchy) appears as a factor that blocks individuals in freely applying polite forms of address that convey some elevating/denigrating meta-message, such reality does not correspond to prescriptive beliefs, although the proper application of terms of address in relation to the hierarchical social reality *is prescribed* by Confucian ideologists at the same time. As Chapter Five will show, although forms of address convey inherently (im)polite connotations due to the societal (meta-)message, individuals can resist their proper application by *omitting* them in discourse, or by *substituting* them with *other formulae*, as long as they have the power to do so. In such cases individual applications emerge, without inherently opposing the social order or being evaluated as impolite. Nor do others who *should not use, but still apply*, polite formulae to attain certain goals necessarily oppose the 'social order' by their 'irregular' application. This keeps the way open for applying Bourdieu's concepts to traditional Chinese politeness.

But, in order to avoid running too far ahead, one can conclude the above discussion with the claim that the societal meta-message defines the application of polite terms of address, and predetermines that the main

aim of Chinese polite vocatives is the maintenance of interpersonal relationships (and making communication successful in such hierarchical social reality) by 'framing' the self and the other.[24] The image of politeness that one gains when studying polite terms of address is not a Parsonian one: people are not 'robots' controlled by the 'Confucian culture'. Rather, the EA/DA system that developed in a hierarchical society was built into the Confucian ideology, which aims to maintain this hierarchical order, as is also shown by the large bulk of prescriptive literature dealing with the proper application of vocatives. This, however, does not mean that Chinese politeness itself is 'Confucian': as will be shown in Chapter Four, the societal meta-message is just as important in Chinese *impoliteness* as it is in politeness. And impoliteness can by no means be accused of being prescriptive.

3.3 Summary

In Chapter Three I have studied the work of the societal meta-message in politeness. In other words, while in Chapter Two I argued that polite vocatives inherently convey some elevating/denigrating meta-message within hierarchical interpersonal relations, in this chapter I have focused on the way in which this meta-message influences the application of vocatives in the aforementioned relations. Chinese polite address appears as a linguistic phenomenon that serves first of all the maintenance of hierarchical social relations, and the successful communication in such relations, through inherent application/'framing'. Considering only the polite side, however, this description cannot give an account of the whole communicational work of (im)polite terms of address and their 'rigidity' in traditional Chinese society. This is because *the model that has been drawn up in this chapter is fundamentally a productional and not an interpretational one*. Therefore, although it can be claimed that the societal-meta message inherently defines the application of certain forms, there is not enough proof that addressees evaluate these forms inherently.

[24] This also provides an explanation for the phenomenon that has been mentioned in the previous chapter: traditional Chinese polite forms disappeared from the language because traditional hierarchical relations, the maintenance of which they served, disintegrated.

One could argue that the polite address of many other historical languages appear just as 'rigid' as Chinese, which only differs from other languages in

(a) the very large number and elaborate application rules of polite vocatives compared with other languages;
(b) the simultaneous elevating/denigrating characteristic of polite address.

And in other historical languages one cannot claim that address formulae which are applied according to proper power relations convey inherent beliefs, i.e. that contextual factors determine their interpretation. Consider the following quotations:

(15) "Upon my faith, I believe" – said Lord Winter and he stood up – "that this absurdity gradually becomes madness. […] I guess my Spanish wine has gone to Your Ladyship's head!"
(*The Three Musketeers*/Chapter 22)

(16) Ford: Come hither, Mistress Ford, Mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, mistress, do I? (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*/Act IV, ii)

In (15) Lord Winter of *The Three Musketeers* speaks with the notorious character Milady in ironic words. Although he applies the vocative 'Your Ladyship', which is proper for addressing power-equal women (i.e. forms of address indicate social power as in Chinese), such usage is open to being evaluated as irony or impoliteness in the given context. Similarly, in (16) the jealous Master Ford in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* addresses his spouse as 'Mistress Ford' when suspecting her of adultery, which is (together with the expressions 'honest' and 'virtuous') open to being interpreted as mock politeness in the given context (Master Ford normally calls his spouse 'wife + you'), in spite of the fact that it is proper for addressing a person in the interlocutor's rank (see more in Busse 2003: 200). So, while the honorific forms themselves in (15) and (16) are polite, their applications and interpretations strongly depend on the discourse strategy followed by the speakers.

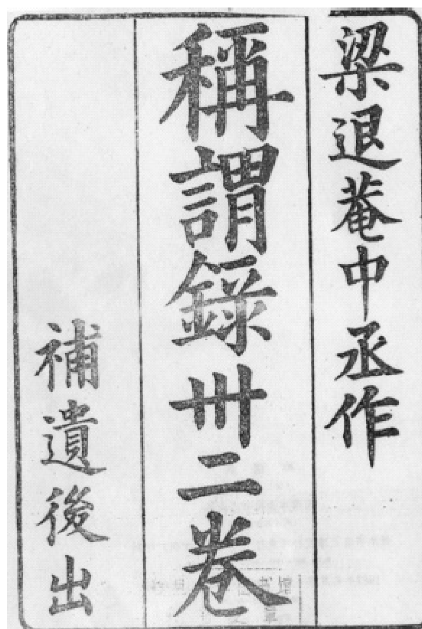
The above examples indicate that the honorific vocatives of historical languages – even though properly applied according to social power relations – are open to free contextual evaluation. However, I would argue that in Chinese the evaluation of terms of address is similarly pre-deter-

mined to their production. This is because Chinese forms of address express, beyond their surface lexical meaning, the secondary, societal *meta*-message, which does not allow free application or interpretation in the hierarchical social reality. In order to show this point, in the next chapter I will study impolite terms of address from *interpretational* perspectives. In many other historical languages impolite vocative formulae are open for contextual interpretation, similarly to polite formulae, as shown by the following example:

(17) Falstaff: A rascal! To brave me?
Doll: Ah, you sweet little rogue, you!
(The Second Part of King Henry IV/Act II, iv)

As Busse (2003) explains, in (17) the term ‘rogue’, which expresses offence in other contexts, is open to be interpreted as a term of endearment. As will be shown, however, Chinese impolite addressing, as opposed to impoliteness in other languages, works as ‘rigidly’ as politeness, due to the societal meta-message. And there is no free transition between politeness and impoliteness (for example irony/banter), which signals inherency in interpretation.

ILLUSTRATION TWO: THE ORIGINAL FRONT PAGE OF THE CHENGWEI LU 稱謂錄 AND ONE OF ITS PREFACES WRITTEN BY LIN ZEXU 林則徐


梁退菴中丞作

稱謂錄卅二卷

補遺後出

The front page of the *Chengwei lu* (Reprint Edition)

Lin’s Preface p. 2

Lin’s Preface p. 1

CHAPTER FOUR

FREE EVALUATION VS. SOCIETAL META-MESSAGE

The Interpretational Aspect of Traditional Chinese Formal (Im)Politeness

The fact that every (im)polite form of address expresses some elevating/denigrating meta-message does not only pre-determine its social application. In the present chapter I aim to find evidence that it also defines its interpretation in the traditional Chinese cultural context. Putting the emphasis on interpretation is important for a politeness research theory because, if researchers deal with production only, they necessarily 'foretell' the effect of (im)politeness on the hearer. This case is no different for Chinese (im)politeness, even though the inherent interpretation of vocatives *could be presupposed*. That is, one could claim that one can predict that the societal meta-message provides inherent beliefs in a hierarchical social setting where the application of honorific formulae is said to primarily serve the maintenance of power relations. Yet there is no proof that the addressees would inherently evaluate (im)polite addressing formulae as polite or impolite. Therefore in the present chapter I examine the linguistic function of the societal meta-message from an evaluative perspective. I aim to prove that the production and interpretation of Chinese formulaic (im)politeness is inherent, i.e., in traditional Chinese hierarchical society, (im)polite vocatives do not permit free contextual interpretation because of their elevating/denigrating societal meta-message. For example, (im)polite forms cannot be freely applied or interpreted as conveying ironic, humorous, etc. beliefs. This supports the 'rigid' image of Chinese communication that has been depicted in the previous chapter.

In order to show, furthermore, that such rigidity is not a prescribed value but a (socio)linguistic property of Chinese vocatives, I focus in this chapter on Chinese *formulaic impoliteness*, a regrettably understudied topic. Impoliteness is a linguistic stratum that is unlikely to be prescribed by Confucian societal norms. Note that although the attribute 'formulaic' is not regularly used concerning linguistic impoliteness, in the case of Chinese such application is not impossible. This is because in traditional Chinese (im)politeness, the EA/DA system provides a two-fold, polite-

impolite application possibility. Thus, besides the large polite (self/other)-addressing lexicon, there are an extensive number of EA/DAs that express impolite connotations – which is in surprising contrast to 'the polite Chinese' stereotype (cf. Chapter One). While the aim of polite, honorific address is the symbolic elevation of the other and denigration of the self, elevation/denigration can be applied in the impolite register for elevating the self and denigrating the other. Thus the speakers assess the social role of the interlocutors negatively, and elevate themselves, i.e., they symbolically deprive the interlocutors of their social values. Gu (1990) describes this phenomenon as:

> The breach of [self-denigration] submaxim (a), i.e. denigrate other, is perceived as being 'impolite' or 'rude'. The breach of [elevate other] submaxim (b), i.e. elevate self, is construed as being 'arrogant', 'boasting', or 'self-conceited'. (1990: 246)

In fact, polite and impolite EA/DAs are the opposite of each other, which is also reflected in the fact that the polite and impolite lexicons show a surprisingly close semantic relationship.[1] Consider the following chart:

[1] In spite of the close semantic connection, there is no possibility of confusion between the polite and impolite lexicons. As has been already noted in Chapter Two, Chinese (im)polite EA/DAs generally consist of nominal terms or adjectival-nominal expressions. Compare e.g. the 'female' DA term *qie* 妾 (lit. 'concubine') with the DA expression *jianqie* 賤妾 (lit. 'poor concubine'). In general, both the nominal and (in the case of polysyllabic expressions) the adjectival part has some elevating/denigrating connotation, but the nominal part also has a referring function. For example, *qie*, above, always denotes the female speaker, while for example *huo* 貨 (lit. 'good') in expressions like the *jianhuo* 賤貨 (lit. 'cheap slut', see Table Three below) denotes the interlocutor. To sum up: the nominal 'core' of EA/DAs does not allow interchangeability or referential misinterpretations between polite and impolite formulaic vocatives. In fact, a small number of impolite DA terms can be found, however, which can have both polite (i.e. self-referring) and impolite (i.e. other-referring) interpretations. Historically, these originally functioned as impolite terms, and later they occurred in polite register. For example, the term *nucai* 奴才 ('a person who only has the ability to become a slave') is one of the most widely applied impolite DA terms in the vernacular, a complementary function of which emerged during the time of the Ming and Qing dynasties when it came to be used as a polite DA form by some officials. But, in the case of these terms, there is no ambiguity between politeness and impoliteness: reference inherently defines interpretation, the use of terms is determined (e.g. *nucai* can only be used by officials towards the emperor), and also it is strictly defined which of the terms can have such a function, i.e. their application is not arbitrary, which cannot be so, anyway, because the overwhelming majority

TABLE THREE: THE SEMANTIC CLOSENESS/REFERENTIAL SEPARATENESS OF POLITE AND IMPOLITE DAS

Referring to the (group of) speaker	Referring to the (group of) interlocutor
chunzi 蠢子 (lit. 'stupid child', denotes the speaker)	*chuncai* 蠢材 ('stupid-minded', denotes the speech-partner)
diaogua 吊瓜 ('a melon [that is head] fit to be hanged') refers to the speaker	*diaodiao* 吊屌 ('a prick fit to be hanged') refers to the interlocutor
jianqie 賤妾 (lit. 'poor concubine', denotes the female speaker)	*jianhuo* 賤貨 (lit. 'cheap/poor slut') refers to the female interlocutor
cun'er 村兒 ('peasant child', refers to one's own son)	*cundiao* 村鸟 ('peasant dick') describes the interlocutor or his/her folks

Chunzi 蠢子 (lit. 'stupid child') refers to the speaker – *chuncai* 蠢材 ('stupid-minded') denotes the speech-partner. *Diaogua* 吊瓜 ('a melon [that is head] fit to be hanged') refers again to the speaker – *diaodiao* 吊屌 ('a prick fit to be hanged') refers to the interlocutor. *Jianqie* 賤妾 (lit. 'poor concubine') denotes the female speaker – *jianhuo* 賤貨 (lit. 'cheap slut') refers to the female interlocutor. Note, that the same semantic correspondence occurs among indirect DA terms, as well: the term *cun'er* 村兒 ('peasant child') refers to one's own son – the term *cundiao* 村鸟 ('peasant dick') describes the interlocutor or his/her folks.[2] This

of nominal 'cores' are inherently impolite in the Chinese context, and thus cannot appear in the polite register. For example, the 'core' *diao* 鸟 (lit. 'prick', see the slang interpretation of this word in Ji 2000: 196) understandably cannot appear in polite terms.

[2] Note that here I only list DAs because, as will be shown below, impolite EAs are very few in number. Also note that in Table Three I only list polite and impolite

systematic similarity between the application of EA/DAs and the resemblance of the polite and impolite lexicons ensures that statements made according to one of them are also valid for the other.

Impolite EA/DA work in interaction in the following way:

(1) 只見阮小五大笑，罵道：「你這等虐害百姓的賊官，直如此大膽！敢來引老爺做甚么！卻不是來捋虎須！」

Zhi jian Ruan Xiaowu da xiao, ma dao: "Ni zhe deng nüehai-baixing-de-zeiguan, zhi ru ci da dan! Gan lai yin laoye zuo shenme! Que bu shi lai lü-huxu!"

[He] just saw Ruan Xiaowu, who gave a big laugh and said scornfully: "You, rascal official who [only] maltreats ordinary people (*ni-zhe-deng-nüehai-baixing-de-zeiguan* – impolite DA), how brave you are! How dare you come here and [try to] catch me, this venerable one (*laoye* – impolite EA)! You don't [want to] strain the tiger's beard, [do you]?"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 19)

Example (1) indicates that the societal meta-message plays a part in the *application* of impolite forms, just as polite ones do. The official is addressed with a specific impolite DA that refers to his *social group*. Also the speaker applies the EA *laoye* (see below in 4.1.2), which is a polite EA to address officials, but in the self-referring sense it expresses that the speaker socially undervalues the other by addressing self as his/her superior. But, this chapter aims to show that the *interpretation* of impolite addressing forms is not free, either. Offensive DAs as above, for example, and others of seemingly funny meaning are similarly evaluated as impoliteness, because they inherently denote the decrease of the interlocutor's rank. Similarly, the above impolite EA cannot be interpreted as humorous in any context because it inherently conveys disparagement of the speech-partner. In short, the societal meta-message controls not only the production, but also the interpretation, of (im)polite vocatives.

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structures that resemble each other. Because in Chinese curses regularly appear in a nominalised form, impolite DA structures are 'longer' and morphologically more complex than the polite ones. See e.g. the vocative structure: *daji-fengmo-qian-nizi* 打脊風魔虔妮子 ('wicked witch slave-girl whose back should be beaten'), where the cursing phrase 'hitting somebody's spine' occurs in the nominalised form. See more on Chinese curses and oaths in Kádár (2005a); and curses/oaths in general in Hughes (1998).

The present chapter will study the following points. Again relying on philological sources as in the previous chapter, in 4.1 I study how Chinese scholars and lexicological studies examine impolite DAs, and I also discuss the possible reasons why they do not examine impolite EAs. It will be shown that they categorise together a large number of DAs of wide semantic meaning as 'impolite' lexicon, and these terms in fact prove to be impolite in discourse. It follows that these terms are of inherent interpretation in the traditional Chinese context, which is also supported by the consideration that there is no permeability between impolite DA application and banter. EAs are missing from the sources because of their low number. But, as with DAs, they are of inherent interpretation, which is supported by the fact that there is no permeability between impolite EA application and irony/humour. In 4.2 I will raise the question that, if both the production (Chapter Three) and the interpretation (Chapter Four) of (im)polite vocatives is pre-determined, how evaluation can still play its role in their discourse application. This issue preludes the inquiry carried out in Chapter Five.

4.1 Traditional Chinese impoliteness and inherent interpretations

The examination carried out in the present section is based on how Chinese philological sources treat the impolite lexicon. Consequently, impolite DAs and EAs have to be studied separately because the former occur in philological studies, while the latter expressions do not. In 4.1.2 I will show that philologists have defined many vocatives as impolite DAs, and the lexical meaning of these terms cover a wide range from serious offence to seemingly funny connotations. The facts that

(a) philologists (as well as many modern dictionaries) categorise these terms together as 'impolite addressing'; and
(b) these terms homogenously occur in several contexts that require impoliteness, independently from their concrete meanings as discourse investigations

show that in traditional Chinese cognition all of these forms express impolite beliefs. This provides evidence for the assumption that DAs convey the secondary, societal meta-message under their 'surface' semantic

meaning (though these can coincide), which pre-determines their interpretation in traditional Chinese hierarchical society. This is supported by the fact that terms with less offensive lexical meaning are not more predisposed to become banter than more offensive ones. In 4.1.2 I examine self-elevating forms. They are missing from traditional sources because their number is low compared with DAs, and their application is reference-dependent. Nevertheless their interpretation is pre-determined, just as in the case of DAs. Although according to their lexical meaning these terms could be interpreted as ironic or humorous, the impolite societal meta-message they express blocks such interpretations. Note that I will apply Hungarian examples throughout section 4.1, to show how predetermined the evaluation of Chinese EA/DAs is, compared with that of similar phenomena in other languages.

4.1.1 Impolite DAs

Etiquette (or, more appropriately, morality) books in China, as in Europe, focused on how to behave politely, cf. Burke (1993). Nevertheless, the study of impoliteness has been a relevant topic for traditional Chinese philology. Even though no comprehensive research of impoliteness was carried out by Chinese philologists, impolite terms appear sporadically in notes of lexical works, and the *Chengwei lu* discusses them in a whole sub-chapter of the already-cited 32nd chapter. Liang Zhangju, the author of the *Chengwei lu*, uses the name *jiancheng* 賤稱 ('impoverishing addressing', the Chinese equivalent of DA) as a collective title for impolite terms of address. This is a noteworthy title-choice because the designation *jiancheng* reflects that philologists attributed *societal* character to impolite addressing, just like its polite counterpart (see Chapter Three). That is, impolite terms of address are claimed to diminish the interlocutor by symbolically 'impoverishing' (i.e. decreasing) his/her social position.

But the definition of impolite addressing is not the only noteworthy point in the *Chengwei lu*. If one examines the corpora studied in the work, and also in modern compendia of historical Chinese forms of address, like Wang and Wang (1988), or Ji (2000), two interrelated points that merit attention are (a) the *lexical* and (b) the *semantic* characteristics of the collected impolite DA terms. The lexical survey shows that there is a surprisingly large quantity of impolite terms, while their semantic examination indicates that they span a wide range of semantic meanings. In what follows, let us show these two characteristics of the impolite addressing lexicon in detail.

(a) Surveying several sources, it appears that there are thousands of indirect terms of address categorised as 'impolite', for example, *cunru* 村儒 (lit. 'rural scholar', a DA used towards Confucian scholars who could not obtain important posts). And my collection (which is far from being comprehensive) yielded as many as 316 direct DA terms, which have many variants. Note that many more terms can fulfil both indirect and direct addressing functions, but these are not counted here.[3] Nor did I count separately those terms that have several written variant forms.[4] DAs are formed in such a large number because they are applied in reference to interlocutors as members of a social community rather than as individuals, just as in the case of the polite EA/DA lexicon. In other words, every community is addressed with different impolite DAs. This is supported by the existence of impolite DA terms to address the members of communities/professions, see, for example, the term *chou-pijiang* 臭皮匠 (lit. 'bad smelling shoemaker'), or terms that address members of higher classes, like the term *zangguan* 贓官 (lit. 'corrupt official'). Besides, there are also regular prefixes, like *zei* 賊 (lit. 'rascal'), which can practically modify any noun referring to (members of) a certain assemblage/social class/politic clique/ethnic group/nation, cf. *zeijia* 賊家 (lit. 'rascals'), a term used towards enemy troops.[5]

(b) Another property of these terms is that they express meanings that cover a wide semantic scale. Offensive terms, e.g., *diaohan(zi)* 鸟漢(子) ('prick') or *daidiao* 呆鸟 ('damn fool prick') and others of seemingly funny meaning like *tulü* 禿驢 (lit. 'hairless donkey'), are characterised similarly as 'impolite addressing', and no measuring of their relative offensiveness is ever mentioned in traditional scholarly works. Furthermore, I could not observe any difference among impolite DAs

[3] It is necessary to note that this data is the yield of diachronic research. I have found, however, that the overwhelming majority of the collected expressions are used throughout the whole bulk of vernacular texts.

[4] Because impoliteness exists on the periphery of high culture, the written forms have not been 'standardised' in Chinese, so many terms have several orthographic variants. For instance, the impolite vocative *wangba* 王八 ('bastard') has two other written versions in vernacular texts: 亡八 and 忘八.

[5] As a matter of course, impolite DAs, just as polite vocatives, do not compulsorily express direct reference to the group of the interlocutor, cf. Chapter Three. These terms can also refer for example to the lack of socially accepted values, the inability of the interlocutor of becoming a worthy member of society, etc. Also note that a fundamental difference in the social application of polite and impolite vocatives is that the latter can be used towards any social group, since these forms are deprecatory, so hierarchical distribution does not play a part in their use.

as discourse tools – they occur in conflictual interactions independently from their direct semantic meaning. Compare the following examples:

(2) 那大漢怒道：「我好意勸你，你這鸟頭陀敢把言語傷我！」

Na dahan nu dao: "Wo haoyi quan ni, ni zhe diao toutuo gan ba yanyu shang wo!"

That guy said furiously: "I tried to persuade use with good intent, and you, this prick monk (*diao-toutuo*, a DA referring to Buddhist monks) still dare to insult me with your words!"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 32)

(3) 魯智深道：「我不看長老面，灑[洒]家直打死你那幾個秃驢！」

Lu Zhishen dao: "Wo bu kan zhanglao mian, sajia zhi dasi ni na ji ge tulü!"

Lu Zhishen said: "I don't care about your honour, my abbot, I will now beat you hairless donkeys (*tulü*, a DA used towards Buddhists) to death!"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 4)

(3) is uttered in a drunken brawl: the speaker addresses Wu Song, a hero of the novel *Shuihu*, with the term *diao-toutuo* ('prick monk'). In the second interaction, the drunken monk Lu Zhishen, another hero of the novel, plans to beat some other monks, while the abbot of the temple entreats him not to do so. As can be seen, both example (2) and (3) are serious conflict interactions. Yet the seemingly funny *tulü* (lit. 'hairless donkey'), just as with other DAs, can occur with much more offensive meanings in such interactions, cf. *diaoren* 鸟人 ('prick') or *diao-toutuo* ('prick monk', above). Note that in other languages and cultures it would be difficult to imagine such co-occurrence of 'funny' and offensive oaths in the same context. Although conflictual interactions do not necessitate the application of oaths and calling the others names to express aggression, when such forms are used one would expect them to be 'serious' (i.e. *of impolite/offensive connotation*) enough. Consider the following examples from Hungarian:

(4) 'Most megnyúzlak, te szemét!'
'I'll skin you alive, you shit!' (my example)

(5) 'Most megnyúzlak, te madár!'
'I'll skin you alive, you little beast!' (my example)

Native Hungarian speakers evaluate the first utterance as 'impolite' in a potential threat, while informants to whom (5) was shown considered it as what could rather be used to threaten children or tease a close friend, but by no means could it be applied in serious, conflictual interaction. This is because the vocative 'madár' (lit. 'bird') expresses a somewhat humorous connotation in contemporary Hungarian. So, *there are contexts* where it can be evaluated as impoliteness, like in formal settings where the use of such a term is 'improper'. But few hearers would evaluate it as impolite in a *threatening* discourse context (e.g. in a pub brawl), which would require vocatives that express impolite (= offensive) *connotations*. The difference between (2), (3) and (4), (5) shows that the Chinese co-occurrence of offensive and 'funny' terms in threatening would be at least unusual in other cultural settings. This means that Chinese impolite vocatives are interpreted as offensive because of the societal meta-message they convey, and not because of their semantic meaning.

The large number of terms shows the specific, societal role of impolite address: impoverishing the interlocutors according to their worldly status requires an extensive terminology. But the above description also indicates that the societal meta-message not only plays a part in the application of impolite vocatives, but it determines their interpretation, as well. The facts that (a) this large number of terms spanning a wide semantic scale is classified together in traditional Chinese philology and (b) these vocatives are homogenously applied in contexts that require impolite (offensive) beliefs indicate that all of these terms are *evaluated as impolite* in traditional Chinese (im)politeness. This leads to the inference that due to the societal meta-message the concrete semantic meaning, which is expressed by these vocatives, is of secondary importance. This, however, entails that the role of free interpretation has to be questioned. While examples (4) and (5) indicate that in other languages vocatives can be evaluated as impolite, humorous, etc. in a given context according to their lexical meaning (or they are freely evaluated as contextually applicable or non-applicable), such contextual evaluation does not work for the application of Chinese impolite DAs. That is, these terms are inherently impolite because in Chinese hierarchical relations the symbolical diminishing of the interlocutor's position is a serious offence.

In what follows, let us study the relation of Chinese impoliteness and banter.

Impoliteness and banter in China

In most languages there is a close connection between impoliteness and banter[6]: the majority of oaths or four-letter words are evaluated as impoliteness in certain contexts, while they can also be interpreted as banter between intimate interactants. Consider the following Hungarian example:

(6) 'Hé, seggfej, nem lépünk le szerezni valami harapnivalót?'
'Hey, you arsehole, why don't we do a bunk and scrounge some grub?' (my collection)

If the above utterance occurs between two teenage students (who are friends), who intend to slip away from school to have a ten-o'-clock snack at the nearby buffet, the vocative 'seggfej' ('arsehole') is supposedly not interpreted as impoliteness, as it is used to express intimacy. So the evaluation of impolite forms as impoliteness or banter strongly depends on contextual factors, but it must also be noted that in general *the less offensive a term is the more likely it is to be applied as banter*. For example, the addressing 'tökkelütött' ('moron') could presumably be evaluated as teasing in more discourse settings (and by more evaluators) than the 'seggfej' ('arsehole').

In view of the above consideration, DAs should, in theory, have been applied and interpreted as teasing depending on context, as in (6).[7] The societal meta-message, however, does not allow such context dependent use and evaluation for Chinese DAs. The semantic differences (which cause the stylistic variability of impolite terms) do not involve a fuzzy

[6] Banter is categorised in some theories as part of impoliteness, cf. Culpeper (1996), while others argue for the separation of these two phenomena, see Eelen (2001: 46). Although the examination of banter as an independent phenomenon falls outside the scope of this study, I accept that impoliteness and banter must be separated in Chinese. This is because (a) in Chinese philology formal impoliteness and banter are separated on a terminological level (banter is referred to with distinct terms e.g. *nüecheng* 謔稱 ('banter addressing') or *xicheng* 戲稱 ('teasing addressing'); (b) impoliteness and banter lexicons are treated separately in these works; and (c) the banter application/interpretation of DAs is restricted in Chinese (see 4.1.1.1).

[7] It is relevant to mention that there are some DAs that can be applied not in bantering but in a self-mockery sense. *Lanfu* 懶夫 (lit. 'lazy person') is a DA that was used by some men of letters (presumably only in written form) as a self-mockery EA. The application of these terms is strongly bound to role-relations similar to DAs used to engage in banter with the interlocutor, see below.

line between impoliteness and banter. That is, a given utterance in Chinese, only because it seemingly conveys a less impolite meaning than another, is not any more predisposed to being interpreted as banter or teasing. In order to exemplify this point, let us cite the term *tulü* ('hairless donkey') from example (3) above. In spite of its funny semantic meaning, *tulü* cannot ever become banter because it carries a secondary societal meta-message: it ridicules one of the fundamental religious customs of the Buddhist order, the cutting of hair when a person is ordained, cf. Chen (1964).

As a result of the societal meta-message conveyed by DAs, the impolite lexicon cannot in general be freely applied for engaging in banter. That is, even though in Chinese, as with other languages, it is possible to apply impolite vocatives in contexts where the interactants banter with each other, the speakers are not free to decide which form they use in such interactions. Note that similar sociolinguistic phenomena have been observed in relation to other languages and societies; cf. Labov (1972), or Montagu (1973), i.e. in many societies there are certain forms which cannot be applied for bantering according to sociolinguistic customs. Consider the classic case of 'fuck somebody's mother' vs. 'fuck somebody's mother from tree to tree' in Labov (1972: 340): in Afro-American communities, the first can be applied for bantering while the second cannot be used in such a sense, as it expresses the speaker's intention to really insult the other. Such restrictions are very strict in Chinese, compared with other languages, because the banter application of impolite vocatives is a 'tender spot', due to the societal meta-message expressed by these terms. Therefore, strict sociolinguistic customs determine the banter application of DAs, the adherence to which helps to 'neutralise' the strongly offensive beliefs conveyed by these vocatives. These customs can be summarised in two points:

(a) In Chinese, no free formation of banter terms can be observed, that is there are only very few DA terms that can be used in banter. Also, no context-dependent deviations can be made from this established set of terms. That is, in a given interaction the speakers cannot decide themselves which DAs they apply as banter. In order to illustrate this point, let us apply again the above example of the term 'hairless donkey' (*tulü*). The fixed, custom-dependent relation between impoliteness and banter is well exemplified if one observes that while the vocative *tulü* cannot be applied as banter at all, impolite DA terms like *feng-heshang* 瘋和尚 (lit. 'crazy Buddhist') are applied when engaging in banter with Buddhists. Similarly, the term *feng-daoren* 瘋道人 (lit. 'crazy Taoist')

is applied to tease Taoists, who – according to examinations of vernacular discourse – cannot be bantered using 'regular' impolite DAs like *zeidao* 賊道 (lit. 'rascal Taoist'). Consider the following examples:

(7) 1. 和尚 […] 道：「劉道爺貴姓？」
2. 老道說：「你叫我劉道爺，又問我貴姓，你是個瘋和尚！」
3. 濟公哈哈大笑，信口說道：「說我瘋，我就瘋 […]」

1. Heshang […] dao: "Liu daoye guixing?"
2. Laodao shuo: "Ni jiao wo Liu daoye, you wen wo guixing, ni shi ge feng-heshang!"
3. Jigong haha-da-xiao, xin kou shuodao: "Shuo wo feng, wo jiu feng […]"

1. The monk […] said: "What is your precious surname, Respected Taoist Liu?"
2. The old Taoist said: "You call me Respected Taoist Liu, but still ask my precious surname, you are a crazy monk (*feng-heshang*)!"
3. Jigong gave a big laugh, and confusedly answered: "If you say I am crazy, I am just crazy […]"

(*Jigong quanzhuan* 濟公全傳/Chapter 5)

(8) 少游直跟到轎前，又聞訊云：「小娘子一天歡喜，如何撒手寶山？」
小妹雖口又答云：「風道人憑地貪痴，那得隨身金穴！」

Shaoyou zhi gendao jiao qian, you wenxun yun: "Xiao-niangzi yitian huanxi, ru he sa-shou baoshan?"
Xiaomei suikou you da yun: "Feng-daoren pingdi tan chi, na de suishen jinxue!"

Shaoyou went [with her] to the palanquin, and asked [her] again: "[I wish you] young lady happiness for the whole day, how about giving [me something] from your mountain of treasures?"
Xiaomei answered at once: "How can you be so stupid, crazy Taoist (*feng-daoren*), should I bring a goldmine with myself?!"

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言/ Chapter 11)

Example (7) occurs between a Buddhist monk and an old Taoist. The Buddhist monk Daoji 道濟 is in fact a crazy person blessed with super-

natural talents, but the Taoist who does not know this fact banters with him using 'crazy monk' (*feng-heshang*). Example (8) is a dialogue of the Song man of letters Qin Shaoyou, masked as a mendicant Taoist, and his bride. After a long and rather humorous interaction the bride banters Qin with the term 'crazy Taoist' (*feng-daoren*). These interactions show that although the terms *feng-heshang* or *feng-daoren* appear in conflict interactions as 'regular' DAs, they can be used to express teasing. From a semantic perspective they are equally or even more offensive than 'hairless donkey' (*tulü*), yet, as regular custom, they can be used as banter terms.

(b) In Chinese, interpersonal relationships strongly determine the interpretation of impolite vocative terms as banter. That is, the Chinese connect the banter application of the DA terms that can be used in a teasing sense to elaborated *role relations*, not simply to 'intimate' relationship, as stated by some pragmaticians concerning banter, see Leech (1983: 144). For instance, the term *shacai* 殺才 ('one who only has criminal talent to kill others') is regularly used as DA, and it can also occur as banter. Lexical studies, however, stipulate that it can only become banter when young men or women use it towards their lovers, or their family members apply it in relation to their lovers. Consider the following examples:

(9) 那婦人大怒，便罵道：「殺才！該死的賊！」

Na furen da nu, bian ma dao: "Shacai! Gaisi de zei!"

That woman got angry and cursed saying: "You, who only have criminal talent to kill (*shacai*)! You, this bandit who should die!" (*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水許全傳/Chapter 29)

(10) 「[…] 愛你個殺才沒去就，[…]」

"[…] ai ni ge shacai mei qu jiu, […]"

"[…] the boy who is as bad as a killer (*shacai*) and loves you didn't go […]" (*Jinxi chi* 金溪池/3, quoted from Ji 2000: 759)

While example (9) is serious conflict speech in a tavern brawl, in (10) the girl refers to her lover. (I have tried to emphasise this difference by the different translation of the same DA term in the two quotations.) The specific role-relation in which *shacai* is applied shows another aspect of the sociolinguistically fixed character of banter application of Chinese

DAs.[8] Role-relation dependent banter application can be observed in other languages, too. Consider example (6) above, where the vocative 'seggfej' ('arsehole') is applied: it can become a banter term between friends or probably colleagues, but it is less likely to be applied between lovers or family members. There is one difference, however, between Chinese and other languages. In other languages it is not predetermined which term can have a banter application and interpretation, instead, it depends on the nature of the given community where the impolite vocatives are used. It can happen (and I have come across such application in reality) that certain families apply the vocative 'seggfej' ('arsehole') for humorous, bantering purposes. In Chinese, however, this is not the case: it is sociolinguistically pre-determined which DAs in which role-relations can be applied as banter. I have not found instances where the above *shacai* is applied for bantering in other role-relations than that of lovers. (Modern sources like Ji 2000: 759 also support this statement.)

So sociolinguistically DAs cannot be freely applied in a bantering sense, which excludes the free discourse evaluation of these terms. This 'fixedness' emerges because, due to the offensive societal meta-message, the banter application of DA terms is a 'dangerous' act. So sociolinguistic customs regulate banter application: some DAs can be applied as banter, but their overwhelming majority cannot. Although in the present state of research I have not found any clear system which is responsible for the 'selection' of certain DAs for banter application, I would suggest that it lies in the referential properties of these terms. *Tulü* ('hairless donkey') is probably of inherently impolite connotation because it refers to the *communal or social characteristics* of the interlocutor (i.e., the cutting of hair), rather than personal ones. On the other hand, although the term *feng-heshang* ('crazy monk') refers to the interlocutor as a member of the Buddhist clerical group, it gives greater emphasis to *person*al values. Note, however, that the examination of this issue will be a later task, and it may also turn out that the banter application of certain DAs is simply defined by (arbitrary) linguistic customs in random ways.

To sum up section 4.1.1: relying on (a) the way in which the *Cheng-wei lu* and modern lexical sources study impolite vocatives and (b) the discourse application of these terms, I have shown that vocatives are applied in impolite contexts independently of their direct lexical/semantic

[8] Although it could be argued that the *shacai* in (10) is an endearing, rather than banter, form, I would maintain that it is banter. I do not only base this statement on the fact that *shacai* occurs in contexts where lovers tease rather than endear each other, but also, endearing forms could hardly occur in conflict talks, consider (9).

meaning. This supports the inference that their evaluation as impoliteness is inherent. While in other languages 'impolite' terms of address are interpreted as impolite, humorous, etc. according to their semantic meaning in a given context, the societal meta-message of Chinese impolite vocatives pre-determines their interpretation independently of contextual factors, consider examples (2) and (3) above. The strict border between impoliteness and banter supports this notion. In other languages the interpretation of impolite vocatives as banter depends on the context and the nature of the relationship between the interactants. Yet in Chinese it is pre-determined which DAs (in which role-relations) can be applied for teasing the interlocutor, which narrows down the scope of evaluation. In what follows, let us turn towards self-elevating vocatives, which are missing from philological works.

4.1.2 Impolite EAs

In this section I will deal with the issue of self-elevation. This lexicon is studied separately from the above category of impolite DA lexicon because impolite EA terms are absent from traditional philological works, and neither do they regularly appear in modern lexical studies. Nevertheless, I intend to show that the impolite EA phenomenon, being the complement of DA application, is interpreted in inherent ways similar to the latter. I look as my point of departure the consideration that if DAs cannot be freely interpreted as banter, the same would be valid for EAs. In other words, I am trying to show that EA application cannot be freely interpreted as self-irony/humour due to the societal meta-message the EAs convey, even though according to their semantic meaning they would be open to being contextually evaluated as conveying self-ironical/humorous beliefs in other cultural contexts.

Let us consider first why Chinese philological sources and lexical works do not deal with the issue of self-elevation. I have found two possible reasons for this phenomenon:

(a) The number of impolite EA terms is very low, compared with the impolite DA terminology. In the interactions that I have examined so far, generally there are only two EAs in use; these are *laoye* 老爺 (in impolite discourse 'I, this venerable gentleman') and *laoniang* 老娘 ('I, this venerable lady').[9] (Besides these two terms there are a few

[9] Note that the adjectival-(quasi)prefix *lao* has a special role in Chinese (im)politeness: not only can it occur in (im)polite EA terms, but also in their DA parallels.

terms that can be used by certain speakers only; cf. the term *zu-nainai* 祖奶奶 '[I, your] great-great-grandmother', which can be applied as an impolite EA by older female speakers. Such terms are used very rarely, however, compared to the above two terms.) Even so, impolite EA and DA are by and large equally frequently applied in discourse, and there is no systematic difference between the two phenomena leading one to assert inequality between their importance. In order to show this, let us quote the following examples:

(11) 婦人道：「賊囚，別要說嘴。」

Furen dao: "Zeiqiu, bie yao shuo zui."

The woman said: "You, this rascal (*zeiqiu*, an impolite DA used between commoners), [just] never wants to say a word."
(*Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅/Chapter 78)

(12) 「[…] 老娘慢慢地消遣你！」

"[…] laoniang manman di xiaoyi ni!"

"[…] I, this venerable lady (*laoniang*, the 'female' impolite EA) will slowly play about with you!"
(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 21)

In (11) the impolite DA *zeiqiu* (lit. 'rascal') occurs without EA, while in (12) the 'female' impolite EA term *laoniang* (lit. 'I, this venerable lady') is applied alone, while the interlocutor is referred to with the second person PP *ni*. This shows that both EA and DA can occur alone in an utterance, so the former is not subordinated to the latter even though the EA lexicon is much smaller than the DA. But, since such application is restricted to the vernacular, it could miss the attention or fall outside the interest of Chinese philologists. It is worth mentioning that from a histori-

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See the polite DA terminology of older speakers, e.g. *laonu* 老奴 (lit. 'old servant', used by aged servants), and the impolite terms uttered towards older interactants, for example *lao-hua'niang* 老花娘 ('old bitch'). *Lao* probably acquired this versatility of representing both poles of Chinese (im)politeness not just because (a) it is a regularly applied 'respect prefix' in nominal structures, cf. Norman (1998), but (b) also the respect for older people is one of the most fundamental concepts in the Confucian tradition – that is why its emphasising in politeness and conscious violation in impoliteness can be especially expressive in a Chinese cultural context. (Note that my collection yielded as many as 50 impolite DA terms that are formed with the prefix *lao*.)

cal perspective impolite EAs had been derived from Classical polite DAs in the vernacular language.[10] As the main corpus of research for traditional Chinese philology dealing with the addressing phenomenon is based on the Classical written texts, such impolite application restricted to the vernacular has fallen outside the scope of studies. This is in contrast with impolite DA terms, which have been studied in some of the philological works because many of these terms had been imported from the colloquial to the Classical language, or they are of Classical origin, cf. the Classical DA *e'nu* 惡奴 (lit. 'evil slave'; Ji 2000: 221).

(b) Another reason for their absence from philology is their referential obscurity: they are generally used as polite EAs. Originally *laoye* is used as an EA towards officials, while *laoniang* is used to elevate older respected ladies (Ji 2000: 512–13; 528), so they only express impolite beliefs when they substitute the first person PP or other self-referring forms of a given utterance. In short, from the perspective of Chinese lexicology, these are 'uncertain' terms because of this referential switch.

It is interesting to note that although there is no specific impolite EA lexicon in Chinese, the above two terms work as a 'fixed' lexicon for impolite self-reference. That is, the self-elevating referential switch is attributed exactly to these two terms. For example, if one compares the term *lao-yeye* 老爺爺 ('venerable older person') with *laoye*, although *lao-yeye* has a lexical meaning similar to the latter, it can still refer exclusively to the interlocutor; cf. Ji (2000: 529). Similarly, in the rare plural form (*lao-yemen* 老爺們) *laoye* is not used in a self-referring sense (i.e., elevating the group of the speakers) in vernacular literary pieces. In other words, impolite EA terms are not freely formed in a given discourse, so self-elevation still has its specific terminology and determined application.

Let us now turn to the issue of the interpretation of EAs. Even though these terms are absent from Chinese lexicology, self-elevation is the com-

[10] Studies of vernacular grammar rarely discuss the appearance of impolite EAs in the Chinese lexicon. Although I cannot provide the exact date for their emergence, I estimate that these terms appeared in the time of the late Yuan or the early Ming dynasties. Two pieces of evidence support this estimate: (a) *laoye* was widely spread in EA function in the Yuan dynasty first to address officials (even though earlier it had been used to elevate male spirits in ritual texts, but such application was rare; see Ji 2000: 529), and supposedly the impolite EA is a colloquial inverse of this term; (b) its impolite application can already be widely observed in the Ming dynasty vernacular corpora.

plementary of interlocutor-denigration, and its impolite evaluation is inherent as is the case of DAs. When one uses EA terms to refer to oneself, they are strictly interpreted as impoliteness, while it is just the other way round for EA terms referring to the interlocutor. My examination of vernacular discourse indicates that the Chinese apply such self-elevating forms exclusively in conflict interactions, and the interlocutors assess such usage negatively (= 'impoliteness') *without exception*. The following quotation (13) is one example of this:

(13) 武行者喝道：「怎地是老爺蠻法？我白喫你的！」
那店主人道：「我倒不曾見出家人自稱『老爺』。」

Wu xingzhe he dao: "Zen di shi laoye manfa? Wo bai chi ni de!"
Na dian zhuren dao: "Wo dao bu zeng jian chujiaren zicheng 'laoye'."

Traveller Wu [Song] shouted: "How [can you mention] my, this venerable person's (*laoye*) barbarian way? I evidently eat your [food]!"
The inn-keeper said: "I have never seen a monk refer to himself as 'venerable myself' (*laoye*)."
(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 32)

This conflict interaction occurs between Wu Song, a hero of the novel *Shuihu*, and an innkeeper, who refuses to give Wu alcohol and meat, which are forbidden for Buddhist monks, and calls it 'barbarian way' that a monk wants to consume these unclean things. This example explicitly elucidates that the Chinese construe impolite EA *application* as impolite: the innkeeper's words express that it is scandalous that a clerical person applies the term *laoye* in this way, i.e., the behaviour of self-addressing (*zicheng*) with *laoye* is regarded as impolite. Again, it is not the term itself, but its social connotation that expresses impolite belief. The self-referring *laoye* – according to its semantic meaning – could be contextually interpreted as *humorous* or *ironic* in other cultural contexts, and could be considered as serving several communicational goals. Consider the following example:

(14) "Na ne mondjad már hogy nem voltam *király* (stressed pronunciation)!"

"Now don't say that I wasn't *the best* (lit. 'king', applied as referential term)!" (my collection)

Citation (14) was reported to me by a friend, whose girlfriend was angry when he burnt her cooking to ashes. When the angry girl blamed him for this, he uttered the above sentence, as a result of which his girlfriend cheered up. So, even though he elevated himself with the term 'király' (lit. 'king', i.e. 'the best one'), the girl evaluated it as humorous and self-ironic, probably because it obviously was contrary to the real situation (i.e. he had been clumsy). So, such self-elevating application is open to being evaluated as humorous, self-mocking, etc. in other languages. If one compares impolite EA application with (14), it turns out that while in other societies self-elevation can be contextually interpreted as self-irony, and so it provides a possible solution for conflict, in Chinese this situation is different. Impolite EAs are not interpreted in a humorous, self-ironic, etc. sense because they convey the inherent and offensive societal meta-message that the speaker undervalues the interlocutor's social position by self-elevation.

Summing up section 4.1: I have examined the work of the societal meta-message in the interactional application and evaluation of impolite EA/DA terms. DAs are studied in both traditional and modern lexicological works, which bring together a large number of terms without regard for their semantic meaning. If their discourse application is examined, it also turns out that they are used homogenously in contexts that pre-suppose the application of forms with offensive connotations, regardless of their semantic meaning. This shows that DAs are primarily evaluated as impolite according to their societal meta-message, which does not allow the free interpretation of (im)polite vocatives in a given context (compare examples 2 and 3 with 4 and 5). The distinction between impoliteness and banter also supports this statement. Some DAs can occur in a teasing sense, while others cannot, and the banter application of DAs is also bound to certain role relations. This originates again in the strongly offensive societal meta-message expressed by these terms. This phenomenon further narrows down the scope of evaluation. In 4.1.2 I have dealt with impolite EAs, which are not studied by Chinese lexicology because of their low number and 'uncertain' application. EAs, just as DAs, cannot be freely interpreted in discourse – while DAs cannot be freely interpreted as banter, EAs cannot be evaluated as irony/humour. In short, section 4.1 has shown that the societal meta-message of vocatives blocks free contextual evaluation.

4.2 The possible routes towards an evaluation focused study of traditional Chinese (im)polite forms of address

In the previous chapters, and also in the major part of the present one, I have built up the sociolinguistic concept of the societal meta-message. Its examination indicates that not only the production, but also the interpretation of (im)polite vocatives are predetermined. The question now arises of how evaluation-focused approaches can still be applied to this lexicon. In this sub-chapter, I set out to find a way of capturing the evaluative process in interaction, and try to find a proper social context for applying this methodology. At first glance, evaluation can be captured if the 'regular' hierarchical social circumstances, under which terms of address are applied, are turned upside down. In such situations (im)polite vocatives no longer serve the mere acknowledgment of power relations, instead, their use becomes strategic. Attributing evaluation to social disorder only, however, would lead to the Parsonian view in which individual acts can only change when the social structure changes. And thus, in line with such discourses, I would end up offering a predictive theory in spite of the previous efforts so far in this study to give a realistic account on the existence of inherency in the application and evaluation of formulae. So I will propose a solution for finding the evaluative process in everyday discourses of traditional Chinese hierarchical society. This preludes Chapter Five, where I try to apply Bourdieu's social theory to Chinese (im)politeness.

The possible methodology and context for studying discourse evaluation

As has been discussed earlier, the production and interpretation of Chinese formulaic (im)polite vocative formulae are inherent. A possible context where evaluation still plays a role on the formal level would be the contextually (deliberately) inappropriate use of polite forms, such as using the EA term *gaoxian* 高賢 ('a person of outstanding wisdom', used to address officials) towards a craftsman interlocutor in some ridiculing sense. But owing to the societal meta-message such use cannot be observed in the traditional Chinese cultural context. As social connotation is interlinked with (im)politeness, the role of (im)politeness can only be fulfilled when terms are used in a socially appropriate way – that is why Chinese offers an ample choice of (im)polite terms. Thus – in the traditional Chinese context – such application of the term *gaoxian* would in fact show that the speakers have lost their command of the language: they

cannot even locate the interlocutors properly on the social scale, and so cannot offend their 'social identity' (cf. Spencer-Oatey 2000).

A more successful way of discovering the evaluative process is if one sets out from the fact that the application of Chinese (im)polite (self/other) address terms is bound to social authority: they are applied and interpreted as indicators of social power. Even impolite terms, which have been studied above, *serve to some extent as indicators of the existing hierarchical social order* (see section 4.1.1). Therefore, the examination of discourses located in times of social turmoil, when the power position of certain social classes becomes unsure, can be of interest because:

(a) the application of terms of address gradually becomes optional, in the sense that sociopragmatic customs do not control their use, which is the case in 'normal' social circumstances[11];
(b) as a consequence of this, vocatives become subjects of evaluation.

For instance, let us examine the following discourse:

(15) 儒以鴆酒奉帝，帝問何故。
1. 儒曰：「春日融和，董相國特上壽酒。」
2. 太后曰：「既云壽酒，汝可先飲。」
3. 儒怒曰：「汝不飲耶？」
[…]
4. 唐妃跪告曰：「妾身代帝飲酒，願公存母子性命。」
5. 儒叱曰：「汝何人，可代王死？」

Ru yi zhenjiu feng di, di wen he gu.
1. *Ru yue: "Chunri yonghe, Dong xiangguo te shang shoujiu."*
2. *Taihou yue: "Ji yun shoujiu, ru ke xian yin."*
3. *Ru nu yue: "Ru bu yin ye?"*
[…]

[11] This could become a new critique of the generally accepted views of 'discernment' (cf. Ide 1989): as it was mentioned in Chapter Two, scholars like Okamoto (1999), Pizziconi (2003), or Kádár (2007) regularly criticise Ide's (1989) and Matsumoto's (1989) discernment vs. volition by stating that in 'regular' social settings the use of honorifics is strategic. Studying social turmoil could provide a new critique because in such cases (which regularly occurred in Chinese, as well as Japanese, history) Ide's notion that honorifics are applied non-strategically according to existing social power is simply inapplicable. The detailed study of this issue, however, falls outside the scope of this work, and will be studied in a later project.

4. *Tang fei gui yue: "<u>Qieshen</u> dai di yin jiu, yuan <u>gong</u> cun muzi xingming."*
5. *Ru chi yue: "<u>Ru</u> he ren, ke dai wang si?"*

Ru (i.e. *Li Ru* 李儒 (?–192 A.D.), one of the rebels against the Han dynasty) respectfully gave the poisoned wine to the emperor, the emperor asked the reason [i.e. for giving him the wine].

1. Ru said: "This spring day is mild, Minister Dong (i.e. Dong Zhuo 董卓 (?– 192 A.D.), one of the leading figures of the rebellion against the Han dynasty) takes this occasion to <u>respectfully send</u> this wine of longevity."
2. The empress dowager said: "If you say it is a wine of longevity, <u>you</u> (*ru*, historical Chinese second person PP) can drink from it first."
3. Ru said with anger: "Won't <u>you</u> (*ru*) drink it?!"
   […]
4. Concubine Tang fell on her knees and said: "<u>I, this concubine</u> (a polite DA used by women) will drink the wine for the emperor, [I just] ask <u>you, my lord</u> (EA term towards officials) to spare the life of the [imperial] mother and her child.
5. Ru said scoldingly: "Who [do you think] <u>you</u> (*ru*) are that you can die instead of a ruler?"

(*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義/Chapter 4)

In this conflictual interaction, the rebel Li Ru, escorted by a group of soldiers, goes to visit the Han emperor in his garden with the aim of killing him and the members of his family. The beginning section of the interaction (turn one) proceeds in a polite fashion: Li Ru asks the emperor with honorific formulae to drink the wine (he uses the EV formula *shang* lit. 'giving something upwards' when referring to the presentation of the wine). The conflict begins when the dowager empress replies to the rebel's request with provocative words in turn two, and uses the second person PP *ru*, which is open to being evaluated as impolite. This is because, according to court customs, members of the imperial family could use EA/DAs towards imperial officials (see example (7) in Chapter Three, but note that Li's original rank becomes unsure because he participates in the revolt), and so although the dowager empress's PP use is not an explicit breach of etiquette (unlike Li's similar PP application), it is open to impolite interpretation in the given context. In turn three, Li's answer is explicitly impolite, since he uses the second person PP *ru* towards the

highest person of the emperor. Later on in the discourse, in turn four in my transcription, the emperor's faithful concubine asks Li to let her die instead of the emperor. Note that she uses the polite DA *qieshen* (lit. 'I, this concubine') referring to herself, and the EA *gong* (lit. 'my lord') towards the rebel. At a first glance, the EA/DA terms she uses fall outside the scope of contextual evaluation, since – according to court etiquette – an imperial concubine has to address an official with the EA *gong* (or similar terms) and herself with *qieshen* (or other female DAs). On the other hand, the *fact* that she uses EA/DA in the given context becomes a matter of evaluation because EA/DA terms prove to become strategic tools. She applies these "beyond what would be perceived as appropriate" (Watts 2003: 21): she uses these honorific formulae when talking to Li (who, as a rebel, has completely lost his social rank according to Confucian ideology), in order to denote that she wants to negotiate with the rebel. In other words, the fact that she applies politeness in a coarsening interaction (towards a despised rebel who has strong contextual power), where other interactants impolitely interchange PPs, is of meta-message value. And in his reply, Li uses the second person PP *ru* again, not only because he is in power position, but also through consciously substituting, PPs for EA/DAs, thus he presumably expresses that he does not want to negotiate with concubine Tang.

The analysis of this interaction provides a solution for capturing the fine process of evaluation: there are points where the omission of EA/DAs or their substitution with PPs (or other forms of address) can become subject to interpretation, strongly depending on the contextual relation between the interactants. Also, the application of EA/DAs with respect to context (or contextual power) is open to being evaluated as more than simple adherence to social power relations, thus secondary meta-messages (besides the primary 'societal' one) are also conveyed by such use. In fact, this reveals the methodology through which I will study the discourse evaluation of (im)politeness: (im)polite EA/DAs cannot be interpreted according to context, but their application, omission, or substitution can be interpreted as (im)politeness. In short, a successful methodology for studying the evaluation of the formulaic vocative lexicon is the examination of its application and evaluation in relation to the fluctuating power in discourse.

Studying evaluation in the context of example (15) is problematic, however, because it reflects social turmoil where regular hierarchical relations are not adhered to. But restricting an investigation to such contexts would implicitly suggest that applying Parsonian views is necessary for describing Chinese (im)politeness. This is because, by acknowledging

that personal applications and interpretations appear only during social changes, one would argue for the 'higher' concepts of culture and society, which control individual acts. Nevertheless, examining (im)politeness in contexts where interactants adhere to power relations and do not resist them excludes the successful observation of personal applications and evaluations in the traditional Chinese setting. This indicates that one has to find discourse contexts where the fluctuation of power can be observed *in regular social contexts*, in order to be able to apply Bourdieu's social theory to describe Chinese (im)politeness and evaluation in it.

I would suggest that such fluctuations of power can be properly observed if one examines interactions in institutions. Such interactions would provide sufficient space for such an inquiry because striving for and resisting power is a general process in the institutionalised discourse of every society, including traditional China. The examination of this issue will be a task for Chapter Five, where I conceptualise the application, omission, and substitution of EA/DAs in Bourdieu's terminology and try to find a type of institutional discourse where power and resistance can be thoroughly studied. It is necessary to note that studying Chinese (im)politeness in institutional settings necessitates primarily focusing on polite EA/DAs rather than impolite ones. Although the discourse application and evaluation of impolite forms in relation to the contextual power fluctuation of interactants would be a fruitful topic (see more on this issue in Kádár to appear), in old Chinese cultural context there is no institutionalised impoliteness. Therefore in this and the next chapter I focus on polite EA/DAs and their interrelation with the non-honorific PPs.

To sum up: relying on the surveys that have been carried out in the previous chapters and section 4.1, I have purported to find the ways in which evaluation can be captured in traditional Chinese context. Setting out from the fact that the interpretation of EA/DA forms is inherent in any context (differently from the (im)politeness formulae of many other languages), I have proposed that their application, omission, and substitution could be examined in relation to contextual factors, particularly the power relations between interactants.[12] Although this solves the methodological issue, i.e. how the process of evaluation can be approached, one still faces problems when trying to find proper contexts for such an examination. This is because instances of contextual interpretability most openly appear in social turmoil. But I would refrain from studying evaluation in such a context because this would suggest the Parsonian

[12] Note that it would be possible to consider other contextual factors, as well, but in this study my focus is primarily on discourse power.

dominance of culture and society above personal acts. So, in the final part of the section, I have argued that evaluation in institutional discourse, in which the resistance of and striving for power can be done without opposing social order, should be studied. In the following chapter I will deal precisely with this issue.

4.3 Summary

In 4.1 I have concentrated on the 'negative' side of interpersonal communication, impoliteness, in order to show that the 'rigid' image of Chinese (im)politeness is not prescribed by cultural norms alone. By focusing on interpretation, it has been proven that the societal meta-message in fact does not only pre-determine the application but also the evaluation of (im)polite formulaic vocatives. In 4.2 I have argued that even though the contextual interpretation of EA/DAs as lexical items is inherent, their application in relation to context can become subject to evaluation, in as far as the interactants do not adhere to regular power relations. The observation of EA/DAs in institutional discourse can provide a realistic insight into the seemingly 'rigid' Chinese (im)polite communication. Thus, I have made a proposal of how to challenge the 'rigid' mechanism of inherency in the application and interpretation of vocatives that has been built up in this study up to this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE

POWER AND (IM)POLITENESS

On the Contextual Evaluation of EA/DAs in Pre-modern Chinese Business Discourse

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the hearer's evaluation is a factor that exists in the discourse application of traditional Chinese (im)polite vocatives; it also explores some of the characteristics of this evaluative process. I will argue that although (im)polite vocatives are of inherent interpretation (as a result of the 'societal meta-message' that they express), their application[1], omission, or substitution in contexts of *power flux* can become of meta-message value. And such 'contextual' meta-messages can be interpreted by the addressees, individually. Thus, I am trying to refine the model of Chinese (im)polite formulaic communication arrived at previously. This approach to the application and interpretation of the formulaic vocative lexicon will not invalidate the view that they are of inherent interpretation; but it will help avoid the present theory of Chinese formulaic (im)politeness being over-simplified or 'static'. Proving that Chinese vocatives can be evaluated in (certain) discourse context(s), in a similar way to other languages, but the nature of this interpretational process is somewhat unique in Chinese, leads to the final conclusion of this work that will be discussed in the Conclusions. That is, discourse evaluation is a universal phenomenon (at least according to Chinese evidence) but its ways differ across languages, cultures, or communities.

In order to attain a reliable image of traditional Chinese (im)polite communication, and definitely exclude Parsonian views from this study, in the present chapter I will apply some of Bourdieu's concepts to my analysis. In this endeavour I take recourse to the long-established methodology and terminology of CDA, a province of linguistics the formation

[1] Context dependent application refers here to those instances when EA/DAs are applied in contextually 'unusual' ways; hence it becomes possible to interpret them in such contexts as beyond what is expectable. Consider the 'strategic' use of EA/DAs in example (15) of the previous chapter.

of which has been strongly influenced by Bourdieu's social model. (On the development of CDA see Faiclough 1998: 1–13, or Weiss and Wodak 2003: 1–34.) My particular aid will be Johanna Thornborrow's work (2002), a recent CDA study which examines power in linguistic interactions, and also attempts to use Bourdieu's concepts for institutional discourse. Although, unlike that work, I focus on the relation of discourse power and (im)politeness (see also on this issue Christie ed. 2004 and Locher 2004), I rely on Thornborrow's (2002) analysis in the conceptualisation and analysis of linguistic utterances, speech acts, or formulae (i.e. vocatives, in this study). Applying her considerations, I will determine EA/DA terms, their omission, and substitution with other forms as *discourse resources*. Discourse resources are available, in principle, for every participant, but their successful utilisation depends on contextual factors like the quantity of (personal and/or institutional) power available to the participants of a given interaction (cf. Bourdieus's 'capital' concept) or on the personal characteristics/decisions of the interactants (cf. the notion of 'habitus'). This provides inequality in their successful interactional application in a setting of power difference.[2] Yet, unlike Thornborrow, I will place more emphasis on the evaluative aspect of these resources, with respect to the power relations between discourse interactants. I will try to show that, while EA/DAs cannot be freely evaluated, their use, omission, or substitution with non-formulaic vocatives (like PPs) is in fact evaluated, depending on discourse power. In short, (a) I will define the aforementioned applications, omissions, and substitutions as discourse resources, and (b) focus on the meta-message value (i.e. interpretation) of these resources in interactions.

In order to be able to observe traditional Chinese terms of address as resources, a corpus of power flux is needed. Although indicating social power is a universal attribute of formulaic vocatives, the 'societal meta-message' defines both the application and the interpretation of EA/DAs in more 'rigid' ways than can be observed in the addressing phenomenon

[2] For the sake of clarity, let us exemplify this point. The statement that some linguistic utterances, speech acts, or formulae are more available for some interactants than for others in given discourses can be exemplified by the case of 'interruption' in medical interviews, which belong to typically 'asymmetric' interaction types (see Thronborrow 2002: 19). While in theory the patients can interrupt the doctors' talk, nonetheless, interruption is a tool that is more available for the doctors, due to their institutional role, professional skills, power in treating patients' illness, etc. factors. And, as studies on this issue show, doctors do in fact use the resource of interruption for controlling medical interactions much more often than patents, cf. Mishler (1984).

of other languages. So, strategic deviations from the 'proper' application of EA/DAs cannot be managed in interactions where hierarchical social relations are adhered. In constant social power relations where polite rituals are strictly observed, honorific addressing is applied in pre-determined ways as was suggested in Chapter Three: this narrows down the possible scope of its free contextual evaluation. Therefore, a better opportunity to observe personal interpretations is provided by interactions where power perceptibly fluctuates between the participants of the given discourses. As indicated in the previous chapter, I will study one kind of *institutional discourse*, where the institutionally less powerful participants can strive to gain power, without opposing the social order. Besides, although this is not a specific attribute of institutional discourses, I will study instances when the interactants have some *secondary aim* besides simply adhering to the etiquette (or 'politic behaviour' in Watts' definition), thus they utilise the honorific formulae (or their omission and substitution) to attain personal, strategic goals – this, as it was predicted in Chapter Two, will also become an implicit critique of the 'discernment' concept, although studying this question in details is beyond the scope of this work.

Studying institutional discourse and its 'rules' is a central issue in CDA: extensive technical literature has been written on medical, courtroom, classroom, police, etc. interactions. Although several kinds of institutionalised discourse could be chosen for the present examination which could be well-reconstructed from vernacular sources, I will focus on the institutional talk which is defined as *pre-modern Chinese business discourse* (henceforth PCBD). PCBD is the business register of the period spanning approximately the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. I have chosen PCBD for the following reasons.

(a) In traditional China, the class of merchants[3] was despised: traders typically belonged to the socially 'powerless' groups. This pre-determines that, in institutionalised PCBD, they were prescribed to apply honorific vocative forms non-reciprocally towards their interactants. And so cases when they gain contextual power over their speech-partners provide challenging data for studying how honorific formulae can be 'irregularly' applied in institutional discourses as resources, without opposing the social order. It is necessary to note that I do not intend to challenge the social communicational view ('powerful' vs. 'power-

[3] In this chapter, for the sake of brevity, the terms 'merchant' and 'trader' are used to denote all kinds of trading professions, as in traditional thinking anyone who did business became a member of the merchant class.

less') elaborated in Chapter Three. Although merchants can gain power over their interlocutors, as far as their speech-partners are 'powerful', traders generally adhere to 'regular' applications, cf. example (1) in Chapter Three. Instead of studying interaction between social classes, in this chapter I examine discourses with respect to *institutional role relations*, which proves to be more fruitful in observing power fluctuation. That is, here the customers (who generally belong to 'powerless' classes in the examples I have studied so far, just like merchants) occur as the 'powerful' party, while the merchants are the 'powerless' party in the interactions (see more below).

(b) 'Discourse power' is an illusive concept, the interpretation of which strongly depends on the characteristics of the examined discourse type. In PCBD power is relatively easy to observe, because it is basically connected with the ability to control the access to gaining *profit*. In 'regular' PCBD interactions, where the participants do not bargain with each other and both are interested in the given business, power relations remain intact. I will show, however, that as soon as the institutionally more powerful 'buyer' parties become more interested in the business than the selling 'traders' in business negotiations, their power relation is overturned. That is, in such cases the loss of interest is in direct proportion to obtaining control over the more interested party. Hence, examining profit and power related to profit is interesting because its study can connect linguistic power with Bourdieu's 'capital' notion. In many linguistic institutions 'capital', which provides power for interactants, is interpreted as an abstract entity; for example, in a conference debate it can be the background knowledge or institutional position of the interactants. But, in PCBD, 'capital' is relatively tangible: it coincides with the ability of controlling the access to material profit (i.e. gaining power means that the powerful party controls the outcome of the business negotiation).

(c) Finally, due to the growing interest in studying business interactions[4] in CDA, sociolinguistics and other areas of linguistics, the reconstruction of PCBD can contribute to the general research of business language (on business language see the comprehensive work of Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997). Although Chinese business discourse has

[4] In the present chapter, "business interaction" denotes all kinds of social interactions where the relationship of interlocutors is established on financial grounds. For example, ordering food and drink in taverns, as in (1), or requests to do something for financial considerations, as in (4) are also included among business interactions.

> received some attention (e.g. Yeung 1997), PCBD is an understudied topic. A problematic point of the research of PCBD is its reconstruction. Even though vernacular writers do not avoid the topic of business, concrete business discourse only appears in relatively few cases. While preparing the present chapter, I collected material from more than 30 major vernacular works, but could only gather approximately 200 quotations in which business interaction is described. Besides the limited amount of material, a further problem is that most of these texts are only descriptions of simple buying interactions, being nearly identical in content and format. Institutional roles are strictly adhered to in these quotations, so they do not provide sufficient material for the study of power flux in PCBD. There are fewer than 40 quotations which contain more detailed descriptions of negotiations. What counterbalances the low number of quotations is the fact that these give a relatively homogeneous picture of deviances from institutional PCBD language use, so a general conclusion can be drawn. In the present chapter quoted examples are taken from the longer and more complex descriptions of PCBD as these are considered to have representative value.

In this chapter I will study the following points. In section 5.1, I will discuss (a) the social background in which PCBD was formed, and (b) its characteristics as an institutional discourse type. By doing so, I build up a general pattern for business interactions with institutionalised power (and role-) relations. As will be discussed, the interaction between traders and buyers is an unequal one: the EA/DA application of 'traders' is non-reciprocally responded to by 'customers' by PPs and other non-polite forms of address. This institutionalised application originates in the despised social position of the merchants. In 5.2, I will challenge this 'rigid' pattern by discussing PCBD negotiations where the regular power between the interactants is 'redistributed' (to apply one of Bourdieu's expressions) according to profit. In business negotiations, if the seller gains control of the access to profit, (i.e., he becomes less interested in the business than the buyer,) we observe deviations from the general EA/DA vs. PP use: the buyer starts to apply EA/DA terms, while the seller decreases EA/DA use and starts to apply PPs. So the power gained by the ability of controlling *profit* (or the wish to have access to profit) overthrows institutional relationships and a flux of power can be observed. In these cases, the use – as well as the omission/substitution – of EA/DA terms becomes a discourse resource applied for gaining profit and controlling linguistic negotiation. Hence, due to these strategic applications, these resources are open

to contextual interpretation, which provides an opportunity to study discourse evaluation.

Before delving into these inquiries, it has to be noted that PCBD is only one type of institutionalised interaction. Its study can only yield some insights into the process of the discourse evaluation of Chinese formulaic vocatives, but the understanding of this process could become more refined by examining other (institutional) discourses of different communities of practice. (In such interactions linguistic tools can change, for example in the institutional discourse of officials the variation of direct versus indirect EA/DAs can also be utilised.) In the present work, however, I primarily intend to argue that vocatives can be evaluated in certain types of institutional talk, and show some characteristics of evaluation. Thus, examining evaluation from cross-institutional perspectives will remain a task for future research.

5.1 PCBD as institutional discourse

With the development of CDA, increasing attention has been paid to institutional discourse. Some theorists, like Habermas (1984), drew attention primarily to the fact that institutional discourse differs in several respects from other interactions. It was Fairclough (1989, 1992, and 1995) who first studied in fine detail how discourse works within an institutional setting or, in other words, how institutions influence discourse. Although it is a matter of debate how institutional discourse should be defined, most researchers agree that institutional discourse is characterised by a greater role of power, compared with 'normal' conversation. For this reason, many earlier theories depicted institutional talk as something pre-determined and constant.

Within the CDA theorisations of 'power' and institutional discourse, Thornborrow (2002) has come up with reverberating new results. This work introduces several types of institutional settings and shows that it is a compound network of factors that shapes the formation of power within institutional discourse. In this complex network, there are linguistic resources of power available to participants, but it is the context, the structure of the discourse and the personality of the participants that defines

whether these resources can be utilised successfully.[5] In brief, although institutional discourse is usually looked upon as something *defined*, there is a constant possibility of *resistance* and change in it (with the help of resources), and challenges or even fights for power can occur.

In the present chapter, I rely on Thornborrow's approach to institutional discourse when studying the application/evaluation of vocatives in PCBD negotiations. In order, however, to be able to apply this theory of institutional resistance to my corpus, first it is necessary to reconstruct the general *institution* of PCBD. There is of course a kind of uncertainty about what kind of discourse should be called 'institutional', and whether 'institutional' should be separated from 'non-institutional' as a limited group of certain speech-situations, or rather be viewed as a general discourse-type of certain power relations. For example, discourse in a family setting can be viewed as institutional, too. Whatever the definition of 'institution', it is certain that business discourse *is institutional*. In every culture, business has its (usually) precise verbal (and non-verbal) rules and it is impractical to break these if one aims at financial success. From the analyst's point of view, the participants in business discourse have their inherited role, or social power, in accordance with which they form their words. And business discourse itself differs from every-day interactions in its terminology, participants' relationship and other factors.

In short, in this section I aim to build up the basic institutional model of PCBD, with special focus on the application/evaluation of EA/DAs. First I will briefly introduce the socio-historical background which is responsible for the specific development of PCBD. I will argue that in old China the social position of merchants was low – this claim is not only prescribed by Confucian morality thinking, but linguistic evidence also supports it. As a result of this 'handicapped' social background business interaction was stereotypically regarded as 'shameful' and this view strongly pre-determined the seller-buyer relationship in institutionalised PCBD, which became a non-reciprocal one. Sellers are of lower rank than buyers because 'selling' is an activity attributed to the lower social class of merchants. This is manifested in the application of (im)polite vocatives in PCBD: EA/DAs are applied non-reciprocally. That is, the sellers apply EA/DAs towards the buyers, who regularly respond with PPs, or they do not use any vocative at all. Such non-reciprocal EA/DA vs. PP applica-

[5] In this respect, Thornborrow's study is also connected with the research of Foucault (1980), who treats linguistic power as a kind of 'credit' available to some speakers in a larger amount than to others.

tion is institutionally accepted, so PPs are not evaluated as impoliteness when they are used by the buyer. The universality of this 'rigid', institutionalised application/interpretation mechanism of vocatives (without power flux) will be challenged in 5.2, relying on Thornborrow's (2002) CDA theory.

5.1.1 The subordinated role of merchants in Confucian state-ideology

To analyze PCBD, a brief historical overview is required. First of all, it should be made clear that PCBD is a business style, which was formed in a society of anti-commercial traditions. The disdain for traders is probably rooted very deeply in Chinese culture: it can already be found in some of the earliest philosophical writings. In the *Analects* or *Lunyu* 論語, one of the most important classics of Confucianism attributed to Confucius himself, the fourth chapter says:

> 子曰：「君子喻於義，小人喻於利。」
>
> *Zi yue: "Junzi yu yu yi, xiaoren yu yu li."*
>
> The master said, "The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain." (Legge 1960: II. 170. 4. 16)

It is obvious from this source that in Confucian prescriptive thinking the gaining of 'profit' (*li* 利), that is an activity that can be attributed to merchants, is thought to be the occupation of 'ordinary men' (*xiaoren* 小人). So it is a pursuit unworthy of a 'noble man' (*junzi* 君子), the ideal person of Confucian philosophy. As the words of the founder of Confucianism became the state ideology of imperial China, it is not surprising that on the traditional four-rank scale of Chinese society merchants (*shang* 商) were at the lowest rank.

This anti-commercial view had its historical reasons. As noted in Fairbank and Reischauer (1989: 34), the class of merchants, which emerged during the time of the Zhou dynasty, proved disruptive to the old aristocratic social order, and so aristocrats set in place the aforementioned scale in order to prevent merchants from acquiring social power. On the other hand, as Fairbank and Reischauer note, this social theory is an official state-ideology or prescriptive 'dogma'; therefore one must be careful not to accept it automatically as an absolute social reality.

In order to have a satisfactory picture of the real status of a social group, the most reliable method is to examine how the given group is represented in language. As shown by Lakoff (1975: 19–42), the existence and number of euphemisms indicate the social position of a certain group. In this respect, we immediately see that Chinese is extremely rich in euphemisms for the word 'merchant'. In vernacular texts – i.e., in those corpora that were more exempt from official dogmatic thinking than the Classical language – the concrete word *merchant* (*shang* 商) hardly appears in discourse. Even in descriptive parts authors tend to avoid it. Instead, merchants are usually referred to as *ke* 客 (or *keren* 客人) or '*guest*', a term which politely refers to the fact that merchants are not local (indeed they could be 'strangers' in the eyes of rural Chinese society), but mitigate this by calling merchants 'guests', i.e., 'welcomed strangers'. The euphemism *ke* can be connected with nearly every trading profession, for example *maibu de keren* 賣布的客人[6] or 'cloth-selling guest', and so on. Another form is *xiansheng* 先生 or 'gentleman', which in itself does not mean 'merchant' but is a general polite term of address. However, when it combines with several trading professions, it becomes a euphemism: for example, in *maigua xiansheng* 賣卦先生[7] or 'fortune-teller-gentleman'. Apart from these two most frequently used euphemisms in vernacular texts, there are many others used for merchants in pre-modern Chinese,[8] like *fan* 販 (lit. 'pedlar'), *gu* 賈 (lit. 'resident-trader'), etc. (see Dai 1999: 340–349). Note that the number of euphemisms does decrease in proportion with the increasing rank of a social group. So, for example, going up the traditional Chinese social scale, in the case of craftsmen or *gong* 工, only a few euphemisms are recorded, and in the

[6] See for example in *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言, Chapter 2:
「[…]只見一個賣布的客人，[…]」
"… zhi jian yige maibu de keren, …"
"… just saw a cloth-selling guest (*maibu de keren*), …".

[7] See for example in *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言, Chapter 1:
「多少東行西走的人，偏沒個賣卦先生在內！」
"Duoshao dongxing-xizou de ren, pian mei ge maigua xiansheng zai nei!"
"How many people are roaming around here, and yet there is not a fortune-teller-gentleman (*maigua xiansheng*) among [them]!"

[8] I tried to collect all the euphemisms appearing in Classical and vernacular texts. This work yielded as many as 66 euphemisms. Besides, there are as many as 9 different deprecatory terms only for the mercantile profession. On the other hand, there are only 4 praising terms for merchants, of which only one, the term *liang-gu* 良賈 actually means a 'good merchant', while the other 3, like the term *chao-feng* 朝奉 refer to the 'richness' and not the ability or any other quality of the merchant.

case of peasants or *nong* 農 and officials or *guan* 官, there are practically no euphemisms in use.

The large number of euphemisms reflects the fact that the merchant class was in a constrained social position[9], which as a matter of course does not mean that they could not gain power, as will be shown below. This handicapped position determined the character of PCBD, and still affects modern Mandarin.[10] Besides the way merchants were (non-)linguistically treated, business itself was a despised activity, so it is totally absent as a topic in traditional official literature.

In short, PCBD developed as a style of a despised social class and, as will be shown through its reconstruction, its institutional character reflects this background.

5.1.2 Reconstructing PCBD as an institutional discourse

In this section I aim to examine the peculiarities of institutional PCBD, with respect to the application of EA/DAs. The social position of merchants determined the formation of the institutional roles of PCBD, a discourse type with the goal of gaining profit. The basic concept of PCBD thus became *non-reciprocity*: since a typical PCBD was formed as an interaction between a customer and a member of the despised class of merchants, reciprocity was typically avoided in it. Therefore PCBD became institutionalised as the interaction between a more and a less powerful party, regardless of who the participants actually were in reality. From the point of view of role relations, it is the customer/buyer/guest, etc., who is the more powerful and the merchant/seller/innkeeper, etc. who is the less powerful participant.

[9] One might think that there are 'internal' social differences between the owner of a business and those who do the selling on behalf of the owner. On the other hand, the materials I studied indicate that – at least in register – no such difference can be observed. It is presumably because traditional Chinese business units constituted family-type groups, the members of which spoke in a similar style and were also treated linguistically in an equal way by 'outer' persons. Minor register difference of owner and staff towards customers is that some owners used an independent self-denigrating term, cf. footnote 11 below.

[10] Although in contemporary China merchants are not despised, the term *shangren* 商人 (lit. 'merchant') is still avoided in polite talk, i.e. merchants are still politely 'framed' (Goffmann 1974), as an unpleasant class to speak about. Also expressions like *shangren sixiang* 商人思想 or 'money-grabbing (mercantile) thinking', a term favoured by intellectuals, is negatively connotated.

Power is displayed in PCBD by the non-reciprocal use of politeness: it is the institutionalised task and burden of the less powerful party to manage his relationship correctly with the more powerful party by using additional politeness. And the stronger party has no obligation to respond to this, by using any kind of politeness. In PCBD, institutionalised non-reciprocity is manifested in EA/DA use, that is to say the participant of lower position (usually the seller) applies EA/DA terms, while the participant of higher rank responds with PPs, or other forms of address.[11] Although instances of such application have been already shown by examples (1), (8), and (10) in Chapter Three, let us still cite the following example for the sake of clarity:

(1) 智深就問那漢道：「你這口刀那裏得來？」
那漢道：「小人祖上留下，[…]」

Zhishen jiu wen na han dao: "Ni zhe kou dao na li de lai?"
Na han dao: "Xiaoren zushang liuxia, [...]"

Zhishen asked that man: "Where did you (*ni*, second person PP) acquire this sword?"
The man said: "I, this worthless person (*xiaoren*, a polite DA term used by 'powerless' speakers) inherited it from my ancestors […]"

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水滸全傳/Chapter 7)

Here the monk Lu Zhishen wants to buy a sword from a person at a market. This is a typical instance of PCBD where a buyer inquires about goods. The institutional rank of Zhishen as a buyer makes him use the second person PP *ni*, while the seller refers to himself by the 'powerless'

[11] It must be noted that merchants, similar to other 'powerless' groups, had no special EA/DA terminology. But, interestingly, there is a single DA term that can be traced in PCBD is 小店 *xiaodian* (lit. 'worthless shop'), which was used by owners of businesses. This term, however, is a quasi-direct DA: it was originally used as an indirect denigrating term referring to one's own shop, and its reference to the owner of the shop was derived from this former meaning relatively late, only in the time of the late Ming dynasty (see Ji 2000: 1040). What underlines the undetermined condition of this term is that it is used only in certain works to a limited extent, and even in these sources it is more generally used in its original, indirect sense. Furthermore, there is no direct EA terminology used towards the owners of businesses, so this 'powerless' sub-group has no systematic EA vs. DA usage.

DA term *xiaoren* (lit. 'this worthless person').[12] This institutional difference between the positions of the seller and the buyer is clearly shown by the fact that in 'regular' PCBD interactions sellers do not evaluate such non-reciprocal PP application as *impolite*. If everything goes on uninterruptedly in the given discourse, the business discussion is successfully closed in such non-reciprocal style, as the overwhelming majority of PCBD interactions I have examined so far indicate. That is, the institutional relationship between the buyer and the seller strongly resembles the social relationship between the 'powerful' and the 'powerless' (see Chapter Three), with the difference that institutional relations can be opposed without revolting against the social order.[13] Thus, in PCBD interactions, vocatives are used as indicators of institutional power, as in the case of the discourses between 'powerful' and 'powerless' speakers: these terms are applied to 'frame' the interactants. And so such applications are not open to free (im)polite evaluations, as interactants adhere to a pre-determined register.

Thus it can be shown from the above description, examining these interactions, where the seller and the buyer adhere to institutional roles, does not contribute to the understanding of discourse evaluation. In these discourses, EA/DAs, or their substitution with PPs, are 'distributed' (cf. Bourdieu's theory) and applied according to institutional power. Therefore, insofar as the application of these forms coincides with the regular understanding of 'proper' role-relations, they can only denote the mutual will of the interactants to carry through the given business transactions. Thus controlling 'profit' (= 'capital') is distributed according to institutional roles. So the use of vocatives/their omission/substitution is not utilised for aims that differ from the acknowledgement of institutional roles.

It is necessary to note that evaluation does not take place in cases that explicitly differ from the above-introduced, institutionalised PCBD interactions, either. There are instances when the seller, for some reason, finds the ongoing business absolutely unprofitable and disturbing. In such a

[12] It is interesting to note that the speaker here is of higher-rank origin, but because he became poor, he must sell his sword. The above interaction shows that as soon as he starts to act as a merchant he applies a 'powerless' DA, i.e., he acts according to his institutional role.

[13] Note that I do not intend to distinguish between 'society' and 'institution' – as a matter of course, institutional roles are defined in a given social context. The above distinction between 'social' and 'institutional relations' refers to the previously discussed difference between constant social classes and role relations, which change by the nature of the given institutional talk.

case, he can refuse to speak in the non-reciprocal way appropriate to his position as a seller, and he can shift to a non-polite, reciprocal style; in this way it is denoted linguistically that he is sending a meta-message: he does not want to *manage* the interaction according to institutional roles – in other words, he does not want to negotiate. But such cases of 'refusal' are inappropriate for studying discourse interpretation because in these cases the seller explicitly offends institutional roles. Hence PPs, even though they become resources utilised to express resistance, inherently express impoliteness in such contexts. This is supported by the fact that such applications occur in conflictual interactions only, which regularly end up in physical violence. Consider the following interaction:

(2)
1. 牛二緊揪住楊志說道：「我偏要買你這口刀。」
2. 楊志道：「你要買，將錢來。」
3. 牛二道：「我沒錢。」
4. 楊志道：「你沒錢，揪住洒家怎地？」
5. 牛二道：「我要你這口刀。」
6. 楊志道：「我不與你。」

1. *Niu Er jin qiuzhu Yang Zhi shuodao: "Wo pian yao mai ni zhe kou dao."*
2. *Yang Zhi dao: "Ni yao mai, jiang qian lai."*
3. *Niu Er dao: "Wo mei qian."*
4. *Yang Zhi dao: "Ni mei qian, qiuzhu sajia zendi?"*
5. *Niu Er dao: "Wo yao ni zhe kou dao."*
6. *Yang Zhi dao: "Wo bu yu ni."*

1. Niu Er grasped Yang Zhi and said to him: "I (*wo*) want to buy your (*ni*) sword."
2. Yang Zhi said: "If you (*ni*) want to buy it, pay the money."
3. Niu Er said: "I (*wo*) don't have money."
4. Yang Zhi said: "If you (*ni*) don't have money, for what reason do you grasp me (*sajia*, dialectal first person PP)?"
5. Niu Er said: "I (*wo*) want your (*ni*) sword."
6. Yang Zhi said: "I (*wo*) won't give it to you (*ni*)."

(*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水浒全傳/Chapter 12)

To understand this situation, one must know that Niu Er is a bully of the marketplace where Yang Zhi tries to sell his sword. Previous to this dialogue, Niu Er goes aggressively to his place and, using expletives, inquires about the price of Yang Zhi's sword. Although at the beginning of their dialogue Yang Zhi tries to speak in a manner appropriate to his

seller's position, later he gauges that this man is not a potential buyer but just a trouble-maker, so he refuses to sell his sword to him in the discourse introduced above. He expresses this resistance by applying PPs, and in turn four he uses the dialectal PP *sajia*, which is probably even less acceptable than the standard PPs. In short, this interaction shows that in the case of explicit refusal, the seller regularly applies first and second person PPs.[14]

Considering the above discourse, cases of 'resistance', just like mere adherence to institutional roles, are inapplicable to studying evaluation, because role-relations are explicitly given up in these interactions. So sellers do not aim to gain profit at all – and so PPs and the omission of EA/DAs only serve the maintenance of resistance and refusal. This is why in the following section I will examine the instances of *negotiations*. In these interactions role relations are adhered to, yet there is an observable flux of power and profit. This provides more refined ways of applying/interpreting vocatives.

To conclude section 5.1: relying on historical background I have tried to reconstruct the peculiarities of institutional PCBD. As has been supported by the examination of euphemisms (rather than relying on Confucian social prescriptions only), the social position of merchants was in fact very low in traditional China. This is why the act of selling, which is stereotypically attributed to merchants, is a 'shameful' one. As a result of this, PCBD is fundamentally non-reciprocal, which is manifested in the application of vocatives. The selling party applies EA/DA towards the buyer, who responds with PPs, or other vocative forms. This obstructs the free application/evaluation of vocatives as long as institutional power-relations remain intact. The situation is similar for cases when the institutionally weaker party explicitly breaks the institutional order.

5.2 Fluctuating power and evaluation in PCBD

In this section, I will examine cases when the regular power distribution of PCBD is challenged without any kind of opposition to institutional order, and interactants strive for power and profit. As result of these

[14] Note that the above interaction is an example of the breach of EA/DA vs. PP use in refusals, but in a less conflictual interaction than this example, refusing can be practised by adhering to EA/DA application, as well.

strivings, changes occur in the institutionally ‘proper’ use of EA/DAs, and so personal evaluations emerge. I will study PCBD negotiations where the institutionally less powerful sellers become disinterested in the transaction or strategically pretend to be disinterested, while the buyers continue to be strongly concerned in the deal. Or, as in (4) below, the buyer is more interested in the business from the beginning. These discourses show that the flux of interest in business negotiation results in flux of power: the less interested a party is in business, the more powerful he becomes, by gaining control over the access to ‘profit’. This phenomenon also manifests itself in the institutionally ‘irregular’ application of vocatives, which denote strategic meta-messages, like the wish to negotiate, lack of interest, and so on. This is why the application of vocatives can be contextually interpreted.

Thus, while in discourses of social power difference the application/interpretation of formulaic vocatives is inherent insofar as one adhered to the polite (or ‘politic’) behaviour, in PCBD negotiations this is not the case. In the interactions I examine below, all interactants are ‘powerless’, so the breach of ‘regular’ application rules do not result in opposition to social hierarchy, or even to institutional order (cf. example 2 above). This results in two options for contextual interpretation:

(a) The omission of EA/DAs and their substitution with PPs or other forms of address is not inherently impolite. In speech where social rank plays a part such deviations are evaluated as impolite (cf. example 15 in Chapter Three). But, in PCBD negotiations, these actually denote that the institutionally powerless party is less interested in business than the buyer. Yet the sellers in the texts I examined do not give up their institutionally subordinated role, which is supported by the fact that they refer only to themselves with PPs, or omit using EA/DAs, and they never refer to the seller with second person PPs (which would be impolite, consider example 2). That is, EA/DAs are omitted and PPs are applied rather strategically, and the interlocutors in many cases do not evaluate such application as impoliteness, and they continue to negotiate.

(b) EA/DAs are applied by the institutionally more powerful interactants, i.e. such applications are open to interpretation beyond what would be institutionally expected. This is because, by losing discourse power (i.e. becoming more interested in the business) ‘profit’ overthrows institutional power and so buyers apply EA/DAs quite strategically, to manage successful negotiation. Thus, while EA/DAs are interpreted as politeness, due to the ‘societal meta-message’ they convey, their ir-

regular application can convey the contextual meta-message that the institutionally powerful speakers apply them beyond what would be expected in their position, because of personal considerations. Note that such applications cannot be interpreted as ironic, etc., as EA/DAs are inherently polite, see Chapter Four.

As these points indicate, one can find personal evaluations in the interactional application of vocatives, when studying institutional discourse where social power is not a determinant factor and interactants do not break, but do not simply adhere to institutional roles, either. In interactions between 'powerful' and 'powerless', the non-reciprocal EA/DA vs. PP application is determined by their property of conveying inherent beliefs in a hierarchical setting. But, in PCBD negotiations, institutional power can be challenged without opposing the social order, and vocatives are interpreted contextually, according to the fluctuating power.

In what follows, I will examine three (one longer and two shorter) PCBD negotiations as case studies for exemplifying the arguments above. In order to illustrate the dynamism of discourse politeness, in (3), which is my longest example, I will show the interaction from its beginning, instead of focusing on 'irregular' applications only. Although this is a less convenient way of highlighting my arguments, it helps to show that there are certain *points* in the ongoing discourse where 'irregular' applications occur, and contextual evaluation can be captured. This will show (im)politeness at work, rather than giving a 'static' image.

Negotiations in PCBD

If the regular process of PCBD is not disturbed (i.e. a simple selling process is going on), the interlocutors use EA/DAs vs. PPs in non-reciprocal ways: the sellers apply EA/DAs, while the buyers use PPs, or do not use any vocatives at all. This pattern can be resisted when the selling party refuses to negotiate with the buyer. On the other hand, the selling process can become more complex: disagreement and bargaining for a reasonable price can also occur in PCBD. In such situations, it can happen (but, of course, it is not always necessarily the case) that the seller-buyer power relation changes, and the seller becomes more powerful because he has seemingly less interest in the negotiation. Hence institutional power is challenged by the power that comes from the possibility of controlling the access to profit. In other words, it is the less interested seller who gets to control the course of interaction, so the buyer

starts to use EA/DA terms as resources for successful negotiation, while the seller omits EA/DAs. (As noted above, however, such change of power does not necessarily manifest itself as an absolute change in language use: the seller often continues to use EA/DA terms anyway, or mixes EA/DA terms with PPs.)

As an example, let us first consider interaction (3) where the seller – who gains the upper hand in the course of the interaction – starts to omit EA/DAs:

(3)
1. 只聽得叫聲：「貨賣過來！」
   冉貴聽得叫，回頭看時，卻是一個後生婦人。
2. 便道：「告小娘子，叫小人有甚事？」
3. 婦人道：「你是收買雜貨的，卻有一件東西在此，胡亂賣幾文與小厮買嘴喫，你用得也用不得？」
4. 冉貴道：「告小娘子，小人這個擔儿，有名的叫做百納倉，無有不收的，你且把出來看。」
5. 婦人便叫：「小厮拖出來與公公看。」
   […]
   當下拖出來的，却正是一只四縫皮靴，與那前日潘道士打下來的一般無二。
6. 冉貴暗暗喜不自勝，便告小娘子：「此是不成對的東西，不值甚錢。小娘子實要許多，只是不要把話來說遠了。」
7. 婦人道：「胡亂賣幾文，與小厮們買嘴喫，只憑你說罷了。 只是要公道些。」
8. 冉貴便去便袋裹摸一貫半錢來，便交與婦人道：「只恁地肯賣便收去了，不肯時，勉強不得。正是一物不成，兩物見在。」
9. 婦人說：「甚么大事，再添些罷。」
10. 冉貴道：「添不得。」
    挑了擔儿就走，小厮就哭起來。
11. 婦人只得又叫轉冉貴來，便道：「多少添些，不打甚緊。」
12. 冉貴又去摸出二十文錢來，道：「罷，罷！貴了，貴了！」
    取了靴儿，往擔內一丟，挑了便走。

1. *Zhi ting de jiaosheng: "Huomai guolai!"*
   Ran Gui ting de jiao, huitou kan shi, que shi yi ge housheng furen.
2. *Bian dao: "Gao xiaoniangzi, jiao xiaoren you shen shi?"*

3. *Furen dao: "Ni shi shoumai zahuo de, que you yi jian dongxi zai ci, huluan mai ji wen yu xiaosi mai zuichi, ni yong de ye bu yong de?"*
4. *Ran Gui dao: "Gao xiaoniangzi, xiaoren zhe ge daner, youming de jiaozuo bainacang, wu you bu shou de, ni qie bachulai kan."*
5. *Furen bian dao: "Xiaosi tuochulai yu gonggong kan."*
   [...]
   Dangxia tuochulai de, que zheng shi yi zhi sifeng pixue, yu na qianri Fan daoshi daxialai de yiban wuer.
6. *Ran Gui an'an xide bu zisheng, bian gao xiaoniangzi: "Ci shi bu chengdui de dongxi, bu zhi shen qian. Xiaoniangzi shi yao xuduo, zhi shi bu yao ba hua lai shuo yuan le."*
7. *Furen dao: "Huluan mai ji wen, yu xiaosimen mai zuichi, zhi ping ni shuo ba le. Zhi shi yao gongdao xie."*
8. *Ran Gui bian qu bian dai li mo yi guan ban qian lai, bian jiao yu furen dao:*
   "Zhi ping de ken mai bian shouqu le, bu ken shi, mianqiang bu de. Zheng shi yiwu bu cheng, liangwu xian zai."
9. *Furen shuo: "Shenme da shi, zai tian xie ba."*
10. *Ran Gui dao: "Tian bu de."*
    Tiao le dan'er jiu zou, xiaosi kuqilai.
11. *Furen zhi de you jiao zhuan Ran Gui lai, bian dao: "Duoshao tian xie, bu da shen jin."*
12. *Ran Gui you qu mochu ershi wen qian lai, dao: "Ba, ba! Gui le, gui le!"*
    Qu le xueer, wang dan nei yi diu, tiao le bian zou.

1. Suddenly, he heard a voice calling him: "Vendor ('huomai', a neutral vocative), come over here!"
   Ran Gui turned his head and looked at her: she was a young woman.
2. Ran said at once: "Greetings, my young lady (*xiaoniangzi*, an EA used towards 'powerless' women), why do you call me, this worthless person (*xiaoren*, a 'powerless' DA)?"
3. The woman said: "You (*ni*) are a street-vendor; I have something to sell urgently for some money to be able to buy food for my son. Can you (*ni*) buy it, or not?"
4. Ran Gui said: "I tell you, my young lady (*xiaoniangzi*), this worthless person's (*xiaoren*) bag is called 'you-can-carry-

away-everything-in-it', there is nothing which I am not interested in, you (*ni*) just bring it out for me to have a look at."

5. The woman shouted at once: "Son, bring it out to show it to this uncle."
   […]
   [The child] brought out then a well-garmented leather boot; it was exactly the same as that magic boot which had been left behind by the Taoist Master Fan.
6. Ran Gui could hardly suppress his pleasure, but said at once to the young woman: "It is not a valuable thing, it isn't worth anything. Tell me, my young lady (*xiaoniangzi*), how much do you want for it, but don't say too much."
7. The woman said: "I want to sell it urgently, just to have some money to buy some food for my son, so tell me how much you (*ni*) want to give for it. I'm just asking you, to give me a tolerable price."
8. Ran Gui took out then one and a half strings of coppers, and offered it to that woman saying: "I will buy it only if you are willing to sell it for this amount, if it is not enough for you, I will not force the business. As the saying goes: 'If one business fails, another will come along.'"
9. The woman said: "How [can you make] such a big problem [from it], just add some more!"
10. Ran Gui said: "I cannot."
    He picked up his sack and [acted as if] he was ready to go away, but that child cried out then.
11. She had nothing to do but to call back Ran Gui and say to him: "Just add a few more, don't be so stubborn."
12. Ran Gui took out twenty more pieces of copper and said complaining: "Done, done! So expensive, so expensive!"
    He grasped the boot, put it into his bag and went away.

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言/Chapter 13)

Ran Gui was looking for a magic boot. When he came across the low-ranked girl who possessed it, the above interaction occurred.

This exchange is a negotiation in which a major deviation from the regular course of PCBD occurs: it is the seller who receives an offer, so role relations already become confused at the beginning. Even so, the discourse goes on in a regular way in the first four turns, until the request to show the goods is made. The vendor, who agrees to see the goods, still

continues to use EA/DA terms in a way proper to the seller, while the girl making the offer uses PPs and other forms of address (cf. the 'neutral' vocative *huomai*). Therefore institutional power remains intact, though the verbal basis of the bargain has already been laid in the second and third turns, where the girl presents her troubled situation, thus sending a message of her willingness to reach an agreement in the business negotiation, while the vendor states that he is interested in any offer. Note that in turn three the girl makes a complaint, which is a typical 'negative politeness strategy' often employed to soften requests (Brown and Levinson 1987: 57), so she puts herself into the position of a requester (i.e. she loses the 'capital' of controlling access to 'profit').

The situation changes radically in turn six. Here Ran Gui already knows that the object on offer is the one he is looking for, so he wants to obtain it, and the wily man cheats the woman by saying that the boot is not valuable. From here on, he starts to control the interaction: by putting the girl into the position of the more interested party, he becomes the more powerful one, i.e. profit relations overthrow institutional relations. While he continues to use the EA term *xiaoniangzi* ('my young lady'), an EA term used towards young commoner women (see Ji 2001: 1055), he does not use DAs any more, which he had applied in every turn at the beginning of the interaction. That is, the omission of DAs is a resource, applied rather strategically (consider point *a.* in the introductory section of this sub-chapter). However, there is no sign in the discourse that the girl would evaluate this change in register as impoliteness. On the contrary, the negotiation goes on without disruption, and it seems that the woman does not interpret Ran's institutionally 'improper' PP as impoliteness. Note that in the following turns EA/DA use completely disappears from Ran's speech, yet the negotiation succeeds, as both parties are strongly interested in it.

In brief, example (3) shows that in the arena of business negotiations, the strategic omission of EA/DA terms can become a discourse tool. As can be seen from the above interaction, there are points in discourse when the lack of EA/DAs can be evaluated – these coincide with the cases when vocatives are applied 'irregularly' as resources for successfully managing the business interaction.

The above example illustrated that the buyers do not necessarily interpret sellers' 'deviances' as impoliteness. Furthermore, there are many PCBD interactions where the buyers themselves make use of the 'irregular' ('overemphasised') application of EA/DA terms, at those turning points of PCBD interactions where they, despite that they are the institutionally more powerful party, make profit-oriented utterances (i.e. they

acknowledge that the interlocutor has the power to control access to profit). In order to show this co-occurrence of 'irregular' EA/DA use and profit-orientation, let us now consider the following example:

(4) 劉四媽道：「此言甚妙！賣了他一個，就討得五六個。[…]
如何不做？」
王九媽道：「老身也曾算計過來。[…]
這丫頭做娘的話也不聽，只你說得他信，話得他轉。」

Liu Sima dao: "Ci yan shen miao! Mai le ta yi ge, jiu tao de wu-liu ge. [...] ruhe bu zuo?"
Wang Jiuma dao: "Laoshen ye zeng suanji guo lai. [...] Zhe yatou zuoniang de hua ye bu ting, zhi ni shuo de ta xin, hua de ta zhuan."

The Fourth Liu mother said: "What strange talk! If you only sold her, you could get five or six [other girls]. […] why don't you do so?"
2. The Ninth Wang mother replied: "I, this elderly person (*lao-shen*, a 'female' DA used by older women) also considered this. […] This maidservant doesn't want to obey me in the case of marriage, it is only you (*ni*) who she believes, it is only you who can convince her."

(*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言/Chapter 3)

The Ninth Wang mother wants to give a profitable dowry to the girl, and the Fourth Liu mother, who is a matchmaker, urges her to do this as soon as possible. 'Normal', non-reciprocal polite language use is appropriate between the consigner and the matchmaker.

In the second turn in the above cited passage, however, the Ninth Wang mother asks the matchmaker to convince the stubborn girl to marry the rich man who has been chosen to be her groom. Although institutionally the matchmaker is the weaker party, she obtains the more powerful position here because she is the one who can successfully bring about the marriage, so the success of the business depends on her. Therefore the Ninth Wang mother applies the DA term *laoshen* (lit. 'this elderly person') – which is a DA term used by elderly women in vernacular Chinese – to form her request appropriately. And she combines her request with the 'positive politeness strategy' of praising ("it is only you" – see Brown and Levinson 1987: 66). On the other hand, she simultaneously uses the second person PP *ni* in most of her turn in the interaction from which (4) is quoted, so such a turn of power relations does not involve an absolute

change in language use, i.e. DA seems to be a rather well-applied tool. Again, in this discourse evaluation can emerge, due to this strategic application: the use of DA by the institutionally powerful participant probably overpolitely (beyond what would be expected) denotes the wish that she intends to go on in the negotiation, as also supported by the praising strategy applied by the Ninth Wang mother.

Example (4) also shows that in PCBD negotiations

(a) EA/DA terms by the institutionally powerful party and
(b) the omission of EA/DAs/their substitution with other forms/the application of self-referring PPs by the institutionally powerless party

become discourse resources when they are used non-institutionally at those turning points where the less powerful party gains the possibility of controlling access to profit. In these cases, vocatives (or their omission) can be interpreted individually, as a result of their specific contextual opposition to institutional rank. Note that such a turning point in power relations can even occur at the beginning of the negotiation, as in the following example:

(5)
1. 胡人看了，嘖嘖道：「有緣得遇此寶，況是一雙，猶為難得。不知可肯賣否？」
2. 王甲道：「我要他無用，得價也就賣了。」
3. 胡人見說肯賣，不勝之喜道：「此寶本沒有定價，今我行囊止有三万緡，盡數與君買了去罷。」

1. *Huren kan le, zeze dao: "You yuan de yu ci bao, kuang shi yi shuang, you wei nande. Bu zhi ke ken mai fou?"*
2. *Wang Jia dao: "Wo yao ta wu yong, de jia ye jiu mai le."*
3. *Huren jian shuo ken mai, bu sheng zhi xi dao: "Ci bao ben mei you dingjia, jin wo xingnang zhiyou sanwan min, jinshu yu jun mai le qu ba."*

1. When the barbarian saw it, he cried out and said: "It was your destiny to find this treasure, and you have a pair [of these pearls], which is even more difficult to obtain. I don't know whether you are willing to sell these or not?"
2. Wang Jia said: "I (*wo*, first person PP) cannot use this [treasure], if I receive a proper price, I will sell it."
3. Seeing that he was ready to sell it, the barbarian could not suppress his pleasure and said: "Originally this treasure had

> no fixed price, now I (*wo*) just have thirty thousand strings of coin in my travelling bag, I can give you, my lord (*jun*, an EA term) the whole worth for it."
>
> (*Erke pai'an jingqi* 二刻拍案惊奇/Chapter 36)

Wang Jia, in his sea journey, found some treasure, and a foreign (that is 'barbarian' in traditional China) trader wants to buy it.

Here, as in (3), institutional power relations are complex because the barbarian – a merchant – is in the buyer's position, while Wang Jia, who is not a merchant, is in the seller's position. Although in turn one the barbarian speaks as a buyer, and avoids using EA/DA terms, he already 'frames' himself into the weaker position by stating that the treasure Wang Jia has is very valuable. It turns out, furthermore, that it is Wang Jia's decision whether the negotiation can go on, thus the 'barbarian' loses from his 'capital'. Again, there is a turning point, right at the beginning of the exchange, when the ability to control the access to profit overthrows institutional power. And Wang's PP application is not interpreted as impoliteness: on the contrary, in turn three, the power change becomes obvious. The buyer – as in previous examples – loses control of the course of negotiation, and applies the EA *jun* (lit. 'my lord', an EA) towards the seller. Again, EA/DA terminology is embedded into a turn where the institutionally more powerful participant, who has become less powerful because of losing control of the interaction, requests for negotiation. So both the EA/DA and the PP application can be contextually evaluated.

To sum up 5.2: I have examined PCBD interactions as case studies, where the regular application of vocatives changes at certain points of the discourse. These changes are in accordance with the fluctuation of power: whenever the institutionally less powerful party acquires control of the discourse, thus gaining 'capital', regular applications change if the institutionally more powerful speaker is ready to continue the negotiation (i.e. (s)he strives to gain capital). This is accompanied by the emergence of the possibility of contextual evaluation. I have tried to collect evidence to show that the application of PPs by the institutionally less powerful party is not evaluated as impoliteness, which should certainly be the case if a 'powerless' speaker used these towards a 'powerful' one. Also the application of EA/DAs are open to being evaluated as overemphasised, as by using them the institutionally more powerful speaker signals the metamessage of losing power ('capital') in the discourse. Even though these interactions show only a specific type of institutional communication, they prove that discourse evaluation exists in Chinese, where interactants can interpret forms according to their personal 'habitus', their and their in-

terlocutors' power ('capital'), and other contextual factors. Also, studying these discourses help to apply many of Bourdieu's notions to the Chinese corpus.

5.3 Summary

In the present chapter I have proposed an analytic method to capture the contextual evaluation of Chinese honorific vocatives. I have argued that although EA/DAs cannot be freely interpreted, their application in institutional discourse can become subject to interpretation. While in contexts where the social hierarchy is strictly adhered to power cannot explicitly fluctuate without opposing the social order, in an institutional setting such as PCBD (where the power stored in social position can be challenged by institutional power) it can be redistributed. In order to prove this point, I have studied institutional PCBD, and examined PCBD negotiations where the interactants fight for profit, and discourse power is stored in the ability to control access to it. In these cases, the flux of power can manifest itself in the application of vocatives. The institutionally less powerful seller can omit EA/DAs and use PPs, while the more powerful buyer utilises EA/DAs as well as PPs to gain profit. These applications are provably strategic (hence this study became a critique of the discernment concept, too), and they occur at points when the seller controls the discourse. Hence evaluation enters the scene: PPs used by the seller towards the buyer are open to being evaluated as 'non-polite', instead of 'impolite'; and EA/DAs used by the buyer are beyond what is expected, in order to promote business negotiation from a losing position. So, in short, the present chapter has proved that as in other languages evaluation also exists in the discourse application of Chinese formulaic vocatives. But its scope is restricted: as EA/DAs used by the institutionally powerful 'buyer' cannot be interpreted as ironic in any context. This leads to the final conclusions drawn in the last chapter, i.e. based on the Chinese evidence evaluation is a universal phenomenon, but its nature differs from language to language.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

This work has studied the interpretational aspects of (im)polite Chinese formulae, with special focus on (im)polite vocatives. Forms of address are neglected in contemporary politeness research because they are regarded as a somewhat 'determined' aspect of (im)politeness, the study of which cannot contribute much to the understanding of discourse evaluation, one of the key topics in politeness research. Theorists regularly try to capture evaluation in the non-formulaic domain of communication, rather than focusing on the relationships between linguistic forms and discourse context. Yet, I have tried to show that the study of (im)polite formulae can reveal several aspects of the addressee's interpretational process in communication; i.e. how utterances are evaluated in discourse as (im)polite. As has been shown, the application of traditional Chinese (im)polite formulae is, on the one hand, strongly governed by (socio)linguistic rules. Although the use of polite vocative formulae is sociolinguistically determined in most cultures, in Chinese, this 'overregulated' character is valid both for the polite and the impolite use of forms. This is a result of (im)polite formulae expressing an elevating/denigrating metamessage, which pre-determines their application and so their interpretation in hierarchical power relations (Ebrey 1981) of old Chinese society. Contextual evaluation of vocatives, on the other hand, can be found in certain types of interaction.

These inquiries have helped to attain the two main objectives mentioned in Chapter One[1]:

[1] Besides these major objectives, there have been other, minor issues studied in each chapter, like the sociolinguistic categorisation of polite forms of address in Chapter Three, or the critique of discernment in Chapter Five, which are not directly related to the main argumentation. These latter issues are not treated separately in the Conclusions because they have been summarised at the end of the relevant chapters.

(a) Chinese vocative formulae, which constitute the most fundamental part of traditional (im)politeness, have been re-examined from a politeness research perspective. As their sociolinguistic/sociopragmatic study shows, in contrast to general stereotypes, Chinese has an elaborate impoliteness system that reflects the same social reality as its polite counterpart, and works in close accordance with it. The inhabitants of old China, furthermore, did not unconditionally adhere to their 'unconditional, absolute and fatal politeness' behaviour (see the quotation of Márai's essay at the beginning of Chapter One) – instead, struggles in order to gain power and/or capital resulted in deviances from the regular applications of politeness formulae.
(b) Evaluation has been re-examined in the traditional Chinese (socio)linguistic context. These studies have helped to widen the scope of understanding as regards how the evaluative process works in languages and societies that diachronically and spatially differ from modern Western ones. As it has been shown, in old Chinese (im)polite formulaic communication evaluation occurs when individuals deviate from the 'standard' (i.e. what is perceived as regular) application of honorifics. This is, however, different from many other historical and modern languages where (im)polite vocatives are freely interpretable according to a given context.

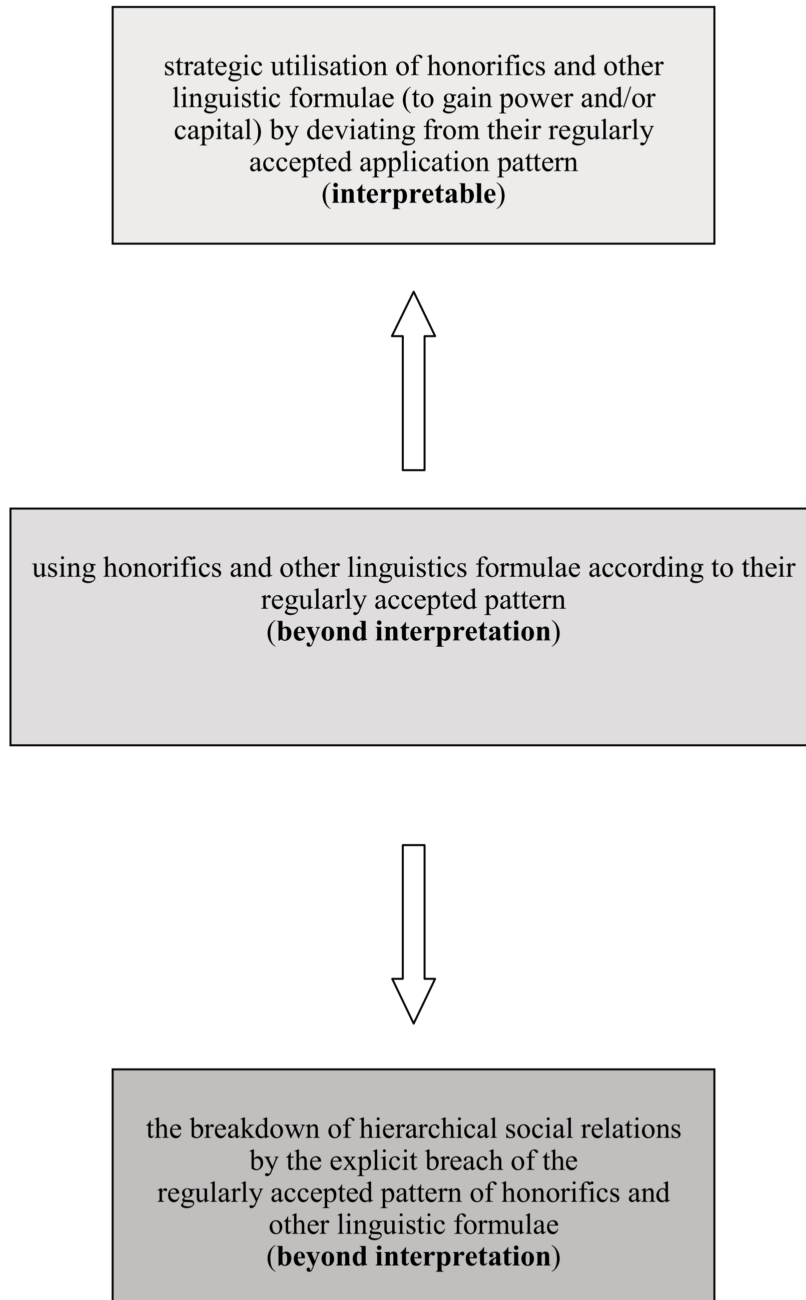
The study has followed a twofold path. Relying on the investigations in Chapter Two, where the elevation/denigration and the addressing phenomena have been united for traditional Chinese (im)politeness, in the first part of the main body of the work (Chapters Three and Four) I have built up a relatively 'rigid' image of the application and interpretation of Chinese honorific vocatives. I have argued that every vocative expresses some elevating/denigrating meaning, which predetermines its interpretation in traditional Chinese hierarchical interpersonal relations. Or, vice versa, traditional Chinese hierarchical social relations require the elevating/denigrating register, which manifests itself in the formation, use, and interpretation of forms of address. Whatever the most appropriate wording of the phenomenon that I have termed as 'societal meta-message', seemingly there is no possibility for free, contextual evaluation in Chinese formulaic language. It has been shown that the 'societal meta-message' not only controls the sociolinguistic application of (im)polite address terms (Chapter Three), but also their interpretation (Chapter Four). This narrows down the possibility of discourse-contextual evaluation in Chinese, compared with other languages where vocative formulae are interpreted as '(im)polite', 'humorous', 'ironic', 'bantering', 'overtly polite', etc., according to the context.

In the second part of the work (Chapter Five), I have challenged this 'rigid' image. Here I have argued that although the interpretations of EA/DA forms are inherent, their 'irregular' application, omission, or substitution with other formulae can be individually evaluated in interactions. These 'irregular' uses have been termed as 'discourse resources', which refers to the fact that, in certain contexts, honorific vocatives (or their absence) are utilised to attain personal communicational goals and the redistribution of power in discourse. Because (im)polite vocatives are indicators of social power, they are applied 'irregularly' in traditional Chinese contexts whenever power relations are 'unstable'. In order to find examples for such flux of power, I have studied polite EA/DA formulae in PCBD negotiations. I have chosen institutional discourse because in certain institutional settings, like PCBD, interactants can deviate from 'proper' language use, without opposing the social order. By examining *Chinese* (im)polite discourse as a field for personal struggles for gaining power, it has also become possible to apply Bourdieu's social concepts to the traditional Chinese corpus. Although in the present work I have examined only one type of institutional interaction, further inquiries into traditional Chinese (cross-)institutional discourse can presumably reveal more peculiarities of the controversy between hierarchical institutional relations and individual acts.

This view of polite interpretation possibilities of historical Chinese polite vocatives can be modelled as shown in Table Four on p. 148. Note that on the graph the middle square is larger, which expresses that, insofar as power relations are constant, honorific vocatives and other linguistic formulae have to be used and interpreted in a sociolinguistically accepted way. The other two squares, i.e., the 'explicit breach of application pattern of honorifics and other formulae' and 'the strategic deviation from their application pattern' are smaller, in order to emphasise that these are more specific cases. The arrows show that in both these latter cases the interactants deviate from what is perceived as 'regular application pattern'. As the graph also indicates, individual interpretations are possible if speakers manage to deviate from the regularly accepted pattern of the use of honorifics and/or other linguistic formulae in the power flux of discourse, in order to gain power and/or capital.

Considering the above description of the ways in which evaluation can enter the stage in historical Chinese contexts, it is possible to conclude this evaluation-focused study of traditional Chinese (im)politeness with the statement that evaluation is a universal phenomenon, at least according to the Chinese evidence: hearers can in every culture, language, or society individually evaluate certain utterances as (im)polite in communica-

TABLE FOUR: THE INTERPRETABILITY OF CHINESE HONORIFICS IN INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE



tion. But the scope and characteristics of this evaluative process differ across languages and societies, and it is also a subject of change in the diachronic development of a certain language. This contributes to an ongoing debate in politeness research, which has been referred to in Chapter One. That is, some researchers like Eelen (2001) hold that culture, language, and society-specific norms have to be omitted in a second-order, scientific theory of politeness, by noting that

> second-order politeness, and therefore the concepts in its toolbox, should be non-normative in nature. (2001: 46)

This is claimed to be the only way for researchers to elaborate a politeness theory that

> […] should be able to show the functionality and inner workings of first-order politeness as an evaluative activity. (2001: 44)

The lack of norms in a politeness theory implicitly suggests that evaluation is a universal and homogeneous phenomenon that can be captured with the aid of an abstract politeness theory. But relying on the evidence that has been proposed in this work, I would rather agree with Watts (2003), who says that:

> […] there can be no idealised, universal scientific concept of (im)-politeness which can be applied to instances of social interactions across cultures, subcultures and languages. (2003: 23)

That is, normative-like factors such as 'politic behaviour' or group membership have to be incorporated into scholarly theories of (im)politeness. Similarly to Watts (2003) and Mills (2003), this work suggests that it is a universal phenomenon that (im)politeness is realised in real language through discourse evaluation (although, as a matter of course, it is impossible to draw universal conclusions relying on a single language), but its nature and scope differ from language to language on a macro level, and communities and persons on a micro level. Specific normative (socio)linguistic factors, like the societal meta-message in the case of traditional Chinese (im)politeness, cannot be omitted from theoretical accounts on linguistic (im)politeness. As the modelling of Chinese formulaic (im)politeness, and its repeated comparison with other historical and modern languages (see Chapters Three and Four) have shown, personal decisions and communicational aims can play relatively little part in the application and the contextual evaluation of vocative formulae, because the hierarchical social reality in old China strongly influenced language use. Nonetheless, instances of personal evaluation can be traced in the

discourse application of vocatives, where certain individuals in certain communities can successfully implement changes in the highly rigid use of historical Chinese formulaic (im)politeness.

This study, as it was mentioned earlier in this work, is not an independent framework, even though a model of the interpretability of Chinese (non-)honorific formulae has been developed in the second part. In fact, it has only tested the applicability of the existing theories to the traditional Chinese corpus. I have hoped to show, on the one hand, the complexity in which even the seemingly 'simple' language formulae are evaluated in human communication, and on the other the problems because of which the theory of evaluation cannot be unconditionally applied to languages that diachronically and spatially differ from modern 'Western' ones. This is what makes discourse evaluation a complex issue and traditional Chinese (im)politeness a challenging corpus.

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[1] In the case of generally applied Chinese dictionaries and encyclopaedias, like the *Cihai*, I do not give the names of the editors, simply other referential data.

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APPENDIX I

LIST OF THE TEXTS THAT COMPRISE THE CORPORA

The following list briefly introduces the literary pieces that I utilised to reconstruct the characteristics of traditional Chinese (im)polite vocatives. It is necessary to note that it is restricted to the vernacular works that were used as sources to study the discourse application and interpretation of linguistic formulae, while the philological works referred to can be found in "Bibliography". Also note that the titles of the works are translated as they are regularly referred to in sinological studies, that is, a literal translation is avoided as much as possible.

No.	Chinese title (in alphabetical order)	Translated title	Time of writing (dynasty)	Genre
1.	*Chuke pai'an jingqi* 初刻拍案警奇	*[Stories at Which] to Pound the Table in Amazement, Volume One*	Ming	novella collection
2.	*Di gong an* 狄公案	*The Cases of Judge Di*	Qing	legal cases (*gong'an* 公案)
3.	*Dong Zhou lieguo zhi* 東周列國志	*Histories of the Various States Under the Eastern Zhou Dynasty*	Qing	historical novel
4.	*Dou E yuan* 竇娥冤	*The Innocent Death of Dou E*	Yuan	drama (*xiju* 戲劇)

5.	*Doupeng xianhua* 豆棚閒話	*Gossip Under the Bean Trellis*	Qing	novella collection
6.	*Er'ke pai'an jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇	*[Stories at Which] to Pound the Table in Amazement, Volume Two*	Ming	novella (*huaben* 話本) collection
7.	*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢	*The Red Chamber Dream*	Qing	novel (*xiaoshuo* 小說)
8.	*Jigong quanzhuan* 濟公全傳	*The Complete Story of Master Ji*	Qing	knight-errant novel (*wuxia xiashuo* 武俠小說)
9.	*Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅	*Plum Blossom in the Golden Vase*	Ming	novel
10.	*Jinghua yuan* 鏡花緣	*Flowers in the Mirror*	Qing	novel
11.	*Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言	*Universal Words to Alarm the World*	Ming	novella collection
12.	*Lao Can youji* 老殘遊記	*The Travels of Old Can*	Qing	novel
13.	*Lianggong jiujian* 梁公九諫	*The Nine Admonishments of Duke Liang*	Song (?)	historical novella (*pinghua* 平話)

14.	*Longtu gong an* 龍圖公案	*Cases of Judge Bao*	Ming	legal cases (*gong'an* 公案)
15.	*Niehai hua* 孽海花	*Flower in the Ocean of Sin*	Qing	novel
16.	*Nüxian waishi* 女仙外史	*Unofficial History of the Female Immortal*	Qing	novel
17.	*Peng gong'an* 彭公案	*The Cases of Judge Peng*	Qing	knight-errant novel
18.	*Pingyao zhuan* 三遂平妖傳	*The Subduing of the Monsters*	Ming	novel
19.	*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史	*Unofficial History of the Literati*	Qing	novel
20.	*Sanguo(zhi) yanyi* 三國[志]演義	*The Novel of the History of the Three Kingdoms*	Ming	novel
21.	*Sanxia wuyi* 三俠五義	*The Three Valiant and Five Righteous Men*	Qing	knight-errant novel
22.	*Shi dian tou* 石點頭	*The Rock Nods*	Ming	novella collection

23.	*Shi'er lou* 十二樓	*The Twelve Towers*	Ming	novella collection
24.	*Shi gong an* 施公案	*The Cases of Judge Shi*	Qing	knight-errant novel
25.	*Shuihu quanzhuan* 水滸全傳	*Water Margin Story*	Ming	novel
26.	*Sui Tang yanyi* 隋唐演藝	*The Romance of The Sui and the Tang*	Qing	historical novel
27.	*Wusheng xi* 無聲戲	*Silent Plays*	Qing	novella collection
28.	*Xihu erji* 西湖二集	*On West Lake, Second Collection*	Ming	novella collection
29.	*Xihu jiahua* 西湖佳話	*Beautiful Stories of West Lake*	Qing (?)	novella collection
30.	*Xixiang ji* 西廂記	*The Story of the Western Chamber*	Yuan	drama
31.	*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言	*Lasting Words to Awaken the World*	Ming	novella collection

32.	*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳	*A Marriage to Shock the World Awake*	Ming	novel
33.	*Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言	*Enlightened Words to Instruct the World*	Ming	novella collection
34.	*Zui xing shi* 醉醒石	*A Rock on Which a Drunkard Sobers Up*	Qing	novella collection

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX II

LIST OF EXPRESSIONS AND TECHNICAL TERMS STUDIED IN THE BOOK

(Restricted to Expressions and Terms that Occur in the Main Body of the Work)

B

baidu 拜讀 ('read the interlocutor's writing with kowtow') – a polite DV expression, referring to the speaker's action 39

baiye 拜謁 ('visiting the superior with kowtow') – a polite DV expression, referring to one's own visiting action 32

bixia 陛下 ('your highness') – a polite EA expression, used towards members of the imperial family in the narrow sense 87

C

cao-ma-pi 肏媽屄 ('fuck your mother') – a modern Chinese four-letter expression 18

chen 臣 ('servant') – a polite DA expression, used by officials towards the ruler 60

chou-pijiang 臭皮匠 (lit. 'bad smelling shoemaker') – an impolite DA expression, used towards shoemakers 101

chuncai 蠢材 ('stupid-minded') – a polite DA expression 97

chunzi 蠢子 (lit. 'stupid child') – an impolite DA expression 97

cundiao 村鸟 ('peasant dick') – an impolite DA expression 97

cun'er 村兒 ('peasant child') – an indirect polite DA expression, referring to one's own son 97

cunru 村儒 (lit. 'rural scholar') – an impolite DA expression, used towards Confucian scholars who could not obtain important posts 101

D

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daling 大令 ('great magistrate') – a polite EA expression, used towards officials 59

daren 大人 ('sir') – a polite EA expression 41, 53, 86

daidiao 呆鸟 ('damn fool prick') – an impolite DA expression 101

di 弟 ('younger-brother') – a noun which regularly occurs in quasi familiar DA expressions 3, 26, 63, 75, 85, 100, 110, 112, 115, 116

diaodiao 吊屌 ('a prick fit to be hanged') – an impolite DA expression 97

diaogua 吊瓜 (‘a melon [that is head] fit to be hanged’) – a polite DA expression 97
diaohan(zi) 鸟漢(子) (‘prick’) – an impolite DA expression 101
diaoren 鸟人 (‘prick’) – an impolite DA expression 102
diao-toutuo 鸟頭陀 (‘prick monk’) – an impolite DA expression, used towards Buddhist monks 102

E

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F

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fu 府 (‘court’) – a polite EA expression, referring to the house of the interlocutor 39, 40, 41, 45, 49
furen 夫人 (‘lady’) – a polite EA expression, referring to the interlocutor’s wife 31, 32, 82, 107, 137, 138
fuzheng 斧正 (‘correcting [i.e. reading] with axe strikes [the speaker’s writing]’) – a polite EV expression, referring to the action of the interlocutor 39, 40, 45

G

gaodao 高道 (‘outstanding Taoist’) – a polite EA expression used towards Taoists 60
gaoguan 高官 (‘outstanding official’) – a polite EA expression, used towards officials 66
gaojun 高君 (‘my high lord’) – a polite EA expression 39
gaoxian 高賢 (‘a person of outstanding wisdom’) – an EA expression, used towards officials 114
ge 哥 (‘elder brother’) – a noun which regularly occurs in quasi familiar EA expressions 63
gong 公 (‘my lord’) – an EA expression, used towards officials 53, 65, 85, 116, 117, 129
gu 賈 (lit. ‘resident-trader’) – a euphemism, used to refer to merchants 115, 129
guanren 官人 (lit. ‘official’) – an expression which expresses elevating connotations if being used towards interlocutors of lower social position 39, 59, 83, 84
guifu 貴府 (‘your valuable court’) – an indirect polite EA expression, referring to the interlocutor’s house 39
guizhuang 貴庄 (‘the majestic head of the house’) – a polite EA expression, a ‘temporary’ expression used towards the gentry 79

H

hanshe 寒舍 (lit. 'cold lodge') – an indirect polite DA expression, referring to one's own house 39, 41

heshang 和尙 (lit. 'monk') – a neutral vocative, used towards Buddhist monks 58, 106, 107

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J

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jiancheng 賤稱 ('impoverishing addressing') – a Chinese technical term for the impolite DA phenomenon 40, 100

jianhuo 賤貨 (lit. 'cheap/poor slut') – an impolite DA expression 96, 97

jianqie 賤妾 ('poor concubine') – a polite DA expression, used by females 39, 96

jiaoyuan 教員 ('the teacher') – a non-honorific indirect address formula, denoting members of academic staff in 'neutral way' 45

jingci 敬詞 (lit. 'respect word') – a Chinese technical term for elevating formulae 38, 40

jingli 經理 ('boss') – a modern Chinese vocative 55

jingyu 敬語 (lit. 'respect language') – the Chinese translation of the Japanese word *keigo* 38

jun 君 ('my lord') – a polite EA expression 39, 81, 142, 143

K

ke 客 ('guest') – a euphemism, used to refer to merchants; it can be connected with nouns that refer to any trading profession 41, 61, 65, 115, 116, 129, 142

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keren 客人 ('guest') – a euphemism, used to refer to merchants; it can be connected with nouns that refer to any trading profession 129

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laoshen 老身 ('I, this elderly person') – a polite DA expression, used by female speakers 141

laoshi 老師 (‘teacher’) – a modern Chinese polite vocative 48
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