

CHANGING ADDRESS FORMS IN CHINESE

by
Qing Zhang

The present study examines recent change in the use of address forms in Chinese. Criticizing a tendency of previous research to treat change in usage as merely reflective of social change, this study views change in address forms as participating in the socioeconomic transformation of China. Based on data collected from anonymous and participant observations of service encounters in socioeconomically stratified consumption sites in the city of Tianjin, the study examines use of address forms as one of the linguistic activities that constitutes these sites as socioeconomically differentiated spaces. The use of address forms in these sites is shown to perform creative functions, such as reshaping interpersonal relations and evoking different kinds of 'positive emotions' associated with service encounter talk in the different consumption spaces.

1. Introduction

Research on the use of address forms has focused primarily on the social dimensions of address forms, such as issues of solidarity, power, and formality. The practice of addressing offers a unique lens to investigate how social and interactional relationships are invoked and indexed. As demonstrated in the seminal work of Brown and Gilman (1960), addressing practice also offers a perspective on the relation between language change and socio-political change. The drastic socioeconomic transition occurring in China over the past three decades has left its impact on language use, and the Chinese address system is one area in particular where the impact of social change on linguistic practice has drawn attention from language scholars. Among previous studies of address forms in Chinese, some have focused on semantic shifts: examining changes in the pragmatic meaning of certain address forms and their distribution patterns, for instance, tongzhi 'comrade' and shifu 'master craftsman'¹, these studies tend to center on

those changes that have happened since the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Lee-Wong 1994; Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1983; Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1984). Others mainly describe changes in the distribution patterns of use, some surveying a range of address forms (Fang and Heng 1983; Ju 1991), while others focus on specific forms (Fan et al. 2004; Pan and Zhang 2001; Wu 1990). Except for a few cases, such as Myers-Scotton and Zhu (1983, 1984), most studies view changes in address forms as reflecting, or caused by, societal changes (Fang and Heng 1983; Ju 1991; Wu 1990).

Another shared focus of many earlier studies is the correlation between distribution patterns of address forms and situational factors, including the social attributes of interlocutors, their relationship and the 'setting' (e.g. restaurants, the post office, department stores). The settings in these studies are typically treated as given and external to the use of address forms. However, according to Goodwin and Duranti, who draw on Ochs' (1979) discussion of the parameters of context, setting is 'the social and spatial framework within which encounters are situated' (1992:6). They point out that (1992:7)

neither the physical nor the social setting for talk is something that is fixed, immutable and simply 'out there'. Instead, these phenomena, and the very real constraints they provide, are dynamically and socially constituted by activities (talk included) of the participants which stand in a reflexive relationship thus constituted.

Drawing on the above conceptualization of setting, the present study examines the use of address forms as part of the constitution of sites of consumption that cater to socioeconomically differentiated consumers and lifestyles. Rather than examining the correlation between choice of address forms and a particular fixed setting, the study treats address forms as part of an interaction that establishes a space of consumption as catering to consumers of a particular socioeconomic segment. The central argument of this paper is that linguistic practice, including the

use of address forms, participates in the construction of these sites of consumption as differentiated socioeconomic spaces.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I briefly outline the changes in the Chinese address system since the end of the Cultural Revolution. I then (in section 3) discuss the methodology used in the present study. Section 4 describes the general distribution patterns of address forms, followed by a discussion on how the address forms are used in talk that invokes socioeconomic distinction in the different sites of consumption (section 5). Finally, section 6 offers a brief conclusion and discusses the implications of the study for sociolinguistic investigation of language change and variation in contexts of socioeconomic transformation.

2. Changes in address forms in the reform era

In this part, I provide an overview of changes in the use of address forms in the post-Cultural Revolution or reform era (since 1978), as reported in previous studies. A general trend observed in the use of address forms is that the formerly most widely used terms, tongzhi 'comrade' and shifu 'master craftsman' have decreased in popularity since the end of the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, address forms that were abolished in the revolutionary era (1949-1976), such as xiaojie 'Miss' and xiansheng 'Mr.', have resurfaced. The term tongzhi originally referred to people sharing the same will or interest (Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1983:479). During the Communist Revolution (1920s-1949), it became an in-group address form among communist party members. According to Fang and Heng (1983:496), its reciprocal use signaled 'revolutionary solidarity, equality and respect as well as intimacy among the revolutionary ranks'. After the Communist Party of China (CPC) took power in 1949, tongzhi was promoted as a general term of address for all members of society, as it was the case in other socialist countries. The promotion of tongzhi was part of the CPC's efforts to abolish social inequality; it signaled socialist egalitarianism and solidarity

among society members engaged in a shared enterprise of building a new socialist China (Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1983; Wong and Zhang 2000). It rapidly replaced other address forms that indexed socio-economic distinctions, including laoban 'proprietor', xiaojie, and xiansheng. The latter two terms are traditional honorific terms for members of the privileged class and the intelligentsia (Fang and Heng 1983; Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1983).

According to Myers-Scotton and Zhu (1983), in the early stages of economic reform, tongzhi remained the most widely used unmarked term to address strangers or people whose occupations did not have a specific title. Lee-Wong's (1994) study a decade later found that it was still the single most often used address form in face-to-face interactions among strangers. As an unmarked term of address, it had lost the connotations of social egalitarianism and solidarity: 'As a societal norm its connotation is that of distance politeness, particularly in the context of counter service' (Lee-Wong 1994:313, see also Fang and Heng 1983).

The trajectory of shifu is to a certain extent similar to that of tongzhi (Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1984 and Lee-Wong 1994). Before the Cultural Revolution, shifu was used to address senior skilled tradesmen and craftsmen. During the Cultural Revolution, by virtue of the prestigious status of the proletariat, shifu's use was extended to address all workers. It expressed deference to the proletariat and solidarity among those identifying with the workers. After the Cultural Revolution, shifu was even more widely used to address adults, regardless of their occupations (Myers-Scotton and Zhu 1983). In the early 1990s, it had lost its political connotations and was used as a general term of respect to service personnel and strangers (Lee-Wong 1994:313).

Lee-Wong's (1994) study found that by the early 1990s, although tongzhi and shifu remained the dominant address forms, accounting for more than 50% of all address forms used in questionnaires and interviews, their usage had significantly decreased, compared with the roughly 96% of all address forms found in Myers-Scotton and Zhu's study in 1980s' Beijing. The reform era saw a revival of the forms

xiaojie and xiansheng, although with semantic shifts. Rather than addressing members of the privileged class and intelligentsia, they were found used in similar ways as English 'Miss' and 'Mr.' respectively in public inquiries and counter transactions (Lee-Wong 1994:313); even so, their use in the early 1990s was very limited. While xiaojie accounted for about 13% and xiansheng about 9% of the address forms found in questionnaires and interviews of Beijing respondents in Lee-Wong's (1994) study, together with forms other than tongzhi and shifu, they accounted for only 10% in the spontaneous encounters she observed in Beijing.

3. Methodology

This study differs from previous works on address forms in Chinese in both its approach and focus. With the exception of Myers-Scotton and Zhu (1983; 1984), who used data collected from spontaneous interactions, most of the previous studies on address forms were based on the author's recollection (Fang and Heng 1983; Ju 1991), or data collected from questionnaires and/or interviews (Fan et al. 2004; Pan and Zhang 2001), or a combination of survey and natural data (Lee-Wong 1994). For example, Lee-Wong's (1994) study was based on 1650 tokens of address forms from questionnaire surveys and interviews, and a small amount of data collected from 93 spontaneous interactions.

The data for the present study were collected exclusively from spontaneous interactions in the city of Tianjin over a period of two months in the summer of 2005. A pilot study had been conducted in the summer of 2004. Anonymous and participant observation of spontaneous interactions between customers and service people in service encounters (Merritt 1976)² was conducted in a selected range of 'sites of consumption' that cater to intended consumers of differing socioeconomic status. Following Liechty (2003:147), 'sites of consumption' are treated in this study as spaces where socioeconomic distinctions are produced through consumption.

Observations were carried out primarily in two types of sites of consumption, (1) dining (restaurants) and (2) shopping which comprises: (a) daily necessities/grocery markets and stores, and (b) clothing and accessories stores. The rationale for choosing dining and shopping as data collection sites is based on the close relation between practices of dining and shopping and the emergent socioeconomic stratification of urban China, a relation also evidenced in recent anthropological and sociological research (e.g. Davis 2000; Farquhar 2002; Li and Zhang 2004). According to Gu et al.'s (2004) report on the urban affluent stratum in large Chinese cities, including Beijing, affluent Chinese are developing a new, distinctive lifestyle indexed by places of residence, dining, entertainment, and shopping. They tend to favor particular upscale restaurants and shopping sites,³ and their embrace of a distinctive lifestyle has in turn led to the emergence of more sites of consumption catering to their needs (ibid: 275).

The consumption sites were categorized into three social-economic levels, in the locals' terminology called di-dang 'low-end', zhong-dang 'mid-level', and gao-dang 'upscale', based on the following factors: price range, décor, and the manufacturing origin of commodities.⁴ A pre-designed data recording sheet was used to document: (1) the name of the store and its socioeconomic level, (2) perception of the social characteristics of the interlocutors, including estimated age (range), sex, dress style, and accents (if noticeable), (3) address forms used and the immediate interaction between the customer and the sales/service person. A total number of 41 sites were observed, as summarized in Table 1.

CHANGING ADDRESS FORMS IN CHINESE

Site Level	Clothing & Accessories	Grocery & Food	Restaurant
Low-end	8	3	6
Mid-level	4	4	5
Upscale	6	0 ^a	5
Subtotal	18	7	16
Total	41		

a: As upscale grocery and food stores were not available in Tianjin at the time of this research, no data could be collected from such sites.

Table 1: *Sites of consumption*

4. Results

A total number of 462 occurrences of address forms were collected. The most striking finding, compared with previous studies, is that tongzhi 'comrade' and shifu 'master workperson', the most widely used terms in the pre-reform and early reform era, are absent from interactions in the sites of consumption observed in this study. However, they are still heard occasionally in interactions between strangers on the streets of Tianjin. One situation in which tongzhi is attested is as a way to address a police officer directing traffic. Shifu was heard when speakers addressed a bicycle repair man and a shoe repair man, who both were working at street stalls.

In the consumption sites, four categories of address forms were found to be used, namely, kinship terms, second person pronoun polite

form nin 'you', the resurfaced terms xiansheng and xiaojie, and fuwu-yuan 'server'. Except for fuwu-yuan, which is a non-reciprocal term used to address service people in a restaurant, all of the address forms can be used reciprocally. The number of each type of address form observed are presented in Table 2. The results in percentages are presented in Figure 1.

Consumption Sites	Address forms			
	K	V	M	S
Upscale	0	49	35	28
Mid-level	6	47	2	45
Low-end	148	63	0	39
Subtotal	154	159	37	112
Total	462			

Note: K = kinship terms; V = nin 'you', second person pronoun polite form; M = xiaojie 'Miss', xiansheng 'Mr.'; S = fuwu-yuan 'server'

Table 2: *Distribution of address forms*

Figure 1 presents the distribution of each address form in percentages across the three socioeconomic levels. Three general patterns emerge. First, kinship terms (hereafter KT) are used predominantly in low-end sites (143 out of 154 or 96.1%), but are absent from upscale sites. Second, the patterning of the resurfaced forms, xiaojie and xiansheng, is the reverse of that of KT. They are absent from the low-end sites and used almost exclusively, about 95%, in the upscale sites, with only two occurrences observed in the mid-level sites. Third, nin, the polite form

of 'you' and fuwu-yuan 'server' are the two terms that are used across all three socioeconomic levels.

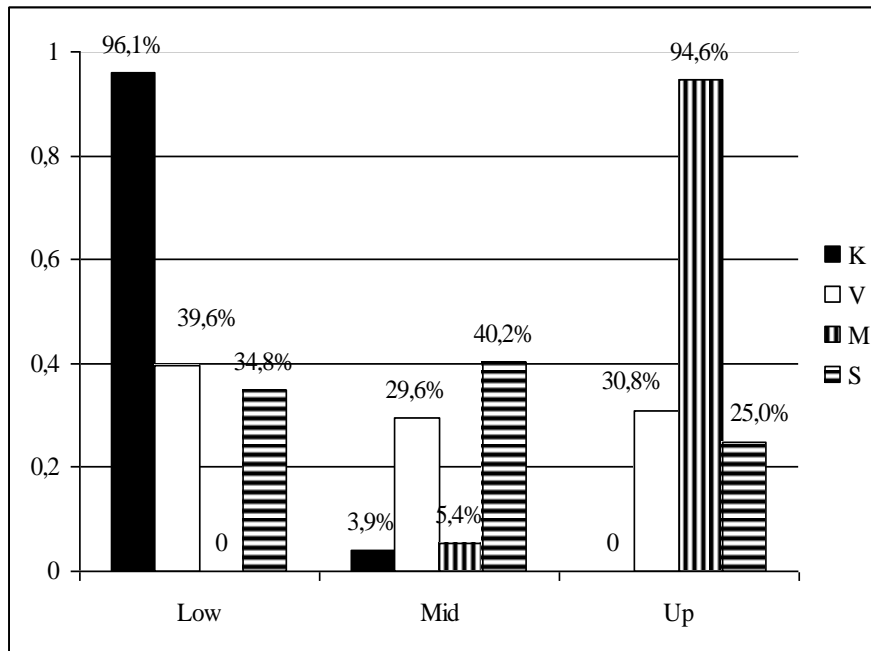


Figure 1: *Distribution of address forms across socioeconomic levels*
(Legend: see Table 2)

Most of the kinship terms observed are modified by da 'big/elder/eldest', which indexes deference to an addressee who may or may not be older than the speaker, for example da-ge 'older brother', da-jie 'older sister' (see example 1), and da-ye 'father's elder brother' used to address an elderly man (see example 2). The use of da-ge and da-jie does not necessarily index more advanced age of the addressee (cf Wu 1990). Less often are KT prefixed with lao- 'old', which expresses deference to seniors (Wu 1990), for example lao-daye 'old uncle' addressing an elderly man, and lao-nainai 'old grandma' (see example 3). In examples 1 through 3, the interactions were carried out in the local, Tianjin dialect.

- (1) (At a vegetable stand in the Lasa Road Market, a male customer in his fifties asked the seller, a woman in her thirties, in Tianjin dialect):
Da-jie, jie pinguo duo qian yi jin? tian ma?
 'Elder sister, how much per jin are these apples? are they sweet?'
- (2) (In the Koutoufu Restaurant, a male waiter in his twenties asked a man in his sixties, in Tianjin dialect):
da-ye, nin xiang dian diar ma?
 'Old uncle, what would you [polite form] like to order?'
- (3) (At a fashion accessory stall at Dahutong, a female seller in her thirties to an elderly woman with a small girl, in Tianjin dialect)
Lao-nainai, gei sun-nür mai diar ma?
 'Old grandma, what would you like to buy for your granddaughter?'

In contrast to the patterning of KT, the resurfaced terms, xiaojie and xiansheng, are used almost exclusively in upscale sites, as shown in examples 4 and 5 below. This pattern indicates that these terms – which were banned in the pre-reform era due to their connotations of class and privilege (Fang and Heng 1983; Lee-Wong 1994) – are now correlated with consumption sites that cater to affluent urban consumers. However, the low rate of use of xiaojie (21 occurrences) and its concentration in the high-end sites are quite surprising, as I had a strong impression that its use was wide-spread in the late 1990s, particularly in service encounters in Tianjin. As reported in both the academic literature (Cui 2005; Fan et al. 2004) and popular media (e.g. Wang 2004), xiaojie has in recent years come to be used as an appellation for women in the sex industry,⁵ so the low frequency of xiaojie found in the current study may indicate that the term is undergoing pejoration.

- (4) (At the reception desk in Harry's Bar, a Western style upscale bar and restaurant, a female receptionist in her twenties to the researcher, in Putonghua, the standard variety of spoken Mandarin in the People's Republic of China):
Xiaojie, nin ji wei? you yuding ma?
 'Miss, how many are **you** [polite form]? (do you) have a reservation?'
- (5) (In Bally, a shoe store, a sales woman in her twenties to a man in his thirties trying on shoes, in Putonghua)
Xiansheng, sishi yi hao zongse de mei you le, women you heise de.
 'Mister, forty-one in brown are sold out, we have them in black.'

The third pattern found from the data is that the second person polite form nin 'you' and the term fuwu-yuan 'server' are used in sites across all three levels (see example 6 below from a mid-level department store, and examples 2 and 4 above from a low-end restaurant and an upscale store respectively). Nin is used the most frequently among the address forms in this study. It is in a way similar to a KT in that it is a traditional address form in Tianjin (and Beijing) Mandarin and has been in relatively stable use over the years, unlike tongzhi, shifu, and the resurfaced forms xiaojie and xiansheng, whose uses have undergone dramatic changes in recent historical periods. However, while KT's signal ingroup relationship, as will be shown in the following analysis, nin signals different kinds of deference in sites of different socioeconomic status.

- (6) (In Binjiang Shopping Plaza, a mid-level department store, a sales woman in her forties to a female customer in her forties looking at wool sweaters, in Tianjin dialect)
nin lai yijiar yangrong shan ba, da liu zhe le.

'(How about) **you** [polite form] buy a cashmere sweater, it's 40% off.'

Fuwu-yuan 'server' is used across all three levels, but it is used only in restaurants to address a service person.

- (7) (In Tianfu Zijin Gong, a mid-level restaurant, a woman in her twenties to a waiter in his twenties passing by, in Tianjin dialect)
fuwu-yuan, zai lai wan mifan
 'Server, another bowl of rice.'

Fuwu-yuan is gender neutral and highlights the status difference between the customer and the service person. While no previous studies on address forms specifically examined fuwu-yuan, Lee-Wong's (1994) study found that it was one of the occupational titles used as address forms; others include shouhuo-yuan 'shop assistant' and guanli-yuan 'supervisor'. In her observation of 93 spontaneous dyadic encounters in Beijing, Lee-Wong gave no data about the frequency of their occurrences. Hence, fuwu-yuan (and other occupational titles) must have had very limited use in her study. Its frequent use in the restaurants in the current study thus indicates that this is a relatively new phenomenon. A plausible explanation for its increased and widespread use in restaurants is that it is used to fill the void left by a reportedly decreased use of xiaojie in such settings (due to its recent association with women providing sexual services). While no research is available on the relation between the possible pejoration of xiaojie and its decreased use in service encounters, which results in expanded use of fuwu-yuan, there are (as remarked above) anecdotal reports of such a connection in both academic literature (Cui 2005) and the popular media (Ma 2004; Yiqutonggong 1999).⁶

5. Discussion

The general distribution patterns of address forms found in this study demonstrate that address forms have undergone drastic changes over the past two decades. Such changes are inseparable from the socio-economic transformations taking place in China and their ideological correlates, particularly the de-emphasis on the socialist ideology of egalitarianism and deference to the proletariat, and the increasing importance of self-identity and social position (Fang and Heng 1983; Lee-Wong 1994). However, construing such changes as merely reflecting the social reality of the fragmentation of a formerly socialist egalitarian society would overlook the contextualizing function of address forms (and talk in general). According to Gumperz (1982), Goodwin and Duranti (1992), and a host of others, linguistic practice can constitute and (re)shape context. Thus in the present study, address forms participate in the socioeconomic reconfiguration of a formerly socialist egalitarian society. In this section, I will discuss examples from the data and show that address forms, together with other co-present linguistic options, are employed to invoke socioeconomically differentiated consumption spaces.

In the *di-dang*, 'low-end' sites, KT's are frequently used by the seller/server to open an encounter in the form of a question about what a customer would like to buy or eat, as in example 8, or as an invitation to check out the goods or dining in the restaurant, as in example 9. KT's in such cases redefine the business relation between the seller/server and the customer, and consequently transform a service encounter between two strangers into one between members of an imagined family.

- (8) (At a produce stand in the Yueyang Street Market, a female seller in her forties to a woman in her thirties, in Tianjin dialect)
Jiejie, ji-er xiang chi di-er ma? Jie huoshizi ji-er zaohang gang sang de.

'**Elder sister**, what would you like to eat today? These tomatoes just came in this morning.'

In this example, the seller brings the relationship between her and the customer even closer by opting for a bare kinship term⁷, jiejie 'elder sister', addressing the customer as if she were her own kin. At the same time, by addressing a younger looking customer as 'elder sister', she expresses deference by projecting herself as a junior person.

Not only are KT's used to attract customers and their business, they are also found to mitigate what Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to as 'face threatening acts', as illustrated in the next exchange (example 9).

(9) (At a fruit stand in the 4th Street Market, a female customer (C) in her sixties to a male seller (S) in his thirties, both speaking in Tianjin dialect)

C: Jie mangguo tian ma? (going through and squeezing the produce)

'Are these mangos sweet?'

S: Nainai, bie nie la, wo bo nin ger-ger dou hao.

'**Grandma**, don't squeeze anymore. I guarantee **you** [polite form] everyone of them is good.'

In this case, the KT nainai 'grandma', again in its bare form, establishes a deferential as well as inclusive relationship between the seller and his customer, thus reducing the force of the direct command following it; here, the seller signals more respect by using the polite form of 'you'.

The next example, 10, further illustrates that multiple linguistic forms are deployed to create an intimate familial relationship. In this instance, a male employee stands in front of a restaurant to attract business, a common practice among low-end restaurants in Tianjin.

(10) (Outside of Laishun Cheng, a hot-pot restaurant, a young man in his twenties calling out to a group of potential customers, in Tianjin dialect)

Da-ge, lai **wo-men** jia ba, **zan** jia de rou hao.

'Elder brother, come to **our** [exclusive] home, the meat at **our** [inclusive] home is good.'

In addition to using the KT da-ge, 'elder brother', the speaker refers to the restaurant as 'our home' twice, the first time using the exclusive pronoun for 'we/our', wo-men, and the second time the inclusive alternative zan. Using the deferential KT 'elder brother' and the exclusive form wo-men jia 'our home', the young man reshapes a potential commercial dining experience as a visit to one's relatives. He then supports his invitation with a statement about the quality of the meat served and shortens the social distance with the customers even more with the use of the inclusive form 'our home', projecting them as members of his own family.

In the lower-level sites, in addition to the use of kinship terms and polite 'you', the local dialect is the predominant variety used in the interactions. As service work demands that service providers also perform emotional labor (Hochschild 1983), linguistic resources are drawn upon to 'project positive emotions' towards customers (Cameron 2000:339). In the low-end sites, KTs and polite 'you', the local dialect, as well as other linguistic forms, such as the inclusive 'we/our', are employed to project qin-qing, that is, 'familial affect'; together, they create a communal space that is local, intimate, and inclusive.

In stark contrast to the low-end sites, the upscale sites use language, including address forms, to produce a modern exclusive space where professional service is provided for affluent cosmopolitan consumers. As shown in examples 4 and 5 above, the use of xiansheng and xiaojie signals an impersonal relationship that is polite and professional. The use of the polite form of 'you', nin, expresses a kind of deference that is different from its use in the low-end sites. In the upscale sites, as shown in example 4 above, it signals professional politeness, indexing the status difference between the one who serves and the one being serviced. In addition to the polite address forms, Putonghua (Mandarin)

is used predominantly by the service people (see also Van den Berg 2005)⁸. The sales/service people in the upscale sites also tend to standardize their talk in the sense that it appears to follow scripted norms. The salespeople's talk presented in example 11, collected from a Dunhill store (men's wear and accessories), illustrates this characteristic standardized feature.

- (11) (When a male customer enters, a saleswoman at the door bows and greets him in Putonghua)

Huanying guanglin Dunhill.

'Welcome to Dunhill.' (Note that the store name is said in English.)

(After the customer has entered the store)

Nin suibian kankan.

'Have a look as **you** [polite form] please.'

(When the customer is looking at the watches)

Xiansheng, nin xihuan nei kuan? wo gei nin na chulai shishi.

'**Sir**, which style do **you** [polite form] like? I'll get it out for **you** [polite form] to try on.'

(As the customer leaves the store)

Man zou, huanying zai lai. (Sales person bowing to the customer)

'Walk slowly, come again.'

The above example shows that attentiveness and deference to customers are verbally and corporally expressed at every stage of the service encounter. In other words, customers are made aware that they are being taken care of every step of the way. In addition to the address forms, several formulaic polite expressions are used at the opening and closing of the encounter. Specifically, 'huanying guanglin' 'welcome your presence' and 'nin suibian kankan' 'take a look as you please' are also used in many of the other high-end stores. 'Welcome your presence' and the formulaic closing 'walk slowly, come again' are also

found widely used in upscale restaurants, as well as in fast food chain restaurants, including McDonald's and Pizza Hut.

Standardized or scripted talk has been shown to be used as a linguistic strategy to convey professionalism in providing customer service (see Cameron 2000). While the sales/service people's talk expresses positive emotions, however, in contrast to the appeal to familial ties and the qin-qing 'familial affect' characterizing the low-end sites, the address forms used in the upscale venues, along with the standardized service talk and demeanor, express emotions that, even though pleasant and caring, are professional and non-local. Such standardized talk provides evidence for Cameron's observation of a globalizing communication style in service encounters that involves the 'international diffusion of certain discourse norms from the English-speaking world' (Cameron 2003:28). Thus, linguistic practice, including address forms xiaojie, xiansheng, and nin, in these upscale sites, together with non-linguistic artifacts, including décor and commodities (and their high prices), create a space that is modern, trans-local and exclusive.

The absence of elements of the standardized service talk can be used as a strategy to exclude certain people from the 'legitimate' group of consumers that a store caters to. An example of such exclusion is shown in example 12 (a personal observation from Ports, a store of women's wear and accessories).

When I entered the Ports store, I was greeted by a sales woman at the door with formulaic expressions similar to those used in Dunhill, 'huanying guanglin' 'welcome your presence', and 'xiaojie, nin suibian kankan' '**Miss, you** [polite form] take a look'. While I was browsing, a young woman in her twenties entered the store; she was not dressed in the fashionable way of many young Tianjin women seen in the shopping mall. The same sales woman did not verbally acknowledge her entrance like she did with me.⁹ When the customer lifted up a sweater folded on a shelf, the saleswoman said hastily, in an annoyed tone of voice:

(12) Bie luan fan, yangzi dou zai nei bianr gua-zhe ne, ni yao kan shenme wo gei ni na.

'Don't make a mess of it, all samples are hung over there, [if you [plain form] want to see something, I'll get it for you [plain form].'

The absence of verbal acknowledgment of the customer's entrance, and of an invitation (with proper address forms) to browse around the store may implicitly signal non-recognition, and hence exclusion, of the young woman from the membership of 'legitimate' customers for whom the store provides service. Together with the use of the direct command 'don't' and the plain form 'you', the sales woman in addition performed an explicit act of exclusion.

6. Conclusion

Based on data collected from spontaneous interactions in socioeconomically stratified sites of consumption, this study has found that the formerly dominant address forms tongzhi and shifu have been replaced by a variety of forms that signal differentiation in terms of gender, status, and social distance. The study analyzed the use of address forms, using an approach that brings attention to their constitutive function. Such an approach problematizes a tendency in sociolinguistic studies of linguistic variation and change to focus on describing patterns of linguistic forms that are involved in change and to treat linguistic change as contingent upon socioeconomic structure or processes. As this study demonstrates, the replacement of tongzhi and shifu with the forms found in the data does not merely result from the restructuring of a formerly socialist egalitarian society and reflect increased socioeconomic diversity. It is shown that particular address forms are used together with other linguistic resources, in order to create socioeconomically differentiated spaces; thus the changing practices of address participate in the process of societal

transformation. Language variation – including variable use of address forms – is thus used as a resource for bringing about and maintaining socioeconomic distinctions.

*Department of Anthropology
The University of Arizona
Emil W. Haury Anthropology Building
1009 East South Campus Drive
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0030
U.S.A.*

Zhangq1@email.arizona.edu

Notes

1. The Chinese translation of shifu as 'master craftsman' in this article is adopted from Myers-Scotton and Zhu (1983:327), according to whom the original meaning of shifu is 'master in the sense of elder and skilled craftsman'.
2. According to Merritt (1976:321), a service encounter is an instance of face-to-face interaction between a server who is 'officially posted' in some service area and a customer who is present in that service area, that interaction being oriented to the satisfaction of the customer's presumed desire for some service and the server's obligation to provide that service.
3. Based on questionnaire surveys, Gu et al. (2004) found that 60% of the affluent in Beijing frequently shop at brand-name retail stores and upscale shopping centers and department stores.
4. The local terms for the manufacturing origin of commodities are: guo-chan 'local/domestic', he-zi 'joint-venture produced', and jin-kou 'imported'.
5. For example, in a news report about a government sponsored AIDS prevention training program, xiaojie was used in both the title and body text to refer to female sex workers. A definition was given in the main text as 'an appellation for sex service providers' (Zhang 2006, my translation).
6. I thank Andrew Wong for pointing my attention to Ma (2004).

7. A bare kinship term is one without deferential prefixes such as da- 'big/elder/eldest' (see examples 1 and 2 in section 4) and lao- 'old' (see example 3 in section 4).
8. In Van den Berg's (2005) survey of the use of Putonghua and Shanghainese, a regional variety in the Wu dialect group, in three socioeconomically stratified department stores in Shanghai, Putonghua was used most often in the upscale store.
9. Comparing the different treatment received by the young woman and me, the fact that the sales woman greeted me with the formulaic expressions indicates that I was perceived to be 'properly' dressed for Ports.

References

- Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Roger and Albert Gilman. 1960. The pronouns of power and solidarity. In: *Style in language*, ed. by Thomas Sebeok, 253-76. New York: The Technology Press of MIT and John Wiley & Sons.
- Cameron, Deborah. 2000. Styling the Worker: Gender and the Commodification of Language in the Globalized Service Economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4.323-47.
- Cameron, Deborah. 2003. Globalizing 'communication'. *New media language*, ed. by Jean Aitchison and Diana M. Lewis, 27-35. London: Routledge.
- Cui, Li. 2005. "Xiaojie" yi ci de yuyanxue jiedu. (A linguistic analysis of the term "Miss"). *Haihe Daxue Xuebao (Journal of Haihe University)* 7.66-71.
- Davis, Deborah S. (ed.) 2000. *The consumer revolution in urban China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fan, Xiaoling, Fanzhu Hu, Jiejun Lin and Xiaoling Ma. 2004. "Xiaojie" chenghuyu de yuyong tezheng, dili fenbu jiqi zouxiang. (The pragmatics, geographic distribution, and developing trend of the appellation "Miss"). *Yuyan Wenzhi Yingyong (Applied Linguistics)* 4.41-47.
- Fang, Hanquan and J.H. Heng. 1983. Social changes and changing address norms in China. *Language in Society* 12.495-507.
- Farquhar, Judith. 2002. *Appetites: food and sex in postsocialist China*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Goodwin, Charles and Alessandro Duranti. 1992. Rethinking context: an introduction. In: *Rethinking context: language as an interactive phenomenon*,

- ed. by Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin, 1-42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gu, Chaolin, Xiuhong Hu, Haiyong Liu and Guochen Song. 2004. Chengshi fuyu jieceng zhuangkuang. (The state of the urban affluent stratum). In: Zhongguo shehui fenceng, (The social stratification of China), ed. by Peilin Li, Qiang Li and Liping Sun, 264-82. Beijing: Social Science Documentation Publishing House.
- Gumperz, John J. 1982. Discourse strategies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1983. The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ju, Zhucheng. 1991. The "depreciation" and "appreciation" of some address terms in China. *Language in Society* 20.387-90.
- Lee-Wong, Song Mei. 1994. Address forms in modern China: changing ideologies and shifting semantics. *Linguistics* 32.299-324.
- Li, Peilin and Yi Zhang. 2004. Zhongguo de xiaofei fenceng. (Consumption stratification in China). In: Zhongguo shehui fenceng, (The social stratification of China), ed. by Peilin Li, Qiang Li and Liping Sun, 225-44. Beijing: China Social Sciences Academic Press.
- Liechty, Mark. 2003. Suitably modern: making middle-class culture in a new consumer society. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Ma, Jiahui. 2004, October 12. Jiaoyu fuwu-yuan. (Education server). Ming Pao.
- Merritt, Marilyn. 1976. On questions following questions in service encounters. *Language in Society* 5.315-57.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol and Wanjin Zhu. 1983. Tongzhi in China: Language change and its conversational consequences. *Language in Society* 12.477-94.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol and Wanjin Zhu. 1984. The multiple meanings of shi·fu, a language change in progress. *Anthropological Linguistics* 26.326-44.
- Pan, Zhixing and Maizeng Zhang. 2001. Hanyu qinshuyu kuozhan yongfa diaocha. (Fictive use of Chinese kinship terms). *Yuyan Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu* (Language teaching and linguistic studies). 2.10-15.
- Van den Berg, Marinus. 2005. Vitality, identity and language spread: the case of Shanghainese. *The Journal of Chinese Sociolinguistics* 2.223-35.
- Wang, Jiwang. 2004. Ti "xiaojie" yi ci zhengming keburonghuan! (Immediate urgency in rectifying the appellation "Miss"). Retrieved October 10, 2005, from <http://news.rednet.com.cn/Articles/2004/06/570307.htm>
- Wong, Andrew and Qing Zhang. 2000. The linguistic construction of the Tongzhi community. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 10.248-78.

QING ZHANG

- Wu, Yongyi. 1990. The usages of kinship address forms amongst non-kin in Mandarin Chinese: the extension of family solidarity. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 10.60-88.
- Yiqutonggong. 1999. "Xiaojie" bu zai shi zuncheng. ("Miss" is no longer an honorific address term). Retrieved October 10, 2005, from <http://www.bilinguist.com/data/hy00/messages/2055.html#381>
- Zhang, Yue. 2006, November 19. Zhengfu ban "xiaojie peixun ban" yinfa zhenglun. (Government organizing "Miss training class" prompts controversies). *Nanfang Zhoumo*, (Southern Weekend), p. A5.