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Evaluative Discourse As Community Identity Among Expatriates In Shenzhen China

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EVALUTIVE DISCOURSE AS COMMUNITY IDENTITY AMONG EXPATRIATES IN
SHENZHEN, CHINA

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Liberty University, 2012

A Thesis
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of the

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for the degree of

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This thesis, submitted by Karyn Harding in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

MARK E. KARAN, Chair

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This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Chris Nelson
School of Graduate Studies

Date

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ABSTRACT

Expatriates are a modern-day community built by a rapid advance towards globalization. Expatriates are now likely to be self-initiated; that is, they chose to live in a foreign country rather than having been sent there by an employer, and they are changing the face of the global job market. However, their social interactions have not been the subject of much previous study. This paper delves into the ways that expatriates build and maintain their communities. In this case, participant observation and discourse analysis are used to study an expat community living in Shenzhen, China. As a group not defined by heritage but rather by situational circumstance, expatriates build their community through their shared experience as guests in a foreign country. This paper found that the participants often use evaluative language about the local culture in their discourse with one another as a way to build and maintain relations due in no small part to the impact that living in a foreign country has on their daily lives. With continuing importance of globalization in our modern world, it is hoped that a greater understanding of these global citizens known as expatriates will give insight into their place and impact on our ever-shrinking world.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Living in a foreign country for work or for travel or for both is easier now more than ever, and there are a number of people packing their bags and making that long flight to start a new life in a culture different from their own. These bold souls are the modern expatriate, and they look different than the expatriates of the past. No longer are they the tortured Hemingways hanging out in Parisian cafes with other tortured artists of their time. They are young adventurers filled with wanderlust (and the need for a job) hanging out in expat bars with other young adventurers. More and more, this lifestyle of work abroad combined with intermittent travel has become a popular draw for many (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Froese 2012; Cerdin & Selmer 2013; McNulty & Selmer 2017), allowing for a new kind of community to emerge.

Looking specifically at expatriates from Western countries to non-Western countries, there are differences of how community is attained and maintained. Many of these expatriates emigrate to these countries with the hope that they will become integrated into their host culture and become involved in the communities of the local culture. However, this is not always the case. Integrating into an established community consisting of individuals with a different value-system is difficult in the best of times, and many expatriates do not become members of the community of the local culture. As a result, groups of expatriates are congregating together in many cities in non-Western countries creating relationships amongst themselves and establishing their own communities as their primary community rather than with the local or host culture.

These communities are formed and maintained not just on the basis of their similar backgrounds as travelers. These expatriate communities base their connections with each other on a common dissimilarity that they all share with the host culture. This

dissimilarity in value systems between the expatriates and their host culture is salient to each expatriate as they are confronted with clashing values on a daily basis living in a foreign environment.

Expatriate communities are modern communities whose social interactions have not been the focus of much previous study. In my analysis of the conversations of the expatriate community in Shenzhen, China, I found that the participants often used evaluative discourse about their host culture as seen in this example:

(1)

126. E3: It's kind of weird like
127. like what China is like to the outside world as a communist thing like
128. and then you meet individual people
129. and I mean no one's like super opposed to it
130. but I don't think anyone's like
131. E27: super into it
132. E3: yeah

(Recording 5.C lines 126-132)

Participant E3 sets up the evaluation of what he sees as a group feeling (or lack thereof) among Chinese nationals, and E27 voices his agreement with this evaluation through a contributive and relevant response. Using the framework of van Dijk (2008), along with that of Hunston and Thompson (2000), there is evidence in this example and through much of the data gathered that expatriates are using this evaluative language as a way of building solidarity with each other.

To start, in chapter 2, this paper delves into what the expatriate community is as it relates to Shenzhen, but also, the broader, global expatriate community that lays outside of it. Chapter 3 outlines important terminology and the methodology used for gathering data and the subsequent analysis. Then, chapter 4 describes my findings and analysis of the data gathered, and chapter 5 discusses the implications that this analysis has as it relates to way in which expatriates living in Shenzhen build and maintain relations with one another.

CHAPTER 2

THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY IN SHENZHEN, CHINA

This chapter describes the location and the participants of this study. To do this, I first discuss the city of Shenzhen, China, its origins and development. Secondly, I discuss the term ‘expatriate’ and its sociological implications. Lastly, I describe specifically the demographics of the participants in this study.

2.1 Study Location

The collection of this data was done exclusively in Shenzhen, China. Shenzhen is a large, commercial city in the southeast of China. Located on the border of Hong Kong, it is a city that ‘popped up’ within the last 40 years from a small fishing village to the thriving metropolis it is today (O’Donnell et al. 2017). This sudden growth is due in large part to the massive factories producing a large portion of the world’s textile and technological goods. Because many migrants from all over China flock to the city for job opportunities, Shenzhen has a cornucopia of languages represented within its population of over 10 million. Although English is an important language of trade and international business in Shenzhen, it is a city that primarily uses Putonghua (standard Mandarin) although Cantonese is prevalent (Shenzhen Population 2019 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs)). Putonghua is the language of government and business while Hakka and Cantonese are the local languages of the province.

Because of its proximity to Hong Kong and the frequent international business upon which its economy thrives, Shenzhen uses English in many domains, and the Chinese nationals in Shenzhen try to acquire English as a means of financial and career advancement. As a result, English language learning has become central to Shenzhen’s citizens. This means that schools all over the city are hiring native English speakers to teach in their institutions, and international schools are growing due to demand.

Expatriates from all over are filling this void and making Shenzhen their place of residence both for the long and short term.



Figure 1. Location of Shenzhen within China

2.2 *Expatriate* Defined

In keeping with the lexical practice of the participants of this study, this paper will refer to foreigners living in Shenzhen, specifically Western foreigners, as ‘expatriates’, or its more common form, ‘expats’, for short. Merriam-Webster defines ‘expatriate’ as any “person who lives in a foreign country”. However, the term ‘expatriation’ has a more extreme meaning than the broader term ‘expatriate’. ‘Expatriation’ means “to withdraw (oneself) from residence or allegiance to one’s native country”.¹ The usage of ‘expatriate’ or ‘expat’, as used by the participants of this study, should not be confused with the more legal connotations of the term ‘expatriation’. When communities of foreigners refer to themselves as ‘expat communities’, they are only noting that they are not living in their home country. Most will not “withdraw their allegiance from their

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/expatriate> (Accessed February 28, 2019)

home country”. ‘Expat’, most commonly, is used to separate oneself from the host country. In this paper, the word ‘expatriate’ (both the noun and the predicate) will be used as the expatriates themselves use it, which is to state that they (the expatriates) have moved from their native country to live long-term in another country.

The uses of ‘expatriate’ by those who call themselves expatriates have often been different than by those outside the community, especially by those who study them. In the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century, expatriates were either transplanted authors, artists, poets, etc.,² or they were spouses to citizens of another country that decided to live in that other country. More recently, expatriates have been mostly studied as employees sent out by their companies on an international assignment that can be short or long term. Although a majority of the research done on expatriates has been done with this understanding, this specific group of “organizational expatriates” (OE) is only one facet of the community.

Increased globalization has introduced a burgeoning member of expatriate culture known as the "self-initiated expatriate" (SIE). SIEs are expatriates that find work overseas on their own instead of a domestic organization that sends them to an international sister organization. In their paper “Who is a self-initiated expatriate? Towards conceptual clarity of a common notion”, Cerdin and Selmer (2013: 1289-1291) give four criteria that must all be fulfilled at the same time in order to label any one expatriate as a self-initiated expatriate. These four criteria are (a) self-initiated international relocation, (b) regular employment (intentions), (c) intentions of a

² These expatriates, known as the ‘Lost Generation’ (most famously, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, E.E. Cummings, and more), made Paris the center of their writing. Their decision to live in Paris and the motivation for much of their writing was based on their perception that inherited values were no longer relevant after World War I (Lost Generation | Definition, Members, & Origin)

temporary stay, and (d) skilled/professional qualifications. These four criteria separate an OE from an SIE.

Once it had been established that SIEs were a separate entity from the OE's, recent studies found that SIEs actually formed a high percentage of all expatriates living overseas; a number that ranged between 30 and 70% (Suutari & Brewster 2000). This high ratio speaks to the importance of SIEs in the world today. They are having impacts on the international workforce, tourism, and cross-cultural relationships between countries.

As stated, SIEs are independently hired. They are not sent by organizations in their native country to sister organizations in the host country, as is the case with OEs. Therefore, the process of hiring takes place between the SIE and either the school itself or a hiring agency in the host country. Left to fend for themselves, SIEs work directly with companies that often have different cultural ideas of the employer-employee relationship, resulting in unforeseen, occupational expectations that can so easily frustrate a newly hired expat. From the perspective of the employers (hiring agencies and schools), they are investing a lot of money into foreign teachers, buying plane tickets and providing visas, apartments, and health insurance. With the high turnover rate of foreign teachers,³ agencies and schools are at a higher risk of losing out on their investments, and alternative methods may be used in order to insure money is not being lost. What can result is an increased number of cultural misunderstandings and strained relationships between expats and the host culture around them.

³ Between 20-40% of new teachers to China will not complete their expected contract duration because of factors related to living abroad. (English Language Teacher Motivation and Turnover in a Private Language Institution in China 2016)

Increasingly, there has been a shift in sociolinguistic research to not only study the effects of or on a language itself, but to view any research with an eye on superdiversity⁴ and the impact that modern migration has on the language landscape. Languages are no longer as isolated as they had been previously, and language studies are keenly aware of the impact of increases in globalization and the migratory movements of populations (Karan 2018). Migration and globalization are key factors in this study. SIEs are voluntary migrants, and their numbers are increasing. The build-up of their community and the problems that they confront in their host culture are as unique as their situation, and their migration affects their language practices.

2.3 Previous Research

Little has been done in the area of expatriate research, and what has been done is usually focused specifically on OEs. OE research considers the implications of expatriation on international business, career development, and so on. As for the research being done on SIEs, it is new and expanding. SIEs, as mentioned in §2.2, are independently hired and both their job positions and time spent in one location can fluctuate wildly, making it difficult to adequately study their impact.⁵ What has been studied, shows that SIE's are quite different from their OE counterparts in motivations

⁴ Superdiversity is a term coined by sociologist, Vertovec, that refers to a spike in population diversity. He states that “[superdiversity] is distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade” (Vertovec 2007: 1024)

⁵ In §2.2, this paper mentioned Suutari and Brewster’s percentage of SIEs that make up the number of overall expatriates. The percentage was a broad range of 30-70%, exemplifying the fluctuation of expatriate research spoken about here (Suutari & Brewster 2000).

for expatriating and their acculturation. To put it simply, SIE's are having a different experience on their assignments.

A study of young New Zealand SIEs showed that the motivations for expatriates are multi-faceted which stands in opposition to the previously, uni-dimensional view that expatriates were motivated purely by financial reasons. However, the study did show that the majority of motivations could be boiled down into two different categories: cultural and career (Thorn 2009: 444). The cultural motivations were based on travel opportunities and international experience, which were the primary motivations for SIEs. The secondary motivation, career and financial incentives, were of less importance. A study of SIEs to South Korea describes these two motivations as push and pull factors; cultural motivations being the pull factors and career motivations being the push (Froese 2012: 1107). The SIEs in this South Korean study were not as motivated by pull factors as were the New Zealanders in the previous study. Froese postulates that this has more to do with the differences of maturity in the participants in his study as opposed to the younger, more adventure-hungry participants of the New Zealand study. The motivations of the younger SIEs focused mainly on pull factors of travel opportunities and foreign experiences with a secondary motivation in financial incentive of jobs in the host country as opposed to the poor income and economic opportunities of the home country. The older SIEs tended to expatriate based on more stable conditions like tenure-track university positions. The younger SIEs often do not adjust well to the host culture and their expatriate position while the older SIEs do seem to adjust better (Froese 2012).

2.4 Demographics of the Participants in this Study

2.4.1 Self-Initiated Expatriates

There are 27 participants in this study, and they are mostly SIEs. Over 75% of them were teachers, either full-time or part-time, at local public schools, international schools, and private academies. The other participants found work as musicians, videographers/photographers, and other journalism related fields.

There are two notable exceptions among the participants that I would like to recognize. One of the participants in the study is not a self-initiated expatriate, or any other kind of expatriate, because she is a Chinese national, born and raised in Shenzhen. The reason that she is included in the present study about expatriates is because she is an active member within the community being described. More than that though, her inclusion in the study stems from her usage of the same discourse tactics used by the other non-Chinese national participants. Specifically, she employs evaluative speech towards the local culture both as a prompter and an active participant in discourse with the other expatriates, as in the example below:

(2)

- 15. E7: the sketchy thing about the Chinese center that I worked for is like
- 16. they just target the foreigners that just land in China
- 17. and just like throw them
- 18. E11: to the wolves

(Recording 9.D lines 15-18)

As a result, I have decided to include her as a member of the expatriate community though she is not, according to the dictionary definition, an expatriate.

The other notable exception is myself. In this study, I will be including myself as a member of the expatriate community demographic. At the time of this study, along with being the primary researcher, I was a self-initiated expatriate the same as the

participants. I fit into the definition and criteria laid out in §2.2. I had self-initiated my relocation to China to work full-time as a teacher with the intention of eventually moving back to my native country. I was a member of the expatriate community. I hung out in the same places with them, had the same job as them, and I used evaluative speech about the host culture with them. Much of the observation in this analysis is due to my own inclusion in this community, and much of the insight in this analysis is a result thereof.

2.4.2 Nationalities

Because of the need for Native English speakers for English teaching job openings around Shenzhen, most of the expatriates come from English-speaking countries, the United States being the most represented at 79%, according to Figure 2, which outlines the nationalities of the participants. Canada was represented by 2 expatriates and England by 1. There is also one from Colombia and one from Russia, who are representing expatriates that are not L1 English speakers nor expatriates that hold positions as English teachers.

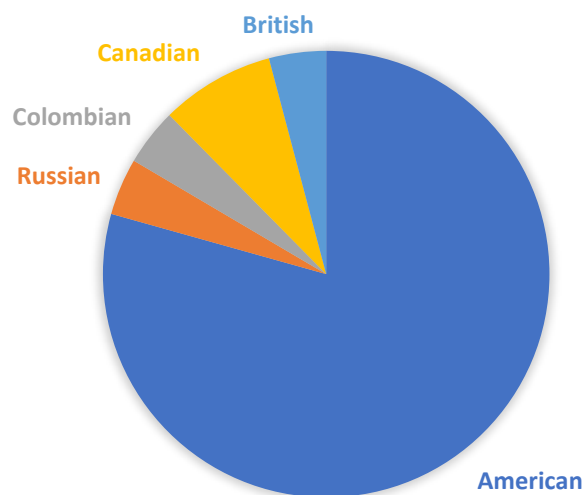


Figure 2 Nationalities of the Participants

There certainly are more countries represented by expatriates in Shenzhen, but these expatriates were unable to participate in the study. Based on my own observation though, my sample is reflective of the broader scope of SIEs in Shenzhen. Most are from the United States and Canada based on the available jobs for foreigners in the city. However, there are communities from other countries living in Shenzhen that do not speak English well or at all and do not spend time in the same locations around the city that English-speaking expatriates do. In the future, it would be excellent to see a study with a larger participant base that incorporated these non-English speaking expatriates alongside the English-speaking ones.

2.4.3 L1s of the participants

Because most of the expatriates in this study are in Shenzhen to fill job positions as native English teachers, they, unsurprisingly, speak English as their L1. English is the L1 of 80% of the participants. Consequently, the language in the discourse analyzed is exclusively in English. The other L1s represented are a random smattering of the other cultures represented, who mostly work other positions unrelated to education.

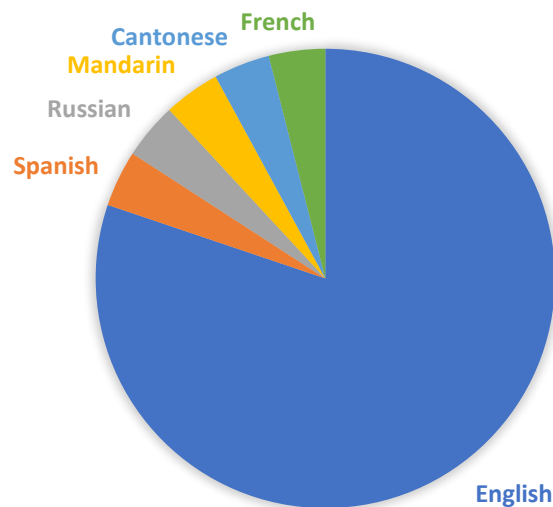


Figure 3 L1's of the Participants

2.4.4 Cultural integration

For this study, cultural integration into the host culture was determined by the personal observations of myself, the primary researcher. Factors considered in determining cultural integration include level of fluency in Cantonese and/or Mandarin, relationships with Chinese nationals outside of the workplace, and level of involvement in local community events. Often included in the measurement of cultural integration in social science research is economic relationships (Algan et al. 2012: 6). I have decided not to include this as a measurement in my observations because economic relationships are the primary reason for the participants' entrance into the host country. The mere existence of this relationship has little impact of the participant's overall integration. Rather, the quality of this relationship is more of a determining factor. However, personal observation of the participants at their place of work was not done in this study, and thus, there is not enough information to support it as a means of determining cultural integration.

The levels of competency in Cantonese and Mandarin varied greatly from participant to participant and no competency test was administered in order to determine this number. Based on observation, though, only 19% of the participants spoke with near native fluency, not including the two participants that already spoke Mandarin or Cantonese as their L1. A slightly larger percentage, 26%, spoke beginner to conversational Mandarin. Finally, 55% spoke survival⁶ Mandarin or none at all.

Relationships with Chinese locals outside of the workplace usually fell into two different camps. The first category of relationships is with Chinese nationals who regularly associated with the expat community. The participants in this set of

⁶ Less than 100 words in the target language.

relationships spoke mainly in English together and revolved around events related to the expat community. The second category of relationships is primarily in the field of dating. Single expats would often date Chinese nationals either in person or using Chinese dating apps like Tantan. These relationships were maintained either in Mandarin or English depending on the Chinese national's level of fluency in English. These two categories of relationships provide a helpful overview, but they are not indicative of every participant. Outside of these categories, two of the participants lived with roommates who were Chinese nationals, and a few of the participants played in bands with Chinese nationals.

The last category with which this study determines level of cultural integration is involvement in local community events. In Shenzhen, there were a number of events put on by expatriates for expatriates. There were even some put on by locals for expatriates. Ultimately, these events were meant for expatriates to interact with each other and, therefore, have not been included in this measurement. There were also a number of events put on by the schools of the teacher participants which they were required to attend. These events have also not been included. Outside of these parameters, a number of the musician expatriates would perform at local music venues two or three times a month. Some of the participants would attend Chinese classes, and most of the participants would frequent Chinese establishments such as clubs, stores, and restaurants.

From this broad overview, the majority of the participants did not have a high level of cultural integration. Only 19% had a high level of fluency in the language, there were few personal relationships made with locals outside of workplace relationships, and there was not a high level of involvement in local, non-expat-focused community events. However, this brief look at cultural integration by expatriates is not intended to

make a definitive point as there are mitigating factors and unobservable aspects unaccounted for here. For example, I have ruled out workplace relationships and events as a measurement because they are required for the participants. Ultimately, however, the workplace is the primary point of contact between the expatriate and the local culture, and each individual expatriate has a unique relationship to their workplace, either positive or negative. It may well be that some of the participants were extremely involved in their workplace, voluntarily or not, and they had a high level of integration solely in their work environment. This level of observation was not attained, but the goal of this cultural integration measurement is to show, in general terms, that there exists a distance between the participants and their host culture outside of mandatory relationships and events. How expatriates are spending their free time is telling of their sociological habits, and from these observances, they focus on expatriate relationships and gatherings.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses a contextual approach to discourse analysis, specifically as it pertains to evaluative speech within discourse. In this section, I will first define important terminology. Secondly, I will speak briefly about the manner and method of data collection. Thirdly, I will describe the models and framework that I applied to my data, starting with Susan Hunston and Geoff Thompson's parameters of evaluative speech and finishing with Teun A. van Dijk's context model approach to discourse analysis. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of my research.

3.1 Important Terminology

Since the field of Discourse Analysis is a varied field, and there are a few ways to approach the analysis and discussion, I would like to cement exactly what is meant when I use terms such as 'discourse', 'evaluation', and 'context' as it refers to both my findings and the study of Discourse Analysis as a whole.

3.1.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis

For the purposes of this study, I will adopt Teun A. van Dijk's use of the term 'discourse' in his book *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach*. In this text, Van Dijk describes 'discourse' as "any form of language use manifested as (written) text or (spoken) talk-in-interaction, in a broad semiotic sense" (van Dijk 2008: 116). Simply put, it is communication that may include many channels for that communication (cell phones, sounds, visuals, etc.). In this paper, my analysis will focus mainly on spoken interaction, though there are other forms of discourse analyzed such as gestures or other ostensive stimuli⁷.

⁷ 'Ostensive stimuli' is an act or a behavior that manifests communicative intent (Clark 2013).

Looking at discourse with this definition in mind, the definition of ‘discourse analysis’ becomes a little clearer. Although discourse is ‘talk-in-interaction’, the analysis of discourse goes beyond the manifestation of written or spoken communication within sentence structure. Discourse analysis connects what the speaker is saying to a broader and more connected conversation. The words we say, or even write, are not unrelated tidbits of sounds smushed together. They flow in a way that is directed by the participants of the discourse into an analyzable structure.

3.1.2 Context

Context, as used in a multitude of disciplines such as anthropology, social studies, or linguistics can be a ‘squishy’ topic. In the field of discourse analysis, context is often the catch-all for any meaning that cannot be semantically defined. However, despite its ambiguity, context is an integral part of discourse that should by no means be ignored. Context is arguably the impetus for all discourse.

Even though context is difficult to define, it still merits a definition. In his book *Society and Discourse*, van Dijk points out two alternative meanings to the word, especially pertaining to discourse research. Firstly, context may refer to the immediate ‘verbal context’ within the discourse itself. What are the preceding utterances? What are the speech acts or turns in the discourse? However, this paper concerns itself with the second meaning of context, which is “the ‘social situation’ of the language use in general” (van Dijk 2009: 2). This use of context is viewed on a larger scale that looks at many outside considerations that may shape the discourse at hand, and it is the use that this study concerns itself with for its analysis.

3.1.3 Evaluation

‘Evaluation’ encapsulates a lot of ideas. It is not just a speaker’s opinion, although that is certainly an important piece of it. ‘Evaluation’ encapsulates *affect*, *attitude*,

connotation, certainty, and much more. The reason this paper has chosen to use this terminology as opposed to others is best described by Hunston and Thompson. For them, “evaluation is the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about” (Hunston & Thompson 2000: 5). Effectively, ‘evaluation’ can convey all the important elements of attitude and stance that this study concerns itself with instead of using a multitude of lesser terms that do not encapsulate a broader range of concepts.

3.2 Data collection

The recorded sessions analyzed for this study were taken in places all over the city of Shenzhen where this expatriate group has been known to socialize with each other. These include bars catering towards expatriates (also known as “expat bars”), restaurants, and apartments of other expatriates. These are the locations at which expatriates congregate to socialize, but the recorded sessions are not limited to these. They also include taxi rides to and from these locations, and in one case, it includes a teachers’ meeting at the international school in Shenzhen where some of the participants worked full time.

In each of the locations where the data collection took place, I made known to the participants within range of the voice recorder that it would begin recording. Once everyone had been made aware, I put the recorder in an optimal position of the space used to gather the greatest amount of clear, conversational data. Each recording session was anywhere between fifteen minutes to three hours depending on the situation being recorded. The shortest recordings usually occurred during taxi rides while the longest were at restaurants or house parties.

3.3 Data Analysis

After the field recordings were taken, I archived and transcribed each session. Once transcribed, I used a contextual approach of discourse analysis to analyze the conversations for evaluative material. Following this approach, each individual piece of data gathered was looked at for its affective meaning (personal feelings of the speaker) and not its connotative meaning (meaning of the language items used). This is to say that I took into consideration the contextual information of the speaker and the situation (setting, participants, etc.) that they were speaking within, and I used that contextual information to deduce the meaning of the utterances spoken.

In my analysis process, I first determined whether or not an utterance was evaluative using Hunston and Thompson's (2000) parameters of evaluation. Next, using Van Dijk's (2008) sociocognitive theory of context and discourse, I analyzed those evaluative utterances against the knowledge and observations of the participants alongside the contextual information of the preceding and following discourse. With this contextual information, I determined whether the evaluative information was used to maintain relations with the other participants, and then I looked at the participants' responses to the evaluation to determine effectiveness.

3.3.1 Determination of "evaluativeness"

As mentioned in my definition of evaluation in §3.1.3, the term 'evaluation' encapsulates a broad range of concepts (*affect, attitude, connotation, certainty*). Within this broad range of concepts, evaluation has the ability to express certain parameters when used by discourse participants. Hunston and Thompson (2000: 22) give four different parameters possible: good—bad, certainty, expectedness, and importance.

The good—bad parameter is the most all-encompassing of the parameters and breaks down evaluative opinion into categories good and bad. Simply put, by using evaluation, the speaker is noting to the listener that they believe this thing over here is good, and this thing over here is bad. The certainty parameter showcases the speaker's belief in their evaluative statement by using modal auxiliaries or other signals of modality like *could*, *probably*, *will*, and more. The speaker tells the listener their level of certainty that the opinion they are expressing is true or not true. The expectedness parameter is what the speaker assumes to be obvious to the listener. For example, the word *clearly* implies to the listener that the speaker expects them to also be certain of the following or preceding information. Lastly, the importance parameter can be the evidence that the speaker produces to support their opinion, or more often, it signifies the point in the evaluative speech that the speaker believes to be most important by using words like *importantly* or *significantly*.

For this study, I focused on evaluation as it relates to the good—bad parameter, and I believe that Hunston and Thompson would readily agree. As they stated themselves, “the most basic parameter, the one to which the others can be seen to relate, is the good—bad parameter” (Hunston & Thompson 2000: 25). The other three parameters (certainty, expectedness, and importance) certainly provide a deeper insight and characterization of evaluation, but inevitably each of these parameters, at its core, circles back to that fundamental concept of what it is good and what is bad according to the speaker. Furthermore, the focus of this study is to discover the impact evaluative language has socially on the community of expatriates as based on their shared value system. Value systems in and of themselves boil down to a structure of what is good and what is bad. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary complexity, this study cuts out the middle

man, and each evaluative utterance's 'evaluateness' is determined by the good—bad parameter.

3.3.2 A contextual approach to discourse analysis

When thinking about how discourse is structured, a common approach is to assume that social situations (gender, age, social status, etc.) are the main influencers. However, Teun A. van Dijk's integrated sociocognitive approach to context and discourse relies heavily on context models made by language users that represent social situations. These mental representations and not society or the social structure within that society, according to van Dijk, are the "crucial 'influencing' force" of discourse variation. Van Dijk argues that "there is no such thing as an *objective* situation", but rather an "objective" social situation is really "an understanding shared by the members of a group or community" (van Dijk 2008: 119)." Of course, these context models and representations are built from socially shared knowledge, which is why Van Dijk's integrated sociocognitive theory does not reduce situation-discourse relations to either a cognitive or social reason. Rather, it is an integration of the two that structures discourse.

I took Van Dijk's integrated sociocognitive theory as my approach to the analysis of this study. Being an "expatriate" is an objective social situation, which this study was able to define in §2.2 at first using the Merriam-Webster definition. However, as was also stated in §2.2, this "objective" definition, or social situation, was not enough to describe the participants in this study, especially considering that one of the participants was a Chinese national. There is a subjective mental representation of what it means to be an expatriate in China that is not encompassed within the "objective" social situation. There are clashing value-systems, us/them mentalities, and more that set the boundaries of the community. Ultimately, it is the "objective" social situation and the subjective mental representation of being an expatriate in China that structures

the discourse. In this case, evaluation, specifically as it pertains to the host culture, is the result.

3.4 Limitations of this research

As I progress into the analysis and results of this data, it is necessary to keep these three major limitations to the research in mind.

Firstly, this study uses personal observation provided by myself when analyzing the discourses among the participants to determine communicative intent. This is both a benefit and a limitation to the results. I was not an outside observer. I was an active member of this community of expatriates. Although my insight, observation, and even participation on the discourses being studied can prove useful, this research does not contain the unbiased impartiality of outside observation. Therefore, my bias and opinion could lead to a misinterpretation of the underlying communicative intent of some of the utterances made by the participants.

Another limitation is the size of the sample. The number of participants was only twenty-seven. This is a very specific sub-community, and comprehensive generalizations cannot be made about all expatriate communities based on this research alone.

In addition to the small sample size, the majority of the participants were only from one Western country, the USA. Although there were other cultures represented, almost 80% were from America. This percentage is due to my own sampling process. Using the 'accidental' sampling method, I used those expatriates already within my social network. Because I am American, many of my participants were also American.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 dives into the analysis of the data studied. The data for this study consisted of over 10 hours of natural conversation over the span of ten conversations. For each of these conversations, evaluation language, or topics that were evaluative in nature, made up approximately 15-20% of the discourse. There are two main methods of evaluation that the participants of this study employed to express their opinion on of the host culture around them. The first is violated expectations, and the second is emotional rhetoric. For each of these methods, the participants employed both narrative and non-narrative discourse tactics.

Before diving in, it is important to clarify what is meant by narrative and non-narrative discourse. ‘Narrative discourse’ is a discourse that is an account of events, usually in the past, that employs verbs of speech, motion, and action to describe a series of events that are contingent one on another, and that typically focuses on one or more performers of actions.⁸ Put more simply, it is the act of storytelling either in written or spoken discourse, and it can include different kinds of stories, such as folk tales, mythology, or personal experiences. In this study, the narratives analyzed are spoken and of personal experiences. Also, the narratives here are natural and unprompted.⁹ This kind of narrative in everyday conversation is “messier” than in written discourse or narrative in a prompted interview. Often, it can be interrupted by other participants; it can be told in fragments; and it can be repetitive (van Dijk 2008: 196-201). The stories told by the participants do not come out in one, smooth retelling.

⁸ Definition of ‘narrative discourse’: <https://glossary.sil.org/term/narrative-discourse>

⁹ See §3.2 on the data collection process of this study.

Non-narrative discourse is as obvious as it sounds. It is any genre of discourse that is not narrative in nature.

In this analysis, the goal of this categorization is to distinguish between reported speech of a past experience versus an evaluative utterance spoken about a situation occurring in real-time. Often, narratives were the favored way of expressing opinions about the host culture because they allowed the speaker a lot of space and freedom to recall and embellish the story according to what they believed the participants would want to hear. This provides us with insight on how evaluation is used as a tool to maintain relations. Non-narrative discourse is a reaction in 'real-time', and therefore, the participants are not given that same time and space. These are instinctive reactions based on the discourse participants present. Analysis of both narrative and non-narrative discourse is necessary to understand the underlying value-system of expatriates and the way that they use that shared value-system to maintain relations with one another.

In this chapter I will discuss examples of evaluative language used by the participants in the data collected. In section 1, I will discuss examples of violated expectations, both in narrative and non-narrative discourse, and in section 2, I will discuss examples of emotional rhetoric, both in narrative and non-narrative discourse.

4.1 Violated expectations

Every individual enters a social situation or a conversation with a set of values or social norms that they carry with them. This framework of values is the control by which individuals measure the 'normalcy' of every interaction (Burgoon 1978). There is an expectation of how a conversation or social situation should proceed. When those expectations are violated by a behavior or a conversational response from another individual, the 'violated' discourse participant may respond in a way that draws attention to the behavior violation (Houser 2005). This response may be during the

expectancy violation as it occurs in real-time, or the response may occur after the fact in a narrative retelling of the event.

Since expatriates are living every day in a culture different from their own, their expectations are violated on a regular basis, which is why there are many examples in the data from this study that pertain to a violated expectation. It is the most common type of evaluative narrative told by the participants when they interact with one another. As for the non-narrative, 'real-time' responses to violated expectancy, the participants are experiencing this violation usually by an individual or individuals who do not share the same language as them. In a violated expectancy scenario in which both parties (the violator and the one being violated) speak the same language, there are likely to be subtle indications that a violation has occurred such as prosodic clues, nonverbal cues, and polite speech. However, the case with our expatriates is a little bit different. The violated (in this case, the expatriates) would often speak to one another in English about the situation currently unfolding before them so that the violator (a local of the host culture) would not be able to understand them.¹⁰ I believe that this is one reason why evaluative speech pops up frequently in these situations and also why expatriates are a unique group to study in the field of evaluative discourse. Expatriates are able to express their opinions freely and without any perceived repercussion.

4.1.1 In narrative discourse

This section will look at the use of evaluative narrative discourses by the participants in this study. The narratives were usually of personal experiences unique to their position as an expatriate in Shenzhen, and because violated expectation narratives

¹⁰ In these situations, participants never verify whether or not the Chinese National they are speaking in front of can understand English or not. The default assumption is that they cannot understand English, and they engage in evaluative language freely under this assumption.

were, by their very definition, a confrontation between the expatriate value-system and that of the host cultures, these stories tended to lean towards a negative evaluative valence rather than a positive one.¹¹

The first example of storytelling took place at a party at an apartment where a few of the participants were living. There were separate pockets of conversation in the kitchen, dining room, and the living room. This example took place in the living room where there were 5 or 6 participants listening at any one time. The narrative was told by participant E26 who was an English teacher from the USA. He had already lived in China for a couple of years at the time of this recording.

In this story, E26 tells a story about his experience getting his beard shaved by a vendor on the street in Shenzhen, China. For context, the conversation had previously been about street haircuts that the other participants had received in their travels to different countries and whether those haircuts were good or bad. E26 added to the discourse with this narrative:

(2)

8. E26: I trusted one of those like army guys cutting hair on the street
9. and asked him to do mine
10. to give me a straight shave and he
11. I had a full beard
12. he did it without shaving cream
13. he just put water on my face and took a blade to my face
14. and there were like big patches of hair that he like couldn't get
15. and like he cut my throat so many times that he just stopped
16. and he was like 'I'm sorry. I can't do this.'
17. and I was like 'You're right. You can't do this.'

¹¹ There is not a lot of research on evaluation as it relates to discourse, and what research there is does not focus on negative versus positive (or even neutral) evaluation. In my data, I found that the majority of evaluations were negative, and only a few were neutral or positive. I do not know how similar or dissimilar this ratio may be to studies of evaluation in other communities.

(Recording 10.E lines 8-17)

E26 went into his street shaving experience with certain expectations of what a good shave would entail, but the experience violated those expectations, as E26 detailed throughout his narration. Table 1 breaks down E26's expectations versus the violations of those expectations:

Table 1. Expectations vs. Expectation Violations in Example (2)

Expectation (A good shave...)	Violation of Expectation (The man shaving him...)
utilizes shaving cream	only used water
removes all of the facial hair	left many patches
is gentle and won't cut him	cut him a lot

In another example, participant E13 was at a dinner party. The conversation at-large was about Chinese agencies that provide English teachers to schools. It is important to note that the overall sentiment of all the English teachers in the room towards these agencies was decidedly negative. E13 told a story about another English teacher who had had a bad experience with one of these agencies.

(3)

1. E13: the other teacher at my school
2. he was actually offered the high school
3. like Shenzhen number one high school
4. for next year
5. honestly I don't know how
6. he's not that good of a teacher
7. um but he found like he was offered that
8. he signed the contract for that
9. and then the agent told him that he was actually going to middle school again

(Recording 9.C lines 1-9)

Example (3) presents what participant E13 believes is a violated expectation of both the subject of the story and of himself. The protagonist of E13's narrative, according to the speaker, expected a different outcome from his agency, and the speaker showed that he expected the same by contributing this story to the discourse at hand. This expectation is shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Expectations vs. Expectation Violations in Example (3)

<p style="text-align: center;">Expectation (A good agency...)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Violation of Expectation (The agency...)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">honors a signed contract</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">did not honor a signed contract</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">will place him in a good high school</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">placed him in a middle school</p>

Because this narrative was told by E13 and not by the protagonist of the story, we do not know if the protagonist felt that this experience was a violation of expectations about how a teacher placement agency should conduct itself. What we do know is that E13 believed that this is a violated expectation, and there are two main clues that showcase this sentiment. The first is the contextual observation of the overall conversation of the dinner. The comments leading up to this story showed that the participants were opposed to the behavior of most teacher placement agencies in China. The second clue that this story represents a violated expectation is E13's use of the word *actually* in line 9. This is a lexical clue that there was some other, better version of how this situation should play as opposed to the way that it actually ended up playing out.

Another example comes from a house party that was at the apartment of one of the expatriates. The participant E6 was speaking about finding a bottle of alcohol at the school he taught at:

(4)

15. E6: I took it¹² and then I brought it to the office
16. and they were like ‘oh you want to drink it?’
17. and I was like ‘no, I don’t want to drink it’
18. this is school
19. that’s not allowed in school

(Recording 10.G lines 15-19)

In this narrative, E6 was discussing how the Chinese employees at his school reacted to the bottle of alcohol that he had found. The expectation from E6 was that he has found contraband on school grounds. He was doing the right thing by turning it into the office and making sure that no students have access to it. His expectation was that the office workers might react similarly to how he has reacted to finding it. Instead, the employees asked E6 if he wanted to drink it as if that was an acceptable thing to do at a school. Table 3 below shows how these expectations were violated:

Table 3. Expectations vs. Expectation Violations in Example (4)

Expectation (A school should...)	Violation of Expectation (The school...)
not have alcohol on the grounds	had alcohol on the grounds
be upset that there was alcohol on the school grounds	was not fazed by the alcohol found on the grounds
not drink alcohol on the grounds or during working hours	suggested drinking the alcohol that was found

The suggestion made by E6 in line 16 of example (4) is that the office workers were serious in their suggestion that E6 might want to drink the alcohol. E6 might have also been noting that the office workers were suggesting that they drink it together though that is not explicitly clear. Since this is a narration on the part of E6, it is impossible for

¹² *it* refers to the bottle of alcohol.

the listeners to know whether or not the office workers were earnest in their suggestion. Perhaps they were joking or perhaps they thought E6, a foreigner with different cultural ideas, might want to drink it even if they would not. However, knowing the true intent of the office workers is not what is important to the narrative. What is important is that E6 believed that the office workers were in earnest, which he did by refusing their offer by noting in line 19, *that's not allowed in school*. He was both noting his value-system and expectation that drinking alcohol in school is unacceptable while simultaneously noting his incredulity that it was suggested to him in the first place.

4.1.2 In non-narrative discourse

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, non-narrative evaluations represent “real-time” reactions of the participants to situations and experiences in the host country. In the realm of non-narrative discourse, violated expectations was the most common reason that the participants employed evaluative language. “Real-time” evaluations are generally reactionary. The participants came into contact with many experiences (taxi rides, restaurants, etc.) that are vastly different from “normal” experiences in their home culture. In situations where their expectations were being violated, the participants would use non-narrative evaluation with one another to discuss or point out the expectation being violated.

In the next example, six expatriates were eating together at a restaurant in Shenzhen. This restaurant was a Western restaurant in a neighborhood with many Western qualities. The group ordered pizza, and it just arrived at their table.

(5)

1. E1: pizza!
2. pizza that looks kind of good
3. it has corn on it.
4. yay my favorite

- 5. E2: so Korean.
- 6. E1: no, Chinese I guess as well.

(Recording 1.C lines 1-6)

E1's intonation in his first utterance is the key to deciphering the opinion that he was trying to express. His very first statement in line 1 was uttered just as the pizza was getting to the table. He was excited about the pizza because he was hungry, and, in his opinion, pizza is good. In line 2, E1's tone shifted a little to one of incredulity, implying that he was expecting this restaurant to violate his expectations on what a pizza should be like. Based on his lexical use of *kind of* as a means of conveying surprise, E1 was noting that his experience with pizza in China has been disappointing, but this pizza was a pleasant surprise to him.

After this, the speaker's intonation changed rather drastically, which reflected his change in opinion of it. E1 saw the pizza more closely, and found that there was an unexpected ingredient of corn. His pleasant surprise immediately shifted into disappointment, which was conveyed through prosody on the part of the speaker in lines 3 and 4. In line 4, the speaker had a disappointed intonation and used an ironic tone with the implication that corn on pizza was the opposite of his favorite. This expectation violation is shown in Table 4:

Table 4. Expectations vs. Expectation Violations in Example (5)

Expectation (Good pizza should...)	Violation of Expectation (The pizza actually...)
not have corn on it	had corn on it

Also of note here is E2's comment in line 5. He characterized corn on the pizza as Korean. Participants E1 and E2 both lived in South Korea prior to living in China. Corn

on a pizza is something that they both have seen before in Korea, and now, they had renewed disappointment that there was also corn on the pizza in China. Example (5) shows that these two expatriates shared a common idea about what is good and bad when it comes to pizza, and they showcased their opinions with evaluative expressions as seen in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Event vs. Opinion in Example (5)

Event	Speaker's Opinion
Pizza	Good
Pizza that looks kind of good	Good—surprise (Implication: This pizza is not normally good.)
Corn on pizza	Bad
Korean/Chinese pizza	Bad

In the next example, example (6), four of the participants were riding in a local taxi when the taxi driver went around a curve faster than the participants were comfortable with. A common evaluation in the expatriate community is that Shenzhen taxi drivers (and Chinese taxi drivers as a whole) drive in a way that most expatriates find stressful and dangerous. The rules of the road are different from Western countries, and the style of driving is something that participants will note. Example (6) is one such case:

(6)

1. E1: Oh my gosh
2. E2: whoa whoa
3. E3: what's it called when you're like on a curve?
4. E1: opportunity curve!
5. E2: oh you're a beefcake aren't ya?
6. what if the door just like flew open?
7. E1: oh, this is like scary!

8. E2: holy shit!
9. Me: it was a little bit like Mario Cart for a while there
10. E3: is he smiling at all?
11. is he enjoying this?
12. Me: no
13. E3: wow
14. E1: I was, like, scared
15. E2: I thought for a while there he was doing it as like a joke
16. coz he was getting, like, so close to that cone
17. E1: did you guys
18. Me: that was definitely
19. E1: that whole moment was just like really scary to me
20. E3: really?
21. E2: I was, like, trying to hold on to you
22. like I thought the door might fly open, and you'd be gone
23. E3: you seriously thought that?

(Recording 2.A lines 1-23)

The indicators here that the participants have come into contact with a violated expectation are given through interjections like *oh my gosh* or *whoa* along with profanity like *holy shit* or with hyperbolic descriptors and scenarios like *scary* or *I thought the door would fly open*. This emotional rhetoric will be touched on in more detail in §4.2. Here, the focus is on the expectation being violated. The rhetoric is our evidence that this expectation has been violated.

Table 6. Expectations vs. Expectation Violations in Example (6)

Expectation (A taxi driver should...)	Violation of Expectation (The taxi driver actually...)
not take curves so fast	took the curve fast
not get close to cones on the street	got close to a cone on the street

4.2 Emotional Rhetoric

Teun A. van Dijk discusses rhetoric in his book *Discourse and Context*, and in it, he describes its main functions. He states that “[the functions of rhetoric] typically enhance (or mitigate) discourse meanings and thus also emphasize (or tone down) interactional and communicative intentions” (van Dijk 2008: 191). That is to say, rhetoric is meant to persuade the listener, specifically to persuade the listener of what is good and what is bad according to the speaker. This persuasion is accomplished through devices such as *hyperbole*, *swearing*, *metaphors*, and more.

In this study, the participants use rhetoric in accordance to their held value system as it matches or clashes with the perceived value system of the surrounding host culture. The speaker’s goal in using rhetorical devices is to persuade the other expatriates listening that the speaker’s value system is good should there be any uncertainty on the part of the listener. Van Dijk notes that making distinctions between in-groups and out-groups “typically involves rhetorical emphasis on any positive attributes of *Us*, and emphasis on any negative attribute of *Them*, and vice versa” (van Dijk 2008: 192). The data of this study supports this assessment as the participants are often seen using this rhetorical emphasis when evaluating their host culture.

4.2.1 In narrative discourse

The narrative discourses in the data are rich with rhetorical devices used by the participants to evaluate. Often, narratives give the speaker space to emphasize and enhance their speech in a way that other genres of discourse do not. In many cases, the speaker has the uninterrupted attention of the listener, and this allows the speaker to embellish their discourse with persuasive rhetoric.

Let’s take another look at E26’s story about getting a street shave:

(7)

8. E26: I trusted one of those like army guys cutting hair on the street
9. and asked him to do mine
10. to give me a straight shave and he
11. I had a full beard
12. he did it without shaving cream
13. he just put water on my face and took a blade to my face
14. and there were like big patches of hair that he like couldn't get
15. and like he cut my throat so many times that he just stopped
16. and he was like 'I'm sorry. I can't do this.'
17. and I was like 'You're right. You can't do this.'"

(Recording 10.E lines 8-17)

E26 was purposeful in his choice of language in this example. He wanted to emphasize how traumatizing this experience was for him by using hyperbolic statements like *he cut my throat so many times* in line 15. Also, E26 wanted the listeners of his narrative to focus on the dangerousness and painfulness of the experience by choosing to call the razor being used by the man on the street a *blade*. This choice ensured that the listeners had a more extreme mental representation of his story than just an average, hygienic experience.

Once E26 finished the main part of his narrative, he continued by describing the results of his shave:

(8)

20. E26: and so my face was all like chafed and fucked up
21. and I had to go home and shave it over the like shaved skin
22. it was like [E26 makes a grinding noise here]
23. it was like grinding like cuts with my razor blade
24. it was gross

(Recording 10.E lines 20-24)

Here, E26 used extreme descriptors to describe the results of his shave. In line 20, he used a negative expletive to drive home his point, and in line 22, he used an ostensive-inferential noise mimicking the aggressive sound that his razor was making when he shaved over the affected area. Finally, he gave his final and direct evaluation of the whole situation by calling it *gross*.

In another example, E2 told of his experience with a taxi driver in Hong Kong that didn't want to drive to the location that E2 had requested even after E2 and E4 had already loaded the taxi with equipment:

(9)

66. E2: well we waited in line for like thirty-five minutes
67. we hop in a taxi
68. we're super late
69. we load all our shit in and he's like I can't take you
70. and were like uh we're just gonna sit here
71. E3: we should've just got in the car
72. E2: just get into the car
73. that's the number one thing
74. E3: yeah
75. E2: just hop in and then what?
76. he like has to physically pull you out with all your shit
77. like three thousand pounds that's the game dude

(Recording 8.A lines 66-77)

In this example, E2 used hyperbolic speech in line 77 to show a few things. First, it showed his annoyance at having loaded all his things into the taxi only to have the taxi driver inform him that he cannot take them to the desired location. This speech also showed that the participant knew he had the upper hand because if the taxi driver didn't take them to the location, then he must physically remove the participant's heavy gear. E2 was expressing that his need to get where he needs to go and the effort he put

into getting his things into the taxi were more important than whatever reason the driver might have had for not wanting to take the participant to his location.

4.2.2 *In non-narrative discourse*

When studying this data, I found that the participants were more likely to use emotive rhetoric in narrative discourse than in non-narrative discourse. Narrative discourse gives the speaker more space to deploy rhetorical devices. However, there were cases of participants using rhetorical devices in non-narrative speech reacting to the situation at hand in real-time, especially if that situation was markedly unique to the participant.

Taking another look at the “crazy” taxi ride from §4.1.1, it is clear that emotional rhetoric plays a key role in the overall evaluation of the taxi ride and, essentially, the taxi driver himself:

(10)

1. E1: oh my gosh
2. E2: whoa whoa
3. E3: what’s it called when you’re like on a curve?
4. E1: opportunity curve

(Recording 2.A lines 1-4)

In this first exchange, E1 and E2 noted that the driver was taking the curve faster than they would have liked by using interjections in lines 1 and 2.

In example (11), E1 used the descriptor *scary* and E2 used profanity:

(11)

7. E1: oh this is like scary
8. E2: holy shit

(Recording 2.A lines 7-8)

And in two instances, as shown in lines 6 and 22-23 in examples (12) and (13), E2 used a hypothetical scenario to express his discomfort:

(12)

6. E2: what if the door just, like, flew open?

(Recording 2.A line 6)

(13)

22. E2: I was, like, trying to hold on to you

23. like I thought the door might fly open and you'd be gone

(Recording 2.A lines 22-23)

The participants knew that the door was not likely to *fly open*. Also, although E1's exclamations that this experience is *scary* may have been representative of how he truly felt, it is more likely that his fear was minimal and that he was expressing his belief that the taxi was not being driven well or in a safe way through this hyperbolic speech. The same could be said for E2's hypothetical scenario of saying *the door might fly open*. It is impossible to know if he really believed this, but it is an extreme hypothetical for the situation at hand. Therefore, it is far more likely that this extreme hypothetical is being utilized as a method in which to evaluate the taxi driver's ability to drive and possibly the safety or sturdiness of the car itself.

In example (14), one participant used similarly hyperbolic speech. When E2 arrived in China, he had an experience with the agency that hired him which colored his first moments in the country. The agency had changed most of what they told him before he arrived in China. This, combined with the culture shock of moving to a new country, gave him a strong emotion towards this new host culture. This was a stressful time for him, and he is conveying that through a strong, emotional word, *hate*.

(14)

42. E2: oh yeah uh

43. back then I just remember McDonalds. How much I hate China.

(Recording 3.B lines 42-43)

It is not known explicitly if E2 truly meant that he hated China. The use of the term within the broader scope of the conversation was to bring attention to the extreme emotion that the host culture can elicit in an expatriate, specifically in E2.

Emotional rhetoric is the courier of heightened emotion. The speakers employed this tactic when they wanted to convey the extremity of the situation that they were describing. Profanity and hyperbolic speech bring attention to the 'unusualness' of the discourse topic. When talking about the host culture, expatriates used emotional rhetoric almost as if to say "Hey, look at how crazy this situation is. This isn't what should normally happen." Thus, they brought the focus onto the dissimilarity between their two cultures, and ultimately, bolstered their own unity by highlighting their similarities with each other.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 4 discussed how the participants employed evaluative speech in their discourse with one another. Chapter 5 discusses the connection between employing evaluative speech and maintaining relations within the expatriate community. First, I show that evaluative speech is being accepted and reciprocated by the listeners through acknowledgement and agreement as well as through contributions. Then, I examine the relation between evaluative speech and community building and maintenance.

5.1 Discourse actions that show the evaluative language is accepted and reciprocated

The analysis in chapter 4 showed that expatriates use evaluative discourse about the host culture around them. This study proposes that they do this as a way of maintaining relations with each other. The best indication that this is the case is shown through the other expatriates' (the other discourse participants) reaction to the given evaluative statements. Evaluative offerings are meaningless to the act of maintaining relations unless the listeners accept them and/or reciprocate them. They show acceptance through acknowledgement and agreement, and they reciprocate it through contributions.

5.1.1 Acknowledgement and Agreement

Acknowledgement and agreement are distinct discourse functions, and this section briefly describes the function of each. For the purposes of this study, acknowledgement and agreement are considered under the same umbrella of 'acceptance' in that listeners of the discourse use these functions to signal to the speaker that there is no objection to the stated evaluation and to keep the discourse flowing.

Acknowledgement, for many conversation analysts, fits into the category of a ‘back’ response because the speakers who use acknowledgement tokens, such as *yeah* and *mmhmm*, do not take the conversational floor. Rather, they allow the speaker to extend their space on the conversational floor (Drummond & Hopper 1993: 11-13). *Agreement*, on the other hand, indicates whether participants want to close a topic or continue it by checking shared values (Wang et al. 2010). Although agreement is more active than acknowledgement in the realm of discourse flow, they both leave the speaker’s contributions unchallenged, keep the discourse flowing, and ultimately, maintain relations between discourse participants by leaving an assumption between participants that their value systems are in alignment.

Example (15) showcases narrative evaluation from E2 and agreement from the listener, E3. E2 explains to E3 the process that he has to go through while ordering lighters online from a supplier in a neighboring city. The guy that he is buying the lighters from told him not inform the mail carrier that the package being sent to him is flammable because the mail carrier won’t actually carry it if it is. Throughout the story, E2 displays his negative opinion of the hold up on the lighters he is ordering from the mail carrier, while E3 listens along and shows his agreement:

(15)

48. E2: and then Steve said don’t tell the guy who’s delivering it that it’s flammable
49. or something like that
50. E3: no way
51. E2: yeah so like don’t
52. so like when they transport it
53. I think they were trying to keep it a secret
54. so they told me not to say anything
55. E3: gotchya
56. E2: how weird is that?
57. I guess it’s like maybe he like throws it next to his exhaust pipe
58. and everything just blows up.

59. I don't know
 60. E3: dude that'd be nuts
 61. I can't even imagine

(Recording 3.B lines 48-61)

Many of the clues for E2's opinion about the mail carrier not wanting to carry flammable goods are in his intonation and in the way that E3 responds to his description. For example, he has emphasized the word *then* in line 48 in a way that indicates to E3 that something unexpected is going to happen in the story. It isn't until line 56 that E2 gives an indication in words that the situation is weird to him. E3's response in line 50 is a better indication that E2 has said something unexpected. E3 responds with *no way* in an incredulous tone that matches the incredulous tone in E2's voice that it seems weird that one cannot tell the mail carrier about flammable objects.

Example (16) shows a case of agreement and acknowledgement. In this example, E3 shares his evaluation of what he perceives to be the general feeling towards communism among Chinese nationals. E27, the listener here, actively shows his agreement by finishing E3's thought, and E3 acknowledges that this is in alignment with his initial evaluation:

(16)

126. E3: It's kind of weird like
 127. like what China is like to the outside world as a communist thing like
 128. and then you meet individual people
 129. and I mean no one's like super opposed to it
 130. but I don't think anyone's like
 131. E27: super into it
 132. E3: yeah

(Recording 5.C lines 126-132)

At the end of E3's statement in line 130, he finishes with *like*. This filler word means that E3 is waiting to finish his sentence. E27 jumps in with his own end to the

statement by saying *super into it*. E3 agrees with E27's contribution in line 131. This interaction shows the solidarity felt between expats 3 and 27 about their shared experience living in China. E3 presents his own assessment of what living in communist China is like from his perspective. E27 shows his mutual feelings on the subject by completing E3's evaluative statement, and finally, E3 accepts E27's contribution with his acknowledgement of *yeah*. Example (16) shows that acknowledgement and agreement in evaluative discourse is an ongoing process, which insures that participants are not in conflict and that the discourse can flow undisrupted.

In example (17), E6 is telling the other participants about the end of the year ceremony at the school where he teaches. E17 is asking him questions for more information:

(17)

4. E6: there's music playing
5. last year I went to a hotel
6. you get dressed up
7. E17: so what do you do?
8. do you sit down and watch a ceremony
9. or do you actually mingle?
10. E6: mingle
11. but there are performances in between too
12. it was weird
13. E17: that sounds awful.
14. E6: yeah it's pretty shitty
15. there's alcohol though

(Recording 10.A lines 4-15)

Earlier in the discourse, E6 had tried to convince any of his listeners to join him at this ceremony. His description of the ceremony at the beginning in line 4 was not negative, just a description of the events. E17 shows interest in E6's description by asking for more information, but it is clear by her lexical use of the word *actually* in line 9 and the

tone of her question when she asks *do you sit down and watch a ceremony?* that she does not find this event appealing. E6's speech becomes negatively evaluative in line 12 when he declares that *it was weird*, matching E17's perspective. E17 overtly evaluates the ceremony in line 13 by calling it *awful*, and E6 jumps on board by agreeing with her in line 14 and calling it *shitty*. E6 has matched E17's assessment of the ceremony, and now, they are both in agreement. E6 does try one last time to convince someone to attend the ceremony with him by saying *there's alcohol though*.¹³

Within the flow of discourse, it is easier for a listener to accept a negative evaluation than to oppose it. E6 certainly changed from a neutral explanation to a negative evaluation in example (17) above based on E17's own negative evaluation. Because discourse flow may have an effect on the agreement of the listener, it is not wholly possible to attribute these agreements to an act of maintaining relations, although discourse flow and maintaining relations are not mutually exclusive. Still, not all evaluative statements about the host culture made by the expatriates are negative. There are certainly times when a member of the community makes a neutral evaluation as in example (18):

(18)

8. E5: now I be¹⁴ like he's¹⁵ from north.
9. coz northerners are usually very confident
10. E3: that's true
11. E5: even when they don't know what they're doing of course they know
12. E3: yeah

(Recording 3.D lines 8-12)

¹³ Nobody actually agreed to go with him.

¹⁴ Participant E5 does not speak English as their first language, and the transcription here is accurate.

¹⁵ E5 and E3 are riding in a taxi, and *he* in line 8 refers to the taxi driver

In this example, participant E5 is generalizing what she thinks to be a character trait among Chinese nationals who are from the northern part of China. She believes, from her experience, that northern Chinese are confident regardless of what they do or do not actually know. This statement was not given a negative or positive evaluation. It does not show whether E5 thinks this kind of confidence is good or bad. Its inherent goodness or lack thereof is not important in this exchange. It only matters that she believes it to be true and that E3 agrees with her by saying *that's true* and not opposing the discourse flow with disagreement.

5.1.2 Contributions

Contribution in discourse can take different forms. Often, this strategy was employed by the participants in a 'one-upping' style of conversation. One conversant makes a statement, and another conversant provides an anecdote similar to the first conversant's anecdote. Adding to the narrative or supplying one's own related narrative gives the implication that the participant agrees with the original evaluation by not only allowing the discourse to continue flowing in the same direction but by contributing to that discourse.

Because so many of the participants have a shared occupation,¹⁶ they end up with similar shared experiences. When one expatriate talks about something that happened to them at their school, which is usually something that would be out of the ordinary in a Western school, the other expatriates are usually quick to contribute their own stories that are similar. These narrative contributions are more than just an attempt to contribute to the discourse and keep it flowing. When a participant contributes a similar narrative to the original, evaluative narrative, they are aligning themselves with the original participant and their assessment of what occurred in the narrative.

¹⁶ English teaching

A good example of narrative, evaluative contributions starts with example (4) that was already examined in § 4.1.1 as an example of violated expectations. I discussed how E6's narrative described his underlying expectations of how a school should react to alcohol on the grounds. Ultimately, his expectations were violated by the reaction of the office workers that he reported the bottle of alcohol to. He shows in his retelling that he believes there should be no drinking at school, but his coworkers violated that expectation by offering to drink it.

(19)

15. E6: I took it¹⁷ and then I brought it to the office
16. and they were like oh you want to drink it?
17. and I was like no I don't want to drink it
18. this is school
19. that's not allowed in school

(Recording 10.G lines 15-19)

E6's narrative evaluation of his school's response to alcohol on the school grounds began a series of contributions of similar stories from the listeners. Directly after E6's narrative, E26 jumps in with his own story about alcohol at his school. The tone of his narrative is both one of disbelief and lightheartedness as he describes drunk fourth graders at his school. His story aligns with E6's initial evaluation in that he retells his co-teacher's reaction to the drunk fourth graders as underwhelming.

(20)

20. E26: two of my fourth graders came to class hammered
21. fourth graders hammered
22. it was hilarious
23. the teacher like grabbed them
24. and they were really red in the face and kept laughing
25. and I didn't know why
26. and the head teacher like came in and dragged them out

¹⁷ *it* refers to the bottle of alcohol.

27. and then came back and was like
 28. don't worry
 29. they were a little drunk
 30. and I was like what
 31. and she was like they drank too much beer during lunch
 32. and I was like they're eight
 33. she was like yeah
 34. I sent them home
 35. I was like alright

(Recording 10.G lines 20-35)

In line 29 of example (20), E26 quotes his co-teacher as saying *don't worry*, and in line 30 says that they were *a little drunk*. E26 indicates that this is too calm a response to kids drinking with his reaction in line 31, asking *what?*. Once again, E26 reports that his co-teacher gives a lackadaisical response in line 32 that the students *drank too much beer during lunch* as if there was a right amount of beer. E26 reminds the co-teacher that kids should not be drinking at all by telling her *they're eight*.

E12 listens to both E6's story and E26's story, and in response to their evaluations, he immediately contributes his own about finding a group of students in the act of drinking alcohol at school.

(21)

36. E12: we had students in my school that got caught with alcohol
 37. one of them did try to claim that the uh
 38. the Mai Mai¹⁸ place delivered it and gave it to them for free
 39. um it was such bullshit
 40. oh they said it was a free drink
 41. you know a free drink deal

¹⁸ Name of a restaurant near E12's school.

42. and they gave this¹⁹ to me.

(Recording 10.G lines 36-42)

These examples of alcohol in school, examples (19), (20), and (21), show how one member of the community brought forth a representation of their value-system as it pertains to alcohol at school. The participants—E6, E26, and E12—discuss their mutual experiences at their schools. Each of them can relate to the others a story about finding their students with alcohol and a lax attitude from Chinese teachers towards alcohol at school. E6 presents the discourse by talking about a large bottle of alcohol he found in his students' possession. After he relays his story, E26 and E12, in turn, contribute their own, similar story that aligns with the value-system that E6 put forward. By the end of the discourse, each of these participants has now made known that they hold the same expectations for conduct as it pertains to alcohol at school, which is distinct from their idea of how the host culture conducts itself as it pertains to the same matter.

The contributions from examples (19), (20), and (21) are good examples of how expatriate discourse participants contribute stories that exemplify the differences between the expatriate community's value-system and the host culture's value-system and paint them in a negative light. In contrast to these negatively held opinions of the host culture, some contributions made by expatriates in other examples were based on a shared ideal of why living in China is preferable to living back in their own native countries. In example (22) below, four of the participants, who actively participate in the music scene, talk about why China has been a better location for playing music:

(22)

1. E4: like actually the majority of my
2. E2: majority
3. E4: of my live music performance experiences in life have come in China

¹⁹ *this* refers to the story that E12's students gave him about why they had possession of alcohol at school.

4. and the U.S. is more just like jamming in basements and creating music and having fun
5. but here it's like ok well there's a lot of opportunities to perform and play
6. and there's so many people
7. E2: that's exactly what would be perfect for the video
8. we've had opportunities here
9. E3: it's really easy to find shows, like
10. and get like people coming out like
11. E2: like yeah we're headlining
12. E3: like yeah
13. E2: like major um what's it called
14. E1: venues
15. E2: livehouses venues
16. that's a lot harder to do I feel like in a lot of other places
17. like book a tour
18. like a thirteen stop tour?
19. E4: yup China has the infrastructure
20. it just doesn't have all of the talent to fill it up yet
21. E2: it's not an over saturated market like it is in America

(Recording 2.D lines 1-21)

Here, the topic of conversation is the American music scene versus the Chinese music scene. E4 starts by evaluating how the Chinese music scene has more opportunities to perform compared to just *jamming in basements* like it is in E4's experience of the American music scene. E2 first just acknowledges and agrees that *we've had opportunities here*. E3 contributes his own assessment by talking about how easy it is to book shows and get people to come out to shows, which prompts E2 to also add his own positive evaluation of the Chinese music scene by talking about being able to headline shows and book a tour. By the end, each of the participants has contributed their positive experience with the Chinese music scene, and they agree that it provides more opportunities than the United States music scene provides.

5.2 Evaluative Language as Maintaining Relations

In this section, I will show that not only are expatriates in Shenzhen using evaluation in their discourse, but they are using that evaluative language for a specific sociological purpose. That is to say, they are using evaluative language that is unique to their circumstances as an expatriate in Shenzhen, to maintain relations with other members of the expatriate community.

Hunston and Thompson (2000: 8-10) give maintaining relations as one of the three main discourse functions of evaluation.²⁰ One of the ways in which this function is employed is through manipulation. Manipulation is used to persuade the listener (or reader) to see things from the speaker's perspective, specifically through the use of covert methods in which the speaker does not acknowledge that they are attempting to manipulate the listener (Carter & Nash 1990; Hart 2013). Hunston and Thompson (2000: 8) put it like this, "Expressing something as a problem...makes it difficult for the reader not to accept it as such." If the listener wants to detach themselves from the value-system underlying the expressed opinion, they must make an effort to do so. It is simpler to accept and identify with the speaker's evaluation than to oppose it,²¹ and regardless of how the listener truly feels about the evaluation being expressed, this agreement leaves these two participants aligned under the umbrella of a communal value-system expressed to each other through evaluation.

Most examples of manipulation through evaluation are subtle. Agreement can often double as maintaining relations and as a way to keep the discourse running along smoothly. In these cases, the power that evaluation has over the listener is not always

²⁰ The other functions are expressing opinion and organizing discourse. (Hunston & Thompson 2000: 8-10).

²¹ Similarly, Brown and Levinson state that disagreement on the part of the listener is a face threatening act (FTA) and that one use of politeness in speech is the maintenance of the other's face needs (Brown & Levinson 1987).

clear. However, let's look at E26's shaving story one more time, but this time the example will include E26's interaction with the listeners of the story. Example (23) occurs just before E26's narrative about his street shaving experience. One of the listeners, E12, wants to know if E26 has ever received one of these shaves:

(23)

1. E12: did you get uh the straight razor down?
2. E26: nah I can't do that dude
3. E12: well I had a guy do that for me uh
4. E26: I tried that twice here
5. and they slit my throat so hard
6. E12: they did a good job for me
7. I was pretty happy uh

(Recording 10.E lines 1-7)

E26 gives his opinion about these street shaves by using the emotional rhetoric in line that *they slit my throat so hard*. It is clear that his opinion is decidedly negative. Interestingly, E12 makes that difficult conscious effort to oppose the opinion that E26 has expressed. This disagreement throws a wrench into the development of this discourse and to the relationship of these two expatriate members. However, E26 expands on his original statement:

(24)

6. E12: they did a good job for me
7. I was pretty happy uh
8. E26: I trusted one of those like army guys cutting hair on the street
9. and asked him to do mine
10. to give me a straight shave and he
11. I had a full beard
12. he did it without shaving cream
13. he just put water on my face and took a blade to my face
14. and there were like big patches of hair that he like couldn't get
15. and like he cut my throat so many times that he just stopped
16. and he was like "I'm sorry. I can't do this."

17. and I was like you're right you can't do this
18. E12: oh my god that's terrible
19. E26: and so my face was all like chafed and fucked up
20. and I had to go home and shave it over the like shaved skin
21. it was like [E26 makes a sound to emulate the razor scraping his skin]
22. it was like grinding like cuts with my razor blade
23. it was gross
24. E12: that's really brutal

(Recording 10.E lines 6-27)

E12 changes his tune now that E26 expands his narrative about his experience getting a street shave. E26 has shared his opinion multiple times (lines 16, 19-20, 22, and 26) over the course of this conversation, and it would be difficult on the part of E12, the listener, to do anything but align himself with E26. If E12 had decided to continue opposing E26, then the discourse would have broken down and the relation between E12 and E26 would not have been maintained. E26's evaluation had the power to manipulate E12 into seeing things his way, and ultimately, they were able to end the discourse aligned under one shared opinion, and the conversation was able to resume its flow. This return to conversational flow is itself an indicator of the solidarity between E26 and E12 (Koudenburg et al. 2013), but that flow is only achieved by E26's evaluative narrative manipulating E12 into maintaining relations.

With Us/Them polarizing behavior²² in the expatriate community, it is tempting to boil down that difference to Western immigrants versus Eastern natives: 'Us' equals

²² Us vs. Them behavior can also be classified as In-group vs. Out-group behavior as described by Henri Tajfel (2010) in Social Identity Theory. This theory predicts social behaviors based on the perceptions of individuals have about their in-group. This perception of identity dictates the way that individuals classify themselves (Us) and those outside of their group identification (Them). In the case of this study, the expatriates are the *Us* and the host culture (Chinese Nationals) are the *Them*.

Western and 'Them' equals Eastern. This objective social construction is too simplistic an explanation for the phenomenon that is happening here, and I believe van Dijk would agree. There is more to this relationship, which is why I have formed this study around the mental representation of expatriates as a community by the expatriates in the community and not around the objective social construction of this community. One of the main supportive pieces of data for evaluative language use for maintaining relations is participant E7. E7 is different from the other members of the expatriate community. She is not from a Western culture. She is a Chinese national and a Shenzhen local.

I have categorized participant E7 as a member of the expatriate community not because she merely hangs around with the other Western expatriates (she does), but because she participates in the social and cultural norms that the expatriate community participates in together. This includes evaluating the local culture from the expatriate value-system.

In example (25), E7 is at a dinner with five other community members²³ at one of their apartments; the same dinner in which example (3) was extracted from with participant E13. Prior to example (25), the group has been discussing how Chinese teacher agencies or other job placement organizations treat (or mistreat) English teachers that come to the country to teach. E7 discusses her experience working with English teachers at a training center that she previously worked at:

(25)

1. E7: when I was working for a training center
2. I got to teach high school level kids
3. and like my boss were really impressed that I was like able to teach

²³ The five other community members are Western, and E7 is the only Chinese national at the gathering.

- grammar and English and everything
4. and then they hired foreign teachers
 5. the foreign teachers only get to teach preschool and first graders
 6. just because they have the face to show that
 7. parents that your kids are going to a school with foreigners
 8. I was like being a TA over there
 9. and I literally saw the foreign teachers suffer
 10. like suffer from it
 11. from the chaos and everything
 12. and I just truly felt bad for them and

(Recording 9.D lines 1-12)

In lines 5-7, E7 is referring to a common complaint among expatriate teachers in China and in other programs as well. Sometimes, a job is advertised as a teaching position when, in fact, the school only wants a native English speaker to play with the little kids and to be a foreign face to the parents who are often paying a lot of money to send their kids to an English school or program. In those situations, the English teacher is not given much power or responsibility, and they very rarely end up teaching; instead, they are assisting the Chinese national English teacher. This is not the case for every English teaching position, but it is a common complaint.

In lines 5 and 6, E7 is noting that teaching preschool and first graders is a negative thing compared to her position teaching grammar to high school students. Our lexical clue here is the use of the word *only* as a way of signifying that this is not a very high position. E7's assertion that this is not a high position is her way of aligning herself with the expatriate value-system. Remember that in example (3), E13 asserted something similar by noting that his friend was offered a high school position, but *actually* only got to teach at a middle school. E13's narrative was only three minutes before E7's narrative here. Furthermore, E7 not only aligns herself with that same value-system, but she also puts herself inside of it to commiserate with the foreign teachers as she notes in lines 10-12. She watches the foreign teachers *suffer*, and she 'feels truly bad for them'.

E7 uses narrative to evaluate the local culture (her culture) as a way of maintaining relations with the expatriate community, specifically the ones sitting at the same table as her at this dinner. She uses this narrative in the same way that the other participants used it in their discourse as discussed in §4.1.1. Her efforts are not in vain because the other participants in the discourse respond to her accordingly in example (26), which occurs shortly after example (25).

(26)

15. E7: the sketchy thing about the Chinese center that I worked for is like
16. they just target the foreigners that just land in China
17. and just like throw them
18. E11: to the wolves

(Recording 9.D lines 15-18)

Here in example (26), E11 contributes to E7's commentary on the training center that she worked at. E11 shares the same sentiment of the other participants that organizations like this do not have the foreign teachers best interests at heart, and she finishes E7's sentence with what she believes E7 is trying to say.

E7's use of similar narratives and the responses of the other expatriates show that E7 is a member of this community based on a shared value-system exemplified in evaluations of the local, Shenzhen culture. However, it is not a perfect fit. There is a notable difference to E7's membership in this community. Looking back at example (26), E7 does align herself with the communal value-system of the expatriate community, but she also refers to foreign teachers as *them*. So although E7 shares a value-system, there is recognition that E7 is different. She is not a foreigner, and she is not Western.

However, this alone is not enough to detract from E7's membership in the community. In fact, it supports this idea that the expatriate community is not built on identity as a Westerner in an Eastern country. It is a community of practice that has

built itself around the mismatch that exists between the expatriate value-system and the host culture value-system. The objectivity of a social fact, like being an expatriate, does not control talk as much as the subjective understanding of how this social fact controls talk (van Dijk 2008: 118-120). E7 shares a value-system with the expatriate community that is different from the value-system of the culture that she grew up in. Because of this, E7 maintains relations with others in this community by noting that difference evaluatively in her discourse participation with the other expatriate members.

Grice (1975) explains that all conversation assumes a certain level of cooperation from the participants and that conversation then becomes a cooperative activity. The participants in the conversation add their own similarly shared set of values by contributing further relevant propositions. E7's contributions, along with the contributions of the other participants, are those relevant propositions that keep the discourse flowing. When E7 participates in conversations with participants from her other social networks—like her Chinese national communities—she most likely tailors her discourse cooperation according to the value-system of her listeners, and her contributions will likely not include a negative evaluation of Chinese culture. However, when E7 is with the expatriate community, her discourse contributions are tailored accordingly. The assumption of cooperation is fulfilled and value-systems are aligned. Thus, community is built and maintained.

This chapter discussed the fact that expatriates use evaluative speech about the local host culture to maintain relations with one another. Their agreement to and their participation in the evaluative aspects of the discourse indicate their inclusion in the shared underlying value-system of the community. This concept is no more clear than in the case of E7. Her participation in the evaluation of the local culture, even though she is a member of the local culture, shows that inclusion in the expatriate community goes beyond merely being an expatriate by definition. Inclusion in the community is

dependent on the shared value-system of the expatriates, and E7 demonstrates that her value-system is in alignment with the expatriate community by participating in evaluative discourse.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This current study has looked into the ways that the expatriate community in Shenzhen, China use evaluative speech with one another in their discourse and has posited that the expatriate community uses evaluative speech to maintain relations with one another. In order to demonstrate this position, this study first discussed what is meant by the term ‘expatriate’ and then examined the demographics of the expatriate participants of this research. By using discourse analysis and Hunston and Thompson’s parameters of evaluation (2000: 22), this study determined that expatriates in Shenzhen use evaluative speech about the local host culture, and the use of this speech act signals to the listeners that the speaker shares their underlying value-system. This shared value-system, and not the objective definition of an expatriate, is what signifies membership in the community.

This is not the first study that has looked into “Us-Them” or “In-group-Out-group” behavior.²⁴ These studies are critical because every single one of us as humans belong to one group or another and these alliances affect us and our decisions on a regular basis. Although these alliances are critical for all of us, they are especially critical for expatriates. This belonging to the expatriate community and this separation from the locals of the host culture is placed in their lives and thrown in their faces every day that they live in their host culture. It is impossible to ignore or to regulate. Every day, they are reminded that they are not a member of the “Chinese National In-Group”. This reality is in their job, their commute, and in many of their activities. In a sense, this distinction is central to their existence.

²⁴ See Labov (1972), Macaulay (2005), Milroy (1991), and Perdue et al. (1990) to name a few.

It is no wonder, then, that this distinction has become central to creating and maintaining community among the expatriates. It has a large psychological impact on each of their lives, and they share it together. In China, in a place where an expatriate may feel that no one shares their value-system, that person is searching for someone who views the world from their perspective, and a way of doing that is by expressing their value-system through evaluation and determining which listeners align themselves with that opinion expressed and which ones do not.

It has been noted in this study that much of the evaluative language found in the data used by expatriates towards their host culture leans towards a negative valence. One might even label it as complaint. At a first glance, that might seem like an unfortunate way to build relationships and an unfortunate way to talk about one's host culture. Why live there if it is so frustrating? Why live there if you speak negatively of it? Why use negative evaluation as a bonding experience with others in your community?

To address these very reasonable questions, I would argue that evaluation, or expressing one's opinion, is a window into the speaker's value system and exposing that ideology can be a vulnerable thing to do. That is a powerful thing to share with another person. When participant E1 complains that there is corn on the pizza he ordered, that complaint is a little piece of himself that he has chosen to give to the other participants. Sure, it's just corn on a pizza, but that evaluation, combined with his opinions about his job or his opinion about garbage on the street, will eventually build a picture of a complete person.

To give an opinion or even to complain is to become vulnerable with the people around one's self. The other participants in the community now have information about the speaker's value system, and they can choose to join that value system or reject it at

any point in the present discourse or even a future discourse. However, to reject another's value-system is often indistinguishable the recipient from rejection of the person themselves. Both reactions, to join or to reject, have a powerful impact on a speaker's decision to align themselves with or distance themselves from that participant, and thus, a community is either born, maintained, or disbanded.

APPENDIX

The following appendix is a collection of natural conversations between the participants of this study recorded and transcribed by the primary researcher. The raw data recorded contains over 20 hours of recorded conversation, but only the contextually appropriate discourses have been included in these appendices. They are ordered by the date on which they were recorded.

RECORDING #1

Date: April 14, 2016

Location: Western style restaurant

Number of Participants: 6

[A]

1. E2: what do you think this means?²⁵
2. okay you have with the translation in there right?
3. this is the [unintelligible]²⁶ whatever guy
4. I'm trying to like confirm
5. E4: who?
6. E2: uhh the day before Xiamen.
7. that like little tiny –
8. E4: Shantou
9. E2: yeah Shantou guy
10. I asked him 'is that information fine'
11. finally responded to me
12. I think he means we should have
13. E4: don't write 'it should be dope'
14. that's not gonna translate if he clicks on that and doesn't know what it means
15. ok you have fun
16. I'm sorry like you're talking to these guys
17. I wish we can cooperate happily
18. then it should be very high
19. like this is –
20. E2: who said high?
21. E4: he said high

²⁵ E2 shows E4 a message on his phone

²⁶ E2 is trying to say the name of a city

22. E2: yeah he said, like, were gonna have high energy
23. E4: yeah but you wrote dope
24. dope is like –
25. it's not gonna be the same
26. he won't know what dope is
27. E2: he won't –
28. he gets, like, my vibe.
29. were gonna have fun
30. I said fun
31. E4: I have no idea

[B]

1. E1: yeah what's your favorite candy bar?
2. E2: oh, there's [E4]
3. uh, I like, uh
4. you guys really don't know this?
5. E1: uh
6. E2: [E1]?
7. E1: I know
8. E2: everybody just guess
9. At the count of 3.
10. one. two. three
11. R:²⁷ Reese's
12. E1: Snickers
13. E2: Reese's. Snickers.
14. you didn't guess.
15. E3: Take 5
16. E2: [E3]'s right.
17. how'd you know?
18. E3: I think you told me once
19. E2: yeah yeah

²⁷ 'R' represents myself, the researcher.

20. I told everybody at the same time
21. E1: I've never seen you eat a Take 5
22. E3: I think it was 2 days ago
23. E2: yeah where do we live?
24. E1: we live in China
25. R: I've never heard you talk about that
26. E2: where else did we live?
27. R: Korea
28. E2: Korea
29. two locations that don't have it
30. E1: I've never known you before Korea actually
31. E2: but like people would always bring them back for me
32. like, Stacey brought back a whole bunch for me.

[C]

1. E1: pizza. pizza that looks kinda good.
2. it has corn on it.
3. yay my favorite
4. E2: so Korean
5. E1: no Chinese I guess as well

[D]

1. E4: when I was I was in college I played some shows and stuff
2. but I didn't like tour around
3. E1: I guess it's very –
4. E2: he didn't even tour I don't know
5. E4: Like actually the majority of my
6. E2: majority
7. E4: of my live music performance experiences in life have come in China
8. and the US is more just like jamming in basements and creating music and having fun

9. but here it's, like, ok well there's a lot of opportunities to perform and play
10. and there's so many people
11. E2: that's exactly what would be perfect for the video
12. we've had opportunities here
13. E3: it's really easy to find shows, like
14. and get, like, people coming out, like
15. E2: like, yeah we're headlining
16. E3: like, yeah
17. E2: like, major um what's it called
18. E1: venues
19. E2: livehouses. venues
20. that's a lot harder to do I feel like in a lot of other places
21. like, book a tour
22. like, a 13 stop tour?
23. E4: yup china has the infrastructure
24. it just doesn't have all of the talent to fill it up yet
25. E2: it's not an over saturated market like it is in America
26. so that leaves room for
27. E3: shitty bands like us

RECORDING #2

Date: April 14, 2016

Location: Taxi

Number of Participants: 4

[A]

1. E1: Oh my gosh
2. E2: Whoa whoa
3. E3: What's it called when you're like on a curve?
4. E1: Opportunity curve!

[Participants making scared noises]

[E2 accidentally slams into E1]

5. E2: Oh you're a beefcake aren't ya?
6. What if the door just, like, flew open?
7. E1: Oh, this is like scary!
8. E2: Holy shit!
9. Me: It was a little bit like Mario Cart for a while there
10. E3: Is he smiling at all?
11. Is he enjoying this?
12. Me: No
13. E3: Wow
14. E1: I was, like, scared
15. E2: I thought for awhile there he was doing it as, like, a joke
16. Coz he was getting, like, so close to that cone.
17. E1: Did you guys –
18. Me: That was definitely –
19. E1: That whole moment was just, like, really scary for me
20. E3: Really?
21. E2: I was, like, trying to hold on to you
22. Like, I thought the door might fly open, and you'd be gone.
23. E3: You seriously thought that?

RECORDING #3

Date: April 17, 2016

Location: Taxi

Number of Participants: 4

[A]

1. E3: he²⁸ has to be from the north right?
2. nobody else has that accent
3. Me: sounds like it
4. E5: listen to his r's
5. if he's doing r's he's probably from the north
6. his accent is too round
7. E3: so what is he, like –
8. E5: sounds like he's –
9. E3: but if people from like the middle –
10. like, I mean pretty much –
11. E5: how about we ask him
12. alright let's place our bets
13. mmm I don't think he's from north
14. I think he's from south somewhere
15. E3: really
16. E5: I need to listen to the –

{Taxi driver answers a phone call and talks on the phone}

17. E3: he's totally from the north
18. E5: uh he said –

{E5 asks the taxi driver where he is from in Putonghua, but he does not immediately reply}

²⁸ *he* refers to the taxi driver.

19. E5: okay ignore me

{E3 and the taxi driver have a conversation in Putonghua here. E3 asks where the driver is from, and he says Hunan. E5, E3, and the taxi driver have a conversation about whether or not Hunan is in the north}

20. E5: you see it's {Chinese word}

21. E3: it's in the middle but it's still –

22. he considers himself a northerner

23. E5: well I don't.

24. you may consider his accent a northerner

25. E3: totally northern

26. E5: I don't like Hunan

27. E3: really? Why?

28. E5: because of good reasons

29. E3: have you been there?

30. E5: yes I've been there.

31. Hunan's not –

32. I just cannot –

33. I just cannot lose

34. I hate losing face

35. E3: uhhh

[B]

44. E3: right? you got 2 messages didn't you?

45. E2: yeah one was just saying it's²⁹ flammable.

46. yeah dude it's flammable

47. E3: oh good

48. E2: and then Steve said don't tell the guy who's delivering it that it's flammable

49. or something like that.

50. E3: no way

²⁹ it refers to a package of lighters that E2 is receiving in the mail.

51. E2: yeah so like don't-
52. so like when they transport it I think they were trying to keep it a secret
53. so they told me not to say anything.
54. E3: gotchya
55. E2: how weird is that?
56. I guess it's like maybe he like throws it next to his exhaust pipe and just like everything just blows up
57. I don't know.
58. E3: dude that'd be nuts.
59. I can't even imagine that
60. E2: it's pretty explosive
61. oh this is where we used to live right Angela?
62. yup
63. E5: really?
64. Me: there's a hotel nearby that we stayed at for like two weeks
65. E5: oh
66. Me: when we first got here
67. E5 so many naked girls around
68. E2: so many what
69. E5: naked girls
70. E2: wait I don't see any
71. Me: on the walls I guess
72. E2: oh yeah uh
73. back then I just remember McDonalds. How much I hate China
74. E5: aww here here
75. E2: umm so you say 'here here' quite a bit.
76. what does it mean?
77. E3: there there
78. E2: there there okay
79. here here to me means like I'm about to make a big speech

[C]

1. E2: There's plenty of bellies around here³⁰
2. Me: oh is it like the Chinese air conditioning
3. E3: yeah
4. Me: and they like put their shirt up.
5. E2: don't see very many girls doing that
6. the kids do it but they don't do it with their bellies
7. they do it with their asses out
8. E5: yeah
9. Me: and they also happen to be going poopy in the street?
10. E2: yeah well to whatever like um
11. E3: while they're getting held over the trash can
12. E2: they just shit wherever
13. E5: oh yeah

[D]

1. E5: so confident³¹
2. I like confident men like that
3. Me: ooooo
4. E5: only northerners are so confident like that
5. E3: see now you see.
6. Me: now she's jumped on the train
7. E3: there's no denying the truth
8. E5: now I be like he's from north.
9. coz northerners are usually very confident
10. E3: that's true
11. E5: even when they don't know what they're doing of course
they know
12. E3: yeah

³⁰ E2 is looking outside the taxi at pedestrians.

³¹ E5 is referring to the taxi driver

RECORDING #4

Date: April 20, 2016

Location: Local Bar

Number of Participants: 3

[A]

1. Me: did you spell your own name right?
2. Smith? Smith was it?
3. E12: I love you for that
4. did you hear about this?
5. my company I work for they like paid an agency to get the visa
6. and then they spelled my last name wrong
7. I'm in Hong Kong with her and a bunch of people
8. and I already knew they messed up part of my name
9. and we were laughing about it
10. and then everybody points out that they spelled my last name wrong
11. and I'm already in Hong Kong
12. E4: wow and what did that
13. E12: and I was just like anxious as fuck
14. E4: yeah but like
15. so what happened
16. E12: uh I got across the border coz the person didn't check
17. I had to mail it back to Beijing
18. they were like okay we'll take care of it
19. apparently it's being taken care of
20. E4: alright that's fine
21. coz I would've charged my company if that cost me like an extra week in Hong Kong
22. yeah they would've paid for it
23. they would've paid for it

24. they definitely would've had to pay for that

RECORDING #5

Date: April 22, 2016

Location: Expatriate's Apartment

Number of Participants: 5

[A]

25. E3: so did you just get a taxi from the border?
26. E27: um yeah
27. so I waked around for about 15 minutes trying to find somewhere to change my money
28. but I eventually - I just got into a taxi with Hong Kong money
29. E3: and they took it?
30. E27: yeah eventually
31. I was, like, I don't have renminbi³²
32. E2: coz you're like a local right?
33. a Hong Kong local?
34. E3: permanent resident?
35. E27: I'm a permanent resident
36. I don't know if that makes me a local
37. E3: is it hard to do that?
38. I've heard, like, at least for Chinese residency I know is really hard to get especially as a foreigner
39. E27: Hong Kong is special because you only have to live there for 7 years
40. E3: so that's pretty much the only stipulation
41. E27: yeah
42. coz it's not a - it's not a country
43. it's just a city

³² Chinese currency

44. so you can have permanent residency
 45. but I mean I got married to a Hong Kong woman
 46. so that's a shortcut I guess.
 47. E3: right

[B]

1. E3: what do you like about Hong Kong
 2. E27: um its – that's a tricky question
 3. E3: yeah
 4. E27: Hong Kong is very tense
 5. the reason I like it is because there's a lot of opportunities there
 6. sounds really like PR-y
 7. but um kind of like proving yourself
 8. if that makes sense
 9. E3: like in terms of
 10. E27: I'm the kind of person where I'm fine doing nothing basically with my life
 11. but living there you kind of have to prove that you can do stuff
 12. so that's another reason
 13. E3: coz it's so intense
 14. E27: just because it's so intense and yeah
 15. um the food's good
 16. E2: I like the sound of that
 17. E27: you being sarcastic or –
 18. E2: what?
 19. E27: you being sarcastic?
 20. E2: no
 21. I like the sound of improving - self-improvement
 22. E27: yeah I mean it's very intense
 23. the other thing is I have family there so - so that's - that's a big thing
 24. but um it's a cool place also
 25. it's just a cool place
 26. it's very convenient

[C]

27. good food. good people.
28. E3: yeah
1. E27: I don't know
2. now it's a lot
3. it's a lot different now then it was a few years ago
4. like I actually liked it more a few years ago
5. it's getting more like kind of weird now.
6. E2: how is it weird?
7. E27: coz all of the political stuff is just weird right now
8. E1: oh yeah yeah yeah
9. between this and china
10. E3: I mean
11. E27: there's just so much angst now
12. E3: I mean I didn't know how much there was until we went over to record
13. and, like, I talked to Henry
14. and he was like telling me about all of the protests coz he's been involved in like a couple of them
15. E27: yeah
16. E3: and like he's knows a lot of people who are very active in it
17. and I just like asked him to go through like what the big issues are
18. and like - and I mean I like heard or seen mentions of them on headlines here and there
19. but like I wasn't really paying attention and I didn't realize how serious it was
20. like how seriously people were actually taking it
21. E27: yeah a lot of my friends who are musicians are really into the protests
22. coz they actually went out there and like slept in the streets and stuff
23. I don't know
24. they - for me I can go home any time I want and be fine
25. but for them like they feel like they're stuck there
26. and their future is kind of bleak

27. especially as like musicians coz they're like I can't make money
28. E3: so the protests that they're involved –
29. what have they mainly been
30. E27: the occupy stuff last two - I guess it was two years ago now
31. I don't know
32. I mean yeah
33. it basically boils down to like they don't like Communism
34. that's basically what it is they want
35. all they wanted to do was vote for their chief executive which is basically like the mayor
36. like imagine New York City has a mayor right
37. they just wanted to vote for the mayor
38. but basically the candidates for the election were preselected by Beijing
39. and they were basically outraged because they assumed that they would get to freely select them
40. that was the basic thing
41. um since then it's been more and more stuff like um
42. you know a lot of the media has been slowly becoming more mainland focused
43. like for example the big English paper is called south china morning post
44. Jack Ma just bought the paper
45. so even like even if you read it now compared to last year it's more sympathetic to Beijing stuff
46. I mean for me I don't really care either way coz –
47. but you can really - really tell it's like more sympathetic towards that political like leaning
48. so stuff like that is what Hong Kong people really pissed off
49. E3: yeah gotcha yeah
50. so it's more just like
51. I mean do they think of the government
52. I mean as just going in more of a communist
53. I mean
54. E27: yeah yeah

55. and it's not just that
56. it's becoming more common
57. it's that they feel that their identity is being like demoted
58. like their culture is being kind of erased
59. and I mean even –
60. even like if you walk down the streets in downtown Mong
Kok ten years ago you could find like little noodle shops
everywhere
61. like someone could just open a noodle shop
62. but now it's just like jewelry shops and purse shops
handbag shops you know
63. targeting those rich Chinese customers instead of targeting
local people
64. so they feel like - they feel like their identity is being
thrown away
65. but for me I'm like well I don't know
66. it's kind of like I'm still on the outside so.
67. E3: totally
68. E1: it'll be interesting to see what happens in the next 5, 10 –
69. E27: I think it's just gonna get worse and worse and worse but –
70. E3: what's the treaty
71. like how long is that supposed to last in terms of - before
Hong Kong becomes –
72. E27: well they have they have the - the one - one country two
systems
73. that's supposed to last until 2047
74. E3: okay
75. E27: yeah but we'll see
76. E3: totally
77. E27: who knows?
78. how are things here?
79. are they like –
80. E1: no one talks - at least our friends - no one really talks about
it
81. like political stuff
82. E27: did you guys hear like about the booksellers who are over

- and all that
83. E1: yeah
84. E3: actually I don't know
85. I didn't ask any of my Chinese friends if they even knew
About that
86. I'm assuming it's completely silent
87. like I mean they didn't
88. I mean it's like the fact that like Tiananmen square is
completely unknown but that's like history
89. so current events wise so things like the Tianjin explosion
90. when that happened last year
91. my friends were like sending me videos that were getting
passed around the internet
92. and honestly like if it wasn't for the internet like I feel like
big events like that would be covered up
93. E27: right
94. E3: and spun in a completely different way
95. any news that didn't leak out then they would find a way
to cover it up
96. so the internet is making that more available
97. but its seems like
98. I mean the way that my friends talk about it is like
99. they expect to be censored
100. like they expect things to be taken down
101. like I don't how good the system is
102. like how they even find stuff that's been posted and censor
it
103. but there's been complaints from my friends
104. and um but it's not like
105. to the point I mean
106. they don't think they can do anything
107. I don't think anybody's ever gonna protest that I know
108. and unless something big happens or some shit happens
109. coz just in terms of their mindset
110. I think they're all very locked into this is just the way it is
111. we can't do anything about it.

112. E27: do you ever feel worried like as foreigners living here
 113. that you might say something wrong or –
 114. E3: no I guess I
 115. and I think it's partly just because I um I mean
 116. I only talk about like those kind of topics when my friends
 Bring it up
 117. and it's only like in our house or whatever and stuff like
 that
 118. E27: not in the street like revolution
 119. E3: yeah
 120. and like and it's
 121. I don't know yeah like
 122. and all the Chinese people I know are like friendly
 123. like their like I've never met anybody who's just like
 communist China I love you
 124. who's just gonna like seek
 125. like bringing anyone against it to bring it down
 126. it's kinda weird like - like what china is like to the outside
 world as a communist thing like
 127. and then you meet individual people
 128. and I mean no one's like super opposed to it
 129. but I don't think anyone's like
 130. E27 super into it
 131. E3: yeah

[D]

1. E27 I was just saying it feels chill here. Idk
2. Me: yeah I think
3. E27: feels like a small town that's getting very big
4. Me: yeah
5. E1: it's growing
6. E27: construction and –
7. E1: yeah definitely
8. E27: and poop
9. E1: lots of poop
10. Me: so much poop

11. E1: there's lots of poop
12. E2: yeah
13. they got the poop
14. E27: yeah
15. I like Hong Kong for me
16. but there is that general like anxiety that I feel this past few years especially among like younger people
17. E3: yeah interesting
18. E1: how's Ashley feel about that?
19. E27: she's fine
20. E1: yeah
21. E27: yeah
22. E3: is she not super worried about it?
23. E27: I mean she's not like 20
24. so she doesn't really have the same like
25. E1: yeah that's true
26. E27: mindset about things
27. E1: yeah
28. E3: yeah
29. E27: you know she's - she's - she's not worried about her future
30. that kind of thing
31. plus she's – she's educated
32. a lot of what I noticed is this kind of feeling is among people who are like
33. I mean it sounds bad
34. but no skills like they don't have college education
35. so they don't have things they can fall back on
36. like my buddy um was a drummer
37. he's like an amazing drummer
38. um he joined the protests
39. he's always talking about political stuff
40. and you know like if things got bad
41. he couldn't really bounce back
42. he couldn't really find like another job
43. you know like

[E]

1. E27: I like the like kind of like class it has the city has
2. E2: yeah
3. E1: yeah definitely
4. E2: is that like from uh British kind of like
5. E27: yeah
6. but where me and E1 are from the states is
7. like from Richmond
8. it's like everything's always sketchy
9. it's like there's always someone sketchy walking around
and like gunshots
10. E1: dude it's true man
11. Me: I think that's a lot of places in America
12. E1: and you feel much more safe here I'm sure
13. E2: definitely
14. E27: and being here yeah being here yeah
15. I don't know if that's Hong Kong
16. but I'm just like being here where there's basically no crime
at all
17. I can go
18. I don't know it's just super chill
19. E3: yeah
20. like I've never - like I'd walk around at night all the time
21. E27: maybe it's not just a Hong Kong thing
22. maybe it's an Asia thing
23. E1: definitely
24. like it was that way in Korea
25. I feel very comfortable
26. E3: I mean it's different for girls
27. Me: I mean yeah
28. I feel it coz guys are creepy
29. but in general I don't feel like anyone's going to mug me
30. but they might scam me by selling me like a bad DVD or
something
31. that's like the worst crime
32. I don't know

33. E1: the thing for me is that people don't have guns here like at all
34. so you don't have to worry at all
35. Me: I liked that about South Korea too
36. yeah
37. no guns thing
38. E1: so that's very nice
39. E27: I'm not saying Hong Kong's perfect
40. I just - that's where I am right now
41. Me: but then come the revolution were not armed so
42. E27: we can get knives and beer bottles
43. Me: Molotov cocktails
44. E27: yeah
45. Me: I'm into it
46. E3: push busses
47. E27: and guitars
48. we can wield our guitars
49. E1: with guitar amps
50. we can play them really loud.
51. Me: while we fight
52. just like mad max.
53. E3: yes
54. make flamethrowers

RECORDING #6

Date: April 25, 2016

Location: School Office

Number of Participants: 8

[A]

1. E20: and also we can do performances
2. you know each class can host the school assembly
3. as in like you can do some kind of performance
4. anything
5. like if you want to recite a poem drama or sing a song
6. E9: you mean come up with something in the last 3 month
7. like a drama
8. E20: I mean you don't have to do it this year but long term

[B]

1. E14: would that still be held at 8 am?
2. E20: yeah similar to what happened today
3. E14: alright um
4. I don't know how well performances will be done at 8 am
5. E11: or because their tired?
6. or
7. E9: no Monday morning 8 am
8. E14: no coz they haven't woken up yet
9. E8: it's like the first day of the week
10. E14: they're not awake yet

11. and it's the first day of the week
12. E8: and the first day of the
13. E20: are you saying we should do it every Friday?
14. E8: and E14 no
15. maybe we just shouldn't include the performances
16. I think hosting is fine like if you want people to come up and host
17. but a performance
18. but that
19. if you're wanting our feedback

[C]

1. E20: and I think they're going to rehearse in 50 minutes
2. they're going to rehearse the opening ceremony in 50 minutes apparently
3. E9: oh today
4. right yeah
5. E20: yeah so we'll see how the opening ceremony rehearsal will go and give you some feed back
6. E21: okay
7. anna said they have an hour rehearsal today and an hour rehearsal tomorrow
8. E10: oh yeah
9. E8: it's like competition for the Olympics
10. E10: can't they just do this in P.E. class?
11. E20: sorry?
12. E10: coz I think
13. E15: like my kids are losing all their art class
14. they're losing Chinese
15. E20: this is all just because of opening ceremony?
16. E8: that's a lot
17. E20: they're just marching for one hour?
18. E10: is the government going to be there?
19. E8: this is a very unique field day
20. E2: very advanced marching

[D]

1. E10: I would check that heavily E11
2. no offense but that's something they usually mess up
3. so
4. E8: that's what I was saying
5. E20: you can't rely on their
6. E10: no to be honest you can't
7. you remember Halloween right
8. E20: yeah but maybe the Chinese department have become a bit more organized
9. E10: I've been here six years
10. seriously I wouldn't depend on them getting that right
11. E20: you need something like translations of time period and class
12. Me: like a program

[E]

1. E8: 600 kids and 600 parents
2. not really but let's just say
3. and ten events
4. E21: 60 kids at each event
5. E8: that's what I was saying
6. E21: so 120 people at each event
7. if you count the parent for each child
8. E9: so I'm just wondering
9. they obviously know what they're doing
10. but if they could explain it to me so I understand it better
11. E10: no E9 they don't
12. they don't
13. you've been here long enough
14. you know they don't understand what they're doing
15. E9: I know
16. so I would like a
17. E20: so I guess what you're suggesting

18. that they specify station
19. like specifying groups
20. E9: I just don't see how they can get 600 kids at ten stations
21. E10: ok
22. they should let us review their lines
23. like give their hands to us and review
24. coz they need it
25. you know they mess this stuff up

RECORDING #7

Date: May 2, 2016

Location: Train Station

Number of Participants: 5

[A]

1. E4: wanna go play some egg soccer?
2. E2: egg!
3. yeah!
4. do you wanna go play with those?
5. E1: throwing eggs?
6. E3: can you stop throwing stuff thanks
7. E2: oh that is super inconvenient
8. oh my god
9. E3: oh my arm is so muscular
10. that's not gonna fit through there
11. E2: oh a foot maybe or this.
12. E1: this will work

RECORDING #8

Date: May 9, 2016

Location: Expatriate's Apartment

Number of Participants: 7

[A]

78. E4: I think the angriest I ever saw him³³ is when we were in
Hong Kong trying to get those taxis
79. and that taxi
80. like we had three different taxi guys
81. like you guys said they were like no we can't take you
there
82. and you made them go there anyway
83. we had 2 guys
84. we loaded up the taxi and then
85. E4: oh that's what happened to you guys?
86. E3: and then we told them
87. E2: we got the fuck out of there
88. E3: they're like no we won't go there
89. and we were like we already put this shit in here
90. we're going there
91. we're running late
92. and then he was like he was like no no no no no
93. and he starts taking our stuff out
94. and E1's just like ohhh
95. you could tell he was about to flip out
96. E2: but he doesn't like ever like address anything
97. E4: our guy was
98. our guy was great
99. he was like but I can't go there

³³ *Him* refers to participant E1 who is not currently in this conversation

100. and we were like
101. E2: can't you flip around?
102. E4: and we were like but we got a show
103. and please sir you know like
104. E3: eventually we got this one guy who was like
105. E4: please this is really important to us
106. E3: you could tell he was like no I don't want to
107. I don't want to
108. and then we were like can you?
109. and he was like
110. he was like yeah
111. and then he was already like driving
112. he was like you know
113. if you had any other taxi driver like they would've
cussed you out
but I'm just a nice guy
114. E12: where were you guys going like where did you want to
go?
115. E3: it was actually really nearby
116. E4: our guy was really
117. he wasn't angry
118. he was sad
119. he was really sad
120. E3: and there were two separate lines
121. and one line was for one side of the bay and one was for
the other side of the bay or whatever
122. and we just wanted to go right over the bridge and go
where the venue was
123. and he was like you gotta go wait in that line
124. you gotta go wait in that line
125. there were no taxis
126. and we stood there for like half an hour
127. over half an hour and no taxis had gone to that line like
128. and like there was taxi after taxi coming to this other
line
129. and so it was just like

130. we were like no you're taking us here
131. E2: well we waited in line for like thirty-five minutes
132. we hop in a taxi
133. we're super late
134. we load all our shit in and he's like I can't take you
135. and were like uh we're just gonna sit here
136. E3: we shoulda just got in the car
137. E2: just get into the car
138. that's the number one thing
139. E3: yeah
140. E2: just hop in and then what?
141. he like has to physically pull you out with all your shit
142. like three thousand pounds
143. that's the game dude
144. E3: well we realized it afterwards and
145. E12: was this this past weekend?
146. E4: did you tip him at all?
147. E2: yeah it was like five days ago
148. E12: oh damn
149. E3: we didn't
150. E4: well no he didn't
151. he wouldn't take it right?
152. E2: sorry?
153. E4: he gave you the change back
154. E2: he gave me the change back
155. E3: did you guys get stuck in traffic pretty bad like near the end?
156. there was an accident like near that area
157. that's what our guy told us
158. E2: we would've missed it by like miles if Rocky hadn't run out and like smacking the
159. E4: that was amazing
160. E3: really?
161. E2: he like ran out into traffic and was like smacking on the trunk
162. E3: you guys were there like an hour before us

163. E2: and I thought we just like hit some dude
 164. like it sounded like we just hit somebody like
 165. E4: yeah
 166. E2: and we were like oh fuck
 167. E4: and we were like oh we just got in an accident
 168. E2: and he's like waving to us
 169. and I'm like who's the skinny dude?

[B]

1. E2: how's your Tantan³⁴ game coming along E6?
 2. E6: alright
 3. it's alright
 4. E2: yeah
 5. E6: I found a girl I've been seeing for awhile
 6. E3: yeah is it the girl from Magma?
 7. E6: yeah that girl
 8. E3: you guys are hanging out?
 9. E2: yeah I remember that girl
 10. E3: sweet awesome
 11. E2: you guys were out there at the table and we were in there
 jamming away
 12. E6: yep that was it
 13. E2: making the beats
 14. E3: she's not from Guangdong is she?
 15. E6: she's Guangdong
 16. yeah she's Guangdong
 17. E3: but you speak mandarin with her though right?
 18. E6: yeah she doesn't speak Cantonese
 19. E3: no way oh is she from like
 20. E12: you haven't gotten around that?
 21. have you spoken Cantonese around her?
 22. E6: yeah yeah of course
 23. that's how I sell myself
 24. E12: got it

³⁴ *Tantan* is the name of dating app popular in China.

25. E6: one of my selling points is speaking Cantonese
26. E12: yeah absolutely
27. E6: that won't work in the US
28. nothing will work in the US

RECORDING #9

Date: May 13, 2016

Location: Expatriate's Apartment

Number of Participants: 6

[A]

1. E13: I mean I've been there 4 years and I've kind of hit the ceiling
2. like I'm the highest ranked foreigner
3. but what do you
4. so if I wanna keep doing more stuff I have to create it for myself ya know
5. and the other thing is the company's downsizing next year coz of the laws for the international program
6. every international program at public schools is against the law now
7. E11: oh right right
8. E17: so
9. Me: they are?
10. E13: yeah
11. they're changing like a whole bunch of stuff
12. E17: who knows
13. I don't know
14. who knows
15. I might just go back to the states and go to grad school.
16. I'm planning on applying next year maybe
17. if I can decide what I wanna actually apply for
18. that's kind of like my reasoning for going back and what I wanna try to do on that
19. like try to job shadow and all that
20. E11: so that's gonna be how long do you think?
21. more than the summer?

22. E17: no just the summer
23. E11: just the summer
24. E17: I'm gonna see if I can do that coz I don't just wanna be
25. coz like everything here you have like a year contract you know
26. and I don't wanna go to school in the states
27. like I don't wanna job shadow for a year
28. like what am I gonna do
29. so yeah um so yeah
30. try and figure it out in the short time that i have
31. come back here and work for a year maybe
32. go back there and try to go to school but who knows
33. we'll see
34. E11: when do you have to let the people in Shang Hai know
35. E17: well I haven't actually gotten an offer yet coz I kinda like screwed up the teaching of the class that I was going to teach
36. like they wanted me to be an IB assistant manager
37. um which is weird because they don't actually have a director
38. so they should have a director
39. but anyway um yeah
40. but they like screwed up the class
41. so they're still trying to work that out
42. um so I don't know
43. they'll probably give me an offer soon I think
44. but um I applied to a couple other things
45. but I still have to interview for them
46. um yeah I'm not sure

[B]

1. E11: I actually have an interview tomorrow morning
2. E17: oh man
3. Me: for what?
4. E11: just a summer camp job

5. E17: what summer camp is it?
6. E11: it's um
7. I have to find the name of this company
8. it's like
9. what's a Chinese company
10. but it's like an education company that does software
11. but they're going to put it into real life practice at this summer camp in Huizhou
12. and it's like I've done a summer camp before like 10 years ago
13. um in Shangdong
14. in Qingdao
15. and it was great at the time
16. that was like my first year in china
17. and it was like the same thing
18. like I had a year contract
19. and summer was free
20. and I was like okay I'll make extra money
21. teach on the beach
22. but actually I know what it is
23. it's the same set up here too
24. like you're with the kids 12 hours a day you know
25. you get 2 days in between
26. like you know these full weeks
27. not full weeks
28. 6 days on
29. two days off
30. and it is its pretty intensive
31. I think if I calculated it all out
32. it probably wouldn't really be worth it like
33. it would probably be better off just to do some tutoring
34. like I could probably work a lot less
35. don't have to be isolated out in Huizhou
36. E17: but you're making money
37. E7: like hour salary?
38. E11: it's

39. that's how I kind of look at it too
 40. it's like one lump of money that's like there
 41. I know also what it's like to tutor
 42. and then you're like hustling coz you're like getting this job
 43. this job somebody cancels
 44. like you know so
 45. Me: if it's not stable
 46. E11: yeah
 47. so I'm just gonna go to the interview
 48. see how it feels
 49. and then if I like it see if I can ask for more money
 50. like and if they give me an offer I can't refuse then I'm gonna do it

[C]

1. E13: the other teacher at my school
 2. he was actually offered the high school
 3. like Shenzhen number 1 high school for next year
 4. honestly I don't know how
 5. he's not that good of a teacher
 6. um but he found like
 7. he was offered that
 8. he signed the contract for that
 9. and then the agent told him that he was actually going to middle school again
 10. Me: that's crazy
 11. did his contract actually say that high school?
 12. E13: I think he signs the same generic one that I do
 13. and they kinda just
 14. Me: that's what I did too
 15. E13: fill in the blank later
 16. E11: they don't tell us until we come back from summer what were teaching
 17. E13: oh that's scary
 18. E11: so I just got lucky
 19. I've had my kids 2 years in a row

20. though if I don't get them next year
21. that's really
22. it's
23. I'm gonna be upset
24. I'm gonna be really upset
25. ya know hopefully I think
26. I guess there's 2 schools of thought you know
27. like one it's kind of good that I know like the grades
28. if I teach like 4th grade again I already know the material
inside outside
29. like improve it innovate
30. also I think you just spend so much time getting to know
the students
31. it's almost like if I get a new batch of students then I'll
spend their whole first semester just assessing them
32. Me: getting to know what their levels are
33. and what they like can do
34. E11: whereas like if I have my kids again I know exactly like
35. I don't have to bother
36. I can just focus on the content and how to teach
37. so I hope so
38. but yeah they do that and it could happen
39. like I've seen it happen with other people
40. They're suddenly like what am I gonna teach for school

[D]

1. E7: when I was working for a training center I got to teach high
school level kids
2. and like my boss were really impressed that I was able to
teach grammar and English and everything
3. and then they hired foreign teachers
4. the foreign teachers only get to teach preschool and first
graders
5. just because they have the face to show that parents that

- your kids are going to a school with foreigners
6. I was like being a TA over there
 7. and I literally saw the foreign teachers suffer
 8. like suffer from it
 9. from from the chaos and everything
 10. and I just truly feel bad for them
 11. and
 12. Me: that's exactly what happened to me
 13. E7: and it's not like super good money for like
 14. Me: that's not what happened to me
 15. E7: the sketchy thing about the Chinese center that I worked for is like
 16. they just target the foreigners that just land in china
 17. and just like throw them
 18. E11: to the wolves
 19. E7: just like an easy job
 20. like um an hour or two on weekends

[E]

1. E7: the thing is I don't think the administration really care
2. Me: yeah that's just crazy
3. E7: which they should for like how much money they are getting from the parents
4. Me: that's exactly what I was saying before
5. like they're paying fourteen thousand US dollars a year to go to this school
6. like are you kidding me?
7. E13: are you serious?
8. E11: that's what people pay to go to college
9. ya know
10. Me: exactly
11. like
12. E13: that's insane money
13. Me: I know that
14. like

15. E7: that's an international school
 16. Me: like if you pay that much money to a private school in America you expect the best
 17. and I am not the best
 18. E7: my former student's younger sister goes to school
 19. Me: yeah
 20. E17: it's like all about the appearance though
 21. it's not yeah
 22. it's not about like the actual quality of anything
 23. it's just like showing number
 24. E13: last year when
 25. E7: she's like truly believes the curriculum is like scientific

[F]

1. E7: seriously there is no excuse
 2. like my kids' parents are from the fifties and sixties
 3. and they can even raise kids that are that are gracious and tolerant
 4. for parents nowadays they get to teach kids to be mean when they even like go through that most epic horrible time in China
 5. and just doesn't make sense to me.
 6. Me: yeah it feels like
 7. and I like
 8. I don't know
 9. maybe it's like a city atmosphere in China
 10. E17: I think it has something to do with privilege too
 11. Me: a little bit of privilege
 12. E11: a little spoiled too
 13. Me: maybe a little bit spoiled
 14. E11: or neglected
 15. or maybe their parents make up for it by letting them just do what they want

[G]

1. E17: there's something to like the population of china that

- makes it just like more
2. it's like more important to get ahead and to get
 3. Me: maybe coz there's so many people
 4. E11: yeah
 5. E17: coz that
 6. I notice in the high school too
 7. like parents fighting for their kids
 8. E7: I don't know
 9. but like being competitive is one thing
 10. but like being rude
 11. like
 12. E17: and not saying like its good
 13. but saying it's like a
 14. I think there's like a more
 15. E11: more pressure
 16. E17: it's kinda like
 17. it's part of the culture
 18. E11: I think there's definitely pressure on the kids
 19. like I see it all the time
 20. like yeah
 21. especially if it's just one child too
 22. I don't know if it makes any difference actually if there's 2 children
 23. E7: and also a lot of parents don't have the mentality that you have to play by rules
 24. like sometimes they feel like if they fought for their kids
 25. and their kids might just get it
 26. E17: not that they do
 27. coz they have that money
 28. like that power to be able to pay for things
 29. you know
 30. Me: I can kind of understand the mentality of it
 31. like China's kind of had a rough go of it
 32. and I can see why people would think like 'I have to do whatever I can otherwise I will get behind
 - 33.

34. or my child will get behind'
35. I kind of understand
36. but it is like
37. it's hard to look at when it's like
38. when I see kids just being as mean as possible to each other
and being so rude and mean to each other
39. but idk
40. E7: I also think back in the day there was a lack of resource
41. but nowadays not really
42. not to that extent that you have to really step on people to
43. E17: it's just there's so many people
44. and it's so competitive
45. yes

RECORDING #10

Date: May 31, 2016

Location: Expatriate's Apartment

Number of Participants: 5

[A]

1. E6: they call it prom
2. I don't know why
3. E17: Is there a DJ and Stuff?
4. E6: there's music playing
5. last year I went to a hotel
6. you get dressed up
7. E17: so what do you do
8. do you sit down and watch a ceremony
9. or do you actually mingle?
10. E6: mingle
11. but there are performances in between too
12. it was weird
13. E17: that sounds awful
14. E6: yeah it's pretty shitty
15. there's alcohol though
16. E17: there is?
17. E6: yeah but I don't wanna get drunk
18. E17: you can drink with the students?
19. E16: do the students drink?
20. E6: yeah they're allowed to
21. Casey says she drank with her students and got caught smoking cigarettes outside
22. E16: oh no!
23. E17: wow I didn't know there was going to be alcohol
24. that'll be interesting
25. E6: you know Casey has a thing for Roger

26. Roger's hot
27. E17: you should obviously come then
28. coz if you get drunk it's fine
29. E16: yeah I think my students have seen me drunk at some point
in time
30. E17: yeah
31. E16: no probably not
32. but if they're out late at night
33. it's likely
34. E17: I can't stop eating these
35. E16: I've gotten texts from students with pictures of me skating
in Shenzhen twice
36. it's like is this you
37. last year's students
38. E17: last year's students?
39. E6: that's why I don't add my students
40. E16: I'm tired of watching this guy
41. E6: yeah I want to smoke a cigarette

[B]

1. E6: we had a good time
2. E17: that's what I heard I missed out
3. E16: it was fucking raining like crazy on Saturday
4. E6: I heard that you guys got there after
5. E16: we were traveling during the worst of it
6. E6: it kept raining too
7. I guess it was inside
8. E18: you were in the Macau buddies group
9. E17: I was in the Macau buddies group
10. I just didn't end up going to Macau
11. I didn't get to be a Macau buddy
12. E16: it's a nice trip
13. it's a little expensive I guess
14. I probably spent over one thousand Kwai

15. E6: I spent over one thousand MOP I spent eleven hundred MOP
16. E18: but what'd you make?
17. E6: huh?
18. E18: did you get paid at all?
19. E6: uh we got paid 850 MOP total which is very little
20. E16: even at the monkey gig?³⁵
21. E6: the monkey gig got three thousand three thousand RMB which is the reason why we did it
22. E16: awesome
23. E6: so much money
24. real money
25. E16: it's a hassle
26. E6: we could've driven
27. E16: you could've taken the ferry
28. but that's a hassle too
29. E6: they probably would've reimbursed us for the ferry but gas money
30. E16: well driving is also expensive
31. you know
32. E6: driving sucks
33. who the fuck wants to ride over water

[C]

1. E26: I didn't know there were all those little alleys around downstairs
2. E6: yeah it's a cool neighborhood
3. E12: all the alleys
4. yeah it's an interesting area
5. yeah I actually used to live just north of here
6. it's an interesting area to walk around

³⁵ A *monkey gig* is an expatriate slang for a show that a Western musician get because they are a Westerner, and they will most likely make a lot of money doing it.

[D]

1. E12: Did you get, uh, the straight razor down?
2. E26: nah, I can't do that dude
3. E12: well I had a guy do that for me, uh
4. E26: I tried that twice here
5. and they slit my throat so hard
6. E12: they did a good job for me
7. I was pretty happy, uh
8. E26: I trusted one of those, like, army guys
cutting hair on the street
9. and asked him to do mine
10. and asked him to do mine
11. to give me a straight shave and he—
12. I had a full beard
13. he did it without shaving cream
14. he just put water on my face and took a
blade to my face
15. and there were like big patches of hair that
he like couldn't get
16. and like he cut my throat so many times
that he just stopped
17. and he was like 'I'm sorry. I can't do this.'
18. and I was like 'You're right. You can't do
this'
19. E12: oh my god that's terrible
20. E26: and so my face was all like chafed and fucked
up
21. and I had to go home and shave it over the like
shaved skin
22. it was like³⁶
23. it was like grinding like cuts with my razor
blade

³⁶ E26 makes a noise here to simulate a razor on his face.

24. it was gross
25. E12: that's really brutal

[F]

1. E2: like I asked the lady at the store
2. like I went back to work with one and then like later found out that there was alcohol in it
3. but I was just like cruising around school sipping on one of these
4. E8: was your whole school like
5. E2: I was like no one really cared
6. Karyn you remember
7. I had one of these at school
8. Me: yeah I remember
9. you thought it was just like juice right?
10. E2: yeah it tastes just like juice to me
11. E8: I'm just picturing like a teacher in high school just like walking in with like a Budweiser
12. E2: I didn't teach any classes while I had it so
13. E8: do you teach?
14. I thought you were the IT director or something like that
15. E2: uh no
16. I teach a PE class and then I edit WeChat articles
17. E8: yeah yeah yeah that's right
18. E2: and then do like uh
19. I organized the Halloween party

[G]

1. E28: I find beer cans around our classrooms
2. E26: all my kid's drink Rios³⁷
3. like uh what's her name?

³⁷ A brand of alcoholic drink popular in China

4. what's that's bitch?
5. that smart bitch
6. E7: uh Kelly
7. E26: senior class elect caught her with a Rio
8. I said that smart bitch and you knew who it was out of 400 students
9. E7: how old is she?
10. E26: uh 15
11. she's a huge bitch
12. she had a Rio
13. E6: a huge thing of Baileys³⁸
14. E26: and you took it?
15. E6: I took it and then I brought it to the office
10. and they were like 'oh you want to drink it?'
11. and I was like 'no, I don't want to drink it'
12. this is school
13. that's not allowed in school
14. E26: two of my fourth graders came to class hammered
15. fourth graders hammered
16. it was hilarious
17. the teacher like grabbed them
18. and they were really red in the face and kept laughing
19. and I didn't know why
20. and the head teacher like came in and dragged them out
21. and then came back and was like 'don't worry.
22. they were a little drunk'
23. and I was like 'what?'
24. and she was like 'they drank too much beer during lunch.'
25. and I was like 'They're eight'

³⁸ An Irish brand of alcohol

26. she was like ‘Yeah. I sent them home’
27. I was like ‘Alright’
28. E12: we had students in my school that got caught
with alcohol
29. one of them did try to claim that the uh
30. the Mai Mai³⁹ place delivered it and gave it to
them for free
31. um it was such bullshit
32. oh they said it was a free drink—
33. you know a free drink deal
34. and they gave this⁴⁰ to me.
35. E26: anyway I hate electo that’s all I got to say

³⁹ Name of a restaurant near E12’s school.

⁴⁰ *this* refers to the story that E12’s students gave him about why they had possession of alcohol at school.

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