Some discourse-interactional uses of yinwei ‘because’ and its multimodal production in Mandarin conversation

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Abstract

Yinwei ‘because’ is a causal conjunction or preposition introducing clauses or NPs of reason or cause in Mandarin. In addition to its use as causal connective, yinwei seems to have other discourse-interactional functions. Adopting the methodology of conversation analysis and interactional linguistics, this study explores some discourse-interactional uses of yinwei in Mandarin face-to-face conversation. An examination of the data shows that one type of yinwei recurrently occurs after the possible completion of a sequence, connecting the subsequent utterances to the talk prior to the immediately preceding one. Specifically, it occurs in two sequential and interactional environments: after the possible completion of a recipient-initiated sequence that may change the ongoing (focus of the) topic, and after the possible closure of a storytelling. In each environment, yinwei is produced with particular prosodic and bodily-visual features and implements particular interactional tasks. This study shows that yinwei has fine-grained interactional functions of building (courses of) actions, organizing sequences and discourse, and accomplishing interactional tasks in Mandarin conversation.

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1. Introduction

One general feature of everyday conversation is juxtaposition or contiguity (Sacks, 1987[1973], 1992a:554). Contiguity is the default adjacency relationship between elements in talk. For example, each syllable, each word, each clause, each sentence, and each turn (among other units in talk) "should come next after the prior" (Schegloff and Sacks, 2007:14). In this study, contiguity mainly refers to the adjacency relationship between successive turn-constructional units (TCUs) and turns. In conversation, a course of action may project a prospective trajectory (such as telling a story, giving directions), which makes relevant a set of possible next TCUs and turns. If a TCU or a turn is 'next-positioned', the default understanding is that it is related to the immediately preceding TCU or turn. But sometimes this contiguity may be broken. A current utterance may not be a relevant next item to the immediately prior talk. For example, it may relate to a prior utterance or course of action other than the immediately preceding one (‘skip-connecting’ in Sacks, 1992b, Vol. 2; Mazeland and Huiskes, 2001; Bolden, 2009a; etc.), or it may initiate a new interruptive course of action before the projected completion of a prior one.¹ In those cases, the speaker regularly deploys techniques to lift the assumption of the default contiguity (Heritage,

¹ For example, 'side sequence' (Jefferson, 1972), 'parenthetical sequence' (Houtkoop and Mazeland, 1985), 'oblique sequence' (Koenig, 2005), 'recipient intervening question' (Li, 2014), misplaced initiation of a new course of action (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) etc.
This paper examines a use of the Mandarin causal connective yinwei ‘because’ as a practice to connect the subsequent utterances not to the immediately preceding TCU or turn but to some earlier talk and course of action.

In the data, these yinweis link the subsequent TCUs to the prior talk in different ways: the yinwei-prefaced TCUs may return to and continue a pre-prior course of action (Excerpt 1 and Section 4.1), or reopen a closed course of action (Section 4.2). Yinwei at this particular sequential position (i.e., the possible sequence closure) seems to be used as a practice to manage the interruption of contiguity and the local exigencies prompted by the recipient’s (lack of) response to their action- and talk-so-far.

In order to situate the current study in its context, it is necessary to give a brief account of the research on yinwei-clauses in Mandarin conversation.

2. Yinwei-clauses in Mandarin conversation

In Mandarin, yinwei can be a conjunction introducing clauses of reason or cause, or a preposition followed by an NP of reason or cause (Lü, 1980: 622–623). When used as a conjunction, the yinwei-clause can be either pre- or post-positioned (Lü, 1982; Xing, 2001). For example,

Pre-positioning of yinwei-clause
(1) Lü (1980:623)
Yinwei tianqi bu hao, feiji gai zai mingtian qifei.
‘Because the weather is not good, the flight is rescheduled to depart tomorrow.’

Post-positioning of yinwei-clause
(2) Modified from Lü (1980:623)
Feiji gai zai mingtian qifei, yinwei tianqi bu hao.
‘The flight is rescheduled to depart tomorrow, because the weather is not good.’

Yinwei-clauses have been documented to have two main functions: providing the reason or cause for an event, state of affairs, or a belief (Xing, 2001; Lü, 1982; Shen, 2003; etc.), and providing accounts for an action (Song and Tao, 2008, 2009; Gao, 2013 etc.). For example,

(3) Shen (2003:196)
Zhang Gang huilai le, yinwei ta hai ai Xiaoli.
‘Zhang Gang returned, because he still loved Xiaoli.’

(4) Shen (2003:196)
Zhang Gang hai ai Xiaoli, yinwei ta huilai le.
‘Zhang Gang still loved Xiaoli, because he returned.’

(5) Song and Tao (2013:66)
B: hai xiang yao ma? hai xiang yao ma?
A: bu bu yao hai bu xianzai bu bu yao bu yao, yinwei xianzai hai hao, xianzai.
B: ou ou ou,
B: ‘(Do you) still want (this)?’
A: ‘No, no, not yet, not now, no no, because (it’s) still OK now.’
B: ‘OK.’

In (3) and (4), yinwei-clauses provide the cause or reason for the event ‘Zhang Gang returned’ (in (3)), and the belief ‘Zhang Gang still loved Xiaoli’ (in (4)). In (5), the yinwei-clause provides an account or explanation for A’s rejection action. These two functions of yinwei-clauses appear to resemble Schiffrin’s (1987) ‘fact-based’, ‘knowledge-based’, and ‘action-based’ causal relation, and Sweetser’s (1990) ‘content-epistemic-speech act’ distinction, in that the first function involves the ideational (e.g., (3)) and epistemic domains (e.g., (4)), and the second function is within the action or speech act domain (e.g., (5)).

But Sweetser’s (1990) categorization of the three domains is not based on authentic data from actual language use (Pander Maat and Sanders, 2000:61). An examination of the natural conversational data in this study shows that in addition to the two main functions described above, yinwei seems to have other discourse-interactional uses in Mandarin.
conversation. For example, \textit{yinwei} may also be used to organize discourse and interaction by indicating how the subsequent utterances relate to the ongoing talk, to pursue one’s interactional agenda or recipient’s affiliative responses. In Section 4, I will examine these two discourse-interactional functions of \textit{yinwei} in Mandarin face-to-face conversation, as well as how they are accomplished through multimodal resources (e.g., prosody, bodily-visual behaviors, sequential position etc.).

Before proceeding, it should be noted that \textit{yinwei} performs a variety of functions in the data, including the ones that have been described in the previous literature (see examples (3)–(5)). But the current study mainly focuses on its use in managing discourse and interaction. Also, this paper explores two particular discourse-interactional uses of \textit{yinwei}. Other possible discourse-interactional uses of \textit{yinwei} will be addressed elsewhere (Li and Luo, forthcoming).

3. Methodology

This study adopts the methodology of conversation analysis (CA) and interactional linguistics, which focus on the vocal/visual resources and interlocutors’ orientation to them in talk-in-interaction (see Heritage, 1984 for CA, and Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 2001 for interactional linguistics). The data for this study are approximately 8 h of audio- and video-recorded Mandarin face-to-face conversations. Participants in the conversations all speak standard Mandarin. They were friends, family members or acquaintances, recorded while engaging in everyday activities such as cooking, having dinner or breakfast, or chitchatting. The data yielded approximately 26 candidate instances of targeted \textit{yinwei}.

4. Two discourse-interactional functions of \textit{yinwei} in Mandarin conversation

4.1. Continuing a pre-prior course of action to pursue an interactional agenda

The first sequential and situational environment where the discourse-organizing \textit{yinwei} occurs is prefacing TCUs that return to and continue a ‘pre-prior’ talk and course of action. Activities and courses of actions have varied organizational features and degrees of projectability, and the interlocutors may not share an orientation to the trajectory of the activity in progress. For example, the recipient may display his/her treatment of the speaker’s ongoing talk and action as possibly complete through beginning a new course of action, whereas the speaker may display his/her orientation to the prior course of action as incomplete by returning to and continuing with it. In this sequential environment, \textit{yinwei} is used by the speaker to connect the subsequent utterances to his/her course of action prior to the recipient-initiated immediately preceding one (thus ‘pre-prior’). By returning to and continuing the pre-prior course of action, the speaker accomplishes his/her interactional agenda that may or may not have been made explicit at the beginning of the interaction. Excerpt 1 exemplifies the use of \textit{yinwei} at the possible completion of a sequence initiated by the previous recipient as well as its multimodal design. Ran (female) and Lei (male) are talking about a new type of husband–wife relationship/marriage dynamics in China (lines 01–03). As a single male, Lei seems to adopt a positive stance towards these dynamics and tries to demonstrate its popularity by using his acquaintance as an example (lines 09–10).

Excerpt 1: Career woman (V00:32:40)

\begin{verbatim}
01 Ran: xianzai shi xianzai shi hen liuxing jiu shi.
      now be now be very popular just be
      ‘Now, it’s very popular that’
02 nüde zai waimian gongzuo.
      women at outside work
      ‘women work outside,’
03 nande zai jiali zuofan.
      men at home cook
      ‘and men stay home and cook.’
04 Lei: hao a-
      good PRT
      ‘OK’
\end{verbatim}
((laughter))

hao a-
good PRT
'OK.'

hui zuofan de nande ye ye;
can cook ASSC men also also
'Those men who can cook also also'

bijiao neng badezhu zhei zhong nüde <<laughing>wo juede>.
relatively can seize this kind women I feel
'can keep this type of women, I think.'

((32 lines omitted regarding Lei's self-evaluation of being a stay-home husband who can't cook.))

Lei: buguo ai haida laoshi haoduo dou shi nei zhong ba.
but PRT Hai university teacher many all be that CL PRT
'But many professors at the Hai University are like that.'

Wang Linli is a typical example.

((8 lines omitted regarding Lei's sudden awareness of having mentioned another person's name and Ran's reminder that their real names and identity will all be concealed through pseudonyms.))

Ran: ta zemne dianxing le.
3SG how typical PRT
'How is he typical?'

wo hai bu zhidao ne.
I still NEG know PRT
'I still don't know.'

Lei: Wang Linli a.
(NAME) PRT
'Wang Linli a.'

Wang linli nei.
(NAME) that
'Wang Linli that…'

Wang linli: laopuo bu shi neige shenme zuo shengyi de ba.
(NAME) wife NEG be that CL what do business PRT PRT
'Doesn't Wang Linli's wife have her own business?'

dui a shi (inbreath) bushi shangwubu de haishi nar de.
right PRT be NEG be Ministry of Commerce ASSC or where ASSC
'Right, she's, no, she works in the Ministry of Commerce or something like that.'

fanzheng jiu shi hen HEN you nengnai de yi nüde.
anyway just be very very have ability ASSC one woman
'Anyway, she is a very capable woman.'

Ran: shangwubu de.
Ministry of Commerce PRT
'Ministry of Commerce?'

shi bu li de;
be Ministry in PRT
'(Does she work) in the Ministry (of Commerce)??'

bu shi shuo ziji ziji zuo shengyi.
NEG be say -self -self do business
'(Didn't you say) she has her own business?'
21 Lei: haoxiang ziji zuo shengyi.

seems -self do business

‘She seems to have her own business.’

22 wo zhe shi wo wo wo ji juti ji bu qingchu le.

I this be I I I remember concrete remember NEG clear CRS

‘I, this, I, I can’t remember clearly.’
23  -->  yinwei youyici.  
   because once  
   'Because once,'  

24  qu dashiguang;  
   go embassy  
   '(When I) went to the embassy,'  

25  nei ge Wang Linli zai nar zuo yi jiangzuo.  
   that CL (NAME) at there do one lecture  
   'That Wang Linli was giving a talk'  

26  jiang jiang jiang tuomasiman de yi ge jiangzuo.  
   talk talk talk Thomas Mann ASSC one CL lecture  
   'about Thomas Mann.'  

27  ranhou ta laopo qu le.  
   then his wife go PRT  
   'Then his wife came.'  

28  zhende gen dashiguang de suoyouren dou shou.  
   really with embassy ASSC everyone all familiar  
   'She was familiar with everyone at the embassy.'
29 Ran:  shenme shenme.
what what
’What what?’

30 Lei:  gen suoyouderen suoyoudashiguan dashiguanderen dou tebie shou;
with everyone every embassy embassy ASSC people all very familiar
’(She was) very familiar with everyone, everyone at the embassy.’

31 ranhou biaoxiangilai tebie nei zhong elegant.
then appear very that CL elegant
’Then, she appeared very elegant.’

32 ((laughter))

33 jiu nei zhong zhen de juejuedui shi yi ge nuqiangren xing de ni zhidao ba
just that CL really absolutely be one CL strong woman type PRT
‘She’s like, really, absolutely a super (career) woman, you know?’

34 rang rang rang ni kan qilai a.
let let let you look up PRT
’(When) you see (her), you’ll feel’

35 zhei zhei kending jiu shi yi ge
this this definitely just be one CL
‘she is definitely a’

36 en you yiding zhiwei he mengli de ren.
PRT have certain position and ability ASSC person
‘Umm, a person of certain position and ability.’

37 Ran:  ((head nods))

After his initial non-serious treatment of Ran’s comment (indexed through the laughter (line 05) and laughing voice (line 08) (Sacks, 1974, 1992a,b)), Lei announces that a professor at his university is a ‘typical’ example of a stay-home husband (lines 09–10). After Ran’s request for clarification and claimed lack of knowledge towards the claim (lines 11–12), Lei provides accounts of the professor’s ‘capable’ wife and the ‘working wife vs. stay-home husband’ trend (lines 13–17). At the end of Lei’s response in line 17, the sequence is possibly closed. Ran initiates a repair (lines 18–19), displaying her understanding problem of Lei’s prior turn. Repair initiation at this interactional and sequential juncture can potentially alter the focus of the ongoing course of action by shifting it onto some elements instead of others (Mandelbaum, 1989). For example, here, the point that Lei is trying to get at is that the wife ‘is a very capable woman’ (line 17) and he brackets the preceding discussion about her work as being off-the-point and ‘off-track’ with the preface fanzheng ‘anyway’ (line 17) (Bolden, 2009b: 986). But Ran’s repair initiation is about the wife’s work (lines 18–19) which is not what Lei’s prior turn is about. Thus, Ran’s repair initiation may potentially change the trajectory of the subsequent course of action (Monzoni and Drew, 2009). Therefore, a conversational juncture appears at the end of the repair sequence in line 22 and different action trajectories emerge. Now that the ongoing course of action (commenting on the professor’s wife) may (or may not) be terminated or altered at this juncture, Lei seems to use yinwei to counteract the possible shift of action trajectory by linking the subsequent TCUs to his course of action prior to the repair sequence.\(^2\) Note that Lei changes the trajectory of talk (and action) in a single turn by fitting the first two TCUs (lines 21–22) to the trajectory of the repair sequence, and then connecting the subsequent TCUs (lines 23–28) to his earlier talk through yinwei. The causal adverbial connector yinwei indexes that the subsequent TCUs are a continuation of his ‘pre-prior’ talk (see Schegloff, 1996; Vorreiter, 2003; Couper-Kuhlen and Ono, 2007 for turn continuation), rather than a ‘restart’ (Local, 1992) or a new beginning (Couper-Kuhlen, 2004).

The return to and continuation of the pre-prior course of action using yinwei is further to accomplish Lei’s interactional agenda: accounting for his assessment of and stance towards the professor’s wife. Lei displays his stance through the strong positive assessment in line 17. His returning to and providing details in support of his assessment through yinwei after the

\(^2\) In this excerpt, the use of yinwei to connect the subsequent utterances to pre-prior talk by the same speaker differs from ‘skip-connecting’ described by Sacks (1992b, Vol. 2; Sacks, 1992b, Vol. 2:349) documents two ‘sorts of facts’ about skip-connecting: (1) speakers tend to skip-connect to themselves and particularly to the last utterance of theirs, and (2) they do not usually skip-connect unless their own utterance was last-but-one; that is, they do not tie over long distance. The two sorts of facts about ‘skip-connecting’ are not applicable to the connecting to pre-prior talk described in this paper. First, yinwei connects the subsequent utterances not to the last utterance of the same speaker (i.e., not to Lei’s own utterance in line 22), but back to the sequence that came before the immediately preceding one (i.e., back to line 17). Second, unlike the ‘turn-by-turn’ skip-connecting, yinwei (line 23) connects over a longer distance (to line 17) than to the speaker’s last-but-one utterance.
repair sequence (line 23) reveals that it has been on his mind. Lei’s use of ‘extreme case formulations’ (Pomerantz, 1986) in the yinwei-prefaced telling such as suoyouren ‘everyone’ (lines 28 and 30), juedui ‘absolutely’ (line 33), kending ‘definitely’ (line 35) is not merely to describe or report the event, but to index Lei’s stance or attitude (conveyed through the extremity of these formulations) towards the professor’s “very capable” wife (Edwards, 2000). Thus, coming back to and accounting for the assessment with an index of his stance indicates that showing (in contrast to claiming) his stance towards the assessable through the telling is something he meant to get at (i.e. his agenda). Thus, through returning to and continuing the pre-prior course of action, yinwei is a resource used to pursue the speaker’s interactional agenda.

Although yinwei occurs at the possible completion of a sequence, it is hearable as the continuation of the immediately preceding TCU, rather than a “restart” (see Local [1992] for the interactional and phonetic distinction between “continuation” and “restart”). In this example, yinwei in this particular sequential position exhibits the following prosodic/phonetic features. First, there is no pause at the end of le, and the inbreath does not occur until after youyici (Fig. 1). The voicing is maintained between le (line 22) and yinwei (line 23) (see the sound wave and spectrogram in Fig. 1). The articulation of le is assimilated with that of yinwei (i.e., the originally mid-central vowel [ə] in le to a high central vowel due to the influence of the subsequent syllable ([i] in yin)) (see Fig. 1). The absence of pause and the assimilation of articulation indicate turn continuation (Walker, 2003; John and Walker, 2012). Second, despite their different tones (i.e., pitch contours), yinwei is produced with more or less the same pitch register as its preceding syllables qingchu le (about 100 Hz, see Fig. 1). The absence of pitch reset or jump in pitch register of yinwei also displays continuation rather than a new beginning (Local, 1992; Couper-Kuhlen, 2004). Third, the last two syllables in line 22 and yinwei are produced with faster tempo than their adjacent syllables (Fig. 1). The speeding up of talk at the juncture shows that the speaker is eager to get to his following talk by pre-empting the opportunity to continue his turn at the TRP (see Schegloff, 1987; Walker, 2003 for a similar interactional import of rush-throughs).

The participants’ bodily-visual behaviors involved in the production of yinwei also embody the interactional exigencies at the sequential juncture. Ran and Lei establish mutual gaze when Ran initiates the repair (line 18) and maintain it during the repair sequence (to line 21) (Fig. 2). Concurrent with Lei’s speech perturbations in line 22, Lei starts to wave his hand and looks away from Ran, which in turn seems to repel Ran’s gaze away from him (Fig. 3). The coordinated look away close to the possible closure of the turn visibly embodies the participants’ orientation to the ongoing course of action as possibly complete (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1986). But when Lei continues his turn with yinwei, he still looks away at the table in front of him (line 23) (Fig. 4) until Ran’s repair initiation at the end of his telling (line 29) (Fig. 5). Lei’s look away upon the production of yinwei as well as throughout the subsequent telling indexes that the turn continuation through yinwei is contingent and not pre-determined.

3 Here, showing is conceptually different from claiming. Claiming (one’s stance) is simply “stating something as one’s belief” (Neufeld and Guralnik, 1994: 257); whereas showing (one’s stance) is to “explain or prove”, and “to demonstrate” one’s stance (Neufeld and Guralnik, 1994:1243). For example, a person may claim (by stating) that his/her solution to a math problem is correct without showing (by proving) it. Similarly, a person may claim (by stating) that he/she loves someone without really showing (through demonstrating) it. In this excerpt, Lei claims that the professor wife is “very capable” (line 17), but he has not shown it (i.e., why and how so) until the yinwei-prefaced telling (lines 23–36).
Excerpt 1 exemplifies the use of yinwei in returning to and continuing the pre-prior talk and course of action in the data. Excerpt 2 is another case in point. Sun, Lan and Tim are chatting about their experience visiting the Great Wall in Beijing. This sequence begins with Sun’s inquiry about the entrance ticket price for the Great Wall (line 1). Tim responds with a rough estimate (line 3).

Extract 2: The Great Wall (LST_V 00:40:02)

01 Sun: changcheng xianzai piao duoshaoqian, Great Wall now ticket how much ‘How much does the entrance ticket cost for the Great Wall now?’

02 Lan: changcheng:: Great Wall ‘The Great Wall,’

03 Tim: =ji shi kuai qianr ba. =several ten dollar money PRT ‘Somewhere between ten and hundred dollars.’

04 Lan: wo bu zhidao. I NEG know ‘I don’t know.’

05 wo shi zhao ren jinqu de; I be find person enter PRT ‘I found someone to get me into (the Great Wall).’

06 Sun: ji shi kuai qianr, several ten dollar money ‘Somewhere between ten and hundred dollars?’

07 Tim: [((head nodding, looking at cell phone))

08 Sun: [wushi kuai qian, [fifty dollar money ‘Fifty dollars?’

09 keneng bu xing, perhaps NEG OK ‘may not be enough.’

10 bashi huozhe yibai ba; eighty or one hundred PRT ‘Maybe eighty or one hundred.’

11 Lan: haoxiang liushi ba bu zhidao. seem sixty PRT NEG know ‘It seems to be sixty, I don’t know.’

12 Sun: liushi, sixty ‘Sixty?’

13 Lan: dangshi wo jiu zhao yi ge pengyou jinqu de. then I just find one CL friend enter PRT ‘I found a friend who got me in.’

14 suoyi mei hua qian. so NEG spend money ‘So I didn’t pay (for the entrance ticket).’

15 ((Sun and Tim nodding together))

16 (3.0)

17 Lan: wo dou mei qu guo badaling. I all NEG go EXP Badaling ‘I haven’t even been to the Badaling (part of the Great Wall) before.’
18 Sun: mei qu wo ye mei qu guo.
   NEG go I also NEG go EXP
   'I haven’t been there either.'
19 Tim: wo ye mei qu guo.
   I also NEG go EXP
   'Me neither.'
20 wo qu de shi juyongguan;
   I go PRT be Juyongguan
   'The part of the Great Wall that I’ve been to is Juyongguan.'
21 Lan: juyongguan wo qu guo.
   Juyongguan I go EXP
   'I’ve been to Juyongguan.'
22 wo qu de shi neige nar
   I go PRT be that where
   'The part that I went to is that'
23 Muqianyu.
   Muqianyu (part of the Great Wall)
   'Mutianyu (part of the Great Wall).'
24 Li: ou.
   oh
   'Oh.'
25 ((head nods))
26 Muqianyu wo haoxiang ye quguo.
   Muqianyu I seem also go EXP
   'I seemed to have been to Mutianyu (Great Wall) before.'
27 wo ye [wang le
   I also[forget CRS
   'I can’t remember.'
28 Lan: [wo ye zonggong pa le bu dao liang ge xiaoshi;
   [I also in total climb PFV NEG reach two CL hour
   'I also (just) hiked for altogether less than two hours.'
29 rang tamen bishi le wo;
   let they despise PFV me
   'which was despised.'
30 yinwei wo shi zuo lanche shangqu de.
   because I be take cable car up PRT
   'Because I took the cable car up,'
31 zuo nei ge huache xialai de ni zhidao ma.
   take that CL toboggan car down PRT you know PRT
   'and the toboggan slide down, you know?'
32 zonggong pa le mei ji bu.
   altogether climb PRT NEG several step
   '(I) didn’t hike that much.'
33 wo kan kuaiyao xialai le.
   I see about to rain CRS
   'I saw it was going to rain.'
34 ranhou wo jiu xialai le.
   then I just come down CRS
   'Then I just came down.'
35 Tim: ((laughter))
<<laughing>> kankan jiu[xing le
look look just[OK PRT
'It's enough just to have a look.'

Sun: [mutianyu changcheng neibian xinxiu de hai
[Mutianyu Great Wall that side new renovate
still
'The Mutianyu Great Wall was newly renovated. It's still

hai shi ting xin de] a.
[still be quite new PRT] PRT
'still pretty new, right?'

Fig. 7. The body and gaze of Lan (right) and Sun (left) in line 39

Lan: [en ting hao de.]
[ummm quite good PRT]
'Umm, pretty good.'

Fig. 8. The body and gaze of Lan (right) and Sun (left) at the end of line 40
en dui.

'Umm, right.'

yinwei dangshi women ye shi renshe ge pengyou zai nar.

'Because then we have a friend we've known there.'

ta zai neikuair kai le ge chaguann.

'He opened a tea house there.'

ranhou zhenghao qu kan kan.

'Then we were visiting his tea house.'

ta shuo wo gei ni zhao ge ren shang shan,

'He said 'I'll find someone to get you up to (the Great Wall).''

ranhou zhenghao jiu qu zhuan le yi quanr;

'Then I just went for a tour.'

Sun: qishi zanmen ziji yao shang.

'Actually, if we were to go up there ourselves,'

ni shuo qu payipa bu shi yiyang ma.

'You say go climb NEG be the same, don’t you think?'

Lan: na mutianyu nei kuair

'Mutianyu (part of the Great Wall) there,'

pade tebie chang ni zhidao ma.

'Is a very long hike, you know?'

gen badaling bu tai yiyang.

'It’s not quite the same as the Badaling (part of the Great Wall).’
The first extended question–answer sequence about the entrance ticket price for the Great Wall ends in line 15 and is further marked by a pause (line 16). At this sequential and interactional juncture, Lan proffers a new topic4 through reporting her own experience (of not having been to the Badaling part of the Great Wall5) (line 17). The telling of “my side” of an experience serves as a possible elicitor of information related to the particular topic from the recipients (Pomerantz, 1980). Sun and Tim immediately offer the information that they have not been to Badaling before either (lines 18–20). Then Lan provides a detailed telling of her visit to the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall (lines 22, 23, 28–34). Lan reports that she has been ‘despised’ for not only spending such a short time but also the way that she conducted her tour (barely hiking on the Great Wall herself and only taking the cable car up and the toboggan slide down) (lines 28–32), because it is considered that the essence of visiting the Great Wall is hiking up the Wall oneself. Lan also treats the way she conducted her tour as accountable by providing accounts (lines 33–34). After Tim’s termination-relevant laughter (Jefferson, 1972) and affiliative response to Lan’s telling (lines 35–36), the sequence comes to a possible closure. At this sequential and interactional juncture, Sun initiates a new course of action and a shift of topic (from Lan’s past experience to the condition of the particular section of the Great Wall). The “knowing” course of Sun’s turn invites confirmation and sequence closure (Heritage, 2011; Heritage and Raymond, 2012). After the confirmations (lines 39–40), Lan rushes to start a new TCU, starting with yinwei (line 41). The yinwei-prefaced TCUs provide background information of how Lan had the free tour to the Great Wall (due to her friend).

Here, immediately after responding to Sun’s topic-shift-relevant inquiry, Lan deploys yinwei as a technique to return to her earlier talk through continuing the previous course of action. Lan also displays that and how the subsequent TCUs are to be understood as being tied back to her prior talk. For example, after an initial mention of yi ge pengyou ‘a friend’ (line 13) and zhaoyinwei ‘find someone’ (line 5), Lan repeats the two lexical items (lines 41 and 44). Like pro-terms, the lexical repeats link the current utterance to Lan’s previous talk (see Sacks, 1992a,b Vol. 1:711–716 for the use of pro-terms as tying techniques). Also, the yinwei-clause is a common device for turn continuation and thereby grammatically extends her prior talk (Vorreiter, 2003; Couper-Kuhlen and Ono, 2007). Thus, yinwei at the possible completion of the recipient-initiated sequence continues Lan’s prior course of action in a (grammatically) continuous fashion.

By returning to the prior course of action, Lan displays the pursuit of her interactional agenda, that is, bragging about getting a free entrance and tour on the Great Wall thanks to her connections.5 Reporting some past event can be a self-praising strategy that tacitly achieves a positive presentation of oneself in interaction (Wu, 2012). Here, Lan’s first report of having someone get her into the Great Wall for free is formulated as an account for her not knowing the ticket price (line 5). But this report receives no uptake from the two co-participants. Lan reformulates the report as an account again for her lack of knowledge about the ticket price (lines 13–14). This time, the report only receives non-enthusiastic “topically disengaged” nodding (Jefferson, 1993:11) and gaze away (Goodwin, 1981, 1984) of the co-participants (line 15). After a topic proffer “my side telling” (line 17) (Pomerantz, 1980), Lan further reports on the details of her tour to the Great Wall, alluding to the fact that it was all taken care of for her. Yet again, the report is treated non-seriously (through Tim’s laughter (line 35)) and ambivalently (through the completion-relevant fixed expression kankan jiu xing le ‘It’s enough just to take a look’ (line 36) (Drew and Holt, 1998). After the contingent topic shift initiated by Sun (lines 37–38), Lan produces yinwei-prefaced TCUs to finally explain how the free Great Wall tour is made possible by her friend (lines 41–45). This is ultimately embraced by Sun, displaying his disagreement with Lan (lines 46–47). The first two unsuccessful attempts in showing the well-connectedness of her friend (and indirectly of herself) (line 5 and lines 13–14) and the eventually successful telling in lines 41–45 indicate that this is what she has been trying to get at from the beginning of the interaction.

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4 One reviewer points out that the term “topic” may not be a useful and relevant notion in unpacking what a turn is doing. Thus, a clarification of the use of the term “topic” in this article is in order. Although it may not always be easy to identify (the boundaries of) topic in conversation, it is still a useful and relevant notion to the present analysis. First, the notion of topic is used in this paper as a system of conversational organization, rather than to account for the actions performed by a turn. In this context, this notion is useful in explaining how conversation is organized, as well as the use of yinwei as a device in organizing talk and discourse. Second, “topic” is not an artificial construct imposed by the analysts (outsiders to the interaction), but indeed oriented to by conversational participants themselves. That is, speakers and recipients display orientation to topic as a way to organize conversation. An excerpt of conversation from my data demonstrates that the participants display orientation to the premature shift of topic. (The transcript of the excerpt is in Appendix C.) In this excerpt, the sequential ground for topic change has not been properly prepared. That is, the sequence in lines 01–09 has not come fully to a point of possible completion. After her receipt of Hei’s informing in lines 08 and 09, Bai initiates a question (lines 10–13) that is topically unrelated to the ongoing talk. Both Bai and Hei orient to the change of topic as premature and abrupt. Bai orient[s] her question as abrupt and sequentially inappropriate through the incomplete syncratic construction (line 13), and laughter (line 15). Bai also verbalize her process of looking for a topic and her orientation to the topic change in line 16 “I’m desperately looking for a topic”. Hei treats Bai’s question as an abrupt topic change and out of the place through her explicit formulation of “how come (we) jumped to this question” (line 14) and laughter (line 15). Hei’s challenge of “how come (we) jumped to this question” (line 14) and Bai’s metalinguistic description “I’m desperately looking for a topic” (line 16) display their orientation to the existence of topic and the topic change as premature and abrupt. This example provides compelling evidence that conversational participants are aware of and orient to topic as a way to organize their conversation.

5 The Badaling part of the Great Wall is one of the most well-known and most popular sections of the Great Wall among tourists because of its higher altitude and elevation on the mountain. The Mutianyu part of the Great Wall has less elevation and spreads out more broadly across the landscape than the Badaling part of the Great Wall.

6 Zhaooren laterally means “find someone”. It usually refers to finding “someone” through connections to get things done through the back door. It implies that the things done in this way are usually difficult to achieve in a regular way and/or are against regulations or rules. For example, in this interaction, the entrance fee and the cable car and toboggan slide fees on the Great Wall can be quite price. Thus, getting into the Mutianyu Great Wall without paying for the entrance fee and having free rides on the cable car and gliding car is against the regulation. The fact that she got a free tour package because her friend knows “someone” shows the well-connectedness of her friend and indirectly herself.
The prosodic/phonetic design of yinwei and the bodily-visual behaviors involved in its production demonstrate some features similar to those in Excerpt 2. Voicing is continuous from the last syllable of the preceding TCU dui to yinwei (see the sound wave in Fig. 6). Also, dui and yinwei are produced with low intensity and similar pitch register (approximately 210 Hz) (Fig. 6). There is no pitch reset or pitch step up at yinwei. In addition, yinwei is delivered faster than its adjacent syllables, which makes it hearable as being “rushed” to get to the subsequent talk.

Lan’s bodily movements seem to display possible completion or disengagement at the end of the TCU before yinwei. Lan and Sun maintain mutual gaze during the question–answer sequence (lines 37–39) (Fig. 7). They both gaze away and look down during Lan’s sequence-closing receipt (line 40) (Fig. 8). Their gaze away at this moment publicly and visibly displays their orientation to the sequence as possibly complete and their disengagement from the ongoing interaction (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1986). Interestingly, while Lan continues her turn with yinwei, she still maintains her gaze down until the second TCU (line 42) (Fig. 9). Lan’s gaze away across the juncture indicates that the continuation of her turn with yinwei is locally and contingently managed. The return to the prior talk through yinwei is not pre-determined or projected by the structure of the ongoing sequence, but rather displays the speaker’s orientation to the fit between the incipient TCUs and the ongoing talk; that is, returning to her earlier talk at the first possible completion point of the recipient-initiated sequence before the foregoing interactional project gets further delayed or derailed.

To summarize, the preceding examples have shown some commonalities in the use of yinwei. First, yinwei is produced immediately after the speaker’s response to the recipient-initiated sequence and topic shift (or the shift of focus within a topic). In addition, yinwei indicates that the subsequent TCUs continue the prior talk, rather than repeat and resume it (see Jefferson [1972:320] for the distinction between continuation and resumption).

Second, through packaging the subsequent TCUs as increments to the prior talk, yinwei is used as a practice to return to and continue the prior talk by the same speaker and to pursue the speaker’s interactional agenda. Note that the speaker’s interactional agenda may not be made explicit from the outset. Thus, the course of action is not projectedly interrupted by the recipient. The returning to and pursuit of the agenda is contingently managed and enacted.

Third, yinwei at the particular sequential position seems to be produced with a set of recurrent prosodic features such as continuous voicing, articulation assimilation, matching pitch register and intensity and faster tempo. The interactional work done by yinwei and its prosodic/phonetic features are similar to but still different from rush-throughs (Schegloff, 1987; Walker, 2003, 2010) and abrupt-joins (Local and Walker, 2004). It resembles the latter two in that they all pre-empt the opportunity to talk after projected possible completion by producing the next unit earlier than the co-participants’ possible start up. But the yinwei here differs from the other two in that it does not continue the immediately preceding talk and action (as rush-throughs) or start a new action (as abrupt-joins), but rather returns to and continues some earlier talk and course of action by the same speaker.

Finally, the participants’ coordinated look away at the possible completion of the TCU before yinwei displays that they orient to the ongoing turn as possibly complete and therefore disengage from the ongoing talk. But when the speaker speeds up to get to the subsequent telling through yinwei, he/she still keeps looking away. The speaker’s gaze away prior to as well as at yinwei seems to display that the turn continuation with yinwei is not pre-determined but contingently fitted to the sequential trajectory set up by the prior sequences.

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**Fig. 6.** Pitch trace (dotted line), spectrogram and waveform of lines 39–41 in Extract 2.
4.2. Reopening a closed telling to pursue affiliative response

Apart from returning to a prior course of action and topic, *yinwei* can also reopen a previously closed course of action such as storytellings to pursue the recipient’s affiliative uptake at the end of the telling. For example, in Excerpt 3, a *yinwei*-prefaced utterance is used to reopen the telling that is just closed. Gen, Wen and Tim are friends. In this interaction, Gen is telling a funny story to Wen and Tim about her friend as a substitute instructor, while Tim is out of the camera preparing some fruit snacks.

Extract 3: The substitute teacher (V 01:35:00)

01 Gen: women tongxue qu nei ge; — My colleague went to that;
we classmate go that CL

02 jiu qu biede difang jian ke me; — ‘to another place to teach as a substitute teacher.’
just go other place substitute class PRT

03 Wen: en. umm
‘Umm.’

04 Gen: ranhou ta nei ge gang kaishi ye shi zuo zai zuowei shang. — ‘At the beginning, she sat in a (student’s) seat.’
then she that CL just start also be sit at seat on

05 ranhou jiu yi ge nansheng guolai gen ta dashan. — ‘Then a guy in the class came up to her and chatted her up.’
then just one CL guy come up with her chat up

06 ei na gen ta liaode ke hao le. — ‘The conversation went very well.’
INT that with her chat very good PRT

07 yihuir fang xue wo dai ni zou a. — ‘(The guy said,)’let me give you a ride after class.’”
later after class I take you go PRT

08 Wen: <<aiya>>[dou dao zhei zhong chengdu le. — ‘Wow, already to this stage.’
INT [already to this kind degree PRT

09 Gen: [qing ni chifan shenme shenmede; — ‘I’d like to take you to dinner’ things like that.
invite you eat what what

10 Tim: zhende jiade. — ‘Really?’
real fake

11 Gen: a: dui. — ‘Yeah, right.’
ah right

12 ranhou te te nei ge yinqin; — ‘And (the guy) was very attentive towards her.’
then very very that CL attentive

13 Wen: en— umm — ‘Umm.’

14 Gen: ranhou jieguo nei ge da le ling le; — ‘Then, the class bell rang.’
then result that CL hit PFV bell PRT

15 wo tongxue zhan qianbian le; — My colleague stood in the front.
my classmate stand front PRT
16 ranhou nei nansheng hai yiwei hai shuo ne;
then that guy still think still say PRT
‘That guy was still thinking and asking.’

17 ei ni shi ke daibiao;
INT you be class representative
‘are you the class representative?’

18 Wen: ((laughter, leaning forward while laughing))

19 Gen: ((laughter))

20 <<laughing>wo tongxue mei li ta;>
my classmate NEG care him
‘My colleague ignored him.’

21 ta shuo(0.8) nei ge;
she say(0.8)that CL
‘and said, well,’

22 jintian ne wo lai gei dajia shangke.
today PRT I come to everyone teach
‘today, I’m the teacher of this class.’

23 nei nansheng nei lian jiu shihua le dangshi;
that guy that face just stone PFV at that time
‘At that time, that guy’s face immediately turned to stone.’

24 Gen: ((laughter))

25 Wen: ((laughter, padding on her own lap, leaning to the right))

26 Gen: tebie dou.
very funny
‘Very funny.’

27 ((Gen and Wen laughing together, Wen’s body returning to rest position))

28 (3.0)

Fig. 11. Gen’s (right) body in line 29

29 Gen:--> ‘h yinwei wo tongxue zhangde hen jiaoxiao de nei zhong;
because my classmate grow very petite ASSC that kind
‘Because my classmate is very petite.’
30 aiyō: ke youyisi le.
INT very funny PRT
‘Aiyo, very funny.’

31 gen wo shuo dangshi nei nansheng lian jiu shihua le.
to me say immediately that guy face just stone PRT
‘(She) told me that that guy’s face immediately turned to stone.’

32 Tim: ((laughter))
33 Gen: ((laughter))
34 tai gaoxiao le;
too funny PRT
’Sofunny.’
35 Tim: <<laughing, f> En.>
umm
‘Umm.’
36 mei liaodao zhei ge [a
NEG predict this CL PRT
‘(He) didn’t expect this.’
37 Gen: [en en.
[en en
‘Right right.’

During Gen’s storytelling, Wen and Tim produce continuers (line 03 and 13), a question (line 8) and a newsmark (line 10) which display their alignment with (Stivers, 2008) and high involvement in the storytelling activity (Tannen, 1981, 1984; M. H. Goodwin, 1982). Wen anticipates the punch line of the funny story and starts laughing with concurrent lean (Griffitt, 2008). After the punch line (lines 22–23), both Gen and Wen burst into laughter together (lines 24–25). The telling is concluded with a summary assessment tebie dou ‘very funny’ (line 26), followed by another laughing together by Gen and Wen (line 27). The laughter after the summary assessment and Wen’s concurrent leaning back to rest position (line 27) index their orientation to the storytelling as possibly complete (Sacks, 1974; Li, 2013). Wen’s laughter (and particularly the laughing together with Gen after the summary assessment) also displays her affiliation with Gen’s stance in treating the story as “very funny” (Sacks, 1974; Jefferson, 1978; Stivers, 2008). But the other recipient Tim has not provided any response upon the story’s possible completion. Tim’s lack of response upon the possible closure of the storytelling is noticeably disaffiliative (Stivers, 2008), especially in contrast to the highly affiliative response from Wen. After a long pause (line 28), Gen reopens her just closed storytelling sequence through yinwei (line 29), and redothes the punch line (line 31) and the summary assessment (line 34). This time, Tim produces laughter (line 32) immediately after the punch line as well as the verbal comment (line 36) after Gen’s concluding assessment. The laughter and verbal comment explicitly display Tim’s affiliation with Gen. Here, yinwei is used to reopen the already closed storytelling and subsequently to redo the punch line to pursue the affiliative response from the previously less engaged recipient.

In contrast to the previous examples in Section 4.1, the prosodic and bodily-visual features embody the disjunction between yinwei and the preceding end of the storytelling. There is typically a discontinuity in timing, an audible in-breath, and/or a sudden shift of pitch (Fig. 10). The deep “pre-beginning inbreath” (line 29, see also Fig. 10) not only projects the beginning of extended TCUs (Schegloff, 1996; Torreira et al., 2015), but also implies the noteworthiness of the incipient talk (Couper-Kuhlen, 2004), i.e. detailed accounts and redoing of the punch line. The disjunctive prosodic cues also retrospectively render the previous storytelling sequence (and activity) as complete. At the onset of yinwei, Gen slightly leans towards the addressed recipient Tim and maintains the hold of lean throughout her first yinwei-prefaced TCU (Fig. 11). Gen’s lean (and hold of lean) visibly displays her pursuit of Tim’s affiliative response to the storytelling (Li, 2014).

We can see in this example that the yinwei preface is designed sequentially, prosodically and visually to reopen a closed storytelling to pursue affiliative responses from one of the recipients. Similar features and uses of yinwei are also observed in Excerpt 4. The storytelling in Excerpt 4 is rather long, lasting about 2 min. Prior to the segment, Bin reports that she broke up with her boyfriend, and a male friend visited her after the breaking up, got drunk and stayed overnight in her place. Pei

\footnote{Aiyo is an interjection (Xiandai hanyu cidian, 2005), conveying an emphatic mood here.}
inquires if anything happened between Bin and the friend when he stayed overnight. After responding with a negative answer, Bin goes on to report what happened that night (starting from line 1).

Extract 4: Bad boyfriends (BP_V 00:28:55)

01 Bin: ranhou wo jiu hen tongku de gen ta liao;
then I just very painful with him chat
'It was so painful to chat with him (about this),'

02 wo shuo wo nanpengyou song renjia(-)nüpengyou yipengliangpeng hua,
I say my boyfriend give other girlfriend one CL two CL flower
'I said, my boyfriend gave another person's girlfriend flowers multiple times.'

03 ranhou wo shuo xin huan yi ge xin nanpengyou immer pech.
then I say new change one CL new boyfriend immer pech
'Then, I said I changed to a new boyfriend, but still had bad luck.'

04 ranhou jiu zhao John jiu dangmiannr yao;
then just find (NAME) just face-to-face ask
'Then, I went to John and asked in front of his face,'

05 wo shuo wo jiu yao yi zhi meiguihua xing ma.
I say I just want one CL rose OK Q
'I said, I just want one rose, is it OK?'

06 meiyou.
NEG have
'No,'

07 ta shuo wo bu wo bu hui langfei qian;
he say I NEG I NEG will waste money
'He said 'I, I won't waste money (on that).'
08 Pei: [pʰ]
09 Bin: ranhou xiaohai? ranhou zhei ci ye fenshou ye shi yinwei John::.
then child then this time NEG also break up also be because(NAME)
'Then the guy, then the reason why I broke up with John was also because,'
10 Bin: <<jiu shi shuo>>.
just be say
'that's to say…'
((45 lines omitted regarding the report on how the guy got drunk and threw up during a long
drinking process in Bin’s place.))
53 Bin: ranhou ta shuo;
then 3SG say
'Then he said'
54 e::dier tian gei wo da dianhua shuo shuo duibuqi;
umm second day to me call telephone say say sorry
'Umm, he called me the next day to apologize.'
55 <p>ta shuo> zai jia li saorao ni yi ge wanshang shenmede.
he say at home inside bother you one CL night something like that
'He said (he's sorry) to have bothered me the whole night in my place and things like that.'
((3 lines omitted regarding an intervening question–answer sequence about if the male friend
is good-looking))
59 Bin: ranhou wo shuo ni duibuqi wo shi ba.
then I say you sorry me be PRT
'Then I said, you are sorry to me, right?’
60 ranhou shuo wo qing ni chifan.
then say I invite you eat dinner
'Then (he) said, I’ll take you to dinner.’
61 yi bai kuaiqian yixia ni tiao;
one hundred dollar lower you choose
'You can choose any place under 100 dollars.’
62 <<laughing> wo shuo bu yao bu yao.>
I say NEG want NEG want
'I said, no, no.’
<<laughing> song wo hua.>
send me flower
'Buy me flowers.'

<<laughing> wo shuo wo xianzai tianzhelian zhao bie ren yao hua
dou yao bu lai;>
I say I now shameless find other people ask flower
even ask NEG come
'I said now I'm almost shameless in asking others to buy me flowers. Even by doing that, I still can't get flowers.'

Pei: <<laughing>en en en::>
umm umm umm
'Umm, umm, umm.'

Bin: ta shuo wo song ni wo dingqi song ni.
he say I give you I regularly give you
'He said, I would send you flowers regularly.'

Pei: !KU!
cool
'Cool!'

Bin: en.
umm
'Umm.'

Pei: ((lip smacking))

Bin: =zhende wo jiu juede-
really I just feel
'I really feel,'

a:: mei banfa
ah NEG way
'Ah, no way.'
73 (1.0)

Fig. 15. The gaze of Bin (right) and Pei (left) in line 73

74 Bin:--> "h yinwei wo jiu zhao zhende zhao jiu zai lianshang
because I just find really find just at face
'Because I just went really went right to (his) face,'

75 wo shuo Jonn yi zhi meiguihua ZHENde mei you duoshaoqian.
I say (NAME) one CL rose really NEG have expensive
'I said 'John, one rose is really not expensive'."

76 wo shuo wo wo yi fenqian dou bu yuanyi [duo hua;
I say I I one penny even NEG willing [more spend
'I said I didn’t want to spend any extra money, not even a penny.'

77 Pei: [dui ta juede ta jianchi yuanze me.
[right he feel he insist principle PRT
'Right, he felt he had principles.'
78 Bin: wo shuo wo zhi xiangyao yi zhi hua; I say I just want one CL flower 'I said I just wanted one flower.'

79 Pei: ta juede ta jianchi yuanze; he feel he insist principle 'He felt he had principles.'

80 ((lip smacking))

81 Pei: ai. 'Ai.'

82 Bin: zuigui de shihou yi zhi meiguihua hui shi ou ma. most expensive ASSC time one CL rose can be ten euro 'Can one rose be 10 Euros at its most expensive price?'

83 [NEG can PRT 'It can’t be.'

84 Pei: [!!HUAN!! [change 'Change (boyfriend).'

85 tian dixia wo gei ni shuo ou. heaven under I to you say PRT 'Let me tell you, in the world,'

86 wo zuotian renjia gen wo [shuo shenme; I yesterday other people to me [say what 'Yesterday, I heard other people say that'

87 Bin: [meiyou huan women jiu fen le me. [NEGchange we just separate PRT PRT 'I didn’t change (boyfriend), I just broke up with him.'

Through the report of the male friend’s visit, Bin complains to Pei about her ex-boyfriend, Bin’s affective stance (i.e., indignation about the behaviors of her ex-boyfriends and especially the most recent one) is conveyed through lexico-syntactic devices such as the telling preface tongku de gen ta liao ‘so painful to chat with him (about this)’ (line 01) and the assessment immer pech ‘forever bad luck’ (line 03) and the direct reported speech showing her indignation (lines 05–07) (Holt, 2000). The complaint story reaches its climax when Bin reports that her boyfriend refuses to buy her flowers and considers it a “waste of money” despite her asking him to do so (lines 04–07). Pei’s response is a “response cry” (Goffman, 1978) or “sound object” (Reber, 2012) (line 08). Response cries or sound objects have been documented as ambivalent markers of affiliation (or non-affiliation) (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012) and empathy (Heritage, 2011). Here, a cluster of Pei’s vocal–visual behaviors in producing the sound object such as markedly strong aspiration, protruding lips, and eyes rolling to the side and head shake (Fig. 12) publicly displays her indignation about the behaviors of Bin’s boyfriend, thereby affiliating with the stance conveyed by Bin. With some speech perturbations (such as self-repairs, restarts, pause in lines 09 and 10), Bin initiates a “frame shift” (Goffman, 1974; M.H. Goodwin, 1996) in the storytelling from complaining about her ex-boyfriend(s) to reporting the male friend’s visit. That is, the events being reported are transformed from a complaint story (through direct reported speech wo shuo wo…” ‘I said I...’ showing her indignation in lines 02–07) to a lighthearted telling of the male friend’s visit and his dinner invitation the next day (lines 09–66). The storytelling comes to its punch line and possible completion when Bin recounts his rejection of the dinner invitation and request again for flowers (lines 62–64) which is finally granted (line 66). Pei displays her orientation to the completion of the storytelling and her disengagement from the activity through multimodal practices. The prosodically upgraded assessment ku ‘cool’ with extra stress (line 67) indicates that Pei is interactionally highly engaged and affiliated with Bin (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012) but topically disengaged from the ongoing talk and activity (Jefferson, 1993). Interestingly, Pei claps her hands once while producing ku ‘cool’ (Fig. 13). Speakers close their lips at
the end of some response tokens such as ‘yep’, ‘nope’, and ‘mm’. It has been documented that the marked lip-closing at the end of these response tokens indicates turn completion with no further elaboration on the response (Heritage and Sorjonen, 1994; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991). By analogy, Pei’s single clapping visually and audibly marks the end of the current activity; further, the closed-hand gesture at the end of the hand clapping (Fig. 13) visually embodies completion and displays her orientation to the current activity, i.e., storytelling, as complete. Her orientation to the closure of the storytelling is further evidenced by the completion-implicative sequence-closing haode ‘OK’ (line 70) and gaze away displaying disengagement from the ongoing activity (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1984). But the teller and the recipient display divergent treatment of the activity-so-far. Bin’s continuation of the report foreshadowed by the epistemic marker zhen de wo jiu jue ‘really, I just feel...’ (line 71) retrospectively renders the telling as not yet complete. But she quickly drops out from the projected continuation of the activity and produces a completion-relevant “figurative expression” mei banfa ‘no way’ (line 72) with a turning of her head and gaze away, indexing the moving away from the teller (Drew and Holt, 1998). The sudden change (halt) of the projected action trajectory seems to be prompted by and exhibit sensitivity to Pei’s prior sequence completion-implicative haode ‘OK’ and embodied disengagement. Thus, the storytelling sequence is brought to a “designed-to-be” and “treated as” possible closure.

But after a one-second pause (line 73), Bin reopens the just closed storytelling through yinwei-prefaced TCUs reformulating the climax of the complaint story and detailing how she requests flowers from her ex-boyfriend (lines 74–76 and 78). The reformulation of the climax of the complaint story is initially not received with Pei’s affiliative response, but rather accounts for the boyfriend’s rejection of Bin’s request (lines 77 and line 79). After Bin’s seek of affiliation (lines 82–83), Pei finally shows her support of Bin by suggesting her dumping him (line 84). Here, again, yinwei is used as a practice to reopen a closed storytelling at its displayed possible completion. It provides the teller with another opportunity to produce (part of) the climax of the complaint story and for the recipient to offer affiliative response.

The yinwei at this sequential and situational environment is also produced with disjunctive prosodic features and bodily-visual behaviors. The approximately one-second pause (line 73, Fig. 14) marks temporal disjunction between yinwei and its preceding TCU. The inbreath after the pause, again, indexes the beginning of an extended stretch of talk (Schegloff, 1996; Torreira et al., 2015). The first syllable yin in yinwei carries significantly high pitch, forming the pitch peak (455 Hz, see Fig. 14). The sharply articulated pitch peak not only indicates the marked status of the yinwei-prefaced TCUs (i.e., not opening a new course of action but reopening the closed course of action), but also (together with Bin’s frown) indexes anger or indignation conveyed in the subsequent TCUs (Rabiei and Gasparetto, 2014). Concurrent with the onset of yinwei, Bin starts turning her head back towards Pei and simultaneously looks back at Pei (Figs. 15 and 16). The teller’s looking away from and then back at the recipient marks retrospectively the possible end of a prior course of action and prospectively the possible beginning of a new course of action (Rossano, 2012). But the yinwei-prefaced TCU turns out not to be the actual beginning of a new course of action, but the reopening of the just closed storytelling.

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9 Rabiei and Gasparetto (2014:4) argue that among the emotions with negative valence, anger is displayed with the highest pitch peak.
In Extracts 3 and 4, *yinwei* serves to reopen action trajectories (i.e., storytelling) that have been treated as closed. In both cases, the recipient’s response at the end of the storytelling departs from the teller’s expectation and disaffiliates with the teller’s conveyed stance. By using *yinwei*, the teller provides additional information and redoes the punch line of the story, which affords another opportunity for the recipient to respond affiliatively. *Yinwei* at this sequential position is usually produced with disjunctive prosodic features such as pause, audible inbreath, and/or significantly high pitch. The teller also displays re-engagement of the recipient in the telling just closed through turning toward and looking at the recipient.

The prosodic and bodily-visual features of *yinwei* in the two different sequential positions have shown systematic differences. The *yinwei* used to return to and continue a pre-prior course of action is delivered with “continuing” prosodic and bodily-visual practices, whereas those that reopen a closed storytelling are packaged with discontinuous prosodic and bodily-visual features.

5. Conclusions and discussion

This paper has examined two discourse-interactional functions of *yinwei* at a particular sequential environment (i.e., mid-turn and after the possible completion of a sequence) as well as its multimodal design in Mandarin face-to-face conversation. We have seen that *yinwei* can be used as a linguistic resource (among other vocal and visual resources) to manage the break in contiguity by linking the subsequent utterances to the talk (and course of action) other than the immediately preceding one. The connection to the (pre-) prior talk and course of action is further used to pursue the speaker’s interactional agenda or to pursue the recipient’s affiliative response. First, at the possible completion of the recipient-initiated sequence (and course of action), the speaker is observed to use *yinwei* to return to and continue his/her earlier talk and course of action. The continuation of the pre-prior course of action allows the speaker to accomplish his/her earlier talk and course of action. The semantic meaning of *yinwei* embodies the continuation of the pre-prior course of action, whereas the speaker’s gaze away seems to indicate the contingency in producing *yinwei* after the possible completion of the immediately preceding sequence. Second, the speaker uses *yinwei* to reopen a storytelling just closed when the recipient’s response departs from his/her expectation. Through reopening the storytelling and redoing the punch line, the speaker offers the recipient another opportunity to provide affiliative response. The disjunctive prosodic features and turning/leaning toward the recipient while producing *yinwei* also embody the speaker’s pursuit of (affiliative) response from the recipient. The analysis of the sequential position, prosody and bodily-visual behaviors of *yinwei* has demonstrated that and how different modalities work together to form actions and accomplish interactional tasks. However, different modalities may not always work in convergence with each other in forming turns and actions. For example, when returning to and continuing with pre-prior talk (and course of action) with *yinwei*, the speaker’s looking away seems to indicate the disengagement from and possible completion of the ongoing talk, whereas the “continuous” voicing and other prosodic features signal turn continuation. The interplay of multimodal resources in the production of *yinwei* reveals the intricacy in the multimodal construction of actions in interaction.

In Mandarin, *yinwei* is typically used as a causal connective to indicate reason or cause for an event, state of affairs, or belief, and to provide accounts for an action (Xing, 2001; Lü, 1982; Chao, 1968; Shen, 2003; Song and Tao, 2008). This paper has shown that in addition to these canonical uses, *yinwei* also has discourse and interactional functions. Fang (2000) argues that some conjunctions in Mandarin have gone through semantic reduction, and can be used as discourse markers in conversation. This study has shown that some *yinwei* seem to be mainly deployed to organize discourse, sequence, and course of actions, as well as in accomplishing interactional tasks. That is, these *yinwei* appear to have become discourse markers that organize discourse and interaction. But the way that *yinwei* is used (i.e., prefacing a chunk of talk that connects to (pre-)prior talk) seems to be related to its semantic meaning of marking causal relation. That is, it provides justificiation for the subsequent talk to be brought up here and now at the possible completion of a course of action. The semantic meaning of *yinwei* may be exploited by the speaker to package the subsequent utterances as related to the earlier talk (as reason, cause, or account), and thereby providing warrants for bringing it up here and now and for its fitness to the prior course of action.

The discourse-organizing function of *yinwei* reported in this study seems distinctive from its use at the three domains or levels (i.e., content, epistemic, and speech-act) proposed by Sweetser (1990) and Schiffrin (1987), among others. Particularly, the *yinwei*s in Section 4.2 do not seem to mark cause of an event or a belief, nor do they indicate causal explanation of a speech act being performed. This type of *yinwei* is primarily used to organize chunks of talk to achieve discourse coherence and to accomplish interactional tasks. The discourse-interactional use of *yinwei* contributes to our understanding and linguistic description of the semantic and pragmatic functions of the causal connective. It provides evidence that linguistic construction and classification are shaped by how people use language in interaction.

Finally, this study casts light on the cross-linguistic comparison of the discourse use of causal conjunctions. Gohl and Günthner (1999) report that *weil* ‘because’, in addition to being a subordinating and coordinating conjunction, has discourse functions as a discourse marker. For example, it may introduce background information and narrative sequences, and mark topic shift in German conversation (Gohl and Günthner, 1999). This study of *yinwei* ‘because’ in Mandarin conversation resonates with their observation of *weil* ‘because’ in German conversation in that *yinwei* ‘because’ also exhibits discourse and interactional functions in addition to being a causal conjunction, and can be used as a discourse marker. Couper-Kuhlen (2011) investigates the sequential and interactional tasks accomplished by turn-initial because-clauses and argues that it is mainly used to account for an immediately prior action by the same speaker or the interlocutor. This current study has shown that *yinwei*-clauses not only relate to the immediately preceding talk and action, but also to the one prior to
that. The observations in this study contribute to our understanding of the discourse-interactional use of conjunctions in different languages and speech communities.

**Appendix A**

The transcription conventions of GAT-2 (Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem 2) (Selting et al., 2009) used in this article:

- \( ^{\circ}h \) in-breaths of appr. 0.2–0.5 sec. duration
- \( ? \) cut-off by glottal closure
- ( ) micro-pause
- (,), (–), (—) short, middle or long pauses
- (1.0) pauses which are or more than 1.0 second
- ACcent primary or main accent
- :: prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them
- <<coughing>> accompanying paralinguistic and non-linguistic actions over a stretch of speech
- <<f>> forte, loud
- <<p>> piano, soft
- ((head nods)) description of an action
  - rising to mid
  - level final pitch movement
  - falling to mid final pitch movement
  - falling to low final pitch movement

**Appendix B**

ASSC associative
BA a pretransitive marker
CL classifier
CRS currently relevant state
EXP experiential marker
INT interjection
NEG negatives
PFV perfective aspect
PROS progressive aspect
PRT particle
Q question marker

**Appendix C**

Hei (female) and Bai (female) are friends living and studying in a city that is much colder than their own hometown. Prior to this sequence, Hei and Bai are chatting about shopping for clothes and the style of dress they like.

(Summer dress)

01 Hei: xiatian de shihou;  
summer ASSC time  
‘In summer,’

02 Hei: ranhou mai le yi tiao;  
then buy PFV one CL  
‘I bought one (dress).’

03 Hei: ou dui.  
on right  
‘Oh right.’

04 Hei: wo hai dai dao zher lai le.  
I even bring to here come CRS  
‘I even brought it here.’
Hei: dai dao zher lai jiu zaiye mei chuan guo. (I've) never worn it since I brought it here.

Bai: dui dui dui. Right right right.

Hei: [yinwei tai leng le. because too cold]

Bai: [women zher jiu shi. Our place is indeed...]

Bai: zhiye guihua ma. career plan,

Bai: huozhe shuo- or say 'of?'

Hei: zenme tiao dao zhege wenti le. how jump to this-CL question CRS 'How (come) we jump to this question?'

((Hei and Bai laughing together))

Bai: <<laughing>wo zai pinmingde zhao huati. I PROS desperately search topic 'I'm desperately searching for a topic.'

References


