

GENDER SOCIALIZATION OF CHINESE CHILDREN:
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND MEDIA

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation seeks to deepen understanding of language-mediated gender socialization of Chinese children by answering three questions. In the family setting, how do parent-child interactions convey gender norms and gender-related expectations? In the school setting, how do teacher-child interaction embody gender norms? What role is cartoon playing in socializing Chinese children with gender? I analyze linguistic data collected from two Chinese families, two Chinese kindergartens, and one household name Chinese cartoon. The results provide novel answers to the three questions. First, parent-child verbal interactions differ in terms of the child's gender. While the father-son pair focus more on rules in the physical world and skill development, the mother-daughter pair care more about social relations, emotions, and joyful life experience. Second, though aware of gender-egalitarian principles, Chinese kindergarten teachers subconsciously treat boys and girls in inconsistent manners. Children of different gender receive diverse interaction frequency, speech length, and speech acts from their teacher. Third, through artistic creation, Chinese cartoon embraces overt gender stereotypes through its language and plots. Male characters produce statistically significantly more utterances and visit a wider range of out-home locations than female characters. Male characters are portrayed through lexemes that embody adventurous and heroic masculine gender norms, while female characters are primarily associated with lexemes that related

to home-based and appearance-related feminine gender stereotypes. All three case studies associate gender socialization with contemporary Chinese zeitgeist. I thus advocate an approach to gender socialization that considers layers of factors in a target society, as it allows us to develop a more comprehensive understanding of gender in dynamic social practices.

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饮子畏小楼 文徵明 [明代]

今日解驰逐，投閒傍高庐。君家在皋桥，諠阗井市区。
何以掩市声，充楼古今书。左陈四五册，右倾三两壶。
我饮良有限，伴子聊相娱。与子故深密，奔忙坐阔疏。
旬月一会面，意勤情有馀。苍烟薄城首，振袖复踟蹰。

To my deceased grandfather, mayor and major general, Zuomin Shi

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Current Study

Gender, a critical shaper of life and world, pertains to the social and cultural norms, beliefs, identities, roles, and behaviors stereotypically associated with biological sex (Aïkhenval'd, 2016; Lindsey, 1990). In a society, gender norms are learned through socialization and are fundamentally determined by cultural values (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Henslin, 1999). As a conceptual vehicle of culture, language reflects and reinforces gender norms, thus plays a central role in gender socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). As novice learners of gender norms, children acquire tacit knowledge of social order principles and systems of beliefs through their exposure to and participation in language-mediated interactions. This dissertation seeks to examine Chinese-speaking¹ children's (age range: 5-6) gender socialization through language in interactions with three socialization agents: *parent*, *teacher*, and *media*. The aim of this research is to broaden current knowledge of gender socialization through a linguistic approach, particularly in the less-studied Chinese setting.

1.1.1 Gender socialization

Sex and gender

Although the terms 'gender' and 'sex' are sometimes used interchangeably in everyday discourses, the two concepts are fundamentally different. Sex is a biological category that distinguishes males and females based on biological, anatomical, and chromosomal properties. The original cause of sex is the chromosomes pair, either XX for females or XY for males in most human populations. This chromosome combination is a person's biological attribute assigned by birth, and they result in visible differences, including primary and secondary sex characteristics. The concept of sex is strictly built upon physical traits that pertain to chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitalia (Arnold, 2004; Bridges, 1925; Charlesworth, 1991).

¹ In linguistics, 'Chinese' may be a general term of seven major Sinitic language groups. Since this dissertation focuses on Mandarin Chinese, hereafter, 'Chinese' and 'Mandarin' will be used interchangeably in all chapters.

Gender, on the other hand, is a set of social and psychological characteristics that society considers proper for its males and females (Udry, 1994). As Wood (1994) explains, rather than merely being a quality of individuals, gender represents one's 'potential choices,' as something to be systematically learned from "the social expectations which define the meaning of sex" (p.53). Intriguingly, the word gender used to be a term adopted in linguistic grammar (e.g., French, German, and Spanish nouns). It was not until the 1970s when researchers such as Money and Ehrhardt (1972) and Unger (1979) called for a new understanding of human sexual typology. Since then, the word gender began to indicate an individual's social roles based on the biological sex or personal identification, which stems from internal awareness (Carlson, 1987).

In the past six decades, various approaches have been proposed to explore the origins of gendered behaviors, especially the actual state of children's gender development. Initially, concepts such as gender identity and gender constancy were introduced by pioneer scholars, who denied the decisive influence of birth-assigned sex while confirmed the societal impact on gender and an individual's active role in perceiving and expressing gender (Kohlberg, 1966; Maccoby & D'Andrade, 1966; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Stoller, 1964). Since then, traditional beliefs of sex and gender were challenged from multiple aspects.

First, gender is related to 'doing.' Namely, instead of essentialized qualities determined by biological sex, gender is a socially constructed performance that takes place during routine interpersonal interactions (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003; Lindsey, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Second, gender does not fall into a dichotomy, and the bipolar opposition between masculinity and femininity is invalid. This is because males and females both have socially defined masculinity and femininity qualities, and the sociocultural contexts impact their degree of gender quality possessions and articulations (Bem, 1974; Constantinople, 1973). Third, within-sex variation may be more significant than the assumed sex difference. The assumption of sex difference was caused by socializing agent's direct shaping of sex-typical behavior on children. Expectations and social treatment on the two sexes are more various than they deserve in reality (Delamont, 2012; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

Socialization and personal development

The notion of socialization stems from sociological observations. In sociology, *nature* refers to biologically determined and instinctive human behaviors, while *nurture* pertains to the human behaviors that firmly rely on the environment an individual is raised in (Lippa, 2005). In this sense, socialization is the nurture process through which an individual develops personality traits, human potentials and learns about their society and culture (Clausen, 1968). Since a century ago, a large and growing body of literature has investigated the relations between human behavior acquisition and societal factors. Research has shown that the ubiquity of socialization essentially influences the behavior, beliefs, and actions of a society's children and adults. Besides, it also faithfully and vividly illustrates an individual's lifetime learning process.

Through the lens of psychology, classic socialization theories went hand in hand with the debate about individual development. Sigmund Freud's (1923) early theory suggests three personality components: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, which refers to an individual's *instincts*, *social reality*, and socially constructed *morality*. In his view, these distinct agents of a person's psyche develop at different stages in life, and they belong to a system in which physical attribute is absent. George Herbert Mead, the founder of symbolic interactionism, later described the development of 'self' as 'taking on the role of others.' In his theory, individuals obtain the sense of self through other people, precisely through social interactions that require one to view themselves as someone else might see you. In Mead (1934)'s developmental model, children learn through four stages: *imitation*, *play*, *game*, and *generalized other*. Although many later scholars have questioned these preliminary approaches to personality, these theories initially proposed the significance of *social impact* on individual development.

Later, the significance of socialization in individual development obtained empirical evidence through Kingsley Davis's (1940) investigation on Anna, a severely isolated children. Without learning in the society, Anna was found without primary language function, achieved only half the intelligence level of her age, obtained almost no knowledge about the outside world. Since Davis's (1940) Anna study, socialization's vital role in the development of language skills, social skills, and emotional stability began to be widely recognized.

Jean Piaget (1969) focused on cognitive development and discovered the correlations between behavior mistakes and children's age. According to him, the socialization process could be summarized into four developmental stages: (1) *sensorimotor stage* (after birth), (2) *preoperational stage* (approx. age 2), (3) *concrete operational stage* (approx. age 6 or 7), and (4) *formal operational stage* (approx. age 12). Years later, Kohlberg (1976) expanded Piaget's theory by incorporating moral development. He proposed that children's understanding of subjective 'right' starts in the *pre-conventional stage*. After they move to the *conventional stage*, they begin to realize how 'rightness' is required by society and caregivers. Eventually, children will enter the *post-conventional stage*, in which they begin to weigh abstract concepts instead of what is mechanically right or wrong. Accomplishing a step further than Freud (1923) and Piaget (1969), Kohlberg's (1976) theory highlighted the influence of *social norms* on individual socialization.

Carol Gilligan, a research assistant of Kohlberg's, added a sex-based comparison in her follow-up investigation of Kohlberg's study. She discovered that while boys stood in a 'justice perspective' (e.g., formal rules) to differentiate right and wrong, girls held a 'care and responsibility perspective' (e.g., interpersonal reasoning) in moral decision. Gilligan (1982) attributed this gender difference to the existing gender norms in the US. Society has socialized girls to be more nurturing and empathetic, and these gender norms brought a noticeable impact on female's moral interpretations of appropriate behavior.

Furthermore, Erik Erikson expanded the process of socialization into a lifelong journey. He proposed that while an infant's challenge is to gain autonomy and taking care of self, a young adult also has concerns and worries about interpersonal relationships. People in various life stages encounter different social expectations; thus, the procedure of socialization is nonstop. In his view, socialization determines how well a person performs the role of being an individual of a certain age (Erikson, 1950).

Socialization agents

Socialization agents are the people and institutions who provide platforms and resources for an individual's acquisition of world knowledge and social norms of their community. These agents are vital to individuals' development as members of a community, as they collaboratively construct a framework in which individuals are

cultivated into social members (Kerckhoff, 1972). In the literature, four major socialization agents have attracted abundant scholarly attention: *family*, *school*, *peers*, and the *media*.

Family, the source of one's *primary socialization*, provides initial experiences with languages, values, beliefs, behaviors, and social norms. Family is decisive because it covers significant aspects of socialization in a person's life. Starting from infancy, caregivers offer children cultural capitals in the form of toys, stories, books, and games. These cultural capitals are the non-financial assets that facilitate an individual's future achievement (Gilligan, 1993). Through family activities such as bedtime story time and parent-child reading hours, value, which goes beyond literacy proficiency, is taught to children. Children are socialized by their family to comprehend how norms, behaviors, values, traits, and attitudes are associated with sex, racial groups, and social class. Family socialization is also *anticipatory* in the sense that it facilitates individuals' learning to take on the values and standards of the groups they aspire to join (Clark, 1983).

Secondary socialization is the process through which children are socialized outside the home and within society. Usually, school is the agent that provides children with their first exposure to bureaucracies through rules that require them to behave in certain manners, in certain places, on certain occasions, and in interaction with relevant others. Educational institutions also expose children to more various perspectives on race, class, religion, politics, etc. These hidden curricula motivate children to update their previous primary socialization results and learn how to act differently than at home whenever necessary. Furthermore, in a micro-society like a school, children interact with peers from diverse backgrounds and socialize themselves in different groups. Peer socialization is essential in personal development because it serves to establish and maintain a person's sense of connection, behavioral regulation, and psychological autonomy (Barber & Olsen, 1997). Besides, peers also provide individuals with 'social prescriptions' such as common expected behaviors and mindsets. Namely, people don't just pick peer groups that fit into their existing traits. Instead, peer groups mold the traits they end up with (Coleman, 1961).

In contemporary tech-focused societies, media has become a significant socialization agent. Previous studies not only discovered the relations between media

consumption behaviors and social traits (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017; Özgüven & Mucan, 2013) but also revealed their influence on children. For example, children exposed to Sesame Street, a cartoon of diverse racial backgrounds, tend to be more positive toward people of different races (Lovelace et al., 1994). Children frequently access news media possess a higher level of political awareness (Conway et al., 1981). Children's consumer characteristics are impacted by the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that media have propagated (Hayta, 2008).

Gender Socialization and development

As a subdomain of socialization, gender socialization pertains to the development from the earliest recognition of sex-related differences through the acquisition of gender knowledge and sex-typed behavior required by the society (Eckes & Trautner, 2000). Differing from the predetermined and passive biological sex, gendered behaviors are actively learned and practiced via social interactions. In recent decades, four developmental stages have been reported in the literature: *cue search*, *gender identity*, *rigidity*, and *flexibility*.

Research has showed that children conduct apparent, self-initiated gender cue searches in their early years. They are skillful in using gender cues provided by society to help them to make sense of the surrounding world. With little direct training, children are capable of generating expectations about others and developing personal standards for gendered behaviors (Bjorklund, 2000; Martin & Ruble, 2004). At around two to three years old, children obtain a clear understanding of their own gender (i.e., gender identity) and form affiliation and preference to that gender group (Bukatko, 2004; Hine et al., 2012; Martin & Ruble, 2004). Consequently, they generate increased motivation to behave similarly with the same gender group members, obtain selective information about ingroup nuance, and demonstrate increased engagement in ingroup activities. Meanwhile, their preliminary gender knowledge at this stage also creates negative assumptions about gender group outsiders, which is reflected by their minimal time spent with the opposite sex (Maccoby, 1998; Ruble & Martin, 1998). During this continuous process of evaluation and assumption, children tend to generate and exaggerate the male-female differences. This either-or-fashioned rigid gender stereotype reaches its peak at the age of five to six before relative flexibility arises two years after (Trautner et al., 2005).

Our knowledge of how children develop and apply gender stereotypes is further supported by cognitive theories, especially through their discovery of children's active role in gender socialization. The *Cognitive Developmental Approach* suggested by Kohlberg (1966) proposed that children's understanding of gender concept significantly influence their behaviors. Once children realize gender constancy at the age of three, they actively construct gender in society by pronouncing their gender understandings in the behaviors. The *Gender-Schema Theory* stated that children establish gender-related conceptions of themselves and others (i.e., schema), and these knowledge structures shape their attitudes and beliefs concerning gender-appropriate behaviors (Bem, 1982; Liben & Bigler, 2002; Martin et al., 2002). As Bussey and Bandura (1999) summarize, children's internal gender information processing continuously interacts with their external gender socialization. They assimilate the selective information regarding self-identified gender, create cognitive representations of gender, and then draft plans for appropriate actions.

1.1.2 Women and gender issues in China

Symbolic constructs and social practices of gender in imperial China

In imperial China, sex roles were molded by the social norms that stemmed from philosophical and religious traditions (Overmyer & Edmonds, 2003; Palmer et al., 2011; Strickmann, 2005; Tu, 1985). Through symbolic constructs and social practices, gender and religion were mutually intertwined and perpetuated (Huang et al., 2011). Three philosophical and religious traditions: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, though each with its own origin and doctrines, contributed to the configuration of gender ideologies in traditional China. Over the millennia, the boundaries between three schools of thought became blurred. Collaboratively they codified masculine and feminine identities and gender roles, and invariably emphasized the patriarchal hierarchy. Though Confucianism imposed stringent expectations on women, Daoism and Buddhism provided shelters for women who transcended the tensions inherent in their social roles.

Confucianism undoubtedly holds an important position in the gender discourse of China. The promotion of Confucian scriptures (Five Classics) and the ideas of Confucius (551-479 BCE) was initiated in Han Dynasty. Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BC), a prime

minister and philosopher then, politicized Confucianism into an ideological foundation of government official training and empire sustentation. Over centuries, this adoption had drawn Confucianism consistently toward conserving the stability, hierarchical order, and the *status quo*. Confucian filial piety stipulated that women must obey men, citizens must obey their ruler, and the young must obey the elderly. The male-centric view of Confucianism was integrated with the *yin-yang* dichotomy in Daoism and became basic guidelines for maintaining social order (DeBary, 2009; Palmer et al., 2011; Tu, 1985). Since then, the *yin-yang* theory was incorporated into Confucian synthesis, in which men were essentialized as *yang* and women as *yin* (Alder, 2002; Smith et al., 2014). Though the *yin-yang* concept itself does not imply gender essentialism, through this Confucian-generated alignment, gender roles were suggested (Chan, 2003). This *yin-yang*-based gender ideology expected sex differences to go beyond the anatomical level and fit into the roles and stereotypes that formed in a male-dominated, hierarchical society. The dyad involves mutual dependence and harmony based on hierarchical differences. While the unity of *yang* was always primary, *yin* qualities were generally inferior (Smith & Smith, 1994). Namely, *yang* takes the lead, and *yin* follows (Wang, 2003).

The teaching of Confucianism was conducted through defining masculinity in intellectual, martial, and familial terms. On the one hand, the ethical standard of Confucius and Mencius associated masculinity with proper attitudes and dispositions of *shèngrén* ‘sage’ or *jūnzǐ* ‘gentleman.’ These terms exemplified ideal men as those who contribute intellectually to the state prosperity or possess a totality of highest human qualities (Strickmann, 2005; Tu, 1985). On the other hand, the martiality of warriors was also applauded. Martial art embodies masculine strength, loyalty, virtuosity, and chivalrous morality. In the Confucian view, masculinity encompasses both wisdom of the sage and the warrior’s heroic virtue (Huang et al., 2011). An eligible Confucian *jūnzǐ* is characterized by personality traits that include *Five Constants*² and 文武双全 *wénwǔ shuāngquán* (‘being scholar and soldier’) through which social harmony and morality are identified.

² The *Five Constants* are *rén* (仁, benevolence, humaneness); *yì* (义; 義, righteousness or justice); *lǐ* (礼; 禮, proper rite); *zhì* (智, knowledge); *xìn* (信, integrity).

Essentially, Confucian masculine roles were ritualized through the patrilineal system and ancestor worship. Father in a family possessed the authority to legitimize the superiority of men. While men held a privileged place to handle *wài* ‘external’ affairs, women’s proper place was in the household, *nèi* ‘internal,’ where they implemented the roles as wife and mother (Alder, 2002; Birge, 2002, 2002; DeBary, 2009). Furthermore, this hierarchical and patriarchal principle granted men authority over women by dictating that status succession and property transmission follow male patriline. Women were expected to ‘marry out’; thus, excluded from the ritual patriline and had no legal guarantees to their paternal property. Though, in reality, women could be financially empowered by their dowry, Confucian principles prohibited them from participating in the civil service examinations, which deprived them of financial independence and political rights (Birge, 2002; Bossler, 2020).

This patriarchal society defined femininity through a hierarchal lens. Women were expected to demonstrate *Three Obediences and Four Virtues*³ which calibrated their moral and social behaviors into ideal servers for the patriarchal society. Women were required to obey male family members’ orders and be modest and moral in their actions and speech (Birge, 2002; Guisso, 1981). Various misogynistic practices were observed throughout Chinese history. Foot-binding, which tormented women’s physical bodies, was triggered by men’s erotic fetish. The ‘cult of chastity,’ which elevated chaste widows, unidirectionally guaranteed male reproductive rights (Guisso, 1981). These practices, accompanied by the policies legitimized in Confucian terms, had relegated Chinese women into inferior subjects, fertility instruments, or even sources of calamity (Chan, 1987; DeBary, 2009). Though Confucianism’s original goal was to maintain social stability, as a rigid social hierarchy, gender role was an essential component. For decades, modern scholars have evaluated Confucianism as a sexist, patriarchal ideology that has chronically compressed Chinese women’s rights (Ebrey, 2003; Rosenlee, 2012).

Although for millennia, Confucianism had an overwhelming influence, Daoism and Buddhism provided alternatives for women in terms of vocation, social status, and religious symbolism. Woman’s refuge from the Confucian hostile mundaneness was

³ Three Obediences (三從 sāncóng) include obedience to: her father as a maiden daughter; her husband as a chaste wife; her sons as a widow. Four Virtues (四德 sìdé) include: virtue in ethics; virtue in matrimony; virtue in visage, virtue in monogamy.

largely realized through their conversion to Buddhism and Daoism (Ames, 1981; Idema & Grant, 2020). In the literature, this shelter-*esque* function of Buddhism and Daoism has been discussed from multiple aspects.

First, Daoism has a femininity-emphasized nature. As Ames (1981) argued, *Laozi*, the founder of Daoism, expressed a strong preference for femininity and treated it as a method to balance *yin* and *yang*. In Laozi's view, feminine virtues, such as yielding, softness, fertility, and non-aggression, are healthier and more effective in the impetus of personal interests. In the canon *Daodejing*, Laozi frequently analogized Dao as "mother" or "womb," from which everything ensues. Second, in Daoism, the feminine *yin* is symbolically privileged through the female goddesses it presents. These deities attracted massive female followers as they circumvented duties as wives and mothers by performing celestial filial deeds (Huang et al., 2011). Besides idealized conceptions of femininity, Daoism accommodates women as individual figures and recognizes their social roles. Daoist women gained equal status as men; they could serve as priests, 'libationers,' teachers, or even achieve apotheosis as immortals (Kohn, 2004). Third, an ideological gulf exists between Daoism and Confucianism. In classical Daoist thought such as *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, Confucian values were strongly criticized as being human-made and anti-natural. Deviated from the universe's spontaneous processes that Daoism praises, Confucian doctrine's restrictions and oppression were denounced (Alder, 2002; Ames, 1981; Kohn, 2004).

Buddhism played a similar role after it entered China from India. Started as a religion of foreign male monks, it preached to a large Chinese population, among which women held significant numbers. Women were provided with alternative vocations as Buddhist nunneries if they refused to marry, became widows, or wished to escape from Confucian restrictions. (Paul & Paul, 1980; Paul & Wilson, 1985). An idiosyncratic anecdote of Chinese Buddhist history was that the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara (*Guānyīn*), transformed into a female in China, reflecting Buddhism's prominent appeal among women (Yü, 2001).

To sum up, the Chinese *yin-yang* cosmology presents a gendered symbolic system of its society and the universe. This cosmology is ambiguous since it grants independent roles to masculinity and femininity, meanwhile, assumes primacy and hierarchy between

the two. Though Daoism and Buddhism shelter women from the Confucian patriarchal constraints, they imply covert sexism in the canon. For instance, Buddhist notion denies women's ability to achieve Buddhahood in their polluted female bodies (Cook & Dogen, 2002). Daoism requires women to abandon sexuality and female physical characteristics to achieve transcendence (Huang et al., 2011). The Chinese gender practices incorporate this ambivalent *yin-yang* cosmological symbolism with a patriarchal social structure until the modern era. Even in contemporary China, traditional gender concepts embedded in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism reserve their influence on Chinese gender norms.

Women liberation in post-imperial China

In the late 19th century, China had witnessed a tremendous decline of imperial power, accompanied by an increasing concern for women's status. Foot-binding, a brutal practice that tormented girls for centuries, was outlawed in 1902 (Li, 2000; Wolf, 1985). After the monarchical collapse of Manchu Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China was founded in 1912 in search of democracy, science, and modernization.

In the early 20th century, revolutionary actions to rectify the vile of feudalist patriarchy, such as the New Culture and May Fourth movements, were launched to improve gender egalitarianism. Notably, the activists and reformers amid these campaigns were primarily pro-Western, rationalistic *male* intellectuals, including Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu. Their enthusiasm toward women's liberation was to restructure the Chinese society and gain national power. In their theory, China's modernization was hindered by its patriarchal family structure (Chen, 2014). The lack of education and the practice of foot-binding prevented Chinese women from bearing and raising robust and healthy populations. They saw women's liberation as a prerequisite to save China from the abyss of underdevelopment and international humiliation (Stacey, 1983; Yang, 2016).

By then, western ideas of gender equality had flown into China through waves of translated literature. The most influential fictive figure was Nora in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), who left a patriarchal marriage to pursue personal fulfillment in civic life. Other imported western female icons included Russian anarchist Sophia Perovskaia and French Revolutionary figure Madame Roland (Hu, 2000). The previously dominant Confucianism was criticized by domestic scholars as well. Ba Jin portrayed the fatal Confucian oppression on both sexes in his 1933 novel *The Family*. Ding Ling

narrated a liberated women's frustrations about romantic love in a patriarchal society through Miss Sophia's Diary (Chien, 1994; Molony, 2016). With their horizon broadened, Chinese women pursued a transform to 'new women' who could receive education, have freedom of marriage, and show up in the public realm (Hu, 2000).

The Chinese women's liberation reached its peak after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. New Marriage Law was issued by the Communist party to guarantee gender equality. Advocated egalitarian concepts included free marriage, free divorce, economic independence. Abolished 'feudal remnants' included prostitution, arranged marriage, child betrothal, and concubinage (Li, 2000; Stacey, 1983). Another major impetus for women's emancipation was motivated by practical considerations. After decades of wars, China was then confronted with arduous tasks of city reconstruction, economic development, and social institution establishment. Tremendous laborers, both men and women, were in demand across occupations. Therefore, driven by socialist propaganda and practical needs, women were called upon to step out of the house and participate in nation-building.

Like the steadfast, committed, and collectivism-oriented masculinity in the communist sense, femininity was newly defined. Attractive women were no longer obedient and dependent; instead, they were 'female comrades' who could 'hold up half the sky;' they were nation builders who stepped up to service the state (Chen, 2014; Ebrey, 2003). Aesthetically, Chinese women in the 1950s did not appear particularly feminine in the traditional sense. They cut their hair short, put on male-style uniforms, and shuttling between lathes. They were expected to free themselves from materialistic concerns and to demonstrate more eagerness to the collective than the individual appearance (Wang, 1997).

Two significant campaigns, though disastrous, have brought Chinese women's labor force participation to almost a saturated level. During the Great Leap Forward, which was launched in 1958 and aimed to speed up economic development through misleading policies including mandatory agricultural collectivization and rural industrialization, more women were thrust into the labor force, especially to fill the vacated field created by men who were relocated to male-oriented industrial occupations (Manning & Wemheuer, 2011). Regardless of its disastrous ending, the Great Leap

Forward led to unprecedented improvements in Chinese women's labor force participation (Barlow, 1993; Wang, 1997).

This pattern continued during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), a chaotic period of collective trauma and destruction. Gender equality improved to the extent that women's labor force participation increased. Following this momentum, women's representation in higher education increased when higher education resumed after the ten-year disruption (Li, 2000). However, there remain debates on this topic. It has been observed that women then still suffered from low status, as reflected by female infanticide under the one-child policy and government's intervention to women's reproductive life (Jeffreys, 2010). It has also been argued that the 10-year long Cultural Revolution neglected women's rights whereby they were either mechanically portrayed as masculine or hardly differentiated from men (Wang, 1997).

Needless to say, during the Mao Era, governance was the most influential factor of gender norm construction. As Jeffreys (2010) stated, the Maoist ideology, Cultural Revolution, economic reforms, and other government interventions into private lives reconfigured modern China's gender ideology. However, undeniably, the significant changes in PRC have effectively reduced the gender inequality that haunted China for thousands of years, even though this outcome was not so much the goal as it was a byproduct of the socialist political economy. In PRC, many of the gender-egalitarian campaigns were top-down and effective. The central government has made great efforts to protect women, who were regarded as an integral part of 'socialist construction.' Besides, the general public's awareness of gender inequality has also increased, gender gaps in educational achievement, labor force participation, and occupational distribution have been narrowed.

The changing gender ideology in contemporary China

The economic reforms that began in the late 1970s have written a new chapter for China and its gender discourse. Women's identity and gender ideology as a whole has witnessed massive transformations in the 21st century. Switching from the old days when women were cloistered and hidden from public discourse, Chinese society now accommodates layers of debates about gender. Among them, four major issues attracted

public attention: (i) gender norm hodgepodge; (ii) the contradicting images of Chinese women, (iii) gender-based wage gap; and (iv) the marital ‘leftovers.’

Accompanied by the nationwide transition from a socialist planned economy to a market economy, reproductive and care services have been returned to individual families from *dānwèi* (‘work units’). The previously integrated public and private spheres in the socialist era became separated (Cook & Dong, 2011; Ji et al., 2017). In reality, the state-promoted gender-egalitarian discourse yields to the market economy and social conventions, through which women’s traditional roles are re-emphasized. Driven by these factors, a hodgepodge of globalization, neoliberalism, feminism, and Confucian patriarchy seems to be commingled in the society (Ji, 2015; Sun & Chen, 2015).

This ideological hodgepodge and the double pressure from work and family spheres have generated monolithic but contradicting stereotypes about Chinese women (Evans, 1997; Jeffreys, 2006; Pei et al., 2007). They are modern ladies, feminists, the victim of abuse, asexual beings, ‘femme fatales’ who gain power through sex, or simply subjects and agents of sexuality (Pei et al., 2007). The images of financially independent and career-oriented urban middle-class ladies are both worshiped and stigmatized in the media (Li, 2014). The ‘leftover women’ are justified by feminists but satirized by patriarchal supporters because, in their views, unmarried status implies a waste of reproductive resources (Fincher, 2014). The media is rife with popular historical dramas of both patriarchy worship and heroine cult (Li, 2021; Zhu, 2020). The present Chinese society seems to lack a uniform standard concerning which gender norm is more culturally or politically valued. As notes, whether China’s hodgepodge of gender ideology indicates the emergence of women’s voice or another form of the previous stereotypes remains a question.

Furthermore, due to the separation and interaction of the two spheres, Chinese women have been disadvantaged both occupationally and domestically, resulting in emerging gender tension caused by women’s work-family conflicts (Ji & Wu, 2018). Furthermore, the separation of the two-sphere and the resurgence of traditional gender ideology also have prohibited Chinese female college graduates from becoming highly paid professionals or achieving the same level of payment as men. These structural and cultural obstacles hinder women’s educational achievements from gaining labor market

rewards (He & Zhou, 2018). Despite China's significant economic growth, its global ranking of gender equality index plummeted from 62 in 2006 to 106 in 2020 (the Global Gender Gap Report 2020: 125). It has been observed that Chinese women have been demoralized in their occupational ambitions due to the deepened gender inequality, including unequal employment opportunities, unequal income distribution (Chen et al., 2013; He & Wu, 2017).

Lastly, 'leftovers' of both genders emerged in society. On the one hand, education has empowered Chinese women with professional achievements, through which they possess the social resources that their grandmothers could never imagine. Chinese women now place significant value on establishing a career before marriage, resulting in an increasing number of 'leftover' females who stay unmarried after 27 (Fincher, 2014). As the first generation of one-child-policy babies enters adulthood, more Chinese women now are the only heir of their family wealth in addition to the economic independence they've gained through education (Fong, 2002). Therefore, men in society find it harder to find wives due to the conflict between traditional patriarchal beliefs and the surging female independence. Men in rural areas, particularly, may become 'leftover' males because most females have left farmland for industrial jobs in the cities (Lake, 2018). Gender tensions emerged in this context, mainly manifested by intense cyber debates about men and women's roles between feminists and their opponents (Peng, 2020; Yin & Sun, 2020).

To sum up, though China has achieved a fast-growing economy, gender inequality persists. In general, men have more access to social resources and achieve higher socioeconomic status, while women, though equally equipped, encounter multiple inequalities. Surprisingly, in recent years, the finally modernized society even demonstrates backwardness in gender equality, mainly reflected by its covert expectations of women performing their traditional roles. As Stacey (1983) well stated, in post-imperial China, 'Confucian patriarchy was replaced first by new democratic patriarchy, and then by patriarchal socialism' (p. 253).

More intriguingly, after rounds of gender-egalitarian campaigns, our understanding of gender in China is still primarily based upon an oversimplified distinction between sex-based differences. As Pei et al., (2007) warned, sexual

differences have reinforced gender as a distinctive, biologically predetermined category. There remains a heavy influence on males and females' biological distinction rather than the socially constructed identity of masculine or feminine. This misconception, therefore, demands more attention in future studies.

1.1.3 Gender ideology manifested in Chinese language

Linguistic sexism in Chinese

Despite the great strides made in gender equity in labor participation and education, gender bias persists in Chinese language. Mandarin Chinese, though without grammatical gender distinction, presents sexism through lexical and structural attributes. As a manifestation of Confucianism and traditional ideology, male-dominant social attitudes are entrenched in the Chinese writing system, word formation, word order, and grammar.

The following covert sexism in Chinese have received keen attention in the literature (Ettner, 2002; Jung-Palandri, 1991; Moser, 1997; Tan, 1990; T'sou, 1981; Wang, 1986). First, gender asymmetry of dyads. Male nouns generally precede female nouns in dyads and idioms such as 父母 *fùmǔ* ('father and mother') and 兄弟姐妹 *xiōngdì jiěmèi* ('brothers and sisters'). Second, asymmetry gender defaults. For example, male is assumed as the default gender of 人 *rén* ('person'), while female should be specified. Third, asymmetry in pronoun usage. Although the spoken language does not distinguish pronouns phonetically, the third-person singular *tā* is interpreted as masculine by default. Fourth, covert sexism in writing system. The female radical 女 ('female, woman') is primarily associated with negative connotations, such as in 嫉妒 *jídù* ('to be jealous') and 奸 *jiān* ('evil'). Fifth, asymmetries in forms of address. Only females are marked with marital status. For example, a woman may switch from 王小姐 *wáng xiǎojiě* ('Miss Wang') to 王太太 *wáng tàitài* ('Mrs. Wang') but a man stays unchanged as 王先生 *wáng xiānshēng* ('Mr. Wang'). Sixth, asymmetric gender marking in vocabulary items. For example, female prefix is widely added to occupational titles such as in 女教授 *nǚ jiàoshòu* ('female professor'), 女医生 *nǚ yīshēng* ('female doctor'), and 女警察 *nǚ jǐngchá* ('female police') because these are traditionally male positions.

From a general perspective, 男 *nán* ('male, man') and 女 *nǚ* ('female, woman') are the two 'primordial morphemes', which as Farris (1988) describes, constitute a rapport system in the language by holding the structurally diverse gendered elements together (p.303). All the gender meanings are embedded in these two morphemes (e.g., as gender prefix or radical), through which sociocultural masculinity and femininity are encoded in Chinese. People's existing sexist beliefs and assumptions of gender shape social practice; hence sexist ideology is transmitted to and inherited by new generations (Farris, 1988).

These sexist attributes revealed linguistic gender imbalances' negative impact on Chinese women's real-world equalities. As Fan (1996) argued, the patriarchal forms of meaning and denomination embedded in the physical structure of the Chinese language reflect and constitute women's historically inferior social status. Intriguingly, given that the traditional third-person singular 他 *tā* was gender-inclusive, gender-specific third-person singular 她 *tā* ('she, her') and 男也 *tā* ('he, him') were respectively introduced by poets Liu Bannong (刘半农 1891-1934) and Liu Dabai (刘大白 1880-1932). However, only the female pronoun was adopted because creating a male counterpart was 'unnecessary' (Ling, 1989). Multiple rounds of debate on this issue have highlighted that women in Chinese are categorized into a separate linguistic category all their own, deviated from the general category of human, or in Moser's (1997) words, 'out of the club'.

To eradicate vestiges of feudalism and elevate the status of women, female pejorative terms and idioms were officially discouraged, and women's social presence was recognized amid linguistic reforms launched in the Socialist China. However, in contrast to the easily identifiable sexist elements, subtly embedded sexism escaped conscious attention; thus, remains in the contemporary language (Ettner, 2002; Farris, 1988; Moser, 1997; Su et al., 2016; Wang, 1986), including popular Internet neologisms such as [X *biǎo* 'slut'] (Jing-Schmidt & Peng, 2018). As Fan (1996) suggested, unless the made-by-men and made-for-men Chinese writing system and physical structure are modified, gender inequality, or even the patriarchal system, will remain preserved in Chinese people's behaviors and ideologies.

Gender Presentations in Chinese

Gender, as a socially constructed system of beliefs and norms, can be presented through multiple linguistic devices. Besides the biologically triggered voice pitch variations between sexes (Chen, 2010; Feinberg et al., 2008; Loveday, 1981; Ohala, 1994; Puts et al., 2007; Van Bezooijen, 1995), influential studies on Chinese gender presentation mainly focused on three issues: feminine accent, 撒娇 *sājiāo* ('coquettish cuteness'), and SFP (sentence-final particle) use.

Young Beijing females' fronting of palatals to dentals has been discussed by Cao (1987) and Hu (1991). According to them, this phenomenon is not a general phonological drift but rather a female-specific and age-related variation. Empirical data of Hu (1991) has shown that dentals reach their peak with middle school seniors and college girls and then decrease as women become workers in the society. Two societal reasons have been accounted for this 'feminine accent.' First, traditional Chinese opera differentiates two types of /-i/ syllables: 'fragile' (with dental initials) and 'blunt' (with palatal initials). The prevalence and entrenchment of traditional theater art enable Chinese people to perceive 'fragile' as more womanly and pleasant, while 'blunt' as more manly and rugged. Second, Chinese society requires women to display good manners by avoiding laughing and talking with their mouths wide open. Speaking with fronted palatal or even dental allows a woman's mouth to be elegantly and slightly open; therefore, it motivates the development of this 'feminine accent.'

Besides phonetic presentations, femininity in Chinese can be manifested through performing cuteness. Qiu (2013) investigated a post-socialist online communication style — *sājiāo* and evaluated it as a subtle strategy of gender performativity. Without an English equivalence, *sājiāo* refers to 'incite tenderness by childishness in order to be coquettish' (Qiu 2013, p.232). Typical *sājiāo* behaviors involve adopting reduplicated words, using tentative lexical items, and in a childish voice. Adopted mainly by young women, *sājiāo* presents a submissive, innocent, powerless, and cute image that aligns with traditional feminine roles. As Qiu (2013) argued, cuteness in China is both a competition and a construction of femininity. It configures youth communication and sexuality in post-socialist Chinese modernity. It even showcases women's manipulative and power-gaining strategy covered by adorable and non-aggressive performances.

Furthermore, gender variations of Chinese also emerge in SFP use. Through media conversational data, Chan (1996, 2002, 2000, 1998) reported that Cantonese females and males differ in the quantity, choice, and sentence types of SFP. Women Cantonese speakers use more particles that indicate politeness and softness. According to Chan (1996, 2002, 2000, 1998), these sex-based distribution patterns relate to social expectations of female-appropriate language and reveal gender-based indexicality and construction in society.

With the spread of feminist ideas, gender-egalitarian practices in Chinese have attracted increasing academic attention. With awakened feminist consciousness, Chinese women have begun to actively express their voices by manipulating the language. Neologisms such as ‘straight man cancer’ have been coined to strike back at sexism (Lang, 2020). As this metaphor reflects, male supremacy is as stubborn and heinous as cancer. Language is the mirror of social ideology. As gender equality continues to be achieved, hopefully, the gender bias in Chinese can be gradually eliminated.

1.2. Review of Conceptual Framework and Literature

1.2.1 Gender and Community of Practice (CofP)

As discussed previously, gender is socially constructed, learned, and acquired. Sociocultural influence on gender ideology and presentation has been increasingly researched in recent decades. In the literature, a large number of socialization studies have explored individuals’ micro-level ‘doing gender’ and a society’s macro-level gender impacts.

The learning nature of gender was theorized by cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger. In their volume *Situated Learning*, learning was evaluated as an inevitable aspect of life and fundamental social practice. Remarkably, Lave & Wenger (1991) proposed the Community of Practice (CofP hereafter) framework to investigate learning between novices and experts, a process by which newcomers achieve a professional identity. In a later book of Wenger (1998), CofP was further applied to personal growth, particularly regarding how a once peripheral individual gains core participation within a group. Since then, the notion of CofP has become a central focus of gender socialization research. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet

(1992) suggested, since gender is not an individual attribute, it should be examined within a CofP. The individuals produce themselves as gendered through engaging in practices associated with the cultural understandings of gender.

Understanding CofP

In Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) theory, CofP is defined by two factors: *membership* and the *practices* in which a member engages. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) also pointed out that CofP focuses on what members do. It is an aggregate of people who have mutual engagement in an endeavor, and practices indicate their memberships.

The membership in a community, as analogized by Lave and Wenger (1991), resembles apprenticeship. Starting from a peripheral position, practicing and learning (e.g., acquisition of sociolinguistic competence) help an individual upgrade to a core member, the one who performs appropriately in the community. To achieve membership advancement and gain control, apprentices continue their practice by modifying linguistic behaviors until they satisfy other community members' perceptions. Through active participation (i.e., the practices), membership in a community is defined and upgraded. The more practices a member is engaged in, the closer s/he is located to the core status.

As introduced by Wenger (1998), CofP has three essential dimensions. First, the members ought to have mutual engagements in *regular interactions*. They should have recurrent and frequent access to the other members. Typical scenarios could be daily greeting with coworkers or weekly catching up after yoga classes. Through systematic and regular interactions, the community members negotiate about meanings and understand their status. Second, CofP members collectively own a *joint enterprise*. As emphasized by Wenger (1998), this enterprise is beyond the level of a shared goal because it is negotiated and involves mutual accountability. In other words, besides a shared goal of contributing to the larger enterprise, each member is aware of his/her role in the community through meaning negotiations. Third, a *shared repertoire* is created in the process of pursuing a joint enterprise. In a CofP, the members interact, practice, and eventually gain collective resources for negotiating meanings. The resources can be tacit knowledge such as terminologies or linguistic routines. For instance, while A uses a medical terminology that B is not familiar with, their meaning negotiation not only

identifies B's relative peripheral status but also constructs the collective intelligence shared among medical community members.

Based on these principles, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) summarized three preconditions of being a core CofP member: (i) *acquisition* of the shared repertoire, (ii) *assimilation* of the joint enterprise, and (iii) *establishment* of engagement patterns with others (p.176). In the sense of gender socialization, CofP serves to provide evidence concerning how gender is socially constructed through practices. Since infancy, an individual is involved with active, regular, and mutual gendered engagements with other social members. Such engagement could be, for instance, production of or resistance to specific gendered linguistic routines which gain broad agreement in the community; or even some non-verbal behaviors that are consistent or inconsistent with the social perception of gender norms. Through regular interactions, raised awareness of the joint enterprise, and a mastery of the shared repertoire, each individual, can upgrade his/her status from a peripheral member to a core member in the gendered CofP. This CofP engagement, according to Lave & Wenger (1991), is built upon mutual trust among the members because their joint enterprise is to develop the collective intelligence of gender members.

To sum up, the interaction between CofP and language and gender addresses “not gender differences but the difference gender makes” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 466). Rather than focusing on the assumed gender differences which possibly stem from early socialization discrepancy, research attention should be switched to “people’s active engagement in the reproduction of or resistance to gender arrangements in their communities” (p.466).

The uniqueness of CofP framework

The proposal of the CofP framework also involved discussions about its theoretical uniqueness. In the literature, CofP has been primarily contrasted to frameworks including *social identity*, *speech community*, and *social networks* (Holmes and Meyerhoff, 1999).

First, the social identity principle lies in comparing self and other groups (Tajfel, 1978). Notably, social identity is established when an individual’s social behavior is affiliated with a group identity, and this group identity is salient in the interaction with

other groups. Concerning gender, Carter (2014) viewed the process of learning gender and building identities as integrated. From birth, gender roles and gender stereotypes accompany the babies with symbols and language that configure ideal gendered behaviors in their societies. For instance, boys are often described with physical characteristics such as strength and agility, while girls might be addressed with affection, expressivity, daintiness, or fragility. These discrepancies emerging from initial life stages are adopted by the caregivers to construct an individual's behavior patterns and boundaries. These boundaries are eventually internalized and become identity standards—the references in which interactions, settings, and contexts are used to compare themselves to others.

In Carter's (2014) theory, gender identity is formed when the family and society provide information about how to act across various situations. Therefore, gender socialization is, in nature, a process of identity establishment. However, a CofP approach to gender socialization has fundamental differences. While the membership of social identity is constructed both internally and externally, CofP membership is internally determined. Without comparing to other groups or communities, the CofP members spontaneously gain commonness through their shared practice and social goals. They actively construct dependence on personal and group identities (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999, p.179).

Second, *speech community* focuses on the shared norms observed in overt evaluations of each member's behaviors (Labov, 1973). Compared to CofP, a speech community values the members' acquisition of norms rather than their activities and practices. In other words, a speech community is a way of being rather than doing. Its membership standard lies in whether the speakers share understandings about the insider and outsiders' languages. In a speech community, membership is decided by the social, behavioral attribute an individual possesses. In contrast, in a CofP, membership is stratified by the degree of engagement to the shared repertoire and goals.

Lastly, although social network and CofP both have peripheral and core membership distinctions, they differ in interaction manners. As Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) explained, social network values the quantity of interaction while CofP focuses on the quality. In a CofP, the interactions should be regular and mutual; however, weak ties

and infrequent interactions are admitted in a social network. Besides, the two concepts also vary in terms of measurement. According to Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999), CofP indexes *interaction* degree, while a social network indexes the *integration* degree.

CofP as a methodological basis of language and gender

As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) stated, the CofP framework is a constructionist approach to language and gender. Gender practices construct members of a community “as” women or “as” men, and this construction also encompasses relations between and within each gender group. Therefore, CofP can be adopted as a methodological foundation for investigating language and gender, whereby treating gender as a homogeneous identity category can be avoided. In particular, it facilitates researchers to explore how an apprentice gradually gains a core gender membership through practices including (i) mutual and regular engagement in the community; (ii) production of or resistance to gender norms.

Several directions have been pointed out in the literature. First, from a sociolinguistic perspective, there are variations among speakers. No matter which variable they relate to, these variations can be regarded as the different membership statuses in the CofP. While one individual is starting as an apprentice, others may have already gained discourse control. The greater extent one possesses membership of a CofP, the more control s/he has in the interaction. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) provided several CofP data examples. For example, the “global or specific aspect of language structure, discourse and interaction patterns” are the presentations of “practice or activities,” therefore, can be utilized to investigate gender construction as a CofP (p.175).

Second, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) emphasized, an individual can be viewed as “an actor articulating a range of forms or participation in multiple communities of practice” (p.8). No articulation of CofP participation is constructed in a vacuum and dependent manner; hence should be surveyed dynamically and comprehensively. Resembling Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) noted that micro-level ethnographic analysis alone is insufficient to explain individuals’ linguistic choices. A macro-level context must be recruited because background reflects a CofP’s meaning and distinctiveness. Therefore, empirical data should include both micro-

level details (e.g., social interactions, negotiations, and practices) and macro-level context (e.g., patterns, generalization, and norms of speech) (p.181).

1.2.2 Studies on Language Socialization

Classic language socialization theories

Understanding language socialization requires sociological, anthropological, psychological and linguistic approaches because this notion pertains to both social and linguistic competences. The theory of language socialization was developed by linguistic anthropologists Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin, who discovered an integrated process of socialization and language acquisition among children. As they argued, children acquire language and culture together, and the process of becoming a competent member of society is realized through socializing both *for* and *through* the use of language. From the first second of social contact, socialization begins. Through language as the major information source, children are exposed to conversational activities that involve culture belief, values, social norms, and world views. Meanwhile, social interactions also provide norms of language use, therefore, children will be socialized into the culturally-defined norms through exchanges of language in various situations (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

This fundamental understanding of language socialization is in concert with several earlier studies. As Trasler & Edge (1970) stated, humans' learning behavior involve two types. One is the acquisition of techniques, including basic human problem-solving skills (e.g., language), physical object recognition, and attitude perception. The other is emotional leaning, such as developing reactions of admiration, aversion, guiltiness that configure social values and behaviors. In this sense, language socialization can be interpreted as a combined process of learning both skills and values. Other earlier frameworks also endorsed the integrated attribute of language socialization and children's social membership advancement during the process. For instance, Bernstein (1975) Cook-Gumperz (1973) both proposed that children acquire knowledge of the society and language structure concurrently. Fischer (1970) discovered a covert purpose of children's language learning was to maintain and change their positions as social members.

Two essential aspects of language socialization worth emphasis: *interactive-ness* and *input*. In the literature, language socialization has been suggested as an interactive

process that built upon Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) theory. ZPD refers to the gap between what a novice has already mastered (the actual development) and what they can achieve under support (potential development). Interaction is vital in language socialization because it allows children to develop skills in ZPD under the guidance and collaboration provided by competent adults (Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch et al., 1984; Wertsch, 1985). Notably, amid interactions, children are not passive recipients but rather active contributors to the outcome. Their desire to advance social membership generates their active and self-responsible engagements. (Ochs, 1983; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Taylor, 2013; Wentworth, 1980). Furthermore, interaction with adults also benefits children with input. As Gleason & Weintraub (1978) emphasized, input not only facilitate children to acquire appropriate use of language, but also instruct them with specific cultural and social information. In a nutshell, language is a channel of socialization process. The acquisition of language and social competence come hand in hand.

Recent studies on language socialization

In addition to the classic studies, more and more scholars have turned their attention to language socialization in recent decades. In the literature, mainstream subjects range from exploration of socialization mechanisms to empirical studies on specific social norm socialization.

Socialization mechanism has been discussed from two aspects: interaction pattern and meta-discourse. Through a philosophical approach, Williams (2011) developed Wittgenstein's (1953a, 1953b) classic *normative character* approach to social learning and proposed a *novice-master* dyad to describe the initiate learning relation between a child and a competent social member. In early stages, due to the novice's insufficient cognitive competence to practice the target skill, an asymmetric dependence on the master exists, a dependence that is not epistemic but linguistic and causal. Therefore, language socialization should be embedded in a normatively structured, language-rich interactional scene. Through rounds of practices, dependencies are alleviated; language and norms are learned.

Taylor (2013) highlighted socialization into a community's meta-discursive practices. At primary stages, sophisticated language games full of epistemic statements

are beyond children's comprehension; therefore, meta-discourses do not independently provide cognitive or epistemic foundations. However, as children achieve higher competence in their cultural community's meta-discursive practices, they begin to measure linguistic phenomena and experience reflexively and automatically. This procedure is essential because it transforms a former novice into someone with full linguistic ability and autonomy. Notably, the reflexive-linguistic competence is not universal. Languages and cultures significantly vary in their folk meta-discursive practices and their criteria of autonomous master's competence (Taylor, 2013).

The socialization of specific social norms has been studied in various world languages. One of the most representative works under this theme was Schieffelin & Ochs's (1986) volume *Language Socialization Across Cultures*. In this book, children's learning of world knowledge and language can be summarized into three segments: *participation*, *acquisition*, and *expression*. For instance, studies on Kwara, Basotho, and American children revealed the prominent role participation plays in acquiring calling-out, prompting, and interactional routines (Demuth, 1986; Peters & Boggs, 1986; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1986). Studies on Anglo-American and Samoan children showed the significance of social and contextual knowledge in language acquisition, which is, according to the authors, as essential as the semantic restrictions (Andersen, 1986; Platt, 1986). Studies on Kaluli, Mexican and white American children reported first-hand routine expressions are the prerequisites of achieving social and linguistic competence (Eisenberg, 1986; Miller, 1986; Schieffelin, 1986). To sum up, a child participates in recurrent and predictable interactional routines; acquires social knowledge through taking communicative positions in contexts; and expresses emotions across contexts after reflections.

Language socialization has attracted multiple cross-linguistic investigations in recent decades. Winskel et al. (2006) compared the narrative styles between Thai and English-speaking caretakers. Unlike English, Thai possesses a high-context communication system whereby less context information is elicited or expressed due to previously shared knowledge. A comparison between Thai and English caretakers eliciting strategies upon preschoolers' past event narratives revealed culture-specific strategies. As expected, English-speaking caretakers generally provided more information,

requested more evaluation, expressed more agreement, approval, and revision in front of their children, while Thai counterparts used more contextual, temporal information such as social relations and mood. The communicative discrepancies discovered by Winskel et al. (2006) unfold valued communication styles in different cultures and how socialization perpetuates them. Caregiver's language input reflects preferred cultural norms, and they calibrate children's narratives into culturally accepted patterns.

Another recent comparative study was conducted by Chang et al. (2017), who investigated mothers' utterances of mental references (emotion, desire, physiological states, causal talk, and cognition) among Chilean and U.S. mother-infant dyads. Contrasting the two groups, this study reported that there are culture-specific preferences in maternal socialization: both gender-neutral and cross-gendered socialization practices emerge in the U.S., while only gender-neutral socialization practices appeared in Chile.

Although less attention has been paid to language socialization in East Asia, two studies have made unique contributions to the literature. One representative research was conducted by Burdelski and Mitsunashi (2010) in the Japanese preschool setting. The authors explored teachers' use of *kawaii* ('cute'), a lexical item linguistically and culturally tied to empathy and relationships. As Burdelski and Mitsunashi (2010) reported, via *kawaii*, preschool teachers organized affect, assessed the children, structured the local interactions, and indexed affective meaning in the larger society. Through multimodal resources, such as talk, embodied actions, material objects, and participation frameworks, preschool teachers assessed behaviors related to the social world and glossed children's actions, thoughts, and feelings concerning *kawaii*. Besides, they also positioned children in various interactional roles through channeling genders in everyday interactions. An examination of children's emerging use of *kawaii* with teachers and peers revealed how the "glossing and assessing" process motivated them to acquire *kawaii* as an index of female gender identity. This study highlighted the role of daily communicative practices in children's acquisition of language and social norms related to affect, gender, and relationships.

Huang (2011) investigated language socialization of affect in Taiwan-based Mandarin parent-child interactions. Focusing on the lexicon of affect words and their background conversations, Huang (2011) discovered that Mandarin-speaking children

tend to use affect words that encoded specific states and particularly preferred setting themselves as the primary agents. On the other hand, the parents either used affective words to negotiate appropriate affective responses or to socialize children's behaviors into culturally approved patterns. Besides, the parents' conversations demonstrate a sequence—*modeling*, *direct instruction*, *negotiation*, and *contextualization* —, which meanwhile served as a discourse-level resource for affect socialization. Initiated by a *modeling* step, children observed their parents' uses. Through *direct instruction*, parents socialized the child into formulaic expressions. During *negotiation*, children contrasted their use with their parents' and reflected on their parents' reactions. Though children may be incapable of understanding and expressing other people's affective states, stories and plays can facilitate their affective expressions.

1.2.3 Research Gap in Gender Socialization through Language

As a clearer distinction between gender and sex becomes wider accepted, more studies on this topic have transformed their focus from gender as a variable to gender as a result of learning, negotiation, and behavior. While recent decades have witnessed a growing body of literature under this framework, very little is known about gender socialization through East Asian languages, especially Chinese. Investigations on Chinese-speaking children's gender socialization have both scientific and social significance.

First, as introduced previously, gender as a social construct is not distinct in Chinese and is used interchangeably with biological sex. Thus, essentially the notion of social gender is conceptually absent from the Chinese language. It is unclear how this conceptual gap may or may not play a role in the meta-pragmatics of gender socialization and, consequently, in the development of gender awareness. What complicates the matter even further is the pervasive cultural discomfort with biological sex as a topic in the socialization process. Hence, there is a noticeable space to investigate what gender socialization looks like in Chinese, given such a conceptual gap.

Second, while gender socialization in Anglo-American cultures has been abundantly examined, there is a shortage of gender socialization studies on children who grow up speaking Chinese. Therefore, very little is known about the way Chinese-

speaking children learn gender norms and develop gender behaviors and attitudes in their interaction with the different socialization agents. Studying the role of language in gender socialization among Chinese children, as my dissertation proposes to do, will fill this research gap and contribute data on the Chinese representation and communication of gender. Besides, it will also shed light on cross-language and cross-culture gender socialization research.

Third, at the methodological level, previous studies on gender socialization heavily relied on self-report and parent-report data and rarely used direct observational data on children's discourse and behavior that reflect their gender awareness development (Burdelski & Mitsuhashi, 2010; Zosuls et al., 2011). For instance, since 1975, 66% of the data supporting research published in the Journal *Sex Roles* was collected by surveys or questionnaires, while experimental and observational studies only account for 14% (Zosuls et al., 2011). Despite the recognized effectiveness of surveys and questionnaires, they sometimes trap participants into subconscious self-categorization. Thus, their opinions are not always accurately presented but instead constrained by the investigator's scales. In the Chinese context, isolated adoption of self-report and parent-report data has methodological weakness due to cultural pressures. The Chinese participants are not always comfortable reflecting on their actual thoughts, knowledge, and behaviors about gender membership due to perceived social taboos. Therefore, my dissertation aims to fill this methodological gap by including subjective data and observational data in complementary ways. More precisely, I investigated the correlation between subjective data (e.g., interviews) and observational data (e.g., fieldwork recordings) and explored how they are predictively related. These methods are synchronically motivated by the CofP notion, which renders gender as noticed, mimicked, and practiced through social interactions.

Fourth, previous studies demonstrate an apparent emphasis on parents' role (e.g., 50% in *Sex Roles*), but teachers' influence is less examined (Zosuls et al., 2011). Although parents are undoubtedly a primary gender socialization agent, teachers' engagement is as well essential because they are both children's resource of gender knowledge and gender role models. Another less studied socialization agent is media, which in reality has ready become an inalienable daily companion of massive children.

Media, especially cartoons, not only provides language input but also propagates knowledge and belief about gender attributes. It is intriguing to explore, as my dissertation does, how cartoons affect children's gender knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors through language use and how cartoons portray the sex stereotypes in society.

1.3. Overview of the Dissertation

Under the conceptual framework of CofP, I plan on engaging with fieldwork-derived and media-based data about gender socialization in the Chinese context. I do so (1) by focusing on how socialization agents calibrate children into genders through their regular interactions, (2) by examining how an apprentice (i.e., children) practice gender with core members (i.e., agents) through production or resistance to gender norms, and (3) by investigating how gender norms are disseminated through socialization agents' linguistic input.

Specifically, I will answer the following research questions:

- I. In the family setting, how do parent-child interactions convey gender norms and gender-related expectations? Do Chinese caregivers socialize boys and girls in different manners?
- II. In the school setting, how do teacher-child interaction embody gender norms? Do Chinese teachers interact differently between boys and girls? Do Chinese boys and girls interact differently with their women teachers?
- III. How does Chinese media propagate gender norms? What role is cartoon playing in socializing Chinese children with gender?

The overall structure of the dissertation takes the form of five chapters, including this introductory Chapter I. As an overview, the following is a summary of each chapter.

Chapter II investigates parent-child verbal interactions in two Chinese families (Tom and Lily) in two sessions: book-reading and chat. Their speeches were transcribed into separate corpora, and analysis on corpus data focused on nouns, verbs, and adjectives used by Tom and his father, and Lily and her mother. Taking the two Chinese families as examples, I will show that gender socialization in the home setting is realized through multiple aspects of language use, including lexical input, parent-child discourse, and parental question style. Additionally, I propose that the linguistic findings of this study

reflect contemporary gender dynamics in Chinese society, in which men are valued in terms of their social values (e.g., professional skill), and women's traditional gender roles (e.g., appearance, motherhood) are again in focus.

Chapter III works with fieldwork data collected from two Chinese kindergartens' four lessons. I will show that Chinese kindergarten teachers occasionally interact more with boys but conducted significantly longer speech length with boys. As for children, Chinese girls interacted significantly more with their teachers and conducted significantly longer speech length to teachers than boys. With quantitative and qualitative evidence on speech act, I will present how teachers' attention allocations vary between gender, especially in criticism, question, and praise. Besides, I will also discuss school climate, gender segregation, and educator's beliefs and practices of gender. These qualitative data obtained from interviews facilitate data interpretation and reflect gender socialization in Chinese kindergartens nowadays. To summarize, in this chapter, I propose that a typical Chinese kindergarten strives to achieve gender equality in its teaching philosophy. However, gender differences are still subconsciously instilled in children through the teachers' daily linguistic practices. Specific manifestations include gender-based differentiated interactions, differentiated requirements, and differentiated teacher attention allocation. In addition, an all-female teacher team invariably shapes a female-dominated kindergarten climate. Chinese boys usually lack a male adult role model in the preschool setting.

The corpus used in Chapter IV consists of dialogues from 20 episodes of a Chinese animated cartoon that has been popular for 25 years. Through corpus analysis on attributes (adjectives), actions (verbs), and identities (nouns) of the characters' lines, I will show how gender stereotypes are transmitted to children through the verbal input of cartoons. First, male characters appear much more frequently than female characters. Second, corpus analysis reveals that male activities are often engaged with helping others, observing nature, exploring the unknown, and primarily performing outdoors. The adjectives used to describe them usually focus on ability, intelligence, and progress. They often identify themselves as leaders, athletes, geniuses, and people of superpowers. By contrast, the portrayal of female characters in this famous cartoon is very limited and revolves around female gender stereotypes. Women cook at home, care about appearance,

and identify themselves as fairy tale characters or cyber influencers. Through these pieces of linguistic evidence, I propose that cartoons, as one of the most popular and familiar media for children, play an important role in instilling gender stereotypes. In this cartoon, although its language responds to gender dynamics in society, gender stereotypes are exaggerated for emotional resonance and comedic effect. This is risky for children who are still establishing gender schemata. On the media, more gender-equitable cartoons are in need.

Chapter V draws upon the entire dissertation, tying up various theoretical and empirical strands in order to discuss about the implication of the findings to future research.

CHAPTER II

GENDER SOCIALIZATION AT HOME: PARENTAL INFLUENCE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates gender socialization in two Chinese families. Through videotaped observational data of parent-child verbal interactions during book *reading hours* and *parent-child chats*, this study aims to throw light on how Chinese parents socialize their same-sex children about gender. I will start with a background introduction about family-based socialization, particularly parent-led gender socialization studies conducted in Western cultures and in China. In doing so, I aim to identify the existing research gap in this domain, setting the stage for this study.

2.1.1 Family: the primary socialization agent

The cognitive approaches to gender socialization emphasize children's active role in gender development (Martin et al., 2002) as they absorb and engage with gender concepts in a nested environmental context (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). According to cognitive-developmental theory, gender conceptions and roles are realized in a broad network, in which social influences operate interdependently across societal subsystems (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Connection, regulation, and autonomy are essential dimensions of socialization, and *family* is central to the process (Bandura & Bussey, 2004; Barber & Olsen, 1997; McHale et al., 2003).

Life debuts in the family when a child is born. Since infancy, family socializes individuals with ideas, attitudes, and behavioral norms. Theoretical models and empirical studies have confirmed the significance of family-based socialization. Before 1995, studies on American mothers recognized the role of parental personality and parenting practices in children's academic, linguistic, and personality development (Baker & Nelson, 1984; Bates et al., 1991; Belsky, 1980; Clark, 1983; Hampson & Nelson, 1993; Murray et al., 1990; Sears et al., 1957; Sorce & Emde, 1981; Tomasello & Todd, 1983). In later studies, it was reported that supportive parenting decreased children's antisocial behavior while maternal depressive symptom increased the risk (Criss et al., 2009). On the contrary, low father-daughter closeness and severe mother-son punishment and

control contributed to the development of children's difficult temperament (Bezirgianian & Cohen, 1992).

As a primary socialization domain, families compensate children's experiential deficits in external contexts and foster their developmental competencies collaboratively (Barber & Olsen, 1997; Durlak et al., 2007). High-quality parent-teacher communication was found to reduce children's problem behavior and drive social development (Serpell & Mashburn, 2012). Meaningful dinner talks serve to provide children with social support, ease their passage into adult discourse worlds, and pass on familial, social, and cultural identities (Blum-Kulka, 2012).

Admittedly, as a primary socialization agent, even unconscious routines of family life may impact children's personality development. As caregivers and role models for children, parents' influence on socialization has attracted systematic research. In the next section, I will provide an overview of mainstream literature on parental gender socialization.

2.1.2 Parents and gender socialization

Developmental psychologists and linguists considered parental impacts as central in children's gender socialization process. In the literature, it has been documented that parents mold early gender attitudes, shape gendered appearances, generate gender affirmation through language (e.g., naming), and influence children's gender behavior development (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Maccoby, 2000; Thorne, 1993).

For instance, the *pink-or-blue* visual dichotomy has been observed cross-culturally (Del Giudice, 2012, 2017). Pomerleau et al. (1990) discovered that boys had more blue clothing, pacifiers and beddings, and were provided with more sports equipment, tools, and vehicles. By contrast, girls wore more pink and multicolored clothing, had more pink pacifiers and jewelry, were given more dolls, fictional characters, child's furniture, and other toys for manipulation. As Pomerleau et al. (1990) discussed, since very early days, girls and boys already experience dissimilar environments that direct their development of specific abilities and preferential activities. Crespi (2004) discovered three distinctive features of home-based gender socialization in the UK: (i) parentally transmitted gender norms, (ii) reliance on personal attitude and resources, and

(iii) gendered task execution in daily family life. This study also highlighted the significance of relational factor in gender socialization, especially the positive role cross-gender relationships (e.g., mother and son) play in reducing stereotyped attitudes. A relevant finding was noted by Crouter et al., (1995), who emphasized gender intensification effect between same-sex parent-child dyads. In the early years, girls are increasingly involved with their mothers and boys with their fathers. Children actively observe and imitate the gender expressions of their same-sex parents and use parental gender concepts to guide actions.

Based on gender-schema theory, Bem (1982, 1983) investigated raising gender 'aschematic' children in a gender-schematic society through parents' active adoption of nontraditional gender-related behaviors. Though viewing gender stereotype learning as inevitable, Katz (1996) similarly suggested that parents can adjust the degree to which their children subscribe to gender norms. A recent study done by Basu et al. (2017) sounded the alarm for parental gender socialization. As they stated, parents are the primary transmitters of inequitable gender norms, even when society-level gender norms are becoming more egalitarian. To achieve greater gender equality, it is urgent to raise awareness of gender equality among parents, otherwise the efforts made in general social environment would be diminished by parental influence.

It is undeniable that the diversity of society is also reflected in parents' differentiated gender perceptions. The gender socialization patterns of two parental types – traditional and egalitarian– have received extensive academic attention.

Traditional parents

The different roles parents play in the family silently convey gender norms to children. In a so-called traditional family, gender stereotypes are deepened by the customary parental division of labor. Children perceive gender stereotypes through their parents' differentiated behaviors based on their division of labor and hence internalize them continuously. Manke et al. (1994) investigated the relationship between familial earner status and parents' participation in housework. The higher income a family holds, the less time its mother has to participate in household chores. However, no significant difference was found in fathers' participation in housework across familial earner status groups. A similar pattern was revealed by Laflamme et al. (2002) in their more recent

study. Compared to mothers, fathers were reported as less accessible to their infants, less likely to provide basic care, and spent less time directly interacting with them. During play, though parents did not differ in the amount of physical contact, conventional play, nonconventional play, and attempts to direct the infant's attention, fathers vocalized less and made fewer requests than mothers. As McHale et al. (2003) argued, family relationships and contextual factors, including gendered dynamics in the marriage, situational demands, and affordances, have an important impact on gender development. Children's relationship experiences with their parents interact with a more extensive social ecology and calibrate them into gender.

Notably, studies done in Western contexts have shown that fathers are more likely to take gender stereotypes for granted, while mothers often try to support and convey gender equality. This finding is reminiscent of feminist studies which showed women in general are more egalitarian (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Spence & Hahn, 1997; Spence & Helmreich, 1979; Twenge, 1997). For example, Fagot (1981) proposed that while both parents tended to overestimate children's sex differences in behavior, males were rated with more stereotypical behaviors than females. Kulik (2002) reported that mothers held the most liberal attitudes, followed by their children, whereas fathers appeared to be the most conservative. Parents' background variables were found to interact with their gender attitudes and their children's understanding of gender roles. Parents with higher education and full-time working mothers tended to be more liberal. Intriguingly, mother's birthplace, family's degree of religiosity, and the number of children were shown to have a stronger influence on parental gender attitudes.

Egalitarian parents

Studies also confirmed that children from less traditional families have less stereotypical, more flexible attitudes about gender roles in the family and society. Egalitarian and traditional families differ in paternal involvement, parents' sex-role attitudes, and marital power indices. These two types of parental socialization, characterized by their family processes, cultivate children with different gender attitudes (Updegraff et al., 1996).

Weisner and Wilson-Mitchell (1990) investigated children in avant-garde and countercultural families and reported that they displayed non-sex-typed knowledge of

objects and occupations more often than children from other families. Particularly, the girls in their studies demonstrated more flexible sex-typing training and displayed more non-sex-typed schemas than boys across family types. Fagot & Leinbach (1995) discovered that children from egalitarian families adopted gender labels at an older age than children from traditional families. Fathers in the egalitarian samples interacted with their children as much as mothers (50%), while fathers in the traditional samples spent only 25% of the time interacting with their children. Besides, boys in the traditional samples received more negative parental reactions, while this pattern was not found in egalitarian samples. Notably, mothers in both samples behaved similarly in both attitudes and behaviors. What contributed more to the group divergence was the father's differentiated attitudes and behaviors about gender.

Egalitarian parenting also has implications for children's social performance outside the household. Updegraff et al. (1996) showed that girls from egalitarian families maintained a high level of achievement at school, whereas girls from traditional families declined in math and science performance after seventh grade. For boys, no significant differences emerged between family types. Risman & Myers (1997) documented how privileged white parents intentionally deconstructed gender by organizing equal divisions of house labor and modeling egalitarian social roles. They presented gender equality in family processes and encouraged daughters and sons to develop free from stereotypes. Consequently, their children were observed to adopt their parent's non-sexist attitudes outside the family, though interaction with peers required them to negotiate serious inconsistencies between their beliefs and their lived experience.

Parents' differentiated expectations and interactions

There is evidence in the Western contexts that parents have different expectations of the behaviors and characteristics of their sons and daughters. Importantly, these differentiated expectations often reflect and serve gender norms in society.

Eccles et al. (1990) showed that parents distort their perceptions of children concerning gender role stereotypic activities. That is, children's gender affects parents' causal attributions for their performance. For instance, boys are inaccurately perceived as more talented in math and sports, while girls are assigned more housework (Crouter et al., 1995; Eccles et al., 1990). These gender biases reflexively influence children's own self-

perceptions and activity choices. In a later study, Eccles et al. (1993) detailed that parental beliefs about gender are mediated by multiple factors, including child's perception of own competencies, emotional reactions to activities, task interest, effort devoted to mastering a skill, and parent-provided opportunities. Both parents are involved in this process. Jacobs and Eccles (1992) discovered that mothers' own gender beliefs moderate their beliefs about children, and mothers' gender perceptions mediate the influence of past performance on children's self-perception. McHale et al. (1999) revealed that sex-typing was most evident in children's interests and activities, and especially, their fathers' attitudes play an essential role.

Girls are frequently assumed to be less competent than boys (Bhanot & Jovanovic, 2005; Furnham et al., 2002; Mondschein et al., 2000). By comparing girls' mothers and boys' mothers, Mondschein et al. (2000) discovered the former's underestimation of children's performance and the latter's overestimation. These gender biases, according to Mondschein et al. (2000), are both groundless and have negative impacts on their children's self-perception. Similarly, Furnham et al. (2002) reported that parents tend to estimate their sons as having significantly higher IQs than their daughters (115.21 vs. 107.49). This gender-based misestimation of children's IQ is consistent with the gender stereotype among adults. The same study shows that men's self-estimates were significantly higher than women's (110.15 vs. 104.84), especially for logical-mathematical and spatial intelligence. Bhanot & Jovanovic (2005) discussed parents' unconscious gender socialization through academic support. They found that though boys received more parental homework instruction, girls were more sensitive to their help, precisely when math was involved. As Bhanot & Jovanovic (2005) argued, in girls' view, parents' math support was intrusive, as their behaviors communicated math stereotype beliefs.

In addition, research has shown gender-based differences in parent-child interactions. In general, parenting of girls often involve language, tolerance of emotional vulnerability, and a focus on social relationships (Casey & Fuller, 1994; Chaplin, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Fabes, 1994). In comparison, parenting of boys was found to be more permissive. Boys are more tolerated in anger expression or mild aggression than girls, and they are less viewed as vulnerable (Chaplin, 2005; Eron, 1992).

It was reported that while mothers have similar levels of emotional tolerance for infants of both genders, as children grow older, mothers became more negative about aggression in girls but less negative about it in boys (Mills & Rubin, 1992). As for fathers, at preschool age, they attended more to girls' submissive emotions; but at early school age, they attended more to boys' disharmonious emotions (Chaplin, 2005). Intriguingly, when comforting boys, mothers were found to be emotion-focused and problem-focused. They demonstrated active encouragement of boys' emotional expression, while engaged only a moderate level of this encouragement when comforting girls (Eisenberg et al., 1996).

Boys are associated with the expectation of more risky behaviors and are punished more harshly than girls. Morrongiello & Hogg (2004) examined mothers' reaction to risks and injury and discovered that most mothers expressed anger to sons but only disappointment to daughters before the injury. Mothers' response at this stage mainly focused on discipline issues of boys and safety issues of girls. Once an injury occurred, mothers predominantly attributed son's risky misbehavior to nonmodifiable characteristics while accounted daughter's risky misbehavior as caregivers' own heedlessness. Parents' protection of girls and permission to boys were also noted by Martin & Ross (2005). In their observational study, parents showed more tolerance for mild physical aggression by boys while conducted more prohibition of mild physical aggression, grabbing, and property damage by and towards girls. As they argued, parents' tolerance for boys suggested that socialization messages may play a role in boys' more frequent physical aggression involvement at home and with peers.

2.1.3 Chinese parental socialization

Traditionally, Chinese parents explicitly preferred to have sons over daughters as sons were the default family heir in the patriarchal society and were regarded as having more opportunities to succeed (Barlow, 1993; Bauer et al., 1992; Evans, 1997; Fong, 2002; Lake, 2018). This gender preference with socio-historical roots has made a significant impact on the gender socialization of traditional Chinese parents.

Studies on Chinese parents' gender socialization have revealed similar stereotypical patterns discovered in the west. Wong and Yeung (2019) found that boys

were provided with more stereotypically masculine toys from a young age and were believed to outperform in mental transformation and targeting accuracy. Girls were given more feminine (and neutral) toys and were regarded as more empathic and less aggressive. Previous research also has highlighted Chinese-specific patterns. In a study done by Hannum et al. (2009), though most mothers in rural Gansu in China expressed egalitarian views about children's rights and abilities, the vast majority of them expected to rely on sons for old-age support. Notably, nearly 20% of mothers interviewed held the traditional belief that efforts on girls' education were fruitless because they would eventually get married and leave home. Hu (2015) discussed the gendered patterns of children's housework time and the underlying persistence of gender inequalities in the domestic realm. Girls in rural China were found to spend longer housework time than their urban counterparts. As Hu (2015) argued, the regional gap in gender socialization are realized through distinctive sociocultural contexts, in which parental housework division and employment behavior function as the models.

Though traditionally, Chinese parents had little incentive to invest in daughters in the patrilineal system, contemporary gender socialization under the revolutionary one-child policy has attracted debates. Some proposed that the urban singleton Chinese daughters have benefited from egalitarianism under the communist one-child policy and enjoy unprecedented parental support because male siblings are absent (Fong, 2002). Some others stated that though most boys and girls in the one-child generation have achieved equal parental investment and academic resource, it is yet over-optimistic to believe that Chinese parents are free from stereotypical gender expectations on their children (Liu, 2006). Deep-rooted factors still exist in Chinese culture, and gender roles become more salient as children enter society.

2.1.4 The current study

The main purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of Chinese parents' gender socialization with their elementary school aged children through the use of language. There are several important areas to which this study makes an original contribution.

First, most of the previous studies in parental gender socialization were conducted in western societies, which are conventionally characterized through their independence-oriented norms (Wang & Chang, 2010). Therefore, it is conceptually meaningful to explore gender socialization of Chinese parents, who are in a society commonly believed to be interdependence-oriented. In a Chinese family, children are important members of the family. Children's behaviors not only represent themselves, but also the collective ideals of their families. Second, as discussed in Section 1.1.2, China has undergone idiosyncratic social changes in which its gender norms have evolved alongside the sociopolitical transformations in recent history. Three major periods can be identified in China's sociopolitical changes in the last century: the patriarchal feudal society dominated by Confucian doctrine, the Mao era when gender-egalitarian efforts were made to boost nation-building, and the current post-reform and opening-up stage, which is rife with gender conflicts. Each of these periods has carried socially constructed gender roles that reflect the characteristics of the zeitgeist and related gender expectations. Given the uniqueness of China's gender dynamics and the perceived research gap, a study on the gender socialization of contemporary Chinese children through their parents has cross-cultural implications. Third, although gender socialization by Chinese parents has attracted academic discussion, research has not explored the role of language in parental socialization. Through observational data and quantitative analysis, this study fills this gap and makes both methodological contributions with interdisciplinary implications.

- I. In particular, this chapter aims to answer three research questions:
- II. How do Chinese parents socialize same-sex child about gender in reading time?
- III. How do Chinese parents socialize same-sex child about gender through casual chats?
- IV. What role do parents' own beliefs of gender roles play in their children's gender socialization?

I focus on parental socialization of same-sex child because of two reasons. First, since early years, children actively search for gender cues and form affiliation to their own gender group (Bukatko, 2004; Hine et al., 2012; Martin & Ruble, 2004). As the most representative and accessible gender role model, parent of the same sex provides primary

gender information to a child (Bandura & Bussey, 2004; Barber & Olsen, 1997; McHale et al., 2003). Second, previous studies have confirmed the role of same-sex parent socialization. Mothers were reported as influential in forming daughter feminist identity, feelings about self, and future aspirations (Colaner & Rittenour, 2015; Rittenour et al., 2014). Fathers were found to impact the son's socialization of affectionate expression, gender roles, social rules, and aggressive behaviors (Baumrind & Black, 1967; Bjørnholt, 2009; McCord, 1991; Noller, 1978). Thus, a focus on the gender socialization of same-sex parents provides a more detailed picture of how gender concepts are transmitted within the family. In particular, how parents and children practice gender in the home-based community.

2.2. Data and Methods

2.2.1 Participants and data

The participants of this study were two Chinese parent-child pairs, Lily (pseudonym) and her mother from family A; Tom (pseudonym) and his father from family B. They are Mandarin-speaking Han Chinese who lived in the same neighborhood in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China. Lily was the only child in her family, while Tom had a younger brother. Both children were six years old at the time of the recording and were attending first grade. Lily has a chef father and a gardener mother, both in their early 40's. Tom's parents are in their late 30's, the father is an instructor, and the mother is an administrator. As author's acquaintances, both families volunteered to participate in this study.

Data used in this study consisted of 1 hour and 24 minutes of parent-child conversations video-taped in the living rooms at the children's homes in December 2019. The author stayed in a different room during all recordings. As shown in Table 1, the recording in each family contains two parts: book reading session and chat session. Prior to the recording, the researcher introduced interaction content and process to both families. In the first session, parents were told to freely choose a book and read it together with their child. In the second session, they were asked to conduct a free conversation with the child. Suggested topics could be the book they had just read, family members, teacher, classmates of both genders, etc. Given the gender theme of this study, the

researcher recommended parents ask children about their interactions with peers of the opposite sex at school and their perceptions of them. Nevertheless, both families were not aware that gender was the primary subject of this study, and they were clearly informed that their conversations should be free, natural, and close to their everyday state.

Table 1. Video content and time distribution

	Lily	Pct.	Tom	Pct.
Reading	21 min 29 sec	49	14 min, 54 sec	36
Chat	21 min 57 sec	51	26 min, 26 sec	64
Total	43 min, 26 sec	100	41 min, 20 sec	100

In the data, Lily only interacted with her mother, and Tom mainly interacted with his father. Mother and younger brother of Tom occasionally participated in the interactions. After recordings were completed, the researcher had brief and semi-constructed interviews with all the participants (questions attached in Appendix). These interviews were conducted to facilitate data interpretation. Specifically, they served to obtain parents' beliefs about gender roles and children's perceptions of their own gender. The data were transcribed according to CHAT conventions (MacWhinney, 2000).

2.2.2 Data analysis

Considering the gap between the two sessions' conversational content, data analysis had different focuses accordingly. During the reading session, because book texts fundamentally structured the participants' language output, the books' content, as reflected in speeches, was investigated. Although during reading, both families had instant and impromptu discussions about the books, their conversations were closely related to the text. Based on the transcriptions, a reading corpus was built for each family. Data analysis of the two corpora focused on *subjects* (person, physical object, abstract topic), *actions*, and *attributes* that appeared in parent-child dialogues. In particular, *nouns*, *verbs* (or verb phrases), and *adjectives* that showed up in the reading session were identified, and their occurrence frequencies were calculated in RStudio. It is worth noting that parts of speech are not fixed but instead dynamically affected by contexts (Page, 1988). When identifying parts of speech, specific contexts were carefully considered.

This procedure was performed to achieve a more accurate understanding of parent-child reading content, as reading hour is an essential component of parental norm socialization.

Besides, it has been reported that parents socialize their children with different emphasis on parts of speech. For instance, Italian mothers place verbs more frequently than nouns in salient utterance positions (Camaioni & Longobardi, 2001), while Korean mothers provide a balanced treatment of nouns and verbs during book-reading (Choi, 2000). Considering the descriptive and socialization functions, part of speech was employed as the basis for data classification in this study.

Data analysis of the chat session involved two directions. First, the two families' conversations were again built into two corpora and quantitatively analyzed from the three aforementioned perspectives. To reveal parents' modeling, instruction, and children's response during socialization (Clancy, 1999), parents' and children's use of lexical items were contrasted. Second, gender norm transmission and negotiation reflected in parents' and children's questions were identified and summarized. This step was conducted because data in chat sessions involved double information. On the one hand, their conversation content reflected the participants' concern and family repertoire of values. The exchanges of life experiences uniquely presented attitudes, beliefs, and underlying social norms. These are reflected in their conversations, which are the linguistic vehicle of gender socialization. On the other hand, through questions, parents socialized children with their own communication styles and expressed their gender-based expectations and requirements for children.

2.3. Findings

Language represents and indexes socio-culturally meaningful realities, and in such way it integrates individual experience, society, and culture (Ochs, 1993, 1996; Silverstein, 1976). Gender, as an essential aspect of life, is what an individual performs (Butler, 1989) through language-mediated social interactions that are realized as a Community of Practice (CofP) (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999a; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Language directly and indirectly indexes through specifiers and intensifiers, including lexicon, particles, markers, repetition, and reduplication (Ochs, 1992). In this section, I will report findings from the empirical data

on parental gender socialization. Focusing on the *lexicons* emerged from the interactions in both families, the results present how Lily's and Tom's parents provide them with gendered world knowledge and life values, respectively. I will also discuss how gendered expectations are transmitted, negotiated through the two parents' differentiated *question* strategies.

2.3.1 Parental input during book reading

Children's understanding of gender concepts has a significant impact on their behaviors (Kohlberg, 1966). The gender schemas that children acquire and establish from the external world structure their internal attitudes and beliefs concerning gender-appropriate behaviors and draft plans for their actions (Bem, 1982; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Liben & Bigler, 2002; Martin et al., 2002). In the domestic realm, children acquire gender norms through parental inputs. Reading children's books together provides a central context for such parental inputs.

Although parents in this study claimed that the purchase of reading materials was 100% relied on the child's own wishes, the books they have read present gender norms and gendered expectations. Corpus analysis of the reading session shows that there are differences between what Tom and Lily have browsed and discussed with their parents. Tom and his father focused on science and rules of the physical world while Lily and her mother were more engaged with morality, social relations, and personality traits in the imaginary world. These differences can be attributed to their different book choices, which more or less reflect the focus of interest of the two parent-child dyads for their reading session.

Lily's reading corpus

The book chosen by Lily and her mother was a collection of fairy tale stories called 知错就改 *zhī cuò jiù gǎi* ('know your mistakes and change them'). Table 2 shows the *nominal* lexicon in Lily's reading session. In her data, among the overall 64 noun types, 31% are daily life objects, 23% are fairy tale characters, 17% are people in society, 9% are foods, 6% are objects in the universe and nature, and 3% are body parts. For token frequency, fairy tale characters make up the majority; 75% of the overall 167 noun tokens are animal characters such as *xiǎo yáng* 'little sheep,' *hú li* 'fox,' *jī dà shǔ*

‘Auntie chicken.’ 21% are daily life objects such as *jiàn zǐ* ‘shuttlecock,’ *shū bāo* ‘school bag,’ and *xiū lí diàn* ‘repair stone.’ 11% were people in the society like *mister* ‘mister,’ *gē gē* ‘older brother,’ *jǐng chá* ‘police’ and *péng yǒu* ‘friend.’ 7% were foods, for instance, *tāng* ‘soup,’ *sōng zǐ* ‘pinecone,’ *ròu* ‘meat.’ Besides, body parts (2%) and objects about nature (5%) both share limited proportions. The former includes *xīn* ‘heart’ and *shǒu* ‘hand.’ The latter includes *yuè liàng* ‘moon,’ *shān* ‘mountain,’ *tài yáng* ‘sun,’ and *shí jiān* ‘time.’

Lily and her mother’s *verb* use during reading and discussion highlights daily life activities (Table 4). Commonly seen daily actions such as *shuō* ‘say,’ *qù* ‘go,’ *dào* ‘arrive,’ *fàng xué* ‘finish school’ constitute 25% of the overall 87 verb types and 38% of the overall 150 verb tokens. Moral actions hold noticeable proportions as well. They include verbs such as *bāng* ‘help,’ *péi lǐ dào qiàn* ‘apologize,’ *yuán liàng* ‘forgive.’ They account for 13% of the types and 13% of the tokens. Affective activities here refer to verbs such as *hài pà* ‘fear,’ *dòng xīn* ‘be moved,’ and *shāng xīn* ‘sad.’ They make up 14% of the types and 9% of the tokens. Interestingly, the female reading session also covered labor-related verbs such as *sǎo dì* ‘sweep the floor,’ *bá* ‘pull,’ *cǎi* ‘pick’ (fruit), and *xiū* ‘fix.’ They constitute 8% of both verbal types and verbal tokens.

As for the *adjective* lexicon, the proportions of positive and negative adjectives tend to be equal (Table 3). Analysis on the affective valence of the adjectives reveals that 43% of the overall 23 adjective types and 42% of the overall 31 adjective tokens are positive. For instance, *hǎo* ‘good,’ *xīn* ‘new,’ *bàng* ‘awesome’ commonly occurred in Lily and her mother’s speeches. Similarly, negative adjectives meanwhile occupy a 48% share of the types and 45% share of the tokens, which include *gān* ‘dry,’ *shǎ* ‘stupid,’ and *bú hǎo yì sī* ‘embarrassed.’ The adjective which ranks on top is *gōng gòng* ‘public’, it was because the story Lily and mother read was about protecting public facilities.

Table 2. Noun frequency rank in girl's reading corpus

Rank	Noun	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Noun	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	小羊	xiǎo yáng	little sheep	15	33	好孩子	hǎo hái zǐ	good child	1
2	狐狸	hú lí	fox	10	34	蜡笔	là bǐ	crayon	1
3	鸡大婶	jī dà shěn	Auntie Chicken	9	35	柴火	chái huǒ	firewood	1
4	小胖猪	xiǎo pàng zhū	little fat pig	7	36	八哥	bā gē	crested myna	1
5	小猫	xiǎo māo	little cat	6	37	课间	kè jiān	classroom	1
6	小浣熊	xiǎo huàn xióng	little raccoon	6	38	油桶	yóu tǒng	oil bucket	1
7	小兔	xiǎo tù	little rabbit	5	39	用具	yòng jù	tools	1
8	松鼠	sōng shǔ	squirrel	5	40	警察局	jǐng chá jú	police station	1
9	猪	zhū	pig	5	41	朋友	péng yǒu	friend	1
10	毽子	jiàn zǐ	shuttlecock	5	42	原位	yuán wèi	original place	1
11	小狗	xiǎo gǒu	puppy	5	43	伙伴	huǒ bàn	fellow	1
12	汤	tāng	soup	4	44	时间	shí jiān	time	1
13	月亮	yuè liàng	moon	4	45	垃圾桶	lā jī tǒng	trash can	1
14	书包	shū bāo	school bag	4	46	窗户	chuāng hù	window	1
15	牛伯伯	niú bó bó	Uncle Cow	4	47	骨头	gǔ tóu	bone	1
16	先生	xiān shēng	mister	3	48	人家	rén jiā	household	1
17	松子	sōng zǐ	pinecone	3	49	菜	cài	vegetable	1
18	大家	dà jiā	everyone	3	50	野果	yě guǒ	wild fruit	1
19	财物	cái wù	property	3	51	小猪	xiǎo zhū	piglet	1
20	石头	shí tóu	stone	3	52	财	cái	wealth	1
21	心	xīn	heart	3	53	人	rén	people	1
22	哥哥	gē gē	older brother	3	54	兄	xiōng	older brother	1
23	城市	chéng shì	city	3	55	油箱	yóu xiāng	oil tank	1
24	坏事	huài shì	bad thing	2	56	小偷	xiǎo tōu	thief	1
25	青蛙	qīng wā	frog	2	57	学期	xué qī	semester	1
26	牛	niú	cow	2	58	班	bān	class	1
27	泥巴	ní bā	mud	2	59	城	chéng	city	1
28	修理店	xiū lǐ diàn	repair store	2	60	手	shǒu	hand	1
29	警察	jǐng chá	police	2	61	红绿灯	hóng lǜ dēng	traffic light	1
30	山	shān	mountain	2	62	生活	shēng huó	life	1
31	太阳	tài yáng	sun	2	63	财品	cái pǐn	financial products	1
32	肉	ròu	meat	1	64	原处	yuán chù	original place	1

Table 3. Adjective frequency rank in girl's reading corpus

Rank	Adjective	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Adjective	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	公共	gōng gòng	public	3	13	不圆	bú yuán	not round	1
2	好	hǎo	good	3	14	不停	bú tíng	non-stop	1
3	干	gān	dry	2	15	一般	yī bān	ordinary	1
4	新	xīn	new	2	16	漂亮	piào liàng	pretty	1
5	傻	shǎ	stupid	2	17	不巧	bú qiǎo	unfortunate	1
6	不好意思	bú hǎo yì sī	embarrassed	2	18	神奇	shén qí	magical	1
7	棒	bàng	awesome	1	19	厉害	lì hài	great	1
8	主动	zhǔ dòng	active	1	20	坏	huài	bad	1
9	高兴	gāo xìng	happy	1	21	不小心	bú xiǎo xīn	careless	1
10	香喷喷	xiāng pēn pēn	fragrant	1	22	了不起	le bú qǐ	amazing	1
11	直接	zhí jiē	direct	1	23	不行	bú háng	not capable	1
12	错	cuò	wrong	1					

Table 4. Verb and verb phrase frequency rank in girl's reading corpus

Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	说	shuō	say	10	47	没有	méi yǒu	don't have	1
2	去	qù	go	9	48	下课	xià kè	class dismissed	1
3	是	shì	am/is/are	9	49	找	zhǎo	find	1
4	到	dào	arrive	6	50	偷	tōu	steal	1
5	扫地	sǎo dì	sweep the floor	4	51	请	qǐng	please	1
6	帮	bāng	help	4	52	觉得	jiào dé	feel	1
7	放学	fàng xué	finish school	3	53	赞叹	zàn tàn	praise	1
8	走	zǒu	go	3	54	安慰	ān wèi	comfort	1
9	踢	tī	kick	3	55	告诉	gào sù	tell	1
10	赔礼道歉	péi lǐ dào qiàn	apologize	3	56	乱动	luàn dòng	move around	1
11	原谅	yuán liàng	forgive	3	57	羡慕	xiàn mù	admire	1
12	听	tīng	listen	3	58	笑	xiào	laugh	1
13	看	kàn	look	3	59	认错	rèn cuò	admit wrong	1
14	变圆	biàn yuán	turn round	2	60	改	gǎi	change	1
15	围过去	wéi guò qù	surround	2	61	踢毽子	tī jiàn zǐ	play shuttlecock	1
16	知错就改	zhī cuò jiù gǎi	know the mistake and change	2	62	难受	nán shòu	feel bad	1
17	拔	bá	pull	2	63	见	jiàn	see	1
18	害怕	hài pà	fear	2	64	做	zuò	do	1
19	修	xiū	fix	2	65	羞	xiū	shy	1
20	有	yǒu	have	2	66	坐在	zuò zài	sit on	1
21	想	xiǎng	want	2	67	打翻	dǎ fān	overturn	1
22	要	yào	to	2	68	拦住	lán zhù	resemble	1
23	捡	jiǎn	pick up	2	69	像	xiàng	resemble	1
24	穿过	chuān guò	traverse	2	70	知道	zhī dào	know	1
25	喊	hǎn	shout	2	71	眼看	yǎn kàn	look	1
26	采	cǎi	pick	2	72	修	xiū	fix	1
27	化妆	huà zhuāng	makeup	1	73	得到	dé dào	get	1
28	乱画	luàn huà	scribble	1	74	不能	bú néng	can't	1
29	出去玩	chū qù wán	go out and play	1	75	需要	xū yào	need	1
30	心虚	xīn xū	weak hearted	1	76	发现	fā xiàn	find	1
31	动心	dòng xīn	moved	1	77	回	huí	back	1
32	伤心	shāng xīn	sad	1	78	指责	zhǐ zé	accuse	1
33	上学	shàng xué	go to school	1	79	敲	qiāo	knock	1
34	落地	luò dì	to land	1	80	偷菜	tōu cài	stealing vegetables	1
35	骂人	mà rén	swear at someone	1	81	红着脸说	hóng zhe liǎn shuō	say with a red face	1
36	会	huì	capable of	1	82	知错就改	zhī cuò jiù gǎi	know the mistake and change it	1
37	开	kāi	open	1	83	红了脸	hóng le liǎn	blush	1
38	起来	qǐ lái	get up	1	84	鼓起勇气	gǔ qǐ yǒng qì	gather courage	1
39	答应	dá yīng	promise	1	85	没理	méi lǐ	ignore	1

Table 4. (continued)

Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
40	大哭	dà kū	cry out	1	86	不像	bú xiàng	unlike	1
41	打扫	dǎ sǎo	clean up	1	87	喝	hē	drink	1
42	道歉	dào qiàn	apologize	1					
43	来到	lái dào	come	1					
44	出去	chū qù	go out	1					
45	能	néng	can	1					
46	来	lái	come	1					

Example (1) illustrates Lily and her mother’s conversation during reading. Used fairy tale characters, mother taught Lily to be humble and admit her mistakes. When Lily expressed her positive attitude to correct herself, her mother praised her with ‘correct.’

Example (1) [Lily and her mother were discussing about the fairy tale story in the book.]

Mother:	suīrán	xiǎo	huànxiónɡ	cuò	le,
	although	little	raccoon	wrong	ASP
	dàn	tā	shénme?		
	but	3SG	what		
	‘Although the little raccoon was wrong, he did what?’				
Lily:	èn,	néng	ɡǎi.		
	um	can	change		
	‘Um, he could change.’				
Mother:	zhī	cuò	jiù	ɡǎi,	
	know	wrong	then	change	
	suǒyǐ	xiǎomāo	ɡàn	ma?	
	so	kitten	do	what	
	‘Know his mistakes and change them, so kitten did what?’				
Lily:	jiù	yuánliàng	le	tā.	
	then	forgive	ASP	3SG	
	‘Then, forgave him.’				
Mother	↑duì	le.	jiǎrú	nǐ	
	correct	ASP	if	2SG	
	fàn	le	cuòwù	zěnme	bàn?
	commit	ASP	wrong	what	do
	‘If you made a mistake, what would you do?’				
Lily:	wǒ	zhī	cuò	jiù	ɡǎi.
	2SG	know	wrong	then	change
	‘I know my mistakes and I change them.’				
Mother:	yào	qiānxū,	dàoqiàn,	↑duì!	
	need	humble	apologize	correct	
	‘Be humble and apologize. Correct!’				

Tom’s reading corpus

Tom and his father read a book called 神奇的宇宙 *shénqí de yǔzhòu* (‘the amazing universe’), an illustrated science material for children. Compared to Lily, Tom’s reading session *nouns* are consisted mainly of academic vocabulary (Table 5). Among the

overall 113 noun types, 39% are objects in the universe and nature (e.g., *dì qiú* ‘earth,’ *yǔ zhòu* ‘universe,’ *yuán zǐ* ‘atom,’ *xīng xīng* ‘star’), 33% are scientific or formal terminologies (e.g., *néng liàng* ‘energy,’ *lì liàng* ‘force,’ *yǐn lì* ‘gravity,’ *huà xué fǎn yīng* ‘chemical reaction’). Unlike Lily, people in society (8%), daily objects/locations (6%), and body parts (2%) only occupy small proportions in the 113 noun types. Regarding token frequency, academic vocabulary still dominates. Over half (58%) of the overall 231 noun tokens belong to objects in the universe and nature, and 20% belong to scientific or formal terminology. The other three noun categories again share limited proportion, with 6% for people in society, 3% for daily objects/locations, and 1% for body parts.

Tom and his father’s use of *verbs* during reading and discussion consistently demonstrates a strong connection to science (Table 7). 44% of the overall 123 verb types and 31% of the overall 386 verb tokens indicate scientific activities such as *bào zhà* ‘explode,’ *biàn chéng* ‘become,’ *cún zài* ‘exist,’ *jù jí* ‘gather, accumulate’ etc. Generally used in Chinese academic and formal discourse, these verbs, accompanied by the scientific nouns and terms, were frequently adopted by Tom and his father. They not only produced these scientific verbs when reading the book text aloud, but also used them naturally in subsequent discussions.

The second verb category with a higher percentage is daily activity. Verbs such as *kàn* ‘see,’ *dào* ‘arrive,’ *shuō* ‘say,’ *lái* ‘come’ account for 39% of the verb types and 27% of the verb tokens. This was partially because Tom’s father preferred to use life experiences as analogies when explaining scientific phenomena. For instance, he used *zhǎng dà* ‘grow up’ to describe the gathering and expansion of cosmic forces. Tom also used mundane bodily motion *lái* ‘come’ and *zǒu* ‘go’ to express his understanding of planetary orbits. Furthermore, the two participants also deployed verbs reflecting thinking activities and affective activities. Thinking-related verbs such as *jué dé* ‘feel,’ *xiǎng* ‘think,’ *yào* ‘want,’ constitute 2% of the types and 5% of the tokens. Verbs indicate affections, such as *xǐ huān* ‘like’, only occupy a limited share of 2% in types and 4% in tokens.

Unlike Lily’s relatively equal adjective distribution, Tom’s *adjective* lexicon highlights positivity (Table 6). Among the 35 overall adjective types and 106 overall adjective tokens, 40% types and 39% tokens are positive. These include adjectives such

as *hǎo* ‘good,’ *wēn hé* ‘mild,’ *kě ài* ‘lovely,’ and *cōng míng* ‘clever.’ By contrast, negative adjectives such as *bào zào* ‘irritable,’ *yuǎn* ‘far,’ *nán* ‘difficult,’ and *fù zá* ‘complex’ only account for 23% of the types and 18% of the tokens. Judgement of the affective valance was based on specific contexts and speaker stance, as some adjectives may reflect flexible affections. The remaining adjectives are neutral or context-dependent, such as *dà* ‘big,’ *xiǎo* ‘small,’ and *cháng* ‘long.’ Example (2) shows Tom’s fluent use of academic vocabulary when talking about science with his father. He skillfully used ‘atom’ and ‘attraction’ to describe principles of physics with his father.

Example (2) [Tom was talking about atoms with his father during reading.]

Tom:	ō,	yuánzǐ.							
	oh	atom							
	‘Oh, atoms.’								
Father:	lingwài	ne,	yuánzǐ	zhī jiān					
	besides	SFP	atom	between					
	hái	cúnzài	zhe #	yì	zhǒng	yīnlì.			
	as well	exist	ASP	one	CLF	attraction			
	‘Besides, there is a kind of attraction between atoms.’								
Tom:	tā	kěyǐ	yīqǐ	xīyīn	guòlái				
					come				
	3SG	can	together	attract	over				
	jiù	huì	biàn	dà.					
	then	will	become	big					
	‘It can attract atoms together, and they become bigger.’								
Father:	duì,	duì,	tā	shì	xiānghù	zhī jiān			
					each				
	correct	correct	3SG	COP	other	between			
	shì	yǒu	yì	zhǒng	†xīyīnlì	cúnzài	de.		
	COP	exist	one	CLF	attraction	exist	NML		
	‘Yes, yes, there exists a kind of attraction between each other.’								
Tom:	rúguǒ	nǐ	bǎ	sān	gè	yuánzǐ	fàng	zài	yìqǐ,
									toget
	if	2SG	ASSOC	three	CLF	atom	put	PREP	her
	tā	jiù	huì	lián	qí lái,				
					together-				
	3SG	then	will	connect	RES				
	‘If you put three atoms together, they will be connected together.’								

Table 5. Noun frequency rank in boy's reading corpus

Rank	Noun	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Noun	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	地球	dì qiú	earth	9	60	答案	dá àn	answer	1
2	宇宙	yǔ zhòu	universe	8	61	球	qiú	ball	1
3	原子	yuán zǐ	atom	8	62	足字旁	zú zì páng	foot	1
4	星星	xīng xīng	star	8	63	名字	míng zì	name	1
5	恒星	héng xīng	fixed star	8	64	科学家	kē xué jiā	scientist	1
6	太阳	tài yáng	sun	8	65	仪器	yí qì	instrument	1
7	能量	néng liàng	energy	6	66	星空	xīng kōng	starry sky	1
8	云朵	yún duǒ	cloud	6	67	线	xiàn	line	1
9	太空	tài kōng	space	5	68	重量	zhòng liàng	weight	1
10	时间	shí jiān	time	5	69	无线	wú xiàn	wireless	1
11	人	rén	people	4	70	大家	dà jiā	everyone	1
12	人类	rén lèi	human	4	71	记	jì	mark	1
13	粒子	lì zǐ	particle	4	72	线索	xiàn suǒ	clue	1
14	星球	xīng qiú	planet	4	73	征兆	zhēng zhào	sign	1
15	火星	huǒ xīng	Mars	4	74	天文学家	tiān wén xué jiā	astronomer	1
16	样子	yàng zi	look	3	75	纸	zhǐ	paper	1
17	气体云	qì tǐ yún	gas clouds	3	76	性别	xìng bié	gender	1
18	冥王星	míng wáng xīng	Pluto	3	77	事	shì	matter	1
19	老师	lǎo shī	teacher	3	78	面	miàn	face	1
20	光	guāng	light	3	79	经历	jīng lì	experience	1
21	海星	hǎi xīng	starfish	3	80	感觉	gǎn jiào	feeling	1
22	天王星	tiān wáng xīng	Uranus	3	81	科学	kē xué	science	1
23	海王星	hǎi wáng xīng	Neptune	3	82	颜色	yán sè	color	1
24	东西	dōng xī	stuff	3	83	微光	wēi guāng	glimmer	1
25	距离	jù lí	distance	2	84	方面	fāng miàn	aspect	1
26	红色	hóng sè	red	2	85	电子	diàn zǐ	electron	1
27	部分	bù fèn	part	2	86	质子	zhì zǐ	proton	1
28	水蒸气	shuǐ zhēng qì	water vapor	2	87	化学	huà xué	chemistry	1
29	水星	shuǐ xīng	mercury	2	88	书	shū	book	1
30	大行星	dà háng xīng	big planet	2	89	生物体	shēng wù tǐ	organism	1
31	引力	yǐn lì	gravity	2	90	作业	zuò yè	assignment	1
32	力量	lì liàng	force	2	91	字	zì	character	1
33	原子团	yuán zǐ tuán	atomic mass	2	92	空间	kōng jiān	space	1
34	同桌	tóng zhuō	table	2	93	降雨	jiàng yǔ	rainfall	1
35	地面	dì miàn	earth's surface	2	94	小朋友	xiǎo péng yǒu	kid	1
36	物质	wù zhì	matter	2	95	水汽	shuǐ qì	water vapor	1
37	事实	shì shí	fact	2	96	闲事	xián shì	other's business	1
38	命名	míng míng	naming	2	97	学校	xué xiào	school	1
39	眼睛	yǎn jīng	eyes	2	98	步	bù	step	1
40	同学	tóng xué	classmate	2	99	亲历者	qīn lì zhě	witness	1
41	放大镜	fàng dà jìng	magnifying lens	2	100	动物	dòng wù	animal	1
42	恐龙	kǒng lóng	dinosaur	2	101	类型	lèi xíng	type	1
43	红星	hóng xīng	red star	2	102	星系	xīng xì	galaxy	1
44	基本	jī běn	foundation	1	103	光和热	guāng hé rè	light heat	1
45	原因	yuán yīn	reason	1	104	话	huà	speech	1
46	猿猴	yuán hóu	ape	1	105	生物	shēng wù	biology	1
47	动物园	dòng wù yuán	zoo	1	106	教室	jiāo shì	classroom	1
48	内容	nèi róng	content	1	107	椭圆形	tuō yuán xíng	oval	1
49	沙子	shā zǐ	sand	1	108	气体	qì tǐ	gase	1

Table 5. (continued)

Rank	Noun	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Noun	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
50	中子	zhōng zǐ	neutron	1	109	宇宙飞船	yǔ zhòu fēi chuán	spacecraft	1
51	学	xué	discipline	1	110	化学变化	huà xué biàn huà	chemical change	1
52	理论	lǐ lùn	theory	1	111	化学反应	huà xué fǎn yīng	chemical reaction	1
53	起因	qǐ yīn	cause	1	112	九大行星	jiǔ dà háng xīng	nine planets	1
54	问题	wèn tí	problem	1	113	毛发	máo fǎ	hair	1
55	太阳系	tài yáng xì	solar system	1	114	小弟弟	xiǎo dì dì	little brother	1
56	行星	háng xīng	planet	1	115	小猴子	xiǎo hóu zi	little monkey	1
57	吸引力	xī yǐn lì	attraction	1	116	生命	shēng mìng	life	1
58	土星	tǔ xīng	Saturn	1	117	生活	shēng huó	life	1
59	木星	mù xīng	Jupiter	1	118	知识	zhī shí	knowledge	1

Table 6. Adjective frequency rank in boy's reading corpus

Rank	Adjective	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Adjective	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	大	dà	big	23	19	浓密	nóng mì	dense	1
2	好	hǎo	good	14	20	微弱	wēi ruò	weak	1
3	暴躁	bào zào	irritable	7	21	强	qiáng	strong	1
4	温和	wēn hé	mild	7	22	丰富	fēng fù	rich	1
5	小	xiǎo	small	6	23	快	kuài	fast	1
6	可爱	kě ài	lovely	5	24	早	zǎo	early	1
7	远	yuǎn	far	4	25	厉害	lì hài	great	1
8	具体	jù tǐ	specific	3	26	微小	wēi xiǎo	tiny	1
9	不错	bú cuò	not bad	3	27	所有	suǒ yǒu	all	1
10	长	cháng	long	3	28	高兴	gāo xìng	happy	1
11	难	nán	difficult	2	29	多	duō	many	1
12	聪明	cōng míng	clever	2	30	一无所有	yī wú suǒ yǒu	dispossessed	1
13	一般	yī bān	ordinary	2	31	确切	què qiē	exact	1
14	差不多	chà bú duō	almost	2	32	非常简单	fēi cháng jiǎn dān	very simple	1
15	主要	zhǔ yào	main	2	33	黑暗	hēi àn	dark	1
16	棒	bàng	awesome	2	34	专门	zhuān mén	specialized	1
17	微妙	wēi miào	subtle	1	35	无限	wú xiàn	unlimited	1
18	复杂	fù zá	complex	1					

We can see from the two children's reading sessions that there is a huge gap in the content of the conversations between the two families. Lily's conversation with her mother was more focused on emotions, relationships, and moral character. In contrast, the conversation between Tom and his father was more concerned with scientific principles and the laws of nature.

Table 7. Verb and verb phrase frequency rank in boy's reading corpus

Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	是	shì	am/is/are	60	63	决定	jué dìng	decide	1
2	有	yǒu	to have	24	64	靠	kào	rely on	1
3	没有	méi yǒu	no	18	65	演化	yǎn huà	evolve	1
4	喜欢	xǐ huān	like	14	66	行走	háng zǒu	walk	1
5	爆炸	bào zhà	explode	13	67	展示	zhǎn shì	demonstrate	1
6	觉得	jué dé	feel	12	68	了解	le jiě	understand	1
7	看	kàn	see	11	69	生成	shēng chéng	generate	1
8	到	dào	arrive	11	70	成为	chéng wéi	become	1
9	说	shuō	say	11	71	炸开	zhà kāi	blow up	1
10	变成	biàn chéng	become	8	72	探测	tàn cè	probe	1
11	开始	kāi shǐ	start	7	73	限	xiàn	limit	1
12	知道	zhī dào	know	5	74	记得	jì dé	remember	1
13	存在	cún zài	exist	5	75	回波	huí bō	echo	1
14	来	lái	come	5	76	包括	bāo kuò	include	1
15	发生	fā shēng	happen	5	77	发现	fā xiàn	find	1
16	想	xiǎng	think	5	78	开除	kāi chú	expel	1
17	产生	chǎn shēng	generate	5	79	叫	jiào	call	1
18	要	yào	want	4	80	刺	cì	sting	1
19	让	ràng	let	4	81	睹	dǔ	see	1
20	聚集	jù jí	gather	4	82	传到	chuán dào	pass on to	1
21	问	wèn	ask	4	83	亲	qīn	pro	1
22	变	biàn	change	4	84	确定	què dìng	assure	1
23	发射	fā shè	launch	3	85	翻译	fān yì	translate	1
24	讲	jiǎng	speak	3	86	有点像	yǒu diǎn xiàng	a little like	1
25	刺激	cì jī	stimulate	3	87	灭绝	miè jué	extinct	1
26	膨胀	péng zhàng	swell	3	88	吸引	xī yǐn	attract	1
27	出现	chū xiàn	appear	3	89	写错	xiě cuò	miswrite	1
28	走	zǒu	go	3	90	揍	zòu	beat	1
29	肯定	kěn dìng	affirm	3	91	见	jiàn	see	1
30	组成	zǔ chéng	form	3	92	收缩	shōu suō	shrink	1
31	形成	xíng chéng	form	3	93	带	dài	bring	1
32	像	xiàng	like	3	94	下课	xià kè	class dismisses	1
33	达到	dá dào	reach	3	95	追	zhuī	chase	1
34	见过	jiàn guò	have seen	2	96	找	zhǎo	find	1
35	设计	shè jì	design	2	97	干	gàn	do	1
36	传播	chuán bō	spread	2	98	坐坐	zuò zuò	sit down	1
37	长大	zhǎng dà	grow up	2	99	去	qù	go	1
38	不会	bú huì	won't	2	100	讲述	jiǎng shù	talk	1
39	推移	tūi yí	push	2	101	散	sàn	disperse	1
40	诞生	dàn shēng	born	2	102	进化	jìn huà	evolve	1
41	离	lí	away	2	103	站立	zhàn lì	stand	1
42	感受	gǎn shòu	feel	2	104	希望	xī wàng	hope	1
43	放在	fàng zài	put	2	105	休息	xiū xi	rest	1
44	看到	kàn dào	see	2	106	回到	huí dào	back to	1
45	解说	jiě shuō	explain	2	107	出门	chū mén	go outside	1
46	判断	pàn duàn	judge	2	108	炸死	zhà sǐ	be killed by an explosion	1
47	属于	shǔ yú	belong to	2	109	打	dǎ	fight	1
48	告诉	gào sù	tell	2	110	需要	xū yào	need	1

Table 7. (continued)

Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Rank	Verb	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
49	作用	zuò yòng	function	2	111	出来	chū lái	come out	1
50	坐	zuò	sit	2	112	上课	shàng kè	class	1
51	蒸发	zhēng fā	evaporate	2	113	闷死	mèn sǐ	bored to death	1
52	回去	huí qù	go back	2	114	玩	wán	play	1
53	复习	fù xí	review	2	115	导致	dǎo zhì	cause	1
54	起来	qǐ lái	get up	2	116	顾	gù	care	1
55	看见	kàn jiàn	see	2	117	翻页	fān yè	turn the page	1
56	看不见	kàn bú jiàn	can't see	2	118	散步	sàn bù	take a walk	1
57	听	tīng	listen	2	119	干坏事	gān huài shì	do bad things	1
58	少管闲事	shǎo guǎn xián shì	mind one's own business	1	120	会会	huì huì	meet	1
59	研究	yán jiū	study	1	121	透透气	tòu tòu qì	get some air	1
60	弹出去	dàn chū qù	pop out	1	122	走	zǒu	walk	1
61	录	lù	record	1	123	听闻	tīng wén	hear	1
62	介绍	jiè shào	introduce	1					

2.3.2 Norm transmission amid parent-child chat

The chat session granted participants with more freedom. Both families covered various topics reflecting their life experiences and beliefs. During the chat session, through questions guided by the parent, the participants co-constructed a discourse in which beliefs were interchanged and unknowns were discussed. Like the reading session, the two families continued to demonstrate their unique conversation topics and word choices. In general, Lily and her mother focused on people (both in reality and in fairy tale) and joyful daily life experiences but less emphasized on skill improvement. In comparison, though Tom and his father also frequently mentioned people, much of their energy was spent on talking about school life, thinking process, and especially skill training.

Lily's chat corpus

Corpus analysis of mother-daughter chat session reveals six major *noun* categories shared between the dyad (Table 8). These nominal subjects or topics were collaboratively described, commented on, and referred to. People, including family members and commonly seen social figures (e.g., teacher, doctor) make up the largest proportion in both mother's and Lily's speech. As contrasted in Table 8, in mother's sub-corpus, 30% of the overall 69 types, and 48% of the overall 172 tokens are people. In

Lily's sub-corpus, 25% of the overall 55 types and 43% of the overall 84 tokens are people. The second noticeable nominal category is fairy tale character, which accounts for 13% of types and 12% of tokens in mother's corpus. In daughter's corpus, it similarly constitutes 13% of types and 11% of tokens. Besides, the two participants have involved multiple hobbies and activities in their speeches, such as *guò shān chē* 'roller coaster,' *huà* 'painting,' *lǐ wù* 'gift,' *pū kè pái* 'poker card,' and *bā lěi wǔ* 'ballet'. This nominal category takes 13% of types and 9% of tokens in mother's corpus. The percentages in daughter's corpus are even higher, with 20% of types and 15% of tokens. Intriguingly, Lily and her mom spent limited energy on society and world, nouns such as country names, city names, social units and concepts (e.g., *jiàn shēn fáng* 'gym,' *yè bān* 'nightshift') were moderately employed, with 8% of tokens for mother and 7% of tokens for daughter. Nouns related to school life and skills were even more rarely covered. Only 8% of mother's tokens and 2% of daughter's tokens are about school, class, work, etc.

Lily and her mother's chat session lexicon demonstrate subtle divergence in *verbs* (Table 10). The mother more frequently adopted daily activity verbs such as *kàn* 'look,' *bú chī* 'don't eat,' *jiǎn féi* 'lose weight.' They account for 69% of overall 29 verb types and 50% of overall 69 verb tokens. Meanwhile, she moderately rendered thinking activities through verbs such as *xǐ huān* 'like,' *jué dé* 'feel,' *xiǎng* 'think,' and *xī wàng* 'hope.' This category takes up 14% of her verb types and 35% of her verb tokens. Lily showed a slightly different pattern. Though she was also engaged in using verbs of daily activity, such as *huán gěi* 'give back,' *děng* 'wait,' and *jiǎn féi* 'lose weight,' they constitute only 48% of her verb types and 36% of her verb tokens. Compared to mother, she employed higher proportions of verbs to express her thinking activity. Verbs such as *xǐ huān* 'like,' *zhī dào* 'know,' *xiǎng* 'think,' and *bù xiǎng* 'don't want' account for 20% of her types and 41% of her tokens.

The mother-daughter chat appears to be positive if viewed from the *adjectives* they adopted (Table 9). In mother's sub-corpus, 77% of the overall 13 adjective types and 90% of the overall 29 adjective tokens are positive. These include noticeable amounts of adjectives related to appearance and personality trait, such as *piāo liàng* 'beautiful,' *kě ài* 'lovely,' *hǎo kàn* 'good-looking,' *kù* 'cool,' *lì hài* 'awesome,' *cōng míng* 'smart,' *yǒng gǎn* 'brave,' and *dǒng shì* 'sensible.' Resembling mother, 80% of adjective types and 86%

of adjective tokens in Lily’s sub-corpus are positive. They are also closely related to appearance and personality trait. Typical items include *piāo liàng* ‘beautiful,’ *hǎo kàn* ‘good-looking,’ *cōng míng* ‘smart,’ *lì hài* ‘awesome,’ *kě ài* ‘lovely,’ *qiáng* ‘strong,’ and *dǒng shì* ‘sensible.’ In contrast, negative adjectives such as ‘scary’ and ‘creepy’ were used in a limited fashion by both mother and daughter. They share 7% in both mother’s and Lily’s overall adjective tokens.

Table 8. Noun frequency rank in girl’s chat corpus

Rank	Mother	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Girl	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	爸爸	bà bà	dad	18	妈妈	mā mā	mother	8
2	老师	lǎo shī	teacher	11	老师	lǎo shī	teacher	6
3	妈妈	mā mā	mom	9	女孩	nǚ hái	girl	5
4	男孩	nán hái	boy	9	宝宝	bǎo bǎo	baby	4
5	女孩	nǚ hái	girl	6	植物	zhí wù	plant	2
6	校车	xiào chē	school bus	5	扑克牌	pū kè pái	poker card	2
7	公主	gōng zhǔ	princess	5	爸爸	bà bà	dad	2
8	朋友	péng yǒu	friend	5	画	huà	painting	2
9	美国	měi guó	USA	5	玫瑰花	méi guī huā	rose	2
10	宝宝	bǎo bǎo	baby	5	仙人掌	xiān rén zhǎng	cactus	2
11	工作	gōng zuò	work	4	王子	wáng zǐ	prince	2
12	广告	guǎng gào	advertisement	3	张老师	zhāng lǎo shī	teacher zhang	2
13	陌生人	mò shēng rén	stranger	3	美人鱼	měi rén yú	mermaid	2
14	小班	xiǎo bān	junior class	3	男孩	nán hái	boy	2
15	圣诞老人	shèng dàn lǎo rén	Santa Claus	3	斑马	bān mǎ	zebra	1
16	过山车	guò shān chē	roller coaster	3	夜班	yè bān	night shift	1
17	坚果	jiān guǒ	nuts	3	尾巴	wěi bā	tail	1
18	仙人掌	xiān rén zhǎng	cactus	3	外地	wài dì	field	1
19	弟弟	dì dì	younger brother	3	广告	guǎng gào	advertisement	1
20	牛肉	niú ròu	beef	3	泡沫	pào mò	foam	1
21	妹妹	mèi mèi	younger sister	2	品种	pǐn zhǒng	category	1
22	画	huà	painting	2	礼物	lǐ wù	gift	1
23	故事	gù shì	story	2	医生	yī shēng	doctor	1
24	优点	yōu diǎn	advantage	2	礼貌	lǐ mào	courtesy	1
25	战士	zhàn shì	warrior	2	时间	shí jiān	time	1
26	事情	shì qing	thing	2	厨师	chú shī	cook	1
27	礼物	lǐ wù	gift	2	牛肉	niú ròu	beef	1
28	帽子	mào zi	hat	2	蓝色	lán sè	blue	1
29	王子	wáng zǐ	prince	2	颜色	yán sè	color	1
30	美少女	měi shǎo nǚ	beautiful girl	2	妹妹	mèi mèi	younger sister	1
31	小鹿	xiǎo lù	baby deer	2	女巫	nǚ wū	witch	1
32	奥特曼	ào tè màn	Ottoman	2	班主任	bān zhǔ rèn	class teacher	1
33	中国	zhōng guó	China	2	板栗	bǎn lì	chestnut	1
34	生活	shēng huó	life	2	舞台	wǔ tái	stage	1
35	蜀黍	shǔ shǔ	uncle (slang)	1	过山车	guò shān chē	roller coaster	1
36	咖喱	kā lí	curry	1	桌子	zhuō zi	table	1

Table 8. (continued)

Rank	Mother	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Girl	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
37	夜班	yè bān	night shift	1	套餐	tào cān	meal set	1
38	尾巴	wěi bā	tail	1	眼睛	yǎn jīng	eye	1
39	眼力	yǎn lì	eyesight	1	照片	zhào piàn	photo	1
40	颜色	yán sè	color	1	脖子	bó zi	neck	1
41	玫瑰花	méi guī huā	rose	1	芭蕾舞	bā lěi wǔ	ballet	1
42	运动员	yùn dòng yuán	athlete	1	书店	shū diàn	bookstore	1
43	健身房	jiàn shēn fáng	gym	1	玩具	wán jù	toys	1
44	大头	dà tóu	big head	1	咖喱	kā lí	curry	1
45	松子	sōng zǐ	pine nuts	1	朋友	péng yǒu	friend	1
46	果子	guǒ zi	fruit	1	小孩	xiǎo hái	kid	1
47	时间	shí jiān	time	1	健身房	jiàn shēn fáng	gym	1
48	猫头鹰	māo tóu yīng	owl	1	王老师	wáng lǎo shī	Teacher Wang	1
49	亲戚	qīn qī	relative	1	肯德基	kěn dé jī	KFC	1
50	礼貌	lǐ mào	manner	1	小鹿	xiǎo lù	baby deer	1
51	地方	dì fāng	place	1	孔雀	kǒng què	peacock	1
52	绿色	lǜ sè	green	1	奥特曼	ào tè màn	Ottoman	1
53	娃娃	wá wa	doll	1	中国	zhōng guó	China	1
54	照片	zhào piàn	photo	1	外国	wài guó	foreign	1
55	厨师	chú shī	chef	1	生活	shēng huó	life	1
56	老人	lǎo rén	elderly	1				
57	个别人	gè bié rén	individual	1				
58	小孩	xiǎo hái	children	1				
59	舞蹈演员	wǔ dǎo yǎn yuán	dancer	1				
60	样子	yàng zi	look	1				
61	摄像头	shè xiàng tóu	camera	1				
62	红烧肉	hóng shāo ròu	red meat	1				
63	爸爸妈妈	bà bà mā mā	dad and mom	1				
64	王老师	wáng lǎo shī	teacher wang	1				
65	孔雀	kǒng què	peacock	1				
66	巧克力	qiǎo kè lì	chocolate	1				
67	中班	zhōng bān	intermediate class	1				
68	广州	guǎng zhōu	Guangzhou	1				
69	俄罗斯	é luó sī	Russia	1				

Table 9. Adjective frequency rank in girl's chat corpus

Rank	Mother	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Daughter	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	漂亮	piāo liàng	beautiful	6	漂亮	piāo liàng	beautiful	2
2	厉害	lì hài	awesome	4	聪明	cōng míng	smart	2
3	神奇	shén qí	magical	4	厉害	lì hài	awesome	2
4	可爱	kě ài	lovely	4	可爱	kě ài	lovely	2
5	聪明	cōng míng	smart	3	恐怖	kǒng bù	scary	1
6	不错	bú cuò	nice	1	不同	bú tóng	different	1
7	恐怖	kǒng bù	scary	1	强	qiáng	strong	1
8	酷	kù	cool	1	好看	hǎo kàn	good-looking	1
9	勇敢	yǒng gǎn	brave	1	刺激	cì jī	exciting	1
10	大	dà	big	1	懂事	dǒng shì	sensible	1
11	懂事	dǒng shì	sensible	1				
12	好看	hǎo kàn	good-looking	1				
13	吓死人	xià sǐ rén	creepy	1				

Table 10. Verb frequency rank in girl’s chat corpus

Rank	Mother	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Daughter	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	喜欢	xǐ huān	like	15	喜欢	xǐ huān	like	9
2	看	kàn	look	7	知道	zhī dào	know	5
3	觉得	jué dé	feel	6	没有	méi yǒu	don’t have	3
4	没有	méi yǒu	don’t have	3	还给	huán gěi	give back	3
5	不吃	bú chī	don’t eat	3	等	děng	wait	2
6	减肥	jiǎn féi	lose weight	3	结婚	jié hūn	marry	2
7	捣蛋	dǎo dàn	trick	3	想	xiǎng	think	2
8	不能	bú néng	can’t	3	变身	biàn shēn	transform	1
9	变	biàn	change	3	得到	dé dào	get	1
10	变身	biàn shēn	transform	2	撕	sī	tear	1
11	跳舞	tiào wǔ	dance	2	不想	bù xiǎng	don’t want	1
12	知道	zhī dào	know	2	减肥	jiǎn féi	lose weight	1
13	想	xiǎng	think	2	不用	bú yòng	don’t have to	1
14	不会	bú huì	not capable of	2	冬眠	dōng mián	hibernate	1
15	再生	zài shēng	regenerate	1	不会	bú huì	not capable of	1
16	希望	xī wàng	hope	1	上班	shàng bān	go to work	1
17	带上	dài shàng	bring	1	枯萎	kū wěi	wither	1
18	上班	shàng bān	go to work	1	告诉	gào sù	tell	1
19	撕	sī	tear	1	觉得	jiào dé	feel	1
20	去掉	qù diào	remove	1	上课	shàng kè	go to class	1
21	学到	xué dào	learn to	1	变	biàn	change	1
22	枯萎	kū wěi	wither	1	打头	dǎ tóu	hit in the head	1
23	睡觉	shuì jiào	sleep	1	打死	dǎ sǐ	beaten to death	1
24	烧饭	shāo fàn	cook	1	死去	sǐ qù	die	1
25	送给	sòng gěi	send to	1	遇到	yù dào	meet	1
26	聊	liáo	talk	1	带去	dài qù	take to	1
27	举重	jǔ zhòng	lift weights	1	消毒	xiāo dú	sterilize	1
28	敲门	qiāo mén	knock on the door	1				
29	遇到	yù dào	meet	1				
30	拍下来	pāi xià lái	shoot down	1				
31	结婚	jié hūn	marry	1				

Tom’s chat corpus

Compared to Lily and her mother’s chat corpus, Tom and his father embraced *nouns* in greater concentration. Similarly, the male parent-child dyad also talked about various people, such as family members, individuals in the workplace, and school. As shown in Table 11, people accounts for 25% of father’s overall 76 types and 50% of overall 107 tokens. It also composes 23% of son’s overall 57 types and 37% of overall 106 tokens. Notably, among them, 25% of the people tokens produced by father are related to son’s school life (e.g., *lǎo shī* ‘teacher,’ *nán shēng* ‘boy student’), and the corresponding percentage for son is 38%. Admittedly, Tom seems to be interested in school life and skills. In his speech, nouns of this category (e.g., *bàn gōng shì* ‘office,’ *wù lǐ* ‘physics,’ *lán qiú* ‘basketball,’ *gōng zuò* ‘work,’ *shù xué* ‘math’) constitute 53% of

types and 41% of tokens. His father also frequently talked around these subjects, with 32% of types and 23% of tokens contributed. Besides, they both moderately touched upon society and the world. In father's sub-corpus, 11% of types and 5% of tokens are surrounding topics such as *qì chē chǎng* 'car factory,' *dān wèi* 'work unit,' and *lǚ yóu* 'travel.' While in son's sub-corpus, 5% of both types and tokens fall in this category.

If we switch to *verbs* used in the male chat corpus, thinking activity is most salient (Table 13). In father's speech, 22% of his overall 45 types and 53% of his overall 124 verb tokens reflect his thoughts. For instance, *xǐ huān* 'like,' *jué dé* 'feel,' *zhī dào* 'know,' *xiǎng* 'want,' and *wàng jì* 'forget' rank on top of the list. Similarly, in Tom's speech, 17% of the overall 30 types and 36% of the overall 66 tokens are about thinking, and 80% of his thinking verbs are shared with father. The second notable verb category is daily activity, which is more often used by the father than the son. In father's speech, verbs such as *dǎ lán qiú* 'play basketball,' *kàn* 'look,' *zuò* 'sit,' and *chū qù* 'go out' compose 40% of verb types and 21% of verb tokens. While in Tom's speech, they only account for 17% of both types and tokens. Another father-son divergence emerges in verbs related to school/work activity. This category only shares 11% of types and 6% of tokens in father's sub-corpus, while in Tom's, it attracts as many as 33% of types and 24% of tokens. Verbs such as *bèi kè* 'prepare teaching,' *liàn xí* 'practice,' *xià kè* 'dismiss classes' and *shàng kè* 'attend classes' were commonly employed by Tom.

The *adjectives* used by Tom and his father during the chat were positive in general (Table 12). Analysis on affective valence reveals that in father's sub-corpus, 62% of the overall 13 types and 68% of the overall 19 tokens are positive. Most of the positive evaluations generated by father were around behaviors and abilities. For instance, he repeatedly used *zuì hǎo* 'best' to describe or question the best automobile and the best basketball player in Tom's class. Positive adjectives also occupy over half of Tom's speeches, but with a dispersed word choice, including *shēng dòng* 'vivid,' *zuì hǎo* 'best,' *lì hài* 'awesome.' They account for 56% of Tom's overall 9 adjective types and 42% of his overall 12 tokens. Tom used *sī mì* 'private' four times to respond to his father's interrogations, especially when he wasn't willing to share his attitude about a school person. Resembling the female parent-child dyad, negative adjectives were also limitedly

used. They only take up 11% and 8% of father's and Tom's overall adjective tokens, respectively.

Table 11. Noun frequency rank in boy's chat corpus

Rank	Father	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Son	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	妈妈	mā mā	mom	26	妈妈	mā mā	mom	8
2	老师	lǎo shī	teacher	18	老师	lǎo shī	teacher	6
3	爸爸	bà bà	dad	10	学生	xué shēng	student	4
4	男孩	nán hái	boy	8	感觉	gǎn jiào	feeling	4
5	爸爸妈妈	bà bà mā mā	dad and mom	8	地方	dì fāng	place	4
6	女孩	nǚ hái	girl	8	办公室	bàn gōng shì	office	3
7	样子	yàng zi	look	6	物理	wù lǐ	physics	3
8	事情	shì qing	thing	6	弟弟	dì dì	brother	3
9	朋友	péng you	friend	5	车厂	chē chǎng	car factory	3
10	弟弟	dì dì	brother	5	篮球	lán qiú	basketball	3
11	篮球	lán qiú	basketball	4	女生	nǚ shēng	girl student	3
12	科学	kē xué	science	4	工作	gōng zuò	work	3
13	办公室	bàn gōng shì	office	4	男孩	nán hái	boy	3
14	地方	dì fāng	place	4	答案	dá àn	answer	2
15	幼儿园	yòu ér yuán	kindergarten	4	爸爸	bà bà	dad	2
16	学校	xué xiào	school	3	问题	wèn tí	question	2
17	脑筋	nǎo jīn	brain	3	男生	nán shēng	boy student	2
18	女生	nǚ shēng	girl student	3	双脚	shuāng jiǎo	both feet	2
19	语文	yǔ wén	language	3	所有人	suǒ yǒu rén	all people	2
20	女老师	nǚ lǎo shī	female teacher	3	科学	kē xué	science	2
21	父母	fù mǔ	parents	3	女孩	nǚ hái	girl	2
22	星座	xīng zuò	star sign	3	小弟	xiǎo dì	little brother	2
23	男生	nán shēng	boy student	3	酒瓶	jiǔ píng	wine bottle	2
24	数学	shù xué	math	3	实验	shí yàn	experiment	2
25	聊天	liáo tiān	chat	3	东西	dōng xī	stuff	2
26	工作	gōng zuò	work	3	数学	shù xué	math	1
27	金牛座	jīn niú zuò	Taurus	3	工作室	gōng zuò shì	studio	1
28	太空	tài kōng	space	2	辫子	biàn zi	braid	1
29	名字	míng zì	name	2	电脑	diàn nǎo	computer	1
30	阳历	yáng lì	solar calendar	2	读书	dú shū	study	1
31	感觉	gǎn jiào	feeling	2	事情	shì qing	thing	1
32	话题	huà tí	topic	2	故事	gù shì	story	1
33	车厂	chē chǎng	car factory	2	画面	huà miàn	picture	1
34	美术	měi shù	art	2	老妈	lǎo mā	mom (slang)	1
35	理想	lǐ xiǎng	ambition	2	世界	shì jiè	world	1
36	东西	dōng xī	stuff	2	频率	pín lǜ	frequency	1
37	旅游	lǚ yóu	travel	2	跑步	pǎo bù	running	1
38	教学	jiāo xué	teaching	1	小班	xiǎo bān	junior class	1
39	世界	shì jiè	world	1	大志	dà zhì	big ambition	1
40	汽车厂	qì chē chǎng	auto factory	1	小孩	xiǎo hái	small children	1
41	库车	kù chē	Kucha	1	小事	xiǎo shì	subtle thing	1
42	车城	chē chéng	car city	1	性格	xìng gé	character	1
43	修车铺	xiū chē pù	car repair store	1	脑筋	nǎo jīn	brain	1
44	边界	biān jiè	border	1	汽车厂	qì chē chǎng	auto factory	1
45	同桌	tóng zhuō	tablemate	1	月份	yuè fèn	month	1
46	状态	zhuàng tài	status	1	视频	shì pín	video	1
47	课外	kè wài	outside of class	1	数学题	shù xué tí	math problem	1
48	一节课	yī jiē kè	one class	1	双手	shuāng shǒu	both hands	1
49	体育课	tǐ yù kè	P.E. class	1	语文	yǔ wén	language	1
50	同学	tóng xué	classmate	1	美术	měi shù	art	1

Table 11. (continued)

Rank	Father	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Son	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
51	教授	jiāo shòu	professor	1	思考题	sī kǎo tí	reflection question	1
52	单位	dān wèi	work unit	1	密室	mì shì	secret room	1
53	月份	yuè fèn	month	1	朋友	péng yǒu	friend	1
54	床	chuáng	bed	1	比赛	bǐ sài	competition	1
55	故事	gù shì	story	1	双人跳	shuāng rén tiào	double jump	1
56	敏感话题	mǐn gǎn huà tí	sensitive topic	1	长绳	zhǎng shéng	long rope	1
57	问题	wèn tí	question	1	中班	zhōng bān	intermediate class	1
58	桌子	zhuō zǐ	table	1				
59	卫生间	wèi shēng jiān	bathroom	1				
60	小班	xiǎo bān	small class	1				
61	小孩	xiǎo hái	children	1				
62	双子	shuāng zǐ	twin	1				
63	秘密	mì mì	secret	1				
64	所有人	suǒ yǒu rén	all people	1				
65	大志	dà zhì	big will	1				
66	小事	xiǎo shì	subtle thing	1				
67	动作	dòng zuò	action	1				
68	职业	zhí yè	occupation	1				
69	物理	wù lǐ	physics	1				
70	经历	jīng lì	experience	1				
71	全都	quán dōu	all	1				
72	宝马	bǎo mǎ	bmw	1				
73	宝宝	bǎo bǎo	baby	1				
74	英语	yīng yǔ	English	1				
75	哥哥	gē gē	older brother	1				
76	考试	kǎo shì	exam	1				

Table 12. Adjective frequency rank in boy's chat corpus

Rank	Father	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Son	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	最好	zuì hǎo	best	6	私密	sī mì	private	4
2	私密	sī mì	private	2	生动	shēng dòng	vivid	1
3	棒	bàng	great	1	有关	yǒu guān	relevant	1
4	一般	yī bān	general	1	普普通通	pǔ pǔ tōng tōng	ordinary	1
5	具体	jù tǐ	specific	1	最好	zuì hǎo	best	1
6	平等	píng děng	equal	1	厉害	lì hài	awesome	1
7	漂亮	piào liàng	brilliant	1	重要	zhòng yào	important	1
8	厉害	lì hài	awesome	1	平等	píng děng	equal	1
9	生动	shēng dòng	vivid	1	专门	zhuān mén	specialized	1
10	突然	tū rán	sudden	1				
11	全部	quán bù	all	1				
12	安静	ān jìng	quiet	1				
13	好吃	hǎo chī	delicious	1				

Table 13. Verb frequency rank in boy's chat corpus

Rank	Father	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.	Son	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	喜欢	xǐ huān	like	31	喜欢	xǐ huān	like	12
2	觉得	jué dé	feel	14	知道	zhī dào	know	8
3	知道	zhī dào	know	11	没有	méi yǒu	no	6
4	打架	dǎ jià	fight	4	备课	bèi kè	prepare teaching	5
5	备课	bèi kè	prepare teaching	4	出来	chū lái	come out	3
6	打篮球	dǎ lán qiú	play basketball	4	打篮球	dǎ lán qiú	play basketball	3
7	不能	bú néng	can't	3	觉得	jué dé	feel	2
8	告诉	gào sù	tell	3	吃饭	chī fàn	eat	2
9	没有	méi yǒu	don't have	3	练习	liànxí	practice	2
10	看	kàn	look	3	做	zuò	do	2
11	想	xiǎng	want to	2	拍球	pāi qiú	bounce the ball	2
12	忘记	wàng jì	forget	2	戴眼镜	dài yǎn jìng	wear glasses	1
13	不想	bú xiǎng	don't want to	2	盖章	gài zhāng	to stamp	1
14	包括	bāo kuò	include	2	跳远	tiào yuǎn	long jump	1
15	坐	zuò	sit	2	学习	xué xí	study	1
16	出去	chū qù	go out	2	不能	bú néng	can't	1
17	变成	biàn chéng	become	2	下课	xià kè	dismiss class	1
18	分享	fēn xiǎng	share	2	上课	shàng kè	attend class	1
19	带去	dài qù	take to	2	结束	jié shù	to end	1
20	回来	huí lái	come back	1	佩服	pèi fú	admire	1
21	打球	dǎ qiú	play	1	公布	gōng bù	announce	1
22	提醒	tí xǐng	remind	1	想	xiǎng	want	
23	修车	xiū chē	fix the car	1	签字	qiān zì	sign	
24	上课	shàng kè	go to class	1	打字	dǎ zì	type	
25	说	shuō	say	1	打架	dǎ jià	fight	
26	遇到	yù dào	meet	1	交换	jiāo huàn	swap	
27	做好	zuò hǎo	do good	1	摆动	bǎi dòng	swing	
28	聊	liáo	chat	1	准备	zhǔn bèi	prepare	
29	佩服	pèi fú	admire	1	做手术	zuò shǒu shù	do surgery	
30	开始	kāi shǐ	start	1	生病	shēng bìng	sick	
31	记得	jì dé	remember	1				
32	结束	jié shù	end	1				
33	分开	fēn kāi	separate	1				
34	出来	chū lái	come out	1				
35	学到	xué dào	learn	1				
36	发现	fā xiàn	discover	1				
37	成为	chéng wéi	become	1				
38	收获	shōu huò	harvest	1				
39	批评	pī píng	criticize	1				
40	带	dài	bring	1				
41	感兴趣	gǎn xìng qù	be interested in	1				
42	旁观	páng guān	spectator	1				
43	回家	huí jiā	go home	1				
44	讲故事	jiǎng gù shì	tell a story	1				
45	拍球	pāi qiú	bounce the ball	1				

2.3.3. Parental questions and gendered expectations

In the chat corpus, Lily and her mother conducted 262 interactions; Tom and his father had 360 interactions. Here, an interaction is defined as one turn. Notably, parent-child conversations in this session were largely guided by parent-initiated questions. As Table 14 shows, while 60% of the mother-daughter interactions were mother-initiated, among them, 60% were mother's questions. Similarly, while father initiated 59% of father-son interactions, 67% of them were father-raised questions. Lily contributed 40% of interactions with her mother, and Tom contributed 42% when chatting with his father. In their personal speech corpora, they both have raised small proportions of questions, 4% for Lily and 5% for Tom.

Table 14. Percentage of initiated speech and question

Participant	Initiated interaction	Pct. in corpus	Question	Pct. in personal speech
Lily's Mother	158	60%	95	60%
Tom's Father	211	59%	142	67%
Lily	104	40%	4	4%
Tom	150	42%	7	5%

A further investigation of parental question strategy reveals significant gender differences. As presented in Table 15, there is a noticeable gap between the two parents' questioning styles. Lily's mother used questions mainly to elicit (43%) daughter's speeches, check daughter's feelings (22%), and confirm information (32%) narrated by daughter. By comparison, Tom's father centralized his questions on two issues, checking Tom's academic progress (46%) and checking Tom's understanding of father's words (42%). He occasionally used questions to confirm information (5%) and elicit Tom's speech (7%).

Table 15. Parents' question strategy

Question Function	Lily's mother	Tom's father
Elicitation	43%	7%
Check feeling	22%	0%
Information confirmation	32%	5%
Check progress	2%	46%
Check understanding	0%	42%
Suggestion	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Example (3) illustrates how Lily’s mother used questions to encourage her daughter’s meaning expression. Meanwhile, she responded to her daughter with short questions in a timely manner to guarantee she had grasped correct understanding of her daughter’s speech. Another relevant conversation is in Example (4), in which mother both elicited Lily’s speech and checked her feeling about her art activity.

Example (3) [Lily and her mother were talking about some past school events]

Mother:	shénqí	xiàochē	shì	jiǎng	shénme	de	ya?	[% elicitation]
	magic	school bus	COP	tell	what	NML	SFP	
	‘What is Magic School Bus about?’							
Lily:	èn,	jiǎng	gùshì	lúnliú.				
	um	tell	story	take turns				
	‘Um, it takes turns to tell stories.’							
Mother:	ránhòu	nǐ	jiù	jiǎng	de	shénme	ya?	[% elicitation]
	then	2SG	then	tell	NML	what	SFP	
	‘Then, what story did you tell?’							
Lily:	èn,	wǒ	◎méi	jiǎng	guò◎.			
	um	1SG	NEG	tell	ASP			
	‘Um, I didn't tell stories from it.’							
Mother:	nǐ	↑méi	jiǎng	guò				
	2SG	NEG	tell	ASP				
	shénqí	de	xiàochē	duì	ma?			[% confirm]
	magic	ASSOC	school bus	correct	Q			
	‘You didn't tell stories from Magic School Bus, is that so?’							
Lily:	◎a	bú	duì◎!	èn,	xiǎobān	shíhòu	jiǎng	de.
	ah	NEG	correct	um	junior	time	tell	NML
	‘Ah! Not right! I told a story when I was in the Junior class.’							
Mother:	jiǎng	gùshì	bǐsài,	nǐ	xǐhuān	ma?		[% feeling]
	tell	story	competition	2SG	like	Q		
	‘Storytelling competition, did you like it?’							
Lily:	◎kě	hǎowán	le!					
	very	fun	ASP					
	‘It was a lot of fun!’							
Mother:	měi	cì	bǐsài	nǐ	dōu	juéde	zěnme yàng?	[% feeling]
	every	CLF	competition	2SG	all	feel	what	
	‘How did you feel every time during a competition?’							
Lily:	◎ lihai◎							
	awesome							
	‘Awesome.’							

Example (4) [Lily and her mother were talking about her works from art class.]

Lily: wǒ xǐhuān zhè yì běn.

	1SG	like	this	one	CLF		
Mother:	nǐ	xǐhuān	nà	gè	tiētú	ma?	[% confirm]
	2SG	like	that	CLF	sticker	Q	
	ō,	xiǎo	gōngzhǔ	tiēzhǐ	shì	ba?	
	oh	little	princess	sticker	COP	Q	
Lily:	gōngzhǔ	tiēzhǐ.					
	princess	sticker.					
	érqiě	hòumiàn	hái yǒu	†gèng	duō	pǐnzhǒng.	
	also	back	as well	more	many	variety	
Mother:	èn,	wèishéme	xǐhuān	gōngzhǔ	de	tiēzhǐ?	[% elicitation]
	um	why	like	princess	ASSOC	sticker	
Lily:	yīnwèi	†piàoliang,	zhēnde	hěn	†piàoliang!		
	because	beautiful	really	very	beautiful		
Mother:	nà	xiàochē	ne?				[% elicitation]
	then	school bus	Q				
	xiàochē	bú	piàoliang	ma?			[% elicitation]
	school	NEG	beautiful	Q			
	bus						
	zhè	yě	shì	nǐ	huà	de?	[% elicitation]
	this	also	COP	2SG	draw	NML	
Lily:	shì!						
	yes						
Mother:	huàhuà	de	shíhòu	juédé	zěnome yàng?		[% feeling]
	drawing	ASSOC	time	feel	what		
Mother:	wa!	Δzhēnde	hěn	piàoliang!Δ			
	wow	really	very	beautiful			

Tom's father tended to raise questions in a direct manner. As shown in Example (5), after Tom described his basketball class experience, father ignored information such as the teacher's surgery and focused on what Tom has mastered. Similarly, in Example (6), when Tom recounted his stroll break at school, his father immediately questioned his academic progress and interrogated whether he had internalized parental teaching. It seems that Tom's 'stuffy' feeling in the classroom wasn't a legitimate reason to have a break.

Example [Tom was talking to his father about a basketball class he attended]

(5)

Father: māmā yǒu méiyǒu péi nǐ dǎ lánqiú?
 mom have NEG have accompany 2SG play basketball
 1

Tom: ‘Did mom accompany you to the basketball class?’ [% elicitation]
 duì, yǒu.
 yes have
 ‘Yes, she did.’

Father: xiànzài lánqiú xué dào shénme yàng ne? [% progress]
 now basketball learn-RED what Q
 ‘What have you learned about basketball by now?’

xué le xiē shénme? [% progress]
 learn ASP CLF what
 ‘What did you learn?’

yǒu nǎxiē jīběn dòngzuò? [% progress]
 have which basic movement
 ‘What are the basic movements?’

Tom: wǒmen jīntiān huàn lǎoshī le.
 2PL today change teacher ASP
 ‘We have changed the teacher today.’

èn yīnwèi lǎoshī shēngbìng,
 um because teacher ill
 ‘Um, because (the former) teacher was ill.’

yào qù zuò shǒushù.
 need go do surgery
 ‘He needed to do a surgery.’

Father: ránhòu hái yǒu jǐ cì? [% progress]
 after still have how many CLF
 ‘After today how many classes you still have?’

Tom: zhè yí cì jiù jiéshù le.
 this one CLF then end ASP
 ‘It ended with this class.’

Father: nà zhè zuìhòu yì jié kè [% progress]
 then this last one CLF class
 xué le shénme?
 learn ASP what
 ‘Then what did you learn in the last class?’

Tom: jiù dǎ dǎ bǐsài, ránhòu xué yì xué
 just play-RED competition then learn one learn
 shuāng jiǎo tiào, ránhòu tiàoyuǎn,
 double foot jump then long jump
 ránhòu hái liànxí le pǎobù.
 then else practice ASP run
 ‘We just had a competition game, then learned a bit of double-feet jump, then long jump, then practiced running.’

Father: néng yòng liǎng gè shǒu [% progress]
 can use two CLF hand
 tóngshí pāi le ma, xiànzài?
 concurrentl bounce ASP Q now
 y

Tom: dànshì wǒ kěyǐ zuò dào
 ‘Can you bounce the ball with both hands concurrently, now?’

but	1SG	can	do-RED
ná	yí	gè	lánqiú,
hold	one	CLF	basketball
ránhòu	shuāng	shǒu	jiāohuàn.
then	two	hand	exchange

‘But I can hold one basketball and exchange with both hands.’

Example (6) [Tom was sharing some school experience with his father]

Tom: wǒ tóngzhu jiùshì gè xìnggé ◎bàozà nǚhái,
 1SG deskmat exactly CLF personalit o ◎ cranky girl
 měitiā dōu dài táng,
 n everyd all bring sugar
 ay ránhòu lǎoshì lái zhǎo wǒ xiánshì.
 then always come find 1SG business
 ‘My desk mate is a cranky girl, she brings candies to school every day, and always minds my business.’

Father: èn.
 um
 ‘Um.’

Tom: yǒu yí cì wǒ zài xuéxiào zǒu
 have one CLF 1SG PREP school walk
 tā jiù guòlái,
 3SG then come over
 ài nǐ gàn shá qù?
 hey 2SG do what go
 ‘There was once, I was walking in school, she came over, and asked, hey where are you going?’

Father: èn.
 um
 ‘Um.’

Tom: wǒ shuō wǒ zǒu, wǒ sànbù.
 1SG say 1SG walk 1SG stroll
 ‘I said I was walking, I was in the middle of a stroll.’
 ránhòu tā jiù shuō sà shá bù ?
 then 3SG then say stroll what stroll
 ‘Then she said stroll what?’

nǐ hái bù gǎnjīn huíqù fùxí.
 2SG still NEG immediatel back review
 y

‘You should immediately go back to review (your lesson).’

ránhòu wǒ shuō ↑shǎo guǎn xiánshì!
 then 1SG say few control business
 ‘Then I said mind your own business.’

Father: nǐ tóngzhu dōu zhīdào
 2SG deskmat even know
 e
 ràng nǐ gǎnjīn huíqù fùxí.

	let	2SG	immediate	back	review		
			y				
	'Even your desk mate knew you should go back to revision.'						
	◎nǐ	què	bù	zhīdào◎			
	2SG	but	NEG	know			
	'But you didn't know it.'						
	nǐ	Δshū	kàn	le	ma?Δ	[% progress]	
]	
	2SG	book	read	ASP	Q		
	'Did you finish reading books (then)?'						
Tom:	dànshì	wǒ	xiǎng	chūlái	◎tòu	a!◎	
	but	2SG	want	go outside	tòuqì	SFP	
					get fresh air		
	'But I wanted to go outside and get some fresh air!'						
	měi	cì	shàngkè	dōu	mén	guān	zhe,
	every	CLF	in the class	all	door	close	ASP
	'Every time in the class, the door was closed.'						
	kuài	◎mèn	sǐ	le.◎			
	almost	stuffy	death	ASP			
	'It was stuffy as hell.'						
Father:	wǒ	de	huà	◎tīng	jìnqù◎	le?	[% understanding]
	1SG	ASSOC	speech	listen	enter-RED	ASP	
	'Did you listen to what I said?'						
	◎xiān	xuéxí	zài	wán◎,	zhīdào	ma?	[% understanding]
	first	study	then	play	know	Q	
	'Study first and play later, understood?'						

As shown in the above examples, parents' concerns and expectations of their children are revealed by their questions. It appears that girl's mother was more concerned about Lily's emotional experience in her activities and tried to encourage her to open up with mother. In contrast, Tom's father seemed to be less concerned with his son's present feelings but cared more about his general development, such as acquiring skills and self-regulation.

These communication patterns and the expectation and requirements they carry may have implicitly provided gendered information to children. Children's responses to and intake of the gender norms are realized in such daily interactions. Through language-mediated practices, parents function as role models and masters in the gender community. Over time, children, the 'gender apprentices', gradually acquire communication styles they perceive as appropriate for themselves, which is largely based on parental input, parental feedback, and their own gender perceptions. To achieve a core membership of

the gender community, they calibrate their language based on the gendered concepts formed in mind and alter their actions according to parental modeling and expectations.

Table 16 shows the children’s question strategies. Like her mother, Lily mainly cared about other’s feelings (75%) and confirmed information occasionally (25%). On the other hand, Tom shared similarities with his father’s question strategy but showed personal characteristics. Unlike his father’s concentration on progress (46%) and understanding (42%), Tom used smaller amounts of questions of these functions (29% and 14%). It is understandable if we consider the dynamic of power between a Chinese caregiver and a child, with the former being responsible for monitoring and guiding the latter. Tom also provided suggestions (29%) and confirmed information (29%) through questions, but his father didn’t include suggestions.

Table 16. Children’s question strategy

Question Function	Lily	Tom
Elicitation	0%	0%
Check feeling	75%	0%
Information confirmation	25%	29%
Check progress	0%	29%
Check understanding	0%	14%
Suggestion	0%	29%
Total	100%	100%

The following Example (7) reflects Tom’s ongoing socialization practice, in which he explicitly expressed opinions on female gender roles, inquired about progress, and checked his younger brother’s understanding of his speech. This example uniquely shows Tom’s understanding of home-based gender roles and how he attempted to mimic his father’s question style.

Example (7) [Tom was talking about his mother with other family members.]

Tom: māmā zhǔyào jiùshì dài xiǎohái.
mom mainly exactly take care of kids
‘Mom mainly takes care of kids.’

Mother: †dài shéi? dài shéi? [=gazing Tom]
take care of whom take care of whom
‘Take care of whom? Take care of whom?’

Tom: dài dìdì hé wǒ.
take care of younger brother and 1SG

Father:	'You take care of younger brother and me.'						
	māmā	yě	gōngzuò	a.			
	mom	also	work	SFP			
	'Mom works as well.'						
Tom:	bú	yòng	bèikè,	tā	yòu	bú	shàngkè.
	NEG	need	teaching	3SG	AUX	NEG	teach
	prep						
	'She doesn't need to prepare teaching, she doesn't even teach.'						
	zài	bàngōngshì	gōngzuò,				
	PREP	office	work				
	'She works in the office.'						
	yǒu	xuéshēng	zhǎo,	tā	jiù	†gài zhāng.	
	have	student	find	3SG	then	stamp	
	'If students come to find her, she stamps (on documents).'						
Tom:	māmā,	shàng	cì	dìdì	de	[% progress]	
	mom	last	time	younger	NML		
	brother						
	hǎo	le	ma?				
	ready	ASP	Q				
	'Mom, last time, for younger brother, was that ready?'						
Tom:	zhīdào	shì	shénme	ma?	[=to	[%	
					brother]	understanding]	
	know	COP	what	Q			
	'You know what I meant?'						

Another socialization practice is demonstrated in Example (8). In this dialogue, Lily asked her mother about her feeling and preference when browsing her paintings and explicitly denied boys' eligibility to appear in her works. Being a girl who demonstrated strong enthusiasm about 'beautiful' and 'good-looking' things, Lily excluded boys from her personal art world because 'boys are ugly!' Though Lily's origin of gender beliefs about boys is unknown, this example reveals her aesthetic concern, a key component in her gender schema about femininity. Lily's obsession with beauty is not unwarranted; her mother's verbal output serves as a model. If we recall, in Table 10, 'beautiful' is the most frequent adjective used by both mother and daughter. It is reasonable to assume that this adjective plays a part in socializing Lily to appearance-related stereotypical feminine roles, and it apparently becomes a standard of Lily's judgment of gender.

Example (8)	[Lily was showing mother her paintings.]						
Lily:	zhè	ge	yě	shì	wǒ	†huà	de,
	this	CLF	also	COP	1SG	draw	NML
	xǐhuān	ma?	[% feeling]				
	like	Q					
	'This was also drawn by me, do you like it?'						
Mother:	●wa! ●	nǐ	huà	de	dōu	shì	
	wow	2SG	draw	ASSOC	all	COP	

	xiǎo	nánhái	háishi	xiǎo	nǚhái?		
	little	boy	or	little	girl		
	'Are these you've drawn little boys or little girls?'						
Lily:	dōu	shì	●nǚhái! ●	xiǎo	bānmǎ.		
	all	COP	girl	little	zebra		
	'They are all girls, little zebras.'						
	hǎokàn	ma?	[% feeling]				
	good-looking	Q					
	'Are they good-looking?'						
Mother:	nǐ	wèishéme	bú	huà	xiǎo	nánhái	a?
	2SG	why	NEG	draw	little	boy	SFP
	'Why you didn't draw little boys?'						
Lily:	xiǎo	nánhái	●chǒu, ●	●nánhái	chǒu! ●		
	little	boy	ugly	boy	ugly		
	'Little boys are ugly, boys are ugly!'						
Mother:	zhè	shì	huà	de	shèngdàn	lǎorén?	
	this	COP	draw	NML	Santa Claus		
	'Is this the Santa Claus you drew?'						
	shì	māotóuyīng	ma?				
	COP	owl	Q				
	'Is it an owl?'						
Lily:	zhè	ge	shì	xiǎo	lù,	shì	nǚhái.
	this	CLF	COP	little	deer	COP	girl.
	'This is a little deer, it's a girl.'						

Intriguingly, while both Lily and Tom seemed to have achieved gender rigidity, their views on stereotypical activities of the opposite sex are different. In Example (9), Tom demonstrated contempt for the act of liking princess books and claimed he would never hang out with girls even if they are interested in space. While in Example (10), Lily and her mother expressed recognition and admiration for a girl who excels in sports and math. Unsurprisingly, this girl has passed the first level of Lily's judging criteria: being beautiful.

Example (9)	[Tom was talking about the girls in his class]						
Father:	nǚhái	xǐhuān	shénme	de	shū	ne?	
	girl	like	yàng		book		
			what	ASSOC		SFP	
	'Girls like what kind of books?'						
Tom:	èn,	bǐrú	†gōngzhǔ	lèi	de	bei,	
	um	for example	princess	kind	ASSOC	SFP	
	'Um, for example, princess that kind of stuff.'						
Father:	jiǎrú	yí	gè	nǚhái	yě	xǐhuān	tàikōng.
	if	one	CLF	girl	also	like	space
	'If a girl also likes space.'						
	nǐ	huì	hé	tā	zuò	péngyǒu	ma?
	2SG	will	with	3SG	make	friend	Q
	'Would you become friends with her?'						
Tom:	†bú	huì,	yīnwèi	wǒ	bù	xǐhuān	hé

NEG will because 1SG NEG like with
 nǚhái yìqǐ wán.
 girl together play
 ‘I won't, because I don't like hanging out with girls.’
 Father: wèishéme?
 why
 ‘Why?’
 Tom: yīnwèi méiyǒu.
 because NEG-have
 ‘No because.’
 yīnwèi méiyǒu ◎zhè zhǒng shì.◎
 because NEG-have this CLF thing
 ‘Because there is no such kind of thing.’
 Mother: jiǎrú dìdì xǐhuān gōngzhǔ,
 if younger brother like princess
 nǐ xiǎngyào hé tā wán ma?
 2SG wish with 3SG play Q
 ‘If your younger brother likes princesses, will you wish to hang out with him?’
 Tom: ◎bù!◎
 NEG
 ‘No!’
 Father: wèishéme?
 why
 ‘Why?’
 Tom: nà tā biàn ◎nǚshēng◎ le,
 then 3SG become girl SFP
 ◎cái bù ◎ gēn tā wán ne!
 AUX NEG with 3SG play SFP
 ‘Then he becomes a girl, I will definitely not hang out with him!’

Example (10) [Lily expressing admiration and envy for another girl.]

Mother: sūyǔ duì nǐ hěn hǎo.
 PN treat 2SG very good
 ‘Suyu treats you very well.’
 Lily: tā †piàoliang.
 2SG beautiful
 ‘She is beautiful.’
 Mother: háiyǒu ne?
 else Q
 ‘What else?’
 Lily: tā shì ◎lǎodà.◎
 3SG COP leader
 ‘She is the leader.’
 shùxué bǐ nánhái háiyaò hǎo.
 math compare boy even good
 ‘Her math is even better than the boys.’
 Mother: èn, wǒ tīngshuō tā shì lǎodà.
 um 1SG hear 3SG COP leader
 ‘Um, I heard that she is the leader.’
 Lily: tā yě huì dǎ lánqiú.
 3SG also can play basketball
 ‘She can also play basketball.’

nánshēng	cái	dǒng	dǎ	lánqiú.
boy	AUX	know	play	basketball
'Only boys know how to play basketball.'				
tā	hěn	↑lihài.		
3SG	very	awesome.		
'She is so awesome.'				

2.4. Discussion

Through empirical data recorded during two Chinese families' parent-child reading and chat sessions, this study reveals differentiated gender socialization practices conducted by Chinese parents of male and female children. The data confirms parents' active and essential role in children's gender socialization as discovered in previous studies (Crespi, 2004; McHale et al., 2003). The findings suggest that gender socialization in a Chinese home is conducted through subtle aspects of life, including selection of books, enrollment of extracurricular classes and activities, and especially, the way parents verbally interact with their children. From a linguistic perspective, this study fills the research gap on parental gender socialization in mainland China through multiple novel findings.

Gender socialization during reading and chat

First, previous studies on book-mediated gender socialization mainly focused on the distribution of male and female characters (Brugeilles et al., 2002; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Hamilton et al., 2006; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; Tognoli et al., 1994; Weitzman et al., 1972) and gender stereotype presentations (Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Grauerholz & Pescosolido, 1989; Hamilton et al., 2006; McCabe et al., 2011; Weitzman et al., 1972). However, children often read books in the company of their parents, and gender concepts are instilled both through book content and their spontaneous discussions. Few studies on this topic have reported how gendered inputs are realized by the specific language used during these reading activities. In particular, little is known about how Chinese parents socialize their children with books. An analysis on specific lexicons used in reading hours, as this study conducts, draws a detailed and quantified picture regarding parental gender socialization.

The result shows that books provide children with gendered inputs in terms of world knowledge and word choice from an early age. Interviews revealed that the books

selected were not random but reflect the two families' common practice. As Lily's mother stated, when Lily was younger, she chose children's books that could 'comfort Lily to sleep.' But when Lily became older, she independently chose fairy tale books, usually on politeness, moral quality, art, hygiene, and Disney princesses. In line with the mother's description, I observed various books related to painting, princesses, and moral education in Lily's home. Tom's father said that Tom's books as a younger child were what he described as 'gender neutral' and 'ubiquitous' bedtime stories. When Tom was three, he began to show a preference for science-related books. Visiting Tom's bookcase at home, I found that the vast majority of books on Tom's bookshelf were related to the universe, nature, and geography. Just like Lily has almost no universe books, Tom has no princess or art books. Lily and Tom have different preferences and access to books, which are manifestations of the intermediate results of gender socialization but tend to be taken for granted by caregivers.

This study's corpus analysis further reveals how gender socialization is realized through lexicons of reading hours. When browsing and discussing books, Tom and Lily's parents provided different linguistic input, imparted different world knowledge, and focused on different subjects, behaviors, and attributes in life. As reported previously, Lily's reading session mainly included fairy tale characters, people in society, daily life objects/locations, and food. They narrated around daily activities, moral activities, affective activities, and labor. They employed equal proportions of positive and negative adjectives. Tom's reading session focused more on objects in the universe and nature, used large amounts of scientific/formal terminologies, and moderately touched upon people in society and daily life objects/locations. Their positive adjectives outnumbered negative ones, and they closely associated verb choices with science. Uniquely, Tom and his father highlighted scientific activities, adopted daily activities for analogy, and occasionally expressed thinking and affective activities.

Second, gender socialization is more deeply practiced in casual conversations between children and parents. In a nutshell, it appeared that the female pair's talk was primarily around family members and imaginary figures' positive traits and mundane activities. By contrast, their male counterparts were more concerned about the physical reality, rules, and skill achievement. Investigation on the chat corpus revealed that Lily

and her mother preferred chatting about people, fairy tale characters, food, plants, and hobbies, but less emphasized the physical world and skill development. The actions they mentioned included daily activities and thinking activities, and Lily has a higher contribution to the latter. Their chats were optimistic as they both have used over 86% of positive adjective tokens. This discovery is consistent with previous Western studies, which associated the raising of girls with parent's focus on emotions and social relationships (Casey & Fuller, 1994; Chaplin, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Fabes, 1994). Lily's mother in this study kept a watchful eye on socializing her daughter with positive emotions and thoughtful interaction patterns.

In contrast to the female dyad's chat, Tom and his father's chat was less casual but resembled a study reflection or report. Though they also have talked about various people, around 30% of them were real-life individuals from school and work. They co-constructed a discourse about school life, skill development, society, and the world. Their thinking activities were most frequently vocalized, accompanied by occasional narrations of daily and school activities. Though their conversation was also positive in general, the percentages of positive adjectives (42% and 68%) were lower than that of Lily and her mothers' (86% and 90%). This finding is slightly different from previous Western studies as it reflects Chinese fathers' significant focus on boys' education. It has been reported in the West that boys are permissively raised, and they are more tolerated in anger expression or mild aggression (Chaplin, 2005; Eron, 1992). However, Tom seems to be cultivated in a highly supervised family environment where he was not given much space for emotional expression or finding excuses to escape from schoolwork. In the eyes of Tom's father, a boy's career development seemed to be more important than his moods and feelings. The center of Tom's life was expected to be skill improvement and academic competitiveness, while issues such as teacher's illness and stuffy classrooms seem to be of marginal interest to the father. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that Chinese parenting centers on the child's academic success and have extensive and intensive parental investment and involvement in the child's schooling (Chao, 1994, 1995, 1996; Stevenson et al., 1993).

Gender and CofP

Third, through question strategy as the variable, parents' gendered expectations and socialization of communication style were illustrated. The result shows that girl's mother used questions to elicit Lily's life experience sharing and emotion-related expression. She didn't execute progress checking or understanding checking through questions. By contrast, Tom's father made fewer efforts to explore Tom's emotions but instead inquired more about Tom's academic development and reflections. Comparatively speaking, Lily's mother's question strategy reflects less parent-child hierarchy than Tom's father's questions. The former included more care, while the latter reflected more supervision.

Furthermore, parental question strategies not only communicate their concerns and expectations but also model gendered communication styles. As reflected in the data, like her mother, Lily was curious about others' feelings. From his father, Tom has preliminarily acquired a question style of checking progress and comprehension. These findings provide Chinese evidence of gender socialization as a CofP whereby socialization style and strategy appear to be a function of the gender of both parent and child. Adopting question strategy as a parameter, we see how gender was practiced between children and their parents through mutual engagement and how memberships were indicated by what they did (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999a). During systematic and regular interactions with parents, Lily and Tom are acquiring gendered patterns and becoming aware of their status in the gender community. As stated by Lave & Wenger (1991), mutual trust among the members of a CofP is central to socialization. Our data, albeit limited in terms of size and representativeness, shows how Chinese children and their parents participated in a kind of joint enterprise where the parent guided the child in developing an implicit understanding of gender roles as members of a community of practice. In this process, trustful interaction continued between the 'master' parents and the 'apprentice' children.

Take Lily and her mother as an example. There was a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) between them. Their concern was around family members, imaginary figures, daily activities, and beauty. These symbolic elements constitute their collective resources of meaning negotiation. Mother and Lily both made efforts on gender practices. Mother

modeled as a core member, while Lily acquired, assimilated, and established appropriate patterns as an ‘apprentice’ defined by Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999). For the male participants, Tom and his father also had mutual accountability (Wenger, 1998) concerning the shared gender repertoire. If Lily and her mother’s gender practice could be analogized as a co-appreciation of joyful life experience, Tom and his father’s gender practice resembled an assimilation training of social hierarchy. Both Tom and his father were aware of their roles in the gender community, and the father’s modeling practice guided Tom in his advancement of perceived community membership. As illustrated in Example (6) and (7), Tom received frequent progress and comprehension checks from his father. He assimilated his father’s pattern by employing the same strategy to his mother and younger brother. This indicates his establishment of gendered patterns and his perceived more central membership in the male community than the other two.

A link to contemporary gender norms in China

From a linguistic perspective, this study reconfirms that parents’ background, personal beliefs and marriage dynamics have impact on children’s gender development (Kulik, 2002; McHale et al., 2003; Updegraff et al., 1996). Although parents in this study differed in social class, education level, and life values, they all projected their perceptions of gender onto their children. Importantly, their perceptions mirror the current gender dynamics in Chinese society. In the post-reform and opening-up era, Chinese society has demonstrated a pattern of full-scale economic competition. The social value that men can obtain through education and work is increasingly valued, but the social value of women is facing differentiated or even contradicting interpretations (Fincher, 2014; Ji, 2015; Ji & Wu, 2018; Sun & Chen, 2015).

Coming from a working-class background, Lily’s mother hopes that her daughter can achieve happiness by living up to traditional female values. Through language, she models and guides Lily to become a gentle, kind, understanding, beautiful, and artistically talented woman. In the interview, Lily’s mother revealed her expectations for the 20-year-old grown up Lily. She recalled that because herself didn’t have any artistic talents as a child, she couldn’t ‘hold her head up among girls’, so she wished Lily grow up into a versatile, thoughtful, and beautiful girl. She also explicitly expressed her differentiated plans for raising boys and girls. Because Lily is a girl, she hopes her

daughter to be healthy, happy and beautiful. But if Lily was a boy, she will ‘work hard to earn money’ so that her son can get enough education for a decent job. As a middle-class intellectual, Tom’s father, to a certain extent, is successful in social competition.

Therefore, he not only knows the hardships of competition, but also hopes his son will inherit the ‘secret code of happiness’: to advance in society through education. In the interview, while he claimed that he would not change nurturing strategy regardless of Tom’s gender, he paradoxically expressed doubts about women’s access to the same level of education. As he stated, Tom’s mother was also ‘highly educated,’ but the more important task for her as a woman was ‘to take care of the children.’ And he kept emphasizing this gendered labor division as ‘natural and normal.’

These findings show three intriguing pieces of information. First, the two parents’ expectations on children, as demonstrated via their language, were gender-based. Similar to previous research conducted in the West (Eccles et al., 1990; Jacobs & Eccles, 1992) this study shows that Chinese parents also bias their perceptions of children based on society-level gender role stereotypes. The gender dynamics in contemporary China, as indicated by men’s advantage in gaining social resource and women’s struggle between work and family duties (Chen et al., 2013; Evans, 1997; He & Wu, 2017; Jeffreys, 2010; Pei et al., 2007), calibrate Chinese parental gender beliefs and their parenting strategies. Second, this study indirectly confirms that mothers tend to be more egalitarian while fathers may take gender stereotypes for granted (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Spence & Hahn, 1997; Spence & Helmreich, 1979; Twenge, 1997). A unique contrast between Lily’s mother and Tom’s father emerged during interviews. While the father described his son’s chance to play with girls was ‘absolutely impossible’, the mother believes her daughter could ‘benefit from hanging out with boys.’ Third, the results also imply that traditional masculine activities are positively viewed, while traditional feminine activities are subconsciously viewed as inferior, and less skillful. For instance, both Lily and her mother complimented on a girl who acquired stereotypical masculine skills (e.g., basketball, math), but Tom denied any relation between himself and feminine behaviors (e.g., like princess). Intriguingly, girls are positively valued for their ability to participate in traditionally masculine activities, but boys are discouraged from or even shamed for their involvement in feminine activities.

2.5. Final Remarks

As warned by previous scholars (Delamont, 2012; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), children's within-sex variation may be more significant than the assumed sex differences. Socialization agents, parents in this study, conduct direct shaping of sex-typical behavior in interacting with children. Assumptions of sex difference are enhanced and instilled through world knowledge and language use; hence children are guided and supported to socialize into socially constructed gender patterns. From the thematic and lexicon-level divergences and community-based gender practices discovered by this study, it is reasonable to question if expectations and social treatment of children of the two sexes are more different than they deserve. Children's gender becomes a major determining factor in raising them, yet individual characteristics are often overshadowed by gender. Meanwhile, the results should also be viewed in light of an emerging concern about the decline of Chinese women's recognition in their professional achievement in favor of their role in the home. Considering the rapid economic development, it is surprising that the career development of Chinese women has demonstrated a flagging trend, as pointed out by sociological studies (Chen et al., 2013; He & Wu, 2017; He & Zhou, 2018; Ji, 2015; Ji & Wu, 2018) and sociolinguistics studies (e.g., Jing-Schmidt & Peng, 2018). Women's responsibility was again associated with family (e.g., Tom's view on his mother), and mothers are actively socializing their daughters to traditional feminine roles (e.g., Lily's goal to be beautiful, artistic). Further research is needed to explore the changing gender norms in Chinese society at large, especially how the younger Chinese generations perceive and practice gender roles.

Finally, this study only focused on two Chinese families in Nanjing who share their neighborhood and social circles. Due to accessibility, the recording length was far from abundant. In addition, the study was initially planned to include four families: middle-class boy and girl and working-class boy and girl. However, due to the travel restriction amid Covid-19, there exists social class differences in the available data. Limited data puts constraints on the generalizability of the current investigation, and the results cannot be interpreted as representative. It is also beyond the scope of this study to generalize nation-level or regional characteristics.

CHAPTER III

GENDER SOCIALIZATION IN THE KINDERGARTEN: THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

3.1 Introduction

As Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems theory (EST) suggests, personal development happens in a nested environmental context, in which socialization is realized via an interwoven and reciprocal process. The socialization agents in children's microsystems and the interactions between them have received considerable attention in academia. Among them, one of the most prominent discussions is the educational institution children attend.

As a socialization hub, school connects family and society. It has been discovered that the integrated foster from school, family, and community impacts a child's developmental competency (Durlak et al., 2007); a high-quality parent-teacher relationship reduces risk-torn children's problem behaviors (Serpell & Mashburn, 2012); and children's initial cultural practices outside family are primarily mediated in school (LeVine, 1998). For children, school not only cultivates their emotional attachments but also calibrates their global, social, and neighborhood experiences (Chipuer, 2001). Peer relations may shape them or adversely impact their school adjustment and achievement (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003). Educators' attitudes may help gain higher friendship reciprocation rates or change classroom social network dynamics (Gest & Rodkin, 2011).

This chapter investigates school-based gender socialization in two Chinese kindergartens. Specifically, this chapter focuses on gender socialization of four and five-year-old children in these kindergartens through their teachers who were female. I will start with a review of teachers' gender-based differentiated treatments of students and their gender perpetuation documented in the Western literature. Then I will discuss Asia-based research on teachers' role in children's gender socialization and how the present study contributes to the research gap.

3.1.1 Teacher-centered school socialization

Teachers, with whom children spend the majority of their school time, are the primary information sources and role models in the kindergarten (Fagot, 1981; Maccoby, 1998; Thorne, 1993). Consciously or unconsciously, teachers send gendered messages through interactions, curriculum, and organizational decisions. Teachers' sponsorship of gender socialization has been investigated systematically and critically in Western countries. These studies mainly investigated two issues: (i) teacher's differentiated treatments of boys and girls; and (ii) teacher's perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Differentiated treatments

In a case study, Thorne (1993) noted that preschool teachers in the U.S. named and dressed boys and girls distinctively. Gender segregations were routinely conducted, and competitions between the genders were adopted as incentives. This institutional socialization generated antagonism against the opposite sex, even to the degree of viewing physical contact from the opposite sex as polluting. Martin (1998) discovered a hidden curriculum that controlled preschool children's bodily practices and cognitively shaped them into genders. As she stated, teachers adopted five sets of practices to socialize gender: (i) dressing up, (ii) permitting relaxed behaviors or requiring formal behaviors, (iii) controlling voices, verbal and physical behaviors, and (v) monitoring physical interactions with peers. This observation provided empirical evidence that gender differences are not naturally formed but intentionally socialized in daily preschool movements, comportment, and physical space use.

Other studies focused on teachers' interaction frequency with different genders. It has been consistently found that teachers interact more with boys, though they do not excel in direct verbal interactions with teachers (Duffy et al., 2001; Fagot et al., 2000; Sadker & Sadker, 2010; Serbin et al., 1973). However, the reasons behind this phenomenon are complex, including teachers' focus on pupil roles in specific tasks (Fagot & Patterson, 1969; Lee & Kedar-Voividas, 1977) and teachers' conscious prevention against boys' disciplinary damage (Alloway, 1995; Serbin et al., 1973).

Fagot and Patterson (1969) questioned if preschool teachers tend to feminize boys. They showed that teachers gave more positive feedback to girls during art play and table plays but rarely joined boys' motion-intense outdoor activities. However, the

'feminization' seemed unsuccessful because boys still showed greater preference for male-preferred behaviors. Therefore, this pedagogical discrepancy, which occurred more often among experienced teachers (Fagot, 1981), was understood as teachers' engagement with pupil-like roles (art play, table plays) and their permission of play-like behaviors (outdoor).

Serbin et al. (1973) investigated this issue and argued that teachers' feminization of boys was relevant to educators' problem behavior management. In their study, boys tended to stay away from teachers and create 'troubles,' but girls actively approached teachers. Even when both genders were at the same physical distance from teachers, boys still received more attention because considerably more instructional time was spent on managing their problem behaviors. From a new perspective, Serbin et al. (1973) stated that this differentiated treatment, though it prevented girls from receiving equal treatment, was in response to boys' and girls' behavioral differences.

Research shows increasing concerns about teachers' differentiated academic feedback to boys and girls. Sadker and Sadker (2010), for instance, criticized the gender bias that hindered American girls from receiving equal education. In their view, girls suffer from academic negligence because boys receive more attention. Girls' unidentified learning problems thus accumulate and lower their scores, although they started out with higher scores than boys. Walkerdine (1998) investigated the female 'mathematics myth' under school-based gender assumptions. She attributed this prejudiced, false belief to a pervasive social discourse that theorizes gendered body and gendered mind. Brophy (1985), Hoyenga and Hoyenga (1993) suggested that gendered expectations are manifested by the fact that boys receive more negative feedback on disciplinary infractions whereas girls receive more positive feedback on compliance.

Indeed, children's differential school experiences cultivate their gender stereotypes, which will, unfortunately, shape their social values and accompany them into adulthoods (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Meanwhile, it has been critically argued that boys may not necessarily benefit from this unequal treatment. They are either arbitrarily grouped as problematic and monitor-worthy or being blindly touted (Best, 1983; Epstein et al., 1998). These gendered treatments at school do not enhance their learning outcomes but instead adversely impact their achievements.

Perpetuation of gender stereotypes

Research on classroom practices and policies has warned that, in the classroom, there exists implicit gender stereotype fosterage and gender-based life opportunity constraints. Entrenched gender values such as the importance of female appearance and the significance of male physical strength and aggressiveness had been repeatedly shown to be instilled into children's gender perception (Chick et al., 2002; Martin, 1998). Teachers tend to regard girls as vulnerable victims who are in need of help, while they readily interfered and blamed boys when conflicts occurred between the genders (Blaise & Andrew, 2005). In reality, until recently teachers' gender perpetuation behaviors were largely taken for granted and remained unquestioned. Hidden curricula, classroom interactions, school climates, and gender-differentiated instructional practices affect students' learning of social relations (Chick et al., 2002; Koch, 2003). Therefore, it is crucial to increase educators' awareness of their gender expectations and explore their pattern of unconscious gender perpetuation.

The gender portrayal in teaching materials, particularly in children's literature, has attracted wide attention. Since the 1970s, four major signs of gender inequity have been found in English-speaking preschool teaching materials. First, male characters are more visible than female characters (Turner-Bowker, 1996; Weitzman et al., 1972). Though the ratio of female characters have improved considerably over the decades (Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Grauerholz & Pescosolido, 1989; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; Oskamp & Kaufman, 1996), improvements have been slow and gender bias lingers. Even in recent children's literatures, males are still represented nearly twice as often in book titles and as main characters than females (Hamilton et al., 2006; McCabe et al., 2011). Second, portrayals of characters' personalities and behaviors reinforce traditional gender stereotypes (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Brugeilles et al., 2002; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; Tognoli et al., 1994; Weitzman et al., 1972). In general, while boys are active, leading, and heroic, girls are passive, following, and nurturing. Similarly, adult men are usually outdoors and engage in various occupations, whereas adult women are commonly presented as indoor wives and mothers. Third, gender roles are assigned to inanimate characters. Anthropomorphized characters are depicted as gendered through traits very similar to human and animal male and female characters (Berry & Wilkins,

2017; Brugeilles et al., 2002; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Weitzman et al., 1972; Williams et al., 1987). Cars and trucks are conventionally characterized as males while flowers, cups and pillows are usually females. Sometimes these inanimate characters are even sexualized in ways that would be inappropriate for human and animal characters (Berry & Wilkins, 2017). Fourth, words commonly used to describe male characters included “big,” “great,” “furious,” and “fierce,” which are identical to, or synonymous with words used to describe the inanimate male characters (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Turner-Bowker, 1996).

Relevant surveys in Asia

Research on Asian teachers’ gender socialization has only started recently since the beginning of the 21st Century, and on a moderate scale. She (2000) reported teachers’ differentiated interactions and the critical role gender stereotypes played in Taiwan middle school classrooms. In her study, teachers have different beliefs about boys’ and girls’ learning styles and classroom participation, which are, unsurprisingly, reinforced and sustained by their teaching. Differentiated treatment included unequal distributions of direct questions, unbalanced feedback and encouragement, and a lack of restrictive controls on calling out answers. Chen and Rao (2011) discovered gendered social and pedagogical processes in four Hong Kong preschools. Teachers were found to interact significantly more with boys and subtly conveyed traditional Chinese gender values through their repeated use of gendered routines and behavioral gender stereotypes. Through observational data from a private Chinese elementary school, Swan (2017) discovered a hidden curriculum of gender relations which children were expected to learn. Though having claimed gender equalities, teachers had different expectations for children based on traditional gender stereotypes. Similar to findings in previous studies, teachers interacted more frequently with boys, demanded quieter and calmer behavior from girls, and permitted more rowdiness and loudness from boys. The teachers reinforced a classroom model that resembled the society-level gender norms, in which boys are active, but girls must be passive. Yang and Gao (2019) expressed concerns over gendered educational consequences in a study that showed a growing shortage of women in STEM majors in China. They argued that two stages of gender socialization have contributed to the decline. First, gender stereotypes in society and lower career expectations of girls from parents have demoralized and discouraged Chinese women from participating in

STEM fields. Second, the internalization of traditional gender roles and expectations have hindered the advancement of female achievements.

3.1.2 Research questions of the current chapter

Although extensive research has been carried out on teachers' role in children's gender socialization, our knowledge of this process in Asian societies is still limited. Besides the works discussed above, few published studies have examined *preschool* teachers in Asia, and even fewer studies have addressed this phenomenon in mainland China.

From a developmental perspective, kindergarten years are a critical period for gender socialization. After earlier gender cue searches (Bjorklund, 2000; Martin & Ruble, 2004) children enter kindergarten (3 y/o) with established gender identity and consequently actively absorb information about their own gender in preschool (Bukatko, 2004; Hine et al., 2012; Martin & Ruble, 2004). Around the age of five, which is the participants' age of this study, children have accumulated some knowledge of gender difference with some level of rigidity (Maccoby, 1998; Ruble & Martin, 1998). The selection of this age group was therefore based on findings from developmental psychology, as age five is the watershed between the child's search for gender cues and the formation of gender rigidity (Trautner et al., 2005).

However, there is a dearth of quantitative linguistic research in this subfield to test theories. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) suggested, the engagement between members of a gendered Community of Practice (CofP), such as the production of or resistance to the social perception of gendered linguistic routines, could be analyzed to reveal how gender is practiced among community members. Therefore, this study explores five-year-old children's gender socialization with their kindergarten teachers as demonstrated in their linguistic practices. Additionally, the role of language in gender socialization is hard to find in China-based subfields, and it is this study aims to fill this gap.

Against this background, this study examines the role of language in gender socialization by kindergarten teachers in Nanjing, China. It aims to investigate whether female kindergarten teachers verbally interact with boys and girls in the same manner and

whether gender norms are perpetuated or resisted in preschools. In particular, this chapter covers four research questions:

- I. Do Chinese teachers interact with boys and girls differently in terms of language use?
- II. Do Chinese boys and girls interact differently with their women teachers in terms of language use?
- III. Do teachers verbally convey gender-based attitudes toward and expectations of children?
- IV. Are gender norms instilled in children through pedagogical materials and organizational decisions?

3.2 Data and Methods

3.2.1 Participants

Data collection of this study was conducted from September 2019 to December 2019 in Nanjing, China, an eastern provincial capital city with a population of 8 million. Initially, invitation letters were sent to principals of six kindergartens across three districts. Three principals responded and two kindergartens were selected because all their staff and children's parents consented to and were committed to video recording. These two kindergartens, located in two districts, were both private kindergartens serving local and socioeconomically homogenous Chinese communities. They both have won awards at city and provincial levels, honoring their efforts on child safety, personality development, and art education.

Kindergarten A, established in the 1950s, was once an affiliated kindergarten to a large state-owned enterprise. During the nationwide economic reform in the 1990s, the mother enterprise was amalgamated. Upon reorganization, its erstwhile affiliated kindergarten became independent and transformed into a private kindergarten in 2004. The campus of Kindergarten A now covers an area of 650 square meters with a three-storied building as its main facility. Including the caucus and administrators, it employs 26 staff members in total. Except one male security guard, all employees are female. By 2019, the total number of enrolled students was 198 (96 girls and 102 boys), and the majority of them were from middle-class families in the neighborhood. According to the

principal, 98% of Kindergarten A students have Nanjing *hùkǒu*, a household registry that indicates permanent residence in urban Chinese cities.

Kindergarten B, founded in 2011, is located on a land of 1,000 square meters inside of a recently built middle-class residential community. It is affiliated with the real estate developer company and serves as one facility of the housing complex. The campus has two three-floored buildings, with one of them encircling a central courtyard playground. Similar to Kindergarten A, Kindergarten B also has a quasi-all-female employee body. Except the only male security guard, 33 female teachers and one female principal are on site. By 2019, 155 students (75 girls and 80 boys) were enrolled. According to the principal, 85% of Kindergarten B children are from the households in the residential community, and 100% of them have Nanjing *hùkǒu*.

A class of 4-year-olds from *zhōng bān* (hereafter Junior) and a class of 5-year-olds from *dà bān* (hereafter Senior) were selected by principals in each kindergarten. Informed consents for participation were obtained from two principals, 13 teachers of the four selected classes, and all other staff members. Through the two principals, the parents of a total of 99 children (48 girls and 51 boys) expressed explicit consent for their children to be videotaped for the observation study.

Four teachers were observed and interviewed about their interactions with the children. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the teacher's background, philosophy and usual practices. Ages ranging from 21 to 43, they all have bachelor's degrees in early education or relevant fields (e.g., P.E). As a professional duty, they have been regularly attending child education workshops organized by the Nanjing Education Bureau. Common topics include effective communication with parents, understanding autism, and child safety. The Senior class teacher from Kindergarten A has received an 'Outstanding Kindergarten Teacher' title granted by Nanjing Education Bureau. The 9 on-site female teaching assistants (3 from A and 6 from B) were observed as well, though they barely participated in interaction. In Kindergarten A, all teaching assistants were formally employed. In Kindergarten B, two teaching assistants were formally employed, and the rest were interns from a local kindergarten teacher training school. The two kindergarten principals were also interviewed.

Table 17. Demographic background of participants

Class	Number of girls	Number of boys	Total	Number of Teachers	Teacher to Student Ratio
Senior	15	13	28	2 (1T+1TA)	1:14
Junior	10	12	22	3 (1T+2TA)	1:7.3
Kindergarten A	25	25	50	5 (2T+3TA)	1:10
Senior	11	14	25	6 (1T+5TA)	1:4.2
Junior	12	12	24	2 (1T+1TA)	1:12
Kindergarten B	23	26	49	8 (2T+6TA)	1:6.1
Overall	48	51	99	13	1:7.6

As presented in Table 17, the two kindergartens differed in teacher-child ratio. In Kindergarten A, the two main teachers (T) managed 50 children with occasional help from three teaching assistants (TA). The two main teachers in Kindergarten B had more teaching support, whereby six teaching assistants could collaboratively manage 49 children together. Nevertheless, a Fisher exact test showed that the two kindergartens' teacher-child ratios do not differ significantly ($p= 0.5577$, $\alpha= 0.05$).

3.2.2 Procedure

Videotaping of natural teacher-child interactions was negotiated with the two kindergartens. The initial plan was to visit each of the two kindergartens twice within ten months. In this way, Kindergarten A would be videotaped in September 2019 and June 2020, and Kindergarten B would be videotaped in December 2019 and August 2020. However, only the first two recording visits were conducted. The last two were cancelled due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, which made it impossible for the author to travel to China as a result of long-lasting border closure. Additionally, another initial plan was to videotape each class for one *hour* during each visit, resulting in a total of 8 hours of recording after all visits. However, both principals only consented to recording one *lesson* (0.5 hours) in each class during each visit.

Table 18. Length (in minute) and context of each recording session

School	Class	Length	Context
Kindergarten A	Junior	23	Traffic safety lesson
	Senior	30	Pet safety lesson & breaks
Kindergarten B	Junior	27	P.E lesson
	Senior	34	Fairy tale lesson & breaks

Due to the above reasons, the ultimate data used in this study consisted of video recordings with an overall length of 113 minutes across various contexts (see Table 18). A total of 1,292 interactions (i.e., turns) were documented, which involves both in- and out-of-class behaviors among the 99 children and their 13 teachers (4 main teachers and 9 TAs). In each recorded lesson, the activities included whole-class teaching, teacher-group interactions, and one-on-one teacher-child interactions. During breaks, spontaneous interactions were promptly recorded whenever possible, which involved pre-class seating, toilet time, and post-class assembly. All teachers were unaware of the purpose of this study — gender.

After classroom recordings were completed in each class, principals and the observed teachers were interviewed by the author. Requested by the principal, in Kindergarten A, the Senior class teacher and principal were interviewed together, leaving the Junior class teacher interviewed separately. Due to time constraint, the two observed teachers of Kindergarten B were interviewed together, leaving the principal interviewed individually. Interviews followed a semi-constructed and semi-spontaneous fashion. Questions were asked about topics including (i) experience with all-female faculty; (ii) gender segregation in teaching, daily routines and other activities; (iii) gendered decorations in the kindergarten's physical environment.

The transcription procedure of this study's recordings followed the pattern outlined by the CHAT conventions (MacWhinney, 2000). Transcriptions, English glosses, and annotative coding of interaction (i.e., marking activity and speech act) were manually generated by the author. The transcription and English glosses were later checked by another Chinese-English bilingual graduate student. Sometimes transcriptions of particular utterances were checked multiple times until a consensus was achieved for reasons including unintelligibility, overlapping utterances and incomplete utterances.

Utterances of each recording session were input into separate Excel spreadsheets for further coding. First, interactions of teacher-girl, teacher-boy teacher-children, girl-teacher, boy-teacher, children-teacher were identified and coded as T-G, T-B, T-C, G-T, B-T, and C-T respectively. Afterwards, information related to interaction dynamics, such

as conversation initiator and syllable⁴-based speech length, were obtained. Second, preliminary data analysis revealed that eight speech acts occurred in the current dataset, including: (1) Criticism, (2) Praise, (3) Echo or Recast, (4) Command, (5) Question, (6) Invitation to activities, (7) Feedback, and (8) Others. Hence, each utterance's corresponding speech act and sub-contexts were identified (e.g., criticizing for interruption, praising for improvement). Third, the coding procedure also specified the emotional context of the interactions (i.e., positive, neutral, and negative).

Considering that the author and the transcription checker were both women, a male Chinese-English bilingual MA student of linguistics background was invited to double check the coding of speech acts and emotional contexts to incorporate a male perspective in the interpretation of the data. Inter-coder reliability between the female and male coders was evaluated, and Cohen's Kappa was ($k= 0.88$), which indicated a high reliability of coding.

The final unitary coding was quantitatively analyzed and visualized in Rstudio (1.3.1093), leveraging packages included tidyverse, ggplot2, and ggrepel.

3.3 Teacher-child interaction

In Sections 3.3-3.5, I will report findings regarding teacher-child interaction from three aspects: (i) interaction dynamics, (ii) adopted speech acts, and (iii) related emotional contexts. Notably, 'child' as in the header 'teacher-child' is a broader term that refers to a pupil participant, regardless of gender. 'Children' refers to the mixed-gendered collective of the kindergarten pupils or a class as a whole. This distinction is necessary when contrasting one-on-one interaction between teacher and an individual child, a situation when gender is salient.

3.3.1 Interaction Frequency

As Table 19 shows, among the overall 1292 interactions in the dataset, 415 (32.1%) were from teacher to children, and 222 (17.2%) were from children to teacher.

⁴ 'Syllable' here refers to Chinese character 字 *zì*, because Mandarin Chinese can be regarded as monosyllabic, meaning that the majority of its words (characters) are one syllable in length (Li & Thompson, 1981).

For *teacher-initiated* one-on-one interactions, 182 (14.1%) targeted a boy, and 156 (12.1%) targeted a girl. Independent *t*-test showed that although the frequency of teacher-boy interactions ($M=3.568627$, $SD= 2.042106$, $N=51$) exceeds that of teacher-girl ($M= 3.25$, $SD=2.547423$, $N=48$), there is no statistically significant difference in gender ($t = 0.68405$, $df = 90.073$, $p = 0.4957$). On the contrary, among *child-initiated* one-on-one interactions with the teacher, 86 (6.7%) were initiated by a boy, and 122 (9.4%) were initiated by a girl. Independent *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference in gender ($t = -3.1649$, $df = 96.109$, $p = 0.002078$). This indicates that compared to boys ($M=1.686275$, $SD=1.449002$, $N= 51$), girls initiated more interactions ($M= 2.541667$, $SD= 1.236989$, $N=48$) with their teachers.

Table 19. Distribution of all interaction types⁵ in the dataset

Interaction Type	Overall Frequencies	Percentage
T-C	415	32.1%
C-T	222	17.2%
T-B	182	14.1%
T-G	156	12.1%
B-T	86	6.7%
G-T	122	9.4%
Others	109	8.4%
Total	1292	100.0%

Statistics of *teacher-initiated* one-on-one interaction frequencies based on class, school and gender are shown in Tables 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. Means were adjusted according to the specific number of boys and girls in the class/school. Considering that the Senior and Junior classes of this study were differentiated by age (i.e., 5-year-old and 4-year-old), the following class-based comparisons are technically age-based.

As the mean values in Table 20 show, there are class-based and school-based variations in teacher-initiated one-on-one interaction frequency. For instance, girls in Kindergarten A received more interactions (3.48) than boys (3.28), while girls in Kindergarten B received fewer interactions (3.00) than boys (3.85). Gender (2) × Class (2) × School (2) ANOVAS were applied to data on the frequency of teacher-initiated one-on-one interactions (see Table 21). Dependent variables were the total number of teacher-initiated interactions and the numbers of each gender, class, and school. One-way

⁵ Abbreviations in Table 19: T-C: Teacher-Children of mixed genders; C-T: Children of mixed genders-Teacher; T-B: Teacher-Boy; T-G: Teacher-Girl; B-T: Boy-Teacher; G-T: Girl-Teacher

ANOVA showed there is no statistically significant main effect of Gender ($F(1,97) = .474, p = .493$), Class ($F(1,97) = .28, p = .598$), and School ($F(1,97) = .022, p = .882$). Two-way ANOVA also showed there was no statistically significant main effect of Gender \times Class ($F(1,95) = .07, p = .792$) and Gender \times School ($F(1,95) = 1.267, p = .263$). Statistics analyses confirm that teachers did not interacted significantly more with boys or vice versa, regardless their occasional preference on boys.

Similarly, statistics of *child-initiated* one-on-one interaction frequencies based on class, school and gender are shown in Tables 3.3.3 and 3.3.4. As the mean values in Table 22 consistently show, girls interacted with their teachers more than boys, regardless of class and school. This gender difference is further confirmed by ANOVA results in Table 21. One-way ANOVA discovered a statistically significant main effect of Gender ($F(1,97) = 9.921, p = .00217$), but not a statistically significant main effect of Class ($F(1,97) = 2.215, p = .14$) and School ($F(1,97) = .085, p = .12897$). Through two-way ANOVA, no statistically significant main effect of Gender \times Class ($F(1,95) = 2.346, p = .12897$) and Gender \times School ($F(1,95) = .005, p = .94503$) were obtained either. These statistical results reveal that girls, across age-groups and schools, interacted with their teachers more often.

Table 20. Frequency and speech length of *teacher-initiated* interactions by class, school and gender

Type	Frequency				Speech Length			
	Girl mean	Girl SD	Boy mean	Boy SD	Girl mean	Girl SD	Boy mean	Boy SD
Class								
Senior	3.67	2.58	3.15	1.72	30.53	25.80	85.15	56.44
Junior	3.20	2.39	3.42	1.78	20.40	19.71	71.00	44.53
School A	3.48	2.47	3.28	1.72	26.48	23.65	78.36	50.53
Senior	3.09	2.91	4.07	2.27	24.82	27.07	96.21	66.17
Junior	2.92	2.54	3.58	2.43	18.50	28.49	111.42	86.88
School B	3.00	2.66	3.85	2.31	21.52	27.37	103.23	75.22
Overall	3.25	2.55	3.57	2.04	24.10	25.35	91.04	64.90

Table 21. Factorial ANOVA results of *interaction frequency* based on class, school and gender

Interaction	Statistics	Gender	Class	School	Gender X Class	Gender X School
T-initiated	F-ratio	0.474	0.28	0.022	0.07	1.267
	p-value	0.493	0.598	0.882	0.792	0.263
C-initiated	F-ratio	9.921	2.215	0.085	2.346	0.005
	p-value	0.00217 **	0.14	0.772	0.12897	0.94503

** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 22. Frequency and speech length of *child-initiated* interactions by class, school and gender

Type	Frequency				Speech Length			
Class	Girl mean	Girl SD	Boy mean	Boy SD	Girl mean	Girl SD	Boy mean	Boy SD
Senior	2.53	1.06	1.31	1.38	59.53	63.97	12.00	17.99
Junior	2.40	1.26	2.00	1.13	74.90	50.46	26.08	17.43
Kindergarten A	2.48	1.12	1.64	1.29	65.68	58.32	18.76	18.78
Senior	2.55	1.13	1.29	0.99	55.91	48.64	12.50	8.66
Junior	2.67	1.61	2.25	2.05	63.17	81.41	27.08	36.07
Kindergarten B	2.61	1.37	1.73	1.61	59.70	66.36	19.23	25.81
Overall	2.54	1.24	1.69	1.45	62.81	61.70	19.00	22.42

Table 23. Factorial ANOVA results of *speech length* based on class, school and gender

Interaction	Statistics	Gender	Class	School	Gender X Class	Gender X School
T-initiated	F-ratio	44.62	0.072	1.071	0.2	2.244
	p-value	1.51e-09 ***	0.79	0.303	0.655	0.137
C-initiated	F-ratio	22.56	1.371	0.153	0.043	0.12
	p-value	7.03e-06 ***	0.244	0.697	0.837	0.73

3.3.2 Speech Length

Besides interaction frequency, speech length in each interaction was also quantitatively analyzed. As explained in Section 3.2.2, speech length in this study is syllable-based; namely, Chinese character-based in the transcribing and coding processes.

As listed in Table 20, the speech lengths of *teacher-boy* interactions are consistently longer than that of *teacher-girl* interactions. In general, teachers' average speech length with girls was 24.10, while with boys was 91.04. On the contrary, the speech lengths of *child-initiated* interactions demonstrate a reverse pattern, where girls consistently conducted longer speech length to their teacher than boys (Table 22). The overall speech length mean of girl-teacher interaction was 62.81, contrasting an average of 19.00 in boy-teacher interactions.

ANOVA results highlighted the main effect of Gender in speech length variation regardless of interaction direction. For *teacher-initiated* interactions, one-way ANOVA showed there was a statistically significant difference in Gender ($F(1,97) = 44.62, p = 1.51e-09$), but no statistically significant difference in Class ($F(1,97) = .072, p = .79$) and School ($F(1,97) = 1.071, p = .303$). For *child-initiated* interactions, one-way ANOVA also indicated a statistically significant Gender-based difference ($F(1,97) = 22.56, p =$

7.03e-06), while no statistically significant difference in Class ($F(1,97) = 1.371, p = .244$) and School ($F(1,97) = .153, p = .697$). Notably, none of the pair-wise Two-way ANOVA for Class and School were significant in both interaction directions.

To sum up, statistical analyses confirm that, regardless of class and school, teachers significantly conducted longer speech length with boys than girls, while girls significantly conducted longer speech length with teachers than boys.

Correlations between interaction frequency and speech length

Furthermore, as the red lines in Figure 1 visualize, the two numeric variables, interaction frequency and speech length, were found to be correlated. A zero-order correlation was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between *teacher-initiated* interaction frequency and speech length ($N=99$). The result rejected the null hypothesis and yielded that there was a strong and positive correlation between *teacher-initiated* interaction frequency ($M= 3.414, SD= 2.295$) and speech length ($M=58.586, SD=59.900$), $t(97) = 8.0145, p=2.5e-12, r= 0.6311752$. Similarly, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between *child-initiated* interaction frequency and speech length ($N=99$) was also rejected. A strong, positive correlation was also found between *child-initiated* interaction frequencies ($M=2.101, SD= 1.411$) and speech length ($M= 40.242, SD= 50.660$), $t(97) = 8.3021, p = 6.094e-13, r = 0.6445156$.

When integrated with the previous statistic results, these two pairs of correlation indicate that teachers of this study initiated relatively more interactions (not significant) but through longer speech lengths (significant) with boys. In comparison, girls started more interactions and conducted longer speech length with their teachers (both are significant).

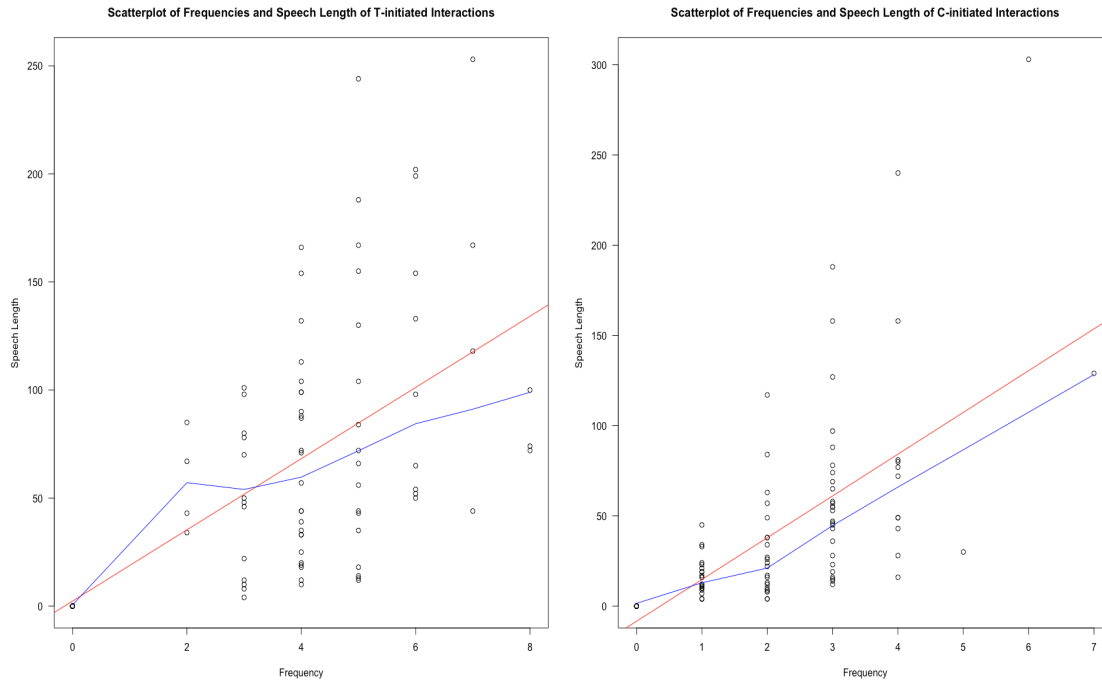


Figure 1. Correlations between interaction frequency and speech length across directions

3.4 Teacher’s attention allocation across eight speech acts

3.4.1 Quantitative analysis

Focusing on teacher-initiated one-on-one interactions (i.e., teacher-girl and teacher-boy), speech acts were identified and quantitatively analyzed. As shown in Table 24, the overall 338 interactions with both genders can be further subcategorized into eight speech acts, including Criticism (40; 12%), Praise (26; 8%), Echo & Recast (75; 22%), Command (27; 8%), Question (50; 15%), Invitation (57; 17%), Feedback (54; 16%) and Others (9; 3%).

The proportion of each speech act varies across genders, but through different mechanisms. As Figure 2 illustrates, children of both genders received Echo or Recast most frequently, with girls’ proportion (24%) slightly higher than boy’s (21%). On average, a girl’s utterances were echoed or recast by the teacher 0.77 times, and the corresponding frequency of accommodating a boy’s utterances was 0.75 times. As indicated by the ANOVA results in Table 25, this divergence is not statistically significant. Both genders were moderately praised by their teachers, whereby each girl received 0.21 times, and each boy received 0.31 times. Though boys (9%) outnumbered

girls (6%) regarding this speech act, the difference is not statistically significant either, according to ANOVA (see Table 25).

Table 24. Distribution of teacher-initiated speech acts across gender

Gender	Girl			Boy			Overall		
Speech Act	Count	Per person	Pct.	Count	Per person	Pct.	Count	Per person	Pct.
Criticism	9	0.19	6%	31	0.61	17%	40	0.40	12%
Praise	10	0.21	6%	16	0.31	9%	26	0.26	8%
Echo & Recast	37	0.77	24%	38	0.75	21%	75	0.76	22%
Command	12	0.25	8%	15	0.29	8%	27	0.27	8%
Question	32	0.67	21%	18	0.35	10%	50	0.51	15%
Invitation	27	0.56	17%	30	0.59	16%	57	0.58	17%
Feedback	25	0.52	16%	29	0.57	16%	54	0.55	16%
Others	4	0.08	3%	5	0.10	3%	9	0.09	3%
Total	156	3	100%	182	4	100%	338	3	100%

Table 25. ANOVA statistics of teacher-initiated interaction across *speech acts*

Interaction	Girl		Boy		By Gender		By Class		By School		By Gender X Class		By Gender X School	
	M	SD	M	SD	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value
Criticism	0.188	0.445	0.608	0.750	11.310	0.0011 **	0.634	0.428	0.456	0.501	0.015	0.904	0.021	0.885
Praise	0.208	0.410	0.314	0.510	1.275	0.262	0.001	0.972	0.140	0.709	0.164	0.686	0.081	0.776
Echo & Recast	0.771	0.778	0.745	0.688	0.030	0.862	0.259	0.612	0.001	0.974	0.340	0.561	0.030	0.862
Command	0.250	0.438	0.294	0.460	0.238	0.627	0.041	0.839	2.312	0.132	2.375	0.127	3.701	0.057
Question	0.667	0.724	0.353	0.483	6.501	0.0123 *	0.005	0.941	0.770	0.382	0.068	0.795	1.537	0.218
Invitation	0.563	0.616	0.588	0.497	0.053	0.819	0.031	0.861	0.417	0.520	0.010	0.922	0.324	0.570
Feedback	0.521	0.714	0.569	0.806	0.097	0.756	0.058	0.811	1.966	0.164	0.003	0.955	6.026	0.0159 *
Others	0.083	0.279	0.098	0.300	0.063	0.802	2.347	0.129	0.099	0.754	0.098	0.755	0.908	0.343

A remarkable gender-based divergence was found in Criticism, which accounts for 17% of boys' speech acts, but only 6% of girls. ANOVA returned a statistically significant difference only by Gender ($F(1,97) = 11.310, p = 0.0011$), not by other paired variables, such as Gender \times Class and Gender \times School (see Table 25). On average, each boy received 0.61 times of criticism, which is approximately 3.2 times of that each girl received (0.19). Another noticeable gender difference was found in Question, which composes 21% of teacher-girl interactions but only 10% of teacher-boy interactions. ANOVA also showed a statistically significant difference only by Gender ($F(1,97) = 6.501, p = 0.0123$) but not by paired variables (Table 25). Each girl was questioned 0.67 times by the teacher, which is a double of the 0.35 times each boy was questioned, on average.

Contrasting the speech acts discussed above, the remaining speech acts, Command (boy 8%; girl 8%), Feedback (boy 16%; girl 16%), Invitation (boy 16%; girl 17%), and Others (boy 3%; girl 3%) demonstrate even distributions.

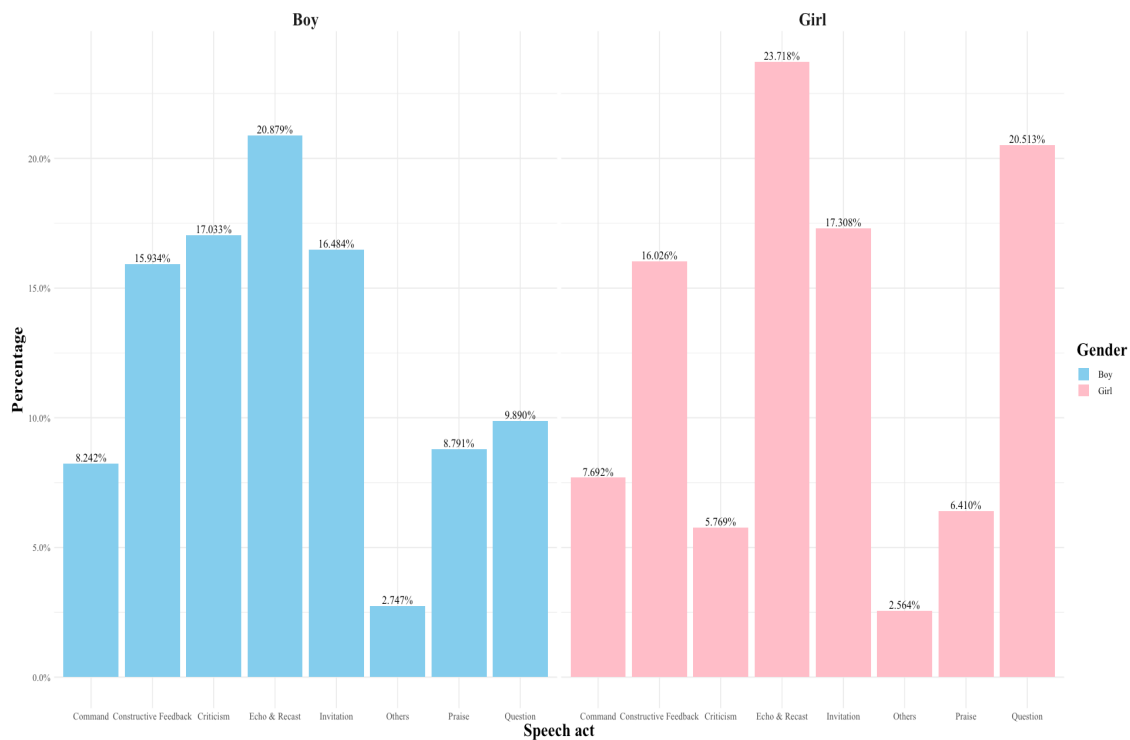


Figure 2. Gender-based comparison of speech act distributions

If we reexamine the dynamics from a teacher’s perspective, the gender-based allocation of each speech act can be visualized by Figure 3. On average, the biggest divergence exists in Criticism, among which 77.5% were given to boys, leaving only 22.5% to girls. The second eminent deviation is Question, which surprisingly reveals teacher’s preference on girls (64%) than boys (36%). Besides, Praise and Echo & Recast also embrace gender differences, although not significant, whereby boys (61.5%; 50.7%) outnumbered girls (38.5%; 49.3%) in both categories. The remaining speech acts demonstrate more even distributions, though across categories, boys consistently received relatively more attentions from teachers than girls. These include Command (boy 55.6%; girl 44.4%), Feedback (boy 53.7%; girl 46.3%), Invitation (boy 52.6%; girl 47.4%), and Others (boy 55.6%; girl 44.4%).

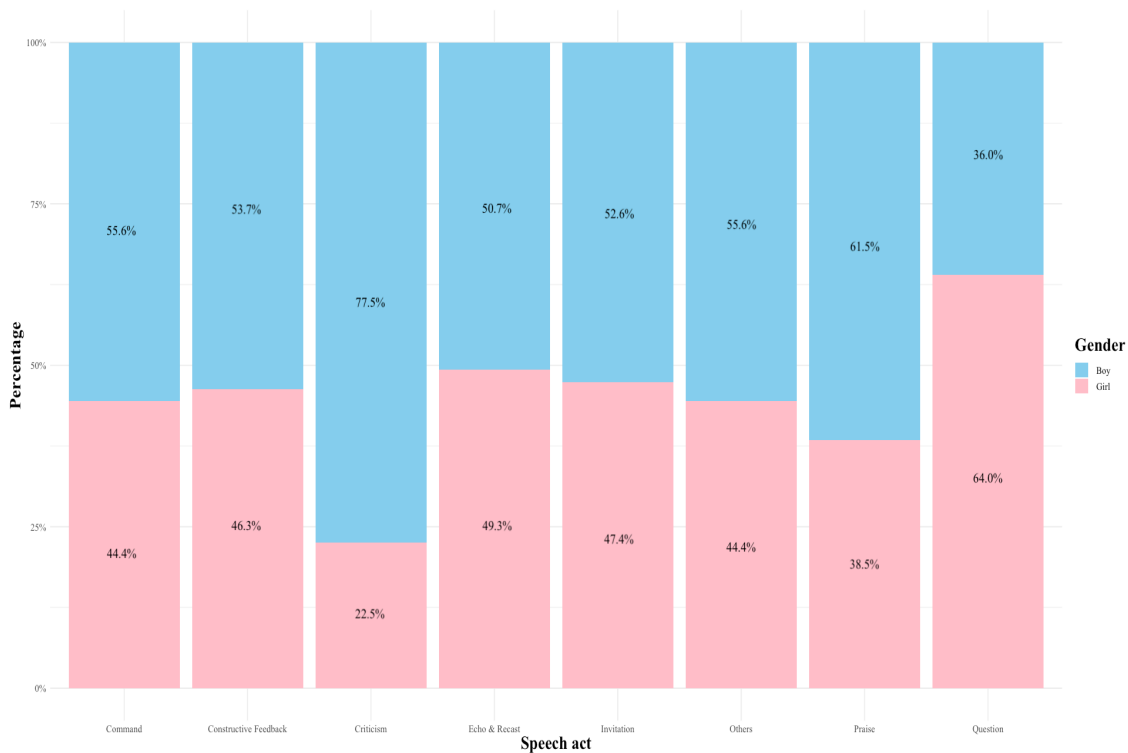


Figure 3. Gender proportion in each speech act

3.4.2 Qualitative analysis

In this section, I will present representative interactions of each speech act. The selection of examples was based on the quantitative analysis results. As shown in Table 26, children may encounter the same speech act in different contexts, and their exposures to those contexts differed by gender. Based on this discovery, under each speech act, the specific contexts with the most ‘noticeable’ proportions will be discussed, and their corresponding excerpt numbers are marked in parentheses in Table 26. ‘Noticeability’ here may apply to any of the three scenarios: (i) the context holds the highest proportion in one gender; (ii) the context is absent in one gender; (iii) the context is relevant to both genders. Some excerpts involve multiple speech acts, and they are noted on top of the scripts. Examples of Invitation and Others are not presented here because the contexts they embrace (e.g., an invitation to skit performance or discussion; a quick response is positive or negative) show more information than their specific conversations. No number means example is not provided. All personal names occurred in the examples are pseudonyms.

Table 26. Distribution of specific contexts under each speech act

Speech act	Specific context	Girl	Boy	Speech act	Specific context	Girl	Boy	
Criticism	Seating (8)	0%	3%	Question	Activity progress	6%	22%	
	Tidiness (9)	0%	10%		Check understanding (14) (15)	34%	28%	
	Posture (11)	56%	16%		Guiding comprehension	16%	6%	
	Interruption (10)	0%	26%		Inspiration (15)	6%	0%	
	Off-task	33%	26%		Life experience (1)	13%	0%	
Praise	Activity rule	11%	19%		Other's emotion (1)	16%	6%	
	Comprehension (5)	50%	38%		Confirmation	3%	11%	
	Initiative	20%	13%		Knowledge (3)	6%	28%	
	Personality trait	10%	0%		Invitation	Skit performance	37%	17%
	Skit performance	0%	6%			Discussion	48%	63%
	Appearance (4)	10%	0%			Reflection	7%	20%
	Obedience (6) (7)	10%	6%			Referee	7%	0%
Improvement	0%	6%	Feedback		Indirect correction	4%	7%	
Knowledge (4)	0%	31%			Direct correction	4%	3%	
Echo & Recast	Echo (1) (14)	58%			38%	Encouragement	12%	7%
	Recast (2)	42%		62%	Reminder (6)	0%	7%	
Command	Activity rule	33%		13%	Suggestion	20%	21%	
	Motion (8) (9) (11)	33%	40%	Inspire thinking (14)	32%	38%		
	Tidiness	8%	7%	Supplementary	20%	10%		
	Etiquette (12)	17%	20%	Safety warning (13)	8%	7%		
	Routine	8%	7%	Others	Neutral quick response	25%	20%	
	Concentration (12)	0%	7%		Positive quick response	0%	20%	
	Safety warning (12)	0%	7%		Instruction	75%	60%	

First, the results show that Echo and Recast are the speech acts that children of both genders received most often. If we recall the proportions mentioned previously, they account for 24% of teacher-girl and 21% of teacher-boy interactions. Each girl was exposed to Echo and Recast 0.771 times and each boy 0.745 times, without statistical significance in gender. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to note, as shown in Table 26, that teachers gave more echoes to girls (58%) while more recasts to boys (62%). The following Examples (1) and (2) contrast this difference. In (1), Teacher 3 echoed girls five times and asked them questions about life experiences and others' emotions. In (2), boys' word choices were corrected and negotiated through three recasts and one echo. For instance, Boy 15 erroneously used a slang *fā máo* (lit. 'emit hair,' meaning 'scared') to describe *fā huǒ* (lit. 'emit fire,' meaning 'flare up, get angry'). This utterance triggered rounds of recasts and echoes by Teacher 1, who even imagined a scenario, 'hair standing up,' to justify the boy's insistent word choice. This teacher also re-casted Boy16's word choice *wēnshùn* ('docile') into *duì tā hǎo yīdiǎn* ('treat him/her well') because the former was inappropriate to the context.

Example (1)	[Echo; Question: life experience, other's emotion; Teacher 3, Girl 10, Girl 11]					
*T3	†sòng give	guò ASP	liwù gift	de ASSOC	jǔ raise	shǒu. hand
	'Raise hands if you have given a gift before.'					
*T3	qǐng, please	zhēn yíng PN	shuō shuō. say-RED			
	'Zhenying, you please talk about it.'					
*T3	nǐ 2SG	sòng give	de ASSOC	shì COP	shénme? what	
	'Who did you gift?'					
*T3	tā 3SG	gāoxìng happy	ma? SFP	[% other's emotion]		
	'Was s/he happy?'					
*T3	nǐ 2SG	sòng give	de ASSOC	shénme what	lǐwù gift	gěi give
	tā? 3SG					
	'What gift did you give her/him?'					
*G10	sòng give	# nǐ um	#wánjù toy	chē. car		
	'I gave...um...a toy car.'					
*T3	xiǎo small	wánjù toy	chē. car	[% echo 1]		
	'Small toy car.'					
	sònggěi give	shéi whom	de NML	ya? SFP		
	'To whom did you give?'					
*G10	sònggěi give	dìdì younger bother	de. NML			
	'I gave it to my younger brother.'					
*T3	gěi give	nǐ 2SG	dìdì younger bother	de. NML	[% echo 2]	
	'You gave it to your younger brother.'					
	dìdì younger bother	gāo happy	bù NEG	gāoxìng? happy	[% other's emotion]	
	'Was your younger brother happy?'					
*G10	gāoxìng happy 'Happy.'					
*T3	gāoxìng, happy	shì COP	bú NEG	shì COP	a? SFP	[% echo 3]
	'He was happy, right?'					
*T3	hái more	yǒu have	ma? SFP			
	'Any more?'					
*T3	lái, alright	qǐng please	mèngxīng. PN			
	'Alright, Mengxing please.'					
	nǐ 2SG	sònggěi give	shéi whom	de NML	a? SFP	
	'To whom did you give?'					
*G11	xiǎopéngyǒu. little friend. 'A child.'					
*T3	xiǎopéngyǒu, little friend	ò. oh.	[% echo 4]			
	'A child, oh.'					
	nà then	xiǎopéngyǒu little friend	gāo happy	bù NEG	gāoxìng? happy	[% other's emotion]
	'Then was that child happy?'					
*G11	gāoxìng happy 'Happy.'					
*T3	gāoxìng, happy	hǎo	de,	qǐng	zuò.	[% echo 5]

happy good NML please sit
 ‘S/he was happy, good, please sit down.’

- Example (2)** [Recast; Teacher 1, Boy 15, Boy 16]
- *T1 xiǎogǒu yǎo rén,
 puppy bite people
 shì tā yě yǒu shēngqì de shíhòu duì ba?
 COP 3SG also have angry ASSOC time right SFP
 ‘A puppy bites people, it’s because he also has angry time, right?’
- *T1 duì bú duì?
 correct NEG correct
 ‘Am I right?’
- *T1 tā shēngqì de shíhòu shénme yàng?
 3SG angry ASSO time what mode
 ‘How he looks when he’s angry?’
- *T1 hǎo, nǐ shuō. [=to B15]
 alright 2SG talk
 ‘Alright, you talk about it.’
- *B15 *tā jiù huì fā máo! [=stands up and yells]
 3SG then will emit hair
 ‘*He will emit hair (be scared)!’
- *T1 tā shēngqì huì fā huǒ shì ba? [% recast1]
 3SG angry will emit fire COP SFP
 ‘He will emit fire (flare up), right?’
 huì hǒujiào
 will howl
 ‘He will howl.’
- *B15 ◎hái huì fā máo! ◎ [=insists and yells]
 also will emit hair
 ‘He will also emit hair (be scared)!’
- *T1 ò, hái huì fā máo. [% echo]
 oh also will emit hair
 ‘Oh, he will also emit hair (be scared).’
- máo dōu zhà qīlái le shì bú shì? [% recast2]
 hair all stand up-RES ASP COP NEG CO P
 ‘All his hair will stand up, right?’
- [a few minutes later]
- *T1 wǒmen gēn zhèxiē xiǎomāo xiǎogǒu [=to class]
 2SG with these kitty puppy
 jiēchù de shíhòu
 contact ASSO time
 ‘When we are getting touch with these kitties and puppies’
- *T1 wǒmen yīnggāi zěnme zuò? [=to B16]
 2SG should how do
 ‘How should we behave?’
- *B16 wēnshù diǎn.
 n docile a bit
 ‘Be a bit docile’
- *T1 yào duì tā hǎo yīdiǎn shì ba? [% recast3]
 should treat 3SG good a bit COP SFP
 ‘We should treat them a bit well, right?’

*T1	bú	yào	qù	dǎ	tā,	[% meaning negotiation]	
	NEG	should	go	hit	3SG		
	'We shouldn't go hit them.'						
*T1	shì	zhè	ge	yisi	ma?		
	COP	this	CLF	meanin	SFP		
	g 'Is this what you mean?'						

Second, quantitative results also demonstrate that on average, each girl was praised 0.208 times and each boy 0.314 times, which constitute 6% of teacher-girl and 9% of teacher-boy interactions. Though the Praise frequency gap between gender is not statistically significant, both genders have exclusive contexts. As Example (3) illustrates, 31% of praises boys received were related to their knowledge, but this context does not apply to any girls' praises. Similarly, Example (4) shows a girl-only praise scenario, appearance, which was not found in boys' praises.

Example (3)	[Praise: knowledge; Question: knowledge; Teacher 2, Boy12 Yiyuan, Boy13 Xiayang]							
*T2	hǎo,	nà	wǒmen	zài	lái	kànkàn	zhè	gè.
	alright	then	2PL	again	come	look-RED	this	CLF
	'Alright then, again, let's look at this one.'							
	xiǎopéngyǒu	zhī	bù	zhīdào	ya?	[=showing a traffic sign]		
	u	little friend	know	NEG	know	SFP		
	'Do you know this, children?'							
*C	zhīdào!	[=screaming]						
	know	'We know it!'						
*T2	nǎ	ge	xiǎopéngyǒu	zhīdào?				
	which	CLF	little friend	know				
	'Which child knows?'							
	lái	gěi	wǒmen	shuō	yī	xià.		
	come	give	us	talk	one	CLF		
	'Come and tell us.'							
*T2	hǎo,	yīyuán	nǐ	zhàn	qǐlái	shuō	[% check B12's knowledge]	
	okay	Yiyuan	2SG	stand	up	speak		
	'Okay, Yiyuan, you stand up and speak.'							
*B12	*zhè	shì	shì	kěyǐ	xiàng	qián	jìn.	
	this	COP	be	can	toward	forward	move	
	'This is you can move forward.'							
*T2	ò,	fēicháng	bàng!	[=touches B12's head]				
	wow	very	great					
	'Wow, very great!'							
	nǐ	zěnmē	zhīdào?					
	2SG	how	know					
	'How do you know it?'							
*B12	wǒ	bàba	kāi	chē	de			
	1SG	dad	drive	car	ASSO			
	shíhòu	kàn	jiàn	guò	C			
	time	see	RES	ASP				

*T2	'I've seen this when dad was driving.'							
	hǎo,	xià	yáng,	nǐ	shuō.	[% check B13's knowledge]		
	alright	Xiayang	2SG		speak			
	'Alright, Xiayang, you speak.'							
	nǐ	kàn	dào	guò	zhè	ge	biāozhì	ma?
	2SG	see	RES	ASP	this	CLF	sign	SFP
	'Have you seen this sign before?'							
*B13	zhè	ge	shì	zìxíngchē.				
	this	CLF	COP	bicycle				
	'This is bicycle.'							
*T2	zhēn	cōngmín	shéi	jiāo	nǐ	de?	[=thumbs up to B13]	
	really	smart	who	teach	2SG	NML		
	'Really smart, who taught you this?'							
*B13	yīnwèi	lù	shàng	dōu	shì	zìxíngchē		
	because	road	up	all	COP	bicycle		
	'Because there are bicycles all over the road.'							

Example (4) [Praise: appearance; Teacher3, Teacher 2, Girl7, Girl8, Girl9]

*G7	↑lǎoshī,	nǐ	de	yīfú	zhēn	piàoliang!		
	teacher	2SG	ASSOC	clothes	really	pretty		
	'Teacher, your clothes is so pretty!'							
*T2	nǐ	yě	piàoliang!	[=thumbs up to G7]				
	2SG	also	pretty					
	'You are pretty too!'							
[in a different school, before the class]								
*T3	jīntiān	nǐ	de	tóufǎ	zhēn	kě'ài!	[=to G8]	
	today	2SG	ASSOC	hair	really	cute		
	'Today your hairsyle is so cute!'							
	shéi	bāng	nǐ	shū	dé?			
	who	help	2SG	comb	NML			
	'Who combed your hair?'							
*G8	pópo,	# jīntiān	dài	wǒ	shàngxué.			
	grandma	today	bring	1SG	go to school			
	'Grandma, today she brought me to school.'							
*T3	nǐ	de	biànzi	ne?	[=to G9]			
	2SG	ASSOC	braid	SFP				
	'How about your braids?'							
*G9	wǒ	māmā	shū	de				
	1SG	mom	comb	NML				
	'Mom made the braids for me.'							
*T3	nǐmen	dōu	tài	hǎokàn	le!	[to both girls]		
	2PL	both	very	good-looking	ASP			
	'You are both so good-looking!'							

Notably, both genders are most frequently praised for comprehension, which composes 50% of girls' and 38% of boys' praises, respectively. As Example (5) shows, Teacher 2 kept giving positive responses to and complimenting children's accurate understanding of the class contexts.

Example (5)	[Praise: comprehension; Teacher 2, Boy11, Girl5]						
*T2	zhè	ge	biāozhì	de	míngzì	a	
	this	CLF	sign	ASSOC	name	SFP	
	# jiàozuò †bùxíng.						
	call	walk					
	'The name of this sign, is called walk.'						
*T2	yě	jiùshì	gàosù		xiǎopéngyǒu...		
	also	precisely	tell		little friend		
	'Precisely, it also tells children that...'						
*T2	shuōmíng	zhè	tiáo		lù,		
	indicate	this	CLF		road		
	zhǐ	néng	zěnmeyàng?		[=to B11]		
	only	can	what				
	'It indicates that this road can only what?'						
*B11	gēn	zhe	zǒu.				[=stands up and answers]
	follow	ASP	walk				
	'Follow along.'						
*T2	zhǐ	néng	gēn	zhe	zǒu.		
	only	can	follow	ASP	walk		
	'We can only follow along.'						
*T2	†zhēn	bàng!	hāhā.				[=thumbs up to B11]
	really	great	haha				
	'Really great! Haha.'						
*T2	zhǐ	néng	zǒulù.				
	only	can	walk				
	'We can only walk.'						
*T2	néng	bù	néng	yǒu	†chēzi	tōngguò	ya?
	can	NEG	can	have	car	pass through	SFP
	'Can cars pass through (this road)?'						
*G5	bù	néng,	chē	bú	ràng	zǒu.	
	NEG	can	car	NEG	allow	through	
	'No, cars are not allowed to get through.'						
*T2	ài,	duì	le.				
	right	correct	ASP				
	'Right, that's correct.'						
*T2	†fēicháng	bàng	a!				[=thumbs up to G5]
	very	great	SFP				
	'Very great!'						

Crucially, obedience is valued for both genders, accounting for 10% of girls' and 6% of boys' praises. The following Example (6) and (7) illustrate this institution-level requirement, which covers both genders and primarily through a lexical item *tīng huà* (lit. 'listen to words', meaning 'obedient'). Teacher 1 in this excerpt not only praised obedient behavior but also reminded children of the classroom discipline through an immediate feedback.

Example (6)	[Praise: obedience; Feedback: reminder; Teacher1, Boy7, Boy14]							
*T1	duì,	gǒu	de	zhǔrén	hěn	xǐhuān	tā	ya.
	right	dog	ASSO C	owner	very	like	3SG	SFP
	'Right, the owner of the dog likes him a lot.'							
*T1	hái	gěi	tā	chuān	shàng	le	piàolian	de
								yífú

	even	give	3SG	wear	RES	ASP	pretty	ASSOC	clothes
	'Even lets him to wear pretty clothes.'								
*B7	†hái	gěi	tā	yí	gè	◎qiúqiú	wán!◎	[=screaming]	
	even	give	3SG	one	CLF	ball-RED	play		
	'Even gives him a ball to play with!'								
*T1	†jǔ	shǒu,	hǎo	bù	hǎo?			[% reminds B7 of classroom discipline]	
	raise	hand	okay	NEG	okay				
	'Raise your hand, okay?'								
*T1	wǒ	kàn	nǎ	ge	xiǎopéngyǒu	zui	tīnghuà?	[=to class]	
	I	see	which	CLF	little friend	most	obedient		
	'Let me see which child is the most obedient?'								
*T1	qīng	nǐ	zhēn	guāi!	[=smiling to B14]				
	yáng,								
	PN	2SG	really	obedient					
	'Qingyang, you are so obedient!'								
	nǐ	lái	shuō	zhè	ge	xiǎogǒu	nǎlǐ	kě'ài?	
	2SG	come	say	this	CLF	puppy	where	cute	
	'You come and tell us what is cute about this puppy?'								
*B14	yǎnjīn	tèbié	kě'ài	[=standing up]					
	g	especiall	cute						
	eyes	y							
	'The eyes are especially cute.'								

Example (7)

[Praise: obedience; Teacher 2, Girl 6]

*T2	nà	gè	jiàntóu	jiùshì	gàosù				
	that	CLF	arrow	simply	tell				
	chēzi	wǎng	nǎ'er	kāi	ya.				
	car	toward	where	drive	SFP				
	'That arrow is simply telling where the car should go.'								
*G6	wǒmen	guò	jiē	de	shíhòu	yě	zài	zhǎo	
	2PL	across	street	ASSOC	time	also	ASP	search	
	'We are also searching for it when crossing the street.'								
*T2	†zhēn	guāi!	[=touching G6's head]						
	really	obedient							
	'You are so obedient!'								
*G6	wǒmen	yào	děng	bié	de	chēzi			
	2PL	should	wait	other	ASSOC	car			
	'We should wait for other cars.'								
*T2	hǎo	háizi,	†zhēn	tīnghuà!					
	good	child	really	obedient					
	'Such a good child, you are so obedient!'								

Third, one of the most remarkable findings is that boys and girls differed significantly regarding the amount of criticism they received. On average, each boy received 0.608 times criticisms, claiming 17% of their teachers' attention. In contrast, each girl was only criticized 0.188 times, constituting 6% of their teachers' attention. The qualitative discourse analysis suggests that Criticism and Command usually occurred

together, although no statistically significant gender difference was found in the latter. As the previous statistics shows, each boy and each girl received 0.294 and 0.25 commands, respectively, and this speech act accounts for 8% of teacher attention in both groups.

More interesting findings were discovered in the specific contexts of Criticism and Command. In general, both genders were most often commanded to adjust their physical positions or motions (coded as Motion), accounting for 40% of boys' command and 33% of girls' command. Three intriguing gender differences were observed. (i) only boys were criticized for seating, tidiness, and interruption (Example 10). (ii) only boys were commanded to improve their concentration and sense of safety (Example 12). (iii) though it involved both genders, posture was the most common (56%) criticism context for girls but accounted for only a moderate proportion for boys (16%) (Example 11).



Figure 4. Teacher grasps the arms of three boys to quickly arrange their seating

Examples (8) and (9) illustrate two such combined interactions related to boys' seating and tidiness. Like many other similar interactions in the dataset, Teacher 1 criticized unsatisfactory behaviors first and quickly gave direct commands for prompt correction. Example (8) happened before the class when teachers were trying to arrange seating rapidly, but three boys demonstrated unsatisfactory behaviors: Boy1 was absent-mindedly standing in a wrong position; Boy2 and Boy3 were not promptly and properly seated (Figure 4). Example (9) happened after the class when Teacher 1 noticed the chairs she arranged before the class have become messy. She blamed and warned the relevant boys, and issued a harsh command to Boy 4, Peng, to 'step back' (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Teacher criticized a boy for his untidy chair after the class

Example (8) [Criticism: seating; Command: motion; Teacher 1, Boy1, Boy2, Boy3]

* T1	◎zǒu	le	āi◎			[= relocating B1].
	go	ASP	SFP			
	'Go forward!'					
* T1	↑zǒu	guòlái	a!			[=to B2]
	go	come	SFP			
	'Come here!'					
* T1	nǐ	wǎng	nàbiān	jǐ	yīdiǎn	[=grasping B2's arm].
	2SG	toward	there	squeeze	a little	
	'You squeeze a little over there.'					
* T1	nàbiān	yǒu	wèizhì			
	there	have	seat			
	'There is a place over there.'					
* T1	↑lái	zhèbiān	zuò			[=grasping B1's arm].
	come	here	sit			
	'Come here to sit.'					
* T1	Δlái lái!Δ	kěyǐ	wǎng	zhèlǐ	zuò	[=grasping B3's arm].
	come come	can	toward	here	sit	
	'Come here come here, you can sit here.'					
* T1	↑zěnmé	bú	zuò	ne?		[=to B3]
	why	NEG	sit	Q		
	'why not sitting down?'					

Example (9) [Criticism: tidiness; Command: motion; Teacher 1, Boy4]

* T1	◎nǐ	kànkàn	gāngāng	bǎihào	de	bǎndèng!◎
	2SG	look-RED	just now	place-RES	ASSOC	chair
	'You look at the chairs I've just placed properly!'					
* T1	nǐ	kànkàn	biànchéng	shénme	yàngzi	le
	2SG	look-RED	become	what	mode	ASP
	'You see what they've become?'					
* T1	wǒ	dài	nǐmen	gāngcái	páihǎo	de bǎndèng + ...
	1SG	on behalf of	2PL	just now	arrange-RES	ASSOC chair
	'I just arranged the chairs on behalf of you guys...'					
*T1	↑biànchéng	shénme	yàngzi	la?		
	become	what	mode	SFP		
	'What they've become?'					
* T1	┌búyào	suíbiàn	de	nuó	bǎndèng!┐	[=to B4]

	NEG-IMP	randomly	ASSOC	move	chair	
	'Don't move chairs randomly!'					
* T1	◎péng,	wǎng	hòu	tui!◎	[=grasping B4's arm]	
	PN	toward	back	step back		
	'Peng, step back!'					

Example (10) shows a context when boys were criticized for interrupting teacher in the middle of class. Resembling the case of seating and tidiness, this type of Criticism only applied to boys. At first glance, the two boys' speeches may seem to be natural responses to the teacher's previous questions. However, if we consider the repeatedly emphasized classroom discipline, answering questions without raising hands would be regarded as interruptions.

Example (10) [Criticism: interruption; Teacher 1, Boy5, Boy6]

*T1	xiǎopéngyǒu	men	↑dōu	rènshí	gǒu	ma?	
	little friend	PL	all	know	dog	Q	
	'All of you know dogs?'						
*C	◎dōu	rènshí!◎					
	all	know					
	'We all know!'						
*B5	◎zánmen	jiālǐ◎	hái	↑yǎng	gǒu	ne!	[=screaming]
	2PL	home-LD	even	raise	dog	SFP	
	'We even raise dogs at home!'						
*T1	nà	nǐmen	xǐhuān	xiǎogǒu	ma?		[=ignores B5]
	Then	2PL	like	puppy	Q		
	'Do you like puppies then?'						
*C	◎xǐhuān!◎	[=screaming]					
	like						
	'Like!'						
*T1	hǎo de,	wǒmen	dōu	xǐhuān	xiǎogǒu		
	alright	1PL	all	like	puppy		
	'Alright, we all like puppies.'						
*T1	xiànzài	nǐ	jiǎng	méiyǒu	yòng		[=switch to B5]
	now	1SG	talk	NEG-have	usefulness		
	'It's useless for you to talk now.'						
*T1	yào	jiǎng	gěi	wǒmen	# dàjiā	tīng.	
	need	talk	toward	2PL	everybody	listen	
	'You should talk to everybody.'						
*T1	tīng	qīngchǔ	lǎoshī	de	huà	le	ma?
	listen	clearly	teacher	ASSOC	speech	ASP	Q
	'Did you listen carefully to what teacher told you?'						
[3 minutes later]							
*T1	zhèxiē	xiǎogǒu	# zhǎng	de	máoróngrōng	de	
	these	puppy	grow	ASSOC	fluffy	AUX	
	yǎnjīng	liàngliàng	de				
	eye	bright	AUX				
	'These puppies look fluffy, and have bright eyes.'						
*B6	◎néng	bǎohù	rénlèi!◎				[=screaming]
	can	protect	human				
	'They can protect humans!'						
*T1	hǎo,	↑wǒ	jiǎnghuà				[=to B6]
	alright	1SG	speech				

	nǐ	dōu	tīngdào	le	ma?
	2SG	all	hear	ASP	Q
	‘Alright, did you hear everything I said?’				
*T1	†yīnwèi	nǐ	yě	zài	jiǎng,
	because	2SG	also	ASP	talk
	‘Because you were also talking.’				
*T1	nǐ	xiān	tīng	wǒ	jiǎng
	2SG	first	listen	1SG	talk
	‘You should listen to me first.’				

Example (11) demonstrates a Criticism and Command scenario that happened more often to girls. Teacher 4 criticized two girls for their improper postures: placing feet on the back of the chair in front of them; standing up without permission. Like Criticism for boys, the teacher in this excerpt also gave prompt commands to the girls after criticism. She even threatened Girl 2, Xingyu, to enforce her compliant reaction.

Example (11)	[Criticism: posture; Command: motion; Teacher 4, Girl1 Wantong, Girl2 Xingyu]							
* T4	†lái,	wǎntóng,	qǐng	nǐ	bǎ	jiǎo	fàng	xiàlái!
	hey,	PN	please	2SG	ASSOC	foot	put	down-RES
	‘Hey, Wantong, please put your feet down!’							
* T4	lái,	xīngyǔ,	†qǐng	nǐ	zuò	xiàlái!		
	hey	PN	please	2SG	sit	down-RES		
	‘Hey, Xingyu, you please sit down.’							
* T4	hǎo,	lái!	—rènzhēn	kàn,	zuò	hǎo.	—	[=to G1]
	good	hey	carefully	look	sit	well		
	‘Good, hey! Look carefully and sit properly.’							
* T4	xiǎo	shǒu	yīnggāi	fàng	zài	nǎlǐ?		
	little	hand	should	put	PREP	where		
	‘Where should you put your little hands?’							
* G1	tuǐ	shàng						
	leg	up						
	‘On my legs.’							
* T4	†xiǎo	yǎnjīng	ne?					
	little	eye	Q					
	‘How about your little eyes?’							
*G1	kàn	lǎoshī						
	watch	teacher						
	‘They should watch the teacher.’							
* T4	lǎoshī	méi	ràng	nǐ	zhàn qǐlái	néng	bùnéng	zhàn?
	teacher	NEG	allow	2SG	stand up	can	NEG can	stand
	‘If the teacher hasn’t allowed you to stand up, can you?’							
*G1	bùnéng+							
	...							
	NEG can							
	‘I can’t.’							
* T4	+< lái,	xiǎopéngyǒu	qǐng	nǐ	◎zuò	xiàlái!◎		[=to G2]
	hey	little friend	please	2SG	sit	down-RES		

	‘Hey, this child, you please sit down!’							
* T4	◎xīngyǔ!	zuò	xiàlái!	◎				
	PN	sit	down-	RES				
	‘Xingyu, sit down!’							
* T4	†nǐ	gěi	wǒ	zuò	xiàlái!			
	2SG	for	1SG	sit	down-	RES		
	‘You sit down for my sake!’							
* T4	yào	bú	zuò	hǎo	bǎ	yǐzi	◎chōu	zǒu!◎
	if	NEG	sit	well	ASSOC	chair	take	away
	‘If you don’t sit properly, I will remove your chair!’							

Another example of Criticism and Command is in Example (12), a comprehensive conversation that includes multiple specific contexts: concentration, safety warning, and etiquette. Teacher 1 first reminded Boy7 to watch carefully, then asked him to show respect: lower the volume and answer while standing up. She also straightforwardly commanded Boy 8 to ‘keep his hands away’ and prohibited his fighting-related conversation or potential behaviors. In the dataset, while etiquette commands are relevant to both genders, concentration and safety warning Commands were only given to boys.

Example (12) [Command: concentration, etiquette, safety warning; Teacher1, Boy7, Boy8]

*T1	†kàn,	xiǎogǒu	fāhuǒ	le			
	look	puppy	angry	ASP			
	‘Look, the puppy is angry.’						
*B7	bǎ	rén #	yǎo	le			
	ASSOC	human	bite	ASP			
	‘S/he bit a human.’						
*T1	nǐ	xiànzài	zǐxì	kàn	ō		[=to B7]
	2SG	now	carefully	watch	SFP		
	‘Now you watch carefully.’						
	†kàn	wán	le	yào	huídá		
	watch	finish-RES	ASP	need	answer		
	wǒ	de	wèntí	de			
	1SG	ASSOC	question	ASSOC			
	‘You need to answer my questions after watching.’						
*C	—qù	le!	qù	zhuī	rén!—		
	go	ASP	go	chase	human		
	‘S/he went! S/he went to chase a human!’						
*B7	◎jiù	shì	nà	gè	yá!◎		[=screaming]
	exactly	COP	that	CLF	tooth		
	‘Exactly that kind of tooth!’						
*T1	◎nǐ	qīng	yīdiǎn!◎				[=comands on B8]
	1SG	soft	a little				
	‘You speak a bit softer!’						
	†zhàn	qǐlái	shuōhuà				[=hand gesture to stand up]
	stand	up-RES	talk				
	‘Stand up and talk.’						

[After watching video clip, in discussion]

*T1	tèbié	shì	xiǎopéngyǒu,	duì	bùduì?
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	especially	COP	little friend	correct	NEG correct				
	'Especially we children, right?'								
	↑gèng	róngyì	shòudào	shānghài.					
	more	easily	receive	injure					
	'We are more easily to get injured.'								
*T1	nǐ	bùyào	kàn	píngshí	xiǎogǒu				
	1SG	NEG	look	common time	puppy				
	tíng	wēnshùn	kě'ài	de					
	quite	docile	cute	NML					
	'You don't get fooled by puppies who commonly look docile and cute.'								
*T1	yīdàn	fānù,							
	once	angry							
	'Once they get angry.'								
*T1	shì	hěn	●kěpà●	de.					
	COP	very	scary	NML					
	'They are very scary.'								
*B8	●dǎ	yī	jià!●		[=screaming while waving arms excitedly]				
	fight	one	fight						
	'Fight with them!'								
*T1	nǐ	de	shǒu	●yuǎn	yīdiǎn!●			[=to B8]	
	1SG	ASSOC	hand	away	a little				
	'Keep your hands away!'								
*T1	bié	dǎ	dào	pángbiān	xiǎopéngyǒu!				
	don't	hit	RES	beside	little friend				
	'Don't hit the child beside you!'								
	↑bù	zhǔn	dǎjià!						
	NEG	allow	fight!						
	'Fighting is not allowed!'								

Fourth, results show that Feedbacks were given in relatively even weights, and accounted for 18% of teachers' attention to both genders. Each boy received 0.569 times, and each girl received 0.521 times of feedback. It is interesting to note that reminder feedbacks were only given to boys. As shown in previous Example (6), they were usually in the form of reminding classroom discipline or activity rules. Additionally, like Criticism and Command, safety warning Feedbacks were also widely observed. Sometimes, these safety concerns even overcome children's meaning expressions. In Example (13), Boy 9 wished to showcase his dog-raising expertise, but Teacher 1 suppressed his desire for speech through repeated safety feedback. Soon after, Girl 3's genuine question about dog bites also yielded to the teacher's eminent emphasis on safety.

Example (13)

	[Feedback: safety warning; Teacher 1, Boy9, Girl3]								
*T1	nǐ	bǎ	tā	rě	jí	le,			
	2SG	ASSOC	3SG	irritate	RES	ASP			
	*nà	tā	↑zhēn	de	huì	qù	lái	yǎo	nǐ.
	then	3SG	really	ASSOC	will	go	come	bite	2SG
	érqiě	tā...							
	and also	3SG							

	‘If you irritate him/her, s/he will really come up to bite you, and s/he also...’						
*B9	(+<)nàxiē	dōu	shì	jiā#	◎jiā	gǒu!	[=screaming]
	those	all	COP	home	home	dog	
	‘Those are all home-raised dogs!’						
*T1	érqiě	nǐ	huì	hěn	†tòng	hěn	tòng
	and	2SG	will	very	painful	very	painful
	‘And you will feel a lot of pain.’						
*B9	◎huì	dǎzhēn	◎!	[=screaming]			
	will	inject					
	‘They will get injected!’						
*T1	yǎng	de	chǒngwù	gǒu,	yě	†bù!	néng!
	raise	ASSOC	pet	dog	also	NEG	can
	suíbiàn	qù	shāng,	# qù	zhāorě	tā,	
	randomly	go	hurt	go	irritate	3SG	
	†duì	bú	duì?				
	correct	NEG	correct				
	‘Even for a home-raised pet dog, you can’t randomly go hurt and irritate him/her, right?’						
*B9	wǒmen	jiā	yǎng	le	hǎoduō	◎hǎoduō	gǒu!◎
	2PL	family	raise	ASP	many	many	dog
	‘Our family raise many many dogs!’						
*T1	hǎo,	wǒmen	zài	lái	kàn	[=to the whole class]	
	alright	2PL	again	come	watch		
	yí	duàn	shipín.				
	one	CLF	video				
	‘Alright, let’s watch the video clip again.’						
[after watching video clip, T1 asks G3 how to deal with a dog bite]							
*T1	rúguǒ	bèi	gǒu	yǎo	le,	[=to G3]	
	if	PSV	dog	bite	ASP		
	bú	shì	yí	gè	xiǎo	shì.	
	NEG	COP	one	CLF	small	issue	
	‘If you are bitten by a dog, it’s not a small issue.’						
*G3	jiùshì	yí	gè	xiǎopéngyǒu	:-	[=trying to recall the video story]	
	precisely	one	CLF	little friend			
	‘It’s precisely that, there is one child...’						
*T1	(+<) duì	bú	duì?	[=to G3]			
	correct	NEG	correct				
	‘Yes or no?’						
*T1	yíding	yào	◎gǎnjǐn◎	qù	yīyuàn.		
	must	need	immediate	go	hospital		
	‘You must need to go to the hospital immediately.’						
*G3	dànshì	tā	†wèishéme	yào	yǎo	wǒ?	
	but	3SG	why	want	bite	1SG	
	‘But why he wants to bite me?’						
*T1	†bù	guǎn	wèishéme.	[=to G3]			
	NEG	care	why				
	‘No matter why.’						
*T1	nǐ	†yíding	yào	dào	yīyuàn		
	2SG	must	need	arrive	hospital		
	qù	zhùshè	kuánguānbīng	yìmiáo,			
	go	inject	rabies	vaccine			
	‘You must go arrive at the hospital and get rabies vaccine injection.’						

*T1 míngbái bù míngbái?
understand NEG understand
‘Do you understand?’

Notably, inspiring thinking was the most common Feedback purpose for both genders, 32% for girls and 38% for boys. As shown in Example (14), they are usually conducted together with comprehension checking Questions and Echoes.

Example (14) [Feedback: inspiring thinking; Question: check understanding; Echo; Teacher 3, G4, B10]

*G4 tā bù xiǎoxīn jiǎn huài le.
3SG NEG careful cut wrong ASP
‘S/he cut the cloth wrong accidentally.’

*T3 jiǎn huài le tā de biǎoqíng
cut wrong ASP 3SG ASSOC expression
shì shénme yàng de a? [% echoes, inspires G4]
COP what mod NML SFP
‘When s/he cut it wrong, what her/his expression was like?’

*G4 †wū! [=mimicking crying]
woo
‘Woo!’

*T3 ò, hěn †jǔsàng duì bú duì?
oh very frustrated correct NEG correct
‘Oh, very frustrated, right?’

*T3 hěn nánguò. [=to G4]
very sad
‘Very sad.’

*G4 tā jiǎn huài le [=continues storytelling]
3SG cut wrong ASP
‘S/he cut the cloth wrong.’

*T3 duì, tā jiǎn zhe jiǎn zhe,
right 3SG cut ASP cut ASP
túrán jiǎn huài le. [% echoes G4]
suddenly cut wrong ASP
‘Right, when s/he was cutting, suddenly s/he cut it wrong.’

*T3 tā †biǎoqíng huì shénme yàng? [% inspires G4]
3SG expression will what mode
‘What her/his expression will be like?’

*C tài jīngyà le.
very surprising ASP
‘Very surprising.’

*G4 nánguò
sad
‘Sad.’

[A few minutes later, a boy was invited to narrate]

*B10 wǒ jiǎn bù qǐlái le.
1SG cut NEG become ASP
‘I am unable to cut it now.’

*T3 jiǎn bù qǐlái shì bú shì
cut NEG become COP NEG COP
hěn shēngqì a? [% echoes, inspires B10]
very angry SFP
‘If s/he can't cut it would s/he be very angry?’

*B10 shì de!
COP NML
‘Yes!’

*T3 ránhòu tā shuō le shénme? [% checks B10]

	then	3SG	say	ASP	what	
	‘Then what did s/he say?’					
*T3	hái	jìdé	la?			
	still	remember	SFP			
	‘Still remember?’					
*B10	tā	shuō	suàn	le.		
	3SG	say	forget	ASP		
	‘S/he said forget it.’					
*T3	ài!	suàn	le (+...)		[% echoes B10]	
	right	forget	ASP			
	‘Right! S/he said forget it...’					
*T3	suàn	le	de	yìsi	shì (+...)	[% inspires B10]
	forget	ASP	ASSOC	meaning	COP	
	‘The meaning of forget it is...’					
*T3	dì	èr	tiān	xiǎo	qīngwā	[% checks B10]
	ORD	two	day	little	frog	
	gēn	hámá	shuō?			
	with	toad	say			
	‘The second day, what did little frog say to toad?’					
*B10	*wǒ	gěi	nǐ	zuò	yí	jiàn
	1SG	give	2SG	make	one	CLF
	màozi	ba				
	hat	SFP				
	‘How about I make you a hat?’					
*T3	ránhòu	wǒmen	de	hámá	tīng	le
	then	2PL	ASSOC	toad	listen	ASP
	yǐhòu	shuō (+...)				
	after	say				
	‘Then after listening to that, our toad said...’					
*B10	tā	shuō	wǒ	zuì	xīhuān	
	3SG	say	1SG	most	like	
	nǐ	de	màozi	le.		
	2SG	ASSOC	hat	ASP		
	‘He said I like your hat most.’					

Finally, Question is another remarkable speech act that demonstrates statistically significant gender differences. It composes 21% of teacher-girl interactions but only 10% of teacher-boy interactions. In this study, questions were given to each girl 0.667 times while each boy 0.353 times.

Contextual gender differences occurred in four aspects. (i) As shown in Example (14) and (15), most of the Questions aimed to check understandings, with girls’ proportion (34%) higher than boys (28%). (ii) As discussed in previous Example (3), more boy-targeted questions were about knowledge (girl 6%; boy 28%) and boys were praised for that reason more often as well. (iii) As shown in Example (1), Questions about life experience and other’s emotions were only given to girls. (iv) Inspirational Questions were only given to girls as teachers tend to use Feedback (statement) to inspire boys but Questions to inspire girls. The following Example (15) illustrates this tendency,

in which Teacher 3 adopted multiple questions to inspire girls. While in the previous Example (14), boys were inspired through statement feedback.

Example (15) [Question: check understanding, inspiration; Teacher 3, Girl 12, Girl 13, Girl 14, G15, Boy 17]

[Discuss about the fairy tale story shown on the slides]

*T3	qǐng please	nǐ 2SG	lái come	shuō talk	yī one	shuō, talk	
	'You please come and talk about it.'						
*T3	women 2PL	de ASSOC	xiǎo little	qīngwā, frog			
	jiàndào see-RES	hámá toad	zhīhòu, after				
	zuò do	le ASP	shénme what	a? SFP			[% check G12]
	'Our little frog, after s/he saw toad, what did s/he do?'						
*G12	bù NEG	zhīdào. know					
	'I don't know.'						
*T3	hámá toad	shuō say	shénme? what	[=to class]			
	'What did the toad say?'						
*T3	women 2PL	xiǎopéngyǒu little friend	háiyǒu still	jìdé remember	ma? SFP		
	'Do we children still remember?'						
*T3	lái, okay	níní PN	nǐ 2SG	zhīdào know	ma? SFP		[% check G13]
	'Okay, Nini, you please come and talk about it.'						
G13	tā 3SG	jiù then	méiyǒu NEG	shuōhuà say	le. ASP		
	'S/he then didn't say anything.'						
*T3	women 2PL	de ASSOC	hámá, toad				
	zhè this	cì CLF	shuō say	le ASP	shénme what	a? SFP	
	'What did our toad say this time?'						
*T3	nǐ 2SG	zhīdào know	ma? SFP				[% check G14]
	'Do you know?'						
*G14	tā 3SG	hěn very	kāixīn. happy				
	'He was very happy.'						
*T3	xiǎngxiǎng imagine	yí one	xià CLF	nǐ 2SG	kāixīn happy		[% inspires G14]
	huì will	shuō say	shénme? what				
	'Imagine when you are happy, what would you say?'						
*G14	huì will	xiào. laugh					
	'I will laugh.'						
	[G15 and B17 are in the middle of skit performance]						
*T3	xiǎo little	qīngwā frog	zài ASP	zuò make	màozi hat	qián, before	[% check B17]
	duì to	zìjǐ self	shuō say	le ASP	shénme what	a? SFP	
	'What did little frog say to him/herself before making the hat?'						
*B17	jiǎn cut	huài wrong	le. ASP				
	'I cut it wrong.'						
*T3	xiǎo little	qīngwā frog	duì to	zìjǐ self			[% check G15]

	little	frog	to	self
	shuō	le	shénme?	
	say	ASP	what	
	‘What did little frog say to him/herself?’			
*T3	xiǎngxiàng	yí	xià	[% inspires G15]
	imagine	one	CLF	
	nǐ	shì	xiǎo	hámá
	2SG	COP	little	toad
	nǐ	huì	shuō	shénme?
	2SG	will	say	what
	‘Imagine if you were little toad, what would you say then?’			

3.5 Teacher’s attention allocation across emotional contexts

Finally, teacher-initiated interactions were analyzed from three emotional contexts: (i) positive, (ii) neutral, and (iii) negative. A positive emotional context is defined as one in which teachers generate positive efforts and positive emotions; this includes four previously discussed speech acts: Praise, Echo & Recast, Invitation, and Feedback. Negative emotional context refers to the scenario in which the teacher was unsatisfied, angry, or stern, such as Criticism and Command. The remaining Neutral emotional contexts include two speech acts: Question and Others. Questions in this study were defined as unemotional, factual instructional information-seeking inquires that appeared in the classroom setting; therefore, they were grouped as neutral.

Table 27. Distribution of emotional contexts across gender

Gender	Girl			Boy			Overall		
	Count	Per person	Pct.	Count	Per person	Pct.	Count	Per person	Pct.
Emotional Context									
Positive	99	2.06	63.46%	113	2.22	62.09%	212	2.14	62.72%
Negative	21	0.44	13.46%	46	0.90	25.27%	67	0.68	19.82%
Neutral	36	0.75	23.08%	23	0.45	12.64%	59	0.60	17.46%
Total	156	3	100%	182	4	100%	338	3	100.00%

Table 28. ANOVA Statistics of teacher-initiated interaction across *emotional contexts*

Interaction	Girl		Boy		By Gender		By Class		By School		By Gender X Class		By Gender X School	
	M	SD	M	SD	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value	F-ratio	p-value
Positive	2.063	1.694	2.216	1.376	0.245	0.622	0.039	0.844	0.632	0.429	0.026	0.872	1.951	0.166
Negative	0.438	0.616	0.902	0.922	8.578	0.00424 **	0.273	0.602	0.081	0.777	0.602	0.440	1.406	0.239
Neutral	0.750	0.838	0.451	0.541	4.503	0.0364 *	0.463	0.498	0.813	0.369	0.127	0.722	0.464	0.497

As a generalization of speech acts, this investigation procedure aimed to explore teacher’s affective role in the gender socialization process. As Table 27 shows, among

the overall 338 interactions, 62.72% were positive, 19.82% were negative, and 17.46% were neutral. This indicates that positive affection dominated teacher-initiated interactions, but negative affects concurrently existed.

In general, both genders received positive interactions most frequently, and the girls received slightly more (63.46%) positive interactions than the boys (62.09%). On average, a girl was involved in positive interactions 2.06 times, and a boy 2.22 times. This subtle difference, as expected, is not statistically significant according to ANOVA (Table 28). In comparison, a remarkable divergence was found in negative interactions, which constitute 25.27% of boy’s interactions but only 13.46% of girls. While each boy was involved in negative interactions 0.90 times, contrasting only 0.44 times for each girl. ANOVA analysis yielded a statistical significance by Gender ($F(1,97) = 8.578, p = 0.00424$), but not by Gender \times Class and Gender \times School. Another gender difference emerged in neutral interactions, which take a smaller proportion in boys’ total teacher-initiated interactions (12.64%) than girls’ (23.08%). On average, boys and girls encountered neutral interactions 0.45 times and 0.75 times, respectively. Again, via ANOVA, this variation was also proved to be statistically significant by Gender ($F(1,97) = 4.503, p = 0.0364$), but not by paired variables.

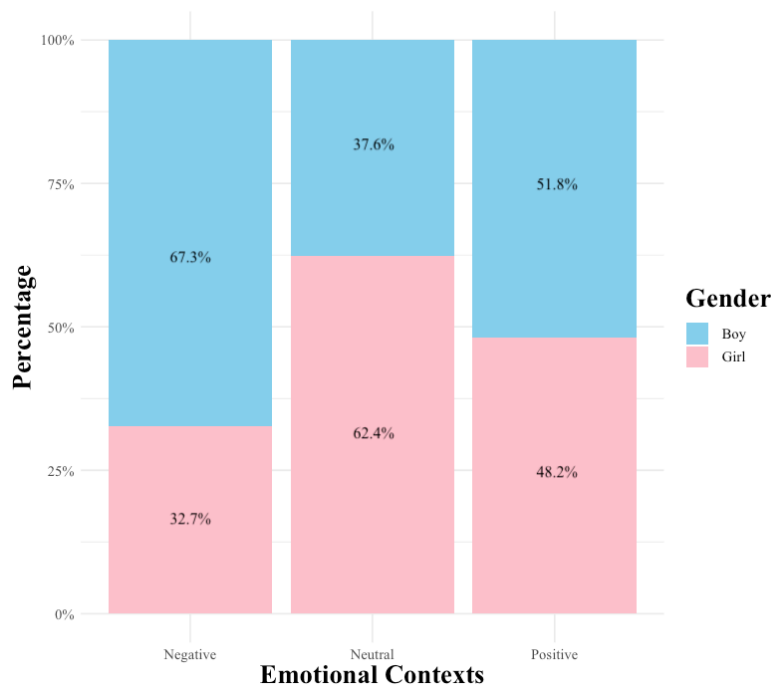


Figure 6. Gender proportions across emotional contexts

As visualized in Figure 6, from a teacher's perspective, boys received the majority of negative interactions (67.3%), nearly half of positive interactions 51.8%, and a smaller number of neutral interactions (37.6%). By contrast, girls received fewer positive (48.2%) and negative (32.7%) attentions but attracted more neutral (62.4%) treatments. This distribution indicates that, regardless of affective property, a teacher's attention is more likely to be paid to boys. From the teacher, boys may face more negative interactions but at the same time receive more positive treatments.

3.6. Teachers' linguistic practices

Drawing upon the current data, teachers' sexist practices and gender equity practices were analyzed. If we consider the two practices as polarized cases on a continuum. On one end of the continuum, I define sexist practice as gender stereotype reinforcement as demonstrated in the teachers' (i) gender label usage and (ii) sex-role stereotyping. On the other end, a gender equity practice refers to teacher's fair treatment of boys and girls in a gender-neutral way.

The results indicate that teachers of the two kindergartens initiated a moderate amount of sexist practices. Their overall attitude and linguistic practice approach the *equity* end of the continuum. It appeared that the four observed teachers aimed to create a gender-neutral environment in the classroom. In general, gender stereotypes were not overtly touched upon, discussed, or assumed. Although the current data shows that the four and five-year-old children have already gained awareness about existing gender stereotypes in society, teachers did not actively reinforce them in their teachings.

3.6.1 Gender label use

It has been discussed in the introduction section that that sexist traditional ideology is rooted in the Chinese language (Jung-Palandri, 1991; Liu, 1991; Wang, 1986). Table 29 presents child-related vocabulary in standard Mandarin and Nanjing vernacular (marked with *). While three words (i.e., *nán tóng*, *nǚ tóng*, *ér tóng*) are exclusively used for referential purposes, the others can be used as both address and referential terms. As Table 29 illustrates, gender labels in the form of prefixes, 男 *nán* ('male') and 女 *nǚ* ('female'), can be productively prefixed to head nouns for gender specification.

Meanwhile, a comprehensive, gender-neutral prefix 小 *xiǎo* ('little') can also be used before child-related words to downplay gender and emphasize juvenileness.

Table 29. Child-related vocabulary in Standard Mandarin and Nanjing vernacular

Reference	Word	Register
Boy	男童 <i>nán tóng</i> ('male child')	formal description, not for addressing
	男生 <i>nán shēng</i> ('male student')	formal, school setting
	男孩 <i>nán hái</i> ('male child')	formal
	男娃 <i>nán wá</i> ('male child')	informal
	*炮子子 <i>pào zǐ zǐ</i> ('naughty boy')	informal, derogatory
Girl	女童 <i>nǚ tóng</i> ('female child')	formal description, not for addressing
	女生 <i>nǚ shēng</i> ('female student')	formal, school setting
	女孩 <i>nǚ hái</i> ('female child')	formal
	女娃 <i>nǚ wá</i> ('female child')	informal
	*丫头 <i>yā tou</i> ('gal')	informal, derogatory
Child	儿童 <i>ér tóng</i> ('child')	formal description, not for addressing
	小朋友 <i>xiǎo péngyǒu</i> ('little friend')	formal
	小孩 <i>xiǎo hái</i> ('little child')	formal
	小娃娃 <i>xiǎo wáwá</i> ('little child')	informal
	*毛娃 <i>máo wá</i> ('small child')	informal
	*毛头 <i>máo tóu</i> ('small head')	informal

Little friend: a genderless addressing term

A search for all words from Table 29 in the dataset revealed that no gender label, such as *nán* ('male') and *nǚ* ('female'), was used to address children. Although the female marker *nǚ* showed up once in one teacher's speech, however, crucially, it was used in her immediate echo response to a child's initial use (discussed in Example 19 later). It was discovered that instead of employing gender labels, teachers of this study uniformly used a gender-neutral term 小朋友 *xiǎo péngyǒu* ('little friend') to address individual children, a group of children, or a generic, third-party child as general concept.

Table 30 reports the frequencies of *xiǎo péngyǒu* that occurred across contexts in the data. In total, 160 occurrences of *xiǎo péngyǒu* were identified. This address term was most favored (130; 81%) when teachers interacted with the whole class or mixed-gender groups (both coded as T-C). On the individual level, girls (14) were more frequently addressed as *xiǎo péngyǒu* than boys (12). However, a *chi*-square test of independence showed no significant association between a child's gender and the teacher's use of *xiǎo péngyǒu* ($\chi^2 = 1.9529$, $p = .58223$). While no boy in the data used *xiǎo péngyǒu* in their

speech toward the teacher, four girls identified themselves, other children, or fairy tale characters as *xiǎo péngyǒu*.

Table 30. Frequencies of using gender-neutral addressing term *xiǎo péngyǒu* across contexts

Kindergarten	Class	Total	T-C	T-B	T-G	C-T	B-T	G-T
A	Senior	23	15	3	3	0	0	2
	Junior	55	49	4	2	0	0	0
B	Senior	34	26	2	5	0	0	1
	Junior	48	40	3	4	0	0	1
Overall		160	130	12	14	0	0	4

The following Example (16) illustrates teacher's typical use of *xiǎo péngyǒu*. In the conversation below, Teacher1 used *xiǎo péngyǒu* three times to address (i) children in the classroom, (ii) a random, unknown, general concept of children, and (iii) Girl 3.

Example (16) [Little friend as addressing term; T1, B18, G3]

[Teacher shows a puppy photo on the screen]

- *T1 jǔ shǒu, hǎo bù hǎo? [=to class]
 raise hand good NEG good
 Raise your hands, okay?
- *T1 nǎ ge xiǎopéngyǒu shǒu zuì gāo? [% addressing class]
 which CLF little friend hand most high
 Which child's hand is raised highest?
- *T1 hǎo, míngmíng, nǐ shuō [=to B18]
 alright PN 2SG talk
 Alright, Mingming, you talk about it.
- *B18 tā yǒu wéijīn
 3SG have scarf
 S/he has a scarf.
- *T1 nǐ juéde tā dài le yí gè [=to B18]
 2SG think 3SG wear ASP one CLF
 xiǎo wéidōudou shì ba?
 small bib COP SFP
 You think he is wearing a small bib, right?
- *T1 xiàng xiǎopéngyǒu yíyàng, shì ba? [% referring to any child]
 like little friend same COP SFP
 Just like we children, right?

[Teacher shows another picture]

- *T1 hǎo, wǒmen zài kàn.
 alright 2PL again see
 Alright, let's see another picture.
- *C ⊙wà!!! [% screaming because the puppy is cute]
 ! ⊙
 wow

	Wow!							
*T1	nǐ	kàn	zhè	zhī	gǒu	xiǎo	bù	xiǎo?
	2SG	see	this	CLF	dog	small	NE G	small
	You see this dog, is s/he small?							
*T1	nǐ	shuō,	xiǎopéngyǒu	nǐ	zhàn	qǐlái	shuō	[% addressing G3]
	2SG	say	u little friend	2SG	stand	up-RES	talk	
	You talk about it child, stand up and talk.							
G3	zhè	ge	gǒu	zhǎn	nàme	duō	máo	ya!
	this	CLF	dog	g grow	that	much	hair	CLF
	This dog has so much hair!							

Gender label absence during bathroom assembly

Surprisingly, this absence of gender label even exists during bathroom time, when gender concept is expected to be salient. Example (17) presents a typical teacher-child conversation in this scenario. Teacher 1 in this excerpt did not use *nán* ('male') and *nǚ* ('female') to address or distinguish children. Instead, she used *zǔ* ('group') as the unit to direct children, and a genderless term *nǐmen jǐ gè* (lit. 'a few of you') to address and direct boys. Notably, in this class, as in all other observed classes, the teacher lined up children by groups rather than by gender. As shown in Figure 7, usually, boys and girls were commingled in the same line outside the bathroom doors. When their turn came, they stepped into separated bathrooms.



Figure 7. Children of both genders line up together for bathroom

Example (17) Bathroom time gender label absence; T1, groups of children
[Before the class, teacher arranges children to use bathroom quickly]

*T1	†dì	yī	zǔ	dì	èr	zǔ	q ù	xiǎobiàn !	[=to two groups]
	ORD	one	group	OR D	two	group	g o	urinate	
	The first group and second group go to use the bathroom!								
*T1	Δxiǎobiàn n	xiǎobiàn Δ	[=to a girl]						
	urinate	urinate							
	Use the bathroom, use the bathroom.								
*T1	hǎo	nǐmen	jǐ	gè	Δpáidu ì	xiǎobiàn Δ		[=to three boys]	
	alright	2PL	severa l	CLF	line up	urinate			
	Alright, you guys line up and use the bathroom.								

3.6.2 Sex-role stereotyping in teaching materials

To examine if teachers have perpetuated sex-role stereotypes or sex-based prejudice, all literary texts adopted as pedagogical materials were investigated. This included all on-screen texts served as prompts, storylines, instructions, and video clip subtitles. Since children of this age have limited reading ability, the purpose of this investigation was to explore teacher's interpretation of the texts and their possible gender reinforcement in teaching. Results revealed that the two kindergartens' teachers did not assume genders of the in-text characters, even when the context implied gender stereotypes. Instead of introducing sex-role stereotypes through the characters, teachers preferred to portray them as genderless but childlike personae.

The genderless friend 'needle-frog'

For instance, Example (18) is composed of discrete utterances extracted from a fairy tale story class. The fairy tale describes a frog who tried to make a piece of clothing for a toad's birthday (original Chinese texts in Figure 8) but failed after multiple attempts. Children were required to comprehend the story first and then conducted relevant skit performances under teachers' guidance.

Tailoring skill is conventionally associated with feminine traits in Chinese culture, where women were required to practice and acquire 女红 *nǚ gōng* ('needlework' or 'embroidery') from a young age. The *nǚ gōng* technique was commonly inherited from older women (Liu, 2011; Wang, 2007; Zhang & Cui, 2015). This gender-exclusive lineage explains why *nǚ gōng* contains the female prefix *nǚ*. Although contemporary

Chinese society no longer requires women to master *nǚ gōng* and the sartorial industry nowadays does not exclude men, making clothes and gifting hand-made clothes are primarily associated with females.

Gender equality practices were discovered through Example (18). First, Teacher 3 did not assume the gender of the characters. Instead of introducing them as 青蛙姑娘 *qīngwā gūniáng* ('frog girl) or 蛤蟆妹妹 *hámá mèimei* ('toad sister'), she emphasized on the youthfulness of the characters. During the whole class, the juvenile term 小青蛙 *xiǎo qīngwā* ('little frog') was used 49 times, and 小蛤蟆 *xiǎo hámá* ('little toad') was used 14 times. The prefix *xiǎo* ('little') creates a cuddly sense of familiarity for the children; it also degendered the characters. Second, as Example (18) shows, Teacher 3 invited children of both genders to act as frogs and toads, including individuals, mixed-gender pairs, and same-gender pairs. During the class, both boys and girls had the opportunity to act as the 'needle-frog'. This indicates that Teacher 3 was not engaged in associating fairy tale characters' behaviors with sex-roles.

Example (18) The genderless friend 'needle-frog'; T3; G13, B10, G16, G17
[Introduce the story characters]

*T3	wǒme n 2PL	gùshi story	de ASSOC	míngzi, name	[=to class]	
	jiào call	sònggěi give	hámá toad	de ASSOC	lǐwù. gift	
	The name of our story is called a gift for toad.					
*T3	wǒme n 2PL	yìqǐ together	lái come	kànkàn look-RED		
	cóng from	zhè this	ge CLF	gùshi story		
	wǒme n 2PL	kěyǐ can	kàndào see-RES	shénme what	a? SFP	
	Together, let's see what we can learn from this story?					
*C	yǒu have	qīngwā frog	hé and	hámá! toad	[=screaming together]	
	There are a frog and a toad.					
*T3	xiǎo little	qīngwā, frog	hái else	yǒu have	ne? SFP	[=to class]
	Besides the little frog, what else do we have?					
*C	hái else	yǒu have	hámá. toad			
	There is a toad.					
*T3	zhè this	ge CLF	shì COP	hámá. toad	[=pointing at toad figure on the slide]	
	This is toad.					
*T3	zài	guò	jǐ	tiān	shì	hámá de shēngri.

	more	pass	several	day	COP	toad	ASSOC	birthday
	A few days later is toad's birthday.							
*T3	qīngwā ā	xiǎng	zuò	yí	jiàn	yīfu,		
	frog	want	make	one	CLF	clothes		
	zuòwéi	shēngrì	lǐwù	sònggěi	tā.			
	as	birthday	gift	give	3SG			
	Frog wants to make a piece of clothing and give it to toad as birthday present.							
	[Invite a girl to perform]							
*T3	hǎo,	nǐ	lái	shì	yí	shì.	[=to G13]	
	okay	2SG	come	try	one	try		
	nǐ	lái	xué	yí	xià	xiǎo	qīngwā	
	2SG	come	mimic	one	CLF	little	frog	
	Okay, you come and try mimicking little frog.							
	[Invite a boy to perform]							
*T3	wǒ	qǐng	yí	gè	xiǎopéngyǒu	shàng	tái	
	1SG	invite	one	CLF	little friend	up	stage	
	zuò	yí	zuò	hámá	de	biǎoqíng	shì	shénme?
	do	one	do	toad	ASSOC	expression	COP	what
	I invite one child to the front to show what the toad's expression is like?							
*T3	jiāyuè,	shàng	lái	shìshì.	[=to B10]			
	PN	up	come	try-RED				
	Jiayue, you come to the front and try.							
	[Inviting a pair of girls to perform skits]							
*T3	wǒmen	yìqǐ	lái	huífù	wǒmen	de	gùshì	
	2PL	together	come	recall	2PL	ASSOC	story	
	Let's recall our story together.							
*T3	lái,	qǐng	zǐjiā	yǎn	xiǎo	qīngwā.	[=to G16]	
	alright	invite	PN	act	little	frog		
	Alright, let's invite Zijia to act the role of little frog.							
*T3	hái	yǒu	shéi	xiǎng	yǎn	a?		
	else	have	who	want	act	SFP		
	Who else wants to act?							
*T3	lái	qǐng	yúnxī	yǎn	xiǎo	hámá	[=to G17]	
	alright	invite	PN	act	little	toad		
	Alright, let's invite Yunxi to act the role of little toad.							
	[Inviting a mixed gender pair to perform skits]							
*T3	èn,	wǒmen	de	xiǎopéngyǒu	[=to G16&17]			
	alright	2PL	ASSOC	little friend				
	yǎn	dé	fēicháng	hǎo!				
	act	ASSOC	very	good				
	Alright, our children performed very well!							
*T3	zhǎo	língwài	yí	zǔ	xiǎopéngyǒu.			
	find	other	one	group	little friend			
	Let's find another group of children.							
	nǐmen	liǎng	ge	lái	ba.	[=to a boy and a girl]		
	2PL	two	CLF	come	SFP			
	You two come up please.							



Figure 8. Teacher's slides of fairy tale story "A gift for toad"

Furthermore, while spoken Chinese does not phonetically distinguish gender through the third person singular pronoun *tā*, the written texts on the teacher's slides (Figure 8) adopted 他 *tā*. In Chinese, 他 *tā*, which is masculine singular, can be used to

refer to either a masculine or a gender-unspecified character. Facilitated by the two characters' genderless appearances in the illustration and the teacher's emphasis on youthfulness, it is reasonable to interpret 他 *tā* here as gender-neutral or unspecified. The frog, who proposed to offer a hand-made gift, though conducting a conventionally feminine activity, was not labeled as female. The toad, who was so understandable and flexible after frog's rounds of failures, was not assigned gender, either.

Policewoman: a compensatory model

Besides literary texts, observed teachers also used various visual displays in teaching, including cartoon screenshots, photographs, illustrations, and video clips. An investigation of their manipulation of visual displays revealed that although sex-role stereotyping emerged via this channel, gender equity practices, such as compensatory recognition of female achievement, were concurrently conducted. Example (19) illustrates this balance. Through slide pictures, Teacher 2 implied the stereotypical sex of a police officer — male; at the same time, she also displayed a policewoman as a compensatory model.



Figure 9. Children quickly noticed the policewoman on the screen

In Chinese, children commonly use kinship terms to politely address non-kin adults (Li & Thompson, 1981). For instance, 叔叔 *shūshu* ('uncle'), as in compounds 交通警察叔叔 *jiāotōngjǐng shūshu* ('traffic police uncle') and 警察叔叔 *jǐngchá shūshu* ('police

uncle’) are conventionalized vocabulary mainly used by children. Notably, ‘police’ in Chinese is 警察 *jǐngchá*, and it’s semantically gender-neutral: 警 *jǐng* (‘to alert’) and 察 *chá* (‘to inspect’). Keyword search on 多领域 (multi-domain) of BCC Corpus (<http://bcc.blcu.edu.cn>) showed that the frequencies of *jiāojǐng shūshu* (‘traffic police uncle’) and *jǐngchá shūshu* (‘police uncle’) are 189 and 1579, respectively. By contrast, the frequencies of their female counterparts, *jiāojǐng āyí* (‘traffic police aunt’) and *jǐngchá āyí* (‘police aunt’), are 0 and 22, respectively. This usage discrepancy reflects society-level sex-role stereotypes related to occupations.

Although somewhat diminished by Teacher 2’s active recognition of female achievement, this male dominance was delivered to the children through visual display and linguistic usage. In Example (19), 叔叔 *shūshu* (‘uncle’) was used five times, once by Boy12 and four times by Teacher 2. In comparison, 阿姨 *āyí* (‘aunt’) was only used once, although not in the complete form of 警察阿姨 *jǐngchá āyí* (‘police aunt’) or 交警阿姨 *jiāojǐng āyí* (‘traffic police aunt’). Furthermore, as Example (19) shows, the preschool children were already aware of the generic masculine stereotypes related to police officers. This explains why the children shouted out *nǚ de* (‘a woman’) when they saw a less commonly seen policewoman. Intriguingly, when Teacher 2 showed a group of male policemen, they commented *bù yīyàng de jǐngchá* (‘different kind of police’). This reaction indicated their existing awareness of occupational sex-role stereotypes.

Example (19) [Policewoman: a compensatory model; T2, C, B12]
 [shows picture of a traffic policeman]

*T2	zhèxiē these	yīwài, beside							
	wǒmen 2PL	hái also	huì will	kāndào see-RES	jiāojǐng traffic police	shūshu uncle			[% uses 'traffic police uncle']
	zhàn stand	zài PREP	nàbiān there	zhǐhūi direct	duì right	bú NEG	duì? right	[=to class]	
	Besides these, we may also see a traffic police uncle standing there and directing the traffic, right?								
*T2	†yǒu have	méi NEG	yǒu have	kāndào see-RES	guò? ASP			[=to class]	
	Have you ever seen?								
*C	●kāndào see-RES	guò!● ASP							[=screaming]
	Have seen that!								
*T2	xiǎopéngyǒu u	men	kàn	yí	xià.				

	little friend	PL	see	one	time				
	Children, please take a look.								
*T2	jiāojǐng	shūshu	de	nà	gè	shǒushì,	[% uses 'traffic police uncle']		
	traffic police	uncle	ASSOC	that	CLF	hand gesture			
	†shì	zěnmē	zuò	de	a?				
	COP	how	make	NML	SFP				
	How does traffic police uncle do that hand gesture?								
	[shows a traffic policewoman]								
*T2	zhè	ge	zīshì	ne?		[=pointing at a gesture on the slide]			
	this	CLF	gesture	Q					
	How about this gesture?								
*C	●nǚ	de!!●	[=screaming]						
	female	NML							
	A woman!!								
*T2	zhè	ge,	# ò,	zhè	shì	gè	†nǚ	jǐngchá	
	this	CLF	oh	this	COP	CLF	policewoman		
	This, oh, this is a policewoman.								
*T2	āi,	zhè	ge	a,					
	alright	this	CLF	SFP					
	tā	shì	yí	gè	#zhíxíng	de	biāozhì.		
	3SG	COP	one	CLF	go straight	ASSOC	sign		
	Alright, this is, it is a go straight sign.								
*T2	wǒmen	de	āyí	ya,	[% uses 'police aunt']				
	2PL	ASSOC	aunt	SFP					
	tā	huì	bǎ	tā	de	shǒu	†tái	qílái.	
	3SG	will	ASSOC	3SG	ASSOC	hand	raise	RES	
	Our aunt (the policewoman) will raise her hand up.								
	[shows a group of male traffic policemen]								
*T2	nà	kànkàn	zhèxiē	jǐngchá	ne?				
	then	see-RED	these	police	SFP				
	Then how about we see these policemen?								
*C	bù	yīyàng	de	jǐngchá!	[% because those are policemen]				
	NEG	same	ASSOC	police					
	Different kind of police!								
*T2	bù	yīyàng	de	jǐngchá?	[=turning back and checking the screen]				
	NEG	same	ASSOC	police					
	Different kind of police?								
*T2	zhèxiē	jǐngchá	tāmen	zěnyàng	a?				
	these	police	3PL	how	SFP				
	What do these police do?								
*C	tāmen	jǔ	shǒu						
	3PL	raise	hand						
	They raise their hands.								
	[wraps up the class]								
*T2	èn,	jīntiān	a,	[=to class][% uses 'police uncle']					
	alright	today	SFP						
	wǒmen	kàn	le	zhème	duō	de	biāozhì,		
	2PL	see	ASP	so	many	ASSOC	sign		
	yě	liǎojiě	le	jǐngchá	shūshu	de	yīxiē	shǒushì.	
	also	comprehen	ASP	police	uncle	ASSOC	some	gesture	
		d							
	Alright, today we have seen so many signs, and also comprehended some gestures of police uncles.								
*T2	nǐmen	†dōu	zhǎngwò	le	ma?				
	2PL	all	know well	ASP	Q				
	Do all of you know them well?								
*C	●zhǎngwò	le!●	[=screaming]						
	know well	ASP							
	We know them well!								

*T2	nǐ	bù	zūnshǒu	jiù	huì	[=to class] [% uses 'police uncle']
	2SG	NEG	abide by	then	will	
	bèi	jǐngchá	shūshu	zhuā	qílái,	
	PSV	police	uncle	arrest	RES	
	†shì	bú	shì	a?		
	COP	NEG	COP	SFP		
	If you don't abide by the law, then police uncle will arrest you, right?					
*B12	huì	bèi	jǐngchá	shūshu	zhuā,	[=screaming] [% uses 'police uncle']
	will	PSV	police	uncle	arrest	
	guāndào	●lóngzi	lǐmiàn!●			
	lock-RES	cage	inside			
	Will be arrested by police uncles and be locked into a cage!					

3.7 The school environment

In this section, I will report major findings from interviews with the four observed teachers and two principals. This investigation serves to provide extra information regarding gender socialization at the institutional and pedagogical levels. Furthermore, it also provides methodological triangulation and ensures a better interpretation of the previous quantitative and qualitative analysis results.

3.7.1 All-female faculty

The female to male ratio of kindergarten employees potentially sets a gendered tone for the school environments and the interactions they embrace. As introduced in the methodology section, both kindergartens have a quasi-all-female employment body. Besides the dominating numbers of female teachers (25 in Kindergarten A; 34 in Kindergarten B), they both have only one male employee, the security guard. According to the principals, security guards in both kindergartens mostly spend their working hours in the reception office apart from the children, though interactions between the two parties may occasionally occur. This uneven gender distribution of kindergarten personnel is pervasive in China. As the 2020 data published by the Ministry of Education⁶ shows, nationwide, 97.79% of full-time teachers hired by pre-school education institutions are females. This percentage is not only the highest among all

⁶ Data source: official website of Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (http://www.moe.gov.cn/s78/A03/moe_560/jytjsj_2019/qg/202006/t20200611_464798.html)

levels of education (e.g., 53.48% in higher education) but also towers over the average female percentage (66%) across all levels of education.

Table 31. Female to male ratio across class and school

Class	Number of girls	Number of boys	Number of Teachers	Female to Male ratio
Senior	15	13	2	1.31:1
Junior	10	12	3	1.08:1
Kindergarten A	25	25	5	1.2:1
Senior	11	14	6	1.21:1
Junior	12	12	2	1.17:1
Kindergarten B	23	26	8	1.19:1
Overall	48	51	13	1.2:1

If we calculate gender ratios of all participants in the study, males in both kindergartens have smaller populations than females. As shown in Table 31, the overall female to male ratio is 1.2:1, indicating children’s potentially more frequent exposure to feminine behaviors and beliefs. More importantly, observational data also suggests that the children’s kindergarten hours are primarily teacher-directed. The female teachers have absolute control over children’s various aspects, including their daily routines, seating, tidiness, posture, activity performance, motion, etiquette, and so forth. These teacher-generated rules and norms are instilled in children through overt instructions and covert implications. Although we cannot yet conclude whether such a gender ratio will feminize boys, from the current data, we see that a series of traditionally female-preferred standards are valued (e.g., safety is most important) while certain traditionally male-related momentums are suppressed (e.g., fight with the dog).

The interviews revealed multiple reasons that may have caused this female skewed gender composition. As Kindergarten A principal explained, the all-female faculty in their institution was intentionally selected due to safety concerns. Recently, news about child sexual assault and harassment in the school has drawn public attention. More and more parents have explicitly requested an all-female teachers’ body in their kindergarten due to raised awareness. Therefore, females have been the priority candidates for job positions in Kindergarten A. The principal of Kindergarten B expressed other practical concerns. Conventionally, there are more females in the pre-school education field. Hence, the possibility of hiring a qualified, well-trained female teacher is significantly higher. In addition, although their school has recruited male P.E

teachers previously, it was not easy to keep them unless a satisfactory salary was provided. As principal B stated, ‘male teachers are rare, and they usually expect higher pay.’

Regarding the pros and cons of a female-dominated teacher body, the principals expressed converging opinions. On the positive side, female teachers are believed to be more thoughtful, patient, and nurturant. Based on the principals’ long-term field observations, female teachers’ mother-like care resembles children’s caregivers at home and reduces children’s anxiety and insecurity. On the flip side, both principals agreed that a living male role model is absent in kindergarten, and this may disadvantage boys. However, they both insisted that this vacancy cannot be, and is not necessary to be promptly fulfilled in preschool education due to various external constraints from society.

3.7.2 Absence of gender segregation

Solutions and measures regarding gender segregation were discussed with teachers and principals. The interviews revealed that educators consciously steered clear of gender segregation in classroom practices for both internal and external reasons.

On the leadership level, segregation based on biological sex was regarded as ‘unnecessary’ and ‘unfeasible.’ Principal A explained that preschool education aims to provide children with a healthy and activity-rich environment to meet their multi-faceted developmental needs. Among them, the process of establishing a non-discriminatory peer relationship is especially beneficial for the children. Through connecting with peers, the children practice socialization and gain warmth, happiness, and togetherness in collective life. Gender segregation, according to principal A, will inversely break this connection because it mechanically creates artificial barriers between the sexes. From an administrative perspective, principal B highlighted that gender segregation goes against ‘equality and respect’, the fundamental principles outlined in the Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (幼儿园教育指导纲要) issued by the Ministry of Education⁷. Separating kindergarten children by sex potentially creates gender discrimination, an issue being long criticized in modern China’s education field. Principal B acutely pointed

⁷ Government document web source:
http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A06/s3327/200107/t20010702_81984.html

out that gender segregation raises awareness about sex disparity, which is in opposition to most Chinese parents' expectations. As she stated, Chinese parents commonly wish their children to stay away from gender awareness, because they believe attention to gender differences may lead to early gender maturity in children.

The front-line teachers talked more specifically about their gender segregation attitudes. According to them, intentional grouping based on biological sex does not exist in their children's daily routine, activities, and seating. In the two kindergartens, approximately six teacher-directed routines are conducted on a typical day. These include exercise assembly, bathroom time, lunch assembly, nap time, and snack time assembly. Without gender segregation, children in both kindergartens were lined up by student numbers during routines. Student number here refers to a class-based double-digit number given to each child upon enrollment and is required to be remembered afterwards. A typical scenario would be children who number from one to ten form a group, whereby their routines are usually conducted together.



Figure 10. Reward-based seating



Figure 11. Student number-based seating

Resembling the daily routines, activity groupings are also genderless. Student numbers and seating-based random grouping are most common. As one teacher recalled, ‘although student numbers can be occasionally used to split groups, children’s grouping in activities is primarily spontaneous.’ Another teacher also explained, ‘most of the time it’s useless to group them, they will naturally find team members themselves. Even if we intentionally grouped them by gender, they form self-selected groups automatically.’ Interestingly, three teachers out of four have noticed that although access to toys is not constrained by sex, girls tend to choose toys that are stereotypically related to both genders (e.g., dolls and balls), while boys usually only focus on masculine toys (e.g., balls).

3.7.3 Gendered decor in the physical environment

The interior design of the four observed classes implied gender hints in the physical environments. As Figure 12 illustrates, Kindergarten A adopted pink as its decoration theme. All installed furniture, doors, window frames, and stairway armrests are painted in pink. Even both bathrooms, though separated by sex, brimmed with pink. Kindergarten B had a different choice; as Figure 13 shows, vibrant colors, such as green and mint, are commonly seen in their classrooms.

Regarding pink decoration, principal A explained that the administrations did not intentionally choose it. The building renovation was contracted by a construction company, which completed the entire process without many discussions about the details. Though principal A personally described pink as a ‘femininity overloaded’ color, she did not think this color is incompatible with the preschool setting, nor would it disadvantage boys. ‘Maybe people simply thought pink was suitable for everything about children,’ principal A said. In comparison, principal B narrated her team’s proactive role in choosing decoration colors. As she stated, ‘we wished to create a fresh and motivating space for children. Thus, bright colors came into our minds. However, we believed neither blue nor pink would fit for all, those are cliché colors in the market, so we told interior designers to paint vivid and cheerful colors.’



Figure 12. Pink as decoration theme



Figure 13. Light colors as decoration theme

3.8 Discussion and conclusion

Focusing on two Mainland China-based preschools, this study explored kindergarten teachers' role in gender socialization through classroom observation data and interview data. As one of the few linguistic studies in this subfield, this study added new data, new findings, and new insights to the existing research. In particular, this study demonstrates how teachers and children practice gender in kindergarten as a community.

Teacher-children interaction and classroom teaching provided cues and linguistic resources for children's acquisition and practice of gender.

3.8.1 Response to previous teacher-child interaction surveys

A large body of research has previously reported that teachers interact more with boys (Duffy et al., 2001; Fagot et al., 2000; Sadker & Sadker, 2010; Serbin et al., 1973). This gender difference was confirmed in the current data. However, notably, teachers in this study did not significantly interact more with boys, though they occasionally demonstrated this tendency. Meanwhile, this study demonstrated for the first time that teacher-boy speech length was significantly longer than that of teacher-girl speeches. While the reasons behind this phenomenon deserve further investigation, interpretation of statistic results pointing toward teachers' more instructional efforts on boys (Duffy et al., 2001; Sadker & Sadker, 2010). In this study, these were reflected as more criticisms, knowledge-related praises, and recasts on boys.

This study also explored gender differences in children's active interactions with their teachers. It was found that girls interacted significantly more with teachers than boys and conducted significantly longer speech length with teachers. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Maccoby, 1998; Serbin et al., 1973; Thorne, 1993) and again demonstrates that girls are more likely to approach teachers and spend more time and energy interacting with them. This pro-teacher phenomenon in girls may be related to a variety of reasons, including feelings of closeness to same-sex female teachers, admiration for female teachers as gender role models (Martin et al., 2002; Martin & Ruble, 2004; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Wood, 1994), and their preference for social interaction and verbal communication (Tannen, 1990, 1993).

3.8.2 Novel findings of speech acts

Third, though speech act is a popular topic in linguistics, it has rarely been addressed in teachers' gender socialization research. Speech acts, which present information and perform interpersonal actions concurrently (Austin, 1975; Bach, 2006; Degand, 2006; Searle, 1969), are essential in understanding teacher's gender socialization process, as they indicate speakers' intention and listeners' reaction and reflect their

beliefs. Therefore, an investigation of teachers' speech acts in this study has theoretical significance since it detailed the differences or consistencies in teacher's treatment of different genders.

One of the novel findings in this regard is that Children of both genders received Echo or Recast most frequently, and among them, relatively more echoes were given to girls, and more recasts were given to boys. Though this gender difference is not significant, it reflects two phenomena. First, teachers actively guided children in their acquisition of socially acceptable language through corrective recasts. The standard was largely based upon teachers' judgment and speculation of children's utterances. If we recall Example (2), Boy 15 erroneously used a slang *fā máo* (lit. 'emit hair,' meaning 'scared') to describe *fā huǒ* (lit. 'emit fire,' meaning 'flare up, get angry') and Teacher 1 negotiated meaning with him through multiple recasts and echoes. Although teachers' recasts were directed at both genders, boys were corrected more often. This finding is consistent with the observed sociolinguistic links of males to non-standard language use (Romaine, 2003; Talbot, 2019), though further investigation involving a bigger dataset is needed. Second, teachers responded positively and supportively to children, as evidenced by their frequent echoes. Echoes often express affirmation and supplement in Chinese conversations (Huang et al., 2018; Li et al., 2010; Li, 2006). Thus, teachers' frequent adoption of them indicates their attentive listening and supportive attitude toward children's expression, especially girls'.

Criticism is the speech act that boys encountered significantly more than girls, and Commands often accompanied it. Gendered treatments emerged in this regard, including 'boy-exclusive' criticism reasons (seating, tidiness, interruption) and command reasons (concentration, safety). This finding is consistent with previous discussions about boys' frequent negative treatment in China (Cai & Lavelly, 2003; Chen & Rao, 2011). Notably, children of both genders were often ordered to move their bodies by their teachers. Kindergarten teachers often gave children direct commands to stand here, sit there, and boys encountered these directions significantly more. Though arguably necessary for crowd management in the reality of a classroom with a large number of children, this approach is questionable. This is because these direct orders may increase

conflict and overdependence between teacher and children, which may even negatively impact their academic and behavioral outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Teachers had low tolerance for girls' unsatisfactory postures and directed more criticisms and commands on girls regarded this issue. This phenomenon is not surprising when one considers the traditional Chinese cultural emphasis on an elegant female demeanor. Traditional gender norms require Chinese females to behave elegantly and smile without showing their teeth (Ebrey, 2003; Mou, 2004). This frequent girl-focused gesture correction reflects how gender norms are taught to girls, particularly through their same-sex teachers. By experiencing and observing criticisms on posture, Children figure out that girls should watch their demeanor, but boys are granted some freedoms; thus, gender norms are reinforced.

This study also revealed that teachers significantly questioned girls more. Questions for comprehension checking were more often given to girls; questions related to life experience and others' emotions were even 'girl-exclusive'. By contrast, boys were most commonly questioned and praised for their knowledge, which, however, happened rarely to girls. This aspect of data implies teachers' covert differentiated expectations. On the one hand, teachers may have subconsciously assumed that girls comprehend slower but were better at narrating and emotion detection. On the other hand, teachers seemed to expect boys to be more knowledgeable. However, there is no evidence that the opposite sex was indeed incapable of the above skills. Teachers' questions reflect stereotypical gender norms, and they are instilled in children through education. This finding is in concert with previous surveys on teachers' differentiated expectations (Best, 1983; Fagot & Patterson, 1969; Sadker & Sadker, 2010; Thorne, 1993; Walkerdine, 1998). It showed that, although Chinese preschool teachers applauded gender equality, they still expressed stereotyped expectations regularly.

Notably, though both genders received praises, differentiated treatment emerged. For instance, only boys were praised for knowledge while only girls were praised for appearance. This discrepancy was considered in previous literature as a result of gender role perpetuation, as it associates children's achievements with stereotypical gender traits (Chick et al., 2002; Koch, 2003; Martin, 1998). Unique to this study, both genders were praised for obedience through a frequently verbalized lexical item *tīng huà* (lit. 'listen to

words,' meaning 'obedient'). Similarly, both genders were commonly warned of safety violations through Feedbacks and Commands, which sometimes even limited children's opportunities to express themselves. For example, a boy's sharing of his dog-raising experience was terminated by the teacher's warning.

Teacher's emphasis on safety is understandable, considering their responsibilities as educators and teaching objectives. As for obedience, an interpretation is teacher's preferred pupil-role as discussed by Fagot & Patterson (1969). These requirements also reflect a Confucian heritage in modern China (DeBary, 2009; Sun, 2005; Tu, 1985), which emphasizes social order and respect for teachers and elders. A righteous person in the Confucian sense is not only wise and courageous but also disciplined, humble, and law-abiding. Therefore, it is understandable that as Chinese teachers, besides socializing children into developing young adults, they are concurrently cultivating students into non-destructive, socially beneficial people.

3.8.3 Overall school climate

This study also examined the gender socialization of kindergarten teachers from the broader perspective of school climate. First, investigation on emotional contexts revealed that overall, teacher-child interactions were predominantly positive. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that boys significantly received more negative interactions and girls significantly received more emotionally neutral or calmer interactions. This again confirms that teachers spend more energy on boys, regardless of negativity or positivity.

Second, teachers did not use any gender labels to address children, i.e., children were not reminded of their gender through routine language use. Researchers have cautioned about the causal relationship between functional use of gender categories and statistically significant increases in gender stereotyping among children (Bem, 1982; Bigler, 1995). Therefore, gender label absence found in this study can be considered a positive sign, in contrast to previous findings in the West (Koch, 2003; Thorne, 1993) and Hong Kong (Chen & Rao, 2011) on teachers' frequent use of gender labels.

Even more remarkable was that the teachers did not assume gender of the fairy tale animal characters. This equality practice was evident in the teacher's slide visuals,

role play casting, and story narration. Similarly, teachers did not instill vocational gender stereotypes in their students. Although the children already knew that a police officer was more likely to be a male, the teacher still provided a female police officer as a compensatory example.

Third, there is a potential female dominance in both schools. With an all-female faculty and in a pink-painted environment, female values and standards inevitably become more salient, which, actually few people would question as that's the perceived 'childlike' convention. These findings relate to previous studies through the shared concern that boys are potentially or unconsciously feminized in kindergartens. However, the data obtained so far is insufficient to be conclusive, and further investigation is needed.

Fourth, it is remarkable that gender segregation was not found at either the administrative or pedagogical level. For multiple reasons, kindergarten directors consciously discouraged implementing gender segregation and publicly supported gender equality in their guiding principles. This finding is also unique to the current study, as previous surveys have reported widespread gender segregations (Burdelski & Mitsuhashi, 2010; Chen & Rao, 2011; Maccoby, 1998; Serbin et al., 1977; Thorne, 1993).

3.8.4 Limitation of this study

Although this study presents a detailed picture of mainland China kindergarten teachers' gender socialization patterns with a focus on verbal interaction, the generalizability of the results is limited by multiple factors. First, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the data collection could not be carried out as planned; therefore, the limited recording data may not accurately reflect teacher's long-term practices. Second, the recordings were conducted after school-level consents, which means that all teachers and students were aware that they were videotaped, which may have influenced their behavior. Although the teachers may have prepared lesson plans, they were not aware of my study's purpose (gender) and could not anticipate how children would behave in the classroom. The lack of awareness of the purpose of the study presumably reduced the undue influence of the observer. Third, this study strives to videotape interactions between breaks and routines, but there were institutional constraints in the field, so most

of the data were from classrooms. Fourth, the kindergartens selected for this study are middle-class kindergartens in Nanjing, a first-tier provincial capital city with a good reputation of education. It is reasonable to speculate that data taken in other regions of China may lead to different results. Lastly, the data from the interviews may suffer a lack of spontaneity and there is no guarantee that the answers elicited reflect the interviewees' genuine opinion.

CHAPTER VI

GENDER SOCIALIZATION THROUGH MEDIA: INPUT FROM A POPULAR CARTOON

4.1. Introduction

Since Disney animated films began sweeping the world, media have been playing an important role in children' lives. In the socialization ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), media came to be an essential agent because of its unique features, including easy accessibility, entertaining function, and fast dissemination (Ahmed & Wahab, 2014; England et al., 2011; Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014; Silverstein, 1985). In modern societies, children are taught about social norms through their exposure to media. Particularly, television has been identified as a powerful and active force in shaping and molding Children' behaviors towards the gender roles in society (Maity, 2014; Signorielli, 1990; Tasmin, 2020; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Williams, 1981). As one of the main television genres designed for and watched by children, animated cartoons provide children with visual, socio-emotional, and ideological basis for gender socialization. Children observe carefully and learn easily through cartoon-mediated entertainment. Subconsciously, they actively socialize themselves according to the culturally accepted gender roles presented through cartoon characters (Huang, 2016).

In this chapter, I will use a Chinese household animation— *Big-Headed Kid and Small-Headed Father*⁸ as an example to explore how the descriptive lines of its male and female characters embody gender roles in Chinese society. Specifically, linguistic analysis on the lines was focused on the *attributes*, *actions* and perceived or claimed *identities* of the characters. Before doing so, I will start with a literature review about the role media have played in gender socialization, primarily through works of Disney, an animation company with significant global influence. Then, I will discuss the research gap in Chinese animation socialization and introduce the goals of the current research.

⁸ This highly recognizable animated series has been translated into several English titles, including Big-Headed Son and Small-Headed Daddy. Its original Chinese title is 大头儿子小头爸爸 *dàtóu erzi xiǎo tóu bàba* ('big-headed son and small-headed father'). In this chapter, I adopted its title presented on Wikipedia: Bigg-Headed Kid and Small-Headed Father (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big-Headed_Kid_and_Small-Headed_Father).

4.1.1 Gender socialization in the media

Book, advertisement, game, and software

Gender stereotypes in children's books, one of the earliest media to be popularized, have attracted decades of research. If we recall Section 3.1.1, gender perpetuation is realized and deepened in children's literature in four major forms. First, male characters are disproportionately overrepresented, though recent works reflect a slow trend toward gender equality (Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Grauerholz & Pescosolido, 1989; Hamilton et al., 2006; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; McCabe et al., 2011; Oskamp & Kaufman, 1996; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Weitzman et al., 1972). Second, traditional gender stereotypes, such as active, outdoor men and passive, indoor women, are manifested and reinforced in children's literature (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Brugeilles et al., 2002; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; Tognoli et al., 1994; Weitzman et al., 1972). Third, inanimate characters are given gender roles, reflecting human gender-stereotypical activities (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Brugeilles et al., 2002; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Weitzman et al., 1972; Williams et al., 1987). Fourth, human and inanimate characters share semantically similar, gendered labels and descriptors (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Turner-Bowker, 1996).

In a similar vein, research on other media has also demonstrated broad and deep gender stereotype perpetuation. Women are underrepresented on television programs (Signorielli, 1990), in games (Dietz, 1998; Dill & Thill, 2007) and educational software (Sheldon, 2004), but routinely sexualized in commercials (Downs & Harrison, 1985; Silverstein, 1985) and games (Dietz, 1998; Dill & Thill, 2007; Funk & Buchman, 1996). Of particular note is that video games have become a base for promoting exaggerated, male-centered gender stereotypes to children and adolescents. Dietz (1998) reported that around 41% of electronic games they studied were without female characters. Among the ones with female characters, 28% were portrayed as sex objects. More surprisingly, nearly 80% of games in their study included aggression or violence, and 21% of them depicted violence directed at women. Even more thought-provoking is video games' peer influence and their gender-based design strategies. Funk and Buchman (1996) investigated prevailing fighting games and found that conforming to gender stereotypes in games would help children maintain social approval, while behaving in alternate

patterns would risk social sanction. They also pointed out that children don't just acquire gender stereotypes in games, their genders are meanwhile the determining factors during game development, as most games are purposely tailored to children of a certain gender.

Cult and reflection of Disney

As a prominent voice of the entertainment world, Disney movies have global impacts on children's learning of gender roles. Disney contributes significantly to widespread myths and misunderstandings about genders, primarily through its construction of our understanding, values, and beliefs about gender (Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014). Cross-culturally, Disney is one of the most influential resources through which children develop their identities and internalize the role that gender plays in the real life. Research on Disney gender socialization mainly covers three main areas: (i) the old Disney; (ii) the revived Disney, and (iii) children's internalization of Disney stereotypes.

Several studies have questioned male character dominance in classic Disney films (Aley & Hahn, 2020; Levinson, 1975; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Wiserma, 2000). Male characters were found to outnumber the female characters and were usually portrayed in a wider variety of roles, with good occupations and superior powers. Exaggerated gender stereotypes were ubiquitous in earlier Disney movies. Women were often associated with in-home labor, less employment, and had little familial or societal power (Wiserma, 2000). Besides, prince and princess characters embody traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics, such as men are brave and fearless while women are beautiful and naive (England et al., 2011). The powerlessness of Disney females is usually rendered through cliché storylines. Female protagonists in multiple films are submissive, servile, and misfortune. Though born with divine beauty, they suffer silently, and ironically, because of this abject attitude, they are given the ultimate reward: salvaged by a handsome, high-status prince (Maity, 2014).

Fortunately, a number of recent studies have affirmed Disney's development towards gender equality. Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) compared pre- and post-1980 cartoons and reported a significant change toward a less stereotypical portrayal of female characters. Through their observed equally distributed female speech elements in both gender characters, Azmi et al. (2016) argued that the blurring of gender boundaries indicates Disney's attempt to break gender stereotypes. Lopreore (2016) investigated

androgynous or undifferentiated gender role portrayals in new Disney movies and discovered that most revival prince and princess characters are both androgynous and progressive. Uniquely, Griffin et al. (2017) discussed a paradox that emerged in the Disney reform. While earlier animations circulated norms that girls should be weak and avoid work, the contemporary productions suggest girls should be strong and employed. Therefore, what is presented in front of children are contradicting norms: girls must and must not have careers; they are both weak and strong.

Although Disney's traditional gender portrayal was criticized and gender equality has been more frequently presented in its new productions, children's internalization of gender roles still reflects Disney stereotypes. Hine et al. (2012) compared children's perception of feminine Aurora versus androgynous Moana and discovered that a large proportion of children did not identify Moana as a princess at all. Golden and Jacoby (2018) observed girls' pretend play and reported their stereotypical beliefs about princesses and their adherence to gendered behaviors when enacting the princesses. In children's views, four traits constitute a princess: beauty, focus on clothing and accessories, princess body movements, and exclusion of boys. These beliefs are accurate reflections of Disney's conventional depictions.

Thus, despite the ongoing efforts of Disney to promote gender equality, its egalitarian impact on children's awareness of gender equality is yet limited. Considering the networked nature of gender socialization, children's adherence to gender stereotypes has interactions with multiple socialization agents. Disney's reform is positive but is limited in scale and influence.

4.1.2 Chinese cartoon animation

Since the late 20th century, China has become a leading animation producer worldwide. The quantity of Chinese animation has met vast market demand, and the quality of its work has won wide recognition (Giesen, 2014; Lent & Ying, 2013; Wu, 2009, 2017). According to Giesen's (2014) data, China produces over 250,000 minutes of animated films annually and has around 5,000 producers and production units nationwide. China's animation industry reflects the country's unique socio-cultural identity. On the one hand, the Chinese animation industry has received long-term government support under communist state's policies to stimulate 'creative industries' (Wu, 2017). On the

other hand, Chinese animated films are powerful metaphors of nationalist identity through reflecting its aesthetic standards, cultural values, and social norms (Li, 2011; Wu, 2009). As Wu (2009) theorizes, Chinese animation is a nationalized cinematic form in its national visual history: it conceptualizes and mediates distinct ethnic styles and constitutes a discourse-based aesthetic school in socialist culture and politics. Nevertheless, Chinese animation is not yet prevailing beyond the contours of the country. Multiple factors have contributed to this, including the nation's previous long, closed period, the use of a less than universal language, Chinese animators' anonymous overseas production, and shortage in indigenous content creation (Lent & Ying, 2013).

Given a highly productive and high-yield animation industry, research on the impact of Chinese animation on children's socialization is rare. One of the pioneer studies was done by Chu and McIntyre (1995) in Hong Kong. They selected 30 random *imported* children's cartoons broadcasted on Chinese television and confirmed male characters' quantitative dominance and hypothesized gender stereotypes. Though subjects of this study were not China-made animation, they reflected international cartoon's circulation of gender in Chinese society. In Jiang's (2013) dissertation, cartoon's socializing effect on Chinese children was recognized, and the presentation of negative norms through cartoon characters was identified. Huang (2016) investigated Disney animation film *Finding Dory* and analyzed its socialization of Chinese children. As Huang (2016) concluded, animated cartoon is a key channel to build children's social values and moral standard, since they are unknowingly indoctrinated with socially acceptable concepts in the process of entertainment.

4.1.3 The target cartoon of this study

Despite increasing attention in the academy, Chinese animation has rarely been analyzed linguistically and quantitatively, especially from the perspective of gender socialization. To fill this gap, this chapter aims to examine the gender norm presentation in a famous Chinese animation: 大头儿子和小头爸爸 *Big-Head Son and Small-Head Father*. In particular, this chapter examines if and how this well-known Chinese cartoon portrays the male and female characters stereotypically through the lexicon in its descriptive lines.

The target cartoon was chosen for its visibility and impact. Since issued by China International Television Corporation in 1995, this animation has been a representative and household cartoon series in the nation. Including both old and new versions, it has produced six seasons and has received numerous recognitions. It won the Golden Eagle Award, European Golden Boy Award, and was listed by China's Ministry of Publicity, Ministry of Education and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League as one of the 15 outstanding animated films since the founding of People's Republic of China⁹.



Figure 14. A CCTV Poster of *Big-Head Son and Small-Head Father Season V*

The story stars a family in Shanghai, with an engineer father 小头爸爸 *xiǎo tóu bàba* ('Small-Head Dad'), a housewife mother 围裙妈妈 *wéiqún māmā* ('Apron Mom'), and their kindergarten attender son 大头儿子 *dàtóu erzi* ('Big-Head Son') (see Figure 14). Though the wording 'big-head' and 'small-head' in original Chinese text imply appearance traits instead of personality traits, the main characters' settings reflect typical social norms, needless to say that the title itself, which focuses on the male members of the family, is overtly gendered. For instance, Small-Head Dad shows up in work scenes and spends a lot of time in his study. Portrayed as a selfless, dopey dad, Small-Head Dad

⁹ Detailed awards obtained see Baidu page of this cartoon: [大头儿子和小头爸爸](#)

caters to the needs of his wife and teaches his son as much as he can through his expertise. The role of Apron Mom is apt to conjure up gender stereotypes in its own way. Aside from her name ‘Apron,’ which is a metonymy of housework, she stays mostly at home, enjoys shopping, is enthusiastic about cooking, beauty and various cyber novelties, yet still has supreme command in the house. The persona of Big-Head Son points to a typical urban Chinese boy. He is interested in science and society, loves creativity even at the cost of getting into trouble, often pokes fun at his father, loves to hang out with and helps neighborhood children, and occasionally gets disciplined by his mother.

In a nutshell, this cartoon animation both reflects social reality and embraces artistic creation. Based on its long influence over the past three decades, it is linguistically relevant to study the expression of gender norms in its characters’ dialogues, especially through descriptive lines of the characters.

4.2. Data and Methods

This study’s data were obtained from the first 20 episodes of *Big-Head Son and Small-Head Father* Season V¹⁰. Released in 2016, Season V is more relevant to contemporary Chinese life than the previous classic seasons in the 90s. Besides, according to Baidu Ranking¹¹ (百度风云榜) Season V is one of the most popular domestic animated cartoons that Chinese children are currently watching; thus, it more accurately reflects gender socialization in nowadays media.

Data processing of the study consisted of four phases. Phase I was to obtain language data. The cartoon audios were first extracted from Youtube videos on audio processing site Ytmp3 and then transcribed into text through Beecut, an AI software for audio-to-text conversion. Phase II focused on improving the accuracy of the linguistic data. Considering the inevitable errors in AI-generated transcriptions, the author manually examined each line of the transcriptions of the 20 episodes in conjunction with the original animation videos. Three steps were performed in this process. First, the lines of each animated character were separated and sorted chronologically. Second,

¹⁰ Youtube link to Season V: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsw2iU9xmpfZZ51gC-vnxqTj04Nyi8Z8Z>

¹¹ URL to Baidu Chinese domestic animation ranking:
http://top.baidu.com/buzz?b=445&c=5&fr=topcategory_c5

information about each line was labeled, including the speaking character's gender, name and speech context. Third, errors in the AI transcription were corrected.

The goal of this study was to explore whether and how the descriptive lines related to male and female characters in this cartoon embody gender norms. Therefore, Phase III aimed to serve this purpose. In each line, specific descriptive utterances related to human characters were analyzed. In particular, three categories of descriptive predicates were manually extracted, and the relevant cartoon character's gender and name were identified.

- I. Predicates that describe a character in terms of his/her *attribute*, mostly adjectives (e.g., 聪明 *cōngmíng* 'smart').
- II. Predicates that describe a character's *action*, mostly verbs phrases (e.g., 做饭好 *zuò fàn hǎo* 'cook well').
- III. Predicates that indicate the perceived or claimed *identity* of a character, mostly nouns (e.g., 侦探 *zhēntàn* 'detective').

Descriptive lines were chosen because the first-hand characterization in cartoons does not only rely on language but also on the appearance, facial expressions, and actions of the character. It is important to note that the descriptive lines of interest in this study include self-descriptions and descriptions given by others. For example, to present that a character is good at cooking, besides his own verbal expressions, people in his surrounding can also attest to his skill (e.g., by way of compliment or description). Therefore, in this study, analyzing descriptive lines is an effective method to uncover gender characterization in cartoons.

After this procedure, the extracted predicates were further cleaned up, mainly to eliminate modifiers. In the final Phase IV, the cleaned predicates were put into RStudio for quantitative analysis. This process was designed to generate word frequency lists by gender and predicate categories. In addition, lexical items in frequency lists were further analyzed semantically, and example conversations were selected through qualitative analysis.

4.3. Findings

Analysis of the scenes and descriptive lines of this cartoon reveals gender norm perpetuation through multiple channels. The portrayal of male and female characters reflects gender norms in contemporary Chinese society, and language plays an essential role in gender stereotype reinforcement. In summary, men are explorers, thinkers, leaders, helpers and often stay outdoors. Women are concerned with appearance, irritable, good at cooking, enjoy life, and commonly indoors. In this section, I will report this cartoon's socialization of gender through two aspects: (i) differentiated presentations of male and female characters; and (ii) gender role reinforcement in the lexicon.

4.3.1 Presentation of male and female characters

The first 20 episodes of Season V include a wide range of scenes and cartoon characters. In total, there are 18 male characters, among which nine are main characters, including Small-Head Dad, Big-Head Son, Teacher Damao, Bother Xiaoshuai, store owner Uncle Mao, chef Uncle Dong, pilot Uncle Blue-sky, and two neighbor boys: Xiaoming and Tangyuan. For female characters, 14 have shown up. Among them, seven are main characters, including Apron Mom, store owner Auntie Cai, Teacher Yueya, florist owner Rose, neighbor girl Marshmallow, her mother Yunduo, and Uncle Mao's granddaughter Maorongrong.

Although there does not seem to be a big difference in the number of male and female characters, there is a noticeable gap in their linguistic presentations. Table 32 shows the number of utterances of each gender in different episodes. In total, male characters produce 1779 utterances, constituting 82% of the overall lines. Female characters, however, only produce 384 utterances and contribute to a modest proportion (18%) in the corpus. Independent *t*-test showed that the amount of male characters' utterances ($M=89$, $SD= 13.69$, $N=20$) exceed that of female characters ($M= 19$, $SD=10.18$, $N=20$), and there is a statistically significant difference in gender ($t(18) = 18.28054$, $df = 18$, $p < .00001$).

Second, male characters show up in a broader range of locations. As indicated in Table 33, male activities are related to 11 locations, while females only appear in nine. Though home is the most common location for both genders, it accounts for up to 62% of

female activities but only 41% of male activities. Besides, though female characters spend 11% of their activities in stores, they are barely customers but instead the store’s staff or owners. Intriguingly, male characters have frequent consuming activities in the cartoon, which explains why 14% of their activities are in the stores, and 8% are in the restaurants. Though the utterance distribution of boys and men is relatively equal (47% and 53%, respectively), girls are less presented than women (33% and 67%, respectively). Even so, the majority (85%) of female activities outside the home are contributed by girls, including neighborhood (3%), playground (5%), and yard (3%). This is because most of the scenes for adult women are at home (78%). Only in limited occasions, they show up in workplaces (9%) such as kindergarten and stores. Though women have restaurant scenes (5%), they primarily work there, barely visit there as customers. Females’ consumption and social activities are less commonly depicted than males, but females’ domestic activities are highlighted in the cartoon.

Table 32. Utterance quantity by gender and episode

Episode	Male	Female	Total
1	112	6	118
2	97	23	120
3	81	41	122
4	105	17	122
5	104	5	109
6	85	8	93
7	83	28	111
8	94	14	108
9	58	17	75
10	74	18	92
11	93	7	100
12	74	33	107
13	95	22	117
14	101	10	111
15	75	36	111
16	77	22	99
17	92	23	115
18	95	27	122
19	105	13	118
20	79	14	93
Total	1779	384	2163
Average	89	19	108
Pct.	82%	18%	100%

Table 33. Locations of characters' activities

Location	Male		Female	
Home	24	41%	23	62%
Store	8	14%	4	11%
Neighborhood	6	10%	1	3%
Restaurant	5	8%	2	5%
Playground	4	7%	2	5%
Kindergarten	4	7%	2	5%
Mountains	2	3%	1	3%
Yard	2	3%	1	3%
City center	1	2%	0	0%
Pet store	1	2%	0	0%
Library	2	3%	1	3%
Total	59	100%	37	100%

4.3.2 Gender role perpetuation in the cartoon lexicon

If we focus on the specific words used to narrate and describe male and female characters in the cartoon, more gender differences surfaced in their *attributes*, *actions*, and *identities*. As reflected in the lexicon, the traditional gender stereotypes, especially men's active and outdoor image and women's passive, indoor tendency, are manifested and reinforced through word choice.

Attributes

Tables 4.3.3 reports the Type I predicates used in the cartoon to depict male characters. Mostly adjectives, each of them describes a male character in terms of his attribute. Semantically, these predicates can be grouped into six categories. The most frequent category is behavioral attribute. Its 16 types make up 31% of the overall 52 types, and its 40 tokens account for 43% of the overall 95 tokens. The highest-ranked items, *lì hài* 'awesome,' *bàng* 'great,' and *bú cuò* 'good,' belong to this category as they are the evaluations or comments on someone's behavior. Intelligent and mental attributes are the second most commonly seen. They constitute 17% of overall types and 22% of overall tokens and include high-frequency items such as *rèn zhēn* 'earnest, serious' *cōng míng* 'smart, intelligent' and *shàn yú guān chá* 'observant.' Appearance and physical attributes, such as *shuài* 'handsome,' *lèi* 'tired,' and *líng huó* 'flexible,' are verbalized in the cartoon's lines through various types. They compose 21% of the overall types and 15% of the overall tokens.

Intriguingly, personality and moral attributes are also presented in diversity, which constitute 23% of overall types and 15% of overall tokens. Typical items

include *yǒng gǎn* ‘brave,’ *bú pà kùn nán* ‘not afraid of difficulties,’ and *yǒng wǎng zhì qián* ‘courageous to go forward.’ Emotional attributes (e.g., *jǐn zhāng* ‘nervous,’ *gāo xìng* ‘cheerful’) and fortune-related attributes (e.g., *yùn qì hǎo* ‘lucky’) are moderately adopted. The former account for 6% of types and 3% of tokens, and the latter account for 4% of types and 3% of tokens.

Example (1) shows Big-Head Son’s frequent use of *lì hài* ‘awesome’ to describe his soccer skill. Highlighting an outstanding ability or talent, this adjective is usually adopted in Chinese compliments or assertive self-descriptions. In this cartoon, *lì hài* can be found in various dialogues of the father-son pair, they not only regard themselves as *lì hài* but also praise each other for being *lì hài* on a frequent basis.

Example (1) [Boys and Small-Head Father are in preparation for a soccer game.]

Xiaoming:	dào	nǐ	le,	dà tóu!	
	arrive	2SG	ASP	Big Head	
	‘It’s your turn, Big Head!’				
	nǐ	hái	hǎo	ba?	
	2SG	still	good	Q	
	‘Are you alright?’				
Son:	qí guài	le.			
	strange	SFP			
	‘It’s strange.’				
	wǒ	gāng cái	dài	qiú	guò
	1SG	just now	bring	ball	pass
	xiǎo tóu	bà bà	de	shí hòu,	
	Small-Head	Dad	ASSOC	time	
	kě	lì hài	le	ne!	
	very	awesome	ASP	SFP	
	‘Just now, I was so awesome when passing Small-Head Dad with the ball!’				
Son:	āi!	wǒ	shì	bù shì	
	hey	1SG	COP	NEG-COP	
	zuì	lì hài	de	qián fēng?	[=to father]
	most	awesome	ASSOC	striker	
	‘Hey! Am I the most awesome striker?’				
Dad:	wǒ	xī wàng.			
	1SG	hope			
	‘I hope so.’				

Table 34. Frequency rank of male characters' attributes

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	厉害	lì hài	awesome	10
2	棒	bàng	great	7
3	认真	rèn zhēn	earnest	6
4	不错	bú cuò	good	5
5	聪明	cōng míng	smart	4
6	无聊	wú liáo	boring	3
7	勇敢	yǒng gǎn	brave	3
8	善于观察	shàn yú guān chá	observant	3
9	帅	shuài	handsome	3
10	跟大人一样	gēn dà rén yī yàng	just like adults	2
11	有创意	yǒu chuàng yì	creative	2
12	运气好	yùn qì hǎo	lucky	2
13	累	lèi	tired	2
14	专注	zhuān zhù	focused	2
15	怪怪的	guài guài de	weird	2
16	好	hǎo	good	2
17	灵活	líng huó	flexible	1
18	高	gāo	high/tall	1
19	腿长	tuǐ cháng	long-legged	1
20	大年纪	dà nián jì	older	1
21	紧张	jǐn zhāng	nervous	1
22	辛苦	xīn kǔ	hard working	1
23	顺利	shùn lì	smooth	1
24	不怕困难	bú pà kùn nán	not afraid of difficulties	1
25	勇往直前	yǒng wǎng zhí qián	courageous to go forward	1
26	马虎	mǎ hǔ	sloppy	1
27	可怜	kě lián	pitiful	1
28	狡猾	jiǎo huá	cunning	1
29	快	kuài	fast	1
30	高兴	gāo xìng	cheerful	1
31	一动不动	yī dòng bù dòng	motionless	1
32	奇特	qí tè	peculiar	1
33	运气不错	yùn qì bù cuò	lucky	1
34	嫉妒	jí dù	jealous	1
35	有当领导的细胞	yǒu dāng lǐng dǎo de xì bāo	have the cells to be a leader	1
36	不称职	bù chèn zhí	incompetent	1
37	有担当	yǒu dān dāng	responsible	1
38	没问题	méi wèn tí	problemless	1
39	有耐心	yǒu nài xīn	patient	1
40	热心	rè xīn	enthusiastic	1
41	最懂我	zuì dǒng wǒ	know me best	1
42	有眼光	yǒu yǎn guāng	visionary	1
43	平衡力很差	píng héng lì hěn chà	of poor balance ability	1
44	死要面子活受罪	sǐ yào miàn zi huó shòu zuì	willing to suffer to save face	1
45	痛苦	tòng kǔ	painful	1
46	神奇	shén qí	magical	1
47	重	zhòng	heavy	1
48	势均力敌	shì jūn lì dí	evenly balanced	1
49	手忙脚乱	shǒu máng jiǎo luàn	hurry-scurry	1
50	不太好	bù tài hǎo	not so good	1
51	漂亮	piào liàng	good-looking	1
52	不小心	bù xiǎo xīn	careless	1

Table 35. Frequency rank of female characters' attributes

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	漂亮	piào liàng	beautiful	5
2	厉害	lì hài	awesome	2
3	棒	bàng	great	2
4	充满青春活力	chōng mǎn qīng chūn huó lì	full of youthful energy	2
5	过分	guò fèn	excessive	1
6	势均力敌	shì jūn lì dí	evenly matched	1
7	敏感	mǐn gǎn	sensitive	1
8	开心	kāi xīn	happy	1
9	辛苦	xīn kǔ	hardworking	1
10	生气	shēng qì	angry	1
11	可怜	kě lián	pitiful	1
12	高兴	gāo xìng	happy	1
13	怪怪的	guài guài de	weird	1
14	美美的	měi měi de	beautiful	1
15	最帅	zuì shuài	most cool	1
16	最美	zuì měi	most beautiful	1
17	漂漂亮亮	piào piào liàng liàng	beautiful	1
18	美丽	měi lì	beautiful	1
19	年轻	nián qīng	young	1
20	好看	hǎo kàn	good-looking	1

In comparison, female characters' attributes are depicted through a smaller range of adjectives. As shown in Table 35, Type I predicates of female characters have only 20 types and 27 tokens. Among them, four semantic categories can be identified. The most common category is appearance and physical attribute, which constitutes 45% of the overall types and 52% of the overall tokens. The highest-ranked item *piào liàng* 'pretty,' for instance, belongs to this category. Besides, this group embraces quite a few one-off items such as *měi měi de* 'beautiful,' *zuì měi* 'most beautiful,' and *nián qīng* 'young.' Like male characters, female characters' behavioral attributes were commonly described in the show. They contribute 30% of both overall types and overall tokens. Typical items are similar to the ones in the male corpus, including *lì hài* 'awesome' and *bàng* 'great.' However, deviating from male characters, emotional attributes occupy higher proportions both in female types (15%) and tokens (15%). Typical items include *mǐn gǎn* 'sensitive,' *kāi xīn* 'happy,' and *shēng qì* 'angry.'

Example (2) illustrates how female's appearance is highlighted in the cartoon through predicates such as *piào liàng* 'pretty' and *chōng mǎn qīng chūn huó lì* 'full of youthful energy.' As if the beautiful appearance is the biggest advantage of women, the praise for female beauty is common in this animation.

Example (2) [The family is discussing which dress looks better on the influencer mother.]

Son:	wéi qún	mā mā	chuān	de	zhēn	piào liàng .
	Apron	Mom	dress up	ASSOC	really	beautiful
	‘Apron Mom dresses up so beautifully.’					
Dad:	hóng	sè	hǎo kàn.			
	red	color	pretty			
	‘The red color is pretty.’					
Son:	fēn	sè	hǎo kàn.			
	pink	color	pretty			
	‘The pink color is pretty.’					
Mom:	bié	zhēng	le!			
	don't	argue	ASP			
	‘Stop arguing!’					
	wǒ	dǎ suàn	chuān	zhè	shēn	yī fú
	1SG	plan	wear	this	CLF	dress
	chōng mǎn	qīng chūn	huó lì.			
	full of	youth	energy			
	‘I plan to wear this dress, (it makes me) full of youthful energy.’					

Actions

If we now turn to Type II predicates, more detailed gender divergence can be witnessed. Mainly made up of verb or verb phrases, Type II predicates in the descriptive lines of male and female characters differ in quantity and quality. First, male actions include 549 types and 927 tokens, while female actions only have 137 types and 185 tokens. In terms of semantics, male actions are much more diversely presented than their female counterparts. Second, except the two genders’ common activities, gender stereotypes can be witnessed through various sex-exclusive activities.

Table 36 shows male characters’ actions that occur at least twice. For males, the most common action is daily activity. This category accounts for 54% of overall types and 51% of overall tokens. Representative items include mǎi ‘buy,’ wán ‘play,’ and chī ‘eat.’ Second, a unique category in the male corpus is explorative, exciting, and challenging activities. They refer to actions such as guān chá ‘observe,’ xún luó ‘patrol,’ and yán jiū ‘research.’ This category contributes 12% to overall types and 15% to overall tokens, and occasionally function as the theme activity of male characters in several episodes. The third common category is affective and mental activity. Items such as pà zhī zhū ‘fear of spiders’ and zháo jí ‘anxious’ belong to this group, and they constitute 14% of types and 10% of tokens. Another remarkable category is morality-related activity as it includes the highest-ranked item bāng ‘help’ and other verbs that deal with justice and

values (e.g., *bǎo hù* ‘protect,’ *piàn* ‘cheat, swindle’). This category composes 4% of types and 8% of tokens in the male verbal corpus.

Table 36. Frequency rank of male characters’ actions

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	帮	bāng	help	41
2	买	mǎi	buy	39
3	找	zhǎo	find	18
4	玩	wán	play	18
5	吃	chī	eat	18
6	观察	guān chá	observe	17
7	抓	zhuā	grab	15
8	准备	zhǔn bèi	prepare	9
9	学生字	xué shēng zì	learn new words	8
10	卖	mài	sell	7
11	回来	huí lái	come back	6
12	中奖	zhòng jiǎng	win prize	6
13	涂	tú	paint	6
14	换喇叭	huàn lǎ bā	change the trumpet	6
15	学舞蹈	xué wǔ dǎo	learn to dance	6
16	参加	cān jiā	participate	5
17	跑	pǎo	run	5
18	换筷子	huàn kuài zi	change chopsticks	5
19	送	sòng	send	5
20	保护	bǎo hù	protect	5
21	踢	tī	kick	4
22	训练	xùn liàn	train	4
23	出去	chū qù	get out	4
24	巡逻	xún luó	patrol	4
25	送礼物	sòng lǐ wù	deliver gifts	4
26	回家	huí jiā	go home	4
27	研究	yán jiū	research	4
28	喝	hē	drink	4
29	带一盆可爱的小肉肉	dài yī pén kě ài de xiǎo ròu ròu	bring a pot of cute little succulent	4
30	挑战自己	tiǎo zhàn zì jǐ	challenge yourself	4
31	看电视	kàn diàn shì	watch TV	4
32	看书	kàn shū	read a book	4
33	睡觉	shuì jiào	sleep	4
34	做	zuò	do	4
35	报名	bào míng	sign up for	3
36	特训	tè xùn	specialty train	3
37	练习	liàn xí	practice	3
38	破案	pò àn	solve a case	3
39	误会	wù huì	misunderstand	3
40	起床	qǐ chuáng	get up	3
41	搞恶作剧	gǎo è zuò jù	play pranks	3
42	试	shì	try	3
43	扔掉	rēng diào	throw away	3
44	剥蒜	bāo suàn	peel garlic	3
45	看看	kàn kàn	look	3
46	走	zǒu	go	3
47	抢	qiǎng	grab	3
48	没中奖	méi zhòng jiǎng	didn't win	3
49	变魔术	biàn mó shù	magic	3
50	指挥	zhǐ huī	command	3

Table 36. (continued)

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
51	看动画片	kàn dòng huà piàn	watch cartoons	3
52	请求支援	qǐng qiú zhī yuán	ask for support	3
53	怕蜘蛛	pà zhī zhū	fear of spiders	3
54	扇	shān	fan	3
55	不买	bù mǎi	do not buy	3
56	画画	huà huà	draw	3
57	用假动作	yòng jiǎ dòng zuò	use fake moves	2
58	骗	piàn	cheat	2
59	欺负人	qī fū rén	bully	2
60	守门	shǒu mén	guard the door	2
61	侦破	zhēn pò	detect	2
62	打仗	dǎ zhàng	fight	2
63	不爱我了	bù ài wǒ le	don't love me anymore	2
64	想要机器战警	xiǎng yào jī qì zhàn jǐng	want robocop	2
65	关心国家大事	guān xīn guó jiā dà shì	concerned about national issues	2
66	没有新玩具	méi yǒu xīn wán jù	no new toys	2
67	决定	jué dìng	decide	2
68	练舞	liàn wǔ	dance practice	2
69	伸左腿	shēn zuǒ tuǐ	stretch left leg	2
70	输	shū	lose	2
71	吓跑	xià pǎo	scare away	2
72	想听	xiǎng tīng	want to hear	2
73	去看看	qù kàn kàn	go see	2
74	救小花店	jiù xiǎo huā diàn	save the little flower store	2
75	成功	chéng gōng	success	2
76	发现	fā xiàn	found	2
77	做不到	zuò bù dào	can't do it	2
78	失败	shī bài	failure	2
79	不会写字	bù huì xiě zì	can't write	2
80	做肉肉	zuò ròu ròu	cook meat	2
81	工作	gōng zuò	work	2
82	捉	zhuō	catch	2
83	下班	xià bān	get off work	2
84	气走	qì zǒu	get angry and leave	2
85	到家	dào jiā	home	2
86	着急	zháo jí	anxious	2
87	缺少维生素	quē shǎo wéi shēng sù	vitamin deficiency	2
88	补充维生素	bǔ chōng wéi shēng sù	vitamin supplementation	2
89	保证	bǎo zhèng	guarantee	2
90	学花	xué huā	learn about flowers	2
91	教	jiào	teach	2
92	认识很多字	rèn shí hěn duō zì	know many words	2
93	变	biàn	change	2
94	偷袭	tōu xí	sneak attack	2
95	命令	mìng lìng	command	2
96	追	zhuī	chase	2
97	保密	bǎo mì	keep secret	2
98	运动	yùn dòng	work out	2
99	有秘密	yǒu mì mì	have secret	2
100	瞒着	mán zhe	conceal	2
101	看电子书	kàn diàn zǐ shū	read e-books	2
102	看手机	kàn shǒu jī	look at the phone	2
103	挑	tiāo	pick	2
104	说得对	shuō de duì	say it right	2
105	有责任	yǒu zé rèn	responsibility	2

Table 36. (continued)

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
106	不见了	bù jiàn le	disappear	2
107	有办法	yǒu bàn fǎ	have a method	2
108	吹喇叭	chuī lǎ bā	blow the horn	2
109	吹气球	chuī qì qiú	blow the balloon	2
110	打电话	dǎ diàn huà	call	2
111	没有发现	méi yǒu fā xiàn	not found	2
112	发快递	fā kuài dì	mail a package	2
113	说假话	shuō jiǎ huà	tell a lie	2
114	教跳舞	jiāo tiào wǔ	teach dancing	2
115	不吃水果	bù chī shuǐ guǒ	don't eat fruits	2
116	送回家	sòng huí jiā	send home	2
117	做玩具	zuò wán jù	make toys	2
118	想到主意	xiǎng dào zhǔ yì	come up with ideas	2
119	吹羽毛	chuī yǔ máo	blow feathers	2
120	勇于挑战	yǒng yú tiǎo zhàn	be brave	2
121	填得好	tián de hǎo	fill it well	2
122	吓	xià	scare	2
123	想一想	xiǎng yī xiǎng	think about it	2

In addition, there are three minor categories. Physical activities, for instance, *zhuā* ‘grab,’ constitute 6% of types and 6% of tokens. Study and professional activities, such as *xué shēng zì* ‘learn new words,’ take up 5% of types and 6% of tokens. Negative behaviors, including *wù huì* ‘misunderstand’ and *gǎo è zuò jù* ‘play pranks,’ account for 5% of types and 3% of tokens.

Example (3) illustrates the accommodating personalities of male characters. In this animation, Big-Head Son and his father have engaged in plenty of activities to help others, including selling fruit and flowers, finding lost pets, and solving a neighbor girl’s homesickness.

Example (3) [The father and the son mention ‘help’ four times.]

Dad:	dà tóu	ér zi,	nǐ	kě yǐ	
	Big-Head	son	2SG	can	
	bāng	dà rén	máng	ba?	[% help]
	help	adult	favor	Q	
	‘Big-Head Son, can you do adults a favor?’				
	qù	bāng	wéi qún	mā mā	mǎi
	go	help	Apron	Mom	buy
	píng	jiàng yóu	lái,	hǎo	bù hǎo?
	CLF	soy sauce	back	good	NEG good
	‘How about you go and buy a bottle of soy sauce for Apron Mom?’				
Son:	bāng	mā mā	mǎi	dōng xī,	[% help]
	help	mom	buy	stuff	
	zhè	zhǒng	shì qíng	tài	jiǎn dān
	this	CLF	thing	too	simple
	‘Helping mom to buy stuff, this kind of thing is too simple.’				

	wǒ	yào	gēn	dà rén	yī yàng
	1SG	want	with	adult	same
	qù	bāng	bié rén.		[% help]
	go	help	others		
	'I want to help others like adults do.'				
[In Uncle Mao's store]					
Uncle Mao	dà tóu	ér zi	mǎi	dōng xī	ma?
	Big-Head	Son	buy	stuff	Q
	'Big-Head Son, are you here to buy something?'				
Son:	wǒ	bù	mǎi	dōng xī,	
	1SG	NEG	buy	stuff	
	wǒ	shì	xiǎng	lái	
	1SG	COP	want	come	
	bāng	nǐ	mài	huò.	[% help]
	help	2SG	sell	goods	
	'I'm not here to buy anything, I am here to help you sell goods.'				

Table 37. Frequency rank of female characters' actions

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	做饭	zuò fàn	cook	6
2	回来	huí lái	come back	6
3	生气	shēng qì	get angry	5
4	没收	mò shōu	confiscate	5
5	帮助	bāng zhù	help	5
6	喜欢	xǐ huān	like	4
7	开饭	kāi fàn	serve meal	4
8	试试	shì shì	try	3
9	说	shuō	say	3
10	买	mǎi	buy	3
11	准备	zhǔn bèi	prepare	3
12	保证	bǎo zhèng	guarantee	2
13	看书	kàn shū	read book	2
14	发现	fā xiàn	discover	2
15	做蛋挞	zuò dàn tà	make egg tarts	2
16	喜欢吃糖果	xǐ huān chī táng guǒ	like candy	2
17	工作	gōng zuò	work	2
18	下班	xià bān	get off work	2
19	出发	chū fā	depart	2
20	玩	wán	play	2
21	化妆	huà zhuāng	make up	2
22	抢	qiǎng	grab	2
23	把冰淇淋送人	bǎ bīng qí lín sòng rén	give away the ice creams	2
24	大扫除	dà sǎo chú	clean up	1
25	遇到麻烦	yù dào má fan	get into trouble	1
26	打分	dǎ fēn	evaluate	1
27	用老办法	yòng lǎo bàn fǎ	use the old method	1
28	准备冰镇西瓜	zhǔn bèi bīng zhèn xī guā	prepare chilled watermelon	1
29	坐	zuò	sit	1
30	晕倒	yūn dǎo	faint	1
31	躲	duǒ	hide	1
32	乘凉	chéng liáng	stay in the cool	1
33	不借书	bù jiè shū	don't borrow books	1
34	见证奇迹	jiàn zhèng qí jì	witness a miracle	1
35	化腐朽为神奇	huà fǔ xiù wéi shén qí	turning the rotten into the miraculous	1

Table 37. (continued)

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
36	打电话	dǎ diàn huà	call	1
37	给橘子	gěi jú zi	give an orange	1
38	弄错	nòng cuò	make a mistake	1
39	擦灯笼	cā dēng lóng	wipe lanterns	1
40	买灯笼	mǎi dēng lóng	buy lanterns	1
41	哭	kū	cry	1
42	放弃减肥计划	fàng qì jiǎn féi jì huà	give up weight loss plan	1
43	闻橘子	wén jú zi	smell oranges	1
44	不会偷吃	bù huì tōu chī	won't steal food	1
45	要留着肚子	yào liú zhe dù zi	to save stomach	1
46	睡觉	shuì jiào	sleep	1
47	养足精神	yǎng zú jīng shén	nourish your spirit	1
48	下载软件	xià zài ruǎn jiàn	download software	1
49	保护眼睛	bǎo hù yǎn jīng	protect eyes	1
50	调查	diào chá	investigate	1
51	买新衣服	mǎi xīn yī fú	buy new clothes	1
52	查	chá	check	1
53	答应	dā yìng	promise	1
54	蹒跚	liū da	walk	1
55	跟踪	gēn zōng	stalk	1
56	担心	dān xīn	worry	1
57	追到家里来	zhuī dào jiā lǐ lái	chase to the house	1
58	赶工	gǎn gōng	catch up with work	1
59	做	zuò	do	1
60	送过来	sòng guò lái	send it over	1
61	用鸡蛋	yòng jī dàn	use eggs	1
62	送蛋壳	sòng dàn ké	send eggshells	1
63	命令	mìng lìng	order	1
64	发火	fā huǒ	get angry	1
65	踩	cǎi	stomp	1
66	浪费蛋壳	làng fèi dàn ké	waste eggshells	1
67	给任务	gěi rèn wù	give task	1
68	害怕	hài pà	fear	1
69	买糖果	mǎi táng guǒ	buy candy	1
70	给糖果	gěi táng guǒ	give candy	1
71	背着	bèi zhe	behind one's back	1
72	偷偷	tōu tōu	secretly	1
73	送礼物	sòng lǐ wù	give a gift	1
74	忘	wàng	forget	1
75	收到礼物	shōu dào lǐ wù	receive a gift	1
76	鼓掌	gǔ zhǎng	applaud	1
77	表达爱	biǎo dá ài	show love	1
78	教字	jiào zì	teach characters	1
79	想方法	xiǎng fāng fǎ	think of ways	1
80	做小饼干	zuò xiǎo bǐng gān	make little cookies	1
81	做热菜	zuò rè cài	make hot dishes	1
82	做饭菜	zuò fàn cài	make a meal	1
83	着急	zháo jí	be in a hurry	1
84	散心	sàn xīn	take a break	1
85	不回来	bù huí lái	don't come back	1
86	回家	huí jiā	go home	1
87	走	zǒu	go	1
88	吃包子	chī bāo zi	eat steamed buns	1
89	做红烧肉	zuò hóng shāo ròu	make roast pork	1
90	蒸包子	zhēng bāo zi	steam buns	1
91	凑热闹	còu rè nào	join in the fun	1

Table 37. (continued)

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
92	没法用筷子	méi fǎ yòng kuài zi	can't use chopsticks	1
93	全家出行	quán jiā chū xíng	travel in family	1
94	准备午餐	zhǔn bèi wǔ cān	prepare lunch	1
95	踩着柔软的绿毯	cǎi zhe róu ruǎn de lǜ tǎn	step on the soft green carpet	1
96	不错过丁香漫山遍野	bù cuò guò dīng xiāng mǎn shān biàn yě	not to miss the lilacs in the hills	1
97	躺着晒太阳	tǎng zhe shài tài yáng	lay in the sun	1
98	说的对	shuō de duì	say it right	1
99	想家	xiǎng jiā	feel homesick	1
100	说话	shuō huà	talk	1
101	观察	guān chá	observe	1
102	跳广场舞	tiào guǎng chǎng wǔ	dance square dance	1
103	有急事儿	yǒu jí shì ér	have urgent issues	1
104	肚子疼	dù zi téng	have a stomach ache	1
105	闹肚子	nào dù zi	have a tummy ache	1
106	肚子疼	dù zi téng	tummy ache	1
107	去厕所	qù cè suǒ	go to the toilet	1
108	小瞧	xiǎo qiào	look down upon	1
109	把水果削皮	bǎ shuǒ guō xiāo pí	peel the fruit	1
110	买新床垫	mǎi xīn chuáng diàn	buy a new mattress	1
111	玩化妆游戏	wán huà zhuāng yóu xì	play make-up games	1
112	用粉扑	yòng fěn pū	use a powder puff	1
113	画画	huà huà	draw	1
114	没带伞	méi dài sǎn	didn't bring umbrella	1
115	运沙子	yùn shā zi	transport sand	1
116	堆城门	duī chéng mén	stack gates	1
117	拔野草	bá yě cǎo	pull weeds	1
118	做早餐	zuò zǎo cān	make breakfast	1
119	收拾	shōu shí	pack up	1
120	去花店	qù huā diàn	go to the flower store	1
121	跳得真棒	tiào de zhēn bàng	dace well	1
122	教跳舞	jiāo tiào wǔ	teach dancing	1
123	教现代舞	jiào xiàn dài wǔ	teach modern dance	1
124	带援军	dài yuán jūn	bring relief troops	1
125	处理	chǔ lǐ	handle	1
126	打扮	dǎ bàn	dress up	1
127	穿裙子	chuān qún zi	wear a dress	1
128	穿衣服	chuān yī fu	dress up	1
129	展示	zhǎn shì	show	1
130	使出杀手锏	shǐ chū shā shǒu jiǎn	make a killer move	1
131	直播	zhí bō	live broadcast	1
132	感谢帮助	gǎn xiè bāng zhù	thank for the help	1
133	献唱	xiàn chàng	sing	1
134	听不清	tīng bù qīng	can't hear clearly	1
135	买洋葱	mǎi yáng cōng	buy onions	1
136	丢东西	diū dōng xī	lose something	1
137	遇到	yù dào	meet	1

As shown in Table 37, though with much fewer action tokens (185) than males (927), the female characters are narrated through various activities as well. Resembling male characters, daily activities also account for the largest proportion of female actions, namely, 41% of overall 137 types and 39% of overall 185 tokens. High-ranking items of this category include *huí lái* ‘come back,’ *shuō* ‘say,’ *mǎi* ‘buy,’ and *zhǔn bèi* ‘prepare.’ Interestingly, although female characters are related to ‘coming back’ and ‘buying,’ what they do outside of home and their specific consumption activities are not as directly portrayed as their male counterparts.

In contrast, multiple descriptive lines involve actions that belong to three female-exclusive verbal categories: housework activity, lifestyle activity, and controlling activity. The first category includes high-ranking items such as *zuò fàn* ‘cook,’ *kāi fàn* ‘serve a meal,’ and *zuò dàn tà* ‘make egg tarts.’ They constitute 14% of types and 15% of tokens. The second category refers to activities that pertain to beauty, health, and talents, such as *huà zhuāng* ‘make up,’ *fàng qì jiǎn fèi jì huà* ‘give up weight loss plan,’ and *mǎi xīn yī fú* ‘buy new clothes.’ These lifestyle activities make up 12% of types and 9% of tokens. The third category showcases female controlling behavior and accounts for 6% of both types and tokens. In multiple episodes, women (especially mothers) terminate men’s chaos, punish their mistakes, and evaluate their behaviors. Relevant items include *mò shōu* ‘confiscate,’ *dǎ fēn* ‘grade, evaluate,’ and *mìng lìng* ‘command, order.’ These verbs portray women into the stereotype that they are emotional (Barrett et al., 1998; Bauer, 2015; Heesacker et al., 1999), bossy, and controlling (Bray et al., 2020).

Another commonly seen female action is affective and mental activity. Constructing 12% of types and 14% of tokens, this category includes a range of verbs that express emotions and preferences, such as *shēng qì* ‘get angry,’ *xǐ huān* ‘like,’ and *kū* ‘cry.’ It is worth noting that both ‘get angry’ and ‘like’ appear with high frequency. In the cartoon, they are often used to depict female’s outward emotions and preferences. Females’ emotions are somehow the basis for males’ activities.

The remaining five categories of actions, although shared with men, all occupy a lower percentage. Morality-related activity accounts for 3% of types and 5% of tokens, with typical items including *bāng zhù* ‘help,’ *bǎo zhèng* ‘guarantee,’ and *bèi zhe* ‘behind one’s back.’ Physical activities, such as *qiǎng* ‘grab,’ *zuò* ‘sit,’ *duǒ* ‘hide,’ are conducted

by females in limited amounts as well: 4% of types and 3% of tokens. Like male characters, study and professional activities were also related to female characters, but with only 2% of types and 3% of tokens. Items such as *gōng zuò* ‘work,’ and *xià bān* ‘get off work’ belong to this category. One of the biggest differences between the genders lies in the depiction of explorative, exciting, and challenging activities. If we recall in the male corpus, this category accounts for 12% of types and 15% of tokens. While in the female corpus, it only constitutes 4% of types and 3% of tokens. Though of low frequency, there exist unique items such as *diào chá* ‘investigate,’ *gēn zōng* ‘stalk, follow’ and *guān chá* ‘observe.’ Lastly, the female characters are also associated with negative behaviors in a limited manner. Items such as *yù dào má fán* ‘get into trouble,’ *nòng cuò* ‘make a mistake,’ and *làng fèi dàn ké* ‘waste eggshells’ occasionally appear; they make up 4% of types and 3% of tokens.

Example (4) reflects the typical Chinese style of maternal control. At a picnic, father and son engaged in a feather blowing contest, but were stopped by the mother. She not only confiscated (*mò shōu*) the feathers but also left in anger (*shēng qì*), leaving the father and son at a loss. Example (5) records the interest in makeup of a girl named Marshmallow. While the children were playing with used sponges, she said she could use the sponge for future makeup games.

Example (4) [Mother demonstrates her authority: confiscation of feathers.]

Mom:	yǔ máo	mò shōu!				
	feather	confiscate				
	‘I confiscate the feathers!’					
Son:	yǔ máo	yòu	pǎo dào	wéi qún	mā mā	
	feather	again	run-RES	Apron	Mom	
	nà biān	qù	le.			
	over there	go	ASP			
	‘The feather went to Apron Mom’s side again.’					
Mom:	yòu	shì	yǔ máo!			
	again	COP	feather			
	‘It’s the feather again!’					
	nǐ men	zhè	yī	duì	pò huài	dà wáng!
	2PL	this	one	pair	vandal	King
	‘You two are such a pair of vandal Kings!’					
	làng màn	yōu xián	de	yě cān	quán	dōu
	romantic	leisurely	ASSOC	picnic	totally	all
	bèi	nǐ men	gǎo zá	le!		
	COP	2PL	screw up	ASP		
	‘The romantic and leisurely picnic has been totally screwed up by you!’					
Son:	xiǎo tóu	bà bà,	wéi qún	mā mā	dōu	shēng qì
	Small-Head	Dad	Apron	Mom	even	angry

	zǒu	le.				
	leave	ASP				
	‘Small-Head Dad, Apron Mom has left in anger.’					
Dad:	zěnn me	shì	wǒ	qì	zǒu	de?
	how	COP	1SG	angry	leave	NML
	‘How come it was me who made her angry and leave?’					

Example (5) [Xiaoming (boy) and Marshmallow (girl) are playing with sponges.]

Xiaoming:	ā!	zhēn	shū fú	a!	
	ah	really	comfortable	SFP	
	‘Ah! It feels so comfortable!’				
Marshmallow:	wǒ	zhè biān	shì	hǎi mián	fěn pū,
	1SG	here	COP	sponge	powder puff
	shì	bù shì	hěn	kě ài	ya?
	COP	NEG COP	very	cute	SFP
	‘I’ve got a sponge powder puff here, isn’t it cute?’				
Xiaoming:	hā hā hā				
	‘Hahaha.’				
Marshmallow:	wán	huà zhuāng	yóu xì	de	shí hòu,
	play	make up	game	ASSOC	time
	wǒ	jiù	kě yǐ	yòng	zhè
	1SG	then	can	use	this
	gè	fěn pū	le.		
	CLF	powder puff	ASP		
	‘Next time during makeup game, I will use this powder puff.’				

Identity

In this cartoon, both male and female characters have a range of self-claimed and other-claimed identities (Type III predicates). Among the 32 male identity types, 16% are other-claimed, and 84% are self-claimed. By contrast, among the four limited female identities, only one (*xiān rén zhǎng nǚ wáng* ‘cactus Queen’) is self-claimed, and the rest three are assigned by males. Mainly appearing as nouns and noun phrases, these identities shape the character’s personalities and reflect gender norms.

As listed in Table 38, 32 identities are associated with male characters. The most notable semantic category is related to intelligence and skill, which composes 31% of the overall 32 types and 49% of the overall 107 tokens. Four out of the top-five items belong to this group, including *dà zhēn tàn* ‘great detective,’ *shǒu mén yuán / mén jiàng* ‘goalkeeper,’ *qián fēng* ‘striker,’ and *fā míng jiā* ‘inventor.’ The second commonly seen identity related to authority and power, which account for 25% of types and 30% of tokens. The highest-ranked item *lǐng dǎo* ‘leader’ belongs to this group. Besides, there are typical items such as *tǔ dòu guó wáng* ‘potato King’ and *píng wěi* ‘judge, referee.’ The male characters are also titled as multiple heroic figures, including *ài xīn shùn fēng*

chē sī jī ‘volunteer ride sharing driver,’ *nán zǐ hàn* ‘manly man,’ and *yīng xióng xiǎo hào shǒu* ‘hero trumpeter.’ With 16% of types and 12% of tokens, they demonstrate male characters’ traits such as eager to help others, being heroic and chivalrous. Kinship and friendship titles are also adopted to identify male characters, including *shuāng bāo tāi gē gē* ‘twin brother,’ *xiōng dì* ‘brother,’ and *huǒ bàn* ‘fellow.’ They have multiple types (22%) but limited amounts of tokens (7%). The category with the lowest frequency is rebellious figure, which constitutes 2% of both types and tokens. Two items are relevant, *dà kē shuì chóng* ‘big sleepyhead,’ and *pò huài dà wáng* ‘vandal King.’ In the Chinese language, they are both more commonly used to describe men.

Example (6) shows Big-Head Son’s repeated self-identification of *dà zhēn tàn* ‘great detective.’ In episode I, he not only referred to himself as a detective, but also imitated detectives in his behaviors. He indulged in this imaginary identity and expected others to regard him as a great detective. He prides himself on being a great observant detective.

Example (6) [The son is a self-proclaimed super detective.]

Son:	cóng	xiàn zài	kāi shǐ,					
	from	now	start					
	wǒ	jiù	shì	yī	gè			
	1SG	exactly	COP	one	CLF			
	ài	guān chá	de	chāo jí	dà	zhēn tàn!		
	love	observe	COP	super	great	detective		
	‘From now on, I am a super great detective who loves to observe.’							
Dad:	dà tóu	ér zi	zhēn tàn	kuài	duàn duàn	àn.		
	Big-Head	Son	detective	quick	judge-	case		
					RED			
	‘Big-Head Son, hurry up and judge this case.’							
	nǐ	guān chá	yī	xià	zhè	zhī		
	2SG	observe	one	CLF	this	CLF		
	chóng zi	dào dǐ	shǔ yú	nǎ	zhī	xiǎo	ya?	
	worm	indeed	belong	which	CLF	chick	SFP	
	‘Indeed, which chick does this worm belong to?’							
Son:	è,	zhè	gè	ma...				
	um	this	CLF	SFP				
	‘Um, in terms of this...’							
	wǒ	kě	shì	chāo jí	dà	zhēn tàn.		
	1SG	AUX	COP	super	great	detective		
	‘I am a super great detective.’							
	zhè	zhǒng	xiǎo	shì ér	bù	guī	wǒ	guǎn.
	this	CLF	small	matter	NEG	belong	1S	responsibilit
						g	G	y

Dad: ‘This kind of small matter is not my responsibility.’
zhè gè dà tóu zhēn
this CLF Big-Head detectiv
e
‘This Big-Head detective.’

Table 38. Frequency rank of male characters’ claimed identities

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	领导	lǐng dǎo	leader	15
2	大侦探	dà zhēn tàn	great detective	15
3	守门员/门将	shǒu mén yuán / mén jiàng	goalkeeper	13
4	前锋	qián fēng	striker	9
5	发明家	fā míng jiā	inventor	9
6	土豆国王	tǔ dòu guó wáng	potato King	7
7	爱心顺风车司机	ài xīn shùn fēng chē sī jī	volunteer ride sharing driver	6
8	评委	píng wěi	judge	3
9	大人	dà rén	adult	2
10	男子汉	nán zǐ hàn	strong man	2
11	孩子王	hái zǐ wáng	kid King	2
12	大将军	dà jiāng jūn	great general	2
13	双胞胎哥哥	shuāng bāo tāi gē gē	twin brother	2
14	英雄小号手	yīng xióng xiǎo hào shǒu	hero trumpeter	2
15	大瞌睡虫	dà kē shuì chóng	big sleepyhead	1
16	主播	zhǔ bō	anchor	1
17	护花使者	hù huā shǐ zhě	flower protector	1
18	兄弟	xiōng dì	brother	1
19	伙伴	huǒ bàn	fellow	1
20	绘画小组的组长	huì huà xiǎo zǔ de zǔ zhǎng	leader of the painting group	1
21	开飞机的	kāi fēi jī de	plane driver	1
22	卖氢气球的老爷爷	mài qīng qì qiú de lǎo yé yé	the old grandfather selling hydrogen balloons	1
23	朋友	péng yǒu	friend	1
24	家人	jiā rén	family member	1
25	破坏大王	pò huài dà wáng	vandal King	1
26	街坊邻居	jiē fāng lín jū	neighborhood	1
27	生字大王	shēng zì dà wáng	new word King	1
28	法官	fǎ guān	judge	1
29	包公	bāo gōng	Baozhen (a Chinese judge)	1
30	幼儿园老师	yòu ér yuán lǎo shī	kindergarten teacher	1
31	侦查小队	zhēn chá xiǎo duì	detective squad	1
32	好帮手	hǎo bāng shǒu	good assistant	1

Table 39. Frequency rank of female characters’ claimed identities

Rank	Item	Pinyin	Gloss	Freq.
1	网络主播	wǎng luò zhǔ bō	live streaming host	3
2	仙人掌女王	xiān rén zhǎng nǚ wáng	cactus Queen	2
3	怪物	guài wù	monster	2
4	大厨	dà chú	chef	1

As shown in Table 39, compared to the diverse identities of male characters, there are far fewer nouns depicting female characters. However, a further look into the semantics revealed intriguing tendencies among the eight tokens

The female identities are associated with three categories: household skill; disagreeability; and appearance. The household skill category includes only one token, *dà chū* ‘chef,’ which is used to compliment Apron Mom’s cooking skill. Disagreeability includes one type as well: *xiān rén zhǎng nǚ wáng* ‘cactus Queen’, where ‘cactus’ is a metaphor suggesting a prickly and disagreeable personality and ‘Queen’ is a symbol of female control. As mentioned previously, this is the only identity that is self-claimed by a female. In episode 19, the neighbor girl, Maorongrong, plants cactuses in her yard. She believes that when they grow up, she will become a queen. Unlike the male characters (84%), the female characters are less involved (25%) in self-evaluation and self-labeling.

Two types imply appearance, and they acutely reflect gender stereotypes in society. The former, *wǎng luò zhǔ bō* ‘live streaming host,’ points to the proliferation of female cyber anchors on the Chinese web in recent years. They attract viewers through their beauty, fashionable lifestyles, and eloquence. It is in this very scenario that the noun *wǎng luò zhǔ bō* ‘live streaming host’ appears in the cartoon. In episode 3, Apron Mom is obsessed with being a cyber influencer and spends her days at home making videos and counting her followers. As shown in Example (7), she receives encouragement from her son because of her look. However, in the same episode, ironically, once her makeup fails, she is called a *guài wù* ‘monster’ (Example 8).

Example (7) [Son and mother are discussing how to attract more internet followers.]

Son:	fǎng xīn be at ease 'Be at ease, Apron Mom.'	ba, SFP	wéi qún Apron	mā mā. Mom		
	nǐ 2SG	zhè me this much	piào liàng, beautiful			
	fěnn sī fans	shù number	yī dìng definitely	huì will	zēng jiā increase	
	hěn duō a lot	de. ASSOC				
	'You are so beautiful, and the number of fans will definitely increase.'					
Mom:	duì correct	ya, SFP	zhǐ yào as long as	wǒ 1SG	bǎ COP	
	zì jǐ myself	dǎ bàn dress up	de ASSOC	piào piào liàng liàng, beautifully		
	fěnn sī fans	shù number	bù NEG	jiù AUX		

duō le ma?
 more ASP Q
 ‘You are right; as long as I dress up beautifully, the number of fans will increase, won't it?’

Example (8) [Apron Mom did a makeup, but it wasn't successful.]

Son: guài wù! guài wù!
 monster monster
 ‘Monster! Monster!’

Mom: nǎ yǒu guài wù?
 where have monster
 ‘Where is the monster?’

Dad: āi ya, méi shì,
 oops NEG matter
 wéi qún mā mā nǐ zěn me huà zhuāng chéng
 Apron Mom 2SG why make up become
 zhè gè yàng zi le?
 this CLF mode ASP
 ‘Oops, never mind, Apron Mom why are you wearing makeup like this?’

4.4. Discussion

Animated cartoons, as one of the media that children are most often exposed to, contribute significantly to the socialization of values, and beliefs about gender (Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014). The results of this study share a number of similarities with the published studies on children’s media and books in Western cultures.

It has been discussed in the literature that on children-targeted media, women characters tend to be marginalized and underrepresented (Dietz, 1998; Dill & Thill, 2007; Sheldon, 2004; Signorielli, 1990), while male characters appeared much more frequently (Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Grauerholz & Pescoslido, 1989; Hamilton et al., 2006; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; McCabe et al., 2011; Oskamp & Kaufman, 1996; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Weitzman et al., 1972). The current investigation shows that in this example Chinese cartoon, male characters produce statistically significantly more utterances than female characters. This finding provides quantitative and linguistic evidence of female’s underrepresentation in Chinese children’s media, a domain that is less studied in the literature.

Resembling what has been reported about children’s books (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Brugeilles et al., 2002; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Kolbe & La Voie, 1981; Tognoli et al., 1994; Weitzman et al., 1972) and Disney films (Aley & Hahn, 2020; Levinson, 1975; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Wiserma, 2000), male characters in *Big-Head Son and*

Small-Head Father are also engaged with a wider variety of activities and visit more locations than their female counterparts. Mirroring previous research in the West, this study shows that, in a popular Chinese animated cartoon, stereotypical gender roles exist. While men are portrayed as active and outdoor, women are presented as passive and indoor. Male activities are more diverse, yet women's activities are potentially marginalized and bound by gender stereotypes.

Linguistic analysis on this study found similar gendered descriptive lexicons that have been reported in studies conducted in the West (Berry & Wilkins, 2017; Turner-Bowker, 1996). As reflected in the lines, male characters are associated with lexemes that embody masculine gender norms in society, such as capable, enthusiastic, love to create, and have leadership skills. While the less commonly presented female characters are generally depicted through lexemes that embrace indoor and family-based themes. They are frequently being verbally described according to appearance, cooking skill, and artistic talents. This finding is in agreement with what has been discovered in Disney animated films, in which the stereotypical gender roles are reinforced through male and female characters' characterizations and plots (England et al., 2011; Maity, 2014; Wiserma, 2000).

Intriguingly, although portrayed in gender stereotypical roles, female characters in this Chinese cartoon are not submissive, but instead seem to exert more control over their family at home. If we recall, in the female lexicon, *shēng qì* 'get angry' and *mò shōu* 'confiscate' are among the top-ranked verbs. This indicate that in this cartoon, though women are not the protagonists, they embody the feminine roles in common Chinese families: mothers are the domestic rule enforcers. On the surface, the Chinese females, as portrayed by this cartoon, wield power over their husbands and sons, unlike their submissive counterparts in Disney films (Maity, 2014). However, research suggests that this seeming power is really a sign of weakness because the women's feelings of worth are based on controlling their family in the absence of other sources of self-worth (Ng et al., 2014). The contingency of Apron Mom's self-worth on the performance of her husband and her son is therefore consistent with the other limitations in her life as a result of being confined in the domestic sphere. The apron moms are good at caring and taking

care of their families, enjoy domestic life, follow fashion trends, enthusiastic about presenting themselves on the Internet, and being psychologically controlling.

On the other hand, it is worth pointing out that although more and more Chinese women nowadays are encountering obstacles in their career development, thus turning the center of their lives to their families, dual-earner families are still common in the society. (Chen et al., 2013; Evans, 1997; He & Wu, 2017; Jeffreys, 2010; Pei et al., 2007). However, through this cartoon's language, stereotypical gender roles are inadvertently instilled in children in the way that women are mainly associated with home-based scenes. The cartoon also overplays women's housekeeping skills. Verbs like *zuò fàn* 'cook,' *kāi fàn* 'serve meal,' *zuò dàn tà* 'make egg tarts,' frequently appear in the female lexicon but barely associated with males.

In addition, women are over described by their appearance. For instance, *piào liàng* 'beautiful' and *chōng mǎn qīng chūn huó lì* 'full of youthful energy' are high frequency adjectives. However, once the makeup isn't successful, women even transform into *guài wù* 'monsters.' The use of language in this cartoon reflects the existing sexist social convention of judging women based on their appearance. While men have a diverse range of identities, women's identities are granted generally because of their appearance and cooking skill. Gender norm instillation is not conducive to the development of gender equality in Chinese children. Regardless boys or girls, these stereotypical presentations of gender hinder children's development of potentially different social valuing.

4.5. Summary

Indeed, Chinese animated cartoons are metaphors of nationalist identity (Li, 2011; Wu, 2009). Through this household name animation, we see how social standards, cultural values, and especially gender norms are transmitted to children through language. Undeniably, this cartoon is well-made in terms of plot, graphics, and lines. It not only depicts modern family life, but also represent the current Chinese zeitgeist. However, it is the popularity and long-lasting impact of this cartoon that makes its gender reinforcement more thought-provoking. As a classic Chinese home-made cartoon, it embodies childhood memories of several Chinese generations and has evolved into a component of

the national discourse. A popular cartoon like *Big-Head Son and Small-Head Father* functions as a powerful channel to socialize children with values, moral standards, and especially, their understanding of gender. Therefore, the character portrayal and linguistic presentation in children's media should avoid stereotypes and assumptions about genders, because these inputs will become bricks in children's gender schemata construction.

Admittedly, the cartoon chooses a father and his son as the main characters; hence determining its focus on male characters. However, this cartoon has been viewed by a large number of children of both genders over the past 25 years. Its role in the gender socialization of Chinese children is intriguing. Fortunately, a female version of this animation, *Marshmallow and Cloud Mom*, was aired in 2016. A follow-up study can compare the linguistic gender presentation of this cartoon series' male and female versions.

Finally, several limitations need to be considered. First, the current study has only examined 20 episodes of Season V; this reduces the generality of the results. Second, the current investigation focused only on predicates; other linguistic devices may present different tendencies. Third, this study distinguished characters primarily by gender and did not compare the differences between adults' and children's utterances. A deeper level of comparison might have revealed different findings. Fourth, this study only focused on linguistic input of the cartoon, and a future study can involve data that reveals children and parents' reception of cartoon and their practice of gender during the conversations. These limitations mean that study findings need to be interpreted cautiously.

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

In this dissertation, I have investigated Chinese children's (age range: 5-6) language-mediated gender socialization with three agents: *parent*, *teacher*, and *media*. As discovered from the empirical data, these agents provide social and institutional platforms, ideological scripts, and linguistic resources for children's acquisition of gender norms. In agreement with what has been noted in the literature (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Kerckhoff, 1972), this dissertation showed how socialization agents in a culture constitute a framework in which children are cultivated into gendered social members. This dissertation also demonstrates the three agents' diverse social and linguistic roles in gender norm indoctrination, especially how teachers and parents function as the 'gender masters' amid CofP (community of practice). Investigations on the three agents, as this dissertation has conducted, furthers our understanding of Chinese children's gender socialization through language.

First, the three agents employ different linguistic strategies in gender socialization. As reported in Chapter II, parental gender norms are transmitted through lexicon and communication style. As shown in the data, Lily and Tom had different preferences and access to books, and the books they browsed and discussed with parents provided differentiated inputs concerning world knowledge and lexicon. While Tom and his father centered on terms about science and rules of the physical world, Lily and her mother were engaged with lexemes of morality, social relations, and personality traits in the imaginary world. A similar semantic gap emerged in their chat lexicons. Tom and his father spent the majority of their energy talking about school life, thinking process, and skill training. In comparison, Lily and her mother were less concerned about skills but instead co-constructed a discourse around interpersonal relations, fairy tale characters, and joyful life experiences.

Focusing specifically on question strategy, I have illustrated how gendered communication patterns are practiced between parent and child. Lily and Tom both have showcased their parental socialization outcomes via question strategies, with the girl demonstrating more concerns about emotion and the boy being more skillful in progress interrogation. As I proposed, parents' modeling, children's meaning negotiation, and their

acceptance of linguistic gender norms manifest their gender practices as masters or novice apprentices in their home-based community.

In Chapter III, I have shown that gender is socialized through kindergarten teachers' patterns of verbal interactions, speech length, and allocation of speech acts. As revealed through the empirical data, teachers occasionally interacted more with boys and conducted significantly longer speech with boys. Compared to boys, girls interacted significantly more with teachers through significantly longer speech length. These findings indicate that boys and girls are implicitly distinguished by their preschool educators through language-mediated communication. While boys attract more instructional efforts, girls are more likely to initiate frequent and prolonged verbal interaction with teachers.

Gendered linguistic strategies are also reflected by teachers' differentiated adoption of speech acts. As demonstrated in Chapter III, children of both genders received echo or recast most frequently. Among these, relatively more supportive echoes were given to girls, and relatively more corrective recasts were given to boys. Two statistically significant speech act differences have highlighted the gender gap. First, boys are significantly more criticized, and commands on body movements often accompany criticisms. Second, girls are significantly more questioned, and more comprehension checking questions were given to them. Intriguingly, the teachers have allocated series of gender-exclusive speech acts. For instance, only boys were praised for their knowledge and criticized for seating, tidiness, and interruption. Only girls were praised for appearance and questioned in terms of life experience and others' emotions. The divergencies in speech act allocation, as I proposed, indicate teachers' gender-biased focus and expectation on children of different genders. Although vocational training and the institutions' teaching philosophy have raised teachers' awareness of gender equality, gender norms seem to be inadvertently and unconsciously displayed through language and actions in their classroom practice.

By analyzing a famous Chinese cartoon's descriptive lines, In Chapter IV, I have shown how utterance frequencies and lexemes that depict attributes, actions, and identities of characters convey remarkable gender stereotypes. Male characters produce statistically significantly more utterances and visit a broader range of out-home locations

than female characters. In terms of language, male characters are portrayed through lexemes that embody masculine gender norms, such as capable, enthusiastic, love to build things, and have leadership skills. By comparison, the marginalized female characters are primarily associated with lexemes that related to appearance, cooking skills, artistic talents, and other home-based traits. Although children's cognitive abilities are limited, the animation's linguistic presentation of gender stereotypes is thought-provoking. Women's domestic functions and beauty are overemphasized in the lines, while their individual thoughts and professional skills are downplayed.

Second, if we compare the three socialization agents, kindergarten teachers engage with linguistic gender norm inculcation in the least obvious way. As discovered in Chapter III, kindergarten teachers barely used gender labels to address children, did not implement gender segregation, did not assume the gender of the fairy tale animal characters, and proactively included gender-egalitarian materials in their teaching. This seems to be a byproduct of the socialist institutional design that deemphasizes individuals including their gender in the interest of a larger collective. However, due to a range of societal factors, the vast majority of the kindergarten staff are female. This potentially elevates female standards to the dominant values and reduces boys' exposure to masculine role models in the preschool. Nevertheless, compared to parental socialization in Chapter II and media socialization in Chapter IV, in general, kindergartens teachers did not employ differentiated vocabulary to interact with boys and girls, nor did they incorporate exaggerated gender stereotypes into their classroom instruction. Therefore, it appears that kindergarten is the socialization agent that provides Chinese children with the most egalitarian ideas, although it is not an absolute gender equality mechanism by design.

Third, from a macro perspective, the roles these agents play in children's gender socialization reflect China's contemporary zeitgeist. The three socialization agents differ in their motivations for imparting gender norms. This divergence is one of the factors that contribute to their differentiated gender reinforcement levels. As educational institutions, kindergartens strive to achieve gender egalitarian as it's one of the core principles of the central government's national education policy in the service of economic development. Though subconscious gender practices exist, kindergarten teachers are aware of their

gender-egalitarian responsibility. They aim to create a gender-friendly or genderless environment through institutional routines and teaching materials.

However, while kindergarten teachers try to downplay children's gender awareness, parent-child interactions and domestic discourses are very much shaped and influenced by the child's gender. While kindergarten lessons de-gender fairy tale characters, cartoons portray salient stereotypical gender images and widely spread exaggerated gender stereotypes on the media.

Indeed, as different society subjects, these three agents have varied objectives and intentions in gender norm dissemination. If kindergartens' practices embody a national goal of gender equality, parents' gendered upbringing of their children reflects their own understanding and perception of gender roles in society. Similarly, if school materials deliberately downplay the gender stereotypes in society, animators' exaggeration of gender stereotypes was motivated by their purpose to achieve comedic and artistic effects. The interaction of these three agents subtly reflects China's zeitgeist amid the post-socialist market economy. While the communist ideology remains the official mainstream, the market drives and guides artistic creation in the entertainment industry. On the individual level, the market also calibrates standards of personal happiness that deviate from the past eras, particularly in terms of the differentiated social roles and workplace prospects of men and women.

Fourth, in addition to filling a huge empirical laguna in language-mediated gender socialization in Chinese children, this study filled a research gap at the methodological level. Considering the cultural convention that Chinese participants are not always comfortable reflecting on their authentic thoughts, knowledge, and behaviors about gender membership, this dissertation included both subjective data and observational data in complementary ways. As shown in Chapters II and III, I investigated the correlation between subjective interview data and fieldwork observational data and explored how they are mutually complementary. These methods have produced converging evidence, as previous studies on gender socialization primarily employed self-report and parent-report data. Furthermore, this methodological triangulation is optimal for an analysis within the CofP framework, which views gender as noticed, simulated, and practiced through social interactions.

To conclude, gender, as a sensitive and essential element of society, critically shapes our lives and synchronically mirrors social and cultural norms, beliefs, identities, and roles. As shown in this dissertation, the process of children's gender socialization in contemporary Chinese society interacts with gender norms from layers of historical periods. The traditional Confucian patriarchal beliefs, the communist gender egalitarianism pursuit, and the widening gender gap amid the rapid economic development that is driven by elite masculinity and that increasingly drives women back to the home sphere can all find clues in this dissertation's empirical data. Through linguistic data, this dissertation demonstrates that gender norms in contemporary Chinese society are intertwined in a flux with competing values and contradictions. While the idea of gender equality is officially implemented and practiced in educational institutions, the gender gap in professional settings undermines females' educational efforts and professional outlook, and the parental discourse and the media reorient children's perceptions of gender towards more traditional gender roles.

Admittedly, in reality, Chinese men have more access to higher status and social resources. However, males are burdened with the invisible lifetime mission to become 'financially reliable'; thus, they are trapped in endless professional competition since childhood. While Chinese women have been given significantly more educational resources and parental investment than their female ancestors, they have to handle the double pressure from workplace and family duties once adulthood arrives. Just as 'achievement' and 'wealth' are men's shackles, the labels of 'beauty' and 'family devotion' constantly put Chinese women under pressure and scrutiny.

Upon finalizing this dissertation, I observe Chinese netizens engaging in a debate over the forthcoming data of China's 2020 Census. Two gender-related population issues have attracted intense public attention. First, as previous NBS (National Bureau of Statistics) data shows, China's annual number of newborns has plummeted from a peak of 30 million in the 1960s to less than 15 million in 2019, the lowest record since 1962. This points to the phenomenon that late marriage and delay of childbearing have become common in China, and young people are less willing to get married and have children. According to NBS, the unmarried rate for Chinese women aged 25-29 has increased by 17% compared to 10 years ago. As netizens on Zhihu.com discussed, young Chinese

people, especially men, face more challenges in finding spouses due to unaffordable housing prices and high costs of childcare and schooling. Second, national statistics show that there are more boys than girls in the population born after 2010. This implies a potentially more unbalanced gender ratio in the future society, which will impact gender interactions and gender role expectations in the next decades. Therefore, follow-up studies of gender socialization and gender dynamics in the changing population and gender landscape will be an important future endeavor. This dissertation broke a path for that endeavor by contributing a first-of-its-kind linguistic evidence of gender development with far-reaching society-level implications regarding gender dynamics in contemporary China.

APPENDIX A
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASSOC	associative case
AUX	auxiliary verb
CLF	classifier
COP	copula
LD	locative
NEG	negation
NML	nominalization
ORD	ordinal number
PL	plural form
PN	person name
PREP	preposition
Q	question word
RED	reduplication
RES	resulative
SFP	senttence final particle
SG	single
PSV	passive voice

APPENDIX B
LIST OF GLOSSING SYMBOLS

text # text	pause between words
text (+...)	trailing off
◎text◎	louder
—text—	high pitch
Δ textΔ	faster
↑text	shift to high pitch
[= text]	transcriber's explanation
[% text]	transcriber's comments
(+<) text	previous word overlapped
(-:)text	previous word lengthened

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS OF CHAPTER II

Semi-structured interview questions in the family study (translated into English):

Questions for parents

1. Before birth, which sex did you expect your child to be? If they turned out to be the opposite sex, would that change your expectations of them?
2. What kind of person do you wish your child to become?
3. Use three adjectives to describe that ideal child.
4. What actions have done by you to achieve that goal?
5. Why did you choose these books for your child? Does the reason align with your parenting goal?
6. Based on your observation, children of which sex group your child prefers to play with? Why?

Questions for children

1. Are you a boy or a girl?
2. When and how did you realize that?
3. What's your ideal self?
4. Who is your role model? Why?
5. Do you often play with boys or girls? Why?
6. Which cartoon character you like? Why?
7. Use an adjective to describe your mom
8. Use an adjective to describe your dad
9. Use an adjective to describe yourself

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