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A Chinese yuppie in Beijing:
Phonological variation and the construction
of a new professional identity

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ABSTRACT

Recent sociolinguistic studies have given increased attention to the situated practice of members of locally based communities. Linguistic variation examined tends to fall on a continuum between a territorially based "standard" variety and a regional or ethnic vernacular. This article emphasizes the need for sociolinguistics, especially variationist sociolinguistics, to look beyond strictly local contexts and to go beyond treating variation as located along a linear dimension of standard and vernacular. Based on quantitative analysis of four phonological variables among Chinese professionals in foreign and state-owned companies in Beijing, this study demonstrates that professionals in foreign businesses employ linguistic resources from both local and global sources to construct a new cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin, whereas their counterparts in state-owned businesses favor the use of local features. The study shows that variation does not just reflect existing social categories and social change, but is a resource for constructing those categories and participates in social change. (Mandarin Chinese, phonological variation, identity, style, linguistic market, China, business professionals, social change.)*

INTRODUCTION

In a September 1997 issue of the Chinese magazine *Xiāofèi Zhǐnán*[1] 'Consumption Guide', an article entitled *Zájiāo Zhōngwén* 'Hybrid Chinese' claims there is a "new" language, "hybrid Chinese," in fashion among Chinese professionals working for foreign companies and Sino-foreign joint ventures. Characterizing it as Mandarin mixed with English, Cantonese, and Taiwanese expressions, the writer observes: "For those who frequent office buildings of foreign and Sino-foreign businesses, even when dealing with local professionals, if they don't understand English, they look like country bumpkins." Following their superi-

431

ors, many of whom are from Hong Kong and who mix Cantonese and English when speaking Mandarin, the local employees are used to this kind of language practice and incorporate it in all aspects of their own lives. The article concludes:

> The phenomenon of hybrid Chinese has caused distress and anguish among linguists who call for standardization of Mandarin Chinese. But as more and more people join such hybrid entities – working in joint ventures, eating hybrid Chinese-style fast food – it's inevitable that they regurgitate this kind of hybrid language.

The article provides a glimpse at the effects of recent socioeconomic change on language use in the People's Republic of China. It attributes a linguistic phenomenon, "hybrid Chinese," to a specific social group, Chinese professionals working for foreign businesses. This emergent professional group is the focus of the present study. I use the magazine article as a springboard for presenting a study of the relation between linguistic variation and socioeconomic changes in urban China.

In this article, I present a quantitative analysis of the use of four phonological variables by two professional groups in Beijing: an emergent group consisting of professionals working in foreign businesses, and an established group of professionals employed in state-owned enterprises. Comparing the linguistic practices of the two groups demonstrates significant intergroup variation in the use of all four variables. I draw on the construct of the linguistic market originally developed in the works of Bourdieu (e.g. Bourdieu & Potaski 1976; Bourdieu 1977, 1991) to explain the sharp intergroup variation. Differences between the two groups are shown to be intimately related to the emergence of a transnational Chinese linguistic market in which a cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin Chinese becomes a valuable form of symbolic capital. At the same time, linguistic features are examined as symbolic resources used by the professionals in foreign businesses to give meaning to their new social identity that is not bounded by a territorial matrix.

Several studies have found the construct of the linguistic market a useful tool to account for sociolinguistic variation (Sankoff & Laberge 1978, Haeri 1996, Eckert 2000). A linguistic market is generally defined as a symbolic market, constituted by various social domains within which linguistic exchanges take place. Linguistic products are not equally valued in a linguistic market. The language legitimized by the market sets the norm against which the values of other ways of speaking and varieties are defined (Bourdieu 1977). Those who command the legitimate language possess the linguistic capital, a form of symbolic capital, that may bring them rewards (both material and symbolic) from the market. The power of Bourdieu's linguistic market as an analytical tool for linguistic practice lies in the nature of the market as part of a larger structured symbolic domain. It draws attention to the social and economic conditions of linguistic production and reproduction, and to the power relations of language users as

both producers and consumers of language. The first sociolinguistic adaptation of the notion of linguistic market is Sankoff & Laberge's (1978) study of grammatical variation in Montreal French. This and a later study by Sankoff et al. 1989 find a strong correlation between the use of standard variants and the relative extent to which speakers participate in the standard linguistic market. Bourdieu's conception of the linguistic market is criticized by Woolard 1985 for its overemphasis on the unified nature of the linguistic market, where the only legitimate language is claimed to be the language of the dominant class or standard language (see also Milroy & Milroy 1992). Woolard has proposed alternative linguistic markets that give value to local varieties. Problematizing the integration of the standard linguistic market from a different perspective, Haeri's (1996) study of the sociolinguistic market of Cairo argues that the segmentation of the labor market produces different linguistic values and different types of symbolic capital. The officially legitimized standard language, Classical Arabic, is not the language of the dominant class, and has value in a small segment of the labor market where the state is the largest employer, for example, in government jobs and public schools. Many members of the upper and upper middle classes who are educated in private schools that teach foreign languages have occupations that require a different kind of linguistic capital constituted of bi- or multilingual skills.

Eckert 2000 illustrates the importance of the notion of the linguistic market in her discussion of sociolinguistic variation among American adolescents in suburban Detroit. She emphasizes the explanatory power of the linguistic market in the study of adolescent linguistic practice, "where the production of the self to maximize one's value in the marketplace is so clear" (2000:13). As part of a broader symbolic market, the construct enables her to examine the adolescents' use of linguistic features in line with other symbolic (and material) resources they draw upon to construct value for themselves "in a peer-controlled 'marketplace of identities'" (2000:14). Recent studies such as Cameron 1999 and Heller 2003 have addressed the consequences of a globalized economy on linguistic practice. Their studies have indicated, on one hand, the emergence of supra-local or international language markets that give (new) values to linguistic resources and the socioeconomic gains that they bring to language users participating on such markets. On the other hand, members of local communities develop strategies to cope with the challenges of globalization. Linguistic resources, particularly local varieties and features, combined with other local symbolic and cultural resources are used to claim access to newly available socioeconomic opportunities in the local markets (for example, the commodification of ethnic varieties and features in heritage/ethnic tourism noted by Dubois & Horvath 1999 and Heller 2003).

The construct of the linguistic market is especially relevant to examining the relation between linguistic practice and socioeconomic change in the current context of mainland China. As explained in more detail in the next section, the rapid

QING ZHANG

restructuring of the economic system and the commodification forces of the market economy have changed the ways in which material and symbolic resources are used and valued in the reconfiguration and construction of (new) social distinctions. Using the construct of linguistic market, I examine the sharp intergroup linguistic variation as integral to broader socioeconomic changes that have brought about weakened state control of access to socioeconomic (including employment) opportunities and allocation of all kinds of resources. The emergence of a new job market brought about by a globalized economy has placed a premium not only on educational credentials and professional expertise but also on linguistic skills. Individuals have become competitors as well as commodities on the job market, where access to desired job opportunities (which may lead to better socioeconomic opportunities) is based on the value of the individual as both a competitor and a commodity. This study examines linguistic variation as constituting the symbolic capital (including educational credentials, professional expertise, and all the components under the rubric of self-presentation, including appearance, dress and manners) that adds value to the individual as a commodity in demand as well as a viable competitor on the market.

While the linguistic market may shed light on the general patterns of variation found, it is inadequate to explain the nuanced social meanings of linguistic variation – that is, why particular linguistic features are favored over others, and how they become resources to distinguish the professionals in foreign businesses from their counterparts in the state sector. To explain the meanings of sociolinguistic variation, I draw on developments in treating sociolinguistic variation as a symbolic resource in the construction of social identity (e.g. Mendoza-Denton 1997, Eckert 2000). Such an approach examines linguistic variation on a par with other symbolic resources used by a new professional group to establish their emergent social identity in Beijing and in a larger, transnational Chinese context. Thus, by examining the interaction between linguistic market and language as symbolic resource in identity construction, the present study of sociolinguistic variation is situated in the broader landscape of urban China, which is undergoing globalization and transition from its former socialist egalitarian society to a socioeconomically more stratified one. In the next section, I sketch the current socioeconomic situation of China, and Beijing in particular, to contextualize the study and the issues of focus in this article.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION OF CHINA

China has been undergoing economic reform since the late 1970s. Drastic changes have been taking place in the economic, social, cultural, and ideological arenas. In this section, I discuss specifically changes in three aspects that are most relevant to the current study: (i) increased income disparity that leads to diversified lifestyle choices and emergence of new urban elites; (ii) China's opening up to

the global market; and (iii) China's becoming a participant in the transnational Chinese community.

Increased income disparity

One of the primary goals of economic reform and modernization has been for all Chinese in the country to achieve a *xiǎokāng*, or relatively comfortable lifestyle. As Davis (2000:17) points out, "in proclaiming the goal of reform to be the establishment of a *xiaokang* society the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] leadership legitimated a society stratified by financial inequalities." Numerous studies show that reforms have given impetus to rapid income growth and rising living standards, but at the same time, income disparities are widening across different segments of the population, different regions (e.g. Khan et al. 1992, Davis 2000), and different types of business enterprises (e.g. Gold 1990, Bian 1994, Goodman 1995, Pearson 1997). Improved living standards parallel the rise of consumerism. As reforms severely weaken state central control of the economy, a consumer market has emerged, and a new generation of consumer goods is available to the general public (Walder 1991). Thus, state-monopolized collective consumption has been overthrown by a consumer revolution (Bian 1994, H. Lu 2000). Growth in income has increased purchasing power and the desire to consume. At the same time, increased economic diversity and the abundance of consumer goods have made it possible for manufacturers and retailers to target different groups of consumers on the basis of their purchasing power. Differential purchasing power and increased choice in housing, leisure, and other components of material life provide a wider space for mainland Chinese to make commercial lifestyle choices (Weiner 1994:13). Gradually, the homogeneity of the masses' lifestyle in pre-reform China gave way to economic diversity and polarization (Wang 1995, Ikels 1996). As Hanlong Lu (2000:136) observes, "People are not satisfied just to follow trends and fashions. They have begun to compete for prestige and style," and they do so publicly. Before the economic reforms, only some high-ranking CCP cadres were able to enjoy a distinctive lifestyle, which was based not on their personal wealth but on their political elite status. Nowadays, wealthy Chinese are able to use their financial power to pursue new lifestyles that are not affordable to the mass majority. As a result, new elites are emerging, and they form the basis for a rising Chinese middle class whose status is not based on party membership (Li 1997; Pearson 1997, 1998; Yan 1997; W. Zhang 2000).[2] Among them are members of a new professional group that has emerged as a direct result of China's participation in the global market. These new professionals are the focus of this study.

China opens up to the global market

Economic reforms are transforming the centrally controlled state economy into a market economy. At the same time, after many years of isolation from the rest

of the world (especially during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976), an "open policy" has been instituted to integrate China into the global market. Opening up to world markets has attracted foreign investment and brought in advanced technology and management expertise from other countries. In 1997, approximately 5,000 foreign-funded enterprises and more than 6,000 representative offices were operating in Beijing. They employed more than 300,000 Chinese (*Beijing Statistical Yearbook* 1997). As of April 1998, an estimated total of 310,570 foreign companies were registered in China (W. Zhang 2000:114).

In the wake of the fast growth of foreign-investment businesses, a new job market has emerged which fosters a new generation of Chinese professionals working for foreign businesses. By mid-1998, 17.5 million Chinese were working in the foreign business sector, many of them in middle and senior management (W. Zhang 2000). Among these managerial level professionals, those working as middle and upper tier managers in multinational Western and Japanese companies form the core of the business elite in the foreign sector (Pearson 1997). These companies offer them much higher salaries than others. In addition, the global prestige of their companies gives them higher social status inaccessible to managers of smaller firms. This status, combined with the increasing attention they receive from the media, has made working as a professional in foreign business an attractive occupation, especially among the younger generation Chinese (Sun 1997, cited in W. Zhang 2000:121).

The middle and upper echelons of these professionals are referred to by some Chinese as *yǎpíshì* 'yuppies'. In addition to the original denotation of the English word, the Chinese term has the connotations of global orientation, trendiness, and sophistication. These social characteristics of the Chinese yuppies are represented in the word *yáng* in the following popular saying about them: *tāmen chuān yángfú, shuō yáng wén, chī yáng fàn, gēn yáng rén dǎjiāodào* 'they wear foreign brand clothes, speak foreign languages, eat foreign food, and deal with foreigners'. *Yáng* captures the core characteristic of this group. Originally meaning 'foreign' or 'Western,' it now means anything fashionable and progressive (Yan 1997:41). Yan notes that "eating foreign food, and consuming foreign goods, has become an important way for these Chinese yuppies to define themselves as middle-class professionals" (1997:50). While there is not much scholarly research to attest to Western influence on the lifestyle of these Chinese yuppies, their unique occupational milieu, extensive contacts with business people from other parts of the world, and frequent international travel have given them greater exposure to other modern cosmopolitan lifestyles than many Mainland Chinese have. Their higher income also enables them to consume in many ways that other Chinese urbanites cannot yet afford. A survey of 800 young professionals working in foreign-invested firms in 1994 found that they share a modern and cosmopolitan outlook and may have a strong impact on the development of a new middle-class lifestyle in urban China (Liu et al. 1998, Liu & Yao 1998, cited in

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

W. Zhang 2000:117). Later in this article I show that the Chinese yuppies in Beijing use linguistic resources to present their cosmopolitan professional identity.

China joins the transnational Chinese community

Rapid globalization has drawn China not only into the global economy but also into a modern transnational Chinese capitalist community (e.g. Harding 1993, Ong & Nonini 1997), which is characterized by economic and cultural interactions that transcend national boundaries among Chinese communities around the world. Overseas Chinese communities (i.e., Chinese living outside the PRC) have played a catalytic role in the economic development of China. Their businesses – mainly from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Singapore, and Thailand – make up the biggest contributor of foreign direct investment in mainland China (Yeung 2000:91). Furthermore, many Western multinationals employ overseas Chinese to manage their local operations in China. Using their cultural and linguistic advantages, overseas Chinese facilitate communication between the foreign headquarters and their local employees (Yeung 2000, W. Zhang 2000).

If the overseas Chinese have been playing a significant role in fueling the economic transformation of the mainland, overseas Chinese popular culture is exerting an equally powerful influence on mainland culture and society. In the wake of overseas Chinese investors and business executives, overseas Chinese cultural entrepreneurs also made their way into the mainland market in the early 1980s. At a time when there were not enough cultural products to satisfy the needs of mainlanders who were eager to see the world beyond their national borders, Hong Kong and Taiwan (jointly referred to in Mandarin as *Gǎngtái*) pop music, with its glamorously packaged singers and sophisticated stage and sound effects, immediately took over China's pop music market and its consumers, particularly the younger generations. *Gǎngtái* films and TV dramas have come out on top at the box office and dominate prime time on mainland television channels. Novels by Hong Kong and Taiwan writers are among the bestsellers. Although at the same time Western pop music, particularly American pop music, Hollywood movies, and Western TV serials also appeal to a large number of mainlanders, the impact of Western popular culture is far less significant than that of *Gǎngtái* (Gu et al. 1992, Tan 1992, Barmé 1993, Gold 1993). In this respect, the common roots of Chinese culture and shared languages give overseas Chinese popular culture, particularly *Gǎngtái* popular culture, tremendous advantages over its Western counterparts. Communicated in Mandarin or Cantonese, *Gǎngtái* popular culture presents to the eyes of the mainlanders a world with a prosperous modern cosmopolitan lifestyle and a new urban identity. This modern urban world is Chinese in essence and hence is readily identified by and with the Chinese on the mainland. Increasing interaction across state boundaries between China and other Chinese societies around the world has brought about the emergence of "Modern Chinese Transnationalism" (Nonini & Ong 1997). According to Nonini & Ong, it "generates new and distinctive social

arrangements, cultural discourses, practices, and subjectivities. Perhaps most crucial, new identities are thereby constituted" (1997:11).

Although only a minority of mainlanders have gone abroad, the implacable forces of transnational Chinese mass media, new information technology, and the global flows of people, capital, information, and commodities (both material and cultural) provide them an array of resources to construct new identities and communities that link up with Chinese in other parts of the world (Barmé1993, Gold 1993, M. Yang 1997). Resources that were previously inaccessible to Chinese on the mainland have now come to symbolize newly available orientations and subjectivities. The current sociolinguistic reality of China challenges us to go beyond treating identities and communities as territorially based and conceptualizing linguistic variation along the linear dimension of the standard and the vernacular. In the linguistic data to be discussed in this paper, a combination of linguistic features is employed by Chinese yuppies to participate in a newly emergent transnational Chinese linguistic market and to construct a new cosmopolitan professional identity.

In what follows, I describe the methodologies and participants for this study. Next, I discuss the linguistic variables and patterns of variation found. Then I explore explanations for the linguistic patterns. I conclude by discussing the implications of this study.

METHODOLOGY AND INFORMANTS

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between 1997 and 1998 in Beijing, China. The primary participants in the study are Chinese yuppies who are top and middle-level managerial professionals working for large, prestigious international businesses in Beijing. They share the three characteristics of the core new elite in the foreign business sector described by Pearson 1997: high income, high educational level, and the prestigious status of their companies.[3] For comparative purposes, a group of managerial-level professionals working for state enterprises was also studied. They all worked for large national corporations and had college-level education. Their monthly salaries, ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 yuan, are much lower than those of the yuppies. Each individual was contacted through "a friend of a friend." The speech data were collected by means of sociolinguistic interviews conducted at the participants' workplaces. Each interview lasted for a minimum of 45 minutes. The interview focused on two general topics: professional experiences, and Beijing society and culture. Having the participants talk about their job-related experiences in their own offices created a context in which their professional identity became quite relevant and salient. The second topic was designed to elicit conversations about Beijing culture and history, Beijing Mandarin, and locally salient social categories. The data used for the quantitative analysis in this study are drawn from interviews with 14

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

yuppies and 14 state professionals. Members of both groups were born and grew up in Beijing, where they also acquired their primary, secondary, and tertiary (four-year university) education. They had not lived in another region for a continuous period longer than three years. One person, the chief representative of a multinational investment group (Participant 9 in the Appendix), studied for two years for a master's degree in business administration at an American university and worked in the United States for one year after graduation. Each group had an equal number of women and men. The Appendix provides detailed information about each participant's age, type of company worked for, and position in the company.

Although the two groups are equivalent in the sense that they are both business professionals with similar educational background and professional skills, they differ drastically in income level, lifestyle, hiring and promotion processes, and salience of gender in their business practice. Differences between the two sectors of business present themselves as soon as one walks into the workplace, in terms of office décor and equipment, attire, and last but not least, the conspicuously decorative placement of women in the foreign sector. As I will show later, these differences are also reflected in the linguistic practices of the two groups.

LINGUISTIC VARIABLES AND DATA

As the linguistic variation to be discussed involves Beijing Mandarin and Mainland Standard Mandarin, a brief description of the relation between the two is necessary here. Beijing Mandarin is a variety in the northern Mandarin dialect group. The standard variety of spoken Mandarin in China is called *Pǔtōnghuà*. According to its official definition, it takes "northern Mandarin as its basis, the Beijing Mandarin phonological system as its norm of pronunciation, and exemplary modern *báihuà* ['vernacular'] literary language [as opposed to classical Chinese] as its norm of grammar" (*Xiàndài Hànyǔ Cídiǎn* 1983:890). In the rest of the article, I refer to *Pǔtōnghuà* as Mainland Standard Mandarin (MSM) to distinguish it from other, including non-mainland, Mandarin varieties.[4] While Beijing Mandarin (BM) and MSM share the same phonetic inventory, it is certainly not the case that all Beijingers speak MSM. Neither is it true that BM and MSM are two monolithic entities. Variation has been found among BM speakers of different age groups, and between urban and suburban speakers (Linguistic Group 1995:7–8, fn.12). In addition, many localisms and phonological features of Beijing Mandarin are not incorporated into MSM. Just as speakers of northern Mandarin may have a hard time understanding speakers whose native varieties are not northern Mandarin (e.g., Yue or Wu varieties), visitors to Beijing often complain that they cannot understand local Beijing speech. The difference between BM and MSM can be described as a continuum. At one end is BM with its various local features. The fewer the local Beijing features or the less they are deployed, the closer the language is to MSM. Like MSM speakers elsewhere,

QING ZHANG

Beijingers speak MSM with varying degrees of a local accent. In Beijing, as in most parts of China, MSM is usually used in radio and television broadcasting (with the exception of some programs that feature local aspects of the city and its people), state bureaucracy, and educational institutions, and as a lingua franca in interactions among participants from various parts of the country. For the purposes of this study, I would like to point out one characteristic of the relation between the spoken standard variety and the written variety. The symbolic dominance of the standard language is established mainly through the written standard variety. The spoken variety, or local varieties of MSM, functions mainly as a lingua franca. Their relationship is further explicated vis-à-vis the construct of the linguistic market in the section where I explain the linguistic variation found between the two professional groups.

Of particular concern here are four phonological variables. All four variables are socially significant in Beijing. In other words, they are recognized by Beijingers as speech features associated with certain social attributes of certain types of personae. As will be explained in detail below, such naturalized linkage between linguistic features and certain social groups or characters is an example of local language ideology at work (Irvine & Gal 2000, Irvine 2001). Specifically, these linguistic features are interpreted as implicating distinctive qualities of three character types in Beijing. In the following discussion, I categorize the linguistic variables into two groups in terms of their association with localness and with specific character types. The first category consists of three variables whose variants are associated with two local personae, *jīng yóuzi* 'Beijing smooth operator' and *bútòng chuànzi* 'alley saunterer'. The second category involves a tone feature that is not local to Beijing and is associated with a new persona connected by locals with the transnational Chinese mass media.

The local variables

Beijing Mandarin has a unique speech style that encompasses segmental features as well as complex prosodic, lexical, and rhetorical features. The Beijing style of speech is well known as *jīngqiāng jīngdiào*; Beijing locals pronounce the phrase – with rhotacized syllable finals – as *jīngqiāngr jīngdiàor*, literally 'Beijing tune.' Speakers who demonstrate prominent local Beijing features are described as speaking with *yì kǒu jīngqiāng* 'a mouthful of Beijing tune,' or *jīngwèi hěn nóng* 'strong Beijing flavor.' Beijing Mandarin has a special national status because of its tremendous cultural prominence. It has been the dialect of the capital city for several hundred years, and a conservative variety of this dialect is the phonological basis for MSM. In addition and perhaps more importantly, there is a rich literary tradition of writing in the Beijing vernacular (L. Zhang 1994). As the literary classics have been read and passed on from generation to generation, they have reified a few local characters that have taken on a life of their own and become cultural icons of and for Beijingers (Zhao

1995). The most famous of these are *jīng yóuzi* 'Beijing smooth operator' and *hútòng chuànzi* 'alley saunterer'.

Jīng in *jīng yóuzi* is Beijing. While *yóu* is the Mandarin word for 'oil,' it is also part of *yóuhuá*, which means 'oily' or 'slippery'. When used to describe a personality, *yóu* connotes smooth and worldly wise. With the nominalization suffix *–zi*, *yóuzi* refers to someone who is well versed in the ways of the world. Hence, a *jīng yóuzi* is a Beijing native who is smooth and streetwise (W. Chen 1992:358). *Jīng yóuzis* are extremely skillful and tactful in dealing with issues and people; they are neither hard-line conservatives nor radical liberals – they are smooth operators. Literary works of Beijing writers provide the most vivid examples of Beijing smooth operators in all walks of life, including business operators, entertainers and artists, descendants of Manchurian aristocrats, and intellectuals (L. Zhang 1994). In my interviews, participants frequently referred to well-known literary characters as examples of "prototypical" Beijingers.[5]

Just as Beijing smooth operators are characterized by their smooth (*yóuhuá*) personality, they are also considered to be smooth talkers. The smoothness of *jīng yóuzi* extends to a stereotypical speech style, known as *yóuzuǐ huáshé* 'oily mouth smooth tongue,' or *yóuqiāng huádiào* 'oily accent smooth tune.' Both expressions mean 'glib' or 'having the gift of gab'. They also refer to the particular sound of Beijing speech. This is what is known among lay people, both locals and non-Beijingers, as the "heavy r-sounding" feature. Although no study has pinpointed the exact linguistic features that contribute to the smooth style, I have found that Beijingers identify two features with smoothness. The first is rhotacization of the syllable final, and the second is lenition of retroflex obstruent initials. As both features are associated with the "smooth operator" character, I discuss them together as a subgroup of the local variables and refer to them as the "smooth operator" variables.

The "smooth operator" variables

The rhotacization of the syllable final, commonly known among Chinese speakers as *érhuà*, involves the addition of a subsyllabic -ɹ to the final, which causes it to become rhotacized (Chao 1968, Y. Lu 1995). In the following examples, the IPA transcriptions of the non-rhotacized forms are followed by their rhotacized counterparts.

  (1) 'here' *zhè* [ʈʂɤ], *zhèr* [ʈʂɤɹ]

  (2) 'goal' *mubiāo* [mupiau], *mubiāor* [mupiauɹ]

Although many participants explicitly used the technical term *érhuà* or its variations *érhuà yùn* or *érhuà yīn* to represent smooth Beijing speech, others mentioned *ér yīn zhòng* 'heavy r-sounding' and related it to the smooth quality of the stereotypical Beijinger. Rhotacization is not the only feature that contributes to the perception of "heavy r-sounding." Additionally, it involves lenition of the

group of retroflex obstruent initials, /ʂ/, /tʂ/, and /tʂʰ/. In Beijing Mandarin, these retroflex initials sometimes are lenited and realized as the approximant [ɹ] (Chao 1968). Lenition can occur word-medially (in a multisyllabic word) and across word boundaries. It is briefly mentioned by Chao 1968 and Norman 1988, both of whom claim lenition to be a feature of weakly stressed (i.e., neutral tone) syllables. In my data, however, lenition also occurs in stressed (i.e., tonal) sylla-bles. In this article, the retroflex obstruent initials are represented by the frica-tive (s). The tokens used in the statistical analysis are word-medial occurrences, as shown in the following two examples. In (3), the second syllable of *xuésheng* 'student' has neutral tone. In (4), the second syllable of *hu'sh4ng* 'peanut' has **Q1** high level tone.

(3) 'student' *xuésheng* [ɕyɛʂən], *xuéreng* [ɕyɛɹən]

(4) 'peanut' huə**sh**ēng [huaʂən], huə**r**ēng [huaɹən]

In contrast to rhotacization, which was explicitly pointed out by many partici-pants as an example of the smoothness of Beijing Mandarin, none of them used the technical term *ruòhuà* to refer to lenition. However, the examples that the participants gave made it clear that they did associate lenition with "heavy r-sounding." In the following quote, the speaker uses two examples to illustrate what he means by "heavy r-sound."

(5) 1 *Běijīng rén shuōhuà éryīn zhòng, ài dǎ dūlu,*
        'Beijingers talk with heavy r-sound, like to trill,'
    2 *Hǎoxiàng zǔili hánle kuair rède kǎo hóngshǔ,*
        'as if having a piece of hot baked sweet potato in their mouths,'
    3 *xiàng bǎ tóngzhì shuōchéng tóngr,*
        'such as comrade [tʰuŋtʂʃ] is pronounced as [tʰuŋɹʃ]'
    4 *pàichūsuǒ, pàirsuǒr.*
        police station [pʰaitʂʰusuo] as [pʰaiɹusuoɹ].

The first example for "heavy r-sounding" is a case of lenition (line 3) in which the syllable initial retroflex [tʂʃ] in *tóngzhì* 'comrade' is lenited. In the 'police station' example in line 4, both lenition and rhotacization occurred so that [pʰaitʂʰusuo] was realized as [pʰaiɹusuoɹ].

In example (6) below, lenition is described as "swallowing sound." In the expression 'promise to Chairman Mao' in line 2, [tʂ] in both 'chairman' and 'promise' are lenited. Again the speaker relates 'swallowing sound' (line 5) to the smooth personality (line 6):

(6) 1 *Běijīng rén ài shuō, "xiàng máo–rǔ'í bāorèng."*
        'Beijingers like to say "promise to Chairman Mao" '[ɕiaŋ mauɹui pauɹən].
    2 *nǐkàn, xiàng–máo–zhǔ–xí–bǎo–zhèng,*
        'look, promise-to-Chair-man-Mao' [ɕiaŋ-mau-tʂu-ɕi-pau-tʂən] [counting with his fingers],
    3 *liùge zir, biànchén, xiàng máorǔ'í bǎorèng,*
        'six words, changed to, promise to Chairman Mao' [ɕiaŋ mauɹui pauɹən]
    4 *jǐ ge? sā zír le.*
        'how many? three words.'

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

5   *Běijīng rén néngshuō, shuōhuà kuài, ài tūn yīn,*
     'Beijingers are glib, talk fast, like to swallow sounds,'
6   *jiù xiǎnde bǐjiào yuánhuá.*
     'hence appear to be smooth.'

The "alley saunter" variable

The second local stereotype is called *hútōng chuànzi* 'alley saunterer'. *Hútōng* is the local term for narrow streets or alleys. The city of Beijing is made up of main streets which are called *jiē* or *lù*, and *hútōng* 'alleys'. Traditionally, no private residence was built on the side of a main street. *Hútōng* was the corridor connecting the main street to residential neighborhoods. Nowadays, *hútōng*s are being replaced by thoroughfares as traditional one-story houses give way to highrise apartment complexes. *Chuànzi* is a person who saunters around without a destination, and *hútōng chuànzi* 'alley saunterer' is a stereotypical Beijing male persona: a man who is feckless and walks about in the alleys, waiting for something to happen. While the smooth operator character can apply to many types, the alley saunterer calls forth a stereotypical lower-class male image (D. Yang 1994). The essential quality of an alley saunterer is lack of education and ambition, and being limited to the local. While both labels represent Beijing locals, *jīng yóuzi* is well versed in the circumstances of Beijing as the national cultural and political center, whereas the world of *hútōng chuànzi* is restricted to the grids of alleys (Liu 1997).

   The speech feature associated with the alley saunterer image is the interdental realization of the dental sibilants /s/, /ts/, and /tsʰ/ as [θ], [tθ] and [tθʰ], respectively. In this article, they are represented by /ts/, and I refer to this as the "alley saunterer" variable. In the following examples the realizations in MSM are presented first, followed by that illustrating the "alley saunterer" variant:

   (7) 'alley saunterer' *hútōng chuànzi* [hutʰuŋ ʦʰuantsʅ], *hútōng chuànthi* [hutʰuŋ ʦʰuantθʅ]

   (8) 'now' *xiànzài* [ɕiantsai], xiànthài [ɕiantθai]

   In the following excerpt, this feature is used to characterize the "authentic" Beijing Mandarin of alley saunterers. See lines 2 and 4:

   (9) 1   Mine is not the real Beijing Mandarin, because I'm not one of
       2   those alley saunters [hutʰuŋ ʦʰuantθʅ].
       3   They speak the authentic Beijing speech. And they say
       4   'big cabbage' [ta pai**tsʰ**ai] as [ta pait**θʰ**ai].

   In (10), Tian[6] says that some of his high-school classmates were alley saunterers; he further characterizes their speech feature as 'big-tongued':

   (10) Tian: … those *hútōng chuànzi*, born in *hútōng*, growing up in *hútōng*, wandering around
                in *hútōng* if they have nothing else to do. Some of my middle-school classmates
                were like that … They are big-tongued.
        QZ: What do you mean by big-tongued?
        Tian: Like, we say little-four's mother [ɕiau**s**əɹ tama], they say [ɕiau**θ**əɹ tama], and
                kid [hai**ts**ʅ], they say [hai**tθ**ʅ]. Big-tongued, [they] bite their tongues when talking.

QING ZHANG

No formal study has been done of this feature. The single published mention of it is found in a footnote in *Hànyǔ fāngyán cíhuì* 'Chinese dialect vocabulary,' as quoted below (Linguistics Group 1995:8, fn.12):

In the southern part of the city [Beijing], some speakers do not have the labial-dental sibilants, [ts], [tsʰ], and [s], but use interdental sibilants [tθ], [tθʰ], and [θ] instead.

In my data, the use of the interdental variant does not correlate with the participants' geographic origin in Beijing. However, as this result is based on a small number of speakers, a larger sample is needed to investigate the geographic distribution of this variant.

The "cosmopolitan" variable

Variation in the use of the three local variables discussed above indicates differential degrees of local accent which can be located along the BM–MSM continuum. The fourth variable is the realization of a neutral tone as a full tone in a weakly stressed syllable. It differs from the previous three variables in two respects: First, it is suprasegmental in some sense, whereas the other three are purely segmental. Second, the use of a full tone instead of a neutral tone indicates not only using less of the local Beijing accent (moving away from the local dialect) but also moving away from MSM. As mentioned in the introduction, in recent years (Hong Kong) Cantonese and Taiwan Mandarin have exerted an influence on MSM in both lexicon and phonology (S. Chen 1991). In this respect, new cultural icons brought about by *Gǎngtái* popular culture (e.g., Barmé 1992, Gold 1993) play a pivotal role in the spread of non-mainland Mandarin features. The use of full tone instead of a neutral tone is well known among Chinese mainlanders, particularly northern Mandarin speakers, as evidence of *Gǎngtái*-accented Mandarin. This feature is stereotypically associated with *Gǎngtái* pop music stars and business people. In the rest of the article I refer to this as the "cosmopolitan" variable. In the following examples, the neutral tone realization in the Pinyin and IPA transcriptions is followed by the full tone variant, with the vowel and its tone mark in boldface:

(11) 'understand' *míngbai* [miŋpai], *míngbái* [miŋp**ái**]

(12) 'student' *xuésheng* [ɕyɛʂən], *xuéshēng* [ɕyɛʂ**ən**]

In Beijing Mandarin and other northern Mandarin varieties, every stressed syllable has a full tone with a fixed pitch value. In other words, every stressed syllable has one of the four Mandarin tones. When a syllable is weakly stressed, it has neutral tone (Chao 1968). Unlike the four basic tones, a neutral-tone syllable does not have a fixed pitch value. Its pitch is determined by the tone of its preceding syllable (Chao 1968, Norman 1988, Qian 1995). While neutral tone is a common feature of the northern Mandarin dialect group, it is particularly prominent in BM. In contrast, most of the southern varieties, such as Cantonese, Min,

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

TABLE 1. *Effects of professional group and gender on variation.*[a]

Variable	Prof. Group		Gender		Topic		Input	Sig.
	Yuppie	State	Female	Male	Topic1	Topic2		
Rhotacization	.246	.733	.346	.644	Not significant		.710	.003
Lenition	.348	.660	.387	.616	.438	.571	.447	.000
Interdental[b]	.332	.664	(1%)	(27%)	.406	.574	.224	.000
Full tone[c]	(21%)	(0%)	.655	.320	.608	.408	.183	.000

[a] Additional factor groups included in the runs: internal constraints.
[b] The VARBRUL results for the interdental realization of /ts/ are for males only.
[c] The VARBRUL results for the full tone realization of a neutral tone are for yuppies only.

and Shanghainese, have very limited use of neutral tone (Chao 1968, Qian 1995). Beijing Mandarin neutral-tone syllables are significantly weaker than those in other northern Mandarin varieties, and they are particularly short in duration and articulated with less intensity (Y. Lu 1995). Their special pitch and rhythmic features contribute to the unique *jīngqiāng jīngdiào* 'Beijing tune.' In my interviews, many participants shared the view that *jīngqiāng* is "rhythmic and melodious." Repeatedly, they used the phrase *yìyáng dùncuò* – an expression typically used to describe the rhythm and melody of poetry and speech – to describe Beijing Mandarin. The use of full tone in its place transforms the rhythmic Beijing style into what Kubler 1985 describes as a staccato effect and hence can be immediately identified by Beijingers as non-local and non-mainland.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were coded for linguistic and social constraints. Statistical analyses were conducted using GoldVarb 2.0 (Rand & Sankoff 1990), a stepwise multiple regression program designed specifically for linguistic analysis. Both internal and external constraints were analyzed. This article focuses on the effects of the social constraints of professional group, gender, and topic on patterns of variation. Note that a VARBRUL weighting value above 0.5 indicates that a factor favors the occurrence of the variant in question. A value below 0.5 indicates a disfavoring effect.

Two prominent patterns emerged after the initial analysis in which the three social constraints were treated as independent, as shown in Table 1. First, there was a sharp contrast between the two professional groups across all four variables. The yuppies used all of the local variants significantly less than the state professionals did. Specifically, the two "smooth operator" variables patterned similarly: Professional group was the most significant factor group, and gender was secondary. The "alley saunterer" variant was almost categorically associ-

QING ZHANG

TABLE 2. *Effects of gender and topic in yuppie group.*

Prof. Group	Variable	Gender		Topic		Input	Sig.
		Female	Male	Topic 1	Topic 2		
Yuppie	Rhotacization	.263	.708	.423	.568	.433	.044
	Lenition	.309	.708	.376	.636	.267	.000
	Interdental	(0%)	(15%)	Not significant		.119	.000
	Full tone	.655	.320	.601	.408	.183	.000

Additional factor groups included in the runs: internal constraints.

TABLE 3. *Effects of gender and topic in state professional group.*

Prof. Group	Variable	Gender		Topic		Input	Sig.
		Female	Male	Topic 1	Topic 2		
State	Rhotacization	Not significant		Not significant		.864	.009
	Lenition	.453	.545	Not significant		.613	.005
	Interdental	(1%)	(40%)	.326	.656	.369	.000
	Full tone	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)		

Additional factor groups included in the runs: internal constraints.

ated with male speakers, with the state professionals strongly favoring it; only three tokens were produced by two female speakers, both state professionals. The state professionals did not use the "cosmopolitan" full tone variant at all. The second prominent pattern was that women used local variants less than men. In addition to the sharp contrast in terms of professional group and gender, topic – though a significant factor group for all variables except rhotacization – did not have as a prominent effect as the other two factor groups. Full tone was the only variant that demonstrated a robust shift depending on topic: It was used significantly more often by the yuppies in Topic 1 (VARBUL value = 0.608) when discussing job-related experiences.

Further analyses were carried out to examine the effects of gender and topic within each professional group. The VARBRUL results are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The two groups showed different patterns of variation with regard to both gender and topic. The results in percentages are presented graphically in Figure 1 (gender variation) and Figure 2 (topic variation).

Except for the "alley saunterer" variant, which was overwhelmingly favored by male speakers in both groups, gender variation was mild to insignificant in
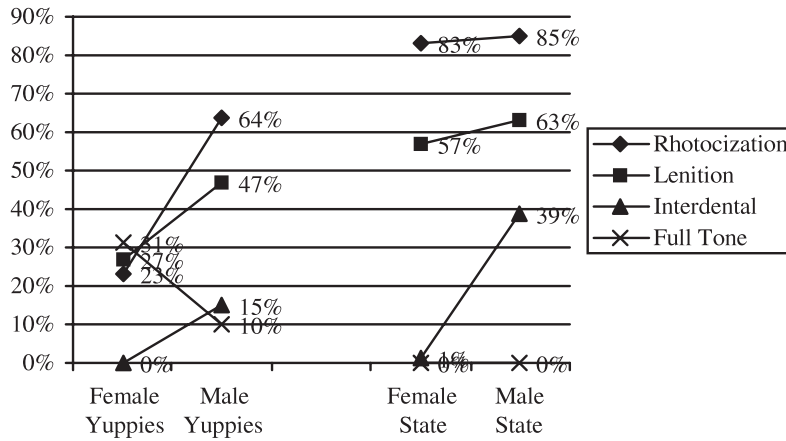
A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

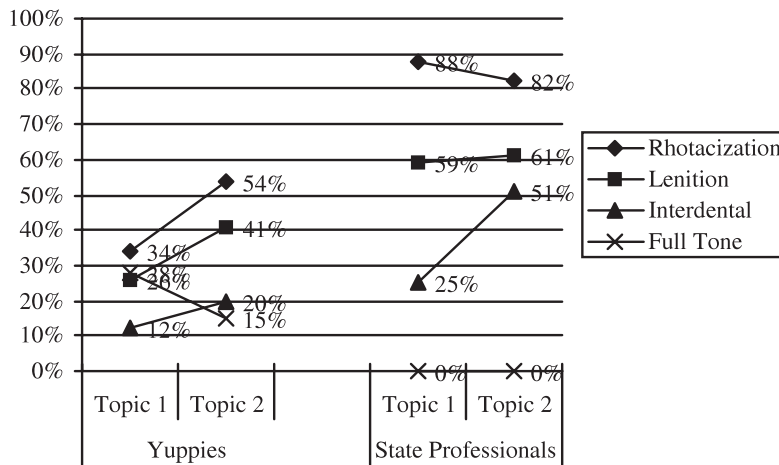FIGURE 1: Gender variation in each professional group.

FIGURE 2: Topic variation in each professional group.

the state group but dramatic among the yuppies. In the former group, differences in the use of rhotacization and full tone were insignificant. Variation was moderate in the use of lenition, with male state professionals slightly favoring it at 0.545 in terms of VARBRUL value, or merely 6% more than female speakers. In contrast, across all four variables, female yuppies overwhelmingly favored the non-local variants. Hence, the observation based on the initial analysis that fe-

QING ZHANG

male speakers disfavored the non-local variants (see Table 1) is inaccurate. In fact, female speakers in the state group used the two "smooth operator" variants much more often than male yuppies (see Figure 1). Women's appearing to be conservative was due primarily to female yuppies' extremely limited use of the local features.

Similar to gender variation, the state group demonstrated slight topic variation, whereas this was again significant in the yuppie group. Only one feature – the "alley saunterer" variant – was used significantly more often in Topic 2 by the state professionals. It is arguable that their lower use of the interdental variant in Topic 1 is related to the stigmatized nature of the "alley saunterer" image and the negative qualities associated with it – fecklessness and lack of education. The same feature did not show a significant topic shift among the (male) yuppies when examined together with internal constraints (preceding segment and tone) (see Table 2). However, when topic was examined by itself, the VARBRUL weightings were Topic 1, 0.434; Topic 2, 0.596; significance, 0.0125. In addition, a chi-square test on the frequencies of the interdental variant in the two topics showed that the p value was less than or equal to 0.025, which indicates that the difference is significant. The non-local variants of the other three variables were all used significantly more often when the yuppies discussed their work-related experiences.

The above results demonstrate that gender plays a different role in the two professional groups. I argue that explanations for the differential gender patterns require an examination of the history of the emergence the new professional group, and specifically of the different career trajectories of the men and women in the foreign businesses. Differences in their career trajectories may contribute to the differential role of language in their careers. Another significant factor lies in the different gender dynamics in the business practices of the two sectors, which may affect patterns of language use among the women and men in state and foreign companies. Broadly put, in the foreign sector, influence from the Western corporate culture may contribute to differences in the types of jobs that men and women tend to hold. During my study, I found women clustered in front-end jobs such as office administration and public relations. It was much easier for me to find male managers than female managers. In the state sector, state feminism, dating from the Maoist period, still to some degree prevents overt gender discrimination in job assignment. In many of my interviews with state managers, I was received by a male secretary. The placement of women in "decorative" positions was relatively less conspicuous in the state sector than in the foreign businesses. Such different gender dynamics may lead to differences in the role of women as symbolic capital of the corporation, and it may further the differential value of standard Mandarin's contributing to the overall symbolic value of women in the two sectors. Detailed analysis and explanations for gender-related variation would require far more space. In the rest of this article, I focus on the variation between the two professional groups.

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

EXPLANATIONS

The most striking difference between the state professionals and the yuppies lies in their use of the "cosmopolitan" full tone variant. The other three variables show similar though less dramatic patterning, with the state professionals favoring the local variants. As mentioned earlier, the full tone variant is evidence of influence from non-mainland Mandarin varieties. The state professionals thus appear to be less affected by this influence than the yuppies are. One factor directly related to this difference is the extent of contact with non-mainland Mandarin varieties and their speakers. Because of the nature of their work, professionals in foreign businesses have more opportunities to interact with non-mainland Mandarin speakers who use the full tone variant. Hence, their use of the full tone is almost surely related to their greater exposure to this feature. While exposure is a condition for speakers to pick up a linguistic form, however, it does not entail consequent usage; speakers who are exposed to certain linguistic features may or may not use them. Whether or not speakers use an incoming linguistic form and to what extent they use it are further determined by social factors such as power relations, social networks (Milroy 1980, Bortoni-Ricardo 1985), community or group membership (Bucholtz 1996; Eckert 1988, 2000), and social orientation (Labov 1963, Gal 1978). As explained earlier, Chinese mainlanders, especially urbanites, are exposed to non-mainland Mandarin varieties, and Beijingers are familiar with the use the of full tone when a neutral tone is expected. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that within the yuppie group, there is significant gender variation in the use of full tone. Exposure alone cannot explain why female yuppies use the full tone variant more often than male yuppies, since it can be assumed that they have similar exposure to this feature.

    In what follows, I argue that rather than treating the full tone variable in isolation as a marker of "yuppieness," explanations for its variable use should be sought in relation to variation in the three local variables from the perspective of contrast in the styles of the two professional groups. As shown in Figure 3, for each variable, the state professionals use the local variant more often than the yuppies. Hence, in terms of the degree of localness, the speech style of the state professionals is prominently Beijing whereas that of the yuppies, with the adoption of the full tone, is comparatively cosmopolitan.

    In the following analysis of the different patterns of linguistic behavior by yuppies and state professionals, I draw on Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) notion of linguistic market, and I examine linguistic resources as symbolic resources that give meaning to an emergent cosmopolitan identity.

Changing economy, changing markets

While the yuppies' less use of the three local Beijing features might be interpreted as an indication that they speak a more standard variety of MSM, such an
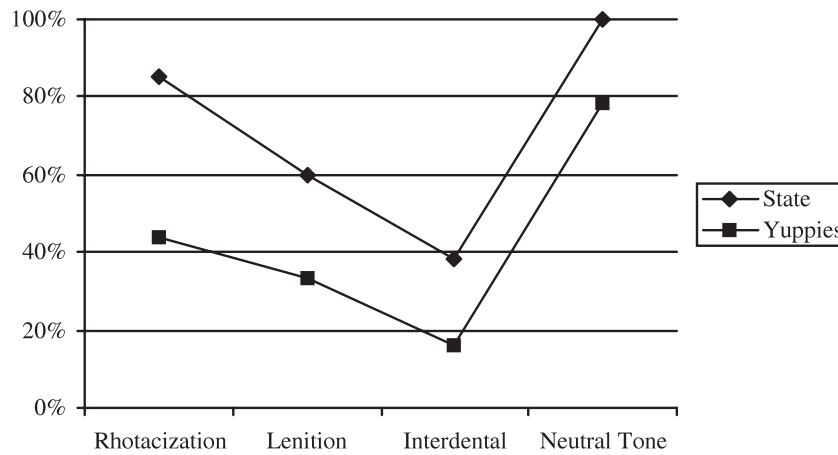
QING ZHANG

FIGURE 3: Contrast in styles (percentages).

interpretation in terms of standardness masks the complexity of their linguistic practice. Their adoption of the "cosmopolitan" full tone variant in addition to their lesser use of local features shows that the linguistic resources they employ are not limited to MSM (also recall the magazine article quoted at the beginning of this article). In my interviews with state professionals and speakers outside the international business sector, one of the most frequently commented-upon speech features characterizing people of *wàiqǐ* 'foreign enterprises' is their use of the full tone in place of a neutral tone. Although not all respondents explicitly named the use of the full tone, it became explicit in their examples. The most common examples came from their telephone interactions with professionals in foreign businesses. They would say *xiānshēng* 'mister' and *xiǎojiě* 'miss' using the full tone in the second syllable of both address terms where native BM speakers would use a neutral tone, i.e., *xiānsheng* and *xiǎojie*.

The use of the full-tone realization of a neutral tone in Beijing is identified as non-local and non-mainland. Hence the yuppies' adoption of this feature makes their speech not only non-local but also non-mainland. The linguistic difference between the two professional groups cannot simply be described along a linear dimension from vernacular to standard. Rather, the yuppies draw on features from both BM and non-mainland Mandarin varieties to construct a new and non-local variety of Mandarin, and they use that to construct a cosmopolitan yuppie style. In the rest of the article, I refer to this new variety as "cosmopolitan Mandarin."[7] I argue that the yuppies' use of this cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin is related to the interaction between their participation in a newly emergent linguis-

tic market and using the cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin as a symbolic resource to present their yuppie identity.

In contrast to the yuppies' cosmopolitan style, the state professionals' speech is characterized by local Beijing features. Particularly prominent is their greater use of the "smooth operator" features and the categorical use of the neutral tone in unstressed and weakly stressed syllables. As BM is the phonological basis for MSM and these three features are also shared by other northern Mandarin varieties, the state professionals' speech can be described as MSM with a prominent Beijing accent. Furthermore, the lack of significant topic-dependent shift in their use of rhotacization, lenition, and neutral tone (shown in Table 3 and Figure 2) shows that these features did not play as significant a role in presenting the professional aspect of their identities as they did for the yuppies.

Since the independent variables – geographical origin, level of education, and professional ranking – were controlled so that they would not exert considerable effect on the use of the linguistic variables, the sharp intergroup variation seems to reflect the differences between the two professional categories: working in state-owned vs. foreign businesses. In other words, to say that the linguistic variation found reflects professional category difference is to assume that the less frequent use of the local features reflects the part of the yuppies' work that deals with non-mainland Chinese. However, such an assumption is implausible if we consider the fact that, as employees of the mainland China (Beijing) branches of international businesses, their work involves interactions with people from both Chinese and international corporations. Despite the differences among the companies they work for in terms of Chinese versus foreign, some factors such as the following would predict more similarity in the linguistic practice of the two groups. Since many sociolinguistic studies have shown that standard language is expected in formal (and by extension corporate) settings, we should expect the two groups to demonstrate a high degree of similarity in their use of non-local features. Particularly, we would expect that the state professionals show greater intraspeaker (i.e., topic) variation in their use of the variables. However, the results show significant topic variation in only one variable. The businesses that the state professionals work for, though based in Beijing, are all large enterprises with nationwide operations. The majority of their clients are from other parts of the country. That fact represents another aspect of similarity between state professionals and those in the foreign sector, who also conduct business at a non-local level and often interact with non-Beijing clients. Moreover, in both national and foreign enterprises, native Beijing employees make up only a small portion of the total number of employees. Thus, in both groups, most of their colleagues are non-BM speakers. The above discussion shows that the assumption that intergroup variation reflects professional group difference fails to explain why state professionals do not show significant topic-dependent variation, or why the yuppies use a cosmopolitan variety that does not strictly conform to the norms of

MSM. In what follows, I argue that the intergroup variation is the result of the professionals' participation in two different linguistic markets, and of the differences in the symbolic value of MSM and a new cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin on each market. I show that the state professionals participate in a Mainland Standard Mandarin linguistic market while the yuppies participate in a transnational Chinese linguistic market.[8] Although both are supra-local language markets, the symbolic value of Mandarin on each market is different. This difference contributes to the linguistic difference between the two professional groups.

The Mainland Standard Mandarin linguistic market

MSM, the officially designated common medium of communication in China, is used in large national enterprises and other national and government organizations headquartered in the capital city. National corporations, the bureaucracy, educational institutions, the media, and other cultural institutions constitute the sites of the MSM linguistic market in Beijing. However, the standard linguistic market in China is not exactly the same as what Bourdieu 1977, 1991 describes. He argues that competence in the legitimate language constitutes the most valuable linguistic capital on the standard linguistic market. Possession of this kind of linguistic capital helps one become a viable participant in the standard linguistic market. In the MSM linguistic market, the spoken variety of MSM does not constitute a profitable form of symbolic capital. As several studies have shown, more than four decades since the initiation of the national language standardization campaign, spoken MSM has not become a social index, nor a symbolic asset necessary for access to elite status in mainland China (Guo 1990, Zhu & Chen 1991, Harrell 1993).

   Shuō biāozhǔn pǔtōnghuà 'speaking STANDARD MSM' – a slogan in the campaign to promote MSM – does not therefore represent a kind of social prestige sought by the majority of mainland Chinese, except for those who work in a very small number of occupations such as broadcasting, journalism, and entertainment, in which standard MSM is mandated. As Zhu & Chen (1990:99) point out, "No great advantages can be gained if one speaks *Putonghua* [MSM] while no harm can be done if one does not." Hence, nearly four decades after the implementation of the language standardization policy, most Chinese on the mainland are content to speak a localized variety of MSM.

   While the spoken variety of MSM does not constitute an especially important form of symbolic capital, linguistic hegemony is established through competence in written Standard Chinese. It is required for access to elite status. The relation between spoken and written standard language is well summarized by Harrell:

   The maintenance of a standard variety of the spoken language does not function as a mechanism of restricting access to the elite. One can be a member of

the elite no matter what variety of the Han [Chinese] language one speaks; the function of a standard seems instead to be primarily a means of facilitating spoken communication. . . . What is required for access to elite status is knowledge of the written standard. (1993:100–1)

My interviews with state professionals confirm Harrell's observation about the symbolic value of spoken MSM. Most of them did acknowledge the importance of speaking MSM in their work, but for them its value lies in the function of facilitating communication. In my earlier study on the Tianjin dialect (Q. Zhang 1996), many respondents contended that the ability to speak MSM indicated that the speaker was educated or cultivated. In contrast, among the Beijing state professionals in this study, speaking MSM was not evaluated as an indicator of educational level or cultural refinement. A possible explanation for this difference is that BM is the phonological standard for MSM; hence native Beijingers are, in a sense, native speakers of MSM, or more precisely, native speakers of a local variety of MSM. Hence, unlike many speakers of other Chinese varieties, Beijingers do not have to learn spoken MSM at school. As Bourdieu (1984:86) argues, the encouragement of the acquisition of a specific competence can be achieved only when the market promises or guarantees profit for this competence. The Beijing state professionals in the MSM linguistic market are "endowed" with the linguistic capital which is the officially established common medium for communication. As there is not much anticipation of reward for speaking standard MSM, the state professionals do not have to strive to speak MSM without a Beijing accent. Hence, we should not be surprised to find the much higher frequency in their use of the two best-known Beijing features, and little style-shifting.

The transnational Chinese linguistic market

While the professionals in the state economic sector participate in the MSM linguistic market, the yuppies in the international sector are engaged in a different linguistic market. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, China's participation in the transnational Chinese capitalist community and global economy has given rise to a new job market. In this market, the traditionally dominant system of state-controlled job assignment has become obsolete. Individuals become competitors and commodities in the market. Job applicants have to sell themselves. The selling process starts with the job interview, a totally new experience to job seekers when first introduced by foreign companies. Making a good self-presentation at the job interview – packaging and comporting oneself appropriately according to the rules of the game in the new market – has become a crucial practice for anyone who wants to enter the international business sector, a steppingstone to a new cosmopolitan lifestyle.

QING ZHANG

To become a commodity in demand in the new market, one has to acquire the kinds of symbolic capital that are valued in that market. On the employer's side, specific language skills alongside educational credentials, specialized skills, and other requirements are expected of job seekers. These include the ability to speak Standard Mandarin without a local accent, and proficiency in one or more foreign languages. English is unquestionably the most valued foreign language at present; others include Japanese, German, and French. Very often, requirements of appearance (*wǔguān duānzhèng* 'having regular features'),[9] age, and gender also appear in job descriptions.

In consequence, the establishment of the international business sector has given rise to a new linguistic market that creates linguistic values different from those in the MSM linguistic market. In the latter, the BM phonological system is the standard, and spoken MSM is valuable as a lingua franca. In contrast, the ability to speak Mandarin without a local accent has become profit-generating linguistic capital in the new linguistic market. Working for international businesses engages the yuppies in a market in which MSM is only one of the varieties of Mandarin – others include Taiwan Mandarin, Hong Kong Mandarin, Singapore Mandarin, and so on. The following comment from Mr. Wang, chief representative of a foreign bank's Beijing office, displays keen awareness among these professionals of the fact that they are members of a market in which BM is not the single standard variety (the italicized words were originally said in English):

> In fact, Beijingers in the whole *business world*, are not a majority, so, that is to say, speaking of Beijing, in the *business world*, when you reach a certain level, you'll find, that is to say, a Greater China *integration*. When speaking in *Mandarin*, you'll meet Taiwanese, Hong Kongers, Singaporeans, and Shanghainese . . .

It is also worth noticing that Wang uses the English word *Mandarin* rather than its Chinese equivalent, *Pǔtōnghuà*. This indicates that he is using a term that can refer to multiple varieties of Mandarin: *Pǔtōnghuà* on the mainland; *Guóyǔ*, the standard Mandarin variety in Taiwan; and *Huáyǔ*, the standard Mandarin variety in Singapore.

I call the new linguistic market the "transnational Chinese linguistic market." Yuppies' use of cosmopolitan Mandarin shows that they do not conform to the norms of MSM, which are based on BM. Indeed, the value of cosmopolitan Mandarin extends far beyond facilitating communication. During their interviews, the yuppies all emphasized speaking Mandarin without a local accent as an important aspect of building their professional and corporate image. For them, therefore, the new Mandarin variety is no longer an object of need – a common medium needed for communication – but a resource for distinction (Bourdieu 1984). The yuppies use the cosmopolitan variety to distinguish themselves from those in the

MSM linguistic market. Its use not only distinguishes the yuppies from their state counterparts, but also helps create and perpetuate the sanctions of the new linguistic market. The effect of the sanctions of market on linguistic behavior is elaborated by Bourdieu:

> Agents continuously subjected to the sanctions of the linguistic market, functioning as a system of positive or negative reinforcements, acquire durable dispositions which are the basis of their perception and appreciation of the state of the linguistic market and consequently of their strategies for expression. (1977:654)

Hence, it is not completely a matter of personal choice whether to use a variety of Mandarin that is not strictly tied to the mainland standard. What is at stake is presenting oneself as a competent business professional in the international sector. Hence, the use of a cosmopolitan variety has the potential to produce symbolic profit and, ultimately, economic profit, whereas failure or inability to use it would be detrimental to one's image as a competent professional. The fact that senior professionals sometimes go so far as assuming the responsibility of norm reinforcement indicates that the yuppies are aware of the sanctions of the market. In the following example, the speaker, David, is a deputy representative of a European bank:

> Working in a foreign business, it's inappropriate to speak to clients with a heavy Beijing accent. Once, I heard my secretary talking to a client on the phone, she said "*téi wǎn la*" ['too late']. "*téi*" is Beijing vernacular. I had to tell her to get rid of it.

Constructing a Chinese Yuppie Identity

Although differences in linguistic markets contribute to the significant intergroup variation reported here, the construct of the linguistic market cannot explain the nuanced meanings of variation. The yuppies' use of the cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin is not an isolated demand of the transnational Chinese linguistic market, but one aspect of a whole set of related practices that constitute a new yuppie style and identity. Linguistic practice is only a part of the practices that distinguish the yuppies from other social groups. Their work environment, or in Bourdieu's term, "occupational milieu" (1984:103), exerts a strong effect on their behavior.[10] Because most of the yuppies in my study are among the first generation of professionals in foreign businesses, working in a foreign company was a new experience for them. Although some of them had previous business experience when they joined their first foreign company, they still had to learn how to be a professional in the international sector. An important part of learning includes technical aspects of business operation. Another equally important part is acquiring the style of an international business professional. It is a cos-

mopolitan business style that involves ways of dressing, conforming to the standards of an international business style of communication (e.g., use of address terms, formulaic telephone conversation, multimedia assisted presentations such as Microsoft PowerPoint), and so on. A chief representative of a Hong Kong company described to me her learning experience when she first started as a secretary: "I learned for the first time in my life what a company secretary means . . . I had to learn everything from scratch, even had to learn how to answer phone calls."

Through their daily engagement in the new linguistic market, which is part of a broader symbolic market, the yuppies gradually develop practices that comprise the yuppie habitus, reflected in the ways they act, speak, shop, and even eat. All these practices give meaning to who they are. As Jenkins 1996, Eckert 2000, and a host of others have argued, the construction of social identity and community is about the making of meaning. In the rest of this section I show that the yuppies extrapolate and appropriate various resources to make their emergent cosmopolitan identity meaningful.

I have repeatedly emphasized that the yuppies see and present themselves as cosmopolitan business professionals. They are using a cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin to carve out a space in the transnational Chinese community and the global business world. Equally important. however, is that the use of this new variety does not uproot them from their local basis, Beijing. In other words, the yuppies do not construct their new social identity by simply disassociating themselves from being Beijingers and packaging themselves as "Hong Kong-Taiwan wannabes." It is true that they have a global orientation, many of them wear foreign brand names, and all speak foreign languages. However, these are only part of the repository of resources from which they draw to forge their yuppie identity. As Giddens 1991 observes, all cosmopolitans are nonetheless contextually situated in space and time. The space that they are carving out is IN and OF Beijing but not limited to Beijing. They are picking and choosing among local as well as non-local resources to make their identity meaningful in a local context. Linguistic features that are socially significant in the local context are employed by the yuppies so that their identity becomes not only meaningful to themselves, but interpretable and meaningful to others around them.

The purpose of the meaning-making process is twofold: (i) to produce agreement among the members, that is, to make the internal similarity meaningful to members; and (ii) to produce distinctions between their group and significant other groups – that is, to make the external difference meaningful to outsiders. This is achieved through the creation of a style – a system of distinction (Bourdieu 1984, Irvine 2001). As a powerful means of self-expression, style helps us articulate who we are and how we are different from others. It defines the group's boundaries against other groups and defines them

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

"more sharply in relation both to its members and all outsiders" (Clarke 1976:182).

To create a distinctive style, individuals draw upon resources that are accessible to them. However, they do not pick up stylistic material in a free-wheeling fashion. The creation of style can be seen as a process of "bricolage" (Lévi-Strauss 1966) in which the "bricoleur" selects from a LIMITED and PREEXISTING set of materials at hand and arranges them into a meaningful ensemble (see, e.g., studies in Hall et al. 1976; Hebdige 1996 [1979]). California Style Collective 1993 examine the linguistic bricolage of adolescent style through phonological variation. Numerous recent sociolinguistic studies, though not adopting the concept of bricolage per se, also demonstrate the appropriation of socially (and culturally) significant linguistic features to give meaning to various social identities and/or communities (Bucholtz 1996, Barrett 1999, Coupland 2001, Wong & Zhang 2001).

The orchestration of a stylistic ensemble based on a limited set of existing resources is crucial because it establishes the basis or common ground for recognition and identification by both group members and outsiders. The linguistic material that the yuppies pick up represents well-known cultural personae. The connection between these linguistic features and their corresponding personae is well established in the public imagination in Beijing. Hence, the use of rhotacization, lenition, and full tone triggers the connection and thus can be easily recognized. In addition, social and symbolic significance is not the only condition that determines what gets picked up. Another important condition is whether there exists a fit, or to use Clarke's (1976) term, "homology," between a potential symbolic resource and the group's ideology or social orientation. Among the three local features, the yuppies use the two "smooth operator" features to a limited extent, as the smoothness and skillfulness in dealing with business is compatible with the persona of a business professional. They eschew the use of the interdental realization of (ts) because there is little homology between the image of an alley saunterer and a yuppie. The locally established meaning of the interdental variant – fecklessness, restriction to the local market, lack of education and ambition – conflicts in every aspect with the cosmopolitan persona that the yuppies are trying to construct. Meanwhile, they adopt the full tone feature – a symbol of the new cultural icons in the transnational Chinese market – to accentuate the cosmopolitan aspect of their identity. The identity of a Chinese yuppie, like social identity in general, is multiplex (Hall 1996, Jenkins 1996). A Chinese yuppie is simultaneously a cosmopolitan, a business professional, a young person, a Chinese, a woman or a man, and a Beijinger. These multiple aspects intersect with each other and consequently affect the ways in which the yuppies select and appropriate symbolic resources. Finally, rather than examining the meaning(s) of each linguistic variable separately, we have to put the variables back into the system of distinction to elucidate our interpretation of the social

meanings of linguistic variables. In other words, the social meanings of the features studied are inseparable from one another. It is not the use or non-use of rhotacization, lenition, and full tone that gives specific meaning to any one of these features. What makes them meaningful is the appropriation of the whole ensemble – the cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin, as well as other practices and resources – in the construction of a yuppie style.

CONCLUSION

I have examined the effects of recent socioeconomic change on language use in urban China, specifically focusing on the linguistic practice of Chinese managerial professionals working for foreign businesses in Beijing. One important issue raised in this study is the rise of a new linguistic market as a consequence of China's participation in the transnational Chinese community and the global economy. I have shown that compared with the MSM linguistic market, a cosmopolitan variety of Mandarin and foreign languages are highly valued in the new transnational market. My analysis of the linguistic market on the one hand challenges Bourdieu's original theorization of the linguistic market which (re)produces and maintains the symbolic value of a single standard language. On the other hand, it suggests that in addition to Woolard's (1985) proposal that there are alternative vernacular/local markets where vernacular norms are valued, we should also consider the existence of supra-local or transnational linguistic markets in which a "standard" variety (of a nation-state or a territorially-based community) may not be the "standard" against which values of other varieties are compared and established. As I have discussed earlier, sociolinguistic variation studies need to look beyond the linear dimension of the standard and vernacular in both the description and treatment of variation data. In other words, the less frequent use of some local features may be far more complex than a simple implication of closer proximity to the "standard" variety. Hence, the vernacular/local market is not necessarily the only "alternative" to the standard linguistic market. In addition to the standard linguistic markets of France or the United States and the alternative markets of Belfast or Catalonia, we can discuss transnational linguistic markets that are not tied to a specific place (though they have local sites). In a transnational linguistic market, a territorially based standard may become an element of localness. What is highly valued in such a market may not be a single variety but several "languages of currency," as discussed in Haeri's (1996:166) study of the sociolinguistic market of Cairo, or a kind of hybrid linguistic competence, such as the cosmopolitan Mandarin in this study and English dominant multilingualism in Piller's (2001) recent study of German advertisements. In such cases, it is not so important to determine which variety – for instance, Cairean Arabic, American English, Mainland Standard Mandarin, Taiwan Standard Mandarin, or German – has greater symbolic value than the others, as to pay attention to the SELECTIVE COMBINATION of features from several varieties that gives value to a

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

kind of non-local (which should not be read as "standard" or "nonstandard") linguistic practice, and yet remains distinctive and meaningful in a local context.

IMPLICATION: LOOKING BEYOND THE LOCAL AND THE TERRITORIAL

Following the seminal article of Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992, recent sociolinguistic variation studies have given more attention to the situated practice of language users (e.g., Bucholtz 1996, Mandoza-Denton 1997, Eckert 2000). However, discussions have rarely reached beyond territorial boundaries and strictly local contexts. In premodern times, the sense of belonging to a community was tied to a specific place; in the era of globalization, the spatial relation between people and their communities is radically transformed (e.g., Giddens 1990, Appadurai 1996). Scholars doing transnational and globalization studies have recognized that the role of place as a primary container of experiences is waning with new developments in communication technology (Peters 1997). As Hannerz observes, "As people move with their meanings, and as meaningful forms find ways of traveling even when people stay put, territories cannot really contain cultures" (1996:8). The reordering of time and space relations in the modern world has led scholars across disciplines to rethink the relation between the local and global, and the ways communities and identities are grounded. As Papastergiadis argues, the "links between individuals and their communities are DETER-RITORIALIZED" (2000:85, emphasis added). That is, "people now feel they belong to various communities despite the fact that they do not share a common territory with all the other members" (115).

In this respect, variationist sociolinguistics, which takes the notion of community as essential, has yet to incorporate recent developments in other social science disciplines to inform our sociolinguistic analysis.[11] As Hill points out, on the one hand, it is essentially valuable to zoom in on "the microanalysis of individual conversational or performative moments" (1999:543). On the other hand, we need to theorize the social organization of linguistic practices in a larger context than the strictly local (545). The present study of Chinese yuppies shows that the their linguistic practice in the local site of Beijing is inseparable from what is happening in the transnational Chinese community and the global market. In the interviews, *qiáoliáng* 'bridge' was frequently used by these yuppies to describe their role and their various "bridging" practices in the international business sector. The yuppies see themselves as belonging simultaneously to Beijing, mainland China, and the international business world. Their sense of flexible belonging is articulated through their speech. Their linguistic behavior is intertwined with their practice in a larger context of constructing and imagining a new cosmopolitan lifestyle and the changing dynamics of the even broader political and economic context of mainland China, which is, again, inseparable from the political economic forces beyond the confines of the nation-state.

APPENDIX

Information about participants

PN	PG	Sex	Age	Company	Position
1	Y	F	35	Multinational real estate development group	Assistant Chief Representative
2	Y	F	28	European bank	Chief Representative
3	Y	F	27	European building products company	Assistant Manager of Marketing
4	Y	F	30	North American consulting company	Assistant Chief Representative
5	Y	F	38	North American elevator company	Manager of Public Relations
6	Y	F	26	European painting products company	Vice President of Marketing
7	Y	F	39	European textile machinery manufacturing company	Chief Representative
8	Y	M	40	European bank	Deputy Representative
9	Y	M	38	Multinational investment group	Chief Representative
10	Y	M	41	North American bank	Chief Representative
11	Y	M	35	North American law firm	Chief Representative
12	Y	M	40	European engineering company	Sales Representative
13	Y	M	39	North American packaging machinery company	Regional Sales Representative
14	Y	M	36	European engineering consulting company	Chief Representative
15	S	F	34	Ocean shipping group	Assistant Director (Business Promotion)

PN	PG		Age	Company	Position
16	S	F	37	Publishing company	Manager (Marketing)
17	S	F	32	Telecommunications company	Assistant Manager (Networking)
18	S	F	40	Import & export company	Assistant Director
19	S	F	30	Telecommunications company	Assistant Manager (Internet service)
20	S	F	39	National bank	Manager (Savings)
21	S	F	38	Investment banking company	Deputy General Manager (Investment banking)
22	S	M	41	Investment banking company	Deputy Manager (Financing)
23	S	M	35	National bank	Assistant Manager (Financial consulting)
24	S	M	37	Ocean shipping group	Director of Business Promotion Department
25	S	M	33	National bank	Assistant Manager (Foreign currency market)
26	S	M	36	National bank	Assistant Manager (Loans)
27	S	M	40	Publishing company	Manager (Distribution)
28	S	M	33	Telecommunications company	Assistant Manager (Internet service)

PN = Participant Number
PG = Professional Group
Y = Yuppie
S = State Professional

QING ZHANG

NOTES

[1] The transliteration system used here is Pinyin, the official romanization system used in the People's Republic of China. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

[2] According to Li (1997:23), the new Chinese middle class in the 1990s is made up of the following groups: urban private entrepreneurs, rural industrialists, speculators in the stock market, real estate and other business agents, managers in collective firms who earn profits through contracts, CEOs of large, state-owned enterprises, government officials made rich through corruption, Chinese representatives for foreign firms, Chinese executives in large joint ventures, sports stars and famous artists, Chinese who used to work abroad, especially in Japan and Australia, where they saved a great deal of money, smugglers, and professional call girls. Wank (1999:270, n. 6) adds Chinese employees of foreign financial, commercial, and service industries, who are often paid significantly more than their counterparts in domestic industries.

[3] As salary was considered a sensitive topic among the professionals in foreign businesses, I asked them to tell me the average monthly salary of a person holding a similar position to theirs. Most of them agreed that salaries could fluctuate drastically among different companies. For mid-level management positions, it would range from 3,000 yuan (about $349) to 5,000 yuan (about $581) or even higher. It is hard to set a range for top management positions, but a majority of them estimated the average salary to be over 8,000 yuan. My contact person, who is also a personal friend, told me that he made about 10,000 yuan per month before he left his last position as the chief representative of a European investment bank. He speculated that some of his friends whom he was going to introduce to me had similar salaries. An extreme case was that of a personal friend of mine who was a manager in an American manufacturing company; he earned 40,000 yuan (about $4,651) per month in 1997. This was an enormous salary compared with the average monthly wage in Beijing, which was 918 yuan ($106) (*Beijing Statistical Yearbook* 1997).

[4] Owing to limitations of space, I am unable to discuss why the Beijing Mandarin phonological system was chosen as the standard for Mainland Standard Mandarin. Norman 1988 and Chen 1999 explain the history of the formation of the modern standard language.

[5] In the following excerpt, an interviewee explained to me the most typical Beijinger and used Manager Wang in Lao She's famous novel *The tea house* as an example:

> Nowadays, Beijingers are mixed. People from all over the country come to Beijing. In our company, there aren't that many locally-born Beijingers and there are even fewer people who are second-or third-generation Beijingers. If you want to find the most typical Beijinger, you should read Lao She's novels, like Manager Wang in *The tea house*.

[6] All names used in this paper are pseudonyms. Chinese pseudonyms (last names) are used for the state professionals. The majority of participants in foreign businesses had both English and Chinese names on their business cards. English pseudonyms (first names) are used for these participants. For those with only Chinese names on their business cards, Chinese pseudonyms (last names) are used.

[7] Linguistic features of cosmopolitan Mandarin are not limited to the use of the full tone. Lexical items, such as expressions from Cantonese and Taiwan Mandarin, as well as Mandarin-English code-mixing, can also give Mandarin discourse a non-local cosmopolitan flavor. Orthography, the use of traditional Chinese characters instead of simplified characters, is another resource to add a cosmopolitan character to written Standard Chinese.

A CHINESE YUPPIE IN BEIJING

[8] It should be noted that I do not assume a discrete linguistic division between the two markets. Neither do I assume that the yuppies participate only in the transnational Chinese linguistic market and that the state professionals only in the MSM linguistic market. Rather, as language users in general, both groups are engaged in multiple linguistic markets. Working for international companies engages the yuppies primarily in a transnational Chinese linguistic market, and working for state-owned enterprises engages the state professionals primarily in the MSM linguistic market.

[9] *Wǔguān duānzhèng* 'having regular features' is a euphemistic way to describe people who are physically attractive in a particular way. Hence, a requirement that job seekers have "regular features" is another way of saying "ugly people and those with physically visible abnormalities or deformities should not apply."

[10] For a discussion of the effects of work and corporate structure on shaping employees' behavior and attitudes, see Kanter 1977. McElhinny 1995 examines the effects of the occupational milieu on the linguistic practice of female and male police officers in Pittsburgh.

[11] A 2003 special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (7.4) presents recent works on the interrelation between language use and globalization.

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QING ZHANG

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