

Chapter Four

Discourse Functions of *Shuo* as a Complementizer

This chapter discusses the discourse functions of *shuo* when it serves as a complementizer. We attempt to address the following research questions: what types of matrix predicate does complementizer *shuo* co-occur with, what discourse functions does *shuo* perform when following these matrix predicates and what discourse factors condition the presence of *shuo* as a complementizer?

In order to investigate the discourse functions of *shuo* as a complementizer, we will firstly detail the categorization of the matrix predicates and the distribution of each matrix predicate. Next, we will move on to discuss the discourse functions of complementizer *shuo* based on its distribution with different types of matrix predicates and different conversational contexts.

4.1 Categorization and Distribution of Matrix Predicates

The matrix verbs found in the data can be classified into four main types: utterance verbs, cognition verbs, perception verbs¹, and others. In the following, each

¹ To adequately define the first three types of matrix predicates, the present study adopts Givon's (1993) categorization of complement-taking predicates (perception verbs, cognition verbs and utterance verbs). In defining PCU (perception-cognition-utterance) verbs, Givon (1993) proposes two definitions: semantic definition and syntactic definition.

Semantic definition of PCU verbs:

- a. The main-clause verb codes either the perception, cognition, or verbal utterance by the dative or agent subject.
- b. The complement clause codes the state or event that is the object of the mental or verbal activity by the main-clause subject.

Syntactic definition of PCU verbs:

- a. No co-reference restrictions hold between the subject or object of the main and the subordinate clause.
- b. The subordinate clause appears like a full-fledged main clause, with no missing subject.
- c. The subordinate clause may be preceded by the subordinator morpheme *that* or in some cases by *if*. (1993:134)

type of matrix predicate is exemplified with examples:

(1) utterance predicate

na wo jiu gen women tongshi jiang shuo=
that I just with our colleague say SHUO
na tian wo zai naban deng nimen jiu hao
that day I BE there wait you just fine
“I will tell my colleagues ‘I will just wait for you there that day.’”

(2) cognition predicate

renhou wo xiang shuo=
then I think SHUO
a zai gen ta tixing yi xia
PAT again with he remind one time
“Then, I thought I would remind him again.”

(3) perception predicate

wo you nagei ta kan shuo=
I have bring she look SHUO
wo zhege sheme rengong leiya a
I this what artificial tear PAT
“I have brought it to her to let her see my artificial tear.”

(4) Others

keshi jiu biancheng shuo=
but just become SHUO
jiu xuesheng dou you dian zai kaiwanxiao
just student all have little BE joke
“It just became that students were all joking around.”

Next, we will quantitatively detail the distribution frequency of the types of matrix predicates. The detailed information of the types of matrix predicates is shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Categories of the matrix predicate type

Category	Matrix predicate	Number	Frequency	Total
Utterance²	<i>jiang</i> “speak; say”	34	29.6 %	55 (47.8%)
	<i>wen</i> “ask”	7	6.1 %	
	<i>xie</i> “write”	4	3.5 %	
	<i>xuancheng</i> “declare”	2	1.7 %	
	<i>zhengshi</i> “prove”	2	1.7 %	
	<i>gaosu</i> “tell”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>taolun</i> “discuss”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>jiao</i> “teach”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>huiying</i> “respond”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>guanshu</i> “instill”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>biaoshi</i> “claim”	1	0.9 %	
Cognition	<i>xiang</i> “think”	26	22.6 %	48 (41.7 %)
	<i>wo/ni de yisishi</i> “what I/you mean is”	12	10.4 %	
	<i>juede</i> “feel”	7	6.1 %	
	<i>zhidao</i> “know”	2	1.7 %	
	<i>pa</i> “be afraid”	1	0.9 %	
Perception	<i>kan</i> “look”	2	1.7 %	2 (1.7 %)
Others	<i>zuixihuandedifangshi</i> “what (I) like best is”	1	0.9 %	10 (8.7%)
	<i>wentishi</i> “the problem is”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>yinggaishi</i> “should be”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>tiyen</i> “experience”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>bijiao</i> “compare”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>shifan</i> “demonstrate”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>xianshi</i> “show”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>biancheng</i> “become”	1	0.9 %	
	<i>kongzhi</i> “control”	1	0.9 %	
<i>liuyi</i> “pay attention to”	1	0.9 %		
Total		115	100 %	115 (100%)

² The utterance predicates adopted in the current study subsume the verbs which mean to express meaning with verbal words. Some of these predicate verbs can be very typical utterance verbs such as *jiang* “say” while some of them may be very typical utterance verbs such as *biaoshi* “claim” which can also mean “report” or “present.”

As shown in Table 3, there are in total 115 entries of complementizer *shuo* following matrix predicates. The distribution of *shuo* in the four different categories varies considerably. Most of the entries fall into two main categories: utterance verbs (47.8%) followed by cognition verbs (41.7%). The rest of entries include perception verbs (1.7%) and other verbs (8.7%).

4.2 Discourse Functions of *Shuo* as a Complementizer

Although previous studies have pointed out that *shuo* has derived many different meanings along the path of grammaticalization, the original meaning or function of *shuo* is a saying verb with which one can express meaning with verbal words. It is found in the data that most of the entries of *shuo* are still used to express its verbal content meaning. Among the total occurrences of *shuo* (544 entries), 306 entries (56.3%) is still used as a saying verb, as shown in the following example:

- (5) *wo tongxue shuo ruguo wo qu xue jen toufa yinggaihui man zhuan*
I classmate SHUO if I go learn cut hair perhaps pretty earn
“My classmate said if I learned cutting hair, I would probably earn a lot.”

The data suggests that it can be found that although the function of *shuo* is undergoing grammaticalization, its content meaning is still prominently used to express the speaker's thoughts with verbal words.

4.2.1 Reported Speech Frame

In addition to fulfilling the textual function, *shuo* as a complementizer also performs discourse functions. The present study finds that the presence of *shuo* in face-to-face conversation serves to mark a psychological distance which codes either the speaker's uncertainty about the information value of the complement clause or the speaker's concern about politeness in conversations.

As *shuo* can be used with other verbs to form reported speech predicates, these verbs are mostly utterance verbs whose functions and properties very much resemble that of *shuo*. In the data, there are 55 entries of utterance predicates (47.8%) forming reported speech frames with *shuo*. These entries consist of 11 verbs. Specifically, they are *jiang* “speak, say,” *wen* “ask,” *xie* “write,” *xuancheng* “declare,” *zhengshi* “prove,” *gaosu* “tell,” *taolun* “discuss,” *jiao* “teach,” *huiying* “respond,” *guanshu* “instill” and *biaoshi* “claim”.

Some of the reported speech frames in the data are exemplified in the following examples.

(6) **jiang shuo**

na wo jiu gen women tongshi jiang shuo=
 that I just with we colleague speak SHUO
na tian wo zai naban deng nimen jiu hao
 that day I at there wait you just good
 “Well, I will just tell my colleague ‘I will be waiting for you there that day.’”

(7) **wen shuo**

o jiushi birushuo ta hui wen ni shuo..
 PAT namely for example he will ask you SHUO
wo xianzai you zhebi qian dehua zhenmeban
 I now have this money dehua (if) how
 “That is to say, for example, he will ask you if you have the money, how are you going to deal with it.”

(8) **xie shuo**

wo ganggang jiu gen ta jiang shuo
 I just now just with he speak SHUO
wo dagai zheyao xie shuo <to my dear family and friends>
 I probably only write SHUO to my dear family and friend
 “I just told him that I would probably write ‘to my dear family and friends’”.

The above examples suggest when formulating reported frames with these utterance

verbs, *shuo* indeed functions as a complementizer linking the reported speech frame to the following complement clause. Take (7) as an example. Structurally speaking, the presence of *shuo* serves as a linker between the matrix predicate *ta hui wen ni* “he will ask you” and the complement clause *wo xianzai you zhebi qian dehua zhenme ban* “if I have the money, how am I going to deal with it.” As documented by Huang (2003), the presence of *shuo* serves as a *de dicto* complementizer which marks the complement clause to belong to the world of speech.

Shuo in a reported speech frame performs the discourse function of coding the speaker’s uncertainty about the information value of the complement proposition. The speaker’s uncertainty in the reported speech frame is due to an unreliable information source, which is usually marked by a third person subject. When the matrix subject of a reported speech frame is the third person, the speaker is actually speaking for and quoting information from another person (or other people)³. The information gained from the third party is not directly accessible and thus unreliable. Hence, when offering information from such an unreliable source instead of his/her own direct perception, the speaker tends to express more uncertainty by adding a hear-say verb *shuo*⁴. The data does show the tendency that most of the matrix subjects in reported speech frames tend to be the third person subjects (58%) followed by the first person subjects (33%) and the second person subjects (9%), as shown in Table 4 and the example (9).

³ The relation between *de dicto* complementizers and the third person subject has been discussed by Suzuki (2000). She argues that the *de dicto* complementizer such as *to* in Japanese tends to co-occur with the third person subject and that the selection of *de dicto* complementizer *to* instead of *de re* complementizer *koto* is related to the psychological distance yielded by the third person subject. It is because the speaker who are speaking for or quoting another person senses the need to create a certain distance to avoid sounding too assertive or too judgmental. The utilization of *de dicto* complementizer which renders the complement clause to belong to the world of speech instead of the real world thus can help create such psychological distance.

⁴ The function of coding unreliable information source with hear-say verb such as *shuo* in Chinese or *kong* in Taiwanese has been documented by Su (2004) and Chang (1998).

Table 4: Matrix Subjects in the Reported Speech Frames with SHUO

matrix predicate	first person	second person	third person
<i>jiang</i> “speak; say”	15	1	18
<i>wen</i> “ask”	2	1	4
<i>xie</i> “write”	1	1	2
<i>xuancheng</i> “declare”	0	0	2
<i>zhengshi</i> “prove”	0	0	2
<i>gaosu</i> “tell”	0	0	1
<i>taolun</i> “discuss”	0	0	1
<i>jiao</i> “teach”	0	0	1
<i>huiying</i> “respond”	0	0	1
<i>guanshu</i> “instill”	0	1	0
<i>biaoshi</i> “claim”	0	1	0
Total	18 (33%)	5 (9%)	32 (58%)

(9) *ranhou keshi zuotian nage laoshi jiushi yao jiang shuo..*
then but yesterday that teacher just want speak SHUO
qishi hen duo dongxi dou shi yiwai zhong chansheng de
actually very many thing all BE accident in produce POSS
“Then, but yesterday that teacher just wanted to say that actually many things take
place in an unexpected situation.”

On the other hand, when the speaker is to offer information from a more reliable source such as the speaker himself or herself, there is little need to code uncertainty and thus complementizer *shuo* tends not to be present. 62% of the matrix subjects are the first person when complementizer *shuo* is absent, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Matrix subjects in the reported speech frames without *shuo*

matrix predicate	first person	second person	third person
<i>jiang</i> “speak; say”	9	3	3
<i>wen</i> “ask”	17	1	5
<i>xie</i> “write”	1	2	0
<i>xuancheng</i> “declare”	0	0	0
<i>zhengshi</i> “prove”	0	0	0
<i>gaosu</i> “tell”	1	0	1
<i>taolun</i> “discuss”	0	1	0
<i>jiao</i> “teach”	0	0	0
<i>huiying</i> “respond”	0	0	0
<i>guanshu</i> “instill”	1	0	0
<i>biaoshi</i> “claim”	0	0	2
Total	29 (62%)	7 (15%)	11 (23%)

Unlike the reported speech frames with *shuo* which aim to express the speaker’s uncertainty, most of the speech frames without *shuo* are used to indicate the speaker’s performative actions, particularly *wo gen ni jiang* “let me tell you” (14.9%) and *wo wen ni* “let me ask you” (34.1%), as illustrated in (10).

- (10) A: *e wo gen ni jiang*
 PAT I with you speak
wo pei diyi fu de shihou ba qian
 I get first pair POSS time eight thousand
 B: *hao*
 good
pei name hao
 get that good
 “A: Let me tell you, when I got my first pair of glasses, I paid eight thousand.”
 “B: Good! You got such a good pair of glasses.”

As we can see in Table 6 in which the percentage of the occurrence of *shuo* in the reported speech frames with different matrix subjects is shown, complementizer *shuo* indeed is most likely to co-occur with third person subjects (74.4%) compared with

the other two types of subjects, which further suggests that the presence of *shuo* tends to signal an unreliable source of information.

Table 6: Matrix subjects in the reported speech frames with and without *shuo*⁵

	first person	second person	third person
with <i>shuo</i>	18 (38.3%)	5 (41.7%)	32 (74.4%)
without <i>shuo</i>	29 (61.7%)	7 (58.3%)	11 (25.6%)
Total	47	12	43

The claim that complementizer *shuo* signals the speaker's uncertainty about the information he or she conveys is also supported by the constant occurrences of the expressions with hypothetical interpretations. In 19 out of 55 entries of reported speech frames (34.5%), *shuo* co-occurs with words or phrases with hypothetical meanings such as *juguo* "if," *birushuo* "for example," *pirushuo* "for example," *sheme* "what," *haoxiang* "seemingly," *keneng* "perhaps" and *dagai* "approximately." In contrast, among all 47 entries of the reported speech frames where complementizer *shuo* is not present, only three entries (6.4%) have expressions with hypothetical interpretations.

Some of the entries with hypothetical interpretations co-occurring with complementizer *shuo* are exemplified in (11)-(13):

(11) **ruguo**

jiushi ranhou ta you yige guize jiushi shuo
 namely then he have one rule namely say
ruguo *dianyuan you wen ta shuo yaobuyao ta da hao de*
 if clerk have ask he SHUO want-not-want extra big size POSS
ranhou ta jiu dou yao shuo shi
 then he just all must SHUO yes
jiushishuo dou yao shuo <yes>

⁵ Special thank should be given to one of the committee members, Professor Lin, Hsueh-o, for pointing out this observation.

namely all must SHUO yes

“That is to say, then, he has one rule that if the clerk asks him whether he wants the extra-large size or not, he always has to say yes; namely always saying yes.”

The speaker in example (11) was describing an act of speech *wen* “ask” carried out by a third person subject *dianyuen* “clerk” in a hypothetical context which is created by the use of the conditional connective *ruguo*. Since the context is hypothetical, the speaker actually has little access to the truthfulness of the *dianyuen*’s utterance. The use of *shuo* helps to express the speaker’s uncertainty about the information value of the reported speech frame.

(12) **birushuo**

A: *ranhou keren lai dehua*
then customer come dehua (if)
ta yao sheme ni caineng gen ta jiang
he want what you able with he speak

B: *o! jiushi birushuo ta hui wen ni shuo=*
PAT namely for example he will ask you SHUO
wo xianzai you zhebi cian dehua zenmeban
I now have this money dehua (if) how

“A: Then, when customers come, you can tell them what they want.”

“B: In other words, for example, he will ask you how he should deal with his money.”

Speaker B in (12) was also referring to a hypothetical situation created by the phrase *birushuo* “to give an example.” In this hypothetical situation, the statement that the third person subject *ta* “he” will raise a question when he comes cannot be directly proved. To help to express the speaker’s uncertainty about this hypothetical statement, *shuo* was used in the third person subject’s reported speech frame.

(13) ***sheme***

wo gen ta jiang shuo=

I with he speak SHUO

en zhe ge dianying shi you sheme sheme jihui jiaoyu

PAT this GE movie BE have what what chance education

sheme de?

what POSS

“I just told him that this movie provided a chance for education or something like that.”

The speaker in (13) was telling the listener that his experience of sharing with another person some educational values he learned from a movie. However, the speaker in fact did not know much about the detail and his uncertainty was shown in his using three times of *sheme* “what.” To express uncertainty, the speaker used *shuo* in the reported speech frame.

In addition to coding the speaker’s uncertainty about the information, *shuo* may also be used to signal the speaker’s intention to sound less assertive especially when the speaker intends to question the interlocutor. There are three entries (5.5%) of reported speech frames with *shuo* compared with one entry (2.1%) in the data where *shuo* is not present. In face-to-face conversations, the speaker may need to reconfirm his/her ideas with the listener by saying *wo bushi ... ma* “didn’t I (say that).” The speaker’s reconfirming with the listener may sound face-threatening, so an act of mitigation to show politeness is therefore needed. The presence of complementizer *shuo* in this case serves to create a psychological distance to make the speaker’s utterance less direct, as we can see in (14) and (15).

(14) *bushi...ma*

zhi sheng o?

direct rise PAT

zhi sheng wo gang bu shi gen ni jiang guo shuo=

direct rise I just now not BE with you speak PER SHUO

jiushishuo

namely

keneng jiushi

probably namely

buguo zhi sheng

but direct rise

tamen laoshi dou hai gei ni

they teacher all will give you

“Going directly to senior high school? Didn’t I just tell you that namely

perhaps? ... but if you want to go directly to senior high school, the teachers will

usually give you this chance.”

In this conversation, the speaker was asked by his sister about the advantages and disadvantages of directly entering senior high school without taking the joint entrance exam. Having been asked a similar question in the previous context, the speaker restated his explanation together with an act of reconfirmation *wo gang bu shi gen ni jiang guo shuo* “didn’t I just tell you that” which might sound offensive to the listener in a face-to-face conversation. Therefore, to sound less direct in challenging the interlocutor, *shuo* was used to help to soften the speaker’s tone.

(15) *bushi...ma*

wo ganggang zai gen ta jiang a shuo

I just now BE with she speak PAT SHUO

ni xiexie nanpengyou jianglai fenshou le

you thank boyfriend future break up ASP

bu shi hen ganga ma

not BE very embarrassing QUE

“I was telling him just now that if you thank your boyfriend, isn’t it embarrassing

in the future when you break up?”

The speaker in (15) was talking about her previous chat with one of her friends who wanted to write a thank-you note to her boyfriend. However, the speaker held an opposite opinion and challenged her friend by saying *bushi hen ganga ma* “isn’t that embarrassing.” In order to sound less face-threatening, the speaker used *shuo* in the reported speech frame to tone down her inquiry.

The speaker’s will to express uncertainty and mitigation is also manifested by prosodic features including the lengthening of *shuo* or a short pause after *shuo*. These prosodic features function to mark the speaker’s psychological distance toward the complement proposition due to either the speaker’s uncertainty or concern about politeness. The data shows that most of the reported speech frames with *shuo* tend to have lengthening *shuo* or a short pause following *shuo* (37 out of 55 entries: 67.3%), as shown in (16) or (17) respectively:

(16) **lengthening shuo**

o! jiushi birushuo ta hui wen ni shuo=

PAT namely for example he will ask you SHUO

wo xianzai you zhebi qian dehua zenmeban

I now have this money dehua (if) how

“In other words, for example, he will ask you if he has money how he should deal with his money.”

(17) **short pause**

ranhou keshi zuotian nage laoshi jiushi yao jiang shuo..

then but yesterday that teacher just want speak SHUO

qishi hen duo dongxi dou shi yiwai zhong chansheng de

actually very many thing all BE accident in produce POSS

“Then, but yesterday that teacher just wanted to say that actually many things take place in an unexpected situation.”

In contrast, in the data of reported speech frames where *shuo* is not present, only 4 out

of 47 entries (8.5%) are followed by a short pause. Most of the entries are directly followed by the complement as in (18) where complement clause *ni zuijin hao bu hao* “How are you recently” directly follows the utterance verb *wen* “ask.”

- (18) A: *ta yao wen ni*
 he want ask you
 B: *wen wo sheme*
 ask I what
 A: *ta wen ni zuijin hao-bu-hao*
 he ask you recently good-not-good
 “A: He wanted to ask about you.”
 “B: What did he ask?”
 “A: He asked how you were recently.”

In summary, the finding of the current study points to the direction that the presence of complementizer *shuo* in a reported speech frame functions to create a psychological distance which either shows the speaker’s uncertainty about the information value of the complement clause or makes the speaker’s statement sound less assertive. In other words, the presence of *shuo* in reported speech frames is conditioned by the speaker’s evaluation of the information value and politeness in conversation.

4.2.2 Reported Thought Frame

In addition to forming reported speech frames with utterance verbs, the saying verb *shuo* can also formulate reported thought frames with cognition verbs. The co-occurrence of *shuo* and cognition verbs stems from the proximity of an act of speech to the thought in one’s mind (Huang 1982, Su 2002, 2004). Since a person speaks what he or she thinks, there is a strong correlation between one’s speech and one’s thought. Therefore, the saying verb *shuo* can co-occur with cognition verbs to form reported thought frames, in which *shuo* functions very much like a

complementizer to “voice for” the speaker’s mind expressed in the complement clause.

The data collected in the current study shows a strong relation between complementizer *shuo* and the cognition verbs. In the data, 48 entries (37.2%) where *shuo* functions as a complementizer co-occur with cognition verbs, including *xiang* “think,” *wo/ni de yisishi* “what I/you mean is,” *juede* “feel,” *zhidao* “know” and *pa* “be afraid,” as exemplified below respectively.

(19) *xiang shuo*

ta jiu shuo Xiao Hou nicheng hen haoxiao
he just SHUO small monkey nickname very interesting
wo jiu shuo o
I just SHUO PAT
*wo **xiang shuo** bu zhidao ni youmeiyou huan a*
I think SHUO not know you have-not-have change PAT
haishi zenyang
or how

“He just said that the nickname ‘Small Monkey’ is very funny. Then I said ‘Well’. Then I thought I didn’t know whether you have changed it or what.”

(20) *wodeyisi shi shuo*

wode yisi shi shuo=
my thinking BE SHUO
ni buneng ba yichian de yinying dai dao xianzai lai
you cannot hold past POSS shadow bring to now come
“What I mean is that you cannot bring the misery in the past to your current life.”

(21) *juede shuo*

huoshi shuo xiang wo la
or SHUO like I PAT
*wo shi **juede shuo**=*
I BE feel SHUO
ni na zhong jiushi zhe zhong en
you that kind namely this kind PAT
tai shengdong de dongxi
too vivid POSS thing

wo fener bu zhidao wo xuedao le sheme

I instead not know I learn ASP what

“But, for me, I feel that your...in this kind of games, I don’t know what I have learned.”

(22) *zhidao shuo*

wo zhi zhidao shuo=

I only know SHUO

wo qing ta xian zuo yixie qianzhi zuoye

I ask he first do some preliminary homework

“I only know that I asked him to do some preliminary work.”

(23) *pa shuo*

dui a

yes PAT

ta ye bukeneng zhexie dongxi meitian sao a

he also impossible these things every day clean PAT

wo you pa shuo..

I also afraid SHUO

fang bieren de zhuozhi

put others POSS desk

renjia yeshi you yixie tongzhi a

others also have some notification PAT

“Yes! It’s also impossible that he put everything neatly every day. But I am also afraid that if we put stuff on others’ desks, those people may also receive some letters.”

In the reported thought frame such as (19), *shuo* serves as a complementizer linking the matrix clause *wo jiu xiang* “I just thought” to the complement clause *bu zhidao ni youmeiyou huan a haishi zenyang* “I didn’t know whether you have changed it or what.” Complementizer *shuo* and the matrix predicate *xiang* together formulate a reported thought frame.

Unlike reported speech frames whose matrix subjects tend to be either the third person (58%) or the first person (33%), reported thought frames such as *xiang (shuo)* or *wodeyisishi (shuo)* are more likely to co-occur only with the first person matrix

subject no matter *shuo* is present or not, as shown in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7: Matrix subjects in the reported thought frames with *shuo*

Matrix predicate	first person	second person	third person
<i>xiang</i> “think”	23	0	3
<i>(wo/ni) deyisishi</i> “what (I/you) mean is”	7	5	0
<i>juede</i> “feel”	6	1	0
<i>zhidao</i> “know”	1	1	0
<i>pa</i> “be afraid”	1	0	0
Total	38 (79%)	7 (15%)	3 (6%)

Table 8: Matrix subjects in the reported thought frames without *shuo*

Matrix predicate	first person	second person	third person
<i>xiang</i> “think”	15	0	1
<i>(wo/ni) deyisishi</i> “what (I/you) mean is”	3	0	0
<i>juede</i> “feel”	252	33	27
<i>zhidao</i> “know”	40	12	13
<i>pa</i> “be afraid”	10	0	3
Total	320 (78%)	45 (11%)	44 (11%)

The high co-occurrence between the first person subject and cognition thought frames results from the fact that a person can only think for himself or herself but cannot think for other people because it is hardly possible for a person to have access to other people’s minds.

As we can see in Table 9 in which the percentage of the occurrence of *shuo* in the reported thought frames with different matrix subjects is shown, *shuo* is more likely to co-occur with cognition predicates with first and second person subjects, which suggests that the presence of *shuo* in the reported thought frames is conditioned by the interaction between interlocutors. This observation points to the direction that the occurrence of complementizer *shuo* is conditioned not only by the source of information value but also by the nature of face-to-face communication.

Table 9: Matrix subjects in the reported thought frames with and without *shuo*

	first person	second person	third person
with <i>shuo</i>	38 (10.6%)	7 (13.5%)	3 (6.4%)
without <i>shuo</i>	320 (89.4%)	45 (86.5%)	44 (93.6%)
Total	358	52	47

The data shows that by using complementizer *shuo* in these first-person-subject thought frames, the speaker aims to create a psychological distance to signal his/her uncertainty and concern about politeness in conversation as the cases of reported speech frames. The speaker's uncertainty may result from his/her having little knowledge about the complement proposition or from his/her later finding out that the truth actually counters his/her presumption, as shown in the following examples respectively.

- (24) *ta jiu shuo Xiao Hou nicheng hen hao xiao*
 he just SHUO small monkey nickname very very laugh
wo jiu shuo o
 I just SHUO PAT
wo jiu xiang shuo bu zhidao ni youmeiyou huan a
 I just think SHUO not know you have-not-have change PAT
haishi zenyang
 or how
 “He just said that the nickname ‘Small Monkey’ is very funny. Then I said ‘Well’.
 Then I thought I didn’t know whether you have changed it or what.”

The speaker in this conversation was asked about her boyfriend’s nickname. However, because she did not know whether her boyfriend had already changed his nickname or not, she used *buzhidao* “doesn’t know” and also *youmeiyou* “whether or not” to create a question and to show her uncertainty about the answer. To help to express the speaker’s uncertainty in her thought, *shuo* was used to create a psychological distance.

(25) *nage shihou mingming jiushi qi dian sishi fen*
 that time obviously namely seven o'clock forty minute
wo benlai xiang shuo..
 I originally think SHUO
wo jintian hai zao qi de le
 I today still early wake POSS ASP
na jintian yinggai bu hui chidao cai dui a
 that today supposedly not will late should right PAT
jieguo haishi chidao le
 result still late ASP

“At that moment, it was obviously seven forty. Originally, I was thinking I really got up early this morning. I should probably not be late today. However, I was still late as usual.”

This speaker originally presumed that she was supposedly able to arrive at her office earlier than usual as she got up quite early that day. However, the actual result turned out to counter her original expectation, which is shown by the expressions *benlai* “originally” and *jieguo* “however...as a result.” Therefore, when restating this counter-factual presumption, the speaker used *shuo* to build her psychological distance in order to show her uncertainty toward the presumption.

In the data of reported thought frames with *shuo*, there are in total 13 out of 48 entries (27.1%) where the speaker’s uncertainty is coded. In contrast, in the data of thought frames where *shuo* is not present, there are only 8 out of 409 entries (2.0%) in which the speaker’s uncertainty is shown. In sum, similar to its function in reported speech frames, *shuo* in reported thought frames also serves to establish the speaker’s psychological distance in order to show his/her uncertainty.

Apart from being used to mark the speaker’s uncertainty about the complement proposition, *shuo* in a reported thought frame may also be used to show the speaker’s concern about politeness in conversation. The use of *shuo* may serve as a mitigator to

help the speaker lessen the assertiveness of his/her thought when the speaker is aware that the listener holds a different point of view (25.0%) or when the speaker wants to paraphrase the listener's thought (10.4%). 12 entries (25.0%) of the data of reported thought frames with *shuo* suggest that *shuo* tends to be present because the speaker wants to sound less direct or less offensive when he or she prepares to express a different opinion from the interlocutor's. The psychological distance marked by *shuo* serves as a boundary between the speaker and the assertion so as to tone down the speaker's assertiveness in his/her different opinion. In contrast, in the data where *shuo* is not present, only one entry (0.2%) in which the speaker shows concern about politeness is found.

The speaker's concern is particularly obvious in the cases of *wode yisi shi shuo* "what I mean is" (7 entries) and *wo juede shuo* "I feel" (5 entries), as shown in (26) and (27).

(26) A: *keshi wo huaiyi ye*
but I doubt PAT

B: *huaiyi sheme*
doubt what

ni shuo huaiyi wo san fenzhong jiang de wan
you SHUO doubt I three minute speak POSS finish

A: *ni yao jiang yingwen*
you must speak English

B: *jiang de wan a*
speak POSS finish PAT
yingwen hen jiandan ye
English very simple PAT

hao-bu-hao
good-not-good

A: *ni yao ziji zheyang hai yao jeshi*
you must self this way still must explain

B: *wo gangcai jiu yijing jeshi wan le*
I just now just already explain finish ASP

shi yinwei ni yizhi wen wo wenti yao wo jeshi
 BE because you continually ask I question want I explain
 A: *mei mei mei wode yisi shi shuo*=
 no no no my meaning BE SHUO
ni yao yong yingwen jeshi
 you must use English explain

“A: But, I doubt it.”

“B: What do you doubt? You mean ... you doubt whether I will be able to finish it in three minutes.”

“A: You are going to speak in English!”

“B: No problem! English is so easy, ok?”

“A: But, you have to deal with so much and all in English...”

“B: Just now, I have already finished my explanation. It’s all because you kept on asking me questions and asked me to explain.”

“A: No, no, no, what I mean is that you must explain in English...”

Speaker A in (26) doubted whether Speaker B would be able to finish her three-minute presentation in English. After listening to Speaker B’s explanation, Speaker A sensed that there was a misunderstanding between him and Speaker A. In response to Speaker B’s misunderstanding, Speaker A initiated his turn with *mei* “no” three times to indicate that what he tried to convey differed from Speaker B’s understanding. Though seemingly offensive to Speaker B, Speaker A’s real thought was spelled out again with a reported thought frame *wode yisi shi shuo*, in which *shuo* is intended to tone down Speaker A’s assertion to avoid more confrontation.

(27) A: *xiaohaizi zai wan dafongchui de shihou*
 children BE play musical chair POSS moment
tamen jiu hui zhidao zhege youxi jiushi <musical chair>
 they just will know this game BE musical chair

B: en

PAT

A: *tongyao dui xuesheng lai shuo ye hen hao bei*
 nursery rhyme to students come say also very good remember

B: *huoshi shuo xiang wo la*

or say like I PAT
wo shi juede shuo=
 I BE feel SHUO
ni na zhong jiushi zhe zhong en
 you that kind namely this kind PAT
tai shengdong de dongxi
 too vivid POSS thing
wo faner bu zhidao wo xue dao le sheme
 I instead not know I learn come ASP what
 “A: When children are playing musical chair, they will know this game is called musical chair.”
 “B: um.”
 “A: To students, nursery rhymes are also easy to remember.”
 “B: But, for me, I feel that your...in this kind of games, I don’t know what I have learned.”

Speaker B in (27) held a different view from the interlocutor’s about having activities in English class. After listening to Speaker A’s explanation on those activities, Speaker B was ready to express his different opinion which was coded by the contrastive adverb *faner* “instead” though it might cause possible confrontation. In order not to sound too offensive, Speaker B’s opinion was hedged by *shuo* serving as a mitigator between the thought frame and the complement proposition.

The speaker’s concern about politeness is also shown when he or she tries not to misinterpret the listener by paraphrasing the listener’s thought. This type of reported thought frame is mostly formulated as *nide yisi shi shuo* “what you mean is.” Although there are only 7 entries of reported thought frame with the second person subject, 5 of them (71.4%) are meant to paraphrase the listener’s previous utterance in order not to cause any misinterpretation⁶. Because it is impossible for the speaker to thoroughly access the interlocutor’s mind, the speaker would try not to sound too assertive in paraphrase. To achieve this goal, *shuo* is added to mark a psychological

⁶ On the other hand, in the data of thought frames without *shuo*, no entry of attempting to paraphrase the interlocutor is found.

distance and thus serves as an indicator of the speaker's reluctance to sound too direct in paraphrasing the interlocutor's idea. The speaker's reluctance is also shown by the use of expressions with uncertainty such as *yinggai* "supposedly," *ruguo* "if" or a question form. In other words, the speaker's intention to keep politeness results from his/her uncertainty about the interlocutor's thought, as illustrated in (28).

(28) A: *guozhong de laoshi bu zhongyao*
 junior high school POSS teacher not important
gaozhong de laoshi cai zhongyao
 senior high school POSS teacher just important

B: *zhendema*
 really

A : *suoyi suoyi laoshi bu hao*
 so so teacher not good
wo juede shi mei sheme cha
 I feel BE no what difference
shu dou yao ziji du de
 book all must self read POSS
yinwei shu nage ziji du-yi-du jiu keyi dong
 because book that self read-one-read just able understand

B : *o! na suoyi nide yisi shi shuo=*
 PAT that so your meaning BE SHUO
ruguo shuo Yenping dehua
 if SHUO Yenping dehua (if)
tade laoshi hui bijiao zishen lo
 his teacher will more experienced PAT

"A: Teachers in junior high school are not important while those in senior high school are."

"B: Really?"

"A: So, I feel fine if the teachers are not good. Students should do the study themselves because they can understand the book as long as they read it several times."

"B: I see. So, what you mean is if I study in Yenping, the teachers there are more experienced?"

Speaker A was originally asked about the teachers' quality in senior high school.

However, Speaker A did not directly answer Speaker B's question but talk about the importance of doing self-study. In order to assure that no misinterpretation was caused, Speaker B reconfirmed the information by paraphrasing Speaker A's statement. In the paraphrase, both *shuo* and *ruguo* are used to make the speaker sound less definite and thus more polite.

In summary, the presence of complementizer *shuo* in both the reported speech frames and the reported thought frames signals the speaker's attempt to build up a psychological distance, which for one thing, functions to mark the speaker's uncertainty about complement proposition, and for another serves to tone down the speaker's assertiveness in dealing with a harmonious conversation.

4.2.3 Other Types of Verbal Frame

In addition to utterance verbs and cognition verbs, *shuo* may also co-occur with other types of verbs to serve the textual function as a complementizer. We have argued that the presence of complementizer *shuo* is meant to help to mark the speaker's psychological distance which signals the speaker's uncertainty about the complement proposition or makes the speaker sound less assertive. Along this line, these functions are also found in the co-occurrence of complementizer *shuo* and other verbs. Although this type of occurrence altogether amounts to merely 12 entries (7.0%), they serve to support the claim that the presence of complementizer *shuo* performs discourse functions: signaling speaker's uncertainty and toning down the speaker's assertion.

In the following example (29) in which complementizer *shuo* co-occurs with common verbs *tiyan* "experience" and *bijiao* "compare," it is found that both verbal frames *tiyan shuo* and *bijiao shuo* are followed by hypothetical contexts created by *pirushuo* "for example" and *birushuo* "for example". Adding complementizer *shuo* in the verbal frames helped the speaker show that he was going to present hypothetical

contexts instead of something which he is very certain about.

- (29) *wode yisi shi*
my meaning BE
<activity> *jiushi rang tongxue tiyan dao shuo=*
<activity> namely let students experience come SHUO
weisheme ta yao tichu zhe yang yi ge wenti
why he want propose this kind one GE question
pirushuo wo nage bufen keneng jiuhui
for example I that part perhaps will
rang tongxue rang tongxue tiyan dao
let students let students experience come
ni shenwei yi ge laoshi
you as one GE teacher
ni keyi ni keyi bijiao shuo..
you can you can compare SHUO
birushuo= zhan zai tai qian zhihui yi ge youxi
for example stand at stage front conduct one GE game
gen wo xiaqu taixia zhihui yi ge youxi de chabie
with I come down off-stage conduct one GE game POSS difference
“What I mean is that the purpose of activities is to let students experience why such a question has been proposed. For example, I will conduct my part by having students experience that being a teacher, you can compare, for example, the difference between managing a game on stage and off stage”

In addition to coding uncertainty, *shuo* in common verbal frames may also be used to show the speaker’s concern about politeness when the speaker’s utterance is intended to challenge the interlocutor, as exemplified in (30).

- (30) A: *mei yi ge ruguo <notebook> you de ren dou keyi yong*
every one GE if notebook have POSS people all can use
chule cifuqi yiwai huo zhe yixie jiadian sheme de
except modem except or some appliance what POSS
dui-bu-dui
yes-not-yes
B: *na keneng zhi yao yi ge chakong huo liangge*

that perhaps only need one GE plug or two
bu yong name duo ge
 not need that many GE
 A: *dui a*
 yes PAT
keshi wenti shi shuo=
 but problem BE SHUO
ta zhe ge zheyang zuo hen fangbian
 it this GE this way do very convenient
 “A: Everyone who owns a notebook computer can use this thought this is not applicable to modem or house appliance. Right?”
 “B: That is perhaps applicable only to one or two plugs not too many.”
 “A: You are right, but the problem is this is really convenient.”

In this example, Speaker A was telling how convenient a new invention of electronics is. Facing that Speaker B did not totally agree with her, Speaker A started her opposite opinion with an agreeing phrase *dui a* “yes” immediately followed by a contrastive connective *keshi* “but” and then her counter argument which was reinforced by the word *wenti* “problem”. To deal with possible confrontation, *shuo* was present in the copula frame *wenti shi* “the problem is” to soften Speaker B’s counter argument.

In summary, the presence of *shuo* in common verbal frames also tends to perform the discourse function of helping the speaker express his/her uncertainty about the complement proposition or make his/her assertion less face-threatening. However, the cases of this type are not sufficient enough to lead to a significant conclusion and merely serve to show the tendency of performing discourse functions of *shuo*.

4.3 Complementizers in Chinese and in English⁷

⁷ I want to point out that credits of the discussion in this section should be given to my advisor Li, Ing.

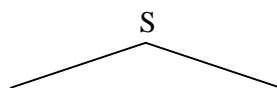
Different languages make use of different words to serve as complementizers. In Chinese, *shuo* has been regarded as a complementizer (Huang 1982, 2003), while in English *that* functions as the complementizer. Although these two words are both complementizers, both mark the *de dicto* world of speech and can both be optional, they should not be deemed totally identical. This section aims to examine their structural and functional differences.

4.3.1 Structural Difference

Complementizers *shuo* and *that* differ structurally. Chinese complementizer *shuo*, which derives from a verb of saying or a serial verb construction, has a closer relation with a VP constituent. Take (31)⁸ as an example. Before *shuo* becomes a complementizer, it should form a serial verb construction with another saying verb *jiang* and the tree structure of (31) is shown as (31'). Therefore, when it becomes a complementizer, it tends to be more like part of the verbal constituent.

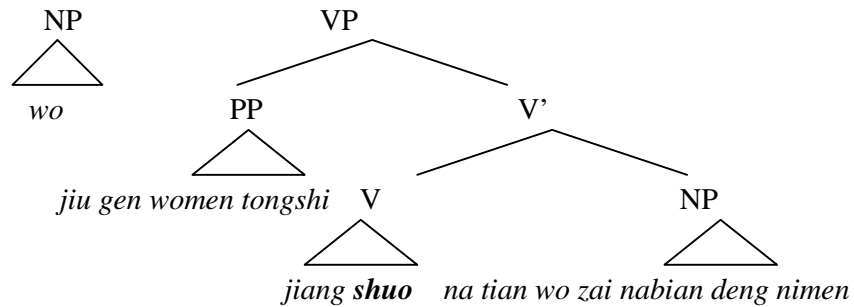
- (31) *wo jiu gen women tongshi jiang shuo*
 I just with our colleague say SHUO
na tian wo zai nabian deng nimen jiu hao
 that day I BE there wait you just fine
 “I will tell my colleagues ‘I will just wait for you there that day.’”

(31')



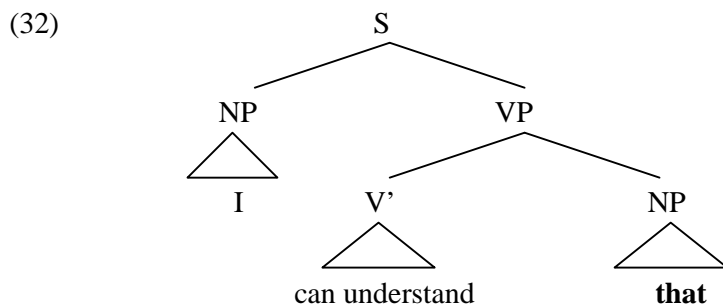
She reminds me of the inadequacy of equating Chinese complementizer *shuo* and English complementizer *that* and some differences between them though they are both complementizers.

⁸ This example is obtained from the database of the current study.

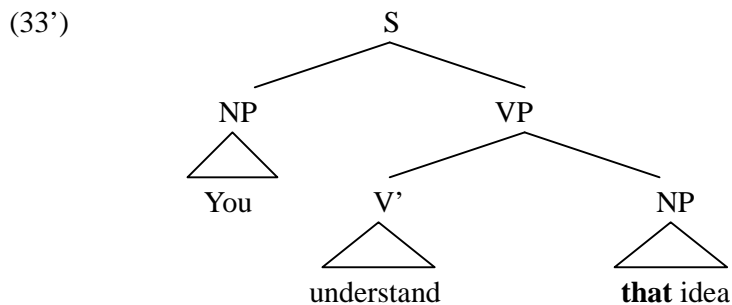


On the other hand, since the original function of English complementizer *that* is a demonstrative, being either a demonstrative pronoun or a demonstrative adjective, *that* tends to be part of a nominal constituent, as shown in (32)-(32') and (33)-(33')⁹.

(32) I can understand that.



(33) You understand that idea.

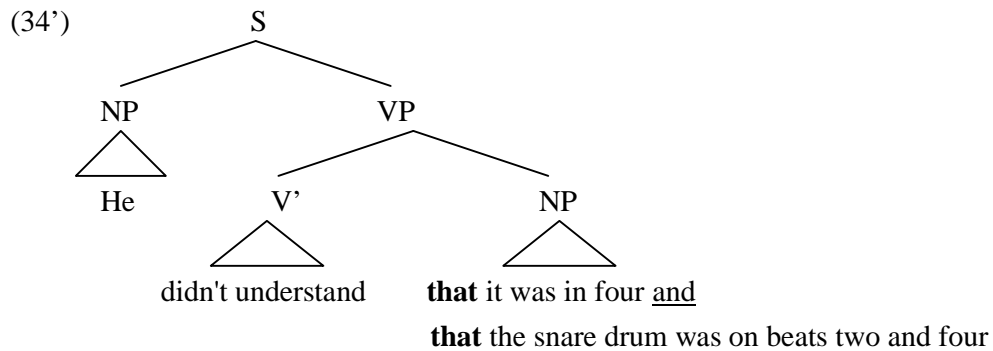


The example (34) and (34') below also suggest that when functioning as a complementizer, *that* seems to have a closer relation with the NP construction because

⁹ Examples (32)-(34) are both obtained from the database of British National Corpus: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>.

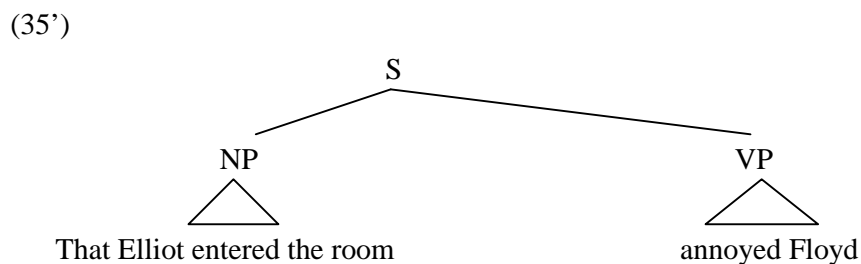
two constituents in the NP construction, each of which is formed by complementizer *that* together with the complement clause, are linked by the coordinate conjunction *and*.

(34) He didn't understand that it was in four and that the snare drum was on beats two and four.



Another support for the claim that English complementizer *that* does not behave in the same way as *shuo* is that *that*-complement clause can be placed in the subject position of a sentence, as illustrated in (35) and (35'), whereas *shuo*-complement clause can not.

(35) **That** Elliot entered the room annoyed Floyd. (Noonan 1985:42)



The above examples suggest that although *shuo* and *that* are both regarded complementizers, due to their different sources of derivation, they do not perform identically.

4.3.2 Functional Difference

Another difference between Chinese complementizer *shuo* and English complementizer *that* is their different discourse functions. Thompson and Mulac (1991-a, 1991-b) maintain that English complementizer *that* tends to be absent when the matrix clause behaves more like an epistemic unit which functions to express the speaker's subjective evaluation, as illustrated in (36). (Thompson and Mulac 1991-a:):

(36) I **think** it's going to rain, isn't it? (Thompson and Mulac 1991-a:239)

In contrast, the present study has argued that Chinese complementizer *shuo* tends to be present particularly when the matrix subject is the first person or the matrix predicates express subjective evaluation such as *wode yisi shi* "what I mean is" and *wo xiang* "I think," as shown in (37).

(37) *wo xiang shuo bu zhidao ni youmeiyou huan a*
I think SHUO not know you have-not-have exchange PAT
"I thought I didn't know if you had exchanged it yet."

As shown in Table 10, complementizer *shuo* is more likely to be present when the matrix predicates are cognition verbs such as *wonide yisi shi* (80.0%) and *xiang* (59.5%) and we have discussed that reported thought frames tend to take the first person subjects. In other words, complementizer *shuo* tends to occur when the matrix clause functions more like an epistemic unit.

Table 10: The co-occurrence rate of *shuo* with predicate verbs

Matrix predicate	SHUO	Total ¹⁰	Rate	Type
<i>wo/nideyisishi</i> “what I/you mean is”	12	15	80.0 %	Cognition
<i>jiang</i> “speak; say”	34	50	68.0 %	Utterance
<i>xiang</i> “think”	26	42	59.5 %	Cognition
<i>xie</i> “write”	4	7	57.1 %	Utterance
<i>wen</i> “ask”	7	30	22.6 %	Utterance

Furthermore, being conditioned by the epistemicity of the matrix clause, the presence of *shuo* and *that* is subject to genres. *Shuo* tends to be present in the spoken genre because it helps to express speakers’ attitude in face-to-face conversations; on the other hand, *that* tends to be present in the written genre because epistemic sentences are less likely to occur in written data. The current data does show that there are comparatively few entries of complementizer *shuo* used in the written data¹¹, whereas English complementizer *that* is most likely to be present in the written genre (Thompson and Mulac 1991-a, 1991-b).¹²

In conclusion, although both Chinese complementizer *shuo* and English complementizer *that* have been proved to be discourse-conditioned, the factors that condition their presence are in fact different, which also leads to their different distribution in different genres.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on the discourse functions of complementizer *shuo* by examining the matrix subjects, the meaning of matrix predicates, and the context of

¹⁰ This means the total entries where the matrix predicate verbs occur with and without complementizer *shuo*.

¹¹ In a written database with approximate amount of data (87,820 words) collected from United Daily which is a domestic newspaper published in Taiwan, there are only 10 entries of complementizer *shuo* are found compared with the spoken database (88,102 words) in which 115 entries of complementizer *shuo* are collected.

¹² As noted by Professor Tsao, Fong-Fu, another possible reason might be that in Chinese when people are writing, they tend to omit discourse markers.

face-to-face communication in different types of verbal frames: reported speech frames, reported thought frames and common verbal frames. It has shown that the presence of complementizer *shuo* marks a psychological distance, which helps the speaker either to signal his/her uncertainty about the information value of the complement proposition or to soften the speaker's assertiveness in dealing with any possible confrontation or misunderstanding in face-to-face conversations.

This chapter has also compared two complementizers (Chinese complementizer *shuo* and English complementizer *that*). We argue that they are different in terms of their structural constituency, their functions and distributions in different genres. Chinese complementizer *shuo* tends to have a closer relation with a VP constituent while English complementizer *that* with an NP constituent. As to their function and distribution, *shuo* tends to be present to signal the speaker's subjectivity and occurs more in spoken data, whereas *that* tends to be omitted when the matrix clause is an epistemic unit and occurs more often in written data.

Therefore, as different complementizers in many languages perform different functions and yield different meanings, the presence of Chinese complementizer *shuo* in spoken data does perform discourse functions and these functions are subject to the nature of conversation: the speaker's evaluation of the information and politeness in interaction.