"Jiang *Shopping* Jinxing Daodi!":
Linguistic Innovation and Social Distinction in Chinese Television Medium

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1 Introduction

This paper is concerned with the constitutive role that linguistic innovation plays in socioeconomic transformation. I argue that linguistic innovation does not merely correlate with or reflect socioeconomic changes but is among the very forces that drive socioeconomic transformations and can be used to effect new social distinctions.

The study of linguistic innovation and change in contexts of socioeconomic changes is a prolific area in sociolinguistics. Especially productive is variationists' work, as represented by two recent special issues on linguistic variation and change and migration (L. Milroy, 2002; Owens, 2005)[1], and a series of articles on innovation and change in the English quotative system (Buchstaller, 2006a; Macaulay, 2001; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2004; Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999). While demonstrating the inextricable link between linguistic innovation/change and the social world, most studies have been predominantly concerned with exploring the processes of change, discovering distribution patterns of innovation, and the (lack of) formation of new community norms in a local variety. To put the matter in James Milroy's terms, many variationist studies adopt a "primarily system-oriented" approach to linguistic innovation and change (1992: 168). The social and economic dynamics tend to be treated as a backdrop of linguistic change and abstracted as external constraints on the distribution patterns of innovative features. For example, a series of studies on change in the English quotative system published in the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* between 1999 and 2006 (Buchstaller, 2006a, 2006b; Macaulay, 2001; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2004; Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999) focus exclusively on correlations between variation in quotative forms and social categories including age, sex, and region. Despite the finding that youth speakers favor the use of the innovative form 'be like,' these studies tell us little about what social meanings are expressed through the use of this innovative form or how variation in the use of quotative forms is employed as part of the discursive practices in the construction of youth styles.

Indeed, Irvine's earlier critique of correlational sociolinguistic studies—"fall[ing] short of revealing the full involvement of linguistic phenomena within political economy"

(1989: 255)—is still very much relevant to many current studies of linguistic innovation and change. Calling attention to the "incorporation" relationship between language and socioeconomic processes, she points out that linguistic differentiation does not merely index but may effect social differentiation. Such an approach to linguistic practice as part and parcel of larger social and political processes is also shared by Fairclough (1992, 2006). Recognizing the dialectical relation between discourse[2] and social structure, and specifically the important shaping role of discourse in social changes, Fairclough states that "[m]any of these social changes do not just involve language, but are constituted to a significant extent by changes in language practices" (1992: 6). This paper draws on insights from the incorporational approach to linguistic phenomena as integral to the socioeconomic system and recent developments in sociolinguistics that treat linguistic variation as resources for the construction of styles (e.g., Coupland, 2001b; Eckert, 2000). Linguistic innovations or innovative linguistic practices—the employment of innovative features—are treated in this study as motivated "new" practices that signal a break from what is considered the "old," the "conventional," and the "traditional." Furthermore, they are construed as newly available resources that can be deployed to effect new social distinctions.

The data considered in this study are drawn from a weekly Mandarin Chinese lifestyle-shopping program on the City Channel of Tianjin Television Station, broadcast locally in the city of Tianjin, China. As a country undergoing rapid socioeconomic restructuring, China provides a rich site for research on the constitutive role that linguistic innovation plays in socioeconomic transformations. This role is especially prominent in the shopping program, which introduces new consumer products and practices and effectively promotes a new middle-class lifestyle based on the pattern of consumption. In the next section, a brief description is provided of the program under study.

2 "S Information Station": Leader in Distinctive Individualistic Consumption

The television program that supplies the data for the present study is titled "S Qiangbao Zhan[3]," 'S Information Station,' with the letter 'S' as the initial of the English word 'shopping.' A half-hour weekly program, it is aired at 7:30PM on Friday and rerun at 10:30AM on Saturday and 3:30PM on the following Tuesday. The 16 episodes of the program used for the analysis in this study were recorded from May to October 2005. Self-styled as "the leader in distinctive and individualistic consumption," the program seeks to "provide information about trendy and avant-garde consumption and detailed practical guidance on shopping," in the hope of bringing to the audience "enjoyment through information and happiness in consumption" (TJTV, 2005). The show consists of four major segments, *Jietou Sou Ku* 'Street Cool Hunting,' *Chengshi Quan Gonglue* 'Complete Metropolitan Strategies,' *Liuxing Dianji* 'Trends Spotting,' and *Jietou Duidui Peng* 'Shopping Partner.' The slogan of the program is "*jiang* shopping *jinxing daodi*!" 'carry shopping through to the end,' a play on a well-known communist revolutionary slogan "*jiang geming jinxing daodi*" 'carry the revolution through to the end.' It was originally the title of an article written by Mao Zedong (Mao Tze-tung) for the Xinhua

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[2] The term "discourse" here refers to "language use as a form of social practice" (Fairclough, 1992: 63). In the present study, the television program hosts' use of a variety of linguistic features is a case in point.

[3] Mandarin Chinese is represented in this paper using the pinyin, the Standard Mandarin romanization system adopted in the People's Republic of China. The English translation of the Mandarin data and other Chinese written material quoted in this paper is provided by the author unless otherwise noted.

News Agency on the New Year's Eve of 1948, one year before the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Revolutionary Army defeated the Nationalists in 1949. Since then, it has become one of the most widely quoted slogans whenever a social movement is instituted by the party and government agencies. Replacing "revolution"—that is, the communist revolution for political power—with the English word "shopping," the key word of the program, the show reappropriates the slogan to turn the revolution into one at the level of consumption. Indeed, to take on the role as the leader or trendsetter in the current consumer revolution is what the show intends to do.

Based on the consumer products and their prices, the shopping venues, and the guest consumers featured in the program, it is clear that "S Information Station" caters to young, urban, white-collar professionals with information about fashion trends and what, where, and how to buy. As a result, it prescribes and promotes "consumer regimens" (Liechty, 2004: 34) for an emergent cosmopolitan middle-class lifestyle. In the 16 episodes analyzed in this study, the consumer products range from home products (e.g., furniture, fine bone china, home accessories), to electronics (e.g., digital cameras, cell phones), to clothing and fashion accessories, beauty products, sports gear, and wedding services. It also introduces new ways of urban living, such as home aromatherapy treatment, gift-giving on special occasions (e.g., anniversaries, housewarming), making cocktails, and brewing and drinking coffee. Together with the introduction of the consumer products and new urban living practices, a belief is valorized through the program, that is, consumption patterns index socioeconomic statuses. The program also exposes the audience to a world of transnationally branded commodities and globally shared (consumption) practices. Hence, the audience of the television show is not addressed as Tianjin-based viewers but as sophisticated consumers that are part of the global, cosmopolitan consumption-centered culture (see also Wang, 2005: 540).

The focus of this study is on the language of the program's two female hosts, Liu Ling and YuYuan,[4] both native-born speakers of the Tianjin dialect. As experts in shopping, fashion, and urban living, and with their distinctive hairstyle, makeup, clothing, and most prominently their language, they themselves present in the program a persona that is modern, trendy, and cosmopolitan. In addition to a high frequency of expressions in the area of fashion and trendiness (as shown in Table 1 below), they use a wide range of innovative linguistic features indexical of newness, urbanity, trendiness, and cosmopolitanism. In the next section, I first analyze each type of the innovative linguistic features used by the hosts. Then, with 2 extracts from the program, I show how the combination of these features forms an innovative cosmopolitan Mandarin style (see also Zhang, 2005), a style that projects the hosts' modern, trendy, and cosmopolitan persona, and at the same time constitutes the new cosmopolitan lifestyle promoted by the program.

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[4] The names of the hosts are presented following the Chinese convention, i.e., family name followed by given name. The two hosts' family names are Liu and Yu, respectively.

Table 1 Expressions denoting fashion and trendiness

Expression	Example
liuxing (*n* = 42) 'in style,' 'trendy'	diaodai ye shi jinnian feichang liuxing de 'spaghetti straps [dresses] are also trendy this year'
xin (in xin + NP) (*n* = 36) 'new'	jinnian de xin kuan zuanshi 'this year's new styles of diamond'
shishang (*n* = 21) 'fashion,' 'trends,' 'trendy'	fangxiang liaofa yijing chengwei yizhong shishang 'aromatherapy has become trendy'
ku (*n* = 9) 'cool,' meaning fashionably attractive	zhege huaban wo juede yinggai nüsheng wan bijiao ku ba 'this skateboard I think girls would look cool on it'
qian wei (*n* = 7) 'avant-garde,' innovative, trend-setting	ni zhejian hen qianwei 'your piece [jacket] is very avant-garde'

Note: the number in parentheses after each expression indicates the number of instances of the expression in the 16 episodes.

3 Innovative Linguistic Features

Before presenting the data, I present a brief explanation about the regulations concerning language use in the Chinese broadcasting media. In October 2000, the "Common Language Law" was passed, stipulating that *Putonghua*, the standard variety of Mandarin based on the phonology of Beijing Mandarin, should be used as the language of radio and television broadcasting. In the following year, the city of Tianjin's Committee on Language and Character and the Committee on Education issued a circular on the examination and evaluation of the situation of the use of *Putonghua* in the city, in an effort to prepare for the pending evaluation by the state Ministry of Education and the Working Committee on Language and Character in 2003 (Nankai Daxue, 2002). As required by the circular, radio and television broadcasters and professional program hosts were to use standard *Putonghua* in their programming. Moreover, they were required to take the "*Putonghua* Shuiping Ceshi" '*Putonghua* Proficiency Test' (hereinafter, PSC) and obtain the certificate of the top proficiency level of Grade 1-A. The data collection period of this study, from May to October 2005, coincided with a time when a series of government regulations were issued to even more strictly reinforce the use of *Putonghua* in the broadcasting media. First, in April 2004, the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), the top government broadcasting authority, initiated the "Purification Project" aiming to purge the elements from films, radio, and television programs that may have harmful influences on the healthy development of the Chinese youngsters (SARFT, 2004). To this end, radio and television broadcasting personnel are required to "adhere to the norms of standard *Putonghua* and written Chinese characters. . . . Except for special needs, program hosts must use *Putonghua*. They should not mix *Putonghua* with foreign language under the pretext of pursuing trendy speech styles. Nor should they adulterate *Putonghua* with imitated Hong-Kong and Taiwan accents and their styles of expression" (ibid.). Then on September 10, 2005, SARFT rolled out "The Self-Disciplining Conventions of Radio and Television Broadcasters and Hosts in China," even more

determined to "protect the purity and standard of the national language." Formulated by the China Radio and Television Society, the Conventions reiterate that "broadcasters and program hosts should refrain from unnecessary mixing of foreign languages in *Putonghua* and from imitating Hong-Kong and Taiwan accents and their styles of expression" (SARFT, 2005). As the following analysis shows, despite the tightened government control on language use in the broadcasting media, the linguistic practices of the two hosts in "S Information Station" are not in conformity with the official regulations.

In the following analysis, innovative linguistic features adopted by the two hosts are discussed in relation to *Putonghua* whose "standard" features are considered conservative as compared with those that are innovative. These innovative features include lexical items, (English-Mandarin) codemixing, and sound features. Although this study does not intend to investigate the source(s) of the innovative Mandarin features[5] found in the data, a written questionnaire survey was conducted to find out whether they are also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong. As only 6 respondents from Hong Kong and 5 from Taiwan completed the survey[6], the results are only indicative of the extent to which these innovative Mandarin features are shared among *Putonghua*, Taiwan Mandarin, Hong Kong Cantonese, and Hong Kong Mandarin. The judgments of the respondents from each region are quite consistent. The summary of the responses for each feature is presented following the English translation of the term in Table 2.

3.1 Lexical Features

One type of innovative lexical items is expressions that have recently found their way into *Putonghua* to fill lexical gaps, as shown in Table 2. Although some of them are included in the 2003 edition of *Xinhua Xin Ciyu Cidian* (hereinafter, *XXCC*), '*Xinhua Dictionary of New Expressions*,' none is found in the 2005 edition of *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (hereinafter, *XHC)*, '*The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*,' the most authoritative dictionary published in Mainland China. From "aromatherapy" to "bubble bath," from "table runners" to "vacuum coffee brewers," from "slimming" to avoiding "clothing clash" at a party, from being "cool" to being "nonconformist," these expressions are about new consumer products, new concepts and practices of urban living, and new urban characteristics. They constitute the vocabulary of an urban lifestyle that is distinctively new (non-traditional) and cosmopolitan (non-local). New expressions such as these directly index newness and cosmopolitan urbanism in that referentially they point to new consumer products, practices, concepts, and desirable urban characteristics that are different from what is considered the "traditional" and the "local."

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[5] For research on sources of lexical innovation in Mandarin, see for example Tang (2001).

[6] All 5 Taiwanese respondents are graduate students at National Taiwan Normal University and University of Texas at Austin. Among the 6 Hong Kong respondents, 5 are graduate students at the City University of Hong Kong, and 1 is a lecturer at the Hong Kong Chinese University.

Table 2 Vocabulary of new urban lifestyle

New consumer products	New ways of urban living and practices	New concepts and urban characteristics
hongxi hu 'vacuum pot' (vacuum coffee brewer), unaware of its use in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**huoshui yangsheng guan** 'spa,' referring to the commercial establishment offering health and beauty treatment, also used in Taiwan Mandarin and Hong Kong (Survey)	**an jie** 'mortgage' (XXCC, 2003: 3), also used in Hong Kong but not Taiwan (Survey)
huaban 'skateboard,' also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**hunda** calque of English 'mix and match,' also used in Taiwan but not Hong Kong (Survey)	**jianyue** 'minimalist,' 'less-is-more,' used to describe styles of fashion and décor that are minimalist and refined, also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)
jingyou 'essential oil,' also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**paopao yu** 'bubble bath,' also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**ku** 'cool, fashionably attractive,' a loanword from English (XXCC, 2003: 187), also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)
moka hu 'moka pot,' also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**shoushen** 'slim, make oneself thinner by such means as exercising and dieting,' loanword from Japanese, spread to Taiwan and then to Hong Kong and Mainland China (XXCC, 2003: 295), also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**linglei** 'nonconformist,' 'unconventional,' 'original,' 'unique' (XXCC, 2003: 203), also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)
zhuoqi 'table runner,' unaware of its use in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**xiangxun liaofa** 'aromatherapy,' also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	**zhuang shan** 'clothing clash,' resemblance in clothing, considered a fashion faux pas (XXCC, 2003: 428), also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)

In addition to the above innovative lexical items, the hosts use a large number of new expressions that do not necessarily denote elements of new and cosmopolitan lifestyles but that carry an indexical value of being "trendy" (unconventional/non-traditional) and "cosmopolitan" (non-local). These include Mandarin expressions such as those listed in Tables 3.1-3.3 and the English words shown in Table 4. The difference between the set of Mandarin expressions in Table 2 and those in Tables 3.1-3.3 is that members of the latter group do not fill lexical gaps, as all have equivalents in the conservative variety of

Putonghua. The main domains or "communication sources" (Spitulnik, 1999: 47) of these expressions (e.g., the two English-based loanwords xiu 'show' and kiu 'cute') are popular culture and computer-mediated communication (e.g., meimei 'pretty girl'). The adverb man 'quite, pretty' and exclamation wa 'wow' have long been in use in certain southern Chinese varieties, for instance, the Shanghai dialect in the Wu dialect group and Cantonese in the Yue dialect group. They are considered "new" and have come to take on special social significance in *Putonghua* with the influx of overseas Chinese—largely Hong Kong and Taiwan—popular culture products in the Mainland market.[7] It is the contrast between these new forms and their conservative *Putonghua* counterparts that gives indexical value to the former group. Furthermore, the indexical meaning of "trendiness" and "cosmopolitanism" is brought out through the host's *motivated* act of using the innovative form instead of its conventional/conservative counterpart.

The indexical meaning as conveyed by the above items is especially highlighted in conversations between a host and a guest participant in which the former employs an innovative expression whereas the latter uses the conventional counterpart, as shown in (4) in Table 3.2. In this example, from the segment "Shopping Partner," the participant shopper Yang is looking for a birthday gift for her mother. Commenting on a potential candidate, a silk scarf, she uses the conventional *Putonghua* adverb ting 'quite' to modify piaoliang 'pretty.' In the next turn, the host Liu expresses her agreement with Yang but describes the scarf as man piaoliang, using the more "trendy" form man. Another interesting aspect of this example is the co-occurrence of features in the speech of Yang and Liu. In Yang's speech, ting co-occurrs with another conventional *Putonghua* feature, that is, the neutral tone of the second syllable in piaoliang. In contrast, in addition to using the innovative adverb man, Liu pronounces the second syllable of piaoliang with a full tone, another innovative feature discussed in section 3.3. I further address the issue of the co-occurrence of innovative features in 3.4.

Table 3.1 "Trendy" expressions

"Trendy" expressions	Standard (conservative) Mandarin
xiu [ɕiou] 'show' (verb or noun) a loanword from English, used in Taiwan Mandarin and spreading to Mainland China (Huang, 2003: 43; XXCC, 2003: 372), also used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)	zhanshi (verb) 'show, display' biaoyan (noun) 'show, performance'

(1) <showing a hair accessory, "Trend Spotting," 10/8/05>:
Liu: women rang ta zhuan guoqu, gei dajia **xiu** [**L**][8] yi xia
          'let's ask her to turn around, show [**L**] it to us'

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[7] On the influence and dominant status of Hong Kong and Taiwan popular culture on the Mainland Chinese market, see Barmé, 1999; de Kloet, 2002; Gold, 1993; Yang, 1997.

[8] In the pinyin transcription, features under study are highlighted in boldface, followed by a capital letter indicating its type enclosed in the square brackets:

[**L**]=lexical feature (Mandarin)
[**E**]=English expression
[**R-**]=non-rhotacization
[**R+**]=rhotacization
[**T0**]=neutral tone
[**T1**]=high-level tone, [**T2**]=rising tone, [**T3**]=falling-rising tone, [**T4**]=falling tone

Table 3.2 "Trendy" expressions (continued)

kiu [kʰiou] 'cute'	ke'ai 'adorable, cute'

a loanword from English, also used in
Taiwan and Hong Kong (Survey)

(2) <discussing clothing accessories, "Shopping Partner," 8/19/05>
Liu: ruguo chuanshang zheyang yi jian yifu, daishang yi ge zheyang xiao lianzi, yiding
        hui rang ren ganjue feichang **kiu** [**L**] de
        'If [you] wear a piece of clothing like this [a pair of grey pants], matching it with a
        small chain like this [a thin metallic silver belt], [you] will for sure look very cute
        [**L**].'

meimei 'pretty girl'	meili de nü hai

a popular term referring to a pretty girl,
used most often in online communication
(XXCC, 2003: 454), also used in Taiwan
and Hong Kong (Survey)

(3)   <introducing the owner of a coffee shop, "Street Cool Hunting," 9/24/05>
Liu: na women xianzai jieshao de zhejia dian de dianzhu, yi wei piao**liang [T4]** de
        meimei [**L**].
        'then the owner of the [coffee] shop we're introducing now, is a pretty [**T4**] girl
        [**L**].'

man (adverb) + adjective	ting, hen

'quite, pretty.' In XHC (2005: 914) 'man' is
marked as "dialectal." This adverb is used
in certain southern varieties such as the
Shanghai dialect, and also used in Hong
Kong Cantonese and Taiwan Mandarin
(Survey).

(4) <shopping for a birthday gift for Yang's mother, Yang asking for Liu's opinion on a
silk scarf, "Shopping Partner," Yang = participant shopper, 9/17/05>
Yang: Liu Ling, wo juede zhetia si jin **ting** piao**liang [T0]** de, ni juede zenmoyang?
        'Liu Ling, I think this silk scarf is quite pretty, what do you think?'
Liu: shi **man** [**L**] pian**liang [T4]** de, ni mama yingding hui xihuan de.
        'it is quite pretty, your mom will definitely like it.'

Table 3.3 "Trendy" expressions (continued)

wa (exclamation) 'wow,' expressing surprise and/or admiration. In conventional standard Mandarin 'wa' is an onomatopoeia describing the sound of vomiting or crying (XHC, 2005: 1395). It is used in Taiwan Mandarin and Hong Kong Cantonese (Survey)	aya, oyo
(5) <commenting on the achievement of a competitor in "Super Shopping Show," 10/22/05> Liu: **wa** [L], hao li**hai [T4]** a! 'Wow [L], really amazing [L]!'	

3.2 Codemixing

In addition to lexical innovations in Mandarin, the hosts' speech is interspersed with English expressions. Almost all the codemixing cases found in the data are single word insertions, as shown in Table 4. Items marked with an asterisk in the top of the list are English expressions associated with elements of new urban lifestyles and popular culture, for instance, 'townhouse': a new type of private residence; 'download' and 'e-mail': new telecommunication technology and practice; 'hip hop': a new popular music genre; 'spa': a new health and beauty service and venue; a new trend of 'DIY' practice[9]; 'Carrie' (Bradshaw): a popular culture character from the American hit series "Sex and the City"; and the Japanese 'Hello Kitty.' These expressions all have *Putonghua* equivalents that are themselves lexical innovations and their use is gaining currency in the contemporary culture of consumption. The use of these expressions but not their *Putonghua* equivalents by the hosts carries special symbolic force in addition to their indexical meaning of newness and cosmopolitanism derived from their referents as well as the contrast between the two codes of *Putonghua* and English. As mentioned earlier, the two hosts' persona as the authority in new urban trends and living is projected by their deploying linguistic and other semiotic resources. Hence, the use of English, the code perceived as representing what is considered cosmopolitan, in their speech puts an authentic touch and helps assert their authority in the area of a new cosmopolitan lifestyle.

Another set of English words, shown in Table 4 without the asterisk mark, do not refer to elements of newness, trendiness, or cosmopolitanism, and again, most of them have *Putonghua* counterparts. In contrast to the English words discussed above, the indexical value of this set derives from the contrast between the two codes. These words include the program's key word 'shopping'; the routine expressions in the segment "Shopping Partner" such as 'partner' referring to the participant who will share the shopping experience with the host and 'let's go' used to signal the beginning of a shopping mission; 'hi' used to greet the audience at the beginning of each episode and the participants during the show; and 'bye-bye' used at the end of each episode. 'Hi,' 'bye-

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[9] In recent years, there has been a rising trend of DIY in urban China, reflected in DIY programs on Chinese television and commercial DIY literature. In the summer of 2005 when collecting data for this project, I found rows of DIY books in a hui yuan zhi ('membership') bookstore, a new kind of bookstore that offers discount to its members.

bye,' and 'okay' are also often used by young show business celebrities as well as hosts in programs about show business. They are also very popular among young urbanites. 'Office' and 'OL'[10] are words associated with the white-collar professionals, particularly those working in the local branches of international corporations, who are part of the show's prominent target audience. Significantly, the English words *create* the sense of trendiness and cosmopolitanism, which would be lost if they were replaced by their *Putonghua* counterparts.

Table 4 English expressions

English	*Putonghua*
*Carrie (Carrie Bradshaw)	Kaili
*download	xiazai
*e-mail	dianzi youjian
*DIY	ziji dongshou
*hip hop	xi ha
*Hello Kitty	Kaidi mao 'Kitty cat'
*spa	huo shui yangsheng guan
*townhouse	lianti bieshu
bye-bye	zaijian
Hawai'i	xiaweiyi
high (in a cheerful spirit, see also Huang, 2004: 45)	jingshen zhenfen, qingxu gao'ang
hi	ni hao
let's go!	zanmen zou ba!
logo	tuxing biaozhi, hui biao
office	bangong shi
okay	hao ba
OL (office lady)	?
model	mote
partner	huoban
party	juhui
pose	zishi (noun), bai zishi (verb)
shopping	gouwu
VIP	gui bin

3.3 Innovative Sound Features

Two innovative sound features are employed by the hosts in this study, namely, limited use of the rhotacization of the syllable rime and the use of full tone in a neutral tone environment. Rhotacization and neutral tone are two prominent features of the conservative—Beijing Mandarin-based—variety of standard *Putonghua*. The former is the addition of a subsyllabic retroflex [ɻ] to the end of a syllable, causing the syllable rime to be rhotacized. Chao (1968) lists 17 Beijing Mandarin syllable rimes that can be rhotacized. It is especially prominent in Beijing Mandarin and shared among the northern Mandarin varieties (Chao, 1968), including the Tianjin dialect (Han, 1993: 24-25).

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[10] OL, the abbreviation of "office lady," derives from the Japanese term ōeru.

Rhotacization is a phonological variable in the sense that, optional in most cases, its use or non-use would not lead to changes in the referential meaning of word.[11] In (6), a realization without rhotacization is followed by one with.

(6) 'flower' <u>hua</u> [hua] ~ <u>hua**r**</u> [huaɻ]

It occurs most often in casual speech and with nouns, a small number of verbs, e.g., <u>wan</u> 'play,' demonstratives such as <u>zhe</u> 'here' and <u>na</u> 'there,' and some classifiers (Li & Thompson, 1981). Its use is limited among speakers of southern varieties (Chao, 1968; Norman, 1993), such as the Yue dialect group, including Cantonese, and the Min dialect group, including Southern Min, which has a strong influence on Taiwan Mandarin (Kubler, 1985). Such a pattern of differentiated distribution makes it one of the telltale features of northern Mandarin speakers. Although rhotacization is optional in most cases, it is considered a "norm" in standard *Putonghua*. Such a norm is reflected in the fact that words with syllable rimes that "must be rhotacized in colloquial speech are treated as independent lexical entries" in the <u>Modern Chinese Dictionary</u> (XHC, 2005: 3), marked with 'r' in the word's pinyin spelling, and represented orthographically with the Chinese character 儿. Rhotacization is also one of the tested items in the PSC.[12] A list of 189 words with syllable rimes that can be rhotacized is given in the *Putonghua Shiping Ceshi Shishi Gangyao* (hereinafter, PSCSG) '*The Guidelines for the Implementation of the Putonghua Proficiency Test*' (PSCSG, 2004: 247-251), and a minimum of 4 such words are to be included in the PSC.

Similar to rhotacization, neutral tone is a feature shared among northern Mandarin varieties, including Beijing and Tianjin Mandarin. In northern Mandarin, every stressed syllable has a full tone, or a tone with a fixed pitch value. When a syllable is weakly stressed or unstressed, it has a neutral tone, which means that its pitch value is determined by that of the preceding syllable (Chao, 1968; Lu, 1995). Its use is limited among speakers in southern China and mainly restricted to grammatical suffixes and particles (Norman 1993: 149). Neutral tone is also a major distinction between Beijing Mandarin-based *Putonghua* and non-Mainland Mandarin varieties including Taiwan Mandarin. Like rhotacization, it is considered a "norm" in standard *Putonghua*. In the *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, words with a neutral tone are explicitly marked in their pinyin transcriptions. A list of 545 words with syllables that must be pronounced with a neutral tone is provided in the PSCSG (2004: 238-246). In the PSC, a minimum of 3 such words must be included to test the speaker's ability to identify and pronounce them. Significantly, the PSCSG states that (2004: 41, emphasis added)

> mastery of words with a neutral tone is a basic requirement for learning *Putonghua*. **One of the major reasons for the so-called speech with a 'Hong Kong-Taiwan accent' is failure in mastering the pronunciation of neutral-tone words**.

In the guidelines for the PSC evaluation, failure to produce rhotacization and neutral tone, among others, is specified as aspects of "*yuyin quexian*" 'pronunciation deficiency'

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[11] For discussion on cases where the variable use of rhotacization causes a change in the referential meaning, see Lu, 1995.

[12] In Part Two of the PSC, test takers are given a list of multisyllabic words. These are used to test the speaker's level of standardness in the production of the syllable onset, rime, tone sandhi, neutral tone, and rhotacization. Regarding the last two features, the test takers must identify which items in the word list are to be pronounced with a neutral tone and which can be rhotacized, and produce them correctly (PSCSG, 2004: 2).

(PSCSG, 2004: 3). Treating rhotacization and neutral tone as norms of standard *Putonghua* and including them in the PSC put speakers of non-northern Mandarin in a disadvantaged position. Because both are northern Mandarin features, non-northern Mandarin speakers have to acquire their usage from learning Beijing Mandarin-based *Putonghua*. However, this is certainly not a problem for the two hosts in "S Information Station," because, as mentioned above, the Tianjin dialect shares these two features with Beijing Mandarin. Indeed, according to the information published on the web site of Tianjin Television, by the end of 2004, "all broadcasters and hosts have obtained Grade 1-A Certificate of the PSC" (TJTV, 2004), the highest level with an error rate of lower than 3% (SARFT, 2004: 5). Liu and Yu, who have hosted the program since 2003, are, of course, among those referred to in the above quote. More important, the professional regulations introduced in the past few years require them to follow the *Putonghua* norms on rhotacization and neutral tone. However, as I show in the following analysis, this is not the case.

3.3.1 De-rhotacization

Rhotacization, associated with colloquial speech, is rarely used in formal registers such as news broadcasting. As introduced earlier, one of the program's objectives is to make shopping and consumption a joyful experience, in which case rhotacization in the two hosts' speech is consistent with the overall casual and jovial style of the program. For example, when addressing each other, the hosts sometimes rhotacize the other's given name, a familiar practice among Beijing and Tianjin Mandarin speakers to signal endearment. In example (7), the rhotacized locative particle <u>zhe</u> 'here,' which is conventionalized in the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (XHC, 2005: 1727), also appears in Yu's speech.

(7) <in a hair accessory store, "Trends Spotting," 10/8/2005>
Yu: Liu Ling**r** [**R+**] a, ni bushi yao gei wo bianhuan zaoxing ma, zenmo dai wo dao
        zhe**r** [**R+**] lai le?
        'Liu Ling [**R+**], aren't you going to have my hairstyle changed? why are you
        taking me here [**R+**]?'

However, in view of the casual and jovial register of the program, it is quite unexpected that the hosts' use of rhotacization is at a very low rate of 13.7% (see Table 5) across the recorded episodes. One could argue that the interactions in the program, although casual in style, must be scripted and rehearsed to a certain extent like those in entertainment programs (Coupland, 2001a; Lorenzo-Dus, 2003). In this case, it is difficult to construe the social significance of the hosts' limited use of rhotacization, which also characterizes the formal style of newscasting.

Table 5 Limited use of rhotacization

Potential environment	% of rhotacization
526	13.7% (*n* = 72)

The following examples illustrate that the low frequency of rhotacization is not predicated on the scriptedness of the program. Like their use of lexical innovations, non-rhotacization, or rather **de-rhotacization**, is a *motivated* act of the hosts: They use rhotacization neither in the same environment as the participant's speech, as shown in

excerpts (8) and (9), nor in the environment that favors it, as illustrated in example (10). In this way, de-rhotacization brings the hosts' speech style into sharp contrast with the local colloquial on the one hand and the conventional variety of *Putonghua* on the other.

(8) <discussing skateboards in a trendy sports gear store, "Street Cool Hunting," 9/10/05, S = store owner>
S: na women xianzai kan yixia tade banmian**r** [**R+**]
        'let's now take a look at the deck [**R+**] of the skateboard'
Yu: banmian [**R-**]
        'the deck [**R-**]'
S: dui, tade huaban mian**r**, yiban tade banmian**r** you san zhong
        'right, the deck [**R+**] of the skateboard, usually there're three types of decks [**R+**]'
Yu: na san zhong banmian [**R-**] ne?
        'which three types of decks?'

In the above example, the store owner uses rhotacization in all three occurrences of banmian 'deck,' but the host Yu repeats banmian twice without rhotacization. Example (9) presents a similar case in which rhotacization is used by the participant in a backchannel expression meicuor 'right,' but not used by Yu.

(9) <discussing wedding services, "Trends Spotting," 8/26/05, Zhang = manager of a wedding service company>
Yu: gangcai zai wu li women shuodao hunqing de xianchang buzhi shi feichang zhongyou de, dangran wo juede chedui dui xinren laishuo yeshi feichang zhongyao de
        'just now in the room we discussed that the decoration of the place where the wedding takes place is very important, of course, I think the motorcade is also very important for the wedding couple.'
Zhang: meicuo**r** [**R+**], xianzai xinrenmen yijing yuelaiyue zhuzhong hunli de meige xijie right [**R+**]
        'nowadays wedding couples pay more and more attention to the details of the wedding ceremony.'
Yu: meicuo [**R-**].
        'right [**R-**].'

The backchannel expression in this example makes the contrast even more salient. As a discourse filler, meicuo is an expression used in casual conversations that constitutes a favorable environment for rhotacization. Indeed, in the 16 recorded episodes, the participants use 7 occurrences of meicuo and all are rhotacized. However, among the 35 used by the hosts (32 by Yu and 3 by Liu), only 1 is rhotacized.

In Example (10), the type of environment is represented that favors rhotacization as well as neutral tone. In Mandarin, locative particles, such as zhe 'here,' wai 'outside,' li 'inside,' often occur with one of the suffixes –bian 'side,' -mian 'surface,' and these suffixes are often rhotacized (Lu, 1995: 27; Shi, 2004) and take a neutral tone (Li and Thompson, 1981: 391; Lu, 1995: 27). Obviously, Liu follows neither convention. The hosts' use of other locative particles of the same type, namely na-bian 'there,' li-bian 'inside,' li-mian 'inside,' and wai-mian 'outside,' consistently shows the same tendency of non-rhotacization of the suffix, as summarized in Table 6.

(10) <Describing a jacket, "Shopping Partner," 8/19/05>
Liu: ranhou ye you yige hudiejie, ji zai zhe-**biān** [**R-; T1**]
           'Then there is also a bow, tied on this side [**R-; T1**].'

Table 6 Locative particles with non-rhotacized suffixes

Number of locative particle with suffix	Number of non-rhotacized suffix
li-bian 'inside': 10	10
zhe-bian 'here': 36	36
nei/na-bian 'there': 16	15
li-mian 'inside': 59	57
wai-main 'outside': 8	8

3.3.2 Full Tone in a Neutral Tone Environment

The use of a full tone in a neutral tone environment is another salient feature characteristic of the two hosts' speech, which goes against the norm of standard *Putonghua* as well as Tianjin Mandarin. In example (11a), the second syllable of piàoliang 'pretty' carries a neutral tone in standard *Putonghua*, but Liu uses the full (high-falling) tone, piào**liàng**, instead. In contrast, in the same segment a few minutes later, in (11b), the participant shopper uses the neutral tone in the second syllable of the same word.

(11a) <discussing fashion trends, "Shopping Partner," 8/19/05>
Liu: V zi ling haoxiang jin nian bijiao liuxing, nazhong mingxing canjia aosika doushi
           xihuan luchu suogu, hen piao**liàng** [**T4**]
           'The V-neck seems in fashion this year. The celebrities attending the Oscars all
           like to expose their collar bones, very pretty [**T4**].'
…
(11b) <participant shopper trying on a jacket, "Shopping Partner," 8/19/05, Men =
participant shopper>
Men: Wo juede zhejian yifu ting piao**liang** [**T0**].
           'I think this piece is quite pretty [**T0**].'

The hosts are also found using a full tone in a phonological environment that favors a neutral tone. For example,

(12) <Discussing coffee culture at a coffee shop, "Street Cool Hunting," 9/24/05>
Yu: na xianzai women jiu lai **kàn**-**kàn** [**T4**] kafe dou [**R-**] ba.
           'Then let's take a look [**T4**] at the coffee beans [**R-**].'

In the above excerpt, kàn-kan 'look-look' ('take a look') is a case of reduplication in which the reduplicated morpheme is monosyllabic. In such a construction, the second syllable usually takes a neutral tone in Standard Mandarin (see Li and Thompson, 1981: 28-9; Lu, 1995: 27), but Yu uses a full tone instead.
Another typical case of obligatory neutral tone is found in the nouns with the second syllable –zi, such as kuzi 'pants,' qunzi 'skirt,' xiezi 'shoes.' Etymologically, –zi is a suffix derived from the morpheme zǐ 'child' with a falling-rising tone. Having lost productivity in modern standard Mandarin, it has become the obligatory second syllable, always bearing a neutral tone in a large number of nouns (Li and Thompson, 1981: 42). In the word list of the PSC, these are nouns whose second syllable "must be pronounced with

a neutral tone" (PSCSG, 2004: 238). Among the 172 occurrences of such nouns used by the hosts, 21, or 12%, are pronounced with the falling-rising tone. The percentage is quite low, yet it reflects that the hosts are motivated to break away from the standard use of neutral tone, one of the most defining features of *Putonghua*.

The examples in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 demonstrate that the two hosts do not follow closely the standard *Putonghua* norms on rhotacization and neutral tone as stipulated in the PSCSG (2004). The fact that they are native northern Mandarin speakers and, as television medium professionals, have passed the PSC with a rate of over 97% correctness provides strong evidence that the hosts are engaged in a motivated act. This act is actually performed not so much by the hosts' avoiding the choice of rhotacization as by their de-rhotacizing in the environments prescribed for rhotacization. Coupled with their de-rhotacization is their use of full tone in a conventionally neutral tone environment. Eventually, these two features are brought into full play, making the hosts sound unconventional and non-local (i.e., Tianjin, Beijing, northern China, Mainland China).

3.4 Effecting Social Distinction through an Innovative Cosmopolitan Mandarin Style

The above analysis shows that the linguistic practices of the two hosts contest the mounting government efforts to make the Beijing Mandarin-based standard *Putonghua* the one and only legitimate standard variety. Notwithstanding some of the features in their speech are shared by Hong Kong Cantonese and Mandarin varieties in Taiwan and Hong Kong , they cannot be taken in any sense as imitating these varieties of Chinese. Rather, they are deploying innovative linguistic features to construct a new cosmopolitan style so distinctive from the state-legitimized standard *Putonghuan* that it is well-matched with the trendy cosmopolitan lifestyle and its associated personae distinctive from the "old," the "traditional," and the "local." These features, for the hosts, are as important resources as other semiotic means such as fashion accessories, designer sports gear, etc., which can be most effectively exploited for the construction of a new social distinction. To borrow Hill's (1999) terms, they are "styling globally."

The following excerpt illustrates the above point and is taken from a segment on white-collar male fashion, including business attire, accessories, and casual wear. Prior to the excerpt, Yu discusses the elements of a gaodang 'high-end' business outfit. She then points out that "accessories are also very important." In the excerpt, she makes the generalizing observation that the wallet, leather belt, and watch are three important accessories for high-ranking white-collar professionals and that such items should be of high quality and intricate workmanship. She stresses that men should use these items made by famous brands. Here, the word mingpai[13] 'famous brand' is pronounced without rhotacization (Line 6). Liu continues with the social meaning of famous branded goods, associating them with one's shenfen 'identity,' which is pronounced with a falling tone instead of a neutral tone on the second syllable (Line 7). Finally, she drives home her message that you are what you wear, again producing mingpai as non-rhotacized. When this excerpt comes to an end, an image is conjured up of a high-ranking white-collar business professional dressed in and accessorized with high-end, famous international brand names, packaged with all the items recommended by the hosts. Meanwhile, the symbolic meaning, that is, a social distinction, embodied by the material artifacts, is

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[13] By sheer coincidence, the rhotacized realization of mingpai, i.e., mingpai**r**, is taken as one of the 4 examples for rhotacized syllable rimes in the Sample Test of the PSC (see Sample Test in PSCSG, 2004: 7).

effected and reinforced by the hosts' distinctive cosmopolitan style, which is characterized by the linguistic innovations as discussed above.

What is significant in this case is that words that express the key ideas of the segment, 'identity' and 'famous brands,' are produced using the innovative forms rather than their standard *Putonghua* alternatives. In this example, innovative linguistic forms, de-rhotacization and full tone, are merged with the content of the program to project a stylish and cosmopolitan persona.

(13) <discussing three fashion accessories for men: watch, wallet, leather belt, "Trends Spotting," 9/17/05>
1 Yu: women kandao, yiban gaoji bailing,
          'we see that, in general high-ranking white-collar professionals'
2   dui zhe sanyang wuping dou feichang zhongshi.
          'pay a lot of attention to these three items.'
3   erqie, women lai kan yi**xia** [**R-**] ta de xijie.
          'and, let's look at the details.'
4   youqi shi yixie hao yi**dian** [**R-**] de, zhiliang bijiao gao de yixie pidai a,
          'especially some nice, better quality leather belts,'
5   baokuo qianjia, shoubiao, tade zuogong doushi feichang jingxide,
          'including wallets and watches, the workmanship is very intricate,'
6   erqie wo juede nanren zhexie dong**xi** [**T0**] yiding yao yong ming**pai** [**R-**].
          'and I think for men, they must use these items made by famous brands [**R-**].'
7 Liu   dui, zheyang dehua, caineng tixian zijide shen**fen** [**T4**],
          'right, only in this way can it reflect your own identity [**T4**],'
8   gaosu ni ziji ye shi ming**pai** [**R-**].
          'telling yourself that you're also a famous brand [**R-**].'

The point that the social significance of the innovative features is derived from their contrast with their alternative forms in standard *Putonghua* has been made and reiterated in the above discussions. Yet, the use of any one individual feature cannot by itself project the new cosmopolitan lifestyle and its associated personae. The new social distinction is constituted through combining new consumer products and new urban practices in particular ways (which is the most frequent topic in the program). By the same token, it is also realized by a new cosmopolitan linguistic style constituted by a combination of innovative linguistic features. Example (14) illustrates this process. In this example, the hosts explain how individual items of clothing (tank top and jacket) and accessory (faux snakeskin bag) are combined into a stylish outfit that is appropriate for both working in the office during the day and going to a party at night. Their talk about such an outfit also evokes an image of a trendy professional woman living a stylish and busy lifestyle, one shared by many professional women in other parts of the world. The trendy and cosmopolitan image and lifestyle are projected not only through the content of the talk, but through a cosmopolitan—non-local, non-conventional—linguistic style constituted by innovative features of all three types in all but one potential environment.

(14) <discussing outfits, "Trends Spotting," 9/3/05>
1 Liu: ni kan wo zhe li**mian** [**T4; R-**] shi mian**hua** [**T1**] laika de xiao bei**xin** [**R-**],
          'look, what I'm wearing inside [**T4; R-**] is a cotton [**T1**] Lycra tank top [**R-**]'
2   zai jia**shang** [**T0**] zhezhong bijiao liuxing de

'plus this kind of fashionable'
3   zhezhong liangshanshan de xiaoguo
   'this kind of sparkling effect.'
4 Yu: dui a, dui a, yinwei shi qiutian,
   'right, right, because it's fall'
5   yiding yao you yige zheyang de jiake,
   'you must have a jacket like this one,'
6   erqie shouyao feichang hao de.
   'and it's very nice that it's narrow at the waist.'
7 Liu zai dapei shang zheyang yige fang shepi,
   'and match it with a faux snakeskin [bag],'
8   ruguo shi **office** [**E**] de hua, wo juede ye **man** [**L**] hao.
   'if [you go to the] office [**E**], I think it's also pretty [**L**]nice'
9   suiran you yidian [**R-**] tiaoyue, keyi dang gongwenbao lai yong.
   'although it's a little [**R-**] breezy, it can still be used as a briefcase.'
10   ruguo ni wanshang [**T4**] qu **party** [**E**] de hua,
   'if you go to a party [**E**] in the evening [**T4**],'
11   keyi chuan limian [**T0; R-**] nage xiao beixin [**R-**]
   'you could wear that little tank top [**R-**]'
12   yeshi wanquan meiyou wenti de.
   'it's certainly alright.'

4 Conclusion

  This study, though focusing on one local television program, addresses some important issues on linguistic innovation in sociolinguistics. It adopts a new approach that treats linguistic innovations as newly available resources that can be employed to effect new social distinctions. The constitutive role that linguistic innovation plays in socioeconomic transformations is not much dealt with in sociolinguistic studies with a "system-oriented" approach. Analysis of the linguistic practices of the television program hosts demonstrates that innovative features are combined to form a cosmopolitan linguistic style and are taken as the very resources for the construction of the distinctiveness of a cosmopolitan lifestyle and its associated personae.

  This study is also concerned with the effect of the television medium on linguistic innovation. The impact of media on language is a touchy issue in sociolinguistics and has been a neglected area (Stuart-Smith, 2007). A survey of sociolinguists' views on this issue shows that a majority of them are skeptical about the potential influence of television on language use, variation, and change (ibid.). In line with Walters's (2003) observation that such a position seems untenable in the Arabic-speaking world, evidence is also found in this study in support of such a challenge. The use of a cosmopolitan Mandarin style distinctive from the standard *Putonghua* is not an isolated phenomenon unique to the television program examined here. During the data collection period for this study, seven other so-called shishang jiemu 'trendy programs' were also periodically recorded, including programs on fashion and lifestyle, on popular music, and on show business. Some of the hosts' innovative linguistic practices apparently outstrips that of the hosts under study. The fact that television program hosts are repeatedly singled out as the target of linguistic disciplining, as mentioned earlier, to some extent gives expression to the government's concern about the current standard linguistic market in Mainland China and its intentions to stem the tide of a new Mandarin style's encroachment upon the standard *Putonghua* by the medium of television. As a matter of fact, TV programs of the kind

discussed in this study not only expose the audience to different varieties of Mandarin but also heighten awareness of the social meaning brought about by their differences with the increasing number of such programs and their running frequency.

As discussed earlier, the linguistic style as well as the new cosmopolitan lifestyle as embodied by the hosts of "S Information Station" make them "iconic speakers," in Eckert's (2000) terms, who play an important role in giving meaning to the new linguistic style and its constitutive features. As "exemplary speakers" (following Agha, 2003), the hosts of these "trendy" programs carry distinctive weight in the "enregisterment" of the new Mandarin style "through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms" (Agha, 2003: 231). The state's intensified efforts in purifying the language of the broadcasting media are attempts to homogenize the linguistic practice of the exemplary/iconic speakers in the media in order to maintain the hegemonic status and value of the conventional standard variety.

In the final analysis, deep in the process of socioeconomic restructuring, China provides the most dynamic site where social agents of all descriptions vie with one another for new linguistic and other semiotic resources to build up their own distinctive space. Under such circumstances, the vital function of the television medium cannot be overlooked. New research agendas should be developed for the investigation of the role of the television medium in introducing, disseminating, and valorizing new linguistic resources.

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