

- L Liǎng kuài bā. Guóchǎn de ¥2.80; the local ones are ¥1.20.
(yì) kuài èr. Xiǎo bāor de. [For] a small pack [one].
- G Jìnkǒu de tài guì le, wǒ hái shì The imported ones are too expensive,
mǎi guóchǎn de. I may as well buy the local ones.
- L È, bú cuò, guóchǎn de yě bú chà! Yeah, there's nothing wrong with local
ones.
- G Hǎo, lái liǎng bāo ba. Okay, two packs please.
L Nà shì liǎng kuài sì. That's ¥2.40.
- G Zhè shì shí kuài. Here's a ¥10.
- L Hǎo, zhǎo nǐ qī kuài liù. Fine, here's ¥7.60 in change.

Notes:

jìnkǒu	V 'to import (enter mouth=port)'; N 'imports'
guóchǎn	N 'produced in China (national-product)'
zhǎo	V 'find', but here, 'to provide change'

Other purchases

wèishēngzhǐ	toilet paper (sanitary paper)	yì bāo 'a pack'
shūzi ~ lóngzi	comb	yí gè; yì bǎ
shuāzi	hairbrush	yí gè; yì bǎ
zhǐjiǎodāo~qián~jiǎn	nail clippers	yí gè
féizào ~ xiāngzào	soap ~ scented soap	yí kuài 'a bar'
máojīn	towel (wool-cloth)	yì tiáo
xǐfāshuǐ	shampoo (wash-hair-water)	yì píngr
yáshuā	(tooth-brush)	yí gè; yì bǎ
yágāo	(tooth-paste)	yì tǒng 'a tube'
chúngāo	lipstick (lip-paste)	yí gè
āsīpǐlín	aspirin	yì píngr; yí piànr 'a pill'
guāhúddāo	razor (shave-beard-knife)	yí gè
dāopiàn	razor blades	yí gè
kuàngquánshuǐ	spring water	yì píngr
bìyùntào	condoms (prevent-birth-	yí gè; yì hé 'a box'
~ ānquántào	glove) ~ (safety-glove)	
wèishēngmiǎn	tampons (sanitary-cotton)	yí gè; yì hé

8.6.1 Shì<qing> 'things'

The noun shìqing, or shìr [shèr] ~ shì 'things' in the sense of 'items of business', introduced in §5.6.1, is common in expressions such as the following:

1. Shì<r> tài duō le, wǒ bù néng qù. I have too much to do, I can't go.
Nà tài kěxī le. That's too bad.
2. Shénme shìr? What's up?
Méi shìr! Nothing!
3. Nà bú shì wǒ de shìr! That's nothing to do with me.
4. Shìqing dōu bànwán le ma? Have [you] finished everything?
Hái méi ne, hái yǒu yí jiàn. Not yet, there's still one item.
5. Chū-le shénme shì? What happened?
Hǎoxiàng chū chēhuò le. Looks like there was an [car] accident.
6. Yǒu shìr, dǎ diànhuà! [If] something comes up, phone!

7. Mini-dialogue

- Nǐ zhǎo wǒ yǒu shénme shì? What do you want to see me about?
- Xiàtiān wǒ dǎsuàn qù Zhōngguó liúxué; máfan nǐ gěi wǒ xiě yì fēng tuījiànxin.* I'm planning to study abroad in China this summer; would you mind writing a letter of recommendation for me?
- Kěyǐ. Shénme shíhou xūyào jiāo? When does [it] need to be in?
- Shíyī yuè shíwǔ hào, hái yǒu liǎng ge lǐbài.* Nov. 15 - there's still 2 weeks.
- Hǎo, nà wǒ yǐhòu yǒu wèntí jiù gēn nǐ liánxi. Okay, I'll get in touch if I have questions.

8.7 Regional languages: dialogue and narrative

The colloquial names for regional languages (fāngyán, shortened from dìfang de yǔyán, and misleadingly called 'dialects' in English) are generally formed from the name of the province or city where the language is most current, eg Guǎngdōnghuà for 'Cantonese', or Shànghǎihuà for 'Shanghainese'. However linguists, in order to suggest more accurately the region where the language is spoken, use more specialized names based on the names of historical kingdoms or regions, plus yǔ, eg Yuèyǔ 'Cantonese'.

Here are some of the better known Chinese regional languages; each subsumes regional variants – which are more properly called dialects. But even these may not be mutually intelligible.

Guǎngdōnghuà or Cantonese

The dialect grouping of which Cantonese is the standard is called Yuè, or Yuèyǔ. Yuè dialects include Táishān (also called Toisan, after the Cantonese pronunciation, and Hoisan after the pronunciation of Taishan itself), spoken on a coastal region of Canton Province, southwest of Hong Kong. Speakers of Yuè are found in many parts of the world. The majority of Chinese-Americans are descendents from emigrants from Taishan County and adjoining regions known (in Cantonese pronunciation) as *Sze Yup* ‘four counties’. Recent administrative changes have made the *Sze Yup* area actually *Ng Yup* ‘five counties’.

Fújiàn huà or Hokkien

Fujianese (or Fukienese) is also called Hokkien after the Fujianese pronunciation of ‘Fujian’. The dialect grouping as a whole is called Mǐn, and within Mǐn, the southern or western group that includes Taiwanese and the languages of Amoy (Xiàmén in Mandarin) and Swatou (Shāntóu in Mandarin) are often called Mǐnnányǔ ‘southern Min’. The descendents of Min speakers are now found throughout Southeast Asia (notably in Singapore, where they are the majority), as well as other parts of the world.

Shànghǎihuà

The language of Shanghai is usually called Shanghainese in English (with an intrusive ‘n’). The dialect grouping that includes Shànghǎihuà, Sūzhōuhuà, Níngbōhuà and others is called Wú or Wúyǔ.

Kèjiāhuà or Hakka

Hakka is the Cantonese pronunciation of the word kèjiā ‘guests; strangers (guest-families)’, which reflects the fact that many Kèjiā people settled in Cantonese speaking areas. Hakka speakers are found in Canton province, in bordering southwest Fujian, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as in many parts of Southeast Asia.

8.7.1 Chinese regional languages

Place: Beijing. Jiǎ, a foreigner studying in China, has been talking to Yǐ, a Chinese student.

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| Jiǎ | Nǐ fùmǔ yě zhù zai Běijīng ma? | Your parents live in Beijing too? |
| Yǐ | Shì, tāmen zhèr yǒu yí ge fángzi. | Yes, they have an apartment here. |
| Jiǎ | O, yǒu zìjǐ de fángzi! | Oh, so they have their own apartment. |
| Yǐ | Bú shì zìjǐ de, shì māma de dānwèi fēn gěi tāmen de. | It's not their own, it's provided by my mom's unit. |
| Jiǎ | O, dānwèi fēn gěi tāmen de. | Oh, it's provided by the unit! |

- Yī Shì, zài yí zuò liù céng lóu lǐ.
Nèi zuò lóu bú qǐyǎnr, kěshì
tāmen fāngzi de lǐtōu hěn bú cuò!
Yes, it's in a 6 story building.
The building isn't much to look at,
but inside their apartment isn't bad.
- Jiǎ Fùmǔ shì zài Běijīng zhǎng de
ma?
Were your parents raised in Beijing?
- Yī Bù, wǒ fùqīn shì Guǎngzhōu rén,
mǔqīn shì Níngbō lái de.
My father's from Canton, my mother's
from Ningbo.
- Jiǎ Wǒ zhīdao Guǎngdōng rén shuō
Guǎngdōnghuà. Nà, Níngbōrén
shuō shénme huà ne?
I know Cantonese speak Cantonese.
So what language do Ningbo
people speak then?
- Yī Níngbō lí Shànghǎi bù yuǎn.
Níngbōhuà yǒu diǎnr xiàng
Shànghǎihuà.
Ningbo's not far from Shanghai.
Ningbo is a bit like Shanghainese.
- Jiǎ O, Níngbō rén shuō Shànghǎihuà!
Oh, Ningbo people speak Shanghainese!
- Yī Bù, Níngbōhuà hěn xiàng Shànghǎi-
huà, kěshì bù wánquán yíyàng.
Shànghǎihuà, Níngbōhuà, Sūzhōu-
huà dēngdēng dōu shì Wú-
fāngyán.
No, Ningbo speech is like Shanghai
speech, but it's not completely identical to it.
The lgs of Shanghai, Ningbo, Suzhou and
so on are all Wu dialects.
- Jiǎ 'Fāngyán' shì shénme yìsi?
What's a fāngyán?
- Yī Fāngyán ne, fāngyán shì dìfāng de
yǔyán, xiàng Guǎngdōnghuà,
Fújiàn huà.
A fāngyán, well, a fāngyán is a regional
language, like Cantonese, Fujianese.
- Jiǎ Nǐ huì shuō Shànghǎihuà ma?
Do you speak Shanghainese?
- Yī Shànghǎihuà wǒ bú huì, dànshì
wǒ huì shuō diǎnr Guǎngdōnghuà.
I don't speak Shanghainese, but I do
speak some Cantonese.
- Jiǎ. Huì shuō Pǔtōnghuà de rén
tīngdedōng Guǎngdōnghuà
Shànghǎihuà ma?
Can people who speak Mandarin
understand Cantonese and Shang-
hainese?
- Yī Bù, Pǔtōnghuà shì Pǔtōnghuà,
Guǎngdōnghuà shì Guǎngdōnghuà,
Shànghǎihuà shì Shànghǎihuà,
dōu shì bù tóng de yǔyán.
No, Mandarin's Mandarin, Cantonese
is Cantonese, and Shanghainese is
Shanghainese, they're all different
languages.

Jiǎ Ài, Hànyǔ zhēn fùzá! Wow, Chinese is so complicated!

Notes

fángzi	‘house’ but in Mainland usage (with <u>ge</u> as M-word), ‘apartment’; a free standing house in an urban setting is a rare thing in China, and is usually called a <u>biéshù</u> , often translated ‘villa’, but more a ‘mansion’ in fact. Less commonly (but more commonly in Taiwan), apartments are also called <u>gōngyù</u> .
fēn gěi	‘distribute give’, ie ‘distribute to’. Earlier in this unit, it was mentioned that <u>mài</u> ‘sell’ and <u>dì</u> ‘pass’ introduced the recipient with a following <u>gěi</u> ; <u>fēn</u> is another in this class of transactional verbs.
zuò	M for buildings, mountains.
liù céng	‘six stories’. Older Chinese residential blocks are typically six stories high; above that, they are required to have elevators.
qǐyǎnr	a colloquial expression that, literally, means ‘raise-eyes’; ie ‘be attractive; striking’; often, as here, in the negative.
Níngbō	A city in <u>Zhèjiāng</u> province, near the coast, south across the Bay of <u>Hángzhōu</u> from <u>Shànghǎi</u> . The speeches of regions in southern <u>Jiāngsū</u> and most of <u>Zhèjiāng</u> are closely related to that of Shanghai, and are classified as <u>Wú</u> dialects.
wánquán	ADV ‘completely’; SV ‘be complete’. <u>Wánquán yíyàng</u> ‘completely the same’.
bù tóng děngděng	SV ‘not the same’; cf <u>tóngxué</u> ‘classmate’, <u>tóngzhì</u> ‘comrade’. used to close a list: ‘and so on; etc.’ Written with the same character as <u>děng</u> ‘wait’, which is also frequently doubled: <u>děngděng</u> ‘wait a minute’.
fùzá	SV ‘be-complicated’; cf. <u>bù jiǎndān</u> ‘not simple’.

8.8 A narrative about Lin Mei

Fāngyán: dìfang de yǔyán

Lín Měi shì Zhōngwén lǎoshī. Lǎo péngyou dōu guǎn tā jiào xiǎo Lín, kěshì xuésheng dāngrán jiào tā Lín lǎoshī. Yīnwèi tā shì Zhōngwén lǎoshī, suǒyǐ tā de xuéshēng dōu shì wàiguó lái de, yǒu Riběn de, Měiguó de, Ōuzhōu de, yě yǒu Àozhōu de. Lín Měi chūshēng zài Běijīng. Tā fùqin yě shì Běijīng rén kěshì mǔqin shì Shànghǎi lái de, suǒyǐ Lín Měi yě huì shuō diǎnr Shànghǎihuà. Huì shuō Pǔtōnghuà de rén bù yíding tīngdedǒng Shànghǎihuà. Lín Měi de bàba huì shuō Pǔtōnghuà, bú huì shuō Shànghǎihuà, kěshì māma Pǔtōnghuà Shànghǎihuà dōu huì jiǎng. Suǒyǐ Lín Měi hé māma shuōhuà, yǒushíhou bàba dǒng, yǒushíhou bàba bù dǒng. Hěn yǒuyìsi! Wǒ kěyǐ

shuō ge Shànghǎihuà de lizi. Pǔtōnghuà shuō: Nǐ chīfàn le ma? Shànghǎihuà shuō: *Nong ch'yuq vele vuh*. Gēn Pǔtōnghuà wánquán bù tóng, duì ma?

Nà, wǒmen tántan Shànghǎihuà ba. Nǐ kànkàn dìtú. Shànghǎi fùjìn yǒu hěn duō xiǎo chéngshì: Sūzhōu, Níngbō, Hángzhōu, Wēnzhōu, Shàoxīng dēngdēng. Dōu lí Shànghǎi bù yuǎn. Nà, Sūzhōu rén shuō shénme huà ne? Sūzhōu rén dāngrán shuō Sūzhōuhuà. Níngbō rén ne? Yíyàng, Níngbō rén shuō Níngbōhuà. Kěshì Shànghǎihuà, Sūzhōuhuà, Níngbōhuà dōu hěn xiàng; kěyǐ shuō dōu shì yí ge fāngyán. Guǎngdōnghuà, Fújiànhuà, Kèjiāhuà dēngdēng dōu shǔyú bù tóng de fāngyán. Fāngyán shì shénme ne? Fāngyán shì dìfang de yǔyán.

Nà bù tóng de fāngyán yǒu bù tóng de míngzi. Bǐfāng shuō, Shànghǎi fùjìn shì Wú-fāngyán. Wèishénme jiào Wú ne? Nà shì yīnwèi yīqián, zài Chūnqiū Shídài, nèi ge dìfang yǒu ge Wúguó. Guǎngdōnghuà gēn Guǎngdōng fùjìn de fāngyán jiào Yuè fāngyán, yīnwèi yīqián nàr yǒu ge Yuèguó. Hànyǔ yígòng yǒu qī bā ge dà fāngyán: Wú (zài Shànghǎi, Zhèjiāng), Yuè (zài Guǎngdōng, Guǎngxī, Xiānggǎng), Mǐn (zài Fújiàn, Táiwān, Hǎinán), Kèjiā (zài Guǎngdōng, Fújiàn), Xiāng (zài Húnán), Gàn (zài Jiāngxī, Húnán) hé Běifāng fāngyán (zài běifāng). Běifāng de shì zuì pǔbiàn de. Pǔtōnghuà ne? Pǔtōnghuà bù néng shuō shì ge dìfang de yǔyán; shì ge guójiā de yǔyán, kěshì Pǔtōnghuà zuì xiàng Běifāng de fāngyán.

Xīn de hé chuántǒng de

Lín Měi xǐhuan Běijīng, yě xǐhuan Shànghǎi. Kěshì tā shuō zuìjìn biànhuà tài duō le. Yīqián Běijīng yǒu hěn duō hútònggr. Hútònggr shì hěn ānjìng de dìfang, kěyǐ zǒuyizǒu, hē chá, kàn péngyou. Yǒu fángzi, xiǎo shāngdiàn, cháguañr dēngdēng. Shànghǎi yě yǒu hútònggr, kěshì Shànghǎi de hútònggr bú jiào hútònggr, jiào nòngtáng – nà shì Shànghǎihuà de yí ge cí. Nòngtáng yǒu yìdiǎnr xiàng hútònggr, kěshì bù zěnme ānjìng, bù zěnme hǎokàn!

Běijīng yīqián hútònggr hěn duō; Shànghǎi yīqián nòngtáng yě hěn duō. Kěshì xiànzài, bù yíyàng. Yīqián de hútònggr shì xiànzài de gòuwù-zhōngxīn le; yīqián de nòngtáng shì xiànzài de dàlóu le! Yǒude Zhōngguó rén hěn xǐhuan gòuwù-zhōngxīn.

Wèishénme ne? Yīnwèi hěn fāngbiàn, dōngxi hěn duō, yǒu chī de, hē de, wánr de.
Gòuwù-zhōngxīn hěn gānjìng, méiyǒu lǎoshǔ, méiyǒu hàozi, méiyǒu zhāngláng, méiyǒu
chóngzi, méiyǒu zhīzhū, méiyǒu wénzi. Xiàng ge gōngdiàn yíyàng, xiàng ge shìwài-
táoyuán yíyàng!

Zhōngguó rén, yǒude xǐhuan lǎo de dōngxi, xǐhuan chuántǒng de; tāmen hěn
xǐhuan Běijīng de hùtòng. Yǒude xǐhuan xīn de, xiàndài de, hěn xǐhuan dà chéngshì de
gòuwù-zhōngxīn, mótiān-dàlóu. Bù zhīdao nǐmen Měiguó rén, Ōuzhōu rén de kànfǎ
zěnmeyàng!

Notes

Fāngyán: dìfang de yǔyán

guān x jiào y.	Recall this pattern as a variant of <u>jiào</u> x y. So equivalent to: <u>Lǎo péngyou dōu jiào tā xiǎo Lín.</u>
lizi	‘example’; <u>shuō ge lizi</u> ‘give an example’; cf. <u>bǐfāng shuō</u> below.
gēn...bù tóng tán	‘different from ... (with ... not the+same)’. Notice the word order! V ‘talk; discuss’ overlaps with <u>shuō</u> ‘speak; say; talk about’; <u>shuōshuō</u> would also be possible here, but <u>tántán</u> seems to suggest participation of all parties, hence ‘discuss’.
zhǒng	M ‘kind; type’; <u>yǒu liǎng zhǒng</u> ‘there are two types’.
shǔyú	V. ‘belong to’; cf. <u>Tā shǔ mǎnián.</u> ‘He’s the year of the horse.’
bǐfāng shuō	‘for example’; also <u>bírú shuō</u> ~ <u>pírú shuō</u> .
Chūnqiū Shídài	‘Spring Autumn Period’. An historical division of the Zhōu dynasty, named for the <i>Chunqiu</i> annals of that period; 770-464 B.C.
pǔbiàn	SV. ‘widespread’; <u>pǔtōng de pǔ</u> .
guójiā	N. ‘country (nation-home)’

Xīn de hé chuántǒng de

biànhuà	N ‘changes’; cf. <u>huàxué</u> ‘chemistry’, ie ‘study of transformations’.
hùtòng	‘alleys’. The word, written with characters taken for their sounds rather than meaning, is apparently adapted from a Mongolian word.
ānjìng	SV ‘peaceful (peace-quiet)’
cháguǎnr	N ‘teashop (tea-shop)’; cf. <u>fānguǎnr</u> .
nòngtáng	N. Mandarin pronunciation of a Shanghaiese word for ‘lane’ or ‘alley’.
bù zěnmē SV	‘not so (SV)’. This is the indefinite use of <u>zěnmē</u> ; cf. <u>bù zěnmē</u> <u>gāo</u> , <u>bù zěnmē lěng</u> .
gòuwù-zhōngxīn; dàlóu	‘goods-center’; a translation of the English ‘shopping-center’. literally ‘big building’. ‘Skyscraper’ has a literal Chinese equivalent: <u>mótiān-dàlóu</u> ‘scrape-sky big-building’.

fāngbiàn	SV ‘convenient’		
gānjìng	SV ‘be-clean’		
<i>vermin and insects</i>	<u>lǎoshǔ</u> ‘mice’ <u>chóngzi</u> ‘insects’	<u>hàozǐ</u> ‘rats’ <u>wénzi</u> ‘mosquitoes’	<u>zhāngláng</u> ‘roaches’ <u>zhīzhū</u> ‘spiders’
gōngdiàn	N ‘palace’		
shìwài-táoyuán	‘world-outside peach-garden’, reference to a famous tale about a man who discovered a secret, idyllic garden.		
xīn de	‘new things’; <u>xīn</u> SV ‘new’.		
xiàndài	N. ‘modern times (new-age)’.		
kànfǎ	N. ‘viewpoint; opinion (seeing-way)’.		

8.8.1 A note on ‘old’

Chinese has two words that correspond, or at least overlap, with English ‘old’. One is lǎo, the other is jiù. In general terms, lǎo is the opposite of shào ‘young’, while jiù is the opposite of xīn ‘new’; but it is also true that lǎo has basically positive connotations, while jiù has basically negative ones. Below are some typical examples – or collocations:

+		–	
<u>lǎo</u>	old; experienced; long-standing; of earlier times	<u>jiù</u>	used; old fashioned; deteriorated; out-of-date; former
Tā lǎo le.	He’s getting old.	Jiù le.	[They]’re worn out!
Jīqì lǎo le.	The machinery’s old.	Shì jiù de.	[It]’s old fashioned.
<u>lǎo péngyou</u>	good friend	<u>jiùchē</u>	used car
<u>lǎoshǒu</u>	an old hand	<u>jiùshū</u>	used books; worn-out books
<u>lǎojiā</u>	hometown	<u>jiùyīfu</u>	worn-out clothes
<u>lǎorén</u>	old people	<u>jiùshèhuì</u>	the old society (ie pre-1949)
<u>lǎogànbu</u>	veteran cadre	<u>jiùsīxiǎng</u>	old-fashioned ideas
<u>lǎo gōngrén</u>	experienced worker	<u>chuān+de hěn jiù le</u>	worn to the point of being worn out.
<u>lǎo chuántǒng</u>	old customs		

Cf. the campaign against the Sì Jiù ‘the Four Old[-fashioneds]’, ie jiùwénhuà ‘old culture’, jiùsīxiǎng ‘old thought’, jiùfēngsú ‘old customs’ and jiùxíguàn ‘old practices’.

Lǎo also means ‘tough’, as of meat, the opposite of ‘tender’, nèn.

Exercise 6.

Answer the following questions on the narrative:

1. Wèishénme yǒu rén shuō Lín Měi shì Shànghǎi lái de?
 2. Tā de xuéshēng shì shénme dìfāng lái de?
 3. Tā fùqīn huì jiǎng shénme huà?
 4. Mǔqīn zhǐ huì jiǎng Shànghǎihuà ba?
 5. Bàba yǒushíhòu tīngbudǒng Lín Měi shuō de huà; wèishénme?
 6. Shénme shì fāngyán?
 7. Wú fāngyán shì shénme? Wèishénme jiào ‘Wú’?
 8. Hútònggēn nòngtáng zěnme bù yíyàng?
 9. Wèishénme xiànzài de Běijīng hútònggēn bù duō le?
 10. Yǒurén bǐjiào xǐhuan hútònggēn; wèishénme?
 11. Gòuwù-zhōngxīn shì shénme?
 12. Mótiān-dàlóu shì shénme?
 13. Yǒurén yě xǐhuan gòuwù-zhōngxīn, wèishénme?
 14. Shénme shì shìwài-táoyuán?
 15. Pǔtōnghuà yě kěyǐ shuō shì fāngyán ma?
 16. Nǐ de sùshè lǐmian, lǎoshǔ, chóngzi, zhāngláng duō bu duō? Zěnme bàn?
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