

**Non-canonical Uses of Overt Personal Pronouns in  
New Zealand English and Chinese**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics  
in the University of Canterbury  
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February 2018

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## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people who helped make this thesis possible. First of all, I am sincerely grateful to my two supervisors Dr Heidi Quinn and Dr Adam Lam. Dr Heidi Quinn, as my senior supervisor, offered me an opportunity to come to New Zealand to pursue a PhD degree, and helped me throughout my whole PhD journey. I am so thankful for her professional knowledge background, her support and encouragement when I did well or felt down, and her insightful comments on my thesis. There is a saying in Chinese ‘if you are my teacher one day, you will be my teacher forever’. I sincerely appreciate Dr Heidi Quinn’s supervision during the whole thesis, as well as Dr Adam Lam. He gave me lots of suggestions on the big picture of the thesis and the parts that relate to Chinese, and also helped me check all the English translations of the Chinese examples.

Second, I would like to express my gratitude to all the people in the Department of Linguistics at University of Canterbury. Professor Jen Hay, Professor Beth Hume, Professor Jeanette King, Dr Kevin Watson, Dr Lynn Clark, Associate Professor Susan Foster-Cohen, Dr Donald Derrick, Dr Tom de Rybel, Dr Viktoria Papp, Dr Peter R ácz, Dr Clay Beckner, Dr Jessie Nixon, Dr Yoonmi Oh, you all are the most professional scholars I have ever encountered. All of your amazing research enlightened me to pursue an academic career in the long term. Before I came to this department, I never thought that doing research could be so much fun. I would like to give my special thanks to Professor Jen Hay, without you forwarding my original PhD proposal to Dr Heidi Quinn, I probably would not have ended up being one of Heidi’s PhD students.

Third, I would like to thank all the postgraduates, masters and administrators in the department as well. People keep coming and going, but all the students in the department work hard to achieve their own dreams in knowledge. Jacqui Nokes, Annalise Fletcher, Daniel B ürkle, Matthias Heyne, Ahmad Haider, Ksenia Gnevsheva, Darcy Rose, Xuan Wang, Clare Li, Jacq Jones, Andy Gibson, Ryan Podlubny, Mineko Shirakawa, Keyi Sun, Daiki Hashimoto, Arshad Ali, Esther Peach, Wakayo Mattingley, Moonsoon Choi, Mohammed Dagamseh, Sidney Wong, and Vicky Watson, you all made my PhD life brighter. Special thanks to Darcy Rose and Sidney Wong, who proofread some chapters of my thesis, thanks to Xuan Wang, who commented on the revised draft of Chapter 4 and checked the extracted Chinese examples, and thanks to Keyi Sun who helped me check the Chinese examples. I would also like to thank Emma Parnell and Maria Hellstrøm, who informed me all the big or small matters happened in the department and around the campus.

Fourth, I owe my friends gratitude as well, the friends I made in New Zealand and the friends back in China. Without all of your support, I could not have kept up with my PhD journey. I would like to thank to Charles Pearson, who proofread some of my chapters as well, and thank my friends Lingling Shen, Ningjie Dan and Di Wu, who also helped check the extracted Chinese examples.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the Chinese Scholarship Council who sponsored me for my PhD study in the last four years. I also feel grateful for the

grants I received from the Thesis in Three and the funding from postgraduate student conference travel at the University of Canterbury.

Last but not the least, I would like to give a huge hug and thank you to my parents and my partner. To my parents, thank you for being such good parents to me, thank you for your understanding to allow me to pursue my dreams far away from home, and thank you for having a broad heart. To my partner Luke, thank you for being my daily chef, for tolerating my ups and downs from the stress of my PhD life, thank you for embracing the cultural differences between us and sticking together with me like the 'pau' in New Zealand, and thank you for being such a great dad looking after our daughter Jessica so well. This PhD thesis is like my second baby. I was carrying it for the last four years, and finally this is it. I thank you to all my teachers, friends and families.

## Abstract

This thesis investigates the non-canonical uses of overt personal pronouns in spoken New Zealand English (NZE) and Chinese. Two oral corpora were chosen to be used in this study. One is the Canterbury Corpus (CC), and the other is the Beijing Oral Corpus (BJKY). Thirty-two speakers were selected from each corpus to make up my sample dataset.

The following types of non-canonical pronoun uses were identified in the CC sample: generic *we*, generic *you*, shifts to *you* from *I* and *we*, *you* and *your* in existentials, unisex *he*, *he* for animal species, *she* for inanimates, *it* with collective nouns, *they* with collective nouns and unisex *they*.

Similar types of non-canonical pronoun uses were found in the transcripts of the BJKY sample: generic *wǒmen* (*we*), generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*), shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and *wǒmen* (*we*), and unisex *tā* 他(*he*). In addition, the BJKY sample also contained instances of generic *wǒ* (*I*), shift to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*), shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*), discourse marker *nǐ* (*you sg.*), generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*), generic *tā* (*3sg*), shift to *tā* (*3sg*) from *tāmen* (*3pl*), discourse markers *tā* (*3sg*) and shift to *tāmen* (*3pl*) from *tā* (*3sg*).

The similarities of non-canonical pronoun uses between NZE and Chinese are accounted for using pragmatic approaches in this study. Two pragmatic schemas - the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema - were applied to interpret the generic uses and shift uses involving generality found in the CC and BJKY samples. All generic uses and shift uses involving generality in this study can be seen to comply with Gast et al. (2015)'s claim that personal pronouns have the same reference or underlying semantics in both canonical and non-canonical uses, and that the difference between canonical and non-canonical uses comes from the sentential context and conversational conditions.

The differences between NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses are primarily analysed from the perspectives of language properties and cultural norms. Language properties may prompt the occurrence of different non-canonical pronoun uses between NZE and Chinese, such as *it/they* with collective nouns in comparison with the shifts to singular from plural forms in Chinese, unisex *he* & *they* in contrast with unisex *tā* 他(*he*) & *tā* 她(*she*) in written Chinese, *he/she* for animal species and inanimates in comparison to *tā* 她(*she*) for countries in written Chinese, and different discourse particle usages. Cultural norms may explain the high frequency of the shifts to plural from singular forms in Chinese. The collectivist society and one-in-group thinking may prompt Chinese speakers to favour the plural *wǒmen* (*we*) and *tāmen* (*3pl*) over the singular *wǒ* (*I*) and *tā* (*3sg*) in their speech, especially when discussing family or work related issues.

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in the texts:

**Adj:** Adjective

**AmE:** American English

**AusE:** Australian English

**AusVE:** Australian Vernacular English

**BJKY:** Beijing Kou Yu (Beijing Oral Corpus Query System)

**BrE:** British English

**CC:** Canterbury Corpus

**CCL:** Centre for Chinese Linguistics PKU (Peking University)

**H:** Hearer

**N:** Noun

**NZE:** New Zealand English

**ONZE:** The Origins of New Zealand English

**S:** Speaker

**SAEH:** Speech Act Empathy Hierarchy

Abbreviations used in the gloss of examples:

**ADV:** Adverbial Marker

**ASP:** Aspect Marker

**ASS:** Associative Phrase Marker

**CL:** Classifier

**COMP:** Complementiser

**CRS:** Currently Relevant State

**CUS:** Causative

**EXP:** Experiential Aspect Marker

**M:** Measure Word

**N:** Neuter

**NEG:** Negation

**NOM:** Nominaliser

**PEF:** Perfective Marker

**PL:** Plurality

**PRT:** Sentence-final Particle

**PTC:** Particle

**Q:** Question Marker

**RST:** Resultative Complement Marker

**2s:** Second Person Singular

**3s:** Third Person Singular

**1PL:** First Person Plural

**1SG:** First Person Singular

**2SG:** Second Person Singular

**3SG:** Third Person Singular

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## **Publication based on this thesis**

Jiao, Dan. (2016). Non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in New Zealand English: A corpus-based study. *New Zealand English Journal* 29&30, p. 51-75.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate non-canonical uses of overt personal pronouns in spoken New Zealand English (NZE) and spoken Chinese based on two oral corpora: the Canterbury Corpus (CC) and the Beijing Oral Corpus (BJKY). I will draw on pragmatic theories to account for cross-linguistic similarities in non-canonical pronoun uses, and I will examine the differences from the perspective of language properties and cultural norms.

## 1.1 Research topic

### 1.1.1 What are non-canonical pronoun uses?

In ‘canonical’ uses of personal pronouns, taking English as an example, first person *I* refers to the speaker, second person *you* refers to the addressee(s)/listener(s), third person *he/she/it* refers to a singular entity other than the speaker and addressee/listener, first person plural *we* refers to the speaker and one or more others, and third person plural *they* refers to plural entities other than the speaker(s) and addressee(s)/listener(s). However, things are different when the pronouns are used in a ‘non-canonical’ way. Let’s take second person *you* as an example. Consider (1)<sup>1</sup>.

- (1) I thought oh. I thought I can’t do this and I thought I’m not chickening out now.  
I can’t get ya know so. **You** shuffle along the wing I’ll show **you** a photo later.  
(CC, fyn95-14)

(1) was uttered by a female speaker who was being interviewed about her parachuting experience. She told the interviewer that she was scared before the jump, but she managed to do it in the end, and she was going to show a parachuting photo of herself to the interviewer.

In the context, the two mentions of *you* in the above example seem to have two different referents. The latter one, obviously, refers to the interviewer, who is the addressee. It is a ‘canonical’ use of the personal pronoun *you*. The first instance of *you*, however, does not point to the addressee. It is not used in the same canonical way as the latter one. The question arises what is defined as non-canonical use in this study.

Wiese & Simon (2002, p. 9) argued that the interpretation of pronouns can draw on four different parameters: morphological paradigms, morpho-syntactic agreement,

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<sup>1</sup> Example (1) and all other examples followed by *CC* and *speaker code* in brackets are extracted from the Canterbury Corpus of the Origins of New Zealand English Archives which is discussed in more detail in the methodology section. Both the speaker and interviewer in (1) are female.

discourse context and world knowledge, and syntactic structure. This study looks at non-canonical use from a morphological perspective: when the morphological form of a personal pronoun does not match the person, number and/or gender of the intended referent/antecedent (cf. Siewierska 2004, p. 215), such a use of personal pronouns is called non-canonical in this study.

Observe again example (1), the second *you* is a canonical use, as there was no morphological mismatch between the form of personal pronoun *you* and the person, number and gender of the intended referent. *You* is the addressee (the interviewer) in (1). The first *you*, on the other hand, qualifies as a non-canonical use in this study, as there was a mismatch between the morphological form of the second person pronoun *you* and the person of the referent. The actual referent for this *you* is the speaker herself, not the interviewer, so this is a shift from first person *I* to second person *you*.

It is noted that examples in (2) - (6)<sup>2</sup> below can be viewed as non-canonical uses in terms of semantics.

- (2) **It** rained yesterday.
- (3) **It** seems that John is unhappy.
- (4) Every farmer who owns a donkey beats **it**.
- (5) The man who gave his paycheck to his wife was wiser than the man who gave **it** to his mistress.
- (6) (Pointing at a painting of the Pope)  
**He** is usually an Italian.

The instances of *it* in the first two examples are expletives. They are not arguments, and are there to fill the subject slot as English requires an overt subject. (4) is classified as E-type anaphora, and (5) is categorised into ‘lazy’ anaphora (cf. Huang 2000, p. 7). *It* in (4) does not point to any particular donkey owned by a farmer, and *it* in (5) does not indicate that it is the same paycheck as that of the first man mentioned. *He* in (6) is not necessarily the Pope in the painting.

The above examples of personal pronoun uses are not considered in this study, as they are not non-canonical morphologically. *It* in instances (2) and (3) is required syntactically, but it is not referential and does not alternate with other morphological forms. Instances (4) - (6) are not counted as generic uses in this study, as they have no morphological mismatches in person, number or gender. The referent of *it* (donkey) in (4) still matches the morphological form of *it* - third singular animate, regardless of which farmer the donkey belongs to. The same goes for *it* in (5). The referent of *he* (the Pope) in (6) still matches the morphological feature of *he* - third person singular male, no matter whether the Pope indicated by the speaker is the one in the painting or the Pope in general.

There has been much discussion of semantically non-canonical uses of pronouns in the literature, and as Büring (2011) points out, the pronouns in instances (4) - (6) can also be considered semantically non-referential (p. 11). Wiltschko (2016) further

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<sup>2</sup> I am thankful and grateful to Professor Yan Huang from Auckland University who pointed out this issue and provided these examples.

argued that (4) and (5) can actually have two interpretations: one is the real use of pronoun in its referential (indexical) reading, the other is the ‘fake’ use of pronoun in its non-referential (bound variable) reading. In other words, if *it* in (5) is the man’s paycheck, it is referential and is the real interpretation of the pronoun. If *it* is not read as the man’s paycheck, it is a fake use of the pronoun, because *it* is a bound variable. Moreover, the syntactic context plays an important role in the interpretation of the linguistic form of pronouns (Wiltschko 2016, p. 48). The pronoun *he* in (6) is known as a ‘deferred’ pronoun (cf. Nunberg 1993; Galery 2016). The semantic non-canonical connotation of (6) is conveyed by the quantifier ‘usually’ in the sentence (cf. Galery 2016, p. 302). If ‘usually’ is omitted, *he* in (6) would be considered canonically referential.

Next, we look at the general situation of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese and English, so that it may be easier to determine what are counted as ‘non-canonical’ pronoun uses in this study.

### 1.1.1.1 Chinese

Scholars in the Chinese linguistics use different terms for the usage of personal pronouns that deviates from its original deictic meaning. One of the most common terms is flexible use (cf. Wang 1995 among others).

Wang (1995) divided the flexible uses of Chinese personal pronouns into two broad categories (p. 82): (a) the vagueness of the literal meaning of personal pronouns; (b) the interchange in the number (singular and plural) and person (first, second and third) of personal pronouns.

#### (a) Vagueness

Vagueness can furthermore be divided into two subcategories: one is that personal pronouns only serve the role to discriminate different referents, as in (7); the other one is that personal pronouns can refer to anyone, as in (8). The second subcategory of vagueness is also referred to as ‘fuzzy reference’ or ‘generic reference’.

- (7) *Ti áoshù, xìngshù, líshù, nǐ búràng wǒ, wǒ búràng nǐ, dōu kāi mǎn le huā gǎn tòng er.*  
 桃 树、杏 树、梨 树，你 不 让 我，我 不 让 你，都 开 满 了 花  
 赶 趟 儿。（朱自清《春》）

Peach tree, apricot tree, pear tree, **you** have no courtesy to **me**, **I** have no courtesy to **you**, are all blossoming. (Ziqing Zhu, *Spring*, cited by Wang (1995, p. 82))<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Regarding all the Chinese examples in the thesis, I decided to provide Chinese characters, pinyin of the Chinese characters and the English translation throughout the thesis. Where there are Chinese examples quoted from other people’s work that did not provide any pinyin of the Chinese characters and the English translation in their original papers, I added pinyin and the English translation in my thesis for the sake of English readers. Therefore, I take the responsibility for any mistakes and errors in the pinyin and English translations that I have provided in this thesis.

In (7), the personal pronouns *wǒ* 我(*I*) and *nǐ* 你(*you*) do not literally refer to the speaker and the listener, but ‘only have the function of distinguishing two different people or two different kinds of people’ (Wang 1995, p. 83).

(8) *Yí gè rén yào shì lí kāi le jí tǐ, tā jiù jiāng yíshìwúchéng.*

一个人要是离开了集体，他就将一事无成。

If a person leaves the group, **he** will achieve nothing. (Wang 1995, p. 83)

*Tā* 他(*he*) in (8) does not refer to any specific third person, it refers to anybody, namely, it has generic reference.

#### (b) Interchange

An interchange of personal pronoun can occur in the way of changing the number of personal pronouns (i.e., from singular forms to plural and vice versa), changing the person of personal pronouns (i.e., from first person to second or third person and vice versa), and even changing the number as well as the person of personal pronouns. Consider examples (9) - (11).

#### Interchange in ‘number’

(9) **Wǒmen** *rènwéi, wúlùn yǐ cíhuì-yǔfǎ de fànchóu wéi biāozhǔn, huò yǐ dānchún de yǔfǎ fànchóu wéi biāozhǔn, hànyǔ dōu shì yǒu cí lèi de.*  
我们认为，无论以词汇-语法的范畴为标准，或以单纯的语法范畴为标准，汉语都是有词类的。（王力《关于汉语有无词类的问题》）

**We** think that Chinese has a part of speech, no matter what to take as the standard, the Vocabulary-Grammar category or the simple grammatical category. (Li Wang, *Question on Chinese part of speech*, cited by Wang (1995, p. 84))

*Wǒmen* 我们(*we*) is literally plural, but in (9), it only has a singular referent, because the claim was just Li Wang’s personal idea. It does not mean everybody had the same viewpoint.

#### Interchange in ‘person’

(10) *Tāde cáixué, jiào nǐ bùdè pèifú.*

他的才学，叫你不佩服。

His talent, **you** have to admire it. (Wang 1995, p. 84)

Wang (1995) indicated that an interchange occurred between the first person and the second in (10). The second person pronoun *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) was used to refer to the first person. By using *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) instead of *wǒ* 我(*I*), the speaker embraces the addressee, so as to emphasise the preceding subject ‘his talent’ (Wang 1995, p. 84).

Interchange in ‘number’ and ‘person’

(11) Guò qù rénjiā kàn bù qǐ wǒmen shì yǒu lǐyóu de. Yīnwéi nǐ méiyǒu shénme  
过去人家看不起我们是有理由的。因为你没有什么  
gòngxiàn, gāng yìnián zhǐyǒu jǐshí wàn dùn, hái nà zài rìběnrén shǒulǐ.  
贡献, 钢一年只有几十万吨, 还拿在日本人手里。  
Guómíndǎng Jiǎng Jièshí zhuānzhèng èrshíèr nián, yìnián gāo dào jǐ wàn  
国民党蒋介石专政二十二年, 一年搞到几万  
Wǒmen xiànzài yě hái bù tài duō, dànshì fāzhǎn sùdù hěn kuài.  
我们现在也还不太多, 但是发展速度很快。  
In the past others looking down on us had reasons. Because **you** did not have  
contributions, only had a hundred thousand tons steel a year, was still in the  
hands of Japanese people. Kuo Min Tang [the National Party] Chiang Kai-shek  
dictated for twenty two years, got tens of thousands of tons [steel] a year. We  
do not have too much [steel] at present, but the development is very fast.  
(Wang 1995, p. 85)

Wang (1995) argued that *nǐ* 你 (*you sg.*) in (11) can be interpreted as *wǒmen* 我们 (*we*), which means it has an interchange in ‘number’ (from plural to singular), as well as an interchange in ‘person’ (from first person to second) (p. 85).

### 1.1.1.2 English

Although English and Chinese personal pronouns are not identical, the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in English can also be classified into two broad categories as with Chinese personal pronouns.

#### (a) Vagueness

The traditional denotation of *he* is the third masculine, and *she* is the third feminine, however, *he* can refer to both genders in generalising statements such as (12), where *he* is usually labelled as ‘generic he’.

(12) Everyone votes at 18 now, doesn’t **he**? (Wales 1995, p. 112)

Interestingly, not only *he* can be used generically, but also *they*. *They* has a generic meaning in utterances such as ‘They Came From Another Planet’ which is used in film and book titles, whose connotation is ‘people in general’ and whose function is distinguishing a group of insiders from outsiders (Wales 1995, p. 8).

Apart from generic *they*, we also find conventional expressions such as ‘they say’ and ‘what they call’, where ‘they’ is more equivalent to ‘some people’, rather than ‘people in general’, as the agents of *they* are more blurred, unknown or unimportant (Wales 1995, p. 45). Jespersen (1933, p. 154) argued that the meaning of *they* in this usage is ‘unspecified’.

Second person *you* also has so-called ‘indefinite’ or ‘generic’ uses, which are quite

commonly seen in oral speech (Wales 1995, p. 46). When we go to public places such as restaurants, bars or airports, there will always be a smoking area for smokers, and you will probably see a sign which says ‘You are not allowed to smoke here’ in a non-smoking area. *You* in this sentence refers to everybody. Similarly, as Chen (2011b) and Chen (2002) point out, *you* in (13) and (14) stands for ‘everyone’, ‘anyone’ or ‘any people’.

(13) **You** never know what may happen. (Chen 2011b, p. 126)

(14) Gravity is what makes **you** weigh what **you** weigh. (Chen 2002, p. 55)

Finally, *we* is also used in a generic way, such as in (15) and (16) below.

(15) **We** must be completely honest if **we** value our credit standing. (Chen 2009b, p. 44)

(16) **We** live to learn. (Chen 2011b, p. 126)

#### (b) Interchange

Yang (2001) claimed that the so-called ‘editorial *we*’ does not refer to ‘the consensus of an editorial board or other collective body’, but is commonly used in formal (especially scientific) writing authored by a single individual, and is driven by a desire to avoid first singular *I*. That is the reason why a writer of a scholarly article might prefer (17), rather than (18).

(17) As **we** showed a moment ago,... (Yang 2001, p. 12)

(18) As **I** showed a moment ago,... (Yang 2001, p. 12)

According to Wang (1995)’s definition, if the writer opted for *we* instead of *I*, there occurred an interchange in number, i.e., from the first singular to the first plural.

*We* can also be used to refer to the addressee (the patient) *you* in utterances like ‘How are we feeling today’ when a doctor is talking to a patient (Yang 2001, p. 12), where an interchange in number (from singular to plural) as well as in person (from second to first) is occurred.

Moreover, *we* can point to a third person (e.g., a boss), when a secretary is saying something like ‘We’re in a bad mood today’ to his/her colleague(s) about their boss (Yang 2001, p. 13; Wales 1995, p. 68). In this case, the interchange occurred in both the number and person, i.e., from third singular pronoun to second plural.

According to Wang (2009, p. 107) (also cf. Chen 2011b), when *you* appears in a soliloquy or an interior monologue, when the speaker and addressee are actually the same person, *you* actually refers to the first person *I* in this case, as can be seen in (19).

(19) It was not a bad life. **You** got up at seven, had breakfast, went for a walk, and at nine o’clock **you** sat down to work. (Chen 2011b, p. 126)

## 1.1.2 What were counted as non-canonical pronoun uses in this thesis

The scope of non-canonical pronoun uses covered in this study ranges from the non-canonical uses we discussed above, i.e., generic use and shift use (interchange), to the uses we have not yet introduced, i.e., unisex use, pronominal concord with collective nouns, personification, and discourse particle uses. In the thesis, I provide further clarification of what is counted as non-canonical use in the chapters where necessary<sup>4</sup>.

The term ‘non-canonical’ in this study is defined from a morphological perspective rather than semantic or syntactic perspectives. It is also chosen as a cover term because the non-canonical pronoun uses I found in this study not only include the personal pronouns being used in a generalising or impersonal way, but also comprise other non-personal uses such as personification, discourse marker use etc., which are clearly different to the generic or shift (interchange) uses discussed previously. Discourse marker uses of *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) and *tā* 他(*he*) are included in this study because even though these two pronouns in such uses have completely lost their referential meanings and thus resemble epletives, they exhibit interesting pragmatic functions and are optional rather than obligatory. They differ from the epletives in (2) and (3) in that the non-referential *it* in (2) and (3) is required syntactically to fill the subject position and does not exhibit variability or pragmatic functions.

## 1.2 Research subject

### 1.2.1 Personal pronoun systems in Chinese

The research subject in this study is personal pronouns. The basic set of personal pronouns in Chinese is given below (cf. Huang & Liao 2002) in Table 1.1.

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, using the two different gender third person singular pronouns *he* and *she* to refer to pets (i.e., use *he* to refer to a male dog, and use *she* to refer to a female cat) is not considered non-canonical pronoun use in this study.

Table 1.1 Personal pronouns in modern Chinese

Personal pronouns		
1p	sg.	Wǒ 我
	pl.	Wǒmen 我们; zǎn 咱; zǎnmen 咱们
2p	sg.	Nǐ 你; nǐn 您
	pl.	Nǐmen 你们
3p	sg.	Tā 他; tā 她; tā 它
	pl.	Tāmen 他们; tāmen 她们; tāmen 它们

## 1.2.2 Personal pronoun systems in English

Wales (1995, p. 13) provided a prototypical Standard English pronoun paradigm table, which is illustrated in Table 1.2<sup>5</sup>.

Table 1.2 Personal pronouns in Standard English

		Personal pronouns		
		subjective case	objective case	genitive case
1p	sg.	I	me	my
	pl.	we	us	our
2p	sg.		you	your
	pl.			
3p	masc.	he	him	his
	sg. fem.	she		her
	non-personal		it	its
	pl.	they	them	their

Comparing Table 1.1 with Table 1.2, we can see that English personal pronouns have person, case, number and gender distinctions, while Chinese personal pronouns only show person, number and gender<sup>6</sup> differences, and they do not have case. The same Chinese characters are used when personal pronouns appear as subject and object. However, there are also some features in the personal pronoun system of written Chinese that English does not share. For example, the three third person pronouns *tā* 他(*he*), *tā* 她(*she*), *tā* 它(*it*) have separate plural personal forms - *tāmen* 他们, *tāmen* 她们, *tāmen* 它们, while English only has one third person plural *they*. And there are three different first person plural pronouns in Chinese - *wǒmen* 我们, *zǎn* 咱 and *zǎnmen* 咱们, which all mean *we*. Moreover, *nǐn* 您, as an honorific form of *nǐ* 你(*you*

<sup>5</sup> In the original table of pronoun paradigm in Standard English, Wales (1995, p. 13) also presented reflexive pronouns.

<sup>6</sup> Gender differences of the third person only appear in written Chinese.

sg.), is used to show respect and politeness to the addressee.

### 1.2.3 The scope of personal pronouns covered in this thesis

This study looks at the morphological mismatches in gender, person, and/or number between the pronoun and its intended referent. For this reason, the personal pronouns investigated in this study are all overt personal pronouns. Empty pronouns, reflexive pronouns, and *zán* and *zánmen* were excluded from the present study.

#### 1.2.3.1 Exclude empty pronouns

Chinese is a language that allows the dropping of a personal pronoun in the subject position of a finite clause (also known as ‘null-subject’ or ‘pro-drop’), while English is a non-pro-drop language (cf. Huang 2007, p. 142; Huang 1994, p. 26). Regarding the personal pronoun *you* in (20), it has to be overt in English. However, the corresponding pronoun *nǐ* 你 (*you sg.*) in Chinese can either be overt (see (21)a), or empty in subject position (see (21)b).

(20) Have **you** been to Beijing? (Huang 2007, p. 143)

(21)a. **Ni** qu guo Beijing ma?

**You** go EXP Beijing Q

b. Ø qu guo Beijing ma?

go EXP Beijing Q (Huang 2007, p. 143)

Empty pronouns (also known as ‘zero pronouns’) have been argued to convey impersonality and express generalisations that apply to all the people in a group (Yan & Siewierska 2011, p. 573), as shown in (22).

(22) Zhuāzhù-le zhège zhǔyào mádùn, yīqǐ èwàntí jìù  
grasp-PEF this-CL principal contradiction all problem then  
yíngènérjìě -le  
readily solve -PEF

(Lit.) ‘Once Ø grasp this principle contradiction, all problems can be readily solved.’

‘Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved.’ (Yan & Siewierska 2011, p. 573)

Empty pronouns are also frequently employed in written Chinese when the speaker urges or advocates certain actions (Yan & Siewierska 2011, p. 574), as exemplified in (23).

(23) Yùqī guīhuán xū jiāonàyùqī shǐyòng fǎ

overdue return must pay overdue use fee  
 (Lit.) ‘If Ø return overdue Ø must pay overdue fee.’  
 ‘Overdue fees will be charged for overdue items.’ (Yan & Siewierska 2011, p. 574)

The empty pronoun in (23) refers to a specified group of people who borrow books from the library.

However, the focus of this study is the morphological form of overt personal pronouns. It would be impossible to determine whether there is a morphological mismatch in person, number or gender when an empty pronoun is being used non-canonically. Moreover, oral corpora will be used for data collection, because most of the previous researches on Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses were based only on the written form. However, it would be difficult to search for instances of empty pronouns in the Beijing Oral Corpus. The Canterbury Corpus allows the user to read through the transcripts and detect the contexts for empty pronouns, but the online access I have to the Beijing Oral Corpus does not allow me to do so. The Beijing Oral Corpus has an online ‘key-word’ search method, where the user types in a key-word and only the pages containing the key-word will appear. It is not possible to read through the entire set of transcripts for a particular speaker, which would be necessary if we wanted to identify non-canonical uses of empty pronouns. Therefore, empty pronouns were excluded from this study.

### 1.2.3.2 Exclude reflexive pronouns

The Chinese reflexive pronoun *zìjǐ* 自己 is equivalent to *self* in English. Chinese *zìjǐ* can be used alone or in combination with personal pronouns. When *zìjǐ* is used alone and translated into English, it must have a proper personal pronoun appearing in the subject position in the English translation, as can be seen in (24).

(24) Mei ge ren dou shuo **ziji** xihuan Zhongguocai.  
 Every CL person all say **self** like Chinese food  
 ‘Everybody says that **he** likes Chinese cuisine.’ (Huang 2000, p. 6)

In (24), *he* was employed in the embedded subject position in English with reference to *zìjǐ* in Chinese. In addition, *zìjǐ* also allows long-distance binding (cf. Huang 1994; Huang 2000; Huang 2007), that is it can be bound not only by the embedded subject ‘Xiaohua’, but also by the matrix subject ‘Xiaoming’, as illustrated in (25).

(25) Xiaoming<sub>1</sub> shuo Xiaohua<sub>2</sub> kanbuqi **ziji**<sub>1/2</sub>.  
 Xiaoming say Xiaohua look down upon **self**  
 ‘Xiaoming<sub>1</sub> says that Xiaohua<sub>2</sub> looks down upon **him**<sub>1</sub>/ **himself**<sub>2</sub>.’ (Huang 2007, p. 250)

In the English translation of (25), *zǐjǐ* can either be translated into the personal pronoun *him* or the reflexive pronoun *himself*.

I did not include the reflexive pronouns in English and Chinese in this study for two reasons. Firstly, Chinese *zǐjǐ* 自己(*self*) does not need to be marked for person, number and gender (cf. Huang 2000, p. 191), which means there is no morphological distinction. Secondly, *zǐjǐ* 自己(*self*) is sometimes translated to a pronoun and at other times to a reflexive in English. The properties of Chinese *zǐjǐ* 自己(*self*) thus differ considerably from the properties of English reflexives.

### 1.2.3.3 Exclude *zán* and *zánmen*

In order to ensure the research subject is as comparable as possible between Chinese and English, I have also excluded the other two first person plural pronouns in Chinese - *zán* 咱 and *zánmen* 咱们, as these two may cause some issues. In the Modern Chinese Dictionary (2005, p. 1696), *zán* 咱 is equivalent to *zánmen* 咱们, and can also be interpreted as *wǒ* 我(*I*) in dialect. *Zánmen* 咱们 itself is an inclusive *we*, which means it includes the speaker as well as the addressee. However, *zánmen* 咱们 can also be interpreted as *wǒ* 我(*I*) or *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) in some contexts. After I extracted all the sample data from the BJKY, I noticed that it was difficult to make a judgement on whether *zán* 咱 and *zánmen* 咱们 were used in a non-canonical way. In some contexts, *zán* 咱 refers to *wǒ* 我(*I*), *zánmen* 咱们 or *wǒmen* 我们(*we*), and *zánmen* 咱们 points to *wǒ* 我(*I*), *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) or *wǒmen* 我们(*we*). These can not be counted as non-canonical uses, as *zán* 咱 and *zánmen* 咱们 already contain such connotations in themselves.

To conclude, this study focuses on morphologically non-canonical uses of the following overt personal pronouns: *wǒ* 我(*I*); *wǒmen* 我们(*we*); *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*); *nǐ* 您 (*honorific you sg.*); *nǐmen* 你们(*you pl.*); *tā* 他(*he*); *tā* 她(*she*); *tā* 它(*it*); *tāmen* 他们 (*they & he pl.*)<sup>7</sup>; *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) and *tāmen* 它们(*it pl.*) in Chinese, and *I*, *we*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *they* (and their corresponding objective and genitive forms) in English. The three gendered third singular and plural are distinguishable only in written Chinese. So I will label the three third singular pronouns *tā* (3*sg*), and label the three third plural pronouns *tāmen* (3*pl*) in spoken Chinese in this thesis.

## 1.3 Research questions

We have seen that both English and Chinese personal pronouns can be used in a morphologically non-canonical way. If we compare and contrast these two languages,

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<sup>7</sup> *Tāmen* 他们 in written Chinese is a general third plural personal pronoun containing both males and females. It is also the plural form of third singular masculine *tā* 他(*he*). For the sake of easily labelling without misinterpretation, I only use *they* in the English translation of *tāmen* 他们(*they & plural form of he*) throughout the thesis.

will we obtain any similar or dissimilar cross-linguistic features in terms of non-canonical pronoun use?

In this study, we ask two main questions. The first question is: will there be any similarities between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses and what they will be? The second is: will there be any differences and what kind of differences we can find? In addition to these questions, we will ask how we can account for the similarities and differences between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses.

### **1.3.1 Will there be any similarities?**

Although English and Chinese are two different languages, we still predict that certain aspects of non-canonical personal pronoun use will be shared by both English and Chinese. This prediction is based on the assumptions from cognitive and pragmatic linguistics.

Cognitive linguistics, which originally emerged in the early 1970s, is an approach that connects language with cognition. In cognitive linguistics, language is neither the result of a specialised knowledge ‘module’ nor separate from general cognition. Instead, it ‘reflects and is informed by non-linguistic aspects of cognition’. (Evans & Green 2006, p. 54) Given the premise that language reflects cognitive organisation, cognitive linguists assume that ‘there are commonalities in the ways humans experience and perceive the world and in the ways human think and use language’, which means all humans ‘share a common conceptualising capacity’ (Evans & Green 2006, p. 101), and there are ‘universal tendencies’ in language (Evans & Green 2006, p. 101). These commonalities are based on ‘the existence of general cognitive principles’ as well as ‘the fundamentally similar experiences of the world’ that are both shared by all human beings due to embodiment (Evans & Green 2006, p. 55). Embodiment indicates that the nature of human experience is affected by the specific cognitive structure and organisation of the human mind, and the neuro-anatomical architecture of our brain and body (Evans & Green 2006, p. 44 & 64). We humans share similar cognitive and neuro-anatomical architecture, so our embodied experiences are similar as well (Evans & Green 2006, p. 64).

Cognitive linguists regard language as ‘a reflection of embodied cognition’, which is used to ‘constrain what it is possible to experience, and thus what it is possible to express in language’ (Evans & Green 2006, p. 64). Common patterns that exist across languages are known as ‘linguistic universals’ (Evans & Green 2006, p. 54). Constraints that lead to linguistic universals include ‘the nature of human embodiment, perceptual principles and the nature of human categorisation’, all of which ‘constitute the conceptualising capacity which is common to all human beings’ (Evans & Green 2006, p.102).

The assumptions from cognitive linguistics may help us predict that there will be potential similar non-canonical pronoun uses between English and Chinese. The assumptions from pragmatic linguistics, on the other hand, will help us identify pragmatic factors that may contribute to the occurrence of some non-canonical

pronoun uses shared by English and Chinese.

Pragmatic linguistics, initiated in the 1930s, is the study of different aspects of meaning dependent on context (Horn & Ward 2006). Wales (1995) noted that personal pronouns become ‘multi-functional in their roles in different contexts’ (p. 7), and other pragmatic factors such as distance, power, modesty, politeness and empathy also play an important part in non-canonical uses (p. 84). Therefore, in the subsequent subsections, I will discuss two pragmatic factors - ‘empathy’ and ‘politeness’- in order to show that these two factors may play a role in the occurrence of some non-canonical pronoun uses in English and Chinese.

### 1.3.1.1 Empathy

The notion of empathy was proposed by Kuno (1975 & 1987), and Kuno & Kaburaki (1977). The term ‘empathy’ refers to ‘the degree of the speaker’s identification with a person or thing that participates in the event or state that the speaker describes in a sentence’ (Horn & Ward 2006, p. 316; Zhao 2013, p. 26).

Kuno (1987) also proposed a ‘Speech Act Empathy Hierarchy (SAEH)’, in which the speaker can receive the highest empathy (Horn & Ward 2006, p. 316). In other words, a first person pronoun can obtain a higher empathy value than other personal pronouns, second person pronouns come second, and the lowest empathy value is associated with third person pronouns. The hierarchy can be given like this: 1<sup>st</sup> > 2<sup>nd</sup> > 3<sup>rd</sup> (Zhao 2013, p. 26).

In the process of communication, the speaker may reduce the empathy value by using a second person pronoun to replace the first person, to make themselves less egocentric, make the statement more objective, and make the situation more common and acceptable to a bigger group (Zhao 2013, p. 26-27). This can be illustrated by the use of second person *you* in English in (26).

(26) When I got to Oxford, I think the first thing I learned was that for the first time in my life **you** are totally divorced from **your** background. **You** go as an individual. (Margaret Thatcher, cited by Zhao (2013, p. 27))

Instead of continuing using *I*, the speaker Margaret Thatcher switched to *you* in (26), which in turn made her seemingly less egocentric and made her personal experience more acceptable to a bigger audience. The shift to *you* from *I* also happens in Chinese, as can be seen in example (27).

(27) Fūqī zhījiān sīxiǎng jiāoliú dōu hěn chà, méi, gèzì gè máng gèzì de. Chī wán fàn, nǐ, tā, tā nàer yào xiě zōngshù niándǐ, nǐ yòu yào jiāo yīngwén, yòu shì yào shàng, kàn yīngwén kè. (1942 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E)

The exchange of ideas between husband and wife are not very good, no, busy with our [ourselves] own. After dinner, **you**, she, she has to write an annual review, **you** have to teach English, [not only] have to deliver [to class], [but also have to] read [prepare] English lesson. (BJKY, M42E)

The speaker in (27) was talking about his life with his wife, he used the second person *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) to refer to himself. *Nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) in the context definitely was not the addressee. The speaker reduced the empathy value by shifting to *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) from *wǒ* 我(*I*), thus making his statement more objective and acceptable to the addressee.

### 1.3.1.2 Politeness

Many languages have honorific forms to express the speaker's respect and politeness to the listener/addressee, i.e., the honorific second person singular *nǐ* 您 in Chinese. Although present-day English does not have any honorific pronoun forms to show politeness, politeness in English can be expressed by using different methods.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), politeness is a universal cross-linguistic phenomenon. They provided an overview of different strategies used to express politeness in languages, such as 'include both S (speaker) and H (hearer) in the activity' (p. 127). One way to achieve this is to use an inclusive *we* form. 'Let's' in English involves an inclusive *we* form, but it sometimes can also mean either *me* or *you* in the contexts like (28) and (29) respectively. (Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 127)

(28) Let's have a cookie, then. (i.e., me) (Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 127)

(29) Let's get on with dinner, eh? (i.e., you) (Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 127)

When the speaker used *we* instead of *I* to refer to themselves, they borrowed the function of inclusive *we* which naturally includes the listener in the activity, and they showed their politeness at the same time. This strategy of 'including both the speaker and hearer in the activity' also happens in Chinese, especially when the Chinese speakers prefer *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) over *wǒ* 我(*I*) in instances like (30).

(30) Bǐfāng dào běi běidà yī xué yuàn, qù xuéxí, āi, nàme zhège cānjiā de zhè rénshùèr jiù bǐjiào duō, shì ba. Jiǎrú shuō **wǒmen** dào yí gè gānbù xuéxiào wa, qù xuéxí zhèngzhì, zhèyàngèr cānjiā de rénshùèr jiù bǐjiào shǎo. (1916 男满 海淀 大学 医生 C)

For example, go to School of Medicine at Peking University, to study, and then the number of people participating [going to Peking University] is relatively large, isn't it. If **we** go to a cadre school, to study politics, in this way the number of people participating is relatively small then. (BJKY, M16C)

In (30), the speaker used *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) to embrace the listener in the supposed situation. The application of *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) not only served to make the speaker's claim more convincing, but also reflected his politeness.

Based on the above assumptions from cognitive linguistics that there are commonalities in human cognition and that language reflects embodied cognition. We might expect there to be universal constraints on the ways in which personal pronouns can be used non-canonically, and we would thus predict that certain aspects of non-canonical pronoun use will be shared by both English and Chinese. Moreover, empathy and politeness are universally shared pragmatic strategies, which may inspire and help us predict that certain similar non-canonical pronoun uses may occur in both English and Chinese.

### 1.3.2 Will there be any differences?

Besides the possibility of similarities between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses, we also predict there will be significant differences. The differences will be predominately explained by taking into consideration: the differences in language properties and differences in cultural norms. I will elaborate each individually below.

#### 1.3.2.1 Differences in language properties

Chinese personal pronouns differ from English ones in terms of the pronoun system and some properties of the pronouns. For instance, Chinese has three different *1pl* pronouns - *wǒmen* 我们, *zán* 咱 and *zánmen* 咱们, although we only included *wǒmen* 我们 in this study. Chinese has two second person singular: one is *nǐ* 你, and the other one is the honorific *nǐ* 您. Moreover, written Chinese has three different third person singular (*tā* 他(*he*), *tā* 她(*she*) and *tā* 它(*it*)) and three different third person plural (*tāmen* 他们(*he pl.*), *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) and *tāmen* 它们(*it pl.*)), but they are indistinguishable in spoken Chinese. In English, the third person plural *they* does not have any gender distinction in writing or speech, but there is a gender distinction in *3sg* in both writing and speech.

English personal pronouns have case differences while Chinese pronouns do not. The subjective case forms are *I*, *we*, *he*, *she* and *they*, and the objective case forms are *me*, *us*, *him*, *her* and *them*. The subjective and objective case forms of *you* and *it* are the same. In this study, we notice that the non-canonical uses of English personal pronouns do not only occur in the subjective position, but also in the objective and possessive positions in the sentences.

Liu (2011) carried out a corpus-based study on English personal pronouns in political speeches and statements, and made a comparison with Chinese personal

pronouns in the translations of the English texts. Liu (2011) attributed the underlying reasons for her findings to factors such as the differences in language properties and thought patterns. Liu (2011) described Chinese language as paratactic, where the cohesion of meaning is important, but the grammar rules are not strict (p. 36). She also argued that Chinese is a topic-prominent language with low linguistic formalisation; while English is a subject-prominent language with high linguistic formalisation (p. 28-29).

### **1.3.2.2 Differences in cultural norms**

‘Each individual typically follows the interaction norms of their own culture, and they unthinkingly and instinctively use those norms to interpret the behaviours of others’ (Paulston et al. 2012, p. 206). Take ‘politeness’ as an example. Although politeness is a universal behaviour and phenomenon, the realisation of politeness in English may differ from that in Chinese due to different cultural norms.

Chinese ‘politeness’ is more restricted by etiquette, it differs from the politeness in western countries in that it has different connotation, different focus of the politeness principle, and different way of expressing the politeness (Zhu & Bao 2010, p.849). ‘Politeness’ in Chinese traditions encompasses ‘respectfulness’, ‘modesty’, ‘attitudinal warmth’ and ‘refinement’ (Gu 1990). Contemporary Chinese ‘politeness’ is based on the combination of traditional concepts and Leech (1983)’s politeness principle. It includes more than ‘respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, refinement, but also a tact maxim and generosity maxim’ (Zhu & Bao 2010, p.849).

In western society, ‘individual power’ and ‘privacy’ are considered as inviolable. Therefore, the tact maxim is prioritised by the speaker to reduce any threat or discomfort posed on to the addressee. In western society, when the speaker asks the addressee to do something, they tend to start with some indirect and euphemistic request (Zhu & Bao 2010, p.850). However, in Chinese society, this is not always the case. If the speaker is eligible to or entitled to give commands, warnings or even threats, then the addressee has to accept and execute the speaker’s requests. For example, elderly people can use directive language to young people, the same as the parents to children, the teachers to students, and the employers to employees. Zhu & Bao (2010, p. 850) concluded that Chinese people’s behaviours are restricted by the social expectation, and the respectfulness principle is what Chinese people choose over all other politeness principles.

The contrast that people in western society prioritise the tact maxim while people in Chinese society prefer the respectfulness principle, may lead us to expect that there might be differences between Chinese and English speakers in the way they express politeness through the non-canonical pronoun uses.

## **1.4 The structure of this thesis**

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 presents a background for the thesis, including a literature review of non-canonical pronoun uses in English and Chinese, and a literature review of the comparison of non-canonical pronoun uses between English and Chinese. The research focus is also stated at the end of this chapter. Chapter 3 describes the data sources and methodology employed in this study. Methodological issues encountered in the study are also discussed. Chapter 4 investigates the non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE. Different types of non-canonical uses are presented with detailed discussion. Chapter 5 examines the non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese. The attested non-canonical uses are likewise categorised and discussed. Chapter 6 explores the similarities and differences between NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses. Two pragmatic schemas - the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema are provided to illustrate the similar and common non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE and Chinese. The attested differences are addressed by taking into account the language properties and culture divergence of these two languages. Chapter 7 summarises the main findings of this study, discusses the results with regard to the two research questions and in comparison with existing literature, discusses the issues emerging from the investigation of NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses, outlines the implications, limitations and future directions, and is completed with a conclusion.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to review existing research on the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in English (Section 2.1) and Chinese (Section 2.2), review the comparison between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses (Section 2.3), and to indicate how I will explore gaps in the existing literature in this study (Sections 2.4). The structure of Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 is detailed below:

In Section 2.1, I will firstly present the existing categorisation of English non-canonical pronoun uses. Then I will review different theories and approaches that have been used to account for English non-canonical pronoun uses in the literature: discourse and pragmatic approaches, mental space theory, theory of territory of information, and theory of mind. Lastly, I will introduce the approach of Gast et al. (2015) and briefly state why I adopt this approach in this study. In Section 2.2, I will follow the reviewing structure as in the previous section. I will offer a general review of the categorisation of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese, and then review different theories and approaches that have been used to account for Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses: markedness theory, some cognitive theories, and predominately the discourse and pragmatic approaches. In Section 2.3, I will concentrate on literature that compares the non-canonical pronoun uses between English and Chinese. The comparative review will be structured in an order of first, second and third person pronouns.

### 2.1 Non-canonical pronoun uses in English

#### 2.1.1 Categorisation

In previous studies, people have drawn attention to a range of different types of non-canonical pronoun uses in English (cf. Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990; Wales 1995; Zhang 1995b; Kamio 2001; Chen 2002; Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi 2004; Chen 2011b; Gast et al. 2015). Of all the English personal pronouns, *you* is the most commonly discussed, especially in impersonal use (cf. Wales 1995; Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990; Kamio 2001; Hyman 2004; Gast et al. 2015). Below I begin with the existing categorisation of non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in English. The order of personal pronouns is from the most discussed to the least.

##### 2.1.1.1 *You*

As pointed out in previous chapter, two types of non-canonical uses of *you* have been identified. One is ‘generic reference’ or ‘impersonal use’, where *you* refers to

‘everyone’ or ‘anyone’; the other refers to the first person pronoun *I*.

(31) was a poster from the London Underground, and (32) was an advertisement. They both captured the indefinite usage of *you* as they were aimed at everyone in the public audience.

(31) Litter slows **you** down. Take **your** litter home with **you**. (Wales 1995, p. 78)

(32) It's September and Christmas is coming. But are **you** feeling the pinch? (Wales 1995, p. 74)

In addition, when you are talking to yourself, you are the speaker as well as the addressee in examples like (33):

(33) **You**'re darned witty. Three drams of usquebaugh **you** drank with Dan Deasy's ducats... Wit. **You** would give your five wits for youth's proud livery he pranks in... (Wales 1995, p. 72)

Also, *you* could also be replaced easily with *I* in sentences like (34):

(34)... it always rather shook me when I first got married in London **you**'d be carrying away practically buckets of that every day... (Wales 1995, p. 79)

Although *you* in (33) and (34) both refer to *I*, *you* in (33) seems to have a self-analysing function, while *you* in (34) is more an unequivocal non-canonical usage, as the speaker still used *I* at the beginning of the sentence.

Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) investigated the impersonal uses of personal pronouns, and offered (35) as a typical example of impersonal *you* in English. The paragraph was retrieved from an interview with a man who taught people how to write fiction.

(35) But I have a gift for teaching... Plus, teaching fiction writing is a lot like writing. **You** have to examine manuscripts, use **your** mind, come up with possibilities, respond to the characters in situations. In a lot of ways, it's like working on **your** own work. (*The Arizona Post*, October 3, 1986, p. A3, cited by Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990, p. 741))

The interviewee in (35) did not really mean that the interviewer must examine their own manuscripts or respond to their characters or do some other actions; he is saying that this is the basic thing for anyone who teaches fiction writing that they must do. *You* does not refer to a particular second person, but has a generic reference.

Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) also contrasted the impersonal uses with vague uses of personal pronouns. Impersonal use ‘applies to anyone and/or everyone, whereas vague use applies to specific individuals, who cannot be identified by the speaker’ (p. 742). (36) is an example of vague *you*.

(36) **You**'re - I don't mean you personally - **you**'re going to destroy us all in a

nuclear war. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 743)

The sentence in (36) was addressed by a European woman to someone who was American. The speaker discussed American political and military policy in Europe. In her utterance, the referent of *you* is not a particular person, and can not be picked out from individuals by listeners/addressees; *you* refers to the American political and military policy in Europe (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 743).

One contribution by Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) is that they categorised the impersonal *you* into three subtypes: ‘situational insertion’ (see (37)), ‘moral or truism formulation’ (see (38)) and ‘life drama’ (see (39)).

(37) Yesterday, we went to Sabino Canyon. And I was talking with this guy who happened to drop in on us. And all of a sudden he began to get agitated, and he swung at me. **You** react instinctively at a time like that. I hit him back. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 749)

(38) **You** kill yourself to raise **your** kids properly, and guess what happens. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 744)

(39) **You**’re going down the highway, **you**’re having a wonderful time, singing a song, and suddenly - **You** get into an argument. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 749)

By using *you*, the speaker in (37) assimilated his own situational experience to a wider range of people even to everyone. Compared to (38), which recounted a general life truth, *you* in (39) was more like describing a life drama episode, and it was the life drama that could be universally applicable. Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) argued that the differences between the three subtypes of impersonal *you* were that *you* can be replaced by ‘one’ and ‘everyone’ or ‘anyone’ in (37), *you* can be replaced by ‘one’ but not easily by ‘everyone’ or ‘anyone’ in (38), and *you* in (39) can neither be replaced by ‘one’ nor ‘everyone’ or ‘anyone’ (p. 750-751).

### 2.1.1.2 *We*

The five main subclasses of *we* mentioned in Wales (1995)’s book can be viewed as non-canonical uses, these are: ‘royal we’, ‘authorial we’, ‘sartorial we’, ‘medical we’ and ‘sarcastic we’.

The ‘royal we’ got its name from being ‘allegedly uttered by Queen Victoria’ (Wales 1995, p. 64). Although *we* is often used to avoid the egocentricity of first person *I*, this is not the case with ‘royal we’, as it actually means *I*. While ‘royal we’ has become obsolete as it is too ‘socially distant for people, with power or influence’ (p. 83), ‘presidential we’ or ‘premier we’ (as shown in (40)) is still common (p. 64).

(40) **We** are fighting for the rights of the little man... We are fighting, as we have always fought, for the weak as well as the strong. (Wales 1995, p. 62)

Even though these words were said by Lady Margaret Thatcher herself in (40), she did not start her speech with *I*, but used *we* instead. The use of *we* can be plausibly interpreted as extending herself to the government, or in this case the Conservative Party, with the sudden effect that a personal idea becomes a public one.

The ‘authorial *we*’, which is influenced by the ‘royal *we*’ in some way by its ‘auto-cratic, author-itative tone’, is a typical scholarly idiom, and can also fulfil ‘the desire to be neither too personal nor too impersonal, and to suggest modesty of achievement of a kind associated with actual joint authorship’ (Wales 1995, p. 65), as can be seen in (41).

(41) **We** have already discussed at length the shortcomings of the available definitions. (Wales 1995, p. 65)

The person who wrote (41) represents himself as an authorised person, and used *we* instead of *I* to make his observations seemingly more convincing and reliable.

A use similar to ‘authorial *we*’ is ‘editorial *we*’, which occurs more in newspapers and journals. ‘Editorial *we*’ is also commonly seen in critical and academic writing (Wales 1995, p. 65). Wales (1995, p. 66) suggested two variants of ‘authorial *we*’ - ‘workshop *we*’ and ‘lecturing *we*’, which both could be substituted by second person pronoun *you*. Consider (42).

(42)... if **we** are to talk about metaphor **we** shall at some stage need a term (Wales 1995, p. 66)

If the teacher uses *you* instead of *we* in (42), students probably will feel much less involved in class and less willing to participate. Therefore, the aim of using *we* in workshops or lectures is to show more intimacy, less distance, more efficiency, more collaboration, and less egocentricity between the two parties (Wales 1995, p. 66).

*We* in the above usages can be interpreted as ‘inclusive *we*’, since the aim of the speaker is to include the addressee(s) they are attempting to reach (Wales 1995, p. 62).

Outside politics, media and academia, there are ‘sartorial *we*’ and ‘medical *we*’, where *we* is even more clearly addressee-oriented.

When shop assistants produce an utterance like ‘We are getting a little flabby in places, aren’t we?’, the aim is to be more tactful, and less aggressive (Wales 1995, p. 67).

The reactions of patients to the so-called ‘medical *we*’, also called ‘doctor *we*’ (Crystal 1988) may differ depending on the individual. Some patients feel that it is very patronising when a doctor comes in to the ward and says ‘How are we today?’, because the doctor is not the one who is sick and *we* simply means *you* (the patient) in the sentence. The aim of using *we* is to ‘share the problem with *you* in the situational context of a doctor and patient or teacher and student relation’ (Yang 2001, p. 13).

‘Baby-talk’ or ‘caretakerese’ also serves to show empathy and care for the addressee. Hence, the speaker is prone to use *we* instead of the second person *you*

(Wales 1995, p. 67). For instance, it is very common when you hear a mother say ‘Should we go to bed now?’ to her baby when it is bed time.

All these uses of *we* share some characteristics with each other such as group solidarity and collective identity (Wales 1995, p. 59-60). Paradoxically, if *we* is used by ‘superiors’ in a non-canonical way, listeners/addressees might perceive it as more friendly and polite, such as when a teacher said *we* instead of *you* to students in the sentence ‘We’re going to be quiet now’ (De Cock 2011, p. 2763). However, if *we* is used non-canonically by ‘inferiors’, it can easily turn sarcastic (Wales 1995, p. 68). For instance, the secretary said ‘We’re in a bad mood today’ to his/her colleagues, but it was actually their boss who was in the bad mood.

In Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990), (43) below is given as a typical impersonal use of *we*, where the pronoun *we* applies to anyone.

(43) Language is like fashion. **We** must make **our** selections carefully and appropriately. Just as **we** would not wear formal clothes at the beach or bathing suits in church, so **we** do not use obscenity or slang for formal public lectures nor pedantic, bookish forms when speaking intimately with **our** sweethearts. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 741)

Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) also discussed the vague use of *we*, where the referents are unspecified, as *us* in (44).

(44) Nationwide only 7.8% of **us** are without a telephone at home. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 745)

*Us* in (44) was confined to Americans, but could not be pinned down to any specific individuals.

### 2.1.1.3 *He*

Since there is no singular third person pronoun in Standard English that can cover both male and female referents, Wales (1995) argued that for traditional grammarians, *he* can not only be used as a male gender pronoun, but also a common gender. It has often been the recommended option for ‘exemplification and indeterminate reference’ (p. 111), because generic *he* is semantically reasonable and culturally favoured to include both genders (p. 113).

Two main scopes of reference are associated with generic *he*, according to Wales (1995): (a) ‘dual-gender’ nouns, especially those who can denote occupations, yet are not marked formally for gender in modern English (p. 110 & 114); (b) ‘indefinite’ pronouns such as ‘everyone/everybody’, ‘someone’, ‘no one’, ‘anyone’. (45) - (47) illustrate these uses of generic *he*.

(45) A surgeon works long hours before **he** takes a break. (Wales 1995, p. 112)

(46) It should be the duty of a Professor to devote himself to the advancement of knowledge in **his** subject. (Wales 1995, p. 118)

(47) A college student ... must maintain some minimal grade average, but **he** is quite free to grow a beard. (Wales 1995, p. 115)

The same consideration lies behind employing generic *he* to refer to children in Wales (1995, p. 115), as illustrated in (48).

(48) We have adopted the convention of calling mothers *she* and children **he**. This convention is violated only when we speak of our child subjects individually, for all of them were girls. (Wales 1995, p. 115)

Although generic *he* is common, it is also controversial. People have come up with various ways to avoid this usage. One of these strategies is the so called ‘singular they’ or ‘unisex they’ (Wales 1995, p. 119).

In addition, Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi (2004) investigated the morphosyntactic features of global non-standard varieties of English. One of the features they listed in their pronouns group is ‘generic he/his for all genders (e.g. My car, he’s broken)’ (p. 1146). It is noted that the definition of ‘generic’ in Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi (2004) seems to be different from the generic use in my study, as the usage of *he* in the above example would be counted as *he* for inanimate referents in this study.

#### 2.1.1.4 *They*

There is now an overwhelming preference for using *they* to represent both genders in spoken and informal and even formal written English, from journalism to administration and academic writing (Wales 1995, p. 125-126). Even Wales (1995) used *they* in her book, as in (49).

(49) Unless the native speaker imagines a whole crowd of teachers... **they** can only perceive an individual as of one sex or another. (Wales 1995, p. 125)

Here, *they* was used as a gender-unspecified singular pronoun, referring to the preceding subject (the native speaker). This is a non-canonical use, since the subject (the native speaker) is a singular entity, no matter whether it is *he* or *she*, but in order to avoid the gender problem, the writer used *they*, which involves a shift in number, from third singular to third plural.

Wales (1995) argued that ‘the motivation for using *they* is likely to be one of sex-neutrality rather than of notional number, i.e., ‘anyone of either sex’ (p. 128). Generic *they* has become a reasonable choice in co-reference with indefinite pronouns (Wales 1995, p. 130), while generic *he* is remarkably scarce in this context (MacKay & Fulkerson 1979).

With indefinite pronouns, *they* can also be used in non-generalising contexts where

the gender of the person might be unknown merely to the addressee, not to the speaker:

(50)... and I was talking to someone about this the other day and **they** said ah yes  
(Wales 1995, p. 129)

In (50), *they* appears not to match the number of ‘someone’, which normally points to one individual.

Wales (1995) suggests that when *they* combines with ‘everyone’, ‘no one’, ‘someone’, ‘anyone’ etc., it is better to label *they* as ‘indeterminate they’ rather than ‘singular they’ (p. 130).

‘Indeterminate they’ is not only preferred in co-reference with indefinite nouns like ‘everyone’, and with potential notionally ‘plural’ pronouns, but also with collective nouns (Wales 1995, p. 163), such as ‘government’ in (51).

(51)The Government are prone to spring decisions on delegates: **they** announced the 70 mph limit to a delegation of chief constables. (Wales 1995, p. 162)

It is quite obvious that the speaker already agreed that ‘the government’ should be a plural entity, that’s why ‘are’ is followed after the subject. *They* in (51) has a narrower scope of meaning, ‘referring to what amounts to a ‘collective’ social organisation’ (Wales 1995, p. 163).

In addition, *they* also shows a similar kind of indeterminacy in sentences like ‘They say it will rain’ (Wales 1995, p. 130). As stated in the first chapter, *they* here refers to some vague and unknown person or people (referred to as ‘vague they’ in Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990). Another example is:

(52)A long-forgotten Act of Parliament may prevent a national memorial to President Kennedy being erected at Runnymede, Surrey... [Mr Oliver] said: ‘I have nothing against Mr Kennedy, but **they** should put the memorial outside the American Embassy.’ (Wales 1995, p. 46)

The agent of *they* in (52) is vague and unknown. It could be a government officer who makes the decision or someone else.

There is a general consensus by Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990), Zhang (1995b), Kamio (2001), Chen (2002) and Chen (2011b) that *we* and *you* both possess ‘generic reference’. Chen (2002) pointed out that so does the third person *he*. Kamio (2001) argued that *they* also has generic use, and Zhang (1995b) agreed both *he* and *they* can be used generically. One interesting observation by Kamio (2001) was that the degrees of genericness vary among examples of *we*, *you* and *they*, and are even different between the following two instances of generic *we* (p. 1115).

(53)**We** all get older day by day. (Kamio 2001, p. 1115)

(54)**We** have a special custom called ‘Yum Cha’ in Hong Kong. (Kamio 2001, p.

1115)

*We* in (53) refers to all human beings, while *we* in (54) merely refers to people who live in Hong Kong. Compared to (53), the genericness, indefiniteness or non-specificness of *we* in (54) is lesser (Kamio 2001, p. 1115).

## 2.1.2 Using different theories and approaches

In the existing literature, scholars have adopted different theories and approaches to account for the non-canonical pronoun uses in English. As I will focus on the pragmatics in the investigation of non-canonical uses in the present study, an overview of the discourse functions, pragmatic effects and pragmatic functions of English non-canonical pronoun uses identified in the literature is provided in subsection 2.1.2.1 below. Subsection 2.1.2.2 presents existing theories that have been applied to the interpretation of personal pronouns in non-canonical use, including mental space theory, theory of territory of information, theory of mind, and the approach of Gast et al. (2015). The reason why this approach is adopted in this study is indicated as well.

### 2.1.2.1 Discourse and pragmatic analysis

Kuo (1999) examined the use of personal pronouns in scientific journal articles (computer science, electronic engineering and physics), and proposed three discourse functions of *we* (and the objective form *us* and genitive *our*): justifying or hedging a proposition or claim, assuming shared knowledge, goals, beliefs etc., and giving a reason or indicating necessity (p. 130-131). Such use of *we* differs from the ‘authorial *we*’ discussed previously which stands for the author only. The use of *we* in Kuo (1999) refers to people in the same discipline in general. (55) below is an example of *we* acting as hedging a proposition in the discourse.

(55) This procedure is allowed only if the three-dimensional distributions implanted at different angles are identical. In fact, computer simulations have long since shown that this assumption is justified, provided that **we** deal with unstructured targets. (Kuo 1999, p. 133-134)

In (55), the clause ‘provided that we deal with unstructured targets’ hedges the proposition that computer simulations have shown that the assumption is justified. And *we* in the clause indicates the researchers in the field of computer science.

Yeo & Ting (2014) also examined the personal pronouns in both arts (social science, economics and business, human resource development and creative arts) and science (medicine, engineering, science and information technology) lecture introductions

delivered in English to students in undergraduate level. They argued that the employment of *you*-generalised (impersonal *you*) in lecture introductions helped establish the relationship between the teachers and students and solicit involvement (p. 30). When *we* was used to refer to the speaker *I* in instance (56), the speaker also achieved the solidarity with students, and created the conditions for students to get engagement with his teaching (p. 32).

(56) Still remember the measure theory before **we** proceed further? Can anyone give me the equation? Y is the function of C plus I, plus G plus NX, ok? (Yeo & Ting 2014, p. 30)

In terms of the discourse functions, *you*-generalised was mainly to activate students' prior knowledge and explain concepts covered in previous lectures. The use of *we* for *I* included more than the above two functions, it also served the purpose of giving instructions or making announcements, directing students' attention and arousing interest, sharing personal experiences and views, stating aims and objectives, and establishing the link with previous lecture in the discourse (p. 31).

Zhao (2013) identified five general pragmatic effects of 'impersonal you' (referred to as 'indefinite you' in his paper). Firstly, the psychological distance between the speaker and addressee disappears due to a feeling of real communication created by 'indefinite you'. Secondly, second person *you* is equipped with a dialogic characteristic, where the speaker acts like two people are talking: a litigant and a judge (as can be illustrated in (36) - 'nuclear war'). Using 'indefinite you' can make the conversation seem more aggressive. Third, 'indefinite you' tends to not only make the antecedent more generalised, but also more easily turns the sentence into a maxim or aphorism. In other words, such a usage of *you* can have an effect of generalisation, which allows the referent to cover more than the addressee, and is similar to what Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) have termed the 'moral or truism formulation' type of impersonal *you*. Fourth, 'indefinite you' can strengthen the cohesion between the contexts. Lastly, by using 'indefinite you', the speaker can share something with the addressee, no matter whether it is a pleasurable experience or a negative emotion (Zhao 2013, p. 27-28). This pragmatic effect is similar to one of the discourse functions of the shift to *we* from *I* discussed in Yeo & Ting (2014).

The effect of presenting shared experiences between the speaker and addressee in impersonal *you* was also argued in Myers & Lampropoulou (2012), who examined impersonal *you* in social research interview in the framework of stance-taking. They argued that the application of impersonal *you* could also invoke recategorising of the speaker, resulting in the addressee (interviewee) being placed in a different category to that of the speaker (interviewer), and the addressee took a stance as a member of that category or someone who had the same experience (p. 1215). The choice of pronoun in this sense can be seen as a form of membership categorisation (cf. Stirling & Manderson 2011) by assigning the speaker in one category and the addressee in another. The framework of stance-taking adopted in Myers & Lampropoulou (2012) was influenced by the demands of the social research interview. While the

interviewee had the entitlement to claim or disclaim a stance, the interviewer needed to support their stances against possible challenge made by the interviewee, and responded to the interviewee's behaviour or views (p. 1206). Impersonal *you* can be seen as a typical feature relevant to the stance-taking in the genre of research interview (p. 1217). Such a feature is also prominent in this study where the oral corpus data was used, and impersonal *you* was the most frequently occurred among all the non-canonical uses.

Ushie (1994) presented the pragmatic functions of impersonal *you* in specific reference (*you* refers to specific persons) in conversational narratives. She argued that the use of *you* in non-second-person specific reference was to achieve identification with the referents. If the speaker was not in the referent range of *you*, the use of *you* was to facilitate the speaker to identify with the referents. If the speaker was included in the referents, the use of *you* was to make the addressee identify with the referents. The non-second-person specific use of *you* in Ushie (1994) can be understood as meaning that the addressee was not necessarily included in the referent range of *you*. Thus the identification of the addressee with the referents should be achieved via a simulation effect. This is captured in the approach by Gast et al. (2015), who argued that if the addressee was not implied in the speaker's claim, the extension of the referents to the addressee had to be achieved via simulation.

In contrast to the above observations of impersonal *you*, De Cock & Kulge (2016) discussed the shift to *you* from *I*, and argued that the personal pronoun played an important role in maintaining empathy between the speaker and addressee (p. 352). The use of *you* put the addressee in the speaker's position and encouraged the addressee to empathise with the speaker (p. 352). Such an effect of empathy was also discussed in Gast et al. (2015). We will return to this in Chapter 6.

Siewierska (2004) indicated that the choice of personal pronouns in the non-canonical uses (when the mismatches between the grammatical forms of person pronouns and their referential value occur) was a manifestation of the social deixis between the speaker and addressee, including power, solidarity, rank, status, office, generation, formality, informality, intimacy, social distance and so on (p. 214). The use of *we* in 'editorial *we*' was a way for a writer to show more modesty than when using the egocentric *I* (p. 218). However, the use of *we* in 'royal *we*' distanced the speaker by emphasising the royal status of the crown (p. 218). The use of third person *his* for direct address in baby-talk in 'Timmy must be a good boy and eat his dinner' was an indication of lack of deference towards the addressee (p. 222), as the mother was talking to her child. The employment of *we* in 'doctor *we*' (or 'nurse *we*'), where the first person form was used instead of the second person address in 'How are we today', was not only being less deferential but also expressed the solidarity between the speaker (the doctor) and addressee (the patient) (p. 223). Moreover, the solidarity effect was more salient than the power and status effects when the speaker (the teacher) used *we* instead of *I* in their lectures introductions in Yeo & Ting (2014). The utilisation of *you* in impersonal use also helped mitigate the social distance between the speaker and addressee discussed in Zhang (2013).

### 2.1.2.2 Using different theories

#### 2.1.2.2.1 Mental space theory

Ushie (2004) investigated the ‘double interpretation’ of impersonal *you* in ‘specific reading’ (*you* referring to a specific individual) and ‘non-specific reading’ (*you* referring to a non-specific individual), and depicted the double interpretation under the framework of mental space theory. Compared to (57)b, (57)a is an example of double interpretation.

(57) She no longer worries that renewed media attention to her childhood plight will colour people’s current perceptions about her.

“It’s inescapable,” she says, smiling. “Now, sometimes, I feel it’s my duty to talk about it, to bring it up in class (at Berkeley).

(a) But when I do, all of sudden, people look at **you** differently,

(b) But when I do, all of a sudden, people look at **me** differently,

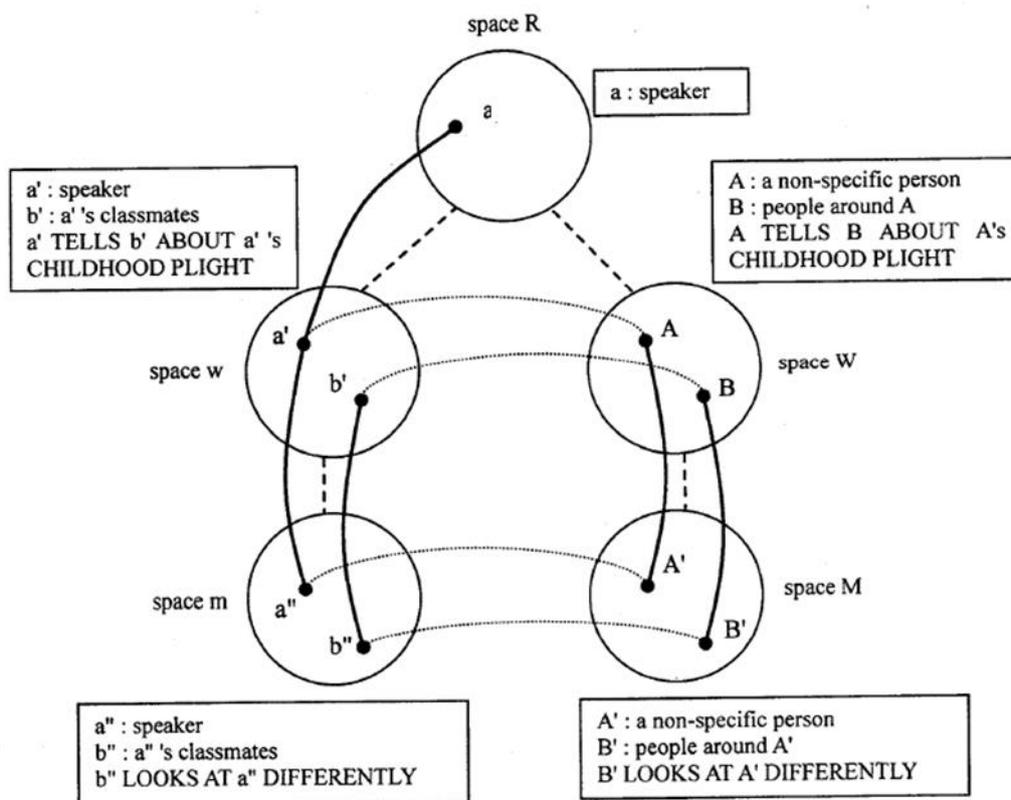
and I hate that because I don’t want it to define me.” (Ushie 2004, p. 259)

In (57)a, *you* refers to the speaker *I* in the specific reading, but can also have a non-specific reading where it refers more generally to people who had undergone the same childhood plight as the speaker (Ushie 2004, p. 258).

Ushie (2004) attempted to utilise mental space theory to explain such double interpretations. In her point of view, mental spaces (also cf. Fauconnier 1994 & 1997) can be viewed as cognitive constructs used by the hearers when interpreting discourses. Cognitive structures are filled with elements (such as *a*, *a'*, *b*, *a''*, *b''*, *A*, *B*, *A'*, *B'* in Figure 2.1), and elements can connect to each other. Mapping establishes correspondences between elements in different spaces. For instance, the solid lines between the elements in Figure 2.1 indicate identity (Ushie 2004, p. 263). ‘The structure of one space can be projected onto another space via mapping.’ (Ushie 2004, p. 261) The speaker’s reality can function as the default parent space if no other space is indicated as the parent space, and a new space can be set up relative to the parent space (Ushie 2004, p. 260-261).

In the double interpretation of impersonal *you*, two sets of mental spaces differing in the degree of specificity were set up relative to the speaker’s reality - space *R* (which is the parent space). One set is spaces *w* and *W*, the other set is spaces *m* and *M*, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Mental spaces of impersonal *you* in double interpretation in Ushie (2004)



In the diagram, spaces w and W were structured by the frame ‘x TELLS y ABOUT x’s CHILDHOOD PLIGHT’, and spaces m and M were structured by the same frame ‘x LOOKS AT y DIFFERENTLY’. Spaces w and m were interpreted under the ‘specific reading’, where *you* referred to a specific individual (the speaker). Spaces W and M were interpreted in ‘non-specific reading’, where *you* referred to a non-specific individual. Space m is more specific than space M, thus space m is a specific space, and space M is a generic space. (Ushie 2004, p. 263-266)

The main advantage of characterising the double interpretation of impersonal *you* in the framework of mental space is that it can explain the shift to *you* from *I* when they are actually referring to the same individual (the speaker). It can also help to explain the impersonal *you* in its ‘non-specific reading’, as the speaker constructed a different set of spaces.

#### 2.1.2.2.2 Theory of territory of information

Kamio (2001) applied the theory of territory of information (cf. Kamio 1997) to generic and non-specific uses of *we*, *you* and *they* in English. He argued that both speaker and hearer have their own territories defined as domains. The speaker’s territory is proximal to the speaker, but distal to the hearer, and the hearer’s territory is

proximal to the hearer, but distal to the speaker (p. 1114). Observe the following three examples to illustrate.

- (58)... **we** are the most respected nation on the earth. (Archer Jeffrey, *The eleventh commandment*, p. 127, cited by Kamio (2001, p. 1116))
- (59) Although **you**'ve got over 110 million here in Japan, it's a small country. (Wetherall W., *The best of the English journal interviews*, p. 52, cited by Kamio (2001, p. 1118))
- (60) **They** had managed to keep National Airport open. (Grisham John, *The street lawyer*, p. 62, cited by Kamio (2001, p. 1121))

(58) was uttered by a Russian presidential candidate. *We* in (58) included the candidate and the Russian nation made up by non-specific people. The use of *we* formed a delimited group of people, in which the speaker was the core member, and the rest of these non-specific people fell into the speaker's territory of reference. Instances such as (58) were not viewed as non-canonical use in the present study, as *we* still bears the property of exclusiveness. *We* in (58) is an exclusive *we*, it points to the Russian nation including the speaker. In other words, it excluded people who were not Russian. The use of *you* in (59) is not considered non-canonical in this study either. *You* in (59) corresponds to the hearer's territory. The territorial character of *you* points to a person who lives in Japan or who comes from there. *They* in (60) refers to the organisation that was responsible for the operating of the airport. The organisation was considered to be beyond the speaker and hearer's territories, thus was covered by the domain of *they*. The use of *they* in (60) is classified as non-canonical in my approach, because its reference is vague. The organisation *they* refers to has not actually been mentioned in the context. Kamio (2001) concluded that *we* represented the speaker's territory, *you* represented the hearer's territory, and *they* represented the domain outside the speaker and hearer (p. 1121).

There is another situation where the territories of the speaker and hearer almost merge (Kamio 2001, p. 1119), which is illustrated in the use of generic *you* in (61), where *you* can be replaced by *we*.

- (61) When **you** have only moments to live, **you** notice every detail. (Archer Jeffrey, *The eleventh commandment*, p. 224, cited by Kamio (2001, p. 1119))

Kamio (2001) argued that the occurrence of generic *you* where *you* can be replaced by *we* is 'when the speaker is not aware of his unity with other people tied by alliance' (p. 1120). If the speaker is aware of it, *we* and *you* are in contrast with each other, just like the use of *we* in (58). Kamio (2001) also claimed that for instances such as (61), the boundary that divides *we* and *you* is very weak, and *you* is almost equivalent to *we* pragmatically (p. 1119-1120). That's why he argued that the theory of territory of information can not only be applied to non-specific uses of personal pronouns but also generic uses. However, generic *you* and generic *we* will be treated separately, and *you* and *we* in generic uses will not be considered pragmatically equivalent in this study.

### 2.1.2.2.3 Theory of mind

Wechsler (2010) argued that in regular plural semantics, first person plural *we* referred to the speaker and addressee, second person plural *you* referred to the addressees. However, in associative plural semantics, *we* could be used to refer to any group of individuals that includes the speaker or speakers, and *you* could be used to refer to any group that includes the addressees and others. Such a generalisation was termed ‘associative plural generalisation’ in Wechsler (2010), as *we* was interpreted as ‘speaker + others/associates’, and plural *you* was interpreted as ‘addressees + others/associates’ (p. 333-337). Such patterns of ‘speaker/addressees + others’ can be related to Kamio (2001)’s argument that the speaker/addressee is the core member and others fall into the territories of the speaker/addressee.

The interpretation of first and second person plural pronouns in associative plural generalisation involved self-ascription. For the first person plural, the speaker self-ascribes membership in the reference set (group of individuals) of the pronoun; for the second person plural, the speaker ascribes membership to the addressee in the reference set (group of individuals) (Wechsler 2010, p. 333 & 356).

When the speaker uttered something related to her mental states (i.e., beliefs, intentions, desires etc.) in the use of first person plural, the speaker self-ascribed membership in the referent set of the pronoun. In order to understand the utterance of speaker, the addressee must construct a model of the speaker’s mental state, and infer the speaker’s self-ascription. Such ‘a cognitive ability to impute mental states to others and draw inferences from these mental states’ is known as ‘theory of mind’ (Wechsler 2010, p. 357, also cf. Premack & Woodruff 1978). In other words, the addressee employed his theory of mind to construct a model of the speaker’s mental space in order to interpret correctly the first person utterance. Theory of mind could also apply to the second person pronouns. When the speaker used a second person to address the addressee, the speaker was required to use his theory of mind to construct a model of the addressee’s mental state in order to use the second person pronoun in an appropriate context. The insight of Wechsler (2010) may be captured in the mental space model proposed by Ushie (2004) with regard to the impersonal use of *you* in non-specific reading. That the referent of *you* can be applied to a wider range of non-specific people in (57)a is based on the speaker’s correct employment of his theory of mind in the construction of the model of the addressees’ mental states (cf. Wechsler 2010, p. 358).

Wechsler (2010) only took the perspectives of how the addressee interpreted the utterance of first person pronouns via the employment of theory of mind, and how the speaker was enabled to use the second person in a correct way by applying his theory of mind to construct a mental state model of the addressee.

#### 2.1.2.2.4 The approach of Gast et al. (2015)

Gast et al. (2015) examined the impersonal uses of the second person singular from a pragmatic perspective. They categorised the impersonal uses of *you* into ‘valid’ and ‘simulated’. Valid *you* is where the addressee is implied in the claim made by the speaker. Simulated *you* is where the addressee is not implied, but is invited to engage in simulation (p. 149). The categorisation of Gast et al. (2015) seems to capture a wider range of uses than the approaches discussed in the preceding section. The double interpretation of impersonal *you* in Ushie (2004), no matter whether in specific or non-specific readings, can be seen as the simulated type use of *you*, as the addressee did not necessarily undergo the same childhood plight as the speaker. The generic use of *you* discussed in Kamio (2001), where *you* can be paraphrased by *we*, would be viewed as a valid use, as the instances of generic *you* are normally general statements where *you* refers to all people including the addressee. In the discussion of generalisation in Wechsler (2010), where the pronoun *we* is not restricted to the speaker, and the second plural *you* is not restricted to the addressee, but both include others, both the uses of *we* and *you* in ‘the speaker/addressees + others’ correspond to the valid type of impersonal *you* according to the definition of Gast et al. (2015). The difference of the classification of impersonal *you* between previous scholars and Gast et al. (2015) is that Gast et al. (2015) focuses on whether the addressee was presupposed in the speaker’s claim, while the other approaches focus on the range of the referents of the pronoun *you* in general. Detailed introduction of the taxonomy of impersonal *you* in Gast et al. (2015) is provided in Section 4.1.2.

Gast et al. (2015) also developed their own ‘model shift’ that captures the simulated types of impersonal *you*, drawing on Moltmann (2010), who applied ‘Simulation Theory’ to her analysis of generic *one*. The definition of Simulation Theory and the developmental progress from Moltmann (2010) to Gast et al. (2015)’s model shift are presented in Section 6.3.1.1.1.

Although Gast et al. (2015) classified impersonal *you* into two types, the grammatical category of second person in impersonal uses, however, was argued to be interpreted the same as second person in personal uses. The second person form does not make the sentences generalising, it happens to be in the generalising sentences (p. 161). The effect of generalisation is ‘contributed by the sentential context, not by the second person’ (p. 152), but the second person does play a role in creating the empathy effect which is a typical feature of the impersonal uses of second person (p. 161).

## 2.2 Non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese

### 2.2.1 Categorisation

Nie (1959), Mao (1980), Sun (1981), Wang (1995), Zhang (1995a), Meng (1996), Xu (1998), Chen (2009a) and Chen (2011a) suggested that Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses can be divided into the two big categories (i.e., vagueness and interchange) mentioned earlier in Chapter 1.

Li (1996), Li (2004), and Huang et al. (2007 & 2010) all viewed non-canonical uses as reflecting the vagueness of personal pronouns. Li (1996, p. 53) argued that personal pronouns can be vague in number and person. Li (2004) studied the vagueness of Chinese first person plural pronoun *wǒmen* 我们(*we*), and Huang et al. (2007 & 2010) discussed the vagueness of first person pronouns (2007) and second person pronouns (2010) respectively. Observe instances (62) and (63).

- (62) Bǐfāng jiǎng f ákuǎn, zu gāo ji ù èrsh íw àn, **wǒmen** kěnéng d àijiā dōu ju éde,  
比 方 讲 罚 款, 最 高 就 20 万, **我 们** 可 能 大 家 都 觉 得,  
du ìzh èjībǎi y ìde, sh í yìsh àng de zh èxiē w éguī de xi àngm ùl ájiǎng,  
对 这 几 百 亿 的, 十 亿 以 上 的 这 些 违 规 的 项 目 来 讲,  
jiǔ ni úy ìm ó, ...  
九 牛 一 毛, .....

For example talking about fine, the highest [amount] is two hundred thousand, **we** may all feel that, in terms of these tens of billions, over one billion illegal projects, [two hundred thousand fine is like] a single hair out of nine cattle, ... (Huang et al. 2007, p. 57)

- (63) N àme zu òw é wǒ l á shuō, q ísh í q i á n ji ùsh ìn á á zu òsh òy ède, ... Ch úcǐ  
那 么 作 为 我 来 说, 其 实, 钱 就 是 拿 来 做 事 业 的, .....除 此  
zhīw ài, y íg èr á n ji ùsu àn měid ùn chī jīnzi, nǐ y òu n éng chīdī ào duōshǎo q i á n  
之 外, 一 个 人 就 算 每 顿 吃 金 子, **你** 又 能 吃 掉 多 少 钱  
ne.  
呢。

So for me, in fact, money is just used to do the business, ... apart from this, a person even if eat gold every meal, how much money **you** can eat. (Huang et al. 2010, p. 31)

Huang et al. (2007) argued that the referent of *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) in (62) is vague, as it can refer to certain people, everyone, people in general or unspecific individuals (p. 57). Similarly, *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) in (63) was also argued to be vague in the reference, as it can point to any unspecific or non-particular person (Huang et al. 2010, p. 31).

Lü (1980), Zhang (2001), Ai (2003) and Chen (2012), on the other hand, focused on the interchanges in ‘person’ and/or ‘number’ of either first, second or third person pronouns in Chinese. Take Ai (2003) as an example, he mainly discussed the

interchanges of third person pronouns, and proposed that *tā* 他(*he*) can have interchanges in person (as in (64)) as well as in number (as in (65)).

(64) *Tí yìjiàn de jiùshì wǒ, nǐ néng bǎ tā zěnyàng?*

提意见的就是我，你能把他怎样？

[The person who] gives comments is me, what can you do to **him**? (Ai 2003, p. 15)

(65) *Lài Hóngwén: ... Zhèxiē wǒ dū yǒu zhēnpíngshíjù; rúguǒ tāmen yào cúnxīn*

赖洪文：.....这些我都有真凭实据；如果他们要存心

*gēn Zhōng Wáng zuòduì, Lài Hóngwén pīnzhe xìngmìng bù yào, jiù gēn tā*

跟忠王作对，赖洪文拼着性命不要，就跟他

*chōngtiān.*

冲天。

Lai Hongwen: ... I have evidence for these; if they want to deliberately go against Zhong Wang, Lai Hongwen will exert the utmost strength, to fight with **him**. (Ai 2003, p. 16)

There is a shift to *tā* 他(*he*) from the first person *wǒ* 我(*I*) in (64), and *tā* 他(*he*) actually refers to the previous third plural *tāmen* 他们(*they*) in (65).

In addition to the discussion on the vagueness and interchanges of Chinese personal pronouns in the previous studies, Jin (2009) and Huang (2012) argued that Chinese *wǒ* 我(*I*), *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) and *tā* 他(*he*) have a tendency to become ‘discourse makers’.

Discourse marker is a term that refers to ‘a syntactically heterogeneous class of expressions which are distinguished by their function in discourse and the kind of meaning they encode’, and can alternatively be called ‘pragmatic marker’, ‘discourse particle’, ‘discourse connective’, ‘discourse operator’ or ‘cue marker’ (Blakemore 2006, p. 221). Discourse markers generally have two typical properties: one is non-truth conditionality, and the other signals connectivity in discourse. (Blakemore 2006, p. 222) The historical development of discourse marker can be viewed as part of the grammaticalisation process (Blakemore 2006, p. 239). In English, scholars have not yet produced a finite list of discourse markers, but the most commonly-seen ones are: ‘well’, ‘but’, ‘so’, ‘indeed’, ‘in other words’, ‘as a result’ and ‘now’ (Blakemore 2006, p. 221).

Contrastively, in Chinese, Jin (2009) proposed that *wǒ* 我(*I*) in (66) has lost its syntactic or grammatical functions<sup>8</sup>, and simply serves to get the listener’s attention pragmatically (p. 36).

(66) *Wǒ shuō, nǐ yǒu wán méi wán le?*

我说，你有完没完了？

I say you have finish not finish modal particle

Shuō chābùduō jiù xíng le bei.

<sup>8</sup> It seems that *wǒ* 我(*I*) in (66) still has some of its original syntactic properties, because it is an argument of ‘shuō 说(say)’, but the whole expression ‘wǒ shuō’ has become grammaticalised.

说 差不多 就 行 了 呗。  
 Say almost then okay modal particle modal particle  
 I say [listen], have you finished or not? [You have] said enough. (Jin 2009, p. 36)

Huang (2012) argued that *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) in (67) has also lost its lexical meaning, and acts as a discourse connection (p. 44).

(67) Wǒ juéde hǎoxiàng yí dào zhōngxué,  
 我 觉得 好像 一 到 中 学,  
 I feel like once to high school  
 wǒ jiù chéng dàrén le a,  
 我 就 成 大 人 了 啊,  
 I then become adult aspect particle modal particle  
 nǐ xiǎoxué lǎo yǒu rén guǎn de.  
 你 小 学 老 有 人 管 的。  
 You primary school always have people administrate particle  
 (1982 年北京话调查资料)

I feel like once into high school, then I [suddenly] become an adult, **you** primary school there is always someone to administrate. (Beijing dialect survey in 1982, cited by Huang (2012, p. 44))

Huang (2012) further claimed that *tā* 他(*he*) in (68) has become tokenised into a discourse marker, as can be omitted from the discourse. The occurrence of *tā* 他(*he*) in (68) is to signal the speaker's strong feeling about what he/she said (p. 48).

(68) Jīntiān, suǒxìng jiābān, gàn tā gè  
 今天, 索性 加班, 干 他 个  
 today simply overtime work he quantifier  
 tòngkuài, míngtiān zài yìqǐ wán tā  
 痛 快, 明 天 再 一 起 玩 他  
 to one's great satisfaction tomorrow again together play he  
 gè gāoxìng!  
 个 高 兴!  
 quantifier happy

Today, simply work overtime to [**he**] great satisfaction, tomorrow have [**he**] fun together. (Huang 2012, p. 48)

In the previous studies, people have also examined the Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses by applying different linguistic theories and approaches. In the following three subsections, I will first review how people apply markedness theory to the explanation of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese, and then I will review the Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses being addressed by the cognitive approaches. Lastly, I will focus on reviewing the Chinese non-canonical uses in the literature that

have been conducted in terms of discourse and pragmatic analysis, as my theoretical approaches will primarily draw on theories in pragmatics.

## 2.2.2 Using different theories and approaches

### 2.2.2.1 Markedness theory

Zhang & Liu (2007) classified pronoun uses into marked and unmarked according to the theory of markedness (cf. Zhu 1992; Spolsky 2000; Martin 1992; Shen 1999). Shen (1999) held that markedness theory is a theory that depicts asymmetric phenomena in the linguistic domain, and the asymmetry is reflected in the opposition of marked items against unmarked items. Zhang & Liu (2007, p. 59) proposed that the normal, customary and conventional uses should be called ‘unmarked uses’, while more special, separate, exceptional or unusual uses should be termed ‘marked uses’. They provided several examples of marked uses of Chinese first person pronouns, and argued that when the first person pronouns are employed to refer to the speaker, they are ‘unmarked usage’. When they are used to refer to other than the speaker, the uses should be considered ‘marked’ (Zhang & Liu 2007, p. 59-60).

Zhang & Liu (2007) also suggested that the marked uses of first person pronouns consist of the following three types: (a) mutual change between the singular and plural forms, where singular form can refer to the plural form, and vice versa; (b) direct quotations; (c) general reference, where the first person pronouns represent ordinary people in general, rather than a specific person. For example, *wǒ* 我(*I*) in the Chinese expressions such as ‘*nǐ lái wǒ wǎng* 你来我往(you come, I go)’ and ‘*nǐ sǐ wǒ huó* 你死我活(you die, I survive)’, refers to any person, not just the speaker (Zhang & Liu 2007, p. 60).

Zhang & Liu (2007, p. 60) regarded the direct quotations as a ‘marked use’<sup>9</sup>, in that when we quote words directly from other people during verbal communication, if first person pronouns are used in the context, like *wǒ* 我(*I*) in (69), they do not represent the speaker of the utterance, but the referee, who is the person being quoted in the sentence.

(69) *Yì xuéshēng: lǎoshī zuótiān zài kètáng shàng jiǎng le kǎoshì de shìqing, tā yì xuéshēng: lǎoshī zuótiān zài kètáng shàng jiǎng le kǎoshì de shìqing, tā shuō tí mù wǒ yǐ jīng xiǎng hǎo le, bìng bú nán.*  
说 题目 我 已经 想好了, 并不 难。

A student: The teacher talked about the examination yesterday in the classroom, he said **I** have already thought of the topic, it is not difficult. (Zhang & Liu 2007, p. 60)

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<sup>9</sup> In the analysis of this study, uses of personal pronouns in direct speech are treated as canonical. See more discussion about this in the next methodology chapter.

Wǒ 我(I) in (69) does not refer to the speaker (the student) of the sentence, but to the third party (the teacher) mentioned in the sentence. However, such a usage of pronouns in direct quotations was not considered as non-canonical in this study.

Indeed, markedness theory provides new insights on how to differentiate non-canonical from canonical personal pronoun uses, but it fails to reveal the inner mechanism behind the non-canonical uses, and is unable to model the relation between the pronoun and its intended referents.

## 2.2.2.2 Cognitive approaches

### 2.2.2.2.1 Subjectivity

Amongst the existing cognitive approaches to non-canonical pronoun uses, subjectivity is the most cited and quoted theory. Wang (2006 & 2008), Jia (2008) and Wang (2004) used subjectivity theory (cf. Langacker 1987 & 1990; Lyons 1977; Shen 2001) to explain the interchange phenomenon, and argued that the choice of a personal pronoun is associated with the subjectivity of the speaker.

Wang (2008) proposed that the speaker perceives an objective scenario from his/her personal perspective, and tends to choose the appropriate personal pronouns according to his/her psychological distance from the recipient (p. 30). If the speaker feels closer to the conceptual object, the expressional subjectivity is higher, and the speaker will be more inclined to use first person pronouns. Otherwise, the speaker will tend to use third person pronouns, or even other expressions that can be used pronominally (Wang 2006, p. 126). For example, the Chinese expression ‘rénjiā 人家 (other people)’ usually refers to a third party, but it can also be used to refer to the listener and even the speaker, as illustrated in example (70).

(70) Tā huí guò tóu lái shuō: ‘wǒ méi yǒu quán lì bù zhǔn rénjiā ài wǒ, kě yǒu tā huí guò tóu lái shuō: “ wǒ méi yǒu quán lì bù zhǔn rénjiā ài wǒ, kě yǒu yí yàng, nǐ bùyào yī fān liǎn, yòu qù gěi wǒ tígǐ yì jiàn, shuō shì jiā lì yà hài le nǐ!’  
你! ” (邓友梅《在悬崖上》)

She turned around and said: ‘I have no right to forbid others to love me, but there is one thing, **you** shouldn’t say something bad about me to others when you turn against me, saying that Jia Liya set **you** up.’ (Youmei Deng, *On the cliff*, cited by Wang (2006, p. 126))

In (70), ‘rénjiā 人家 (other people)’ was used pronominally instead of the second person pronoun nǐ 你 (you sg.) to refer to the listener. Wang (2006) indicated that the use of ‘rénjiā 人家 (other people)’ can widen the conceptual distance from the referent and show the low subjectivity towards the addressee, thus can pass on the discontent

from the speaker to the addressee ( p. 127).

The subjectivity discussed in Wang (2006) indicates the closeness between the speaker and addressee. If the speaker feels closer to the addressee, the degree of subjectivity is higher and the first person pronouns will be favoured. If the speaker feels less close to the addressee, the second or third personal pronouns will be opted for. Subjectivity is another way of showing the relation between the speaker and addressee. The option of a personal pronoun is affected by the subjectivity of speaker and the closeness between the speaker and addressee. Some non-canonical uses of Chinese personal pronouns such as shift uses may be explained by subjectivity, but perhaps not all of them (i.e., generic uses). Subjectivity can be seen to relate to the theory of territory of information argued by Kamio (2001). The use of first person pronouns is a way of indicating the higher subjectivity of speaker, but also a way of showing the territory of speaker. When the second and third person pronouns are used, the subjectivity of speaker is lower, as it is out of the territory of speaker.

#### 2.2.2.2.2 Mental space theory

Gan (2011) attempted to explore the Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses by applying mental space theory from cognitive linguistics. Consider example (71).

(71) Wǒmen zhēnduì de duìxiàng zhǔyào shì shèhuì shàng guǎngdà cóngshì  
我们 针对的对象 主要是社会上 广大从事  
gāngqín jīàoxué de jīāoshī, ... zài hěnduō zhōngxiǎo chéngshì hěnduō  
钢琴教学的教师, .....在很多中小城市、很多  
biānyuǎn dìqū... fāxiàn hěnduō jīāoshī tā shì fēicháng nǚ lì de zài cóngshì  
边远地区.....发现 很多教师 他是非常努力地在从事  
jīàoxué, dànshì yú yú tāmen běnshēn de nàgè huánjìng de júxiàn, suǒyǐ  
教学, 但是由于他们 本身的那个环境的局限, 所以  
tāmen hěnnán dédào yīxiē hěnyǒuyì de zīliào lái bāngzhù tāmen tígāo,  
他们 很难得到一些很有益的资料来帮助 他们提高,  
suǒyǐ duì tāmen lái jiǎng, zhèxiē zīliào yě shì fēicháng de bìyào. (周铭孙《学  
钢琴与教钢琴的要领与诀窍》)

Our main objects are the teachers who are engaged in piano teaching in the community,... in many middle sized or small cities and remote areas... We found that many teachers **he** is very engaged in [their] teaching, but due to the limitations of their own environment, so **they** are hard to get some very useful information to help them improve, so for them, this material is very necessary. (Mingsun Zhou, *Piano learning and teaching essentials and tricks*, cited by Gan (2011, p. 38))

(71) was a spoken passage originally from a television programme. The speaker made a speech, aiming at the piano teachers from small or middle-sized cities and remote

areas in China, so the piano teachers could be the audiences or viewers of the television programme. In (71), the speaker did not use the second person *nǐmen* 你们 (*you*), but used *tā* 他 (*he*) and *tāmen* 他们 (*they*) to refer to the listener.

Gan (2011, p. 38) suggested that using the third person pronouns enabled the listener to save their face, as it constructed a mental space which was independent of the mental space belonging to the speaker and listener. It also widened the psychological distance between the listener and referent - these piano teachers who needed help.

However, Gan (2011) merely focused on the interchange of personal pronouns, i.e., the interchange between the first and second person pronouns, between the first and third person pronouns, and between the second and third person pronouns. The generic uses were not discussed in his thesis. In addition, the illustration of the interchanges between the first and third person pronouns and between the second and third person pronouns via the mental space theory is rather superficial. No detailed diagrams were provided to capture how the speaker created a mental space shared with the addressee in the shift to the second person from the first person pronouns, and how the third mental space was constructed independently of the mental spaces of the speaker and addressee in the interchange uses between the second and third person pronouns such as in (71). With respect to the shift to second person from the first person pronouns, Gan (2011) did not comment how mental space theory works in such a shift use. He only indicated that the use of second person helped the addressee understand the statement made by the speaker more easily (cf. p. 38). Ushie (2004) proposed a mental space model of impersonal *you* in specific reading (shift to *you* from *I*), but also constructed the mental space model of impersonal *you* in an alternative non-specific reading. The mental space adopted in both Gan (2011) and Ushie (2004) did not capture the relation between the form of the pronoun and its intended referents in non-canonical use.

### **2.2.2.3 Discourse and pragmatic analysis**

From the preceding discussions, it seems that context may play a role in the occurrence of some non-canonical pronoun uses. Some researchers like Zhang & Liu (2007), even directly attributed the occurrence of non-canonical pronoun uses to context.

Shen (1993) argued that context contributed to the temporary interchange of some personal pronouns in person (p. 25) and in number (p. 26), contributed to the temporary lost or shift of the inherent 'referring' meaning of some personal pronouns (p. 26), and contributed to the occurrence of personal pronouns in empty reference, general reference and non-specific reference (p. 27).

Jiang & Zhang (1981), Zhang (1995a) and Meng (1996) considered the non-canonical pronoun uses as a rhetorical phenomenon. Zhang & Zhang (2005) pointed out that the utilisation of personal pronouns non-canonically according to the need of expression, can achieve important rhetorical effects such as in expressing love,

anger, modesty, and showing emphasis (p. 34).

Liao (2010) discussed three pragmatic reasons why personal pronouns can be used non-canonically. The first reason is to abide by the ‘politeness principle’. Liao (2010, p. 121) argued that you not only show your politeness to others, but also to yourself. Using personal pronouns in a non-canonical way is a strategy to achieve this. The second reason is to narrow or widen the psychological distance between the speaker and addressee (Liao 2010, p. 121). If the speaker wants to be closer to the addressee and narrows the psychological distance, they will tend to use personal pronouns non-canonically, as with the use of *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) in (72).

(72) Xi àozhǎng (mi àndu ìxué shēng): **Wǒmen** yào hǎohǎo xiǎngxiǎng, fùmǔ bǎ  
校 长 (面 对 学 生): 我 们 要 好 好 想 想, 父 母 把  
wǒmen sònglái dúshū róngyì ma? Tāmen duì wǒmen bào yǒu zěnyàng de  
我 们 送 来 读 书 容 易 吗? 他 们 对 我 们 抱 有 怎 样 的  
xīwàng ne?  
希 望 呢

Principal (facing the students): **We** have to think about it seriously, parents send us [here] to study, [is it] easy? What expectation do they have for us? (Liao 2010, p. 122)

The speaker in (72) was a school principal. The occurrence of *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) at the beginning of sentence seemed strange especially when the principal wanted to show his/her authority to the students (the addressees). However, using *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) instead of *nǐmen* 你们(*you pl.*) can reduce the psychological distance between the principal and students, make the principal look friendly and kind, and render his words more convincing and acceptable to the students. (Liao 2010, p. 122)

The third reason is to express different emotions. For instance, if the speaker uses *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) instead of *wǒ* 我(*I*) to talk about their own achievements, which is a manifestation of the speaker’s modesty (Liao 2010, p. 122).

Shen (1993), Liao (2010), Biq (1991) and Hsiao (2011) also investigated Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses from a discourse and pragmatic perspective.

Biq (1991) discussed three different non-canonical uses of the second singular *nǐ* 你 (*you sg.*) in conversational Mandarin, i.e., impersonal use, dramatic use, and metalinguistic use, and focused on the last metalinguistic use.

#### (a) Impersonal use

In casual speech, the impersonal use of the second person singular *nǐ* is ‘a substitution for an indefinite pronoun’ (Biq 1991, p. 309), as can be seen in (73).

(73) Nei-xie xiao haizi nao de jiao **nǐ** bu neng  
That-PL small child make noise RST CUS 2s NEG can  
zhuanxin zuo shi.  
concentrate do thing

‘Those children make such a noise, it makes **you** [me, one] unable to

concentrate on your [my, one's] work.' (Chao 1968, p. 648-649)

(b) Dramatic use

Biq (1991) proposed that there was not always a clear-cut boundary between the impersonal and dramatic use of *nǐ* due to they were too closely related to each other, although the dramatic use appeared more often in the spoken language rather than in writing (p. 313). In the dramatic use, the speaker temporarily lost their own viewpoints. 'They created a story scenario, assumed themselves one of the characters in the described situation, and used *nǐ* to address another character in the same situation' (Biq 1991, p. 311). The dramatic use of *nǐ* occurred as a result of 'partially shifting from the discourse situation to the described situation', and *nǐ* is non-deictic (Biq 1991, p. 310-311). (74) is an example to illustrate this point.

(74)(F is on the topic of people's communes.)

- 1F. Dangran zhe limian you yi ge wenti jiu shi, eh,  
Of-course this inside have one M problem just is eh  
2 youde ren ne ta keyi juede fanzheng wo ye dei  
some people PRT 3s may feel anyway I also have-to  
3 fen liangshi ta jiu bu haohao ganhuo zhei ge jiu  
share food 3s then NEG well work this M then  
4M. Mmm—  
mmm  
5F. dei kao sixiang jiaoyu, bu bu neng kao  
have-to depend thought education NEG NEG can depend  
6 qiangpuo ye bu neng kao yi zhong weixie de banfa  
force also NEG can depend one M threaten NOM way  
7M. Dui.  
Right  
8F. banfa **ni** bu haohao ganhuo rang **ni** qiong xiaqu mei fan  
way 2s NEG well work let 2s poor down NEG food  
9 chi jiu kao dajia zijue  
eat just depend everyone conscientious  
10M. Mmhum.  
Mmhum

F. Of course there's one problem in here that is, eh, There're people who may feel that I have to share the food [with other people] anyway, so he doesn't work hard. This has [got] to depend on ideological

M. Mmm—

F. education. [It] couldn't be solved by imposition. Nor could

M. Right.

F. it be solved by threat [like], [since] **you** don't work hard, [we'll] let **you** stay poor and have nothing to eat. It just depends on

M. Mmhum.

F. everyone's consciousness. (Biq 1991, p. 311)

Biq (1991) considered that *nǐ* in (74) is a dramatic use, because the two mentions of *nǐ* in line 8 denoted someone who did not want to work hard. The speaker abandoned her own point of view in the discourse and presumed herself to be the other characters in the assumed scenario (the farmer or the leader of commune etc.) (p. 312).

(c) Metalinguistic use

Biq (1991) focused particularly on the metalinguistic use of *nǐ*. Metalinguistic *nǐ* 'acted as a vocative, attracting the listener's attention to the propositional content, and demonstrating the speaker's emphasis on what they are saying' (p. 314). This usage is illustrated in (75).

(75)(F is emphasising the importance of education for the development of medicine.)

- 1F. Jiaoyu shiye fanzhanle yihou keyi peiyang geng duo de  
Education enterprise develop after can train still more-ASS
- 2 yisheng, eh zhei shi yifangmian danshi  
doctor eh this be one-side but
- 3 ruguo bu, ah?  
If NEG what?
- 4M. zhei shi yi, yi, yi, yiyao jiaoyu  
This be medicine education
- 5F. jiushi yiyao, dui ma, **ni**  
just medicine right PRT 2s
- 6 zhengger de xuexiao ye duo le, eh, shang xiaoxue shang  
whole ASS school also more CRS eh go elem-school go
- 7 zhongxue de ren dou duo le name shang yixueyuan de  
mid-school ASS person all more CRS then go med-school ASS
- 8 ren ye duo le, zhei shi yi fangmian.  
person also more CRS this be one side

F. Once education is developed many more doctors can be trained. Uh,  
this is one point but  
If not, ah?

M. This is med-, med-, med, medical education

F. Just medicine, surely, (**ni**) the number  
of schools on the whole increases, eh, the number of people going to  
grade schools and middle schools increases, then the number of people  
going to medical schools will increase, too. This is one point. (Biq 1991, p.  
314-315)

*Nǐ* in line 5 did not belong to the propositional content of argument in lines 6-8. For the purpose of drawing and increasing the addressee's attention to the upcoming talk,

*nǐ* operated as ‘a vocative at the speech act level’ (Biq 1991, p. 315). The use of *nǐ* in (75) is neither impersonal nor dramatic, but is strictly metalinguistic. (Biq 1991, p. 315)

Kuo (2003) analysed the pragmatic roles and discourse functions of first and second person pronouns in 24 hours of videotaped data of televised sports programs in Taiwan. Kuo (2003) identified two types of non-canonical uses of second person *ni*. One is impersonal *ni*, which is similar to that in Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990); the other is dramatic *ni*, which is identical to that in Biq (1991). Moreover, first person *wo* was also found to be used in dramatic use. Kuo (2003) pointed out that the use of impersonal *ni* conveyed a sense of camaraderie, as the addressee was no longer the passive recipient of information from the speaker, and the speaker assigned the addressee an active role to share the world view with (p. 487). This could be seen as inviting the addressee to empathise, which is argued to be a typical pragmatic feature of impersonal use of *you* in Gast et al. (2015).

Dramatic *ni/wo* were found in direct speech. The uses of *ni* or *wo* in the direct quotes established interpersonal involvement between the speaker and addressee. The speaker assumed the voice of one of the characters (i.e., a player in the sports game) in the described situation, such as Kobe Bryant in instance (76) below.

(76) Rang women kandao Kobe Bryant zhendeshi bu jiandan a,  
yue guanjian de shike ta yue gan da,  
jihushi gei Hurendue de qiuyuan shuo,  
→ ‘O’Neal xiaqu mei guanxi,  
→ **wo** haishi neng dailing nimen qude shengli’

We see Kobe Bryant is really something,  
the more critical the time, the more daring he is,  
it’s almost like he’s telling Lakers’ players,  
→ ‘It doesn’t matter that O’Neal is out,  
→ **I** can still lead you to victory’ (Kuo 2003, p. 488)

*Ni* and *wo* in dramatic use did not refer to the speaker (the sports reporter), but to the sports player in the discourse (Kuo 2003, p. 487). The dramatic uses of *ni/wo* in direct speech discussed by Kuo (2003) are classed as canonical in this study.

Hsiao (2011) investigated the interchanges of the first person singular *wǒ* 我 (*I*) and second person singular *nǐ* 你 (*you sg.*) in conversations. She explored why and how these two personal pronouns can be used far beyond the traditional grammar (p. 799).

Hsiao (2011) distinguished three types of interchanges: (a) first person pronoun *wǒ* was used to indicate the interlocutor; (b) second person pronoun *nǐ* was used to indicate the speaker himself; (c) second person pronoun *nǐ* was used to indicate an unspecified person outside the speaker and listener. *Nǐ* in the third type was called ‘generic you’ in her paper (p. 801). Hsiao (2011) focused majorly on the first two interchange patterns. Example (77) illustrates the second type of interchange, where the actor ‘Wang’ responded to the host about his competitive relationship with

another actor ‘Ming’.

(77)[Acting in a play]

370. Wang: (0) 我們 好 愛 講 戲 喔.\_  
women hao ai jiang xi o  
1PL very much enjoy talk about play PTC

371. Host: (0) 恩=\_

en  
hmm

372. Wang: ..他 就 在 講 說,\_  
ta jiu zai jiang shou  
3SG then ASP say COMP

373. ..他— 他 每次 比如 說 我 在 演 的時候,\_  
ta ta meici biru shou wo zai yan deshihou  
3SG 3SG every for COMP 1SG ASP play when  
time example

→374. ..他 會 跟 你 講 這個 應該 怎麼樣,\_  
ta hui gen ni jiang zhege yinggai zenmeyang  
3SG ASP to 2SG say this should how

375. ..他 在 演 的時候 我 會 說,\_  
Ta zai yan deshihou wo hui shou  
3SG ASP play when 1SG ASP say

376. ..你 這個 再 多 一點點,\_  
Ni zhege zai duo yidiandian  
2SG this again more a little

377. ..這個 情形 多 一點 會 更 好看.\_  
zhege qingxing duo yidian hui geng haokan  
this scene more a little ASP more impressive

Wang: ‘We [me and Ming] enjoy talking about play and acting very much.’

Host: ‘Hmm.’

Wang: ‘He [Ming] would say, he— he gives comments when I am acting, he will tell **you** how to make the playing even better. On the contrary, in his acting I will also give comments such as ‘You can make the acting more impressive by putting more [emotion] a little bit’.’ (Hsiao 2011, p. 802)

Hsiao (2011, p. 802) pointed out that in line 374, *nǐ* in fact refers to the actor ‘Wang’ himself. ‘Wang’ used *nǐ* as if the host (the listener) were him, and the host was receiving acting suggestions from Ming.

Hsiao (2011) also discussed the pragmatic functions of personal pronoun interchanges and the motivation for the interchange patterns. *Wǒ* has two pragmatic functions: one was to ‘reveal listener’s inner thoughts’ (p. 804). The speaker used *wǒ* to represent the listener’s inner thought. Thus, the discourse is a manifestation of perspectives from both sides (the speaker and listener). The other function was to

demonstrate the speaker understood what the listener said and to express the speaker's attitudes (p. 804). *Nǐ* also had two pragmatic functions. One is to 'cite instances' (p. 805). For example, in (77), the speaker (the actor 'Wang') used *nǐ* to cite the other actor Ming's acting comments on him ('Wang'). *Nǐ* was used as if the listener (the host) had experienced the conversation with the other actor 'Ming' in person, but *nǐ* refers to the speaker 'Wang' himself. Another pragmatic function of *nǐ* is to 'present conclusions' (Hsiao 2011, p. 805). When an argument was introduced, *nǐ* was embedded to 'take the listener through the speaker's logic', as if it was the listener who had developed the argument and finally arrived at the conclusion (Hsiao 2011, p. 805). In terms of the motivation behind the interchanges of *wǒ* and *nǐ*, Hsiao (2011) attributed it to intersubjectivity. She also argued that when we use *nǐ* to refer to a speaker or use *wǒ* to refer to a listener, both methods can improve the communicative effect by considering both parties' perspectives (Hsiao 2011, p.818).

In conclusion, Biq (1991) and Hsiao (2011) analysed the different aspects of non-canonical uses of Chinese first person *wǒ* 我(*I*) and second person *nǐ* 你(*you*). Biq (1991) distinguished the three non-canonical uses of *nǐ*, and found that both the impersonal and dramatic uses could illustrate 'the pragmatically motivated blurring of the demarcation between the described situation and the discourse situation' (p. 319). Hsiao (2011), on the other hand, applied the conversational and discourse analyses into her research, and focused on syntactic properties, discourse and pragmatic functions of the interchanges. However, neither of them carried out a systematic pragmatic and discourse analysis of all the non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese.

## **2.3 Existing comparisons between Chinese and English non-canonical pronoun uses**

Impersonal uses of personal pronouns, especially the second person, have been well documented to be a universal phenomenon cross-linguistically (cf. Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990; Siewierska 2004; Malchukov & Siewierska 2011; Malamud 2012; Helmbrecht 2015; Gruber 2017). In previous studies, scholars have compared the impersonal uses of English pronouns with pronouns in other languages, such as German (Behrens 2005; Malamud 2012; Zobel 2012; Gast 2015), Dutch (van der Auwera et al. 2012; Gruber 2017), and several European languages (Siewierska & Papastathi 2011; Gast & van der Auwera 2013). However, the comparison between English personal pronouns and their Chinese counterparts in non-canonical uses has received less attention compared to other languages. In this section, I will discuss the existing comparisons between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses in a sequence of first, second and third person pronouns.

In general, prior studies that compared English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses concentrated mainly on the types, i.e., different categorisations of non-canonical pronoun uses. The non-canonical uses of the first and second person pronouns have been more frequently discussed than non-canonical third person pronoun uses.

Generic uses and interchanges have been more often discussed than other non-canonical types such as shifts involving generality and unisex uses. In addition, as far as I am aware, using a theoretical approach to account for both English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses is rare in the existing literature.

Chen (2009b) carried out a comparison of English and Chinese personal pronouns from a macroscopic and microscopic perspective. Micro-contrast compares first, second and third person pronouns from the two languages and macro-contrast looks at collocations, reference, and frequency of use. When Chen (2009b) compared the similarities and differences of reference between English and Chinese, he discussed the ‘generic reference’ and ‘empty reference’, which are the joint features of these two languages (p. 42). An example of ‘generic reference’ in English can be observed in (78).

(78) **You** can’t smoke in the reading room. (Chen 2009b, p. 44)

In (78), it is not only *you* who can not smoke in the reading room, neither can anybody else. Chinese generic *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) is like English generic *you*. For instance, *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) in (79) includes everybody, rather than refers to a particular person or a particular *you* (Chen 2009b, p.44):

(79) Fánshì fǎndòng de dōngxi, **nǐ** bù dǎ, tājiù bù dǎo.  
凡是反动的东西，**你**不打，他就不倒。（毛泽东《抗日战争胜利后的时局和我们的方针》）  
Everything reactionary, if **you** do not fight, he will not fall. (Zedong Mao, *Current situation and our policy after the victory of anti-Japanese war*, cited by Chen (2009b, p. 44))

However, Chen (2009b) did not include any discussion of the interchange of personal pronouns in English and Chinese, and the comparison between English and Chinese non-canonical uses was not the main focus in his thesis.

Yang (2001) carried out a contrastive study of English and Chinese deixis. In the chapter of person deixis, he focused on the similarities and differences between Chinese and English first, second and third personal pronouns. Yang (2001) argued that Chinese first person singular *wǒ* 我(*I*) could be used to refer to an uncertain person or an uncertain group of people, as can be seen in (80) and (81).

(80) Wǒmen yào wèi shíxiàn sì gè xiàndàihuà ér wàng **wǒ** láodòng.  
我们要为实现四个现代化而忘**我**劳动。  
We want to achieve the four modernisations and work selflessly hard (even forget **myself**). (Yang 2001, p. 11)

(81) Xíngshì yǒu lì yú **wǒ**, ér bù lì yú dǐ.  
形势有利于**我**，而不利于敌。  
The situation is conducive to **me**, but not conducive to the enemy. (Yang 2001,

*Wǒ* 我(*I*) was also likely to co-occur with the second person *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) and third person *tā* 他(*he*) in pairs, as in (82)<sup>10</sup>, where *wǒ* 我(*I*), *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*), and *tā* 他(*he*) do not refer to any specific or particular person in the sentence.

(82) Dàjiā **nǐ** qī áo **wǒ**, **wǒ** kàn kàn **tā**, bùzhī zěnmē huídá.

大家你瞧我，我看看他，不知怎么回答。

Everyone **you** look at **me**, **I** look at **him**, don't know how to answer. (Yang 2001, p. 11)

According to Yang (2001), the non-canonical uses of *we* in English include 'editorial *we*', 'we for you' and 'we for a third person (= he/she)'. In terms of the second person pronouns, Yang (2001, p. 13-14) noted that both English and Chinese had a generic use of the second person pronoun, and both the second person pronoun could refer to the first person singular. Specifically, the second person plural *nǐmen* 你们(*you pl.*) in Chinese could also interchange with the first person plural *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) in the context in (83)<sup>11</sup>.

(83) Wǒ xiāngxìn, **wǒmen** (= **nǐmen**) měi gè qīngnián tóngzhì yīdìng búhuì gūfù

我相信，我们 (= 你们) 每个青年同志一定不会辜负

dǎng hé guójiā duì **wǒmen** (= **nǐmen**) de qīwàng.

党和国家对我们 (= 你们) 的期望。

I believe that each of **us** (= **you plural**) young comrades will live up to the expectations the party and the country put upon on **us** (= **you plural**). (Yang 2001, p. 14)

There were not too many similarities between Chinese and English third person pronouns in terms of the non-canonical uses. Yang (2001) indicated that *he* in English could be used generically (p. 16), and *tā* 他(*he*) in Chinese could be used to emphasise a statement and denote something that is uncertain (p. 15), as in (84), which can be classified as discourse marker use in this study.

(84) Sūn shīfu shuō: 'Lèi sǐ le, zhēn xiǎng shuì

孙师傅说：“累死了，真想睡

Sun master said worn out modal particle really want sleep

**tā** gè liǎng sān tiān!'

他 个 两 三 天！”

**he** quantifier two three day

Master Sun said: '[I am] worn out, really want to sleep [**he**] two or three days!'

<sup>10</sup> Instance (82) is similar to instance (7) discussed briefly in Chapter 1.

<sup>11</sup> Yang (2001) did not indicate who the speaker was in (83). The interchange between *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) and *nǐmen* 你们(*you pl.*) would be more evident if the speaker in (83) was a party leader instead of one of the young comrades.

(Yang 2001, p. 16)

Yan & Siewierska (2011) considered referential impersonal constructions in Mandarin Chinese and also compared Chinese impersonal uses of personal pronouns with English impersonal uses. They argued that one important difference between English impersonal *we* and *you* and Chinese impersonal *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) and *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) was the genre they appeared in. Sometimes *we* and *you* were used impersonally in the subject position in English proverbs, whereas their Chinese counterparts were not the preferred subjects in such sentences (p. 561), as can be seen in the contrast between (85)a and (85)b. The second person *you* is obligatory in (85)a, but the use of *wǒmen* or *nǐ* in (85)b was argued to be less idiomatic (p. 561).

(85)a. **You** may take a horse to the water, but **you** can not make him drink.

b. ? **wǒ-men/nǐ** kěyǐ bǎ mǎ qiāndào  
1PL/2SG can ba-particle horse take  
hé biān, dànshì bù néng qǐng dǎ hē shuǐ  
river side but NEG can force 3SG:N drink water (Yan &  
Siewierska 2011, p. 561)

In terms of third person pronouns, Chinese third singular *tā* was able to be used impersonally when it referred to a non-specific antecedent, as ‘yīgerén’ in (86).

(86) Yī-ge rén zhǐyào bǎnyǎn-le yī-zhǒng shèhuì juésè,  
one-CL person as long as play-PEF one-CL: type social role  
**tā** jiù huì mǎnman de ànzhào zhège  
3 then will slowly ADV according to this-CL  
juésède yāoqiú qù zuò  
role ASS requirement to do  
‘Once a person assumes a social role, **he** will gradually act according to the requirements of that role.’ (Yan & Siewierska 2011, p. 562)

Although third person plural pronouns had been attested to be the most common form of referential impersonal devices cross-linguistically and impersonal *they* is found in English (cf. Siewierska & Papastathi 2011), Chinese third person plural *tāmen* was seldom used impersonally (Yan & Siewierska 2011, p. 562).

Apart from the above observations, there are some studies which focus simply on the comparison of one type of personal pronouns (i.e., first, second or third person) between English and Chinese in their non-canonical uses. What follows is a detailed discussion of the existing comparisons in the order of first, second and third person pronouns.

### 2.3.1 First person pronouns

Miao (2011) argued that the first person singular pronoun *wǒ* 我(*I*) in Chinese had five non-canonical uses: *wǒ* 我(*I*) refers to the first person plural, the third person singular, the third person plural, the second person singular, and is used for ‘generic reference’. In English, on the other hand, she argued that there were no non-canonical uses of the first singular *I*. However, with respect to the first person plural *we*, Chinese and English shared the same non-canonical uses, i.e., *we* refers to the first person singular, to the second person singular, and to the third person plural. Moreover, Chinese *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) could also refer to the second person plural.

Xu (2010) agreed that the first person plural *we* in English and *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) in Chinese can both be used to refer to the first person singular (p. 23), as well as to the second person singular and plural (p. 23). They were both argued to have ‘general reference’ (as in (87) and (88)) and ‘empty reference’ (as in (89) and (90)) (Xu 2010, p. 22).

- (87) Tīng shuō guózú rèshēn sài yíng le fǎguó duì, zhēn de ma?  
——听 说 国足 热身 赛 赢了 法国 队，真 的 吗？  
Shì zhēn de a, zhēn gěi **wǒmen** zhēng le kǒu qì!  
——是 真 的 啊，真 给 我 们 争 了 口 气！  
--- [I] heard that national football team won over French team in warm-up match, really?  
--- Yes, it's real, really cheers **us** up. (Xu 2010, p. 22)
- (88) **We** know not what is good until we have lost it. (Xu 2010, p. 22)
- (89) **We** have 366 days in a leap year. (Xu 2010, p. 22)
- (90) Yǒu **wǒmen** zhè wèi lǎo shū, nǐ xiǎng tīng gē róngyì, yào duōshǎo, yǒu duōshǎo.  
有 我 们 这 位 老 叔，你 想 听 歌 容 易，要 多 少，有 多 少。  
There **we** have this youngest uncle, [it's] easy for you to listen to the music, [we] have as much as [you] want. (Xu 2010, p. 23)

According to Xu (2010), *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) in (87) and *we* in (88) both have a general meaning in referring to ‘everyone’ (p. 22). *We* in (89) and *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) in (90) have empty references, as they do not refer to any specific group. The use of *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) was to close the distance between the speaker and addressee. (Xu 2010, p. 22-23)

### 2.3.2 Second person pronouns

Zhang & Lu (2013) mentioned that the second person pronouns in English and Chinese could both be used as ‘generic reference’ and also refer to the first person

pronouns (p. 71). Wang (2009) in particular, pointed out that the second person pronoun in English and Chinese could refer to the first person plural *we* (underlined) and *wǒmen* 我们(*we*) (underlined) respectively, as illustrated in (91) and (92).

- (91) Píngyuán jūn fūrén——dàjiā yì tiáo xīn, sǐ shǒu zhe wǒmen de dūchéng.  
平原君夫人——大家一条心，死守着 我们 的都城。  
Wǒmen shòuguò Chángpíng de cántòng jiàoxùn, jíshǐ nǐ tóuxiàng le, dírén  
我们 受过长平的惨痛教训，即使你投降了，敌人  
yě yào bǎ nǐ zǎnjìnshājué Suǒyǐ wǒmen dōu nǐngkěn zhàn sǐ, bú yuàn zài bèi  
也要把你斩尽杀绝。所以 我们 都宁肯战死，不愿再被  
rén túsā.  
人屠杀。（《郭沫若剧作选》 221 页）

Lady Pingyuan – we all have one mind, [we] will protect our capital until [we] die. We have received a painful lesson from Changping, even if **you** surrender, the enemy will annihilate **you**. So we would rather die fighting, than be slaughtered. (Guo Moruo, *Guo Moruo's play selection*, p. 221, cited by Wang (2009, p. 107))

- (92) **You** learned to respond to her every whim and eccentricity, and had your parents invite her to supper. Your mothers phone her to see if **you** were being 'good' and 'working' hard, - We knew we were the teachers' favorites. (Wang 2009, p. 107)

In addition, Zhang & Lu (2013, p. 71) claimed that the second person pronouns in English and Chinese could both refer to the third person plural in examples like (93) and (94).

- (93) Shíjì shàng, Námòwēn duìdài wàitōu gōngrén, yě bìng bù zě yàng kèqì,  
实际上，拿莫温对待外头工人，也并不怎样客气，  
yīnwéi chúle dǎmà zhī wài, hái yǒu gèng qiǎomiào de fāngfǎ, pìrú pài  
因为除了打骂之外，还有更巧妙的方法，譬如派  
gěi nǐ nán zuò de 'shēnghuó', huòzhě tiào nǐ qù zuò bù yuàn yù zuò de  
给你难做的“生活”，或者调你去不愿意去做的  
gōngzuò.  
工作。（夏衍《包身工》）

In fact, Na Mowen did not treat workers from outside, very polite neither, because in addition to beating and scolding, there are cleverer ways, such as to assign **you** difficult 'tasks', or transfer **you** to do some work you do not want to. (Xia Yan, *Bonded labourer*, cited by Zhang & Lu (2013, p. 71))

- (94) To those who would tear the world down: We will defeat **you**. To those who seek peace and security: We support **you**? (Obama's campaign speech in 2008, cited by Zhang & Lu (2013, p. 71))

According to Zhang & Lu (2013), *nǐ* 你(*you sg.*) was used instead of the third person plural in (93) to refer to the topic - the workers from outside. Similarly, *you* was used instead of *they* in (94) to strengthen the speaker's strong and determined emotions (p. 71).<sup>12</sup>

Miao (2011, p. 98) offered a summary about the similarities and differences of the non-canonical uses of second person pronoun in Chinese and English in her paper, which are tabulated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Non-canonical uses of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *you* in Miao (2011)

Nǐ 你( <i>you sg.</i> )	You
Generic reference	Generic reference
Refer to <i>nǐmen</i> 你们( <i>you pl.</i> )	Refer to <i>I</i>
Refer to <i>wǒmen</i> 我们( <i>we</i> ) or <i>zánmen</i> 咱们 ( <i>we</i> )	Refer to a third party, or a second party in hypothetical situations
Refer to <i>wǒ</i> 我( <i>I</i> )	
Refer to <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	

### 2.3.3 Third person pronouns

Chen & Wu (2011) compared 'singular they' in English with the plural use of 'ta (it/he/she)' in Chinese. Their paper was based on the claims of Borthen (2010), who argued that 'plural pronouns may appear linguistically less 'well-behaved' than their singular correspondents, in the sense that the cognitive status encoded by plural pronouns is less restrictive than that encoded by singular pronouns', and there is 'an asymmetry between plural and singular pronouns' (p. 1813-1814).

Chen & Wu (2011) provided supportive evidence for Borthen (2010)'s findings that 'plural pronouns are referentially less well-behaved' by examining the plural pronoun *they* in English. Consider example (95).

(95) It is the situation that will face the next president of United States when **they** take office just over a year from now. (Chen & Wu 2011, p. 408)

*They* in (95) is morphologically plural, however, it was used to refer to a singular antecedent - the next president of United States. Chen & Wu (2011) questioned why the speaker used a plural pronoun to refer to a singular antecedent. They argued that as 'the next president of United States' in (95) is unknown in identity and gender, thus it can 'functionally denote a plural entity (a group of entities, i.e., a class of candidates)' (p. 408). In this case, the lexically encoded number features of *they* in English is incompatible with the singular interpretation of *they* in (95), thus it

<sup>12</sup> In my point of view, instance (94) looks like a direct speech, and we would expect *you* to be used instead of *they* according to the context in (94).

supported Borthen (2010)'s claim that 'plural pronouns are linguistically less well-behaved in terms of reference'.

However, Chen & Wu (2011) also provided counter-evidence against Borthen (2010)'s claim about 'the asymmetry between plural and singular pronouns' by showing that the singular pronoun *ta* in Chinese can also 'be less well-behaved and less restrictive in terms of reference'. For instance, the third person singular pronoun *ta* (*it*) in Chinese can be used as plural, as can be seen in examples (96) and (97).

(96) Neixie gua, women yao chi le ta.  
Those melon 1PL should eat ASP 3SG  
'Those melons, we must eat them.' (Cited from Wu & Matthews 2010, p. 1805)

(97) Zhe bang xiaotou, jingchu henbude sha le ta.  
This gang thieves police would-rather kill ASP 3SG  
'This gang of thieves, the police would rather kill them.' (Cited from Xu 1999, p. 5)

*Ta* (*it*) is morphologically singular, but it refers to 'those melons' and 'this gang of thieves' in (96) and (97) respectively, where the melons and thieves are treated as a single collective entity (Chen & Wu 2011, p. 408-409). If compared the above three examples, we will note that Chinese *ta* semantically denotes a plural entity while English *they* denotes a singular entity (Chen & Wu 2011, p. 409). Therefore, Borthen (2010)'s claim that 'there is an asymmetry between plural and singular pronouns' does not seem to be applicable to languages universally.

Chen & Wu (2011) tested Borthen (2010)'s claims by investigating and comparing the third person pronouns in English and Chinese. However, they did not carry out a wider comparison and theoretical analysis of non-canonical pronoun uses in these two languages.

## 2.4 Research focus

It seems that there are some gaps in the existing literature of English, Chinese and the comparison between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses. Firstly, the categorisation of non-canonical pronoun uses in previous studies focused mostly on the impersonal uses, more specifically, second person *you*. Non-canonical uses of third person pronouns have largely been neglected. Secondly, several theories have been proposed to capture some non-canonical uses in English and Chinese, but they seemed to be unable to capture the relation between the form of personal pronoun and its intended referents, and between the pronoun and the generalisation effect in generic use. Thirdly, the investigation of the non-canonical pronoun uses in English in the literature has been rather sporadic and non-systematic. Most of the research on Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses was based on written Chinese, with less attention

being paid to the spoken Chinese.

In the present study, I carry out a systematic exploration of NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses based on data from two oral corpora. Particular attention is given to the comparison of non-canonical pronoun uses between spoken NZE and spoken Chinese. The similarities (primarily generic uses and shift uses involving generality) identified in the two corpus samples will be accounted for with pragmatic approaches. More specifically, I adopt the approach of Gast et al. (2015): their categorisation and their pragmatic models. The reason for adopting the approach of Gast et al. (2015) is twofold: (a) their categorisation is able to capture the similar non-canonical uses shared by NZE and Chinese identified in my two samples. (b) their models are not only able to capture the generic uses and shift uses (involving generality) found in NZE, but also can be extended to those found in Chinese. The differences between NZE and Chinese non-canonical uses will be examined from the perspectives of language properties and cultural norms.

The research aim of this study is to empirically examine the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in spoken NZE and spoken Chinese by looking at two oral corpora - Canterbury Corpus and Beijing Oral Corpus. I focus on what types of non-canonical uses can be identified and how the pronouns are used non-canonically in the wider discourse context. Moreover, I also aim to theoretically apply Gast et al. (2015)'s approach to the account of the generic uses and shift uses involving generality in NZE and extend the approach to the explanation of the same uses in Chinese.

In Chapter 3, I will introduce the data and methodology employed in this study, as well as the issues encountered in the data selection and methodology.

## Chapter 3 Data and Methodology

### 3.1 Data sources

Since researchers have already investigated non-canonical uses of Chinese personal pronouns using the written corpus of the Centre for Chinese Linguistics PKU (CCL), I decided to compare and contrast non-canonical uses in spoken English and spoken Chinese, and base my research on oral corpus data.

#### 3.1.1 English

My main data source for English non-canonical pronoun uses is the Canterbury Corpus (CC) from the Origins of New Zealand English (ONZE) archives.

All the information about the Canterbury Corpus provided here is based on Gordon et al. (2007, p. 82-104). The Canterbury Corpus (CC) has been collected since 1994 by students in the Linguistics Department of the University of Canterbury as part of courses on New Zealand English and sociolinguistics. Approximately 466 speakers were interviewed. All were born in New Zealand and most come from the Canterbury region. The speakers were engaged by having a conversation with the interviewer and reading a prepared word-list. The topics covered in the CC interviews include life, education, family, work and hobbies. The background information of speakers includes their gender, year of birth, socio-economic status. The recordings were mainly made on audio cassettes. In order to preserve copies of this archive, all of the audio cassettes were transferred to audio CDs. Also, WAV format CDs were also made. Conventional spelling was used in the transcripts of those recordings. For my study, I used the digital version of the corpus, which is under the ONZE Miner (<https://labbcats.canterbury.ac.nz/onze/>). The ONZE Miner consists of three corpora, and the CC is one of them. The corpus searching can also be achieved with the LaBB-CAT software developed at the University of Canterbury, which can be downloaded from <https://sourceforge.net/projects/labbcats/files/install/>.

#### 3.1.2 Chinese

My main data source for Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses is the Beijing Oral Corpus from the Beijing Oral Corpus Query System<sup>13</sup> (BJKY) developed by the Institute of Linguistic Studies, Beijing Language and Culture University.

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<sup>13</sup> All the information about the Beijing Oral Corpus Query System provided in 3.1.2 is extracted from a PDF file that introduces the Beijing Oral Corpus Query System. The link to this online PDF file is [http://app.blcu.edu.cn/yys/6\\_beijing/wenjian/北京口语语料查询系统简介.pdf](http://app.blcu.edu.cn/yys/6_beijing/wenjian/北京口语语料查询系统简介.pdf). This PDF file can also be found on the Beijing Oral Corpus Query System website page ([http://app.blcu.edu.cn/yys/6\\_beijing/6\\_beijing\\_chaxun.asp](http://app.blcu.edu.cn/yys/6_beijing/6_beijing_chaxun.asp)).

The Beijing Oral Survey commenced in 1981 by international students who came to Beijing to study at the Beijing Language and Culture College (current Beijing Language and Culture University). In accordance with the principles of sociolinguistic judgment sampling, approximately 500 speakers who were born and grew up in Beijing were interviewed and recorded, yielding a total of 210 cassette tapes. However, only interviews with 374 speakers on 120 cassette tapes turned out to be usable.

The full version of the Beijing Oral Corpus is based on the Beijing Oral Survey. It consists of: (a) audio corpus files (wav. format) transferred from 119 cassette tapes, comprising 370 speakers; (b) 1.84 million words of transcribed text corresponding to these audio files. The recordings of four speakers' data are missing.

In order to allow more people to get easy access to the Beijing Oral Corpus for inquiry and research, the Institute of Linguistic Studies at Beijing Language and Culture University developed the Beijing Oral Corpus Query System (BJKY) based on the Beijing Oral Corpus, which is public and free to everyone. The BJKY comprises 1.84 million words of transcribed text. Speaker information provided by the BJKY includes year of birth, gender, education and occupation. Interview topics include living condition, family, study, work, life, personal experiences, which are quite similar to the interview topics covered in the CC.

## **3.2 Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Quantitative or qualitative analysis?**

To date, most of the previous studies on the flexible uses of personal pronouns in Chinese (cf. Nie 1959; Sun 1981; Biq 1991; Wang 1995; Zhang 1995a; Zhang 2001; Hsiao 2011; Huang 2012 and others, see Chapter 2) and on the impersonal uses of personal pronouns in English (cf. Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990; Kamio 2001; Stirling & Manderson 2011; Gast et al. 2015 and others, see Chapter 2) have focused on a qualitative analysis. I also note that Posio (2016) recently conducted a quantitative analysis of the impersonal second person singular and first person plural in Spanish using a corpus of sociolinguistic interviews. The analysis carried out in this study will be qualitative.

A qualitative analysis is more appropriate for the topic I have chosen and the data sources allow me to carry out a detailed qualitative analysis. I attempted to select the range of speakers to be as wide as possible, so that I can maximise the possibility to obtain as many different types of non-canonical pronoun uses as possible. However, the contexts and interview topics for each speaker are not easy to control. The interview topics of the BJKY are similar to the CC, but they are still not exactly identical. Context is crucial for non-canonical uses to occur, but it can not be exactly the same for each speaker even if they discuss the same topic. The speakers do not have equal opportunities to produce the same non-canonical uses due to the

intricateness and variability of the contexts. And so if I carried out a quantitative analysis, it would be meaningless. Instead, if I perform my study qualitatively, it will allow me to determine the exact function of each non-canonical use. Moreover, it was not my intention to conduct a quantitative analysis in the first place when I was first intrigued by this research topic. I acknowledge people have taken research on the impersonal uses of personal pronouns, no matter which language, from the perspective of quantitative analysis, but qualitative analysis is more appropriate for addressing my research questions in this study.

### **3.2.2 Speaker selection**

This is a comparative study. In order to efficiently address my research questions, a relatively proper amount of speakers for my sample was concerned for the detailed qualitative analysis carried out in the thesis. Sociolinguistic factors such as age group, gender and social class were considered in the selection of speakers in order to obtain a manageable and heterogeneous sample dataset, which would yield as wide a variety of non-canonical uses as possible. Speakers in the CC were born between 1930 and 1984, and speakers in the BJKY were born between 1901 and 1972. For the sake of comparability, only the overlapping years of birth were included, i.e., speakers born between 1930 and 1972.

The entire sample used for my study consists of 64 speakers in total, 32 each from the CC and the BJKY. The procedures for selecting the speakers were as follows:

Firstly, the speakers were divided into two large groups (Group 1 and Group 2) according to their year of birth, taking the year 1950 as a cut-off date, for two reasons: (a) each group spanning 20 years would be a good time period to manifest language differences between two generations; (b) the People's Republic of China was found in 1949. There could be some changes in language use after the establishment of a new country and newly released government policies.

Next, these two groups were divided into two subgroups according to gender.

Last, in each subgroup, equally half numbers of the speakers are professionals, and the other half are non-professionals.

Therefore, each sample covers 8 cells, and each cell contains 4 speakers with the same gender and social class. The sampling of speakers for the CC is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Speaker sample for the Canterbury Corpus (CC)

Group 1: 1930-1950		
	Professional	Non-professional
Male	4	4
Female	4	4
Group 2: 1951-1972		
	Professional	Non-professional
Male	4	4
Female	4	4

With reference to the quota sample, I manually selected the 32 speakers for the CC sample by taking into account gender, year of birth and social class. Also, the interview recording time was also considered. Some speakers were only being interviewed for less than 5 minutes. In order to obtain a reasonable amount of speech data from each speaker for my analysis, I opted for the speakers whose recordings are approximately between 25 minutes and 75 minutes long.<sup>14</sup> Where I found more than four speakers fitting the criteria for a cell in Table 3.1, speakers with longer recording times were prioritised and favoured over those who with shorter recording times. Eventually, a relatively evenly distributed sample of speakers for the CC was finalised. The detailed breakdown of the sample is presented in Table 3.2.

<sup>14</sup> This includes the time it took for speakers to read the word list.

Table 3.2 The distribution of selected speakers from the Canterbury Corpus (CC)

Number	Speaker ID <sup>15</sup>	Gender <sup>16</sup>	Year of Birth	Social Class <sup>17</sup>
1	Mop03-2b	M	1938	P
2	Mop94-6a	M	1947	P
3	Mop96-26b	M	1940	P
4	Mop94-22c	M	1943	P
5	Mon99-16a	M	1950	N
6	Mon95-1a	M	1932	N
7	Mon94-23b	M	1934	N
8	Mon99-3	M	1947	N
9	Fop94-19b	F	1947	P
10	Fop95-10	F	1948	P
11	Fop95-27	F	1937	P
12	Fop94-7	F	1944	P
13	Fon96-16	F	1933	N
14	Fon94-8b	F	1946	N
15	Fon95-18a	F	1949	N
16	Fon94-34b	F	1943	N
17	Mop01-16b	M	1955	P
18	Mop05-1	M	1959	P
19	Myp94-34a	M	1970	P
20	Myp97-14b	M	1968	P
21	Mon02-4	M	1956	N
22	Mon03-3b	M	1958	N
23	Myn95-11a	M	1971	N
24	Myn96-8a	M	1966	N
25	Fop98-4b	F	1953	P
26	Fop02-8	F	1955	P
27	Fyp94-29a	F	1968	P
28	Fyp94-24	F	1966	P
29	Fyn95-14	F	1964	N
30	Fon95-5b	F	1954	N
31	Fyn95-13	F	1965	N
32	Fyn95-5a	F	1969	N

As can be seen in Table 3.2, the first four speakers are all professional males who belong to Group 1, the second four speakers are all non-professional males who also

<sup>15</sup> The speaker ID in this column was used in the CC corpus. It gives the basic information about the speaker: the gender, age group at time of recording (older vs. younger), socio-economic status, and the year of the interview. For instance, the speaker ‘Mop03-2b’ is a male, older, professional speaker, and he was interviewed in 2003.

<sup>16</sup> In the gender column, ‘M’ is male, ‘F’ is female. These two capitalised abbreviations also apply to the gender column in Table 3.3.

<sup>17</sup> In the social class column, ‘P’ is professional, ‘N’ is non-professional.

belong to Group 1, the third four speakers are all professional females who belong to Group 1, and the fourth four speakers are all non-professional females who belong to Group 1. Likewise for the allocation of the rest of 16 speakers who belong to Group 2.

Since this study focuses on the comparison between English and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses, it is important to select a as close as possible sample of speakers from each corpus, so as to further yield a creditable and valid comparative result. Therefore, the selection of speakers for the BJKY also referred to the quota sample, and was similar to the speaker selection in the CC, i.e., taking into account the speaker's gender, year of birth and social class. However, the BJKY used for this study does not contain social class of any interviewed speakers. In fact, social class had to be assigned to the speakers in the CC as well. I will introduce how assignment of social class to speakers was carried out in the CC in the next paragraph, and then describe how I assigned social class for the BJKY. The CC method is predominantly derived from Gordon et al. (2007, p. 93) and partially from Maclagan & Gordon (1999, p. 52-53). The limitations of such a coding of social class classification (professional vs non-professional) are also readily acknowledged in both papers. For example, rich people like farmers can claim very low incomes for tax purposes. Some popular occupations nowadays such as counsellors were not listed in the scale.

The interviewers of CC had collected some personal information from the interviewees including their education, occupation and even the occupations of their parents. A social class was assigned to the speakers in the CC according to the combination of information about their occupation with information about their education level, a method which was widely used among the social scientists in New Zealand at that time. Both the coding of speaker's occupation and educational level used a six-point scale. The lower the number, the higher the rating. Professional occupations such as doctor, lawyer and university lecturer with a PhD or a higher tertiary degree had a higher rank on the scale; whereas someone without any educational qualification in menial occupations such as domestic cleaner had a lower rank. The scores for education and occupation were combined and added together to determine the speaker's social class, ranging from 2 (high) to 12 (low). The speakers in the professional groups in the CC have average scores between 4 and 4.5; while the speakers in non-professional groups hold average scores between 8.5 and 9.5.

In order to obtain a relatively similar distributed speaker sample as the CC for the BJKY, i.e., have equal numbers of professionals and non-professionals for each cell (cf. Table 3.1), I also resorted to the method of combining the speaker's education level with their occupation to select the sample speakers from the BJKY.

Based on the speakers' information provided in the BJKY, a speaker who is a doctor and has a university or higher tertiary degree was coded as professional. A speaker who is a worker and only has a primary school degree was coded as non-professional. To simplify the selection, I chose speakers who are doctors, high school teachers, cadres and police officers to be in the 'professional' groups to match up with the professionals in the CC, and chose speakers who are workers, salespersons, street cadres and ticket officers to be in the 'non-professional' groups to pair with the non-professionals in the CC. In China, it is well-known that people who

are doctors, high school teachers, cadres and police officers, will normally hold a higher education qualification than people who are workers, salespersons, street cadres and ticket officers.

Both the CC and BJKY are oral corpora, but they still differ from each other in various ways. This study is a combination of a descriptive study as well as a comparative study. I readily acknowledge the limitations of my own coding of 'professional' and 'non-professional' for the selection of speakers for my BJKY sample in order to maximise the contrast between the two groups and facilitate the comparison with the CC. Table 3.3 shows the general distribution of selected speakers in the BJKY sample.

Table 3.3 The distribution of selected speakers from the Beijing Oral Corpus (BJKY)

Number	Speaker ID <sup>18</sup>	Gender	Year of Birth	Education	Occupation	Topic <sup>19</sup>
1	M42E	M	1942	University degree	Doctor	E
2	M39D	M	1939	University degree	High school teacher	D
3	M40D	M	1940	University degree	Cadre	D
4	M49E	M	1949	Senior high school	Policeman	E
5	M39D	M	1939	Junior high school	Worker	D
6	M48E	M	1948	Junior high school	Salesperson	E
7	M30A	M	1930	Junior high school	Street cadre	A
8	M30F	M	1930	Senior high school	Ticket officer	F
9	F47E	F	1947	College degree	Doctor	E
10	F39B	F	1939	University degree	High school teacher	B
11	F50E	F	1950	College degree	Cadre	E
12	F43A	F	1943	Junior high school	Policewoman	A
13	F30C	F	1930	Primary school	Worker	C
14	F46A	F	1946	Junior high school	Salesperson	A
15	F49C	F	1949	Junior high school	Street cadre	C
16	F43F	F	1943	Junior high school	Ticket officer	F
17	M55E	M	1955	College degree	Doctor	E
18	M56E	M	1956	College degree	High school teacher	E
19	M55B	M	1955	University degree	Cadre	B
20	M54D	M	1954	Senior high school	Policeman	D
21	M53A	M	1953	Junior high school	Worker	A
22	M57E	M	1957	Senior high school	Salesperson	E
23	M55C	M	1955	College degree	Street cadre	C
24	M64E	M	1964	Junior high school	Ticket officer	E
25	F51D	F	1951	University degree	Doctor	D
26	F55D	F	1955	University degree	High school teacher	D
27	F62F	F	1962	Senior high school	Cadre	F
28	F61A	F	1961	Senior high school	Policewoman	A
29	F65B	F	1965	Junior high school	Worker	B
30	F63D	F	1963	Senior high school	Salesperson	D
31	F51A	F	1951	Senior high school	Street cadre	A
32	F61F	F	1961	Senior high school	Ticket officer	F

<sup>18</sup> In this column, I created a speaker ID for each selected Chinese speaker from BJKY, which provides the gender and year of birth of the selected speaker in my BJKY sample for the English readers. This speaker ID is given in brackets after the English translation of Chinese examples extracted from the BJKY sample data throughout the entire thesis. The ID for each selected speaker is a combination of their gender (M or F), year of birth and the topic letter. For instance, speaker 'M42E' is a male (M), born in 1942, who talked about the topic E.

<sup>19</sup> Interview topics covered in the BJKY are: A. Living conditions, health conditions, sightseeing, love and marriage, welfare; B. Family, education, special experience or encounter, childbirth, public safety; C. Study, employment, the way to get out of plight, funeral, travel; D. Work, salary, climate, currency, what one sees and hears; E. Daily life, market, culture and entertainment, transportation; F. Personal experience, commodity price, sports, personal visitations or greetings.

In Table 3.3, the first four speakers are likewise all professional males who belong to Group 1, the second four speakers are all non-professional males who also belong to Group 1, the third four speakers are all professional females who belong to Group 1, and the fourth four speakers are all non-professional females who belong to Group 1 as well. The remaining 16 speakers all belong to the Group 2, and are chosen according to the equal distribution of four male professionals, four male non-professionals, four female professionals and four female non-professionals respectively as in Group 1.

### 3.2.3 Data search and extraction

As the CC and BJKY differ from each other, I will introduce separately my way of searching and extracting data from the two oral corpora.

I used the ONZE Miner to search for the 32 speakers. In the search function of ONZE Miner, the user can search for the speaker's gender, year of birth, social class, region, origin mother and origin father. The user can also search for a certain speaker by simply typing the speaker's ID in the search bar.

I searched the sample speaker in the CC one by one by typing their speaker ID in the search bar. I looked through each speaker's transcripts online, manually extracted all non-canonical uses into the Word document, grouped them according to pronouns in order of first, second and third person, and then identified the different types of non-canonical uses attested for each personal pronoun. When I extracted the non-canonical use examples from the CC, I ensured the extracted examples provide enough information for the reader, and the reader was likewise able to confidently make a decision or judgement on whether the personal pronouns are in non-canonical uses from the rich contexts.

A screenshot of one speaker (Fon95-18a)'s transcript that contains a non-canonical use - generic *we* is given in Figure 3.1, so as to show my way in searching and identifying the non-canonical pronoun use from each speaker's transcript. In the fourth line from the top in Figure 3.1, this speaker said 'yip we've all gotta go back to our roots'. *We* and *our* in this sentence are coded as generic uses.

Figure 3.1 Sample transcript of one speaker in the CC, contains generic *we*

Interviewer fon95-18a	well that's that's where they're going <yeah> cos for seventeen ye~ well ever since dad was here he like he never had any desire to go back but I think now he's really <yeah> itching to go home I think
fon95-18a	yip we've all gotta go back to our roots - I mean my roots are here aren't they  but I suppose -- I dunno to a certain extent part of me belongs in England  because me mum's there and that's all where my family are my rela~ you know mum's . brothers and sisters and
	Interviewer: laughs

The BJKY differs from the CC in the searching format to some extent. It is dominantly driven by a key-word search method. The corpus user is allowed to specify two different words in their search. As it is a Chinese corpus, each word can consist of more than one Chinese character. The corpus user can also decide how many words the second key word will be apart from the first key word, and how many words will appear before and after the key words. The rest of the search functions are similar to the CC, where the user can choose the gender, ethnicity, district, education, occupation and topic.

After I confirmed all the speakers for my BJKY sample, I set the information for each speaker according to their gender, year of birth, education, occupation and topic. I manually searched each speaker's transcript by setting one Chinese personal pronoun as the key word each time, and setting the maximum of 50 words appearing before and after the key word. The search is based on the principles of 'one personal pronoun after the one' and 'one speaker after the one'. Once I obtained the part of the transcripts that contain the personal pronoun at issue, I looked at the context to identify the non-canonical ones and extracted those out from the online web page. I grouped them in order of first, second and third person, and labelled each attested type of non-canonical use. Figure 3.2 displays a screen shot of the search results (the first three of 69 examples are given) for *nǐ* (*you sg.*) by one speaker, who is the first speaker listed in Table 3.3.

Figure 3.2 Sample excerpts for one speaker in the BJKY, with non-canonical uses of *nǐ* (*you sg.*)

查询结果

语料 (总共69条, 共1页, 当前是第1页)	出生	性别	民族	地区	文化	职业	话题
1. 你或者在车上睡。它是老开, 因为它东海岸啊, 他可以换司机, 一直开, 他换司机, 就跟咱们火车似的。所以 <b>你</b> 坐上那个, 你可以在车上睡觉。车上就跟那飞机上那椅子一样, 往后一靠, 大靠背儿, 一躺就完了。北京啊, 就一	1942	男	汉	西城	大学	医生	E
2. 他非常讲信义。他买了东西, 你要说不好, 你找他换, 他马上给你换。他就怕你什么? 就怕你坐那儿不走, 你说 <b>你</b> 不给我换, 我坐这儿了。我把那东西, 我不要了, 往那儿一摆, 说你们看啊, 他这, 买他东西就是这个, 还不给换	1942	男	汉	西城	大学	医生	E
3. 往后一靠, 大靠背儿, 一躺就完了。北京啊, 就一个大缺点, 现在就是越呆越没劲。这人太多了。到哪儿去呀? <b>你</b> 商场也好, 什么自由市场也好, 你还是公园儿也好, 全是人, 合着。甭看, 全是人, 黑压压一片。现在夏天倒好,	1942	男	汉	西城	大学	医生	E

In Figure 3.2, we can see that this speaker produced 69 examples containing *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in both canonical and non-canonical uses. All examples are in the left large panel block. The speaker's information is provided on the right, which is separated into seven small panels. The first example contains the generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*), and the third example contains the discourse marker use of *nǐ* (*you sg.*).

### 3.2.4 Further methodology issues

This section looks at some issues and obstacles encountered in the methodology part of this study.

#### 3.2.4.1 Excluding direct speech and false starts from my sample<sup>20</sup>

After I had extracted all the potential instances of non-canonical pronoun uses in both English and Chinese, I realised that some of them are direct speech like *nǐ* (*you sg.*) (in bold) in (98), and some involve a false start such as *wǒ* (*I*) (in bold) in (99).

- (98) Xiǎo érzi tèbié éh ànw áner, nǐ k àn jiālǐ xi ànz ài zh ème m áng, tā y àosh ìq ù  
 小 儿 子 特 别 好 玩 儿, 你 看 家 里 现 在 这 么 忙, 他 要 是 去  
 y óuyǒng q ù, wǒ yě zhīch ítā, sh ìk ànk àn dì ànyǐng er q ù, wǒ yě zhīch ítā,  
 游 泳 去, 我 也 支 持 他, 是 看 看 电 影 儿 去, 我 也 支 持 他,  
 liūbīng q ù **nǐ** yě q ù w áner. Yīnggāi, qīngni ánr én yīnggāi r àng tā yǒu

<sup>20</sup> In this study, a 'direct speech' is counted when the speech seems to be a reported form from its original speech articulated by the speaker. A 'false start' is counted when the speaker attempted to say something first and then realised they said it wrong and quickly switched to other things. In fact, I double-checked all the Chinese examples extracted from the BJKY sample with other Chinese native speakers. I owe them gratitude to point out examples like (98) seemingly to be a direct speech and examples like (99) most likely to be a false start.

溜冰 去你 也去 玩儿。应该， 青年人 应该 让 他有  
hu ódòng, bù yīnggāi jiù shì shuō sǐ kǎnzhe zhège jiātíng zhège xiǎo fàn wéi,  
活 动，不 应该 就是 说 死 看着 这个 家庭 这个 小 范围，  
en, huòzhě shì jiǎn guǎn gōngzuò.

嗯，或者是 就 管 工作。（1930 女 汉 西城 小学 工人 C）

The younger son especially likes to play, you see it's so busy at home now, if he wants to go swimming, I will still support him, if go to watch movies, I will also support him, go skating **you** also go to play. Should [support], young people should let him have activities, should not say simply stay at this small home area, mmm, or only care about work. (BJKY, F30C)

(99) Zhè yīnggāi guǎn le, bùguǎn, suǒyǐ shuō wǒmen de shèhuì fēngqì bù huì hǎo,  
这 应该 管了， 不管， 所以 说 我们 的 社会 风气 不会 好，  
du ba? Rén bù yào bèi qián gěi mí zhù le yǎn, du ba? Wǒmen zhèngde qián shì  
对 吧？ 人 不要 被 钱 给 迷 住 了 眼， 对 吧？ 我们 挣 的 钱 是  
bù duō. Wǒ yóuqí wǒmen gōng rén zhèngqián, wǒmen zì háo. Wǒmen zhèng  
不 多。 我 尤其 我们 工人 挣 钱， 我们 自 豪。 我们 挣  
de shì wǒmen wǒmen gōngzuò de qián, du ba? Wǒmen gěi guójiā chuàngzào  
的 是 我们 我们 工 作 的 钱， 对 吧？ 我们 给 国家 创 造  
yí dìng de cáifù le, du bù du?

一 定 的 财 富 了， 对 不 对？ （1939 男 汉 天 桥 初 中 工 人 D）

This should be controlled, no control, so that our social atmosphere will not be good, right? People shouldn't be blindfolded by money, right? We didn't receive much [money]. I especially we workers earn [our own] money, we feel proud. What we earn is the money from our job, right? We create some wealth for the country, right? (M39D)

By using *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in (98), the speaker seemed to have a direct conversation with her son. In (99), the speaker began the clause with *wǒ* (*I*), and then quickly to restart his speech with the plural *wǒmen* (*we*). In my CC and BJKY samples, instances involving the above situations (i.e., quoted direct speech or a false start) were excluded from the data analysis.

### 3.2.4.2 Demonstrating my analysis with unambiguous and prototypical examples

I have realised the existence of semantic indeterminacy in the corpus data after reading Whitty (2017)'s thesis. Whitty (2017) observed the 'impreciseness' or indeterminacy of modals in identifying modal meanings in her thesis (p. 28).<sup>21</sup> Indeterminacy may occur when we are confronted with unclear cases such as some tokens that can not be strictly assigned to one category or another (Leech & Coates 1980, p. 80). One of the reasons causing the failure of assigning a token to one

<sup>21</sup> The inspiration to look at Leech & Coates (1980) and Rosch (1973) came from Whitty (2017)'s thesis.

concrete category instead of others is because this token may be ambiguous, yielding more than one interpretation (Leech & Coates 1980, p. 81). Ambiguities can most probably be avoided if provided with adequate contextual clues, thus isolating a sentence from its context is not appropriate to prevent the ambiguity (Leech & Coates 1980, p. 81).

In order to make sure all the non-canonical pronoun use examples displayed in Chapters 4-6 for detailed analysis are unambiguously accurate, I double-checked with a couple of other Chinese native speakers so as to validate that there is a consensus on the judgement on all the selected examples of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese, and had also consulted my supervisory team for all the selected English examples.

In addition, the detailed analysis of non-canonical pronoun uses in English and Chinese in the forthcoming two chapters will involve a number of different non-canonical uses categories identified from the sample. It is noted that instances of the same category still differ in the degrees, i.e., some instances are like the salient focal examples, but some are more like the peripheral ones, just like for dog breeds - retriever is more representative of the meaning of a dog than other breeds such as pekinese (cf. Rosch 1973). For the purpose of my theoretical analysis, I demonstrated the non-canonical uses with the most prototypical and clear-cut examples representing the best of their categories in Chapters 4-6. However, it is important to acknowledge the existence of many less prototypical and less clear-cut instances in my sample data.

Take the BJKY sample for an example. The search format in the BJKY only allows a maximum of 50 words before and after the key search words. It is impossible to view the entire transcripts of any particular speaker, which sometimes makes it harder to detect certain non-canonical uses in Chinese personal pronouns because the context provided is not sufficient to decide. Some non-canonical uses are likely to be ambiguous in two different readers' viewpoints even if both of them are Chinese native speakers. Consider the example in (100).

- (100) ...dào wǒmen nàr le. Zhè zhè zhè xiàng xiàng xiàng guó wài tāmen de Gōngān  
 ...到 我们 那儿了。这这这 像 像 像 国外 他们的 公安  
 Bù, zánmen jiào Gōngān Bù, rénjiā jiào Bùguǎn Bù, jiù nǎr nǎr dōu  
 部, 咱们 叫 公安 部, 人家叫 不管 部, 就哪儿哪儿 都  
 bùguǎn de shìr, jiù zhǎo **nǐmen**. Nǐ xiàng nàge jūzhù tiáojiàn. Nǐmen nàr  
 不管 的事儿, 就 找 **你们**。你 像 那个 居住 条件。你们 那儿  
 yào gài fáng de huà gěi bù gěi pài chū suǒ fáng a? Zhěng gè er niú, Xuān wǔ qū  
 要 盖 房 的 话 给 不 给 派 出 所 房 啊? 整 个 儿 牛, 宣 武 区  
 ba, chú le wǒmen pài chū suǒ, Niújiē, Chūn...  
 吧, 除了 我们 派出所, 牛街、椿... (1954 男 汉 牛街 高中 民警  
 D)

... came to us. This is like their Ministry of Public Security at overseas, we call [it] the Ministry of Public Security, and others call [it] the Ministry of  
 Regardless, for things which other people don't care, just come to find **you (pl.)**. You like the living conditions. If your (pl.) place want to build houses [would you (pl.)] give any house to the police station? The whole Niu,

Xuanwu district, except our police station, Niujie, Chun... (BJKY, M54D)

From the given context, it is hard to tell whether *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) (in bold) in (100) is a generic use or a shift, as *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) can be either viewed as a categorical generic use, where *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) refers to a specific category of people - people who work for the Ministry of Public Security, or it can also be treated as a shift to *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) from *wǒmen* (*we*). Because the speaker worked for the Ministry of Public Security and he was talking about the difference of the Ministry between domestic and overseas by giving an example of what people in the domestic Ministry of Public Security can not do in the previous context. So the use of *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) here can also be treated as a shift to *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) from *wǒmen* (*we*) if viewing the domestic Ministry people as a group.

### 3.2.4.3 The issues surrounding *tā* (3sg) and *tāmen* (3pl)

In written Chinese, the third singular *tā* (3sg) has three different characters representing three different genders: 他(*he*), 她(*she*) and 它(*it*). It is the same for third plural *tāmen* (3pl): 他们(*he pl.*), 她们(*she pl.*) and 它们(*it pl.*). Liu (1993, p. 21) pointed out the trichotomy of *tā* 他(*he*), *tā* 她(*she*) and *tā* 它(*it*) in modern Chinese is a result of the influence of western languages dating back from the 1919 Chinese New Culture Movement. These three third personal pronouns originated from the epicene pronoun *tā* (3sg), and are explicitly distinguishable in written language.

However, in speech, all of the three third singular pronouns are pronounced the same, as are all three third plural pronouns. Since my study focuses on the non-canonical pronoun uses in spoken Chinese, I will concentrate on the pronunciation in my analysis. I can only access the transcripts of the BJKY sample, and there are no audio recordings of the speakers in the BJKY that are freely available on the BJKY online query system. The issue of the same pronunciation for the three different gendered third singular and plural personal pronouns in Chinese can be problematic. I decided to provide the English translation of all the Chinese examples extracted from the BJKY for the English readers. Whenever the examples containing issued Chinese third singular and third plural personal pronouns, I coded the third singular ‘他(*he*), 她(*she*) and 它(*it*)’ as *tā* (3sg), and ‘他们(*he pl.*), 她们(*she pl.*) and 它们(*it pl.*)’ as *tāmen* (3pl) in the English translation, because they all are pronounced the same in spoken. I also translated the three third plural ‘他们(*he pl.*), 她们(*she pl.*) and 它们(*it pl.*)’ into ‘*they*’, ‘*them*’ or ‘*their*’ in English, as there is no gender difference in English, or in spoken Chinese.

Another thing to note regarding the formatting and annotation of all the examples extracted from my two oral corpus samples used in this thesis: I bolded all the personal pronouns in the examples that I intend to focus on discussion. I underlined other elements in the examples that I intend to emphasise so as to assist with the explanation of the particular non-canonical uses. All the Chinese examples extracted from the BJKY sample data are annotated with pinyin (the official romanisation

system for the Standard Chinese characters) for the convenience of English readers, and accompanied by an English translation that I have tried to match as closely as possible to the original Chinese.

I discuss the findings of my corpus study in the following chapters: Chapter 4 looks at non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in NZE on the basis of the sample data from the Canterbury Corpus. Chapter 5 examines Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses on the basis of the sample data from the Beijing Oral Corpus.

## Chapter 4 Non-canonical Pronoun Uses in NZE

### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous methodology section, I have presented an overview of the data source, speaker sample selection and the way in searching and identifying all the non-canonical pronoun uses from the CC. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in NZE based on the data of 32 speakers selected from the CC. The structure of this chapter is detailed below:

Section 4.1 gives a brief introduction to non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE from the sample dataset, and the classification adopted for the generic and shift uses in my NZE data. In Section 4.1.1, I present the types of non-canonical pronoun uses evident in NZE and the frequency of each non-canonical use employed by individual speakers out of the total 32 in the sample. As I apply some of Gast et al. (2015)'s approaches and models to my data results in Chapter 6, I need to introduce their classifications of impersonal uses of the second person pronoun in English and my applications of their taxonomy to the generic *we*, the generic *you* and shifts to *you* in my data in this chapter. Therefore, in 4.1.2, I exhibit the re-categorisation of the generic uses of *we* and *you*, and shifts to *you* according to the taxonomy of Gast et al. (2015). In 4.1.3, I discuss some issues emerging from the re-categorisation and application of Gast et al. (2015)'s approach. Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 carry out detailed discourse analyses of each personal pronoun in NZE in a sequence of first, second and third personal pronoun. Prototypical instances are provided to assist with the comprehensive description and analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Result overview of the non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE

After I examined the data from 32 speakers in the CC, various different types of non-canonical pronoun uses are found in NZE, as can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Types of non-canonical pronoun uses found in NZE

Personal pronouns	Non-canonical uses
1p We, us, our	Generic <i>we/our</i>
2p You, you, your	Generic <i>you/your</i> ; <i>you/your</i> for <i>I/me/my</i> ; <i>you/your</i> for <i>we/us/our</i> ; <i>You</i> and <i>your</i> in existentials
3p He, him, his	Unisex <i>he</i> ; <i>he</i> for animal species
She, her, her	<i>She/her</i> for inanimates
It, it, its	<i>It</i> with collective nouns
They, them, their	Unisex <i>they</i> ; <i>they/them/their</i> with collective nouns

Overall speaking, the majority of non-canonical usages in my CC sample involve *you*, followed by *he* and *they*. *We*, *she* and *it* only have one type of non-canonical use. No non-canonical uses of *I*<sup>22</sup> (or *me* or *my*) has been identified.

In terms of categories of non-canonical uses, I found generic uses of *we* and *you* as well as what I have termed unisex uses of *he* and *they*. Interestingly, non-canonical uses such as shifts to *you* from *I* and *we*, the use of *you* and *your* in existentials, and the use of *he* for animal species are also evident, as are *she* for inanimates, *it* with collective nouns and *they* with collective nouns.

As far as the different grammatical forms of personal pronouns in non-canonical uses are concerned, the situations are as follows:

- *We* in generic use can also appear in its genitive form *our*.
- Generic *you* appears in both subject and object positions and in the genitive form *your*.
- As regards *you* in the shifts from *I* or *we*, it is possible to occur in nominative, accusative and genitive roles, which means shifts to *you* from *me* or *us*, and shifts to *your* from *my* or *our* are also found in the given context.
- *You* in existentials generally appears in the subjective position and in the genitive *your*.
- The unisex use of *he* and the use of *he* for animal species appear to be confined to the subject position. However, I have found instances of objective *her* referring to inanimate objects.
- *It* with collective nouns tends to occur in the subjective and objective positions.
- *They* in the unisex use seems most likely to occur in the subjective position, whereas *they* with collective nouns appears in all the three positions in my data sample.

<sup>22</sup> Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990, p. 742 & 747) argued that *I* is able to be used impersonally in hypothetical contexts, i.e., ‘I think, therefore I am’ (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 741), but no such instances of generic *I* have been found in my CC sample. This is most likely due to the informal nature of the interviews that make up the CC.

It is noted that previous studies were mainly focused on the impersonal uses of the second person in English. Is this due to the relatively high frequency of impersonal *you* compared to other impersonal pronoun uses? To find out the answer, I calculated the frequency of each non-canonical pronoun use in my CC sample, which is displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Frequency of each non-canonical pronoun used in CC

Non-canonical uses	The number of speakers who used this usage
Generic <i>we/our</i>	2
Generic <i>you/your</i>	29
Shifts to <i>you/your</i> from <i>I/me/my</i>	18
Shifts to <i>you/your</i> from <i>we/us/our</i>	10
<i>You</i> and <i>your</i> in existentials	3
Unisex <i>he</i>	4
<i>He</i> for animal species	1
<i>She/her</i> for inanimates	2
<i>It</i> with collective nouns	8
Unisex <i>they</i>	5
<i>They</i> with collective nouns	13

The frequencies of the different non-canonical uses vary in Table 4.2. Some non-canonical uses such as generic *you* holds the highest frequency, 29 out of 32 speakers used generic *you* in their interviews; whereas some non-canonical uses like *he* for animal species, had only 1 speaker use it.

If we line up all the non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE on a frequency continuum from lowest (left) to highest (right), there seems to be three different frequency groups: generic *you* is in the right (highest frequency) section; shifts to *you* from *I* and *we*, and *they* with collective nouns are in the middle; *he* for animal species, generic *we* and *she* for inanimates are in the left (lowest frequency), and the rest of the non-canonical uses scatter between the middle and the left lowest frequency areas.

After presenting an overall picture of the results, I allocate the re-categorisation of generic uses of *we* and *you*, and shifts to *you* in the forthcoming subsection 4.1.2. The re-categorisation draws on the taxonomy of Gast et al. (2015), and is used for two reasons: (a) the Gast et al. (2015) taxonomy fits in with the descriptions of the data of generic *we*, generic *you* and shifts to *you* in my CC sample; (b) the theoretical framework adopted for the interpretation of generic uses in Chapter 6 requires such a re-categorisation.

#### 4.1.2 Re-categorisation of generic and shift uses in NZE

As the re-categorisation is theoretically supported by the classification and definition

of Gast et al. (2015), I will firstly introduce their arguments and claims.

Gast et al. (2015) examined the impersonal uses of the second person singular from a pragmatic perspective. They distinguished several different types of impersonal uses of the second person singular. Firstly, they distinguished the personal uses and impersonal uses of the second person singular according to whether or not a claim is made about the addressee only. If the answer is positive, it is a ‘personal’ use of the second person singular, if the answer is negative, it is an ‘impersonal’ use. *You* in (101) is the personal use, while *you* in (102) - (104) are impersonal.

(101) **You** are drunk. (Gast et al. 2015, p. 148)

(102) **You** shouldn’t drink and drive.<sup>23</sup> (Gast et al. 2015, p. 148)

(103) As a forward **you** have to be selfish if **you** want to score goals. (Gast et al. 2015, p. 149)

(104) **You** are in Egypt admiring the pyramids and feeling that **you** have really left **your** own world and time behind when suddenly **you** meet **your** next door neighbor from home. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 749)

Secondly, they decided whether the sentences have a clause-level property of generalising. If the sentence has, it is considered as ‘generalising’, if the sentence has not, it is called ‘episodic’. Instances (102) and (103) are generalising, while (101) and (104) are episodic.

Thirdly, and most relevant to my research, they distinguished the impersonal uses between ‘valid’ and ‘simulated’ ones, according to whether a claim about the addressee is addressee-inclusive or addressee-exclusive. If a claim about the addressee is implied, these impersonal uses are named ‘valid’, as in (102)<sup>24</sup>. If the addressee can not be literally implied by the predications such as (103) and (104), the impersonal uses automatically fall into the ‘simulated’ group, as ‘the addressee is invited to engage in simulation’ (p. 149). Simulation was furthermore divided into two types: (a) ‘category simulation’, ‘where the addressee is invited to self-ascribe properties that she does not actually have’ (p. 149); (b) ‘participant simulation’, ‘where the addressee is invited to imagine herself in a situation in which she is not actually participating’ (p. 149).

The ideas of breaking down the non-canonical pronoun uses into ‘valid vs. simulated’ and further ‘category simulation vs. participant simulation’ are applicable to and also serve as a good platform for my analysis of generic *you*, shifts to *you* and even generic *we* in my NZE sample data, as my data can be re-categorised and fitted into the trichotomy of ‘valid’, ‘category simulation’ and ‘participant simulation’.

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<sup>23</sup> As indicated by Gast et al. (2015, p. 149), instance (102) has at least three different interpretations: (a) *you* refers to the addressee only, as in situations like ‘Jane, you shouldn’t drink and drive, because you are a lousy driver when you are drunk.’ (b) *you* is used in a generalising way, it refers to the addressee as well as other individuals. (c) *you* does not include the addressee although a generalisation is made, as in a situation ‘where the speaker attempts to explain to a six-year-old child the reason why he is walking home instead of driving’.

<sup>24</sup> Referred to the previous footnote, putting instance (102) into ‘valid’ only applies when the reader reads *you* in the addressee-inclusive settings such as (a) and (b), not in the (c) setting where the speaker said instance (102) to a six-year-old child.

The trichotomy of Gast et al. (2015) also seems to fit with the three subtypes of impersonal *you* proposed by Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) - ‘situational insertion’ (see (105)), ‘moral or truism formulation’ (see (106)) and ‘life drama’ (see (107)).

- (105) Yesterday, we went to Sabino Canyon. And I was talking with this guy who happened to drop in on us. And all of a sudden he began to get agitated, and he swung at me. **You** react instinctively at a time like that. I hit him back. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 749)
- (106) **You** kill yourself to raise **your** kids properly, and guess what happens. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 744)
- (107) **You**’re going down the highway, **you**’re having a wonderful time, singing a song, and suddenly - **You** get into an argument. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 749)

The type of ‘life drama’ is equivalent to ‘participant simulation’, as it involves the feature of simulation. ‘Moral or truism formulation’ is correspondent to the ‘valid’ type, as this type normally recounts general truths. The instance of ‘situational insertion’ given in Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) is more a description of the speaker’s own experience, and the addressee needed to simulate being in the speaker’s situation. Thus the ‘situational insertion’ type also resembles the ‘participant simulation’ in Gast et al. (2015) and is akin to the shift to *you* in the present study.

In my sample, generic *you* consists of valid, category simulated and participant simulated these three types. Shifts to *you* from both *I* and *we* are viewed as participant simulated. Generic *we* includes only the valid type. Table 4.3 depicts the re-categorisation of generic *we*, generic *you*, shifts to *you* from *I* and *we* in my NZE sample according to the taxonomy of Gast et al. (2015).

Table 4.3 The re-categorisation of generic *we*, generic *you* and shifts to *you* in my NZE sample

Non-canonical uses	Re-categorisation
Generic <i>we</i>	Valid
Generic <i>you</i>	Valid; category simulation; participant simulation
Shifts to <i>you</i> from <i>I</i>	Participant simulation
Shifts to <i>you</i> from <i>we</i>	Participant simulation

### 4.1.3 Remaining issues about the re-categorisation

I took the approach of Gast et al. (2015) and re-categorised the generic uses of *we*, *you* and shifts to *you* in my sample according to their classifications of distinguishing impersonal uses of the second person singular (valid, category simulated and participant simulated), as I will later adopt the relevant theories and models suggested

by them in Chapter 6 for theoretical purposes. However, some issues still exist regarding the difficulties of thoroughly applying their approach to the corpus data used in my study, in particular how to categorise the general statement that is rarely discussed in Gast et al. (2015). For this I will generally discuss one typical problem of applying Gast et al. (2015)'s trichotomy to my CC sample data.

The example (102) from Gast et al. (2015) exemplified the valid use of impersonal *you*. It looks introspective and lacks a proper citation source. Examples (103) and (104) are used to illustrate simulated impersonal *you*, and both seem to lack adequate context cues and information. Stubbs (1996, p. 201) suggested that we have to be mindful about the oversimplification in these kinds of invented data used in pragmatics and speech act theory, as these invented examples may differ from the examples of real instances of language in use, i.e., from the oral corpus.

I noted that in my CC sample, the context is crucial to the occurrence but also the identification of certain non-canonical pronoun uses. Gast et al. (2015)'s argument for the valid impersonal *you*, where the addressee should be implied in the claim made by the speaker, fails to categorise some instances of general statements in my CC sample. This is because sometimes it is hard to determine whether the addressee is implied in the claim, especially when it is lacking sufficient information in the (narrow) context (see below instance (109) in Section 4.2.1).

In order to avoid this, all examples extracted from the CC sample for the illustration of each non-canonical pronoun use will be context-abundant<sup>25</sup>, which makes it easier for the reader to determine whether the addressee is implied in the claims or in predications made by the speaker. Compared with some introspective, clear-cut and context-inadequate examples provided in Gast et al. (2015), the sufficient context available from each illustrated example is clearly an advantage of this study.

The failures to ideally assign Gast et al. (2015)'s definitions of valid, category simulated and participant simulated to my oral corpus data and to classify general statements allow us to question whether their definitions should be refined and/or broadened. I suggest that we could broaden the definition of valid impersonal uses, so that it not only covers the cases where the addressee is implied, but also where it applies to general statements such as universal truth or life moral in my sample data. The generalisation effect naturally generalises to everyone as well as the addressee to be included in the set of referents applied to by the predication.

Below the subsequent three sections are the detailed interpretations and illustrations of first, second and third personal pronouns in non-canonical uses in my NZE sample.

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<sup>25</sup> I focused here in this subsection on the importance of context to the selection of examples of non-canonical pronoun uses. It does not mean that I prioritised the unambiguity and prototype less, which are also important to the consideration of exemplified examples (as discussed in Chapter 3). With regard to the examples selected for analysis in this study, they are unambiguous, prototypical and context-abundant.

## 4.2 First person plural *we*

### 4.2.1 Generic *we*

The typical generic use of *we* in my CC sample can be interpreted as generalising personal opinions or ideas into universal truths or life morals, as shown in example (108). *We* in generic use is generalised to cover everybody or people in general, in other words, it comprises the speaker and addressee. That's why, in Gast et al. (2015)'s categorisation, generic *we* in my sample data can be considered as 'valid' impersonal use, as the addressee is included in the speaker's claim.

The universal truth or life moral that the speaker attempted to generalise can be shared by or happen to everyone. As in (108), the speaker seems to truly concur with the universal truth - 'when we get older, we will go back to our roots'. Her dad never had any desire to go back to his roots (England), but now that he is older, he does want to go back to his roots. The speaker's family comes from England, and she has started to realise that part of her also belongs to England and part of her roots are there.

- (108) Interviewer: well that's that's where they're going <yeah>  
Cos for seventeen ye~ well ever since dad was here he like  
he never had any desire to go back but I think now he's really  
<yeah>  
Itching to go home I think  
Speaker: yip **we**'ve all gotta go back to **our** roots – I mean my roots are here  
aren't they  
But I suppose – I dunno to a certain extent part of me belongs in England  
(CC, fon95-18a)

However, the problem arises when applying Gast et al. (2015)'s trichotomy to some instances of generic *we* in my sample. If the reader is not provided with sufficient context information, sometimes it would be difficult for the reader to determine whether the addressee is implied in the speaker's claim. Consider (109).

- (109) Well that's you know he's just so lucky. If he if he's got that way to express  
himself that.  
talent which you have or you don't. um and people will admire him for it  
because **we** all envy people who are.  
very musical or good (CC, fop95-10)

This paragraph was spoken by the speaker. She made a general statement that 'we all envy people who are very musical'. In other words, the speaker herself envied people who are very musical, but it does not necessarily imply that the addressee (the interviewer) was envious too. If we put the paragraph in a broader context, we know

that the interviewer was actually talking about her deaf but talented brother to the speaker, and the speaker believed and envied the interviewer's brother. And the use of 'all' in (109) also helps indicate that the speaker implies that everyone envies people who are very musical. The generic use of *we* in (109) can be more easily and clearly classified as 'valid' according to Gast et al. (2015)'s definition.

In my CC sample, general statements such as (109) are reasonably prevalent. The problem of how to classify general statements in generic use is something to be investigated in the future research.

## 4.3 Second person *you*

### 4.3.1 Generic *you*

As can be seen in Table 4.3, the types of generic *you* in my CC sample comprise valid, category simulation and participant simulation according to Gast et al. (2015)'s classification. No matter which type, *you* in generic use generalises to cover everybody or a wider range of people, including the addressee and the speaker.

Most of the valid generic *you* in my sample are similar to (110) and (111), where the addressee is implied or presupposed in the claim or statement made by the speaker. We live in a constantly changing world, no matter if it is a new job in (110) or a new technology in (111), we always need to learn new things but will also contribute to every new thing we try. *You* in both (110) and (111) points to every human being.

(110) Well. Library was my first love and I only left.  
The library because. We left Dunedin and left the university centre.  
But. I think it's good to have a change because **you** actually  
Bring something. To every job **you** go to **you** bring something else.  
And I found it good going back to teaching having worked in an office I had.  
A new respect for. What.  
Um. typists do <mmm> (CC, fop95-10)

(111) Speaker: and ah. Because it's a  
It's an area of technology that is constantly changing  
**You** never find yourself in a position where **you** know it all.  
Interviewer: right  
Speaker: There's there's. there's always new things to learn.  
There are new skills to pick up  
There are new products to get to know there are new.  
Philosophies that **you**'ve got to embrace.  
That the organisation has to adopt  
Interviewer: right  
Speaker: And ah I mean they're just coming at us now one after the other

Interviewer: right

Speaker: Um as computing technology evolves and and as **you** can do more things with computing especially with network computers- (CC, Mop94-6a)

As indicated by its title, the category simulation type of generic *you* in my CC sample can be typified as with (112) and (113), where *you* does not point to everybody or anybody, but is constrained to particular groups/categories of people who meet the given context. The addressee is not implied in the speaker's predication, but is rather invited to imagine being one of these groups/categories of people and having their property.

(112) It it was I just noticed myself doing it and I thought my God.

But it it came across.

As it was supposed to

But then in the other way it's quite good because.

Being a female **you** can actually use **your** feminine femininity quite well (CC, fyp94-24)

(113) Interviewer: so skilled the skill involved in the violin. And I also took the flute for a term

Speaker: oh did you? Right

Interviewer: gave that up for ballet

Speaker: well if **you**'re a primary school teacher **you** um. Possibly would um have to.

Demonstrate on the recorder or something the flute lessons might come in handy. (CC, fop95-10)

*You* in (112) refers to a specifically designated subgroup, namely females, as the speaker was commenting what sort of behaviours a female could exhibit in a given situation. *You* in (113) is confined into another subgroup of people in categorising occupation, namely primary school teachers. In these two cases, the addressees (the interviewers) were neither a female nor a primary school teacher, but were invited to interpret the predication in which they have the property of being a female or a primary school teacher.

The last type of generic *you* in my sample is participant simulation. The data for this type generally appear as the speaker presenting situations where the addressee was not actually participating. In other words, these situations or experiences do not necessarily belong to the addressee. The addressee is not implied in the predication made by the speaker. But the speaker invites the addressee to put/simulate themselves in the situations described by the speaker via the utilisation of the second person *you*. Therefore, *you* in this type still applies to people in general including the addressee. Examples (114) and (115) are good illustrations of this type of use of generic *you* in my sample.

- (114) Interviewer: oh just keeping talking <yeah>. So what was it like when you went parachuting?  
 Speaker: oh it was wonderful. I was so scared. I was really-  
 I was alright while we were doing the course and every now and then **you**'d sort of get a bit nervous.  
 But what they don't prepare **you** for a I guess they can't prepare **you** for is the wind.  
 When **you**'re go when **you**'re actually up there.  
 And they say right were going to open the door cos I was third to jump  
 So the first person was right at the front so they opened the door to let them out and **you** get all this noise.  
 From the wind. which is okay but **you** don't realise  
 How strong it is. (CC, fyn95-14)
- (115) I've had a few that I've sort of looked at and thought oh yeah yeah.  
 But you know when **you you** go through a job description and.  
 They're very specific about what they want  
 <mmm> so **you** start off at the top and **you** think yeah.  
 Yeah it's me yeah woh that's me-  
 And then as **you** go d d down the list there's  
 There might just be one niggly little thing **you** think. Whoa.  
 Oh I don't quite can't quite do that one.  
 And. Then. **You** start to doubt it. (CC, fyp94-24)

The speaker in (114) was recounting her experience of parachuting, which may or may not have been experienced by the interviewer. The situation narrated by the speaker could happen to anyone who will go parachuting: you will get nervous before the chuting, wind can not be prepared for and you will hear noise from the strong winds. It seems that the speaker takes the addressee through the whole parachuting process experienced by her. Similarly, the speaker in (115) was discussing what kind of reactions people would have when they were looking for jobs and viewed the job descriptions. At the beginning, people would feel they were suitable for the job until they began to suspect that some of the requirements could not be met.

It has been noted that generalised uses of *you* tend to 'co-occur with other linguistic phenomena or features, including 'you know', pauses, some grammatical or lexical indicators of hypothetical situations, and other indicators of genericity such as expressions like 'always', plural reference and indefiniteness' (Stirling & Manderson 2011, p. 1584; cf. O'Connor 1994). In my CC sample data, I have found that generic *you* is prone to occur regularly in conditional (hypothetical) clauses, when either:

- (a) it appears with words signalling a condition/hypothesis such as 'if', 'when', 'once', 'provided', etc., or
- (b) with words or phrases such as 'like', 'let's say', 'you say', etc. to provide examples.

Amongst these hypothetical words, the most frequent is 'if'. 'If' can be used to bring up a category for the addressee to simulate belonging to, as shown in (116). The speaker and the listener were discussing a condition called 'muscular dystrophy', which can be caused by sports activities. The speaker then took a builder or a labourer as examples to demonstrate that if jackhammers are used too much, they can damage their spines.

- (116) Um. yeah yeah mus muscular dystrophy can happen from sport.  
Any um. like if **you**'re a builder a labourer.  
You know the jackhammers ohhh. Can actually shutter shudder. **Your**. Spine  
To the max. I mean it's just. Not the one. But (CC, fyn95-5a)

'Once' and 'when' also denoted conditions. The speaker in (117) enjoyed cycling a lot, so much so that even sometimes if the weather did not allow going out for a ride, but 'once' he went out, and sweated, there was no problems at all. In (118), the speaker was asked to share some of his interesting water sports experiences. He reckoned 'when' the weather is good, it is just pleasant to enjoy the beautiful time out on the water even without doing any water sports.

- (117) I I really enjoy riding and there's a few days in the year where you think  
Um oh it's raining too hard  
But actually the worst part of it is actually getting out the door  
And once **you** are out going **you** get wet **you** take me clothes get into them  
Um it's no problem  
But it's just such a gorgeous feeling this and **you** arrive at work with **your**  
Blood pumping and **your** heart's pumping away  
And everything's circulating and **you** I'm sure **you** must um be work better  
(CC, mop05-1)

- (118) Interviewer: have you had any interesting experiences out water skiing or boating or anything?. That you can think of-  
Speaker: no it's just basically enjoyable times the good weather and the.  
You know and especially when **you**'ve got very flat water it's it's it's  
It's really magic out on the water. (CC, mop96-26b)

In addition, words or phrases such as 'like', 'let's say' etc. were also shown to co-occur with *you* in the generic use, as illustrated in (119) and (120). It is also noted that these exemplifying words or phrases will sometimes occur together with these conditional words in the generic use of *you* as well (as in (120)).

- (119) that's what I find amazing. I I see I just went there this year.  
Everyone said. Oh huge school largest in New Zealand or whatever.  
And for a start. I felt I need a map.

To find out where I wanted to go I found the staff room.  
The number of staff large. But.  
Like anything like living in a large city  
**You** get into **your** own little- area <yeah>  
And that's it. <mmm> so yes it's (CC, fop95-10)

- (120) And and the risk in that is that. If a person's self employed.  
Let's say you're an architect and and **you've** broken ah smashed **your** wrists.  
Or or a loosha y lose **your** limbs obviously **you c you** won't be able to  
perform **your**.  
Functions or **your** duty that. **Your** occupation that **you're** trained for and and  
rely on to earn **your** income.  
So in that case that insurance policy will. Pay **you**.  
The agreed amount. <is it?> it's (CC, Mop94-22c)

The discussion in (119) was regarding the speaker's working environment. She provided an example using 'like'. Working at her school was like living in a big city. People normally socialise around their own small social circle. Although the school where the speaker worked at was large, her social circle was still small.

In (120), the speaker was explaining to the interviewer about the insurance policy in his company, more specifically, under what circumstances the insurer will receive compensation. The speaker started with an assumption introduced by 'if' (if the insurer is self-employed), and then specified by 'let's say' (let's say you are an architect). The speaker continued explaining under what situation the architect would receive the compensation. The speaker took an example by combining the conditional word 'if' with the exemplifying phrase 'let's say' in a sequence of generic use of *you*, which made the category simulation gradually available to his addressee (the interviewer).

### 4.3.2 Shifts to *you* from *I/we*

Most existing studies of non-canonical pronoun uses in English have concentrated on the generalisation of English personal pronouns, especially second person *you*. Shifts to *you* from either *I* or *we* are rarely mentioned.

Chen (2011b), Zhang & Lu (2013) and De Cock & Kulge (2016) discussed the shift to *you* from *I* in English, and pointed out that when *you* is used in examples such as (121), extracted from a speech given by former American president Barack Obama in 2013, *you* points to the speaker themselves.

- (121) I look in the mirror and I have to admit, I'm not the strapping young Muslim socialist that I used to be. Time passes. **You** get a little gray. (Zhang & Lu 2013, p. 71)

Zhang & Lu (2013, p. 71) argue that such a shift to *you* can narrow the psychological distance between the speaker and listener. The speaker invites the listeners to put themselves into the speaker's shoes and empathise with the speaker (also in De Cock & Kulge (2016)).

Stirling & Manderson (2011) also considered the shifts to *you* from *I* in their study, as one of the main patterns they found in the usage of generalised *you* within a corpus of interviews with women who had undergone mastectomies. They argued that *you* is used in the context when the speaker is recounting her personal experiences (treatment for breast cancer), and can 'generally be replaced by *I* without changing any descriptive content of their experiences' (p. 1590-1591). (122) is the emotional disclosure of one patient who first came to look at her mastectomy site after surgery. Her narrative involves shifting between the first person pronoun *I* and generalised *you*.

- (122) Speaker: But it was just you know a-  
yeah looking at **your** body,  
Interviewer: mm  
Speaker: and thinking oh you know,  
all the women around you,  
who had two breasts you know,  
had nice breasts,  
**you**'d be always-  
I'd be always looking you know.  
as soon as I came ou-out- out of hospital,  
and **you**'d go out-  
cos I never went out for about three or four months,  
I stayed indoors,  
And I was scared? (Stirling & Manderson 2011, p. 1591)

From my CC sample, it is evident that both the shift to *you* from *I* and the shift to *you* from *we* exist in spoken NZE.

In example (123), the speaker employs *you* instead of *I* to share some personal experience with the listener.

- (123) Interviewer: < I suppose> sounds like you missed him  
Speaker: yeah I did **you** used to you know cos he often was in bed  
<mmm> and you know **you** our **you** always had to pass his bedroom door  
<mmm>  
Cos we sort of our house sort of had a big hallway. <mmm>  
And his bedroom was off one side <mmm>  
And our was off the other stairs  
<mmm> and the upstairs and that  
<mmm> and **you** always passed it  
And just expected it to see him there. <right> (CC, fyn95-13)

The speaker in (123) missed her father a lot, recounting that when her father was still alive, every time she passed her father's room, he was always there. After her father passed away, every time she passed her father's bedroom, she still expected her father to be there. The context of the whole conversation suggests that *you* is in fact meant to be the speaker herself who passed her father's bedroom door.

Likewise, a speaker may suddenly shift to *you* from *we*, as can be seen in (124).

(124) Speaker: and we were away for four weeks.

And we really haven' had a holiday since then it wasn't a holiday then not with two children either

Interviewer: <um> come home for a rest

Speaker: oh **you** did. Yah and some decent food and.

Friendly faces and oh (CC, fon95-5b)

*We* in (124), comprised the speaker and her family members (her husband and two children), coming home for a rest from a four week holiday. In her narration, the speaker made an inadvertent shift to *you* from the flow of *we*, rendering her personal experiences more relevant to the interviewer, even though *you* in the context does not pertain to the interviewer, or anyone else. It actually denotes the speaker and her family.

In the CC sample, *we* in the shift use to *you* normally comprises the speaker and one or more others, as can also be illustrated in example (125), where *we* represents the speaker and people who lived together with the speaker in a boarding house.

(125) Yes yes that was where. The-

Lady I landlady always made our lunch.

And she often made us egg sandwiches but she wasn't very good at getting the shell off and

Often when **you** were eating **your** lunch.

The crunchy bits of shell

I I couldn't eat egg sandwiches for years afterwards because of.

The rather unpleasant sensation (CC, fon94-34b)

As with some of Stirling & Manderson (2011)'s examples such as (122), the speaker might suddenly quickly shift back to *I* from *you* to clarify that it was actually the speaker themselves experiencing these matters instead of a more generalised *you*. Consider (126) from my sample, where the shift occurs when the speaker declares that it was her idea not to let her mother check her letters.

(126) We carried on um. we started writing <mmm hmm>.

I actually managed to write to him once a week which was very good.

Not that he could always read the letters that he received but I did warn him.

He tells me now I sort of said look I'm a terrible speller. <mmm>



adjective plus noun, as in ‘your divisional allegiance’ in (127).

## 4.4 Third person pronouns

### 4.4.1 *He*

#### 4.4.1.1 Unisex *he*

In my sample, the speakers generally select *he* to represent individuals whose gender is unknown or irrelevant in their narratives. It may either be that the speaker did not know the gender of the referent, or that the speaker treats *he* as an epicene pronoun that denotes both male and female. *He* could be a random child in (128) or a game player in (129), and so forth.

(128) Kindergarten <yeah> the only thing is like she’s pretty fragile  
If some little kid decided **he** was going to have a wee bit of poke at her  
She might sort  
Of cave in you know.  
Bertha the wonder pig (CC, fyp94-24)

(129) Interviewer: and um-  
Yeah tell me about Scum what sorta game’s that?  
Speaker: the game Scum it’s.  
I can’t remember how to play it I mean. You’ve.  
Yeah yeah oh it’s the idea you get dealt out cards and then.  
And. The. The winner becomes king.  
And and the. Like person who who gets out last like you gotta get rid of all  
your cards.  
Stuff I think that’s how its played isn’t it.  
Yeah something like that and uh.  
The person who’s who’s last gotta.  
When **he**’s deals get. They’re Scum and they gotta.  
And. An they gotta chuck off their best cards the ne~ next hand round to. The  
king.  
It’s quite good (CC, myp94-34a)

It is not clear whether the speaker chooses to use *he* to represent the referent(s) due to a male-dominated orientation in people’s perception. There is no expectation when we talk about a game player or a random child, that they should be males. What we can assume is that the speaker is likely to have a preference in their mind about the gender of the referent(s). When they are aware that they should not utilise a gendered

pronoun to generalise gender, some of them will shift to *they* to avoid the ambiguity and the dilemma of picking one particular gender. This will be discussed in generic *they* use.

#### 4.4.1.2 *He* for animal species

It is also justifiable for the speakers to select personal pronouns according to the gender of animals they know. In the corpus, both *he* and *she* are utilised to refer to specific animals, especially dogs and cats, but also horses. Observe (130), where *he* was employed by the speaker to refer to his mother's sister's dog.

(130) Well.

People s often ask me that and I say well.

My mother. Had a sister who lived at Oamaru. Years and years ago.

And ahh. They had this dog called Booza.

And **he** got hit by the train on the railway crossing where they used to live  
<mmm> and I always thought if ever I had a dog.

That's what I gonna call it. (CC, mon94-23b)

Using *he* to reflect the gender of a specific animal would not be considered non-canonical. However, I also found examples such as (131), where *he* is employed to make a general statement about an animal species, i.e., the carpet snake. This is treated as a 'non-canonical' pronoun use in this study.

(131) Interviewer: snakes

Speaker: eh?

Speaker: nah the only snake they've got in Canada is . um –

A carpet snake. **he**'s only a little wee –

A metre long or something like that <wow> - (CC, mon02-4)

#### 4.4.2 *She*

##### 4.4.2.1 *She* for inanimates

We have just seen how the speakers from my sample have applied *he* to refer to cats, dogs and some other animated animals. *She* has also been found to represent animated animals such as cats, dogs, and even doves and ponies (as in (132)).

(132) Interviewer: did you have horses on the farm?

Speaker: I had horses on the farm <mmm> at one stage I had up to five horses

<mmm> I had ahh-  
My I suppose. My  
Original pony **she** always stayed at home. And we bred off her  
So **she** ended up having three foals <mmm>.  
I never actually really got to break. (CC, fyn95-13)

However, as with *he* for animals, using *she* for individual animals will not be considered as non-canonical in this study. Interestingly, we do find some non-canonical uses of *she*, where *she* is used to refer to inanimate objects, such as car, boat, or truck (as in (133)).

(133) Yeah it was. It was pretty good <mmm>  
This Dodge truck I think **she** only cost me about um.  
Two thousand or something  
You know **she** was fairly old. A  
<yeah> sixty nine or something like that.  
So. But **she** did. **She** really went well. <mmm>  
I. think I only had one trouble with **her**.  
When **she** wouldn't start <mmm> (CC, fyn95-13)

### 4.4.3 *It*

#### 4.4.3.1 *It* with collective nouns

In the CC sample, *it* was attested to co-occur with collective nouns, and was presented in a combination of 'singular verb + it', i.e., the verbs after the collective nouns are in singular forms, as shown in (134).

(134) And um we went up to Artiamuri.  
When the dam was being built. Um.  
Just north of Taupo south of Tokoroa. And that was the pla ~ that was the.  
Town of. That was a school of five hundred pupils then I mean  
I think the school's till there but it might just be a sole charge.  
But **it** had five hundred then.  
**It** was a booming place. And I had infants there – (CC, fop95-27-05)

*It* in (134) refers to the collective noun - 'school', which had five hundred pupils then. The verb after 'school' is a singular 'is'. The speaker in (134) was treating the school as a collective group and relating the general enrolment numbers in the school. Therefore, the singular *it* was employed.

#### 4.4.4 *They*

##### 4.4.4.1 Unisex *they*

Instead of pondering between two genders and picking one over the other, some speakers just directly use *they*.

In my sample, *they* is generally used when speakers refer to ‘someone’, ‘anyone’ or ‘everyone’. This ties in with Holmes (1998, p. 38)’s finding that most of the time *they* co-occurs with non-specific referents such as ‘anyone’ in New Zealand speech by that time. It actually may look more reasonable if *they* is chosen to refer to any individual in a group although the individual is unspecified, like *they* in instances (135) and (136).

(135) oh it’s not a prerequisite for it all I mean these days-  
In some areas there are no prerequisite  
For a particular field of employment um  
It’s it’s a case of  
Of being the best person for the job. And  
And I think there’s an unfortunate trend or there has been over the past few  
years that.  
You can employ anyone unless you provided that that  
**They** appear to be able to do the the job.  
I think that’s kind of unfortunate in a way because it  
It um it tends to devalue education (CC, Mop03-2b)

(136) And the other end of the spectrum of course is that.  
Not everybody’s going to die before **they**’re sixty. In fact many many people  
live well into **their**  
Seventies eighties even nineties- and **they** give up work at say sixty five  
**They** might have another twenty years in retirement.  
Therefore unless **they** have money put aside over **their** working life- they  
(CC, Mop94-22c)

However, in situations such as (137), it might be because the speaker forgot or was uncertain, or she did not know the gender of the referent in her story, or the gender of the referent was not important.

(137) Oh someone said to me the other night.  
**They** said you’re showing your age.  
I said oh am I? and **they** said yes.  
You’re getting old fashioned ideas (CC, fon95-5b)

#### 4.4.4.2 *They* with collective nouns

Apart from *it*, *they* was also found to co-occur with collective nouns. Interestingly, the verbs that are associated with the collective nouns still tend to be in their singular forms as well. Observe (138).

(138) yeah. And there was letters from our doctor there was  
Letters from the hospital and everything.  
You know showing the injuries and everything.  
And she just couldn't comprehend it this woman.  
I thought well you've gotta come out of the clouds sometime-  
And that's what happens you know in a. school  
Like that <mmm> it's got.  
And the school's running scared because **they**'ve got a such a marvellous  
reputation.  
And they're terrified that it's be.  
Come out in the news media. Course my husband was calling for blood- (CC,  
fon95-5b)

The school, referred to by the bolded *they*, is the subject and collective noun in (138), yet the verb follows after 'the school' is a singular 'is'. *They* in (138) highlights that the teachers and students created the good reputation of the school. To emphasise these individuals in the school, the plural pronoun *they* was applied to refer to the school in order to highlight the collection of individuals (teachers and students) behind the notion of school.

## 4.5 Summary

This chapter investigated non-canonical pronoun uses in a sample made up of 32 speakers of NZE from the Canterbury Corpus. Various types of morphologically non-canonical pronoun uses are attested in the sample, including generic *we*, generic *you*, shifts to *you* from *I* and *we*, *you* and *your* in existentials, unisex *he*, *he* for animal species, *she* for inanimates, *it* and *they* with collective nouns, and unisex *they*. Not all grammatical forms of personal pronouns were found in these non-canonical uses. Subject forms were more common than object and genitive forms. Generic *you* had the highest frequency among all the non-canonical uses in the CC sample. 29 out of 32 speakers employed *you* generically in their speech. In preparation for the theoretical analysis presented in Chapter 6, I re-categorised the generic and shift uses into 'valid', 'category simulated' and 'participant simulated' types according to the classification proposed by Gast et al. (2015). Generic *we* was found to only have the valid use. Generic *you* encompassed all the three types, and shifts to *you* from *I* and *we* could only be re-classified into the participant simulated type. I proposed that the

generic use of *you* and two shift uses form a generalisation continuum with the generalisation degree of generic *you* being higher than shift uses. Both unisex *he* and unisex *they* were identified, and *they* in unisex use tended to co-occur with indefinite nouns such as ‘anyone’, ‘someone’ or ‘everyone’. While *he* was used to refer to animal species such as snake, *she* was found to refer to inanimate objects such as truck. Both *it* and *they* were attested to co-occur with collective nouns. Finally, I also identified uses of *you* in ‘you have’ or ‘you’ve got your’ constructions, where *you* seemed to completely lose its lexical meaning.

In Chapter 5, non-canonical uses of Chinese personal pronouns will be inspected. The categorisation of Gast et al. (2015) will also be applied to generic and shift uses in the sample data from the Beijing Oral Corpus.

## Chapter 5 Non-canonical Pronoun Uses in Chinese

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in NZE, and this chapter will focus on the non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese from the BJKY sample data.

The structure of this chapter is: Section 5.1 presents a result overview of the non-canonical pronoun uses attested in the BJKY sample, including the types of non-canonical uses and the frequency of each attested non-canonical use per speaker. Section 5.2 provides detailed discussion on the non-canonical uses of first person pronouns in Chinese. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 examine thoroughly the Chinese non-canonical uses of Chinese second and third person pronouns respectively.

The investigation of the 32 speakers' data from the BJKY results in various sorts of attested non-canonical pronoun uses, i.e., generic use, shift use, unisex use, discourse marker etc. Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 respectively display the different types of non-canonical uses of the first, second and third personal pronouns identified in the BJKY sample. As this study is based on oral corpus and the issue of no gender difference in the pronunciations of the third person singular and plural in spoken Chinese, I separated the attested types of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese third person into Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 to discriminate the spoken speech from the written texts.

Table 5.1 Attested types of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese first person

Personal pronouns	Non-canonical uses
Wǒ (I)	Generic <i>wǒ</i> (I)
Wǒmen (we)	Generic <i>wǒmen</i> (we); <i>Wǒmen</i> (we) for <i>wǒ</i> (I)

Table 5.2 Attested types of non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese second person

Personal pronouns	Non-canonical uses
Nǐ (you sg.)	Generic <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.); <i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>nǐmen</i> (you pl.); <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒ</i> (I); <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒmen</i> (we); Discourse marker
N ń (honorific you sg.)	Generic <i>n ń</i> (honorific you sg.)

Table 5.3 Attested types of non-canonical pronoun uses for third person in spoken Chinese

Personal pronouns	Non-canonical uses
Tā (3sg)	Generic <i>tā</i> ; <i>Tā</i> (3sg) for <i>tāmen</i> (3pl); Discourse marker
Tāmen (3pl)	<i>Tāmen</i> (3pl) for <i>tā</i> (3sg)

Table 5.4 Attested types of non-canonical pronoun uses for third person in written Chinese

Personal pronouns	Non-canonical uses
Tā 他(he)	Generic <i>tā</i> ( <i>he</i> ); Unisex <i>tā</i> ( <i>he</i> ); <i>Tā</i> ( <i>he</i> ) for <i>tāmen</i> ( <i>they</i> ); Discourse marker
Tā 她(he)	Unisex <i>tā</i> ( <i>she</i> ); <i>Tā</i> ( <i>she</i> ) for countries
Tāmen 他们(they)	<i>Tāmen</i> ( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> ( <i>he</i> ); <i>tāmen</i> ( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> ( <i>she</i> )
Tāmen 她们(he pl.)	<i>Tāmen</i> ( <i>she pl.</i> ) for <i>tā</i> ( <i>she</i> )

In the above three tables, it is evident that *nǐ* (*you sg.*) holds the most non-canonical uses, followed by *tā* 他(*he*). The other personal pronouns exhibit on average one or two types of non-canonical uses. The non-canonical uses of the second plural *nǐmen* 你们(*you pl.*), third neutral *tā* 它(*it*) and the third neutral plural *tāmen* 它们(*it pl.*) have reported null in this study. In terms of the category of non-canonical uses, it varies from generic use, shift use and unisex use to discourse marker use and personification. With respect to the frequency of each attested non-canonical pronoun use in the BJKY sample, it is displayed in Tables 5.5 and 5.6. Table 5.6 specifically presents the frequency of non-canonical uses of the third person pronouns attested in the transcripts of BJKY due to the distinguishability of third person pronouns in written Chinese.

Table 5.5 Frequency of each attested non-canonical pronoun used in BJKY (spoken)

Non-canonical uses	The number of speakers who used this usage
Generic <i>wǒ</i> (I)	4
Generic <i>wǒmen</i> (we)	1
<i>Wǒmen</i> (we) for <i>wǒ</i> (I)	23
Generic <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.)	27
<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>nǐmen</i> (you pl.)	1
<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒ</i> (I)	15
<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒmen</i> (we)	7
Discourse marker <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.)	25
Generic <i>n ń</i> (honorific you sg.)	2
Generic <i>tā</i> (3sg)	5
<i>Tā</i> (3sg) for <i>tāmen</i> (3pl)	2
Discourse marker <i>tā</i> (3sg)	2
<i>Tāmen</i> (3pl) for <i>tā</i> (3sg)	6

Table 5.6 Frequency of written non-canonical 3ps pronoun uses in BJKY transcripts

Non-canonical uses	The number of speakers who used this usage
Generic <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	5
Unisex <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	25
<i>Tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> ) for <i>tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> )	2
Discourse marker <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	2
Unisex <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	2
<i>Tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> ) for countries	1
<i>Tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	4
<i>Tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	1
<i>Tāmen</i> 她们( <i>she pl.</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	3

In Tables 5.5 and 5.6, it seems that the frequency of attested non-canonical uses of Chinese personal pronouns in the BJKY sample is nicely separated into the high and low frequency blocks. Generic *nǐ* (you sg.), discourse marker *nǐ* (you sg.), unisex *tā* 他 (*he*) and shift to *wǒmen* (we) from *wǒ* (I) are most frequently used by Chinese speakers among all the attested non-canonical uses. As with generic *you* in the CC, generic *nǐ* (you sg.) was also attested to have the highest frequency, with 27 out of 32 speakers utilised this usage in the BJKY. The shift to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *wǒ* (I) situates in the medium of the frequency scale, while the bunch of the rest non-canonical uses position at the low frequency areas, due to their low usage ratio (less than 6 speakers out of 32).

In the following three sections, I will implement a thorough and detailed description and analysis of each Chinese personal pronoun in the order of first, second and third. Typical examples will be provided to assist with the analysis.

In order to lay a good foundation for the theoretical analysis in Chapter 6, with

what has been completed in Chapter 4, I will also briefly categorise the generic uses and some shift uses attested in the BJKY sample according to Gast et al. (2015)'s trichotomy of impersonal *you* in Chapter 5. A summary of Gast et al. (2015)'s categorisation of impersonal *you* is as follows:

If the addressee is included in the claim or predication made by the speaker, the impersonal use of *you* will be labelled as 'valid'; if the addressee is not included, it will be termed 'simulated'. Under the subcategory of simulated impersonal *you*, if the addressee is invited to simulate having the property of a category of individuals, it will be called 'category simulation'; if the addressee is invited to simulate participating in a situation, it will be named 'participant simulation'.

One important thing to note is all the generic uses attested in the BJKY including generic *wǒ* (*I*), generic *wǒmen* (*we*), generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*), generic *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*) and generic *tā* (*he*) can be applied with Gast et al. (2015)'s approach, but not all the shifts in the BJKY are valid. This is because some shifts involve generality while some do not. Shifts such as shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒmen* (*we*) can be applied to Gast et al. (2015)'s categorisation; whereas shifts to plural forms of personal pronouns from singular forms (i.e., *wǒmen* (*we*) for *wǒ* (*I*), *tāmen* 他们(*they*) for *tā* 他(*he*), *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) for *tā* 她(*she*)) and shifts to singular forms of personal pronouns from plural forms (i.e., *nǐ* (*you sg.*) for *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) and *tā* 他(*he*) for *tāmen* 他们(*they*)) are purely shifts. They have no property of generality or any generalisation degree, thus they will not be applied to Gast et al. (2015)'s categorisation in Chapter 5 and they will be addressed from a different theoretical perspective in Chapter 6.

## 5.2 First person pronouns

### 5.2.1 *Wǒ* (*I*)

#### 5.2.1.1 Generic *wǒ* (*I*)

There is no generic *I* attested in my CC sample, but Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990, p. 741-742) argued that *I* in English can be used impersonally, mainly in hypothetical contexts, i.e., 'I think, therefore I am'.

Chinese *wǒ* (*I*) also has been reported to be used generically either by itself or by co-occurring with other personal pronouns *nǐ* (*you sg.*) or *tā* 他(*he*) in written Chinese (Wang 1995; Liu 2014) and online talk shows (Huang et al. 2007) in previous studies.

In my BJKY sample, generic use of *wǒ* (*I*) was attested. *Wǒ* (*I*) in generic use does not refer to the speaker themselves, neither to people in general. It points to a certain group or a particular category of people who meet the given context. Observe instance (139).

(139) Wǎ shénme xiànzài gètǐhù'èr huòzhě jiàogē kāide gōngchǎng, tā zhè  
 为 什么 现在 个体户儿 或者 叫 个体 开的 工 厂, 它 这  
 qiántú tǐng guāngmíngde, jiù zài zhèr ne. **Wǒ** zìjǐ, zhè dōngxi dōushì **wǒ**  
 前途 挺 光 明的, 就在 这儿 呢。 **我** 自己, 这 东 西 都是 **我**  
 zìjǐ de, **wǒ** děi duì **wǒ** zìjǐ fùzé. Dàn tā yǒude shì qǐshìyè dānwèi shì zhè  
 自己的, **我** 得 对 **我** 自己 负责。 但 他 有 的 是 企事业 单位 是 这  
 zhǒng, **wǒ** chīzhe guójiāde fàn, **wǒ** zhè kuīle, guójiā yǒu bǔzhù, **wǒ** zhuān  
 种, **我** 吃着 国家 的 饭, **我** 这 亏 了, 国家 有 补 助, **我** 赚  
 le ne, shuōjù shízài, **wǒ** yě zhuàn bùle duōshǎo.  
 了呢, 说 句 实在, **我** 也 赚 不 了 多 少。 (1949 男 汉 卢沟桥 高中  
 民警 E)

Why now self-employed or factories run by individuals, its future is pretty bright, this is it. **I** myself, these things are all **mine**, **I** have to be responsible for **myself**. But he some are [state] enterprises and [state] administrations are like this, **I** am getting benefits from the country, **I** lost, the country will give subsidy, **I** earned money, to tell the truth, **I** can not earn much. (BJKY, M49E)

In (139), the first four bold *wǒ* (*I*) point to the categories of people who are ‘self-employed’ or ‘individual business owner’, and the last four *wǒ* (*I*) represent people who work for the state enterprises or administrations. The speaker was a police officer who worked for the government.

When *wǒ* (*I*) is used in the first ‘self-employed’ or ‘business owner’ scenario, the speaker invited both himself and the addressee to imagine being one of these categories of people, and then ‘I would have a bright future if I am responsible for my own business’. In the second ‘state enterprises and administrations’ scenario, the speaker made his argument by using *wǒ* (*I*) that generalises and applies to more than the speaker himself. If both the speaker and addressee were national enterprise or administration employees, ‘I might bear fewer burdens for any gain or loss because I would receive benefits from the government’.

In Gast et al. (2015)’s investigation of impersonal *you* in English, the core of their argument is still whether or not the addressee is included in the claim or predication made by the speaker. When applying their approach to my sample data, especially with respect to the generic *wǒ* (*I*) used here, I argue that if the speaker is implied in the claim or statement made by the speaker, the generic use of *wǒ* (*I*) will be labelled ‘valid’. However, if the speaker is not implied, it will be labelled ‘simulated’. So instance (139) is an example that combines both. The first four *wǒ* (*I*) are category simulated generic *wǒ* (*I*), as the speaker was a police who did not belong to the category of people described in the first scenario. While the last four *wǒ* (*I*) are valid generic, as the speaker belonged to the category described in the second scenario.

Apart from the category simulation, generic *wǒ* (*I*) can also appear in participant simulation occasionally. Observe instance (140).

(140) Gōngqì úguānxì yǐngxiǎng, bǐrán yǐngxiǎng le zhège wùjì àshàngzhǎng. Bǐrú

供求关系影响，必然影响了这个物价上长。比如  
 yígèrénér, nǐ yǒu, bǐrúshuō gāngbǐ, nǐ yǒu shízhī gāngbǐ yígèrénér yòng, nà  
 一个人儿，你有，比如说 钢笔，你有 十支 钢笔一个人儿用，那  
 wǒ kěyǐ tiāozhe kěyǐ. Yībǎi gè rén háiyǒu shízhī gāngbǐ nà jiù gāi qiǎngzhe  
 我可以挑着可以。一百个人还有十支 钢笔那就该抢着  
 yòng le, gōngqiúzhì bù yíyàng le.

用了，供求制不一样了。(1940 男 汉 西城 大学 干部 D)

The impact between the supply and demand, will inevitably affect the ongoing prices. For example one person, you have, for example say a fountain pen, you have ten fountain pens for one person to use, then I can pick. One hundred people only have ten fountain pens then should snatch, the system of supply and demand will be different. (BJKY, M40D)

(140) is exemplified to illustrate the relation between the demand and supply. The speaker created a hypothetical situation where a person can easily pick one pen out of ten if provided with ten pens. However, if only ten pens are available to be picked by a hundred people, the demand and supply will be different. The speaker in (140) used *wǒ* (*I*) to invite the addressee to participate in this hypothetical situation created by the speaker in which the relation of demand and supply is illustrated. The speaker and addressee were not really picking any pen when they had this conversation.

## 5.2.2 Wǒmen (we)

### 5.2.2.1 Generic wǒmen (we)

As with generic *we* in the CC, generic *wǒmen* (*we*) is also attested in the BJKY. Consider (141), where the speaker was comparing the small scale peasant economy with capitalist economy.

(141) Ji ùshì xiǎonóng jīngjì, zìjǐ zìú, zìrán jīngjì bǐjiào shénme, suǒyǐ zàochéng  
 就是 小农 经济，自给自足，自然经济 比较 什么，所以 造成  
 yī shénme ne? Yī, zhǐyào yī zīběn jīngjì zhè chéngdù yì fāzhǎn, wǒmen yǒu  
 一 什么 呢？一，只要 一 资本经济 这 程度 一 发展，**我们** 有  
 shíhòuér rènshi bú nàme tài qīngchǔ, suǒyǐ xíngchéng gěi tā chōngjī shì bǐ  
 时候儿 认识 不 那么太 清楚，所以 形成 给他 冲击 是 比  
 jiào dàde, dāngrán zhè dōngxī shì, yěshì kěyǐ, jiānglái mànmanér huì kěfúde.  
 较大的，当然 这 东西 是，也是可以，将来 慢慢儿 会 克服的。  
 Dāngrán, zuò wéi biérén lái shuō, tígāo rén de sùzhì ma, tígāo quánmín de sù  
 当然，作为 别人 来说，提高 人的 素质 嘛，提高 全民的 素  
 zhì wǒmen jìyù gǎigé yě zhèyàng er...  
 质，**我们** 教育 改革也 这样 儿...

质，**我们** 教育 改革也 这样 儿... (1940 男 汉 西城 大学 干部 D)

The peasant economy, self-sufficiency, the natural economy is pretty what, so

what would cause? Firstly, as long as the capitalist economy develops to a certain extent, **we** sometimes do not recognise very clear, so the impact caused to it is relatively large, of course this thing is, is also possible, will slowly be overcome in the future. Of course, as someone else, to improve people's morality, to improve the morality of the entire citizens, **our** education reform should be the same... (BJKY, M49D)

The speaker generalised his personal opinion on the capitalist economy on behalf of a whole group by using *wǒmen* (*we*). He indicated that we all should re-examine the impact of capitalist economy as the impact could be alleviated. *Wǒmen* (*we*) in such generic use points to Chinese people in general.

With reference to Gast et al. (2012)'s classification of impersonal *you*, the criteria of distinguishing 'valid' from 'simulated' generic *wǒmen* (*we*) is to see whether *wǒmen* (*we*) is implied in the statement or claim made by the speaker. The pronoun *wǒmen* (*we*) itself can be an inclusive *we* in Chinese, and *wǒmen* (*we*) in (141) is certainly including the speaker and the addressee, so we can decisively classify generic *wǒmen* (*we*) in (141) as 'valid'.

### 5.2.2.2 Shift to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*)

In the BJKY sample data, the shift to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*) most commonly appears within the structures of 'wǒmen (*we*) + home/family/family members', 'wǒmen (*we*) + work/workplace' or 'wǒmen (*we*) + colleagues/classmates'. It is translated into *our* in English even though there is no changes in case form in Chinese, as it appears to function as a possessive in these structures. Consider instances (142) - (144).

- (142) Yǒushí hǒuer ba, nàgè xià yǔ la, **wǒmen** jiā zhù, wǒbà zài xiǎojǐng er gōngzuò.  
有 时候儿吧，那个下雨啦，**我们** 家 住，我 爸 在 小 井 儿 工 作。  
Kěshì, wǒ nàgè, **wǒmen** jiā zài lúgōuqiáo, děng huílái ne yǐhòu, wǎnshàng  
可 是，我 那 个，**我们** 家 在 卢 沟 桥，等 回 来 呢 以 后，晚 上  
xià yǔ le.

下雨了。（1963 女 汉 卢 沟 桥 高 中 售 货 员 D）

Sometimes, it rains, **our** family live, my dad works in Xiaojing. However, I mmm, **our** home are in Lugou bridge, after [he] comes back, it starts to rain in the evening. (BJKY, F63D)

- (143) Ni ánqīng r é n, wǒmen fǎnzhèng wǒ jiēchù zhè jǐ gè tóngxué, yǒu hǎo jǐ gè bú  
年 轻 人，我 们 反 正 我 接 触 这 几 个 同 学，有 好 几 个 不  
yào xiǎoháier de. Wǒmen liǎng yě xiǎng bú yào xiǎoháier, kěshì **wǒmen** nà  
要 小 孩 儿 的。我 们 俩 也 想 不 要 小 孩 儿，可 是 **我们** 那  
àiréner lǎo xiǎngzhe méishì er shēng yī háizi ba. Xiànzài zhǔyào shì pò yú shì  
爱 人 儿 老 想 着 没 事 儿 生 一 孩 子 吧。现 在 主 要 是 迫 于 是

fēnjū, méifǎer zhàogù, bùnéng yào, cóng wǒ láishuō wǒ bùxiǎng yào.  
分居, 没法儿照顾, 不能要, 从我来说我不想要。(1955  
男 满 海淀 大学 干部 B)

Young people, we anyway these several classmates I have contacted, there are a few [classmates] don't want any children. We both do not want children, but **our** that wife is always thinking about having a child if have time. Now mainly is forced to separate, can not look after [each other], can not have, from my perspective I don't want to have [a child]. (BJKY, M55B)

(144) Dào shīdà ne, wǒ zài **wǒmen** xì shì xuānchuánduì de, yěshì nàgè gǎogǎo tiào  
到 师大呢, 我在 **我们** 系是 宣传队的, 也是那个搞搞跳  
wǔ a, nàgè xiǎotíqín na, wǒ shì yīnwéi wǒmen yuánlái lóushàng yǒu yì xiǎo,  
舞啊, 那个小提琴哪, 我是 因为 我们 原来 楼上 有一小,  
xiǎo nánháier, tíng xǐhuān zhè xiǎotíqín de, mànmaner de ne, wǒ yě mǎi le  
小 男孩儿, 挺喜欢 这 小提琴的, 慢慢儿地呢, 我也买了  
yíge xiǎotíqín, wǒ jiù ràng tā, en, jiāo wǒ lā.

一个小提琴, 我就让他, 嗯, 教我拉。(1955 女 汉 西城 大学 中  
学教师 D)

After came to the Normal University, I was in the propaganda team at **our**  
department, and also engaged in the dancing, playing violin, I was because  
we had a little upstairs, a little boy, quite like the violin, gradually, I also  
bought a violin, I let him, mmm, teach me to play. (BJKY, F55D)

Although the speakers expressed 'wǒmen (our) family/home/wife/department' in (142), (143) and (144), they in fact mean 'my family/home/wife/department'. In addition, Huang (2012) pointed out that the writer in (145) used plural *wǒmen (our)* to represent an individual (the husband), predominantly because of 'modesty or wanting to be closer to the interlocutors' (p. 13).

(145) Rújīn de Chéngdū nánrén bùjǐn jiāntiāo zhuānqián yǎngjiā de zhònggrǎn, tóng  
如今的 成都 男人 不仅 肩挑 赚钱 养家的 重担, 同  
shí hái jiānrèn dàchú, qīngjié gōng、sījī、cāifù、'qínghū'... Tāmen zú  
时 还 兼任 大厨、清洁工、司机、慈父、“情夫”.....他们最  
xiǎngshòu de shíkè, mòguò yú niánqīng de zhǎngdàxué nǚshēng de lǎopó  
享 受 的时刻, 莫过于 年轻 得直逼 大学 女生的 老婆  
xiàng rén xuānyào: **wǒmen** nàkǒuzi hái kěyǐ ...

向 人 炫耀: **我们** 那 口子 还可以... (Huang 2012, p. 13)

Nowadays Chengdu [a city in China] men not only shoulder the burden of a  
breadwinner, but also serve as chef, cleaner, driver, loving father,  
'lover'.....The moment they enjoy the most, is no other than when their  
wives who are as young as university female students show off to other  
people: **our** that half [husband] [is] not bad... (Huang 2012, p. 13)

The husband is literally described as 'wǒmen (our) that half' in (145), but it should be

‘my that half’. Huang (2012) suggested that *wǒmen* (*we*) in (145) more commonly occurs in spoken Chinese, and is particular to address between the husband and wife (p. 13).

Apart from the above structures, there is another case where the plural *wǒmen* (*we*) was singled out when the speaker was simply recounting their own matters or affairs, as in (146).

(146) Chuānjié guò hòu, a, en, zài xuéshēng kāixué zhīqián zhè liǎnggè xīngqī,  
 春 节 过 后, 啊, 嗯, 在 学 生 开 学 之 前 这 两 个 星 期,  
 wǒ zuò nàge sānsānyī jī wùtè bié hǎo zuò. Nàge zìcóng xuéshēng yīkāixué é en,  
 我 坐 那 个 三 三 一 就 特 别 好 坐。那 个 自 从 学 生 一 开 学, 嗯,  
 zhèzhèchē jiǎnzhí wǒ jī wùtè sānsānyī wǒ dōu kuā jǐ bú shàngqù le. Wǒ cóng  
 这 这 车 简 直, 我 就 三 三 一 我 都 快 挤 不 上 去 了。我 从  
 zhèr, yǒude shíhou er yǒu sānshíbā de shíhou er zuò sānshíbā, méiyǒu sānshí  
 这 儿, 有 的 时 候 儿 有 三 十 八 的 时 候 儿 坐 三 十 八, 没 有 三 十  
 bā jī wùtè zǒu yīzhàn, ránhòu zài dǎo sānsānyī. Zhège, měitiān zài qì  
 八 就 坐 七 路, 走 一 站, 然 后 再 倒 三 三 一。这 个, 每 天 在 汽  
 chē shàng a, tāmen shòupiànyuán, **wǒmen** měitiān zuòchē ma, shòupiànyuán  
 车 上 啊, 他 们 售 票 员, **我 们** 每 天 坐 车 嘛, 售 票 员  
 dōu gēn **wǒmen** tǐng shú de le. Ránhòu, yǒu yīgè shòupiànyuán gēn wǒ  
 都 跟 **我 们** 挺 熟 的 了。然 后, 有 一 个 售 票 员 跟 我  
 shuōde, en, tā shuō nǐ kàn nàge xiànzài a, zhège nǐ kàn xiànzài zuòchē tǐng  
 说 的, 嗯, 她 说 你 看 那 个 现 在 啊, 这 个 你 看 现 在 坐 车 挺  
 hǎozuò de a, nǐ kàn, děng xuéshēng yīkāixué é en, chē jī wùtè bié nán zuò.  
 好 坐 的 啊, 你 看, 等 学 生 一 开 学, 嗯, 车 就 特 别 难 坐。

(1947 女 满 西 城 大 专 医 生 E)

After the Spring Festival, ah, mmm, in the two weeks before the students started to go back to school, I took [Route] 331 particularly easy to take. Since the students went back to school, hmm, the bus simply, I just I could hardly squeeze into [Route] 331. I am from here, sometimes if [Route] 38 comes [I] take [Route] 38, no [Route] 38 [I] take Route 7, walk for one stop, then take [Route] 331. Hmm, every day on the bus, they bus conductors, **we** catch bus every day, and bus conductors become very familiar with **us**. Then, one bus conductor told me, mmm, she said you see that now ah, you see now it is easy to take the bus, you see, wait until the students start the school, mmm, bus is particularly hard to take. (BJKY, F47E)

The speaker in (146) was telling the interviewer her daily bus ride to work. From the given context, it is clear that *wǒmen* (*we*) does not represent more than two people or even a large group. It is exclusive to the speaker. However, the speaker still preferred the plural *wǒmen* (*we/us*) instead of *wǒ* (*I/me*).

Huang (2012) indicated that Chinese people are accustomed to use plural pronouns to strengthen the group a person belongs to, in order to enhance the sense of belonging and identity (p. 13). This supports my finding that the Chinese speakers in

the BJKY sample favour the plural *wǒmen* (*we*) over the singular *wǒ* (*I*), especially when they discuss their families or jobs.

## 5.3 Second person pronouns

### 5.3.1 *Nǐ* (*you singular*)

#### 5.3.1.1 Generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*)

In my BJKY sample, *nǐ* (*you sg.*) is found to be used generically and is generally referring either to ‘anyone’ or ‘everyone’ or to a particular group/category of people who meet the given context.

In keeping with Gast et al. (2015)’s definition, when the claims or statements made by the speaker can apply to the addressee, and the addressee is implied, the generic use of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) will be labelled ‘valid’. Most of the valid generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in my BJKY sample appears in conditional sentences, explicitly or implicitly introduced by the conditional words ‘if’, ‘no matter’ etc., as can be seen in (147) and (148). This resembles the generic *you* in NZE where *you* also tends to co-occur with words signalling conditions such as ‘if’, ‘when’, ‘provided’ etc.

- (147) Xi ànz à l á jiǎng ne, y í g è m é yǒu w é n p í ng, z à y í g è l á jiǎng ne, ji ù sh ì nǐ  
现在来讲呢，一个没有文凭，再一个来讲呢，就是你  
dǒngde y diǎner dōngxi l á jiǎng ne, yǐjīng y ào lu ò wǔ le, du ba? H á dǎi y ào  
懂得一点儿东西来讲呢，已经要落伍了，对吧？还得要  
f è n f ā de l á xu é í nǐ bù xu é í nǐ ji ù nǐ ji ù gǎn b ú sh à ng zh è ge xi à n d à de  
奋发地来学习，你不学习，你就你就赶不上这个现代的  
gōngy í j ì sh ù, sh ì w a, zh è ge f ā zhǎn, sh ì w a? Zh è sh ì hěn guān j i à n de sh ì qing.  
工艺技术，是哇，这个发展，是哇？这是很关键的事情。  
(1939 男 汉 天桥 初中 工人 D)

Now to speak, firstly doesn’t have a diploma, in addition to say, is you only know a little thing, you still fall behind, right? Also have to work hard to learn, [if] **you** don’t learn, **you** then **you** then can’t catch up with this modern technology, isn’t it, [with] this development, isn’t it? This is a very critical thing. (BJKY, M39D)

- (148) Ji ù sh ì shuō b ú y à o k à n de gu ò zh ò ng, k à n sǐ le. Dōngxi dōush ì j u é du ì de ji ù bù  
就是说 不要看得过重，看死了。东西<sup>26</sup> 都是绝对的就不

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<sup>26</sup> ‘东西’ has two different pinyin in Chinese. It means ‘things’ when it is pronounced ‘dōngxi’, and it means ‘east and west’ when it is pronounced ‘dōngxī’. It is clear from the context that ‘东西’ in instance (148) should be pronounced as ‘dōngxi’. The issue of more than one pronunciation for the same word also happens to other examples extracted from the BJKY sample, as well as to the Chinese

hǎo le, ai, yī bān lǎ jiǎng, jiù shì nǐ yào bǎ tā kàn guò zhòng ne, jiù wǎi qù tā de yì yì. Wǒ hái bǐ jiào xǐ huān zhè gè gōng zuò de. (1956 男 汉 天 桥 大 专 中 学 教 师 E)

That is to say do not view [matters] too seriously, or view too rigidly. [If] things are all black-and-white it is not good, mmm, generally speaking, which is if **you** treat it too seriously, it loses its meaning. I still pretty like this job. (BJKY, M56E)

In the BJKY, generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*) also appears in cases where *nǐ* (*you sg.*) still indicates people in general, but the addressee is not implied in the statement. In other words, the addressee is not actively participating in the matter. Consider (149).

(149) Tā shì lǎo kāi, yīnwéi tā dōngdōng hǎi àn a, tā kěyǐ huàn sījī, yìzhí kāi, tā huàn sījī, jiù gēn zǎo men huǒchē shì de. Suǒyǐ nǐ zuò shàng nà ge, nǐ kěyǐ zài chēshàng shuǐ jiào. Chēshàng jiù gēn nà fēijī shàng nà yǐzi yí yàng, wǎng hòu yī kào, dà kào bèi er, yì tǎng jiù wán le.

一靠，大靠背儿，一躺就完了。(1942 男 汉 西 城 大 学 医 生 E)

It is always on the operation, because it east coast ah, he can change the driver, always operating, he changed the driver, just like our train. So **you** sit on that, **you** can sleep in the bus. The seat in the bus just like what in the airplane, can lean backwards, a big backrest, just lying on it. (BJKY, M42E)

The speaker in (149) was telling his experience of taking the long distance bus in America, where the passenger can sleep in the bus because they change the bus driver during the trip, and the seat is adjustable to make the passenger feel comfortable while they sleep. The addressee was not on the bus trip with the speaker, but was invited to imagine being in the same situation described by the speaker. This generic use of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) can be classified as participant simulation in Gast et al. (2015)'s approach.

*Nǐ* (*you sg.*) in sentences in (150) and (151) only relates to particular groups of people which differ from the above cases where the claims made by the speaker can apply to anybody.

(150) ‘Bǎihuā Jiǎng’ ha, yī fā jiǎng de shí hòu er ba, zhè xiē zhè xiē, zhè ge, zhè ge “百 花 奖”哈，一 发 奖 的 时 候 儿 吧，这 些 这 些，这 个，这 个 di ànyǐng yǎnyuán, shíwéi de, zhè xiē a, chuānshàng pī àoliang de yīfu a,

---

examples quoted from other people's work. It became difficult when putting pinyin on them, but once we know what the correct meaning is from the context, it would be less problematic. I hereby take responsibility for any errors and mistakes in the pinyin that I added on top of all the Chinese characters in this thesis.

电 影 演 员 ， 什 么 的 ， 这 些 啊 ， 穿 上 漂 亮 的 衣 服 啊 ，  
shénme lǐngjiǎng a, shénme zhǐgāoqì yáng de a, yào bié rén, tā, tā děi gěi  
什 么 领 奖 啊 ， 什 么 趾 高 气 扬 的 啊 ， 要 别 人 ， 他 ， 他 得 给  
bérén qiānmíng a, shénme zhèxiē huódòng gǎode, wǒ jì duì zhè ge tèbié  
别 人 签 名 啊 ， 什 么 这 些 活 动 搞 的 ， 我 就 对 这 个 特 别  
fǎngǎn. Wèishénme ne? Nǐ, wǒ jì shuō yǎnyuán ba, zài nǐ de zhè ge shìyè  
反 感 。 为 什 么 呢 ？ 你 ， 我 就 说 演 员 吧 ， 在 你 的 这 个 事 业  
shàng ha, nǐ zuò chū le yí dìng de chéngjì dānshì zài xǔxǔxǔduō de hángyè  
上 哈 ， 你 作 出 了 一 定 的 成 绩 ， 但 是 在 许 许 许 许 多 的 行 业  
dāngzhōng ba, měigè rén dōu yǒu tā zì jǐ de chéngjì  
当 中 吧 ， 每 个 人 都 有 他 自 己 的 成 绩 。 （1947 女 满 西 城 大  
专 医 生 E）

Talking about ‘Hundred Flowers Awards’, when giving awards, these these, this, this movie actors, etc., these, wearing beautiful clothes, receiving awards, arrogant [to others], want other people, he, he had to give other people signature, these kind of activities, I am particularly disgusted with this. Why? You, let me take actors for an example, in **your** own career, **you** have made some achievements, but in many other industries, everyone has his own achievements. (BJKY, F47E)

(151) Búxiàng xiànzài zhèshèpùpiànshìde, dōu méi rén er wǒ jì zuò zhe, hèn bù de néng chòng dūn er ne. Nǐ de zhǎohuór, tíxǐng chéngkè xiàchē a, nǐ kàn yǒu shuǐ jì àde nǐ jìu děi wèn wèn qù, a, nín nǎ er xià a?  
不 像 现 在 这 售 票 似 的 ， 都 没 人 儿 我 就 坐 着 ， 恨 不 得  
néng chòng dūn er ne. Nǐ de zhǎohuór, tíxǐng chéngkè xiàchē a, nǐ kàn yǒu  
能 冲 盹 儿 了 。 你 得 找 活 儿 ， 提 醒 乘 客 下 车 啊 ， 你 看 有  
shuǐ jì àde nǐ jìu děi wèn wèn qù, a, nín nǎ er xià a?  
睡 觉 的 你 就 得 问 问 去 ， 啊 ， 您 哪 儿 下 呀 ？ （1943 女 汉 东 城 初  
中 售 票 员 F）

Unlike the bus conductor nowadays, when there is nobody I will sit down, can't wait to take a nap. **You** have to find the job to do, remind passengers to get off the bus, **you** see someone who is sleeping **you** have to go and ask, ah, where do you get off? (BJKY, F43F)

The referent in bold *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in (150) is the ‘actor’ mentioned previously. In (151), the referent is the ‘bus conductor’. The addressees in both examples were not actors or bus conductors. But the speakers invited the addressees to imagine having one of these occupations. Thus, this usage of generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*) can be regarded as category simulated.

### 5.3.1.2 Shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*)/*wǒmen* (*we*)

The shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and *wǒmen* (*we*) were also attested in the BJKY. Similar to the shifts to *you* from *I/we* in the CC, the utilisation of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) by the speakers in the BJKY sample also does not make the sentence generalising. Instead, it makes the statement more generally related to the addressee, which means the generalisation degree of the shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and *wǒmen* (*we*) is much

lower than the generic *nǐ* (you sg.) in the BJKY.

Interestingly, both the shifts to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *wǒ* (I) and *wǒmen* (we) can be classified as participant simulation, as the addressee was truly not the person who had participated or experienced in the matters or issues discussed by the speaker. Observe instances (152) and (153).

Shifts to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *wǒ* (I)

(152) Wǒ èr, wǒ nàgè shíjǐsuì shíhou wǒ zuìkǔ le. Zài gōngchǎng lǐtóu a jiùshì  
我二，我那个十几岁时候儿我最苦了。在工厂里头啊就是  
shuō, búshì zhège gōngchǎng búyào nǐ le, jiùshì nàgè gōngchǎng búyào.  
说，不是这个工厂不要你了，就是那个工厂不要。  
Yītiān nǐ tīlāzhe xīn. Zhè gōngtóuér zhǐyào yí chǎu nǐ búshùn yǎn, déde, tā  
一天你提拉着心。这工头儿只要一瞅你不顺眼，得了，他  
yī zuò mó nǐ, shuō zhēnde xīnlǐ jìu tī xīndǎnde. (1930 nǚ hàn xīchéng xiǎoxué  
一琢磨你，说真的心里就提心吊胆的。(1930女汉西城小学工人 C)

I twen-, I was in the bitterest time when I was in teenage. In the factory that is to say, either this factory did not need **you**, or that factory did not. **You** held your heart all day. This manager as long as [he] looked at **you** and [he] felt dislike, ok, he doubted about **you**, to be honest my heart was on tenterhooks. (BJKY, F30C)

Shift to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *wǒmen* (we)

(153) Wǒ cóng qīsuì sǐde fùqīn, wǒ fùqīn sǐle yǐhòu, wǒ yǒu liǎng, yí gè dì yí gè  
我从七岁死的父亲，我父亲死了以后，我有两，一个弟弟一个  
mèimei. Ai, méiyǒu shēnghuó yuán, zhǐzhe wǒmā ne, jiùshì zuò zhēnxiàn  
妹妹。哎，没有生活来源，指着我妈呢，就是做针线  
huóer. Zuò zhēnxiàn huóer nàhuìr, zhù rénjiā de fángzi ne, jiùshì shuō, diǎn  
活儿。做针线活儿那会儿，住人家的房子呢，就是说，点  
diǎndēng a, nǐ duō shǐdiàn, rén dōuyǒu yǐjiàn. Jiù bǎ dēng a mǒngshàng  
电灯啊，你多使电，人都有意见。就把灯啊蒙上  
hēibù, shèng yí diǎn guāng zài dǐxia, wǒ mǔqīn gěi rénjiā zuò huóer. (1930  
黑布，剩一点儿光在底下，我母亲给人家做活儿。(1930  
女汉西城小学工人 C)

I was seven [when] my father died, after my father died, I have two, one younger brother one younger sister. Alas, don't have source of income, relying on my mum, simply by sewing. At that time sewing, lived in other people's house, that is to say, leave the lights on, **you** used more power, other people had complaints. Then covered the lights with a black cloth, leaving a little light at the bottom, my mother was working for other people. (BJKY, F30C)

The speaker in (152) disclosed her experience when she was a teenage working at a factory. She was always worried that the factory manager would dismiss her, and she

would become unemployed. Simulation allows the addressee to imagine being in the speaker's position, although the addressee was not the protagonist of the story. Likewise in (153), *nǐ* (*you sg.*) created the simulation effect so that the addressee can empathise with the speaker, although the real protagonist of this particular story in (153) is the speaker's family. If the speaker's family used too much power, their landlord would complain about it. The applications of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in both cases ensure the speaker's personal experience to be more generally related to the addressee, and the addressee can easily empathise with them. Their stories can not really generalise and apply to the addressees. Thus instances like (152) and (153) are labelled participant simulated uses.

### 5.3.1.3 Shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*)

The shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) is intentionally separate from the shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*)/*wǒmen* (*we*) since it is not the same phenomenon. The shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) is purely a shift, as it does not involve any generalising or simulation effect, nor was it intended to make the statement by the speaker generally relevant to the addressee.

In the literature, Zhang (1995a), Zhang (2001) and Chen (2011a) argued that the switch to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) as well as the shift to *wǒ* (*I*) from *wǒmen* (*we*) usually appear in written language rather than spoken. Although the shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) is attested in the BJKY sample, its frequency (1 token) is relatively rare. Consider (154).

- (154) N àhú èr a, wǒ h áshì bù wǔ, bù wǔ zhè zhǒng dōngxi ne! Bù wǔ dōngxi ne, wǎnle yǐhòu ne, rénjiā jiù shì kàn dōu niánqīng, shì ba, nǐ qù gēn tā yìqǐ tiàowǔ yǎnchū qù de le. Nǎme wǒ shuō méi rén, méi rén zǎo qù ba, a méi rén zǎo qù, en, fǎnzhèng zǎo bǔquē, nǐmen méi yǒu rén zǎo qù gěi nǐ, gěi nǐ shì shì. Ai, dào nàr yǐhòu, rén dàjiā伙儿 duì wǒ hái tǐng hǎo, jiù shuō de nǐ ne, nǐ jiù gēn zhèr dāizhe de, nǐ bié zài nàr bǔquē le, nǐ jiù dāizhe de, jiù gēn tāmen wǔdǎodu èr qù tiàowǔ huò shì shì. (1939 男 汉 天 桥 初 中 工 人 D)

At that time, I still don't, don't know how to do this! Don't know how to do, later, they just saw all very young, yes, you go together with him to dance and perform. So I said [if] there is nobody, [if there is] nobody I will go, ah [if there is] nobody I will go, hmm, anyway I fill the gap, you (pl.) don't have

people I will give **you (sg.)**, give **you (sg.)** a try. Alas, after I got there, they all were very nice to me, just said you, you just stay here, you don't be there to fill a vacancy, you just stay here, just go dancing with them dancing team or something else. (BJKY, M39D)

The speaker in (154) began his statement with an underlined plural *nǐmen* (*you pl.*), yet finished with two singular *nǐ* (*you sg.*). The speaker was uncertain whether he was capable to dance with other people in the dancing group, but he would give it a try if the dancing group could not find somebody else. *Nǐ* (*you sg.*) in the given context in (154) refers back to the third party, i.e., the dancing group. This is interesting and is reminiscent of the ‘*it vs they* with collective nouns’ in NZE. The speaker in (154) may view the ‘dancing group’ as one unit instead of a collection of individuals when he switched to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*).

### 5.3.1.4 Discourse marker

Both Guo (2008a) and Huang (2012) noted that *nǐ* (*you sg.*) can be used as either an independent discourse marker or a combinational discourse marker (where *nǐ* (*you sg.*) combines with words such as ‘shuō 说(say)’, ‘qī áo 瞧(look)’, ‘kàn 看(see)’, ‘xiǎng 想(think)’, ‘zhī dào 知道(know)’, ‘guǎn 管(no matter)’ etc). Huang (2012, p. 43) termed these two options as two pathways for personal pronouns in Chinese to tokenise into discourse markers. Consider examples (155) - (158). (155) and (156) are independent discourse markers, and (157) and (158) are combinational discourse markers.

(155) *Nǐ* shuǐ zhǎng chuán gāo, *nǐ* shuǐ duō gāo, tā zhè tǎ qǐ duō gāo.

你 水 涨 船 高, 你 水 多高, 他 这塔起 多高。

**You** water goes up the boat becomes higher, **you** how high the water is, he how high the pagoda will be. (Guo 2008a, p. 54)

(156) Wǒ jué de hǎoxiàng yí dào zhōngxué wǒ jiù chéng dàrén le a, *nǐ* xiǎoxué lǎo

我 觉得 好像 一到 中学, 我就 成 大人了啊, 你 小学 老

有 人 管的。

I feel like once go to the high school, I became an adult, **you** primarily school always have people to control. (Huang 2012, p. 44)

(157) Xià tiān de gǎnjué ba, wǒ jué de, *nǐ* kàn xiǎo de shí hou ba, wǒ jué de zhè ge

夏 天 的 感觉吧, 我觉得, 你 看 小 的 时候吧, 我觉得 这个

Běijīng, wǒ jué de dào xià tiān tè bié bù hǎo guò, tè bié rè

北京, 我觉得 到 夏天 特别 不好 过, 特别 热。

The feeling of summer, I think, **you see** when young, I think Beijing, I think when summer comes particularly bad, especially hot. (Guo 2008a, p. 54)

(158) N àsh h òuer ne, **nǐ** xi àng yǒu hǎoduō sh ìmǎnyǔ l áide, y èh éng h ànz ìde.  
 那 时 候 儿 呢, 你 像 有 好 多 是 满 语 来 的, 译 成 汉 字 的。  
 At that time, **you like** a lot are from Manchu language, translated into Chinese characters. (Huang 2012, p. 53)

Guo (2008a) argued that when *nǐ* (*you sg.*) is grammaticalised to become an independent or combinational discourse marker, its original referential meaning has been highly bleached. *Nǐ* (*you sg.*) is no longer a syntactic constituent in the sentence, and it serves to turn the conversation, to connect and adjust the discourse (p. 54). When *nǐ* (*you sg.*) is a combinational discourse marker, it can not separate from ‘shuō 说(say)’, ‘qī áo 瞧(look)’, ‘k àn 看(see)’ etc., and they function together as a combinational discourse marker (Guo 2008a, p. 54).

Huang (2012) further examined the combinational discourse markers involving *nǐ* (*you sg.*), especially when *nǐ* (*you sg.*) combines with verbs such as ‘shuō 说(say)’, ‘k àn 看(see)’, ‘xiǎng 想(think)’, ‘xi àng 像(like)’ etc. She investigated its function as a combinational discourse marker in the sentence and the function of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in the combination. Combinational discourse markers of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) can have an exemplification function, like ‘nǐ xi àng 你像(you like)’ in (158). They can also indicate the speaker’s attitude, standpoint or comments towards the topic information (Huang 2012, p. 53-54), as ‘nǐ shuō 你说(you say)’ in (159). However, Huang (2012) did not discuss what kind of attitude the speaker expressed in (159).

(159) N àyu ànlǐ jǐ wǒ shì zǎomen, wǒ shuō zhè zěnmēb àn ne? **Nǐ** shuō tā j òng y à mō  
 那 院 里 就 是 咱 们, 我 说 这 怎 么 办 呢? 你 说 他 净 要 摸  
 di ànm én qù, y à z ò z ěr x ún sǐ z ò shā.  
 电 门 去, 要 自 个 儿 寻 死 自 杀。  
 It’s only us in the yard, I said how to do? **You say** he determinedly wanted to touch the electrical gate, wanted to commit suicide. (Huang 2012, p. 54)

With regard to the function of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in the combinational discourse markers, Huang (2012) only suggested that *nǐ* (*you sg.*) has a function of referencing. The function of the whole combinational discourse marker of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in the sentences is still dependent on the verbs followed after *nǐ* (*you sg.*) (p. 53).

In the BJKY sample, both independent and combinational discourse markers of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) were attested. The number of speakers using combinational discourse markers involving *nǐ* (*you sg.*) (23/32 speakers) is considerably greater than the independent ones (7/32 speakers). What follows is the discussion of these two discourse markers of *nǐ* (*you sg.*).

#### (a) Independent discourse marker

*Nǐ* (*you sg.*) as an independent discourse maker does not have any referential meaning. It is optional in the clause and can be omitted. The removal will not affect the truth condition of the sentence. In terms of the position distribution of this type of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in the sentence, the majority of them are likely to be clause initial.

Basically, the independent discourse marker of *nǐ* (you sg.) in my BJKY sample tends to pattern as ‘*nǐ* (you sg.) + N.’ (as in (160) and (161)) or ‘*nǐ* (you sg.) + Adj. + N.’ (as in (162)). In the BJKY, *nǐ* (you sg.) could serve as listing examples, as can be seen in (160) - (162).

(160) Běijīng a, jī yī gè dà quēdiǎn, xiànzài jiùshì yuèdāi yuèmèi jìn. Zhè rén tài duō le. Dào nǎr qù ya? Nǐ shāngchǎng yě hǎo, shíme zì yóu shì chǎng yě hǎo, nǐ hái shì gōngyuán er yě hǎo, quánshì rén, hézhe. Rén kàn, quánshì rén, hēiyāyā yī piàn.

黑压压一片。(1942 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E)

Beijing, has a big drawback, now the more [you] stay the more bored [you feel]. Too many people here. Where to go? No matter **you** department stores, or any free market, or **you** parks, all full of people. No need to look, full of people, a dense mass. (BJKY, M42E)

(161) Yīnwéi wǒ hěnxiǎo ne jiù xǐhuān huà huà er, jiù xǐhuān měishù, yīnwéi nà huìr tā jiù, nǐ xiǎoxué, nǐ nà gè chū, chūzhōng bì yè yǐ hòu ne, jiù méi bì yè yǐ hòu nà gè jiù, gēnběn méi yǒu zhè gè měishù, měishù xué xiào huò shì měishù xué yuàn, méi yǒu zhè zhǒng...

学院，没有这种...(1939 男 汉 天桥 初中 工人 D)

Because since I was little just fond of drawing, only like art subject, because at that time it has, **you** primary school, you that junior, after graduating from junior high school, even not graduating that mmm, doesn't even have art subject at all, art schools or art colleges, doesn't have this kind of... (BJKY, M39D)

(162) Zhè yào jiǎng qǐ lái, zhè guījuér dà le, shì bù shì, nǐ yào zhè yàng, nǐ shuō guò qù de huà, nǐ guò qù Běijīng, mǎnzú yǒu mǎnzú de guīju, nǐ shuō, wǒmen huí mǐn de huà, nǐ guò qù Běijīng, mǎnzú yǒu mǎnzú de guīju, nǐ shuō, wǒmen huí mǐn de guīju.

有回民的规矩。(1930 男 回 东城 高中 售票员 F)

If talking about this, the rules are big, isn't it, if you do this, you say when in the past, **you** old Beijing, the Manchu minority have Manchu rules, you say, we Hui minority have Hui rules. (BJKY, M30F)

Alternatively, *nǐ* (you sg.) could assist the speaker in giving examples in order to emphasise their personal opinions. This is illustrated in (163).

(163) Yīnwǎ zánmen běnshēn zhège yǒu guīdìng, sì, shuō zhèròu shì dāpèizhe àn sānfēnzhīyī, sānfēnzhīèr zhège bǐlì dāpèi. Fǎnér jīběn xiànzài dāpèi ròu wǎ, jīběn dōu hédí. Sānfēnzhīyī de shòu ròu běnshēn nǐ méi duōshǎo. Dànshì nǐ lí zhèqúnzhòng zhège yāoqiú lái shuō shì fǎn'ér zhèng shì chàdiǎnr.  
 因为咱们本身这个有规定，哟，说这肉是搭配着按三分之一，三分之二这个比例搭配。反而基本现在搭配肉哇，基本都合理。三分之一的瘦肉本身你没多少。但是你离这群众这个要求来说是反儿正是差点儿。（1948 男满海淀初中售货员 E）

Because we ourselves have rules, mmm, saying that the meat [pork] is matched by percentage of one-third [lean meat] with two-thirds [fat meat]. But now basically matching the meat, basically is reasonable. One third of the lean meat itself **you** are not too much. But **you** from the requirement of the masses however [it's] not exactly enough. (BJKY, M48E)

In (163), the speaker held the opinion that giving the customers who came to the shop one third of the lean meat was not that much. In fact, the amount was far from what the customers had expected. However, dating back to the period when the interview was conducted in China, the butcher would normally regulate to sell the customers one third of lean meat with two thirds of fat meat, otherwise the meat would not sell out. *Nǐ* (*you sg.*) was used to emphasise speaker's opinion that giving customers a third of the lean meat was actually not enough.

(b) Combinational discourse marker

In the BJKY sample, *nǐ* (*you sg.*) was also found to combine with other elements to make up combinational discourse markers. The elements are as follows:

- Verbs: xiàng 像(like), shuō 说(say), kàn 看(see), qiáozhāo 瞧(look), ná 拿(take), xiǎng 想(think);
- Dual verbs: kàn ná 看拿(see take);
- Conjunctions: yào 要(if), yàoshì 要是(if);
- Phrases: bǐrú 比如(for example), bǐrúshuō 比如说(for example say), ná...láishuō 拿.....来说(take...as an example)

The primary pragmatic function of combinational discourse marker of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in the BJKY sample seems to be introducing examples, as illustrated in the following (164) - (167).

(164) Kàn tāmen zìjǐ yǒu duō dà nàgè nénglì yā, jiù xiǎng ràng xuéxí xuéxí, duō xuéxí yídiǎnr. Kěshì yíyàng ne, jiùshì zhèhǎizǐmen de xuéxí ne, dōu bù zěnmeyàng. Nǐ nǎwǒmen nàgūniang lái shuō ba, xuéshàng, shàng

不 怎么样。你 拿 我们 那 姑娘 来 说 吧，学，上，上  
 d àxu é y ò zh ì sh ànglè sānni án, di ànd à wǒ ji ù t ò bi é zhīch í  
 大学，一直 上 了 三年， 电大，我就 特别支持。（1930 女 汉 西  
 城 小学 工人 C）

To see how many abilities they have, just want to let [them] to learn, learn more. However there is one thing, which is, the studies of the children, all were not good at all. **You take** our daughter as an example, study, go, go to the university, has been at university for three years, TV University, I particularly support. (BJKY, F30C)

- (165) Wǒ zu ò f àn de sh ì Zhēnzh èng zu ò w éi z ěi n àge xiūji à, nǐ bǐ r úshuō wǒ xiǎoh á  
 我 最烦 的事。真 正 作为 自己那个休假，你 比 如 说 我 小 孩  
 er f àng shǔji àle, yāoqi ú wǒ duōshǎohu í gēn tāmen y ò ku ài er q ù sh àng  
 儿 放 暑假了，要求 我 多少 回，跟 他们 一块儿 去 上  
 gōngyu án er sh éime w áner w áner, gēnběn m éi sh ĵiān p éi tāmen q ù  
 公 园儿 什么 玩儿 玩儿，根本 没 时间 陪 他们 去。（1942  
 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E）

The most annoying thing I have. Truly as for that holiday for myself, **you for example say** [when] my children have [their] summer vacation, [they] asked me so many times, to go to the park together with them to have a play, [I] didn't have any time to accompany them at all. (BJKY, M42E)

- (166) Wǒ jīnni án chūntiān y òu chūq ù, y òu q ù t àng, y ò g èduōyue Gōngyu án p éizhe  
 我 今年 春 天 又 出 去，又 去 趟，一个 多月。公 园 陪着  
 w àigu ó r én q ù, nǐ xi àng ch ángch éng, sh ĩānl íng zh èp éizhe w àigu ó r én q ù hǎo  
 外 国 人 去，你 像 长 城，十三陵 这 陪着 外 国 人 去 好  
 jǐ t àng le.  
 几 趟 了。（1942 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E）

I went out [travelling] in spring this year, went out again, more than a month. Accompanying foreigners to the parks, **you like** the Great Wall, the Ming Tombs already accompanied foreigners to go there for several times. (BJKY, M42E)

- (167) Suǒyǐ wǒ ji ù du ò zh èxiē sh ĵìng t ò bi é fǎngǎn, wǒ y ò k àn ji àn yǎnyu án wǒ ji ù  
 所 以 我 就 对 这 些 事 情 特 别 反 感，我 一 看 见 演 员 我 就  
 tǎoy àn. Zhēnde, yǒush ĩou er, y òu q íxi ànz à, nǐ shuō, zh èxiē w ény òzuo p ìn  
 讨 厌。 真 的，有 时 候 儿，尤 其 现 在，你 说，这 些 文 艺 作 品  
 ha, w ény òzuo p ìn lǎosh ĩfǎnzh èng y ò zh ènfēng er, fǎng sh éime d àjiā d ōush ì  
 哈，文 艺 作 品 老 是 反 正 一 阵 风 儿，仿 什 么 大 家 都 是  
 sh éime.  
 什 么。（1947 女 满 西城 大 专 医 生 E）

So I particularly dislike these things, once I saw actors I dislike [them]. That's true, sometimes, especially now, **you say**, these literary works, literary works always appear like a gust of wind anyway, imitate something then

everybody else will be the same. (BJKY, F47E)

In terms of the grammaticalisation degree, the combinational discourse markers with *nǐ* (*you sg.*) are less grammaticalised than the independent one, as not all *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in combination can be removed. *Nǐ* (*you sg.*) in instances (164) - (166) can be removed, while in (167) it can not be removed. *Nǐ* (*you sg.*) in (167) combines so closely with the contingent component ‘shuō 说(say)’, which allows ‘*nǐ shuō* (*you say*)’ to function together as an ‘independent component’.

It seems the grammaticalisation degree of combinational discourse markers involving *nǐ* (*you sg.*) varies within different combinations. I would argue that the grammaticalisation degree of combinational discourse markers of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) is likely to be on a continuum, where the starting point of the grammaticalisation is like (164), the interim has instances like (165) and (166), and the end has instances like (167).

### 5.3.2 *N ń* (*honorific you singular*)

#### 5.3.2.1 Generic *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*)

Guo (2008a, p. 51-52; 2008b, p. 85) has established that the honorific form of second person singular *n ń* can be utilised to refer to anybody including the speaker and addressee in Beijing vernacular, as it is relatively highly frequent in the daily communication in contemporary Beijing vernacular.

Interestingly, I also found generic uses of *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*) in the BJKY sample where *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*) refers to everyone who meets the given context. Consider (168).

- (168) Suīr án yǒu xǐyījī, tā n àxǐyījī sh ìb àn z ìl ònghu àde. Zh èbǐb ùliǎo gu ów à,  
虽然 有洗衣机，它那洗衣机是半自动化的。这比不了国外，  
rēng d ào lǐtòu ji ùw ánle, zh èqu án l kǎn, shuǎi gān le, **n ń** gu òyīhu èr, **n ń** y ì  
扔 到 里头就 完了，这全离心，甩 干了，您 过一会儿，您一  
dīliu chūl á ji ùw án le, yǒu ch éngx ùde. Z ánmen n àxǐyījī h ádǎi Kānzhe,  
提溜 出来就 完了，有 程序的。咱们 那洗衣机还得 看着，  
n òngle b àntiān, wǒ k àn h á gēn shǒuxǐ ya, ji ùsh ìshěng diǎner j òn, sh jīān sh ì  
弄了 半天，我看还 跟 手洗呀，就是省 点儿劲，时间是  
shěng b úxi àsh éme sh jīān.  
省 不下 什么 时间。（1942 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E）

Although there is a washing machine, the washing machine there it is semi-automatic. This cannot compare with foreign [washing machine], throw [clothes] inside that's the end, it is all centrifugation, spin and dry, **you (honorific)** wait for a moment, **you (honorific)** take [the clothes] out that's the end, have procedures. The washing machine we have needs to watch [it], and wait for half day, I reckon compared with hand wash, only save some

strength, can not save any time. (BJKY, M42E)

In (168), the speaker was discussing the advantage of overseas washing machines when compared to the domestic ones. The users only need to place the clothes in the washing machine, wait until the clothes dry, and then take them out. The speaker was using the honorific form *n ě* (*honorific you sg.*) to refer to every washing machine user.

The interviewer in (168) is unknown to us. If the interviewer (the addressee) was an international student who had experience in using an overseas washing machine, the generic use of *n ě* (*honorific you sg.*) in (168) would be considered valid. However, if the interview did not have any experience in foreign washing machine, the generic use of *n ě* (*honorific you sg.*) in (168) would be counted as participant simulated, as the addressee was invited to participate in imagining how to use a foreign washing machine by the speaker.

*N ě* (*honorific you sg.*) is the honorific form of *nĭ* (*you sg.*), it is normally used when the speaker wants to show respect for the listeners or addressees. However, we are aware that it may also depend on the speaker's personal language habit or personality. In the transcripts of the speaker in (168), he not only used *n ě* (*honorific you sg.*) to address every washing machine user, but also to refer to the interviewer, teacher, and even his sister's child in the direct speech. The occurrence of generic *n ě* (*honorific you sg.*) in (168) is possibly not due to the speaker showing respect to foreign people when discussing foreign products. It could also be due to his personal language habit or his personality. He might be the type of person who is fond of using honorific form to address everybody.

## 5.4 Third person pronouns

Before starting the discussion of non-canonical uses of Chinese third person pronouns, it is important to note at least two things. Firstly, since there is no pronunciation distinction of the three different *tā* (*3sg*) and three different *tāmen* (*3pl*) in spoken Chinese, I therefore put the three singular *tā* (*3sg*) in subsection 5.4.1, and put the three plural *tāmen* (*3pl*) in subsection 5.4.2 separately. Secondly, since there is no gender difference of the plural and singular third person pronouns in spoken Chinese, the non-canonical uses of third person pronoun in the BJKY transcripts may be a choice of the transcribers, and we can not determine which third person pronoun the speaker intended. Therefore, in the English translation of the Chinese transcripts, I placed *tā* (*3sg*) for all the three third singular forms no matter which gendered third pronoun occurred in the original transcripts, as there is no gender distinction in the realisation of pronunciation. However, the third person pronouns are genderly distinguishable in written Chinese, thus I discuss them separately in the following subsections in accordance with the written forms appeared in the transcripts of BJKY.

## 5.4.1 *Tā* (3sg)

### 5.4.1.1 *Tā* 他(*he*)

*Tā* 他(*he*) in the BJKY transcripts consists of two usages: generic *tā* 他(*he*) and unisex *tā* 他(*he*).

#### 5.4.1.1.1 Generic *tā* 他(*he*)

*Tā* 他(*he*) in generic use refers to anyone or everyone, it is not only restricted to males. Observe (169).

(169) Bǐrúqǐ nàgè chéngběn jiàngdī le ha, diànjī de chéngběn cái néng diàn, nàgè  
比如棋子那个 成本 降低了哈, 电机的 成本 才能 电, 那个  
jiàngdī. Suǒyǐ ne, duì nàgè rénmín ne, nà shēnghuó ne, tèbié yǒu hǎochù ha.  
降低。所以呢, 对 那个 人民 呢, 那 生活 呢, 特别 有 好处 哈。  
**Tā** kěyǐ mǎi dōngxi, kěyǐ piányidiǎner a, nǐ nǔlì jiàngdī chéngběn, duì dàjiā  
他 可以 买 东西, 可以 便宜 点儿 啊, 你 努力 降低 成本, 对 大家  
tèbié yǒu hǎochù.  
特别 有 好处。 (1962 女 汉 牛街 高中 干部 F)

For example the cost of chess pieces has been reduced, and then the cost of electrical machine can be, mmm reduced. So, for the people, [their] living, [it is] particularly beneficial. **Tā (3sg)** can buy things, a little cheaper, you strive to reduce costs, [it is] especially beneficial for everyone. (BJKY, F62F)

In (169), *tā* 他(*he*) was preferred by the transcriber to refer to the topic subject ‘the people’ in the previous sentence. The speaker held the opinion that so long as the cost of the most commonly seen products in daily life reduced like chess pieces, then cost of those less commonly seen products such as electrical machines would also go down, from which people would get more benefits. People were more willing to consume because of the cheaper prices, and their living cost would also decline.

Speaker’s predication in (169) was generalised to cover more than a random third party, but to anyone including the speaker and addressee. In this case, generic *tā* 他(*he*) can be considered as valid use according to Gast et al. (2015).

#### 5.4.1.1.2 Unisex *tā* 他(*he*)

*Tā* 他(*he*) in unisex use in the BJKY transcripts, on the other hand, must be specific. *Tā* 他(*he*) does not refer to anybody. The referents are narrowed down to a certain range.

The topic subjects in both (170) and (171) are a certain group of people, i.e.,

‘young people’ and ‘students’ respectively. However, third person male *tā* 他(*he*) was taken into consideration by the transcriber regardless of the gender issue involved in the ‘young people’ and ‘students’. When we think of young people or students, they are not necessarily all males.

- (170) Zánmen jiùshì liǎngzhǒng bùtóng de zhǐdǎo sīxiǎng. Suǒyǐ xiànzài zhè  
咱们就是截然两种不同的指导思想。所以现在这  
xiǎo qīngniánr ya, shuō shízài de, zán yě bùnéng duōshuō. Yīnwéi shénme?  
小 青年儿 呀, 说实在的, 咱也不能多说。因为什么?  
Nǐ shuō duō le, tā yě bú ài tīng.  
你说多了, 他也不爱听。 (1946 女 汉 西城 初中 售货员 A)  
We are completely under two different guidelines. So now these little young  
people, to tell the truth, we cannot say something more. Because of what?  
You say too much, **tā (3sg)** does not want to hear. (BKY, F46A)

- (171) Wǒmen zhège xuéxiào ne, xuéshēng a, guǎnlǐ shàng, jiùshì méiyǒu zìjuéxìng.  
我们这个学校呢, 学生 啊, 管理上, 就是没有自觉性。  
Tā dúshū ba, méiyǒu néng, méiyǒu zìjǐ de yítào fāngfǎ. Suǒyǐ wǒmen ne, jì  
他读书吧, 没有能, 没有自己的一套方法。所以我们呢, 既  
děi jiāoshū, yòuděi jiāo fāngfǎ.  
得教书, 又得教方法。 (1956 男 汉 天桥 大专 中学教师 E)  
Our school, students, in terms of management, don't have self-discipline. **Tā  
(3sg)** studies, doesn't have, doesn't have [his] own set of methods. So we, not  
only have to teach, but also have to teach methods. (BJKY, F56E)

The topic in (172) is a single individual - a customer. From the context, we can not obtain any information from the speaker regarding the gender of the topic. Nevertheless, male *tā* 他(*he*) occurred in the transcript.

- (172) Háyǒu bǐrú shuō zhège zhǎoqián de shìr. Yǒu yī gùkè yěshì, tā míngmíng  
还有比如说这个找钱的事儿。有一顾客也是, 他明明  
gěide shíshí kǔ àiqián kěnéng shì ai, kěshì wǒmen nàge shùhuòyuán ne,  
给的是十块钱可能是, 哎, 可是我们那个售货员呢,  
shuōshì zhǎo tā le, ān wǔkuài qián gěi tā zhǎo de.  
说是找他了, 按五块钱给他找的。 (1948 男 满 海淀 初中  
售货员 E)  
And also for example things like giving change [to the customers]. There is a  
customer, **tā (3sg)** obviously gave ten Yuan [Chinese Dollar] maybe, alas, but  
the salesman that we have, said already gave him [the change], gave him [the  
change] according to five Yuan. (BJKY, M48E)

The main difference between generic and unisex *tā* 他(*he*) in the BJKY sample is that generic *tā* 他(*he*) can also be treated as unisex *tā* 他(*he*), as the transcriber chose the male *tā* 他(*he*) to refer to a ‘gender unspecified’ collective concept, i.e., mankind or

people in general. However, unisex *tā* 他(*he*) can not be considered as generic use as there is no generality involved.

Regardless of the difference, it seems that in the BJKY sample, no matter how old the topic subjects are, no matter what occupations the topic subjects are, and no matter if it is an individual or groups, when it comes to the third singular personal pronouns, the transcribers are most likely to utilise *tā* 他(*he*) instead of *tā* 她(*she*). It can also be seen from the frequency when we compare unisex *tā* 他(*he*) to unisex *tā* 她(*she*). The fact that *tā* is underspecified for gender in spoken Chinese makes it more suitable for general statements than *he* and *she* in English.

In addition, when we compare the unisex use of *he* between the CC and BJKY samples, one interesting thing is in the CC, the referents referred to by *he* are normally single individuals (i.e., a random child in (128) in Chapter 4) rather than plural entities, whereas in the BJKY, unisex *tā* 他(*he*) is able to refer to both singular (i.e., a customer in (172)) and plural entities (i.e., students in (171)).

#### 5.4.1.1.3 Shift to *tā* 他(*he*) from *tāmen* 他们(*they*)

Chen (2011a) in the previous study indicated that in spoken language, Chinese people generally use the plural forms *wōmen* (*we*) and *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) when they encounter the collective concepts such as ‘nation’, ‘province’, ‘city’, ‘college’, ‘department’, ‘factory’, ‘company’ etc. (p. 56-57), and the frequency of shifting to third person *tā* (3sg) from plural *tāmen* (3pl) is relatively low (p. 57). This ties in well with my finding of the shift to *tā* 他(*he*) from *tāmen* 他们(*they*) in the transcripts of BJKY sample, example (173) is extracted from the sample.

(173) Hòu lái wǒ jiù gēn nà ge nà ge jiě fàng jūn yě shuō, wǒ jiù shuō wǒ shuō nǐ kàn nà jǐ ge hái zǐ dōu biē shàng tā le, zhè tā cái míng bái. Jiù, ài, zǒu, zǎo men wǎng qián qù ba! Liǎng rén guò qù le. Zhè bāng hái zǐ tā nà yàng er yī zhāo wǒ, Fú chéng mén kāi mén er, xī lǐ hú lú quán cǎng hòu mén er jiù pǎo le. (1943 女汉东城初中售票员 F)

Later I also said to that People’s Liberation Army, I said I said you see that several children all hold on *tā* (3sg) [‘him’ refers to the People’s Liberation Army], *tā* (3sg) then realised. Then, alas, go, let’s go forward [to the front of the bus]! [The] Two [People’s Liberation Army] people went [to the front of the bus]. This bunch of kids when *tā* (3sg) saw me, the door [of the bus] was open [when the bus arrived at] Fucheng Gate [stop], [they] all ran away from the back door quickly and sneakily. (BJKY, F43F)

The speaker in (173) is a bus conductor. One day, there were several thieves on the

bus, and they were all young children. These children had already targeted two People’s Liberation Army personnel who were also on the bus. The speaker later reminded one of the military personnel that these children were thieves and had already targeted him before. Then, those two army personnel started to move towards the front of the bus, whilst these children had a quick look at the speaker (the bus conductor) and realised that their identity had been exposed, so they got off the bus from the back door and ran away very quickly. Given the context, the first two underlined *tā* (3sg) refer to ‘that People’s Liberation Army’, the last bold *tā* (3sg) refers to ‘this bunch of kids’. This could be seen as a shift from the third person plural *tāmen* 他们(*they*) to singular *tā* 他(*he*) according to the transcripts.

There are a few more tokens showing the same shift in the BJKY. What makes instance (173) noteworthy is it contains a quantifier ‘bāng 帮(bunch)’. I have examined this quantifier in the transcripts of BJKY corpus. What normally appears after ‘bāng 帮(bunch)’ is the plural form *tāmen* 他们(*they*), no matter it is ‘one bunch’, ‘this bunch’ or ‘that bunch’. In other words, the personal pronoun that co-occurs with the quantifier phrases consisting of ‘bāng 帮(bunch)’ can be considered grammatically and notionally plural. In (173), however, the speaker did not abide by the notional meaning or the grammatical rules. She used the singular *tā* (3sg) instead of the plural *tāmen* (3pl) to refer to this bunch of kids. Instances like (173) can be linked to the use of *it* with collective nouns in Chapter 4. ‘This bunch of kids’ is a collective notion, but the speaker used the singular pronoun *tā* (3sg) to refer to the collective notion ‘this bunch of kids’.

#### 5.4.1.1.4 Discourse marker

*Tā* 他(*he*) has been reported to have lost its referential meaning (Shen 1993) and even function as a discourse marker (Huang 2012) in the previous studies, and is more likely to occur in the ‘double object’ structures such as (174) - (176) when it functions as a discourse marker (Huang 2012, p. 48).

(174) Hē      **tā**      gè              tòngkuài  
          喝      他      个              痛快  
          Drink    **he**    quantifier    joyful (Huang 2012, p. 48)

(175) a. Wán      **tā**      gè              gāoxìng  
          玩      他      个              高兴  
          Play    **he**    quantifier    happy (Huang 2012, p. 48)

b. Wán      **tā**      yì tiān  
          玩      他      一 天  
          Play    **he**    one day (Shen 1993, p. 26)

(176) Shū    **tā**      shí tiān    shíyè



...到 时候儿 住得 多 宽敞 啊。结果 倒是，四口人儿，老俩，  
 xiǎoliǎ zhù yī dà sìhé yuànér. Wǎnshàng nǐ shuō kāikāi, bǎ wūlǐ dēng dōu  
 小 俩 住 一大四合 院儿。晚 上 你 说 开开，把 屋里 灯 都  
 kāikāi, dào, diànfèi tāobùqǐ, nǐ bùkāi, kàn yuànèrlǐ hēigulōngdōng hái tā  
 开开，到，电 钱 掏不起，你不开，看院儿里 黑咕隆咚 还 他  
 hàipà. Xiǎng zū chūqù ba, xiànzài yě méirén yuànyì, jiù xiànzài jiù shuō, wǒ  
害怕。想 租 出去吧，现 在 也 没 人 愿 意，就 现 在 就 说，我  
 méifáng, wǒ yě bú yuànyì zhù sìhé yuànér.  
 没 房，我 也 不 愿 意 住 四合院儿。（1954 男 汉 牛街 高中 民警  
 D）

... at then living in a much more spacious place. The result turned out, four people, two old one, two young one living in one big courtyard house. At night you say turn on, turn all the lights on in the house, turns out, can't afford the power, you don't turn on, see the yard pitch-black still tā (3sg) afraid. Want to rent [the house] out, now no one is willing to, now [the situation is] to say, [even] I don't have any house [to live in], I don't want to live in the courtyard. (BJKY, M54D)

The speaker in (177) was telling the interviewer how much money he could receive per month. If added everything together, he could get fifty two Yuan. *Tā* 他(*he*) occurred in the transcripts between the verb ‘ná 拿(to get)’ and the nominal complement ‘wǔshí èr kuài qián 五十二块钱(fifty two Yuan)’. The double object structure consisting of *tā* 他(*he*) in the transcript of (177) is similar to the example (175)b and (176). It is certain that *tā* 他(*he*) in (177) is not an actual argument of the verb ‘ná 拿(to get)’.

The structure that *tā* 他(*he*) occurred in (178) is a little different compared to the typical double object structure. The speaker's family in (178) lived in the courtyard, and he was complaining if they do not turn on the lights at night, while looking at the yard, the yard will be pitch-black. In the transcript, the clause inserted with *tā* 他(*he*) seems to be able to cut into two small segments: one segment is ‘see the yard pitch-black’; the other is ‘still feel afraid’. ‘Pitch-black’ is to describe the yard when there are no lights on, and ‘feel afraid’ describes the speaker's feeling when looking at the pitch-black yard. The conjunction ‘hái 还(still, also)’ connects the two segments, and *tā* 他(*he*) was inserted between the first and second segments after ‘hái 还(still, also)’.

Both Shen (1993, p. 27) and Huang (2012, p. 48) argued that the usage of *tā* 他(*he*) as a discourse marker is to strengthen the mood or tone of the speaker. Huang (2012, p. 49) also suggested that *tā* 他(*he*) can serve to bring up topics and to connect texts.

In the transcripts of BJKY sample, the discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*) seems to act mainly as to show the speaker's attitudes or to intensify their emotions. For instance in (177), the speaker showed his attitude towards an incident via *tā* (3sg) (shown in the transcript as *tā* 他(*he*)). He felt quite pleased and lucky because he can receive fifty two Yuan per month if added all his extra allowances together on to his salary. His attitude towards his monthly payment is positive. While the speaker in (178), not

only showed but also intensified his emotions by using *tā* (3sg) (shown in the transcript as *tā* 他(*he*)). He felt not only a little but much more afraid if there was no light on in the pitch-black yard at night.

#### 5.4.1.2 *Tā* 她(*she*)

##### 5.4.1.2.1 Unisex *tā* 她(*she*)

*Tā* 她(*she*) is also attested to be employed by the transcribers in the BJKY sample when the gender of the referent is unknown or uncertain in the context. As in (179), *tā* 她(*she*) in the transcript refers to the ‘form teacher’, who can not be confirmed to be a female in the context.

- (179) Guānjiàn jiùshì zhège xiǎo bānzhǔrèn ba, zérèn xīn tèbié qiáng. Ai, shì yè xīn bǐjiào qiáng, zhège, yě bǐjiào hào xué. Zhèyàng ne, tā jiù zhège, zhège, jì zhèyàng de huà zhè zhèzhǒng bānzhǔrèn ba, fǎn'ér bǐ yīxiē jiùshì méiyǒu zérèn xīn a, huòzhě shì mǎmǎhūhū, còucòu hēerhēer...  
关键就是，这个小班主任吧，责任心特别强。哎，事业心比较强，这个，也比较好学。这样呢，她就，这个，这个，就这样说的话，这，这种班主任吧，反而比一些就是没有责任心啊，或者是马马虎虎，凑凑合合儿... (1947 女满西城大专医生 E)

The key is that, this little form teacher, has a particularly strong sense of responsibility, mmm, and also loves to learn. It so, **tā** (3sg), um, um, if so, this, this kind of form teacher, compared with those who have no sense of responsibility, or very careless, or just so so... (BJKY, F47E)

Compared to the unisex use of *tā* 他(*he*), the frequency of unisex *tā* 她(*she*) (2/32 speakers) in the transcripts from my BJKY sample is much lower.

##### 5.4.1.2.2 *Tā* 她(*she*) for countries

Besides the unisex use, *tā* 她(*she*) can also be personalised to refer to motherland in the transcripts of BJKY. As can be seen in (180), *tā* 她(*she*) points to the subject ‘China’ in the later clause.

- (180) Kàn jiājiāhùhù, bùguǎn lǎolǎoxiǎoxiǎo de zuòzài yìqǐ ha, dōukàn. Xiàng shénme Láng Píng ya, Zhāng Róngfāng ya, dōu chéngle dàjiā xīnmù zhōng de rénwù ha. Wǒ juéde tā ne, jiù zhège, zài zhè fāngmiàn ne, zhōngguó

的人物哈。我觉得 **她**呢，就这个，在这 方 面 呢，中 国  
háishì tǐng nàge, tǐng qiángde, zài shìjiè shàng. Dànshì ne, xiàng zúqiú ba,  
还是 挺 那个，挺 强 的，在 世界 上。 但是 呢，像 足球吧，  
jiù bù xíng le.

就 不 行 了。 (1962 女 汉 牛街 高中 干部 F)

See each family, regardless of elder or young people all sitting together, watching [the basketball]. [People] like Lang Ping, Zhang Rongfang, both become big figures [people] in everybody's heart. I think **tā (3sg)**, mmm in, in this respect [in basketball], China is still pretty, pretty strong, in the world. But, like soccer, it is not alright. (BJKY, F62F)

However, it still needs to point out it was the transcriber's option to favour the female form over the male. Whether the speaker intended to consider *tā* (3sg) to be the female form is uncertain in the context.

## 5.4.2 *Tāmen* (3pl)

### 5.4.2.1 Shifts to *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from *tā* 他(*he*)/*tā* 她(*she*)

We have discussed the shift to *wǒmen* (*we/our*) from *wǒ* (*I/my*) in the previous subsection. The shifts to the plural form *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from the singular forms *tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*) in the transcripts of BJKY follow a similar pattern. When the speaker discusses their home, family, family members or workplace, *tāmen* 他们(*their*) is chosen by the transcriber to be placed in the front. Consider instances (181) - (183).

(181) Wǒ gēge zài diànjī gōng, diànjī chǎng gōngzuò. Èn, nàge, **tāmen** jiā yǒu yī xiǎoháier, jiào zhēngzhēng, you, tèbié hǎowáner.

小 孩 儿，叫 征 征， 哟， 特别 好玩 儿。 (1963 女 汉 卢沟桥 高中 售货员 D)

My older brother works at the electrical worker, works at the electrical factory. Mmm, that, **their** family has one child, named Zhengzheng, yo, really amusing. (BJKY, F63D)

(182) Wǒ jiějie jiéhūn, tā xiànzài, èn, yuánlái shì zhù zài tā gōnggōng jiālǐtóu. Tā gōnggōng jiālǐ, zhǔyào yīnwéi tā háizi duō, jǐnzhāng. Hòulái ne, nǎge wǒ gōnggōng jiālǐ, zhǔyào yīnwéi tā háizi duō, jǐnzhāng. Hòulái ne, nǎge wǒ jiēfu **tāmen** dānwèi ne gěi le, gěi le tā yīgè, gěi tā zhùfáng le, jiùshì zài nàge Nánpíng zhuāng, Fǔyòu dàjiē, jiùshì Zhōngnánhǎi xībiāner yìdiǎner, zài nàer

南 平 庄， 府 右 大 街， 就是 中 南 海 西 边 儿 一 点 儿， 在那 儿

ne, shì gěi tā liǎngjiān píngfáng.

呢，是给她 两间 平房。（1953 男 满 海淀 初中 工人 A）

My sister already married, she is now, mmm, formerly [she] was living in her father-in-law's place. Her father-in-law's home, mainly [it's] because he has lots of children, [the room is] in shortage. Later on, that my brother-in-law **their** [work] unit gave, gave her one, gave her a house to live, [it] is in the village of Nanping, on Fuyou Street, [it] is a little west of Zhongnanhai, in there, is to give her two bungalows. (BJKY, M53A)

- (183) Zánmen méi jīngguò, zán bú tài qīngchǔ, shì wǎ? Xiànzài, wǒ zǒngde lái shuō, zánmen bǐ wǒ gāng dào chǎngzi dānwèi, xiànzài fúlì jiù jiù qiáng duō le. En, wǒ ài rén tāmen dānwèi yě shì yí yàng, guòqù shénme qián yě méi yǒu. Xiànzài ne, tā yīnwèi, tā zài nàgè, e, Yǒngfēng gōngshè, Yǒngfēng zhōngxué. Qū shǔ yú, tā xuéxiào shǔ yú shì yè dānwèi, guòqù shénme fúlì yě méi yǒu. (1953 男 满 海淀 初中 工人 A)

Now, I'm in general, compared with when I arrived at the factory unit, now the welfare is much better. Mmm, my wife **their** [work] unit is the same, didn't have any money in the past. Now, she because, she is in that, uh, Yongfeng Commune, Yongfeng High School. The area belongs to, her school belongs to the public institution, didn't have any welfare in the past. (BJKY, M53A)

Instances (181) and (182) are shifts to *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from *tā* 他(*he*), and instance (183) is a shift to *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from *tā* 她(*she*). The speaker in (181) preferred 'tāmen (their) family' to stand for her brother's family, and the speaker in (182) also opted for 'tāmen (their) unit' to refer to his brother-in-law's workplace. Likewise, 'tāmen (their) unit' in (183) is actually the speaker's wife's workplace (the school). Interestingly, in the followed up narration, the speaker in (183) also used the singular 'her school' to indicate his wife's workplace.

#### 5.4.2.2 Shift to *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) from *tā* 她(*she*)

The patterns of the shift to *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) from *tā* 她(*she*) in the BJKY transcripts are similar to the shifts to *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from *tā* 他(*he*)/*tā* 她(*she*). *Tāmen* 她们(*their*) was used in front of the referent's 'workplace' or 'home/family/family member' by the transcriber. However, *tāmen* 她们(*their*) can also extend to combine with the referent's 'classmates', as shown in (184).

(184) Fǎnzhèng, wǒmen dānwèi lái de rén bùsuan tàiduō, jiùshì wǒ ài rén'ér tāmen  
 反正，我们单位来的人不算太多，就是我爱人儿她们  
 tóngxué a. Lái de bǐjiào duō, yīnwéi wǒ ài rén'ér yuánlái shàng zhōngxué  
 同学啊。来的比较多，因为我爱人儿原来上中学  
 shíhou'ér a, tā yěshì bān gānbù'ér, gēn tóngxué guānxi dōu bùcuò, suǒyǐ tāde  
 时候儿啊，她也是班干部儿，跟同学关系都不错，所以她的  
 zhōngxué shíhou'ér tóngxué hái lái de bùshǎo. (1953 nǚ mǎn hǎixiàn chūzhōng gōng  
 人 A)

Anyway, our unit did not have so many people come, it was my wife **their**  
classmates. So many came, because when my wife was in junior high school,  
 she was also a class representative, had a good relationship with classmates,  
 so a lot of her junior high school classmates came. (BJKY, M53A)

In (184), the speaker described his wife's classmates as 'tāmen (their) classmates' instead of 'her classmates'. China is a monogamous country. People are only allowed to have one wife, but the speaker still employed the plural *tāmen* (3pl) to refer to his wife.

In the end, we do have to emphasise again the gender of the third plural personal pronouns in the BJKY sample is attributed to the transcriber, as there is no gender distinction in the pronunciation of the third plural *tāmen* (3pl). Every time the transcriber transcribed, they had to decide between the male (*tāmen* 他们(they)) and female (*tāmen* 她们(she pl.)) forms.

## 5.5 Summary

This chapter examined non-canonical pronoun uses in Chinese based on a sample of 32 speakers in the Beijing Oral Corpus. The attested types of morphologically non-canonical pronoun uses comprise generic *wǒ* (I), generic *wǒmen* (we), shift to *wǒmen* (we) from *wǒ* (I), generic *nǐ* (you sg.), shifts to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *nǐmen* (you pl.), *wǒ* (I) and *wǒmen* (we), discourse marker use of *nǐ* (you sg.), generic *nǐ* (honorific you sg.), generic *tā* 他(he), unisex *tā* 他(he), shift to *tā* 他(he) from *tāmen* 他们(they), discourse marker use of *tā* 他(he), unisex *tā* 她(she), *tā* 她(she) for countries, shifts to *tāmen* 他们(they) from *tā* 他(he) and *tā* 她(she), and shift to *tāmen* 她们(she pl.) from *tā* 她(she). Characters are given here due to some of these uses being observed only in their written forms. It is important to note that the three third person singular and plural pronouns are pronounced the same in spoken Chinese, so some of the non-canonical uses listed are found in the written transcript but not in the spoken form. Among all the non-canonical uses, generic *nǐ* (you sg.) was the most frequently used one, just like generic *you* in English.

As in the previous chapter, I used the classification of Gast et al. (2015) to re-categorise all the generic uses and shifts denoting a generalisation, namely, generic *wǒ* (I), generic *wǒmen* (we), generic *nǐ* (you sg.), shifts to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *wǒ* (I) and

*wōmen* (we), generic *n ū* (honorific you sg.) and generic *tā* 他(he). Since the rest of shift uses attested in the corpus sample did not encode a generalisation, the trichotomy proposed by Gast et al. (2015) was not applicable to them. Generic use of *wǒ* (I) in this study included ‘valid’, ‘category simulated’ and ‘participant simulated’ types, as did generic *nǐ* (you sg.). Generic *wōmen* (we) and generic *tā* 他(he) seemed to only fit the valid type, and the shifts to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *wǒ* (I) and *wōmen* (we) could be assigned to the participant simulated type. Lastly, generic *n ū* (honorific you sg.) comprised both the valid and participant simulated types.

The shift to *wōmen* (we) from *wǒ* (I), shifts to *tāmen* 他们(they) from *tā* 他(he) and *tā* 她(she), and the shift to *tāmen* 她们(she pl.) from *tā* 她(she) could be grouped together into shifts to plural from singular forms, since all of these non-canonical uses were more likely to occur when the speakers were discussing their family or work related issues. Similarly, the shift to *nǐ* (you sg.) from *nǐmen* (you pl.) and the shift to *tā* 他(he) from *tāmen* 他们(they) could be grouped together into shifts to singular from plural forms, as they both seemed to have something in common: the choice of singular forms indicates that speakers viewed the referents more as a collection of people rather than focusing on the individuals in a group.

In addition, both unisex *tā* 他(he) and unisex *tā* 她(she) were attested in the transcripts of the BJKY sample. *Tā* 她(she) was also used to refer to the speaker’s motherland. Lastly, both *nǐ* (you sg.) and *tā* 他(he) were employed as discourse markers in this study, where they completely lost their referential meaning in the discourse. *Nǐ* (you sg.) could appear as an ‘independent discourse marker’ by itself or as a ‘combinatorial discourse marker’ in combination with other elements. The occurrence of *tā* 他(he) in the discourse marker use generally serves to indicate the speakers’ attitudes and emotions.

In the next Chapter 6, I will compare and contrast my main findings for the non-canonical pronoun uses in spoken NZE and Chinese, and I will draw on different theoretical approaches to account for the similarities and discrepancies between NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses.

## Chapter 6 Theoretical Approach

### 6.1 Introduction

After carrying out a detailed description and analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, the aims of this chapter are twofold: (a) to compare and contrast the non-canonical pronoun uses attested in the two oral corpora for Chinese and NZE; (b) to provide a theoretical account of the similarities and differences identified in the comparison and contrast.

The forthcoming Section 6.2 provides an overview of the similarities and dissimilarities between Chinese and NZE non-canonical pronoun uses. I will compare and contrast pronoun uses from two perspectives: by person (i.e., first, second and third person) and by type of non-canonical use (i.e., generic, shift, unisex uses etc.). Section 6.3 applies relevant pragmatic theories, chiefly via pragmatic schemas, to account for the generic and shift uses in NZE and Chinese. The differences will be addressed in Section 6.4 from the perspectives of language properties and cultural norms respectively.

### 6.2 Overview

Based on my findings from the last two chapters, I have summarised and grouped the non-canonical pronoun uses of Chinese and NZE in the order of first, second and third person pronouns in Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

Table 6.1 Non-canonical uses of first person pronouns in Chinese and NZE

Non-canonical uses	Chinese	NZE
1sg	Generic <i>wǒ</i> (I)	None
1pl	Generic <i>wǒmen</i> (we) <i>Wǒmen</i> (we) for <i>wǒ</i> (I)	Generic <i>we/our</i>

Table 6.2 Non-canonical uses of second person pronouns in Chinese and NZE

Non-canonical uses	Chinese	NZE
You	Generic <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.)	Generic <i>you/your</i>
	<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>nǐmen</i> (you pl.)	<i>You/your</i> for <i>I/me/my</i>
	<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒ</i> (I)	<i>You/your</i> for <i>we/us/our</i>
	<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒmen</i> (we)	
	Discourse marker <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.)	<i>You</i> and <i>your</i> in existentials
You (honorific)	Generic <i>n ń</i> (honorific you sg.)	None

Table 6.3 Non-canonical uses of third person pronouns in spoken Chinese and NZE

Non-canonical uses	Chinese	NZE
3sg	Generic <i>tā</i> (3sg)	Unisex <i>he</i>
	<i>Tā</i> (3sg) for <i>tāmen</i> (3pl)	<i>He</i> for animal species
	Discourse marker <i>tā</i> (3sg)	<i>She/her</i> for inanimates <i>It</i> with collective nouns
3pl	<i>Tāmen</i> (3pl) for <i>tā</i> (3sg)	Unisex <i>they</i> <i>They/them/their</i> with collective nouns

Table 6.4 Non-canonical uses of third person pronouns in written Chinese and NZE

Non-canonical uses	Chinese	NZE
3sgM	Generic <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	Unisex <i>he</i>
	Unisex <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	<i>He</i> for animal species
	<i>Tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> ) for <i>tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> )	
	Discourse marker <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	
3sgF	Unisex <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	<i>She/her</i> for inanimates
	<i>Tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> ) for countries	
3sgN	None	<i>It</i> with collective nouns
3pl	<i>Tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	Unisex <i>they</i>
	<i>Tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	<i>They/them/their</i> with collective nouns
3plF	<i>Tāmen</i> 她们( <i>she pl.</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	None

In Table 6.1, we can see that two different types of generic use have been identified in

the Chinese sample, while non-canonical uses of *I* in the NZE sample have left blank. *Ipl* on the other hand, can be used generically both in the BJKY and CC. However, there is still an absence of the shift use of *we* in the CC sample.

Within the generic use of *Ipl*, we also find differences between Chinese and NZE. The range of the references covered by *we* in generic use in the CC slightly differs from that covered by *wǒmen* (*we*) in the BJKY sample. The absence of the shift to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*) in the CC sample also indicates that culture plays a role in non-canonical pronoun use. This point will be elaborated later in Section 6.4.2.

The non-canonical uses of *2ps* in the Chinese and NZE samples in Table 6.2 are similar to some extent. Both languages have generic *you*, the shift to *you* from *I* and *we* as well as atypical non-canonical uses - discourse markers *nǐ* and *tā* (*he*), *you* and *your* in existentials. In addition, the shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) and generic *n ĭ* (*honorific you sg.*) are attested in the Chinese sample.

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show that although the three Chinese different gender-specified personal pronouns (singular and plural forms) are identical in pronunciation, only the male *tā* 他(*he*) has both generic and unisex uses in the BJKY sample transcripts. *Tā* 她(*she*) also seems to have unisex use in the transcripts. Contrastively, due to the dilemma of gender selection in NZE, unisex *he* and unisex *they* are both attested in the CC. Moreover, some interesting non-canonical uses are worth mentioning. For instance, in the CC sample, *he* and *she* are used to refer to animal species and inanimates respectively, and both singular *it* and plural *they* co-occur with collective nouns. On the other hand, in the BJKY sample transcripts, *tā* 她(*she*) can be used to represent countries, *tā* 他(*he*) can be used as a discourse marker, and shifts are able to occur from the third singular pronouns to third plural when the speakers discuss their family or work.

If we view the Chinese and NZE non-canonical pronoun uses according to type instead of different person, the similarities and dissimilarities described above can be summarised into Tables 6.5 and 6.6.

Table 6.5 Spoken Chinese and NZE non-canonical pronoun uses by type

Types	Chinese	NZE
Generic use <sup>28</sup>	Generic <i>wǒ</i> ( <i>I</i> );	
	Generic <i>wǒmen</i> ( <i>we</i> )	Generic <i>we/our</i>
	Generic <i>nǐ</i> ( <i>you sg.</i> ); <i>Nǐ</i> ( <i>you sg.</i> ) for <i>wǒ</i> ( <i>I</i> ); <i>Nǐ</i> ( <i>you sg.</i> ) for <i>wǒmen</i> ( <i>we</i> )	Generic <i>you/your</i> ; <i>You/your</i> for <i>I/me/my</i> ; <i>You/your</i> for <i>we/us/our</i>
	Generic <i>n ń</i> ( <i>you honorific</i> )	
	Generic <i>tā</i> ( <i>3sg</i> )	
Unisex use	( <i>Tā</i> is inherently unisex)	Unisex <i>he</i> ; unisex <i>they</i>
Shifts to pl. from sg. <sup>29</sup>	<i>Wǒmen</i> ( <i>we</i> ) for <i>wǒ</i> ( <i>I</i> ) <i>Tāmen</i> ( <i>3pl</i> ) for <i>tā</i> ( <i>3sg</i> );	
Shifts to sg. from pl.	<i>Nǐ</i> ( <i>you sg.</i> ) for <i>nǐmen</i> ( <i>you pl.</i> ) <i>Tā</i> ( <i>3sg</i> ) for <i>tāmen</i> ( <i>3pl</i> )	
Pronominal concord with collective nouns		<i>It</i> with collective nouns; <i>They/them/their</i> with collective nouns
Personification		<i>He</i> for animal species; <i>She/her</i> for inanimates
Discourse particles	Discourse markers <i>nǐ</i> ( <i>you sg.</i> ) & <i>tā</i> ( <i>3sg</i> )	<i>You</i> and <i>your</i> in existentials

<sup>28</sup> Indicated in Chapters 4 and 5, I therefore put the shifts to *you* and *nǐ* into the ‘generic use’ column in Tables 6.5 & 6.6, as they are on the same generalisation continuum as other generic uses of *wǒ* (*I*), *you* and *nǐ*. It is just that the degree of generalisation is higher for generic *wǒ* (*I*) and *you/nǐ*, but lower for the shifts.

<sup>29</sup> I will use a different theoretical approach to address the shifts to plural from singular forms and the shifts to singular from plural forms, thus they are placed in a separate section of the Tables 6.5 & 6.6 from the shifts to *you* and *nǐ*.

Table 6.6 Written Chinese and NZE non-canonical pronoun uses by type

Types	Chinese	NZE
Generic use	Generic <i>wǒ</i> (I);	
	Generic <i>wǒmen</i> (we)	Generic <i>we/our</i>
	Generic <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.); <i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒ</i> (I); <i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>wǒmen</i> (we)	Generic <i>you/your</i> ; <i>You/your</i> for <i>I/me/my</i> ; <i>You/your</i> for <i>we/us/our</i>
	Generic <i>n ń</i> (you honorific)	
Unisex use	Generic <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	
	Unisex <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> ) Unisex <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	Unisex <i>he</i> ; unisex <i>they</i>
Shifts to pl. from sg.	<i>Wǒmen</i> (we) for <i>wǒ</i> (I)	
	<i>Tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> ); <i>Tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> ); <i>Tāmen</i> 她们( <i>she pl.</i> ) for <i>tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> )	
Shifts to sg. from pl.	<i>Nǐ</i> (you sg.) for <i>nǐmen</i> (you pl.) <i>Tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> ) for <i>tāmen</i> 他们( <i>they</i> )	
Pronominal concord with collective nouns		<i>It</i> with collective nouns; <i>They/them/their</i> with collective nouns
Personification	<i>Tā</i> 她( <i>she</i> ) for countries	<i>He</i> for animal species; <i>She/her</i> for inanimates
Discourse particles	Discourse markers <i>nǐ</i> (you sg.) & <i>tā</i> 他( <i>he</i> )	<i>You</i> and <i>your</i> in existentials

For one linguistic phenomenon to exist in two different languages, how can we account for the similarities in non-canonical uses, and how can we explain the differences? The subsequent sections will address these questions by proposing theoretical approaches that concentrate on theories from pragmatics to address the similarities (mainly generic and shift uses) between Chinese and NZE. I will draw on cultural divergence and language properties to address the differences.

## 6.3 Accounting for the similarities between NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses

This section draws on using the approach of Gast et al. (2015) to account for the similar non-canonical pronoun uses identified in NZE and Chinese dataset, namely, generic uses and shift uses involving generalisrty.

### 6.3.1 Interpreting generic uses in NZE

#### 6.3.1.1 Generic *you* and shifts to *you*

I will first look at generic *you*, which is the most widely discussed non-canonical use in NZE, and shifts *to you*, which are only rarely considered. The structure of this section is as follows:

In 6.3.1.1.1, I will introduce the concept of simulation and the formulation of model shift proposed by Gast et al. (2015). In 6.3.1.1.2, I will apply Simulation Schema<sup>30</sup> not only to generic *you* (simulated) in my NZE sample data, but will also present my own interpretation of shifts to *you* via this schema. In 6.3.1.1.3, I will apply Valid Schema<sup>31</sup> to interpret generic *you* (valid) in my sample. In 6.3.1.1.4, I will examine the pragmatic factors of authority, solidarity and empathy which contribute to and play a role in generic *you* and shifts to *you*.

Before we move on to the next subsection, I present here the following instances (185) - (189) which are taken from my NZE sample data. (185) - (187) are generic uses of *you*. (188) and (189) are shift uses.<sup>32</sup> (188) illustrates the shift to *you* from *I*, and (189) illustrates the shift to *you* from *we*. I will refer back to these instances in my theoretical analyses in the following sections.

According to Gast et al. (2015)'s definitions (see Chapter 4 for more detailed discussion), (185) is a valid case, as the addressee is implied in the generalising sentence. (186) can be classified as category simulation, as *you* refers to a category of people - 'primary school teacher'. (187) - (189) are classified as involving participant simulation, since the speakers were describing some situations, mostly very personal, and were inviting the addressees to imagine themselves in these situations, in which the addressees were not actually participating. Except (185) which is valid, (186) - (189) are all labelled as simulated.

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<sup>30</sup> Simulation Schema is relabelled from Gast et al. (2015)'s 'model shift'. For further explanation, see the last paragraph in subsection 6.3.1.1.1.

<sup>31</sup> Valid Schema is termed from a diagram sketched by Gast et al. (2015) shown in Figure 6.2. For further reasons, see subsection 6.3.1.1.3.

<sup>32</sup> Instances (188) and (189) are also discussed in Chapter 4. For further references, see the detailed discussions in Chapter 4.

- (185) Well. Library was my first love and I only left.  
The library because. We left Dunedin and left the university centre.  
But. I think it's good to have a change because **you** actually  
Bring something. To every job **you** go to **you** bring something else.  
And I found it good going back to teaching having worked in an office I had.  
A new respect for. What.  
Um. typists do <mmm> (CC, fop95-10)
- (186) Interviewer: so skilled the skill involved in the violin. And I also took the  
flute for a term  
Speaker: oh did you? Right  
Interviewer: gave that up for ballet  
Speaker: well if **you**'re a primary school teacher **you** um. Possibly would um  
have to.  
Demonstrate on the recorder or something the flute lessons might come in  
handy. (CC, fop95-10)
- (187) Interviewer: oh just keeping talking <yeah>. So what was it like when you  
went parachuting?  
Speaker: oh it was wonderful. I was so scared. I was really-  
I was alright while we were doing the course and every now and then **you**'d  
sort of get a bit nervous.  
But what they don't prepare **you** for a I guess they can't prepare **you** for is  
the wind.  
When **you**'re go when **you**'re actually up there.  
And they say right were going to open the door cos I was third to jump  
So the first person was right at the front so they opened the door to let them  
out and **you** get all this noise.  
From the wind. which is okay but **you** don't realise  
How strong it is. (CC, fyn95-14)
- (188) Interviewer: < I suppose> sounds like you missed him  
Speaker: yeah I did **you** used to you know cos he often was in bed  
<mmm> and you know **you** our **you** always had to pass his bedroom door  
<mmm>  
Cos we sort of our house sort of had a big hallway. <mmm>  
And his bedroom was off one side <mmm>  
And our was off the other stairs  
<mmm> and the upstairs and that  
<mmm> and **you** always passed it  
And just expected it to see him there. <right> (CC, fyn95-1)
- (189) Speaker: and we were away for four weeks.  
And we really haven' had a holiday since then it wasn't a holiday then not

with two children either

Interviewer: <um> come home for a rest

Speaker: oh **you** did. Yah and some decent food and.

Friendly faces and oh (CC, fon95-5b)

### 6.3.1.1.1 Introducing simulation and model shift

‘Simulation’, intertwined with pretending, can be conceived as ‘putting oneself in the other’s shoes’ or ‘projecting oneself into the other’s situation’ (Gordon 1986, p. 162).

‘Simulation Theory’ (cf. Gordon 1986; Goldman 1989), which is discussed more in the psychology and philosophy fields, is a theory about ‘how people ascribe mental states especially propositional attitudes to others, and predict or explain their behaviour’ (Moltmann 2010, p. 450; cf. also Gordon 1986; Goldman 1989). In other words, we simulate the situation of others by pretending or imagining ourselves in the other’s shoes, and interpret or respond accordingly (Goldman 1989, p. 169). It is suggested to be a ‘first-person-based grasp of mental concepts’ approach (Goldman 1989, p. 183).

Moltmann (2010) drew on Simulation Theory. She indicated that the theory is basically a first-person approach, explaining that the third person’s ascriptions of attitudes and predictions and explanations of behaviours have to be ‘based on first-person’s ascriptions either by pretending to be another person or taking another’s point of view’ (p. 450).

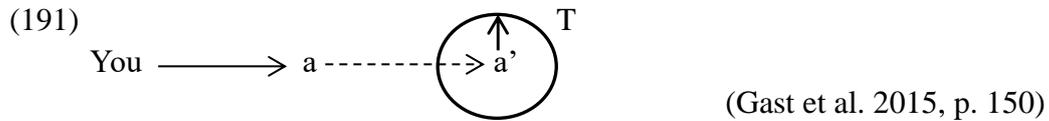
Moltmann (2010) also pointed out that the simulation discussed in Simulation Theory is specific simulation, i.e., attributing the properties to a specific person (p. 450). However, the simulation discussed in her paper is ‘generic simulation’. In generic simulation, the agent generalises his own situations and attributes the property to anyone meeting the relevant conditions. The agent does not need to adopt any other’s point of view (p. 450).

In Moltmann (2010)’s paper, she carried out a semantic analysis of generic *one*, which she analysed as ‘generalising detached self-reference’. Generalising detached self-reference can also be seen as generic simulation (p. 450). Both of them are associated with the relevant notion of pretence (p. 455). Moltmann (2010) interpreted pretence as follows: ‘pretending to have a property can mean either of two things: [1] projecting one’s actual person onto having the property...’, or ‘[2] projecting oneself onto just anyone having the property...’ (p. 455). She then argued that [2] is ‘generic pretence’ or ‘generic simulation’ and is what involved in generic *one*.

The two options outlined by Moltmann (2010) are reflected in the distinction between ‘referential shift’ and ‘model shift’ discussed by Gast et al. (2015). Gast et al. (2015) referred to option [2] as ‘referential shift’, and developed their own ‘model shift’ based on option [1]. Example (190) and the diagram in (191) are used by Gast et al. (2015) to illustrate option [2].

(190) **You**’re going down the highway, **you**’re having a wonderful time, singing a

song, and suddenly - **You** get into an argument. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990, p. 749)

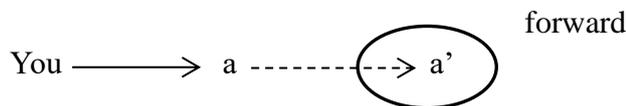


As pointed out by Gast et al. (2015, p. 150-151), *a* in (191) is the addressee, the solid arrow is the referential act which links *you* to *a*. *a'* is the referent the addressee simulates being. The dotted arrow from *a* to *a'* indicates ‘simulation’. *T* is the referential target or the target of empathy. From *a'* to *T* involves the generalisation, that the hypothetical situation in (190) could happen to anyone. *T* stands for anyone meeting the specific conditions described by the speaker, i.e., in (190), it denotes anyone who is going down the highway, having a wonderful time etc.

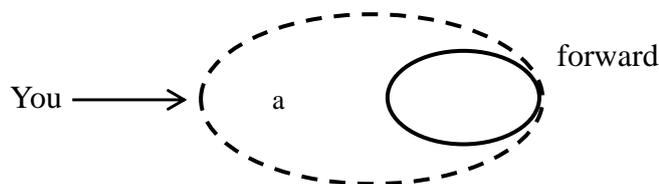
However, in Gast et al. (2015)’s own pragmatic analysis of impersonal uses of second person singular, they argued that option [1] is more appropriate for all their simulated groups of impersonal *you*. They provided another example (192) to illustrate the contrast between the referential shift approach in (193) and their own model shift approach in (194).

(192) As a forward **you** have to be selfish if **you** want to score goals. (Gast et al. 2015, p. 160)

(193) Referential shift (Gast et al. 2015, p. 160)



(194) Model shift (Gast et al. 2015, p. 160)



Similar to (191), *you* in (193) refers to the addressee *a*, and *a* links to the referent *a'* that the addressee simulates being, ‘forward’ indicates the property of a set of referents including *a'*. This diagram captures Moltmann (2010)’s option [2], where the addressee *a* projects herself to some other referent *a'* who has the property of being a ‘forward’, and the addressee is no longer herself (Gast et al. 2015, p. 160).

In contrast, *you* in the model shift (194) refers to the addressee *a*, and the addressee is still herself. The category of being a ‘forward’ in the football game is the solid circle. The dotted circle depicts the simulation model *M'*. In the model shift, the

speaker ‘invites the addressee to interpret the sentence relative to simulation model *M*’ in which she has the property of being a forward’ (Gast et al. 2015, p. 160). Therefore, the simulated referent *a*’ is absent in (194), because there is no mapping to other referents anymore. By way of simulation, the category ‘forward’ is enlarged to include *a*.

For a better understanding of the diagram in (194), it is essential to explain what the simulation model *M*’ is. Before that, we need to know what a mental model is.

According to Gast et al. (2015), a ‘mental model’ is ‘a system of propositional attitudes (doxastic and emotive) held by an individual’ (p. 153). Everybody has a mental model of the world. There is another concept - ‘common ground’ which relates to the mental model. Common ground is also a system of propositional attitudes, but it is a public one, not like the mental model that belongs to each individual. When the speaker makes an utterance, it seems to be ‘an act of modifying or updating the common ground’ (p. 153), and the addressee can ‘take the information the speaker added to the common ground and feed the information into her own mental model’ (p. 153). Both the speaker and addressee have their mental models and the common ground. With respect to the simulated impersonal *you*, the speaker invites the addressee to engage in simulation. If the addressee is a cooperative one, she will follow the speaker’s guide and establish a simulation model. So the simulation model is a mental model that is modified because of the new information added to the common ground by the speaker, and it is adopted by the addressee for the purpose of a successful and cooperative processing of the utterance made by the speaker (cf. Gast et al. 2015, p. 158).

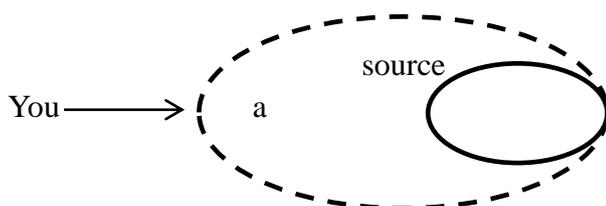
The question arises whether Gast et al. (2015)’s model shift can be applied to the shift uses to *you* from *I* and *we* in NZE in my sample. Gast et al. (2015) did not discuss any shifts to *you* in their paper at all, but I argue that the model shift can serve to interpret the shifts to *you* from *I* and *we* as well.

For my own theoretical analysis, I will borrow the ideas of ‘simulation’ and the ‘model shift’ proposed by Gast et al. (2015), but refer to them as ‘Simulation Schema’, as (a) it can be applied to interpret not only generic *you* (simulated), but also the shifts to *you* from *I* and *we* in my NZE sample; (b) I have made some minor modifications to the original model shift in order to accommodate the shifts to *you* in my data; (c) the name captures that it involves simulation.

#### 6.3.1.1.2 Applying Simulation Schema to interpret generic *you* (simulated) and shifts to *you*

In the Simulation Schema illustrated in Figure 6.1, the solid circle is re-labelled as ‘source’, and the dotted circle is regarded as the simulation circle.

Figure 6.1 Simulation Schema for generic *you* (simulated) and shifts to *you* in my NZE sample



In Figure 6.1, the speaker invites the addressee to put themselves in the simulated situation (the dotted circle) where the effect of simulation is initiated from the simulation ‘source’ (the solid circle). The simulation source bears several different properties, it can:

(a) represent a certain category, like being a ‘forward’ in Gast et al. (2015)’s example (192) or a teacher in example (186) in my NZE data, which corresponds to ‘category simulation’;

(b) be the origin of the simulated situation, like the ‘life drama’ in Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990)’s example (190) or parachuting in example (187) in my NZE data, which corresponds to ‘participant simulation’;

(c) fit in with the shift to *you* from *I* and *we*. In the shift to *you* from *I*, *you* points to *a*, but *a* is in the simulation circle (dotted) which originates from the source circle (solid). In the shift to *you* from *I*, the source circle contains just the speaker himself. For the shift to *you* from *we*, the source circle contains more than one person - the speaker and one or more others to make up *we*.

In addition, I assume that the source circle is dynamic and flexible in size, depending on the different types of non-canonical uses of second person at issue. The circle for generic *you* (simulated) will be considerably bigger than shifts to *you*, and the circle for shift to *you* from *we* will be slightly bigger than shift to *you* from *I*.

The idea of this dynamic simulation source circle ties in with my arguments in Chapter 4 that the degree of generalisation varies within generic *you* and between generic *you* and shifts to *you* in NZE, and that they are all on a continuum of generalisation. Although they all have generalising effects, the degrees of generalisation differ from each other.

#### 6.3.1.1.3 Applying Valid Schema to interpret generic *you* (valid)

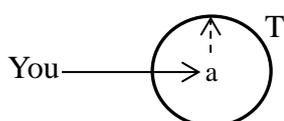
It seems that the Simulation Schema discussed above can not serve to illustrate valid generic *you*, as there is no simulation effect associated with it.

According to Gast et al. (2015), the major difference between ‘valid’ and ‘simulated’ impersonal *you* is whether or not the addressee is implied in the claim or predication made by the speaker. For *you* in instance (195), Gast et al. (2015) considered it as ‘valid’.

(195) Life insurance pays off triple if **you** die on a business trip. (Gast et al. 2015, p. 150)

Gast et al. (2015, p. 150) state that the situation in (195) only applies to people who have bought a life insurance, and the addressee is presupposed to belong in the category/group consisting of people who have bought the life insurance. The category/group can be presented by the circle around the addressee *a*, labelled as *T* (the ‘referential target’ or the ‘target of empathy’), as shown in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2 Valid Schema for generic *you* (valid) in my NZE sample



(Gast et al. 2015, p. 150)

Gast et al. (2015) did not give any name to this diagram in their original paper. I have chosen to call it ‘Valid Schema’ (as can be seen in the title of Figure 6.2) in contrast to the Simulation Schema, so I can easily refer to it in the subsequent discussion.

In fact, I argue that the Valid Schema in Figure 6.2 is capable of interpreting the valid type of generic *you* in my NZE sample. In my own interpretation of the Valid Schema, *you* directly links to the addressee *a*. The dotted arrow indicates the extension of generalisation and the application of speaker’s predication or claim. The circle around *a* is the range of individuals that the predication or claim applies to. Due to the generalising effect contributed by the context, the set of intended referents referred to by *you* is expanded to cover not only the addressee, but a wider range of people, even all human beings. Observe again example (196) in my NZE sample.

(196) Well. Library was my first love and I only left.  
The library because. We left Dunedin and left the university centre.  
But. I think it’s good to have a change because **you** actually  
Bring something. To every job **you** go to **you** bring something else.  
And I found it good going back to teaching having worked in an office I had.  
A new respect for. What.  
Um. typists do <mmm> (CC, fop95-10)

In (196), *you* on the surface refers to the addressee, but at the same time, generalisation allows the predication made by the speaker to broaden its application and to cover anybody else, as this kind of thought - ‘it’s good to have a change because you actually bring something else’ - can apply to anyone.

#### 6.3.1.1.4 Pragmatic factors: authority, solidarity and empathy

In this subsection, I will attempt to examine some pragmatic factors - authority, solidarity and empathy - that contribute to non-canonical pronoun uses of generic *you* (simulated & valid) and shifts to *you*.

The reason why Gast et al. (2015) argue that model shift is a better linguistic device for all instances of the simulated impersonal *you* is due to the emergence of an empathy effect along with the simulation. Simulation creates empathy. It is 'by way of attributing properties to the addressee themselves or by adopting an attitude with regard to these properties' that empathy is able to emerge (p. 161). Gast et al. (2015) also emphasise that 'the generalising effect is contributed by the sentential context, and empathy is contributed by the second person form' (p. 152).

In fact, Gast et al. (2015, p. 152) were assuming more than one pragmatic effect at different levels of interpretation. Empathy is implied at the expressive level. At the interactional (social) level, impersonal uses of the second person imply solidarity between the speech participants. At the propositional level, impersonal uses imply abstraction and/or generalisation.

They furthermore made a distinction between primary and secondary pragmatic effects. 'Primary effects are those primarily motivating the use of an impersonal second person form, while secondary ones are conversational by-effects' (Gast et al. 2015, p. 152-153). Abstraction and empathy are primary effects, whereas authority, objectivity and solidarity are all secondary effects. Gast et al. (2015, p152) argued that abstraction presupposes the authority of the speaker's knowledge about a specific field, and allows the speaker to objectify the description of a situation. On the other hand, the second person form contributes to the effect of empathy, and empathy presupposes a certain degree of solidarity between the speaker and the addressee.

However, Gast et al. (2015)'s paper did not devote too much time to the pragmatic effects of the impersonal uses of the second person, as their primary objective was to demonstrate that impersonal uses of the second person are no different to personal uses in terms of grammatical category. Where they did discuss the pragmatic effects arising from impersonal uses, they focused on the empathy effect as it was argued to be 'a typical feature of impersonal uses of the second person' (p. 161). Moreover, the impersonal uses discussed by them did not include the shifts to *you* from *I* and *we*.

Stirling & Manderson (2011) discussed the shifts to *you*, and made the claim that empathy, objectivity and authority play a role in their generalised *you* usage. In their contextual-driven, microcosmic and interactional analysis of the interview data, two main uses of generalised *you* were considered: one is that *you* occurs in 'structural knowledge descriptions', the other one includes a shift between use of *you* and use of *I* under the frame of personal (particularly negative) experience from the speaker.

Their first 'structural knowledge description' is adopted from Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990). In structural knowledge description, the speaker 'tells of what commonly happens in a situation, so that its use indicates that the speaker's experience embeds them in a wider class of people, that is, that the experience is only incidentally theirs but could well be anybody's' (Stirling & Manderson 2011, p. 1584). This first

category of generalised *you* corresponds to the valid generic *you* in my NZE data. The second category (shift between uses of *you* and *I*) resembles the shifts to *you* from *I* in my sample data principally in that they both involve personal experiences, some of which are extremely private.

Stirling & Manderson (2011, p. 1600) argued that for structural knowledge description *you*, authority is invoked so as to engage the addressee in the story telling. For the personal experience of a negative type where generalised *you* is used as an alternative to first person *I*, objectivity, empathy and authority all take effect. Objectivity seems to facilitate the other two effects. The act of using *you* instead of *I* makes their story more objective in a way which avoids the addressee having to give a personal response to the stories told by the speaker, thus makes it more likely for the speaker to achieve empathy as well as to ‘retain her authority as the possessor of her own personal experience’ (p. 1600). Gast et al. (2015) referred to Stirling & Manderson (2011)’s second category as ‘personal experience type’, and further argued that simulation is a crucial ingredient of this ‘personal experience type’ (p. 152).

Concluded from the above previous work, I believe that authority, solidarity and empathy all play a pragmatic role in the speaker’s selection of *you* instead of other pronouns in generic use and shift use in my NZE sample data. If we look at my data again, they are primarily oral corpus data which involve conversations between the speakers and interviewers.

Gast et al. (2015) claimed that the first step of any communicative act between the speaker and addressee is the speaker having a specific intention and a communicative goal (p. 154). Since I am investigating non-canonical pronoun uses from the speakers’ data, the influencing pragmatic factors of generic and shift uses of *you* draw on the speakers’ perspectives - their speech intentions and their decisions on personal pronouns. Simply, the speaker has the authority to comment on the interview topic. Authority may be partially empowered by the objectivity and validity of the content of a speaker’s speech. The decision to choose *you* instead of *I* or *we* in generic *you* and shifts to *you* can have at least two benefits: (a) it creates solidarity between the speaker and addressee; (b) it engenders empathy from the addressee. Why do these two matter? Because in my NZE sample, the speaker (the interviewee)’s intention is to get the interviewer to view things from their perspective, to empathise with them, or to leave a good impression on their interviewer, so that eventually they will have a good and successful communication with the interviewers.

### **6.3.1.2 Generic *we***

As observed in Chapter 4, generic *we* in my NZE sample only includes the valid type, where *we* covers all human beings or anybody. Given the above interpretation of generic *you* in my NZE data, where the Valid Schema was applied to valid generic *you*, is it possible that we could modify the Valid Schema and apply it to generic *we* in my sample as well?

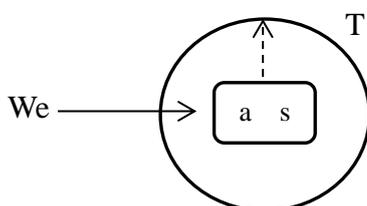
Let’s re-consider the prototypical example of generic *we*, as in instance (197) from

## Chapter 4.

- (197) Interviewer: well that's that's where they're going <yeah>  
Cos for seventeen ye~ well ever since dad was here he like  
he never had any desire to go back but I think now he's really  
<yeah>  
Itching to go home I think  
Speaker: yip **we**'ve all gotta go back to **our** roots – I mean my roots are here  
aren't they  
But I suppose – I dunno to a certain extent part of me belongs in England  
(CC, fon95-18a)

*We* in (197) is valid. In other words, the speaker and addressee are presupposed to belong in the general statement 'we've all gotta go back to our roots'. In the Valid Schema used for valid generic *you* in Figure 6.2, the referential act is directly linking *you* to the addressee. The difficulty for valid generic *we* is how to address the set of referents referred to by *we* in the generalisation effect circle. I propose the adapted Valid Schema in Figure 6.3 for valid generic *we*, where the target referent pointed to by *we* is a combination of the addressee *a* and speaker *s*.

Figure 6.3 Valid Schema for generic *we* (valid) in my NZE sample



In the figure for valid generic *we*, *we* points to the speaker and the addressee, but at the same time the predication is generalised to extend to anybody else, which is represented by the referential target *T* circle. The generalisation is created via the sentential context. What makes *we* here in (197) generalising is that it occurs in a generalising sentence.

### 6.3.2 Interpreting generic uses in Chinese

As far as I am aware, Chinese scholars to date have not paid enough attention to the notion of simulation in terms of any generic uses in Chinese personal pronouns, let alone applied the Valid Schema or Simulation Schema to them. Equipped with the above observations of applying the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema to generic *you*, shifts to *you* and generic *we* in my NZE data, my first assumption is that these two schemas are able to interpret at least their counterparts of generic uses in my Chinese data (generic *nǐ*, shifts to *nǐ* and generic *wǒmen*).

### 6.3.2.1 Generic *nǐ* (you sg.) and shifts to *nǐ* (you sg.)

Let's re-consider the types of generic *nǐ* and shifts to *nǐ* in Chinese and present the relevant instances according to Gast et al. (2015)'s taxonomy. The following examples (198) - (203) are repeated from the last chapter.

#### Valid generic *nǐ*

- (198) Xi ànz ài l á jiǎng ne, yí gè m éi yǒu wén píng, zài yí gè l á jiǎng ne, jiù shì nǐ  
现在来讲呢，一个没有文凭，再一个来讲呢，就是你  
dǒngde yí diǎn er dōngxi l á jiǎng ne, yǐjīng yào luò wǔ le, du ba? H áiděi yào  
懂得一点儿东西来讲呢，已经要落伍了，对吧？还得要  
fèn fā de l á xué xí nǐ bù xué xí nǐ jiù nǐ jiù gǎn bú shàng zhè ge xi àn dài de  
奋发地来学习，你不学习，你就你就赶不上这个现代的  
gōngyì jì shù, shì wa, zhè ge fā zhǎn, shì wa? Zhè shì hěn guān jiàn de shì qing.  
工艺技术，是哇，这个发展，是哇？这是很关键的事情。  
(1939 男 汉 天桥 初中 工人 D)

Now to speak, firstly doesn't have a diploma, in addition to say, is you only know a little thing, you still fall behind, right? Also have to work hard to learn, [if] **you** don't learn, **you** then **you** then can't catch up with this modern technology, isn't it, [with] this development, isn't it? This is a very critical thing. (BJKY, M39D)

- (199) Jiù shì shuō bú yào kàn de guò zhòng, kàn sǐ le. Dōngxi dōu shì àn duì de jiù bù  
就是说不要看得过重，看死了。东西都是绝对的就  
hǎo le, ai, yí bān l á jiǎng, jiù shì nǐ yào bǎ tā kàn guò zhòng ne, jiù shī qù tā de  
好了，哎，一般来讲，就是你要把它看过重呢，就失去它的  
yì yì. Wǒ hái shì bǐ jiào xǐ huān zhè ge gōng zuò de.  
意义了。我还是比较喜欢这个工作的。(1956 男 汉 天桥 大  
专 中学教师 E)

That is to say do not view [matters] too seriously, or view too rigidly. [If] things are all black-and-white it is not good, mmm, generally speaking, which is if **you** treat it too seriously, it loses its meaning. I still pretty like this job. (BJKY, M56E)

#### Category simulated generic *nǐ*

- (200) 'Bǎi huā Jiǎng' ha, yí fā jiǎng de shí hòu er ba, zhè xiē zhè xiē, zhè ge, zhè ge  
“百花奖”哈，一发奖的时候儿吧，这些这些，这个，这个  
diàn yǐng yǎn yuán, shì shén me de, zhè xiē a, chuān shàng piào liang de yī fu a,  
电影演员，什么的，这些啊，穿上漂亮的衣服啊，  
shì shén me lǐng jiǎng a, shì shén me zhǐ gāo qì yáng de a, yào bié rén, tā, tā děi gěi  
什么领奖啊，什么趾高气扬的啊，要别人，他，他得给  
bíe rén qiān míng a, shì shén me zhè xiē huó dé gāo de, wǒ jiù duì zhè ge tǐ bié

别人 签名啊，什么 这些活动 搞的，我就 对这个 特别 fǎngǎn. Wǎshénme ne? Nǐ, wǒ jiù shuō yǎnyuán ba, zài nǐde zhège shìyè 反感。为 什么 呢？你，我就说 演员 吧，在 你的这个 事业 shàng ha, nǐ zuòchū le yí dìngde chéngjì dānshì zài xǔxǔxǔduō de hángyè 上 哈，你 作出了一定的成 绩，但是 在 许许许许许 的 行业 dāngzhōng ba, měigè rén dōuyǒu tā zìjǐ de chéngjì 当 中 吧，每个人 都有他自己的成 绩。（1947 女 满 西城 大 专 医生 E）

Talking about 'Hundred Flowers Awards', when giving awards, these these, this, this movie actors, etc., these, wearing beautiful clothes, receiving awards, arrogant [to others], want other people, he, he had to give other people signature, these kind of activities, I am particularly disgusted with this. Why? You, let me take actors for an example, in **your** own career, **you** have made some achievements, but in many other industries, everyone has his own achievements. (BJKY, F47E)

Participant simulated generic *nǐ*

(201) Tā shì lǎo kāi, yīnwéi tā dōngdōng hǎi'àn a, tā kěyǐ huàn sījī, yìzhí kāi, tā 它是老开，因为它 东 东 海岸啊，他可以换司机，一直开，他 huàn sījī, jiù gēn zài nǐmen huǒchē shì de. Suǒyǐ nǐ zuòshàng nàge, nǐ kěyǐ zài 换 司机，就跟咱们 火车似的。所以 你 坐上 那个，你可以在 chēshàng shuǐjiào. Chēshàng jiù gēn nà fēijī shàng nà yǐzi yíyàng, wǎng hòu 车 上 睡觉。车 上 就跟 那 飞机 上 那 椅子一样，往 后 yīkào, dàkào bèier, yìtāng jiù wán le. 一靠，大靠 背儿，一躺 就 完了。（1942 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E）

It is always on the operation, because it east coast ah, he can change the driver, always operating, he changed the driver, just like our train. So **you** sit on that, **you** can sleep in the bus. The seat in the bus just like what in the airplane, can lean backwards, a big backrest, just lying on it. (BJKY, M42E)

Shifts to *nǐ* from *wǒ*

(202) Wǒ èr, wǒ nàge shíjì shíhou wǒ zuìkǔ le. Zài gōngchǎng lǐtóu a jiùshì 我二，我 那个十几岁 时候儿 我 最苦了。在 工 厂 里头啊就是 shuō, búshì zhège gōngchǎng búyào nǐ le, jiùshì nàge gōngchǎng búyào. 说，不是 这个 工 厂 不要 你了，就是那个 工 厂 不要。

Yìtiān nǐ tīlāzhe xīn. Zhè gōngtóu'er zhǐyào yìchǎu nǐ búshùnǎn, déle, tā 一天 你 提拉着心。这 工 头儿 只要 一瞅 你不 顺眼，得了，他 yìzǔ mó nǐ, shuō zhēnde xīnlǐ jiù tīxīndǎnde. 一 琢磨 你，说 真的 心里就 提心吊胆 的。（1930 女 汉 西城 小 学 工人 C）

I twen-, I was in the bitterest time when I was in teenage. In the factory that is to say, either this factory did not need **you**, or that factory did not. **You** held your heart all day. This manager as long as [he] looked at **you** and [he] felt dislike, ok, he doubted about **you**, to be honest my heart was on tenterhooks. (BJKY, F30C)

Shift to *nǐ* from *wǒmen*

(203) Wǒ cóng qīsu iside fùqīn, wǒ fùqīn sǐle yǐhòu, wǒ yǒu liǎng, yīgèdì yīgè  
我 从 七岁死的父亲, 我父亲死了以后, 我 有 两, 一个弟弟一个  
měimei. Ai, méiyǒu shēnghuó láiyuán, zhǐzhe wǒmā ne, jiùshì zuò zhēnxi àn  
妹妹。哎, 没有 生活 来源, 指着 我妈呢, 就是 做 针线  
huóer. Zuò zhēnxi àn huóer nàhuìr, zhùrénjiāde fángzi ne, jiùshì shuō, diǎn  
活儿。做 针线 活儿那会儿, 住人家的 房子呢, 就是 说, 点  
diǎndēng a, nǐ duō shǐdiàn, rén dōuyǒu yǐjiàn. Jiùbǎ dēng a mǎngshàng  
电 灯啊, 你 多 使电, 人 都有 意见。就把 灯 啊 蒙 上  
hēibù, shèng yídiǎn guāng zài dǐxia, wǒ mǔqīn gěi rénjiā zuò huóer.  
黑布, 剩 一点儿 光 在 底下, 我母亲 给 人家 做活儿。(1930  
女 汉 西城 小学 工人 C)

I was seven [when] my father died, after my father died, I have two, one younger brother one younger sister. Alas, don't have source of income, relying on my mum, simply by sewing. At that time sewing, lived in other people's house, that is to say, leave the lights on, **you** used more power, other people had complaints. Then covered the lights with a black cloth, leaving a little light at the bottom, my mother was working for other people. (BJKY, F30C)

(198) and (199) are instances of valid generic *nǐ*, (200) is category simulated generic *nǐ*, (201) is participant simulated generic *nǐ*, (202) is the shift to *nǐ* from *wǒ*, and (203) is the shift to *nǐ* from *wǒmen*. Similar to shifts to *you* in NZE, (202) and (203) can also be viewed as simulated impersonal uses of *nǐ* according to Gast et al. (2015)'s definition.

I presented two instances of valid generic *nǐ*, because instances like (198) and (199) are the most commonly-seen ones in my Chinese sample, where *nǐ* occurs in these kind of generic factual conditional sentences, explicitly or implicitly introduced by the adverbial subordinator 'if'. Moreover, they both are similar to the valid generic *you* in NZE, where the speaker intended to yield some general truth about life or how we perceive the world. (201) - (203) are all participant simulated, where the speakers invite the addressees to engage in simulation. The speaker in (201) was telling his experience of taking the long distance bus in America. The addressee was not really there with the speaker on the bus trip, but was invited to imagine being in the kind of situation described by the speaker. Engaging in the simulation also happens to the addressees in (202) and (203). The speaker in (202) disclosed her private story when she worked at a factory as a teenager. She felt worried to lose her job and become unemployed. Simulation allows the addressee to imagine themselves being in the speaker's position, but the addressee was not really the protagonist in the story. The utilisation of *nǐ* ensures the speaker's personal experience is more generally related to the addressee, but does not apply to anybody else. Likewise in (203), *nǐ* in fact originates from the simulation source where the real protagonist of this particular story in (203) is the speaker's family.

The Valid Schema in Figure 6.2 is able to interpret the valid generic *nǐ* in my Chinese sample data. Second person *nǐ* refers to the addressee, at the same time the predication or claim also extends to apply to a wide range of people via the generalisation effect created by the context. The Simulation Schema is also capable of interpreting simulated generic *nǐ* and shifts to *nǐ* in the Chinese data. Certainly simulation plays a role in both non-canonical uses. The situation/predication/claim described by the speaker (depicted as the solid circle ‘source’ in Figure 6.1) is the origin/trigger/source of the simulation effect. The speaker invites the addressee to simulate being in the simulation source circle, so the source circle is expanded to incorporate the addressee. For the simulated generic *nǐ*, the addressee is not presupposed to be in the speaker’s description of a situation, but *nǐ* is employed in order to create the effect of simulation and to allow the addressee to simulate being in the situation described by the speaker. Due to the effect of generalisation created by the context, the range of individuals that the situation/predication/claim is taken to apply to broadens to cover anybody else or a category of people. For the shifts to *nǐ*, *nǐ* refers to the addressee and also contributes to the simulation, but the actual protagonists in the simulation source are not the addressees.

### 6.3.2.2 Generic *wǒmen* (we)

The data of generic *wǒmen* in my sample resembles generic *we* in NZE at least in one point that they both encompass the valid type, where the addressee is implied. However, generic *wǒmen* differs from generic *we* in that the scope of referents encompassed by *wǒmen* in valid generic use in my sample does not cover the entire human race or everybody, but only the Chinese people, as can be seen in example (204) from Chapter 5.

- (204) Ji ʔsh ʔxiǎon ʔng jīngj ʔ z jǐz ʔzú z ʔr ʔn jīngj ʔbǐji ʔo sh ʔme, suǒyǐ z ʔoch ʔng  
 就是 小 农 经济，自给自足，自然经济 比较 什么，所以 造成  
 yī shénme ne? Yī, zhǐyào yī zīběn jīngjì zhè chéngdù yì fāzhǎn, **wǒmen** yǒu  
 一 什么 呢？一，只要 一 资本经济 这 程 度一 发展，**我们** 有  
 shíhòuer rènshi bú nàme tài qīngchǔ, suǒyǐ xíngchéng gěi tā chōngjī shì bǐ  
 时 候儿 认识 不 那么太 清楚，所以 形成 给他 冲击 是 比  
 jiào dàde, dāngrán zhè dōngxī shì, yěshì kěyǐ, jiānglái mànmaner huì kèfúde.  
 较 大的，当然 这 东西 是，也是 可以，将来 慢慢儿 会 克服的。  
 Dāngr ʔn, zu ʔw ʔ bi ʔr ʔn l ʔshuō, t gāo r ʔnde s ʔzh ʔma, t gāo qu ʔnm ʔnde s ʔ  
 当 然，作 为 别人 来说，提高 人的 素质 嘛，提高 全民的 素  
 zh ʔ **wǒmen** jì ʔy ʔ gǎig ʔyě zh ʔ ʔnger...  
 质，**我们** 教育 改革也 这样 儿... (1940 男 汉 西城 大学 干部 D)
- The peasant economy, self-sufficiency, the natural economy is pretty what, so what would cause? Firstly, as long as the capitalist economy develops to a certain extent, **we** sometimes do not recognize very clear, so the impact caused to it is relatively large, of course this thing is, is also possible, will

slowly be overcome in the future. Of course, as someone else, to improve people's morality, to improve the morality of the entire citizens, **our** education reform should be the same... (BJKY, M49D)

In (204), we can see that the degree of generalisation may also vary even within the same type of generic use across different languages. *We* in (197) ('we've all gotta go back to our roots') is valid, and *wōmen* in (204) here is also valid, but the degree of genericness or the scope of referents covered by *we/wōmen* differs between the two examples.

Despite this, I still hold that the Valid Schema (in Figure 6.3) used for valid generic *we* in NZE can be adapted to interpret valid generic *wōmen* in my Chinese sample. In the Valid Schema for valid generic *wōmen*, the speaker *s* and the addressee *a* will still appear together, and the difference in the degree of generalisation will be represented by the size of the generalisation circle (the round solid one). If we compare *wōmen* in (204) with *we* in sentence 'we've all gotta go back to our roots', the size of the generalisation circle for valid generic *wōmen* will be smaller than for valid generic *we* in NZE.

Such a difference in the degree of generalisation between valid generic *we* and valid generic *wōmen* is reminiscent of the distinction between 'impersonal' (see (43)) and 'vague' (see (44)) uses of *we* in Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990). Although Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) categorised the use of *we* into 'impersonal' (referring to everybody) and 'vague' (referring to an unspecified group of individuals), both uses can actually be viewed as valid generic use according to Gast et al. (2015)'s definition. It is just in Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990), the generalisation degree of impersonal *we* is higher than vague *we*.

After examining the above applications of the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema to generic *nǐ*, shifts to *nǐ* and generic *wōmen* in my Chinese sample, the question remains as to whether these two models can also work well for generic *n ń*, generic *wǒ* and generic *tā* in Chinese. Do we need to simply modify these two models or alternatively create new models for the rest of the generic uses in Chinese? The last three subsections set out to look for the solutions.

### 6.3.2.3 Generic *n ń* (honorific you sg.)

The generic use of *n ń*, as the honorific form of *nǐ*, is presumed to be analogous to generic *nǐ*. In fact, the generic use of *n ń* is less varied than generic *nǐ* in that it includes only the valid and participant simulation according to Gast et al. (2015)'s taxonomy. (205) is an example that can illustrate both.

(205) Suīr án yǒu xǐyījī, tā n à xǐyījī shì bàn zìdòng huà de. Zhè bǐ bù liǎo guó wài, rēng dào lǐ tóu jiù wán le, zhè quán lí xīn, shuāi gān le, **n ń** guò yí huì er, **n ń** yì tǎo dào lǐ tóu jiù wán le, zhè quán lí xīn, shuāi gān le, **n ń** guò yí huì er, **n ń** yì tǎo dào lǐ tóu jiù wán le.

dīliu chūlái jiù wán le, yǒu chéngxù de. Zǎmen nà xǐyījī hái de kàn zhe,  
 提溜出来就完了, 有程序的。咱们那洗衣机还得看着,  
 nòng le bàn tiān, wǒ kàn hái gēn shǒuxǐ ya, jiù shì shěng diǎnr jǐn, shíjiān shì  
 shěng búxià shíme shíjiān.

省不下什么时间。(1942 男 汉 西城 大学 医生 E)

Although there is a washing machine, the washing machine there it is semi-automatic. This cannot compare with foreign [washing machine], throw [clothes] inside that's the end, it is all centrifugation, spin and dry, **you (honorific)** wait for a moment, **you (honorific)** take [the clothes] out that's the end, have procedures. The washing machine we have needs to watch [it], and wait for half day, I reckon compared with hand wash, only save some strength, can not save any time. (BJKY, M42E)

The speaker was comparing a Chinese domestic washing machine with the foreign counterparts in (205). Since we can not really tell who the interviewer was in (205), the use of generic *nǐ* here can either be treated as valid or participant simulation. If the addressee (the interviewer) had experienced using a foreign washing machine before, the use would be valid; if the addressee had not, the use would be counted as participant simulation. Simulation allows the addressee to imagine participating in the situation described by the speaker, namely, how to use a foreign washing machine.

The model used to illustrate the valid generic *nǐ* will be similar to the model shift in Figure 6.2, and the model for the participant simulated *nǐ* will be like Figure 6.1. The only thing that needs to be changed is the personal pronoun, namely, changing *you* to *nǐ*.

At the beginning of this section, I discussed how the two schemas being applied to generic *you*, shifts to *you* and generic *we* in NZE can be reused for generic *nǐ*, shifts to *nǐ* and generic *wǒmen* in my Chinese sample. What has not yet been addressed is how to capture generic *wǒ* and generic *tā* in terms of modelling. I will consider these in the forthcoming two subsections.

#### 6.3.2.4 Generic *wǒ* (I)

In my sample, generic *wǒ* is relatively small in token number, but tends to include all three usages: valid, category simulation and participant simulation.

*Wǒ* differs from *nǐ* and *wǒmen* in generic use in that the addressee in generic *wǒ* is certainly not implied in the speaker's predication, whereas the speaker in generic *wǒ* might be implied or might not be. (206) is a perfect example to illustrate this.

(206) Wǒ shíme xiànzài gètǐhù'èr huòzhě jiào gètǐ kāide gōngchǎng, tā zhè  
 为 什么 现在 个体户儿 或者 叫 个体 开的 工 厂, 它 这  
 qiántú tǐng guāngmíngde, jiù zài zhèr ne. **Wǒ** zìjǐ, zhè dōngxī dōushì **wǒ**  
 前途 挺 光 明的, 就 在 这 儿 呢。 **我** 自己, 这 东 西 都 是 **我**

zì jǐ de, **wǒ** děi duì **wǒ** zì jǐ fù zé. Dàn tā yǒu de shì qǐ shì yè dān wèi shì zhè zì jǐ de, **我** 得 对 **我** 自己负责。但 他 有 的 是 企 事 业 单 位 是 这 zhǒng, **wǒ** chī zhe guó jiā de fàn, **wǒ** zhè kuī le, guó jiā yǒu bǔ zhù, **wǒ** zhuān le ne, shuō jù shí zài, **wǒ** yě zhuān bù le duō shǎo.

了呢, 说 句 实 在, **我** 也 赚 不 了 多 少。(1949 男 汉 卢 沟 桥 高 中 民 警 E)

Why now self-employed or factories run by individuals, its future is pretty bright, this is it. **I** myself, these things are all **mine**, **I** have to be responsible for **myself**. But he some are [state] enterprises and [state] administrations are like this, **I** am getting benefits from the country, **I** lost, the country will give subsidy, **I** earned money, to tell the truth, **I** can not earn much. (BJKY, M49E)

The first four *wǒ* refer to self-employed individuals, while the last four *wǒ* refer to employees who work for enterprises or government institutions. The speaker in (206) was a police officer who worked for the government, so he is not implied in the first four *wǒ*, but is implied in the last four *wǒ*. Therefore, *wǒ* in (206) has two types of generic use. The first four *wǒ* are category simulated, as the speaker is not implied in his predication. The last four *wǒ* are valid, as the speaker is implied.

Another type of generic *wǒ* is participant simulation, as can be seen in (207). The speaker in (207) was not really conducting the behaviour of picking one pen from ten pens. Both the speaker and addressee were invited to take part in the assumption made by the speaker via simulation.

(207) Gōngqiú guānxì yǐngxiǎng, bīrán yǐngxiǎng le zhè ge wùjià shàng zhǎng. Bǐrú gòng qiú guān xi yǐng xiǎng, bī rán yǐng xiǎng le zhè ge wù jià shàng zhǎng. Bǐ rú yí gè rén er, nǐ yǒu, bǐ rú shuō gāng bǐ, nǐ yǒu shí zhī gāng bǐ yí gè rén er yòng, nà **wǒ** kě yǐ tiāo zhe kě yǐ. Yí bǎi gè rén hái yǒu shí zhī gāng bǐ nà jiù gāi qiǎng zhe **我** 可 以 挑 着 可 以。一 百 个 人 还 有 十 支 钢 笔 那 就 该 抢 着 yòng le, gōngqiúzhì bù yí yàng le.

用 了, 供 求 制 不 一 样 了。(1940 男 汉 西 城 大 学 干 部 D)

The impact between the supply and demand, will inevitably affect the ongoing prices. For example one person, you have, for example say a fountain pen, you have ten fountain pens for one person to use, then **I** can pick. One hundred people only have ten fountain pens then should snatch, the system of supply and demand will be different. (BJKY, M40D)

The challenge for building models for generic *wǒ* is where to place the speaker and addressee. Although Gast et al. (2015) only distinguished between valid and simulated impersonal *you*, the idea of adapting ‘addressee-inclusive’ or ‘addressee-exclusive’ as a criterial threshold is applicable to generic *wǒ* in my data. I argue that if the speaker is implied in the speaker’s predications or claims, these generic *wǒ* will be considered

as ‘valid’; if the speaker is not implied or the predications/claims expressed by the speaker do not literally hold of the speaker, these generic  $w\check{o}$  will be labelled as ‘simulated’, no matter if the speaker is invited to simulate being one of the category of people or simulate participating in a situation.

I furthermore argue that no matter if  $w\check{o}$  is valid or simulated generic, the referential link directly links  $w\check{o}$  to the speaker  $s$ , as shown in Figures 6.4 and 6.5. The trick is that for the simulated generic  $w\check{o}$ , depicted in the latter figure, the simulation effect will be activated to allow the speaker and the addressee to imagine having the property of being one member of the designated groups/categories discussed by the speaker or to imagine participating in a situation described by the speaker.

Figure 6.4 Valid Schema for generic  $w\check{o}$  (valid) in my Chinese sample

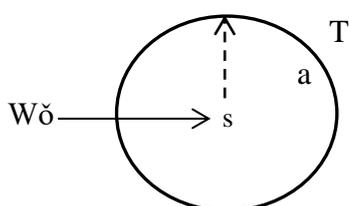
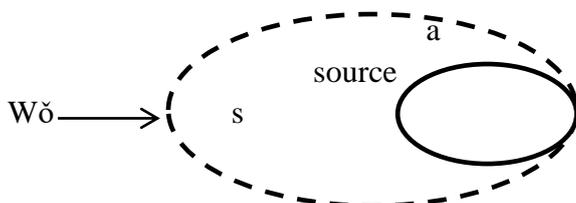


Figure 6.5 Simulation Schema for generic  $w\check{o}$  (simulated) in my Chinese sample



No matter whether the speaker  $s$  is implied or not, the addressee  $a$  will still be in the scope of individuals that the predication/claim made by the speaker applies to, either due to the generalisation effect contributed by the context (refer to Figure 6.4) or due to the simulation effect contributed by the simulation source (refer to ‘source’ in Figure 6.5).

This first figure ties in with Gast et al. (2015)’s argument that the ‘generalising effect is contributed by the sentential context’ (p. 152). Personal pronoun forms, be they first, second or third, do not make sentences generalising. Instead, they happen to be in generalising sentences.<sup>33</sup> For valid generic  $w\check{o}$ ,  $w\check{o}$  happens to occur in sentences expressing a generalisation about categories of people to which the addressee does not belong, but the speaker does. The generalisation effect is still shown by the dotted arrow in Figure 6.4. It broadens the referents to cover a wider

<sup>33</sup> This view is originally from Gast et al. (2015). They argued that ‘the generalisation effect is independent of the second person forms, because second person forms do not make sentences generalising, but they may occur in sentences that are generalising independently’ (p. 161). Although they only discussed the impersonal uses of second person singular, I think their view on the relation between the generalisation effect and second person forms can also apply to generic uses of other personal pronouns in NZE or Chinese in my sample, not only second person singular.

range of people including the addressee *a*. However, *a* will definitely not be located in the centre of the circle.

In the second figure, the referential link still links to the speaker *s* and the speaker is still himself. Both the speaker and addressee are excluded in the predications or claims made by the speaker, which are represented by the ‘source’ circle, but both the speaker and addressee are invited to engage in the simulation.

### 6.3.2.5 Generic *tā* (3sg)

The data of generic *tā* in my sample is another pertinent case that provides further support for Gast et al. (2015, p. 152)’s insight - ‘the generalising effect is contributed by the sentential context, not by the second person forms’.

In my BJKY sample, the vast majority of generic *tā* occurs in contexts where speakers are recounting matters or expressing opinions about human beings or people in general. These given contexts are essential for the generalisation effect to apply. Consider example (208).

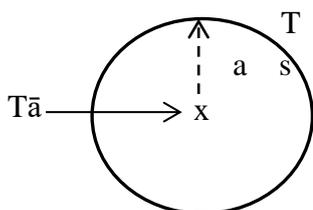
(208) Rénmen na, tā dōu bù xíguàn yú yòng xīn de dōngxi, tā jiù shì lǎolù shàng bǐ  
人们 哪, 他 都 不 习 惯 于 用 新 的 东 西, 他 就 是 老 路 上 比  
jiào xíguàn. Suǒyǐ jiāotōng ne jiùshì bùhǎo, yìshí bànhuǐer, wǒ kàn yě bùhǎo  
较 习 惯。所 以 交 通 呢 就 是 不 好, 一 时 半 会 儿, 我 看 也 不 好  
jiějué  
解 决。 (1947 女 满 西 城 大 专 医 生 E)

People ah, **he** is not accustomed to using new things, **he** is used to the old road. So the traffic is not good, within such a short time, I think [the problem] is not easy to solve. (BJKY, F47E)

The speaker in (208) was discussing some typical properties that people in general would bear, i.e., people are more used to old stuff even when new stuff exists. Just like the traffic in Beijing, although several new roads had been built, people were still habitually using the old roads. *Tā* in (208) literally refers to a random third person, but the predication made by the speaker is expanded to apply to people in general. Random *tā* is just one of those people.

The speaker and the addressee are not literally implied in generic *tā*, the third person singular is employed to refer to a collective concept. On the other hand, both the speaker and addressee are still covered in the scope of people covered by speaker’s predication. This is more likely because of the generalisation effect derived from the context rather than by simulation, so I sketched a Valid Schema for generic *tā* in Chinese, which is shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6 Valid Schema for generic *tā* in my Chinese sample



I argue that in Figure 6.6, the third person *tā* is directly linking to a random third party *x*, presented in the middle of the circle. Both the speaker *s* and the addressee *a* are in the referential target circle *T* due to the generalisation effect presented by the dotted arrow, but are not placed in the centre of the circle.

### 6.3.3 Can the approach apply to all the non-canonical uses?

We have successfully expanded the Valid and Simulated Schemas to the interpretation of generic *we* and shifts to *you* in NZE, and tentatively extended them to the illustration of generic uses in Chinese. The question is, can Gast et al. (2015)'s approach be employed to explain all the non-canonical uses attested in my two samples? The subsequent three subsections will set out to discuss this question one by one. We begin the discussion with personal pronouns with collective nouns in NZE.

#### 6.3.3.1 *It/they* with collective nouns

Discussions of number agreement with collective nouns in NZE have looked at verbal concord, pronominal concord and mixed concord (e.g. Bauer 1988 & 2007; Hundt 1998 & 2009; Vantellini 2003). When verbs occur after collective nouns, they can be in singular forms reflecting grammatical agreement (also called 'syntactic agreement'<sup>34</sup>, (cf. Corbett 2006, p. 155)) or in plural forms due to notional agreement (or 'semantic agreement'<sup>35</sup>, (cf. Corbett 2006, p. 155)) (see the difference in 'the committee has/have decided' in (209)). Similarly, personal pronouns used to refer to collective nouns can either be third person singular or third person plural forms (see 'it/they' and 'its/their' in (209)). When both verbs and pronouns occur with collective nouns, mixed concord may occur, where the verb might be in the singular form but the pronoun is third person plural (as in 'the committee has decided that they will postpone their decision' in (209)).

<sup>34</sup> 'Syntactic agreement' is agreement in line with the form of the controller (Corbett 2006, p. 155). In (209), the 'committee' is the controller. If 'has' is chosen in 'the committee has decided', which means it shows the syntactic agreement between the controller and verb.

<sup>35</sup> 'Semantic agreement' is agreement in consistent with its meaning (Corbett 2006, p. 155). If 'have' is used in the committee have decided' in (209), it indicates the semantic agreement.

(209) The committee **has/have** decided that **it/they** will postpone **its/their** decision. (Hundt 2006, p. 207)

The reason behind this is because collectives can be thought of as ‘a collectivity of the group’ (singular) or ‘the individual within the group’ (plural) (cf. Quirk et al. 1985, p. 316 & 758).

Both *it* and *they* are attested to occur with collective nouns in the CC. Can Gast et al. (2015)’s approach apply to this phenomenon? To answer this, we need to reconsider the main goal of Gast et al. (2015)’s study, which is that the grammatical category ‘second person’ can be interpreted the same in impersonal uses as in personal uses, because the second person in impersonal uses still directly refers to the addressee in both valid and simulated cases. If we re-examine *it* and *they* with collective nouns from this perspective, the occurrence of *it* with collective nouns is when the speaker treats the collective noun as a group of collectivity, whereas the usage of *they* with collective nouns is when the speaker considers the collective noun as a bunch of individuals in the group. So *it* still refers to a third person singular entity when treating the collective nouns as a concept of whole, and *they* still refers to a third person plural entity when treating the collective nouns different individuals within a big group. The dual existence of *it* and *they* with collective nouns in the CC is reasonable, and the occurrence of both personal pronouns with collective nouns complies with the ultimate goal of Gast et al. (2015)’s study.

### 6.3.3.2 Shifts to plural from singular forms and shifts to singular from plural forms in Chinese

We have also encountered shifts to plural forms from singular forms: *wǒmen* (*we*) for *wǒ* (*I*), and *tāmen* (*3pl*) for *tā* (*3sg*) in spoken Chinese, and *tāmen* 他们(*they*) for *tā* 他(*he*), *tāmen* 他们(*they*) for *tā* 她(*she*) and *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) for *tā* 她(*she*) in the written transcripts. There are also shifts to singular from plural forms: *nǐ* (*you sg.*) for *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) for *tāmen* (*3pl*) in the spoken form, which is represented as *tā* 他(*he*) for *tāmen* 他们(*they*) in the transcripts. Can we apply Gast et al. (2015)’s approach to these shifts?

To answer this question, we need to consider whether *wǒmen* (*we*) and *tāmen* (*3pl*) still have plural reference in shifts to plural from singular forms, and whether *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) still have singular reference in shifts to singular from plural forms. This thesis may not be able to apply Gast et al. (2015)’s approach to these shifts as a first attempt, but it is worth more investigation in the future.

In the later subsections, shifts to plural from singular forms are discussed separately from shifts to singular from plural forms, as the separation can be beneficial to compare with the findings in the NZE sample. Additionally, shifts to plural from singular personal pronouns in Chinese can be examined from the perspective of cultural norms.

### 6.3.3.3 Personification

The personification, namely, *tā* 她(*she*) for countries in written Chinese, *he* for animal species and *she* for inanimates in NZE, is a completely different usage compared to typical non-canonical pronoun uses such as generic use. However, it does make us ponder, are *tā* 她(*she*), *he* and *she* still referring to the same references in personification as in their original deictic personal uses? Why do I even classify personification into non-canonical use in this study?

It might be easier to look first at the use of *he* for species since animal species also have a gender distinction. If the animal is male by itself, *he* in the use of *he* for a species is not in opposition to Gast et al. (2015)'s claim at all, as *he* still refers to a male in the use. However, for the use of *she* for inanimates and *tā* 她(*she*) for countries, things will get a bit more complicated. The occurrence of such uses may depend on how we perceive and conceptualise our world. In some people's eyes, inanimate objects like truck are more feminine-like, and their country land is like their caring mother. In a later subsection, we will discuss the differences between the uses of personification between NZE and written Chinese from the perspective of language properties.

### 6.3.4 Grammaticalisation

The grammaticalised usages identified in the two corpora, i.e., *you* and *your* in existentials in NZE, and discourse markers *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) in Chinese, are also worth mentioning. It hardly seems possible to apply Gast et al. (2015)'s approach to the explanation of these three usages which are chiefly driven by grammaticalisation.

Grammaticalisation is a conceptualisation process in which 'lexical items become grammatical formants' (Smith 2011, p. 369), and can be expressed by the so-called 'cline of grammaticality': content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix (Hopper & Traugott 2003, p. 7). Lehmann (1995) proposed several 'parameters' of grammaticalisation, and one of these parameters that has drawn the most attention is morphological degeneration. Morphological degeneration consists of phonological reduction as well as semantic reduction, which involves semantic generalisation, bleaching, reduction and erosion (Smith 2011, p. 370). Pragmatic strengthening, however, may also impact the process of grammaticalisation (cf. Traugott 1989; Hopper & Traugott 2003). Take English modal 'must' as an example. 'Must' was originally a full verb. It developed into a maker of deontic modality in the sentences like 'He must move his car at once', which expresses ability, necessity and obligation, and later it became a marker of epistemic modality in sentences like 'It must be 100 degrees in here', expressing the speaker's certainty. The alternation of the meaning of

‘must’ lingers on the speaker’s personal evaluation. (Smith 2011, p. 371)

Reanalysis, analogy and frequency are important to the process of grammaticalisation. Reanalysis is ‘the change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation’ (Langacker 1977, p. 58). It is regarded as the first step towards grammaticalisation (Smith 2011, p. 371-372). Take ‘be going to’ as an example. Due to reanalysis, the syntactic boundary between ‘going’ and ‘to’ disappeared, which leaves open the possibility of fusion. Ultimately ‘be going to’ can be phonetically realised as ‘gonna’ (Smith 2011, p. 371). As another example, both analogy and frequency motivated the spread of English Perfect ‘have’ in semantic/syntactic contexts at the cost of ‘be’. Analogy caused ‘have’ to win over ‘be’ over time by way of specialising. The higher type frequency of ‘have’ (i.e., can occur with more different types of verbs) also helped it to spread. By the end, ‘have’ was grammaticalised to be used with all other verbs (Smith 2011, p. 372-373).

*Nǐ* (you sg.) and *tā* (3sg) in discourse marker use lost their fundamental function of a personal pronoun. Did reanalysis, or analogy, or frequency act importantly in their grammaticalisations? Did *you* and *your* in existentials undergo the same grammaticalisation process as the discourse markers *nǐ* (you sg.) and *tā* (3sg). *You* and *your* in existentials in NZE, namely ‘you have’ and ‘you’ve got your’ constructions, can be paraphrased as ‘there be’ in the sentences. In these contexts, *you* and *your* have wholly lost their deictic meanings semantically. Was there any semantic reduction going on under the assistance of pragmatic strengthening? I will discuss some of these questions more in a later subsection.

The discussion in subsections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 has showed us that not all non-canonical uses can be confidently explained by or absolutely fit into Gast et al. (2015)’s approach. For those that can not, we will consider two other perspectives: language properties and cultural norms.

## **6.4 Accounting for the differences between NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses**

In this section, language properties and cultural norms are prioritised to account for the different but interesting non-canonical uses attested separately in NZE and Chinese. I will draw on language properties mainly to explain generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*), *it/they* with collective nouns in comparison with shifts to singular from plural forms in Chinese, unisex uses in both NZE and Chinese, personification and grammaticalisation. Cultural norms will be employed to show why shifts to plural from singular forms are frequently used among Chinese speakers in the BJKY sample but not in the CC.

## 6.4.1 Language properties

### 6.4.1.1 Generic *n ĭ* (honorific you sg.)

The second person in English originally had a number (singular vs. plural) contrast in second person pronouns. The taking over of both singular and plural forms of present-day *you* is historical. *You* was a 2*pl* form in the late Middle English, then gradually became a neutral 2*sg* form in Early Modern English, and eventually came to be used for both singular and plural in all contexts (formally or informally) (cf. Lass 1999, p. 146-155). However, in present-day English, there is no honorific form of the second person pronoun, whereas in modern Chinese, it not only has singular and plural second person pronouns but also an honorific form. Different language properties in terms of the second person pronoun system make the occurrence of Chinese generic *n ĭ* (honorific you sg.) less unexpected.

### 6.4.1.2 *It/they* with collective nouns vs. shifts to singular from plural forms

In my CC sample data, both singular *it* and plural *they* were attested to co-occur with collective nouns, and the verbs after the collective nouns in both cases tend to be in singular forms. However, the frequency of *they* (13/32 speakers) co-occurring with collective nouns is slightly higher than *it* (8/32 speakers), which ties in with Corbett (2006, p. 207; also cf. Corbett 1979) and Vantellini (2003, p. 49)'s suggestions that personal pronouns are more sensitive to notional concord (semantic agreement) than grammatical concord (syntactic agreement) in most cases.

Chinese verbs do not have any number agreement, but there is still a distinction between singular and plural forms of personal pronouns. This is reflected in the occurrence of the shifts to singular *nĭ* (you sg.) and *tā* (3sg) from plural *nĭmen* (you pl.) and *tāmen* (3pl) respectively, which are worth elaborating on in more detail.

Zhang (1995a, p. 90) suggested that *nĭ* (you sg.) in shift use from *nĭmen* (you pl.) is actually indicating a collective group consisting of many people instead of an individual in the group. Likewise, Nie (1959, p. 31) claimed that when treating many people as a whole, Chinese people will use the singular forms *wǒ* (I), *nĭ* (you sg.) and *tā* 他(*he*) to replace the plural counterparts. One of the instances provided by Nie (1959) to exemplify this argument is similar to one token from my BJKY sample data, which involves a quantifier ‘*bāng* 帮(bunch)’, and *tā* 他(*he*) was employed by the transcriber to refer to a bunch 帮(*bāng*) of people. Moreover, *nĭ* (you sg.) was used by a speaker in the shift from *nĭmen* (you pl.) in the BJKY sample when the speaker more likely treated the ‘dancing group’ as one unit instead of a collection of individuals in a unit.

Interestingly, Nie (1959) and Sun (1981) both agreed that the uses of *nĭ* (you sg.) in place of *nĭmen* (you pl.) and *tā* (3sg) replacing *tāmen* (3pl) are common in spoken Chinese, and that these uses contain a sense of disdain. However, the speakers in my

BJKY sample data did not explicitly show any disrespect or contempt when they chose the singular *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) to refer to a collective group of people.

Language properties may lead languages to have different ways of representing collective concepts across languages. Chinese may not be able to change the external forms of verbs, but can still use pronoun forms to achieve similar outcomes. Using singular personal pronouns such as *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) to refer to the plural collective referents might be one way to go, even though the shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) and the shift to *tā* (*3sg*) from *tāmen* (*3pl*) in my BJKY sample data are relatively rare when compared to the shifts to plural forms from singular forms. In NZE, on the other hand, the realisation of referring to collective referents (nouns) can be achieved via alternations in the forms of verbs as well as in pronouns, as seen in my CC sample.

#### 6.4.1.3 Unisex *he* & *they* vs. *tā* (*3sg*) in spoken and written Chinese

The unisex uses of third person pronouns in Chinese and NZE also relate to various language properties held by different languages. The different third person pronoun systems in NZE and Chinese result in different unisex uses attested in the two oral corpora. In spoken English, there is a gender distinction between singular third person pronouns (*he* vs *she* vs *it*), but no gender distinction in the third person plural (*they*); whereas in spoken Chinese, there is no gender distinction in either the third singular or the third plural personal pronouns. The singular forms are all pronounced *tā* (*3sg*), and the plural forms are all pronounced *tāmen* (*3pl*).

When it comes to third person pronouns, the plight for English speakers is gender selection, i.e., to pick one gender over the other. When it is impossible to do so, some speakers alternatively opt for *they*. In the CC sample, both unisex *he* and unisex *they* were attested. The identification of unisex use of *he* in the NZE data at least indicates that some English speakers are willing to favour *he* instead of *she* or *they*, although the gender of the corresponding nominal subjects is unspecified in the context. Some speakers made an alternate choice of *they*, especially when the referents were indefinite such as ‘someone’, ‘anyone’ or ‘everyone’.

In contrast, Chinese speakers do not have to struggle with which gendered personal pronoun they have to choose, as there are no gender distinctions in the pronunciations of third singular and plural personal pronouns. However, both unisex *tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*) occur in the transcripts of the BJKY sample, and the preference for one third person pronoun over the other seems to be more dependent on the transcribers themselves.

Liu (1993) pointed out that the trichotomy of *tā* 他(*he*), *tā* 她(*she*) and *tā* 它(*it*) in modern written Chinese is a comparatively recent innovation. The three different gendered personal pronouns all came from the epicene pronoun *tā* (*3sg*). The divergence from one common gendered pronoun led to some drawbacks (Liu 1993, p. 22): (a) it is not in line with the general law of homonyms, i.e., the same pronunciation was artificially divided into three different written forms of third

personal pronouns, which might lead people to articulate ambiguous expressions such as ‘*tā* loves *tā*’. (b) it is unreasonable to differentiate one epicene third person pronoun into three in the written forms. *Tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*) represent men and women respectively, but *tā* 他(*he*) is also able to refer to both genders. The dual characteristic of *tā* 他(*he*) is the source of the logic chaos. (c) people have not yet established a strong psychological foundation for the trichotomy of the three third personal pronouns to date after it has existed for over half a century.

Since both *tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*) are pronounced the same, we can not tell whether the third person pronoun shown in the BJKY transcripts really reflects the speaker’s original intention. What we can state is that the transcribers in my BJKY sample tend to have a strong bias towards *tā* 他(*he*) (25/32 speakers) over *tā* 她(*she*) (2/32 speakers) in terms of the frequency. *Tā* 他(*he*) can not only refer to the singular entity such as an ordinary worker or the director of internal medicine, but also plural entities such as farmers or university students, whereas *tā* 她(*she*) seems to purely refer to single individuals such as formal teacher or ticket officer.

#### 6.4.1.4 Personification

It is a common phenomenon to adopt the third female *tā* 她(*she*) to refer to the motherland in written Chinese (Zhang 1995a, p. 89). Among rhetoricians, this is actually treated as ‘personification’, a rhetorical technique, where things and objects are described and anthropomorphised as humans. In the BJKY, there were instances where the transcriber employed the female *tā* 她(*she*) to refer to the motherland China. Note again that there is no pronunciation distinction between three different gendered *tā* (3sg) in spoken Chinese, it is more the transcriber’s choice to adopt the female *tā* (3sg) when referring to their own country.

In my NZE sample, no instances have been found using personal pronouns to refer to countries, but the CC corpus data do provide evidence for the use of *he* for animal species and *she/her* for inanimate objects, which are treated as non-canonical in the present study. In addition, Pawley (2004, p. 616) suggested that ‘in Australian Vernacular English (AusVE), *he* or *she* (or an accusative or genitive variant) is used not only to refer to inanimate things such as trees, axes, houses, roads, rain, jobs and situation, but also to living creatures of unknown sex, such as birds, fish and mosquitoes’. Unfortunately, many of the inanimate referents reported for AusVE were missing in my NZE sample data.

Since there is no gender distinction in spoken *tā* (3sg) in Chinese, the main difference in terms of gender is that English speakers have to choose, whereas Chinese speakers only have *tā* (3sg) to refer to third singular entities of any gender, which in turn may lead to the very distinct uses of the three gendered personal pronouns between NZE and Chinese even when referring to non-human creatures or inanimate referents.

Although some personification has been more customarily used by English speakers such as the use of *she* for inanimate object boat, both English and Chinese

poets and writers have described the sun as more masculine (Chen 2004, p. 42; cf. Zi 1984). Similar to Chinese writers, English writers have also endowed Mother Nature and Mother Earth with the feature of femininity (Chen 2004, p. 42). Chen (2004) concluded that personification is not only a rhetorical technique, but also reflects a universal way of human thinking and cognition (p. 43). However, humans may differ in their ways of conceptualising the world, which will be discussed further in Section 7.4.3.

#### 6.4.1.5 Grammaticalisation

The personal pronouns *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) have already been documented to have lost their inherent referential connotations in some contexts (Shen 1993) and were even claimed to have become discourse markers (Guo 2008a; Huang 2012) in written and spoken Chinese. *Nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* (*3sg*) did not originally function as discourse markers, but rather are undergoing the gradual process of grammaticalisation or tokenisation (Huang 2012).

Guo (2008a) indicated that *nǐ* (*you sg.*) can be used as a discourse marker in spoken Beijing vernacular, and can have the functions of turn taking in the conversation, discourse connection and discourse adjustment when being used as a discourse marker, but she did not investigate the grammaticalisation process in which *nǐ* (*you sg.*) becomes a discourse marker.

Huang (2012) did not either. She investigated instead the tokenisation of discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*) in her thesis. Huang (2012, p. 47) argued that *tā* 他(*he*) underwent three different stages to finally become a discourse marker:

From the original meaning (notional words addressing a third person) → to cognitive meaning (function words providing connection (between the context) and expressing mood) → to textual meaning (discourse markers, namely turning into an attached form)

From the first to second stage, *tā* 他(*he*) acquired cognitive meaning from the source structure ‘*tā* 他 + *zhè* 这(*ge* 个)/*nà* 那(*ge* 个) (he + this/that)’, and later when the quantifier ‘*ge* 个’ in ‘*zhè* (个)/*nà* (个) (this/that)’ dropped, *tā* 他(*he*) gradually combined with ‘*zhè* 这/*nà* 那’, and lost its referential function yet acquired the indicative function. Progressively, ‘*zhè* 这/*nà* 那’ also dropped, so that *tā* 他(*he*) in terms of its cognitive meaning was equivalent to ‘*zhè* 这(*ge* 个) (this)’ or ‘*nà* 那(*ge* 个) (that)’. Eventually, *tā* 他(*he*) came to be able to make up parenthesis such as ‘*tā* 他 *zhè* 这(*nà* 那) er 儿 (he here (there))’ or ‘*tā* 他 *nà* 那 *ge* 个 (he that)’ to introduce topics. (cf. Huang 2012, p. 47-48)

In the last stages from cognitive meaning to textual meaning, double-object structures (such as in (210) and (211)) contribute to *tā* 他(*he*)’s transformation to acquire textual meaning.

(210) Hē      tā      gè      tòngkuài  
 喝      他      个      痛快  
 Drink    he    quantifier    joyful (Huang 2012, p. 48)

(211) Shuì    tā    shí tiān    shíyè  
 睡    他    十 天    十夜  
 Sleep    he    ten days    ten nights (Huang 2012, p. 49)

Huang (2012, p. 48-49) argued that the key for *tā* 他(*he*) to become a discourse marker is whether or not *tā* 他(*he*) can be omitted in these double-object structures (p. 48). If *tā* 他(*he*) can be omitted, it then becomes a discourse marker. *Tā* 他(*he*) in discourse marker use is more flexible with regard to the position it occurs in clauses (p. 49). In addition, discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*) has completely lost its referential function, and is only functioning to bring up a topic or to connect the discourse (p. 49).

In my BJKY sample transcripts, discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*) seems to occur either in double-object structures where *tā* 他(*he*) was inserted between a verb and a noun phrase (similar to (211)), or before an adjective compliment (similar to (210)). *Tā* 他(*he*) in my BJKY sample transcripts has completely lost its referential meaning in discourse marker use, and can be left out from the syntactic structure of the clause without semantically altering the meaning of the sentence. In other words, the omission will not affect the truth condition of the sentence. Pragmatically, the discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*) serves to intensify the speaker's attitudes and emotions, rather than to bring up topics or to connect the discourses as argued by Huang (2012).

One question remains as to whether the discourse marker *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *you* and *your* in existentials in NZE have undergone the same or similar grammaticalisation process as *tā* 他(*he*), as neither have been investigated in the literature yet. We can at least claim that different language properties will result in different realisations of grammaticalisation. We may fail to find any non-referential *you* in 'you have' and 'you've got your' constructions in Chinese, because Chinese has different ways to represent existence.

Jin (1996, p. 12) indicated that the typical existential sentence in Chinese is structured as 'locative words + existential verbs + existential subjects', as exemplified in (212).

(212) Guōli      zhǔzhe      hún tún  
 锅里      煮 着      馄饨  
 Pot inside    boiling    wontons  
 Wontons are boiling in the pot. (Jin 1996, p. 12)

Jin (1996) suggested that after translating more and more English language and literature workpieces in China, Chinese existential sentence structure was impacted. Preposition 'zài 在(in/at)' can be added in the front of the location words. Structure of 'zài 在(in/at) + locative words + existential verbs + existential subjects' gradually

became common in modern Chinese (mainly in written) as well (p. 13). No matter which structure, it is still unlikely to fit any personal pronoun in either of these two existential structures.

With respect to ‘you have’ and ‘you’ve got your’ structures in NZE, as seen in example (213) from Chapter 4, they will be restructured as ‘a smaller school has a very strong school spirit’ and ‘Burnside has divisional allegiance’ in Chinese.

(213) exactly. But it doesn’t matter I suppose though.

The only difference that you would notice at a smaller school **you** would **have** a very strong school spirit. <mmm> which Burnside <mmm> just can’t have because **you’ve got your** divisional. < > allegiance. Which division were you in? (CC, fop95-10)

## 6.4.2 Cultural norms

Existing cross-linguistic research indicates that the use of first singular *I* is related to ‘the independent/individualist self’, while the use of first plural *we* is related to ‘the interdependent/collectivist self’, and a greater relative use of *I* than *we* in written texts goes along with a higher degree of cultural-level individualism (Uz 2014, p. 1671).

‘Collectivism<sup>36</sup>’ emphasises the social nature of people. It advocates for collective interests taking priority, with an individual’s well-being or interest is based on that of the group. An individual is seen as being subordinate to a social collectivity such as a state, a nation etc. In collectivist societies, people are incorporated into strong and cohesive in-groups, and value their in-group as a whole. ‘Individualism<sup>37</sup>’, on the contrary, emphasises the moral worth of the individual in the group. It advocates that the interests of the individual should be above the interests of group. Individuals should have the right to freedom and self-realisation.

It is well known that China is a more collectivist country, while NZ is more individualised. This cultural difference might also be reflected in language use. For instance, compared to English speakers, Chinese speakers are more likely to opt for plural personal pronouns instead of singular forms in written and spoken Chinese.

Zou (2008), Li (2008) and Tu (2011) consensually argued that the usage frequency of the first person plural is overwhelmingly higher than the first person singular in Chinese academic writing, compared to English academic writing, and they all suggested that one of the reasons is cultural difference, i.e., English speaking countries advocate individualism while china advocates collectivism. Lu (2007) suggested that under the influence of collectivism, Chinese university students whose major is not English tend to use plural subject pronouns in their essay writing in the National College English Test Band 4 (CET4) and Band 6 (CET6); whereas British

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<sup>36</sup> The brief explanation of ‘collectivism’ here is drawn from Encyclopedia Britannica (see <https://www.britannica.com/topic/collectivism>) and Hofstede (2001, p. 211 & 225).

<sup>37</sup> The brief explanation of ‘individualism’ here is drawn from Encyclopedia Britannica (see <https://www.britannica.com/topic/individualism>) and Wood (1972, p. 6-7).

and American university students are more likely to use singular subject pronouns in their essay writing under the influence of individualism.

In fact, this is not only restricted to written language, it can also apply to my oral sample data. I found that the frequency of using *wōmen* (*we/our*) instead of *wǒ* (*I/my*) by the Chinese speakers in the BJKY is quite high (23/32 speakers), especially when they discuss their families, jobs or friends. This finding seems to fit in well with China's comparatively low score on Hofstede et al. (2010)'s individualism index. Interestingly, Chinese speakers in the BJKY also prefer third plural *tāmen* (*3pl*) over third singular *tā* (*3sg*) in similar contexts where the speakers talk about their families and jobs.

I argue that shifts to plural personal pronouns (*wōmen* (*we/our*), *tāmen* 他们 (*they/their*) and *tāmen* 她们 (*she pl./their*)) from their singular counterparts (*wǒ* (*I/my*), *tā* 他 (*he/his*) and *tā* 她 (*she/her*)) among the Chinese speakers in the transcripts of my BJKY sample data are associated with Chinese cultural norms. Liu (2014) mentioned that the fundamental spirits of Chinese culture are harmony and moderation<sup>38</sup>. Chinese culture treats each individual as a part of the group. The value of individuals exists because of the group and is reflected by the group (p. 68). Choosing *wōmen* (*we/our*) to express personal thoughts and opinions, as if the speaker hides themselves among the collective group, is another way to show their modesty, which is seen as a virtue in Chinese culture (Yan 2012, p. 44; also cf. Jiang & Zhang 1981; Liu 2014). Similarly, adopting plural third person pronouns instead of the singular counterparts is also a way of demonstrating the one-in-group thinking, which is deeply entrenched in Chinese people's minds. As Adam Lam (p.c.) pointed out, the use of plural pronoun forms in this context also reflects the recognition that 'one person does not possess and can not form a family' and 'schools, factories and work units are also publicly/state/commonly owned'. Similarly, when Chinese speakers utter 'wōmen nà kǒuzi 我们那口子 (1pl that half)', it is better understood as 'the other half of us' (i.e., *wōmen* refers to the speaker and speaker's spouse).<sup>39</sup>

## 6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I firstly compared and contrasted the non-canonical pronoun uses between NZE and Chinese attested in the previous two chapters by types. Both the NZE and the Chinese speakers in my sample were found to have generic uses including generic *we/wōmen* (*we*), generic *you/nǐ* (*you sg.*), and shifts to *you/nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *I/wǒ* (*I*) and *we/wōmen* (*we*). Generic uses of *wǒ* (*I*), *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) and *tā* 他 (*he*) were only found in the Chinese sample. Unisex uses of *he/tā* 他 (*he*) were observed in both NZE and in the Chinese transcripts. The NZE sample contained unisex uses of *they*, whereas the Chinese transcripts included unisex *tā* 她 (*she*). The

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<sup>38</sup> 'Moderation' is shown as '中庸' in the original paper in Liu (2014). '中庸' is a philosophy concept from Confucius. It can be interpreted as treating people or viewing things in an impartial attitude, i.e., neither being inactive nor aggressive. (Modern Chinese Dictionary 2005, p. 1765)

<sup>39</sup> Thanks to my second supervisor Dr Adam Lam who drew my attention to this.

study also revealed differences in NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses. While the Chinese non-canonical uses included shifts to plural from singular personal pronouns and shifts to singular from plural personal pronouns, neither of these two types of shift uses were attested in the NZE sample. In NZE, both *it* and *they* occurred with collective nouns, and there were instances of *he/she* for animal species and inanimates. In Chinese, only the use of *tā* 她 (*she*) for countries was attested. Particularly interesting differences between NZE and Chinese are found in non-canonical uses of pronouns as discourse markers. NZE featured *you* and *your* in existentials, and Chinese has *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* 他 (*he*) as discourse particles.

I demonstrated how the approach of Gast et al. (2015) can be applied to all the generic and shift uses attested in the English sample, and then extended their approach to generic and shift uses (involving generality) in Chinese. The formulation of ‘model shift’ proposed by Gast et al. (2015) was presented, as well as the theory behind the model shift - Simulation Theory. The model shift was utilised by Gast et al. (2015) to illustrate simulated types of impersonal *you*. I modified Gast et al. (2015)’s model shift schema for the purpose of interpreting not only generic *you* (simulated), but also the shifts to *you* from *I* and *we* in my NZE sample data. The modified model shift schema was labelled ‘Simulation Schema’ to clearly distinguish it from Gast et al. (2015)’s unnamed schema for valid generic *you*, which I have termed ‘Valid Schema’. I applied the Valid Schema to the interpretation of valid generic *you* and generic *we* in my NZE sample, and I illustrated how the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema can be extended to the explanation of generic and shift uses (involving generality) in Chinese. Generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*), shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*), generic *wǒmen* (*we*) and generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) were easy to capture with the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema developed for English. However, I had to make slight modifications to the two schemas in order to account for generic *wǒ* (*I*) and generic *tā* 他 (*he*). The question as to whether the approach of Gast et al. (2015) could be applied to non-canonical uses other than generic and shift uses (involving generality) in NZE and Chinese remains open (see Section 7.4.3 for more discussion).

The differences between NZE and Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses were addressed from the perspective of language properties and cultural factors in this study. Differences in language properties were argued to be a factor in the occurrence of generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*), *it/they* with collective nouns in contrast with the shifts to singular from plural forms in Chinese, different unisex uses in NZE and Chinese, personification, and grammaticalisation of discourse particles. We only find honorific generic forms in Chinese, because present-day English does not have honorific forms of personal pronouns. The uses of *it/they* with collective nouns in NZE and the shifts to singular from plural personal pronouns in Chinese could both be seen to relate to whether the speaker conceived of the referents as ‘a collection of individuals’ (plural *they*) or ‘a group that forms a unit’ (singular *it*). Different unisex uses identified in NZE and Chinese might be attributed to the fact that there is no gender distinction in either the third person singular or the third person plural pronouns in spoken Chinese, whereas NZE speakers face the dilemma of gender selection in the third person singular. Different ways of showing personification

resulted in the different non-canonical uses of third singular pronouns in NZE and Chinese. *Tā* 她(*she*) is conventionally used to refer to the motherland in China, and *she* has been reported to refer to inanimate objects in previous studies of varieties of English. In addition, language properties may also have attributed to different grammaticalisation patterns. *You* and *your* in English existentials may have no direct counterpart in Chinese because Chinese and English have very different ways of expressing existence. The shifts to plural forms from singular forms, namely the shift to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*), the shifts to *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from *tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*), and the shift to *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) from *tā* 她(*she*), were accounted for in terms of cultural norms. The high frequency of using plural instead of singular forms by Chinese speakers when they discussed their families or jobs was attributed to the more collectivist culture in Chinese society, when compared to the more individualist culture in NZ society.

## Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary

This thesis investigated the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in NZE and Chinese by looking at two oral corpora - the Canterbury Corpus and the Beijing Oral Corpus. The main findings of this study are summarised as follows.

The types of non-canonical uses attested in this study include generic use, shift use, unisex use, pronominal concord with collective nouns, personification, and uses of pronouns as discourse particles. Uses attested in both NZE and Chinese include generic *we/wōmen* (*we*), generic *you/nǐ* (*you sg.*), shifts to *you/nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *I/wǒ* (*I*) and *we/wōmen* (*we*) and unisex *he/tā* 他(*he*). Generic *wǒ* (*I*), generic *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*), generic *tā* 他(*he*), unisex *tā* 她(*she*), shifts to plural from singular personal pronouns, shifts to singular from plural pronouns, *tā* 她(*she*) for countries and discourse marker uses of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* 他(*he*) were only attested in my Chinese sample. By contrast, only my NZE sample contained unisex *they*, the alternation between *it* & *they* with collective nouns, *he* for animal species, *she* for inanimates, and *you* and *your* in existentials.

With regard to the re-categorisation of generic uses and shift uses involving generality in NZE and Chinese according to the taxonomy of Gast et al. (2015), generic *wǒ* (*I*) and generic *you/nǐ* (*you sg.*) can be re-classified into valid, category simulated and participant simulated types. Generic *we/wōmen* (*we*) and generic *tā* 他(*he*) seem to be found only in the valid type, while the attested shifts to *you/nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *I/wǒ* (*I*) and *we/wōmen* (*we*), and generic *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*) can all be re-categorised into the participant simulated type.

One of the contributions made by this study was the modification of the ‘model shift’ argued by Gast et al. (2015), which was referred to as ‘Simulation Schema’ in this study. I successfully applied this modified Simulation Schema to the interpretation of not only the generic *you* in NZE, but also the shift to *you* from *I* and *we*. I also applied Gast et al. (2015)’s diagram for valid uses of *you* (referred to as ‘Valid Schema’ in this study) to generic *we* in NZE. Moreover, I extended the Simulation Schema and Valid Schema to the generic uses of *wōmen* (*we*), *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *n ń* (*honorific you sg.*), and shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and *wōmen* (*we*) in Chinese. I also demonstrated that the Simulation Schema and Valid Schema could be subtly altered to capture the interpretation of generic *wǒ* (*I*) and generic *tā* 他(*he*) in Chinese.

### 7.2 Discussion

In this section, I return to the two research questions set out in the introduction

chapter of this thesis, and discuss the results of the present study in relation to the two research questions.

The first question is: will there be similarities between non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE and Chinese? We expect the similarities can be explained from pragmatic or cognitive perspectives, as firstly ‘there are commonalities in the ways humans experience and perceive the world and in the ways humans think and use the language’ (Evans & Green 2006, p. 54), and there will be ‘linguistic universals’ across languages where some common patterns are being shared. Secondly, context is crucial to the occurrence of non-canonical pronoun uses, and pragmatic factors such as empathy, authority and solidarity are also contributors to some of the non-canonical usages. In this study, we have identified many similarities in non-canonical uses between NZE and Chinese, namely, generic *wē/wǒmen* (*we*), generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*), shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wē/wǒmen* (*we*). These analogous patterns of non-canonical pronoun use in NZE and Chinese can be explained by the unified pragmatic schemas (Valid Schema and Simulation Schema) based on models of Gast et al. (2015). Furthermore, the pragmatic schemas can also be expanded to elaborate some other generic and shift uses (involving generality) as found in my BJKY sample, such as generic *wǒ* (*I*), generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) and generic *tā* (*3sg*).

The question arises whether the Valid and Simulation Schemas can be applied to personal pronoun in languages other than English and Chinese. Can Gast et al. (2015)’s approach extend to languages in general? Are their models more likely to apply to second person in particular? I have no answers to these questions so far. However, Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) claimed that the impersonal use of second person pronoun is widespread in languages, but it is ‘only restricted to these languages that have small, closed pronoun sets such as English, Chinese, French, German, Gulf Arabic, Modern Hebrew, Hindu-Urdu, Italian and Persian (Farsi), and excluding languages that lack a defined closed set of personal pronoun such as Japanese and Korean’ (p. 753-755). This may at least help us predict that Gast et al. (2015)’s approach can be employed to the impersonal use of second person pronoun in languages that have small closed personal pronoun sets such as English and Chinese. However, we are still uncertain whether the approach can be extended to all personal pronouns. There may be other factors involved in the extension. For instance, the culture practice, just like the shifts to plural forms from singular personal pronouns (the shift to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*), shift to *tāmen*他们(*they*) from *tā*他(*he*), shift to *tāmen*她们(*they*) from *tā*她(*she*) and the shift to *tāmen*她们(*she pl.*) from *tā*她(*she*) in Chinese, which is arguably more influenced by the collective culture immersion in the community of Chinese speakers in this thesis.

The second question is: will there be differences in non-canonical pronoun use, as NZE and Chinese are totally different languages belonging to two different language families? We might expect the differences to potentially be due to aspects of cultural difference (cultural norms and customs) and/or language properties. In this study, we also distinguished different non-canonical pronouns uses between NZE and Chinese, which include different unisex uses of the third person pronouns, the shifts to the

plural forms of personal pronouns from their singular counterparts and vice versa in Chinese, *it* and *they* with collective nouns in NZE, different personifications, and different discourse particle uses. All these different non-canonical uses found between NZE and Chinese can be attributed to their intrinsic language properties or different cultural norms developed and entrenched gradually in the different societies of New Zealand and China.

Apart from the above, there are three more issues I discuss in this section. One compares the current findings of non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE and Chinese to the findings in the existing literature (Section 7.2.1). For NZE, I specifically ask how the non-canonical uses in NZE attested in this study compare with the other varieties of English worldwide. The second is to compare the approach of Gast et al. (2015) to others discussed in the literature (Section 7.2.2). The last issue is: can non-canonical pronoun uses be viewed the same as canonical uses to some extent? (see Section 7.2.3)

### 7.2.1 Comparing the findings with the existing literature

The non-canonical uses of personal pronouns found in my CC sample are very similar to uses reported for other varieties of English.

The generic uses of *we* and *you* fit in with Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990)'s observations about impersonal uses of English personal pronouns, with a large number of occurrences of generic *you* in my spoken NZE sample, used by 29 out of the 32 selected speakers. However, the 'royal *we*', 'authorial *we*' and 'editorial *we*' discussed in the literature chapter were not found in this study, which may be due to the genre of the data used in this study. I will return to this in Section 7.4.1. Moreover, the use of *we* for *you* in baby-talk or 'doctor *we*' were also not attested, neither did the vague *we* discussed in Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990), where *we* refers to unspecified individuals.

In my CC sample, I have not only found evidence for a shift to *you* from *I* (cf. Stirling & Manderson 2011), but also for a shift to *you* from *we*, which does not seem to have been noted in the existing work on English non-canonical pronoun uses.

Unisex *they* is more likely to co-occur with indefinite pronouns such as 'someone', 'anyone' or 'everyone' in the CC, which is consistent with Holmes (1998)'s suggestion that *they* is the default pronominalisation in such a context. Additionally, this study provides some evidence that unisex *they* is favoured over *he* in spoken NZE, with tokens of unisex *they* marginally outnumbering unisex *he* (8:5), which can be seen to support Zanetti (1991, p. 31)'s argument that singular *they* is particularly likely to occur in spoken NZE. Wales (1995, p. 126) pointed out that the unisex use of *they* has been well established in informal usage for centuries although conservative grammarians regarded it as grammatically incorrect. The vague *they* proposed by Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) was not found in this study.

The corpus data also provide some evidence for the use of *she/her* for inanimate referents in NZE suggested by Quinn (2013). Pawley (2004, p. 616) suggested that 'in

Australian Vernacular English (AusVE), *he* or *she* (or an accusative or genitive variant) is used not only to refer to inanimate things such as trees, axes, houses, roads, rain, jobs and situation, but also to living creatures of unknown gender, such as birds, fish and mosquitoes'. Some of the inanimate referents reported for AusVE were missing in my sample data from the CC corpus, but I did find one clear instance of *he* being used to refer to a species of animal in my sample.

With respect to the use of personal pronouns with collective nouns, there seems to be a growing tendency that American English (AmE) speakers use the singular (grammatical) concord with most collective nouns, while British English (BrE) speakers most frequently use the plural (notional) concord (Hundt 2009). Both the singular *it* and the plural *they* co-occur with collective nouns in my CC sample. According to the frequency of *it* (8/32 speakers) and *they* (13/32 speakers) in the sample, it is difficult to say whether the favoured pronominal concord with collective nouns in NZE is plural or singular, which in turn supports Hundt (2009, p. 218)'s observation that English varieties such as NZE and Australian English (AusE) lie somewhere between AmE and BrE in terms of the pronominal concord with collective nouns.

Last but not least, the existential constructions involving 'you have' and 'you've got your' do not seem to feature in the existing work on English non-canonical pronoun uses, even though there is evidence that those constructions also occur in other varieties of English, such as AmE<sup>40</sup>.

Now turning to the non-canonical uses of Chinese personal pronouns identified in the BJKY sample in comparison with the existing literature. I found evidence for the generic use of *wǒ* (*I*), *wǒmen* (*we*), *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* 他(*he*), which had been documented in the literature. Generic use of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in this study was in line with the observation of Guo (2008b), who argued that *nǐ* (*you sg.*) can be used generically to refer to anybody in the Beijing vernacular. The shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *wǒ* (*I*) and *wǒmen* (*we*) proposed by Wang (1995) were pure shifts with no generality involved, however, the two shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) found in this study involved a generalisation effect.

The pure shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) identified in this study is the shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*). The low frequency of the shift to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) from *nǐmen* (*you pl.*) in the BJKY sample (1/32 speakers) seems to contradict Zhang (2001)'s claim that the practice of using the singular form to replace the plural form occurred regularly in the Chinese second person pronouns (p. 32). The other example of shifting to singular from plural forms is the shift to *tā* 他(*he*) from *tāmen* 他们(*they*), which was similar to what had been reported by Ai (2003).

I also found shifts to *wǒmen* (*we*) from *wǒ* (*I*), to *tāmen* 他们(*they*) from *tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*), and to *tāmen* 她们(*she pl.*) from *tā* 她(*she*), which altogether were grouped into the shifts to plural from singular forms in the present study. These shifts

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<sup>40</sup> My supervisor Dr Heidi Quinn has pointed out that the existential 'you've got your' construction can be found in some online resources, such as the video at <http://www.northcentralohio.com/national-news/nationalsingle.asp?story=68141>. In this video, a CNN presenter is showing the viewers what a future space home looks like. In the transcript below the video, some instances of the 'you've got your' construction can be identified.

had not been paid sufficient attention in the prior studies. A contribution of the current study is that these shifts are linked to the cultural prominence of collectivism in Chinese society.

Likewise, previous studies had paid less attention to the unisex uses of *tā* 他(*he*) and *tā* 她(*she*), which were attested in the transcripts of my BJKY sample.

Lastly, discourse marker uses of *nǐ* (*you sg.*) and *tā* 他(*he*) were attested in the study. The discourse marker *nǐ* (*you sg.*) patterned similarly to what had suggested by Guo (2008a) and Huang (2012), i.e., *nǐ* (*you sg.*) could occur either independently in the discourse or combine with other elements to function as a combinational discourse marker. However, the discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*) seemed to be used more to indicate the speaker's attitudes or deepen the speaker's emotions than to bring up topics or connect discourses as suggested by Huang (2012).

## 7.2.2 Comparing the approach of Gast et al. (2015) to others in the literature

Gast et al. (2015)'s approach is more suitable for modelling the range of non-canonical uses identified in this study than the mental space approach in Ushie (2004). Firstly, Gast et al. (2015)'s models are better able to capture the interpretations of examples such as (214), which Ushie (2004) treats as having two different meanings (specific and non-specific), but which are treated here as shifts to *you* from *I*.

- (214) She no longer worries that renewed media attention to her childhood plight will colour people's current perceptions about her.  
"It's inescapable," she says, smiling. "Now, sometimes, I feel it's my duty to talk about it, to bring it up in class (at Berkeley).  
But when I do, all of sudden, people look at **you** differently,  
and I hate that because I don't want it to define me." (Ushie 2004, p. 259)

The pronoun *you* in (214) points to the addressee, but it is the speaker who is in the simulation source circle and was recounting her private experience to her classmates. The speaker invited the addressee to imagine being in her situation where she suffered from childhood plight. Due to the simulation effect, the addressee was included in the reference of *you*. The approach of Gast et al. (2015) offers a comparatively simple and elegant way of distinguishing and illustrating the different kinds of (generalising) non-canonical pronoun uses in my study.

Secondly, the approach of Gast et al. (2015) I adopted in this study clearly illustrates the relation between personal pronouns and their intended referents. The mental space diagram proposed by Ushie (2004), on the other hand, can not fully capture the relation between the personal pronoun and its referents, and the pronoun does not even feature in the diagram provided by Ushie (2004). Thirdly, the mental

space framework used in Ushie (2004) may not be able to explain non-canonical uses such as generic *we* in English and generic *tā* 他(*he*) in Chinese. *We* in generic use includes both the speaker and addressee, while *tā* 他(*he*) in generic use excludes both the speaker and addressee. It would be more complicated to capture these two uses in the kind of mental space diagram provided by Ushie (2004), because the addressee's space should be in parallel to the speaker's space for (valid) generic *we*, and there would presumably be no speaker or addressee spaces in the representation of generic *tā* 他(*he*).

Most of the examples that Kamio (2001) applied the theory of territory of information to are those where personal pronouns refer to indefinite and non-specific groups of people. For generic uses where the personal pronouns refer to people in general or the whole human race, the theory is less effective (cf. Kamio 2001, p. 1115-1116). Some of the indefinite, non-specific uses of personal pronouns discussed by Kamio (2001) did not qualify as non-canonical in this study.

The theory of mind discussed in Wechsler (2010) captures a natural ability (cf. Premack & Woodruff 1978) that both the speaker and addressee have. It helps the speaker and addressee correctly interpret utterances involving the first and second person pronouns with their generalising connotations. It may be able to account for the valid generic uses of pronouns. However, it is difficult to tell how it could distinguish between valid and simulated generic uses.

The previous work discussed in the literature review that employed markedness theory, subjectivity, and mental space (argued in Gan (2011)) to the interpretation of Chinese non-canonical pronoun uses did not provide any diagrammatical models in their analysis. None of the alternative approaches considered here offer a clear model of the relation between the form of pronouns and their referents.

In this study, the approach of Gast et al. (2015) was successfully extended from generic *you* to other generic uses in English as well as Chinese, such as generic *we*, shifts to *you* involving generality, generic *wǒ* (*I*), generic *wǒmen* (*we*), generic *nǐ* (*you sg.*), shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) involving generality, generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) and generic *tā* 他(*he*). What I have termed the 'Valid Schema' and the 'Simulation Schema' (= the model shift) proposed by Gast et al. (2015) are able to capture the dynamic relationship between the personal pronoun and its referents, between the personal pronoun form and generalisation effect. They are capable of interpreting not only the generic *you* use in my data, but also can be modified to explain other generic and shift uses (involving generality). However, this approach still has some remaining problems. Compared to the more variable oral corpus data examined in this study, the examples given by Gast et al. (2015) in their categorisation of impersonal *you* seemed to be simple and clear-cut. As a result, some generic uses found in the corpora can not be easily classified. For example, it is sometimes difficult to classify general statements in my data when there is not sufficient information in the context.

### 7.2.3 Are generic use and some shift uses really non-canonical?

In Gast et al (2015)'s investigation of impersonal uses of *you*, their main argument is impersonal uses of *you* should be interpreted no differently than personal uses. *You* in the impersonal uses directly links to the addressee and exhibits the same underlying semantics as *you* in the canonical uses. Gast et al (2015) suggested the impersonal uses of *you* are better not to be treated as an independent grammatical category of their own. The status of 'impersonal' is rather a function of sentential contexts and conversational conditions.

Gast et al (2015)'s argument is based on the impersonal uses of *you*. Can their main argument be applied to generic uses (generic *wǒ* (*I*), generic *wē/wǒmen* (*we*), generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) and generic *tā*(他(*he*)) and some shift uses involving genericity (shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*)) in my sample data? Should we view all of the above generic and shift uses as canonical uses? I have a bias towards Gast et al (2015)'s argument - 'the effect of generalisation is independent of the form of second person'. In other words, the second person forms do not make the sentences generalising; they just occur in the generalising sentences (Gast et al 2015, p.161). Since the forms of personal pronouns do not contribute to the generalisation effect, which is the core of generic use, all the personal pronouns (*wǒ* (*I*), *wē*, *wǒmen* (*we*), *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) and *tā*(他(*he*)) in generic uses in my sample data should be able to be interpreted the same as in personal uses in terms of grammatical category. However, we still need to be careful about the shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in my sample. Although they are on the same generalisation continuum as other generic uses in my sample, they involve different degrees of generalisation. Moreover, they involve an effect of simulation, and they are all classified as simulated uses in my study, which means they can be captured by the same Simulation Schema as the simulated generic uses. Gast et al (2015) indicated that the instances of impersonal *you* that involve an invitation to simulation can still be viewed as canonical instances of *you*, because the simulation is created 'at an interactional level (pragmatically), not at a propositional level (grammatically)' (p. 161). Therefore, the shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*) in my sample can be argued to be canonical like other generic uses.

## 7.3 Implications

As far as I am aware, no previous research has conducted any systematic investigation on the non-canonical uses of overt personal pronouns in NZE and Chinese, especially by taking a look at oral corpus data. This cross-linguistic study was launched to examine the non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE and Chinese via two oral corpora, so as to reveal the similarities and uncover the differences between the two languages. The findings have at least some contributions to the existing knowledge of the field in a theoretical and practical way, in particular to the understanding of the current research subject - non-canonical uses of overt personal pronouns in spoken NZE and

spoken Chinese.

### 7.3.1 In theoretical terms

The theoretical contribution of this thesis to the current field is four-faceted. First, not too much attention has been paid to the pragmatic approach adopted by Gast et al (2015) and their models for the illustration of the valid and simulated impersonal *you*. Even less efforts have been undertaken to apply the Valid Schema and Simulation Schema to generic *we* and shifts to *you* in spoken NZE as well as to the elaboration of generic *wǒ* (*I*), generic *wǒmen* (*we*), shifts to *nǐ* (*you sg.*), generic *nǐ* (*honorific you sg.*) and generic *tā* (*3sg*) in spoken Chinese. The thesis took an innovative step in extending the relevant pragmatic theories, in particular Valid Schema and Simulation Schema, to the explanation of generic and shift uses involving generality besides generic *you* found in the CC, and to the application of generic and shift uses involving generality identified in the BJKY.

Second, the aim of using the oral corpora in the thesis is to examine the spontaneous spoken data. Instead of the invented data with fewer contexts provided, the illustrated examples in each chapter extracted from the two oral corpora are context-abundant and are beneficial to a better understanding of the research topic at issue, as some of the non-canonical uses in the study are more context-dependent.

Third, the investigation of the non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE and Chinese can help in understanding of typological similarities and differences between two languages. NZE and Chinese are from different language families. However, they do have similar non-canonical pronoun uses. The present study will be advantageous for future research on or investigation into the distribution of personal pronouns occurring in the oral speech in NZE and Chinese. Although non-canonical uses containing generic and some shift uses involving generality can be interpreted the same as personal referential deictic uses in terms of the grammatical category, we still need to remember they are different in pragmatics. So if any empirical research regarding the quantitative corpus-based analyses of any generic and shift uses involving generality of personal pronouns (i.e., the distribution of the forms of personal pronouns in the natural discourse) is conducted in future mono-linguistically or cross-linguistically, we need to be aware of the pragmatic difference between the canonical and non-canonical uses of personal pronouns.

Fourth, the theoretical approach adopted in this study may provide insight into cross-linguistic study of the impersonal use of overt personal pronoun or second person pronoun in particular. Languages, that have similar closed pronoun system as English and Chinese, can be analysed with the same theoretical approach in investigations of impersonal pronoun use.

### 7.3.2 In practical terms

The current study may also have application for language teaching (or second language teaching) and pedagogical course design relating to personal pronouns in NZE and Chinese. In traditional language teaching classes and pedagogical textbooks, personal pronouns are normally provided with their canonical connotations only. The first or second language learner would simply acquire the basic referential deictic meaning of the personal pronouns and apply it in daily oral speech or in writing. It would be better if we can also remind the language learner of the pragmatic differences between canonical and non-canonical pronoun uses in discourse in their textbooks or language learning classes. That way, any awkwardness or misunderstanding between the interlocutors caused by non-canonical pronoun uses would potentially be mitigated in daily conversation.

## 7.4 Limitations and future research directions

In this comparative study, there are limitations. However, limitations may in turn shed light on future research. In the following, I primarily discuss the limitations regarding the corpus I selected and sample size in this study. I will also indicate the future research directions based on the limitations.

### 7.4.1 Genre of the corpus and sample size

The types of non-canonical uses I have found in this study are likely to be associated with and influenced by the genre of the recordings in my sample<sup>41</sup>.

Some non-canonical uses of *we* mentioned by Wales (1995) such as ‘royal *we*’, ‘authorial *we*’, ‘sartorial *we*’, ‘medical *we*’ and ‘sarcastic *we*’, and the generic *I* discussed by Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) were not attested in the CC sample. This is probably because these uses are more likely to occur in written texts or certain situational contexts which are beyond the scope of the interviews in the CC, where speakers recount their personal experiences, stories and views.

Likewise, some non-canonical uses such as the personification of *tā* 她(*she*) which is more salient in written Chinese, were not very frequently used in my BJKY sample. In addition, the much higher frequency of unisex *tā* 他(*he*) than unisex *tā* 她(*she*) in the BJKY transcripts may also be due to the style of the corpus I chose. The transcribers in the BJKY sample have an overall favour towards the male *tā* 他(*he*) when it comes to the third singular *tā* (3sg). If we use a written corpus, the frequency

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<sup>41</sup> I would like to thank Laurie Bauer for his feedback at the New Zealand English and English in New Zealand (NZEENZ) conference held at University of Canterbury from 8-9 June 2016, especially for drawing my attention to the link between non-canonical pronoun uses and genre.

of the three different gendered *tā* (3sg) may differ from the BJKY sample, since the forms of third person pronouns are clearly distinguishable in written Chinese.

Secondly, the absence of generic *she*, generic *it*, and more inanimate referents referred to by *she* or *he* might also be due to the speech style of the CC corpus and the comparatively small size of the research sample. Moreover, some identified types of non-canonical pronoun uses do not occur in all grammatical forms (some are missing accusative or genitive forms), which may also be because of the limited number of speakers included in the sample. Similarly, the sample size may have an impact on the number of tokens identified in the BJKY. Almost half of the identified non-canonical pronoun uses in the BJKY have relatively low frequency, and were only utilised by 1-5 speakers overall.

In order to avoid the limitations of the corpus style and the sample size on the attested non-canonical pronoun uses in terms of the types and different grammatical forms, a larger data sample or corpus spanning a wider range of genres, including written texts, could be considered in further research.

Although the existential constructions involving ‘you have’ and ‘you’ve got your’ are attested in my CC sample, it seems others have paid less attention to *you* and *your* in existentials. There is scope for further research on this usage. The frequency of discourse marker *nǐ* (*you sg.*) is fairly high in the BJKY sample (25/32 speakers), yet its grammaticalisation process is still left open for future research.

## 7.4.2 The issue of using an oral corpus

Since very few previous studies to date have focused on the systematic comparison of non-canonical pronoun uses between NZE and Chinese by using oral corpus data, my present study contributes to the existing literature especially in the examination of non-canonical pronoun uses on the basis of an oral speech dataset. However, one problematic issue of using oral corpus is the same pronunciation of third singular *tā* (3sg) and plural *tāmen* (3pl) in spoken Chinese, as they are not distinguishable in spoken. This issue can be alleviated if we adopt a written Chinese corpus. Therefore, for future research, one could either compare systematically the non-canonical pronoun uses between Chinese and other varieties of English by using written corpora, or persist in using oral corpora, but acknowledge the issue surrounding *tā* (3sg) and *tāmen* (3pl).

## 7.4.3 Theoretical interpretations

Applying relevant pragmatic theories to explore the similarities between NZE and Chinese, and explaining the differences from the perspectives of language properties and cultural norms has at least one drawback: some distinctive non-canonical uses found in either Chinese or NZE can not be merely elaborated by one theory or be

attributed to one factor. It is rather contributed to by various integrated factors. Using Valid and Simulation Schemas to illustrate the similar generic and shift uses (involving generality) in NZE and Chinese in my study is one way to proceed. As stated in Chapter 2, previous studies have attempted to explain the non-canonical uses of Chinese personal pronouns by applying theories from cognitive linguistics, i.e., subjectivity and mental space, and have applied theories such as theory of mind and theory of territory of information to explain the non-canonical uses of personal pronouns in NZE. Future research could explore in more detail how these cognitive linguistic theories could be applied to capture the full range of non-canonical pronoun uses attested in English and Chinese.

Secondly, we endeavoured to accommodate Gast et al. (2015)'s models that were originally used to address the impersonal use of the second person in English, to the interpretation of generic uses and shift uses (involving generality) of personal pronouns besides the second person in NZE and Chinese found in my sample dataset. There are still some questions left open for future research to be undertaken. One is will it be possible to apply Gast et al. (2015)'s approach to languages universally? The other is can Gast et al. (2015)'s approach be applied to non-canonical pronoun uses apart from generic and shift uses involving genericity?

As discussed at the start of Section 7.2, observations by Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) suggest that the approach of Gast et al. (2015) could be more likely to apply to impersonal uses of second person pronoun in languages that have a small, closed set of personal pronoun system like English and Chinese.

I had started to tentatively explore the question whether Gast et al. (2015)'s approach could be extended to other non-canonical uses at the end of Chapter 6. It seems that the approach of Gast et al. (2015) could be applied to some non-canonical uses such as *it/they* with collective nouns, since *it* and *they* still encode their original semantic meanings, and refer to a third person singular and plural entity respectively, and the choice between the pronouns merely reflects whether the speaker treated the collective nouns as a collective or single concept.

In fact, many other non-canonical uses listed in the differences between NZE and Chinese personal pronouns reflect different ways of conceptualising the world (cf. Wiese & Simon 2002), including shifts to singular from plural personal pronouns, *he/she* for animal species and inanimates and shifts to plural from singular personal pronouns. The motherland to some Chinese speakers was as symbolic as their caring mother, thus *she* was selected. Likewise, snake was more masculine in some NZE speakers' eyes, so male *he* was used to refer to it. Some uses have become conventional in a given culture, and require the addressee to have specific knowledge about the uses (cf. Gardelle & Sorlin 2015, p. 14). Chinese speakers might not be consciously aware of their highly frequent usages of the plural forms instead of the singular forms when they discussed families or jobs, because such shift uses were rooted in their collective culture, and gradually became more conventionalised. The question is: how can we model our conceptualisation in the divergences of these non-canonical uses between NZE and Chinese? This is something can be studied in the future.

Grammaticalised uses such as discourse marker *tā* 他(*he*), on the other hand, seem unlikely to fit into the approach of Gast et al. (2015), as *tā* 他(*he*) in the discourse marker use merely has a pragmatic function and is no longer referential.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This thesis was an exploration into the non-canonical uses of overt personal pronouns in NZE and Chinese. The investigation of two oral corpora data - the CC and the BJKY - has resulted in fruitful outcomes. Chapter 4 examined the non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE. The results displayed different categories of non-canonical uses found in the CC sample, including generic use, shift use, unisex use, *it* and *they* with collective nouns, *he/she* for animal species and inanimates, and *you* and *your* in existentials. Detailed analysis of these various types of non-canonical pronoun uses in NZE was also provided. Chapter 5 explored the non-canonical uses in Chinese. The attested types cover from the generic use, shift use, unisex use, and personification to the discourse marker use. Thorough descriptions of all non-canonical pronoun uses identified in the BJKY sample were also presented. Chapter 6 concentrated on the theoretical approach, in particular the simulation theory from the field of pragmatic linguistics. The Valid Schema and Simulation Schema were employed to illustrate the inner mechanism of similar non-canonical uses - generic uses and some shift uses (involving generality) - in NZE and Chinese. The differences of non-canonical pronoun uses between NZE and Chinese were addressed from two points of view - language properties and cultural norms.

This thesis demonstrates the benefit of a comparative study on the non-canonical pronoun use between spoken NZE and spoken Chinese. Understanding each other without any misinterpretation caused by the non-canonical applications of overt personal pronoun is important in our daily conversation. This study shows the non-canonical pronoun use is pragmatically different to the canonical deictic use of personal pronouns, so much so that although the native language speaker may find it less difficult to grasp what the addressee intends to utter, it may be more challenging for the second language learner. I suggest if the second language learners are informed or made aware of non-canonical pronoun uses in their second language learning courses, misunderstandings in the real conversation context between the native and non-native speakers would be more or less alleviated. Ultimately, it is hoped this thesis will make a contribution to the literature on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies.

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Best wishes,

Kevin

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Kevin Watson

Editor, New Zealand English Journal