

space in these stores, with possibly no staff facilities. In many of the stores, the owners' small children could also be observed being cared for or playing around the entrances of the stores.

During the time of this research period, the interaction between store owners and assistants was also observed. In one of the stores I observed an employer saying to the assistant "Meagan. Please..." an interaction followed by gestures. At this point the assistant knew exactly what to do based on two words and an elaborate gesture. On the other hand, in one store a Chinese employer was yelling at the store assistant that she wanted something done to the way the products were being displayed. At that moment the assistant did not understand the employer's instruction, which subsequently led to the employer yelling "You not understand!" and adjusting the display herself. This particular employee appeared very awkward and uncomfortable at this stage, especially as the incident happened in full view of the customers.

One significant observation to be recorded here is the interaction that the shop assistants have with customers. Upon entering the stores, the shop assistants would greet the customers, the greeting is reciprocated, and the assistant keeps his/her distance to allow the customer to browse. While maintaining their distance from the customers, the shop assistants are vigilant of customer activities and often make comments on products the customers are interested in. In this way one can therefore also argue that the shop assistants act as the sales people for the Chinese, except that they do not process the transaction. The interaction between shop assistant and customers are thus very different from that of the shopkeeper-customer interactions.

6.1.2 Interviews

The questions I used to get the conversations with the shop assistants started can be found in Chapter 4, p 57. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, these were used not only to get answers to the questions, but also to try to elicit further responses from this group. The participants whose responses are captured here in four case studies were a young Xhosa female about 19 years old (SA1); a female Congolese migrant estimated age early 30s (SA2), a male coloured Afrikaans teenager aged 16 (SA3) and a coloured Afrikaans-speaking young female, 20 years old (SA4). Obviously, their different backgrounds and ideological orientations influenced the nature of their individual responses.

SA1

The first shop assistant I interviewed was a Xhosa female from Tableview. When asked how she felt about China Town she said that China Town was “not a good place”. She did not like China Town and she also did not shop at the stores. When I asked her why she worked there if she had such negative feelings towards it she stated that “the Chinese just use people” and that she was only working there “for fun”. She added that she did not complete her matric year at high school, so lacked the necessary qualifications for a better job, leaving her with not much choice but to work there. When I asked her how she got the job, she said that she got it via a friend who was a previous employee at that store. I asked SA1 about the nature of her relationship with her employer and whether they had good interaction. She replied that her employer “doesn’t speak proper English” and often did not understand the customers’ questions. The employer was also described as being “difficult to work with”. I asked SA1 how she managed to communicate with her employer despite the language barrier, and she said that some form of paralinguistic communication (gestures, facial expressions) was used in addition to the little bit of English the employer could use. SA1 did not believe that China Towns used particular advertising to attract customers, which may indicate that she did not listen to those radio stations that carry Chinatown advertising or just had a low level of interest in her place of work.

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This case study provides evidence that China Towns are prepared to employ people with relatively low qualifications as long as they are perceived as being effective as communicators with South African customers. Undoubtedly SA1 was extremely useful in communicating with other speakers of isiXhosa, who might be drawn to the shop precisely because of her presence there. In addition, people relied on informal networks with friends to find employment in China Town, thereby saving the owners the cost of advertising. Undoubtedly this employees’ negativity towards China Towns as well as her current employer was likely to impact on how effectively she carried out her tasks, particularly as she said that she was working there “for fun”. It was also interesting to note that her description of the Chinese fitted in with two of Van Dijk’s topic classes in racist discourse (Van Dijk, 2004:352-353): *deviance* (‘doesn’t speak proper English’; ‘difficult to work with’) and *threat* (‘the Chinese just use people’).

SA2:

The second shop assistant was a female migrant from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). When I asked her how she felt about China Town she said that she had no choice but to work there because she was a foreigner. Her fear was that working in a local franchise would put her at a disadvantage because she could be let go easily so that a local South African could get the job. For this reason she got the job at China Town through a friend who also worked there. SA2 claimed to have a good relationship with her employers. Although her employers did not speak English, their daughter was proficient in English and attended an English medium school. She furthermore said that her employer “knows everything, he knows money, he can calculate”, so having a little command of English wasn’t very problematic for them. I asked SA2 how she felt about working in a Chinese shop and she expressed pride in working there: “It’s like my shop. I clean, I take care of my store” – jobs she did in addition to helping the customers.

There is quite a strong contrast between the case study of SA2 and SA1, with SA2 being very grateful to have found employment, once again through her network of friends. She appears to have no negative attitude towards her employers, despite saying that she ‘had no choice’ but to work there because of her status as a foreigner in South Africa. It is obvious that this employee was prepared to do more than simply wait on customers in order to maintain the good relationships she had with her employers, like cleaning the shop. It is possible that this employee, as a migrant to South Africa herself, could identify with the Chinese who were in a similar, if less disadvantaged, position. SA2 also pointed out the positive role of her employer’s daughter (being schooled in South Africa) who was proficient in English and could therefore help to interpret between the staff, customers and her employer, which definitely contributed towards her having a far more positive attitude to her employer than SA1.

SA3

The third participant was a coloured Afrikaans teenage boy from one of the surrounding areas close to China Town. His sentiments were that the Chinese were “nice” and that China Town is a “good place”. He also states that China Town “helps people” by being cheaper

than other stores and therefore their products are more affordable for working class people. When asked how he got the job he said that he got it through his cousin. The participant did not complete his secondary school education and thus acquired the job as an assistant. He admits that working in China Town is “just a starting job” and that he does not intend to work here for long.

As with the previous respondents, SA3 also found work in China Town through his own networks. Like SA1, he did not complete his secondary education, but like SA2, he was very positive about his experiences here, particularly as he only saw this work as temporary. SA3 was the first shop assistant to point out the financial benefit to working class people of shopping at China Towns, given the relatively low prices of their goods.

SA4

This participant was a coloured female from Cape Town working as store assistant. When asked how she feels about China Town she described it as an “okay place”. The participant also got the job via a friend, like the previous participants. She explained the process, saying that the Chinese store owners simply wanted her details and cell phone number, and sent her a text message to say that she would commence working the next day. She expressed the view that she enjoyed working for the Chinese because their culture is “different” and “you learn new things about them every day”. When I asked her how the interaction between her and her employers were in terms of communication, she described their communication as “okay”. SA4 was asked what she thought attracted people to China Town and she stated that the allure of China Town was “the cheap stuff [which] attracts the customers” as well as the variety of products that can be found in China Town. When asked whether her employers were nice, she said that the Chinese in general are very friendly, and that it was usually the customers who were rude and “come with an attitude” into the stores.

While this case study was largely in line with the more positive responses from SA2 and SA3, SA4 provided more detail on how she was employed, how she related to the Chinese and what attracted customers to the shops – “the cheap stuff” and the variety of products. What was different here was SA4’s defence of her ‘very friendly’ employers and her

argument that some customers' behaviour and attitudes often caused problems. This contrasts strongly with the views held by SA1.

6.1.3 Discussion of Observations and Interviews with the Shop Assistants

Despite the obvious limitations of interviewing the assistants while they were working, a lot can be said by examining what was said and observed. The first point that should be mentioned is the fact that all the participants became China Town employees through a very informal process. All of them were told about vacancies through friends or a relative, and there did not appear to be any formal interview process. For example, SA4 said that she received a text message informing her that she would start working the next day. Another trend observed in these conversations is that these participants are employed here arguably as a last resort. Most felt that they were at a disadvantage to find jobs in the formal sectors, so they worked here. SA1 and SA3 did not complete high school so China Towns are possibly places where a chance of employment is relatively higher than in the formal sector. In this way, despite the criticisms levelled at them, the Chinese contribute to lowering the unemployment rates in South Africa.

Many of the participants stated that even if their employers did not have full command of English, they found ways of working together. As SA1 argued, her employer was difficult to work with because she does not speak "proper English", while SA4 described the communication between her and her employer as "okay". This shows that it was only in some instances that the Chinese employer and employees could come to a workable understanding.

The dominant themes that emerged from the conversations with the shop assistants were:

- Working in China Town is a means to an end: none of them expressed a particular desire for a life-long position as a store assistant. This occupation is simply a stepping stone or a gateway while they look for something better, or until a more promising prospective appears.
- The informality of finding employment in a Chinese store: all the participants got word of the vacancies through word of mouth from a friend or relative.

- Communication between staff and employers rely predominantly on paralinguistic and non-verbal behaviour

6.1.4 A summary of the main trends observed with the shop assistants

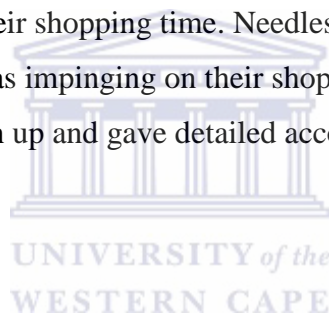
The main trends observed during my research in China Town with regards to shop assistants were that at face value one is tempted to say that shop assistants are the main strategy for success in this enterprise. I have come to the conclusion that arguably, the shop assistants are not only the life force of the stores, but they are the ones who maintain interpersonal communication with customers. Even though some shop assistants are foreigners themselves (from other African countries) they do not seem to maintain the same distance between themselves and South Africans as the Chinese do. Ostensibly, their English proficiency is a little more developed than that of their employers, so their interaction with customers has more of a conversational register. They are the ones who assist the customers, assist with the fitting of garments and even deliver opinions on which products to buy. Their interaction ends at the point where the customer makes the decision to make the purchase, which is where the Chinese shopkeeper's main role is performed at the sales transaction point.

As mentioned, communication between the Chinese and their shop assistants rely heavily on non-verbal communication. As SA1 stated, some form of paralinguistic features was used together with the little bit of English her employer knew. Similarly, the observations showed that when SA4 was given an instruction from her employer ("Meagan... Please") she responded by nodding and followed through with the task. Conversely, the other shop assistant who was given a task by her employer and failed to do what was required, was silent throughout the interaction and gave no response either to understanding the instruction or when she was admonished. Here Allwood's (1985) theory of differences in communicative behaviour, specifically with regards to *feedback*, comes into focus. This concept deals with the ways in which participants in a conversation signal how they perceive, understand and react to what the speaker has said. Allwood, Nivre and Ahlsén (1993) claim that linguistic feedback enables four basic communicative functions which are essential in face-to-face interaction: *contact*, which establishes whether speakers are capable and willing to continue the communicative event; *perception* which establishes whether participants are willing and able to perceive the message; *understanding* establishes whether the communicators are willing and able to understand the message and lastly *attitudinal reactions*, which indicates

whether the participants are willing and able to react and respond to the message. Clearly the success of the first observation was owing to the gestural communication as well as the attitudinal reaction from “Meagan” which signalled to her employer that she understood what she had to do. Perhaps the absence of feedback in terms of perception, understanding and most importantly the attitudinal reaction could account for the breakdown in communication between the second shop assistant and her employer. It could also be assumed that the participants have varying levels of intercultural communication competence (Wiseman, 2003) which could account for either the success or failure of the communication between shop keeper and shop assistants.

6.2 The Customers

The interviews with the customers all took place in China Town, where I casually started conversation with them during their shopping time. Needless to say the main limitation of the customer interviews was that I was impinging on their shopping time. However, most of the customers were very keen to open up and gave detailed accounts of their experience in China Town.



6.2.1 Observations

The observations relating to the customers are not very different from that of the shop assistant observations, as the two sets of role players were observed in one context or social setting. It is however worth mentioning that the main observation here was that customers showed no desire to interact with the shop keepers. Their entrance into the stores followed more or less the same sequence: they entered the shops; looked around, and if they did not find something they liked they would leave, or ask assistance from the shop assistants if they needed it. No interaction took place between the customers and the shopkeepers, unless the shop assistants were absent. In most cases however, interaction in these stores were minimal. Not once did I walk into a store where conversation was taking place between customers and staff, although this could be owing to the self-service layout of the store.

6.2.3 Interviews

As mentioned, the interviews with the customers took place in China Town stores. The questions asked were meant to explore the feelings of customers around China Town as well as their experiences with the service in these stores. I interviewed four customers in three different stores. The participants included a young coloured female estimated at around 30 years old (C1), an elderly coloured female (C2) and the final participants were two middle aged coloured females who were shopping together (C3 and C4). The questions used for customers were fairly structured and flowed with the responses from the interviewees. The interview questions for the customers can be found in Chapter 4 p.58. Responses from the customers were also not recorded, but field notes were taken.

C1

The first interview took place in a clothing shop with a coloured female participant. The first question asked was what she likes about China Town. Her response was that they have “a nice variety of stuff” and there are different stores to be found in the complex. The second question was about how she felt about the Chinese. She stated that “they are a part of us already, obviously they are here to stay. They are everywhere”. The follow up question centred on what they are like when they serve her as a customer. To this she answered that they can’t serve customers because “they can’t speak English” but that they are “nice”. When asked why she goes to China Town she said that she doesn’t go there often, but rather as a last resort for when she cannot find what she has been looking for in other stores. The final question asked her what she thinks about the way they advertise their products. The customer responded: “Do they really advertise?” and furthermore stated that she feels the Chinese don’t really put effort into advertising, but that she found the mannequins are dressed fashionably.

The interviews with the customers provided a great insight into their sentiments around China Town and their experiences with the store keepers. In the above interview with C1, as many of the interviewees expressed, the attraction to China Town is the variety of products to be found here. As C1 states, she likes China Town for their “nice variety of stuff”. From clothing (C3 and C4) to “many stuff” (C2) it is obvious that China Town attracts customers who come for variety. C1 also significantly expresses that the Chinese are “a part of us already... they are here to stay”. This was not expressed negatively but rather stated matter-

of-factly in a way that shows her acceptance and tolerance. She did however adopt a fairly negative tone when she stated that the store keepers “cannot serve customers because they cannot speak English”. This possibly indicates that while C1 is accepting and open to the presence of Chinese, the language factor is essentially linked to Esser’s (2006) argument that language and accents can index belonging or foreignness and thus give rise to differentiation and some degree of discrimination. She furthermore states that they are “nice”, but the preconceived idea that the Chinese cannot speak English is arguably one of the most significant reasons for the communicative gap between customer and store keeper.

C2

The second interview also took place in a clothing store with an elderly coloured female. The first question asked was what she thinks about China Town. She responded that there “is many stuff here” and that “our people” meaning coloured people, are fond of it. When asked why she goes there, she said that she goes for the price and that you would pay a cheaper price in China Town for the same product that you would find at a franchise store. When asked if the store owners/keepers were nice, she said that as far as she knows they are, and that it is the customers that are usually rude because they become aggressive and often tell Chinese that “it is not their land”. She added that they “give friendly service” when they serve her, and that “the other foreigners are friendly” referring to the store assistants. Her sentiment regarding the way the products are advertised is that “they advertise themselves very well”.

Once again it is noted that the variety of products as well as the cheap price of the products are what attracts people to the stores. With China Town’s vibrant decorations, the presence of the oriental and even the fact that China Town presents a different space where one feels one has walked into a different country, one would think that the allure of China Town would be the attraction and interest in the “other”. However South Africans seem to be goal orientated when they enter China Town, and their focus is to purchase what they came for, possibly with no engagement with China Town staff. While C2 does not specifically say that she does not engage with the store keepers, her statement that they are nice “as far as [she] knows” indicates that there possibly has not been much contact between them. Another significant observation here is her account of the attitudes of other customers, who appear to be portraying xenophobic attitudes towards the Chinese. This is in contrast to C1’s statement

that “they are a part of us already”. C2 does however portray a very positive attitude towards the store keepers, saying that they are friendly and “the other foreigners” (i.e. shop assistants) are friendly as well. Even though she expresses that they are friendly, she still seems to see the staff of China Town as foreigners, with the Chinese as one group of foreigners and the shop assistants as “the other foreigners”.

C3 & 4

The last interview was a conversation I had with two females who were shopping together. When asked what they liked about China Town, they said that they were not very fond of it because the Chinese store owners/keepers follow the customers around the shops. They see it as “a big problem” because it makes them feel like thieves. When asked why they came to China Town the customers expressed that they like their clothing. Their sentiments regarding the service is that Chinese are “okay”, they aren’t “nice” or friendly, and that their service is “okay”. The participants expressed that they have no communication with the Chinese except that they follow them around the store. When asked about the effectiveness of their advertising, they said that the advertising is good and that the mannequins are dressed fashionably, however the products are expensive.

These participants expressed a rather negative view of China Town. One thing that particularly stood out was their argument that the Chinese store owners follow them around the shops, which makes them feel uneasy. My observations however were that the store keepers do not follow customers around, as they are not usually present on the floor, but seated at the cash register. It would most likely be the shop assistants that would do the monitoring of customers. The fact that C3 and C4 did not distinguish between who it is that actually follows them around the stores possibly indicates that their negativity is not limited to Chinese but rather the entire enterprise, including the shop assistants. Even though C3 and C4 express no liking for China Town, they are still drawn by the products, specifically the clothing. This is particularly significant because it shows that even when customers do not support the Chinese enterprise or do not have positive attitudes towards the Chinese, they cannot deny the allure of the products, even when they claim that the products are expensive. These two customers felt that the display of the products specifically on the mannequins appeals to the customers and appears to be a very good advertising method; one which doesn’t involve the use of language, but rather of visual semiotics.

6.2.4 A summary of the main trends observed with the customers

The major attraction to China Town based on the conversations with the customers appeared predominantly to be the variety of the products, contrary to the popular saying “Once you’ve seen one Chinese store you’ve seen them all”. The sentiment here is that China Town has a variety not easily found at local franchise stores. Even the customers who expressed that they did not like China Town owing to the “expensiveness” admitted to liking the clothing sold there.

Overall the customers admitted that they did not engage in interaction with the shop owners and shop keepers, and this is arguably owing to the preconceived idea that “the Chinese cannot serve because they cannot speak English”- C1. The second participant stated that “as far as [she] knows, the store owners and keepers are friendly”. This may show that even though she was positively disposed towards the Chinese, she was unlikely to initiate communication with them. “As far as I know” suggests that she most likely does not have a lot of experience interacting with Chinese, but asserts a view of positivity towards them as business people. The last participants also stated that they did not communicate with the store keepers, and that it bothered them that they were being followed around the stores. Even so, regardless the lack of interaction, it was the products sold at China Town that attracted the customers.

Many similarities can be drawn between what was said by the shop assistants and the customers respectively. The first comparison is that of SA4 and C2, who expressed the view that Chinese are generally friendly, but the customers are the ones who are generally rude when they interact with the store keepers. In this view it is evident that the store keepers are not solely to blame for the lack of interaction in the stores, as customers arguably do not make interaction easy. Esser (2006) argues that if there is social distance between the immigrants and the majority society, there will be no exposure to or immersion in the majority language. This could also account for the reason the customers and store keepers do not interact. Esser (2006) furthermore states that if there is a high level of ethnic concentration in a specific area, there is a lesser likelihood of acquiring the national language in an area. Therefore, with China Town being a complex with a high density of Chinese, they might feel no obligation to acquire a certain degree of English or any South African language for that matter. Observably they remain self-contained, and as a result, language remains a problem as very few recent migrants speak English or any of the local languages.

The second major trend in terms of this study is the significance of the product and the pricing in the stores. In Chapter 5 it was found that Chinese feel they do not really need to talk to the customers, just smile and introduce the product to them. Or in some cases they feel that they don't need to speak at all, they price the product for the customer and that is enough. For the shop assistants, China Town is successful because of the variety of products and the cheap prices. The customers all appear to share these sentiments, save for C3 and C4 who say that even though they are attracted to China Town's clothing, the prices are relatively expensive.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the interviews conducted with the shop assistants and the customers in China Town regarding their interaction with the Chinese store keepers and the enterprise as a whole. This chapter has shown that the major attraction to China Town for the customers is the product and the pricing, and a similar trend was expressed by the shop assistants. The most observable trend here is that even though the customers I interviewed generally are accepting of the store keepers, interaction between the groups is minimal.

While one customer expressed that she has witnessed xenophobic tendencies of customers toward Chinese, those accounts were not expressed by the shop assistants and the Chinese. The only participant who seems to exhibit a degree of xenophobic ideology is SA1, who feels that China Town is "not a good place" and that Chinese "use people". Regardless of SA1's concern that the China Town enterprise is a negative element in South Africa, this chapter has shown that the relationship between Chinese and South Africans is arguably an overall harmonious relationship.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis with a discussion of the main findings of the study in relation to the research objectives. The chapter also includes a discussion of the limitations of this study, as well as suggestions for future studies on this topic.

7.1 Initial Expectations

My initial aim in terms of observation was to become a regular customer at China Town and observe how business is conducted. The activity of all role-players (store keepers, shop assistants, customers) was observed with the aim to identify the strategies these role players make use of to interact and conduct business effectively. While my initial hypothesis was that Chinese made use of Google Translator or actively used the shop assistants to translate and act as mediator between themselves and customers, my initial research showed that there appears to be very little verbal interaction between them. While this might have limited the research in some way, the interviews revealed a great deal about the way these three groups view each other and the ideologies underlying their responses in the interviews.

7.2 Research objectives

The observations showed that owing to the layout of the stores, customers can more often than not do their purchases without the assistance of the shop assistants or store keepers. This therefore renders communication optional, but not a necessity for customers in China Town. With this in mind, the central research questions have been answered.

The first aim of the study was to identify the strategies used by Chinese store owners and store keepers to communicate and do business in South Africa. This aim was addressed with the observations and the interviews. While they do not necessarily use strategies to communicate verbally, their focus on the product is their key strategy for doing successful business in South Africa. This being said, the second aim was to identify how the cultural and communicative gap is bridged by Chinese. The research shows that Chinese are quite aware

of the stereotypes that South Africans have regarding their language use: “they cannot speak English”. This was evident in the responses of customers and a South African shop assistant. It was found that the store owners do not seek to engage in communication with the customers, but choose to put their best efforts into pricing the products and making their displays attractive for the customers, as my observations showed. The focus on the display of the products (a multi-semiotic form of communication) is effective to a great extent as customers expressed that they were attracted to the clothing stores based on how fashionably the mannequins were dressed.

The third research aim was to examine how the Chinese interact with the customers. As mentioned, this question was rendered difficult by the observation of there being no observable communication between customers and the Chinese. Instead, the communication that took place was between the shop assistants and the customers. It can therefore be argued that the employment of the shop assistants is a strategy the Chinese use to conduct their business effectively without having to actively cross any linguistic or cultural gaps. The interviews with the store owners revealed similar findings when the majority of the interviewees stated that the way they communicate with customers is through the product. The interviews also revealed that Chinese received no instruction regarding South African culture before leaving China, which shows that the focus of the Chinese enterprise might be centred solely on the product and not on bridging any intercultural gaps.

The final research aim was to determine how the customers feel about China Town as well as the on-going Chinese integration into South Africa. Responses from customers were rather positive and none of the participants expressed any negative attitudes towards Chinese. Some may have displayed some stereotypical notions when they made reference to the Chinese not being able to speak English, nevertheless it appears that China Town attracts customers whether there is communication or not. The situation in China Town seems to be win-win. The Chinese display their products in such a way that customers can walk in and look for what they want owing to the simplistic layout of the stores; a “what you see is what you get” principle seemingly dominating these stores. In return customers get to walk in, browse the shop without being impeded, often resulting in a successful transaction. As Interviewee 3 said:

“Ya when they come in maybe we just say hello or uh how you, sometimes they come in and they don’t look at you. Maybe we don’t have any interaction, and then they just check the stuff themselves”

7.3 Answers to the Research Questions

The major research question of this study was: how do Chinese entrepreneurs cross intercultural and linguistic boundaries to do business effectively in South Africa? This research question was addressed in 3 ways. One would be tempted to conclude that Chinese do not cross intercultural or linguistic boundaries; however, the fact that they don’t actively perform the crossing of boundaries does not imply that it does not take place. For instance, many Chinese stores play South African radio stations or mainstream pop music in their stores. Others employ South African shop assistants, which one could argue is the most effective strategy. One other strategy is that they have written notices around the stores which set rules for customers (see attachment2). In this way they avoid having to verbally admonish customers when they unknowingly transgress a rule in the store, thereby saving face.

The main theme to emerge from the data analysis was the importance of the Chinese product. Significantly, the importance of the product is expressed throughout the interviews with the Chinese as well as the main observation for this study. This particular extract from Interview 4 seems to resonate throughout the study:

M: How would you describe the interaction, so from the moment they come in through the doors, how would you interact with them?

A: Uh.. Uhhh, your product.

Similarly, another participant (Appendix 2 Interview 7) expressed the same idea surrounding communication:

M. So how would you describe the interaction that takes place between you and your customers? Is it friendly, is it business-like?

I: how do you communicate with your customers since you do not speak English?

A: Well, I price all the products in the shop. If customers like it, they will buy.

The study endeavoured to answer the following sub-questions:

1. How is language used and adapted in interactions between Chinese and South Africans (specifically Capetonians) in trade settings?

The answer here is simple. It can be said that Chinese evidently do not significantly adapt their language.. They use whatever proficiency they have in English and do not appear to take extra measures to adapt their language for customer interaction. As Interviewee 2 stated: “When they ask me, I will answer”.

This shows that language use is already minimal in this context; therefore, language does not have to consciously be adapted. If the store keepers experience difficulties in interacting with customers, they call the shop assistants to help, as one participant stated: “If they don’t understand we can call the lady to help” (Appendix 2, Interview 8).

2. How interculturally competent are the traders forming part of this study?

The store keepers all said that they did not receive any intercultural communication instruction prior to their migration to South Africa. Even so, they appear to have an idea of how to handle South African customers. Those participants who have been in the country for long (as with Interviewee 4) are ostensibly integrated into South African culture and are aware of the cultural differences. As interviewee 4 said “South Africans are simple”. While intercultural competence according to Wiseman (2003:192) is the “knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures”, it does not mean that verbal communication is the only method of communication. The Chinese participants in my study appear to pay more attention to non-verbal communication with customers; smiling, being friendly, giving good service and positive facial expressions. One could however, argue that these are universal and not limited to Chinese or South Africans. Ultimately the fact that majority of the store keepers claim that smiling and selling good products to the customers are effective ways of maintaining good interpersonal relationships, shows that they not only have knowledge of the wants of the customers, but also that they perform this knowledge.

3. How do South African customers view and respond to Chinese businesses and those who staff them?

The customer interviews as well as the observations revealed that customers are quite accepting of the Chinese enterprise. While one customer recounted that she has seen other customers showing intolerance towards the Chinese, her personal sentiment is that they are generally friendly. The prejudice that all Chinese are incapable of communicating with South Africans still seems to loom to a great extent, as all customers in the interviews believed that they did not communicate with their customers. C1 said they cannot serve because “they can’t speak English”. Nevertheless, the presence of Chinese goods is said to be beneficial to customers as they can choose from a variety of products often not sold in commercial franchise stores. The variety, along with the relatively low price of the products, serves as a benefit for low to middle income group customers.

4. What impact does the linguistic landscape have on how customers react to Chinese stores in terms of advertising?

The interviews with customers revealed that even though Chinese do not necessarily make use of commercial advertising, their existing methods of decorating their stores and displaying their products are effective. The decorations, the bright colours that attract the customers from outside (see attachment 1). The displays and mannequins also appear to be an effective attraction for the customers. Even those customers who said that they are not too fond of China Town stated that they like the clothing and are attracted to the stores by the mannequins and how they have been styled. The overall linguistic landscape of China Town seems to generally be an attraction for customers.

7.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has looked at all the role players in China Town in order to determine how the Chinese conduct business effectively despite the language and cultural differences. The major conclusion of this study is that communication does not appear to be problematic in this enterprise as verbal interaction between store keepers and customers is minimal. The employment of South African shop assistants, as well as assistants from other parts of Africa is argued to be a strategy the Chinese make use of to avoid any intercultural or

linguistic conflict, and it is ostensibly successful. The intercultural communication that takes place between customers and store keepers can be summed up in two scenarios: (i) non-verbal communication such a nod in acknowledgement of the customer's presence or a way of greeting and smiling as a way of showing friendliness; and (ii) the monetary transaction that takes place when the purchase is being made. The latter is when a little verbal communication occurs, where the store keeper will ring up the items and tell the customer the amount due. The interaction ends when the customer says "thank you" and leaves the store.

It can therefore be concluded that China Town may be a space where diverse cultures are found and where intercultural contact takes place. But here business is concerned mainly with the product, and the price speaks a universal language.

7.5 Recommendation for further study

This study focused specifically on one China Town complex in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. A suggestion for further study is that several China Town complexes be observed and comparisons be drawn between these centres. Furthermore, in this study 8 Chinese participants, 4 shop assistants and 4 customers were interviewed, which leaves room for more participants to be incorporated into future research. Additionally, Critical Discourse Analysis could be used to determine issues of power and ideology in the customer-store keeper interactions, which could elicit interesting data.

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APPENDIX 1

Consent Form

[Participant's Copy]

Interviews for research on how Chinese cross linguistic and cultural barriers in trade

面試在貿易中國如何跨語言和文化障礙的研究

Letter of Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research.

This interview serves to gather basic information about your residence in South Africa, the duration of your business here and seeks to answer questions regarding the communicative practices between you and South African customers. Kindly be assured that this is strictly for research purposes and that the researcher has no affiliation with any external institutions (government, political, etc.) or parties other than the University of the Western Cape. The research assistant will explain the basis of the research to you, and will conduct the interviews in your mother tongue. The section below requests consent to use the interviews in my research.

感谢您同意参与我的研究

这次采访旨在收集有关你的居住的基本信息在南非，你的企业的持续时间在这里和试图回答关于您与南非客户之间的沟通实践的问题。请放心，这是严格的研究目的和研究人员也没有隶属关系与任何外部机构（政府，政治等）或政党比西开普大学等。研究助理会解释的研究，以你的基础，并会进行面试中你的母语。下面的部分请求同意使用在我的研究中采访。您的身份将保持匿名，并在接受采访时所做的任何录音是唯一的翻译目的，不会被复制或分发。请随时提问，如果您需要的任何其他信息。

Please note the following:

请注意以下几点

The interviews will be recorded for translation purposes only

The interviews will not be reproduced or distributed other than for the purpose of this study

Your identity will remain anonymous throughout the study

You may withdraw consent at any time during the study

面試將被記錄翻譯，僅供參考

訪談將不會被复制或分发除对本研究的目的

你的身份將整個研究保持匿名

您可以在任何时间在研究过程中撤回同意

I..... (name of participant) hereby grant Miché Thompson, student in Linguistics Department- University of the Western Cape, permission to record the interview and use it towards completing her research for her intended degree.

I have been informed about the research and its aims and have been made aware of the fact that I can retract my contribution to this study at any time if I feel the need to do so.

The ethical considerations have been explained to me and my anonymity has been assured. Additionally, my contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and I have under no circumstances been forced into participating.

我在此授予米凱•湯普森，學生在西開普省的語言學系，大學，同意錄製採訪，並用它完成對她的研究，她打算程度。

我已被告知有關研究及其目標和已知道的事實，我可以在任何時候收回我這個研究的貢獻，如果我覺得有必要這麼做。

在倫理方面的考慮已經向我解釋，我的匿名性得到保證。此外，我對這項研究的貢獻是完全自願的，我已經在任何情況下被迫參與。

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Signed 簽署 :.....

Date日 :.....

Place 位置:.....

APPENDIX 2

Interviews

Transcription Key

= Overlapping speech

[?] Indecipherable word

False start

[...] short pause

[_] long pause

☺ Laughing

☺☺ Nervous giggling

M: Miché (principle researcher)

I: Interpreter (research assistant)

A: Answer (participants' response)



Interview 1

M. Can you tell me about yourself, where you grew up?

I: Where did you grow up?

A: I grew up in JiLin City, in the JiLin province, in China.

M. Is it a good place to grow up?

I: Is it a nice city?

A: It is a big city.

M: How long have you been in SA and was it easy to come here?

A: It is more than 7 years.

M. Do you feel welcomed in South Africa?

I: Do you feel welcome in SA?

A: I think it is okay... because I do not have any impacts, especially negative impacts on SA... I think it is okay.

M: What motivated you to move to South Africa and open a business here?

I: what motives you to move to SA and open a business here?

A: my friend has a business here and he/she says it is nice doing business in SA.

M: So how did you decide where in South Africa you would set up your business? How did you know where in South Africa, like how did you decide on China Town?

I: how did you know about this China Town? And what made you decide to open a shop here?

A: I was hired by one of the shops in China town and I started my own business after working there for a year.

I: Are you happy working here?

A: Its fine

M. Did anyone teach you about South Africa and South Africans before you came here, and what did you learn?

I: Did anyone told you anything about SA or South African before you came to SA?

A: yes, I have heard of something.

M. Did anyone teach you in China about what South Africans like to buy? When you think about what stock to buy for South Africans, how do you come up with that? What stuff to buy here compared to what to buy in China.

I: Did anyone tell you about South African preferences and trend before you came to SA? And is there any difference compared to the fashion in China?

A: I like shopping. And Cape Town is the same as China. And I have worked for a shop before so I know which is nice to buy.

M. How would you describe the interaction that takes place between you and your customers?

I: How do you interact or communicate with your customers?

A: I greet them in the morning by saying “NiHao” or “morning”. Customer come. And I am able to ask “can I help you” and introduce stuff. And I have a good manager.

M. Which kinds of customers tend to buy here the most and what are your most successful items that are sold?

I: What are the best sold items in your shop?

A: well, usually suits and clothing things, which are upstairs. Like party dresses and wedding dresses.

M. Why do you think people like these items?

I: Why do you think people like these?

A: for example, the suits in my shop, are cheap and beautiful. Is low price and is beautiful

M. What tools or strategies if any do you use to communicate effectively with your customers? So how do you communicate effectively with the customers?

I: what strategies do you use to communicate with your customers effectively and make them feel welcome?

A: there is no special strategies. You just keep smiling while you introduce your products to them.

M. Who are your nicest customers and what makes them nice? Like in trms of all the South Africans or Capetonians that come here, who are the nicest?

I: what type of people are the nicest customers?

A: most of them are nice, like white people, coloured, and black people. There are nice and bad customers among all races.

M. What do you do to make South Africans feel welcomed in your shop?

I: this is kind of the same as one of the previous questions. What do you do to make South Africans feel welcome?

A: I serve good quality of stuff, and nice clothes. And smiling for them as well.

Interview 2

M. Can you tell me about yourself, where you grew up, maybe in which town?

I: can you introduce yourself briefly? Like where did you grow up?

A: China, Jiangsu province.

M. Is it a good place for me to visit if I decide to go to China?

A: Yes

M. How long have you been living in South Africa and was it easy to come here?

A: I have been here 2 years. It wasn't easy coming to SA.

M. Do you feel welcomed in South Africa, and why? If you do, why, and if you don't, why not?

I: do you feel welcome in SA?

A: Yes, because we do business here.

M. What motivated you to come to South Africa and open a business here?

I: what motives you to move to SA? And why did you choose to do your business here?

A: My father owns the shop here.

M. Okay so was he here and you were back in china? Is this your shop or is it yours?

A. My father's shop

M. okay so was he here and you were back in China?

A. yes

M. So are you happy being here in China town and why?

A. ☺yes

M. Are you happy?

A. yes

M. Can you tell me why?

A: Yes. It is a strange question, ☺. Because we have a lot of customers here.

M. Did anyone teach you about South Africa and about South Africans and what they like, before you came here?

A: No. no one taught me.

M. So if no one taught you anything, what did you do to prepare yourself for coming to South Africa?

I: how did you prepare to come to South Africa? About SA culture and people here.

A: It is also a strange question. [___] ☺Next questions.

I: do you want her to explain the question to you again or just skip over this one?

A: well, just skip over.

M. Maybe I'll ask it differently. Did anyone teach you about what south Africans like in terms of, you know in china they may like different types of clothes to what they like in south Africa. How did you know what types of things to stock in your shop?

I: how did you know about SA trend and preferences? And is there any differences between china and SA?

A: My father told me about this 😊😊

M. how would you describe the interaction that takes place between you and your customers?

I: how do you interact with your customers?

A: When they ask me, I will answer.

I: only like that?

A: yah.

M. What kinds of customers tend to buy here the most? Like you know, of all the Capetonians here and all the different cultures and colours, what type of people come here the most and who buys here the most?

A: like, uh.. black people 😊

M. what are your most successful items that are sold in your shop and why do you think people like buying it?

A: Cameras.

M. Why do you think people like buying your cameras here?

A. Because they need it😊

M. What tools or strategies, if any do you use to communicate effectively with your customers?

I: what strategies do you use to communicate with your customers as you cannot speak English?

A: I will show them the stuff, and the quality. And introduce the products to them.

M. Are people usually friendly when they see that you don't know a lot of English? Are they friendly when they see that you dot speak English as fluently as South Africans do?

I: if you do not know English, then how do customers display their friendliness to you?

A: well...

I: are they rude to you if you do not speak English?

A: Well, not really. Sometimes though. But most of the time, they are friendly.

M. And who are your nicest customers? And what makes them nice?

I: what type of people are the nicest? And what make them nice?

A. Eh, if they serious want to buy they will be very nice 😊

M. So there is no specific type of customer that's the nicest, like what about coloureds, black, what, like who are the nicest of the races?

A: If they serious want buy something, they will be nice. It is not about race.

M. What do you do to make South Africans feel welcomed in your shop

I: what do you do to make south Africans feel welcome in the shop?

A: Smiling 😊



Interview 3 [English only]

M: Can you tell me about yourself and where you grew up?

A: In China, Fujian province

M: How long have you been living in South Africa?

A: 2 and a half years

M: What motivated you to move to South Africa and to open a business here?

A: Just want to earn more money

M: Okay and it's better here than in China?

A: Uhm because we got a basic. My sister in law was here and uh.. she already had a shop so we had a basic foundation here

M: What factors play a role when you decide where to put up your shop? Like in terms of the area? Do you think about how safe it is, do you think about the type of people that will come here=

M: What do you=

A: =Ya the first thing is safe, the second thing is people, is the quality of the people

M: Okay. Did you receive any intercultural communication skills before you came here? So was there any training that would help you communicate with people from different cultures in South Africans?

A: No, you see because we learn English in china already when we were starting ya and come here maybe just Uh.. use Uhh.. all the language, all the knowledge, ya and to sometimes learn some, ya nobody help us.. yeah

M: How would you describe the interaction that takes place in your shop? So when the customer comes in here, do you have an interaction? How would you explain or describe it?

A: Ya when they come in maybe we just say hello or uh how you, sometimes they come in and they don't look at you. Maybe we don't have any interaction, and then they just check the stuff themselves

M: Okay do they then maybe interact with the shop assistants instead?

A: SometImes ya

M: Okay, just 3 more questions.

A: Okay

M: What tools or strategies if you use any, do you use to communicate with your customers? So if you don't speak to them, or if maybe you find it difficult to communicate, what other strategies would you use to communicate with them?

A: Normally they have a [misfunction?] uh uh they have a [misuration?] sometimes they just buy something ya and pay for it, money. You see maybe just calculate ya. And uh

second, sometimes they ask for something we don't have. We don't know we got a lot. And sometimes customer don't wait for you, they just ask do you have one, maybe we just think about it and they say 'oh its fine fine' they just go

M: So they're very impatient?

A: Yees sometimes=

M: =they don't wait for you to process it=

A: =yeah and some customer they say 'ooh it's fine I can check myself'

M: In terms of the things that you buy for the customers, do you do any research to think about what people actually like before you buy things? So do you do any research on what South African customers want?

A: No ☺

M: No so you just buy anything and hope= they buy it?

A: =Yes just buy the stock from the suppliers. We buy stock from different suppliers. And we just check the stuff we like, maybe we think maybe this one customer will like it and we get it in. Maybe first time we just try a few, three or five. And if its popular, go quick, ya we will get more in

M: Okay that's very interesting. Last question

A: Okay

M: Do you employ any strategies; what do you do to make South African customers feel welcome in your shop?

A: Feel welcome?

M: Hmmm, how do you make them feel welcome?

A: I think uh... the attitude is very important. Yeah sometimes, yea, if they want to ask something or what, ya you smiling to them, ya because customers always say ya, in the other shop or maybe everyday just a face without any uuuuh [...] how do you say....

=smile?

A: Ya appearance on uh face, ya?

M: So you're saying the attitude=

A: Attitude ya

M: =and being friendly

A: =friendly yeah

M: =helps a lot

Okay thank you so muchA: No problem

Interview 4 [English Only]

M: So the first question is can you tell me about yourself and where you grew up?

A: I grew up from Taiwan

M: From Taiwan?

A: Hmmm

M: Which Town was that? Is it a good place for me to visit if I want to go there?

A: Uhm.. It's a very poor area

M: Very poor area?

A: Yes

M: Okay. Uhm, how long have you been living in South Africa and was it easy to come here?

A: Nineteen-eighty-eight

M: Nineteen-eighty-eight? Wow. And was it easy to come here though?

A: Not that easy

M: Not that easy? And do you feel welcomed in South Africa though?

A: Yes I feel welcome

M: What motivated you to move to South Africa and open up a business here?

A: Uhm I not automatic come to South Africa, it's a relocate

M: Oh, you relocated?

A: Yeah, it's a government recruit the Taiwanese business person_

M: _Okay..?

A: Eh to invest in South Africa. So that's why we came here

M: That's very interesting, and do you plan on staying here?

A: Uh we stay here..

M: Like stay, stay, like never going back?

A: Oh, no no no we going to retire

M: Okay

A: Yes

M: Uh, How did you decide where to set up your shop or business, so aside from the fact that the government recruited you, how did you decide on China Town, or Parow, for that matter?

A: Uhh.. How we deciiide... is because China Town can uh can uuuh attract, you know, the people of china town. They feel china product is cheap. That is uhm what motivated

M: Okay, so are you happy with being in this area and why?

A: Uuuh, its okay because uh the china only few china town in the western cape so I don't have a choice ya, but its okay

M: Did anyone teach you about South Africa and Africans before you came here?

A: No

M: Not at all?

A: I just read fro uuuh from the book

M: There's a book on South Africans?

A: Yes they introduce us especially like uuuh what Table Mountain uuuh whats that uuuh Cape Point

M: Hmmm

A: Ya

M: I've never even been to Cape Point and I'm South African (laughs)

A: Okay.... You no geography?

M: No I=

A: =You read the geography

M: =never did geography

A: Ah it's a foreign history

M: So you read up on the geography of South Africa= E

A: =yes

M: =you know about table mountain and cape point=

A: =yes

M: So besides that, what else did you do to prepare yourself for coming to South Africa? Besides knowing about the landmarks

A: Uh you know sometime it's a business opportunity uh you have to change and see the the far view from the future. So you must change your environment. You know sometime in that time I was very young, so I wanted to see how is south africa, because south africa is africa main country. You know? If you come to south africa probably you can do the african market as well. So that's why I had that vision

M: Did anyone teach you about what south africans like to buy? As opposed to Taiwan? Like, the market=

A: =No body=

M: =is it the same? =

A: =nobody

M: So you just assumed?



A: Ya you must study yourself you know

M: Okay?

A: Only know from the geography you you study

M: How would you describe the interaction that takes place in your shop between you and your customers?

A: How?

M: How would you describe the interaction, so from the moment they come in through the doors, how would you interact with them?

A: Uh.. Uhhh, your product.

M: Okay? So you don't do much communication with your customers?

A: Uh we do a lot of communication but the once you ask them, say how how how can I help you. But we see from his attitude. You know sometimes customer is quiet, he think Chinese can't communicate. So that's why they don't automatically come to ask you

M: Do they go to the shop assistant more often than=

A: =yees yes

M: That's quite bad though, they shouldn't just assume these things?

A: They they have to try to, but not everyone can speak you know.. ya so there is someone that can speak

M: Well I must say your English is very well, you speak beautifully

A: Oh thank you

M: Okay so just about two more questions. Which kinds of customers tend to buy here the most, and which items are the most=

A: =I think the major

M: =successfully sold

A: =the majority of customers come here and they want the price, that's why they come to china town. If they want the quality, they go to shopping centre.

M: Hmmm

A: That's the most of them they analyse, you know because they want to find out something, but the china town also the other thing is is not the price only.. They can find something else that they couldn't find from the shopping centre. Because you know the most of the shopping centre they sell the same product. But if you come to china town you can find something you want. Ya. And China product is become quite interesting of the whole world. Uh, because they can create a new product, and you know the most of the manufacturer, the most of the product, they supply from America and Europe designed, they send to China to make. You know, and once of uh of a America and Europe wants, they [[outphasing]] and they will come to the countries like brazil or south africa, this kind of area

M: Why do you think that they have everything made in China though? Is the labour better? Is it cheaper?

A: Not the labour better, what you gotta understand is that today the china manufacturer, they have a chain. The supply chain. That is very important. You can manufacture in South Africa, but your material you must get from Korea or Vietnam or whatever. And that is far away from that area to supply the material then you assemble it here. But they got everything. Even like transport. You know transport is very important. Like a website. You sell something on the web, but the thing you wanna give to your customer your transportation is not improved enough, then its very difficult because they must add transport. Today you must understand transport is the most expensive cost in this country because of long distance. That is the major thing, ya. So do you catch my point?

M: Yes yes I do. I did some research on the Chinese engagement on the world before I did this research=

A:=so that's why China we call it the world manufacturer. The main country. Other country they cant reach him because why first the have labour, but labour today is a problem now because chinese labour has increased a lot and also their currency also is stronger also than other country. You can understand, say like four years ago, south african currency and china currency is the same. But now today china currency is near six rand. Or one U.S. dollar is near six RMB now, but now you can see the rand is one U.S dollar equal eleven fifty now. So nearly double. So today if you take the south african currency and spend the money onto the china, you have to take double money. Ya that's why you know you not only the labour problem, of course labour cost is also part of our other reason.

M: Okay just two more questions, I know I said that before ☺

A: Ten minutes already ☺

M: Its nooot...Uhm, what strategies if any, do you use to communicate effectively with your customers? Although I don't think you would need any since you speak English so well, but if there are any, what would they be?

A: You know, uh.. The shop if you can attract the customer that come to the shop it's the main reason, not only the product, your service, your display.. And your price. There's too many reasons all get together. Not only one reason... soooo.. What can I say..

M: So its not only about communication its about attracting=

A: No no no.. Your product very bad, and your price very high, customers cant afford you know.. customer first of all compare the price, second he compare the quality. But I can tell you the majority of the customer in south Africa because they didn't see many product, like me I go Korea I go Japan I go Hong Kong I go Singapore I see so many product. Lots of product I already see maybe ten years ago. But today only appear in South Africa. You know, so it's a too many reasons. Ya, but at the moment today South Africa, the basic income is low. So that's why the price is low because the people can't afford it. The government must be having some strategy, how to increase the employment, that's important. Today you have to understand 29 percent of unemployment rate has caused people too much violence, and steal and that's main reason. And as well, you know because uh the labour department is so strong that's the other reason. And that of course of the political reason as well

M: Just one more question.

A: Okay

M: The last question is what do you do to make South Africans feel welcomed in your shop?

[]

M: _Easy peasy

A: You know actually South African people is very simple uuh because there is no competition, you know like lots of Chinese people like Hong Kong or Japan or even our Taiwanese the people is very complicated. Because they see too much, of uh condition and the competition if it is too much then people are more complicated. But South Africans actually is not complicated because not too much competition. But now we've become more competition. So you say what reason? =

M: =How do you make them feel welcome in the shop..

A: In the shop? Only thing is service. And communicate. That is uh, you can make them feel more than welcome, that is the only way.

M: Just the good service?

A: Ya like you must keep a smile, talk, you know, humorous and you know, and good talking. That's the only reason

M: find it so interesting that you say you should talk to them, I mean I interviewed other people =

A: =no actually =

M: =say they all they do is smile

A: =actually you know we talk a lot with customer. We can see, because we have more than 25 years in South Africa and we also know about their customs you know and what colour they like, their background, their environment, especially my children, all study in school here

M: Okay?

A: Yeah.

M: Any of them at UWC?

A: No, one is at Stellenbosch, the other one UCT.

M: Ooh okay. Ivy league ☺

A: And uh Stellenbosch is the same like you, they study language. They study German, France, other two languages.

[Interview ended abruptly because the shop was getting busy and the interviewee had to attend to a customer]

Interview 5

M. can you tell me about yourself maybe where you grew up?

I: Where did you grow up?

A: China.

M. How long have you been living in South Africa?

A: 1 year.

M. What made you move to South Africa and open a business here?

I: what motivated you?

A: I am just helping here temporarily.

M. What factors play a role in choosing where to establish your business? So do you think about how safe the area is and the people that will come here when you choose where to put up your business?

I: what made you choose to open the shop here? For example, the level of safety and whether it is busy in the area?

A: I am not really sure about this. I am only helping.

M. Did you receive any intercultural communication skill before you came to South Africa?

I: did you learn English here or in china? And who taught you English?

A: I had learnt a little English from school in china. Like the basic greetings.

M. how would you describe the interaction between you and your customers? So when the customer comes in here, how do you interact?

I: how do you interact with customers when they come in?

A: I greet them.

M. What tools or strategies do you use to communicate effectively with your customers?

I: what methods and strategies do you use to communicate effectively with customers? Like do you use gestures?

A: There is nothing special. Just talk normally.

I: do you ask your staff for help?

A: Like I ask them, "do you need help?"

M. When you look at the things that are going to be sold in the shop, do you do first look at what the customers like so do you do research on what the customers would like? Or do you just buy things?

I: how do you know about the SA preferences or fashion trend? Do you ever do any researches?

A: I didn't do any research. I just buy what I feel like buying.

M. How do you make your customers feel welcome in the shop?

I: the last questions is how do you make customers feel welcome?

A: I talk to the customers.

I: do you give customers discounts or anything like that?

A: I can give them discounts if they come here really often or they buy a lot of stuff. And I usually give the maximum discount to them.

M. That is all, thank you so much.



Interview 6

M: Can you tell me about yourself, maybe where you grew up, and what town?

I: can you introduce yourself? Like where you grew up?

A: I was born in China, Hebei province

M: Is that a good place for me to go if I decide to move to China one day? What do you think?

I: is it a good place to visit for her?

A: Yes, it is a nice country.

M: How long have you been living in South Africa?

A: 1 year.

M: Was it easy to come here?

A: Ya...It was easy.

M: Do you feel welcome in South Africa? Do you feel welcome here?

A: Yes.

M: What motivated you to move to South Africa and open up a business here?

I: what motives you to move to SA and open a business here?

A: It is a good environment to live. It is better than china.

M: How did you decide where to set up your business, so in terms of the area, how did you decide to set up a business in China town? And are you happy with being here?

A. ya my family here?

M: Is your family here? Do they also have business in China Town?

A: Yes. My uncle and aunt have businesses here.

M: Did anyone teach you about South Africa and South Africans before you came here?

A: Yes. My uncle, my aunty

M: Okay so were they here before you were?

A: ya

M: Okay, so what did you learn? What did they teach you about South Africans?

I: you can answer in Chinese.

A: it is really difficult to answer, even in Chinese.

I: what did you know about SA?

A: I heard that SA was not safe.

M: Did anyone teach you about what South Africans like to buy? When you think of the products you buy in South Africa and the ones they sell in China. Did anyone teach you about what South Africans like

A: Yah, my aunty told me

M: Okay, so she gave you some tips on what to put in your shop?

A. Yeah, But this is not my shop.

M: Oh it's not your shop? You're just the shopkeeper?

A:Its my aunty's shop.

I: how do you interact with your customers when they come to your shop?

A: Just speak English and greet them. Like asking them "how is your day" or "how are you".

M: Which kinds of customers come in here the most?

A: Most Coloured. Coloured people

M: Coloured people? Okay and what are the most successful items that are sold here? Like if you take into account all the products, which sell the best?

A: Dresses. Long dress

M: Why do you think that people buy long dresses?

A: Because there is no winter and summer is warm.

M: What tools or strategies, if any, do you use to communicate effectively with your customers

I: what strategies do you use to communicate with customers as you don't speak English?

A: I will just let them try the clothes

M: Are people usually friendly if they see that you don't speak much English?

A: no

M: So you don't get any rude customers?

I: is there rude customers?

A: No.

I: what type of customers is nice?

A: Black people.

M: Last question; what do you do to make your South African customers feel welcome in your shop?

I: what do you do to make south Africans feel welcome in your shop?

A: Just be friendly to them.

M: Okay thank you so much for participating in my interview

Interview 7

M. Can you tell me about yourself and where you grew up?

I: the first question, may you please introduce yourself, like whether you were born in SA?

A: I wasn't born in SA.

M. how long have you been living in South Africa?

I: how long have you been living in SA?

A: I came here in 2003.

M. what motivated you to move to South Africa and open up a business here?

I: what motives you to move to SA and why did you choose to open a business here?

A: My friend asked me to come here.

M. How did you decide where to put up your business, like the area?

I: this is kind of the same as the last question. Why did you choose to open the shop in this specific china town?

A: A lot of people opening their businesses here and I think here is a lot of opportunities.

M. So what factors play a role in choosing where to establish your business. Like what made you decide, what factors do you take into consideration, like do you look at the area, the people?

I: he has answered this question in the previous one.

A: The same as the last one.

M. So how would you describe the interaction that takes place between you and your customers? Is it friendly, is it business-like?

I: how do you communicate with your customers since you do not speak English?

A: Well, I price all the products in the shop. If customers like it, they will buy.

I: So you know some basic English about pricing.

A: Yes.

M. did you receive any prior intercultural communication skills before emigration to South Africa? So any communication skills you learnt that made you capable of speaking to South Africans?

I: Where did you learn English, including the simple, and basic part of English?

A: I only learnt English after I came to SA.

M. What tools or strategies, if any, do you use to communicate effectively with your customers?

I: what strategies or methods do you use to communicate with customers effectively? Do you use body language and gestures or do you ask your staff (here specifically means the black people working in the shop) for help?

A: Sometimes I ask my staff to help me. Sometimes I have to do it on my own.

M. Did you do any research regarding the preferences of South African customers as opposed to those in China such as fashion and jewellery and stuff? So how do you know what type of clothing they like?

I: how did you know about South African preferences and trend?

A: First the manufacturer provides me some options of what the current trend is. Then I have to pick things on my own based on my knowledge about the market preference, e.g. colour, size, price, etc.

M. Do you employ any strategies to make South Africans feel welcomed in your shop? How do you make them feel welcome?

I: this is the last question. What strategies do you use to make customers feel welcome?

A: That depends on the products, such as the quality and price of the products. If the quality is terrible, then customers would not buy no matter how cheap the stuff is.

I: do you give discounts to those who shop here really often?

A: yes, we do that. If the price is R150, then we can negotiate how much discounts the customer want, like R10 or R5.

[interview ended when customers walked in]



Interview 8

M. Can you tell me about yourself and where you grew up?

I: where did you grow up?

A: In china.

M. How long have you been living in South Africa?

A: 6 year and half.

M. What motivated you to come to South Africa and open a business here?

I: what motives you to come to SA and open a business here?

A: My friend had a shop here and called me to come over.

M. What factors play a role in choosing where to establish a business? Do you think about the area and how safe it is and the types of people that will be shopping here

I: Why did you choose to open a shop here? Because it is safe or busy?

A: It was busy in this area before.

I: you can answer in mandarin. Is it safe here? Or what attracts you to do your business here?

A: The level of safety is around average.

M. So you thought about safety?

A. Little safe, little not safe.

I: And what about the rents?

A: The rent is actually quite expensive.

I: what made you to open the shop here? You need to provide a proper reason.

A: My family chose the place.

M. Did you receive any prior intercultural communication skills before coming to South Africa?

I: Did you learn English before or after you came to SA? And who taught you English?

A: Before come. People talk English. My family speaks English. And I was listening to him when he was practicing at home.

M. what tools or strategies do you use to communicate effectively with your customers. So if you can't communicate with words, what else would you use to communicate effectively?

I: how do you communicate with customers if you cannot speak English properly?

A: If they don't understand we can call the lady to help.

M. Did you do any research about what type of clothing south Africans like? Like how do you know what type of clothing and jewellery and products they like?



I: did you do any research about SA preferences and fashion trend?

A: No. I did not do any research.

M. What do you do to make South Africans feel welcomed in your shop?

I: what do you do to make customers feel welcome?

A: Smiling. I will help the customers with the products in the shop.

M. Thank you



Appendix 3

	Product	Smiling	Speaking	Service
Interviewee 1	✓			
Interviewee 2		✓		
Interviewee 3		✓		
Interviewee 4		✓	✓	✓
Interviewee 5				✓
Interviewee 6			✓	
Interviewee 7	✓			
Interviewee 8	✓	✓		

Table 2 Store keepers' strategies for effective interaction



Attachment 1



Figure 1 China Town exterior

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Figure 2 China Town entrance

