Mediated actions and social practices: The case of service interactions in Persian shops in Sydney

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Table of Contents

Abstract viii

Statement of the candidate ix

Dedication x

Acknowledgements xi

Chapter 1. Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1

1.2 Immigration to Australia 3

1.3 Persian Shops in Sydney 5

1.4. Overview of the theoretical framework 6

1.4.1. Discourse 6

1.4.2. Conversation Analysis 8

1.4.3 Setting the scene: Service Interaction as a Social Practice 9

1.4.4 Definition of the Situation: The Frame of Service Encounter in Persian shops . 10

1.4.5 Footing 11

1.4.6 Goffman's Face and facework 12

1.4.7 Brown and Levinson's face 13

1.4.8 *Ta'arof* 13

1.5 Statement of the Inquiry 14

1.6 Significance of the study 17

1.7 Objectives and Scope: Addressing the Goffmanian question 17

1.8 Research Questions 19

1.9 Overview of the Thesis 21

Chapter 2: Theoretical Underpinning 23

2.1 Introduction 23

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings 23

2.3 Ontological Questions 24

2.4 Frame: The case of Persian shops 26

2.5 Mediated Discourse Analysis 29

2.6 The Essence of MDA 31

2.6.1 Mediated Action 32

2.6.2 Site of Engagement 40

2.6.3 Mediational Means 55
2.6.4 Practice 56
2.6.5 Nexus of Practice 57
2.7 Previous Research Findings on Service Encounter Discourse 59
2.7.1 Intercultural Communication 61
2.7.2 Politeness 65
2.7.3 Relational/interpersonal interactions versus transactional interactions 68
2.7.4 Institutional Talk 71
2.7.5 Non-verbal behaviour 73
2.8 Summary 75
Chapter 3: Spatial Engagement in *Persia* 77
3.1 Introduction 77
3.2 Site of Engagement as spatial engagement 79
3.3 The interaction order in *Persia* 81
3.3.1 Singles 82
3.3.2 With 83
3.3.3 Conversational encounters 84
3.3.4 Platform event 84
3.4 Discourses in Place in the shop 86
3.4.1 The *frontstage* and the *backstage* of the Persian shop 88
3.4.2 Special occasions and non-linguistic signs 90
3.4.3 The Persian Literature section 91
3.4.4 The Bulletin board as a *display space* 92
3.4.5 The music section 93
3.5 The *Historical Body* of the participants in the Persian shop 94
3.6 Conclusion 97
Chapter 4: Methodology 99
4.1 Introduction 99
4.2 Why a Qualitative Approach? 100
4.3 Linguistic Ethnography 103
4.4 Bringing Linguistics and Ethnography together 107
4.5 Motivational relevancies 108

4.6 How did my research begin? 109
4.7 Multi-perspectival approach 110
4.7.1 The Analyst's Perspective: Positioning the Ethnographic Researcher 115
4.7.2 The Participants' perspectives 120
4.7.3 The semiotic resource Perspective: Mediational means/Cultural tools 121
4.7.4 The social action perspective 123
4.7.5 The Socio-historical perspective 125
4.8 Data collection tools and procedures 126
4.8.1 Fieldwork 127
4.8.2 Audio recordings 131
4.8.3 Participant observations 132
4.8.4 Fieldnotes 134
4.8.5 The organization of the findings 137
4.9 Translating and transcribing interactions in the shop 139
4.10 Ethical considerations 141
4.10.1 Accessing the field setting 141
4.10.2 Gaining access to the research site 141
4. 11 Summary 143
Chapter 5: Identity 145
5.1 Introduction 145
5.2 Identity in Interaction 145
5.3 Membership Categorization Devices 147
5.4 Action, Category and Identity 152
5.5 Different stories, different identities 156
5.6 Establishing different identities in arguing 166
5.7 Conclusion 183
Chapter 6: Participation Framework and Footing 187
6.1 Introduction 187
6.2 Mediational Means and Participation Framework 188
6.3 Alignment and non-alignment in institutional and non-institutional social action 198
6.4 Alignment in storytelling 215

6.5 Conclusion 218
Chapter 7: Critical Moments in *Persia* 221
7.1 Introduction 221
7.2 Critical moments: Definitions 221
7.3 Strategies for conflict resolution: Interdiscursivity and Intertextuality 222
7.4 Mediational Means as a Source of Conflicts 239
7.5 Conclusion 253
Chapter 8: Narrative as talk-in-interaction 255
8.1 Introduction 255
8.2 Narratives as small stories in *Persia* 255
8.3 Narrative as a mode of knowledge 257
8.4 Narrative as accounts 265
8.5 Narrative and mediational means 269
8.6 Narrative at the site of engagement 275
8.7 Narrative as identity work 282
8.8 Conclusion 287
Chapter 9: Mediated Action in *Persia* 291
9.1 Introduction 291
9.2 Mediated Discourse Analysis 291
9.3 Service Encounters 292
9.4 Summary: Revisiting the research questions 293
9.4.1 Chapter 5: Identity in Interaction 293
9.4.2 Chapter 6: Participation framework and footing 295
9.4.3 Chapter 7: Critical moments 296
9.4.4 Chapter 8: Narratives in talk in interaction 297
9.5 Exploring Service Encounters 299
9.5.1 Definition of the situation 301
9.5.2 Bourdieu's Field 301
9.5.3 Community of Practice 302
9.5.4 Site of Engagement 304
9.5.5 Cultural tools 305
9.5.6 Discourses 307

9.5.7 History 308
9.7 Limitations of the study.....309
9.7 Implications for research into service encounters 310
9.8 Concluding remarks 312
References..... 313
Appendix 1: Transcription conventions 336
Appendix 2: Final Ethics Approval 337
Appendix 3: Information and Consent form 339

List of Figures

Figure 1: Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies (1978) 49
Figure 2: Frame: What is it that is going on here? (Definition of the situation: Working consensus) 59
Figure 3: The generic structures of a service encounter (Adapted from Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 64) 70
Figure 4: Cycles of discourse (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) 77
Figure 5: Singles in Persia 83
Figure 6: Conversation encounters in the shop 84
Figure 7: Panopticon interaction 85
Figure 8: The entrance 89
Figure 9: A "Haft Sin" setting in the shop (Front stage): a traditional table setting of Nowruz, the traditional Persian spring celebration 91
Figure 10: The literature section in the shop 91
Figure 11: The News Bulletin board at the entrance of the shop 92
Figure 12: The music section 93
Figure 13: A multi-perspectival research model (Candlin & Crichton, 2011) 112
Figure 14: The concepts framing the service interaction in a Persianshop in Sydney 139
Figure 15: Production Format of Extract 6.1 191
Figure 16: Byplay 196
Figure 17: Rekeying 215
Figure 18: Site of engagement: mediational means as a source of conflict 244
Figure 19: A map for service encounters research 300

List of Tables

Table 1: Research objectives 19
Table 2: Production format (production roles) and participation framework (reception roles) (adapted from Goffman, 1981) 36
Table 3: The different data types gathered for each of the four inner perspectives. 126
Table 4: Overview of the data collected 128
Table 5: Sample of fieldnotes 135

Abstract

Service encounters are a fundamental activity in everyday life whereby commodities and/or information are exchanged between a service provider and a customer. A service encounter is by nature a goal-oriented speech event. However, goals at service encounters are not simply limited to achieving business transactions; on the contrary, they incorporate a range of social and discursive practices. The current study focuses on the intersection of social action, practices and discourses produced and reproduced by the shop owners (a husband–wife team) and the customers within a site of engagement in a typical Persian shop in Sydney and the way they are interactionally realized. Unlike prior studies, which have tended to focus on verbal exchanges as units of analysis without paying much attention to the site of engagement, research on service encounters has recently shifted its focus toward an understanding of the social processes that underpin such verbal exchanges. The present study is situated within the framework of Mediated Discourse Analysis (Scollon, 2001) and Nexus Analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) in that it focuses on how the social practices imbricated in service encounters are always mediated by a range of mediational means, of which wording and text is only one. In such settings, joint actions are not undertaken exclusively through language use, but frequently incorporate nonverbal conduct and references toward material objects available in the physical environment. The findings are presented through a framework of focal themes, namely those of identity, participation works, critical moments, and narratives (small stories), which emerged from the analysis as having particular explanatory resonance. These focal themes form the central chapters of the thesis. The study foregrounds that a mediated discourse analysis of the practices embedded in service encounters provides a finer understanding of specific social practices and actions and local material contexts, which serve to ascribe social identities for shop owners and customers. It also concludes with a discussion of a critical reflection on the multi-perspectival and mixed methodological research orientation. The result of this critical reflection is a tentative map devised to best represent and capture the complexities of the face-to-face interactions that cross boundaries, and set the current study apart from previous studies of service encounters.

Statement of the candidate

I, Dariush Izadi, declare that this thesis titled "Mediated actions and social practices: The case of service interactions in Persian shops in Sydney" has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution, and represents an original contribution to the field of linguistics. All sources of information used are indicated in the thesis.

I certify that Chapter 3 was published in the Journal of *Multimodal Communication*. The paper went through a process of blind review and was accepted subject to a few revisions.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Reference number: 5201200542) on 9 October, 2012.

Student Number: 42529352

Dariush Izadi 30 October 2015

Dedication

To Chris Candlin

who has set me on the right path for my future.

To my parents

who helped set me on this path many years ago and who continue to sustain me through the highs and the lows. I am forever indebted to you.

To my amazing wife, Hedieh Sazesh

who has held my hand these last vital steps. Only she understands the heights and depths of the journey. I could not have done this without her. I am grateful for having you by my side throughout this study.

To my son, Aran

who was born during the period of time I was undertaking this study and who gave me a new identity.

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I am also grateful to the Higher Degree Research Office for granting me Macquarie University Postgraduate Research Funding (PGRF) that enabled me to present papers at international conferences (Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines-Loránd Eötvös University Budapest, Hungary, The BAAL (British Association of Applied Linguistics) conference-the University of Warwick, and Explorations in Ethnography, Language and Communication 5, Manchester) and to build long-term relationships with academics.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Service encounters are a fundamental activity in everyday life whereby commodities and/or information are exchanged between a service provider and a customer. Their importance is corroborated by the vast body of literature which has built up over the past years, and which continues to grow. In fact, scholars (Aston, 1988; Scollon, 2001a, 2001b, 2002) have stressed the importance of such mundane encounters and argued that actions such as buying a cup of coffee (Scollon, 2001a, 2001b) lighting a camping stove (Scollon, 2002), or buying a book (Aston, 1988) can enlighten how social practice (i.e., service encounters), discourse, identities and action are closely interwoven. These studies have demonstrated that the interaction between customers and shopkeepers is vital for the success of the service encounter. In addition, in the case of intercultural service encounters, studies have found that variations in what is deemed appropriate communicative behaviour (i.e., which verbal and non-verbal actions may give rise to customer satisfaction) may impede the success of the service encounter (Blue & Harun, 2003; Callahan, 2006a).

The main focus of previous studies on service encounters has thus far been on verbal exchanges as units of analysis and from a pragmatic point of view (see among many others Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2005; Márquez Reiter, 2004) as well as misunderstanding (Bailey, 1997, 2000a). While these findings are important and relevant aspects of research on service encounters, they alone do not provide a complete picture of the social processes that underpin such verbal exchanges. In order to explore this complexity and to bridge this gap, this thesis is therefore situated within the framework of Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001a, 2001b) and through the lens of Goffman's focal question '*what is it that is going on here*?' (1974, p. 8) in that it focuses on how the social practices imbricated in service encounters are always mediated by a range of mediational means (i.e., language and objects, of which wording and text are only one).

The clearest way to introduce this study is through the data itself. For instance, consider a moment in the events of a Persian ethnic shop in a multicultural city, Sydney.

A customer (i.e., a social actor, Persian or non-Persian) enters a shop, greets the shop owner (perhaps through a simple nod, or smile) and looks for the item(s) they are after. Having searched for what he or she needs, the customer takes the items to the counter, pays, and says good bye. So, what is involved here? What are the cycles in and out of

practices, materials, and discourses that come together in this encounter? How do these cycles shape our interpretation? What tools are needed to analyse these moments? Are there any critical moments? If so, how do the social actors manage to navigate those moments?

This thesis demonstrates methods of MDA (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001b) as a way of unpacking and tracking how the smallest actions, like paying, constitute key meaning-making practices (e.g., taking money out of one's pocket, viewing it, handing money over, counting, etc.) that signal literate abilities and identities.

The use of the MDA framework with a focus on Goffman's question "*what is it that is going on here?*" allows for a detailed examination of how all participants develop and maintain relationships through the ways in which they interact with each other. Additionally, it allows us to highlight the participants' roles in this process, providing a new perspective on research on service interactions. While the study focuses on (inter)action within Persian shops in Sydney, it is envisaged that the findings can be extrapolated to other settings (i.e., online service encounters, telephone service encounters, intercultural service encounters, conversational structure of service encounters) and in other ethnic groups or languages.

Specifically, the thesis explores an in-depth analysis of interactions occurring in one Persian shop in Sydney. This analysis has three key objectives, with primarily theoretical, methodological and practical relevance. The study focuses on the intersection of social action/practices and linguistic/discursive (i.e., relational/transactional) practices and the way they are interactionally realised.

The aim of this introductory chapter is to provide important background information that helps set the scene for the study. Section 1.2 below is concerned with Iranian immigration to Australia which provides a demographic basis for the current study. Section 1.3 supplies brief information about Persian ethnic shops and their locations in Sydney. This is followed by Section 1.4 which provides a brief overview of the theoretical framework for the study. Here, discourse analysis and conversation analysis are introduced, several relevant approaches are discussed, and the reasons for selecting MDA as the ideal methodological framework for the study are outlined. Section 1.5 discusses the research issues followed by Sections 1.6 and 1.7 which set out the significance of the study and the

objectives and scope of this research respectively. Section 1.8 formulates the research questions and, finally, Section 1.9 outlines the organization of the thesis.

1.2 Immigration to Australia

As a country with a strong recent history of immigration and that hosts people from dozens of nations, Australia presents an 'extreme' case of multilingualism. Australia's good reputation in humanitarian affairs, its low population, and growing economy (2011) have turned this country into a popular destination for Persian immigrants primarily from Iran. The Australian Government provided an opportunity for people from different parts of the world, including Persians, to migrate to Australia (Adibi, 1994) by abandoning the White Australia Immigration Policy and adopting a Multicultural Policy. The influx of Persians into Australia since the late 1970s has added a distinctive minority to the existing diversity of population of this country. The studies on Persian migrants in different parts of the world demonstrate that they have brought with them a strong sense of cultural history, family connectedness, and ethnic values (Ansari, 1992; Mahdi, 1998). However, they have also confronted many difficulties deriving from political, cultural, and financial complications (Bozorgmehr, 2000; Mobasher, 2006).

The initial stage of this movement was in 1979 immediately following the Islamic revolution in Iran, which substantially altered political and social conditions there. At the time of the revolution, a large number of Persian students were studying in American universities. The political instability of the country after the revolution meant many of these students decided to remain in the United States after their graduation (Daha, 2011). Following the revolution, the rate of Persian immigration to the U.S. increased dramatically as people were striving to escape religious and political persecution, economic instability and the effect of the war between Iran and Iraq. According to Bozorgmehr, Der-Martirosian, & Sabagh (1993), these immigrants mostly constituted skilled migrants, secular Muslims, members of persecuted religious minorities and educated individuals.

The 2000 U.S. census shows that 338,000 Persians are currently living in the United States. This, however, does not accurately represent the population of the Iranian-American community as the political and growing tension between Iran and the U.S. has prevented many people from self-identifying as Iranian (Mostashari & Khodamhosseini, 2004). In

2005, the Iranian Studies Group at Massachusetts Institute of Technology estimated that the actual number of Iranian Americans exceeded approximately 691,000.

However, there has been a significant decrease in the pace of the influx of Persians into the U.S. partly because of the Iranian hostage crisis of 1980 and the horrific terrorist attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2001. This has led many Iranian Americans to be subject to racism and prejudice, in spite of there being no Iranian involvement in the 9/11 attacks, and for Iranians who choose to migrate to the U.S., this has taken the form of visa refusals (Daha, 2011). Thus, the latter group has decided to go through immigration to some other Western countries. One of these countries in which Persians have prepared themselves to migrate to has been Australia.

One of the distinct features of Persian migration to Australia is the motives of migrants before or after the revolution. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), before the 1979 revolution, most of the migration from Iran to Australia was based on the service workers mainly in the oil industry as well as the earlier cohorts of students and economically-motivated immigrants. However, in 1981, Australia began a special humanitarian program in support of Baha'is who sought to escape religious persecution, leading around 2500 people to arrive under refugee programs. Furthermore, during the 1980s with the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq, and the 1990s with the political and economic hardship, many experienced professionals began to leave Iran for Australia (Adibi, 1994). These professionals have come to Australia under the Skilled and Family streams of the Migration program, resulting in an increase in migration to Australia by the turn of the century.

Socio-demographic data in 2006 has shown that 22,550 Persians live in Australia, a significant increase of 19.7 percent from the 2001 census. According to this survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011), in terms of the distribution by state and territory, New South Wales has the largest number of Iranian residents (11,940) followed by Victoria (4,430), Western Australia (2,190) and South Australia (1,760). It is likely that the strong presence of Iranians in Sydney, the state capital of New South Wales, can have an influence on their linguistic practices. The Persian immigrants, who have settled in different areas of Sydney, import their languages to the communities where they are situated. Hence, these communities are adding a new element of "plurilingualism to what is already a composite linguistic situation" (Barni & Bagna, 2010, p. 3).

1.3 Persian[1] Shops in Sydney

In multicultural cities like Sydney, many retail businesses can be viewed as 'ethnic'. These shops often have a location pattern different from the major supermarkets. Immigrants may perceive shopping opportunities as having distinct characteristics not only by the cultural meaning of these shopping spaces but also by their size and location. Spatially, Persian ethnic retail markets, like many others, are located in places where ethnic populations are concentrated. These cultural shopping places are readily distinguishable by the employees, the ethnicity of the owners, and customers as well as service languages provided, background music, merchandise mix, signage and indoor decor (Wang & Lo, 2007, p. 684). This is of major significance for the immigrants as the first generation shoppers want goods or services that are reminiscent of home (Popovec, 2006).

In addition, such businesses sometimes serve as a gathering place where immigrants obtain information and reinforce their social connections (Ehrkamp, 2005) . Many of these businesses provide opportunities for employment for migrants unable to find jobs within their pre-migration fields. These stores serve not only as a shopping space where purchases are made, but additionally as social spaces where individuals negotiate and renegotiate their identities through browsing, consuming the goods, and interacting with other co-ethnics (Wang & Lo, 2007). Customers' accounts of their shopping experience reveal that Persian ethnic shops provide a social and cultural space where self-identity can be promoted through browsing imported products.

Generally, most of the Persian ethnic shops are run by Persian husband-wife teams, sometimes with the help of siblings or children, or a few hired unrelated migrant Persians as employees with a few of the shops run by Afghans. The shops are open seven days a week, typically from 70 to 100 hours a week. Proprietors will often spend all these hours in their shops, especially when it is a small store or there are no children or siblings to assist. These Persian ethnic shops sell a variety of food products that are not available in mainstream Australian supermarkets (such as Coles or Woolworths) and which are imported from Iran. Additionally, the shops also assist their customers with other business, including the provision of the most recent Persian TV series and movies on DVDs; currency exchange and international money transfer; and selling telephone cards and

[1] In this thesis, I use the term "*Persian*" in the sense that it typically connotes the ethnicity and culture of which these retail shops are examples.

tickets for Persian concerts. Furthermore, the store serves as a convenience store and offers a wide range of non-ethnic items for general consumption such as milk, cigarettes, tobacco products, soft drinks, and confectionary.

Irrespective of the owners' profitability, what is worthy of attention is that ethnic shopping spaces, with their obvious cultural ambience, convey sophisticated cultural messages to individuals from the same ethnic community (Wang & Lo, 2007). This means through shopping practices such as interacting with their counterparts, ethnic minority consumers may become co-actors in producing a unique ethnic retail environment. In addition, Persian ethnic shops generally maintain strong cultural and economic ties to the Persian community and their business success has largely been guaranteed by their Persian customers' patronage. It would suffice to say that the ready availability of Iranian restaurants and ethnic food shops has contributed to some extent to the popularity of these shops.

Furthermore, the lay-out of the shops is such that there is also a section allocated to Persian literature. This section displays a good collection of pre-Islamic Persian literature, Persian literature of the medieval and pre-modern periods and poetry, Persian dictionaries as well as some references in relation to the history of Persia (Iran). According to one shop-owner, this collection provides excellent sources for the second generation who, born in Australia, can make themselves familiar with the culture of their parents.

1.4. Overview of the theoretical framework

The following section will outline the theoretical underpinning of the current study focusing on its theoretical context so as to provide a more specific understanding of the location of my research. This includes outlining the key terms, namely Discourse, Conversation Analysis, Mediated Discourse Analysis, and Goffman's definition of frame, footing, and facework as well as Brown and Levinson's use of the term 'face', and that of *ta'arof* (a ritual practice among Persians) on which this study draws heavily.

1.4.1. Discourse

An increasing number of studies pertaining to 'discourse analysis' have appeared in the last few decades. While it is impossible to devote separate attention to all the theoretical proposals put forward, one may identify some recurring themes which provide the theoretical background for any discussion of discourse. This section briefly focuses on the importance of 'discourse' on which this thesis is grounded.

In its broadest sense, discourse analysis is a general term for a number of approaches to analysing written, spoken, signed language use or any significant semiotic event. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, there is a wide range of analytical approaches to the study of discourse based in many different disciplines (Stubbe et al., 2003, p. 351). It can be seen as a sociolinguistic tool employed in a variety of qualitative approaches to studying socially situated but localised interaction, including interactional sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis and ethnomethodology to name a few. Discourse analysts are concerned with patterns of interaction within different contexts and with investigating what these patterns reveal about the way humans construct their identities and carry out their mundane everyday activities. Discourse, therefore, plays a significant role in many daily activities which are achieved through gesture, body language and actions, but additionally through talk alone (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005). However, clearly what is meant by the construct of 'discourse' in the literature relies heavily upon the researcher's disciplinary and theoretical orientation and their focus of inquiry.

As defined by linguistically focused discourse analysts, ethnomethodologists, pragmaticists, and ethnographers, the notion of 'discourse' often refers to a single spoken interaction or written text in a specific social context, or genre or unit of interaction such as meetings or conversations. Critical discourse analysts and social researchers, on the other hand, offer a broader and more complex definition, albeit focusing on the linguistic analysis of empirical texts in a context. These researchers view discourse as a multi-layered form of action (Layder, 1993; van Dijk, 1990). Such approaches strongly advocate the more abstract view of Foucault's orders of discourse and discursive practice, in which language and society establish each other (Foucault, 1982). Such a view of discourse refers to the totality of interactions in a given context such as media, medical or other institutional discourse and covers a much larger entity.

However, from an MDA point of view, and as a focal theme in this thesis, where discourse analysis is integrated with ethnography, the historical trajectories of individuals, institutions, and instruments involved in moments of social interactions are examined and linked (Scollon, 2001a, 2001b; Scollon & Scollon, 2004). As such, the social action of shopping in a Persian shop is the point of linkage of several social practices. Here, the social action is manifested in the linkage of practices and is not just conditioned by them (Scollon, 2001b, p. 159). Among the practices that can be analysed here are greeting (as an opening of negotiation), searching for an item, purchasing, and, many others which are

undetectable in transcript; such as queuing. The mediational means, (i.e., "cultural tools such as language, gesture, material objects and institutions" (Scollon, 2001b, p. 7)), through which this action is taken are artefacts such as money and a cash register, among others.

This view of discourse (MDA) is in line with Gee's definition of the term 'Discourse' (with a capital D (i.e., language with other "stuff"), whereas discourse with a small 'd' refers to any instance of language in use (i.e., a text (Gee, 2011, p. 28)). Drawing on his understanding of Discourses in the New Literacy Studies (Barton & Hamilton, 1998b; Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981), as well as his own work, for Gee (2011) a Discourse is:

> ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity. (p.28)

This definition highlights several crucial issues and occupies much territory. Central to this definition of a Discourse are associated participants (agents and their identities), aims and tasks (action). More importantly, how a Discourse is both linguistic (i.e., wordings) and non-linguistic involving power relationships, embedding an ideology, "privileging not only people and groups but their symbol systems" (Scollon, 2001b, p. 146), all play an important role in MDA. Following this definition, we can infer that a Discourse is identified with particular social practices in which these participants are engaged both by a realization of the identification with particular *institutional*, *organisational* or *professional* groups and by their own accounts.

1.4.2. Conversation Analysis

Although the current study does not take a conversation analysis (CA) approach *per se*, some CA strategies and techniques are proposed in the analysis and in the transcription processes and, therefore, a brief outline of the principal aspects of this approach seems necessary. CA has its roots in ethnomethodological studies (Garfinkel, 1967) and was developed into an invaluable tool within the field of sociology (Jefferson, 1988; Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 1972). CA relies heavily on naturally-occurring interaction, the focus of the current study, and is an approach to analysing spoken discourse that explores the way in which participants use talk-in-interaction to manage their everyday conversational interactions. For conversation analysts, *ordinary conversation* is the most fundamental way

in which friends, relatives, or others exchange information, maintain and negotiate social relations. However, it should be noted that other forms of talk-in-interaction are similar to ordinary conversation but drawn upon from this rudimentary form of talk. CA-based researchers are primarily interested in gaining an understanding of the study of the orders of talk-in-interaction at a micro level, exploring aspects such as conversation openings and closings (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), the turn-taking system (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), and repair (Jefferson, 1987).

A key feature of CA-based research is that the data gathered during fieldwork is used as the main source of information. Consequently, the analysis does not reflect on the participants' interactions supplemented by fieldnotes as a way of gaining information about the naturally-occurring data (discourse). In support of such data collection, conversation analysts maintain that the use of this type of data gathering represents idealizations about how spoken discourse works. This augments the view that CA attempts to shun beginning with assumptions about analytical categories in the analysis of talk-in-interaction. In doing so, they argue that talk is viewed as being "context-shaped" and "context-renewing" (Heritage, 1984) in the sense that talk is inherently sequential and that each turn or contribution is seen to display the participant's interpretation of the preceding utterance and in turn directly impacts upon subsequent utterances.

1.4.3 Setting the scene: Service Interaction as a Social Practice

At first glance, service encounters seem to be viewed as relatively rudimentary social practices. Turning to Merritt's (1976) definition of service encounter, one can assume that such interactions are predetermined by a limited set of actions with participants engaged in their institutional roles (i.e., shop keeper and customer). However, there are occasions where interpersonal and relational concerns are inextricably implied and have consequences in the talk and alignments between the participants in such settings (Aston, 1988), and thus are far more complex and unpredictable than they are often imagined. The position of a service provider, for instance, requires an ability to advise customers, to facilitate their choices, and to coordinate with other colleagues. In such settings, joint actions are not taken exclusively through language use, but frequently incorporate nonverbal conduct and references toward material objects available in the physical environment (Filliettaz, 2004, 2005).

From this perspective, this thesis is situated within the framework of Mediated Discourse Analysis (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001b) and Nexus Analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) through the lens of the Goffmanian question '*what is it that is going on here?'* in so far as it focuses on how the social practices incorporated in service encounters are always mediated by various types of linguistic and non-linguistic means. Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) is an action-oriented approach to Critical Discourse Analysis that views socio-cultural activity as its primary focus, which looks at a physical action as a unit of analysis rather than a strip of language. In this way, every action is simultaneously co-located within a local embodied community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and a far-reaching nexus of practice, defined as the "mapping of semiotic cycles of people, discourses, places, and mediational means involved in the social actions" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. viii). These practices are linked to other practices, discursive and non-discursive, over time to form nexus of practice.

The unit of analysis in MDA is the mediated action. This is the moment when social actors act in real time (i.e., the site of engagement) within complex nexuses of practice through the use of mediational means such as language and material objects. That is, MDA focuses on social action and only analyses language (e.g., discourse, texts) when it is used by social actors as a crucial mediational means in carrying out particular actions (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001b). In other words, the focus of MDA is not discourse per se, but the whole intersection of social practices of which discourse is a component. It explores, among other things, how, at that nexus, discourse becomes a tool for claims and imputations of social identity (Norris & Jones, 2005).

1.4.4 Definition of the Situation: The Frame of Service Encounter in Persian shops

Service encounters are by nature goal-and-task-oriented. Goffman (1963) claims that a service encounter is a 'face engagement' in which participants with specific goals conduct a mutual activity through the use of various communicative means. However, many studies of service encounters have shown that goals are not simply limited to achieving business transactions (Kalaja, 1989; Kidwell, 2000). These studies have reported that talk in service encounters is quite intricate and strategic with opportunities for interactants to participate in interpersonal and interactional relationships during their encounters.

Borrowing Bateson's term "frame" to address a situational concern, Goffman makes this fundamental statement: "My perspective is situational, meaning here a concern for what

one individual can be alive to at a particular moment" (Goffman, 1974, p. 8). This means when participants enter a social setting (i.e., Persian ethnic shops), they need to have prior knowledge and understanding of the situation and the participants involved. They require to know whether the situation is formal or informal, the various roles of the people, to whom they speak, and whom they avoid. In brief, knowing how to behave in any interaction, they face the question "*what is it that is going on here?*" (i.e., "*the definition of the situation*"). In other words, the definition of the situation is what people use to know what is expected of them and what is expected of others in a situation. Through the definition of the situation, people obtain a sense of the statuses and roles of those involved in the situation in order to know how to behave. These situations may have different interpretations as participants have multiple interests and generate what Goffman (1974) may refer to as "motivational relevancies" (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001).

In addition, the question "*what is it that is going on here?*" has its roots in Bourdieu's habitus (1977b), defined as "the regulative principle that underlies all cultural practices" (Harker & May, 1993, p. 173). This means that the reference to "it" and "here" should not bias one's interpretation to the singular or to the here and now in that participants in a social setting might be dealing with multiple events and what is going on in the present always has historical connotations and influences. Suffice to say that when we look back on "what it was that was going on there", our retrospective accounts, as participants or as otherwise involved parties are quite likely to differ markedly.

It is assumed that unlike non-Persian customers, Persian customers treat service encounters not just as occasions to exchange goods for money, but as opportunities for sociable, relatively personal conversation. Repeatedly in other researchers' observations and audiotaped records, the customers, on whom they have based their research, introduced topics of conversation that are unrelated to the business exchange, sharing humour, displaying relatively high levels of affect in their speech, and taking steps to increase their interpersonal involvement with the retailers.

1.4.5 Footing

The notion of footing is highly relevant to the current study in terms of, for instance, the use of small talk in Persian ethnic shops (i.e., during shopping) as it examines how these elements are utilized over the course of the interaction. Footing, drawn from Goffman (1981b), is referred to as "another way of talking about a change in our frame of events"

(p.128). In particular, what Goffman refers to as a change in footing implies "a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p.128). In other words, during an interaction, the role and relationships of participants can change. Any change of footing implies a shift in frame, which is a persistent feature of natural talk in real time situations.

For Goffman, these footings are essentially signals which participants send out by means of conscious and strategic semiotic choices (i.e., from the resources of language, discourse, and gesture that participants possess to varying degrees of competence and communicative expertise, which corresponds to what have been referred to as "contextualization cues" (Gumperz, 1977)).

1.4.6 Goffman's Face and facework

The notion of face and facework in (face-to-face) interaction has been the focus of sociolinguistic studies over past decades despite having been theorized in a number of different ways. Perhaps the most influential approach to the study of face that has dominated much of the debate especially in Linguistics so far has been Brown and Levinson's (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010) application of politeness theory, who acknowledge deriving their formulation from Goffman's classic account of face. Goffman's construct of face characterizes a theory of interaction whereby participants in any given setting act so as to protect the face of self and other. Goffman (1967) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p. 5) (e.g. in our Persian shop). A line can be defined as a "pattern" which displays "verbal and non-verbal" behaviour that conveys the individual's "evaluation of participants", especially of him/herself (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Here, Goffman views face as neither a private nor internalized property "lodged in or on his body", but rather as an image "located in the flow of events", advocated by other participants' accounts (including verbals and non-verbals) and anchored by "impersonal agencies in the situation" (Goffman, 1967, p. 7 see also ; Mao, 1994). This view of face (i.e., a public image on loan) is consistent with MDA, as a focal term in this thesis, whose goal is to focus on discourse in *action* (Scollon, 2001b), as opposed to discourse *as* action, whose focus is on texts. To maintain this public image, participants employ what Goffman refers to as "face-work" aiming "to designate the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face" (p.12), while

at the same time, intent on saving their own face (a "defensive orientation") and the other's face (a "protective orientation") (1967, p. 14).

1.4.7 Brown and Levinson's face

Brown and Levinson's interpretation of the concept of 'face' is best understood as an individual's public self-image (1987). They argue that when the speaker performs an act which may put the hearer or even the speaker in jeopardy and hence lose face, the speaker will be highly likely to employ a politeness strategy to reduce the risk involved. In taking a Durkheimian line (Durkheim, 1976 (1915)) of approach and withdraw (see Terkourafi, 2007), Brown and Levinson decompose 'face' into 'Positive face' and 'Negative face', which can be summarized in the following (Brown & Levinson, 1987): claiming that the notion of face and individual's interaction oriented to it is universal.

- *Positive face*: the want of every member that his/her wants be desirable to at least some others, and
- *Negative face*: the want of every 'competent adult member' that his/her actions be unimpeded by others (p. 62).

1.4.8 *Ta'arof*

When coming into contact with one another, participants with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds may subconsciously display verbal and non-verbal behaviours during their interactions, with the consequence that the possibilities of misunderstanding will be immense. Examples of cross-cultural misunderstanding are copious in the literature on sociolinguistics, intercultural communication and pragmatics (e.g., see Takahashi & Beebe, 1987a; Thomas, 1983; Wolfson, 1989). A good Persian example clarifies the issue here: An American nearly took possession of a Persian friend's coat when the Persian responded to the American's compliment with an English translated version of "*ta'arof*" "you can have it" (Assadi, 1980).

Ta'arof is one such behaviour in the Persian system of politeness that many writers have identified as an enormously complex concept (Assadi, 1980; Beeman, 1976a, 1986; Hodge, 1957; Koutlaki, 2002). In fact, any description or analysis of the Persian politeness system without referring to the notion of "*ta'arof*" would be inadequate and incomplete (Koutlaki, 2002). It is a fundamental and significant aspect of the Persian language (Hodge, 1957) defined as "a myriad of verbal and nonverbal deferential behaviours in

Persian" (Assadi, 1980, p. 221). *Ta'arof* plays a key role in establishing good and smooth relationships in a number of ways, as this thesis will demonstrate.

1.5 Statement of the Inquiry

The first problem in the field is related to the conflict and tension between people from different ethnic backgrounds in service encounters. A cursory look at the literature shows that some of the previous studies on service encounters in ethnic shops have examined the negative aspects (i.e., misunderstanding or stereotypes involved in intercultural communication). A large number of these studies on Korean immigrant - African American interactions, for instance, seem to have restricted their analytical domain to the framework of the unsuccessful and problematic nature of the interactions (e.g., Bailey, 2000a; Jo, 1992; Min, 1996). These studies hold the view that, irrespective of the different claims of each study on what brings about the conflict and issues, frequent misunderstanding and conflict are inherent and bound to happen in interactions between these two ethnic groups. However, to address the overly emphasized nature of the presumed conflicts between Korean immigrant - African American interactions, Ryoo (2005) suggested that there was a need to also examine the cooperative and friendly nature of interactions between the two groups. The result of her research produced abundant evidence of intercultural friendliness and cooperation between them. It seems that the studies mentioned above have focused only on part of the characteristics of the interactions (i.e., problematic and friendly). The current study, by contrast, draws on an interdisciplinary approach because there is much more than language involved in producing these discourses.

Another noticeable problem in the field of this research is related to the definition of the term "service encounters". Within the body of some research, the term has been used to include the interactions at the point of payment, where customers bring their items to pay, hence focusing on the basic structural patterns of the events in such social settings whilst paying little attention to the (inter)action. In others, the term has been used to refer to the domain of "pragmatics", referring to an understanding of the relationship between form and context that enables us, appropriately and accurately, to express and interpret the intended meaning (Murray, 2010), (i.e., speech acts including suggesting, requesting, apologizing), where the focus has been on cultural variation, thus pertaining to how different the degree of directness is or how formal, deferent and explicit the requests are.

In addition, in early studies of service encounters, interactions in such events mainly consist of simple business transactions, which involve information transmission such as the availability or prices of items (Merritt, 1976; Mitchell, 1957). However, more recent studies hold the view that not only do interactions in service encounters exhibit the business-oriented aspect of language, but also show the interactional aspect of language. In fact, a number of studies on service encounters have provided ample evidence that interaction in service encounters do have complex and dynamic aspects in as much as the customers' needs must be met and balanced with the abilities of the seller or service provider. Many studies show that service encounters provide participants with opportunities to establish interactional and interpersonal relationships during their service interactions (Aston, 1988; Lamoureux, 1988). One reason for such discrepancies in previous studies in service encounter is that these studies have solely focused on one aspect of the interaction. This does not mean to place less emphasis upon the findings achieved up to now but some aspects of the field should be widened to enable the possibility of further inquiry.

Furthermore, it has been documented that little attention has been paid to service encounter contexts in ethnic shops in Australia (Alcorso, Castles, Collins, Gibson, & Tait, 1995). In multicultural cities like Sydney, many retail businesses can be viewed as ethnic. These shops are spacious and often have a location pattern different from the mainstream stores. Migrants may perceive shopping opportunities as distinct behaviour not only by the cultural aura of these shopping places but also by their size and location. In addition, ethnic businesses have an important role as a gathering place where "immigrants obtain information" (Ehrkamp, 2005) and reinforce their social connections within their community.

The literature also reveals that while there have been some contrastive studies on the interactions in service encounters in ethnic shops in other languages, no attempt, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has been made to investigate such interactions in Persian ethnic shops. It seems that service encounters in Persian ethnic shops, at least in the Australian context, have been largely left unexplored.

Perhaps the most important issue to consider in this study of social interaction is with the shop owners' limited proficiency in English. The differences between Persian and English make achieving communication difficult where the shop owners have limited opportunities for study. This difficulty is even experienced amongst shopkeepers who have been in

Australia for thirty years or so, but still cannot understand English spoken at native speed and many seem to feel embarrassed about speaking it because of their limited proficiency. Shop owners' English quickly becomes adequate for routine business transactions - even the least fluent speakers were able to execute them - but English does not necessarily continue to improve beyond that. Shop owners do not have time to study English because they are in their shops most days, and when in their stores, they frequently read Persian newspapers, watch Persian TV, or listen to Persian radio programs.

Though limited English is sufficient for straight-forward business transactions, many shop owners have difficulty with speech activities that require more sophistication, (e.g., explaining why a price on a product is as high as it is). Several shop owners expressed frustration at their inability to make such explanations to customers. When confronted with a complaint about a price, it is easier to remain silent than to struggle to explain, in limited English, business practices. Shop keepers' limited English proficiency can also prevent them from defusing situations involving potential conflict (e.g. questions about prices) through talk.

More generally, limited English proficiency constrains the depth and type of interaction that store-owners can have with customers. It is more difficult to make small-talk, share humour, or access personal information through communication. Whereas restrained politeness can be expressed by not using the verbal channel (i.e., silence) involvement politeness requires more complex verbal activities, (e.g. using in-group identity markers, showing interest in the other's interests, and sharing humour). Finally, shop keepers frequently speak to each other in Persian, even in the presence of customers. This has an alienating effect, and some customers not only feel excluded but become suspicious that they are being put down to their face in a language they do not understand.

Specific contextual features of these service encounters have a dramatic effect on the talk and interaction that takes place in them. Few of the shop owners are proficient in English, for example, which hinders interpersonal involvement with customers. Most retailers work the equivalent of between two and three full-time jobs, leaving them exhausted, and with no energy to chat socially. Such specific contextual features of these service encounters are intertwined with macro-economic and socio-historical conditions that affect retailers' and customers' behaviour and channel interpretations of each other.

All the above suggests that there is a great need for developing more systematic tools to analyse what is really going on in actual interactions in Persian ethnic shops, particularly between the shop owners and their Persian and non-Persian customers.

1.6 Significance of the study

The results of this study can be helpful on a number of grounds to shed light on many issues related to intercultural communication in ethnic shops. First, the results of this research can partly show what constitutes possible communication barriers in Persian ethnic shops in a migration context. The findings of such miscommunication are unique and particularly informative in that they can cast light on what constitutes these obstacles for the non-Persian participants. Although there have been some comparative studies on offers and expressions of thanks as face enhancing acts (Koutlaki, 2002), there have been no studies to explore and tackle such problems in a migration context in Persian where Persian is locally (i.e., in the shop) dominant but English is dominant in the wider (multicultural but English-dominant) community.

Second, the analytical model (Mediated Discourse Analysis) utilised in this study can be applied to similar studies on service encounters in other ethnic shops. The rigorous procedures employed in this study can also provide practical guidelines for future researchers on how to develop a study of this kind. Similar research techniques can be elicited from the systematic and iterative steps. The theoretical framework of this study is unique in that it examines the social practices imbricated in service encounters drawing on Mediated Discourse Analysis. This approach is compatible with and, in fact, particularly useful as a unit of analysis for the current research and has been widely suggested in the literature (Filliettaz, 2005; Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001b).

Lastly, the results of this study can move us away from a merely linguistic perspective to a more holistic sociolinguistic perspective, one which can clarify the possible roles of society and social dimensions.

1.7 Objectives and Scope: Addressing the Goffmanian question

As discussed earlier, this thesis will consider the ways in which instances of interactions and critical moments (Candlin, 1987) in such interactions in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney are instantiated in some selected cases drawn from the corpus collected between 2012 and 2014. The study is positioned within a multidisciplinary space; as such it is based broadly within the disciplinary framework of MDA (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon,

2001b), but also draws on concepts and analytical tools from a range of related discourse and interactional analysis, with additional links to applied linguistics and organizational communication.

Additionally, this study makes a contribution to our understanding of service encounters by isolating two structurally distinct types of encounter in Persian ethnic shops; following Bailey (Bailey, 1997) socially restricted service encounters and socially expanded service encounters, and identifying cultural preferences for each structure. According to Bailey (1997), in socially restricted service encounters, talk focuses overwhelmingly on the business transaction at hand whereas socially expanded service encounters are ones in which there is talk and interaction that is not directly tied to the business exchange, (i.e., discussion of personal topics such as experiences outside the store).

The analytical focus is on the aspects of social action of everyday or 'backstage' ("a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (Goffman, 1959, p. 114)) spoken discourse between Persian shop owners and their customers (Persians/-non-Persians), as opposed to public or 'frontstage' ("the place where the performance is given", Goffman, 1959, p.110) institutional or organizational settings such as professional-client interactions. The primary data examined therefore comprises naturally occurring talk-in-interaction collected as part of routine activities, supplemented by a variety of ethnographic data, including information based on observations, interviews, and other forms of dialogue with participants related to the interactions analysed.

Accordingly, the overall aim of this project is to examine the proposition that a comprehensive understanding of "*what is it that is going on in Persian ethnic shops?*" and of cases of critical moments requires the flexible application of a robust multi-layered approach (i.e., MDA) which incorporates multiple theoretical perspectives, analytical methods, and data sources. From a review of the literature (see Chapter 2), it can be observed that there is a considerable gap in the systematic exploration of the nature of Discourse (i.e., language and other "stuff", Gee, 2011) in institutional settings in general. The following general research objectives will be addressed through the analysis of interaction and interviews from Persian ethnic shops in Sydney to be presented in Chapters 5 to 8. These objectives are related in turn to theoretical, methodological and practical aims as follows:

Table 1: Research objectives

Objective 1 (Theoretical) To problematize and systematically explore a set of relevant theoretical approaches to the concepts of 'what is going on in Persian shops' via empirical investigation of naturalistic data
Objective 2 (Methodological) To build the specifications for a methodological and analytic framework which is robust enough to account for the complexity of interactions in Persian ethnic shops
Objective 3 (Applied/Practical) To identify and describe the range of communication problems that typically arise in the contexts of Persian ethnic shops, and the strategies used by the people in such social settings to maximize the effectiveness of their communication and to prevent or repair miscommunication and problematic talk

While individual questions are identified as targeting a particular perspective, the specific focus of each question will also inevitably crossover into the domains and sites of MDA perspectives. Furthermore, the findings concerned with that question and perspective will almost always have direct implications for the findings and/or analyses of other perspectives. It is also important to note that the process of formulating questions is closely linked to the methodologies available in MDA. This means questions are often formed with certain methodologies in mind, and methodologies are selected for the toolbox with the particular orientation of the research in mind. More specific details of the methodological orientations and the tools used will be provided at the beginning of each of the Findings chapters.

1.8 Research Questions

In examining the Goffmanian question "*what is it that is going on here?*" and exploring an in-depth analysis of the interactions from a range of Persian ethnic shops in Sydney, a number of research questions are addressed. These questions formed part of the original research proposal, and were concerned with my personal experience, as well as with anecdotal evidence from customers and shopkeepers. Firstly, I seek to determine in what sense ethnic shops can be identified as "ethnic". I will then move on to analyse Goffman's notion of a participation framework and how it is understood by all participants (shopkeepers and customers) within such shops and hence impacts upon the dynamics of everyday interaction. Further, I aim to consider the critical moments of such shops as revealed by narratives.

To problematize the above, this thesis sets out to address the following questions:

1- In what sense can ethnic shops be categorized as 'ethnic'?

This research question is designed to address the issue of the identification of ethnic shops in terms of their ethnicity and identity of the participants in interaction. I consider this important to address in that due to the nature of such ethnic shops, the interaction taking place might be uncertain in terms of its ethnicity. This chapter, therefore, explores in more detail the construction of (ethnic) identity in interactions through sequences of talk focusing on membership categories (young, expert etc…) and category-implicative descriptions (I am a grandfather). Specifically, I will address the following sub-questions:

1a) What communication resources do such encounters require?

1b) What are the affordances?

1c) What are the constraints?

2- What is the participation framework of these shops?

This question addresses the interactive organization of Goffman's participation frameworks, exploring how they are framed during moment-to moment interaction and focusing on the role of participants during interaction, which is an integral element of this thesis. A temporary change of footing (see Section 1.4.4 above) in talk shifts responsibilities from the speaker to the hearer and is centred upon the accomplishment of an interactional task. Based on the analysis of the participants' interaction in the shop, I aim to probe into how (and why) the participants take up certain roles. Specifically, I will address the following sub-questions:

2a) Who is involved?

2b) What roles do these participants play?

2c) How do they differ?

3- What are the critical moments which occur in these encounters?

In Persian ethnic shops in Sydney there are at least two main languages that might be spoken namely English and Persian. Due to cultural and linguistic differences of the participants' backgrounds, each group might show verbal and non-verbal interaction by being more friendly and/or polite to each other. In addition, despite the fact that the customers and shopkeepers might contend that they are involved in a service encounter; they may have differing views of the types of activities that form a service encounter and

the appropriate means for participating in and achieving those activities (referring to Bourdieu's habitus). Therefore, due to the participants' conflicting habitus, there might be occasions of "critical moments", referring to "those moments within the processes and practices of a crucial site of engagement in which the participants identify and orient to the occurrence (or the potential occurrence) of contradictions arising among conflicting orders of discourse" (Candlin, 2001, p. 188). Following Candlin (2001), I aim to explore the characteristics of such "Discourse" (Gee, 2011) in which the participants engage to "seek information…give advice…recount troubles…make decisions, reason and eliminate hypotheses" (Candlin, 2000, p. 10). Therefore, I will look into the participants' experiences of critical moments with the following sub-questions:

3a) What constitutes the critical moments in interaction in these shops?

3b) What are the communicative challenges which arise from participants in managing these critical moments?

3c) What discursive strategies do such participants employ in the management of such challenges?

4- **What kinds of social actions do members of the community accomplish through their telling?**

As discussed by Sarangi (2008, p. 172), small stories can decode the "cultural and symbolic order". During their shopping, participants can actually use stories in everyday, mundane situations to create and perpetuate a sense of who they are. Specifically, I aim to explore the following sub-questions:

4a) Who are the participants?

4b) What kinds of topics are discussed?

4c) Why are certain types of narratives told at certain moments in *Persia*?

1.9 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has served as the introductory chapter and has dealt with the purpose of the study. It has presented the problems that will be investigated, the organization of the study, and in-depth background to the study. Chapter 2 provides important contextual information about the study by presenting a conceptual framework for service encounters. It further provides an overview of some of the key theories that underpin such encounters followed by the findings from previous studies on service encounters. Chapter 3 aims to investigate

human social action at the site of engagement, which has been overlooked in previous research findings in service encounters, in *Persia*, which is replete with mediational means (objects) and social actors. Specifically, this chapter will explore how "cycles of discourse" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), which are embedded in social action, take place within a site of engagement at a nexus of some aggregate of discourse in real time and space. Chapter 4 addresses the methodological questions and the research methods employed in the current study, outlining in more detail the nature of the data that was collected and the methods of transcription and analysis that were developed.

Chapters 5-8 are the data chapters in the thesis comprising the orientation of the data together with a discussion of the results of the fieldwork. These chapters further tease out the theoretical and methodological issues canvassed in earlier chapters, but also address more substantively the objectives of the research, by presenting a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the particular communication patterns. Chapter 5 examines the identification of Persian shops and the ethnicity and identities of the participants, which looks at the ways in which the discourse of "ethnicity" in relation to Persians and non-Persians has been constructed during the participants' shopping experience in Persian shops. Chapter 6 provides analyses of the interactive organization of Goffman's participation frameworks. The chapter includes insights into the ways in which participants take up certain roles and develop and maintain relationships through interaction with one another. Chapter 7 focuses on the discursive strategies used by the participants for managing possible miscommunication and critical moments in this setting and for optimizing the communicative effectiveness. Chapter 8 broadens the scope of analysis by turning to narrative discourses in the data. The chapter draws these discourses through an examination of personal narratives. Examining narrative also provides another angle from which to view how the study's participants negotiate social belonging and exclusion in a larger discourse unit.

In Chapter 9, the concluding chapter, I discuss this study's main findings in relation to the research questions, emphasise the findings about constructions of the participants' identity, and then highlight what gaps my study has filled before suggesting several promising avenues for future investigations. These include examining other sources or types of data, conducting ethnographic research on ethnic shops, adding more perspectives to comparative studies, and introducing other inquiries about the nature of such ethnic shops. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the limitations of this study.

The facts of human natural history that throw light on our problem, are difficult for us to find out, for our talk passes them by, it is occupied with other things. (In the same way we tell someone: 'Go into the shop and buy . . .' – not 'Put your left foot in front of your right foot etc. etc. then put coins down on the counter, etc. etc.') Ludwig Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, 1980

Chapter 2: Theoretical Underpinning

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 places the thesis within the realm of the Goffmanian question *"what is it that is going on here?"* (Goffman, 1974, p. 8) through the lens of Scollon's Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) (Scollon, 2001b). In the previous chapter, I have attempted to outline and provide the motivation for my study of 'service interactions' in Persian shops. The aim of this chapter is to situate this study within previous scholarly attempts to describe, interpret and explain the interactions involved in such encounters. One additional purpose here is to carry out a general critical evaluation of the research relevant to my research theme (Sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6). A further purpose is to set out what has been revealed in other relevant research studies as a basis for the findings of the current study (Section 2.7). The following review draws extensively from theories pertinent to 'Service Encounters' so as to build a platform from which to explore social, cultural and linguistic factors which influence the interactions observed in the Persian shops.

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

Researchers from many different disciplines have been increasingly utilizing discourse analysis (the study of language in context, see Chapter 1 Section 1.4.1) in its various forms as an analytical tool to explore interaction in organizational settings (Candlin, 2002b; Holmes, 2006a; Iedema, 2003; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999). In fact, as observed by Candlin (2006):

> it has become something of a commonplace to assert that workplaces are in some sense held together by the communicative practices to which they give rise, or even, more boldly, that such communicative practices constitute the work of the workplaces themselves (p. 21).

According to Jaworski and Coupland (1999), discourse has become so important and indispensable a tool that it is used to interpret and gain a better understanding of not only "society and human responses" but also "language itself" (p.3). Nonetheless, many

practitioners in the field intent on applying discourse analysis to their studies encounter a wide range of prospects as to what is considered as discourse and how best to investigate it. Researchers from the perspective of their own field of studies have identified a wide range of analytical approaches to the study of discourse under the banner of discourse analysis (Stubbe et al., 2003). Van Dijk (1995, p. 459), for instance, has referred to it as "the creative chaos of an exciting new discipline"; and Coupland, Sarangi and Candlin (2001, p. xiv) have described this excess and plenitude as the "radical heterogeneity" of discourse analysis. This profusion has been in part engendered by the interdisciplinary origins of the term discourse (Crichton, 2010). As Fairclough (1992a) argues, "discourse is a difficult concept, largely because there are so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints" (p.3).

Accordingly, there is an apparent lack of consensus on what exactly is meant by the term 'discourse'. In order to reach a clearer consensus, then, the researcher must investigate this perspective by identifying and addressing certain important clarificatory questions. Following Crichton (2010) and Candlin and Crichton (2013), these can be broadly classified into three types: namely ontological and methodological questions (which will be addressed in Chapter 4 of this thesis) as well as the questions addressing the relationship between these (Chapter 3). In the following section, I briefly summarize the main argument underpinning the ontological type of question and relate this argument to the current study and to MDA more generally.

2.3 Ontological Questions

Ontological questions are concerned with the conceptualization of 'discourse' as a term (i.e., its nature). Such questions can provide the researcher with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the relationship between language and the settings in which it is used and how social theory, in its various forms, can contribute to this understanding (Hammersley, 2007; Sarangi & Candlin, 2001). Additionally, they can address the question of the relationship between macro- and micro social phenomena (Layder, 1993). In sum, these questions can shift our focus onto the problem of explaining context, a problem which "stands at the cutting edge of much contemporary research into the relationship between language, culture, and social organization, as well as into the study of how language is structured in the way that it is" (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992, p. 32).

In order to address this issue of the relevance of *social contexts*, and in particular reference to the theme of this thesis, Bourdieu's construct of field (1985) can play a significant role in identifying how the service encounter within Persian ethnic shops as a discourse can be seen as context. This in essence implies the need for closer engagement between linguistics and sociology at the point of theory (Coupland, 2001; Sarangi & Candlin, 2001). As Linell argues, the social context is characterized by both stability and change, but social theory seems to be a place where stability is emphasized and dynamism marginalized (Linell, 2001, p. 121).

Bourdieu (1989) argues that field can be seen in terms of a historical and current relation between positions that are anchored in the construct of capital. These positions within fields are taken by participants (agents) who have a stake in the operation of the field. For instance, in the field of the Persian shops, service providers (shop owners) and their customers (Persians/non-Persians), social actors in MDA terms (Scollon, 2001b), are two types of agents who each possess their own particular stakes in the operation of such a field. The positions (i.e., that of the Persian shop owner seen as the connoisseur of Persian values, for example) of the agent in the field are, in Bourdieu's terms, determined by the weight and amount of the capital such shop owners possess. To exemplify this, Bourdieu's linguistic marketplace (1991) annunciates the idea of "field" and also "capital". According to Bourdieu, language interaction corresponds to a marketplace, dependent on the degree to which an individual's economic activity requires knowledge of the standard variety, whose goods are words and the speaker's linguistic capital (i.e., ways of speaking). These words and speaking have different values which may be invested with the capital value of the states' of the speaker. The other may have to do with the economic power of the speaker. The meaning of such *capital* is arbitrary and dependent on the agent. The shopkeeper's words may, for example, be more valuable than that of a customer's in the context of the Persian shop.

"A field," Wacquant (1992) argues, "consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)" (p. 16). It refers both to the totality of actors engaged in an area of social practice as well as to the organizations and institutions involved in that area of social or cultural production (e.g., Persian shops) (DiMaggio, 1979, p. 1463), representing these conditions.

A further question posed by Bourdieu (1977b) relates to his construct of habitus. Habitus is seen by Bourdieu (1977b) as a mental or cognitive system, which is an internalized

embodiment of external social structure that people acquire over the course of a lifetime. Further, habitus can be seen as a structure through which people produce their thoughts and actions so as, in turn, to create their internal social structures. Habitus both structures the social world and it is naturally structured *by* the social world. Thus, habitus can be viewed as the collective schemata of experience and perception through the biological individual. Furthermore, because habitus can be shared among groups of people that have some commonality of experience, it can also be viewed as a collective phenomenon.

A key point about habitus is that it constrains, but does not determine thoughts and action. In other words, thoughts and actions are constrained in the manner that habitus only suggests what a person should think or how a person should act. Even so, according to Bourdieu, people do not act blindly according to their habitus. Rather, they act based on what Bourdieu (1990) calls "practical sense" (p. 68) or "fuzzy logic" (p. 87) of their understanding of the context in question.

Accordingly, Bourdieu's twin constructs (field and habitus) are particularly relevant for this thesis in that its focus is centrally placed on the social context of participant action and how such a context can impact on participant interaction. Here, habitus plays a fundamental role in that it highlights how people in a certain setting, as here that of a Persian ethnic shop in a migration context like Sydney, develop a specific mentality and attitude toward a language and culture and which in turn impacts on their interactional actions. That is to say, people's habitus is shaped and constructed in a certain way by virtue of their beliefs, desires, and intentions.

The following discussion now turns to an overview of Goffman's notion of frame and frame analysis, which explains how frames - ways to organise experience in a particular setting (i.e., Persian shops) - structure an individual's perception of the organization of experience (Goffman, 1974). A frame is a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives that organise experiences and guide the actions of individuals, groups and societies. Frame analysis, then, is the study of the organization of social experience. Accordingly, an understanding of this can be useful in the analysis of how an issue is defined and problematized in Persian shops in Sydney.

2.4 Frame: The case of Persian shops

As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, the construct of frame was first termed by British sociologist, Gregory Bateson, in 1956 (Goffman, 1974), who observed otters playing in a

zoo. Bateson was interested in gaining an understanding of how the otters could comprehend the difference between playing or fighting.

Following Bateson, Goffman (1974) utilises the construct of frame to refer to "definitions of a situation that are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events, and our involvement in them" (pp. 10-11) and what he calls 'the organization of experience' or 'the structure of experience individuals have at any moment of their social lives'. In this sense frames roughly correspond to what is captured in Bourdieu's term habitus. In sum, the term frame is associated with how participants in a particular social setting (e.g., Persian shops) may refer to knowledge and experience being cognitively stored, and augmented by experience. For example, our experience will enable us to recognise that someone is criticizing or teasing. We can refer to such a frame "teasing" or "joking" and respond accordingly (O'Grady, 2011). Consequently, a frame permits participants to determine what is going on in a situation and what roles are being assumed by themselves and other primary participants.

Goffman (1959) argues that when participants of a social setting enter into a field (as per Bourdieu), they must arrive at the definition of the situation, known as "frame". Goffman regards this definition as "working consensus" which involves "not so much a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured" (p. 4). This process involves negotiation about the situation concerning the power relation, the status and social distance between the participants, thus in line with Bourdieu's habitus. This negotiation is an ongoing process in all types of interaction, be it institutional or relational/interpersonal.

In any interaction, participants place reliance on their expectations that "particular sounds, words, objects, topics, ways of speaking, interaction structures, roles, situations and so on" (Rampton, 1995, p. 31) will combine with one another to relatively determine the situation in which they are engaged. For participants to work out the definition of the situation, they need to see the connections between things in present and "things we [they] have experienced before or heard about" (Tannen & Wallet, 1993, p. 15). This 'working consensus', which is based on the assumptions derived from experiential knowledge and experience (or habitus), allows us to make sense of the world in which we live and make up "much of our everyday, common-sense knowledge of social reality" (Rampton, 1995, p. 31).

While the current study draws on Goffman's frame, borrowing Bateson's notion of frame (1955 (1972)) to refer to the participants' interpretation of the ongoing interaction, as its fundamental framework, it is crucial to note that there are other overlapping terms that concisely express similar notions to "frame", namely *schema* and *scripts*. The meanings of these terms may be different from discipline to discipline according to the researcher's understanding of the particular term. Tannen (1993), for instance, thoroughly discusses the terms 'schema', 'frames' and 'script' illustrating the intricacy of these terms and the ways in which they can be utilized. She, nevertheless, views these concepts as "structures of expectations" (p.16), arguing that individuals gain their knowledge of the world according to their experiences of the world (habitus) in any given situation (such as in the case of Persians versus non-Persians). They will extend this knowledge to "predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences" (Tannen, 1993, p.16).

Tannen[1] (1993) stresses that frames are interactional, dynamic and non-static, and are dependent upon individuals' ongoing and frequent assessments of their own role(s) and that of their counterparts, on a turn by turn level, in a given situation. An interaction frame (Tannen & Wallet, 1993) is therefore seen as a snapshot which captures what is happening at a particular moment, thus contributing to interpreting what is going on and arousing expectations about what may happen next. Within a frame, a participation framework (Goffman, 1981a) arises, which exhibits the relationship between interactants (e.g., institutional roles such as that of a Persian shopkeeper, salesperson and client), and which alters and adapts accordingly to the interaction between the speaker and listener. Goffman provides a definition of participation roles, which are associated with the relation of a member of a participation framework to an utterance. Participants acquire their status in a speaker or a hearer role, hence assuming their places in the participation framework for each moment of speech (see 2.6.1.1 for further discussion on participation framework).

In order to understand the complexity of face-to-face interactions between participants and between people from different backgrounds (e.g. Persians-non-Persians in a Persian ethnic shops) and to work out what they do with *language*, they have to be positioned socially, situated in the moment, and we need to seek to engage with an inside account of what is going on in a particular situation. From this perspective, interactions between service

[1] Tannen's view of frame is always seen through a kind of interactional lens, on which the current research is also grounded.

providers and clients can be viewed as a very relevant domain of investigation for Scollon's Mediated Discourse Analysis (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001b), and Nexus of Practice (Scollon, 2001b). The reason for this resides in the fact that social practices (interactionally) occur in a site of engagement; for example, asking for the price or for the availability of a product in a Persian shop. As sites of engagement are constantly repeated, the outcome of such intersections is a nexus of practice (Scollon, 2001b, pp. 3-5; Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

In the following, I will explain how these different methodologies can triangulate (using more than one method to gather data) the instances or critical moments of interaction in the Persian shops.

2.5 Mediated Discourse Analysis

As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, this thesis sets out to address the Goffmanian question "*what is it that is going on here?*" (Goffman, 1974, p. 8) in Persian shops in Sydney, adopting Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) as its methodological and theoretical framework.

To take on an in-depth examination of human social interaction as human communication, verbal or non-verbal, one must scrutinize the intertwined mediation of different modalities (Jewitt, Kress, & Mavers, 2009). This means when we interact with one another, we tend to subconsciously bring together gesture, gaze and other aspects of the material surrounding us to form coherent courses of action. In fact, "our very *presence* without any wording at all is multimodal" (personal communication with Candlin, 2014). Here, Norris and Jones (2005) argue, our interpretation of a social situation (frame) in a face-to-face interaction should not be limited to discourse in terms of wording itself. In this way, as Scollon (2001a, 2008a) maintains, one would have a distorted and incomplete picture of what is going on in a social event. In other words, we would understand very little about the instances and the structure of such interactions were we to explore just the worded discourse. The reason resides in the fact that a social situation does make better sense when the relationship between action and discourse that social actors take with it is carefully analysed.

The essence of the approach taken by MDA is an attempt to integrate discourse with social action. This integration has been proposed as an alternative to approaches to discourse that view social action as secondary and approaches to social analysis taking discourse as

secondary (Scollon, 2001b). MDA tries to focus on and identify the complexity of the social action by not favouring either, but by viewing discourse and its wording as one of many tools available for participants upon which they draw to take action. From this point of view, MDA takes the position that not only are discourse and action closely connected (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) but also these connections are oftentimes less explicit, and thus in need of more careful theorization (Scollon, 2001b, p. 1).

Scollon, along with other scholars, views the relationship between discourse and action as dynamic. If this is the case, then it will be difficult to work out the social meanings of this relationship as this will inevitably and always involve conflicting views between what is being said and what is being done. Therefore, for analysts to examine that relationship, they need to ask the essential Goffmanian question "what *action* is it that is going on here?" and arriving at an answer to that not simply in the uttered words, but in the understanding of the broader social context argued by Cicourel (Cicourel, 1992; 2007). For this to happen, Scollon and Scollon (2007) argue that researchers in the field must widen the realizations beyond just wordings to an understanding ethnographically of the meaning of actions from the participants themselves. Further, they must incorporate ethnographic work so that they can study the ways that members appropriate and utilize various tools to express themselves, claim identities, and in so doing thus asserting membership of a particular community of practice.

In the moments of shopping in a Persian shop, for instance, we could assume that there is just a single action being undertaken by participants (i.e., shopping). Or, following Scollon (2001b), we could say there is "a very complex and nested set of actions" (p.1) including greetings, negotiating, asking for the price and availability of an item, purchasing, paying (using cash or credit card), conversing. Similarly, we could say that there is just one discourse taking place here (i.e., the shop owner and their Persian customers discussing issues back home). Or we might say there are many complex discourses each with rampant interdiscursivities (Scollon, 2001b, p.1) (i.e., importing the items in the shop, service encounter talk, family talk, participants' roles, and the rest). According to Scollon (2001b) and Scollon and Scollon (2004, 2007), MDA seeks to bring all of this complexity to the analyses without assuming a priori which discourses and which actions are the pertinent ones and applicable in any particular case under study.

Thus, it is not discourse that is the focus of MDA, but rather the whole intersection of social practice of which discourse is only a part. It investigates how, at the nexus of

practice (see Section 2.6.5), discourse becomes a tool for "claims and imputations of social identity" (Norris and Jones, 2005, p. 4). In this way, MDA does not view buying the authentic Persian products from a Persian ethnic shop, for instance, as 'context'. Rather, it shifts its focus to the actions which the participants take with the (cultural) tools (Wertsch, 1998) available in such settings.

Furthermore, MDA research is committed to gaining an understanding of how our mundane daily activities interact with broad social issues. In other words, it explains how discourse (with a small d) with the help of other mediational tools, of which language is only a part, reproduces and transforms Discourses (with a capital D, "cultural toolkits") (Gee, 1999) and how Discourses create, reproduce and transform the actions the social actors can individually take at given moments (Norris and Jones, 2005, p. 10). As Scollon reiterates (2001b), both micro-sociological questions concerning locally organised (Garfinkel, 1967) practices of everyday life (i.e., interactions in Persian shops) and macro-sociological questions dealing with ideology and power are centrally situated in social practice. However, according to MDA, addressing the issues of power and ideology is not located within in any of these practices, but in the way nexuses of practice impact upon concrete social actions. Accordingly, the place to begin to make sense of the instances (or moments) in the events of the Persian shops, for example, is in the concrete act of handing money to a person in exchange for a particular service or goods in such a setting.

To sum up, it is clear from the aforementioned that MDA takes discourse as part of Goffman's key question "*what is it that is going on here?*" Its focus is on what is being done or to cite Garfinkel (1967) "accomplished" at the nexus of practice. This focus on action aligns with Norris and Jones's (2005) argument that texts themselves do not provide further insights. They, however, follow action or as Wertsch (1991, 1997, 1998) asserts mediated action. In the following, I summarise the main concepts of MDA and relate them to the current study.

2.6 The Essence of MDA

MDA is organised around five central concepts:

- Mediated action;
- Site of engagement;
- Mediational tools;
- Practice; and
- Nexus of practice.

I will use the mundane everyday instances in the events of Persian shops, which could be called "*Service (inter)actions*" in the sense of shopping in ethnic shops to illustrate these concepts.

2.6.1 Mediated Action

The unit of analysis of MDA is taken to be the mediated action not the discourse or text or genre (Norris, 2004; Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001a, 2001b). This implies a researcher's shift of focus from discourse (i.e., texts and wordings) to social actors as they are acting. These actions are the instances of social life in which the Discourses (see Chapter one Section 1.4.1) are produced, reproduced and structured in the social world as social action, not simply as material objects. The notion of a mediated action was first suggested by Wertsch (1991), a term adopted from Vygotskian psychology. Wertsch (1998) put forward the argument that there is always an unresolvable tension between actors and mediational means, focusing on two crucial elements, namely those of actors and mediational tools (1998, p. 25). This constant challenge is identified in the unit of analysis as that of a social actor acting with or through mediational tools. Accordingly, a mediated action is *never* performed by an actor alone, but rather is always and only possible if both elements of agent and mediational tools are co-present (Scollon, 2001, 2007). According to Scollon (1998), for "[t]he concept [of mediated action] to remain useful, [it] must always remain problematized (p.11). Hence, the notion of mediated action is always contingent and for it to become useful as a tool, it must be "constantly interrogated" (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 18).

2.6.1.1 Mediated Action and Participation Framework

As discussed above, a focal point in mediated action is that social actors are taking action in a social setting. Through their course of interaction, participants in Persian ethnic shops, for example, can take up different roles and display to one another what they are doing and how they expect others to align themselves. Language and embodied action can provide crucial resources for the achievement of such social order. According to Goodwin (1999), the term 'participation' refers to actions that demonstrate forms of involvement employed by participants within evolving structures of talk. The participation framework (Goffman, 1981b), therefore, creates a framework for exploring how multiple parties build action in the presence of one another while at the same time both helping to build and attending to

relevant context and action. The analysis of participation within activities provides an opportunity for the researcher to regard actors as not "simply embedded within context, but as actively involved in the process of building context" (M. H. Goodwin, 1999, p. 178).

Goffman (1981b) views participation (hearer's involvement and speaker's production) aspects of talk as separable features of conversational interaction in the sense that in any social setting, we may have an indirect target who is nevertheless present and attending to the utterance in question. Solely focusing on the terms speaker and hearer seems however to be inadequate to gain an understanding of the whole interaction (i.e., "*what is it that is going on here"*?) Goffman (1981a) suggests the need for decomposing them into smaller, analytically coherent elements (p. 129). In other words, participants do not always relay their own words; rather, they effectively articulate others. As a result, in the participation framework, there is a much more intricate set of participants that may at some stages be ratified or at another unratified. Goffman regards the participation framework as highly dynamic in that participants are ratified and not ratified at different points, but some are naturally ratified (i.e., shopkeepers and buyers), but others are not, but will become so within activities. Prior to moving on to an in-depth discussion of the participation framework, the discussion now turns to a review of the notion of role set.

2.6.1.2 Role set

Within the participation framework in the Persian shop, the shopkeeper does not play just one role. He is, for instance, the provider of the service or a connoisseur of Persian food and, at the same time, may be a connoisseur of Persian values. He can have different roles and his roles can be different in terms of the relationships he establishes with his customers. As Sarangi (Sarangi, 2011) argues the aforementioned discussion directs our attention to the professional role performance by which the shopkeeper, for instance, remains within the boundary of his professional activities. Through his interaction with the customers, the shopkeeper can occupy different roles discussed above. However, these roles form part of what is termed a "role set", (Goffman, 1981b; Sarangi, 2010), which is "a basic characteristic of social structure" and defined as a "complement of role relationships which persons have by virtue of occupying a particular social status" (Merton, 1986, p. 423). This argument can be illustrated with the example of a shopkeeper in a Persian shop who shifts his role between dealing with new and varied customers (i.e., Persians vs non-Persians) and in the family domain as opposed to his workplace. He can, for example, occupy the role of an informer (i.e., informing non-Persians) (though at some

point he can also inform Persians about the quality of the food, for instance) about a product imported to Australia, a consultant, an advising or even a father role. Overall, we could say that the shopkeeper seems to possess (or have access) to a role set, which includes those aforementioned roles, but excludes other ones, potentially producing different outcomes. Linton (1971) maintains that within such dynamic shifts, the shopkeeper's status, for instance, becomes latent as he assumes another active status or group membership. As such, "roles are transformed over time" (Sarangi, 2010, p. 78) and within a given activity there are multiple roles available to individuals though some of these roles may be situationally conflicting or uncertain (Sarangi, 2010, p. 78).

However, as discussed by Sarangi (2010), a distinction should be made between "multiple roles" and "role set" particularly in the context of "situated activity roles" (Goffman, 1961) (i.e., "each a set of acts that can be compatibly performed by a single participant" (p.85)). Take the example of the role-responsibilities of the shopkeeper within our Persian shop who functions as a cultural connoisseur/leader, a salesperson, or a father, who can be moved into a central place by this salesperson role, thereby eclipsing his specifically sales responsibilities (adapted from Elliott, 1972, p. 126). According to Sarangi (2010), this is an indication of professional performance within a role set. The discussion now turns to an overview of salient background information to the participation framework.

2.6.1.3 Participation Framework

Berger (Berger, 1986, pp. xvii-xviii) argues that one "goes to Goffman for the truths of close-up human interaction" and the current study draws extensively on a number of key terms developed by Goffman that make possible the exploration of the interaction order. Before moving on to consider further the notion of footing, I will briefly summarise the key elements of Goffman's participation framework (1981a) referred to earlier (i.e., production format: speaker-production role and reception roles: listener).

In terms of the hearer (or recipient), Goffman observes their participation status. This is the relationship of any participant concerning the person producing an utterance (i.e., the speaker) (Goffman, 1981a). Goffman made a distinction between two types of hearers namely ratified and unratified. Ratified hearers are recognised as those who have official status in the interaction and consist of those who are directly addressed recipients (i.e., addressees). In a two-party exchange, this is a relatively clear category. However, it can become more complex in settings where there are more than two participants. For instance,

in a Persian ethnic shop, the shopkeeper (say a speaker) is likely to address a family or other customers in the shop present at some point, hence affording them equal status. Yet, it is possible that at some point one particular individual will be made the main focus of the speaker's attention, thus reducing those not directly addressed to bystanders. Consequently, ratified or official hearers need to be further categorized into "addressed" and "unaddressed" recipients.

Unratified participants are those whose place in the interaction is not formally accounted for, but have access to the social encounter, including bystanders and over-hearers (i.e., those who are inadvertent, non-official listeners or eavesdroppers) (Goffman, 1981a). Therefore, in a setting (for example shops) where there are multiple participants, there could be a number of intended recipients (addressed-unaddressed), but there may also be hearers who are not ratified.

The role of speakers can be identified through several distinct participation formats, which are dependent upon whether the person speaks for himself or on someone else's behalf (Bennert, 1998, p. 18). Goffman describes three role models which the speaker can undertake namely animator, author and principal. The speaker has the ability to accomplish one or all of these roles at a given time (see above). The animator is the speaker who produces the sound, the participant "active in the role of utterance production" (Goffman, 1981a, p. 144). The author is the individual who has chosen the sentiments that are being uttered and the way in which they are expressed. Lastly, the principal is someone whose position is "established by the words that are spoken", an individual who is committed to what the words say and who is active in a particular social identity (Goffman, 1981a, p.144). Through the assignment of a particular discourse role, participants tacitly claim about "their social positions and relationships", while also reframing and redefining the activities in which they are engaging (Bennert, 1998, p. 19).

Since the speaker's relationship to addressees and utterances is highly complex to work out, concepts about animator, author and principal can contribute to understanding the alignments and non-alignments between the participants in a social setting. The following table summarises the above.

Table 2: Production format (production roles) and participation framework (reception roles) (adapted from Goffman, 1981)

1. animator: 'the sounding box (p. 226)
2. author: 'the agent who scripts the lines' (p. 226)
3. principal: 'the party to whose position the words attest' (p. 226)
Participation framework (reception roles)
A) ratified (p226) i- addressed recipient 'the one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom, incidentally, he expects to turn over his speaking role' (p.133) ii- unaddressed recipient (p.133) 'the rest of the 'official hearers' who may or may not be listening' **B) unratified** i- overhearers 'inadvertent', 'non-official' listeners (p. 132) or bystanders ii- eavesdroppers 'engineered', non-official followers of talk (p. 132)

This categorization of participants and actors brings up a number of issues. Firstly, as Levinson (1988) emphasizes in exploring Goffman's notions of participation roles, participants should not be viewed as the physical persons who are engaging in some place in any interaction. This view of the definition of participant roles is regarded as limiting and does not show the true picture of their roles. To obtain a better understanding of who these actors are in any event in a *site of engagement* (see below), we need to extend our scope to include the persons who are actually present but also those who constrain and afford those who might be present. Such influences could be related to participants' historical, actual or current experience.

Secondly, following Bourdieu's concept of capital, participants present in any activity event and their contributions to the interaction are not viewed as *equally valued*. For example, the shop owner of the Persian shop may be a full member of the Persian community and therefore his contributions to the discourse of the shop will carry differential weight. As such, participants carry with them some kind of capital as a result of their position, of what they know, of the power of their arguments (i.e., shop owners versus customers). Bourdieu (1985) considers four types of capital:

(i) *Economic capital*: the command over economic resources such as wealth or assets;
(ii) *Cultural capital*: which consists of cultural awareness, skills, and goods (i.e., habitus)
(iii) *Social capital*: the recourses which cover the group membership and social networks

(iv) *Symbolic capital*: which is the form taken by all types of capital when their possession is recognized as legitimate such as fame, reputation, knowledge (pp. 723-244).

Despite the fact that these types of capital shape resources in all fields, their status and hierarchy varies from one field to another. The accumulation of one kind of capital highlights for Bourdieu the stake of the struggles in one particular field (i.e., Persian shops).

Finally, participants establish various identities through their interaction in a specific site of engagement. Sarangi and Roberts (1999) refer to this as *hybridization of roles* (p.14-19). These scholars suggest that in a particular setting (i.e., Persian ethnic shops) professionals may display a number of overlapping identities in their work-related discourse, namely *a professional identity*, *a personal identity* and *an institutional identity*. They go on to argue that discourse analysts need to make a distinction among these identities to gain a better understanding of "the dominance of the institutional order and professional discourse which emerge from workplace studies" (1999, p. 16). In the following, I will briefly summarise the focal point of identity and relate this to the current thesis.

2.6.1.4 Identity in Interaction

This brings us to another important theme of this thesis (i.e., identity). This thesis seeks to explore the way identities are constructed in an institutional interaction (i.e., service encounters) in the context of Persian ethnic shops in Sydney pertinent to the institutional setting.

As argued by De Fina (2010), there has been a growing tendency for researchers in the study of identity within discourse (see Chapter 1 for further discussion on discourse) to incorporate theorizations on the self and the impact of interaction in the formation of personal and social worlds. These trends have brought with it the interdisciplinary nature of this recent endeavour at redefining the field. The upshot of the previous debate and reflection on language and identity has laid bare the development of a new paradigm that can be indicated as social constructionist and aimed at interaction and practice (De Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006). This move in perspective seems to be pertinent not only to the emergence of trends of thought that originate from other disciplines such as the post-modern self within social theory (Bauman, 2005), the feminist's theory of identity (Butler, 1990), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) but also to the growing interest in researching discourse studies. De Fina (2010) has

identified three areas in which shifts in perspective have occurred namely, identity and the self, identity as a social construction, and interaction and discourse. I will briefly summarize the main points of the latter inasmuch as "social reality does not exist as an independent entity" but is "socially constructed" (De Fina, 2003), an important concept of the current study. Furthermore, since, borrowing Bourdieu, the field (Persian shops) further challenges our senses of self (Baynham, 2006) and draws our attention to look at identity "from a relational perspective as involving as much what we are not as what we are (pp. 394-395), it is essential to adopt a perspective that centres on the way identities are being performed in particular interaction.

2.6.1.4.1 Identity as a Social Construction

The focus of identity in social constructionism is concerned with two principal concepts, those of identity as "performing" rather than "being" and the "de-essentialization of the self", an approach to the study of socio-cultural phenomena (De Fina, 2010, p. 267). From this perspective, we can infer that identity is constructed not separately within the individual, but in coordination with other participants. Thus, to be a member of any social category, not only is contextually variable and open to various interpretations but also concerns behaviours and actions as much as feelings (Lazar & Kramarae, 2011). In support of this view, social constructionists such as Hall (2000) hold the view that identity should be seen as a process rather than as a series of attributes. Viewing identity this way (i.e., focusing on the process) may give rise to "the concrete ways" (De Fina, 2010, p.267) in which participants in a specific social setting will assume identities and ascribe (attribute) the membership of various categories to each other or resist such attributions. Additionally, Blommaert (2005b) draws our attention to the importance of taking a performance approach to the study of identities and invites us to see how identities are constructed in practice. He goes on to argue that identities are semiotic constructs that can allow us to set them in the framework of "polycentric and stratified systems in which hierarchies in identities can be developed" (p. 211) and that this stratification of identities and semiotic resources rely on its environment.

2.6.1.4.2 Identity Processes

Let us now turn to the discussion of two discursive processes which are crucially important in the construction of identity and communication namely, indexicality and local occasioning (De Fina, 2010).

2.6.1.4.3 Indexicality

According to De Fina (2010), identities are communicated in different ways (i.e., they might be openly or indirectly discussed or symbolically conveyed). When a person claims to be a Persian shopkeeper, or a Persian, that person is openly revealing his or her identity. However, De Fina argues, a large amount of work on identity is indirectly done through meaning associations. As discussed by Van Dijk (2010) and De Fina (2006), words, expressions and sounds of a language and styles are connected with ideas, situations, qualities and social representations. These are associated with social groups and categories viewed as "sharing or representing them in a process of meaning creation" that is based on "accepted social meanings" while at the same time "modifying them" (De Fina, 2010, p. 269). This process of indexicality refers to the idea that symbols will 'index" (Silverstein, 1976) or refer to elements of the social context. For instance, in the context of the Persian shop, addressing the shopkeeper by his/her first name or last name, at least in interaction among Persian customers, may index the existence of an intimate or distant relationship between them.

2.6.1.4.4 Local occasioning

The notion of local occasioning refers to the idea that when people present or reveal their identities to others, their identities not only are heavily dependent on the context in which the discourse is occurring, but also shapes that context (De Fina, 2010). As such, social roles and the identities that are associated with them seem to be relevant to certain social occasions and practices but not to others. For instance, in introducing himself in a Persian shop, the shopkeeper will highly likely choose to describe himself as a member of a Persian community, while on some other occasions he will find it adequate to say that he is "X's father". As a result, while roles and identities crucially depend on the context, the meanings of categories are indexical and may vary depending on participants and circumstances (De Fina, 2010). As discussed above, indexicality and local occasioning are processes that can assist us in understanding how identities are communicated through behaviour in contextualized ways and how people manage to negotiate and understand them.

To conclude, the consideration of participation status is vital in gaining an understanding of the potential roles and identities that participants in Persian shops can assume during interactive discourse. The shop owner has unique roles in interaction, having to respond to

his/her customers' request and fulfil their needs in which he and his customers are engaged.

2.6.2 Site of Engagement

A site of engagement is a social space at which a mediated action can take place (Scollon, 1998, 1999). Scollon sees the site of engagement as the real-time "window" that is opened through an intersection of social practices and mediational means (cultural tools) that make that action the focal point of attention of the relevant participants (Scollon, 2001b, p. 4). Drawing on conversation analysis and Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics, the site of engagement focuses on "practice/activity theory the insistence on the real-time, irreversible, and unfinalizable nature of social action" (p.4). According to this definition, following Scollon (2004), action is situated in a unique historical moment and material space when separate practices (i.e., in a service encounter context) such as greetings, asking for the availability of an item, handing the credit card to the shop owner, come together in real time to construct an action. Each of these sites of engagement is a combination of the patterns of orientation towards space and time that participants bring with them to these moments and locations of social settings, which are mediated through what Jones refers to "attention structures" (2005, p. 141) (2005, p. 141), which themselves are "cultural tools" (p.152).

Norris (2011) takes a further step to include in the site of engagement the:

> intersection of social practice(s) and mediational means that make that *lower (or higher) level action* the focal point of attention of the relevant participants, *and radiates from there encompassing the intersection of practices and mediational means that make those lower and higher level actions the less focused or un-focused points of attention of the relevant participants* (p. 45, emphasis in original).

What is worthy of attention here is the complexity of the concept of different levels of action and shifting the attention from focused action to less focused and ultimately to unfocused actions in which participants are engaged.

By extending the notion of a site of engagement to enable the analysis of higher-level actions (transaction i.e., doing business) within a site of engagement (Norris, 2011), the notion of a site of engagement to somewhat is in line with Goffman's notion of a social encounter (1981b). Goffman holds the view that events or practices in social encounters are often bracketed by the opening and closing. Consequently, when higher-level actions (i.e., service encounter) are analysed as they are occurring in a site of engagement, this

higher level action is bracketed by an opening and a closing of the site of engagement. In this way, the conversation between a shop owner and a customer can be analysed as taking place within a site of engagement. The higher-level action has a clear opening when a customer enters a shop and a clear ending when the customer leaves the shop. Here, the transaction ends. Thus, the site of the engagement is the real-time encounter that occurs between the opening and the closing of the event.

Again, Norris (2011, p. 45) argues that although focusing on the expansion of the site of engagement allows movement from a momentary point to a possibly longer one in real time, this definition does not capture the *less* and even *unfocused* aspects of interaction in a multimodal analysis (i.e., frozen actions). To incorporate such actions, according to (Norris, 2004), the analyst needs to first focus on the lower (the smallest interactional meaning unit) and higher action (bracketed by an opening/closing and made up of a multiplicity of chained lower-level actions (i.e., the basic communicative structure in service encounters including opening, negotiating and closing), which builds the focal action of the relevant participants. Once the focal point of attention is framed (i.e., transactional and relational interaction in the Persian shop), the analysis radiates to lower rates of attention/awareness (i.e., incorporating the layout of the shop, the objects, and the décor) radiating even further to the frozen mediated actions.

2.6.2.1 Narratives as a site of engagement

As noted in the previous chapter, ethnic businesses sometimes function as a gathering place for *community activities* where immigrants exchange and obtain information and thus reinforce their social connections. Personal narratives can provide an apt site of engagement of such discourses.

The seminal study of personal experience narratives in sociolinguistics began with the structuralist perspective through the work of Labov and Waletzky (1967). Their concern was in developing a structural model of narrative, which still remains deeply influential in the work of later studies of narrative (see Linde, 1993). Their hypothesis was that "fundamental narrative structures are to be found in oral versions of personal experience – the ordinary narratives of ordinary speakers" (Toolan, 2001, p. 143). The authors used a structural linguistics approach which could be viewed as "a top-down method of narrative analysis" (Johnson & Paoletti, 2004) if the structural categories (orientation, complication,

evaluation, resolution, coda) are applied "as a set of precoded analytic slots for an actual story's contents" (Edwards, 1997, p. 145).

While Labov and Waletsky's formal model cannot be universally applied, and is not central in answering questions about identity negotiation, it has provided a useful starting point for the exploration of identity narratives. Other approaches to narrative also focus in particular on the why, the evaluation involved in the story-telling (Polanyi, 1985).

De Fina and Georgakopoulou (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008a) view narratives or small stories as "talk-in-interaction" and "as social practice" (p. 379). This view of narrative is different from that of the Labovian narrative analysis in which the stories have been decontextualized and do not carry out the scheme of "an active teller, highly tellable account, relatively detached from surrounding talk and activity" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 20). Small stories are an umbrella term that covers "a gamut of under-represented narrative activities such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions (a brief or indirect reference) to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell" (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 130).

Viewing narratives as part of interaction and practice provides analysts with a window through which discourse can be operationalized as an instance of actual communication. In fact, work on narrative and identity has brought to the fore how shared ideologies and stereotypes about social categories of belonging become a resource for local self and other positioning and identity construction (Bucholtz, 1999; De Fina, 2006; Kiesling, 2006) for individuals and groups.

Narratives tend to carry out different types of action and tasks for different interlocutors (Goodwin, 1984). They can be expected to have a variety of functions that are associated with the roles and relationships managed by individuals within a community of practice (for instance, Persian shops) and with the image of that community as a collective entity (De Fina, 2008, p. 423). In addition, these narratives serve to establish the close ties between the activities that take place within the community and some aspects of the wider social context. This link between local activities and social processes at macro levels can be found in the negotiation (i.e., relational and transactional goals in service encounters), within the limitations of local practices (permissible or allowable actions, activity type) (Levinson, 1992; Sarangi, 2000) at the local level (Persian ethnic shops), of the position and roles (referring to Goffman's footing) of the ethnic group in the wider social space

(i.e., in Australia). These positions and roles are constructs of narratives which consist of explanation, processes and representation of social relations shaping part of a wide range of cultural practices in which the ethnic group (i.e., Persians) as a collective agent is engaged in other fields of social activity (De Fina, 2008, p. 423). From this perspective, narrative activity can be seen as one of the many symbolic practices (Bourdieu, 1977b) in which social groups engage to carry out struggles for legitimation and recognition that can serve to accumulate symbolic capital and, eventually, greater social power (De Fina, 2008).

2.6.2.2 Site of engagement: Hybrid Ethnicity and Critical Moments

Interaction between members of different cultural groups (in this case Persians versus non-Persians) can be challenging in many different ways. When participants engage in an intercultural interaction within the site of engagement in Persian shops, they are faced with a range of challenges and their 'instruments' function less well or not at all. In order to handle the uncertainties they face, they need to master sophisticated skills in managing 'cultural complexity' (Hannerz, 1992).

It is this cultural complexity that makes the site of engagement of service interactions in a Persian ethnic shop more challenging from that of a mainstream food store in Australia, for example, Coles or Woolworths. This intricacy resides in the fact that the sites of engagement which occur in such ethnic shops through mediated interaction among members of different communities form around different nexus of practice (Scollon, 2001b). Sites of engagement, as argued by Jones (2005), are therefore not objective moments or locations, but rather the results of orientations towards time and space that participants bring to interaction, mediated through what he calls *attention structures* or *cultural tools*. The cultural tools then are partly hidden in environments and partly in the social practices that grow up within communities (Persian and non-Persian customers) and partly in the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) of individuals, hence there might be occasions of misunderstanding.

It is this misunderstanding that creates 'critical moments'. According to Candlin (1987), critical moments are those moments and incidents within the processes and practices of a site of engagement in which participants identify "the (potential) occurrence of contradictions" (Candlin, 2001, p. 188) that is caused by conflicting order of discourse (Foucault, 1971). These critical moments, Candlin argues, could be mediated or involved in a range of types and modes of textualization. They are the moments that need to be

engaged with and frequently present a considerable challenge to the communicative resources of the participants. In a Persian ethnic shop, the critical moments might be those moments when there is a *demand* made on either the customer or the shop owner on their communicative abilities. Examples of such include: customers think they have been overcharged or they were not happy with a product and wanted to get a refund.

Another important aspect of such interaction is its criticality. Any kind of commercial transaction has inherit in it criticality in that it involves a buyer and seller and has some potential of this for negotiating positions, hence opportunities for problems to arise. However, this is all localized within a general situation of the shop. Since the shop under investigation is a Persian shop in Australia, with the audience and the customers varied (Persians and non-Persians), there might be issues which impact upon the issue of critical moments such as an understanding of the culture of shops of this kind. Because non-Persians are well aware that they may not have been to a shop of this kind, they might enter into such settings and from the moment of their arrival, they could be incurring some infringements of the culture without even noticing it. These interactions pertain to shops where Persian is locally (i.e., in the shop) dominant but English is dominant in the wider (multicultural but English-dominant) community. As such, getting a flavour of this increasingly hybrid ethnicity within the site of engagement can address and underpin Goffmanian's question "what is it that is going on in the site of Persian shops"?

From this perspective, the line this thesis is taking in intercultural communication is thus that of the whole interaction, but against the following background. The interaction is always set against the institutional background, general cultural background and the particular cultural background of retail. In fact, Spencer-Oatey (2013) calls for the need for a broader view on research into intercultural communication and suggests that analysts should not focus on "face" at all times. The author points out that analysts should take into account both individual perspectives (weak) as well as social perspectives (strong) when dealing with interculturality in an interaction, thus a conjoint-co-constituting perspective. She has used the term "relating" to indicate a broader perspective and also better represent the first order lay conceptualizations of "doing relations".

In the following, an overview of the central construct of face is developed through attention to Goffman's (1967) theory of social interaction and Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of face and the theory of universal politeness in the context of the Persian language. The purpose here is to present a broad sketch of the background to the main

themes of the research and to highlight areas of divergence pertaining to the construct of face and the degree to which it can account for elements of linguistic politeness across cultural contexts (Arundale, 2009, 2010; Gu, 1990; Haugh & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010).

2.6.2.3 Face: Goffman

Central to many of the classic and contemporary approaches to politeness is the construct of face. Grounded initially on Goffman's (1969) approach to the notion, how face should be conceptualized and applied is a matter of debate within approaches to human interaction. In this section, I will make an attempt to explore the clear perspectives on politeness, derived from arguments and conclusions drawn by scholars, and relate them to the Persian concept of face. It should, however, be noted that the researcher here cannot hope to address all concerns on face. I will, therefore, limit the argument to the discussion of the key issues concerning the construct of face as it applies to the current study.

2.6.2.4 Goffman's face and facework

Through the 1950s and 1960s, Goffman developed a theory of social interaction from the work of Mead (1934) in which he maintained that participants in a given social setting need to gain an understanding of what their relative statuses are when deciding the form of their speech so as to encode their assumptions about such differences in status. Goffman views these variables as face and put forward a proposition that during an interaction, participants seek to consciously or unconsciously organise their verbal and non-verbal behaviour through justifying these variables. These variables consist of the definition of the situation, the relationship to other participants and the nature of our communication (i.e., what it is we wish to interact).

Goffman (1967) further elucidates that his purpose is to "explore some of the senses in which the person in our urban secular world is allotted a kind of sacredness that is displayed and confirmed by symbolic acts" (p.47). Here, it can be inferred that every customer in the Persian shop, be they Persians or non-Persians, thus has a kind of "sacredness". Accordingly, Goffman is interested in the micro-level of human interaction (Watts, 2003), taking into account what is said (i.e., texts) and done (action) by individuals in the social interaction (i.e., in our case the Persian shop).

Goffman's inquiry about face-to-face interaction provides us with an analytical framework for the interpretation of social interactions. This is based on the concept that the construct of face can potentially expound on how individuals seem to be presenting themselves in

social settings. Here, we can infer that Goffman's view on face aligns with the actions a participant takes so as to "make whatever he is doing consistent with face", as facework (Goffman, 1967, p.12). By re-evaluating some of the tenets of Goffman's conceptualization of face, Bargiela-Chiappini's argues that "for Goffman, "facework" has to do with self-presentation in social encounters, and although individual psychology matters, it is the interactional order that is the focus of Goffman's study" (2003, p. 1463). Hence, facework provides possible explanations for individuals' attempts to interact in a positive manner when publicly presenting themselves and dealing with an interlocutor's face claims so that they can maintain what they presume to be socially appropriate behaviour.

Goffman implicitly implies that it is through social interaction that individuals gain their knowledge of the world and the place they hold in that world (Watts, 2003). According to Goffman (1967):

> in any society, whenever the physical possibility of spoken interaction arises, it seems that *a system of practices, conventions*, and *procedural rules* comes into play which functions as a means of *guiding* and organizing the flow of messages. An understanding will prevail as to when and where it will be permissible to initiate talk, among whom, and by means of what topics of conversation (pp, 33-4, emphasis added).

The system of practice, conventions, and procedural rules that Goffman speaks of corresponds to what is referred to in the literature as habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) or as stocks of interactional knowledge (Peräkylä & Vehvil*f*inen, 2003) in that individuals' prior knowledge of the situation, in which participants will recognise the system of practice, conventions and procedural rules (i.e., habitus) due to their prior exposure, will permit them to support the interlocutor's face and to project positive value. Goffman defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has himself taken during a particular contact" (p. 213). The line is defined as "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). For Goffman, the maintenance of one's face can be accomplished through the speaker's agreement of a line and image. Nonetheless, if there is discontinuity between the desired line and image, then it is seen as being "in the wrong face" (Goffman, 1967, p. 8). In fact, the line individuals take in interaction with others in a social setting is devised based on

how they wish to be valued, how they view the interlocutors and how they assess the situation.

Throughout the process of face-to-face interaction, participants not only make an attempt to maintain face but also to respond to the face claims of their interlocutor. Goffman argues that these actions can be conscious or sub-conscious and due to repeated exposure will often become habitual. Thus, individuals, through verbal and non-verbal means and cues which are implemented to enact face, could employ to support, enhance, or potentially challenge their interlocutor's face. The link between the preservation of the specific social situation and the maintenance of one's face is explicated in Manning's (1992) account of Goffman's work where he elucidates that "there is a general conspiracy to save face so that social situations can also be saved" (p. 38). This means facework not only defines the individuals, but also serves to determine actions based on the particular situation. Therefore, the strategies implemented during interaction and the ways in which the individual elects to regulate conduct in social settings are significantly impacted upon by the individual's understanding of social norms and the social image he wishes to preserve and construct.

To illustrate the above, one can look at the interactions occurring within the context of an informal exchange in our Persian ethnic shop. When dealing with customers, the shopkeeper may elect to establish a professional distance with the customers so as to frame formality and support what he sees as being mutual expectations concerned with the occasion of service encounters. This seems to be achieved through practices such as the avoidance of private talk, attention to the transactions and to the time constraints. This distance may be viewed by the customer as impressing on the shopkeeper that he is acting according to his professional responsibilities and thus the information being communicated indicates a professional appraisal. Furthermore, from the customer's point of view, the professional distance may offer a context in which the customers feel free to make requests or potentially challenge the way in which the shopkeeper is fulfilling the professional duties associated with service encounters. However, if the customer and the shopkeeper were to unexpectedly meet on a local occasion, both parties may actively seek to avoid distance concerning professional roles. This could be achieved through functions such as the avoidance of business talk. It is to Brown and Levinson's model which we now turn.

2.6.2.5 Brown and Levinson on Politeness system

In 1978, drawing on Goffman's notion of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that there is "extraordinary parallelisms in the linguistic minutiae of the utterances with which persons choose to express themselves in quite unrelated languages and cultures" (p. 55). Based on this premise, Brown and Levinson posited a Model Person that has the ability to reason motivation behind linguistic and politeness strategies to achieve communicative goals that are strikingly similar across cultures and languages. In essence, Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is founded on the assertion that many speech acts, defined as the action performed by a particular utterance such as requests, suggestions, pose an intrinsic threat to the speaker and/or the addressee. Their theory suggests that to mitigate the force and degree of speech acts, the participants involved in a given interaction are provided with a broad set of polite linguistic conventions which fulfil the same social and interaction purpose across languages, which is often referred to as the "face-saving" theory of linguistic politeness, drawn on Goffman's "face" (1967) as well as the Gricean model of the "Cooperative Principle" (Grice, 1975), describing how people interact with one another.

Central to face-saving theory is the concept of face defined as "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). Brown and Levinson assume that face is made up of two constituents namely positive and negative. While positive face is defined as the individual's desire that his or her wants be approved of, negative face consists of the desire not to be imposed upon or unimpeded by others. Here, it can be inferred that, in line with Goffman's description of face, since participants are susceptible to face loss, it is the mutual interest of all the participants to maintain one another's face in interaction by avoiding and softening the impact of face-threatening acts, which are defined as "acts and strategies which could harm or threaten the positive or negative face of one's interlocutors" (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, for the Model Person, "a wilful speaker of a natural language" (p. 58), to make a contribution to the interaction, he or she must rationally assess the possible face-threatening nature of the move that he or she is about to make and then accordingly must use an appropriate linguistic strategy so as to minimize the risk involved. Brown and Levinson therefore outline five possible linguistic strategies available to the speaker when linguistically communicating face-threatening

information. These strategies, which are hierarchically based and are used for mitigating the FTAs, include:

1- ‘Do the FTA on record without redressive actions (the least polite)’;
2- ‘Do the FTA on record with redressive action addressing positive face’;
3- ‘Do the FTA on record with redressive action addressing negative face’;
4- ‘Do the FTA off record’; and
5- ‘Don’t do the FTA (the most polite strategy)’.

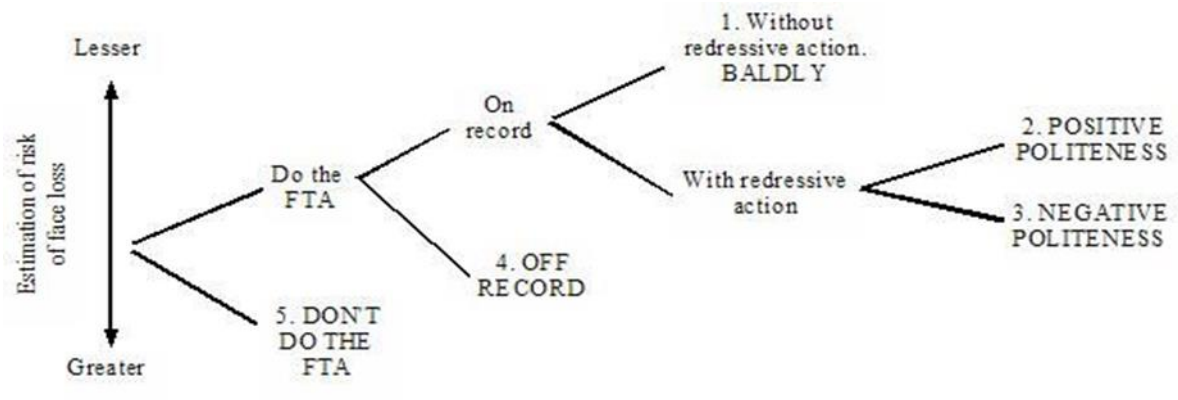

Figure 1: Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies (1978)

As can be seen from Figure 1, the higher the face threat “inherent” in the FTA utterance is issued, the higher the number of the strategies is chosen. It is presumed that the speaker will employ strategies involving a higher degree of politeness so as to reduce the risk of the potential threat to face. The speaker can then gauge the size of the FTAs on the basis of the variables of social distance (D), power (P), and rating of imposition (R). These combined values determine the overall “weightiness” of the FTA which in turn impacts upon the strategy employed (Thomas, 1995, p. 168).

At the one end of the spectrum, the FTA is carried out baldly (directly, strategy 1) when there is no risk involved or the speech act is considered as having minimal weightiness. This type of strategy is performed by participants who are on intimate personal terms or in case of efficiency with regards to Grice’s conversational maxims (1975). However, at the other end of the spectrum, in situations where the risk of FTA (strategy 5) is regarded as prohibitively great, the participant has the option not to carry out the action.

The diagram distinguishes between carrying out a FTA on record (strategies 1, 2, and 3) and doing it off record (strategy 4). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), if a participant elects to go ‘on record’, then there is “one unambiguously attributable intention with which witnesses would concur” (p.69). By contrast, if the participant chooses to go “off-record”, then there is “more than one ambiguously attributable intention so that the

actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent" (p. 69). For instance, in the context of our Persian shop, if a customer seeks assistance from the shopkeeper by asking "Can you help me with this?" he would be on record as the request is explicit. However, if the customer were to ask, "I am still debating which one to buy", he would be going off record as he has not explicitly requested for assistance.

In spite of useful insights embodied by this model and by the empirical research informed by it, various researchers of non-Western languages (Gu, 1990; Koutlaki, 2002) have argued that Brown and Levinson's framework does not provide the analytical tools necessary to describe politeness in a socially-contextualized and discourse-based study (Blitvich Pilar, 2006). The problem primarily resides in the fact that speech act theory—which is assumed in Brown and Levinson's model—focuses on single utterances out of context rather than on utterances within a discourse framework. In this approach, meaning is assigned to individual utterances based on linguistic form, following the notion of one form/one function. An ethnographical approach can provide an opportunity to seek a detailed and comprehensive explanation beyond "one size fits all", an explanation which must ultimately find its causes in a domain outside of linguistics (i.e., in social relations) on which the current study is grounded. The following sets out to provide a brief background on Persian society, "*ta'arof*" (ritual politeness) and Persian concept of face, which examine both support for and opposition to the universality of politeness theory.

2.6.2.6 Persian society

In Persian society, the nuclear family represents an important unit of social organization consisting of not only the smallest component of the social structure but also of a frame of all types of support for its members (Koutlaki, 2002, 2010). Hence, the members are seen as belonging to a family rather than as individuals. This, however, does not mean any loss of their individuality. They are acknowledged not only as a member of a family but also as individuals in their own right.

The notion of "privacy" in Persian society varies significantly; mainly pertinent to the gender segregation which is encouraged in Islam, not to individual wants of private space. In the traditional lifestyle of Persians, all the family members spend their time in the same room, which often doubles as a dining room and as a bedroom at night, and they do not usually withdraw to be alone in another room often not even when they pray, sleep or study (see Wierzbicka, 1985, p. 164). Even though these patterns may no longer be

observable, in modern, urban families, the feeling is still generally one of "togetherness" and family and other group membership.

In the family setting, members share obligations and responsibilities. This takes the form of assisting other members in times of need (i.e., financially as well as emotionally). In addition, maintaining one's family's good reputation takes the priority for everyone. Each family member can, in return, expect from the other family members the same commitment. As Beeman (1986, p. 47) points out, family members:

> must be able to further each other's interests and provide for the survival of the family as a whole. For this reason it is to the advantage of the family to have great diversity in its membership in terms of occupations, interests, political connections, life styles and so forth.

Furthermore, every member of the family establishes a network with people from their workplace, university or among other friends. The network provides an opportunity for individuals to seek assistance (i.e., services) from any member of the one network (i.e., nuclear family) on behalf of any member of the other one (colleagues, friends). The favour will be returned in the future.

The concept of *mennæt* (obligation) is a powerful one in Persian as people frequently rely on others for hospitality in a strange city, or for services or goods that they cannot supply for themselves. As a result, one can infer that Persian is a "debt sensitive culture" (Koutlaki, 2002, p. 1740) similar to the Japanese (Matsumoto, 1989, p. 409). Nonetheless, in Persian society, social debt is seen as a fundamental component of everyday interaction and not felt as a heavy burden on individual's shoulders (Koutlaki, 2002, 2010).

2.6.2.7 The concept of ta'arof (ritual politeness)

When two Persian friends try to enter or depart from a door or car, it is quite common to observe that they queue in front of the entrance or the car determining who should proceed or depart first. The matter is eventually settled by the participant who has been flattered into leading the way. It is, therefore, the custom to be humble and respectful of the person accompanying you.

Assadi (1980) argues that there is "no set time limit on a particular t*a'arof* exchange" (p. 222). For instance, when you are invited to a friend's house, the host or the hostess expects the meal or the sweets, which have been prepared and purchased, to be turned down by the guests. The host may insist several times, and the guests will politely refuse. Eventually, the invited guests will accept the offer and enjoy hospitality.

The exchange of *ta'arof* is omnipresent within the Persian culture in almost all diverse regions among ethnic groups such as the Persians, the Kurds, the Baluchies, the Turks, and the Gilakies, as well as among the religious groups of Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. *Ta'arof* is sometimes sincere but there are times when it is used as "empty offers".

Ramazani's work on *ta'arof* (1974, pp. 219-220) highlights that many Persians go hungry or thirsty when using their *ta'arof* strategies with a non-Persian host or hostess. It is the norm in Western societies for the host to make at least one or two offers of food or beverages. The Westerner will interpret a refusal from the guest as a final decision. However, this is not the case with Persians, who will turn down anything several times before finally taking it up.

Sociolinguists have demonstrated that when two culturally diverse individuals come into contact with each other, they exhibit display different verbal and nonverbal behaviour in their interactions. As a result, the possibilities of their misunderstanding are rife. Examples of cross-cultural misunderstanding are copious in the literature on sociolinguistics, intercultural communication and pragmatics (see e.g., Takahashi & Beebe, 1987b; Thomas, 1983; Wolfson, 1989). Gumperz (1972b, p. 17), for example, states that:

> members of all societies recognize certain *communicative routines* which they view as distinct wholes separate from other types of discourse, characterized by *special rules* of speech and *nonverbal behavior*... these units often carry special names (my emphasis).

Ta'arof is one such "communicative routine" that any discussion of Persian politeness will include much more than a passing reference to it (Koutlaki 2002). It is the most central concept among Persians and is seen as ineluctable in all communication by native speakers. This illustrates the need to comprehend the socio-linguistic meaning of *ta'arof* when interacting with Persians. Non-Persians, for instance, can implicitly hear the *ta'arof* or use it in an inappropriate setting without comprehending the imbedded meaning.

Ta'arof expresses one of the most fundamental Persian cultural values. It is generally defined as paying respect to someone and is seen as social etiquette. It takes the form of giving a compliment to someone's good deed, admiring someone's elegant clothing, or praising someone's statement. Etymologically, it is an Arabic word meaning "meeting together" (Beeman, 1988, p. 27), hence representing a valuable tool for interpersonal interactional situations. *Ta'arof* is classified as a stylistic aspect of the Persian language

underlying its native speakers' discourse (Hodge, 1957). Persians exchange phrases of *ta'arof* in all levels of daily interaction, in both formal and informal settings such as market places, restaurants, offices, and social gatherings.

Due to the difficulty in finding an appropriate lexical equivalent in English, the researchers who have studied *ta'arof* have glossed it as ''ritual courtesy'' (Beeman, 1986, p. 56) and ''polite verbal wrestling'' (Rafiee, 1992, p. 96). Aryanpour and Aryanpour (Aryanpour & Aryanpour, 1976, pp. 306-307) define *ta'arof* as ''compliment(s), ceremony, offer, gift, flummery, courtesy, flattery, formality, good manners, soft tongue, honeyed phrases, respect'' and renders *ta'arof* kærdæn (to do *ta'arof*) as ''to use compliments, to stand upon ceremony, to make a present of, to speak with courtesy, to use honeyed phrases (soft tongue)''.

The above dictionary illustrates the entry with the following examples (translations and glosses as given in the dictionary):

Tæ'arof bemoq'e xosˇayænd æst: A timely compliment is pleasing.

Tæ'arof-ra kenar begozarim væ sadeh hærf bezænim: Let us put ceremonies aside and speak plainly.

Xeili be u tæ'arof kærdæm: I showed him much courtesy.

Be jaye ezhare ædæb tæ'arof (cærb zæbani) kærdæn: to use flattery in place of politeness.

Tæ'arofat-e diplomatik: the diplomatic formalities.

U ædæme ba tæ'arof æst: He is a man of good manners.

Tæ'arof qaleb qalebæn xeili delpæzir æst: Soft words (honeyed phrases) are often very pleasing (Koutlaki, 2002, p. 1741).

2.6.2.8 The Persian concept of face

As discussed above, Goffman's focal point in "On-Face-work" is on the concept of face, or that positive image of self, charged with pride and honour, that individuals display during interactions with others. Here, Goffman clearly indicates how face is interactionally constructed and is neither a permanent aspect of the person nor inherent; rather, it "is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter" and "on loan to him from society" (Goffman, 1967, pp. 7-10). Once individuals project that positive social self (i.e., face) to others, they are then felt constrained, in fact to meet its demands. "Approved attributes and their relation to face," Goffman argues, "make every man his own jailer; this is a fundamental social constraint even though each man may like his cell" (1967, p. 10).

As Koutlaki (Koutlaki, 1997, 2002, 2010) points out the two interrelated constructs of Goffman's pride and honour are understood as two main components of the Persian notion of face namely *"sˇæxsiæt"* and *"ehteram"* respectively. *Sˇæxsiæt*, Koutlaki (2002) says, is

a complex concept which could be interpreted as ‘personality’, ‘character’, ‘honour’, ‘self-respect’, ‘social standing’ (p.1742). A person’s sˇæxsiæt is heavily reliant on the speaker’s behaviour and his/her educational background and is often seen as pertinent to the upbringing he or she has received. Hence, while a polite person is characterized as *basˇæxsiæt* (literally “*with-sˇæxsiæt*”), a person who does not have the disposition to observe the expected rules of etiquette and behaviour and conduct in a way that may be considered as rude by his or her peers is usually described as bisˇæxsiæt (literally “*without-sˇæxsiæt*”). Individuals who speak highly of their peers during an encounter behes *sˇæxsiæt* mide (i.e., gives him/her [the interlocutor] *sˇæxsiæt* [honour, respect]), simultaneously displaying their own *sˇæxsiæt*. Put differently, an individual who wishes to “keep up his/her own sˇæxsiæt” will also try to maintain his/her interlocutor’s *sˇæxsiæt* too.

Ehteram (corresponding to ‘honour’, ‘respect’, ‘esteem’, ‘dignity’), on the other hand, denotes the statuses and positions of the participants in regard to each other and manifests itself by conforming to the accepted cultural norms of behaviour in relation to the speaker’s status, age, position and interlocutors’ relationship, which is closely reminiscent of Goffman’s view “duty to wider social units” (1967, p. 9). In social interaction, *ehteram* takes the form of the use of appropriate terms, “conformity to the rules of ritual politeness (*ta’arof*) and other conventions” (Koutlaki, 2002, p.1742).

In Persian society, there is a major discrepancy between “*sˇæxsiæt*” and “*ehteram*”. While sˇæxsiæt is associated with the individual, hence largely unchanged, and his/her background, even though it must be dealt with in interaction, ehteram is continuously changing and flows from the speaker to the addressee and may or may not be given. As Koutlaki (2002) argues this is in line with Goffman’s view that:

> ...while [a person’s]...social face can be [his] most personal possession and the center of his security and nature, it is only on loan to him from society; it will be withdrawn unless he conducts himself in a way that is worth it (1967, p.10).

Furthermore, participants demonstrate their *sˇæxsiæt* through their verbal or non-verbal behaviour, not only to the person with whom they are having a conversation but also to the whole group, which adheres to social norms and pays the appropriate amount of ehteram to an interlocutor. This depicts that it is of vital importance for face to be simultaneously attended to by all participants in a given situation. Persians demonstrate this through the definition of the situation (Goffman, 1974) (i.e., according to their interlocutor’s age, social standing, position, and the relationships obtaining between them). This is achieved

through the expression of concern about his or her comfort, the use of expressions of desirability of the addressee's company and show of interest in his or her affairs. As a result, a lack of such accepted norms will give rise to a face-threatening situation for one's interlocutor due to the fact that the use of inappropriate linguistic form could be seen as trying to establish a different relationship from the one an addressee feels appropriate or desirable (Beeman, 1986, pp. 73-77).

To sum up, although it may be argued that *sˇæxsiæt* corresponds to Brown and Levinson's construct of positive face (Koutlaki, 1997, 2002), there are some very fundamental differences. Brown and Levinson conceptualize positive face as the need to be accepted by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others. In a Persian setting, says Koutlaki (2002), giving *sˇæxsiæt* to an addressee is associated not only with society's injunctions about paying face, but also with group face wants. Behaving in keeping with societal values is of crucial importance. Consequently, loss of face can be experienced if a participant is seen behaving or becomes known to have behaved in an unacceptable way, since this failure in behaviour is seen as "detrimental to a speaker's social standing and indirectly to his family's public face and is bound to incur society's criticism, which directly damages his/her face" (Koutlaki, 2002, p. 1743).

2.6.3 Mediational Means

Scollon (2001a, 2001b) defines mediational means as the semiotic means through which any social action is performed. In this definition 'semiotic' is intended to convey not just abstract or cognitive systems of representation such as languages or systems of visual representation, but also any and all material objects in the world which are appropriated for the purposes of taking a social action. In other words, mediational means are a class of objects that can be appropriated within a practice (Norris & Jones, 2005). This would include, for example in Persian shops, the layout and design of the shop as well as the grammatical structure of any utterances made by the social actors (i.e., the owner and his customers). In MDA, mediational means are construed as the carriers of social, cultural, and historical formations (Scollon, 2001a, 2001b).

While the focus here is on the service encounter in Persian ethnic shops, this service interaction has also entailed the physical spaces of the shop, the currency exchanged, the service providers, the counters, the tables, the other customers of the shop, and the social

actors' own habitus (i.e., an authentic product for a non-Persian customer). In Scollon's (2001b) terms, the "*polyvocality*, *intertextuality*, and *interdiscursivity*" of the shop has been noted above. This means mediational tools are by their nature "multifunctional", open to appropriation to a wide range of practices outside of their normative uses within other mediational tools (Scollon, 2001). To this, we need to add Sydney, Australia as well as the Persian décor, which sets this particular shop in its place on earth and departs so radically from the same shops in other parts of the world or even a similar one in Iran.

In the same vein, Wertsch (1998) argues that these cultural tools incorporate a whole range of practices, identities, objects as well as discourses and utterances. These tools reveal some certain patterns of affordances and constraints that are concerned with the actions that can be taken through their use, facilitating certain kinds of action and messages and at the same time limiting others. Understanding mediational tools, therefore, entails taking into account both the socio-cultural histories of one's *habitus* and the socio-cultural histories of mediational means.

2.6.4 Practice

For the mediated action to take place, there is a necessary intersection of social practices and mediational means which in themselves reproduce social groups, histories, and identities (Scollon, 2001b; Scollon & Scollon, 2007). A mediated discourse analysis takes the position that a mediated action is only understandable within localised practices (i.e., interaction in the Persian shops). From this point of view 'service interaction in a Persian shop' is seen as a different action from a mainstream one or in a Chinese ethnic shop. The difference lies both in the practices (how the order is made, for example) and in the mediational means (including the range from the decor of the spaces in which the action is taken to the type of products on offer). To put differently, a mediated discourse analysis does not view these practices and social structures as 'context', but rather seeks to keep them *alive* in interpretations of mediated actions (Scollon, 2001b, 2004).

A key point to consider in a mediated action is that, following Scollon (2001a), '[A] practice predates the social actors' (p. 149). This is to say we first learn the practices of our society in which we live, but rarely initiate them. Since a practice is a collection of mediated actions, it carries with it a group of relevant mediational tools. For instance, the actions of queuing and paying in a Persian shop in Sydney create a social structure that is

applicable not only to service encounters, but also to other social practices (i.e., in a bank, or in a coffee shop).

The foregoing situations fit into the Scollon's (2004) idea of "nexus of practice" as it concerns/implicates with Bourdieu's habitus (i.e., what participants already know about what this situation interactionally requires of them). In fact, if participants are not competent at a situation in which they are engaged, the outcome may be indeterminable. As a result, a customer may suddenly signal by some questions or statements that they are not as knowledgeable about the interactions as the shop owner might have expected. The shop owner might say "can I help you"? Whereas if he senses that his participants are quite familiar with these practices, he may not want to intervene.

Accordingly, following Bourdieu's habitus, every professional person and indeed every person has at their disposal "normative models and theories or quasi-theories" about interaction as part of the knowledge, which is referred to as "stocks of interactional knowledge" (Peräkylä & Vehvil*f*inen, 2003, p. 729). This means when participants go to a new type of event (i.e., non-Persians to a Persian ethnic shop in Sydney), it may be very unnerving to them in that they may not be aware of how this situation or of how the interaction processes will work. As a result, participants try to centre and organise themselves to understand what the appropriate interactional steps are to take (Goffman's definition of the situation). However, if they are familiar with such an event, such as a person who is a regular customer of such a shop, they have built into themselves "stocks of interactional knowledge". In other words, they have an idea of some sequences of possible actions and *activity types* (Levinson, 1979; Sarangi, 2000) and even more some sequences of wordings associated with these interactional steps. For example, there are things that an experienced customer does, which any inexperienced customer does not do, and the shop owner will act in one way toward the experienced customer and another to an inexperienced customer.

2.6.5 Nexus of Practice

The concept of *nexus of practice* refers to a regular repetition of a site of engagement and a linkage of multiple practices. "Service encounter" in a Persian shop might be analysed as a nexus of practice in that it consists of the mediated actions of shopping and perhaps having a conversation (relational and transactional goals). According to Scollon (2001a), to this extent, the notion of the nexus of practice indicates "a genre of activity" and the group of

people who engage in that activity (p. 150). From this point of view, paying by credit card or chatting with the shop owner while shopping makes sense as an action within the higher level action of service encounters in the Persian ethnic shop. This sense making aspect of social action, or "semiosis" involves taking the credit card out of one's wallet at the time of paying, hence viewed as "paradigmatically located in these levels of social action" (Scollon, 2001a, p. 163).

A service encounter, therefore, can be viewed at multiple levels simultaneously (Lemke, 1999). At one level, it is construed by a range of mediated actions. For instance, customers enter the shop, greet, seek the items, bring them to the counter, pay and leave the shop. Each of these actions is constituted by a lower level of actions. Paying is constituted in taking money or credit card out of your pocket or wallet, handing the money to the shop owner or assistant, naming (the kind of a credit card e.g., visa or MasterCard), pin or signature, receiving change or receipt. According to Scollon, each of the actions at one level is construed by lower level actions and in turn constitutes or at least is constrained (Lemke, 1999) by actions at a higher level. This is what Scollon referred to as the idea of a "funnel of commitment" (2001a, p. 166).

2.6.5.1 Nexus of Practice and funnel of commitment

In the nexus of practice, some actions can more or less be reversed. When customers enter a Persian shop, that action constrains the range of products from which the customers will be buying, but what they will buy and the rest are still open. The customers may, actually, decide at the point that they would prefer to leave and go elsewhere and as a result undo this action of entering. Similarly, when they stand in the queue, they might be examining the item they would like to buy, but at this stage they still are not committed to any particular kind of quantity of products. Gradually, once they have asked the shop owner to help them with an item and picked it up and taken it to the cash register (but not yet paid) it is, however, highly unlikely they would change their mind. According to Scollon (2001a), some actions are "placed in a hierarchy of significance that operates somewhat independently of other structures of meaning" (p. 167). This means there is a chain of mediated actions, yet some of these are more easily undone than others. The following diagram (Figure 2.2) addresses Goffman's question through the lens of MDA.

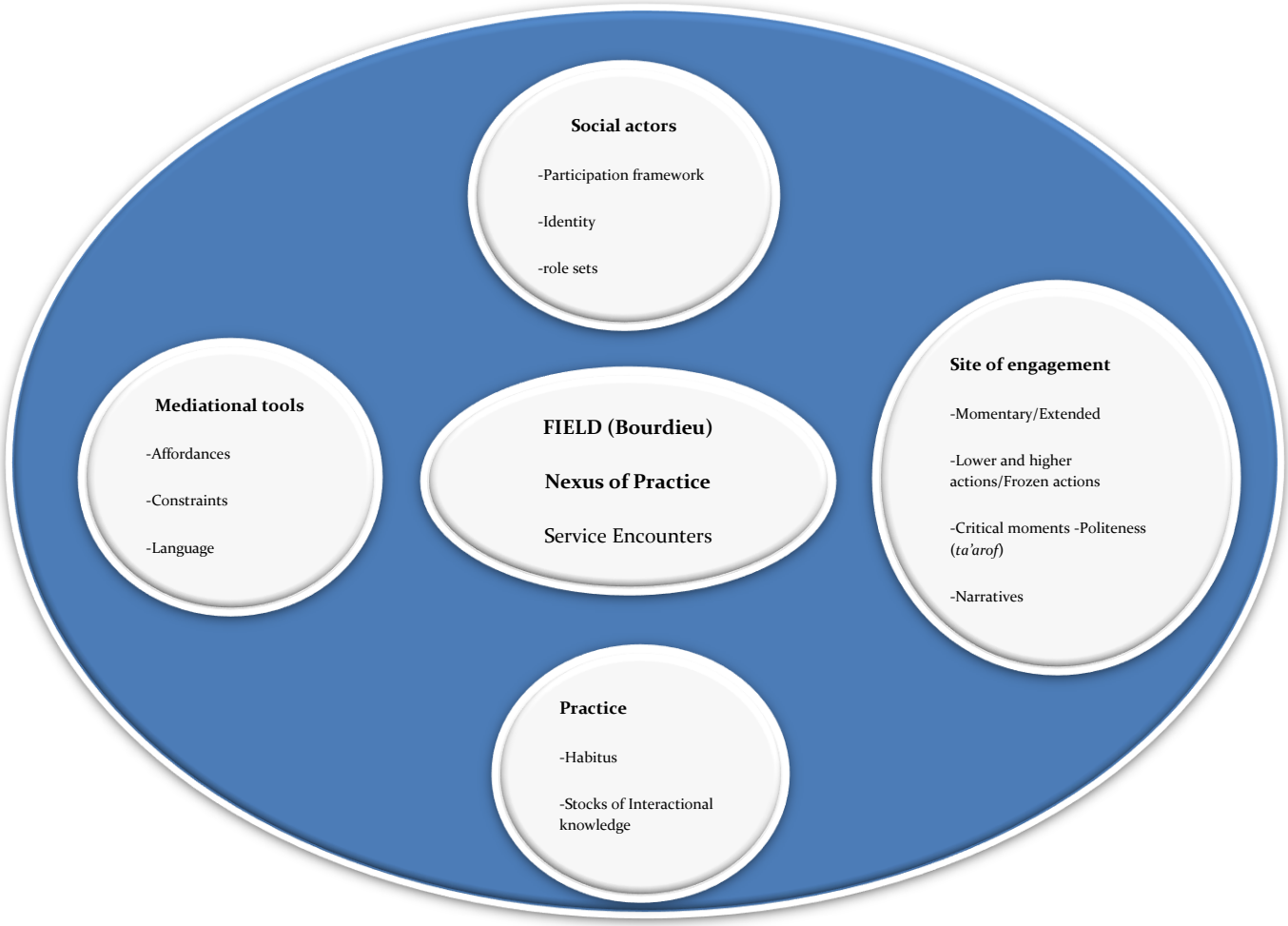

Figure 2: Frame: What is it that is going on here? (Definition of the situation: Working consensus)

2.7 Previous Research Findings on Service Encounter Discourse

As discussed in the previous chapter, a service encounter is by nature goal and task-oriented. Such encounters are not simply a matter of achieving successful business transactions. Additionally, what is significant is a range of social and discursive practices which they incorporate. Accordingly, this study sets out to investigate such practices in service interactions in a selected range of Persian retail shops in Sydney.

In ordinary language the term 'service encounter' (SE) is frequently used to convey the simple notion of everyday social interactions between a client and a service provider engaging in some service area. Within the research community, this everyday use of the term has led to various constructs and related terms such as top-down and bottom-up approaches (Kalaja, 1991), communicative behaviour and conflict (Bailey, 2000a), achieving friendly interactions (Ryoo, 2005), politeness and face work (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2006; Koutlaki, 2002), language ideology (Barrett, 2006), cross-cultural

communication (Kidwell, 2000), shifting alignment (Ylänne-Mcewen, 2004), multimodal negotiation (Filliettaz, 2004), and rapport building (Placencia, 2004). These constructs have been applied to a variety of situations, ranging from ethnic and small shops, travel agency, primary care consultations, front desk encounters, just to name but a few contexts.

In other studies, SEs have been investigated from different perspectives in different languages. There have been single culture and language studies, contrastive, and intercultural studies. Among the most important studies is Ventola's (1987) within the systemic functional tradition. Ventola's study is quite seminal in that it is a proposal for a generic structure for service encounters. However, scholars on the PIXI (Pragmatics of Italian/English cross-cultural interaction) project have carried out contrastive studies of bookshop SEs in English and Italian mostly within the conversation analytic tradition. Hence, they have centred their focus on different aspects of the local organization of these interactions (Aston, 1988; Gavioli, 1995, 1997). George's (1990) work, for instance, is an ethnomethodological ethnography of requests and complaints in Naples with the aim of uncovering the underlying interactional norms necessary for successful intercultural communication with Neapolitans. These studies highlight, for example, differences in interactional style in English and Italian through an analysis of the way in which elements of the SE are structured and sequenced.

In early studies, interactions in SEs primarily consisted of routine business transactions, involving the basic communicative activities namely a) greetings or openings, b) negotiation of the business exchange such as the availability or price of merchandise (Merritt, 1976; Mitchell, 1957) and c) closing the encounter. In the seminal work on service encounters, Mitchell (1957) studied the patterns of interaction during street trading in Cyrenaica, to create what McCarthy (2000, p. 85) refers to as "a seminal account of the staging and sequencing of extended spoken events". Merritt (1976) had examined the individual moves and turns from which the service encounter is built. She scrutinized the exchange structures typified by adjacency pairs, insertion sequences and other two or three part units of interaction in microscopic detail.

However, more recent studies (Aston, 1988; Bailey, 1997, 2000a; Kalaja, 1989; Ryoo, 2005) claim that SEs not only display the transactional and business oriented aspect of language. Rather, they also exhibit the interactional and relational aspects of language use in discourse. For instance, Filliettaz and his colleague (Filliettaz & Roulet, 2002), explored service encounters in small shops and bookshops in Geneva from a multimodal perspective

i.e., transactional talk. Their model incorporates the analysis of verbal and non-verbal actions (gestures, presence of the participants). They have, for instance, analysed the co-construction of request-response sequence that is carried out and accomplished across multiple turns. Their analysis of request sequences has examined the intricate connections between conceptual knowledge and discourse realities as well as the construction of joint activities. More importantly, the study has highlighted the main contributions made by a "modular approach" to the new challenges linked to the recent expansion of discourse analysis. Through implementing a range of explicit descriptive principles to naturally occurring discourse realities, such an approach offers the analyst with a set of restricted theoretical tools (e.g. praxeological structures, conceptual structures, hierarchical structures, etc.) that provide a detailed account of various contextual and textual components.

Linked together, all of these approaches offer explanations for SEs. These approaches have concentrated on the different linguistic aspects of service encounters including, speech acts, politeness, rapport building, and relational talk. Among these, speech acts, for instance, have largely attracted researchers' attention in service interactions. In the following, I will briefly summarize the findings of the research conducted in SEs in different disciplines, namely intercultural communication, transactional versus relational service encounters, institutional talk, and non-verbal behaviour.

2.7.1 Intercultural Communication

Research on SEs relevant for the realm of intercultural communication has mainly been undertaken in the areas of misunderstanding, miscommunication and conflicts (e.g., Bailey, 1997, 2000), friendly and positive service interactions (Ryoo, 2005), pragmatics (i.e., speech acts and politeness) (Koutlaki, 2002), and racial inequality (Barrett, 2006). The main focus of these disciplines is how cultural and linguistic differences of individuals from different cultural backgrounds give rise to problems pertinent to the negative nature of such interactions. Researchers across various disciplines such as Gumperz (1982) and Tannen (1984) have strongly advanced arguments concerning this perspective of culturally determined ways of speaking. Gumperz (1982), the pioneer of the notion of 'discourse strategy', for instance, argues that interactions among individuals with different cultural backgrounds shape different interactive experiences in a given speech community. The culturally specific discourse strategies can be realised when one speaks his/her second language, hence, causing frequent miscommunication.

Another key factor that has attracted researchers' attention in intercultural SEs (e.g. primary care consultations; Anglo-owned Mexican restaurant) is a success or lack of success of intercultural communication, which is mediated by linguistic proficiencies. Linguistic proficiency is viewed as the inability to use a particular language in a, presumably, unfamiliar context. Roberts, Moss, Wass, Sarangi & Jones (2005), for example, examined patients with limited English in 19 inner London general practices. With the help of video recorders, the researchers recorded 232 consultations and identified all misunderstandings that arose. Interestingly, they found that these misunderstandings were caused by linguistic proficiency in medical encounters in this multilingual community.

In the same vein, Barrett's study (2006) is concerned with the impact of language ideology on the interactions between English-speaking Anglo managers and workers with their monolingual Spanish speaking staff in Texas. The researcher found that the relatively little attention given to grammatical forms in Spanish by the Anglos left the communicative burden almost entirely to the Spanish speakers, who oftentimes had difficulty understanding Anglo speech due to its lack of sufficient semantic content. This reinforced the basis of racist stereotypes of Spanish speakers as lazy, indignant, uncooperative, illiterate, or unintelligent (p. 164). In contrast, the Spanish staff frequently used Spanish as an essential tool of solidarity' and 'resistance'. The researcher argues that the fact that Anglos paid little or no attention to what was talked about in Spanish made it possible for the Latino workers to use Spanish as a means of controlling resources in the restaurant.

Another study on SEs that has gradually taken hold of the researchers' attention is what has been referred to as 'small talk'. Small talk, defined by Coupland (2000), "has widely been taken… to be a conventionalized and peripheral mode of talk" and is often assumed to be "a range of supposedly minor, informal, unimportant and non-serious modes of talk" (2000, p.1). According to Holmes (2000), small talk can take place on a continuum with "core business talk" and "phatic communion" at either end (2000, p. 38). As suggested by Aston (1988), studies on small talk have been overlooked or have only been targeted at the limited role of transactional communication. For Aston, phatic communication is interactional talk that is established for the purpose of negotiating "positive rapport", which is referred to as the establishment and maintenance of friendly relations (Brown & Yule, 1983). Aston adopts this notion to refer both to conventionalized forms and to individualized, creative uses of the language. The current study will be enhanced by

Aston's notion for a range of activities, including language play exchanges (see Placencia, 2004) which are creative activities not concerned with phatic communication in the sense that it has been traditionally perceived, that is, as referring to inquiries about health, talk about the weather and affirmations of some "supremely obvious" state of affairs (Malinowski, [1923]1972, p. 149); greeting and leave-taking tokens (Laver, 1975, 1981); and exchanges of 'biographical information' (Knapp, 1978).

Drawing on Goffman's facework and conversation analysis, Aston's (1988) work is among the first to identify a range of linguistic resources which participants in specific contexts employ for the purpose of negotiating friendly relations, which was assumed to be beyond the use of conventionalized forms. Aston and his fellow colleagues on the PIXI project (1988) investigated a range of interactional talk in the context of bookstore encounters in the UK and Italy.

Putting service interaction in a different context, Lorenzoni and Lewis (2004) conducted a study on the ways in which Italian and British service staff of an airline deal with service failure. In this context, service failure refers to occasions when 'something goes wrong' such as customers having their baggage lost or being unable to get on their flight owning to overbooking. Drawing on two questionnaires, the researchers interviewed 39 Italian and 37 British cabin, ground, and telephone staff working for the same airline. The researchers found that most staff reported that they would attempt to change an arrangement if it were in line with company rules and regulations. If an arrangement were not an option, they would suggest why it was the case. Lorenzoni and Lewis's research has demonstrated that there were some attitudinal differences. While Italian service staff, for example, sometimes reported compassionate cases, British workers were not keenly sensitive about them. As a result of the same training that all employees of the airline receive, the researchers reported some similarities. The authors conclude that the differences and similarities they found in the staff's attitudes gave rise to Italian and British culture and stated that attitudes are not as amenable to training as behaviour (see also Piller, 2011).

In addition, and pertinent to the present multilingual data, Callahan (2006b) and Torras and Gafaranga (2002) discussed the linguistic components of cross-cultural interactions in the service encounter context. Callahan (2006) examined language accommodation theory (Giles & Smith, 1979) by employing seven fieldworkers in New York City. The participants initiated service interactions in a variety of service contexts in which English and Spanish were both regularly utilized. Callahan argues that the tendency toward

language accommodation, generally within their first turn, seems to be on the part of the bilingual service providers. However, frequency and realization of language accommodation differed in terms of the age of the service providers, with younger Latino service providers being more likely to respond in English even if a request for service was made in Spanish.

In another study, Torras and Gafaranga (2002) analysed language alternation in trilingual (i.e., English, Spanish, Catalan) service encounters in Barcelona and suggested that such code alternation was performed by speakers as a "practical social action" that serves various medium-related functions including medium selection, medium repair, and medium suspension. For these authors, the choice of linguistic code can be influenced by a variety of ideological and political factors external to the service transaction. Nonetheless, the "language preference" demonstrated in these interactions serves as a categorization device through which participants establish social identities for themselves and others as they pertain to the interaction. Given the cross-cultural and multilingual nature of the present study's interactions, it seems that similar explorations of the linguistic code choices made by participants in the current study's Persian shops are warranted.

In a different setting, Kuroshima (2010) has explored the sequence organization of orders of food in a Japanese restaurant in the US. The researcher has examined a variety of ways in which food orders and their acceptance in a Japanese restaurant can be expended. The study argues that a minimal orientation to problems of understanding is embodied by a minimal adjacency pair sequence of order and acceptance. While in expanded sequences trust is attenuated, the base adjacency pair sequence shows trust in customer's understanding of the food being ordered and in the chef's registration of the order. According to the author, these conversational practices are "vehicles for the construction of relationships" between customers and a restaurant chef in a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic setting.

In a most recent study on service encounters in commercial and non-commercial settings drawing on pragmatic-discursive framework, Felix-Brasdefer (2015) explores transactional and relational talk in various contexts in Mexico and the United States. The author has analysed the structure of the interactions on different discourse/pragmatic levels, including the actional, sequential, stylistic, and organizational levels with specific attention to variation by gender. However, while the study has centred its attention on interactional aspects of SEs, virtually its detailed description and explanation of actual interaction was

seen as a product of text rather than as a social phenomenon. In order to get a better understanding of interactions in SEs, which are inherently embedded in social interaction, a further detailed analysis of actual interaction (i.e., language and non-language elements) would obviously have provided a better picture of what can be achieved through action and talk in the settings discussed in Felix-Brasdefer's book.

These studies, then, provide the impetus and foundation for the present examination of encounters in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney, Australia. The present study expands and complements this body of literature with its analysis of a multicultural and multilingual service encounter context.

2.7.2 Politeness

Previous studies of SEs largely draw on Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Goffman's (1955) analysis of politeness and facework respectively. Linguistic politeness is one of the integral parts of the relational interaction in SEs and has aroused widespread interest among researchers interested in cultural variation. While Yabuuchi (2004) and Ryoo (2005) have discovered different norms for the expression of politeness in the interaction of different cultural groups in the United States, Buttny and Williams (2000) discuss narratives of disrespect in intercultural discourse. In an Asian context, Kong (1998), for instance, has shown that politeness norms can vary according to the type of encounter, or the anticipated length of a service provider/service user relationship, and Chan et al. (2004) has found that despite the fact that Filipino and Chinese participants in service encounters have different attitudes to rapport promotion, in both cases the customers heavily rely on the good will of the provider.

In a study on the effect of politeness and macro-social variables on SEs, Antonopoulou (2001) conducted an ethnographic study on (mainly fieldnotes) at a small newsagent's store in Greece. The researcher has investigated the effects of politeness and gender focusing on the responses to greetings, requests, gratitude and partings. The findings reported suggest that the verbalized requests were preferred in female-female interactions (71%) while elliptical requests were more common among male interactions (61.5%). As for the preference for greetings, expressions of gratitude and partings, women were likely to use expressions of solidarity politeness more frequently than did males.

Examining SEs in a Spanish context, Ruzickova (2007) conducted her study on requests and politeness strategies in Cuban Spanish, using an ethnographic approach from a variety

of service encounter contexts. Distinct from results found in some other Latin American contexts, she found a predominate use of conventionally direct request strategies among Cuban speakers of Spanish. In addition, her participants demonstrated a preference for positive politeness, particularly concerning the use of in-group markers such as the informal address form *tú*, "pal" address forms, slang and group language, and the use of diminutives.

In the same vein, beyond the Spanish-speaking context, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006) carried out research into small shop service encounters in France focusing on opening and closing rituals, request strategies, and mitigation tactics employed by small shop service assistants and their customers in Lyons. She concluded that these interactions can be characterized by the use of a large number of "politeness formulae" including "conventionally indirect" requests, well-wishing, and thanking.

Generally, existing linguistic research on SEs has taken two approaches, namely genre studies (Hasan, 1985; Mitchell, 1957; Ventola, 1987) and politeness studies (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2006; P. Norris & Rowsell, 2003; Placencia, 2004; Traverso, 2006). The primary goal of the first approach is to describe the textual forms, which constitute such an interaction and its basic communicative structures, drawing on the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. The second approach is concerned with studying politeness strategies implemented by participants in the interaction. The interest in politeness in sales encounters has grown in recent politeness research on spoken interaction in institutional, professional and corporate settings. Kong (1998), Pan (2000) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006) have adapted Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to analyse service encounters. Despite the challenges of Brown and Levinson's notion of face and its applicability, their model still remains the most applicable and viable for such an analysis in that the awareness of face, a fundamental concept of Brown and Levinson's model, plays an important role in establishing interpersonal communication (Gao, 1998).

Similarly, Márquez Reiter and Placencia (2004) examined the closeness and/or distance exhibited between clothing and accessory shopkeepers and their customers in Montevideo, Uruguay and Quito, Ecuador. The authors encountered the use of various selling strategies in both Montevideo and Quito, including the disclosing of personal information, anticipating the customer's experience with the product, explaining the product, enumerating the product's attributes, and making an offer, among others.

A handful of previous studies have analysed pragmatic development in service encounters by L2 learners. Kidwell (2000), for example, demonstrates how the institutional context of a front desk service encounter in a university setting can function as a shared background that all participants in a cross-cultural exchange possess. Her participants were native English-speaking front desk attendants and non-native English-speaking students who asked for their assistance. Although there were cultural differences and the existence of a language barrier, it was the institutional context of the front desk service encounter that enabled, for example, the front desk attendants to interpret various utterances as requests for service and to more efficiently provide that service. Applied to the present data, it is feasible that in the multicultural setting of Persian ethnic shops, culturally variable orientations and approaches to service encounters may impact upon the interactions in the present corpus.

Another interesting study on L2 learners in the context of SEs is that of Shively (2011) who examined L2 pragmatic development in the context of students' study abroad. The participants of her study were L2 learners of Spanish and local Spanish service providers in Toledo, Spain. The L2 students studied abroad for one semester in Spain and the data was composed of naturalistic audio recordings that the students made of themselves while visiting local shops, banks, and other establishments. The theoretical framework of her study was based on language socialization, politeness theory and Vygotskian sociocultural theory. She found that the l2 learners slightly changed their request sequences, but no structural changes resulted. The students reported feeling good about the way they spoke Spanish, which might signify that the socialization process contributed to the students' boost in self-confidence and identity as a Spanish speaker. Finally, the most prevalent change reported was the shift from speaker-to hearer-oriented verbs in requests. This shift is not simply the result of syntax and semantics. It denotes an understanding of the target culture's influence on language well beyond vocabulary and grammar.

As a whole, the aforementioned studies constitute a rich body of knowledge about interactional patterns in service encounter contexts, especially within the Spanish-speaking world, and their foci, methodologies, and varied results encourage and guide the present exploration of SEs in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney. However, while these studies have centred their attention on interactional aspects of SEs, virtually none has addressed or have analysed the detailed description and explanation of actual interaction. The detailed analysis of actual interaction would obviously provide a better understanding of what can

be achieved through action and talk in such contexts. As a result, this study is an attempt to build on previous interactional analysis of face-to-face interaction of SEs focusing on Scollon's nexus of practice discussed above. That is, given this particular site (i.e., Persian ethnic shops), I seek to explore what discourses are circulating through that site and particularly through action.

Studies like those outlined above tend to have constrained their analytical scope within the framework of the critical moments of the interactions. These studies seem to be aligned along the lines of the common theme that, despite the different claims of each study on what brings about the conflict or problems, miscommunication among people with cultural differences are deeply ingrained and bound to happen in interactions.

Clearly, these studies are each concerned with quite different objects of inquiry and are based on different understandings of intercultural communication. In such studies, it seems as though the findings were seen as a product of text rather than as a social phenomenon. To work out what is exactly going on in an interaction such studies need to be situated within the whole interaction. Relying solely on the linguistic means (i.e., texts) can lead to a distorted and incomplete picture of the semiotic realities occurring when face-to-face interactions are met. In such settings, joint actions are not carried out merely through language use. Rather, they frequently incorporate non-linguistic conduct and references to material objects available in the physical environment (Filliettaz, 2004; Scollon, 2001b). Such elements cannot be overlooked and should be paid central attention within a multimodal approach to discourse.

2.7.3 Relational/interpersonal interactions versus transactional interactions

Perhaps the above seems to imply that participants in service interactions, for example, often have clear and explicit goals. However, as studies in communication goals have revealed, participants regularly have multiple goals (Tracy & Coupland, 1990), two of which can be distinguished as those having to do with accomplishing a task (transaction) or those that guide the way in which people relate to each other (relational). Furthermore, in analysing business negotiations, Lampi (1986) distinguishes three types of goal namely, "task-orientation", "interaction-orientation" and "self-orientation". In addition to these, Ylänne-Mcewen (1997) also adopts "identity goals" in her analysis of interactions in travel agency. Identity goals can be viewed as associated with either a relational or transactional orientation or perhaps both in that participants can make relevant either their institutional

roles or identities when dealing with transactional goals or some other identity, which can be linked to some kind of a relational goal.

However, in many kinds of workplace or institutional discourse, the participants may be predominately concerned with getting things done, hence with transactional goals. This is more or less true for SEs between customers and shop owners where there is no interpersonal goal to maintain. Previous studies on institutional talk have brought to the fore the predominance of task goals in such talk (Drew & Heritage, 1992b). Nonetheless, taking more than a one goal approach to discourse allows one to acknowledge that in most types of discourse, participants orient to both types of goals, but even so one type of goal might remain relatively dominant. Recent research has also shown the importance of relational goals in transactional settings as diverse as the travel business, health care, telephone companies (Coupland & Ylänne-Mcewen, 2000; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Ragan, 2000).

Generally, in such research, SEs are defined as interactions (i.e., conversations) between participants who gather in a specific setting for transactional exchange. Merritt (1976, p. 321) defines a service encounter as:

> an instance of face-to-face interaction between *a server* who is officially posted in some *service area* and a *customer* who is present in that service area, that interaction being oriented to the *satisfaction* of the customer's presumed desire for some service and the server's obligation to provide that service (emphasis added).

As can be seen and is persuasively argued by Ylanne-McEwen (2004), this definition is rather limited to roles, goals and setting of the situation as highlighted above. Whereas service encounters by nature are goal and task-oriented and the goal of achieving successful business transactions is foregrounded, there are occasions when they also incorporate a range of important social and discursive practices (i.e., interpersonal and relational concerns) (see Aston, 1988) that play an important role in the talk and alignment between the participants.

As an example of an activity type (i.e., “our knowledge of the structure”) (Levinson, 1992, p. 62), service encounters consist of a set of goal-defined bounded events or episodes. Studies on the conversational structure of service encounters (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Ventola, 1983, 1987) found that service encounters are a mutually co-ordinated undertaking where participants share a common ground and interest in successfully pursuing the activity based on the following plan:

a- Greeting
b- (Service initiation)
c- (Service enquiry)
d- Service request
e- Service compliance
f- Sale
g- Purchase
h- Closure
i- (goodbye)

Figure 3: The generic structures of a service encounter (Adapted from Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 64)

The stages shown above in the framework of a service encounter[1], developed by Halliday and Hasan (1985), have different status in the structure. Those between brackets are optional. However, the stages (f) through (h) constitute obligatory elements. Service "request" and service "compliance" consist of the integral part of the service element. However, previous research has explored how the participants in such contexts have more opportunities to shift their relational alignments and that they seem to be less confined to be in line only with their pre-allocated identities of a service provider or a customer (client).

Coupland (1983), on the one hand, draws a distinction between commodity service encounters that are concerned with relatively brief encounters such as the buying and selling of newspapers and tape-reels and, on the other hand, a more general type such as a travel agency where the commodity that is being transacted is a "less tangible entity: a holiday, a tour package, an "experience"" (1983, p.464). The general service encounter involves both selling and informing, encouraging or even debriefing the customers and, as Coupland suggests (1983, p. 465) is "communicatively more open" than "commodity service encounters" in that it covers a broader range of communicative options that are available to the participants. Additionally, there are various opportunities and possibilities of opening up and maintaining a personal relationship between the assistant and the client.

Ventola also worked with service interactions in the late 1980s focusing on talk in a post office, a gift shop and travel agency discourse. Similarly to Hasan (1985), her study is associated with distinguishing obligatory (i.e., sale request) and non-obligatory elements (e.g. greetings) and recognises the dynamism of the most mundane everyday service

[1] The basic communicative structure of service encounter goes back to Mitchell's original study of buying and selling in Cyrenaica, Libya in 1957.

conversations. Drawing on the notion of register (i.e., Halliday's Field, Tenor and Mode), her main interest is the Field (transactionally oriented discourse) rather than the Tenor and how similar features take place across the different spatial environments, thus offering the researcher the possibility of formulating a generic structure potential for any given genre. Ventola (1983) has used Finnish and Australian English data to explore some cross-cultural differences in schematic expectations in service encounters in a post office and in a travel agency.

In another study, Placencia (2004) examined the non-transaction-oriented talk activities carried out by shop owners in Quito and Madrid to build rapport with their regular customers. She discovered that participants regularly got involved in talk activities that brought with it a personal orientation to the institutional context and task-oriented transaction. According to the author, these talk sequences represented relation-oriented activities aimed at establishing and maintaining quality neighbourhood relationships and connectedness. In the same token, James (1992), while using video-and audio recorded interactions, examined both transactional and relational talks in service encounter in southern England. The researcher found that women, aged 60 and plus, initiated topics (e.g., weather) more frequently than men. In other words, topic control was common among older females.

Accordingly, it seems that these previous studies provide further impetus and foundation for the present examination of service encounters in Persian ethnic shop

2.7.4 Institutional Talk

A further common dichotomy in research on interaction in service encounters is a key distinction between mundane talk and institutional talk. Mundane talk is viewed as interaction in which contents of turn, length and order are not controlled by prior management (Wilson, 1991, p. 22). It is the default option in interaction from which all specific exchange systems depart (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 729-731). On the contrary, interaction, as argued by Boden and Zimmerman (1991), is viewed as institutional when participants' professional and institutional identities are to some extent made relevant to the activities in which they are engaged, hence institutions are "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984, p. 290).

On such a view, Drew and Heritage (Drew & Heritage, 1992a, p. 22) characterize three features which appear to recur across institutional talk namely:

a) Interaction in institutional settings is by nature task-oriented. This means talk in such context is shaped by goal orientations conventionally relevant to a given institution. In the context of a service encounter, the goal (i.e., the service) is achieved through the participants' complementarity; one participant provides the service while the other one obtains it;
b) Institutional interaction tends to focus on what are regarded as allowable contributions to the business. In the service encounter context, for example, both participants (service provider and customer) seem to be oriented towards negotiable understandings about the ways in which the nature of the institutional aspects of their activities may constrain their allowable contributions;
c) Institutional talk may be related to inferential procedures and frameworks that are particularly specific to the institutional context.

Auer (1992), for example, argues that in institutionalized episodes, participants have an idea of some sequences of possible actions, and even more likely some sequences of wordings associated with these interactional steps. In other words, a set of contextual schemata associated with social roles are thought to be relevant from the beginning of the interaction. In the context of a service encounter, for instance, when participants enter a shop, they have certain expectations about the shop owner/keeper's behaviour prior to their interactions. This is in accord with SIKs previously discussed.

Lamoureux's study, on the other hand, (1988) is actively involved in retailing and refers to data that consists of recordings from a fabric shop, a record shop, markets, a department store, a fish shop, bookstores, and a drug store. Lamoureux concludes that when service providers and customers come into contact with each other in retail settings, they give impetus to a large number of competing forces. This includes the needs of the customer that can be seen to be traded off with the relative motivations and abilities of the service provider. During SEs, information about products and/or services is sometimes exchanged and sales may be transacted. Concurrently, interactants manage interpersonal relationships.

In a study on talk in a travel agency setting, Ylanne-McEwen (2004), examined the shifts of alignment from server-customer alignments to different directions, including symmetrical positionings of various kinds from asymmetrical to symmetrical either in an institutional or non-institutional frame. This means such shifts between transactional to relational talk seem to be initiated by the customers. In this way, not only does the service

provider align with the customer's transactional needs but also with their interpersonal needs and complies with their stance shifts.

The theoretical underpinnings (frames, footing, facework) utilized in the aforementioned study tend to be an integral part of the current research where ethnic shops are viewed not only as a shopping opportunity but also as a gathering place where "immigrants obtain information" (Ehrkamp, 2005) and whereupon they access their social connections within their community. The current research aims to centre its focus on the whole interaction where social actors are only considered to be one part of it. It is in the nexus of practice that one can recognise other social practices, which seem to have been left unexplored in previous studies on service interactions.

The sort of institutional encounters investigated in the current study can be associated with non-formal settings as defined by Drew and Heritage (1992b) in that they are less formal than those pertinent to news interviews or courtroom interaction. As a result, patterns of interaction in the latter settings show less uniformity. Generally, as previous research has shown, service encounters not only include achieving successful business transactions but also incorporate a range of important social and discursive practices. It is for this reason that this study attempts to address Goffman's focal question in order to grasp as it were from the inside, an account of what it is that is going on in the Persian ethnic shops.

2.7.5 Non-verbal behaviour

Within the body of research that has been conducted on non-verbal features of social interactions, talk through behaviour has significantly drawn most of the attention of researchers for the past decades. Studies of this kind have brought to the fore how gesticulations, facial expressions, or postures can lead to the process of interpretation and utterance formation. However, many researchers in the field have pursued their investigations on one particular sub-type of non-verbal behaviour, namely on what is sometimes known as "communicative gestures" (Cosnier & Vaysse, 1997, in Filliettaz, 2004). After more than forty years of systematic inquiry on topics of such a kind, many categorizations of such communicative gestures have been introduced (iconic gestures, metaphoric gestures, deictic gestures, emblems). Furthermore, since the question of non-verbal (non-linguistic) components of communication has progressively and thoroughly undergone scrutiny, it has aroused various controversies among conversation analysts (Schegloff, 1984), psycholinguists (McNeill, 1992, 2000), or semioticians (Calbris &

Porcher 1989, in Filliettaz, 2004), who aimed at defining a conceptual framework that could shed light on both the imagistic side of language use and the linguistic side (Filliettaz, 2004).

Filliettaz's study (2004), for instance, on non-verbal behaviour in the construction of service encounters is rare in the domain of service interaction. The researcher collected naturally occurring data in a department store in Geneva by drawing on a multimodal discourse analytical approach to service provider-customer interaction focusing on the impact of non-verbal behaviour on the construction of service encounters. The author found that by applying a multimodal negotiation of service encounters, researchers have at their disposal better accounts of interpretation of service interactions. Moreover, he argues despite previous research on SEs, where the focus was an attempt to decompose non-verbal components systematically, his study showed that speech and gestures should not be viewed as two sides of a single system. It is because non-verbal behaviours like instrumental acts simultaneously occur with speech without assisting a "single semantic unit" (Filliettaz, 2004, p. 98).

Filliettaz (2004) goes further to argue that the provision of a service or selling and buying goods incorporates the performance of a vast array of specific tasks, some of which are being mediated by wordings (i.e., talk). It is for this reason that most of the backstage and frontstage practices of such context that participants involved in are being conducted through communicational means (Filliettaz, 2004). However, it is obvious that interactions in SEs are not largely aimed at communicational activities and means. As long convincingly argued by scholars such as Goffman (1981b), and Scollon (2001b) social practices occurring in transactional settings are inextricably intertwined with material objects (mediational tools, Scollon, 2001) or various semiotic practices including graphic acts or inscriptions (Streeck & Kallmeyer, 2001).

In this vein, there is a growing body of work exploring referential practice (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986; Goodwin, 1986b, 1994; Hanks, 1990; Hindmarsh & Heath, 2000; Kendon, 2004; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Wootton, 1990). For instance, Sacks & Schegloff (1979) investigated how speakers over the telephone refer to persons while using verbal descriptors and names. Hindmarsh & Heath (2000) analysed how workers in a telecommunications control room used pointing when referring to information objects in a complex environment of computer monitors and documents. Goodwin (1994, 2003)

investigated how archaeology students are instructed to see “features” in dirt in part through pointing and tracing.

Another key study on non-verbal behaviours in SEs at a quick print shop is that of Moore (2008). The study has investigated several ways in which gesture is utilized as a supplement, complement, and alternative to talk in the context of service encounter referring to objects. Whereas previous studies on gesture and references have focused on pointing or deictic gestures (e.g. Hindmarsh & Heath, 2000; Kendon, 1980, 2004; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979), this study found that iconic gestures played an important role in achieving reference. The author maintained that not only are categorization, ostension (recognition of an object with a simple gesture and a deictic word e.g. this…) and depiction alternatives to reference, but also they are ordered alternatives. Whatever form of reference customers employed, the employees and the customers unanimously demonstrated a preference for the print shop’s official term for the service. This finding is in line with Sacks’ and Schegloff’s (1979) and Schegloff’s (1972) argument that names tend to display a preferred from of reference in that they seem to be both minimal and recognitional. Taken together, the author argues, these kinds of referential resources seem to be an extremely powerful system for achieving successful recognition in face to face interaction.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has introduced the theoretical frameworks based on which this study was founded. The main theories presented that inform this study are that of Scollon’s MDA, linked with Goffman’s constructs of interactive frame and footing. Social and discursive practices as the key elements in this study seem to have several meanings. Thus, this chapter has set the platform for the forthcoming methodology chapter.

Chapter 3: Spatial Engagement in *Persia*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to investigate human social action at the site of engagement in the Persian ethnic shop, which is replete with mediational tools (objects) and social actors. Specifically, this chapter sets out to explore how "*cycles of discourse*" (Figure 4) (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) are embedded in social action, in what Scollon (2008b) later renamed by "discourse itineraries", occur in a site of engagement at a nexus of some aggregate of discourse in real time and space. Such itineraries, Scollon (2008) says, are always mediated by text, action, and the material world (service interactions, for example), for "the relationship of text to text, language to language, is not a direct relationship but is always mediated by the actions of social actors as well as through material objects of the world" (p. 223). Thus, bringing language use into its social context has an important contribution in shedding light on how a space like Persian ethnic shops is full of cultural-social meaning. Such discourse itineraries, which form one ethnographic object of inquiry (ethnography will be discussed in Chapter 4 in detail) include:

a) *the interaction order* (social roles and relationships in a situation)
b) *the discourses in place* (the discourses the participants produce and the discourses already available in the surroundings i.e., signs, the layout) and
c) *the historical body* (the aims, purposes and reasons for being in a social space and the habitus of the individuals).

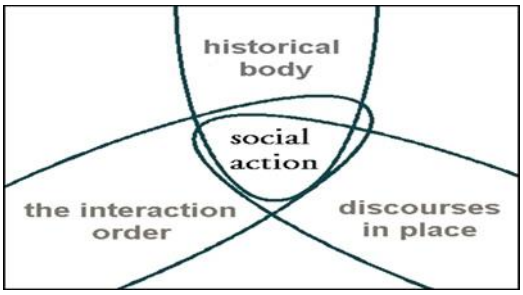

Figure 4: Cycles of discourse (Scollon & Scollon, 2004)

As argued in Chapter 2, Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) focuses on gaining an understanding of social actions (neither text nor genre) which are performed by social actors in a site of engagement and of how discourse is utilized as a means to perform that action. In this sense, previous scholars in the field (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon & Scollon, 2004; S. Scollon, 2003) have informed us about how and why certain social

practices and activities (the latter defined as the sequence of an action) are performed and how discourse functions as a tool for producing and reproducing social actors.

Traditional discourse analysis in the domain of service encounters seems to have ignored the importance of the social processes, the historical and cultural context that underpins such verbal exchanges. These studies have documented the minimal forms of social interactions taking place in the site of engagement of such encounters. The analysis of other forms of discourse (i.e., mediational tools, material available in a shop) has stood outside of a social, historical and physical space. Such analysis cannot be removed from the reference to the world of action in which they occur. In fact, the difference between a mediated discourse approach, on which this thesis is heavily grounded, to other approaches so far applied to service encounters, (Bailey, 2000b; Barrett, 2006; Ryoo, 2005) is that rather than taking discourse (i.e., utterances) as a unit of analysis, MDA begins by exploring what actions the shop-owner and his/her customers (as the social actor in MDA) in the Persian ethnic shops, for instance, take and how discourse is being used as constructing those actions.

In the studies mentioned above, discourse takes the form of a few utterances mixed with non-discursive actions, as an instance of "textualization 'in' action" (Filliettaz, 2002, p. 261, in De Saint-Georges, 2004). In this way, discourse analysis focuses on verbal utterances and therefore fails to capture and scrutinize much detail of the relationship between its site of engagement and utterances. Thus, this chapter aims to fill this gap that has existed in the literature on service encounters by providing an account of what can be captured when attention is directed to a site of engagement, at which actions occur.

Here in Chapter 3, the focus will be more closely on the discrete moments whereby there is an intersection of social actors and practices in a particular time-place which constitutes different "sites of engagement" (Norris, 2011) in the shop. I will use the three-part framework, displayed in Figure 4, arguing that conducting a nexus analysis can reveal complex social relationships, patterns of discourse and social events, all of which occur as an intersection or nexus of three kinds of cycles, namely: *interaction order, discourses in place* and *historical body*. *The interaction order* directs our attention to different kinds of participants in different social situations (i.e., an ethnic shop) where the participants establish their ongoing relationships and where the shop owners are viewed to be at the centre of the interaction as a gatekeeper so that they can fulfil their customers' needs. *Discourses in place* grab or distract individuals' attention away from the layout of the

shop, its shelves, cash register etc. as well as from images or written texts. That is, the discourse is distributed among multiple participants of different statuses, some primary (i.e., ratified and some secondary, i.e., unratified). Perhaps participants who change their footing (Goffman, 1981a) during an interaction may see an interest in the unratified points. Additionally, given the nature of the site (i.e., an ethnic shop), once attention is directed toward the discourses in place, one can explore what discourses are circulating through that site and particularly through the participants' actions. Finally, the shop owner and customers' experiences of shopping which are stored within their *historical body* can enable them to be selective about which parts of a social action require their attention and which need to be backgrounded.

A close analysis of the sequence of the basic communicative activities of a service encounter, including (a) greetings or openings, (b) negotiation of the business exchange and (c) closing of the encounter (Bailey, 1997) permits for the possibility of how social actions and mundane activities (i.e., service interactions) are constituted out of mediated actions, practices and discourses (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) which can give rise to particular social consequences, (i.e., identity construction). For instance, all of these phenomena combined provide for a demonstration of presenting precise knowledge of a particular mediational means. A particular Persian rice, for instance, whose meaning is embedded in the mundane practices of the shop owners and the customers, can be used to analyse and understand the discourse. In fact, it would seem that the world of "food" within which the participants' accounts are situated is a field of two clashing worlds namely knowledge and unfamiliarity. In essence, a particular mediational means such as Persian rice provides the participants with a small world of culture that has a significant bearing on some of the customers involved in the accounts.

3.2 Site of Engagement as spatial engagement

Perhaps one of the most under-theorized constructs in MDA, as Jones (2005) argues, is that of the "site of engagement". The site of engagement is a social space at which a mediated action (see Chapter 2) takes place and encompasses not only the physical spaces where the interaction happens, the moments in time when actions take place, but also "the psychological or historical make-up" (Norris, 2011, p.51) which allows for the possibility of actions to happen, thereby relating the concepts of social actors and their real-time space.

All actions, according to Norris (2004), including lower (i.e., gestures), higher (an opening or closing of a service encounter for example) or frozen (the products on the shelves), are performed by social actors (in the Persian shop, customer-shop-owner) in a site of engagement to such an extent that each action is unrepeatable and specific since the scene (window) which opens for mediated action to happen will never correspond to an imminent action within the same site of engagement.

As for the link between interaction and a site of engagement, one ought to explore a nexus analysis, and specifically the area which has come to be known as MDA. A nexus analysis is the systematic and ethnographic study of the many overlapping cycles of discourse that fall naturally together to shape a nexus of practice (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). These elements or cycles are of *discourses in place* (the physical setting), *the interaction order* (the social relationships between the social actors), and *the historical body* (the aims, purposes and the life experiences) of the social actors. As can be seen, here the focus is to show how a nexus of practice occurs at an intersection or nexus of the three-part framework set out by the Scollons. These intersections of multiple discourses (language and non-language elements) in a particular site of engagement form what is known as "*semiotic aggregates*" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 167). This way of viewing discourse is particularly informative in that it helps the analyst explore how (inter)action is mediated through the physical/environmental features and objects in particular spaces, like the Persian shops in Sydney (e.g., cash registers). Each of these elements makes it possible to illuminate how customers in the Persian shop, for instance, use space to "structure (ing) our (their) attention in particular ways" (Jones, 2010, p. 153) that helps some kind of social practices to be admissible and some inadmissible.

To be more precise, an action such as paying at the cash register, asking for the price of an item or any of the other numerous actions framing service encounters in the Persian shop, occurs at the intersection of many cycles of discourse, action, and practice referred to as the '*site of engagement'*– that moment when all those practices–calling the shop owner's name, stepping into personal space, showing the item to the shop owner, and so on–come together to form an action in real time.

This interest in focus on action corresponds to what Garfinkel (1967) has called "ethnomethodology". Ethnomethodology is the study of people's methods for accomplishing just about any aspect of social life. In other words, ethnomethodology enables us to explore how social actors accomplish *social action*, *social order* and *social*

structure via their actions. For example, in the Persian shop, we can talk about how a person does something as simple as asking the shop owner a question about an authentic Persian item or shopping in this ethnic shop. In the first place, the customer is motivated by his or her reasons for being there and wanting to purchase some, if you will, authentic Persian items or pleasing his/her Persian partner.

Jones (2005, 2010) invites us to view *sites of engagement* as the collection of the patterns of orientation towards time and space that participants bring with them to time and space of social action mediated through what he calls "attention structures" (2005, p. 152). These patterns, Jones says, are themselves cultural tools that are embedded in built environments that are the mediational means (semiotic resources) that the customers in the Persian shop, for instance, utilize to take actions, as part of social practices of the shop itself (i.e., the norms of social interaction and the types of social identities it can offer). Additionally, these patterns are built into the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977b) of the participants, which have been internalized by the individuals as part of their historical body.

It is important to pay the principal focus of our attention on exploring how multiple sites of engagement in the Persian shop are formed through different patterns of orientation toward time and space. The main interest here is to try to get a sense of how the customers (Persian/non-Persian speakers) take actions of various kinds and what the constraints and affordances of the mediational means are, by which participants (i.e., the customers) perform in this site of engagement. In the following section, I will briefly summarise the three-part framework, namely *the interaction order*, *discourses in place*, and *the historical body* and relate them to the site of engagement in one of the Persian ethnic shops in Sydney with the pseudonym, *Persia*.

3.3 The interaction order in *Persia*

The interaction order, a term borrowed from Goffman (1983), is defined as the way in which individuals organise their social interactions in a social setting. Additionally, it includes any analytical tools associated with "the current, ongoing, ratified (but also contested and denied) set of social relationships we take up and try to maintain with the other people who are in our presence" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 16). Any social interaction that takes place in a site of engagement is closely linked to not only an understanding of the interaction order and the structure of the physical space but also to the social understandings of the space at which it occurs. In this sense, Scollon and Scollon

(2003) have reminded us that it is crucially important to perceive interaction order as semiotic signs in that it "gives off" (Goffman, 1959) social insights into social actors.

The interaction order of Persia is formed out of four main types of interaction units conceptualized by Goffman (1971) namely "*singles*", "*withs*", "*conversational encounters*", and "*platform events*".

3.3.1 Singles

Singles (see Figure 5) take the form of a person who is by him/herself in a social space among others. Based on my observations in the Persian shops, a large number of non-Persians visited the shop on their own without anybody accompanying them. It would be assumed that for non-Persians, interactions in service encounters would primarily consist of simple business transactions, which involve the transmission of information such as the availability or prices of merchandise (Merritt, 1976; Mitchell, 1957) (i.e., as an instance of customer–shopkeeper interaction).

In general, the *single* in a site of engagement occupied by others must provide legitimate reasons for being in that space (shopping for instance) despite the fact that their presence does not take up much material space. In addition, it seems that they are likely to be in conflict with the social situational needs of the "*with*" or the conversational encounter (see the following). In the context of the shop, for instance, I was reminded of an occasion when a customer entered the shop and seemed to be snooping around the shop. He did not converse with the shop-owner and just looked at the items on a shelf next to the cash register, where the shop-owner was standing. After a minute or two, he left the shop. To the surprise of the shop-owner and myself, he returned again looking at the same shelf. The shop-owner was curious to know what he was looking for, but refused to approach him. The customer left the shop again without purchasing anything. As soon as the customer left the shop, the shop-owner told me that he must have gone to the Arab shop, which was located in the vicinity of the Persian shop, and compared the prices. Figure 5 depicts the "*singles*" in the shop.

Figure 5: Singles in Persia

3.3.2 With

The *"withs"* are an event in which two or more people are seen as being together with one another and have their focus on their own interaction. In this kind of interaction unit, in Persia, the roles of the customers and the shop-owner are not fixed, but rather move back and forth between them, both of whom are engaged in displaying the self to the other group. The shop, based on my own observations, is full of customers mostly on Friday evenings and weekends. The interaction then is viewed as a jumble of small groups of three or more customers engaged in small talk along with a very few *singles* (normally non-Persians). These encounters, most often involving the shop-owner, begin when the first customers turn up and are often conducted in quite loud voices, for some customers frequently as continuations of conversations which have begun earlier outside the shop. Thus, the interaction order is featured by mostly grouping in which almost all of the participants, including the shop-owner, are mutually present to each other and where the focus of the attention is centred on the group's topics of interest. However, it should be noted that the customers were aware of "preserving others' privacy" in the shop. This was quite obvious when a group of customers held a discussion somewhere in the shop, the other customers, who happened to be in the vicinity, attempted not to approach them even if they needed an item from that section of the shop. In return, the group, who were busy chatting, were usually aware that they might have been obstructing others and thereby did move across the shop.

3.3.3 Conversational encounters

Another type of interaction that occurs in the shop is what is referred to as *"conversational encounters*". These have as "their main focus of attention the production and the maintenance of a state of talk among a relatively small group" (adapted from Goffman's definition in Scollon & Scollon 2003, p. 209) who have relatively equal status in their right to hold the floor. Quite often, the Persian speaking customers entered the shop while accompanying their relatives or friends. These customers had normally preferred to have their conversations at the back of the shop (which I refer to as "backstage"- see the following) or at the counter (the "frontstage" (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Conversation encounters in the shop

3.3.4 Platform event

A "*platform event*" is one where someone or a small group acts as a spectacle in order to observe another group of people. The platform event of the interaction order in Persia could be viewed as a "panopticon event" (Foucault, 1977) since a typical interaction in my research data was basically organised around the focus of the shop-owner and his customers. Even if it became a discussion involving many customers, the interaction remained for the shop-owner to monitor and observe the flow of the interaction exchanges. One reason for this would be the shop-owner's attempt to ensure the security of the shop (as well as helping customers with their requests), which may be referred to as what Scollon (1998) calls "*a watch*", defined as "any person or group of people who are perceived to have attention to some spectacle as the central focus of their activity. The spectacle together with its watchers constitutes the watch" (p. 283). In a *watch*, the roles

of the participants are relatively fixed. That is, the shop-owner, in this case, acts as the audience who devotes all of his attention to his customers who take the role of acting out the spectacle.

Due to its layout and the physical structure of the field, the panopticon Persian ethnic shop interaction is one in which, though equipped with Closed Circuit (CC) television, the shop-owner is at the centre of the communication as a gatekeeper. That is, the shop-owner talks to everyone in the shop and everyone in the shop who wants to know about a Persian product talks to the shop-owner or to the other customers when a discussion is held. In the great majority of the Persian ethnic shops I have visited in Sydney, the layout of the shop is arranged to facilitate this panopticon interaction order. The cash register, where the shop-owners usually stand, is placed at the entrance door, often as much as one-fourth of the total space in the shop, and the shop-owner is most often standing at the cash register which takes the form of a bulwark to facilitate the shop-owner to monitor and see all of the interactions taking place in the shop (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Panopticon interaction

The spatial layout of the shop places the customer and the shop-owner in an array that makes the relationships among customers fall within the intimate to personal range of Hall's (1969) interpersonal distances. However, it normally places the shop-owner at a further social distance from the customers. Based on my observations, many customers, mainly Persian speaking, walk in the shop in small groups (conversational encounters), where the interaction is seen shoulder-to-shoulder normally within what Hall (1969) calls intimate space.

The panopticon shop interaction order has quite clear practices where there is an opening and a closing interaction, which falls under the category of "higher action" (Norris, 2004, 2011). These include greetings, bringing the items to the cash register, asking for the availability and price of an item, shifts in voice levels, eye-gaze, and key words or phrases (both in Persian and in English depending on the customers) which normally signal a boundary.

These practices for opening and closing the interaction order are important in that the fundamental difference between this interaction order and what precedes and follows it in the shop is the exclusive attention paid to the shop-owner and perhaps to his/her interests. What seems to fall outside of the interaction in time before and after, are organised around small social interactions, mostly brief conversational encounters. These, according to Goffman, are "withs which have as their main focus of attention the production and the maintenance of a state of talk among a relatively small group" (adapted from Goffman's definition in Scollon & Scollon 2003, p. 209).

3.4 Discourses in Place in the shop

Similar to the physical environment where multiple focuses of attention are manifest, an action such as paying occurring at a site of engagement was not treated as a single focus of attention, but rather a series of overlapping focuses that had different windows and tasks all being simultaneously performed. Customers, mainly Persian speaking, regularly combined "shopping occasions" with "engaging in multiple discourses" such as talking about the weather, politics, upcoming elections, Nowruz (Persian New Year) and so forth. These 'discourses in place' of the customers in the shop have created a series of interactional activities and spatial contexts across which practices were polychronically (Hall, 1959) distributed over a wide range of activities with multiple tasks in progress. From this perspective, attention was not paid to one particular practice in isolation (i.e., shopping) or where it began or ended.

Within the shop, which itself is a semiotic aggregate, many discourses intersect, among them shop signage, ethnic food distribution and service, payment options (i.e., credit cards, cash), interior design, telephone ordering, money exchanges, ethnic music, bulletin news (such as job advertisements), and business cards. Discourse (as social action) in the shop is therefore formed by the arrangements of the shelves and the (narrow or long) passages within the space as well as the position of the shop-owner. For instance, I observed many

telephone call orders, where the shop-owner had to be stationary at the counter so that he/she could write down the name of the caller (customer) and the items which they were after.

The discourses in Persia are confined and formed by the interaction order and the built environments which enable and control the participants (including the shop-owner) who use the space. The term "built environments" is defined as the human-made surroundings which supply the setting for the human beings activity to happen. These built environments are often designed to accommodate certain interaction orders. For instance, the lay-out of the shop, as a discourse in place, is such that it helps the customer to pass the service point upon entering the shop and pick up the items he/she is after and bring them back to the counter, which is located in the vicinity of the entrance. Within this physical environment, the customers' attention is afforded or constrained by the walls of the shop, its windows, the doors and its furniture as well as by the images, texts, spoken and written (Jones, 2010, p. 153) that might be available in the shop. For example, the customer is likely to pay attention to the items he or she is after or to the signs among the discourse available in the shop. However, he/she is likely to pay no attention to or to fail to notice the TV set in the shop or the music being played in the shop. In other words, the customer is selective about all of the discourses in the shop, the ones that are relevant to the action he/she is taking and uses just those needed in conducting the purchase of his/her particular items.

The different structures of social interaction, mentioned above, enable the customers in the shop, for instance, to produce discourses in place where they can choose with whom they have a chat. These structures of social interaction are themselves part of the world for others who are in that same physical space. A conversation in the almost empty *Persia* can feel very different from the same conversation in the crowded *Persia* on weekends when families and friends are around. The difference does not lie so much in the conversation itself but rather in the other conversations that take place in the shop. *Those* discourses in this place are part of *this* discourse in the place (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

Much of the discourse in the *Persia* follows quite directly from the features of the interaction order discussed above. The discourse is circulated among multiple participants of different statuses. Oftentimes, the majority of the discourse takes place among non-ratified primary participants. During my recordings, for example, the shop-owner and one of the customers were chatting with each other while another customer approached them to make a point. It seems that the shop-owner has an interest in the un-ratified customer

Goffman (1981a), perhaps getting his attention to encourage him to buy the products, but the customer who is ratified and right there does not and therefore seeks to grab the shop-owner's attention to his topic for a moment.

3.4.1 The *frontstage* and the *backstage* of the Persian shop

Over the past 30 years or so, many scholars have pointed us to sociologist Ervin Goffman's construct of "frontstage" and "backstage" behaviours. He laid the foundation for a theory of impression management claiming that every individual is an actor on a stage performing for an audience and who requires controlling information (content, pacing etc.). For those who are present during an interaction, information becomes available and has many carriers for expressing it. Goffman views these performance settings as the region, defined as "any place bounded to some degree by barriers to perception" (1959, p. 66) which would take symbolic, emotional or physical form.

Originating from his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), the twin notions of "frontstage" and "backstage" suggest that individuals in their daily dealings have two different modes of presenting themselves to others, namely one when they are "on the stage" (frontstage) and the other one when they let down their guard (backstage), which is "out of bounds to members of the audience" (p. 79) and where they can dispose of their role or identity which they play when they are in front of others. In other words, participants as part of their performance regularly function in a fixed fashion to define the situation (frame analysis) for those who observe the act (performance).

In society, individuals use such *impression management* as a tool to make themselves more appealing to other individuals in a social setting while on the frontstage. That is when participants are out in social settings (i.e., in the presence of other people), they are on the frontstage. In this place, they are similar to actors in their lives. That is to say, they are using the tools of impression management while they are on the frontstage to try and put their best character out there for other people in an attempt to make those people accept them in society; thereby trying to manipulate the audience into liking them. However, Goffman argues participants leave the frontstage and return to the backstage when they are no longer required to be in the social environment. This is a place closed and hidden from other people and participants practice how to be *social* in the backstage. The front that individuals *were* is now dropped and they do not have to pretend and act. Therefore,

individuals behave in a manner with which they feel comfortable and of which no one else is a part.

As can be seen in Figure 8, the twin constructs of "*frontstage*" and "*backstage*" set the scene for Persia. Based on my observations, the customers (mostly Persian speaking) enter the frontstage by greeting the shop-owner. After the greeting rituals, they make their way to the back of the shop, which I call the "backstage". This is where the spatial dimension of the shop may enable the customers to privately use multiple (underlying) discourses, and passes from being an unnoticed aspect of the shop to becoming a space active in the dynamics of the shop among its participants. In other words, this struck me as an interesting site of engagement where the space becomes constructed as an "eventful space" (Crang & Thrift, 2000, p. 6), a socially produced space for purposeful and motivated actions. I would like to emphasise that the backstage of the shop is not just the "given" setting within which the shopping occurs. Rather, there is a real-time creation of the backstage as part of the practices of the shop (the practice of the group, so to speak) that can be observed.

Figure 8: The entrance

On the whole, the backstage of the shop is, in fact, complex and at times ambiguous. On the one hand, based on my observations, for the customers it is a social space for not only shopping but also for commenting on the price (e.g., “Do not buy that! It’s a bit expensive”) or on the quality (“We can buy a better one at Coles”) of the items that they may not do so at the cash register in the frontstage in the presence of the shop-owner. Thus, the backstage is used by the customers as an invisible space where they are allowed to shield certain activities from the shop-owner, thereby providing them with a sense of “privacy”. On the other hand, however, for the shop-owner the backstage is a place where he does his office work in his tiny office including issuing invoices, ordering goods he needs and so forth, which is invisible to the customers and to which they have no access. For those (mainly Persian speaking) who have close and intimate relationships with the shop-owner, the backstage is a place where they usually converse with the shop-owner and confide in him such that it is inaudible to the other customers. I observed many Persian speaking customers (as can be seen in Figure 8), who had taken the shop-owner, who was standing at the cash register, to the backstage and spent nearly 15 minutes or so talking to him, which was inaudible to me and the customers.

3.4.2 Special occasions and non-linguistic signs

During Nowruz, the Persian New Year, which usually falls on March 21st, the shop gives the impression that it is adorned with symbols of “Zoroastrianism” (an ancient monotheistic Persian religion and a religious philosophy) and with the Flag of the Imperial State of Iran-Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1979) (Figure 9). The Persian speaking customers approached the “Haft Sin”, the seven 'S's is a traditional table setting of Nowruz, the traditional Iranian spring celebration, and took photos of one another. For non-Persians, however, it would have been an educational occasion as they were curious about it and usually had a long discussion with the shop-owner and/or with the other customers, including myself, in the shop about the “Haft Sin” setting. The Haft-Sin is thus perceived as a semiotic space, a discourse in place, that not only affords some discourses, within the small limits of that space, but also imposes a particular interaction order, one into which almost all of the non-Persian customers have been effectively informed.

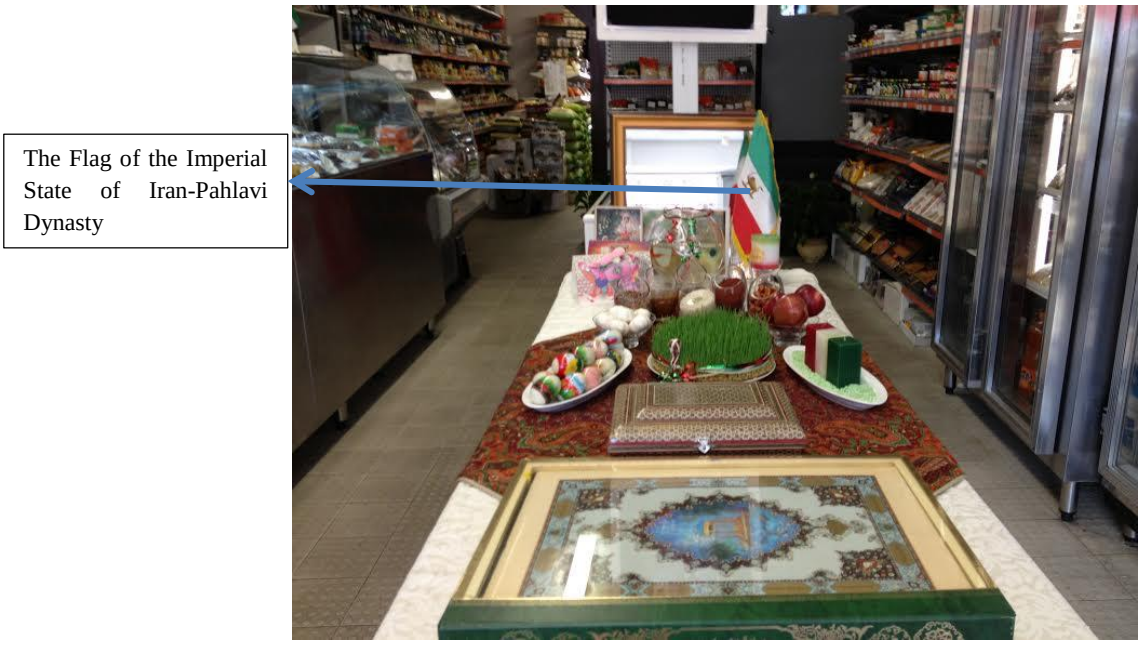

Figure 9: A "Haft Sin" setting in the shop (Front stage): a traditional table setting of Nowruz, the traditional Persian spring celebration

3.4.3 The Persian Literature section

Upon entering the shop and going past the "sweets" section (Figure 10), on the left-hand side, there is a section where Persian novels, Persian dictionaries, and history books (mainly before the 1979 revolution) are kept, which I refer to as "the Literature" section. This section is backgrounded and does not get noticed by customers unless they are interested in Persian literature and history. Based on my observations, customers, Persian or non-Persian speakers alike, had a cursory look at this section but did not attempt to purchase any books.

Figure 10: The literature section in the shop

3.4.4 The Bulletin board as a *display space*

Upon entering the shop, on the right-hand side, there is a noticeboard where job opportunities, rooms for rent, Persian language courses (mainly for those who were born in Australia), and newly established businesses (mainly Persians) are frequently advertised (both in English and in Persian, see Figure 11) for the customers to observe. Jones (2010) refers to such space as "a site of display" in that the noticeboard has become a tool by which customers engage in a different kind of practice (i.e., identity), in Persian shops. Interestingly, one of the ads reads (my own translation): "Teach our children the Persian language in order to maintain our identity and to foster relationships between them." The display of the noticeboard makes the display of the reading the ads possible, which in turn makes it possible for other displays. Thus, a noticeboard with a set of constraints and affordances, for some participants, the information displayed on the board might not be of relevance. However, for the analyst, the main interaction may seem to be that between the ads posted and the readers. In other words, as Jones (2010) argues, this site of engagement is always overlapped or embedded with other sites. An ad in a newspaper on someone's breakfast table, for instance, cannot be used in the same way it can when it is hanging on a noticeboard in a Persian shop. It is partially this context of sites of display that provide opportunities for customers to strategically use them.

Figure 11: The News Bulletin board at the entrance of the shop

3.4.5 The music section

Closing the service encounters in the shop takes place where the cash register is positioned. Here, the music section behind the till (Figure 12) attracts the attention of the customers (mainly Persian speaking). This site of display is likely to be the main focus of the customers amongst all of the other displays available (including transient notices) at this site of engagement. Upon viewing, the customers went on to engage not only with the music (e.g., reading CD labels) but also with the written text such as notices of concerts etc., (Figure 12, for instance), which seems to be transient and reads as "On Saturday, 1/11/2014 *Persia* (pseudonym) will close at 6:30 pm. We apologise for any inconvenience".

The function and semiotics of this music section are complex. Such displays are multifunctional, which can operate as documents of identity or aesthetic objects. However, their most important function seems not only to attract the attention of the customers but also to serve as social actions. In sum, the overall setting plays a significant part in communication, providing not only topics for discussion of the conclusion of the shopping experience but also positions for interaction (who may speak to whom at what point given the natural boundaries of the space).

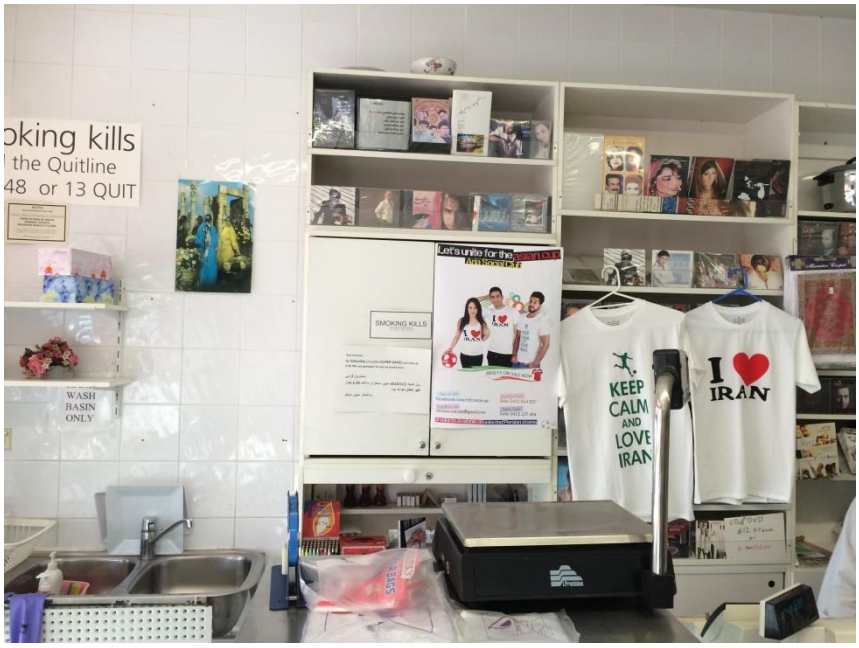

Figure 12: The music section

3.5 The *Historical Body* of the participants in the Persian shop

This section explores the relationship between the historical body and discourse and hypothesizes that through attention to retrospective and anticipatory discourse (de Saint-Georges, 2004, 2005; Jones, 2008; S. Scollon, 2003) discourse analysts are better equipped with a tool to explore how discourse is transformed into social practice within the historical body. I will consider this issue in connection with the discourse of service encounters in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney.

The notion of the *historical body* was coined by the Japanese Philosopher Nishida (cited in Scollon & Scollon, 2003) and also from Bourdieu's (1977) construct of habitus as the stocks of knowledge that one has deposited through his/her life experiences. In other words, the historical body is manifested as aims and purposes and reasons for being in a social setting. Additionally, it illustrates bodily features such as gestures and body language which determines one's previous experiences or knowledge, and is thus adjusted to a particular historical space (shopping from an ethnic Persian shop).

The historical body may connote Garfinkel's *members' methods* (Heritage, 1984), simply defined as how participants, who are part of a community, carry on their kind of discursive business. In other words, a member of a particular event (community of practice, e.g., a Persian ethnic shop) has certain methods which they can use so as to govern in some sense the nature of their interaction. By inspecting these methods, one can gain an understanding of their membership, which is not dissimilar from the construct of stocks of interactional knowledge (SIKs) (Peräkylä & Vehvil*f*inen, 2003) discussed in Chapter 2. For instance, a customer possesses SIKs about going to shops. However, he may not have a refined understanding of international knowledge in relation to ethnic shops and may not have one concerning Persian ethnic shops. The shop-owner, on the other hand, will also possess SIKs which, one would expect, he would use to help a customer who will not know exactly what he or she wants, therefore, he has to explain to this customer more than he has to do to a Persian customer.

Whenever customers enter into this social field in order to take actions (i.e., shopping), they bring with them their own units of knowledge (schema), experiences, and their skills of service encounters, which are historically generated. This "baggage" (Blommaert & Huang, 2009, p. 7) of knowledge constrains and affords what they can do in the Persian shop. Thus, the historical bodies of the shop-owner and his customers have been shaped in

a particular space, representing the "communicative competence"[1] (Blommaert & Huang, 2009) of them in the shop as a social field. As a result, the shop-owner and his customers are familiar with the aims/purposes and to some extent with the needs of one another, with the actual physical space where the shop-owner works, with the way that the shop-owner professionally arranges his work. Numerous processes are mediated and intersected in this particular practice. That it, this is an ethnic shop, there might be different expectations on the non-Persian speaking customer's side, thus particular patterns are required while others are unexpectedly developed, certain skills needed but others are temporary. The upshot of this is the shop-owner can open his shop and adequately perform his job (i.e., he knows exactly through his historical body that the customer, for instance, who has just entered the shop, needs some help with the item he/she is after and therefore tries to supply his/her need). Hence, the historical body of the shop-owner (as well as the customers) has been formed in such a way that he will be perceived as a shop-owner and that most of the actual practices he does can be routine.

Along this line, S. Scollon (2003) views the historical body as "a compost heap of social practices" (p. 193). For instance, a non-Persian customer, who was brought up in a community different from that of Iran, wishes to purchase from a Persian shop in Sydney. When the adult customer enters a new community (that of a Persian shop), that has a different "nexus of practice" (p. 193), his or her habitus, "the residue of (his/her) earlier life experience, becomes detritus to be decomposed into humus for the ontogenesis of new social practices" (S. Scollon, 2003). One very simple and tangible example would be upon entering the shop Persian speaking customers often greet the shop owner, who usually stands near the cash register. This is not the case for almost all of the non-Persian customers, whom I had observed during my fieldwork. For the non-Persians, this social practice of greeting the shop-owner upon entering the shop, which is highly typical for the Persian speaking customers, has been institutionalized as "habitus" through their repeated visits. During my fieldwork, I met customers (an Australian couple in their 30s) who did not greet when they entered the shop, but on their third or fourth visits, when I happened to be present, the same couple started greeting the shop-owner. As a result, the historical body of the non-Persian customers in the shop are realised by their own practices that they

[1] Blommaert and Huang (2009) argues that "communicative competence" is not adequate to address this vast field of flexible skills, and therefore there is a need for a nexus analysis.

had not experienced before. Here, it can be argued that their non-Persianness got noticed and constructed and became part of their "nexus of practice" in the shop.

This focus of the dynamism of the historical body can enable the analyst to get a sense of how the historical body portrays the social world (Jones, 2008, p. 247) and how it is transformed (S. Scollon, 2003). The Persian speaking customers' life path, their historical body, carries in it certain expectations about social exchanges that include the feeling that it is good to greet upon entering the ethnic shop, Persia, before purchasing. It can, therefore, be argued that different customers play the same role differently depending on their history of personal experience deposited in their historical body. Hence, a lifetime of personal experience feels so natural that an individual's body conducts actions without paying attention to what Bourdieu (1977) calls "genesis amnesia". The historical body that intuits this act of greeting, therefore, can best be seen as a nexus of multiple actions, each at different stages, and each might be connected to different notions of identity linked to them.

According to Jones (2008) two places where these linkages can be brought to attention are what Scollon (2001) calls "anticipatory" and "retrospective" actions. 'Anticipatory' actions are those which are expected to happen in future; in this case, actions like experiencing shopping in Persian ethnic shops involves those actions that might be different from those of mainstream ones such as "Coles" or "Woolworths" in Australia, including greeting the shop owner, looking for the items with or without the help of the shop-owner, knowing where the items are located in the shop, paying by credit card or cash, chatting with the shop-owner or other customers, saying good-bye, all in anticipation of the act of shopping, (i.e., buying a pack of Persian rice so that he/she can use for dinner). In this scenario, however, there is also another chain of anticipatory actions shaping, those which result in the "anticipatory discourse" (Jones, 2008), those of Persian identity or values. The latter one, as Scollon (2001b, p. 168) argues, takes place largely outside of the site of engagement within which the actions we are investigating happen. They are important both for what is visible and for what is invisible and what is noticed.

Within the historical body of the shop-owner are both the social connections and the skills in dealing with the customers. Non-Persian customers, unless they are regular customers, often have little or no knowledge or experience of the discourse practices taking place in the Persian shop. They might have had some understanding about the interactional knowledge, that is the basic communicative elements of a service encounter (Greetings,

negotiation of the business and closing the encounter) but the majority of them might see the discourse structures and practices of the Persian ethnic shop as somewhat uncanny abilities that had no use or function in the society outside of the shop. For instance, if a non-Persian customer is not competent at interactional knowledge or in the discourses occurring in a Persian shop, then the customer may suddenly signal by some questions or statements that they are not as knowledgeable about the interactions as, say, the shop owner might have expected. The shop owner might approach them by saying "can I help you?" Whereas if he senses that the customer is quite familiar with these processes, he may not bother to intervene.

However, even on their first visit to a Persian ethnic shop, non-Persian speakers upon their arrival have had some years of shopping experiences, many of which have been in shops similar to a Persian one. However, their historical bodies, that is their goals or purposes, their life experiences, and even their unconscious ways of taking actions have been formed to a large extent within shops in Australia. As a result, they may have practiced, despite differences from their historical body, all of the possible discourse and interaction order factors that might take place in a Persian shop discussed above. While the non-Persian customers might be uncomfortable and unnerved shopping in such shops, they know exactly what to do there from long experience of watching it happen before. Perhaps shopping is one of the rare social experiences into which individuals enter with such a long and extended experience in the discourses and practices in society.

One of the most important aspects of the historical body of the shop-owner is that he does not just sell the products in the shop. Through mingling and discussing with the shop-owner, I witnessed that the shop-owner had provided good services and displayed a good manner which could lead to promoting and developing Persian culture among Persian and non-Persian speaking customers. For instance, the shop-owner was very attentive to all of his customers and when asked about the quality of a product, the conversation would take longer than answering a simple question (i.e., questions like "is it authentic?").

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that the process of understanding the sites of engagement, at which a social action occurs, in service interactions entails an understanding of the analysis of the *interaction order*, *discourses in place* and the *historical body*. Such close analysis can shed light on what is actually going on in a service interaction in that relying solely on

the linguistic means (i.e., utterances) can lead to a distorted and incomplete picture of the semiotic realities occurring when face-to-face interactions are met. As I have illustrated in this chapter, in such settings, joint actions are not carried out merely through language use. Rather, they frequently incorporate non-linguistic conduct and references to material objects available in the physical environment (Filliettaz, 2004). Such elements cannot be overlooked and should be paid central attention within a multimodal approach to discourse.

Perhaps such intricacies encourage us to re-evaluate our understanding of the relationship between a service encounter and its multiple discourses in a specific site of engagement. For MDA, the answer lies in how, in the historical body of the customer, for instance, service interaction discourse is constructed and interacts with overlapping other discourses and practices, and how, when it emerges in a moment of a service interaction, it is connected with other discourses and practices that are brought back to the historical body and to the interaction order.

If the service encounter and its site of engagement are viewed as a nexus analysis, it will then be conceived as a moment of social and cultural transmission. As participants employ their agency in a site of engagement in the shop, they make claims about their ability and expertise to perform changes, which may be ratified or not. The interpretation of meaning, therefore, appears to derive from the complex "material semiotic coupling" (Lemke, 1993, p. 251). For instance, customers' accounts of their shopping experience reveal that Persian shops provide a social and cultural space where self-identity can be promoted through browsing imported products. Ethnic shopping spaces, with their obvious cultural ambience, convey sophisticated cultural messages to individuals from the same ethnic community (Wang & Lo, 2007), and therefore, much of what can be understood from interpreting discourse does not actually need to be unpacked but rather is embedded not only in the participants' definition of the situation but also ultimately in the practice of those engaged in interaction. From this perspective, the Scollons have directed us to two important elements in the field of language to which we are not accustomed, namely bodies as repositories of experience and space as historically organised and patterned (Blommaert & Huang, 2009).

"An Ethnographer who sets out to study only religion, or only technology, or only social organisation cuts out an *artificial* field of inquiry, and will be *seriously handicapped* in his work". (Malinowski, 1984 [1922], p. 50, emphasis added)

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

While the previous chapters (2 & 3) have situated the current study within its theoretical frameworks, this chapter outlines the underpinning methodology for data collection and analysis and my involvement in the world of the participants in the Persian shop. The aim of the chapter is to enable the reader to arrive at a clear and thorough understanding of the ways in which the data were collected through the various stages of the study.

The central foci of this study are the exploration of social, cultural and linguistic factors which influence the interactions observed in service encounters in the Persian ethnic shops. Such a research focus necessarily entails an inquiry into the conceptualization of service encounters, as indicated in Chapters 2 & 3, in the context being studied. In order to conduct such a multifaceted study, I will draw upon a methodological scheme which is multi-perspectival and focused on exploration and discovery, as "a set of heuristics" (Scollon, 2001a, p.152) by which the researcher can restrict the scope of what must be taken into account when analysing so as to achieve an understanding of mediated actions in real time. Such inquiry is increasingly being proven as crucial for studies investigating the complex and situated communicative practices of institutional and professional worlds (Candlin, 2002a, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011, 2013), of which practices of service encounters are categorized as one particular kind (see Drew & Heritage, 1992b).

The following sections will therefore provide a detailed discussion of the methodological agenda, defined as "the translation of ontological and epistemological perspectives into tangible conceptual frameworks, including both methods and techniques of data collection and analysis" (Riazi & Candlin, 2014, p. 138). The sections offer a thorough discussion of the methodological agenda underpinning this study, including details about the sites of analysis, participants, research procedures, analytical tools and organization. More specifically, in this chapter, I will situate the current study within a qualitative research approach, followed by linguistic ethnography and discuss the rationale for adopting a multiperspectival approach. Following this discussion, I will move on to describe the data collection and data analysis used in this study. The data collection section reports on the

macro- and micro-domain data collected from the field and their respective data collection procedures. The data analysis section expatiates on the triangulation of discourse and multimodal analysis methods for the four sets of data (ethnicity and identity, participation frameworks, critical moments, and the roles of narratives) under study. I close with a review of the ethical considerations of the study.

4.2 Why a Qualitative Approach?

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, previous studies on service encounters seem to have overlooked the importance of the social processes, the historical and cultural context that underpins such verbal exchanges. In order to explore and situate such processes, a research methodology ought to be selected that heavily relies on the appropriateness of the study and that addresses its research questions with reference to social processes. Therefore, the established themes identified in the previous chapters and the aims of the research occasioned the need for a qualitative approach, as Bell (2014) points out "each (approach) is particularly suitable for a particular context" (p.9). This study has taken a qualitative approach to examine interactions in Persian ethnic shops and to explore how the shop-owners and their customers accomplish actions through their shopping occasions. In the following, I will elaborate my approach and orientations, and provide the rationale for adopting them.

Qualitative research is a generic term used for investigative methodologies not requiring quantification of variables. It is a "situated activity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3) which positions the researcher in natural settings with the purpose of interpreting phenomena associated with the meanings people bring to them (Howard Saul Becker, 1986). The basis for such a research paradigm includes a wide range of empirical materials such as case study, observations, fieldnotes, interviews as well as interpretive practices so as to get a sense and a fine understanding of the subject in question. Perhaps one of the key features of qualitative research studies is that it takes the construction of reality as its basis (Flick, 1999). In interacting with participants in a social setting, the researcher observes phenomena that the participants bring to the interaction. Through this interaction, which later takes the form of discourses or transcribed conversations, their reality and identities are interactively constructed as reality is not a given entity (Flick, 1999, p. 637), but rather is constructed through interaction in the presence of other social actors.

In order to explore the intricacy of face-to-face interactions between Persian and non-Persian-speaking customers along with the shop-owners and to explore what they actually do with language, they have to be socially positioned. It is here that a qualitative approach can have a role to play in that it shows the social processes imbricated in service encounters are not constrained nor are they pre-determined, but manifest themselves as they are used by participants in social interactions. According to Heller (2006), "social processes do not happen up in the sky somewhere: they happen *on the ground* in *real life*" (p. ix, emphasis mine), thus a qualitative approach suits the current study and addresses the issue raised above.

The objective of qualitative research is to describe in appropriate detail events and experiences. In the interpretative paradigm, reality and experience are viewed as socially and historically constructed, and consequently have multiple realities and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative researchers seek to explore how subjectivities and experiences are constructed and how people give meaning to these experiences (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). In other words, rather than just simply being interested in objectivity, qualitative researchers attempt to produce "authentic interpretations that are sensitive to specific social-historical contexts" (Neuman, 2006, p. 151). This study aims to achieve this goal with the focus on service interactions in Persian ethnic shops and their effect on both shop owners' and their customers' experiences in intercultural contexts like Sydney.

Qualitative researchers commit to investigate life experiences from the "inside out", from the participants' point of view (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004, p. 3), aiming at gaining an in-depth understanding of the social realities and paying meticulous attention to the processes, meaning patterns and structural features. In other words, qualitative researchers are particularly interested in answering questions about the complex nature of phenomena, with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view. As mentioned earlier, my research questions were accommodated in this manner. In this way, perceptions of strangeness in the modern everyday world, where "adventure is just around the corner" (Bruckner, Finkielkraut, & Kober, 1981 in Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004, p. 6), can be described and their meaning located.

In qualitative research, the researcher is viewed as "a bricoleur" or "as a maker of quilts" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4) and has to apply a number of special methods of manipulating, collecting, and fixing his evidence (Malinowski, 1988 [1922]). The bricoleur is a man of "odd jobs" and is a "Jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself

man" (Lvi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17). As de Certeau (1984 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) notes, a bricoleur manages to "adapt the bricoles of the world" (p.xv) . The qualitative researcher as a bricoleur utilizes several tools and techniques of his or her craft, "deploying whatever strategies, methods and empirical materials are at hand" (Becker, 1998, p. 2). In the present study, for instance, while I had originally assumed that I would be able to adequately address my research questions by recoding interactions at the cash register, as I conducted my fieldwork, it became obvious that I also needed to systematically explore what was going on in other parts of the shop (i.e., at the backstage (see Chapter 3)) to implement nexus analysis. I, as a bricoleur, had to piece together and adapt collection methods in response to this issue by deploying a wide range of tools, methods, and techniques of interpretation to map semiotic cycles of participants, their discourses, the site of engagement (see Chapter 3), at which a mediated action takes place (see Chapter 2) and cultural tools involved in the service encounters of Persian ethnic shops in Sydney.

Qualitative research studies investigate "real-world situations as they unfold naturally" (Patton, 2004, p. 4). It is, therefore, perfectly fitting to explore the service interactions in Persian ethnic shops as there is a need to capture the essence of the interactions and practices of everyday life occurring between the shop owners and their customers to explore the complexity and novelty of the issue in question. Additionally, qualitative researchers are, themselves, the valuable and key instrument for data gathering and analysis (see the following). Throughout my fieldwork, I made repeated visits to the research site and observed the types of 'interaction order' units (Goffman, 1971) the historical body of the ethnic and non-ethnic groups, utilizing fieldnotes, participant observation and a recording device. This has resulted in both macro (signage in the shop, newspapers etc.) and micro (interviews, participant observation, and fieldnotes) data that were gathered by myself.

Another important feature of qualitative research is its reflexivity (Flick, 1999). Throughout my fieldwork, I had an opportunity to discuss issues with the shop-owners (the husband and the wife) and their customers leading to an explicit part of the knowledge-gain instead of treating this as a variable. In other words, my subjectivity as well as the participants' (shop-owners and their customers) has become part of the research process (Candlin & Crichton, 2013; Crichton, 2010). For instance, I documented all of my reflections on my own observations and actions, my feelings, impressions and so forth which instantiated part of the data and entered into my fieldnotes and interpretations. If I

was not sure about a customer's background or whether he or she was a regular customer, I was able to ask the shop-owner or tried to mingle with the customer in a way that my presence did not obstruct his/her shopping. Based on my observations, the latter (regular customers) played an important role in the customers' historical body in that the more they were familiar with the context, the less questions they posed and, therefore, they knew where to find their desired items. This view of qualitative research positions me both as etic (as a researcher outsider) and emic (as an ethnic minority insider, a regular customer of such ethnic shops). As an ethnic regular visitor to such ethnic shops, I can be self-reflective and attempt to interpret and make sense of the unfolded natural and real situations (Patton, 2004) and the authentic exchanges between languages (e.g. Persian and English and possibly other languages) and identities in the "unique, dynamic and complex" (Hatch, 2002, p. 9) context of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the shop.

In the following section, I justify the implementation of a Linguistic Ethnography (LE) from three perspectives: 1) nexus analysis as the unit of analysis and the framework for the current study; 2) the appropriateness of triangulation for the analysis of multiple sets of data; and 3) multiple methods used in data collection.

4.3 Linguistic Ethnography

Linguistic ethnography (LE) is a research approach that studies social and cultural practices through comprehensive analysis of situated language and communication, utilizing a combination of discourse-analytic and ethnographic research tools. It is an orientation towards specific epistemological and methodological traditions in the study of social life (Creese, 2008, p. 232). In this respect, LE attempts to combine meticulous and close attention to the details of local interactions with observation of macro-processes to situate linguistic action as embedded in the wider social world.

LE presents an ideal approach since so little is known about service encounters in intercultural contexts, particularly as they pertain to shops where Persian is locally (i.e. in the shop) dominant but English is dominant in the wider (multicultural but English-dominant) community. Ethnographic approaches are widely acknowledged as particularly valuable in such contexts when not much is known about the context or situation (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 169).

The tenets underpinning LE are expressed by Rampton (2007) and Rampton, Maybin & Roberts (2015), who make two important statements concerning the beliefs of those who

ascribe to an LE approach. The first point is that rather than assuming the contexts in which communication is taking place, they ought to be examined since meaning is constructed and understood between participants "within specific social relations, interactional histories and institutional regimes" (Rampton, 2007, p. 585). Due to the nature of such ethnic shops, (i.e., ethnic shop-owners with Anglo-customers (mainly Australians but other ethnic groups as well)), in my case for instance, it is *assumed* that there are always occasions of misunderstanding due to contrasting interactional practices that reflect differing views of the relationship between customer and shop-owners, and different ideas about the speech activities that are appropriate in such encounters. However, in order to challenge such stereotypes and to explore what is *actually* going on in the Persian ethnic shops, which may encompass misunderstanding, an ethnographic approach is required, which allows the researcher to observe the communicative events, the interactions, the social relations and the roles that the participants take through their shopping occasions.

Secondly, meaning is more than just the "expressions of ideas with biography, identifications, stance and nuance" being extensively signalled in the linguistic and textual fine grain of discourse data (Rampton, 2007, p. 585). LE thus emphasizes that linguistics can gain from the "processes of reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography" (Creese, 2008, p. 232). On the other hand, ethnography can be enhanced by the analytical frameworks established by linguistics. For instance, through ethnographic observations, I can observe critical moments that may occur in a shop of this kind (or perhaps any non-ethnic shops as well) particularly when a customer, for instance, is not happy with an item that he or she had bought and demands a refund. Here, the linguistic practices (i.e., ways of negotiating to resolve this issue between the shop-owner and his/her customer) can play an important role.

Roy (2000) suggests that for an analyst to truly make sense of what is actually occurring in a social situation, they must have a clue about the event that to some extent matches that of the participants within the setting, and this claim underpins my research. As a regular and native customer to such ethnic shops, and therefore to some degree familiar with such settings, I felt that an ethnographic approach was particularly relevant to this study, as without some context in which to situate interactions (e.g., the small-talk the people are discussing, their use of a specific language, a specific product they are buying, their

personal relationships as well as their roles), it is particularly challenging to completely understand what is happening.

As part of any investigation, it is essential that the ethnographic researcher explore the behaviour in which meaning is constructed by those engaged in discourse, allowing for the possibility of the effect of historical and external factors. On the other hand, they should also take into account what is unfolded from the fine-grained data (texts) analysis. This type of data analysis enables the researcher to identify the ways in which the data reveal the stance and the attitudes of participants taking part in the interaction. Through this process, linguistic ethnographers draw on knowledge stemming from sociolinguistics and applied linguistics to explore "the discourse patterns found in everyday interactions", seeking to situate these in the "dynamics of wider cultural settings" (Wetherell, 2007, p. 661). In fact, one of the significant contributions of LE has been to "draw out the patterned nature of language behaviors" (Tusting & Maybin, 2007, p. 579), even though it is blurred and unclear to those involved. This significance lends itself to the current research as linguistic practices are positioned at the heart of this project (i.e., critical moments) given the nature of talk in ethnic shops.

Combining ethnographic methods with detailed linguistic analysis is not a new approach. In terms of previous explorations of intercultural communication within institutional settings a great body of literature has been ethnographic in nature, and involved linguistic analysis of spoken discourse. Bailey (1997, 2000) and Ryoo (2005), whose works contribute considerably to the current study, drew on a multidisciplinary approach to their data analyses, utilizing interactional sociolinguistics, conversation analysis and Gumperz and Goffman's notions of social interaction and participation frameworks. Barrett (2006) also combined an ethnographic approach to gathering audio-taped data and fieldnotes of interaction in an Anglo-owned Mexican restaurant in Texas, with a linguistic analysis of the events, drawing on linguistic ideology frameworks. However, their units of analysis have tended to focus mostly on utterances (i.e., texts) without paying much attention to the historical and social processes that imbricate such interactions.

Ethnography holds a broad view of context and emphasizes that it is crucially important to have insight into the background knowledge of the participants and into collecting information about the institutional context (Cicourel, 1987). A sufficient understanding of the broader and social-local and organizational conditions, which have been overlooked in the previous studies on service encounters, enables the researcher to get a sense of what is

actually going on within a communicative event, on linguistic or non-linguistic levels, even "if we are dealing with single utterances" (Cicourel, 1987, p. 218). Put differently, for the interaction under study to be fully understood, the investigator must take into consideration the relationships between the site of the engagement (see Chapter 3) and the social actors, their roles and their historical body within which the discourse (language and non-language matters) is situated. Bringing all these elements together can help the researcher adequately understand the shared knowledge, which is oftentimes implicit between participants (Cicourel, 1981).

LE provides the researchers with analytical and descriptive tools to seek communication as it reveals social processes, including the participants, the situation in which they are involved (site of engagement) and the "institutions, networks and communities of practice" (Rampton, 2007; Rampton et al., 2015) in which they are located. LE aims to link between what is occurring on the "meso and macro-levels of contextual and social structure" and the micro-level (Tusting & Maybin, 2007, p. 580). This interdisciplinary view of my current study has urged me to embark on other disciplines beyond ethnography and linguistics (i.e., sociology, anthropology and so forth). As Tusting and Maybin (2007) convincingly argued, the socially ingrained nature of such structures cannot be captured by just simply analysing linguistic or ethnographic data as they are not readily available and identifiable for the participants. It is here that Scollon and Scollon (2007) urge the analyst to explore a nexus analysis by which they can widen their horizons beyond linguistics and bring in all resources accessible in the field under study.

In the papers that establish the fundamental principles of LE (Rampton et al., 2015; Rampton et al., 2004), the authors distinguish the relationship between ethnography and linguistics as "*opening up linguistics*" and "*tying ethnography down*". By opening up linguistics, I managed to tap into the description of the local linguistic practices that can be observed in the shops that were reported in previous research studies on service encounters (i.e., the basic communicative elements namely greeting/opening, negotiation of the business, and closing at the counter). Tying ethnography down has provided me with an opportunity to gain "accurate knowledge of meaning" which is a "sin qua non" (Hymes, 1996, p. 8). This was an important tool for me as a researcher in that ethnography is viewed as a useful tool for analysing and "uncovering unnoticed intricacies in the discursive processes through which cultural relationships and identities are produced"

(Rampton, 2007, p. 596). The importance and value of discourse analysis in ethnography has therefore been foregrounded (Creese, 2008).

4.4 Bringing Linguistics and Ethnography together

In this section, it is necessary to present some of the challenges and tensions that are inherent within LE. As a relatively new domain of analytical orientation, LE is under serious debate. As such, it is essential that the researcher examine the rationale behind LE and "ask questions about its nature and its relationship with other approaches" (Hammersley, 2007, p. 690).

One of the main challenges concerning LE is the tension between ethnography and certain linguistic traditions (Creese, 2008). Rampton (2007) argues that the disparities between ethnography and linguistics can be addressed in two ways. Firstly, if they are regarded as complementing each other through their differences, linguistics can be viewed as "helping to avoid error and inaccuracy in cultural description" (Rampton, 2007, p. 596). At the same time, ethnography can be considered as "humanising language study", embedding rich description of how the "language users of a given variety adapt their language to different situational contexts and purposes". This helps prevent linguistics from becoming "reductive and shallow" (Rampton, 2007). If their differences are highlighted, then the focus can be directed back to the researcher and his or her methods, accepting responsibility for the ways in which the contradictions are dealt with (Rampton, 2007).

The level of the researcher's involvement and their effect on language activities in ethnographic studies has been an ongoing source of tension in the literature. Tusting and Maybin (2007, p. 576), for example, stress that while methodological tensions between a more closed focus on linguistic text and a more open sensitivity to context and the role of the researcher do exist, a dual focus of linguistic and ethnographic methods exploits the potential of producing rigorously grounded linguistic work which at the same time reveals the complexities of social practice. This means the practice that LE promises to create, with linguistics tying down and ethnography opening up (Rampton et al. 2004) gives rise to a number of issues. These concerns pose "interesting questions" about the recording and selection of what counts as data, the representative functions of the language both for the researcher and the researched and the positionality of the researcher in the research (Tusting & Maybin, 2007, p. 576). As a result, it is important that the linguistic ethnographer sustain a careful balance concerning the claims they make in relation to the

linguistic and ethnographic elements of their data. In this sense, the site of engagement, where a mediated action occurs, should not be ignored as it has an impact on what the participants under investigation say or do. However, it cannot be held accountable for everything that is going on within an interactive discourse event. Therefore, while my ethnographic approach means that I will consider the context of the practices, I will make a conscious effect to be well aware of the fact that context does not necessarily need to explain what emerges from the data.

Tusting and Maybin (2007) go on to argue that one of the advantages of LE could be its relatively broad view of its critical position. This means it can bring with it a wide range of questions without making accusations of intrinsic bias, such as those that have been faced by critical discourse analysis (Widdowson, 2004). However, they hold the view that this stance of LE may reveal a weakness as a result of explicit articulation of a political position, with important questions about the social structures within which action takes place being "assumed rather than examined" (Tusting & Maybin 2007, p. 580).

All in all, LE enables the ethnographic researcher to gain some distance from the involvement which occurs by their status as a participant observer, encouraging a rigorous analysis of data. The combination of an ethnographic approach, in which the ethnographer can draw on a variety of materials outside of the discourse event so as to contextualize the interaction between participants, along with detailed micro analysis of linguistic data, seems to prove adequate to explore the interactions occurring in this study.

4.5 Motivational relevancies

As discussed in Chapter 2, adopting and developing an ontology of discourse analysis echoes the challenge of employing a methodology with which to explore it. In addition, by paying attention to the researcher's a priori assumptions and decision making about a relevant methodology, Cicourel and Sarangi raise an important question, that of "how the analyst is situated in relation to the context studied" (cited in Crichton, 2010, p. 27). On this point, the following section addresses the question raised by Sarangi, and Candlin (2001) in which they assert that "theory and method are intricately intertwined" (p. 351). This is relevant to this study since the decisions that I, both as the analyst and a regular customer to such ethnic shops, had made to analyse my data are closely related to the social context in which my research had taken place. The authors go on to argue that the analyst should make explicit their "motivational relevancies". These relevancies include

my interests, my (background) knowledge, both as a regular customer and the analyst, and values which have shaped my understanding of the ontological assumptions and methodological decisions. This key information is considered crucial as it unfolds my relationship type with that of my participants including the shop-owners and their customers, a relationship type which Sarangi and Candlin (2001) maintain, determines whose perspective on data the analysis reveals.

4.6 How did my research begin?

It seems, therefore, appropriate to begin this section by reflecting briefly on the motivation and impetus for the current research study. Many researchers within LE (see above) are highly motivated by issues arising from their observations, their own experience of interactions and tensions within their particular domain. The origin of my interest in service interactions in Persian ethnic shops can be traced to my visits (as a customer) to these shops. A simple question crossing my mind was "what goes on in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney?" What brings Persian and non-Persian speaking customers including myself to such ethnic shops? Why is it that some Persian-speaking customers try to switch to English (e.g. code-switching or mixing) while they can use the Persian equivalents? How does cultural Persianness get constructed in ethnic shops in a migration context like Sydney? My subsequent reflection on such questions led me to consider the complexities of service interaction norms and discourse, both explicit and implicit, which underpin participants' behaviour in this domain.

Another important factor in my own life that was particularly relevant to my research interests was the fact that I had migrated to Australia like many of the ethnic shops' customers (the Persian speaking customers), the ones with whom I have at least one thing in common, the language and culture. Furthermore, prior to my PhD, my wife and I had made repeated visits to different Persian ethnic shops in Sydney and therefore I was viewed as a customer (not a researcher). My research began with this passionate interest in exploring the service interactions between the Persian-speaking shop owners and their customers (Persians-non-Persians) in the city of Sydney.

At another level, not only has there been very little exploration of interactions in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney, there has also been minimal examination of interactions between shop owners and their customers in complex situations like this. Similarly, detailed analysis of the interactions between shop owners and their customers (Persian speaking

and other customers) has been neglected in Sydney. These ethnic shops are a rather structured environment, underpinned by largely tacit norms. I have sought to combine a number of approaches used to examine the interactions occurring in such shops with established approaches to analysing shop owner-customer interactions discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

As a regular customer to such shops, and of Persian heritage, I attempt to approach my research from an unbiased perspective. For instance, my background knowledge about Persians strongly hints that whenever I saw the Zoroastrian emblem in the shop, this meant that the shop-owner must be practicing Zoroastrianism. However, I tried to discreetly ask the shop-owner so as not to make presuppositions. Undoubtedly, my cultural background has affected my studies, but without my background, I had no grounding and no connection to the threads I was attempting to weave. As a researcher, I want to be an insider, and not the 'other'. My culture and character must be present and valued as another contribution to the ongoing discourse. It is also important to note that even if we acknowledge and explore our cultural background as researchers, that should not automatically be a foundational perspective for all others with similar cultural beliefs. To assume that one Persian can represent an entire group of Persians, leads to stereotyping and 'a language of deficit'.

I will now turn to the need for a multi-perspectival approach for this study.

4.7 Multi-perspectival approach

The inclusion of a multiple perspective on research has almost become self-explanatory and self-evident in carrying out discourse analytical research. The researcher combines multiple perspectives and methodologies in order to gain a finer understanding of phenomena taking place in a specific context. For instance, I have featured the descriptive analysis of interactions but combined them with qualitative and ethnographic studies of perceptions, attitudes and human understandings by the shop-owners and the customers of the Persian ethnic shops. Additionally, I have linked both of these, for instance, to an analysis of the actions which *mediate*, to cite Scollon (2001b), the discourse (as social action in the sense of MDA). The rationale, therefore, behind such multiple perspectives and methodologies is to increase the degree of (*ecological*) *validity* (Cicourel, 2007) (see the following) and authenticity of the findings of the research by investigating data sets with different methodological tools available.

Perhaps one way of exploring the issue of these perspectives is to situate any sort of utterance (i.e., text), following Scollon and Scollon (2001, 2004, and 2007), within social action (i.e., interaction which resembles a moment or event). In addition, if the analyst reconsiders the link between discursive practices, social practices and orders of discourse (Foucault, 1971) that interplay in any site of engagement in an organization similar to our Persian shops, it will then be crucially important to integrate different perspectives on that discursive practice. To exemplify this in the context of *Persia*, a pseudonym for the shop where I collected my data discussed in Chapter 3, the *Persia* shop-owner takes the role of a panopticon in the interaction order, which in the eye of a customer would be violating his/her rights. However, for the shop-owner, it is just a daily practice of being responsive to his/her customers so that he can accommodate their needs.

For the claims about the sites of engagement (see Chapter 3) of Persian shops to be ecologically valid (Cicourel, 2007), this study adopts a methodological approach which analyses a wide range of data collected from the sites described in the previous chapter. Known as a multi-perspectival approach (Candlin, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011; Crichton, 2010) to discourse, it provides the researcher with an invaluable and powerful tool to investigate the relationships between language, interaction, participants, the observations of the researcher and the "broader and local organizational conditions" (Cicourel, 1992, p. 294). This takes the form of multiple primary and secondary sources of data incorporating the interaction and interpretative accounts of participants, semiotic resources, discourses (texts, genres), ethnographically-driven data, the historical, social and cultural accounts about a particular site of engagement (i.e., Persian ethnic shops in Sydney) and more importantly the attitudes and motivations behind carrying out the research. This is outlined in Figure 13.

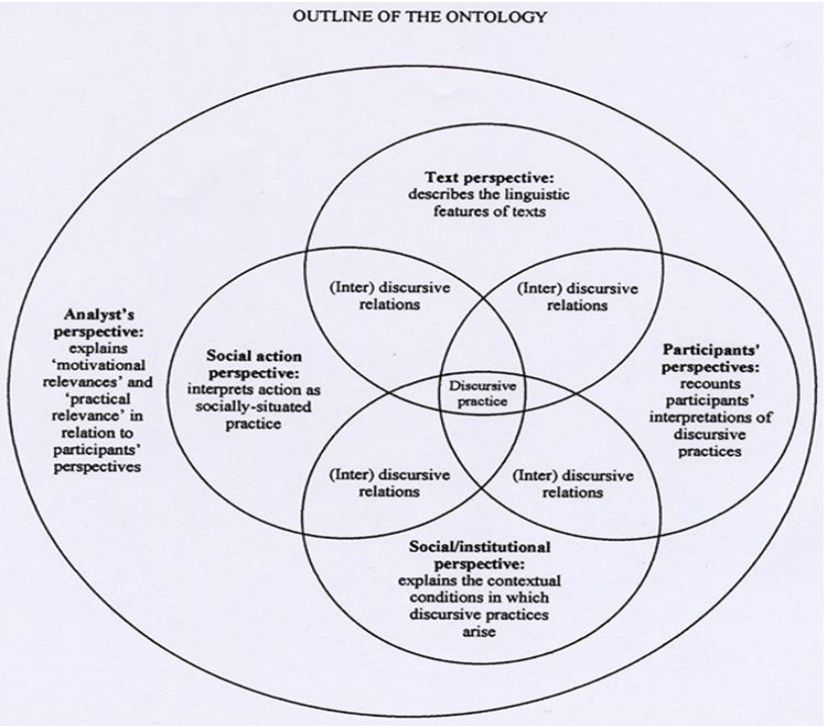

Figure 13: A multi-perspectival research model (Candlin & Crichton, 2011)

Each of the perspectives in the model, shown above, provides the analyst with a tool for conceptualizing discursive practice and for obtaining particular kinds of data. For instance, the text perspective (semiotic resources), mediational tools in MDA, focuses on the descriptions of the kind of language and other semiotic resources (cultural tools, see Chapter 3) utilized by the participants to constitute situated meaning in interaction. The analyst perspective indicates that the types of data gathered, different values placed on the perspectives and the methodologies applied to all play an important role in the particular research interests, aims and the historical body of the researcher and his/her understanding of the research context. The participants' perspective focuses on accounts of experiences and the requirement that the analyst needs to develop in order to make sense of the subjective experiences of the participants in a social setting. The social action perspective, which may resonate with Scollon's Mediated Action (2001b), focuses on the interpretation of accounts of interactions among participants as they conduct their practices, which involve discursive practices which go unnoticed by the participants themselves. The social/institutional perspective provides us with wider, social, historical and institutional resources which allow for the possibility of the discursive practices taking place at a site of engagement (i.e., a Persian shop).

Key to such a research agenda is the call for "ecological validity" (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) in research practice. The multi-perspectival approach is a research agenda which holds the

researcher accountable for his/her data and which views Cicourel's construct of *ecological validity* (1992, 2007) as its integral part from the beginning of the research process to the dissemination of the data to the reader. Cicourel (1992, 2007) argues that the researcher needs to draw from a wide range of methodological resources so as to accommodate real-world interactions by allowing for the contingencies of participants, the localized and interpersonal mechanisms, all of which display and shape the institutional and social practices that are being investigated. For a research study to be valid, the researcher needs to implement *ecological validity* (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) which refers to the ways in which the research methodology adopted and what is counted as data are shaped by the tacit or unstated knowledge of the materials, the researcher and his/her participants. That is, what we take at face value is the hidden knowledge which impacts upon all aspects of the research process. In the context of *Persia*, for instance, casual conversations between the shop-owner and the customers are replete with "normative institutionalized features" (Cicourel, 1992, p. 295) which are associated with encounters in public places discussed in Chapter 3. These encounters, Cicourel maintains, carry with them considerable cultural and personal "baggage" for the shop-owners and their customers since they might have had long-term relationships, which are unknown to or overlooked by the researcher (Cicourel, 1992, p. 295). A multimodal perspective allows for the possibility of such encounters to be accounted for by the researcher. Therefore, I felt that an ethnographic approach with a focus on a multimodal perspective would enable me to capture some of the fine detail of the intricate social interaction taking place in a Persian shop in Sydney.

However, pursuing this ecological validity brings up a range of issues. For instance, how the shop-owners and their customers are situated in the shop, how they position themselves in the daily activities of the shop (see Chapter 3), how tacit knowledge and models of professional understandings (see Chapter 2), which are discursively realised, arouse *standards* against which my participants are judged and their identities, for instance, are constructed in the shop. Such a research paradigm requires a considerable widening of traditional research planning in discourse analysis and applied linguistics. In response to this issue of research program design, Candlin (1997) and Sarangi and Candlin (2001) maintain that such research needs to account for semiotic and textual analyses of discursive performances on a site of engagement, first-hand accounts of interpretations of interactions and experience by actively involved members and interpretive, ethnographic and grounded

studies of organizational practices, all of which, the authors say, need to be situated within particular domains such as the Persian shops.

A multiperspectival approach calls for the inclusion of both macro and micro orientations in social research without privileging either. This view resonates with Mediated Discourse Analysis (see Chapter 2 for a detailed explanation) which attempts to understand how broad social issues and concerns (i.e., macro) intermingle with the mundane moments of our everyday lives (i.e., micro) (Norris and Jones, 2005). In our Persian shops, for instance, one may want to see how identity (macro) is constructed through the customers' shopping occasions (micro). It is in this vein that Layder (1993) urges the social researchers to include in their research what he calls a "multistrategy" approach which takes into account the orientation towards a historically and socially oriented discourse that is situated within linguistics, sociology and social psychology. In developing this position, Layder divides the macro and micro into four elements namely *context* (see Chapter 2), *setting* (Chapter 3), *situated activity* (Chapter 3) and *self* (Layder, 1993, p. 72), all of which is interconnected and each of which has a particular research focus and which may resemble Scollon's Mediated Discourse discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

For Layder, *context* is an element that is closely related to the macro social organization and power relations within the social formation in that the "micro phenomena have to be understood in relation to the influence of the institutions that provide their wider social context. In this respect macro and micro phenomena are inextricably bound tighter through the medium of social activity" (pp.102-3), which resonates Bourdieu's construct of field (see Chapter 2 for further explanation), defined as a form of social setting where "a configuration of social roles, agent positions and the structures they fit into" as well as "the historical processes in which those positions are actually taken up" (Hanks, 2005, p. 72). In the context of the Persian shop, for instance, the context determines normative behaviour which may take the form of (Persian) values and ideologies that are historically and socially embedded in the customers' everyday practices in the shop. The term *setting* encompasses the institutions in which a situated activity takes place. If we take the Persian shop as an institution in which mundane everyday activities of shopping occurs (i.e., non-work for customers), then the nature of the Persian ethnic shop, as a setting (work-related for shop-owners), characterizes the "typical forms of attachment and commitment that individuals have in these types of setting" (Layder, 1993, p. 98). *Situated activity* comprises face-to-face social interaction which involves what Layder calls "symbolic

communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the contexts and settings" (Layder, 1993, p.71). Here, the focus is on the discursive meaning that is locally contingent and organised (Cicourel, 1992, 2007). For instance, the shop-owner utilizes codes during his/her interactions with his/her customers that may not make sense for a non-Persian customer, who is not a regular customer to shops of this kind. The *self* construct focuses on the participants' conception of the world and their sense of identity. As observed, Layder's research map positions social theory within the motivational relevancies (Sarangi and Candlin, 2001 in Crichton, 2010) of the analyst and places emphasis on the interdiscurive analysis of different layers of social reality by linking macro and micro, which resembles Cicourel's (1992, 2007) challenge, that views the interaction order and the social formation as essential for achieving ecological validity.

I will now turn to each perspective and provide more specific details of the tools and relate them to the current study.

4.7.1 The Analyst's Perspective: Positioning the Ethnographic Researcher

The involvement of the linguistic ethnographer in ethnographic research means that the researcher is placed "at the heart of the research" (Tusting & Maybin, 2007, p. 578). The ethnographic researcher tries to enter into the life of those individuals whose everyday activities are under observation (Rampton, 2007; Rampton et al. 2015) and he/she is actively present and acts as participant observer to the extent that "the ethnographic researcher becomes part of the nexus that makes action possible" (Scollon & Scollon, 2007).

This active role of the ethnographic researcher and their effect on linguistic practices has been viewed as one of the ongoing tensions not only within LE but also in all social scientific research. In ethnographic research studies, the researcher is required to be actively involved in the social activities under study. This involvement enables the researcher to yield invaluable insights which cannot be achieved in any other way (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). For the researcher to balance the impact of their involvement in the process of data collection, it is therefore essential to consider and acknowledge the effects of their presence and their position as a participant observer at all stages of the research process.

Cameron et al. (1992) argue that "researchers cannot help being socially located persons" (p.5). This means that they are part of all interests and influences of society, influencing

how they strive to find answers and bringing with them to their own subjectivities and biographies of every stage of the activities under investigation. However, the researcher's subjectivities should not be viewed as a limitation. Rather, they should be seen as an element in the human interactions that include the object under study. Additionally, research subjects should be regarded as "active and reflexive beings" who can produce insights into their experiences and who should be interacted with, rather than treated as inanimate objects (Cameron et al. 1992, p. 5). Therefore, the researcher needs to find a balance between the relative power of their own views and that of their participants when producing "representations of the reality under study" (Tusting & Maybin, 2007, p. 579).

The researcher's actual observations are viewed as essential as the researcher's perception of the participants' expectations and aims (Gumperz & Gumperz, 1982). My experiences and inside knowledge of the events that I observed during recordings and observations in the Persian shop produced valuable insights into the nature of the interaction between participants, providing me with an additional tool with which I was able to identify patterns in my data. Nonetheless, it is important that the researcher not allow knowledge of the field to give rise to assumptions on what might have been observed in data. I must therefore accept as a limitation of my study the assumptions I have made about the interactions and their interpretations. In observing the interactions, I brought my own cultural history to bear on the questions I sometimes asked of the participants and how comfortable I expected them to be in responding. This shift from the "inside out", utilizing linguistic analysis, can help minimize exposure to what is taking place in familiar situations, enabling the identification and isolation of participant behaviour in the interpreted event as 'strange'(Scollon & Scollon, 2001).

4.7.1.1 My role as a researcher and as a shop assistant

Scholars in the field of anthropology have identified two types of participant-observation namely passive and complete (Duranti, 1997, p. 99), the former where the researcher tries not to be intrusive and the latter in which the researcher closely interacts with other participants present in a social setting and might have a chance to take part in and carry out the activities they are investigating (Spradley, 1980, pp. 58-62). In the shop, I acted both as a passive and a complete participant-observer and depending on the situation and on the customers, the shop-owner usually provided me with very detailed accounts of some customers including whether they were regular customers (as well as their backgrounds). During my data collection sessions, I was conscious that I could not ideally position myself

outside the group as a researcher and an observer, but needed to be actively involved in what was going on. I was having an uncomfortable feeling to sit back and simply observe the interactions, trying to "wait for what will fall into them [my nets]" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 48). I, therefore, often engaged with what the participants were saying and with ideas revealed, I asked questions and commented, along with the shop owners' comments on some of their customers immediately after the customers left the shop depending on how busy the shop was.

The following data, from my third visit to the shop, occurs when a Scottish (we got to talk to each other while she was shopping) customer, in her late 60s, along with her daughter, in her early 30s, enters the shop. They were the only customers present in the shop at the time, so we got good sight of each other. They both went to the back of the shop and took two packs of rice. The owners (the couple) left the shop to go to the stock room, which is located at the back of the shop, to retrieve some items on the shelves. They asked me to keep an eye of the shop till they got back.

SL (the Scottish lady) R (the Researcher) (this interaction is taking place near the cash register)

SL: "How much is it (referring to the rice)?

R: There should be a price tag on it.

SL: No, there isn't. You don't know that (showing a surprise face). How long have you been working here?

R: (laughing) me? I don't work here…

SL: Oh, you're a family friend?

R: No, I'm not. I'm doing a research study here.

SL: A researcher?! Oh, really? I would never have guessed. What's your research about?

R: Sociolinguistics, you know the use of language in society. I'm recording interactions here, in the shop. Here's the sign.[1]

SL: Very interesting! (Looking at her daughter saying: he wants to record my Scottish accent…Both laughing)

R: Thanks.

SL: Which one (referring to the rice) would you prefer, the Iranian or the Indian?

R: "Of course" the Iranian one (laughing).

SL: Cause you're Iranian (laughing)? (I told her about my background)

R: No, because of its quality! (We both laugh)

SL: Ok, then I'll take the Iranian one."

[1] See section 4.8.9 regarding ethics and signage.

In the meantime, the shop owners entered and we stopped talking.

This data sample reveals that firstly, I was acting as the shop assistant in the absence of the shop owners even for a short period of time and that secondly I held an integral position in the culture of the shop, helping customers to get what they were looking for, and was central, even only temporarily, to interactions between customers. Such closeness with the participants had positive effects upon my research, as the shop-owners and some of the customers (both Persian and non-Persian speakers) opened up about their lives and therefore I learned much about their lives in a fairly short time.

The ethnographic activities alluded to above obviously provided many opportunities to confess my ignorance about some of the interactions and to pose questions not only about the customers but some of the interactions, which I found interesting or "bizarre". Knowing the shop-owners made my participation in the field easier and enabled me to ask many "dumb" questions. Soon after I had established myself in the shop, I began to participate in the "shop life", looking forward to the "rich points" (Agar, 1997), events, participation patterns, the discourses in the shop, the vernacular literacies (Barton & Hamilton, 1998a). Every time I visited the shop, I could see the arrangements for the shop-owners' day's work, the groups of customers busy shopping, talking, conversing with the shop-owner, all of which formed the atmosphere of the life in the shop. I must stress here that as the customers constantly saw me in the shop almost every day during my fieldwork, I tended to be viewed as disinterested to them or made them feel conscious by my presence. In fact, as the customers were aware that I would have different roles (researcher, shop-assistant), they undertook their service interaction by regarding me as part of their shopping life. I was reminded of an occasion when I met an Australian customer (I had occasion to talk to him) on his second visit to the shop during my fieldwork. He started chatting with me while shopping. He was very witty and asked me if I had any plans to buy the shop. He also commented on my family resemblance to the shop-owner by saying that we looked like each other and asked if we were brothers.

However, for me, the closeness with the shop-owner and the customers brought with it certain issues. In reality, I was neither an actual shop owner nor an assistant, but had to maintain my "outsider" status in relation to customers involved in the shop. Additionally, I was conscious that my own involvement in such honesty was complicated in that it was not always a simple case like the above. In this, I was reminded of conflicting roles I played, that I was not just an interesting person talking to his "seeming" peers, but also a

researcher gathering data. For instance, there were times when I was well aware of a feeling in an interesting talk in which what a customer (mainly Persian-speaking customers) was viewing as important (particularly when it comes to the politics of Iran, culture, people) was something I found unimportant and commonplace (or even untrue) at least from my point of view, or simply with which I could not agree. I was conscious of my own response and let that pass for a while, surprised at what was being said. Instead of complicating matters, I tried to let go of commenting and ask the shop owners' comments, with whom I felt more comfortable. I felt that my silence on such occasions was quite liberating. However, I needed to work against my own instincts to achieve it. In doing so, I was aware that I was playing the role of a researcher, in that it was only a position of a researcher (not, for instance, a customer or a shop assistant) that I could take up in such events. Actually, I was performing the role of a researcher. In short, the more seasoned and experienced I became as a field and ethnographic researcher, the easier it became to juggle my role and to disengage from my own opinions, feelings and thoughts.

On other occasions, my own presence was simply problematic. I was reminded when a customer entered the shop and started talking to both the shop owner and myself, at the back of the shop. As soon as he saw the sign (saying your interaction will be recorded), he refused to talk and said literally nothing. While paying at the counter, he just used his body language (using eyebrows or nodding his head). Before leaving the shop, he even did not say good bye. The shop owner told him that he could at least have said good bye.

As a researcher of ethnic shops and of identity (the latter will ultimately emerge from my data), I thought I needed to keep my distance from my participants wherever and whenever possible. Although it is true that I was not objective as a researcher, as a researcher I did manage to view the customers through analytical tools and lenses. This is in fact what Norris (2011) calls "objective" (p.73).

In short, many customers, who were in the shop at the time of the recordings, knew me as a researcher, a shop assistant or a friend. Although I believe that I am not strictly an "outsider" in terms of membership of the ethnic shop community, neither am I a full member. However, my previous involvement in visiting and buying from the Persian shops located in Sydney, together with my social relationship with the shop owner and his wife, has meant that I have established a considerable level of trust within the community, thus allowing me to carry out a research study in the shop. This has enabled me to draw quite

heavily on the relationships with customers in the shop. This positive response to my research requests can be attributed in some part to the trust that they had invested in me.

4.7.2 The Participants' perspectives

This perspective makes an attempt to investigate the recurring themes in the interpretations of the participants' accounts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) of the discursive practices in which they are engaged, where lies "an emphatic understanding of the behaviour of those people being studied" (Layder, 1993, p. 38). This entails a form of ethnographic study in which participants provide the researcher with some accounts of how they perform actions on account of how they see them (Blumer, 1966; Garfinkel, 1967). This shared understanding of the world of the participants being studied mirrors the "*verstehen*" construct which is associated with the work of Blumer. According to Blumer (1966), the social world is implied to be "forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets, and judges" (p. 542), and which takes into account the participants' perspective, where the analyst needs to:

> see the operating situation as the actor sees it, perceive objects as the actor perceives them, ascertain their meaning in terms of the meaning they have for the actor, and follow the actor's line of conduct as the actor organizes it (p. 542).

For instance, I was reminded of an occasion where a Persian speaking customer, 32 (we had a short chat), who had recently arrived in Australia, brought an item to the counter to pay. While paying, he realised that he did not have enough cash to pay. He then asked the shop owner if it was ok to withdraw some money from the cash machine, which was located just a minute away from the shop. He said to the shop owner, "*Miram "cash out" mikonam miam sari"* (I'll go withdraw some money and will be back soon). Before leaving the shop, he asked me if I was the researcher. He said he had seen the sign at the counter. We got to talk about my research and exchanged telephone numbers (on his request) so that we could perhaps meet and talk about it later as he was very eager and curious to know more about my research. I thought it was the best time to ask him why he had used the term "*cash out*" not the Persian equivalent. Interestingly, he said it was really common here and that he'd been living here for a while and if he didn't use it, the shop owner might have thought he didn't know English". This curiosity to gain the native's view of his world greatly helped me avoid the "ethnographic fallacy" (Duneier, 1999), which refers to when an ethnographer takes what he or she observes at face value without questioning what people say in a field site and solely focusing on the immediate details of

a setting overlooking larger social forces (Neuman, 2007, p. 294). This focus on narratives (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008b) (i.e., participants' personal experience, past events (narratives as a social practice)) mirrors the fact that narrative has come to be viewed as a "mode par excellence for the construction of self" (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2000, p. 75). Hence, participants use their past experiences to "support and legitimize their own projected version of events" (Georgakopoulou, 2002, p. 432).

Following Tannen (1984) and Norris (2011), I employed playback methodology, utilizing mainly the shop-owners' points of view of the shop as I did not have access to all of the customers. Their views of an interaction (shop-owners' and some customers) were reflected in my fieldnotes and in audio-recorded data and implemented into the analysis. For instance, if I came across an interaction about which I had doubts or could not fully capture because of my lack of background knowledge about a customer whom I had never met, in order to obtain a better understanding of a situation, I tried to consult with the shop-owners, or the customers wherever and whenever possible, and asked for their understanding of it before jumping to conclusions.

The analytical tools for such exploratory work are assisted by Membership Categorization (Sacks, 1992), and are additionally drawn upon to identify the categories (i.e., category-bound activities and category-based properties (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002)) which participants attribute to social interactions and their responses as well as to themselves and each other along with narratives (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008b; Georgakopoulou, 2006).

4.7.3 The semiotic resource Perspective: Mediational means/Cultural tools

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, mediational means are indivisible and integral to the definition of the mediated action. These cultural tools are used by participants to perform a social action in a social field, which are embedded in a wide range of semiotic tools and physical objects from an authentic Persian product, for instance, the customers might purchase to the language (i.e., Persian and English) they utilize in order to make a request.

As previously discussed, the unit of analysis in MDA is the mediated action by which the social actor takes action in a site of engagement. If we take shopping in a Persian shop as a mediated action, then there are multiple mediational/semiotic tools available in the shop. In the broadest sense, these comprise the built-in environments, the layout, the design, the backstage, the frontstage, the cash register, the space where the queue is formed, the

methods of payment (cash/credit cards) used for the transaction, the shelves where the products are positioned, the products themselves, as well as the background Persian music.

Additionally, there are a large number of texts available in the shop (Scollon, 2000). There are the texts on the noticeboard (see Chapter 3), the price tags on the shelves, the transient hand-written notices both in English and Persian. According to Scollon (2001a), there are two types of spoken texts namely conversation as a social focus and shorter spoken texts, the latter which are the service encounter ordering sequences and the texts involved when a customer undertakes an inquiry to the shop-owner. Furthermore, there are many other overlapping texts among customers and the shop-owner, say, in the queue or in the backstage among customers.

However, it should be noted that according to Scollon (2001a), MDA would not take assumptions about what particular texts or any mediational tools should be regarded as significant. This needs to be guided by the research issue(s). If my interest were in the critical moments (Candlin, 1987) taking place in the shop, I would probably not pay much attention to the money exchanges as this is more likely to be quite similar to other mainstream shops (i.e. Coles in Australia). On the other hand, in the phrase, "is it an authentic Persian Cheese?" is a near impossible exchange of an utterance at a Coles in Sydney where there are different types of cheese from different parts of the world. At Coles, for instance, there would be even no exchange of these types of utterances. Accordingly, for a specific mediated action to occur, "not only are certain mediational means appropriated, but also the choice among multiple mediational means is significant" (Scollon, 2001a, p. 173).

The answer to such inquiry perhaps resides in the habitus of a customer (i.e., to what extent they are familiar with the material objects in the shop). That is, a mediational tool is neither an "external object in the world" nor is it an "internal psychological schema or disposition" (Scollon, 2001a, p.175). Rather, it is a dialectic between the customer's past experience, purposes and aims (habitus, historical body, see Chapter 3), or what Fairclough calls "members' resources" (1985), and the material world. This inquiry has become an integral part and focus of numerous studies of social action and a central one in the current study. A customer, for instance, who enters a Persian shop and asks for a "Persian sweet", puts him/herself as a participant in the nexus of practice of "service encounter".

4.7.4 The social action perspective

This perspective is largely addressed through ethnographic methodologies including approaches to discourse analysis. As Scollon and Scollon (2004) pointed out, see Chapter 3, social actions take place at the interaction of three factors namely: *the interaction order*, *the historical bodies* of the participants in that action, and *the discourses in place* which enable that particular action or are used by the participants as mediational tools in their action.

The problem of nexus analysis as suggested by Scollon and Scollon (2004) is to identify the social actions and social actors, who were an integral part of my data collection. My first task was to investigate those actions and the social actors, not only their social roles (i.e., the shop-owners and their customers), but also what their individual histories are. This had given me a chance to narrow down my selection and focus on the specific actions the social actors performed in the shop, allowing me to enter into the "zone of identification" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). This zone opened up new windows by which I had identified, following Scollon and Scollon (2004):

a) The social issue

Due to the nature of such shops (i.e., that the customer is always right, that the shop-owner might not be able to express him/herself in English due to his/her limited English proficiency) there may be misunderstanding. This misunderstanding may give rise to critical moments where one needs to possess a good command of English to express oneself (i.e., to resolve the issue).

b) The crucial social actors

During my fieldwork (see the following), I observed who the primary social actors were in the mediated action. My focus on mediated action allowed me to explore what social identities my participants were producing or, rather claiming, what social statuses they brought to the site of engagement of the shop, where they were performing their actions, their historical body with the actions, with the discourses which circulated through their actions, and along with the other participants present at the site of engagement (see Chapter 3 for a detailed analysis of the cycles of discourse in *Persia*).

c) the interaction order

As Scollon and Scollon (2003) note, social actors perform several types of interaction arrangements in the presence of others in a social setting. As discussed in Chapter 3, there

were four types of interaction order in Persia, namely, *singles*, *withs*, *conversational encounters*, and *platform event*. I had paid especial attention to them for two important reasons: firstly, these types form semiotic units which "become indexable social organizations in public places" and secondly these groupings allow the researcher to observe how the participants package their spoken uses of language as it takes place in the world (p. 61).

d) the most significant cycles of discourse

My main focus on the cycles of discourse was to discover what discourses were circulating through the site of engagement and particularly through the actions of my participants. In particular, I wanted to know whether the discourses I was observing were "overt", "covert", "spoken" or "written" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 155). The central goal was to situate the crucial discourses within the historical bodies of my participants and the interaction order so as to create the focal mediated actions of the study.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the most influential research traditions which have characterized the social perspective are ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism. Ethnomethodology offers a unique perspective on the nature of social order and, while downplaying macro analysis, argues that social actions are not determined by rules because rules are conceived as falling outside the flow of ordinary events. It views the meaning of social organization and social action as contingent and emergent that results from the concerted efforts of social actors acting within local situations. Key to this contingency are the various methods that members provide to recognise the courses of social activity for a mutually understood social world (Heritage, 1984; Maynard & Clayman, 2003). These methods or accounts signal the participants' understanding of the definition of the situation (i.e., *what is it that is going on here?*) (Goffman, 1974) because participants' background knowledge (i.e., habitus) of how to proceed in an interaction is itself constructed by what they actually observe other's methods to be (Garfinkel, 1974). This point corresponds to what Giddens (1993) has maintained: "the central postulate of ethnomethodology, indeed, is that the activities that produce the settings of everyday life are identical with actors' procedures for making these settings intelligible" (p. 46).

In contrast to Garfinkel's "ethnomethodology", in his dramaturgic account of social life, Goffman (1959) conceptualizes the construct of theatre (see Chapter 3) so as to portray the centrality of human and social action and interaction, which he refers to as the dramaturgical concept of social life. Goffman uses the term 'performance' to refer to all

the activity of a social actor in the presence of other observers, or audience. Through this performance, the "performer" (1959) conveys meaning to others and to their situation where the action is taking place. These performances constitute each person's face (Goffman, 1967) and each person's involvement in interaction is viewed as an ongoing performance performed strategically to augment face. This account of the self in social settings can provide the analyst with a heuristic way to explore how social actors exploit mediational tools (cultural or semiotic resources) to minimize the risk encountered in everyday interaction. In the Persian shop, for instance, a Persian speaking customer may use this strategy to ask the shop-owner (too many) questions and since his or her face heavily relies on the perception of the shop-owner, he or she makes an attempt to manage the interaction to this perception in a continuous process of "mutual monitoring", where the customer finds him/herself accessible to the naked eye of the shop-owner or of the other customers around (Goffman, 1964, p. 135).

However, criticism can be levelled at the two constructs discussed above. Although I draw on ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, and participation framework to explain *what is it that is going on?* (or how action is accomplished) in Persian ethic shops, they may not provide me with a way of exploring interaction within a broader context in which it arises. From this perspective, Crichton (2010) have observed that Goffman's account of interaction does not align with larger social constructs and therefore is deprived of resources which can justify the impact of macro-social phenomena on interaction (Crichton, 2010, p. 41). This occasions the need for additional resources with which to scrutinize the broader social context within which social practices and activities are positioned.

4.7.5 The Socio-historical perspective

As discussed in the previous chapters, previous research studies on service encounters, in particulars those carried out on ethnic shops, have overlooked the importance of the social processes and historical perspectives that are embedded in such encounters. In order to take into account of the "already established character" (Layder, 1993, p. 90) of the social interaction in the Persian shops, for instance, the meaning cannot be inferred from how the customers in the shop engage in the interaction order or in practices as such. Hence, any instance of everyday interaction in the shop needs to be interpreted in the social theories that address how societies and institutions are themselves reproduced over time (Crichton,

2010, p. 41) and portrays "an ongoing life that is identifiable apart from specific instances of situated activity" (Layder, 1993, p. 90).

The most influential of these theories are those of Bourdieu (1977b, 1991), Giddens (1991) and Habermas (1987). Each of these theoreticians underscores the importance of language in our daily life and the "meaningful character of human action is given above all by its saturation with language" (Giddens, 1994, p. 3). The social-historical perspectives and resources that I drew on in the current study are introduced in Chapter 2 and developed throughout Chapter 3. Table 3 provides a summary of the multiperspectival orientations and analytical tools used for this study, relevant to each of the four inner-perspectives.

Table 3: The different data types gathered for each of the four inner perspectives

Perspective	Methodological orientation	Tools
Semiotic resources (mediational tools)	**Drawing on Nexus analysis and frame analysis**	
	Interaction order	Singles/withs/conversational encounters/platform events including gestures
	Discourses in Place	Observation of the recurring discourses at the backstage/frontstage Display spaces/spatial layouts
	Historical body	Material objects (i.e., Persian products) Burke's Rhetoric of motives
Social action	**MDA deriving from:**	
	Pragmatics	Requests/politeness/face Impression management
	Interactional sociolinguistics and Conversation Analysis	Identifying the critical moments and managing them arising from the participants practices in the shop including: Linguistic misunderstanding Cultural differences of service encounters Basic communicative elements (i.e., greetings, negotiation of the business and closing of the encounter) Contextualization cues and inferences (including prosody)
	Ethnomethodology	A detailed description of the methods performed by participants as they accomplish and make sense of their shopping occasions
	Participation framework and footing	Ratified/unratified (different) roles of the shop-owner Three role models namely animator, author and principal
Socio-historical	Bourdieu's field and Linguistic marketplace	**Identity** being constructed in the site of engagement including: Local occasioning Indexicality (words, expressions and sounds of a language and styles) **Hybridization of roles including** professional identity personal identity institutional identity
Participants	Narratives Ethnographic accounts	Narratives consisting of explanation, processes and representation of social relation Topics being discussed Observations of recurring themes
	Membership categorizations	Category-bound activities Category-based properties

4.8 Data collection tools and procedures

From the beginning of the study, I made an attempt to collect "normative data", which consisted of members' generalizations, in field notes and in audio-recordings. Scollon

(1998, p. 291) refers to such data as the "objective data" as they were mainly gathered through the use of audio-recording, fieldnotes, participant-observation and photos. In addition, I collected "concrete personal or subjective data", following Norris (2011), which were included in the fieldnotes and audio-recorded data. The collection of the various forms of data discussed above provided me with triangulation which augmented the analysis of the interactions in the shop that assisted in the discovery of methodological tools for the analysis of different types of interactions, critical moments and the ethnicity of the shop, all of which my research questions encompass.

4.8.1 Fieldwork

This thesis was based on fieldwork study over a period of two years in one Persian ethnic shop in Sydney with the Pseudonym *Persia* discussed in Chapter 3. Drawing on MDA (Scollon, 2001b), my ethnographic fieldwork was combined with participant observation and audio-recordings. The data for this study consisted of an abundance of fieldnotes, 50 hours of audio-recordings of naturally occurring interactions between the shop-owners and their customers, and over 30 still photographs all of which are summarised in Table 4.

This section focuses on the methodological tools adopted for this study which allow the researcher to conduct a study on interactions, identity and ethnicity of the shop-owners and their customers' life while interacting with each other. Studying social actors in different interactions provided me with an opportunity to interpret their identity through their performance of particular interactions, (i.e., shopping).

Table 4: Overview of the data collected

Types of data	What was collected
80 hours of audio-recorded data	Naturally occurring interactions in the shop between the shop-owners and their customers. They were made at different times of the day and week to ensure a diversity of interactions. 80 hours of audio-recordings of interactions between: -shop-owner and customers -customers/customers occurring at the site of engagement
Fieldnotes	I took fieldnotes of the lower and higher level actions performed by the participants. The focus was on a) ethnicity and identity production of the customers and b) on critical moments. More than 100 pages of field notes of: -the unexpected and surprises -observing people, their actions, and events (physical surroundings) -noting the main themes or issues in the interactions (i.e., critical moments) -making speculations about interactions -recording necessary contextual information
Still photographs and visual texts available in the shop (see Chapter 3, discourses in place)	Of the objects and of the interaction orders of the shop
Participant-observations	Mingling with the participants and with the shop-owners 200 hours of Observation of: -the interactions during customers' shopping moments -my mingling with shop-owner and customers Observations, photographs, and video-recordings of: -shop-owners and their customers interactions
Narratives	Examining talk-in-interaction: -Narratives of the shop-owners and -Persian and non-Persian speaking customers

Following Blommaert and Jie (2010, p. 16), my fieldwork included three stages:

a) prior to fieldwork (preparation and documentation)
b) during fieldwork (fieldwork procedures)
c) after fieldwork (post-fieldwork analysis and writing)

I will briefly discuss each in the following subsections.

4.8.1.1 Prior to fieldwork

The importance of thorough preparatory research prior to one's fieldwork has been constantly stressed in the literature. Blommaert and Jie (2010), for instance, have suggested that the ethnographer should have a rigorous plan which can help them identify and decide issues pertinent to a field. Before entering the field, as I mentioned above, I was a regular customer to the specific shop where my fieldwork took place. As a result, I was reasonably familiar with the field situations such as the shop's opening hours; who visits the shop; that half of the customers were non-Persians (according to the shop-owners); that

there is a Persian restaurant located in the vicinity of the shop (two shops away) and the Persian speaking customers usually eat there on weekends and enter the shop to purchase their weekly provisions (and the shop-owner asks them "have you been up"?: "up" referring to the restaurant); that there is an Arab shop nearby and so forth. The fact that it was not just an ethnic shop where customers (at least Persian-speaking) purchase "authentic products" but also a place where *ethnicity* was practised, reconstructed and sometimes challenged was also noted in advance of conducting this study. Consequently, my fieldwork and the topic I chose to conduct an empirical research study seemed to be promising in terms of findings and theoretical issues. I also developed a rationale for why I should be there: namely that I had a genuine interest in exploring what was going on in a Persian ethnic shop.

However, despite this familiarity, it did not mean that I was aware of and familiar with *everything* that was going on in the shop. After all, I was viewed as an "outsider" in the eyes of the customers and of the shop-owners, although the latter had been very helpful throughout my fieldwork. As an outsider, I was part of the practice and a member of the shop, but one who had limited knowledge of the customers, of the culture of the customers, and of the normal patterns of the interaction order in the shop. My insider knowledge had provided *some* knowledge, yet the spatial arrangements of the shop, of which I had no idea and of which I was not aware prior to my research, the moments in the shop, and the social environments draw on "tacit knowledge" and shared experiences, none of which belonged to my background as an outsider (researcher). Through my mingling with the customers and the shop-owners and my involvement in the shop, I gradually got to familiarize myself with these tacit codes.

There can obviously be an overlap in my status when I, as an emic researcher, do have a rich and long experience in the shop both as a customer and as an insider. Even so, when I became a researcher in the shop, I was no longer viewed as a customer, a friend, or an insider. For one thing, when I came across a customer who happened to be a regular customer in the shop, the interaction was no longer just a friend-to-friend encounter. Much of what he/she uttered or acted out was not taken for granted anymore and from the researcher's point of view, needed to be called into question. I was reminded of an occasion when one of my friends, who played soccer with me on weekends, along with his wife saw me in the shop and asked what I was doing there. I told him about my research

and he immediately tried to stay away from the recording device and asked his wife, who was from Hong-Kong, to pay at the cash-register.

My preparations prior to my fieldwork had provided me with detailed insights into the complexity of the shop and into the "*uniquely situated reality*" (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). This uniqueness occurs at a *unique* site of engagement whose social events and practices, culture, language, social structure, history and social orders carry rich cultural implications. The shop, depending on a special occasion (e.g., Nowruz: the Persian New Year) was assumed to be culturally unique and its practices seemed to be revolved around that uniqueness.

4.8.1.2 During fieldwork: Both excitement and chaos

My very first day's experience as a fieldworker (ethnographer in the field) was both exciting and chaotic (the latter term I have borrowed from Blommaert & Jie, 2010). Exciting because I had the opportunity to observe and describe intricacies and interesting scenes that I might have previously overlooked or that simply were not important to me as a customer. Chaotic because I was not accustomed to the complexity of the field as a fieldwork researcher and plainly it did not match my "habitus". As soon as I entered the field, I discovered that fieldwork was not exactly what I had read in the literature but was full of surprises, although, I initially thought that I was well-prepared and had read extensive literature around my topic, selected my theoretical frameworks, and reviewed the research plan prior to my fieldwork. For instance, with the help of the shop-owners (the couple) I thought it would be more appropriate to approach customers in person to get their consent to record their interactions. However, this did not work out well as half of the customers I approached refused to be recorded. However, based on the shop-owners' suggestions, I decided not to approach them and instead positioned more signs in the shop during my fieldwork (see the following sub-section on ethics).

Additionally, due to the spatial arrangements of the shop, discussed in Chapter 3, most of the merchandise was displayed openly and the store was basically self-service. In the main, customers brought their selections to the service post (in this case the cash register counter) to make their purchases or make inquiries. I thought this was where most of the interactions between shop-owner and customer took place. However, some of the interactions occurred elsewhere (at the backstage, see Chapter 3) in the shop where both the customers and the shop-owner seemed to have more to discuss and share. This meant

that when they returned to the counter, there was not much left to discuss or mainly it was a continuation of their talk somewhere else in the shop, which was not well-integrated into Mediated Discourse analysis discussed in Chapter 2, and ultimately did not capture what was actually going on in a Persian ethnic shop.

Thus, this chaos, which seemed to be part of the social events of the shop and in fact in any social moment, led to a revised research plan and to adopting new strategies. I decided to discuss this with both my thesis supervisor and the shop-owner about my access to the backstage, where interactions took place more often than those at the cash register. As a result, two audio-recording devices were positioned in the shop, one at the cash register and the other one at the backstage.

In the main, I kept careful and meticulous, wherever possible, records of the ID tags of the participants, and their interactions that took place in the shop. This consisted of their gazes, their clothes (including their colours) body language, their interaction order, of what types of questions they asked, the arrival and departure times, and the types of products they purchased (see Appendix).

4.8.2 Audio recordings

Part of my observation consisted of recording the interactions that took place in different parts of the shop. Two small digital audio-recording devices had been positioned in the shop, one at the cash register and the other one at the back of the shop, where the customers usually said things that they might not have said in front of the shop-owners at the cash register. The recording devices were put in spots where they captured adequate quality data of the interactions between the shop-owners and their customers without disturbing the order of the setting of the shop. Recordings were made at different times of the day and week to ensure a diversity of interactions. I acted as a participant observer in the shop for a period of 50 hours from October 2012 to October 2014. So as not to inconvenience the shop keeper, I offered to help with various tasks as the need arose.

The use of audio recording was a necessary method in this study as it helped capture a deeper understanding of the interactions occurring. There were a number of occasions where the presence of the recording device was referred to, both directly and indirectly. On one occasion, a customer looked at the audio recorder and said “what the hell? Why didn’t you inform me beforehand”? I did not approach her but the shop owner told (in Persian) her (my translation) that the signs were right before her eyes and that she should have

sighted the signs, which were positioned at the counter where customers brought their items to pay for them. While laughing at this explanation, she then agreed to be recorded. On an even more interesting occasion, as soon as a customer (Armenian-Persian) saw the sign at the cash register, she said (in Persian), "the USA, too, records people's voices". The shop owner replied that "the USA does this without letting us know, but a big difference here is that we already informed you" (both laughing, my translation).

Because I was physically present during the recording sessions, I was able to make notes of what I saw and heard which created a secondary record of the recording sessions and which bridged important gaps when I started reviewing and analysing the recorded interactions later. This also helped me identify who spoke in a recording particularly when the shop got really busy and crowded and when there were "withs" and "conversational encounters" (see Chapter 3) interactions going on. Therefore, my notes provided me with information about who participated in any particular interaction.

After my fieldwork was completed, I created a detailed catalogue of my recordings. In the catalogue, I provided each session an identity tag including the day I visited the shop and the number of interactions, and then I systematically numbered the interactions on my fieldnotes. The digitally recorded audio data were downloaded as electronic files and stored on a password protected computer so that only the researcher and his principal supervisor had access to the data.

4.8.3 Participant observations

Participant-observation is the most basic ethnographic research method. Based on my experience as a participant observer, it in some respects resembles learning a new language, since it seems simple at first but it takes years to truly master. Nonetheless, even novice researchers will be able to utilize this method effectively, as I believed I did, to disseminate large amounts of valuable and useful information if they follow some helpful and practical guidelines.

In his now classic work, Spradley (1980) revealed that "The participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: a) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation (in my case being a shop assistant and a customer), and b) to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation" (in my case as a participant observer) (p. 54). In the same vein, Fetterman (1989) adds:

Participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data. [P]articipant observation is immersion in a culture. Ideally, the ethnographer lives and works in the community for six months to a year or more, learning the language and seeing patterns of behavior over time. Long-term residence helps the researcher internalize the basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expectations of the people under study (p. 45).

To be considered highly reliable and to effectively utilize the observation techniques, the ethnographer is required to do long-term and repeated observations. These observations contain some certain rules that each ethnographer requires in their fieldwork. Goffman (1989) suggested that the ethnographer should run tests so that he/she senses that he/she has really "penetrated the society" (p. 129) that they are supposed to be studying. Such rules include becoming accustomed to the sounds and sights of the field, 'playing' with the participants and making jokes. However, Goffman himself admitted that although these are rigorous techniques, he asserts that if participants hear strategic jokes, it gives off a sign that they are "in". In a study of human interactions, the current study as an example, one observation does not suffice for subjects under study because participants frequently modify and change their behaviour owing to their being conscious of being observed. Through repeated and long-term observations, significant and rich data can be obtained as participants return to behaving naturally.

My role as a participant observer for two years in the shop enabled me to observe unexpected events, and surprises, allowing me to "get material on a tissue of events" (Goffman, 1989, p.130). I would have never predicted that a customer (an Armenian speaker but Persian born man in his early 70s) grew vegetables in his garden and sold them to the shop owner or that non-Persian customers were looking for "authentic Persian products". Or, new immigrants, who were unable to find jobs in their pre-migration fields, would come to the shop to get help from the shop owner with their job search. These occasions in understanding are referred to as "rich points" (Agar, 1997, p. 1157). When such points (e.g., "hey, that's strange", "what the hell is that"?) happen, a fieldworker finds out that his or her knowledge about how the social order is created or works, often implicit and subconscious, is flawed and deficient in understanding processes and practices happened. This gap or distance between two worlds (the researcher and the practice) emerge from the details of human activities (Agar, 1997). It is here that ethnographic

research is all about making sense of the distance between two worlds of experience and relating this to the problem under investigation.

4.8.4 Fieldnotes

Following Malinowski (1922), I tried to include in my fieldnotes almost anything that was potentially useful to add a new perspective that could address my research questions posed in Chapter 1.

Observing the shop for two years, as well as having been a regular customer for about five years prior to commencing this study, had given me insights into the transactions, participation patterns, types of interactions, the customers and the shop-owners were involved in. Hence, I was able to interpret whether an action was common, exotic or took place once only; how a discussion is held in the shop; who participated; what discourses were being produced, etc. These data actually were not possible to capture by simply interviewing or questioning my participants but needed to be positioned in the lives of their everyday activities in the shop, which may resemble Malinowski's "the imponderabilia of actual life" (1922) by which he means the detailed observation of what is actually going on with all its subtlety of form and expression, which will then turn into a collection of texts of significant statements (i.e., the ''real stuff of the social fabric" (Garbett, 1970, p. 214)).

Such 'real stuff' in the shop includes the routine and details of the shop-owners' working day (they both take turns running the shop), the existence of intimate, strong relationships or hostility between the shop-owners and the customers or between customers and customers; a backstage in the shop where the customers can privately comment on the quality of the products. Additionally, it was also important to note that the shop is not just a shopping place where only business transactions are negotiated, but a place where Persian speakers (non-Persians can get advice on what to buy) obtain information; that the place reminds them of home; that some Persian speaking parents bring their children, born in Australia, to the shop in order to raise their awareness of a Persian community; or they insist that their children use "Persian" in the shop even for a short period of time. All of these facts had been cautiously observed and recorded. However, it should be emphasized that I did not try just to document the above. If I had doubts about a situation or my insider knowledge would have ignored it, I tried to either ask the shop-owner, when he was not busy, or to mingle with the customers, embarking on my quest for clarification. This detailed observation of the interactions in the shop yielded results of outstanding value.

This, of course, was not possible at the early stage of my fieldwork, when I was a novice field researcher.

In my fieldnotes I not only tried to note what my participants actually said but also to include their body movements, laughs, smiles, gazes, eye contact, visual and bodily responses as they interacted with the other customers or with the shop-owners in the shop. In addition, I also made notes about the sequence of the events, such as when the customer enters the shop, greets (sometimes they do not) the shop owner, asks for the items or price, goes to a particular section of the shop and closes his or her conversations. This has enabled me to recall the details of even very long conversations. Table 5 depicts a sample of my fieldnotes:

Table 5: Sample of fieldnotes

Scene 5 Day 1 02/10/2012 Time the customer entered 3:30 pm and left 3: 50 pm

Participants: the Shop-owners (the couple) a lady in her 30s with her 9-month old daughter and myself. A customer enters from the back door.

The following takes place at the counter. The shop is not crowded. I am standing near the cash register, too. The recording device, which is positioned at the register, is on and recording our interaction.

Body language: eye contact, gazes: the customer dressed down. There was a tear in her jeans and she was wearing pink flip-flops

A lady in her 30s comes to the shop most often. She lives very close to the shop. She has a 9-month old child (a daughter). She normally spends about 10 to 15 minutes every time she visits the shop, mostly talking about food, what she does each day etc... Mr and Mrs Persia (pseudonym: the shop-owners) have been teaching her some Persian but she said she'd forgotten all about it. She said they teach her every now and then a word. The shop-owners were playing with her child. Mr Reza, while making a joke about it, said to me: "*we're doing babysitting in the shop, too*" (in Persian, but the word "babysitting" in English). The interesting point was the mother got the point and started laughing with us. I said to the customer: "*you got the point*"? She said nothing while looking at me, wondering what I meant. I told her that Mr. Persia said he is babysitting in the shop. She then started laughing. Ms. Sarah taught the child how to clap in Persian while saying "*dasti dasti* (clapping), the mom was repeating "dasti, dasti" as well. Ms. Persia asked the child to do "*dasti, dasti*" in Persian and surprisingly she did it!!

The customer started talking to me. She asked if I was first/second generation. I said: first, but continued by saying I speak fluent English with no pauses or accent. She asked me what I thought of Australians and I said they are laid-back, cool and easy-going. She said oh really? But, my father has been working since she remembers. He used to work at a mine here in Australia….

In line with Bernard (2006), I managed to use three types of fieldnotes namely:

Methodological Notes: These types of notes deal with techniques in collecting data discussed above.

Descriptive Notes: Descriptive notes are "the meat and potatoes of fieldwork" (p. 397). These notes consisted of summary descriptions of the interactions and environmental features of the shop that I thought were important to record to answer questions concerning ''what's going on?" While the customers were busy shopping, I either tried to immerse myself with them or later asked the shop owners to explain "what was going on?"

Analytic Notes: These notes are the product of the ethnographer's understanding of a scene. In order to make sense of data, as I mentioned above, I tried to discuss my understandings of each scene either with the participants or with the shop owners. This was where I tried to lay out my ideas about how I thought the interactions I was studying were organised.

Due to the nature of the current study (i.e., observing customers and shop owners interacting with each other in real-life situations) it was nearly impossible to record everything particularly when the shop got really busy such as on Friday evenings and on weekends. However, I attempted to be self-reflective as an observer. As Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 51) suggested, I noted down observations which included:

1- Observing people, their actions, and events (physical surroundings)
2- Noting the main themes or issues in the interactions
3- Relating the interaction to the research questions
4- Making speculations or hunches about interaction
5- Gaining necessary information

In order to record as a participant my observations in the lives of the shop owners and their customers, I carried a fieldnote notepad with me and took notes whenever possible. At the end of each day of data collection, I expanded on the basic fieldnotes by writing more formal fieldnote entries. Each day, on which I interacted with the customers or shop owners, I also reflected on the issues brought out in the fieldnotes and in my unwritten observations in an attempt to link my observations to the research questions raised in the current study.

These notes were an important secondary or back up data source as I tried not to give too much "weight to what participants say" (Goffman, 1989, p. 131). Rather, I tried to

triangulate what I observed (i.e., what my participants were saying "with events"). Put simply, what I collected during my fieldwork were "building blocks for an archive" (p.131) that could fill in important blanks while analysing recorded material and that documented my work and gradual process of understanding and learning.

As mentioned in the literature, writing up fieldnotes immediately after each visit to the shop was indeed my priority. I transcribed and coded according to the categories that emerged as I examined the data, and sorted these codes to detect emerging themes. The process was exactly similar to making a crossword puzzle, adding, arranging and rearranging pieces of information to make sense of the data. While writing up fieldnotes and listening to the recordings, if utterances were not clear to me, on my next visit to the shop, I tried to approach the shop-owners and ask them for clarifications. I was reminded that on numerous occasions, the customers referred to the physical objects or processes while choosing from a variety of resources, including verbal categories, labels, pointing, verbal descriptors, depictive gestures, and prop demonstrations, both in English and in their Persian equivalents depending on the customers, which were not easy to identify. This made me observe and listen more carefully to the utterances while on the premises.

The fieldnotes changed from as short as a sentence or two to as lengthy as a page or two for an interaction over time. This was due to the fact that I focused and refined the research questions and therefore the notes became more specific about the issues that were closely related to my main interests.

It should be noted, however, that the fieldnotes, which produced some rich data, were used as a useful tool to corroborate the theoretical background that undergirded this study. After all, these notes may not be viewed as representative for a population nor are they proposing hypotheses that can be replicated "in similar, not identical, circumstances", as "ethnography produces theoretical statements, not 'facts' nor 'laws' (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 17).

4.8.5 The organization of the findings

In the domain of discourse analysis, Roberts and Sarangi (2005), and Candlin and Crichton (2013) have informed us how a theme-oriented approach can provide the analyst with analytic themes and concepts that can be drawn from sociology and linguistics for the investigation of discursive phenomena in the different professional and institutional settings, of which 'service encounter' is a kind. Roberts and Sarangi, for instance, refer to

this as “theme-oriented discourse analysis” (p. 633) and propose that it consists of centring the research on an interdisciplinary relevant focal theme (identity constructions in our Persian shops, for instance) associated with a set of analytic themes that bring to the fore how meaning is negotiated in interaction and which can offer insights into the use of disciplinary knowledge and discourse (e.g. frames and footing, face and facework, social identity, rhetorical devices and contextualization cues). In the same vein, Candlin and Crichton (2012), while drawing upon the concept of the macro focal theme, maintain that “discourse phenomena are always “about”, and motivated by, particular themes” (p. 290, emphasis in original) and augmented the framework by also including some underlying conceptual constructs which allow the researcher to discover new research questions to investigate since these constructs can be employed as a guide by the analyst to pick out particular methodological combinations. Figure 14 identifies the framework of conceptual constructs which frame the exploration of the key focal theme in the study: service encounters in a Persian ethnic shop in Sydney. As indicated in Chapter 1, each of the following Chapters (5 to 8) will be organised around the analysis of conceptual constructs. However, as suggested by Candlin and Crichton (2013), the individual concepts “may be referenced to each other and interconnected in different combinations” (p.10); hence, whereas each of the chapters (5 to 8) could be considered as a stand-alone analysis of the key focal theme, they together interrelate to shape a larger coherent and detailed research study. Figure 14 depicts the focal themes of the service encounters in Persian ethnic shops.

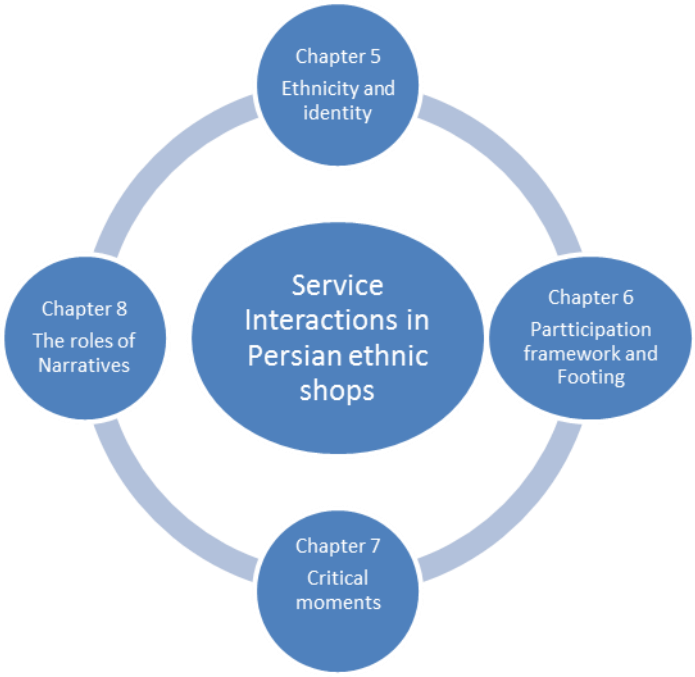

Figure 14: The concepts framing the service interaction in a Persianshop in Sydney

Accordingly, Chapter 5 examines the identification of Persian shops and the ethnicity and identities of the participants, which looks at the ways in which the discourse of "ethnicity" in relation to Persians and non-Persians has been constructed during the participants' shopping experience in a Persian shop.

Chapter 6 provides analyses of the interactive organization of Goffman's participation frameworks. The chapter includes insights into the ways in which participants take up certain roles and develop and maintain relationships through interaction with one another.

Chapter 7 focuses on the discursive strategies used by the participants for managing possible miscommunication and critical moments in this setting and for optimizing the communicative effectiveness.

Chapter 8 broadens the scope of analysis by turning to narrative discourses in the data. The chapter draws these discourses through an examination of personal narratives. Examining narrative also provides another angle from which to view how the study's participants negotiate social belonging and exclusion in a larger discourse unit.

4.9 Translating and transcribing interactions in the shop

In translating and transcribing the interactions in the shop, I was fully aware that transcription is part of the social act of research and that the transcriber brings his or her own perceptions and ideologies to transcribing data (Duff & Roberts, 1997). Furthermore, transcripts are not neutral and objective representations of talk. Rather, as Green, Franquiz

and Dixon (1997) note, a “transcript is a text that "re"-presents an event; it is not the event itself” (p.172). Following this logic, therefore, to achieve objectivity in translations, I paid particular attention to maintaining the content by various listenings to the interactions as they were crucially important to my data analysis. Several articles and textbooks on Conversation Analysis (Liddicoat, 2007; Norris, 2004, 2011; ten Have, 1999) have highlighted the importance of transcription for a thesis. The interaction data was transcribed utilizing transcription symbols (see Appendix 1) adapted from the system developed by Jefferson (2004). Common to Conversation Analysis, these symbols provide the analyst and the reader with a guide to follow the talk and communicate accurately when the participants in the shop, for instance, interact. Descriptions of non-verbal action were also included in the transcripts following Norris (2004, 2011). Through multiple listenings to the recordings, attention was directed to intonation, the responses, initiating of the talks, developing the topics, and gestures and facial expressions noted during my fieldwork.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the theoretical underpinning of this thesis, deriving from Mediated Discourse Analysis, which takes the mediated action (social actors taking action in a social setting) as its unit of analysis, can be decomposed into lower-level actions, which are the smallest meaning units of a communicative mode—such as a gesture, or an utterance; and higher-level actions, bracketed by a multiplicity of chains of lower-level actions (Norris, 2011), as a service encounter for instance might be comprised of spoken utterances, gestures, and semiotic resources (i.e., products in the shop). The visuals, in the shop for instance as discussed in Chapter 3, display frozen actions, which frequently express thoughts or higher level actions that are embedded in the practices of the shop at a prior time, and, each time the customer picks an item from a shelf in the shop, the customer performs a lower level action.

Special attention was paid to the actions discussed above and to embodied and disembodied modes of communication which are carried out by the participants in the shop so as to convey complete messages, which often mirror several differing perspectives. While shopping, a customer can, for instance, convey solidarity and dominance simultaneously. Despite the fact that non-verbal activity of communication and objects used by the participants are difficult to interpret without analysing the spoken language, it is also difficult to analyse spoken language to its fullest extent without interpreting other accompanying modes (Norris, 2004).

The presentation of the interactions in the shop throughout the thesis is structured with English presented in standard font and Persian in italics. As can be expected within an ethnic shop, often participants shifted between different languages mainly Persian and English. Following the Persian speaking participant comment, for instance, are a literal translation in single quotation marks and a roughly translated version of the English in double quotation marks.

4.10 Ethical considerations

4.10.1 Accessing the field setting

Given the complex nature of the setting and the potential for large numbers of participants, the practicality of gaining audio recording required thorough planning. Prior to data collection, I had a face-to-face meeting with the shop owner to go through the aims and the practicalities of the research project. This direct contact gave the shop owner the opportunity to ask for clarification or further explanation, something that would not have been feasible through emails or telephone conversations. Additionally, holding the face-to-face meeting gave me an opportunity to engage with potential research problems and to demonstrate my commitment to making sure that the shop owner and his wife understood the aims of my research. It was also made clear that visits depended exclusively on the shop owner's availability and I committed to advise him in advance of any scheduled observations.

It is worth reiterating that prior to conducting my research in this shop I had been a regular customer. We had had a good relationship to the extent that if I was busy and could not go to the shop, on my subsequent visit to the shop, the shop owner usually asked me "why I didn't drop by earlier". My insider status, therefore, was a major advantage in securing agreements for this research. While all these arrangements were time-consuming, I believed that they were of enormous benefit in establishing good trust and my personal commitment to the current project.

4.10.2 Gaining access to the research site

To ensure the ethical form of knowledge production, two techniques were utilized to protect the rights of the participants involved in this project namely confidentiality and informed consent. These were included in the application for ethics approval from Macquarie University's Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 2).

There are around 30 Persian shops similar to the data collection site in the Sydney metropolitan area. By using a pseudonym for the particular shop in this study and not specifying neighbourhood details, the shop thus remained anonymous. For customer anonymity, if they were addressed by name (e.g., because they were known to the shop-owner), these were replaced with pseudonyms in the transcript, and pseudonyms will be used in all presentations and publications resulting from the research.

The shop owners (the couple), who were the primary participants, received an information and consent form about the project (see Appendix 3). On the first day of data gathering, it was made clear that participation in this study was entirely voluntary and that the shop owner and his wife were not obliged to participate. In addition, if they decided to participate, they were free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequences.

Customers were alerted to the presence of the recording device and the researcher by way of a small sign displayed next to the recording device. Customers, who did not wish to be recorded, could of course choose to let the researcher know and have the recording device switched off. The sign displayed the following text in English and Persian:

"Your service interaction is being recorded for intercultural communication research purposes. If you do not wish to be recorded, please let us know".

مشتری گرامی گفتگوی شما جهت استفاده در یک تحقیق زبانشناسی دز حال ضبط شدن است. در صورت عدم تمایل به ضبط شدن آن، به ما اطلاع بدهید.

It was explained that any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study were confidential. This was ensured by the use of code names for the shop owner's shop and any individuals in all data records, analysis and for future publications. Neither the shop owner's shop nor any individual would be identified or identifiable in any publication or report of the findings.

During the recording of the interactions, a number of the participants wished not to be recorded and based on their requests, I switched off the recording device, although this resulted in losing data from some other customers who had already been in the queue at the counter.

Additionally, it is argued that notification of recording without seeking explicit consent is customary cultural practice in Australia. Most retail premises and other public spaces comparable to the one under investigation are under 24-hour CCTV security camera

surveillance and customers are thus used to and, indeed, must routinely expect, being visually recorded in contexts such as the one under investigation. The opt-out method is also common in another comparable situation, namely service calls, which are typically prefaced in Australia with "This call is being recording for quality assurance and training purposes. If you do not wish to be recorded, please alert the representative."

Despite this overall cultural framework, which would seem to make the proposal the most contextually and culturally appropriate, it should be noted that the investigator was on the premises during all of the recording sessions and made every effort to ensure that customers noticed the sign. I also ensured that the recording device was switched off when unaccompanied minors attended the premises.

4. 11 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methodologies utilized in collecting and analysing interaction data in a Persian ethnic shop in Sydney. The methodological orientation of qualitative research studies and the specific approach of linguistic ethnography were first described. Secondly, the rationale behind the inclusion of the multi-perspectival approach was provided, which addressed the key elements of Cicourel's (1992, 2007) challenge (i.e., acknowledging "ecological validity"). This study is the first of its type in Australia, and as such it was important to document the process of data collection and analysis in detail. Similar studies conducted overseas have provided valuable guidance in terms of methods and analytical tools; Bailey (1997, 2000a) study of communicative behaviour and conflict between African-American customers and Korean immigrant retailers in Los Angeles that provided especially relevant background for this study.

This chapter has also described important improvements that have been made to previous methods used in similar studies. In terms of transcription, this study offers an adapted model that has a greater focus on representing the meaning and also carefully describes non-linguistic information such as gesturing, eye gaze, and body movement, all of which can be important clues to understanding the negotiation of meaning. The most important improvement made was to include the multi-perspectival approach.

The fieldwork presented a range of challenges. In effect, there was an overwhelming volume of information. As mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994), this is a common problem with qualitative research studies. At first, it was difficult to identify which service interactions were important since they all seemed to be crucial at the beginning of the

research and in the nexus of practice framework. Nonetheless, once several focal themes, discussed above, had been identified and the data began to be organised under particular categories, it became easier to keep track of the new information. In conclusion, by taking the methodological approach adopted in this chapter, this thesis offers rich information in terms of the social actors, the history, and contexts imbricating the verbal processes.

Chapter 5: Identity

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines often taken-for-granted identity work (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Hester & Hester, 2012; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002; Stokoe, 2012) which is routinely accomplished in the situated context of the Persian ethnic shops in Sydney. Such identity work is observable in the study of actual talk in interaction. This chapter, therefore, sets out to investigate in more detail the construction of identity in interactions. The analytic approach is conversation analysis (i.e., sequences of talk in which membership categories) (e.g., old; young; expert; lay) and category-implicative descriptions (e.g., I am a grandmother) that appeared were analysed for their action and their sequential placement.

5.2 Identity in Interaction

The construction of identity in interactions in social practices has received much interest within the field of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis at least for the past two decades. The theoretical underpinnings utilized for the investigation and analysis of identity have centred on a radical shift from linguistic variables with previously listed and usual social categories such as age and class to a focus on how those social categories are interactionally negotiated not only through language but also through other mediational tools available in interaction (Norris, 2004, 2007) in the business of everyday life. Hence, researchers have recognised the importance of identity as "an element of context for talk in interaction" (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 87) without giving any privilege to or presupposing the aspects of membership in social categories including gender, class or ethnicity.

Previous research has demonstrated that social identity is ingrained in social and cultural currents (Norris, 2007), constructed through past experiences and embodied by social actors in habitus (Bourdieu, 1977a). Identity is interactively constructed on a micro level at which a social actor's identity is claimed, accepted, refused and constructed in interaction and in the presence of other participants (Scollon, 1997). From the point of view of mediated discourse analysis (MDA), social action, in which one chooses to claim or disavow an identity, is always mediated by text, action, and the material world (service interactions, for example), for "the relationship of text to text, language to language, is not a direct relationship but is always mediated by the actions of social actors as well as

through material objects of the world" (Scollon, 2008b, p. 223). Such constructions are not only accomplished through embodied modes like gaze, gesture or posture but also through disembodied modes (Norris, 2007) such as the items stacked on the shelves in Persian shops at an earlier time. Therefore, in order to gain a finer understanding of identity production in interaction, one needs to position this or that identity in the moment. As such, this chapter does not begin with a traditional list of identities that have been taken for granted in the previous studies. Rather, the line the chapter is taking for the empirical analysis on identity production is through talk in interaction in that participants perform such local understanding by accomplishing the resources available in everyday talk.

This shift of researching identity has originated in the work of the social constructionist paradigm (De Fina et al., 2006) which is grounded on the importance of social actors constructing their identities in a local interaction and setting. That is, using participant observation techniques and fieldnotes, which are indispensable elements in the current study, the researcher observes the social behaviour and the notion of practice in a site of engagement (see Chapter 3 for further discussion on the notion of site of engagement) in which these actions are actually taking place. From this perspective, researchers in the field of identity have demonstrated that social actors present and create an image of themselves which do not pre-determine the social practices in which they are negotiated. Individuals in social practices claim, accept or distance themselves from belonging to certain social categories (De Fina, 2007). Therefore, the analyst cannot take identity work, which is routinely accomplished in the situated context of, say, Persian ethnic shops, for granted insofar as identity constructions are derived from social practices.

This view of identities has its roots and is informed by the ethnomethodological work of Harold Garfinkel, and the allied conversation analytic work of Harvey Sacks (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, 1992) where the local context (see Chapter 3 for further explanation for context), in which actions take place, is highly relevant. The construct of ethnomethodology is directed towards an explanation of social actors' local understanding of *intelligibility* and *order* (Garfinkel, 1967) in social practices that resemble in many ways those used in everyday life of ordinary lay activities, which aligns closely with Scollon's Mediated Discourse Analysis and Scollon & Scollon's Nexus Analysis discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. In order words, social actors through their actions can inform us what is going on in a social setting. Hence, actions in interaction are treated as both context producing and context renewing (Heritage, 1984, p. 242) and in which

material objects are viewed to be reflexively constituted in and through social interaction (Hindmarsh & Heath, 2000). The interest for the analyst therefore is to observe which of these actions claim, accept, or reject identity that is locally produced.

5.3 Membership Categorization Devices

As a contribution to the theoretical discussion of identity, this chapter will explore identity construction of the shop-owners and their customers in the Persian shop named *Persia* (see Chapter 3) through the lens of Sacks's (Sacks, 1992) Membership Categorization Device (MCD). MCD is a development from within ethnomethodology which emphasizes the importance of the qualitative (see Chapter 4) and empirical understanding of membership categories as they are used by social actors in interaction as well as in texts. In a social context, for instance, social actors use categories as part of a set of categories, which is known as MCD. For example, within the MCD "Persian", there are more than four categories namely "language", "culture", "ethnicity" and "history". However, there is no fixed number of categories as their application heavily relies on in what context and situation they are used. Hence, categories carry with them "a number of different associated properties" those of "category-bound activities" (ten Have, 2004, p. 23). For example, the activity "arresting" may be considered to be bound to the category "police" but not teachers, judges or lawyers, while the activity "committing a crime" is typical of the category "criminal". Therefore, the tie between an activity and a category provides inferences about what a member of a society (i.e., social actors) can observe what they are doing.

Other kinds of categories or predicates (Watson, 1978) may also comprise properties such as responsibilities and rights, or specialized knowledge. According to Sacks (1972), the central elements to apply social categories are MCDs, and a set of "rules of application" including an "economy rule", where one category would often suffice, and a "consistency rule" defined and known as the hearer's maxim:

> If two or more categories are used to categorize two or more members of some population and those categories can be heard as categories from the same collection then: hear them that way (Sacks, 1992, p. 221).

According to this definition, when describing service encounters in our Persian shops, for example, one participant may be identified as "the shop-owner", which is sufficient from a practical point of view, though the same person might be a "man" or a "woman" or an "adult". Although numerous types of categories may be correct, there are only a few

applicable to an occasion in interaction, which accounts for the consistency rule. When one person in a social encounter is called a “shop-owner”, another may be identified as “the customer”, “the wholesaler” or even “a regular customer” or a “passer-by”, a “stranger”, “a non-Persian speaking customer”. While there may be a significant difference between those that could be relevantly categorized in any population, other categories have a more specific application. In addition, a subcategory of MCDs is a “team”. Sacks referred to them as “duplicative organization” referring to categories that work in a team and which have “specific obligations to each other, such as ‘centre-forward’, ‘goalkeeper’ and ‘defender’ in a ‘football team’” and “standardized relational pair” which refers to as pairs of categories that have morals and responsibilities towards one another (Stokoe, 2012) such as shop-owner and customer.

As can be seen, membership categories can be applied to the study of identity as they are understood, avowed, disavowed or organised within the practical contexts of interaction and within language use. For instance, in the context of *Persia*, while it is acknowledged and understood that shop-owner-customer and their situated and associated activities are already institutionally established at the site of engagement of service interaction, what is worthy of attention is to see how membership in these categories is interactionally generated in the moment by moment on a turn-by-turn basis. Thus, the shop-owners and their customers may allude to different aspects of identity and membership of associations in the course of their interaction in the shop. These categories are frequently implied by an understanding of and competence in linguistic and cultural methods of practical reasoning which can be found in members of any culture or linguistic community (Garot & Berard, 2011; Hester & Eglin, 1997b).

However, since Sacks's death, MCD has been developed by numerous other researchers. In particular, the construct of MCD has been replaced with “membership categorization analysis” (MCA), which was first offered by Eglin and Hester (1992). As the authors explicate the replacement was not merely based on “aesthetic” nor on “name-changing for its own sake”(Hester & Hester, 2012) . Rather, MCD analysis, argue the authors, had the privilege of the analysis of membership categorization devices without paying much attention to their intelligibility for members on which category collections are reliant. In this sense, MCA covers a wide range of categorization practices and does not particularly give any priority to any practice.

As Heritage (1984) argues, membership categorizations are always selections from alternatives. That is, as initially emphasized by Sacks, members take into consideration options in selecting categorizations in social interaction on particular occasions. Therefore, two important developments in MCA are taken into account in this chapter. The first brings to the fore the issue of context. MCA does not treat interaction in social settings as a reflection of preexisting social, political, and cultural patterns and hence views it as what can be observed within the constraints of its local practice of everyday interaction privileging its wider social contexts (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002), a point that has most forcibly been made by other identity researchers (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; De Fina et al., 2006). For instance, a central theme in identity research is the refusal of accepting the *essentialist* view that identity categories such as class, gender and age are fixed. By contrast, from the perspective of the constructionists, identity is interactionally situated and is viewed "in the public realms of discourse and semiotic systems" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 50). Hence, identity is "best viewed as the emergent product rather than the preexisting source of linguistic and other semiotic practices" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588).

However, in institutional settings, of which service encounter in Persian ethnic shops is a kind and where technical vocabularies and jargon are linked to particular professional groups (and perhaps in which membership categorization is closely tied to the institution, i.e. the category of "authenticity" and "Persian food" for instance), MCA scholars have shown a greater sensitivity to the socio-institutional context of the interaction (Hester & Eglin, 1997b; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002). Consequently, this chapter will take into account the socio-institutional context as an important perspective that is shaped by and forms the social actors' interactional achievements, particularly concerning the normativity of the membership categorization of the shop-owners and their customers. This is indeed a central point as the recurrent way that the practice of service encounter between the shop-owners and their customers is expanded in the actions the social actors perform in the shop, shedding light on the sequentially organised way between the participant action, category action and "typical behaviour". It is where both Conversation Analysis and MCA are perceived as "normative behaviour" in the sense that "members' category work" changes based on the immediate action (Fitzgerald, 2012).

The second development is the addition of non-personalized categories (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) to MCA, which seems to have been overlooked in the early stage of

studying membership categorization. For instance, despite the fact that "Persianness" or "non-Persianness/otherness" may be seen as the category-bound activities of the personalized categories "shop-owner", "salesperson", and "customer", the data collected for the current study suggests that the normativity (i.e., norms in action (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002)) of the service encounter at least in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney is established by the social actors (customers and the shop-owners) as powerful categories and therefore is habitually used as resources for the construction of their identity. These non-personal objects, argue Housley & Fitzgerald, exhibit "a normative organization" in that the spoken utterances produced by the social actors get their meanings from 'stocks of common-sense knowledge' which is similar to the construct of "stocks of interactional knowledge" (Peräkylä & Vehvil*f*inen, 2003) discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, as well as connected to "locally situated conditions of relevance, activity, and context" (p.66). Thus, their meanings are subtle and variable to the local accomplishments of the social actors and show their own category-based predicates.

In addition to the construct of membership categorization devices for the analysis of identity, I have also used the analytical tools of Multimodal[1] Interactional Analysis developed by Norris (2004, 2007, 2011). Norris (2007) views identity as being constructed "very much" (p.655) on Sacks's (1992) theories of membership categorization. Nonetheless, she has encompassed a wide range of other modes namely gaze, body movement, layout and gesture as important to the forming of identity in situ. Norris (2007, 2011) proposes the term "identity elements" as a replacement for membership categories in that she convincingly argues that an individual's personal identity is multiple in nature (for instance, occupational, gender) and as such considers the analogy of chemical elements valences, which are associated with different ways and forms, some permanent (gender) and some less stable (researcher).

Arguably, one of the most focal themes of MCA and in generally researching identity is the importance of indexicality in the attribution and the construction of identities in interaction. Borrowed from linguistics, the term indexicality refers to as a "layered, creative, interactive process that lies at the heart of the symbolic workings of language"

[1] As discussed in Chapter 4, the shop-owner refused to agree to data for the current research study to be collected through video-recording as he thought he would lose customers. Wherever possible, I therefore took fieldnotes of the lower and higher level actions performed by the participants to make better sense of ethnicity and identity production of the customers, which instantiated part of the data and entered into my fieldnotes and interpretations.

(De Fina et al., 2006, p. 16) and "connects utterances to extra-linguistic reality via the ability of linguistic signs to point to aspects of the social context" (2006, p. 4). Sacks also emphasized the centrality of indexicality and applied it to category membership. That is, the gestures, cues, words and other information produced and "given off", to cite Goffman (1959), by social actors carry meaning in a particularly contextual setting. Without some prior knowledge about the context, where the interaction occurs, the participants' purpose, their past interactive experiences (habitus) in the shop, for instance, it would easily be possible to misconstrue the symbolic communication among interacting individuals. This fact of interaction is what is known as indexicality.

This aspect of indexicality delves into the problem of how social actors in a social field construct reality in that field. They develop expressions that generate their common-sense knowledge about what is real in their situation. The concept of indexicality thus leads an investigator's attention to an actual interactive context so as to explore how actors approach indexical expressions-words, facial and body gestures and other cues to produce the presumption that a particular reality oversees their affairs, all of which can help construct identity in an interaction.

All in all, the identity categories social actors use in interacting with other participants in a social setting are resources available to them by which they participate in their activities and simultaneously they are methods by which they construct them as members of the same or a different social group (Day, 1998, p. 151). Analysis of the situated use of MCs can cast light on the sense-making practice and mundane activities involved in the choice of a particular description and accordingly of the local production of social order, which is embedded in a set of common-sense and cultural understandings (Sacks, 1992).

In what follows, I will focus on the practices of the participants in the shop, which clearly presents the identity issue under scrutiny. While the excerpts and examples here may primarily focus on minority group individuals (i.e., Persian speaking customers), the theoretical discussion may not be restricted only to the construction of national or ethnic identity. This is because the unit of analysis of the current study, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, is mediated action where both the agent (the social actors) and the mediational tools are co-present (Norris, 2007). The following investigates how these observations play out in the use made of different aspects of identity in the context of Persian ethnic shops and in how the participants go about their social activities.

5.4 Action, Category and Identity

As a form of goal-oriented interaction, service interaction centres upon the achievement of business transaction and specific goals, for instance, "the satisfaction of the customer's presumed desire for some service and the server's obligation to provide that service" (Merritt, 1976, p. 321), which pertain to their "institution-relevant identities" (Heritage, 1997, p. 224) (i.e., shop-owner/assistant-customer). These activities (including talk and non-verbal) imbricated in service encounters must therefore plainly comprise those required to pursue these goals (the exchange of the customer's money for the shop-owner's goods). This institutional interaction can impose constraints on what customers, for instance, are allowed to do within and throughout an interaction. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 2, the basic communicative exchanges and activities that occur in service interactions include (a) greetings, or openings; (b) negotiation of the business exchange; and (c) closing of the encounter. These negotiations (in particular of the business related exchange) can be full of adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), involving requests for a product, questions about prices, repairs (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), requests or offers of bags and so forth.

Previous research into service encounters and mainly interactions in institutional talk has demonstrated that there is some special turn-taking in operation in such negotiations. According to Heritage (1997), once the organization of turn-taking has been identified, the next step is to build an "overall map" of the interaction based on its "phases and sections" (p. 227). This is a convenient moment to go about introducing the pieces of data that will be examined during the rest of this chapter. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, all names in the findings chapters (Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8) have been changed.

Typically, at least among the Persian-speaking customers and based on my observations, upon passing through the doorway, the customers greet the shop-owners, who usually stand where the cash-register is positioned. They then go about doing their shopping at the back of the shop, where most interactions among customers and customer to shop-owners occur when, for example, they wish to ask for the availability of a merchandise (see Chapter 3 for further discussion on the layout of the shop). In Extract 5.1, a wholesaler man aged about 40 with a Greek background born in Australia, according to the shop-owner, entered the shop, and I initially thought he was a customer. Upon his arrival, he stood near the cash register and greeted the shop-owner. I was also standing not far from the cash register upon his arrival in the shop. As soon as I saw him, I pointed at the sign

(see Chapter 4) in which it says *"Dear Customer, your service interaction is being recorded for intercultural communication research purposes. If you do not wish to be recorded, please let us know"*, without producing a word. He continued by saying:

Extract 5.1

((I am showing the customer the sign))
(0.5)

```
1  Wholesaler      I'm not actually a customer
2  The             oh ok↑
   researcher
3  Wholesaler      no no I'm a I'm a wholesaler[bu
4  The                                          that's alright
   researcher
5  Wholesaler                                   na  tha]  bu  tha  that's  fine
                   anyway
6  The             yeah thank you
   researcher
7  Wholesaler      that's ↓all right↓
```

For ease of analysis, I have divided the excerpt above into two primary frameworks (Goffman, 1974) namely the "permission" and the "business" (Extract 5.2 see the following) negotiations because even though the wholesaler has only one piece of business to undertake with the shop-owner, the interaction orients itself to other various keyings (Goffman, 1974). First, in this interaction, I was the initiator of the *action* but not the *utterances* (i.e., the unit of analysis of a mediated discourse is the mediated action). That is, the action that I, as a social actor, am taking in this site of engagement gets noticed and privileged but not my utterances (wordings). From this perspective, MDA scrutinizes the action the participants are carrying out and asks the question: what happened before the wholesaler produced the utterance in line 1 *"I'm not actually a customer"*?

Second, during this brief excerpt, the wholesaler and I have performed several simultaneous higher-level actions (i.e., I point at the sign, the wholesaler looks at the sign and starts reading it, and we both simultaneously interact with one another). Some of the chains of lower-level actions are overlapping so that the wholesaler's talk about his professional identity, a wholesaler, for instance, in part constructs the higher-level action of interacting with the researcher.

The first segment (lines 1-7) is regarded as an "opening" of the primary framework, where the researcher initiates the action. Here, we both enter into a state of interaction and establish our identities for the other (Schegloff, 1986). Although my identity in this

interaction is not *verbally* revealed and claimed as a researcher, my frozen action (my fieldnotes and the recording device) and the sign, as a mediational tool, which has been positioned at an earlier time at the cash-register by the researcher, may have contributed to the establishment of my social identity tag as a researcher. In fact, my identity here is viewed as something "available for use: something that people [I, the researcher] do which is embedded in some other social activity and not something they [I, the researcher] actually 'are'" [am] (Widdicombe, 1998, p. 191 emphasis in original).

The fact that the sign is a research document and that it is treated as a legal entity, which took the researcher about six months to gain the approval from the University's ethics committee, may have encompassed the wholesaler to feel entitled to interact with the researcher. In other words, when participants use MCs, they do not always name the category. Rather, categories can be inferred from typical activities performed by members of that category, either in relation to or instead of naming the category itself (Stokoe, 2012). Hence, as is made evident from the interaction above, and taking into account the "perceptually available categories" (Jayyusi, 1984), by which the participants are, for instance, socially arranged (shop-owner, researcher, wholesaler), the participant holding a pen and taking some notes on a piece of paper becomes a "researcher" which modifies the "description of the person as an incumbent of the category that is perceptually available" (p.74). These assumptions stem from common-sense knowledge of what I, as a researcher, in the category of researcher do.

However, the wholesaler immediately categorizes himself as a wholesaler in line 1. It is notable that the wholesaler's categorical account "I am not actually a customer" in line 1 does the work of self-attributed category membership directly, in lieu of ascribing membership through category-implicative description, on which he ultimately relies "I'm a wholesaler" in line 3. The use of the indefinite article "a" along with the adverb "actually", produces a category as something which is known-in-common meanings. It is safe to say that the wholesaler moves from naming a category to unpack its incumbent features or predicates. The category "wholesaler" works to clarify why the wholesaler cannot help me with my data collection as the sign in front of him at the cash register is restricted to customers only.

In the second segment of the aforementioned interaction, where I take the role of a ratified "bystander" (Goffman, 1981b), at least on the part of the shop-owner, the wholesaler insists on maintaining his occupational identity as a wholesaler, this time through the use

of category bound activities. That is, since the participant evidences his social identity as a wholesaler, he is then bound to provide for what he is claiming to be (i.e., purchasing merchandise in large quantities and selling them to retailers in smaller quantities).

Extract 5.2

```
8     Wholesaler  (0.3) how are you today Reza↑
9     Shop-owner  is all right↓
10    Wholesaler  everything ok↑(0.2)beautiful day↓
11    Shop-owner  good to walk
12    Wholesaler  sorry ↑((grinning))
13    Shop-owner  it's good to [walk ↑
14    Wholesaler                I know]I know ((grinning))(0.2)I know
15    Wholesaler  gotta work mate
16    Shop-owner  one two three four five six seven twnee:::y eight
                                                 ((counting money))
17    Wholesaler  there it is(.)perfect (0.1)OK thank[you
18    Shop-owner                                     thank you]very much
19    Wholesaler  see ya later
20    Wholesaler  have a nice day↓
21    The researcher thank you
```

Referring to Extract 5.2, after agreeing to be recorded, the wholesaler greets the shop-owner, by addressing his first name "how are you today Reza↑" in line 8 as a reference form in what is known as a recognitional referring expression (Sacks & Schegloff, 2007). Typically, greeting exchanges in service encounter are used to function as an attention grabber or a summons (Placencia, 2004). The response greeting by the shop-owner in line 9 in turn displays his acknowledgement of the presence of the wholesaler. The wholesaler takes the initiative to frame the service interaction as an opportunity for interpersonal talk and to increase interpersonal involvement by commenting on the weather as small talk, as in what Sacks (1992) calls "weather talk" as a safe topic, which instantiates a new speech activity. In response to a comment on the weather, the shop-owner, while busy counting the money to hand over to the wholesaler, replies by saying "good to walk" in line 11. While grinning, the wholesaler misheard it and sought for clarification with a rising intonation "sorry↑" in line 12. The shop-owner self-repairs the trouble source this time with a full sentence "It's good to [walk ↑". Here, when the wholesaler's talk overlaps in line 14 is an instance of recognitional onset (Jefferson, 1986), which accounts for the orderly production of overlapping talk no matter how interruptive it is. The wholesaler ties "gotta work mate" in line 15 to the category "a wholesaler", moving from belonging to a category to unloading its incumbent features or "predicates" (Watson, 1978). The "wholesaler" faces up to his responsibilities, those of fulfilling his clients' needs, even though it is a "beautiful day", which can be interpreted as a complaint as the wholesaler

needs to work. That of course does not mean that the category "wholesaler" always indexes the same meaning (Stokoe, 2009). Rather, the orderliness of categories and their predicates, "their 'going together' is achieved and is bound to be found in the local specifics of categorization as an activity" (Hester & Eglin, 1997a, p. 46).

To conclude this section, a vast body of recent research has occasioned the need to devote close attention to what participants actually perform during interaction so as to establish and negotiate identities and more importantly to the importance of ethnographic studies of specific communities and concrete social practices. This will provide researchers with an opportunity to investigate how social groups are "constituted in and through social action (including, of course, discourse practices) and the specific symbolic activities that are used to define membership into those aggregates" (De Fina 2010, p. 217). After the wholesaler left the shop, I had a chance to talk to the shop-owner about the wholesaler. He said they frequently arrange the items the shop-owner requires over the phone. The wholesaler usually calls and determines the time and the day when he wishes to visit to ensure that the shop-owner (the husband) is present in the shop. As can be observed from Excerpt 5.2, the wholesaler enters the shop, and unlike the customers who conduct their shopping at the back of the shop, directly goes to the cashier, where the shop-owner usually serves customers. An interesting observation of this interaction is that the wholesaler never asks for his money and the shop-owner already knows why the wholesaler is visiting the shop, which marks the familiarity which participants (the shop-owner and the wholesaler) want to claim for the interaction, where the shop-owner has become a "client" to the wholesaler.

5.5 Different stories, different identities

The next extract comes from an interaction between the shop-owner (the wife) and a couple in their late 50s. As discussed in the previous examples, Persian-speaking customers usually greet the shop-owner at the cash register, where customers are served, on their arrivals. These "how-are-you inquiries" usually take about 30 seconds but sometimes go on for two to five minutes, where the inquiries can extend to their immediate families. When the customers arrived, the shop-owner was busy watching a show on "Youtube". As soon as the shop-owner saw the couple, she approached them, and, while greeting, commented on the wife's appearance by saying "you look great". Unfortunately, this "greeting" interaction was not recorded as there was no customer around at the time of their arrival and the recording device was normally switched off when there was no customer in the shop. After a minute or so, the couple went back to the back of the shop

and were looking for the items they were after. On picking out the items, they took them to the cash register. The shop-owner (the husband) had to run some errands and was not in the shop. Normally, when one of the shop-owners is not present in the shop, the regular Persian-speaking customers ask for them. Since the husband was not present in the shop, the husband of the customer asked the shop-owner (the wife) about her husband.

Having brought the items to the cash-register, the wife of the customer asked her husband to carry the two packs of rice, which seemed to be heavier than the other items they purchased, to the car while she was paying. The husband said good-bye to the shop-owner and requested the shop-owner convey his regards to the husband. The following excerpt takes place after the husband of the customer left the shop:

Excerpt 5.3

((At the counter between the shop-owner's wife (SW) and a customer in her late 50s))
SO: Shop-owner's wife (SW) C: Customer

1 SW hava aliye
nice weather
((the shop-owner's voice fading as she's standing a bit far from the recorder: now coming close to it, background noise from outside, the entrance door is open))
2 C =kheili khube =Sarah jan inghadr varzesh mikonam[hhh
=very nice = Sarah I've been working out hard lately [hhh
3 SW pas hamoone dige]
oh that's why
((while bagging the items, making a quick eye contact))
4 SW =mane [tanbal hich kari nakardam
=I ['m just lazy and haven't done anything
((still bagging the items, no eye contact))
5 C hhh are]
hhh yes]
6 SW ma:::n heee kheili varzesh mikardam=bad ke dokhtarakam zaeedo gereftar
I used to work out a lot=but when my daughter gave birth I got busy with the
bacheo va ina ta ya sal (0.1)
kid and stuff for about a year (0.1)
kartamo albate negah dashtam too gym goftam
but I kept my membership card and told them
bar migardam(0.1) hhh baz alan ye mahe bargashtam (.)
I'd return (0.1) hhh it's been about a month that I've joined the same club again (.)
kheili too ab (.)varzesh mikonam
I work out in the water (.) a lot
=chon man joinam kheili vazesh khar[abe
=cause I'm having trouble with my [joints
7 SW man aslan]
I never]
8 C =↑kheili darde zanoo dara:::m (.) dast hame ja (0.1)
=↑my knees are aching (.) and my hands all over my body (0.1)
bad hafteye 2 3 rooz har joor shode khodamo be oon estakhr miresoonam
and I do my best to go to the swimming pool under any circumstances for two or three times per week

```
        =Lane (.) Co[ve
        =Lane (.) Co[ve
9   SW        Kheili[khube
                that's very [good
10  C            bad ba mo]rabi
                and then with a tra]iner
        too::: estakhr                va[zne va ino ina
        I work out in the swimming pool  and [lift weights and stuff like that
11  SW                                   tereining] dige bale
                                         it's called train]ing yes I know
12  C   ba:::d Pilates ham taze shoroo ka:::[rdam
        th:::en Pilates                  I've just [started
13  SW                                          ahan]
                                                  aha]
14  C   =bara khatere mashallah hez:::ar mashallah
         =for ((pointing to her body))  thank God
15  C   vali:::
        b:::ut ((constant eye contact))
16  SW  =na
        =no
17  C   khei:::li daram mikham roo khodam kar konam
        I keep telling myself I have to work out
        =vali baz hey bacheha ye dafe
        =but again my children keep
        zang mizanan emrooz in nave [farad oon nave
        calling me today this grandchild the [next day another
18  SW  akhey]        [hhh
        poor thing]   [hhh ((looking at the customer))
19  C                  va]li ta betoonam say mikonam↓ke[(0.1)
                        b ]ut I try to go to the gym  [(0.1)
20  SW                                                 [ ((cough))]
21  C                                                    ye zarre]
                                                   even for a short time]
22  C   =man[shayad majboor besham ba credit card bedam is OK↑
        =    [maybe I'll have to pay by credit card is OK↑ ((Checking her purse))
23  SW       Kheili karetoon khube]
                you're doing a good job
```

CA researchers (see for instance Antaki, Condor, & Levine, 1996) contend that the deconstructing of interaction into separate stages will help the researcher to get a better sense of what is actually going on in an interaction. In Extract 5.3, the conversation hinges on the customer's recent attempt to stay fit by working out at a gym. As can be observed, there is much talk of sports jargon and the customer's account of why she had to quit exercise and why she needed to take more exercise. The profusion of sports vocabulary and the customer's attempt to relate it to her being active makes it as though one could do a content analysis and infer that the customer is suffering from "aging". Here is an example of the kind of stretch of talk, at the beginning of the interaction, that a content analysis can be used as evidence for the category "aging" even though the term itself was not specifically mentioned by any of the interlocutors nor were their ages.

The pre-established or pre-allocated (Atkinson & Drew, 1979) roles of the shop-owner and the customer are broken at the opening of this encounter. The shop-owner's identity as a service-provider is constituted by her positioning at the counter, where the cash-register is located, but not by her opening move "nice weather" in line 1. Rather, she is aligning herself not to the role of the shop-owner, rather to the role of a friend/someone with whom she has something in common. Here the encounter develops into small talk. Weather talk, as indicated in the previous extracts, has largely been perceived as the most common and safe topic of casual conversation among social actors who do not share much of a common experience (Laver, 1975). After the shop-owner commented on the weather, the customer assesses the shop-owner's comment by saying "very nice", closing the topic of the weather, signalling that the small talk in line 1 was intended as getting the interaction underway, inferring that talk-in interaction is not just a matter of turn-taking but is a matter of accomplishing actions. However, after this, in line 2 the customer initiates the shift and very quickly moves into interpersonal topics: her busy schedule with sports "Sarah, I've been working out hard lately" where the shop-owner replies "I'm just lazy and haven't done anything", which is left unassessed by the customer in line 6. She goes on to talk about her "busy schedule" by playing sports but had to quit due to her granddaughter's birth and her being busy with her daughter's baby in line 6. She then explains she did not resign her membership of the club, where she usually exercises, and it has been about a month that she has rejoined the same club.

Here, in line 6, the customer opens up to the shop-owner about why she prefers water sports because she has trouble with her joints and because her knees are aching. In line 8, she then justifies why she insists on working out two or three times per week no matter what happens. The shop-owner, in line 9, assesses her account in an overlap by saying "very good" and the customer goes further and says she has even hired a trainer and does the exercise with him, where the shop-owner uses a category "yes, it's called training", the term 'training' in English again in an overlap in line 11, which shows the shop-owner's familiarity with this kind of activity. The customer goes on to talk about her new activity that she has recently taken up namely 'Pilates' "a physical fitness system involving controlled movements, stretching, and breathing" which has shown some improvement in her physical movement where she "thanked God" in line 14 while pointing to her body. The shop-owner displays her understanding by "aha" in 13 with an overlap. The customer again begins with a discourse marker "but" in line 15, indicating a contrast or problem with

the previous description. She then continues by saying that in line 17 although "she keeps telling herself she has to work out", her children prevent her from doing it regularly because her grandchildren keep calling her and ask her to spend time with them.

As can be observed so far from Extract 5.3, the description given by the customer serves much the same function as the "aging" attribution as it accounts for why the customer needs to work out. We can see, then, how category-implicative descriptions do the work of explicit categorizing (i.e., I am aged), constituting members' methods for disclosing common-sense knowledge of why the customer, for instance, is concerned about her health "I am suffering from knee problems". The consequences of these accounts and descriptions are spelled out (i.e., the customer also discloses that she needs to look after her new-born grandchild, making relevant other categories such as 'grandmother' or 'a responsible grandmother' which the shop-owner affiliates with "you're doing a good job" in line 23).

In Extract 5.4, shifts in footing occur between personal issues to task-oriented talk, or in what Bailey calls a "socially minimal service encounter", which is restricted to aspects of the business transaction, and which does not include "discussion of more sociable, interpersonal topics, e.g., experiences outside the store or the customer's unique personal relationship with the storekeeper" (1997, p. 333).

Extract 5.4

24	C	=man[shayad majboor besham
		= [maybe I'll have to
25	SW	Kheili karetoon khube]
		you're doing a good job]
26	C	behetoon kart bedam= is OK↑
		pay by credit card is OK ↑((checking her purse))
27	SW	=eshkali nadre khahesh mikonam↓
		not a problem at all
28	C	=che ghadar shod↑
		how much is it↑
29	SW	(0.1) shod 3:::3.15
		(0.1) it comes in 3::: 3.15
30	C	=na (.) daram bebakhshid man fekr kardam nadashtam↓
		=no I've got it in cash sorry I thought I didn't have the correct amount↓
		((looking at her purse to find the correct money))
31	SW	(0.4) ahan bebakhshid berenjo naza [dam
		(0.4) ((rechecking the items)) oh sorry I forgot to count [the rice
32	C	hamoone] manam fekr kardam khanom
		I see] I thought lady↓
		ja:::n hhh bish[tar az
		hhh it'd be much more [than that
33	SW	be]renj ro 2 ta uh chiz bordin
		rice] you got two packs of uh
34	C	=2 ta 5
		=2 packs of 5 kilos

35 SW man 36 dollar bezanam bara bere:::nj
I'll charge you 36 dollars for the rice ((no eye-contact, looking at the swipe machine))
36 C hhh
hhh
37 SW (0.1) bebakhshin
(0.1) sorry
38 C =didi kochooloo:::
did you see that "kochooloo" little↑
(("kochooloo" a Persian word which means "small one" or "little one"))
((the customer looking at the shop-owner and the shop-owner busy with the rechecking))
39 SW hhh
hhh
40 C fekr kardam poolam 50 dollar kame (0.1)
I thought $50 didn't sound right (0.1)
befarmaeen =credit signature merci
there you go =credit signature thanks
((handing her credit card to the shop-owner a quick eye-contact))
41 SW credit
credit
((background noise, Persian music on, she is swiping the customer's credit card looking at the transaction process))

Going back to the second segment of the interaction, the shift in footing is again initiated by the customer in lines 24 and 26 where the customer asks whether the shop-owner would mind if the customer paid by credit card "maybe I'll have to pay by credit card, is OK" in lines 24 and 26, where the phrase "is OK" is produced in English, which is a grammatically-ill-formed sentence, common among Persians (as non-native speakers of English) as grammatically there is no 'dummy subject' in Persian. The shop-owner replies by saying "not a problem at all" in line 27 after the customer has issued her request for the price. The shop-owner requests the customer pay $33.15 in line 29. The customer looks at her purse again and checks if she has the correct amount of cash to pay while she initially thought she did not. The customer responses by saying "no, I've got the correct amount" in line 30 and then apologizes for the inconvenience she had caused followed by an account "I thought I didn't have the correct amount" in line 30. In the meantime, the shop-owner rechecks the customer's shopping list and immediately repairs by "oh" in line 31 as a pre-sequence and their near relatives (i.e. pre-announcement) (Terasaki, 2004), followed by an account "sorry I forgot to count the rice", where the shop-owner had already requested but forgot to count the two packs of the rice the customer's husband had already taken to the car. The customer replied back by saying that she knew that she had to pay a bit more than $33.15 and that her $50 bill would not suffice, which made her surprised. In line 35, the shop-owner adds $36 to the previous amount for the two packs of rice. The customer in line 36 starts laughing, which is followed by the shop-owner's apology again "sorry" in line 37. The laughter might have impacted upon the shop-owner, which made her

apologize to the customer again. Interestingly, the customer jokes about the scene by saying "did you see that, little", *kochooloo* a Persian word which means "small one" or "little one", in line 38, which is again followed by more laughter on the shop-owner's side.

Brown and Levinson (1987) consider joking as a strategy to address the positive face concern of participants, which is often applied to make the participants involved in an interaction feel comfortable. Norrick (1994) defines joking as "all those forms or strategies such as word play, teasing, and anecdotes designed to elicit laughter from listeners" (409). As can be observed here in line 38, the customer's use of the joke and the word play "little one" and the success of the joke, where laughter is a preferred turn (Gavioli, 1995) created by the customer, provides a situational frame that softens the nature of a serious one where the shop-owner made an error. Interestingly, the joke is accepted and recognised in line 39 by the shop-owner which gives rise to a positive relation and enhanced rapport.

Extract 5.4 has demonstrated that the shop-owner and the customer invoke their culture's categories that are grounded in members' displayed orientations in the ongoing course of action. That is, they perform and accomplish the social actions in situ pertinent to service interactions (in Persian ethnic shops) without explicitly avowing their identities as a service-provider (shop-owner) and a customer. This can be observed from the descriptions or accounts, which the participants have provided, that may be interpreted as category bound activities (which cannot be seen, for instance, in Extract 5.2 above) within ongoing sequentially organised talk turned into membership categories, shedding light on how "the ordinary workings of talk and other conduct in interaction serve to get categorization devices made relevant or activated" (Schegloff, 2007c, p. 477).

As mentioned earlier, during the course of the interaction between the shop-owner and the customer, they are undertaking several higher-level actions, and these are being constructed at the same time (Norris, 2004, 2007) (i.e., disclosing their personal lives, telling narratives, shopping, serving the customer). Each higher-level action (e.g., serving the customer) is performed and constructed through chains of lower-level actions. For instance, the higher-level action of serving customers is constructed through several chains of object handling and a chain of head movements. As Norris (2007) contends "[E]ach higher-level action is part of a practice" (p.188). The higher-level action of the telling of narratives about "house chores" during service interaction, where both the shop-owner and the customer happen to be females, in a Persian shop can be seen as part of the practice of

being a housewife/mothering. These actions, which are in line with the practices that they construct, can give us insight into the participants' social identities.

Extract 5.5

```
42  SW  (14)manam shoone dard kheili badi dasht:::am
        (14) ((busy bagging the items)) I also had a shoulder pain
43  C   ehe:::m
        ah:::a
44  SW  (0.2) ye 2-3 mahi tool keshid
        (0.2)     it took me 2 to 3 months
        hey goftan male kare sanguine male [chieze
        and they kept telling me it was for the heavy work and stuff
        ((quick eye contact, looking at the receipts))
45  C                                      bale ma:::le]
                                                 yeah clear]
46  SW  bad raftam doktor aks gereftam ina
        and then I ran some tests and stuff
        oonam be man goft hatman bayad beri tooye abe estakhr[rah beri
        they told me that I must walk                          [in the swimming pool
47  C                                                          kheili]khu:::b
                                                          that's ve::: ry] good
        shoma Lane Cove mi
         you   go to Lane Cove
        =albate yeki ham hast Willoughby kheiliam     [tariff mikonam
        =of course there's one in Willoughby      everybody says it's  [a good place
48  SW                                                Fitness] First
        mirid shoma::: ↑                                 Fitness]  First
        do yo:::u go to ↑              ((quick eye contact))
49  C   man::: (.) uh::: (.)
        I:::       (.)   uh:::     (.)
50  SW  [Virgin
        [Virgin
51  C   Blu] Blue Fit miram
        I go to Blu] Blue Fit
52  SW  ahan Blue Fit
        aha     Blue   Fit (( closing the register, handing the receipt to the customer))
53  C   (0.5)                                 merci
        (o.5) ((getting the receipt from the shop-owner)) thanks
54  SW  vali tarjihan ye jaye ke nazdik bashe
        I'd prefer to go to a nearby gym
55  C   =vali yekiam ha[st
        =but       there's      [one
56  SW                  vagarne]
                         otherwise]
57  C   injaha hamin poshta
        near here behind the shop
58  SW  too Chatswood ham hast
        there's also one in Chatswood ((pseudonym))
        ((her voice fading as she is moving the swipe machine to one of the shelves behind her))
59  C   too Chatswood ham hast
        yea that's right there's one in Chatswood ((pseudonym))
        =vali yeki too Willoughby kheili be shoma bayad nazdik bashe
        =but there's one in Willoughby that should be very close
60  C   (0.2)vali beri:::na↑
        (0.2) but do go to the gym↑ ((a polite suggestion))
61  SW  bale hatman [bayad beram
        yes sure        [I must go
62  C                 chon] na inke begam hala (.)
```

cause] not that I'm saying now (.)
ke shoma kheili(.)sennetoon(.)ja dare ta be ma beresin vali (0.1)
that you are much (.) younger than us but (0.1)
[uh:::
[uh:::
63 SW kha]nom jan [shoma fekr mikonid man
dear] miss ((a polite way of addressing the elderly in Persian)) do [you think ((eye-contact))
64 C be khoda]
for God's sake]
man ma:::dar bozorgam
I'm a gran:::dmother
65 SW =bashe] khub man az tanbaliye bachehame ke madar bozorg na[shodam
=no problem] but it is because of my children's laziness that I haven't become a grandmother [yet
66 C na]
no]
ghorobonetoon beram
thank you very much
67 SW hhh
hhh ((the shop-owner looking at me))
68 C hu::: vali chon hey rooz be rooz badtar mishim ↓ (.)
but because our health keeps getting worse↓ with each passing day ↓
midonid ma roo be behbood nistim
you know we are not improving
69 SW =[na
= [no we're not
70 C ma] rooz be rooz badtar mishim [darnatije
we] keep getting worse [therefore
71 SW doroste]
you're right]
72 C (.) bayad movazebe khodetoon bashin ↓
(.) we should take care of ourselves ↓
73 SW hatman
for sure
74 C kheili khoshal shodam
it was nice seeing you
75 SW hamintor ghorobonetoon beram
likewise thank you very much
76 C salam beresoonid
say hi to all
77 SW rooze khubi dashte bashin
have a nice day
78 C merci kheili mamnoon
thanks thank you very much

After resolving the problem concerning the payment in Extract 5.4, the shop-owner, this time, proposes a new topic about her shoulder pain which she has recently been experiencing, providing an "occasioned context" (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) within which the boundaries of the forthcoming trouble are stated. In lines 42 and 44 respectively, she establishes a category and action/activity: "shoulder pain", where she provides an upshot of why she is suffering from the shoulder pain "they kept telling me it was for the heavy work and stuff" in line 44. Here, the account formulates an "attribute" of the shop-owner but does not explicitly categorize her shoulder pain as, for instance, working in the

shop (i.e. her occupational identity). In fact, in the way the topic of the "shoulder pain" is organised here can be considered as an occasioned device in that it helps frame the relevant topic of the imminent account, for which the shop-owner provides. However, the "shoulder pain" invokes a host of possible category resonances (Schegloff, 2007a) pertinent to why the shop-owner does not want to claim her (occupational) identity as a shop-owner (e.g. working long-hours in the shop, not having time to see a doctor etc.). The shop-owner continues by saying what she had done to alleviate the pain, where she comments that she had to see a doctor and based on her doctor's recommendation, she had to walk in the swimming pool in line 46. The customer then assesses the shop-owner's account by saying "that's good" in line 47 and the two go on to discuss which gyms they are attending.

Of particular interest in this extract is the customer's subsequent account, in which, she suggests, in line 60, the shop-owner "go to the gym" and not give up exercise, where in line 61, the shop owner takes the offer by saying "yes, for sure. I should keep going". However, the action and turn design is different from the previous extracts, where identities are not explicitly avowed but categorized. First, the age attribution takes place in a turn that is not designed to account for something to which the shop-owner belongs. This attribute is clear from the customer's account, in line 63, where she pauses, hesitates before producing the age attribution, "not that I'm saying now… (.) that you are much (.) younger than us, but". As the customer is about to close the sequence in line 62, which contains the age attribution, the shop-owner overlaps and objects to the customer's account in line 63 by saying that "do you think I am", which could be interpreted as "do you think I am young". The customer then says "I am a grandmother", which is again dispreferred by the shop-owner "no problem, but it is because of my children's laziness that I haven't become a grandmother yet" in line 65, followed by an overlap by the customer and laughter from the shop-owner. Interestingly, in the next turn, in line 68, the customer changes her stance from excluding the shop-owner from her membership categorization device (i.e., "the aged") to including the shop-owner to her circle when she provides an account of why they should keep working out in lines 68 and 70: "but because our health keeps getting worse with each passing day you know we are not improving", and the shop-owner ratifies this assessment in line 69 "no, we're not".

The customer goes on to provide more of an account here where in lines 71 and 72 she justifies her account by saying "we are getting worse therefore", to which the shop-owner agrees again in an overlap in line 71 "you're right". Here, the customer's turn therefore

establishes a categorical identity: the ‘we’ implies membership of a team-type category, such as ‘husband–wife’. Although ‘we’ could also suggest other teams (i.e. friend–friend), by categorizing the person, we get a sense for which collection of categories is being invoked. This account the customer provides allows her to shape her talk such that she can be seen to be speaking for the whole group of the “aged”. Furthermore, given that the many ways that the customer might have done this description, in line 64, “I’m a grandmother” the fact that she did it this way might mean that it gives the shop-owner a sense of on what basis she herself is now expected to speak (i.e., as a member of her own team). The excerpt above demonstrates how categorical identities are brought about in talk not haphazardly but to do specific social actions.

5.6 Establishing different identities in arguing

Unlike the previous extracts, in which first names, which articulate or reinforce the type of relationship the shop-owners and the customers would like to claim, appeared in the initial turns, Extract 5.6 comes from an interaction between the shop-owner (the wife) and a (regular) customer, a non-Persian speaking customer (an Australian: we got talking to each other) in her late 50s, where no forms of address or greetings on the part of the customer are employed. This can be seen as displaying their knowledge of the other person’s occupational (institutional) identity (i.e., shop-owner and customer).

Upon her arrival, the customer goes directly to the back of the shop, where most of the items are located. She picks out an item from the shelf and before approaching the shop-owner, she is reading the ingredients on the package for about 30 seconds. The shop-owner (the wife) is at the counter watching a movie on her laptop.

Extract 5.6

SW: shop-owner’s wife C: Customer ((The customer is busy reading the ingredients on the label))

```
1   SW   [hello↓        ((grinning))
2   C    =are these] hello are these
         ((referring to the items)) Australian↑((eye contact))
3   SW   um (2.0)this is Australian↓ bu but is medium size
4   C    we don’t have any [large ones
                            you don't] have any big ones
5   SW   no sorry
6   C    uh (1.0) actually I think I pre[fer
7   SW                                  not]in   the   market   at   the
         moment=
         we asked(.) many suppliers(.)all they have(.)only medium size
8   C    OK (1.0) I wo I won't take them
9   SW   you will take them ↑
10  C    =I won’t
11  SW   Oh you won’t [heh
12  C                 I won’t↓] yeah
```

```
13  SW   is alright
14  C    Ok heh thank you
15  SW   hhh thank you very much by bye
```

Pomerantz and Mandelbaum (2005, pp. 152-153) argue that "in performing locally relevant conversational actions or activities, participants incorporate explicit relationship categories anticipating that recipients will draw on their understanding of the activities, motives, rights, responsibilities and/or competencies associated with incumbents of the category". Furthermore, as can be observed from Extract 5.6, this type of interaction in service encounters is what is known as "socially minimal service encounter" under the banner of "institutional talk" (Drew & Heritage, 1992b). That is, the interaction here centres mainly on the business-oriented talk. In this excerpt, the interaction starts off as an ordinary inquiry by the customer asking about the origins of an item (in a Persian ethnic shop). She picks out the product from the shelf at the back of the shop and, while approaching the cash register, is busy reading the label. The label and its information about the product the customer is looking for is seen as a mediational tool in MDA (see Chapters 2 and 3), where information about the ingredients can be found.

Although she had read the label, the customer was not sure where this product had been produced. Therefore, when the customer approached the cash register, she became involved in talk that is closely tied to the business exchange with no greetings, no small talk or introduction of personal topics. However, the shop-owner opened the interaction by greeting the customer in line 1, where the customer replied by an embedded response with an overlap in line 2, and directly started negotiating the business "Are <u>these</u> Australian↑" in line 2. The shop-owner then draws the customer's attention to the size of the item in line 3 and tells her that they do not have big ones in the stock at the moment. The customer, however, in line 4 formulates a question "you don't have any big ones", where the shop-owner apologizes, in an adjacency pair, in line 5, and replies "no sorry". The customer, before rejecting the shop-owner's account in line 6, prefaces her response with "uh" and a pause as foreshadowing a rejection of the shop-owner's account, which occurs before the production of the dispreferred response, known as prefatory (Heritage, 1984) to reject, followed by an account "actually I think I pre[fer". Because the shop-owner fails to supply the customer's need, she provides an account of why she cannot fulfil the customer's need: "in the market at the moment=we <u>as</u>ked (.) <u>many</u> <u>suppliers</u> (.) all they have (.) only medium size" in line 7. With this response, the shop-owner displays that she

is willing to pursue this form of exchange development as she tries to reorient the topic by proposing the in-stock product.

This account is in line with Merritt's definition discussed above. The shop-owner's account therefore turns on what a "shop-owner" (i.e., her professional identity) should do when fulfilling customers' needs although the shop-owner could not accommodate the need of the customer. This rather shared understanding between the shop-owner and the customer is co-constructed by what participants do with the rights and obligations that are expectable of each other (i.e., for the shop-owner supplying the items a customer wants). In Sacks's word (1992) "the fact that activities are category-bound also allows us to praise or complain about absent activities (p. 585). On the customer's part, however, upon entering the shop, she already enters the "funnel of commitment" (Norris, 2007) as the action has confined the range of items the customer is looking for. For instance, it may be assumed that since it is a Persian shop, one would not necessarily expect to find Australian-produced items. The customer, therefore, needs to provide legitimate reasons for not purchasing the item she sought to purchase.

The following extract illustrates how participants move between categorization and description while treating each other's descriptions as category-resonant. This interaction comes from an interaction between the shop-owner (the wife) and a customer in her late 30s. According to the shop-owner, she is a regular customer and visits the shop three times a week and the only item she purchases is tobacco. The initial part of this conversation, which is not displayed here, consisted of a routine business transaction between the participants.

Extract 5.7

((The customer is paying by credit card at the counter, handing her husband's credit card))

```
1  C    you know what if I give you this card rather (1.0)
        ((the shop-owner on takes the customer's credit card))
        that's my husband's sees the smoke
        on this card bill hhh .heh he doesn't like me smoking
2  SW   2.0) it's um a [credit↑ ((eye contact))
3  C                   yeah]
4  SW   and signature↑ (1.0) or pin↑
                      (1.0) or]
5  C    yeah sign (2.0) he says I smoke too much
6  SW   What's up↑
7  C    (1.0) Pardon↑
8  SW   =you're alone by yourself↑
9  C    I'm not allowed to smoke too much, I already [tol
```

The customer has already given the shop-owner her husband's credit card and suddenly changes her mind and asks the shop-owner whether she could use hers in place of her husband's in line 1 "that's my husband's sees the smoke on this card bill hhh" followed by a laugh. Here, from a MDA point of view, the husband's credit card has become an important mediational tool, though he is not present during this interaction, where he is brought into play (i.e., the credit card replaces the husband). The customer provides an account of why she cannot use her husband's credit card "he doesn't like me smoking". What is interesting about this extract is the identity categories in play, such as husband-wife and shop-owner and customer and how the social actors here manage and orient to their membership of these different categories through conversational actions. For instance, at the start of the sequence (line 1), the customer accomplishes the action of displaying concern that she does not want her husband to find out that she is smoking. After the customer has stated her problem (i.e., not allowed to smoke), it would be expected to be followed by compliance on the part of the shop-owner. Nonetheless, in line 2, after a pause of two seconds, her account is not taken up by the shop-owner. The shop-owner then directly goes to the business and asks whether it is a credit card, a signature or pin in line 4. It seems that the shop-owner is fulfilling the category-bound "duties" of expressing concern here as a (responsible) "mother" of two children (her habitus). It should be noted that after the customer left the shop, the shop-owner confided to me that she herself smokes cigarettes but not tobacco. She said she was worried about the customer because the customer breastfeeds her two-year old child, thus smoking tobacco is detrimental not only to her health but to her child. She concluded that smoking tobacco is about nine or ten times as harmful as smoking cigarettes.

```
Extract 5.8

10  SW  =you're alone by yourself↑
11  C   I'm not allowed to smoke too much, I already  [tol
12  SW                                                I    m]ean  I  mean
        your
        husband is on ho[
13  C                                                   oh]
14  SW                  liday]
15  C   he's in Europe
16  SW  yes↓ ((giving her the receipt))
17  C   he's been there for three weeks now (.) an[d
18  SW                                              ah::: a]
19  C   it's been (.) I never wanne be a single mum never
20  SW  m::: [m        ((eye-contact))
21  C        I now] know it's been hard but I work in Epping ((pseudonym))
22  SW  ( )
23  C   and I live in Castle Hill ((pseudonym)) so it's an hour an (.)
```

```
        whatever
        to get to work an hour to get home and then I've got my little
        one
        in school childcare (1.0) so it's a long day for him
24  SW  [= yeah
25  C      it's] a long day for me and by the time we both get home
        and I gotta cook dinner, I gotta cle[an
26  SW                                      =washing]
27  C   [do the
28  SW        cleaning]
29  C   washing put him in the bath by the time I've got him to bed
        it's nine o'clock and I haven't even sat down yet
30  SW  I know=and your mother is here to help you↓
31  C   =my mum's yeah she helps out a lot cause (.) I jus said to her
        the other day I just need to come nd spend two nights at your
        house
32  SW  mm
33  C   jus sit and relax a little bit(1.0)so I've got one more week to
        go
34  SW  one more week and then you are going for holiday↑Ye[ah↑
35  C                                                      oh]I
        wish=bye
36  SW  hhh bye
```

The second notable aspect of the interaction produced in this extract is the participants' "cooperative alignment of teller and listener" (David, 1999, p. 257) in that the customer initiates the narrative and the shop-owner shows her cooperative moves by joining the interaction particularly when it comes to the house chores, where both of them have a lot in common. In line 10, the shop-owner asks the customer if "=you're alone by yourself↑". The customer did not understand the way the shop-owner has formulated the question, due to the shop-owner's mispronunciation (mishearing) of the word "alone", which the customer would have heard as "allowed". Based on her own interpretation of the question and without explicitly announcing that a mistake has been made, the customer, in a complaining tone, produced an answer to the question "I'm not allowed to smoke too much, I already [tol" in line 11. The shop-owner, in an overlap, which simultaneously locates and resolves the trouble, repairs, in the form of an explicit correction, and says "I m]ean I mean your husband is on ho" in line 12. The customer instantly responds "he's in Europe" in line 15 with an overlap. She then goes on to provide accounts about the circumstances that worry her with her husband being away. She then begins to describe the consequences of it "it's been (.)" in line 19, but halts the production of this "turn constructional unit" (Sacks & Schegloff, 2007, p. 3) to insert the account "I never wanne be a single mom never". The shop-owner's placement and continuing function of the customer's account in line 20 "m:::[m" shows her sympathy and displays her understanding and more importantly, due to her habitus, her appreciation of the category

and what it might mean to be a “single mum” toward the customer’s hard work while her husband is away on business. The customer then begins to describe the consequences of being a single mom, “know it's been hard” in line 21, it's an hour an (.) whatever to get to work an hour to get home and then I've got my little one in school childcare” in line 23.

Unlike extract 5.7, where the customer was revealing her personal life (i.e., smoking without letting her husband know), which was not motivated by a supportive attitude by the shop-owner, in this extract, we can see a cooperative alignment of talk where both the shop-owner and the customer’s contributions were congruent and balanced with many instances of positive support and agreement about the objects (i.e., household chores) that they both experience in what Aston (1988) calls “solidarity affect”, in lines 26, 28 and 30. These aspects of the family identity element (Norris, 2011) occasionally included the “mother”, the housewife” identities, which are firmly rooted in the above-mentioned participants’ (women’s) habitus. In general, the customer and the shop-owner include a “common-sense knowledge component” (e.g., “yes” in line 16 and “I know” in line 30) as they construct categorical turns which are treated as “packaging devices” (Stokoe, 2012) that do not require further explanation.

Extract 5.9 is taking place when the shop-owner (the husband) is busy serving a customer’s needs. The initial part of this conversation consists of a routine greeting between the participants where the shop-owner and the customer exchange conventionalized greetings with each other.

Extract 5.9

SO: the shop-owner (the husband) C: a Persian-speaking customer

1 C Salam agha Reza
Hi Mr. Reza ((psyduneonm))
2 SO Salam khubi↑
hi how are you↑
3 C agha Reza lotfan ye (.) um 1 tokhmeye aftab gadroon um
Mr. Reza, can I get (.) um 1 packet of sunflower seeds um
(1.0)2ta tokhmeye(1.0)mesri va ye baste sigar Dunhill grey(2.0)20 taee
(1.0) 2 Egyptian sunflower seeds and a Dunhill 20 Pack, grey↑
4 SO =20 taee ma::: nadarim 25 taee darim↓
we don’t have a Dunhill 20 pack but we do 25
5 C 25 ta bede khi:::ali nist
give me the 25 one not a big deal
6 SO 25 taee bara rafe salamati behtare
the 25 one helps maintain your physical health
7 C Khiali nist
not a big deal ((suddenly saw a pack of the cigarette on the shelf right behind the shop-owner and says))
=oon 20 taee bebin↑
that one right there is a 20 pack see↑
8 SO ina 25 taee↓

```
          they're 25↓
9    C    =OK
```

The primary framework (Goffman, 1974) or the basic communicative activities (Bailey, 2000a) of the service encounter above include a) greetings (lines 1-2), and b) business negotiation (lines 3-9). Greetings, as "access rituals" (Goffman, 1971, p. 79), shift a transition to a period of heightened interpersonal access. In *Persia* (see Chapter 3), mainly among Persian-speaking customers, greetings typically take place when the customer enters the shop and passes by the cash-register unless the shop-owner is already busy serving another customer.

The second basic activity is the negotiation of the business transaction, which includes such elements as stating the price of the merchandise brought to the counter by the customer, or counting out change as it is handed back to the customer. While explicit verbal greetings and closings do not occur in every recorded encounter, each contains a verbal negotiation of the transaction. The negotiation of the business exchange can be long and full of adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) – involving requests for a product kept behind the counter (e.g., CDs, cigarettes), questions about a price, repairs (Schegloff et al., 1977), and requests or offers of a bag. Merritt calls these adjacency pairs "couplets," and gives a detailed structural flow chart (1976, p. 345) that shows the length and potential complexity of this phase of a service encounter.

There are a number of issues about identity in this extract that can be attributed to the participants. As can be observed, some identity categories (or elements) in the extract above are set (i.e., the customer, shop-owner identity), which takes on a more permanent form and which is present at most times in the foregoing interaction while other identity categories crop up in the course of service interactions. When examining the example above, it appears that the customer performs a change in identity from being a customer to being a "regular customer" and a "smoker" at the initial stage of the interaction, whereby a clear shift in alignment can be found. When the customer comes in, after greeting the shop-owner as pre-established or pre-allocated (Atkinson & Drew, 1979), he lists the items he needs in line 3 "Mr. Reza, can I get (.) um 1 packet of sunflower seeds um (1.0) 2 Egyptian sunflower seeds and a Dunhill 20 Pack, grey↑". While most of the merchandise in the shop are self-service items and the customers can have access to them without the help of the shop-owner, unless they need more information about the product, there are some items in this case like cigarettes or sunflower seeds that require the help of the shop-owner as the

items are positioned behind the cash-register where the shop-owner serves the customers. Therefore, due to his familiarity with the positioning of such items in the shop (i.e., his habitus), on his arrival, the customer directly goes to the cash register and asks the shop-owner for those items. On requesting those items, he points to the items and shows the shop-owner where the items are located. Although the identity of a "regular customer" here seems to be implicit, yet it is manifested through other modes of communication (i.e., pointing to the items, knowing where the items are located without having to ask the shop-owner).

The customer's higher-level action (i.e., negotiating the number of cigarettes in a packet with the shop-owner in lines 3-9) is an attempt to acquire a new practice because according to Norris (Norris, 2007, 2011) actions and practices can inform us about a social actor's identity. When we consider the statement "a Dunhill 20 Pack, grey↑", we can find that the talk makes a projection of the customer's historical development of a social identity from a regular customer to a "smoker". This "smoker identity" can be viewed as a temporary social identity which was invoked the moment the customer's identity of a "regular customer" switched to the type of the tobacco product he was after. This temporary smoker identity is displayed at three different levels (see Norris, 2007, p. 192) namely: *the general*, which is construed through social actions pertinent to smoking; *the continuous*, constructed through long-term actions, from when he started smoking up to now when he orders the particular type of Dunhill product, and the *immediate*, which is constructed through carrying out actions at the time of action. The fact that the customer is knowledgeable about the type of cigarette and that he knows how many cigarettes there are in a packet, even though the shop cannot provide him with a 20 pack, demonstrates how category-implicative descriptions (i.e., look, the one on the shelf is a 20 pack) function as basic features of members' methods for performing actions, to which the customer belongs. Such category work produces implied meanings that are ascribed to as common-sense knowledge, which is typically imbricated in the smooth progress of in situ activities.

The second point to make on the basis of the extract above refers to the "immigrant identity" which the interaction in lines 10-23 had set up. While the shop-owner (the husband) is busy preparing the order for the customer, the wife, who was busy fulfilling other customers' needs at the back of the shop, is approaching the counter and sees the customer:

Extract 5.10

Extract 5.10 (Translated) SW: Shop-owner's wife SO: Shop-owner C: Customer R: the researcher

```
10  C    salam Sara khanom
         hi Miss Sarah (pseudonym)
11  SW   Salam khubid↑
         hi how are you↑
12  C    chetoran baro bacheha↑
         how are the kids ↑
13  SW   elahi shokr shoma chetorin↑
         thank God how about you ↑
14  C    har rooz(.)ke cheshamoono baz mikonim mibinim hanooz inja hastim↓(.)
         every day (.) when we open our eyes and when we see that we are here, we thank God
15  SW   khodaro shokr
         thank God
16  C    migim khodaro 100 hezr martabe shokr
         we thank God 1000 times
17  SW   ba:::le vaghean↓
         ye:::s indeed
18  C    zendeheem (.)
         = we are alive (.)
19  SW   [salemim
         [we're ((both physically and mentally)) healthy (.)
20  C         too] keshvare khubi ham darim zendegi mikonim (.)
         we're living] in a good country
         baghiyasham(.) pool nadarim migim be jahannam↓
         and the rest is ((i.e. if you want to know more)) (.) we don't have any money, we tell ourselves who cares↓
21  SO   =pool mikhay chikar saret salamat
         what do you need the money for↑as long as you're healthy that's enough ((the noise of the swipe machine))
22  C    =hhh a:::re (.) (1.0)
         =hhh y:::es (.) (0.1)
         pool mikhayam koone miras khoraro gonde tar konim↓=hhh
         we don't need the money to make our legacy's asses' bigger ↓=hhh (all laugh))
23  R    hhh
         hhh
```

As soon as the customer saw the shop-owner's wife, they both take the time for how-are-you inquires. These inquiries, as discussed in the previous extracts, first exchange and then reinstate as if to lay emphasis on the interest in the other participant each one wishes to convey. Through this inquiry, they both seem to attempt to enter into each other's realm of the personal level, which is not uncommon between the shop-owners and their regular customers. When asked about her children, the shop-owner replied in line 13 by saying they are well and asked about his health. The customer replied by saying "Every day (.) when we open our eyes and when we see that we are here, we thank God", which is followed by an assessment on the shop-owner's part in line 17 "yes, indeed". The customer continues providing more accounts of why he is feeling happy "we're living in a good

country and the rest is (i.e. if you want to know more) (.) we don't have any money, we tell ourselves who cares↓". Interestingly, the shop-owner (the husband) who was busy serving the current customer, and who has now become a ratified participant (Goffman, 1981b), comments on the customer's account by saying "what do you need the money for, as long as you're healthy that's enough" in line 21. The shop-owner's account was acknowledged by the customer as a joke as shown in the customer's laughing. The customer's final utterance "hhh yes we don't need the money to make our legacy's backs bigger hhh" was a cooperative move toward the shop-owner's joke in the previous turn. However, the joke also performed a role of promoting intimacy between the shop-owner and the customer, which was intrigued by the shop-owner's friendly joke.

Extract 5.11

SO: Shop-owner (the husband) SW: Shop-owner's wife R: the researcher

24	SO	agha sedat dare zabt mishe bad sood mikonam ha↑
		hey man your voice is being recorded then I'll make a big profit ((all laughing))
25	C	na↓ agha goft eshkal nadare dige
		no↓ this gentleman said it's not a big deal
		((Both the shop-owner and the customer are busy bagging the items while grinning))
26	R	etefaghan behtare hhh
		Indeed I'm after such data
27	SW	[hhh
		[hhh
28	R	bara tahghighe man↓]
		for my research ↓]
29	SW	onvagt shoma bayad tarjome konid va bayad begin oon yani chi
		then you should translate his utterances and have to say what that word ((ass)) means
30	R	oonoo hala ye karish mikonim hhh
		I'll sort it out
31	SW	hhh
		hhh

Interestingly, in Persian, the elderly, mainly grandfathers and fathers, bequeath their children a legacy. However, in this extract, it seems that the customer is refusing to leave a legacy to his child/children. Before entering the shop, I saw the customer parking the taxi in front of the shop. When he entered the shop, he was wearing a taxi driver's uniform, revealing his professional social identity as a "taxi driver". Therefore, as a taxi driver, he might be struggling with financial problems here in Australia as an immigrant as can be implied in lines 20 and 22.

Furthermore, there is another dimension to the extract above that needs investigating, that of my identity "a researcher/translator". After the account the customer provides in line 22

regarding the legacy, where he uses a taboo word "ass" in front of the shop-owner's wife, the shop-owner (the husband) warns him that his voice is being recorded in line 24. This warning seems to occasion the shop-owner's request that the customer not violate the cultural taboo in the shop. The customer replied by saying "no↓ the gentleman said it's not a big deal", calling me a "gentleman". While I was observing their interaction at the cash-register and was standing nearby, I commented on the customer's account by saying "indeed, I am after such data" in line 26. This account refers back to when the customer entered the shop and I asked him if he minded being recorded. While laughing, he said he would not but would use taboo words, and I replied "that's not a big deal". My comment was overlapped with the shop-owner's wife laughter in line 27 where she provided another account "then you should translate his utterances and have to say what that word "ass" means". I replied by saying that "I'll sort it out", followed by another laugh from the shop-owner's wife. It is probably true to say that the participants including myself in this extract are making this or that identity relevant to them through talk "without necessarily naming it out loud". In other words, once a category is claimed or disavowed in an interaction, the social actors may be oriented to the interaction, which can, by turn, have an impact on the direction of the talk. Here, the shop-owner's wife is making relevant the identity of a researcher/translator for me and for the interaction. This may allow for the possibility that what the shop-owner's wife is doing here is not indicating what she thinks, but her utterance might be actually projected to do something (i.e., having the customer to avoid using taboo words).

The third and final activity of the encounter above, the closing, often includes the payment and formulaic exchanges: "See you later" and "Have a good day", or "be salamat" (take care). Frequently, the words used to close the negotiation of the business exchange also serve to close the entire encounter. However, it should be noted that, as indicated in Chapter 2 in Persian society, "certain communicative routines" (Gumperz, 1972b, p. 17) can be recognised among native Persian speakers that are often distinct. "*Taarof*" is one of those "communicative routines" which is central in the Persian interaction and which is seen to be a prerequisite for all communication by native speakers of Persian (see Beeman, 1986; Koutlaki, 2002). For instance, as Koutlaki (2002) postulates, in Iran it is common that the shop-owner or the assistant ostensibly refuse payment with the formulaic expressions "ghabeli nadare" (it's not worthy of you) as in utterance 33 of Extract 5.12 although it is not meant literally. Koutlaki goes on to argue that such a refusal ritual fulfils

a dual purpose: first, it saves the speaker's face since it offers an explanation of generosity. In addition, it enhances the customer's face in the sense that he/she is "presented as a person of high standing" (2002, p. 1753). In the following extract, as can be seen, the customer asks for the price and the shop-owner, without mentioning how much the customer should be paying, uses the formulaic expression "ghabeli nadare", which is not common when there is a non-Persian speaker involved. It should also be stressed that based on my observations during my fieldwork in the shop, the ritual expressions of "ghabeli nadare" is not common among every single customer but rather among those the shop-owner is intimate with. Here, the customer and the shop-owner are orienting their "ethnic" identity to each other. This view complements what Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) refer to as "constructing affiliations" in the context of metrolingualism. The "ghabeli nadare" expression is taken to be an example of an identity category in what Day (1998, p. 156) refers to as "linguistic ethnic group categorization". According to Day, this identity category can be made relevant in two ways namely "activity relevance" and "group relevance". During the course of the "shopping" activity in this extract, the shop-owner uses in interacting with his/her customers a cultural tool by which he/she organises his/her activities with them, which, simultaneously, casting them as members of the same social group, which based on my observations, such an offer might not arise when a non-Persian speaking customer is involved. As can be seen, and argued by Day, the shop-owner casts the customer as a certain linguistic ethnic group not by directly naming him a Persian but by some "oblique work" in his description which is termed as "special relevance" (Day, 1998, p. 155).

Extract 5.12

32	C	agha cheghdar mishe↑ sir how much should I pay↑
33	SO	ghabeli nadare↑ they're not worthy of you↑
34	C	khahesh mikonam you're welcome
35	SO	mishe $28 It comes to $28
36	C	befarmaeed(0.1) Khoda hafez there you go ((paying in cash)) (0.1) good bye
37	SO	mamnoon ghorbanet agha khodafez ((grabbing the amount from the customer)) thanks so much
38	SW	khodafez bye
39	C	agha khodafez ((to me)) sir bye
40	R	khodafez bye

The following scene is taken from an interaction between the shop-owners and a young lady in her late 20s, where an "ice cream" was the topic of discussion. Upon arrival, the customer greeted the shop-owners and went to pick out some ice creams from the freezer. Along with her, there were a young man, in his mid-20s, and two Persian speaking families including two children. According to the shop-owner, the couples with children have migrated to Australia and have been living in Australia for a long time but the young lady and the man were born in Australia from Persian parents. The families went to the back of the shop, but the lady was looking for an ice-cream in the freezer, which is located opposite to the cash-register where the shop-owners serve customers.

Extract 5.13

SW: Shop-owner's wife SO: Shop-owner FC: a female Customer R: the researcher

About the ice-cream: It is known as "Rose-Saffron Ice Cream" ((which is called BASTANI in Persian))

Ingredients: Milk, cream, sugar, rosewater, egg yolks, shelled pistachios (roughly chopped) and saffron

```
1   FC   cn I ge (.) um (1.0) last time you told me to get a certain
         ice cream↑= I can't remember which one it was (.)
         but it was yummy so [cn yu ((eye-contact, smiling while talking to the SO))
2   SO                       =what] colour it was↑
         ((the SO and his wife are serving another customer at the counter))
3   FC   I can't remember = you sa[id
4   SW                              de yell]owish one is de
         ((Persians can't pronoun "th" properly))
         (.) more popular de saffron ((the SW made an instant eye contact))
5   FC   =OK coz I wan one tha (.) it was really yummy
6   SO   =and this one yummy as well but if you're happy with the yellow
         one
         =take a yellow one↓((the shop-owner's busy serving another customer as well))
7   FC   =was it the yellow↑=how do I sup[po
         ((her voice is fading away as she is approaching the fridge where the ice creams are kept))
8   SO                                    wi]th saffron yeah
         ((the SO is handing a receipt to a customer))
         (1.0)it should be yellow or white [the first
9   SW                                     Yup]
10  SO   choice_↓
11  SW   yup (2.0)
```

When linking the utterances to the customer's actions of choosing her favourite ice-cream, she displays a regular and an ethnic customer identity. When the customer was busy choosing ice creams from the freezer, I approached her to ask if she minded being recorded (in Persian) but she stressed that her Persian is not good enough and that she would prefer to speak English. I rephrased my question and said to her I did not want to interview her

but to record her interaction at the cash-register, which she agreed to be recorded. As soon as she saw the types of the ice-creams in the fridge, she approached the shop-owners, who were busy serving two customers at different cash-registers, which are closely located to each other, and asked in line 1 “Cn I ge (.) um (1.0) last time you told me to get a certain ice cream↑=”. The customer is seeking information about the ice-cream she is looking for, which is similar to the ones (her habitus) she had bought when she visited the shop last time and provided an account for making the request “I can't remember which one it was (.) but it was yummy so [cn yu”. Since she is a regular customer, and perhaps she is familiar with the types of the ice cream she usually buys, she offers a series of accounts “a certain ice cream” and “yummy”. However, while busy serving another customer at the counter, and not finding the information in the request useful, the shop-owner narrowed down a range of possibilities in line 2 followed with an overlap “=what] colour it was↑”, which is grammatically ill-formed, turning the information-seeking back to the customer. The customer is trying to remember her favourite ice cream when she is cut short by the shop-owner’s wife, who was also busy serving a customer and who takes the role of a ratified bystander. In fulfilling the customer’s need, the shop-owner (the wife) takes a more generic approach and establishes her identity as a shop-owner by saying “de yell]owish one is de (.) more popular de saffron”. The shop-owner’s wife’s account is preferred by the customer in line 5 “ok” but the customer still wants the particular ice cream she had last time, the one that “was really yummy”, which can be implied as “give me the one I am after”. This time, the shop-owner responds to the customer’s request in line 6 “=And this one yummy as well but if you're happy with the yellow one =take a yellow one”. Here, not only did the shop-owner compress the sequence, which seems rather terse for identification of the item, but also he did not help the customer to identify the one she is after. The customer is having her doubts about the offer the shop-owner is providing and asks “=was it the yellow↑=how do I sup[po”, where the shop-owner replies “wi]th saffron yeah (1.0) it should be yellow or white”, followed by an overlap with the shop-owner’s wife “yup” in line 9.

In the extract above, the occasionality of the MCA apparatus (Hester & Hester, 2012) and particularly the occasionality of collections and categories is well documented. As can be observed, the customer’s account in line 1 is constructed as a request which inquires as to which of two categories of the ice-cream (i.e., the customer) (white and yellow) would prefer. This account provides a choice to be made between two categories of ice cream in

that selecting one of the categories would frame an appropriate method for completing the adjacency pair in line 5. In other words, the account is devised for an acceptance of one of the categories of the ice cream that are on offer namely the yellowish and the white, which the projected answer should be one which makes a choice between the two types of the ice cream. However, as her utterance in line 5 makes evident, the customer is still not convinced of the accounts the shop-owners are providing and therefore does not choose the two categories of the ice cream on offer. Rather, she insists on the one she had experienced last time, which can be heard as an alternative category of the two categories chosen by the shop-owners in their offer. The adjacency pair organization of the projected sequence in this extract is designed to incorporate at least two functions: offer is followed either by acceptance or rejection; her response to the shop-owner's accounts in lines 3 and 5 can be viewed as a rejection of the choice of the ice cream on offer. It should be noticed that here the customer is not rejecting the ice cream rather she is declining the choice of the ice cream she has been offered. She will purchase an ice cream (as she did) but based on her own terms not the ones offered by the shop-owners. The customer's alternative category of the ice cream which she will purchase could be inferred as a kind of challenge: a tension between the particular experience of a regular customer and an expert (i.e., the shop-owners).

In the second segment of her interaction in the shop, Extract 5.14, the young man approaches the young customer and asks her what she is getting for herself. The lady offered to buy him the ice cream she is buying but the young man declined to have one.

Extract 5.14

MC: male customer FC: a female Customer SW: Shop-owner's wife

```
12  MC  what are yu getting yuself  ((the M is approaching the L, who is standing near the cash
        register))
13  FC  =I'd be happy to have
14  MC  [no
15  FC    one of these]  ((showing the guy the ice cream))
16  MC  I'll be all right thank you
17  FC  I'm gonna get another one
18  MC  =no= no::: (.) no no I'm not having that trust me:::
        I don't wanna[touch it
19  FC                      you]don't even try it↑
20  MC  I'm not into it like I know what I'm in[to
21  FC                                          how do]you know↑
22  MC  =my life experience tells me what I know
23  FC  your life experience aint that good mate↓you're tw[:::elve
        (( FC is making fun of MC))

24  MC                                                   it is]that good
25  SW  (    )
26  FC  thank you
```

```
27  MC  despite what you wanne think
28  FC  [hhh
29  SW     cre]dit↑
30  FC  =savings pl[ease
31  SW             savi]ngs (13.0)↓
32  FC  thanks
```

Here, several mediated actions - gazing at the ice cream, choosing the item from the freezer, taking it to the counter, being in the queue - combine to create a recognizable pattern that can be interpreted as buying an ice cream, a social practice: a set of mediated actions that are categorized as a known way of performing and interacting in a social setting. The social practice of shopping in a Persian ethnic shop, for instance, is a way of accessing and making sense of a practice through the use of a mediational tool: the material artefacts as well as the semiotic systems (Wertsch, 1991) that make available for us meaningful words, gestures, gazes and so forth: in which case, the mediational means is the ice cream and the stocks of the interactional knowledge of the participants. This interaction happens in a real-time moment or site of engagement: a social space where practices come together along with mediational means to make a mediated action the focus of attention (e.g., shopping in a Persian shop).

As such, this extract illustrates how different levels of identity emerge in discourse (i.e., the ice cream, as a mediational tool, establishes a different identity for both of the participants). Both of the participants were born (according to the shop-owner) and grew up in Australia from Persian parents and therefore have access to some extent to very similar kinds of linguistic resources of, say, the shop-owners. Nonetheless, they both habitually situate themselves as different kinds of (i.e., ethnic) customers through their use of language. This category can be demonstrated through a wide range of linguistic markers, namely that of the use of "innovative quotative forms" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). According to Bucholtz and Hall, innovative markers allow for the possibility of "represented discourse; some forms may mark non-linguistic affective expressions as well" (p. 592). As can be seen from the data, after the man refuses to buy the ice cream in lines 14 and 16, the young lady insists by saying "I'm gonna get another one" (line 17) where he replies in line 18 "=no= no::: (.) no no I'm not having that trust me::: I don't wanna [touch it" followed by an overlap where she responds to his account "you]don't even try it↑" in line 19. In response to her question, to complete the adjacency pair, he says "I'm not into it like I know what I'm in[to". The man here indexes his youth identity through his use of the innovative quotative marker in this case "like", which is the well-established quotative marker. Interestingly enough, he presents a scenario where he could claim his

“matureness” through the account he provides after the quotative marker “like” “like I know what I’m in[to” in line 20. In the analysis of his speech, one can recognise the importance of demographic variables such as gender, race and class which can provide part of the picture. However, more can be displayed and said by considering other ways where this male customer positions himself and the female customer intersubjectively. To start with, by treating the customers (male and the female) as a member of almost the same age group, one can associate the importance of age with a shared social identity that is articulated through the use of the quotative marker. Secondly, a close attention to the interactional work the customers are performing sheds light on how through represented discourse (i.e., bringing other discourse inside the time or space of our own (Mannheim & Tedlock, 1995, p. 16)), they negatively evaluate each other. In other words, not only do the customers make critical evaluations of each other’s utterances- for example, the wording or attitude of the reported speaker-, but also align with each other, whether convergently or divergently. For instance, when the young lady asks how he knows he does not like the ice-cream, the young man provides an account where he brings in his personal experience to prove the lady that he knows what is good or bad for him while the lady rejects his account and replies “your life experience aint that good mate↓ you’re tw[:::elve”. Such instances of service encounters illuminate that how participants in social encounters change their footing and frame as well as their positions, which typically take place simultaneously, as the interaction progresses.

In the final segment of her interaction, while paying (line 33), the young lady tells a narrative of why she will have to return to the shop to buy some more ice creams. The customer goes on to talk about her relatives, who typically refuse to purchase ice creams while in the shop, but as soon as they get “in” the car, they would like to share what she is having, which she finds annoying (in line 35). When she comes to the end of her interaction with the shop-owners, interestingly she for the second time brings the man, who was over-hearer (Goffman, 1981b) to the conversation, where the shop-owner’s wife inserted a laugh, sharing her experience or sympathy with the customer in line 36.

Extract 5.15

FC: female Customer SW: Shop-owner’s wife SO: Shop-owner MC: male customer

```
33   FC   =you know what's gonna happen=everyone’s like
          no no I don't want any[and then
34   SO                          and then]you can’t get anything yeah↑
35   FC   we get in the car and they’ll all be like OK
36   SW   =hhh
```

```
37   FC   I want some
38   SO   =then you will be back
39   FC   [It always happens to me
40   SO    you will]be back get another one for yourself[because
41   FC                                                  =I   did   la:::st
         time]
42   SW                                                            .heh
         .heh]
43   FC   it was so annoying=Aron did you hear that↑
44   MC   =what↑
45   FC   you can't have any of my bastani
46   MC   =I'm not touching yur bastani =who wants yur bastani ↓
47   FC   you know you will ((leaving the shop))
48   MC   I'm not touching em
49   FC   Aron let's go
50   MC   hhh
51   FC   let's go
52   MC   why that way
53   FC   you're gonna be talking for anything
54   SO   (  )
```

Since both customers were born in Australia and have been speaking English upon their arrival in the shop, thus code-switching can be viewed as a marked choice. In this case, besides the argument the two are involved in and the account the young lady provides, the code-switching refers to Persian food (i.e., ice cream (bastani)). Both have inserted the Persian word referring to the same field (food) (De Fina, 2007) in their interaction. This insertion is not accidental and is highly symbolic. It functions as the purpose of claiming Persian ethnicity on the subject of the Persian vital area in the life of the shop (i.e., food). By repeating the Persian term for the ice cream, the customers are emphasising the Persianness of this area and hence the traditional character of the shop. In addition, arguably, the significance and emphasis on Persianness in this segment plays an important role in the construction of a "collective ethnic identity" because of the type of food they were after and of the nature of the shop as a Persian community (see Chapter 3). Consequently, the social practices pertinent to the shopping can be seen as powerful resources and sites of engagement for constructing identity.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter begins its focus on a particular section of the instances of interaction in the Persian ethnic shop (i.e., the reference to identity work) as the motivation for a wider analysis of the discursive events shaping customers' identity in the shop. The findings suggest that central to the context of the shop is the constitution of ethnic activities into a number of separate and distinct categories each distinguished by category-bound activities and category-based predicates. However constrained, partly, by the existing requirements

and the interactional knowledge of the shop, as well as participants taken-for-granted understandings of existing service encounter practices, the institutional categories and their attributes are non-essentialist, and thus are routinely being redefined, reshaped, invoked and exploited for the local and situated business at hand; a process that primarily occurs within, and is subject to, the properties of talk-in-interaction. A fundamental outcome of this process is that Persian and non-Persian speaking customers orient to corresponding category identities (e.g., customer, shop-owner), which give rise to the performance of certain category-related behaviours. This finding is a significant contribution to the field.

Furthermore, the shop-owners themselves, in their interactions with their customers, and with each other, also claim certain identities (e.g. housewife, father, institutional authority) which work to reinforce or realign the disciplinary orientations of the customers. The situated and occasioned nature of the service encounter categories and their attributes lead to a certain degree of tension between, and among, interactional orders. Amongst what could be described as a context of alterity (Candlin, 2002a), the account the shop-owners and the customers provide play a vital role by facilitating, at least momentarily, a required level of intersubjectivity.

Last but not least, MCA by tradition sees identity as "an indexical, local and occasioned matter, shot through with speakers' interests" (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998, p. 195), rather than an internalized and psychological reality. Thus, MCA is interested in the situated relevance of identity and its outcomes for "the local projects of speakers" (p.195). Moreover, it views identity as an appeal to common-sense knowledge and is interested in how this is invoked, challenged by participants as a resource for identity work. However, a speaker's interest and their normative knowledge is necessarily an embodiment of their habitus, and furthermore, the situated and occasioned identity work constantly occurring throughout an individual's life contributes to the ongoing reformation of the habitus. Such a view, which according to Blommaert (2005a) rejects a view of the sedimented structures of the habitus as static, helps alleviate the theoretical conflict between subjectivity and situatedness.

Customers (social actors) in the Persian ethnic shops engage in different practices in which they enact, project, and negotiate identities of various kinds and at different levels: from situational identities (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 95) such as that of shop-owner and customer to wider social identities such as those related to ethnic or gender categories. For example, given the nature of the shop, where it is run by a couple, in interaction, customers often

make relevant their gender identity as can be seen in Extract 5.8. As observed in the extracts above, identities may combine with each other to the extent that a customer, for instance, performing, claiming, or discussing an identity as a smoker may, simultaneously, claim an identity as a Persian.

In sum, as discussed in the previous chapters, in MDA, as a framework for the current study, the mediated action is taken to be the unit of analysis, which emphasizes the importance of "social actors taking actions in a site of engagement" (Norris, 2007). As observed in this chapter, many mediated actions that the participants in the shop have carried out in part have led to the identity construction of the participants, both implicitly and explicitly. When utilized as a framework, MDA has much to offer particularly when examining the intricacy of identities in interaction.

Chapter 6: Participation Framework and Footing

6.1 Introduction

Within an interaction, getting a sense of one's *place* or *voice* is fraught with complexities. Previous research has demonstrated that social actors' status (i.e., the roles of the speaker and hearer) within an interaction is not simply met with consensus but rather is negotiated, challenged or claimed. Participants in a social encounter, therefore, must arrive at a definition of the situation (Goffman, 1974) when interacting with one another. In service interactions, for instance, in understanding how social actors can shift from transactional talk (i.e., business-oriented talk) to that of the interpersonal, one needs to develop an understanding of the definition of the situation. A participation framework emerges within this frame, which highlights the relationship participants take up during an interaction. Tannen and Wallet (1993) define an interaction frame as a strip of what is happening at a specific moment, and this assists the interpretation of discourse and expectations of possible meanings.

The construct *frame* as utilised by Goffman (1974) refers to one's understanding of what transpires in a given situation, (i.e., the "structure of experience individuals have at any moment of their social lives" (13)), thus foreshadowing the complexities between actors, their roles and other primary participants. These expectations of the world are drawn from our experiential knowledge that we have accumulated throughout our interactions with others, which roughly connote Bourdieu's (1977b) notion of habitus.

Erving Goffman has made many significant contributions to our understanding of human interaction. Goffman's extensive work on face-to-face interaction has convincingly demonstrated the delicate ways in which context is constantly being renewed and reconstructed in interaction. It has provoked inquiry into different alignments and roles that social actors ascribe to one another in social engagement when they come into contact. For Goffman, the practices of participation, where social interactions are constructed, take priority in the analysis of interactions rather than language or speech. Accordingly, he conceptualises participation in terms of contact not "involvement" (Sidnell, 2009). For Goffman, each strip of interaction, each moment, devises a restricted system in which there is "a single, albeit moving, focus of visual and cognitive attention" (Goffman, 1964, p. 135). These non-verbal markers allow for the possibility of understandings of the occurrences of what goes on in an interaction and developments of talk. Of these non-

verbal markers, gazes and body orientation, eye-contact, nodding etc. carry a proportion significance of meaning. For instance, by virtue of a social actors' gaze, one can observe whether they are involved in a joint activity or a single one. Pervious research (Tannen, 1985; Tannen and Wallet, 1993) has demonstrated that participants identify frames of interaction not only by linguistic markers (i.e., the words produced), but also by non-linguistic signals – that is what Gumperz (1982) refers to as "contextualisation cues". However, it should be emphasised here that Goffman maintains that "linguistics provides us with the cues and markers through which such footings become manifest, helping us to find our way to a structural basis for analysing them" (p. 157).

As Goffman (1974) asserts, changes in frame can be signalled through what he calls a *footing shift*. Significantly, there are times in social interaction in which participants attempt to shift their perspective or alignment they take up with one another. Levinson (1988) observed that footing is the trajectory of a speaker's stance towards an utterance. It, therefore, describes a social actor's alignment in connection with an utterance produced by another primary participant[1]. A shift in footing can affect the social distance arrangement and prior stance among participants.

This line of inquiry, which investigates how subtle changes in social actors' position, role or stance may reshape or affect the direction of the ongoing talk, is a useful approach to gaining a finer understanding of interaction in *Persia*. This Chapter therefore addresses these concerns while focusing on the interactions in *Persia*. It analyses the interactions between the shop-owners (a couple) and their customers' discourse in the shop. It, therefore, attempts to explicate the role of participation frameworks, which participants (the speaker and the recipient) jointly display to each other's performance. This signals their definition of the situation where the participants interact and form a community of practice in lieu of exclusively adhering to the merchant and customer relationship.

6.2 Mediational Means and Participation Framework

As discussed in previous chapters, the unit of analysis of the current study is Mediated Discourse. An MD analysis centres its attention on the social actors as they are acting in a *site of engagement*. For any action to take place in a social setting, the social actor (in any culture) should be well-equipped with mediational tools which he/she should use in order to perform that action. These mediational tools have a history that are embedded and

[1] For the key elements of Goffman's Participation Framework, see Chapter 2

understood through the social actor's practice, which otherwise lead to confusion, dissimilarity, and misunderstanding. The following extract is of a kind.

Extract 6.1

SW: Shop-owner's wife C: an Anglo-Australian Customer (in her early 30s) CD: Customer's daughter

```
1   C    hey (0.3) who was that↑
2   SW   (0.6) uh (.) tomato paste ((no eye contact trying to tidy things up at the counter))
3   C    =Oh OK
4   SW   =yeah (0.3)
5   C    that's a lot of tomato paste
6   SW   =yeah
7   C    hhh[hhh
8   SW       because]the Iranian people using a lot
         ((eye contact and gazing at the customer))
9   CD   ((making noises))
10  C    o:::h right  (( having a cursory look at her daughter))
11  CD   ((making loud noises))
12  SW   =food
13  C    =yeah
14  SW   for (.) uh Persian food
15  C    =yeah
16  SW   =y:::eah
```

In this extract, the interaction is taking place between the shop-owner (the wife) and a customer, a lady in her early 30s, Anglo-Australian. According to the shop-owners, they have known her for about three years and the customer often visits the shop but is regarded as more of a window-shopper. The customer usually comments on the product items and on customers' purchases or makes enquiries regarding their shopping experiences. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to talk to the customer who provided me with some accounts of her regular visits to the shop. She informed me that her shopping experiences in Coles, Woolworths, or IGA excludes interpersonal interactions with the shop assistants: "All you can do is to put the items you have purchased in the trolley and leave the shop as nobody wants to talk to you. Here, in *Persia*, although they are busy, they have a word with you, ask about your daily activities etc". The customer revealed that the shop-owner (the wife) often provides her with Persian cuisine. The customer has an eight-month-old daughter, with whom the shop-owners play and teach her some Persian. For instance, in one of my observations, the shop-owners were teaching the daughter to clap while speaking Persian with her. Interestingly, the daughter was imitating the shop-owners' instructions (i.e., clapping).

One can notice that there was no uptake by the shop-owner in relation to the customer's question in line 2. As can be shown, because the shop-owner knows that the customer is a

“busybody” and that the customer is curious to know about the things going on in the shop, the shop-owner may not have wanted to reveal the person’s identity and change the “who” question to a “what” question. This is evidenced by a pause and a repair (uh) in line 2, where the shop-owner provides an irrelevant response. This moment of “trouble” may suggest that the shop-owner is either reluctant to provide a response to the customer’s request as is evidenced in her non-verbal actions (i.e., maintaining no eye-contact) or she might have misheard the question.

In the foregoing scene, the deconstruction of the speaker suggested by Goffman in *footing* illustrates the power of an analytical framework that places its attention on the “dialogic interplay of separate voices with reported speech” (Goodwin, 2007, p. 18). In Extract 6.1, the shop-owner provided an account in which she quoted something that the *Iranian people* frequently do. Thus, the interaction is about five cans of “tomato paste” that a Persian, male speaking customer had bought, while the female customer was observing. After the male customer left the shop, the female customer commented on the amount of tomato paste the customer had purchased (lines 2-8). However, in response to the customer’s surprise in line 5 “that's a lot of tomato paste”, the shop-owner offers an account where it gives an impression that the amount of tomato paste the Iranian people use is taken as typical in line 8. Who is speaking in line 8? Arguably and intuitively, the voice that is heard is the shop-owner’s. However, she is referring to something that the Iranian people consume within their cultural practice. The shop-owner is both quoting the talk of other Iranian people and taking up a stance toward the customer’s comment. To some extent, the shop-owner (the current account-provider) and the Iranian people are both “speakers” of what is earlier referred to in line 8, even though in a different cultural perspective and understanding. The theoretical framework underpinned in *footing* for what Goffman called the “Production Format” (Goffman, 1981a, p. 18) of an utterance offers a powerful lens not only for decomposing the “speaker” but also for investigating how speakers position themselves vis-à-vis each other in interaction.

In terms of the categories identified by Goffman, the shop-owner is the *Animator*, the party who uses her voice in order to utter this strip of talk. Nonetheless, the *Author* of this speech, the party who actually produced the phrase (who used “a lot of tomato paste) in line 8, are the *Iranian people* who are not present at the moment during this interaction. Here, it is safe to say that the *Iranian people* are held responsible both as the *author* and as the *principal*, the people who are *socially* and *culturally* accountable for carrying out that

action (i.e., "buying a lot of tomato paste") performed by the utterance and perhaps the main source of that speech.

Goffman sees the speaker's talk in interaction as an entire theatre, where they are put on stage. The shop-owner, in informing the customer that the Persian speaking customer did not buy "a lot of tomato paste" and that it is not a laughing matter, as evident in line 7, is actually putting the Iranian People on stage as *animating* them as a *Figure* (Goodwin, 2007, p. 20) (see Figure 15). Furthermore, through her phrase in line 8, the shop-owner displays her own position, constructing her talk as something to be taken seriously through her eye-contact and her gaze.

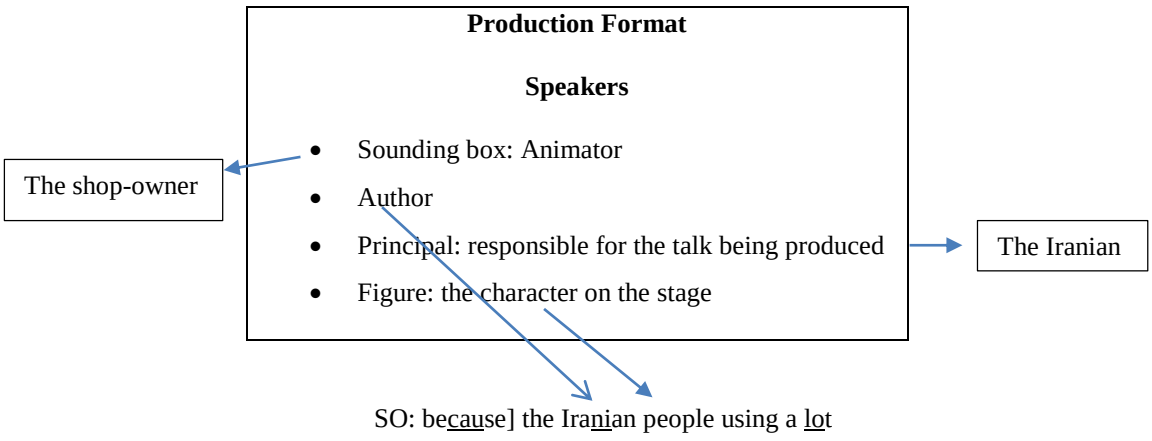

Figure 15: Production Format of Extract 6.1

Additionally, after the shop-owner's account of why the previous customer had purchased "a lot of tomato paste", the customer in line 17 (see Extract 6.2) provides a narrative in which she refers to a TV show on an Australian national channel called "Food Safari". Perhaps this change of *footing* in the customer's account is due to her lack of knowledge of Persian culture with a complex network of expectations regarding the use of tomato paste and the activities (i.e., how much is "a lot of?"). The examination of the larger food discussion taking place demonstrates that particular competence in the domain of discourse. This involves not only knowledge about the food being discussed, but also the ability to recognise the food type, as well as specific practices for making expertise in this subject matter (Goodwin, 1986a) which is evident moment by moment in the talk the participants produce.

As can be observed, the utterance "a lot of tomato paste" has a history in both the shop-owner's and the customer's habitus as both are progressively understood in terms of the

when, how and how much to use in their food along with the other mediational means, amounting to structures of expectations or knowledge structure (Tannen, 1985) concerned with a particular item in the shop. Much of what can be understood from mediational tools, therefore, does not actually need to be unpacked but rather is embedded in the knowledge of the participants engaged in interaction.

The upshot of the above discussion is the customer's subsequent misunderstanding about Persian culture and its distinction between a type of rice and the way rice is cooked (Tahdig). This has, therefore, brought about non-alignment with the shop-owner's account in line 34. For this, we now return to the narrative the customer produced about a show called "Food Safari". In this particular episode of the interaction, the participants are initially standing at the counter and talking about the food. The customer's daughter is also sitting on the counter.

Extract 6.2

```
17  C    (1.0) actually, I saw um (0.4) ((the CD is making noises))
         this show called food safari
18  SW   =aha
19  C    =they go all around the world ((gaze))
20  SW   aha
21  C    they had one on Persian food ((gaze))
22  SW   a:::h
23  C    =an[d
24  SW       OK]
25  C    they said yeah they would they would she said that um (0.1)
         tomato paste was a big th[ing
26  SW                             =yes]
27  C    yeah and rice
28  SW   rice
29  C    the special rice they they
30  SW   Basmati
31  C    nah it goes dah uh hard down the bottom
32  SW   (.) Tahdig
33  C    I don't know
34  SW   =yeah
35  C    =yeah
```

The customer in line 25 acknowledged that the Food Safari broadcast had also referred to the constant and frequent use of tomato paste in Persian cuisine. Furthermore, in line 27, the customer added another item, rice, which is one of the staple foods among Persians. Here, the customer confused a type of rice, Basmati in line 30, with a type of dish in line 32. The customer in line 33 does not align with the shop-owner due to her lack of knowledge of this particular type of dish, which is very common among Persians. The

customer's different knowledge schema structure (i.e., her set of expectations about this particular type of dish, the mediational tool in MDA) has suddenly shifted the frame "talking about an ethnic dish" to the frame "misunderstanding". Had the customer's schema included (or seen the *Tahdig*) the information that Persians are in the habit of making *Tahdig* with rice, this change of *footing* might not have occurred. Thus, this lack of knowledge about a dish has led to confusion which is evidenced from lines 30 to 35, where the shop-owner is informing the customer that the customer is talking about *Tahdig*, a type of dish but not a type of rice; the customer did not regard the shop-owner's account as convincing. Thus, what on the surface seem to be moments and examples of the same activity (i.e., talking about a dish) are viewed as very different when they are understood as serving different frames (cultural perspectives).

In dealing with the customer, the shop-owner, therefore, shifts from one register to another. In the aforementioned excerpt, the shop-owner, who is culturally competent and knowledgeable about the item of which the customer is talking as a result of the nature of her work and of her mental schema, shows how the register shifts from listening to the customer to informing the customer. Thus, the shop-owner provides an account in which she makes the distinction between Basmati and the *Tahdig*. In doing so, the shop-owner must talk differently to the customer, who is culturally unaware of the items and their use.

In this script, two often conflicting frames are evident: a business frame and an informing frame. Activities that on the surface seem the same can lead to different consequences and interpretations. For instance, because the shop-owner is aware that the customer perhaps does not want to buy the Basmati rice, she just provides an account to raise the customer's awareness of the differences and thus does not explain in detail the difference as in lines 38 and 46 in Extract 6.3. However, the outcome may have been different if the same customer had intended to buy the Basmati rice. If a non-Persian speaking customer desired to know more about an item, based on my observations, both shop-owners would provide them with sufficient information, which shifted the frame to a role associated with business consultation with the customer. In the first instance (i.e., giving advice), the shop-owner is interpreting that sequence to focus on something else and in the second (i.e., transacting business) the shop-owner is adhering to a pre-set sequence of events in the shop (the basic communicative activities in the service encounter).

Interestingly, in line 38, the shop-owner has actioned the need to make a move and provided further accounts of what the Iranian people tend to purchase with respect to food.

She names two items, rice and tea, that are important to Persians regardless of the cost (in line 38) and then begins to further explain (in line 40) why they are selling a lot of rice and tea. Providing the customer with such information can be taken as a sign that the shop-owner does not assume that the customer is able to recognise the items important to Persians. Furthermore, it specifies the exact parameters of the shop-owner's cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985) about the staple foods among Persians. It suffices to say that if the customer had recognised the staple foods or had made a distinction between a type of rice and a dish, the further identification being provided by the shop-owner would have not been necessary.

```
Extract 6.3

36   SW   (.) yeah the (.) Iranian people they really care about two
          things
          that does doesn't matter how expensive↓
37   C    =yeah
38   SW   rice and tea↓
39   C    oh al:::right yeah (.) a:::ha
40   SW   that's why we have we are selling a l[ot
41   C                                          ye]ah
42   SW   of ri[ce
43   C         a:::]ha
44   SW   many different um brand b[ut
45   C                              yeah]
46   SW   is all Basmati ↓
47   C    ye:::ah oh OK yeah =my dad used to bring in Basmati
```

All of these phenomena so far together have provoked a demonstration of how presenting precise knowledge of a particular mediational tool, in this case in the shop-owner's and the customer's accounts about a type of rice and *Tahdig*, which is embedded in their mundane practices, is being used to analyse and understand the talk produced and to display to what extent the participants are culturally competent. In fact, it would seem that the world of "food" within which the participants' accounts are situated is a field of two clashing worlds namely knowledge and unfamiliarity. In essence, the rice, tea and *Tahdig* has provided the participants with a small world of culture that has a significant bearing on some of the customers, including myself as an observer of the interaction, involved in the accounts. Furthermore, the analysis has contributed to the illumination of exchange of information (leading to learning) which is driven as the participation frameworks and the collateral social relations of the social actors are contested and taken up in the moment-to-moment unfolding actions of *Persia*.

While the shop-owner and the customer were actively discussing the Persian food mentioned above, a male customer (Australian, in his late 40s) entered the shop. He directly went to the back of the shop, without greeting the shop-owners, unlike Persian speaking customers, and picked up a box of dried lime[1] and took it to the counter. As the shop-owner was talking to the customer, the shop-owner's husband, who was upstairs having lunch, approached the counter with the greeting "yes man↑" in line 48 (Extract 6.4) to serve the male customer. Concurrently, a new customer approached the counter with some new items to which the shop-owner (the husband) is now serving. The shop-owner's wife, therefore, ended up serving the Australian male customer, with the analysis below.

Extract 6.4

SO: shop-owner C: an Anglo-Australian Customer (in her early 30s) CD: Customer's daughter MC: Male customer

```
48  SO  yes man↑
49  MC  um (.) can you tell me how much they are please↑
        ((a customer approaches and the SO is now busy with him))
50  SO  6 dollars
51  MC  (.) OK (.) I got (  )
52  C   ((clearing her throat)) ((she is now holding her daughter and watching the SO and the MC))
53  CD  making noises ((looking at her mum))
        ((The TV is on and there's a program on in Persian))
54  MC  0.8) um (.) can I give you credit card for those please↑(.)
        and then I'll buy last I'm down to my last dollars
55  SO  =credit card i[s ((SO is pointing to the sign which says if purchased below $10
        the customer would be charged by $2 extra))
56  MC                 oh] how much was it ↑=oh no no forget it
57  SO  =7:90
58  C   =it's all right it's all right
59  SO  (0.1)((scanning the item) sorry(.)thank you very m[uch ((opening the cash
        register))
60  C                                                  there]'s an ATM next
        door
        (.)just out the door↑
        ((MC suddenly looks at her, who is standing on his right - her voice is fading))
61  MC  oh OK
62  C   yeah hhh
63  MC  oh yeah which b[ank↑
64  C                  Common] Wealth bank
65  MC  oh Ok thank you
66  SO  =thank you very much
67  MC  I gotta get ( ) [
68  SO                  have a nice evening]
69  C   hhh
70  SO  by bye
```

[1]Dried limes are limes that have lost their water content after having been exposed to a majority of their drying time in the sun. They are used, whole, sliced or ground, as a spice in the Persian dishes. Originating in the Persian Gulf, hence the Persian name "*limoo amani*" (Omani limes), dried limes are popular in cookery across the Middle East.

In Extract 6.4, the customer needs to pay by credit card in line 54 “can I give you credit card for those please↑(.) and then I’ll buy last I’m down to my last dollars”. However, based on my observations and a note displayed at the counter which says if the amount of purchase is below $10, the customer would have to pay in cash; otherwise, they would be charged by $2 extra. Therefore, the shop-owner in line 55 (by his show of hand) reminds the customer of the charge imposed with an overlap in which the customer changed his mind about paying by credit card and decided to pay in cash instead as he forgot he had some cash in one of his pockets. As the interaction between the shop-owner and the male customer continued, the customer (with the daughter) observed the interaction. Here, in terms of the categories developed by Goffman, the shop-owner and the male customer are ratified participants, who may be considered principal speakers. However, the female customer is an unratified (bystander) participant, who has no bearing on the interaction or the ratified participants involved as the ratified participants (the shop-owner and the male customer) did not select her as principal addressed recipient of the interaction. Nonetheless, because the female customer lives nearby and is aware of an ATM machine near the shop, she attempts to inform the male customer that there is an ATM machine nearby. This feature of the female customer’s comment here is referred to as “byplay” (Goffman, 1981a, p. 9) as shown in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16: Byplay

In discussing the organisation of listener participation in conversation, Goffman (1981b) maintains that participants who do not officially hold the floor may interrupt their "evaluative expression of what they take to be occurring" through "asides, parenthetical remarks and even quips, all of whose point depends upon their not being given any apparent sequence space in the flow of event" (Goffman, 1981b, p. 29; M. H. Goodwin, 1990). As can be seen in this extract, although the byplay technically overlaps the shop-owner's (the principal) ongoing talk, it has been produced in such a way in order not to intrude upon it. It is uttered with lowered volume as the customer's voice was fading and both the shop-owner and the male customer showed a particular spatial organization of gesture and gaze (M. H. Goodwin, 1990) or to what Gumperz (1982) would have referred to as "contextualization cues". After producing the byplay, I observed that the female customer had angled her head towards the ratified participant, the male customer, so as not to infringe upon his privacy, thus providing an alignment between her and the male customer, her principal addressed recipient, along with the shop-owner. Despite the fact that the female customer was a bystander with no official role a minute previously, she has now become a ratified participant, who officially holds the floor and who comments on the continuing interaction. In addition, the response turns which subsequently develop between the female customer and the male customer provide unity for the interaction which allows for the continuation of their action. For instance, when the female customer informs the male customer of an ATM in the vicinity of the shop, the customer takes up the offer and asks "which bank?" in line 63 where the female customer responds by an overlap "Common] wealth bank" in line 64. This theme (the question associated with the type of the bank) is fitted and is expanded into a typical talk where the male customer has now been positioned as the recipient of the response and where he moves his eye-gaze from the shop-owner. In considering providing a response to the female customer's question, the male customer counts her as a ratified participant and continues conversing with her.

The placement of byplay during an interaction can halt the progress of a particular discourse between participants. This example of byplay in interaction offers an instance of different directions discourse may take. In the example above, the commentary becomes the principal focus for talk on the floor, in which both parties (the female and male customers) have successfully participated in the byplay. This sheds light on the fact that even though disruption of the ongoing talk may be possible, as observed above, both of the

participants have worked together to continue non-intrusive commentary (see M. H. Goodwin, 1990).

6.3 Alignment and non-alignment in institutional and non-institutional social action

The following excerpt will investigate the specific directions and kinds of shifts in role alignments that occur in interactions in *Persia* and their social effects. Like almost all of the Persian speaking customers, the customer in Excerpt 6.5, a young male in his early 30s, after greeting the shop-owner (the husband) went to the back of the shop (the backstage) and picked out the items he liked and brought them to the counter.

Extract 6.5

SO: Shop-owner C: A Persian-speaking customer (in his early 30s)

```
1   C   salam khubi shoma↑
        how are you ((gazes at the SO))
2   SO  ghorbane shoma(.)
        thank you ((quick eye contact as he's busy with the purchase))
        khanom↑kocholoo↑
        how are your wife and the baby
3   C   hafteye dige miresan↓
        they will arrive ((in Sydney)) next week↓
4   SO  (.)shoma alan tanhayee dige na↑
        you're alone now aren't you ((gazing at C and grinning))
5   C   are   hh[h
        yes I am hh[h
6   SO          pas] hamine rango root baz shode
                so that's why you look great
7   C   =are hhh (.) sakhte↓ (3.0)
         yes it's made me look great
```

The initial part of this interaction consists of a routine greeting between the participants where the customer initiates the move. In greeting back to the customer, the shop-owner, however, selects to be more specific about the customer's family's well-being in line 2. The representative case of such personal communication is what has been referred to as "phatic communion" (Malinowski, 1923), defined as "a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words" (p. 315). Malinowski further elucidated that the functional aspect of such talk is to "to establish bonds of personal union between people brought together by the mere need of companionship" (p.316). Such phatic talk, known as small talk (J. Coupland, Coupland, & Robinson, 1992), is an active way by which the participants in my data, based on my fieldwork, in their service encounters attend to the relational aspects of interactions. Interestingly, the customer in line 3 opens up to the shop-owner that his wife and his baby, whose gender was not identified, are both returning to Sydney next week. The shop-owner, in line 4, asks the customer whether he is

living alone now, given that his family is away. The customer responds “Yes I am” in line 5. In response, the shop-owner, however, makes a joking remark to the customer in line 6 “so that’s why you look great”. The shop-owner’s remark was acknowledged as a joke as the customer provided a supportive uptake in his laughing and the account he offered in line 7 “it’s made me look great”. Here, the customer’s laughing and his utterance built up closeness and promoted solidarity and familiarity between the participants, which was motivated by the shop-owner’s friendly joke. From this example, we can see a cooperative alignment of talk in which both social actors’ contributions were harmonious with many positive uptakes.

The interaction develops as the customer switches the topic to the status of the Australian dollar these days. As discussed in the previous chapters, one of the services that these ethnic shops assist their customers with is currency exchange and international money transfer. For instance, based on my observations during my fieldwork, most Persian speaking customers have had a short chat about the status of dollar with the shop-owner (mainly with the husband). The participants spoke of the sanctions which have been imposed (by the United Nations) for the shop-owners to do momentary exchange where the Persians have to apply for a permit in order to transfer money in and outside Australia. As a result, the shop-owner, where I was doing my fieldwork, had decided to cease the business of money transfer. Yet, there were occasions when the customers made enquiries about the dollar’s status irrespective of the shop-owners’ unwillingness to discuss the topic for the time being and ultimately to transfer money to Iran in general.

Extract 6.6

8 C dollar be koja reside↑
any updates on the price of dollar↑
9 SO bazar kharabe felan (.) (1.0)
the price of dollar is currently fluctuated ((busy checking the item and a quick eye contact))
3750 be foroosh mirese vali parirooz 3200-3250 foroosh rafte
it’s sold 3750 but the day before yesterday it was transacted about 3200 – 3250
10 C =Sobahat 3055 mikardan↓
they were talking about 3055
11 SO too in joor jaryana (.)harf ziad mizanan↓
in a situation of this kind, people are constantly talking about it ((stops checking the purchase and gazes at C))
vali onchzaee ke(.)too bazar(.)vajood dasht
but apparently what was observed in the market
kharid(.)3200 ta 3600 balatar narft↓(.)froosham az 3750 balatar naraft↓(.)
it was purchased 3200 and didn’t go up to 3600 and it didn’t jump to 3750
Ghabl az inke barzar baste beshe omad paeen 3400
((starts checking the items again)) before the market closed down it came down from 3400 to 3450
ta 2700/800 kharidari shod
and it was purchased 2700/800

12 C =aha(3.0) ozashoon kharabe↓ hhh
I see ((nodding his head showing an agreement)) the government's situations are getting worse hhh
hala chikar daran mikonan di[ge-
now what they've been doing
13 SO na] hala yeki mige agha be 7 ta ham mirese↓
((quick eye contact)) no] now people are saying it will get to 7000
(.) har chizi emkan pazire↓
anything possible
14 C aha
I see
15 SO =bastegi dare tahrima chegadar feshar biyare va bastegi
it depends on how much pressure the economic sanctions can impose
va bastegi dare ina ta key moghavemat konan↓(.)
and on how long they (the government) can withstand the pressure applied
har chegadar toolani tar beshe(.)bishtar feshar miad be mardom↓
the longer the sanctions ((quick eye contact)) the more pressure they puts on the people
16 C aha
I see
17 SO =chon polle ma arzeshi nadare↓(.)
because our currency devalues
tabieye=arzeshe poole m:::a↑ hatman dare khodesho neshoon mide
there's no doubt about it the value of our currency is now showing itself
benaf nist ke hey bekhad sooti dade beshe↓
so it's not a laughing matter ((bags the purchase))

This segment illustrates a departure from the phatic talk in Extract 6.5 above as the encounter develops into the shop-owner supplying information about the dollar status among Persians. The customer, on the other hand, who seems to have a close relationship with the shop-owner, shifts from the role of friend to that of customer. Therefore, this segment positions the customer as an information-seeker and the shop-owner as an information-provider. This is triggered by his question in line 8 "any updates on the price of dollars?" This question establishes the ground for a narrative to occur and allows the shop-owner to fully update the customer on the most recent changes. However, a shift of alignment into the shop-owner-customer roles also takes place. For instance, when the shop-owner in line 9 gave the customer the prices of dollars (both the sale and the purchase prices), the customer took up a defensive stance and questioned the shop-owner by his response "They were talking about 3055" in line 10. Here, the customer's pronoun use "they" may suggest distancing himself from performing the action done by the original utterance of that talk.

Unlike the previous frame, in Extract 6.5, in which the shop-owner fostered a feeling of solidarity with the customer, here the shop-owner behaves in a way that perhaps created some friction with the customer, which aligns with Tannen and Wallat's (1993) assertion that each frame brings with it affordances and constraints that "potentially conflict with the demands of other frames" (p.211). However, there is more to this shift of footing. In

providing an account in response to the customer's challenge, the shop-owner abruptly halts the bagging of the items being purchased, even though delaying the business, while gazing at the customer, explaining that "in a situation of this kind, people are constantly talking about it" in line 11. His gazing during the provision of the account shows how serious this topic is (at least to the shop-owner) and that he is monitoring the customer. In doing so, he relies on his "knowledge structure" (Tannen, 1985), his habitus if you will, his previous experience as a money transferrer. The customer's schemas for the prices of dollars, on the other hand, do not give him the expectation that his knowledge of currency exchanges is sufficient to persuade the shop-owner and hence positioning the customer as someone who possesses only lay versions of such knowledge. Thus, the preface the shop-owner has provided describes the activities and moments in the narrative in a particular way, due to the shop-owner's habitus, adopting an expert stance, specifically as being about the price of dollar, where the shop-owner employs some of his professional metalanguage in addressing the customer. As a result, the mismatch of knowledge structure explains an urgent demand on the shop-owner to switch from the simply answering a question frame to the consultation frame, where the shop-owner is self-presenting his role (the service provider).

According to Goodwin (1986, 1986a), within an account, (in this case the shop-owner's), members of an audience have resources at their disposal that allow them to analyse the talk being produced, and to align themselves to what is uttered, which provides a new arena for them to participate (p.297). By making use of the aforementioned resources and (due to) his relatively limited knowledge about the currency exchange, the customer is able to offer a way of understanding the event (i.e., his lack of knowledge) and takes up a supportive stance in line 12 and provides a new account, where he puts the blame on the Iranian government, "Their situations are getting worse hhh now what they've been doing", while using the possessive pronoun "their", referring to the government. The customer is positioning himself as a victim of the institutional process instead of a recipient of the complaint. Interestingly, the effect of this account is that the shop-owner provides agreement to the customer's assessment and offers his support about the object or about the "reality" to which the customer was referring "No now people are saying it will get to 7000 anything possible" in line 12, which they have both experienced in the world, to which the customer responded by saying "I see" in line 14. Aston (1988) calls this type of sharing attitudes *solidarity affect*.

As the shop-owner describes the situation in which he expresses his non-alignment with the customer, he moves his eye-gaze to the customer, positioning himself as a potential source of advice and the customer as an advice-seeker. Such a framework, within "service encounters", is typically tightly focused and has narrowly defined business to fulfil: to get advice (Heritage & Sefi, 1992). The next moves that the shop-owner makes in lines 15 and 17 support his prior talk in line 13: "anything possible", which has not only outlined the upcoming events (lines 15 and 17) but also provided a distinctive alignment to the event (the status of the dollar) and a way of understanding the status of it (i.e., its import). Both the shop-owner's and the customer's utterances are actually embedded within a participation framework that has an array of important structural features which carry it well beyond either "a typology of participants", or "dialogic text instantiated within the talk of a single speaker" (Goodwin, 2007, p. 21). The Iranian government, the principal character in the shop-owner and the customer's accounts, the party whose political blunder is being quoted, is held accountable for the (economic) instability and the fluctuations of the prices of the dollar as is evident in the shop-owner's account in line 17 "because our currency devalues there's no doubt about the value of our currency is now showing itself so it's not a laughing matter". Thus, when the shop-owner first provided his analysis of the status of dollar, the customer readily joined in agreement with the shop-owner both vocally (in line 12 "I see") and visually (nodding) to the interpretation that the shop-owner offered and began to comment on the talk in line 11 he has heard (see the customer's response in line 12). From this extract, it is shown that participants actively shared their attitudes and experiences and responded to each other with support and alignment.

There is another dimension in this excerpt that is worth noting. As the talk continues, there are clues in the excerpt that can probably be discerned as institutional talk of service provision. For instance, there is no interruption between the participants and each actor is allocated their response turn. Each person waits for their turn to speak. The interaction is, therefore, well-organised and has enabled the participants to achieve the goals of the service encounter (i.e., fulfilling the customer's needs). While in a mundane activity, any participant can choose to initiate a new topic, in this excerpt, it seems that the topic is more focused and is often directed by the shop-owner, the information-provider.

To steer the conversation away from potential conflict, the customer introduces a new topic in Extract 6.7 which concerns the considerable changes that have occurred back in Iran in his absence. The new topic of conversation shows the initiation of a new frame, changes in

the food taste back home, as the customer shifts from challenging the shop-owner to expressing concern about the current developments there. The segment analysed above demonstrates Goffman's (1981b) insight about how participants show a shift in alignments when they sense that their position in the interaction is somehow challenged. I argue in this interaction that the customer's embarrassment and unease with the discursive identity as information-seeker in Extract 6.6 enforced by the shop-owner, occasioned a shift in framing dynamics. Following is my brief analysis of the interaction:

Extract 6.7

```
18  C   (1.0)dadashi  rafte(.)behesh  migam  boro  ino  bokhor  boro  oono
        bokhor(.)
        my brother has recently gone to Iran ((constant eye contact)) I told him to eat this food or that food
        mige ba hamoon khatereh bemoon↓ as[an
        he says I should forget ((starts smiling))  about what I used to eat ((leave those memories behind))
        things have changed
19  SO                                        hhh]
                                               hhh] ((still busy bagging, no eye contact))
20  C   fekr nakon biay bokhori hamoone mazaro mide↓
        don't expect that you'll get the same taste again
21  SO  shoma alan chan sale injeen↑
        how long have you been here ((eye contact))
22  C   alan 7 sale↓
        7 years now
23  SO  7 sale↑ alan shoma berin(.)tagheer va tafavot vahshatnake↓(.)
        7 years if you go now you'll see some terrible changes and differences
        dige 7 sal far[gheshe
        it's been 7 years now
24  C                     ahan]
                           I see
25  SO  (1.0) ma:::n khub (0.6) hamin 6 mah pish(.)
        I went to Iran 6 months ago
        raftam↓1 sale pish raftam ↓ (.) ghablesh 4 sal pish raftm↓(.)
        and a year ago, too                          I also went there 4 years ago
        vali hamoone 4 sale pish ya 2 sale pish (.) fargh dare↓
        but there's a big difference between the 4 years I went and the 2 years ((quick eye contact))
26  C   =ma yadame masalan hamishe miraftim Rasht
        ((gazing at SO))  I remember going to (restaurants in Rasht) Rasht ((a city in the north part of Iran))
        az oon cholokababa mikhordim aslan lezat mibordim
        ate yummy kebabs and really enjoyed ourselves
        =in dafe rafte khorde mige asan fekresho nakon(2.0)
        this time he [the brother] went there and ate in that restaurant and told me to forget about those
        yummy kebabs you used to eat back home
        mige kababi ke to onja mikhori asan(.)fekresho nakon inja hhh
        the kebabs you're eating there (in Sydney), cannot be found back home
27  SO  =na haminja chi mishe ke keyfiyat miad paeen
        no even here what happens is the quality (of the food) drops
        taghalob ina ke ziade inja(.)
        there's a lot of cheating here
        hale dige(.)chi mikhad beshe maloom [nist↓
        but it's not clear what's going to happen ((rings up the cash register))
28  C                                                hhh]
                                                     hhh
29  SO  (10) i:::n 15
        here's the $ 15 ((handing the cash to the SO))
30      in khedmate shoma
```

here you are ((closes the cash register))

In this section, the customer's new topic about the quality of the food back in Iran in line 18 may suggest his choice of not pursuing the topic of the dollar anymore in the face of the shop-owner's efforts to describe what is actually happening in relation to the status of Iranian Rial rates. The key to getting a sense of the customer's growing discomfort with the dollar exchange resides in the aggregate interaction effect of the shop-owner's accounts in Extract 6.6, where the customer produces only a few words. The shop-owner's stance towards the customer's question is perceived as not sufficiently informed and indicates the shop-owner's refusal to take it at face value. Accordingly, the customer attempts to find a way to escape the unpleasant situation and brings in an account of his brother regarding the quality of food served back in Iran.

In moving the exchange to another interactive frame, the extract shows a transition from a tension-laden (at least from the customer's point of view) scene to a more easy-flowing episode of interaction. The new frame, talking about the quality of food back in Iran, provides a situation in which the conversation turns to a jocular mode as can be observed in line 19. In responding to the customer's account about the quality of food in Iran, the shop-owner proceeds by asking the customer "how long have you been here?" in line 21, to which the customer responds "7 years now" in line 22. The question the shop-owner poses here corresponds to what Tannen and Wallat (1993) noted that in using each register, the shop-owner signals the speech activity in which he is involved and, at the same time, establishes an alignment or footing in relation to (the topic of the) involved recipient (in this case the customer).

Accordingly, the shop-owner's expectations about his customer, the events and the setting in which the action is being performed suggests that the shop-owner's knowledge schema has allowed him to align himself differently in this extract with that of Extract 6.6. Hence, the customer has offered a response token that has facilitated the progress of the shop-owner's telling "I see", a continuative token to pass on the chance to do more (Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff, 1982) in line 24. Hence, as for the alignment created within the extract 6.7 frame, the shop-owner has provided a new account in line 25, where he aligns with the customer's brother not only with the current topic but also with the dramatic changes taking place in Iran in general "I went to Iran 6 months ago, and a year ago, too. I also went there 4 years ago but there's a big difference between 4 years ago I went to and 2

years ago". The shop-owner's account has enabled the customer to share his own story with the shop-owner. In his story, the customer tells the shop-owner about how delicious the kebabs were, the ones they used to eat in a city in the northern part of Iran, named Rasht, and how they really enjoyed themselves. He also quotes something that his brother said "this time he went there and ate in that restaurant and told me to forget about those yummy kebabs I used to eat back home the kebabs I'm eating there (in Sydney), cannot be found anymore here (in Iran)". Here, the customer's brother, as the third party, is held accountable as not only the *author* of the utterance, since the brother produces the activity of the change but also as the *principal* since the brother is entitled to have performed the action carried out by the utterance of that talk (i.e., the changes back home) as the brother is now visiting the country and has therefore eye-witnessed the changes (i.e., the low quality of the food brought about). Interestingly, in dealing with the customer's final utterance in this extract, the shop-owner attempted to resist and showed no alignment "No even here what happens is the quality (of the food) drops there's a lot of cheating[1] here but it's not clear what's going to happen" in line 27.

As previous research into service encounters has illuminated (Bailey, 2000a)**,** when the shop-owners respond to talks, many of their responses demonstrate an understanding of the referential content of utterances. Accordingly, based on my observations, some of the shop-owner's customers are restaurant-owners. This may suggest that the shop-owner possesses inside information (his habitus) about the quality of the food served in Persian restaurants in Sydney. In addition, there is another dimension to the shop-owner's negative assessment about the customer's talk. In the vicinity of *Persia*, there is a restaurant where the customers usually dine with their family and friends on weekends. After having lunch in the restaurant, the customers usually visit the shop so as to do their weekly shopping. One of the topics in which the customers and the shop-owners regularly engage is the quality of the food partaken. Customers usually open up to the shop-owner about the quality of the food and the service they receive in the restaurant. Hence, the shop-owner's use of "there is a lot of cheating" can justify the reason why he is not in line with the customer. In return, the customer responded to the shop-owner's account by laughter with an overlap in line 28, which seems to be a response to the customer's use of "cheating".

[1] Cheating in this context refers to diluting ingredients.

This segment highlights how the customer achieves interactional symmetry by maintaining the current topic being discussed which highlights equal discursive positionings of the participants. In addition, it illuminates the shop-owner's attempt to align with his customer's framing of the exchange, where the shop-owner's contributions never latch onto and interrupt the customer's.

In Extract 6.8, unlike in previous interactions, the interaction here takes place between two customers. An Australian lady, according to the shop-owner (the wife), in her mid-30s, at the counter is talking to her daughter. This lady has just paid for what she has purchased and is waiting for her husband to pick her up. The customer asked the shop-owner whether the shop-owner objected her waiting at the counter, to which the shop-owner responded "no". Simultaneously, a young Persian-speaking couple, in their mid-30s, arrived in the shop. As soon as the wife saw the baby at the counter, she was looking at her and told the mother, "She is gorgeous". In the meantime, the husband called the waiting wife saying that he would be running 10 to 15 minutes late as he was stuck in congested traffic. I overheard their conversation whilst standing near the cash register and observed their interaction as the customer told the shop-owner that her husband would be late due to the traffic. The couple went straight to the back of the shop and picked out the items they wished to purchase and brought them to the counter where the customer (the wife) was playing with the waiting woman's daughter. Although both of the participants in this interaction were customers, for the reader's convenience, I have used different identity tags for each participant as follows:

Extract 6.8

C: The customer (the wife) H: The husband of the customer M: Mum D: daughter

1 C how old is she↑
2 M uh 10 months
3 C .h 10 months just ((looking at the daughter and talking to her))
4 M she's a big girl now isn't she↑ ((looking at the daughter))
5 H yeah
6 M she's a big ((smiling)) girl ((the baby is making noises and laughing))

As the customer (the wife) approaches the counter, she is looking at the baby, who was positioned at the counter by her mum. As soon as she arrived at the counter, she asked the mum about her daughter's age in line 1 "how old is she↑". This question establishes the frame of "having a chat" about a topic given that they both have something in common. However, like many utterances, this may serve another function: in this case, to test whether the mother is responsive to her being involved in a rather personal matter. Thus,

the frame should make inferences that encourage the mother to answer, for instance, the customer's questions about having babies and that the mother shares information with the customer about the mother's experience and the difficulties she might have been encountering. In other words, the customer's initial attempt sets a benchmark for ease of the rest of her interactions with the mother as will be unfolded in the following. As Goffman (1974) has maintained, the set of assumptions relevant to a particular event or situation acts as a lens whereby participants examine their stock of interactional knowledge so as to retrieve what they need to know for the purposes of a given encounter (Gumperz, 1992, p. 307). It seems that the customer is using her knowledge of the situation to hold a conversation. In addition, the "having a chat" frame shifts the two customers' footing insofar as the relationship between the two is more like that of two unequals holding a conversation as both of them seem to be unratified bystanders (Goffman, 1981a), even though the customer has commented on the daughter's appearance on her arrival.

An interesting shift of frame has occurred in Extract 6.9, where the customer asks the mother "(1.0) this is your first↑" in line 7. The customer's initial silence in this frame may have provided her with sufficient time to consider the situation, which has allowed her to raise a new topic. This fleeting moment, a change in the framing, in the interaction seems to have gone smoothly in that the mother and the customer are more likely to be interested in the topic of "having babies" as they both seem to know how to proceed when the basic building blocks of intersubjectivity are in place. For the mother, it would have been an excuse to idle away the time until her husband shows up. For the customer, it on the other hand, would have been an educational session, where an experienced mother is transferring her knowledge and experience of caring for a baby to an absolute novice (a mother-to-be). The customer, then, begins the next turn with an announcement that "I'm (.) planning" in line 9, which seems to be news to the mother as is evidenced in lines 10 and 12 with the mother's use of high pitch in line 10, which has created a state of heightened mutual involvement in their ongoing talk. However, the customer does not supply the mother with the detailed information about her "planning" of having babies. One reason for not disclosing her plan to the mother, particularly before her husband, is that it seems to be very personal and is therefore not culturally appropriate among Persians, where the mother has never been previously questioned.

Extract 6.9

7 C (1.0) this is your first↑((eye contact))

```
8   M   yes ((looking at the couple))
9   C   I'm (.) planning ((gazing at M))
10  M   yes↑((turning the eye contact to C and surprised due to her facial expressions))
11  C   yes↓
12  M   uh h:::uh
```

Excerpts 6.8 and 6.9 above have shed light on how shared knowledge (or habitus) can enable members of a community (in this case the mothers) to understand precisely what is happening in a particular interaction. Additionally, this shared knowledge has assisted them in making effective and appropriate contributions in a way that would be quite impossible for an outsider, (i.e., the husband of the customer, who seems to be disinterested in the topic while observing their interaction). In other words, the scenes above illustrate the significance of Participation status (Goffman, 1981b; Goodwin, 1981; M. H. Goodwin, 1980) in the organisation of activities and context. Through detailed analysis of the ways in which co-participants take part in the ongoing interaction moment-by-moment, they display their understanding of what goes on and more importantly their alignments to those events (Goffman, 1981b). Such displays of understanding can be used in interaction not only to challenge evaluations and proposals offered by co-participants but also to ratify proposals and carry out evaluations (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, pp. 42-45)

As will be observed in Extract 6.10, it is the customer who has initiated a new move here: shifting the frame. The customer has used a number of contextualisation cues so as to show that she is about to shift frames (i.e., from "having a chat" to a more serious one of "responsibilities"). The customer pauses in line 13, uses a discourse marker "so" in line 13, and then moves to extract more information regarding her own concerns: "(.) so is it hard↑". In response to the customer's question, the mother abruptly says "=yes h[hh" followed by a laughter. With her response, the mother assesses the process of having babies (e.g., the responsibilities). Nonetheless, she is not the only party to perform an evaluation. In an overlap the recipient, the customer, begins an assessment of her own "I know" in line 15. The evaluation which took place here is therefore carried out as "a collaborative, multi-party event"(Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992, p. 78).

Extract 6.10

```
13  C   (.) so is this hard↑
14  M   =y[es       h[hh ((looking at the couple))
15  C      I know] hhh
16  M                  hhh]
17  C   yes hhh it's hard↓
18  H   tell her ((smiling)(.)tell her please((smiling: eye contact to M))
```

```
19  M   hhh ((looking at H and laughing)) no I bet(.)pure joy↓
20  C   yes
        ((The husband is talking to the shop-owner. He's asking about an item he is after))
21  M   =yes ((the noise of the swiping machine)) you go thro:::ugh (.)
        like for a whi:::le she was(.)we had routine↓=you know(.)
        we(.) she slept that very good time
22  C   that's good↓ yeah ((eye contact))
23  M   at the moment(.)routine at the window she won't sleep↓
        you know so:::(.)but (.)it's only for a short time↓
24  C   ye[ah
25  M     nor]mally like(.)everything(0.1)and she gets very unsettled
        for a little while and then(.)you go back to routine you know
        you have good and bad time↓
26  C   (.) ((gazing at M)) of co:::urse(.)but more good[time↓
27  M                                                   the o:::lder]((nod nod))
        they are the more(.)work↓(.)but ↑the more(.)joy↓(.)you know like
28  C   =specially when they start talking
29  M   ye[s
30  C      an]d just running ((looking at the baby))
31  M   yes
32  C   oh my goodness↓
33  M   and you know (.) [she
```

Additionally, the recipient's response to the mother's utterance is accompanied by a series of head nods. These head nods claim access to what the speaker is saying as an agreement (Stivers, 2008), hence affiliate with the mother. In fact, because of their positionings in interaction, such nods and the talk they accompany create a very robust way of establishing consensus (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1992).

The husband, who has been observing the interaction and who had not commented on his wife's and the mother's utterances, when overhearing his wife's question in line 13, looks at the mother and says "tell her (.) tell her please". It seems that the husband's sensitivity in this regard was apparent in his practice of finding moments to establish byplay and open up the conversational floor. Although the husband displays himself as a recipient to the mother's story, his presence goes mostly unnoticed. Yet, the mother, as can be observed in lines 8 and 14, addressed the husband by her gazes and her eye-contact, where the husband ignored cues for active participation. However, given that the mother was directing her story to the husband on two occasions, how does the husband, as a ratified participant in this segment of the talk, not provide any comments prior to this?

An interesting formulation of what might be interpreted as "intertextuality in interaction" is expressed by the husband towards his wife's question in line 18 where he says "tell her (.) tell her please". In Tannen (2007), this could be categorized as an instance of "intertextuality in interaction" in that the words and topics that have been previously exchanged between the couple is privileged in a public domain. Intertextuality is then

defined as “the insight that meaning in language results from a complex of relationships linking items within a discourse and linking current to prior instances of language” (p.9). In the example analysed above in Extract 6.10, the topic of the tension about whether or not having a child soon is recycled, reframed and rekeyed across time both between the couple and in conversation with others: in this case with the mother in a Persian shop.

The topic, “having babies”, is recycled because it has reappeared in a public domain (Tannen, 2006, 2007) where there is a third party involved (i.e., the mother). The husband’s utterance did not happen at the time of speaking. Rather, the couple might have been talking about “having babies” before visiting the shop or even several days ago or it could have been an ongoing issue in the family. As such, the issue brought up by the husband may have had a history in the couple’s interactions where the husband has moved the argument from the private territory with his wife to the public domain of an interaction with a stranger in a shop. He, therefore, reframed, defined as “a change in what the discussion is about” (Tannen, 2006, p. 601) the topic in that the topic at issue is whether or not the husband will agree with having babies.

Later, in Extract 6.10, the focus of the discussion centres on whether or not the wife can rely on him if the wife has decided to have babies. The husband reframed the conflict by utilising it as a resource in a conversation with the mother so as to attempt to persuade the wife not to have babies. Finally, rekeying refers to “a change in the tone or tenor of an interaction” (Tannen, 2007, p. 23). In discussing the notion “key”, Goffman (Goffman, 1974) drew an analogy with music. He therefore defines “key” as “the set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else” (Goffman, 1974, pp. 43-44). A rekeying takes place when a social actor’s “tone of voice, amplitude, lexical emphasis, rhythm, intonational contours, or other qualities of speech” (Tannen, 2006, p. 601) suggests a change of stance. The argument between the husband and the wife is rekeyed when the husband’s comment on his wife’s question is recycled with smiling. Here, my fieldwork is useful in dissemination of discourse between participants. Prior to the couple leaving the shop, the wife disclosed about how upset her husband would become if they talked about the topic at issue. Here, while commenting on his wife’s question, the husband’s low pitch, together with his smile indicated the rekeying of the exchange for the purpose of humour.

The mother, on the other hand, may have treated the husband's utterance as a complaint and in defence, strongly disagrees with him in line 19, which is illustrated by contextualisation cues: laughter at the beginning, the emphasis on the negative response "no" and on "pure" and the falling tone on "joy". The negative response "no" with an emphasis suggests a strong disagreement and the falling tone marks a statement rather than a question. In response to the mother's account, however, the customer, in contrast to her husband, aligns and ratifies the mother's commentary in line 20.

The customer's question in line 13 invoked the expert-novice frame, requiring the mother to provide the customer the information requested based on the mother's habitus. As the mother did not provide any further information (in line 14) on the difficulties the customer will have to experience in relation to having (bringing up) babies, in line 21 she occasioned the need to offer the customer with a more developed and clarified presentation of what will be involved. Here, the mother excludes the husband through the use of a singular pronoun "you" in line 21 targeting at the customer. The husband, on the other hand, was excluded in the exchange as he was enquiring about a particular item from the shop-owner. To make the effect of the information less serious, the mother utilises pausing and hesitation, minimising the apprehension and fear the customer will be facing in child-bearing by using "a little while", "only for a short time", "you go back to normal" and by focusing on what seems to be positive where the mother draws a clear conclusion in line 25 "you know you have good and bad time↓".

In return, the customer seems to be very familiar with the "upbringing" processes as she is acculturated to them. The customer, in particular, compares and evaluates the practices of children's life cycles and it is she who initiates the move in line 26, where the customer partially agrees with the mother "of co:::urse (.) but more good [time ↓". This evaluation/comparison of life cycles occurs in a context in which the customer has spent nearly four minutes talking to the mother and going through various stages of "having babies". The mother aligns with the customer's accounts "the o:::lder] they are the more (.) work↓ (.) but ↑the more (.) joy↓ (.) you know like" in line 27 followed by the customer's fairly specific example of what stage in line 28 "=specially when they start talking" and in line "30 an]d just running". Here, the customer is positioning herself as if she had been exposed to such practices.

In this interaction, in light of the customer's familiarity with this process (her habitus), the topic of "having babies" was recycled, reframed and rekeyed (Tannen, 2006) in a public

context, with the participation of a third party, the mother. The topic of "having babies" might have arisen possibly when the customer had discussed this with her husband several months ago or even yesterday or the day when the current interaction took place. Thus, the customer reframes the topic, this time by expanding it to a wider domain (i.e., the process and the difficulties besetting mothers). The customer's response to this reframing is yet another reframing, one that considers the customer's eagerness to start a family, followed by response tokens "yeah" in line 24 and "oh my goodness" in line 32. Furthermore, while in Extracts 8 and 9 the customer took the role of an interviewer and the mother as an interviewee who does most of the talking, in Extract 10 the customer does not always align with the mother as in line 26 discussed above.

Extract 6.11 is a continuation of the previous excerpt, where the customer, again, shifted the frame when this time she asked about the "pregnancy period" in line 34. As from line 35, the mother goes into some detail about the difficulties she suffered during her pregnancy. In this frame, the mother employed some of her 'professional' metalanguage in addressing the customer "blood toxicity" in line 41, "premature" in line 43 and "nearly miscarried" in line 37. The customer was expressing her sympathy, for example, by responding with "really]↑" and her facial expressions in line 38.

Extract 6.11

```
34  C            what] about the pregnancy period↑it was hard or:::↑
35  M   (.)for me it was very hard ↓cause I wa:::s(.)((eye contact))
        I had trouble(.)like I::: at the beginning(.)I was bleeding
36  C   oh ((showing sympathy with her facial expressions))
37  M   and I nearly mis[carried
38  C                   really]↑((showing sympathy with her facial expressions))
39  M   so I had to be on bed rest
40  C   oh ((showing sympathy))
41  M   so and I had um what they called blood toxicity↓
        so my liver (.) wasn't ((grinning)) very good↓
42  C   OK↓
43  M   so um but and she came(.)premature↓(.)so but you know↑
        as long as you look after yourself↑(.)it's you know not too bad↓
44  C   ((nod nod))
45  M   and you have(.)something grow special you know↓ you have(.)
        this beautiful thing growing inside you↓
46  C   yeah of course↓ ((smiling)) you're thinking about that ((smiling))
47  M   y:::eah(.)exactly(.)so yeah(.)((looking at C))
        nothing worthwhile comes easy↓
48  C   (.) of course (3.0) ((looking at the baby))
49  M   and this is the most worthwhile thing you ever do so hh[h
50  C
        =really↑]
        ((eye contact)) hhh
51  M   so it's very difficult hhh
```

52 C ((looking at the baby and tells her in Persian)) (2.0) "elahi ghorbonet beram"
((literally sacrifice-of-you- I-go: love you so much))

((In the meantime, the husband is buying 100 grams of Persian sweets and asking the wife if 100 grams would be enough))

An important part of Extract 6.11 illuminates the demands associated with the "consultation" frame (i.e., novice) (the customer) vs. expert (the mother). As the customer is seeking to find out what is involved in the pregnancy and after birth, the mother provides accounts so as to educate the customer. In so doing, she is explaining what has happened to her during her pregnancy. The mother responds in a way that makes a trade-off between the demands of several frames. These frames and their associated demands are manifested in linguistic elements. By using hesitations ('um'), discourse markers ('but' and 'so'), conditional constructions ("as long as you look after yourself↑" in line 43) and stressing what appears positive ("something grow special you know↓ you have (.) this beautiful thing growing inside you" in line 45), the mother apparently succeeds in reassuring the customer. In response, the customer displayed her alignment to the mother "yeah of course↓ you're thinking about that" in line 46. In supporting the customer's account, the mother imported talk from another genre into her present account "nothing worthwhile comes easy ↓" in line 47, which can offer "a parody or commentary on the present interjection" (M. H. Goodwin, 1996, p. 76). The mother, in a very real sense, is being held accountable not only as the *principal* of the talk but also as its *author* in that she has performed the action carried out by the original utterance of that talk. The Persian-speaking customer reconfigures her alignment, matching the mother's stance by producing "yeah of course" in line 48 followed by a smile. Their alignments throughout this interaction suggest stages where they perform as a team, where both parties provide the other with the opportunity to reframe the baby talk and expand it to a wider domain (i.e., responsibilities in life as a mother).

What happens next is of particular significance for the analysis, as the topic at issue is reframed and rekeyed by the husband. In drawing the interaction to a close, which will be illustrated in Extract 6.12 below, the customer is asking her husband to see the daughter. The husband, while smiling, comments on the baby "she is so gorgeous" in line 54 and abruptly goes to the shopping list he was holding in his hand. The husband asks the wife whether 100 grams of Persian sweet would be enough, where the wife replied "I don't know↓" in line 55. This segment of their interaction is uttered in Persian and the mother is

standing next to the couple and listening to their conversation. Here, the mother, who was a *principal* speaker a moment ago, is currently being relegated to an unratified bystander (Goffman, 1981a). Therefore, the new frame has had a bearing on the mother's interaction in that she has moved from a more central role, information provider, to withdrawal from the interaction.

Extract 6.12

C: the customer (the wife) H: the husband of the customer SW: shop-owner (the wife)

```
53  C   (1.0) Amir↑ bia bebinesh
        Amir((smiling)) come over here to see her ((the husband is standing at the cash
        register))
54  H   =che bahale                          =Parisa]↑(.) 100 gram khube↑
        =she is so gorgeous ((smiling)) ((M is looking at both))=Parisa↑(.) would 100 grams be enough↑
55  C   nemidonam↓
        I don't know↓
56  M   =but you have your husband to help ((looking at C))
57  C   =hhh let's see ((looking at H))
        ((H is laughing, too)) ((SW is laughing but no eye contact as she is busy bagging the items))
58  M   [hhh ((gazes at H))
59  C    hhh] ((H is talking to SW and is grinning))
60  M   maybe hhh ((looking at H))
61  C   hhh ((looking at the husband))
62  H   (0.1) plea[se ((smiling))
63  M             hhh]
```

The mother, then, interferes with their talk and says "=but you have your husband to help" in line 56. One feature of this process can be quickly expressed. In overhearing their interaction, I have observed that the husband assisted the wife in picking out the items from shelves and that he prevented the wife from carrying heavy items e.g., rice. Due to the layout of the shop, almost all of the movements that the customers make are visible to the other customers. This suggests that the mother might have observed the husband helping the wife. The mother's comment here provides an example of byplay (M. H. Goodwin, 1990), discussed earlier in this Chapter, which presents a different alignment towards the wife's stance. In response to the mother's utterance in line 56, the wife, however, produces "=hhh let's see" in line 57, where both the husband and the shop-owner, as a ratified bystander, laugh, acknowledging what the wife is saying. The mother's gazing at the husband suggests she is monitoring the husband as the wife produces her talk. Gazing towards the husband is one way by which the mother can solicit the participation (Goodwin, 1981) of the husband, which was declined by the husband. Because the husband is not willing to solicit co-participation, the mother, this time, employs a different technique with the use of hedging "maybe" followed by a laughter in line 60 (see Figure 17

below). On hearing the mother's utterance, the husband rekeys the whole exchange in a dramatic way. The pause before he begins his turn and the aborted utterance "please" with an overlap with the mother's laugh suggest that the husband has figured how to turn around the conversation. As has been seen with this interaction, the topic at issue is thus recycled and rekeyed one last time in the closing.

Figure 17: Rekeying

6.4 Alignment in storytelling

Scholars in the field of communication, along with social scientists, have increasingly stressed the important role played by the recipient's assessments in forming the courses of actions in conversational stories through various forms of response tokens. The researchers have suggested deconstructing mid-telling-type response tokens from other categories of responses (Dittmann & Llewellyn, 1968; Duncan & Fiske, 1977). These response tokens include "continuers (*Mm hm* and *Uh huh*)", "acknowledgement tokens" (*Yeah* and the weaker acknowledgement token *Mm*)", "the newsmaker group" ('change-of-state token' *Oh*, 'the idea connector' *Right*) and the "change-of-activity tokens" (*Okay* and *Alright*) (Gardner, 2001, p. 24). Research in the area of Conversation Analysis (CA) has subsequently demonstrated that these response tokens can give rise to facilitating, halting or shaping a story (Duranti, 1986; Goodwin, 1986a; M. H. Goodwin, 1980). In addition, there has been unanimous agreement among CA researchers that while recipients' assessments (e.g., that's awesome) of a storytelling are investigated differently (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; M. H. Goodwin, 1980) , tokens such as *mm hm, uh huh, and yeah* as

well as nods and cues are viewed to belong to "one class of response" (Stivers, 2008, p. 33). However, Stivers (2008) has referred to them as "aligning" in that when a listener takes up a stance toward a storytelling, he or she "supports the structural asymmetry of the storytelling activity: that a storytelling is in progress and the teller has the floor until story completion" (p. 34).

Schegloff (1982) demonstrates the importance of listener activity, continuers or response tokens in the sense envisioned above, and discusses their significance in the turn-taking system of everyday mundane interactions. He notes:

> Perhaps the most common usage of "uh huh", etc. (in environments other than after yes/no questions) is to exhibit on the part of its producer an understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway by another, and that it is not yet, or may not yet be (or even ought not yet be) complete. It takes the stance that the speaker of that extended unit should continue talking, and in that continued talking should continue that extended unit (1982, p. 81).

In the following, two extracts of the mid-telling response tokens namely "uh huh, Mm hm, Right, and nodding" will be examined to show how the participants in *Persia* manage issues of alignment in the course of the telling activity prior to the point at which the recipient should show his or her stance towards the moments and the events produced in the accounts.

Extract 6.13 shows an example taken from a discussion between the researcher (R) and an Australian lady (C), in her late 40s. The customer disclosed to me how friendly and helpful the shop-owners are and that they are totally different from the shop-assistants in those of Coles or ALDI. Here, the telling proper begins in line 1 and as can be seen, the researcher, the recipient, is not supplied with any access to the customer's stance or the event being narrated. Nonetheless, a telling activity is being performed and clearly underway.

Extract 6.13

1	C	you know uhm(.)in some Australian shops like Coles um.(.)or ALDI (.)
2	R	uh huh ((gazes at the C))
3	C	you should get your stuff you know in trolleys and get out and it's the worst feeling in the world…
4	R	((nods nods and smiles))

In Extract 6.13 my continuative "uh huh" token provides an opportunity for the customer to supply me with more information (Jefferson, 1984) about how friendly the shop-owners are towards their customers. This "vocal continuer" (Schegloff, 1982) aligns with the storytelling activity, which was preceded with a small silence emerging at points where the

researcher has facilitated the telling structurally and where the storyteller has not finished the story yet. As previous research has shown (e.g., Stivers, 2008) and as evident in Extract 6.13, this continuer does not adopt a stance towards the account the customer is providing nor does it claim that the researcher has been offered access to the event being uttered. In contrast, in line 3, the customer provides the researcher with accounts about her own stance towards the shop-owners' friendly manner to their customers. This account is informative in the sense that the researcher has access to the customer's stance which ultimately portrays why the customer prefers shopping in *Persia* to shopping in the large supermarkets. In response to that, the researcher nods. The nodding, in contrast to the vocal continuer, is situated where the storyteller has uttered an account in which she produces insights into her own stance.

A similar token is illustrated in Extract 6.14. A customer, in his late 50s enters the shop and goes directly to a section where dried nuts and candies (Persian nougat) are kept, near the TV set, where this interaction takes place. It seems that the customer has previously visited the shop as he knew where those dried nuts and candies are kept in the shop. The customer is looking at the items on the shelf when the shop owner approaches him to assist him with his request. After discussing what it was the customer was looking for, the shop-owner (the husband) picked out two types of "*Sohan"* [1] and brought them to the counter. According to the shop-owner, there are two types of "*Sohan*" namely dry and greasy. The greasy ones are individually wrapped for long-term storage and for easy distribution.

Extract 6.14

1	C	that's the one ((pointing to the item SO has just picked out from a shelf))
		yeah I've seen that one yeah yeah so what you're saying is
		that big one you showed me there (.)
2	SO	mm hm
3	C	is similar to this↑ ((picks up the item at the counter and shows it to C))
4	SO	similar to that↓((pointing to the item))
		that one individually wrapped↓
5	C	((nods nods))
6	SO	that one in a (.) big uh size↓
7	C	=right (.) but it's the same product=it's a similar
		product↑
8	SO	=similar product↓ ((eye contact to C))
9	C	=similar product↓ ((eye contact to the SO))

[1] *Sohan* is a traditional saffron brittle toffee, which is chiefly produced in the cities of Qom and Isfahan in Iran. Its ingredients consist of flour, rose water, egg yolks, cardamom and slivers of almond and pistachio, wheat sprout, sugar, butter, and saffron. *Sohan* has been commercially produced by traditional confectioners for decades.

In line 1, the customer has confirmed the item the shop-owner is showing to him. One can observe that there is a vocal continuer "mm hm", followed by a pause, offering at a point in the customer's account where the shop-owner has not yet been provided with an insight into the customer's stance towards the item he is purchasing. The "mm hm" token aligns with the telling activity and it is highly likely that, note the pause in line 1, the shop-owner would have preferred to know precisely what it is that the customer is looking for after the customer's lengthy description. By contrast, in line 5, the customer vigorously nods. This is done at a point where the customer has been provided with sufficient information about the item he was after, which might have eliminated the customer's uncertainty over the product. Hence, the nod is situated where the shop-owner has provided access to the shop-owner's stance towards the product as being a "similar product" in lines 3 and 4 and therefore he might be persuaded to purchase it.

In line 6, the shop-owner presents new information about the same product "that one in a (.) big uh size↓", where the customer responds by "right". Such *Rights* are used to achieve recognition on the part of the speaker (here the shop-owner) that an idea from that unit of talk has been understood (see Gardner, 2001). The earlier idea that the shop-owner and the customer have been discussing (i.e., "similar to this") is from two turns back in the same local sequence. Thus, the connection is the idea the shop-owner has produced in the previous turns. In line 6, the shop-owner is providing new information, with which the customer is not familiar. Here, immediately prior to this *Right*, we have two ideas that have been juxtaposed namely "individually wrapped" and "a big size". According to Gardner (2001), this is typically the type of connection that such *Rights* are employed to recognise.

In this section, I have examined some of the resources on which the speakers (the tellers) depend to take up their stances towards the experiences (accounts) which they were describing. This has thus provided the recipients with a tool so that they can deduce what type of response is preferred at story completion. In addition, I have shown that nods are typically situated following telling elements which offer the listener access to the events being recounted in the story.

6.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have used Goffman's construct of "frame" to refer to the sociological and anthropological term of a frame, defined as participants' understanding of a situation (i.e., *"what is it that is going on here*?"). As demonstrated, when social actors in a social field come together, they must arrive at a definition of the situation. Hence, an understanding of

frames accounts for many of the shop-owners' lengthy explanations as well as the non-Persian speaking customers' lack of knowledge about a dish when the customers' frames contradicted those of the shop-owners'. Therefore, much of what can be understood from discourse does not actually need to be unpacked because it is embedded not only in the participants' definition of the situation but also ultimately in the practice of those engaged in interaction. Thus, as observed, this way of approaching discourse has made an invaluable contribution not only to the field of service encounters in ethnic shops but has moved beyond simplistic notions of worded discourse revealing to subtle and dynamic ways participants, in particular Persian-speaking customers, manage their stances in reference with Persian products, and culture.

In addition, we have seen how the participants' shared knowledge at hand was mediated through a unique set of discursive practices which offered a rich resource for creating a positive environment and constructively negotiating the many practical and interpersonal issues that could arise in the course of a typical shopping experience in an ethnic shop.

The Chapter has also attempted to bring to the fore that in order to address Goffman's question *"what is it that is going on here?"*, the analysis should centre both on the deconstructing of different voices in a strip of talk and, simultaneously, extending such analysis so as to incorporate not only the speaker but also the ratified and unratified participants within the organization of the utterance. The data have demonstrated many shifts from the stances of shop-owner-customer. The shifts of stances (alignments) are in different directions shifting from asymmetrical to symmetrical either in a transactional or interpersonal frame. The shifts between transactional and relational talk are more likely to be instigated by the customers. The shop-owner's stances in the participation frameworks as a service-provider appear to mean that when they are aligning with this role, they not only merely abide by fulfilling their customers' transactional needs but also their conversational and interpersonal needs and align to their stance shifts.

So far, the current study has shown that the methodological and analytical frameworks applied are robust ones. They offer greater explanatory power than an analysis of isolated interactions or analyses limited to very specific aspects of (mis) communication The analytic approach has conflated selective micro-level analysis used in CA with an in-depth ethnographic survey across the data set to produce a thick description grounded in the situated practices occurring in *Persia*.

Chapter 7: Critical Moments in *Persia*

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine potential and actual "*critical moments*" that have occurred in *Persia* that impacted upon the participants' social interactions. Specifically, my purpose in this chapter is to provide theoretically informed explanations of the nature of the conflicts and to demonstrate how these conflicts between the shop-owners and their customers are variously magnified and what strategies the participants have employed to resolve them. Using Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), we shall then see how discourse in context (i.e., in *Persia*) includes key moments in interaction that can be viewed as critical in terms of participants' meanings and potential face-threatening acts arising from the different habitus of participants.

7.2 Critical moments: Definitions

As discussed in Chapter 1, due to the participants' cultural and linguistic differences, there might be occasions of inadvertent misunderstanding, confusion and disagreement between participants' interactions in the shop. Each of the participants in the shop (myself included) partakes in "mutual engagement" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) in a joint practice and belongs to a different ways of thinking, tied to particular bodies of knowledge and ideological stances. Access to such communities entails a "shared repertoire of resources" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73), of habitus and of experiences. Yet, each customer, and the shop-owners themselves, belongs to multiple communities where participants have different perceptions of the role of their counterparts and of what needs to be achieved. These ideological underpinnings manifest their values and importance for the participants in practice and in a particular site of engagement, following Candlin, in a *crucial site* (Candlin, 2000) in the shop. Within the context of this scenario, Candlin defines "crucial site" as "those contexts of communication, in part defined physically, in part by topic, in part by participation, in part by perception" (2000, p. 9), which participants view as especially prominent. I argue that to those contexts of communication, one must incorporate mediational means. For reasons which will become clear throughout this chapter, the mediational means in the shop encompasses both semiotic and material tools (Izadi, 2015) whereby a lack of particular knowledge and lack of familiarity will lead to a critical moment.

Within these crucial sites of engagement occur what Candlin has called "critical moments" (p.10). These interactions are referred to as "those moments within the processes and practices of a crucial site of engagement in which the participants identify and orient to the occurrence (or the potential occurrence) of contradictions arising among conflicting orders of discourse" (Candlin, 2001, p. 188). Hence, perceptions of some part of the interaction process are taken at face value. Thus, such sites bring with them significant critical moments where participants' actions, beliefs, and competencies are challenged, where their subjective realities are exposed and challenged (Candlin & Lucas 1986), where interactions may develop in unexpected ways, and where meaning-making is evidenced as an interactive process. In brief, critical moments are very often inherent in such settings where ideological differences between participants may not be kept to oneself and are not tolerated.

As my data in this chapter will have demonstrated, these moments of conflict could pertain to the importance of the subject matter for their different ideological, professional or personal reasons. Cicourel (1996, 2007) argues that such sites can be seen as "*ecology*", involving their settings, their participants with their mediated actions and roles, focal themes and purposes, states of being, and where professional expertise is open to scrutiny and evaluation.

In order to understand the discourses (of professional practice) in service encounters, the focus should be centred on two related constructs, that of crucial sites of engagement and their critical moments. The interaction of these two constructs is ultimately manifested in the "fullest sense of the language of talk and text" (Candlin, 2000, p.11). This interest in focusing on action brings us back to MDA in which the significance of other communicative dimensions, mediational means for instance, come into the picture. In what follows, I will analyse the sources of critical moments occurring in *Persia* and examine the strategies employed by the customers and the shop-owners to resolve such moments of conflicts.

7.3 Strategies for conflict resolution: Interdiscursivity and Intertextuality

A couple in their early 50s entered the shop and greeted the shop-owners who were busy serving other customers at the counter. The couple went to the back of the shop and had a look at various items but did not pick out any of them. They then approached the refrigerator where the frozen food and yogurts were kept. While standing next to the

refrigerator, the wife asks SW (displaying familiarity being on a first name basis with SW) whether the yellow yogurts are located on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. The shop-owner's husband responded "no", they are on the top shelf in the refrigerator. The shop-owner's wife also added "there's one on top". The couple both brought the item to the counter. The following extract occurs approximately five minutes after the customers entered the shop and marks the beginning of the interaction focusing on the critical moments in a crucial site (i.e., the cash register). Pseudonyms are used for the participants to ensure confidentiality. For analysis purposes, the excerpt is split into four sections that immediately follow on from each other (Extracts 7.1 to 7.4).

Extract 7.1

A couple: Wife (W) and Husband (H) The shop-owners= Shop-owner's wife (SW) and Shop-owner (SO)

```
1   SO  khub khubi shoma↑
        well are you OK ((to the customer's H))
2   W   =Satar dare mi[ad↑
        Is Satar coming ((eye contact to SO))
         ((looking at the sign placed at the counter where it says Satar will be performing in Sydney))
3   H                  merci] shoma khubi↑
                         Thanks   You    OK
4   SO  migan↓      hhh (0.1)
        they (people) say hhh
        ((H is also laughing))
5   W   sevvome Novambr chizi namoonde ke↓
        3rd of November is not too far away
6   SO  =na uh (1.0)                    20 rooze dige↓
        no uh ((stops bagging the items and looks at the calendar sitting on the cash register
        and counting how many days is left to the concert))  20 days later ((continues bagging the items))
7   W   (1.0) Babak↑ shirni nemi[khay↑
        ((Looking at H)) Babak would you like some sweets
8   H                              ma ke] nistim↓
                                 we're not going to his concert
        ((Looking at SO and smiling but no eye contact with W))
9   SO  =aslan be senosale uh shoma nemikhore Satar(.)
        Satar is not your ((plural)) age group at all ((quick eye-contact))
        Sa(.)Satar male Oon(1.0) sen balahast↓
                    Satar is for the old ((bagging the other customer's items who has just left
        the items at the counter and went to the back of the shop))
10  W   hhh na:::[goo agha Reza nago↓
        hhh   don't mention it Mr. Reza just don't ((eye-contact))
11  SW             hhh]
                    hhh]
12  SO  male seno sale mast dige↓
        ((looking at W)) he belongs to our age group ((smiling))
13  W   =hame a[hang asheghanehatoono az hamin Satar yad_gereftin↓
        you've learned all your love songs from Satar
14  H          bebkhsid]
                 excuse me
15  SO  bebakhshid male mahast na male ina↓
        excuse me he belongs to us not to them ((referring to H while pointing his head at H))
16  W   =pas yani shoma az Babak (.) kheili sennetoon balater↑
```

so you mean you're older than Babak

17 H =agha Reza shoma lotfziad be m[an darin↓
Mr. Reza you're so nice to me

18 W in]zaheresh=goole zahresho nakhorin↓
this is how he looks don't be fooled by how he looks

19 SO jedi↑
really ((eye contact))

20 W are↓
yeah ((all looking at H)) ((all laughing))

21 SW (.) a:::khey
oh dear

22 SO (2.0) lo rafti agha Babak hhh
she let the cat out of the bag ((eye contact))

23 H hhh
hhh

Immediately after the customers brought the items to the counter, the shop-owner (the husband) started greeting the customer's husband again in line 1 "well are you OK". The shop-owner's wife maintained eye-contact with the couple whilst observing their interaction. The greeting rituals are used here by SO to carry out the function of increasing interpersonal involvement with H. However, it seems to be superfluous (at least from W's point of view) as W interrupts the phatic communion and takes the initiative to refer to the content of the sign she has just observed at the counter, which mentions a Persian singer named "Satar" is performing at an upcoming concert in Sydney. Here, the sign may not play an important role in H's and SO's interactions but has a significant bearing on W as the interaction turns to the content of the sign. The content of the sign, as a mediational means, which becomes noticed when W refers to it, creates an arena where a moment of conflict makes its hidden influence potentially recognisable in the discourse of the participants within this crucial site.

As Candlin (1987) observes, certain instances of discourse may not become transparent in the sense that such instances do not cast light on the "forces" and "factors" which "constitute the social institutions" (p. 414) not only producing them but being produced by them. For such assumptions to be carefully pondered and formulated, one needs to attempt to challenge what is taken at face value in such discourse. In addition, following Candlin (1987), since there are always cultural, political, economic and social ideologies which partially constitute the institutions in question, such ideologies need to be further investigated. Some of these ideologies are in stark contrast to participants' goals, purposes and are always embedded in their practices.

W, therefore, initiated a conversation with SO by making an enquiry about the singer named "Satar" in line 2, overlapped with H's response to SO's initial (previous) enquiry

about his well-being. SO in answering W's question did not directly provide a "yes/no" response. Rather, his response in line 4 "they (people) say" followed by a laughter particle does not show SO's move as cooperative. The lack of response from SO is particularly salient here because W, after reading the sign, herself responded to her enquiry as evidenced in line 5, "3rd of November is not too far away". The effect of this is to exert a force on SO to be more precise about the date of the concert. Notice that there is a pause of (1.0) second between lines 6 and 7 which signals that the former topic has ended. Then, in line 7, W suddenly changes the tone of her voice, together with a louder volume, indicating the turn of topic. In addition to this intonation signal, the change of the topic is lexically manifested when W addresses her husband in line 7 "Babak↑ shirni nemi[khay↑", known in terms of lexicogrammar that Halliday (1994) suggests, assists a change of topic to become more salient. Accordingly, W is asking H whether he would like some sweets. Interestingly, H did not respond to his W's request but provided an account of the previous topic (i.e., the concert), indicating his disinterest in the concert in line 8 "we're not going to his concert". This is the first critical moment in the encounter (i.e., the moment that determined its trajectory), the moment of clashes of interests and values, that signals to the participants the possibility of a situation that is "out of the ordinary" (S. Candlin & Candlin, 2014, p. 266) and might need to be handled with trepidation. In fact, H's comment on the concert marks a shift in the nature of the smooth-going interaction from information exchange to a critical moment sequence.

A further critical moment was the response the shop-owner produced in line 9 "Satar is not your (plural) age group at all Satar is for the old" providing a more challenging situation and moment. Conversation analysts have documented a considerable body of work about agreement (*preferred*) and disagreement (*dispreferred*) and observed that agreement is the preferred response to a large number of first parts of adjacency pairs (for instance, assessments and suggestions) while disagreement is dispreferred (Levinson, 1983; Pomerantz, 1984) and is identified by a far more complex turn. SO's response to H's comment has the typical structure of a dispreferred second pair part. That is, the disagreement is delayed by a preface, which happens to be a strong negative adjective "at all" at the beginning of his Persian utterance as evidenced above in line 9. Hesitations from the shop-owner in the form of a pause "uh" reflect an account and a repetition of his statement with almost the same content in the second part of his utterance "Satar is for the

old" (i.e. an explanation of why the dispreferred action is being performed (Levinson, 1983, p. 334)).

In addition, there is another dimension to SO's response. It suggests that the response provided an edge of sarcasm in SO's utterance. Here, SO uses a contextualisation cue to express his displeasure. The response by SO is provoked when there is no interval between adjacent utterances (i.e., SO's utterance being latched immediately to H's) without overlapping. Note also that SO did not provide any account as to why H did not belong to SO's age group. However, this kind of sarcasm is also highly likely to be common in the West. Yet, it is important to note its effectiveness as conveying age-related honour may have been offended by H's comment. Arguably, there is also a sense of male solidarity here in which SO "rescues" H from situation in which W might "force" him to accompany W to Satar's concert.

When there is no definite link between an instance of conflict and the actual utterances in discourse, one can draw on ethnographic data so as to address the question *"What is it that is going on here?"* In this instance, it is important to note that all the participants come from the same age group and have Persian backgrounds, where strictly hierarchical relationships exist between interactants and where Persians value internal (*baten*) aspects of human existence far more than outside (*birun*) ones (see Beeman, 2001; Koutlaki, 2010). The effect of this is that SO elicits a presumably apologetic response from W, however perfunctory. W's account invites SW to participate in this activity by laughter. The point at which SW has placed her response (i.e., her laughter) is not random, and is known as a "recognition point" (Jefferson, 1973), and therefore seems to be legitimate for SW to respond in the course of an ongoing utterance as a ratified participant. Furthermore, it is noteworthy here how W addresses SO "Mr. Reza" in line 10. The importance of names among Persians has been emphasised in the literature (see for example Koutlaki, 2010). Even if Persians are on first-name terms with their interactants, two options are common, namely a) titles plus *agha/khanom* (Mr/Lady) and b) first names plus *jan* or *jun* (soul, life) (see Koutlaki, 2010). As can be observed, W uses the title plus SO's first name (option "a" above) to emphasise sincerity in her utterance.

Interestingly, SO did not adopt a new position but persisted in the continuation of his stance as stated in line 12 "he [Satar] belongs to our group", once more without providing W with an account, followed by a smile. W's response to SO is an example of a shift of footing combined with what the singer (Satar) is popularly known for (i.e., his love songs).

Here, W picks up an important word of the previous utterance (i.e., our age group) and builds the centre of her countermove, known as "opposition format" (Kotthoff, 1993). Perhaps one reason for why W made such a move would be the fact that SO did not provide any reason for his opinions (i.e., as to why H does not belong to his age category).

Additionally, the mention of the singer "Satar" here carries with it a new meaning in this context and is different from the previous ones. "Satar" in the previous accounts was a singer, who was planning to have a concert in Sydney. However, in line 13, Satar is the person who refreshes the participants' memories, in this case SO's, as evidenced in line 13 "You've learned all your love songs from Satar". This discursive practice may be accounted for in terms of a shift of footing as W moves for a segment of defending (expressing sympathy for) SO in line 10, for instance, to an antagonist. Interestingly, SO is extremely persistent in his position combined with repetition of the exact wording of the previous turn "he belongs to us not to them" while moving his head toward H in line 13. Here, SO's response is specifically targeted at H. This action is displayed not through verbal discourse but through more powerful non-verbal behaviour (i.e., head movement). This non-verbal display has a bearing on W as she formulates this as a gist formulation "So you mean you're older than Babak" in line 16. W uses her husband's name in the formulation to redirect the topic back to H. Following this formulation, H begins to provide a comment as being appreciative of SO in line 17 "Mr Reza you're so nice to me" signifying that H does not belong to SO's age group. W does not approve of her H's account and challenges her husband in line 18 "This is how he looks don't be fooled by how he looks". W's formulation in line 16 and her disapproval of her husband in line 18 enable SO to directly refer to the nature of the disagreement arising at the outset of their interaction in line 22 "she let the cat out of the bag", which invites H to laugh. SO in line 22 provides a gist of W and H's preceding contributions, which summarises SO's view.

In exploring this interaction further, one needs to draw on the notion of interdiscursivity. Interdiscursivity refers to the mixing and use of elements in one discourse and social practice associated with social and institutional meanings from other discourses and social practices (see Candlin & Maley, 1997). This linguistic element is displayed through language use. A concrete example can be found in Extract 7.1, in which two kinds of activities (namely "nostalgia" and "age") intermingle in the process of achieving settlement. Thus, it can be seen as interdiscursive through the hybridity of two genres: "the world of music" and "the world of memories". For instance, in line 13, it seems that W's

comments on the singer “Satar” reveals an attempt to formulate a strategy from another but related discourse, accommodating it with the requirements of a different orientation. This is an instance of interdiscursivity.

To sum up this section, as documented in the literature of conversation analysis, participants in an interaction, provide each other with clues as to what they are actually performing through talk and what their recipients ought to expect. That is, they have some resources and methods at their disposal that signal that an expression of disagreement may have just occurred and whether it corresponds to a strong or weak disagreement (see Kotthoff, 1993). As described previously in Extract 7.1, speakers of Persian have many cultural resources at their disposal for managing such conflicts or critical moments in interaction. Following Beeman (1976a, 1976b, 1986) and Koutlaki (2002, 2010), Persians practise the act of politeness based on three principles namely: cordiality, humility and deference, the application of which leads to numerous behaviours in interaction. The most common strategic principle in interaction comprises selecting a lower status for oneself in deference to another person (see Beeman, 1976a) as evidenced in SO’s utterance in line 9 above. It seems that SO in line 9 is lowering his own status whilst enhancing the status of H. On the other hand, W in line 10 is showing interest in SO’s concern and comfort claiming common ground with him.

Extract 7.2 furthers the process of converting the couple’s disagreement into a moment of conflict when their conversation is diverted to the quality of the food served in the restaurant adjacent to *Persia*.

Extract 7.2

24 SW bala bodi:::n↑
have you been upstairs ((referring to the restaurant))
25 W bale↓
Yes
26 SW Khordin ya darin mibarin khune↑
did you have it there or are you taking away
27 H =ham khordim ham mibarim
we’ve both had it there and also are taking away
28 SW =khub bood↑
what was the food like
29 W ma khodemoonmikhroim bara:::(.)bacheha mibarim↓
we usually eat in and take away for the kids
30 H are are khodaeesh khub bood
yes yes ((nodding while the head moving up and down)) the food was good
31 SW =Kheili ghazash khub shode↓
they’ve been serving excellent food recently
32 W kheili kabab khubidehash vagean kabab khubideh vagheye shode↓
Their kebabs have become a real kebab ((grinning and looking at her husband))
(0.1) vali(.)

but ((getting a bit closer to her husband as if she was whispering something in his ear her voice is fading))
alan migi na(.)
I bet you're saying no

33 H bargesh↑
barg ((a Persian style barbecued lamb))

34 W but dasht emrooz↑(.) ya nadasht↑
was there a "but" today ((about the quality of the food))

35 H bus dasht↑
was there a bus ((grinning))

36 W but ((grinning))dasht ya nadasht↑
was there a "but" or not ((looking at H))

37 H man na
not for me

38 W =nesbat be oon dafe be nazare man(.)ke oondafe ke maslan omadim(.)
I think by comparison last time we've eaten there
kababash kheili charbtar va narmtar bood↓
its kebab was much fatter and much tenderer

39 SW =ar:::e↑
was it ((eye contact to W))

40 H =na
no ((with his head constantly moving up common among Persians when disagreeing))

41 W na↑
no ((looking at H))

42 H na↓ man na↓
no not for me

43 W akhe(.)ashpazeshoon avaz shode bood↓=emrooz aghae nabood↓
well ((looking at H)) they had a different chef today the chef I knew wasn't there today

44 H =man khosham omade↓
I liked it

45 W to dost dari in loyale
you like it here ((laughing)) he's loyal ((telling SW while pointing her hand at H))

46 H na khub bood↓
no the food was good

SW initiated the interaction by asking the couple whether they were "up", referring to the restaurant adjacent to *Persia*, which constitutes more relational talk than transactional talk in this segment. In response to SW, W says "yes" in line 25. WS then goes on to ask a further question in line 26 "Did you have it there or are you taking away?" In response to SW's question, H responds "We both had it there and also are taking away". In line 28, the topic turned to the quality of the food served at the restaurant when SW made an enquiry about the quality of the food. This was immediately followed by H's assessment of the quality of the food in line 30 "Yes yes the food was good". Interestingly, H not only uses the verbal element "yes yes" but also the non-verbal behaviour (nodding) to emphasise the quality of the food. Additionally, he uses "*khodaeesh*" as he feels the need to swear an oath to establish sincerity. This type of oath is very common among Persians particularly when the Persians feel really agitated (see Beeman, 2001). Immediately after H's comment, SW provided a positive uptake regarding the quality of the food in the restaurant in line 31 "they've been serving excellent food recently".

However, of particular interest to the analysis of this segment is W's assessment, which brought about some friction between the couple. In line 32, rather than commenting on the quality of the food served in the restaurant in general, W referred to the quality of the kebabs, a staple cuisine among Persians, served in the restaurant "their kebabs have become a real kebab". It is assumed that W's use of the phrase "real kebab" reminded her (her habitus) of the kebabs she used to eat back in Iran. Based on my observations during the fieldwork, this type of comment regarding the quality of food is very common among Persians. Yet, W uses the classic device of agreement prefaces of the "yes…but" type (Pomerantz, 1984) to formulate her disapproval of the quality of the food. Given this dilemma, perhaps due to her habitus (i.e., the fact that H might have disagreed with W on different occasions), W's strategy in this particular exchange is to make her disapproval of the quality of the food more acceptable to H and perhaps to SW as a ratified participant in this interaction. In doing so, after providing a positive account about the kebab in line 32, she pauses and uses a discourse marker "but" to foreshadow a disagreement.

The specific form of disagreement in W's talk consists of "but". Interestingly, here W did not provide any account of why she did not agree with SW and H. Rather, she approached her husband, while her voice was fading, saying "I bet you're saying no", as a preface, which has delayed the indirect posing of disagreement. Since H is listening to W and has identified a completion point with the pause at the end of W's utterance in line 32, H might have assumed that W did not like the "Barg" (another Persian style barbecued lamb) served in the restaurant in question. W continues by saying in line 33 "Was there a "but" today", as a mutually understood term suggesting the possibility of displeasure, to which H responds "was there a "bus", which seems to suggest that H is joking followed by a laugh at the end of his utterance in line 35. This was immediately followed by W's response in line 36 clarifying that she means "Was there a "but" or not", which is directly answered by H in line 37 "not for me".

H's move is a countermove to W's and potentially confronting and a threat to her face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which forces W to provide a fuller account of her disapproval of the quality of the food. In an attempt to maintain the floor and in applying an evaluation to her perspective, W indirectly challenges H's position for not being relevant. In doing so, she mitigates this through the use of "I think" and "by comparison" in line 38 prior to her account. The effect of this hedging is to modify the indirectness of her response and to make it less face-threatening and more personalised as evidenced in the reset of her

account in line 38 “I think by comparison last time we’ve eaten there, its kebab was much fatter and much tenderer”. Surprisingly, immediately after SW asks for confirmation in line 39 “was it” while maintaining an eye-contact with W, with which H disagrees. W asks H whether he disagrees through intonational emphasis on “no” in line 41, which is again countered by H in line 42 “no not for me”. So far in this segment, W’s attempt to persuade her husband into agreeing with her utterances has been unsuccessful. W again provides an account and explains that “Well they had a different chef today the chef I knew wasn’t there today”, which is again dispreferred by H in line 44 “I liked it”. In response to H, W formulates her response in a gist formulation “you like it” while maintaining the eye-contact with H. W uses the third person pronoun “he’s loyal” pointing her hand at H to redirect the disagreement back to SW as it seems that SW has initiated the topic. In doing so, W transfers the ownership of the nature of the conflict to SW, as a ratified participant, with the aim of negotiating the problem statement at the initial stage of the interaction. Furthermore, here, W’s response to SW is applied and expressed in “a hybrid discourse” (Candlin & Maley, 1997; Sarangi, 2000) which draws upon the discourse of “taste” and “commitment”, whose orientation is personal and pertinent to needs and feelings. The strategies adopted to bring the disagreement to settlement include hedging, delaying the disagreement, prefaces and the reformulations which have attempted to reframe the disagreement’s perception of the issue and the other parties involved (i.e., SW in the dispute). As can be observed above, when the context of argumentation is established, it would be very difficult to agree. However, it appears that it is crucial to contradict quickly and in a coherent manner. This possibly holds more for some cultures than for others.

Extract 7.3 is the continuation of their talk and the final phase, where the couple ended their shopping. This excerpt follows an issue across the boundaries of different contexts and interactions to demonstrate how intricate and complex even the simplest disagreement (critical moment) in a crucial site can be in interactional terms when it is intertextually considered and in the context of the discursive and other practices within which it is embedded. It will also illustrate how H’s discursive practices impacted upon the ways in which the critical moment in the local interaction unfolded and more importantly was managed and dealt with.

Extract 7.3

47	SW	in restaurant jadide raftin↑ (.) have you been to this new restaurant ((looking at both))
48	W	=na

no

49 SW tooye chiz(.)in posht baz shode↓koja baz shode↑
it's in the thingy ((forgot the name of the place))
((turning to SO, who is standing next to her serving another customer))

50 SO Castle Gray↓
Castle Gray ((pseudonym)) ((no eye-contact))

51 H Castle Hills↑
Castle Hills

52 SO na
na

53 SW =Castle Gray hamin posht
Castle Gray just behind us ((with a show of her hand))

54 H ahan Castle Gray e::: chi↑=Irani↑=cholokababi↑
oh Castle Gray really what is it Is it Iranian do they serve kebabs

55 SW bale↓(.)migan ke kheili salonesh ina kheili khub↓
yes they say it's got a big dining room
((her voice is fading as she is turning to grab a plastic bag from behind))

56 H bayd berim hemayat konim yaroro↓
we should go ((eat)) there and support ((financially)) the owner ((looking at SW))

57 SW salonesh migan kheili bozorge
they say it's got a big dining room ((back to her previous position))

58 H =bayad berim ye bar bayad berim bebinim che joriye (.)
we should go there we should go there at least once to see what's it like
bad shoro konim enteghad konim gheybat konim ina↓
then we should start criticizing and gossiping ((bitching)) and all that

59 W (.)[hhh
[hhh

60 khunasho] atish bezanim↓
setting his house on fire

61 SW chegadar shod↑
how much ((asking SO how much they have to pay))

62 SO 80 ta
$80

63 H khoda nakone khanoma beran onja(.)moodeshoon khub nabashe↓
God forbid if women went there and they were not in a good mood
=mian be hame migan in kababash didi cheghadar bad bood↓
they'd tell every single person that the kebabs they'd eaten there was terrible
((changing his voice as if he was mimicking a woman's voice))
(.) badbakht mi[she
he (the owner)'ll go bankrupt

64 SW hhh]
hhh]

65 H marde bayad dokoonesho bebande bere be ghoran↓
the owner has to close down his business
((W and SO are looking at H grinning: SW is busy bagging the items))

66 SW [hhh
[hhh ((no eye-contact busy with bagging the items))

67 W hhh]
hhh]

The conversation now turns to a new restaurant that has recently opened. Based on my observations, whenever a new restaurant or a new shop opens, either the shop-owners or the customers usually discuss it and provide one another with some comments. SW is asking the couple whether they have been to the new restaurant in line 47. The conversation goes on about the restaurant and the shop-owners inform the couple about the

location of the new restaurant. After this briefing, H provides an account in line 56 “We should go ((eat)) there and support the owner”. It seems that by “supporting” H refers to the contribution that he and his wife can make to the economic success of the new restaurant and of the Persian community itself. However, he may have conveyed a message of a different sort. It seems that the message (voice) that has been uttered is a particular level of criticism. Within this overall discourse, it appears that H is making an attempt to get his message across, which is one of levelling criticism at women in general. H uses a variety of discourse strategies in this excerpt to get the message across in all its complexity. He was both direct and explicitly indirect in communicating this information, without holding back in his criticism.

Additionally, H dominated the floor for most of this sequence while, at the same time, making use of long explanations, repetition (line 58), and occasionally explicit directives to convey his points. He begins by posing the problem and the reason for it explicitly. H’s use of the pronoun “we” in line 58 may have suggested that he avoided embarrassing W and SW (i.e., to maintain face). Nonetheless, despite the fact that he refrained from pointing the finger at the women present in the current interaction, he quite specifically and skilfully, though only for a short time, let the women off the hook according to his world view. As can be observed in line 58 “we should go there we should go there at least once to see what’s it like then we should start criticizing and gossiping and all that”, the message establishes a cause-effect relationship, leading to “setting his [the restaurant owner’s] house on fire”. Next, he provided very cogent and important reasons (as true for himself), which allowed for the possibility of critical moments (i.e., as the source of the problem at least he has been experiencing, using a deliberate, emphatic intonation pattern with the sarcastic use of “God forbid”). He then went on to analyse the problem further and identified what he surmised to be the source of the problem: “God forbid if women went there and they were not in a good mood, they’d tell every single person that the kebabs they’d eaten there were terrible ((changing his voice at this point as if he was mimicking a woman’s voice)) He’ll (the owner) go bankrupt”.

Excerpt 7.3 demonstrates how various social factors are intertwined with H’s handling of a series of critical moments and how he managed to move seamlessly between different subject positions. In the course of what seemed just less than a minute, H adopted direct and explicit strategies which also established his authority as “husband”. However, at the same time, he was aware of maintaining the face needs of SW and his wife by avoiding

placing the blame on the two female participants available in the interaction. He also ensured that he reduced the tension by raising a laugh and demonstrating that he is still the same "customer" to SW and the same "husband" to W, who could have a laugh by engaging in a jocular mood. These strategies all reflected his strong orientation to maintaining a balance between his social culture and his continued acceptance (at least) in the culture of the shop in the presence of other customers.

In Extract 7.3, there seems to be a moment of conflict (at least between the couple) that can potentially totally fracture the interaction. However, the husband skilfully brings in a wide range of experiences (criticising and gossiping in line 58, finding fault with the chefs and with their cuisine while changing his voice to mock women in line 63) in the interaction, which according to him is common among women, where he utilises these "rather" shared experiences to get his message across and communicate his ideas with his co-participants (i.e., levelling criticism at them). Here, the husband's utterances manifest and incorporate "family" intertextuality (see Kristeva, 1986). The construct of intertextuality implies "the insertion of history (society) to a text and of this text into history" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 39) in the sense that the text "absorbs and is built out of texts from the past" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 270). In fact, all texts are organised around elements of other texts and use such intertextual resources to varying degrees and for various purposes. As is evident, here H brings in the "family" discourse to evoke a particular discoursal value, (i.e., directing criticism at women) which is associated with some social meaning.

Furthermore, the close and functional connection between "family discourse" and "service encounter discourses" simultaneously provides an arena of interdiscursivity. Lexical phrases and chains in the use of the husband's utterances such as "criticising, gossiping, God forbid, terrible, bankrupt" illustrate many of the characteristics of an informal tenor (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Extract 7.4, the continuation of the previous interaction between W and H along with the shop-owners, offers another instance of critical moments in the shop. It immediately follows the excerpt analysed in the preceding sections, where SW brings to H's attention that it is not women who always have bad moods. Rather, men, too, do lose their tempers. This move from SW introduces significant changes in the underlying interactional process.

Extract 7.4

68 SW aghayoon chi↑ aghayoon mood bad aslan nadaran↑ na↑
how about men men don't have bad tempers do they

69 W =na nadaran↓ mood badeshon male mast
no they don't (grinning)) we have to put up with their bad moods
70 H didi ke alan sabet kardam
haven't you seen that I've just proven it
71 W mood badash[oon
their bad tempers
72 H "but" dare]
is there a "but"
73 W male mast(.)cholokababia mood khube inaro mibine↓ hhh
are ours the restaurants display their good tempers hhh
74 SW daste shoma dard nakone
((W is handing over her credit card to SW)) thank you ((the swiping machine noise))
((4.0)) the couple are taking the bagged items from SW
75 W aslan agha Reza man hich vagt nemitonam tasavor konam
I can never imagine Mr Reza
mood bad dashte bashe↓ shoma mitoni↑
having a bad temper can you ((to SW)
76 H =na
na
77 SW Reza↑
Reza ((looking at SO))
78 H =Khodaeesh na↓
I swear he doesn't have any
79 W be hamoon nesbat Babak ham hamoone↓ hhh
by comparison Babak is the same hhh ((a mocking smile)) ((faking laughter))
80 SW na mood badesho chera chandafe didam
no but I've seen him lose his temper several times
albate ba man khodaro shokr nabode↓ (.) vali didam mood badesho↓
but thank God he never got mad at me but I have seen him lose his temper
81 W gosh bede
just pay attention ((looking at H))
82 H khub mirize jaye dige biroon↓
well he takes/puts his temper somewhere else
all laughing
83 H zooresh ke be shoma nemirese manam ke zooram be ishoon nemirese ke↓
he is no match for you (SW) and I am no match for her (W)
84 W na man didam↓ hhh
but I've seen it ((that he's lost his temper)) hhh
85 SO akhe adam ba khanoma dar nemiofte [hhh
well you shouldn't mess around with women [hhh
86 W hhh man har] 2 roosho didam hhh
hhh I've seen both hhh
khub ba ezajatoon[hhh((both getting mad at me and at others)) OK we're leaving
87 SW hhh ghor]bane shoma khodahafez
hhh thank you goodbye
88 SO rooze khubi dashte bashin
have a nice day
89 H khoda hafez
good bye

In Extract 7.4, H is challenged both by W and SW. In other words, SW began this excerpt by framing the conflict created by pointing at H. It seems that they both team up against H

and it appears that SW is at times a partner with W in the interaction, rather than simply taking the role of a "passive" listener or participant. SW's contributions are challenging and argumentative in that she made an unfavourable comment on H's accounts in line 68 "How about men men don't have bad tempers do they". In this way, her comments are directly and carefully targeted at H with the use of the tag question at the end of her utterance "do they", to push her own suggestion. There is no doubt that SW speaks for herself and, at the same time, aligns with W. Furthermore, her contribution is of the same type as the articulation of the problem with family negotiations and discussions as it would occur in wife-husband interactions, for instance, in expressing or resolving disagreement. This is again an example of the interdiscursivity I have been referring to throughout this chapter, which seems to be legitimate and valid in the sense that SW is working out a strategy to possibly talk H out of his position.

In response to SW's account, W attempted to intervene in the interaction so as to control the turn-taking process preventing H from providing further unfavourable comments, where she selected herself as a speaker as her utterance is latched immediately to SW's in line 69 "=no they don't ((grinning)) we have to put up with their bad moods". Here, W's strategy did not work as H pushes his own suggestion**,** this time by referring back to W's previous comment "haven't you seen that I've just proven it" in line 70, discussed previously in Extract 7.2 in line 32. H in line 72 incorporated W's exact wording "is there a 'but'". Note here how H enters his disagreement turn with an overlap and that W allows H to complete his message despite W's initial move. The aim of repeating W's exact wording may suggest that H rejects the wife's behaviour, being more assertive and being presumably in a position of greater authority to the extent that once more the incorporating words function interdiscursively. Here, it seems that W's account positions her at the margin, which corresponds more powerfully with Persian culture, where men have the final say in family matters.

In addition, by making it (the incorporating words) more explicit, H has established a situation in which by far the preferred response of W is agreement with H's account as it is inherently difficult not to agree with one's own words. Furthermore, this is elucidated in the strategy H employed when talking to his wife in the previous extracts (i.e., showing no support for W's position and refusing to change or listen to her i.e., being dogmatic). By contrast, in response to H's comment, W's strategy in this particular exchange is to make generalisations and she appears to lay the blame on the wives in general. In other words,

she makes her comments seem like it is her world perspective in lieu of being a reflection of her husband present within this interaction, as evident in line 73 "[their bad tempers] are ours the restaurants display their good tempers hhh" followed by a laughter token. On performing this more off-record face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987), W redresses with positive politeness. It would be assumed from W's contributions that the couple might have not been in major disagreement while dinning in the restaurant. Interestingly, although SW makes the initial statement in this extract which constructs continuing disagreement between the couple, she seems to embody a lack of attention and not to be orienting to the basic practices of turn-taking rules. This offers one explanation for SW's lack of interest in the talk exchange as she was busy with bagging the items while looking downward at the items, as is evidenced in line 74.

Given the dilemma, in line 75 W drew a comparison, selecting SO as a role model, while choosing SW as her recipient "I can never imagine Mr Reza having a bad temper can you". To this end, she incorporates the phrase "bad temper" so as to include the previous topic along with her own assessment "I can never imagine". It seems that W's explicit aim in this segment is not only to implicitly criticize H for having bad tempers at home but also to set up a cordial relationship between her disputing husband and herself so as to stay out of trouble for a short period of time as W might have found it embarrassing in front of the shop-owners. Interestingly, rather than SW responding to W's question, H immediately intervenes and assesses W's account in line 76 where he agreed and said "no". SW responds "Reza↑" with rising intonation which seems to do specific work here (i.e., to continue with her talk: forward-oriented). However, once again H foreshadows SW's response in line 78 "I swear he doesn't have any" along with an oath "I swear", trying to assert sincerity, which is common among Persians (see Beeman, 2001). SW still has not provided her response to W's request. This time, W responds in line 79 "by comparison Babak is the same hhh ((faking laughter))" in order not to lose the floor. As can be seen here, the conflict remains from that of the previous extracts and the couple are explicitly challenging each other. Interestingly in this segment, both H and W are quite domineering. Of particular significance in this segment is the strategy of "concentrated effect" (Candlin, 1987) by means of which the powerful participant, H in this case, "intervenes in a series of events so as to alter their course" (Giddens, 1993, pp. 117-118) by incorporating various kinds of linguistic resources to reduce the challenge via:

a- *Phonological*: the use of falling intonation showing finality and not offering an option of response
b- *Lexico-syntactic*: use of short-answer response "no"
c- *Discoursal*: bald-on-recordness of face threatening act, interruption, turn seizure and turn taking management
d- *Proxemics*: hand movements by H, aversion of eye contact by H (see Candlin, 1987, p. 417).

In light of the responses provided by the couple, SW answers W's question providing an account: that she has seen her husband lose his temper but he did not get mad at her. When SW attempts to frame SO's behaviour or feelings, she modifies his behaviour (several times) and (not getting mad at me). The effect of SW's account is that W asks H that he listen to SW in line 81. Here, again, H continues to express his disagreement this time with both of the female participants in line 82 where H says "Well he puts his temper somewhere else" followed by laughter. By doing this, H responds negatively to all the suggestions made by the female participants, putting himself in the role of the source of the conflict. H's embodied communication during this phase includes shaking his head and evading eye contact, which suggest his disagreement with W. The laughter may have forced H to respond to his recipients "He is no match for you (SW) and I am no match for her (W)" so as to employ a defence strategy to achieve protection based on the account the female participants have provided. Here, H indexes the deeper past relationship to obtain his goal of protection. Even as SW's account in line 80 may suggest assisting the parties to move closer to an agreement, the couple continue to engage in adversarial construction using counterattack strategies around their positions. This is evidenced by W's account in line 84 where she says "hhh I've seen both ((both getting mad at me and at others))".

When W comments on how "even-tempered" SO is in line 75, her goal is to implicitly invite him to comment on why he does not lose his temper easily (i.e., giving him the floor, and, of course, to employ her voice of blame on H). However, SO was acting out the role of a by-stander without providing any comments on W's request. However, when H made his comment in line 83, SO intervenes and takes this opportunity to respond in a positional manner "Well you shouldn't mess around with women hhh" in line 85. Here, SO develops his adversarial account in direct opposition to H, implying that the disagreement (dispute) may have been a result of a misunderstanding on the part of H. SO's utterance exemplifies a gist/upshot, which infers an obstacle that has not yet been removed, expressing a modified version of the state of the problem. However, the preceding exchanges between SW and the couple have made clear that problems have arisen and SO's upshot infers that

the problem rests with H. Interestingly, after SO's upshot, H's lack of response to SO's utterance may have suggested that the disputant, the husband, has implicitly accepted the reframing offered by SO.

As has been evident throughout the interaction in the extracts discussed above, the couple left the shop without a mutually agreed-upon settlement. Most interestingly, the couple did not "give up" their positions in the process of entering into agreement.

7.4 Mediational Means as a Source of Conflicts

The FC went to the back of the shop and picked out dill pickles, Persian sweets and pistachios. She brought the items to the counter, where SO is standing.

Extract 7.5

FC: A non-Persian Female Customer in her early 30s SO: Shop-owner (the husband) MC: a Persian speaking Male Customer SW: The shop-owner's wife

1 SO ((FC putting the items on the counter)) thank you
2 FC are these ones ((pointing to the dates at the counter)) to taste↑
3 SO yeah↓
((no eye contact his voice is fading as if he was reluctant to answer)) ((checking the items FC has bought))
4 FC =yeah=I'll have one ((the noise of the swiping machine)) they're different↓
((SO is busy bagging))
5 SO that's a fresh date ((handing the receipt and the changes to FC))
6 FC ((While eating)) hm ((nodding))
10 seconds later ((FC is grabbing the items along with the receipt and the change))
7 FC thank you
8 SW thank you ((busy watching a program on her laptop and suddenly looking at SO))
((a new customer brings an item to the counter and SO is busy serving him))
9 MC khorma(.)kheyrati midin↑(.)bara chiye↑=bara raees jomhoriye↑
are you giving dates to charity what are they for for the new president ((smiling))
10 SO =na=ye aghayee pedaresh foot karde(.)sa[le
no they're for someone whose father passed away and he bought them in commemoration of his
11 MC aha ee]
oh I see
((MC suddenly changed his voice as if we was embarrassed))
12 SO pedaresh bood (.)
it was his father
13 MC ee khoda rahmatesh kone
Oh may he rest in peace
((SO is bagging the bought items))
14 SO (4.0)behesh goftam=goftam inja bezari baziya fekr mikonan male sampele(.)
I told him that if he bought a box of dates and put it at the counter people would think it's a sample
15 MC [are]
yes you're right
16 SO khorma gozashtim=baziya(.)mikhorano(.)migan agha in kara chiye
so I've put the dates here some are eating and saying "what is it"
=baziya ham mikhoran fateh ham mikhonan
and some are eating and are praying for him (for the guidance, lordship and mercy of God)
17 MC =ahan
I see
18 SO =Goft man niyatam moheme
he ((the customer whose father passed away)) said he wanted to do it for his father
to bezar=goftam bashe

and asked me to put the dates at the counter and I said sure I'd do it and I said sure I'd do it

19 MC bashe
yeah sure ((laughing))

20 SO man poolesho migiram mizaram=kari nadaram↓
as long as he pays for the dates, I'll leave them there at the counter I don't care (smiling))

21 MC (0.1) chegadar mishe
((laughing)) how much is it

22 SO $ 6.50
$ 6.50

23 MC (4.0)befarmaeed
here you are ((handing the money to SO)) ((holding some coins in his hand and counting them))

24 SO daste shoma dard nakone
thank you

25 MC pas bezarin ye fatehey baroosh befrestim↓
((picking a date from the box at the counter)) Ok then let me pray for him

26 SO Khoda raftegane hamaro biyamorze↓
((Closes the counter)) God bless all the dead

27 MC khoda rahmatesh kone(.)kheili mamnoon agha Reza
may he rest in peace (.) thank you Mr. Reza

28 SO ghorbane shoma rooze shoma bekhair↓
thank you and have a nice day

29 MC khoda hafez↓
good bye

Here, in Extract 7.5, the consumption of dates, as a mediational means, brings about a moment of conflict that needs to be extrapolated. To elaborate on this point a bit further, a brief background of the use of "dates" in the daily lives of Persians is essential. Irrespective of the rich nutritional content of dates that make them highly beneficial for health and can be found at the Persian breakfast table, dates in Persian culture in general are found to offer other different uses. For instance, when a person passes away, a memorial service is usually held at a mosque and at the deceased's house. Crying, weeping or other expressions of sorrow are expected and encouraged. Candles are lit, "*Halva"*, a sweet food made of crushed sesame seeds and honey, sugar and saffron is served, along with, tea and "*dates*" during the gatherings. Furthermore, during Ramadan, a month of fasting in the Islamic calendar, at sunset, families hasten for the fast-breaking meal, known as "*iftar"*. During "*iftar*", it is observed that dates are usually the first food to break the fast, which dates back to the tradition of the prophet Muhammad era where he broke fast with three dates (Stoeltje, 2009). Based on my observations in my fieldwork, during Ramadan, dates were almost an indispensable item that were purchased by almost all Persian speaking customers. In addition to that, dates are also used as donations for the purpose of commemoration of the deceased so that the deceased are forgiven for the sins they have committed. Therefore, the use of dates has a religious function among Persians.

Dates thus have a history and this can be discussed in two senses. First, dates have a history within the site of engagement of *Persia*, where the topic of tasting or purchasing of

dates is discussed. This history predates the FC's presence in the shop (Scollon, 2001b). In the second sense, dates have a history in the world that predates the Persian participants' knowledge and use of them. In a broader sense, the dates in the shop at some point were purchased by the shop-owners who of course remember why the dates came into their possession. Additionally, and more importantly, it is fair to assume that they purchased them out of some perceived need (i.e., to fulfil their customers' needs). This means that the shop-owners appropriated it through purchase to mediate actions in the shop (i.e., to response to their customers' needs).

However, it is evident that the dates, as the mediational means, carry with them a sociocultural history. While they do not in themselves define this Persian shop as a place where a unique use of dates is practised, they are, in essence, a mediational means that is inherent in the practice of the social actors' shopping experience in the shop as it materially embodies and reproduces a social structure embedded in *that* practice of the participants. As a semiotic structure, the dates display much about its use and practice at least in *Persia*. This history and social structure, Scollon argues, are presented to FC as given in this small action of purchasing or tasting of the dates. As such, to that small extent, it can be argued that FC, has internalised them as mediational means in her practice. The point is that even in this very brief moment of tasting dates, FC is becoming a competent user of dates. However, there is a dialectic between the external object and her internalisation of its use (Scollon, 2001b). As such, it should be noticed that the *appropriation* of the dates for tasting employs just some part of what Halliday (1978) might have called the meaning potential of the dates in that it is not at all the expected meaning. In this, we can see that the dates as a mediational means is appropriated by FC through practice.

Interestingly, it seems that SO was reluctant to answer FC's request in line 2 and therefore refused to provide her with more information as to what the main reason for the box of the dates sitting on the counter was. One reason for SO's failure in providing more information about the dates could have been because he saw a customer, labelled as MC in this extract, waiting to be served and therefore did not want to delay his business as evidenced by a contextualisation cue, with the falling tone on the "yeah", marking a statement rather than a continuation. Another explanation could have been that FC may not have understood the cultural meaning of the dates had among Persian had SO provided more information. However, interestingly, the interaction is characterised by FC opening the phase again in

line 4 by providing an account of why she takes one "=Yeah=I'll have one they're different↓", along with an assessment, which is taken up by SO further and he responded "That's a fresh date", implying there is no difference between these dates except that they are fresh. SO could have provided more information about the dates once again when FC was taking her purchased items on the counter, which lasted about 10 seconds. In closing the encounter, MC thanks SO in line 7, where SO did not respond and where instead SW, who was standing nearby, closed the interaction.

However, the same dates sitting on the counter within the same site of engagement have a different interpretation and a different history in the habitus of MC and of SO. When SO and FC were talking about the dates, MC was observing their interaction and was fully cognisant of the situation. As soon as FC left the counter, while putting his chosen items on the counter to pay, MC made enquiries about them as evidenced in line 9 "Are you giving dates to charity what are they for for the new president". Interestingly, here, at the same time, the dates are being used by MC within two other social practices namely "charity" and "festivity" (for the new president). At the time of data collection, exactly on the same day when the current interaction was being recorded, Mr Hasan Rouhani was announced as President of Iran. Therefore, MC proposed a further reason for the dates in his practice. However, it should be noted that in my mingling with MC, outside of the recording situation, I have brought to the MC's attention that dates in the practice of Persians is not used for festivity, to which he responded "he was just making fun". Immediately following, in response to MC, in line 10 SO responded that "No they're for someone whose father passed away and he bought them in commemoration of his father". In response to SO's account, MC was taken aback and immediately responded "Oh may he rest in peace" in line 13. As evident from the accounts SO has provided, it would be assumed that SO feels reasonably more comfortable conversing with MC than FC as to why the dates are on the counter. It seems that mutual understanding and common ground about a mediational means (i.e., here the date) provides an arena where interactants have demonstrated their personal involvement and interest and built up a positive atmosphere in the interaction when MC initiated the conversation.

Although not displaying the level of detachment present in his conversation with MC as opposed to FC above, this case also demonstrates a critical moment, though much less hostile, constructed by the narratives produced by SO. This may be because the primary issue with FC seems to be a damaged relationship (or a face-threatening act) and therefore

SO did not attempt to give FC the floor or at least to be open with her. Here, SO opens up to MC that he gets different types of customers, who put entirely different interpretations on the dates sitting on the counter. SO focuses on two types of customers, two specific dilemmas, and takes his position regarding each: “So I’ve put the dates here some are eating and saying “what is it” the others say, “and some are eating and are praying (for the guidance, lordship and mercy of God)” for him in line 16. However, what seems to be interesting is SO’s position on the mediational means (i.e., the date). As evidenced in line 20, SO views the date neither as a religious practice nor as a sample, but as a commodity in his shop. As such, it can be argued that the presence of a product such as the date, which none of the customers attempted to buy, obviously plays a central role in the ability and the cultural practice of the social actors to frame the actions in which they are engaged.

The example analysed in Extract 7.5 has demonstrated the partial aspect of mediational means in the sense that the dates, as discussed above, are being (locally) used in the first place to taste and are consumed on special occasions. These are for prayer and for a formal rite (i.e., for a deceased) in the second place. This practice might be viewed as secondary characteristics of the objects that have been exploited in making them as mediational means, not for tasting or praying, but for the cultural practices of each participant. In this case, it is Australian and Persian culture; to which we need to add the cultural perception of the transaction. In addition, it is mainly this mediational means, with its various interpretations for different social actors with different habitus, that links the multiple practices incorporated in the present nexus. In other words, as illustrated in Figure 18, the participants at this site of engagement have different perceptions on the mediational means (i.e., dates), which has led to critical moments. In all ways, one might be compelled to say, interactions, particularly in this ethnic shop, are marked by differences (my personal communication with Candlin). Four dominant discourses have emerged and at the same time merged with the practice of service encounters at this site of engagement namely: the practice of a service encounter, the practice of tasting, the practice of praying, and the practice of selling dates, all leading to shifting from one possible discourse to another.

As a shop-owner, SO adopts the *economy discourse* by paying close attention to the thriving of his own business rather than to his customer's as mentioned in line 20. SO conveys that as long as the deceased father's customer pays, he will provide the dates for offering on the counter. Previous studies in the domain of service encounters have viewed such interactions as mainly consisting of simple business transactions.

Here, the *economy discourse* converges with the *transactional discourse*. However, as a member of the Persian community, SO has adopted the *religious discourse* as a common practice among Persians after someone's passing in line 26 along with the male customer. In fact, there are more discourses that could be teased out, but these four discourses are primarily merged with the practices that make the frozen action (Norris, 2004) of the sitting dates on the counter possible. Hence, the concrete frozen action of the dates sitting on the counter was not only possible through the merging with the various practices, but also by the various converging discourses.

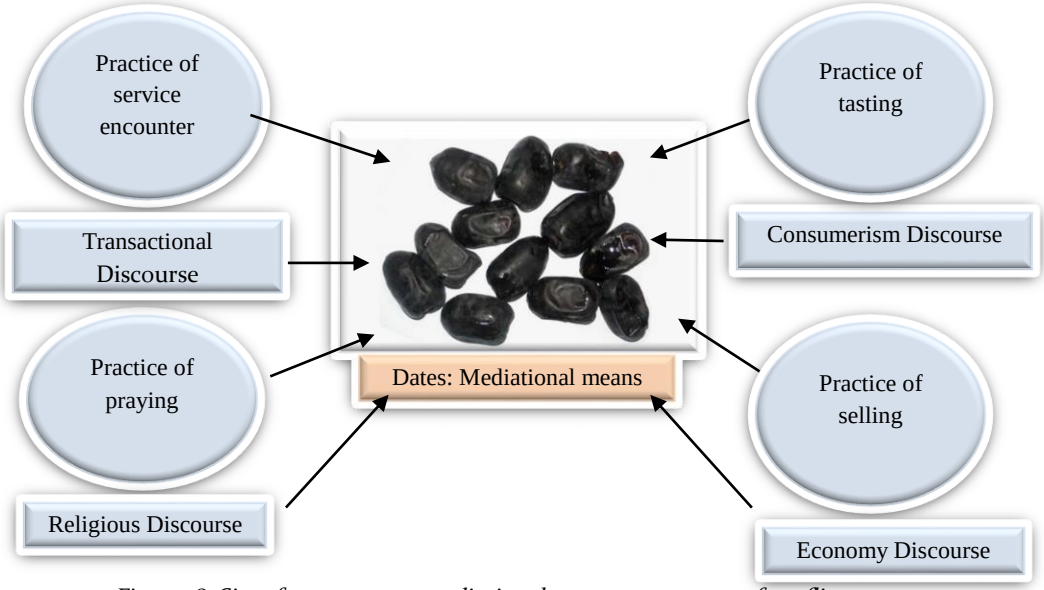

Figure 18: Site of engagement: mediational means as a source of conflict

In Extract 7.6, a couple in their early 30s, entered the shop. After greeting the shop-owners, who were standing behind the cash-register, they made their way to the back of the shop.

In order to understand what exactly is going on in this extract, one needs to draw on the mediated action (i.e., the action the social actors are performing in this site of engagement) in that this approach expands the discourse analysis to the inclusion of other kinds of discourse that ultimately gives rise to the issues (disagreement, critical moments) with which I will conclude, that of gaining an understanding of discourses interwoven during an interaction.

Extract 7.6

A Couple: H: The Husband W: the wife SW: Shop-owner's wife

1 H e danestaniha (1.0)
wow here's the "Danestaniha" Magazine ((both are looking at the cover))
khanome Reza↑ film (.)filme ghadimi nadarin↑
MS. Reza are there any old movies available ((here "old movies" refer to "Persian old movies"))
2 SW (2.0)filmaro [hamaro forokhtim
we've sold out all the movies ((looking down and busy ringing up the purchase))

3 W zadi too kare film ghadimi]hhh
he's been looking for old movies recently hhh
4 H dashtin ghadimi akhe↓
but you've had old movies ((eye contact to SW))
5 SW hama[sh
all of them ((eye contact to H))
6 H na↓]
haven't you
7 SW nazdike 1000 ta film dashtim hamaro forokhtim↓(.)
we've had nearly 1000 movies but we've sold them out cause ((the noise of bagging and no eye contact))
chon dige kesinemikhare↓
nobody buys them anymore
8 W =hame online mikharn↓
everybody shops online these days
9 SW =hame bale (.) ya download mikonan ya↑(1.0)
yes they do or they'll download or ((bagging other items))
10 W aha
yeah ((while nodding))
11 SW (3.0) bejash ghableme gozashtim
((Bagging the purchased items)) instead we've replaced them with stock pots ((eye contact))
12 W =[hhh
=[hhh
13 H hhh
hhh
14 SW hhh]
hhh]
15 W kheili khube↓
very good

If this mediated action is to be analysed, then the couple's as well as the shop-owner's (in this case SW's) service interaction will be the first point of departure. Here, the action of service interaction (shopping in an ethnic shop) is a partially sequential aggregate of actions performed by two different but not entirely coordinated social actors. The couples pick out the items from the shelves and bring them to the counter and the shop-owner rings them up. They have brought together these two broad actions into the single action, service interaction, and they also carried out these two actions in a largely separate set of individual actions.

From the perspective of mediated discourse analysis, it is essential that this central point of the coordination be mediated by the mediational means, in this case, the material objects available in the shop, the "Danestaniha Magazine' and the "old movies". Thus, one can argue that it is the mediational means, the "Magazine" and the "old movies", that creates the cohesive work in conjunction with the discourse. That is, the cohesion that can be seen in the discourse in the adjacency pair of the "are there any old movies" in line 1 and the following "We've sold out all the movies" in line 2 is not only in the definite article "the" in "the movies" in line 2 uttered by SW but also in the properties of the old movies and their characteristics and in the habitus of the social actors, all of whom know the

characteristics of the old movies. Therefore, as can be observed, this is not just a shopping place where only business oriented discourse is displayed. Rather, this Persian shop provides customers, mainly the Persian speaking customers, with ample opportunities which can serve to ascribe social identities for the customers and the shop-owners as discussed in Chapter 5 of the current thesis.

The first critical moment in Extract 7.6 was the initial perception of "nobody buys them anymore" in line 7 produced by SW. In response to SW's account, W said "Everybody shops online these days". Interestingly, this critical moment was not actually indicated by any verbal communication but created an opportunity for the participants to demonstrate what their interpretation was on the mediational means being discussed and what strategies they employed to help them resolve the disagreement. In response to W's comment, SW seemed to display cooperation and exhibit alignment with W "Yes they do or they'll download or" in line 9. However, SW did not desire to continue with this rather "*delicate topic*" as is evidenced in her lack of eye-contact with the customers and in her not completing her sentence followed by a rising intonation and a pause of (1.0).

Additionally, interestingly, as soon as the couple left the shop, I attempted to mingle with SW and to get an insider's sense of the reason why she was not interested in continuing with the couple. SW confided to me that a cursory look at the "YouTube" search can reveal thousand movies that can be downloaded for free. Furthermore, she mentioned that she had customers coming to the shop and supplying her with instructions as to how to download Persian old movies for free on the internet. Interestingly, W offers a token agreement (yeah) in line 10 and displays alignment with SW's comment where H, who initiated the talk, did not make any comment on this. In expressing dissatisfaction with, most possibly, her customers who download movies illegally, SW adds new information "instead we've replaced them with stock pots" in line 11, followed by laughter from the couple and SW.

Here, in the utterance "they'll download or" in line 9 produced by SW, there is a mutual understanding among the participants including myself, as a by-stander, that implicates in what is mutually achieved or what is shared. Here, discourse serves as evidence (Candlin, 2002a) which makes this intersubjectivity obvious. Fundamental to this view is that mutuality is contingent (Bakhtin, 1986) in that it relies upon the local activity or upon the immediate context of interaction. Intersubjectivity is also socio-culturally mediated (Fairclough, 1992a; Scollon, 2001b) in the sense that it should not be explored in a vacuum

or in the abstract. Rather, it needs to be constantly connected to the ideologies, stances and practices of the participants involved, as can be evidenced in Extract 7.6.

The foregoing scenario culminates with the following extract in which SW produces the phrase "downloading movies". SW and I were talking about this issue at the back of the shop. As discussed in Chapter 3, the backstage is a place where people say things that they might not say in front of the shop-owners or in the presence of other customers. As such, SW seemed to be confiding to me with a very quiet voice. Concurrently, a young male customer, in his early 30s, was overhearing our talk. As soon as he heard the word "downloading movies", he intervened and commented on that. Unfortunately, there was a couple nearby and they refused to be recorded and thus I had to have the recording device switched off. The male customer believed that the word "download" in Persian, while grinning, has a negative connotation as the authors, singers etc… copyrighted works are not protected. It should also be noted that in a recent program on Iranian TV channels, that I was watching, one of the country's leading book publishers was complaining that most books in Iran are readily available as PDFs and therefore the publishers are not interested in investing in having books published.

This has encouraged me to reconsider the issue carefully during my fieldwork. In doing so, I have attempted to mingle with the customers and to bring up the "download" issue into our discussion. Interestingly, the practice of almost all of the customers, though I have discussed this with many other people outside the shop and with many in Iran on the phone, is to have given into the illegal downloading of Persian movies and materials.

Extract 7.6 has demonstrated that the participants, myself included, in *Persia* have developed an ability around viewing "downloading" as a *process* through meta-discursive terms (see Iedema et al., 2009), referring to "language that abstracts away from the here-and-now". The authors argue that the term "culture" would not be a better "fit" here as it reifies norms and relationships (p.297). However, meta-discourse re-examines the aspects of the situated work and provides an arena for common ground. Meta-discourse has enabled the participants in Extract 7.6 to recreate and address how they carried out "downloading" and what role they played in it.

In Extract 7.7, H is attempting to close the encounter. In service encounters, and in my data, the purchase in business encounters is often followed by a final sequence comprising a service closure episode and a farewell. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) observe that closings

have a sectional design that can continue with (or last) four turns at talk. This closing prototype, which is partially illustrated from lines 16 to 23, brings together the mutual and lengthy suspension of a turn's transition relevance. A first move to closing in line 16, offered by H, suggests closing. Here, H thanks SW and asks how much he needs to pay. SW takes up a second closing offer in line 17 which entirely legitimates the production of a first terminal component. These two closing turns are employed by close components, which offer closings in a closing implicative environment.

Extract 7.7

```
16  H   =daste shoma Dard nakone (.)          chegadar shod jarimam↑
        thank you so much ((taking the purchased items from SW))   how much do I have to pay
17  SW  $33.60↓
        $33.60↓
18  H   (4.0)                              befarmaeed
        ((taking out the credit card from his wallet)) here you are ((handing over to SW))
19  SW  credite↑
        is it credit ((eye contact))
20  H   =bale lotfan
        yes, please ((eye contact))
21  SW  emza↑ ya pin↑
        signature or pin
22  H   (.) u:::m (1.0) har do↓
              um            both
23  SW  har joftesh↓
        both of them ((a quick eye contact while SW swipes the card))
        ((when H enters the pin, SW turns her face to the other side))
24  H   (3.0) Ann hamishe mige tasmimeto begir
        ((looking at SW)) Ann ((immediately turning back and looking at H)) is always telling me
        to decide which one I'd prefer to use
        =akhe man hamishe fekr mikonam↓
        cause I keep thinking ((whether it's a signature or pin)) before paying
25  SW  hu hu
        hu hu ((as if she's making fun of H))
26  W   (.) tasmime chiro begiri↑
        ((looks at the CDs sitting on the shelves behind SW and suddenly turns to H)) what should you
        decide
27  H   bara inke man[pin daram va emza
        cause          I  both have a pin and a signature
28  SW                   ke emza ya pin↓]
        ((eye contact to W))  Whether it's a pin or a signature
29  W   are =hamishe mige either↓                  kh[ub
        yes ((nodding)) he's always saying "either" ((eye contact to SW)) well
30  SW                                                    hhh hhh
                                                          hhh hhh
31  H                                                     hhh
                                                           hhh
32  W                                                      migam]bara    hhh
        hhh
                                                   I    keep    telling    him    ((the
        husband)) hhh
        oona ham ke farghi nemikone yekisho
        it doesn't make any difference to them ((the shop-owners))
33  SW  hhh
        hhh
34  W   bezan↓ya hhh bego pin ya signature(.)rahat kon khodeto↓
```

choose one of them either hhh a pin or a signature and get yourself off the hook
(2.0) ((SW closing the cash register))

35 SW fekr konam bara har dotarf(.)pinzadan uh rahat[tare
I think ((handing the receipt over to H)) for both the customer and the shop-owner pin would be easier

36 W are
pin]khe:::ili
yes pin is very
rahate↓ (.)vali khub migan secure nis onghdara ke ma[slan
convenient but well some say it's not as secure as

37 H pi:::n↑]
((eye contact to W)) pin

38 W signature hast Chon um mitonan bebinan dige invar onvaro↓(.)
a signature cause it could easily be seen from both sides ((of the person entering the codes))

39 H aha↓
aha

40 W ke che pini zadi(.)signature(.)
what pin was entered with signature

41 H uhm
hm

42 W na nemitonan hamishe taghlid konan↓
they can't always forge it

Rather than providing terminal components such as goodbye rituals, the participants go on to discuss the method of payment H prefers to pay. When SW asks H whether he uses a pin and signature, H pauses and uses a hesitation marker "Um" in line 22 followed by another pause and "both". It seems that the use of "um" here is "a turn-holding device not only suggesting I don't remember and give me some time to remember" but also meaning "I'm in my turn" (Gardner, 2001, p. 15). This is where the critical moment in this extract occurred in that H might have realised that his brief pause needs an explanation. In so doing in line 24, he quotes his wife "Ann is always telling me to decide which one I'd prefer to use cause I keep thinking before paying" in order to justify the delay in responding to SW's enquiry. Here, the strategy H employs echoes Foucault's significant element in discourse analysis, namely that of intertextuality: "there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others" (Foucault, 1972, p. 98), to which Fairclough (1992a) refers as " discourse representation", which is marked with devices such as quotation marks or reporting clauses (p. 107) (Anna is always telling me in line 24 above). This part of H's discourse represents what is newsworthy which H has employed so as to reduce the burden, it seems, H has imposed on SW. What is found in the discourse representation of H then is a merging of the voice of e H himself with his wife immediately after quoting his wife in line 24, which involves H adapting it and translating it into his own utterance.

Interestingly, SW appeared not to accept this rather apologetic response as evidenced in line 25 "hu hu". W, who was busy cursorily looking at the CDs sitting on the shelves

behind SW, did not understand what her husband was talking about and asked him about what he should be deciding in line 26, where both SW and H respond whether he should use a pin or a signature. In response to that, W has established an appropriate alignment, both verbally and non-verbally, to the discourse in progress in line 29 “Yes he’s always saying “either”, followed by laughter from SW. W continued providing more accounts about her husband’s use of the credit card in lines 32 and 34, where she claims that her husband needs to choose either as it may not make any difference to the shop-owners or their assistants. This way, he makes it easier for himself. Following Tannen (2006), it should be emphasised here that W and H might have been discussing this and W has moved the argument from the private domain of conversation with her husband to the public domain of conversation before SW and the researcher along with other customers in the shop. This was again followed by SW’s laughter in line 33. W has reframed and (might perhaps have) rekeyed this minor disagreement by using it as a recourse in a two-way conversation with SW. W has rekeyed it in that she was laughing at the counter and the frame now seems to be a mild complaint, because W does not contest H’s comment in line 24.

However, a change in footing has taken place in line 35 where SW’s account has posed a counterclaim to W’s comment. Krainer (1988) defines challenge as “the expression of a negative judgement of the speaker toward a past or present act”. This is preceded by the pause (2.0) before SW took the turn and by her use of the preface as a mitigating device (see Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998) in line 35. With this counterclaim, SW has established an alternative claim which expresses disagreement with the prior turn. Nonetheless, as with SW, W offers a token agreement “Yes pin is very convenient” in line 36 before turning it into a counterclaim. W’s token agreement and the pause between her first account and her second account serves as a preface suggesting dispreference. By partially agreeing with SW, W acknowledges SW’s contribution and shows a short-term cooperation. After the pause, W provides a new account and disagrees with SW to attempt to continue the tone of the opposition that was initiated by SW. SW’s counterclaim may function as an obstacle discouraging SW from providing further comments on the topic. This strategy seems to be workable, however temporarily, as SW did not provide a reason in support of her previous account in line 35.

SW’s silence in the next turns in this extract begs the question as to why she employed such a strategy. One possible explanation for this is that W merged a new discourse that of

secure (in line 36) in support of her stance towards the use of signature when paying by credit cards, which inherently creates a critical moment given the concept of the term "*secure*". The point here is that W's careful choice of "secure" demonstrates an attempt to include a strategy from another related discourse, at least relevant to methods of payment, to place increased emphasis on the importance of signature in lieu of pin[1]. This is an example of interdiscursivity. The role of such interdiscursivity in constructing discourse is not that W's use of the discourse "secure" is accidental, but rather her contribution is a valid component in this site of engagement to the extent which the couple control turn-taking in this segment precluding SW, though temporarily, from taking a turn.

In Extract 7.8, SW has focused on the impact of W's account in Extract 7.7, in which SW seems to be responding defensively with a pursuit of a problem orientation to a solution orientation. As discussed in the extract above, W would prefer her husband to use signature when paying by credit card as she finds it more secure. Perhaps, in order to gain her customers' trust, SW has provided a narrative (a small story) of how the husband-wife team (the shop-owners) deal with this issue when the customers pay by their cards. Interestingly, SW has shown the action of not watching H entering the pin code when H was paying by credit card in line 23 from Extract 7.7 above. Despite the fact that SW's action seems to be the most primitive and rudimentary activity, it is treated as fundamental. It seems that the participants in this extract are increasingly negotiating through dialogue and that they refer to the 21st century lifestyle, where trust and security come first. As evident in the extract, the discourse of trust and security have been activated.

Extract 7.8

(6.0) ((SW helping the couple to take the purchased items from the counter))

43 SW hala(.)inja ke ma(.)um(.)romoono mikonim invar ye vaght(.)
well ((looking at the both)) we turn our faces to the other side
((turning her face toward the shelves behind her)) so that
44 W ahan
oh I see
45 SW kart estefade mikonan=har ki estefade mikone=ya man ya Reza(.)
when they pay by credit cards anybody who pays by credit cards me or Reza ((SO))
soratemoono bar[migardonin
we turn our faces to the other side
46 W bale↓]
yes
47 SW ye khanomi az Iran omad goft(.)soratetoono chera barmigardonin↑
we had this female customer ((a visitor)) coming from Iran and she said to me why I turn my face
((SW means when the customer enters the pin))

[1] Option of signature and pin here predates more in Australia in August 2014 where signatures were phased out, for security reasons.

48 H =too Iran mi[gan
in Iran they say
49 SW oon az
someone from
50 H pinet chande↑
what's the pin
51 SW hamoon] posht mige ke (.)ram[zet
behind the counter says your code
52 W hhh hhh
hhh hhh (giggling))
53 SW chiye↑]
what is
54 W hhh
hhh
55 SW khub↑
well
56 W are hhh Iran hehe hamintore↓
yes hhh ((exactly)) it sounds like Iran
57 SW asan man bavarm nemishod
I couldn't believe it at all
58 H =are too [Iran
yes in Iran
59 SW age] khub ramzeramze=pas [chera
if you're using a code then why
60 W hhh
hhh
61 SW miporsi chiye]
are you asking what the code number is
62 W are hhh
exactly hhh
63 SW az hamoon tah dad mizane ramzet oonam mige
from behind the counter he calls what the code number is and the customer says it out loud
64 W =mige hhh
and he says it out loud
65 SW jolo hame mizanan↓
and they enter the pin in front of everybody
66 W hhh daghighan↓
hhh exactly
67 H dastetoon dard nakone
thank you so much
68 SW ghorbane shoma
thank you
69 W kheili mamnoon
thanks a lot
70 SW rooze khub dashte bashin
have a nice day
71 H moafagh bashin
good luck
72 W moafagh bashin
good luck
73 SW soeechetoonam yadetoon nare
don't forget to take your car keys ((pointing to the keys on the counter))
74 W mamnoon
thanks ((she takes the keys))
75 SW khoda hafez
good bye

In this extract, examples of discourses from non-institutional spheres (Bakhtin, 1986) have permeated the institutional discourse. This is what Fairclough (Fairclough, 1993) has

called the ‘conversationalization’ of public discourse, by which he means “a colonization of the public domain by the practices of the private domain” (p. 140). This conversationalization, Fairclough argues, is manifested as *synthetic personalization* comprising ‘the simulation in institutional settings of the person-to-person communication of ordinary conversation’ (p. 141). In doing so, SW combines within and incorporates into the existing discourse (i.e., the transactional discourse intertextuality and interdiscursivity to employ a strategy that is most effective and has most value. In effect, one needs to explore the couple’s responses to SW’s account. As can be observed, W employs laughter as an affiliative function to align herself with SW. The laughter does not simply mean that W is aligning with SW. Rather, it means that W knows exactly what SW is referring to in the sense that W can picture it due to her habitus as is evident in her utterances in line 52, 54, 56 and 60, and 62. This is what Fairclough refers to as members’ resources” (Fairclough, 1992a) in the sense that the use of the credit card in Iran is limited by the specific nature of the social practice in Iran and perhaps of the social setting where it is used as a method of payment, which determines “what elements of members’ resources are drawn upon” (p. 80).

Although the existing discourses, those of security and transactions are different, they have a common interest in the strategic uses of language to take control of the process and to a certain degree produce outcomes. Whether the outcome of these conflicts is a resolution, a decision, or a further dispute, (the latter might lead shop-owners to lose their customers) these social practices organise the discoursal and linguistic resources to accomplish their institutional purposes (see Candlin & Maley, 1994).

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the potential and actual critical moments that have occurred in *Persia*, utilising MDA to explore in detail the intertextual patterns of communication in the shop within a discursive community of practice framework. In this chapter, I have identified, analysed and described some critical moments taking place in the crucial sites of *Persia* as well as the communication challenges the participants faced. In addition, I have attempted to examine the discursive strategies the participants in the shop had at their disposal to manage the occurrences of problematic talk (critical moments) that inevitably arose in their shopping experiences. These moments of conflict have stemmed from different ideological differences which ultimately gave rise to different ways of thinking.

This study has demonstrated that the theoretical underpinnings used is a robust one. Previous studies of service encounters seem to have remained at the level of textual analysis in the interaction, and hence not taking into account the significance of differential mediational means in the shops in question. As discussed previously in this chapter, mediational means that of "dates" and "old movies" in Extracts 7.5 and 7.6 respectively seemed to be one of the sources of the critical moments in the shop. This focus on the mediational means has produced overlapping discourses and practices that merged with one another resulting in not only the identity of the participants but also a lack of particular knowledge about or familiarity with the cultural tools available in such settings. Through this mediational means, which shows how frozen actions are embedded in objects, the analyst can get a sense of how the historical body of the participants portrays a possible occurrence of a moment of conflict in the social world.

Additionally, I have argued throughout this chapter for strategies the participants have adopted to resolve conflicts, in which the participants have viewed them as a "tool box" of members' resources (Fairclough, 1992a). Many of these resources are inherently intertextual and interdiscursive. As the data and examples in this chapter have demonstrated, these elements have been imported from other disciplines and institutions to manage conflicts, however temporarily.

The particular ways in which the participants achieved this outcome would not generally be considered to be a 'textbook model' of effective workplace communication. Nevertheless, as the various analyses above have illustrated, the shop-owners' and their customers' skilful management of a complex discursive repertoire allowed them to take control when and where required, while also paying explicit attention to the face needs of their interlocutors. Through the deliberate use and interplay of a range of strategies, those of intertextuality, mitigating devices, and interdiscursivity, they simultaneously aligned and further reinforced the high solidarity culture characteristic of this particular community of practice (i.e., Persian shops). This finding has important implications for better understanding of interactions in ethnic shops as *"what is it that is going on here"* imbricates a complex range of imputations of identity that go far beyond the provision of service.

Chapter 8: Narrative as talk-in-interaction

8.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore the significance of storytelling in the context of *Persia*. Such stories are clearly observable in my study of actual talk in interaction as, while shopping, customers and shop-owners share with each other their daily lives. Examining narrative as talk-in-interaction offers another angle from which to view how my participants negotiate social belonging in a larger discourse unit. Here, I will focus on the positioning of narratives in the everyday lives of the shop-owners and their customers. In what follows, I will very briefly review previous work on "narratives (small stories) and show how and why the participants in *Persia* use narratives during their shopping occasions. Narratives in my data will be investigated in turn as small stories, a mode of knowledge, accounts, mediational means, narrative at the site of engagement and finally narrative as identity work.

8.2 Narratives as small stories in *Persia*

The telling of stories is a fundamental activity and a ubiquitous part of social life, through which participants in a social field recount and reflect on their past experiences. These mundane activities (storytelling) that are narrated and produced in interaction suggest that we live in a "storytelling society" through which we make sense of our lives (Denzin, 2000). In the context of *Persia*, for instance, customers along with the shop-owners use small stories to make sense of their life experiences. In doing so, they jointly and continuously negotiate what is being done and said through small stories, thus implementing a wide range of social actions (i.e., complaining, doing identity work and so forth).

However, a glance at the literature concerning oral narratives suggests that there have been debates about how best to contextualise and research narratives. The result of these debates is the emergence of two distinct theoretical positions, namely the conventional and canonical paradigm, and social interactional approach. From the first perspective, known as Labovian sense (i.e., presenting interesting or unusual events), a narrative is defined as a way "of presenting past experience by a sequence of ordered sentences that present the temporal sequence of those events by that order (Labov & Fanshel, 1977, p. 105). Labov (1972) observed that the narratives he collected contained a number of components. A "fully formed" narrative "begins with an orientation". In *orientation clauses*, the narrator

attempts to "identify in some way the time, place, persons, and their activity or the situation" (p. 369). In *complicating action clauses*, narrators tell the audience what the main action in the story was and finally in *evaluation clauses*, they provide the audience with a response to the "so what" question (i.e., the motivation behind telling the story). Taken together, these narrative components share several features. First, all narratives have a trajectory. They present a problem and then make an attempt to seek solutions to it. They have beginnings, middles and ends, and include "the recounting of events that are displaced spatially and, crucially, temporally" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 133).

From the second theoretical perspective, the social interactional approach (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008a), which is tuned with Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), narratives are regarded as talk-in-interaction and as social practice in the sense that the talk surrounding narratives has a significant bearing not only on the storytellers but also on the recipients (Goodwin, 1984; Sacks, 1992) and on the unratified participants present in the interaction. This approach aligns with the objectives of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology in that it focuses on the methods (accounts) that participants in *Persia*, for instance, attempt to produce, shedding light on their social world. In other words, Garfinkel argues in favour of "methodological collectivism", maintaining that participants in (Bourdieu's) social field make joint sense of their social world and that they do so methodologically utilising social procedures or methods that they share. In fact, these methods are shared by members of specific cultures and subcultures (i.e., Persian-speaking customers along with the shop-owners). To this end, one needs to add indexicality in the process of contextualising and the analysis of narratives. Indexicality suggests that the sense people make of a situation or of an account is a product of the experiences and expectations they bring to that situation (see Heritage, 1984). As a result, all interpretive work is tightly linked to the situation, its ecology and in fact to the habitus of the participants involved.

Whilst it is worthwhile to raise attention to investigate narratives as talk-in-interaction as pointed out above, it seems that this view of narrative warranted by talk-in-interaction is empirically limited (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008a), hence in need of a better methodology known as "narrative as social practice", which encompasses "larger social processes" (p.379). This view of narrative is in tune with Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) because mundane activities such as shopping in an ethnic shop can readily inform us about social practice, action and discourse occurring in that context. In addition,

viewing narratives as social practice can better position us in "the flow of everyday lived experience" (p. 382).

In what follows, I will analyse how the events of storytelling occurring within a site of engagement in *Persia* pertain to larger social processes. Additionally, I attempt to bring to the fore the importance of the functions of such small stories in ethnic shops similar to *Persia* that are pertinent to the roles and relationships negotiated by individuals within the shop.

8.3 Narrative as a mode of knowledge

In the following excerpt, a non-Persian customer, in her late 30s, (FC) who lives nearby and occasionally visits the shop for a short chat, narrates a small story about a previous shopping experience that she had in a large mainstream supermarket (i.e., Coles). Recently, she had been to a Coles store and is telling SW about "a whole snapper" she purchased there. In Extract 8.1, FC first acknowledges the modality of the story and then negotiates the meaning of the story in a broader context. For analysis purposes, the excerpt is split into three sections that immediately follow on from each other (Extracts 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3). The divisions between the excerpts are rather arbitrary, but they overlap with my assessment of where changes in sub-categories take place as well as changes in the characteristics of the narrative construction.

Extract 8.1

FC: a Female Customer in her late 30s SW: Shop-owner's wife (For confidentiality, all names quoted in this chapter are pseudonyms)

```
        ((SW is busy dusting the shelves near the fridge))  ((FC saw some canned tuna))
1   FC  oh you know what I get today↓(.)um(.)I was at Coles(.)and(.)
        they have on special(.)snapper↓(1.0)it was nine dollars a
        kilo↓(0.2)
2   SW  o:::[h    ((raising her eyebrows, showing surprise))
3   FC      fi]sh
4   SW  fish [yeah ↓ ((continues dusting))
5   FC       yeah]
6   FC  there's a wh[ole one
7   SW              nine dollars]
8   FC  =nine dollars a kilo
9   FC  there's there's a whole snapper(.)for five dollars or something
10  SW  oh ((showing surprise)) that's good=how much is the normal price↑
11  FC  u:::m(.)up here
         ((with a gesture of her hand towards a shop near the Persian shop, where fish is sold))
        um (.) then it's like (.) twenty dollars a ki[lo
12  SW                                                o:::h]
13  FC  for(.)snapper fillet↓
14  SW  hm
15  FC  um(.)and at Coles the other one was (2.0) u:::m (1.0)
```

```
I think was about(.)fifteen dollars a kilo↓(1.0)
of course that was fillet↓
```

In order to gain a finer understanding of the discourse and more importantly of the action, (the main focus of the current thesis), taking place in this extract, and in line with Wertsch (1991) and Scollon (2001a), we need to disregard the discourse, the language, as well as the topic of the interaction (the snapper) and focus our attention on what is referred to as mediated action. In this sense, the focus will disregard shopping, storytelling, and eventually cooking the snapper, but rather attends to the mediational means as tools for carrying out mediated action. Whilst these elements or modalities appear to be simple at first sight, for MDA, anything in the process of nexus of practice needs to be taken account of so that one can obtain a better understanding of "*what is it that is going on here*?" (Goffman, 1974, p. 8). In this sense, with the focus on social action, "virtually any means that is drawn on in producing social action is a mediational means and so a useful site for studies of mediated discourse' (Scollon, 1999, p. 153). This aligns with what De Fina (2008) has recently called for:

> in order to understand any kind of narrative activity, it is necessary to uncover through ethnographic observation the particular and often subtle links that connect narrators and the narratives they tell with the social activities in which they are engaged (p.425).

Therefore, this utterance begs the critical question "what made FC recount this *small story* about snapper?" As referred in the transcription, SW was busy dusting the shelves and FC approached her and noticed on the shelf next to the fridge some canned tuna with price tags on them. Each can of tuna cost $4.50. This is where MDA becomes prominent, where action as the social actor performs it becomes privileged, not the discourse nor the wording. Here, the site of engagement, where this small story is being told and taking place, creates a stage where FC is invited to share her story with SW. This stage has a clear opening and closing (Norris, 2011). It can be assumed that if this interaction had occurred at the counter, this storytelling about snapper might not have been uttered.

Turning to the analysis of the interactional engagement between FC and SW, one can notice the elements of a typical narrative in this extract. By producing "Oh you know what I get today" in line 1, FC successfully attracts the attention of SW as FC diverts SW's attention away from what she has been busily doing (i.e., dusting the shelves). In doing so, SW rapidly ceased the cleaning of the shelves temporarily to listen to FC's story. According to Sacks, (1992), an utterance like "Oh you know what I get today" can fulfil

two functions. In the first instance, it is heard as a preface (p.19) which orients its recipient to an upcoming story. Additionally, such a preface is frequently acknowledged in interaction by the response "what?" (Silverman, 1998, p. 116) Hence, the first speaker maintains the floor by being required to continue (Sack, 1992, p. 226). As can be seen, the story preface arouses the expectations about the activity to follow as a storytelling of a past event. This is being developed to a neat story preface turn where the permission will be obtained to allow the telling to take place (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008).

However, SW, at the end of the story preface, did not respond to it linguistically as evident in the falling intonation (↓) and the pause (.) in line 1, where the recipient is expected to act upon it, (i.e., to evaluate the story). It is argued that SW's cessation of the dusting of the shelves and her eye contact with CF has already signalled the approval of SW to continue with her small story. Perhaps, this finding is in stark contrast to one of the most influential conversation-analytic findings which is concerned with gaining the verbal approval from the interlocutor for the actual telling to occur. Previous findings (see Sacks, 1992) have documented that this type of approval is routinely linguistically uttered. Additionally, it is assumed that due to FC's habitus (her previous dealings with SW), she knew that SW's cessation has granted her the permission needed to proceed with the storytelling.

On hearing the story preface, SW's response in line 2 was delayed 2.0 seconds perhaps due to mishearing or having difficulty understanding the word "snapper". The fact that SW delayed the response does not necessarily mean that she could not offer an appropriate form of reply. Rather, she responded appropriately to the story preface in line 2 "o:::[h", a continuer, which displays her understanding of the interactional force of the first utterance. This could illustrate how SW's reply (i.e., her action) in this sequence of adjacency pairs constrained the next action (see Segerdahl, 2003). Here, one can observe the importance of the turn-taking system by which the participants in this extract show one another that they are engaged in social action. If one partner needs the help of the other, he/she is responsive to the needs of them, as is evidenced in this extract in line 3 where SW did not understand FC's meaning, whereby she translated it for SW. SW then evaluates what the story was about (about the snapper FC bought) which seems to boost the tellability of the story. In other words, this section illustrates how "newsworthiness" is a consideration in storytelling.

The interaction now turned to the price of the snapper in line 6 where SW seemed rather surprised to hear that a whole snapper cost only nine dollars and accounted for her general

assessment in a narrative format “oh that’s good” in line 10. It seems that SW was neither aware of this reasonably priced snapper on special nor the price of snapper in general as evidenced in her question to FC “=how much is the normal price↑”. FC went on to provide accounts in a narrative format where she informed SW about a shop next to *Persia* where snapper is sold “fifteen dollars a kilo” in line 11. As can be observed, SW responded in a low voice with a continuer in lines 12 14, and 16, minimally acknowledging the reported experience. One possible explanation for SW’s verbally limited response is due to her lack of knowledge of the snapper. This disaffiliative action (Kjaerbeck, 2008, p. 312) makes FC keep on with her small story while still providing an account (see Heritage, 1984)

In this extract, several instances of disalignment have been observed with SW (the recipient) participating minimally as in the case of her assessment. This encouraged FC to add more to her story, her report of the price of a whole snapper, in pursuit of alignment from SW. Furthermore, the turn-taking system FC is carrying out in Extract 8.1 requires further explanation. FC perceives that SW’s responses are minimal, and, perhaps due to her previous dealings with SW, as a sign of a lack of knowledge about snapper. As a result, FC utilises storytelling to perhaps educate SW about this particular fish.

One can also notice the asymmetrical relationship between the participants in this extract. The encounter develops with FC, and not SW, supplying information about the snapper and the different price rates in different stores (i.e., in Coles and in a shop next to *Persia).* Interestingly, FC formulates her question based on ‘folk knowledge’ =how much is the normal price↑) which is another indication of her distancing herself from her professional role at this stage of the interaction. This alignment is an expression of positive politeness in that SW is ‘coming closer’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 103) to FC in the terms of power and distance.

Perhaps, what seems to be occurring in this encounter is due to SW’s lack of linguistic proficiency, which is ever present as a key obstacle on the SW’s part. One such challenge is evidenced in that SW may wish to speak more to FC about the snapper that the customer has purchased but SW seems to be frustrated in this because of her perceived lack of competence in English, so an encounter type, which ought to be relatively simple becomes a critical moment simply due to SW’s inability to express herself more eloquently (i.e., providing more information). This interaction might be a critical moment for both because these critical moments engender in the shop-owner a sense of inadequacy and in the customer a sense of a lack of trust.

Extract 8.2 is the continuation of the participants' talk from Extract 8.1 where their discussion turned to the method of cooking snapper. This interaction is taking place at the counter. FC initiated this episode with a preface "but" in line 17 to foreshadow the topic of the cooking recipe, this time in a narrative format. Interestingly, FC did not directly ask about the cooking instructions as evidenced in line 17 "but I said how you cook (.) and she sa:::id just put (.)". Note the pause at the end of line 17. This is evidence that FC is seeking information regarding the cooking recipe, and wishes SW to assist her with the cooking of the snapper. Here, the reported speech is marked as the punchline of the story (Kjaerbeck & Asmuß, 2005) but not as the end of the telling. SW responded to this implicit request in line 18 "grill or in oven" in an attempt to complete the sentence. In addition, this is indicative of close alignment between the speaker (FC) and her interlocutor (SW). Thus, SW collaborated in providing information but FC did not take up her response and as a result continued with her storytelling in line 19, extending the turn "just cut off the fin and cut off th:::e tail and put in she said she just fried it". The FC's extended account compelled SW to provide yet another account, while aligning with the fishmonger "yeah you can fry it" but to offer her preferred option "or you can put it in oven or↑" in line 20.

Extract 8.2

```
17   FC   but I said how you cook(.)and she sa:::id just put(.)
18   SW   grill or in oven
19   FC   just cut off the fin and cut off th:::e tail and put in
          she said she just fried it
20   SW   yeah you can fry it or you can put it in oven or↑
```

Here, as I have discussed at the outset of this chapter and in the previous chapters, one should interpret this action as seen within the history of practice within the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977b) of the participants in this action. It must make sense that it is not FC's first time shopping in this Persian shop and not her first time to receive assistance from SW. This suggests that there may have been a time when FC was unable to make such requests, (i.e., "how do you cook it?") As observed, this utterance has a history in habitus as FC has progressively been able to approach SW and to combine the practices of shopping for snapper along with the mediational means, 'frying', 'grilling', 'wrapping in foil', or differences between frying and putting it in an oven. As Scollon (2001b) argues, from this practice view of social action, the phrases "you can fry it" or "you can put it in oven" embed this history in the habitus, the main issue in question. In fact, it is mainly the snapper, with its wide range of material features, that tightly links the multiple practices combined in the present nexus: the practice of service interactions, the practice of cooking

snapper, the practice of giving a lesson. Had FC known how to cook the snapper, this interaction would not have taken place.

Another main theme seems to emerge from FC's narrative in Extract 8.2**,** as it can be observed how intertextuality arises in naturally occurring interaction and discourse (see Tannen, 2006). At the inception of Extract 8.2, as discussed above, FC told SW that the fishmonger had advised her to fry the snapper. Here, FC has used "intertextuality" as an invaluable tool in order to possibly elicit SW's point of view with regard to the cooking of the snapper. This form of intertextuality, known as "discourse representation" (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 273), though slightly different from that of Tannen's notion of intertextuality in interaction, has been explicitly marked with a reporting clause (e.g., she said). Though reported speech is constructed (Tannen, 2007) and transforms the original act (Bakhtin, 1981), direct quotation necessitates "deictic and grammatical transformations" (Schiffrin, 2003, p. 549) that represent an author's language verbatim. By combining and appropriating elements of narrative genres, FC skillfully (and successfully) has incorporated intertextuality into her storytelling to open up all kinds of possibilities to attain her goal (i.e., for social change). The effect of this intertextuality is that SW not only aligned with FC (and originally with the fishmonger) but also provided her with a new option in line 20 "yeah you can fry it or you can put it in oven or↑".

The last episode of the SW-FC interaction, Extract 8.3, presents a non-narrative account and is not dissimilar to an example of question-answer format, where SW takes the role of an information-provider and FC as an information-seeker. After SW's suggestion on how to cook the snapper in line 20 (i.e., "you can fry it or you can put it in oven or↑",) in line 21 FC confided to SW that she does not have an appropriate oven but does have a "convention" one. Here, perhaps in terms of cultural norms and ethnicity construction, though this might be considered overgeneralized, it is interesting that for SW, and for me as a bystander, not possessing an oven can be regarded as a very personal (confidential) topic (beneath one's dignity to admit to) and cannot crop up in conversation in front of others in a public sphere. It is assumed that for Persians, at least for SW (as evidenced in line 21) and myself included, such personal topics cannot be moved to the public sphere and discussed in an ethnic shop, where there were other (Persian-speaking) customers present at the time. Hence, on the part of FC, a lifetime of her personal experience feels so natural that her body, for instance, performs actions without paying attention to what Bourdieu (1977b) calls "genesis amnesia". As a result, FC's disclosure of her not

possessing an oven thus in a narrative format fulfils the purpose of indirectly expressing her closeness to SW due to her previous dealings with her.

Going back to the analysis, upon hearing this information (about not having an oven), SW raised her eyebrows, as a sign of surprise but declined to engage in an adjacency pair. However, immediately following that, FC provided an account of what she meant by a convection oven, to which SW responded "aha" in line 22 as a continuer. Here, it would be appropriate to argue that due to the participants' habitus (i.e., their previous engagements), they both arrive at a common understanding of the narrative (storytelling) and that as a result they display with one another a mutual alignment.

Extract 8.3

```
21   FC   I haven't got an oven ((SW looks at her showing surprise))
          (.) but I've got a got a convection oven
          =it's like microwave it's microwave but has oven as well↓
22   SW   aha
23   FC   =but I don't know how how hot what temperature↑
24   SW   I ((a bit surprised)) think it should be two hundred↓
25   FC   oh really↑
26   SW   =Yeah
27   FC   =very hot(.)how long↑
28   SW   (.)half an hour
29   FC   oh really↑
30   SW   yeah↓
31   FC   =it's a long time↓(1.0)
          I put some(.)lemon and ginger↓(.)inside yeah↑
32   SW   (.) yeah you can put what would you like↓
          lemon and ginger yeah (1.0) is very nice
33   FC   in[side
34   SW      you can] fry it Yeah inside or on the top↓
35   FC   yeah ok↓
36   SW   that doesn't matter
37   FC   =yeah and you put in foil(.)or not in foil↑
38   SW   yeah if you want to be um (.) crunchy
          and the(.)colour(.)golden colour↑
39   FC   yeah (.) no foil
40   SW   =no foil
41   FC   (2.0)I have I have glass container
          maybe I'll put it in this one↓
42   SW   (.)yeah
                                  ((her voice is fading away))

                  ((A customer brought items to the counter and they stop talking))
```

From lines 21 to 42, the interaction, perhaps due to the way FC has formulated the question in line 23, follows a natural progression of the methods of cooking the snapper, where FC asks SW "=but I don't know how how hot what temperature↑" in line 23. In other words, the activity in which the participants are engaged is "context-shaped" and "context-

renewing" (Heritage, 1984). This means that in interaction, context changes from turn to turn or moment to moment (see also Duranti & Goodwin, 1992). In line 20, as observed, the participants were actively engaged in and discussing the options available on how to cook snapper. However, in the course of what seemed mere moments, the interaction turned to the oven, as a mediational means in MDA. This mediational tool (i.e., the oven) provides an appropriate site of engagement for cooking instructions in this part of their talk in the sense that the whole interaction is heavily dependent upon this topic. This is evidenced in the lexical cohesion throughout Extract 8.3. This can be captured by listing all the related lexical items to oven, demonstrating how they form lexical strings which add texture to the discourse in question. A lexical string is "a list of all the lexical items that occur sequentially in a text that can be related to an immediately prior word" (Eggins, 2004, p. 45; Halliday & Hasan, 1976):

Convection oven, microwave, how hot, what temperature, two hundred, very hot, how long, half an hour, a long time, etc…

FC's question regarding "how hot what temperature" presupposes but does not explicitly mention that FC has not cooked the snapper. The fact that such interpretations are presupposed is evidenced in FC's short narrative (lines 23-31) in which she implicitly recounts (she might probably have admitted this to the fishmonger) that she does not know how to cook the snapper. It could therefore be assumed that due to her lack of experience in cooking the snapper, FC has used small stories (her experience of purchasing the snapper) as a tool to encourage SW to instruct her on how to cook the snapper. This is evident in the lexical cohesion discussed above (i.e., the process of cooking the snapper).

As can be observed in the extracts above, narratives (small stories) have offered invaluable insights into culturally specific norms (i.e., I cook it this way), including those of particular ethnic groups, in this case a Persian-speaking shop-owner. The stories recounted in the narratives above not only have given rise to the construction of the ethnic identity (i.e., "Yeah if you want to be um (.) crunchy and the (.) colour (.) golden colour↑" in line 38) but also contributed to the importance of the locally organised activities (see Garfinkel, 1967) (i.e., ways of doing things in *Persia)*. Though seen as a kind of establishment of a commercial kind, which sets up a bond between a customer and a shop owner, the shop has become a kind of educational environment where customers are seeking advice. Such advice seeking may be unique to small shops and might not be seen taking place in large

mainstream shops such as Coles or Woolworths, which lack opportunities for social intimacy.

8.4 Narrative as accounts

As discussed in the previous chapters, upon their arrival at the shop, non-Persian-speaking customers would typically not greet the shop-owners but would proceed with their shopping. Based on my observations, the shop-owners, in turn, would not have expected them to do otherwise. This was evident in the shop-owners' non-linguistic behaviour (i.e., maintaining eye-contact) with Persian-speaking customers entering the shop unless they have been regular customers as in the case of Extract 8.4. In this extract, a Persian-speaking male customer, in his late 50s, entered the shop and after greeting the shop-owner (the husband, who was standing at the cash-register) immediately went to the aisle where Persian pistachio nuts were previously kept in the shop, but he could not locate them. On observing this, he asked the shop-owner whether the round Pistachio, known as Fandoghi among Persians, was still available, to which the shop-owner responded, "we moved them to the section under the TV right there". Round Fandoghi, according to the shop-owner, is one of the main traditional export products of Iran and very popular among Persians. The customer, due to his familiarity with the shop and the positioning of the items, knew where the pistachios were and therefore made his way to the relevant section without needing to make further inquiries.

Extract 8.4

R: Researcher MC: an Anglo male customer (in his late 50s)

Persian Pistachio

```
1   R   would you mind if I asked you some questions about my research
        project↑
2   MC  sure(.)but make it snappy(.)I'm in a rush
3   R   sure(.)thanks(.)you like shopping here↑
4   MC  I've been shopping i:::n(.)multiple stores since I was(.)13↓
5   R   Oh↓
6   MC  right↑ ((raising his eyebrows and smiling))
7   R   so you like Persian(.)products↑
8   MC  yeah I do and I like Japanese products
9   R   oh Japanese
10  MC  and I like Turkish products
11  R   um
12  MC  yes↓(.)but I really don't get it from many(.)Aussie products
13  R   oh OK
14  MC  except for Vegemite of course↓
15  R   yeah I know
16  MC  well that's not an Aussie product anymore↓
        =anyway sorry gotta go my wife is waiting for me in the car
```

When MC approached the relevant section of the shop, he found the pistachios under the TV set but was not sure whether they were the same pistachios he used to purchase from the shop. The items under the TV were positioned in a way that if one needed to ask a question, he/she needed to turn back so as to make a request to the shop-owner. To make sure he was picking out the pistachios he usually purchased, MC turned back (perhaps to ask the shop-owner) but saw the shop-owner talking on the phone so did not attempt to ask. In the meantime, I was in the vicinity of MC with no other customer around and he asked me if I could help him with his inquiry. I apologized to him saying I was not a shop assistant but told him that I was glad to help him with his inquiry as much as I could within my own scope of knowledge. I also explained to him that I was a researcher. He asked me if they (pointing to the pistachios) were the round Pistachio. I inspected them and told him to the best of my knowledge they were, but I also told him he had to check with the shop-owner. Unfortunately, I did not record our conversation taking place next to the TV set as there was no customer in the shop before MC's arrival and therefore I had to have the recording device switched off. Immediately following our brief 30-second encounter, he approached the shop-owner to confirm whether he had the right pistachios. The interaction in Extract 8.4 between MC and me took place at the counter when MC brought the pistachios to the counter.

As evident in Extract 8.4, this is a typical interaction that Garfinkel might have called "accountings" (1967). That is, while social actors are carrying out actions in a (Bourdieu's) social field, they tend to provide "descriptive accountings of states of affairs to one another" (Heritage, 1984, p. 136). However, the issue is that accounts may not be a universal truth. However, they could be naturally biased statements of what a person believed was transpiring from their world view. As can be seen in line 1, it is unlikely that the researcher randomly approached MC and asked him whether he liked to shop in this Persian shop. However, drawing on MDA and on Multi-perspectival approach (see Chapter 4), this question would not have been posed had the shop-owner (as discussed above) not been busy serving another customer and MC not asked the researcher about the pistachios. In fact, further interaction with the customers was required to dispel ambiguity surrounding an incident. However, due to privacy and politeness considerations, such interactions were not always possible. In other words, this practice has been made available based upon the position of the researcher, (i.e., my "stocks of interactional knowledge" (Peräkylä & Vehvilƒinen, 2003) my understanding of the shop context), where

I have built up an understanding of some sequences of possible actions with these interactional steps (i.e., whether certain enquiries were appropriate as in Extract 8.4).

Returning to the analysis, MC picked out the pistachios and brought them to the counter, during which, and while in conversation, I followed suit. In line 1, I used "would you mind if I asked you some questions about my research project↑" as a pre-sequence, which flags an action to come. According to Schegloff (2007b), such pre-sequences can be utilised to examine the possibility of success for a projected action (i.e., to see whether the recipient is receptive to my invitation, such as, preparing the recipient for a projected action). As can be observed, with the use of the pre-sequence, I have made a request, which has not been followed immediately by the request itself but instead some other elements, which provide reasons to alert the recipient to the request. This pre-sequence has perhaps assisted me in reducing the social awkwardness or the threat to my own face (Goffman, 1967) of a rejection.

After the pre-sequence has been successfully employed, in line 3, I asked MC "you like shopping here↑". In an adjacency pair, MC responded "I've been shopping i:::n (.) multiple stores since I was (.) 13↓". At first glance, MC appears not to actually directly respond to my enquiry as to whether he would like to shop in this particular Persian shop. However, here, one needs to bring in the construct of "indexicality" as an integral element in understanding how adjacency works. Indexicality refers to the observation that one cannot understand the meaning of utterances such as "here" in line 3 and "multiple shops" in line 5 simply by relying on the linguistic meaning. Rather, the meaning resides in their use in a particular context (see Heritage, 1984; Potter, 1996). As such, given the context within which this interaction is taking place, one can interpret by making assumptions about what is meant by "here" (this specific Persian shop and Persian shops in general) and "multiple stores" (shops of this kind, where this interaction is taking place).

My question in line 7 "so you like Persian (.) products↑" illustrates how I used "formulations" (Heritage & Watson, 1976) as a resource for accomplishing the task of encouraging MC to directly respond to my inquiry. The formulation here displayed my orientation to the fact that a relevant answer was expected. In other words, the formulation was intended as an utterance where I offered my own interpretation of what MC meant through his previous talk within the same conversation (Drew, 2003). In a literal sense, I may be heard as pursing my research agenda by eliciting responses from my research participant (i.e., what MC exactly means by "multiple shops"). Additionally, my question

seems to connote Garfinkel's "breaching experiment" (1967, p. 42) in that I pretended that the utterances themselves (the language) used by MC were not indexical. A breaching experiment refers to people's reactions to deliberate breaching of commonly accepted social norms and rules. The aim of such "breaching experiment" studies was to discover "background expectancies" (p.53) or the "common sense understandings". This is one of Garfinkel's key arguments where facts about social order and human action are illustrated. In other words, despite the fact that language *is* by nature indexical, participants in an interaction frequently have their own ways of dealing with this complexity and considering it non-problematic. As such, this breaching experiment has forced MC to elaborate more on what he exactly meant by "multiple shops", as evident in lines 8 and 10.

Interestingly, MC has eventually elaborated further on the reasons why he would like to shop in "multiple shops": "yes ↓ (.) but I <u>really</u> don't get it from many (.) Aussie products" in line 12. This is evident in MC's use of the deictic expression "it". From a sociological point of view (see Heritage, 1984), deictic expressions such as "this, such, I, you etc…" can only be understood by deriving meaning from contextual knowledge. Thus, in line 12, the referent of "it" might have referred to the lack of authenticity of Australian products. This could also be interpreted by knowing what the participants have been previously discussing (i.e., "shopping in Persian shops"). In addition, MC has to some extent resolved doubts about the referent of "it" in line 14 "Except for <u>Vegemite</u> of course↓". Perhaps MC has used vegemite[1] as a useful tool to get his message across: that Australian products may not be highly nutritious and that the food may be heavily processed, thus he would rather shop in Turkish, Japanese and Persian shops. Accordingly, the term "vegemite" (as a mediational means) seems to function as deixis as its meaning and interpretation draw upon its specific use and its contextual knowledge, not its lexical meaning. Vegemite on someone's breakfast table, for instance, cannot be interpreted in the same way it can when it is being discussed in an ethnic shop, where the topic of the discussion is ethnic food. It is partially this specific context that has provided opportunities for MC to strategically use it. In fact, whichever sense of "it" and "vegemite" are intended here cannot become readily available from their linguistic utterances alone.

[1] Vegemite is a dark brown Australian food paste made from leftover brewers' yeast extract with various vegetable and spice additives developed by Cyril P. Callister in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1922.

8.5 Narrative and mediational means

A Persian couple (in their late 30s) entered the shop. As usual for Persian-speaking customers, on arrival, they greeted the shop-owners very briefly as the shop-owners were busy serving other customers. As the shop-owners were busy with the customers, the shop-owner's wife asked me if I could go to the back of the shop and bring her a pack of rice. She profusely apologized and explained to me that because she was in the middle of ringing up a sale, she did not want to "make a mess with the numbers". In addition, she said the customer could not carry the pack of rice as it was a bit too heavy for her, not to mention the customer was too old to carry it. The customer also thanked me "thanks so much, my son" (literal translation). This is very common among Persians, particularly when one of the recipients is an elderly person. The person is thanked with a title "my son, my daughter etc…" for the help they have received. I also took the rice to the customer's car, which was parked not far away from the shop.

As I was in the back of the shop, I called the customer to ask which type of rice she preferred. The customer approached me in the back of the shop and pointed to the rice she would prefer to purchase. This provided me with an excellent opportunity to observe what the newly arrived customers were doing in the backstage. As I was carrying the rice, I overheard the wife of the customer, who had just arrived in the shop, asking him if he would like her to get some sour cherry jams for him. The husband replied "I'll let you know".

Extract 8.5

W: Wife H: Husband SO: the shop-owner (husband) MC: Male customer (in his late 30s)

((calls H from back of the shop where sour cherry jams were kept))

1	W	moraba albaloo barat begirm ya na↑	
		would you like me to get you some sour cherry jams or not	
2	H	u:::m	
		u:::m ((turns back and looks at W))	
3	SO	bara shoma migiran =khodeshon nemikhoran↓h[hh	
		she wants to buy it for you ((SO is looking at H)) not for herself	↓h[hh
4	H		hhh bale
			hhh yeah right
5	W		vagean] migam
		((picked out two sour cherry jams and approaches the counter))	I really mean it
6	SO	h[hh	
		h[hh	
7	H	hhh]	
		hhh]	
8	W	hamishe ham be [man nemirese↓	
		never do I get to eat them	
9	SO	hhh	
		hhh	

```
10  H                    hhh]
                         hhh]
11  W   =mishe lotfan man ye baste dige ham (.) az ina
        can I please get one of these
        ((referring to the Shirmal bread, a saffron-flavored traditional flatbread made in Iran, on the counter))
        ma begirm ham↑
        can we get  ((approaches the counter and takes one loaf of packaged Shirmal bread and returns to
        where she was standing))
        (2.0) ((Both H and W are looking at SO ringing up the purchased items))
12  MC  khanoma zerang ha↓          khanome man ham daghighan[hamine↓
        Women ((both H and W look at MC)) are very smart my wife is exactly the same
13  W                                                          hhh
                                                               hhh ((a fake laugh))
14  H                                                          hhh]
                                                               hhh]
15  MC  begirm↑ barat hala man aslan nemikhoram(.)barakse vali↓
        she says do you want me to get it for you but she doesn't eat it   it's the reverse
16  H   =h[hh
        =h[hh
17  W     vali na man]daram migam khanoma barakse=vagean man nemikhoram↓
           but I'm telling you      that's right for women  it's the reverse     I really don't eat it
18  MC  are↑
        you don't↑
19  H   hhh
        hhh
20  W   are↓[chon
        no ↓   cause
21  H        hhh
             hhh
22  W        morabaye albaloo] ziad be man nemisaze↓=bekhatere medam
               sour cherry jams          aren't good for me        because of my stomach
23  H   in estesna bood vali mamoolan ghedeye ghaleb hamine          hhh
        ((looking at MC)) this case is an exception but   normally that's the dominant rule      hhh
                                  all laughing ((SO is busy bagging the purchased items))
```

The husband brought the chosen items to the counter, but he did not pick out the sour cherry jams. While the husband was taking out the items from a hand trolley and leaving them on the counter, the wife was still at the back of the shop browsing around some shelves. From there, in line 1, she called H "Would you like me to get you some sour cherry jams or not". H was still not sure whether he wanted them or not and therefore did not provide an answer but a long hesitation in line 2. The delay in answering W's request has provided an opportunity for SO to joke about the situation in line 3 "She wants to buy it for you not for herself" followed by laughter. Here, while the SO's playful laughter might have been used as entertainment on SO's part, for the couple, particularly for W, this might have indicated a potential embarrassing moment and practice. This is evidenced in line 4 where H laughed and offered a minimal response and in line 5 where W immediately responded to the SO's witty comment with an overlap, where she disaligned with him "I really mean it", while still not close to the counter.

One could argue that if it were not for the embarrassing practice, W would have approached the counter first and then responded to the laughter. Or, perhaps, she could have laughed as her husband did. One could hypothesize an explanation in the discourse for SO's attempted witty comment and the way he selected to respond to the W's request. That is, the W's use of singular pronoun "you" and her question "would you like me to get you", in a way sounded like she has the final say at home, and more importantly in front of other customers, as well as H's long hesitation might have probably encouraged SO to challenge W. The SO's comment is a simple one, told in a way that successfully held W's attention and led her into the play. However, an examination of just how the SO's comment was made indicates that it is more than just serving as entertainment. In particular, the strategies utilized to elaborate the events offer interesting insight into the kind of identities the participants in this interaction are constructing through the small stories. In other words, meta-communication (Bateson, 1955 (1972)) - discussion about communication processes - is not typically viewed as an untoward behaviour and as verbal strategy. Direct questioning about how a comment was meant seems to be conceived as a challenge.

Interestingly, both SO and H in lines 6 and 7 respectively laughed at W's response, which may suggest that they did not align with W's account (i.e., the position she adopted). This laughter encouraged W to provide yet another account in line 8 "Never do I get to eat them", followed by H and SO's laughter again, implying that it is H who likes eating and she just does the shopping. The laughter is evoked by W's failure to provide a relevant account. The effect of this laughter is that in line 11 W is attempting to change the topic of the current discussion "Can I please get one of these can we get". Note here the change in the W's use of pronoun from "I' to "we". I also note here that the laughter and SO's responses and the outcomes of the mediated action initiated by W and followed by SO were evidenced not only through verbal discourse but also through more powerful non-verbal displays. When W approached the counter, she was standing next to H and there was a considerable distance between the counter and W. After the laughter in lines 9 and 10, W made a move in order to 'turn the table' on her side. Her move towards the counter would have contributed to the impact of his message, as no comment by H and SO sides was made. Here, the mediational means sitting on the counter, the *Shirmal*, has been used as a useful tool to temporarily resolve the ongoing issue in Extract 8.5.

While the couple were being served at the counter, a Persian-speaking customer was in the queue waiting to be served. Typically, based on my observations (see Chapter 3), the waiting customers were usually aware that they would obstruct others and thereby kept their spatial distance. However, this did not mean that they would not overhear what was conveyed between the shop-owners and the customers. Here, the waiting customer was not viewed as a ratified participant but a bystander in the sense that the bystander's presence, though in a social space where everybody has a legitimate reason to be, may have a bearing on the interplay between the shop-owner and the couple. From this perspective and circumstances, Goodwin's theory (2007) has called for the significance of bringing in the hearer's influence and his non-verbal contribution within a participation framework (see Chapter 6). This is perhaps one of the profound differences between the stories narrated in interaction with the presence of other participants and the stories told in response to a question. Small stories told in interaction allow for the possibility of building a valuable tool for constructing social organization, where some actions are permissible and some are impermissible (see M. H. Goodwin, 1997).

On overhearing the topic, the waiting customer (MC) commented on W's account in line 12 "Women are very smart. My wife is exactly the same", followed by the couple's laughter in line 13 and 14. It is interesting to note that MC did not make any comment while the "ratified" participants were discussing the issue. In fact, he selected himself to speak next after a transition relevance place (Sacks et al., 1974) followed by a pause of (2.0). It seems that MC was waiting for the *right* moment so as not to intrude in their ongoing interaction particularly for a touchy subject where one side is the wife of a customer who is present in the interaction. This understanding of the turn-taking system may refer to the importance of one's familiarity with one's culture, which draws on a member's sense of what might be understood as intervention. Here, MC built his small story with attention to the participation structure of the immediate local context (i.e., the moment in this interaction), incorporating both the current recipients and their alignments towards figures in the story (M. H. Goodwin, 1997). To this, we need to add the site of engagement (the counter) as well as the field in which this interaction is taking place. Had MC had the opportunity to overhear a similar conversation in the large mainstream supermarkets such as Woolworths or Coles, he would not have intervened and made comments.

Returning to the analysis, MC's comment on the topic of the interaction was skillfully strategized in that he chose not only to personalize his comment but to bring in his wife to be fitted in the story as a ratified participant with the use of intertextuality. In doing so, he took a footing as animator (Goffman, 1981a) of his wife's beliefs. He used an indirect speech and partially animated his wife's words. Tannen (2007) refers to such discourse strategy as "constructed dialogue" in that "when speech uttered in one context is repeated in another, it is fundamentally changed even if reported accurately" (p.112). The effect of the use of the intertextuality (i.e., indirect speech) is that the couple treated him as a ratified participant, who was simply a bystander in the course of what transpired just less than a minute previously. Though MC's story about his wife's action seems to be viewed as funny, the telling of the story here is actually doing the action of complaining about his wife. MC continued with his story in line 15 "She says do you want me to get it for you but she doesn't eat it it's the reverse", followed by H's laughter. MC's account here may indicate that he considers that husbands are used by wives as a tool in order to get what they want. This was challenged by W in line 17 "But I'm telling you that's right for women it's the reverse I really don't eat it", which was challenged again by MC in line 18 "you don't", followed by H's laughter. Here, H's laughter is a response which treats the content of MC's challenge as almost familiar (i.e., H's habitus, his previous encounters with W) that is to say, as a kind of his cultural knowledge about these types of stories. However, what seems to be interesting in MC's and his recipients' small stories is that such concepts can be *put to use* in the shop in front of other customers.

At this point W returned to the main topic of the discussion (i.e., sour cherry jams) that took place at the inception of Extract 8.5. W repeated the product "sour cherry jams", the mediational means, which had not been previously mentioned followed by an account "Sour cherry jams aren't good for me because of my stomach" in line 22. The aim of this repeating may suggest that W was reminding MC of the main topic of the discussion (i.e., the product in the shop) but not of judging/whinging about women in general. Here, W's account "because of my stomach" is an example of interdiscursivity (see Chapter 7). The role of such interdiscursivity in building discourse is not that W's use of the *medical* discourse is unintentional, but rather her contribution is a valid component in this site of engagement to the extent to which H aligns with W in this specific topic in line 23 "This case is an exception but normally that's the dominant rule", which ultimately precluded MC from taking a turn. In fact, W's account on MC's challenge reveals an attempt to

implement a strategy from another discourse, accommodating it with the requirements of a different orientation. However, it should be noted that H skillfully dealt with this critical moment. Not only did he produce in line 23 what appears to be an aligning assessment with MC, but also, at the same time, redirected the focus from W's situation to MC's and as a result, he constructed a position of neutrality in which he treated assessment and empathy descriptions as events.

Through the small stories, the 'argument' was initiated as talk about an apparently minor issue. However, it was quickly escalated to be about one of the most fundamental issues in participants' home life (i.e., regarding domestic power relations). This was carried out through the mediational means in the shop (i.e., sour cherry jams), which both constrained and enabled the actions which were taken through the use of these tools in small stories. It constrained because the question W posed made her embarrassed in front of other customers and the shop-owner in the shop. As a result, she attempted to digress from this situation. It enabled in the sense that W does not eat them as they are detrimental to her health because of her stomach-sensitivity. This enabled W to successfully deal with the predicament in which she found herself throughout this extract. The development of the argument demonstrates why the issue of who does what chores can have such force; it shows how an argument gets reframed and rekeyed throughout the day; and it illustrates how the argument is resolved through tools and strategies available to members, including those of interdiscursivity.

The small stories in the following extract (Extract 8.6) took place during the "shopping occasions" which were combined with "engaging in multiple discourses". It is also interesting to notice that such small stories correspond to what might be referred to as "conversational talk" (De Fina, 2008), which is common among the ethnic shops (see previous chapters for instance). Persian speaking customers often made reference to their relatives, friends or acquaintances who have been provided assistance from the shop-owners. For instance, they recounted how the shop-owners assisted them with apartment-hunting or getting a loan from banks or even getting jobs. Most of the Persian-speaking customers referred to the shop-owners as "user-friendly". These relational/interpersonal interactions are important in understanding the following narrative to which we now turn our attention.

8.6 Narrative at the site of engagement

In the second segment of the foregoing interaction, W left the counter for a very short time to see the bulletin news, which is located in the vicinity of the entrance. She glanced around the bulletin news (such as job advertisements) section and returned to the counter in the course of what seemed just less than 30 seconds. MC is still in the queue and has not been served. On returning to the counter, she immediately asked SO "Do you know any good migration agents" in line 24.

Extract 8.6

24 W shoma vakile mohajerate khub soragh nadarin↑
do you know any good migration agents
25 SO (3.0) bebinin↑
((busy bagging the purchased items and handing them to H)) you know
26 W gheyre Irani ham bashe eshkal nadare↓
if they are non-Iranians it doesn't matter
27 SO na man khodam (2.0) baste be caseo ina dare↓
no I myself ((still hands items to H)) it depends on the cases↓
u:::m Foad Foadi khube
um Foad Foadi is good
28 W ki↑
who↑
29 SO Foad Foadi
Foad Foadi
30 W man nadaram shomarasho↓
I don't have his telephone number↓
31 SO Sam Darbari khube
Sam Darbari good too
32 W Darbari ro chiz(.)shenidam↓
I've heard of Darbari
33 SO ina jofteshon fekr mikonam ye meghdar ziadi sareshoon sholoogh bashe↓
but both of them I think are a bit too busy these days
34 W ah:::a kasi digeyiroo soragh nadarin↑
aha ((a bit surprised)) do you know anybody else
yani midonini ye kasiro mikham ke vagt bezare
you know I want to hire somebody who takes the time
=chon in case case pichidiy:::e (.)
cause I've got a very complicated
nemikham ke maslan hamintore sar baz kone ina bashe↓
case I don't want them to avoid responsibilities
bara hamin yeki mikham ke saresh sholoogh nabash
that's why I'm looking for someone who's not that busy
35 SO ba Soroosh Islami sobat kardin↑
have you spoken to Soroosh Islami
36 W =are ye bar sobat karadam =vali naraftam pishesh
yes I've talked to him once but haven't met him yet
=etefaghan kheiliam ham az raftareshon khosham omad↓
actually I really liked his good manners
hala bayad beheshon zang bezanam↓
I'll have to call him
37 SO javoone(.)momkene tajrobeye ziad nadashte bashe
he's young ((bagging items)) he may not have enough experience
vali khub(.)be nazara miad(.)[ke

but he's good ((eye contact)) it seems that

38 W vagt]dare↓
he's got enough time↓

39 SO vaght] dare va khube(.)
he's got time and he's good ((maintaining eye contact))
vali man khodam chandin case pichide dashtam(.)
but I had some complicated cases
Foad Foadi baram anjam dad↓
and I got Foad Foadi to do them for me

40 W =man nadaram shomara shono shoma darin↑
I don't have his phone number do you

41 SO too roznameye Parsian hast↓
you can find it in the Parsian newspaper

42 MC man daram shomarasho
I've got his phone number

43 W age lotf konin bedin mamnoon misham
((turns back to MC) I'd be very grateful if you could pass it on
((MC is giving W Foad Foadi's number telephone number from his cell phone))

44 H daste shoma dard nakone
((handing SO the credit card to pay))Thank you so much

45 SO khahesh mikonam
you're welcome

46 W bad oon yeki ki bode:::↑aghaye Islami oonam nadarin↑
who was the other one Mr. Islami you don't have his telephone number either

47 SO =Soroosh Islami bayad kart dashte bashim↓ be farmaeed
((Looks at the shelf behind him, finds a business card))
I think we may have Soroosh Islami's business card here you are

48 W kheili mamnoon
thank you so much ((looks at it and puts it in her purse))
((SO is ringing up the purchased items))

49 SO daste shoma dard nakone(.)rooze khubi dashte bashin↓
thank you so much (giving the receipt to H)) have a nice day

50 H shoma ham hamintore
you too ((leaving the shop))

51 SO ghorbane shoma
thanks

52 W Khoda hafez
((Picks up the purchased items from the counter)) Good bye

53 SO khoda negahdar
bye

As discussed in Chapter 3, the shop itself is a semiotic aggregate, in which many discourses intersect, some of which include ethnic music, bulletin news (such as job advertisements) and business cards. Customers are likely to pay most attention to the items they are looking for or to the signs, among the discourses available in the shop. However, there is always a high possibility that they pay attention to the bulletin news but not to the business cards sitting on the counter. In other words, customers are selective about all of the discourses in the shop, in particular the ones that are relevant to the action they are conducting, and utilise just those necessary to make the purchase of their particular (chosen) items. This is true for W's question in line 24 in Extract 8.6. In fact, this mediated action provided an arena for this narrative to be told. It could be assumed that if W had not

paid attention to the bulletin news section, their interaction might have been expanded in a different direction.

The plot of the small stories in Extract 8.6 illustrates the importance of ethnic shops like *Persia* as an arena not only for a shopping, where transactional exchanges are carried out, but also for sharing experiences, educating and informing each other and relational work in the participants' daily lives (see Georgakopoulou, 2013). This provides insights into the historical body of the shop-owners (i.e., being aware of their customers' needs and aims) and the customers themselves. As I will show below, it therefore seems that shopping in this place would not necessarily take the most urgent priority. Rather, based on my observations, at least for Persian-speaking customers including the shop-owners, the shop provides them with an opportunity to inform or get informed, on the latest events. The 8.6 excerpt illustrates how such small stories contribute to the construction of social relationships in *Persia*. As can be seen, the small story focuses on a topic that is not a transaction-related exchange. It is pure social talk. Such talk is viewed as acceptable in this community of practice and serves to develop good rapport between participants in this setting.

W initiated this segment with a question about a migration agent with whom she needs to consult, in line 24. The story is proposed (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) in the sense that W's question functions to keep SO paying attention to her, and to prepare SO to listen to a forthcoming stream of talk (Sacks, 1992). Here, the small story is encapsulated in W's question, which is referred to as "abstract" (Labov, 1972), introducing the reason why W is telling the story. The remainder provides an elaboration of the narrative, illustrating SO's take on the question posed, and some insights into his knowledge about the Persian/non-Persian migration agents in Sydney. In addition, it would be argued that such narratives fulfil the essential function of maintaining social relationships in that they embrace non-transactional relationships, signalling a regular routine for this community of practice (see Holmes, 2006b).

When the question was posed, SO was busy with handing the purchased items to H. This would have been the reason why he provided a minimal response in line 25 "you know" followed by a rising pitch which may have signalled that further information would be provided. On seeing SO busy, W self-selected herself as the answerer of her own question and further elucidated that "if they [the migration agents] are non-Iranians it doesn't matter" in line 26. It is within this new sequence of talk that we find SO's small stories. In

line 27, SO responded to W's question with a personal account "no I myself ((still hands items to H))", paused again as he was still busy handing the purchased items to H before launching his response "it depends on the cases". While his response, at the same time, positioned himself as experienced and knowledgeable "depends on the cases", SO supplied W with the names of two *apparently* very popular agents among Persians in Sydney "Foad Foadi" and "Sam Darbari" in lines 27 and 31 respectively. W had not heard of "Foad Foadi" and asked SO for the agent's telephone number but had heard of the other agent SO introduced her "Sam Darbari".

Interestingly, SO suggested a 'punchline' in line 33 or in Ochs's words, the construct of "unexpected event" (Ochs, 1997), "But I think both of them are a bit too busy these days", where W addresses the modality of the SO's account with a token of acknowledgement "ah:::a" in line 34, meaning W understood the modality of the story (see Kjaerbeck & Asmuß, 2005). In other words, by "ah:::a", W aligns with her interpretation of the modality, indicating that such activities in small stories are highly interactive phenomena. However, W's prolonged "ah:::a" and her non-verbal behaviour including her facial expressions and her body posture expressed surprise: perhaps implying that the modality of the story was understood, W not only produced a new account in which she asked SO whether he knew anybody else "aha ((a bit surprised)) do you know anybody" but also carried out a new activity in which SO took part "you know I want to hire somebody who takes the time cause I've got a very complicated case I don't want them to avoid responsibilities that's why I'm looking for someone who's not that busy" in line 34.

Indexicality is inherent within the interaction, and can be observed in line 33. Here, after introducing two migrant agents to W, SO provides a general assessment of their busy schedule with the use of "these days". "These days" is a clear case of an indexical (deictic) expression whose meaning calls up contextual information and knowledge. This notion, "these days", places its focus on the issue of context (Collins, 2011) insofar as there is always more to what actually "these days" is meant or understood to carry than what is literally said in this context. This occasions the need for ethnographic studies. This indexical sign is interpreted in situated encounters in which this interaction took place. This is also significant as "the interpretation of communicative acts always without exception depends upon the speaker's background knowledge" (Gumperz, 1972a, p. 22).

After the couple left the shop, I made an attempt to converse with SO to gain a finer understanding of the migration agents' practices and their busy schedule and perhaps of the

meaning of “these days”. When this interaction occurred, the topic of “boat arrivals” was a dominant one in the shop. It was also the dominant topic in the Australian news. Some customers as well as the shop-owners were concerned about the Iranians (the asylum-seekers) who chose to arrive in Australia by boat. Some of the customers, whom I had a chance to mingle with, were worried about these asylum-seekers’ lives, claiming that most of these “apparent” asylum-seekers were not “genuine refugees” and that they were rich businessmen and drug dealers back in Iran. These customers claimed that the asylum-seekers threatened not only their lives but also their families’. According to SO, these two migration agents SO introduced to W are very popular among Iranians. One of the services these migrant agents offer to their customers is to assist them with applying for refugee visas (i.e., protection visas). SO confided to me that due to the increasingly numerous refugee applicants, he recommended W to see other migrant agents, who are less busy than these two.

In line 34, W’s use of “a very complicated case” is also associated with indexicality in the sense that “complicated case” does not tell us anything specific about what kind of case it would be or about what kind of migration agent she was after. It is obvious that “complicated case” is open to a number of interpretations in such a context. By relying on W’s previous accounts and inferences based upon them (i.e., contextualisation cues (Gumperz, 1982)) “I want to hire somebody who takes the time” in line 33 and later in line 38 “he’s got enough time” and drawn from the topic of their discussion, “complicated case” here may well refer to an “asylum-seeker’ case. This was also brought up by SO when we were discussing this issue. He claimed that although W did not provide us with any clue as to what exactly she meant by “a very complicated case”, we could possibly interpret that she was looking for a migration agent who has some experience with “protection visas”. This is what Garfinkel (1948 (2006)) has referred to as “methods” or “practices” whose intelligibility require constant mutual orientation and are *tacitly* dependent on the participants, in this case SO and W and perhaps myself included. These methods, according to Garfinkel, have the character of reflexivity in the sense that each action taken by the participant is considered in connection with the last (Rawls, 2008) and this is how sense making occurs and works.

In line 35, SO produces what appears to be enumeration and a list of migration agents (“Have you spoken to Soroosh Islami”) that SO possesses whenever he needs to, giving the sense of how SO makes an attempt to assist his customers with their requests. Note also

here that there is another customer in the queue waiting to be served. Even though this may delay the business, and perhaps SO is aware of this, his attempt to satisfy W's needs demonstrates the kind of support the customers receive in this community of practice, which is evident throughout this excerpt and based on my observations (see also Chapter 3).

Interestingly, as the interaction proceeded, the repertoire questions W posed were in a progressively specific series: in line 34 "I need to hire somebody who takes the time" to which SO responded "have you spoken to Soroosh Islami" in line 35. These questions are templates in that they are models for producing good results in the activity in which W and SO are engaged within a field of expertise. It is a "field of expertise" because SO provided W with some of his personal accounts in which he shared his experience with W. In response to SO's question, W recalled how she had previously spoken to yet another migration agent on the phone with whom she was impressed by his good manners "Yes I've talked to him once but haven't met him yet actually I really liked his good manners I'll have to call him" in line 36. W's response here may demonstrate that she is desperate to find a migration agent, whom she can trust and that Persian shops would be a good option to find one. Interestingly, SO provided an account of the agent's experience without W's request in line 37 "He's young ((bagging items)) he may not have enough experience but he's good it seems that", with an overlap, where W adds "He's got enough time" in line 39. W's overlapping turn can be described as an instance of "recognitional onset" (Jefferson, 1986) as W is aware of SO's turn but wishes to incorporate in SO's talk her priority (i.e., paying attention to her "complicated case"). The effect of this overlap is that SO aligned with W and repeated W's phrase in line 39 "He's got enough time".

How does SO know about the migration agent Soroosh Islami? Here, in gaining a better understanding of SO's response to W in line 37, one needs to draw upon ethnographic observation on the study of actual talk in interaction. One reliable and invaluable source of information was the migration agents. For instance, the agent to whom SO was referring had visited the shop on the day when I was conducting my fieldwork. SO and the agent held a rather lengthy conversation at the back of the shop, which was outside of the recording situation. As a result, I was not informed of the content of their discussion. However, after the agent left the shop, SO had told me that the gentleman to whom he was speaking at the back of the shop was a migration agent and that the agent implored him to introduce some clients to him. Additionally, during my fieldwork, I had a chance to meet

several migration agents in the shop. They informed the shop-owners about the nature of their work and about the most recent changes made in the type of visa required. This is how the shop became an educational site not only for the shop-owners but also for the customers. Another source of information to which the shop-owners had access was the customers. Some of the customers were very open about their visa cases and informed the shop-owners about difficulty they had with some of the migration agents. As such, the shop-owners were informed about the visa statuses in the shop.

Returning to the analysis, SO provided W with some of Soroosh Islami's public profile in line 37 "He's young ((bagging items)) he may not have enough experience but he's good ((eye contact)) it seems that" and in line 39 "He's got time and he's good ((maintaining eye contact)) I had some complicated cases and I got Foad Foadi to do them for me", hence acting on behalf of others as a kind agent himself. In addition, one needs to pay attention to SO's amount of eye-contact, while offering his advice to W. Kendon (1967, p. 59-60) argues that the primary import of eye contact is not the fulfilment of some particular "need". Rather, through eye-contact participants are aware "that he is affecting [the other] in some way and that he is, thereby, making progress in whatever he is attempting to do" (pp. 59-60).

However, what is particularly worthy of attention is SO's "complicated cases" and having Foad Foadi to take them on rather than "Soroosh Islami". One implication of SO's small stories in lines 37 and 39 is that because W has a "complicated case" similar to SO's and because Soroosh Islami lacks considerable experience compared to the other migration agents in the field whom SO knows, it can be interpreted from SO's accounts that Soroosh Islami might not be an ideal agent for W's case. It therefore seemed that SO was reluctant to introduce W to Soroosh Islami. This frame is marked by several contextualisation cues: SO pauses until he reformulates his account, uses the discourse marker "but" which introduces a contrasting idea with what SO has already mentioned. In addition, SO uses intertextuality, "complicated cases", in which W used in her previous accounts, as a resource to implicitly preclude W from seeking Soroosh Islami's service. The effect of the contextualisation cues is that W in line 40 asked for Foad Foadi's telephone number, bringing in another perspective to the interaction, to which now we turn our attention.

When stories are recounted in a social field like Persian shops, the notion of storytelling is not restricted to merely two types of participants, namely the narrator and the recipient. This way of treating narratives (small stories) in interaction is too narrowly restricted and

does not take up Goffman's typification of "participation frameworks" (1981a) discussed in Chapter 6. Storytelling can bring in other participants and can involve more than a narrator and a recipient. In fact, it involves a whole range of participants including addressees, addressed, unaddressed, ratified, unratified, bystander, eavesdroppers. According to Bell (1984), storytellers design their utterances (in relation to content and style) to have different types of audiences in mind, occasionally receiving several audiences simultaneously. In line 40, when W asked SO whether he had Foad Foadi's telephone number, SO responded that she should look at the Parsian newspaper. This took place when MC was still in the queue. On hearing this utterance, MC responded "I've got his phone number" in line 42. In this case, MC, who was an antagonist at the outset of this interaction, now takes the role of a volunteer helper and occupies a new participant status (ratified). The way W constructed her utterance through her small story may have had a bearing on MC as an unratified participant (bystander), which eventually, not only provided an opportunity for W to form a new kind of relationship with MC but also successfully achieved what she was looking for (i.e., obtaining the agent's telephone number).

8.7 Narrative as identity work

In the last extract, Extract 8.7, a Persian-speaking customer, in his mid-50s, entered the shop. Upon his arrival, the shop was very quiet and there was no other customer in the shop. The shop-owners and I were at the back of the shop stacking and arranging items on the shelves. When the customer saw us at the back, he approached us and began conversing with the shop-owners and me. The customer and I along with other Persians in Sydney play soccer on Sundays, so we have a nodding acquaintance. As I was helping the shop-owners with putting the products on the shelves, the customer asked me whether I was working there, to which I responded, "No, I am conducting a research study here". In the following, the conversation now turns to the shop-owners' son, who also plays soccer with us on Sundays.

The small stories recounted in this extract are an example of an "ethnic identity" narrative, which is explicitly uttered by the customer. As discussed by De Fina, (2008), and will be demonstrated in the following excerpt, such stories cannot be categorized as the Labovian variation in the sense that the stories produced in the following are not actually presenting *unusual events* around which action develops (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Rather, they are narratives which participants produce to see how they can maintain their "Persian

identities" in a migration context like Sydney. However, in order to demonstrate the structural features (see also De Fina, 2008) of the narrative under scrutiny, I have used Labov's (Labov, 1972) model (see Section 8.2 above). We will now turn our attention to the analysis of Extract 8.7.

Extract 8.7

MC: Male customer in his mid-50s SW: shop-owner's wife SO: Shop-owner R: researcher

((SO is serving MC but SW is standing at the counter and MC is greeting her))

1	MC	khub shoma khub hastin khanom↑ so ((eye contact)) how are you doing madam
2	SW	kheili mamnoon shoma khubin↑ ((SO Swipes the purchased items)) thank you ((eye contact)) are you OK
3	MC	kheili mamnoon↑(1.0)ma Ryne ro mibinim har 1 shanbe↑ thank you I see Ryne every Sunday ((he means at the soccer game)) age nayad miam behetoon migam [hhh↓ if he doesn't show up I'll keep you posted
4	SW	hhh hhh ((constant eye contact))
5	SO	hhh hhh
6	R	hhh] hhh]
7	MC	na har hafte miadesh↓ no he turns up every Sunday
8	SW	=miad↑ does he↑
9	MC	are he does
10	SW	inghadar bacham heyvoni khastas↓ he's exhausted my little boy 6 rooz 7 rooze dar hafte kar mikone↓ he works 6 or 7 days per week alan hanooz sare kare he's still at work ((it's 4 pm on a Sunday when this interaction was being recorded)) ((eye contact)) =6 sob rafte hanooz nayomade↓ he went to work at 6 am and hasn't returned yet

As can be observed, the small stories are embedded within another activity: shopping. The narrative occurred at the back of the shop, at the back stage (see Chapter 3) while the customer was busy picking out some items from the shelves as well as at the counter while paying. After greeting the shop-owners, MC turned the conversation to Ryne, the shop-owners' son, whom MC meets every Sunday (lines 1-3) at the soccer game. Through this greeting enquiry, MC appears to attempt to enter into the SW's personal realm, given that MC seems to know her son fairly well. The greeting MC issued at the inception of his narrative opened up an opportunity for him to signal the participation frame (Goffman, 1981) within this narrative which MC wishes to adopt for the purpose of initiating his small stories. It should also be noted that the inclusion of the formal greeting by MC in line

1 (the use of "khanom" meaning "madam" in Persian) (see Koutlaki, 2010) as an address form marks the relationship as less likely a very intimate relationship. In line 3, MC reports to the shop-owners (both are present in this interaction, but his main recipient is SW) that Ryne takes part in the Sunday games and "if he doesn't show up, I'll keep you posted" followed by a laughter token. The MC's witty comment was also followed by laughter in lines 4-6, including myself, which set the friendly mood and positive interactional frame that could support the use of the in-group marker. In other words, as (Gavioli, 1995) noticed, when a joke is told, a laughter token is a preferred turn. As can be observed in lines 4-6, the humour was successfully comprehended, which reflected the interactional feature of joking as a speech activity that the participants have jointly produced. When MC made the joke, SW maintained constant eye-contact with MC. This powerful non-verbal behaviour may have been a precursor for MC to say "No he turns up every Sunday" in line 7, which confirmed that Ryne participates in the Sunday soccer games.

As Schegloff (Schegloff, 1997) claimed, the conditions of production (here MC's account in line 3, his immediate local context) of narratives have a bearing on the structure of narratives. The consequence of MC and SW's interactional conditions in this storytelling is that in line 10 "He's exhausted my little boy he works 6 or 7 days per week he's still at work ((it's 4 pm on a Sunday when this interaction was being recorded)) ((eye contact)) he went to work at 6 am and hasn't returned yet" SW challenged MC and maintained an ironic implicit stance regarding MC's point "if he doesn't show up, I'll keep you posted". The message, for MC, which SW conveyed in line 10 can be viewed as mildly (and perhaps explicitly) critical as the joke (the witty comment) that developed between MC and SW can also be regarded and interpreted as an indication of disalignment. As such, it is clear that through this collaborative narrative-in-interaction, SW's small story in line 10 serves the purpose of implicitly expressing appreciation to her son, Ryne, for the hard work he had put by constructing him as a "hard-working and dutiful son", who even works on weekends, and at the same time presenting herself as a "proud mum".

However, important changes (the storytelling) occurring in the second part of the encounter have many features that are consistent with Persian cultural values. Extract 8.8 demonstrates how narrative-in-interaction can offer a valuable tool for "doing ethnicity" (Marra & Holmes, 2008) in the course of everyday interaction in *Persia*. In particular, the strategies employed and developed here to evaluate the events provide a valuable insight

into the kind of "Persian identity" the participants are constructing throughout their narrative.

Extract 8.8

((the following is taking place at the counter, where the MC has brought his items to purchase))

11 MC =oon tanavoeshe dige↓
playing soccer is his hobby ((as if not a big deal))
=miad oonja↑ chon dostasho mibine
he goes there cause he catches up with his friends
alan hame bishtare bache ha javoonan(.)
now almost all of the players are young
bachehayee hastan ke zire 25↓(.) havalye 20 ta 25 hastan
all under 25 between 20 and 25
((eye contact but SW is busy bagging the items))
chon hame javoon hastan
cause they're all young
bad pesare man ham miad chon hame javoonan(.)
and my son joins me too cause they're all young
peerashoon dige ma hastim↓(.)be hamin khater khub mian↓
we're the oldest that's why they show up to the game
12 SO =khub sareshoon [garme
that keeps them busy
13 SW daghighan]
exactly
14 MC are khub dostashoono bebinan(.)
that's right they catch up with their friends
bad(.)komakeshoon mikone be khatere inke ID shoon chiz mishe
and that helps them cause their ID will become ( )
=bachehayee ke miran tooye(.)jamiyate bozorgtar
when the young ((he means second generation)) hang out with lots of
gheyre Persian(.)ye meghdar moshkel ID peyda mikonam↓
non-Persian groups they'll a bit face ID problems
((giving MC the receipt and his credit card))
15 SW =bale
that's right ((while nodding her head))
16 MC injori migan khub bachehayee dige ham hastan(.)
nut when they show up to the game they see other kids
bad az ham dige(.)az daneshgah miporsan(.)
and they ask each other about universities
va in khub(.)in khodesh kheili komake bozorgiye↓(.)
and that's a big help
khub kheili khoshal shodam↓
OK good to see you
17 SO =merci rooze khubi dashte bashin↓
thanks have a nice day
18 MC daste shoma dard nakone↓
thank you very much
19 SO salam beresonid
give my regards ((to your family))
20 MC merci khoda hafez
thanks good bye

Extract 8.8 opens with MC's disalignment in line 11 "Playing soccer is his hobby" with SW's account in relation to her son. MC could have simply ratified SW's narrative and

provided an acknowledgement token. However, rather, in an extensively expanded turn, MC elected to express his concern about how to guide (nurture) the young like SW's son. MC here provided an account to merely inform the shop-owners about the nature (purpose) of the Sunday gatherings at the soccer game. Through his narrative, MC is implying that this is not just a usual soccer game where the members only "play soccer". Rather, MC displays himself as an accountable person, which in this context (talking to the other parents) can be regarded as a "concerned and responsible parent", whose son also joins the group. MC's account would have probably provided the shop-owners with a sense of relief, which was highly respected and aligned by the shop-owners as can be observed in line 12 "That keeps them busy" (SO) and in line 13 "exactly" (SW).

In line 11, MC's notion of "we're the oldest" is an instance of indexicality, thus treating it as a semiotic phenomenon. Whichever sense of "the oldest" was intended is certainly not readily available from the utterances produced by MC alone. Rather, it remains to be dealt with by MC in light of the specifics of "the utterance". The referent of "the oldest" perhaps needs some ethnographic observation and should be established by an insider (in this case, the researcher) who has been attending the Sunday soccer gatherings. In this way, I have been participating in soccer on Sundays with this community for the past three and half years. Each Sunday, prior to the game, MC usually encourages the "players", most of whom are young, to share with others their personal experiences with each other. This is usually organised in a way that the players form a circle where MC stands in the middle. It is also interesting to note that through this regular formal contact, some of the players have instilled sufficient confidence to apply for work and successfully gained employment. It is therefore safe to deduce that the notion "the oldest" may not refer to the age category. Rather, it might refer to the concept of "leadership" (i.e., a person who has the experience to organise such events and to whom others in the group show respect and are attentive to what is requested from them).

Of interest in this extract is the concept of the "Sunday soccer game" as a meeting point where "Persian identity" is not only practised but also is maintained (line 14). In light of its content and the organisation of the story, the narrative has successfully created an image of first-generation Persian immigrants as caring about their Australian-born children. If attention is not paid to them, the young then "hang out with lots of non-Persian groups" and "they'll face ID problems" (line 14). In addition, one can see a cooperative alignment of interaction in which MC's contributions were balanced with a positive uptake and

agreement from SW in line 15 “that’s right ((while nodding her head))”, both verbally and non-verbally, indicating that both MC and SW arrive at a common understanding of the narrative as concerned parents, which illustrates that they display alignment to each other.

To sum up, following De Fina (2008), we can summarise some of the features of the narrative analysed above in reference to contextual factors including *identity*: the storytellers are both immigrants to Australia, and they have been living in Sydney for 30 to 40 years. In terms of *activity in which narratives are embedded*, the narratives recounted in these two extracts took place when the participants were serving and were being served in the shop. In relation to *structure*, the storytelling did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, this nexus of practice shows how closely social actions are intersected with each other in the life of the participants’ everyday experience in the shop. As seen in Extracts 8.7 and 8.8, there is no complicating event as such. Instead, there is a “complicating condition” (De Fina, 2008, p. 433). To clarify, the stories in the aforementioned extracts are *tellable* simply in the light of their cultural value implications, not because of unexpected events.

8.8 Conclusion

The analysis of the narratives in this chapter has demonstrated that the practices of storytelling in *Persia* are embedded within the practice of service encounters. In fact, as the data have suggested through small stories, the participants along with the shop-owners carry out their discursive business within this community of practice. Within the ethnomethodological approach, members of a particular event (or community of practice), have certain methods which they use to govern in some sense the nature of their interaction. Storytelling is of a kind.

We have also seen how the small stories that participants in *Persia* shared were mediated through a unique set of discursive practices which provided a rich resource for negotiating the many interpersonal exchanges and issues that could arise in the course of a typical day in the shop. Furthermore, the narratives analysed have offered invaluable insights about culturally relevant activities which comprise particular ethnic groups. As shown, whenever such activities (i.e., maintaining Persian identity (Extract 8.8, for instance)) become prominent, the small stories the participants produced have resulted in the construction of unique ethnic identity.

It seems that through small stories, the members in *Persia*, customers and shop-owners as well as the researcher, have used narratives as invaluable tools to achieve a variety of

goals. This is evidenced in the type of small stories in which the participants were engaged. Among them, I have documented the questions that I posed for my research agenda from my research participant (Extract 8.3), the questions regarding the migration agents in Extract 8.6, negotiation of identity work (Extract 8.8) and so forth. It can then be convincingly argued that such small stories are mediated and informed by participation roles, social actors' actions and their practices. In doing so, locally narrated stories and situational roles (i.e., information provider vs information seeker) are shown to be closely connected with the activity of the construction of the theme and the content of the stories narrated (i.e., consulting a migration agent). The analysis has, therefore, demonstrated that providing a rich account of multimodal shopping exchanges will increase our understanding of the ways in which every day transactional encounters are at the core of wider transcultural engagements and flow.

To conclude the "findings Chapters", as observed, drawing on Goffman's question "*what is it that is going on here?*" with a focus on MDA has provided powerful and invaluable tools for detailed examination of how the mediated actions my participants have carried out in the shop in part have led to the identity construction of them, both implicitly and explicitly (Chapter 5). Additionally, the theoretical underpinnings implemented in this study have allowed us to bring to the fore the significance of the participants' roles in this process (Chapter 6), providing a new perspective on research on service interactions. As observed, with the use of the foregoing tools, the analysis has displayed a number of overlapping identities in the participants' work-related discourse namely a *professional identity*, a *personal identity* and an *institutional identity* as well as ethnic identities. The participation frameworks have deconstructed different voices in a strip of talk and, simultaneously, extended such analysis so as to incorporate not only the speaker but also the ratified and unratified participants (both the language and non-language elements) within the organization of the utterance.

Using MDA has also demonstrated how discourse in context of *Persia* has included key moments in interaction that were viewed as critical (Chapter 7) in terms of participants' meanings and potential face-threatening acts resulting from different habitus of participants. Previous studies of service encounters seem to have overlooked the importance of differential mediational means in the respective shops in question. As discussed in Chapter 7, mediational means seem to be a source of critical moments in the shop. This focus on the mediational means has exposed overlapping discourses and

practices that merged with one another leading to discovering not only the identity of the participants but also to their lack of particular knowledge about or familiarity with the cultural tools available in such settings. This has been shown to have emerged from the robust theoretical underpinnings implemented in this study.

Chapter 9: Mediated Action in *Persia*

9.1 Introduction

This final chapter will provide a concise summary of the Findings presented in Chapters 5-8. It will postulate that the theoretical underpinnings framing the analyses in these preceding chapters illustrate certain discourses which, combined, lead to and are part of a "nexus of practice". The four research questions are revisited, and the limitation of the current study are discussed along with suggestions for future research.

9.2 Mediated Discourse Analysis

Briefly, Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) approaches the problem of "which discourse to analyze" (Jones, 2012, p. 33) by addressing Goffman's key question: *"What is it that is going on here?"* That is, MDA makes an attempt to gain an understanding of the relationship between *social action*, *practice* and *discourses* that play a role in *"What is it that is going on here?"*

Throughout this thesis, I have been at pains to guide the reader through an examination and exploration of the mediated action and social practice in Persian shops from an MDA perspective (Chapter 2). I have attempted to analyse naturally occurring data and face-to-face interactions that comprise joint actions (Clark, 1996) (e.g., nexus of practice) across one Persian shop in Sydney with the pseudonym, *Persia*. The analysis has mainly drawn upon 90 visits and 80 hours of audio-recorded data of *Persia*, that included circa 200 hours of face-to-face interactions from October 2012 to October 2014. My analysis was based on the nexus of practice; that is the locally organised activities (see Garfinkel, 1967) that occurred in *Persia*.

I have suggested throughout this thesis that getting a sense of action around *Persia* necessitates the need for exploring the ways in which it is embedded and perhaps rooted in the constraints imposed by the dominant "*Discourses"* (Gee, 2011) and in the affordances through which the participants (the shop-owners along with their customers and myself included) adapt these affordances and constraints for the purpose of gaining and pursuing specific social goals in *Persia*. As observed, the opening of such a line of inquiry has led to the constructing and forming new social practice and social identities. In so doing, the analysis requires incorporating both macro (here social theories) and micro dimensions (i.e., linguistic and conversation analyses). When taken together, the macro and micro levels can provide us with a better understanding of the social practices in service

encounters in general and of the underlying "critical moments" in *Persia*, in particular (embedded in the mediational tools as "cultural toolkits"), and of the identity claims that allow the situated social interaction to take place.

9.3 Service Encounters

In this thesis, as discussed in Chapter 1, *service interactions* (encounters) were defined as a social action and as everyday interactions through which some kind of commodity including goods and/or information is negotiated and exchanged between the shop-owners and their customers. Crucial to this definition throughout this chapter have been the *"action"* and "*cycles of discourse"*, neither genre nor utterances. As discussed in Chapter 3 (see also Izadi, 2015), viewing service encounters as a social practice can call attention to the significance of "sites of engagements" where action takes place. Such a definition in previous studies of service encounters was loosely referred to as "context", which, *per se*, as observed in the Findings chapters, did not capture the dynamism of action (and reaction) in *Persia*.

To tackle the effects of such definition in isolation, Scollon and Scollon (2004), with the use of their theory of social action, provided a conceptual "tool box" in lieu of "context", in which they have postulated that all human action be analysed as an intersection of three "cycles of discourse" namely: the "interaction order", the individual's "historical body", and the "discourses in place". Such a tool box sets an analytic task of mapping those cycles of discourses with an impact on the activity occurring in the relevant moment of social action. In other words, they *mediate* the relationship between utterances (linguistic analysis) and non-linguistic society and culture. Advocates of linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al., 2015, for instance) have been at pains to draw on the strengths of this theoretical orientation by arguing that context needs to be explored and not just assumed.

One also needs to take account of Blommaert's (2005b) stance on the importance of "history" as an important element in such investigations. In so doing, Blommaert has drawn upon constructs from linguistics such as intertextuality and interdiscursivity (see Chapters 6 and 7) to highlight the significance of shifting discourse across time and space, which ultimately assists researchers in the field in explaining power relations and inequalities in meaning making and expanding analyses far beyond the text of an interactional transcript.

In what follows, firstly, I will summarise the analytical chapters (i.e., Chapters 5-8). I will then aim to bring together the main points of my analyses through a theoretical map (Figure 19) suggesting a tentative model for researching service encounters. The chapter will conclude with some methodological issues, limitations of the current study and future directions.

9.4 Summary: Revisiting the research questions

The analytical chapters, Chapters 5 to 8, were oriented around a series of conceptual constructs (Candlin & Crichton, 2012, 2011, 2013) and focal themes (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005) that emerged from the data as providing a set of frameworks for the description, interpretation and explanation of the *nexus of practice* in *Persia*, and the key role it plays in the facilitation of activities undertaken in the shop. The following offers a short concluding summary of each of the foregoing chapters and addresses the research questions first posed in Chapter 1.

9.4.1 Chapter 5: Identity in Interaction

Research Q 1: In what sense can ethnic shops be categorized as 'ethnic'?

Chapter 5 set out to explore in more detail the construction of identity and ethnicity in interactions in the situated context of the Persian shops in Sydney. As discussed, the identities of the participants (myself included) work to orient towards one of a set of institutionally constrained, yet locally organised and exploited identities. This is evidenced through talk-in- interaction insofar as the social actors in *Persia* have carried out such local understanding by accomplishing resources readily accessible in the socially situated but localised interaction. For instance, *Persia* has served not only as a shopping space where purchases were made, but additionally as a social setting where the customers and the shop-owners have negotiated and renegotiated their identities through browsing, consuming the goods, and interacting with other co-ethnics (i.e., Turkish, Greeks etc.…). As discussed in the Findings chapters, the participants' accounts of their shopping experience have demonstrated that *Persia* has provided a social and cultural ethnicity where self-identity was promoted through browsing imported products. Such interaction cannot be observed in other similar shops such as Coles, ALDI or Woolworths, and is typical of shops of this kind. In brief, the identity and ethnicity categories the social actors in *Persia* have used in interacting with other participants were resources available to them by which they have participated in their shopping activities and at the same time they were

methods by which they constructed them as members of the same or a different social group.

1a) What communication resources do such encounters require?

Therefore, for the interaction to be effectively operative in *Persia*, the participants (shop-owner-customers) needed to be well-equipped with and have at their disposal some understanding of the communication resources pertinent to such ethnic fields. Such resources are always set against the shop's institutional and cultural backgrounds. The particular cultural background of *Persia*, for instance, entails an understanding of the culture of the shop (e.g., deciding when to actually intervene with a statement or with negative comments). Such awareness of communication resources is inherently embedded in the social actor's understanding of the definition of the situation (i.e., frame analysis), which, as observed, has led to the identity of the participants (see, for example, Extracts 5.11 and 5.12). That is, the shop-owners and their customers, augmented by the interactions (verbal and non-verbal behaviours) in the shop, perform their "talk-in-interaction" (local) identities in the context of the shop through interactional modes, including the discourses in place and the participants' particular identity's category-bound activities (Hester & Hester, 2012; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002; Sacks, 1992). For instance, while most Persian speaking customers orient towards their ethnic activities each distinguished by category-bound activities and category-based predicates (i.e., discussing issues raised back in Iran) non-Persian customers orient across the wider discourses taking place in the shop.

1b) What are the affordances?

1c) What are the constraints?

It would be, therefore, safe to argue that the effects of the locally organised activities (i.e., the situated categorisations and identity work of the service encounters) have instilled the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990) of the participants, which have provided affordances (familiarity) for some and lack of knowledge for others (constraints). Such affordances and constraints have suggested one's previous experiences or knowledge, and are thus adjusted to a particular historical body. Such affordances and constraints are constructed in the space between social and material agencies, reflecting the participants' motives, their

historical body, situated in their respective knowledge about interaction, and in their stocks of interactional knowledge. As observed in this chapter, many mediated actions that the shop-owners along with their customers in the shop have performed have partly given rise to the identity construction of them, both implicitly and explicitly. Furthermore, the shop-owners themselves, in their interactions with their customers, and with each other, have claimed certain identities (e.g. housewife, father, institutional authority) which work to reinforce or realign the disciplinary orientations of the customers. The situated and occasioned nature of the service encounter categories and their attributes lead to a certain degree of tension between, and among, interactional orders.

9.4.2 Chapter 6: Participation framework and footing

Research Q2- What is the participation framework for these shops?

A primary means by which the participants in the situated context and locally organised activities in this study make sense of their actions as intelligible is through the participation framework and footing; that is the participants' roles. The participation framework (Goffman, 1981a) has, therefore, offered a theoretical framework for investigating how multiple parties construct action in the presence of one another while at the same time both helping to build and attending to relevant context and action. The analysis of participation within activities in the shop has provided an arena for the researcher to regard actors as not "simply embedded within context, but as actively involved in the process of building context" (M. H. Goodwin, 1999, p. 178).

2a) Who is involved?

As the data have demonstrated, within the participation framework emerges a much more complex set of participants. As such, the participants in the shop were not regarded simply as shop-owner-customer. Rather, they were of different types and of different orders in the sense that they were not speaker-hearer. There were over-hearers (backstage over hearers) but also there were the participants for whom the speakers were the spokespersons. In other words, the participants in the shop did not always produce their own words. Rather, they have effectively articulated somebody else's words resulting in a cooperative alignment.

2b) What roles do these participants play?

As observed, for instance, within the participation framework in the shop, the shop-owners did not play just one role. They were, for example, the provider of the service or a

connoisseur of Persian food. They had different roles and their roles were different in terms of the relationships they have established with their customers. The aforementioned discussion directs our attention to the professional role performance in which the shop-owner, for instance, remains within the boundary of his professional activities (see Sarangi, 2011). Through his interaction with the customers, the shop-owner can occupy different roles. However, these roles form part of what is termed a "role set" (Sarangi, 2010), which is "a basic characteristic of social structure" and defined as a "complement of role relationships which persons have by virtue of occupying a particular social status" (Merton, 1986, p. 423).

2c) How do they differ?

In addition, an important finding of this chapter was the shifts between transactional and relational talk, which were more likely to be initiated by the customers. The shop-owner's stances in the participation frameworks as a service-provider appear to mean that when they are aligning with this role, they not only merely abide by fulfilling their customers' transactional needs but also their conversational and interpersonal needs and align to their stance shifts.

9.4.3 Chapter 7: Critical moments

Research Q3- What are the critical moments which occur in these encounters?

Chapter 7 examined, described and analysed the critical moments occurring in the crucial sites of *Persia*, as well as the communication challenges the participants have faced. Such critical moments are evident as fluid throughout the sales interactions from the significant initial first impression, through selection of products in the shop to the final purchase consideration.

3a) What constitutes the critical moments in interaction in these shops?

As discussed, any kind of commercial transaction inherently comprises criticality in that it involves a buyer and seller and has some potential of this for negotiating positions, hence opportunities for problems to arise. This was supported by the data presented in this chapter as well as by the ethnographic data from the situated setting of the study. However, this was all locally organised within the general situation of the shop. Since the shop under investigation was a Persian shop in Australia, with the audience and the customers varied (Persians and non-Persians), there were factors which had had a bearing on the issue of

critical moments such as an understanding of the culture of shops of this kind as in the case of "fruit dates", as a source of critical moments, observed in Extract 7.5.

3b) What are the communicative challenges which arise from the participants in managing those critical moments?

As the data in this chapter have demonstrated, each of the social actors in *Persia* took part in "mutual engagement" (Wenger, 1998) in a joint practice and belonged to multiple communities and ways of thinking. Such ways of thinking are positioned in particular bodies of knowledge and ideological stances. As observed, critical moments were frequently embedded in the social actors' practice in *Persia* where ideological differences between the social actors have not been kept to oneself and where there were always political, economic, cultural and social ideologies, which partially constituted the institutions in question. Some of these ideologies were in clear contrast to the social actors' purposes, interests and values as in the case of the interaction between a couple in Extract 7.2, where the participants' disagreement over the quality of the food served in the restaurant next to *Persia* has led to a critical moment.

3c) What discursive strategies do such participants employ in the management of such challenges?

Furthermore, I have argued throughout this chapter for discursive strategies the participants have adopted to effectively prevent or settle conflicts, in which the participants have unconsciously regarded them as a "tool box" of members' resources (Fairclough, 1992a). Many of these resources are inherently intertextual and interdiscursive. As the data and examples in this chapter have demonstrated, the participants have been equipped with the communicative competence pertinent to such a social field (i.e., Persian shops) to successfully negotiate the interactions in which such resources have been integrated into other disciplines and institutions to handle conflicts, albeit momentarily. Through the deliberate use and interplay of a range of strategies, those of intertextuality, mitigating devices, and interdiscursivity, the participants simultaneously aligned and further reinforced the high solidarity culture characteristic of this particular community of practice (i.e., Persian shops) in response to the challenges that arose in *Persia*.

9.4.4 Chapter 8: Narratives in talk in interaction

Research Q4- What kinds of social actions do members of the community accomplish through their telling?

Chapter 8 further expanded the interactions in *Persia* and analysed the significance of storytelling in the context of an ethnic shop in Sydney. The study has problematized canonical (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) narratives, which are frequently elicited through interviews. Moreover, it has responded to the challenge of the analytic notion of ordinary conversation. The chapter has suggested that in order to gain a better and finer understanding of narratives as talk-in-interaction, one needs to expand the analytical tools and should not simply analyse just what has been uttered. As observed, the mediational means and discourses in place have led to the recounting of narratives.

4a) Who are the participants?

As demonstrated by the data, the participants who shared their stories in *Persia* were of two types: immigrants to Australia and those who were non-Persian regular customers, who had an understanding of the culture of the shop and who knew when to narrate a story. There were also non-Persian customers whose priority was to shop and whose small stories were hovered around the questions they had about the products that they sought to purchase.

4b) What kinds of topics are discussed?

The topics that were discussed through narratives were those of a unique set of discursive practices which provided a rich resource for negotiating the many interpersonal exchanges and issues that could arise in the course of a typical day in the shop including economic and political issues back in Iran, the depreciated Iranian currency (Rials), family issues, pre-migration jobs etc. Furthermore, these narratives have provided invaluable insights about culturally relevant activities to particular ethnic groups.

4c) Why are certain types of narratives told at certain moments in *Persia*?

The types of narratives recounted and analysed here grew out of the shop-owners' and their customers' own concerns, but concerns that emerged from the situated activities in which the participants were engaged, each with "characteristic interactive and social configurations" (Haviland, 2008). In brief, the social actors (shop-owners and customers) in *Persia* have used small stories to make sense of their life experiences. In so doing, they have jointly negotiated what was being carried out and narrated through small stories, hence utilizing narratives as invaluable tools to attain a variety of social actions, doing identity work, avowing their ethnic identity, complaining and so forth.

9.5 Exploring Service Encounters

In describing and making sense of the interactions (i.e., the service encounters) in *Persia*, I have devised a tentative map to incorporate the complexities of the face-to-face interactions that cross the boundaries, which set apart the previous studies carried out so far to the current study at hand. This map in many ways is not dissimilar to those drawn by other scholars in the field of social theories and discourse (Bourdieu, 1977b; Fairclough, 1992a; Jones, 2000; Scollon & Scollon, 2004). However, in doing so, it is not meant to belittle these other theoretical frameworks but rather to focus attention on the landscape of the service interactions in Persian shops to propose an alternate scheme (method) for the purpose of gaining a better understating of the relationship between *social practice*, *discourse* and *identities* in locally organised activities in the shop. Figure 19 displays a graphic representation of the map. However, it should be emphasised that what I will have shown here ought not to be viewed as fully highlighting the complexity and intricacy of the situated activities (action) and the interactions taking place in *Persia*. Rather, it is hoped that what it does is to offer a set of useful theoretical underpinnings that suggest directions for future researchers in the domain of service interactions. In the following, before I go on to briefly summarise each of the theoretical frameworks displayed in Figure 19, let me justify the validity of devising the foregoing model.

Since every map or model does not picture different contexts and motives per se and always deals with a simulation of reality, one needs to consider the validity of any given model of this type (i.e., Figure 19). To validate such a definition of social life encapsulated in the graphic map/model, the model should inform us about its practicality (i.e., to what extent is it plausible in the context of *Persia*, for instance) and about where researchers wish to go with it so as to facilitate them with a better understanding of what is *actually going on* in an interaction, of the locally organised activities in the shop (apart of shopping), for instance. Gee (2011) suggested that for a model to be easily articulated and constitutes many of the situated meanings, it must always be *flexible* and *reflective* (see also Jones, 2000). For Gee, to be flexible incorporates different sets of tools and methods that the researcher adapts and develops during the research process.

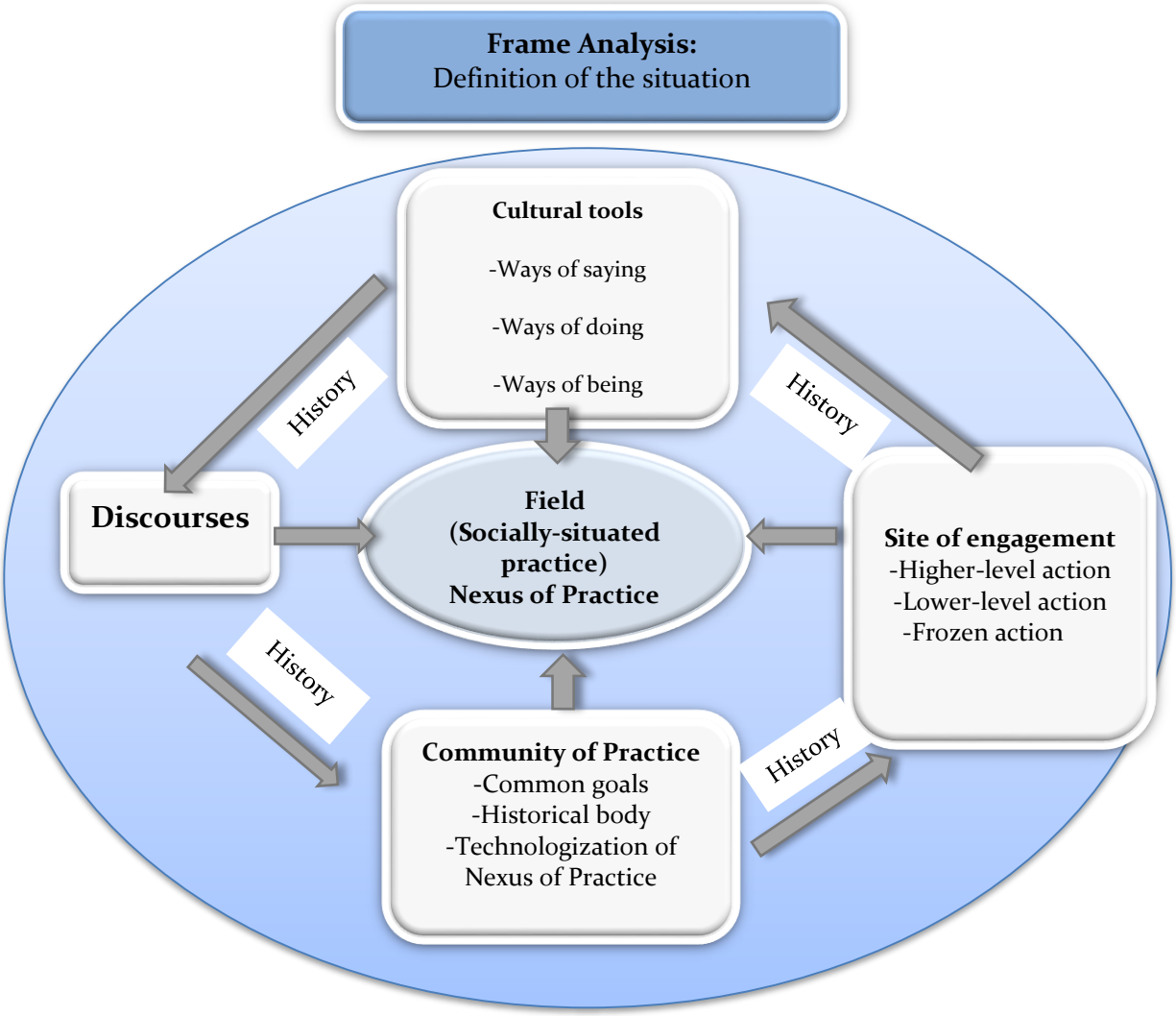

Figure 19: A map for service encounters research

However, such methods and tools require extensive alterations in that they are "adapted to specific issues, problems and contexts" (Jones, 2000, p.473). To be reflective means that the researcher must acknowledge that they, by their nature of qualitative/ethnographic research, are embedded in the social processes and that the way they view this world is "contingent on their professional 'storylines'" (Jones, 2000, p. 473), including the participants, the situation in which they are involved (site of engagement) and the "institutions, networks and communities of practice" (Rampton, 2007, see also Rampton et al., 2014) in which they are located. This view of reflexivity is also evident in the multiperspectival approach discussed in Chapter 4. In short, the principles of MDA, upon which this thesis has drawn, are "a set of heuristics" (Scollon, 2001a, p. 152) by which the researcher can restrict the scope of what must be taken into account when analysing so as to achieve an understanding of mediated actions in real time. Such an inquiry crosses disciplinary boundaries and sees phenomena from multiperspectival approaches. As discussed in the previous chapters, MDA borrows insights and analytical tools (Norris &

Jones, 2005) from various disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, sociology, psychology, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and so forth. MDA provides the researcher with an opportunity to adjust his/her approach based on the demands of research purposes. I will now turn the discussion to the graphic representation of the map.

9.5.1 Definition of the situation

Central to this map lies the definition of the situation, proposed by Goffman (1974), known as "frame analysis", which defines the process of decomposing the individual's "organization of experience" (p. 11). One of Goffman's main contributions was the construct of "primary frameworks". Goffman attempted to specify that primary frameworks were the first point of the organisation of experience. He maintains that "we tend to perceive events in terms of primary frameworks, and the type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied" (Goffman 1974, p. 24), asserting that "acts of daily living are understandable because of some primary framework (or frameworks) that informs them" (Goffman 1974, p. 26). This process involves negotiation about the situation which is tightly linked to the power relation, the status and social distance between the participants, thus in line with Bourdieu's habitus. Accordingly, as the Findings chapters have illustrated an understanding of the definition of the situation (and at times a lack of familiarity with the definition of the situation) has offered useful tools for the analysis of how an issue is defined and problematised in *Persia*. Goffman further elucidated two discrete primary frameworks namely, "the natural" and "the social" that assist social actors to work out "what is actually going on" around them.

Whilst natural frameworks "identify occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, 'purely physical'" (Goffman, 1974, p. 22), social primary frameworks "provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being" (p. 22). As shown in detail in the Findings chapters, the primary frameworks discussed above have constructed the basis of our most fundamental understanding of the phenomena that occurred in *Persia*.

9.5.2 Bourdieu's Field

Following the map in Figure 19, I have investigated the notion of social "field" that is invoked in discourse about shopping in *Persia*. As discussed in Chapter 2, the construct of

"field" is a social space where interactions, transactions and events take place (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 148). In this sense, "field" can be viewed as a historical and current relation between roles and positions that are affixed to the construct of *capital*. These positions within fields are taken by participants who possess a stake in the operation of the field. As such, in order to make sense of interactions taking place among participants in a social field, it is inadequate to analyse what was merely uttered or what was going on. In other words, the point I wish to make here is that when we consider language as the "taken for granted" mode of communication, we may indeed place too much value to what is being written or uttered and as a result (perhaps) our analysis would lead to a distorted picture of reality. Such analysis ought to incorporate "*locating* the object of investigation in its specific historical and local/national/international and relational context" (Thomson, 2008, p. 67 italics in original). The field of *Persia*, for instance, is, therefore, replete with such specific characteristics attributed to Persian society: it possesses its own history; with particular agents performing action within it and for a specific stake in the field, leveraging their capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Additionally, the field of *Persia* has its own habitus and maintains a given set of beliefs. Such a field is highly distinguished by boundary features, beyond which the field "ceases to have any impact on practice" (Peillon, 1998, p. 215).

9.5.3 Community of Practice

According to Scollon (2001a), in many ways, a nexus of practice (a regular repetition of a site of engagement and a linkage of multiple practices) can be readily perceived as a group. Hence, MDA has a preference to use the construct "community of practice" (CoP) when explicit membership in a group in question becomes prominent (p. 150). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, p. 464) define CoP as an "aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour". The researchers go on to write of "practices" which stem from mutual engagement and may incorporate "ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, and power relations" (p. 464). Scollon (2001a), on the other hand, refers to a CoP as a "group of people who regularly *interact* with each other towards some common purpose or goal" (p. 151, emphasis added). Scollon's view of CoP is inherently embedded in social interaction in that practices by their nature are ways of displaying who we are and what our relationship is to one another (i.e., how we are assigned to a larger social world). As can be perceived by this definition, practices in a CoP are locally organised and defined by the specific group of participants who carry out action at a specific social field.

At the same time, however, Wertsch (Wertsch, 2001) has made a distinction between two types of communities namely "implicit" community and "imagined" community. An implicit community has to come to be recognised not based on their shared actions but on the pursuit of interest in a shared domain as providing a basis for the development of shared practices and tools in real time and space. Such practices and tools are viewed as the *property* of the implicit community. In other words, the members of such communities do not do "things together" but who essentially "do the same things" (Jones, 2013). On the other hand, in imagined communities, according to Wertsch (2001), "there is an emphasis given to recognizing or imagining the collectivity and to creating or reproducing it" (p.3). To contextualise the foregoing communities, it seems unlikely that any MDA is taken within a CoP. This claim is evidenced in the preceding Findings chapters where some of the mediated actions observed were performed by the social actors in *Persia* as an action within a CoP. Take the example of the shop-owners. The shop-owners in *Persia* were not just taking the role of employees (who owned the shop). Their duties incorporated assisting the customers to find the goods and products they are looking for, answering queries from customers, providing advice and guidance on product selection to customers and so forth. These actions might be viewed as occurring within a particular formal institutional action and hence constructing identity within that structure.

At the same time, however, as discussed in Chapter 3 (and see Izadi, 2015), the shop-owners' duties were not just limited to the ones listed above. Rather, due to the historical body of the shop-owners, they had offered goods and services and displayed a good manner which could give rise to promoting Persian culture among Persian and non-Persian-speaking customers. They, therefore, produced an array of asides in and around the shop assistant duties and actions which placed them within the Persian community of practice, which requires another nexus of practice compared to large mainstream supermarkets such as "Coles or Woolworths". To conclude this section, while one customer (perhaps a non-Persian-speaking one) could treat the service interaction in *Persia* as a nexus of practice, another (perhaps a Persian-speaking customer) might make an attempt to produce a CoP. That is, as plentifully observed in the data, advice seeking (i.e., seeking employment) was one of such practice that was unique to the interactions taking place in *Persia* and might be seen differently from those in large mainstream supermarkets. Such actions seem to be taken within the CoP of *Persia* (the shop).

9.5.4 Site of Engagement

According to Norris (2004), all actions including lower (i.e. gestures), higher (i.e., an opening or closing of a service encounter for instance) or frozen (i.e., the products on the shelves), are carried out by social actors in a *site of engagement*. This is because each action is unrepeatable and specific and the scene (window) which opens for mediated action to happen will never correspond to an imminent action within the *same* site of engagement. To be more precise, an action such as paying at the cash register, asking for the price of an item or any of the other numerous actions framing service encounters in *Persia*, takes place at the intersection of many *cycles of discourse* (Chapter 3), action, and practice referred to as the "site of engagement"– that moment when all those practices – calling the shop owner's name, stepping into personal space, showing the item to the shop owner, and so on – come together to form an action in real time.

When a site of engagement incorporates frozen actions (i.e., the layouts of the items on the shelves), the lower (i.e., the smallest interactional meaning unit) and higher action (which is bracketed by an opening/closing and made up of a multiplicity of chained lower-level actions), then the researcher is equipped with invaluable tools and should focus on the focal theme of attention of the relevant participants in question. For instance, the conversations between the shop-owners and their customers, during which they are momentarily constructing their "institutional" identities (i.e., shop-owner versus customers) concentrate on the focal point of attention of the two participants in the specific *sites of engagement* in the shop. According to Norris (2011), once the focal point of attention is delineated (i.e., transactional and relational interaction) the analysis radiates to lower rates of attention/awareness (i.e., incorporating the layout of the shop, the objects, and the décor) radiating even further to the frozen mediated actions (pp. 45-6).

None of the identity claims, the participation frameworks, the critical moments and the narratives observed in *Persia* discussed in the previous Findings chapters can be properly investigated through the analysis of the spoken utterances alone. As such, to gain a better understanding of the effect of such spoken utterances in an ethnic shop, for instance, one needs to explore how they are negotiated and taken up in situated activities and moments of social practice through which the social actors are performing. Scollon (2001b) refers to such situated moments as "sites of engagement", "the real-time window that is opened through an intersection of social practices and mediational means (cultural tools) that make that action the focal point of attention of the relevant participants" (pp, 3-4). In the Persian

shop discussed in Chapter 3, sites of engagement can be as diverse as separate practices such as entering the shop, asking for the availability of a product, taking the items to the counter to pay, handing the money or credit card to the shop-owner are all put together in real time to form an action such as shopping in an ethnic shop.

In fact, one of the most significant characteristics of sites of engagement, in which social action and the practice of service encounters take place, in *Persia* is that they accommodate customers who are members of different communities of practice (including Persians (including the second generations, Anglos, Greeks, Turkish etc.). Crucial to those sites of engagements is not only the experience (perhaps knowledge about shopping in (Persian) ethnic shops) but more importantly the different (socially acceptable) norms of communication in the shop as a small community of practice among Persian-speaking customers and understandings of the intricacies of the culturally related interactions in *Persia* and of the role of communicative challenges in coping with service interactions.

Thus, different notions hinge upon what *communicative competence* (Hymes, 1972) in shopping in *Persia* means. In other words, half of the interactions occurring in *Persia* (according to the shop-owners, half of their customers being non-Persian speaking) are under the banner of "*intercultural communication*", that is, interaction between non-Persian speaking customers and the shop-owners who have different language backgrounds, who are following different *tools* about how language and non-language elements should be interpreted. Perhaps, due to the habitus of the regular non-Persian speaking customers, they have instilled in them some sort of possible understandings of "competence", which in *Persia* may refer to knowing how to act as a customer in this particular CoP in its particular *sites of engagement*. Through implementing such knowledge, those customers have developed and combined the various cultural tools (mediational means) that those sites of engagement have made readily available for them to take actions. A concrete example of such intercultural communication was observed in Chapter 7 in Extract 7.5 where the consumption of dates, as a mediational means, has resulted in a moment of conflict.

9.5.5 Cultural tools

At the inception of this thesis, the approach to discourse analysis which has been set out in this thesis has been informed by MDA (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, 2001b). MDA is an approach that heavily relies on how actions are *mediated* through discourse and other

cultural tools that are available at the site of engagement in which an action is taking place. Key to the application of such an approach is how these cultural tools afford and constrain the types of social actions that the customers, for instance, in *Persia* can carry out and the kinds of social identities with which they can be affiliated.

One way to understand such complexities in interactions and the relationship between discourse and action is by implementing MDA, which was adapted from the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky viewed all actions as mediated through cultural tools, which impact upon the ways in which the social actors perform their action at a site of engagement. Here, it is crucially important to recognise that Scollon (2001b) also maintained that "the idea of site of engagement takes from practice/activity theory (as well as from interactional sociolinguistics) the insistence on the real-time, irreversible, and unfinalizable nature of social action" (p.4). From the perspective of an activity theory, social actors are embedded in socio-cultural contexts and the actions that they carry out heavily rely on them. Additionally, the social actors are not passively positioned in the context in which they take actions. Rather, they actively intermingle within it and make changes to it. From this perspective, mediated discourse "owes much to activity theory" (Scollon, 2001b, p. 164).

Vygotsky divided those tools into physical and technological tools (including the material objects in the shop for instance) and psychological tools such as the shop itself (as an institution) the signs (the Flag of the Imperial State of Iran-Pahlavi Dynasty, see Chapter 3), the methods of service encounters in *Persia*, gesture, and the languages used (i.e., Persian and English, perhaps other dialects spoken back in Iran among the participants). Hence, these cultural tools are aspects of socially-situated objects which possess certain modes of operation and embody the aims of a practical action.

The critical question to ask about cultural tools is to what extent they can afford and limit participation in the service encounters in *Persia* by members. Nonetheless, one should not only question the affordances and constraints that are found in the tools themselves, but rather in their conditions of their use. Tools, for instance, which the customers in *Persia* might surmise would greatly assist them in carrying out actions and in encouraging participation in the discourse in the shop might be appropriated in ways that actually constrain them. In fact, one of the limitations of many current approaches implemented in researching service encounters is the failure to sufficiently consider the contingencies of their multiple purposes and their uses and therefore place almost entirely an emphasis on

the lexicogrammatical resources without even taking notice of such cultural resources. The tool of "fruit dates", for instance, may encourage participation in the sense that they are used to determine how culturally aware the customers in the shop are of their uses aside from their nutritious consumption. However, when used to claim the "identity" of a customer who is *knowledgeable*, they can sometimes meddle with complexities that bring about critical moments as observed in Chapter 7. Thus, I have shown how these cultural tools appropriated not only to claim (ethnic) identities of the customers but also to make some collections of social actions possible and, at the same time, impose constraints when it comes to the other uses of the tools.

The notion of "cultural tools", one of the constructs which has broadened the scope of the current thesis, incorporates three important considerations namely *ways of saying, ways of doing,* and *ways of being* (Gee, 2011; see also Jones, 2000, p. 482). "Ways of saying", to some extent connoting Goffman's "framing", help participants organise their social interaction and make sense of the world in which they live and make up "much of our [their] everyday, common-sense knowledge of social reality" (Rampton, 1995, p. 31). "Ways of doing", which provide the social actors with some sets of methods through which they perform a social action, draws on Garfinkel's "ethnomethodology" in the sense that the participants, who carry out the social practices in a social setting, have mastered them in their communities in which these tools have shaped their perception and come to be considered typical of participation because of their habitus. Finally, "ways of being" focus on the various social identities which the Persian shops, for instance, allow for the members to claim (through interaction). As observed, in Chapter 5, many mediated actions that the customers in the shop have conducted in part have given rise to the identity construction of them, both implicitly and explicitly.

9.5.6 Discourses

As the Findings chapters have demonstrated, it is impossible to make sense of what the participants linguistically produce about their experiences while shopping (such as their inability to send money back to Iran due to the (imposed) sanctions, their depreciated currency, the use of dates as a religious practice and so forth) and the practices, which can lead to their social identities, that they construct around them without reference to the particular *ideological*, *institutional*, *professional* and *organisational* groups and systems from which they borrow cultural tools, rules and regulations about their use in a specific site of engagement. Hence, Discourses, with a Capital D (Gee, 2011, p. 29), are associated

with the systems that make mediated actions visible by emphasising members' methods (Garfinkel, 1967) and practices in the sites of engagement of a CoP. Such an emphasis on the larger ideological systems (Discourses) allow some sequences of possible actions and activity types (Levinson, 1992; Sarangi, 2000) of service interactions in *Persia* possible and even more some sequences of wordings associated with these interactional steps and others less by controlling the relationship between social practice and social identity.

Attention to Discourses can provide researchers with an opportunity to make sense of how actions in service interaction in *Persia* expand beyond the field where they actually occur, of how they are embedded in larger ideological systems, of what action is culturally permissible and of what is culturally impermissible to connect social actors in intricate ways to institutions and communities. Exploring the connections between social actors taking actions *mediated* through cultural tools, which are constructed in Discourses, can assist us in gaining an understanding of the mechanism of practices around "service encounters" in general and service encounters in ethnic shops like *Persia* in particular and of conformity on participants.

9.5.7 History

Operating through all of these perspectives, the perspective of *frame analysis*, the perspective of *field*, the perspective of *community of practice*, the perspective of *sites of engagement*, the perspective of *cultural tools*, and the perspective of *Discourses* is yet another perspective that becomes privileged and is worth mentioning namely, the perspective of *history*. This element, which to some extent connotes Bourdieu's habitus or Nishida's historical body, emphasises that any observation of "*what is it that is going on here?*" either in connection with socially organised activity (situated social interaction) or "culture" is an observation of a *process* in lieu of a range of fixed traits. It is in this vein that Layder (1993) reminds social researchers to include in their research what he calls a "multistrategy" (1993) approach which takes into account the orientation towards a *historically* and *socially* oriented discourse that is situated within linguistics, sociology and social psychology (see Chapter 4, section 4.7). In other words, what Layder calls for lies in the fact that all analyses of socially-grounded interaction (talk-in-interaction) are contingent on historical conditions and, therefore, must be open to question. Hence, mediational tools such as ice-cream, observed in Chapter 5, cannot be practically separated from the historical circumstances of their use and decontextualized from the social setting in which they are carried out.

9.7 Limitations of the study

Cicourel (1992) used the construct "ecological validity" to explain the method by which the researcher utilises his/her tacit knowledge throughout the research process in all aspects of his/her research. Principally, the role of the researcher necessitates the need to be aware of bias, not only the researcher's own role in the fieldwork and during the data analysis but also the potential influence of the participants, observers and perhaps moderators. As discussed in Chapter 4, prior to my research study, I had been a customer at this the shop for about five years. While such closeness has provided a platform for making sense of the data, it must be noted that this familiarity with the fieldwork and with the practice of service interactions in *Persia* can also be viewed as a limitation of the research conducted. Nonetheless, I took action to attempt to reduce the bias and limit the influence on the process of data collection by keeping at arm's length during my data collection as discussed in Chapter 4.

Furthermore, due to ethical considerations and the need to protect the participants' rights, researchers conducting research on service interactions require approval and consent from not only the ethics committee at their institutions but also from the owner's and participants' consent. Given the nature of the current study (i.e., mediated action and social practice through the lens of Goffman's key question *"What is it that is going on here?")* video-recorded data were needed for the interpretation of gestures as expressive acts (Kendon, 2010). Examining the non-verbal features and bodily actions of the participants was crucially important for the purpose of a more fine-grained analysis. Such actions were part of a joint activity, leading to nexus of practice. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the shop-owner refused to agree to data for the current research study to be collected through video-recording as he thought he would lose customers. Wherever possible, I therefore triangulated the audio-recorded data with abundant fieldnotes of the lower and higher level actions performed by the participants to capture the non-verbal behaviour, which instantiated part of the data and entered into my fieldnotes and interpretations.

Arguably, an additional limitation of this study was that the focus of the current thesis was on only one Persian shop in Sydney. By researching other Persian shops in Sydney, the above findings could be confirmed and strengthened. Nevertheless, however small in scale, this study was sufficient to highlight that the social practices imbricated in the service encounters of an ethnic shop (i.e., including the resources that are expended to make the

interactions in such social fields possible) should not be reduced to linguistic utterances, but can be critically analysed as constitutive elements of a "nexus of practice".

9.7 Implications for research into service encounters

Owing to the wealth of the situated data gathered in this study and the wide range of potentially productive methodological tools, it can often be difficult to establish the limits of the analysis in multi-perspectival research, thus determining where the analytical process should end. To this, the dynamic nature of multi-perspectival analysis needs to be added in the sense that the findings that grew out of one perspective may have a bearing on those from another perspective. As such, the findings redefine and reshape the outcomes of the analysis. In Chapters 5-8, as the analytical approach taken for this study, each of the focal themes (i.e., identity, participation framework, etc.) was utilised to offer an initial set of guiding parameters for the analysis. As preliminary findings emerged from within these parameters, they were further examined across and within different perspectives.

In terms of methodology, there is no doubt that for the purposes of providing an MDA situated (thick) description, a comprehensive longitudinal study design is the 'gold standard', especially in service encounters in *Persia* where Persian is locally (i.e., in the shop) dominant but English is dominant in the wider (multicultural but English-dominant) community. *Persia* has particular characteristics which may add further layers of intricacy, in particular localized sets of practices, activity types, which may be both interactional and *practical* (with the latter to some extent represented through the medium of talk and non-verbal behaviour). This is not to belittle the useful insights yielded from previous research findings in the domain of service encounters (i.e., more randomly data sets). Rather, the baseline data analysis which was reliant on previous studies nevertheless offered a great deal of analytic utility.

However, as observed with each of the excerpts in Chapters 5-8, the theoretical and methodological approaches to the current study are robust as they have provided greater explanatory power than an analysis of isolated interactions or analyses limited to very specific aspects of (mis) communication. In other words, from a mediated discourse perspective, what this thesis has attempted to demonstrate was to illustrate how these social actions, these mediated actions, took place as human action (Scollon, 2001a, 2001b). Nevertheless, what I wish to emphasise here is that talk- or service interaction-related Discourses, both viewed as forms of social action, manifest themselves as an intersection

of *cycles of discourse*, shifting as individuals move through these cycles across time and space, which has been highlighted throughout the data analysis in the preceding chapters. As an illustration, the conceptual construct and the focal theme of "critical moments", discussed in Chapter 7, derived from MDA and MP, mediational means that of "dates" and "old movies" in Extracts 7.5 and 7.6 respectively appeared as one of the sources of the critical moments in the shop. This focus on the mediational means has produced overlapping discourses and practices that merged with one another resulting in not only the identity of the participants but also a lack of particular knowledge about or familiarity with the cultural tools available in such settings. To date, mediational means as "cultural toolkits" has remained substantially absent from the previous studies on service encounters (except for Filliettaz, 2004, 2005). According to Scollon (2001b) and as observed in Chapters 5-8, these mediational means carry with them "historical affordances and constraints, and to be inherently polyvocal, intertextual, and interdiscursive" (p.4), in the case of "fruit dates" in Chapter 7.

Clearly, MDA offers invaluable tools for understanding and tracking complexity and intricacy in service encounters in overlapping contexts of online sites such as YouTube. Furthermore, this theoretical and grounding approach provides new methods to analyse a range of embodied and disembodied practices that converge in face-to-face interactions at different sites of engagement in a nexus of practice. In addition, this focus of the dynamism of action on sociocultural theory has proven to be productive and critical in the sense that taking a narrower view of social practice uncovers the complexities and intricacies of social action as simple as a "request for service" in service interactions in *Persia*. In the examples analysed in this thesis, I have employed MDA to place emphasis on "action" over pure linguistic analysis (i.e., utterances). The rationale behind this shift in the analytic medium and scale of analysis was based on the understanding that social practice (i.e., service encounters) could only be understood from socially grounded theories of communication, conversation, action and interaction where locally organised activities are practised; and an understanding of social practice, social field and the habitus of the participants taking actions in that social field. This shift has highlighted the embodied practices (i.e., participants' habitus) their historical body, their experience of shopping in general and in Persian shops in particular that would be typically backgrounded in linguistic transcription, and identifies the mediated actions with potential for reconstructing the nexus of practice.

9.8 Concluding remarks

This study of the discourses of service encounters in a Persian shop in suburban Sydney has exposed a rich and complex social and interactional environment. In addressing Goffman's fundamental question *"What is it that is going on here?"* I have described, interpreted and explained how social actors (shop-owners and customers) make meanings and make sense of meanings in various sites within the shop. It is my sincere hope that other researchers interested in investigating service encounters of any kind will be able to enrich their investigations by drawing on the findings of this thesis.

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Appendix 1: Transcription conventions

(.)	pause of less than one second
↑	marked rising intonation
↓	marked falling intonation
(1.0)	pause timed to nearest second
:::	each colon indicates further lengthening of a sound
<u>ones</u>	underlining indicates a stressed word or syllable
[	Squares brackets aligned across adjacent lines denote the start of overlapping talks
]	the point at which overlap stops is marked by right-hand square brackets
(( ))	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity Alternatively double brackets may enclose the researcher's comments on contextual features
yeah= =no	Equals signs indicate no break or gap
hhh	Laughter syllables
( )	Unclear speech or noise to which no approximation is made

Appendix 2: Final Ethics Approval

Re: "Intercultural communication in Persian Ethnic shops in Sydney"

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research. This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Mr Dariush Izadi

Prof ……..

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 10th September 2013

Progress Report 2 Due: 10th September 2014

Progress Report 3 Due: 10th September 2015

Progress Report 4 Due: 10th September 2016

Final Report Due: 10th September 2017

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before

implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:
http://www.mq.edu.au/policy
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.
Yours sincerely,
Dr……..
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee
Human Research Ethics Committee
****
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Appendix 3: Information and Consent form

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INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Intercultural communication in Persian ethnic shops in Sydney
Chief Investigator: Professor Ingrid Piller
Researcher: Dariush Izadi

You are invited to participate in a study on intercultural communication and language use in businesses of the type you own and manage. The purpose of the study is to explore intercultural communication in service contexts.

This study is conducted by Mr Dariush Izadi in fulfilment of requirements for a PhD in Applied Linguistics and supervised by Professor Ingrid Piller, of the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences – Macquarie University.

You can help in this study by allowing the researcher to audio record service interactions in your shop. The study requires that the researcher observe you or your staff interacting with customers. The researcher might also take notes about these interactions.

The researcher will have to make the recordings at different times to collect a range of different interactions by different types of customers. For this to happen, the researcher will have to make repeated visits to your shop over a period of about four weeks and spend a few hours there during each visit. Visits will depend exclusively on your availability and the researcher commits to advise you in advance of any scheduled observation.

Additionally, no recordings will take place without your prior permission being re-sought each time and you will be able to turn off the recording device at any time if you wish any of your conversations not to be recorded.

The researcher will try his best not to inconvenience you and is happy to volunteer with any work in the shop as it arises. Indeed, being able to help you out will give him an even better understanding of intercultural communication in your store.

Customers will be alerted to the presence of the recording device and the researcher with a small sign displayed next to the recording device. Customers, who do not wish to be recorded, can of course choose to let us know and have the recording device switched off. The sign will display the following text in English and Persian:

Your service interaction is being recorded for intercultural communication research purposes. If you do not wish to be recorded, please let us know.

مشتری گرامی، گفتگوی شما جهت استفاده در یک تحقیق زبانشناسی در حال ضبط شدن است. در صورت عدم تمایل به ضبط شدن آن به ما اطلاع بدهید.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. This is ensured by the use of code names for your store and any individuals in all data records, analysis and publications. Neither your store nor any individual will be identified or identifiable in any publication or report of the findings.

Digitally recorded data (audio) will be downloaded as electronic files and stored on a password protected computer. Only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to the data.

The researcher undertakes to present you with a copy of his PhD thesis upon completion. Additionally, you may also request a progress report or summary of findings at any time.

Participation in this study is **entirely voluntary**: you are not obliged to participate and if you decided to participate, you are free to **withdraw at any time** without having to give a reason and without consequences.

I agree to data for the research study mentioned above to be collected through audio-recording and observation in my shop. ☐

I have read and understand the information above, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Shop owner's Name (in block letters):_____
Date: _____/_____/_____ Signature: _____
Researcher's Name (in block letters):_____
Date: _____/_____/_____ Signature: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.