A Conversation Analysis of Turn-Final *haobuhao* in Chinese Parent-Child Interaction

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Abstract

Haobuhao ("好不好") is a recurrent linguistic practice in Mandarin conversation and performs different interactional functions depending on where it is positioned within a turn. This study examines occurrences of turn-final *haobuhao* in parental talk in naturalistic parent-child interactions, drawing on a corpus of video-recorded data and using the analytic framework of Conversation Analysis (CA). The analysis shows that when *haobuhao* is deployed in responding position, it frequently implements other-initiated repair targeting the child's conduct. In these cases, parents use *haobuhao* to mark the child's behavior as inappropriate, to frame it as a departure from social norms, and to assert their epistemic authority. When used in initial position, *haobuhao* commonly accompanies directive formats. In directives delivered through commands or complaints, *haobuhao* strengthens an accusatory stance and highlights the problematic nature of the child's behavior. When accompanying request-based directives, however, *haobuhao* mitigates the directive force and downshifts parents' deontic authority. By revealing how *haobuhao* contributes to the management of epistemic and deontic relations in interaction, this study demonstrates the intricate ways in which interactional practices participate in the construction of social norms and parental authority. The findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Mandarin parent-child interaction and expand CA research on epistemics in family and institutional settings.

Keywords: conversation analysis, *haobuhao*, parent-child interaction, sequential position, epistemics

1. Introduction

Haobuhao is a recurrent interactional practice in Mandarin that appears in a range of sequential environments. While it may function as part of a clause, it frequently occurs turn-finally as an interrogative appended to a complete declarative or imperative. In such cases, the interactional role of *haobuhao* cannot be understood solely through its grammatical interrogative form. Rather, its function emerges from the social action implemented by the surrounding turn-constructional units (TCUs) (Sacks et al., 1974), as shown in Examples 1 and 2. Here, *haobuhao* is mobilized not to solicit information, but to accomplish additional interactional work.

Extract 1: [去北京: 00:20:38-00:20:51]

01 妈妈： 你知道北京>有什么<?你还去玩?

02 女儿： 北京有<游乐园>,<游乐场>.

03　　　　 [还有(　　　)]

04 妈妈： [游乐园我们这]也有,好不好?

05 　　　　　(1.5)去北京要(.)去看升国旗.

Extract 2:[去吃水饺了: 00:00:24-00:00:34]

01 妈妈： hehe.我们中午在(0.6)饭店去吃水饺了.

02 女儿： 哦.

03 　　　　　(2.4)

04 妈妈： 你嚼嚼再咽,好不好?=

05 女儿： =嗯:↑,太好吃了.

Parent-child interaction constitutes a form of institutional talk in which epistemic and deontic asymmetries are inherent. Through everyday interactions, parents construct their identities, enforce social norms, and socialize their children. Understanding how specific linguistic practices contribute to the negotiation of epistemic and deontic relations is therefore essential to understanding the organization of family interaction.

This study employs CA to investigate the interactional functions of turn-final *haobuhao* in naturally occurring Mandarin parent-child interaction. Drawing on concepts of epistemics (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b, 2018) and deontic rights (Stevanovic, 2012; Peräkylä & Stevanovic, 2013), the analysis examines how parents use *haobuhao* to display epistemic expectations, enact authority, and manage children's conduct. In doing so, the study contributes to broader discussions about the relationship among social norms, linguistic practices, and social actions in Mandarin family interaction.

2. Literature Review

Research on *haobuhao* in Mandarin has largely been conducted within a pragmatic framework. Prior studies typically examine *haobuhao* as a postposed negative marker or as part of the *X-bu-X* interrogative pattern, identifying its discourse- and pragmatics-related functions (Gao, 2009; Yu & Yao, 2009; Yan, 2015; Wang, 2017). Drawing largely on literary texts, film scripts, and constructed examples, these studies identify a range of discourse functions—such as initiating a turn, facilitating turn exchange, or introducing a third party—and discuss pragmatic functions related to modality, politeness, and intersubjectivity, including seeking permission or agreement, requesting advice, and establishing interactional alignment. While such work offers insights into certain uses of *haobuhao*, it is limited in capturing the full

complexity of *haobuhao* as an interactional practice. A more adequate understanding requires examining *haobuhao* within actual, naturally occurring conversational sequences, where its function is shaped by its sequential position and by the social actions implemented by the surrounding turns.

Motivated by this gap, the present study employs CA to examine turn-final *haobuhao* in video-recorded Mandarin parent-child interaction. Focusing exclusively on *haobuhao* used as a turn-final interrogative appended to a prior TCU, the study describes its sequential distribution and identifies the social actions it accomplishes across different environments. By further considering epistemic and social norms that parents orient to, the study aims to elucidate how this practice operates as a conversational routine in the management of knowledge, authority, and social behavior in parent-child interaction.

3. Research Methodology and Data Collection

This study adopts the methodological framework of CA, a branch of microsociology developed by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson. CA draws on Goffman's structural conception of interaction order and Garfinkel's notion of shared common-sense reasoning, and its distinctive contribution lies in the creative use of audio and video recordings and the development of a specialized transcription system, which together allow for detailed observation and analysis of social action in talk. CA is a naturalistic, descriptive qualitative approach. Researchers aim to uncover and describe how participants accomplish social actions in interaction, focusing on what is observable in the sequential organization of turns rather than imposing subjective interpretations. Its naturalistic character is reflected both in the collection of data—recordings of spontaneous interaction without experimental manipulation—and in analysis, which examines how social actions are produced and normatively organized through participants' turn construction.

The dataset consists of video-recorded, naturally occurring parent-child interactions collected in everyday home settings. All recordings capture spontaneous activities such as mealtime conversations, play sessions, and routine household interactions. The participants are Mandarin-speaking parents and their preschool-

or school-aged children, all capable of producing complete and coherent utterances. The data are transcribed using CA transcription conventions (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), with attention to turn-taking, sequence organization, and action formation. The total duration of recordings is approximately 190 minutes, within which 24 instances of turn-final *haobuhao* functioning as appended interrogatives are identified.

4. Data Analysis

The interactional functions of *haobuhao* depend on both its sequential position and the social action implemented by other TCUs within the same turn. A close, data-driven examination of the corpus shows that when *haobuhao* occurs in a responding position, parents typically use it while performing repair. In contrast, when *haobuhao* appears in a sequence-initial position, it is commonly embedded within turns implementing directive actions, such as issuing commands, complaints, or requests. The following sections examine how turn-final *haobuhao* displays epistemic norms and deontic orientations in these different sequential environments, and what interactional functions it accomplishes.

4.1 Haobuhao in Responding Position

The data show that turn-final *haobuhao* in responding position is frequently used when parents initiate or implement repair. In these cases, the appended interrogative *haobuhao* serves as a conversational practice through which parents highlight the inappropriateness of the child's prior behavior and maintain their epistemic authority.

In everyday social life, and especially in talk-in-interaction, participants routinely encounter troubles of hearing, speaking, or understanding. When mutual understanding is not achieved, participants deploy conversational repair to address and resolve the trouble (Schegloff et al., 1977). Because repair interrupts the progressivity of talk, it takes priority over other ongoing social actions. Only after the trouble is resolved and intersubjectivity restored can interaction continue and other social actions be carried out. Thus, repair holds a structurally privileged status within the organization of conversation.

In the context of parent-child interaction, turn-final *haobuhao* in repair sequences is not simply a yes/no interrogative. Rather, it

functions as a parental practice for re-establishing normative expectations, framing the child's prior conduct as problematic, and reinstating the parent's epistemic authority. The detailed sequential analysis below demonstrates how *haobuhao* participates in the organization of repair and in the management of knowledge and responsibility between parents and children.

Extract 3. [亲子饭间对话: 00:00:45-00:01:08]

23 女儿： 好凉啊.

24　　　 (0.4)

25 妈妈： 凉?

26 女儿： 嗯.

27 妈妈： 没在冰箱里放着,在外面放着呢.

28　　　 (0.7)

29 女儿： [( )]

30 妈妈： [>那应该<]是热的,好不好?

31　　　 (0.4)

32 女儿： 那不是热的,关键是.

33　　　 (2.2)（（妈妈品尝薯条））

34 妈妈：>一点儿也不凉.< (0.6).h ¥哈哈哈哈¥[.h

35　　　　　 女　儿　：[>蘸上<番茄酱就凉了.

36 妈妈： 哦,番茄酱凉.

37　　　 (.)

38 女儿： °he°=

39 妈妈： =>番茄酱在冰箱里呢,<番茄-番茄酱凉,(0.8)薯条不凉.

40 女儿： 对.

Excerpt 3 occurs after the daughter requests ketchup, the mother retrieves it from the refrigerator, and the daughter eats a French fry with ketchup. In line 23, the daughter produces an assessment of the food's temperature ("It's so cold"). Following a 0.4-second silence, the mother initiates repair in line 25 by partially repeating the trouble source ("Cold?"). This partial-repeat repair initiation (Schegloff et al., 1977) indicates that the mother's trouble is not one of hearing but of understanding: she displays difficulty comprehending the grounds on which the daughter has produced this assessment, or treats the assessment as misaligned with the actual state of affairs.

After the daughter confirms the trouble source in line 26, the mother continues in line 27 by

offering an explanation: "It wasn't in the fridge; it was left outside." The design of this turn shows that the mother treats the daughter's assessment as inconsistent with what she knows to be the case and provides information about storage conditions to recalibrate the daughter's understanding. Here, the mother displays greater epistemic access to the temperature and storage status of the food, positioning herself as the more knowledgeable participant in this domain.

From an epistemic perspective, the mother's turns in lines 27 and 30 reflect orientations to epistemic access and epistemic primacy. According to epistemic norms, speakers should avoid making claims in domains where they lack sufficient access (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Epistemic primacy further holds that participants with superior knowledge have greater rights to make evaluations concerning that domain (Stivers et al., 2011). In this sequence, the mother displays her knowledgeability regarding the fries' storage and temperature; thus, when the daughter's assessment conflicts with her epistemic territory, she assumes epistemic responsibility for resolving the discrepancy. Her turn in line 30 implements repair to restore intersubjectivity.

Importantly, the appended interrogative *haobuhao* in line 30 follows a syntactically complete TCU and is not necessary for the implementation of repair. Thus, *haobuhao* here does not function as a request for confirmation. Prosodically, *haobuhao* is latched to the preceding TCU without a gap and is produced with stress, suggesting its role as a discourse marker rather than an information-seeking interrogative. In this position, *haobuhao* serves to draw the child's attention and to strengthen the mother's stance. It highlights the epistemic asymmetry between the participants and reinforces the mother's epistemic authority. More specifically, turn-final *haobuhao* here works as a conversational practice for marking the child's assessment (the repairable) as inappropriate and for foregrounding the parent's entitlement to correct it.

Extract 4. [一起剪窗花: 00:00:22-00:01:53]

20 妈妈： 你想剪个什么样的？

21　　　　(0.6)

22 女儿： 嗯::,(0.7)随便选什么样的都行:.

23　　　　(.)>但是<(0.8)°先对折,这样对折.°

24 妈妈： 对折::,

25　　　　(2.6)（（折东西的声音））

26　　　　再对折::.

27　　　　(1.4)（（折东西的声音））

28 女儿： 对:,(0.2)°很好.°

29　　　　(0.5)（（折东西的声音））

30 妈妈： 很好?是我<教你>,好不好?

31　　　　hehe[°he°

32 女儿：　　[.h 这是<老师>教我的.

33　　　　(0.2)

34 妈妈： 再对折::=

35 女儿： =哎,不不不.

36 妈妈： 我们>再对折<,我再对折,

37　　　　(0.4)你不对折了吗?

38 女儿： 对呀.

Example 4 occurs during a mother-daughter activity in which they are folding paper in preparation for making window cutouts. In line 20, the mother initiates an open-ended question ("What kind do you want to make?"). After a 0.6-second silence, the daughter, in lines 22-23, not only provides a type-selecting response but also proceeds to deliver step-by-step instructions ("Fold it first, fold it like this"). In this sequential position, the daughter presents detailed procedural directives, thereby positioning herself as the party with greater epistemic access and epistemic authority, and consequently proposing a reconfiguration of the ongoing activity framework.

In lines 24-27, the mother performs the actions in accordance with the daughter's prior instructions, apparently ratifying the epistemic stance the daughter has established. Then, in line 28, the daughter produces a positive assessment of the mother's folding performance ("Yes, very good"). Such an assessment, produced in second position, is generally contingent upon the speaker's entitlement that derives from their epistemic authority in the relevant domain (Pomerantz, 1984; Heritage, 2002). By evaluating the mother's action with "very good," the daughter further reinforces her epistemic claim regarding the paper-folding activity.

However, in line 30, the mother initiates a repair through a partial repeat ("Very good?"), followed by "I taught you, *haobuhao*?" ("I taught you, okay?"), thereby making explicit her

understanding and stance toward the current epistemic relationship. The partial repeat here does not display a hearing problem but instead indexes the mother's suspicion regarding the action the daughter's prior assessment implements—namely, whether the daughter is entitled to evaluate her performance. Furthermore, through "I taught you," the mother re-establishes the epistemic hierarchy for this activity, asserting that she—rather than the daughter—should occupy the instructional role.

The appended *haobuhao* in this position occurs after a syntactically and pragmatically complete TCU, and its removal would not affect the execution of the repair. Therefore, it does not function as an information-seeking question. Instead, it serves to reinforce the speaker's stance display and to emphasize the propositional claim just made. In other words, the mother uses *haobuhao* to strengthen her epistemic position and to secure alignment with her understanding of "who is entitled to teach whom" within this activity framework.

In the subsequent line 32, the daughter counters with "The teacher taught me this," signaling her non-acceptance of the mother's epistemic reconfiguration. By invoking the authority of "the teacher," she supports her prior epistemic access. This resistance provides further evidence that the *haobuhao* in line 30 does not solicit information but rather constitutes an interactional strategy through which the mother defends her epistemic primacy when confronted with a challenge.

Overall, in Example 4 the mother's use of the appended *haobuhao* in repair sequences consistently occurs after an assertive or evaluative TCU, functioning to reinforce, highlight, and protect her epistemic authority rather than request information. Its deployment is occasioned by the recipient's production of actions that violate the speaker's understanding of epistemic norms—for instance, "who is entitled to instruct" or "who may assess another's actions." Thus, in this position, *haobuhao* constitutes an interactional practice used to point out the inappropriateness of the recipient's behavior and to restore the expected epistemic order.

4.2 Haobuhao in Initial Position

When parents use *haobuhao* turn-finally in a initial position, it most commonly occurs in the implementation of directive actions. Directives are pervasive in everyday interaction; as long as a speaker's utterance is designed to "get another person to do something," it may be treated as a directive (Goodwin, 2006). A directive is not a single speech act but rather a complex speech genre (Goodwin, 1990) that encompasses a range of linguistic formats (e.g., imperatives, descriptions) and a range of actions (e.g., commands, requests). In parent-child interaction, parents typically possess higher epistemic authority and deontic authority, which grants them the right and responsibility to prompt the child to adjust behaviors that violate social norms. This is particularly salient with younger children, for whom parents routinely undertake the work of socialization through directive actions.

Example 5 occurs during mealtime talk. Structurally, prior to line 153 the mother is explaining how she knows what the child ate in kindergarten; lines 154-158 constitute an inserted directive sequence, and in line 159 the talk returns to the prior topic. This shows that the directive is not projected by the preceding turns but is launched in response to the mother's real-time monitoring of the child's behavior. Such side-sequence directives demonstrate that, given the parental role and the authority attached to it, directive actions can legitimately disrupt the ongoing progressivity of the main sequence.

Extract 5. [亲子饭间对话: 00:03:47-00:04:02]

150 妈妈： 我星期五的时候看见你王老师贴在小学-幼儿园门口了.

151 　　　(0.2)

152 女儿： 哦.

153 妈妈： 这一星期的饭(0.4)都贴在>门口了<.

154 　　　你把腿放好了,>好不好?<

155 女儿： 好吧. ((女儿把腿拿了下去))

156 　　　(1.2)

157 妈妈： 老拿起来干什么.

158 　　　(1.7)

159 女儿： 你>刚才<说啥?

In this case, the mother notices that the daughter has lifted her feet onto the chair—a breach of basic table manners and social norms—and therefore issues a directive in line 154 requiring her to put her leg down. In this directive, *haobuhao* does not function as a genuine inquiry

into the child's preference, nor does it present a real choice between "yes" and "no." Rather, it constrains the projected response to a single acceptable option: the child should immediately comply with the mother's instruction. The daughter's behavior in line 155 confirms this interpretation demonstrating shared understanding of the deontic rights at play. Accordingly, the removal of *haobuhao* would not affect the implementation of the directive itself.

When *haobuhao* occurs in directives that require the recipient to correct an inappropriate behavior, it adds a layer of reproach to the action. Although the directive succeeds, the daughter's response *hao ba*—rather than a straightforward, unmarked *hao*—constitutes a dispreferred format (Wu & Yang, 2020; Wu, 2022). From a facework perspective, this mitigated acceptance may reflect her experience of the mother's turn as face-threatening due to its embedded criticism. Since a single turn may accomplish multiple actions, the *haobuhao*-marked directive here not only enforces behavioral compliance but simultaneously indexes the mother's negative assessment of the child's conduct.

Overall, in initial position, turn-final *haobuhao* within directive actions functions not as a request for information but as an interactional resource for highlighting the inappropriateness of the child's behavior and asserting parental deontic authority. It thus operates as a conversational practice through which parents enact norm enforcement and maintain the expected moral and social order in parent-child interaction.

Extract 6. [亲子饭间对话: 00:08:44-00:08:51]

355 妈妈： >你那筷子还用吗?<

356　　　　(0.4)

357 女儿： 不用啊.

358　　　　(0.4)

359 妈妈： 不用,你举着它-耽误我 chao 菜菜,好不好?

（（方言 chao 菜是夹菜的意思））

360 女儿： >好吧.<

不用，你举着它耽误我夹菜

Excerpt 6 occurs during a parent-child mealtime interaction. In line 355, the mother initiates a pre-directive with "Are you still using those chopsticks?" After a 0.4-second silence, the daughter responds in line 357 with "No,"

thereby providing the conditional relevance and legitimacy for the mother to proceed with a directive—that is, confirming that the mother has both the right and an adequate reason to ask her to put down the chopsticks that are not currently in use.

In line 359, the mother issues the directive in the format of a declarative plus *hao bu hao*: "Since you're not using them, you holding them up is getting in the way of my picking up food, hao bu hao?" Although the grammatical format differs from Excerpt 5, where the mother used an imperative plus *hao bu hao*, the identification of a directive action is not determined by syntax. The daughter's immediate compliant response "Fine" in line 360 shows that she recognizes line 359 as a directive. Her subsequent action of putting the chopsticks down demonstrates that the directive has been successfully implemented, and then the sequence is closed.

From a sequential perspective, since the daughter has already confirmed in the pre-sequence that she is not using the chopsticks, the mother has obtained the requisite entitlement and grounds to issue the directive. Thus, even without *hao bu hao*, the directive in line 359 would still be fully performable. However, the TCU preceding *hao bu hao* does more than issue a directive: it also frames the daughter's current behavior as causing inconvenience to the mother, thereby containing a complaint component. The addition of *hao bu hao* does not solicit information or offer a genuine choice; rather, it upgrades the stance of complaint, strengthening the reproachful tone embedded in the mother's directive.

As in Excerpt 5 and 6, when *hao bu hao* occurs within a directive that is implemented through command or complaint, its function is augmentative: it adds a layer of reproach to the directive without altering its basic action. It thus allows the parent not only to exercise behavioral control but also to morally evaluate and discipline the child's conduct. The daughter's reluctant-sounding response across both excerpts further supports the claim that *hao bu hao* in this position carries a reproachful tone with recognizable interactional consequences.

In sum, when appended to directives delivered through commands or complaints, *hao bu hao* serves to intensify the parent's negative stance toward the child's behavior. Rather than seeking information, it contributes a reproach

component, enabling parents to both enforce behavioral compliance and mark the child's conduct as inappropriate within the ongoing activity.

Example 7 differs from the preceding two cases in that the mother does not seek to modify the child's behavior due to any impropriety; instead, she enacts a directive through a request.

Extract 7. [折纸比赛: 00:01:45-00:01:52]

01 女儿： 咱们来比赛,好不好？

02 妈妈： 我还没找到(.)折纸王子教我呢,

03 妈妈： 我找到折纸王子那一页 he[1],好不好?

04 女儿： 好啊.

Example 7 takes place in a playful context in which the mother and daughter are preparing to compete in an origami contest. Because the daughter has learned origami at school while the mother has not, the mother needs to locate the "Paper-folding Prince" tutorial on a tablet before she can begin. After the daughter proposes starting the competition, the mother in line 03 requests that the daughter wait until she locates the tutorial. Following Couper-Kuhlen's (2014) analysis of the relationship between benefactor/beneficiary roles and action types, the mother's move in line 03 constitutes a request.

In the activity framework of a "competition," social norms stress fairness: participants should enjoy equivalent rights and obligations at the starting point. Thus, the epistemic and deontic authority ordinarily associated with the mother role is not expected to be strongly exercised here. As co-participants in the competition, the mother's request is legitimately open to acceptance or rejection. The relative low entitlement of the mother in this local context renders the turn-final *haobuhao* genuinely interrogative: it offers a real choice in the response space rather than projecting a single preferred outcome.

If the *haobuhao* were omitted from line 03, the remaining TCU would still implement a directive, but the action type would shift from a request to a command, violating the locally relevant norm of participant equality. Thus, in low-entitlement positions, speakers may append

haobuhao to directives to downgrade the directive force, enabling them to implement a directive in the form of a request. This adjustment aligns the action with expectations of politeness and interactional order, while simultaneously indicating the mother's recognition of the child's behavioral autonomy in this context.

To summarize, turn-final *haobuhao* in parent-child directives is both positionally and actionally sensitive. First, when *haobuhao* is attached to directives enacted through commands or complaints, it intensifies a blaming or admonishing tone, highlighting the child's behavioral impropriety and allowing the parent to perform a blaming action alongside the directive. Second, when *haobuhao* is attached to directives enacted through requests, it softens the directive force, temporarily downshifting parental deontic authority and enabling the directive to be realized in a socially compatible manner. These contrasting uses illustrate how parent-child power relations are maintained, negotiated, and recalibrated in situated interaction, demonstrating the multifunctionality of *haobuhao* in directive environments.

5. Discussion

Drawing on a conversation-analytic approach, this study has examined in detail the turn-final appended interrogative *haobuhao* ("OK?/alright?") as it appears in Mandarin parent-child interaction. The analysis has shown how, across different sequential environments, parents' deployment of *haobuhao* invokes distinct epistemic and deontic norms, and how it functions as an interactional practice within the institutional context of parenting.

The findings indicate that turn-final *haobuhao* in responding positions is typically associated with repair. In these cases, *haobuhao* does not carry an interrogative meaning; prosodically, it is tightly attached to the preceding TCU, forming a continuous and often emphasized unit. This usage serves as a conventionalized practice through which parents highlight the inappropriateness of the child's prior action and assert their epistemic authority. Notably, all instances of turn-final *haobuhao* in repair sequences are parent-initiated and parent-carried-out repairs which belongs to the other-initiated other-repair type. This diverges from the widely observed preference for

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[1] he: In the dialect, "he" means "wait until I finish…". Here, the mother's meaning is "Let's start the competition after I find…".

self-initiated self-repair in ordinary conversation (Schegloff et al., 1977). It can be argued that this divergence is attributable to the institutional nature of parent-child interaction: given parents' role as caregivers and the asymmetrical distribution of power, parents bear epistemic responsibility and deontic rights to initiate repair when children display behavior that deviates from social norms. Through such repair initiations, parents not only maintain their epistemic authority but also guide the child's socialization into appropriate conduct.

Turn-final *haobuhao* in initial positions is predominantly associated with directive actions. However, its interactional function varies depending on the specific type of directive being performed. When parents issue directives through commanding or complaining formats, *haobuhao* adds a layer of moral accountability and transforms the directive into a directive-plus-reproach action. In such cases, the interrogative morphology does not implement a genuine question but strengthens the deontic force of the directive and foregrounds the child's breach of normative expectations. By contrast, when *haobuhao* is used in a request-based directive, it serves a different interactional purpose. In these contexts—often those in which the parent does not hold clear deontic superiority, such as collaborative activities or games—turn-final *haobuhao* mitigates the directive's impositive force and renders it more affiliative and negotiable. Here, parents modulate their deontic authority in order to align with the moral and structural requirements of the activity (e.g., fairness in a game) and to acknowledge the child's behavioral autonomy. Thus, *haobuhao* functions as a resource for recalibrating authority relations within the interactional moment.

In sum, the use of turn-final *haobuhao* is closely tied to the negotiation of knowledge and rights in parent-child interaction. When responding to children's norm-deviant actions, parents—who hold greater epistemic and deontic authority institutionally—tend to use *haobuhao* to strengthen repair or directive-plus-reproach actions, thereby asserting or protecting their epistemic standing and marking the child's conduct as inappropriate. In these contexts, *haobuhao* embodies adherence to institutional norms associated with the parental role. However, parents do not always exercise authority in a straightforward or unilateral

manner. In request-based directives, parents employ *haobuhao* to soften their deontic stance and to display sensitivity to the child's autonomy. Here, the meaning and function of *haobuhao* shift in accordance with the social action being implemented, and the practice contributes to the local reconstruction of epistemic and deontic relations. These findings demonstrate that language use in specific sequential environments plays a constitutive role in shaping norms of knowledge and action rights within the parenting institution.

6. Conclusion

Drawing on naturally occurring Mandarin parent-child interactions, this study has examined the sequential distribution and social action functions of turn-final *haobuhao* as an appended interrogative, demonstrating how this practice is mobilized in local negotiations of knowledge, authority, and behavioral regulation. Rather than a mere modal particle, *haobuhao* emerges as a finely tuned interactional resource through which parents modulate entitlement, enact or mitigate directive force, and display adherence to—or recalibration of—norms of epistemic and deontic authority. These findings highlight the central role of micro-interactional practices in the socialization process and contribute empirical evidence to understanding how epistemic and normative orders are accomplished in Mandarin parent-child talk. Nonetheless, the present study is limited by the size and situational scope of the dataset, and has not systematically addressed variation across families or participant characteristics. Future research could draw on larger and more diverse corpora to further test the generalizability of these patterns, and explore how turn-final *haobuhao* intersects with broader socio-cultural factors—such as family dynamics, social class, and trajectories of language socialization—to build a more comprehensive account of its sequential and social functions.

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