PhD-FLSHASE-2015-25
The Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education

Thèse no 609
Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Éducation

DISSERTATION

Defense held on 02/09/2015 in Luxembourg

to obtain the degree of

DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG

EN SCIENCES DU LANGAGE

AND

DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

EN SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION

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EXPLOITING LINGUISTIC RESOURCES FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT: WORKPLACE PRACTICES AND LANGUAGE USE OF THAI IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN THE GERMAN PERIPHERY

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Summary in English

This thesis is about immigrants in self-employment in Germany. More specifically, it is about immigrants who make a culturally-endowed practice or knowledge economically available in their new home. These immigrant business owners are generally referred to as ethnic entrepreneurs. Yet, according to research and widely-held public opinions in Germany, a problem that hampers the success of these businesses is the owner's lack of proficiency in the German language, which apparently impedes them from accessing institutional support and from offering their services to the majority population. However, the ways that language competence actually affects the entry of immigrants into self-employment and the execution of their daily work as business owners has received only insufficient attention, including from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Hence, this thesis aspires to examine the pathways of immigrants into self-employment and how these pathways are shaped by the owners' language knowledge. Secondly, by analysing the workplace practices in close empirical detail, it aims to understand how the owners' language knowledge impacts the execution of their work and whether these practices constitute sites of language learning for the owners. Thirdly, it intends to document the challenges that the business owners face at their workplaces, in order to understand to what extent they are due to insufficient levels of language knowledge.

In order to answer these research questions, this study focuses on three businesses owned and operated by first-generation female immigrants from Thailand in the federal state of Saarland in southwest Germany. Businesses by Thai immigrants are particularly interesting for the purposes of this investigation, because they have flourished in recent years and because they offer their services in markets that target the majority, primarily German-speaking population.

The ventures are typical examples of ethnic small businesses created by Thai immigrants in Germany: Thai massage salons and food retails stores. The first is a large Thai massage salon run by Kanita, the second a small Thai massage salon managed by Patcharin, and the third business is a food retail store owned and operated by Wipa. The three owners (and their staff) differ in terms of their competence in German. Kanita has only minimal competence in German, Patcharin has partial competence, while Wipa has maximum competence in the language.

The analysis of the pathways into self-employment of these three owners exhibits a number of similarities. In all three cases, their migration to Germany was triggered by marriage to a German national. Previously, they all had professional careers which were directly connected to their appropriation of English, a language that later enabled communication with their German husbands. While their move to Germany was generally motivated by prospects of a better future, they were unable to find work due to a lack of German proficiency. German was primarily learned informally. Informal learning was fostered by their prior experience of language learning, their individual engagement in the form of self-study and reflexivity, a deliberate exposure to German through media, and their engagement with native speakers in practices towards which that they had developed an affinity. Interestingly, these practices were either their previous professional practices or activities that they took up after migration and later on developed into their own businesses.

Realising the demand for their services in the open market and among the majority population kindled Kanita's, Patcharin's and Wipa's flame to enter self-employment. They deliberately adapted their services to the requirements of their customers, but also in reaction to prejudices about their professions. The support of their husbands and other associates was also significant, as they handled tasks that were difficult to perform linguistically, as, for example, the registration of the businesses and the preparation of administrative paperwork. In sum, these findings suggest that an advanced standard level of German was no prerequisite for these owners to enter self-employment, but that the prospects of engaging in self-employed work acted as an incentive to improve their German language skills.

A detailed analysis of the workplace practices at Kanita's Massage Salon shows that working with minimal competence in German is possible, but that its success depends on several factors. To complete their workplace actions, Kanita and her staff draw on both resources in their linguistic repertoires, Thai and German. In addition, all workplace actions are designed as routine actions with discursive routines that all staff members are able to master quickly. Their successful accomplishment also depends on the customers' familiarity with these actions. Therefore, formal inconsistencies in German do generally not impede the performance of work, but problems are primarily due to the staff's or the customer's inexperience with the routines. If problems occur, they tend to be solved in

cooperation with colleagues or by drawing on the material resources available to the staff members.

In comparison to Kanita, Patcharin and her staff have partial competence in German, which is instrumental for the performance of the key practices at their workplace. The analysis shows that their restricted competence in German is important for their work, as it provides the tools for Patcharin and her staff to perform discursive practices during the massage treatment, such as finding out about their clients' health problems, building rapport with clients, giving instructions or clarifications about the treatment, or providing assessments of their customers' health issues. Talk is an important part of the massage treatment at Patcharin's salon and it aids to construct the professional identity that Patcharin claims for herself, namely to provide a high-quality and personalised service to her customers. Thai is less relevant, but in interactions between Patcharin and her staff it serves to exchange information and coordinate work.

Wipa has maximum competence in German and Thai, which allows her to manage her store and serve her customers independently and competently in line with her professional aspirations. The key practices at her store of explaining and ordering stock illustrate how Wipa relies on both the use of Thai and German to effectively perform these actions. Her maximum competence in German and in Thai permits her to make 'rational' choices about the suitability of her suppliers and to provide her customers with advice that is tuned to their linguistic and cultural background.

The conclusions drawn from these findings are that an advanced competence in German in not a prerequisite for immigrant entrepreneurs to start their businesses. The owners attune their workplace actions to the level of competence in their linguistic repertoires and operate effectively. Moreover, self-employed work provides the owners with the necessary motivation and the need to appropriate German. On the other hand, the data suggest that a greater proficiency in German becomes important, if the immigrant entrepreneur wants to differentiate her business from direct competitors, as it allows them to move beyond the concrete performance of routine actions.

Summary in French

Cette thèse a pour sujet les immigrés établis professionnellement à leur compte en Allemagne. Elle concerne plus précisément les immigrés qui rendent une pratique ou un savoir chargé culturellement abordable dans leur nouveau foyer. On qualifie généralement ces immigrés chefs d'entreprises d'entrepreneurs ethniques. Cependant, selon les recherches et selon l'opinion publique largement répandue en Allemagne, le manque de maîtrise de l'allemand de ces entrepreneurs serait une entrave sérieuse à leur succès. Cela les empêcherait visiblement d'avoir accès aux appuis institutionnels et de proposer leurs services à une large part de la population. Toutefois, la façon dont les compétences langagières affectent effectivement l'accès des immigrés à l'entrepreneuriat ainsi que l'exécution de leur travail quotidien en tant que chefs d'entreprise n'a reçu que peu d'attention, y compris du point de vue de la sociolinguistique.

Par conséquent, nous souhaitons tout d'abord étudier l'accès à l'entrepreneuriat des immigrés ainsi que la façon dont cet entrepreneuriat est façonné par leurs compétences linguistiques. Dans un deuxième temps, nous analyserons empiriquement et dans le détail les pratiques professionnelles afin de comprendre non seulement dans quelle mesure les compétences linguistiques des entrepreneurs impactent la réalisation de leurs tâches professionnelles mais aussi si ces tâches professionnelles sont une manière d'acquérir des compétences linguistiques. Dans un troisième temps, il s'agira d'analyser les défis auxquels sont confrontés les entrepreneurs sur leurs lieux de travail, afin de comprendre dans quelle mesure ces obstacles sont dus à des niveaux de langue insuffisants.

Pour répondre à ces questions de recherche, nous allons orienter essentiellement notre étude sur l'analyse de trois entreprises tenues et exploitées par trois femmes issues de la première génération d' immigrés thaïlandais dans l'état fédéral de la Sarre. Ces entreprises tenues par des immigrés thaïlandais sont particulièrement intéressants pour notre étude non seulement car elles sont devenues plus nombreuses ces dernières années mais aussi parce qu'elles proposent leurs services sur un marché qui cible prioritairement et majoritairement la population germanophone.

Ces entreprises sont des exemples typiques de petits commerces créés par des immigrés thaïlandais en Allemagne : les salons de massages thaïlandais et les magasins d'alimentation. Le premier commerce est un grand salon de massage thaïlandais tenu par Kanita, le deuxième est un petit salon de massage thaïlandais dirigé par Patcharin et le

troisième est un magasin d'alimentation détenu et exploité par Wipa. Les trois chefs d'entreprise (et leur personnel) ont des compétences linguistiques différentes en allemand. Kanita ne possède que des compétences linguistiques minimum en allemand, Patcharin maîtrise l'allemand de façon partielle alors que Wipa possède de solides compétences linguistiques.

L'analyse de l'accès à l'entrepreneuriat de ces trois chefs d'entreprise montre un certain nombre de similitudes. C'est en épousant un allemand que les trois femmes ont immigré en Allemagne. Auparavant, elles avaient toutes les trois une carrière professionnelle où une bonne connaissance de l'anglais était indispensable. C'est d'ailleurs en anglais que les trois femmes communiqueront par la suite avec leurs maris. Alors que leur emménagement en Allemagne était motivé par l'espoir d'une vie meilleure, elles ont été incapables de trouver un emploi du fait de leur manque de compétences en allemand. L'allemand a d'abord été appris de façon informelle. L'apprentissage informel a été favorisé par leur expérience préalable de l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère, leur engagement individuel par le biais de l'auto-apprentissage et d'une approche introspective, une exposition délibérée à l'allemand à travers les médias et leur engagement auprès de natifs (de langue maternelle allemande) dans des activités pour lesquelles elles ont développé des affinités. Il est intéressant de noter qu'il s'agissait soit d'une activité professionnelle déjà exercée par le passé, soit d'activités vers lesquelles elles se sont tournées après leur immigration, et dont elles ont ensuite fait leur propre profession.

C'est en réalisant qu'il y avait une demande pour leurs services dans un marché ouvert et parmi une majorité de la population que la flamme de l'entrepreneuriat s'est allumée dans le cœur de Kanita, de Patcharin et de Wipa. Elles ont délibérément adapté leurs services aux attentes de leur clientèle mais aussi en réaction aux préjugés liés à leurs professions. Le soutien de leurs époux et d'autres associés a été déterminant puisqu'ils ont pris en charge les tâches difficiles à accomplir sans maîtrise de l'allemand, comme par exemple l'inscription au registre des commerces et la gestion des documents administratifs. En résumé, les découvertes suggèrent qu'un niveau avancé en allemand n'est pas un pré requis indispensable à l'accès à l'entrepreneuriat mais que la perspective de s'engager dans le domaine de l'entrepreneuriat agit comme une motivation pour améliorer ses compétences en allemand.

Une analyse détaillée des pratiques professionnelles de Kanita dans son salon de massage montre qu'il est possible de travailler en possédant un niveau minimal en allemand. Mais le succès dépend alors de plusieurs facteurs. Pour réaliser au mieux leurs activités professionnelles, Kanita et son personnel puisent dans les ressources linguistiques à leur disposition, en thaï et en allemand. De plus, chaque action réalisée au salon de massage est conçue comme une série d'actions discursives routinières que chaque membre du personnel est capable de maîtriser rapidement. Le plein succès de l'entreprise repose aussi sur le fait que les clients connaissent bien son fonctionnement. Par conséquent, des incohérences formelles en allemand ne gênent pas l'efficacité du travail. Les problèmes viennent alors principalement d'une méconnaissance des routines de travail, de la part des clients ou du personnel. Lorsqu'un problème survient, on tend à le résoudre en faisant appel à la coopération entre collègues ou en utilisant les ressources matérielles accessibles aux membres du personnel.

En comparaison, Patcharin et son personnel possèdent des compétences linguistiques partielles en allemand, ce qui joue un rôle important pour la réalisation des principales actions dans le salon de massage. L'analyse montre que leurs compétences en allemand, même restreintes, sont importantes pour leur travail car il fournit à Patcharin et à ses employés les outils nécessaires à l'élaboration de pratiques discursives pendant le massage. Ils peuvent ainsi déterminer les problèmes de santé de leurs clients, construire des relations avec eux, donner des instructions ou des précisions quant à un traitement ou fournir une évaluation liée à leurs questions de santé. Parler est une part importante du traitement par le massage dans le salon de Patcharin et la parole permet de construire l'identité professionnelle qu'elle affirme être la sienne, notamment pour fournir un service haut de gamme et personnalisé à ses clients. Le thaï est moins pertinent, mais les interactions entre Patcharin et ses employés sont utiles à l'organisation du travail et à l'échange d'informations.

Wipa possède des compétences importantes en allemand et en thaï, ce qui lui permet de diriger son commerce et de servir ses clients en toute indépendance et avec compétence, conformément à ses aspirations professionnelles. Les principales actions permettant à Wipa d'expliquer et d'organiser son stock montrent bien comment elle utilise aussi bien le thaï que l'allemand afin de les réaliser efficacement. Ses compétences en allemand et en thaï lui permettent de faire des choix rationnels quant aux choix des

fournisseurs appropriés, elle peut également fournir à ses clients une écoute attentive et des conseils selon leur langue et de leur culture.

Les conclusions qui se dessinent à la lumière de ces résultats tendent à indiquer qu'un niveau avancé en allemand n'est pas un pré requis à l'accès pour les immigrés à l'entrepreneuriat. Les chefs d'entreprise adaptent alors leurs tâches professionnelles à leur propre niveau de compétences linguistiques et ils sont alors efficaces. D'ailleurs, un entrepreneur trouve dans son travail la motivation nécessaire et le besoin de s'approprier l'allemand. D'un autre côté, les données suggèrent qu'une meilleure connaissance de l'allemand est fondamentale si l'entrepreneur tient à se démarquer de ses concurrents puisque cela lui permet d'aller au-delà de la réalisation des tâches routinières.

Acknowledgements

This has been a long, challenging and at times arduous journey. Many individuals have accompanied me on this trip and I owe them a great deal of gratitude. They have contributed in small or big ways to the process of this research and its product in the form of this thesis. Many helped actively through discussions and feedback, and many others have provided support in other forms, for example by simply being there for me and taking some load off my shoulders in times of distress. To extend my heartfelt appreciation to all of these individuals would be impossible given the constraints of the page and me being a man of few words on such occasions. However, I would like to sincerely thank a number of people explicitly, as they have made this experience extremely rewarding.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors Associate Professor Ingrid de Saint-Georges and Associate Professor Laurent Filliettaz for their invaluable insights, support and guidance throughout this project. Ingrid gave me the chance to take a shot at this doctorate by showing interest in my initial proposal and by facilitating my entry into the world of workplace and professional discourse. Under her mentorship these ideas were significantly shaped and sharpened, and her enthusiasm and constant positive support were central in the project's process and its completion. I am equally grateful to have been able to work with Laurent, who together with his team of researchers at the research unit *Interaction & Formation* at the University of Geneva not only welcomed me with open arms into their midst, but whose research on learning and language at work was an eye-opening experience for me, as it showed me the implications of applied linguistics for professional practice. Both Ingrid's and Laurent's critical readings and comments on the different parts and versions of this thesis provided priceless feedback and I hope that the final results do justice to their efforts.

My gratitude goes out to all members, past and present, of the *Institute for Research on Multilingualism* at the University of Luxembourg. It was an inspiring time to work with people from such a variety of cultural, linguistic and academic backgrounds. A special thanks also goes to all the doctoral candidates, instructors, and administrators of the *Doctoral School in Educational Sciences* (DSES) for the opportunities that they created for me and others by organising our training programme and providing us with the

opportunities to participate in exchange programmes, conferences and workshops. I also would like to thank all those who have shared an office space with me at the Walferdange Campus for the coffees, conversations and their friendship: Susanne Backes, Erica Uusitalo, Francine Uwera, Monika Sujbert, Nancy Morys, and Natalia Bilici.

My heartfelt and utmost appreciation goes out to all of the business owners in this research project and their staff members without whose curiosity and commitment none of this would have been possible. They very warmheartedly opened the doors of their businesses to me and willingly shared details from their personal biographies, experiences and expertise with me. I cherished the time that I spent with them and was inspired by their hospitality, their drive and resilience. This dissertation is built around their stories and I hope that I have done them justice with this work. I also would like to thank Mr Ittichai Hasser, without whose contributions in the form of the Thai translations, I would have never gotten far with the data.

And last but definitely not least, I have to thank my partner Siti and my daughter Dian for their unstinting support, patience, love, and for taking this leap of faith with me. Natürlich danke ich auch von ganzem Herzen meinen Eltern, Urban und Gerhardi, und meiner Schwester Susanne, ohne deren tatkräftige Unterstützung all dies nicht möglich gewesen wäre. And a big thank you also goes to my Singapore family Hani, Naemah, Rizal and Hennilia. All of them have shaped my own pathway in so many wonderful ways! Vielen Dank and termia kasih!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Despite being in 2013 the second most popular destination for migrants after the USA and despite long-standing calls for immigration to fill the gap for skilled labour, Germany is still struggling with the idea of being a country of migration. The call for effective legislation that regulates labour migration and attracts immigrants similar to countries like Australia or Canada is becoming louder. An important aspect of such legislation is also the regulation of language. The 2005 reform of the German Foreigners Act for the first time made German language courses compulsory for certain groups of immigrants to obtain a permanent residency in Germany. Like in many other European states, in Germany, proficiency in the national language is regarded as the key resource for immigrants to participate successfully and thus integrate in German society (Esser, 2006, Haug, 2008). This is particularly so for the domain of work, where a standard level of literacy in German is seen as essential in order to accomplish work and to learn about work (Ohm, 2010). Insufficient knowledge of German is therefore often seen as an obstacle that prevents immigrants from accessing the labour market. This applies especially to foreign nationals and first-generation immigrants from non-EU countries, who, apart from language barriers, also face legal restrictions to access the labour market. The consistently higher unemployment rates among members of these communities, in comparison to the national average, reflect these problems (see Table 1).

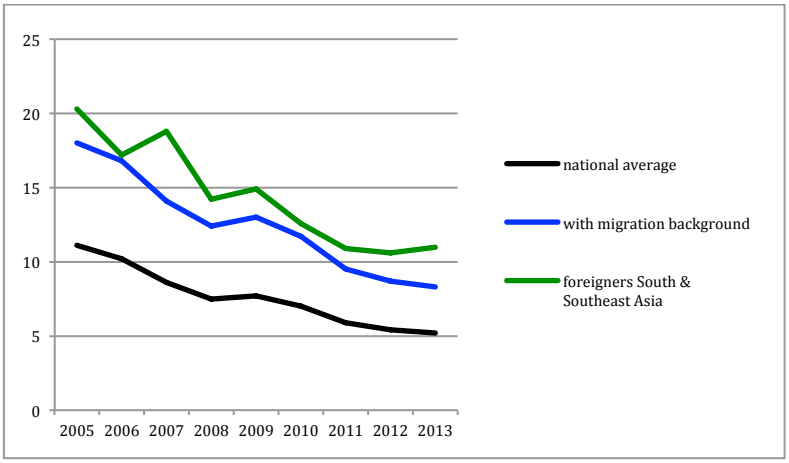


Table 1: Unemployment rate among migrants in Germany, 2005-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2014a, 2015)

On the other hand, the high self-employment rates among immigrants in Germany, as shown in Table 2 below, suggest that becoming self-employed is seen as a chance to overcome the problems that immigrants face in becoming economically active, in particular for non-EU migrants (Brixy et al. 2011; Hagen et al., 2012, Seebaß & Siegert, 2011).

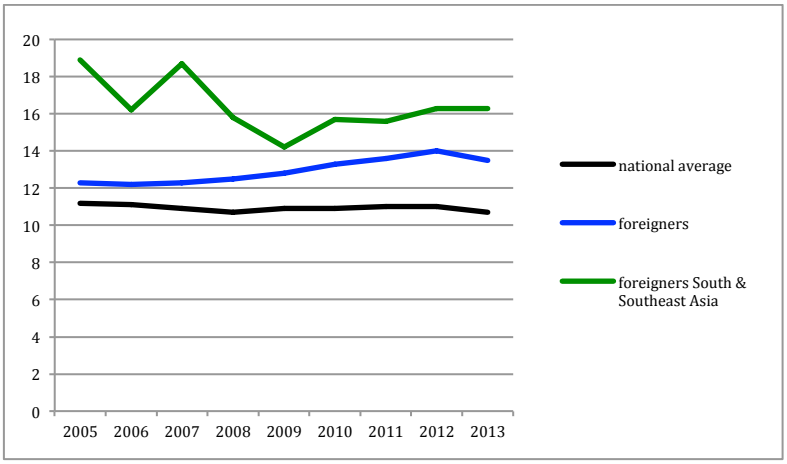


Table 2: Self-employment rate in Germany, 2005-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2014a, 2015)

In sociology the phenomenon of immigrants using the material and immaterial resources of their community to establish themselves as self-employed business owners is known as ethnic entrepreneurship (Volery, 2007, Dana & Dana, 2008). Ethnic businesses or immigrant businesses are generally seen to be located in two types of markets with low access barriers: those that offer products and services to their own ethnic community and those that have been abandoned by indigenous entrepreneurs. Yet, research suggests that insufficient competence in German hampers the success of immigrant entrepreneurs in all these markets, even if their businesses serve their ethnic community. Language competence in German is seen as essential in business management, and in accessing legal and institutional support (Leicht et al. 2012, Volery 2007, Leicht, 2005, Hillmann & Sommer, 2011). Moreover, the lack of competence in German is seen to foster the marginalization of immigrant businesses into a niche market, with the immigrant entrepreneurs being unable to provide their products or services to the majority population (Yavuzcan, 2003). Competence in German and therefore developing multilingual resources is thus seen as an asset for immigrant entrepreneurs to manage their businesses successfully, and to widen their customer base and their supply chains

(Schuleri-Hartje et al. 2005). On the whole, however, there have been few studies documenting the ways immigrant entrepreneurs establish their ventures effectively from a sociolinguistic perspective.

In particular, for immigrant entrepreneurs from minority migrant groups who operate specifically in markets targeting the general population, there is still little empirical evidence documenting how they successfully run their businesses, despite their assumed lack of linguistic competence in German. Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate these practices with special reference to a minority migrant group, the Thais. More specifically, it aims to analyse how these Thai immigrant business owners apply the resources in their linguistic repertoires to the range of practices that they need to engage in to manage their businesses. We intend to examine how they manage the routine practices at their workplaces, while paying particular attention to the challenges they face and the strategies they develop to deal with these challenges. Moreover, we aim to understand how their engagement in work relates to processes of learning German and thus whether the workplace is a space for informal language learning.

Therefore, the thesis attempts to answer three main research questions:

- What are the pathways into self-employment for immigrant entrepreneurs? How are these pathways shaped by their linguistic repertoires?
- How do the linguistic repertoires of immigrant business owners shape the execution of their work? To what extent do their workplace practices constitute sites of language learning?
- What are the challenges that immigrant entrepreneurs face, to what extent are they due to their linguistic repertoires, and how do they overcome them?

1.1 The growth of businesses by Thai immigrants in rural Germany

Despite the fact that particularly first generation non-EU immigrant entrepreneurs have been described as hampered in their business activities by a lack of German competency, the last decade has seen a rise of businesses by first generation Thai immigrants, in particular Thai massage salons and food retail stores. These businesses have not only opened up in urban or metropolitan areas, but also in the geographical periphery, such as the federal state of Saarland in the southwest of Germany, as the following headline from

a regional newspaper documents: *Nachfrage nach Thai-Massagen steigt an der Saar* 'Demand for Thai massages increases in the Saar region'.



Nachfrage nach Thai-Massagen steigt an der Saar

Immer mehr Studios in den Städten – Kunden sollten auf Ausbildung achten

Thai-Massage-Studios erfreuen sich im Saarland offenbar großer Beliebtheit, denn ihre Zahl wächst. Die Branche will nun für

Thai-Spa-Vereinigung Deutschland. Dass es aber in ganz Deutschland mehr Thai-Massage-Studios geworden

Image 1: Thai businesses in the press (*Saarbrücker Zeitung*, 19 Aug 2013)

This growth in Thai businesses has been significantly driven by a particular type of migration, namely marriage migration. The Thai community is thus predominantly composed of Thai women who are married to German men. This makes them a particularly interesting group to study, because through their legal dependency status these women possess the right to enter self-employment easily. Moreover, Thais being a minority migrant group in Germany that is not geographically clustered, their businesses cannot rely solely on their ethnic community to survive, but they depend significantly on the majority population as customers or, like the massage salons in the above newspaper article, target specifically members of the indigenous population. In sum, these businesses exemplify the ways minority migrants create their own spaces and access routes to the German labour market by commodifying a skill or knowledge that is associated with their cultural background.

In relation to the research questions that guide this thesis we strive to look at three aspects of the language use of immigrant business owners. First, the aim is to see the relationship between the workplace practices and language knowledge. How does language mediate the practices that are common at the workplace of these women? We thus attempt to show how the practices at work depend on these immigrants' first language (Thai) and to what extent they depend on German, a language only learned later in life. Secondly, we want to understand how these women have learned German for the practices that they do at work: In which biographical trajectories do these language practices anchor themselves? Thirdly, since workplace practices are also shaped by the

broader societal discourses, we want to see how the immigrants adapt or accommodate their workplace practices to the local circumstances and explain the role language plays in these accommodation processes.

Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to three different areas of research. Firstly, while there is ample scholarship on immigrant entrepreneurship and ethnic entrepreneurship in economics and sociology that suggests the importance of language knowledge, there has been few empirical work on how immigrant entrepreneurs use the multiple resources in their repertoires and expand them through and for their workplace practices. Additionally, most research has focused on large immigrant groups, but not on a relatively isolated minority migrant community whose members have to establish their businesses in absence of an ethnic market. Secondly, while linguists have been engaged widely in the study of language and work, the focus on the use of multiple languages at work is still a nascent area of research. The focus has been particular on the effects of multilingualism on employees in large companies and skilled professionals, but less on relatively unskilled migrants. Thirdly, the language use of private business owners has also not been looked at closely. Therefore, research in this area is important to better understand the specific issues migrants face and more generally the realities of immigrant business owners in Germany.

1.2 Theoretical preliminaries

In order to best address these research questions, we adopt in this thesis an approach that considers language as a resource for performing everyday, routinized practices that cannot be abstracted from what people do and who people are. We also consider that being engaged in practice is a source of language learning and a resource for learning (cf. Barton & Lee, 2013). The resources in the linguistic repertoires shape the practices and are shaped and transformed as a result of being put into action.

Such a perspective on language requires us to consider three factors as particularly important. First, the social arrangements that prevail at any particular moment will render certain language resources more salient than others, it demands the control of certain styles or genres to perform the social roles meaningfully. Second, the social actors' experiences and knowledge are relevant for the actions performed. And third, the larger discourses that circulate in society impact on how and what is said and done. To

understand what role language plays in business practices, we therefore think that all of these levels need to be taken into account in the analysis of the data.

The data comprises long-term observations of workplace practices in three Thai-owned businesses in the state of Saarland in southwest Germany. The businesses are a large Thai massage salon in the shopping district of a small town, a small Thai massage salon and a convenience store selling Asian food products. All are owned and managed by Thai women. In line with ethnography, the data is a mix of observations, fieldnotes, audio recordings and video recordings allowing us to document systematically and in detail the range of language practices that are at play. The data also comprises formal and informal interviews with the business owners, their staff, and their associates about the history of the business and their way into self-employment.

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis comprises 8 chapters together with this introduction.

Chapter 2 presents the background of this study. First, the phenomenon of immigration from Thailand to Germany will be explained. Then theories of immigrant entrepreneurship are presented giving details about the form and characteristics of ethnic businesses. Thirdly, the relationship between language and practices at work will be discussed with a special emphasis on the theme of multilingualism at the workplace. And finally, because one interest of this thesis is on how workplaces can be sites of informal language learning, recent theories of learning compatible with the kind of self-directed learning that can be found in the data will be presented.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical approach that has been adopted to examine language at work, Mediated Discourse Analysis. This approach is rooted in the view of language as a practice. It pays notably attention to the history of practices for the people engaged in them and also examines how individuals' practices are located within larger networks of sociohistorical practices. The chapter also addresses the methods adopted for the study and introduces the field sites.

Chapter 4 discusses pathways into self-employment created by the three business owners and investigates the ways the participants appropriated German for their professional practice.

Chapter 5 presents the analyses of the key actions at Kanita's Massage Salon. They present how the owner and her staff despite a minimal knowledge of German are able to organize their workplace practices successfully by making use of their multilingual and other material resources.

Chapter 6 concentrates on the key workplace actions at Patcharin's Massage Salon. The data illustrate how the owner and her staff due to their partial competence in German are able to position themselves professionally and to react to unfavourable discourses in relation to their service and profession.

Chapter 7 illustrates how bilingual competence in German and Thai opens up possibilities for the owner of a convenience store, Wipa, in order to align herself effectively with a range of suppliers and customers. This competence allows her to offer her services to a heterogeneous clientele and source her products from suppliers that she deems most appropriate for her needs.

Chapter 8 concludes with the main results of the study, discusses implications, and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Background

This chapter is divided into four subsections that provide the relevant background for this study. In the first section, we will review the characteristics of the Thai community in Germany and the federal state of Saarland, and relate those to the theme of self-employment. The subsequent section tackles the theme of immigrant self-employment from the point of view of sociology. We will discuss the theories that explain the proclivity of immigrants towards this form of work and focus on what these studies say about language. The next section will delve into the topic of workplace discourse and we will discuss what applied linguistics has generally said about the importance of the linguistic aspect at work. We also want to see what has been said in applied linguistics about language use in immigrant businesses. After that we will look at the theories of learning at work and how they relate to theories of second language learning. This section will end with our position of what it means to know a language based on these theories of learning. But let us first turn to a review of the literature on Thai migration to Germany.

2.1 The Thai community in Germany and the state of Saarland

In 2013, Germany was home to slightly more than 7.6 million foreign nationals (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b). For that same year, Asian nationals made up only 12.5% among Germany's immigrant population, a share that has remained relatively stable throughout the last decade. Within the Asian community in Germany, slightly more than a third hail from South and Southeast Asia, a group that includes nationals of the states of India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. At only 4.4% of the total foreign community, South and Southeast Asians present a minority immigrant group. Within this group, Thais constitute one of the largest groups together with Vietnamese and Indians, as Table 3 below illustrates.

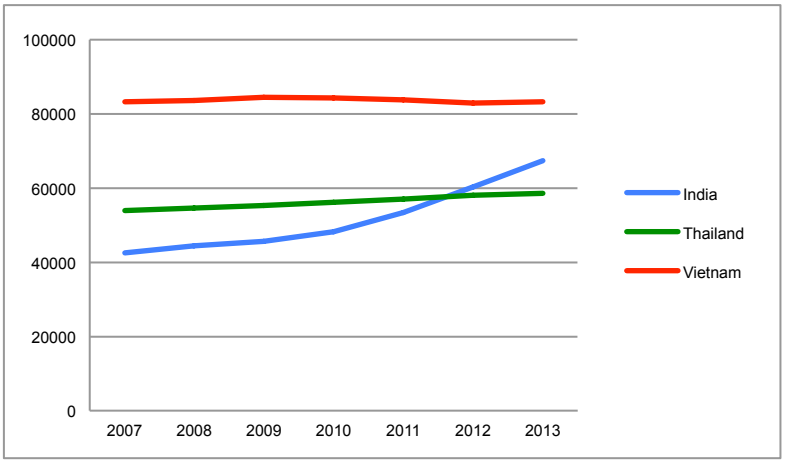


Table 3: South & Southeast Asians in Germany, 2007-2013, total number (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b)

What is interesting about the Thai community is that is has been growing steadily from the mid-1960s until today (see Table 4), despite the absence of any political or economic interventions that explain the existence or rise of the other South & Southeast Asian communities. For instance, many members of the Vietnamese community came to Germany as refugees in the 1970s, or as foreign wage labourers to the former East Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. Likewise, the recent rise of the Indian community was significantly fuelled by Germany's search for skilled migrants in the IT sector.

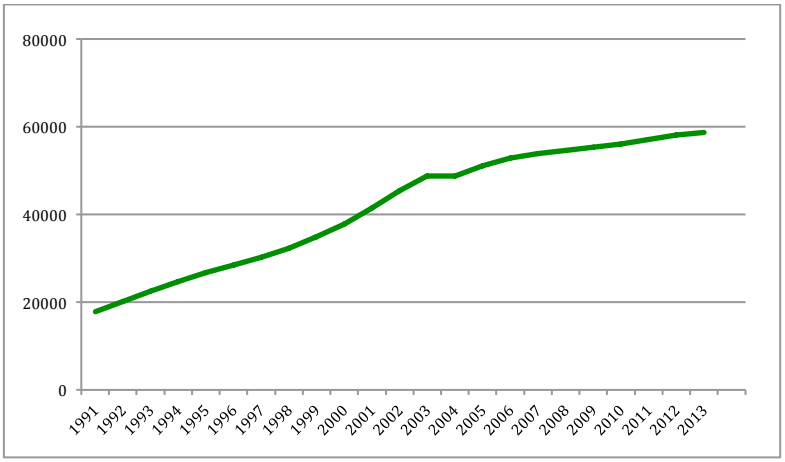


Table 4: Thai nationals in Germany, 1991-2013, total number (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008a, 2014b)

Another interesting aspect to note about the Thai immigrant community is the very high share of its members having a permanent residency status in Germany. As Table 5 below shows two-thirds of all Thais in Germany have a permanent residency status. In addition, the stats indicate that Thais are double as likely to have permanent residency as compared to other foreigners in Germany. From this follows that Thais reside in Germany

not as students, temporary workers or for political reasons, but are in Germany for the long-term. This permanent residency status equips them with equal rights and obligations as compared to German citizens, in particular with respect to access to the labour market.

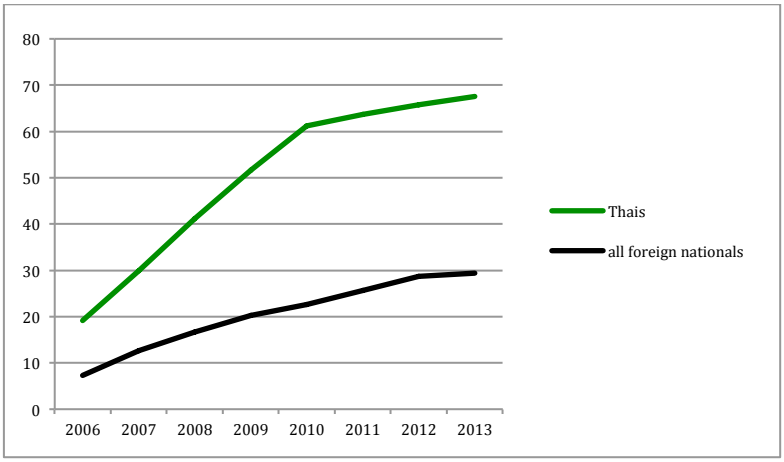


Table 5: Share of permanent residents among foreigners in Germany, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2007, 2008b, 2009d, 2010b, 2011c, 2012b, 2013a, 2014b)

The Thai community is also not concentrated in specific geographical locations within Germany. While 93.7% of Thai nationals reside in the federal states that made up the territory of former West Germany, the census data for 2013 as represented in Table 6 below does not suggest specific settlement preferences (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b). Predictably the most populous states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, and Baden Württemberg are home to greater number of Thais, however, these settlement patterns of Thais in Germany do not suggest that urban centres are the preferred destinations. While Table 6 only shows the data for 2013, the available data from 2005 onwards paints a largely similar distribution across states.

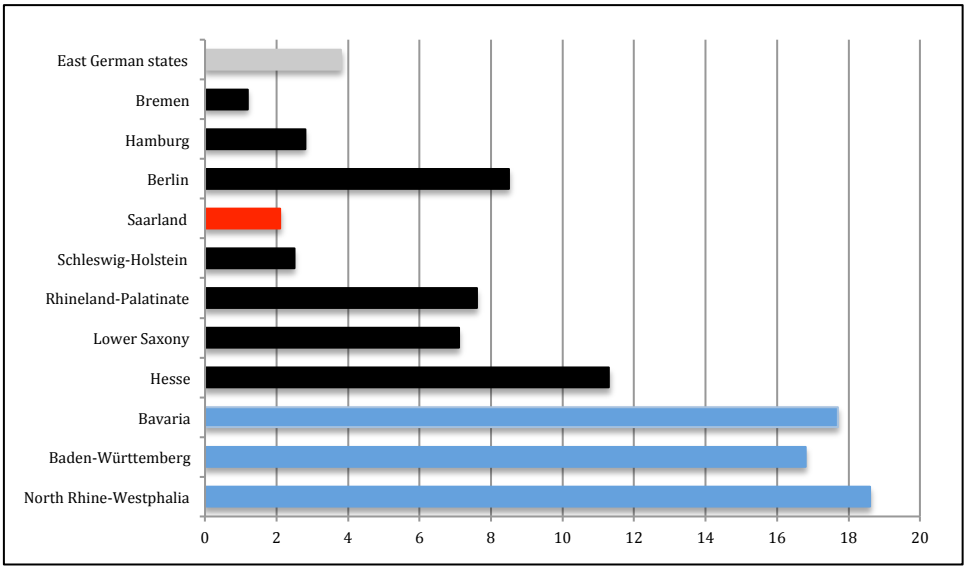


Table 6: Distribution of Thai nationals across federal states, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b)

The most distinctive aspect of the Thai community is its gender disparity. The Thai immigrant community in Germany has always been predominantly female: seven out of eight Thais in Germany are women, as Table 7 illustrates.

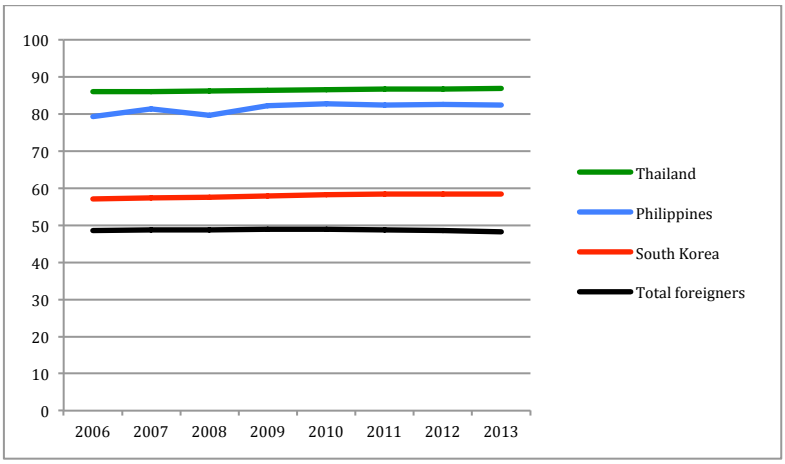


Table 7: Share of women among foreigners in Germany, in % (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b)

The high proportion of women among immigrants from South Korea and the Philippines can be partly explained by the fact that, in the 1950s and 1960s, Germany attracted and employed nurses from these countries in greater numbers. The higher share of women in the Filipino community can be attributed to the phenomenon of marriage migration. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s approximately 10,000 marriages between German men and Filipino women were registered.

In a similar vein, Thai migration into Germany can largely be explained by marriage migration. While census data does not establish a direct and causal connection between immigration and marriage (Ruenkaew, 2003), other indicators make this link highly probable. For example, as shown in Table 8 below, for the last 25 years unions between Germans and Thais made up the single largest bloc of all marriages between German men and Asian women from 47 different countries.

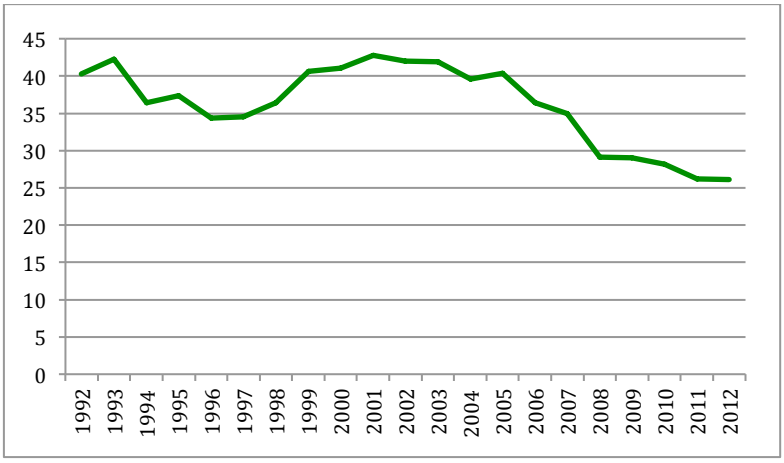


Table 8: Share of German-Thai marriages among all marriages between German men and Asian women, 1992-2012, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013b)

Another indicator is the number of married women among Thai nationals in Germany. Table 9 below shows that the proportion of married women within the Thai community is significantly higher as compared to the average of Asian immigrant groups in general.

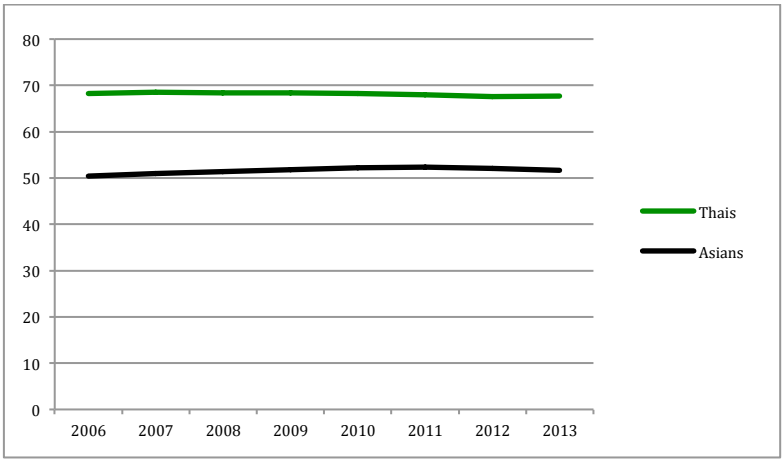


Table 9: Share of married women among foreigners in Germany, 2006-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2007, 2008b, 2009d, 2010b, 2011c, 2012b, 2013a, 2014b)

Among all married Thai women in Germany, the number of those married to a German partner is also expressively higher, as Table 10 shows. The share of unions with German nationals among all married Thais in Germany is almost four times as high as that of all foreign women, and slightly more than three times as high as the average rate among the Asian immigrant community.

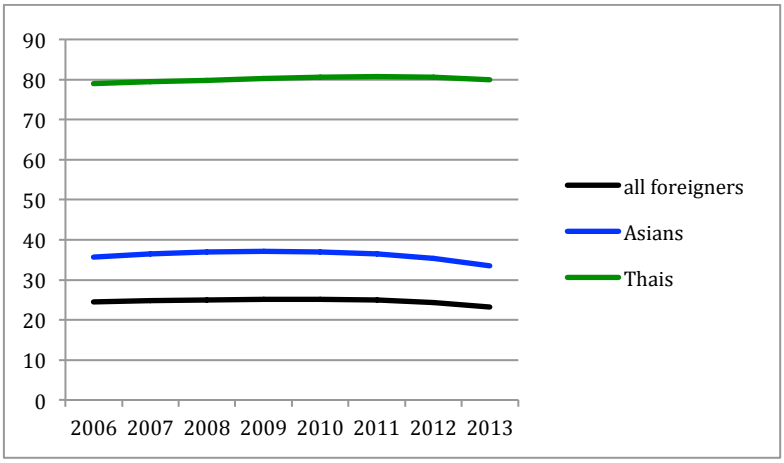


Table 10: Share of marriages with Germans among married foreign women in Germany, 2006-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2007, 2008b, 2009d, 2010b, 2011c, 2012b, 2013a, 2014b)

As shown in Table 6 above, approximately 2% of the Thai community in Germany reside in the state of Saarland, the smallest of all federal states in Germany in terms of size and population. However, in terms of population density the state is ranked fifth in the country with similar settlement characteristics as North Rhine-Westphalia.

Unfortunately, on a regional level the data sources on the Thai community are limited. The available statistics show that the total number of Thais in Saarland, like the national average, has risen slightly between the years 2005 and 2013 from 1117 to 1213 in total (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b). However, the number of Thais as a proportion of the whole Asian population in Saarland is almost double that of the national average. For example in 2013, 12.1% of all Asians in Saarland came from Thailand as compared to 6.1% at the national level. This means that one is more likely to meet a Thai, if one meets an Asian in Saarland. Similar to the national trend though, the Thai community in Saarland is predominantly female at 88.5% in 2013. A look at their length of residency in the state reveals that two thirds of these women (59.1%) have been living there for 10 years and longer. Another 19.1% have lived in Saarland for 6 to 10 years (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b). This is in line with the numbers at the national level for the same year (63.5% &

16.7%) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b). This suggests that although the community has increased it has not experienced rapid internal changes in the last decade.

Having established that members of the Thai community are predominantly female and very often married to a German national and have very likely a permanent residency status, we must consider the significance of these statistics within the broader context of their migration. In the following section, we want to consider the literature that has examined marriage migration explaining the conditions that shape these women's move to Germany.

2.1.1 Thai migration as marriage migration

In this subsection we will look more closely at the literature to investigate the reasons for marriage migration and the motivations of Thai women to emigrate to Germany. Studies suggest that marriage is the predominant medium of Thai migration to Europe. While economic considerations were and are still an important factor, studies suggest that these alone do not explain the phenomenon completely.

First of all, it is important for the purposes of this study to emphasize that marriage migration is substantially different from other forms of immigration. In legal terms, immigrating to join a German spouse provides the migrant with pretty much the same rights and obligations that a German citizen possesses. After the union has been ratified by the German state, foreign spouses of German citizens have unrestricted access to the German labour market. This includes the right to set up a business, a privilege, which is not granted to individuals with other migrant statuses, as will be pointed out in more detail in the next section. While until 2005, foreign spouses were not required to show any proof of proficiency in the German language, the reform of the Foreigners Act in Germany in 2005 tagged the right of residence of non-EU migrants to the successful completion of a language cum culture course, the 'Integrationskurs'. The curriculum of this course is supposed to provide future permanent residents with a basic understanding of German culture and institutions, as well as a low intermediate competence of German, or level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The course comprises 600 hours of formal instruction by certified instructors and ends with a final test that includes a writing and speaking module which participants must successfully pass within the first two years of their stay in order to obtain permanent residency.

Despite these measures, the statistics discussed above do not suggest a slow down of immigration of non-EU migrants, such as the Thais. Let us now look that the factors that are said to affect the migration for Thai women.

As mentioned above, marriage is the primary medium that sets in motion the migration process for many Thai women (Ruenkaew, 2003, 2009, Suksomboon, 2009). The most important factor that fuels marriage migration is poverty and the social marginalisation of single mothers and unmarried women in Thailand. Marrying a foreigner and moving abroad is regarded as a viable prospect for these women to secure financial stability (Ruenkaew, 2009). The first waves of Thai women emigrating via conjugal unions with Western men in the 1980s were primarily individuals from the impoverished North and Northeast regions of Thailand, such as the Isan region, areas of the country that experienced and still suffer from severe economic depression (Ruenkaew, 2009, Sakdapolrak, 2008). The majority of these migrants had little formal education and their employment experience was largely as labourers in the agricultural sector. These conditions funnelled many Thai women into the hands of human traffickers associated with prostitution and the vice industry (Lipka, 1989, Niesner et al., 1999).

However, contemporary investigations into the phenomenon criticize approaches that highlight the economic conditions as reductionist when applied to the sharp increase in female migration in the 1990s and after (Ruenkaew 2003, Suksomboon 2009, Lapanun, 2012). They stress that conditions on both sides, in Europe and Southeast Asia, sustain these flows of migration. In her study of Thai women who emigrated to the Netherlands, Suksomboon (2009) emphasizes the importance of matching socio-cultural ideals that create favourable conditions for the unions between Thai women and European men. These included stereotypical cultural models of the affluent West or the docile and domestic Asian homemaker, but also the decline of the stigma associated with cross-cultural relationships in both sending and receiving countries. Suksomboon (2009) argues that only because of these intersecting cultural ideas, Thai women would consider a life abroad as an option over staying in Thailand. Marriage migration is thus seen as an opportunity created through these discourses and which Thai women consider as a legitimate choice available to them to create a better future for themselves.

Moreover, studies highlight the significance of matching personal histories of the individuals involved. The men as well as the women have often made negative experiences in a previous marriage, have not been married before, are past the socially

acceptable age of marriage, and both long for emotional and economic stability (Ruenkaew, 2003, Suksomboon, 2009, Lapanun, 2012). Marriage to a foreigner thus presents an opportunity for personal fulfilment and is not exclusively driven by economic necessity. Migration is finally only a possible outcome of marriage for the Thai women and not always a one-way street, as some men "do actually consider the long-term socio-economic benefits in their later life, particularly after retirement when they expect to live in Thailand with their Thai wife" (Suksomboon, 2009, p. 215). Lapanun's (2012) ethnographic investigations into a rural village in Thailand's Isan region corroborates these findings, showing that many marriages lead to the Western partner settling and investing in his future in Thailand. In sum, the findings stress the degree of agency that Thai women exercise in engaging in such relationships.

When it comes to women who do choose to emigrate, Ruenkaew (2009) distinguishes three categories of women: single mothers, former sex workers, and young unmarried women searching for economic and social improvement. Unlike earlier waves of Thai migration, these women have completed compulsory education, possess vocational qualifications or have completed their first level of university education. Many had professional careers in Thailand and have predominantly experienced internal rural to urban migration. Marriage migration is thus one instrument to participate in the global labour market and improve their own and their family's financial situation further (Suksomboon 2009, Ruenkaew, 2009). After migration, transnational family ties are usually not severed but maintained, e.g. through the sending of remittances generated through the wife's paid work, a characteristic of transnational migration well documented in the recent literature (Vertovec, 2009). Linguistically, this means that these women seem to maintain their Thai language actively, while at the same time finding themselves in a position where they have to learn one or more new languages to be economically active in their new home.

In summary, all this illustrates that marriage migration must be seen as an option open to Thai women and Western men, made possible through socio-economic conditions and discourses that open up a window leading up to the events of marriage and migration. Secondly, Thai women's lives in Europe consequently display features of transnational ties. They display their embeddedness in various communities, local and transnational (Suksomboon 2009).

However, contrary to the common perception of this form of migration in both societies the geographical move north does not necessarily constitute a step upwards economically, because many of these women find it difficult to find employment in their new home country (Suksomboon 2009). The reasons include the difficulties to recognize vocational qualifications and the lack of competencies in the language of the country of migration. For many, self-employment thus presents an opportunity. In order to ascertain whether self-employment actually presents a preferred option for non-EU immigrants to find work, we want to return to the labour market statistics again.

2.1.2 Labour market statistics and the option of self-employment

Obtaining statistically significant information on labour market characteristics of the Thai immigrant population in Germany in comparison to other immigrant groups is impossible, due to the small size of the community. Longitudinal data about the participation of the Thai community in the German labour market can only be inferred from the data of the South and Southeast Asian community in general.

First of all, we need to ascertain whether Thai women in Germany actually seek access to the labour market in the first place. In order to do so we need to consider the proportion of individuals within the community that actually wishes to be gainfully employed, in other words their employability rate. Table 11 below compares the employability rates of all women in Germany compared to all women with a migration background and foreigners from South and Southeast Asia between 2005 and 2013.

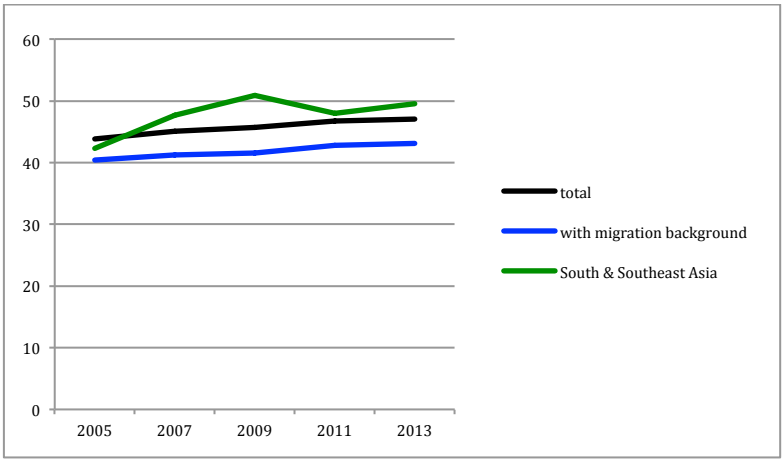


Table 11: Employability rate of women in Germany, 2005-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2014a, 2015)

Table 11 suggests that women from South & Southeast Asia try to access the labour market in slightly greater numbers as compared to other migrant women and women in Germany in general. While the employability rate of women with a migration background is lower than the national average, the rate of South & Southeast Asians is significantly higher.

However, employability alone only tells us if a person wants to work or seeks work. A better indicator to assess the success is to regard these numbers together with the unemployment rates of these groups. Together these figures provide clues about these women's actual success in finding employment. Table 12 below compares the overall national unemployment rate, with those of women in general and women from South & Southeast Asia in particular.

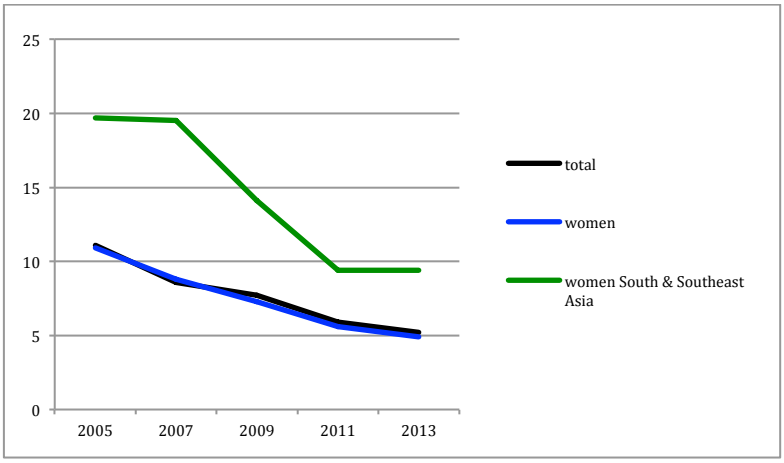


Table 12: Unemployment rates among women in Germany, 2005-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2014a, 2015)

This table illustrates that despite the general decrease in unemployment in Germany, foreign women have been particularly affected by unemployment and remain unemployed in greater numbers. While the rate of unemployment among women in general is in line with the overall, national unemployment rate, women from South & Southeast Asia are still almost twice as likely to be unemployed. This leads us to two interesting questions: Faced with a higher likelihood to be unemployed in comparison to other women, are women from South and Southeast Asia more likely to turn to self-employment? If so, the self-employment rates of women from South and Southeast Asia should be higher than those of the other groups.

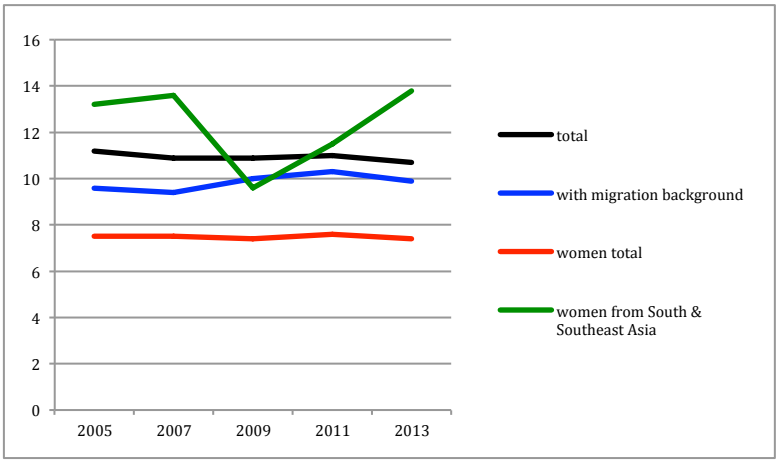


Table 13: Self-employment rates among women in Germany, 2005-2013, in % (own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2014a, 2015)

Table 13 suggests that women from South & Southeast Asia generally tend more towards self-employment than women in general, but also in comparison to the overall migrant population and the national average. This suggests that self-employment is actively sought as an option to participate in the labour market.

In the introduction we have mentioned, however, that studies suggest that the lack of German language competencies presents a barrier, so that immigrant entrepreneurs are often active within their own communities. Regarding their level of knowledge of German, there are no representative studies with respect to the adult immigrant population, while some data has been gathered for school children. Haug's (2008) overview of studies on language knowledge of migrants in Germany attests that adult immigrants struggle mostly with writing and reading in German. She attests that a period of 10 years of residency in the country shows a significant improvement in speaking and writing. Haug's (2008) summary of different panel investigations shows that, through the method of self-reporting of language competence, immigrants judge their language abilities good enough to master everyday activities. These studies also suggest that foreigners who engage in work perceive their German competence higher than those who do not.

2.1.3 Summary

This section has shown that the Thai community in Germany is a minority migrant group that is not geographically clustered. The majority of members of the Thai community also seems to be in Germany for the long term, because many of them have permanent

residency status. Another distinctive feature is that the members are predominantly female and married to German men. We have also shown that marriage to a German national is the characteristic medium which sets the migration process in motion. The motivations ascribed to the process of migration are an economic as well as affective improvement of their lives. The statistics also suggest that in the new home Thai women strive to become economically active and more than other women seek their economic participation in self-employment. However, very little is known about the sectors in which they seek self-employment and how this is affected by their competence in German. In the next sections, we would like to discuss the literature in sociology in order to review the general characteristics of immigrant self-employment and which factors contribute to the success of these businesses and how this relates to language competence.

2.2 Immigration and self-employment

Migration movements throughout the past 200 years can often be linked to the search for labour. Emigration from Europe to the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries for instance, was driven by domestic economic problems and better prospects for economic success across the Atlantic. Indeed, a number of European migrants were able to build a legacy for themselves as leading entrepreneurs in their new home. A similar development seems to be gaining momentum among immigrants in Europe. Recent reports on self-employment among foreigners in Germany show that between 2009 and 2011, a third of all new businesses were founded by foreigners and that 53% of all new business ventures were started as small, side-income businesses (Jung et al., 2011, Hagen et. al, 2012). So, what are the links between self-employment and migration? And to what extent is language knowledge of the migrant's home language and the national language of the host economy relevant in the establishment and the running of these ventures?

Research that has looked into the connections between self-employment and immigration has developed under the label *ethnic entrepreneurship* or *immigrant entrepreneurship* (Volery, 2007, Hettlage, 2008). In fairly broad strokes, studies in this area have attributed the high self-employment numbers among immigrant groups to two general factors. One is the view that immigrants are pulled into self-employment due to socio-cultural characteristics of their immigrant community, emphasizing that immigrants make favourable use of so-called *ethnic resources* that render self-employment more

attractive than other kinds of work. A contending view sees ethnic resources as secondary and stresses the importance of the economic, political, and legal conditions that immigrants face in the host economy that, at its worst, pushes immigrants into self-employment.

2.2.1 Ethnic resources and the pull factors

That the proclivity for self-employment does not purely result from individual-psychological factors (e.g. the classic Schumpeterian entrepreneur), but may also be favoured by cultural routines and practices is probably most famously expressed in Max Weber's (1930/1992) argument about the influence of Protestant-Puritan ethics on the development of capitalism in Western Europe. Weber saw a connection between the Calvinist ascetic way of life and the logic and habitus of the modern entrepreneur. Building on Weber's insights, social scientists in the US American context became increasingly interested in studying the reasons for the varying levels of self-employment and economic development among the different ethnic minorities. Light & Gold (2000) provide an exhaustive summary of this development. Light's (1972) pioneering investigation of the corporate world of ethnic minorities in US American society, for example, connected the success of Chinese and Japanese immigrants over African Americans to their more effective recourse to or even reliance on their community structure in order to build and sustain their businesses. These "sociocultural and demographic features of the whole group that coethnic entrepreneurs actively utilize in business or from which their business passively benefits" are referred to as ethnic resources (Light & Rosenstein, 1995, p. 22). This view suggests that immigrants profit from in-group relationships and culturally-derived practices to set up private businesses.

This theory proposes that immigrant businesses are predicated to a large extent on practices that demonstrate in-group solidarity and trust. For example, instead of relying on institutions like banks and trade organisations to raise financial capital, immigrant businesses turn to their ethnic community through lending schemes in their personal networks, so-called Rotating Credit Associations (RCAs), which are culturally-derived practices that have endured in the diaspora (Bates, 1997, Geerts, 1962). Human capital, meaning employees, are also most frequently sought from within the own ethnic group or family (Sanders & Nee, 1996, Goldberg & Şen, 1997). Moreover, immigrant business owners are said to profit from co-ethnic suppliers that reside both within national

borders but also transnationally (Portes et al., 2002). Culturally-derived knowledge can also be turned into a product, when the immigrant business owner uses "culinary, linguistic, aesthetic, or handicraft skills ... that may be of economic value" (Light & Gold, 2000, p. 113). Ethnic resources are thus always a form of social capital that creates economic opportunities based on cultural similarity and, fairly often, similar experiences of exclusion and marginalisation in the host economy.

This toolkit of ethnic resources (Light & Gold, 2000) pulls immigrants into self-employment rather than salaried work. Building on these resources immigrants have been documented to create economically sensible boundaries or markets that have been described as parallel economies or ethnic economies. An example of such a parallel economy includes the ethnic enclave, an ethnic economy that is fuelled by the geographical and residential clustering of a particular immigrant group and which predominantly caters to the demands of the ethnic community (Portes, 1981). In a study of the Cuban and Mexican communities in the US, Portes & Bach (1985) illustrate that the ethnic enclave provided otherwise marginalized immigrants with better chances for social and financial advancement. Apart from serving their own community, ethnic communities may successfully control certain markets using ethnic resources, while simultaneously providing products and services to the mainstream market of the host society, therefore acting as middleman minorities (Bonacich, 1973). These communities are characterised by the use of ethnic solidarity and trust, as well as network relations to maximise the profit of their ventures, as they are driven by a sojourning mentality that "creates a preference for liquidity, encourages thrift, and fosters a solidary community that is cooperative internally and ‘free‘ to compete with the surrounding society" (Bonacich, 1973, p. 588). Thus, the ethnic resources are taught and maintained because they are valued and provide alternative access to resources that are otherwise inaccessible in the mainstream economy.

Another important ethnic resource is the knowledge and maintenance of an immigrant minority language. The transfer of language skills within a minority group presents important human capital that is used to support ethnic ties, be they national or even transnational. Language knowledge affects the recruitment of staff (Hofmeyr, 2010, Evans, 1989), and it is a vehicle to sustain an entrepreneur’s social or even financial capital. These insights have been documented for the European context as well. A study of the first wave of Vietnamese migrants to the Czech Republic showed that being bilingual

in Czech and Vietnamese proved an economic asset and helped to maintain transnational ties with the Vietnamese diaspora in other places around the world (Nekvapil, 2008). Leicht et al. (2012) arrive at similar conclusion with respect to Polish businessmen in the southwestern German state of Baden Württemberg. Knowledge in both Polish and German enabled many Polish businessmen to set up companies in both countries. On a more general level, their analysis also showed that knowing more than one language is valuable human capital for the self-employed in highly skilled jobs, such as doctors, lawyers and business services. Here the knowledge of an ethnic language was found to fosters ethnic trust and is responsible to secure coethnic customers, while proficiency in German correlated with the ability to create employment opportunities and access to institutional knowledge.

Yet the question that arises is to which degree these resources are of ethnic or cultural origin. Aldrich & Waldinger (1990, p. 112) criticize the essentialist view of ethnicity prevalent in many studies on immigrant entrepreneurship as static and argue that "what is 'ethnic' about ethnic enterprise may be no more than a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing common national background or migratory experiences". Ethnicity is thus not a toolkit that immigrants have, but rather an outcome of the conditions of migration, which must always be defined locally. Moreover, ethnic resources cannot explain immigrant entrepreneurship apriori, because it ignores the social diversity within ethnic communities. Furthermore, an emphasis on cultural resources suggests that immigrant entrepreneurs do not need to build and maintain links to the community they are active in (Hettlage, 2008). This is a misleading and wrong perception as several studies have shown. Salaff et al.'s (2006) research on successful Chinese immigrants in Canada illustrates that their rich economic reapings were based on their heterogeneous social network ties. Moreover, studies in the UK concluded that success of immigrant businesses relies significantly on reaching out to non-ethnic consumers (Ram & Jones, 2008). In general, the results of research in this area after its beginnings in the 1970s proved that "immigrant entrepreneurs cannot just transfer their activities from back home and continue in their new environment as if nothing has changed. They have to accept the specific socio-economic make-up of their new place of living" (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001, p. 196).

2.2.2 Opportunity structures and the push factors

While ethnic resources present a possibility for immigrants to succeed in self-employment, the economic, political and legal conditions immigrants face in the host society significantly affect their potential to become self-employed (Waldinger, 1986). These conditions have been referred to as the *opportunity structures*, or the economic and institutional frameworks of a national economy that "provide the niches and routes of access for potential entrepreneurs" (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990, p. 122). These opportunity structures are seen to provide immigrants with affordances but also constraints with respect to their business ventures. For Aldrich & Waldinger (1990), the opportunity structure is determined by the kind of markets or demands for services and products that immigrant entrepreneurs can provide and by the degree of regulation that enables immigrants to access certain markets.

In particular for the European context, the opportunity structures have a strong influence on the self-employed activities of immigrants, as they shape the migrants' access to markets and the form of the businesses (Kloosterman & Rath (2001, 2011, Kloosterman, 2010). According to Kloosterman & Rath (2001), opportunity structures, or what they call *regulatory regimes*, work on three levels of an economy: the national, the regional, and the neighbourhood. On a national level, for example, immigration policies regulate the access of immigrants to self-employment. In Germany, foreigners without a permanent residency status are generally barred from engaging in self-employed activities or, if they already reside in the country, require a special permit that they can only obtain through an assessment of profitability provided by the Immigration Authorities and the local business councils (cf. Hillmann & Sommer, 2011). Moreover, the state may protect certain markets from private enterprises or it may regulate access and thus decide what is commodifiable and what is de-commodified. For example, child care and education are largely protected markets. Moreover, if markets are open, access to these markets may be regulated via educational or vocational qualifications that can only be obtained in the host country. For the German context, vocational regulations or legislation with respect to the skilled crafts and trade sector, for instance, bars even experienced immigrants from access. Thai massage salons are a case in point as well. While the treatments have, in practice, similar effects on the client's well-being just like physiotherapy, Thai massage practitioners are not allowed to claim that their services have healing or curing effects, because the businesses are not classified as health

businesses. Such regulatory regimes do not only affect access but also the practices of running a business. For example, retail of food is subject to hygiene regulations with which the owner must comply and owners are accountable to national taxation regulations. Kloosterman & Rath (2011) also highlight that active institutional support by government or non-government organisations, or the lack of it, affect the entrepreneurial activities of immigrants. In Germany, urban regions often have established programmes that target immigrants by providing information and practical support. Of particular importance is that this information is supplied in different languages. Other influences on the success of the business are access to ownership of shop space in locations that provide the immigrant entrepreneur with an interested, and hopefully affluent, segment of customers.

In contrast to a view of immigrant entrepreneurship that ties the supply and demand of immigrant businesses exclusively to the ethnic community, Kloosterman (2010) stresses that the regulatory regimes create opportunities for immigrant businesses in nearly all markets of an economy. Into which market exactly the business becomes active depends on the budding business owner's knowledge and professional experience (or her human capital), as well as the level of customer demand (or the growth potential). Kloosterman (2010) distinguishes three types of markets, as shown in Image 2 below, which are characterized by different strategies when it comes to the use of ethnic resources.

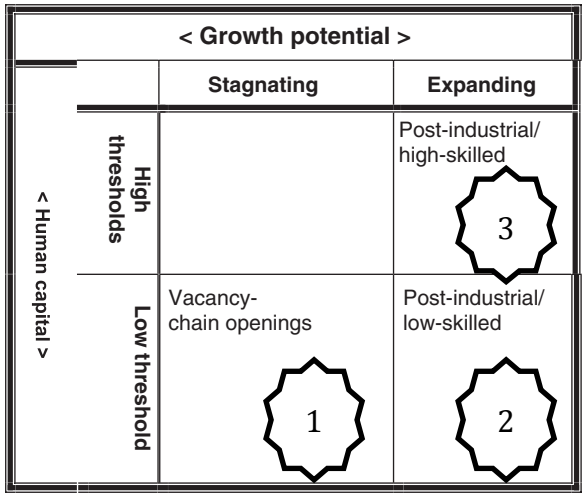


Image 2: Market openings for immigrant businesses (reproduced from Kloosterman, 2010)

Vacancy-chain openings (1) are easily accessible and Kloosterman (2010) identifies them in sectors such as retail of food, tailoring and dry-cleaning, in other words businesses that have been vacated by more established entrepreneurs. The financial attractiveness of these markets is low, but they provide an entry point into the market for many migrants. Such markets often serve the needs of an ethnic community. The second type of market, the post-industrial/low-skilled openings (2), require immigrant entrepreneurs to have little specialist education or qualifications according to the standards set in the host economy. However, they offer promising growth and upward social mobility for the owner. Kloosterman (2010) sees such opportunities in the area of personal services, e.g. household-related services, where innovative businesses can thrive. Post-industrial/high-skilled markets (3) are markets that are relatively unexplored and offer great growth potential. Business owners in these markets usually have specialist training or knowledge that equips them well to be successful in this market. Kloosterman (2010) sees these companies in particular in the areas of high technology and producer or business services (consultancy, law, advertising). With respect to immigrants, these markets are the playing field of highly mobile transnational elites whose educational qualifications or professional expertise equips them with skills that are applicable almost anywhere around the globe. Recent immigration policies set up in many EU countries tend to favour migration into these markets, as businesses here are assumed to have a positive impact onto the local job market.

According to Kloosterman's (2010) framework each type of market is characterized by a different degree of reliance on ethnic resources. Businesses in vacancy-chain markets are usually strongly dependent on a homogeneous ethnic network. They often depend strongly on co-ethnic customers and suppliers. Since returns are expected to be low, exploitation of self and family support is common. Businesses in these markets are easily affected by competition from the mainstream economy or the sudden lack of loyalty by its co-ethnic client base. On the other hand, businesses in post-industrial/low-skilled markets are built on more heterogeneous network connections. Maintaining a heterogeneous social network provides the owner access to trends and tastes of the majority population and thus a wider customer base. Businesses of this type are usually not targeted at clients from their own immigrant community, even though they may very well involve an ethnic product.

For Kloosterman & Rath (2001, 2011) the development of a successful immigrant business require owners to develop ethnically heterogeneous networks on the supply and the demand side. This process of *opening up* or *breaking out* of a market that relies heavily on customers and suppliers from the owner's ethnic community consequentially means that immigrant entrepreneurs need the tools to access such networks. As the next section illustrates having access to the demands and having the language knowledge to reach the majority population are important tools in the movement out of the ethnic economy.

2.2.3 Breaking out

Opening up the business can be achieved in several ways. Basu (2010) explains that extending or diversifying the product or service is important, in order to suit the requirements of a wider or more promising market segment. This includes a continued focus on an ethnic product or service, but they must be marketed "as exclusive, fashionable and high-value products meant for the discerning, sophisticated customer" (Basu, 2010, p. 77). This entails, as Basu (2010, p. 78) argues, linguistic competence in the language of the host economy as a means to "improving their ability to communicate with customers, bankers and others in the host community, and thereby overcome market barriers." Breaking out stresses the agency that immigrant entrepreneurs have to position their businesses given the opportunities that are provided for them and the different networks available to them. Their biographical experiences are seen as resources that provide motivations to create or influence their position (Apitzsch, 2003, Kontos, 2003a). Pütz's (2004) research illustrates that successful immigrant entrepreneurs use a repertoire of cultural or semiotic resources in doing business. Pütz (2003, 2004) calls this ability to use multiple cultural resources flexibly in a business context *transculturality in practice* or *practiced transculturality*. Changing or moving between cultures is situationally produced through adapting the symbolic practices locally to suit the needs of the business owner. To do so the owner can draw on a variety of cultural symbols such as dress, language or gesture (Pütz 2004).

2.2.4 Summary

In this section, we have presented models that attempt to explain the connection between immigration and self-employment. On the one hand, immigrant businesses are said to be grounded in practices and network relations within the immigrant community that

provide conditions that favour self-employment over other forms of work. On the other hand, we have discussed that immigrant businesses cannot be understood without reference to the economies that they are a part of. These opportunity structures shape the forms of immigrant businesses. The success of immigrant businesses is ultimately connected to the ability of the business owners to break out of an ethnic economy and by offering their product or service to the local as well as ethnic clients. Breaking out depends partly on the owner's ability to use the language of the majority population. However, little research has been done on how immigrant entrepreneurs learn the L2 or use it in their business context or manage with the resources that they have. Let us now turn to applied linguistics in order to discuss the importance of language for work.

2.3 Language at work

Throughout the following section we will examine the connection between language competence and workplace practices, as it has been studied by applied linguistics (de Saint-Georges, 2014a, Filliettaz, 2006, 2014). This will shed light onto the issue of language at work of ethnic entrepreneurs. First, we will present the changing relevance of the linguistic aspect in relation to the material conditions of work or the organization of work. Second, we will show how epistemological and methodological changes in linguistics itself contributed to a heightened attention to language at work. Thirdly, the increasing emergence of contact zone encounters spurred by the late capitalist order has created an interest in the ways such encounters at the workplace determine the discursive strategies workers adopt. We shall focus on those that are particularly relevant for the purpose of this study. And lastly, we will look at the findings of the albeit few studies on the workplaces of immigrant business owners.

2.3.1 The organisation of work and its effect on language

The material conditions under which work is organised have a significant influence on language use. Throughout the last century and a half the world has witnessed profound changes of these conditions of production, which in turn have changed the significance of language at work. Along with these changes, the ideologies concerning the status of language in the process of production have equally changed from placing a marginal importance of language to a heightened sensitivity of the linguistic or communicative

aspect of work. For many professions language has become the central aspect of work transforming the workforce into a 'wordforce' (Heller, 2010). These changes have also spurred and necessitated the focus of applied linguistics on workplace communication in particular from the 1980s onwards (Filliettaz, 2006, de Saint-Georges, 2014a). Let us now review the interrelationship between language and the material conditions of work in production, the service industry, and transnational business that affect the requirements of language at work.

Early forms of industrial production, generally referred to as Taylorism or Fordism, were characterized by a clear separation between manual labour and language use (Boutet, 2001, 2012). The accomplishment of work for the majority of workers was little dependent on their ability to communicate. Communicating at work was considered a distraction rather than a productive part of the work process, as the planning of the work processes was mainly done by white collar workers, who controlled literacy. In particular for migrant workers these conditions are still relevant today. For example, for many immigrant workers in industrial production, language competence in the dominant language of their workplace is often of minor consequence to the accomplishment of their work. Studies of modern industrial production and immigrant workers in particularly in the North American context, for example by Goldstein (1997), Mawer (1999) or McAll (2003), illustrate that the workplaces of immigrant workers are often "language-marginal" (McAll, 2003, p. 238). In industrial production, migrants tend to work in ethnically homogeneous teams where their first language is of higher practical value than the official languages of a corporation or a national economy (Kleifgen, 2013). In linguistically heterogeneous workplaces, workers resort to the use of a lingua franca (Clyne, 1994) or bilingual supervisors to perform their work (J. Holmes & Stubbe, 2004). While these conditions have been shown to lead to language learning on the job (Rehbein, 2007), the division between language-marginal and language-centred work "shows how language difference remains a key instrument in maintaining inequality between speakers of a dominant language and speakers of a subordinate language over whom they exercise power" (Bayley & Schecter, 2003, p. 5). These conditions linger on in today's world as a recent study by Piller & Lising (2014) on Filipino meat production workers in Australia shows. Work in ethnolinguistically homogeneous teams systematically deprives Filipino workers of the chance of appropriating a level of English language competence that allows them to obtain secure and permanent jobs in Australia. On the other hand, Hewitt (2012)

presents historical records for how the provision of language education programmes for immigrant workers in production was used as an exclusionary measure, where failure to pass a language test resulted in the revocation of their work permits.

This separation between communicative competence and professional practice changed dramatically with the rise of the service economy and the development of the tertiary sector. Providing services increased the requirements of workers and organisations for communication inside and outside the company. Language became the new tool of work impacting both professional and institutional discourses (Borzeix, 2001). First, work in the service sector is dominated by a relationship between service provider and customer, a constellation that has affected the communicative forms and norms, often resulting in a shift towards the needs of the client (Fairclough, 1992, Gee et. al, 1996). Secondly, this sector created completely new occupations that rely primarily on literacy in their process and product, for instance the fields of public relations and corporate communication. Thirdly, workers are increasingly asked to coordinate their work in teams and engage in a variety of tasks that are not necessarily routine in nature. This entails a greater ability to communicate, in order to cooperate and solve problems. Moreover, an increase in the need to account for work and to reflect on the work process has increased the language aspect of many professions. For example, Sales (2006) illustrates the growing importance of record keeping and report writing in engineering. Lastly, the introduction of technology into the work process, from different kinds of machines to the tools of information technology, has changed the relationship between the worker and her product of work, a process that Boutet (2001) calls the dematerialization of work. Throughout all professions, including those who did not used to engage much with literacy, digital literacy skills are now required or have increased in significance (de Saint-Georges, 2014b). This shifting importance of language at work in the tertiary sector also spurred the institutionalization of language learning programmes (Grünhage-Monetti, 2009). With respect to immigrants in the European context and in particular the non-English speaking contexts, the interest in professional language education for immigrants has only recently developed (Adami, 2012, Grünhage-Monetti et al., 2003, Mourlhon-Dallies, 2007). For many immigrants the heightened importance placed on language competence in service sector jobs has very often exclusionary effects. It presents a linguistic penalty (Roberts, 2010), as immigrants are generally assumed not

to have the communicative competence in the official language required to perform the job.

The internationalization of work and the increased mobility of people and goods throughout the last two decades (Vertovec, 2009) have only increased the demands on the communicative aspect of work, as well as the value of multilingualism. Workplaces have increasingly turned into transnational spaces where individuals of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds get together. In order to ensure a smooth work flow communication has increasingly become the object of control and has thus reintroduced an aspect of Taylorism into work (Duchêne & Heller, 2012). Many large corporations that are active internationally have therefore introduced language policies for internal as well as external communication for crucial language-centred phases (Angouri, 2013, Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014, Kingsley, 2009). Such policies range from monolingual ones, in particular favouring English as a lingua franca, to multilingual policies (Lüdi et. al 2010). For many workers, multilingual language skills have become a crucial factor in the recruitment process (Kingsley, 2013, Duchêne, 2009). Appropriating such language skills can, however, be a serious strain on workers, in particular, if the new language is often only marginal to their actual work (Piller & Takahashi, 2013). The internationalisation of work has also had an impact on national education systems, as learning a second or third language is considered as equipping individuals with essential skills for the workplace. For the context of the Philippines, Lorente (2012) illustrates how the state creates language education programmes to enhance the mobility of Filipino women as domestic workers. Language competence has thus not only turned into an essential skill for workers, but multilingualism is also the product of work in the new economy (Duchêne & Piller, 2011, Duchêne & Heller, 2012). On the other hand, transnational mobility has also created opportunities for immigrants to employ their linguistic competencies that are otherwise little valued or silenced (Sabaté i Dalmau, 2012, Jansson, 2014). While the internationalization of work has augmented encounters of diversity, research suggests that many such constellations involving different linguistic resources do not necessarily pose a problem, as workers show flexibility in combining these resources, in order to perform their work.

2.3.2 Shift in the study of language

Changing perspectives on language and the development of novel conceptual tools have also led to an increased engagement of applied linguistics in the analysis of workplace discourse and interactions. From seeing language as a system to realising the social basis of language "as situated in the flux and pattern of communicative events, and as in integral relation to them" paved the way for applied linguistics into the domain of work (Hymes, 1964, p. 4). Particularly relevant for the analysis of workplace communication are concepts developed in Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), Conversation Analysis (CA), Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as well as multimodal approaches to communication (Stubbe et al., 2003, Filliettaz, 2014). Research in IS has shown how often subtle features of message form act as cues (Gumperz, 1982) in the construction of the context of communication in signalling relationships and shifts in the alignment of the participants (Goffman, 1983). These concepts have been used to understand the microculture at work, as it affects and is affected by situationally constructed identities, including discriminatory practices in intercultural and interethnic encounters (Roberts et al., 1992), and have been applied to workplace communication under the title of *professional discourse* (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999) or *language in the workplace* (J. Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). Studies under the banner of CA have applied the insights of the sequential organisation of talk as creating and re-creating local social order to the domain of work. Such studies in *institutional talk* (Drew & Heritage, 1992) illustrate how the regularities of talk in interaction construct and reinforce the order of the professional domain. Similarly, studies in DA examined the characteristics of professional discourse and identified generic features of spoken and written workplace communication (Gunnarsson, 2009, Koester, 2010, Kong, 2014). CDA added a socio-historical perspective of discourse to the constructivist views of workplace communication highlighting the ideological aspects inherent in genres of business discourse and the ways aspects of power and hierarchy are produced and reproduced in institutional and professional discourse (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2002, Candlin & Sarangi, 2011, Gunnarsson et al., 1997, Roberts, 2011a, Sarangi & Slembrouck, 1996, Wodak, 1996). Lastly, studies on multimodality focused on the influence of non-verbal resources involved in workplace practices (Luff et al., 2000, Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010).

Together these changes construct a "professional turn in applied linguistics" (Filliettaz, 2014, p. 227), which, despite diverging epistemological and methodological

entries, shares a common interest in topics such as identity and social relations at work, hierarchy, power, and politeness, negotiations and decision-making processes, problem-solving, cooperation and coordination at work, as well as issues of workplace learning. The most typical settings that have been studied are task-oriented encounters such as meetings, medical examinations and service encounters, but also gate-keeping encounters such as job interviews and assessments. Moreover, many scholars have examined the relational or interpersonal aspect of communication at work. In very broad strokes, discourses as texts and speech are the materials at work that allow workers to perform the transactional demands as well as the social demands at work (J. Holmes, 2000, Meyer & Kameyama, 2007).

2.3.3 Communicative competence and functions of language at work

The review in the last section illustrates that displaying professional expertise requires a worker to be communicatively competent. This competence spans familiarity with the discourses of the profession, the corporation or institution the worker is active in, as well as the relational aspects among the members of the community of workers (Roberts & Sarangi, 1999, Roberts, 2011b). Applying Canale & Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) development of Hymes's (1972a) concept of communicative competence to the workplace, this means that a worker must possess receptive and productive linguistic knowledge and skills in four areas: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. Grammatical competence refers to the workplace specific registers and styles, and the morphological, syntactic, and phonetic particularities of workplace discourse. The sociolinguistic competence encompasses the appropriate use of discourse with respect to the statuses and roles at work, as well as the purpose and norms of the interaction. In addition, a worker must display discourse competence, which entails the production and understanding of particular genres of text and talk appropriate for work. And lastly, a worker must have strategic competence in the management of discourse to repair problems and enhance effectiveness of communication via verbal and non-verbal resources. Such communicative competence must be conceived of as resources that are context and practice-specific, locally situated, as well as dynamic and always changing across the different constellations workers engage in. Altogether it makes up for a worker's interactional competence or "the ability to mutually coordinate our actions" (Hall et al., 2011, p. 2).

Discourse in the form of writing and speech performs three essential functions at work (Boutet & Gardin, 2001, Lacoste, 2001, Filliettaz, 2014). These are practical, social, and cognitive. Firstly, the practical function refers to the workers' use of discourse to perform their job, "to plan and anticipate future actions, perform them, and provide accounts and evaluations about past events" (Filliettaz, 2014, p. 228). Both text and speech realise such practical functions. While the reception and production of texts is central to work in certain professions such as academia, law, accounting, politics or media (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999, Gunnarsson, 2009, Wodak & Koller, 2008), others rely more heavily on talk in interactions with co-workers or customers in face-to-face encounters or over the phone. Meetings, service encounters, courtroom hearings, interviews, medical consultations, and more recently the work of call centre staff are illustrations where talk constitutes professional practices (Candlin & Sarangi, 2011, Duchêne, 2009, J. Holmes, 2009, Koester, 2010, Lee, 2011, Roy, 2003). This means that in order to accomplish tasks successfully, workers must show communicative competence in the genres, registers and styles particular to their profession. However, these discourses may differ significantly across organisations, because of the organization of work at a company or its corporate identity. For example, J. Holmes et al. (2011) point to the differences in the conduct of meetings in companies that identified themselves openly as workplaces for New Zealand's indigenous Maori community, a fact that posed problems for newcomers unfamiliar with such practices. Secondly, discourse is instrumental in performing workplace roles and identities and to enable and maintain the relations between co-workers. The performance of situational roles such as doctor-patient, judge-defendant, or sales person-customer is supported by historically-formed ways of interacting, which mould the possible contributions and actions of the participants (Drew & Heritage, 1992, Heritage, 2005). Likewise, access to professional registers and the use of terminology supports the positioning of workers as experts, for example, when doctor's draw on medical terminology when briefing patients about surgical procedures and pointing out potential complications (Bührig & Meyer, 2004, Meyer et al., 2010). However, as Nguyen (2006) shows for trainee pharmacists, experts must render their use of terminology appropriate to the level of knowledge of their interlocutors, in order not to jeopardize the construction of their professional selves. In addition, the social relationships between workers are carried off through discursive forms such as humour, story telling, or small talk. For example, J. Holmes et al. (2013) illustrate how short

exchanges about food between workers routinely mark periods of transition between activities at work or re-construct positive relationships after instances of conflict or dispute. And thirdly, discourse not only enables the doing of work and constructs the relationships between workers, it also passes on knowledge, solves problems and allows for the creation of instances of learning. For example, when understanding and fixing technical trouble in the production process, machine operators and supervisors draw on language to report the problem, coordinate their actions and finally mend matters (Filliettaz & Bronckart, 2004, Kleifgen, 2013). In contexts of vocational training, discourse in interactions between the expert and the apprentice enables episodes of learning and shapes the whole learning process (de Saint-Georges & Filliettaz, 2008, Filliettaz et al., 2010, Filliettaz, 2014).

In conclusion, discourse is an important resource for doing, coordinating and managing actions at work. However, in performing these functions, language is always tied to other non-linguistic resources. Moreover, language use is shaped substantially by the task, often making it subservient to the task itself. This is particularly so in multilingual constellations, where speakers draw on the various resources in their repertoires and the materials at work to get things done.

2.3.4 Multilingual strategies and performative competence

The economic developments throughout the past two decades and the increased mobility of people has arguably put a strain on the linguistic aspect of work, because people find themselves in situations, where they do not share or have different levels of competence in the linguistic tools that they require to do their job. Therefore, researchers have increasingly turned to investigating the strategies that workers adopt in these multilingual constellations. In relation to the topic of this thesis, we will focus on some of the discursive strategies described in the literature. We subscribe to the view that these multilingual strategies at work are fundamentally based on three aspects: "the constraints and the possibilities of the setting, the ongoing activity and the constellation of the participants as well as their competences" (Markaki et al., 2013, p. 11). This means that the forms of workplace multilingualism are situationally enacted dependent on the wider social and institutional context, the local context of the activity and the repertoires that the participants bring to the scene to coordinate their actions (Gunnarsson, 2014, Lüdi et al., 2010, 2013). The typical multilingual strategies that are described in the literature and

that are relevant to the data presented in this thesis are: use of a lingua franca, language accommodation, translating and interpreting, and code switching.

In the absence of a common language variety, communication at work may be safeguarded by the use of a lingua franca. For the professional context, this is very often English (Seidlhofer, 2004, Jenkins, 2000). While English as a lingua franca (ELF) may be regarded as a linguistic variety with its own regularities, research on ELF communication has shown that its use is highly context sensitive and understanding is negotiated in situ. In particular, the research by Firth (1996, 2009) has demonstrated how interactions in ELF are dominated by a focus on the task making the formal features subservient to it. Formal inconsistencies in syntax, phonology or lexis often go unnoticed (let-it-pass) or are accepted as normal (make-it-normal), in order to secure the understanding and the flow of the interaction (Firth, 1996). Research covering the use of English in international business settings between non-native speakers generally corroborate these findings. In constellations with native speakers of English, findings assert that native speakers tend to accommodate their contributions to the perceived level of competence of their non-native interlocutors, so that the task they set out to do can be completed satisfactorily (Cogo, 2010, Connor, 1999, Pitzl, 2010, Rogerson-Revell, 2007, 2008). In multilingual constellations, such processes of accommodation may also involve the use of a language that participants share or feel most comfortable in. In blue and white collar workplaces in Luxembourg where multilingual constellations are the rule rather than the exception, accommodating to a shared linguistic resource is reported as the most commonly used strategy (Franziskus, 2013, Kingsley, 2009, Wille et al. 2012). Such processes of language accommodation to the competencies of co-workers, despite a monolingual national or corporate language policy, have also been described as the conditions for the successful accomplishment of work by engineers (Hill & van Zyl, 2002) or sales personnel in service encounters (Calahan, 2006, Ayoola, 2009). Language accommodation to the linguistic resources of the workforce and clients is also visible in the production of texts for internal and external circulation, as well as the semiotic landscape of companies (Lüdi et al. 2010). We may also subsume receptive multilingualism under such strategies of accommodation (Beerkens, 2010, Lüdi, 2013), because even though the languages used by the participants differ, communication rests on the assumption that the resource used is understood by their partners. However, in constellations where speakers do not have linguistic resources in common, translating and interpreting through the assistance of a language broker often

ensures the continuity of work. This has been documented in particular for the health sector, where due to elite and non-elite migration, the professionals or their patients at times lack the appropriate language knowledge to communicate (Bührig & Meyer, 2004, Meyer et al., 2010, Moyer, 2011). While relying on translators or interpreters has its own pitfalls, in particular if these translators do not possess the expertise of a professional, interactants frequently draw on the practice of translating in situ to secure mutual understanding and orientation to the task (Lüdi et al., 2013, Markaki et al. 2013). Fourthly, alternating freely between different languages, or code switching (Gumperz, 1982), has also been documented for workplace contexts. A bi- or multilingual mode of speaking may be encouraged not only by the degree of intersection of linguistic resources of the participants, but also by the language norms prevalent in a particular institution (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). On the other hand, code-switching also serves concrete local functions in interactions, for example, as a strategy to change the alignment between participants, or to shift the focus from one task to another (Mondada, 2007, Markaki et al., 2013).

A last point that is important for this thesis is that interactions at work may be successfully performed, even though the participants cannot fall back on a common linguistic resource or a lingua franca. Such exolingual constellations illustrate that actors may fall back on their sociopragmatic competence or their familiarity with the context to ensure successful communication (J. Holmes et al., 2011, Lüdi et al. 2013, R. Scollon et al., 2012). This orientation to the activity may thus override any mismatch with respect to language knowledge. A crucial component of the success of multilingual constellations is thus a mutual orientation to the activity, something that we will return to and address in more detail in the analytical chapters of this thesis.

Research on multilingual practices point to the fact that social actors in such contact zone encounters (Pratt, 1991) are able to meaningfully communicate beyond linguistic differences that separate them. Canagarajah (2013, 2014) refers to this practice-based competence as performative competence. Performative competence stresses the ability of social actors to draw on all the available resources in the moment of interaction, in order to maintain or sustain the alignment between them. For Canagarajah (2013), language form is thus always subservient to the task-focus of the participants. While the differences in language competence may well shape the interaction, actors invest all their efforts to

maintain alignment. With respect to language use, Canagarajah (2013) stresses that speakers employ various interactional strategies to do so, for example, apparent errors are not flagged as long as they do not obstruct understanding, unidiomatic language use is accepted as normal, clarification and confirmation is actively sought, and styles are adopted that ensure uptake but also allow for the individuality of the actor to emerge. These strategies point to the efforts invested by participants to sustain the action and secure mutual understanding without relying on abstract linguistic norms for the interaction to be successful. Not sharing a common linguistic code or system of communication does therefore not impede the interaction, because participants establish the suitable frame and footing for their activities by making use of all the resources available to them, making "grammar and vocabulary subservient to the objectives of communication" (Canagarajah 2011, p. 412). However, Canagarajah (2013) stresses that such strategies are not exclusive to multilingual speakers, but are general characteristics of contact zone encounters, which may certainly include native speakers and non-native speakers as well.

2.3.5 Language use in immigrant businesses

While the literature on multilingualism at the workplace has focused on the strategies in multilingual constellations involving migrant workers, little attention has been paid to those immigrants who have chosen to start their own businesses. This is surprising given the fact that communication with internal and external partners takes up more than 80% of the work time of business owners (Müller et al., 2012). On the other hand, the dearth of research into the language use of immigrant business owners can be explained by the general assumptions that most of their work is embedded in an ethnically homogeneous environment, such as ethnic enclaves and ethnic economies (Portes & Bach, 1985). However, the theories on immigrant entrepreneurship discussed in the previous section suggest that the long-term success of immigrant businesses depends to a significant degree on the owners' abilities to position their services in a heterogeneous market.

The few studies in applied linguistics that have dealt with immigrant businesses that cater their services to a non-ethnic market suggest that the owners deal with such contact zone encounters by drawing on similar discursive strategies as described above. Generally, they suggest that multilingual competence is important for the professional and institutional demands of the business. It ultimately is the basis for the success of

immigrant businesses, because this multilingual competence allows them to cater to a non-ethnic customer base, to maintain contacts to a range of suppliers, to comply with the administrative demands, and to manage work tasks, as well as the social relations at work. The choice of language is dependent on the activity as well as the repertoires of the participants involved. Before reviewing some of the findings, let us briefly review the professional contexts studied and the objectives of the studies, as this varies and affects the constellations. On the basis of interviews with owners and staff, Hewitt (2007) studied the linguistic ecology within Turkish, Polish, Kurdish, and Chinese small businesses in the London metropolitan area. His interest was primarily in the overall constellations of languages used in the different areas of these businesses and specifically in the ways the owners dealt with the institutional demands on language as they pertained to the businesses' embeddedness in a monolingual English language economy. On the other hand the studies by Leung (2009) and S. Collier (2006, 2010, 2011) were based on ethnographic observations of the routine tasks within immigrant businesses in the service sector. Leung (2009) focused on the language choices in spoken interactions between the two staff members, and their language choice in service encounters in a bakery in the Chinatown area of Philadelphia. S. Collier (2006, 2010, 2011) looked at several small businesses managed by female entrepreneurs from China, Senegal, Thailand and Korea in the area of beauty services that served a predominantly English-speaking and African American clientele. Her interest was likewise in the interactions between workers and workers and clients, but also on the language socialization process of these women into English.

One interesting finding was the existence of a language broker or translator. For the businesses in his study, Hewitt (2007, p. 23) showed that these language brokers "constitute a structure of nodes within a company that face both inwards to the firm and outwards to the English-speaking, official and mainstream world in which the firm must survive and possibly expand". Therefore, these brokers fulfilled crucial institutional demands. Depending on the size of the firms in his sample, the broker was either the owner or, in larger companies, multilingual speakers from the second generation were employed for these positions strategically. For the micro businesses in her sample, S. Collier (2010) also stresses the importance of such brokers in interactions with customers. For example, in a hair-braiding shop run by three Senegalese women, while all women had receptive competence in English, most transactional tasks with clients were

delegated to one particular employee who had the most productive competence in English. Her presence was therefore central to the functioning of the business.

For all language-centred activities between staff, these studies report the use of the staff's mother tongue, as in all the businesses most staff comprised co-ethnic employees. Hewitt (2007) reports that on the production floor the L1 also dominated the linguistic landscape to enforce production standards. Similarly, S. Collier (2010) as well as Leung (2009) show that the L1 was the primary medium to coordinate work between the workers, for example to provide directives and explanations. Because the L1 was very often not in the repertoires of the clients, the studies suggest that it also served as a kind of secret code between the workers to discuss or resolve problems even in the presence of their customers. For example, Leung (2009) reports for the staff in the bakery that they discussed their reactions to unfavourable treatments by customers by using Cantonese, a resource many of their clients did not understand. S. Collier (2011) shows for the Mandarin speaking staff in the nail care salon that L1 conversations provided important information for staff about the preferences of customers. Moreover the L1 was used to provide staff with background information on their customers, which could then be used as a basis for social talk. In such interactions, the L1 was also a tool for learning about their clients. S. Collier (2010) concludes that the L1 thus provided a door to the L2 culture of the clients and ultimately a tool for socialization into the new environment. Naturally, the L1 was predominantly used for social talk or small talk between staff. Interesting is that these conversations between staff in Collier's sample also took place during treatments to talk about personal and private issues concerning their lives. This suggests that the L1 was seen as safe and not as distracting from the business as hand.

For much of the service encounters an accommodation to the client's preferred language is documented. For the sale of bakery products, Leung (2009) reports a plethora of languages used, ranging from Mandarin and other Chinese varieties, as well as Vietnamese and English. Leung (2009) describes that the owners used these resources in their repertoires as powerful assets in striving to strategically align to the actual or perceived language preferences of their clients in the ethnically diverse neighbourhood where their business was located. Since the businesses studied by S. Collier (2010, 2011) catered to a monolingual English-speaking majority population, English ruled the interaction with clients. However, S. Collier (2010) emphasizes the routine nature of these interactions and reports that the majority of employees in the Thai and Chinese-owned

nail salons were competent in a limited set of routine actions in English that comprised the opening and closing of transaction, choice of treatment, or the handling of payments. With reference to English, which was always a language learned later in life for the participants in Collier's and Leung's studies, both note that formal inconsistencies in language almost never led to any break-down or lack of uptake in these routine interactions. All showed communicative competence and a mastery of function over form. S. Collier (2010) makes the point that such routine tasks were then also often the only site of English language learning for the workers, as most of the owners in her sample spent long hours at work, and work constituted the only place where they were able to practice their L2 skills.

Yet, appropriating resources in the L2 that allows workers to go beyond such routines is important. For example, S. Collier (2010) argues that going beyond routine discursive actions is vital to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. She reports that the owner of one of the nail salons frequently and successfully attempted to engage customers in small talk and socially expanded talk during the usually 20-minute treatments. For this particular worker, S. Collier (2010) reports that her motivation for learning the L2 was high and that she showed agency in using the time of the treatment to hone her L2 skills, which also had a positive impact on her business, as the L2 was a vehicle for the workers to find out about the life world of their customers and to adapt their services to their clients' needs. Investment in appropriating the L2 was for this owner not only an investment in her own future but also in the future of her business.

2.3.6 Summary

The studies of multilingualism at the workplace point to a number of relevant issues. The use of multiple languages at work seems to depend on the requirements of work tasks and, crucially, the language knowledge of the workers involved. The literature on immigrant entrepreneurship suggests that successful ethnic entrepreneurs are able to use the various resources in their linguistic repertoires strategically, so as to achieve the greatest benefit for their businesses. In their particular case, language learning appears to depend on the types of professional practices that allow exposure to the target language. In the subsequent section we intend to connect these findings to a general theory of learning at work.

2.4 Language learning at the workplace

In the previous section, we have highlighted the importance of the linguistic or communicative aspect of work. And there is a huge industry in applied linguistics that claims to equip workers with the skills for the workplace. Yet very little is known about how workers acquire language on the job. Workplace language is specific and practice-based. In particular for self-employment such language courses do not exist.

We have also seen that language education is rediscovering the importance of learning language for work. However, not much research has been done on the workplace as a site for second language learning. While studies in the domain of language education point to the importance of language for work or even take a critical stance towards language learning programmes, what has until recently received only little attention is the domain of second language learning at the workplace. There is ample evidence that informal and formal interactions at work are places for migrant workers to develop their language competencies (Mourlhon-Dallies, 2007, Grünhage-Monetti, 2009). These studies point to the fact that language learning accompanies the development of professional skills (Rehbein, 2007), and language becomes a resource for accomplishing work, negotiating promotions, and expanding opportunities. Language is thus a resource not only to do work but also to learn about work and to learn language at work. To understand these practices of informal language learning or language learning through work, we will draw on two different theoretical sources that see learning and the outcome of learning as a social process. First, we will examine general theories of workplace learning as a social process. We will refer to Lave & Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation that explains learning in social practice. Since learning also takes place in a self-guided fashion, we would like to complement the views of situated learning with theories that stress the importance of individual engagement in the process. While there are few theories of language learning at work, we can draw on the insights of studies in second language (L2) socialization that view the process of language learning and its outcome as a social process. Lastly, we will introduce the concept of linguistic repertoires that describes forms of language knowledge.

2.4.1 Learning at work

The literature in the field of workplace learning has repeatedly shown that learning at work is best captured through a sociocultural perspective as a social learning process

(Dochy et al. 2011, Billett, 2010a, Billett & Choy, 2013, Fuller et al., 2005). This has been shown for professions as varied as health care (van der Zwet et al., 2011), university teaching (Smith & Boyd, 2012) or engineering (Coll & Zegwaard, 2012). The fundamental social process behind learning in the vocational domain has been termed *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP) which stresses that learning means "[a]bsorbing and being absorbed in the 'culture of practice'" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.95). Learning is about gaining expertise in performing a social practice and being socialized into the social structures of the community that sustains these practices. The novice becomes involved in the practice, in order to gradually obtain expertise in its performance, so that the performance is recognized as a legitimate instantiation of the practice. Therefore "learning is both a condition for membership and is itself an evolving form of membership" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 80). The scope of learning is influenced by the degree and quality of exposure and guidance awarded to the learner and her individual investment or engagement in the activity. LPP stresses that the learner accesses different resources to learn and it emphasizes that learning takes place in both directions, not only the novice learns but also the mentor. Moreover, situated learning does not only mean that the novices acquire a practice, but novices also develop a normative understanding of what it means to do the practice well in the local context, therefore adopting a moral stance towards the practice. Such domain-specific knowledge is three-fold (Billett 2010b): it comprises encyclopaedic knowledge about facts and concepts of the profession (conceptual knowledge), knowledge about how to best complete one's tasks (procedural knowledge), and the influence of one's values or that of the corporation's beliefs, attitudes and interests on workplace practices (dispositional knowledge), or what it means to perform the practice well. In summary, learning is grounded in situated social action and it is socially mediated in interactions with others that are engaged in the same task. With reference to workplace contexts, learning is thus (largely) regarded as access via direct or indirect interpersonal relations to knowledge specifically related to the vocational domain.

Yet, each workplace is different and thus the quality of learning depends on the exposure that the novice receives as well as the degree of the individual engagement in the activities. Billett's (2001) model of co-participation regards the quality of workplace learning as the match between the affordances provided by the workplace setting and the level of engagement of the learner. Workplace affordances refer to the degree "the

workplace supports or inhibits an individual's engagement in work activities and access to both the direct and indirect guidance" (Billett 2001, p. 210). These affordances thus determine the workplace practices that learners eventually participate in, e.g. their level of exposure to relevant artefacts, activities and procedures, as well as the type and quality of interpersonal guidance received. At the same time, the learners' level of engagement in performing activities and interactions affects and is affected by their beliefs, values, interests, capacities, and life histories, or in other words their personal epistemologies. Billett (2001, p. 209) regards the interplay of affordances and individual engagement as "central to understanding the kinds of learning that workplaces provide".

While we conceive of workplace learning as typically involving interactions with experienced others, an additional important aspect of the learning process is the learner's agency or engagement (Goller & Billett, 2014, Smith, 2012). The impact of agency in workplace learning is particularly visible in contexts where expert guidance is (almost) completely lacking. Small-business operators are a case in point, as they often manage their ventures alone or without the immediate presence of a more knowledgeable professional. Billett et al. (2003) and Billett (2011) report that such entrepreneurs when faced with the need to acquire new workplace practices resorted to highly pragmatic, selective and conscious learning strategies based on the requirements of their particular businesses, their personal interests and networks, and the scope and limit of their existing knowledge. Billett et al.'s (2003) study of several Australian small business owners trying to prepare for the introduction of new tax requirements revealed that learning often took place in a self-administered and directed fashion, and did not necessarily involve interactions and guidance from experts in the immediate presence. Billett (2011, p. 158) stresses the role of these individuals' existing knowledge structures, as those that "were exercised to understand the knowledge required for these work tasks and the boundaries (e.g. scope, limitations, strengths, and weaknesses) of what the individuals know". These findings thus illustrate the impact and relevance of individual agency in learning. More importantly, however, they show that understanding the scope and zone of an individual's knowledge acquired throughout their life history is important in order to understand professional adults' learning needs and the strategies sought.

2.4.2 The practice of second language learning

Based on the same practice-based principles, studies in second language socialization (henceforth L2 socialization) regard the process and the product of second language learning as fundamentally social. L2 socialization has its roots in studies of first language socialization developed in linguistic anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s that examined the language learning of children in family contexts as a process of socialization into routine practices and values of their communities (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008, Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). Language is therefore not the appropriation of a system or a code but of "communicative forms, including lexico-grammar, prosody, speech styles and genres, turn-taking structures and sequences, language and dialectal choices, [that] bears a symbiotic relation to culture and context" (He, 2011, p. 287). Learning a second language is thus the appropriation of tools to obtain "membership and the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which that language is spoken" (Duff, 2011, p. 564). Competence in a language must therefore always be judged against what the learner can do with the communicative forms of a language in practices with other community members, a concept comparable to other notions of broadly sociocultural second language competence in a foreign language, such as interactional competence (Hall et al., 2011) or performative competence (Canagarajah, 2013).

Research in L2 socialization points to four crucial factors that foster the learning process: exposure to and participation in routine practices, the guidance of supportive more knowledgeable others, the prospect to develop new and favourable identities, and the ability to reflect on the learning process.

In their study of users of the photo sharing website Flickr and of Instant Messaging services, Barton & Lee (2013) demonstrated that their participants reported to have learned new language skills or improved their existing language skills through their repeated reception and production of texts through these web-based applications. Important was, however, not only the routine nature of the task but also that the learning happened "incidentally and ... not controlled by any authority" (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 136). Similarly, research in educational settings by Rymes (2004) points to the fact that second language learning is enhanced in practices in which the learner is not seen as a novice but as an equal or expert in the performance of the practice.

Besides the participation in routine practices, learning a second language is nurtured through the guidance of supportive more knowledgeable others. Just like in

workplace settings, guidance is important. Morita's (2004) study of Japanese university students' acquisition process of English at an American university illustrated that her participants perceived a positive advancement of their language learning process only after having secured an adequate environment or a network of fellow students who did not take to them as outsiders. Likewise, studies on learning languages online by Gee (2005), Gee & Hayes (2011) and Barton & Lee (2013) stress that learning is enhanced by having access to an affinity space or group, "a transitory grouping where people join together for a specific purpose" (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 130). Such affinity groups provide positive support in learning by observing and experimenting with other like-minded members, suggesting that such types of groups are often more effective learning spaces as those provided by formal educational institutions, which tend to be perceived as more threatening.

The third aspect that studies in L2 socialization have highlighted as a means to enhance the language learning process is the ability for the learner to create favourable identities for themselves in their new language (Norton, 2000, Block, 2007). These favourable identities may involve striving for economic improvement through the second language (Kinginger, 2004) or to dissociate oneself from unfavourable identities (Polanyi, 1995). The identity may also not be readily attainable, but it may be an imagined community (Kanno & Norton, 2003) or an imagined future (Barton et al., 2007) that they wish to attain through participation in the practices of the second language.

Being able to conceive of a positive future in the second language affects the final aspect that boosts the process of L2 socialization, namely reflexivity or the ability of the learner to ruminate their learning process (Barton & Lee, 2013). Reflexivity is about the fact that learners are provided with a capacity to react to their performance and turn this reflection to alter their actions. Problems and challenges, in particular with discursive practices, can then lead the person to adapt his or her performance.

L2 socialization research shows that becoming competent in using the communicative resources of another language "is about succeeding in attaining material, symbolic and affective returns that they [the learners] desire for themselves" (Ortega, 2013, p. 250). In this process learning must then be perceived as always mutually transformative, of the learner's world but also of the environment (He, 2011). Moreover, language learning is an on-going, life-long process "as we become socialized into novel activities, identities, and objects relevant to work, family, recreation, civic, religious, and

other environments in increasingly globalized communities" (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008, p.11).

Such a view of language learning in practice then explains that competence is unevenly developed and structured. Language knowledge is thus best conceived of as organised in repertoires.

2.4.3 Language knowledge as repertoire

In order to fathom the variety of ways of speaking (Hymes, 1972b) in a community, Gumperz (1964, p. 137-138) put forward the notion of verbal repertoire, which he defined as "the totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction … [it] contains all the accepted ways of formulating messages … Speakers choose among this arsenal in accordance with the meanings they wish to convey". Accounting for the verbal repertoire of a community thus meant doing an inventory of the complete set of registers, styles, dialects and varieties available. In later writings, the term verbal repertoire was recast as linguistic repertoire (Gumperz, 1972, 1982).

This concept presented a novel perspective to account for language knowledge for a number of reasons. First, by describing a repertoire, the analyst attempted to stay clear of pre-conceived, grammatical notions of language. Gumperz (1972) was particularly interested in his concept capturing the reality of speakers in multilingual communities and their frequent practice of alternating between languages. Second, it emphasized the power of social constraints on acceptability of language as equally, if not more important, as grammaticality. Third, the verbal repertoire was regarded as a pool of linguistic resources that individuals are able to draw on without positing that each member possessed equal competence in using and accessing these resources. Therefore, the concept of verbal repertoire countered the orthodoxies of linguistic research at the time. Not only did it explicitly encourage seeing the social as shaped in and through communication, but it also put the emphasis back on the users and their actual communicative behaviour. This shift presented a significant move away from viewing language as a system.

A shift from a community-based, ideal-typical, and static view to the level of the accounting for an individual's language knowledge made sense considering Gumperz's

(1964) original idea of the repertoire as a semiotic repository or arsenal of skills, as even within the same community the repertoires of speakers are significantly different due to their personal development over time, the social roles they accomplish in their practices, and their geographical mobility.

An individual's repertoire is consistently constructed over time, layer by layer, in connection to the individual's biography. This is a point that Schiffman (1996) develops schematically in his concentric circle model based on similar sites of research as Gumperz, namely in multilingual contexts in India. With the individual at the centre, resources are added around him or her over the course of time, like rubber bands. Some are thicker and more enduring than others, and some are physically and emotionally closer to the individual. Some might have snapped, but all leave their traces. Taking time seriously as a factor in describing a person's language knowledge enables us to consider a number of important points about the repertoire. As it is built up in close connection to an individual's biography, it thus forces us as analysts to consider an individual's life trajectory and experiences. The notion of time accounts for the fact that particular resources in the repertoire are more prevalent at particular stages in life due to the engagement in certain practices particular to that time. For example, Schiffman (1996) points to the fact that in the multi-ethnic and multicultural environments in South and Southeast Asia, individuals possess a good knowledge of English for specific professional registers but it does not imply that these individuals are fluent in all varieties, styles, and registers of English. Lastly, the skills in the repertoire involve active as well as passive competencies. All of this indicates that some resources in the repertoire are only partially present at any given moment in time. A repertoire thus becomes indexical of an individual's biography. The resources in the repertoire point to changing geographical spaces, social roles, status and social practices that can become meaningful in interactions (Gal 2006, Blommaert, 2010). However, the increased mobility of individuals not only changes the resources in the repertoires of individuals but also affects the value of the existing ones. A repertoire with a set of resources may be highly valued in one location, but less so in another. Similarly, the value of a particular resource is also relative when carried over to another location, for instance, varieties of English appropriated in Africa and used in Central Europe (Blommaert, 2010).

Linguistic competence based on the notion of repertoire is therefore always dynamic, affected by time, practice and space. Accounting for someone's state of language

knowledge or multilingualism is therefore not the property of an individual as a member of a speech community, “but what the environment, as structured determinations and interactional emergence, enables and disables them to deploy" (Blommaert et al., 2005, p. 213). At the same time, competence in a particular resource is never complete but always partial or truncated. Blommaert & Backus (2013, p. 25) define the characteristics of this truncated competence as a competence that "is not generative: fluency in these informal conversations does not automatically imply fluency in other genres and social domains; competence in one sociolinguistic area does not imply fluency in any other area, nor can it a priori be seen as an engine for acquiring such fluency. Competences are as a rule sociolinguistically specific". So how can language knowledge and language learning be fathomed from the point of view of the repertoire? This will be further examined in the next section.

2.4.4 Types of language learning and language competence

Based on the concept of repertoire, Blommaert & Backus (2013) propose a taxonomy to distinguish the various forms through which resources enter the repertoire of an individual and to describe the status of these resources in terms of level of competence. They distinguish between four main types of learning that are based on an individual's access to a range of practices in different social domains and the time of exposure or experience that the individual develops in these practices. The first type of learning is *comprehensive language learning*, which is achieved by the "[f]ull socialization across a lifetime in a language" and is therefore lasting and durable in character (Blommaert & Backus, 2013, p. 17). Such learning presupposes access to an array of formal and informal learning environments that build up a depth of productive and receptive literacy skills. These competencies then allow the individual to easily expand or change the communicative forms in this resource. The second type of learning is *specialized language learning*. This kind of learning develops through the individual's prolonged engagement with a particular domain, for example a professional domain. This results in the appropriation of specialised spoken and written genres, registers and styles that allow the individual to participate competently in this particular field. While this type of learning is also enduring, Blommaert & Backus (2013) argue that these skills are not easily transferable to practices in other arenas. They regard these two types of learning as accounting for an individual's communicative competence, as these forms of learning

provide the person with an ability to act and perform a range of identities, concrete and future ones (or expressing one's voice in Hymes's (1996) terms). But there are two more types of learning that are smaller in amplitude, but nevertheless important. The third type of language learning by Blommaert & Backus (2013) is referred to as *encounters with language*. These are communicative forms that individuals pick up due to their temporal alignment with or membership in certain affinity groups. For example, my own engagement in skateboarding as a teenager exposed me to registers and styles in English inaccessible through formal education. Yet this form of language learning also includes even more minimal types of acquisition, such as single word learning or the ability to recognize languages by sound and script. Blommaert & Backus (2013, p. 19) stress that although this type of learning is minimal it presents an important aspect of social knowledge as it allows individuals "to identify people, social arenas and practices, even if one is not able to fully participate in such practices". The last form of learning is *embedded language learning*, which refers to the acquisition of chunks or features of a language (usually lexical units) that come together within the structures of a typographically different one. For instance, borrowing Rodney Jones's example (R. Scollon et al., 2012), practicing yoga leads to the practitioner's often unconscious acquisition of bits of Sanskrit or Hindi.

Taken together, these forms of learning describe the ways the repertoire is constituted reflecting "the polycentricity of the learning environments in which the speaker dwells" (Blommaert & Backus, 2013, p. 20). These forms of learning thus emphasize that language learning is much more than formal learning and that an individual's learning through the participation in everyday practices is an equally legitimate site of and for learning.

In order to measure an individual's knowledge in particular resources of her repertoire, one needs to look at the skills and competences that can be realized. Blommaert and Backus (2013) propose four types of competencies that can be used to describe an individual's language knowledge: maximum competence, partial competence, minimal competence, and recognizing competence.

Maximum competence refers to receptive and productive writing and speaking skills in formal as well as informal domains, which include regional and social varieties, genres, styles, and registers. On the other hand, *partial competence* suggests knowledge in

specific genres, styles and registers of a resource or resources. It also means that the individual may be more competent receptively rather than productively or may be more skilled in the spoken mode as compared to the written mode. *Minimal competence* in a resource means to "produce and/or understand a limited number of messages from certain languages, confined to a very restricted range of genres and social domains: shopping routines, basic conversational routines and stock expressions" (Blommaert & Backus, 2013, p. 22). And lastly *recognizing competence* refers to the ability to classify or categorize communicative forms that one may not be able to use productively.

These four types of competence combine to make up an individual's overall communicative competence as "a patchwork of skills, some overlapping and some complementary, with lots of gaps between them" (Blommaert & Backus, 2013, p.23). This accounts for the diversity or difference in access to and uptake of actions, but again, it also accounts for the partial or truncated nature of some of the resources in the repertoire. This has implications in actual situations. An individual's minimal competence may allow for maximum effectiveness in a particular local practice, but it may also pose problems or challenges, as this local ability may be misjudged for an overall greater competence.

To this linguistic notion of repertoire, one could add also other non-linguistic features, those that go "beyond language" (Rymes, 2014, p. 7). Rymes (2014, p. 9-10) usefully enlarges the concept of linguistic repertoire to the communicative repertoire, which she defines as "the collection of ways individuals use language and other means of communication (gesture, dress, posture, accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate" in order to achieve alignment or dis-alignment with their communication partners.

2.4.5 Summary

The theories covered in this section emphasize the importance of the resources provided by the social network in the process of learning. Drawing on members of a social network is thus a legitimate strategy to obtain information or to overcome problems. On the other hand, language competence sustains an individual's social network. For example, if a business owner does not speak German, it may be more difficult to draw on a wider network. However, this can be done through someone else, who acts as a language broker.

Sociological research into organisations and workplaces has seen a major shift in the last 20 years towards a focus on organisations as social processes providing "a fertile

ground for practice theories ... due to their capacity to provide a processual view of organizational matters" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 11). Similarly scholars in sociolinguistics have turned to a practice-view of language (Pennycook, 2010). Language in use is seen as the tool through which social structures and organizations are built and through which the social relations are maintained. This view clashes with traditional conceptions of language as a medium to communicate ideas or language as a free-standing system.

This thesis attunes to such a view and claims that a view of language in practice is best to understand how immigrant entrepreneurs develop their linguistic repertoires in action and interactions with others, how they use language or make do without it on the occasions their repertoires prove insufficient. In the next section, we describe what such a practice view of language entails, and we introduce Mediated Discourse Analysis as the theoretical framework that is used to understand these processes.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework and data collection

3.1 Mediated Discourse Analysis

In order to understand how immigrant entrepreneurs use their linguistic repertoires as meaningful resources to accomplish actions at work, we need a theory that allows us to examine both discourse and its linkages to workplace practice.

As was mentioned above in the discussion of multilingualism, contemporary sociolinguistic theories have recently proposed a shift to social practice as the focus of linguistic analysis (Pennycook, 2010). For practice theorists in sociology, taking the social practice as a unit of analysis provides a middle ground between purpose-oriented theories of action, which stress the primacy of the individual, and norm-oriented theories, which stress the primacy of structures (Reckwitz, 2002). For linguists, adopting a practice view of language means to realize that "languages are a product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people engage" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 1), but also that language shapes these social activities. Such a view is in stark contrast to the view of language as a global, universal system of communication or representation, as it shifts our attention away from language towards action. Pennycook (2010, p. 2) stresses: "To think in terms of practices is to make social activities central, to ask how it is we do things as we do, how activities are established, regulated and changed." A practice view of language, however, does not only advocate a focus on the locally constructed nature of social actions, but also an attention to the discourses these actions are embedded in: "we need to appreciate that language cannot be dealt with separately from speakers, histories, cultures, places, ideologies" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 6). In that sense, this perspective is both heir to a host of traditions that, since Austin's Speech Act Theory or ethnomethodological studies of social conduct, have adopted an action or praxeological view of discourse (Filliettaz, 2013, Nevile & Rendle-Short, 2007), but it also goes beyond them by drawing from post-colonial views of language the idea that discourse, identities, and cultures are best understood when thought of as specific sets of transforming practices rather than moulds that predetermine actions in any essentialist manner.

Mediated Discourse Analysis (henceforth MDA) as developed by R. Scollon (1998, 2001) and R. Scollon & S. Scollon (2003, 2004) is such a practice-based approach, which seeks to establish concrete links between different discourse analytical traditions. We have chosen this approach, because it offers a discussion of notions useful to study

empirically the impact of discourse in action. While MDA's conceptual apparatus may at first glance seem complex and challenging to grasp, it provides the tools to rethink the ways language plays out in the larger ecology of social actions. Let us now consider some of the aspects of this framework relevant for this study.

With a focus on action, MDA offers the researcher of discourse a different entry point. The aim of the analysis is "to understand the relationship between 'what's going on' and the discourse that is available in the situation to perform these 'goings on' " (Jones, 2012, p. 33), rather than focusing on language alone (as sometimes researchers of language do) or on action alone (as some sociologists do). With respect to language, MDA encourages a broad view of discourse as "the ways in which people engage each other in communication" (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004, p. 4). The concept of discourse for MDA thus comprises what has become known, after Gee's work (1986, 1999), as small d discourse (speech, texts, register or genres relevant for the action) and big D discourse (the beliefs, experiences, habitual, as well as conventionalized and normative ways of acting, behaving, and thinking that have currency in a group). As Jones (2012, p. 33) emphasizes: "the point is that to really understand how discourse is relevant to 'real life', we have to try to understand how different texts and conversations are linked, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, to the concrete, real-time actions that are going on in coffee shops and classrooms and offices and on street corners at particular moments, and how these linkages work to create social identities ... and social practices".

3.1.1 MDA as an analytical toolkit

For the empirical study of discourse in action, MDA does not attempt to reinvent the wheel, but encourages us to combine existing approaches to the study of social practice and discourse. Each time the combination will depend on the goals pursued by the particular study. Therefore, MDA draws on other broadly social practice-based approaches, such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Conversation Analysis (CA) and Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), as well as linguistic anthropology or the New Literacy Studies (NLS). MDA shares, for example, with CA and IS the concern for the micro-level of interaction where social actors use discourse to negotiate their relationships, perform their situated identities, and mutually construct the interactional context. However, unlike IS and CA, MDA gives no preferential treatment to talk or a system of turn-taking. With linguistic anthropology and the ethnography of communication, MDA also shares an

interest in understanding the relationship between forms of discourse, and cultural patterns of ways of doing and thinking. This implies an interest in the ways communicative forms such as particular genres, styles and registers provide models for action in particular communities. Lastly, from CDA and NLS, MDA adopts the interest in linking social actions to the larger structures of the social world. It investigates how social issues and discourses that circulate in social life have an effect on actions. MDA thus does not only seek to account for the discourses that are present in the moment of taking an action, but it aims to understand the ways these discourses are taken up or are sidelined, in order to act in the world, and in doing so may be challenged or changed. Therefore, MDA is likewise interested in how actions can be the realisation of power and authority, but also the locus for struggle over power and authority, as each action contributes to ratifying or challenging the status quo.

Consequently, MDA does not propose a novel analytical position as much as a possibility to unite existing approaches by shifting the focus of analysis to allow the analyst to embrace some of the complexities of social practices at work (R. Scollon, 2001a, 2001b, R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004). In the next sections, we review the three main analytical concepts of MDA: the mediated action, mediational means or cultural tools, and nexus of practice.

3.1.2 Social action as mediated action

The unit of analysis for MDA is not the text or utterance, as other approaches in linguistics have traditionally chosen to do, but the mediated action, the concrete, observable and irreversible social action that social actors engage in at a particular time and in a particular space making use of the resources that are accessible to them (R. Scollon, 2001a). Language is only taken up in the analysis in other words, when and if it becomes relevant to the action. MDA derives this concept of mediated action from the neo-Vygotskian framework of mediated action analysis developed in sociocultural psychology (Wertsch, 1991, 1998). This perspective posits that by looking at how agents take actions with cultural means, we can start to understand how the agency of the individual actor is both constrained and enabled by the mediational tool. For example, the action of contacting a friend through the technology of the phone has undergone drastic changes from the invention of Bell's first landline in the late 19th century to the modern day 3G smart phone. Thus the attribute 'mediated' in mediated action refers to the assumption

that any social action is accomplished through the use of mediational means or cultural tools that are provided by the socio-cultural environment and that these cultural tools shape the user's actions, the kinds of identities he can claim, and the norms that he has to abide to in performing the action. Mediational means may be concrete tangible objects such as the coins that we use when we pay for a purchase in a supermarket, or the menu we use to order food in a restaurant, but they are also the symbolic or representational tools such as the units of speech and writing, languages, genres, counting systems, or mental scripts and schemata. All of them come with their own histories of use in the individual and society. Nobody invents the tools that he uses, but rather learns to use the tools available in one's environment. In this sense, every action is always imbued with the social, historical, and cultural formation that comes with the tool. This focus on the mediated action has important consequences for theories of social action: by neither looking at the individual alone (psychological determinism) or primarily at the social world (social determinism), the mediated action as a unit of analysis offers a perspective where both of these factors intersect and are brought into engagement (R. Scollon, 2005a).

MDA generally subscribes to a narrow view of the mediated action as "the smallest interactional meaning unit" (Norris & Jones, 2005a, p. 17). While this is no hard and fast rule it allows for an emic or actor-centred definition of the action. The idea behind MDA is to keep alive the complexity of the action, taking into account that all actions are complex entities constituted of lower-level actions and constituting in turn actions at a higher level. For example, 'teaching a class', to borrow R. Scollon & S. Scollon's (2004) example, can be perceived as a higher-level action that is made up of a chain of lower level actions such as 'starting the class', 'introducing the topic', 'giving the first point' ... 'closing the class'. However 'teaching a class' is only one action in the higher-level action of 'working at the university' which in turn is linked to 'participating in educating the younger generation'. The recognition that a mediated action does not happen in a vacuum but is always connected to other actions in space and time allows MDA to keep the complexity or the layered simultaneity (Blommaert, 2005) of the social world alive.

For analytical purposes, R. Scollon & S. Scollon (2004) also propose to consider three different aspects of an action: what is the particular constellation of social actors and the relationship they take up towards each other (the interaction order)? What do the actors bring to the situation, and what are their life experiences and abilities (their so-

called 'historical bodies')? Within which networks of discourses do they operate (the discourses in place)? These three aspects taken together give shape and meaning to the social action (see Image 3 below). We will borrow again an example by R. Scollon & S. Scollon (2003) to illustrate these elements and their effect on the mediated action by considering the action of 'crossing the street'.

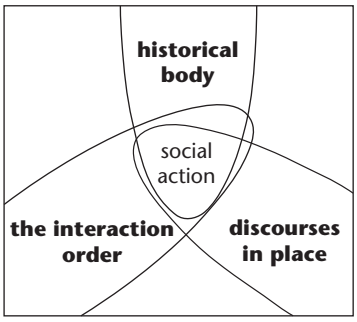


Image 3: Material entities of the mediated action (reproduced from R. Scollon & S. Scollon (2004))

The first element is the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) and as an analytical concept aims to ascertain which type of interactional configuration is constructed by the social actors for the performance of the mediated action. For example, crossing the street as a father together with my seven-year-old daughter may be performed differently from crossing the street with a close friend. Despite a lack of traffic, I tend to wait for the signal light to turn green when I am with my daughter, while I would simply carry on the conversation with my close friend crossing on a red light, if I see no cars approaching. Looking at the interaction order brings to light that the meaning of my action depends very much on the alignment that I take up to others present. If the interaction order changes, so does usually the action and its meaning. For example, by not crossing at the red light, I not only engage in a 'safe' practice, but also in a kind of pedagogical interaction by showing my daughter how to cross the street safely. In each of these situations, the action of crossing the street is thus embedded in different 'discourses', e.g. jaywalking as opposed to pedagogical discourse. Likewise, the activity of reading an informational letter issued by my daughter's school about safe ways of crossing the street might have quite a different meaning, if I read it out aloud to my daughter as an instruction, or, if I discuss it with my wife or a friend mocking its content and cuing it as a joke. Looking at discourse alone is thus not as informative as considering what frames the discourse and in which interaction order it appears.

The second dimension useful to consider in the analysis of every social action is the history of the participants with the action, or their storehouse of experiences. For example, throughout my lifetime I have learned various ways of crossing the street, however, not all of them may be appropriate in all circumstances and they may not be easily transferable to other locations. The habit that I developed to check for traffic when growing up in Germany - to first look to my left and then to my right - took some serious un-learning when I had to perform the same action of crossing the street as an exchange student in New Zealand, where the traffic regulations require drivers to stick to the left lane. This shows that my history of experiences is crucial to how I accomplishing an action and the meanings I give to it. These ideas are subsumed in MDA under the notion of 'historical body'. The concept is derived from the work of the Japanese philosopher Nishida (1958) and runs in large parts parallel to the concept of habitus as developed by Bourdieu (1990, p. 53) as the "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures". The historical body is thus a form of tacit knowledge that mediates to a lesser or greater degree any social action. While MDA subscribes to the general ideas of the concept of habitus, it regards critically the rigid application of the concept and the lack of accountability for modifications, transformations and contradictions, as well as the recognition that in every social action the various experiences individuals have come together from different sources and experiences. The concept of historical body provides room for this variety of experiences, which at times may also hold contradictory ways of doing things, due to different environments social actors engage in. The historical body is thus "an unstable, dissipative structure in interaction with its environment rather than an objective, regular, or durable set of dispositions" (R. Scollon et al., 2012, p. 173).

The third dimension one can consider are the discourses in place. Here the analyst pays attention to the ecology of discourses available at the point in time of performing the action. For example, when crossing the street in an inner city area the discourses present may range from the traffic signals, the regulatory marking on the tarmac, to the advertising billboards and public notices on construction sites, from the message I just received on my cell phone to the conversations of other people around me. For MDA all these discourses may potentially impact the performance of the action. A traffic sign re-directing pedestrians to cross the street elsewhere will affect how I move through space, or the loud noise of traffic might force me to shout rather than speak softly to my

daughter. Therefore an analysis needs to consider which discourses are attended to and which ones are ignored, which discourses constrain the action, and which facilitate it.

An attention to these three elements in the analysis recognizes both the historical and normative grounding of any social action, as well as its synchronic realization (Blommaert, 2012). And for the analysis of discourse, it safeguards against "uprooting words and actions from the historical bodies of the individuals performing them, or disconnecting the discourses and actions from the sociocultural context of their formation and realization" (S. Scollon & de Saint-Georges, 2011, p. 72). A focus on these three dimensions therefore also allows us to understand what affects the language use in the multilingual setting of a workplace.

Let us know turn in more detail to the concept of mediational means or cultural tools.

3.1.3 Mediational means and cultural tools

In MDA parlance, a mediational means or a cultural tool (the two terms are used interchangeably) refers to "[a]nything an individual uses to take action in the world" (Jones, 2012, p. 84). This notion of mediational means is adopted from Wertsch's (1998) development of Vygotsky's (1981) notion of the psychological tool. An example R. Scollon (2001a, 2001b) uses to explain the notion of mediational means is the action of 'ordering a cup of coffee at Starbucks'. For leveraging this action, the customer uses a variety of mediational means, for example the queue of other people, the counter, the menu above the counter, her familiarity with the expressions used at Starbucks for the different types of coffee, and also the typical sequence organisation of the order, which usually starts with the barrista's utterance: 'Welcome to Starbucks. How may I help you?'. This example illustrates that there are always multiple mediational means involved in performing an action, and that these mediational means can be more material (the cup or coins) or symbolic (the discourse used to order the coffee). Together they account for the multimodal aspect of any action. As not all of these means are used simultaneously, an MDA analysis is interested in finding out which ones are actually used at which moment and therefore become salient in the process, in order to understand the mechanisms of the social action.

Mediational means have several characteristics. They always come with a history of use in the individual and a history in the wider community. This means that the cultural

tools carry to the action "biases, orientations, and ideologies which derive from the history of their formation" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 203-204). For example, although a first-time customer to Starbucks may have a lot of experience ordering coffees in other types of coffee shops, she may be puzzled by the company's designations of cup sizes as *tall*, *grande*, *venti* and *trenta*. If she knows Italian, she may be able to relate *venti* to 'twenty' and *trenta* to 'thirty' and ultimately to the amount of liquid that will end up in her cup, but it remains an object of inquiry whether this helps her to place the order with greater ease. This points to another characteristic of mediational means, namely that they shape the performance of the action by facilitating or making it harder to perform. Familiarity with the sizes at Starbucks, regardless of one's competence in Italian, facilitates the ordering process, while non-familiarity may require the customer not to respond to the barrista's opening question with an answer, but by inserting a side sequence asking for clarification. This indicates that when we have no familiarity with some of the tools involved in a specific situation, we also show our identity as novice in that situation (Wertsch, 1998, R. Scollon et al., 2012). The mediational means that an individual has at her disposal and that are provided in the situation therefore "determine not just what we can do, but who we can be" (Jones, 2012, p. 85). However, since mediational means are not tied to a specific action and are multifunctional, actors may employ their cultural toolkit creatively, adopt new tools, or combine old ones in new constellations, in order to overcome the constraints that they face in performing a particular action.

The use of mediational means is learned through an individual's socialization process into different communities. On the one hand, this accounts for the fact that not everyone is equally comfortable or skilled in using a tool. On the other hand, it accounts for the fact that mediational means are often learned in sets. With respect to language, this conception aligns with practice-based views of language learning that see language knowledge as always partial, so that at times only bits or chunks of particular languages are appropriated to perform particular types of actions. Wertsch (1998) differentiates further between two types of learning: mastery and appropriation. Both types of learning are similar in process. Both forms of learning are for Wertsch (1998) in line with what Bakhtin referred to in relation to language as heteroglossia (Bailey, 2012), as "taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own" (Wertsch 1998, p. 53). Both types of learning involve a certain degree of resistance or friction, because the use of the tool is laden with social meaning. However, while appropriation means that the tool has

become second nature to the social actor and has been accepted as something of her own, the mastery of a tool is limited to " 'knowing how' (Ryle, 1949) to use a mediational means with facility", which entails a remaining feeling of resistance and friction (Wertsch, 1998, p. 50). Wertsch (1998, p. 56) argues that if "such conflict or resistance grows sufficiently strong, an agent may refuse to use the cultural tool altogether". This is interesting with respect to second language users and learners, because it explains that the actions are shaped by the user's level of mastery or appropriation of the second language. It also suggests that problems and challenges that L2 speakers encounter may even lead to a rejection of learning. In the analysis, we will see, however, how the combination of various mediational means allow speakers with minimal language competence to accomplish their everyday work successfully.

Let us now turn to the last two central concepts of MDA, the social practice and the nexus of practice.

3.1.4 Social practice and nexus of practice

MDA distinguishes analytically between the mediated action and social practice. A social practice is a history of mediated actions and a constellation of mediational means or as R. Scollon (2001b, p. 149) defines it as the "historical accumulation within the habitus/historical body of the social actor of mediated actions taken over his or her life (experience) and which are recognizable to other social actors as `the same' social action" (R. Scollon, 2001b, p. 149). Unlike other practice approaches in sociology, MDA takes a narrow view of social practice. Returning to our previous example of 'ordering a cup of coffee at Starbucks', the practices of 'queuing', 'greeting', 'question-answer sequence', and 'handing over coins' are also applicable to the performance of other mediated actions. This narrow view is important as it allows an MDA analysis to recognise the "ethno-methods that go into performing the most mundane of activities" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 204), but also to recognize that the mediated action "produces that linkage of practices and is not just conditioned by them" (R. Scollon, 2001a, p. 159). Social practices thus provide the ground for a mediated action to happen which in turn make the mediated action the basic unit that sustains activities in the social world.

Routine activities are therefore built up of chains of mediated actions and become linked in habitual ways. These routinized ways of doing things create what is called in MDA a nexus of practice. A nexus of practice is thus also a linkage of discursive and non-

discursive practices (R. Scollon, 2001a). One of the interests of MDA is in exploring how such nexuses of practice are created and maintained, and how discourse plays a role in their creation and maintenance. In addition, MDA seeks to understand how a nexus of practice produces certain roles and identities for the social actors by the way they act in the scene. Thirdly, the aim is to account for the ways that variations in the performance of actors may lead to disruptions or transformations of the expected script. And finally, it aims to comprehend how rules and regulations, or discourses 'from above', condition the nexus of practice.

3.1.5 Summary

Private businesses, just like those we would like to look at in more detail in the subsequent chapters, can be regarded as being constituted out of various nexuses of practice. First, we aim to identify the central nexuses of practice that make up each business and how their realization is influenced by levels of language competence. The focus is on the chain of mediated actions the owners and employees accomplish to perform these routine actions at work and which linguistic and material mediational means they use to do so. By doing so, we would like to examine the bearing of their multilingual repertoires on the nexus of practice, and in particular how their levels of competence in German shape these actions. Since actions and discourse at work are also conditioned by broader social discourses, we also want to establish which discourses in place influence the actions in the occupational contexts of these immigrant entrepreneurs.

The terminology reviewed thus far in this chapter might seem a very complex apparatus of terms and concepts, but what the framework attempts to achieve is to de-reify notions such as identity, language, group or community and anchor the discussion at the level of social practice or networks of practices. Once we start unpacking these myriad practices and mediations, we put ourselves in a better position to see how practices are learned, how identities are constructed or sustained over time, and how organizations are built, maintained or changed. Ultimately, what MDA analysts seek is to understand how social actions get configured in ways that then appear typical to the observer and the practitioner as a nexus of practice. Another aim is to comprehend how these systems of practices are reconfigured or altered by the actors, if the routines prove to be challenging or troublesome. Consequently, we are interested in how the actors overcome problems in the nexus of practice.

In line with these ideas, what we will do in the analytical chapters is to consider the following points more specifically: Since the historical bodies, meaning the experiences, abilities and knowledge, of the three self-employed immigrant business owners we followed are relevant to understand the ways they carry out their work, we will first consider their pathways into self-employment in chapter 4. Based on a thematic analysis of solicited and unsolicited retrospective accounts, the aim is to reconstruct their historical bodies with a specific focus on their professional experiences before and after migration, their learning trajectories of German as a resource for acting in business, as well as the broader discourses in place that had an effect on the way they organize and conduct their workplace practices. In the subsequent analytical chapters 5 to 7, we will look in detail at the typical routines of actions at each of the three workplaces, or those nexuses of practice that are central to their work as self-employed business owners. Based on an ethnographic inquiry, we will attempt to account for the discursive and non-discursive social practices that construct these nexuses of practice by considering the typical social arrangements, or the interaction order, in which these practices unfold and the mediational means that are used to perform them, while paying specific attention to the role played by the linguistic resources.

3.2 Methodology and data collection

Adopting a practice ontology, an MDA approach also obliges the researcher to adopt a practice epistemology, which "requires a commitment to an observational orientation and the adaption of methods that allow an appreciation of practice as it happens" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 14). Such an epistemology is necessarily ethnographic and aims at an interpretative understanding of the connection between workplace practice and discourse. The methodological principles behind MDA are ethnographic, but contrary to other ethnographic approaches in linguistics, MDA takes "social action as the theoretical center of the study, not any a priori social group, class, tribe, or culture" (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004, p. 13) and does not make "a priori assumptions about what kinds of texts or discourses will ultimately be relevant to the analysis" (R. Scollon, 2001b, p. 152). The purpose of the research design is to identify relevant sites and at these sites to identify core actions (Wohlwend, 2014), which are those nexuses of practice that are "central to the lived experiences of the participants" (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 202). These core

actions are then analysed, in order to examine how discourse enables, curtails, and flows through them. For the purpose of this project, it means that the analysis aims at examining how the core actions are performed through language and how they are affected by the linguistic repertoire of the participants. Moreover, MDA attempts to locate and explain the significance of these core actions in the histories of the participants and the wider sociocultural environment (Wohlwend, 2014).

The ethnographic process in MDA is organized around three filters that guide the researcher towards the actions that are ultimately interesting for the analysis (Wohlwend, 2009, R. Scollon, 2001b). The first filter aims at finding the appropriate sites at which the social issue that one wants to understand better can be most suitably studied. This is what R. Scollon & S. Scollon (2004) refer to as 'establishing the zone of identification' with the object of research. This can be achieved by "a review of media texts about the issue or issues the researcher is interested in, informal observation at relevant sites, individual or group interviews and surveys of participants" (Norris & Jones, 2005b, p. 202). For the case of this project, it meant to establish a set of criteria to locate immigrant businesses where we would expect the issue of language diversity to be most relevant. The processes that I undertook in this respect will be reviewed in section 3.2.1. The second filter is to do a survey of the scenes that have been identified for closer study. This does not involve the focused gathering of data, but the goal is "to get an idea, together with the participants about the contours of the interaction order ... to be studied and the kinds of discourses and other mediational means that cycle through it" (Norris & Jones, 2005b, p. 202). This means to document typical interaction orders that the participants engage in during their work, as well as to understand the socio-cultural context that shapes the performance of these actions and the mediational means used to accomplish them. Lastly, it is important to explore the historical bodies of the participants, meaning their experiences and skills with respect to the actions and the mediational means. In other words, the second filter aims to obtain a broad picture of the world of the participants and to find out about the actions that are of most concern to them. The third and final filter consists in analysing in detail what might be deemed as the most significant actions for the participants. These core actions then become the centre of data collection through repeated exposure to the actions via participant observation, their documentation in field notes, recordings and photographs, as well as the reflective anecdotes of the participants. It is important to stress though that these three filters are not mutually exclusive but recursive and

reflexive (Heath & Street, 2008, Emerson et al., 1995), as new information emerges during the fieldwork, or the relationship between the researcher and the informant continue to evolve and interests develop that have not been foreshadowed.

The methods employed in an MDA methodology therefore aim at collecting four types of data: members' generalizations or their accounts and opinions about their routine actions, neutral observations by the researcher, in order to test the generalizations by members, individual experiences of members with the mediated actions to construct their historical bodies or their habitus with the actions, and the observer's interactions with members, in order to obtain the perspectives of members on the performance of particular mediated actions (R. Scollon, 2001b, R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004). These four types of data hope to safeguard that the study and the interpretations are carefully triangulated.

3.2.1 Establishing a zone of identification

This research addresses a common dilemma that immigrants in Germany are facing. On the one hand, their linguistic backgrounds are portrayed as a problem with respect to integration into German society in general and the labour market in particular. The lack of adequate competence in the German language is commonly mentioned as a reason that hinders their employability without specifically establishing the link between work practices and German language competence. On the other hand, in the course of governmental efforts to promote self-employment in Germany throughout the last decade, the diversity of immigrants is usually celebrated and their cultural backgrounds are regarded as resources that can be successfully used in starting their own businesses. For example, from 2010 onwards the Ministry of Economic Development of the state of Saarland, at that time under the helm of the Liberal Democratic Party, specifically targeted individuals with a migration background in their advertising campaigns. One of the individuals that frequently appeared on posters at bus stops and brochures distributed to the public was a Japanese lady, who successfully operated her own sushi delivery service. Therefore, in order to understand more about the issue of language competence and self-employment initially, I interviewed three representatives who worked for different chambers of commerce in the area. However, their experiences and awareness of the language issues that concerned self-employed immigrants was severely limited. The interviewees often repeated the issues highlighted in the literature discussed in section

2.2 that immigrants due to their lack of German may have difficulties in registering their businesses or may often fail because they lack the necessary language competence in dealing with the institutional requirements of their job. However, little was known about the ways discourse and language competence actually impacted the work routines of immigrant entrepreneurs, who have successfully established their businesses in a non-ethnic economy but with a product or service that was widely associated with their cultural heritage. Therefore, I chose to approach immigrant business owners personally, in order to find out more about their experiences.

This information led me to establish a set of exclusionary and inclusionary criteria for theoretical sampling for choosing the field sites (Silverman, 2013). First, I wanted to look at business owners from a minority migrant group whose first language was not one of the official languages of the EU. The reason was that a minority migrant group would not be able to fall back on a large enough co-ethnic market with co-ethnic customers and co-ethnic suppliers, such as members of the Turkish community in Germany. Secondly, this implied that I wanted the business to target the majority population and not to be located in an ethnic economy or ethnic niche market. Thirdly, I wanted the owner to be a first-generation migrant assuming that this person only learned German later in life. Fourthly, I wanted the business to offer a service or a product that was generally regarded as connected to their cultural background. So, for example, I would not consider immigrant entrepreneurs that operated telecommunication shops or general personal services. Fifthly, I wanted the business to be well-established, so that I could rely on regular opening hours and proven workplace routines. And lastly, I sought businesses that were not in close proximity to one another or not in direct competition for the same pool of clients, as I felt that this would compromise my chances of obtaining access and to build a positive relationship with the owners.

Businesses managed by Thai immigrants seemed to be particularly relevant, because of their increasing popularity (in particular Thai massage salons) and the fact that they apparently bucked the trend described in the literature and prevalent in public perception that members of a minority migrant group with supposedly little competence in German could manage their own businesses successfully.

3.2.1.1 Negotiating access

As I was not able to go through any direct personal contacts, I resorted to locating relevant businesses by searching the Internet and the local business listings. I then contacted the owners via email or personally at their work sites. In all cases, I explained the aims of the research project through a document (see Appendix A) in German or English and asked whether they were willing to participate in the research project. This process was unfortunately very time-consuming and I had to deal with a number of rejections. I initially asked for a semi-structured interview with the owners, after which I explained the possibility of further participation in the study. After a long process of finding interested participants, three business owners agreed to be part of the study and provided me with access to their worksites: a large Thai massage salon located in a large town (Kanita's Massage Salon), a Thai small massage salon in a residential neighbourhood of a village (Patcharin's Massage Salon), and an Asian convenience store in the shopping district of a small town (Wipa's Asia Market). These three businesses and their owners met my selection criteria well. All three businesses were operated by women, who were first-generation Thai immigrants to Germany. All three businesses were owned and managed by the owners themselves, although the massage salons employed a number of employees. Due to its size and demand, Kanita's Massage Salon employed a great number of part-timers and relied on these employees to provide the service. At Patcharin's Massage Salon two long-standing therapists were employed part-time, both of whom were first-generation Thai immigrants as well. On the other hand, Wipa's Asia Market was operated exclusively by Wipa herself. All three businesses offered an ethnic product or service, and attracted exclusively or to a large extent a local German clientele. While Wipa's food retail business could be regarded as a traditional immigrant business providing for the ethnic community, she did not cater to a Thai audience exclusively, but her clients constituted a healthy mix of Thais, Asian immigrants, and Germans. Another aspect that added value to the sample was that the owners and their respective staff differed in terms of their level of competence in German. Wipa was the most proficient German speaker. Her knowledge of spoken German can be described as maximum. This is followed by Patcharin and her staff, who were very fluent German speakers, but their overall competence is partial. Kanita and many of her staff members spoke little German, as some of her staff had only recently moved to the country. Therefore, Kanita and the majority of her staff had only minimal competence in German. The organization of the

massage businesses also differed. Patcharin primarily ran her business alone only making use of her part-timers for the afternoon shifts or at times of high customer frequency. On the other hand, Kanita's salon was a business of scale. In order to sustain her business, Kanita depended on part-timers, who had to be familiar with the general routines of the work at the salon.

3.2.1.2 Obtaining informed consent

Before the start of the field work, I obtained informed consent from each of the owners. They were asked to sign a consent form that described the nature of the research and explained to them the methods of data collection and the confidential treatment and use of the data for academic purposes (see Appendix B). With respect to the massage salons, I agreed with the owners that they would inform their part-time staff about the project and that consent was granted on their behalf. However, I made sure that I informed all part-timers personally about the aims and the procedures of the study. In Patcharin's case obtaining consent from her two part-timers was not a problem, but in Kanita's case the sheer number of part-timers and their flexible work schedules presented a problem. In this case, I informed each part-timer individually to obtain her consent. In all cases, I also informed the part-timers that they were always able to opt out of the study, if and whenever they wanted.

Another problem was that the majority of the practices at the three workplaces presented customer service encounters. I agreed with the owners to put up a sign containing information on the project that they could place visibly on the counter during my observation sessions. All three participants also agreed that I would introduce myself to the customers, in case they approached me or if they wondered about my presence. For the process of data collection, I also obtained clearance from the University's Ethics Review Panel.

3.2.1.3 Description of the field sites and main actors

In this following section, I would like to present the field sites, their location, the layout, as well as the main participants in the research.

Kanita's Massage Salon

Kanita set up her massage salon in one of the largest towns in the state of Saarland. The town is home to slightly more than 40000 inhabitants, hosts a number of big industrial players in the automotive industry and boasts a vibrant shopping district with a good mix of retailers centred around the town's historic market square. Kanita's salon is located in one of main roads leading to the square. Restaurants, a cinema, a community theatre, and a number of bars popular with young adults thrive in the immediate vicinity. Kanita's massage salon is thus in a visible and easily accessible part of the city centre. The salon was officially opened in early 2010. In the beginning Kanita started working on her own, but soon after was joined by two part-timers, because of increasing demand. This success led to an expansion and doubling of the floor space in late 2011 by renting the adjacent shop space. The addition became the new centre of the shop, as it provided space for a large counter top, a waiting area for customers, three closed-off treatment rooms, two with double bunks and one with a single bunk, and two large armchairs with foot rests for foot reflexology treatments. The following images show the counter area, the waiting room area, and a treatment room.

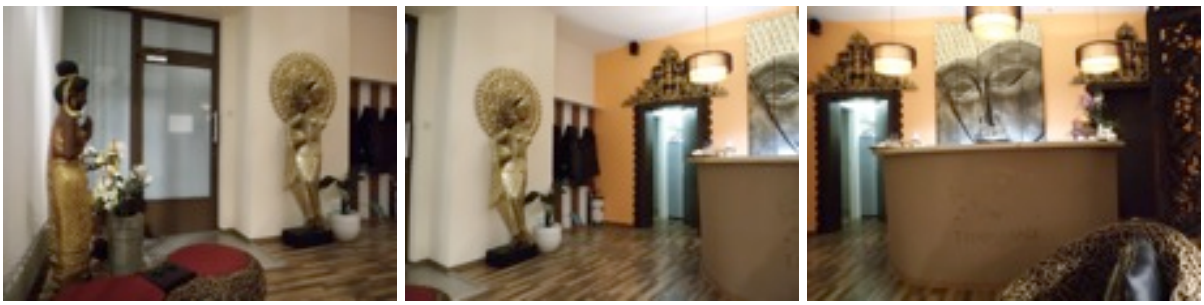


Image 4: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entrance and service counter



Image 5: Kanita's Massage Salon: Customer waiting area

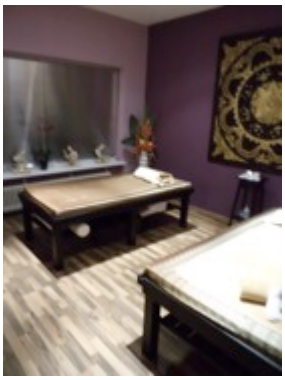


Image 6: Kanita's Massage Salon: Treatment room

Upon entering the salon the customer finds the service counter to her left and the waiting area to her right. The counter takes the form of a half circle. On either side one usually finds orchid flowers and behind the counter is a big wooden portrait of Buddha's head. Behind the counter to the left is the entrance to the kitchenette that staff use to store their belongings and that provides storage for the utensils they need to access before and after a treatment, such as sterilised hot face towels, massage oils, or the drinks that are provided for the customers afterwards. To the left of the kitchenette is a small guest toilet and a wash basin. To the right of the counter is a treatment room with a single bed (Treatment room A). The room welcomes patients in calming shades of green. Further to the right, at the opposite wall of the entrance are two further, larger treatment rooms both with two massage beds each. The one around the corner from Treatment room A is painted in purple (Treatment room B) as shown in the image above, while the second one comes in yellow (Treatment room C). During treatments the doors to the rooms remain closed. The waiting area for customers consists of a bench, two cushioned seats, and a low coffee table providing a space for customers to linger after their treatments. Besides the furniture, a number of art pieces and small statues of Thai dancers adorn the reception area and each treatment room, all of which was imported from Thailand, according to Kanita. A faint music is continually running in the background, and the air is filled with the odour of massage oil.

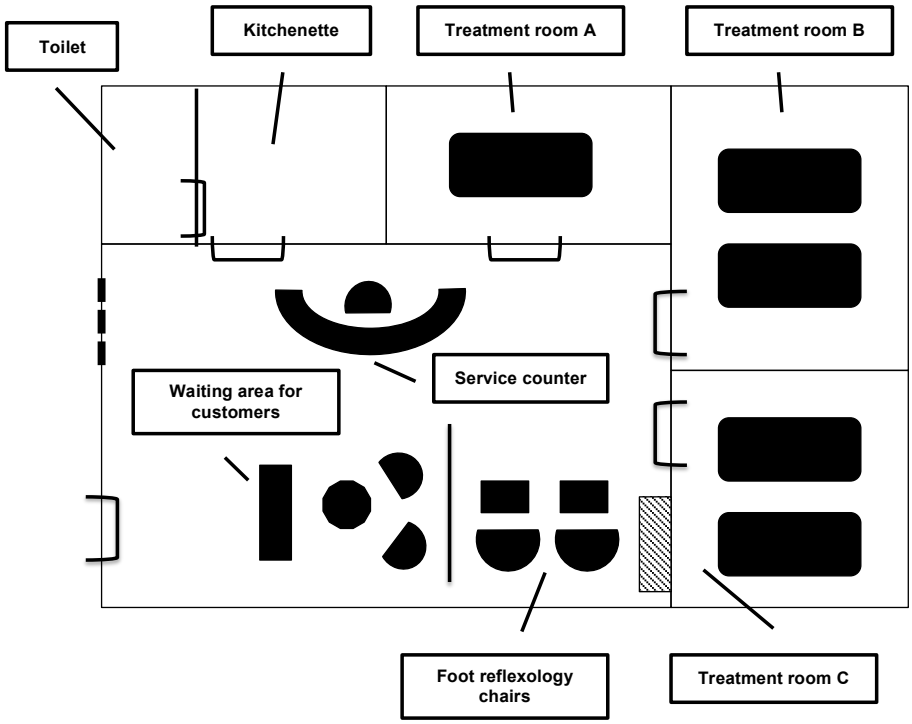


Image 7: Kanita's Massage Salon: Floor plan

In the course of my observations at the store, I encountered overall thirteen different part-timers that worked for Kanita. All were Thai women and all were married to German nationals and resided in the area. Eight of them worked regularly at the store and had been working there from 6 months to almost 2 years. Two were only called upon on weekends or exceptionally busy periods or when there was a temporary shortage of staff. The remaining three were introduced to me by Kanita as trainees, who, as she put it, underwent a trial period at her store. Some of the part-timers did not work on fixed days or pre-determined times, but working times were handled flexibly depending on demand and the therapists out-of-work commitments. This fact made it difficult to select certain staff members for observation.

The interesting issue for me was that similar to Kanita, there were a number of staff members whose proficiency in German was just minimal, so I particularly wanted to focus on them. Just like with Kanita herself, I primarily communicated with them in English or in a codeswitched variety. However, interestingly, their minimal German competence did neither deter them from working at the salon, nor was it a criterion for Kanita not to employ them.

Main participants:

NAME	POSITION	GERMAN COMPETENCE
Kanita	owner	minimal
Ratcha	regular part-timer; 2 years	partial
Thani	regular part-timer; 1 year	minimal
Sopha	regular part-timer; 1 year	minimal
Gerhard	Kanita's husband	maximum

Table 14: Kanita's Massage Salon: Main participants & German competence

Secondary participants:

NAME	POSITION	GERMAN COMPETENCE
Petchara	regular part-timer; 1 year	minimal
Porntip	regular part-timer; 2 years	partial
Sinjai	regular part-timer; 6 months	partial
Sucharat	regular part-timer; 1 year	partial
Savika	trainee	partial
Namthip	trainee	minimal
Mai	trainee	minimal

Table 15: Kanita's Massage Salon: Secondary participants & German competence

Patcharin's Massage Salon

Patcharin's massage salon is located on the ground floor of her two-storey home in a residential neighbourhood in a village of approximately 6500 inhabitants. The village, however, borders a large town of roughly 35000 inhabitants that is the commercial and administrative centre of the area. While her home and salon is located in a residential neighbourhood, it is easily accessible, as it is just off one of the main roads leading into the adjacent town. Patcharin opened her current business in 2008. A lighted sign above the door indicates the existence of her business and on the entrance door to the house a slightly faded, laminated A4-size paper indicates the opening hours of her practice. The workspace stretches over most of the right hand side of the ground floor of the house. Stepping through the entrance, a customer finds a small reception area in the hallway, where she needs to change her shoes for slippers before entering the main part of the salon.

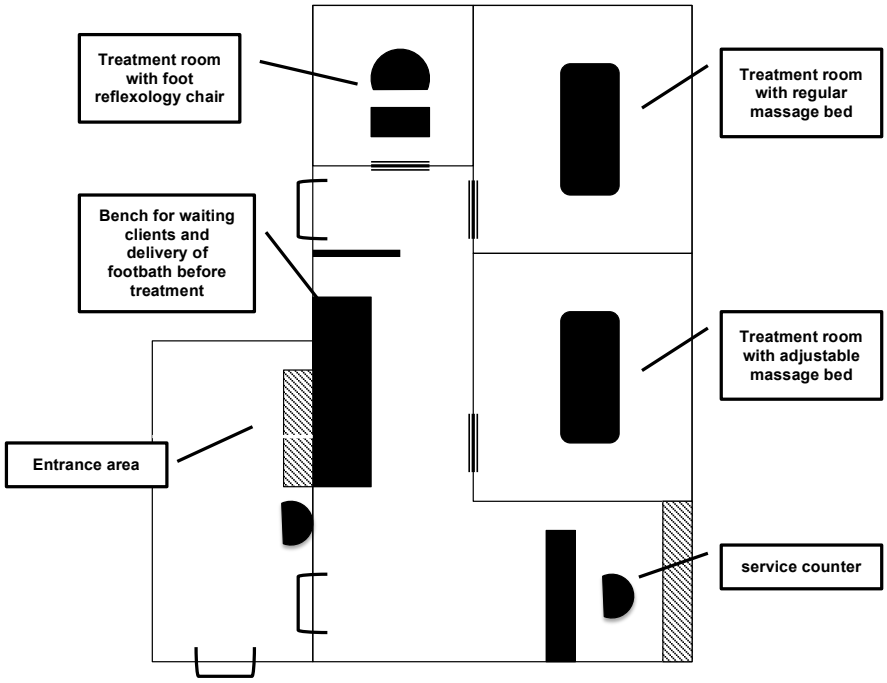


Image 8: Patcharin's Massage Salon: Floor plan

The main part of the salon is on the right of the entrance. It is accessible through a door next to the entrance that is decorated with Thai cartoon figures, written greetings in Thai for men and women, and a notice in German that reminds customers to take off their shoes before entering, as shown in Image 9 below.



Image 9: Patcharin's Massage Salon: Entrance area

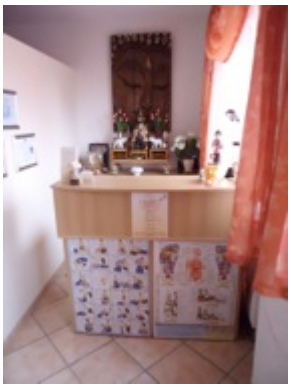


Image 10: Patcharin's Massage Salon: Service counter

The salon is divided into several activity zones: a transactional zone marked by the service counter, a waiting zone in the form of a long bench that comfortably fits two adults, and three treatment zones, two large rooms with a massage bed each and one with an armchair and foot rest for foot reflexology treatments. The service counter is mainly used to settle payments and bookings and provides all the tools necessary for Patcharin and her staff to do so. On the wall that separates the treatment room and the service counter and accessible to the gaze of the customer are six of Patcharin's training certificates that attest to her participation in general and specific Thai massage workshops in Thailand. The treatment zones are not fully closed off rooms, but are formed by plasterboard walls that do not reach up until the ceiling. This fact facilitated the audio-recordings of talk during treatments. Next to the service counter is a treatment room and another treatment room is adjacent to it. Each room contains a massage bed in its centre. The first treatment room contains an massage bed with an electric motor that allows the bed to be raised and lowered. On the other hand, the second treatment room has a low wooden massage bed which is normally used for Thai massage treatments. Patcharin's interior design resembles that of Kanita's salon with golden statues of Thai dancers, the bench and side-tables made of dark, probably tropical wood, the cloth on the bench with embroidered elephants, the thick orange silk curtains that seal the entrances of the treatment rooms, and a large Buddhist altar or shrine behind the service counter. The room is always well heated, a smell of massage oil pervades the air and soothing music continuously runs softly in the background.

Although Patcharin always talked to me in English (as she had previously worked and lived in Australia) her competence in German can be seen as partial. Her part-timers also had partial competence in German.

Main participants:

NAME	POSITION	GERMAN COMPETENCE
Patcharin	owner	partial
Chalida	regular part-timer; 4 years	partial
Kesarin	regular part-timer; 6 months	partial
Erik	Patcharin's husband	maximum

Table 16: Patcharin's Massage Salon: Main participants & German competence

Wipa's Asia Market

The third business was Wipa's Asia Market, a food retail shop, specialising in products from Asia. I had been a customer at Wipa's shop previously and she was one of the first immigrant business owners who agreed to be interviewed during the first phase of the study. Wipa's store is conveniently located in the commercial centre of a small town of approximately 22000 inhabitants. Wipa's store is part of a row of established, local businesses, e.g. a fish market, a butchery, a bakery, a book store, a tea retailer, an organic grocer, and a hairdresser. Facing her store is a large parking space and a number of multi-storey houses with a high concentration of medical clinics that attract a great number of patients from the community throughout the week. The store is on route to the town's small pedestrian area which features the usual franchised outlets and some cafés and eateries.

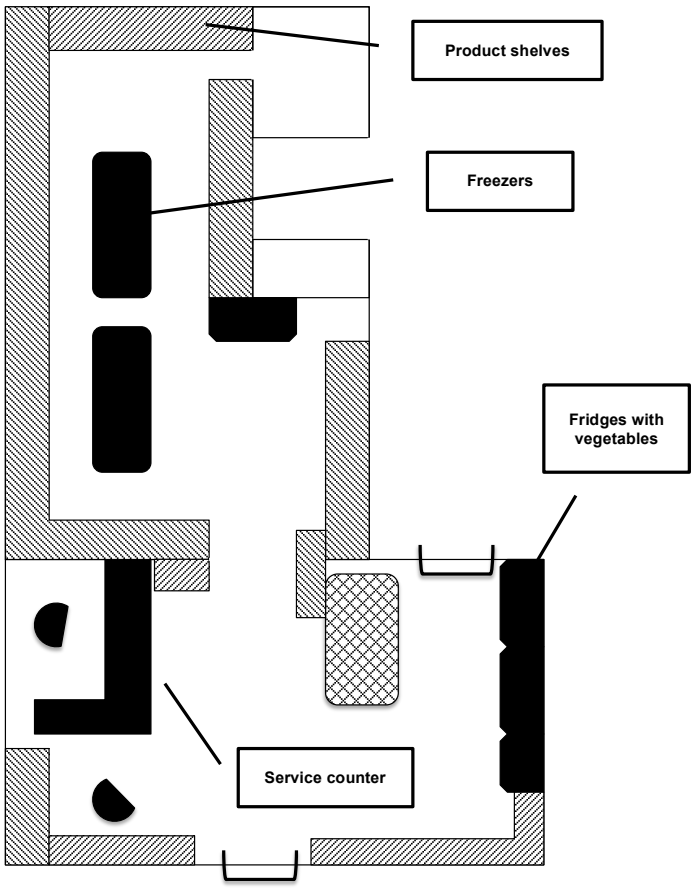


Image 11: Wipa's Asia Market: Floor plan



Image 12: Wipa's Asia Market: Counter area

The retail space is distributed across two rectangular-shaped rooms. The store's front features two large display windows with top to bottom glass panels. Stickers on each glass panel project the name of the store to passers-by. Seen from the outside the left glass panel carries the name in Roman script, while the name is featured in Thai script on the right hand side. On both panels the national flag of Thailand thrones above the shop name. The products on display in the windows on cube-shaped metal shelves are cooking utensils used in the preparation of Asian food, for example, pounders, woks, bamboo

steamers, and a rice cooker. There are also handicraft items, such as candle holders, bowls, and elephants made of dark tropical wood. Interestingly though, none of her staples is on display, i.e. food and beverage products.

The cashier counter on the left can be seen as a physical barrier that separates the retail space accessible to all visitors from Wipa's administrative space. On top of and behind the cashier counter, Wipa has access to all the items that she needs to run her business: the cash register and the weighing scales, a telephone and fax machine, the product catalogues by the suppliers, essential stationary items, files, folders and document trays to collect relevant paperwork. Wipa can exit this space through a small gap facing the shop window. Right next to this exit in front of the display shelf in the shop window there is usually a low padded seat that visitors and researchers use as a resting place or observation platform.

Main participants:

NAME	POSITION	GERMAN COMPETENCE
Wipa	owner	maximum
Paul	Wipa's brother-in-law	maximum

Table 17: Wipa's Asia Market: Main participants & German competence

3.2.2 Design of the field research and data collection

The second phase aimed at obtaining a broad overview of the regular actions and patterns of work for the owners and their staff. The aim was to become familiar with the actions that constituted regular workplace practices for the participants. Following the concept of social action in MDA, I paid particular attention to the three constitutive elements when observing the workplace practices at the three sites. This involved documenting the different types of interaction order, or the various relationships and constellations that the participants engaged in while working. I also attempted to find out about the discourses in place, or the norms or conventions, that governed these actions and the mediational means that they used to accomplish work. Moreover, I tried to learn about the influence of the participant's historical bodies on the workplace routines based on their trajectories into self-employment and their levels of experience with the tasks and tools at work, in particular the use and relevance of German. And lastly, I tried to understand what the challenges and concerns of the actors were with respect to performing their work and

whether these were related to language competence. In order to achieve these broad goals I employed a number of methods, such as participant observation, interviews, accounts, audio recordings, video recordings, and photographs. Throughout the following sections, I would like to describe in more detail the different methods employed.

3.2.2.1 Participant observation

Following other workplace ethnographies in sociology (Chapman, 2001), I designed my observation plan, such that I would try to cover, as much as possible, a full work week at each of the sites by doing short stretches of observation of 3 to 4 hours each. First of all, by covering a whole work week, I hoped to ensure to observe the complete range of workplace practices, because they may differ depending on the time of the day or the day of the week. In addition, by doing short observation sessions instead of observing a whole working day at a time, I also hoped to minimize interfering with the routines of the informants and at the same time increase the possibility of observing the same working day more than once. All participants were happy with this arrangement. In order to negotiate my access always anew, I also made sure to ask for permission for each next visit, so that the participants would have the choice to end the observation whenever they wanted. This proved useful in the case of Patcharin, for example, because her support for the project dwindled after seven visits to the store.

The following tables (Tables 18 to 20) represent a summary of the time covered at the different workplaces. Each cell indicates one hour of observation. All cells in colour indicate time spent at the workplaces, while the white ones indicate time slots that I did not observe. The black cells indicate that the shop was closed at these times. The orange cells mean that this time slot was observed more than once, while the green cells indicate that it was only observed once.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
09:00						
10:00						
11:00						
12:00						
13:00						
14:00						
15:00						
16:00						
17:00						
18:00						
19:00						

Table 18: Observation Plan: Kanita's Massage Salon

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
09:00						
10:00						
11:00						
12:00						
13:00						
14:00						
15:00						
16:00						
17:00						
18:00						
19:00						

Table 19: Observation Plan: Patcharin's Massage Salon

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
09:00						
10:00						
11:00						
12:00						
13:00						
14:00						
15:00						
16:00						
17:00						
18:00						
19:00						

Table 20: Observation Plan: Wipa's Asia Market

Overall, I covered large parts of the work week at each site to obtain a good understanding of the overall routines and the nexuses of practice or the core actions. The greater number of white cells in Patcharin's observation plan is due to several reasons. After the start of my observations at her salon in February 2013, Patcharin had to leave for Thailand for four weeks and then again in April 2013 for a short stint to tend to an ailing family member. After her return, I continued the observations there, but Patcharin's support waned after I had completed altogether seven sessions of observation. However, since her store was a small business and I was able to follow her work and those of her part-timers closely, I felt that the data collected there still presents a reliable and valid representation of her work.

My position in the field varied at the different sites. With Kanita and her employees, as well as with Wipa, I was able to build a very positive relationship. The relationship with Kanita and her staff was, I felt, one of mutual trust. They were interested in my work and my life and I was interested in them and their work. A seal of approval after two months into the project was that, although Kanita went to Thailand for three weeks, she did not object to continuing my observations. Several times I was invited to join staff for lunch or dinner in the shop. And I was more than happy to help out removing empty trays, washing dishes or preparing drinks for the customers during busy spells at the salon. During the observation sessions, I would sit in the waiting room area or, in case the area was occupied by clients, I would position myself next to the counter. I felt that since the shop served a large number of customers my presence in the shop was generally not often noticed and perceived as intrusive. However, writing my field notes drew the attention of some customers. If this happened, I willingly offered to identify myself, which then at times led to further discussions on the topic of my research.

My relationship with Wipa started on a very positive note, when we discovered during the initial interview some commonalities in our biographies. She lived in the same village as my parents and her son attended the same secondary school as I did in the past. I also sensed that during my observation sessions Wipa was very keen on sharing her experiences, something which seemed to have an almost cathartic effect on her, because she usually did not have the opportunity to talk with anyone about the heavy work load at the store and the responsibilities that came with it. During the observations, I would usually sit on a small cushioned chair next to the counter, where very often friends would take a seat when they came for visits. After the first month of fieldwork, I was already a

familiar face to many of her clients. And since I was sitting on the chair where her visitors would usually occupy, my presence did not appear to customers as extraordinary.

As mentioned above, the relationship with Patcharin was very positive at the start and my relationship to her part-timers remained positive throughout. However, towards the end I felt that that my presence was increasingly eyed with suspicion by Patcharin. From my perspective, our relationship became slightly strained after I introduced myself to one of her customers, although, just as Kanita and Wipa, Patcharin and I had agreed that I should do so, if a customer inquired. Yet, the customer showed a keen interest in my research and even after the massage would continue to talk to me about the project. It seemed that the customer's attention to my presence was perceived by Patcharin as too much of an interference with her work. During the observation sessions at her salon, I would usually take a seat on the bench provided for waiting customers, but during busy spells I would move to the foot reflexology chair adjacent to the treatment room with the Thai massage bed at the back of the salon. Since I had adopted the policy of always asking for consent after each session, Patcharin and I agreed to stop the observations after the seventh session, even though I had not covered her shifts on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings.

I documented each observation session with field notes that I wrote down in a A6-size notebook. After each sessions I would type up the notes on my computer at home. These field notes provided me with neutral data on the routine actions that made up the various nexuses of practice at each site, as well as the interaction orders and the material and discursive mediational means used, but also my subjective impressions of what I had observed, all of which could then be compared to the personal experiences of the actors.

3.2.2.2 Interviews

I conducted a number of interviews during the research process: semi-structured interviews with all the owners, semi-structured interviews with the business associates (those individuals supporting the owners), and language repertoire interviews with some of the participants. Overall, I conducted 11 interviews, each of which lasted between 30 and 120 minutes.

The *semi-structures interviews with business owners* aimed at obtaining the owners' views on their work. These interviews were designed as explorative interviews (Honer, 2011),

in order to capture the owners' subjective accounts of the experiences and activities that led to the start of the business and the regular conduct of their work based on the issues that had emerged from the literature on immigrant businesses (see Appendix C for the guiding questions). I had constructed six broad themes for the interviews: a description of the type of business, their previous professional experiences, the process of entry into self-employment, the routine actions at work including frontstage and backstage routines, their language knowledge and the use of languages at work, and finally their migration history. I usually started the interview prompting the owners to describe the nature of their business to me. This proved to be a good strategy, as it led almost naturally into the other topics on my agenda. Given the explorative nature of the interview, it also provided ample space and time for the owners to address topics that they felt to be relevant. All these interviews were conducted at the workplaces of the participants. Since these interviews were part of phase one of the study, they all took place before the actual field work started. Therefore, these interviews served as the first point of contact between me and the future participants. The interviews with Kanita and Wipa were conducted in January 2012, and the interview with Patcharin in August 2012. In Patcharin's case her husband was also present during the interview. All interviews were audio-recorded and written consent was obtained in advance. For each interview, I made content summaries in order to elicit sub-themes on the topics covered. The interview data thus complemented the neutral observations, as they presented the participants' own categorization of the normality and regularity of their workplace practices (Baker, 2004).

A brief comment must be provided on the language choice of the interview. As I do not speak Thai, the language choice was restricted to the resources of German and English. Between these two languages, I left the choice up to my informants. However, their language choice was also valuable information that helped me in determining their level of competence in German. Wipa chose German, which remained our medium of communication throughout the research. Patcharin chose to talk about her experiences in English, despite speaking to all customers relatively freely in German. Kanita, as the observational data will show, used primarily English in interactions with me, but frequently codeswitched into German.

Throughout my observations at the three sites, it turned out that the owners either had received some assistance in the beginning or still relied on the assistance of trusted

associates. In Kanita's and Patcharin's case, these were their husbands. In Wipa's case it was her brother-in-law. Therefore, I chose to conduct *semi-structured interviews with these associates* towards the end of the field phase. These interviews centred around three broad themes: their role in starting up the business, their current involvement in the management of the business, and their views on the ability of their partners to shoulder the linguistic aspects of their work. The interview with Kanita's husband Gerhard was conducted in August 2013, the interview with Patcharin's husband Erik in July 2013, and the interview with Wipa's brother-in-law Paul in July 2013. These interviews were also audio-recorded with the consent of the associates and content summaries were produced. The associates' accounts provided additional evidence that supplemented the owners' statements as well as the observations.

While details on the owner's language repertoires were gathered primarily through the initial interview or through their accounts during work hours (as described below), I chose to conduct language repertoire interviews with a number of the part-timers at both massage salons. These interviews attempted to get a more detailed understanding of their language knowledge, language use and language learning strategies. The *visual language repertoire interview* (VLR) was supposed to capture a synchronic and diachronic record of the participant's knowledge of languages relying on the participant's own accounts and evaluations of how the resources entered or left their repertoire. In line with Blommaert and Backus's (2013) notion of language competence, the exercise was designed to elicit information on language knowledge across both productive (speaking, writing) and receptive (listening, reading) skills. In order to facilitate the interview I had designed a grid with four squares on an A3- size paper, with each square representing one of the four areas of competence (speaking, listening, writing, reading). I asked the interviewees to use post-it notes and write down the resources for each skill and paste them into the squares of the grid. They then ranked the items in terms of their self-assessed proficiency. However, the participation rate and the success of this form of interviewing was limited. From Kanita's salon, only Sinjai, Sopha and Kanita herself participated. From Patcharin's salon, only her two part-timers, Chalida and Kesarin, agreed to participate. A reason for the limited success of this form of interviewing was that, with the exception of Kesarin, all had to be interviewed during or just after work hours. Kesarin, on the other hand, invited me to her home, and was very willing to share her experiences of language learning, in

particular with respect to what it meant to learn German, as we will see in chapter 4. The interviews with Kanita and her staff were conducted in June 2013 and with Chalida and Kesarin in September 2013. Like the other interviews, the VLR interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants and content summaries were made. A thematic analysis of the interviews focussed particularly on the strategies that the participants identified as conducive for their appropriation of German.

3.2.2.3 Accounts

An important part of the data in an ethnographic investigation are unsolicited and solicited oral accounts between participants or between the participants and the researcher. Also for this study such accounts provided "a useful source both of direct information about the setting and of evidence about the perspectives, concerns, and discursive practices of the people who produce them" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 99). In the initial phases of the fieldwork, I frequently relied on the participants' accounts to make sense of their actions, to explain the different types of interaction order, the mediational means used to accomplish the actions, the discourses in place that shaped these actions, or to clarify the relationship between sets of actions that were otherwise not readily accessible to me by observation. Whenever time permitted, I also tried to actively engage the participants in sharing their personal histories and the experiences of learning languages with me. Later on in the research process, when I had chosen to focus on particular nexuses of practice or core actions, I also engaged with the participants in reflective accounts testing my interpretations of the phenomena that I had observed. In doing so, I also made use of the photographic evidence collected to elicit such reflective accounts. Most of these accounts were captured on the recordings of the observation sessions. As I will explain further below, I later on organised all the accounts according to the themes of core actions, language repertoires, and the development of their businesses.

3.2.2.4 Audio recordings

Each observation session was captured on audio using a ZOOM M2next and a CONRAD DR2 recorder. After an initial survey of the layouts of the shops during my first observation sessions and my impression of where most of the actions took place, I decided to position the recorder in these strategic locations. In the case of Kanita's salon, it was on the side of the service counter, in the case of Patcharin, it was on the side-table

next to the bench were customers were prepared of their treatments, and at Wipa's retail shop, it was on top of the display shelf just next to the service counter. Unlike other approaches to audio-record workplace interactions, where participants are given the control over their recordings and are equipped with portable microphones (e.g. J. Holmes & Stubbe, 2003), such an approach proved not to be feasible for the recordings at the massage salons. First of all, attaching a portable microphone would have restrained the movements of the practitioners severely and due to the changing schedules of the workers, I would not have been able to supervise the recording process or equip every worker with the necessary devices. In Wipa's case, I did make use of a portable microphone for the last six observation sessions, in order to be able to record interactions with customers that happened in the back of the store, although the majority of the actions happened around the service counter in the front of the store, an area which was well covered by the stationary recorder. For the afternoon sessions at Patcharin's salon when two practitioners were working, I used two separate recording devices. One recorder remained on the side-table, while the other recorder was placed in the room with the foot reflexology chair next to the second treatment room. This was a way to ensure that interactions in both treatment rooms and at the service counter were captured. As much as the small shop space of Patcharin's salon enabled the recording of talk during treatments, such recordings were impossible at Kanita's salon, because the massage beds were located in separate rooms that were closed-off from the main part of the salon. As talk was a frequent and important tool during the performance of treatments at Patcharin's salon (as chapter 6 will illustrate), I decided to self-record four of my own treatments at Kanita's salon involving four different therapists. However, during my own treatments talk was hardly used, which is why I did not pursue the recording of treatments further.

For each recording session I initially produced rough timelines of the content and matched these to the field notes, so that I was able to contextualize the recordings with the observational data. These audio recordings thus allowed for the close sequential analysis of the discursive routines that constituted the core actions at each site using the conceptual apparatuses of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics.

3.2.2.5 Video recordings

Video recordings have become a staple for many workplace studies, as it allows to capture the multimodal nature of interactions. I had obtained consent from the University's Ethics Review Panel to make use of video materials, but only Wipa gave consent to the use of video. In the end, seven observation sessions at Wipa's Asia Market were also captured on video. As most interactions happened around the service counter, Wipa and I agreed to mount the camera onto the wall behind the service counter. I used a CANON MiniDV camera with a wide-angle lens. As mentioned above, customers were made aware of the video recording through a piece of paper prominently placed on the counter, so that they were able to opt out or stop the recording, if they wished. The video recordings provided additional detail for the sequential analysis of the core actions, especially with reference to the use of material mediational means that were used to accomplish the chains of routine actions. Yet, since I was not able to use video recordings systematically throughout the research and only at one of the sites, I take the video data as an additional source for the analysis of the core actions at Wipa's store.

3.2.2.6 Photographs

The collection of photographic data allowed me to capture important literacy artefacts in the workplaces that were either used or produced by the participants as mediational means in accomplishing their work. As the analytical chapters will illustrate, the documentation of these tools via photography proved to be an important aspect in making sense of the core actions in particular at Kanita's salon and Wipa's shop. I utilized the photographs not only as representations of the artefacts that could be further analysed using concepts of visual and social semiotics with respect to the languages used in their inscriptions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003), but also as a basis to engage the participants in reflective accounts about their use of these artefacts as mediational means in their workplace practices (J. Collier & M. Collier, 1986).

Table 21 below presents an overview of the types of data that I collected at the three field sites, in order to answer my research questions.

	Period of observation	Sessions (number)	Audio (hours)	Video (hours)
Wipa's Asia Market	02/2013 – 07/2013	20	35	28
Kanita's Massage Salon	03/2013 – 07/2013	17	47	0
Patcharin's Massage Salon	04/2013 – 08/2013	7	26	0
TOTAL		**44**	**108**	**28**

Table 21: Observation periods & quantity of data

In summary, through the use of these different methods, I was able to gather multiperspectived and multimodal data (Norris & Jones, 2005b) that allowed me to focus with the help of my participants on the most significant nexuses of practice for further analysis.

3.2.3 Focus on key nexuses of practice or core actions

After having been introduced to the workplace routines at the three sites through prolonged periods of participant observation and the data generated through audio and video recordings, photographs, fieldnotes, as well as the interviews and accounts by the participants, the most important nexuses of practice or core actions at each of the three businesses were identified for further analysis. At Kanita's Massage Salon the core actions comprised the four routine actions of booking appointments, welcoming customers, charging customers, and selling vouchers. These four core actions all involved encounters with customers and constituted practices that were vital for the business to function and survive. Consequently, all staff members had to be able to perform them. At Patcharin's Massage Salon, the core action was administering the massage treatment itself, because it was the most prominent action at her salon and thus forms the basis of the work for Patcharin and her employees. As we will see in chapter 4 in more detail, the emphasis on dissimilar key workplace practices, despite Kanita's and Patcharin's engagement in the same sector, was to a significant extent due to the size of the businesses and the owners' objectives with respect to their ventures or their business identities. In the case of Wipa's Asia Market, I focused on two core actions that Wipa revealed as being particular significant. The first of these core actions is what Wipa referred to as 'explaining', a routine that was tied to the transactional side of her job. The core action of 'explaining' was a part of face-to-face interactions with her customers, but also realised in the routine

production of artefacts. These artefacts were handwritten shelf labels stuck to the product shelves in Wipa's store and which allowed customers to access information on the products. The second core action for Wipa was the ordering of stock with her suppliers. Being able to competently order stock was not only essential for her business to function, but it was also a frequently reoccurring activity that Wipa engaged in during a regular work week.

The analyses of these core actions throughout chapters 5 to 7 follow the same analytical procedure. In line with the principle of MDA to examine discourse in action by drawing on concepts from different practice-oriented theoretical traditions, each core action is first of all divided into its component parts, meaning those mediated actions in their sequential development that finally lead to the accomplishment of the core action. Second, for each of these lower-level actions, the array of mediational means are examined that are accessible to the social actors and that are used by them to accomplish the actions. A particular focus will be placed on the use of discourse in the form of spoken language and texts and the way they contribute to the performance of the actions. As mentioned above, in order to analyse the use of spoken discourse as a mediational means, we will draw the analytical principles of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics. Given the focus of this thesis, we strive to examine how the participants' utilize the resources in their multilingual linguistic repertoires and how their different levels of competence in German affect the performance of the core actions. Moreover, the analysis attempts to account for the influence of the participants' historical bodies and the broader discourses in place on the accomplishment of the actions. Therefore, the analysis of the sequential development of the core actions will be supplemented with the data gathered via the interviews and the solicited and unsolicited accounts.

3.2.4 The corpus of data and preparation for analysis

As Table 22 illustrates, the corpus of data collected comprised audio and video recordings, solicited and unsolicited accounts by the participants in the form of interviews or anecdotes, photographic documentation of crucial artefacts, as well as my field notes.

CORPUS		
audio recordings	solicited accounts	photographs
video recordings	unsolicited accounts	field notes

Table 22: Composition of corpus

After each observation session, I transferred all the collected data to my computer and two external hard drives, one of which was kept under lock and key. According to the University's Ethics Guidelines, the original DV cassettes used for the video recordings were also kept under lock and key in my office at the premises of the University. For the audio and the video data I developed an alphanumeric coding system that included a reference to the site and the date of the recording, the time of the recording, and, if necessary, the part of the recording or the type of medium. For example, a passage labelled EEUK_060313_014448 means that this passage was recorded at Kanita's salon on 6 March 2013 and it can be found at 1 hour, 44 minutes and 48 seconds. If the audio recording comprised two parts, the second part is indicated with (P2) at the end of the code. The same coding system was used for the video recordings. A video is indicated by a sub-code in brackets at the end of the main code, e.g. (T9a) means that this is tape 9a.

Since complete anonymization of personally identifiable information is neither feasible nor wanted in an ethnographic and sociolinguistic study, because participants always need to have the right to access data of the study or withdraw their consent afterwards, I employed a system of pseudonymization. Effective pseudonymization here meant that I systematically encrypted all personally identifiable information upon collection. First, even before the actual recording, I developed pseudonyms for all human participants, all the business names, names of suppliers or customers, as well as geographical locations or landmarks that may enable the tracing of the identities of the participants and their businesses. These pseudonyms were then consistently employed in all documents making reference to the data (e.g. in transcripts of passages of recordings or in field notes). However, this was not always possible or even desirable for the customers' names in the photographic data collected (e.g. the schedule book at Kanita's salon), if they served as an important example in the data analysis. Otherwise, all the names of customers in the transcripts have also been changed to pseudonyms. In order not to disclose the identity of

participants through still photographs taken from the videos, I also decided to blank out their faces, as it does not compromise the analyses in this study.

3.2.4.1 Preparation for analysis

The first step to prepare the data for analysis was to produce content summaries of the audio and video recordings, as well as all the different kinds of interviews. For all the audio recordings and the video recordings, I produced time sheets upon listening. As mentioned briefly above, these time sheets were then aligned to the field notes, so that I was able to refer to the relevant passage in the field notes that fitted the passage in the recording. When producing the time sheets, I themed the data (Saldaña, 2009) by coding the passages according to presence of core actions (e.g. selling vouchers, booking appointments, or welcoming customers) or accounts. The themes of the accounts distinguished between reflective accounts with reference to the core actions (e.g. ordering stock, producing shelf labels) or accounts with reference to the themes of language learning, migration history, and business development. In a similar manner, all interviews were themed.

Based on these themes, I built collections of passages in the data with reference to the core actions (see Appendix D), the reflective accounts on the core actions, and the themes of language learning, migration history, and business development. The collections on the broad themes of language learning, migration history, and business development were then further analysed by identifying sub-themes based on the categories used by the participants (Baker, 2004), which provide the basis for the first analytical chapter 4. For each of the core actions similar collections were produced and they were then linked to the photographic data and the video data.

Based on the collections of the core actions, I selected typical instances for the transcription process. These transcriptions were largely based on the conventions developed for the analysis of talk-in-interaction in German, GAT 2 (Gesprächanalytisches Transkriptionssystem) (Selting et al., 2009). Analytically, GAT 2 allows for a sequential analysis of the data applying the conceptual tools of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics. The GAT 2 transcription conventions differentiate between three tiers of transcripts: a minimal, a basic, and a refined transcript. For my purposes I used largely the basic transcript with some aspects of the refined version, if they were

deemed meaningful, for example, accentuations. However, I had to make a number of decisions that are not resolved by the GAT 2 conventions with respect to certain features in the spoken discourse in German by my Thai informants and with respect to the regional variety of German used in the state of Saarland.

Regional features, as GAT 2 spells out, should only be transcribed, if they are relevant for the analysis and if it is possible to reproduce them in script. I opted to include typical regional variations, for example the regional variant *nommo* for standard German *nochmal* 'once again' or the reduced form of the definite article in the accusative *de* for the standard German version *den* 'the'.

```
29      FC      anschließend [nommo in de lade] gehen [ne?]
                after that [go to the shop] again [right?]
```

Other common regional variants or common forms of spoken German reproduced in the transcripts are *nit* for *nicht* 'not', *jo* for *ja* 'yes', *nee* for *nein* 'no', *sin* for *sind* 'are', *un* for *und* 'and', *hamma* for *haben wir* 'we have', or *machma* for *machen wir* 'we'll do'. The complete transcription conventions can be found in Appendix F.

Similarly, I opted to represent typical features of spoken German by my Thai informants that are not regional, but nevertheless so-called ethnolectal dimensions in their speech. This concerned in particular lexical units that involved the alveolar fricative /ch/ which was very often replaced with a palatal stop /k/. For example *sechzig* 'sixty' was often pronounced as *seksik*, or *nicht* 'not' as *nikt*. If these are used in the transcript these variations are not meant to represent deviant forms, but I would like to represent them as characteristics of the speech style of my participants. If other forms of speech of my participants were flagged as a repairable, I would still try to represent them using regular orthography, but I will highlight them in the transcript by putting them into dashes, for example:

```
03 ->           (heut) alles /bese/.
```

/bese/ represents one of participant's pronunciation the adjective *besetzt* 'occupied'. Non-idiomatic grammatical construction were represented in the data as they appeared in the recordings. In accordance with the GAT 2 conventions, I chose regular orthography rather than a phonetic script for the representations of these features.

All the transcripts used in the analytical chapters were translated into English. Here I faced a number of challenges, as I had to make choices about how to represent certain non-idiomatic features in the German data in the English translation. I chose not to mirror the regional variants or colloquialisms explained above. However, I tried, as far as possible, to represent morphosyntactical inconsistencies in the English translation, such as omission of articles or pronouns, or the absence of agreement in the plural. A particular problem were the translation of adverbials of time. In German the 24h system as well as the 12h system can be used to refer to time. I opted for the solution of representing both in the translation into English, while being aware that the 24h system in English is reserved for certain professional registers, such as aviation.

3.2.4.2 Dealing with Thai translations

Working with multilingual data poses an additional challenge in particular, if the researcher does not speak one the varieties used by the participants, such as Thai in my case (P. Holmes et al., 2013). In order to secure reliability when working with a language in which one lacks any or sufficient proficiency, some researchers work in teams which include at least one 'native-speaker' expert (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). In my case, I unfortunately did not have access to a collaborator who was a trained linguist and an expert in Thai. I engaged a Thai translator, who was born and raised in Thailand but who migrated to Luxembourg in his teens, and was therefore proficient in Thai, German and English. He translated all instances of Thai present in the various artefacts that were used for work and which were identified as relevant for my analysis. Moreover, from the collections of audio and video recordings, I selected episodes for translation. I prepared a transcript template for him to use. He then used Thai script to represent the Thai data and translated it into English. Before, I had instructed him on some of the transcription procedures reminding him that he should refrain from altering the original wording of the Thai version and to put the translation into the template provided.

In order to ensure the quality of the examples that appear in this thesis, I used the translations provided by him, but I then organized them into intonation units. At times I had to repair some of the translations in order to re-introduce repetitions or sentence particles that he had left out. I did so using the website www.thai2english.com which provides a kind of parsing tool for Thai with phonetic transliterations in Roman script, which I was then able to compare with the audio recording. However, issues that get lost

in translation are sociolinguistic details in Thai. While the translator was able to point some things out to me, such as the conventional address forms in Thai, many other potentially interesting details about the use of Thai among my participants were lost. However, as the analysis will show, instances of spoken Thai for the performance of the core actions were usually very short and less significant than expected.

3.2.5 Shortcomings and challenges

Part and parcel of any ethnographic research, is that the researcher encounters unforeseeable challenges and realizes that the previous planning of the process and the methods do not yield the expected returns in the field.

Obviously, the fact that I had to deal with a language that I did not understand proved to be a challenge. The recruitment of a translator ensured my understanding of the passages and my participants proved willing collaborators in explaining aspects of Thai language with me. However, in order to facilitate the transcription process and to enhance the overall validity of the analysis and interpretations in future projects of this kind, the collaboration with a linguistically-trained native speaker would be desirable. On the other hand, I do not think that not being able to converse with my participants in Thai or the fact that I was previously unacquainted to members of the local Thai community presented an obstacle. I rather felt that my perceived impartiality or outsider status and my active interest in their professional lives through the ethnographic approach was valued positively and welcomed. This may be due to the fact that ordinarily few members of the majority, non-immigrant community take an interest in the experiences of my participants. On the other hand, as already mentioned above, the relationships that I was able to build with my participants varied. This imbalance affected the amount of exposure to and the amount of feedback that I was granted regarding their workplace practices. This may have been avoided by concentrating on a single case, but then I would not have been able to examine the similarities, differences, and idiosyncrasies that define their experiences and routines.

Using the method of a visualized language repertoire to obtain details on the sociolinguistic competences of my informants proved to be cumbersome and less effective than I had imagined. While I still consider the method as a valid way to access details on the diachronic development of an adult migrant's language repertoire, as well as its

synchronic state, the fact that I only conducted it towards the end of the research process was strategically unfortunate. In retrospect, I should have resorted to the use of a standardized sociolinguistic questionnaire at the start of the project to obtain a preliminary audit of the self-proclaimed language competencies of my participants, which would have also made comparisons of their competencies more reliable.

A third aspect that I would like to mention is with respect to my choice of not using an analytical software. Given the variety of data that the theoretical approach and the methodological process allowed me to gather, the use of a technical supporting tools, such as ATLAS.ti or MAXQDA would have been helpful. I personally decided against the use of a software, as I was not able to fall back on personal practical experiences with any of the programmes. I do not believe that the use of a software would have enhanced the validity or rigour of the analysis (Fielding & Lee, 1998, Silverman, 2013). However, if used from the start of the project, a software could have facilitated the integration of the different data sources by linking them, something that I did manually in the end.

In the next chapters, I will move on to the analysis of the data.

Chapter 4: Pathways into self-employment

This chapter attempts to answer the first research question.

- What are the pathways into self-employment for immigrant entrepreneurs? How are these pathways shaped by their linguistic repertoires?

Answering this question requires a look at the biographical experiences (or the 'historical bodies') of all the participants. Reconstructing these biographical trajectories is important, because it allows us to consider how the practices and the mediational means that the participants use have entered their lives (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004) and how the biographical trajectories of the owners act as motivational resources to enter self-employment (Kontos, 2003a).

Since the study did not follow a longitudinal approach that accompanied the owners in the process of establishing their businesses, these experiences can only be accessed indirectly. Therefore, I will draw on biographical and language biographical data from the business owners obtained through the semi-structured interviews and the accounts collected during the observations. I will also use the visualized language repertoire interviews conducted with the staff members and, in order to obtain another perspective on the process, the semi-structured interviews conducted with the business associates.

The first section of this chapter will present an analysis of the biographies of the owners before migration, in order to examine the similarities and differences of their experiences. As a second step, the focus will be on their experiences after migration to Germany with a particular emphasis on the ways and means that our participants appropriated German into their repertoires. Thirdly, we will discuss their entry into self-employment, the conditions that acted as motivations behind these decisions, and the resources that they used to create their opportunities, and whether this step depended on their level of appropriation of German and how it affected language learning. Finally, we will examine the corporate identities the three owners claim for themselves, which impacts the actions they define as crucially important for their work. These core actions will then be analysed further for each workplace in the subsequent chapters.

4.1 Professional life and language repertoire before migration

The literature on Thai immigration discussed above pointed to several characteristics of Thai migrants after the 1990s. It suggests that Thai women have completed basic schooling, they have experienced job-related internal migration in Thailand, and thus have previous professional experience. Marriage to a foreign national and the possibility of subsequent migration is viewed as a possibility to secure a better future or to realise dreams that are not achievable in their current lives. All these traits can be documented in the experiences of my informants, which in turn have affected the resources in their linguistic repertoires.

4.1.1 Wipa

Wipa was born in 1968 and grew up in central Thailand in the province of Nakhon Sawan north of Bangkok. Like many families in the area, hers had Chinese roots on the paternal side, but she was socialized into Thai culture and learned the standard variety of Thai at home. Like for all school children in Thailand, Wipa's first foreign language was English. It was introduced as a school subject in the last two years of the six years of compulsory primary school education. Then Wipa received a scholarship to enrol in a prestigious catholic missionary school in her state, where she received what sounds like a bilingual Thai-English education:

... un ganz bekannt weil die die sind sehr gut in Englisch? weil pastor viele pastor kommt au-von äh spanien england oder china? un die spricht dann nur englisch dann ne? ... de:r pastor spricht mit uns (dann) thailändisch aber wenn lesen oder wenn was erzählen dann englisch. aber wenn er befehl geben hausaufgaben so un so dann thailändisch (EEWA_030513_000250)

... and very well known because they they are very good in English? because priest many priest come fro- from uh spain england or china? and they speaks then only english then right? ... the: priest speaks with us (then) thai but when reading or when tell a story then english. but when he give order homework so and so then thai. (EEWA_030513_000250)

After her schooling, her competence in English had a profound impact on Wipa's professional career. Initially Wipa had set her mind on becoming a nurse. It happened that her terminally ill mother received treatment in the same hospital where Wipa had been registered to start her vocational training. As the following short narrative illustrates, Wipa suggests that her competence in English allowed her to understand a conversation between the doctor and a group of trainee doctors that decided on her mother's fate and therefore influenced her decision not to start her vocational training as a nurse.

un dann zwei nächte war ich bei ihr, nächste tag, kommt einer so wie professor ne mit so die schülerinnen <ah okay,> un spricht nur englisch, <hm,> wie ist mit meiner mutter passiert, wat ist los mit ihr, un das wird nicht weiter behandelt weil es lohnt sich nicht ne? <hm,> un äh es bringt nichts so sie sterbt so oder so, <hm,> hab ich gesagt, (.) wissen sie was, ich hab

verstanden was sie gesagt haben, aber es ist unverschämt. so was zu sagen, <ja.> un ich finde das is nicht in ordung wenn mein mutter heute oder morgen sterben un ich komm hier bei ihr euch lernen. <ja genau.> un krankenschwester werden. ... da hab ich ihm dann erklärt watt er gesagt hat. er war sprachlos un hat gesagt ich komm nicht. (Interview, Wipa, 00:11:50)

and then two nights I was with her, next day, someone like professor come right with like female students <uh okay,> and speaks only english, <hm,> how happened with my mother- what is the matter with her, and this will not be treated further because it is not worth it right? <hm,> and uh it won't help like she'll die anyway, <hm,> I said, (.) you know what, I understood what you said, but it is shameless. to say something like that, <yes.> and I think it is not okay if my mother die today or tomorrow and I come to learn with you. <yes exactly.> and become a nurse. ... then I explained to him what he said. he was speechless and said I don't come. (Interview, Wipa, 00:11:50)

Wipa's recount portrays her as an unusual young girl at that time in Thailand, as the medical staff reacted surprised on her English proficiency. In this case, access to English allowed her to exercise agency and choose an alternative professional route.

In search of a new career, Wipa reports to have moved on to relatives in Thailand's tourism hub Pataya. There she secured a position as a receptionist in a hotel, because of, as she stresses, her English competence.

in pataya als rezeption <ah okay.> damals wusst ich nicht mal wat rezeption ist ne? <ja,> un dann jo. (0.5) sagt er zwei wochen probezeit, <hm,> ich kann nicht mal wie nennt man das schreibmaschine umgehen ja, aber durch die so gute englischkenntnis, <hm,> hat er mich aufgenommen (Interview, Wipa, 00:13:35)

in pataya as reception <ah okay.> back then I did not even know what reception is right? <yes,> and then yes. (0.5) he says two weeks probationary period, <hm,> I can't even how do you call it use typewriter yes, but because of the so good english knowledge, <hm,> he took me in (Interview, Wipa, 00:13:35)

While Wipa's English competence allowed her to reject the appropriation of one professional practice, it enabled her to learn another one. She suggests that her English proficiency was the crucial tool to gain access to the professional practices of a receptionist, which included the appropriation of dispositional practices, such as ways of dressing and wearing make-up. For example, she related to me in another anecdote that she had not really been concerned much about her appearance before taking on the job as a receptionist. The following quote implies that these newly acquired skills finally played a role in meeting her husband.

... un nach un nach sagt er ich soll schminken, richtige rock tragen, <ja,> uniform schön angezogen un dann kam mein mann dann ne? <ja?> der war geschieden un wollte nach bali fliegen, <oh,> aber sein bekannter hat dann gesagt bangkok is auch sehr schön ne? <hm.> ja. dann bin ich hier. (Interview, Wipa, 00:13:35)

... and little by little he says I should put on make-up, wear proper skirt, <yes,> uniform nicely dressed and then my husband came along then right? <yes?> he was divorced and wanted to fly to bali, <oh,> but his acquaintance said bangkok is also very nice right? <hm.> yes. then I am here. (Interview, Wipa, 00:13:35)

Like for many German-Thai couples, English would remain the means of communication between Wipa and her husband initially. Shortly after their wedding in 1991 in Thailand and at the age of 23, Wipa moved from a busy tourism hub in Thailand

to a quiet village at about 10 minutes from the location of her current business without any knowledge of German. One of the reasons that encouraged her to take the step abroad was, as she suggests, her dream of attending university in Germany. However, this dream was thwarted by her immediate pregnancy and the lack of support from her German husband.

un dann bin ich dann mit ihm gekommen direkt, eigentlich wollte studieren dacht ich jetzt hat jemand mich zu finanzieren. ((laughs)) nee er wollte nicht ne? er hat gesagt ich hab geheiratet dann muss mein mann da wo ich bin ne? <hm,> äh meine frau jo okay. un dann bin ich direkt schwanger, (Interview, Wipa, 00:17:00)

and then I went with him directly, wanted to study actually I thought now have someone to finance me. ((laughs)) no he didn't want right? he said I have married and then my husband must be where I am right? <hm,> uh my wife yes okay and then I am immediately pregnant, (Interview, Wipa, 00:17:00)

These details about Wipa's life before migrating to Germany reveal that she had previous migratory experience, a, albeit brief, professional career, and a history of language learning. Her knowledge of English shaped her career path and finally sustained marriage life in her new home. However, these skills were of very little value in the new surroundings, so that Wipa became a homemaker for the first decade of her life in Germany.

4.1.2 Patcharin

Born in 1980, Patcharin grew up in the Chiang Mai region in the north of Thailand, a region that, like the Isan region in the northeast, has been the source of much of Thailand's internal labour migration (Sakdapolrak, 2008). Patcharin obtained a high school diploma and was prepared to start her tertiary education in Thailand. Judging from her level of education, Patcharin must have received almost 12 years of formal instruction in English. Instead of enrolling in a university course, Patcharin reluctantly followed her sister to Australia in 1999, where she started work in her sister's Thai massage business.

anyway she live there. and then she got a thai massage there. at first I'm not really want to do the thai massage. I just go to learning because of my sister. and in my brain think like, thai massage is like other person thinking. like going to be like, similar to like erotic massage <yeah.> that why I don't want to do it. but I have to do, because for my sister. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:01:17)

Her statement suggests that filial piety appeared to have been stronger than Patcharin's doubts about the legitimacy of the professional practice abroad or the fact of having to start a professional career in another country. However, she prepared herself professionally and linguistically for her migration, as her following quote suggests.

I go to learn, I went to learn, the thai massage, from 1999? <hm?> yes (xx) I was seventeen years old, and after that finished learning the massage ... finish massage, and finish learning English, for six months, and then (straight) to australia <hm?> (0.5) ja. then I start to work with my sister. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:01:17)

After her move to Australia, Patcharin's life was dominated by her work in her sister's massage salon. Yet, she apparently did not lose sight of her aim in obtaining a university degree, as her statement below implies. With this goal in mind, she reports to have continued to hone her English language skills besides her professional practice.

I work there, seven days weeks, and every morning monday to friday, I do go to the english school, at first, and then, ja, after english school I've straight work. until ten o'clock at night and sometime eleven o'clock at night, y'know it's up to like how many customer waiting for, (1.0) ja and then is, (.) after, (1.0) ja study the language and go to the uni not long, (Interview, Patcharin, 00:03:14)

However, Patcharin's life took another turn, apparently again due to the life choices of her sister. Her sister married a German national and moved from Australia to Germany to live. Thus in 2002 after three years working in Australia, Patcharin followed her sister to Germany, who was staying in a small town close to where Patcharin now operates her own salon. Her sister's marriage migration, seems to have ignited similar ideas in Patcharin.

and I said with my sister, first I said to my sister like, oh I feel bored in australia y'know? <hm?> just find somebody for me to marriage, <((laughs))> and then come here, she really do find somebody for me, but for my feeling like, (1.0) can't be. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:04:20)

Ultimately Patcharin refused to enter into a pre-arranged relationship. Nevertheless, upon the expiry of her tourist visa for Germany and shortly before her return to Thailand - Patcharin describes it as a stroke of fate - she met her future husband. They kept in touch while Patcharin was in Thailand, worked on marriage plans and decided to tie the knot in 2003. At the age of 23 and without prospects for a job, Patcharin finally migrated to Germany to stay.

Similar to Wipa, Patcharin's English competence opened up and was shaped by her professional career. English also remained the main language of communication between her and her German partner. While Patcharin describes her motivations for marrying and migrating to Germany in affectionate terms that do not suggest any economic reasons, a move back to Thailand with the professional skills that she had been able to develop abroad surely would have made little economic sense. Therefore, the prospects of continuing her professional career in Germany must have felt much more attractive to Patcharin.

4.1.3 Kanita

While Kanita did not reveal her exact age to me, she is clearly the oldest in the sample. Based on the biographical details, she must have been born in the mid 1960s. She grew up in the northeast of Thailand close to the Laotian border in a town called Sakon Nakhon in the Isan region. As mentioned in the review of Thai migration above, many women from this region experience marriage migration and internal labour migration (Lapanun, 2012, Sakdapolrak, 2008). It is also a multidialectal or multilingual area. Kanita reports to have grown up speaking Lao, as well as two varieties of Thai, Phu Thai and Nyaw, at home. She also claims to have learned some Vietnamese, because her family hosted Vietnamese war refugees in the early to mid-1970s. Kanita completed her basic schooling and thus received her literacy skills in standard Thai.

Kanita did not reveal as many details about her life before migrating to Germany. To me, this may be due to a number of traumatic experiences that finally led to her migration. For example, during an observation session she showed me a number of scars on her neck and arms and told me, without being prompted, that she had been shot several times and was lucky to have survived. Moreover, the fact that she had a daughter from a previous marriage and later separated from her Thai husband points to the fact that she must have struggled to make a living as a single mother. Yet, her marriage to a Thai businessman and through her involvement in his work Kanita claims to have learned two foreign languages, Japanese and English.

> for japanese is before because my husband he do business about japanese also my ex-husband ja, sometime I go japan ja, ... I learn but I not finish. too difficult ja, because I learned two languages together ja, at first language english ja, after english course and I change japanese course too much and I confused ja, (VLR interview, Kanita, 00:04:30)

Kanita reports that she learned English at a prestigious language school for professionals in Bangkok over two and a half years, which suggests that her husband's work not only took her to Japan, but also spurred internal migration to Bangkok. Like in the biographies above, Kanita reports to have appropriated new resources to her repertoire, because of her professional practice.

Kanita's daughter was born in 1988. Yet, life must have turned sour at some stage and Kanita must have gone through a very difficult period in her life. The separation from her husband possibly triggered a change in her professional career, because at the end of the 1990s Kanita started taking Thai massage courses at the Wat Po massage school in Thailand, according to her current German husband. Kanita and her German partner met

through mutual friends, a Thai-German couple, while her future husband was on holiday in Thailand. Her German husband had not been married previously, but had dedicated most of his life to work. Kanita is slightly younger than he is and judging from the fact that her daughter was 12 when they migrated in 2002, Kanita must have been in her mid-thirties when she left Thailand for Germany. Given Kanita's status as a single mother, we can assume that her motivation to marry and migrate must have been partly motivated by the prospects of securing better economic conditions for herself and her child. Kanita did not know any German, but again, like Wipa and Patcharin, Kanita's knowledge of English served as a tool to ensure communication with her German partner.

4.1.4 Summary

These biographical details reveal a number of interesting similarities and differences about the ways professional practices and languages entered the historical bodies of these future entrepreneurs before their migration to Germany. It seems that none of the three women had planned a move to Germany. None of them had previous knowledge of German, but all possessed histories of learning a new language for their jobs and through their jobs. All three women had experienced a form of job-related migration before they arrived in Germany, a typical characteristic of Thai migrants as mentioned in the literature review (Suksomboon, 2009). Wipa and Kanita experienced internal migration in search for professional opportunities. Work was also the reason for Patcharin's move to Australia. While Patcharin and Wipa made their own independent work experiences, Kanita had professional experience through her ex-husband's work. Marriage to a German national was for all three women, and actually for all other Thai women that I encountered during the research, the medium of migration. Their biographies suggest a variety of motivations. For Wipa and Kanita migration appears to have been an opportunity to leave an economically precarious situation in Thailand or the hope to find more favourable opportunities for themselves abroad. Patcharin emphasizes more romantic motives, but given her professional expertise, a return to Thailand after having worked in Australia would have meant a step backwards.

Interesting is the role of English in their biographies. Wipa found work due to her competence in English, while Patcharin built her competence in English through work. Similarly, Kanita added English and Japanese to her repertoire for work reasons. Their knowledge of English can regarded as a catalyst for their geographical mobility, because

English permitted communication with their German partners in the beginning. Moreover, their experiences in learning another language, and in particular their knowledge of English, helped them with their appropriation of German after migration, as the following two statements suggest. One is by Paul, Wipa's brother-in-law, and her early business associate.

anfangs ja, konnte sie schon äh recht gut deutsch weil sie sehr gut englisch konnte, da war deutsch lernen relativ einfach? (Interview, Paul, 01:45:20)

in the beginning yes, she knew already uh german quite well, because she knew english very well, then german was relatively easy to learn? (Interview, Paul, 01:45:20)

While Paul does not explicitly mention how English influenced Wipa's acquisition of German, the following statement by Kesarin, one of Patcharin's part-timers suggests that proficiency in English allows for a form of cross-linguistic transfer in learning German phonology.

in thailand kein /sch/ /schp/. ((laughs)) <gibts kein ja.> hinten keiner, <genau ja.> nur nur nur zum beispiel (.) äh /ing/ /ingli/ /ingli/, <ja,> einfach so /engli/. <ja,> kein /tsch/ kein /sch/. <ja,> ja bei uns keiner so. wenn ich hab keine english gelernt, kann ich dann auch nicht deutsch äh äh lernen weil, <hm.> weil deutsche is auch so äh komm buchstabe von english. (VLR interview, Kesarin, 01:01:01)

in thailand no /sh/ /shp/. ((laughs)) <there is none yes.> at the back none, <exactly yes.> only only for example (.) uh /ing/ /ingli/ /ingli/, <yes,> simply like that /ingli/. <yes,> no /tsh/ no /sh/. <yes,> yes among us none like that. if I have not learned english, then I also can't uh uh learn german because, <hm.> because german is also like that uh the letter come from english. (VLR interview, Kesarin, 01:01:01)

The phonological inventory of Thai does not comprise word final fricatives and affricatives. Kesarin argues that knowing English therefore facilitates the learning of German phonology. In the continuation of this anecdote, Kesarin even backed up her argument with an example of a Thai friend of hers who did not learn any English and who continues to experience difficulties with fricatives and affricatives in syllable final position in German, a fact that, according to Kesarin, affects her friend's overall comprehensibility.

All of the main informants arrived in Germany with no knowledge of German and so did the majority of the other Thai women that I encountered during the study. So what was their experience appropriating German into their repertoires?

4.2 Professional life and language repertoire after migration

For all three women the challenge after migration was to establish themselves in a new community. Adjustment to the life in their new home was challenging due to a number of factors. One of the central issues mentioned by the participants was the lack of language

knowledge. Generally, my informants qualified this as a social deficit, because not knowing German prevented them from establishing social and professional contacts. Patcharin remembers this as a rather traumatic experience.

and then, ja: think like the life here is not for me, <hm,> because language is not hundred percent, <hm,> and the person here did not really speak english. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:04:20)

The linguistic resources in Patcharin's and the others' repertoires were of little value after their move to rural Germany. Even English, the mobile and internationally valued resource that had enabled their professional development and was the means of communication with their husbands, was of little value outside of the family context in the German periphery. In Patcharin's case the inability to work and to connect to others deprived her of her independence and self-worth.

Moreover, their linguistic isolation was made worse by being positioned as different in interactions with the local population. Wipa stresses in the following statement how the reactions of locals to her mere presence produced a feeling of marginalisation.

sehr schwer sprache, das essen, die kälte, menschen, ... es gab nicht so viel asiaten. un dann chinesen oder vietnamesen, un die deutschen die starrt mich an ... weil ich war die wenigste damals ne? in [NAME OF THE CITY] gab wirklich wenig asiaten. (EEWA_150513_010658(T9a))

very difficult language, the food, the cold, people, ... there were not so many asians. and then chinese or vietnamese, and the germans they stare at me ... because I was the fewest back then right? in [NAME OF THE CITY] there were really few asians. (EEWA_150513_010658(T9a))

The feeling of marginalisation was reinforced through the inappropriate conduct in interactions, because of a lack of awareness or lack of socialization into the norms of the host society. Wipa gives an example of a sales encounter, where she paid with a 100 German marks bill.

aber ich bin fast überall bekannt, (auf) die stadt, ich ging mit 100 de mark schein ein strauss äh vom äh trauben kaufen ((laughs)) äh er hat was gesagt der ladenbesitzer, ich hab gar nix verstanden. <am anfang.> jo hm? oder bei der bank bei der sparkasse dann ne? ich geh immer dorthin nur (.) ich hab den schon gekannt, ich war schon mal bei ihm, ich geh nur zu ihm dann. (EEWA_150513_011254(T9))

but I am known almost everywhere, (on) the city, I went with 100 marks note to buy a bouquet uh of uh grapes ((laughs)) uh he said something the shop keeper, I didn't understand anything. <in the beginning.> yes hm? or at the bank at the savings bank then right? I always go there only (.) I already knew him, I've been with him before, I only go to him then. (EEWA_150513_011254(T9))

This breaching of norms was also the site, however, where the conventional forms of conduct of the host society were appropriated given the presence of a supportive knowledgeable other. Wipa's quote shows traces of this learning process and of

developing coping strategies. Her solution to deal with service encounters at the local bank was to attend to a particular service staff member that she felt comfortable with.

Lastly, as for many migrants, their professional qualifications proved worthless in the new environment. Kesarin illustrates this point in her interview. She used to work as a bank clerk in Thailand for five years prior to meeting her husband and moving to Germany. She was aware that due to her lack of competence in German, she would not be able to continue in this line of work after migration.

in thailand hab ich äh: an der bank gearbeit <hm.> ja. un dann äh (.) ich komm hierher, die arbeit kann nicht benutzen <hm,> von die sprache, <ja,> muss ma neu lernen, un alles lernen, <ja,> dann hab ich gesagt oh nee kann ich nit. (VLR interview, Kesarin, 00:46:21)

in thailand I uh: worked in a bank <hm.> yes. and then uh (.) I come over here, the work can't use <hm,> of the language, <yes,> have to learn new, and everything learn, <yes,> then I said oh no I can't. (VLR interview, Kesarin, 00:46:21)

We now would like to focus more closely on the conditions that my participants mentioned as having a positive effect on learning German or which they qualified as favourable. Firstly, we want to examine the reasons why they often judged formal language learning courses as fruitless. Instead, all describe informal learning as most conducive for their needs. Therefore, we want to analyse the strategies that they report as having been most successful.

4.2.1 The futility of formal language learning

Formal language courses remain the dominant mode of institutional support regarding German language acquisition for immigrants and are still widely viewed as the most effective way to do so. Such courses have been institutionalized in Germany with the reform of the immigration policy in 2005 as *Integrationskurse* 'integration courses' under the helm of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Since 2005, immigrants who wish to obtain a permanent residency in Germany are required to participate in a 600-hour language and culture course that ends with an examination. They need to pass this test within the first two years of arrival. Thai nationals are furthermore required to participate in a 100-hour preparatory course in Thailand, so as to certify an A1 level proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). However, the experience of my informants with the formal learning of German, before or after 2005, was generally negative.

Kanita, who arrived in Germany in 2002 before the reform of the immigration policy, participated in a language course that was recommended by friends. She

remembers the course as little helpful, because it failed to address her needs and did not suit her learning style, as the following statement illustrates.

a lot of russian ja, they not attention to learning ja, they come, the school also for the russian and ba ba ba ba ba look like spielen they not attention to learn ja. sinnlos for sit and. then I only learn one and a half month and then not anymore ... but then I go, come back to thailand and I buy the book and I take to learn by myself. (VLR interview, Kanita, 00:21:25)
[*spielen* 'to play'; *sinnlos* 'useless']

Kanita describes the course as ineffective, because it was designed primarily for migrants from Eastern Europe, but she also criticizes the teaching methods, when she says *look like spielen* 'look like playing'. Kanita's husband corroborated her views on the futility of the classes and added that another problem was the instructor's inability to understand Kanita's questions in English. Interestingly, Kanita's reaction to this negative experience was to resort to self-study, an experience most of my informants share, as will be discussed shortly.

Even the compulsory language and integration courses that have been put in place since 2005 are generally valued negatively, something that runs contrary to recent large-scale representative survey studies of these courses (Rother, 2010). Thani, one of Kanita's part-timers, who participated in the course in 2010, felt that unlike her preparatory course in Thailand, where she enjoyed intensive one-on-one tuition, the class size of the compulsory *Integrationskurs* did not assist her progress in learning German.

aber in: (.) in deutschland (.) siebenundzwanzig leute ungefähr. <hm.> dann in deutsch kurs <ah ha?> ((laughs)) dat war nicht gut für mich. ((laughs)) mein kopf geht nicht gut. (EEUK_060513_001601)

but in: (.) in germany (.) about twenty-seven people. <hm.> then in german course <ah ha?> ((laughs)) that was not good for me. ((laughs)) my head does not feel well. (EEUK_060513_001601)

Apart from the class size, the ineffectiveness of these courses is also related to the inflexibility of the institutional demands that force immigrants to attend only those classes that are conducted by certified teachers before taking the final exam. Thani's German husband, who I had been introduced to one afternoon at Kanita's salon, attempted to arrange for a private German tutor for Thani, but to his disappointment the German authorities did not recognize this as preparation for the final examination of the course. In its place, Thani was forced to attend the Integrationskurs, which she shared with other migrants from very different backgrounds. In the following statement, Thani's husband assesses the heterogeneity of the class as another factor that hindered his wife's learning in this formal setting.

un in dieser schule wo die mache müsse was vorgeschrieb is, das se (.) von nigeria von kenia von russland von iwwerall <hm_hm,> un die lehrerin is nochmal ne ukrainerin. <ach so.> das find ich sowas von blöd (EEUK_240513_014621)

and in this school that they have to do what is required by law, that they (.) from nigeria from kenia from russia from everywhere <hm_hm,> and the teacher is again a ukrainian. <okay.> I find that so stupid (EEUK_240513_014621)

Moreover, the high-stakes requirements of the course may even result in producing anxiety instead of a safe learning environment for the participants. Sopha, a part-timer at Kanita's salon, recounted in a conversation that was not recorded that she often returned home from the course exasperated. She said that she had to cry a lot, because she feared that she would not be able to pass the final test, despite her overall positive experiences in her new homeland with a very supportive husband, who even started learning Thai in response to her struggles with learning German.

Another factor that presents a problem with the formal learning environment appears to be the long hiatus that many of the immigrants have when it comes to learning in formal environments. The following statement by Chalida, one of Patcharin's part-timers, suggests that the classroom situation may be awkward for adult learners like herself.

aber jetzt ist wenn hierher kommen muss lernen ne? <ja.> vorher nit aber jetzt muss ... is schon gut normal aber ... aber jetzt (.) brau nit mehr, bin zu alt für (.) schule zu gehen un ((laughs)) <hm?> ich hab keine lust mehr so, vier fünf stunden SITZEN un dann, ((laughs)) (EEFP_080813_013026(P2))

but now is when come over here have to learn right? <yes.> before not but now have to ... is actually good normally but ... but now (.) don't need any more, am too old for (.) go to school and ((laughs)) <hm?> I am not in the mood to like, four five hours SITTING and then, (llaughs))(EEFP_080813_013026(P2)

While the formal learning environment is seen as not very useful for those who experienced it, learning in practice and in interactions with German-speakers is regarded as more effective. In the following statement Kesarin suggests recounts that she contemplated joining a class, but decided against it in favour of learning German in interactions with colleagues at work, after she had started a part-time job in the horticultural industry.

un dann hab ich gedacht brauch ich das, <hm,> nee das brauch ich nicht weil, ich ich geh nicht arbeiten so richtig in der bank oder in: ich arbeit nur mit blumen, <hm,> un dann so mit leute reden, wenn ich verkehrt reden, dat macht spass, das kein problem. ((laughs)) ja das brauch ich gar nicht, überhaupt gar nicht, hab ich gedacht. (VLR interview, Kesarin, 00:53:00)

and then I thought do I need that, <hm,> no I don't need that because, I I don't go to work like properly in a bank or in: I work only with flowers, <hm,> and then like talking to people, if I say something wrong that is fun that's not a problem. ((laughs)) yes I don't need this at all, really not at all, I thought. (VLR interview, Kesarin, 00:53:00)

While Kesarin's statement suggests that informal learning is effective in activities that are not language-centred, such her task of potting plants, the problem of obtaining

access to such moments of practice remains. For Kesarin, work provided these opportunities, but for many others access to work was barred and therefore deprived them of chances to rehearse and learn German. This experience is mirrored in the following statement by Patcharin.

and then, I feel so mad. all my life I only work work get my own money y'know? ... is really bad for me that I can't go to work, I cannot really make the conversation with the person. <hm.> and then what my (main) thing is, I make my husband mad too. <sure yeah.> because if I feel upset, I can't go somewhere else except him. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:06:40)

The lack of opportunities to apply herself productively due to her linguistic handicap made her feel isolated and put even a strain on her personal life. So which conditions or strategies emerged as important for appropriating German from the statements of my informants?

4.2.2 Strategies of informal language learning

The literature on learning discussed above emphasizes the importance of the learner's agency in the learning process. For the majority of my informants 'learning on their own' was judged as the most effective way of appropriating German. Their statements suggest a number of important factors in this process that have also been addressed in the research literature as discussed in section 2.4 above: reflexivity, the exposure to supportive others in practice, and the importance of affinity spaces.

Just as Kanita's reaction to the inappropriateness of the formal language course was to resort to buying learning materials from Thailand, Wipa sought similar recourse to self-study and exposure to German through the use of media. She gradually developed her knowledge of German using a grammar book and a dictionary but also by watching game shows on television (*Glücksrad* 'Wheel of Fortune') and reading tabloid newspapers.

<wie ging das dann mit deutsch für sie, ihre erfahrung deutsch zu lernen?> Glücksrad, un viel zeitung gelesen, nix verstan un dann immer nachgefragt, un ich hab zwei ganz dünne heft aber war sehr gut äh für anfänger grammatik ... in thailändisch geschrieben ... un dann wörterbuch? ich hab viel selbst beigebracht. (EEWA_030513_002346)

<how did it work with german for you, your experience learning german?> wheel of fortune, and reading newspapers a lot, didn't understand anything and then always asked, and I have two thin note book but was very good uh for beginner grammar ... written in thai ... and then dictionary? I learned a lot by myself. (EEWA_030513_002346)

Wipa's experience suggests the importance of developing a reflexive stance in the process of self-study. In her statement she says that she always sought assistance, if she encountered problems (*nix verstan un dann immer nachgefragt* 'didn't understand anything and then always asked'). In the following quote she even points to the deliberate practice of collecting expressions while watching the popular cooking programmes on

German television, in order to improve her culinary vocabulary in German. The following statement came as a response to my question about how she attained her large register of cooking terminology.

durch viel fehler, un zehn jahre sammeln, gesammelt, un die die: kochsendung die ich gekuckt, dann dat gibt schon viel mehr, zu sehen zu lernen dann auch. (EEWA_150513_011150(T8))

through many mistakes, and collect for ten years, collected, and the the: cooking programmes that I watched, then this gets already a lot more, to see to learn then also. (EEWA_150513_011150(T8))

This reflexivity appears to have supported her learning of German. Yet, her experience also points to the importance of developing an affinity for an activity that supports the process of language learning. In Wipa's case it was cooking, which encouraged her to watch cooking shows. Other informants point to similar strategies. Porntip, one of Kanita's part-timers, says that after starting to work as a Thai massage therapist, she started reading the free magazines available at pharmacies, in order to expand her German vocabulary in the area of health and anatomy.

Another important aspect is engaging in interactions with German speakers in order to learn and apply their language skills. As we have mentioned briefly above, Kesarin relates her good competence in German to her exposure to German speakers other than her husband and the immediate family members.

ich spreche bissjen besser, weil ich viel mehr arbeit mit deutsche un ich viel mehr lerne mit deutsche. (VLR Interview, Kesarin, 00:36:04)

I speak a little better, because I work a lot more with germans and I learn a lot more with germans. (VLR Interview, Kesarin, 00:36:04)

Kesarin's husband, who was overhearing the interview, cut in at this point to lend support to his wife's opinion adding that this was due to a significant extent to her outgoing personality and lack of anxiety. Yet the mere exposure to more knowledgeable others can also produce anxiety in the learner, in particular if the learner does not feel to be in a position of equality. For example, Wipa admits that she had ample exposure to practices with Germans, but very often in situations that felt intimidating, such as running errands for her husband's business shortly after her arrival in Germany.

er war selbständig, aber er hat nie was gemacht. er hat mich überall hingeschickt. <ach so.> schon von an- vom anfang an schon ... dann steh ich da, die ton macht musik, ich weiß was die leute sagen. <hm.> die unterhalten sich, also (asiatin). versteht doch kein deutsch, wieso kommt selber nicht ... <wo mussten sie da hin, zum amt oder,> überall. überall. zum steuerberater, (xxxx), (.) äh finanzamt (EEWA_080513_005146)

he was self-employed, but he never did anything. he always sent me everywhere. <okay.> already from the be- from the beginning on already ... then I stand there, die ton macht musik, i know what the people say. <hm.> they talk to each other, well (asian woman). doesn't understand german, why doesn't come himself ... <where did you have to go, to the local council or,>

everywhere. everywhere. to the tax consultant, (xxxx), (.) uh income tax authority (EEWA_080513_005146)

Wipa's statement suggests that these situations were overwhelming not only linguistically, but also because she felt and was made to feel incompetent and helpless by the people she interacted with. Interesting though is that she often stressed the importance of being exposed to these activities in retrospect. Participating in activities and practices outside the home is thus regarded as an important aspect of learning German. However, the type of practice is important. Language learning seems to have been most effective for my participants, when they reported to have had the opportunity to engage in an activity that they enjoyed and were able to demonstrate their expertise. Engaging in self-employed work has become for my participants such an affinity space. For example, Kanita relates her learning German directly to her professional practice and her interactions with her customers. It is through her professional practice that she appropriated and ultimately needed to appropriate German.

at home we speak english, but after I do this geschäft is wenn meine deutsch is besser <ah ha,> normally I cannot so speak so much with the people, but now everything must be must be ja ((laughs)) before no no I only speak english with my husband at home (Interview, Kanita, 00:16:59)
[*geschäft* 'business'; *deutsch* 'German'; *besser* 'better']

Kanita's husband confirms his wife's perception explaining that her engagement in work has changed the medium by which he and his wife communicate.

wenn meine frau früher was wissen wollte von mir ne? hat se immer auf englisch mit mir gesprochen un jetzt versucht se doch schon zuerst auf deutsch, un wenn es dann nicht hinhaut, dann dann erst auf englisch ne? also sie versucht jetzt, früher also vorm geschäft da war wirklich. alles was sie gesagt hat zu mir war in englisch ne? un jetzt versucht ses halt doch schon mehr in in deutsch (xx) sprache auch un nur wenn was hapert dann dann gehts auf englisch über ne? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:21:30)

in the past when my wife wanted my help right? she always spoke to me in english and now she does indeed try in german first, and if it then does not work, only then then in english right? well she now tries, before meaning before the business there was really. everything she said to me was in english right? and now she does indeed try more in in german (xx) language also and only when there's a problem then then it is switched to english right? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:21:30)

The engagement in their own business and the further appropriation of German also had an effect on the identities of the owners. Wipa's brother-in-law and business partner Paul feels that she has become more assertive and outspoken due to her engagement with her customers, or *mehr deutscher als thai* 'more German than Thai' as he puts it in the quote below. Wipa described this change during one observation session as *erwachsen werden* 'growing up'.

sie war damals noch so wie sie gekommen ist ... aber nun, wo sie jeden tag mit den leuten zu tun hat über mehrere jahre hinweg, hat sie auch freche kunden, aber sie kann sich dann doch zurückhalten, aber mein bruder und ich wir kriegen manchmal feuer, zwar nie unbegründet aber wir

kriegen feuer wenn wir was nicht gut gemacht haben. aber damals hätte sie das nie gemacht. nicht mal ein bissjen geschimpft ... mehr deutscher geworden wie thai. (Interview, Paul, 01:44:10)

back then she was still like when she came ... but now, when she has to deal with people everyday over several years, she also has impolite customers, but she can then still hold back, but my brother and i we at times receive severe criticism, never without reason but we are being criticized if we haven't done it well. but back then she would have never done that. not even scolded a little bit ... became more german than thai. (Interview, Paul, 01:44:10)

Similarly, Kanita's husband Gerhard's statement below suggests that the opportunity for Kanita to start her own business turned his wife into a happier and more content person.

früher war se oft deprimiert un so, aber seit se, jetzt seit se den laden hat is se glücklich ja, <glauben sie dass das was ausgemacht hat?> das hat was ausgemacht. das hat sehr viel ausgemacht ja. auch ihr selbstwertgefühl jetzt ne? das war vorher also es war nicht so ausgeprägt (xx) zeitweise seit se den laden hat, es geht ihr besser, se hat ne aufgabe, un sie fühlt sich auch besser ne? das merkt das merkt man also schon. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:40:19)

in the past she was often depressed and that, but since she, now since she has the shop she's happy yes, <do you think it had an impact?> it had an impact. it had a great impact. also her feeling of self-worth now right? that was before well it was not as developed (xx) at times since she has the shop, she is better, she has a task to do, and she also feels better right? you can notice you can really notice. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:40:19)

Briefly after this, Gerhard qualified his statement further and suggested that it is not just any kind of work that has such positive effects on the overall well-being, but that it must be an appropriate type of work.

das is für viele schwierig. ich denke auch. wenn se dann wirklich anfangen dann nur als putzfrau oder so was dann ne? des is das is dann halt auch nix ne? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:40:19 continued)

this is difficult for many. I also think so. if they really start then only as cleaner or something like that right? this is this is then really nothing right? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:40:19 continued)

4.2.3 Summary

The ways that the Thai women in this study have appropriated German points to the importance of informal learning. We have seen that the experiences of the participants substantiate many of the factors that theories of situated learning and second language socialization regard as fostering the process of language learning. While classroom learning was very often judged as inappropriate, the pathways of my informants suggest that their appropriation of German was grounded in a reflexive stance that they developed about their own learning, as well as the exposure to practices, in particular to practices that put them in a position of expertise. Becoming a business owner was such an opportunity. Language proficiency in German was not necessarily a condition to become self-employed, but self-employment ultimately created a context for the exposure to practices in which they were able to hone their German language skills. For the participants, engagement in work was thus a legitimate site where language can be practised and appropriated.

Yet, we do not want to suggest that all these efforts led to equal levels of proficiency in German. At the time of the present study, and most probably at the time of opening her business, Wipa was clearly the most proficient user of German, which was surely a result of her overall longer residency in Germany. Wipa reported no problems with handling situations of daily life independently and she is able her to run her small business on her own. The interactions with family members that I observed were always in German. Her circle of friends clearly extends beyond the Thai community, as I was able to gather from her anecdotes. She always spoke to me in German and during the less busy periods during my observations, we would freely talk about a variety topics in German, from cooking and local interest stories to politics and religion. But Wipa also reads German. For example, Wipa goes through the biggest German tabloid newspaper every morning at work, which she later uses to wrap the frozen goods customers buy. Whenever there are quiet times at the store, she turns to cookbooks in German or reference books about plants and vegetables, anything that suits her interests in cooking and alimentation. In addition, I was able to observe instances at the shop, when Wipa's language knowledge in German was sought by her Thai acquaintances and friends, in order to translate documents or to complete forms in writing. Therefore, her overall competence in German can undoubtedly be described as maximum.

In contrast Patcharin's and Kanita's socialization into German spans only half the time of Wipa's. Fostered by their own and their partner's proficiency in English, Patcharin and Kanita continue to rely primarily on English for their interactions in the private domain. Patcharin's part-timer Chalida reports, for example, that reading and writing in German remain difficult tasks, which she is not able to master without the help of her husband. However, as the examples in chapter 6 illustrate, Patcharin and her staff's proficiency in spoken German in the domain of their work is extensive. Their competence in German allows them to perform all customer-related tasks independently and, beyond the confines of the task, to build rapport and trust between them and their clients. Similarly, my interactions with Patcharin's part-timers Chalida and Kesarin were always conducted with relative ease in German. Therefore, Patcharin's, Chalida's and Kesarin's competence in German can be described as partial competence.

For Kanita herself and the majority of her staff members, whose migration to Germany at the time of the study only dated back approximately five years, the accomplishment of everyday activities in German still presents a problem. Kanita

reported that running errands in German, such as service encounters at the bank or consultations at the doctor, remained a problem without the linguistic assistance of her husband. Even her participation in conversations in the private domain, such as a family gathering, as she reported in an anecdote, is still strained due to her limited proficiency in the language. She judges her receptive and productive skills in English higher than those in German, which was also reflected in her language choice with me. Her reading routines involve mainly looking at Thai and English newspapers on the Internet, while her German competence allows her to understand the weekly print advertisements distributed by the local shops. In comparison to the other owners, Kanita's competence is the lowest, and can safely be described as minimal competence. She is aware of these limits and judges her overall competence in German as follows.

I understand only 30% maybe now it's 40% (VLR Interview, Kanita, 00:12:40)

Kanita stresses that her use of German is confined to her workplace, but the workplace is thus also the site were she practices and improves her German (see her use of *now* in the above statement). However, as the following quote illustrates, she does not regard her minimal competence as a hindrance to do her job.

one thing the doc- customer come for us, (one thing) want to do appointment ja? and two what about the cost ne? <hm,> three how we do ja? <hm,> how we do, just like that hm? (.) it's not difficult ja, (VLR Interview, Kanita, 00:43:55)

Due to the task-related nature of the interactions with her customers, Kanita judges her minimal competence in German as sufficient to manage her business effectively.

4.3 Starting the business

We now want to examine the processes that led the three main participants, Wipa, Kanita, and Patcharin, to start their businesses. Based on the data from the interviews, four main factors affected their entry into self-employment. Firstly, all three women realised opportunities in the market. Secondly, they received active support by partners. Thirdly, they successfully reacted to challenges. And fourthly, they adapted their services to the demands of the local clientele.

4.3.1 Realising opportunities

All owners suggest that due to their socialisation into the new community, they realised the existence of demands for their skills. Therefore, none of the ventures was without prior contemplation, but rests on experiences and knowledge that they possessed before migration or developed in their new home, and then adapted to the new context.

As the discussion above has shown, for the first twelve years in Germany, Wipa was a homemaker looking after her son and her mother-in-law and running the household for her husband and her brother-in-law. This new role led Wipa to developed an interest in food and cooking. As Paul, her brother-in-law suggests, Wipa developed her culinary skills only after her migration to Germany. Moreover, Wipa acquired a basic understanding of the institutional demands of managing a business by running errands for her husband, as described above. These factors prepared her step into self-employment in 2003. Initially Wipa had toyed with the idea of opening a Thai restaurant serving original Thai food, but she did not find support from her husband or her brother-in-law, who provided the seed funding for the business. Just before Wipa took the step into self-employment, her husband had closed his business and her brother-in-law had gone into early retirement due to health reasons. At the same time Wipa's son started secondary school in the town where Wipa opened her store. The family situation thus supported the move into self-employment or even encouraged it. Moreover, Wipa knew from her own experience that she did not face much competition in the area as a food retailer specialising in Asian or Thai food, as she was used to purchasing her own supplies at a shop approximately 30km away. She was also aware of a number of potential Thai customers in the area, mostly acquaintances and friends, who faced the same difficulties of obtaining ingredients for Asian dishes. The start of her business was therefore not without prior planning or consideration of the market opportunities.

Just before leaving Thailand for Germany, Kanita had graduated from the Wat Po Massage school in Thailand and became an accredited Thai massage therapist. During her first years in Germany and before her daughter graduated from secondary school, she already worked part-time as a massage therapist in a larger city approximately an hour away from where she lived. We can assume that this professional experience in Germany made Kanita realise that opening up her own store presented an opportunity to become professionally independent, because demographic changes in Germany seemed to have increased the demands for massage services, as her following quote suggests.

I come to deutschland 2002. (and I think) uh maybe this business is worth, because this is about gesundheit ja? is much grow old ja? (Interview, Kanita, 00:04:20)
[*deutschland* 'Germany'; *gesundheit* 'health']

On the other hand, Patcharin's motivation to start the business was largely due to her ambitions to continue in the career that she had previously built for herself. Similar to her experience in Australia, Patcharin wanted financial independence in a line of work she considered as a gratifying act of self-fulfilment. Her husband, Erik, actively supported her wish to become self-employed. After a challenging first year in Germany looking for opportunities to apply her professional skills, Patcharin obtained clearance by the German authorities to run her own business and opened up her first shop in 2004 in a room in the house that they rented. She and her husband both report that the decision to run the practice from home was a conscious one, as they were able to keep expenses to a minimum and it enabled Patcharin to work on demand. Their current home was bought in 2008 offering the possibility of opening up permanent premises on the first floor.

It is important to mention, however, that all of them also subscribe to broader discourses that influenced their businesses favourably. These included the growing popularity of Asian cultures in Germany in general, the increase of personal experiences of Germans in Asia due to travelling, and, in particular for the massage salons, the growth of the wellness industry in Germany over the last decade, and an increase in acceptance of alternative forms of health care.

4.3.2 Active support through partners

Very often budding entrepreneurs depend on a person with the institutional knowledge and the financial capital to support their business ideas. For immigrant entrepreneurs, this support is often found among members of their own ethnic community, but for Kanita, Patcharin and Wipa active assistance came from their husbands or, in Wipa's case, from her brother-in-law.

In 2010, when Kanita opened up her salon, her husband Gerhard provided the financial muscle, because he went into early retirement and received a large payout by his employer. Supporting his wife's business represented for him an investment into his and his wife's future, as we will see below. Not only did he provide the financial means, but he also supported Kanita with the renovation of the shop space and the registration of the business, something that, according to Gerhard, would have been difficult for Kanita.

also ich denk die anmeldung aufm amt, das is schon gut wenn da jemand dabei is der, der deutsch kann. also da hätte meine frau denk ich doch probleme gehabt ne? ... weil die wollten ja zum beispiel auch wissen mit der der thai massage. was alles (sie so macht) wie gesagt, ob gesundheitsmassage mache. ob erotikmassage. oder solche sachen ne? ich denke da wäre meine frau ein bissjen überfordert gewesen. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:12:30)

well I think the registration at the council, that is actually good if someone is around who, who knows german. well there my wife would have had difficulties I think right? ... because they also want to know for example with the thai massage. what it is (that she does) as mentioned, whether do health massage, whether erotic massage, or such things right? I think my wife would have been a little bit overwhelmed. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:12:30)

Faced with these institutional demands, Gerhard continues to be in charge of all the administrative issues such as registration of staff or the communication with authorities. In short, anything that would require a more elaborate register and literacy in German. However, he is adamant that these managerial tasks do not take up much of his time and in the end do not interfere with the daily runnings of Kanita's business.

also mein part war dann eigentlich dann immer nur, so (xx) die buchhaltung oder was dann halt so (0.5) dann auch kommt also mit der anmeldung von de kolleginne und und und un die ganzen sachen un so was ... oder wenn es irgendwelche probleme gibt mitm arbeitsamt oder oder (.) was weiß ich (0.5) genehmigung dass das ich das halt mache. ... mehr war da eigentlich nie geplant, zum glück wurde es auch nicht mehr. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:08:15)

well my part was then actually always only, like (xx) the accounting or whatever like (0.5) comes along with the registration of the colleagues and and and and all the other issues and such things ... or if there are any problems with the employment agency or or (.) what do I know (0.5) permit that that I just do that ... more than that was never planned, and luckily it also didn't get any more. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:08:15)

Kanita and Gerhard also consciously chose a location for their salon that would give them access to an affluent and interested clientele. Choosing an appropriate location is besides the adaptation of the product or service described as another important feature in opening the immigrant business up to a larger client base (Basu, 2010).

die räumlichkeiten und ich sag ma das soziale umfeld ... und durch die universitätsklinik da oben da ist das vielleicht ganz in ordnung ne? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:04:14)

the shop floor and let me put it that way the social environment ... and because of the university hospital up there it is maybe quite appropriate right? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:04:14)

Kanita did draw on her Thai network connections, however, in producing her promotional materials, such as the brochures and the internet website, by making use of the services provided by a Thai family friend, who, as part of her translation business, specialises in the production of these materials for small Thai-owned businesses in the southwest region of Germany, according to Kanita. In addition, she relied on her Thai network for the recruitment of staff.

Patcharin's husband Erik was also actively involved in the start-up of the salon by obtaining the necessary business license, setting up the website, and designing the promotional materials. These were and are all practices that involve to a crucial amount

institutional and linguistic knowledge in German. Patcharin summarizes Erik's involvement succinctly in the following statement.

I'm the work and he make all the paper. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:36:30)

While Kanita and Patcharin took more effort in planning their ventures, the day that Wipa became a store owner literally took her by surprise. The surprise came, however, in the form of Paul, her brother-in-law, as the following quote illustrates.

eigentlich eine äh reinfall <hm,> oder zufall. sowas kann ich dann sagen, <ja,> ... un dann war eine thai frau hier in diesem laden sie verkauft auch so äh wäsche ne? <hm_hm,> bissjen mit lebensmittel aber nicht viel vielleicht nur ein drittel von dieser ganze bereich, <hm_hm,> un sie hat mich bei gerufen, dacht ich ich komm nur zu besuchen. un dann mein schwager war dabei, un der herr der kauft was ohne manchmal nachzudenken ne? <hm. ja,> innerhalb von drei stunden besitz ich schon diese laden. (Interview, Wipa, 00:08:20)

actually a uh letdown <hm,> or by chance. I can say something like that, <yes,> ... and then there was a thai woman here in this shop she sells also like uh clothing right? <hm_hm,> some food items but not much maybe only a third of this whole area, <hm_hm,> and she told me to come, I thought I only come to visit. and then my brother in law was with me, and this gentleman sometimes buys something without contemplating right? <hm. yes,> within three hours I already own this shop. (Interview, Wipa, 00:08:20)

In her account, Wipa portrays herself not as the initiator who negotiated the take-over of the business from the previous owner, a Thai lady, who had been running the shop for 3 months but faced problems managing it due to family commitments. Paul agrees with Wipa's assessment that he may have finalized the take-over, but he regards Wipa as complicit in the process.

du bist auch schuld Wipa, hättest du damals nein gesagt, hätt ich von [NAME OF PREVIOUS OWNER] nicht gekauft. (Interview, Paul, 01:52:30)

you are also to blame Wipa, if you had said no back then, I wouldn't have bought from [NAME OF PREVIOUS OWNER]. (Interview, Paul, 01:52:30)

As Paul had also recently retired from his job as a metal worker, he felt that an investment into the shop would be a good opportunity and a chance for Wipa to realize her ambitions of becoming economically active. The business was registered in Wipa's name, but both worked together for the first two to three years.

4.3.3 Reacting to challenges

However, engaging in their own businesses was not all smooth sailing. For the massage salon owners two issues became immediately apparent. The first one resulted from the registration of the business and the second challenge from the wide-spread association of Thai massage in Germany with the vice industry.

A Thai massage treatment is according to German labour legislation a wellness treatment and not a health care service. This has several implications. Firstly, Thai massage practitioners are not allowed to assert and advertise their services as having healing effects, but merely as improving the general well-being of their clients. This is because to be classified as a health care professional in Germany, for instance as a physiotherapist, requires the certification of a period of vocational training and the examination of one's skills by a chamber of crafts. Secondly, due to being classified as a wellness treatment, a Thai massage salon is not allowed to include the noun *Praxis* 'clinic' in their official name. As will become clearer below, this professional categorisation is largely at odds with Patcharin's and Kanita's own categorisation of their work. In particular for Patcharin, the legal interpretation of wellness as purely relaxation runs contrary to her own understanding and practice of Thai massage.

Another issue that affected and continues to affect Thai massage salons in Germany is its discriminatory association with the sex industry. Patcharin thinks back with horror about the first two years of her self-employment. The majority of customers perceived her business as an erotic service, despite her best efforts in distancing her business from the vice industry by including the label 'Traditional Thai massage' in the name of her salon and by stressing the health benefits in her promotional materials. Her husband Erik reports that he repeatedly had to physically remove very persistent customers from the premises. This only changed when the clients in their target market, the local German population, became more interested in wellness treatments and forms of alternative medicine. Patcharin said that she felt this change in demand from 2007 onwards, a year before she moved into her current premises.

that is probably start to be up y'know? ja. on this time, the person s-start to coming for the massage, the person start to know more about uh what is (properly) thai massage y'know? <hm.> not like think like (.) erotic massage or something like that (Interview, Patcharin, 00:13:30)

Her painful experiences attest to Aldrich & Waldinger's (1990) claim that immigrant entrepreneurs cannot simply transfer their business practices into a different location, as these practices are always affected by the discourses in the new setting. To run the business successfully, the owner needs to adjust to the local conditions.

In retail trade, Wipa was not up against similarly serious challenges. On the contrary, Paul and Wipa were convinced that managing a retail business was a simple

practice of ordering and selling. Yet, Paul admits that in practice it was not as easy as they had imagined.

ich hab mir echt so naiv einfach vorgestellt, na ja man bestellt material, verkauft fertig aus ne? das es so viel arbeit ist auch schreibkram und so, das hab ich alles vorher nicht gewusst ne? und sie [Wipa] auch nicht sonst hätte sie abgelehnt ne? (Interview, Paul, 01:59:00)

I naively imagined simply, well one orders goods, sells finished right? that it is so much work also paper work and things like that, I didn't know all that before right? and neither did she [Wipa] or she would have refused right? (Interview, Paul, 01:59:00)

Therefore, starting off presented a steep learning curve. While theories suggest that the lack of preparation is a common cause for failure for many self-employed business owners, Wipa and Paul's story shows that even inexperienced entrepreneurs can successfully utilize the resources in their network to obtain the relevant information necessary to run their business well (Billett et al., 2003). Initially, they had counted on the previous owner to introduce them to the overall routines of running the store, but instead of the promised two-month induction period, she did not return after only a week, as Paul reports. While the previous owner passed on her knowledge about ordering and how to use the cash register, Wipa and Paul had to turn to their tax consultant to explain to them the necessary administrative tasks, and to the suppliers for assistance with the ordering process, as the following quote by Wipa suggests.

<hatten sie sonst noch hilfe?> nein, direkt nicht nee. also (.) direkt eher (.) eigentlich mehr von die leute von großhändler <hm.> die mich helfen <okay,> also empfehlen, wenn du was bestellen, dann vielleicht ein zwei karton. weil dat wird dann wöchentlich geliefert is besser so, oder wenn du solang (.) das halten (.) un mit dem geld dann bleibt solang weg dann ne? <ja klar.> wird nicht so schnell verkauft manche sachen jo. (Interview, Wipa, 00:22:50)

<did you have any other kind of help?> no, not directly no. well (.) directly rather (.) actually more from the people at the wholesale companies <hm.> who help me <okay,> meaning recommend, if you order something, then maybe one two cartons. because it will be delivered every week is better like that, or if you this long (.) hold on to this (.) and with the money this will be gone for that long right? <yes sure.> will not be sold so quickly some things yes. (Interview, Wipa, 00:22:50)

Nevertheless, they were largely left to a process of learning on the job, in order to master the routines of ordering stock and managing the demands of clients.

The experiences of the three informants show how they started their businesses by drawing on the resources in their environment. The more knowledgeable others were often their husbands, but also, as in Wipa's case, her future business partners. In particular for Kanita and Patcharin, crucial support came from their husbands who acted as language brokers to complete the key actions of registration, promotion, and administration.

4.3.4 Adapting the services to the local conditions

Another significant feature that seems to have added to the success of the businesses was to deliberately adapt to the local discourses in place to suit the demands of future clients. This meant not only to adapt professional practices but appropriate discursive practices to perform their work, as the analysis in the subsequent chapters will show.

Wipa and Paul introduced changes to the previous make-up of the store, as they judged that it did not appeal to their customers' needs. They changed the product range to primarily food and stopped the sale of clothing. They also acted on rumours about the unreliability of the previous owner and introduced regular opening hours making sure that the shop was always manned during the stipulated times. They also realised the importance of marketing to generate greater interest in the shop. Paul reports that they displayed what he called 'Thai luxury fashion' in the shop windows, even though they did not actually engage in its sale.

nur um die leute neugierig zu machen, damit sie reinkommen ne? ... das andere [thai luxury fashion] war praktisch nur so eine art magnet um neugierig zu machen. ... werbung ist alles ne? (Interview, Paul, 01:26:20)

only to raise the interest of people, so that they come in right? ... the other stuff [Thai luxury clothing] was practically only a kind of magnet to raise curiosity. ... marketing is everything right? (Interview, Paul, 01:26:20)

While initially the majority of customers consisted of other Thai women, who, as Paul reports, came to know about the shop by word of mouth, through these changes Wipa and Paul drew in a more varied clientele, including other Asian immigrants and local Germans. However, also a change in the local clients' interests and experiences added to their success, for example, by the means of modified travel and eating habits, as Wipa reports.

halbe halbe ich sagen, halbe sind thai? un andere hälfte sin dann deutsch un gemischt dann mit verschiedene leute dann, verschiedene länder dann ne? aber es sin gibt auch viele deutsche die im moment so offen sind viel verreist un dann würde gern dann asiatische selber kochen oder die haben do in das land kochkurs mitgemacht un dann wollte dann hier ausprobieren. (Interview, Wipa, 00:04:14)

half half i say, half is thai? and other half are then german and mixed then with different people then, different countries right? but there is are also many germans who at the moment very open have travelled a lot and then would like to cook asian themselves or they have participated in a cooking course in the country and then wanted to try out here. (Interview, 00:04:14)

But not only demand attracts customers to Wipa's shop. Paul stresses that clients profit much from Wipa's culinary knowledge and her ability to explain the products and their preparation effectively.

und dann kamen auch immer mehr deutsche und deutsche und äh hauptsächlich frauen- und dann hat wipa denen auch gut erklären können oder relativ gut, (Interview, Paul, 01:22:40)

and then more and more germans came and germans and uh primarily women, and then wipa was able to explain to them well or relatively well, (Interview, Paul, 01:22:40)

Although Wipa's entry into self-employment was rash, this discussion has shown how she created the opportunities for herself by positioning her business outside of an ethnic market targeting fellow Thai immigrants. At the same time, her venture profited from larger changes that created a demand for Asian food products.

Similarly the massage practitioners realized that they had to adapt to their local clients' needs. Patcharin stresses that the major difference between Europe and Thailand is that her customers only come when they already suffer from ailments.

go to have massage before the problem coming y'know? not like the problem come and then go to massage, is not really like that y'know? that is for thai person. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:22:36)

Patcharin's statement stresses that massage is a preventive treatment in Thailand, but in Germany it largely means treating existing pathologies. Like Patcharin, Kanita stresses that the services they offer are adaptations from the Thai original. The service a Thai massage salon offers cannot be the same, not only due to her clients' habits of when to visit the doctor, but also due to physiological differences, as she suggests in the following statement.

we not do exactly hard same original massage ja? sometime we have to (apply) ja? technique and (apply) ja? because the body, asian body is stronger than europe body ja? we must do soft. (Interview, Kanita, 00:07:02)

Another important issue when it comes to adapting to the local discourses as prevailing habits and tastes is authenticity. This relates especially to expectations regarding the interior design and the staff. The atmosphere created through the material design is important, as it is a distinctive feature of the Thai massage salon as compared to regular medical massage practices. As the images in the methodology section already showed, both shops feature numerous artworks associated with Thai culture and religion. While Kanita imported much of these items directly from Thailand, most of the features in Patcharin's salon have been purchased in Europe. Additionally, the continuous stream of music, the pleasant smell of the massage oil and the warm temperature in the salons produce an atmosphere that is attractive to German customers, as it all seems to conjure up an image of an exotic holiday escape, as Erik's statement below illustrates.

ein grund warum viele leute auch hierher kommen, weils halt nit so: steril is wie in ner deutschen massage praxis oder so sondern halt, (.) wie gesagt warme töne, licht, mit der musik un so, dat is schon wie im kurzurlaub denk ich schon. (Interview, Erik, 00:26:50)

one reason why many people also come here, because it is simply not so: sterile like in a German massage practice or so but its, (.) like I said warm hues, lighting, with the music and that, that is like taking a short vacation I really think so. (Interview, Erik, 00:26:50)

Erik categorizes the atmosphere as *kurzurlaub* 'short vacation', an expression that I heard frequently from customers during my observations in both salons. Another aspect of authenticity from Erik's point of view is achieved through the practitioners themselves.

wenn die leute zu ner thai massage gehn, das dat auch thailändisch is, deswegen würd ich auch nie:, egal wie ausgebildet derjenige wäre, jemand deutsches oder so einstellen, weil das passt meines erachtens nit. da fehlt halt einfach die: originalität. (Interview, Erik, 00:27:26)

when people go to a thai massage, that this is also thai, this is why I also would ne:ver, whatever the training of that person, employ someone german or so, because that does not fit in my opinion. what is missing is the: originality. (Interview, Erik, 00:27:26)

Authenticity here means being phenotypically Thai in the perception of a German customer. We shall assume that this type of authenticity also includes the practitioners' accents in German and the use of Thai among the practitioners, all of which fit well into this overall atmosphere of the immigrant business.

Now we want to see how the owners themselves view their businesses, what motivates them in running the business, and what kind of professional identities they wish to be in place. These considerations will ultimately tell us which actions they value as core actions for their businesses. The discursive aspect of these core actions will then be analysed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

4.4 Immigrant business identities and the role of language for work

We already discussed how Kanita realized lucrative market opportunities and how she, with the help of her husband, made conscious decisions about the location considering the customers that she could attract. Kanita's business is regarded as an investment in the future and Gerhard specifies their goals in the following statement.

wir wollen also nicht mehr so so lange hier in deutschland bleiben. also (wir) dachten so an zehn jahre und dann wollten wir nach thailand gehen. un dann wenn alles halt so läuft wie geplant dass die tochter dann halt den den laden übernimmt. (Interview, Gerhard, 00:27:00)

we actually do not want to stay on in Germany for so so long. (we) actually thought about ten years or so and then we wanted to go to thailand. and then if all goes as well as planned that the daughter takes over the shop.

Indeed, after her return from a short trip to Thailand during my observation period, Kanita showed me some pictures that showed possible construction sites for a spa catering primarily to Western tourists that she and her husband would like to set up in Thailand. Kanita's current business showed great growth potential by attracting a wide range of customers with respect to age and gender. The floor size of the shop doubled within the first two years of its existence, a development that forced Kanita to build up a sizeable pool of part-timers, all of which are Thai women.

For Kanita creating employment for other Thai women is another positive source of motivation behind her engagement in self-employment. She sees herself as a mentor and someone who is able to provide fellow Thai immigrants with an opportunity to be gainfully employed that they would otherwise not be able to attain in the mainstream economy. The following statement reflects her belief that Thai immigrants find a more dignified employment at her store rather then with German employers.

but for me: for my (1.0) worker. <hm.> when they come, I love them. ... they are my family. <hm.> they look like my sister younger, she look like my sister older. ... nit for uh europe people oder, they not here is work, worker is worker. (when you) go out, out. (EEUK_040613_004704)
[*nit* 'not'; *oder* 'or']

In my interpretation, her statement suggests that in mainstream workplaces, the Thai worker is only a number and is replaceable. In contrast, a workplace like her own provides a more supportive environment, because together with other Thais, the Thai immigrant worker is able to build more lasting and trusting relationships. A similar view is voiced by Kanita's long-standing part-timer Porntip's answer to my question during an observation session when Kanita was away in Thailand. I suggested with Kanita not around, it surely meant a lot of responsibility for the remaining staff. Porntip responded:

mir arbeiten wie wie in thailand. <ja,> (1.0) <was meinen sie, arbeiten wie in thailand.> wie in thailand is einer immer hilfe. <ja,> ja. (1.0) in thailand, (xxx) scheiß (x) dat is nit mein problem, in thailand nit. alle, (1.0) zusammen ... mir is thailänderin. <hm.> mir mach wie thailänder. ja ein bissjen deutsch aber, noch mehr thailand. (EEUK_090413_000613)

we work like like in thailand. <yes,> (1.0) <what do you mean, work like in thailand.> like in thailand someone is always help. <yes,> yes. (1.0) in thailand, (xxx) shit (x) that is not my problem, in thailand not. all, (1.0) together ... we is thai women. <hm.> we do like thais. yes a little german but, much more thai. (EEUK_090413_000613)

The organisation of the business as a business of scale that provides Kanita and her husband with a return on their investment and fellow Thai immigrants with an opportunity to find employment, rests on long opening hours from Monday to Saturday between 9.30 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. Since Kanita cannot be present all the time, she depends on a routine that her staff are familiar with and can perform without her constant

supervision. Kanita's husband opines that these routines are all manageable given the restricted language competencies of his wife and many of the staff members. When I asked him whether he thinks his wife's German proficiency is sufficient to deal with her customers, Gerhard replied:

aber (.) es reicht samma mo für die (.) um sich um die kunden zu kümmern. ob se en tee wollen obs ihnen gefällt obs ihnen gut geht. so sachen kann se halt fragen, aber was dann schon (.) tiefer geht also samma mo, die kann halt fragen (was weiß ich) schmerzen un so so so krempel halt, alles was die (.) massage betrifft das geht; aber was dann halt (.) drüber hinaus geht (.) muss ich dann halt wieder inspringen ne? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:20:15)

but (.) it's enough let's say for the (.) to deal with clients. whether they want a tea whether they like it whether they are well. things like that she can ask, but what then (.) goes deeper let's say, she can simply ask (what do I know) pain and such such such stuff, everything that the (.) concerns the massage works, but then (.) goes beyond (.) then I have to come into the picture again right? (Interview, Gerhard, 00:20:15)

Gerhard's statement suggests that Kanita and her staff are able to master all customer-related interactions. This means that these routines must account for the varying language competences of her staff. Given their predominantly minimal levels of language knowledge in German, it is important that Kanita establishes practical routines that accommodate to the language competences of her staff, in order to ensure a reliable service for her customers. Therefore, in chapter 5 we want to take a closer look at these routine practices at Kanita's salon. I intend to analyse how the staff accomplish the actions with the linguistic resources at their disposal. I particularly want to zoom in on challenges or practical problems that arise in the process, in order to assess whether they are rooted at all in their minimal competence of German.

In contrast to Kanita, Patcharin's business is not a business of scale, as her household income does not depend on the gains generated through the salon. Her professional ambition is to provide a qualified and reliable service based on her professional ethos that Thai massage is a health treatment and not just a wellness treatment similar to nail care or facials. Patcharin stresses that in order for Thai massage to be effective, a certain amount of pain is involved, as it goes even deeper than a traditional health massage practiced by physiotherapists in Germany. In her initial interview Patcharin emphasized this fact and backed it up with the experiences of an acquaintance, a lady who works as a licensed physiotherapist in Germany, who has repeatedly referred clients to her for further treatment.

because from what she know and what she learned she can't help already (Interview, Patcharin, 00:46:00)

This quote shows that Patcharin regards her professional practice and identity on equal terms with or even above that of an institutionally recognized therapist. For Patcharin this professional integrity involves adjusting her massage techniques only to a certain degree to the expectations of her customers, as the following quote suggests:

but I have to say like, thai massage oder ölmassage for the massage, equal for type massage, you going to feel hurt or feel pain <hm,> that is normal. because if you like smooth on the body, is not the massage already, and is help nothing. <hm,> and I can probably says straight like, if you want like that, you don't need to pay the money for. you can do for yourself at home, <hm.> hm, not need to go out and pay the money for nothing y'know ne? <hm.> hm, because for massage, probably normal is hurt (Interview, Patcharin, 00:51:00)
[*oder ölmassage* 'or oil massage']

This has an impact on the discursive practices that Patcharin and her staff members engage in during their work. For example, due to the physicality of the Thai massage treatment Patcharin stresses the importance of obtaining basic information about the patient beforehand. This includes the age, previous experience, and current health status.

that why we have to ask first like, uhm this person got any problem or not, <ja.> or the bone everything alright, got any operation, <ja.> and if the person coming, we have to see first. and if the person start to be like, fifty, <hm> or fifty-five, and the body is still okay. <hm.> okay you can make thai straight. <hm.> and if, we see already, is not right is not okay, <hm.> we going to say too is like better to stay by öl massage. <ja,> or with the child, we have to see too. <ja ja,> hm? ja. chil- with the child for sure thai massage is can't be. <ja.> the bone still (xx) growing and not really can make hard y'know? ja, have to take a look with every person. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:53:00)

This presupposes that communication with the patient before and during the massage is important, in order to deliver the best possible service. Patcharin expects the same attitude towards the profession from her employees, which means in turn that she requires her staff to be able to communicate effectively with her customers, in order to act on their concerns and needs. The following quote reiterates the importance of the professional conduct that she expects of her staff.

but then I have to take a look too like, that person, they really want to work, but they work for only money. because that is different thing. the person really want to work. the work from heart. they really love to do what they do. and the person, they work for the money, they only come to the work to get money. equal what. (xx) they not really put the feeling inside y'know? and that person is like, they not really going to know what is the problem with this person. because with the massage, you have to put your brain your heart into y'know like, if the person coming if they lying you put your hand on, you going to feel it okay this what's going on with this person. <hm,> or something is right or how you have to do with this person. because everybody that coming, they got different problem. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:16:40)

The analysis of the practices in chapter 6 will illustrate how this attitude towards her work affects the language practices at Patcharin's salon. In particular during the rendering of the treatment, talk in German aims to establish the professional image that Patcharin seeks and expects of herself and her staff.

Lastly, Wipa regards herself as a hard-working and reliable businesswoman, who runs her business differently from, what she regards as, other typical immigrant businesses. One of the differences Wipa mentioned is to stay clear of illegal practices. For example, in the following quote she refers to the, according to her, black market practices prevalent among other immigrant retailers. She distances herself from such habits highlighting her position as a vendor who shows awareness of the norms of the retail trade.

aber es gibt auch home service ne? <ach so> dat die mit auto kommen, oder mit kleinbus, <hm_hm,> die sachen eingepackt in pappkarton oder in (styro)karton un dann kommen auch feiertag oder sonntag, <ach so,> nur äh ich finde dat dat nicht so in ordnung, <hm.> weil äh ich muss alles nach regeln machen. <ja.> also die ganze tiefkühlwaren so ne? <ach so ja.> un so wie ich erfahrungen haben hat meine freundin dann gesagt die sachen sin manchmal schon aufgetaut, (un) schon abgelaufen, hol doch hol doch ich gib dir billig. un ich kann das nicht machen. <ja.> wenn das kurz vor abgelaufen oder schon abgelaufen dann muss ich die verschenken <hm,> auf mein eigene gefahr auch manchmal ne? <ja klar.> aber ich tu die leute zuerst dann sagen, <hm,> es is abgelaufe, abgelaufen aber wenn: wenn das in ordnung für ihnen dann können sie das essen. wenn nicht dann wegschmeißen. (Interview, Wipa, 00:49:09)

but there is also home service right? <okay.> that they come by car, or with van, <hm_hm,> the things packed in a carton box or in (styrofoam)box and then also come public holiday or sunday, <okay,> only uh I find that that not really okay, <hm.> because uh I have to play by the rules. <yes.> meaning like all the frozen goods right? <okay yes.> and from what I have experienced my girl friend then told me the things have sometimes already thawed, (and) already expired, take take I give you cheap. and I can't do that. <yes.> if it is almost expired or already expired then I have to give them away <hm,> also sometimes at my own risk right? <yes sure.> but I tell the people beforehand, <hm,> it is expired, expired but i:f if this is okay for you then you can eat it. if not then throw away. (Interview, Wipa, 00:49:09)

It is her familiarity with the institutional discourses around her business that distinguishes her from rivals. For example, with reference to a new competitor that opened up in the same town during my stay at her store, Wipa told me that she had heard rumours that the prices at her competitor kept on rising. Wipa attributed this to a lack of administrative knowledge, as this new owner had not fully factored in all the running costs that affect the product prices in a retail business, such as value added tax (VAT) and the sales tax. In the following comment, Wipa thus emphasizes her professional expertise over her competitor.

der preis is nich so geblieben wie: wie geschrieben ne? ... anscheinend hat sie gemerkt dass sie auch steuern zahlen muss. (EEWA_080513_032546)

the price has not remained li:ke like written right? ... probably she noticed that she also has to pay taxes. (EEWA_080513_032546)

Another part of this professional expert knowledge in managing a retail store in a financially sound manner comprises the ability to source stock from suppliers. Above, we have discussed that Wipa and Paul highlighted the know-how of ordering stock as crucially important for the conduct of their business and that this activity posed

significant challenges at the beginning. Therefore, we will examine the core action of ordering stock further in chapter 7 below.

However, what Wipa regards as the most significant difference between her shop and her immediate contenders, whether these are other Asian convenience stores or supermarket chains, is her knowledge and experience in cooking and thus her ability as a sales person to competently advice her customers.

eher als verkäuferin, un ich will dat die leute, wenn sie reinkommen die kunden, zufrieden mit meinem service. <hm,> un die produkte die ich hier haben wenn nicht dann tut mir leid, <ja.> un die sollen auch zufrieden sind wenn ich äh erklären so wie ich es kann so ne? <ja.> aber ich denke ich kann das auch ne? <hm,> weil die leute sind viel zufrieden mit mir, un sie kommen immer wieder zurück dann ne? (Interview, Wipa, 00:46:44)

rather as a sales person, and I want that the people, if they come in the clients, happy with my service. <hm,> and the products that I have here if not than I am sorry, <yes.> and they should also be happy when I uh explain in the way that I can right? <yes.> but I think I am able to do that right? <hm,> because the people are much happy with me, and they keep returning all the time then right? (Interview, Wipa, 00:46:44)

Her culinary knowledge, her familiarity with the products she sells, and her skill to provide tailor-made assistance in German and Thai, are all resources that are appreciated by her customers as that subtle but pivotal edge over other competitors, as Wipa suggests in the following quote.

<nee aber sie können ja die leute direkt beraten, wenns um sowas geht,> hm: is doch schön. <ja ja is schön. ((laughs))> dat is dat unterschied, hat auch viele selber gesagt, <hm,> wenn sie woanders hin gehen dann, (1.0) entweder sie kann nit kochen? <hm,> aber meistens sie kann nit so gut deutsch dann ja. (EEWA_150513_011203(T08a)

<no but you are able to advice customers directly, if it concerns something like that,> hm: but that's nice. <yes yes is nice. ((laughs))> that is the difference, many have said themselves, <hm,> if you go some other place, (1.0) either she cannt cook? <hm,> but most often she can't speak german well then yes. (EEWA_150513_011203(T08a)

Similarly, the themes of culinary expertise and language competence in German surface in Wipa's subsequent account of her reasons for letting go of a part-timer that she used to employ for a short period in the past. She was disappointed by this worker's inability to explain and provide a service that met her own standards.

un wenn die kunde komm, thailänder geht noch, aber wenn deutsch kommt und dann nachfragen, dann hat sie gar keine ahnung, dann ruft mich ständig an ne? (Interview, Wipa, 00:19:30)

and if the customer come, thais still okay, but if german come and then ask for advice, then she doesn't have a clue, then calls me constantly right? (Interview, Wipa, 00:19:30)

Therefore, in chapter 7 we want to focus on this core action of 'explaining' that apparently distinguishes Wipa's service from others. We want to focus on the language knowledge that is needed to accomplish this work in interactions, but also on the use of material discourse in her workplace that serves the purpose of explaining.

4.5 Conclusion

Drawing on the data from interviews with the business owners, staff members, and their business associates, as well as on the participants' accounts during the observation, this chapter analysed the pathways into self-employment of the three immigrant entrepreneurs in this study and the ways these pathways shaped and were shaped by their linguistic repertoires. While each trajectory is unique, a number of commonalities are particularly noteworthy.

Firstly, the biographies of Wipa, Kanita and Patcharin show clearly that all three owners had professional experiences before migration, knowledge which they were able to use later on for their step into self-employment in Germany. Very often migrants are portrayed as lacking such human capital, which is partly due to the institutional framework in the new country, which does not recognize these skills. Moreover, their professional experiences in Thailand already introduced them to an additional language or their professional development was fostered by competence in a foreign language. In the case of the three owners in this study it was English, which also supported their learning of German.

Secondly, in all three cases, their migration to Germany was made possible through their marriage to a German national. Their statements indicate that prospects for a better future with respect to their private lives and their families were a major motivating factor. Economic activity may not have been on top of the agenda, but we have shown how these ideas developed through their experiences in their new environments. Self-employment emerged as a viable opportunity, also because their language competencies blocked them from entry into the regular labour market.

Thirdly, their processes of learning German shows that informal learning was most effective. Their learning journeys were fostered through self-study and reflexivity, by seeking exposure to practices with more knowledgeable others, and by developing a proclivity for specific activities. These affinities finally turned into business ideas. Wipa had an interest in cooking and ended up in food retail, while Patcharin and Kanita had previous experience in Thai massage and opened up their own salons. Their practical skills and abilities more than their language knowledge in German led them into self-employment. Their levels of competence in German were not regarded as a hindrance and ultimately did not present an obstacle. Instead, engagement in work presented for all the

owners the site for applying and improving their German language skills by adjusting their workplace routines to their linguistic competencies.

Fourthly, the main participants' routes of entry into self-employment point to a number of factors that helped establish their businesses successfully. One of these factors is the assistance that all of them enjoyed from trusted associates. In Kanita's and Patcharin's case, their husbands took on a crucial role by taking on tasks that were and still are difficult to handle linguistically. While Wipa also had support from her brother-in-law, her experience shows that these tasks can also be successfully outsourced by turning to regular business support services, such as tax consultants. More important was, however, that all three owners not only realised the opportunities that the market provided for their services, but that they also created their opportunities by overcoming challenges and adapting their service to the local tastes and customs. Their ventures never relied on co-ethnic demand, but were always geared towards the general population and their demands.

Lastly, we have shown that the three owners expressed clear visions for their businesses. We called these their business identities. Kanita sees it as an investment in her family's future and a space that provides work for other Thai women. For Patcharin, her business is the realisation of her own professional vision, a space were she can provide the health service that she thinks Thai massage can provide. Wipa sees her business as a chance to be recognized as a professional and reliable sales person and as a retailer who provides expert advice to her customers. These missions affect the practices that are important for the business. In the following chapters, we want to analyse how the owners and their staff accomplish these core actions with the resources in their linguistic repertoires. Through doing this, we turn to our two other sets of research questions:

- How do the linguistic repertoires of immigrant business owners shape the execution of their work? To what extent do their workplace practices constitute sites of language learning?
- What are the challenges that immigrant entrepreneurs face, to what extent are they due to their linguistic repertoires, and how do they overcome them?

To organize the analysis that will allow addressing those questions, chapter 5 begins with observing the key routine practices for Kanita, who claims only a minimal competence of German for herself and the majority of her staff. Chapter 6 considers the workplace practices as Patcharin's salon and how they are affected by her and her staff's partial

competence in German. Finally, chapter 7 focuses on the practices at Wipa's retail store and examines which opportunities open up when a maximal competence in German and Thai is available. In line with MDA, throughout the analysis, we look at professional actions and the roles played by the linguistic resources in these actions. We also examine the ways other kinds of mediation sustain professional practice in the absence of maximum competence in German. And lastly, we will observe how social discourses influence the professional activities of these immigrant entrepreneurs.

Chapter 5: Kanita's Massage Salon: Accomplishing core business actions with minimal competence in German

The previous chapter has shown that Kanita claims for herself only a minimal knowledge of German. Moreover, the majority of her staff have only recently migrated to Germany and have not had much exposure to the language. Therefore, in order to sustain her business, Kanita must rely on workplace routines that accommodate to these minimal levels of proficiency in German among the staff.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the four core actions (Wohlwend, 2013) that keep Kanita's business running: booking appointments, welcoming customers, charging customers and selling vouchers. The analysis will examine the chains of actions that make up these core actions and which mediational means are employed to accomplish them. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship of these mediational means to the staff's language competence, the challenges and practical problems that arise in performing these actions and the strategies that are developed to solve them. This leads us first of all to an analysis of the most important mediational means involved in the three core actions of booking, welcoming, and charging customers: the appointment schedule.

5.1 The appointment schedule

Without immediate reference and access to the appointment schedule neither of the three core actions of booking, welcoming or charging customers can be performed, as it holds all the essential information that Kanita's staff need to perform these actions. Therefore, the appointment schedule crucially mediates the performance of the professional role of the staff at Kanita's salon. The book is an ordinary A-4 size spiral note pad that is always placed at the centre of the table at the reception desk, as Image 13 below shows.



Image 13: Kanita's Massage Salon: Position of schedule book

Image 14 shows a typical example of a single page in the schedule book.

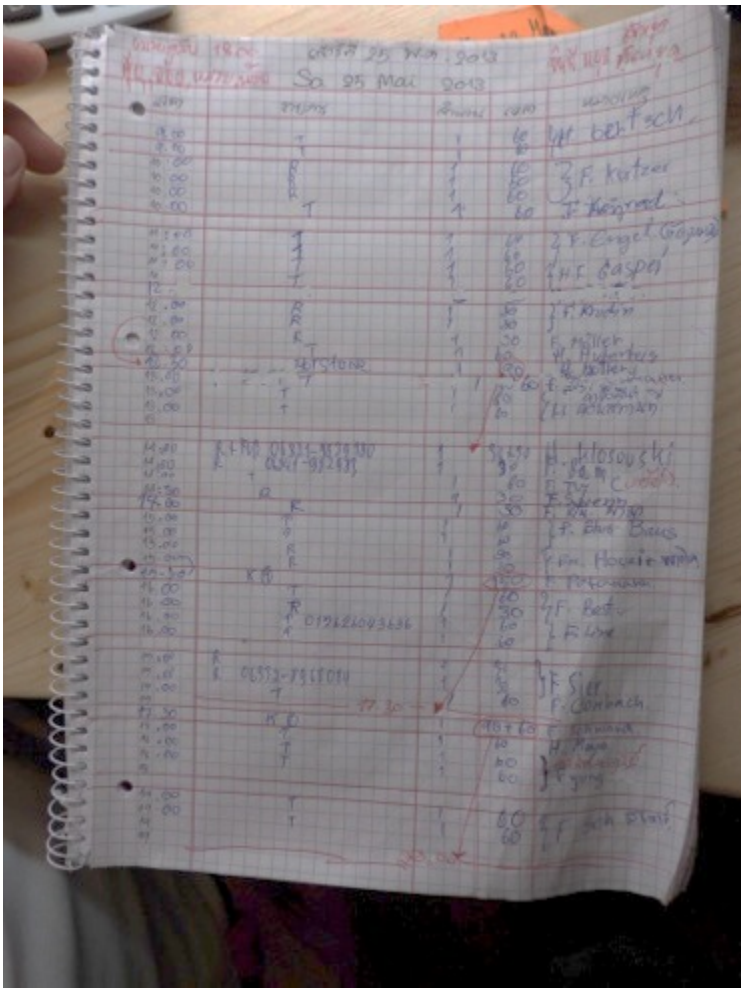


Image 14: Kanita's Massage Salon: Page in schedule book

One page represents one working day, as the date on top in the centre indicates. Five columns from left to right contain information on the time, the type of massage treatment, the number of persons, the duration, and finally the name of the customer. Sets of double

continuous horizontal lines demarcate an hour of service. The four rows in between indicate that a maximum of four treatments per hour is possible. An additional fifth treatment may be recorded in the space between the double continuous horizontal lines. A booking is finalized once a single row across the five columns has been completed.

Completing a row in the schedule book builds on the staff's situated professional knowledge of the procedures in the shop and services on offer. For example, treatments are always either 30 minutes or 60 minutes, or combinations thereof. They always start on the hour or half hour. Staff requirements are organised around this basic time cycle, to ensure the smooth operation of the shop. These organisational requirements are built into the design of the schedule. However, there is other information provided in the schedule that affect the actions of booking, welcoming, and charging and it is crucial for staff members to be able to access this information. This information is provided through written inscriptions that involve Thai and German creating a mixed, multilingual register. For example, at the top of the page to the left and right of the date the names of the therapists on duty on that day, as well as their working hours, are specified using Thai script and written in red ink. In our example in Image 14, on the left, the document states the names of the four staff who are on duty for the day. Above the names it is also written that one of the staff works until 6 p.m. In the case of making a booking, it is important that the staff on duty is able to refer and understand this information, as she has to avoid to schedule more than three appointments after 6 p.m. Apart from the general knowledge about procedures and concepts, knowing how to read Thai is therefore important for the user of the schedule book when deciding whether a certain time slot is available on a certain day.

In order to complete a row in the schedule the employee uses a combination of numerals and letters drawing on a professional register that is specific to the community of practitioners at the store.

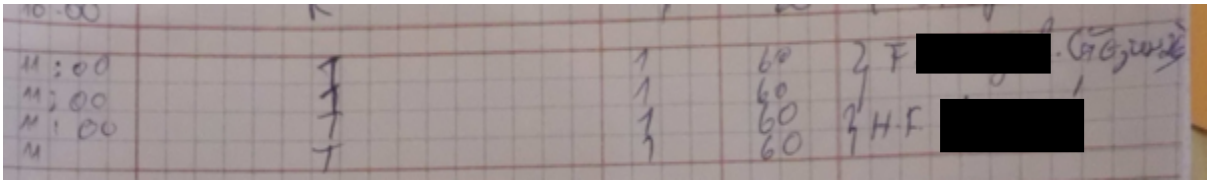


Image 15: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entry for 11 a.m.

Image 15 shows an entry for 11 a.m. In the second column from the left the type of treatment is indicated via abbreviations that are initials of the names of the treatments in

German. For the most common treatments these initials are used, while other treatments use different forms of abbreviations or are written out in full, for example,

T = Thaimassage or 'Thai massage'
R = Rückenmassage or 'back massage'
F or Fuß = Fußmassage or 'foot reflexology'
K1 = Kombimassage or 'massage combo'
Hot stone = Hot stone massage or 'hot stone massage'
Bambus = Bambusmassage or 'massage with bamboo sticks'

An entry is incomplete without the name and gender of the customer. The customer's gender is indicated by the initials *F* and *H*, derived from the German address forms *Frau* 'Ms' and *Herr* 'Mr', that are in standard German usage abbreviated by *Hr.* and *Fr.* . The names are written out completely, usually in Latin script. There are, however, instances when Thai script is used, either just behind the customers' names (Image 16) or to represent the names of customers (Image 17).

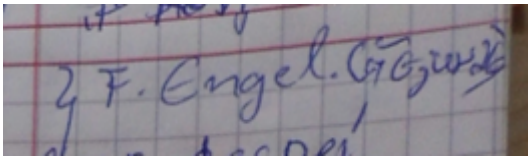


Image 16: Kanita's Massage Salon: Thai entry behind customer name

Image 16 shows a close-up for the entry for 11 a.m. The name of the customer has been written down as *F. Engel* 'Ms Engel' and the braces pointing to the right indicate an appointment for two people. Behind the customer's name in parentheses are the two names of the therapists assigned to the clients in Thai script. While the usual system among employees for treating customers is on a first-come-first-serve basis, some customers may request for particular therapists. In such cases the names of the staff members are written behind the name of the customer. Thai script also appears with names of customers. An example from the schedule shown above are the appointments for 1 p.m. Image 17 shows a close-up for this entry.

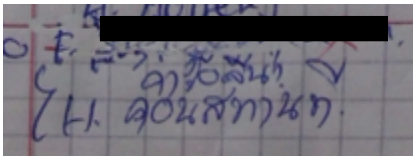


Image 17: Kanita's Massage Salon: Thai for customer name

For 1 p.m. three bookings have been made: one for a single lady, *F. Steigermann* 'Ms Steigermann', and a booking for two individuals, whose names have been recorded using Thai script. The Latin letter *H.* in front of the name stands for *Herr* 'Mister'. The two names in Thai script use the Thai phonetic inventory to represent the names of the customers: /kaolina/ and /konstanti/. Later on in this chapter, we will discuss some of the motivations for using Thai for names of customers and whether this presents a problem for performing the action of welcoming a customer.

Furthermore, Thai is used in the schedule to pass on specific information on a booking or a customer. For example a client may have called to cancel a booking or the client may have not turned up. The booking is then crossed out and usually an additional remark in Thai in red ink annotates that the client has cancelled, such as in Image 18 below.

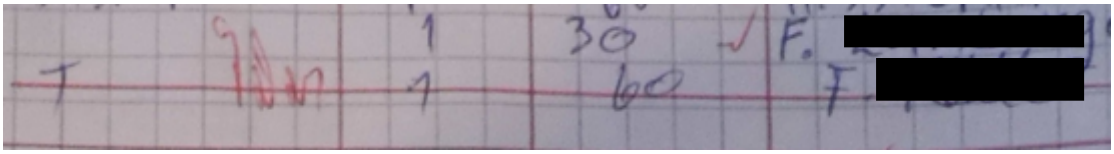


Image 18: Kanita's Massage Salon: Annotations in Thai: Cancellation

Moreover, if the booking deviates from the routine, for instance, if it involves a combination of treatments or a special circumstance, the information is inscribed in Thai, such as in Image 19 below from another schedule.

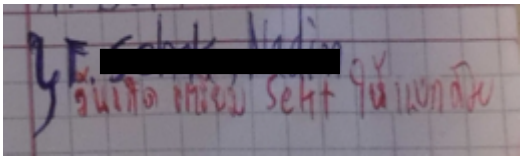


Image 19: Kanita's Massage Salon: Annotations in Thai: Non-standard procedure

Underneath the name in Latin letters, there appears a phrase in Thai, again in red ink, which involves the German noun *Sekt* 'sparkling wine' in Latin script. This sentence is a reminder to the staff member who will welcome the customer to cater the fuzzy drink for the customers, as it says: 'Birthday, prepare sparkling wine for customer too'.

While Kanita is the designer of the appointment schedule, ultimately the schedule is an example of poly-voiced or heteroglossic production, as all employees add to the construction of the appointment schedule. This echoes what studies of workplace literacy

see as the three general functions of writing at work (Fraenkel, 2001). First, it documents work accomplished and is thus used as a piece of evidence or a record to a superior or co-worker. Second, writing anticipates the performance of activities or provides explicit instructions of what are permissible actions or ways of conduct. And third, writing informs co-workers or collaborators who are not present in time or space about what has been accomplished. Workplace literacy also presents itself as significantly different from everyday forms of literacy. It is usually tied to specific activities and tasks, is pre-structured in form, and is often composed by various workers or voices. Thus workplace literacy is generally characterized by its polygraphic and dynamic form, but also its often cryptographic style. This form reflects its highly contextualized nature and workers tend to appropriate such literacy practices only at work. The appointment schedule is also an important administrative tool for Kanita, as she relies on the information provided in the schedule to monitor the work and cash flow of her business.

The appointment schedule is an important tool for the majority of the central practices at the salon. The analysis of these actions shall be the focus of the following sections. Since the clients are almost exclusively members of the local community, interactions between the employees at the salon and their clients are carried out in German, a linguistic resource that many of the employees control only minimally. Throughout the following sections, we want to examine the mediational means that employees draw on to perform these core actions. We also want to analyse problems and challenges that occur in the performance of the actions, and the strategies that are used to solve them.

5.2 Booking appointments

One of the central nexus of practice, or core actions (Wohlwend, 2013), at Kanita's salon is the scheduling or booking of appointments. The aim of this section is to analyse the chain of actions that constitute the booking process and the mediational means that are used to accomplish it. We want to pay particular attention to the discursive practices that are used to complete the action of booking and how the levels of German proficiency shape the performance of the action of booking.

In line with Kanita's business model to cater to as many customers per day as possible, clients can book appointments at the counter, over the phone, and via email.

Because of the accessibility of Kanita's salon, walk-in bookings and phone bookings are the most common. The action of booking constitutes a chain of smaller routine actions that include <clarifying service request>, <determining date & time>, <determining type of massage>, <clarifying number of customers>, <taking name of customer>, and <confirming the booking>. All of these actions are necessary to make a successful booking, which therefore commit the employee and the customers to perform a routine sequence of actions.

It is important to understand that for the employees the action of booking an appointment serves two kinds of interaction orders, making the action polyfocal (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004). The primary interaction order is between the staff and customer. However, a successful booking also requires the staff member to position herself towards her colleagues by the means of the written entry in the appointment schedule. The action is thus sustained by the existing information provided in the appointment schedule: primarily the work schedules of colleagues and the bookings already in place. The therapist who is responsible for the booking also has to understand and to make use of the routine register described above, so that colleagues are able to correctly interpret the booking. In sum, completing a booking successfully involves the use of the tools of language across two modes, speech and writing, and at times two scripts.

Let us now turn to two transcripts that illustrate typical examples of a walk-in booking (Figure 1) and a telephone booking (Figure 2). The aim is to illustrate the discursive practices that staff and customer engage in to complete the booking. In example 1, we meet Ratcha, one of the long-standing staff in the salon and whose German competence can be described as maximum. She is behind the service counter, when a lady enters the salon. The example illustrates the routine development of a counter booking, which takes Ratcha and the customer through the different lower-level actions comprised mostly of question and answer pair sequences.

Figure 1: Walk-in booking (EEUK_040413_000511)

RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer

01	**RAT**	**wat kann ich für sie tun?**
		what can I do for you?
02	**FC**	**hätt gern einen termin zur thai massage.**
		like to have an appointment for a thai massage.
03	**RAT**	**wann wollen sie?**
		when do you want?
04	**FC**	**montag oder dienschtag wenns geht?**

		monday or tuesday if possible?
05		**[aber: abends]**
		[but: in the evening]
06	RAT	**[eine person ja?]=**
		[one person right?]=
		((RAT flicks through the schedule))
07	FC	**=ja,**
		=yes,
08	RAT	**abends,**
		in the evening,
09	FC	**ja,**
		yes,
10	RAT	**für wie lange?**
		for how long?
11	FC	**für eine stunde,**
		for one hour,
12	RAT	**äh: für eine stunde.**
		uh: for one hour.
		((RAT flicks through schedule book))
		(3.5)
13	RAT	**am diens[tag]?**
		on tuesday?
14	FC	**[ach-] ja,**
		[ach-] yes,
15		**ab siebzehn uhr oder,**
		from seventeen hours onwards or,
16	RAT	**siebzehn uhr oder achtzehn uhr.**
		seventeen hours or eighteen hours.
		(3.0)
17	RAT	**siebzehn uhr auch frei.**
		seventeen hours also free.
18		**achtzehn uhr auch frei.**
		eighteen hours also free.
19	FC	**hm,**
		hm,
		(2.0)
20		**dann siebzehn uhr.**
		then seventeen hours.
21	RAT	**für welche massage?**
		for which massage?
22	FC	**thai massage.**
		thai massage.
23	RAT	**eine stunde ne?=**
		one hour right?=
24	FC	**=ja,**
		=yes,
25	RAT	**ihr name?**
		your name?
26	FC	**tiegmeier.**
		tiegmeier.
27	RAT	**tikner,**
		tikner,
28	FC	**tiegmeier.**
		tiegmeier.
29	RAT	**ah tiegmeier.**
		ah tiegmeier.
		(4.0)
30		**okay.**
		okay.
		(4.0)
31		**dann am dienstag neunter april ja?**
		then on tuesday ninth of april right?
32	FC	**alles klar [danke,]**
		all right [thanks,]
33	RAT	**[um] siebzehn uhr.=**
		[at] seventeen hours.
34	FC	**=ja,=**
		=yes,=
35	RAT	**=bitte,**
		=welcome,
36	FC	**tschü:s,**
		bye:,
37	RAT	**tschü:s,**
		bye:,

Let us now look at the sequential development of this encounter first. It starts with a question and answer pair that elicits the service request from the client (FC) in line 2. The client's statement in line 2 guides Ratcha's subsequent action, as it selects among the various action scripts that Ratcha is familiar with (e.g. selling a voucher or welcoming for service or payment). Throughout line 3 to 12 Ratcha initiates more question and answer pairs to obtain the client's preferences for the day and approximate timing of the massage (lines 3 to 4 & 8 to 9), the number of customers (lines 6 & 7), and the duration (lines 10 & 11). This information seems to be used by Ratcha for a preliminary audit of the options, as the pause and her flicking through the schedule book suggest. In line 13, she proposes one option, Tuesday, from the options that the client presented in line 4. The client confirms Ratcha's proposition. This is followed by a negotiation about the exact timing from line 15 to line 20. Here it is again the client who provides a general frame first (line 15) and Ratcha, who, in collaboration with the schedule, proposes two concrete options (lines 16 to 18) for the lady to chose from. There is a slight problem of uptake, as Ratcha did not raise her voice in line 16 to signal a question, but she repairs it by rephrasing making use of a more explicit lexical construction *auch frei* 'also free'. With this information, we can imagine that Ratcha has identified free rows in the schedule that she is now able to complete with the customer's details. Apparently, following the flow of information in the schedule, Ratcha confirms the type of massage, the duration, and then asks for the customer's name. As mentioned above the name is very important, because it functions as the main token of customer identification later on. The problem with the customer's name is resolved through repetition and Ratcha's *okay.* 'okay.' in line 30 suggest that she completed the schedule with these details. In lines 31 and 33 Ratcha repeats the details of the booking for the client to confirm in lines 32 and 34. All in all Ratcha and the client demonstrate the ability to coordinate their actions, via the sequential organisation of the actions and an adequate use of the resources of speech, but also the appointment schedule. Characteristic of institutional interactions, the design of the turns is efficient, mostly constituted through prepositional phrases or noun phrases, so-called least resistance forms (Drew & Heritage, 1992).

Let us now compare such a routine face-to-face booking with a regular phone booking, in order to see whether the phone has an influence on the sequence organisation or the design of the turns. We have chosen an example with Thani, whose German knowledge is minimal, but who is also a regular part-timer and therefore well acquainted

with these routines. Unfortunately, the audio recording did not capture the responses by the caller, which should, however, not hinder an analysis of the actions accomplished (cf. R. Scollon, 1998).

Figure 2: Phone booking (EEUK_060313_014448)

THA = Thani

01	**THA**	**kanita thai massage guten tag?**
		kanita thai massage good day?
		(2.5)
02		**ja?**
		yes?
		(6.5)
		((flicking through schedule book))
03 ->		**am sam- neuntes märz gell?**
		on sat- ninth of march right?
		(4.0)
04		**äh: geht bei ihnen um zwölf uhr.**
		uh: does twelve hours work with you.
		(5.0)
05		**einen moment (bitte)?**
		one moment (please)?
		(3.0)
06 ->		**das soll wie viel personen bitte?**
		this should how many persons please?
		(1.5)
07		**für ein person,**
		for one person,
		(1.5)
08		**ja: für wie lang bitte:?**
		ye:s for how long please:?
		(1.5)
09		**ja: für thai massage dann.**
		ye:s for thai massage then.
		(0.5)
10		**he?**
		hu?
		(1.0)
11		**aromaöl ja?**
		aromatic oil yes?
		(0.5)
12		**geht bei ihnen um siebzehn uhr.**
		does seventeen hours work for you.
		(1.0)
13		**ja am sieb-,**
		yes at sev-,
		(1.0)
14		**ein moment bitte?**
		one moment please?
15		**aromaöl.**
		aromatic oil
		(3.0)
16 ->		**seksik minuten ne?**
		sixty minutes right?
		(1.5)
17		**d-ihr name bitte?**
		th-your name please?
		(1.0)
18		**schneider es zeh ha?**
		schneider es cee aitsh?
		(2.0)
19		**(moment,)**
		(a moment,)
		(1.0)
20		**ja schneider.**
		yes schneider.
		(1.5)
21		**ja,**
		yes,
		(2.0)
22		**ja okay,**
		yes okay,

```
23                  samstag um siebzehn uhr ja?
                    saturday at seventeen hours yes?
                    (1.0)
24                  danke schön,
                    thank you,
25                  tschü:s,
                    bye:,
```

After being summoned by the ringing tone of the telephone, Thani answers presenting herself as a principal (Goffman, 1983) of the salon upon which the caller most probably announces her request which is confirmed by Thani's utterance in line 2, her subsequent flicking through the schedule, and a request for confirmation of the date in line 3. She scans the appointment schedule for options and proposes a time in line 4. She then pleads for the customer to hold on in line 5, which suggests that she is attempting to find a suitable row in the schedule. This pleading for time is due to the medium of the phone, because, compared to a physical encounter, the customer is not able to observe the staff searching through the schedule and therefore requires a sort of turn-holding device (Gardner, 2001) with *einen moment (bitte)?* 'one moment (please)?' in order to signal to the caller that she is engaged in an activity and will continue her turn shortly after. Then from lines 6 to 11, Thani elicits details about the number of clients, the duration of the treatment and the type of massage, pieces of information that are important for Thani to make another proposition of time in lines 12 and 13. The proposition seems to be accepted by the caller, as Thani utters another turn-holding device in line 14 while completing the schedule, first with the type of massage (line 15), the duration (line 16) and finally the name (line 17 to 21). Again the completion of the name involves a repetition of the name, and in this case Thani's effort to verify the spelling (line 18). Her *ja okay* 'yes okay' in line 22 signals the successful completion of the booking and the action is routinely closed with a confirmation of the booking by repeating the day and the time (line 23). It is important to note that the completion of the action is not compromised by Thani's non-standard renditions of case inflection (line 3), the ellipsis of the copula (line 6), lack of gender and case agreement in the indefinite article (line 7) or the use of stops instead of fricatives for the number sixty in German (line 16).

The discussion of these examples illustrates that the core action of booking an appointment means that the staff and the client mutually engage in a sequence of lower-level actions that are all accomplished discursively. The aim of this series of actions is that the staff commits to provide a particular service on a certain day and time that is both convenient for the client as well as manageable given the provision of human resources.

Both examples show that the action of booking an appointment is an interactional achievement that centres on basically six actions. The booking is successfully made due to the interactional competence of the participants to perform their roles using the linguistic and interactional resources provided to them (Hall et al., 2011, Young, 2011). The linguistic resources in German or the register that is drawn on to accomplish the actions comprise the ability to form questions with question words or prosodic cues, the days of the week, ordinal numbers, telling the time in the 24h system, asking for the name, and making propositions for dates and times. With these resources, a staff with an overall minimal competence in German, can be maximally competent in doing her job.

5.2.1 Declining and proposing with minimal resources

Two important actions that staff must be able to handle are to decline a request and to propose a new or alternative booking. To accomplish these actions the therapists draw on a simple set of linguistic resources that are lexical and prosodic. In the following example, Ratcha and a female client negotiate a time slot for a 30-minute back and neck massage at the counter. The customer declines Ratcha's first proposal, which requires her to propose another possible date and time frame in lines 1 and 2 of the following transcript.

Figure 3: Declining & proposing: Ratcha (EEUK_040413_004400)

RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**ich könnt ab,**
		I could make it from,
		(1.0)
02		**zwölf uhr fünfzehn.**
		twelve fifteen.
		(2.0)
03 ->	RAT	**zwölf uhr nicht? ((looking at schedule))**
		twelve o'clock not?
04 ->		**dreizehn uhr nicht.**
		thirteen hundred not
05 ->		**vierzehn uhr dreißig?**
		fourteen thirty?
		(2.5)

While Ratcha then browses through the schedule she signals the unavailability of certain times slots using constructions of the time and the negation particle *nicht* 'not' in lines 3 and 4. In order to make a proposition she simply uses the time but raises her intonation in line 5 *vierzehn uhr dreißig?* 'fourteen hundred thirty?'. Another resource that is commonly used to make propositions is a lexical construction using *geht* 'works', as illustrated in the following examples by Petchara and Thani during a phone booking and by Kanita during a

counter booking. These constructions seem to have been appropriated widely by all the staff members in the salon to perform the action of proposing alternatives.

Figure 4: Declining & proposing: Petchara (EEUK_090413_003521)

PET = Petchara

```
01      PET     (dann) sie kommen ah vierzehn uhr geh:t?
                (then) you come ah fourteen hours ca:n?
```

Figure 5: Declining & proposing: Thani (EEUK_060313_014621)

THA = Thani

```
01      THA     geht's bei ihnen um dreizehn uhr,
                is it possible for you at thirteen hours,
```

Figure 6: Declining & proposing: Kanita (EEUK_270513_003705(P2))

KAN = Kanita

```
01      KAN     nur f-fünfzehn uhr geht bei ihnen?
                only f-fifteen hours works for you?
```

Besides the *geht?* 'works?' structure, other lexical resources that are commonly used to make propositions in combinations with time expressions are *ja?* 'yes?' or *okay?* 'okay?' This set of resources is aptly illustrated in the following phone booking by Sucharat. She proposes a time using *okay?* 'okay?' in line 2 and with *geht* 'works' in line 10, and declines propositions effectively by negating the structure with *geht nicht* 'does not work' in lines 5 and 8.

Figure 7: Declining & proposing: Sucharat (EEUK_110313_015230)

SUC = Sucharat

```
01      SUC     hm:: wann bitte:?
                hm:: when please?
                (1.0)
02 ->           um vierzehn uhr is okay?
                at fourteen hours is okay?
                (1.0)
03              vierzehn uhr.
                fourteen hours
                (4.5)
04              halb eins ein moment?
                half one a momen?
                (2.5)
05 ->           halb eins geht nicht.
                half one doesn't work.
06              h:m?
                h:m?
                (4.0)
07              bitte?
                pardon?
                (2.0)
08 ->           siebzehn uhr geht auch nicht ja?
                seventeen hours also doen't work yes?
09              alles /beset/,
                all occupied
                (3.0)
10 ->           geht nu:r
                only works
                (0.8)
11              um vierzehn uhr oder fünfzehn uhr.
                at fourteen hours or fifteen hours
```

Another interesting aspect about the example is that Sucharat provides a reason for why she cannot yield to the request of the client. In line 9 she says, *alles /beset/*. Interesting is that her pronunciation of the adjective *besetzt* 'occupied' without the final consonant cluster /tst/ does not appear to pose a problem of uptake. The data also shows the therapists' use of an alternative lexical item to *besetzt* 'occupied' in order to decline a client's request, namely *voll* 'full' .

Recourse to this repertoire allows those staff members with minimal competence in German to perform these important additional actions of declining and proposing competently. The following example shows Sopha during a phone booking. Sopha has an overall minimal competence in German. In the example she is about to decline the caller's request by informing her that all slots have been taken.

Figure 8: Declining & proposing: Sopha (EEUK_040313_005950)

SOP = Sopha

01	**SOP**	**für heute?**
		for today?
02 ->		**alles /bese/ bitte?**
		all occupied please?
		(2.5)
03 ->		**(heut-) alles /bese/.**
		(to-) all occupied.
		(1.0)
04		**alles,**
		all,
		(1.0)
05 ->		**ja für heute alles voll.**
		yes for today all full.

To decline the caller's request, Sopha first attempts to use the adjective *besetzt* 'occupied' but pronounces *besetzt* 'occupied' without any consonant in final position, so that the form resembles /bese/. Judging from the long pause before her turn in line 3, the caller may have not taken up her utterance, so that she repeats it in line 3. Her subsequent turns in lines 4 and 5 suggest that the caller still indicates a lack of understanding. While the example does not allow us to judge whether Sopha actively reformulates her turn by choosing an alternative lexical item with *voll* 'full' or whether the alternative was provided in the caller's turn, the important aspect for our purposes here is to highlight that Sopha resorts to an alternative by using *alles voll* 'all occupied' in order to salvage the situation and to competently serve her client.

The discussion has shown that booking an appointment is a routine sequence of actions for the workers and that they rely on a set of discursive practices that allow them

to perform the action competently. Interestingly, instances of formal errors in German do not seem to interfere with the overall task-orientation of the participants. A problem in the action of booking, however, are the names of customers.

5.2.2 The problems with names

Due to the routine nature of the booking process, staff members with minimal competence in German are able to perform the action competently. The only unpredictable element in the process of booking an appointment is the name of the customer. However, a recognizable inscription of the name is crucial, because subsequently the welcoming may be administered by another staff member who has not made the booking earlier. So the booking must be clear for any of the staff involved. In the following anecdote, Kanita reveals that the names of customers are a potential problem source.

sometime also for, (0.5) for sign name ja? <ja,> we also have problem. we cannot richtig (say) the deutsch but we can read ja? (EEUK_040313_004604)
[*richtig* 'correctly'; *deutsch* 'German']

Kanita highlights that the difficulty here lies in the process of resemiotization (Iedema, 2003), the process of transferring the auditory input into writing and thus an inscription in the schedule. For the employees it is important that this inscription is decipherable to them, as Kanita's statement points out. This means that names have to be annotated in a way that is readable by the staff. In order to overcome the problem with the annotation of names in the schedule, Kanita and her colleagues make use of a number of strategies.

One of these strategies is to ask the customer to spell out her name. In Figure 2 above, we have already seen Thani using this strategy for a booking over the phone. However, also in counter bookings this strategy is frequently employed, as the following example with Petchara illustrates.

Figure 9: Names: Petchara (EEUK_090413_031204)

PET = Petchara
FC = Female customer

01	**PET**	**rücken nacken dreißig?**
		back neck thrity?
02	**FC**	**jawohl.**
		exactly
		(2.0)
03	**PET**	**sie sind frau:?**
		you are ms?
04	**FC**	**Baris.**
		Baris.
05		**be ah er i es**
		be ay ar ee es

However, as straightforward as this strategy may seem, letting the customer spell out the name can be challenging to some who are not familiar with the German alphabet, as Kanita explains in the following statement.

but deutsch schreiben auch schwer ja? <sure.> ja because it's different from the english ja? <ja,> because we start, from english, ay be cee dee <hm?> but in deutsch aa be ce de <hm,> auch bissjen schwer. I I always mit ah mit i <hm> das problem ja? (EEUK_170713_010110(P2))
[*deutsch* 'German'; *scheiben* 'to write'; *auch* 'also'; *schwer* 'difficult'; *mit* 'with; *das problem* 'the problem']

While Kanita suggests that the problem with asking the customer to spell out the name is because many Thais have learned the Latin alphabet through English which is not easily transferrable to German, she interestingly draws on this knowledge herself in the following example of a phone booking. When taking down the name of the customer, she clearly uses English for the pronunciation of the first two letters of the customer's name, 'b' and 'e', in line 4 of the transcript.

Figure 10: Names: Kanita (EEUK_170513_013521(P1))

KAN = Kanita

01	**KAN**	**o:ka:y alles klar.**
		o:ka:y all right.
02		**ihr name bitte?**
		your name please?
		(1.0)
03		**best ja?**
		best yes?
04 ->		**/bi/ /i/ es te ja?**
		/bi/ /i/ es te yes?
		(0.5)
05		**o:kay alles klar,**
		o:kay all right,

Another strategy that Kanita and her colleagues use to obtain the name of customers is by asking the customer to write their names on a piece of paper. This can obviously only be used for bookings at the counter. However, the collection of papers that Kanita volunteered to show me suggests that this strategy is frequently used (see Image 20).

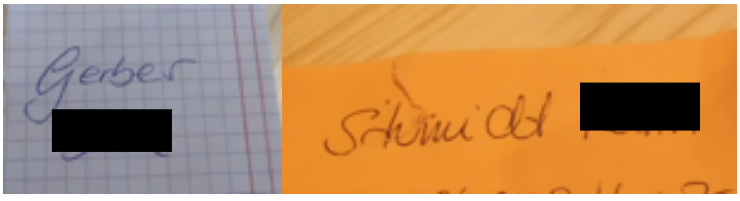


Image 20: Kanita's Massage Salon: Customer names on paper

However, even when this strategy of writing down the names on paper bears challenges. When talking to Sinjai about this practice, she cautioned that letting the customers write

down their name does not work for all staff members, because some have problems to read the cursive style of handwriting commonly used by their customers.

aber wenn die kunden kam, <hm> ja? wenn uns nicht wissen und einfach äh zettel geben un schreibt man ihr name bitte? un nachher muss man schreiben. aber manche leute (.) bissje alt ja un, (.) schreib normal <ja> da gibts schreibschrift dann ne? <ja,> un manche, kann nit lese ne? dat is bisschen schwierig. (EEUK_170513_011210)

but if the customers came, <hm,> yes? if not know us and simply uh give piece of paper and one writes your name please? and afterwards one has to write. but some people (.) a little old yes and, (.) write normally <yes,> there is cursive writing then right? <yes,> and some, cannot read right? that's a little difficult. (EEUK_170513_011210)

If all fails, there is another strategy that the employees at Kanita's store make use of, namely to resort to Thai script to represent the names of their customers. This strategy is, however, not very frequently used. What is interesting is that in the process of transferring the auditory input, the Thai alphabet is used to approximate the sounds of the German names. The following two images show two such instances. In Image 21, the German family name *Scherer* has been written in Thai script as /sela/ and in Image 22, the family name *Gerber* has been written in Thai script as /gebek/.

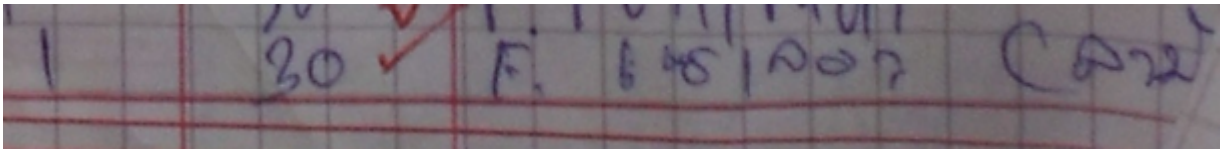


Image 21: Kanita's Massage Salon: Customer name in Thai: 'Ms Scherer'

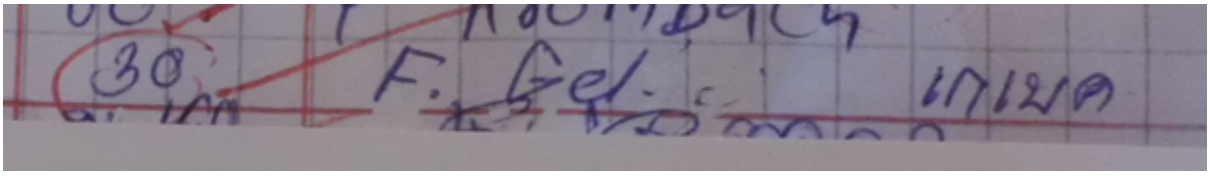


Image 22: Kanita's Massage Salon: Customer name in Thai: 'Ms Gerber'

Interestingly, Thai script is not only used to represent what the staff perceives phonetically, but there are instances in the data where not the name, but contextual information about the customer or the mode of booking was used to record the appointment. In the first case, represented in Image 23, Sopha had taken a phone booking for two customers. For the entry in the schedule she used the Thai verb phrase 'called already' after the 'F' to indicate that the customers are female.

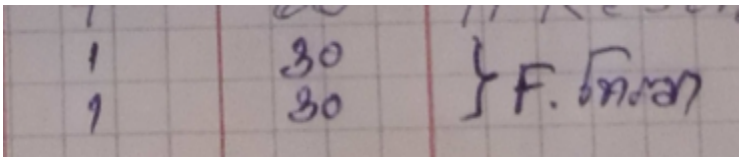


Image 23: Kanita's Massage Salon: Customer name in Thai: 'Ms *called already*'

Similarly, in the entry in Image 24, Porntip used the Thai phrase 'white cloth with flower prints' in reference to the dress the lady was wearing at the time when she booked her appointment with Porntip over the counter.

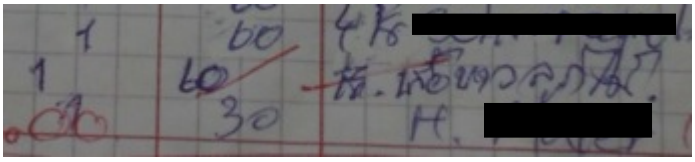


Image 24: Kanita's Massage Salon: Customer name in Thai: 'Ms *white cloth with flower prints*'

It is important to note, however, that in both these cases when Thai was used to represent a name by referring to contextual information, the appointments were all scheduled for the same day.

While names may pose a challenge during the booking process, Kanita stresses that these moments of potential trouble are usually resolved humorously and can therefore be used to build positive relationships with her customers.

but I think the most kunde auch, they enjoy ja? <hm?> for schreiben name or tell exactly name ja? <hm,> but sometime I not, I not so serious about this problem. <hm.> can make customer smile also (EEUK_170513_010014(P1))
[*kunde* 'client'; *auch* 'also'; *schreiben* 'to write']

5.2.3 Summary

The discussion of the core action of booking appointments has illustrated that the routine design of this chain of actions allows all staff members, especially those with minimal competence, to interact effectively and perform the action competently. This competence involves the use of the appointment schedule and a recourse to Thai and the use of German in interactions with the clients. Also when negotiating appointments with clients, the staff make effective use of a restricted set of stock phrases in German to accomplish their work. A common trouble source are the names of clients. In order to solve problems with names, the staff have developed routine practices to deal with these problems, such as asking the clients to spell out their names or writing them down on a piece of paper. They also resort to the resource of Thai producing phonetic spellings in Thai script that

approximate the names of their clients or by using contextual information instead of the names.

5.3 Welcoming customers

Just like booking appointments, welcoming customers is a routine action at Kanita's salon that all staff have to be able to perform. Likewise, the performance of the action of welcoming involves the use of the appointment schedule and a sequence of discursive practices. We want to illustrate that the competent use of these mediational means also allows relative newcomers to the store with minimal competence in German and little procedural knowledge to perform the action proficiently. Furthermore, the use of Thai for names of customers in the appointment schedule does not present a problem when welcoming customers. Lastly, we want to see how two types of practical problems are solved: on the one hand, problems that are due to wrong entries in the schedule, and, on the other hand, a problem that arises due to mixing up the entries in the schedule.

5.3.1 The routine structure of welcoming customers

Like booking appointments, the action of welcoming customers is best conceived as a chain of actions that includes the lower-level actions of <establishing contact>, <clarifying customer request>, and <confirming customer request>.This process is aptly illustrated in the following example when Thani welcomes a female client.

Figure 11: Welcoming: Thani 1 (EEUK_060313_020838)

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	THA	**guten tag?** good day?
02	FC	**guten tag,** good day,
03	THA	**was kann ich für sie tun?** what can I do for you?
04	FC	**ich hatte jetzt einen termin?** I had now an appointment?
05		**um zwölf uhr?** at twelve o'clock?
06	THA	**ja ihr name bitte?** yes your name please?
07	FC	**sand?** sand?
08	THA	**ölmassage ja?** oil massage yes?
09	FC	**ja,** yes, (5.0) ((clicking sound of pen))
10	THA	**(so bitte.)** (so please.)

11		**bitte schön sie,**
		welcome you,
		(11.0) ((walk over to treatment room))

After the exchange of greetings, Thani initiates the action of <clarifying the customer request> in line 3 with a typical stock phrase *was kann ich für sie tun?* 'what can I do for you?'. FC states her request that she has made an appointment for 1 p.m. in lines 4 and 5. To confirm the request, Thani asks for the name of the customer in line 6 and in line 8 she mentions the treatment requesting the customer's confirmation with respect to the correctness of the booking. Once these actions are accomplished, the staff either ask the customer to proceed to the treatment room, as Thani does in lines 10 and 11 using gestures and polite stock phrases such as *bitte schön* 'please' or the slightly un-idiomatic construction *bitte schön sie* 'please you', or they invite the customer to take a seat in the waiting room area.

Reference to the appointment schedule is important in the performance of the welcoming routine, as it provides various clues for the staff to identify the customer. Staff may draw on the name, gender, the time of booking, or the type of treatment to confirm the booking. In the following example, Thani follows the standard procedure described above, first asking for the name in line 4, and then verifying the booking with a reference to the treatment in line 6. As Image 25 below suggests, the entry in the schedule allows Thani access to the type of treatment the customer has booked.

Figure 12: Welcoming: Thani 2 (EEUK_250413_000924 (P2))

THA = Thani
MC = Male customer

01	**THA**	**schönen guten ta:g?**
		a very good day?
02	**MC**	**ei ich hab angerufen fü:r massage,**
		well I called for a massage,
03		**dreizehn uhr.**
		thirteen hours.
04 ->	**THA**	**ja ihr name bitte?**
		yes your name please?
05	**MC**	**ketle,**
		ketle,
06 ->	**THA**	**ja für rücken nacken [(ja?)]**
		yes? for back neck [(yes?)]



Image 25: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entry in schedule: Entry for 1 p.m.

The action of welcoming a customer is routinized to such a degree that even temporary or new staff and those with minimal competence in German are easily able to learn and perform these actions. The following example features Namthip, a staff member who completed an internship at the store. She had been in Germany for less than a year and was looking to find employment at Kanita's store. The day that the example below was recorded was only her second day at the store. I observed her performing predominantly backstage duties, such as preparing drinks for customers or clearing the treatment rooms after service, and she was not involved in treating customers at this time. Therefore, we can assume that she had not too much exposure to the practice of booking and welcoming before this incident. The following example, however, illustrates how quickly she was able to adjust to the welcoming routines in the store and how she manages to use the appropriate linguistic and material resources competently to accomplish the action of welcoming a customer.

Figure 13: Welcoming: Namthip (EEUK_040613_011326)

NAM = Namthip
FC = Female customer

		((Namthip enters))
01	NAM	**hallo: guten ta:g.**
		hello: good da:y.
		(3.0)
02		**wat kann ich sie [tun?]**
		what can I do [you?]
03	FC	**[scherer] is mein name.**
		[scherer] is my name.
04		**ich hab einen termin für halb sechs,**
		I have an appointment for five thirty,
05		**für rücken massage.**
		for back massage.
06	NAM	**halb /sek/.**
		five thirty.
07	FC	**hm?**
		hm?
		(8.0)
08	NAM	**warten (.) paar minuten.**
		wait (.) a couple of minutes.
09	FC	**hm? ja ja.**
		hm? yes yes.
10		**[gerne kein problem.]**
		[I don't mind not a problem.]
11	NAM	**[ja okay.]**
		[yes okay.]

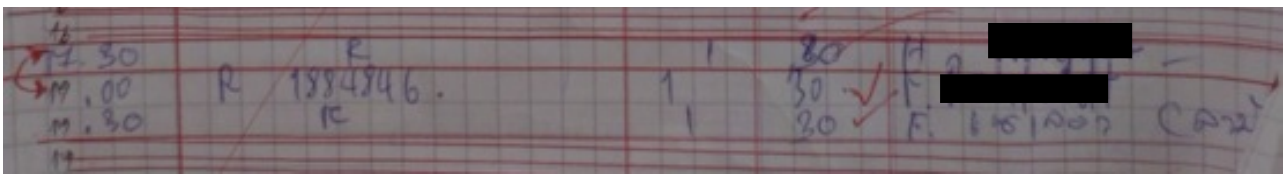


Image 26: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entry for 5.30 p.m. in Thai: 'Ms Scherer'

First of all, it is noteworthy that Namthip appears to have almost mastered the discursive practices necessary for performing the action of welcoming. She establishes contact with the client in line 2, she confirms FC's time for the appointment in line 6, and she asks FC to wait for her turn in line 8. Secondly, Namthip's success in welcoming the client is also based on her ability to utilize the entries in the schedule appropriately. Two appointments have been scheduled for the 5.30 p.m. slot, as Image 26 above shows. Both customers have booked back and neck massages for 30 minutes. Yet, one customer's gender is indicated as male, as a capital H is used in front of the customer's name, while the other one is female. The lady's name, however, is provided in Thai script. As we have already shown in the previous section, the Thai letters are a phonetic approximation of the client's name, /sela/, while the lady identified herself as *Scherer*. While we cannot be sure on which resources Namthip actually draws in this moment, the successful performance of the action suggests that she had already appropriated the tools in the schedule, in order to correctly identify the customer.

The previous section on booking of appointments illustrated that one particular strategy the employees draw on when writing down names in Thai in the schedule is to refer to contextual features instead of the name of the customer. One of the examples cited above was the case of Porntip, whose inscription referred to the dress the lady was wearing, 'white cloth with flower prints', as again shown in Image 27 below. The reason why Porntip did not write down the lady's name was that in the moment of booking, she actually forgot to ask the lady for her name. We could assume that it would not pose a problem now, if Porntip were the one to welcome the lady, but when the customer returned, Porntip was occupied in one of the treatment rooms. In the end, it was Sinjai who welcomed the lady. Sinjai had just started her shift a few minutes earlier and therefore did not have time to exchange any information with Porntip. The following transcript shows the interaction that ensued.

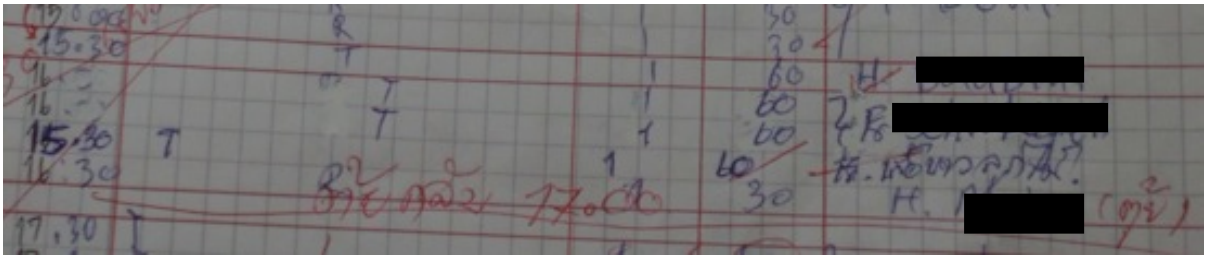


Image 27: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entry for 3.30 p.m. in Thai: 'Ms *white cloth with flower prints*'

Figure 14: Welcoming: Sinjai (EEUK_170713_021016)

SIN = Sinjai
FC = Female customer

01	SIN	**bitte schön.**
		at your service.
02	FC	**ich hab einen termin fü:r um halb vier?**
		I have an appointment fo:r three thirty?
		(3.0)
03	SIN	**wie heißen sie?**
		what is your name?
04	FC	**seel.**
		seel.
05		**ähm ich war vor einer stunde da,**
		uhm I was here an hour ago,
06		**die kollegin hat den namen gar nicht aufgeschrieben.**
		the colleague did not write down the name.
07	SIN	**okay.**
		okay.
08		**alles klar.**
		all right.
09	FC	**ja?**
		yes?
10	SIN	**ja?**
		yes?
11	FC	**ja gut,**
		alright then,
12	SIN	**einen moment,**
		a moment,

In order to identify FC, Sinjai asks for her name in line 3, as there are several massages scheduled for the time between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. FC gives her name but specifies in line 6 that she had not been asked for it earlier. Yet, Sinjai confirms her booking immediately in lines 7 and 8 without any signs of hesitation, which seems a little bit unexpected to FC judging from her reaction in line 9. Like in the example above, two appointments had been scheduled for the same time, one for a man and another for the lady. Therefore, we cannot be absolutely certain to which information in the schedule Sinjai referred to when confirming the lady's booking. Nevertheless, Porntip's description of the lady's garment in Thai in the schedule at least did not disturb Sinjai's efforts in identifying the customer correctly.

While these examples show how the employees use the resources in the schedule competently to perform the action of welcoming customers, the entries in the schedule may also pose problems, because they may be wrong or they may be misread.

5.3.2 Mistakes in the schedule

The most common source of problems when welcoming clients is a wrong entry in the appointment schedule concerning the number of clients or the length of the treatment. Such mistakes potentially affect the whole workflow and may delay all subsequent appointments. However, what struck me during my observations at the salon is that I

never really witnessed a staff cancelling a customer's appointment, due to such problems. So let us take a look how these challenges are solved and handled discursively.

In the following example, the problem results from the fact that instead of two customers for a 30-minute treatment only one was written down for the 2.30pm slot, as Image 28 shows.

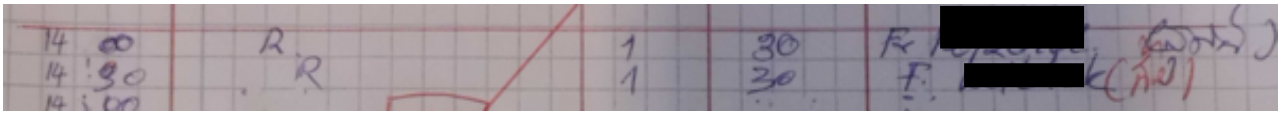


Image 28: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entry for 2.30 p.m.: Wrong entry: number

Thani and Porntip were the staff at the counter, when the two customers, a lady and her daughter, entered. For the sake of the analysis, we will break up the transcript into two parts.

Figure 15: Wrong entry: Thani & Porntip (EEUK_250413_013047(P3))

THAN = Thani
FC = Female customer
POR = Porntip

01	FC	**hallo guten tag.**
		hello good day.
02	THA	**haben sie einen termin ja?**
		do you have an appointment?
03	FC	**ja laibach.**
		yes laibach.
		(1.0)
04	THA	**ein person.**
		one person.
05 ->	FC	**zwei personen.**
		two persons.
06 ->	THA	**ZWEI personen?**
		two persons?
07 ->	FC	**zwei PERSONEN. ((determined))**
		two persons.
08 ->	THA	เอาแล้วสิ
		alright then
		(1.0)
09		**ja eine minute,**
		yes one minute,
10		**nehmen sie [platz] ja?**
		take a [seat] yes?
11	FC	**[ja?]**
		[yes?]
12		**danke,**
		(1.0) ((FC and FC2 sit down))

The problem with the entry in the schedule becomes apparent after FC's turn in line 5, *zwei personen* 'two persons', contests Thani's previous turn instead of confirming it. Thani's repetition *ZWEI personen?* 'TWO persons?' as a question in line 6 is again confirmed by FC in line 7. Interesting is now that despite her slight frustration, as her utterance in Thai in line 8 suggests, Thani still continues with the routine in a friendly

manner and asks the customers to take a seat. While the customer may have inferred that there is a problem with the booking, picking up on the cues from Thani's turn in line 6, Thani does not openly acknowledge it, but turns to Porntip, after the lady and her daughter have taken a seat. Thani realigns to address Porntip by switching to Thai.

Figure 15: Continued

13	THA	ใครเขียนลงคนเดียว
		who wrote down one person only
14		ต้องเอาไอ้ **Sopha**
		has to be Sopha
		(1.5)
15		เนี่ยะ **termin** คนเดียวเขามาสอง
		she has appointment alone now come two
		(2.5)
16	POR	(xxxxx) (มีกี่คน)
		(xxxxx)(how many people are there?)
		(2.0)
17		**(xx)** อ่อ หนึ่ง สอง สาม สี่
		(xx)uh one two three four
18		**Sopha** เดี่ยวเสร็จ
		shortly Sopha will finish
19		สี่
		four
20	THA	เดี่ยวเสร็จ **Sopha** ออกมา
		shortly Sopha will finish and come out
		(1.0)
21	POR	อีกสองคน (xxxxxx)
		there are two more (xxxxxx)
		(0.5)
22		อยู่บ้านนู้น
		in the other part
		(1.0)
23	THA	ไม่อยู่
		not here
		(2.0)
24		เขาคงเข้ามา
		they will be in

This small mistake creates a big problem for Thani and Porntip, because at this moment only four therapists are on duty: two are busy, and another customer is expected to arrive shortly. So taking on the two ladies immediately would mean that Porntip needs to delay her subsequent appointment for a foot massage. In Thani's and Porntip's conversation in Thai, they deliberate by counting the available staff (line 16), checking the schedule of who is most likely to finish soon (line 18), and considering additional manpower (line 21). Since all these deliberations are done in Thai, the problem stays opaque to the customers. While I do not want to claim that this switch to Thai is deliberate, the change of language at least covers up the extent of the problem, as it remains in a space that is only accessible to the therapists. In the end, both ladies did receive their massage treatments, as Thani prepared the treatment room and waited for Sopha to finish her treatment only to immediately instruct her to join.

This tendency to accommodate at all costs to the demands of the customers when a mistake in the schedule has been noticed is also at work in the following example. Here a man and his wife have booked two treatments for 60 minutes. Unfortunately, Thani must admit in line 1 that the schedule entry only specifies one person.

Figure 16: Wrong entry: Thani & Sinjai (EEUK_240513_000312)

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer
MC = Male customer
SIN = Sinjai

01	THA	**hier steht nur ein person.**
		here says only one person.
02	FC	**nee?**
		no?
03		**[zwei] personen?**
		[two] persons?
04	MC	***[nee]***
		[no]
05		***ei wenn nit,***
		well if not,
06		***bleibschd du do un ich fahre.***
		you stay here and I drive off.
07 ->	FC	**un wenn würde ähm,**
		and if would uhm,
08 ->		**dreißig minuten zwei personen machen,**
		do thirty minutes two persons,
09 ->		**geht das [(xxx)?]**
		does that work [(xxx)?]
10	THA	**[ja] moment,**
		[yes] a moment,
11		**ein moment bitte?**
		a moment please? ((laughs))
12 ->	FC	***(falsch verstann gischtern obend)***
		(understood wrong last night)
13 ->	THA	**sinjai** สักครึ่งเนอะ
		sinjai only half okay?
14	SIN	**ja:,**
		ye:s,
15		ครึ่งหรอ
		half okay
16	THA	**okay.**
		okay.

Following Thani's acknowledgment of the blunder in the schedule, the couple deliberate and FC proposes a solution in lines 7 to 9: to have a 30-minute treatment for two instead of a 60-minute treatment for one person only. Then in line 13, Thani turns in Thai to her colleague Sinjai who has been busy in the kitchen and asks her whether she is occupied. Since Sinjai agrees and Thani is aware that this arrangement will not delay the subsequent bookings, she agrees to take them on. Interesting, nevertheless, is also FC's utterance to her partner in line 12, before Thani turns to Sinjai. FC says softly in the regional dialect to her husband *falsch verstann gischtern obend* 'understood wrong last night' suggesting that the fault in the schedule was not due to her, but due to a receptive problem by the staff member who administered the booking the day before.

These examples illustrate how most problems that occur due to wrong bookings and mistakes in the schedule are solved by the staff in situ. The fact that the dominant medium between staff members is Thai has the effect that these problems and the negotiations about solutions may not surface openly, but remain within the linguistic space created by the use of Thai. In the following examples, Thai serves similar cognitive functions, even though the problems are here not created by wrong entries, but by a host of factors that lead to the wrong identification of the customers.

5.3.3 Mixing up entries

The following extended example will illustrate a number of points. First of all, it will show that the use of Thai for names of customers does not always facilitate the identification of a customer. Secondly, it will show that a lack of interactional competence by both participants in the interaction causes the problem, and, thirdly, we will show again that the therapists collaborate to solve the problem. Since this collaboration is in Thai, the problem and its resolution will again not become readily apparent to the customers.

Image 29 below shows the entry in the appointment schedule that causes the problem. Two women have scheduled their massage treatments for 5 p.m. One lady, *F. Krombach*, has booked a 60-minute Thai massage, while another lady, *F. Gel*, whose name is further specified in Thai script as /gebek/, has scheduled a 30-minute back and neck massage. It is *F. Gel*'s first visit to Kanita's salon and, as the transcript shows, she admits to having had problems because of her name while booking her appointment. It must also be said that both women arrive at a very hectic period of the day, when Kanita and her staff are busy welcoming, booking and charging several clients at the same time. So when F. Gel arrives and Kanita welcomes her, Kanita's focus is on getting the job done quickly. But let us now turn to the transcript to examine why the problem occurs.

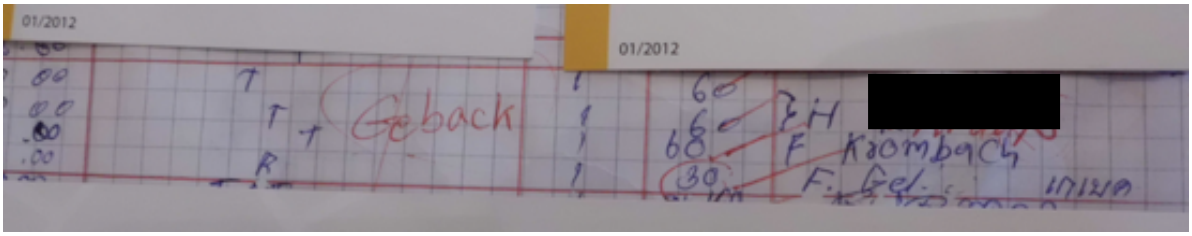


Image 29: Kanita's Massage Salon: Mixing up entries: Schedule entry

Figure 17: Mixing up entry: Kanita 1 (EEUK_170513_000330)

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer (F. Gel)

01	KAN	**ein wunderschön guten ta:g,**
		a wonderful good da:y,
02	FC	**guten tag.**
		good day.
03	KAN	**was kann ich für sie tun?**
		what can I do for you?
04 ->	FC	**gerber.**
		gerber.
05		**ich hab heut termin um fünf uhr.**
		I have an appointment today at five o'clock.
06	KAN	**um fünf uhr [ja?]**
		at five o'clock [yes?]
07	FC	**[hm_hm?]**
		[hm_hm?]
08	KAN	**fünf u:hr,**
		five o'clo:ck,
		(2.0) ((pen clicks))
09 ->		**mh ger- krem- krembach [ja?]**
		mh ger- krem- krembach [yes?]
10 ->	FC	**[ja:] wa- ((laughs))**
		[ye:s] wa- ((laughs))
11 ->	KAN	**für die thai-**
		for the thai-
12	FC	**war schwierig [am telefon.]**
		was difficult [on the phone.]
13	KAN	**[ja:]((laughs))**
		[ye:s]
14 ->		**für die thai massage seksik minuten ja?**
		for the thai massage sixty minutes yes?
15		**so.**
		so.
16		**nehmen sie platz ja?**
		take a seat yes?
17		**ein paar minuten.**
		a couple of minutes.

The first lady to arrive is *F. Gel* and she is welcomed by Kanita. *F. Gel* identifies by giving her name in line 4, *gerber,* and the time of her treatment in line 5. Kanita then follows the usual pattern of confirming the time in lines 6 to 8, she then turns to the schedule and reads out the name of the person in line 9 which she identified for the treatment. This poses a challenge to Kanita shown by the two false starts *mh ger- krem krembach [ja?]*. What happens here is that Kanita actually reads out the wrong name. She reads out *F. Krombach*'s and not *F. Gel*'s name, which is given in Thai script as /gebek/ (see Image 29). However, when, at the end of her turn in line 9, Kanita seeks approval through the discourse marker *[ja?]* '[yes?]', *F. Gel* starts her turn early and inadvertently her utterance *[ja:] wa-* '[ye:s] wa-' is taken up by Kanita as a positive confirmation of her albeit wrong choice of customer. This is shown by Kanita's turn in lines 11 and finally in line 14 when she announces the type of treatment as *für die thai massage seksik minuten ja?* 'for the thai massage sixty minutes yes?'. *F. Gel* does neither react to Kanita's announcement of the wrong timing nor the wrong type of treatment. This is also partly due to the fact that she is hardly given any time to state her claim, as Kanita immediately continues to end the

encounter in line 15 by asking *F. Gel* to take a seat. The misidentification of the client is therefore not due to a wrong entry in the schedule, but to a misalignment between Kanita and *F. Gel* that only becomes apparent when one minute later the real *F. Krombach* enters the store.

When *F. Krombach* arrives and Kanita welcomes her, Ratcha also happens to be behind the counter. As we can see from the transcript below the interaction develops routinely until lines 13 and 14, when Kanita realizes that she has made a mistake: *wou: andere auch* 'wou: other as well'.

Figure 18: Mixing up entry: Kanita 2 (EEUK_170513_000556)

KAN = Kanita
RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer (F. Krombach)

01		KAN	**schön [guten] ta:g,**
			a very [good] da:y,
02		FC	**[hallo,]**
			[hello,]
03		KAN	**[hallo.]**
			[hello.]
04		FC	**[guten tag.]**
			[good day.]
05			**krombach.**
			krombach.
06			**ich hab n termin um siebzehn uhr.**
			I have an appointment at seventeen hours.
07		KAN	**ja?**
			yes?
08			**um siebzehn uhr.**
			at seventeen hours.
09			**ihr name:?**
			your na:me?
10		FC	**krombach.**
			krombach.
11		KAN	**krom-**
			krom-
12		FC	**krombach.**
			krombach.
13	->	KAN	**wou:,**
			wou:,
14	->		**andere auch,**
			other as well,
			(1.0) ((KAN laughs))
15	->	RAT	**hm?**
			hm?
			(2.0)
16		KAN	**ge:ba.**
			ge:ba.
			(1.0)
17		RAT	**(un) krombach.**
			(and) krombach.
18		FC	**nee krombach.**
			no krombach.
19		KAN	**ja?**
			yes?
20	->	RAT	**sie is krombach.**
			she is krombach.
21		KAN	**อะไร krombach.**
			what krombach.
22		FC	**((laughs))**
			(1.0)
23		RAT	**แม่นไหมนะ**
			correct?
24		FC	**((laughs))**

```
                    (0.5)
25          KAN     (xx)
                    (xx)
                    (0.5)
26 ->       RAT     ein ein [sch- ein ein paar minuten.]
                    a a [sh- a a couple of minutes.]
27          KAN     [(xxx)] ได้ ได้ ได้ ได้  [ได้ ได้ ได้]
                    [(xxx)] can can can can [can can can]
28          FC      [okay dann] setz ich mich noch [hin.]
                    [okay then] I take a seat [still.]
29          KAN     [okay] ein paar minuten [ja?]
                    [okay] a couple of minutes [yes?]
30          FC      [(recht vielen dank)] danke [schön.]
                    [(I appreciate it)] thanks [a lot.]
31          KAN     [so?]
                    [so?]
```

After Kanita has realized the mistake, as indicated by her utterances in lines 13 and 14, she starts laughing it off without explaining the matter to FC, *F. Krombach*. Now it is interesting that after Kanita has signalled a problem, her employee Ratcha immediately takes an interest and takes on an active role in solving it. Kanita and Ratcha both turn to the schedule and re-read the entries in lines 16 to 18. Then in line 20, Ratcha identifies *F. Krombach* when she says *sie is krombach* 'she is krombach' and seems to make sure that Kanita understands the mistake in line 23, when she turns to her again in Thai asking for confirmation 'correct?'. The problem has been resolved once Ratcha asks *F. Krombach* to take a seat in line 26. Kanita seems to support Ratcha's initiative with her turn in line 27 in Thai, and when Kanita turns to FC in line 29 *[okay] ein paar minuten [ja?]* '[okay a couple of minutes [yes?]', she shows that she also has cleared the confusion.

This example illustrates how a written schedule entry can develop into a problem when it is taken up or resemiotized in a spoken interaction with a client. At the same time, it exemplifies the collaborative attitude between the workers at Kanita's salon. When problems occur the staff very often get together to solve it. Moreover, this example illustrates Kanita's statement cited in the previous section about her attitude towards mistakes with the names of customers: she tries not to take them too seriously and attempts to turn such mishaps into opportunities to make her customers and herself smile. This attitude seems to catch on with *F. Krombach* as her laughter in lines 22 and 24 in Figure 18 above suggests.

5.3.4 Summary

This section has shown that the action of welcoming customers in Kanita's salon is a routine action entailing routine discursive practices that even staff with minimal competence in German are able to perform. These discursive practices are easily

appropriated by newcomers and those with otherwise minimal competence in German. The schedule is again a crucial tool in accomplishing the action of welcoming and Kanita's staff can draw on various elements in the entry to identify a customer. Schedule entries in in Thai script that only provide contextual information on the customer therefore do not present obstacles in practice, but problems arise due to the wrong annotation of the length of the treatment and the number of clients. If a problem occurs the staff attempt to resolve it in situ and often in collaboration with colleagues. Since staff use Thai to tackle these problems, such mishaps often remain concealed to the customer.

5.4 Charging customers

The third core action that Kanita and her staff must be able to perform is charging customers after a treatment. Just as the other actions discussed previously the action of charging customers can be broken down into routine lower-level actions, such as <establishing contact>, <closing the sale>, and <completing the loyalty card>.

The action of <establishing contact> tends to kick off this sequence. It not only establishes alignment between staff and customer, but it involves short discursive routines that support the relationship between staff and client. In other words these openings create positive rapport and do relational work. However, as we will try to show in the analysis, staff can sustain sequences of extended small talk after a treatment, but their investment in the action is constrained by their level of competence and restrictions of time. The subsequent action of <closing the sale> is arguably the central piece of this chain of action, because it requires the staff to verify the identity of the customer and to announce the price. The schedule book is again a central tool in this action. However, the completion of this action can pose a challenge due to the lack of procedural knowledge or the therapist's minimal competence in German. After handling the payment, another routine task is <completing the loyalty card>. While the completion of the loyalty card does not pose a problem with routine customers, a challenge to many staff at Kanita's salon is posed by the need to explain the system to customers.

5.4.1 Establishing contact

A message treatment has always physical consequences and therefore clients are given time to change and relax afterwards. It is a custom at Kanita's salon to offer their

customers a drink, very often jasmine tea or a glass of water, which is prepared by the therapists and served in the waiting area. Since the therapists often have to proceed immediately to another appointment, payments are often handled by another staff member after the clients have consumed their drinks.

To initiate a payment, customers tend to walk up to the counter. Typically this is mediated by a short feedback sequence. These discursive practices typically prepare the floor for the monetary exchange that is to follow. These transitions typically involve obtaining feedback from the customer via a routine question, as in the Figure 19 below by Kanita in lines 2 and 6.

Figure 19: Establishing contact: Kanita 1 (EEUK_130713_000258(P2))

KAN = Kanita
MC = male customer
FC = female customer

01	KAN	**so.**
		so.
02 ->		**alles in ordnung?**
		everything fine?
03	MC	**super.**
		super.
04		**[(genau.)]**
		[(exactly.)]
05	KAN	**[super.]**
		[super.]
06 ->		**ja und bei- bei ihnen?**
		yes and with- with you?
07	FC	**alles okay.**
		all okay.
08	KAN	**[jo.]**
		[jo.]
09	FC	**[alles] super.**
		[all] super.

MC and FC are first-time customers at Kanita's salon. After their drinks, they get up and approach the counter where Kanita is sitting. Kanita initiates the interaction with asking them how they liked the treatment by saying in line 2 *alles in ordnung?* 'everything fine?' This is a routine practice that is nevertheless significant to maintain a positive relationship with her clients. The following example in Figure 20 illustrates how Kanita sticks to this routine of seeking feedback, even with customers who are regular clients and who appear to want to get straight to business by cutting out the niceties.

Figure 20: Establishing contact: Kanita 2 (Example: EEUK_130713_011343)

KAN = Kanita
FC1 = Female customer

01	KAN	**so:.**
		so:.
02 ->	FC	**zweimal-**
		twice-
03 ->	KAN	**alles in ordnung für ihnen [heute:?]**

		everything alright with you [toda:y?]
04	FC	**[ja danke?]**
		[yes thanks?]
		(1.0)
05	KAN	**so:. ((laughs))**
		so:.
06	FC	**zweimal ölmassage.**
		twice oil massage.

In line 1, Kanita establishes her readiness by saying *so:* 'so:'. Since FC is a regular visitor, her turn in line 2 suggests that she interpreted this as a go-ahead to announce the services that she wishes to pay for, but she is interrupted by Kanita's inquiry for feedback in line 3, before Kanita initiates the actual action of charging in line 5 after a short pause with another instance of *so:* 'so:'.

These brief polite routines rarely develop into longer stretches of feedback, however. As we would like to illustrate with the following example, the main reason may be that the therapists immediately orient to other tasks that they need to accomplish post-treatment, such as removing the used sheets and towels. Another reason may be their lack of competence in German to contribute to extended stretches of small talk. However, the following example provides evidence for Kanita's interactional competence to sustain social talk by her female client by providing appropriate responses.

Figure 21: Establishing contact: Kanita & Porntip (EEUK_130713_003400(P2))

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer
POR = Porntip

01	KAN	**wie war heute?**
		how was today?
		(1.5)
02	KAN	**alles gut?**
		all good?
03	FC	**ja ich bin operiert worden?**
		yes I had surgery?
04 ->	KAN	**ja [oh:,]**
		yes [oh:,]
05	FC	**[es is] wirklich sehr gut.**
		[it is] really very good.
06 ->	KAN	**ja?**
		yes?
		(1.0)
07	FC	**viel besser.**
		much better.
08 ->	KAN	**hm?**
		hm?
09	FC	**und hier muss auch noch aber,**
		and here must also still but,
10		**mal schauen.**
		let's see.
11 ->	KAN	**ja?**
		yes?
12	FC	**mh?**
		mh?
13 ->		**ich mach schon mal die [rechnung.]**
		I'll settle the payment [already.]
14	KAN	**ja:?**
		ye:s?
15	POR	ผ้าปูถลกออกเลยเนอะ

```
                take the bed sheet off?
16      KAN     เออ ผ้าปูค่อยวันจันทร์ เอาไว้ก่อน
                uh leave it and wait till monday
17              เปิดออกไว้
                leave it open
                (1.0)
18      KAN     so zwei person für thai massa:ge ja?
                so two persons for thai massa:ge yes?
```

This interaction suggests that Kanita's routine question for feeback in lines 1 and 2, *wie war heute? (1.5) alles gut?* 'how was today? (1.5) all good?', is taken up by FC as a question about her general health condition, as she responds in line 3 that she had surgery *ja ich bin operiert worden?* 'yes I had surgery?'. Kanita's minimal feedback in lines 4, 6, 8 and 11 signals her engagement and support of FC's short account, but Kanita's lack of initiating further questions appears to lead FC to commence the payment transaction in line 13. This may be due to interest, time or attention, as in line 15 Porntip approaches Kanita in Thai and asks whether she should tidy up the treatment room. Yet, it also seems to be due to the lack of Kanita's competence in German that does not support her engagement in an exchange with her client. So while these feedback sequences are an important routine to establish contact with clients, the data suggests that they are not meant to develop into longer interactions with clients.

5.4.2 Closing the sale

The central action in the chain of actions that makes up the core action of 'charging customers' is <closing the sale>. Here it is important to know that the action of charging is not always performed by the staff member who administered the massage. Therefore, anyone behind the counter must be able to close the sale. The appointment schedule is here again a central mediational means that the staff can draw on, because the schedule informs the staff behind the counter about the type and duration of the massage and therefore the price she has to charge.

In the following instance, a couple of mother and daughter steps up to the counter to make their payment for a 30-minute massage treatment that was executed by Sopha and Ratcha between 1.30 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. It was also Sopha who had welcomed the couple earlier. After the treatment Sopha and Ratcha are busy cleaning the treatment room and preparing it for new customers, but Porntip is behind the counter to receive the couple. While Porntip was neither involved in treating them nor welcomed them personally, she now relies on the details in the appointment schedule to appropriately

charge the customers for the service received. Image 30 shows the entry in the schedule that Porntip had access to at this moment in time.

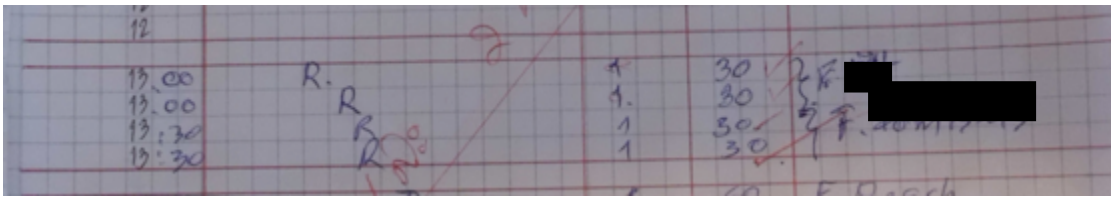


Image 30: Kanita's Massage Salon: Entry for 1 p.m. & 1.30 p.m.

Based on her ability to read the information in the schedule, Porntip is able to see that both had back massages for 30 minutes for 20€ each. Based on this information, Porntip is able to announce the price for the treatment, when mother and daughter exit the treatment room and walk towards the counter.

Figure 22: Closing sale: Porntip (EEUK_170713_001135(P2))

POR = Porntip
FC = Female customer

01	POR	**trinkt sie keine?**
		you don't drink any?
02	FC	**nein,**
		no.
03	POR	**nein.**
		no.
04	FC	**(wir) gehen nach hause.**
		(we) go home.
05 ->	POR	**ja vierzig euro zusammen.**
		yes forty euros together.

In line 1, Porntip establishes contact with the two ladies by asking them about their drinks and after it has been clarified that no drinks will be consumed, Porntip initiates the action of <closing the sale> in line 5 by announcing the price.

Another common practice is to repeat the type of treatment that has been rendered, so that the customer is able to verify the details that lead up to the price. The following example involving Kanita illustrates the regular pattern that most staff follow when <closing the sale>. Like in the example above, Kanita was not the therapist, but Thani and Sinjai had been treating the couple, so that Kanita relies on the information in the appointment schedule to close the sale.

Figure 23: Closing sale: Kanita (EEUK_270513_015143)

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer
MC = Male customer

01	KAN	**heute ja?**
		today yes?
02		**frau weber,**
		ms weber,
03	FC	**genau.=**
		exactly.=
04	KAN	**für [thai] massage,**
		for [thai] massage,
05	MC	**[ja.]**
		[yes.]
06	KAN	**äh rücken nacken,**
		uh back neck,
07		**seksik minuten zwei person,**
		sixty minutes two person,
08		**siebzig euro.=**
		seventy euros.=
09	MC	**=ja?= ((hands over money))**
		=yes?=
10	KAN	**=wie imme:r,**
		=as usu:al,
11		**so [da:nke schö:n.]**
		so [tha:nks a lo:t.]
12	MC	**[(x) ich habs ja ja.]**
		[(x) I got it yes yes.]

In line 1, Kanita verifies the name, she then announces the treatment in lines 4 and 6, the duration in line 7, and finally the price in line 8.

This examples suggest that the action of <closing the sale> is a straightforward practice for the therapists at Kanita's salon, because the register required for this action is similar to the one used for the other actions described above. However, lack of routine with the modalities of the payment and the pronunciation of numbers can present a stumbling block, as we will see in the following section.

5.4.2.1 Problems with closing the sale

Treatments are always paid in cash. However, some customers have obtained vouchers which they can use to off-set a part of the total price. These modalities may present a problem for those staff members that lack familiarity with the charging routine. In the following example Mai and Savika, two trainees at the store, have to handle a payment by two customers, a man and a woman, who have both enjoyed 60-minute standard massages for 35€ each. The lady had a foot reflexology massage, while her partner received a back massage. The amount the customers need to pay is thus altogether 70€. However, when the lady proceeds to settle the bill, she presents a voucher over 35€ to Mai with her turn in line 2 *einmal haben wir gutschein* 'we have one voucher'. Mai's hesitation at the start of her turn in line 3 signals a problem, because she is unable to

announce the total price to the customer. In order to rescue the situation, Mai switches to Thai and seeks the assistance of the next best available colleague, in this case Savika, her fellow trainee.

Figure 24: Closing sale: Mai & Savika (EEUK_060713_005528)

MAI = Mai
SAV = Savika
KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer

01	MAI	**okay.**
		okay.
02	FC	**einmal haben wir gutschein,**
		we have one voucher,
03	MAI	**ah:** ตัวเองมานี่เลย
		ah: you come here,
		(3.0)
04	MAI	อันนี้หกสิบสี่
		this (one) sixty and four,
05		แต่เขานวดหลังนะ
		but he got back massage.
06	SAV	อันนี้หรอ
		this?
07		มันก็เท่ากัน
		it is the same.
08	MAI	เท่ากันใช่ไหม
		it is the same is that right?
09	SAV	งั้น
		in that case,
10	MAI	ก้จ่ายตังค์คนเดียว
		only one person pays.
11	SAV	ของผู้ชายหรืออะไร
		is it the man or what?
12	MAI	เขามาด้วยกัน
		they come together.
		(1.0)
13	MAI	อันนี้เอาตังค์ให้เขา
		the voucher brings money to her.
14		ตัวเองทำนี่ไป
		you do this.
15	SAV	ไม่ใช่อันนี้เขานวดหลังชั่วโมง หรือครึ่งชั่วโมง
		no he got back massage for one hour or half an hour.
16 ->	KAN	เออ นวดหลัง[ก็เท่ากัน]
		yeah back massage [is the same.]
17	SAV	**[(xxx)]**
		[(xxx)]
18	MAI	จ๊ะ
		yes.
19	SAV	สองคนชั่วโมงหรอ
		two persons one hour?
20		แปลว่าเขาต้องจ่าย
		that means they have to pay,
21	MAI	**ah:,**
		uh:,
22		**noch äh,**
		still uh,
		(1.5)
23 ->		**noch (-) fünfunddreißig.**
		still (-) thirty-five.
24	SAV	**ja.**
		yes.
25 ->		**fünfund[dreißig euro,]**
		thirty-[five euros,]
26 ->	MAI	**[fünfundreißig] euro bitte.**
		[thirty-five] euros please.
27	FC	**[hm?]**
		[hm?]

After having secured Savika's attention, Mai informs Savika in lines 3 and 4 about the treatments the couple had enjoyed with reference to the duration and the type of massage. In line 4, Mai refers to FC's foot massage using the number in the brochure, namely number 4: 'this (one) sixty and four'. In line 5, she tells Savika that the man took a back massage. Savika, who is obviously more familiar with the prices, informs Mai that both massages are the same in line 7: 'it is the same'. Given the presence of the voucher, Mai correctly infers that only one person needs to pay in line 10: 'only one person pays'. Savika then wonders who of the two still needs to pay, but Mai informs her that they arrived together and therefore pay together in line 12, and she adds that the voucher was presented by FC in line 13. However, although Mai now possesses all the details that she needs to announce the price, she attempts to pass on the responsibility of charging to Savika with her turn in line 14, 'you do this', suggesting that she still feels not confident enough to announce the price. But Savika requires more information and asks Mai about the duration of the man's massage in line 15. At this point, Kanita, who has been occupied with a foot reflexology treatment at one of the foot reflexology chairs not far away from the service counter, cuts in. She has obviously overheard Mai's and Savika's deliberation about the prices and she resolves her trainees' problem addressing them in Thai in line 16: 'yeah back massage [is the same.]' Through their coordinated effort and the help by their boss, Mai and Savika are then able to turn to FC in German to announce the total price of 35€. While, this example is on the one hand an illustration of how the lack of routine in the practices of the salon can cause a problem, it is again evidence of how the staff at the salon work together to come to a swift and effective resolution of problems.

While the lack of procedural knowledge can affect the action of <closing the sale> another source of trouble can be a staff member's level of competence in German. In the collection of recordings that document these actions, it was particularly one staff member with minimal competence in German, who seemed to repeatedly face risks of break-downs due to her pronunciation of numbers in German. The following example shows this staff member, Sopha, charging a client for two treatments worth 70€.

Figure 25: Closing sale: Sopha 1 (EEUK_040313_010950)

SOP = Sopha
MC = male customer

01	SOP	**bitte schön.**
		there you go.
02 ->		**[siebzehn-]**
		[seventeen-]
03	MC	**[mh danke?]**
		[mh thanks?]
04	SOP	**siebzehn euro bitte?**
		seventeen euros please?
05 ->	MC	**siebZIG,**
		sevenTY,
06		**[*bestimmt ne?*]**
		[*you mean right?*]
07	SOP	**[äh äh,]**
		[uh uh,]
08		**ja [siebzig.]**
		yes [seventy.]
09	MC	**[ja (x)] (xx).**
		[yes (x)] (xx).
10	SOP	**((laughs))**

In this example, Sopha charges a man and a woman for two 60-minute massages. Instead of using *siebzig* 'seventy', Sopha uses *siebzehn* 'seventeen' twice in lines 2 and 4. The customer identifies Sopha's blunder as a repairable item in line 5 by immediately highlighting Sopha's mistake and putting heavier stress on the suffix, *siebZIG* 'sevenTY'. Sopha's response suggests that she realises her error by repeating the price again in line 8, *ja siebzig* 'yes seventy'.

A single instance may now be seen as a temporary mistake, however, Sopha committed the same mistake just 15 days later during another observation session suggesting that numbers, and particularly the number *siebzig* 'seventy', presents a problem for her.

Figure 26: Closing sale: Sopha 2 (EEUK_190313_015056)

SOP = Sopha

01	SOP	**siebzehn.**
		seventen.
02		**zehn und siebzehn ja.**
		ten and seventeen yes.
		(0.5)
03		**und danke schön,**
		and thanks a lot,

Here again Sopha was charging a couple who had booked two 60-minute treatments for together 70€. She again uses *siebzehn* 'seventeen' instead of *siebzig* 'seventy' in line 1 when she announces the price. She seems to have realized her mistake immediately, as she initiates self-repair in line 2, which, however, is still not the appropriate target item: *zehn und siebzehn ja*. 'ten and seventeen yes'. However, the male customer does not react, does not say anything, but simply makes the payment. In other words, he let's Sopha's

error pass, most probably due to the fact that he and his wife are regular customers and therefore familiar with the prices at the salon. In a conversation with me after her massage talking about the study and Kanita's staff's language competence, the female part of the couple told me that she had experienced problems with booking appointments that she felt were due to the staff's minimal levels of German competence. Moreover, she said that interactions during treatments are sometimes strained by the staff's minimal competence in German. She then made the following generalization stressing that for administrative purposes a staff with sufficient proficiency in German should be placed behind the counter to facilitate interactions with clients.

normal müsst do jemand hinnen dran wo richtig deutsch (kann). (EEUK_190313_014228)

ideally someone should be behind there who can speak german correctly.(EEUK_190313_014228)

Interestingly, however, Figure 25 shows that Sopha's infelicitous pronunciation of the number did not affect her husband's performance of the action of paying, because of his active involvement in the action by falling back on his prior experiences with the pricing practices at the salon.

5.4.3 Completing the loyalty card

Each customer at Kanita's salon is given a loyalty card. After each completed treatment the staff in charge of charging the customer puts a stamp into the loyalty card and signs it with their name or nickname. As Image 31 shows a loyalty card is complete once nine stamps have been collected. A reward for a full loyalty card is a free back and neck massage or the equivalent of its cash value of 20€, which can be used to off-set the cost of another treatment. This reward is also spelled out as an inscription in German on the right hand side of the loyalty card above the nine white rectangles: *Nach 9 Massagen erhalten Sie eine 30 minütige Rückenmassage gratis* 'After 9 massages you obtain a 30-minute back massage free of charge'.



Image 31: Kanita's Massage Salon: Loyalty card

With regular customers the action of completing the loyalty card requires little prompting by the staff. Customers who come up to the counter to pay for their treatment simply present the loyalty card to the staff member, who then takes it and completes it even before proceeding to the payment. An illustration is the beginning of an example with Sopha that we have already seen above, before Sopha experiences problems with the numbers *siebzehn* 'seventeen' and *siebzig* 'seventy'. The customer approaches the counter and hands the loyalty card to Sopha, who completes it immediately and only then goes over to close the sales transaction.

Figure 27: Loyalty card: Sopha (EEUK_190313_015056)

SOP = Sopha
MC = Male customer

01	SOP	**zusammen [oder?]**
		together [or?]
02	MC	**[mhm?]**
		[mhm?]
03	SOP	**ähm (.) äh ,**
		uhm (.) uh,
		(1.0)
04		**alles,**
		all,
		(18.0) ((SOP completes loyalty card))
05	SOP	**bitte schön.**
		there you go.
06		**[siebzehn-]**
		[seventeen-]
07	MC	**[mh danke?]**
		[mh thanks?]
08	SOP	**siebzehn euro bitte?**
		seventeen euros please?

Sopha completes the loyalty card in the 18 seconds before passing it back to the client with her utterance in line 5 *bitte schön* 'there you go'. This example shows that the action of <completing the loyalty card> hardly requires any talk with regular customers, as it has become routine for all participants. If a customer fails to hand over the card, staff tend to remind her about the loyalty card before or after the payment, just like Kanita does in line

6 of the following encounter with a customer who comes for treatments on a weekly basis:

Figure 28: Loyalty card: Kanita (EEUK170713_001135(P2))

KAN = Kanita
MC = Male customer

01	KAN	**bitte: wie immer,**
		there you go: as always,
02		**thai massage sechzig minut,**
		thai massage sixty minute,
03		**fünfunddreißig euro [ja?]**
		thirsty-five euros [yes?]
04	MC	**[mh?]**
		[mh?]
05		**gern [können wir das-]**
		welcome [could we-]
06 ->	KAN	**[und ihre] kundekarte äh:,**
		[and your] loyalty card uh:,
07	MC	**ja?**
		yes?
		(0.5)

With first time customers, however, the staff is obliged to explain how the system of collecting the stamps works. This is a potentially challenging task for those with minimal competence in German. Yet, the therapists make use of different strategies to accomplish this action, which seem to be appropriate to their level of competence in German. For example, Ratcha, a therapist with maximum competence in German, can be seen to explain the functioning of the loyalty voucher verbally as in lines 7 and 8 of the following example.

Figure 29: Explaining loyalty card: Ratcha (EEUK_240513_005904(P2))

RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer
MC = Male customer

01	RAT	**heute erstes mal,**
		today first time,
02		**wir [haben] äh punktekarte für (kunden) einsammeln ja?**
		we [have] uh point card for clients collect yes?
03	FC	**[ja,]**
		[yes,]
04	MC	**[ja,]**
		[yes,]
05	FC	**[mh?]**
		[mh?]
06	MC	**[mh?]**
		[mh?]
07 ->	RAT	**wenn neunmal voll,**
		if completed nine times,
08 ->		**bekommen sie halb stunden rücken nacken ja?**
		you get half hours back neck yes?
		(2.5)
09	MC	**irgendwann kommen wir noch mal.**
		sometime we will come again.

Another strategy is to explain the functioning of the loyalty card by guiding the customer's attention to the text on the card. This strategy seems to compensate for the lack of competence to explain it verbally. Kanita applies this method in the following example when presenting the loyalty card to a young couple.

Figure 30: Explaining loyalty card: Kanita (EEUK_130713_000258(P2))

KAN = Kanita
MC = Male customer
FC = Female customer

01	KAN	**ja?** yes?
02		**nach der massage wir habe?** after the massage we have?
03		**punktekarte?** point card?
04		**ja für jede kunde ja?** yes for every client yes?
05		**heute zwei punkte?** ((chops loyalty card)) today two points?
06		**so.** so.
07 ->		**bitte noch mal [lesen] ja?** please [read] again yes?
08	MC	**[okay]** [okay]
09		**(x) massage (xxx)** ((reads the text, mumbling)) (x) massage (xxx)
10		**oh super.** oh super.
11	FC	**oh cool,** oh cool,
12	MC	**na das läuft,=** well that's on,=

From lines 2 to 5 Kanita presents the card to the couple and adds two stamps for their completed treatment. She does explain by means of a physical demonstration of stamping the card in front of the couple, but she also refers MC to the text on the loyalty card in line 7 saying *bitte nochmal [lesen] ja?* 'please [read] again yes?', instead of explaining the system explicitely.

Another strategy is for the staff to remain silent and simply to pass the loyalty card to the customer. This is what Petchara does in the example below, after finding out that she has been charging a first-time customer.

Figure 31: Explaining loyalty card: Petchara (EEUK_090413_005551)

PET = Petchara
FC = Female customer

01 ->	PET	**haben sie kundenkart dabei?** do you have loyalty card with you? (1.0)
02	FC	**ä kundenkart.** a loyalty card.
03	PET	**ja?** yes? (2.5)

```
04        FC        nicht,
                    not,
05        PET       nein,
                    no,
06        FC        äh,
                    uh,
07        PET       ja.
                    yes
08 ->     FC        ich hab- nein ich war noch nie hier.
                    I have- no I've never been here.
09        PET       okay [ja,]
                    okay [yes?]
10        FC        [okay?]
                    [okay?]
11 ->     PET       *hier bitte schön ja?*
                    *here you go yes?*
12        FC        ah danke,
                    ah thanks,
```

After having announced the price of the massage, Petchara routinely requests the loyalty card from FC in line 1. FC indicates her lack of familiarity with the loyalty card in line 2 *ä kundenkart.* 'a loyalty card.' and stresses in line 8 that it is her first time at the salon: *ich hab- nein ich war noch nie hier* 'I have- no I've never been here'. Without engaging in an explanation about how the system works, Petchara simply passes the card to FC with her utterance in line 11.

These examples suggest that apart from relying on explicit discursive practices, the therapists are able to perform the action of explaining the loyalty card to their customers choosing a strategy that suits their respective competence in German. In doing so they can rely on the fact that the loyalty card system is a well-established practice across many companies in the service industry, such as coffee shops, video stores, and petrol stations. The majority of customers is therefore familiar with such loyalty schemes.

5.4.3.1 Problems due to customers

There is, however, evidence in the data that problems emerge due to the lack of the client's procedural knowledge that stamps in the loyalty card are provided only after actual treatments and not after the sale of vouchers. I was able to witness on two separate occasions with two separate therapists that clients demanded a stamp in their loyalty card after having purchased a voucher. This puts the therapist in a position to provide an explicit explanation that stamps can only be collected after a treatment has been completed. For therapists with minimal competence in German this poses a challenge, because such a discursive action is not part of the usual routines.

In the following example, we want to see how Thani manages to deal with this situation. The problem is that the client, FC, purchased two vouchers with a value of

altogether 70€ and now requests Thani to put two stamps into her loyalty card. Like Kanita above, Thani could simply turn to the inscription on the loyalty card, instead she attempts to explain to the client verbally that stamps are only given after actual massages. The interesting aspect about this interaction is that the client as well as Thani continually re-align to each other in order to incrementally arrive at a mutual understanding of the matter. Let us look at Thani's and the customer's efforts step by step. We enter the interaction with the client expressing her wish to have the stamps in the card in line 1.

Figure 32: Problems explaining loyalty card: Thani (EEUK_270513_004255)

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**ai ich woll's st- abgestempelt haben.**
		well I wanted it st- chopped.
02	THA	**aso dat is nur massage bitte?**
		well that is only massage please?
		(1.0)
03		**nur massage.**
		only massage.
		(0.5)
04	FC	**massage war das [jo,]**
		that was massage [yes,]
05	THA	**[ja] aber die gutscheine ohne,**
		[yes] but the vouchers without,
06		**keine stempel.**
		no stamps
07		**nur massage.**
		only massage.
08		**un dann stempel ja?**
		and then stamp yes?
		(1.5)
09 ->	FC	***(versteh ich nit.)***
		(I don't understand.)
		(1.5)

Thani's first attempt at explaining in lines 2 and 3 *aso dat is nur massage bitte? (1.0) nur massage.* 'well that is only massage please? (1.0) only massage.' proves to be unsuccessful. The client 's reaction to Thani's explanation in line 4 *massage war das [jo,]* 'that was massage [yes,]' shows that she still feels that she deserves the stamps in her card, because she has paid for a massage treatment, just like Thani's explanation suggested. Thani then rephrases her explanation more explicitly throughout lines 5 to 8, trying to stress that stamps are not given out for vouchers, but only after massages. In her utterances in lines 7 and 8, Thani attempts to stress the temporal sequence of first the treatment and then the stamp by using the conjunctive adverb *dann* 'then': *nur massage. un dann stempel ja?* 'only massage. and then stamp yes?'. However, FC shows her lack of understanding in line 9 by saying softly **(versteh ich nit.)** '*(I don't understand.)*' However, Thani does not give up and after a short pause, she re-starts her explanation stressing the temporal sequence

even more emphatically in line 17: *danach massage einmal punkte.* 'after that massage one time points,'.

Figure 32 continued

13	THA	**wir machen,**
		we do,
14		**zu (für) stempel ja?**
		to (for) stamp yes?
15		**nur massage.**
		only massage.
16	FC	**wenn ich es selbst nehme.**
		if I take it for myself.
17	THA	**danach massage einmal punkte,**
		after that massage one time points,
18		**weil bei gutschein,**
		because with voucher,
		(1.0)
19		**ähm,**
		uhm,
20	THA	**[keine-]**
		[no-]
21	FC	**[ich hab] zwei gutscheine gekauft für siebzig euro.**
		I have bought two vouchers for seventy euros.
22	THA	**ja das ist für-**
		yes this is for-
		(5.0)
23	THA	**((laughs))**
		(2.5)

FC's contribution in line 16 and her statement in line 21 still signal her lack of understanding. Moreover, her turns interrupt Thani's efforts, which ultimately leads to a longer period of silence and some embarrassed laughter by Thani. However, it seems that this break-down provides Thani with the necessary space and time to rephrase her explanation and she retakes the floor in line 24.

Figure 32 continued

24	THA	**für ähm (.) nur massage ja?**
		for uhm (.) only massage yes?
25		**dann stempel,**
		then stamp,
26		**aber gutschein ohne stempel.**
		but voucher without stamp.
27	FC	**achso.**
		okay.
28		**gut.**
		good.
29		**alles klar.**
		alright.

From lines 24 to 26 Thani is granted the floor and a long turn at talk to provide an explanation which ultimately leads to the successful uptake by FC: *für ähm (.) nur massage ja? dann stempel, aber gutschein ohne stempel.* 'for uhm (.) only massage yes? then stamp, but voucher without stamp'. It is Thani's persistence and efforts to reformulate her explanations but also FC's collaborative effort in this interaction that lead to the clarification of the matter. Despite Thani's minimal competence in German, which is

visible in her limited ability to alter the design of her turns, she and the customer above all show performative competence by perpetually reinvesting effort in making the interaction work. The fact that shortly after this sequence FC actually purchases another voucher without asking for a stamp in her loyalty card is evidence for the success of Thani's explanation.

In another interaction with a similar problem, Sopha and her client were less successful, because the client drew the wrong inferences from Sopha's efforts to explain and Sopha was unable to understand the client's predicaments. In this instance a female customer purchased two vouchers for 20€ each for a back and neck massage. After Sopha had prepared and presented the vouchers, FC requested to have her loyalty card stamped. The misalignment between Sopha and her customer is interestingly due to the customer's misinterpretation of a feature in Sopha's pronunciation of the German preposition *nach* 'after'.

Figure 33: Problems explaining loyalty card: Sopha (EEUK_060513_015412)

SOP = Sopha
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**ich hab hier noch den (.) den,**
		I still have here the (.) the,
02	FC	**den pass noch.**
		the card/pass also.
03 ->	SOP	**äh /nak/ den massage.**
		uh after the massage.
04	FC	**nacken ach das is nur,**
		neck ah this is only,
05		**ich dacht das is das,**
		I thought this is it,
06 ->	SOP	**/nak/ den massage?**
		after tne massage?
07	FC	**is das nicht das?**
		isn't that it?
08	SOP	**nein,**
		no,
09	FC	**nee?**
		no?
10	SOP	**nein.**
		no.
11	FC	**okay,**
		okay,
12	SOP	**hm?**
		hm?
13	FC	**gut.**
		fine.
		(2.0)
14	FC	**ah hier steht ja,**
		ah it says here,
15		**rückenmassage.**
		back massage.
16	SOP	**hm?**
		hm?
17	FC	**okay.**
		okay

After having bought the vouchers, FC demands in lines 1 and 2 to have her loyalty card stamped. Sopha's response is */nak/ den massage* 'after the massage', with /nak/ being a variant pronunciation of the preposition *nach* 'after' without the voiceless velar fricative /x/ but with a voiceless velar stop /k/. Embedded in Sopha's utterance and together with the use of the accusative form of the definite article *den* , FC's response in line 4, *nacken ach das is nur* 'neck ah this is only,' suggests that FC misunderstood Sopha's prepositional phrase */nak/ den massage* as a noun phrase, *nackenmassage* 'neck massage'. Sopha does not pick up on this misinterpretation, but repeats her utterance in line 6. FC's turns in lines 14 and 15 suggest that she now looks at the vouchers that were issued with the inscriptions *rückenmassage* 'back massage'. She then seems to draw the wrong inference given the resources that she is provided with, namely that stamps in her loyalty card are not provided, because she purchased vouchers for a back massage instead of a neck massage. On the other hand, Sopha does not seem to be conscious of her client's wrong conclusion, but judges from her client's reaction that her efforts in providing the explanation have been successful.

5.4.4 Summary

This section discussed the core action of 'charging customers'. Like the other actions, 'charging customers' is composed of a routine chain of lower-level actions that are accomplished through discursive routines and material resources such as the appointment schedule and the loyalty card. Again, we have attempted to highlight that staff with minimal competence in German can perform the routines with ease by drawing on routine utterances in interactions with clients and, in explaining the loyalty card, even the printed texts on artefacts. However, our discussion of these examples suggests that the success of these actions also involves the client's experiences. For example, Sopha's problems in pronouncing the number *seventy* 'siebzig' in German are seldom flagged and never lead to a break-down, because many customers are familiar with the prices. Similarly, the clients familiarity with similar loyalty card systems does not necessitate an elaborate explanation apart from the text on the card itself. We have seen how these conditions allow staff to perform their professional practices in accordance with their level of competence in German. Yet, we have also shown that staff and customers show performative competence when non-routine trouble occurs. Explaining that stamps are only provided after an actual treatment posed a challenge for Thani, because of her

minimal competence in German. However, through the mutual focus on the task and the constant efforts to re-align and adjust their contributions, Thani and the client successfully accomplished the explanation. The task focus and the various mediational means available to complete the action of 'charging customers', as well as the customers experience with these actions, render formal inconsistencies in the staff's competence in German inconspicuous.

5.5 Selling vouchers

The final core action that sustains the existence of Kanita's salon is selling vouchers. These vouchers are popular with clients and their sale represents an important source of income for the store and an opportunity to secure new clients. Kanita offers vouchers for all the different treatments offered in her salon. On top of that, clients can request for cash vouchers that are not linked to a specific treatment, which enables them to freely spend the amount on a massage of their choice.

Like the other core actions, selling vouchers consists of a chain of smaller lower-level actions. These actions prompt the use of a variety of mediational means. The aim of the analysis is to illustrate the ways these mediational means combine for the performance of the action and how their use affects the staff's discursive practices. Moreover, the analysis will show how historical experiences shape the lower-level actions of <completing the voucher> and <handing over the voucher>.

5.5.1 The action of selling vouchers

Let us first try to pin down the actions that syntagmatically construct the action of selling vouchers. Vouchers are always sold over the counter at the store. So just like the actions of booking an appointment, welcoming a customer, and charging a client, the chain of actions that leads to the sale of a voucher begins with the practices of <establishing contact> and <determining the service request>. It is the realisation of the latter that leads staff and clients into a funnel of commitment (R. Scollon 2001b, p. 167), meaning that the client's request for a voucher commits the staff to a series of actions that ultimately lead to the payment of the voucher by the client and thus the successful transaction. So what are the actions that lead there?

Once the staff and client have determined that a voucher is what the customer wants, the subsequent action is <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher>. This action concerns the terms of the voucher, i.e. is it a cash voucher over a certain value, is it about a certain treatment or a combination of treatments. As we will see below the length of this action is constrained by the specificity of the service request. After the staff and the client have agreed on the terms of the voucher, the staff will need to prepare the voucher, while the client waits. For the action of <completing the voucher> the therapist uses a template provided by the store and fills in the type of massage or the value in writing. Moreover, she must indicate the date of sale by putting a stamp on the voucher. Once the voucher has been completed according to the requirements of the client, the next action is <handing over the voucher>. Here the employee shows the voucher to the client, she packs it in an envelope together with a brochure. This action involves the important discursive practice of informing the clients about the validity period of the voucher. <Charging the customer> completes the sale, before the participants end their encounter by <disengaging the contact> usually by bidding their farewells.

Throughout the following sections, we will specifically zoom in on the lower-level actions of <determining the service request>, <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher>, <completing the voucher>, and <handing over the voucher>. The questions we intend to answer is how these actions require the staff to draw on the resources in their repertoires, as well as other mediational means. We will also look at problems that arise due to their competence in German or their experience.

5.5.2 Determining the service request

In order to figure out the want of the customer, the employees rely largely on the discursive routine that I have described for the other core actions. The contact between staff and client has been established through the exchange of greetings and the client's movement towards the counter, the staff member tends to signal her readiness to receive the client's request through the use of the formulaic expression *was kann ich für sie tun* or *wat kann ich für sie tun?* 'what can I do for you'. This prompts customers to reveal their demand for a voucher, as in the following example

Figure 34: Requesting voucher: Kanita 1 (170513_003305)

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**[hallo]**
		[hello]
02	KAN	**[hallo] schönen guten abend?**
		hello a very good evening?
03	FC	**abend.**
		evening.
04 ->	KAN	**wat kann ich für sie tun?**
		what can I do for you?
05 ->	FC	**ich hätte gerne einen gutschein [bitte,]**
		I would like to have a voucher [please,]
06 ->	KAN	**[ja:] gerne?**
		[yes] certainly?

FC's utterance in line 5 not only reveals her service request, but it sets in motion the chain of actions that ultimately leads to the handing over of the voucher. In line 6 Kanita's *ja gerne?* 'yes certainly' signals the uptake of FC's service request, which completes the action of <determining the service request>. Kanita is now aware that FC wants to purchase a voucher and she can therefore go over to the next action, which aims as <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher>.

It is possible that due to their experience and routine of buying vouchers customers already incorporate the terms of the voucher into their service request. For example in line 3 below, MC spells out the cash value, which relieves Ratcha of the need to negotiate the terms.

Figure 35: Requesting voucher: Ratcha (EEUK_060713_011357)

RAT = Ratcha
MC = male customer

01	RAT	**hallo,**
		hello,
02		**guten tag.**
		good day.
03 ->	MC	**ich hät gern einen gutschein für fünfzig euro,**
		I'd like to have a voucher for fifty euros,
04	RAT	**ich schreibe auf für fünfzig euro ja?**
		I write down for fifty euros yes?
05	MC	**genau,**
		exactly,
06	RAT	**okay.**
		okay.
		(24.0) ((RAT completes voucher and stamps it))

Alternatively, customers may refer to the type of treatment that they want the voucher for. In the following example, the overlapping talk of Kanita and FC throughout lines 7 to 10 suggest that FC intends to render her initial service request more specific without waiting for Kanita to initiate the next action of <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher>.

Figure 36: Requesting voucher: Kanita 2 (EEUK_060713_004805)

KAN = Kanita
RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer

01		FC	**hallo,**
			hello,
02		RAT	**hallo,**
			hello,
03		KAN	**hallo olga,**
			hello olga,
04			**guten ta:g?**
			good da:y?
05			**ja wat kann ich für sie tun?**
			hello a very good evening?
06		FC	**ich bräuchte ä gutschein.**
			uh I would need a voucher.
07	->	KAN	**ja [gerne?]**
			yes [certainly?]
08	->	FC	**[f-f-=]**
			[f-f-=]
09	->	KAN	**[für welche] massage:,**
			[for which] massa:ge,
10	->	FC	**[=für,]**
			[=für,]
11			**fü:r hand rücke un schulter,**
			fo:r hand back and shoulder,
12			**für fuffzehn euro.**
			for fifteen euro.
13		KAN	**fünfzehn euro.=**
			fifteen euros.=
14		FC	**=hm?=**
			=hm?=
15		KAN	**=ja?**
			=yes?

Kanita's use of FC's first name in line 3 *hallo olga* 'hello olga' suggests a historical relationship between them. FC is most probably a regular customer and has very likely bought vouchers before. This relationship explains why FC intends to skip the action of <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher>. However, Kanita maintains her usual routine, which ultimately causes the overlap.

Problems with the action of initiating a voucher sale occur only, if the staff or the customer lack the necessary procedural knowledge to perform the action. Let us first turn to a staff, in order to see how the problem is solved. The only example in the data of a near failure to complete the action included Namthip, one of the trainees at Kanita's store. It was Namthip's first day on the job and all her experienced colleagues were busy at the time of the interaction. In the following episode, she was busy in the kitchen when a female client entered and walked to the service counter. Knowing that all her colleagues were occupied, Namthip took the initiative and walked from the kitchen to the counter.

Figure 37: Problem requesting voucher: Namthip (EEUK_240513_003632)

NAM = Namthip
FC = Female customer
STE = Stefan

01	FC	**hallo.**
		hello.
02	NAM	**hallo, ((from kitchen area))**
		hello,
		(9.5)
03	FC	**ich bräucht ä gutschein,**
		I'd need a voucher,
		(0.5)
04	NAM	**wat kann ich sie tun?**
		what can I do you?
		(0.5)
05	FC	**einen gutschein,**
		a voucher,
06	NAM	**gutschei,**
		voucher,
		(2.0)
07		**a::h tsk**
		u::h tsk
		(8.5) ((ONN looks behind counter))
08	NAM	***stefan,***
		stefan,
09		***bitte helfen bei mir.***
		please help me out.
10	STE	**kein problem,**
		no problem,
11	NAM	**kaufen gutschein.**
		buy voucher.
12	STE	**hm?**
		hm?
13	NAM	**gehts?**
		works?
		... ((after 8s Sinjai walks to the kitchenette. STE suggests her help))
14	NAM	**sinjai (du),**
		sinjai (du),
15		**besser helfen.**
		better help.
16		**ich kann nicht kann (.) gutschein kaufen.**
		I can not can (.) buy voucher.

The client immediately brings forward her service request in line 3 *ich bräucht ä gutschein,* 'I'd need a voucher,', but after a slight pause Namthip responds with *wat kann ich sie tun?* 'what can I do you?' an alternative version of the typical phrase used by her colleagues to elicit the client's request. The slight pauses before and after Namthip's utterance in line 4 indicates that a problem occurred and FC rephrases her service request now in a less regionally marked variety of German using the complete form of the indefinite article in the accusative case *einen* 'a' instead of the more dialectal variation *ä* and only the noun phrase as the theme of her request. Namthip's turn in line 6 shows that she understood the service request, but she is at a loss to react appropriately. In search for help she first turns to me, the researcher, standing at a slight distance from the service counter. But before I can assist, help arrives in the form of her colleague Sinjai, who is on

her way to the kitchenette from one of the treatment rooms. Namthip calls on her and Sinjai takes over.

This example is interesting, because Namthip herself attests the problem to her lack of procedural knowledge, which she also conveys to Sinjai in line 16 *ich kann nicht kann (.) gutschein kaufen.* 'I cannot can (.) buy voucher.' Yet, it is interesting that she still attempts to serve the client by using the discursive routines that she has obviously already appropriated.

5.5.3 Agreeing on the conditions of the voucher

After the request for a voucher has been clarified, the subsequent action is to ascertain the service that the voucher is supposed to stand for. As mentioned and illustrated above there are two options for the client: either a particular treatment or a cash value. The action of agreeing on the conditions of the voucher is typically initiated by the therapist's utterance *für welche massage?* 'for which massage?', as illustrated by Ratcha's utterance in line 1 in the example below.

Figure 38: Voucher conditions: Ratcha (EEUK_250413_000707(P3))

RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer

01 ->	**RAT**	**für welche massage?**
		for which massage?
02	**FC**	**ä:m die aromaöl massage neunzig minuten bitte.**
		u:m the aromatic oil massage ninety minutes please.
03	**RAT**	**ja.**
		yes.

The design of this question constrains the subsequent response of the client. It favours a response in which the client is supposed to refer to a specific type of treatment. This presupposes the client's familiarity with the treatments and prices. It assumes furthermore that the client demands a voucher for a particular type of treatment. This works well with regular clients as the one Ratcha is dealing with above. Ratcha's question in line 1 *für welche massage* 'for which massage' prompts FC to specify the type of treatment and the duration in line 2. FC's immediate response shows her familiarity with the routine and Ratcha's token of receipt in line 3 *ja.* 'yes.' indicates the appropriateness of FC's utterance. Ratcha then goes on to prepare the voucher for FC.

However, many customers do not arrive at the salon with a clear image of the treatment in mind. Therefore, the standard prompt *für welche massage?* 'for which

massage?' may pose a problem. This appears to the case in the following example in Figure 39 involving Thani and a female customer.

Figure 39: Voucher conditions: Thani (EEUK_060513_012351(P3))

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	THA	**[hallo?]**
		[hello?]
02	FC	**[hallo?]**
		[hello?]
		(2.0)
03	THA	**schönen guten ta:g?**
		a very good da:y?
		(1.5)
05	FC	**hätt gern zwei gutschein.**
		like to have two voucher.
06	THA	**ja:?**
		yes?
		(1.0)
07 ->		**für welche /masa:j/ bitte?**
		for whi:ch massage please?
		(1.0)
08 ->	FC	**bitte?**
		come again?
09 ->	THA	**für welche massage.**
		for which massage.
10 ->	FC	**einmal eine stunde?**
		one time one hour?
		(1.0)
11 ->		**und einmal eine halbe stunde.**
		and one time half an hour.
12 ->	THA	**ähm,**
		uhm,
		(4.5)
13 ->	THA	**für welche /masa:j/ bitte?**
		for which massage please?
		(1.5)
14 ->	FC	**so rücken massage.**
		such a back massage.
15 ->	THA	**rücken nacken,**
		back neck,
16 ->	FC	**genau.**
		exactly.
17	THA	**as- äh,**
		as- uh,
18		**einmal dreißig minuten?**
		our voucher affordable two years yes?
19		**[und einmal sechzig minuten.]**
		[and one time sixty minutes.]
20	FC	**[sechzig minuten] genau.**
		[sixty minutes] exactly.

We have seen in other examples above the effectiveness of the standard phrase *für welche massage bitte?* 'for which massage please?'. Thani uses it as well in line 7, albeit with a variant pronunciation of the word *massage* 'massage' as /masa:j/ without the final vowel /e/. However, FC indicates a problem and Thani self-corrects by repeating her turn this time using a careful enunciation of the word *massage* 'massage' with the final vowel in line 9 suggesting that FC's problem may have been due to her pronunciation. Yet, FC's reaction in line 10 and 11 to Thani's self-repair still does not provide the input that Thani is looking for, because FC does not specify the type of treatment or the value, but only the

duration *einmal eine stunde?* 'one time one hour?' (line 10) *und einmal eine halbe stunde.* 'and one time half an hour.' (line 11). This is a practical problem for Thani, which she indicates with her hesitation *ähm* 'uhm' in line 12 and the subsequent long pause. This could provide FC with the space to react and rephrase her request. However, FC's silence indicates her lack of understanding Thani's predicament, so that Thani repeats her initial question *für welche /masa:j/ bitte?* 'for which massage please?' in line 13 again using *massage* 'massage' without the final vowel /e/. Thani's third repetition finally yields the desired answer by the client in line 14 *so rücken massage* 'such a back massage', which is vague and suggests again the client's lack of familiarity with the types of treatments offered at Kanita's salon. In order to maintain the smooth flow of the action despite the client's indecision or lack of experience and knowledge, another mediational means is therefore often recruited by the therapists into the practice: the shop's brochure.

5.5.3.1 Use of the brochure to facilitate choice

The brochure of Kanita's salon, as seen in Image 32 below, is an A4-size landscape paper that lists the different types of massages that the salon offers with prices. It also features brief explanations of the nine different types of treatments on the right hand side. In two to three sentences in German the descriptions explain technical issues of the treatment and its effects on the body.



Image 32: Kanita's Massage Salon: Brochure: Complete

The introduction of the brochure into the action allows the staff to facilitate the choice for the customer, as the following example illustrates.

Figure 40: Using brochure: Kanita 1 (EEUK_170513_000012)

KAN = Kanita
MC = Male customer

01	KAN	**schönen guten tag ja?**
		a very good day yes?
02		**wat kann ich für sie tun?**
		what can I do for you?
03	MC	**ich hätt gern einen gutschein.**
		I'd like to have a voucher.
05	KAN	**ja gerne?**
		yes certainly?
06		**für welche massage,**
		for which massage,
07 ->		**oder haben sie schon entscheiden, ((shows the brochure))**
		or have you already decide,
		(1.0)
08		**so:.**
		so:.
09		**wir habe?**
		we have?
10		**die liebling- massage für die kunde is- thai massage.**
		the favourite- massage for the customer is- thai massage.
11		**sechzig minute kostet fünfunddreißig euro ja.**
		sixty minute costs thirty-five euros yes.
12		**oder kann man betrag,**
		or one can value,
13		**zwanzig euro dreißig euro geht auch,**
		twenty euros thirty euros also works,
14		**wie sie wollen.**
		as you like.
		(20.0) ((MC looks at brochure))
15 ->	MC	**okay mach ich des,**
		okay I do this,
		(1.5)
16	MC	**(x,)**
		(x,)
17 ->	KAN	**körper thai massage sechzig minuten ja?**
		body thai massage sixty minutes yes?
18	MC	**ja,**
		yes,
19	KAN	**ja?**
		yes?

Kanita welcomes MC who expresses his wish to buy a voucher without specifying clearly the treatment in line 3 *ich hätt gern einen gutschein.* 'I'd like to have a voucher.' When Kanita initiates the action of <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher> in line 6 she takes a brochure unfolds it and spreads it out on the counter top in front of the customer. The customer can thus browse through the menu of the salon including explanations of the most common treatments. At the same time, Kanita accompanies MC's choice with explanations and presenting the two options for the voucher. From lines 9 to 11, Kanita explains that one option is to choose a specific treatment and she adds the cost. Across line 12 and 13 she presents the option of a cash voucher. MC then takes 20 seconds to ponder before making his decision in line 15 *okay mach ich des* 'okay I do this'. The use of

the deictic demonstrative suggests that he points to the treatment number 7 as listed in the brochure (see Image 33 below). Kanita's turn in line 17 *körper thai massage sechzig minuten ja?* ' body thai massage sixty minutes yes?' supports this interpretation, because Kanita refers to the treatment with the name it is given in the brochure.

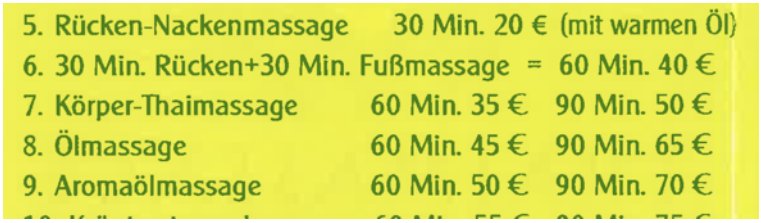


Image 33: Kanita's Massage Salon: Brochure: List of treatments

Instead of pointing or using the name of the treatment, I have also observed customers using the numbers in the brochure to refer to their treatment of choice, a practice reminiscent of ordering food at an Asian take-away restaurant or when ordering a pizza. An example is in line 4 of the following transcript. This short transcript also illustrates how the introduction of the brochure as a mediational means by the therapist renders the action of <agreeing on the condition for the voucher> more effective and more efficient than relying on the mode of speech alone.

Figure 41: Using brochure: Kanita 2 (EEUK_040613_001404)

KAN = Kanita
MC = Male customer

01	KAN	**für welche gutschein bitte? ((puts brochure in front of MC))**
		for which voucher please?
02	MC	**ich gucke mo grad.**
		I'll just take a look.
03	KAN	**ja?**
		yes?
		(18.0)
04 ->	MC	**do die: die sechs.**
		this o:ne the six.
05	KAN	**die [nummer sechs] ja?**
		the [number six] yes?
06	MC	**[für vierzig.]**
		for forty.

The incorporation of the brochure may also relieve staff completely of the need to use speech, in particular if her language competence in German is minimal. The instances in the data that document Sopha's practice of selling vouchers actually never see her engaging in explicit explanations of treatments, as it may present too much of a linguistic challenge. On the other hand, she regularly refrains from talk and draws on the brochure instead to provide a convenient and effective service, as in the example below.

Figure 42: Using brochure: Sopha (EEUK_170713_013254)

SOP = Sopha
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**[hallo,]**
		[hello,]
02	SOP	**[hallo,]**
		[hello,]
03		**wat kann ich für sie tun?**
		what can I do for you?
04	FC	**ich wollt ä gutschein.**
		I wanted a voucher.
05	SOP	**ja?**
		yes?
06		**für welche massage?**
		for which massage?
07	FC	**äh:m müsst ich nommo kurz gucke?**
		uh:m I'd have to have a quick look?
		(11.5) ((SOP takes brochure and gives it to FC))
08	FC	**diese rücken nacken massage.**
		this back neck massage.
09		**dreißig minuten zwanzig euro.**
		thirty minutes twenty euros.
10	SOP	**ja**
		yes.
		(52.0) ((SOP completes voucher and stamps it))

Moreover, the use of the brochure as an additional mediational means does not only compensate for gaps in language knowledge. It also allows staff to accomplish the action of <agreeing on the conditions of the voucher> quickly, because they are often pressed for time, as a new customer may already be waiting.

Now I want to come to the final benefit of the brochure in aiding customers to select a treatment for their vouchers. The brochure does not only facilitate the choice, but it also assists the staff in explaining the different types of massage, an action that may otherwise be potentially challenging monomodally via speech only. In the following example, Kanita is assisting a customer making a choice for a gift voucher. The added challenge is that the customer is looking for a combination of treatments. Before we enter the interaction, Kanita has already pointed to the section in the brochure that lists the different types of massage combos, but the customer is not convinced as we see in line 1.

Figure 43: Using brochure: Kanita 3 (EEUK_040613_002333)

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**ah nur dann kombination,**
		uh only then combination,
02		**nur is DAS hier dann.**
		is only THIS here then.
03	KAN	**kann man auch alles ja?**
		one can also do everything yes?
04	FC	**hm?**
		hm?
05	KAN	**ja?**
		yes?
		(3.0)

06	FC	**tsk** tsk (4.0)

Kanita's response in line 2 *kann man auch alles ja?* 'one can also everything yes?' in reaction to FC's indecision indicates the possibility to customize a massage combo by combining any of the individual treatments on offer. FC suggests her understanding in line 4, however, the long pauses and the click in line 6 continue to signal FC's contemplation.

Figure 43 continued

07 ->	KAN	**wir haben hier au:ch,** we have here a:lso,
08		**rücken nacken.** back neck thrity minutes,
09		**dat dreißig minut,** this thirty minute,
10		**un dann fuß dreißig minut auch ja?** and then foot thirty minute also yes? (1.0)
11		**un dat kostet vierzig euro: ja?=** and that costs forty euro:s yes?=
12	FC	**=hm?** =hm?
13 ->	KAN	**oder hier die thai,** or hier with thai,
14		**die lang (.) minuten,** the long (.) minutes,
15		**mit thai massage neunzig minuten,** with thai massage ninty minutes,
16		**un dann fußreflexonen sechzig minuten.** and then footreflexology sixty minutes.
17	FC	**hm?** hm?
18	KAN	**thai massage neunzig minut,** thai massage ninety minute,
19		**fußreflexonen sechzig minuten.** footreflexology sixty minutes.
20		**[okay?]** [okay?]
21	FC	**[mhm?]** [mhm?] (1.0)

This prompts Kanita to make her suggestion more explicit by presenting the different types of treatments that can be combined from line 7 onwards. For this explanation Kanita makes use of the brochure again which is suggested by the deictic expression *hier* 'here' in lines 7 and 13 and *dat* 'this' in line 11. By incorporating the brochure as an additional mediational means into the sub-action of explaining, Kanita is able to balance out the limitations of her minimal competence in spoken German. Ultimately, it is the ability to draw on the a mixture of mediational means, which allows Kanita and many of her staff to provide competent advice to their customers.

5.5.3.2 Problems caused by the brochure

However, the use of the brochure does not always have positive effects on the development of the action, because the discourses in the brochure may initiate other requests by customers that are outside of the routine practice. This is also due to the unfamiliarity of the customer with the services offered by Kanita. In the following interaction Kanita welcomes a female client, who is a first-timer to her salon. FC demands a cash voucher for between 20€ and 30€. Kanita proposes treatments 5 and 7 in the brochure, the back and neck massage for 20€ and the body Thai massage for 35€. In order to understand the continuation of the interaction and the customer's further request, it is important to consider the images that are in the margins of the brochure (see Image 34 below).



Image 34: Kanita's Massage Salon: Brochure: Relevance of pictures

Treatment number 5 is listed in the brochure as being offered *(mit warmen Öl)* '(with warm oil)' and to the right of the list of treatments there is a visual depicting small bottles of massage oil. This is the part of the brochure that Kanita has directed the customer's attention to. The transcript below shows that the visual content of the brochure is now apparently made relevant for the interaction by the customer in line 3: *haben sie irgendwie so öle oder so [was?]* 'do you have somehow such oils or something like [that?]'. Being unaware that Kanita does not sell massage oil in her store, the customer then states her wish of obtaining a voucher over 25€, which will cover the cost of a treatment for 20€, such as treatment 5, as well as the cost of a bottle of massage oil in lines 6 and in lines 11 to 13. However, Kanita's reactions in line 7 and 8 suggest that she thinks the customer

refers to treatment 5, which already includes the use of oil: *[ja (hier) drauf gibt ö:l.] ja öl [in rücken] ja,* 'yes (here) there is with oil. yes oil on back yes,'.

Figure 44: Problems due to brochure: Kanita (EEUK_170513_003305)

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**äm.**
		um.
02		**vielleicht könnten ma das,**
		maybe we could the,
03 ->		**haben sie irgendwie so öle oder so [was?]**
		do you have somehow such oils or something like [that?]
04	KAN	**[ja?]**
		[yes?]
05	FC	**also dass ich diese,**
		meaning that I this,
06 ->		**diese eine massage nehme [für die zwanzig euro,]**
		take this one massage for the twenty euros,
07	KAN	**[ja (hier) drauf gibt ö:l.]**
		yes (here) there is with oil.
08		**ja öl [in rücken] ja,**
		yes oil on back yes,
09	FC	**[genau.]**
		exactly
10	KAN	**warm öl ja.**
		warmm oil yes.
11 ->	FC	**un dann zum beispiel noch irgendwie n öl,**
		and then for example on top something like an oil,
12 ->		**oder so was mit dazu nehmen,**
		or something on top of that,
13 ->		**dass ma so auf fünfundzwanzig vielleicht kommen oder so,**
		so that we somehow get to twenty-five or so,
14		**weiß nich was das öl kostet,**
		don't know what the oil costs,
		(1.5)
15	KAN	**oh,**
		oh,
		(2.5)
16	KAN	**[((laughs))]**
17	FC	**[((laughs))]**

This leads to a misunderstanding, because of the visual cues in the brochure, and a temporary hold of the interaction after line 15 indicated by mutual laughter in lines 16 and 17. Kanita then tries to repair the break-down by asking FC to repeat her request in lines 18 and 19.

Figure 44 continued

18	KAN	**was sie meinen,**
		what you mean,
19		**entschuldigung [(noch einmal)?]**
		sorry [(once again)?]
20	FC	**[also] wenn ich die jetzt nehme,**
		[well] if I now take this one,
21		**diese diese ähm wenn sie mir die,**
		this this uhm if you me this,
22		**rücken nacken massage,=**
		back neck massage,=
23	KAN	**=ja,**
		=yes,
24	FC	**ähm**
		uhm
		(1.0)
25		**äm was kostet das,**

		um how much costs this,
26		**das is dann schon mit dem warmen öl**
		this is already with the warm oil
27	KAN	**ja mit warm [öl] in den rücken ja?**
		yes with warm [oil] in the back yes?
28	FC	**[genau.]**
		[exactly.]
29 ->		**aber haben sie auch irgendwie öle zum verkaufen?**
		but do you have also some oil for sale?
30		**also so als,=**
		I mean kind of like,=
31	KAN	**=uh,=**
		=uh,=
32 ->	FC	**=als geschenk?**
		=as present?
		(1.0)

It is interesting now how FC attempts to re-align with Kanita in trying to clarify her request. From lines 20 to 22, FC refers back to the treatment, which is treatment 5, the back and neck massage with warm oil. Then in lines 25 and 26, FC confirms her understanding that the massage already comes with warm oil. Only after these issue have been confirmed, FC poses her question about the oil again in line 29: *aber haben sie auch irgendwie öle zum verkaufen.* 'but do you also have some oils for sale.' And she specifies the reason for her request in line 32 *=als geschenk?* '=as present?'. Having thus reconstituted the alignment, Kanita is now also in a position to respond to FC's want appropriately by explaining that the oils that she uses are nothing special but a regular well-known brand (line 34) which is available in the various local drug stores (line 36).

Figure 44 continued

33	KAN	**oh a:h ö:l,**
		oh u:h o:il,
34 ->		**wir wir (-) wir benutzen normale öl [NAME OF BRAND] öl von,=**
		we we (-) we use normal oil [NAME OF BRAND] oil from,=
35	FC	**=ja?**
		=yes?
36 ->	KAN	**[NAME OF STORE] oder [NAME OF STORE] ja?**
		[NAME OF STORE] or [NAME OF STORE] yes?
37	FC	**achso,**
		right,
38	KAN	**ja,**
		yes,
39	FC	**aber sie haben keine fläschchen zum zum verkaufen oder irgendwas,**
		but you don't have any small bottles to to sell or something,
40		**oder [körperlotion oder,]**
		or [body lotion or,]
41	KAN	**[nein nur aromaöl] wir haben extra öl ja?=**
		[no only aromatic oil] we have extra oil yes?=
42	FC	**=okay,**
		=okay,
43	KAN	**aber für normale öl wir,**
		but for normal oil we,
44		**äh benutzen [NAME OF BRAND] von der,=**
		uh use [NAME OF BRAND] from the,=
45	FC	**=mh?**
		=mh?
46	KAN	**[NAME OF STORE].**
		[NAME OF STORE].
47	FC	**okay.**
		okay.
48		**dann dann nehm ich einfach die äm,**
		then then I simply take this um,

49	**die nacken rücken massage,**	
	the neck back massage,	

FC indicates her understanding of Kanita's explanations in line 37 *achso* 'right', and then inquires one final time whether she sells massage oil separately in little bottles or body lotion in lines 39 and 40. Kanita is now in a position to negate the customer's special demand.

My analysis and interpretation of this episode points to the efforts that Kanita and the client invest to cooperate in order to achieve mutual understanding, using different strategies to recontextualize the interaction in order to resolve the confusion. In other words, it is a good example of performative competence (Canagarajah, 2013) and the ability to make things practically work, despite unequally shared levels of mastery of the tool of German.

5.5.4 Forgery protection

Let us now turn to the next action after the terms of the voucher have been clarified. This action introduces the material mediational means of the voucher. The staff must now complete the voucher with details that have been negotiated with the client: the name of a particular treatment and its duration or the cash value without a treatment. Image 35 depicts a completed voucher.



Image 35: Kanita's Massage Salon: Voucher

As we can see from Image 35, a therapist may routinely write out in full the type of massage in German adding a numeral and the specification of the unit in minutes. Or they fill in the cash value. The cash value is always given between two dashes. Additionally a

stamp is put on the voucher with the date of issue and, usually beside it, a signature by the staff member who sold the voucher. Also note that each voucher carries a serial number in the bottom left corner. While the actual content of the inscriptions is less important here, we want to focus on the circumstances that lead to the form of these practices, in other words how the action of <completing the voucher> makes sense paradigmatically in connection to the experience of Kanita in relation to the history of this action.

In the flow of the action of selling the voucher the final step of <completing the voucher> is a straightforward literacy practice. But Kanita revealed in a number of anecdotes the reasons for why she uses the inscriptions on her voucher in the way she does. When I asked Kanita which inscriptions are usually required to complete the voucher, she reports the following:

ja I chop the day ja? the datum ja, and the sign from who sell it ja? <ah okay.> ja ja for protect this gutschein <ja,> lose ja? (...) oder somebodys copy our gutschein <ja.> also ja we must to have our stempel and the sign of who sold it ja? (EEUK_040613_002022(P1))
[*datum* 'date'; *gutschein* 'voucher'; *stempel* 'stamp']

Here she explains that the stamp of the date of issue and the staff's signature in Thai are important means to safeguard against the potential forging of the voucher by deviant customers. Kanita reports of cases where customers have tried to photocopy vouchers or where customers have tried to alter the inscriptions on the voucher, which led her to develop her own system of protection.

this also I think for myself. I think I do this system by myself (...) because something los also. I learning by doing ja? (EEUK_040613_002215)
[*something los* 'something happens' from German *etwas los sein* 'something happens']

An example that Kanita reports is the alteration of the numeral on cash vouchers. Initially, the inscription of the cash value was simply done by putting the numeral on the voucher, for instance '25'. However, as she illustrated to me on the voucher on the right hand side of Image 35 above, she has experienced cases where a customer simply added a '0' to the end of the '25' changing the value of the voucher to '250€'. Moreover, she reports of cases where the digit '3' had subsequently been altered by customers to an '8'. As the following quote illustrates she had no proof against such forgeries and these cases cost her dearly in terms of income.

at first I lose a lot stefan because I don't know ... what should I do and then how because they are like that I know by myself ... they say don't know they buy this. what can say. (EEUK_040613_003700(P1))

In order to safeguard against this, she now resorts to the practice of putting the numerals in between two dashes, so that no digits can be added. Also for the numeral '3', she

showed me on a separate piece of paper (Image 36 below) that she now adds a little circle to the end of the bottom curve, so that it cannot be rendered easily into an '8'. Thirdly, when a voucher for a treatment is issued and the time is specified, e.g. 30, the unit must be specified, e.g. '30 min', so that it cannot be rendered into a different value, e.g. '30€'.

if I not schreiben minute you see what what will happen. (EEUK_040613_003650(P1))

[*schreiben* 'to write']

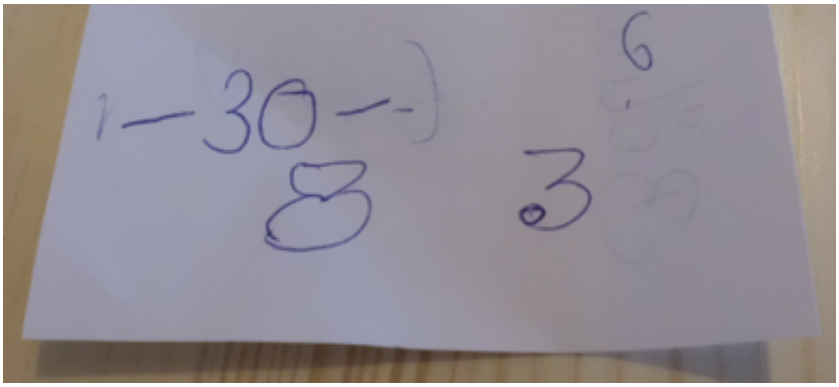


Image 36: Kanita's Massage Salon: Forgery protection: Numbers

Another practical problem that Kanita faced was that customers returned with vouchers that had been issued more than two years ago, just after she had opened up her store. Kanita claims that this is past the legal or accepted validity period of vouchers, but that she also was not able to argue with clients, because she neither put a date of issue on the voucher nor did the voucher specify the validity period in print.

now about uh gutschein, I always tell two year but they nearly three year one lady ... they said they have my gutschein from 2011, I anfang 2010, normally the law in germany for the gutschein six month oder? oder one year. ... but my gutschein I tell every person two year, but somebody three year already ... but they say I no have schreiben in meine gutschein. I tell my hushand go and do this and BAM. gutschein günstig zwei jahre. ... scheiße ne? I think is two year is more than the government allow. (EEUK_040613_003850(P1))

[*gutschein* 'voucher'; *anfang* 'beginning' n.; *oder* 'or'; *schreiben* 'to write'; *meine* 'my'; *günstig* 'cheap' or 'economical' what she means is *gültig* 'valid' but we get back to that later on; *scheiße ne?* 'shit right?']

According to German legislation, the validity period of vouchers sold over the counter is actually three years. Shorter validity periods are possible for wellness services, as the costs to render the service are susceptible to change. However, what is important in Kanita's case is that in order to state her claim, she must put a date of issue on her voucher. Moreover, as her quote above reveals and as we will see in the next section, Kanita has started making it a point to explicitly mention the validity period of the voucher to the customers during the action of <handing over the voucher>. The importance of putting the stamp on the voucher as part of the practice surfaces in the

following exclamation by Kanita in Thai while she is just completing a voucher for a customer.

Figure 45: Forgery protection: Kanita (EEUK_240713_000130(P2))

KAN = Kanita

01	**KAN**	เห้ย hey
02		ไม่มีใครเลื่อนอันนี้เลยนะเนี่ยะ nobody changed the date
03		วันนี้**24**นี่หว่า today is the 24th
04		โอ้โห oh ho
05		ไม่มีใครเลื่อนอันนี้กันเลย nobody changed it
06		กระจ๊อกอยู่ได้ **22** here is still 22nd

The signature of the staff on the voucher is another measure in the face of arguments with clients. Interestingly, Kanita likens the use of Thai to a secret code that is only meaningful to her and her colleagues. As she explains below, only she and her colleagues are able to trace the signature to a particular staff, which then allows them to settle a potential dispute.

this name also our top secret. ... this who who did it ja? and they must uh schreiben the name or if I (sit) here if some problem with customer we could know who did it ... is also my trick ja? (EEUK_040613_002330(P1))
[*schreiben* 'to write']

As she exclaimed in the following statement, the development of all these practices are based on a learning process that came about through the experience of managing the store.

everything I learn learn and learn ja? (EEUK_040613_003550(P1))

Or as Kanita put it albeit unconsciously in practice terms:

they intelligent, I also must do intelligent. (EEUK_040613_004117(P1))

This discussion has shown that the action of <completing the voucher> requires the staff to inscribe the treatment or value onto the template. Yet, the meaning of these literacy practices surfaces only when viewed in the history of experiences of the operator of the store. The next action that staff and client engage in after the voucher has been completed is <handing over the voucher>. The meaning of the discursive practices involved in this action is again only fully comprehensible with reference to the experiences just described.

5.5.5 Handing over the voucher

Once the staff have completed the voucher, they hand it over to the customer. This involves that they first present the completed voucher to the customer, before putting the voucher into an envelope together with the salon's brochure. While the whole action of <handing over the voucher> could be a rather simple coordination of physical actions between staff and client, it is almost always initiated not only physically but also by spoken discourse such as in the following example. Here Kanita has just completed three vouchers for a female client.

Figure 46: Handing over voucher: Kanita 1 (EEUK_040613_001137)

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer

01	**KAN**	**so bitte schau an,**
		so please look,
02		**ja ich schreiben,**
		yes I write,
03		**körper thai massage seksik minuten ja?**
		body thai massage sixty minutes yes?
04	**FC**	**hm?**
		hm?

In line 1 Kanita's utterance *so bitte schau an* 'so please look' accompanies her physical action of placing the completed voucher onto the service counter. Thus Kanita directs FC's attention to the inscription, which she then reads out aloud in line 3 *körper thai massage seksik minuten ja?* 'body thai massage sixty minutes yes?'. In the light of the wider discourses in place described in the previous section, this routine discursive practice is significant, because through this sub-action of presenting the voucher before handing it over, Kanita seeks to obtain the approval of the client with respect to the value of the voucher. The following example involving Thani illustrates that most staff in the salon subscribe to this routine.

Figure 47: Handing over voucher: Thani 1 (EEUK_060513_012351(P3))

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	**THA**	**kucken sie mal noch einmal ja?**
		look one more time yes?
02		**ich schreibe,**
		I write,
03		**rücken nacken seksik minuten.**
		back neck sixty minutes.
04		**dat ist sein so gut.**
		that's be fine like this.
05	**FC**	**genau.**
		exactly.

I have discussed above that Kanita faces a practical dilemma with the validity period of the voucher. She insists on a two year validity period for her vouchers. Since it is not specifically spelled out in print on the voucher, the staff must put a stamp with the date of issue on the voucher and, they have to announce to the client that the validity period is two years. Staff tend to do this with utterances, exemplified by the following extracts involving Ratcha and Thani.

Figure 48: Handing over voucher: Ratcha (EEUK_090413_023222)

RAT = Ratcha
FC = Female customer

01	**RAT**	**und gutschein ist zwei jahre gültig.**
		and voucher is valid for two years.
02	**FC**	**okay.**
		okay.

Figure 49: Handing over voucher: Thani 2 (EEUK_060513_020031(P3))

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	**THA**	**gutschein dauert zwei jahre heute ja?**
		voucher lasts two years today yes?
		(1.5)
02	**FC**	**können se ruhig in eins mache,**
		you may put it into one,
03		**es is- is jo für eine person. ((laughs))**
		it is- is for one person.

While Ratcha's announcement in line 1 is idiomatic according to standard lexico-grammatical norms in German, Thani's announcement and her use of the verb *dauert* 'lasts' is not completely idiomatic. However, the client does not object to Thani's usage of *dauert* 'lasts' here, because she seems to orient to the overall meaning of the utterance in the context of the practice to render it meaningful. This orientation towards the function of language in practice over the form is even more apparent in the following example, where Thani uses a construction that is semantically ambiguous in German, as it remains unclear whether the voucher is two years old or has a validity period of two years.

Figure 50: Handing over voucher: Thani 3 (EEUK_060513_012351(P3))

THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	**THA**	**gutschein dauert zwei jahre alt ja?**
		voucher lasts two year old yes?
		(1.5)
02	**FC**	**hm so alt wird der nit.**
		hm it won't get that old.
03	**THA**	**[((laughs))]**
04	**FC**	**[((laughs))]**

Yet again, the customer does not object to Thani's statement, but signals complete uptake of Thani's utterance in line 2 by humorously commenting that she will make use of the voucher before it comes of age: *hm so alt wird der nit.* 'hm it won't get that old'. Even lexical errors - meaning routine lexical mistakes - made by staff in these important announcements do not seem to get in the way of the overall meaning or constrain the successful completion of the action. Above, I have already shown that Kanita uses the adjective *günstig* 'affordable' or 'cheap' instead of *gültig* 'valid'. This usage can be seen as an error in Kanita's appropriation of German, as she consistently uses *günstig* 'affordable', as illustrated in the subsequent example.

Figure 51: Handing over voucher: Kanita (EEUK_040613_002333(P2))

KAN = Kanita
FC = Female customer

01	**KAN**	**[un] unsere gutschein günstig zwei jahre.**
		[and] our voucher affordable two years.
02	**FC**	**zwei jahre**
		two years
03	**KAN**	**ja.=**
		yes.=
04	**FC**	**=nee so lang wollen ma aber nit warte. ((laughs))**
		=no that long we don't want to wait.
05	**KAN**	**((laughs))**
06	**FC**	**((laughs))**

While Kanita's use of *günstig* 'affordable' can certainly be described as an error, the example above clearly shows FC's appropriate uptake of Kanita's utterance in line 4 *=nee so lang wollen ma aber nit warte.* '=no that long we don't want to wait'. Likewise other examples in the data do not document any instance in which Kanita's or her staff's non-idiomatic usage for these announcement presents a problem in terms of understanding for the clients.

5.5.6 Recording voucher sale

The sale of the voucher still requires the staff to perform another action, the action of <recording the voucher sale>. This is an important action, because its completion is necessary for administrative reasons. Each staff member has to perform this action and Kanita as the manager of the store watches over this practice as the following reaction reveals.

Figure 52: Recording sale: Kanita (EEUK_270513_002650)

KAN = Kanita
THA = Thani
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**dank schön?** thank you? (5.0) ((KAN opens and money box))
02	FC	**(wart) ich nehm mir noch,** (wait) I take,
03	KAN	**(was?)=** (what?)=
04	FC	**=ah sie hann e proschpekt jo drin ja.** =uh you have a brochure inside yes.
05	KAN	**ja?= ((leafing through the record book))** yes?=
06	FC	**=okay,** =okay,
07		**alles klar.** alright.
08 ->	KAN	ใครขาย ห้า ศูนย์ ไปใบนึง who sold voucher number five zero? (1.5)
09	THA	วันนี้ยังไม่ได้ขายเลย I haven't sold any today.
10	KAN	นั่น those/see
11		ใครขาย ห้า ศูนย์ ไปใบนึงแล้วไม่ลง who sold five zero and didn't write it down
12		พี่ขาย ห้า หนึ่ง I sold five one

In this example Kanita has just completed the sale of a voucher to a client. Thani is also present, not at the counter, but in the treatment room right next to it, which she prepares for the next customer. After Kanita and FC have completed the transaction, Kanita switches to Thai in line 8 complaining about the fact that the voucher with the two final digits of the serial number 50 has not been recorded in the record book. It highlights the importance of the appropriate conduct of the action of <recording the voucher sale> .

The action of <recording the voucher sale> requires the staff to record in writing the details of the sale. The book as a mediational means thus requires the staff to resemiotize the details of the sale. Image 37 shows that knowledge of Thai is important for the performance of this action.

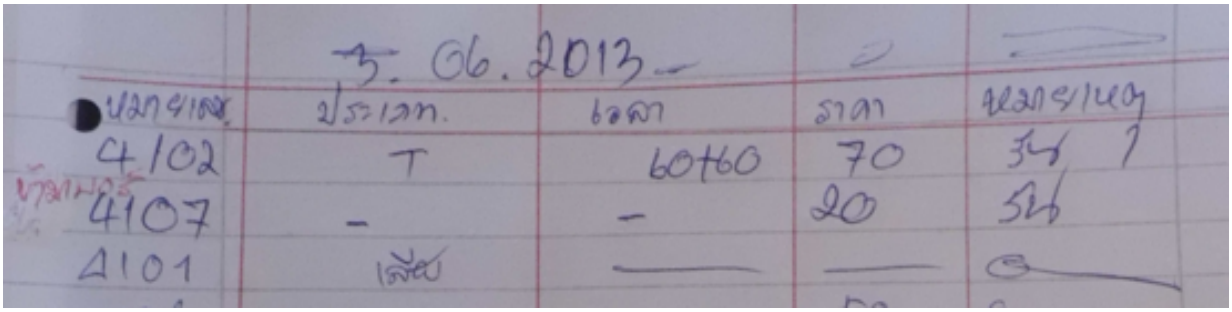


Image 37: Kanita's Massage Salon: Voucher record book

The sale of the vouchers are recorded daily. The column headers are in Thai and from left to right refer to the information that the staff need to record: number, the type of treatment (if specified), the time (if specified), the price or the value, and the name of the staff who sold the voucher. These records are an additional feature of protection for Kanita. Each voucher carries a serial number, as mentioned above. This serial number is recorded in the book, so that potential disputes between clients and staff about the value of a voucher can be solved based on the record. Moreover, these records are a means for Kanita to control her staff. She relates to me that staff members have put money from voucher sales into their own pockets.

they not schreiben 70 euro. they schreiben 20. (EEUK_040613_002745(P1))
[schreiben 'to write']

As Kanita explains, while she may not be able to stop the staff from cheating, she is at least able to follow up on any suspicions. Kanita keeps these records at home, as she explains.

when the gutschein come, <so when you sell one then you take that,> that number <then they write it in the book.> yes ... and when they do then I also (.) read it ja? ... and after that then I do the copy one at home and I have exactly book at home. (EEUK_040613_002022(P1))
[gutschein 'voucher']

Moreover, these records are important to document the cash flow of the business. At home Kanita must record the income from voucher sales separately. As her husband assists her in doing the accounting of her business, we can also imagine that the records in Thai from this book are again resemiotized into a format that is accessible to the German accountant or financial authorities.

A final point about this practice is that it illustrates that Thai mediates much of the administrative work in the shop. While the staff is proficient in German to perform the frontstage tasks with client, the backstage actions that concern the coordination of the workers and the documentation of practices are dominated by Thai.

5.5.7 Summary

The core action of 'selling vouchers' is just like the other core actions at Kanita's salon a recognizable nexus of practice that involves the routine use of spoken and written discourse. The discussion has shown that these circumstances enable staff with a minimal competence in German the successful completion of this action. Even newcomers to the store have been shown to quickly appropriate the discursive routines, while they may still

lack the procedural knowledge to perform the action competently. However, the success of the action again depends on the customer's level of familiarity with the routines. If they are not part of the customers' historical bodies, problems are more likely to occur. We have presented examples where the customer's inexperience can create challenges to the smooth performance of the action, for example when the customer has not decided on the conditions of the voucher. The staff have developed strategies to deal with such constellations, for example by introducing the brochure as an additional mediational means which relieves them of the task of explaining the treatments verbally. With respect to language form, the discussion has shown again that mistakes in German usually do not impede the flow of actions, as the participants orient towards the completion of the task. Finally, we have illustrated how the historical experiences with the action of <selling the voucher> impact discursive routines. The inscriptions on the vouchers are reactions to Kanita's negative past experiences that had resulted in economic disadvantages. The discussion exemplified how she exercised agency in changing her practices, in order to develop a system that now guards her against financial loss.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have analysed the core actions that constitute the nexus of practice at Kanita's store: 'booking appointments', 'welcoming customers', 'charging customers' and 'selling vouchers'. All these actions are performed primarily between a staff member and a client. Since the clients are almost exclusively German-speaking, Kanita and her staff rely on discursive routines in German to perform these actions. However, in particular the first three core actions, always involve a secondary interaction order between staff members, which is established through the entries in the appointment schedule. As the analysis has shown, in order to use of the appointment schedule, the staff draw on their receptive and productive knowledge of Thai. Therefore, the performance of these core actions is crucially mediated by both resources in the employees' repertoires.

All the core actions at Kanita's Massage Salon are routine actions with a clearly defined goal, which are repeatedly performed throughout a regular working day. Because of the organisation of work at the salon, each staff member must be able to accomplish these core actions. For each core action, the employees can rely on a routine sequential realisation of the action as a chain of lower-level actions, which contain discursive

routines in German. This allows for the successful execution of the core actions by staff members with an overall minimal competence in German. Yet, an important aspect is that the clients orient to these routines as well. We suggested that clients generally understand and contribute to the task-focus of these core actions. This mutual orientation to the goal of the interaction accounts for the relative irrelevance of formal inconsistencies in German or non-idiomatic usage that appear in the contributions by the employees. Moreover, the overall routine nature of these core actions enables newcomers to appropriate the procedures and the discursive practices quickly, a fact that meets Kanita's overall objectives of providing employment opportunities for other Thai immigrants and generating a steady stream of income for herself and her husband.

The practical problems that occur within these routines are few. The annotation of the names of customers presents a common challenge for staff members. However, the employees have developed effective strategies to tackle these challenges by requesting customers to spell their names or write them down, or by resorting to phonetic spelling in Latin or Thai script. Wrong schedule entries may present another problem, but like those that newcomers experience due to the lack of familiarity with the procedures, these problems tend to be solved in cooperation with another staff member. Since such assistance is typically provided in Thai, the glitches often remain opaque to the clients.

Other challenges are primarily due to the customers' inexperience with the types of services offered or with the routine nature of the core actions. Such situations are potentially difficult to salvage for the staff, as they would require explanations that they are unable to offer due to their minimal competence in German. For example, if customers need advice on the different treatments offered at the salon or if they are not familiar with the procedure of obtaining stamps for the loyalty card. For solving these predicaments, Kanita and her colleagues tend to draw on the additional material resources provided in the context, such as the printed texts in the brochure and on the loyalty card.

In summary, the analysis of the core actions at Kanita's Massage Salon illustrates that in order to support her business model, namely that of a business of scale that generates income for her future and that provides employment opportunities for other female Thai immigrants, the actions have been designed such that any staff in the salon can perform them effectively. This means that even those staff members with minimal competence in German are able to be maximally competent in their work.

Chapter 6: Patcharin's Massage Salon: Accomplishing core business actions with partial competence in German

While Kanita's business is the main source of income for her and her husband and serves as an investment to generate surplus, Patcharin's business is an additional source of income that builds on her experience. The size of the business, as well as its organization, while in the same line of work, influences which practices are deemed most important. Moreover, Patcharin's ambitions, as illustrated in chapter 4, are to provide a service that can be recognized as a health treatment and not just a wellness treatment. Knowledge of her patients' problems, demands and expectations is important for Patcharin to render a high quality service, a standard that she also expects her two employees to adhere to.

Providing a Thai massage for Patcharin means that the therapist needs to get familiar with the client's conditions and demands. The client's age, experience and overall physical and psychological conditions matter. For the therapist this means that it is more than physical work, but it requires empathy and a positive relationship with the client to offer a good service. Her aspirations surface in the following statement when Patcharin compares herself to other practitioners in the same line of work.

the other person they (.) I ever got a person to work here before too, but mostly like they think like all thai massage is easy to get money y'know? <hm_hm,> but if y-you're not really working like (.) you really want to do, the easiest thing is not easy already. because you have to put your brain and your feeling your brain inside too y'know? not only (.) work work work get money and that's it y'know? and everybody is got (.) that they coming they got a problem that's why they coming, they not only like come to enjoy you:r thing like the other y'know <yeah.> so they got problem they come, so you have to take a look what the problem they are y'know, ... you can feel the person too y'know, you not only working y'know, (EEFP_160713_000545(P3))

In comparison to other Thai massage practitioners, Patcharin positions herself as having the skill and experience to empathize with her clients, which differentiates her service significantly from others, as she stresses.

they not really can feel like, they are put the wrong place or they put the right place, they not really can telling you or they not really can feel it y'know, (EEFP_160713_000748(P3))

Patcharin emphasizes the importance of communication with the patient, of *telling* the patient what the matter is, to inform the client about what is going on with her body. Helping the client therefore requires the therapist to open up to the client, to take an interest in the person. Patcharin's professional aspiration puts arguably a greater emphasis on the communicative aspect of her work and the ability to build up a connection between the therapist and the customer is thus the decisive factors to render a good treatment.

These institutional principles find material form in a text written in Thai on a laminated A-4 size paper that hangs on the wall that divides the service counter from the first massage booth (see Image 38).



Image 38: Patcharin's Massage Salon: Rules & Regulations

Underneath the logo of her store, this paper spells out the best practices that Patcharin wants her staff to observe in interactions with her clients, but also towards one another. Here is the translation into English.

We stay together, we work together, please read and try to understand

- dress politely
- if customer take an appointment up to one hour, please wash their feet too
- after the massage don't forget to ask the customer if he likes to drink water
- do not pick up phone calls or make a phone call during work
- do not talk to each other during work, if not necessary
- do not bring any gambling materials
- please arrive 10 to 15 minutes in advance
- if you are unable to come to work, please do report 2 to 3 weeks in advance, or even better a month before
- in case of sudden illness, report as quickly as possible, not only after one or two days, or very early in the morning
- work is paid at the rate of XX euros per hour and will be paid at the end of the month

- if customer give tips in the hand you can keep it, but if the customer puts tip in the tipbox all the contents will be donated to the temple

The customer is god, they bring us money and work. We should do our best and give them the best service ever. We should stay together like brothers and sisters – we should talk together and advice each other – helping one another as much as we can.

Knowing the time, knowing the work, knowing the responsibilities. Those things should remain together.

This document clearly spells out the valued processes at work for her employees. For example, washing the customers feet, asking the customer for a drink after the massage, letting the phone ring during the treatment, and not engaging in conversation. It also stresses a mentality of service to attend at all times to the needs of the customer, as their work depends on the customer's satisfaction. These rules and regulations, as the document suggests, ensure a high quality service. On the other hand, it appeals to the staff to act supportively, so as to create a positive work climate.

All of this sets the tone for the workplace practices at Patcharin's store: to offer a high quality service by being professional and subservient to the customer's needs and to be collegial to one another. As the discussion will attempt to illustrate, these factors have an influence on the linguistic aspect of the performance of work at Patcharin's salon, which is crucially sustained by the therapists' partial competence in German.

6.1 Talk during the massage treatment

We now would like to analyse the type of interaction order prevalent in a massage treatment, as well as the mediational means available to do so. Patcharin offers mainly two types of massages: the traditional Thai massage and oil massage. The distinctive features of a traditional Thai massage treatment are that the client is subjected to sequences of stretches and the application of pressure on the body that aim at alleviating pain in joint tissue and muscles. In order to do so, there is close physical contact between practitioner and client, as the practitioner puts the patient's body in particular poses and at times uses her extremities and body weight to initiate the stretches. In comparison to massages known in Western Europe, a traditional Thai massage treatment involves an active collaboration between the participants. For maximum effect the client must not

resist the practitioner's moves. The treatment may be painful and exhausting to the client. Manuals of Thai massage assert that the therapist must be conscious of the patient's health history as well as her current condition (e.g. flu, menstruation, bone problems). The nature of a Thai massage, whether in its more original form or its adapted version, requires the practitioner to adjust her routines to the physical condition of her client. One manual even suggests to provide a brief questionnaire to patients, so that the consultant becomes aware of potential complications (Salguero & Roylance, 2011). As explained in chapter 4, Patcharin does not offer traditional Thai massage treatments indiscriminately, because she is aware that certain physical conditions may prevent or constrain the application of Thai massage techniques. The oil massage is an alternative for which Patcharin still makes use of certain stretching techniques, but it focuses more on the relief of muscular tension.

These circumstances suggest that language serves as an important tool to coordinate and prepare actions. Being able to ask a client about their health issues, as well as making sure that the client is comfortable during a Thai massage seem to be legitimate places for the practitioner to use language.

6.2 The action of performing a Thai massage treatment

Providing a massage treatment is a complex bundle of actions that both practitioner and client engage in. The contact between Patcharin and her client takes them through several stages: <welcoming the customer>, <providing a footbath>, <starting the treatment>, <conducting the treatment>, <ending the treatment>. It starts with welcoming the customer and the preparation of the client for treatment, before the actual treatment begins. The treatment itself also follows a regular pattern of physical positions. Depending on the type and duration of the massage, the therapist works from the extremities to the inside of the body, usually starting first with the client lying on her back, before asking her to turn over. Discourse may not be perceived as overly important in these actions. However, the analysis shall highlight how spoken discourse supports these actions and how it aids to sustain the performance of the professional identity of a Thai massage therapist that Patcharin intends to put forward.

6.2.1 Welcoming the customer

The first action in the chain of actions that makes up the massage treatment at Patcharin's salon is the action of welcoming the customer. As mentioned in chapter 4, the attractiveness of the Thai massage salon is said to partly reside in its atmosphere. Compared to traditional, standard medical treatments that are often perceived as impersonal and sterile, a Thai massage salon such as Patcharin's offers a different environment due to visual, auditory and olfactory factors. The notion of the massage treatment as a short holiday trip is invoked by Patcharin's client in the following quote, just before she enters the treatment room:

Figure 53: Welcoming customer: Patcharin 1 (EEFP_310713_011901)

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	**PAT**	**dann,**
		then,
02 ->	**FC**	**ich bin im urlaub,**
		I am on holiday
03 ->		**haschte urlaub gemacht,**
		you went on holiday,
04 ->		**sa ich jedes wo- jede woche.**
		I say each wee- each week.

Similarly, during an earlier observation session in a conversation between another client, Patcharin and myself at the service counter, the client expressed her positive perception of the atmosphere in the salon as being influenced by the music, the darkness in the massage rooms, and the temperature in the salon. Patcharin responded and highlighted that other clients even incorporate the external traffic noise to conjure up a mental image of the short vacation.

manche leute hat auch gesagt, ähm die musik gehört ne? <hm?> un dann wenn die auto vorbei, dann sie hat gefühlt wie am (.) am meer. (EEFP_160713_003711(P2))

some people also said, uhm listened to the music right? <hm?> and then if the car passes, then she felt like at (.) at the sea. (EEFP_160713_003711(P2))

As mentioned above, due to the location in a residential neighbourhood, there is very little spontaneous customer traffic at Patcharin's salon. The majority of the appointments have been scheduled in advance and many of the customers are regulars and have been attracted to the salon by word-of-mouth. Habit has it that clients arrive shortly before the time the appointment has been scheduled. The customer rings the doorbell and Patcharin or one of her colleagues will open the door personally or let the client enter via the intercom. After entering through the main door, the client will leave

her shoes in the hallway and change into slippers that are provided for all clients. The therapist will then ask the client to enter the main part of the salon and to sit down on a small bench. Since the majority of Patcharin's clients are regulars, the welcoming practices are different from the ones described in Kanita's store. They often re-establish or re-constitute past relationships. In the greeting sequence below, Patcharin's client brought a painting that his wife made as a present for Patcharin. The man as well as his wife are regular clients who have through their repeated visits established a relationship with Patcharin that goes beyond the service and also involves, as illustrated here, an interest in her linguistic heritage.

Figure 54: Welcoming customer: Patcharin 2 (EEFP_050413_015020)

PAT = Patcharin
MC = Male customer

01	PAT	**ha:llo,**
		he:llo,
02	MC	**hallo?**
		hello?
		((MC enters with a picture frame in hand))
03		**((laughs))**
04	PAT	**un wie geht's?**
		and how are you?
05	MC	**mei frau hat gesagt,**
		my wife said
06		**ich soll sagen,**
		I'm supposed to say,
07	PAT	**was dann?**
		what is it?
08 ->	MC	ขอ[บคุณค่ะ]
		thank you.
09 ->	PAT	[สวัสดีค่ะ]
		hello
10		ขอบคุณค่ะ
		thank you
11		สวัสดีค่ะ
		hello
12		**un wie geht's?**
		and how are you?

Many of Patcharin's clients are such regulars and appointments are usually scheduled well in advance. Moreover, the location of her store attracts few spontaneous customers in comparison to Kanita's salon. Therefore, the welcoming of a client at Patcharin's salon does not constitute as important a practice as it does at Kanita's salon. The therapists are usually aware of who their clients will be before the treatment, so that customers are immediately asked to sit down on the small bench opposite the first treatment room to receive the preparatory footbath.

6.2.2 Providing the footbath

As spelled out in the rules and regulations mentioned above, 60-minute treatments oblige the therapist to provide a footbath prior to the commencement of a treatment. Since most appointments at Patcharin's salon are such 60-minute treatments, the footbath was a constant practice that therapist and customer engaged in during my period of observation. For the footbath, the customer will first soak her feet in warm water for a couple of minutes, before the therapist then starts washing her feet. While the action of washing does not require language to be carried out, it is very often accompanied by talk. The discursive actions here are generally about clarifying the treatment and gathering feedback, assessing the health condition of the client, and establishing rapport.

6.2.2.1 Clarifying the treatment and gathering feedback

The therapist uses the time of soaking and washing to confirm the treatment that the client has booked. This is important for several reasons. One reason is that the booking details in the appointment schedule can diverge from the demands of the customer, as the following transcript shows.

Figure 55: Clarifying treatment: Kesarin (EEFP_020813_000133)

KES = Kesarin
FC = Female customer

01	KES	**machen sie ölmassage?** you do oil massage?
02	FC	**nee normale [thai massage.]** no regular [thai massage.]
03	KES	**[normale] thai [massage.]** [regular] thai [massage.]
04	FC	**[ja.]** [yes.]
05	KES	**okay.** okay. (2.0)
06	KES	**wie heißen sie bitte?** what's your name please?
07	FC	**hess,** hess,
08	KES	**hess,** hess, (1.0)
09	KES	**weil hier schreiben öl wegen.** because here write oil because of.
10	FC	**nee,** no,
11		**ich mach schon länger kein öl mehr. ((laughs))** I've not been doing oil for a long time.
12		**[hat] ich mal.** I [used to] one time.

Clarifying which treatment the customer wants has a variety of implications for the immediate future practices of the therapist. Oil massage and Thai massage differ

significantly in the routines as described above. At Patcharin's salon it also influences the choice of the room. Thai massages are usually offered on a low and wide massage bed to make it easier for the therapist to administer the stretches. Oil massages, which do not necessarily require the therapist to be on the massage bed are performed on a motorized bed that can be raised or lowered automatically. With regular customers, the time of soaking the feet or of waiting for the treatment is also used to gather feedback, as the following exchange between Chalida and a client illustrates.

Figure 56: Obtaining feedback: Chalida (EEFP_220713_013502)

CHA = Chalida
FC = Female customer

01	**CHA**	**wie war letz mal?**
		how was list time?
02	**FC**	**prima.**
		great.
03	**CHA**	**muskelkater?**
		muscle ache?
04	**FC**	**nein.**
		no.
05	**CHA**	**gut.**
		fine.
06	**FC**	**((laughs))**

Interesting is here that Chalida does not simply ask how the customer liked it, but in line 3 she inquires about a common but specific after-effect of massage treatments in general and Thai massage in particular, namely *muskelkater* 'muscle ache'. Chalida's use of this term in German displays her professional identity and expert status, but her utterance also builds a connection with the customer's previous visit.

6.2.2.2 Assessing client's health

The time of soaking feet is also used to check the general and current health conditions of the customer. These are important pieces of information for the therapist, as they may impact the execution of the treatment. A muscle ache may tell the therapist that she has to apply a less forceful massage. The following statements by Patcharin show the implications these health assessments potentially have on the treatment and how they provide important clues for the practitioner with respect to rendering the treatment.

that why we have to ask first like, uhm this person got any problem or not, <ja.> or the bone everything alright, got any operation, <ja.> and if the person coming, we have to see first. and if the person start to be like, fifty, <hm,> or fifty-five, and the body is still okay. <hm,> okay you can make thai straight. <hm,> and if, we see already, is not right is not okay <hm,> we going to say too is like better to stay by öl massage. (Interview, Patcharin, 00:53:00)

like brain have to work with too. or if the person come with the (.) breaken leg, so what you have to do y'know? or some person come with the: wie bandscheibenvorfall what you have to do or the person is like uh pregnant. ... you not really can follow, like everything that you, y'know

like every time with the normal person y'know? hm that's why have to, if you not really know the person, or the person come here we have to ask first y'know? ... or the person is, like yesterday I have to, let the person go back home, because is uh uhm she was sick, and from the sickness is not completely gone. at first she want to have massage and this can't be possible y'know because you have the massage, can be like after, it's getting worse. and it's not good too for us here, because the krankheit is always here in the room. and is not good for the next person that coming too ... maybe if go to other place. they want to keep you y'know? but is not here. (EEFP_050413_014312)
[*wie bandscheibenvorfall* 'like slipped disc'; *krankheit* 'illness']

These statements stress the importance that Patcharin assigns to assessing the health of her patients prior to the treatment. In particular in the second statement, she suggests that this kind of professionalism distinguishes her business from competitors. These assessments before the treatment are comparable to medical consultations, where the therapists attempt to elicit information on the health status of the patient in a sensitive manner. The following extract shows Kesarin and her client working together to construct the pathology of the client's ailment. Yet it also shows that Kesarin is in the position to make the decision over the adequate treatment technique. Prior to the extract Kesarin and the client have clarified that he wants a Thai massage. As Thai massage techniques require the practitioner to be aware of the client's physical impairments, in particular previous bone fractures or bone problems, Kesarin asks about his current state of health in line 1, which the customer subsequently provides.

Figure 57: Health assessment: Kesarin (EEFP_020813_011901)

KES = Kesarin
MC = Male customer

01	**KES**	**haben sie irgendwo problem heute?**
		do you have problem somewhere today?
02	**MC**	**ähm heute eigentlich nit.**
		uhm today actually not.
03	**KES**	**nee.=**
		no.=
04	**MC**	**=heute geht's mir eigentlich ganz gut.**
		=today I feel actually quite good.
05	**KES**	**ah.**
		uh.
06		**nur normal verspannung ne?**
		only regular tension right?
07	**MC**	**ja:.**
		ye:s.
08		**ich hatte n bandscheibenvorfall aber,**
		I had a slipped disc but,
09		**[seit ich] hier war,**
		[since I've] come here,
10	**KES**	**[achso,]**
		[alright,]
11	**MC**	**seit ich hier in behandlung bin,**
		since I am being treated here,
12		**is es sehr gut.**
		it is very good.
13	**KES**	**ja?**
		yes?
		(3.0)
14	**KES**	**wie viel mal haben sie schon gemacht?**
		how many times have you done already?
		(1.0)
15		**[oder wie lange] schon?**
		[or how long] already?

```
16      MC      [ich weiß gar nit,]
                [I don't really know,]
17              seit em halben jahr bin ich hier.
                for half a year I've been here.
```

MC's mention of the *bandscheibenvorfall* 'slipped disc' is construed as a significant piece of information by Kesarin in line 10 *achso* 'alright'. A slipped disc can be a condition that may exclude a patient from doing Thai massage, because the stretching may exacerbate the problem, if not done carefully. This most probably leads her to quiz the customer further about his prior experience, since he mentioned in line 11 and 12 that he profited from the treatment. MC then informs Kesarin that he comes once or twice a month and that he has taken Thai massage treatments during his last two sessions, which finds Kesarin's approval. She then continues to request more specific information on the slipped disk.

Figure 57 continued

```
18      KES     wie lang haben sie schon bandscheibevorfall.
                how long have you already had slipped disk.
19      MC      ah schon länger.
                uh for some time already.
20      KES     ok- äh.
                ok- uh
21              hat immer schmerzen oder?
                do you have constant pain or?
22      MC      ja ich hatte immer schmerzen,
                yes I always had pain,
23              un dann war (.),
                and then was (.),
24              da hab ich spritzen bekommen,
                then I got injections,
25              das hat alles nix (.) [geholfen?]
                this all did no (.) [help?]
26      KES     [hm?]
                [hm?]
27      MC      und äh seit ich jetzt (xxxx) is,
                and uh since I am now (xxxx),
28              weitaus besser geworden.
                improved tremendously.
29      KES     mhm,
                mhm,
                (1.5)
30 ->           muss bisschen mehr dehnen der rücken,
                have to stretch a bit more the back,
31 ->           das is gut ne?
                that is good right?
32      MC      hm,
                hm,
```

Similar to a medical professional, Kesarin wants to know about the time the customer has experienced pain and the intensity and persistence of the pain. Based on these details, she is then able to give a judgment on the appropriateness of the treatment, in lines 30 & 31 and how her treatment will improve MC's condition.

Similarly, the following interaction between Patcharin and a female client shows how the customer provides details about her ailments and therefore provides the floor for the therapist to give her professional opinion on which treatment suits her condition. FC

had booked an oil massage, but now she inquires about the possibility to change to a Thai massage. Before the excerpt below, she indicated that she has back problems and issues with her hips. The transcript below shows in lines 3 and 5 that FC asks PAT for her opinion about the type of treatment given her physical condition. This provides the floor for Patcharin to provide her professional advice in line 6 confirming the suitability of a Thai massage treatment, *ja machma thai* ' yes let's do thai' and then in line 7, Patcharin qualifies how she will adapt her performance: *un ich versuch nicht zu fest machen* 'and I try not to do too hard'.

Figure 58: Health assessment: Patcharin (EEFP_160713_013340)

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**es ist zwar schon bissjen besser aber**
		it is already little better but
02		**es tut immer noch weh**
		it still hurts
03 ->		**ich weiß jetzt nit was da**
		I now don't know what in this case
04	PAT	**ja**
		yes
05 ->	FC	**sinnvoller is.**
		makes more sense.
06 ->	PAT	**ja machma thai**
		yes let's do thai
07 ->		**un ich versuch nicht zu fest machen**
		and I try not to do too hard
08		**gell?**
		alright?
09	FC	**das macht nix**
		that doesn't matter
10		**((laughs))**
11	PAT	**((laughhs)**

It is important for our purpose to note that these assessments go beyond simple routine phrases and that they are not tied to the current action of washing the customer's feet. Moreover, the therapists' access to medical terminology in German, receptively as well as productively, enables them to perform the discursive action of assessing. By doing so they are able to assert their identity as competent health care professionals.

6.2.2.3 Establishing rapport

The preparatory phase is not only used to clarify treatments, obtain feedback and assess the client's health condition, but it also provides space to build or maintain rapport between client and therapist with the aim of relaxing the client for the treatment to come. Examples of such relational work is most prevalent in the data between Patcharin, and her regular clients. As the following example illustrates, Patcharin does not only draw on her

German competence but profits from her familiarity with local geographies and customs. The bulk of the recordings were made during the summer months, when many clients could be expected to have gone on holiday trips. Frequently, Patcharin would elicit stories from customers about their vacation plans, but she would also offer her own in return.

In the following example, Patcharin is washing the feet of a regular client. She then initiates story telling by the client in line 1 and through her backchannelling in lines 5, 7 and 11 shows active listening and provides support for the narrative.

Figure 59: Rapport: Patcharin (EEFP_220713_001348)

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**wie lang haben sie urlaub?**
		how long is your holiday?
02	FC	**oh ich hatte die vorige woche.**
		oh I had last week.
03		**jetzt hab ich noch drei bis am mittwoch,**
		now I am left with three till wednesday,
04		**un samstag muss ich dann noch bissjen in der koppel arbeiten. ((laughs))**
		on saturday I still have to work a little in the paddock ((laughs))
05	PAT	**hm,**
		hm,
06	FC	**heu- nur daheim gearbeitet ((laughs))**
		tod- only worked at home ((laughs))
07	PAT	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
		(2.0)
08	FC	**un mein mann hat nur vorige woche urlaub gehat.**
		and my husband was only last week on leave.
09		**mir hann e vordach kritt für unser haustür.**
		we got a rain shelter for our front door.
10		**da hatta (.) ziegeln (.) dach drauf gemacht.**
		then he put (.) shingles (.) roof on top.
11	PAT	**hm?**
		hm?
12	FC	**bei der hitze. ((laughs))**
		in that heat. ((laughs))
13		**un der war heut schon wieder arbeiten.**
		and today he went back to work again already.
14	PAT	**hm?**
		hm?

It is also interesting to note that FC does not seem to modify her speech style, as she uses forms from the regional variety in particular in her turn from lines 8 to 10: e.g. the participle *gehat* for *gehabt* 'had', *mir* for *wir* 'we', or *kritt* for *bekommen* 'got'. However, Patcharin does not only backchannel but shows her understanding of the customer's narrative by contributing her own story. After FC talked about her trip to a local lake and how she had to fight with the crowds to find a free spot on the lawn, Patcharin recounts her own experience at this particular lake.

Figure 59 continued

15	PAT	**schon lang wir waren nit do.**
		long time we haven't been there.
16		**aber wenn wir dort waren ne?**
		but when we went there right?
17		**oh: *so viel leute.***
		oh: *so many people.*
18	FC	**mh?**
		mh?
19	PAT	**mein mann hat gesagt wenn dort gehen,**
		my husband said if go there,
20		**muss dat früher aufstehen,**
		have that get up earlier,
21	FC	**ja,**
		yes
22	PAT	**un dann früher weg.**
		and then leave earlier.
23		**so wenn nit hat,**
		so if not have,
24		**nit genüge parkplatz gell,**
		not enough parking space right,
25	FC	**parkplatz hamma gefunn.**
		parking space we found
26		**aber [sogar noch glück] gehat,**
		but [even were] lucky,
27	PAT	**[is weit.]**
		[is far.]
28	FC	**nee ganz nah direkt,**
		no quite near directly,
29		**brauchte ma nur über die straße**
		we only needed to cross the road
30		**un sch- bissjen runter,**
		and sch- a little down,
31		**dann woren ma schon am strandbad.**
		then we were already at the beach

It is important to see that Patcharin possesses the adequate knowledge of the geographical context FC refers to, in order to contribute to the conversation. Moreover, despite a number of formal inconsistencies in Patcharin's brief anecdote in German, FC does not show any problems of understanding. This illustrates that both participants in doing relational work here maintain their idiosyncratic voices in German.

This section has illustrated that the footbath as a preparatory activity to the massage treatment provides the space for the therapists to gather feedback, to assess the customer's health status, and to establish rapport through bits of small talk. All these discursive practices are not central to the performance of the action of washing feet, but the action provides the space for the discursive practices to occur and thus prepare the therapist and the client for the treatment.

6.2.3 Starting the treatment

Once the footbath has been completed, the therapist leads the customer into the treatment room. Inside the treatment room, the therapist will instruct the client on how to dress and how to position herself on the massage bed. Especially first-timers require such instructions, as in the following example.

Figure 60: Starting massage: Patcharin (EEFP_220713_014017)

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**okay,**
		okay,
02		**bitte schön,**
		please,
03		**kommen sie mit,**
		follow me,
		(4.0)
04		**mach alles ausziehen ne?**
		do take everything off okay?
05		**unterhose anlassen?**
		leave on panty?
06	FC	**[hm_hm?]**
		[hm_hm?]
07	PAT	**[die] (haar) kann auch anlassen,**
		[the] (hair) can also leave on,
08		**un dann auf dem rücken legen [ne?]**
		and then lie on the back [okay?]
09	FC	**[okay.]**
		[okay.]
10	PAT	**bin gleich da.**
		I'll with you soon.

Patcharin accompanies FC to the treatment room and then instructs her how to dress or undress in lines 4, 5, and 7, *mach alles ausziehen ne? unterhose anlassen? [die] (haar) kann auch anlassen,* 'do take everything off okay? leave on panty? [the] (hair) can also leave on,', and how to position herself in line 8, *un dann auf dem rücken legen [ne?]* 'and then lie on the back [okay?]'. The therapist then usually leaves the treatment room for a short while to remove the footbath. In the meantime, the client will have prepared herself and the therapist enters to start the massage. Each treatment begins with two typical actions: assessing the experience of the customer and locating the painful areas on the body.

6.2.3.1 Assessing the client's experience

The data suggests that in this preparatory stage the therapist actively aligns to the level of experience of the client. This means that first-timers to the salon are usually provided with more specific information on the techniques and the effects of the massage treatment. The following example of a rather long starting sequence between Chalida and a female client illustrates this nicely. For the sake of readability the transcript is broken up into several parts.

Figure 61: Assessing experience: Chalida (EEFP_080813_000907)

CHA = Chalida
PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	CHA	**okay.**
		okay.

02		**so,**
		so,
		(1.5)
03	PAT	อ้าว พี่ปู
		oh sister PO
04	CHA	จ๋า
		yes
05	PAT	แกมาคราวที่แล้วนวดเท้า
		last time she came for foot massage
06		หนูลืม
		I forgot
07	CHA	เอ่อ
		okay
08	PAT	**((laughs))**
09	CHA	**okay.**
		okay.
		(...)

After Chalida has entered the booth and seems to be set to start her massage, as her turns in lines 1 and 2 suggest, Patcharin, who is working in the adjacent booth, interjects and addresses Chalida in Thai, in line 3, across the dividing wall. In line 5, Patcharin informs Chalida that FC came for a foot massage previously which implies that she does not have experience in Thai massage, the treatment she booked on that day. Several interesting issues can be noted about this passage. First it is the fact that Patcharin and Chalida talk to each other across the dividing walls of the booths. Secondly, by using Thai, a language that the customers do not understand, such alignments that transcend physical space are possible, but not very frequent. However, for the point we wish to make here, it is interesting that Chalida now uses this information about her client to start a long turn at talk explaining the techniques and effects of Thai massage.

Figure 61 continued

14	CHA	**dat erste mal bei ihnen thai massage,**
		the first time with you thai massage,
15	FC	**mh vor langer langer zeit hat ich schommo so was.**
		mh a long long time ago I already had something like that.
16 ->	CHA	**die thai massage is ein drückpunkt massage [ja?]**
		the thai massage is a pressure point massage [yes?]
17	FC	**[ja?]**
		[yes?]
18 ->	CHA	**manche punkt tut bissjen weh,**
		some points hurts a little,
19	FC	**[hm_hm?]**
		[hm_hm?]
20 ->	CHA	**[wenn] zu viel verspannung is.**
		[if] is too much tension.
21	FC	**ja?**
		yes?
22	CHA	**ne?**
		okay?
23 ->		**aber wenn tut zu weh,**
		but when hurts too much,
24 ->		**kamma einfach sagen.**
		one/we can simply say.
25	CHA	**ja wo ich manchma schmerzen hab,**
		yes where I have pains sometimes,
26		**dat is halt schommo so im rü- unteren rückenbereich?**
		this is actually kind of at ba- lower back area?
27	CHA	**hier zum beispiel im /nachen/ ne?**

		here for example in the neck okay?
28		**[wenn sie zu viel] verspannt.**
		[if you are too] tense.
29	FC	**[ja im nacken ja.]**
		[yes in the neck yes.]
30		**ja ja [ja ja.]**
		yes yes [yes yes.]
31	CHA	**[ich] drücken,**
		[I] press,
32		**et tut (.) weh,**
		it is (.) painful,
33		**aber dat is normal.**
		but this is normal.
34	FC	**ja das is halt [normal.]**
		yes this is simply [normal.]
35	CHA	**[ne?]**
		[okay?]
36	FC	**ja.**
		yes
37	CHA	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
38 ->		**aber wenn tut zu weh,**
		but if it is too painful,
39 ->		**kann nie mehr (.) halten,**
		can not anymore (.) stand,
40 ->		**dann kann einfach sagen.**
		then can simply say.
41	FC	**jo dat is klar.**
		yup this is clear.
42	CHA	**ne?**
		okay?
43	FC	**ja.**
		yes.
		(2.0)
44 ->	CHA	**weil ich- jeder körper is nit gleich,**
		because I- every body is not the same,
45 ->		**manche leute:,=**
		some peo:ple,=
46	FC	**=hm_hm,=**
		=hm_hm,=
47 ->	CHA	**=gefällt sehr sehr hart,**
		=enjoy very very hard,
48 ->		**manche leute [nit so] hart ne?**
		some people [not so] hard okay?
49	FC	**[hm,]**
		[hm,]
50	CHA	**zum beispiel mein mann kann nit so hart machen. ((laughs))**
		for example my husband cannot do so hard.
51	FC	**hm,**
		hm,

Chalida's turn in line 14 suggests that she has picked up on Patcharin's information about the client. She then engages in a longer explanation about what the Thai massage is about and the important role of the client in the process. From line 16 to line 20 Chalida informs about the specificities of the Thai massage highlighting that the treatment may result in painful sensations. In lines 23 to 24 she encourages FC to inform her, if the treatment becomes too painful. Then Chalida provides a hands-on example with relation to the area around the neck from lines 27 to 43 explaining why pain occurs and that these painful sensations are normal, but that FC should indicate when it becomes too stressful. And finally, from line 44 onwards, Chalida's gives a reason for the importance of the cooperation between therapist and the patient, as each person's threshold of pain is different. This rather long explanation is an illustration of Chalida's competence in

German which allows her to provide all this information freely. She uses technical jargon such as *drückpunkt massage* 'pressure point massage' (line 16), *verspannung* 'tension' (line 20), *verspannt* 'tense' (line 28) and shows variability in her expressions, e.g. in lines 38 and 39 *aber wenn tut zu weh, kann nie mehr (.) halten* 'but if it is too painful, cannot anymore (.) stand'. Chalida also always checks FC's understanding of her explanation actively by using the common regional discourse marker *ne?* 'okay?'. At the same time FC shows her uptake of Chalida's explanation, despite infelicitous pronunciations such as in line 27 /nachen/ instead of *nacken* 'neck'. In sum, Chalida's competence in German sustains such a practice, but the understanding is also due to FC's competence to focus on function and to negotiate on equal terms with Chalida's voice that render this discursive practice successful.

As we have seen in the examples, making customers feel welcome and secure through small talk, sharing personal information, and explaining and anticipating problems is important to build the non-hierarchical relationship between customer and practitioner in the beginning of the treatment. It is important that a relationship of trust is created between therapist and client. Building this relationship of trust is certainly supported by the therapists' levels of competence in German. Let us now turn to another action that frequently happens at the start of treatments: the efforts to locate painful areas on the patient's body.

6.2.3.2 Locating pain

The start of a massage also provides the possibility for the client and the therapist to find the painful area by using touch. As mentioned above, it is important for the therapist to be aware of her client's specific ailments. Locating these painful areas on the client's body is achieved through touch but also through questioning routines that require an understanding of medical and physiological terminology in German.

The cooperation between therapist and client and the use of language and touch becomes apparent in the following example. Chalida's client has booked a 30-minute Thai massage treatment for her back. In the transcript below, Chalida initiates by asking the client for her problem areas. FC points out the shoulder and specifies the location in line 4 as *[also unterm] schulterblatt* '[well beneath the] shoulder-blade'. Subsequently, Chalida and FC work together to locate the specific spot. First in line 6, Chalida tests whether she has found the painful spot, *hier ne?* 'here right?', but she is redirected by FC in line 8, *aber*

weiter runter. 'but further down.' The correct area is found when FC's and Chalida's utterances overlap in line 9 and 10: *[genau.] [hm_hm?]* '[exactly.] [hm_hm?]'. FC's painful outcry in line 11 and her strained laughter in line 12 confirm Chalida's successful localization. However, FC's painful sensations surely does not stem from the words uttered, but are caused by Chalida's touch. At the same time, language is central in guiding and focusing Chalida's actions. Therefore, Chalida's ability to coordinate her actions with FC in German is important.

Figure 62: Locating pain: Chalida (EEFP_020813_002640)

CHA = Chalida
FC = Female customer

01		CHA	**so: verspannungen?**
			so: tensions?
02		FC	**j:a.**
			y:es.
03			**hier die schulter.**
			here the shoulder.
04			**[also unterm] schulterblatt,**
			[well beneath the] shoulder-blade
05		CHA	**[hm?]**
			[hm?]
			(1.0)
06		CHA	**hier ne?**
			here right?
07		FC	**hm:?**
			hh:?
08			**aber weiter runter.**
			but further down.
09			**[genau.]**
			[exactly.]
10		CHA	**[hm_hm?]**
			[hm_hm?]
11	->	FC	**AH ja da.**
			AH yes there.
12	->		**und da [hoch,] ((painful laughter))**
			and up [there,]

This example illustrates that language is not the sole mediational means that therapists depend on to do their work. Mastering the tool of touch is proof of a therapist's expertise and its appropriate application asserts her professional knowledge. However, together with speech, the value of touch is enhanced. We will see more examples later on.

Likewise the following passage is another instance where therapist and patient work together to establish the problems that the client would like see treated. While above we have seen the importance of touch, in the following example we would like to focus on the importance of showing understanding and expertise by providing brief responses to the client's problem narrative. Kesarin is about to start a treatment and FC provides her with a rather detailed description of her problems. We want to focus on just one passage of this interaction to highlight the functions of Kesarin's contributions. The

transcript starts with FC's description of her problem with water retention (or edema) in her legs.

Figure 63: Locating pain: Kesarin (EEFP_020813_004428 (P2))

KES = Kesarin
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**und ich hab ein bissjen,**
		and I have a little
02		**ich hab auch n bissjen kranke beine?**
		I also have a little sick legs?
03		**so ein bissjen wasser.**
		like a little bit of water.
04		**überall [(wie hier)]**
		everywhere [like here)]
05	KES	**[ja] überall [wasser.]**
		[yes] everywhere [water.]
06	FC	**[ja,]**
		[yes,]
07		**un vielleicht das tut immer weh,**
		and maybe that also always hurts,
08		**bei thai [massage,]**
		during thai [massage,]
09	KES	**[hm,]**
		[hm,]
10	FC	**un wenn dann so auch [n bissjen (drück)] (xx) ja,**
		and if then also [(press) a little] (xx) yes,
11	KES	**[ja: ja ja.]**
		[ye:s yes yes.]
12		**das (bekannt) wenn thai massage das machen so.**
		this (known) when thai massage this happens like that.
13		**(tut) blut (.)=**
		does blood (.)=
14	FC	**=genau,=**
		=exactly,=
15	KES	**=durchlaufen,**
		=flows through,
16		**[un dann] besser durchlaufen ne?**
		[and then] better flow through right?
17	FC	**[un das s-]**
		[and this s-]
18		**ja das wär [klasse.]**
		yes this would be [great.]
19	KES	**[is verstaut] wenn wenn wenn zu viel verspannt dann,**
		[is blocked] if if if too tense then,
20		**irgendwie so verhärtung?**
		some kind of hardening?
21	FC	**mhm?**
		mhm?
22	KES	**dann äh,**
		then uh,
23		**hindert dat die;,**
		prevents that the:,
24		**[den ganzen (fluss),]**
		[the whole (flow/blood),]
25	FC	**[den durchfluss,]**
		[the flow,]
26		**genau ja,**
		exactly yes,

FC defines the problem that she experiences with her legs in line 3 as *so ein bissjen wasser.* 'like a little bit of water', the colloquial expression in German in reference to the medical condition of swollen legs: *wasser in den beinen haben* 'to have water in the legs'. In line 40, Kesarin signals her understanding by repeating FC's assessment *ja überall wasser* 'yes everywhere water'. In the following turns, FC suggests that this problem always causes

pain during the Thai massage, because of the pressure technique. Interestingly, Kesarin does not simply affirm FC's statement with a simple 'yes', but she explicates the positive effect resulting from the treatment in lines 13, 15 and 16: *(tut) blut (.)= =durchlaufen, [un dann] besser durchlaufen ne?* '(does) blood (.)= =flow through, [and then] better flow through right?'. Furthermore, she provides the reasons for the edema and qualifies that it is caused by a blockage or muscular tensions in lines 19 and 20, and she explains its effect from lines 22 to 24. In this excerpt, Kesarin does not only show an understanding of her client's problem, but in turn provides her expert knowledge on the causes and the remedies of the condition. Just like other examples above, Kesarin's utterances contain many formal inconsistencies, but FC signals her uptake and can be seen to support Kesarin's turns by anticipating or almost completing them, e.g. in line 14 *=genau,=* '=exactly,=' or in line 25 *[den durchfluss,]* '[the flow'], and by slightly monitoring her output, e.g. in line 2 FC first refers to her problem as *n bissjen kranke beine* 'a little sick legs' before referring to it with the more colloquial expression *so ein bissjen wasser.* 'like a little water'. The effort that FC invests in this interaction also provides the groundwork for Kesarin to demonstrate her knowledge and thus to perform her identity as a therapist. All this then sets the stage for the treatment to begin.

We have shown in the analysis of the action of starting the treatment that this action provides the space for the therapists to assess their patient's experience and, if necessary, to educate them in the art of massage. We have also seen how touch is used to locate problems in the body of the clients and how language works together with touch here to assert the therapist's identity as a professional. Let us now turn to the next phase, which is the treatment proper.

6.2.4 Conducting the treatment

While we may assume that language plays only a minor role in performing the work of a massage therapist, the data from Patcharin's salon shows that there is substantial amount of talk during treatments. Talk relates to the actions of massaging in different ways. Firstly, talk instigates an action or is one of the tools that accomplishes the action. Secondly, talk describes or evaluates an action or the physical effect of an action. Thirdly, talk is used to relate these evaluations to bodies of knowledge in order to determine the nature or causes of the effects. Fourthly, talk anticipates future actions. And lastly, talk may have no bearing on the actual action of massaging, but primarily sustains the

relationship between the actors. Let us now turn to three smaller actions that talk is involved in: <relaxing the patient>, <giving instructions>, and <assessing problems>.

6.2.4.1 Relaxing the patient

In the introduction we have presented Patcharin's ambition to provide a holistic treatment. Very often episodes of small talk or relational talk occur at the start of the treatment and they are initiated by the client or the practitioner. Certainly, the amount and topic of small talk depends on the prior and current relationship between the therapist and the customer. During my period of observation at Patcharin's, small talk covered a wide range of topics from pets, holiday trips, how to bake bread and cook jam, to the worries of the workplace. Patcharin's statements quoted above point to the importance of connecting with customers and showing an interest in their lives, to build a positive relationship, and thus to provide a quality service. However, Patcharin stresses that too much talk is distracting and keeps the patient from unwinding and relaxing, which is necessary for the massage to be effective.

and the time that he lying for the massage, if he start to speak, is everything like, he can't relax already ... that why I try to not make conversation y'know? (EEFP_160713_000655(P3))

Let us now return to the start of the treatment between Patcharin and the male customer, who greeted her in Thai during the welcoming phase and who brought her a painting as a present. The example aims to illustrate what I experienced repeatedly during the observations: Patcharin would start the massage, she would initiate some small talk, but leave the floor primarily to the patient. She would slowly reduce her engagement and 10 minutes into the massage, the talk would subside completely. In line 1 of the example below, Patcharin asks a question in reference to the painting. This hands the floor over to MC. Like an interviewer, Patcharin provides the questions in line 1, line 17, line 33, and line 38 and supports MC's answers with backchannels.

Figure 64: Relaxing patient: Patcharin (EEFP_050413_015745)

PAT = Patcharin
MC = Male customer

01	**PAT**	**aber sie hat wirklich schön gemacht he?**
		but she did a really nice job right?
02	**MC**	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
		(1.5)
03	**MC**	**diese künstlerische ader hat sie.**
		she this artistic side
04	**PAT**	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?

05	MC	**sie macht auch äh,**
		she also makes uh,
06		**hat auch sch-schön getöpfert schon.**
		has also done pottery already.
07	PAT	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
08	MC	**so aus äh,**
		like out of uh,
09		**aus lehm ne?**
		out of clay right?
10		**so figuren also gesichter.**
		like figures and faces.
11	PAT	**hm_hm,**
		hm-hm,
12	MC	**un äh,**
		and uh,
		(1.5)
13		**den einen kopf,**
		one of the heads,
14		**den hama im garten stehen auf einer säule,**
		we have in the garden on a column.
15	PAT	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
16	MC	**schöne sachen.**
		pretty things.
		(0.5)
17	PAT	**un wer hat dat geschrieben?**
		and who wrote this?
18	MC	**das hat mei frau geschrieben ausm internet,**
		my wife has written this from the internet,
19		**[hat die-]**
		[she has-]
20	PAT	**[oh wie] [schö:n]**
		[oh how] [nice]
21	MC	**[hat die] rausgekuckt und übersetzt in thailändisch,**
		[she looked] it up and translated into thai,
		(0.5)
22	PAT	**ah ha?**
		alright?
23	MC	**jo ob's richtig is wusst sie nit.**
		well if it's correct she didn't know.
24		**ob [ah ((laughs))]**
		if [ah ((laughs))]
25	PAT	**[((laughs))]**
		[((laughs))]
		(8.0) ((motor of massage bed starts))
26	MC	**sie hat äh glaube ich ges- äh geschrieben,**
		she uh I think wr- uh wrote,
		(0.5)
27		**äh vielen dank [und] alles gute,**
		uh many thanks [and] all the best
28	PAT	**[ja?]**
		[yes?]
29	MC	**und viel glück für die familie.**
		and good luck for the family.
30	PAT	**ja?**
		yes?
31	MC	**gesundheit.**
		health.
32	PAT	**ja.**
		yes
		(12.0) ((motor of the bed stops))
33	PAT	**für die /juropa/ nit verstehen thai ne?**
		for the /juropa/ not understand thai right?
34		**sie hat das gut (.) geschrieben.**
		she wrote that {.} well.
35	MC	**ja?**
		yes?
36	PAT	**ja,**
		yes,
37	MC	**ah ha?**
		uh ha?
		(16.0)
38	PAT	**geht auch später bei die tochter?**
		also go later to the daughter?
39	MC	**ja ich geh nachher bei zu steffi ja.**
		yes I go later at to steffi yes.

40 PAT **hm_hm.**
hm_hm.

The pauses in between stretches of talk become longer (after lines 32 and 37) until the conversation comes to a halt after Patcharin's final contribution in line 40. Patcharin seems to apply such a strategy repeatedly during other treatments. She initiates small talk for the first few minutes of the treatment, but then her initiative or support of the client's stories wanes. While small talk can happen anywhere during the treatment it is particularly prevalent during the opening stages. This is certainly also influenced by the physical positioning of the client, as it is easier to talk when lying on one's back than on one's stomach. The physical positioning also necessitates another form of talk during the treatment to which we shall turn now: the instructions.

6.2.4.2 Instructions

Providing a massage treatment requires the therapist to manipulate the body of the client. In order to provide an effective treatment, both participants must coordinate their physical movements. The patient needs to position her body in a particular way and she must not resist the therapist's actions. The therapist must ensure that the client's body is placed in a manner that is conducive to her actions. Massaging is therefore an intricate coordination of actions using different semiotic resources. Language is one tool that therapists draw on, in order to ensure that the body of the client is in the appropriate position. We have touched on these discursive practices as instructions already above, when in the preparatory phase the therapist advises the client how to lie down on the massage bed. Similar instructions continue throughout the process of the treatment. The data suggests that they occur at predictable stages. They instigate or prepare for lower-level actions of the massage and are an important ingredient in sustaining the whole activity.

In order to illustrate these instructions with examples, we will refer to one particular treatment between Patcharin and a first-time visitor to her salon. The young woman arrived together with her mother, who is a regular visitor. Patcharin and FC have gone through the routines of the preparatory stage. A Thai massage treatment usually starts with the client lying on her back. The practitioner starts at the legs of the client. First the feet are stretched, then the legs are treated and stretched, before moving on to the arms and the shoulders. Usually 30 minutes into a typical 60-minute treatment, the

therapist will want the client to change sides, in order to continue the treatment at the back. The posture change is typically instigated via talk, as in the following example.

Figure 65: Instructions: Patcharin (EEFP_220713_000648(P2))

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**langsam aus dem bauch bitte?**
		slowly out the tummy please?
		(10.0) ((sounds that indicate that client moves))
02	PAT	**warte mal?**
		wait a bit,
03		**ich mach kissen weg,**
		I remove pillow,
04		**viellei besser.=**
		maybe better.=
05	FC	**=hm,**
		=hm,
		(0.5)
06	FC	**[((clears her throat))]**
07	PAT	**[(den) arm] hier auf die seit ne?**
		[the arm] here to the side okay?
08	FC	***so?***
		like this?
09	PAT	**ja,**
		yes,
10		**(dann) besser?**
		better then?
11	FC	***ja,***
		yes,
12	PAT	***(okay),***
		(okay),

In this example, Patcharin wants her client to turn over onto her stomach and to position her arms alongside her body for the continuation of the treatment. To do so Patcharin uses a polite instruction in line 1 for FC to turn over. Then she readjusts the customer's pillow, and instructs FC to position her arms at the side of her body. After the repositioning is completed, Patcharin checks FC's comfort level in line 10, before she continues with the treatment. In particular for an inexperienced client, it is important that these instructions are clear. FC shows her uptake of PAT's instructions despite inconsistencies in PAT's utterances, such as the wrong preposition in her first instruction in line 1, where it should be *auf den bauch* 'onto the tummy' instead of *aus dem bauch* 'out of the tummy'. However, given the context of the action, a misunderstanding is highly unlikely. The important aspect about this example, however, is that we could imagine these repositionings being performed completely without the accompaniment of any talk. Yet, the fact that Patcharin has mastery over the tool of German and is able to use it in this situation with an inexperienced client facilitates the performance of the action and the coordination between her and FC. The significance of language as a resource to coordinate

physical movements is even more obvious in the next example, when Patcharin starts treating the area around FC's shoulders.

One of the techniques in Thai massage is the so-called *palm press* to stretch muscles around the spine. For this technique the therapist may kneel or stand on the massage bed pressing both palms with outstretched arms onto the client's upper back. For this movement the coordination of the client's breathing and the therapist's pressing movements is important. The patient must breath out, when the therapist presses down, in order not to cause the patient any discomfort. Instructions prepare, but also, as the example will show, accompany the action.

Figure 66: Instructions palm press: Patcharin (EEFP_220713_001223(P2))

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**mach tief einatmen?**
		do breathe in deeply?
02		**wenn ich drück mach ganz aus ne?**
		when I press do all out okay?
03	FC	**okay,**
		okay,
04	PAT	**okay?**
		okay?
05		**anfang?**
		start?
		(1.5)
06	PAT	**ganz tie:::f,**
		very dee:::ply,
07		**ganz aus.**
		all out.
		(3.5)
08	PAT	**weiter ne?**
		continue okay?
		(77.0)
09	PAT	**normaler atmen ne?**
		normal breathe okay?

In lines 1 and 2 Patcharin provides the instruction in anticipation of the palm press: *mach tief einatmen? wenn ich drück mach ganz aus ne?* 'do breathe in deeply? when I press do all out okay?'. Although the imperative in German is mostly formed with the infinitive, e.g. *tief einatmen* 'breathe deeply', and usually not with the verb *machen* 'to do', as in *mach einatmen* 'do breathe in', FC signals her understanding of Patcharin's instructions in line 3 without hesitation, so that Patcharin announces the start of the movement in line 5. Then in lines 6 and 7, Patcharin performs her first palm press and accompanies the movements with speech. Interestingly, her utterances lend support not only to her own movements, but act as a guide for FC's breathing pattern. In line 6, she draws out the adjective *tie:::f* 'dee:::ply', for as long as FC is supposed to draw in her breath. She also raises her voice slightly resembling a drawing of breath. And then in line 7, when saying *ganz aus* 'all out'

with falling intonation, she guides the onset of FC's out-breath and at the same time applies pressure to FC's upper back. In line 8 she reminds the client to continue with the breathing pattern. Slightly more than a minute later in line 9, she announces the end of the palm press by asking FC to breathe normally again. This example illustrates how Patcharin uses language to prepare the customer for a complex action that requires the coordination between practitioner and client, but also how her turns at talk act as an on-line support for her client's actions. Let us now turn to another complex movement that requires the careful instruction of the therapist and which always occurs at the end of a treatment.

Stretching the upper body of the client customarily announces the last few minutes of a treatment. For this movement, the client must sit cross-legged on the massage bed and the therapist squats behind her. The client must interlock her hands behind her head, so that the therapist can reach around the arches of the client's arms. The therapist will now pull the client's upper body backwards over her knees and thighs and turn it to both sides, to the right and left, and then forwards and backwards to stretch the upper body. To guard against any pain, it is crucial for the client not to resist the movements of the therapist. In order to perform this complicated motion, the therapist relies on the tools of language to put the client into the appropriate position and to guide the client's movements.

Figure 67: Instructions stretching: Patcharin 1 (EEFP_220713_003307)

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**mach hände zusammen am genick bitte?**
		put hands together at the back of the neck please?
		(8.5)
02		**un fest zusammen ne?**
		and together tightly okay?
		(1.0)
03		**ganze körper so mal locker bleiben?**
		whole body like stay relaxed?
		(2.0)
04		**okay komm zu (mir)?**
		okay come to (me)?
05		**ja?**
		yes?
06		**locker ne?**
		relax okay?

From line 1 to 3, Patcharin prepares FC for the stretch of her upper body. First she makes sure that FC places her hands in the appropriate position (line 1), that she interlocks them tightly (line 2), and then Patcharin reminds her to relax her posture in line 3: *ganze körper so mal locker bleiben* 'whole body like stay relaxed?'. For the successful execution of this

last move, it is again vital that Patcharin's instructions are clear. To be able to give these instructions the reference to parts of the body is important, for example, where to put the hands, *genick* 'back of the neck', and how to keep them, *fest zusammen* 'together tightly'. Patcharin starts the movement in line 4. Like in the example above, she guides FC's movements through talk.

The collections of similar instances suggest that Patcharin's colleagues largely adhere to the same discursive routines. The transcript below shows Chalida at work administering the final stretching movement to a first-time customer.

Figure 68: Instructions stretching: Chalida (EEFP_080813_010913)

CHA = Chalida
FC = Female customer

01	CHA	**so mach bissjen dehnung?**
		so do little bit stretching?
02		**arm nach hinten?**
		arm to the back?
03		**zusammen?**
		together?
		(0.5)
04	CHA	**am besten ne?**
		the best okay?
		(6.5)
05	CHA	**einfach langsam liegen,**
		simply lie down slowly,
06		**hab kein angst liegen.**
		have no fear lie down.
		(4.0)
07	FC	**ja?**
		yes?
08	CHA	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
09		**ich geh vor.**
		I go forward
		(2.5)
10	CHA	**un komm zurück?**
		and come back?

Like Patcharin, Chalida first guides her client into the appropriate posture by telling her where and how to place her hands in lines 2 and 3. When she performs the stretches, she also guides her client's movements backwards (in line 5: *einfach langsam liegen,* 'simply lie down slowly' and in line 10: *un komm zurück?* 'and come back?') and forwards (in line 9: *ich geh vor* 'I go forward'). She also prompts her not to tense up and resist her movements by telling her not to be afraid (in line 6: *hab kein angst liegen* '*have no fear lie down*').

As mentioned earlier, we do not intend to prove the point that language is absolutely necessary to perform these actions. The data suggests that treatments of regular clients demand significantly less or even no such instructional talk, because of the familiarity between the participants or the experience of the client. But given Patcharin's

business identity and her goal to provide a trusted professional service, language appears to be an important mediational means to facilitate the performance of these actions and to secure the satisfaction of her clients.

We wish to make a final point about learning and how language forms are appropriated through repeated practice and remain linked to them. Given Patcharin's professional background in Australia, we would expect her to be perfectly able to provide these instructions in English. A few examples in the data suggest, however, how these phases of routine instructional talk must have over time become tightly linked to German. Patcharin uses English only with few of her customers, most of whom are long-standing customers. Patcharin and I mostly conversed in English as well, although we never explicitly settled on a language norm. During a 30-minute Thai massage that I took with Patcharin, English dominated small talk. However, when it came to instructions she tended to switch to German, as the following example of administering the palm press illustrates.

Figure 69: Instructions stretching: Patcharin 2 (EEFP_080413_000541)

PAT = Patcharin
STE = Stefan

01		PAT	**and how about your child?**
			(0.5)
02		STE	**oh she's fine,**
			(2.0)
03		STE	**going to kindergarden,**
04		PAT	**hm_hm?**
			(3.5)
05		PAT	**okay (let's) try first,**
06			**try make my-**
			(0.5)
07	->	PAT	**tief einatmen?**
			breathe in deeply?
08	->		**un wenn ich drück,**
			and if I press,
09	->		**mach ganz aus ne?**
			do all out right?

Before she starts the palm press, Patcharin asked about my daughter in English in line 1. When she wants to start the palm press, she begins in English in lines 5 and 6, but breaks off and after a short pause restarts in German in line 7. We do not want to argue that Patcharin is not able to give instructions in English. However, this example suggests how her repeated discursive practice of giving instructions in German has created a strong link

with this physical practice. This link between the discursive and the physical practice accounts for Patcharin's switching of languages here.

6.2.4.3 Assessments

As we have discussed above, the aim of a Thai massage treatment is to alleviate muscular tension and to increase the flexibility of the patient. The techniques therapists employ may cause discomfort or pain, but painful sensations are part and parcel of a treatment. In order to contextualize the pain that clients experience, therapists frequently employ assessments. This section examines these discursive practices. We will argue that in order to perform assessments the therapists draw on a *repertoire of pain* composed of a limited number of expressions in German. Moreover, this section will show that Patcharin makes use of assessments more generally to go beyond her call of duty, in order to raise her patient's awareness of other ailments that she detects through her touch in her patients' bodies. We would like to argue that access to the *repertoire of pain* and other medical terminology in German allows the therapists to perform the action of assessing and therefore to display their expertise, which eventually positions them as health care professionals.

During most of the massage sessions that I observed at Patcharin's salon, I repeatedly experienced the therapists' use of adjectives such as *steif* 'stiff' *hart* 'hard' *verspannt* 'tense' *verkrampft* 'cramped up', or nouns such as *verspannung* 'tension' *verhärtung* 'hardening' *verkürzung* 'shortening' *stau* 'congestion' *blockade* 'blockage' at different stages of the treatment process. Together these lexical items form, what I would like to call, the *repertoire of pain* that the therapists utilize to assess problems that they encounter on the client's body. These assessments are mainly triggered by two conditions, either as a response to the therapist's touch or experience with the client's body, or as a reaction to the customer's explicit expression of discomfort.

A typical action that calls for the employment of the repertoire of pain is during the stretching of the client's torso at the end of the massage that we have described in the last section.

Figure 70: Assessment: Patcharin 1 (EEFP_160713_015635(P2))

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	**PAT**	**mach hände zusammen am genick bitte?**
		put hands together at the back of the neck please?
		(21.5)

```
02        PAT         hm_hm.
                      hm_hm.
03 ->                 steif.
                      stiff.
04        FC          steif ne?
                      stiff right?
05        PAT         hm?
                      hm?
```

In the example above, Patcharin administers the final stretching and towards the end of the movement, after using *hm_hm* as an attention-getting device in line 2, Patcharin uses the adjective *steif.* 'stiff.' in line 3 as an evaluation of the limited quality of movement that she has just performed with her client. Assessments such as these, although potentially face-threatening for the client, occur frequently in the course of a massage. We could argue that taken together, they construct a kind of diagnosis of the state of the customer's physical condition.

Assessments performed through recourse to the *repertoire of pain* also mitigate pain that the client overtly expresses. The following is an extract from a regular 60-minute treatment were for the first 25 minutes silence reigned supreme. Suddenly, the customer could be heard to draw in air sharply suggesting an uncomfortable or painful sensation, here represented in line 1.

Figure 71: Assessment: Patcharin 2 (EEFP_080413_010952(P2))

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

```
01        FC          ah .h,
                      uh .h,
02        PAT         tut das weh?
                      does this hurt?
                      (0.5)
03        FC          da oben ja.
                      up there yes.
04        PAT         hm_hm?
                      hm_hm?
05 ->                 vom (.) verspannen ne?
                      from (.) cramping up right?
06        FC          hm_hm?
                      hm_hm?
```

Patcharin immediately reacts to her client and asks in line 2 whether she experienced pain. The client specifies the location in line 3. Then Patcharin gets FC's attention by uttering *hm_hm?* 'hm_hm?', which is again followed by an assessment *vom (.) verspannen ne?* 'from (.) cramping up right?'. Through this assessment Patcharin contextualizes FC's painful experience as being due to the physical condition of the part of the body that she is treating, as opposed to, for example, a wrong application of a massage technique. The *repertoire of pain* is routinely employed for those kinds of assessments.

Apart from such routine assessments, Patcharin can be seen to use assessments more generally to make visible other health issues that she encounters during the massage treatment. These kinds of assessments are in tune with her expressed goal of providing a holistic treatment for each client. In the following example Patcharin finds fault with something she discovers while massaging her client's arm.

Figure 72: Assessment: Patcharin 3 (EEFP_160713_012744(P2))

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**wat is HIER los.**
		what's the matter HERE.
02	FC	**bitte?**
		pardon?
03	PAT	**wat is hier LOS.**
		what's the MATTER here.
04		**nur eine punkt is wie: knot.**
		only one point is li:ke knot.
05	FC	**isn knoten.**
		it's a knot.
06	PAT	**ja.**
		yes.
07	FC	**.h soll ich ma zum arzt gehen.**
		.h should I go to a doctor.
08	PAT	**besser.**
		better.
09		**probier ma mit handen hier,**
		try with your hands here,
		(4.0)
10	FC	**wo.**
		where.
11	PAT	**hier.**
		here.
12	FC	**ah das is äh von äh vene.**
		uh that is uh from uh vein.
13	PAT	**hm_hm vene.**
		hm_hm vein.
14	FC	**jo.**
		yes.
15	PAT	**hm_hm,**
		hm_hm,
16	FC	**vene kein knoten.**
		vein no knot.
17	PAT	**hm_hm is sehr hart ne?**
		hm_hm is very hart right?
18	FC	**ja,**
		yes,
19	PAT	**war auch schon bei doktor?**
		been also to doctor already?
20	FC	**nee.**
		no.
21		**soll ich gehen?**
		should I go?
22	PAT	**besser.**
		better.
23		**besser.**
		better.
24	FC	**hm_hm.**
		hm_hm.
25	PAT	**wenn nich schlimm is okay.**
		if not serious is okay.
26		**kann das lassen.**
		can leave it.
27	FC	**ja,**
		yes,
28		**gut mach ich.**
		okay I'll do it.

Based on her haptic input, Patcharin voices her concern in line 1 and obtains her clients attention. Patcharin qualifies her discovery in line 4 as *nur eine punkt is wie: knot.* 'only one point is li:ke knot.'. While Patcharin uses an infelicitous form of the noun *knoten* 'knot', FC signals her understanding in line 5 through a reformulation *isn knoten.* 'it's a knot'. The categorisation of Patcharin's touch sensation is significant, because a massage therapist is trained to dissolve muscular tension. A knot, however, points to the presence of permanent and potentially malignant tissue. We can assume that FC's utterance in line 7 is based on this inference, when she asks Patcharin whether she should see a doctor. Patcharin responds that she should in line 8. Now that Patcharin and FC defined the problem through the assessment, Patcharin invites FC to feel the trouble spot herself. FC's assessment is at odds with Patcharin's, as she expresses in line 12: *ah das is äh von äh vene.* 'uh that is uh from uh vein.' While Patcharin does not openly contest FC's assessment, her reactions in lines 13 and 15 eschew from an alignment with her client's opinion. Patcharin's turn in line 17 can be seen as another attempt at trying to contextualize the knot as potentially worrying by stressing its consistency, *hm_hm is sehr hart ne?* 'hm_hm is very hart right?'. Patcharin insists on construing the knot as a problem, when asking FC in line 19 *war auch schon bei doktor?* 'been also to doctor already?'. This can be seen as an implicit appeal to FC that it is necessary to have the knot examined. Finally, FC agrees to Patcharin's proposal and promises to visit a doctor.

For several reasons, this episode is noteworthy. First of all, it shows that Patcharin's competence in German takes her beyond the *repertoire of pain* and therefore allows her to express her expertise and make assessments that do not fall into the purview of her job. This professional and linguistic competence supports her aim to offer a holistic treatment for her client. On the other hand, what is remarkable is the fact that her client seems to put trust and faith in Patcharin's advice, because by the end of this episode she has given up her initial opposition to Patcharin's assessment. The successful performance of assessments such as this one positions Patcharin largely outside of the narrowly defined circle of wellness and relaxation. Instead, Patcharin's service can be defined as a health service, as it provides a from of preventive medical care.

Throughout these sections we have discussed several aspects of talk during the massage treatment. We have examined how talk is used to let customers unwind at the start of the massage. We have also seen that language is important to provide instructions and to

perform various techniques during the massage process. Lastly, we have emphasized that Patcharin and her colleague's level of competence in German allows them to perform actions such as assessments that ultimately give adequate expression to the professional identity that they claim for themselves. Let us now proceed to the action of ending the massage treatment.

6.2.5 Ending the treatment

At the end of every massage session, Patcharin and her colleagues have some routine words of warning for their clients. These routine recommendations that we will see in the following transcript are again concerned with the issue of pain. While for the therapists a good job done means that the client will feel sore a day or two after the massage, many clients are simply not aware of the fact that the pain only develops later on and ultimately leads to an enhancement of their well-being. Therefore, a session usually closes with an advice to either take a hot bath or put a hot-water bottle on the strained areas of the body. In the following transcript, Patcharin provides a more elaborate piece of such advice to a first-time customer.

Figure 73: Ending treatment: Patcharin (EEFP_220713_003415(P2))

PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	PAT	**kann es sein morgen,**
		could it be tomorrow,
02		**bissjen muskelkater bekommen ne?**
		get a little muscle ache right?
03	FC	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
04	PAT	**vielleicht ein tag vielleicht zwei tage,**
		maybe one day maybe two days,
05		**dann langsam weg.**
		then slowly gone.
06	FC	**okay.**
		okay.
07	PAT	**wenn is nicht zu warm,**
		if it not too warm,
08		**mach bissjen warme flasche drauf,**
		put a little warm bottle on it,
09		**hier ne?**
		here right?
10	FC	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
11	PAT	**aber ich denk is warm,**
		but I think is warm,
12		**warme [flasche] gell?**
		warm (bottle) right?
13	FC	**[ja. ((laughs))]**
		[yes. ((laughs))]
14	PAT	**(so,)**
		(so,)
		(3.0)
15	PAT	**is nicht so schlimm wenn muskelkater bekommen,**
		is not so bad if get muscle ache,
16		**weil is normal ne?**
		because is normal right?

17	**FC**	**hm_hm?** hm_hm?

From lines 1 to 5, Patcharin informs FC that she may only feel the effects of the massage in a day or to and that these effects are *bissjen muskelkater bekommen ne?* 'get a little muscle ache right?'. Then she recommends to treat the muscle ache with a hot water bottle. Here we observe the same effect that we have seen throughout many of these examples. Patcharin uses an infelicitous expression to refer to the hot water bottle in line 8, *warme flasche* 'warm bottle' instead of *wärmflasche* 'hot water bottle', which, nevertheless, does not interfere with the overall comprehension, because FC signals her uptake throughout the whole conversation. These words of advice close the massage treatment and shortly afterwards the therapist tends to exit the treatment room.

6.2.6 Summary

In these sections, we analysed the talk that appears during the different stages of the massage treatment at Patcharin's salon between the therapists and the customer. In general, we have argued that the discursive practices in German are an important feature during all the stages before, during and after the massage. During the footbath just before the massage discourse establishes and builds a positive relationship between practitioner and client and it anticipates how the treatment will be administered by eliciting information on the client's health. Just before and during the massage, the therapist's talk prepares the client for the treatment and informs her about her contribution, it prepares the client for physical actions and guides her movements, and it renders the therapist's touch meaningful by providing assessments and diagnoses. Similarly, after the treatment discourse provides information on the effects of the massage and advice for the client of how to remedy these effects. In sum, Patcharin and her colleagues' partial competence in German may not be instrumental in performing their professional practices, but their partial mastery of the language allows them to express their professional expertise and thus to claim their professional identities as health care workers, which differentiates them from competitors and counteracts unfavourable public and institutional discourses about Thai massage practitioners.

6.3 The use of Thai

Since the main interaction order during massage treatments is between therapist and client and German is usually the only resource that the participants share, we have not seen much Thai being spoken in the extracts above. Obviously, Thai has a place in the world of Patcharin's salon in interactions between staff. However these interactions are limited to short exchanges before or after a treatment, or, as we have seen above, brief remarks spoken over the dividing wall of the treatment rooms. In the introduction, we have shown though that Patcharin values a positive relationship among her and her staff highly. Most exchanges between the therapists are short and the majority is about coordinating their work or to check on one another's well-being.

6.3.1 Coordinating work

Thai is predominantly used to coordinate work between the therapists. In the following example, Chalida has just finished a treatment, she has cleaned her treatment room and is now sitting behind the counter waiting for a new customer to arrive. Her waiting is interrupted by the door bell and via the intercom she provides access to a new customer, who shortly after enters the main part of the salon. Chalida invites him to take a seat, offers him a glass of water and asks him to wait for his footbath. The man then sits down on the bench. Then Kesarin finishes her treatment and steps out of the other treatment room. She is followed by a lady, her customer, who then approaches Chalida at the counter to make her payment. While Chalida and the lady settle the payment, Kesarin places a footbath in front of the man, who has been waiting for just a short while. Chalida and the lady are in the midst of scheduling a new appointment, when Kesarin addresses the man, asking him which treatment he has booked, as can be seen in lines 1 and 2 of the example below. Chalida interrupts the conversation between Kesarin and the male customer by calling on Kesarin in line 5.

Figure 74: Coordinating work: Chalida & Kesarin (EEFP_020813_011527)

CHA = Chalida
KES = Kesarin
MC = Male customer

01	KES	**tschuldigung bitte,**
		excuse me please,
		(0.5)
02		**machen sie thai massage oder öl massage.**
		do you do thai massage or oil massage.
03	MC	**öl massage heute.**
		oil massage today.
04	KES	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?

05	CHA	**KESARIN**
		KESARIN
06	KES	**ja bitte?**
		yes please?
07	CHA	**เอาห้องนู้นแหละ**
		take the room over there
08		**พี่จะนวดคนท้อง**
		I will massage pregnant woman
09	KES	**okay.**
		okay.

In line 7, Chalida switches to Thai, although Kesarin answered Chalida's summons in German in line 6 *ja bitte?* 'yes please?'. In her two turns in Thai across lines 7 and 8, Chalida directs Kesarin to the booth with the Thai massage bed, so that she can use the booth with the motorized bed for her massage of her upcoming customer, who she identifies as 'pregnant woman'. The use of Thai here is on the one hand natural for the interactions between the therapists, as it is the language that both are most competent in. Moreover, since the information is not client-related, but concerns the organization of their work, Thai appears to be the expected means to perform such actions.

We have seen in Figure 61 above that Thai is used to access important information about a client in her presence, when Patcharin informed Chalida that her patient did not have any prior experience with Thai massage. The following transcript illustrates a similar situation, where Kesarin addresses Patcharin in Thai, in order to obtain important information about her customer. Just before the episode in the example below, Patcharin welcomed a client, who she greeted in English at the entrance door. When the client and Patcharin entered the main part of the salon and the client sat down on the bench to start her footbath with Kesarin, she and Patcharin continued chatting in English about the client's recent weight loss regime. Kesarin, who has only minimal competence in English, then turns to Patcharin to clarify the language choice with the customer in line 8 and 9 below by addressing Patcharin in Thai asking whether the customer does not speak any German.

Figure 75: Coordinating work: Patcharin & Kesarin (EEFP_020813_003745)

KES = Kesarin
PAT = Patcharin
FC = Female customer

01	KES	**hallo,**
		hello
02	FC	**[hallo,]**
		[hello,]
03	PAT	**[so:?]**
		[so:?]
04		**that is for you.**
05	FC	**okay.**
		okay.

```
06        PAT       ((laughs))
07        FC        ((laughs))
                    (1.0)
08 ->     KES       พูด พูด
                    speak speak
09 ->               ด๊อยซ์ไม่ได้หรอ
                    no /deu/ is it
                    (0.5)
10        PAT       doch er kann auch deutsch.
                    yes he knows also german.
11                  [is] deutsch.
                    [is] german.
12        KES       [ah,]
                    [ah,]
13        FC        ((laughs))
14 ->     KES       ja mich versteht eh?
                    yes me understand uh?
15        PAT       ((laughs))
16        FC        ((laughs))
```

However, instead of responding to Kesarin's inquiry in Thai and accommodating to Kesarin's language choice, Patcharin responds in German in line 10 and 11: *doch er kann auch deutsch. [is] deutsch.* 'yes he knows also german. [is] german.' By using German, Patcharin opens up the interaction order to include the client and to reassure Kesarin that she and the client do have a resource in common. Kesarin's reaction in line 14 *ja mich versteht eh?* 'yes me understand uh?' indicates that she puts importance on the fact that there is a common language for them to use, because her knowledge of English is not up to the mark to confidently perform her professional practice.

Brief exchanges that deal with the organisation of work between the practitioner are almost always in Thai. They also appear when both or one therapist is at work. In the following example, Patcharin is on the phone behind the service counter and is about to re-schedule a booking with a customer, while Chalida and Kesarin are busy treating customers. Chalida is occupied in the booth just next to the service counter. In line 1 of the following example, Patcharin asks the caller to hold on and then she summons Chalida in line 2 using a typical Thai address form พี่ *Chalida* which can be roughly translated into English as 'older sister Chalida'.

Figure 76: Coordinating work: Patcharin & Chalida (EEFP_200213_005959)

PAT = Patcharin
CHA = Chalida
KES = Kesarin

```
01        PAT       ein moment bitte?
                    excuse me please,
                    (0.5)
02        PAT       พี่ Chalida
                    older sister Chalida
03        KES       จ๋า [(Patcharin)?]
                    yes [(Patcharin)?]
04        CHA       [ja?]
                    [yes?]
05        KES       ((laughs))
```

06	PAT	วันเสาร์สักครึ่งชั่วโมงหน่อยได้ไหม
		saturday can you do half an hour
07	CHA	จ๊ะ
		yes
		(0.5)
08	PAT	**ähm,**
		uhm,
09		เก้าโมงหรือว่าหลังจากเที่ยง
		nine in the morning or afternoon
10	CHA	เก้าโมงดีกว่า
		nine in the morning better
		(0.5)
11	PAT	**hallo?**
		hello?
		(0.5)
12		**können sie am samstag der zweite märz kommen?**
		can you come on saturday the second of march?
		(2.5)
13		**ja?**
		yes?
14		**um neun uhr.**
		at nine o'clock.

In line 3 and 4, Kesarin and Chalida both respond to Patcharin's summons almost immediately. Kesarin in Thai and Chalida in German. However, Kesarin realized that it is not her who Patcharin wants to talk to and therefore reacts with laughter in line 5. In line 6, Patcharin then addresses Chalida and poses a question in Thai with respect to her availability for a massage on Saturday. Chalida affirms and Patcharin then asks her about the preferred timing. Chalida confirms the morning slot, so that Patcharin is able to return to her client on the phone switching from Thai back to German. Since exchanges such as this one between the practitioners tend to interfere with the massage treatments, they are never long. But since the accomplishment of Patcharin's action of booking depends on her immediate negotiation with her part-timer, they are necessary. An arguable unintended outcome of using Thai for these exchanges during treatments, however, may be that they are not perceived as distracting by the clients as they are not able to understand Thai.

6.3.2 Relational work

Thai is also used during treatments between Patcharin and her colleagues for reasons that are not related to the organisation of their work. Not very frequently, but if the need arises, they draw on Thai to check on one another. A good illustration presents the following example, when Patcharin addresses Chalida in Thai while both are busy treating a patient.

Figure 77: Relational work: Patcharin & Chalida 1 (EEFP_220713_010121)

PAT = Patcharin
CHA = Chalida

		((a loud bumping sound can be heard))
		(8.0)
01	**PAT**	**พี่ Chalida**
		older sister Chalida
02	**CHA**	**hm?**
		hm?
03	**PAT**	**okay ป่ะ**
		okay or not

The reasons for Patcharin's summons in line 1 was a loud bumping sound of something falling down that was clearly audible. Patcharin calls on Chalida using the same Thai address form as in the example above. After Chalida's short response in line 2, Patcharin seems to inquire about Chalida's well-being. Chalida's non-response then signals that everything is fine. Brief interactions in Thai between the therapists during treatments, such as this one, give substance to Patcharin's call for a supportive work environment as described in the introduction of this chapter. The sense of a community also finds expression in equally brief exchanges about food.

In this last example, Chalida has just started a massage in the booth next to the service counter, where Patcharin is sitting and waiting for her next customer to arrive. Chalida then addresses Patcharin in line 1.

Figure 78: Relational work: Patcharin & Chalida 2 (EEFP_020813_004613)

CHA = Chalida
PAT = Patcharin

01	**CHA**	**Patcharin**
		Patcharin
02	**PAT**	**hm_hm?**
		hm_hm?
03	**CHA**	**พี่มี äh**
		I have uh
04		**ขนม อยู่ใน**
		sweets in
05		**ตู้เย็น ทองหยอด**
		fridge thong yot foi thong
06	**PAT**	**หร**
		really
07	**CHA**	**hm?**
		hm?
08		**[เดี๋ยวรอ] (x)**
		[wait a moment] (x)
09	**PAT**	**[เดี๋ยวรอ]**
		[wait a moment]
		(0.5)
10	**PAT**	**เดี๋ยวรอ**
		wait a moment
11		**เสร็จงานค่อยกินกัน**
		after work we get together
12	**CHA**	**hm.**
		hm.

While Chalida's patient slumbers under her touch, she summons Patcharin and informs her about a Thai desert made of egg yolks that she brought along, and which she stored in the fridge in Patcharin's flat. Patcharin expresses her delight in line 6. Yet, subsequently both remind one another that the consumption of the desert has to wait until their work is completed.

6.3.3 Summary

Overall, these examples illustrate that interactions between the therapists are almost exclusively in Thai, because it is the resource that they share and that they are most proficient in. However, most of their interactions are as short as the examples presented here and are primarily about coordinating their work or watching over one another. For longer stretches of small talk at work there is rarely any time, because Patcharin calls on her part-timers only when a sufficiently great number of appointments has been booked for the afternoon shifts. Nevertheless, these short exchanges about food, or at times their families or pets, are an important ingredient to sustain their relationships beyond their workplace duties.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined the core action at Patcharin's Massage Salon, namely providing a massage treatment. The analysis has shown that the different phases of the treatment feature a substantial amount of talk in German between the therapist and the client and to a lesser extent interactions between the therapists in Thai. The interesting issue is that discourse is not necessarily contributory to the performance of the treatment, but the discursive practices that Patcharin and her staff engage in throughout the treatment become meaningful with respect to the kind of service that Patcharin strives to provide and the wider public discourses that set Thai massage into an unfavourable light.

The analysis has shown that the discursive practices before, during and after the treatment serve a variety of functions. A practical function, for example, is fulfilled by the routines of assessing the client's health during the footbath, as they provide important information for the therapist to anticipate how the treatment will be conducted. Likewise instructions that manipulate the client's physical positioning prepare for specific massage techniques, and instructions during the performance of these movements, such as the

palm press, perform the actions by guiding the client's movements. Exchanges between the therapists in Thai also serve primarily a practical function, when, for example, therapists relay details about a customer or when a booking needs to be settled. Secondly, the discursive routines also assert the social identities of the therapist. Of particular significance are the assessments that the therapists provide via the repertoire or pain. In these cases, as we have argued, talk serves to amplify the mode of touch that is of primary importance to the therapist in providing the treatment. Only through the discursive routines of assessments the touch sensations are rendered meaningful and thus accountable for the client. On the other hand, the hierarchical nature of the therapist-patient relationship is flattened with episodes of small talk in particular during the footbath and at the beginning of the treatment, which are not only sustained by the therapists, but to which they also contribute actively. Lastly, when preparing clients for treatments or when locating the painful areas, Patcharin and her staff are able to pass on their knowledge about the symptoms, effects and benefits of their professional practice. In order to do so, Patcharin and her staff can fall back on their partial competence in German. This partial competence in German enables them to go beyond the confinements of the task and is thus instrumental in providing the kind of professional treatment that dissociates them from run-of-the-mill competitors and counter-acts discourses that position Thai massage as a wellness treatment or an erotic service.

Chapter 7: Wipa's Asia Market: Accomplishing core business actions with bilingual competence

Let us now turn to our third immigrant entrepreneur, Wipa. In this chapter, we would like to examine how the resources in her linguistic repertoire affect the core practices at her store. With respect to German, Wipa has the highest competence of all three business owners in the study. Her business is located in an altogether different sector from the previously discussed ventures. Wipa specializes in the sale of Asian food and beverages. Her biography, as presented in chapter 4, showed that she entered food retail haphazardly, even though she had been considering becoming self-employed seriously before. For her business, Wipa was able to build on her interest in and passion for cooking. As we have discussed above, neither Wipa nor her business associate of early days, her brother-in-law Paul, had any experience in the practices that were required to run a food retail business successfully.

The tasks that Wipa defined as particularly important for her business were the activities of explaining in interactions with her customers and the ordering of stock. We have discussed in chapter 4 that Wipa but also Paul identified the ability to advice her customers competently as the decisive difference between Wipa's business and her competitors. According to Wipa, it is in particular her multilingual competence that allows her to provide her customer service in German and Thai that represents the crucial difference between her shop and the large, anonymous supermarkets and her immediate competitors, meaning other Asian or Thai food retailers. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, we aim to examine two types of actions that involve Wipa's ability to explain: in interactions with customers during the sales encounter and in the production of shelf labels, the small pieces of paper attached to the product displays in her store, which, as we will show below, we take to be a material instantiation of the action of explaining. Both actions can be subsumed under the larger action of 'selling', which is obviously a crucial aspect of her business.

The second significant difference between her and her immediate competitors is Wipa's familiarity with the administrative side of the business. In chapter 4, we have heard Wipa stressing how the fluctuation of prices at another Asian supermarket in her vicinity were most probably due to the lack of knowledge about such institutional discourses. One particular challenge that Wipa identified for her business was the

ordering of stock. The literature on immigrant entrepreneurship suggests that ethnic businesses rely heavily on co-ethnic networks to order their supplies, because it is assumed to be supported by a shared mother tongue. We would like to examine the action of ordering stock more closely in the case of Wipa, in order to ascertain how language competence is relevant for this action and how her language competence shapes the action.

7.1 Explaining

Wipa identified explaining as a central task of her job. In this section, we want to zoom in on how Wipa accomplishes this action of explaining in her everyday work. Explaining occurs in two different modes: in personal interactions with her customers and in material signs, in the form of shelf labels. Let us first take a look at what the characteristics of explaining are.

Explaining is at its core the rendering of new information between social actors with respect to objects, events or concepts (Antaki, 1994). The need for an explanation arises, if there is a perceived or an explicitly expressed asymmetry of knowledge (Waring, 2007). This knowledge differential needs to be either signalled materially or conceptually in an interaction before an explanation can proceed (Costa & Müller-Jacquier, 2009). For example, in our context, a customer may be walking around the shop, bending down, looking at the shelves and products, so that her actions signal to the shop keeper that she is in need for an explanation. On the other hand, the customer could walk up to the counter and directly address the shop keeper seeking an explanation from her. Explaining is therefore always an interactional achievement between the participants and should not be understood as a one-sided transfer of knowledge. This active cooperation requires an explanation competence by the social actors to coordinate their actions, because explanations create delicate hierarchical relationships between the participants (Spreckels, 2009, Nguyen, 2006). The provider of the explanation must constantly monitor her output, testing for the recipient's understanding and adjusting the explanation to the recipient's situation, in order to avoid a breakdown of the explanation (Waring, 2007). On the other hand, the recipient has to signal her understanding with appropriate signs of feedback. Therefore, explanations are never a one-way street, but are a cooperative effort between both participants. Explanations can take on various

discursive forms, such as accounts, recounts, descriptions, reports, instructions for actions or finding a way or location (Kotthoff, 2009). For the purposes of this study, we would also like to add material discourses like the shelf labels to the list of forms in which explanations occur, because the meaning of such shelf labels likewise results from the alignment between a producer and the reader of the label, as well as their knowledge, prior experience and abilities (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003).

We now want to examine how Wipa uses the resources in her linguistic repertoire to perform explanations in face-to-face service encounters with clients, before proceeding to the shelf labels. We would like to focus specifically on how these actions of explaining are shaped by the resources in Wipa's linguistic repertoire, but also by the other discourses in place and the mediational means available. As the action of explaining is nestled into the sales encounter, we first want to review the characteristics of this constellation.

7.1.1 Explaining in sales encounters

Sales encounters are to a large extent a predictable interactional episode and therefore an example of institutional talk (Heritage, 2005). They develop along a number of typical phases, that generally evolve in a sequence of greeting, offering service, statement of demand, searching and finding product, demonstrating product, payment, and farewell (c.f. Brons-Albert 1995, Ventola, 1987). While these phases may be typical of many sales encounters, its actual realisation is shaped by a variety of situated factors: the type of product the customer attempts to purchase, the time the participants have at their disposal, the relationship between the participants, as well as the institutional context in which it happens (Brünner, 2000). For the context of retail sale, such as Wipa's store, Rehbein (1995) argues that sales encounters are at their simplest and most predictable. One reason is that prices in retail are almost always fixed and therefore are not subject to a process of negotiation between the seller and buyer (Dorfmüller, 2006). Secondly, the products offered in retail sale are generally not complex, but meant for everyday usage, which facilitates the interaction, as the knowledge differential between buyer and seller is supposedly minimal (Rehbein, 1995). However, while sales encounters include typical discursive practices and may well be simple on the surface, they are best perceived as a "combination of both typified social knowledge and interpersonal negotiation" (Filliettaz, 2005, p. 109). As interactional achievements, sales encounters are therefore always open

to expansions. Such expansions can be initiated by either participant and may be shorter or longer sequences inserted in the overall frame of the goal-directed nature of the encounter (Filliettaz, 2005). In the case of the sales encounters at Wipa's store, such expansions often come in the form of explanations.

The example below presents an excerpt from a sales encounter between a male customer and Wipa. It illustrates an example of a brief but typical expansion in the form of an unsolicited explanation in an otherwise routine sales encounter at Wipa's store. MC has come to the store to purchase a number of vegetables. When he stands at the counter about to proceed with his payment, he seems to remember an additional item that he wanted to purchase: soy bean sprouts. However, in his utterance in line 1 he erroneously refers to them as *bambussprossen* 'bamboo sprouts', which is highlighted by Wipa's turn in line 2.

Figure 79: Explaining 'sprossen' (EEWA_230513_002000(T13a))

WIP = Wipa
MC = Male customer

01	MC	**bambussprossen könnt ich vielleicht noch**
		bamboo sprouts I could maybe still
02 ->	WIP	**bambus?**
		bamboo?
03 ->	MC	**diese diese sprossen die [(bohnen),]**
		these these sprouts the [(beans),]
04 ->	WIP	**[soja.]**
		[soy.]
05	MC	**soja ja (genau). ((laughs))**
		soy yes (exactly).
06	WIP	**okay? fünfhundert gramm ne? ((walks back to fridge))**
		okay? five-hundred gramms right?
07	MC	**jo genau.**
		yes exactly.
08 ->	WIP	**ถั่วงอก ja.**
		bean sprouts yes.
09	MC	**ja.**
		yes
		((WIP gets the bag of bean sprouts and returns to counter))

Wipa highlights MC's referring expression as a problem in line 2 by repeating the wrong or repairable item *bambus?* 'bamboo?'. MC's reaction in line 3 suggest that he is not able to repair his error, therefore signalling a problem and his lack of knowledge to identify the item, so that Wipa repairs in line 4 *[soja.]* '[soy.]', thus providing an explanation.

In the subsequent section, the aim is to argue that Wipa's routine practice of engaging in explanations is, on the one hand, sustained by her knowledge of culinary traditions and socio-cultural knowledge and, on the other hand, by the resources in her linguistic repertoire. These tools allow her to position herself as a skilled professional and therefore provide assets that set her apart from competitors. In the following sections, we

want to look closer at these explanations and how they constitute valued culinary advice for her customers.

7.1.1.1 Preparing for explaining

The basic condition for an explanation to happen is that a problem must be signalled or made apparent. This means that the problem is either expressed or inferred. In sales encounters this usually means that the client approaches the sales person directly to state her problem, or that the sales person approaches the client to offer assistance thus giving the client the opportunity to express the problem. In Wipa's store both types of signalling occur: problems are either explicitly stated by the buyer or they may be elicited by Wipa.

Customers often explicitly state their problem by approaching Wipa at the counter area. The following example is a typical illustration of the process.

Figure 80: Preparing for explaining 1 (EEWA_290513_005551(T16a))

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

1	**FC**	**[guten tag.]**
		[good day.]
2	**WIP**	**[guten tag.]**
		[good day.]
		((FC enters looks to her right towards the fridges. Looks straight ahead. Stops in front of counter. Wipa observes her the whole time. Then FC turns to her left and their Wipa's and FC's gaze meets))
		(5.0)
3 ->	**FC**	**ich such ko-**
		I'm looking for co-
4 ->	**WIP**	**bitte schön,**
		yes please,
5 ->	**FC**	**kokosmilch such ich.**
		coconut milk I'm looking for.



Image 39: Wipa's Asia Market: Establishing alignment 1

Upon FC's entry, Wipa and her customer exchange greetings. Wipa is standing behind the service counter. As Image 39 shows, FC steps forward and then turns to her right and looks at the area where the fridges are. Wipa observes her, but she doesn't say anything. Then FC takes a couple of steps forward, stops and looks ahead, then she turns her gaze to the left towards Wipa. When their eyes meet, the customer and Wipa begin their utterances almost simultaneously. In line 3, FC starts her problem statement *ich such ko-* 'I'm looking for co-', but Wipa interrupts with a kind of summons or statement request in line 4 *bitte schön,* 'yes please,' ratifying the alignment between them and signalling her readiness to receive the customer's problem statement. FC then re-starts in line 5 and expresses her problem with locating the product *kokosmilch such ich.* 'coconut milk I'm looking for'.

This is not different from interactions between Wipa and her Thai-speaking clients. Again alignment must be sought before the problem can be stated. In the following example and represented in Image 40, FC was waiting at a distance from the service counter, where Wipa was busy serving another client, the one to the right wearing a hat. FC's waiting posture probably caught Wipa's attention, so that Wipa turns towards FC and signals her attention by saying 'yes' in Thai, as represented in line 1 of the transcript below, thus providing the floor for FC's problem statement.



Image 40: Wipa's Asia Market: Establishing alignment 2

Figure 81: Preparing for explaining 2 (EEWA_230513_004145)

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

		((WIP looks at FC, FC turns to WIP))
01	**WIP**	ค่ะ
		yes,
02	**FC**	ถามหน่อย ข้าวหอมมะลิ
		can I ask? jasmine rice?
03	**WIP**	**((nods her head))**
04	**FC**	มันอยู่ตรงไหน
		where is it?
05	**WIP**	ข้าวหอมมะลิ
		jasmine rice.

In this example, we could argue, Wipa does not only align physically, but she also aligns linguistically to the perceived preference of her Thai client.

Alternatively, Wipa creates opportunities for problem statements by directly approaching her customers. This typically seems to depend on Wipa's judgment of adequateness with respect to the time the customer has spent rummaging around the shop. Because she is not able to observe the complete shop floor from her usual position behind the service counter, in particular not the back of the store where the majority of her products are on display, Wipa will initiate assistance usually after a couple of minutes have passed without the customer asking her for help. If she judges that the time is ripe to approach a customer, Wipa offers her assistance and provides the floor for the customer's problem statement through the following typical discursive routines.

sie kommen gut zurecht gell? (EEWA_040613_002900(T18a))
you'll find your way right? (EEWA_040613_002900(T18a))

haben sie allet gefunden gell? (EEWA_040613_012334(T17a))
you found everything right? (EEWA_040613_012334(T17a))

Before proceeding to the analysis of the types of problems stated and the explanations provided by Wipa, it is important to note that the majority of explanations in the data are in German. This may not seem surprising, if we assume that the majority of Wipa's Thai clients are familiar with products on sale in the store. Moreover, many of her Thai clients are long-standing customers and are creatures of habit and thus predominantly demand the same range of goods, a fact that does not necessitate as many explanations. On the other hand, many Thai customers tend to pre-order their purchases by phone. For Wipa, this means that she notes down the customer's order on a piece of paper, then picks the items from the shelves, packs them into plastic bags, and waits for the caller to pick up the order. In addition, many of her Thai clients are also personal friends, so the talk that

accompanies their shopping trips is very often not in relation to the object of purchase. The following short example aptly illustrates this. Wipa is handling the payment with a female customer (FC2) at the counter, who she has been talking to in German, when a Thai lady walks into the store (FC1).



Image 41: Wipa's Asia Market: Greeting Thai customer with wai

FC1 has come to pick up a number of Thai magazines that Wipa orders for her each week. Wipa has also prepared a plastic bag with vegetables for FC1. As usual, Wipa has labelled the bag with the customer's name and has placed it in one of the fridges opposite the service counter. Upon entering the store Wipa and FC1 exchange greetings in Thai as shown in lines 1 and 2 of the transcript, which also includes the typical *wai* gesture of folded hands in front of the chest and a slight bow, as shown in Image 41. FC1 then walks towards the fridges and looks for the plastic bag with her name. As the transcript shows the ensuing conversation between Wipa and FC1 is not related to the activity of shopping at all, but it is primarily playful banter between friends that hovers over all the other activities that are going on at the moment in time, including Wipa's handling of the payment with FC2.

Figure 82: Serving regular Thai customer (EEWA_150513_000000(T8a))

WIP = Wipa
FC1 = Female customer (Thai lady)
FC2 = Female customer

01	**WIP**	สวัสดีค่า
		hello.
02	**FC1**	หวัดดีหนุ
		hello.
03	**WIP**	สวยจังวันนี้
		so beautiful today
04	**FC1**	สวยหรอ
		beautiful?

		((FC1 walks towards the fridges))
05	FC1	สวยให้แน่ใจนะ
		beautiful are you sure?
06	WIP	สวยค่า
		yes beautiful
07	FC1	แน่ใจนะ
		you are sure
08		ไม่ใช่พูดเล่นนะ
		you're not kidding me
09	WIP	**vier euro ein runde,**
		four euros one round,
10		**danke schön,**
		thank you,
11	FC1	ไม่ใช่พูดเล่นน้า
		you're not joking
12	WIP	พูดเล่นไม่ได้
		not joking
13		ห้ามเลยค่ะ
		really not
14	WIP	**danke schön.**
		thank you.
15		**den zettel?**
		the receipt?
		((FC1 approaches the service counter))
16	FC1	ห้ามพูดเล่นน้า
		stop teasing me
17		รถจอดตรงนี้แปปนึง
		I park here for a moment
18	WIP	**((laughs))**
19		จอดได้ค่ะวันนี้วันพุธ
		today can park it's wednesday
20		แปปนึงได้อยู่
		just a moment is fine

The banter between Wipa and FC1 is only interspersed with Wipa changing alignment to FC2 by switching to German: in line 9, Wipa announces the price, and in line 10, she receives FC2's money. Again in line 14, she turns to FC2 returning the change, and in line 15, Wipa checks whether FC2 would like to hold on to the receipt. Even when FC1 arrives at the counter to settle her payment, as shown in Image 42, their talk continues not to be related to the task, but the exchange of money and goods is performed seemingly underneath their breaths, as the price has most probably been clarified before, when FC1 had placed her order with Wipa over the phone.



Image 42: Wipa's Asia Market: Serving customers in Thai & German

We have seen in this section that the action of explaining necessitates an alignment between the buyer and the seller, which is either initiated by an explicit statement of the problem by the customer or by Wipa's offer of assistance to the client. Let us now turn to the types of problems that customers have and the types of explanations that Wipa provides. In the discussion, we will attempt to show that what makes Wipa's explanations in sales encounters interesting is her ability to attune her explanations not only to the explicitly expressed but also the perceived knowledge differential between her and her clients. In addition, her ability to tap into her extensive culinary knowledge allows her to provide more explanations than required which, at times, leads to an increase in sale.

7.1.1.2 Types of problems and explanations

The following discussion shall examine the common problems that Wipa's customers express, as well as the types of explanations that Wipa provides in return. My aim is not to give an exhaustive, quantitative account of all the problems present in the data, but to give an impression of the general range of the types of problems that are made salient in the interactions and, in reaction to the problems, Wipa's action of explaining. In doing so Wipa uses her linguistic competence in German and Thai, her conceptual knowledge of cooking and shows adaptability to the cultural background of her clients. The types of problems that Wipa generally needs to deal with concern the availability of the product, the characteristic of the product itself, the absence of the product, and the naming of products. These problems may all be typical for food retail in general and not specific to Wipa's store. However, two characteristics of Wipa's explanations are that she often provides more than one solution to a particular problem and unsolicited explanations to perceived problems. Ultimately, it is this ability based on her linguistic, sociocultural, and conceptual knowledge that differentiates her service from those of her competitors.

7.1.1.2.1 Explaining availability

As we have already demonstrated in the example above, a common problem faced by customers is that they are not sure whether a product is available in the store. Such problems seem relatively easy to solve. However, Wipa's action of explaining depends on the degree of accuracy with which the customer expresses her problem. Is the customer not able to clearly express what she wants, the success of the explanation depends on

Wipa's ability to determine what the client is actually looking for. Such negotiations call for the cooperative effort of both parties. This becomes particularly apparent in the following example, which we would like to present in several stages. A man has entered the store, they establish contact and the man states a rather vague problem of availability in line 7.

Figure 83: Explaining availability 1 (EEWA_290513_000927(T16a))

WIP = Wipa
MC = Male customer

01	WIP	**guten tag.**
		good day.
02		**hallo,**
		hello,
03	MC	**guten tag.**
		good day.
		((look at each other))
04	WIP	**bitte schön.**
		what can I do for you.
05	MC	**ich wollt sie was fragen,**
		I wanted to ask you,
06		**ich brauch so,**
		I need such,
07 ->		**sauce so scharf sauce curry sauce oder so haben sie was so,**
		sauce like spicy sauce curry sauce or so do you have something like,
08	WIP	**ich hab chili sauce,**
		I have chili sauce,
09		**jo.**
		yes.
10	MC	**ja,**
		yes,
11	WIP	**für was brauchen sie denn.**
		for what do you need then.
12		**zum dippen oder (.) für curry zu machen,**
		for dipping or (.) to make curry,
13	MC	**jo ich will gemüse mit curry sauce machen.**
		yes I want to make veggies with curry sauce.
14	WIP	**[ah so,]**
		[I see,]
15	MC	**[chinesisch.]**
		[chinese.]

The client's generic reference to the product of his desire, *sauce so scharf sauce curry sauce oder so haben sie was so,* 'sauce like spicy sauce curry sauce or so do you have something like,' leads Wipa first to a similarly general reply in line 8 *ich hab chili sauce* 'I have chili sauce'. But she does not leave it at that here, but by probing what the man is trying to cook in lines 11 and 12, she obtains more specific information about MC's culinary plans in lines 13 and 15: *jo ich will gemüse mit curry sauce machen. [chinesisch.]* 'yes I want to make veggies with curry sauce. [chinese.]'. Armed with this information, Wipa and the customer walk to the shelf with the different kinds of sauces and pastes. In the new location, Wipa then uses MC's slightly more specific information and proposes three different general types of products that may suit his needs: *sauce zum dippen* 'sauce for dipping' (line 16), *paste für scharf machen* 'paste to make spicy' (line 19), and

fertigsauce 'instant sauce' (line 20). MC chooses the latter and Wipa confirms her understanding of his choice in line 24.

Figure 83 continued

16	WIP	**ah (.) ich hab sauce zum dippen ne?**
		uh (.) I have sauce for dipping okay?
17		**das sinn [extra scharf ha sowas ne?]**
		they are [extra spicy ha like that okay?]
18	MC	**[nee nee nee.]**
		[no no no.]
19	WIP	**un äh paste für scharf machen?**
		and uh paste to make spicy?
20		**oder fertigsauce.**
		or instant sauce.
21	MC	**jo [so fertigsauce.]**
		yes [like instant sauce.]
22	WIP	**[mit kokos]milch.**
		[with coco]nut milk.
23	MC	**jo ja,**
		yes yes,
24	WIP	**ja:.**
		ye:s.
25		**das gibt so drei verschieden im moment.**
		this are like three different at the moment.
26		**(sie bekommen) grüne sauce dann ne?**
		(you get) green sauce then okay?
27		**mit kokosmilch,**
		with coconut milk,
28	MC	**aha,**
		uhu,
29	WIP	**der ist schon fertig abgeschmeckt,**
		this one is already thoroughly seasoned,
30		**sie müssen nur fleisch und gemüse rein machen.**
		you only have to add meat and vegetables.
31	MC	**ja ja ja,**
		yes yes yes,
32	WIP	**der is schon fertig dann ne?**
		this is already prepared then okay?
33	MC	**ja gudd danke.**
		yes fine thanks.
34	WIP	**oder da bekommn sie rote curry sauce,**
		or here you get red curry sauce,
35 ->		**aber es is nich so scharf wie diese.**
		but it is not as spicy as this one.
36 ->		**da is schon bissen scharf,**
		that is already a little spicy,
37 ->		**der is bissen milder?**
		this one is slightly milder
38 ->	MC	**ah nee is gudd do hollnma die.**
		uh no that's fine then we take this.
39	WIP	**die sinn milder.**
		those are milder
40	MC	**jo alles klar, ((laughs))**
		yes alright,
41		**do hollnma die.**
		then we take this.
42	WIP	**danke schön,**
		thanks,

Wipa then starts to present the different options of instant sauces available by pointing to the products on the shelf. She starts with the *grüne sauce* 'green sauce' (line 26) and provides instructions on how to prepare the dish in line 30: *sie müssen nur fleisch und gemüse rein machen* 'you only have to add meat and vegetables'. MC's reaction in lines 31, *ja ja ja,* 'yes yes yes,', and in line 33, *ja gudd danke.* 'yes fine thanks.', show that he has

made his choice and it seems that Wipa's explanation will stop here, when she introduces a decisive piece of information in lines 35 to 37 that eventually changes MC's decision in favour of another product. This crucial aspect of the product is the degree of spiciness of the sauce. Although MC has indicated his preference for the green sauce, Wipa goes on to present the red curry sauce and specifies it as: *aber es is nich so scharf wie diese. da is schon bissen scharf, der is bissen milder?* 'but it is not as spicy as this one. that is already a little spicy, this one is slightly milder?'. Faced with this new evidence, MC changes his mind and decides for the milder red sauce: *ah nee is gudd do hollnma die.* 'uh no that's fine then we take this.'

This example not only vividly illustrates Wipa's sales techniques and her competence in advising her customer in German, so that he can make an informed choice, but the example illustrates her ability to act on a knowledge differential that is not openly expressed. While many Westerners or Germans enjoy eating spicy food, the spiciness of Asian dishes, and in particular Thai curries, is literally too hard for many to swallow. The products that Wipa stocks are all produced in Thailand and, while made for the export market, are not necessarily milder in taste. The following quote by Paul, Wipa's business associate, illustrates that authentic Thai cooking may not meet the taste of the local population. This is why he also dissuaded Wipa from opening up a Thai restaurant in the past

was sie wollte war, vorher schon schon ein zwar jahre vorher hat sie dann gesagt ja ja sie möchte ein thai restaurant aufmachen ne und dann, original thailändisch kochen, nur sagte ich ja dann kriegste nur thai frauen rein die deutschen, (.) wenn dann (xx) so zehn mal weniger chili reinmachen. (Interview, Paul, 01:52:30)

what she wanted was, before already already a few years before she had said then yes yes she would like to open up a thai restaurant right and then, cook authentic thai, only I said yes then you only get thai ladies to come in the germans, (.) if then (xx) like add ten times less chili. (Interview, Paul, 01:52:30)

Therefore, by informing or cautioning her customer about the spiciness of the sauce, Wipa shows her competence not only in accommodating linguistically but also in culinary terms to the preference of her customer. Moreover, this example shows how Wipa responds to a simple problem of availability with a whole chain of explanations. Her cultural and culinary knowledge support the action of explaining and ultimately the sale of the product.

The economic benefit Wipa reaps from such chains of explanations is illustrated in the following example. While we cannot be absolutely certain, the subsequent interaction at least suggests that her efforts in investing time in explaining pay off in monetary terms.

A customer has been in the shop for some time looking at the shelves in the back of the store. After waiting for a while behind the service counter, Wipa approaches her and from the items that the customer has in her basket inquires about what the customer intends to prepare. Based on the information provided, Wipa begins to propose different ways of preparing the dishes and to recommend other products that the customer may want to consider. For each product that FC subsequently puts into her basket, Wipa provides unsolicited culinary advice, such as in the extract from the encounter below.

Figure 84: Explaining availability 2 (EEWA_040613_010126(T17a))

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**un diese mu er pilze brauch ich noch.**
		and those mu er mushrooms I still need.
02		**mu er pilze?**
		mu er mushrooms?
03		**hm.**
		hm.
04	WIP	**am besten wenn sie sie über nachten einweichen ne?**
		it's best to soak them over night right?
05	FC	**über nacht.**
		over night.
06	WIP	**ja?**
		yes?
07		**dann geht sie richtig auf dann.**
		then they expand properly then.
08	FC	**hm_hm,**
		hm_hm,
09	WIP	**dann zuerst?**
		then first?
10		**dann nachher kochen ne?**
		then after that cook right?
11		**zuerst in der pfanne?**
		first in the pan?
12		**damit s- äh anbraten,**
		so that th- uh fry,
13		**damit sie fein riechen dann ne?**
		so that they smell nice right?
14	FC	**hm_hm,**
		hm_hm,
15	WIP	**dann bekommen sie feine aroma.**
		then they develop a fine aroma.
16		**aso kamma direkt in die suppe oder gebraten rein machen.**
		well you can put it straight into the soup or fried.
17		**aber weil dann riecht nikt so gut.**
		but then it doesn't smell so good.
18		**aso,**
		right,
19		**die schmeckt nur,**
		it only tastes,
20		**aber wenn sie in öl anbraten,**
		but if you fry in oil,
21		**dat riecht ganz fein dann ne?**
		that smells very nice then right?

FC's problem in lines 1 and 2 is one of location. She's looking for a certain kind of mushroom and turns to Wipa in line 2: *mu er pilze?* 'mu er mushrooms?'. Wipa hands them to her and then provides an unsolicited explanation or culinary advice with respect to the preparation of the product in line 4: *am besten wenn sie sie über nacht einweichen*

ne? 'it's best to soak them over night right?'. FC's reaction in line 5 indicates that she is not aware of this method of preparation, *über nacht.* 'over night.' This provides Wipa with fertile ground to extend another explanation about the most adequate way of cooking the mushrooms. From lines 9 to 13, Wipa recommends to fry the mushrooms first, because only then they will develop their fine aroma and scent. As FC had explained earlier in the interaction that she likes to prepare soups, Wipa draws on that information in lines 16 and 17, in order to discourage FC to put the mushrooms directly into the soup when cooking, as she will miss out on the scent that will develop only after the mushrooms have been soaked and fried. Wipa provides similar unsolicited explanations for the other products that FC purchases, such as the different Thai curry pastes, fish sauce and prawn paste. That the explanations have struck a chord with the customer and influenced her shopping is suggested in FC's comment below, after she and Wipa finally proceed to the service counter to settle the payment.

wenn ich hier raus gehen hab ich nie einen artikel (EEWA_040613_011729(T17a))

when I exist I never have only one article (EEWA_040613_011729(T17a))

Apart from showing customers the locations of products, another common problem explicitly expressed by customers concerns the nature of the product itself.

7.1.1.2.2 Explaining the product

Customers may also ask Wipa directly about products. In order to provide adequate explanations, Wipa must draw on her knowledge of the products, but also the culinary and cultural experiences and preferences of her clients.

The first example demonstrates Wipa's sensitivity to the culinary inclinations of her Thai customers and shows Wipa's ability to draw on a common cultural background in providing a successful explanation. In the example below, a female Thai customer waits at the service counter for Wipa to pack her purchases which are placed inside a plastic basket on the counter top. While waiting, the client spots a packet on the shelf next to her and then takes it off the shelf in order to inspect it (see Image 43). She then turns to Wipa and asks her in Thai what the product is or whether her guess is correct, as represented in line 1 of the transcript below.



Image 43: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining Kelp Salad

Figure 85: Explaining product 1 (EEWA_230513_005245(T12a))

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	**FC**	สาหร่ายหรอ is this seaweed?
02	**WIP**	สาหร่าย seaweed.
03		มันป็นสลัดอะพี่ this is salad.
04	**FC**	เอาไปทำไร what do I have to do?
05	**WIP**	มันสำเร็จแล้วอ่ะนะ พอพี่เททุกอย่างรวมกันก็คนๆ ก็กินได้เลย it is ready to eat, you just mix everything together and then you can eat.
06	**FC**	อะไรมีหมดใช่ไหม are ingredients inside?
07	**WIP**	มีค่ะมี yes it has.
08		มีเม็ดงา มีน้ำมัน แล้วก็มีพริกอยู่ในนั้นแล้ว it has sesame, oil and chili inside.
09	**FC**	อ่อ เดี๋ยวลองดู ah, I will try.
10 ->	**WIP**	มันจะเหมือนที่**[NAME OF RESTAURANT]** เวลาเราสั่งสาหร่ายสลัด it is like at [NAME OF RESTAURANT] the same as seaweed salad
11	**FC**	ไม่รู้ เคยกินแต่ที่เป็นบุฟเฟ่อะ แล้วอร่อย I don't know, I once ate it at buffet and it was so good.
12	**WIP**	เนี่ยะล่ะค่ะ yes, it is.
13		เค็มๆ เผ็ดๆ salty and spicy.
14	**FC**	มันคล้ายกันใช่ไหม is it similar?
15	**WIP**	ค่ะ yes

In line 2 Wipa confirms FC's guess and specifies that it is seaweed salad. The product is actually *kelp salad*, a popular type of seaweed dish in the southeastern part of China and in Japan, but less well known in Thai cooking. FC inquires about the preparation of the product and Wipa provides the details in lines 5 and 8, which bears witness to her familiarity with the goods that she sells. However, Wipa provides another important piece of information in line 10, which appeals to the common cultural experiences of both women. Wipa compares the taste of the product to the equivalent dish in a famous

Japanese restaurant chain in Thailand. FC's response in lines 11 and 14 prove that she is able to make the association with the restaurant and apparently also with the dish and, more importantly, with the quality of the food there. By appealing to their shared sociocultural knowledge of the dining scene in Thailand, Wipa manages to explain to her Thai customer the taste and the quality of a product.

In order to explain what a product is like, Wipa also relies on her linguistic competence in German. In the following example, a German customer wonders about a young coconut, a popular snack and drink in Thailand, that she spotted in one of the fridges. In line 3, the customer specifies her problem, wanting to know which parts of the coconut are edible.

Figure 86: Explaining product 2 (EEWA_040613_003350(T18a))

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**so ne kokosnuss dahinten,**
		such a coconut over there,
02		**ich hab so was noch nie gesehen.**
		I have never seen anything like that.
03		**ah ((laughs)) was kamma da von essen?**
		uh ((laughs)) what can you eat from it?
04	WIP	**ah? ((laughs))**
		uh?
05		**also den saft da drinn [ne?]**
		well the juice inside [okay?]
06	FC	**[ja?]**
		yes?
07	WIP	**der is (.) hell?**
		it is (.) light in colour?
08		**un: fas durchsichtig,**
		an:d almost transparent,
09		**un de fruchtfleisch da drinn auch,**
		and the meat inside there also,
10	FC	**ja?**
		yes?
11	WIP	**de fruchtfleisch is noch ziemlich dünn un weich?**
		the meat is still very thin and soft?
12	FC	**okay?**
		okay?
13	WIP	**jo.**
		yes.
14	FC	**un un schmeckt wie wie wie sonst auch wenn se hart is.**
		and and tast like like like otherwise as well when it is still hart.
15	WIP	**nein schmeckt bissen anders.**
		no tastes a little different.
16	FC	**ja?**
		yes?
17	WIP	**is angenehmer aso:,**
		is more pleasing we:ll,
18		**weicher zarter dann ne?**
		softer more gentle then you see?

Wipa provides her explanation about the edible parts of the young coconut from line 5 to line 13 creating appropriate reference to the different parts in German, *saft* 'juice' (line 5) and *fruchtfleisch* 'meat' or 'pulp' (line 9), but also their qualities, *hell* 'light' (line 7),

durchsichtig 'transparent' (line 8), *dünn* 'thin' and *weich* 'soft' (line 11). The ability to describe the parts of the fruit in such detail demonstrates Wipa's maximum competence in German when it comes to the culinary register. Similarly, when FC wonders about the taste of the young coconut in comparison to the ordinary coconut in line 14, Wipa is not at a loss to describe the soft texture of the young coconut's meat by using the comparative forms of the adjectives as *angenehmer* 'more pleasing' (line 17), *weicher* 'softer' and *zarter* 'more gentle' (line 18). Yet again, Wipa does not stop here, but provides another unsolicited piece of information in the continuation of this episode.

Figure 86 continued

19	WIP	**nur sie müssen auch wissen wie man aufmachen ne?** only you must also know how to open you see?
20	FC	**ja? (xxx)** yes? (xxx)
21	WIP	**mit messer. ((makes the hacking gesture))** with knife. ((makes hacking gesture))
22	FC	**okay?** okay?
23	WIP	**mit messer hacken. ((repeates the hacking gesture))** hack with a knife.

Based on the customer's expressed lack of knowledge about the product, Wipa may safely infer that the customer also lacks the knowledge and skills with respect to opening the young coconut, before she can enjoy it. Wipa explains this to FC in a combination of words, *mit messer* 'with knife' (line 21) and *mit messer hacken* 'hack with knife' (line 23), accompanied by demonstrating the hacking gestures, as shown in Image 44.



Image 44: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining how to open a young coconut by hacking

So while Wipa reacts to the customer's explicitly mentioned problems about the edible parts and the taste of the product, she also provides an unsolicited explanation, which is,

nevertheless a crucial one. By performing such unsolicited explanations, Wipa anticipates problems that her clients could potentially encounter when using her products. Such actions underscore her claim to provide a professional and reliable service to her clients. The following example is another instance of an unsolicited piece of information on a product, which anticipates a potential problem that clients may experience after they have bought it. This time Wipa resorts to material and linguistic tools to provide her explanation.

In the following example, a client purchases one of the popular items at Wipa's store, the 'beckoning cat', a plastic figurine in the form of an upright sitting cat that waves its right or left outstretched arm up an down. The 'beckoning cat' is a lucky charm originating from Japan, which is supposed to bring good luck to the owner. Wipa obtained these plastic cats from one of her regular wholesalers and they proved to be so popular with her clients that the first delivery of 'beckoning cats' was sold out within two weeks. However, a common problem with the cats, according to Wipa, was that the pins in the battery compartment were faulty. Therefore, always before she sold a cat, Wipa would test the cat's waving motion by inserting batteries and demonstrating it to the client, as shown in Image 45 below.

Figure 87: Explaining product 3 (290513_003400(T15a))

WIP = Wipa
MC = Male customer

01	WIP	**guten tag.** good day.
02	MC	**guten tag.** good day. ((man looks at shelf with cats))
03	MC	**ich möcht gern so ne winkende katze.** I'd like such a waving cat.
04	WIP	**ja gerne.** yes sure. ((Wipa gets the cat from the shelf and puts it on the counter, opens the carton, man has opened wallet already and holds bill in hand))
05 ->		**kuck immer zuerst nach dat es (.) funktioniert.** always check first that it (.) functions.
06 ->		**nit das sie nach hause kommen un dann winkt er nich.** not that you come home and then he doesn't wave.
07 ->		**(das) ärgert.** (that) angers. ((WIP puts in batteries and all look))
08		**ähä?** aha?
09		**noch paar sekunden warten** still wait a couple of seconds
10		**ich glaube der winkt** I think he waves
11	MC	**((nods))** ((nods))
12	WIP	**ne? ((laughs))** right? ((laughs))
14	MC	**okay.** okay.



Image 45: Wipa's Asia Market: Demonstrating 'beckoning cat'

While MC was already about to pay for his purchase with a bill in hand, Wipa unpacked the cat in front of him. In order to render her actions meaningful to her client, Wipa explained the reasons for her action in lines 5 to 7: *kuck immer zuerst nach dat es (.) funktioniert. nit das sie nach hause kommen un dann winkt er nich.* 'always check first that it (.) functions. not that you come home and then he doesn't wave.'. By performing the demonstration and explaining her actions, even though the customer would have taken the cat without questioning, Wipa acts on her background knowledge and previous experiences with the product and its problems. She thus safeguards against any difficulties that the customer may have after the sale is complete.

7.1.1.2.3 Explaining absence

Another unsolicited but equally important kind of explanation that Wipa provides are those that account for the absence of products from her store. Through the action of explaining why the products are not available, Wipa performs a shift of liability away from herself to either her suppliers (Figure 88 below) or to the legal framework of retail sale (Figure 89 below).

The following example concerns the absence of ginger. Ginger is usually placed in a large basket on the service counter and regular customers, such as the lady in the episode below, expect to find the ginger there. The customer has purchased frozen goods and Wipa is busy wrapping them up in newspaper with the lady standing in front of her at the counter. With her turn in line 1, the client draws attention to the absence of the ginger.

Figure 88: Explaining absence 1 (EEWA_290513_000352(T16a))

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**ingwer keinen.**
		ginger none.
02	WIP	**nein,**
		no,
03	FC	***(nicht gudd auch gudd.)* ((takes out money from wallet))**
		(not good also good.)
04	WIP	**immer noch dreizehn kilo. ((laughs))**
		still thirteen kilo. ((laughs))
05		**ich hab versucht ne?**
		I've tried y'know?
06		**ich hab gesagt kann ich noch fünf kilo haben,**
		I said can I have five kilo,
07		**dann bestell ich jede woche,**
		in that case I'll order every week,
08		**sagt er nein leider.**
		he says no unfortunately.
09	FC	**leider wie viel wie viel müssen sie,**
		unfortunately how much how much you have to,
10	WIP	**drei dreizehn dreizehn kilo.**
		three thirteen thirteen kilo.
11	FC	**dreizehn kilo.**
		thirteen kilo.
12	WIP	**ja einer karton dreizehn kilo.**
		yes one carton thirteen kilo.
13	FC	**((puffs up her cheeks))**

The negative design of FC's question in line 1 indicates that she would have expected to find the ginger on the counter. After Wipa's negative reply, FC's turn in line 3 suggests that she is not going to question the absence of the ginger and actually prepares for her payment by taking money out of her wallet. Yet, Wipa again does not leave it at that and offers an explanation. Wipa clarifies that due to the inflexibility of her supplier to offer her a smaller quantity of ginger, five instead of thirteen kilos, she does not have stock. Via her explanation she positions herself as having made an effort to obtain the ginger, but portrays the supplier as the source of the problem. By puffing up her cheeks in line 13, FC indexes her understanding. Wipa's ability to account for the absence of a product thus serves to highlight to her customer the constraints within which she has to perform her work and that the unavailability is not caused by her negligence. This becomes particularly apparent in the following example.

As we have discussed in chapter 4, Wipa constructs her corporate identity in opposition to competitors who do not abide to the practices defined by the institutional framework of food retail in Germany. In the following example, Wipa provides an explanation for not stocking a particular brand of Thai medical oil, Boxing Oil, by appealing to the legal restrictions that frame her workplace practices. In this particular episode, a couple that had made a number of other purchases inquired about the availability of Boxing Oil and after Wipa declined in line 1, they probed carefully for the

possibility of obtaining if from Wipa's store: *[könnt ihr auch nicht besorgen ne?]* '[you can't get hold of it right?]' (line 6).

Figure 89: Explaining absence 2 (EEWA_260413_020549)

WIP = Wipa
MC = Male customer
FC = Female customer

01		WIP	**nee ich hab keine,**
			no I don't have any,
02		MC	**gut.**
			good.
03		WIP	**leider,**
			unfortunately,
04		MC	**schade.**
			bummer.
05	->	WIP	**[darf ma auch nicht verkaufen.]**
			[we are not allowed to sell anyway.]
06	->	FC	**[könnt ihr auch nicht besorgen ne?]**
			[you can't get hold of it right?]
07	->	WIP	**nein [nein.]**
			no [no.]
08		MC	**[ja?]**
			[yes?]
09	->	WIP	**wir dürfen sowas nit verkaufen.**
			we are not allowed to sell something like that.
10		MC	**ach so,**
			alright,
11			**dat is-**
			this is-
12	->	WIP	**ich bin: äh nicht (.) apotheken. ((laughs))**
			i a:m uh not (.) pharmacies. ((laughs))
13	->		**ich hab kein zulassung für so was.**
			I don't have a license for something like that.
14		MC	**ach so da brauch man extra wieder,**
			alright one needs extra again,
15			**ich dachte das wär,**
			I thought this was,

After FC's proposition in line 6, Wipa denies any possibility of obtaining the massage oil even more forcefully in line 7, *nein [nein.]* 'no [no.]', and then adds an explanation that adds weight to her statement that she is not allowed to sell it in line 13: *ich hab kein zulassung für so was.* 'I don't have a license for something like that'. Whether the sale of Boxing Oil really requires her to obtain a special license is not as important here as the fact that her explanation again displaces the responsibility outside of her own area of influence and shifts it to the scene of the legal framework. Wipa's explanation is readily accepted by MC in line 14: *ach so da brauch ma extra wieder* 'alright one needs extra again'. His utterance suggests an understanding of the bureaucratic chains that control Wipa's business.

While these two examples showed that an explanation for absence indexes the constraints under which her business operates, explaining absence can also provide room to assert her role as a professional sales person through expressing her expert knowledge. If a customer's demand cannot be met directly by providing her with the product of her

desire, because it is not available in the store, Wipa tends to recommend suitable alternatives. However, proposing alternatives requires an explanation to underscore why these substitutes are appropriate. In the following example, Wipa does so not only based on her knowledge of the product, but in particular by invoking shared cultural practices that she and her customer value highly.

In the following example, a Thai customer requests for egg noodles to prepare a particular Thai dish. As Wipa does not have any egg noodles in stock, she immediately proposes a different brand of noodles that Wipa defines as a *better* choice in line 2 of the transcript below.

Figure 90: Explaining absence 3 (EEWA_040613_011446)

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**Wipa** กมีเส้นที่ทำบะหมี่กวางตุ้งไหม เส้นหมี่เหลือง Wipa, do you have egg noodle for making Kwang-Toong noodle? Yellow noodles.
02 ->	WIP	เส้นหมี่เหลืองต้องใช้ของบริษัท**[NAME]** For yellow noodle, it is better to use same company of **[NAME]**.
03		เขาเรียกอะไรน้า เมนดาเกะ What's it called? Mandake? ((W follows FC1 to the back of the store))
04 ->	WIP	อันนี้พี่เคยทำบะหมี่หมูแดงขายในวัด I once used it for making noodles and roast pork to sell in the temple.
05	FC	เออๆ อันนั้นแหละ yeah! that's the one.
06 ->	WIP	มันไม่ใช่บะหมี่ไข่นะ แต่มันจะเหนียวนุ่มเหมือนอันนั้นเลย เห็นปะ it's not egg noodles but it is soft and sticky same as egg noodles.
07 ->		จำ**[NAME OF BRAND]**ได้ไหม do you remember **[NAME OF BRAND]**?
08	FC	อืม yes.
09	WIP	เออ เนียะแหละ มันจะเหมือนอันนั้นเลย yeah, it is the same.
10		แต่พี่ต้มแค่สองนาทีนะ I boil it just two minutes.
11	FC	อืม yes
12	WIP	มีสี่บ๊อก have four boxes.

In order to support her proposed better choice, Wipa appeals to common memories and experiences between her and her client. The first is a religious event that both attended in line 4 (*I once used it for making noodles and roast pork to sell in the temple*), and the second is a popular brand of noodles in Thailand in line 7 (*do you remember [NAME OF BRAND]?*). While Wipa also mentions the similar quality of her alternative proposition in comparison to egg noodles in line 6, 'it is soft and sticky same as egg noodles', it is in particular the reference to practices of high social prestige within the Thai community (religious ceremony) and an appeal to common memories in both their historical bodies

that seem to reverberate in FC's positive reactions in lines 5 and 8. It is this access to a shared sociocultural background with her Thai customers, but also her German customers, which allows Wipa to shift her alignment effectively.

7.1.1.2.4 Explaining names

Through her interest in different culinary cultures and her long experience in food retail Wipa has appropriated expertise in many different styles of cooking. This knowledge that spans several culinary traditions serve Wipa well in satisfying her clients demands. Her competence in German also allows her to communicate this knowledge effectively. Access to both of these tools come in particularly handy when her clients lack the appropriate vocabulary to express their wants precisely.

The popularity of Japanese food has also reached the German periphery and has set foot in Wipa's business. While Wipa herself is not a great aficionada of Japanese cuisine, a number of her clients have taken on to preparing Japanese food at home. In the following example, a customer wants to prepare sushi and is looking for the ingredients and tools to do so. At the start of the sales encounter, which is not represented here, the client had already sought Wipa's assistance in selecting pickled ginger and an adequate soy sauce. However, then she suddenly seemed at a loss when it came to the names of the other essential ingredients to prepare sushi. Drawing on her knowledge of what is needed to prepare sushi and on her knowledge of the names of the ingredients in German, Wipa is able to assist her customer competently. We want to represent this transcript again in separate passages.

Figure 91: Explaining names 1 (EEWA_040613_005025(T17a))

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**und haben sie auch peperoni eingelegte.**
		and do you have also pickled capsicum,
02	WIP	**peperoni,**
		capsicum,
03		**mh: nein ich hab nur [paste dann ne?] vom chili ja hm.**
		mh: no I only have [paste then right?] from chili yes hm.
04	FC	**[ja nee nee nee,]**
		[yes no no no,]
05		**aber die,**
		but the,
06 ->		**frisch,**
		fresh,
07 ->		**so scharfe grüne im die,**
		such spicy green in the,
08 ->	WIP	**wasabi.**
		wasabi.
09	FC	**ja.**
		yes.
10	WIP	**die hamma vorne.**

```
                we have it in front.
11      FC      ja das bitte dann brauch ich.
                yes please this then I need.
12      WIP     hm?
                hm?
```

The first item that FC requires is wasabi paste. Yet, we see from her utterance in line 1 that she refers to something utterly different when she asks Wipa for the availability of pickled capsicum. Wipa's repetition in line 2 may express her surprise as she had already chosen two ingredients for preparing sushi together with FC before. When Wipa negates FC's request in line 3 and starts to propose an alternative, FC seems to have realized that her request was misinterpreted, as she jumps in mid-way through Wipa's turn in line 4 *[ja nee nee nee,]* '[yes no no no,] to retain the floor. Yet, FC still lacks the referring expression and is only able to outline some characteristics of the object that she wants: *frisch* 'fresh' (line 6) and *so scharfe grüne im die* 'such spicy green in the,' (line 7). Inferring from these cues and building on the immediate prior context of the interaction, Wipa is able to name what FC is looking for in line 8: *wasabi.* 'wasabi.'. FC then immediately ratifies Wipa explanation, so that Wipa guides her to the location where the products can be found. The next item is the nori sheets that are used to roll the sushi.

Figure 91 continued

```
13 ->   FC      dann blätter?
                then sheets?
14 ->   WIP     nori blätter hamma auch vorne.
                nori sheets we also have in front.
15              ja,
                yes,
16              mhm.
                mhm.
                ((lady and Wipa come to front))
17      WIP     hier direkt rekts das sin nori blätter?
                hier straight right that are nori sheets
18              un wasabi dann ne? ((Wipa points to the items on shelf))
                and wasabi then okay?
19      FC      mh mh?
                mh mh?
                ((Wipa takes plastic bag and writes sth on the bag))
                ((lady takes nori sheets from shelf and puts on counter top))
```

Again FC only finds a general referring expression in line 13 *dann blätter?* 'then sheets?', which Wipa immediately disambiguates in her next turn in line 14: *nori blätter hamma auch vorne.* 'nori sheets we also have in front.' Then both step up to the service counter and Wipa starts packing FC's purchases, when FC intends to add another item to the list: the sushi rolling mat.

Figure 91 continued

20	FC	**so dann brauch ich noch jetzt äh**
		right then I now also need uh
21		**auch eine die ((rubs her hands together))**
		also one the
22 ->		**machma?**
		machma?
23 ->	WIP	**matte?**
		mat?
24 ->	FC	**matte?**
		mat?
25		**ja?**
		yes?

FC is again lost for words, but this time, standing in front of Wipa at the service counter, instead of describing the characteristics of the item, she employs a gesture in an attempt to clarify what it is that she needs. As shown in Image 46, she folds her hands and in a horizontal position rubs them together. At the same time, she uses the expression *machma?* in line 22, which does not carry a meaning in standard German, which suggests an interpretation that it was a slip of the tongue.



Image 46: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining names: 'rolling mat' gesture

Yet, Wipa immediately clears up the potential misunderstanding by supplying the adequate expression in line 23 *'matte?'* 'mat?' which is confirmed by FC in line 24 through a repetition. Equally for the last item, the bamboo spoon, as shown in Image 47, FC uses a gesture to support her vague referring expression in line 26 *un dann so eine löffel so das* 'and then such a spoon so that,'. Her gesture first outlines a spoon shape with her right hand and then she performs a scooping motion with the same hand. Her clues are taken up by Wipa, who swiftly advices FC on the referring expression in line 27, *bambuslöffel.* 'bamboo spoon'.

Figure 91 continued

26	FC	**un dann so eine löffel so das, ((scooping motion with hand))**
		and then such a spoon so that,
27	WIP	**bambuslöffel.**
		bamboo spoon.
28	FC	**ja.**
		yes.
29	WIP	**die hab ich da ne? ((points with finger))**
		those I have there okay?



Image 47: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining names: 'bamboo spoon' gesture

The example nicely illustrates that Wipa is able to draw the appropriate inferences from her client's turns, but also her gestures, and the specific topic around which the interaction evolves, the preparation of sushi. Wipa's knowledge of the ingredients and the tools for preparing sushi, as well as her competence in German all work together to enable the successful completion of this sales encounter.

A slightly different kind of problem with respect to product names surfaces in the last example. Here it is not that the customer does not know what to call the product, but the problem results from the fact that the referring expressions are not shared, even though they denote the same product. As the example will illustrate, this necessitates a coordinated effort of mutual explaining between Wipa and her client, in order to assess whether the product is the correct one. In the following example, a male customer entered the store with a shopping list in hand. He immediately turned to Wipa and started reading out the items on his list. Before the episode below, the man had already checked with Wipa about the availability of an item, ajowan seeds, which she did not have in stock (line 1). The client then proceeds to the second item on his list and asked Wipa whether the product was available: *asant pulver* 'asant powder' (line 2).

Figure 92: Explaining names 2 (EEWA_110513_001842(T6a))

WIP = Wipa
MC = Male customer

01		WIP	**nein hamma nicht leider.** no don't have it unfortunately. ((MC looks down onto his shopping list))
02		MC	**haben sie asant pulver.** do you have asant powder.
03	->	WIP	**asafoetida?** asafoetida? (2.0)
04			**die:, ((picks up item))** the:,
05	->		**ersatz für knoblauch und [zwiebeln.]** substitute for garlic and [onions.]
06		MC	**[ja] sowas.** [yes] something like that.
07		WIP	**ja dat dat haben [wir ne?]** yes this this we [have yeah?]
08		MC	**[also] so,** [well] so,
09		WIP	**dat is pulver dann ne?** this is powder then right?
10	->	MC	**is asant (.) pulver.** is it asant (.) powder. (2.0)
11	->	WIP	**asafoetida.** asafoetida.
12		MC	**was is futida?** what is futida?
13		WIP	**asafoetida dat is ein name dann ne?** asafoetida that is a name then right?

Wipa does not react with a yes or no, but her response suggests a problem with the referring expression, as Wipa offers another term in line 3, *asafoetida?* 'asafoetida?', with rising intonation prompting the customer to confirm. MC does not respond and a pause of two seconds follows. Wipa retakes the floor in line 4 and at the same time she turns around and picks up a small yellow container from the display behind her. She turns back towards the customer with the container in hand and classifies the object as: *ersatz für knoblauch und [zwiebeln.]* 'substitute for garlic and [onions.]' in line 5.



Image 48: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining names: Introducing container

Wipa then passes the container to MC, who takes it and inspects it. Wipa turns around again and takes another one for herself, so that both are able to look at the product, as shown in Image 48. At the same time, in his subsequent turn in line 6, MC corroborates Wipa's description of the product's purpose, so that she assures MC in line 7 that the product he is holding is actually what he is looking for (*ja dat dat haben [wir ne?]* 'yes this this we [have yeah?]'). In addition, in line 9, Wipa guarantees that the contents of the container MC is holding are of the appropriate consistency, as specified in his initial question: *dat is pulver dann ne?* 'this is powder then right?'. Having clarified that these criteria match, in line 10, MC seeks confirmation from Wipa that the product in his hands is what his shopping list specifies as asant powder: *is asant (.) pulver.* 'is asant (.) powder.' Yet, Wipa's response in line 11 again repairs MC's referring expression. Wipa stresses that the product is *asafoetida* 'asafoetida'. Probably based on the phonetic similarity of the two initial syllables of their differing referring expressions, MC now seeks further clarification in line 12 by asking: *was is futida?* 'what is futida?'. Wipa nonchalantly returns in line 13 that asafoetida is the product's name: *asafoetida dat is ein name dann ne?* 'asafoetida that is a name then right?'. At this stage a quick glance at the inscriptions on the product that they are holding is expedient. As Image 49 below shows, the label on the yellow containers that MC and Wipa have been holding and looking at indexes its contents as COMPOUNDED ASAFOETIDA and the ingredient list identifies one of the components as ASAFOETIDA. So while Wipa is using the accurate referring expression, neither the spoken nor the material discourses present resolve MC's uncertainty. Hence, Wipa makes another effort at eliciting more information from MC about the product that he is looking for, as shown in the continuation of the transcript below.

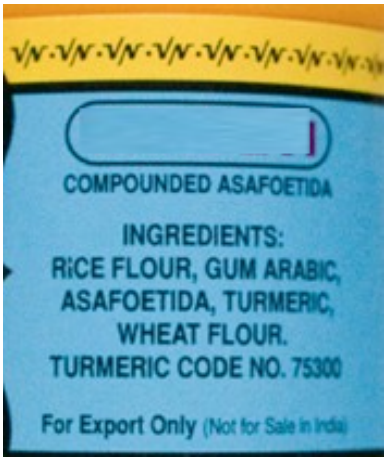


Image 49: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining names: Looking at product

Figure 92 continued

```
14        WIP   eigentlich,
                actually,
15              für was soll das sein?
                what is it for?
16              asant.
                asant.
17        MC    als gewürz so ähnlich
                as spice or something like that
18              also es gibt's in klumpen oder so als
                well it comes in clumps or as
19   ->         gelb ja?
                yellow yes?
                ((WIP puts container to nose))
20        WIP   der wird gelb ja.
                this turns yellow yes.
21              gelb (bläulich),
                yellow (kind of blue),
22        WIP   [(riechen sie mal)]
                [(take a sniff)]
23        MC    [und schmeckt so] bisschen wie zwiebeln wenn mans kocht.
                [and tastes like] a little like onions when you cook it
24        WIP   dat wird als ersatz von knoblauch und zwiebeln genommen (xxx).
                it is used as a substitute for garlic and onions (xxx)
25        MC    das.
                this one.
26        WIP   ja.
                yes.
                ((MC smells containter))
```

Wipa seeks clarification and asks MC what asant is used for in lines 14 to 16. Her initiative gets the process of explaining back on track by reversing the roles of provider and receiver of the explanation. MC responds with a classification of the product, *gewürz* 'spice' (line 17), its consistency, *klumpen* 'clumps' (line 18), its colour, *gelb* 'yellow' (line 19), and its taste, *wie zwiebeln* 'like onions' (line 23). Wipa is now able to pick up on MC's cues. First in line 20, she confirms that the product they are holding shares the feature of colour: *der wird gelb ja.* 'this turns yellow yes.' And in line 24, she re-affirms that the product in the container has the same qualities with respect to taste: *dat wird als ersatz von knowblauch und zwiebeln genommen (xxx)* 'it is used as a substitute for garlic and onions (xxx)'. Wipa also introduces an additional identifier, namely smell. Wipa already put the container to her nose during MC's explanations and in line 22, she prompts him to take a sniff as well, as seen in Image 50 below.



Image 50: Wipa's Asia Market: Explaining the name: Using smell

Figure 92 continued

27	MC	**riecht so natürlich nicht so gut.**
		this way it does not smell that nice.
28	WIP	**nee ?hm?hm aber schmeckt lecker. ((laughs))**
		no ?hm?hm but tastes delicious. ((laughs))
29	MC	**ja genau.**
		yes exactly.
30		**dann isses das richtige.**
		then it's the correct one.
31		**dann nehm ich das mit.**
		then I take it with me.
32	WIP	**danke schön,**
		thank you,
33	MC	**okay.**
		okay.

Wipa and MC have now set almost all possible senses in motion to solve the problem of whether the product in the yellow container is what MC is looking for. And this strategy proves to be successful, because, in line 30, after having appealed to taste, colour, consistency and smell, MC can say with certainty that the product that Wipa knows as asafoetida is identical to what he wants: *dann isses das richtige.* 'then it's the correct one.'

The problem in this episode was that Wipa and the client know the same product by different names. They resort to their knowledge of the consistency, the smell, the colour, and taste of the product to come to an understanding about the identity of the product. This example shows how a difference in referring expressions can evolve into a problem, and in order to disentangle the web, necessitates that both participants mobilize a variety resources. This involves the ability of client and Wipa to work together, each providing explanations for the other.

7.1.1.3 Summary

In order to provide explanations, Wipa taps into both resources in her linguistic repertoire, German and Thai, but also her culinary knowledge, her familiarity with cultural practices in Germany and Thailand, and her awareness of the legal and institutional framework of her business. Her ability to attune to the expressed but also to the perceived problems of clients make her explanations particularly effective. We have argued that through providing unsolicited explanations, Wipa constructs the professional identity that she wishes for herself to be in place, namely that of a knowledgeable and reliable sales person. The analysis has also shown, however, that explaining is not merely a discursive practice. A successful explanation is, like the service encounter in general, an action that is sustained by various mediational means. We have seen how explanations involve gestures, the material objects, and the use of the senses of smell and taste. Wipa's maximum competence in both German and Thai therefore allow her to open up her service to the resources of her clients. This ability to explain multilingually becomes equally apparent in the shelf labels that she produces, which we would like to discuss in the next section.

7.1.2 Explaining on shelf labels[1]

Besides sales encounters, Wipa also provides explanations in material form through shelf labels. Shelf labels are the small pieces of paper that are attached to the edges of a product display. In most supermarket chains, the production of shelf labels is tied in with the stock management system. The labels are machine-printed and employees slot them into the plastic covered skirting that is glued to the edge of the rack, so that they appear directly underneath the product. Image 51 below depicts an example of such a shelf label together with the product, here stock cubes, as it is used by one of Germany's biggest supermarket chains.

[1] The analysis in this section is based on Serwe & de Saint-Georges (2013).



Image 51: Regular supermarket shelf label

There are various information units on a shelf label: product name, manufacturer, packet size, price per unit, price, date of label printing, the barcode, and numerical codes identifying the product and the supplying warehouse. These pieces of information are not randomly placed on the label but follow a polarized left-right arrangement. On the left is the information about the product and store internal information. On the right are the details about the product price. Certain elements are also given salience due to their font size and type face, or in other words the *modality* of the inscriptions on the label (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003). The large font size and bold type face visually highlight the price in comparison to the packet size above or the price per single unit immediately below. On the left, capital letters and bold type face emphasize the name of the product and the manufacturer over the store internal information. Composition and modality of the information units on the shelf label thus follow a certain order. On the one hand, the visual composition permits distinguishing internal information for store employees from information for the clients. On the other hand, the label can be said to provide access to information that the customer lacks and it is therefore an explanation in material form.

The shelf label is usually positioned immediately below the product. Primarily due to this vertical alignment of product and label, clients link the information on the label with the product. This is particularly true for the visually most salient information on the label, the price. The connection between the label and the product is further strengthened through the reproduction of the product name and the manufacturer on the label via a process of exophoric indexicality (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003). Moreover, if the product were to be missing, the label would act as a place-holder, reminding the client of what

should be stacked on the shelf. Finally, even more broadly speaking, the shelf label enters into an intertextual relationship with other labels around it allowing the customer to compare products and prices.

The labels in Wipa's store, such as the one shown in Image 52 below, follow the same basic semiotic principles, although they contain fewer information units. They are also pasted to the edges of the shelves just below the products. Unlike the corporate labels though, the inscriptions are handwritten and the product name is often given in two languages, German and Thai, but not consistently so. In the following sections, we intend to investigate why the inscriptions sometimes draw on one language and sometimes on two and what this tells us about these multilingual practices and the agency of Wipa as the producer of these signs.

7.1.2.1 Bilingual labels: Catering to the needs of all customers

A distinctive feature of the inscriptions on the shelf labels in Wipa's store is the use of both German and Thai for product names. Image 52 shows a label that is pasted on the inside of one of the fridges that are filled with fresh vegetables. It appears just below the product when the door remains closed. While the vegetables themselves are not labelled, the inscription helps to identify the product, specifies the package size, and announces the prize and the currency. For the name of the product 'coriander', Wipa used two languages: German *Koriander* and Thai ผักชี



Image 52: Wipa's Asia Market: Bilingual shelf label: Coriander

A bilingual inscription such as this one gives off a variety of sociolinguistic information (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003). Firstly, the use of German points to the shop's location and

embeddedness in a German-language consumer economy. The use of Thai suggests the Asian or Thai theme of the store. Secondly, assuming that the Thai script does not express a symbolic value only – much like European languages signal trendy and fashionable retail outlets in Asia (Blommaert, 2010, Curtin, 2009; R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003, Serwe, Ong & Ghesquière, 2013) – the languages index an audience that is literate in both or either of the languages. And thirdly, it suggests that the producer of the sign, Wipa, is able to use these two linguistic resources.

While these descriptions account for some of the reasons these two languages are displayed, ethnographic evidence allows us to take the analysis one step further (Blommaert, 2012; R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003). As mentioned above, female Thai customers are responsible for a significant part of the overall revenue of Wipa's business. Particularly popular with Thai customers are vegetables, all of which Wipa obtains directly from Thailand but through a German wholesaler, so that the greens are freshly available every Tuesday. At first sight, the use of Thai seems to indicate Wipa's effort to accommodate to the language knowledge of a particularly loyal community of customers. However, Wipa's statement below reveals her motivation for using Thai for the product name on the shelf label:

also hauptsächlich ich hab geschrieben damit die, viele kann nit deutsch lesen. (EEWA_170513_011635(T11a))

well mainly I wrote that they, many cannot read German. (EEWA_170513_011635(T11a))

Wipa construes the lack of German reading skills among her Thai customers (referred to with the definite plural article *die* 'the') as the main reason for using Thai on the shelf labels (*hauptsächlich* 'mainly'). Therefore, the use of Thai is not only a means of addressing her Thai clients in their preferred language, but Wipa presents its use as a necessity, based on the concrete social fact of literacy knowledge. She wants to ensure that the situated indexical meaning of the shelf label remains intact even for those among her customers that cannot read German. The ethnographic contextualization of this bilingual sign makes clear some of the socio-political realities within the Thai community in this part of Germany that a descriptive analysis alone would not allow us to recover. It also reveals something about Wipa. In designing the signs, she makes active use of both her knowledge of the conditions in the local community and her linguistic competence in German and Thai.

In the next section, we look at another bilingual shelf label in the vegetable section, but now we focus on the part of the sign written in German. The analysis will tell us more about the types of knowledge Wipa draws on to produce the inscriptions on the label.

7.1.2.2 Bilingual labels: Showing expert knowledge

The discussion in the previous section illustrated that Wipa's use of Thai is grounded in her familiarity with the state of language and literacy knowledge of the local Thai migrant community. As we are about to show, the use of German on the label in Image 53 seems to rely upon her knowledge of the product and the commercial register in German.



Image 53: Wipa's Asia Market: Bilingual shelf label: Bean sprouts

The label in Image 53 refers to a popular ingredient in Asian cooking, namely bean sprouts or ถั่วงอก in Thai. There are two major types of bean sprouts: the commonly used mung bean sprout, which is white in colour, and the larger-sized soy bean sprout, which comes in a yellowish hue. Both types are used in Asian cuisine, but due to its milder taste and smaller size mung bean sprouts are the more popular. While in Thai ถั่วงอก 'bean sprouts' does not denote the type of bean, the respective German noun compounds do: *Mungbohnensprossen* 'mung bean sprouts' and *Sojabohnenprossen* 'soy bean sprouts' or simply *Sojasprossen* 'soy sprouts'. The sprouts that Wipa sells originate from the mung bean and are thus *Mungbohnensprossen* in German. Wipa uses this referring expression and has written it on the shelf label. With this practice she follows the commercial register in German, which differentiates between *Mungbohnensprossen* and *Sojabohnensprossen*. However, in colloquial German the referring expression to any kind of bean sprout is

Sojasprossen, despite the fuzziness of the term. Indeed, recordings of sales encounters in Wipa's store show that the term *Sojasprossen* is almost exclusively used in reference to the sprouts by customers and owner alike (see Figure 79 above for Wipa's own use of the term). Wipa's statement below shows that she is aware of the difference between the commercial and colloquial use and her customers' preference for the term *Sojasprossen*, but she still prefers to use the technical term:

ich hab mungbohnensprossen geschrieben, weil äh, anfang hab ich auch sojaprossen geschrieben? <ja.> und dann nachher, dacht ich nee das ist nicht von sojabohnen ne? <achso> wollt dann korrekt schreiben. es gibt auch schon dat die deutschen kunden kommen wundern, dieser name aber, dat ist mungobohnen. nee wir wollen sojabohnen sprossen haben. <achso.> dat ist es, dann muss ich wieder erklären. (EEWA_040613_000900)

I wrote mung bean sprouts, because uh, in the beginning I also wrote soy bean sprouts? <yes.> and then later on, I thought no this is not from soy beans right? <alright.> wanted to write correctly then. it happens also at times that the German clients come wonder, this name but, that is mung beans. no we want to have soy bean sprouts. <alright.> that is it, then I have to explain again. (EEWA_040613_000900)

Although Wipa's use of *Mungbohnensprossen* 'mung bean sprouts' on the label may lead to misunderstandings among German-literate customers and subsequently to her efforts to resolve them, as she expresses in the quote, Wipa is convinced that she should continue to use the accurate biological term instead of the colloquial one as the referring expression. This provides us with some clues about Wipa. First, she demonstrates her German language knowledge by showing awareness of register variation. The choice of the technical over the lay expression reflects her choice to be congruent with the commercial jargon commonly used by retailers. At the same time, the non-standard spelling (*Mungbohnen Sprossen* instead of *Mungbohnensprossen*) can be said to give away her German learner identity. Second, Wipa's choice of *Mungbohnensprossen* rests on expert conceptual knowledge relevant to her occupational field. Her word choice can thus be seen as an expression of her expert professional identity that she claims for herself.

The majority of the products in Wipa's store are imports from Asia. Depending on the country of origin, the product labels feature Asian languages and scripts, such as Thai, Chinese or Vietnamese, but also English. Therefore, another function of the bilingual inscriptions on Wipa's shelf labels is to provide a translation that will inform clients about the product. It is to this next aspect of Wipa's multilingual shelf label design that we turn now.

7.1.2.3 Bilingual labels: Mediating between culinary cultures

Customers may encounter products that only feature English on the packet as in Image 54 below, so that on her shelf label Wipa appears to provide the translations of the product name. The inscription in German and Thai accommodates to the linguistic resources of her customers. In this case, however, both the German as well as the Thai phrase do not provide literal translations of the product name. The German phrase *Würzpaste für hainanesisches Reisgericht mit Huhn* 'spice paste for Hainanese rice dish with chicken' is an informative rendition of the original, and the Thai one เครื่องปรุงข้าวมันไก่ 'seasoning rice fat chicken' or '*kao man gai* seasoning' is a free idiomatic translation with reference to a popular dish in Thai culinary culture, *kao man gai* or *chicken rice*. The question now is: which resources does Wipa draw on to arrive at these translations?



Image 54: Wipa's Asia Market: Bilingual shelf label: Hainanese chicken rice

As the lower part of Image 54 illustrates, the German phrase on the shelf label is copied from the product description on the back of the product itself. It is important to mention here that German legislation on product safety (ProdSG) requires all importers of food to provide translations of the product information in German on each unit, so that

consumers are able to quickly and clearly obtain relevant information. Consequently, food products usually carry details on the ingredients as well as cooking instructions in German (here also in Dutch and French). They are usually provided on an adhesive that is stuck to the back of the product.

On the other hand Wipa also relies on her own translation skills. The Thai phrase has not been lifted from another source, but it represents a free idiomatic translation based on Wipa's familiarity with the dish as it is displayed on the product and her knowledge of the culinary customs in Thailand, as she reports in the following statement:

ich hab das geschrieben ne? auf thailändisch. damit die thai wissen, weil dat ist auch bekannt in thailand? nur? eh wie sagt genau nach wort zu übersetzen, nach meiner meinung, die leute die leute versteht nicht. ... gai ist huhn. kao man ist typisch wenn ma äh, reis mit was fettiges fetthaltige so zum kochen dann ne? zum beispiel wenn äh, meersalat kochen wir auch kokosmilch und reis, den klebereis. fast ähnlich wie dieser Hainan Chicken Rice aber, machen wir dann mit kokosmilch. (EEWA_290513_012300(T16a))

I wrote that right? in thai. so that the thais know, because it is also known in thailand? only? uh as I said to translate word by word, in my opinion, the people the people don't understand. ... gai is chicken. kao man is typical if one uh, rice with something oily containing oil to then boil right? for example if uh, sea food salad we also cook with coconut milk and rice, the glutinous rice. very similar to this Hainan Chicken rice but, we do it with coconut milk then. (EEWA_290513_012300(T16a))

The first part of the Thai compound เครื่องปรุง means 'seasoning' or 'ingredients to mix', which is semantically the closest expression in Thai to the English noun compound *spice paste*. The second part, ข้าวมันไก่, are three nouns that mean 'rice fat chicken'. As a compound noun they make up the name of a popular dish in Thailand, which, as Wipa explains, turns out to be very similar to *Hainanese Chicken Rice* as it is known in Singapore, where the rice is not cooked in coconut milk but boiled in chicken broth. The Thai inscription on the shelf label thus rests on Wipa's knowledge of the two languages involved here, but equally on her knowledge of the subtle differences and similarities in Asian cooking. This allows her to act as a cultural and culinary mediator through language.

We hope that our discussions of the bilingual inscriptions on these shelf labels illustrate that a close analysis is able to reveal the various resources that are drawn on in their production. The practice of producing the labels compels Wipa not only to consider the resources accessible to her customers and her own linguistic resources, but it builds upon her knowledge of the professional, cultural, and culinary contexts in Germany, Thailand, and Southeast Asia. The next examples look more closely at monolingual inscriptions on the shelf labels and the motives behind the use of one language only.

7.1.2.4 Monolingual labels in German: Opening up access

As indicated above, the shelf labels in Wipa's store exhibit a common design, but the product names are not always provided in two languages. The label referring to stock cubes in Image 55 below is such an example that begs the question: why is only one language used for the inscription in this case?



Image 55: Wipa's Asia Market: Monolingual shelf label: Stock cubes without MSG

Image 55 shows the product and the way it is displayed to the customer and the shelf label with a monolingual inscription in German: *Bouillonwürfel ohne Glutamat* 'stock cubes without MSG'. The product packaging only features descriptions in Thai script. Therefore, Thai-literate clients do not require the shelf label to identify the product. For them the label is merely important for the price, which is visually enhanced in the label through a larger and thicker font. The absence of German on the product packaging thus explains the monolingual German product name inscription on the shelf label, because it ensures the identification of the product by Wipa's German-literate clients. Unlike in the previous example, Wipa did not take the German noun phrase from the ingredient list on the back of the product. Image 56 below shows that the reference to the flavour has been dropped in favour of the prepositional phrase *ohne Glutamat* 'without MSG'. Wipa provides reasons for incorporating this additional piece of information in the shelf label product name in the quote below.

<aber schreiben sie hier ohne glutamat, warum schreiben sie das hin?> es gibt kunden die auf glutamat verzichten müssen vermeiden jo. <achso> jo hm_hm, allergie. <achso wegen allergie.> ja. und gerade wenn [NAME OF BRAND] gibt dann, ist bekannt für, bei uns ne? glutamat jo ne? hm_hm.(EEWA_290513_004300(T16a))

<but you write here without MSG, why do you write it down?> there are customers who must refrain from avoid MSG yes. <alright.> yes hm_hm, allergy <alright due to allergy.> yes. and especially

if it's [NAME OF BRAND] then, is known for, among us y'know? MSG yes y'know? hm_hm. (EEWA_290513_004300(T16a))

Wipa presents the fact that these stock cubes by the manufacturer contain high amounts of monosodiumglutamate or MSG as common knowledge among Thais (*bei uns ne?* 'among us y'know?'). In public discourse Asian food has indeed been notoriously associated with high MSG content and while considered safe by most national food agencies, the use of the substance has been criticized widely. According to German food safety regulations (LMKV 6) a product's ingredient list has to contain a reference to MSG, if it is used as an ingredient. While there is no set standard of referring to MSG, the noun *Geschmacksverstärker* 'flavour enhancer' or the numerical code E621 are most commonly used. As for the particular type of stock cubes that Wipa sells in her shop, they seem not to contain any MSG, as the product list in Image 56 shows.

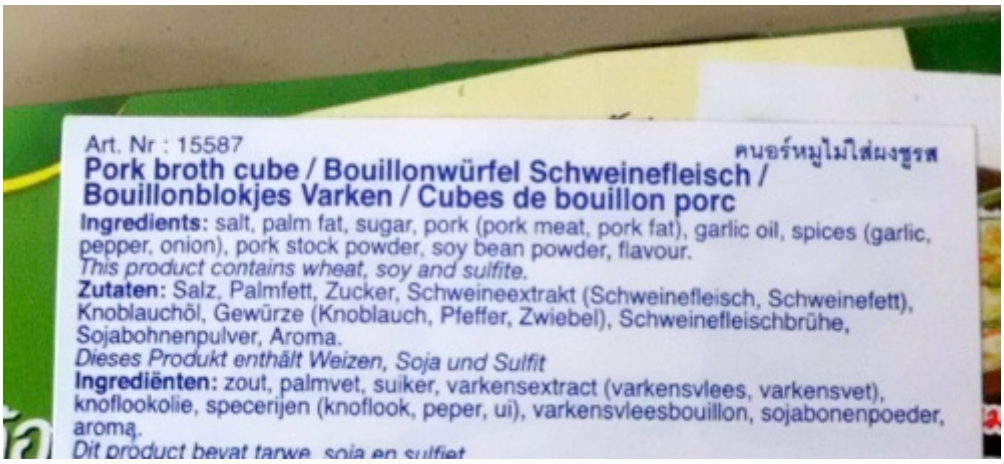


Image 56: Wipa's Asia Market: Ingredients label stock cubes

Obviously, Wipa chose to highlight the absence of MSG in these cubes via the inscription on the shelf label. She explains her addition of *ohne Glutamat* 'without MSG' through her knowledge of the health risks of MSG. Yet her use of a monolingual inscription in German here suggests that this information is projected in particular to her German-literate customers, who appear to be considerably more concerned about food safety and healthy alimentation in general and therefore also about MSG in Asian food products as compared to her Thai-literate clients.

To sum up, this example illustrates the general motivation behind a monolingual inscription in German on a shelf label, namely the presence of Thai and absence of German on the product packaging. German-literate customers require the inscription on the shelf label to identify the product, while her Thai customers have access to the information on

the packet. More than that, however, by choosing to add the prepositional phrase *ohne Glutamat* 'without MSG', Wipa demonstrates awareness of her customers' health concerns and potentially a greater interest by her German speaking clientele in issues of food content and safety. As in the previous example the inscription is not simply a translation but a strategy to accommodate her customer's concerns and preferences. While a monolingual inscription in German is fuelled by efforts to be more inclusive, the subsequent discussion shows that a monolingual inscription in Thai has the opposite effect.

7.1.2.5 Monolingual labels in Thai: Restricting access

Monolingual inscriptions in Thai are rare on the shelf labels in Wipa's store. The shelf label in Image 57 was placed on the inside of the fridge underneath a stack of transparent plastic containers filled with a red paste as shown in the same image. The inscription in Thai identifies the product as น้ำพริกคั่วมันกุ้ง 'roasted shrimp chilli paste'. Since the plastic containers lack any further product information, the use of Thai only suggests that the product is advertised to Wipa's Thai-literate community of customers.



Image 57: Wipa's Asia Market: Monolingual shelf label: Roasted shrimp chilli paste

In an anecdote recorded in the field notes, Wipa related that the proceeds of the sale of this paste were meant to support the visit of a Thai Buddhist monk. Using only an inscription in Thai on the label was thus a strategy to restrict access to the product to fellow Thai Buddhists who may have wanted to support the event. But Wipa gave another reason for regulating interest in the product via the use of Thai only. The paste is not commercially mass-produced, but it is home-made by herself. Due to the fact that the sale of such home-made products in her store may not be entirely legal, she chose a

monolingual inscription in Thai as a strategy to advertise the product to a community of clients that she largely knows well personally. While she is sure of the good quality of the product, its sale among the Thai immigrant community may be less likely to lead to an official complaint, should anything be wrong with the paste.

In summary, monolingual inscriptions on the shelf labels are used strategically by Wipa, but with contrasting objectives. Similar to a bilingual inscription, an inscription in German renders a product more accessible to her clients, because such a monolingual label is usually attached to a product that only features Thai on its packaging. But we have also shown that the monolingual German inscription is based on Wipa's knowledge of her customers' culinary preferences or concerns. On the other hand, a monolingual inscription in Thai on the shelf label aims to limit interest in the product to a specific subgroup of customers.

7.1.2.6 Summary

In this section we have shown that the action of explaining also exists in material form, or as a literacy product, in the form of shelf labels. Bilingual product descriptions and monolingual ones in German accommodate to the linguistic competences of her clients, in order to provide explanations that allow clients to identify the product appropriately. Yet, the examples illustrate that in doing so, Wipa crucially relies on her knowledge of the culinary preferences of her clients, their social characteristics, interests and inclinations, as well as the institutional demands of her business. Monolingual product descriptions in Thai, on the other hand, restrict the access to the product to her Thai literate clientele. In sum, the discussion illustrated that Wipa uses her literacy competence in Thai and German strategically for the production of the product description on these labels.

7.2 Ordering stock

The second core action in Wipa's business is obtaining the goods for sale. Wipa's associate Paul described the process of ordering stock as one of the most challenging learning points, when they started the business.

äh es gab dann auch anfangs bis man sich dran gewöhnt hatte auch sehr viel arbeit und äh konzentration überlegung und sortieren und bestellen vor allem bestellen was so alles gebraucht werden könnte, nicht nur thailändisch, indisch und (xxx) und äh das war schon äh ne tortur die ersten fünf sechs monate bis wir äh so alles im griff hatten uns dran gewöhnt haben. (Interview, Paul, 01:38:08)

uh there were then in the beginning until one got used too it also a lot of work and uh concentration contemplation and sorting out and ordering above all ordering what could all be needed, not only thai, indian and (xxx) and uh that was really uh a torture the first five six months until we uh were in control of it got used to it. (Interview, Paul, 01:38:08)

While studies on immigrant entrepreneurship in sociology suggest that immigrant business owners generally profit from co-ethnic ties in sustaining supply lines, few have looked in any detail at the process. This section aims to understand the chains of actions involved in obtaining stock for Wipa and how her language repertoire sustains or constrains the performance of the action. Let us first analyse the most important mediational means involved in ordering stock: the product catalogues as they are issued by Wipa's suppliers.

7.2.1 The action of ordering stock

For small retailers like Wipa the direct import of goods from Asia is not feasible, neither economically, nor in terms of workload or with respect to import trade regulations. In order to secure her goods, Wipa depends on various wholesale companies that specialize in the import of Asian food products. There are a number of such wholesale companies across Europe. Some are active in one country only, while others hold rights to sell their products across the European Union. Very often a wholesaler specializes in the import from certain Asian countries or holds exclusive import rights for particular brands. Therefore, retailers of Asian food products such as Wipa maintain customer accounts with several wholesale companies from whom they source their stock. Since Wipa is working on her own, she is not able to purchase the goods directly at the cash and carry warehouses, but she relies on wholesalers who provide the logistics as well, either through their in-house delivery fleet or through external logistics companies. This in turn means that Wipa must comply with certain delivery cycles and routes. Some wholesalers offer weekly deliveries, while others reach Wipa's store only every two weeks. Moreover, her order must meet a minimum amount that ranges between 600€ and 1000€, in order to save on any additional charges.

Wipa holds accounts with approximately eight different wholesale companies that are based in Germany and the Netherlands, but for her regular business she depends on mainly three (Wholesaler Batavia, Wholesaler Chin and Wholesaler Fresh Veggie). The primary tool through which these wholesalers present their products to her is through an

annually-printed product catalogue. The following images are excerpts of the entries of the different catalogues that Wipa uses.



Image 58: Wholesaler Malukan: Catalogue entry



Image 59: Wholesaler Batavia: Catalogue entry



Image 60: Wholesaler Kropok: Catalogue entry



Image 61: Wholesaler Nguyen: Catalogue entry



Image 62: Wholesaler Chin: Catalogue entry



Image 63: Wholesaler Fresh Veggie: Catalogue entry

A typical page in a product catalogue contains several of the entries displayed in Images 58 to 63. Like the shelf labels discussed in the previous section, a single entry is a complex semiotic aggregate (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2003), which comprises several units of information: Firstly, there is an image of the product, usually the most prominent element. Secondly, there are two sets of numerals. One indicates the article number, which is very often emphasized through size and position as in Image 59, or through colour as in Images 60 and 61. The other set of numerals refers to the size of a single unit, e.g. *24x220g* in

Image 62, which in this case means that a single order comprises 24 individual packets of tofu, each weighing 220g. Thirdly, there are at least two textual elements to each entry. One denotes the name of the producer, for instance in Image 1 *Jiang Fan* or in Image 2 *MAMA*. The other textual element is the description of the product. This can be either monolingual (as in Images 58 and 62) or multilingual (as in Images 59, 60, 61, and 62). The choice for a monolingual or a multilingual product description appears to be a form of recipient design (Sacks et al., 1974) to either the markets the companies are active in or to the repertoires of the clients that they attempt to reach. Similar to the choice of languages on commercial webpages, the choice of languages in the catalogues points to the wholesale companies' awareness of the linguistic repertoires of their customers (Yanaprasart et al., 2013).

Such an attempt to accommodate to the linguistic preferences of their prospective clients is mirrored in the other point of contact between wholesaler and retailer. Many wholesalers employ sales staff with language competencies that span across the spectrum of Asian languages and thus appear to be able to provide assistance in the supposedly preferred language of their clients. Wholesaler Chin, for example, emphasizes the ability to provide multilingual assistance, as the following quote from its website illustrates:

> Our multi-cultural marketing staff will be happy to advise you in English, German, Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Philippine or Sri Lankan. Orders can be made by phone, fax and online. (Wholesaler Chin, accessed 15 Oct 2014)

The subsequent analysis shall look at the practices of ordering stock at Wipa's shop in order to understand how Wipa deals with this array of languages based on her own multilingual repertoire. The aim is to examine how the tool of the catalogue is involved in the process and how the different languages in the descriptions of the product sustain or constrain the process.

However, before we commence the discussion, let us emphasize that just like the other actions described above, the action of obtaining stock is best described as a chain of actions that is composed of a series of smaller actions, such as <selecting products>, <completing the order form>, and <faxing the order form>. While these actions usually follow in succession, they do not always occur together in a single session of time, but are often spread out over the course of a day or several days. This is because the activity of ordering is embedded in other regular activities that go on in the shop. First I would like to analyse the action of selecting products to order.

7.2.2 Selecting products to order

We now want to zoom in on the action of <selecting products>. The selection process is determined by a variety of factors that we would like to examine in more detail. The analysis will show that selecting is based on routine and habit, that it is performed with the catalogue, and in interactions with the sales representative of the different suppliers, as well as customers. For all these constellations, we would like to focus on how language competence affects this action.

7.2.2.1 Selecting as a routine activity

The set of images shown in Image 64 below shows Wipa at the back of the store. From behind one of the freezers she is looking at the contents of the shelves and the cartons that are stacked on top of them. She carries with her a pen and a piece of paper. In this case, the paper is the order form from Wholesaler Batavia. Wipa completes the form in writing whenever she has checked the availability of a product on the shelves.



Image 64: Wipa's Asia Market: Routine selection

Wipa places her order with Wholesaler Fresh Veggie and Wholesaler Batavia every week. As mentioned above, she must place her order before a certain cut-off date determined by the wholesaler, which is usually a week in advance. Wholesaler Fresh Veggie delivers on a Tuesday, while Batavia does so on Wednesdays. Since Wipa places orders every week with these Wholesalers, the process of ordering has become a routine and repetitive activity in particular with respect to the popular items for sale in her store. This has an effect on the performance of the two first actions in the process of ordering stock. Selecting the products that she wants to order requires the scanning of the shelves in her store and the completion of the order form, as Image 64 shows. It is then done on the spot without consulting the product catalogue. Since Wipa does neither have an inventory

system (e.g. an electronic software), nor storage facilities on site, she relies primarily on her experience (or historical body).

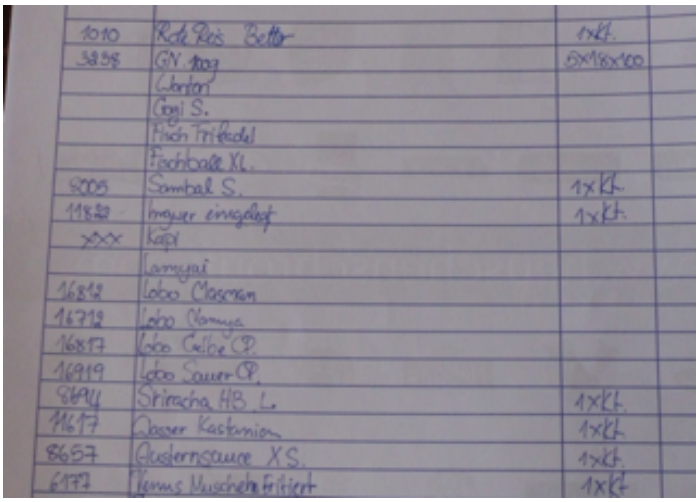


Image 65: Wipa's Asia Market: Incomplete order for Wholesaler Batavia

Image 65 above presents the result of the routine selection process for Wholesaler Batavia. The order form primarily contains the names of the products in the centre, but lacks some of the product numbers in the column on the left. Similarly, the column that requires Wipa to complete the unit size on the right hand side is also largely blank. During such routine orders, Wipa thus selects a product by inspecting the remainder of the stock on the shelves, and then completes the centre column containing the names of the products on the spot. Only after that she consults the catalogue to complete the article numbers and the unit size. As Wipa related to me, for very popular products she already knows the details by heart and therefore does not use the product catalogue at all.

7.2.2.2 Selecting with catalogues

Besides ordering by routine and habit, Wipa also choses products by browsing through the product catalogues. For the purpose of this study, the question arises to what degree the product descriptions in the catalogues are relevant in this action. Image 66 below shows Wipa behind her service counter, while she is flicking through a product catalogue. Other product catalogues are stacked in a pile in front of her on the counter. She is taking notes on a piece of paper while filing through the pages of one of the catalogues.

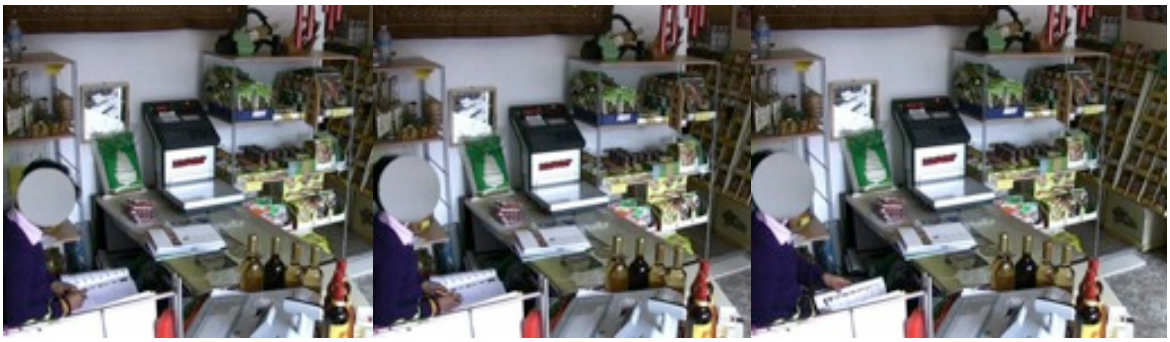


Image 66: Wipa's Asia Market: Selecting with catalogue

Since the entries in the product catalogues provide different information units and use different multilingual strategies when it comes to the product descriptions, I became interested in the elements in the catalogues Wipa pays attention to when selecting a product. In addition, I was wondering whether the choice of the companies for a monolingual or multilingual product description shapes Wipa's choice. At several stages, I therefore tried to put Wipa on the spot after she had completed the order, and I would ask her which of the different pieces of information in the entries of the product catalogues were the most salient for her and why. With respect to the product descriptions, Wipa said the following:

ich kuck gar nit auf die schrift, ich kenn dat von die bilder. (EEWA_100713_005700)

I don't look at the writing, I know it from the images. (EEWA_100713_005700)

Her statement suggests that the product description is only of marginal importance when selecting the product. Instead the image, which is also the most salient unit in the product entry, catches her attention. However, the statement reveals another important issue in the selection process. It is not only the image, but her familiarity with the product that is crucial, something that is stressed through the verb in the second part of her statement above: *ich kenn dat von die bilder* 'I know it from the images'. The conceptual knowledge about the products in the catalogues can be seen to be a type of knowledge that is particularly accessible to her through her upbringing in Asia and her familiarity with the ingredients in Asian cooking. Access to this type of knowledge provides her with expert knowledge in the process of ordering that others without her background do not have. This interpretation is supported by an anecdote that her brother-in-law and former business associate Paul shared with me during his interview. He describes that in the early days of the business, when he had to take charge of the ordering himself for the time

that Wipa was away on holiday, he experienced difficulties, due to his lack of familiarity with the products and the demands of the customers.

da hab ich einmal teig für frühlingsrollen bestellt aber mit zwiebeln eingeknetet. das hat natürlich keiner gekauft. nicht mal thai frauen. da war sie grad im urlaub. (Interview, Paul, 01:55:40)

once I ordered dough for spring rolls, but with onions inside. naturally no one bought that. not even the thai women. this is when she was on holiday. (Interview, Paul, 01:55:40)

We can assume that this unsuccessful attempt at ordering the dough did not spring from his lack of language competence only, but was to a significant extent due to his lack of conceptual knowledge, as well as his unfamiliarity with the demands of clients. On the other hand, Wipa knows which kinds of products are suitable, because she possesses the necessary experience and culinary skills. Therefore, the image suffices for her to select an item. However, Wipa mentions that besides her familiarity with the product, and therefore the image, another information unit included in the product descriptions is particularly relevant: the unit size.

The unit size of the product is, as we have seen above, always given in a numerical format, e.g. *40x150 Gr.* (Image 58), *90 x 55 g* (Image 59). As briefly commented above, the unit size indicates how many single items are contained in one order. With reference to Image 58 above, *40x150 Gr.* means that each single package of *Instant Natural Seaweed* weighs 150g, but one unit comprises 40 individual packets. This information is important for Wipa, because based on the unit size she is able to ascertain whether ordering the product makes economic sense. The following example illustrates this predicament for Wipa in actual practice.

ich bin wie sagt man das sehr naiv, manchmal früher, bestell ich sachen, egal wat die kunden sagt bestell ich, un dann steh ich da mit so abgelaufene sachen ne? jo. un dann lern ich dann nein zu sagen, weil dat mein geld is dann. (EEWA_020913_013759)

I am how do you say very naive, sometimes before, I order stuff, doesn't matter what the customers say I order, and then I am left with those spoiled/bad products right? yep. and then I learn to say no then, because this is my money then. (EEWA_020913_013759)

Her quote clearly stresses the economic considerations for inspecting closely the unit size for each product in the product catalogue before selecting it for ordering. Interesting is also that Wipa stresses that she had to learn about the significance of the unit size by trial and error, and ultimately by losing money. Moreover, her quote illustrates the impact that these circumstances have on her encounters with clients: *un dann lern ich dann nein zu sagen* 'and then I learn to say no then'. The following extract shows the fruits of this learning process in action.

Figure 93: Explaining absence 'oyster sauce in canister' (EEWA_130515_004641(9a))

WIP = Wipa
MC = Male customer

01	WIP	**hallo guten tag bitte schön,**
		hello good day can I help you,
02	MC	**ich such die nudelnsoße im kanister.**
		I'm looking for the noodle sauce in a canister.
03	WIP	**nein kanister hama nix nee, ((WIP shakes head))**
		no kanister we don't have any no,
04	MC	**mhm.**
		mhm.
05	WIP	**gar nix nee.**
		nothing no.
06	MC	**krinn da die gar nimme?**
		you don't get them anymore?
07	WIP	**äh muss ma bestellen,**
		uh have to order,
08		**aber das sin drei oder vier kanister in einer karton,**
		but there are three or four canisters in one box,
09		**ich krieg sie nicht weg.**
		I can't sell them.

In this example, a male customer enters and asks for noodle sauce in line 2 of the transcript: *ich such die nudelnsoße im kanister.* 'I'm looking for the noodle sauce in a canister'. The product the man refers to is oyster sauce, a very popular sauce in Thai cooking, which is very often used to prepare egg noodle dishes. His reference to *kanister* 'canister' means that he was looking for the oyster sauce in a large plastic container that holds 5l of the sauce. Wipa used to sell this product, but stopped doing so. In the interaction above, Wipa responds negatively to the clients problem statement and provides two reasons for why she does not order this product anymore: the unit size (line 8: *drei oder vier kanister in einer karton,* 'three or four canisters in one box,') and the lack of demand (line 9: *ich krieg sie nicht weg.* 'I can't sell them.'). This example illustrate how Wipa's managerial experience shapes also her interactions with customers.

It may also be significant to remark that ethnic solidarity does not seem to change Wipa's economic considerations in this particular case. After the man had left, Wipa told me that his wife is Thai and that she knows her personally. She mentioned that she had not seen her for some time due to the lady's illness. She expressed sympathy for the lady, but this personal connection did not change her mind about the order. Wipa even pulled out the product catalogue again to confirm that ordering the canisters really does not pay.

These examples stress that when selecting products, the image and the unit size, and ultimately the price, are the salient pieces of information that Wipa focuses on. However, the example above has pointed to another possible constellation in the process of the action of selecting with the catalogue. Selecting a product at times involves the active participation of the client. In the following example an Indonesian lady is looking

for a particular type of anchovies that Wipa does not have in her store, but which is popular in Indonesian and Malay cooking. Wipa then turns to the catalogue and spreads it out on the service counter, so that both of them are able to browse through it. In this case they used the catalogue of Wholesaler Malukan, where all product descriptions are in English. Unfortunately, I was unable to retrieve the original page in the catalogue as an image, but the product that Wipa and her client refer to in the example below was described as: *Anchovy (Headless)*.

Figure 94: Selecting with customer & catalogue (EEWA_1901213_010003)

WIP = Wipa
FC = Female customer

01	FC	**oder hier der auch geht.**
		or here this also works.
02		**anchovy an-,**
		anchovy an-,
03	WIP	**der is bisschen größer?**
		this one is a little bigger?
04	FC	**ja nicht kleiner ne?**
		yes not smaller right?
05 ->	WIP	**dat is headless.**
		this is headless.
06 ->		**headless äh is ohne kopf dann [ne?]**
		headless uh is without head then [okay?]
07	FC	**[ja?]**
		[yes?]
08		**holma die do.**
		we'll take these.
09	WIP	**diese hier headless moment?**
		those headless a moment?

For routine orders, product descriptions in the catalogue appear to be less salient, as described above. Yet when selecting a product together with a customer, these descriptions may become the centre of attention. Interestingly in this example, it is Wipa's English competence that seems to play a part in FC's selection. In line 5, Wipa orients to the description and apparently reads it out *dat is headless.* 'this is headless.' In her next turn, she provides a translation into German: *headless äh is ohne kopf dann [ne?]* 'headless uh is without head then [okay?]'. At this moment, Wipa's translation can be interpreted as an effort to accommodate to the language that she and her client use in their interaction and therefore to facilitate the choice of her client. FC's subsequent turns in lines 7 and 8, when she makes the selection, at least suggest so. Nevertheless, I am unable to further corroborate this interpretation, as I did not have access to the client's linguistic repertoire.

In this section we have discussed how the catalogues as mediational means are involved in the process of selecting products. We have shown that the linguistic units in

the catalogues are not the most salient pieces of information, but they may become the focus of attention in selecting products together with customers. Let us now turn to another constellation in the selection process: the interaction between owner and sales representative.

7.2.2.3 Selecting with sales representatives

The action of selecting a product is not only done with the catalogues, but also involves interactions with the sales representatives of the wholesalers. Only with one of her three principle wholesalers, Wholesaler Chin, Wipa interacts in Thai. With the other contact persons at the remaining two main suppliers, Wholesaler Batavia and Wholesaler Fresh Veggie, Wipa interacts in German. Wipa's competence in both languages, German and Thai, is consequently important to sustain her access to her main wholesalers. Let us now see how the direct contact to the wholesalers affects the process of the selecting and ordering.

Wholesaler Batavia is based in the Netherlands and the sales representative that Wipa is assigned to at the company is a Dutch national. Wipa interacts with this sales representative in German and she refers to him by his first name, Arijen. The following example illustrates how the personal contact to the sales representative influences Wipa's choice of selecting a product. Wipa recounts that Wholesaler Batavia advertised brown sugar as a special deal in a fax that was sent to her. Because the price seemed attractive and because Wipa did not have any brown sugar in stock, but her experience told her that that certain clients might be interested, Wipa was considering to take up the order. However, as she was not completely sure, she contacted Arijen directly to seek his council regarding his company's special offer. She related to me that a phone conversation with Arijen dissuaded her from selecting the product, because he helped her determine the selling price per unit, which ultimately seemed too high.

der arijen hat gesagt, bestell keine so ne, deswegen is das so günstig aber, schon günstig, noch fast zwei euro, pro päckchen ein päckchen 250g, weil das auch noch v- viel ne? der preis is ziemlich hoch, (EEWA_090213_011213)

arjien said, don't order those right, because it is a convenient price but, actually convenient, still two eruos, per pack one pack 250g, because that still m-much right? the price is pretty high, (EEWA_090213_011213)

Her account of this incident indicates that it was her positive relationship to the sales representative built up through her competence in German that allowed her to take the decision not to order the sugar.

However, Wipa's competence in Thai is also a useful tool in the selection process. Wipa's contact person at Wholesaler Chin, Fanny, is a Thai national, who Wipa was introduced to before Fanny started work at the company. Wipa told me that Fanny is married to one of Wholesaler Chin's delivery drivers and Wipa met her personally, when she accompanied her husband on one of his delivery tours. Later on Fanny started as a sales person at Wholesaler Chin and became Wipa's primary personal contact there. The following extract is taken from a telephone conversation between Wipa and Fanny and it shows them involved in a negotiation over product prices while making use of the catalogue and the article numbers to refer to the products.

Figure 95: Selecting with sales representative (EEWA_210313_010508)

WIP = Wipa
SR = Sales representative (Fanny)

01	WIP	**ah** ของฝ่ายอันนี้ราคาเท่าไหร่ ห้าศูนย์หกศูนย์ศูนย์เจ็ด
		uh and how much for this one five zero six zero zero seven
		(3.0)
02	SR	แป๊ปนึงนะคะ
		just a moment please
		(3.0)
03	SR	ห้าศูนย์หกศูนย์ศูนย์เจ็ด
		five zero six zero zero seven
04	WIP	**aha**
		uhu
05 ->	SR	ปกติอยู่ที่ สามสองแปด
		normally it's three two eight
06 ->		แต่ฝ่ายลดให้อีก
		but give you discount
07 ->		สองยูโรแปดสิบสองค่ะ
		so its two euro eighty-two
		(2.0)
08	WIP	**okay** งั้นยังไม่เอาค่ะ **((laughs))**
		okay if it's like that I don't want ((laughs))
09	SR	ขอบคุณมาก **((laughs)**
		thanks a lot ((laughs))
10		มันแพงไปใช่ไหม
		is it too expensive right?
11	WIP	ปกติเขาขายกันเท่าไหร่อ่ะ
		how much does he usually sell it for
12		ตลกมากเลย
		it's so funny
13		ราคามันสูง ใช่
		price so high right?
14		**ähm** งั้นโอเค
		uhm like that okay
15		เรียบร้อย
		it's done

In line 1, Wipa draws Fanny's attention to a particular product and asks for the purchase price. Since the prices of the products fluctuate due to the import/export regulations and the changing currency rates, the catalogues never indicate the prices explicitly. Prices are usually faxed to shop owners on a monthly basis or, as in the example above, can be obtained through the sales representative. In line 5, Fanny indicates the price, 3.28€, but then offers Wipa a discount of 0.48€ in turn 7, which Wipa first jokingly refuses but in the

end, in lines 14 and 15, willingly accepts. What we do not like to suggest with this example is that Wipa receives a more favourable treatment by Fanny, because they are both Thais and are able to negotiate in Thai. In order to draw this conclusion, we simply do not have enough empirical evidence. However, the conclusion that can be drawn is that firstly, like in the example above, Wipa's competence in Thai makes this constellation possible. Secondly, the personal contact to the sales representative also has an influence on the ordering process, because through the relationship that she maintains with Fanny, Wipa is able to create for herself more favourable conditions.

In conclusion, the action of selecting products is multifaceted and involves a number of different constellations. Wipa selects from the catalogue based on her knowledge of the product and considerations of economic sensibility. Selecting a product may also be done on demand together with a customer. And lastly, Wipa relies on the council, recommendation, and a positive personal relationships with the sales representative to make her choices about which products to order. In the process her language competencies allow her different routes of access and ultimately influence the action of selecting positively.

7.2.3 Completing the order form

In this section, we would like to examine the action of <completing the order form>, which presents the last crucial step before the order is placed. In the case of Wipa's three principle wholesalers, only Wholesaler Batavia provides an actual template, while Wholesaler Chin and Wholesaler Fresh Veggie accept handwritten order forms, which Wipa compiles on standard pieces of A4-size paper from an ordinary notepad. Images 67 to 69 show samples of completed order forms.

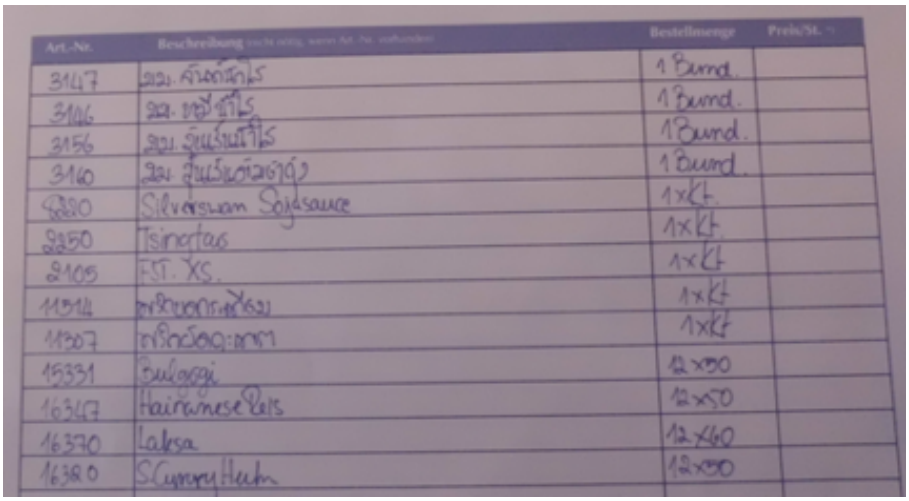


Image 67: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Batavia: Completed order form

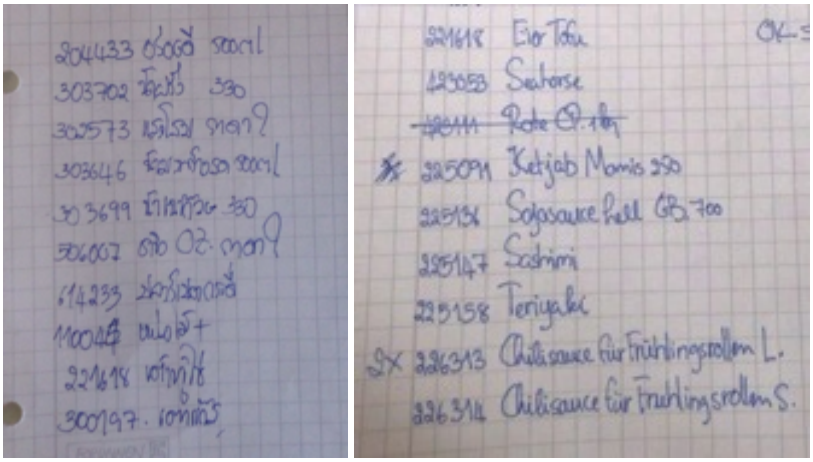


Image 68: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Chin: Completed order forms

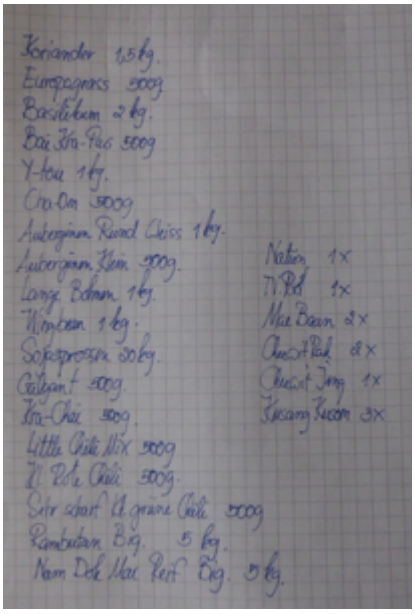


Image 69: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Fresh Veggies: Completed order form

What is striking about these order forms and what raised my interest in these documents during my fieldwork was the fact that both German and Thai, but also English, were used in apparently random fashion for the product descriptions. The aim of this section is thus to understand the role that these product descriptions and ultimately the languages play in the production of this document and the action of ordering more generally.

Let us first look in detail at the elements that are present on the order forms. While we presented the order form briefly above, we want to take a closer look at them now to understand the similarities and differences. Wholesaler Batavia's order form (Image 67) provides an insight into the units of information that are generally present. From left to right, the form prompts Wipa to put down the article number, a description of the product, and the unit size. Images 68 and 69 suggest that Wipa follows roughly the same structure in her self-designed order forms for Wholesalers Chin and Fresh Veggie. A quick glance over the product descriptions on these order forms reveals that Wipa uses two different types of scripts: Latin and Thai. Wholesaler Fresh Veggie's order is completely in Latin script, while the order forms for Wholesaler Chin and Wholesaler Batavia use both. The scripts represent a number of languages, e.g. Thai script is used for Thai (Image 70), Latin script for English and German (Image 71), or Thai (Image 72):

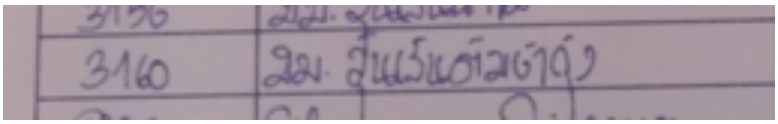


Image 70: Wipa's Asia Market: Entry order form Wholesaler Batavia (Glass noodles in Tom Yam Soup)

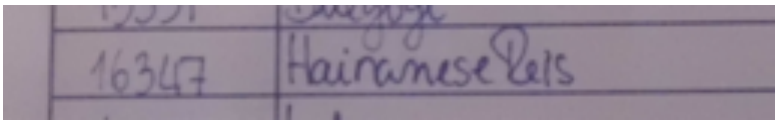


Image 71: Wipa's Asia Market: Entry order form Wholesaler Batavia: Hainanese (English), Reis (German)

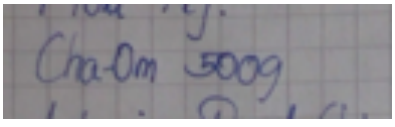


Image 72: Wipa's Asia Market: Entry order form Wholesaler Chin (Cha-Om)

Faced with such an array of scripts and languages, two questions arise: What determines this variety? Does this variety affect the overall action of ordering stock in any way?

In order to determine the first question, we need to look at the catalogues and the matching product descriptions, in order to determine whether these may have influenced Wipa's language choice on the order form. In order to do so, we want to compare selected product descriptions with their representations on the order forms.



Image 73: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Batavia catalogue and order form entry

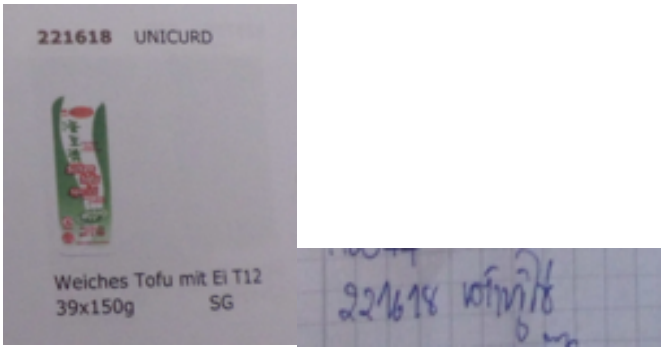


Image 74: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Chin catalogue and order form entry

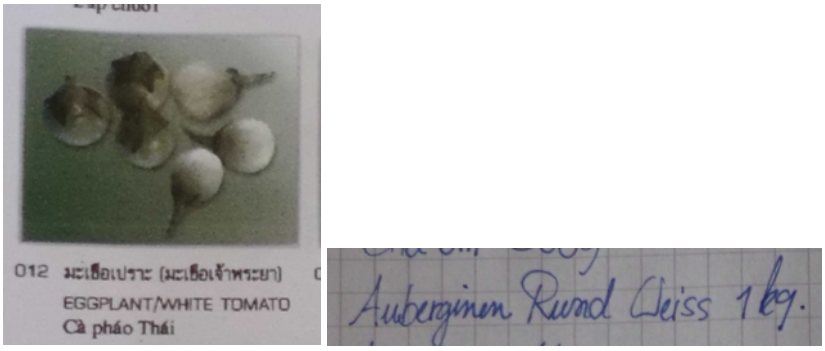


Image 75: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Fresh Veggie catalogue and order form entry

Each example suggests a case of language alternation with respect to the product description during the process of resemiotization, or the change of medium, from the catalogue to the order form. What was in English and German in the Batavia catalogue appears in Thai on Wipa's order form (Image 73). What was German in Wholesaler Chin's catalogue is now in Thai on the order form (Image 74), and what was printed in Thai,

English, and Vietnamese in Wholesaler Fresh Veggies catalogue is changed into German (Image 75). Contemporary approaches to multilingualism have developed a variety of concepts to describe the fluid use of communicative forms. Concepts such as translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2013), metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) or languaging (Juffermans, forthcoming) emphasize that the products of linguistic variability must be explained within the practices that these resources are employed in, taking into account the repertoires of the speakers, as well as the social and historical circumstances. Let us now focus in particular on those latter circumstances that give rise to the multilingualism with respect to the product descriptions on these order forms.

Firstly the linguistic variation is explained by the fact, that the article number is the most important piece of information that Wipa must pass on to the wholesaler. The product description is thus only of secondary importance and only assumes prominence when the article number is wrong or missing. Wipa recounts an example of an order with Wholesaler Batavia, where she accidentally forgot to include the article number of a product and, in addition, she had used the Thai name of the product written in Latin script. Subsequently her contact person at Wholesaler Batavia, Arijen, called her to clarify her order, as he was not able to make sense of Wipa's entry.

ich hab gestern bei Wholesaler Batavia den fax geschickt ne? zehn minuten später ruft der arijen, Wipa, ich hab dann schon gelacht ne? ich weiß was kommt. ich hab die kundennummer gar nicht geschrieben, ich hab nur einfach so gefaxt, un eine artikel, hab ich die artikelnummer gar nicht geschrieben? aber auf thailändisch in deutsch geschrieben dann ne? bananenblätter. was ist das bai dtaawng. bai dtaawng willst du das haben? ((laughs)) (EEWA_150513_013050(T8a))

yesterday I sent the fax to Wholesaler Batavia right? ten minutes later arijen calls, Wipa, I was already laughing right? I know what is to come. I didn't write the client number, I only faxed like that, and one article, I didn't write the article number? but wrote in thai in german then right? banana leaves. what is that bai dtaawng. bai dtaawng do you want that? ((laughs)) (EEWA_150513_013050(T8a))

This anecdote shows that the recipient of the order form focuses primarily on the article number to make sense of the order. The language used for the product description becomes relevant, only if the article number is absent. The following transcript of a phone call between Wipa and Fanny again illustrates the salience of the article number in completing the action of ordering. Wipa called Fanny in order to add a couple of items to her list of products which she had faxed the day before. Throughout this excerpt, as well as for the whole stretch of the interaction not represented here, the products were exclusively referred to in terms of the article number.

Figure 96: Ordering with sales representative (EEWA_130321_010508)

WIP = Wipa
SR = Sales representative

01	**WIP**	**Fanny** งั้นพี่ทำ **Nachbestellung** เลยนะฝ้าย
		Fanny I want to do post order now ok?
02	**SR**	ค่ะ
		yes
03	**WIP**	**okay**
		okay
04		งั้น สองศูนย์สี่สี่สามสาม
		in that case two zero four four three three
		(3.0)
05	**SR**	สองศูนย์สี่สี่สามสาม
		two zero four four three three
		(1.0)
06	**WIP**	มันราคาเท่าไหร่คะตอนนี้
		how much is it at the moment?
07	**SR**	ไม่มีเลยค่ะ
		don't have at the moment
08		กะทิห้าร้อยไม่มีเหลือเลย
		coconut milk five hundred is none left
09	**WIP**	**hu:**
		hu:
10	**SR**	ไม่มีเข้ามาเลยค่ะ
		none is coming in
		(1.5)
11	**WIP**	**okay** สามศูนย์สามเจ็ดศูนย์สอง
		okay three zero three seven zero two

These examples demonstrate that Wipa may use any of the linguistic resources in her repertoire freely when completing the product descriptions on the order forms for Wholesaler Batavia and Wholesaler Chin, because she can rest assured that as long as she has used the correct article number, her order will be compiled appropriately and to her satisfaction.

However, this does not explain the language choice on the order form for Wholesaler Fresh Veggie. We have seen above that the catalogue provided by Wholesaler Fresh Veggie shows the greatest variety in terms of languages used for the product descriptions, namely English, Thai and Vietnamese. However, on Wipa's order form all product descriptions are in German, a language that is not featured at all in the catalogue. Likewise, all the products in Wholesaler Fresh Veggie's catalogue come with article numbers. However, on Wipa's order form none of the article numbers appear. So a number of questions arises: Why did Wipa not follow the standard pattern with this particular supplier? Why are the article numbers completely absent? Why does she use German for the product descriptions, when none of the descriptions in the catalogue are in German? Where do they come from? The answers to these questions has a historical dimension and can be explained in terms of routine experience and practice built up over the years in her historical body.

As briefly mentioned above, Wholesaler Fresh Veggie is based in Germany and, according to Wipa, it is managed and owned by a German couple. I was able to witness several phone calls between Wipa and either the company's sales representative or the delivery driver, and indeed the language used in all these instances was exclusively German. Wipa has been a long-standing customer with Wholesaler Fresh Veggie. During one of my last observation sessions at the store, Wipa presented to me the supplier's old catalogue that she had used for many years in the past, before Wholesaler Veggie produced the current version in colour and with images of the vegetables. Image 76 below shows an excerpt of this old catalogue.



7	GALANGAWURZEL	
8	KURKUMAWURZEL	CU NGHE
9	KACHAIWURZEL	CU NGAI THAI
10	ZITRONEN DICKSCHALIG	
11	ZITRONENBLÄTTER	
12	AUBERGINEN RUND WEISS	CA PHAO
12-1	AUBERGINEN GELB	CA PHAO VANG
12-2	AUBERGINEN OVAL	CA PHAO TIM
12-3	AUBERGINEN VIOLETT	CA PHAO TRANG
12-4	AUBERGINEN STREIFEN	CA PHAO SAC
13	AUBERGINEN KLEIN	CU NOT AO
14	DUFTBLÄTTER	LA DUA
15	BETALBLÄTTER	LA TRAU
		TRAI CAU

Image 76: Wipa's Asia Market: Wholesaler Veggie: Old catalogue

There are no images featured in this old version and the product names appear in German in the central column and in Vietnamese on the right. Since Wipa has been ordering her vegetables from this company for more than ten years, she said that she still referred to this old list to compile her order form, even though she uses the images in the new catalogue as a reference when choosing the products. So while her choice for German can be explained by a long-standing habit and practice, it still does not explain why she leaves out the article numbers completely, given the fact that these numbers are of such crucial importance to place orders with her other two suppliers. To sufficiently answer this question, we need to understand what it is that Wipa values above all about a supplier: reliability.

Instead of ethnic solidarity and trust or the prospects of attaining low prices and discounts on orders, Wipa seems to choose a supplier primarily based on the level of

reliability and transparency of the service. A positive relationship between her and a wholesaler is fostered when problems during the process of ordering can be ironed out in her favour. For example, Wipa complains that some suppliers deliver wrong, faulty or spoilt goods that she is not able to exchange after the delivery and it may be impossible to obtain a refund. In the following account, she explained what happened when she had to order vegetables with another wholesaler in the past.

die gemüse war alles kaputt un so ne? dafür ich bekomm ganze gutschrift zurück, mit ganze kaufpreis nein, ich hab nur fünf prozent zurück bekommen, die ausgabe wo ich ausgegeben habe für gemüse zweimal, war fast dreihundert euro. (EEWA_090213_000300)

the vegetables were all bad and that right? for that I get a complete refund, with the whole purchasing preis no, I only got back five percent, the expenses that I spent for vegetables twice, was almost three hundred euros. (EEWA_090213_000300)

Such negative experiences with delivery practices that work against her obviously foster a feeling in Wipa that she is not really valued as a customer. Therefore, it is important for Wipa that the conditions for an after-sales support are to her favour. This means that she is either able to return wrong or faulty orders without a problem or that she is able to obtain a full refund. Another problem with ordering stock that Wipa mentioned was a problem with the catalogues and the article numbers.

aber es gibt manche firma, besonders bei asiatische firma so wie bei [NAME OF COMPANY] ne? [NAME OF COMPANY] [NAME OF COMPANY], die haben zwar viel bilder gezeichnet, aber die artikel gibt nicht mehr, gibt stattdessen was anderes, du bestell dieser in diese katalog, kommt was ander, oh nee die nummer hab ich aber richtig geschrieben, ja aber wat haste dann bekommen ne? solche sachen dat gibt auch. (EEWA_090213_000300)

but there some company, especially asian company like [NAME OF COMPANY] right? [NAME OF COMPANY] [NAME OF COMPANY], they have a lot of pictures drawn, but the articles are not available anymore, instead there is something different, you order this in this catalogue, something else arrive, oh no but I wrote the number correctly, yes but what did you receive right? those things also happen. (EEWA_090213_000300)

Wipa's statement illustrates how article numbers may actually cause problems that affect the smooth and correct process of ordering. Just like receiving faulty goods, receiving wrong items affect Wipa's sale and therefore also her perception of the supplier negatively. In other words, the supplier is judged as unreliable. Ultimately, this also answers our question of why Wipa does not use the article numbers on the order form for Wholesaler Fresh Veggie. As she told me during an observation session: the article numbers provided in the catalogue are simply too similar and therefore may lead to problems with her order.

ich schreib nur die name von (.) gemüse. ... weil (.) die nummern fast gleich dann ne? wenn sie eine haben vergessen oder falsch geschrieben, dann kommt andere nummer. (EEWA_080513_035021)

I only write the name of (.) vegetable. ... because (.) the number almost the same then right? if you have forgotten one or spelled wrongly, then another number comes. (EEWA_080513_035021)

7.2.4 Summary

The second core action at Wipa's Asia Market of 'ordering stock' comprises two important lower-level actions, which we examined in more detail in this section in order to understand how Wipa's language competence mediates these actions. The discussion has shown that the action of <selecting products> is accomplished in different constellations which does not always involve the direct use of the product catalogue, which wholesalers produce to present their goods to Wipa. It is based on routine experience and habit built up through the repeated performance and the regular demand of her clients. It also involves interactions with customers and the sales representatives. In order to sustain these constellations Wipa does draw on her competence in German and Thai, but selecting a product crucially rests on her consideration of economic sense. When Wipa selects products from the catalogues, she tends not to focus on the product descriptions that are often multilingual, but she concentrates on the images and, most crucially, the unit size, which again carries economic implications. While <completing the order form> can be a multilingual literacy practice, the analysis has shown that it is only so, because the product descriptions are not the most salient features for the wholesaler to process the order. Here the article numbers and the unit size are the most relevant. However, the analysis also shows that completing the order form rests on Wipa's historical experiences and is shaped by them. She adjusts her practice, so that she can be certain to obtain the goods she desires. Ultimately, economic sensibility and reliability of service are the guiding principles that shape the practice of ordering stock, and not notions of ethnic reliability or trust.

7.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the two core actions at Wipa's Asia Market: the action of explaining in sales encounters and on shelf labels, as well as the action of ordering stock. Like in the previous chapters, the aim was to understand the ways the resources in Wipa's linguistic repertoire shape the performance of these actions.

The first finding is that in contrast to the core actions at Kanita's and Patcharin's businesses, Wipa relies more heavily on both German and Thai to perform these actions, which is due to the types of interaction orders she enters with her clients and suppliers.

Her competence in German and Thai allow Wipa to accommodate to the preferences of her interlocutors.

The analysis of the explanations that Wipa provides in sales encounters show that Wipa is not only able to attune linguistically to the preferences of her customers, but that she also adapts to the cultural and culinary backgrounds of her clients. Her familiarity with her clients' preferences and her competence in German and Thai allow her to respond competently to their expressed demands, but also to offer unsolicited explanations, which, as we have argued, build customer loyalty that is reflected on her balance sheet at the end of the month. Likewise, the product descriptions that she produces on bilingual shelf labels in German and Thai, as well as on monolingual labels in German, show evidence of her efforts to accommodate linguistically and culturally to her clients.

The analysis of the other core action of ordering stock showed that Wipa also relies on both German and Thai. However, the accomplishment of this action does not always depend on language as a mediational means. While her bilingual competence opens up access to different wholesalers, the lower-level actions of selecting products and completing the order form rely less on language competence.

While we were not able to trace language learning processes in situ, we can deduce that language learning for Wipa has gone hand in hand with developing the professional identity that she imagines for herself. Her register of German cooking vocabulary is extensive and has been built together with her affinity for cooking and her professional practice of selling food. This competence thus allows her to position herself towards her customers as a trusted expert, which sets her apart from competitors.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

In this thesis, we have attempted to take a closer look at the issue of language competence and self-employment of immigrants in Germany against the background of public discourses suggesting that a lack of German competence curtails the opportunities and the success of immigrant business owners and that an advanced level of standard literacy in German is crucial not only in setting up and managing the daily demands of the business, but also in ensuring its sustainability by providing access to a wider and possibly more affluent client base.

In order to investigate these issues empirically, we focused on three small businesses operated by first-generation female Thai immigrants in the federal state of Saarland: a large Thai massage salon run by Kanita, a small Thai massage salon managed by Patcharin, and a food retail store owned by Wipa. Each of these businesses presented a typical immigrant business according to the sociological literature reviewed in chapter 2, because each store made commercially available skills or products directly connected to the owners' cultural background. Three reasons justified the focus on businesses by Thai immigrants within the geographical confines of the federal state of Saarland: firstly, businesses by members of the Thai community had recently flourished, a fact that had received some attention by the local media but relatively little by political and public stakeholders. Secondly, statistical evidence indicated that Thai migrants in Germany turn overproportionally to self-employment. And thirdly, because of the small size of the Thai community in Germany and their geographical distribution across the country, businesses operated by Thais have to be established in an open market targeting the majority population. We drew on research on workplace communication in applied linguistics to illustrate and emphasize the importance of language competence for the accomplishment and coordination of work, as well as learning at work. While few studies had concentrated on the linguistic aspect of self-employment previously, research on immigrant businesses suggested that the workplace practices necessitated the use of the owners' multilingual repertoires and that these routines presented possible sites for language learning. A review of the literature on learning at work and second language socialization pointed to the significance of learning in practice, or informal learning, and the level of individual engagement in the process. Based on these preliminaries, we attempted to find out about the pathways that led these three women into self-employment and how these pathways

shaped and were shaped by their linguistic repertoires. We then examined the key workplace practices in detail to ascertain how the participants' language competencies affected the execution of their work. The analysis also addressed common challenges that the workers faced and the strategies that they developed to overcome them. In the following sections, we would like to present the main results of the study, put them in perspective with regards to the literature reviewed in the first part of the thesis, and provide suggestions as to the implications of the research.

8.1 Main results

8.1.1 Pathways into self-employment

Kanita's, Patcharin's and Wipa's biographical trajectories into self-employment showed that all had gathered professional experiences before their migration to Germany. These careers added linguistic resources to their repertoires or, in the case of Wipa, language learning shaped their occupational pathways. For the three participants migration to Germany was a consequence of their marriage to a German national. Apart from affective reasons, their emigration from Thailand was generally motivated by the prospects of realising better futures for themselves and their families. However, this move entailed for all of them a hiatus of their professional careers, which was to a significant extent due to linguistic reasons, because neither Kanita, Patcharin, nor Wipa arrived in Germany with any competence in the German language.

Informal learning or learning in practice was heralded as the most effective form of appropriating German as a resource into their repertoires. Their accounts of their learning processes pointed to a number of relevant factors in line with established findings on informal learning and second language socialization (c.f. Barton & Lee, 2013). First, learning German was supported by building on their existing language knowledge, in particular English. Their prior learning and use of English for professional reasons aided the appropriation of German orality and literacy. A second factor was their individual engagement and their reflexivity invested in the learning process. The participants attested to having resorted to self-study of grammar and vocabulary with materials brought from Thailand. Moreover, they sought deliberate exposure to German through the use of media, such as watching television shows and reading newspapers,

which provided them with access to communicative forms in German that could then be clarified with the help of their partners. A third factor, was their engagement with native speakers in activities towards which they had or developed a liking. These practices were either their previous professional practices, for example, Thai massage for Patcharin, or those that they developed in their new home and finally into their future work, for example in Wipa's case, her interest in cooking. These efforts did not result in equal levels of proficiency in German, but all three participants entered self-employment with different levels of competence: Kanita had minimal competence, Patcharin partial competence, and Wipa maximum competence in German. A final factor that had a bearing on their appropriation of German were the business identities that they claimed for themselves and which defined their key workplace practices. The findings therefore suggest a strong link between second language learning and workplace practice. Ultimately, engagement in self-employed work developed positive intrinsic motivation for all three participants to appropriate German and their workplaces constituted the sites were these linguistic skills could be practiced and developed.

Four factors were found to be particularly conducive to the successful establishment of their businesses. Firstly, their commercial endeavours were based on previous professional expertise that they either developed before or after their migration to Germany. Secondly, all three owners built their businesses around a growing demand for their services among the majority population. This awareness resulted from their socialization into the new community but also a growing level of receptiveness among Germans to the products they supply, for example, the popularity of wellness treatments or the growing interest in Asian cultures and culinary arts. Yet, thirdly, the owners adapted their services to the requirements of their customers. These alterations render their services not ethnic products per se, but stress the agency of these immigrant entrepreneurs in providing a service that is perceived as ethnic and authentic in the eyes of their customers. This adaptability also involved reacting proactively to unfavourable conditions, such as the association of Thai massage with the rendering of erotic services or the need to distinguish the service from competitors. A fourth beneficial factor was the support they received through their husbands or close family members especially during the start-up phase of their businesses. Not only did these associates provide financial aid, but they crucially shouldered the institutional demands that posed a linguistic challenge for the owners, such as the registration of the company and staff, or the regular

preparation of the documents submitted for tax declaration. In sum, neither for Kanita, nor for Patcharin or Wipa, an advanced level of standard competence in German was a necessary condition for their entry into self-employment. They learned to carry out their day-to-day work independently. Their corporate biographies suggested that their workplace routines are organized according to their and their staff's language competencies and the professional identities they intend to claim and project for themselves.

In conclusion, the performance of work in these immigrant businesses is shaped by the level of competence in the various resources in their repertoires and with respect to the business identities they wish to perform. On the other hand, levels of language competence and the business identities shape the work of these immigrant entrepreneurs, such that they put emphasis on certain nexuses of practice or routines at each of the three workplaces.

8.1.2 Working with minimal competence in German

In accordance with her two main corporate objectives of generating funds for a future investment in Thailand and of providing employment opportunities for other members of the Thai community, the analysis of the core actions at Kanita's Massage Salon illustrated that a minimal competence in German can suffice in performing the key workplace practices of booking appointments, welcoming customers, charging customers, and selling vouchers. The analysis showed that the successful performance of these core actions with minimal competence in German depends on several conditions. First of all, in order to accomplish their workplace practices, the staff at Kanita's salon draw on both German and Thai. Literacy in Thai is important to read and complete the entries in the appointment schedule, the central material tool which effectively supports the discursive routines in German in the encounters with clients. Secondly, the overall routine nature and task-focus of these actions is realised through routine discursive practices in German that the employees are quickly able to appropriate into their repertoires. The analysis illustrated though that staff also adjust their discursive routines to their language competence in German and a lack of German competence is often bridged by drawing on other material resources available in the environment, for example, when the brochure is introduced to present and explain treatments. Thirdly, for these actions to be successful the client's familiarity or experience with the practices is important. Mutual orientation to the routine

and the aim of the interaction proved to downplay or even eliminate the potential impact of formal inconsistencies in the staff's contributions in German. Problems occurred primarily, because either staff or customer is unfamiliar with the routine procedures. Yet, such problems tend to be resolved on the spot, often through a cooperative effort between employees for which they resort to Thai. Fourthly, due to Kanita's and her staff's overall minimal competence in German, the interactions with their German-speaking clients fulfil primarily practical functions. There is little evidence of extended small talk in German. However, while this seems certainly due to their levels of competence in German, it is also caused by the general organization of the work at Kanita's salon, which leaves little time for idle chatter with clients. Lastly, the analysis also exemplifies how the core actions at Kanita's salon are shaped by historical experiences. For example, the process of selling vouchers exposes how Kanita's negative experiences shaped the performance of the action, a fact which highlights her agency and the malleability of the practices at her workplace, which in turn affect the discursive routines to accomplish work by using the linguistic resources available to her effectively.

8.1.3 Working with partial competence in German

The analysis of the core actions at Patcharin's massage salon suggested that access to partial competence in German permits the staff to counteract the negative stereotypes of Thai massage present in Germany by positioning themselves as trusted experts in providing a health care treatment. While the nexus of practice that constitutes a massage treatment at Patcharin's salon may function well without talk, the analysis showed that the practitioners' repertoires of discursive routines in German, such as assessing the client's health status, explaining the treatments, providing clear instructions and guiding the patient's movements during the treatment, as well as initiating and contributing to small talk enable them to provide the high quality and personalized service that Patcharin perceives as the main aim of her business. In this context, Thai only plays a marginal, albeit important, role as the tool that allows the practitioners to exchange information about clients, coordinate their work, and foster a positive workplace environment.

8.1.4 Working with bilingual competence

Wipa's ability of managing her retail store independently and competitively, as well as her professional goal of providing expert culinary advice for her customers rest on her

bilingual competence, a maximum competence in German and Thai. Her bilingual competence makes the accomplishment of professional practices possible that may be inaccessible to her direct competitors. It is thus instrumental in creating opportunities that allow her to make 'rational' choices without assistance and to provide explanations to the expressed but also the assumed problems of her clients. While her language competence is not pivotal for the execution of all the key workplace practices at the store, as the analysis of 'ordering stock' illustrated, it nevertheless allows Wipa to express her expert knowledge, attune to the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of her clients, and maintain contact to a variety of suppliers from which she sources her products.

8.1.5 Exploiting linguistic resources for success

The general conclusion that we can draw from these results is that contrary to the commonly held assumption among politicians and government officials in Germany, an advanced standard competence of German is neither a prerequisite nor a necessary condition for immigrants to work successfully as entrepreneurs in the open market outside the protected niche of the ethnic economy. The evidence from the three owners discussed in this study implies that an immigrant entrepreneur can attune her workplace practices to her level of competence in German and the multiple resources in her linguistic repertoire to operate effectively. Moreover, engagement in these routines at work actually constitute the site where the immigrant owner can hone her German language skills, as self-employed work provides her with the intrinsic but also the extrinsic motivation to appropriate German. On the other hand, more than just minimal competence in German becomes important, if the owner wants to differentiate her business from competitors. This is particularly relevant for immigrant entrepreneurs, because their businesses tend to accrue in the same line of work, occupying similar market niches, and potentially creating a fierce competition for prices. The examples of Patcharin and Wipa illustrate how their partial and maximum competence in German stand them in good stead in attempting to claim differentiated and unique professional identities for themselves, because their competence in German allows them to move beyond the concrete practical performance of the action.

Nevertheless, while the focus on members of a minority immigrant group, such as the Thais in Germany, may point to more general aspects about the linguistic aspect of

immigrant entrepreneurs in Germany, the small sample size obviously restricts the reach of the findings. Another important aspect that this study does not address, but which may add significantly to a fuller understanding of the matter, are the perceptions of the customers. As language use is not only about communication, but always very much about social categorisation, it would have been interesting to explore the customers' evaluation of the owners' professional practices in the light of their language use further, in order to examine whether a correlation exists between the level of German competence and perceptions of expertise and quality of service.

8.2 Implications

This study makes a number of methodological and theoretical contributions to the study of workplace discourse, multilingualism at work, research on multilingualism in general, research on immigrant entrepreneurship, as well as the provision of professional language support programmes for immigrants.

8.2.1 Methodological implications

In order to determine the impact of linguistic competence on workplace practices of immigrant entrepreneurs, the study advocates a shift of focus from the linguistic unit to the unit of social action, and therefore its relationship to the historical experiences of the actors, and the broader social discourses surrounding these practices. Considering the historical bodies and the discourses in place provides us with a better understanding of the relevance and functions of the discursive practices, which a sequential analysis of the interactions alone would not be able to retrieve. For example, only through the appreciation of Patcharin's past struggles with customers who demanded erotic services and her professional aspirations of providing a health care service are we able to understand the significance of the discursive practices during the massage treatments that she and her staff provide. Similarly, only by recognizing the problems that Kanita experienced with her past practices of completing vouchers, does the importance of the inscriptions on the present vouchers and the discursive practice of announcing the validity period come to light. Conceptualizing the social action in this manner allows the researcher to account for the malleability of routines and the ability of social actors to adjust their practices to conditions that they consider unfavourable. The discursive

practices have thus to be seen as embedded in the overall organisation of the work and the identities, as well as the futures that the actors claim for themselves.

Moreover, since an MDA perspective considers a variety of tools and resources to accomplish social actions, it allows the researcher of multilingualism to consider sites that may otherwise not be perceived as particularly interesting, as they seemingly lack a flexible use of linguistic resources on the surface. For example, only due to a consideration of the schedule book as an artefact that Kanita created were we able to perceive the core actions at her store as inherently multilingual. This study therefore adds to the growing body of literature that investigates aspects of multilingualism from the view of MDA or nexus analysis (Hult, 2014, Pietikäinen et al., 2011, Pietikäinen et al., 2014)

8.2.2 Theoretical implications for research on language at work

This investigation contributes to the research of professional discourse from a applied linguistics perspective by opening up a context that has hitherto not been at the centre of the majority of investigations in the field. The findings indicate that self-employment is a rich site of study, because the linguistic aspect is multifaceted affecting institutional as well as professional aspects of the work of a business owner.

This study contributes to workplace studies that highlight the multimodal aspect of work. The analyses of the core actions illustrate the significance of taking into account the use of artefacts, as spoken discourse never is the sole resource for producing meaning in interaction. An analysis purely based on verbal interactions would have missed out on many of the tools that the workers at Kanita's salon draw on when doing their work, or it may have neglected the use of the material discourses, such as the shelf labels that Wipa produces to support the sale of the products in her store, artefacts that are a significant part of her communicative repertoire at work. In particular, the study adds to contemporary research on the significance of touch as a mode (Bezemer & Kress, 2014, Norris, 2011). The analysis of Patcharin's workplace practices has shown the importance of touch as a professional tool, but also how touch is rendered relevant or meaningful through talk.

The findings also add to research on the aspect of individual agency in workplace learning (Billett, 2001, 2011). The cases of the three immigrant entrepreneurs are good illustrations of the relevance and importance of the individual's engagement in the process of learning for work, which seems particularly relevant for self-employed

workers, because of the relative lack of access to situated expert guidance. In order to solve practical problems the ability to draw on a network of knowledgeable others and to act on their epistemologies were relevant for the owners in this study. The degree of engagement is, however, affected by language competence, e.g. Wipa's bilingual competence enabled her to successfully obtain council from different sales representatives in Thai and German. On the other hand, learning resulted in altering their discursive practices to suit their specific corporate needs and thus presented further opportunities for language learning.

Much research on multilingualism at work has focused on transnationally operating organisations. Few studies have looked at workplaces that migrants create for themselves (Sabaté i Dalmau, 2012). This study is evidence to the ways immigrants organize their workplace practices to compete in the open market, despite the absence of advanced communicative competence in the dominant language of the economy. These businesses thus create accommodating workplaces for themselves and other immigrants by taking into account their own linguistic competencies and those of their staff. On the other hand, the findings relate to research that views bilingual or multilingual competence as an asset. The linguistic aspect of work and the need for greater multilingual competence becomes more important when the immigrant business owner intends to differentiate herself from competitors. More extensive competence in German provides access to discursive practices that go beyond a purely practical function, thus fulfilling social and cognitive functions that build customer loyalty, display professional expertise, and allow overall for greater independence.

8.2.3 Theoretical implications for research on multilingualism

This study is a contribution to the call for the investigation of the linguistic diversity in Europe. The linguistic richness of Europe does not only consist of the diversity of national languages or regional minority languages, but also the languages of its immigrants (Extra & Yağmur, 2008, Extra & Barni, 2008). The research shows how the use of an otherwise little valued linguistic resource in Europe, such as Thai, has economic implications and permits immigrants an active participation in the labour market. In addition, since much research in multilingualism has been devoted to cities and sees the urban context as predestined for such diversity, as evoked by contemporary sociolinguistic concepts such as metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) or urban

vernaculars (Rampton, 2011), the examples discussed here attest to the presence of such diversity also in the geographical periphery.

This inquiry also adds to research that accounts for multilingualism as a product of the practices people engage in, which transcends linguistic boundaries, structures and forms, as captured, for example, by the concept of translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2013). The results of this study encourage the researcher to consider the variety of resources in accounting for such multilingual practices and heed warning to those who become overly excited about the flexible use of language features on the surface. As mentioned above, few of the examples from Kanita's Massage Salon may be considered overtly as examples of multilingual practices. But while they are monolingual on the surface, they are multilingual practices nevertheless once we start considering the use Thai in the schedule book. On the other hand, the examples of language mixing or meshing on Wipa's order forms may be fascinating multilingual products on the surface. However, as the analysis has shown, the diversity of features here is of little practical consequence for the performance of the action of ordering stock.

8.2.4 Theoretical implications for studies on immigrant entrepreneurship

Some scholars in economic sociology and business administration advocate an ethnographic and processual approach to entrepreneurship research (Dana, 2000, 2011, Dana & Dana, 2005, 2008, Kontos, 2003a, 2003b). The cases of the three business owners in this investigation highlight that in order to understand their engagement in self-employment and the organization of their businesses, a careful consideration of the historical, socio-cultural, and biographical conditions that shape individual entrepreneurial activity is necessary. The findings also highlight the importance of looking at self-employment from a practice perspective, as a process and not only as the result of an interplay of individual capabilities and structural features of the market. Looking at practices uncovers the agentive process involved in entrepreneurship as "the ongoing creative construction of ventures as patchwork quilts of pieces from one's own and others' lived experiences" (Johannisson, 2011, p. 141). By adhering to a practice approach, the study also adds to the criticism of looking at immigrant entrepreneurship from an essentialist perspective of culture. The analysis of the workplace practices of the Thai immigrant entrepreneurs in this study shows that these practices are best understood in its situated context rather than shaped by their heritage cultures. Consequently, ethnic

entrepreneurship appears to be not substantially different from other kinds of small business entrepreneurship. Moreover, this study substantiates the linguistic aspect in self-employment in general and in immigrant entrepreneurship in particular by providing rich empirical examples of how language competence shapes the workplace routines of business owners. The findings suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs organize their work around their multilingual repertoires and thus present counter-evidence to many investigations that regard the immigrant entrepreneur's mother tongue as a key tool for corporate success.

8.2.5 Practical implications for language support of immigrants

While applied linguists have made considerable headway in providing tailored in-house language support for immigrants at work (cf. Grünhage-Monetti et al., 2003, Mourlhon-Dallies, 2007), there are few programmes that target those who wish to become self-employed or who face communicative challenges in self-employment. One reason for the lack of direct support is obviously that entrepreneurship comprises a very large range of professional and institutional discursive practices depending on the sectors the ventures are active in. However, language support programmes could target specific areas, such as the typical tasks that constitute the institutional side of entrepreneurship. Additionally, the state institutions and authorities in Germany could also transform their practices to accommodate to the linguistic requirements of budding immigrant entrepreneurs, for example by providing multilingual assistance or by accepting paperwork in more than just German, for example in English. For the moment, such support is only offered in few places throughout Germany and primarily in urban centres with a high concentration of immigrants.

8.3 Perspectives for further research

The area of self-employment in general and the engagement of immigrants in self-employment certainly opens up a novel domain that merits further research by applied linguists. We would like to highlight in particular two aspects.

Applied linguists are well positioned to look in more detail at the process of entry into self-employment, in order to examine they ways this process is shaped by discourse and how it inhibits or facilitates the participation of immigrants. The cases of Kanita and

Patcharin in this study suggest that without the support of trusted associates with maximum competence in German, the successful completion of the necessary institutional requirements would have been close to impossible. In order to develop more adequate support for immigrants, but also for budding entrepreneurs in general, more research is needed to examine the steps that need to be taken to establish a business, so as to examine them for potential communicative pitfalls. In order to avoid essentialization, such a study should be a comparative study of the experiences of immigrants and indigenous entrepreneurs alike. As mentioned above, the field of immigrant entrepreneurship research has been rightfully criticized for continually positioning immigrant entrepreneurs as different and deficient, while they very often share the same concerns as indigenous entrepreneurs.

Another interesting spin-off would be to look at the experiences of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from Europe attempting to establish their businesses abroad, for example in Asia. It would be interesting to find out about the strategies that these business owners adopt to prepare and deal with the linguistic diversity in these settings, the institutional support that they may enjoy to do so, and whether they experience difficulties due to a lack of language competence in an Asian language when setting up their operations there. While one could expect that the use of English looms large within the corporate circles in Asia, the lessons learned could inform the decision-makers in Germany to reflect on the situations that immigrant entrepreneurs face within their own country.

Self-employment is thus an area that applied linguistics should continue to look at more closely, as it is not only the natural home of researchers in business administration. Entrepreneurship on a small scale, in small businesses and in small places has always been and remains in many parts of the world at the centre of the lives of ordinary people. Sharing and understanding their experiences is definitely stimulating for the qualitative researcher, as it opens doors to the worlds of people whose lives and creativity at work are all to seldom recognized.

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Appendices

Appendix A: German and English project information

UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG

LCMI | LANGUAGES, CULTURE, MEDIA AND IDENTITIES

FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, HUMANITIES, ARTS AND EDUCATION

Teilnahme an einem Forschungsprojekt über Sprachgebrauch am Arbeitsplatz

Sehr geehrte TeilnehmerIn,

Mein Name ist Stefan Serwe und ich bin Doktorand an der Universität Luxemburg im Bereich Sprachwissenschaft. Unter der Leitung von Prof. Dr. Ingrid De Saint-Georges führe ich meine Dissertation in der Mehrsprachigkeitsforschung durch und ich würde Sie gerne als TeilnehmerIn in meinem Forschungsprojekt begrüßen dürfen.

Meine Studie mit dem Titel *Sprachgebrauch von Ethnischen Unternehmern in einer mehrsprachigen Grenzregion* untersucht, wie selbständige Unternehmer mit Migrationshintergrund in Luxemburg und Deutschland ihre Mehrsprachigkeit nutzen, um ihre Betriebe erfolgreich zu führen. Dabei interessieren mich besonders drei Aspekte: Was sind die Kommunikationsformen am Arbeitsplatz? Welche Sprachen werden für welche Zwecke benutzt? Profitiert Ihr Geschäft von Mehrsprachigkeit?

Für meine Studie würde ich mit den Teilnehmern gerne Gespräche führen, ihren Arbeitsalltag beobachten, und ihren Sprachgebrauch durch Audio- und Videoaufnahmen festhalten. Diese Daten sollen detailliert darlegen, inwiefern Ihre Mehrsprachigkeit wichtig für Ihren Arbeitsalltag ist. Die Daten werden in meiner Doktorarbeit, aber auch in wissenschaftlichen Präsentationen und Veröffentlichungen benutzt werden. Alle gesammelten Daten werden unter Verschluss archiviert und sind ausschließlich den Forschern zugänglich.

Ihre Identität wird stets gewahrt bleiben. Weder Ihr Name noch der Ihres Betriebes, Ihrer Mitarbeiter oder Partner wird veröffentlicht, oder in schriftlicher oder mündlicher Form mit den Daten in Verbindung gebracht werden. Für alle Teilnehmer werden Pseudonyme entwickelt.

Zurzeit gibt es nur wenige Studien zur Mehrsprachigkeit am Arbeitsplatz in unserer Großregion. Deshalb wäre Ihre Teilnahme äußert bedeutsam und ich wäre Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mitmachen würden. Bitte lesen Sie auch die Einverständniserklärung aufmerksam durch, die diesem Schreiben anhängt. Falls Sie den Bedingungen, die dort aufgelistet sind, zustimmen und an der Studie teilnehmen möchten, unterschreiben Sie doch bitte die Erklärung und geben Sie sie an mich zurück.

Sollten Sie noch weitere Fragen haben, können Sie mich jederzeit unter der folgenden Nummer und E-Mail-Adresse erreichen: 00352 46 66 44 9701 oder stefan.serwe@uni.lu . Sie können auch meine Betreuerin Frau Prof. Dr. Ingrid de Saint-Georges unter 00352 46 66 44 9739 oder ingrid.desaintgeorges@uni.lu kontaktieren. Sollten Fragen auftauchen, die Sie denken, nicht mit uns besprechen zu können, können Sie auch die Ethikkommission der Universität direkt ansprechen. Die E-Mail-Adresse lautet erp-submissions@uni.lu .

Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Stefan Karl Serwe

Prof. Dr. Ingrid De Saint-Georges

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Etablissement public
Loi du 12 août 2003
Mémorial A149 du 6 octobre 2003
TVA Intracom LU 19805732
N° R.C.S.L. – Luxembourg J20

Request for participation in research project on language use at the work place

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Stefan Serwe and I am a doctoral candidate in Linguistics at the University of Luxembourg. I am conducting research for my doctoral thesis in the field of Multilingualism under the supervision of Prof Dr Ingrid De Saint-Georges, I would like to ask you to participate in my research project.

My study, entitled *Language use among ethnic entrepreneurs in a multilingual border region*, examines how entrepreneurs with a migration background in Luxembourg and Germany use the different languages they know to operate successful businesses. In particular, I am interested in three broad issues: What are the ways you communicate at work? Which languages do you use for these purposes? Does it help your business to use different languages?

Participants in my study will be asked to be observed during their normal work routines and their language use shall be captured through audio and video recordings. The data I collect will be analysed to document in detail how language knowledge is significant for your daily work practices. The evidence will be used in my dissertation, but also for academic presentations and publications. All data collected will be stored under lock and key and can only be accessed by the researchers.

Your identity as a participant will remain confidential at all times. Your name as well as the names of your business and associates will never be publicly associated with the data you provide in oral or written presentations of my study. Data will be reported only in aggregate form. Individual participants will not be identified but will be referred to by pseudonyms.

To date very little research has been undertaken on multilingualism in professional settings in this region. This is why your contribution would be highly meaningful and I would be grateful, if you would participate in this study. Please read the consent form that accompanies this letter. If you accept the terms it sets forth and still wish to participate, please sign the form and return it to me.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation or about my study, please feel free to contact me at +352 46 66 44 9701 or stefan.serwe@uni.lu . You may also contact my supervisor at +352 46 66 44 9739 or ingrid.desaintgeorges@uni.lu . In case of a problem that you feel cannot be addressed by me or my supervisor, you may also contact the University's Ethics Review Panel (ERP) at erp-submissions@uni.lu .

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Stefan Karl Serwe

Prof Dr Ingrid De Saint-Georges

Appendix B: German and English consent forms

UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG

LCMI | LANGUAGES, CULTURE, MEDIA AND IDENTITIES

FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, HUMANITIES, ARTS AND EDUCATION

Einverständniserklärung zur Mitarbeit in einem Forschungsprojekt

Mit meiner Unterschrift erkläre ich mich einverstanden,

- dass ich am Forschungsprojekt mit dem Titel *Sprachgebrauch von Ethnischen Unternehmern in einer mehrsprachigen Grenzregion*, welches von Prof. Dr. Ingrid De Saint-Georges und Stefan Karl Serwe von der Fakultät für Sprachwissenschaften und Literatur, Geisteswissenschaften, Kunst und Erziehungswissenschaften (FLSHASE) der Universität Luxemburg durchgeführt wird, teilnehme. Das Ziel der Studie ist die Analyse des Gebrauchs von Mehrsprachigkeit von Unternehmern mit Migrationshintergrund im Kontext der selbständigen Arbeit.

- dass meine Teilnahme Beobachtungen, Audioaufnahmen, und Videoaufnahmen des Sprachgebrauchs in meinem Arbeitsalltag durch die Forscher umfasst.

- dass meine Teilnahme freiwillig erfolgt, und dass meine Teilnahme mir weder Vorteile bringt, noch meine Nicht-Teilnahme Nachteile nach sich zieht.

- dass ich jederzeit meine Teilnahme widerrufen und auch jederzeit Antworten auf Fragen des Forschers verweigern kann.

- dass mein Name weder in schriftlichen Veröffentlichungen und noch in mündlichen Präsentationen in der Öffentlichkeit mit dieser Studie in Verbindung gebracht werden wird.

- dass Teile der Aufnahmen zum Zwecke der sprachwissenschaftlichen Analyse in wissenschaftlichen Seminaren und auf Konferenzen, oder als Transkriptionen in schriftlichen Abhandlungen benutzt werden dürfen.

- dass Sicherheitskopien dieser Daten angefertigt werden.

- dass der Zugang zu allen Originalen und Kopien nur Prof. Dr. Ingrid de Saint-Georges und Stefan Karl Serwe möglich ist, dass alle Originale und Kopien ausschließlich der sprachwissenschaftlichen Analyse dienen, und dass alle Originale und Kopien in den Büroräumen der Forscher an der Universität Luxemburg unter Verschluss aufbewahrt werden.

- dass ich Stefan Karl Serwe unter 00352 46 66 44 9701 oder unter stefan.serwe@uni.lu kontaktieren kann, falls ich Fragen zum Projekt und meiner Teilnahme haben sollte.

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die oben beschriebenen Bedingungen gelesen und verstanden habe, und dass ich einer Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt zustimme.

_____

Datum

_____

Teilnehmer (Name & Unterschrift)

_____ _____

Stefan Karl Serwe Prof Dr Ingrid de Saint-Georges

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TVA Intracom LU 19805732
N° R.C.S.L. – Luxembourg J20

Statement of informed consent to participate in research

I, the undersigned, understand the following:

- that I am about to participate in a study entitled *Language use among ethnic entrepreneurs in a multilingual border region*, which is being conducted by Prof Dr Ingrid De Saint-Georges and Stefan Karl Serwe at the Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education (FLSHASE) of the University of Luxembourg. The purpose of this research is to examine how entrepreneurs with a migration background in Luxembourg and Germany use the different languages they know to operate successful businesses.

- that my participation in this study will entail observations of workplace routines and language use, as well as interviews, audio and video recordings.

- that my participation in this study is voluntary, and that no penalty or disadvantage will accrue to me for non-participation, nor any benefit for participation.

- that I may withdraw from the study at any time, and may refuse to answer any questions I am asked.

- that if I give my name to the investigator, my name will never be revealed in written or oral presentations of the study, and will never be associated publicly with any data collected.

- that portions of the recordings may be played in linguistics classes or conference presentations, or transcribed in written reports, for demonstration purposes connected with linguistic analysis.

- that additional copies of the data may be made for back-up purposes.

- that the original tape and all copies of it will be accessible only to Prof Dr Ingrid de Saint-Georges and Stefan Karl Serwe, will be used only for linguistic analysis (including presentations mentioned above), and will be kept in the researchers' offices at the University of Luxembourg, which are locked when they are not present.

- that I may contact Stefan Karl Serwe at +352 46 66 44 9701 or at stefan.serwe@uni.lu if I have any questions or concerns relating to this project or to my participation in it.

By signing below, I certify that I have read and understood the foregoing terms and conditions, and that I agree to participate, in accordance with them, in the above-named study.

_____

Date

_____

Participant (Name & Signature)

_____ _____

Stefan Karl Serwe Prof Dr Ingrid de Saint-Georges

Appendix C: Semi-structured interviews with business owners: Guiding questions

Interviews with immigrant entrepreneurs

- Guiding questions -

Geschäftstyp

Beschreiben Sie mir bitte Ihr Geschäft.
... Mitarbeiter, Standort ...

Unternehmererfahrung

Hatten Sie Erfahrungen als Unternehmer oder Kenntnisse über die Arbeit eines Selbständigen, bevor Sie Ihr heutiges Geschäft eröffneten?
... Eltern, Familie, Freunde ...

Eintritt in die Selbständigkeit

Beschreiben Sie mir bitte wie es zu dieser Geschäftsgründung gekommen ist?
... Idee, Chancen/Probleme, Finanzierung, Förderprogramme/private Hilfe ...

Unternehmensführung

Beschreiben Sie mir bitte die Tätigkeiten und Arbeitsabläufe in Ihrem Unternehmen.
... Sprache, Mitarbeiterführung, Ethnizität/ethnisches Netzwerk, Kunden ...

Sprachkenntnisse

Erzählen Sie mir bitte welchen Sprachen Sie beherrschen und beherrscht haben.
... Schreiben, Verstehen, Sprechen, Lesen ...

Beschreiben Sie bitte welche Sprachen Sie in welchem Maße bei Ihrer Arbeit benutzen.
... Nutzen, Probleme, das Deutsche ...

Migrationsgeschichte

Erzählen Sie mir doch bitte über Ihre Migrationserfahrung.
... Geburtsort, Sprachrepertoire, Ausbildung, Migrationsländer ...

Appendix D: Sample of collections of core actions

Welcoming customers at Kanita's Massage Salon

date	time	participants	interesting & problematic & tools	link to photo	Thai
24/07/2013	002205	Kanita & Savika	FC is pregnant and asks for a special treatment or caution		X
17/07/2013	005336	Sopa	Fr Telefon and her friend arrive Som greets them; Som says sth in Thai Ari leads them to room	CIMG0736 CIMG0737	x
17/07/2013	013520 (P2)	Ratcha	Familiar customers Group of 4 No name mentioned booking easy to recognize in schedule	CIMG0735	followed by Thai
17/07/2013	021016 (P2)	Sucharat	Welcomes Fr 'White cloth with flower print' Asks for name to identify FC says she didn't give name Asks her to wait Porntip wrote in Thai about lady's clothing, Sucharat obviously recognises	CIMG0738	
17/07/2013	000640	Patchara & Ratcha	Cryptic greeting by FC: name & tpye Patchara confirms Ratcha & Patchara exchange sth in Thai (probably about broken shade) Interesting is that room is not ready, info in Thai, FC asked to wait	CIMG0738	x
13/07/2013	002146	Kanita & Savika	Greets FC exuberantly, shows familiarity FC needs to go to toilet Kanita & Savika talk in Thai in between and after		x
13/072013	004209 004451	Kanita	Customers greeted Then identified via name Confirmed with type of massage Payment handled Ushered to room and explained how to undress		

date	time	participants	interesting & problematic & tools	link to photo	Thai
13/07/2013	011238	Savika & Kanita	Savika greets but tells them to wait Savika calls Kanita who talk to couple Kanita says sth in Thai to Savika		x
13/07/2013	015428 015643	Kanita & Ratcha	First MC is greeted and told to wait Then his partner arrives Ratcha seems to know her well There is a little banter & joking		
13/07/2013	002835 (P2) 002918	Kanita	Very friendly greeting MC Banter about shirt and room colour After she let man in Kanita talks to Savika who then treats him (connected?)		x
09/04/2013	005227	Sucharat & Petchara	Greets customers Identifies in schedule Petchara cuts in with Thai (!) Ushers couple to room		x
09/04/2013	023145	Sucharat & Ratcha & Sopha	Customer are late Talk dialect Sucharat in Thai Ratcha also in Thai Ratcha leads them to room		x
09/04/2013	030512	Porntip	Welcomes customers Jokes with them "Sie kommen mit Regen"		
09/04/2013	030856	Petchara	Ask them whether appointment Goes through the motions Petchara very ritualized, routine style		
25/04/2013	000924 (P2)	Thani, Ratcha, Sopha	Thani greets client Gives his name Therapists chat in Thai Room has not been cleared and laughter ensues	CIMG0368	x
25/04/2013	005330 (P3)	Namthip, Porntip	Namthip greets FC Porntip who is doing foot reflex takes over Namthip leads lady to room	CIMG0368	x

Appendix E: Transcription Conventions

The transcription conventions are adapted from GAT 2 (Gesprächanalytisches Transkriptionssystem) (Selting et al., 2009). Each line of transcription represents spoken language as segmented into intonation units.

`ich bräuchte ä gutschein.`	A **period** shows falling intonation.
`fü:r hand rücke un schulter,`	A **comma** shows continuing intonation.
`ja [gerne?]`	A **question mark** shows rising intonation.
`[f-f-=]`	A **single dash** indicates a cut off with a glottal stop.
`[und einmal sechzig minuten.]`	**Square brackets on successive lines** mark
`[sechzig minuten] genau.`	beginning and end of overlapping talk.
`fünfzehn euro.=`	**Equal signs** on successive lines show latching
`=hm?`	between turns.
`fü:r`	A **colon** shows a prolonging of prior sound.
`ZWEI personen`	**Capitals** show heavy stress or louder speech.
`*hier bitte schön ja?*`	**Stars** indicate that utterance is spoken softly.
`(noch einmal)`	**Words in parenthesis** indicate that are not transcribed with absolute certainty.
`((laughs))`	Paralinguistic features are indicates with **double parentheses**.
`(x) (xx) (xxx)`	Incomprehensible syllables are denotes with **the letter *x* in parentheses**.
`(.)`	**A single period in parentheses** indicates a micro pause.
`(1.0)`	**Numbers in parentheses** indicate a timed pause.
`.h`	Inhalations are denotes by a **period followed by a small *h***.
`hm`	denotes a monosyllabic reception signal.
`hm_hm`	denotes a bisyllabic reception signal.
`hm?hm?`	denotes negation with glottal stops
`...`	Ellipsis from transcriptions are indicated by **three consecutive periods**.