Performing linguistic and cultural authenticity: Contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia

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Table of Contents

III

Abstract

This study examines the linguistic and cultural practices of contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region of China, where Mongols constitute around 11 percent of the population. Situated at the crossroads of minority linguistic and cultural revival, multicultural state policies and cultural commodification, contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies constitute a privileged window on linguistic and cultural change in the context of rapid socio-economic transformation. The study addresses three specific questions. First, what linguistic and cultural choices can be observed in Mongolian wedding ceremonies? Second, what ideologies are embedded in these semiotic practices? And, third, how do wedding practices and ideologies serve to produce and reproduce Mongolian "authenticity" and social hierarchies?

To address these research questions, the study adopts a critical sociolinguistic ethnographic approach: a range of data were collected in Inner Mongolia in early 2016, including twenty-two video and audio recordings of wedding ceremonies, participant observation at weddings, interviews with "cultural entrepreneurs" involved in wedding planning and collection of wedding-related artefacts. Analysis focused on the discursive and material construction of a "perfect" Mongolian wedding; the ritual acts involved in weddings; and language and genre choice in wedding speeches.

Findings show that contemporary Mongolian weddings are permeated by the hegemonic ideology of Mongolian tradition based on images of pastoralism, the imperial past, and the ideal of a "pure" Mongolian language. However, in actual practice, contemporary wedding ceremonies are heterogeneously constituted and range from monolingual Mongolian weddings through various bilingual and hybrid forms to Chinese-dominant weddings. Various forms of re-stylization, reflexivity and creativity contest the boundaries of tradition and modernity, minority and majority, local and global. The study also finds that material and linguistic indexes of authentic "Mongolian-ness" are only accessible to certain groups of Mongols, mostly well-educated middle-class urbanites. By contrast, rural farming Mongols are largely excluded from performing "Mongolian" weddings.

The results of the study contribute to an improved understanding of Mongolian language and cultural change, maintenance, loss and revival in contemporary China. The

research also makes a broader sociolinguistic contribution by complicating notions of minority language, culture and identity in the 21st century.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "Performing linguistic and cultural authenticity: Contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia" has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree, to any university or institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and that it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literatures used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: 5201500737 on 28 October 2015.

Gegentuul Hongye Bai (Student ID: 43706460)

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List of Figures

X

List of Tables

Glossary of Mongolian and Chinese terms

Balchiruud: a township in Arhorchin banner

Bogt Chingghis: Holy Genghis

Burhan: Buddha

chagaan süld: white standards

Chinggis süljee: Genghis net

Chinggisiin Tahilga: Genghis Khan Sacrificial Ceremony"

deel: Mongolian costume

ehiin chagaan süü haruulah: paying back mother's white milk

ger: Mongolian yurt

golomt: hearth

gurb mürgel-iin yos: the ritual of three bowings

Haan sum: a township in Arhorchin banner

hadag: ceremonial scarf

har lus: the deity who reigns over water

hariin-aan/harüü-gaan ügeh: giving the received or going to be received favor

hariin-an/harüü-gaan abeh: taking back the given favor

helmürch: wedding speaker

heshig boyan: fortune and luck

hiimor: wind horse

hoimor: the honorific zone of *a dwelling*

holvoo: connection

hüdee: countryside and pastoral areas

Hülünbeir: a city of Inner Mongolia

hütlegch: a ceremony speaker

huursan budaa: a type of Mongolian millet

jayaa: fate

hurim: wedding

naadam or *nair*: a Mongolian celebratory occasion which includes both a ceremony and games

nasan bayar: the celebration of advanced ages

oboo: or ovoo, a site for worship of gods or of the protector of the place

saadag: groom's team

süld: holy standard

sum: a Mongolian township

suragchin bayar: the celebrations for those high school graduates who are admitted to universities"

temdegs: the signs and symbols that order and regulate the society and the behaviour of the people within it"

tümen agtiin tübergen: Thousands of steeds

Türiin ordon: state palace

Yisun ürlig: nine generals of Genghis Khan

yos: custom, rule

yüüreel: blessing speech in the ritual

红包 *hongbao*: red packets

改口: change of address

中国梦 : China Dream

正能量 : positive energy

囍 : double happiness

祝福语: good wishes

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research problem and rationale

I started this doctoral research wanting to examine language contact, language maintenance and language loss related to Mongolian in contemporary China. Originally, I intended my research to be undertaken in a school setting and to relate to the role of Mongolian in formal education. However, very early in my candidature, it so happened that my social media feeds were increasingly populated with images, videos and comments of highly stylish weddings, often involving members of China's ethnic minorities. One of these – the wedding of a Tibetan couple in 2015 – went viral in China and around the world (Ford, 2016). Mongolian weddings, too, increasingly made the rounds on the internet. The following is a description of a Mongolian wedding shared on social media in my circles (A-dan, 2016) in May 2016: the video shows a festively decorated banquet hall with a stage. There are four people on the stage: a male and a female wedding speaker and the bride and groom. All four are dressed in traditional Mongolian costume: the groom wears a blue every-day style Mongolian costume with golden edges and the bride wears a similar dress in a different colour, bright red, and is also adorned with a plastic head decoration. In the background, the couples pre-wedding photo is displayed, where the bride wears a white wedding gown and the groom a dark suit. The photo is topped with the Chinese inscription 你是我的幸福 ("you are my happiness").

The ceremony is led by the two wedding speakers who issue instructions to the couple in Mongolian and ask them to conduct various ritual acts such as paying their respects to their parents by offering them drinks. As the female wedding speaker delivers a speech about parental love in Mongolian, the couple present each of their parents with a white *hadag*. A *hadag* is a silk scarf that is used to express reverence and respect (Boldbaatar & Humphrey, 2007, p. 11). Mongols usually use blue *hadag* during religious rituals and ceremonies, but white *hadag* is used occasionally too. This is followed by a blessing recited by the male wedding speaker, again in Mongolian.

This part of the video lasts around twenty minutes, before the four actors leave the stage. However, the video and the ceremony do not end here: the couple re-enter the stage to the sounds of Mendelssohn's wedding march. This time, they are dressed differently: they have shed their Mongolian costumes and the bride is dressed in a white wedding gown while the groom wears a gray suit. The male wedding speaker, too, has replaced his Mongolian costume with a Western-style suit. With his dress, his language has changed: in the second part of the ceremony, the male wedding speaker delivers his speech in Chinese. Only the

female wedding speaker undergoes no such transformation: she is still in her red Mongolian costume and she still speaks Mongolian. The actions in the second part of the ceremony are different, too: instead of paying respect to parents and receiving blessings, the couple now exchange rings and vows, and they fill a tower of glasses with champagne.

This mixture of different symbolism, iconic of different nationalities and of Mongolian and Chinese, is highly intricate and choreographed. It is also highly commodified, as the video was actually posted by a catering company specializing in wedding banquets. I came to see this language shifting and its association with changes in dress, music and ritual performance - as well as its circulation on social media - as a window into language contact, language maintenance and language loss related to Mongolian in contemporary China. I began to wonder what these shifts in language and symbols mean: what does it mean to place the holy white *hadag* together with Chinese characters expressing romance? I also wondered about aspects of the wedding that remain hidden in the video: what languages do the wedding guests speak? Which weddings are circulating as "Mongolian" weddings on social media and which remain hidden from wider viewing? What does the commodification of weddings mean for the ways in which languages and national symbols are used, and the ways in which the video "product" of the wedding circulates?

Motivated by questions such as these, I thus set out to explore the different languages and symbols utilized in contemporary weddings in multicultural and multilingual Inner Mongolia. Through this inquiry this PhD project hopes to contribute to an understanding of the changes that the very definition of what it means to be "Mongolian" is undergoing at this point in time. This changing identity of Mongols has been described as follows:

> As more Mongols lose their language, arguably the last stronghold of their 'nationality' status, they are becoming a depoliticized and deterritorialized 'ethnic group' in an increasingly primordial and multicultural 'Chinese Nation'. As they become increasingly urbanized, their homeland penetrated by Chinese, they have lost the vital conditions for developing as a full-fledged nationality with institutional and territorial integrity. In the new multicultural Inner Mongolia of China, domesticated Mongols can now choose to sing and dance as they please, even speak their language if they care. But they have lost the economic, social, and cultural preconditions, as well as the political powers that can meaningfully define the purpose and quality of their native speech (Bulag, 2003b, p. 762).

Is this the grim reality that hides behind glamorous wedding videos such as the one I described above? Jankowiak (2013, p. 62) also argues that most urban-born Mongols will

never speak Mongolian. Therefore, what it means to be "Mongolian" is now largely focused on an individual's heritage and descent. This emphasis on heritage and descent is clearly manifest in the Mongolian symbolism in the video described above. Notwithstanding Jankowiak's (2003) argument there is also a lot of Mongolian spoken in the video. Even so, the video could be considered evidence for the fact that Mongols are now free to sing, dance and speak their languages as they please in a ceremonial context such as a wedding while they clearly face the pressures of deterritorialization, Chinese nationalization and urbanization (see Chapter Two for details).

Having identified my broad research problem and rationale, I will now move on to provide some background information about Inner Mongolia.

1.2 Orientation to Inner Mongolia

Inner Mongolia, or the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR) as it is officially known, was founded on May 1, 1947 under the auspices of the Chinese Communists, two and a half years before the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (for further details on the Chinese colonization of Inner Mongolia and Mongolian-Chinese language contact in the region, see Chapter Two, Section 2.2.2). Mongols are the titular nationals of IMAR, but they are a small minority in their homeland. According to the 2010 census, the total population of IMAR was 24.7 million and Mongols constituted 17 percent of this group (4.2 million). It is worth noting that these 4.2 million Mongols also include Chinese who have changed their ethnicity to Mongolian in order to benefit from the preferential policies for minorities (Bilik, 1998b; Jankowiak, 2013; Wurlig, 1994). For instance, Bilik (1998b) notes that since 1981, when the state issued *Decisions on Principles of Restoring and Correcting Ethnic Identities*, a large number of Chinese have switched their ethnic identity in order to gain preferential treatment. In Hohhot, for example, more than 10,000 Chinese became Mongols between 1981 and 1984. For these reasons, a non-census estimates put the figure of Mongols living in Inner Mongolia much lower at around 2.6 million (or 11.2 percent of the total population) (Jankowiak, 2013, p. 57).

Map 1: Inner Mongolia in China (Wikipedia, 2017)

Inner Mongolia is located in the northern part of China bordering Russia and the Republic of Mongolia. The capital city is Hohhot and IMAR has nine prefecture-level cities and three *aimag* (Chinese: 盟, pinyin: meng; "league"), as shown in Map 2 and Table 1. These are further divided into numerous *hoshu* (旗, *qi*; "banner") and counties.
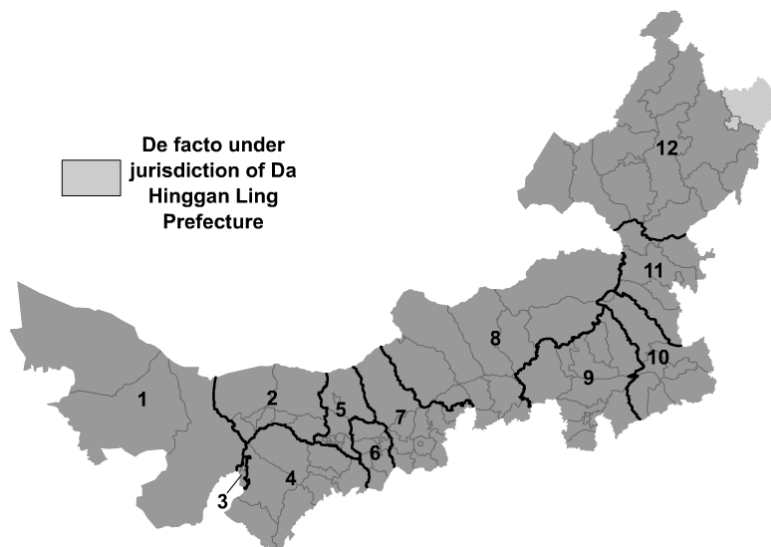
Map 2: Inner Mongolian prefectures (Wikipedia, 2017)

Table 1: Inner Mongolian prefectures (Wikipedia, 2017)

Division code	English name
1	Alasha League
2	Bayanuur
3	Wuhai
4	Ordos

5	Baotou
6	Hohhot
7	Ulaanchab
8	Shilingol League
9	Chifeng
10	Tongliao
11	Hinggan League
12	Hulunbuir

The term *league*, as well as other administrative terms specific to Inner Mongolia, such as *banner* can be dated back to Qing dynasty.Bulag (2002b) explains that during Qing dynasty, Mongols in different communities were allowed to keep their khanates as in Outer Mongolia, or organized under a league and banner system as in Inner Mongolia. Furthermore, in Inner Mongolia the prefecture-level cities and leagues coexist with each other and they are of equal status. Banner (Mongolian: hoshu; Chinese: 旗) and county (Mongolian loan: xian; Chinese: 县) coexist with each other and they have the same status as well. Below them, *sum* (Mongolian: sum; Chinese: 苏木) and townships (Mongolian loan: xiang; Chinese: 乡) also coexist in parallel. However, in reality, the coexistence of Mongolian administrative units with Chinese ones is complex. Bulag (2002b) explains further that,

> At the tertiary level, within Inner Mongolia, we see a clear pattern of ethnic division: Mongolian banners (*hoshu or qi*) coexist with Chinese counties (*xian*), which is not only a manifestation of a lost battle to restore Mongolian administrative characteristics, but also a forced recognition of the reality that the Chinese constitute the overwhelming majority in the autonomous region overall and even in many rural areas. Nor should the banners be construed as purely Mongolian in population. Banners are also studded with

Chinese townships along with Mongolian sum. Along with these administrative names embroiled in ethnic struggle there exist cities or municipalities (Bulag, 2002a, p. 201). In sum, the coexistence of Mongolian and Chinese administrative units are the result of the increasing presence of Chinese in Inner Mongolia.

The influence of Chinese on the administrative texture of Inner Mongolia has continued unabated in recent years. One of the most notable changes in recent years is the rectification of the names of leagues, and the conversions of many leagues into prefecture-level cities.

Table 1 shows that there are three leagues and nine cities in Inner Mongolia now, but until 1976 there were only two municipal cities in Inner Mongolia, Hohhot and Baotou. This has since changed and more cities were incorporated: Wuhai in 1976, Chifeng in 1983, Tongliao in 1999, Ordos in 2001, Hulunbuir in 2002, Ulaanchab in 2003, Bayanuur in 2003. As a result, cities today outnumber the three prefecture-level leagues Alasha, Shilingol, and Hinggan. In the process some of the original league names were dropped and replaced with Chinese names (Chifeng, Tongliao) while others such as Hulunbuir, Ulaanchab and Bayanuur remained Mongolian. Chifeng (赤峰; "red peak"), for instance, used to be called Juu-Uda ("one hundred willow trees") and Tongliao (通辽; "opening up the Liao's land") used to be called Jerim ("the horse's saddlegirth").

> While *Ulaanhad* [the capital city of Juu-Uda league, meaning "red peak"] is alive and well in Mongolian, the official Chinese name for the city has always been Chifeng, the Chinese literal translation of *Ulaanhad*. We have to keep in mind that hongshan ("Red Mountain"), a less literal Chinese translation of *Ulaanhad* is used to denote an archaeological site containing artefacts of the New Stone Age. Though largely filled with pastoral animal motifs, the so-called Hongshan culture has been appropriated to construct a glorious ancient Chinese civilization. Likewise, the change of Jerim league to Tongliao municipality in October 1999 is a similar story [to that of Chifeng]. It was also a case of replacing the Mongolian league name with the name of the capital city of the league, except that Tongliao is a straightforward Chinese name meaning 'penetrating or opening up the Liao,' with its background in dealing with the Liao dynasty (AD 916–1125), a dynasty founded by non-Chinese Kitan people (Bulag, 2002a, p. 206).

Bulag (2002a, p. 203) further suggests "the municipalization of the Mongolian league system, marking the elimination of leagues, reflects the tension between China's

multinational reality and the Confucian-cum-nationalist Chinese state's desire for cultural and administrative homogeneity".

Having introduced the administrative characteristics of Inner Mongolia, I shall proceed to introduce the lifestyles of Mongols in Inner Mongolia. Mongols in Inner Mongolia are customarily divided into pastoralists, sedentary agriculturalists and urban residents. As shown in Map 3 below, nomadic herding is dominant in northern and western Inner Mongolia, which is indicated by squares on the map. Sedentary agriculture is predominant along the southern and eastern border of Inner Mongolia, represented by circles. The triangles represent overlaps between nomadic herding and sedentary agriculture. Urban residents live in municipalities, prefecture-level cities, and the seats of banners, which refer to the main town where administrative centers of banners are located.

Map 3: Three Mongolian cultural zones in China (Sodbator, 2010),

Map 4: Inner Mongolian prefectures (Lingguamongolia, 2015)

Out of the leagues and cities of Inner Mongolia, I shall elaborate on Tongliao, Chifeng and Hohhot, where the bulk of my data collection took place. Map 3 and Map 4 show that in Tongliao and Chifeng both the agricultural and herding mode of life are present. Within these leagues, I specifically attended weddings and collected related data in Jarud banner and Darhan banner of Tongliao, as well as Arhorchin banner of Chifeng. Among these three banners, Arhorchin and Jarud are situated in the northern part of Tongliao and Chifeng, and

they are generally regarded as areas where herding predominates. Jarud banner in Tongliao has around 315,000 inhabitants and Mongols constitute 49.2 percent (Jarud, 2017). Arhorchin banner's population is 300,315 and 38 percent are Mongols (Arhorchin, 2017). By contrast, Darhan banner in the south-eastern part of Tongliao is regarded as an agricultural area, and it borders with the Chinese provinces of Liaoning and Jilin. It has a population of 537,000 and Mongols constitute 73.6 percent of the population; most of them engage in agricultural life (Darhan, 2017).

In addition to these rural areas I also collected data in the capital city, Hohhot, which has a population of 2,580,000, of which Mongols constitute around 10 percent.

Table 2: Overview of field work locations

Banner/city	Prefecture	Banner/city population	Percentage of Mongols	Major economic modes
Arhorchin banner	Chifeng	300,315	38%	Herding
Jarud banner	Tongliao	315,000	49.2%	Herding
Darhan banner	Tongliao	537,000	73.6%	Agriculture
Hohhot	Hohhot	2,580,000	10%	Urban

Before I proceed, I wish to clarify that the purpose of the thesis is neither to make a comparison among the weddings in the above areas nor to claim that my data are representative of weddings in each of these areas. It is not the goal of this thesis to show what a "typical" Arhorchin, Darhan, Hohhot or Jarud wedding might look like. The local characteristics of wedding traditions have already been explored widely by Mongolian folklorists in the past (See Chapter Two, Section 2.4). The reason I conducted my fieldwork in these places is mainly due to the informants I had and the contacts I had established both before and during the fieldwork (see Chapter Three. Section 3.4 for details). In addition, I also clarify that throughout the thesis, I use the categories such as "Mongolian" and "Chinese". These categories are essentially an illusion as no single type of "Mongolian" or "Chinese" ever exists. However, to make any culture or language audible and graspable, ethnographies always need to flatten multivocality and diversities inherent to any culture. My text unavoidably homogenizes the multitudinous discourses that are heard in the context of

Mongolian weddings. This, unfortunately, is the necessary result of producing a coherent description.

1.3 Outline of thesis

This thesis offers a critical examination of the performance of linguistic and cultural authenticity by exploring contemporary wedding ceremonies of Mongols in Inner Mongolia. The thesis is organised into seven chapters as follows. In this Introduction chapter, following the background and rationale of the research, I have provided an orientation to Inner Mongolia by introducing its administrative characteristics, the life styles of various groups of Mongols and the places where I conducted field research.

Chapter Two reviews the existing research into language shift in Inner Mongolia, and language commodification, performance, and wedding ceremonies in various contexts. The first section reviews the research into language contact and language shift in Inner Mongolia in relation to two distinct periods: Chinese agricultural in-migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and more recent urbanization phenomena dating from the past five decades. Following the overview of the language contact situation in Inner Mongolia, the second section reviews studies on language use and the performance of authenticity in ritual contexts within linguistically endangered communities; and the intersection of authenticity and language performance with commodification strategies in such contexts. From there the chapter narrows the focus and reviews the literature on wedding ceremonies and the role of such ceremonies in changing societies. The review closes with recent research related specifically to Mongolian weddings and the identification of the research lacuna.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology that undergirds the study. First, the chapter explains why critical sociolinguistic ethnography was adopted as the main approach. After providing the rationale for the research design, the chapter goes on to detail the data collection and various data collection methods including collection of wedding videos, participant observation, artefacts collection, interviews and social media data. Following the data collection, I discuss my own researcher positionality with a particular focus on how I adjusted my role as both an outsider and insider and what strategies I employed to obtain rich data and to ensure research ethics. The chapter concludes with the methods of analysis and a summary.

Chapter Four provides an in-depth analysis of the production of Mongolian weddings. The chapter first analyses the mediated images of perfect Mongolian weddings and the diversity in actual Mongolian weddings by examining the wedding costumes and stage

decorations. The chapter further examines the wider context of symbolic production of such imageries: namely promotion of costume-wearing, and state-sponsored costume competitions and heritage development. From there the Chapter unravels the key agents behind the production of wedding imageries by offering case studies on two costume studios. Lastly, the chapter discusses another important participant of and contributor to the production and consumption of weddings: the wedding guests. The guest themselves need to be understood in the context of increasing banquets, thus the chapter closes with an examination of the proliferation of banquets in a society where Mongols are struggling with ongoing socio-economic change.

Chapter Five narrows the scope and explores the sequencing of the wedding ceremony. The chapter begins by describing the sequencing of traditional Mongolian weddings as described in the literature. Then the chapter addresses the inescapability of contemporary Mongolian weddings from the gaze of camera. Following this, the chapter examines contemporary wedding ceremonies in two specific spatial and temporal frames, namely the home and the restaurant. Then the chapter continues to explore how the performance of weddings on stage employs dominant discourses and how the performance of different ritual genres reproduces the hierarchies observed throughout the thesis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relocation of wedding performances into public space and its intertwinement with the reinvented tradition and revalued authenticity.

Chapter Six examines the language and genre choices of wedding speeches and the metalinguistic comments on these choices. The chapter describes the language and genre choices observed in the wedding speeches of monolingual Mongolian weddings, bilingual weddings and Chinese-dominant weddings. After this, the chapter examines the metalinguistic comments in those wedding speeches. The chapter concludes with a critical discussion of how language and genre choice create layers of stratification by framing Mongolian weddings as traditional or non-traditional, as Mongolian or Chinese, as pure or impure.

Chapter Seven summarises the key findings by revisiting the research questions and relating the thesis findings to previous studies of language shift, commodification and ritual performance. The chapter then goes on to outline the implications of the study and to suggest further research directions.

Chapter Two: Literature review
2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing research into language shift in Inner Mongolia, and language commodification, performance, and wedding ceremonies in various contexts, with a particular focus on contexts undergoing rapid social change. The first section sets the scene with a review of research into language contact and language shift in Inner Mongolia in relation to two distinct periods: Chinese agricultural in-migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and more recent urbanization phenomena dating from the past five decades.

Following the overview of the language contact situation in Inner Mongolia in the wake of migration and urbanization, the second section broadens the focus and reviews research into language, performance and commodification. Of particular import are, first, studies on language use and the performance of authenticity in ritual contexts within linguistically endangered communities; and, second, their intersection with commodification strategies in such contexts.

From there the chapter narrows the focus again to review the literature on language use and language ideologies in a specific ritual, namely the wedding ceremony. Beginning with an overview of research related to wedding ceremonies in societies undergoing social change, the review will then move on to recent research related specifically to Mongolian weddings.

In sum, this literature review brings two distinct bodies of research into conversation: research on language shift in Inner Mongolia, on the one hand, and research on language ideologies, ritual performance, authenticity and commodification in European and North American contexts, on the other. There is a clear gap linking these two bodies of research and the chapter will therefore close by situating the present study within the existing research and arguing that it will address a clear research lacuna by examining multilingual language use and language ideologies in contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies.

2.2 Language contact and language shift in Inner Mongolia
2.2.1 Overview of the emergence of Inner Mongolia within China

Inner Mongolia was a loose administrative unit created as a result of the Manchu conquest of the Mongols in the seventeenth century. It was one part of the area of historical Mongolia, the other being Outer Mongolia (Bulag, 2002b). Inner Mongolia, by its very name, connotes internal and direct administration from the Chinese perspective (for details see Chapter One Section 1.2). Nevertheless, during the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Mongols in Inner Mongolia enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy and were political allies and vassals of

the Manchus because they had helped them to conquer China (Lattimore, 1940). The alliance was maintained and consolidated through a number of imperial marriages (Rawski, 1991). After the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the declaration of independence of Outer Mongolia in 1911, and the subsequent establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic with the help of the USSR in 1924, the question of resolving the status of Inner Mongolia needed to be dealt with (Bulag, 2002b).

Bulag (2002b) lays out the details related to the various parties involved in determining the status of Inner Mongolia before the establishment of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region in 1947. To begin with, after the collapse of the Qing dynasty, Inner Mongolia was overrun by Chinese warlords. Between 1931 and 1945 eastern Inner Mongolia came under Japanese rule and western Inner Mongolia was controlled by Chinese nationalist forces. At the same time, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) also started to gain momentum. Against this complicated geopolitical situation, Inner Mongolian nationalists were divided among themselves and formed several camps. In the end, after the Soviet-Mongolian declaration of war against Japan in 1945, Ulanhu, a Mongolian communist who played a major leadership role, secured CCP victory in Inner Mongolia. Shortly after, in 1947, the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region was founded, two years prior to the establishment of the PRC in 1949 (for details about the incorporation of Inner Mongolia by the CCP, see Bulag, 2010).

2.2.2 Chinese colonization and language contact in Inner Mongolia

Having offered the background of how Inner Mongolia became part of China, I shall now discuss Chinese migration into Inner Mongolia, a phenomenon which started during the Qing dynasty. By 1749 Chinese migration had become so intense that Emperor Qianlong ordered closure of the Mongolian border to Chinese immigrants in an effort to protect Mongols from the increasing numbers of Chinese who migrated to Inner Mongolia to cultivate farmland (Bulag, 2002b). Even so, Mongolian nobles continued to lease their lands to Chinese peasants in circumvention of the policy (Burensain, 2007). In Darhan banner, for instance, there were already substantial numbers of Chinese migrants in 1784 (Burensain, 2007). Furthermore, between 1821 and 1866, areas with significant concentrations of Chinese migrants started to have their own administrative units referred to as 县 (*xian*; "Chinese county"). These *xian* gradually became independent from the administration of Mongolian banners (see Chapter One, Section 1.2).

The official ban on Chinese immigration to Mongolia was lifted in 1902 to raise revenue for payments required of China in the Boxer Treaty (Bulag, 2002b, p. 108). As a consequence, large numbers of Chinese peasants joined the rush to Inner Mongolia. By 1912

there were 1.5 million Chinese in Inner Mongolia, and they outnumbered the Mongolian population of around one million by 50 percent (Bulag, 2002). With the arrival of more and more Chinese, an increasing number of Chinese counties were established. For instance, the current Tong Liao city was first established as Tong Liao *xian* in 1912 due to the settlement of Chinese peasants in this area and the cultivation of rich pastureland along the Xi Liao River (Burensain, 2007).

Chinese migration continued unabated after the collapse of the Qing dynasty. By 1947, Chinese migrants had become the overwhelming majority of the population of Inner Mongolia constituting over 85 percent of the total population of 5,617,000 people (Bulag, 2004, p. 87). The number of Chinese migrants further increased after 1947 as a result of land reform and collectivization. Between 1950 and 1957, 1,536,100 Chinese migrated into Inner Mongolia. An additional 1,926,600 Chinese arrived between 1958 and 1960 as a result of famine. More and more pastures were claimed for agriculture during this period (Bulag, 2004, p. 92). As a result of these various waves of migration, today, there are 2,681,000 (or 11 percent) Mongols compared to 20,914,152 (or 81 percent) Chinese living in Inner Mongolia (Jankowiak, 2013, p. 57).

While Inner Mongolia became a magnet for Chinese migrants, the Mongolian population was poorly prepared for Chinese colonization. A key problem was that no unified Mongolian identity or representation existed because the Qing deliberately segregated Mongolian tribal groups as part of their divide-and-rule policy to prevent a unified Mongolian opposition. These smaller tribal groups were vulnerable to colonization (Bulag, 2003b).

During each wave of Chinese migration, Mongolian herders were pushed further away from rich pastures and headwaters of streams and were increasingly forced to the edge of the steppe into arid grasslands or semi-deserts. However, not all Mongols retreated from the Chinese and many Mongols took up sedentary farming themselves as a way to sustain their livelihoods on increasingly limited land. In fact, Mongols in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia adopted an agricultural mode of life as early as the mid-nineteenth century (Burensain, 2007). Overall, pastures in southern Inner Mongolia were opened up for cultivation early because of their favourable conditions for agriculture. Thus, Chinese *xian* and agricultural areas farmed by both Chinese and Mongolian farmers are located in the south

of Inner Mongolia, while pastoral areas under the Mongolian banner administration are mostly situated in the north.

The Chinese settlement of Inner Mongolia has meant that different groups of Mongols have experienced different degrees of contact with Chinese people at different periods, in different geographical locations and according to different economic modes of life. Mongols who settled, took up farming and mingled with Chinese migrants underwent high degrees of language shift and even language loss. In contrast, Mongols who maintained a pastoral life in the remote north and west have maintained Mongolian as their main language to a larger degree (Bulag, 2003b).

As just mentioned, widespread language shift from Mongolian to Chinese has been underway since the late nineteenth century. The first groups of Mongols to become sedentary and adapt to Chinese language and culture were the Tumed and Kharchin Mongols.

Tumed refers to the area around Hohhot. Chinese migration to Tumed started as early as in the sixthteen century during Ming Dynasty when Tumed land was opened up for farming. By the nineteenth century it had been completely turned into farm land (G. Ma, 2001). Those Tumed Mongols who remained on the land had all become sedentary farmers by that time (G. Ma, 2001). In addition to the fundamental transformation in their economic mode, Tumed Mongols were Sinicized ("assimilated to Chinese") linguistically in the late nineteenth century; by the early twentieth century the Tumed had practically no Mongolian speakers (Bulag, 2003b). Today, Tumed Mongols have become indistinguishable from Han Chinese farmers in most aspects, including language, kinship structure, religion, culture, and lifestyle (G. Ma, 2001). However, many retain a strong sense of Mongolian identity and pride themselves on their Mongolian heritage (G. Ma, 2001).

The Kharchin Mongols live in the south-west of Chifeng and the north-west of Liaoning provinces in south-eastern Inner Mongolia. They underwent similar Sinification processes to the Tumed Mongols in the early twentieth century. However, in comparison to the linguistically Sinicized Tumed, Kharchin Mongolsmaintained their language for longer, as a 2008 study (Bao, 2008) discovered. The research found that of the 71,579 Kharchin Mongols in Ningcheng *xian*, which used to be Kharchin central banner, 9,649 (13.5 percent) were found to still speak Mongolian (Bao, 2008). However, the study also found that young Kharchin Mongols were undergoing language shift from Mongolian-Chinese bilingualism to Chinese monolingualism, while their parents had undergone language shift from Mongolian monolingualism to Mongolian-Chinese bilingualism and also to Chinese monolingualism.

Furthermore, the researcher observed that Chinese use had steadily increased in the public domain and was starting to trickle into the family domain (Bao, 2008).

While the Tumed and Kharchin Mongols experienced overwhelming language shift, the same is not true of all Mongols who took up farming. Other groups such as the Khorchin Mongols developed a highly mixed variety of Mongolian that is heavily influenced by Chinese.

Khorchin Mongols mostly live in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia and neighboring provinces such as Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang. Historically, Khorchin Mongols were a Mongolian tribal group led by Hasar, Genghis Khan's brother. During the Qing dynasty, the Khorchins were divided into ten banners, which later were restructured either into Inner Mongolia or into other Chinese provinces. Today, there are around two million Khorchin speakers and they constitute the largest Mongolian dialect group (Jiang, 2011). Khorchin Mongolian is also the Mongolian dialect influenced most heavily not only by Chinese but also other languages and dialects, such as Manchu and Kharchin Mongolian (Jiang, 2011). Some scholars have gone as far as to identify Khorchin Mongolian as a pidgin language (e.g., Bulag, 2003). Others have pointed out that Khorchin Mongolian is a hybrid language that is neither understood easily by other Mongolian speakers nor by Chinese speakers (Schatz, 2012, p. 89).

In sum, large-scale Chinese settlement in Inner Mongolia over the past centuries has resulted in a number of linguistic outcomes for Mongols, ranging from Mongolian-Chinese bilingualism via large-scale Chinese migration, to complete language shift towards Chinese monolingualism. Although contact with Chinese has been most prolonged and intense in eastern Inner Mongolia, Mongolian is still being transmitted from generation to generation, despite widespread bilingualism and language contact phenomena (Puthuval, 2017).

Having examined language contact and shift in Inner Mongolia in relation to the history of Chinese settlement, I now turn to urbanization, a newly emerging factor that is playing an increasingly important role in language contact in Inner Mongolia.

2.2.3 Language contact and urbanization

The spread of Chinese, uneven as it has been, that went hand in hand with a change to sedentary farming, particularly in the South-East of Inner Mongolia, has been further complicated by the processes of urbanization that have taken place since the end of the twentieth century. Prior to the large-scale migration of Mongols into cities that has taken place since the late 1990s and early 2000s, only a small number of Mongols lived in cities and townships. Those who did were mostly Mongolian cadres, intellectuals and workers

(Bilik, 1998b, p. 80). In the 1950s, urban Mongols, for instance in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia's capital city, had been reorganized into a wide network of individual work units that linked one's home with one's place of employment, thereby effectively preventing the formation of Mongolian neighbourhood enclaves (Jankowiak, 2013). In Hohhot, the ratio of Han to Mongolian residents was twelve to one in 1984 (Jankowiak, 2013). This means that the younger generation of urban Mongols has been brought up in a mainly Han Chinese environment, which means they have intermingled and interacted with Han people in all social spheres (Bilik, 1998a). Furthermore, an unintended consequence of the work-unit policy in the 1950s was to make it difficult for Mongolian families to transmit their language to their children (Jankowiak, 2013, p. 56). Thus, Mongolian is mainly a means of symbolic communication for urban Mongols while it remains an everyday language for Mongols in pastoral areas and some farming areas (Bilik, 1998b). For centuries, urban Mongols have lived and intermingled with the Han Chinese, intermarriages and fraternity have been well developed into families and communities on both sides, especially in the cities. This lopsided assimilation of Mongols on city and township levels has been further accelerated by economic reforms in China (Bilik, 1998b).

However, the new whirlwind of urbanization in the last twenty years has impacted Mongolian language and culture to a previously unknown extent. As Puthuval (2017) claims, in the 1950s, the phenomenon of urban language shift only affected a small minority of Mongols, the intellectual and political elite. Today, its impact is broadening. Like elsewhere in China, more and more people are relocating from the country to the city, and almost every young Mongol has spent part of their life in the city as a student or a migrant worker (Puthuval, 2017).

Similarly, Jankowiak (2013) notes that due to China's massive internal migration, tens of thousands of Mongolian-speaking migrants move to cities such as Hohhot and work there, primarily in the service industry. He suggests further that their numbers have expanded the unofficial urban Mongolian population by at least five percent, and today, fifteen percent of Hohhot's unofficial population is Mongol, compared with eight percent of official Hohhotian Mongols (Jankowiak, 2013, p. 62). The official Hohhotian Mongols are those who have their *hukou* (in Chinese: 户口; "household registration") in Hohhot.

These new urban Mongolian migrants to the cities and townships of Inner Mongolia face new linguistic situations and challenges. How they cope with these, including the potential threat of losing their language, has largely remained unexplored to date. It is not just

those urban Mongols and migrants to the cities who are being swept up in the whirlwind of urbanization, but even Mongolian herders and farmers who remain in Mongol-concentrated rural areas encounter more and more contact with Chinese due to the accessibility of modern tools, such as fast transport, mobile phones and affordable Wi-Fi connection services, even in remote villages. Thus, the blurring boundary between rurality and urbanity will potentially affect further contemporary Mongols' language practices. Thus far, the most recent investigation of language contact and shift in Inner Mongolia comes from Puthuval (2017) who studied intergenerational language shift in Inner Mongolia since 2014. It is worth quoting her important findings at length:

> As of the late twentieth century, bilingualism with Chinese has become almost universal among Mongolian speakers in China. If one speaks Mongolian at all, one is bilingual. Some ethnic Mongols have shifted to only speaking Chinese. Nonetheless, the spread of bilingualism has not been immediately followed by loss of Mongolian in the next generation. Rather, bilingualism in many cases persists for multiple generations. The earliest that the Mongol community could be described as fully bilingual is perhaps 1980, that is, any Mongolian speaker born after that date is almost certain to be bilingual. It does not seem like Mongolian in Inner Mongolia is headed for a mass language shift in the immediate future. If present trends continue, stable bilingualism could still take hold, though probably only among a minority of the ethnic Mongol population. Mongolian in China, while not in imminent danger of disappearing … is in a relatively early stage of endangerment (Puthuval, 2017, p. 160).

Thus, since the late twentieth century, almost all Mongols have become bilingual speakers, no matter where they live. This means that the previous uneven distribution of Chinese among Mongolian groups had been gradually levelled out by the late twentieth century.

Overall, with the exception of the study on intergenerational language shift by Puthuval (2017), research examining the ongoing urbanization and its inevitable impact on language use by the expanding population of urban Mongols remains severely limited to date. Research into how urban Mongols (re)valorize certain forms of Mongolian linguistic and cultural practices is therefore highly desirable. To place that research into its disciplinary context, the next section will review how indigenous and minority communities in other societies use

their languages in ritualistic contexts when they face language shift and impending obsolescence.

2.3 Ritual performance, authenticity and language ideology

In this section I will review research on minority languages in relation to performance and authenticity. I will show that performance in religious and ceremonial contexts may constitute a vital setting for minority language use and identity expression, especially for minority groups undergoing language shift. In such contexts, minority language use may be undergirded by strong linguistic ideologies, which regiment the form of minority language and order the hierarchy of languages. However, in addition to being the most valuable capital for minority and indigenous community to express their identities and ensure their cultural continuity in the face of language endangerment, minority languages have been circulated on markets as consumable commodities in various contexts, such as heritage tourism. Thus, we have witnessed a fluctuation between language as a marker of identity and the core of community existence to language as a valuable asset on the market appropriated by different parties.

My review in this section is structured as follows: first, I will review research examining the use of minority and indigenous languages in ritual performances in linguistically endangered communities. Then I will review research examining the shift of language from a marker of authenticity to a marketable product in a variety of contexts. In doing so, I aim to underline, first, the crucial ideological role that minority languages, even in truncated forms, may play for peripheral communities. Second, I aim to lay out the complexities and tensions triggered by displays of authenticity and by commodification processes. The overarching goal of this section to is show how existing research in a variety of contexts relates to and informs my research into contemporary wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia. This includes Mongolian language use in rituals, the context of language shift and language contact, commodification, performed authenticity, as well as tensions and opportunities arising from the commodification.

2.3.1 Ritual and the performance of authenticity in contexts of language endangerment

In contexts of language shift and obsolescence, ritual performance may provide an important way to open up new spaces for languages with limited practical use in daily life. For instance, in the Buryat Republic of Russia, shamanic healing rituals provide Buryats with incentives to learn Buryat since shamanic interventions involve communicating and negotiating with the ancestors in the Buryat language (Quijada, Graber, & Stephen, 2015). Although language revitalization is not the goal of shamans or patients, shamanic practices are effective loci of

language and cultural revitalization because shamanic treatment requires genealogical and linguistic knowledge (Quijada et al., 2015). This example demonstrates that minority language use during ritualistic performance can be an effective way for people to be exposed to the minority language, even if only in symbolic ways, to connect with the past and to increase their ethnic pride. In another example, the cultural performances of Texas Czech music bands were found to help re-enact symbolic boundaries of the Texas Czech community in the minds of performers and their audiences and create an environment conducive to heritage language use (Dutkova-Cope, 2000). The researcher argues that Czech lyrics in Texas Czech folk songs contribute to ethnolinguistic maintenance, as they remind young Texans of the Czech descent of their ethnic identity and expose them to their heritage language (Dutkova-Cope, 2000). In yet another examples, Ahlers (2006) demonstrates that the use of Native American languages in public events and ceremonies constitutes a form of linguistic identity marker. The public use of Native American languages in greetings and concluding segments of community events by non-fluent speakers foregrounds the symbolic functions of language over referential functions. In doing so, the Native American identity shared by speaker and audience is highlighted (Ahlers, 2006).

In situations of language endangerment, however, ritual language use may also become a lightning rod for intragroup disputes, which can focus on, among other things, who speaks an "authentic" version of the language or who should be allowed to teach it or introduce new terms into the language (Ahlers, 2006, p. 60). Kroskrity (2000), for instance, shows in his study of Arizona Tewa ritual speech that indigenous purism and strict compartmentalization are two dimensions of Arizona Tewa linguistic ideology during ritual performance. In addition, he notes that proper ritual performance is expected to replicate past conventions; innovation is neither desired nor tolerated. More importantly, the ceremonial language is idealized as "pure language" and hence functions as a model of linguistic prestige (Kroskrity, 2000, p. 301). Similar to language ideologies in Tewa ritual speech, the Yuchi language of eastern Oklahoma also remains the preferred language for ritual discourse, despite the lack of fluent speakers (Jackson & Linn, 2000). Jackson and Linn (2000) observe that while extended orations are now delivered in English, certain shorter and more specialized genres continue to be performed in Yuchi, such as the stylized announcements made at ritual dance events (Jackson & Linn, 2000, p. 61).

In communities where language obsolescence is widespread and advanced, ritual events may thus become the last social setting in which the language is retained. This is why the fixed ritual text is often highly valued: exactly for the sake of its rigid form and its continuity

with tradition, even if only a small number of people understand its referential content. It is in these religious and ceremonial contexts that language may become a valuable currency, controlled, in most cases, by community elders and ritual specialists. It is also in such contexts that language tends to become reified further.

Furthermore, ritual performance and contested symbolic use of minority languages have become inescapably intertwined with the commodification of ethnicity in late capitalism. The same symbolic functions which constitute the core of ritual performance and minority identity have rendered language an increasingly sought-after commodity. In many contexts, language has become a valorised symbol to be traded and to be consumed, mostly by "the aspirational class" (Currid-Halkett, 2017, p. 21).

2.3.2 Minority languages and cultures on the market

A range of sociolinguistic studies have been concerned with the commodification of minority languages and the tensions and new opportunities for minorities evoked by this process (Duchêne & Heller, 2011; Heller, 2003; Heller, Jaworski, & Thurlow, 2014; Pietikäinen, Jaffe, Kelly-Holmes, & Coupland, 2016). For instance, in the context of sports, Del Percio and Duchêne (2011) examine how the shift from language as an expression of community to language as a commodifiable product engenders tension among football fans and other stakeholders in a Swiss football club. Authentic practices such as chanting songs in dialect created by everyday fans are appropriated by the football industry, transforming local and vernacular practices into commercial resources. This commercialization of fan support practices and the subsequent actions taken by local fans to combat the wave of commercialization meant that both parties became involved in an endless struggle between the commodification of fan culture and resistance to this commercialization (Del Percio & Duchêne, 2011). This struggle between authenticity and commodification in ethno-commerce is not unique to Swiss football fans as Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) show. These researchers argue that ethno-commodities have the capacity for infinite replication without losing their essential character as symbols of authenticity. As such, ethno-commodities are embedded in an open-ended dialectic in which, on the one hand, cultural property constitutes the distinctive identity of those who possess it, while, on the other, it is this very identity that makes the property "cultural" to begin with (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, p. 32). To return to the example of the Swiss football club, it is their authentic fan culture practices that separate the club from others, but the constant duplication and appropriation of fan culture by industry stems from the very fact that these fans and their vernacular practice embody "authenticity". The dialectic that binds subject to object, object to subject, underlies the

fusion of cultural and economic capital and ensures the enduring symbolic quality of many cultural products and practices in the face of their mass marketing (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009).

In many minority contexts, this open-ended dialectic is carefully and reflexively managed by "legitimate minorities" or "authentic owners" themselves in the process of commodifying and performing their own culture. For instance, in the Sámi context, a lasso teacher from a Sámi family, dressed in traditional Sámi dress may teach reindeer lassoing techniques to tourists using the Sámi language, although it is incomprehensible to most of them (Pietikäinen, 2013). Learning a Sámi activity (lassoing) and being taught in an endangered, indigenous language by a Sámi man wearing a Sámi dress is a rich point of authentication in the visit (Pietikäinen, 2013). This performative aspect of authenticity is also studied by Coupland and Coupland (2014) in mining heritage sites in Cornwall and Wales. Looking at authenticity through the lens of performance, they foreground the reality that the mining sites, despite their material and cultural authenticities, are selective and to various extents scripted representations of cultural histories, constructed partly for economic purposes (Coupland & Coupland, 2014, p. 504). Thus, the miner-guides draw on their personal history and habitus for credibility in order to construct and perform the past and its traditions for both consumption and commemoration (Coupland & Coupland, 2014).

In addition to the context of heritage tourism, the commodification of language and the performance of authenticity have also been studied in the context of ethnic shops and restaurants. Ivory (2017), for instance, offers an interesting study on Sub-Saharan Africans engaged in selling African-American Hip Hop fashion in urban Tokyo. Strategic ethnic performance is deployed by referencing the targeted ethnic group through speech, mannerisms, dress, and claims to a particular ethnic heritage (Ivory, 2017). At the same time, Sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs tend to select names such as Harlem, Brooklyn, NY Broadway, American Hip Hop, and Jay-E Fashion in their boutique Hip Hop shops in order to reference geographic and social connections associated with African-American culture and New York City as the supposed birthplace of Hip Hop. The ambiance and décor of the shops are also crafted to heighten the customer's perception of engaging in an authentic Hip Hop experience. Many shops feature graffiti-style spray-painting on store signage, promotional leaflets, and the exterior or interior of the boutique (Ivory, 2017). More importantly, apart from the appropriation of displayable signs, the more established and successful Sub-Saharan African owners make regular trips to the USA (usually to Los Angeles or New York) to do business with clothing wholesalers and observe current fashion on the street. The author notes

that ties to the USA have the additional benefit of lessening the need for strategic ethnic performance over time. Displays of deep knowledge about the contemporary US Hip Hop scene by the Sub-Saharan African entrepreneur help to develop a loyal customer base who understand that the clothing is current and directly from the USA even if the body selling the clothing is not (Ivory, 2017). This demonstrates that the knowledge and agency of cultural entrepreneurs are as important as the inalienable link between a particular body or ethnicity and the performed version of it. As Pietikäinen et al. (2016, p. 78) argue, authentic objects need not be presented or accepted as singular, inalienable, or fully original to be authentic; that is they are defined by cultural agency rather than cultural "essence".

In this sense, the authentic need not be exclusively linked to a product's "essence" but to an ensemble of conditions of appropriation and experience surrounding their discovery, selection, consumption, modification, display, narration and so forth (Pietikäinen et al., 2016). For instance, in the Sámi context, the making of reindeer fur shoes was traditionally learned in the home and transmitted from one generation to another; today, courses in these artisanal practices are offered. Thus, traditional ways of learning have been replaced by contemporary forms of agency and intentional acts of identification with traditions (Pietikäinen et al., 2016). This valorisation of effort, performativity, and a reflexive stance to tradition is one of the features of transactional authenticity identified by Pietikäinen et al. (2016). To go back to the case of the established Hip Hop retailers in Tokyo, it is the accumulated knowledge about American Hip Hop culture that made them established cultural entrepreneurs and agentive mediators of "authenticity". Thus in this transactional mode of authenticity, performance and artfulness are construed as positive, and mediation between appearance and "essence" is recognized (Pietikäinen et al., 2016, p. 78). What this means for the scope of authenticity is that the involvement of cultural experts and cooperative consumer-learners expand the criteria of authenticity that was previously based on a "natural" link and congruence between appearance and "essence". In respect to languages, this expansion of criteria means that linguistic and other semiotic resources can be assembled in new ways to create parodies of familiar images, accents or styles. And this opens a door to dis-embedding linguistic and semiotic forms and styles from familiar social matrices and reentextualizing them in novel contexts, creating new resonances and dissonances, new stances and postures, new ideological and political possibilities (Pietikäinen et al., 2016).

But these new possibilities of language and culture in new spaces do not mean that the previous essentializing conceptions of authenticity disappear altogether. Jaffe and Oliva (2013) demonstrate in their research that the display and commodification of the Corsican

language as a marker of authentic heritage and place tend to reproduce essentialist models of the relationship between language and identity. That is, the commodification of heritage as a possible product tends to confine Corsican, and minority languages more generally, to emblematic functions and does not disrupt the default assumptions and conventional expectations that tourist encounters should take place in major languages such as English or French (Jaffe & Oliva, 2013). In other words, the seemingly mobile and freely moving minority language in tourist spaces often does not disrupt default assumptions about minority and majority languages and established boundaries between the two. It is this relatively fixed boundary and conventional essentialist image of the minority language that coexists with other new modes of valorising minority languages.

Overall, the entrance of minority languages into the market creates both challenges and opportunities. The conflicts between Swiss football fans and the football industry show the tensions engendered by the process of commodification of the language and identity of "authentic" fans. However, the competitive marketplace has also brought various parties into play and performance with various eclectic aspects of authenticities, including "legitimate" possessors of minority language and culture, knowledgeable cultural mediators and experts, and cooperative consumers. The creativity, heightened reflexivity and agency of the various parties create new added values for languages and traditions, such as the Swiss German dialect, Sámi or African-American Hip Hop discourse. But, it is of particular note that these newly gained values of minority languages and cultures - even if they sometimes contest and challenge the conventional and stereotypical images related to minorities - are intertwined with essentializing conceptions of authenticity in most contexts. As Myadar (2007) and Nichols (2014) argue, these staged performances, constructed authenticity, and revalued and reinvested heritage, instead of empowering minorities on the margin of society, may further essentialize them and obscure their lived realities under the romantic guise of neoliberalism and neo-colonialism.

Having examined the performances of authenticity and languages in various contexts, such as community ceremonies, heritage tourisms and ethnic shops, I will now focus on the ritual performance that is at the heart of this study, namely the wedding ceremony.

2.4 Ritual performance in wedding ceremonies

Weddings are regarded as a complex of social, political, religious, and economic systems. As such, wedding ceremonies as a major and near-universal life-cycle ritual can be considered as a mirror of social changes and also a medium implicated in affirming and contesting such changes. This section reviews research investigating wedding ceremonies in changing

societies and demonstrates that the wedding ceremony constitutes a ritual space where multiple signs and powers are being negotiated and interpreted in different ways by different actors to make meanings in a society where change and ambivalence loom large. I will first review research examining weddings in changing societies, with a focus on how weddings reflect and constitute socio-political changes. Then I will review studies dealing with how weddings reinforce or complicate ethnic and lifestyle diversity within society, with a focus on the commodification of tradition in wedding ceremonies. Overall, through these studies I will show how people seek means to engage with, understand and explain these changes through their weddings performances. Finally, I will move on to review the literature that is specific to Mongolian wedding ceremonies.

2.4.1 Weddings in transforming societies

Weddings are a window through which we can gain insight into a society. In a study on post-Soviet Lithuanian modernity by Lankauskas (2003), middle-class urban Lithuanians' wedding celebrations are examined as social forums employed for conceptualizing and reconfiguring the meanings of national identity *vis-à-vis* the profound systematic changes brought about by the collapse of totalitarian state socialism in the early 1990s, as well as in relation to the ambiguous "transition to the west" then underway in this Eastern European nation. In the process of this lifecycle ritual Lithuanians invoked their historical past, reinvented "tradition" in various performative acts, and simultaneously consumed diverse "Western" commodities. In doing so, Lithuanians in the early 1990s mobilized their national identity informed by the idea of "tradition" and Lithuanian-ness to negotiate, adapt to, and critique the ongoing post-socialist and disorienting modernization. The ethnographic exploration of this rite of passage also reveals Lithuanians caught in a paradox: "people who yearn for a well-defined, firmly anchored and homogenous self and people whose identity is hybrid and constantly in motion" (Lankauskas, 2003, p. 278). Conducted in the context of a peripheral European state, Lankauskas' (2003) study shows the ambivalence and conflicts experienced by Lithuanians on their way to Westernization and modernization. Furthermore, it also shows local actors' practices in adapting to and creatively dealing with changes beyond their control, which is brought into focus again by the following study in the context of Tajikistan (S. Roche & Hohmann, 2011).

S. Roche and Hohmann (2011) examine the role of weddings as a vehicle to deal with transformation in the shifting sociopolitical milieu of Tajikistan. Both the Soviet and post-Soviet Tajik state strove to regulate and standardize the weddings of their citizens. For instance, the modernization of family law under Soviet rule regulated the age of the girl

(seventeen as the lowest marriageable age), and banned polygyny and parts of the bride price, and through these regulations the state demonstrated its hegemonic claims in relation to the family (S. Roche & Hohmann, 2011). However, despite the introduction of strict rules, people maintained cultural practices of early marriage throughout the Soviet period, and occasional circumvention of the law was enough to reactivate local cultural identity against general conformity (S. Roche & Hohmann, 2011). Furthermore, the "modern" wedding during the Soviet period was marked by a mix between the Komsomol weddings – the "modern" way of performing marriages – and various local rituals said to be traditional. In such "modern" weddings, the "bricolage" of wedding symbols successfully used the discourse of tradition to maintain a distinct local and ethnic identity against Soviet standardization. Thus, the Tajik wedding became a "bricolage" whose signs appropriated the power of both colonialism and tradition (S. Roche & Hohmann, 2011, p. 124).

The post-Soviet Tajik state has shown similar interest in regulating weddings. For instance in 2007, the state enacted laws to control conspicuous consumption and large-scale gatherings. Against the watchful eye of the state, people are continuously reshaping the wedding ceremony to maintain its meaning as a cultural event, for example, through the revival of "authentic" and religious weddings (S. Roche & Hohmann, 2011). Thus, Tajiks have creatively dealt with the tension between the nation state's claims to exert control over its citizens, on the one hand, and the use of traditions as historical continuity to create a common identity, on the other. In the wedding, people seek to reverse and reconstitute symbols of power, and the wedding as a ritual has the power to transcend the divide between compliance and traditional resistance, for it is a link between public state power and the personal lives of ordinary people, and a central element in the making of a national identity (S. Roche & Hohmann, 2011). It is this power of ritual to transcend the divide between conformity and resistance which makes weddings a space where different signs, symbols and ideologies can be experimented and collaged. However, apart from creatively dealing with state policies or challenges through reconstituting symbols, weddings also may bring to the surface existing intra-group divides and reproduce social powers in relation to class and ethnicity.

In Cyprus, the difference between "authentic", yet "backward" village weddings, and modern "champagne weddings" of the bourgeoisie held in high-end hotels is highlighted by Argyrou (1996), in his examination of weddings as symbolic struggle between tradition and modernity. Through illustrating this gap in wedding styles, the author points out that the bourgeoisie's claim to modernity is denied either as an imitation of the original, or as a loss

of local character. Conversely, working class adherence to local "authentic" wedding ceremonies reproduces their inferior position in the world (Argyrou, 1996, p. 130). In other words, Cypriots' resistance to Western influence as well as their appropriation of Western elements subjugates them further and reproduces the symbolic dominance of the West. However, to focus only on the inescapable fate of the symbolically dominated is to miss the potential complexity of the performance of weddings. Instead, it is worth noting how Cypriots re-channel and translate value-laden symbols such as the buffet, champagne, and the honeymoon, into their local context and create locally salient meanings. More importantly, the existence of various styles of weddings shows that the wedding is indeed an important means to display identities by people who have different degrees of access to sociocultural and economic capital. But the production of diverse identities through different wedding styles is increasingly interrelated to commodification of wedding ceremonies in many parts of the world (see Section 2.3.2).

In the context of Singapore (Heng, 2010), weddings are often categorized into "cosmopolitan" and "heartlander" styles and people who choose either display different "taste performance" (Heng (2010, p. 161) and enact different ethnic styles. Heng (2010) elaborates that, "cosmopolitan" lifestyles suggest a widely-cast, widely drawn-from trans-diasporic space, often attributing sources to include the "West" – in this case mostly North America and Western Europe. Individuals who direct their trajectories towards such lifestyles are often connected to better education, better housing, higher salaries, better life opportunities and a global-connectedness that suggests a worldly, dynamic selfhood. By contrast, "heartlander" lifestyles involve ethnic identifications adapted from China but perpetuated as distinctly Chinese. Individuals who steer their trajectories towards these lifestyles are often first or second-generation Chinese Singaporeans who made an actual migratory journey. At the same time many of these individuals do not speak English, are (relatively) poorly-educated, work blue-collar jobs and often treat "Western" practices with a degree of suspicion (Heng, 2010, p. 169). More importantly, the distance between these two wedding styles is perpetuated further by the wedding industry. Therefore, the dissonance between two different aesthetics and lifestyles, apart from creating ethnic hybridity within Singaporeans, is intertwined with an individual's consumption patterns and achievements. This means that the commercialised productions of ethnic hybridity expose the connections between wealth-making, socio-economic aspirations, conspicuous consumption and ethnicity (Heng, 2010, p. 215).

Echoing Heng (2010)'s study, the commercialized production of culture or identity in relation to wedding ceremonies has also been illustrated in the case of Japanese wedding

enterprises (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2000). Against the general background of the quest for cultural identity in Japanese society, wedding industries, in manifold ways, produce, package, and commercialize weddings. During this process of commercialization, the wedding industries constantly invent "new traditions" and combine them with elements of Western weddings to produce a uniquely Japanese wedding. In short, they construct Japanese culture and identity products. In return, the bridal couple who choose to buy the whole wedding package including the traditional-Japanese appearance as one of the highlights of their wedding day, are also involved in the construction of this contemporary Japanese cultural identity (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2000). In this sense, wedding industry is, to use the Comaroffs' term, "identity business" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, p. 64). Out of the seven dimensions of an identity business identified by Comaroff and Comaroff (2009), two dimensions are particularly relevant to the wedding industry. First, it is commerce that produces an ethnic group, not the other way around. Second, ethno-enterprise is always mandated by culture difference, though it may not originate in, nor have much to do with, the content of that difference (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, p. 74). It means that once on the road to incorporation, these ethnic groups began to assert – if necessary, to rediscover – their "traditions". Their examples of identity business focus on how Native American tribes' casino management on their reservations, mostly with the injection of capital from outside, raised ethnic groups from the dead by manufacturing identity through the power of capital. It is this power of capital to manufacture identity and to raise the "traditions" from the dead that works powerfully in wedding industry, as is illustrated by the Japanese wedding enterprise. Therefore, the commercialization of the wedding ceremony added another dimension to this rite of passage – a dimension intricately linked to the sweeping commodification of ethnicity and identity.

In short, the wedding has been an important platform on which ideological convictions and local, ethnic, and national dynamics are publicly displayed and have to be adapted, readapted, and creatively embedded to deal with the state's claim to control ritual practices as acts of national cultural representations, as S. Roche and Hohmann (2011, p. 113) suggest in the case of Tajiks, or to deal with social transition in post-Soviet Lithuania (Lankauskas, 2003). However, the emergence of the wedding industry and its sale of culture and ethnicity also suggest that the wedding has been turned into a potentially rich cult practice, culturally and economically: a cult attracts profit-driven industry, essence-seeking bridal couples and other spectators.

To sum up, the wedding ceremony is a ritual where various social actors, including individuals, corporations, and the state, engage in dynamic interactions with each other and

participate in the circulation of ideologies. In doing so, they adapt to, negotiate and create social change. None of the studies reviewed here focus specifically on language choice, language use and language ideologies in weddings. Such studies are relatively limited and those that have come to my attention will be introduced in Chapter Six below, when I focus on wedding speeches. Having examined weddings ceremonies as mirrors of social processes in various peripheral contexts undergoing social change, I shall now proceed to review research on Mongolian weddings.

2.4.2 Mongolian weddings

In the context of Inner Mongolia, there is a large body of literature about Mongolian wedding traditions and customs. Traditional Mongolian weddings of diverse Mongolian groups, such as Ordos weddings (Hasbilligt, 2014), Jarud weddings (Rashi-osor, 2012), Khalkha and Buryat weddings (Horlewa, 2003), have been described extensively by folklorists and ethnologists. These works mainly draw on historical and ethnographic sources: frequently-used historical records include medieval Mongolian texts such as *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Rachewiltz, 2006). These may be complemented with ethnographic data and other scholars' research related to Mongolian weddings that was conducted in the first half of the twentieth century. For instance, the newest edition of the book *Ordos wedding* (Hasbilligt, 2014), the first edition of which was published in 1983, is largely based on *honjin debter* ("The book on ceremony speech and speakers") written between the thirteenth and fourteenth century. In addition to referencing sources from history, Hasbilligt (2014) combined these sources with his observations of Mongolian weddings conducted among the Ordos Mongolian group in western Inner Mongolia. It is interesting to note that works related to Mongolian customs and traditions have been republished and circulated widely since 2000. Another ethnographic account of a Mongolian wedding is offered by Sneath (2000), whereby the author described a wedding he attended when he was doing fieldwork in Inner Mongolia in 1980s. However, wedding is not a key focus of Sneath's (2000) study, which concerns with the transformation in pastoral society in 1980s after the decollectivization.

Apart from this large body of literature of Mongolian wedding traditions and ethnographies, the contemporary Mongols' wedding ceremonies are seldom explored in and of itself, except one about weddings in Durbed banner (Suye, 2011). Durbed banner is located about 80 kilometres north of Hohhot. Analysed from the perspective of visual anthropology, Suye (2011) explores changes in Mongolian wedding videos from 1995 to 2010. From these videos, the study specifically describes the changes in Mongolian costumes, pre-wedding photos, wedding scenes, songs and music, and the decoration of the

new house. The study finds that Mongolian weddings, both in their form and content, are influenced by Western and Chinese elements, such as white wedding gowns, the decorative use of the English word "love", a red flower-wreath around the bride's head or the Chinese wedding custom of drinking wedlock wine. More importantly, the study also finds that Chinese and Western elements were sighted more often at weddings conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s. From around the mid-2000s to 2010, Mongolian elements became more and more visible, for instance, couples, their parents and some guests started to appear in Mongolian outfits from around 2008. In the last year of the study, couples were adorned with elaborate Mongolian costumes made by increasingly professionalized costume tailors, and couples were fully adorned with other Mongolian accessories, such as silver knives or bridal head decorations, delicately embedded with coral and silver. At the same time, from 2009, couples in white gowns and suits were only being seen occasionally.

A similar trend was found in pre-wedding photos, where a shift from Chinese and Western styles to Mongolian ones was also apparent. In the photos taken between 1996 and 2000, brides were dressed in white gowns or red Chinese wedding outfits and grooms in suits. In 2003, couples wore Chinese, Western and Mongolian costumes. However, in the last year of the study, this relatively balanced mixed style gave way to predominantly Mongolian style pre-wedding photos, in which couples wore various Mongolian costumes. Accompanying this trend is the change of the venue of the wedding ceremony, which was shifted from home to restaurant. This means that weddings have become public events. This shift as well as the growing popularity of Mongolian weddings gave birth to a group of wedding professionals since 2004 in Durbed. Wedding caterers started to offer services, including Mongolian-themed stage decoration, ritual speeches, Mongolian songs, throat singing, and horse-head fiddle performance during weddings. By 2010, the Mongolian-themed stage decoration included the image of Genghis Khan, white and black *sülde* ("holy standard/banner"), and hearth. But sometimes these Mongolian-themed visual displays are mixed with wedding flower doors and Chinese characters denoting double happiness.

The above descriptions in the study have illustrated that the revival of Mongolian-themed weddings in the last ten years are intertwined with the professionalization of Mongols' wedding ceremonies in public space. It also hinted that this revival has stimulateda the development of a series of businesses related to weddings, such as professional Mongolian costume tailors, photographers, wedding planners and ritual masters. The author

attributed these trends to the influence of globalization and Mongols' nostalgia after their gradual loss of pastoral life style (Suye, 2011).

In short, Mongolian ethnologists and folklorists have provided rich accounts of Mongolian wedding customs and tradition, and their works have achieved wide circulation in this century. Furthermore, Suye's (2011) exploration of the visual signs in contemporary Mongolian weddings shows the changes in their texture, which is constantly conditioned by the sociocultural and economic changes encountered by Mongols.

2.5 Summary and research questions

In this chapter, I have reviewed relevant research into language shift, performances and commodification of language and authenticity, as well as wedding ceremonies in a variety of contexts. I started with an overview of language shift and language contact in Inner Mongolia in relation to two factors, namely Chinese in-migration, which dates back centuries, and urbanization, which is more recent. First, the Chinese settlement of Inner Mongolia was described, covering the periods from the Qing dynasty to the PRC. Then, the uneven distribution of Chinese among Mongols was introduced. It has been suggested that due to Mongols' different economic modes of life and the different geographical locations, Chinese has spread among Mongolian groups unevenly, both in temporal and spatial aspects. Finally, the influence of urbanization since the end of the twentieth century up until now was dealt with separately as an emerging factor contributing to Mongols' increasing contact with and shift to Chinese.

Following the review of language shift and language contact in Inner Mongolia I reviewed ritual performance in the context of language shift in linguistically endangered communities, and authenticity and performance in the context of the commodification of minority language and culture. In doing so, I illustrated how language may act as a marker of indigenous identity and as an extremely contested and highly charged symbol among minority and indigenous communities who are undergoing language shift and cultural loss. The research I have reviewed suggests that ritual performance is a potentially rich terrain to study language use and ideology in communities undergoing language shift. Most studies I reviewed in this part have been conducted in communities where few numbers of proficient speakers remain. This situation is different in Inner Mongolia, where Mongolian is still vigorous with a strong demographic basis, even if it may be considered to have started to enter the early stage of

endangerment (see Section 2.2). Thus, it is worthwhile to explore how certain forms of Mongolian become regimented and contested in ritual performance in this context.

In a next step I reviewed how minority languages are injected with "new life" in the marketplace, often by various parties who may sometimes have conflicting interests. I focused again on performative contexts, mostly in heritage tourism and ethnic shops. In doing so, I underlined the tensions and opportunities, problems and promises engendered by the commodification of language, culture and ethnicity by local stakeholders as well as by outsiders.

Finally, I reviewed the literature on wedding ceremonies as a platform to display multiple signs, powers and identities in changing societies, such as Cyprus and Lithuania on the European periphery, or Tajikistan in central Asia. I also examined, through reviewing the cases of weddings in Singapore and Japan, the interplay between the wedding industry and ethnic and identity performance. In the end, I focused on research into Mongolian weddings. In doing so, I reviewed the literature on Mongolian tradition and wedding customs by ethnologists and folklorists. Then I also reviewed an anthropological study on contemporary Mongols' wedding videos in Inner Mongolia. There, it emerged that the weddings of contemporary Mongols have started to revalorize "Mongolian-themed" wedding styles including Mongolian costumes, photos, decorative objects and cultural symbols.

By bringing these three different strands of research into conversation, I aim to point out that the intersection of Mongolian weddings, authenticity, commodification and language shift in changing Inner Mongolia is waiting to be explored.

Specifically, it is worth exploring processes of language contact and shift in contemporary Mongolian weddings against the background of differential language shift and maintenance among peasant, pastoral and urban Mongols. How does widespread bilingualism coinciding with early language endangerment inform and shape contemporary wedding performances? What kinds of language ideologies emerge in the performance of wedding ceremonies? Overall, there is a clear gap as to how both change and continuity observed in weddings are related to processes of language loss and cultural change, specifically in the context of Inner Mongolia.

Regarding the increasing professionalization of Mongolian weddings, it is worth exploring what this process means for language and cultural change, and how the commodification of ethnicity and tradition intertwines with the revival of Mongolian weddings, and how this revival relates to the Chinese state's self-promotion as a multicultural and multiethnic nation. It is also worth examining further how those multiple decorative signs

and cultural symbols, together with wedding speeches, are produced, paid for and interpreted by different parties. The political economy of language - more specifically, of performative speech in Mongolian weddings - has yet to be touched upon. In other words, the interplay of wedding speeches, authenticity, performance and commodification in the minority context of China is waiting to be explored. In addition, the above-mentioned early stage of Mongolian language endangerment and Mongols' long-standing contact with Chinese will potentially shape further ritual speech, language ideology, authenticity and interact further with the political economy of language.

Building on previous research into language shift, performance, and commodification, this study is intended to contribute to filling these gaps. This study is situated against Mongolian language shift, sociocultural change and the rise of a professionalized Mongolian wedding industry. Against this background, I intend to explore the intersection of language practices, authenticities, diversity, and commodification in Mongols' wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia. At the same time, by examining the language practices and signs at weddings I seek to explore the tensions experienced by and opportunities opened up for Mongols in the multilingual, multicultural minority context of China. Additionally, I will examine how cultural entrepreneurs and cultural experts chart their ways in the wedding business and other wedding-related ethnic businesses in the seemingly supportive national environment of China. These aims can be translated into the following research questions, which this study seeks to answer:

1. What linguistic and cultural choices can be observed in Mongolian wedding ceremonies?
2. What ideologies are embedded in these semiotic practices?
3. How do wedding practices and ideologies serve to produce and reproduce Mongolian "authenticity" and social hierarchies?

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study is designed to investigate ritual performance and language choice in Mongolian wedding ceremonies in the shifting social context of contemporary Inner Mongolia. As stated in Chapter Two, the three research questions are:

1. What linguistic and cultural choices can be observed in Mongolian wedding ceremonies?

2. What ideologies are embedded in these semiotic practices?

3. How do wedding practices and ideologies serve to produce and reproduce Mongolian "authenticity" and social hierarchies?

In order to examine these research questions, a qualitative paradigm has been adopted to guide my inquiry. Qualitative research emphasizes the situated-ness of social practice, and "consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 56). Critical sociolinguistic ethnography is one of the most significant forms of qualitative inquiry as "it takes the researcher beneath surface appearances, disrupts the *status quo*, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operation of power and control" (Madison, 2005, p. 13).

This chapter begins by justifying this choice of methodological approach and explains the rationale for undertaking a qualitative study, particularly a study with a critical sociolinguistic ethnographic orientation (Section 3.2). Next, it describes the fieldwork and data collection (Section 3.3), followed by reflections on how my own position as a "peripheral insider" – a Mongol who grew up in Inner Mongolia but has pursued higher education first in Shanghai and then Australia – shaped my data collection (Section 3.4). Finally, the methods of analysis (Section 3.5) and a summary of the chapter will be offered (Section 3.6).

3.1 Approach: critical sociolinguistic ethnography

Critical ethnography is a style of thinking and writing that links the elements of cultural description to social organization, social structure, or action (Thomas, 1993). It "directs attention to symbols of oppression by shifting and contrasting cultural images in ways that reveal subtle qualities of social control" (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). In other words, critical ethnography is never devoid of politics. This aspect of critical ethnography makes it ideally suited to research into minority languages, cultures and identities and it has frequently been adopted in sociolinguistics. For instance, Heller (2011) combines sociolinguistics with critical

ethnography to describe, understand, and explain the role of language in constructing the relations of social difference and social inequality that shape our world. Guided by such models, I examine how the taken-for-granted symbols, cultural images and linguistic forms in the context of weddings reveal the operation of social control, an unequal distribution of power and the reproduction of symbolic dominance.

Critical ethnography's agent- and practice-oriented perspective on society and culture reveals the dynamic interplay between the social, conventional and ready-made in social life and the individual, creative, and emergent qualities of human existence (Madison, 2005). This emphasis echoes with the poststructuralist emphasis on the constructed-ness of social life: we cannot take language, the body, the environment or space as given entities with evident meanings (Pennycook, 2010). Through looking at the performance of Mongolian culture and language in weddings, I aim to examine what "Mongolian" means to agentive minority Mongols who strive to maintain their language and culture, to the Chinese state and its project of building a harmonious multicultural society and to entrepreneurs such as wedding planners, costume designers, caterers or photo studios for whom weddings constitute an economic opportunity.

Critical ethnography also "problematizes our understanding of the concepts of community, nation and identity by taking into account transnational communication and affiliations in this era of globalization" (Madison, 2005, p. 169). Our understanding of local context "expands to encompass the historical, dynamic movement of people, ideas, images, commodities, and capital" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 145). This flow of people, ideas and images and its linguistic consequences has become a key sociolinguistic concern, and critical ethnography enables an examination of how transnational images, ideas and languages are reworked into local spaces and serve to create new indexical orders (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005; Coupland & Coupland, 2014; Heller, 2003; Pennycook, 2012; Piller, 2016; Piller & Lising, 2014). This focus on fluidity and mobility makes critical sociolinguistic ethnography highly suitable to research with the minority languages and cultures of China, as they are undergoing rapid transformation (Grey, 2017; Li, 2016).

Critical sociolinguistic ethnography is capable of revealing the forces, tensions and ideologies undergirding a web of symbols and languages.

Having justified my general approach, I now proceed to explain the details of my fieldwork and data collection.

3.2 Fieldwork and data collection

In this section, I describe the process of the data collection during my fieldwork in Inner Mongolia from January to April in 2016 and the dataset that was obtained in this way. My primary data are comprised of audio and video recordings of weddings. These primary data are complemented with interview data with key actors in weddings, participant observation data, and data from social media and wedding-related artefacts.

3.2.1   Audio and video recordings of weddings

My primary dataset consists of twenty-two audio and video recordings of wedding ceremonies. These records "offer a 'microscope' for an in-depth study of the on-going production of situated social order" (Knoblauch & Schnettler, 2012, p. 336). They allow for an in-depth and multi-modal analysis of the linguistic and symbolic practices that constitute the wedding ceremony.

Video-based research in the social sciences has proliferated in recent years. A number of different video-based approaches can be distinguished, including early studies employing silent cinema film and audio-recording, followed by anthropologists' short films of Native American cultural practices, then the use of video in pedagogical and workplace research (Erickson, 2011). However, in the current project the videos are used differently and are a type of collected document, i.e. they were not recorded by the researcher but were collected as existing videos. Videoing has become an indispensable part of wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia, as it has elsewhere (e.g., Abraham (2010)). Couples usually commission a photographer or a studio to record the ceremony on the day. The video material is then edited and mixed by the studio and a professional film of the ceremony is produced. The video product is usually placed on CDs and distributed among family, friends, neighbors, and even unrelated others who join this collective activity of watching wedding videos, as Jacquemet (1996) shows of Moroccan wedding videos being played on buses to Europe.

This means that I did not have to record weddings myself but that wedding videos produced as part of the wedding are readily available for collection. I set about collecting wedding videos from various parts of Inner Mongolia and from couples who identify as "Mongols". Weddings taking place in Inner Mongolia but involving couples from other ethnic groups were not sought out. In keeping with the Mongolian focus, I also avoided

videos from intermarried couples although the rate of intermarriage between Mongols and Han Chinese is relatively high. In 2010, the intermarriage rate between Mongols and Han Chinese was 38.1% (Jian, 2017). Because of this high rate, I did not reject videos from intermarried couples that were offered to me. In the end, one wedding of an intermarried couple with a Chinese groom and a Mongolian bride was included in the dataset (A10).

Recruitment of volunteers to share their videos was done in two principal ways: first, Mongolian and Mandarin versions of the recruitment flyers (see Appendix 5) were posted on the social media channel WeChat to publicize the project to my WeChat friends and their social networks. Second, personal contacts were used to recruit potential participants and the range of this approach was extended through the snowball technique. This means I contacted my social network before my departure for fieldwork and told them about my research. When I arrived in Inner Mongolia they introduced me to friends who had recently married and who were willing to share their wedding videos. In other instances, my contacts, including one of the research participants, collected the videos for me as the couples themselves were not living nearby or were unavailable at the time of my visit. In addition to couples, wedding videos were also given to me by wedding professionals from a collection of samples of their work. I also downloaded two online wedding videos (B05, C01), the links to which were sent to me by research participants at different stages of my fieldwork. One of these videos (C01) is extremely well-known in Inner Mongolia and is being shared widely on social media, as it is held in a beautiful grassland tourist resort and choreographed as a "traditional" Mongolian wedding. In addition to collecting ready-made videos from the participants, I personally audio-recorded the wedding speeches of four weddings I attended.

As wedding videos exist in abundance and are kept both by couples and wedding studios, collection was not particularly difficult. The owners of some wedding companies were hesitant to share videos because they were concerned about their rivals stealing their innovative ideas. However, this is, in fact, unavoidable as most guests also video-record weddings on their smartphones and post short videos on WeChat during or after the wedding. Despite the wide circulation of wedding videos, I treated all collected videos and photos as confidential in order to obtain my participants' trust.

As a result of the selection and collection processes outlined above, a total of twenty-five recordings were collected through various channels. Three of these were duplicates: while they were of different couples the ceremony was conducted by the same wedding company and speaker and were identical to other ceremonies staged by the same studio.

Therefore, these three videos (A07, A11, and A13) were excluded from the analysis. Wedding A07 is more or less a duplicate of A06, and A11 and A13 of A12.

Table 3 provides an overview of the recordings that constitute the primary data for this study. Recordings coded "A" refer to recordings that were commissioned by the couples themselves and given to me. Additionally, I attended some of these weddings personally (see also Table 6). "B" denotes recordings of weddings that I personally attended and recorded but for which I do not have a recording commissioned by the couple. "C" stands for a video circulating online that was not given to me by anyone connected with the wedding and was a wedding that I did not attend, either.

Table 3: Overview of the wedding recordings that constitute the primary data

Code	Length of video	Length of ceremony on stage	Location	Date of the ceremony
A01	60 mins	20 mins	Arhorchin Banner	July 4, 2015
A02	70 mins	6 mins	Arhorchin Banner	January 13, 2016
A03	50 mins	5 mins	Arhorchin Banner	December 30, 2015
A04	90 mins	17 mins	Arhorchin Banner	November 23, 2015
A05	80 mins	15 mins	Arhorchin Banner	December 9, 2015
A06	60 mins	11 mins	Jarud Banner	January 13, 2016
A07	50 mins	14 mins	Jarud Banner	January 8, 2016
A08	90 mins	18 mins	Jarud Banner	January 21, 2016
A09	90 mins	20 mins	Jarud Banner	December 21, 2015
A10	60 mins	8 mins	Jarud Banner	March 22, 2016
A11	70 mins	24 mins	Jarud Banner	September 27, 2015
A12	94 mins	26 mins	Jarud Banner	January 23, 2016

A13	60 mins	20 mins	Jarud Banner	January 16, 2016
A14	110 mins	23 mins	Darhan Banner	February 4, 2016
A15	50 mins	10 mins	Darhan Banner	December 21, 2015
A16	58 mins	24 mins	Darhan Banner	January 21, 2016
A17	50 mins	14 mins	Darhan Banner	January 22, 2016
A18	100 mins	8 mins	Darhan Banner	January 24, 2016
A19	70 mins	13 mins	Darhan Banner	March 17, 2016
A20	90 mins	30 mins	Hohhot	November 14, 2015
B02	N/A	30 mins	Hohhot	April 14, 2016
B03	N/A	32 mins	Hohhot	April 10, 2016
B04	N/A	14 mins	Hohhot	January 24, 2016
B05	N/A	38 mins	Darhan Banner	October 3, 2015
C01	95 mins	23 mins	Jarud Banner	September 27, 2015

To counteract any edited effect of wedding videos, I collected a range of secondary data through interviewing, participant observation at weddings and collection of wedding-related artefacts. These are described in the following sections.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

During my fieldwork I interviewed a number of actors involved in weddings. I focused on speaking with professionals involved in the wedding industry in Inner Mongolia and, to a lesser extent, recently married couples. In total, I formally interviewed seventeen wedding speakers, eight costume designers and photo studio owners, and ten recently married people. The wedding professionals I interviewed are bilingual speakers. The fact that I did not

include Chinese-speaking wedding professionals is mainly decided by my research focus on Mongols' agency in commodifying their own culture and the role of Mongolian in wedding contexts.

Additionally, I had informal conversations with a large number of people engaged with weddings. As almost any member of a society is engaged with weddings in one way or another, particularly as guests, the number of these informal conversations was extremely large. Here, I describe the formal interviews.

The reasons for recruiting wedding professionals are that they play prominent and decisive roles in the production of contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies. Photo studios and Mongolian costume studios have become must-go-to places for couples, months before the ceremony. After decisions related to the venue have been made, and photography and costumes have been settled, couples or their parents choose a wedding speaker. The actual wedding is then executed against the background of these preparatory decisions: on the ceremonial stage, the pre-wedding photo slides are displayed one by one on a large LED screen, accompanied by music as a background to the ceremony. The beautifully dressed couple wearing their custom-designed costumes will then be married by their chosen wedding speaker. Therefore, wedding professionals obviously play a central role in contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies and I interviewed them to gain an understanding of their perspectives.

Because many of the professionals I interviewed were also involved with the primary data recordings, recordings and interviews complement and illuminate each other.

Recruitment of wedding professionals happened in parallel to video collection. Once they agree to an interview, I met the wedding professionals at their studios, at restaurants, or in their homes. Six wedding speakers preferred to invite me to attend ceremonies they were engaged to perform. One of them justified the importance of attending the ceremony over conducting an interview by saying: "You have to see the ceremony and listen to the speech by yourself. Then you will know." I went to these ceremonies and sat at the table set for staff members of the catering company. Most but not all interviews were audio-recorded. Interviews were complemented by extensive notes and field observation during the ceremonies.

In addition to the wedding speakers, eight other wedding professionals also participated in formal interviews, including: two owners of cultural media companies; three owners of photo studios; and three costume makers.

All these interviews were conducted in Mongolian. I started each interview by introducing the research project. I followed a list of prepared questions that guided the interviews (see Appendix 4). However, the interview questions and the modes of interviewing were flexible. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) argue that on different occasions, or at different points in the same interview, the approach may be non-directive or directive, depending on the function that the questioning is intended to serve. I also paid particular attention to how the participants said something and in what circumstances. In addition, the observations made before, during, and after the interviews helped shape further my interview questions throughout the fieldwork. For instance, a blog post about an argument that ensued between a Mongolian writer and a wedding speaker after the latter asked inappropriate questions from the couple for levity led me to ask follow-up questions in my interviews with regards to the use of humorous and solemn styles in wedding speeches. Another adaptation refers to the influence of the Republic of Mongolia's costume styles, whose importance I only discovered after visiting costume studios in Hohhot and Arhorchin Banner.

As has been indicated earlier, interviews were arranged at each participant's convenience. The settings of the interviews were the participants' homes, their favorite restaurants, their companies or studios, the places where the wedding ceremonies were held and even in their cars. Choosing a setting where the participants feel confident about themselves or their work facilitates the generation of data. For instance, the photographers who were interviewed in their studios showed me large framed photos on their walls and sample bridal photo albums on their reception desks. With these objects at hand they explained to me their customers' favorite styles or told me about incidents that had happened when they took certain photos.

All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by either professional typists or myself. I checked all the interview transcripts from the typists repeatedly and corrected any misunderstandings that might have arisen. An overview of the wedding professional interviewees is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Overview of formal interviews with wedding professionals

Name	Age range	Gender	Role/s in weddings	Main/former occupation	Residence
Bishireltü	30s	Male	Wedding speaker, planner, fiddler; owner of a wedding company	TV producer	Hohhot

Hünestü	50s	Male	Wedding speaker; trainer of wedding speakers	Radio broadcaster	Tongliao City
Asgan	40s	Male	Wedding speaker, the owner of a wedding service company	TV broadcaster	Hohhot
Nasan	60s	Male	Wedding speaker	TV broadcaster; famous poet	Hohhot
Manda	70s	Male	Wedding speaker	Former university teacher of foreign literature	Hohhot
Otgan	30s	Male	Wedding speaker, singer	Herder and horse racer	Arhorchin Banner
Erdenchichig	40s	Female	Wedding speaker	High school teacher	Arhorchin Banner
Tümensang	40s	Male	Wedding speaker	Principal of a primary school; famous poet	Arhorchin Banner
Erdemtü	40s	Male	Wedding speaker	Middle school teacher of Mongolian language and literature	Arhorchin Banner
Soyolt	50s	Male	Wedding speaker	Former herder	Arhorchin Banner
Dabalgan	30s	Male	Wedding speaker and singer	Music teacher in primary school	Arhorchin Banner
Huyag	30s	Male	Wedding speaker and singer	Singer	Jarud Banner
Toora	40s	Female	Wedding speaker	Event organizer in cultural office of Jarud Banner	Jarud Banner
Temur	40s	Male	Wedding speaker and singer	Associate head in the cultural office of Jarud Banner	Jarud Banner
Wu	30s	Male	Wedding speaker	No information	Darhan Banner
Yongjiu	30s	Male	Wedding speaker	Herder	Darhan Banner

Wurna	30s	Female	Wedding speaker	Former primary school teacher	Darhan Banner
Yulin	late 20s	Male	Owner of photo studio, costume studio, and wedding service company	Former primary school teacher	Tongliao City
Dagula	50s	Female	Owner of a costume studio, and tailor	Former herder	Arhorchin Banner
Surna	30s	Female	Tailor	Housewife	Arhorchin Banner
Saima	60s	Female	Tailor	Housewife, herder	Jarud Banner
Timur	Late 20s	Male	Photographer and studio owner	No other jobs	Jarud Banner
Suhe	40s	Male	Photographer and studio owner	Teacher	Jarud Banner
Huhe	40s	Male	Photographer and studio owner	No other jobs	Hohhot
Alang	Late 30s	Male	Photographer and studio owner	Former herder; hairdresser	Arhorchin Banner

As mentioned earlier, in addition to interviewing wedding professionals, I also interviewed ten recently-married people, five grooms and five brides. The aim of these interviews was twofold: first, in addition to the perspective of the wedding professionals, it is crucial to hear how the couples, who, during the ceremony, are "immobilized and objectified" (Adrian, 2003, p. 89), had planned their ceremonies beforehand, and second, how they described them afterwards. More specifically, by asking why they made certain selections regarding the ceremony's style and the wedding speaker, I hoped to delve further into how they actively appropriate and shape the semiotics of the shifting traditional ritual and what role language ideologies may play in their decisions to choose a particular wedding speaker.

Recruitment of couples happened in parallel to video collection. Two brides and a couple were recruited after they agreed to meet me and give me their wedding videos. One couple was recruited through personal contacts. The others were recruited after I had attended their wedding through other contacts. I began by asking each participant to tell me about his

or her wedding ceremony, including the following sets of questions: how it was prepared; who chose the venue and wedding speaker/s; what were the most satisfactory aspects on the stage; and why a certain wedding speaker or wedding style had been chosen. This opened up the opportunity for the participants to talk at length about their preparations, the processes of their wedding ceremonies, and their feelings afterwards. An overview of the couples interviewed is provided in Table 5 below.

During the interviews, some of them also showed me their wedding photos on their phones and commented on the costumes they wore on that day. In response to what they were saying and showing me, I made comments and sometimes shared my plans for my own wedding party. This would allow couples to give me advice on who the most talented wedding speaker was, the most reliable wedding catering company, the studio making the most stylish wedding costumes, or the prerequisites for holding a "perfect" wedding ceremony.

The interviews with the couples were audio-recorded and later transcribed in the same manner as the interviews with the wedding professionals. Table 5 provides an overview.

Table 5: Overview of interviews with couple

Pseudonym	Role/s	Hometown
Billig	Husband	Jarud Banner
Aruun	Wife	Jarud Banner
Bühe	Husband	Hohhot
Jinghem	Husband	Jarud Banner
Naomi	Wife	Jarud Banner
Zhang	Husband	Jilin Province
Navch	Wife	Jarud Banner
Suhe	Husband	Jarud Banner
Saihana	Wife	Darhan Banner
Dulma	Wife	Bairan Right-Wing Banner

Having described the semi-structured interviews with wedding professionals and couples, I will now move on to describe the participant observations that I have noted.

3.2.3 Participant observation

Additional data were collected through participant observation and informal interviews. During the fieldwork period from January to April 2016, I attended nine weddings. Some of these ceremonies I attended in the company of a friend or acquaintance. This means that I was able to witness the ceremonial performance in the same manner as the other invited guests. Being a member of the party in a role similar to an invited guest and joining the conversation at the table gave me additional insight into the audience's perception of the performance and their interest in particular aspects of it. At other times, I often heard and sometimes joined other invited guests' small talk about the couple's costumes, the digital photo albums on display, the food, or the discussions of other attendees. In addition to attending the ceremonies as a guest, I also attended wedding ceremonies with the wedding catering companies' staff, which offered me a chance to observe and even participate in their preparation for the coming ceremony. When I was attending a ceremony with wedding catering staff we usually arrived at least half an hour before the commencement of the ceremony. That is how I got to make observations regarding how wedding speakers write down notes of specific details; how company staff set up a fake yurt and decorate the stage;

how fiddlers adjust their instruments and practice; or how plans can be thrown into turmoil when a cameraman fails to show up on time. After the ceremony, I helped to put all the props and decorations away. Additionally, conversations with company staff both before and after the ceremony helped me gain a perspective on the ceremony on-stage from the perspective of those who are back-stage, the planners and service providers. Table 8 provides an overview of the weddings I attended. The first six weddings with codes A and B are weddings of which I used recordings for my primary data (see Table 3 above). Weddings coded "D" are the weddings where I only did participant observation without collecting videos.

Table 6: Overview of attended weddings

Wedding	Location	Speaker	My role
A10	Uljimuren sum, Jarud Banner	Huyag	Guest
A19	Chason ail gacha, Darhan Banner	Wurna	Guest
B01	Hohhot	Asgan	Helper with catering company
B02	Hohhot	Manda	Helper with catering company
B03	Hohhot	Nasan and Lian	Helper with catering company
B04	Hohhot	Chugla	Helper with catering company
D01	Hohhot	Chugla	Helper with catering company
D02	Hohhot	Sarna	Guest
D03	Bogantal village, Jarud Banner	Huyag	Guest

In addition to attending the wedding ceremonies, I visited numerous other sites that are significant to the production of Mongolian wedding ceremonies. These include Mongolian costume studios, silk shops and photo studios. In these shops and studios, I spoke with the owners or employees about matters such as their products, the prices, and the preferences of their customers. I also observed how they decorated their studios, how they displayed different samples, the styles of Mongolian costumes and photos, and how they interacted with customers who happened to be present while I was there. These conversations and observations offered me a further perspective on contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies and their political economy.

Another relevant site for my participant observation was the Second Spring Shopping Festival at the Inner Mongolia Exhibition Centre in Hohhot, which took place between

January 22 and February 2, 2016. There, products from the Republic of Mongolia such as all-season costumes, hats and leather boots were very popular. I learned to understand the differences regarding prices, fabrics and cuts between Mongolian-themed products from Inner Mongolia and the Republic of Mongolia. Insights I gained at the festival helped me recognize different types of wedding costumes and informed my subsequent fieldwork. Even more importantly, this exhibition supplemented my dataset relevant to the broader socioeconomic, cultural and transnational contexts in which contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies are embedded in that it allowed me a glimpse of the interaction between different meanings associated with Mongolian and authenticity, and the hierarchical order of these meanings.

Table 7: Overview of additional key participant observation sites

Names	Location	Date
Anda photo studio	Jarud Banner	March 8, 2016
Mongolia photo studio	Jarud Banner	March 3, 2016
Boljoo photo studio	Jarud Banner	Feb 27, 2016
Alang's cultural media company	Arhorchin Banner	Feb 21, 2016
Balgarma costume studio	Arhorchin Banner	Feb 24, 2016
Gowa's costume studio	Arhorchin Banner	Feb 24, 2016
Jimes costume studio	Jarud Banner	March 9, 2016
Goylol costume studies and cultural media company	Tongliao City	March 19, 2016
Hüh-Jurag photo studio	Hohhot	Jan 26, 2016
Uleger-es ebgen nutag Mongolian product shop	Hohhot	Jan 26, 2016
Silk shop	Arhorchin Banner	Feb 25, 2016
Asgan Jam cultural media company	Hohhot	April 12, 2016
Yisun Urlig cultural media company	Hohhot	April 14, 2016
The Second Spring Shopping Festival	Inner Mongolia Exhibition centre, Hohhot	Jan 29, 2016
Qiu lao wu wedding planning company	Darhan Banner	March 19, 2016

| Fu quan wedding video studio | Darhan Banner | March 20, 2016 |
| Ulan's wedding video studio | Darhan Banner | March 18, 2016 |

Finally, in addition to my "excursions" to multiple sites relevant to the production of wedding ceremonies, I also looked to experts' exegesis for different perspectives and insights. I spoke to a number of Mongolian scholars about their views of the popularity of Mongolian costumes, traditional and contemporary wedding ceremonies, and the revival of other traditional customs in an urban context. For instance, a professor of Sociology and Ethnology at Inner Mongolia University shared his research regarding the ban on traditional Mongolian costumes during the Cultural Revolution. He also spoke to me about the revival of such costumes since the 1980s and offered his thoughts on the wedding ceremony as a reflection on class, social inequality and interpersonal relationships in the current socio-political environment of Inner Mongolia. Another professor shared with me his opinions regarding the identity reconstruction of young Mongols in urban settings. In addition to scholars, conversations with famous and experienced wedding speakers and folk artists also informed my understanding about both their work as wedding professionals and cultural workers or cultural inheritors.

In sum, this section has offered an overview of my participant observations in wedding ceremonies as both a guest and a helper. Beyond these focused observations, I also introduced my "wanderings" in the urban spaces where Mongolian-themed shops, studios and events are concentrated. Finally, I described how my data is complemented by conversations with Mongolian scholars and artists. In addition to these data, I collected a range of related materials, which I describe in the following.

3.2.4   Documents and artefacts

During my field work I also collected a range of relevant documents and artefacts, including library archives, online blogs, flyers, photos, video clips and posts on WeChat, as well as wedding invitation cards.

To begin with, I collected documents in Inner Mongolia University library. I searched and scanned academic papers and theses related to Mongols' urbanization, the revival of tradition, verbal arts, changing socio-economic life, and minority education.

Second, I collected publicly accessible online blog posts about wedding speeches and styles from *holvoo net*. Holvoo ("connection") is a Mongolian website run by a young Mongolian man based in Beijing, which publishes blog posts, poems, novels, critiques and

commentaries written by Mongols on their personal pages. By clicking the title of a blog or a poem users can have access to the blogger's personal page on *holvoo*. I also saved relevant advertisements for photo and costume studios, wedding speakers from WeChat public account pages. I downloaded the *holvoo* app into my phone and saved articles whose titles contained key words such as *hurim* ("wedding ceremony"), *bayar nair* ("banquet") or *hurim-iin hütlegch* ("wedding speakers") in the period from July 2015 to March 2017. In addition, I followed public accounts on WeChat and relevant blog posts were saved in the period from July 2015 to January 2017. In the same manner, after following some photo studios' public pages on WeChat, I collected the advertisements and photos they posted on their account pages. The public WeChat accounts I followed and from which I collected data include *Altanhurd* (金轮), *Sodon süljee* (所得网), *Meng gu li ren* (蒙古丽人), *Meng gu ji di* (蒙古基地), and *Bu li ya te* (布里亚特). I also collected widely shared wedding-related news, advertisements and photos from my WeChat friends' daily posts.

Another source of my data collection is from the daily WeChat posts of the research participants who added me as their WeChat friend before or after the interviews. In particular, this provided me with rich online data even after the fieldwork. The wedding professionals often post short videos of ceremony preparation, and they also post about how the photographer was shooting photos at the studios and on the grasslands. These continued to provide me with fresh data throughout the research period. I had not been able to observe first-hand how the immaculate wedding photos were taken during my fieldwork due to various practical reasons. However, this type of online secondary data complemented the data I collected during the field research and infused more contextual and up-to-date understanding into my research. Therefore, the participants' everyday posts served as a virtual extension of my field work.

In addition to online data surrounding Mongolian weddings, I collected online blogs and photos related to Mongolian language standardization, multilingualism, and the incongruence and conflict between the tourism industry and "authenticity", whenever they became available in my data stream. For instance, in early May 2016 Mongols shared widely and commented upon the news that a monolingual Mongolian passenger from a pastoral region had missed his flight at Inner Mongolia's Baita International Airport because the announcement was only made in Chinese and English. Another example was a campaign to "purify" the Mongolian language by burning dictionaries with Chinese loanwords in them (Bai, 2017). The data related to the language issues of Inner Mongolia in public contexts was

collected to situate my analysis of language use in Mongolian wedding ceremonies in its wider ideological and social contexts.

Another focus of my collection were wedding invitation cards since these form an indispensable part of contemporary wedding ceremonies.

Having offered an overview of the related documents I collected in the field in this section, in the following I will turn to the way I positioned myself and in turn how I was viewed by the participants during the data collection process.

3.3 Researcher positionality

Going back to the place where I had grown up as an academic researcher and fieldworker was different from all the other return journeys I had made before. In 2005, at the age of 18, I left Inner Mongolia to attend university in Shanghai. From then on what happened back home became what I could hear about over the phone from my family or what I could see during my annual one or two weeks' winter holiday or what my friends shared on social media. During these years I came to feel like both an insider and an outsider in my hometown. The fieldwork intensified this feeling. After all, most field research involved roles somewhere between complete observation and complete participation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 96). And shifts in roles can often be made over the course of one's field work.

My plane from Sydney (via Beijing) landed in Hohhot on January 16, 2016. No matter how much preparation I had before the fieldwork, I was overwhelmed by a sense of uncertainty and fear. The first interview was conducted on January 20 with a photo studio owner. I gained confidence more or less after that since at least the first step was taken. And yet, this first interview reminded me of my brand new role in that place. When I arrived at 11:00am at his studio, a middle-aged Mongolian man served me tea in delicate china with tiny blue flowers along the edges. I felt uneasy because I was much younger than he was, and a woman. But this feeling was overcome when the interview started, because I soon realized that, in his eyes, I was a "scholar", a young woman who learned "a lot" abroad and now returned to study Inner Mongolia. This realization helped me in two ways later, though paradoxically: I began to assume comfortably the role of "scholar" conferred on me by participants, but, at the same time, they perceived me as naïve when it came to Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian wedding industry due to my long absence from the place. My experience reflected that of Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), who argue that gatekeepers, sponsors, and the like will operate in terms of expectations about the ethnographer's identity and intentions which can have serious implications for the amount and nature of the data collected. Therefore, participants' perceptions and expectations toward me inevitably shaped

the kind of data I was able to collect. In talking with different participants I also tried to foreground certain aspects of my identity while perceiving how they positioned themselves and me accordingly, so that more insightful data and nuanced understandings could be obtained. For example, in the interviews with the wedding professionals, most of whom were male and older than me, I presented myself as a "socially acceptable" incompetent person (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 85), a novice in the field of the burgeoning Mongolian wedding industry. When I approached young couples, by contrast, my recently-married status facilitated our interactions. Upon learning that my own wedding had taken place only at the government registry without any further ceremony, they enthusiastically talked about the importance of holding a "real" ceremony and made recommendations regarding the wedding speakers and companies we should engage.

I also found that my identity as a young Mongolian studying her own culture but based overseas made my interlocutors feel a considerable sense of obligation to help me in the field. They expressed their hopes for me and encouraged me. Most of them refused to accept the small gifts I offered them as a token of appreciation, saying things like *chi enggej mani mongol-iin-han tuhai yüm-iig hiij baital, biden abaad boleh ügüi shüü?* ("It is you who are doing important thing for Mongolians. How can we accept this?") One participant refused my gift and said: *en-een öör gajar jarchah, mani end teden-iih tai aidel ügüi, tegej chag mag-iig hamarah ügüi. Neg hoyar chag nadad abch helbel hamaa ügüi* ("Use it somewhere else where you might need it later; here in our culture we don't value time as much as they do in Western culture. I am happy to help you, a few hours don't cost me anything").

For my participants I am, indeed, one of them, but I am also a stranger who has become unfamiliar with their ways due to many years of absence from the land. One of my best friends advised me to wear expensive-looking clothes after she saw my black winter coat and comfy boots, because according to her, people have changed in our place now: they make judgements based on what you wear.

In all these interactions, the temporal (now and then) and spatial (here and there) deictics indicate distance both in time and space, and I was situated at the intersection between two dimensions of past/present and we/other.

Within the community, the divide and stratification between different groups of Mongols added another layer of differentiation. When Mongolians meet for the first time, they usually ask each other about their home banner or league. At times they make judgments based on each other's accents and inevitably interaction is based on the "silent" evaluation drawn from the immense pool of stereotypes. Recurring sentences in my initial interactions

with participants were: *mani ordos mongolchuud enggej heldeg* ("We Ordos Mongols say something in this way;") *tani jarud-ed bol teim jinghen mongol mayag-aar bas hiij baina, hurim deer holih ügüi chuul mongol hel bas oloj sonosnoo, mani darhan hushuu tai aidel ügüi* ("In Jarud Banner [which happens to be my Banner] you can see a "real" Mongolian wedding and hear "pure" Mongolian speech but not here in our Darhan Banner;" or *chamas tongliao chifeng ayalag garch baina* ("I guess you're from Tongliao or Chifeng because of your accent.") Therefore, the diversity within the community also determined that there was another layer on top of the insider/outsider differentiation, mainly based on accents and sometimes even on looks. This means that my identity as a Mongol did not grant me a complete insider's position at all times simply because of my affiliation with one particular banner and having a particular accent in my speech.

In addition to understanding and "managing" my position reflexively in the field, in the latter part of my field research I also strenuously tried to avoid feeling "at home" as I became more familiar with the daily routines of fieldwork. The comfortable sense of being "at home" is a danger signal. Atkinson and Hammersley (1983) point out that from the perspective of the "marginal" reflexive ethnographer there must always remain some part held back, some social and intellectual "distance", for it is in the "space" created by this distance that the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done (p. 102). To keep this distance and to be on constant alert I used two strategies: taking field notes after each observation and reading academic papers. In the field, I allocated on average two days out of each week for reading and summarizing so that before heading off to data collection again the following week I could readjust my position and renew my critical perspective. However, this engaged but also disengaged position in the field was stressful to me as well. Even so, out of the marginal position of simultaneous insider-outsider the researcher generates a "creative insight" (Lofland, 1971, cited in Atkinson and Hammersley, 1983, p.91). Therefore, the marginal position of simultaneous insider-outsider was by and large maintained in the field, although this sometimes demanded a concerted effort.

In this section I have discussed and reflected upon my position as both an insider and outsider in the field. I also showed how I managed to be reflexive and flexible in my encounters with different participants at different locales. In the end, I introduced the ways which helped me maintain a perspective of a "marginal" reflexive ethnographer.

Although ongoing analysis was a feature of my fieldwork, systematic analysis was undertaken after I returned from the field to Australia. This section describes the principles and methods of the data analysis.

3.4.1 Content analysis

Content analysis has been used widely to understand and explain social life. It has been used by linguists to examine language use in mass media, language attitude, and social categorization (Dlaske, 2017; Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles, & Sink, 2016; Georgiou, 2010). Content analysis "takes content to emerge in the process of analysing a text relative to a particular context" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). In my research, I have adopted content analysis for my interview data, videos and field notes. I identify the recurring themes and patterns that are salient according to their frequency of occurrence and their relevance to language use, choice of symbols and signs, attitudes, and identity expressions. These themes and patterns include the concepts of "authentic and pure Mongolian", "modernity and tradition", "urbanization and marketization", "good Mongolian wedding speaker", "Chinese influence", "hybrid and changing Mongolian culture", "language and cultural loss" and "commodification/distortion of tradition". Then, I situate the emerging patterns and themes within the observational data, looking for commonalities or further implicit data fitting within identified themes.

3.4.2 Linguistic landscape analysis

A linguistic landscape approach (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010) has been adopted to analyze the process of place-making in the particular spatial and time frame of the wedding ceremony, as well as the establishment of the hegemony of "tradition" through public displays of signs and symbols in various sites. In addition, I analyze how the languages and symbols displayed in wedding venues spatialize the landscape of the wedding ceremony as a key site of a commodified display of ethnicity. By doing so, I highlight the link between the linguistic landscape and the commercialization of ethnicity. Using the concept of landscape as ideological representation, I examine how the symbolic economy of wedding ceremonial space and other private and public establishments related to the production of wedding ceremonies, such as Mongolian costume shows and photo studios, influence the power relationships among Mongolian groups.

As the wedding ceremonies of Mongols are situated in a multilingual and multicultural, peripheral yet globalizing society, I analyze patterns in the display of languages and symbols with reference to which symbols and languages are displayed alongside Mongolian language and cultural symbols, how different symbolic functions are shared between symbols and signs belonging to different orders of indexicality (Blommaert, 2007, p. 195). It is argued that:

> the environments are polycentric, and individuals always have to orient to multiple centres
> of indexicality (authoritative individuals or institutions: schools, government, the church

etc.), and such polycentric systems involve different scales, differences between the range and scope of meanings and meaningful social behavior, some of which are strictly local-situational, others being translocal (Blommaert et al., 2005, p. 200).

By drawing on the concept of the "order of indexicality" and the concept of mobility emphasized by Jaworski (2014) in studying linguistic landscapes, I examine how new conjunctions and interactions of old and new variables infuse Mongolian wedding ceremonies with a global touch. In doing so, I highlight the emergence and co-presence of transnational spaces with the local ceremonial space. In other words, I will focus on the intertextuality and mediation that exist between multilayered signs and multilingualism in ceremonies. I will also analyze how different social actors exert control or contest the changing cultural and linguistic landscapes of Mongolian wedding ceremonies by reordering or abandoning certain constitutive variables. The findings from the linguistic landscape analysis of wedding venues and wedding production sites are situated against the ethnographic interviews and participant observation to move towards an in-depth understanding of both inside and outside forces in the place-making of wedding ceremony.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have described the rationale for following the qualitative paradigm in conducting a critical sociolinguistic ethnography to understand my research. I then explained what types of data I collected and how I collected them, during my field work and at other stages of my research. Moreover, I also reflected on how my identities as both an outsider and insider in Inner Mongolia and as a researcher doing a PhD study abroad might have influenced and shaped the types of data I was able to collect. In addition, I described how I processed my data by adopting different analytic lenses for various types of data.

Throughout this research I attempted multiple triangulations in the collection of different types of data from various sources and methods of analysis to address multiple perspectives of the research inquiry. The findings based on these methods of data collection and analysis will be presented in the following three chapters.

Chapter Four: Producing the perfect Mongolian wedding

4.1 Introduction

Mongolian-themed wedding ceremonies have become increasingly popular in recent years. This chapter examines this trend by exploring what it means to stage a "Mongolian" wedding. I first introduce how images of the "perfect" Mongolian wedding circulate on social media. There, the perfect Mongolian wedding has come to be represented as involving spectacular "traditional" Mongolian wedding costumes. From there I move on to explore how these media images are imitated, re-enacted and subverted in actual weddings. The imagery of the perfect Mongolian wedding as centering on costumes and decorations needs to be understood within a wider context of the resurgence of Mongolian costumes. To shed light on this wider symbolic reconstruction of Mongolian heritage I first show how costume wearing is being promoted. Two specific promotional contexts are state-sponsored costume competitions and cultural heritage events, which I also describe. In addition to the state, commercial costume studios are key actors in the production of Mongolian imagery. To elucidate their role I present case studies of two costume studios in different locations. The chapter ends with a description of another essential "ingredient" of a perfect wedding, namely guests. The latter constitute not only the audience for which a wedding is performed but also give indispensable gifts to the couples. Gift exchange is a key rationale for staging weddings and it needs to be understood against the proliferation of banquets and ceremonies, all of which compete for audiences and gift-givers.

4.2 Mediated images of Mongolian weddings

Social media sharing of wedding photos and videos has become immensely popular in recent years (see also Chapter 1). Such social media campaigns often involve the weddings of celebrities. This is the case in the first campaign I explore, that of Hügjilbaator, a famous singer. When he got married in August 2015, a series of wedding photos were posted on a public WeChat page. In these, the couple appeared in four different Mongolian costumes. During the rituals conducted at home (see Chapter Five, Section 5.3) they wore two different costumes, matching with each other in colour and in style (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 2: Second set of costume worn at rituals at home

Figure 1: Costumes worn at home ritual

The styles of these two sets of costumes worn at home do not belong to any specific Mongolian group. During the wedding ceremony in the restaurant, two other sets of costumes

Figure 3: The Khalkha costume worn on stage

are worn on stage. These are even more extravagant and reflect the costume worn by the noble women of the Khalkha Mongolian group (Figure 3). The Khalkha constitute the major group in the Republic of Mongolia and their nobles' costume is characterized by an artistically designed female headdress with rich ornaments, silk overcoat and cone-shaped hat. After the ceremony on stage, the couple toast to guests in yet another set of Mongolian costumes. This time the costumes are designed in a new style called "Hun style". The latter is characterized by a special pattern on the chest and the back (Figure 4). Each costume comes with a matching

headdress. The bride's dangly coral-embedded silver earrings are the most popular accessories for Mongolian women in general and a must-have for brides. Although

Hügjilbaator is an Inner Mongolian celebrity and the wedding took place in Inner Mongolia, the wedding costumes gain additional symbolic value from the fact that they were designed and produced in Republic of Mongolia, as one of my informants, Yaruu, the owner of a costume studio explained to me.

The circulation of wedding costumes in social media also serves to popularize a localized version of the white "Western" wedding gown.

Figure 4: The Hun costume worn during reception

Figure 5, for instance, was widely shared on WeChat and titled: 每个蒙古女孩都向往的蒙古族婚礼, 震撼! ("A Mongolian wedding every Mongolian girl dreams of, stunning!"). While the white colour of the gown is a Western import, it has also been localized and adapted to Mongolian symbolism through the auspicious knot shapes around the waist and sleeves as well as the addition of a Mongolian headdress and earrings. Usually, the groom also wears a matching white Mongolian costume on stage.

The Mongolian white wedding gown first appeared in Republic of Mongolia, where a Western style wedding ceremony, sometimes mixed with Mongolian style, is popular and where tailors and designers specialize in the production of this type of white wedding costume. Mongols in Inner Mongolia, too, have recently started to imitate Mongols from the Republic of Mongolia and may also wear white wedding gowns, either at the wedding ceremony or in pre-wedding photo shoots. While some studios in Inner Mongolia have started to design and make white wedding gowns, their professional skills are widely deemed inferior to those of designers and producers from the Republic of Mongolia. One way to challenge such perceptions is through the circulation of wedding photos on social media and costume studios often run their own campaigns. An example can be seen in Figure 6, which is a photo circulated by Hohhot-based studio EnGe, which have earned a reputation as producers of white wedding gowns that are as good as the ones made in the Republic of Mongolia.

57

In sum, mediated images of Mongolian wedding costumes are shared widely on social media. These outfits have come to be imagined as being crucial for a perfect Mongolian wedding. In Mongolian, this is expressed with the evaluative descriptor *saihan mongol hurim* ("beautiful Mongolian wedding"). Furthermore, these images are not static, as they move from WeChat public spaces to the albums of anonymous individual phone users and from there to their friends to end up in costume studios, where they may serve as models for new designs.

Figure 5: White Mongolian bridal costume

Figure 6: Couple in white wedding costumes, show-casing EnGe studio design and productions, Hohhot

However, there is usually a gap between image and reality. While many may share the dream of a perfect wedding as signalled by the wearing of Mongolian-style costumes, not everyone can actually afford such high-fashion wedding dresses. The next section therefore explores what kinds of costumes can be found in actual weddings and also how other forms of decoration are employed to signal the "Mongolian-ness" of a wedding.

4.3 Dressing up and decorating the venue
4.3.1 Wedding costumes

In this part I describe the wedding costumes worn in the weddings I attended and the wedding videos I collected. Out of twenty-two weddings, in thirteen weddings couples wear Mongolian costumes throughout the ceremony. One of these (B01) changed their costumes three times throughout the two-hour ceremony. The couple appeared in Khalkha-style costumes for the stage ceremony. Then they changed into a simple Mongolian-style costume

for the reception and, finally, they returned to the stage for group photos in white Mongolian costumes.

Figure 7: Two different wedding costumes worn on stage and during reception (A20)

Another six couples appeared in two different costumes. An example can be seen in Figure 7, where the couple (A20) wore a Khalkha-style outfit on stage and simple Mongolian costumes for the reception.

Finally, another six couples only wore one set of Mongolian costumes. For instance, at a wedding (A04) held in Arhorchin Banner the couple wore the same Mongolian costume both on stage and off stage, and their costumes are of the styles of the Ujumchin group,

Figure 8: One single set of wedding costumes worn on stage and during the reception (A04)

characterized by their special hand-made wide fringes along the collars, sleeves and both sides of the costume (Figure 8).

While thirteen couples only wore Mongolian costumes, three couples changed from white gowns and suits on stage to Mongolian costumes for the reception. An example can be found in wedding A12, which was held at Lubei Town, the seat of Jarud Banner (Figure 9 and Figure 10). During the interview, the couple told me that they had rented the Western-style wedding gown from a photography studio, but had their Mongolian gowns custom-

Figure 9: Western-style wedding outfit on stage (A12)

designed and made in a studio in Tianshan Town, the seat of the Arhorchin Banner. In fact, all the three couples who mixed different styles (A06, A09, and A12) had their Mongolian costumes and hats custom-made but rented their western wedding costumes for a day or two from a photography studio.

Figure 10: Mongolian costumes off stage (A12)

But not all Mongolian couples invest in making new Mongolian costumes for themselves. At a wedding I attended in

Bogontal village in Jarud Banner (D03), a couple rented their Mongolian costumes. The groom's costume was too short for his almost two-meter figure, while the bride's red Mongolian costume was too loose and baggy for her slender body. A few days later, in Jarud Banner centre, when I met the groom, I asked

Figure 11: Accessorized Western suits on stage (A17)

him about their costumes and he said that it was not worthwhile to make new Mongolian costumes just for one single day's ceremony.

In yet another variation, additions and modifications may be used to make a Western wedding suit and dress look somewhat Mongolian, as was the case in wedding A17 (Figure 11). While the couple are dressed in a Western-style costume consisting of a black suit for the

Figure 12: Mongolian costumes off stage (A17)

groom and a white gown for the bride, the groom's suit has been modified with a red silk band around his waist. From the back of this waistband dangle two Mongolian tobacco bags and two new towels. The waistband is reminiscent of those typical of Mongolian costumes and the groom's suit is thus not completely Western but has been accessorised to look

Mongolian. This couple, too, changed into more "fully" Mongolian costumes for the reception (Figure 12) Thus, one of the ways to mix different styles is to wear Western style wedding costumes on stage and Mongolian costumes off stage.

There are many different ways to create hybrid styles in addition to those discussed above. For instance, at wedding A16, the bride was dressed in a thick layered white gown with a short white fluffy cloak on stage. The groom wore a dark-coloured suit (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Hybrid wedding outfits (A16)

Additionally, the bride's head was adorned with a Chinese-style red plastic floral band. For the reception, only the bride changed into another costume while the groom's suit remained

Figure 14: Hybrid wedding outfits (A14)

unchanged. The bride's second costume was a short red costume incorporating both Mongolian and Chinese elements.

A similar melange can be observed in wedding A14, held in an agricultural village in eastern Inner Mongolia. The bride's outfit shifts from a Western-style white wedding gown to a dress entirely in red, the auspicious colour of the Chinese culture (Figure 14).

In A14 and A16 only the bride changed her outfit while the groom wore the same costume throughout the wedding. In some weddings, the bride did not change her outfits either, as was the case in A19. I arrived for wedding A19 at the groom's house in Chasen village in Darhan Banner on a cold February morning at 5:00am to wait for the arrival of the bride. When the bride arrived at 5:50am in a white Japanese car, she wore a red casual outfit

Figure 15: Informal wedding outfits (A19)

with matching red shoes. The dress was complemented with a plastic pink floral head band given to her on arrival by her mother-in-law (see Chapter Five, Section 5.3). The groom had

been waiting for her in a black and dark red short coat and suit pants. Both partners wore the same outfits throughout the day, even after they left the house and the party moved to the restaurant, until the ceremony finished around 11AM.

Overall, in weddings in eastern Inner Mongolia (A12, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, and B05), Western- and Chinese-style outfits predominated while Mongolian costumes were rare, although some Western- and Chinese-style outfits were designed or accessorized in a way that made them resemble Mongolian styles.

Another layer of hybridization is added by the fact that the Western-style costumes described above (e.g. A 16, A17) are typically considered Chinese-style rather than Western-style in eastern Inner Mongolia. This is due to the fact that Western-style wedding costumes have come to the attention of Mongols mediated through Chinese people. Therefore, Western-style wedding costumes (as well as some other elements of globalization), after being sifted through a Chinese medium and mixed with the imagery of Chinese weddings, no longer appear as Western.

While rare, Mongolian-style costumes are not entirely absent from weddings in the villages of eastern Inner Mongolia. Yongjiu, a wedding planner in Darhan Banner, where an

Figure 16: Western-style wedding outfit and the cheap imitation Mongolian costume (B05)

agricultural mode of life is predominant, told me that he is asked to organize a Mongolian-style wedding ceremony about three times a year. An example of such a Mongolian-style wedding in Darhan Banner is B05, where the couple switched from a Western-style wedding outfit to one in Mongolian style (Figure 16). However, as is apparent from Figure 16, their

Mongolian costume is a cheap imitation. Such cheap costumes are often described as *taisan-ii hobchas* ("dancers' stage costumes") or *huurmeg mongol-iin hobchas* ("costumes of fake Mongols"). The "fake" nature of the costume is also apparent from the fact that the groom wears suit pants and leather shoes (instead of matching Mongolian boots) with his Mongolian costume.

To sum up, in this section I have described the wedding outfits apparent in my corpus. Thirteen out of 22 couples wore only Mongolian-style costumes (one or more throughout the ceremony) while the other nine couples employed more hybrid styles combining Mongolian-style costumes with Western and Chinese styles or using the latter exclusively. Such mixed or Chinese-dominant styles were particularly prevalent in the weddings in agricultural villages and towns in eastern and south-eastern Inner Mongolia.

Most of the wedding costumes in my data, irrespective of where the weddings took place, were much more hybrid than the "pure" Mongolian wedding costumes represented and shared on social media (see Section 4.2 above). This means that there is significant variation in the wedding costumes that can be found in "Mongolian" weddings in contemporary Inner Mongolia. However, this diversity of wedding costumes is largely obscured on social media and it is particularly the wedding costumes observed in the agricultural villages of southern and eastern Inner Mongolia that are absent from social media. Even if couples there choose Mongolian costumes, their costumes are evaluated as least aesthetic and least authentic, and often not recognised as indexing Mongolian culture and identity, as is particularly apparent in B05. While Mongols on social media indulge in an "authentic" representation of Mongolian couples and their costumes, Mongol peasants of places such as Darhan Banner are excluded. Their close association with Chinese farming culture tarnishes also the value of their symbolic indexes of "Mongolian-ness". By contrast, wealthy urban Mongols who can afford to wear up to three different "authentic" Mongolian costumes during their wedding are the group who both emulate and sustain the mediated images of the "perfect" Mongolian wedding.

Because of Mongols' desire to represent only "flattering stereotypes" (Billig, 1995, p. 66) of themselves – those associated with an "authentic" herding life-style and nowadays also connected with the Republic of Mongolia – Mongols who cannot live up to those "flattering stereotypes" are excluded from the imagery of the perfect Mongolian wedding. They are deemed unable to make a positive contribution to the representation of "authentic" Mongols.

To make matters worse, some of their adaptations to Chinese farming life and its associated culture run contrary to what is considered as precious and unspoiled Mongolian culture.

Having described wedding costumes as the key material signifier of a wedding and its significance, I now move on to another constitutive sign of a wedding, namely the decoration of the venue and particularly the wedding stage.

4.3.2 Venue and stage decorations

Weddings usually take place in two venues: the home and a public celebration in a restaurant (see Chapter Five, Section 5.3). The restaurant is specially prepared to feature some sort of stage, where the ceremonial part of the wedding will be conducted (see Chapter Five, Section 5.4). The stage may itself consist of two parts: a main stage and an extended runway stretching from the main stage to the other end of the hall. An elevated runway is common in venues in Hohhot but usually absent from town or village weddings, where couples may just walk through the guests' tables. It is the stage and runway decoration that is the focus of this

Figure 17: A wedding stage runway decorated with Mongolian white standards and ox-cart wheels (Hohhot)

section.

Where a runway exists, it is most commonly flanked by *chagaan süld* ("white standards") as symbols of the past Mongolian empire. An example is shown in Figure 17: the

runway is flanked by four white standards on either side and the standards are supported by wooden ox-cart wheels. The latter are symbolic of the Mongolian herding past.

Figure 18: A wedding stage and runway decorated with Mongolian arrows and a yurt

White standards made of horse mane symbolise happiness and good luck, the God of the tribe, a military banner, and the tree of life (Urtnast, 2012). They are considered one of the sacred objects of Mongols. In the past each Mongolian tribe had its own standard, which were slightly different from one tribe to another. According to *The Secret History of the Mongol*, a white standard was set up in 1206 when Genghis Khan took the throne (Yang,

Figure 19: Alternative stage decoration

2004). This is how the association of the white standard with the throne began in Mongolian tradition. Stage decorations including the white standard thus embody the spirit, the throne, and holiness and associate these with a wedding.

Because of their association with the sacred, the use of the white standard in wedding decorations can be controversial, the owner of *Yisun Ürlig* ("nine generals of Genghis Khan") *Mongolian Cultural Media Company* in Hohhot, Bishireltü, explained to me: because he considers sacred and heavenly cultural objects such as the white standard incompatible with wedding stages, he chooses arrows as runway decorations in the weddings he organizes (Figure 18). His choice of arrows still symbolizes the glorious

Mongolian military and hunting past. This is also true of horse saddles on pillars, which may also be used as decorative elements along the runway.

The runway typically leads to a small Mongolian yurt placed at one end, as is shown in Figure 18. The bride usually sits in the yurt at the beginning of the ceremony until the groom, along with wedding speakers and best man, come and pick her up. Then they walk down the runway together to the main stage, sometimes led by the wedding speaker and followed by dancers (see Chapter Five, Section 5.4). Alternatives to the yurt include a tent in the shape of a traditional Mongolian female headdress (Figure 19) or a baldachin (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Alternative stage decoration

The main stage is usually placed on the other end to the yurt on the runway (Figure 21). On the main stage, the most commonly seen backdrop is a big LED screen, on which pre-wedding photos of the couple are displayed or a pre-wedding video is screened. An image or statue of Genghis Khan often features prominently on the stage. There may also be

Figure 21: A wedding stage in Hohhot

images or models of items associated with a traditional pastoral lifestyle on display, such as teapots, a plate of curd, wrestler's vests, saddles, and wooden buckets for making yogurt, horse-head fiddles or arrows. Display of the words *mongol hurim* ("Mongolian wedding") is

also popular (Figure 22). The purpose of all these decorative items is to assert the Mongolian-ness of the wedding.

Figure 22: Everyday pastoral items displayed on stage, including sign saying "Mongolian Wedding", Hohhot

Along the front edge of the main stage, artificial fire to symbolise the hearth can often be found (Figure 23). These artificial fires and the images of Genghis Khan are central to the worshipping sequence of the wedding (for details see Chapter Five, Section 5.4).

The wedding stage is designed to mimic the north-west honorific zone of a traditional yurt, where Mongols used to place their Buddha statue. Traditional yurt arrangements of herding Mongolians are thus recreated on the contemporary wedding stage, particularly on the hotel stages of Hohhot, which are designed by high-tech cultural media companies.

By contrast, country weddings are far less elaborately decorated. There, only the main stage is decorated and there is rarely a runway. The main stage may simply be marked by a plastic poster, on which the couple's

Figure 23: Artificial fires to symbolize the hearth on a wedding stage, Hohhot

one pre-wedding photo with their names may be printed (Figure 24). There rarely are fancy LED screen and the clutter of symbolic objects is absent.

Similarly to the diverse styles of wedding outfits discussed in Section 4.3.1, stage decorations are highly diverse. In addition to the highly Mongolian-themed stage decorations

Figure 24: Stage decoration in a village restaurant A05

discussed so far, there are also more hybrid and Western- or Chinese-themed decorations. Wedding A12, for instance featured a fibre light display and floral decorations (Figure 25). This was complemented by a sign bearing the English word *Wedding*.

Fusions of Mongolian and Western elements can be observed in Figure 26, where a yurt is complemented with floral arrangements.

A particularly common Chinese-style decorative element is a sign displaying the character "囍" (pinyin: xi; "double happiness"), which is composed by repeating the character "喜" ("happy") twice and is stylized as consisting of four love-hearts (Figure 27). Chinese newly-weds usually stick this

Figure 25: Bride on a Western-themed wedding stage (A12)

carved artistic character on their windows after the wedding ceremony to denote that they are newly married.

Figure 26: Wedding stage fusing Mongolian and Western decorations

Another frequently-observed Chinese-style decorative element are red lanterns. In rural areas such as Darhan Banner, Western- and Chinese-style decorations are predominant and Mongolian-style props may not be readily available. Where they are available, they tend to

be much more expensive. Darhan-based wedding planner Yongjiu explained to me that he had not invested in Mongolian-style decorations because there was little demand for them, partly because of the price: a Mongolian-style venue costs around 3,000RMB (600AUD) while a Chinese- style venue costs around 1,400RMB (300AUD). With an embarrassed laugh he explained that farming

Figure 27: Chinese-style wedding signage (A18)

Mongols had little taste for Mongolian-style decorations:

> *mongol hüün baisaar mongol daan daseh-ügüi, hitad yuumen-d dasechai, sonin shii.*
> ("Although we are Mongols, we can no longer relish Mongolian styles, we are used to Chinese things, isn't it strange?")

To sum up, in this section I have described the decorative elements of weddings. Decorations that are symbolic of the Mongolian herding and imperial past are popular and easily accessible to urban Mongols living in Hohhot, as the city is home to many Mongolian wedding catering companies. The fierce competition between these companies makes Mongolian-themed decorations available and affordable to urban Mongols who have a desire for "authentic" material signs. The situation is different in rural eastern Inner Mongolia, where Western- and Chinese-style decoration are preferred. Preference goes hand in hand with availability and affordability. Irrespective of context, however, none of this is static and symbolism is constantly changing. This can best be seen from Darhan wedding planner Yongjiu's observation that a market for Mongolian-themed weddings was developing in the villages of eastern Inner Mongolia through the circulation of young university graduates who returned from Hohhot to their home towns for their weddings.

Taken together, my discussion of wedding costumes in Section 4.3.1 and the discussion of venue decorations here shows the emergence of a hierarchy of "authentic" Mongolian styles. Mongolian-style costumes and decorations in expensive venues in urban centres like Hohhot sit at the top level of this hierarchy and are considered most "authentic." Western- and Chinese-style costumes and decorations in the farming villages of southern and eastern Mongolia with their cheap plastic materials sit on the lowest level and are least valued. In-between these two extremes, various hybrid and fusion styles can be found. At the apex of the

hierarchy sits the grassland wedding (see Section 5.2), which is pointed out to me as *chul Mongol hurim* ("pure Mongolian wedding"). This most perfect of Mongolian weddings circulates on social media as the dream wedding against which other weddings are measured. To understand the broader context in which this hierarchy of Mongolian authenticity is produced, the next section investigates Mongolian costume revival beyond weddings.

4.4 Wider contexts of the symbolic production of Mongolian imagery
4.4.1 Promotion of costume-wearing

In recent years, Mongolian costume wearing has become increasingly popular and goes hand in hand with a renewed valorisation of all things considered authentically Mongolian. University students constitute a case in point: in 2016, a group of university students in Hohhot started a "Costume Monday" campaign (Figure 28). The text alongside their photos, which was widely circulated on WeChat, says:

> Today, a few thousand Mongolian university students attended their classes on campus in their traditional costumes. They did so not because of certain regulations, but they decorated themselves in their costumes out of their own free will. Their slogan is: "Every Monday we will wear Mongolian costumes." Thank you to all Mongolian university students for your efforts to preserve and transmit Mongolian culture. All Mongols, please support our young university students.

Figure 28: WeChat campaign of university students in Hohhot posing in Mongolian costumes

In 2017, primary and secondary schools followed suit when a middle school in Alaxa League, the most western prefecture of Inner Mongolia, decided that all staff and students should wear Mongolian costumes on Mondays. The title of their news item released on WeChat was: "Instead of putting your costumes away at the bottom of your closet, let's put them on. Mongols should decorate themselves with Mongolian costumes". In another

example, Mongolian costumes have become the school uniform of a primary school in Ujumchin Left-Wing Banner (Figure 29).

Adults, too, increasingly favour Mongolian-style costumes on formal public occasions such as for attending public events, including weddings, but also on TV. Most broadcasters on Mongolian TV have been dressed in Mongolian-style outfits in recent years. Figure 30 constitutes an example from an advertisement playing between programs, promoting standard Mongolian use. Their

Figure 29: Primary school students with Mongolian-style school uniforms

message is: *nutag nutag-iin ayalg-aar jirgedeg-ch, bagtam saihan mongol hel-een barimjaa abya-gar yarij surchgaya* ("instead of chattering in various dialects, let us speak standard Mongolian.")

In addition to schools and TV, *Naadam* festivals (see Section 4.4.2) and New Year celebrations are also important occasions for the wearing of Mongolian costumes. One important activity during the New Year celebration is taking family photos wearing their own Mongolian costumes at home. Those who do not have their own costumes usually go to photo studios to rent Mongolian costumes for photo shoots during the New Year. Recently, some Mongolian women on International Women's Day celebrated the occasion by visiting photo studios for a photo opportunity in Mongolian costumes.

Figure 30: Mongolian-style clothing worn by TV hosts

Apart from the above mentioned formal occasions for wearing Mongolian costumes, young Mongols have started to wear everyday fashionable Mongolian-themed attire in their

daily lives, too. Figure 31 and Figure 32 show such everyday Mongolian-themed attire on

display in shops and online catalogues.

To sum up, Mongolian costumes or Mongolian-themed attire have become increasingly fashionable in both formal and informal contexts in recent years. This trend has been led by

Figure 31: Casual Mongolian-style outfits designed by Goylol studio

TV broadcasters, celebrities and other famous people from both Inner Mongolia and the Republic of Mongolia and disseminated on TV and social media. In these contexts, Mongolian costumes are mobilized as a prime way to express a Mongolian ethnic identity and culture. Sometimes, Mongolian costumes are conveniently utilized by those who support linguistic purism or language standardization.

Overall, Mongolian costumes have become an effective way to express Mongolian identity, and a tool to fight for the Mongolian culture in an environment overwhelmingly dominated by "Chinese-ness" and increasingly influenced by global culture. However, other than being a tool for an ideological mission, Mongolian costumes also open themselves up to

Figure 32: Casual outfits designed by EnGe studio

the market and more broadly to Mongols' needs. The continuing adaptations of Mongolian costumes in modern society has infused new energy into once-traditional costumes. They have become not just an expression of identity or of a sense of nostalgia, but also a sign of being "new" and fashionable, especially for young Mongols. Therefore, it is important to note that the revival of Mongolian costumes and its success so far are due to at least two factors. First, Mongolian costumes in their various forms are seen as a carrier of Mongols' tradition, culture and identity. Regardless of recent innovations on the costumes, they still bear close associations with Mongolian elements in one way or another. In Urban's words, they have maintained their "cultural inertia" (2001, p. 127), so that they still reserves their ideological function. Second, Mongolian costumes are open to the consumer market and

fashion trends, as we have seen in everyday Mongolian-style dresses above and various innovative styles of Mongolian wedding costumes in Section 4.3.1.

In addition, the media, the commentary on social media about different Mongolian costume styles, as well as studio owners' evaluations and judgements cannot be glossed over in the free movement of Mongolian costumes within different spheres of lives either. These commentaries and judgments are forms of powerful "meta-culture", abstract ideas about cultural objects (Urban, 2001). The role of abstract comments and expert knowledge in the facilitation of changing Mongolian costumes is illuminated when I discuss costume studios at the end of this section. After delineating the popularity of Mongolian costumes and its implications, I move on to other context, where Mongolian costumes are intertwined with the development of cultural heritage and tourism, which is supported by the state and endowed with new meanings in the context of Chinese nationalism.

4.4.2 Costume competitions, intangible heritage and tourism

Competitions and shows of Mongolian costumes have taken place every year in Inner Mongolia since the mid-2000s. To describe these and their role in promoting heritage and tourism, I focus on two informants: Saima, a traditional Khorchin costume maker and an inheritor of intangible cultural heritage of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and Yulin, a costume studio owner in Tongliao City. Both participate regularly in Mongolian costume shows and competitions.

First, I introduce Saima and her role in the development of Mongolian costumes, mainly based on the posts she had uploaded on her WeChat and an informal interview I had with her during field work. During the interview she showed me the photos she uploaded on her WeChat, other photos at her home and a Mongolian newspaper article published about her work. She also showed me a room allocated for making costumes in her house.

Saima was awarded the title of "Cultural Inheritor" for her Mongolian costume in 2009 competition in Tongliao City. This means she was selected as one of a number of local representatives who preserve or excel at traditional arts, such as traditional Mongolian costume making, embroidery, fiddle storytelling, Mongolian long tunes or ritual speech.

Inheritors are encouraged by the government to open classes and workshops to train the next generation of cultural inheritors in their hometowns.

Since then, Saima has gained wider recognition and, amongst other things, was able to attend the exhibition of cultural heritage in Hohhot in September 2015. The exhibition was branded as 草原文化遗产日暨全区非物质文化遗产 ("A day of grassland cultural heritage and an exhibition of intangible cultural heritage of Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region"). There, Saima showcased her works along with other inheritors (Figure 33).

The exhibition's bilingual slogan (Figure 34) translates as: "Commemorating our roots and opening up the future; be apt at inheriting the past

Figure 33: Saima at the exhibition in 2015

and bringing forth the new." This slogan is taken up and recontextualized by costume studios and other traditional art festivals in various ways (see Section 4.4.3).

In addition to providing opportunities to Mongolian costume makers and making visible Mongolian costumes, the exhibition also shows how the Chinese state supports and

Figure 34: The bilingual slogan of the Exhibition

protects traditional Mongolian costumes and embroideries as items of cultural heritage. The state is producing, regulating, and protecting tangible and intangible cultural property; and cultural heritage thus constitutes another field "where state institutions have to assume activities of protection, conservation, documentation and exhibition" (Fillitz & Saris, 2012, p.

16). However, the state not only produces, protects and regulates cultural heritage, it also uses it as a tool to propagandize policies and extol itself.

Through exhibiting, presenting and describing Mongolian costumes and presenting awards to their creators, the state claims ownership over them. It is also one of the physical connections the state establishes with minority groups and their cultures. Furthermore, such connections formed through cultural heritage protection and development resonate with and is captured by the concept of the culturalization and de-politicization of ethnicity advocated by some Chinese scholars to strengthen Chinese national identity. Among them, a prominant Chinese scholar Ma (2007) went so far as to argue, "when social development, economic prosperity, democracy and cultural diversity reach a high level in most nations, and equality among different groups has been reached, then the tension among ethnic groups will fade and finally vanish, because there will be no need to encourage minorities to fight for their rights and benefits. When that stage has been reached, the concept of ethnic identity will lose its political meaning, retaining its linkages only with cultural heritage" (2007, p. 216).

Figure 35: Modern Mongolian-themed dresses designed for stewardesses won a silver cup for Goylol studio

The promotion of Mongolian heritage not only binds Mongols to the Chinese state but also commodifies their heritage, as is particularly obvious in costume competitions as a development strategy associated with the burgeoning tourism industry. I focus on a costume competition held from January 5 to 7, 2017 in Ujumchin Right-Wing Banner in Shilingol League. This costume competition went by the title: 内蒙古第十四届冰雪那达慕暨第七届冬季蒙古族服装服饰艺术节 ("Inner Mongolia fourteenth winter Naadam and seventh Mongolian costume and clothes art festival"). The festival was supported by the cultural departments as well as the tourism offices of banners and cities of Inner Mongolia. Around five hundred candidates from Inner Mongolia, the Republic of Mongolia and Russia took part in the competition, and from Inner Mongolia around thirty costume studios and organizations

participated. Tongliao City sent both traditional Khorchin costume and modern Mongolian costume makers to the competition. Goylol studio in Tongliao City (see Section 4.4.3), competed in three different streams: traditional Mongolian headdress, traditional costume, and modern costume. They won second prize in the latter category for their modern Mongolian costumes designed for airline stewardesses (Figure 35).
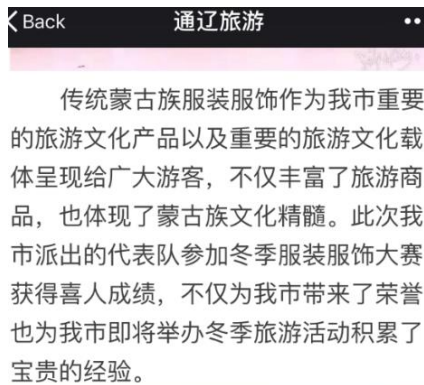
Figure 36: An excerpt from Tongliao Tourism

Two days after the competition, a short news article was published in Chinese by Tongliao Tourism on their WeChat page (Figure 36), which read:

Traditional Mongolian costume as an important cultural tourism product and as an embodiment of tourism culture can be shown to wider tourists. The cultural tourism products enriched tourism commodities, in the meantime, they also brought to the forefront the essence of Mongolian culture. This time the representative group of our city achieved an exciting result. Their success not only brought glory to our city but also accumulated precious experiences for our city's upcoming winter tourism.

In this news item, the emphasis is on the role of Mongolian costumes as valuable cultural commodities in the development of the local tourism industry. While they are also described as the essence of Mongolian culture, this statement is to highlight their potential value as a cultural commodity aimed at tourist.

By participating in art festivals and fairs, the traditional and modern Mongolian-themed costumes have indeed fostered heritage tourism and brought potential economic benefits for local businesses. Costume festivals ascribe a new role to Mongolian costumes, which is both to connect Mongols to their past and the state and, simultaneously, to contribute to their future on the market. This new role in economic development is closely tied with regional and local governments whose support for these festivals has been ongoing. Furthermore, the studios and individuals take part in these competitions as representatives of their respective cities by collaborating with cultural or tourism offices. Thus, the revival of Mongolian costumes has an inextricable relationship with both political propaganda as well as economic prospects.

The creation of a favorable environment for Mongolian costumes has created significant opportunities for cultural entrepreneurs. These are key agents in the costume

revival described here. The next section examines how they chart out their own territory outside of festivals. Since participation in festivals and competitions linked with political institutions cannot bring direct economic profits but only indirect profits such as fame and collaboration opportunities, costume studios play a crucial role in taking Mongolian costumes to (a highly competitive) market, as I explore in the next section.

4.4.3 Costume production

Figure 37: Costume studios on the street: dian ying zhi pian chang xi xiang, Hohhot

Costume studios are key players in the production of Mongolian authenticity. Through their market activities – in an environment supported by the state as illustrated in Section 4.4.2 – they contribute to (re)creating and disseminating images not only of what it means to be authentically Mongolian in the contemporary world but also, specifically, of what the appropriate costumes and props for the perfect dream wedding are.

The business of costume studios is booming across Inner Mongolia. In Hohhot, for instance, I counted no less than seventy costume studios in one single street, where they are located together with souvenir shops, photo studios, and shops selling products from the Republic of Mongolia (Figure 37).

This boom is not restricted to Hohhot, and one of my informants, a studio owner in Tianshan, the seat of Arhorchin Banner, which has 31,120 inhabitants, told me that there were around 60 costume studios there in 2016. This number has undoubtedly increased since then, as the example of Jarud Banner centre shows, where fifteen costumes studios have been opened since 2007. To show the diversity of these businesses and their role in the production of Mongolian authenticity as expressed through costumes, I now introduce two contrasting

case studies of a small one-person craft studio in Tianshan Town and of a medium-sized professional studio in Tongliao City.

4.4.3.1 Case study 1: Gowa's studio in Arhorchin Banner

The first case study demonstrates how costume making has become an economic opportunity for rural women displaced from their land and thus shows how the (re)invention of Mongolian authenticity is inextricably linked to socio-economic transformations related to urbanization. The case study is of a small studio located in Tianshan Town and run by a middle-aged woman, Gowa, who migrated to Tianshan from a village in 2006 in search of a better life and economic opportunity, as she explained to me:

Juun honi tejeej huchirnuu, gurban hüühed bichig üjeje baijai. Enggej baital mani ger-iin hün bas ebchin hürchei. Ter üyes chin torog jardag, teegeed ger teen baisan torog morog-oon tebreed nogoon chuzu terger-eer orood irsen yüm-ee. Neg jixi tai, erten-nii jixi, hül-eer-een hüdelgeedeg, neg honi-oor solij abchai. Tegeed üile oyoyo ged orj yirjai.

("We had three kids at school at that time and we only had one hundred sheep, which wasn't enough to support our family. Then my husband fell sick. You know how we used to use silk as gifts? So we had a few rolls of silk at home. We hired a green taxi and came to the city. We took those silk materials we had at home with us and one very simple sewing machine, which I bought after selling a sheep. That type of old-fashioned sewing machine, which is operated by a pedal. That's how we came to the city to do tailoring work.")

From Gowa's account it is obvious that she and her family struggled with their decision to give up their traditional life as herders and to seek to advance their economic situation in the city. Initially, life in the city was tough for them, particularly as very few people were interested in wearing Mongolian costumes. Gowa initially worked as a helper in a tailor's shop and in 2009 she opened her own small shop next to the Mongolian primary and middle schools, focussing on sewing and mending school uniforms. However, by 2016, when I met her, her life was very different. She owned her own studio and had four tailors working for her. She told me that the demand for Mongolian costumes had started to soar in 2013. For example, in 2016, her studio had received around one hundred orders for the New Year. Along with the popularity of Mongolian costumes, their price has soared, too. In 2016, the price of the longer costumes ranged from 500RMB to 5,000RMB (100AUD to 1,000AUD). Therefore, Gowa is happy with her profit, which mostly comes from New Year's orders and,

throughout the year, wedding costumes. More recently, the demand for Mongolian costumes from university students (see Section 4.4.1) has further increased the studio's income.

Figure 39: Half-finished embroidered bridal gown in Gowa's studio

Gowa's studio specializes in traditional Mongolian costumes and her studio is beautifully decorated with sample dresses on display. She showed me a half-made expensive bridal costume (Figure 38). It is stunning with its back and front almost fully covered with exquisite hand-made, thin, silk-thread embroidery. The embroidery is done by her employees and outworkers. These outworkers are usually migrant women from the countryside who moved to the city for their children's education. The closure of pastoral village schools since 2001 has forced many children and their carers to move from the countryside to the city. The usual pattern is for mothers to relocate with the children while their fathers remain in the villages and commute. Sewing work is popular with such women because the casual nature

Figure 38: Khorchin-style embroidered bridal costume at a wedding in Hohhot

of outwork gives them the flexibility to combine their housework and care-work with an opportunity to receive an income.

The embroidery style in Figure 39 is in the Khorchin style traditional to Arhorchin. It is characterized by exquisite floral embroidery covering the length of the bridal gown .While the floral embroidery is traditional to the Khorchin costume, Gowa explained to me that the flowers on contemporary costumes are much bigger and denser to fit the wedding

choreography of the couple placed on stage (see Section 4.3.2) and to create the most favorable impression with contemporary lighting.

Figure 40: Ujumchin Mongolian costumes in the pre-wedding photos shared on WeChat

At Gowa's studio, in addition to Khorchin costumes, other styles are on display too, including Ujumchin Mongolian costumes, and styles impossible to identify with a specific region or group. While Khorchin costumes are local to Arhorchin and hence expected, this is not true of Ujumchin costumes (Figure 40), which are traditionally associated with Ujumchin Left- and Right-Wing banners in mid-northern Inner Mongolia. When I asked Gowa about this discrepancy, she responded that as long as young people think a dress is beautiful, it does not matter to which Mongolian group a costume belongs.

In short, Gowa's is a success story of a migrant woman in a small city, who made good use of her traditional costume-making skills. Her studio provides employment opportunities to other women like herself who moved into the cities for their children's education. The studio is thus a key node in the transformation from an agrarian economy to a culture-based economy, as Gowa explained:

> *Neg ohin-oon bas oyodal surgajai. Neg hüü urlig suraad odo münggen darhan hiij bainaa. Ter nadas yiluu üb soyol-iig hamagaalj baina, huuchin yuum-iig shuugeed. Mini hüü ber bayar deer duu duuladag. Odo bür echus teen oor-iin mongol-iin tuhai yuum hiij baina. Ene chin mini ohin duu, tereen mini achi ohin. Mongol gesen yuum-een jabal hairalj hamgaalah ged, bi odo taban jil-es jar hürcheh-nee, ene taban jil dotor eden deen jaaj üggeed jalgamjilulya daa oor-iin üb soyol-oon.*

("One of my daughters learned costume making. My son went to art school, and he is a Mongolian silversmith now. He is protecting Mongolian culture more than I am. He is collecting traditional Mongolian artefacts from the countryside. My daughter-in-law is

a singer at ceremonies. Together, we are all doing something related to our culture. The one sitting over there [pointing to a seamstress at her sewing machine] is my younger sister, and the other is my brother's daughter. I will be sixty years old in five years, so within these five years I need to teach them and let them be the inheritors. It is necessary to cherish the things of our Mongols.")

Gowa is a self-taught entrepreneur who drew on her traditional skills to forge a new business under changed economic circumstances and who was able to take advantage of the emerging popularity of Mongolian costumes while also helping to create that popularity. While she takes great pride in her contribution to the maintenance and development of Mongolian culture, there is another class of "professional" cultural entrepreneurs who cultivate the imagery of authentic Mongolian-ness as indexed by costume wearing much more self-consciously and I explore the studio of one such entrepreneur in the next case study.

4.4.3.2 Case study 2: Goylol studio in Tongliao City

Figure 41: The first floor of Goylol studio

Goylol Studio opened in June 2015 and is run by Yulin and his wife Yaruu, both university graduates from Tongliao. When I visited the studio in early 2016, three tailors from Republic of Mongolia were busy making costumes on the third floor of their three-floor building. They were surrounded by rolls of fabric, some imported from Republic of Mongolia, others from southern China. The second floor of the building housed a photography studio, where one wall was completely filled with sample costumes for customers to wear when they had their photo taken. On the first floor, the one that customers would enter first, there were the studio's sample photos, an image of Genghis Khan, and other Mongolian-themed decorations, similar to those found on the wedding stage (see Section 4.3.2). In addition to these Mongolian elements, other decorative elements such as a

guitar, a pendulum clock, wooden boxes, and a bottle of European wine given to them by their friend from abroad, were less Mongolian-specific and conveyed some sort of global artistic flavor (Figure 41). The combination of both Mongolian-themed elements and artsy hipster objects express the young studio owners' taste as well as their ability to blend "Mongolian" and "global" objects to create a modern cultural business.

Figure 42: Costumes on display in Goylol Studio

It is obvious that the studio provides services that go well beyond sewing costumes and include a range of cultural media productions, including wedding photography. As far as costume production is concerned, Yulin and Yaruu, do not participate in the actual sewing, tailoring or embroidering themselves, as Gowa does. In fact, they do not even hire local women to work for them but have hired one fashion designer and two tailors from Republic of Mongolia. Unlike Gowa's studio, Goylol studio does not specialize in traditional Khorchin costumes but rather high-end Mongolian-themed fashion that transcends group boundaries, such as the white Mongolian-themed wedding gown (see Section 4.2).

An analysis of the brochure the studio distributed in early 2016 (Figure 43) offers insight into the studio's contribution to (re)creating and circulating Mongolian authenticity. On the green cover of the brochure, the name of the studio is printed in three scripts: the central Mongolian name is written artistically in calligraphy and complemented with the Chinese name, 高雅文化传媒 (literally "Gao Ya Cultural Media Company"), and a repetition of the Mongolian name in the Latin script: *Goylol soyol zuuch* (literally "Goylol Cultural Media Company"). Here *soyol* means "culture" and *zuuch* "media". The pronunciation of the Chinese name 高雅 (pinyin: *gao ya*) is close to the pronunciation of the Mongolian name *goylol*. As to its meanings, the Mongolian noun *goylol* is derived from the adjective root *goy*

("beautiful") and 高雅 means "graceful" or "elegant". Thus, there is a certain proximity both in pronunciation and meaning between the Mongolian and Chinese names of the studio. This is similar to what Wilkerson (1997) observed in a study on English and Japanese bilingual

Figure 43: The cover of the brochure and the brand name on the costume package, Goylol studio

brand names where advertisers used a Japanese expression which bears a phonemic resemblance to an English expression to catch the audiences' attention. In addition to attracting the attention of potential customers, the meaning of the studio's name also connotes attributes of elegance, beauty and grace. This is common in advertising language where brand names and slogans "are meant to encapsulate the identity or philosophy of a brand and the language used in the slogan of an advertisement becomes the language of the advertisement's "master voice," the voice that expresses authority and expertise" (Piller, 2001, p. 160).

Inside the brochure, the services are introduced bilingually too. There, sample pictures of clothes and photos are accompanied by written introductions to the studio (Figure 44). The introductions are worth citing at length here.

The Mongolian introduction is as follows:

We hope you are enjoying infinite peace and blessings. Goylol Cultural Media Company is the only company in Tongliao City that provides, in a comprehensive way, ethnic Mongolian-style photography services, Mongolian costume tailoring services, and the services of planning wedding ceremonies and other celebrations.

We will catch the memorable and happy moments of your life thanks to our talented photographers and up-to-date technical facilities from the island of Japan. We make outfits that will add a touch of a queen's elegance and a king's royalty to your beautiful figures and lines. To this end, we choose the most modern and newest-

technology high-quality silk, and we have also specially invited dexterous tailors and designers with their new designs from the Republic of Mongolia. We also provide services for wedding ceremonies, *nasan bayar* [a celebration of advanced age], and house-warming parties. To leave a long-lasting memory for your guests and to leave a romantic mark on the page of your life we will design, plan and direct your ceremonies.

In the Mongolian version, a formulaic Mongolian greeting opens the text before the three types of services the company provides are introduced. In the second paragraph, the three types of services are expanded and elaborated on. Among these elaborations, the advanced and new technology from Japan, the high-quality silks produced by new technology, and the professional designers from the Republic of Mongolia are
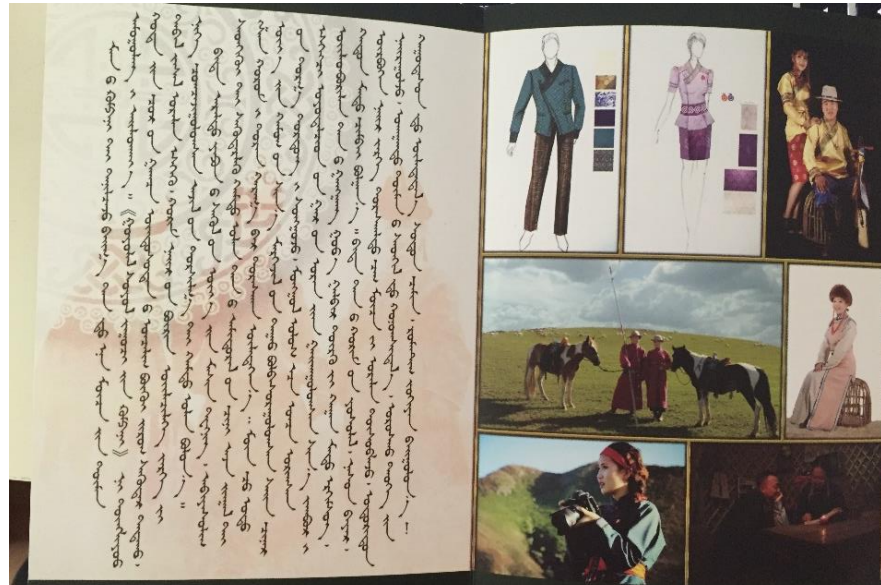
Figure 44: The Mongolian introduction to the studio

highlighted. Next to its written introduction, in addition to the sample photos, what is notable is that the company also puts two pictures of hand-drawn designs. These sketched designs prove further that their costumes are made professionally by taking into consideration both the shape of each body and the suitable colors for each individual.

In sum, the pictures and the text of the brochure focus on innovation, technical sophistication and professionalism. This is the opposite of what traditional Mongolian costumes aim to show, with their focus on being "age-old" and "transmitted in the family through generations". But while emphasizing its innovativeness and professionalism, the studio does not forget its alignment with Mongolian-ness. Therefore, the brochure, just like the studio's decorative style described above, seamlessly combines the new and the old. This bricolage of the new and the old corroborates Urban's (2001) argument about meta-cultural segmentation. We can treat the written introduction and the sample pictures of the studio as comments and ideas about culture – a meta-culture of the cultural object. Urban (2001, p. 189) argues that "meta-culture needs to establish the respects in which a new object might be linked to older ones and might be judged in relation to them." As such, the new costume

designs or the Mongolian-style photos are judged in terms of the aspect that relates to Mongolian tradition or culture. Combined with "expert" knowledge and comments, this dissection supplies the basis for ensuring a continuity of culture; a continuity that takes shape in the absence of a traditional way of cultural transmission (Urban, 2001). In other words, after and during the dissection of tradition into various segments and reassembling them with new elements, what a new cultural product needs is an expert who explains and ensures that the bricolage of the old and the new is one form of continuing tradition. In this context, experts refer to cultural mediators and entrepreneurs in the movement of culture in modernity such as the proprietors of Goylol Studio. These cultural mediators' knowledge of traditional Mongolian culture as well as their expertise in modern fashionable styles ensures the continuity of Mongolian culture through modern production.

In this way, studios such as Goylol may become sources of new ethnic creativity. By this I mean that expert explanations turn modern costumes into costumes that can still be recognized as "Mongolian", as is the case with the white Mongolian wedding gown (see Section 4.2). As Pietikäinen et al. (2016) argue, this explanation and expansion is a constant testing of the boundaries of authenticity. In fact, for my own wedding, I rented a white silk Mongolian costume with blue edges for half a day from a studio. When one of my uncles saw the photo, he commented: "It looks like a Japanese costume with a Japanese collar". I corrected him with the expert advice the studio owner had shared with me: "The studio owner told me it is a new popular Mongolian style, and it is called a "Hun collar". It has been revived in Mongolia recently." This example demonstrates that cultural entrepreneurs such as studio owners indeed become the arbiters of what constitutes "Mongolian" costumes or, more generally, "authenticity" and "Mongolian-ness".

The costumes produced in the studios thus also serve to instruct and to develop culture. This was certainly Yulin's ambition:

> *Eneg hiih-eer damjuulaad bas ter neg büleg mongolchuud-iin serel-iin chichij sergeen gej bain shidee.*

> ("Through opening this cultural media company I aim to wake up and stimulate the nerves of Mongols who forgot about their culture and who lost interest in it.")

These comments resonate with Gowa's claims to contribute to Mongolian culture above. Other studio owners I interviewed even asked my opinion about their studios and

culture development, assuming that a person who was researching Mongolian weddings must be an expert in Mongolian cultural styles.

In this sense, the costume studios provide resources for Mongols' desire to mark their identities and preserve their culture, and at the same time, the studios reap the benefits, both material and symbolic, from these desires. Therefore, the studio owners' claims about instructing and spreading culture take root in the sentiments shared by Mongols in the wider community. By claiming so, studios also shape and guide the ideas and sentiments about culture and tradition through translating them into material forms as costumes. That is why they all prefer the title of "cultural media company": it is a culture and a corporation. That is also why, as luxury product consumers, Mongols are consuming not just costumes from a corporation but also ideas and emotions carried by the consumed costumes. Therefore, modern costume studios embody and rely on at least three factors in order to be successful: first, capturing and responding to the expressed and harbored sentiment of Mongols; second, possessing (or pretending to possess) expert knowledge in traditional culture and being able to manage in volatile market; third, as discussed in Section 4.4.2 part, taking advantage of the policy environment created by the Chinese state.

4.5 Wedding guests

It is not only the couple who consume the services offered by the studios described in Section 4.4 but also other attendees. Therefore, this section moves from the material signs constituting a Mongolian wedding and the production of these signs, to another important constituent of weddings: wedding guests, who willingly or unwillingly take part in the circulation of material signs by contributing their financial gifts to the consumption and production of weddings. First, I describe the guests' participation in the wedding ceremonies and the gift or *hongbao* (a term in pinyin, meaning "red packets") exchange. Then, I describe the proliferation of ceremonies and banquets as an important context for understanding the guests at wedding ceremonies.

4.5.1 The gift or hongbao exchange

At the weddings I observed, there were on average around twenty tables, with each table seating at least ten people. So, generally in the weddings in both rural and urban areas, there were around two hundreds guests, who can be roughly divided into close kin and friends and distant acquaintances. The status of any given guest can be perceived easily from the position of their table in the reception hall. The important guests usually occupy the table at the center of the front row. For instance, at a Hohhot wedding (B01) held by the head of a company, local dignitaries, guests from overseas, and business partners sat at the main table close to the

ceremonial stage. In other cases, this central "VIP table" is allocated to the couple's grandparents and other respected elders of the family. Additionally, there is the practical consideration that some guests might need to leave early and these will be allocated outer tables. Bishirelü, who operates a wedding business, explained the procedure of table allocation as follows:

> *Yamar shireen deer yamar hün suuh-iig toihrulna. Nutag-as iresen hün-iig dotor shireen deer suulgaj, ah düü <u>tong xue</u>-gii dotogshoon suulgaj, <u>dan wei</u>-nii yaaruu ulas-ii höbeeger suulgana.*
>
> ("On which table which guests should sit should be planned. The guests from [the couple's] hometown should sit at the central tables; siblings, friends and classmates also should be seated centrally. Then those busy guests who are working in offices and in government departments should sit at the outer circle [close to the door].")

This is planned to facilitate the departure of "busy" guests within half an hour after the commencement of the ceremony. This comment illuminates the existence of at least two types of guests at a wedding: close friends and relatives, and distant others, or in other words, the ones who sit in the front close to the stage and the ones who sit behind near the door. Erdenchichig, a part-time wedding speaker, also said:

> *Odo hurim deer ajuu udaan suj baih-ne bol ter bol ünen setgel-eseen suuj baih ulus-uud, cham tai ünen harchaa tai, ja enen bol echüs ten tultal suuj ügen gesen üg. Odo ügerüü harchaa ügüi bol müünch suula hagas chag dotor bolchihnoo. Odo chi haruu barin haruu aben ergeed ergeldseer baigad odd eime yabdel garchai.*
>
> ("Now, those who stay long at the weddings are those who come with their true heart, and those who really have a connection with you. They would stay until the very end of the ceremony. Then those who do not have real relations with you would try to stay half an hour. This is because … I said before about it [referring to her comments on the proliferation of various ceremonies], giving and receiving *hongbao*, and then this circulates and circulates and this current situation occurs.")

Erdenchichig's comment also highlights the difference between two types of guests based on the duration of their stay. She also mentioned another important reason behind the presence of the guests who sit in the outer circle or who leave early, which is to get or give the favor, *hongbao*. *Hongbao* exchange must be considered a key rationale for hosting a wedding in the first place. This exchange of gift money explains why some guests simply attend to fulfil an obligation. In that case, they may do little other than giving their gift: and

may ignore the ceremony conducted on stage, or even avoid exchanging words with their host. A widely shared WeChat meme admonishes these types of guests:

> *Hurim nair-t suubal ilüü shig alag tashin urme hairalj, amarag hos-te, aabe eeji-d-en bayar hürgej baii, bitgei hooson ideed hairsan hoinoon nogoo-gen muuhai-ged baii.*
>
> ("If you come to sit at a wedding or ceremonial banquet, please give your applause and show a bit of enthusiasm. Please congratulate the couple and their parents. Do not just eat and then go home and complain that the dishes were not nice.")

Therefore, for some guests, the exchange of *hongbao* has become the most important impetus for coming to the ceremony, as I now explain.

In every wedding ceremony, on the ceremonial day, outside the reception hall or next to the counter of the restaurant a table is set up for documenting *hongbao,* as in the example in Figure 45: the two white Mongolian words on the blue background say: *mongol hurim* ("Mongolian wedding"). In the middle of these two characters is an artistically written red Mongolian word in a circle: *mend* ("greeting"). And this artistic Mongolian character is flanked by two identical tilted square-shaped red stickers. On these stickers the word written in yellow is *bayar* ("happiness"). On each sticker, there are two *bayar*, and these two *bayar* face each other. Mongols call this *hos bayar* ("a pair of happiness"). Therefore, its meaning is "double happiness", which may reflect the influence of Chinese 囍 (see Section 4.3.2). The background of these characters looks like a wooden fence. In fact, this fence-like image is designed to be similar to the wall of the Mongolian yurt. This background is topped with a cloth banner on which Mongolian auspicious knots are printed in blue and white. Then, on the very top of it, there are *hadag* of five colors (see Chapter One, Section 1.1). On the table, at the center are sweets put on a red piece of cloth, and the guests can have some after their *hongbao* has been documented. On the right hand side of the table is a board on which the couple's wedding photo is displayed, and their names, linked with a heart, are printed in Chinese underneath the picture. Similar billboards are commonly seen outside the reception hall, which may help prevent those guests who may not know the couple well from entering the wrong reception hall.

At least two reliable family members are needed to staff the *hongbao* desk: one is needed to write down the names of guests and the amount of money they bring while the other is responsible for collecting the money. There is hardly any sense of privacy as the ledger is visible to all guests. Usually, close friends and family would contribute an amount that is a genuine gift while others just "repay" the amount they received from this particular host family on previous occasions. Therefore, one function of the *hongbao* ledger is to document the amount of money each guest has given, so that a similar amount can be

Figure 45: A table for hongbao documentation outside the reception hall

returned to today's guests on similar future occasions. Simultaneously, guests usually keep their own private ledger. For instance, a woman, who I asked to share wedding invitations with me, had kept all the wedding invitation cards she had received over the years and on each card she had noted down the amount of money she had gifted to the couple. Therefore, both sides – hosts and guests – each have different ways to keep a record of the monies coming in and going out.

The flows of *hongbao* during weddings is symmetrical for most ordinary Mongols. The most often used Mongolian words to describe the *hongbao* giving at a ceremony is "*harin-aan/harüü-gaan ügeh*", which means "giving the received or going to be received favor". Conversely, *hongbao* receiving at a ceremony can be described as "*harin-an/harüü-gaan abeh*", which means "taking back the given favor", as is exemplified in this conversation between two sisters I overheard during field work. The younger sister said to the older sister: "You have been to so many ceremonies in the last two years, you must have spent a lot. But it

90

is okay, next year your mother-in-law is going to be seventy three and you can hold her birthday celebration for advanced age. Then you can take back what you gave". In another example I was part of a conversation where a young woman complained to her boyfriend that he was attending too many ceremonies and spending too much. His response was "all these monies are *harin* giving, one day when we hold our wedding ceremony these *harin* will all return to us." Therefore, the financial gift is future-oriented as it will flow back to the spender one day.

The reciprocal nature and moral obligation of *hongbao* exchange is largely related to a society which places enormous importance on "*renqing*", a Chinese term which literally means "human feeling". Yan (1996) in his insightful chapter on "Reciprocity and *renqing*" sums up "*renqing*" as:

> *Renqing* is a system of ethics that guides and regulates one's behavior when dealing with others within one's own *guanxi* network. At the normative level, *renqing* relies on the basic concept of reciprocity (*bao*), sharing (*zhan guang*), and face (*mian zi*). In practice, *renqing* represents socially accepted, correct interpersonal behavior, and the violation of *renqing* is regarded as serious misconduct. The system of *renqing* has three structural dimensions: rational calculation, moral obligation, and emotional attachment. Although all three dimensions coexist in all social interactions concerned with *renqing*, actual emphasis can be placed on any one of them in a given situation (Yan, 1996, p. 146).

Though Yan's study was conducted among Chinese in Xiajia Village in Heilongjiang province, the same dynamics and principles of a *renqing* society are behind the exchange of *hongbao* in Mongolian weddings. Yan also explains that if one fails to give in person or send *hongbao* shortly after a wedding to which one was invited, the guest would suffer from losing face (social face) among fellow villagers and self-guilt (moral face). This explains why most villagers I spoke to considered the increasing number of ceremonies a significant financial pressure. Even so, they try not to miss a single ceremony so as to fulfil their moral obligations.

Furthermore, Yan's three structural dimensions also clarify the presence of different types of guests. Those who come to rejoice with the couple and families bring their *hongbao* with strong emotional attachment, even if, to some extent, they are also driven by the moral obligation of *renqing*. This group usually arrives two to three days ahead of the ceremony, and every night the couple's families host these guests. Some of them join in to help prepare for the ceremony. In this sense, for close relatives and friends a wedding lasts for a few days,

instead of just the two hours in the reception hall. Therefore, the emotional attachment infused into some *hongbao* cannot be glossed over, either. By contrast, the standard amount of *hongbao* for acquaintances is usually decided and updated by collective and tacit agreement in a village.

In addition, there are also guests who attend wedding ceremonies mostly to ingratiate themselves with the host. During my fieldwork, one cameraman in Hohhot revealed to me that there are certain rooms in the restaurants where they are not allowed to video record, especially if a wedding is held by a high-ranking official. Sometimes such dinners in private rooms in a restaurant take place the night before the official wedding ceremony. On such occasions, for some guests, the invitations to attend their superior's children's weddings can be a convenient occasion to bribe their superior in the name of giving *hongbao* to the newly-weds. This kind of financial gift serves more instrumental than expressive functions. Yan (1996, p. 21) insightfully notes that gift-receiving rather than gift-giving is the symbol of prestige; in some contexts gifts flow only up the social status hierarchy, with the recipient superior in status to the giver. Therefore, he argues that the underlying socio-cultural mechanisms sustain this kind of asymmetrical or unilateral gift giving and help to reproduce the existing social hierarchy. Similarly, in weddings held in Mongolian rural and urban contexts, it is those situated in higher socio-economic or political strata who are able to generate substantial economic surplus, in addition to enhancing their social status, from holding wedding ceremonies. In contrast, most ordinary people do not have much left over from holding a wedding ceremony after subtracting the expense of the banquet and the *hongbao* which flowed out of their pockets on previous occasions.

Thus, the *hongbao* exchange, as Erdenchichig also described it to me, is part of a cyclical process. As long as a person or family is involved in this cycle they are hardly ever able to extricate themselves from it. It is this exchange that creates the two different types of guests, the one who comes with their true heart and the ones who come to accomplish a task for *renqing*. Furthermore, I have also demonstrated how the exchange of *hongbao* is conveniently utilized by certain guests and hosts, and how this action may further contribute to status building.

The *hongbao* exchange is not just present in the weddings, it is omnipresent in every other banquet party, too. Furthermore, the endless circulation of *hongbao* creates a link between weddings and other ceremonies as well, which means that the wedding guests are not just the guests for the wedding only, they are the guests for numerous other ceremonies as well. As such, as the conversation between two sisters above has shown, what they focus on

is the giving or taking of *hongbao* rather than a focus on which portion of the financial gift went to the wedding and which portion flowed to other banquets. The villagers often do not distinguish clearly between various types of ceremonies. When asked how many weddings they have been to in a month, they often say in respond:

> *Neg sar dotor hen medeh boi, deer garag dürben bayar-t ochijai, hurim bain, hoyor asar-t oroh nair, hühediin sar-iin hurim baina.*

> ("In this month, who knows? Last week I went to four banquets, one wedding, and two ceremonies for moving into new apartments in the city [from the countryside], one for a baby's one month ceremony.")

When I asked about the annual expenditure in wedding ceremony attendance, a villager first gave me the total amount she spent on all celebrations. She said:

> *Bayar nair deer bi barag tüm iluu jarchai. Hagas-ne hurim magad ügüi, sain medeh ügüi.*

> ("At celebrations I spent more than ten thousand (AUD2000), maybe half of them was on weddings. I am not sure.")

She used a general term *bayar nair* to cover all the celebrations and banquets, of which weddings are but one. In addition, in my interviews with the wedding speakers, they often gave me examples of speaking on the stage at ceremonies other than weddings. For instance, after giving me examples of how they used a cooked lamb instead of cake and delivering a speech at an elderly woman's birthday celebrations, Yongjiu said:

> *Chi ganchhen hurim-iig sodolj baina? Teim bol bi hurim-iin tohoi bas helj ügii. Gebech ene orchim nasan bayar arbin taarj baina.*

> ("You are only studying weddings, right? Ok I will tell you about weddings, too, but recently I have come across a lot of *nasan bayar* ("celebration of advanced age").")

From the perspective of the wedding speakers as well as the guests, there are a lot of similarities between different celebrations due to the similar tasks they are required to accomplish. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the current wedding ceremony context in order to understand the position of the wedding ceremony among those other flourishing ceremonies.

4.5.2 The proliferation of banquets

There are two peak periods of celebrations and formal banquets in villages according to the interviews with wedding speakers and the informal chats with villagers: from July to August is *suragchin bayar* ("celebrations for those high school graduates who are admitted to universities") and from November (sometimes October) to Spring Festival (either January or

February) is *nasan bayar* ("celebration of advanced age") and *hurim* ("weddings"). However, in urban contexts, most of the wedding ceremonies and other banquets fall on Fridays, weekends, and public holidays. One village woman in the month of December sent her husband and two daughters to four different celebrations in one week. Even if she cannot attend in person, at least her *hongbao* must arrive. Among these flourishing ceremonies, there are a lot of newly-invented ones. Among the invitation cards I collected from a villager, I found an invitation to attend a celebration for having electricity installed in a camping cabin. Celebrations on being admitted to university are also becoming common.

Erdemtü, a part-time wedding speaker and a middle school teacher, also expressed his opinion on holding various ceremonies and especially on holding *nair* ("celebrations").

> *Önöö chin mani ende eldeb jüilin, odo ter hiih ügüid bolhe nair bas baina shüü. Suragchiin bayar, ger tulh, nasan bayar, sai jar garch baih hüün shüü. Hurimch bolo odo yahab da, hüünni neg nasanii yabdel yuum chin.*
>
> ("Now around here are various sorts of ceremonies and *nairs*. Some *nair* are not necessary to be held, for instance celebrating a student's admission, house-warming parties, and *nasan bayar* for people just over sixty. For weddings it is understandable, since it is a once-in-a-lifetime thing.")

Erdemtü's comment highlights the variety of celebrations held by people, some of which he regarded as insignificant. Although a wedding celebration is understandable compared to other celebrations, it is also a type of *nair*. After Erdemtü's comment, Soyolt, a wedding speaker and a friend of Erdemtü also commented further on holding too many *oboo* (or *ovoo*, a site for worship of gods or of the protector of the place) *nair*.

> *Nair naadam gedeg chin bol delger juuni doloon sar bish bol naiman sar-d hideg. Dusel booroon ügüi jil chin hijel baina. Odo oboo-le baidag bol tahij baina, soyol-on aldagdaad… Ter udaa Balchiruud-in nair deer ebes ügüi, ulaan toos butarj baij.*
>
> ("*Nair* and *naadam* are supposed to be held during the height of good summer – July or August. Now they hold *nairs* even if it is a summer without a single drop of rain. Last time at the *nair* of Balchiruud in Arhorchin Banner, the land was barren and the air full of dust. And as long as there is an *oboo*, they worship and hold *nairs*; culture is being lost")

Soyolt's comment shows the abundance of "inappropriate" *nair*. He mentioned later that when he was young, if there was a drought or crisis, *nair* were suspended until the coming of a good year. But, there is a difference between the *nair* he went to when he was young and the current *nair* held for various practical reasons such as *hongbao* collection.

Based on his comment, the worshipping of too many *oboo* has also changed the sacred function of *oboo nair* and destroyed the culture. For instance, Urtnast (2012), a Mongolian scholar in his book about the worship of *Oboo* argues that

> The *erdene oboo* in Shilinhot was revived and worshipped in 2004 after being dormant for half a century, but this *oboo nair* goes with another title too, which is the opening ceremony of the first nomadic cultural *nair*. The purpose of the latter title is to attract investors and tourists from metropolises like Beijing and Shanghai (Urtnast, 2012, p. 705).

Therefore, from both the individual and institutional perspectives, the ceremonial banquets and *nair* are held for various utilitarian purposes. From the individual's perspective, holding and even "inventing" various banquets is an easy method for alleviating temporary economic pressure. For the institutions, infusing sacred *oboo* ritual with tourism and economic development is also an effective way to make money out of advertising "nomadic" culture (See Section 4.4.2).

In the social media space, blog posts which are inspired by or contextualized within the abundance of ceremonial banquets are frequently encountered. For instance, an online article posted by an anonymous writer on *holvoo* (literally means "connection") net claimed that, to celebrate the *nasan bayar* of an old woman, her three sons in turn held three *nasan bayars* for her in sequence, by moving her from one *nasan bayar* organized by one son to another *nasan bayar* held by another son. In the end, the poor old lady was hospitalized due to too much noise and the hustle and bustle of multiple *nair* within a short period of time. And the one who had always been taking care of her is actually her only daughter. Her sons' purpose is implied by the author, which is to increase their income. Of course, the current burgeoning of unreasonable and ill-purposed banquets is may be discussed in an exaggerated manner. However, the reality of the over-abundance of ceremonial banquets is undeniable. No wonder that the guests, in whatever the ceremonies, all developed a similar attitude against this ceremony proliferation, as Otgon, one participant, jokingly commented:

> *Odo-nii jochin uhamsar ünder boljai, uhamsar tai gej heleh-ch yüm üü, esgül uhaan ahdesen-ch yümü, mönö bol odoo neg bag idej uulaa yabchgen gesen üg.*
>
> ("Guest these days are of high morality and discipline, not sure it is because of their improved morality or because they have become too sophisticated. Anyway, the guests just taste a bit food, and drink a bit, then they are ready to leave.")

His comment means that compared to the previous excited and happy guests, contemporary guests are "sophisticated" and "well-disciplined". After all, they have to be

well-disciplined and keep themselves sober to be able to efficiently attend up to three celebrations per day, as most of the celebrations fall on the same auspicious days. Thus, overwhelmed with various celebrations and banquets, whether they attended weddings or other types of celebrations may not matter much to the guests, as long as they do not miss any of them and as long as their *hongbao* have arrived.

I have described the proliferation of ceremonies and banquets in order to further understand contemporary wedding guests, as well as to situate the wedding ceremony within the context of other ceremonies. In doing so, I aim to illustrate the changed function of ceremonies and their close association with the socio-economic life of Mongols, which has recently been characterized by drought, sandstorms, and overreliance on private or bank loans for survival. How to get loans from the bank and who is going to be the guarantor of the borrower were some of the most frequently heard conversations during my fieldwork. The Mongolian language radio even warned herders against overextending themselves. A Mongolian blogger wrote in *Chinggis süljee* ("Genghis net") in June 2016 about this crisis:

> *Hurim nair-iin salh jiljin holairanaa, gegeen üder gerelt naren door mürüi tai naadam-iin tailbai-d mongol jaluus huraj, jeeleleg-t gud oronoo. Yitegemjiin horshoon-d ürrin dangs ügüi malchin ail tung chööhen baij, hamag yeh-den juun tüm-ig dabaj, hamag bagen arben tüm-iig dabaj baih-ii yaaheltei bile? Hereg-en hiiged gedes-en dürgesen bangh-iin tolomchuud guij argadaj abchiraad shinetgeej baina gene. Malchid yaagad yaduursen bi? Türiin bodolg-iin uchir uu? Öörin bodolg dutuu yüm üü? Ünder hüü tai jeeleleg hechüüdsen-ii gol hairuuchalg haa hen-d baibal taarana?*

("The whirlwind of the weddings and celebrations is still going on. Under the bright sun and in broad daylight the Mongolian young men are gathering and gambling. There are few herding families who do not owe any money to banks. At the most they owe one million, at the least they owe one hundred thousand. How can it be? The trouble makers, the banks whose bellies are filled full, are now begging the herders to come and "renew" their loans. How come the herders became so poor? Is it due to the policies of the state? Is it due to their own lack of "self-policies" in their lives? Who or which place should be blamed for the responsibility of the loan with staggering interest rates?")

Mongolian society today is a society torn apart by natural disaster, the declining price of lamb, wool and agricultural products. And it is also a society rife with ceremonies and banquets, as well as with bank loans with rising interest rates. This socio-economic background is reflected in the wedding ceremonies and produces "restless" guests

participating in a social ritual with financial considerations at the front of many participants' minds.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have dealt with the material signs constituting the contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremony. I began by describing mediated images of "perfect" weddings as indexed by beautiful costumes worn by couples against stunning "Mongolian" backgrounds. These images of the perfect Mongolian wedding circulate widely on social media forums used by Mongols and also other Chinese people. These highly visible and widely-circulated wedding costumes cover diverse styles but give particular prominence to Khalkha Mongolian styles of the Republic of Mongolia and the modern white Mongolian wedding gown. Furthermore, they model the use of multiple costumes for different parts of the wedding.

Then I moved on to describe the costumes and decorations that appear in my corpus of actual weddings. High levels of diversity of wedding costumes and stage decorations, ranging from various Mongolian styles via hybrid styles to Western or Chinese styles were observed. I argued that the most "authentic" Mongolian wedding costumes and venue decorations are enjoyed by those urban Mongols who are able to afford the consumption of authenticity. Less well-to-do pastoral Mongols may also be able to present themselves in an "authentic" way, even if they may not have multiple costumes and their wedding stages are relatively simple. In the farming villages of southern and eastern Inner Mongolia, Western and Chinese outfits predominate over Mongolian costumes and decorations. This means that the diverse styles seen in wedding costumes and decorations are hierarchically structured. Not all Mongols are included in the celebration of identity through fashionable Mongolian costumes. Therefore, my analysis showed that a certain exclusionism is part and parcel of the pursuit of Mongolian costumes and stratifies Mongol groups into more or less authentic minorities.

To lay out the wider context of Mongolian costumes I then widened my lens to other occasions where Mongolian costumes are worn, such as schools, TV programs, festivals and celebrations other than weddings. In addition to these formal contexts, Mongolian costumes and their modern variations are becoming increasingly popular, especially among young Mongols for every-day wear. This means that costumes and costume wearing have acquired a role in the expression of Mongolian identity.

This expression of Mongolian identity through costume revival is explicitly supported by the political institutions of the Chinese state, as is apparent from events such as Inner Mongolia's Cultural Heritage Exhibition in Hohhot and costume competitions. Through examining these activities and key participants such as inheritor of intangible cultural

heritage, I showed how minority culture is incorporated into the state's political and economic projects. If we are to understand the booming Mongolian costume industry, the state's involvement in it and the responses it has triggered cannot be glossed over.

One of these responses come from cultural entrepreneurs, who are pursuing economic profits from the costume revival. I offered case studies of two studios which are both charting out new territory in the market by creating more or less traditional Mongolian-themed costumes and related cultural imagery. Rather than simply producing and selling dresses, they have come to take on the role of arbiters and mediators of contemporary Mongolian identities. However, due to their differential knowledge and symbolic capital, the voices of low-educated women offering traditional craftsmanship are subordinate to those of university-educated entrepreneurs with the skills to professionalize their work. The latter are able to provide meta-cultural commentary and circulate it not only through their studios but also social media spaces, which guide the evolving shapes of contemporary Mongolian costumes, as I showed at the beginning of the chapter.

Overall, my analysis has shown that the process of change underlying cultural diversity is best understood as interactions between ideologies, as G. Roche (2011) argues. The display and acquisition of diverse material signs embodying different cultures indeed enacts ideologies at weddings.

Moving on from costume wearing and decorations as indices of Mongolian authenticity, I moved on to another indispensable material constituent of weddings, namely guests and the *hongbao* exchange they engage in. Just as costume production and consumption is booming, so are banquets increasing. The result is a perversely fraught society where dancing and singing Mongols are struggling with rural displacement, indebtedness and social change.

This chapter narrows the scope and explores how the ceremony is conducted in two specific spatial and temporal frames, namely the home and the restaurant. This analysis of the sequences of a wedding has two aims. First, I aim to understand the reconstruction and (re)invention of tradition in contemporary weddings. Second, I aim to examine how the division of the wedding into two spatio-temporal sections is utilized by different actors for different purposes. To achieve these aims this introduction section provides a contextual background by describing the sequencing of traditional Mongolian weddings as described in the literature. While observers must have been rare at traditional weddings, the contemporary wedding cannot escape the omnipresent gaze of the camera, which I will also address in this section.

While the traditional sequencing is no longer strictly practiced, it constitutes the basis on which contemporary wedding rituals are (re) created in the home and on stage. I will explore the rituals in these two settings in my data in detail in Sections 5.2 and 5.3.

Traditional Mongolian weddings were quite rigidly structured as historical and ethnographic research, particularly from the late 19th to early 20th century, shows (Rashi-osor, 2012). While there were variations across different Mongol groups, the traditional Mongolian wedding ceremony always consisted of three main parts, with their specific rituals: the pre-wedding, the wedding, and the post-wedding. The following description of each is based on Rashi-osor (2012).

The pre-wedding rituals involved the first visit to the bride's family by the matchmaker and a respected member from the groom's family in order to ask for their daughter in marriage. Subsequent visits involved the provision of hospitality, detailed discussion about ceremony preparation, and an offer of blessings to the new yurts prepared for the bride and groom. During these pre-wedding activities a date for the actual ceremonial wedding day was set.

The wedding rituals on the ceremonial day covered around fifteen to twenty segments, which varied due to the differences in wedding customs among different Mongolian groups. The ceremony started with the groom setting off from his home with a few followers, including a *helmürch* ("wedding speaker") from the groom's side. Upon arrival in the bride's home, her sisters-in-law (her brothers' or cousins' wives) and the *helmürch* from the bride's side would start a verbal duel with the *helmürch* from the groom's side outside the home. The verbal duel revolved around trying to symbolically bar the groom from entering the bride's

home. Once entry was granted, the groom would worship the hearth or Buddha of the bride's family. Then he would also pay his respects to the bride's parents and give gifts to her relatives. This was followed by the groom being dressed up by two female members of the bride's family (usually either the bride's brothers' or her cousins' wives). Then a series of feasts would start, during which the groom's skill and strength was also tested. The latter was done by practical tests such as having to remove the knuckle bone or twist the spine of a cooked lamb. The events at the bride's house would conclude with the *helmürch* blessing the couple.

Following the ceremony at the bride's house, the bride and groom would return to the groom's house and the second half of the ceremony revolved around their arrival at the groom's house. In the same way as the groom previously, the bride would worship the hearth of her new family and pay her respects to her in-laws. The bride's hair would then be parted with a rib bone and braided and tied in a new way to signify her married status. In the end, the bride and the groom would enter their own *ger* ("Mongolian yurt") and the other guests would enjoy a night of feasting, music and verbal duelling. The next day, the ceremony reached its conclusion and all guests departed, except one sister-in-law of the bride (bride's brother's wife). The farewell ritual was also characterized by long speeches and emotional songs.

After the wedding itself was concluded, there were a range of post-wedding rituals. For instance, three days after the wedding, the bride would get up early and throw away ashes under the instruction of her mother-in-law. This symbolized the start of her life in the new family. There would also be a number of mutual visits between the new couple's family members.

Each of the above-mentioned rituals was preceded, accompanied or concluded with either the speeches of the *helmürch,* elders or sisters-in-law of the bride. In addition, songs, fiddle music and stories were also abundant throughout the wedding festivities. In fact, there were fixed types of songs specific to each segment of the rituals. In addition to such verbal genres, there was also a specific symbolism that went with each segment of the wedding: for instance, a white felt-carpet was prepared for the bride's arrival; the number of persons on the *saadag* ("groom's team") had to be uneven; or milk was presented to the bride's mother by groom. It can therefore be argued that the traditional Mongolian wedding was in itself *temdeg*: that means it was part of the signs and symbols that regulate social norms, stabilize

100

tradition, order the behaviour of people and renew and rebuild the community (Sainchogt, 1999).

Having described the main stages, oral genres and *temdeg* symbolism in the traditional Mongolian wedding, in the following I explore their presence, transformation and absence in contemporary Mongolian weddings. The ritualistic elements of weddings in my data can be divided into two distinct parts: rituals at home and rituals on stage in the restaurant (see Section 4.3.2).

Before analysing the rituals that appear in the data the role of the camera as the inexorable permanent observer of contemporary weddings needs to be acknowledged. Most of my data come from wedding videos that the couples had commissioned themselves as part of their wedding activities (see Section 3.3). The camera operator thus becomes a "permanent observer", as Shagoyan (2000, p. 14) argues with reference to Armenian weddings. The presence of this permanent observer and the fact of the recording of the entire wedding, of course, affects the course of the actual performance of the ritual, even if the degree to which it does so is not clear (Shagoyan, 2000, p. 25). In ritualistic events such as weddings, the influence of the camera may not be substantial, since in such cases the ceremonial situation itself assumes a spectator. Furthermore, participants in a ritual at the very least are simply more careful in performing their roles than they would in a more naturalistic setting. This is particularly true of ceremonies performed on stage by couples and wedding speakers. Overall, the inclusion of the camera into the wedding affects different ritual segments in different ways and to different extents.

Therefore, it is important to note that both the rituals at home (Section 5.2) and those on stage (Section 5.3) are captured on video. This means that in both cases there is a sense of theatricality, which is further enhanced on the stage. In other words, the ceremony performed on the stage creates a second layer of objectification and overt performance of ritual acts. In order to explore how the home and stage ritual relate to each other, I begin by describing the home rituals in the following section.

5.2 Wedding rituals in the home

As explained above, the traditional Mongolian wedding consisted of three spatio-temporally different segments: pre-wedding, wedding, and post-wedding. This tripartite structure has today become a dual structure of rituals in the home and rituals on stage. It could be possible that post-wedding rituals are still being conducted, but they are not recorded on video. Rituals in the home and on stage do not strictly map onto pre-wedding and wedding proper, either. Strictly speaking, pre-wedding rituals have disappeared, too, at least from the videos.

However, the rituals in the home are more family-oriented and the rituals on stage more public. This public-private distinction is apparent from the fact that only family attend the rituals in the home while other guests only appear once the wedding party moves to the reception hall or restaurant. It was therefore relatively easy for me as a researcher to gain access to the wedding segment conducted in the restaurant but relatively difficult to gain access to wedding ritual conducted in the home. For the latter, I rely on the videos as the camera is present in both segments.

This section examines the more private wedding rituals in the home, which precede the more public rituals. Table 8 presents an overview of the pre-reception rituals in my data.

Table 8: Pre-reception rituals in the videos

	Groom's home		Bride's home				Groom's home			
	Deity worship	Departure	Interdiction to the threshold	Groom paying respects	Groom being dressed	Departure	Welcome	Deity worship	Purification	Bride paying respects
A01	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A02	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A03	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A04	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A05	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A06		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
A08		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
A09		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
A10			Y	Y	Y	Y				
A12		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A14		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	
A15		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	
A16		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	
A17		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	
A18		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
A19							Y	Y	Y	
A20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
C01			Y	Y	Y	Y				

As shown in Table 8, the pre-reception rituals take place in three distinct spaces: the video record starts with pre-departure rituals in the groom's home. From there it cuts to arrival rituals at the bride's home. From there, the couple set off together and return to the groom's home, where the third set of rituals unfold. In total, the record of these rituals lasts from thirty minutes to an hour. This means that the rituals in the home on average constitute one third to half of the full wedding video.

Wedding videos typically begin in the groom's home. There, one or two rituals may be observed. In six videos, the wedding rituals begin with the groom worshipping the deity in his home. This involves the groom bowing before his family Buddha or hearth to obtain blessings for his journey to the bride's home. After the worship, the groom sets off with his

best man in a decorated car. If there is no deity worship, the video starts with the groom's departure from his home.

Departure from the groom's home is followed by arrival at the bride's home except in videos A10 and C01, which start with the groom's arrival at the bride's house. The reason for these exceptions – and also A19, which starts even later, with the couple's arrival at the grooms' home – are practical: due to the geographical distance between the groom's and bride's homes, these couples held two wedding ceremonies, at two different locations and on different days. This may have even included hiring two different camera crews and producing two different videos. Another consideration is the cost of the camera: A19 engaged the camera operator for a shorter time to economize.

After the groom's arrival at the bride's house, three or four separate ritual segments are recorded. Three of these are present in all the videos – interdiction to the threshold, groom dressing and the couple's joint departure – while the groom paying respects constitutes an optional element.

The entrance-barring ritual described in the traditional Mongolian wedding continues to be important: family members and friends of the bride stop the groom and his entourage at the gate of the house or door of the apartment. They test the groom and his team by asking various questions. However, the verbal duelling aspect of the entrance-gaining ritual is now overshadowed by monetary gift giving: the door is opened not as a result of satisfactory answers or speeches but after the groom's best man has given *hongbao* to those on the other side of the door.

Once the groom has been admitted to the bride's home, he usually pays his respects to his future parents-in-law. This ritual is recorded in twelve videos and may involve presenting gifts of cigarettes or alcohol.

After paying his respects to his new parents-in-law and other relatives, the groom is dressed up by the bride's sisters-in-law before the couple get ready to depart back to the groom's home. The departure ritual may involve worshipping the bride's family Buddha or hearth (A04, A05) or simply entering the decorated car. The groom may also carry the bride to the car (A12, A15-A18). In videos A01 to A07, a member of the bride's family circles the car three times in a clock-wise direction. This ritual is intended to preserve a portion of fortune and luck for the bride's family by ensuring that the leaving daughter will not carry

with her all the family fortune and bring it to her husband's family. Thus, the circling is done to ward off the full loss of the bride's *heshig boyan* ("fortune and luck").

Finally, the new couple return to the groom's home for another set of rituals. As Table 8 indicates, the rituals in the groom's home following the couple's arrival are the most variable and consist of up to four elements: welcoming the bride, deity worship, purification and the bride paying her respects to her new family.

A welcome ritual is recorded in videos A01 to A08. Strictly speaking this happens outside the groom's house: before leaving the car, the bride is offered a bowl of milk by her new mother-in-law. The bride's sisters-in-law, who usually accompany her in the car, may also be offered food and drink.

The welcome ritual for the bride between the car and the entrance to the groom's home is highly variable. The white felt-carpet for the bride to step on, which was a crucial element of the symbolism of a traditional Mongolian wedding, appears in two weddings (A03 and A04). There, it takes the form of a pre-paved decoration which stretches from the car to the door of the house. In some cases (C01), the white felt is replaced by a red carpet, a Chinese or Western ritual for an honored welcome. In other cases (A02, A05, A08), there is no carpet or other ground cover for the bride to walk on. The groom may also carry the bride across the threshold (A15).

The variable nature of the welcome ritual demonstrates that, while Mongolian traditions such as the white felt, may still be residually present, they have also become overlaid – and confused - with other "global" wedding rituals such as the red carpet or the groom carrying the bride across the threshold. That this mélange of rituals may be arbitrarily judged right or wrong by cultural experts (see Section 4.3) became apparent in wedding A19, which I attended: when the couple's car arrived, an elderly woman from the groom's family, who was also the matchmaker and is a practicing shaman, made the couple get back into the car after they had already exited with loud and angry shouts. It turned out that the car had been parked in the wrong direction. So, the couple and driver got back in, the car was parked facing north and the welcome ritual started all over again. Only the second entrance – from the car parked in the ritually "correct" direction – was record on the video.

Following the welcome rituals, a number of videos show worship rituals. The deities worshipped are most often the family Buddha and hearth (A01-A05). Additionally, the image of Genghis Khan may also be venerated (A04). Worship usually involves lighting the oil lamps before the deity or deities and bowing to it or them three times. The presence of multiple deities is not uncommon. For instance, the couple in A19 worshipped three different

deities by kneeling down. In addition to traditional Mongolian deities such as *har lus* ("the deity who reigns over water"), one of these was a framed image of Chairman Mao. While this incorporation of seemingly incommensurable deities may seem unusual, the co-existence of different deities was also observed by Roche (2011) in his research with the Monguor people of the northeast Tibetan Plateau. He argues that the co-existence of traditional religion, Christianity and modern science is embedded in relationships, including from complementarity, antagonism, or a complex intertwining and even co-identification (G. Roche, 2011).

The next segment is occupied by purification rituals, which are present in all videos that include a part set in the groom's home. The purification ritual usually begins with the bride and groom walking to their new bed and sitting down on it. Then the groom's mother feeds the bride a bowl of cream mixed with *huursan budaa* (a type of millet). In some weddings, such as in A01, A03 and A04, the bride's hair is then divided with a rib bone and done in a way that symbolizes her new married status. While this practice is in line with traditional Mongolian wedding customs (see Section 5.1), the hair parting is purely symbolic of tradition as the difference in the hairstyles of married and unmarried women was obliterated during the Cultural Revolution, as Tügesbayar, a professor from the Inner Mongolia University explained to me. Although there is now a mismatch between ritual practice and modern-day behavioral norms, the ritual act is still maintained in some weddings. In other words, the form of the *temdeg* is retained although it has lost its function and correspondence with social reality. Alternatively, the traditional Mongolian ritual may be replaced with a Chinese wedding custom, as is the case in A14 to A19, where the groom's mother places a red or pink plastic flower wreath on the bride's head. In return, the bride also sticks a pink or red flower into her mother-in-law's hair.

In a further act of purification, the couple wash their faces and hands in a new red basin filled with water and, in some cases, with coins. In weddings A15 and A17 the bride and groom actually compete with each other to see who can grab more coins from the basin. The idea behind this ritual is to determine who will manage the household finances. This kind of ritual is completely absent from traditional Mongolian wedding customs.

The last ritual act that is observed in the home is the bride paying her respects to her in-laws and new relatives by giving them gifts. Gifts are mostly practical items such as thermal underwear (A02) or blankets (A05). In return the bride also receives gifts, mostly money. The gift exchange concludes the rituals in the home, before the wedding (and the video) resumes

in the restaurant, where the families and more distant guests will meet for a feast and to enjoy the ceremony on stage.

Despite their differences, in all these rituals conducted at home, the "director" of the ritual is usually a family member or a close relative who is respected and has knowledge of the traditional rules. As the couple performs each act, one or more family members direct the couple either by leading them or showing them. Sometimes, so many voices and instructions overlap that it is hard to discern who is giving which order. These competing instructions and orders may indicate the gradual disintegration of once embodied traditional norms and culture. To compensate for this loss and to make the ritual more "professional" some families invite wedding specialists to their home, as is the case in A20 and C01.

In wedding A20, Bishireltü, a wedding specialist and wedding speaker, is present and provides professional guidance which negates the need for "amateur" family members being involved. Before or during each ritual act, Bishireltü offers an explanation as to the meaning of a particular ritual. For instance, before the groom is being dressed, he puts a white felt on the floor and spreads different types of grains underneath the felt. As he does so, he explains that Mongols from ancient times have valued their five prime types of livestock and grains. Therefore, the five grains underneath the felt symbolize the flourishing and multiplication of descendants. In other words, the wedding specialist's participation at the rituals conducted at home makes the rituals not just orderly but also "instructive" and explicit. Furthermore, his participation also makes each ritual act self-reflexive. This means that, while at other weddings the couple conduct each act following someone's gesture or simple order without being offered a reason for what they are doing, Bishireltü explains each ritual act. The ritual act is given further special attention through the close shots of the camera. In other words, in those weddings only involving family members, the *temdeg* is implicit and carried out and repeated based on long established rules. But in weddings A20 and C01, the *temdeg* is not just acted out, but also dissected, scrutinized and explained. Once traditional and embodied rituals undergo such a transformation, they are turned into a valuable commodity of knowledge possessed by wedding specialists such as Bishireltü.

In wedding C01, which was held at a tourist resort on the grasslands at the foot of mount Khan in the northern part of Jarud Banner, a wedding expert was also present throughout the wedding. The wedding was filmed by Goylol Studio (See Section 4.4.3 for details) and later shared widely on WeChat. There, one of the most frequent comments under the post of this video was: "there is so much tradition to learn from this wedding." Of course, the ritual expert's explanation, long "traditional" speeches, and guidance made this wedding

noteworthy and pedagogical, reinforced by the tradition-invoking vast grassland, yurts, and horses of the resort. Furthermore, wedding C01 strictly adheres to the traditional wedding procedure outlined in Section 5.1. The wedding included almost every ritual act described in traditional weddings, including long verbal duelling between two *helmürch* outside the bride's yurt, testing the groom by letting him pull out the knuckle bone of the cooked lamb, and starting the wedding with three long traditional wedding songs.

Overall, the involvement of a ritual specialist, traditional long song singers and an aspiring new wedding studio (and catering company) made this particular wedding ceremony an extremely distinguished one compared to other "normal" wedding rituals of ordinary people conducted at their real homes (as opposed to a hotel yurt symbolizing the bride's home). This wedding held in a tourist resort thus acts as a model wedding and combines the rituals conducted at home with the ceremony on stage in a fusion that emulates tradition but, at the same time, brings the complete wedding ritual, including the rituals that most people conduct in the relative privacy of their own homes, entirely into the commodified public space of the resort. Of course, only very few families can afford to fuse these two parts together by hiring an entire resort and associated personnel. Although this kind of "traditional" Mongolian wedding on the grassland that transcends the division between private and public rituals is available to only very few families, most families can display tradition to their guests at least part of the wedding by holding a wedding ritual on stage in a restaurant.

5.3 Wedding rituals on stage

The ceremony in the restaurant usually follows after the rituals conducted at home. In the city, where most guests are likely to be employed, the most convenient time for the ceremony in the restaurant is during the lunch break between 11:30am and 2:00pm. In the countryside, the timing may be more flexible. The ceremony in a rural restaurant starts earlier and lasts longer compared to that held in the city. For instance, in wedding A19, after finishing the rituals at the groom's home around 7:00 am, guests sat around idly until, just before 8:00am, the loudspeaker of the village council announced in Mongolian that there was a wedding banquet at the village restaurant and asked all the villagers to come.

The ceremony in the restaurant consists of two parts: one is the performance of the wedding on stage and the other is the actual feast. The ritual on stage lasts for about twenty minutes and is the key focus of the wedding videos. After the performance on stage is concluded, the couple usually join their guests for food and drinks and share toasts with them (often in a new costume, as described in Section 4.3.1), which concludes the formal part of

the wedding. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine the ritual acts performed on stage. Table 9 provides an overview of these ceremony sequences.

Table 9: The ceremony sequences on the wedding stage

	Preliminaries			Couple-specific commentary			Interactive elements			Blessings
	Prelude	Greetings	Explanation	Introduction	Praise	Love	Worship	Parents	Q&A	Blessings
A01		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y
A02		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
A03		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
A04		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y
A05		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y
A06		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y
A08		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y
A09		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
A10		Y		Y	Y			Y	Y	
A12	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
A14		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
A15		Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	
A16		Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	
A17		Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	
A18		Y		Y		Y		Y		Y
A19		Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y
A20	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
B02	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
B03	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
B04	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y		
B05	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y
C01	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y		Y

On the stage, four ceremonial segments can be identified: preliminaries, couple-specific commentary, interactive elements and blessings. In the following I will examine each of these segments in turn.

The preliminaries may start with a prelude before the couple even appears on stage. The prelude, which is prevalent in urban weddings such as in A12, A20, B02 and B04, involves screening the couples' pre-wedding digital photos on the big LED screen backgrounded by music choices ranging from global pop music such as Taylor Swift songs to traditional Mongolian songs. Another prelude can be found in weddings A20 and B02, where four or five uniformly dressed fiddlers perform *tümen agtiin tübergen* (Chinese: 万马奔腾; "thousands of steeds") on stage as a lead-in to the wedding. The prelude is absent from country weddings due to economic and resource limitations.

After the prelude, the ceremony proper commences with the speaker delivering a welcome speech and providing a ceremonial explanation.

The second part, which I call "couple-specific commentary", shifts the focus to the couple. If the couple are not yet on the stage, the wedding speaker invites them to the stage, encouraging the guests to applaud. The speaker then starts to introduce the couple. Getting

the couple on stage takes many different forms. They may come up together or separately. For instance, in weddings A12 and A15 the groom walk from one end of the runway to the other, kneel down before the bride and give her a bunch of flowers. The effect is to resemble a Western marriage proposal. In another example, wedding A20, the groom asks for blessings from Genghis Khan, before he, his best man and the wedding speaker set off together from the main stage to pick up the bride who is sitting in a yurt at the end of the runway. Upon approaching the yurt, they are stopped by the wedding speaker from the bride's side. An enactment of the verbal dueling outside the bride's home in traditional weddings follows. Compared to similar barring rituals conducted at home (as discussed in 5.2 above), the one performed on the stage is more elaborate. The verbal dueling clearly is a show, playing to the guests, many of whom can be seen capturing the moment on their smart phones. Having obtained entrance to the yurt, the groom returns to the main stage together with his new bride and they are both led by the two chanting wedding speakers and followed by the best man and the bridesmaids.

Once the couple is on stage, the wedding speaker introduces them. This includes couple praising speeches in sixteen weddings, either in Mongolian or in both Chinese and Mongolian (see Chapter Six, Section 6.3 for details on language choice). In eight weddings, the couple introduction speech was also preceded or followed by a Chinese commentary on love and marriage. Throughout this segment, the bride and groom remain mostly silent, sometimes smiling imperceptibly in an awkward way especially when the praising speech is delivered without aligning its "traditional" and fixed content with the real young couple at hand. The speech is an obligatory ritual element and because it is the key linguistic component in the wedding ceremony it will be analyzed separately in Chapter Six.

The third segment is an interactive phase and may include deity worship, paying respects to the parents, and couple interaction. Furthermore, the interactive phase of ceremonies can be classified into two types. The first type is called *gurb mürgel-iin yos* ("the ritual of three bowings") and refers to first, bowing to deity, second, bowing to parents, and third, the couple bowing to each other. This ritual of the three bowings can be found in weddings A02 to A08, A20, B01, B03 and B04. The second type of interactive phase mainly consists of two activities: paying respects to the parents and a series of couple interactions. These can be found in the remaining weddings.

As regards deity worship, there are certain overlaps between the rituals at home and on stage. For instance, in weddings A02 to A04, deity worship was conducted in both contexts. But there are also non-overlapping situations. These have two configurations. First, the

worship may be absent from the rituals at home - or it might have been edited out or not filmed - but it is performed on stage. In wedding A20, at home, the couple did not worship any deity, but on the stage they worship Genghis Khan. Second, the worship is done at home, but it is omitted from the ceremony on stage. In wedding A19, the couple worshipped three different deities at home, but none on the stage. The latter pattern may even be explained, as is the case in A01, where the wedding speaker mentions that the couple have already gone through the process of hearth and Eternal Blue Sky worship at home. Therefore, he can skip this part.

What is particularly noteworthy in the cases of overlaps and repetition is that the stage worship is much more elaborate than the one conducted at home. This is the result of the involvement of the wedding speaker during the ceremony performed on the stage. Furthermore, the languages used on the stage in this sub-segment also include Chinese, in addition to Mongolian, such as in weddings B02 and B03. This is attributable to the presence of Chinese guests in the restaurant. Thus, the simple and short informal monolingual Mongolian instruction of family members in deity worship rituals at home is turned into an elaborate and vivid, and in some cases, multilingual worship on stage. Furthermore, the deities worshipped on stage are not personalized to the families as they are at home. The object worshipped on stage is mostly designed by the wedding catering company or wedding speakers, such as a big image of Genghis Khan on the LED screen or a bust of Genghis Khan on the altar, placed on the stage with a flaming artificial fire, symbolizing the hearth (see Section 4.3.2).

Deity worship is followed by paying respects to the parents. In the same way as deity worship, this sub-segment may overlap with ritual acts conducted at home. On stage, couples bow to parents who are either on stage with them or sitting at the main table. A more elaborate form includes the Mongolian wedding custom of *ehiin chagaan süü haruulah* ("paying back mother's white milk"), in which the groom particularly gives tribute to the bride's mother's love and sacrifice. This ritual also symbolizes that the bride from now on shall belong to others. When this ritual is conducted on stage, it is accompanied by a long and touching formulaic speech about the mother's love and devotion from the birth of her daughter through her childhood years to her wedding day. This may get very emotional and both mother and daughter and other women might burst into tears (A12, B03, and C01).

The bow to the parents is then followed by the couple's mutual bow to each other. Compared to the bows to the deity and parents, the last bow is simple and no corresponding speech is delivered for this last bow. Thus, the highlights of the first type of interactive phase

are the traditional Mongolian customs, particularly deity worship and paying respect to the parents.

In the second type of interactive phase, where there is no deity worship on stage, the interactive phase starts from paying respect to the parents. In this sub-segment, the parents come to the stage and four chairs would be allocated for them. Then the couple either kneel before them or bow to them and then address their parents-in-law as *meme* or *eme* ("mother") and *aabe* or *ajai* ("father"). In return, both parents give *hongbao* specifically to their new daughter-in-law or son-in-law. This Chinese wedding custom is called "改口" ("change of address"). This way of paying respect is present in weddings A12, and A14 to A19.

After paying respect to the parents, the interactive phase may shift to some form of couple interaction, which I call "Q&A" in Table 9. This sub-segment may include interactions such as wedlock wine drinking, joint candle lighting, exchanging vows, exchanging rings, or following instructions from the wedding speaker such as for the groom to kiss the bride or for the couple to hug each other. In-between these acts, the wedding speaker may ask the couple questions ranging from how they first met, their experiences while dating, to who would manage the family finances in the future. These rituals are largely unknown in traditional Mongolian weddings but are part of Chinese wedding customs. In a focus group interview with three wedding speakers, they reflected on these interactive rituals between Mongolian tradition and Chinese innovation as follows:

> Erdemtü: *Odo hoyuul-aan hejeed chug aimdern gesen tangrig taibij baih uhaan tai. Gebech haitad-iin yümen-d oroj irele geseer bas…*
> Soyolt: *Deer üid Mongol er hün mor-nii sain-iig jaidalj, saihan oihid bereed-iig bulaaj abch baisan, yosloh yabdel ügüi gesen üg. Yosloh-chin bol mongol er hün-d abch helbel beyeen door taibij bain.*
> Tümensang: *Echig tenger, ehe gajar, gal Burhan-d mürgeh bol mongol-iin yos, hairilchan mürgeh yos ügüi gej baarin-ii neg hütlegch nadad helj baijai. Shinchilseer baigaad man-ii bol erii horoi ügüi bolj bain.*
> (Erdemtü: "Mutual bowing may mean that the couple is committing to each other, that they are going to live together forever. But in Chinese weddings, the mutual bowing…"
> Soyolt: In early times, Mongolian men with the best horses took the beautiful girls by force. This shows that men did not bow to women. For Mongolian men, bowing to their brides is an act of lowering themselves.

Tümensang: A wedding speaker from Baarin Banner said that the bow to the Heaven, the Earth and the Buddha is the Mongolian custom; but there is no mutual bowing between bride and groom in Mongolian tradition. Wedding rituals have become messy and they no longer have any rules, after this ongoing innovation.)

No matter how doubtful the authenticity of mutual bowing may be, it is nonetheless widespread. The argument over the couple's mutual bowing also reflects the conflict between the traditional norms of a patriarchal society and the more egalitarian ideal of romantic love embraced by modern couples.

Other ritual acts of the interactive segment are controversial, too. One bride I interviewed objected expressly to the wedding speaker quizzing the couple:

Hereg-tai hereg-ügüi yum asuuhas aigaad, bid hoyar urdaar helejei, bid hoyar-os büü üg helüül gejei.

("We were afraid the wedding speaker would ask many useless questions so we told beforehand not to ask us anything on stage.")

This bride, like many others, expresses a preference for the couple's silence on stage. In the wedding videos, the couples keep silent on the ceremonial stage in thirteen cases. The response also shows that prior negotiation may be essential for the couple to achieve their desired ritual. Unfortunately, not all negotiations are successful. One couple told me that at their wedding ceremony, the speaker even revealed to the guests that they had asked him not to ask any questions. Encouraged by applause and laughter he then proceeded to their chagrin to ask many questions from them. A groom also told me how embarrassing questions on stage could be to the couple:

Ter chin odoo aimar-iin <u>pi-di</u> hün bol sai hairuulj deilnee.

("Only those who are especially <u>cheeky</u> can answer those kinds of questions.")

Couples who do not appreciate the interactive ritual segment may react in unexpected ways, as wedding speaker Feng revealed:

Bain shuu, jarim-en nadtai <u>pei he</u>-ügüi. <u>You qi shi</u> jarim oihiduud taisan deer ünsüülh ügüi. Jarim-en uur hürchhene.

("Yes, there are problems. Some couples <u>do not cooperate</u> with me on the stage. <u>Especially</u> some girls who do not let the groom kiss her, and some of them also become angry on stage.")

In sum, the interactive segment is widely contested. It is the only ritual act where couples are allowed, or sometimes forced, to speak themselves. In the ceremonies where these couple interactions are absent, couples hardly utter a word and hardly express any

emotion throughout. The silent couples are passive, like persons going through sanctification or purification in rituals. On the surface, such silent couples resemble Turner's (1988, p. 67) "liminality entities", who are characterized by silence and submissiveness, among other attributes, when neophytes enter the transitional stage of a rite of passage. But in practice, on this wedding stage in the restaurant, these silent couples are in control of and relishing their own preferred ceremony style, as pre-ceremony negotiations with the wedding speaker suggest. Compared to those who are either willing or unwilling cooperative couples on the stage, who answer questions and follow the commands of the wedding speaker shyly, the silent couples may have demonstrated much more power in controlling their own ceremony. Therefore, it would be misleading to state that the silence of the couple on the stage is the loss of their agency. In the performed ritual on the stage, no matter how silent and passive the couples appear to be, they are mostly in control of the ceremony procedures and styles. After all, the wedding speaker is hired and the couple are the wedding speaker's customers. So if the customers want a silent and simple wedding then the wedding speaker has to offer it, no matter what kind of "tools" he has in his "toolbox". This means that compared to the silence and conformity during the "simple but serious" rituals at home, supervised by family members, the silence of couples on the stage implicates much more agency. After all, ritual performance on the stage needs paying and paid actors, while life transitional rituals at home need social members.

After the divergent and contentious interactive segment, the final ritual segment takes place: *yüüreel* ("blessing"). "祝福语" ("good wishes") may replace the blessings. The latter may be due to some wedding speakers' lack of competence in the *yüüreel* genre. This final segment may also involve wedding speakers expressing gratitude to the guests on behalf of the host family.

After the final ritual act, the couple leaves the stage and they start to toast each guest at their tables, usually after having changed into another set of costumes. At the same time, a song and dance performance designed by the wedding caterers may get underway on stage.

5.4 Summary

Through laying out the ritual acts and patterns of wedding ceremonies in the home and on the stage, I have been able to show the diversity in contemporary Mongolian wedding rituals: while some strive to remain faithful to "authentic" Mongolian traditions and customs, others are heavily influenced by Chinese, or even "global" or "Western" wedding rituals. The elaborate ritual performance on stage, no matter what kind of styles it engages, complements, contrasts or accentuates the rituals conducted at home. Once relocated onto the stage in the

restaurant, the ritual acts employed further serve to classify and re-order wedding ceremonies into different "styles" and ranks. The rituals in the home do not differ substantially regarding the ritual acts and their order, even if some Chinese customs, such as placing a red floral band on the bride's head, may enter the ritual mix. It is only once the wedding ceremony moves into the public space of the restaurant that the weddings diverge clearly from each other and can easily be grouped into different categories. Indeed, to describe a wedding as "Mongolian", does not refer to the identity of the participants but the ritual performance on the stage. The relocation of the "Mongolian" way of holding a wedding ceremony on the stage in the restaurant, as the crux of invention, creates different hierarchies among weddings and makes the conspicuous consumption of Mongolian rituals the most "authentic." This is apparent from the fact that my informants and acquaintances again and again directed me to wedding C01 as a beautiful traditional Mongolian wedding, which I must see. Conversely, some of the brides I spoke to expressed their dissatisfaction with Mongolian weddings held in rural areas because there are no "quality" Mongolian props for the stage decoration (see Section 4.3.2) or "good" Mongolian wedding speakers. Therefore a Mongolian dream wedding is increasingly seen as taking place in Hohhot, where "good" Mongolian wedding resources are available.

Of course, the ritual performance on the stage reproduces tradition selectively, as Nasan, a wedding speaker, explained:

> *Taisan deer bol jübhen hurimlah-d eimerhü-l yos baina gesen neg-l agshan-ii haruulja baina. Jarim tal-iin haruulan, jarim tal-iin üngerchehen.*
> ("On the stage, we show only one moment of the wedding customs. Some of the customs are shown and others are not shown.")

Other speakers pointed out that the spatial and temporal constraints of the stage and the restaurant made it impossible to recreate the real Mongolian wedding rituals. The latter is due to the fact that the traditional Mongolian wedding is, by definition, located in the wide open space of the steppe, while the stage is, obviously, extremely spatially constrained. For most Mongols, *hüdee* ("countryside") evokes deep meaning, but contemporary Mongols rarely live there. It is a place of nostalgia and authenticity, a place that sustains the "true" nomadic Mongolian culture, and an idyllic place that Mongols dream about going back to one day. *Hüdee* refers to vast spaces, dotted with yurts and traversed by horses, although in reality the

countryside is now covered by farming fields, fences and mines, and horses have been replaced by cars.

The wedding rituals on stage have yet another purpose that is relatively independent of tradition: the entertainment of the wedding guests (see also Section 4.5). Wedding speaker Erdemtü explained this purpose as follows:

> *Taisan deer hiij baih-n bol ünen deen bol odoo dailleg-iin uhaan tai. Dailleg-aan shuud hiij odoo en shin hürgen shin ber-en bol tanilchuulj. Mani Arhorchin-d bol gal-d mürgen eej aabe-daan mürgeh yos-iig bür ger teen beylüülchgeed iren. Ulamjilelt yos-uud bas hayigduudai shuu.*
>
> ("The main purpose of the stage ceremony is the reception of guests. And it is to introduce the groom and bride at the reception. In our Arhorchin, the worshipping of hearth and kneeling to the parents are conducted at home, after which they come to the reception. The traditional custom has not been lost [in the home ritual].

Erdemtü distinguishes clearly between the two different parts of the wedding ceremony: the "serious" ritual is conducted at home following the traditional custom, while the stage rituals follow a different logic. The latter are endowed with different, sometimes overlapping as well as contradictory meanings by different actors, ranging from cultural authenticity via status display to entertainment. To quote Alexander (2006, p. 42) "ritual-like things" in modern societies are extremely complicated and need to be understood in their specific contexts, as a mere division of ritual and staged performance cannot capture their full complexity, especially when they are intertwined with the apparent commodification of culture.

Chapter Four and Chapter Five have demonstrated that wedding ceremonies and attendant practices stratify different groups of Mongols and impose different values on different types of ceremonial practices. A further key aspect of creating different types of weddings is related to language choice and I therefore now turn to the linguistic choices made during the main body of the ceremony on stage – the wedding speech delivered by the wedding speaker or speakers.

The wedding speech - that is, any speech accompanying the ritual acts performed on stage – consists of four distinct segments (see Section 5.3): first, the preliminaries which include the greetings and ceremonial explanations; second, the couple-specific commentary, where the couple is introduced and praised; third, interactive elements such as commands to worship deities, instructions to repay parental love or personal questions directed at the couple; fourth, blessings, congratulations and good wishes.

In this chapter, I examine the language choices made in each of these four segments separately, before considering any metalinguistic comments in Section 6.6.

Table 10 presents an overview of the language choices in the various segments of the weddings in my dataset.

Table 10: Elements of the wedding speech in the data

	Preliminaries		Couple-specific commentary			Interactive elements			Blessing
	Greeting	Explanat-ion	Introduct-ion	Praise	Love	Worship	Parents	Q&A	Blessing
A01	M	M	M	M			M	M	M
A02	M	M	M	M	M		M		M
A03	M	M	M	M	M		M		M
A04	M	M	M	M	M				M
A05	M	M	M	M			M		M
A06	M	M	M	M			M		M
A08	M	M	M	M			M		M
A09	M	M	M	M		M	M	M	M
A10	M		M	M			M	C	
A12	B	M	M	M	C		M	C	M
A14	M	M	M	M		M	M		M
A15	B		C		C		B	C	
A16	B		C		C		C	C	
A17	B		C		C		C	C	
A18	B		C		C		C		B

A19	B	M	C		C		M	M	M
A20	M	M	M	M		M	M		M
B02	B		B	B		B	C		B
B03	B		B	B	C	B	B		M
B04	B		B	B			B		
B05	M		B		C		M	C	B
C01	M	M				M	M		M

Key:

B: Bilingual in Chinese and Mongolian

C: Chinese

M: Mongolian

Table 10 shows that eleven wedding speeches are conducted in Mongolian only (A01 to A09, A14, A20 and C01), and the remainder include both languages to varying degrees. Language choice is related to the overall structure of the speech: Mongolian-only speeches lack the segments that provide a commentary on love, an address to the couple's parents, and the interactive quiz element. By contrast, in most of the bilingual speeches, except in B02 and B03, the ceremonial explanation, the couple-specific commentary, and the worship of deities are missing. Therefore, three types of language choice can be distinguished:

- Monolingual Mongolian: this language choice always entails an adherence to traditional Mongolian ritual speech genres.
- Bilingual: this language choice pattern may entail the use of both Mongolian and Chinese within a predominantly Mongolian frame or a mixture of Mongolian and Chinese ritual speech genres.
- Chinese-dominant: in this pattern Chinese language and Chinese ritual speech genres predominate.

Of course, the boundaries between these four types of language choice patterns are not always clear-cut, as the following examination shows.

6.2 Language and genre choice in the preliminaries
6.2.1 Monolingual Mongolian preliminaries
An example of a monolingual Mongolian opening speech can be found in wedding A09. A09 was held in a village restaurant in Jarud Banner. The stage was empty of any of the decorations described in Chapter Four, Section 4.3.2, except for the Chinese advertisement of the restaurant, which was running on an electronic banner above the stage. On the stage, four

red plastic chairs were placed along the wall. The guests' tables and chairs, too, were covered with cloth in the Chinese festive color red. Against a Mongolian song playing from a loudspeaker in the background, the wedding speaker, Müren, a middle-aged man dressed in a blue Mongolian costume and a pair of Mongolian-style knee-length leather boots delivered the opening speech in Excerpt 6-1, while holding a blue ceremonial *hadag* in his left hand and a microphone in his right.

Excerpt 6-1: A monolingual Mongolian opening speech (A09)

1. *Ja! Gereltüülen saatesan erhem hündete geichin jochin, erhemseg hadagtai noyad, boyan heshig tai tomchuud,*	1. Ja! respectful guests, honorable gentlemen and ladies, gift and grace bestowing elders,
2. *bolbarai hörhön hüühdüüd, gal tai chog tai jaluuchud,*	2. lovely kids, lively youths,
3. *ganggang gegenchir büsgüichuud,*	3. beautiful ladies,
4. *nutag usan-ii-han alder ner-iig ürgej yabsen ahmed buurulchuud-aa,*	4. elders who preserve the fame of our land,
5. *salh-nii-han üner-er jusaj, mal-iin-han toosan-d yabaa mini hairtai **malchin tümen** min,*	5. my dear **fellow herdsmen** who walk in the scent of the wind and the dust of herds,
6. *ta bühen elgeer-en enghe amaglang, türel-eer-en tübshin amaglang, sain baichganuu? Saihan **ebeljij bainuu** dayaar-an?*	6. Are you all at peace? Are you all **wintering well?**
7. *Bid bühen-ii medeej,*	7. As we all know,
8. *uul hedei ünder baisan-ch, urgaad garsen gajar tai.*	8. No matter how high a mountain is, it has a root.
9. *Us hedei urt baisan-ch, ehe absen boleg tai.*	9. No matter how long a river is, it has an origin.
10. *Had hedei ünder baisan-ch, hajuulan garh jam tai.*	10. No matter how high a cliff is, there is a trail around it for passing it.
11. *Haan tür-iin günj baisan-ch, har-d mordah-iin yoson tai.*	11. Similarly, the princess of a royal kingdom must get married.
12. *Harch arad-iin ohin baisan-ch, har-d mordah-iin yoson tai.*	12. And the daughter of a commoner must get married.
13. *Uruu gajar urgan gedeg chin, uliyasan moden-ii jayaa,*	13. Growing on lower land is the fate of the willow tree.
14. *urag-iin gajar ochin gedeg, hühen hün-ii jayaa bile!*	14. Marrying to someone else's land is the fate of a girl!
15. *Hobor erden-iin jaluu saihan nas, hos-oor amidarh-iin jayaa tai.*	15. Precious young age is fated to live as a pair.

16. *Zambulag-iin negen yos-iig daaguulan,* *mongolchuud min hü-gen üsch er bolbal ber* *buulgaj, Hühen-e üsch öölei bolbal hair-d* *morduuldag bilee!*	16. Abiding by this law of the universe, Mongols find a wife for their son when he becomes a man, and wed their daughter when she is mature!

The ceremonial greeting and opening speech in Excerpt 6-1 is entirely delivered in Mongolian. In addition to the language choice, the content of the speech is typically "Mongolian". This is particularly obvious from the fact that the guests are specifically identified as *malchin tümen* ("fellow herdsmen") engaged in nomadic practices such as *ebeljij bainuu* ("wintering well"). In reality, the guests include only few herders and most are sedentary peasant farmers. This expression of "Mongolian" content through the Mongolian language is not unusual and in wedding A08, the wedding speaker highlights that he himself is a herder, as are the wedding singers:

> *Önööder-iin en toglagchid bol bür barag malchin-aar urbasen yüm aa, hütlegch-en-ch malchin, duuchin-ch malchin. Ja, mani hoyar malchin duuchin ta bühen deen aya duugaan ürgen barih gej baina!*

("Today's performers are all herders, the speaker is a herder and the singers are herders. Now, our two herder-singers are going to present us their songs!")

This particular emphasis on herders is another aspect of the valorization of the pastoral culture and Mongolian nomadic "tradition" evident in costumes and stage decoration (see Section 4.3.1 and Section 4.3.2) and ritual acts (see Section 5.3). Nomadic-themed expressions such as *saihan ebeljij bainuu?* ("are you wintering well?") and *saihan jusaj bainuu?* ("are you summering well?") are usually received with enthusiastic applause from the audience.

After the greeting, which foregrounds content related to pastoralism and nomadic life, the speaker offers a ceremonial explanation, in which he uses various rhetorical devices, including parallelism, metaphor and analogy to explain marriage as a natural, universal aspect of life. Just as rivers, mountains, willows, princesses and ordinary girls all have a destination and fate in this life and universe, so do young men and women. In this way, marriage – and specifically Mongolian marriage – becomes imbued with the laws of nature. Fate and long-held customs are invoked in all the Mongolian ceremonial explanation in my data. The key terms of explaining marriage as fate include *jayaa* ("fate") and *yoson* or its root *yos* ("custom, rule"), which occur repeatedly, as in Excerpt 6-1 (ll. 11-14). The popular association of marriage with fate and destiny can also be found in the expression *jayaani hain*, which refers

to "a companion of fate". In fact, finding one's life partner through prophesy and divination is an age-old custom with pervasive occurrence across Mongolian epics (Horlewa, 2003). However, contemporary young Mongols are unlikely to consider marriage as destiny.

Therefore, the ceremonial account does not serve as an accurate reflection of contemporary mores but is valued for its power to infuse the flavor of tradition into the wedding. It means that the speaker, by delivering a Mongolian formulaic ritual speech rhythmically and poetically, foregrounds the meta-communicative side of the speech, which is essential for creating a Mongolian wedding. Overall, by employing these fixed ritual expressions, which are valuable linguistic and cultural resources in creating a Mongolian wedding, Excerpt 6-1, like the other Mongolian preliminaries, serve to frame the wedding as "Mongolian".

However, not all weddings in the corpus conform to the Mongolian-ness of ritual commencement by delivering a monolingual and poetic oration filled with references to tradition as Excerpt 6-1 does. In a changing multilingual and minority society where Chinese predominates, wedding speakers face significant challenges in the creation of "Mongolian" weddings through the use of monolingual Mongolian speeches. In cases where both Mongolian and Chinese are used, the "Mongolian" ceremonial frame may be sustained or disregarded, as I show in the following.

6.2.2 Bilingual preliminaries

One way to maintain the Mongolian content and feel of traditional formulaic ritual speech for an audience that many not be fully proficient in Mongolian is to provide a Chinese gloss of Mongolian segments, as happened in wedding B02 in Hohhot. Before the commencement of the speech, an English pop song was played in the background while the couple's pre-wedding photos in both Western and Mongolian costumes were displayed on the big LED screen. After the arrival of the guests, the song faded and the male wedding speaker, Manda, who was dressed in a traditional Mongolian outfit, started to greet the guests in Chinese and Mongolian (Excerpt 6-2).

Excerpt 6-2: A bilingual opening speech (B02)

1. 蒙古婚礼习俗主持方队，但考虑到今天参加婚礼的嘉宾当中有很大一部分不懂蒙语所以也考虑到让您懂得我说的大概意思老夫要用跑调的后学的汉语，难免有些纰漏，各位届时请鼓掌鼓励！	1. This is a Mongolian wedding catering group, however most of today's guests cannot understand Mongolian. For the sake of their comprehension, I will humbly use my poorly pronounced and later-learned Chinese. It might have many mistakes, when they do occur please give me your applause of encouragement and understanding!

120

2.	*Erhem hündet jochid-oo, ta bühen-ii-hen amar amaglang-iig ailatgaj bain, hurim ehlih boleloo! Ta bühen tabtai morilan saataarai.*	2.	My respected guests, may you be well and in peace! The ceremony is about to start. Please be seated comfortably.
3.	女士们，先生们，各位来宾大家中午好！婚礼马上要开始了，恭请入席！首先由我们的表演团队为你们演奏马头琴曲《万马奔腾》。将《万马奔腾》献给新郎新娘，祝他们永结同心，白头到老！同时我们衷心祝愿在座的各位身体健康，工作顺利，合家幸福！	3.	Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon! The ceremony is about to start, please be seated. First of all, let us offer you the horse-head fiddle performance Thousands of Steeds. We present it to the bride and groom and all the best for them. We also wish all the guests health, success and happiness!
	[Performance of *Tümen agtiin tübergen ("Thousands of Steeds")*] 4. *Ja, um sain amagalangten boletugai! Enghe sain jargalangten boletugai! Ja, hurai hurai hurai…*		(Four young Mongolian fiddlers in identical white Mongolian costumes are performing…) 4. Ja! May there be happiness and may there be peace! Hurai hurai hurai hurai...
5.	朋友们，我们今天的婚礼在蒙古族古老的宴歌《圣主成吉思汗》当中缓缓地拉开了序幕！让我们再次以热烈的掌声为新郎和新娘祝福！	5.	Dear friends, against the traditional and ancient Mongolian song of feast, today's ceremony lifted up its veil slowly. Let's applaud and send our best wishes to the bride and groom!

Excerpt 6-2 begins with a metalinguistic explanation about language choice in Chinese. The use of Chinese is justified with the fact that guests cannot understand Mongolian. At the same time, the speaker identifies as Mongolian-dominant and apologizes for the quality of his Chinese, although in fact his Chinese is as good as his Mongolian. Chinese thus provides a gloss of the Mongolian ceremonial speech (e.g. Segment 3 is a translation of Segment 2 and also contains further explanation and elaboration of the fiddle performance).

After the end of the performance, Manda delivers the formulaic Mongolian ritual opening with its characteristic prosody and parallel expressions (Segment 4). The repeated chanted exclamation *hurai* is used in rituals to call forth blessings, protective spirits and good luck. This ritual opening and chanting is extremely powerful, especially when it is delivered by an old and respectful Mongolian man, who is dressed in a traditional outfit. The background music of the traditional Mongolian wedding long song *Bogt Chingghis* ("Holy

Genghis") further serves to infuse the whole hall with a sacred Mongolian ritual flavor. This flavor is even maintained when Manda switches to a Chinese gloss in Segment 5.

In this opening speech Chinese is used due to the presence of a large Chinese audience, but the relationship between the two languages is not one of simple translation. Rather, Mongolian ritual speech is used to set up and frame the ceremony - as it does in the monolingual Mongolian speech in Excerpt 6-1. The addition of Chinese serves to evaluate and explain. In other words, except for practically serving the linguistic needs of the Chinese-dominant audience, another function of the Chinese language is to evaluate and explain the Mongolian speech.

At the same time, the formulaic Mongolian ritual opening and its particular prosody frame the wedding as Mongolian. In other words, even though the audience cannot understand Mongolian (or cannot understand Mongolian ritual speech specifically), the style and form of Mongolian ritual expression along with Mongolian songs and fiddle performances become the major means of communicating an unintelligible content. This is similar to Afro-American preaching where "performance style is not simply an adjunct to or accompaniment of speech content" (Gumperz, 1982, p. 192). In this case, the speech content of Mongolian expression is so completely overshadowed by its form and style that the performance form is in itself part of the content and meaning of the performance. This is illustrated by the comment of a Chinese girl sitting next to me at another wedding (B03), who said to the famous Mongolian wedding speaker and poet, Nasan:

那老师，刚才太震撼了，太感人了虽然我听不懂你说的。

("Na *laoshi* ("Teacher"), it was so impressive just now, your speech touched me although I cannot understand what you are saying.")

What this observation and interaction at the ceremonial scene demonstrate is the particular value attached to salient Mongolian ritual delivery. It is to see its ethnic colour, to hear its sound, and to be moved by its solemnity people choose to create and indulge in a frame of Mongolian wedding ceremony under the meta-commenting role of Chinese explanation.

Therefore, a bilingual opening speech such as the one in Excerpt 6-2 successfully framed the wedding ceremony as a "Mongolian" wedding by assigning different, yet cooperative, roles to the two languages. But there are bilingual speeches in which Chinese does not serve such an explanatory yet ancillary function, as I show now.

In some bilingual speeches Mongolian and Chinese appear in sequence, without any obvious relationship to each other or offer of interpretation. Wedding A12 provides an

example where Sümber, a Mongolian male wedding speaker, and Ying, a Chinese female wedding speaker, jointly manage the stage ceremony. Each speaker deliver their own portion of the speech in their language without commenting on or translating each other's speeches. Sümber was in his usual white Mongolian costume, which I saw him wear at other weddings, and he was holding a blue *hadag* in his right hand. Ying was wearing a pink long evening gown.

Excerpt 6-3: A bilingual opening speech (A12)

Sümber	1. Uuljsan bühen deen mend-iin chengher hadag-aan ürgej, ucharsan bühen deen menghe-iin saihan yüüreel-een debshüülen.	1. On every encounter, we hold the blue *hadag* of peace. On every meeting, we send the blessing of eternal auspices.
	2. Haalga üüd-een tos-oor miliyasan, horim-iin nijger nair-iin jochin hoimor-t gereltüülen saatesan erhim hündet jochin ta bühen deen ene chag-iin mend-iig hürgeyee!	2. I am sending forth the peace of this moment to my respected guests who by their presence brighten the *hoimor* ("the honorific zone") and honor the great *nair* ("banquet and feast") of this wedding ceremony!
	3. Daayar-aan beye amor, tumen üljii, tübshin hiimor-tai amarhan saihan ebeljij bainuu?	3. Are you all well, peaceful and full of *hiimor* ("wind horse"?) Are you wintering well, and enjoying infinite peace and blessings?
Ying	4. 朋友们，婚姻是幸福的开始，是一次爱情的升华，同时也注定着注定着两个人将开始发生蜕变，将会懂得如何经营一个幸福的家庭。	4. Dear friends, marriage is the starting point of happiness, it is the sublimation of love; and it also means a transformation for two persons. From now on, they will learn how to build and manage a happy family.
	5. 作为男人就是该像右手一样坚实而有力，作为女人就应该像左手一样温柔而体贴。	5. As a man, he should be as strong and steadfast as the right hand; as a woman, she should be as gentle and considerate as the left hand.
	6. 只有将左手与右手紧紧握在一起的时候才可以迸发出最伟大的爱情力量。	6. Only if the right and left hand hold each other firmly can they bring forth the greatest love.
	7. xx 先生 xx 女士新婚庆典正式进入倒计时，朋友们当我数到三时掌声响起! (1, 2, 3)	7. Mr. xx and Miss xx's wedding ceremony has entered the final count down. Please applaud when I count to three! (1, 2, 3)

The Mongolian part of the opening speech in Excerpt 6-3 is characterized by culturally and traditionally salient Mongolian greetings through its inclusion of words such as

hadag ("ceremonial scarf"), *hiimor* ("wind horse"), or *hoimor* ("the honorific zone"). The parallel structure of the text reinforces the formulaic genre. However, the Chinese speech that follows the Mongolian speech operates within an entirely different frame: it extols romance and love by comparing the husband and wife as the right hand and left hand of a person (ll.5-6). By doing so, Ying sets a ceremonial scene filled with romance and love. Her way of opening the ceremony bears a lot of similarities with celebrations and shows played on Chinese TV. Against a soft romantic melody she expounds on love and marriage, then the lights are dimmed when she asks the audience to count down to three with her. At the count of three, the hall suddenly lights up. Simultaneously, the melodic music is replaced by sharp and happy music. Overall, the scene created by the Chinese segment is far removed from the traditional ritualistic tone of the Mongolian segment and resembles an award announcement on TV.

Compared to the bilingual opening speech in Excerpt 6-2, the bilingual opening speech in Excerpt 6-3 does not frame the wedding as specifically "Mongolian". Rather, it is an opening speech which covers the speech portions of both a Mongolian opening speech and a Chinese ceremonial speech on love and romance. Furthermore, the stage decorations highlight the romance and modernity of the ceremony with their flowers and DJ performance. Thus, this bilingual opening results in an ambiguity regarding the frame and style of the wedding. This ambiguity between a Mongolian and Chinese framing may break down completely if the balance between Mongolian and Chinese language and genre is not maintained. In the next part, I explore examples where that happens and Chinese language and genres come to dominate.

6.2.3 Chinese-dominant preliminaries

Chinese-dominant ceremonies tend to be backgrounded by audio-visual signs unrelated to Mongolian culture, such as Chinese pop songs, the red-colored Chinese character "囍" ("double happiness") or a red carpet flanked by plastic flowers (see Chapter Four, Section 4.3). An example can be found in wedding A17 held in a farming village in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia, where Erdene, a male wedding speaker who wore a western suit delivered the following opening.

Excerpt 6-4: A Chinese-dominant opening speech (A17)

1. *Hüdet jochid-oo, elgen saihan türel min, daayar-an sain baichganuu? saihan ebeljij bainuu?*	1. Dear respected guests and relatives, how are you? Are you wintering well?
2. *Tiim-ee, jorshisen yos-oor ene jargal tai saihan müch bol 2016 on-ii 1 sar-iin 22, bilig-iin ularil-iin 12 sar-iin 13.*	2. Yes, it is the happy and good day of 22 January, 2016, in the lunar calendar 13 December, 2015.
3. *Jargal üljei hoslasan hos bayar tai saihan üder,*	3. The day is a day of double happiness with a combination of happiness and auspiciousness.
4. *Ta bühen min Bao obugtan-nii ger türel deer hürelchen yirej, shin hürgen bolood shin ber, hoyar hos-iin-hon hurim nair-iin talbai-d hüreed yiresen baina!*	4. You all came to the Bao family's to attend the new couple's wedding ceremony!
5. *Ja, tegeed horchin mongol-iin jorshil-oor mongolchuud-iin saihan jangshil-aar eimerhü hurim nair-aan yabagduulh baiga Bao obugt-iin ger türel, hoyar shin hos-oon tüleelen eneh saihan nair-iin talbai-d hürelchen yirsen ta bühen deen hünd-iin saihan jüngnel-een ürgen ürgen debshüülyee!*	5. According to the custom of Khorchin people, according to Mongolian custom, the Bao family is celebrating a wedding. On behalf of the groom's family and the new couple I present again and again my warm welcome and best wishes to all of you here!
6. *Hairt ta bühen min sain bainuu?*	6. My dears, how are you?
7. 尊敬的各位来宾、各位长辈、各位领导、现场在座的亲人以及送亲团朋友、上午好！（掌声）	7. Respected guests, elders, leaders, relatives and the bride's families who came with the bride today, good morning! [Applause]
8. 那么今天是阳历 2016 年 1 月 22 日，农历的 12 月 13 日。在北国风光，千里冰封，万里飘雪的美好季节里，	8. Today is 22 January, 2016, in the lunar calendar it is 13 December, 2015. It is a beautiful season of winter, with its quietly falling snow, crystal clear ice, and gallant northern sceneries,
9. 我们大家共聚在我们包氏家族，迎来了 X 先生与 Y 女士、两位新人新婚庆典仪式在这里落下了隆重的帷幕！	9. Today we gathered with the Bao family to celebrate Mr. X and Miss. Y's wedding. The grand prelude of the ceremony of the new pair is being unveiled now!
10. 在这里我仅代表两位新人及他们家人委托向所有在场的亲人朋友们送上最美好的祝福！	10. Here on behalf of the new pair and their families I send my best wishes to all of you who are present today!

Although the Mongolian and Chinese language are used in about equal parts and the Mongolian is used first, I call this a Chinese-dominant speech because the Mongolian

language by and large delivers a Chinese genre. For instance, the Mongolian term *hos bayar* ("double happiness") is a direct translation of the Chinese expression and verbalizes the Chinese character hanging on the stage. Another example is the way in which the hosts are addressed as *Bao obugtan* "the Bao family") in line 4. This expression is not usually used in Mongolian and does not appear elsewhere in my corpus. This focus on the family and lineage, which also appears in the Chinese version, is the result of the Chinese influence on the farming Mongols of eastern Inner Mongolia (see Section 2.2), as Burensain (2007, p. 277) explains in his study of the formation of a sedentary Mongolian farming village in Darhan Banner:

> Mongols from ancient times did not have the custom of writing the family lineage. It is not because they do not value blood ties, rather it is because they had a unique way of transmitting history: myths, oral stories, epics, and so forth. Furthermore, in nomadic times, for ordinary Mongols, *obug* ("family name") had different implications than it has for Chinese clan society. Until recently, in Mongolian society, the transmission of tribes and groups' history was through oral retellings. The written record of the family tree is rare among Mongols. However, in the sedentary farming villages, Mongols accepted quickly the Chinese culture of writing family lineage (my translation).

Compared to Excerpt 6-2 and Excerpt 6-3 above, the Mongolian opening in Excerpt 6-4 appears truncated. For instance, there is no chanting as in Excerpt 6-2, nor are there any culturally-specific words as in Excerpt 6-3 or the parallelism characteristic of Mongolian ritual speech. In contrast, the greeting in Excerpt 6-4 is highly influenced by Chinese language and culture, such as "double happiness" and "the Bao family". Partly, this use of the Mongolian language but in a Chinese genre may be due to the fact that wedding speakers are often self-taught, as Feng, a wedding speaker from the same area as Erdene, explained to me:

> *Bi öröön surchai, hün-iih bas üjnee, <u>ben si</u> oloj üjeh ügüi, <u>wei xin</u> deer-es surna, nertei hün-ii haitad-aar helej baih-iig Mongoloor orchuulenaa.*
>
> ("I learned it [speaking at ceremonies] by myself. I watched others speak. We don't have <u>books</u> for ceremonial speeches. I also learned from <u>WeChat</u> [mostly from posted and shared videos or video clips]. Sometimes I translate famous Chinese speakers' speeches into Mongolian.")

Feng's comments may explain why the Mongolian opening in Excerpt 6-4 is so different from the previously described Mongolian speeches, even despite its inclusion of some tokenistic and formulaic Mongolian greetings such as *saihan ebeljij bainuu* ("wintering well"). In other words, Erdene's opening speech (Excerpt 6-4) is a product not just of the

Mongolian language associated with a Mongolian genre but also Mongolian expression derived from Chinese wordings. Furthermore, as shown in Table 10, in wedding A17, only the greeting was delivered bilingually while the remainder of the stage ceremony was delivered in Chinese only. This "diluted" version of a Mongolian ritual opening must thus be considered tokenistic.

This analysis of the language choice in opening speeches has shown how language choice contributes to the framing of the ceremony. Monolingual Mongolian opening speeches characterized by rich references to Mongolian tradition and custom are one way to frame a wedding as "Mongolian". Bilingual speeches may achieve the same frame where Chinese serves to explain Mongolian ritual speech. Bilingual opening speeches may also frame a wedding as both Mongolian and Chinese if the language choices go hand in hand with clearly demarcated genres and themes. This dual framing may become even more ambiguous where the Chinese genre is delivered not only through the medium of Chinese but also that of Mongolian.

6.3 Language and genre choice in couple-specific commentary

Traditional Mongolian wedding speeches include the genre of groom praise. An example comes from A08 (Excerpt 6-5).

Excerpt 6-5: A monolingual Mongolian groom praise (A08)

1. *Deel büs-eer goyj, deeren malgai hiimor tai,*	1. Decorated with *deel* ("Mongolian costume") and with a hat embodying his wind-horse spirit,
2. *nüür teen gal tai,*	2. He has a radiant face,
3. *düd deen chog tai,*	3. He has bright and piercing eyes,
4. *sb-d yabebel ganjeg düüreng irdeg,*	4. He returns triumphantly from hunting,
5. *ayan-d yabebel achaa düüreng bochadag,*	5. He returns fully loaded with riches from trips,
6. *üjeh har nüden deen üiles-iin saihan-iig baraalj,*	6. He sets his eyes on a bright and ambitious future,
7. *ünder bosoo hamar taan ünench shuderg-iig seilsen,*	7. He is stamped with righteousness,
8. *juun olon-iig bahruulmar,*	8. He is praised by hundreds of people,
9. *jurag hüreg shig jüs tai,*	9. His face resembles the ones in paintings and statues,
10. *jasag tür teen tanigdamar…*	10. He is recognized by the one in power…

This highly formulaic praise with its focus on the groom's appearance, bravery, good fortune and high standing has a meta-communicative and reflexive function instead of a

referential function. Just as not all guests are herders (see Section 6.2.1), not all grooms are equally handsome and few today have in fact good hunting skills or are famed in their community. What matters most in these highly form-focused and culturally specific speeches is their "rigid" form and the appropriate delivery. In this sense, this groom praising speech is faithful to its "traditional" content and form while its connection with a young Mongol's lifestyle is fading into history. Thus, in the same way as the monolingual wedding opening speeches discussed in Section 6.2.1, this groom praise serves to make the wedding "Mongolian".

One way to make the content of traditional groom praise more appealing to contemporary guests is to supplement the Mongolian groom praise with groom praise in Chinese that maintains the genre but makes its content more accessible to a contemporary audience, as is the case in Excerpt 6-6.

Excerpt 6-6: A bilingual groom praise (B02)

1. *Ja, erhem hündet jochid-oo,*	1. Ja, my respected guests,
2. *eneh bagan temer shig beye tai,*	2. He is as strong as an iron pillar,
3. *baator met sür tai,*	3. He has the air of a hero,
4. *baisongui ööde charai tai,*	4. His face always beams with light,
5. *erdem nomin cheej tai,*	5. He contains knowledge in his chest,
6. *elberil achila-iin surgal tai,*	6. He is dutiful and obedient,
7. *enirel jöölen setgel tai,*	7. He has a golden heart,
8. *ajil üiles teen charmailg tai,*	8. He is hardworking,
9. *ail olon doon hürelel tai,*	9. He is loved and appreciated by all,
10. *arih darson-d shundag ügüi,*	10. He does not drink,
11. *amarag büsgüi deen hairtai,*	11. He loves his beloved wife.
	(Continues…)
12. 这位，五官端正，相貌堂堂，	12. This young man has such good **looks**,
13. 英俊潇洒，风度翩翩，	13. He is so handsome and such a gentleman,
14. 满腹经文，才华横溢，	14. He has **impressive knowledge** and talents,
15. 忠厚老实，表里如一，	15. He is totally trustworthy and faithful,
16. 不酗酒，不睡懒觉，	16. He is neither a drinker nor lazy,
17. 倍儿帅，特酷，	17. He is **super handsome and super cool,**
18. 新娘心中的太阳，	18. He is the sun shining in the heart of the bride,
19. 同意就点赞！	19. If you agree, please give me **the thumbs up!**

The Chinese version of this bilingual groom praise is a loose translation of the preceding Mongolian speech (ll.12-19). At the same time, the wedding speaker transplants the rhythmic effect of the Mongolian speech into the Chinese speech by using Chinese four-word phrases effectively. In other words, he tries to carry the poetic and performative aspects of the Mongolian speech across the languages into Chinese. What differs most from the Mongolian speech is that at the end of the Chinese praising speech the speaker uses the popular social media expression "thumbs up" in line 19 to invite the audience's involvement. This attempt was successful and resulted in a lot of laughter and amusement.

Three aspects of linguistic creativity can be observed in Excerpt 6-6. First, the content of the Mongolian groom praise is adjusted so as to align it with the ideals of contemporary young men no longer leading a traditional pastoral life. Second, the Mongolian groom praise genre, which is not usually found in Chinese wedding speeches has been transferred into Chinese. In other words, the delivery of a groom praise in Chinese is novel in itself. Third, this newly created genre of Chinese groom praise offers the speaker many opportunities to mold the genre, for instance through adapting social media expression such as "点赞" ("thumbs up").

In contrast to the relatively rigid Mongolian praise genre, which is unintelligible to most of the guests, including some who have some proficiency in Mongolian, the new Chinese praising genre can fulfil two functions: first, it translates the Mongolian praise and makes both the content and genre available to a non-Mongolian-speaking audience. Second, it engages the audience and encourages audience interaction in a way that is not possible in the traditional Mongolian genre, which relegates the audience to the role of silent observers.

However, not many speakers are as creative as Manda, the speaker in wedding B02 (Excerpt 6-6). While he succeeds in bringing both the Mongolian and the Chinese groom praise into the frame of the traditional Mongolian wedding, few other wedding speakers achieve this and the inclusion of Chinese in the couple-specific commentary usually dissolves the Mongolian frame, as I show in the next example.

Excerpt 6-7 comes from wedding A16, which was held in a village in eastern Inner Mongolia. The stage ceremony was choreographed by two wedding speakers: Sa, a young woman dressed in a purple knee-length Mongolian-style winter coat, spoke in Mongolian and Han, a middle-aged man in a dark suit, spoke Chinese. The stage decoration included a big red poster with the Mongolian word *hurim* ("wedding"). Despite the fact that the word was Mongolian, the fact that the word is on a red poster means the display must be considered as Chinese-influenced.

Excerpt 6-7: A Chinese-dominant couple introduction (A16）

1. Ta nar min sain baichganuu?	1. How are you?
2. En üder bol heshig boyan hurailsan üljiit saihan chag.	2. Today is an auspicious day, a moment full of *heshig boyan* ("fortune and luck").
3. Hüü üsbel ber buulgaj hühen üsbel hair-d morden gej urt-as ulamjilsan yos tai.	3. It is a long-established rule that when a boy becomes a man and when a girl becomes mature they marry.
4. Ene üder-iin nüden deen chog tai, nüür teen gal tai saihan jaluu.	4. Today's groom, the handsome young man, has a bright and piercing eyes, he has a gleaming face.
5. nar shig goy sar shig tergelhen hühen tai jayaa-gan holboj.	5. He is tying the knot with a girl who is as beautiful as the sun and as luminous as the moon.
6. shin negen amidarel-aan jargal tai chogchilah gej baina!	6. They are going to start their happy new life together!
7. Ja, hoyar jaluu üs-en chaital jargaj suuh-iig jüngnen belgedeyee!	7. Ja, I wish their happiness last forever!

8. 带着真诚的期待，带着温柔情怀，一对新人手挽着手向这里走来。	8. With sincere expectation and tender feelings, a new couple is walking towards us.
9. 此时此刻，在场的朋友们用祝福声，呐喊声祝一对新人幸福美满。	9. At this moment, please all those who are present here congratulate them loudly and wish them happiness.
10. 朋友们，目光聚焦在这里，在我身边手中拿鲜花的，这是我们潇洒风度翩翩的小伙子，是我们今天的主角， 也是我们今天的新郎。	10. Friends, turn your gaze in this direction, the man standing next to me with a bunch of flowers in his hand, is our handsome young man, the groom, who is the star of the day.
11. 我们今天美丽的新娘来自科左中旗，是我们王氏家族的心肝宝贝。	11. Our beautiful bride is from Khorchin Left Middle Banner (Darhan Banner). She is the apple of the eye of the Wang family.
12. 愿我们一对新人永结同心幸福一生！	12. I wish our new pair happiness and togetherness forever!
13. 好，朋友们！今天是人生的一件大事。婚姻是人生中最幸福最快乐的时刻。有人说爱是神话，婚姻她是幸福的融合，温馨的婚姻需要一辈子的时间，要求的是一生一世相依相伴……	13. Dear friends! Today is an important day. Marriage is the happiest moment of life. Some say love is a fairytale, marriage is the fusion of happiness! A good marriage needs a lifetime commitment, and it needs two persons staying together forever…

The Mongolian and Chinese couple praise in Excerpt 6-7 is not delivered consecutively. Rather, the short and simple Mongolian couple praise is, in fact, bundled up into a short Mongolian opening speech, which also included a greeting, a ceremonial explanation and a blessing (ll.1-7 in Excerpt 6-7). The couple praise in ll.4-5 is followed by good wishes for the couple in in ll.6-7. The latter stands in for the conventional blessing (see Section 6.5). Thus, all the distinct segments are squeezed into one single piece of Mongolian speech delivered at the very beginning of the ceremony. After that, Mongolian is not heard again on stage. Thus, the Mongolian couple praise in Excerpt 6-7 becomes a mere tokenistic symbol of a few lines rolled up into an overall very reduced wedding speech in Mongolian.

After the short Mongolian speech is complete, the male wedding speaker takes over and switches to Chinese (ll.8-12). While the introduction includes elements of couple praise (e.g., "潇洒风度翩翩的小伙子" ("handsome young man"), "美丽的新娘" ("beautiful bride"). This is far removed from the Mongolian praise genre and the speech quickly shifts to general comments about marriage and happiness. Weddings A15 to A19 all include general comments about love and marriage in Chinese which are absent from Mongolian-language couple-specific commentary.

In sum, in the couple-specific segment three types of language choice can be clearly distinguished. Monolingual Mongolian is used for the traditional praise genre and uniformly conforms to a traditional Mongolian frame and, simultaneously, serves to invoke that frame. Monolingual Mongolian groom praise remains true to the form and content of Mongolian ritual speech. By foregrounding age-old formulaic genres and content related to the Mongols' cherished past as nomadic herders, monolingual Mongolian speech deeply infuses the ceremony with Mongolian-ness and the sacred. However, its content no longer resonates with the real lives of contemporary Mongols. Nonetheless, bilingual creativity can serve to bridge that gap by delivering "Mongolian" form and content through the medium of Chinese and adapting it to the modern social context. This bilingual creativity serves to sustain the Mongolian-ness of bilingual weddings such as B02. However, in other weddings bilingualism undercuts that Mongolian-ness: reduced and truncated Mongolian forms are dominated by Chinese both quantitatively and qualitatively. The divergence of Mongolian and Chinese genres is particularly apparent in the interactive phase of the ceremony to which I now turn.

6.4 Language and genre choice in interactive elements

The interactive elements of the traditional Mongolian wedding included three parts: deity worship, paying respects to the parents and to each other. Chinese-dominant weddings, by contrast, may include paying respect to parents, instructions to couples to undertake rituals

such as drinking wedlock wine and a question-and-answer section (see Section 5.3 for details).

My analysis here focusses on Mongolian deity worship and Chinese instructions to couples, as it is in these genres where the contrast between Mongolian and Chinese wedding language and genre choices is most apparent.

6.4.1 Deity worship

Segments for deity worship are prevalent in weddings held in pastoral villages and are occasionally present in urban weddings (see Table 9 in Section 5.3). Deity worship may be conducted in Mongolian only or through the consecutive use of Mongolian and Chinese.

Excerpt 6-8: Monolingual hearth worship (A04)

1. *Ja daraa-gen.*	1. Next, we will worship the hearth.
2. *echig-iin-hen ger-es üblej,*	2. This is the one you have inherited from your father's house,
3. *udum-iin-han ner-er nereldeg,*	3. the one you have named after your father's line,
4. *onggon dogshin jüsen tai,*	4. the one holy and fearful,
5. *untargaj boldag ügüi yoson tai,*	5. the one who never dies out,
6. *hamag mongol tümen-ii min horin gurban daan tahilag tai,*	6. The one all Mongols worship on the 23rd of the last month of the year,
7. *hanat tuurgat ger-iin chin,*	7. the one deserving the highest respect in your *ger* ("Mongolian yurt") is your hearth,
8. *hamag deede shüteen bolson Burhan gal golomt chin baiga, süseglen daatgaj mürgen **yosolyoo**!*	8. with your devout and obedient heart wish upon the hearth and bow!
9. *Nabch checheg met delgertugai!*	9. Ja, may you and your descendants flourish like leaves and flowers!
10. *Nuur dalai met boyan heshig togtatugai!*	10. May your luck and fortune overflow as water in the lakes and oceans!
11. *Ündes ugsaa jujaarah boletugai!*	11. May your descendants be abundant and flourish!

In traditional Mongolian culture, the *golomt* ("hearth") connects the family with their ancestors and with heaven through fire and the vertical column of smoke (Bulag, 1998, p. 266). To destroy the hearth would mean the death of a person or a lineage. Therefore, Excerpt 6-8 emphasizes the holy, pure, and constantly burning hearth of the family and asks for its blessing. The speech is accompanied by the wedding speaker's hand gestures to instruct the

couple to bow, and by the couple's bowing. Like all deity worship in my corpus, Excerpt 6-8 is delivered in a highly artistic and melodic way.

In addition to the hearth, the deity worship may also be addressed to the Eternal Blue Sky, the Mother Earth or Genghis Khan. An example of the latter can be found in Excerpt 6-9, which illustrates how the content changes with the object of worship and how the burgeoning cult of Genghis Khan is reconstructed and performed on the wedding stage.

Excerpt 6-9: Monolingual Genghis Khan worship (A20)

1. *Tengerlig bogt chingkhis haan daan mürgen jalbaryaa!*	1. Now you are going to worship holy heavenly Genghis Khan!
2. *Ja hüleg-iin hatuu tuurai-gar hijgaar-iin bogomt-iig seirüülj,*	2. Genghis Khan, who broke through and shattered the strongholds of the borders with the fierce and strong hooves of his horses,
3. *hüün-ii gegen uhaan-aar hil-iin shugum-ii balalej,*	3. who erased the borders with his enlightened great mind,
4. *üdesten yasten-aan delhii dahin-d manduulj yabsen, ejen bogt chingkhis haan min ibeen hairlah boletugai!*	4. who spread the name of the Mongol nation throughout the world!
5. *Boyan heshig ibeeh boletugai! Hurai hurai hurai ……*	5. Please bless them with good fortune and luck! Hurai hurai hurai …

The excerpt begins with the wedding speaker, Bishireltü, announcing the act to be performed. While the couple is kneeling he expounds on the greatness of Genghis Khan in ll.2-4 before he asks for the Khan's blessing and chants the traditional Mongolian summon for spiritual power: *hurai* (see 6.2.2). The speech in Excerpt 6-9 is, in fact, very similar to the one delivered by the ritual master during *Chinggisiin Tahilga* ("Genghis Khan Sacrificial Ceremony") in the Genghis Khan Mausoleum in Ordos as the worshippers bow before the shrine: "Composed in a flowing, epic style, the prayer is basically an invocation of Genghis Khan, with an account of his life, his superhuman ability, and his feats" (Khan, 1995, p. 272). Already in 1995, Khan noted that the unprecedented popularity of Genghis Khan was "achieved through considerably improved modern forms of communication" (Khan, 1995, p. 269). Obviously, the wedding ceremony on stage – further mediated as it is through videos, photos and social media sharing – reinforces the promotion and inevitable commodification of the symbol of Genghis Khan.

Overall, the two monolingual Mongolian worship rituals in Excerpt 6-8 and Excerpt 6-9 are highly performative. By using a series of commands with accompanying gestures the wedding speaker orders the couple to conduct the worshipping actions. The couple, in return,

by cooperating with the speaker on the stage, perform and accomplish the worship in front of the guests. In addition, the stylistic voice of the speaker combines with the background music and material signs present on the stage, such as the bust of the Genghis Khan (See Section 4.3.2). As a result, the ceremonial space becomes enveloped in a holy and ritualist ambience. The creation of such ambience and the affective power of worshipping may be captured by Charles Peirce's (1955) theory of thirdness: the semiosis of iconicity-indexicality-symbolism, whereby the materially mediated worship is intuitively experienced, and its meaning is communicated, reflected upon, and gives rise to re-symbolism and further evolvement.

That Genghis Khan has evolved from a symbol of Mongolian imperial political legitimacy to a symbol of Mongolian ethnic and national identity, as Khan (1995) argues, is also apparent from the fact that he may worshiped bilingually in Mongolian and Chinese, as was the case in wedding B03. B03 was held in Hohhot and two wedding speakers, Nasan, a male Mongolian speaker dressed in a blue Mongolian traditional outfit, and Lian, a female Chinese speaker dressed in a sparkling evening gown, shared the stage.

Excerpt 6-10: Bilingual deity worship (B03)

Nasan	1. *Ja, odo ene chag-t, mongol-iin-han yos-oor shinhen hos min, ert deed-es-en üldegdej irsen, ejen bogt Chingkhis khan-ii-han üyes ulamjilagdagsan,*	1. Ja, now according to Mongolian custom, which is handed down from the past and inherited from the time of holy Genghis,
	2. *hüh mongol tengger-teen mürgen,*	2. the new pair shall worship the Eternal Blue Sky,
	3. *hüreset altan delhei deen mürgen,*	3. they shall worship the golden Earth ,
	4. *checheglen mandasan mongol oron doon mürgenenee!*	4. they shall pay respect to the rising and flourishing Mongolian land!
	5. *Ja, anghan-ii yos-iig hiinee.*	5. Ja, the first bowing shall be done.
Lian	6. 亲爱的朋友，蒙古民族自古以来就十分崇拜长生天，也崇拜自然。	6. Dear friends, Mongols from time immemorial worship the Eternal Blue Sky, and they also worship nature.
	7. 是自然万物和长生天赋予了我们辽阔的牧场，肥壮的牛羊。	7. It is Mother Nature that bestows rich pasture and fat herds.
	8. 而成吉思汗不仅仅给了我们最广阔的胸怀，也给予了蒙古人最坚定的性格。	8. It is Genghis Khan who gives us both open-mindedness and strong character.
	9. 在这神圣的时刻，祭拜圣祖成吉思汗，有请！	9. At this holy and sacred moment, let's worship Genghis Khan, please!

The Mongolian version of the deity worship in Excerpt 6-10 is addressed to *hüh mongol tengger* ("Eternal Blue Sky"), *hüreset altan delhei* ("Golden Earth") and *checheglen mandasan mongol oron* ("The thriving Mongolian land"). By contrast, the Chinese speech refers to these long-held objects of Mongolian worship and references "长生天" ("Eternal Blue Sky") and "自然" ("Mother Nature") but omits reference to the Mongolian land as an object of worship. Instead, Genghis Khan, who is referenced as standing at the beginning of Mongolian history in the Mongolian version, is identified as the deity to be worshipped ("祭拜圣祖成吉思汗，有请!", "let's worship Genghis Khan"). This disjuncture regarding the objects of worship between the Mongolian- and Chinese-language version are partly bridged by the visuals on the huge LED screen behind the stage, which serve to reinforce the Chinese version: there, an image of Genghis Khan in a yurt is displayed (Figure 46), undergirded by a ritual song

Figure 46: Background image of Genghis Khan for deity worship (B03)

similar to the one played in the Genghis Khan Mausoleum in Ordos. That the Chinese language undergirds the Mongolian ceremony was also evident from the ceremony run-sheet for the catering company's staff: there, the sixth step in the ceremony was listed in Chinese as "拜长生天、成吉思汗" ("Eternal Blue Sky and Genghis Khan worship").

The disjuncture between the Mongolian and Chinese versions of the deity worship do not matter much, though. The essence of the worship is not its referential content but its performative aspect: it is to be sensed, heard and seen as a performative ritual experience. In

other words, whether it is worshipping the Eternal Blue Sky, the Earth or Genghis Khan is not as important as the experience of this "traditional" and sacred moment. By "relaying" and commenting on the preceding Mongolian speech, the Chinese version renders the so-called long-held tradition reflexive and mediates the invention of the "tradition" of worshipping Genghis Khan. The mechanics of this invention of tradition was poignantly brought home to me by a young Chinese employee of the catering company who was responsible for playing different types of music for different segments during the ceremony. I sat next to him for most of the wedding and he asked me to remind him when the Genghis Khan Worshipping moment was about to start on the stage because he was not sure of that moment as he did not understand any Mongolian. Apparently, it is anonymous employees detached from anything Mongolian who are crucial to enabling contemporary Mongols to enjoy their "tradition". However, Chinese is not always subservient and helps to invoke a holy flavor to the wedding, as I show next.

6.4.2 Chinese interactive elements

While deity worship, where it is present, is dominated by the Mongolian language, instructions to couples are dominated by Chinese. Such instructions can be found in weddings A12 and A15 to A19 (see Table 9 in Section 5.3). Excerpt 6-11 provides an example of a speech delivered before and after wedlock wine drinking in wedding A16, held in an agricultural village in eastern Inner Mongolia. Wedlock wine drinking itself is a Chinese rather than Mongolian tradition.

Excerpt 6-11: Chinese speech accompanying wedlock wine drinking (A16)

1. 那么此时此刻我们一对新人为了表达千年修得的缘分在这里共饮他们的爱情美酒！	1. Now, our new pair is going to drink their wine of love to celebrate the fate which has awaited them for thousands of years!
2. 此时此刻，在掌声中一对新人共饮了这杯美酒。祝你们的生活就像这美酒一般甜甜蜜蜜！	2. Now, during your applause the new pair has drunk this fragrant wine. Let's wish your life is as sweet as this fragrant and sublime wine!

The speech in Excerpt 6-11 serves to both explain the meaning of the wine-drinking act about to be conducted and to associate it with good wishes after its completion. Often, further interactive activities may be interspersed into the wine-drinking ritual. The most popular of these is to observe whether the bride or groom finishes their wine first. The "winner" is then predicted to be the one to manage the household in the future. Such activities are usually greeted with much laughter and applause by the audience. At such moments the speaker may

shift from Chinese to non-standard Mongolian to further enhance the humorous effect, as in Excerpt 6-12.

Excerpt 6-12: A bilingual speech about couple interaction (A15)

1. 接下来有请们的新娘新郎转过来面对面站好。	1. Next, please the bride and groom stand facing each other.
2. *Eserg eserg-en hand-aa. Odo mani shin hürgen sanduraad haa-gen jogsoh-oon medeh ügüi lai.eim saihan shin ber abch baigaad sandurh ügüi hün bainuu da, ja alag-aan tashaad mani shin hürgen-d bayar hürgeye! Sanduraad oroh gajar-aan oloh ügüi lai.*	2. Face each other. Now our new groom is so nervous that he lost his sense of direction. Marrying a beautiful wife, who cannot be nervous right? Ja, please applaud and congratulate the groom. He is so nervous that he cannot find a place for himself now.
3. 如果你愿意去亲吻你的新娘好吗？来掌声鼓励鼓励好吗？	3. If you will, please kiss your bride. Applause for encouragement please. [Bride turns away her face].
4. *Tegeed nuuj bolah ügüi shuu, teden önö nuuj baina, ayar gebel nuuh ügüi lai me.*	4. Do not hide, ok? Now she is hiding her face but after a while they will not hide from each other anymore.

The female wedding speaker, dressed in dark jeans and black turtleneck sweater, in Excerpt 6-12 gives formal commands in in Chinese (ll. 1,3) but codeswitches from Chinese to Mongolian dialect to make fun of the perplexed groom, who struggles to find his place on the small stage, or the embarrassed bride, who resists a public kiss. Non-standard Mongolian serves to create humor and laughter among the audience, albeit at the expense of the bride and groom. Shifts such as these from formal language (either standard Mongolian or Chinese) to informal Mongolian occur throughout my data, particularly in the interactive phase and when the wedding speaker departs from pre-scripted speech. In such moments, the clear demarcation between Mongolian and Chinese may give way to local dialects and informal hybrid usage. In sum, the Chinese interactive speech interspersed with the "clownish" figure of informal and local Mongolian, charts its own course in contemporary Mongolian weddings and carries with it a complete departure from the sacred and holy atmosphere prevalent in Mongolian-language interactive elements.

6.5 Language and genres choice in blessings and good wishes

The final speech segment consists of *yüüreel* ("blessings") and 祝福语 ("good wishes"). Language and genre choice in this segment consolidates the frames established throughout the ceremony. A chanted monolingual blessing such as the one delivered at wedding A01 (Excerpt 6-13), for instance, consolidates the Mongolian frame of that wedding by its rigid adherence to the traditional Mongolian blessing.

Excerpt 6-13: Monolingual Mongolian blessing (A01)

1. *Ja!, onon yeh müren-ii us ursanghan baij, unag daag-aan uslanghan baij,*	1. Ja! May you water numerous horses along the river *Onon*.
2. *aaisan chagaan tal-iig taden baij, minggan chagaan güü-en saan baij,*	2. may you milk thousands of mares on the boundless grassland.
3. *deel hiih-es torg tai,*	3. may you have silk for making costumes,
4. *dengseleh-es müng tai,*	4. may you have silver for splashing out on things,
5. *oir hol doon ner-een manduulj,*	5. may you rise to fame among people,
6. *oroi hotgor-oor mal hemjije,*	6. may you measure your flocks by valleys,
7. *heshig boyan-oon nemegdüülj*	7. may you increase your fortune and luck,
8. *bayan targun badarj yabeh boletugai!*	8. may you become rich and glorious!
9. *Ja! Galbaranch zanden mod aidel chühüij,*	9. Ja, May you stand like an ever-green tree,
10. *gangga müren-ii usan-d aidel, uyan chadburjin undurj.*	10. may your strength and perseverance flow abundantly like the river Ganges.
11. *Ja! Naran-d aidel mandaj yab,*	11. Ja! Rise up like the sun,
12. *nabchin-d aidel delgerj yab,*	12. flourish like the leaves of trees.
13. *saran-d aidel sachurj yab,*	13. Shine like the moon,
14. *samga-d aidel delgerj yab!*	14. bloom like the flower*!*
15. *aabe eeji ah düü türel saten-ii chin altan gegen nüür deer-es ashid-iin saihan yüüreel-iig ürgen barilaa!*	15. I present this blessing on behalf of your respected parents, brothers and relatives!
16. *Ene saihan yüüreel bat oroshih boletugai!*	16. May this beautiful blessing be true forever!

As in the opening speech in Excerpt 6-1, this blessing addresses attendees as nomadic herders living a traditional nomadic lifestyle, which is relatively removed from contemporary lifestyles.

Bilingual creativity may, once again, serve to link a Mongolian frame with contemporary realities. Excerpt 6-14 provides a case in point; this bilingual blessing is from the same wedding as Excerpt 6-6.

1. *Ja, um sain jargalengtuun boletugai! enghe sain amagalantuun boletugai!*	1. May happiness be with you! May peace be with you!
2. *Üs-en holboj ürh-en sehksen.Ür hoyar hühed min Üürden jargal tai,*	2. Tying the knot and starting your new life, my two children, may eternal joy be with you!
3. *aabe eeji-en hüdelej yab, Ahas jahas-an ürgej yab,*	3. be respectful to your parents, be helpful to your brothers,
4. *ah düü nar tai-gaan bülhemdej yab, arad tumen deen jütgej yab,*	4. be united with your brothers and friends, be devoted to your people,
5. *ündes sorbolj-oon jalgamjilj yab,Üb soyol-oon badaruulj yab, Ündesten mongol-oon manduulj yab.*	5. be the inheritors of your roots, be the carriers of your traditional culture, be the promotors of your Mongolian nation.
6. *Sanaa setgel tüb yab, Sain üiles-ig büteej yab. hiisen bühen chin büteh boletugai!*	6. Be righteous, do good! May you accomplish all!
7. *Hiimor chin mandah boletugai! Heshig boyan chin nemegdeh boletugai!*	7. May your wind horse always fly high! May your fortune and luck increase abundantly!
8. *Urt naslah boletugai! Udaan jargah boletugai!*	8. May you live long! May you have everlasting happiness!
9. *Ür hoyar hühed min üs-en chaital jargatugai!*	9. May these two children be happy ever after until their hair turns grey!
10. 没听懂，提要如下：	10. Ok you didn't understand it? The gist is as follows:
11. 衷心的希望我的孩子们你们要做到对上尽孝，对下尽爱，对国尽忠，对家尽责。	11. I sincerely hope that these two children be pious to their parents, be loving to their children, be faithful to their country, be responsible to their family.
12. 怀着一个感恩宽宏敬畏的心，诚信做事，清白做人，挑好自己的担子，走好自己的路，带好自己的孩子，过好自己的日子。	12. I hope they have a grateful and forgiving heart, and I also hope they are honest in all matters and responsible. I hope they follow their own way, bring up their children well and live a good life.
13. 还希望我的孩子们你们要正身齐家，守住底线，走好人生的路。	13. I also hope you can cultivate a moral self, regulate the family and stick to your own principles.
14. 最后还希望你们要释放正能量，为实现伟大的中国梦奉献你们的还有我们大家的力量！	14. In the end, I also wish that you can unleash positive energy and contribute your power, together with ours, to the realization of the great China Dream!

As he did in the groom praise in Excerpt 6-6, the wedding speaker, Manda, tries to keep to the original form of the Mongolian blessing while updating its contents, so that they are compatible with the lived reality, experiences and aspirations of contemporary Mongolian young adults. The injunction to inherit and develop Mongolian culture (l. 5) is a particularly noteworthy innovation in the Mongolian-language part of the blessing.

The Mongolian-language blessing is followed by a Chinese blessing. The latter is highly unusual and the translation and form itself constitutes an innovation. The submission of the Chinese blessing to the form of the Mongolian source utterance has a concomitant effect on the rhetorical power of the text: upholding the integrity of the form opens the way to acceptance of the validity of the message (Bauman, 2001, p. 248). This means that, by upholding the form of the Mongolian blessing, at least partly, the Chinese blessing is invested with the authority of the traditional source text. In other words, the invention of the Chinese blessing as a new speech genre is made possible by subjugating itself to the fixed and established Mongolian blessing.

However, the content of the Chinese blessing, which is understood as paraphrased from the Mongolian text, does not preserve the content of its source text. The injunction to promote Mongolian culture is strikingly absent from the Chinese version. It has been replaced with an exhortation to contribute to the Chinese nation state through the political slogans 正能量" ("positive energy") and 中国梦 ("China Dream"), which was announced by president Xi Jinping in 2012. Duan (2016, p. 265) explains that the China Dream refers to "achieving the transformation of China from an economically backward and diplomatically isolated country into a global economic superpower", and it also implies the national renaissance of the Chinese people. Thus, despite the transference of the design of the Mongolian speech into the subsequent Chinese blessing the content is manipulated by the speaker to align his Chinese speech with the national Chinese political context.

In addition, the infiltration of catchy political slogans into the Chinese blessing paradoxically turns the speech into something that is not traditional at all. By this I mean that the form of the Chinese blessing recalibrates the traditional Mongolian blessing genre but the content of the Chinese blessing departs far from the authority of tradition. Thus, the content of the preceding Mongolian blessing is diffused by the Chinese blessing. Therefore, while the Chinese blessing reinforces the authority of the Mongolian blessing by preserving its form, it also simultaneously undermines it by departing far from its traditional content and adding

new content related to the Chinese state. This openness to multiple voices is, unsurprisingly, contentious. For instance, Tunggalag-tuul, a Mongolian blogger objected in a post:

> From time to time, during wedding ceremonies, some speakers talk about morality and unity, others vociferously shout about the nation and the China dream. This really made me confused. The wedding has wedding customs and party meetings have meeting regulations. If wedding speeches were delivered in party meetings, it would be strange. Likewise, it is strange to hear the words belonging to party meetings in weddings. (*holvoo net*, Jan 23, 2016; my translation).

The blogger criticizes precisely the insertion of political phrases into the wedding speeches like those seen in Excerpt 6-14. While the insertion of Chinese political slogans into Mongolian weddings may be controversial from a Mongolian perspective, their insertion into weddings gives these slogans new life and must be highly desirable from the perspective of the party state. The joyous ceremonial performance on the stage, first and foremost offers the wedding speaker and audience a distance and freedom to look at familiar and serious matters in a different way and playfully engage with them. The transformed slogans here to a certain extent resemble Bakhtin's (1994, p. 209) "carnival images". What is celebrated and collectively laughed about in Bakhtin's carnival is the temporary subversion of the established order. In the Chinese blessing in Excerpt 6-14, serious political slogans, too, are inserted into a festive context and actually evoked much laughter. However, this transformation or "rebirth" of political slogans does not - and is not intended to - subvert the established political order. It is a play within the established hierarchy.

Finally, as repeatedly observed throughout this chapter, bilingual speeches may also help cement the Chinese-dominant frame of a wedding, as it does in Excerpt 6-15, where the traditional Mongolian blessing has been transformed into a series of good wishes.

Excerpt 6-15: Bilingual good wishes (A18)

1. *Hoyar shin hos toon nasan turshid-aan jargaj yab!* 2. *Nasan hudag boyan tai bolj,* 3. *Urt nasalaj udaan jargah-iig jüngneyee!*	1. Let's wish our new pair long-lasting happiness! 2. Let's wish them long life and good fortune, 3. Let's wish them a long and happy life!
4. 幸福的这瞬间，我们全场再次响起祝福的掌声为我们的两位新人爱情之旅插上真诚的翅膀，让他们在爱情的自由天地里展翅飞翔！	4. At this happy moment, let us applaud again to wish them sincerely that their journey of love will be filled with the wings of sincerity and that they may fly freely and happily!

The Mongolian good wishes in ll. 1-3 are commonly used at *nasan bayar* ("celebration of advanced age") instead of weddings. So, the Mongolian good wishes here have already departed from the frame of the traditional Mongolian wedding. The style is highly simplified and suffers from style restriction. It is similar to the restricted couple praise in wedding A15 (Excerpt 6-7), where only two lines were devoted to the beauty of the bride and the handsomeness of the groom. Thus, the occasional use of the Mongolian language in Chinese-dominated weddings appears truncated, lacking variety of stylistic expression, and is almost devoid of "proper" ritualistic delivery.

Furthermore, the content is more of a good wish highlighting love and marriage than a bestowment of a traditional blessing.

In Chinese-dominant weddings it is the ending, along with the preliminaries (e.g., Excerpt 6-4), where a Mongolian speech appears most often. It seems that the speakers in Chinese-dominant weddings, by relying on their memorized formulaic Mongolian opening and concluding speech, such as greetings and short final blessings, try to frame the wedding as more or less Mongolian. However, due to the predominance of non-Mongolian ceremonial elements in the main body of the wedding speech such ceremonies fail to frame a wedding as "Mongolian". Thus, bilingual good wishes such as those in Excerpt 6-15 serve to cement the Chinese dominance of a wedding, just as a traditional Mongolian blessing may serve to cement its "Mongolian-ness".

6.6 Comments about language and genre choice
6.6.1 Comments about genre choice and tradition

So far, I have focused on language and genre choice in the four key segments of the ceremony on stage. However, language and genre choices are not only made, they are also commented upon within the ceremony. Such metalinguistic comments play a crucial role in enhancing the frame of a ceremony and in solving any tensions inherent within it.

As I have shown, the use of monolingual Mongolian frames a wedding as traditional Mongolian. However, even monolingual Mongolian weddings may include elements which are incommensurable with a traditional Mongolian wedding, as is the case in A01 and A09, where a quiz element is inserted into the interactive phase. In each case, the wedding speakers took remedial steps to integrate this incommensurable question-answer section within the holy and sacred interactive frame. Excerpt 6-16 provides an example.

Chogo (Wedding speaker)	1. *Bi neg asuuye gej bodoj baina, bügdeer-en alag-an tashin urema hairalaarai!*	1. [to the guests] I want to ask one thing now, please give some applause and show your encouragement!
	2. *Ta ene üder bayarlaj bainuu?*	2. [To the groom] Are you happy today?
Groom	3. *Bayarlaj baina.*	3. Yes.
Chogo	4. *Yüü gej bayarlaj bainaa?*	4. Why are you feeling happy?
Groom	5. *[silence]*	5. [silence]
Chogo	6. *Ja, erhem hündetai jochid-oo, uul-iin ter saihan juun-d bol eim teim naadam gej baidag ügüi yuum-aa, geh deen odo-gin shin chag eren-d bol enggej tenggej ter üg-iig asuuh ene saihan jorshil bol mani nutag-aar mash yeh ürnej baina, eim-es ta bühen algaan tashin urum hairalan ter saihan setgel-iin üg-iin sonosyoo?*	6. Ja, dear guests, in the good old times there were no such jokes at weddings. But now in this new era, the habit of asking this and that has started to pop up and spread in our area. So would you please applaud and let us listen to his beautiful words from his heart?
	7. *Yüü gej bayarlaj bainaa?*	7. Why are you happy?
Groom	8. *Shin ber buulgaj abeh ged bayarlaj bainaa.*	8. Marrying a new bride makes me happy.

When the wedding speaker's unexpected question is met by awkward silence from the groom (l. 5), the wedding speaker, to save the situation, introduces a meta-commentary comparing traditional and new wedding customs. The explanation can be considered a form of remedial work (Goffman, 1981, p. 31) and puts the speech situation back on track. After the same question was repeated, the groom was able to give an acceptable answer (l. 8) and the guests applauded.

Excerpt 6-16 illustrates three points. First, in a Mongolian wedding the question-answer section is unexpected. Therefore, the mitigating comment in line 6 puts forward two different time frames for a Mongolian wedding ceremony and juxtaposes weddings in the past century

to contemporary ones. In other words, the speaker acknowledges that traditional Mongolian weddings do not include humorous questions addressed to couples, but in the new society, new rules are emerging. However, it is not easy or natural to glue together frivolous elements to the traditional Mongolian wedding, as the groom's awkward silence shows. Second, the comment line 6 shows the important function of creating a distance and commenting reflexively on both "the traditional" and "the new". Through this reflexive discussion, the frame of the Mongolian weddings may be contested and challenged. The result is either to include something as a part of a Mongolian wedding or reject it as incommensurable. Third, this question-answer segment in a monolingual Mongolian weddings also shows that not all Mongolian weddings strictly follow the fixed and rigid traditional genres.

In addition to mending a challenged ceremonial frame, metalinguistic comments may turn Mongolian tradition into a perceptible object. This is the most frequently occurring meta-commentary and is frequently delivered in Chinese, as in Excerpts 6-2 and Excerpt 6-10. Another example occurred in wedding A20, which was conducted monolingually in Mongolian, except for the short Chinese commentary in Excerpt 6-17.

Excerpt 6-17: Chinese meta-commentary about Mongolian custom (A20)

1. 我们蒙古族啊，我们北方游牧民族蒙古男儿娶亲的时候可以带弓箭，	1. We Mongols, nomadic people of the north, Mongol men when they marry, they can carry bow and arrows.
2. 这弓箭是我们蒙古族的神圣武器，是保护草原保护自己保护家族的一个神圣的武器。	2. bow and arrows is our Mongolian holy weapon that protects our steppe, ourselves and our family and community.
3. 但是当今社会呀，是和谐社会，还有核武器都出来了但是我们为什么可以带弓箭娶亲呢？	3. But now it is a harmonious society and also now even nuclear weapons have been invented. Why do we still carry bow and arrows when we marry?
4. 第一，传承我们蒙古族的习俗。第二，辟邪。	4. First, it is to inherit Mongolian custom. Second, it is to fend off evil forces.

The speaker's short meta-pragmatic comment in Chinese in an otherwise Mongolian-language ceremony serves to heighten the audience's awareness of Mongolian tradition. The comment and explanation of the tradition while it is performed on stage – the groom had a bow and arrows slung across his shoulder as he walked across the runway towards the bride's yurt – is similar to the bilingual opening in Excerpt 6-2. At the same time, the explanation of Mongolian custom is delivered in a humorous way by ingeniously recontextualizing the familiar Chinese political slogan of "和谐社会" ("harmonious society"). While the insertion

of a Chinese political slogan bears resemblance to the reference to "中国梦" ("China Dream") in Excerpt 6-14, the difference is the intention to transmit a Mongolian wedding custom through the medium of Chinese. At the same time, the explanation also has a humorous effect.

In fact, throughout my data, meta-comments on tradition and custom emerge as an integral feature of Mongolian ritual practice on stage. This reflexive engagement with tradition serves to add authority to the performed rituals, to teach lost tradition, to perform Mongolian identity, and to create a valuable commodity. At the same time, the heightened awareness of both Mongols and Chinese towards Mongolian tradition must be considered the epitome of self-exoticism (G. Roche, 2011) or internalized orientalism (Schein, 1997). Through self-exoticism that is complicit in the internal orientalism of the Chinese state, Mongols, as a minority, are able to ensure a form of continuity of their culture in the contemporary world. Although the objectification of tradition and culture through meta-commentary indicates the rupture or loss of culture, it is also one form of an evolving culture in a changing social milieu.

6.6.2 Comments about language choice

In addition to comments about genre and tradition, metalinguistic comments about language choice can also be found throughout my data (e.g., Excerpt 6-14). The focus of metalinguistic comments on language choice are usually comprehension questions regarding Mongolian. . For instance, after delivering a formulaic Mongolian groom praise, the speaker in wedding B04, switched to Chinese and said:

Excerpt 6-18: Chinese meta-comment about language choice (B04)

没有掌声啊? 都是汉族朋友，那我就拿汉语说下哈！	No applause? Ok, I see you are all Chinese friends, I will use Chinese and say it again!

This comment on his own language choice serves the wedding speaker as a shifting device. In other cases, comments on language choice may also serve to create humor, as in Excerpt 6-19.

Excerpt 6-19: Chinese meta-comment about language choice (B02)

今天参加婚礼的有老外吗？那咱们英语就不说了，说了他们也听不懂。仅用两种语言主持婚礼确实是小儿科而已。	Are there any foreigners here today? Ok then I don't need to speak English; actually even if I did speak it, they would not understand. Delivering wedding speeches in only two languages is a piece of cake.

This metalinguistic comment, too, is a shifting device to the next speech segment following the couple praise. More importantly, by explicitly commenting on his usage of multiple languages, the speaker highlights that the wedding is conducted not just in one language. This transforms his bilingual delivery itself into something special and unique. Of course, in addition, his mention of English also serves to elicit laughter.

Comments about ceremonial bilingualism such as these accentuate the specialness of bilingual weddings: a wedding within a traditional Mongolian frame but delivered in two languages simultaneously by one single speaker. In other words, compared to monolingual Mongolian ritual speech, bilingual ritual speech within a Mongolian frame is more note-worthy and challenging. Thereby, the bilingual language choice is itself transformed into a valuable symbol.

The value of bilingual ritual performance is even further accentuated against the devalorization of Chinese-dominant ceremonies and the use of non-standard Mongolian. The latter is not the subject of metalinguistic comments during weddings themselves but emerged in interviews. Yongjiu, a wedding speaker, from Darhan Banner, where the Chinese-dominant weddings were held, told me that standard Mongolian, particularly in formulaic ritual speech, was incomprehensible to most Mongols in the farming villages of eastern Inner Mongolia:

> *Mani ene shuud mongol-oor helej baibabech, jüün ujumchin-iih tai aideltgaabal bas teim mongol bishi, hün-ii ter tai taarah ügüi, hün-ii ter-iig yoloh ügüi. Mani ene gajar hartai mongol-oor helbel tüheereh ügüi.*

> ("Even though we use Mongolian at weddings, compared to the Mongolian language in Ujümchin Left-Wing Banner, ours is different. We cannot compare with them, theirs is good. In our place, people cannot understand Mongolian if you speak in an overly Mongolian way.")

Even so, Yongjiu dreamt of expanding his business and contributing to the improvement of Mongolian culture by make his wedding ceremonies "purer":

> *Mongol yos-iig ilüü shig oruulna, Hülenbeir-t ochood surchai, tendeh hurim bol chul mongol hurim.*

> ("I want to add more Mongolian customs into weddings. I went to Hülünbeir and learned it. Their weddings are pure Mongolian.")

Yongjiu was not alone in comparing Chinese-dominant weddings with "pure" Mongolian weddings and other wedding speakers in the area also desired to improve their

Mongolian linguistic and ritual competence. While the weddings in eastern agricultural regions of Inner Mongolia are Chinese-dominant, as I have demonstrated, speakers in these areas are deeply aware of other Mongols' "pure" language and ritual practice and they keenly feel the "inferiority" of theirs. The "inferiority" of their language and rituals is, of course, embedded in a gap in economic power and taste (Bourdieu, 1978) which keeps "overly Mongolian" weddings – be they monolingual or bilingual – out of their reach.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has investigated how language and genre choice serve to frame Mongolian weddings as traditional or non-traditional, as Mongolian or Chinese, as pure or impure. Language and genre choice creates layers of stratification, just as costume and decorative choices (Chapter Four) and ritual practices and sequencing (Chapter Five) do. Throughout the chapter I have argued that language and genre choice contribute to the emergence of different ceremonial frames and styles. Specifically, the monolingual and bilingual speech infuse a wedding with an atmosphere of sacredness and solemnity. In contrast, Chinese-dominant speeches are relegated outside the scope of *mongol hurim* ("Mongolian wedding") or they may, at best, be lingering on its margin. Although there is a clear code compartmentalization between Mongolian and Chinese in all bilingual weddings, the demarcation between bilingual weddings that are considered traditional Mongolian and those that are not – i.e. those that are Chinese-dominant - shows that language choice alone is insufficient for a wedding to be counted as "Mongolian". To accomplish the latter, mastery of traditional formulaic genres, which are elaborate and stylistically rich, is essential. A "Mongolian" wedding is not achieved through the use of truncated Mongolian genres whose content is overshadowed by Chinese speeches about love and romance.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis has explored how the discursive construction of Mongols' wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia serves as a way to experiment with diverse identities and languages, and to produce social hierarchies. By placing wedding ceremonies in their wider social context, I described and analysed how the material compositions of weddings, including costumes, stage decorations and *hongbao* exchange, are embedded in a wider Mongolian cultural revival on the one hand and commodification of that culture, on the other. At the same time, the burgeoning production and consumption of Mongolian-themed objects and cultural practices manifest group diversity, produce hierarchy and intertwine with the Chinese state's multicultural rhetoric.

Beyond the material and social contexts of wedding ceremonies, my focus on the ritual performance of the wedding ceremonies foregrounds how the commodified wedding ceremony may serve the multifarious interests of different parties involved in weddings. Polyphonic wedding speeches, in particular, reference different cultural sources and frame ceremonies within different themes. As a result, the speeches either further regiment certain forms of Mongolian or provide creative spaces for language variation and mixing. This polyvocality of wedding speeches is deeply intertwined with the enactment of different ideologies in a changing society.

This concluding chapter draws together the key findings of this research by revisiting the research questions and by presenting the implications and suggesting possible directions for future research.

7.1 Revisiting the research questions

7.1.1 What linguistic and cultural choices can be observed in Mongolian wedding ceremonies?

My analyses of material performances, ritual acts and language and genre choices have found that Mongolian symbolism and language choice are closely related. A variety of symbols and languages are assorted, classified and combined in ways that reflect, reinforce or challenge the set frame and space of a certain wedding ceremony.

The examination of material signs and languages of weddings found that there were at least three different ways to deploy different semiotics in the weddings of Mongols. First, the most ideal wedding is composed of a monolingual Mongolian wedding speech delivered by a Mongolian male dressed in traditional Mongolian costume, a couple adorned with beautiful custom-designed Mongolian costumes, and a stage decorated with rich Mongolian cultural symbols. In these monolingual Mongolian weddings, Mongolian has both symbolic and

referential functions. Such monolingual Mongolian weddings were predominantly found among Mongols who still maintain a more or less pastoral mode of life.

Second, there are bilingual weddings. In bilingual weddings, two subgroups can be distinguished: those where Mongolian and Chinese are both used within a predominantly Mongolian frame and those where there is an oscillation between Mongolian and Chinese frames. In a bilingual wedding within a predominantly Mongolian frame, salient and dense Mongolian ritual speech and symbols infuse the ceremonial space with Mongolian themes. At the same time, Chinese is used as an explanatory and meta-commentary device to cater to any non-Mongolian speakers present. In these cases, Mongolian ritual speech along with Mongolian cultural symbols were given a dominant position, whereas Chinese was used to serve this already-established Mongolian frame by explaining or commenting on the content within that frame. In this kind of bilingual wedding the symbolic function of Mongolian may outweigh its communicative function, especially for the non-Mongolian speakers in audience. Thus, in these bilingual weddings, in order to fully convey their communicative function, Chinese is indispensable. In addition, the examination of language choice in these bilingual weddings highlighted the role of metalinguistic comments delivered in Chinese in bilingual weddings. In most cases of bilingual speeches, it can be argued that Chinese metalinguistic comments contribute to the increasing reflexivity of Mongolian ritual speech and traditional custom. Thus, the choice of Chinese in metalinguistically commenting on preceding Mongolian ritual speech and accomplished Mongolian ritual acts at weddings reifies and immobilizes Mongolian further.

In the second type of bilingual weddings, a mixture of Mongolian and Chinese ritual speech genres is used. In these bilingual weddings, the speeches expressing Mongolian wedding traditions and Mongolian customs are delivered in Mongolian, and the speeches addressing love and romance are delivered in Chinese. Within this bilingual and bicultural frame, Chinese and Mongolian work within their respective genres without any mutual interpretation of or comments on each other. In other words, there are no cross-overs between the content and genres delivered via the two different languages. Symbols displayed on the wedding stage at these weddings also draw on hybrid cultural repertoires. Symbols from a different pool of cultural sources may be chosen either to support the romantic theme of the Chinese speech or to enhance the traditional theme of the Mongolian speech. In some cases, the balance between Mongolian themes delivered via Mongolian and Chinese themes

delivered via Chinese may be kept throughout. Such balanced combinations can create a ceremony frame oscillating between Mongolian and non-Mongolian themes.

Lastly, there is a third type - Chinese-dominant weddings. In these weddings, Chinese is used predominantly throughout the ceremony and combined with symbols unrelated to Mongolian culture, such as decorative English words like "love" or "wedding" on the stage, the Chinese character for "double happiness" and the red bridal costume. In such Chinese-dominant weddings, Mongolian is not absent completely, though. A truncated, tokenistic and simplified Mongolian wedding speech may appear haphazardly, and it is completely overshadowed by the long, poetic and formal Chinese speech focusing on love, marriage and romance. In addition, non-standard Mongolian, which is characterized by code-mixing, may be interspersed into speeches in order to elicit audience laughter. Such Chinese-dominant weddings were found in the agricultural villages of eastern Inner Mongolia.

However, the examination of semiotic choices at weddings with different dominant themes has shown that there is always a tension in the frame of the wedding due to the interactions of multiple signs and languages. In fact, an ambiguity in the frame of weddings or challenges to the established frame of weddings occurred in most weddings, no matter within which frame they were operating. Even in some monolingual Mongolian weddings, a segment of Mongolian speech or a few symbols which run counter to Mongolian wedding customs and traditional culture may be included. As a result, a speech genre or a symbol from other cultures, say from Chinese wedding customs, potentially challenges the established authoritative frame of "traditional" authentic Mongolian weddings. Thus, among the constitutive languages and symbols of most weddings, a heteroglossia exists in the bricolage of weddings. The choices of certain languages and symbols in the ceremony may work as centripetal forces for the established ceremonial frame and style if they are rightly chosen for the specific speech genre used. However, mostly they worked as centrifugal forces.

Moreover, the research further found that the linguistic and semiotic choices in weddings largely mirror the sociolinguistic situations of different Mongolian groups. The language and semiotic choices in monolingual and bilingual weddings with a predominantly Mongolian wedding frame corroborate Bilik's (1998a) argument that

> Chinese will steadily replace other minority languages in more aspects of social life
> than ever before. Mongolian is mainly a symbolic means of emotional communication
> for urban Mongols while it remains an everyday language for the Mongols in pastoral
> and semi-pastoral lands. Despite the unavoidable conflicts between practical and

emotional approaches among the Mongols, they are interlocked by rhetorical devices or symbolic reconciliation. (Bilik, 1998a, p. 57)

Therefore, the language choices in Mongolian weddings can be considered to mirror the different status of Mongolian and Chinese for urban and pastoral Mongols outside weddings. And a reconstructed Mongolian wedding may serve as a rhetorical device and symbolic reconciliation of the conflicts deriving from the practical and emotional needs of Mongols. Furthermore, the Chinese-dominant weddings of agricultural farming Mongols may be conditioned by and mirror the sociolinguistic situation in eastern Inner Mongolia, where Mongolian peasants have had prolonged and intensive contact with Chinese and developed a dialect and culture with heavy Chinese influence, as discussed in Section 2.2.

To sum up, the linguistic choices at Mongolian weddings are mostly decided by the frames and themes of the weddings. But the frames of wedding ceremonies are not without tensions due to the heteroglossia inherent in a multilingual and multicultural environment. Furthermore, the language choices in wedding speeches both reflect and reinforce the different roles of these languages in the wider social contexts beyond the wedding ceremonies.

7.1.2 What ideologies are embedded in these semiotic practices?

The exploration of wedding semiotics showed that three different strands of ideologies and forces undergird the language and cultural practices of weddings. These are the hegemony of Mongolian tradition, the ideology of a multiethnic and multicultural Chinese nation, and the force of cultural commodification combined with the work of cultural entrepreneurs.

First, the hegemony of conformity to tradition, or to borrow Roche's words, "the invariance in cultural practice" (2011, p. 362), works powerfully in the semiotic practice in the weddings of Mongols. In Chapter Four the examination of Mongolian costumes and costume production showed that the Mongolian-ness inscribed in such material objects was highly valued culturally and economically. In Chapter Five, the display of Mongolian wedding elements on stage foregrounded the invariance of Mongolian wedding tradition by performing it elaborately under the guidance of wedding professionals. In Chapter Six, the emphasis on proper Mongolian wedding genres and styles was prominent across language choices and in meta-commentary. Ruled by this convention of invariance of traditional cultural and language practice, what is valued most is the rigid and "pure" Mongolian ritual expression on stage, the right solemn ceremonial atmosphere, and speakers' mastery of traditional cultural knowledge. This strong ideology of an immobile and unalterable wedding tradition undergirds the semiotic practices of wedding ceremonies and regulates various

ceremony actors' behaviours and ensures endless meta-comments and arguments regarding what is allowed and proper and what is not.

Furthermore, this seemingly time-immemorial traditional culture and Mongolian wedding custom is highly selective, as Bilik (1998b, p. 79) notes: "Chinese Mongols pick up evidence eclectically throughout history, from the 'deep past' until now, in search of moral emotion tailored to the future". For this selection of evidence from the "deep past", pastoralism, "the mnemonic site of Mongols" (Bulag, 2003a, p. 35), provides the richest symbolic resources for contemporary Mongols. Indeed,

> the threat of ethnic assimilation and resistance to it have given rise to an imagery of pastoralism that can be used as the most salient rallying point and identity marker, since the nomadic way of life is intimately connected to the Mongols' proud past as a powerful nation that once ruled over the Middle Kingdom and beyond (Bilik, 1998a, p. 56).

But, in the context of China, for Mongols, the polemical opposition to pastoralism is agricultural farming, because it is a mnemonic site of the Chinese" (Bulag, 2003a, p. 35). This discourse has resulted in ethnic polarization and reinforces Mongols' attachment to their own mnemonic site and shapes Mongolian identity based on images of pastoral life (Bulag, 2003b)Therefore, contemporary Mongols satisfy their emotional desire and strengthen their identity by engaging in a wedding full of Mongolian cultural repertoires the semiotics of which evoke traditional lifestyles and history. Accordingly, weddings lacking such Mongolian cultural repertoires are excluded from the realm of "true Mongolian-ness" and end up invisible due to the embarrassment they may cause to the celebrated Mongolian self-image.

In addition, I also dealt with the role of the Chinese state in the further reinforcement of this Mongolian cultural repertoire. The participation of the Chinese state in the development of Mongolian tradition is motivated by the state's aim to build up an image of a harmonious multiethnic and multicultural Chinese nation and to develop the tourism industry. To do so, the state awards Mongols who are embodying Mongolian traditions and supports the organization of Mongolian cultural events, such as costume competitions and cultural exhibitions. By doing so, the state incorporates Mongolian culture and identity into the multiethnic Chinese nation. However, either intentionally or unintentionally, such actions of the state also reinforce Mongols' imagination about themselves and their past. State's supportive action thus further reifies Mongolian culture and strips it of mobility and changeability. Therefore, a variety of celebrated Mongolian symbols, such as costumes, Mongolian ritual speech genres, such as

blessings, and the cult of Genghis Khan Worship, is undergirded by state promotion of multiculturalism and the complicit cooperation of Mongols with the state.

Finally, commodification brings yet another ideological strand to weddings. Cultural entrepreneurs exploit the mnemonic site of Mongols and further commercialize this already highly objectified and exclusionary aspect of Mongolian culture. The emergence of professional wedding specialists has clearly affected the semiotics and production of weddings. Cultural entrepreneurs such as Mongolian costume makers, wedding speakers, and studio owners draw their inspiration from traditional culture and, at the same time, add new values. By instilling traditional elements into their products, cultural specialists participate in the reinforcement of the desired Mongolian cultural repertoire. However, they are also under pressure to innovate and to constantly add new elements to their cultural products in response to customer desire and market trends. By doing so, they may break through the stereotypical images of Mongolian culture and infuse tradition with new energy.

Moreover, most cultural entrepreneurs see themselves as self-proclaimed champions of the preservation and development of Mongolian culture. This is in line with Bilik's argument that "running Mongolian schools, studying Mongolian cultural heritage and engaging in anything ethnic by the Mongols, especially the Mongolian intellectuals, is to build a venue whereby their unbalanced psychology can be redressed, nostalgic moan echoed, collective solidarity assured and moral support drawn" (Bilik, 1998b, p. 75). However, emotional satisfaction and collective identity building is only one side of the coin. No matter how cultural entrepreneurs downplay their commercial pursuits, their operation in the market certainly endows them with new roles and new tensions. Cultural commodification is likely to undercut the binding role of ritual:

> Rather than being organized primarily through rituals that affirm metaphysical and consensual beliefs, contemporary societies have opened themselves up to processes of negotiations and reflexivity about means and ends, with the result that conflict, disappointment, and feelings of bad faith are at least as common as integration, affirmation, and the energizing of the collective spirit (Alexander, 2006, p. 30).

In the end, it is the market that may destabilize hegemonic Mongolian tradition, although the market also takes its inspirations from this essentialized hegemonic tradition. My examination of the role of cultural entrepreneurs has indicated that a cultural economy of wedding ceremonies revolves around tensions, negotiations and conflicts, although some

cultural specialists' involvement in the process of commodification of language and culture does inject new life and new mobility into an objectified culture.

In sum, the linguistic and semiotic choices in weddings manifest the interaction of the three strands of ideology: the hegemonic ideology of Mongolian tradition, the state's ideology of the harmonious multiethnic and multicultural Chinese nation, and the market forces of commodification. The consequences of the intertwinement of these three forces and ideologies are multiple. First, they incidentally serve to further limit Mongolian imagination and language use. The relocation of Mongolian language and culture on the wedding stage reproduces the disadvantaged position and essentialization of the Mongolian language. Mongols, as a minority, have been unable to create favourable conditions for the use of Mongolian to pursue a career, achieve social mobility, or, above all, realize social values (Bulag, 2003a). The Mongolian wedding speech reproduces this limited space allocated to a less mobile Mongolian. Second, the interstices of these ideologies, especially the individual Mongolian cultural experts by exploiting and balancing these forces on the market, extends the scale and innovates the content of Mongolian culture by commodifying it. A variety of newly emerging professions in relation to Mongolian culture and tradition are advancing the development of Mongolian culture. Third, these ideologies working underneath wedding practices and other cultural businesses may create additional distinction for certain groups of Mongols while excluding others, as I explain next.

7.1.3 How do wedding practices and ideologies serve to produce and reproduce Mongolian "authenticity" and social hierarchies?

This research has shown that the Mongolian imagination and pursuit of tradition and authenticity does not come without sacrifice and exclusion. The commodification of authenticity based on images of pastoralism and the imperial past reproduce and entrench the polarization of authentic versus inauthentic Mongols, pastoral versus agricultural Mongols, and rich versus poor Mongols.

The examination of material contexts, speeches and wedding speakers has shown that what is condemned is symbols and speeches linked with the Chinese and agricultural mode of life. My research thus confirms Khan's (1996) argument that the hegemonic herder symbolism marginalizes the majority of eastern Mongols, who have long been crop-cultivating farmers. In Bulag's words, "Mongolian farmers become an unnameable category in the Mongolian imagination" (Bulag, 2003a, p. 35). Thus, this binary division and the hegemony of tradition works behind the devalorization of certain styles of weddings. What is more, this exclusion is reproduced not just by Mongols themselves, but also by the Chinese

state and the cultural market. As addressed in Section 8.1.2 they consciously or unconsciously applaud and disseminate the reified and flattering stereotypes of Mongols to which farming Mongols have never been admitted. Furthermore, the examination of the ceremonies in two different spatio-temporal frames also indicated that the invented traditional Mongolian wedding performed on stage brings into the spotlight the existing linguistic, cultural and economic gap within Mongolian groups, and exposes the thoroughly modern nature of Mongolian weddings. In particular, the relocation of wedding ceremonies onto the stage in restaurants shows that instead of the homeland where Mongols have lived for generations, modern hotels in the city can offer the best chance for appreciating a "Mongolian" wedding. Instead of Mongolian herders and farmers, urban (and wealthy) Mongols can assemble most resources that suggest "tradition", such as famous ritual speakers, fiddle performance, expensive and Mongolian-element rich stages, or famous traditional singers. It is a ceremony wearing the cloak of modernity. It is also a ceremony which doubly excludes those Mongols who are not modern enough to pursue and consume their fading culture. This same group of Mongols is also one whose lifestyles are not "traditional" enough to benefit from modernity. Thus, it is particularly at the juncture of the stage display that the weddings of farming Mongols in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia fall short. It is on the stage that the Chinese wedding customs that are destined to be ranked at the lowest spectrum become most visible, even though at home these Mongols worship at the same *burhan* as other Mongols and consult the same lama or shaman.

Therefore, it is the urban middle-class Mongols or rich pastoral Mongols who are most able to consume a full set of Mongolian wedding products designed by a prestigious wedding catering company. Urban middle-class Mongols may, in fact, become "authentic" Mongols by consuming tradition. They can gain distinction as Mongolian through their conspicuous wedding ceremonies. As Bourdieu argues, the production of naturalness may be a matter of distinction:

> "Distinction" or better "class", the transfigured, misrecognizable, legitimate form of social class only exits through the struggles for the exclusive appropriation for the distinctive signs which make "natural distinction" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 250).

Bourdieu further states that it is these struggles over distinctive signs that generate the value of culture and maintain collective belief in the absolute value of the pursuit of distinctive signs (Bourdieu, 1984). In the pursuit of distinction as "authentic Mongol", the opposition between authenticity and imitation, true culture and popular culture "conceal a collusion that is essential for the production and reproduction of the fundamental recognition

of the cultural game and its stakes" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 250). For Mongols, the struggles over authentic Mongolian signs generate the very value of such authenticity, maintain their belief in it and naturalize the game of authentic culture.

Middle-class Mongols master social power and pay for the symbolic knowledge and interpretive authority of their wedding ceremonies. As a result, they gain distinction in this naturalized competitive game and race for authenticity. In the process, existing social hierarchies and gaps are reproduced. However, my exploration of Mongolian weddings also suggests that creating group boundaries and exclusion along the lines of Mongolian authenticity and essentialized Mongolian identity is not without its reason in the context of contemporary China. After all, these "authentic" Mongolian weddings can act as a site to sustain the images of the past, to convey collectivism and to express emotional discourses for these domesticated Mongols, who are facing the increasing pressure of assimilation and language loss; even if the engagement with this symbolic representation and the participation in the race for authenticity marginalize a large number of Mongols.

7.2 Implications and future research directions

This research has a number of implications for language maintenance, language shift and commodification in the context of minorities in China. The implications of this research are structured around the following topics: the significance of minority language commodification for minorities and the state, the intersection of commodification and ritual performance, and the connection of commodified language and languages in wider society.

First, this research shows that the commodification of language in this minority context, characterized by language shift, reproduces essentialized views of the minority language and reinforces its symbolic role over its referential role. This is because the commodification of language starts from and circulates essentialized views of language and culture. For instance, in the context of Mongolian weddings, the valorization of pure and rigid forms of Mongolian as an asset in fact inflects and contributes to the increasingly diminishing domains of the Mongolian language in Inner Mongolia.

Second, the transformation of language into a valuable commodity increases the gap between groups within this linguistically shifting society. The issue starts from whose language is chosen for commodification and who is able to consume it. As commodification is highly selective, it chooses a language variety with rich cultural and political sediments. For Mongols, their imagined "pure" language spoken by herders and the ritual speech of time immemorial are of most symbolic value. But this selective commodification entrenches pre-

existing negative stereotypes and acts as an exclusionary mechanism toward those who neither have such pure speech nor are able to consume such speech.

Third, closely related to the above implication is that the commodification of culture and the symbolic and economic value of language in a minority ritual in the situation of language loss poses another important question: who is a Mongol in China? In other words, can Mongols, including those who have lost Mongolian, claim a Mongolian identity by consuming a Mongolian traditional ritual? As Jankowiak (2013, p. 62) argues,

> most urban-born Mongols will never speak Mongolian and, thus, the discussion over the criteria for *proper Mongolian-ness* has been expanded to include a more inclusive criteria that emphasizes an individual's historical origins and descendent commonalities.

However, my research has suggested that the commodification and consumption of culture and language of common historical and ethnic origin may have provided new sources for the expanding criteria for being a Mongol in China. This consumption may provide, to borrow Salces-Alcalde & Amezaga's (2016, p. 239) words, "vital spaces" or "breathing spaces" for minority identities. This means that Mongolian identities may persist and flourish in the process of rampant commodification. Yet, such expanding new criteria may complicate the already existing multiple types of Mongolian identities that are based on lineage, language, emotion, politics and other factors. Thus, future research into minority language and commodification in China needs to explore further the changing nature of minority identities and multiple types of minority identities intertwined with commodification and language shift.

Fourth, the agency of the Chinese state has to be taken into consideration in examining the revival and commodification of tradition and culture. The state more or less supports the invention and commodification of minority cultures. Further, it adopts different policies in different minority regions as is shown by Inner Mongolia's long-held status as an exemplary minority region ("模范自治区") in China for other minority regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang. Jankowiak (2013) also notes that China adopts multiculturalism rhetoric and acknowledges the importance of cultural diversity while simultaneously seeking to blur differences between ethnic groups. The commodified and reconstructed minority culture and tradition should be examined against this differing and conflicting stance of the Chinese state towards its ethnic minorities. Moreover, this research shows that the emotional expression of Mongolian identity can coexist dialectically with both the commodification of that very

identity on the market and the appropriation of that identity by the Chinese state. Undoubtedly, this dialectic coexistence needs every party involved in it to calculate and evaluate carefully what is within the acceptable range and what might go out of this range. Thus, research into minority language and culture and commodification needs to examine how the power of the state underpins the commodification of language and identity in China and elsewhere. Moreover, research needs to focus on the role of cultural specialists or mediators who are directly involving in shaping and disseminating minority culture.

In addition, by focusing on the commodification of highly-charged ritual speech this research has strived to illuminate the intersection of minority language use in ritual settings and language commodification. Previous research into minority languages and performance has either highlighted the symbolic usage of language for identity expressions and community building among linguistically endangered people or solely focused on language commodification in heritage tourism and tensions between language as a source of pride and profit (see Chapter Two, Section 2.3). However, this research has tried to bring these two streams of linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic research into dialogue with each other in the minority context of China. I suggest that in the commodified weddings of Mongols, identity expression, collective adaptation to social transformation, the development of new Mongolian cultural form through commodification and through close alignment with the Chinese state can coexist, despite multiple tensions. The gap between ritual speech and commodification should be bridged for rituals other than weddings and for minorities other than Mongols in China.

Furthermore, this research has indicated that there is a certain relation between languages used in the ritual context and language use and shift in the wider social context. While monolingual weddings and bilingual weddings in a Mongolian frame predominate in pastoral and urban areas, eastern Inner Mongols' early contact with Chinese language and culture is mirrored in their Chinese-dominant weddings. Although the Mongolian dialect of that region is heavily influenced by Chinese, it has been transmitted from generation to generation (Puthuval, 2017). I have added to this by demonstrating that this hybrid variety of Mongolian is even used on the wedding stage, albeit for burlesque. Future research needs to explore additional social domains of the still vigorous Mongolian dialects of eastern Mongols as well as domains where Mongolian is gradually replaced by Chinese, particularly in formal and public settings such as the wedding ritual on stage. Moreover, the ideology of purity of Mongolian speech at weddings may intersect with the purist and standard language ideology working in wider Mongolian society. Future research can illuminate this connection of

158

commodified standard and pure Mongolian in ritual settings with the language use and language ideology in wider Mongolian society. In addition, it would be valuable to examine Mongolian language diversity and commodification in a range of contexts such as ethnic tourism, minority schools, social media space, and how these link to language ideology in wider society. The relationship between "pure" and hybrid languages and their domains of use is an issue for other minority languages, too.

Finally, another direction for future research of which I have only been able to scratch the surface and that awaits further research is the linguistic and cultural influence flowing from the Republic of Mongolia to Inner Mongolia. I was only able to hint at the popularity and the high authenticity value commanded by Mongolian costumes from the Republic of Mongolia and the high salaries paid to the Mongolian costume designers from there. Thus, future research into the sociolinguistics of authenticity in Inner Mongolia needs to explore the potential influence of Outer Mongols on defining authenticity and marketing authentic culture and language. Again, this could also be approached comparatively in relation to other cross-border minorities in China and beyond.

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Appendix 1: Transcription and Translation Conventions

All spoken data for this thesis were transcribed in Hudum Mongolian and simplified Chinese characters. However, the Mongolian excerpts that are presented as evidence in the thesis are transcribed in Romanised Mongolian. The vast majority of oral data in wedding videos were spoken in standard Mongolian and Mandarin.

Additionally, in interviews Mongolian dialects were used, such as Khorchin Mongolian, Ordos Mongolian, or Bairan Mongolian, which are all mutually intelligible. As my study does not focus on language variation, these were all transcribed in standard Mongolian. Code-switches into Chinese were transcribed using pinyin, which is italicized and underlined to differentiate them from italicized Mongolian. Similarly, in the English translation, those words that are code-switches from Mongolian to Chinese are underlined.

All analyses in this thesis are based on the original language data and the Chinese and Mongolian transcriptions. English translations are provided only for the convenience of the reader. The excerpts that are presented in this thesis as evidence were translated into English. However, Chinese and Mongolian place names, administrative terms, culturally specific words were kept in their original forms with English explanations offered.

Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are by me. In order to ensure the quality of the translation from Mongolian or Chinese to English, all translations were double-checked by a Mongolian-Chinese-English trilingual, Dr Dongbing Zhang, University of Sydney.

In most cases, the Mongolian or Chinese original is presented first followed by the English translation. In the case of extended excerpts, the English translation follows after each turn to ensure readability.

Here and elsewhere I follow the standard Romanization of Mongolian as per the Mongolian-English dictionary by Haltod and Lessing (1995), except for the following changes: č is rendered as ch, γ (a voiced deep velar stop) as g, ǰ as j, q as h and in proper names as kh, š as sh,

The following transcription conventions were adopted:

ₒ	Sentence final intonation for Chinese.
.	Sentence final intonation for Mongolian.
,	Clause final intonation for both Mongolian and Chinese.
!	Sentence – level emphasis for both Mongolian and Chinese.
?	Question intonation for both Mongolian and Chinese.

(…)   Researcher's omission

[something]   Researcher's supplement to incomplete utterance or explanatory notes

Appendix 2: Final Ethics Approval Letter

Dear Professor Piller,

Re: "Contemporary wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia"(5201500737)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 28th October 2015. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Miss Hongye Bai
Professor Ingrid Piller

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1.   The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2.   Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 28th October 2016
Progress Report 2 Due: 28th October 2017
Progress Report 3 Due: 28th October 2018
Progress Report 4 Due: 28th October 2019
Final Report Due: 28th October 2020

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/a
pplication_resources

3.   If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4.   All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/m
anaging_approved_research_projects

5.   Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6.   At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/
human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external

organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anthony Miller
Chair
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Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

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Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Professor Ingrid Piller, PhD

Participant Information Statement [ENGLISH VERSION]

Name of Project: Performing linguistic and cultural authenticity: Contemporary Mongolian wedding ceremonies in Inner Mongolia

You are invited to participate in a study of language choice in Mongolian wedding ceremonies. The purpose of the study is to better understand minority language use in the People's Republic of China.

Who we are:

The study is being conducted by Professor Ingrid Piller and Doctoral Student Hongye Bai of Macquarie University, Australia (Department of Linguistics), +61-2-9850-7674 and ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au and hongye.bai@students.mq.edu.au +86 15000637090. This research is Hongye Bai's PhD field work. It is being conducted to meet the requirements of a PhD under the supervision of Dr Ingrid Piller of Macquarie University.

Your Commitment:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview. Participation in interview requires one to two hours of your time. Interviews will be audio-recorded. If you are uncomfortable at any time you can tell Hongye Bai and an interview can be suspended or stopped. Interviewees will not be paid. You will also be asked to share your wedding videos with us. You can decide not to share your wedding videos at any time.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Your personal details:

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. The results will eventually be published in a PhD thesis and in some academic papers. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results (not even in photographs). Individuals' personal details will be held only by Hongye Bai and the Chief Investigator, Professor Ingrid Piller. A summary of the results of the data can be made

171

available to you on request by emailing Hongye.bai@students.mq.edu.au. You can also send feedback to this email address.

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone +61 (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

+ 61 (02) 98507854 ethics@mq.edu.au

(Human Research Ethics Committee)

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Ingrid piller

Ingrid piller

Performing linguistic and cultural authenticity: Contemporary Mongolian wedding

ceremonies in Inner Mongolia

Interview guide

Couples

- Can you tell me about your wedding ceremony?
    Specific sub-questions might include:

    o Where did you hold your wedding ceremony?
    o Which wedding style did you choose? Why?
    o Who planned your wedding ceremony? Was it a wedding company, yourselves or families?
    o What were your criteria in hiring [specific wedding professionals]?
    o Were you happy with every aspect of your wedding ceremony?
    o What is your favorite memory of your wedding ceremony?
    o Was there any aspect of your wedding ceremony that you were not happy with? That did not go according to plan?
    o Did you have more than one wedding ceremony? If yes, can you compare the ceremonies? Which one did you prefer? Why? [Note to Ethics Committee: some couples choose to have separate ceremonies for the bride's and groom's family and/or for colleagues]
    o Is there any advice you have to other couples about how to plan and conduct their wedding ceremonies?

- Asking more generally, what do think about other wedding ceremonies you've attend?
    Specific sub-questions might include:

    o What do you think needs to be considered when preparing and conducting a wedding ceremony?
    o How many wedding ceremonies have you attended?
    o Is there anything you've seen in a wedding ceremony that you really liked?
    o Is there anything you've seen in a wedding ceremony that you really disliked?
    o Have you ever seen anything in a wedding ceremony that you thought was unique/surprising/weird?

- I'm particularly interested in language. Can you tell me about Mongolian and Chinese? Do you speak both languages? Which Mongolian dialect do you speak? Are you/will you teach Mongolian to your children?

Wedding professionals

- What is your role in a wedding ceremony?
    Specific sub-questions might include:

    o How many weddings to you attend/organize per month?
    o What do you do at a wedding?
    o Why is your role important?

- o How do you know you are doing a good job as a [specific wedding professional]?
- What is involved in a typical Mongolian wedding ceremony?
    Specific sub-questions might include:

  - o What elements are crucial?
  - o What needs to be done when?
  - o What are the roles of the bride/the groom/ [specific extended family members]/ [specific wedding professionals]?
  - o How much Mongolian language do you need in a "typical" Mongolian wedding?
- What makes a good wedding ceremony?
- Can you tell some stories of memorable weddings?
    Specific sub-questions might include:

  - o What was the funniest/weirdest/most memorable/best/worst wedding you ever attended? Why was that?
  - o What special requests do couples have?
  - o How do you deal with extraordinary requests?
- I'm particularly interested in language. Can you tell me about Mongolian and Chinese? Do you speak both languages? Which Mongolian dialect do you speak? How do you manage bilingual ceremonies?

Appendix 5: Flyers for video collection

此项目在研究现代蒙古人的婚礼与语言文化。 为了分析在舞台上的婚礼用语和舞台布置， 本人在收集婚礼光盘。如果您愿意与我分享你的光盘请加我微信。关于此研究，您有其他问题和疑虑我也愿意详细回答。

微信: Sophiemongolian   手机: 15047831915

Mongolian version:

Appendix 6: Flyers for recruiting wedding professionals

此**项**目在研究**现代**蒙古人的婚礼和**语言**文化。如果您从事有关于蒙古婚**庆礼仪**的

职业，比如婚礼主持人，婚礼策划人，或婚礼服**饰设计**人，**恳请**您加我的**联系**方式。

我将会安排一个小**时**到两个小**时**的采**访**，向您**请**教有关**现代**蒙古人的婚礼。

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Mongolian version: