

Original Paper

Denying, Qualifying, or Diverting with “meishier” (没事儿) in Open-Class Repair in Mandarin Chinese Talk

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Abstract

When engaging in a conversation, interactants frequently encounter problems of hearing, speaking and understanding. Under such circumstances repair is usually resorted to ensure the progressivity of the talk. With the methodology of Conversation Analysis, one specific repair procedure has been investigated in this paper which is open-class repair initiated by the recipient with “huh?” (啊?/嗯?) or “what?” (什么?) followed by the speaker denying the existence of the previous action, qualifying or diverting the previous action in the trouble source turn (the turn with the problem) with “meishier” (没事儿). And in these three situations “meishier” can be probably translated respectively into “nothing”, “nothing serious” and “I’m ok”. Therefore, this research would provide a profound knowledge about the actions conducted by “meishier” as well as a specific guidance to the translation of “meishier” into English.

Keywords

open-class repair, “meishier”, denying, qualifying, diverting

1. Introduction

When engaging in a conversation, interactants frequently encounter problems of hearing, speaking and understanding. Under such circumstances repair is resorted to ensure “that the interaction does not freeze in its place when trouble arises, that inter-subjectivity is maintained or restored, and that the turn and sequence and activity can progress to possible completion” (Schegloff, 2007, p. xiv). The problems of speaking, hearing or understanding basically occur in the “immediately preceding talk, while a repair outcome results in either a solution or abandonment of the problem” (Schegloff, 2000, p. 207). Thus, a repair can be initiated either by the speaker of the trouble source turn (the turn with the problem) or by the recipient. And one specific repair procedure has been investigated in this paper which is open-class

repair initiated by the recipient with “huh?” (啊?/嗯?) or “what?” (什么?) (Drew, 1997; Schegloff, 1997; Enfield et al., 2013) followed by the speaker denying the existence of the previous action, qualifying or diverting the previous action in the trouble source turn (the turn with the problem) with “meishier” (没事儿). Therefore, the pattern of the target repair procedure is:

Speaker: Trouble Source Turn

Recipient: Repair Initiation with “huh?” (啊?/嗯?) or “what?” (什么?)

Speaker: Abandonment or Repair Solution with “meishier” (没事儿)

And besides hearing and speaking problems, the sequential environments of open-class repair involve specifically “first an apparently abrupt shift in topic, and second an apparently inapposite, or even disaffiliate, response by the other speaker” (Drew, 1997, p. 69). Drew’s conclusion has covered almost all the situations, though the specific environments are more complicated. According to the data, (1) when the previous action is doing abrupt topic shift, doing inapposite action, disagreeing, talking to oneself or talking with a third person, the speaker would deny the existence of his/her action with “meishier” as “nothing”; (2) when the previous action is telling the reason for call, the speaker would qualify the reason for call with “meishier” as “nothing serious”, then repeat the trouble source turn; and (3) when the previous action is doing negative expression towards the recipient’s previous disaffiliate action, the speaker would divert his/her action by treating it as something he/she can handle with “meishier” as “I’m ok”.

In addition, according to *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (现代汉语词典) (2018, p. 885), “meishier” basically means “nothing” which can be used to indicate “nothing to do”, “no job”, “no accident”, “no responsibility” and “never mind”, etc., in different contexts. In the above three situations “meishier” can be probably translated respectively into “nothing”, “nothing serious” and “I’m ok”. Hence, this research is meant to probe into the actions conducted by “meishier” and its possible appropriate translations into English in actual everyday interactions.

2. Methodology and Data

The methodology adopted in the current research is Conversation Analysis (hereafter CA) which “aims to explicate how people accomplish and understand social actions when interacting with others” (Hepburn & Bolden, 2017). Founded in 1960s by Harvey Sacks with the collaboration of Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, CA has deeply influenced by Erving Goffman (1959, 1967) and Harold Garfinkel (1967) respectively in terms of revealing the interactional order behind talk-in-interaction and understanding social actions embedded in utterances with the procedural approach of common-sense reasoning and practical reasoning. And one important research locus of CA is social action (Drew, 2013), which is implemented on a turn-by-turn basis in real conversation (Schegloff, 2007).

“The central domain of data with which conversation analysts are concerned is everyday, mundane conversations” Heritage (1984, p. 238). The whole database from which targeted phenomena are

selected from consists of 830 intact mundane telephone talks (202h, 30m, 19s) collected from 2014 to 2020 among classmates, friends, lovers, couples, relatives, parents and children etc. And out of it there are 14 intact telephone calls containing 14 targeted sequences. The following table shows the distribution of the actions conducted by “meishier” in different sequential environments. All the data are transcribed according to CA conventions (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013), and adjusted according to the accepted conventions for showing non-English data. The data have been transcribed in Mandarin and in pinyin Mandarin in the first two lines, then translated into English, first literally and then into a more idiomatic form. Therefore, each excerpt consists of four lines, though in some cases the more idiomatic translation is not shown line-by-line but rather at the end of that turn, the more idiomatic translation into English is shown in bold. In addition, certain linguistic details, especially particles, are indicated in the transcription.

Table 1. The Distribution of the Actions Conducted by “meishier”

Categories	Trouble Source Turn	NO.
(1) Denying the existence of the previous action with “meishier” as “nothing”	Doing abrupt topic shift	3
	Doing inapposite action	2
	Disagreeing	1
	Talking to oneself	2
	Talking with a third person	3
(2) Qualifying the previous action with “meishier” as “nothing serious”	Telling the reason for call	2
(3) Diverting the previous action with “meishier” as “I’m ok”	Doing negative expression	1

As is displayed in the above Table, when the previous action in the trouble source turn is doing abrupt topic shift, inapposite action, disagreeing or even departing from the current talk (talking to oneself and talking with a third person), the speaker would deny the existence of his/her action; Yet when the previous action in the trouble source turn is telling the reason for call, the speaker would qualify the action and repeat the turn; However, when the previous action in the trouble source turn is doing negative expression towards recipient’s previous disaffiliative action, the speaker would divert the action.

3. The Actions Conducted by “meishier”

As has been argued, after the initiation of the repair procedure, the speaker would deny the existence of the previous action, qualify or divert the previous action in the trouble source turn with “meishier” as “nothing”, “nothing serious” or “I’m ok” respectively. The following sections would illustrate these

situations with examples.

3.1 Denying the Existence of the Previous Action with “meishier” as “Nothing”

As has been put forward, throughout the data there are five kinds of actions conducted in the trouble source turn which are doing abrupt topic shift, doing inapposite action, disagreeing, talking to oneself or talking with a third person, yet the speaker would deny the existence of these actions nevertheless.

3.1.1 Doing Abrupt Topic Shift

According to the data, when the previous action in the trouble source turn is doing abrupt topic shift, the recipient would probably encounter an understanding problem, then after the initiation of the open-class repair by the recipient, the speaker would abandon the repair with “meishier”, indicating that the trouble source turn has nothing to deliver. The following example shows the situation.

Ma (马) and An (安) are friends, and they are chatting with each other on the phone. Ma is telling An that she has lots of relatives (data not shown), then An replies that Ma can receive lots of Lucky Money from these relatives in Chinese New Year in lines 10 and 11, yet Ma disagrees with An in line 12. However, in line 14 An still considers Ma’s relatives would give her more Lucky Money. Then, in line 15 An suddenly shifts the topic into a question asking if Ma has met Yan (艳) who is supposed to be their mutual friend. After a long silence (1.8s) in line 16 which probably indicates a trouble (Pomerantz, 1984), Ma initiates an open-class repair with “what?” (什么?) in line 17 proving that she has difficulty in understanding the whole turn in line 15. However, An abandons the repair with “meishier” in line 19, and changes to another topic in line 21. In this situation the action conducted by “meishier” is denying the existence of the previous action in line 15, thus “meishier” in this particular context can be translated into “nothing”.

(1) 19YYF_XZED

10 安: 过年的时候多给你点压岁钱。
guonian de shihou duo geinidianyasuiqian.
Chinese New Year of time more give you little Lucky Money.

In Chinese New Year you will be given lots of Lucky Money.

11 () 你这么优秀。
()nizhemeyouxu.
() You so excellent.

You are so excellent.

12 马: 想得美呀。我这是。
xiang de meiya. wo zheshi.
Think of beautiful PRT. I this is.

Stop dreaming. I am dreaming.

13 (2.2)
14 安: 就是嘛。多给点压岁钱。
jiushi ma. duo geidianyasuiqian.

Just is PRT. More give little Lucky Money.

That's it. Let them give you more Lucky Money.

15 .h 你见艳来吗?

.h nijianYan lai ma?

.h You meet Yan come PRT?

Have you met Yan?

16 (1.8)

17 马: 呃, 什么?

e, shenme?

Uhm, what?

What?

18 (1.6)

19 安: 没事儿。

meishier.

Nothing.

Nothing.

20 (1.0)

21 安: 我们今天这边下雪了。

women jintianzhebianxixue le.

We today this side snowing PRT.

We have snow here today.

3.1.2 Doing Inapposite Action

When the previous action in the trouble source turn is doing inapposite action, after the initiation of the repair procedure by the recipient, the speaker would abandon the repair with “meishier”, avoiding the reoccurrence of the previous action.

In example (2), Ying (樱) and Xing (星) are friends, and Ying offers Xing a place to stay, since Xing comes from another city and is about to come to Ying's city to attend an exam. Xing declines the offer with an account (Robinson, 2016) of a long distance (data not shown). Ying agrees with Xing in line 33 by expressing that the distance is “a little far” (有点远), to which Xing also agrees in line 35. Just when Ying attempts to close the sequence in line 36 with “oh” (噢) (Schegloff, 2007) and “Ok” (行喽), Xing changes her assessment about the distance in line 37 by saying that there are at least four sets of traffic lights indicating the distance is too far to fit her needs which partly overlaps with Ying's closing utterance. Therefore, this surplus assessment from Xing would probably embarrass Ying for providing such an offer. Thus, when Ying initiated the repair procedure in line 38, Xing denies the happening of this inappropriate previous action with “meishier” in line 40. Then Ying closes the topic in line 41. In this situation the action conducted by “meishier” is denying the existence of previous inapposite action in line 37, thus “meishier” in this particular context can be translated into “nothing”.

(2) 14JY_TGBZ

33 櫻: 噢。是。我也是觉得有点远。是哇。

ao. shi. wo ye shijuede you dian yuan. shiwa.

Oh. Yea. I also is think have little far. Yea PRT.

Oh. Yea. I also think it is a little far. That is right.

34 (0.6)

35 星: 嗯。稍微有点儿远。

en. shaowei you dianer yuan.

Yes. Slightly have a little far.

Yes. Slightly a little far.

36 櫻: 噢。行[啞]。

ao. xing [lao.

Oh. Ok [PRT].

Oh. Ok.

37 星: [至少有四个红绿灯。].hh=

[zhishao you sigehonglvdeng. .hh=

[At least have four piece traffic lights. .hh=

At least four sets of traffic lights.

38 櫻: = [啊?]

=a?

=Uh?

Uh?

39 (0.8)

40 星: [没事儿没事儿。]

meishiermeishier.

Nothing nothing.

Nothing nothing.

41 櫻: 噢。行啦行啦。

ao. xing la xing la.

Oh. Ok PRT Ok PRT.

Oh. Ok ok.

3.1.3 Disagreeing

When the previous action in the trouble source turn is disagreeing with the recipient, then after the initiation of the repair procedure by the recipient, the speaker would abandon the repair by denying the existence of the previous disagreeing with “meishier”.

In example (3) Xiang (香) and Yue (跃) are lovers, and they are talking with each other on the phone. When Xiang the girl tells Yue the boy that the reason she gives up doing some small business during

freshman enrollment is because the business would cost her lots of time and energy, Yue tells Xiang his assessment about money, but this assessment is a paradox since he says that money is both good and bad (data not shown). Then Yue says that he cannot tell more about this topic in lines 2134 and 2135, but Xiang disagrees with Yue by saying that she thinks it's no big deal in line 2137 which indicates that Xiang thinks Yue can say whatever he wants to say. However, after Yue initiates the repair in line 2139, Xiang denies the existence of her previous disagreeing with "meishier" in line 2140. Then Yue says something like they will talk this topic sometime in lines 2142 and 2143. In this situation the action conducted by "meishier" in line 2140 is denying the existence of previous disagreement in line 2137, thus "meishier" in this particular context can be translated into "nothing".

(3) 16CTS_TQ

2134 跃: 唉, 你知道- 你知道有些话不能说。

ai, nizhidao- nizhidao you xiehuabunengshuo.

Alas, you know- you know have some talk can't say.

Alas, you know- you know something can't be talked about.

2135 你知道吗。

nizhidao ma.

You know PRT.

Do you know.

2136 (2.5)

2137 香: .h 没事儿。我觉得没事儿。

.h meishier. wo juedemeishier.

.h No big deal. I think no big deal.

No big deal. I think it's no big deal.

2138 (1.4)

2139 跃: 啊?

a?

Uh?

Uh?

2140 香: .h 没事儿。

.h meishier.

.h Nothing.

Nothing.

2141 (2.5)

2142 跃: 算了吧。我故意- 故意- 故意- .h

suanleba. wo guyi- guyi- guyi- .h

Forget it PRT. I deliberately- deliberately- deliberately- .h

Forget it. I deliberately.

2143 不是, 你- 唉呀:。 没事儿。 慢慢- 慢慢来吧。

bushi, ni- ai ya: meishier. manman- manmanlaiba.

Not is, you- alas PRT: . Nothing. Slowly- slowly come PRT.

No, you, alas. Nothing. Let's deal with it slowly.

3.1.4 Talking to Oneself

When the speaker is talking to herself/himself in the trouble source turn, the recipient would encounter an understanding problem and probably initiate a repair procedure. However, facing the initiation of an open-class repair the speaker would abandon the repair with “meishier”.

In example (4) college senior Jun (琺) calls junior student Wen (文) to tell that Wen and other students' archive materials should be submitted by tomorrow night. After making related arrangement (data not shown), Jun seems to be looking at these materials and talking to herself in lines 24 to 26 which expresses her own bewilderment on how to fill in these forms. Then, Wen initiates an open-class repair in line 27 indicating that she cannot understand the whole turn in lines 24 to 26. Jun abandons the repair with “meishier” in line 30, then immediately after the abandonment, she asks Wen to fill in these forms as required, and in line 31 she mentions the example which Ming (明) has sent to Wen and other students. Then Wen acknowledges the request with “Oh” (噢) in line 33. In this example, the action conducted by “meishier” in line 30 is denying the existence of the previous action of talking to herself in lines 24 to 26, thus “meishier” in this particular context can be translated into “nothing”.

(4) 17YHW_TBG

24 琺: 综合测评, 填写自己的综合测评成绩,

zongheceping, tianxiezi ji de zonghecepingchengji,

Comprehensive evaluation, fill in self of comprehensive evaluation result,

Comprehensive evaluation, fill in comprehensive evaluation result.

25 >综合测评成绩,< .h

>zonghecepingchengji,< .h

>Comprehensive evaluation result,< .h

Comprehensive evaluation result,

26 hehe¥三个咋能往上写。¥hehe 就是-

hehe ¥sange za neng wang shangxie.¥hehejiushi-

hehe¥three how can to up write.¥hehe just is-

How can this three be filled in? That is.

27 文: $\boxed{\text{嗯?}}$

en? =

Uh? =

Uh?

28 琺: =呃-

=e-

=Uh-

Uh.

29 (0.5)

30 璐: 没事儿。你们就把那些:, 都按那个:要求填了。 .h
meishier. nimenjiubanaxie:, dou an nage: yaoqiutian le. .h
Nothing. You just take those:, all follow that: request fill PRT. .h

Nothing. You just fill those as required.

31 然后明不是还给你们- 发了个范例意思是?

ranhou Ming bushihaigeinimen- falegefanliyisishi?

Then, Ming doesn't also give you- send an example meaning is?

Then, doesn't Ming also give you, he sends an example?

32 (1.4)

33 文: 噢。

ao.

Oh.

Oh.

3.1.5 Talking with a Third Person

This situation is similar with the one in example (4), only this time the speaker suspends the on-going talk but starts a new talk with a third person beside him/her. While facing the initiation of the repair procedure by the recipient, the speaker would deny the happening of the new talk with “meishier”.

In example (5) Li (理) is the boyfriend of Nian (念), and he is telling his childhood story about the firecrackers to Nian (data not shown). While in the middle of the telling, there appears a third person's utterance in line 446, which overlaps with Li's storytelling in line 445. Then after the initiation of the open-class repair by Li in line 447, Nian abandons the repair with “meishier” in line 449 indicating there is nothing happens. Still in line 449 Nian asks Li to continue his telling. Then Li acknowledges with “Oh” in line 451, and continues his talk in line 453 (though he can't recall other interesting things). In this situation the action conducted by “meishier” in line 449 is denying the existence of previous action of talking with a third person in line 446, thus “meishier” in this particular context can be translated into “nothing”.

(5) 17CTS_BP

445 理: 然后 [你接着想,

ranhou [nijiezhexiang,

Then [you continue to think,

Then you go on with your thinking,

446 (): [C]

447 理: 呵呵?

a?

Uh?

Uh?

448 (0.7)

449 念: 没事儿。你接着说。

meishier. nijiezshuo.

Nothing. You continue to say.

Nothing. Go on.

450 (0.8)

451 理: .hh 嗯:。

.hhen:.

.hh Oh:.

Oh.

452 (1.7)

453 理: .hh 这个:, .h 然后其他有意思的事儿我还真想不起来哈。

.hhzhege:, .h ranhouqitayouyiside shier wo haizhenxiangbuqilai ha.

.hh This:, .h Then other interesting things I still really can't recall PRT.

Then I really can't recall other interesting things.

The above five examples illustrate the situations that the speaker would abandon the repair by denying the happening of the previous action in trouble source turn when there is abrupt interruption to the current talk (abrupt topic shift, talking to oneself and talking with a third person), inapposite action or disagreement. While the next section illustrates a situation when the speaker would provide the trouble solution by repeating the trouble source turn.

3.2 *Qualifying the Previous Action with “meishier” as “Nothing Serious”*

When the previous action is telling the reason for call, then after the initiation of the repair procedure, the speaker would provide a trouble solution by repeating the trouble source turn but qualify it.

In example (6) Liang (亮) is calling Ting (婷), his desk mates back in senior high school, who is in a different college now. After Ting answers Liang's question by telling what she is doing (data not shown), Ting asks about the reason why he is asking so in line 63. There is no immediate response as indicated by the 0.6s silence in line 64, and then Ting suddenly reports her just-then finding while surfing the net in line 65 (the previous data show that Ting is searching for a bag on the net). And Liang's response in lines 66 and 67 just overlaps with Ting's report in line 65. Then Ting initiates an open-class repair in line 69. Instead of abandoning the repair, Liang repeats the trouble sources turn in lines 71 and 72 but qualifies the reason for call with “meishier” in line 71, though he changes the question from “Just asking what you are doing.” in line 67 into “Just care about you for a bit.” in line 72. Then Ting seems to be doing some kind of complaining in line 74 by saying that “you also know you should care about me”. In this situation the action conducted by “meishier” in line 71 is qualifying the reason for call in lines 66 and 67 indicating that there is nothing serious happened and the speaker

just calls to ask what the recipient is doing recently, thus “meishier” in this particular context can be translated into “nothing serious”.

(6) 15YJW_WGQK

63 婷: 你问这个干啥?

ni wen zhegegan sha?

You ask thisdo what?

Why are you asking this?

64 (0.6)

65 婷: 哎。[我找到了哎。]

ai. [wo zhaodao le ai.

Hey. [I find already PRT.

Hey. I find it now.

66 亮: [() 好长时间没给你打电话,]

[() haochangshijianmeigeinidadianhua.

[() So long time not give you call.

It's been a long time since last time I call you.

67 看看你在干啥。]

kankannizaigan sha.

Look look you at do what.

Just asking what you are doing.

68 (2.0)

69 婷: [啊?]

a?

Uh?

Uh?

70 (0.4)

71 亮: [没事儿啊。我说这么长时间没打电话啦。]

meishier a. wo shuozhemechangshijianmeidadianhua la.

Nothing PRT. I say so long time no call PRT.

Nothing serious. I said “It's been such a long time that I didn't call you.”

72 关心你一下嘛对不对。]

guanxinniyixia ma dui bu dui.

Care about you once PRT right not right.

Just care about you for a bit, right.

73 (1.6)

74 婷: 啊。你也知道哈?

a. niye zhidao ha?

Uh. You also know PRT?

Uh. You also know you should care about me?

So far, what the speaker does after the initiation of the open-class repair is denying the existence of his/her previous action or qualifying his/her previous action in the above two categories (3.1. & 3.2.), but in the next section, the situation is quite different, what the speaker does is diverting his/her previous action by treating it as something he/she can handle.

3.3 Diverting the Previous Action with “meishier” as “I’m Ok”

As has been mentioned above, when a speaker’s previous action is doing negative expression towards recipient’s previous disaffiliative action, the speaker would divert his/her action by treating it as something he/she can handle with “meishier” as “I’m ok”.

In example (7) Mao (茂) and Miao (苗) are lovers, they are chatting on the phone. When they are talking about the cosmetic surgery, Miao (the girl) asks her boyfriend Mao to accompany her to get an eyelid surgery after her graduation, if they are still in a stable relationship by that time. Then Mao complains that Miao should be optimistic towards their relationship and asks Miao to stop thinking that way, since Miao’s request implies that she thinks there is a possibility of break-up in the future. However, Miao doesn’t agree with Mao explicitly with the account that she is a conservative person, or as Mao describes that she is a rational person (data not shown). And Miao agrees with Mao’s description about her in line 728. When this topic seems to be coming to an end, however, in line 730 Mao expresses his feelings towards Miao’s previous action, which consists of the “tch” and “alas” (唉) projecting some kind of trouble or negative feelings which Mao is suffering from at the moment. In another word, Mao takes Miao’s previous action as something disaffiliative which brings him trouble or negative feelings. Due to the overlapping in lines 730 and 731, Miao initiates a repair procedure in line 733, after 0.5 silence in line 734, Mao provides a repair solution with “meishier” in line 735. And at the same turn, there seems to be an account that as a big brother to Miao, Mao himself can handle the trouble or negative feelings, which is also used to prove why Mao is “meishier”. Therefore, “meishier” translated into “I’m ok” in this situation is diverting the previous negative expression into a comfort to Miao. And Miao accepts it with “Ok” in line 737. Then Mao introduces another topic in line 738.

(7) 15XJM_LTFQ

728 苗: 嗯。对。

en. dui.

Oh. Yea.

Oh. Yea.

729 (2.8)

730 茂: tch [唉。]

tch [ai.

tch [Alas.

tch Alas.

731 苗: [嗯:,

[en:,

[Uhm:,

Uhm.

732 (1.3)

733 苗: 啊?

a?

Uh?

Uh?

734 (0.5)

735 茂: 没事儿。茂哥扛得住。

meishier. Mao ge kangdezhu.

Nothing. Mao brother can handle it.

I'm ok. I, brother Mao, can handle it.

736 (2.1)

737 苗: <好的。>

<haode.>

<Ok.>

Ok.

738 茂: 我们这- 这次查的资料特别多。

women zhe- zhecichadeziliaotebieduo.

We this- this time looked up materials especially much.

We have looked up too much materials this time.

In the above three sections (3.1., 3.2. & 3.3.) the speaker's abandonment of the repair (with the action of denying) and trouble solution (with the action of qualifying or diverting) after the initiation of the open-class repair by the recipient have been illustrated with examples. And the possible selection mechanism between abandonment and trouble solution has been elaborated in the last section.

4. Conclusion

Different aspects of "face" has been identified by Erving Goffman (1967) and elaborated by Brown and Levinson (1987) as basic human desires and characteristics of all competent adults. "Negative face refers to the desire to be free from imposition and to have one's autonomy and prerogatives honored and respected. Positive face refers to the desire to have a favorable self-image that is validated by others" (Clayman, 2002, p. 231). Therefore, (1) the abrupt interruption to the current talk (abrupt topic shift, talking to oneself and talking with a third person) is a face-threatening action which harms the recipient's negative face as the speaker has not fully attended to the current talk, or the recipient has not been fully respected by that absent-minded speaker. Further, the speaker's inapposite action harms the

recipient's positive face as has been treated as someone who would provide an inappropriate offer (for example). And the speaker's disagreement also interferes with the recipient's own choice, thus damaging the recipient's negative face. Thus, from the perspective of the face-threatening act, the speaker would probably choose to deny its happening instead of providing a trouble solution; (2) while by qualifying the reason for call, the speaker actually provides a trouble solution, with seemingly no face-threatening consideration from the speaker; (3) however, the speaker's diverting his/her previous negative expression seems rather complicated in terms of the face-threatening consideration, since the recipient is doing something disaffiliative previously, yet the speaker's action actually prevents the previous discord (disaffiliation) between the interactants "escalating to the point of complaints 'going too far' and resulting in irretrievable breakdown" (Yu, Wu, & Drew, 2019, p. 21).

Additionally, through a detailed examination of the actions conducted by "meishier" in these three situations, we have gained a profound knowledge about its specific meanings and usages which can not only help us make precise use of this phrase, but also provide a specific guidance to the translation of "meishier" into English.

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