"RUBBISH" VS. "BUYER BE AWARE": A Cross-Cultural Move Analysis of Chinese and American Negative Online Shopping Reviews and Their Corresponding Responses

"RUBBISH" VS. "BUYER BE AWARE": un análisis de movimiento intercultural de las críticas negativas de compras en línea de China y Estados Unidos y sus correspondientes respuestas

"垃圾"与"买家当心":中美网络差评及应答的跨文化语步分析

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Abstract: The present study aims at comparing the move structures of Chinese and American negative online shopping reviews and managerial responses, and the influence of negative online reviews on peer customer. The researchers collected 158 Chinese negative shopping reviews from www.jd.com, followed by 157 managerial responses and 76 peer customer responses, and 156 American negative reviews from www.amazon.com, followed by 139 managerial responses and 97 peer customer responses, respectively. The negative online reviews were analyzed into explicitly-impolite and implicit-impolite moves, the managerial responses were analyzed into rapport-enhancing and rapport-damaging move, and the peer customer responses were analyzed into agreement and disagreement with the negative online reviews. After qualitative analysis, the researchers conducted chi-square to examine whether the differences between the Chinese and American negative online reviews and managerial and peer customer responses were significant of not. The results show that the American negative online reviewer has matured as a genre, in that American negative online reviewers not only criticized the commodity, service, etc., but also warned other customers against making the purchase, while Chinese negative online reviews mainly aimed at criticizing the commodity, services, etc., leaving the decision to the peer customer. In terms of managerial responses, the Chinese manufacturer responded significantly more to the negative online reviewer, but employed more rapport-damaging moves than their American counterpart. By contrast, the American manufacturer customized their greeting and rectification with a unique reference code, which make their managerial responses more individualized. As for peer-customer responses, the results show that negative online reviews had a greater impact on Chinese peer customers than their American equivalents. The findings may provide directions for the Chinese and American negative reviewers and the management to adjust their move structures of negative reviews and managerial responses to the negative online shopping reviews according to target consumers.

Key Words: negative online shopping reviews; managerial responses; peer-customer responses to negative online shopping reviews; a cross-cultural move analysis.

Resumen: El presente estudio tiene como objetivo comparar las estructuras de movimiento de las críticas negativas de compras online de China y Estados Unidos y las respuestas de la dirección, y la influencia de las críticas negativas de otros clientes. Los investigadores recopilaron 158 críticas de compras negativas chinas de www.jd.com, seguidas de 157 respuestas de los directivos y 76 respuestas de otros clientes, y 156 revisiones negativas estadounidenses de www.amazon.com, seguidas de 139 respuestas de los directivos y 97 respuestas de otros clientes respectivamente. Las revisiones negativas online se analizaron como explícitamente descortés e implícitamente hacia lo descortés, las respuestas de los directivos de la organización se analizaron en la línea de la mejora de una relación dañada, y las respuestas de otros clientes se analizaron según el acuerdo y desacuerdo con las críticas negativas realizadas. Después de un análisis cualitativo, los investigadores, a través del chi-cuadrado examinaron si las diferencias entre las revisiones en línea negativas chinas y estadounidenses y las respuestas de los directivos y de otros clientes fueron significativas o no. Los resultados muestran que la crítica estadounidense negativo online ha madurado como género, en el sentido de que las críticas estadounidenses negativas en línea no solo criticaron el producto, el servicio, etc., sino que también advirtieron a otros clientes que no hicieran la compra, mientras que las críticas negativas en línea de China apuntaban principalmente a criticar la mercancía, los servicios, etc., dejando la decisión al cliente. En términos de respuestas gerenciales, el fabricante chino respondió significativamente más al revisor negativo en línea, pero empleó más movimientos que dañan la relación que su contraparte estadounidense. Por el contrario, el fabricante estadounidense personalizó su saludo y rectificación con un código de referencia único, que hace que sus respuestas gerenciales sean más individualizadas. En cuanto a las respuestas de los otros clientes, los resultados muestran que las revisiones negativas en línea tuvieron un mayor impacto en los clientes pares chinos que sus equivalentes estadounidenses.

Palabras clave: comentarios negativos de compras en línea; respuestas gerenciales; respuestas de otros clientes a comentarios negativos de compras en línea; Un análisis interculturales.

摘要：本研究旨在比较中美网购差评、卖家应答和消费者反应之间的差异。研究者分别从www.jd.com（京东）收集了158条中国购物差评，157条卖家回复和76消费者评论，www.amazon.com（亚马逊）上收集了156条美国购物差评，139条卖家回复和97条消费者评论。差

评分为显式不礼貌和隐式不礼貌语步，卖家回复分为增进和睦关系和破坏和睦关系的语步，其他消费者的回复分为肯定与否定两种观点。定性分析之后，研究者们通过卡方检验验证中美差评语步、卖家回复语步和消费者回复的差异是否显著。结果表明，美国购物差评作为一种体裁趋于成熟，阅读其差评，消费者可以了解产品各方面的表现。美国购物差评不仅旨在批评商品，服务等，还警告其他消费者不要购买，而中国的购物差评主要旨在批评商品，服务等，而将是否购买的决定权留给了其他消费者自己。从卖家回复的角度来看，中国卖家对差评的回复率明显高于美国同行，但是其回复中破坏和睦关系的语步多于美国同行。此外，美国卖家的差评回复采用了个性化的打招呼语、含独特的索引号的补偿方式而显得更加个性化。研究结果还表明，相对美国消费者而言，中国的消费者更容易受到差评的影响。 本研究的发现为中美消费者和管理阶层根据目标读者调整差评及回复的语步提供了可能性。

［**关键词**］网购差评 卖家回复 消费者回复 跨文化语步分析

1. Introduction

With ubiquity of e-commerce, online shopping has become part of our daily life. Before purchase, people would like to read online reviews of the commodities they are interested in for reference. Positive online reviews may attract potential customers to purchase the commodities, while negative reviews not only threaten the sellers' face, but also ruin their business. Thus, the online platform has become an arena for satisfied and dissatisfied customers, the management, and potential customers to communicate on the commodity. According to Swales (2004), online reviews and responses to those reviews belong to the same "genre chain". Since positive reviews may be taken advantage of as advertisement, shoppers tend to find negative reviews more convincing.

As pointed out by Ho (2018), a better understanding of negative online review discourse may provide valuable resources for three parties: dissatisfied customers, the management and other customers. Therefore, increasing attention has been paid to negative online reviews across disciplines (Li, 2012; Ruzaite, 2018). Previous studies mainly approached negative online shopping reviews from non-linguistic and linguistic perspectives (Chen, 2015; Li, 2015; Zhang & Gu, 2013; Zheng, Youn & Kincaid, 2014). Recently, more scholars have shifted their attention from negative online reviews to managerial responses made in the hotel industry to these reviews (Yavas, Karatepe & Babakus, 2004; Levy, Duan & Boo, 2013; Ho, 2018). However, according to the best knowledge of the researchers, few studies have investigated the three dimensions of the negative online reviews, i.e. negative reviews, managerial responses, and peer-customer responses.

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The current study attempts to compare the move structures of the Chinese and American negative online review and managerial responses, and compare the influences of negative reviews on Chinese and American peer customers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Negative Online Shopping Reviews and Their Responses

Negative online reviews, as a genre of expressing negative evaluation, have been defined by scholars with such terms as "online negative evaluation" (Zhang & Gu, 2013), "online complaints" (Levy, et. al., 2014), "e-complaints" (Zheng, et. al., 2014), "negative online shopping comments" (Chen, 2015), "hate speech" (Ruzaite, 2018). For example, Zhang and Gu (2013) used "online negative evaluation" to define "expression of dissatisfaction"; Zheng, et. al (2014) referred to "e-complaint" as negative online reviews. Chen (2015) employed "negative online shopping comments" to describe "comments made by consumers that show their dissatisfaction with online sellers' commodities, logistics, services etc." Ruzaite (2018) used "hate speech" to define "(verbal) conduct or expressions that are abusive, insulting, intimidating or harassing and/or which incite violence, hatred or discrimination against groups identified by a specific set of characteristics".

Based on the above definitions, the operational definition of negative online shopping reviews in the present study refers to negative evaluation of commodities, services, logistics made by dissatisfied customers labeled under 1 star on www.jd.com and www.amazon.com

Negative online shopping reviews have given rise to a related genre: online managerial responses, which are sometimes referred to as online responses from business, customer care, webcare, or online reputation management (Zhang, et. al., 2014). Responses to negative online shopping reviews in the present study refer to the online replies to the above negative online shopping reviews made by both the management/platforms and peer customers who may consider purchasing or have purchased the commodity. In the present study, the thumb-up, thumb-down or helpful signs provided by peer customers were not included because of their ambiguous nature in interpretation.

2.2. Previous Studies of Negative Online Reviews

Previous studies have investigated negative online reviews mainly from non-linguistic and linguistic perspectives. In terms of management, scholars have studied book reviews, shopping reviews, and hotel

satisfaction. For example, Li (2012) investigated negative online book reviews. The study found that negative comments usually focus on book content, quality of publication, criticism and suggestion, motivation for the purchase and cost-effectiveness of the book. Likewise, Zheng, et. al (2014) explored customers' complaint behavior via selected online comments. They collected 504 comments of five categories (rooms, services, value, cleanliness, and dining). The study shows that service was the major causes for dissatisfaction. Similarly, Chen (2015) studies the reasons and strategies for negative online shopping reviews. She proposed that negative online shopping reviews mainly come from (1) inferior goods and poor service, (2) the unreasonable rules and regulations set by the selling platform, (3) the complicated complaint- and appeal-making procedures required by the platform, and (4) lack of relevant laws and regulations to protect both the negative commentators and the seller. Recently, Li (2018) explored ways to enhance customers' satisfaction with hotels by studying negative reviews made by the hotel customers. The results show that customers mainly complained about service quality, sanitary condition, hardware, food, and price.

Based on Politeness Principle, Zhang and Gu (2013) investigated the similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese semantic formulae to express dissatisfaction on hotel reservation platforms. The findings show that, compared with the Chinese negative comments, the Japanese counterparts were longer, involving more semantic formulae. For instance, the Japanese employed more mitigators, comparison with other hotel competitors, compliment on the hotel, forbearance, and asking for improvement. On the other hand, the Chinese negative comments focused on the complainable points of the seller and customers' dissatisfaction. On the contrary, based on Bousfield's (2008) Impoliteness Principle, Zheng (2018) explored impoliteness in negative online shopping reviews. She collected data from www.taobao.com and analyzed them into two major categories and five subcategories: (1) explicit impoliteness, including (a) excluding the authenticity of the commodity, (b) showing indifference towards the product concerned, and (c) criticism, and (2) implicit impoliteness, including (a) role-switching, and (b) sarcasm or false politeness. The researcher pointed out that impolite online shopping reviews reflect adaptation to the online communication context.

As regards responses to negative reviews, many scholars have studied responses to negative online reviews in the hotel industry. For example,

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Yavas et al. (2004) explored the potential influence of the managerial responses on customers' satisfaction and repurchase intention. The findings show that promptness, redress, explanation, and attentiveness had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction, together with promptness, explanation, and attentiveness had significant impacts on repurchase intention. However, apology was not found to have any significant effect on neither satisfaction nor repurchase intention. Similarly, Levy, et. al (2013) investigated the dynamics of poor reviews by analyzing 1,946 one-star reviews from ten popular online review websites and 225 management responses from 86 Washington, D.C. hotels between 2000 and 2011. They found that although hotels of different tiers had different complaints, the front desk staff, bathroom issues, cleanliness, noise were the top four complainable issues and that the management usually adopted eight semantic formulae, namely, (1) Apology, (2) Appreciation, (3) Explanation, (4) Please come back, (5) Passive Follow-up, (6) Correction, (7) Active Follow-up, and (8) Compensation. Besides, the highly rated hotels often employed Apology, Appreciation, and Explanation. Zhang and Vasquez (2014) examined the move structure of the management responses to negative comments made by 4- and 5-star hotels in four Chinese cities: Xi'an, Hangzhou, Chongqing, and Nanjing). They found 10 moves: Express Gratitude, Apologizing for Sources of Problem, Invitation for a Second Visit, Opening Pleasantries, Proof of Action, Acknowledge Complaints/Feedback, Refer to Customer Reviews, Closing Pleasantries, Avoidance of Recurring Problems, and Solicit Response. Likewise, Ho (2018) explored the effectiveness of hotel management's responses to negative online reviews by studying the linguistic strategies and resources employed by the hotel management's responses. She collected 4256 hotel responses from www.tripadvisor.com involving three popular tourist destinations: (1) China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau; (2) Japan and Korea; and (3) Southeast Asia. Thirty questionnaires rating clearly effective and 30 questionnaires rating clearly effective were selected from 156 questionnaires completed by frequent travelers and analyzed. The findings reveal that eight moves (i.e. Acknowledging Problem, Continuing Relationship, Denying Problem, Expressing Feelings, Greeting, Recognizing Reviewer's/ Comment's Value, Self Promoting, and Thanking Reviewer) were found in both effective and less effective responses and that effective and less effective responses differ in the use of moves and metadiscourse. In other words, effective responses acknowledged problem more frequently, whereas ineffective

responses denied problem more frequently. Moreover, the perceived effective responses employed six metadiscourse categories (Transition, Code Glosses, Boosters, Attitude Markers, Self-Mentions, and Engagement Markers) more frequently, while ineffective responses employed Frame Markers more frequently.

Different from the previous three studies, Sparks and Bradley (2017) attempted to develop a framework to describe and analyze managerial responses by comparing responses to negative online reviews of hotel accommodation made by top- and bottom-ranked hotels. They collected 75 responses to negative hotel reviews from top-ranked hotels and the other 75 from bottom-ranked ones. The data were analyzed into three major categories: (1) Acknowledgement, including Thank, Appreciate, Apologize, Recognize, Admit, Accept and Dismiss; (2) Account, including Excuse, Justify, Reframe, Penitential, and Denial; and (3) Action, including Investigate, Referral, Rectify, Policy, Training, Direct Contact, and Compensate. The results show that, while most responses contained moves that belonged to each of the three categories, hotels of different rankings varied in their preference for moves. In other words, top-ranked hotels more often recognize the occurrence of an event and appreciated customers' comment, while bottom-ranked hotels denied the event or its consequence, and the absence of rectification.

Existing literature of negative online reviews and managerial responses has shed light on various aspects of service failure and recovery in the online context. Previous studies have studied the negative online review genre chain based on the assumption that negative online reviews would dissuade other customers from the purchase, but few studies have examined the reactions of other peer customers to negative reviews. Therefore, the present study attempted to investigate the negative online review genre chain from three levels: negative online reviews, managerial responses and peer-customer responses. The analysis of online shopping negative comments was guided by three main research questions:

(1) Are there any differences between the Chinese and American negative online review move structures? If yes, what are they?

(2) Are there any differences between the Chinese and American managerial responding rate and responding move structures to negative reviews? If yes, what are they?

(3) Are there any differences between the influences of the Chinese and American negative online reviews on peer customers? If yes, what are they?

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3. Method

3.1. Data

There were two corpora in the present study: (1) 158 Chinese negative shopping reviews of Acer Aspire 5 Slim Laptop labeled under 1 star posted on www.jd.com in 2020 respectively, followed by 157 managerial responses and 76 responses from peer customers, consisting of 47,606 simplified Chinese characters; and (2) 156 English negative shopping reviews of Acer Aspire 5 Slim Laptop labeled under 1 star posted on www.amazon.com in 2020 respectively, followed by 139 managerial responses and 97 responses from peer customers, consisting of 36,737 English words (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Chinese and American Negative Online Reviews,
Managerial Responses and Peer Customer Responses**

Data	Chinese			American		
	words	n	mean	words	n	mean
Negative Reviews	11,570	158	73	18,662	156	120
Managerial Responses	34,576	157	220	14,210	139	102
Peer Customer Responses	1,460	76	19	3,865	97	40

The Chinese online shopping platform www.jd.com and the English online shopping platform www.amazon.com were chosen because both platforms become very popular among local residents and employ the same five-star rating system.

3.2. Coding Scheme

3.2.1 Coding Scheme for Negative Online Reviews

Based on Zheng's (2018) model, the negative online reviews were analyzed into seven moves:

Move 1 Motivation: the statement made by the reviewer that introduces the circumstances under which the reviewer chose the commodity concerned, e.g. "Bought this for my mom while she is on bed rest so she could simply play on Facebook.";

Move 2 Praise: the statement made by the reviewer that mentions the strength(s) of the commodity, manufacturer, or the platform concerned, e.g. "The computer is overall nice. If only it didn't have a Microsoft based operating system.";

Move 3 Problem Statement: the statement made by the reviewer that explicitly states the adverse aspects of the commodity, service, etc., e.g. "13 days into owning the computer, it lost the ability to connect to the internet.", which are subdivided into seven themes: hardware, software, speed, service, system, price, and 2nd hand;

Move 4 Criticism: the statement made by the reviewer that describes the commodity, manufacturer or the platform as inferior or unworthy, e.g. "THis laptop is low quality and you cannot get a repair or support.";

Move 5 Warning: the statement that requires the potential customer not to purchase the commodity involved, e.g. "Do not buy if you need this for any semi-standard business apps such as Outlook, Teams, etc.";

Move 6 Emotion: the statement that describes his or her negative emotions triggered by the commodity, e.g. "I didn't like this computer"; and

Move 7 Solution: the statement made by the reviewer that introduces the resolution adopted by the reviewer, e.g. "Sent back to Amazon; they've had it back since the 25th."

The seven moves can be classified into two categories: implicitly impolite negative reviews, including Moves 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7; and explicitly impolite negative reviews, including Moves 4 and 5.

3.2.2 Coding Scheme for Managerial Responses to Negative Online Reviews

The managerial responses were compared firstly in terms of responding rate, i.e. whether the manufacturer or the platform responded to the negative review or not. Then, based on Ho's (2018) models, managerial responses were analyzed into ten moves:

Move 1 Greeting: the statement that addresses and greets the reviewer directly, drawing him/her into the disclosure and closer to the manager, e.g. "Dear Robby,";

Move 2 Empathy: the statement that displays their understanding of the reviewer/ reviewer's feelings or behavior, e.g. "We understand you returned it for a replacement through Amazon";

Move 3 Thanking Reviewer: the statement made by the management that shows the managerial gratitude and appreciation for the comments the reviewer has written, e.g. "We appreciate you taking the time to write this review and offer your feedback";

Move 4 Apologizing: the statement that tells the reviewer that the management feel sorry that their commodity or service has caused adverse outcome for the reviewer, or asks the reviewer for forgiveness, e.g. "We

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are very sorry to hear that the product is not meeting your expectations in some areas";

Move 5 Denying Problem: the statement made by the management that functions to deny explicitly or implicitly the existence of the problem described in the reviewer's comment by attributing responsibility to 3rd party, challenging reviewer's decision/ judgment, or recommend the reviewer to contact the third party, e.g. "In checking the Amazon page and Acer page for this product, we are not seeing a mention of one year subscription for Office, unless you selected the model that included Office for $439.98";

Move 6 Self-Promoting: the statement made by the management that serves to promote or emphasize the commodities, services, or image of the manufacturer, or the platform, e.g. "Our support team is always available to assist with getting your new product set up and configured, or assist with any other troubles you may experience with your purchase. If you should change your mind and decide to keep your product and need assistance, please contact our support team via phone, chat or social media, and we will be glad to help";

Move 7 Rectification: the statement made by the management that aims at improving some tangible aspect of the product or service, e.g. "We will certainly get the system repaired and back to you as soon as possible";

Move 8 Recognizing Reviewer's Value: the comment that shows the reviewer that the manager values him/ her as a customer or his/her comments, e.g. "Your input is very important to us as we are always looking for ways to improve our customer's experience";

Move 9 Continuing Relationship: the statement that invites the review to maintain correspondence with the management or repurchase the item in future, e.g. "If in the future you need assistance with an Acer product, feel free to contact support from the info posted at acer.com>Support>Contact Support"; and

Move 10 Expressing Wishes: the statement that expresses the manager's positive feelings or wishes, e.g. "Regards".

Based on Sparks and Bradley's (2014) typology, these ten moves can be divided into two major categories:

(1) Rapport Enhancement moves: the statement that draws the reviewer closer to the management, comprising eight subcategories, including Moves 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

(2) Rapport Damaging moves: the statement that pushes the reviewer from the management, including Moves 5 and 6.

3.2.2 Coding Scheme for Peer-Customer Responses to Negative Online Reviews

The peer customer responses were compared firstly in terms of responding rate, i.e. whether peer customers responded to the negative review or not. Then, to infer whether the negative review will influence peer customers, the researcher investigated whether they agreed with the reviewer's opinion. The assumption behind is that if the peer customer accepted the dissatisfied customer's review, the chances of making the purchase would be quite slim. Therefore, peer customers' responses were analyzed into two major categories:

(1) Agreement: the statement made that echoes the reviewer's shopping experience, thanks the reviewer for the comment which facilitates his or her decision making, or indicates his or her decision of not purchasing the commodity involved, e.g. "me too, and here i was thinking it would be a good purchase...";

(2) Disagreement: the statement that negates the reviewer/reviewer's comment, defends the manufacturer/platform without evidence, clarifies any wrongdoing or adverse outcome with evidence, e.g. "the star rating has nothing to do with amazon's pricing, it's supposed to be a rating on the PRODUCT. Duh".

3.3. Data Analysis

The present study aims at comparing the move structures of the Chinese and American online negative reviews and their managerial responses and influence of negative reviews on peer customers. To answer the three research questions, the two researchers firstly read through the data to find the emerging themes, and then designed the tentative coding scheme for the negative reviewer, managerial responses and peer customer responses accordingly.

With the tentative coding scheme, the two researchers analyzed twenty negative reviews, managerial responses and peer-customer responses together. When they had disagreement, they discussed and revised the coding scheme until reaching consensus. Then, they started to code the data independently. The resultant Cronbach reliability of the two raters reached 95%.

Then, Nvivo 12 were employed to tally the frequencies of semantic formulae employed by three parties: negative online reviewers, the management, and peer customers. In the present study, when the reviewer, the management or the peer customer repeated one semantic formula many

times, the researchers only tallied them once. Then Chi-square statistics were conducted to find out whether the Chinese and American negative online reviews, managerial responses, and peer-customer responses were significantly different in terms of semantic formulae and responding rates.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1 Frequencies of Chinese and American Negative Online Review Moves

To find out whether Chinese and American negative online reviews differed in terms of impoliteness, the researchers tallied the explicitly and implicitly impolite reviews. Any reviews containing either criticism/warning or both were regarded as explicitly impolite reviews, and the rest went to implicitly impolite reviews (Table 2).

Table 2: Chinese and American Explicitly and Implicitly Negative Online Reviews

Categories	Chinese		American		Chi-square (1, 314)
	n	%	n	%	
Explicitly Impolite Reviews	87	55.1	98	62.8	1.95, p=.16
Implicitly Impolite Reviews	71	44.9	58	37.2	1.95, p=.16

（Not*es*: No. of Chinese negative online reviews=158; No. of American negative online reviews=156; % = reviews containing the semantic formula divided by the total reviews; * refers to significant differences in semantic formulae between Chinese and American negative reviews at *p* <.05).

The results show that Chinese and American negative online reviews did not differ significantly in terms of impoliteness degrees.

Then, the researchers further tallied the frequencies of Chinese and American negative online reviewer moves to answer the first research question (see Table 3).

Table 3: Frequencies of Chinese and American Negative Online Review Moves

Moves n	Chinese		American		Chi-square (1, 314)
	%	n	%		
*M1 Motivation	11	7	42	27	22.29, p<.001
*M2 Praise	5	3	27	17.3	17.16, p<.001

M3 Problem Statement	Service	47	30	53	34	0.65, p=.42
	*Hardware	43	27	92	59	32.30, p<.001
	*Speed	38	24.1	8	5.1	22.48, p<.001
	Price	28	17.7	26	16.7	0.06, p=.80
	*System	23	14.6	38	24.4	4.82, p<.05
	*Software	18	11.4	52	33.3	21.81, p<.001
	2nd Hand	10	6.3	7	4.5	0.52, p=.47
M4 Criticism		75	47.5	69	44.2	0.33, p=.56
*M5 Warning		27	17.1	62	39.7	19.84, p<.001
*M6 Emotion		30	19	91	58.3	51.31, p<.001
*M7 Solution		5	3	35	22.4	26.23, p<.001

(Notes: No. of Chinese negative online reviews=158; No. of American negative online reviews=156; % = reviews containing the semantic formula divided by the total reviews; * refers to significant differences in semantic formulae between Chinese and American negative reviews at p <.05).

Table 3 reveals that Chinese and American negative online reviews did not differ in terms of criticizing the commodity, manufacturer, or platform, or pointing out the problems in pre- or after- sales service, pricing, or selling 2nd hand computer. However, Chinese negative online reviewers pointed out the speed problem in the computer more than the American reviewers, while American negative online reviewers tended to point out the problems in hardware, system, and software, express negative feelings, warn peer customers not to make the purchase, mentioning the motivation behind the purchase, praising the commodity, and mentioning the solution to the problem concerned more than their Chinese counterparts.

4.1.2 Frequencies of Chinese and American Managerial Response Moves

To answer the second research questions, the researchers compared the Chinese and American managerial responding rate (see Table 4). The results show that the Chinese managerial responding rate is significantly higher than the American managerial responding rate.

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Table 4: Chinese and American Managerial Responding Rates

Managerial Responses	Chinese		American		Chi-square (1, 314)
	n	%	n	%	
Responding	157	99.37	139	89.1	15.30, p<.001
No Responding	1	0.63	17	10.9	

(Notes: No. of Chinese negative online reviews=158; No. of American negative online reviews=156; % = managerial responses divided by the total negative reviews; *p* <.05).

To investigate whether Chinese and American managerial responses differed in semantic formulae, the researchers tallied the frequencies of each semantic formula (see Table 5).

Table 5: Frequencies of Managerial Responses Moves

Moves	Chinese		American		Chi-square (1, 296)
	n	%	n	%	
*M1 Greeting	88	56.1	119	85.6	30.64, *p*<.001
*M2 Empathy	72	45.9	30	21.6	19.24, *p*<.001
*M3 Thanking Reviewer	103	65.6	139	100	55.27, *p*<.001
*M4 Apology	70	44.6	133	95.7	89.34, *p*<.001
*M5 Denying Problem	38	24.2	15	10.8	9.02, *p*=.0026<.05
*M6 Self-Promoting	78	49.7	11	7.9	61.17, *p*<.001
M7 Rectification	118	75.2	110	79.1	0.66, *p*=.42
*M8 Recognizing Review's Value	59	37.6	1	0.7	61.98, *p*<.001
*M9 Continuing Relationship	81	51.6	15	10.8	56, *p*<.001
*M10 Expressing Wishes	44	28	126	90.6	118.26, *p*<.001

(Notes: No. of Chinese managerial responses=157; No. of American managerial responses=139; % = managerial responses containing the semantic formula divided by the total managerial responses; *refers to significant differences in semantic formulae between Chinese and American managerial responses to negative reviews at *p* <.05).

The results suggest that the American manufacturer employed more rapport-enhancing and less rapport-damaging semantic formulae than the Chinese manufacturer. Although Chinese and American manufacturers did not differ in terms of offering rectification for the problem, the

Chinese managerial responses expressed empathy with the reviewer for the negative feelings, recognized the reviewer's value, advertising the commodity, service, etc. to promote the self-image, and denied the problem mentioned significantly more frequently than the American management, whereas American managerial responses greeted the reviewer, thanked the reviewer for their reviews, apologizing to the reviewer, and expressing wishes significantly more frequently than the Chinese counterparts.

4.1.3 Results of Chinese and American Peer Customer Responses to Negative Online Reviews

To find out whether the Chinese and American peer customers differed in their responding rates to negative reviews, the researchers tallied the presence of responses made by the peer-customer (Table 6).

Table 6: Peer Customer Responding Rate

Peer Customer Responses	Chinese		American		Chi-square (1, 314)
	n	%	n	%	
Responding	76	48.1	97	62.2	6.29, p=.01<.05
No Responding	82	51.9	59	37.8	

(Notes: No. of Chinese peer customer responses=76; No. of American peer customer responses=97; % = peer customer responses divided by the total negative online reviews; p <.05).

The results show that American peer customers responded significantly more frequently than the Chinese peer customers did. In other words, American peer customers seemed more interactive than Chinese peer customers.

To further examine whether American peer customers differed in their responses towards the negative reviews, the researchers tallied the agreement and disagreement responses respectively (see Table 7).

Table 7: Frequency of Semantic Formulae of Responses Made by Peer Customers

Semantic Formulae	Chinese		American		Chi-square (1, 173)
	n	%	n	%	
Agreement	50	65.8	33	34.2	16.9, p<0.001
Disagreement	26	34.2	64	65.8	

(Notes: No. of Chinese peer customer responses=76; No. of American peer customer responses=97; % = peer customer responses containing the semantic formula divided by the total peer customer responses; p <.05).

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The results suggest that while Chinese peer customers agreed with the negative online reviewers significantly more than American counterparts, American peer customer tended to disagree with the negative online reviewers.

4.2. Discussion
4.2.1 Move Structures of Chinese and American Negative Online Reviews

The findings show that although both Chinese and American negative online reviewers made their negative comments explicitly impolite, they differed in terms of move structures: Chinese negative reviewers usually started their negative reviews with M3 Problem Statement, and ends with M4 Criticism, while American reviewers would start their review with M1 Motivation for the purchase, optional M2 Praise, continue with M3 Problem Statement, M4 Criticism, M5 Warning, M6 Emotion and end with M7 Solution. In other words, Chinese negative online shopping reviewers did not mention their motivation behind purchase, which differs from Li's (2012) findings of negative online book reviews. The inconsistency may be caused by price differences of the commodities involved. When prices rise, the severity of the offence increases accordingly; therefore, maybe Chinese reviewers just decided to directly criticize the commodity, service, etc.. In making reviews explicitly impolite, Chinese reviewers employed criticism, whereas American reviewers used both criticism and warning. For example:

Extract 1: yòng le jǐ cì jiù kāi bù liǎo jī le, hǎo lā jī

(After several usages, it cannot start. RUBBISH.)

Extract 2: BUYER BE AWARE: This computer has Microsoft 10S. This is scam software by Microsoft to force you to use only Microsoft apps from their deserted island wasteland of an app store. The computer will not allow you to do anything else. You can upgrade to a full version of Microsoft 10... for another $134. Hard pass. STAY AWAY from ALL computers with Microsoft 10S!! Absolute garbage software.

(The underline parts are warnings, and the italicized parts are criticisms.)

Extract 1 shows that Chinese reviewers tended to describe the computer as "rubbish", while in Extract 2 American reviewers not only described the software as "scam", and "absolute garbage software and the app store as "deserted island wasteland", but also warned other customers not to buy the computer. One of the causes for the high-context and low context cultural differences between Chinese and American cultures (Hall,

1959). In Chinese culture, reviewers only needed to write the negative reviews, and the readers would take the cue not to make the purchase, while American reviewers should not only criticize the commodity, but also explicitly warn the readers against making the purchase.

The same cultural differences can be reflected in Problem Statement. Table 3 shows that Chinese reviewers focused on service, hardware and speed of the commodity, while American reviewers emphasized hardware, software, and service of the commodity. The implication for the sellers is that Chinese online consumers value service more than the commodity itself. The Chinese reviewer's priority of service over commodities can also be found in Li' (2018) study of negative online reviews in the hotel industry. Besides, American reviewers explicitly stated what was wrong with their computer significantly more frequently than Chinese reviewers. For example:

Extract 3: I literally was able to set the computer up, use it a total of three times and now it won't work. I turn it on but the screen is completely black. I have tried all of the different suggestions but nothing has helped. I've chatted with Acer twice and am having to send it back for repairs. I will have to pay for the shipping, go through all the hassle and have no idea when I will receive it back. This has been a complete waste of money and a pain.

[Updated] after receiving it after repairs it has gone out again. I bought this in July and Acer says my warranty is out and I cant get my money back. They will only let me send it back for repairs again. This has been a nightmare and I will never buy another again.

(The underlined parts are problems described by the reviewer.)

Extract 3 reveals that the American reviewer elaborated on the problems s/he encountered, which included system and after-sales service aspects.

One thing worth noting is that, although both American and Chinese reviewers mentioned cost related to the commodity, they had different foci. As can be seen from Extract 3, when American reviewers mentioned money, it was usually related to such after-sales charges as shipping or repair, but when Chinese reviewers mentioned money, they focused on the after-sales dropping of the price or lack of complimentary gifts. For instance.

Extract 4: mǎi de shí hòu 4099，shōu dào dì yī tiān jiù jiàng jià 3899，xiàn zài yòu jiàng jià 3789。shēn qǐng yī cì bǎo jià zhī hòu bèi gào zhī bú néng zài shēn qǐng dì èr cì le，yīn wéi chāo guò le bǎo jià qī qī tiān！diàn nǎo bǎo

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jià qī tiān，nà nǐ wéi shí me yào bǎ jiā diàn bǎo jià 30tiān xiě zài diàn nǎo de yè miàn lǐ lái wù dǎo xiāo fèi zhě ne？yī zhí jiàng jià，zhēn de hěn bú shuǎng！

(Bought it at ¥4,099. Reduced to ¥3,899 on the first day of receipt. Now reduced to ¥3,789. After applying for insured price once, I was told that I could not apply for it a second time, and it has exceeded the 7-day insured period! The computer is guaranteed for only seven days, then why should you put the 30-day guarantee on the computer page to mislead consumers? It's really infuriating to keep reducing prices!)

Extract 5: shǔ biāo hé diàn nǎo bāo dōu méi yǒu，gèng yù mèn de shì bàn gōng ruǎn jiàn hái xū yào qù jī huó

(There is no complimentary mouse or computer bag. What's more frustrating is that the office software still needs to be activated.)

(The underlined parts are problems related to cost incurred by the commodity, service, etc.)

Extract 5 reveals that some Chinese customers may anticipate complimentary gift, which the seller does not promise; once their anticipation is let down, they may complain about that. On the other hand, few American reviewers mentioned lack of complimentary gifts, which suggest that Americans take meaning from the explicitly stated words, instead of the implicit context. This confirms Hall's (1957) findings that North Americans are near the low-context extreme of the continuum.

Moreover, American reviewers exposed their motivation behind the purchase, vented their negative feelings, praised certain aspects of the commodity, and disclosed their solution to the problems significantly more frequently than Chinese reviewers. This explains why American negative reviews was longer than Chinese reviews on the average. As for the shortness of Chinese negative online reviews, Zhang and Gu (2013) made the same observation when they compared Chinese and Japanese semantic formulae to express dissatisfaction on hotel reservation platforms. The findings suggest that American online shoppers may be more communicative than their Chinese equivalents in writing the negative online review. For example:

Extract 6: Poor quality item. Never could get it to connect to the internet properly. Although I attempted several times to reach Acer for technical support, it was completely impossible to do so. I returned it after 5 days of hassle. Thank goodness Amazon has an easy return policy or I would have thrown it out the window.

(The underlined part is solution to the problem, while the italicized part is praise of the platform.)

In Extract 6, the American reviewer shared with others the resolution to the problem, i.e. "returned it", and praised the platform Amazon for its easy return policy.

4.2.2 Chinese and American Managerial Response Moves

When it comes to the managerial responses, Chinese manufacturer responded to almost every negative review, whereas American counterparts ignored almost 11% of the negative reviews. According to Yavas et, al.'s (2004) study, managerial responses have significant impact on the consumer's repurchase intention. Therefore, if not responded to in any other means, those neglected American negative reviewers may turn to other sellers for the product. However, an analysis of the semantic formulae adopted by Chinese and American management reveals that Chinese manufacturer denied the reviewer the problem concerned and promoted the self-image of the commodity, service, or the manufacturer, which may threaten the reviewer's face. As Sparks and Bradley (2014) explained, any attempt to deny the problem and promote the self-image in front of a dissatisfied reviewer poses a sort of disagreement, thus, damaging the rapport between the management and the consumer. Therefore, the American manufacture can enhance their responding rate to the negative online reviews, whereas the Chinese manufacturer can avoid denying the reviewer the problem mentioned and self-promoting the commodity, service, etc. before a dissatisfied customer.

Table 5 shows that both manufacturers/platforms employed the rectification to resolve the problem. In the following extract, the manufacturer offered rectifications for the problem when an American reviewer commented that she could not install Windows 10 home based on Windows 10s. The underlined parts are rectifications for the problem.

Extract 7:

[GREETING]Dear Helen (pseudonym),

[THANK]Thank you for taking the time to leave a review regarding your Acer Aspire laptop.

[APOLOGY]We are sorry to hear you are having problems switching from Windows S mode to Home. [RECTIFICATION]Here is a link that has information on how to switch that you might find helpful:

https://us.answers.acer.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/51079/

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If this does not resolve the issue, please take the time to contact us by phone or chat so we can help address any problems you may be experiencing. Please be prepared to provide your reference code AMZ54658, to allow us to access information about your purchase.

Acer Support:

Phone - 1-866-690-4549

Chat - https://go.acer.com/AmazonChat

[WISHES]Regards,

Acer America

From Extract 7, we can find the American manufacturer provided two rectifications: the link to specific steps to solve the problem and a customized reference code in case that the reviewer still needed online guidance. On the other hand, in the Chinese online context, when the consumer complained that the computer was not usable due to lack of installed authorized Microsoft Office, the manufacturer also provided the corresponding rectification. The underlined parts are rectification.

Extract 8:

qīng qīng de fēng ér，chuī kāi nín jǐn suǒ de méi tóu，sàn qù nín suǒ yǒu de chóu xù。chǎn pǐn chū chǎng yù zhuāng shì yòng bǎn office，shì yòng qī yǔ ruǎn jiàn ān zhuāng jìng xiàng wén jiàn yǒu guān，shí jiān kě néng cún zài chà yì。nín kě yǐ zài shì yòng qī jié shù hòu gēn jù gè rén xū qiú xuǎn zé fù fèi shǐ yòng huò xià zǎi qí tā bàn gōng ruǎn jiàn shǐ yòng。gěi nín dài lái bú biàn，rú hòu xù shǐ yòng zhōng xū bāng zhù，nín kě bō dǎ Acerfú wù rè xiàn （400-700-1000）。tā men dōu huì jié jìn quán lì bāng nín jiě jué wèn tí de。xī wàng nín néng duō duō hé xiǎo mò xiàng chù，hái qǐng dà rén duō gěi běn běn zhǎn xiàn zì jǐ shí lì de jī huì，xiàng xìn zài jīn hòu de shǐ yòng zhōng yī dìng huì chéng wéi nín de dé lì zhù shǒu ne ~

([EMPATHY]May the gentle breeze smoothen your locked brows and dissipate all your worries. [DENY PROBLEM]The trial version of Microsoft Office is pre-installed into the product at the factory. The trial period is related to the software installation image file, and the time may vary. [RECTIFICATION]After the trial period, you can choose to pay to use or download other office software according to your personal needs. It inconveniences you. If you need help in subsequent use, you can call the Acer service hotline (400-700-1000). They will do their best to help you solve the problem. [SELF-PROMOTING]I hope you can get along with Xiaomo[the computer] more, and please give it more opportunities to show its strength. I believe it will definitely be your right assistant in future use~)

The Chinese manufacturer also provided rectifications: to pay to use, download other office apps, or call the Acer service Hotline. The comparison shows that the Chinese version was more formulaic, while the American rectification was more customized because of its unique reference code. Maybe with this reference code, the American computer engineer would be able to locate the complaint lodged by the reviewer very quickly and provide the corresponding resolution to the problem without asking the consumer to repeat the problems encountered. In this way, the work efficiency would be enhanced. By contrast, the Chinese online managerial responses appeared more templated, with no customized sign. If the Chinese reviewer decided to make the phone call, s/he would still need to spend time repeating the problems s/he described on the internet. In this case, maybe Chinese online management should consider establishing the reference system for each negative online reviewer to improve the work efficiency.

Apart from Rectification, American manufacturers greeted the reviewer, thanked the reviewer, apologized for the source of the trouble, and expressed best wishes more frequently than their Chinese equivalent, whereas Chinese manufactures showed empathy with the reviewer, recognized the review's value, denied the problem, and promoted their self-image significantly more frequently than their American counterpart. Extract 7 shows that American managerial responses started with an individualized greeting with the reviewer's name (e.g. "Dear Helen"), a thank-you (e.g. Thank you for taking the time to leave a review regarding your Acer Aspire), and an apology for the source of the trouble (e.g. We are sorry to hear …), continued with rectification and ended with wishes (e.g. Regards).

On the other hand, the Chinese management started with showing empathy with the reviewer, e.g. "qīng qīng de fēng ér，chuī kāi nín jǐn suǒ de méi tóu，sàn qù nín suǒ yǒu de chóu xù" (May the gentle breeze smoothen your locked brows and dissipate all your worries.) in Extract 8. "qīng qīng" (gentle breeze) represents the Chinese manufacturer, who attempted to relieve reviewer' worries. Though a Chinese can understand the meaning conveyed here, non-Chinese may have difficulty understanding the usage of epithet here. Other clearer examples of empathies can be found in the following extract:

Extract 9: "líng tīng dào nín de xīn shēng，mèi zǐ yuàn zuò bān yùn gōng，bān zǒu nín suǒ yǒu de fán nǎo。"

(Listening to your voice, the girl is [I, the girl, am] willing to be a porter, removing all your troubles.)

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As we know, a porter's job is usually to carry customer's luggage, but here a porter is going to carry others' worries; obviously, the Chinese manufacture employed a metaphor, comparing worries to luggage. The examples show that the Chinese management preferred rhetorical devices in their responses.

Other differences between the Chinese and American managerial response can be found in greetings. While the American manufacturer preferred "Dear XXX" to shorten the personal distance, the Chinese equivalent favored languages to enlarge the social gap between the manufacturer and the reviewer. For instance:

Extract 10:

líng tīng dào dà rén de xīn shēng，xiǎo de lì mǎ chuán sòng jiā shǎn xiàn fēi bēn ér lái

(Hearing the voice of your Highness, humble I come here in a flash)

"dà rén", which is interpreted as "your Highness, and "xiǎo de", which can be understood as "humble person" or "your servant" aimed at raising the social status of the reviewer, so that s/he felt better about herself/himself.

4.2.3 Influences of Chinese and American Negative Online Reviews on Peer Customers

The results show that American peer customers responded more frequently to negative online reviews than their Chinese counterpart did. However, the content analysis reveals that most peer customers were not influenced by negative online reviewers; instead of accepting reviewer's judgment, they criticized the reviewer. For example, one reviewer wrote:

Extract 11:

Watch out for Microsoft glitch that prevents you from leaving safe mode.

We purchased this product for my son's birthday. As he starts playing with it, we realize it's in safe mode and he's not able to download or open the products he wants to use. Microsoft says it's a glitch in their system and we need to wait for them to work it out. Amazon says they will replace with another unit, but they can't guarantee that unit won't have the same issue. So, here we are with a brand new computer, unused. Huge let down. Disappointing product with disappointing options to make it right.

From Extract 11, we can find that the reviewer was not satisfied with the software, but he also mentioned the solutions provided by Microsoft

and the Amazon platform. A peer customer reacted to the above review in the following way

Extract 12: I am here looking around because I want to get one myself, actually. But YOU GOTTA LOVE a company that enters a comment apologizing for this and offers help. They're -- er -- Ace[r]s in my book!

The critical thinking of American peer customers can also be reflected in the following example. The reviewer posted his/her comment in the following way:

Extract 13: what a piece of garbage! I have never had a computer so useless as this one. I don't think I've had such slow response since dial up. i'll admit it was cheap but I never expected such poor quality. I am not a gamer I do not run any type of advanced programs. I play very simple games, I watch Netflix, email, facebook etc, very basic stuff. well let the buyer beware. at least now I know to stay away from acer and anyone who would sell such a shoddy product as this. I will certainly note this seller and stay away, not that the seller cares i'm sure.

The reviewer described the product as "garbage", "useless", "poor quality", "advanced programs", "simple games", "shoddy product", but did not provide much evidence to support his/ her argument. Therefore, a peer customer responded to the review in the following way:

Extract 14: Arguments without context or meaning.

From the above examples, we can find American customers demonstrated their critical thinking in reading negative reviews.

On the other hand, statistically speaking, Chinese peer customers tended to agree with negative online reviewers. For example, a Chinese reviewer posted the following negative comment:

Extract 15: ò hē ……yù zhuāng zhèng bǎn xì tǒng hé office，shì yòng bǎn méi yǒu xiě！jī huó hòu xū yào xiě mì yào cái zhī dào zhè shì shì yòng bǎn，zhì diàn 950618，kè fú diàn huà shuō jiāo yì kuài zhào lǐ què shí méi yǒu sòng office，wǒ yào qiú jīng dōng tí gòng jiāo yì kuài zhào，hē hē，rén jiā shuō zhè shì shāng yè mì mì ??，hē hē，nǐ jiàn guò nǎ gè dāng shì rén yào qiú chá kàn hé tóng shuō zhè gè shì jī mì，bú néng kàn de？

diàn nǎo yào bú shì jī huó bú néng qī tiān wú lǐ yóu，wǒ yòu tuì le，bú zhī dào huì bú huì bèi hēi hù？

hēi hēi hēi

yùn háng sù dù：yī bān bān

píng mù xiào guǒ：zhā

diàn chí gèng zhà

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wài xíng wài guān：pǔ tōng de gōng mó chū lái de chǎn pǐn

sàn rè xìng néng：hái hǎo，67shí ℃

qīng báo chéng dù：zhèng chǎng

(Hahaha... Pre-installed genuine System and Office! The trial version is not mentioned! After activation, when asked to input a key, I started to know that this was a trial version. Call 950618 (hotline), and the customer service said that the transaction snapshot did not show a complimentary Office. I asked jd.com [the platform] to provide a transaction snapshot. Ha ha, they said that this is a business secret?? Ha ha, have you ever seen when buyers asked to read the contract, they were denied because it was a business secret?

But for the no-7-day-return policy for the activated computer, I would have it refunded. I wonder if I will be hacked?

Haha haha

Running speed: so so

Screen effect: slaggy

Battery: slaggier

Appearance: ordinary products from the template

Thermal performance: acceptable, 67 ℃

Lightness: normal)

One Chinese peer customer replied,

Extract 16 xiè xiè nín de zhēn shí píng jià，huàn bié de diàn nǎo le

(Thank you for your real evaluation! Change to another brand.)

Although the Chinese negative reviewer did not provide enough evidence to support his/her claim in Extract 15, we can find that one peer customer has been dissuaded from the purchase.

Another thing worth noting from Extract 15 is that in Chinese online shopping context, if a buyer of a computer has activated the system, s/he would not be able to enjoy the 7-day return policy. This is not the same as the American online shopping context, which can be testified by the following negative review:

Extract 17: Tech Details show "Windows 10 Home" but it came with S mode. Fine, I already learned how to switch out to Windows 10 Home however, it's been nightmare. Spent about 5 hours before gave up. I followed easy instruction but it returns with "Error Code 0x801901F4". I searched this error code to fix the registry but you cannot even go to command prompt to work on this error. No solution found and requested return. Got a reply from seller that they would charge 20% restocking fee if they found the return would be not at their fault. I am in the process of

contesting it to clear up what they would do. You cannot use Chrome or 3rd party applications with S mode and this should be kids only. I wasted too much time to resolve this and now about to be charged for overstocking fees. No buyer is deserved for this.

The underlined part in Extract 17 shows that in the American shopping context, even if the consumer had activated the system of the computer, s/he would still have the right to return the product, though 20% restocking fee would be charged.

5. Conclusion

The present study found that the American negative online reviewer has matured as a genre, in that American negative online reviewers not only criticized the commodity, service, etc., but also warned other customers against making the purchase, while Chinese negative online reviews mainly aimed at criticizing the commodity, services, etc., leaving the decision to the peer customer. In terms of managerial responses, the Chinese manufacturer responded significantly more to the negative online reviewer, but employed more rapport-damaging moves than their American counterpart. By contrast, the American manufacturer customized their greeting and rectification with a unique reference code, which make their managerial responses more individualized. As for peer-customer responses, the results show that negative online reviews had a greater impact on Chinese peer customers than their American equivalents.

The findings of the present study suggest that, to achieve the communicative purposes of negative reviews, the Chinese negative online reviewers can explicate their warning purposes in their reviews, that the Chinese manufacturer should reduce the rapport-damaging moves in their responses and exert more efforts in appeasing the dissatisfied reviewers. On the other hand, American manufacturers should endeavor to respond to each negative review, though it seems that they do not need to worry a lot about their critical peer customers. For future studies, more Chinese and American negative reviews from different online shopping platforms on different commodities can be collected to substantiate the findings of the present study.

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