

# Feedback Markers in Mandarin: Tracking Cognitive Status in Conversation

Li-chiung Yang

Tunghai University, Taichung, Taiwan

**Abstract:** A key aspect of conversation is the interactive exchange of information and the cooperative discourse process that functions to bring about a mutually satisfactory sharing of information. The encountering of new information gives rise to emotional responses as well as on the certainty and degree of cognitive reorientation to the pre-existing knowledge state. In this study we present our results on prosody and contextual meaning of two feedback markers: “dui” and “oh”, showing that the marker “dui” ‘right’, functions to mark the perceived status of lexical truth and degree of understanding, approval, or agreement, thus acting as an indicator of cognitive understanding to organize topic development through signals of a shared knowledge state, whereas the marker “oh” acts as an indicator of temporary cognitive difficulty or reorientation of cognitive states, thus providing the complementary function to “dui” with respect to certainty and uncertainty of information and knowledge states in discourse.