A study of the interactional function of the tag question

dui bu dui in Mandarin conversation from a multimodal perspective

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the interactional function of the tag question *dui bu dui* ('right?') in Mandarin conversation and the prosodic and visual features involved in its production. Adopting the methodology of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics, the present study explores the function of *dui bu dui* in 8 hours of Mandarin conversational data. These two methodologies have not been used in the study of tag questions in Chinese Linguistics. *Dui bu dui*s in the data mainly have two interactional functions: seeking acknowledgment and seeking affiliation. These two interactional functions of *dui bu dui* have not been documented in the previous studies. A detailed examination of the data shows that when used after the topic component of an utterance, it serves to seek acknowledgment of the referent specified in the topic. When occurring after an assertive sentence, *dui bu dui* is used to seek the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance revealed in the speaker's immediately preceding assertion. *Dui bu dui*s are also produced with recurrent prosodic features such as slightly falling pitch movement and short duration. In addition, some visual behaviors (e.g., gaze shift and hold of gesture) are involved in the production of *dui bu dui*. The current study is an attempt to study *dui bu dui* from a multimodal perspective. The study shows that *dui bu dui*s have different interactional functions depending on the sequential position in which they occur. This study contributes to our understanding of the use of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin conversation.

Key words: tag questions; *dui bu dui*, interactional function, Conversational Analysis; Interactional Linguistics; Mandarin conversation

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 *Dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation

Dui bu dui literally means right-not-right. It can be used as predicate in an A-not-A question or a tag question (Li and Thompson, 1981). An A-not-A question in Mandarin is a type of question with a function similar to that of a yes-no question in English. The form of an A-not-A question involves two predicates, A and not A. When used as a tag question, it approximately means 'right?' in English. These two different usages are demonstrated by the following two examples. The first example demonstrates *dui bu dui* as predicate in an A-not-A question and the second example illustrates *dui bu dui* as a tag question

(1)   (Li and Thompson, 1981:546).

A: 这 个 答案   *对 不 对*?

       zhe ge daan   *dui bu dui*?

       this cl answer ***right not right***

       Is this answer correct?

B1:   这 个 答案 *对*。

       zhe ge daan   *dui*.

this cl answer **right.**

This answer is correct.

B2:　这 个 答案　　*不对*。

zhe ge daan　　**bu dui.**

this cl answer **not right**

This answer is not correct.

In example (1), A-not-A is realized as *dui bu dui* "right-not-right". *Dui bu dui* is used as predicate in the A-not-A question. It is equivalent to yes-no question. The answer is either affirmative "A" (*dui* 'right') as is exemplified by (B1), or disconfirmative "not A" (*bu dui* 'not right') in (B2). The second example shows *dui bu dui* as a tag question:

(2)　　　(Chen and He, 2001:1443)

A:　你们 是 九 点 钟　开 门　的, *对 不 对*?

nimen shi jiudianzhong kai men de, ***dui　bu　dui*** ?

you　be nine o'clock open door PRT ***right not right***

　You opened the door at nine o'clock, right?

B1:　*对,*　我们 是 九点钟　开　门。

dui, women shi jiudianzhong kai men

right we   be nine o'clock open door

Right, we opened at nine o'clock.

B2:   不对，   我们不是九点钟开门的。

bu dui ,   women bu shi jiudianzhong kai men

not right   we   NEG be nine o'clock open door

No, we did not open at nine o'clock.

In example (2), *dui bu dui* serves as the tag question and it is equivalent to the English tag "right?". (B1) is the affirmative answer, and (B2) is the disconfirmative answer. The A-not-A question differs from the tag question in terms of their forms and the response they make relevant. Their forms are different in that A-not-A in the A-not-A question is part of the predicate, whereas that in the tag question is attached to a statement. According to Li and Thompson (1981:546), the response to an A-not-A question is "an answer that confirms or denies the proposition in the question"; whereas the response to a tag question is a "confirmation or disconfirmation of the statement that occurs before the tag".

1.2 Research questions

The current study focuses on *dui bu dui* as a tag question in Mandarin conversation. Most

studies on *dui bu dui* are on its usage in institutional interaction. For example, Chen and He (2001) examine the function of *dui bu dui* in Chinese language classroom interaction. Chen (2007) investigates the usage of *dui bu dui* in Chinese TV talk show programs. There is very limited research on the interactional functions of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin interaction. The objective of this study is to uncover the interactional function of *dui bu dui* and the multimodal resources used in its production in everyday Mandarin face-to-face conversation. We intend to answer the following two questions in this study:

1. What are the interactional functions of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin conversation?

2. What are the multimodal resources used by the speaker in the production of *dui bu dui*?

Answering these two questions can help us better understand the usage of *dui bu dui* as a tag question in Mandarin conversation. The exploration of the multimodal resources involved in the production of *dui bu dui* shows the importance and necessity of taking into consideration not only the verbal aspects but also the nonverbal behaviors in face-to-face interaction.

1.3   Organization of the thesis

The thesis is organized in the following way. The present chapter introduces *dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation and the research questions. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant studies of tag questions and *dui bu dui* in Mandarin. Chapter 3 introduces the data and the

methodology of the study. Chapter 4 examines the interactional functions of *dui bu dui*.

Chapter 5 summarizes the major findings and the significance of this study.

Chapter 2 Previous Research on Tag Question and *Dui Bu Dui* in Mandarin

This chapter provides an overview of the previous research on *dui bu dui* and tag question in Mandarin. Section 2.1 outlines the research on tag question in Mandarin. Section 2.2 introduces the studies of *dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation. Section 2.3 summarizes the discussion in this chapter.

2.1 Tag question in Mandarin

In this section, I will outline the studies of tag question in Mandarin from three aspects. In Section 2.1.1, I will introduce the studies of the classification of tag question. In Section 2.1.2, I will discuss the research on the interrogative mood of tag question. In Section 2.1.3, I will focus on the previous literature on the function of tag question.

2.1.1 Classification of tag question

There are two types of tag questions in Mandarin based on their lexico-syntactic forms: canonical tag question and invariant tag question. These two types of tag questions are both formed by a declarative sentence and a tag, but they differ in the lexico-syntactic form of the tag. Table 1 shows the classification of tag question in Mandarin.

Table 1 Classification of tag question in Mandarin

No.	Type of Tag question	Form
1	Canonical tag question	Declarative sentence+ A-not-A
		Declarative sentence+ A-particle
2	Invariant tag question	Declarative sentence+ particle

The first type of tag question is the canonical tag question. It is composed of a declarative sentence and a tag in the format of A-not-A or A-particle (Shao, 1996; Li & Thompson, 1981). The first form of canonical tag question is a declarative sentence+A-not-A. A in the A-not-A question can be a verb, an adjective, or an adverb. According to Li and Thompson (1981), the most common tags in the A-not-A format are *dui bu dui* ('right not right'), *hao bu hao* ('good not good'), *xing bu xing* ('OK not OK'), and *shi bu shi* ('be not be'). For example,

(1)   (Li and Thompson, 1981: 546)

你们 是九 点钟 开 门 的   *对 不 对？*

nimen shi jiu dianzhong kai men de,   ***dui bu dui***

you be nine o'clock open door NOM ***right not right***

You opened at nine o'clock, right?

(2)   (Li and Thompson, 1981: 546)

我们　去吃 水果　*好 不 好？*

women qu chi shuiguo, ***hao bu hao***

we   go eat fruit   ***good not good***

Let's go (to) eat some fruit, OK?

In example (1), the declarative sentence is *nimen shi jiu dianzhong kaimen de* (You opened at nine o'clock.) and the tag is *dui bu dui* ('right-not-right'). In example (2), the declarative sentence is *women qu chi shuiguo* ('Let's go to eat some fruit.') and the tag is *hao bu hao* ('good-not-good'). The current study focuses on first type of A-not-A tag question, *dui bu dui* ('right-not-right') in Mandarin conversation.

The second type of the canonical tag is the A-particle tag. This type of tag is in the A-*ma* or the A-*ba* format. *Ma* and *ba* are commonly used question particles in Mandarin (Chao, 1968; Hu, 1981; Li and Thompson, 1981; Zhu, 1982;). The tag A-*ma* or A-*ba* is attached to a declarative sentence to construct a canonical tag question. For example,

(3)   (Gao and Zhang, 2009:45)

所以 你 现在　就 觉得 非常　　犹豫，*是吗？*

suoyi ni xianzai jiu juede feichang youyu ***shi ma***

so   you now   just think very hesitate ***be PRT***

So now you hesitated, aren't you?

(4)　　　(Li, 2009:86)

当然　是 以 政治　为　主，*是吧？*

dangran shi yi zhengzhi wei zhu ***shi ba***

certainly be as politics as main ***be PRT***

Certainly, (it) is mainly focus on politics, isn't it?

In example (3), the declarative sentence is *suoyi ni xianzai jiu juede feichang youyu* ('So now you hesitated.') and the tag is *shi ma* ('aren't you'). A in the A-*ma* format is *shi* ('be') and the particle is *ma*. In example (4), the declarative sentence is *dangran shi yi zhengzhi wei zhu* ('Certainly, it is mainly focus on politics') and the tag is *shi ba* (isn't it). A in the A-*ba* format is also *shi* ('be') and the particle is *ba*.

The second type of tag question is invariant tag question. The tag of the invariant tag question is usually a single particle such as *ha* ('eh?'). It is immediately attached to the declarative sentence. The single particle as tag is usually used in Mandarin conversation

and Chinese dialects (Gao, 2009a; Gao and Zhang, 2009; Yin,1999). (5) is an example of the invariant tag question:

(5)   (Gao and Zhang, 2009:47)

所以 特 好吃　 *哈？*

suoyi te haochi *ha*

so very delicious *PRT*

So (it is) very delicious, eh?

In example (5), *suoyi te haochi* ('So it is very delicious') is the declarative sentence and the single particle *ha* ('eh?') is the tag. Yin (1999) claims that the single particle *ha* is originally from Xiang dialects.[1] Also, in Wu dialect, people use the particle *ho* to form tag questions (Gao and Zhang 2009).

Dui bu dui ('right not right') and *hao bu hao* ('good not good') are considered two of the most commonly used tag questions in Mandarin (Li and Thompson, 1981). The previous research on *hao bu hao* will be reviewed in Section 2.1.3. Since the function of *hao bu hao* ('good not good') has already been systematically studied, this study will focus on *dui bu dui*.

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[1] There are seven major dialect groups in Chinese: Mandarin (the Northern dialect), Wu, Xiang, Gan, Kejia (Hakka), Yue (Cantonese), and Min (Chen, 1999; Sun, 2006).

2.1.2 Interrogative mood of tag question

There is abundant research on the interrogative mood of tag question in Mandarin. Among these studies, some concentrate on the comparison of the degree of interrogative mood of tag question and that of other types of questions (Xu and Zhang, 1985; Zhang, 1997;), while others focus on the relationship between interrogative mood of tag question and speaker's epistemic status (Xu,1999; Niu, 2001, 2002).

Among the first type of studies, Xu and Zhang (1985) argue that questions in Mandarin Chinese can be classified based on the degree of their interrogative mood. They use different percentage (100%, 80%, 60%, 40%) to indicate the degree of interrogative mood conveyed by different types of questions. Among the different types of questions, tag questions convey the lowest degree of interrogative mood (40%), whereas wh-word question has the highest interrogative mood (100%). The following example demonstrates the wh-word question that has the highest degree of interrogative mood.

(6)   (Xu and Zhang, 1985:71)

你 吃什么？

ni chi shenme

you eat what

What do you want to eat?

According to Xu and Zhang (1985), Example (6) shows the highest degree of interrogative mood (100%). This question is a request for information from the recipient because the speaker has no knowledge of it. Example (7) demonstrates the tag question which has the lowest degree of interrogative mood.

(7)   (Xu and Zhang, 1985:78)

她 才 十九岁 是 不 是？

ta cai shijiusui shi bu shi

3SG only nineteen be not be

She is only nineteen, right?

According to Xu and Zhang (1985:78), Example (7) shows that tag question has the lowest degree of interrogative mood (40%) compared to other types of questions. In this example, the speaker is uncertain about the truth of the proposition in the declarative sentence. Therefore, he/she produces tag question to seek recipient's confirmation.

Zhang (1997) also classifies different types of questions in terms of their interrogative mood. He argues that tag question is one type of yes-no question and has the lowest degree of interrogative mood. Speakers use tag question to seek recipient's confirmation.

The second group of scholars approaches the interrogative mood of tag question from the epistemic status of the speaker. For example, Xu (1999) and Niu (2002) believe that the

degree of interrogative mood is related to the speaker's epistemic status. Xu (1999) claims that different types of questions are used as indications of the speaker's different epistemic status. For example, yes-no question displays that the speaker has no epistemic knowledge about the proposition; whereas tag question displays that the speaker has some epistemic knowledge and certain degree of certainty towards the proposition. Developed from Xu (1999), Niu (2002) argues that when the speaker has more epistemic knowledge towards the proposition, the tag is to seek confirmation from the recipient. When the speaker has less epistemic knowledge toward the proposition, the tag is to seek information from the recipient. The second group of research connects the design and the type of question to the epistemic status of the speaker. The approach to tag question from the questioner's epistemic status differs from the traditional grammar in that it underscores the importance of taking into consideration the conversational participants' perspective in the study of tag question.

2.1.3 Function of tag question

Research on the function of tag question has mainly concentrated on two aspects: function of tag question in general and that of a particular type of tag question *hao bu hao* ('good not good').

Scholars have investigated the function of tag question. For example, Lü (1944; 1985) argues that by producing a tag question, the speaker ask about the correctness or truth of the event described in the declarative sentence. Li and Thompson (1981:546) also state that "tag questions are functionally different from other types of Mandarin questions in

that they serve to seek confirmation of the statement that occurs before the tag". Shao (1990) argues that tag question is used to seek the recipient's response to or confirmation of what is stated in the declarative sentence.

Recent studies of the function of tag question have mainly focused on a particular tag question *hao bu hao* ('good-not-good'). Gao (2009b) argues that *hao bu hao* has two functions depending on the content of the utterance to which it is attached. When used after an utterance expressing speaker's opinion, it is used to seek recipient's confirmation. When used after an utterance stating speaker's stance, It is used to draw recipient's attention. Yu and Yao (2009) further investigate *hao bu hao* and argue that it has four functions. First, the speaker usually expresses his/her understanding towards the event mentioned in the proposition and produces *hao bu hao* to request more information from the recipient. Second, the speaker produces an assertion and uses *hao bu hao* to seek recipient's agreement. Third, the speaker use *hao bu hao* as a strategy to soften the forcefulness of an utterance during arguments with the recipient. Using *hao bu hao*, the proposition will be more acceptable. The last function is to express the speaker's emotion. The speaker will use *hao bu hao* to reprimand recipient's lack of consideration. Zheng and Shao (2008) examine *hao bu hao* and specifically concentrate on its function in expressing the speaker's emotion. They claim that in addition to being a device to show politeness, *hao bu hao* can also be used to convey impoliteness. That is, it can be used to admonish the recipient's lack of common sense.

Hao bu hao is a heavily-researched tag question in Mandarin (Gao, 2009b; Yu and Yao, 2009; Zheng and Shao, 2008). However, as one of the most commonly used tags (Li and Thompson, 1981), *dui bu dui* has not been systematically explored.

2.2 Tag question *Dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation

Compared to the research on *hao bu hao,* the research on the tag question *dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation is very scarce. The valuable exceptions are Gao and Zhang (2009), Chen and He (2001) and Chen's (2007) studies of the function of *dui bu dui* in classroom interaction and TV talk show programs.

Gao and Zhang (2009) explore the interactional functions of the tag question in TV shows and naturally occurring conversation. They investigate two interactional functions of tag question: seeking confirmation and seeking alignment. In their study of different types of tag questions, they mention that the interactional function of *dui bu dui* is seeking confirmation. The speaker employs the tag question *dui bu dui* to seek recipient's confirmation of the statement to which the tag question is attached. However, the study does not distinguish the function of *dui bu dui* in TV programs and natural occurring conversation. *Dui bu dui* may have different usage in these two different interactional settings. The discussion of the function of *dui bu dui* should be situated within a specific interactional setting, either institutional or everyday interaction.

Chen and He (2001) discuss the function of *dui bu dui* in Chinese language classroom interaction. According to them, *dui bu dui* can be used to request confirmation by teacher in conducting classroom activities. That is, teacher usually employs *dui bu dui* to ask for student's confirmation towards the proposition in the declarative sentence. In this way, *dui bu dui* can be used as a cue to remind students what they have learned before. This usually happens during a review activity. When introducing new concepts, teacher usually uses *dui bu dui* as a device to maintain students' attention.

Chen (2007) investigates the interactional functions of *dui bu dui* in TV talk show programs. The study shows that *dui bu dui* has four functions in TV talk show programs. The host in the talk show program tends to use tags much more frequently than the interviewees. First, the host will use *dui bu dui* to seek interviewees' confirmation to his/her preceding statement. Second, the host will produce *dui bu dui* to express emphatic emotion or exclamation after hearing the interviewee's utterance. Third, the host will use *dui bu dui* to arouse audience' interest and maintain audience' attention during the transition between different topics. Finally *dui bu dui* is also used as a conversation filler to substitute pause or silence in order to make the conversation go smoothly.

Previous studies on *dui bu dui* have been conducted in classroom settings and TV talk show programs. However, the use of *dui bu dui* in everyday interaction has not been investigated. It is an open question if *dui bu dui* has similar interactional functions in everyday Mandarin conversation. Thus, the interactional function of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin conversation will be explored in the current study.

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the previous research on tag question in Mandarin and the studies on *dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation. I discussed the research on the classification of tag question, the interrogative mood of tag question and the function of tag question in Mandarin. Finally, I have introduced the studies of *dui bu dui* in Mandarin conversation. In Chapter 3, I will introduce the methodology of this study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Data

The data used in this study are 8 hours of combined audio and video recordings of Mandarin face-to-face conversation. All the 24 participants are native Mandarin speakers from mainland China attending a university in North America. There are 11 female participants and 13 male participants. They are undergraduate and graduate students from the same university. Their age ranges from twenties to thirties. An advertisement was posted on campus to recruit the participants. The participants in each conversation are friends or at least acquaintances who have known one another before the recording. No topic was given to the participants for the recording. The participants in the data are conducting activities in everyday settings (e.g., chitchatting, playing games, having lunch). Two cameras and a separate audio recorder were used to record each conversation. The two cameras were used to capture all the visible body movements from the participants. The researcher was not present during the recording. The first ten minutes and the last ten minutes of the recording were not used in the study to avoid unnaturalness.

3.2 Data transcription

The data is transcribed according to the GAT-2 (Gesprachsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem 2) transcription system (Selting et al, 2009) with slight

modification. Three transcription systems are commonly used in the study of spoken discourse: Jefferson's Conversation Analysis transcription system (Jefferson, 1984), Du Bois et al's transcription system of spoken discourse (Du Bois et al, 1991), and GAT-2 in interactional linguistics (Selting et al, 2009). GAT-2 is "a transcription system for notating, first and foremost, the wording and prosody of natural everyday talk-in-interaction" (Couper-Kuhlen and Barth-Weingarten, 2011:2). By using this system, breathing, pausing and lengthening could be exactly notated whereas the interactional phenomena such as laughter and overlap can also be transcribed (Couper-Kuhlen and Barth-Weingarten, 2011:3). Furthermore, the system has more detailed transcription of the prosody. Thus, GAT-2 transcription system is used in the current study. The visual body movements are transcribed based on the transcription symbols used in C. Goodwin (1981), Heath (1984, 1986) and Kendon (2004). The transcribing symbols used to transcribe the verbal and nonverbal behaviors are provided in the Appendix. The symbols for body movements are above the first line in the transcripts (see the following example). To represent the body movement more clearly, screen captures from the videos are provided for the noticeable body movements under discussion. Each line in the transcripts represents one intonation unit (IU). The intonation unit is "a stretch of utterance produced under a single coherent intonation contour" (Li, 2014:72; Du Bois et al, 1993:47; Tao, 1996:35). The segmentation of lines and the transcription symbols are exemplified as follows:

(4) Exam 3

01   Adam：   地上   没有 试卷;

        dishang meiyou shijuan

        floor   NEG   exam

        'There is no exam paper on the floor.'

Hand |～～～～～ ********************************
02   （当时）   多余 的 那 份 试卷   一定 是 假 的.

                (dangshi)   duoyu de   na fen shijuan yiding shi jia de

                at that time extra ASSC that CL exam   must   be fake PRT

                'At that time, that extra exam paper must be suspicious.'

This example shows that the data is presented in the four-line format. The first line is the Chinese character of the utterance. The second line provides the pinyin for each corresponding character. The third line provides word-by-word glossary and the fourth line offers the free translation in idiomatic English. If there are relevant body movements, they are transcribed above the first line (as is shown in line 2 in the previous example).

3.3 Methodology

Conversation Analysis (CA) and interactional linguistics (IL) are the methodologies used in this study. CA is first developed by ethnomethodologists Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Sacks, 1992). CA is a data-driven research method that studies talk-in-interaction based on recorded naturally occurring conversational data. Conversation is not an individual product, but dynamic process achieved collaboratively by both speakers and recipients together. CA puts special emphasis on the recipient's orientation to the analytical category. The "next-turn proof procedure" is a basic analytic method in CA (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974:728; Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998:15). It shows how a recipient reacts to and interprets the prior turn. That is, recipients will display their orientation toward the ongoing sequence and especially the immediately preceding turn in their next turn. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, 729) summarize the "next-turn proof procedure" as follows:

"But while understandings of other turns' talk are displayed to co− participants, they are available as well to professional analysts, who are thereby afforded a proof criterion (and a search procedure) for the analysis of what a turn's talk is occupied with. Since it is the parties' understanding of prior turns' talk that is relevant to their construction of next turns, it is their understandings that are wanted for analysis. The display of those understandings in the talk of subsequent turns affords both a resource for the analysis of prior turns and a proof procedure for professional analyses of prior turns − resources intrinsic to the data themselves."

(Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, 1974: 729)

The "next-turn proof procedure" ensures that the analyses are based on recipient's orientation, "rather than subjective and intuitive interpretations of the analyst" (Li, 2014:29). The next-turn proof procedure will be the key method employed in this study.

Interactonal Linguistics is the other research methodology adopted in this study. It is to study how language structure shapes interaction and how interaction shapes language structure (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen, 2001). In this study, IL is used to analyze the linguistic structures such as the lexico-syntactic and prosodic features of *dui bu dui*, as well as their interrelatedness with interaction.

In this study, the prosodic and visual features in the production of *dui bu dui* are also analyzed by acoustic analysis and visual annotation software programs. Praat is a software for doing acoustic analysis, especially of speech. The Praat software analyses the pitch contour and shows the duration of the sound. Elan is an annotation software used to analyze and annotate nonverbal behaviors in the video recordings. I have investigated the prosodic features and visual behaviors involved in the production of *dui bu dui* in the current study. Prosody always exists because *dui bu dui*s are always produced with certain prosodic features. But sometimes there is no noticeable body movement during the production of *dui bu dui*. Therefore, only noticeable body movements are reported in this thesis. For example, there is no noticeable body movements on the part of the speaker in the production of *dui bu dui* in Excerpts (1), (2), (3), (4), (6) and (9); thus only the prosodic features are reported in those excerpts.

In this chapter, I have briefly introduced the data and the transcription system used in my study. Also, I have introduced the methodologies that are used in this research. Previous

studies of *dui bu dui* in Chinese linguistics have not used Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics as their methodologies. Most of the studies are from a traditional grammar perspective and have not investigated the nonverbal aspects such as body movements. Therefore, Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics is used as new approaches to study *dui bu dui* in the thesis. The multimodal resources such as prosodic features and body movements are also explored in the current study. In the following chapter, I will provide a detailed account of my findings, two interactional functions of *dui bu dui* in Mandarin face-to-face conversation and their multimodal constructions.

Chapter 4 Results: The Interactional Function of *Dui Bu Dui* and its Multimodal Construction

This chapter reports on my findings of the interactional functions of *dui bu dui* and how it is produced in everyday Mandarin conversation using CA and IL approaches based on my data. Specifically, I describe two previously undescribed interactional functions that are observed in my data. My findings are as follows: there are a total of 68 *dui bu dui*s used as tag question in my data; among them, 29 (43%) *dui bu dui*s are used to seek acknowledgment, and 21 (31%) are used to seek affiliation; the rest of the *dui bu dui*s have a variety of functions such as seeking confirmation (11, 16%), seeking attention (3, 4%), turn holding (3, 4%) and exclamation(1, 2%).

The current study focuses on the two main interactional functions of *dui bu dui* in the data: seeking acknowledgment and seeking affiliation. These two interactional functions of *dui bu dui* have not been explored before. Specifically, when used after a topic component, *dui bu dui* serves to seek acknowledgment of the referent specified in the topic; when produced after an assertive sentence, *dui bu dui* is used to seek the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance specified in the assertion. In the following sections, I will report on these two functions of *dui bu dui* respectively. For each interactional function, two to three simple clear cases will be presented to illustrate the point.

4.1 Seeking acknowledgment

The first interactional function of *dui bu dui* is seeking the recipient's acknowledgment of the referent specified in the topic. This type of *dui bu dui* is usually used after the topic component of a topic-comment structure. According to Li and Thompson (1981), topic-comment structure is considered as one of the most striking features of Mandarin sentence structure. Mandarin is also considered as a topic-prominent language (Li and Thompson, 1976). The topic of a sentence is "what the sentence is about" and it serves as the "center of attention of the sentence"(Li and Thompson, 1981:85). It sets the framework for the rest of the sentence which is called the comment. The following two examples demonstrate the topic-component structure in Mandarin.

(1)   Li and Thompson (1981:86)

      Topic   Comment

      那 只 狗   我 已经　看 过　了

      na zhi gou   wo yijing   kan guo le

      that CL dog   I   already see EXP CRS

      That dog   I've already seen.

(2)   Li and Thompson (1981:86)

      Topic   Comment

这 棵 树　　叶子 很 大

zhe ke shu　　yezi hen da

this CL tree　　leaf very big

This tree,　　(its) leaves are very big.

According to Li & Thompson (1981), the topic sets a framework in naming what the sentence is about. The topic is "typically a noun phrase or a verb phrase" and "occurs in sentence-initial position" (Li and Thompson, 1981:86). In the first example, the topic is the noun phrase *na zhi gou* ('that dog'). It occurs at the beginning of the sentence. The rest of the sentence is the comment *wo yijing kanguo le* ('I've already seen'). The topic *na zhi gou* ('that dog') sets the framework for the comment. In the second example, the topic is the noun phrase *zhe ke shu* ('this tree'). It also appears in the beginning of the sentence and sets the framework for the rest of the sentence *yezi hen da* ('leaves are very big') which is the comment.

In my data, *dui bu dui* recurrently occurs after the topic component of an utterance and it is used to seek acknowledgment of the receipt of the referent specified in the topic. Extracts 1, 2, and 3 exemplify this usage of *dui bu dui*. In these three extracts, the speakers produce *dui bu dui* immediately after the topic component. After hearing *dui bu dui*, the recipients immediately provide an acknowledgment token *en* ('mm') displaying their acknowledgment of the receipt of the referent.

Extract 1 is taken from a conversation between two graduate students working as teaching assistants at a university. Adam is telling Ben a story of a student cheating in an exam where Adam was one of the exam supervisors.

(1) Exam

01   Adam: 把 那　份,

          ba na fen

          BA that CL

          'Given that…'

02   有 这 个;

          you zhe ge

          have this CL

          'Having this…'

03   有 可疑性 的 试卷 交给 我们 的 那 个 女 的

          you jeyixing de shijuan jiaogei women de na ge nü de

          have suspicious ASSC exam give we ASSC that CL female PRT

'That girl who handed in the suspicious exam.'

→ 对　不　对;

dui　bu　dui

right　not　right

'Right?'

04　　Ben：嗯;

en

mm

'Mm'

05　　Adam：她 是 从　第二　　个;

ta　shi cong dier　　ge

she be from second CL

'She is from the second (aisle).'

06   右边　那　个　跑道;

     youbian na　ge　paodao

     right that CL　runway

     'The aisle on the right side…'

07   就是　右边　　那 个 跑道;

     jiushi　youbian na ge paodao

     just be right that CL runway

     'It's the aisle on the right.'

In this sequence, *dui bu dui* occurs in line 3. Prior to this sequence, Adam is telling Ben that after the students handed in their exam papers, a girl found an extra exam paper on the floor. Therefore, Adam considered this extra exam paper suspicious. Line 3 except *dui bu dui* is the topic component of Adam's utterance. Adam uses a determiner (*na*, 'that') to refer to the specific girl who found the suspicious exam paper (line 3). Here, *dui bu dui* is produced after the topic component in line 3. Adam uses *dui bu dui* to seek Ben's acknowledgment of the receipt of the referent, "that girl" identified in the topic. After hearing *dui bu dui*, Ben responds with an acknowledgment token *en* ('mm') in line 4, acknowledging that the referent is 'that girl' in the topic component. Ben's

acknowledgment token here shows that he orients to Adam's *dui bu dui* as seeking acknowledgment.

Although there is no noticeable body movement involved, *dui bu dui* is produced with particular prosodic features. Figure 1 demonstrates the prosodic features of *dui bu dui* in this extract. It is produced with a slightly falling pitch movement[2] based on the author's auditory perception and a short duration of c.a 190 ms (Figure 1).

---

2 Mandarin is a tone language and it has four tones: high level (Tone 1), high rising (Tone 2), low falling(Tone 3) and high falling(Tone 4) (Chao,1968). For example, the syllable *ma* can have four different meanings depending on the tones: *mā* "mother" (Tone 1: high level tone); *má* "hemp" (Tone 2: high rising tone); *mǎ* "horse" (Tone 3: low falling tone); *mà* "scold" (Tone 4: high falling tone). In the current study, the first and the last syllables *dui* "right" is in the high falling tone (Tone 4) and the second syllable *bu* "not" is in the high rising tone (Tone 2) in Mandarin. But "despite the interplay of tones, there exists coherent intonation contours in naturally occurring Mandarin conversation"(Li, 2013:78). The relationship between tones and intonation in Mandarin is described as small ripples riding on large waves (Chao, 1968). Here, *dui bu dui* has a coherent intonation contour in addition to their individual lexical tones. Due to the effect of global intonation, the pitch contours of the three syllables may be different from their lexical tones.
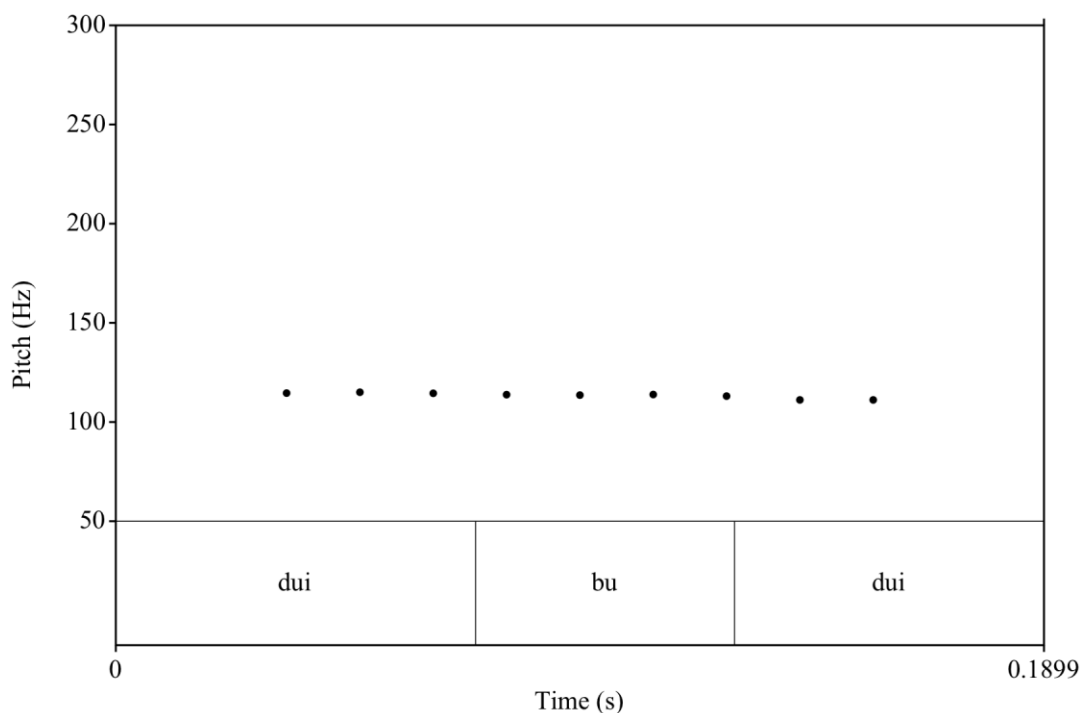
Figure 1 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 3 in Extract 1

Although the slightly falling pitch movement is not directly observable in the acoustic analysis result shown in Table 1, it is clearly noticeable in the native speaker's auditory perception. Sometimes there is discrepancy between the result of the acoustic analysis (due to the calculation error by the acoustic analysis software program) and the native speaker's auditory perception. In this case, the native speaker's auditory perception is considered more reliable and given priority. The author has also asked ten other native speakers of Mandarin to listen to the pitch movement of *dui bu dui*, and their auditory perception is also slightly falling.

In this example, *dui bu dui* appears after the topic component, and it has the function of seeking acknowledgment of the receipt of the referent identified in the topic.

Extract 2 is taken from a conversation between two friends Hou and Li. They are talking about how to write a Chinese literature thesis.

(2) Literature

01   Hou：我　当时　　就　觉得;

            wo dangshi　　jiu　juede

            I　at that time then think

            'I was thinking at that time'

02   嗯-

            en-

            mm

            'Mm'

03   可以 去 把 它;

            keyi qu ba ta

            can go BA it

            '(I) can make it (the book)'

04   挖出　一　点;

wachu　yi　dian

dig　　one　CL

'Dig into it'

05   有　没　有 (-) 可能　　去 挖出 一　点 深　的　东西　来　呢;

you mei　you (-) keneng　　qu wachu yidian　shen de　dongxi lai　ne

have NEG have possibulity go　dig　　a little deep ASSC stuff　come PFV

'Is there any possibility to dig out something deeper?'

06   好像　　也 (--) 很　难.

haoxiang ye (--)　hen　nan

seem　　also　very difficult

'It also seems difficult.'

07   比如　　　说;

biru   shuo

for example say

'For example,'

08 →   你 上次   说 那 个 (-) 笑傲江湖;   对 不 [对];

ni shangci shuo na ge (-) xiaoaojianghu   dui bu [dui]

you last time say   that CL *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer* right not right

'Last time you said that *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*, right?'

9   Li :   [嗯];

                                                                    [en]

                                                                    mm

                                                                    'Mm'

10   (1.3)

11   [.hhh]

12   Hou : [那] 比如 说 我 现在 想: 分析,

         [na] biru shuo   wo xianzai xiang: fenxi

         then for example I   now   want   analyze

         'Then, for example, now I want to analyze…'

13   笑傲江湖;

         Xiaoaojianghu

         The Smiling, Proud Wanderer

         '*The Smiling, Proud Wanderer.*'

From line 1 to line 5, Hou expresses her opinion on the topic of her thesis. She asserts that it is difficult to dig deeper into the idea. She then provides accounts for her assertion in lines 07-13. In line 8, Hou produces the topic component, *ni shangci shuo na ge xiaoaojianghu* ('Last time you said that *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*'). Immediately after the topic component, she produces *dui bu dui*. In line 9, Li produces an acknowledgment token *en* ('mm'), overlapping with the last syllable of Hou's *dui bu dui*. The overlap shows that Li anticipates the completion of Hou's turn after hearing *dui bu dui* even before its actual completion, and produces the acknowledgment token as the

response. This acknowledgment token shows that Li has already recognized the referent in the topic, which is the novel *xiaoaojianghu* ('*The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*') and treats Hou's *dui bu dui* as seeking acknowledgment.

The pitch movement of *dui bu dui* in this extract (see Figure 2) resembles that of in Extract 1. Again, *dui bu dui* is produced with a slightly falling pitch movement based on the author's auditory perception, and a short duration of c.a. 170 ms.
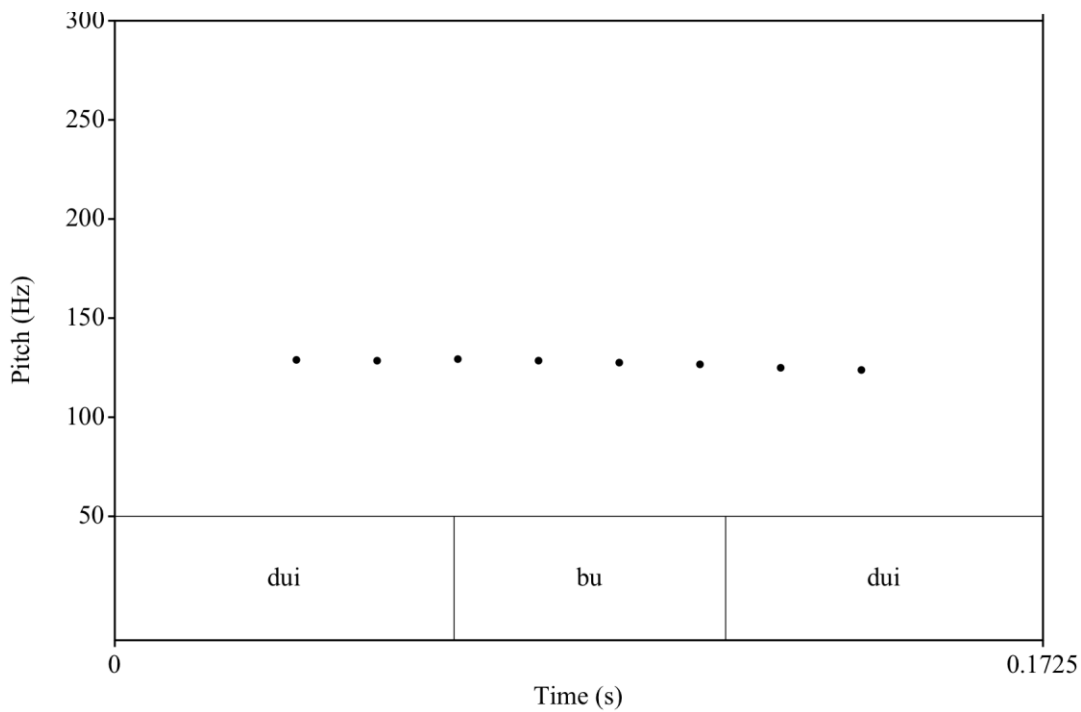
Figure 2 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 8 in Extract 2

Similar to the previous example shown in Extract 1, *dui bu dui* appears after the topic component and it has the function of seeking acknowledgment of the referent identified in the topic.

The same use of *dui bu dui* can also be observed in Extract 3, which is taken from the same conversation as Extract 1.

(3) Exam 2

1   Adam: instructor 就 发现 了 一 个 好 主意;

           instructor jiu faxian le   yi ge hao chuyi

           instructor just find PFV one CL good idea

           'The instructor comes up with a good idea.'

2   说 这 个.

          shuo zhe ge

          say this CL

          'Saying…'

3   待会 我们 出去 的 时候 嘛. (0.2)

          daihui women chuqu de   shihou ma (0.2)

later   we   out   ASSC time PRT

'When we go out,'

4 → 对 不 对;

dui bu dui

right not right

'Right?'

5   Ben：[嗯].

[en]

mm

'Mm.'

6   Adam: [就 是] 六 个 人;

[jiu shi] liu CL ren

just be six cl people

'There are six teaching assistants.'

7   还 一 个 把守   一 个门,

          hai yi ge bashou   yi   ge men

          also one CL stand by one CL   door

          'Each teaching assistant will stand by a door (to collect the exams).'

In this sequence, Adam tells Ben about the instructor's idea about how to collect the exam papers. The report of the instructor's idea is formulated in the topic-comment construction in lines 3, 4, 6 and 7. The sentence-initial time adverbial clause *daihui women chuqu de shihou* 'when we go out' (line 03) is the topic as "it sets the frame within which the rest of the sentence is presented" (Li and Thompson, 1981:95). The topic can be separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause or a particle (Li & Thompson, 1981). In this example, the topic is separated from the rest of the sentence by a particle *ma* and a 0.2 second-pause in line 3. *Dui bu dui* is produced in line 4, after the topic component and the topic marker *ma*. Ben produces an acknowledgment token *en* in line 05 immediately after *dui bu dui*, acknowledging the receipt of the topic component. Ben's response here shows that he orients to *dui bu dui* as seeking acknowledgment.

Dui bu dui also has particular prosodic features in this extract. It is produced with a slightly falling pitch movement and a duration of c.a. 310 ms (Figure 3). The duration of *dui bu dui* in this example is longer than the duration of *dui bu dui*s in the previous two examples. The duration of *dui bu dui* is not systematic because of the small size of the data sample. One speculation for the difference of duration is that *dui bu dui* in this example is produced after the pause and the topic marker *ma* whereas *dui bu dui*s in

previous two examples are produced immediately after the topic component. Because of the speech disfluency (a 0.2 second-pause in line 3), Adam produces *dui bu dui* in a new IU. Being produced as a separate IU may be related to the longer duration. In previous two examples, short *dui bu dui* is produced as one IU with the preceding topic. Similar to the previous two examples, *dui bu dui* here also appears after the topic component and has the function of seeking acknowledgment of the referent in the topic component.
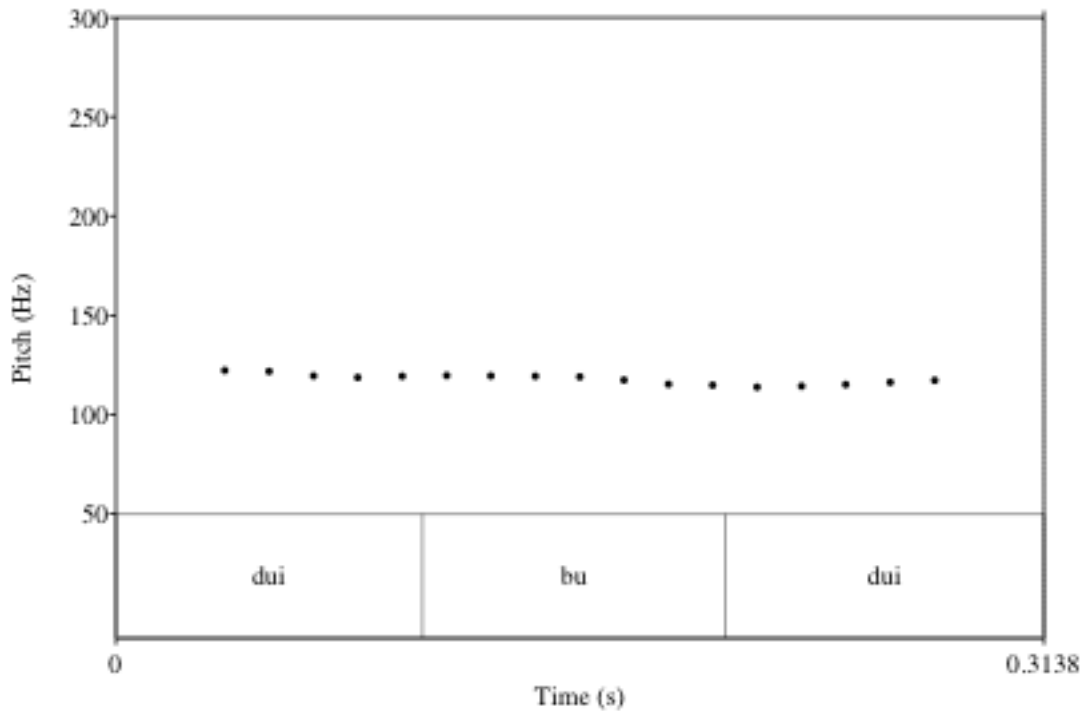

Figure 3 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 4 in Extract 3

To sum up, when occurring after the topic component of an utterance, *dui bu dui* has the function of seeking acknowledgment of the receipt of the referent. It is also produced

with recurrent prosodic features such as slightly falling pitch movement and relatively short duration.

4.2 Seeking affiliation

In addition to being after the topic component, *dui bu dui* also occurs at the end of a complete assertive sentence. The assertive sentences before *dui bu dui* are usually produced with certain lexico-syntactic constructions such as copula *shi* "be", universal quantifier and conjunction in the data. When produced at the end of the assertive utterances with these lexico-syntactic constructions, *dui bu dui*s serve to seek the recipients' affiliation with the speakers' stances revealed in the speakers' previous assertions. Thus, seeking the recipient's affiliation is the second interactional function of *dui bu dui* in the data. The three recurrent formats of assertion before *dui bu dui*: copula *shi* "be", universal quantifier and conjunction will be explored in sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3 respectively.

4.2.1 Assertion with copula sentence structure

The copula verb *shi* ('be') in Mandarin is a linking verb in the copula sentence (Li and Thompson, 1981). The copula *shi* ('be') is employed to construct assertive sentences. In the data, *dui bu dui* is observed to attach to the assertive sentences constructed through the copula *shi* ('be'). Recipients regularly produce affiliative responses immediately after

dui bu dui. Recipients' affiliative responses provide the evidence that they treat the speaker's *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation.

The following extract demonstrates this function of *dui bu dui.* It is taken from the same conversation as Extract 3. Prior to this sequence, Adam tells Ben about the details of a student's possible cheating behavior in an exam.

(4) Exam 3

01   Adam：地上　没有　试卷;

        dishang meiyou　shijuan

        floor　　NEG　　exam

        'There is no exam paper on the floor.'

02   （当时）　多余　的　那 份　试卷　一定　**是** 假 的.

        (dangshi)　 duoyu de　 na fen shijuan yiding **shi** jia de

        at that time extra ASSC that CL exam　must　 **be** fake PRT

        'At that time, that extra exam paper must be suspicious.'

03   (0.8)

04 ⟶ 对　不　对;

dui　bu　dui

right not right

'Right? '

05 Ben： 为什么　　多余,

weishenme duoyu

why　　　extra

'Why extra?'

06 Adam: 就是:,

jiushi

just be

'Namely,'

07 后来　后来　后来　交　　了　一　份　之后;

houlai houlai houlai jiao   le   yi   fen zhihou

later   later   later   hand in PFV one CL after

'After (students) handed in (the exam papers)'

08   地上   捡   了   一   份 试卷   嘛;

dishang jian   le   yi   fen shijuan ma

floor   pick up PFV one CL exam   PRT

'(Someone) picked up one (extra) exam paper on the floor.'

09   Ben :   喔喔.

ou ou

Oh oh

'Oh oh.'

10   Adam: 这一   份 试卷   一定 是假   的;

 zhe yi   fen shijuan yiding **shi** jia   de

this one CL exam   must   **be** fake PRT

'This exam paper must be suspicious. '

11 ⟶ 对 不 对;

dui bu dui

right not right

'Right?'

12 Ben ： 对 啊;

dui a

right PRT

'Right.'

13 Adam ： 一定 是 后来 的 人 带 进来 的 试卷;

yiding shi houlai de ren dai jinlai de shijuan

must be later ASSC people bring in ASSC exam

'This exam paper must have been brought in later.'

In this excerpt, there are two occurrences of *dui bu dui* (line 4 and line 11). The first *dui bu dui* is produced after the assertion in line 4. The sentence is in a copula sentence structure asserting that the extra exam paper must be suspicious in line 2. Adam then produces *dui bu dui* after this assertive sentence. Ben displays neither his affiliation nor explicit disaffiliation towards Adam's assertion; instead, he initiates a repair (*weishenme duoyu* 'why extra?') in line 5. Schegloff et al. (1977: 361) define repair as dealing with "problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding". Ben is having a understanding problem towards Adam's assertion. Adam then performs the repair with an account (lines 6-8). After Adam's repair, Ben produces two change-of-state token *oh*s (Heritage, 1984) in line 9. Here, the change-of-state token *oh* indicates Ben's epistemic shift from "non-knowing to now-knowing" (Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 2007:118), that is, from not knowing why the exam paper is extra to now knowing the reason. Here, Ben's knowledge of why there was an extra exam paper prepares the ground for his affiliative response later in line 12. In what follows, Adam repeats the assertion and *dui bu dui* again (line10 and line 11) to seek Ben's affiliation. After his understanding problem has been solved, Ben immediately provides his affiliative response with an agreement marker *dui* (lines 12). That is, he affiliates with Adam's stance that the extra exam is suspicious.

The two *dui bu dui*s are both produced to seek Ben's affiliation. However, Ben has not provided the affiliative response after the first *dui bu dui* due to an understanding problem regarding Adam's assertion. After the repair, Adam repeats the same assertive utterance with *dui bu dui* to seek Ben's affiliation again. That Adam repeats the same assertive sentence with *dui bu dui* until he receives Ben's affiliative response provides evidence that the speaker treats *dui bu dui* as seeking the recipient's affiliation. That Ben

produces the affiliative response immediately after *dui bu dui* provides evidence that the recipient also orients to *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation.

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate the prosodic features of *dui bu dui* in line 4 and line 11. We can see that the *dui bu dui*s here are also produced with similar pitch movement as those after the topic component. They are both produced with a slightly falling pitch movement. Their duration is slightly longer than other *dui bu dui*s. The first *dui bu dui* in line 4 has the longest duration among all the *dui bu dui*s. It is produced after a long pause. The 0.8- provides Ben with the opportunity to give affiliative response. But there is no uptake from Ben. Thus, Adam produces this longest *dui bu dui* to seek Ben's affiliative response. The duration of the second *dui bu dui* in line 11 is also longer compared to other examples. The second *dui bu dui* is produced after Adam's clarification of Ben's understanding problem. After the clarification, he reproduces the same assertive sentence pursuing Ben's affiliative response. Thus, he is producing a longer *dui bu dui* to emphasize that he is still seeking affiliation from Ben.
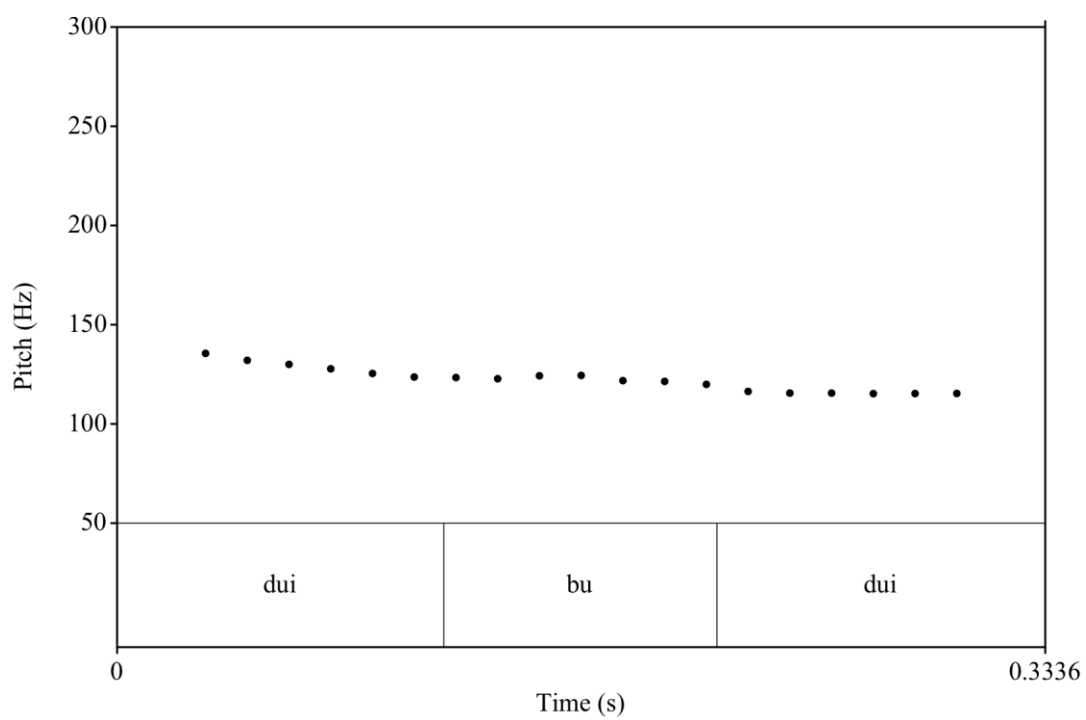
Figure 4 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 4 in Extract 4
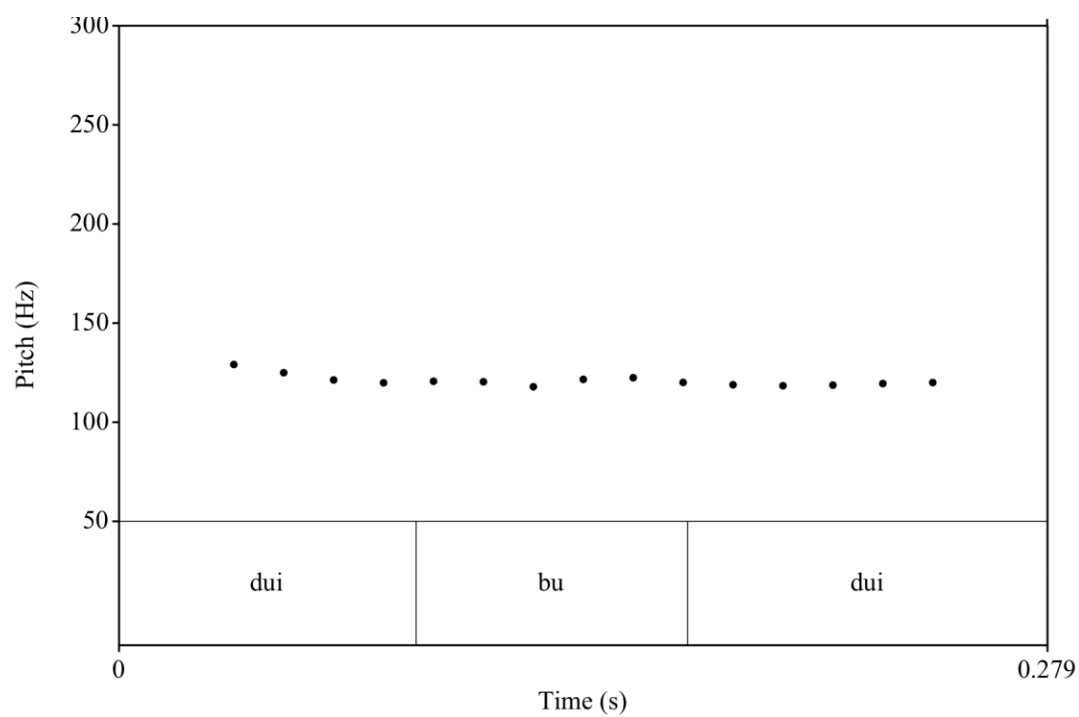
Figure 5 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 11 in Extract 4

There are two *dui bu dui*s (line 4 and line 11) in this example. They are both produced after the assertive sentences through the copula sentence structure. After the repair and the second *dui bu dui*, Ben provides the affiliative response to display his affiliation with Adam's stance.

Extract 5 is another case in point. Hou and Li are students at the same university, and they are talking about their thesis statements.

(5) Thesis

01   Hou: 他 就 说 thesis statement (--);

               ta jiu shuo thesis statement (--)

               3SG just say thesis statement

               'He just said thesis statement.'

02   我 当时　　是,

             wo dangshi　　shi

             I　at that time be

             'At that time, I…'

03   (1.2)

04   出来   的   是 一 个 问题;

            chulai   de   shi yi   ge wenti

            come up ASSC be one CL question

            '(I) came up with a question'

05   因为 我 当 [时   选   的];

            yinwei wo dang[shi   xuan de]

            because I   at that time choose PRT

            'Because at that time I chose…'

06   Li: [那不   行]

                       [na bu   xing]

                       that NEG OK

                       'That's not OK'

07   Hou ：对.

        dui

        right

        'Right.'
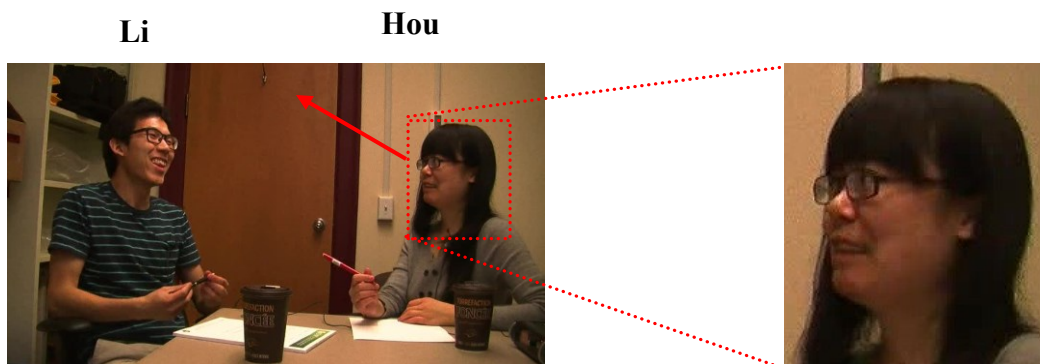
Li   Hou

Figure 6 Hou's gaze away at *jiushi* ('just be') in line 8

Gaze: gaze away

08   就是;

        jiushi

        just be

        'Namely,'

Li   Hou
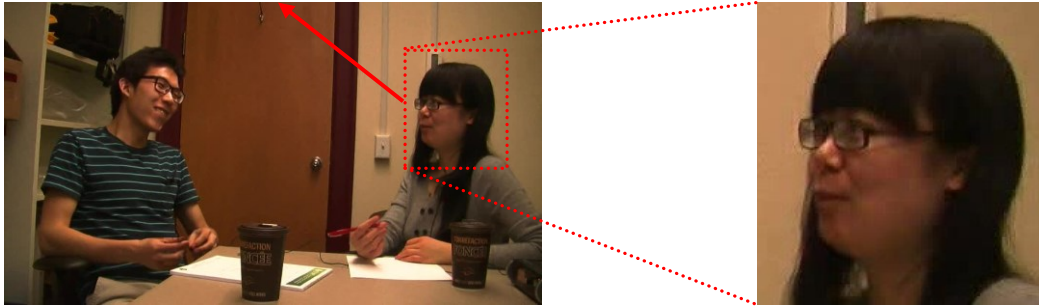
Figure 7 Hou's gaze away at the pause in line 9

Gaze: gaze away

09   (1.4)

Li   **Hou**
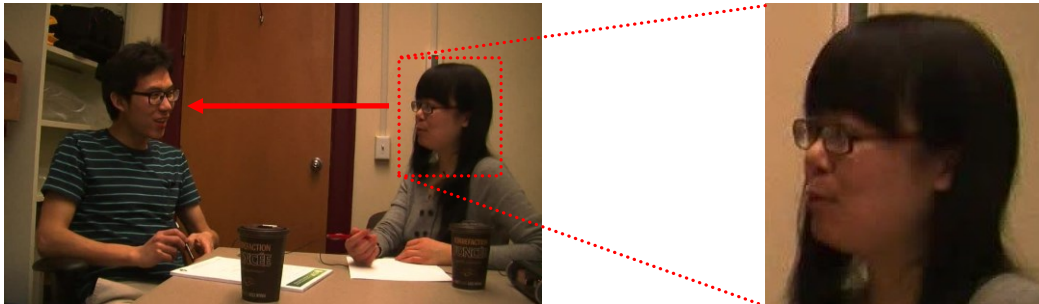
Figure 8 Hou's gaze at Li at *yaoyou yige* ('should have one') in line 10

Gaze: gaze away   at Li

10   它 应该 是 要有 一 个;

          ta   yinggai **shi** yaoyou yi ge

          3SG should **be** have   one CL

'It should be a …'

Li   **Hou**   **Li**   **Hou**

Figure 9 Li's head nod in line 11 (A)   Figure 10 Li's head nod in line 11 (B)

11   Li: nod

Gaze: _gaze at_____

12 ➜ Hou: 定论   对 不 对;

           dinglun   dui bu dui

           statement right not right

           'Statement, right?'

13   Li: 对.

           dui

right

'Right.'

14   是的.

shi de

be PRT

'Yes.'

Here, *dui bu dui* is attached to the assertive sentence produced by Hou where she displays her understanding of the thesis statements (line 10 and 12). She thinks that the thesis statement could be a question (lines 1-5). Upon hearing Li's disagreement *nabuxing* ('That's not OK') in line 6, Hou drops her utterance and produces an agreement token *dui* (line 7) to affiliate with Li's disagreement. In lines 10 and 12, Hou expresses her opinion on the thesis statement using an assertive sentence with a copula *shi* ('be'). *Dui bu dui* is produced at the end of the assertive sentence (line 12). After *dui bu dui*, Li produces two agreement tokens, *dui* ('right') and *shi de* ('yes'), displaying his affiliation with Hou's stance (lines 13-14). Li's affiliative response with two explicit agreement tokens immediately after *dui bu dui* provide compelling evidence that he treats *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation.

In this sequence, Hou produces noticeable bodily-visual behaviors in the production of *dui bu dui*. In addition to the verbal structure *dui bu dui*, the nonverbal behaviors seem to be used as visual resources to seek Li's affiliative response. Before producing the assertive sentence *ta yinggai yao you yi ge* ('It should be a...'), Hou starts shifting her gaze away from Li and looks up at the beginning of line 8 on *jiushi* ('namely') (Figure 6). She gazes back at Li during the delivery of the assertion, in line 10 (Figure 8). Here, the gaze shift (from away to at the recipient) embodies that Hou directs her attention to Li at the end of her assertion and now seeks Li's response (Goodwin, 1979; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). In line 11, Li nods (Figure 9 and 10) at this very moment when Hou shifts her gaze back at him. The coordinated timing between Li's nods and Hou's gaze shift shows that Li treats Hou's gaze shift as a visual resource to seek his response. Hou maintains her gaze during the delivery of *dui bu dui* in line 12.

Here, *dui bu dui* is also produced with specific prosodic features. We can see that *dui bu dui* is produced with a slightly falling pitch movement in Figure 11. Its total duration is about 140 ms.
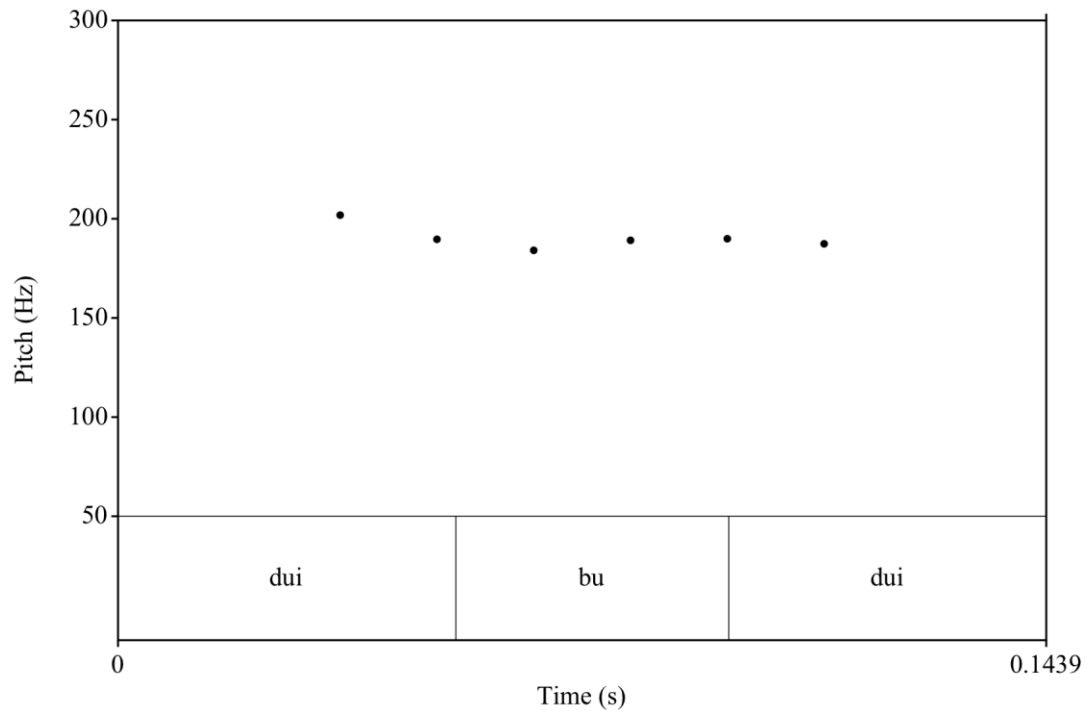
Figure 11 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 12 in Extract 5

To sum up, *dui bu dui* in this section occurs after assertive sentences constructed by the copula structure. The function of *dui bu dui* is seeking the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance revealed in the assertion to which *dui bu dui* is attached. That the recipients provide the affiliative response immediately after *dui bu dui* provides evidence that they treat it as seeking affiliation with the speaker's stance. This type of *dui bu dui* seems to have a set of recurrent prosodic features. That is, they are all produced with a slightly falling pitch movement and relatively short duration. Some noticeable bodily-visual behaviors also occur during the production of *dui bu dui*. For example, gaze shift may be a resource to seek the recipient's response.

4.2.2 Assertion with universal quantifier

In addition to the copula sentence structure, *dui bu dui* is also observed to appear after assertions formulated with universal quantifier. Universal quantifier is used to assert that a general proposition is true to all the members of the delineated universe or class. The typical universal quantifiers are "all" and "every" (Saeed, 1997). The universal quantifiers used in the assertive sentence in my data include *quanbu* ('all') and *renhe* ('any'). When produced after assertions with universal quantifiers, *dui bu dui* also serves to seek the participants' affiliation with the speaker's stance. The following two extracts demonstrate this usage of *dui bu dui*.

In Extract 6, Liu, Rui and Mei are three students from a Chinese students' association. They are talking about how to get funding from sponsors for an event organized by their association. Prior to this sequence, they are talking about what kind of companies might be interested in sponsoring their event.

(6) Car

01   Liu : 主要 还 是 搬家;

zhuyao hai shi banjia

main   still be moving

'The main (sponsor) is still the movers'

02 我 觉得 那 个 二手 车 他 真的 是 不 鸟 你 (-);

wo juede na ge ershou che ta zhende shi bu niao ni (-)

I think that CL second-hand car 3SG really be NEG care you

'I think that used-car dealer won't really sponsor you.'

03 Rui: 嗯;

en

mm

'Mm'

04 Mei： 对 啊,

dui a

right PRT

'Right.'

05 二手 车 是: 是 (-) [当地 人 吧].

ershou che shi: shi (-) [dangdi ren ba]

second-hand car   be be   local   people PRT

'The used-car dealer is a local.'

06   Liu :   [他   觉得],

                                        [ta   juede]

                                         3SG think

                                        'He (used-car dealer) thinks…'

07   他 (-)面向   的   是::全部   埃德蒙顿   人   嘛;

                ta (-)mianxiang de   shi **quanbu** aidemengdun ren   ma

                3SG facing   ASSC be **all**   Edmonton   people PRT

                '(Used-car dealer) He is providing services to all the people in Edmonton.'

08 ⟶   对 不 对;

                dui bu dui

                right not right

                'Right?'

09　　Rui：对.

　　　　　　dui

　　　　　　right

　　　　　　'Right.'

10　　Mei:　嗯;

　　　　　　en

　　　　　　mm

　　　　　　'Mm'

11　　Liu：你　这个　协会　　才　那　一点　人;

　　　　　　ni　zhe ge　xiehui　　cai　na　yidian ren

　　　　　　you this CL association only that little　people

　　　　　　'There are only a few people in your association.'

Here, Liu, Mei and Rui are discussing the possibility of getting funding from a used-car dealer for their event (lines 1-6). In lines 1 and 2, Liu argues that the main sponsor is still movers not the used-car dealers. After the acknowledgment (line 3) and agreement (line 4) from Mei and Rui, Liu provides accounts for his argument (lines 6,7 and11). In line 7, Liu asserts that the used-car dealer is providing services to all the people in Edmonton. The assertive sentence is produced with a universal quantifier *quanbu* ('all'). *Dui bu dui* is produced after this assertion (line 8). The addressed recipient Rui's agreement token *dui* ('right') (line 9) shows that he agrees with and endorses Liu's stance. Rui's orientation to the *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation is evidenced by his offer of the affiliative response *dui "right"* immediately after Liu's *dui bu dui*.

In this example, *dui bu dui* is produced with a slightly falling pitch movement and short duration (c.a. 200 ms) (see Figure 12).
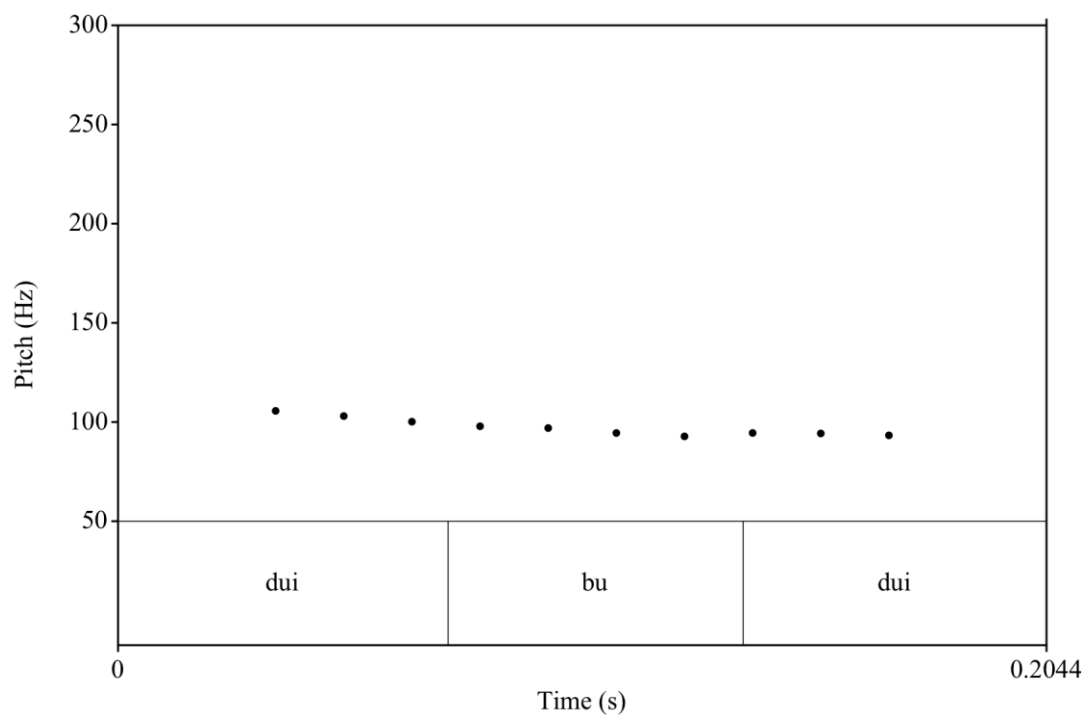
Figure 12 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 8 in Extract 6

Extract 7, taken from the same conversation as Extracts 2 and 4, is another case in point. Prior to this sequence, Adam introduces the exam rules and the way the supervisors collected the exam papers.

(7) Exam 4

01   Adam: 出去 了 你 就 交 一 份 试卷;

        chuqu le   ni jiu jiao   yi   fen shijuan

        out   PFV you just hand in one CL exam

        'Hand in your exam on your way out.'

02　　　出去 了 你 就 交 一 份 试卷;

　　　chuqu le ni jiu jiao yi fen shijuan

　　　out PFV you just hand in one CL exam

　　　'Hand in your exam on your way out.'

03　　　就 这样子 (-) 这样 就:;

　　　jiu zheyangzi (-) zheyang jiu

　　　just like this　like this just

　　　'Just like this, this just…'

04　　Ben： 嗯;

　　　en

　　　mm

　　　'Mm.'

05　　Adam：而且不准任何人进来;

erqie bu zhun renheren jinlai

moreover NEG allow anyone come in

'Moreover, no one will be allowed to come in'

06   (1.0)

07   你　明白　　吗,

            ni   mingbai ma

            you clear   Q

            'Are you clear?'

08   Ben： 明白.

            mingbai

            clear

            'Clear.'

Adam   **Ben**   **Adam**   **Ben**

Figure 13 Adam's preparation of gesticulation   Figure 14 Adam's holding of the gesture

at *jiushi* ('just like') in line 9   at *renhe* ('any') in line 9

Hand: ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ **********************************

09   Adam：就是 这样子   不   会   有 **任何** 外来   的   试卷   卷进来;

         jiushi zheyangzi bu   hui you **renhe** wailai   de   shijuan juanjinlai

         then   like this   NEG will have **any**   outside ASSC exam   come in

         'Just like this, there won't be any extra exams coming into the exam room.'

Hand: *******

10 →   对 不 对;

           dui bu dui

           right not right

           'Right?'

Adam   **Ben**

Figure 15 Adam's retraction to rest position after *dui* ('right')at the end of line 11

Hand: **** .-.- RP |

11   Ben : 对.

        dui

        right

        'Right.'

12   Adam: 但: 这 个 然后   我们   就 这样子   办 了;

        dan zhe ge ranhou women jiu zheyangzi ban le

        but this CL then   we   just like this   do PFV

        'But, then we just do it like this'

13   就是 清场;

jiushi qingchang

namely site-clearing

'Namely, site-clearing of the exam room.'

In this sequence, Adam is explaining to Ben how the supervisors collected the exam papers (lines 1-5). There is a 1-second pause after Adam's explanation, which indicates that Ben's response is relevant at this moment. But due to the lack of response from Ben, Adam continues with his turn and pursues Ben's response by directly asking about his understanding (line 7). After hearing Ben's confirmation (line 8), Adam continues with his telling. The understanding check and Ben's confirmation here prepares the ground for Adam's assertion in line 9 where he asserts that there won't be any extra exam papers coming in. The assertion contains the universal quantifier *renhe* ('any'). *Dui bu dui* is produced immediately after this assertion in line 10. Ben's agreement (line 11) is a highly affiliative response to Adam's assertive turn. That Ben provides agreement immediately after Adam's *dui bu dui* provides evidence that he orients to *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation. After hearing Ben's affiliative response, Adam continues with his telling of the cheating story.

Adam also performs noticeable visual behaviors before and during the production of *dui bu dui*. At the beginning of his turn in line 9, Adam starts to move his hands outwards, (line 9, Figure 13). Then he holds the gesture until the end of the turn after *dui bu dui*

(lines 9 and 10, Figure 14). After receiving Ben's affiliative response (*dui*, 'right'), Adam retracts his hand to the home position (Sacks & Schegloff 2002 [1975]) (line 11, Figure 15). The holding of the gesture at the end of *dui bu dui* seems to indicate that Adam is expecting the (affiliative) response from Ben. Immediately after Ben's affiliative response *dui* ('right'), Adam retracts his hands to the home position (Figure 15).

Dui bu dui in this extract is also produced with a slightly falling pitch movement and short duration (c.a. 220 ms) (see Figure 16). Although the acoustic analysis shown in Figure 21 seems to indicate that *dui bu dui* is produced with a level pitch movement, the pitch movement of *dui bu dui* is auditorily perceived as slightly falling by native speakers.
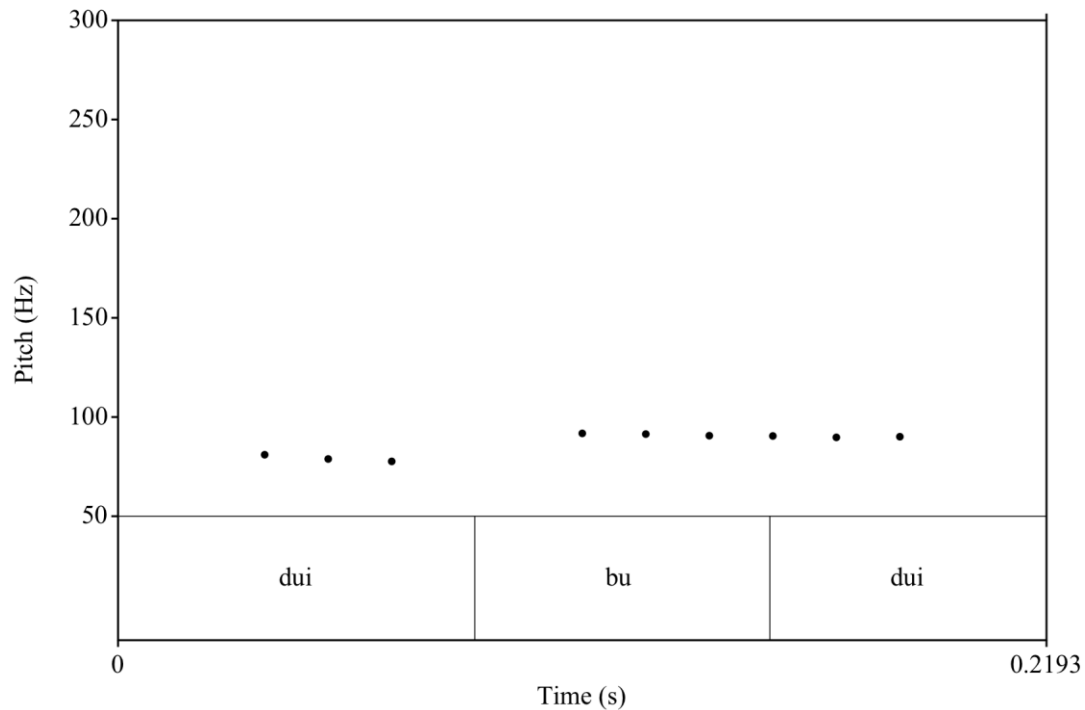

Figure 16 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 10 in Extract 7

In this extract, *dui bu dui* appears after Adam's assertion containing the universal quantifier *renhe* ('any'). It is used by Adam to seek Ben's affiliation with Adam's stance. Adam's holding of the gesture indicates that Adam is expecting Ben's response.

To summarize, *dui bu dui*s in this section occur after the assertions containing universal quantifiers. The function of *dui bu dui* is seeking the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance. The recipients display their affiliation by producing the agreement token *dui* immediately after *dui bu dui*. The *dui bu dui*s at this position are also produced with recurrent prosodic features. It is produced with a slightly falling pitch movement and relatively short duration. Sometimes, certain body movements are also involved in the production of *dui bu dui*. For example, the hold of the gesture by the speaker indicates that the speaker is expecting the recipient's response.

4.2.3 Assertion prefaced with conjunctions

In addition to universal quantifiers, the speakers in the data also produce assertions prefaced with conjunctions.When produced after assertions prefaced with conjunctions, *dui bu dui* also serves to seek the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance revealed in the assertion. In my data, the conjunctions used in this context are *danshi* ('but') and *suoyi* ('so'). *Danshi* and *suoyi* can both precede a statement of the speaker's opinion. *Danshi* is a contrastive marker in Mandarin. The speaker produces an assertion prefaced with the contrastive marker *danshi* ('but') to contrast his/her ensuing opinion to the immediately previous one (Lü, 1980). *Suoyi* is a causal conjunction. The speaker

produces an assertion prefaced with *suoyi* ('so') to summarize what has just been said (Lü, 1980). Extract 8 is an example of the assertion constructed through the contrastive *danshi* clause, while Extract 9 exemplifies the causal adverbial clause prefaced with *suoyi*.

In Extract 8, Tong, Ashley and Chang are friends gathering together for lunch. Prior to the sequence, they are discussing the benefit of getting a permanent resident (PR) card of Canada.

(8) Visa

01　　Tong :　　　我 还 寻思 着,

　　　　　　　　wo hai xunsi zhe

　　　　　　　　I   still think ASP

　　　　　　　　'I am still thinking…'

02　　　　　　　诶,

　　　　　　　　ei

　　　　　　　　INT

　　　　　　　　'Ei'

03　　　　　　　其实　 不　 移民　　 也　行　 啊;

qishi　　bu　yimin　　ye　xing a

actually NEG immigrate also ok　PRT

'Actually, it is ok (if you) do not immigrate.'

04　　Ashley：　　嗯::,

en

mm

'Mm.'

05　　　　　　　不　行.

bu　xing

NEG ok

'No.'

06　　Tong：　　想　过来 随时　就 过来 了;

xiang guolai suishi　jiu guolai le

want　come anytime will come PRT

'Come whenever you want.'

07   Ashley :   那 你 那 你 过来 的话;

na ni na ni guolai dehua

then you then you come   if

'Then, then if you come…'

08   你 你 过来 短期   行 啊;

ni ni guolai duanqi   xing a

you you come short term ok   PRT

'It's OK if you come in short term.'

09   Tong: 对.

dui

right

'Right.'

Chang   **Ashley**   **Tong**

Figure 17 Ashley's gaze away at *zhe* ('this') in line 10

Gaze: <u>gaze away</u>

10   Ashely :   这 个 没 问题 啊;

                 zhe ge   mei wenti   a

                 this CL NEG problem PRT

                 'That's OK.'

Gaze: <u>gaze away</u>

11   **但是**你 你 拿 那 个 东西 不 能 在 这边 上班;

           danshi ni ni   na na ge dongxi bu   neng zai zhe bian   shangban

           but you you hold that CL stuff   NEG can   at this CL   work

           'But, you…you can't work here holding that stuff (tourist visa). '

Chang   Ashely   Tong

Figure 18 Ashley's gaze at Tong after *dui bu dui* ('right?') at the end of line 12

Gaze: <u>gaze away</u>   <u>at Tong</u>

12 →   对　不　对;

                         dui　bu　dui

                         right not right

                         'Right?'

13   Tong :   是　的.

                         shi de

                         be PRT

                         'Yes.'

73

14   [对].

[dui]

right

'Right.'

15   Ashley: [嗯].

[en]

mm

'Mm'

Here, *dui bu dui* appears in line 12 after the assertion with a conjunction *danshi* ('but'). In this excerpt, Tong and Ashley have different stances towards having a permanent residence card of Canada (lines 1-9). Tong thinks it is not necessary to obtain this card, whereas Ashley holds a different view. In line 10, Ashley ostensively displays affiliation with Tong's proposal by saying *zhege mei wenti a* ('that's OK'). However, in line 11 she immediately delivers a conjunction *danshi* ('but') and stating a contrastive opinion that one cannot work by holding a tourist visa in line 11. Here, Ashley employs a strategy of endorsing Tong's stance first before proposing her actual contrastive stance. *Dui bu dui* is produced after Ashley states her contrastive stance. Tong produces two agreement tokens *shi de* ('yes') in line 12 and *dui* ('right') in line 13. The two tokens display Tong's

affiliation with Ashley. Her affiliative responses immediately after Ashley's *dui bu dui* provide evidence that Tong orients to *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation.

In this example, Ashley also uses visual signals to elicit the recipient's response after *dui bu dui*. At the beginning of line 10, Ashley starts shifting her gaze away from Tong and to the direction of her chopsticks (line 10, Figure 17). At the end of line 11, she directs her gaze back at Tong after producing *dui bu dui* (line 12, Figure 18). Here, Ashley's gaze at Tong immediately after *dui bu dui* can be viewed as a visual resource to elicit response from Tong (Goodwin, 1979; Stivers & Rossano, 2010).
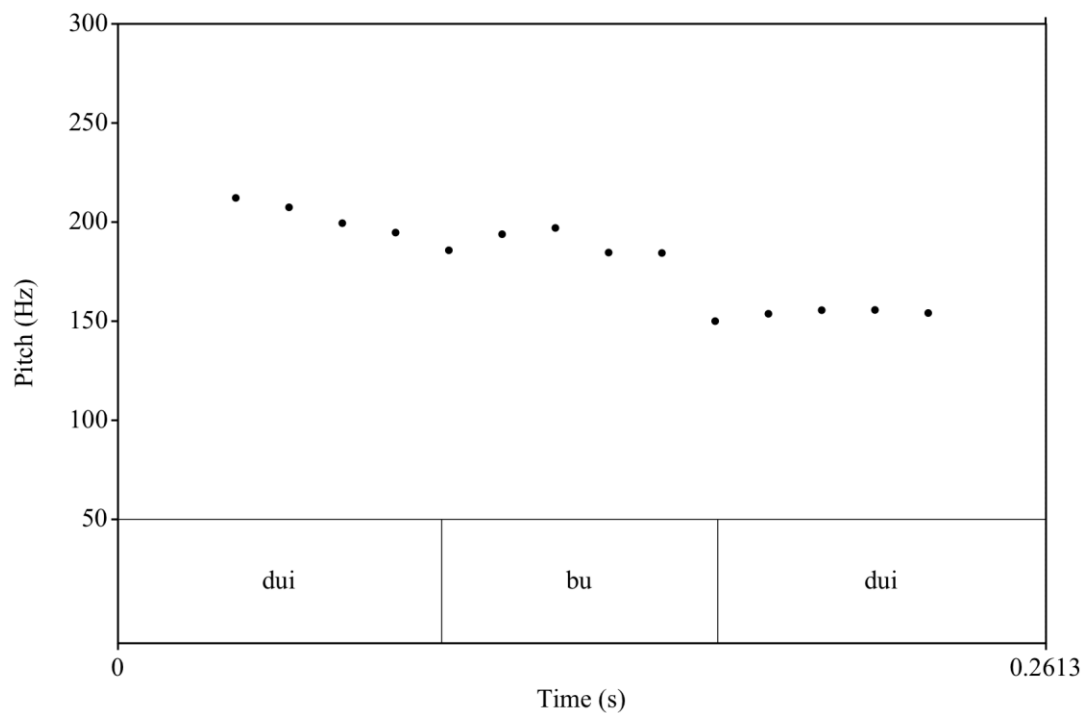

Figure 19 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 12 in Extract 8

Dui bu dui is produced with particular prosodic features: a global falling pitch movement and relatively short duration of c.a 260 ms (Figure 19).

Extract 9 is taken from the same conversation as Extract 8. Prior to this sequence, Ashley is complaining about revising others' papers.

(9) Dissertation

01   Ashley:其实　我　觉得　改　　是　最　　累　的;

              qishi　　wo juede gai　　shi zui　　lei　de

              actually I　　think revise be　most tire PRT

              'Actually, I think revising (others' papers) is very difficult.'

02   因为　　首先　　你　要　看懂　　这　个　人　写　　的　什么;

              yinwei　shouxian ni　yao　kandong　zhe ge ren　xie　de　　shenem

              because first　　you need understand this CL people write ASSC what

              'Because first you need you understand what he is writing about.'

03   然后　你　在　这　个　基础　上　　要　帮　他　　加工;

              ranhou ni　　zai zhe ge jichu shang yao bang ta　　jiagong

then   you at   this CL base above will help 3SG working

'Then you (the editor) need to revise (on it) based on your understanding.'

04   **所以**   要求   对 他 要求   是 更高   一 层   的

            suoyi   yaoqiu dui ta yaoqiu shi genggao yi ceng de

            so   require to 3SG require be higher   one CL PRT

            'So, the requirement, the (knowledge) requirement for him (the editor) is

            higher'

05   ➞   ［对 不 对］；

             [dui   bu dui]

              right not right

              'Right?'

06   Tong： [((laughing))]

07   Chang:[是].

[shi]

be

'Yes.'

08   Ashely:[我 说] 太 累 了.

[wo shuo] tai lei le

I   say   too tired PRT

'I am saying it's too difficult.'

The extract begins with Ashley's elaboration on the difficulty of revising others' papers (lines 1-3). In line 4, she uses a conjunction *suoyi* ('so') to summarize her opinion. She asserts that the knowledge requirement for the editor is higher. *Dui bu dui* is produced after the assertion to seek Chang's affiliation in line 5. The addressed recipient, Chang, produces the affirmative marker *shi* ('yes') in line 7. That is, she affiliates with Ashley's stance that the knowledge requirement for the editor is higher. Chang's affirmative response immediately after *dui bu dui* shows that Chang treats Ashley's *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation.

In this example, *dui bu dui* is produced with a falling pitch movement based on the author's auditory perception and a short duration of about 180 ms (Figure 20).
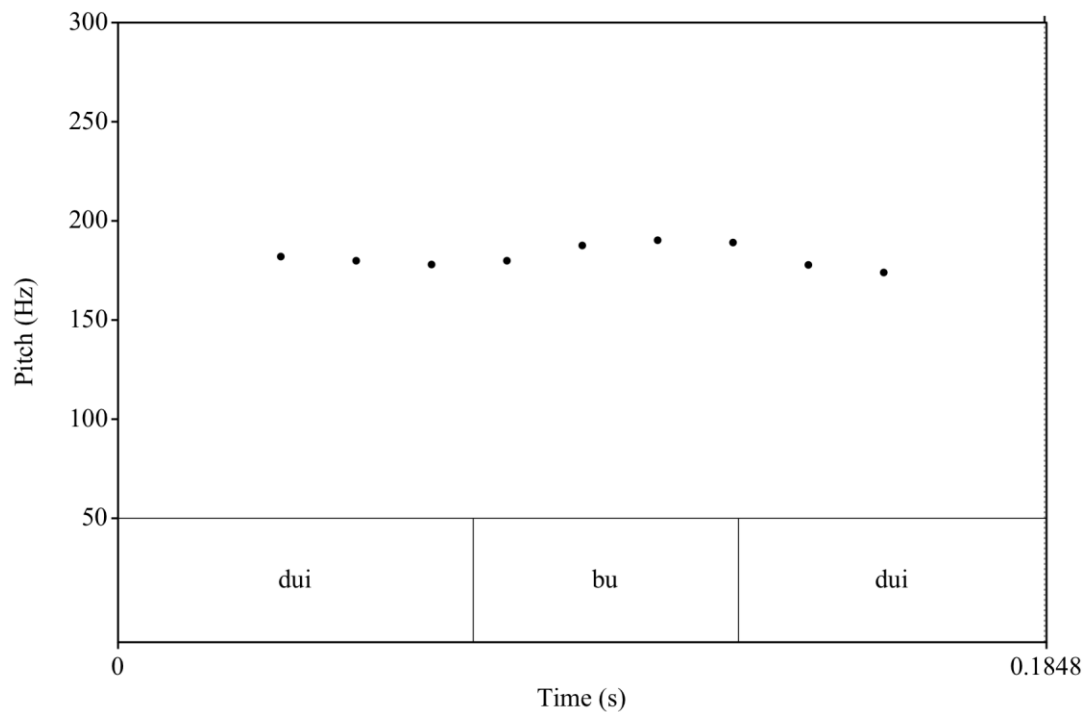
Figure 20 Pitch trace of *dui bu dui* in line 5 in Extract 9

In this section, the two extracts demonstrate that some assertive sentences are prefaced with conjunctions such as *danshi* ('but') and *suoyi* ('so'). *Dui bu dui* is produced after the *danshi-* and *suoyi*-prefaced assertions to seek the recipients' affiliation with the speaker's stance revealed in the previous assertion. This type of *dui bu dui* is also produced with a slightly falling pitch movement and short duration, as well as some body movements such as gaze shift.

Section 4.2 investigates the function of *dui bu dui* attached to assertive sentences. In the data, the assertive sentences are often constructed by three types of lexico-syntactic constructions: copula sentence structure, universal quantifiers (*quanbu* 'all', *renhe* 'any')

and conjunctions (*danshi* 'but', *suoyi* 'so'). The interactional function of *dui bu dui* after the assertive sentences is seeking the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance. The *dui bu dui*s are also produced with certain prosodic and visual features such as the slightly falling pitch movement with short duration, holding of the gesture and gaze shift.

4.3 Summary

This chapter reports the new findings of this research, two interactional functions of *dui bu dui*s as well as the verbal and nonverbal features in their production. The first type of *dui bu dui* appears after the topic component of a sentence. The speaker uses *dui bu dui* to seek the recipient's acknowledgment of the referent identified in the topic. After hearing *dui bu dui*, the recipient displays his/her acknowledgment by delivering an acknowledgment token *en*. The second type of *dui bu dui* is used to seek the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance conveyed in the immediately preceding assertive sentence. This type of *dui bu dui* is usually produced in particular lexico-syntactic structures: copula sentence structure, universal quantifiers and conjunctions. *Dui bu dui*s are produced after these assertions to seek the recipient's affiliation towards the speaker's stance revealed in the assertion. The responses to these two types of *dui bu dui*s are different. The response to the first type of *dui bu dui* is usually an acknowledgment token, whereas the response to the second type is usually an agreement token (i.e., affiliative response). The different types of responses reveal that the recipients orient to *dui bu dui*s in the two different sequential positions differently.

In addition, *dui bu dui*s are produced with some recurrent prosodic features such as slightly falling pitch movement and relatively short duration (of c.a. 150-330 ms). There are two types of body movements observed in the production of *dui bu dui*. First, the speaker's gaze at the recipient can be employed as a visual resource to seek the recipient's response during the production of *dui bu dui*. The second body movement is the holding of the gesture during *dui bu dui*. The holding of the gesture indicates that the speaker is expecting the recipient's response.

The two interactional functions are the new observations based on my current data. In contrast to previous research, the study investigates *dui bu dui* in everyday conversational setting. It also adopts two new research approaches, CA, IL and multimodal perspective. The interactional functions together with the multimodal resources used in the production of *dui bu dui* enhance our understanding of the usage of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin conversation.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. Section 5.1 outlines the major findings of the present study. Section 5.2 discusses the significance and implications of this study.

5.1 Findings

Adopting the methodologies of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics, the present study explores the interactional function of tag question *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin conversation from a multimodal perspective.

This study examines the interactional function of *dui bu dui* and the sequential environments, prosodic forms and visual features involved in its production. *Dui bu dui* is mainly used to serve two interactional functions in the data: seeking acknowledgment and seeking affiliation. The first type of *dui bu dui* occurs after the topic component of an utterance and it is produced to seek acknowledgment of the referent specified in the topic. The response to this type of *dui bu dui* is usually an acknowledgment token, which provides evidence for the recipient's orientation to the *dui bu dui* as seeking acknowledgment. When used to seek acknowledgment, *dui bu dui*s are produced with slightly falling pitch movement and short duration. The second type of *dui bu dui* occurs after an assertive sentence. The assertive sentences are usually produced with copular sentence structure, universal quantifier, or conjunction. These *dui bu dui*s serve to seek

the recipient's affiliation with the speaker's stance revealed in the speaker's previous assertion. The response to this second type of *dui bu dui* is usually affiliative response, which shows the recipient's orientation to the *dui bu dui* as seeking affiliation. When used to seek affiliation, *dui bu dui*s are also produced with slightly falling pitch movement and short duration. Visual behaviors such as gaze shift and hold of gestures can be employed as visual resources to mobilize the recipient's response during the production of the *dui bu dui*.

5.2 Significance and implications of the study

The study is important in three aspects. First, it is the first attempt to study the function of tag question *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin conversation from an interactional and multimodal perspective. Most studies of Mandarin tag questions have been conducted from a traditional grammar perspective. The interaction function of *dui bu dui* is related to its sequential position. It is also produced with certain recurrent prosodic features and visual behaviors. Thus, this study will shed new light on our understanding of the use of *dui bu dui* in Mandarin interaction from a multimodal perspective.

Secondly, the existing interactional studies on *dui bu dui* have used the data of institutional interaction such as classroom interaction and TV talk show programs. There is a lack of research on the functions of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin interaction. Therefore, the current study investigating the tag question *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin face-to-face conversation fills this gap in the literature.

Finally, the study adopts the methodologies of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics to explore the functions of *dui bu dui* in everyday Mandarin face-to-face conversation. Through detailed examination of the moment-by-moment unfolding interaction, the study provides a dynamic picture of how participants employ *dui bu dui* to achieve different interactional tasks through a variety of multimodal resources.

The present study identified two interactional functions of *dui bu dui* in the data and described their prosodic features, visual features and their sequential environments in the current data. However, the study does not intend to explore all possible forms and functions of *dui bu dui*. There are other interactional functions, such as seeking confirmation, seeking attention, turn holding and exclamation. This study only discussed two main interactional functions reflected in the data. Other interactional functions could be further explored. Also, the interactional functions of other tag questions such as *hao bu hao* and *shi bu shi* need to be explored in future studies.

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Appendix: Transcript symbols

The transcription system in this study is mainly based on GAT2 (Selting et al, 2009). The visual body movements are transcribed using the transcription symbols in C. Goodwin (1981), Heath (1986) and Kendon (2004).

Symbol	Meaning
[ ]	Overlap
=	Latching
(.)	Micro-pause
(-), (--), (---)	Short, middle or long pause if ca. 0.2-0.8 seconds
(1.0)	Pause 1.0 second
((laughing))	Description of laughter
:,::,:::	lengthening of ca. 0.2-0.8 seconds
.h,.hh,.hhh	Breathing in, according to its duration
(XX)	Presumed wording
?	Final pitch movements: high rise
,	Final pitch movement: mid-rise

-	Final pitch movement: level pitch
;	Final pitch movement: mid-fall
.	Final pitch movement: low fall

Symbol	Meaning
~	Preparation of gesticulation
*	Stroke of gesticulation
<u>*</u>	Holding of stroke
-.	Recovery of gesticulation
¦	Boundary of gesture phrase
|	Boundary of gesture phrase
X	Head nodding
RP	Rest position
<u>Away</u>	Gaze away
<u>At</u>	Gaze at

Glossing Conventions

3SG   Third person singular

ASSC   Associative (*de*)

PRT   Particle

NOM   Nominalizer

CL   Classifier

CRS   Currently relevant state (*le*)

CSC   Complex stative constrction (*de*)

DUR   Durative aspect (*-zhe*)

NEG   Negative (*bu*)

PFV   Perfective aspect