

Confirmation/agreement Seeking in Talk-in-interaction:

with special reference to the interrogative particle “HAO” (豪) in northeastern

Mandarin Chinese

Shihong Zhou
Beijing Normal University
zhoushihong@bnu.edu.cn

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This paper examines the interactive and coordinative functions of the discourse particle HAO (豪) in the Northeastern Mandarin Chinese from the perspective of interactional linguistics, using the data of natural conversation. The data includes 20-hour natural conversation collected by the author himself, as well as the dialogic transcription from Northern dialectal film and television program.

In previous studies, HAO(豪) was often regarded as a modality particle at the end of the sentence. This paper proposes that HAO(豪) is different from the modality particles which occur at the end of sentence/utterance, like BA(吧), NE(呢), etc. in Mandarin Chinese. HAO(豪) is an interjective particle, independent from the preceding utterance, and should be categorized as utterance tag. The “HAO(豪?)” tag is a single word question that is attached to the end of the immediate preceding utterance and is highly positional sensitive for turn construction, and therefore should be regarded as a discourse operator (Norrick 2009; Onodera 2014), or to be specific, the one-word tag question (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: Chapter 8). For example:

(1) 你结婚了，豪？

You married hao

You're married, aren't you?

(2) 今天天气不错，豪？

Today weather not bad, hao

It's a good day, isn't it?

(3) 我吧豪，从小就爱看电影。

I particle(uncertain) hao, from childhood like to watch movie

As for me, right? I like watching movie since I was a child.

In the framework of the epistemic gradience (Heritage 2012), this paper proposes that the epistemic gradience of the HAO(豪) question is the slightest compared to other types of questions, including polarity questions in Chinese. The tag question HAO (豪) is not so much used to seek information as it is to confirm the content of the just-said within the speaker's utterance.

The HAO (豪) tag question can not only be used to seek confirmation of the addressee (example 1), but also solicitate agreement or supportive answer from the addressee (example 2). In the narrative style (example 3), HAO(豪) also can be used inviting the hearer to interact and coordinate to reach a common ground. This paper tries to give an unified explanation of the HAO(豪) in different speech context.

References

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