

From Receipt of Information to Management of Interaction: The Use of *Zheyangzi* as a Response Token in Chinese Conversation^{*}

Chen-Yu Chester Hsieh
National Taiwan University

The current study aims to investigate the information receipt particle *zheyangzi* (ZYZ) in Taiwan Mandarin conversation. Adopting an Interactional Linguistics approach to spoken data, I show that ZYZ tends to co-occur with particular preceding and suffixing particles within the same turn and that the use of particles may to some extent influence the design of the next turn. Moreover, I argue that ZYZ serves three major interactional functions other than information receipting and that the sequential environment in which it is deployed exerts a significant influence over how the particle is understood and reacted to by interlocutors. The meaning of ZYZ is thus dynamically negotiated and co-constructed through talk-in-interaction.

Key words: *zheyangzi*, response token, receipt of information, sequential context

1. Introduction

Insofar as the exchange of information is one of the major functions of human communication (Maynard 2003), acknowledging one's receipt of information from the prior speaker constitutes an important and prevalent part of interaction (Thompson, Fox & Couper-Kuhlen 2015). Although a variety of linguistic devices have been found to indicate information-receipting, particles are one of the most common resources for this purpose across languages (Gardner 2001, Thompson, Fox & Couper-Kuhlen 2015). Ever since Heritage's (1984a) seminal study on the change-of-state token *oh*, a considerable amount of research has been devoted to the investigation of particle response in conversation (e.g., Local 1996, Heritage 1998, Gardner 2001, Heritage 2002, Gardner 2007, Thompson, Fox & Couper-Kuhlen 2015). This literature has shown that seemingly simple response tokens are in fact multifunctional and that such functions are closely related to factors like prosody and sequential context.

The use of information-receipting particles has also been observed and researched in a number of other languages, such as German (e.g., Golato 2010), Finnish (e.g., Koivisto 2015), and Icelandic (e.g., Hilmisdóttir 2016). For example, Golato & Betz

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(2008), as well as Golato (2010), contrast the near-synonymous pair, *ach* and *achso* in German and argue that while the former marks the speaker's receipt of information, the latter demonstrates the recipient's understanding of the message or action in the prior turn. In Finnish, Koivisto (2015) analyzes the particle *aijaa* as a neutral news receipt marker, whose adequacy depends on the sequence in which the particle is occasioned. While unproblematic as a response to initial announcements, *aijaa* may appear insufficient and be dispreferred when used in response to sequences that are complete or valenced. Finally, Hilmsdóttir (2016) compares two Icelandic information-receiving tokens *nú* and *er það* and concludes that *nú* functions as a newsmark, whereas *er það* elicits a confirmation or an elaboration from the prior speaker.

However, despite such fruitful findings, this topic has received much less attention in Asian languages, especially in Chinese. While some effort has been made to investigate the general pattern of response tokens used in Mandarin conversation (Clancy et al. 1996, Deng 2008), relatively little research has focused on individual markers that index a receipt of information. Chang & Lin (2009), for example, is one of the few studies to specifically look into the use of information receipts. They compare the distribution patterns of *o* and *shi-o* in Chinese online conversation and note that both tokens can respond to an informing, indicate disaffiliation or topic change, and preface questions that request further information. However, while *o* can function as a receipt of both old and new information and indexes a strongly disaffiliative stance, *shi-o* responds only to new information and can be used to mitigate dispreferred actions.

In addition to the lack of research, there is also limited discussion concerning the impact of sequential environments on the interpretation of particular particles. Most previous works on Chinese discourse particles (e.g., Wang 2008, Chang & Lin 2009, Wang et al. 2010) tend to describe only the more conventionalized functions. Although these analyses have shed light on this topic, contextual influence has not received the attention that it deserves. As a number of scholars have demonstrated in other languages (e.g., Heritage 1998, Gardner 2001, Sorjonen 2001), the sequence in which a particular particle is occasioned will exert a significant influence over how the token is understood and reacted to. More research should be devoted to investigating the process in which the meaning of a linguistic device emerges and is negotiated in Chinese.

The present study thus aims to address this issue by investigating the use of *zheyangzi* (ZYZ) and its variants as an information receipt in Chinese conversation. Composed of a proximal demonstrative *zhe* followed by an abstract noun *yangzi*, which denotes the meaning of 'appearance' in Chinese, ZYZ is often treated as a

demonstrative or a deictic device (Lü 1980). However, as Liu (2002) has pointed out, this marker can also be used as a particle in response to an informing act, indicating a receipt of information. She also observed that *ZYZ*, when used as such, tends to co-occur with particles such as *ou* and *a* to form lexicalized prefabs (cf. Thompson, Fox & Couper-Kuhlen 2015) with similar functions.

By zooming in on the pattern of *ZYZ* as a response to informing, this study intends to show that the sequence in which an information receipt such as *ZYZ* is occasioned can contribute to the reading of and reaction to the particle. I will argue that *ZYZ*, found in three primary sequential environments, can serve different functions, such as a continuer, a marker projecting change of topic or action, or a repair initiator, and thus give rise to different interactional consequences. In addition, I will also pinpoint the impact that final particles may have over the use of such information receipts.

For the rest of this article, I will in section 2 review previous studies on the use of *ZYZ* as a response token and in section 3 introduce the data and methodology on which this study relies. In sections 4 to 6, I will discuss the interactional functions of *ZYZ* and the sequential contexts in which they are found. Finally, in section 7, I will summarize the findings and point out the possible implications of the present research.

2. Previous research on *ZYZ*

To my knowledge, the thesis of Liu (2002) was the very first study to focus specifically on the use of *ZYZ* in Chinese spoken discourse. In her thesis, Liu (2002) argues that *zheyangzi* has undergone grammaticalization and derived six major discourse/pragmatic functions, including exophoric reference, endophoric reference, quotation marking, discourse boundary marking, inference indexing, and interactive functions. The function of *ZYZ* as a response particle is subsumed under the category of interactive uses proposed by Liu (2002). By “interactive uses,” she refers to the use of *ZYZ* in support of, or in reaction to, what other conversation participants put forth, as opposed to other more text-oriented functions, such as quotation marking. She characterizes *ZYZ* as a marker of receipt of information and points out that it is often used with particles like *ou* or *a* in an informing-*ZYZ*-confirmation sequence, as presented in (1) below.

(1) The informing-*ZYZ*-confirmation sequence

A: Informing

B: (*Ou*) *ZYZ* (*ou/a*)

A: *Dui* (as a confirmation)

A decade later, Hsieh (2012) revisited this topic and put forth a more fine-grained analysis. He suggests that the use of ZYZ as a response token should be separated from other subtypes of interactive use presented in Liu (2002), due to the peculiarity in its collocation, structural position, and interactional function. Moreover, Hsieh (2012) indicates that this responsive particle also allows the speaker to negotiate the boundary of interaction. That is, when used as a response to a prior speaker, ZYZ often gives rise to a change of topic or activity in following turns. In addition to observing the same informing-ZYZ-confirmation pattern in his data, Hsieh (2012) also points out that ZYZ can be used in sequences such as question-elicited informing and advice-giving as well. The usage pattern of ZYZ as an information receipt is in fact more complex than described in Liu (2002).

Although the observations presented in Liu (2002) and Hsieh (2012) are informative and insightful, the aforementioned authors fail to distinguish between the uses of ZYZ in different sequences and the interactional consequences thereof. They also pay little attention to the differences to which the presence or absence of final particles may give rise. Finally, neither study mentions the deployment of ZYZ as a responsive turn preface. In light of these gaps, the current paper aims to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are the recurrent collocates of ZYZ when used as a response token?
- RQ2: Do the instances of ZYZ together with co-occurring features present any specific patterns?
- RQ3: In what sequences and sequential positions is ZYZ often used and what functions does ZYZ serve in these contexts?

3. Data and methodology

The analysis presented in this study is based on data from the NTU Spoken Chinese Corpus. This corpus is composed of transcripts of naturally occurring Chinese conversations carried out in face-to-face interaction, telephone communication, or radio talk shows,¹ based on the transcription system proposed by Du Bois et al. (1993). The total length of the collected transcripts in this dataset amounts to approximately 15 hours.

¹ No significant difference concerning the use of ZYZ is observed across different genres. However, as will be shown in later sections, certain functions tend to be found in specific sequential environments, and since communicative events like radio talks often contain more sequences like advice-giving, particular uses of ZYZ may occur more frequently in such conversations. Nevertheless, it is still turn-by-turn interaction between speakers that has more influence over use of the response token in question.

Since the form *ZYZ* serves multiple functions in Mandarin Chinese (Liu 2002), target tokens were selected based on the following criteria: Structurally, the unit needs to be syntactically independent (Schiffrin 1986), i.e., not functioning as a grammatical argument or attached to any content elements (as the other subtypes of interactive use illustrated in Liu (2002)). Sequentially, the token has to be employed at, or close to, the beginning of a responding turn. In order to restrict the focus and scope of the current research, this study, following Liu (2002) and Hsieh (2012), does not distinguish *zheyangzi* from the shortened form *zheyang*.² Based on these criteria, I retrieved in total 63 occurrences of *ZYZ* used as a response token from the database. For the rest of this paper, *ZYZ*, unless otherwise indicated, will only refer to its use as a response token.

To analyze the data, I mainly adopted the framework of Interactional Linguistics (Ochs, Schegloff & Thompson 1996, Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001). This framework emphasizes the socio-pragmatic aspects of language and aims to explore the relationship between linguistic structure and its functions in talk-in-interaction. In contrast to the more dominant, writing-oriented school of linguistics, Interactional Linguistics research bases its analysis on naturally-occurring, spoken interaction, which is deemed to be the most pervasive and primary form of language (Clark 1996). For interactional linguists, language is regarded as a social practice and grammar as a dynamic and, to some extent, flexible resource for achieving particular social goals (Ochs, Schegloff & Thompson 1996, Ford, Fox & Thompson 2003).

Deeply influenced by the methods of Conversation Analysis, Interactional Linguistics is an emic, or a participant-oriented, approach to language (Liddicoat 2011).³ In other words, the analysis is carried out primarily based on the perspective of the conversationalists participating in an unfolding interaction. In practice, this is achieved by observing what speakers produce within a conversation and how co-participants react in the following turn(s). This “next turn proof procedure”

² It should be noted that no clear functional distinction between the instances of *zheyangzi* and *zheyang* was observed in the data. However, there seems to be some distributional differences between the two: First, while *zheyang* is the more reduced form and a more economical alternative, *zheyangzi* is in fact used two times more frequently than *zheyang*. Second, *zheyang* is more likely than *zheyangzi* to be suffixed by a final particle, especially *a*, whereas *zheyangzi* occurs more frequently without a final particle. Finally and probably relatedly, *zheyang* is less often used to launch an extended turn, in part because a final particle tends to elicit a response from the interactant. The contrast between *zheyang* and *zheyangzi* may be a potential topic for future research, if a larger amount of data can be gathered.

³ Despite the commonalities shared by Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics, these two approaches differ in their focus of research. While conversation analysts pay more attention to the order of social interaction in conversation and the means (not necessarily linguistic) used to achieve it, interactional linguists put more emphasis on how pragmatic/interactional functions and linguistic features mutually shape each other.

(Liddicoat 2011) allows researchers to accumulate evidence for their analysis without resorting to external sources.

Lastly, Interactional Linguistics also shares with Conversation Analysis the assumption that conversation is an ordered and organized phenomenon (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). As a result, much attention is paid to how linguistic resources interact with the organization of turns and sequences. The use of a particular linguistic device may be occasioned by the sequential environment or turn-taking pattern, and in turn creates a context for the development of following turns and sequences (Heritage 1984b).

4. A description of the ZYZ turn

Although ZYZ can be used by itself as a free standing turn, this is rarely the case in our data. Only four out of the 63 tokens occur without any preceding or suffixing particles in the same turn, and only two out of these four appear as a free-standing turn. Regarding particles that precede ZYZ, the change-of-state token *ou* is the single item that recurs in this position. While 27 occurrences of ZYZ (42.86%) are positioned at the very beginning of a turn, 35 out of the 63 instances (55.56%) of ZYZ are found to follow a responsive *ou*, which suggests that the speaker has undergone a change of state from unknowing to knowing (Heritage 1984a, Chang & Lin 2009).⁴ Only one ZYZ is preceded by *hoN*, a particle borrowed from Taiwan Southern Min (TSM), which also marks a receipt of information in a turn-initial position (Li 1999).

Table 1. The distribution of ZYZ with(out) preceding particles

ZYZ with preceding particles	Token number	Percentage
ZYZ	27	42.86
<i>ou</i> ZYZ	35	55.56
<i>hoN</i> ZYZ	1	1.59
Total	63	100.00

With regard to components that immediately follow ZYZ in the same turn, 42 out of the 63 tokens (66.67%) are suffixed by a final particle. The confirmation-seeking *a* and *ou* (Wu 2004) constitute the two most frequently found particles, accounting for 19 and 18 occurrences respectively. Five instances of ZYZ are followed by *hoN*⁵, an utterance-final particle borrowed from TSM that requests confirmation from the

⁴ This particle is comparable to *oh* in English conversation (Heritage 1984a, Chang & Lin 2009).

⁵ According to Li (1999), *hoN* is a multifunctional particle in TSM. It can be used independently as a response token or as an utterance-final particle attached to a phrase or clause.

interlocutor (Li 1999), and 21 are not suffixed by any particles. This pattern shows that the use of *ZYZ* is largely related to confirmation-seeking in an informing sequence.

Table 2. The distribution of *ZYZ* with(out) final particles

<i>ZYZ</i> with(out) final particles	N	%
<i>ZYZ</i>	21	33.33
<i>ZYZ a</i>	19	30.16
<i>ZYZ ou</i>	18	28.57
<i>ZYZ hoN</i>	5	7.94
Total	63	100

It is worth noting that the presence (or absence) of final particles with *ZYZ* in the same turn seems to influence to some extent how the addressee designs the next turn. For example, 18 out of the 21 *ZYZ* turns produced without a final particle (85.71%) are not responded to with the confirmation markers *dui* or *heN* (an acknowledgement token borrowed from TSM). In these 18 cases, *ZYZ* is either used to preface a longer turn⁶ (8 instances) or reacted to by other types of next turn responses⁷ (10 instances). On the other hand, all five occurrences of *ZYZ hoN* elicit a confirmation marker in the next turn. The final particle *hoN* appears to have the strongest power in mobilizing a particular kind of response.

When comparing the two most frequently co-occurring final particles *a* and *ou*, we can see in Table 3 that it is slightly more likely for *a* than *ou* to induce a confirming response. Ten out of the 19 tokens (52.63%) of *ZYZ a* are responded to by a confirmation marker, whereas only seven out of the 18 tokens (38.89%) of *ZYZ ou* show the same pattern. Moreover, while seven out of the ten occurrences (70%) of *ZYZ a* are responded to by a confirmation marker along with a final particle *a*, only one occurs in the instances of *ZYZ ou* (14.29%), and none in the instances of *ZYZ hoN*. This tendency may again show that the final particle of a confirmation-seeking turn can affect how the acknowledgement token in the next turn is formatted and that Mandarin conversationalists do pay attention to such linguistic nuances and react accordingly.

⁶ See Extract (5) below.

⁷ See Extracts (10) and (11) below.

Table 3. The distribution of a next-turn confirmation marker in relation to the combination of ZYZ and different final particles

	With <i>dui</i> in next turn		Without <i>dui</i> in next turn		Total
	N	%	N	%	
ZYZ	3	14.29	18	85.71	21
ZYZ <i>a</i>	10	52.63	9	47.37	19
ZYZ <i>ou</i>	7	38.89	11	61.11	18
ZYZ <i>hoN</i>	5	100.00	0	0.00	5

Finally, 22 out of the 63 ZYZ instances (34.92%) are both preceded and followed by a particle in the same turn. As Table 4 indicates, 21 *ou*-preceded tokens of ZYZ are also followed by a final particle, mostly *ou* and *a*. The only one *hoN*-preceded instance of ZYZ is suffixed by the particle *ou*. It should be noted that, based on the data used, the use of the *ou* preface seems to have little influence over the choice of the suffixing particle and vice versa. Whether there is a final particle, and if there is, whichever final particle follows the ZYZ token, there seems to be an approximately 50 percent chance for *ou* to be deployed to launch a ZYZ turn.

Table 4. The distribution of ZYZ both preceded and followed by a particle in the same turn

ZYZ both preceded and followed by a particle	N	%
<i>ou</i> ZYZ <i>a</i>	9	40.91
<i>ou</i> ZYZ <i>ou</i>	10	45.45
<i>ou</i> ZYZ <i>hoN</i>	2	9.09
<i>hoN</i> ZYZ <i>ou</i>	1	4.54
Total	22	100

The collocation patterns presented in this section reaffirm the analysis of ZYZ as a receipt of information marker proposed by Liu (2002) and Hsieh (2012). In addition, they also show that the turn of ZYZ often consists of multiple interactional particles that not only convey the recipient’s epistemic stance but also elicit a response from the interlocutor. The ZYZ turn is thus both responsive and response-mobilizing (Stivers & Rossano 2010). However, given the core meaning of ZYZ as a marker of information receipting, previous researchers have not paid sufficient attention to the sequential environments in which ZYZ is employed and functions that may emerge in different contexts. In light of this, the following sections will look into the sequential contexts of ZYZ and elucidate how it serves the three functions of a continuer, a marker of change of topic or activity, or a repair initiator, in different sequences.

5. ZYZ as a continuer in a large unit of discourse

One of the major interactional functions that ZYZ serves is that of a continuer. According to Schegloff (1982), a continuer is a marker that conversationalists use in an extended unit of discourse to indicate that they know that their co-participant's talk is not yet completed and that he or she can continue speaking. In our data, ZYZ is often used as a continuer by the recipient of information when the primary speaker appears to be constructing a long talk. After the recipient produces ZYZ as a continuer, the speaker may extend the turn by using a transition word like *suoyi* in (3) (Wang & Huang 2006) or a confirmation marker like *dui* (Wang et al. 2010) in (4) or simply continuing the sentence as in (5) (cf. Schegloff 1982). The pattern can be represented as follows in (2):

(2) ZYZ as a continuer

A: Informing

B: ZYZ

A: (Connector)

Extended informing

In Extract (3) below, B is describing to T how strict their new homeroom teacher is. B first compares the new teacher to the old one, characterizes the new teacher as very strict, and illustrates his point by referring to the teacher's ban on playing basketball. In this segment, T is primarily the recipient of information. He employs a number of continuers such as *hm hm* 'mm' (line 4), *ou* 'oh' (line 8), and *zheyangzi a* 'I see' (line 11) to show his understanding of, and attention to, B's talk (cf. Schegloff 1982). After each of these tokens, B uses discourse markers such as *keshi* (line 5) and *suoyi* (lines 9 and 12) (Wang & Huang 2006) to initiate the extended turns.

(3) Extended turns prefaced by a discourse marker

- 1 B: ... (4.3) *jiu,*
just
'(our new homeroom teacher is) just'
- 2 ... (1.0) *buhui xiang yinianji de daoshi,*
won't like first.grade ASSC home-room-teacher
'not like the one we had in the first year'
- 3 ... *sheme dou bu guan la.*
what all no control PRT
'who didn't discipline us at all'

- 4 T: ...*hm hm*.\
PRT PRT
'hm hm'
- 5 B: ...*keshi*,_
but
'but'
- 6 ...*guan-de hen ^yan la*,_
control-CSC very strict PRT
'the new one is really strict'
- 7 ...*ye buneng dai qiu lai xuexiao da*.\
also can't bring ball come school play
'we are not allowed to bring basketballs to school to play'
- 8 T: ...*ou*.\
PRT
'oh'
- 9 B: ...*suoyi*,_
so
'and'
- 10 ...*qiu dai lai le jiu hui bei ^moshou a*.\
ball bring come ASP just will PASS confiscated PRT
'if we do, the ball will be confiscated'
- 11→ T: ...*zheyangzi a*.\
ZYZ PRT
'I see'
- 12 B: ...*suoyi*,_
so
'so'
- 13 ...*zhihao toutou ba qiu fang zai ^bieban*,_
only.can secretly BA ball put LOC another.class
'we have to secretly put the ball in another classroom'
- 14 ...*ranhou*,_
then
'and'
- 15 ...*yao daqiu shihou*,_
want play.ball time
'only when we're going to play basketball'

- 16 ...*zai na chulai da.*\
 again take out play
 ‘we will take it out’

On the other hand, in instances like (4) below, the primary speaker may preface a turn with a confirmation marker (e.g., *dui*) in response to the token of ZYZ produced in the prior turn before continuing his or her talk. In extract (4) below, speaker H is explaining to L that because the medical expense receipts will be collected by the Bureau of Labor Insurance (BLI) altogether, it is of no use to take out another medical insurance plan. To emphasize his point, H formats a rhetorical question in lines 6 and 7, indicating that because the BLI will collect all the receipts, there will be no documents left for another insurance claim. L responds to the rhetorical question with a token of ZYZ, marking her receipt of the information. H then continues his explanation with a preceding *dui a* ‘yeah’ in line 10 in response to the ZYZ turn and extends the discourse. Used in response to ZYZ, the *dui a* produced in line 10 not only indexes the speaker’s confirmation, but also establishes continuity and coherence with the foregoing discourse (Wang et al. 2010). The discourse marker *suoyi* subsequent to *dui a* further strengthens this connection (Wang & Huang 2006).

(4) Extended turns prefaced by a confirmation marker

- 1 H: ...*danshi,*\
 but
 ‘but’
- 2 ...*chu shiqing de shihou,*\
 happen thing ASSC time
 ‘when an accident happens’
- 3 ...*laobaoju,-*
 Bureau.of.Labor.Insurance (BLI)
 ‘the Bureau of Labor Insurance (BLI)’
- 4 ...(0.98) (*tsk ping nage shouju qu jifu.*\
 base.on that receipt go pay
 ‘will pay the benefit based on the receipt’
- 5 ...(0.74) *suoyi nide jifu jiu bei laobaoju nazou-le.*\
 so your payment just PASS BLI take.away-ASP
 ‘so your receipt will have been collected by the BLI’
- 6 ...*na ni ping sheme danju,*\
 then you base.on what document
 ‘then you won’t have any documents’

- 7 ...*xiang baoxian gongsi lai shenqing lipei ne.*\
 toward insurance company come apply.for benefit PRT
 ‘to apply for benefits from your insurance company’
- 8 L: ...*ou,-*
 PRT
 ‘oh’
- 9 → ...*zheyangzi.*\
 ZYZ
 ‘really’
- 10 → H: (0) *dui a.*
 correct PRT
 ‘right’
- 11 ...*suoyi,*\
 so
 ‘so’
- 12 ...*dengyu chongfu jifu,*\
 equal repeat pay
 ‘that means you are paying the bill twice’
- 13 ...*chongfu jiaoqian,-*
 repeat pay.money
 ‘paying money twice’
- 14 ...*meiyoyong a.-*
 of.no.use PRT
 ‘it’s no good’
- 15 ...*zaocheng lipei jiufen duo la.*\
 cause claims dispute much PRT
 ‘it may even cause a dispute over the claims’

Finally, a speaker may also launch his turn in response to the ZYZ token without any preceding discourse markers (Schegloff 1982). For instance, in extract (5), D, a female physician who was invited on a radio talk show as an expert guest, is addressing a mother, M, whose son has an articulation problem. In lines 1 to 6, D explains that the difficulty in articulation may be due to the complexity of the word’s syllable structure. M responds in lines 7 and 8 with a change-of-state token *ou* and a ZYZ. Before M even finishes her ZYZ turn, D continues her explanation by asserting that some children, who may not have a serious pronunciation problem, can be affected by the pronunciation of particular words. From the overlap in lines 8 and 9,

we can see that the use of ZYZ is treated by D as a continuer, which invites her to progress, and she does so without prefacing her turn with a discourse marker.

(5) Extended turns without a preceding marker

- 1 D: ...*yinwei*,\
because
'because'
- 2 ...*women ye jiang-guo*,-
we also say-ASP
'as we said'
- 3 ...*jiushishuo*,-
that.is
'that is'
- 4 ...*yinwei yuyin de fuzadu hoN*,\
because articulation ASSC degree.of.complexity PRT
'because the complexity of a word's pronunciation'
- 5 ...*keneng hui yingxiang ta zai*=--
possible will influence he LOC
'may influence how he...'
- 6 ...*tade biao*xian.\
his performance
'how he performs'
- 7 M: (0) *ou*,-
PRT
'oh'
- 8 → ...*zheyang*[*zi*].\
ZYZ
'I see'
- 9 D: [*youxie*] *haizi keneng.. bu=shishuo= wanquan*--
some child possible not.really completely
'some kids are not really totally'
- 10 ... (0.75) *wanquan buhao*.\
completely bad
'totally bad (at pronouncing words)'
- 11 ...*danshi*,\
but
'but'

- 12 ...*ta keneng hui yinwei qianhouyin*=... *butong*,-
 he possible will because place.of.articulation different
 ‘the difference in front and back sounds’
- 13 ...*suoyi ... you yingxiang*.-
 so have influence
 ‘may impact their pronunciation’

As can be seen from the examples above, *ZYZ* often functions as a continuer that shows the information recipient’s attention and understanding while encouraging the information giver to continue (Schegloff 1982). This mostly occurs in an extended informing sequence, where one of the conversation participants serves as the primary speaker. However, in other instances, the speaker does not extend his talk after the *ZYZ* turn. That is, *ZYZ* appears to serve other interactional functions in different sequential contexts. And it is to these functions and sequences that I now turn in the next two sections.

6. *ZYZ* as a change-of-topic/activity marker

In addition to its use as a continuer, *ZYZ* is found to project or foreshadow a change of topic or activity. In other words, instead of having the previous speaker continue his or her talk, the *ZYZ* speaker may switch to another (sub)topic or activity in the same or following turns. Two recurrent patterns are found to help achieve this function: one is to occasion *ZYZ* as a response to a question-elicited informing; the other is to use the token to preface a longer turn. When used in the first pattern, *ZYZ* in fact works similarly to a ‘sequence-closing third,’ which refers to a device used in third position (i.e., after the first and second pair parts) to propose the end of a sequence (Schegloff 2007). The interlocutor will respond with a confirmation token and the *ZYZ* speaker will then move on to another topic or activity. To describe the pattern schematically:

(6) *ZYZ* as a sequence-closing third

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| A: Question | Position 1 |
| B: Response | Position 2 |
| A: <i>ZYZ</i> | Position 3 |
| B: Confirmation token | |
| A: Change of topic/activity | |

To illustrate, prior to extract (7) below, speakers A and B have been discussing C, one of their mutual friends who is studying in the US. In line 1, A poses a confirmation-requesting question about whether C is going to take her qualifying test. B responds to the question in lines 2 to 4, indicating that C may not be preparing for her qualifying test but still has a heavy course load. After that, A produces a ZYZ turn in lines 5 and 6 to index her receipt of the information. In response to the ZYZ turn, B vocalizes a confirmation token *mm* in line 7, after which A formulates another question about C's major, switching the topic of the discussion.

(7) ZYZ projecting a topic change

- 1 A: ...*xianzai yao kao* <Eng *qualify* Eng> *a*.\
 now want take.test qualifying.test
 'is she going to take the qualifying test?'
- 2 B: (0) *haoxiangshi* <Eng *meeting* Eng> *ba*.\
 seem meeting PRT
 'she seems to be preparing for a meeting'
- 3 ...*haishi xia xueqi* .\
 or next semester
 'or maybe next semester (she is going to take the qualifying test)'
- 4 ...*fanzheng tade ke man zhong de*.\
 anyways her course quite heavy PRT
 'her course load is quite heavy anyways'
- 5 A: ...*ou*.\
 PRT
 'oh'
- 6 → ...*zheyang a*.\
 ZYZ PRT
 'I see'
- 7 B: ...*mm*.\
 PRT
 'mm'
- 8 A: ...*ta xianzai daodi shi nian sheme xi a?*\
 she now after.all be study what department PRT
 'what exactly is she studying now?'
- 9 ...*bushi--*\
 no
 'isn't she--'

- 10 B: (0) *yingyang a.*
 nutriology PRT
 ‘Nutritional Science’

It should be noted that although the change of topic illustrated in this extract may not appear to be dramatic, the discontinuity is much more pronounced when we compare the example with the ones presented in the previous section. In excerpts (3) to (5), the content of the turn subsequent to the ZYZ token is the consequence (3), inference (4), or elaboration (5) of the pre-ZYZ turn. In contrast, the question that speaker A asks in excerpt (7) after the ZYZ turn focuses on another topic or at least another aspect of the same general topic. There is no overlap between the speakers or any explicit effort made to connect the pre- and post-ZYZ turns as is found in examples (3) to (5). The information giver in (7) does not extend his turn after the confirmation either. This use of ZYZ should thus be distinguished from the use as a continuer discussed in the prior section.

Similarly, in response to a question-elicited informing, ZYZ can also be utilized to foreshadow a change of activity. For instance, in extract (8), H is the host of a radio talk show, which is only broadcast in Taipei, while L is a listener who just called in to the show. Prior to the excerpt, L says that he lives in the south of Taiwan, and consequently H asks him in line 1 if he is working in Taipei. L responds that he has in fact only come to the city to run some errands. H then marks his receipt of information by formatting a ZYZ turn in lines 4 and 5. After L produces the confirmation marker *heN* in line 6, H moves on with a surprise token *wa* in line 8, indicating that he is glad L tuned in to the radio show. Here, H switches from the activity of checking the listener’s basic information to that of welcoming him, a change foreshadowed by the use of ZYZ.

(8) ZYZ projecting an activity change

- 1 H: ...*a xianzai zai taibei gongzuo.*
 PRT now LOC Taipei work
 ‘so you’re working in Taipei now?’
- 2 L: ...*uh=,-*
 PRT
 ‘well’
- 3 ...*xianzai lai taibei ban xie shiqing.-*
 now come Taipei do some thing
 ‘I am running some errands in Taipei currently’

- 4 H: ...*ou*,\
PRT
‘oh’
- 5 → ...*zheyangzi ou*.\
ZYZ PRT
‘I see’
- 6 L: ...*heN*.\
PRT
‘yeah’
- 7 ...[*dui*].\
correct
‘right’
- 8 H: ...[*wa=*]
PRT
‘wow’
- 9 ...*na hao gaoxing a*,\
then very happy PRT
‘I am so happy’
- 10 ...*ganghao tingdao womende jiemu*.\
happen.to hear our program
‘you just happened to tune in to our show’

The second pattern, in which ZYZ is deployed to mark a change of topic/activity, is schematized in (9) below.

(9) ZYZ as a turn preface

A: Informing

B: ZYZ

Change of topic/activity

When ZYZ is used to launch a longer turn, it is more likely for the speaker to not employ a final particle after the token, as exemplified in Extracts (10) and (11) below. This is, in part, because the presence of a final particle may mobilize a response from the addressee. After the ZYZ preface, the speaker may ask a follow-up question to switch to another (sub)topic, as in (10), or progress to another activity, as in (11).

In Extract (10), N and W are talking about the judgment of a referee in an intercollegiate basketball game. In lines 1 to 3, N criticizes the referee for being eccentric and inconsistent. In lines 4 and 5, W produces *ou zheyangzi* ‘oh, I see’ to indicate his receipt of information and to preface a later question about the affiliation of the referee in line 6. Notice that there is a 1.6 second silence following W’s *ou* ‘oh’ in line 4, and yet N does not take up the next turn. W then uses ZYZ to relaunch his turn along with another question, switching to a slightly different (sub)topic, that is, moving from the referee’s judgment to the referee’s affiliation (lines 6-8).

(10) ZYZ as a turn preface that projects a topic change

- 1 N: ...(0.7) *wo juede nage caipan ta nage.. ziji chidu.. buyiyang you guai.*\
 I feel that referee he that self scale different also weird
 ‘I think the referee was eccentric and weird’
- 2 *ye ye ye jiu suanle a.*\
 also also also just don’t-matter PRT
 ‘that was okay though’
- 3 *ranhou keshi you bu jianci.*\
 then but also no persist
 ‘but he was not consistent, either!’
- 4 W: ...(0.9) *ou=.*\
 PRT
 ‘oh’
- 5 → ...(1.6) *zheyangzi.*\
 ZYZ
 ‘okay’
- 6 *shi shi S-da de shi-bu-shi.*\
 be be S-University ASSC be-not-be
 ‘was the referee from S University?’
- 7 N: ...(0.9) *bushi.*\
no
 ‘no’
- 8 *shi N-da nulan de jiaolian.*\
 be N-University women’s.basketball ASSC coach
 ‘she was the coach of the women’s basketball team from N University’

Likewise, ZYZ can also be used to preface a change of activity. As shown in extract (11) below, M and G are discussing different buffet restaurants in Taipei. M

first proposes in line 2 that they go to restaurant X and then supports this proposal by quoting a positive review from someone else. It should be noted that although M's turn in line 5 may involve an assessment, M presents it in third-party reported speech, as if she were offering a piece of factual information. In response to M's suggestion, G first produces a bare token of ZYZ without any preceding or following particles, indicating her receipt of information, and then shifts to accepting M's proposal.

(11) ZYZ as a turn preface that projects an activity change

- 1 M: ...*shangci wo shuo shi shuo*,-
 last.time I say be say
 'last time, I was proposing'
- 2 ...*yaobuyao qu chichi X de nage sheme* <Eng *buffet* Eng> a.\
 want-not-want go eat X ASSC that what buffet
 'maybe we could try the buffet at restaurant X someday'
- 3 G: (0) *uN huN*.\
 PRT PRT
 'un hun'
- 4 M: ...*tamen shuo*,-
 they say
 'they say-'
- 5 ...*youren shuo* <MRC *bucuo* MRC>.\
 some say not.bad
 'some say that it is not bad'
- 6 → G: ...*zheyangzi*.\
 ZYZ
 'I see'
- 7 ...*na hao a*.\
 then good PRT
 'okay'
- 8 ...*keyi a*.\
 can PRT
 'let's try it'

In short, when used in the sequence-third position of a question-elicited informing or as a preface to a responding turn, instead of serving as a continuer, ZYZ allows the speaker to foreshadow an upcoming change of topic or activity. Examples in this section show that the sequential position of a response token can exert an influence on its function (Heritage 1984b).

7. ZYZ as a repair initiator

Thus far, the instances of ZYZ that I have discussed are mostly found in the context of informing sequences. However, our data shows that ZYZ can also be deployed in response to other sequential environments. When it is, the token often constitutes a dispreferred action⁸ (Pomerantz 1984) and may initiate repair in the following turn(s), as schematically represented in (12).

(12) ZYZ as a repair initiator

A: Advice-giving/first assessment

B: ZYZ

A: Repair

The two most commonly found sequences in this pattern are advice-giving and assessment sequences. An advice-giving sequence resembles an informing sequence in that both social acts involve a more informed party communicating a piece of new information to a less informed party; however, accepting the suggestion, instead of mere receipt, is preferred as the second pair part of advice-giving (cf. Heritage & Sefi 1992). The deployment of ZYZ in such a sequence characterizes the prior turn as an act of informing or telling, without identifying one's own acceptance or rejection. The response may thus prompt the co-participant to produce more turns to achieve agreement.

Extract (13) below is from a call-in radio talk show that primarily discusses medical issues. Speaker M is a mother who calls in to ask for some advice regarding her son's articulation problem. Toward the end of the show, speaker D, a female physician, advises that M bring up her son's articulation problem when taking him to see the doctor. After the acknowledgement of the show hostess H at line 7, M formulates a token of ZYZ in response to D's advice. Without receiving an explicit acceptance, D launches a turn prefaced by the causal connective *yinwei* 'because' to elaborate on the reason why she is offering such a suggestion. According to Song & Tao (2009), the use of *yinwei*-initiated clauses after the main clause in response to another speaker is oftentimes an effort to mitigate disagreement and to work toward agreement. Therefore, upon realizing that the ZYZ she produces at line 8 may have

⁸ In the framework of Conversation Analysis, the distinction between preference and dispreference is not a psychological or emotional notion. Rather, whether an action is preferred or dispreferred depends on whether a second action is socially expected with respect to the first action in the sequential context (Pomerantz 1984, Schegloff 2007). For example, agreement is a preferred response to an assessment (Pomerantz 1984), while acceptance is more preferred in response to an offer and invitation (Schegloff 2007).

been mistaken as a signal of resistance, M rushes in at line 15 with a negation marker *bushi* ‘no’ to deny this interpretation (Wang 2008) and then states that she will do as D has advised.

(13) ZYZ in response to advice

- 1 → D: *na nin = keneng yao =,-*
 then you possible have-to
 ‘then you may have to’
- 2 M: ...*heN,*
 right
 ‘right’
- 3 D: ...*gen = yishi jiang,*
 with physician say
 ‘tell the physician’
- 4 ...*jiushishuo,-*
 that.is
 ‘that is’
- 5 ...*ninde wenti keneng shi zaiyu =,-*
 your problem possible be lie.in
 ‘the problem lies in’
- 6 ...*xiaohaizi fayin buhao.*
 child articulation bad
 ‘the kid’s articulation’
- 7 H: ...*mhm.*
 PRT
 ‘mhm’
- 8 → M: ...*zheyangzi.*
 ZYZ
 ‘I see’
- 9 → D: ...*yinwei youxie ren,-*
 because some person
 ‘because some people’
- 10 ...*ta keneng jue--*
 he possible think
 ‘may think’
- 11 ...*youxie yishi keneng hui renwei shuo,-*
 some physician possible will think say
 ‘some doctors may think’

- 12 ...*ei?*/
PRT
‘uhm’
- 13 ...*ni zhishi lai jiancha houloung a,-*
you only come examine throat PRT
‘you go to them just to examine the throat’
- 14 ...*huozheshi shuo xiaohaizi ganmao [zhe zhong qingkuang].*
or say child cold this kind situation
‘or because of a cold’
- 15 M: [*bushi,*
no
‘no’
- 16 *wo shi --]*
I be
‘I am-’
- 17 → ...*ruguo wo qu,*
if I go
‘if I do (take the kid to a doctor)’
- 18 → ...*wo yiding hui gen ta jiang zhe zhong yuan <@yin de @>.*
I must will with he say this kind reason PRT
‘I will definitely tell him the reason’

M’s response in lines 15 to 18 serves two functions. First and foremost, it shows that M treats D’s turn not as a mere extension of D’s previous discourse, but as a repair initiation, and thus formulates an explicit acceptance of D’s suggestion, which is the more preferred second pair part in this sequence. Second, the negative particle *bushi* ‘no’ at the beginning of M’s turn in line 15 also corrects D’s interpretation of her ZYZ turn as a disagreement (cf. Wang 2008). This indicates both participants are aware that the use of ZYZ in the advice-giving sequence is not expected or preferred and may be read as an index of disagreement. However, this example also demonstrates that the exact meaning of ZYZ is not fixed and needs to be negotiated as a conversation unfolds.

In some cases, ZYZ can even drive the advice-giver to format a *yes-no* question, explicitly urging the recipient to provide a less equivocal response. As illustrated in example (14) below, H, as a cosmetologist, suggests that C avoid exposing herself to the sunshine because of the spots on her face. C reacts to H’s advice with a token of ZYZ at line 5, treating the prior turn as a new piece of information without accepting or rejecting it. In order to get an unequivocal response from the recipient, H then

formulates a *yes-no* question *hao-bu-hao* ‘is it okay’ (Li & Thompson 1981) at line 6, making relevant a particular type of response from C (cf. Stivers & Rossano 2010). C then expresses her acceptance and appreciation of the advice in the following turn (lines 7-8).

(14) ZYZ in response to advice

- 1 H: *haiyou zhang heiban,-*
 moreover grow freckle
 ‘by the way, if you do have freckles’
- 2 → ...*jinliang shao shai taiyang.*
 as.much.as.possible little expose.to sun
 ‘try to reduce exposure to sunlight’
- 3 ...*(0.6)[hoN.\]*
 PRT
- 4 C: [*ou =,-*]
 PRT
 ‘oh’
- 5 → ...*zheyangzi.*
 ZYZ
 ‘I see’
- 6 → H: *(0) hao-bu-hao.*
 good-not-good
 ‘okay?’
- 7 → C: ...*hao hao.*
 good good
 ‘okay’
- 8 ...*xiexie.*
 thanks
 ‘thank you’

From H’s reaction to the ZYZ turn at line 6, we can see that the use of this information-receipting marker in response to an advice-giving turn is deemed to be insufficient and thus needs repair. Although, as shown in the later turns of this example, while ZYZ may not indicate disagreement, it still forms a dispreferred and repairable second pair part that requires both parties to resolve collaboratively.

Another non-informing context in which ZYZ is found is in response to a first assessment. Similar to an informing act, an assessment also reveals new information to the addressee, although the information presented in an assessment may be

subjective and more negotiable. Previous research also notes that how an assessment is made is pertinent to one's state of knowledge concerning the topic (Goodwin & Goodwin 1992, Heritage & Raymond 2005, Thompson, Fox & Couper-Kuhlen 2015). However, as argued by Pomerantz (1984), the preferred second pair part of a first assessment is mostly an agreement, usually put forth in the form of an upgraded assessment without hesitation. The use of a mere information-receipting marker like ZYZ in response to a first assessment appears to be disaligning and thus initiates repair.

For instance, at the beginning of extract (15) below, the radio talk show hostess B describes the invited guest, A, as a melancholy and taciturn person. She then mentions another female artist, Chyi Yu, referring to her as having the same qualities. A's use of ZYZ, rather than an upgraded agreement, at line 11 in response to B's assessment appears to convey a stance other than total agreement (Pomerantz 1984). Aware of this, B launches her turn with a negative conditional adverbial *buran* 'otherwise,' attempting to defend her own statement while responding to A's potential disagreement. Speaker A's stance is further revealed by the question *ni queding ma* 'Are you sure?' formulated at line 14. In the face of this challenge, B then modifies her assessment by emphasizing that while Chyi Yu "looks like" a serious person, actually she is not. A then agrees with B's revised comment accordingly.

(15) ZYZ in response to an assessment

- 1 B: ...*dui*.\
correct
'yeah'
- 2 ...*suoyi renjia hui juede nimen jiushi zhe zhong hen youyu de*
so they will feel you just this kind very gloomy ASSC
ren a.\
person PRT
'so others will think you are very gloomy'
- 3 ...[*bijiao*],__
more
'more'
- 4 A: ...[*ni zhidao*],\
you know
'you know'
- 5 B: (0) *jiushi bijiao* =,__
just more
'just more...'

- 6 ...tsk.\
- 7 ...<p *cenmuo bu jianghua a zhe zhong p*>.\
taciturn no talk PRT this kind
'more taciturn or what'
- 8 A: ...[*youyu zhege bufen you*].\
gloomy this part have
'(I admit) I appear a bit gloomy'
- 9 → B: [*xiang qiyu wo juede xiang*] *qiyu ye shi yiyang*.\
like Chyi.Yu I feel like Chyi.Yu also be the-same
'like Chyi Yu, I think Chyi Yu is the same'
- 10 *ni zhidao ma?*__
you know PRT
'you know'
- 11 → A: ...*ou zheyangzi a*.\
PRT ZYZ PRT
'oh, really?'
- 12 → B: ...*buran ta zenme huei* --
otherwise he why will
'otherwise, why would she...'
- 13 ...[*qiyu qishi*]--
Chyi-Yu actually
'Chyi Yu actually'
- 14 → A: ...*(H) [ni que=ding] ma?*__
you sure PRT
'are you sure?'
- 15 B: ...*bushi*--
no
'no,'
- 16 (0) *wo shuo qiyu kanqilai ta jiushi yige hen =,*__
I say Chyi look she just one very
'I mean she looks like a...'
- 17 ...*jiushi*--
that.is
'that is'
- 18 ...tsk-
- 19 ...*meiyou sheme hua zheyang*.\
no what words this.way
'a quiet person'

- 20 (0) *hen* <Eng [*serious*] Eng>.\
 very serious
 ‘a serious person’
- 21 A: [*haN*]./
 PRT
 ‘huh?’
- 22 → B: ...*dan qishi ta wanquan bushi ma*.\
 but actually she completely not PRT
 ‘but actually not at all’
- 23 ...[*dui-bu-dui*]?\
 correct.not.correct
 ‘right?’
- 24 → A: [*dui dui dui*].\
 correct correct correct
 ‘that’s right’

Unlike the examples discussed in sections 5 and 6, it takes several more turns for the participants in extract (15) to come to mutual agreement. As can be seen from this example, A’s production of ZYZ in line 11 in response to B’s assessment is apparently a dispreferred action and thereby gives rise to a series of negotiation and repair.

In sum, examples (13) to (15) discussed in this section demonstrate that the sequential environment in which ZYZ is used may affect how the co-participant interprets and reacts to the response token. While this information-receipting marker appears to be sufficient and preferred in response to an informing, it is treated as insufficient and repairable in other sequences, like advice-giving and assessments. However, it should be noted that ZYZ as an alternative response does not necessarily indicate disagreement. Instead, the meaning of the token emerges and has to be co-constructed in the process of talk-in-interaction.

8. Conclusion

While there is a growing body of research specifically focusing on the use of information receipt markers in a number of major languages, not enough comparable work has been done in Chinese linguistics. The current paper is thus an attempt to contribute to this line of research. In this article, I have scrutinized the use of ZYZ, a response token for marking information receipt in Chinese conversation. I have shown that as a response token, ZYZ recurs with preceding markers that index a change of

state or a receipt of information, such as *ou* and *hoN*, and with final particles that seek confirmation from the prior speaker, such as *a*, *ou*, and *hoN*. Both groups of particles clearly reflect the function of *ZYZ* in marking information receipt and mobilizing responses. Moreover, the use of final particles may also exert some influence on the design of the next turn, especially the interlocutor's deployment of acknowledgement tokens. More importantly, I have pinpointed the interactional functions that *ZYZ* can serve in addition to indexing information receipt and have identified the sequential contexts that give rise to these readings, arguing that information receipt markers are also instrumental in the management of real-time interaction and that sequential environments may significantly affect the interpretation of, and the reaction to, a particular particle.

This study thereby contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First of all, it addresses a topic that has not been sufficiently explored in Chinese linguistics, i.e., information receipt markers. In contrast to Liu (2002), who only lists the response token use of *ZLZ* as a subtype of one of its uses, I specifically zero in on this function and demonstrate that an information receipt particle like *ZYZ* works in a much more complicated way than it may first appear and thus is worthy of a more in-depth analysis. Second, methodologically, I adopt a more participant-oriented approach to the data, using the next turn and ensuing discourse as evidence for the analysis of the particle's function. This may help to avoid or alleviate the impact of researcher bias. Moreover, to complement prior studies (Liu 2002, Hsieh 2012), I present the distributional patterns of *ZYZ* and the co-occurring particles, revealing how *ZYZ* turns are composed and how these pragmatic expressions interact with one another and with other contexts. Finally, while Liu (2002) analyzes *ZYZ* as a mere information-receipt token, I argue that the meaning of this response token in context is negotiated and co-constructed as a conversation unfolds, rather than being entirely given and fixed. This dynamic process should thus be taken into account when one is studying such linguistic resources.

Despite all these contributions, this research has some limitations, which may serve as points of departure for future research. First, I did not discuss how the components of *ZYZ*, i.e., a proximate demonstrative *zhe* and an abstract noun *yangzi*, enable the marker to derive such an information-receipting meaning. It would be interesting to look into this semantic change phenomenon and see if similar patterns can be found in other information-related expressions in Chinese and other languages. Second, partly due to the nature of the corpus used, paralinguistic cues such as prosody and gesture that go with this response token were left uninvestigated. If more naturally occurring multimodal data were made available, we could better understand how *ZYZ* and other similar response tokens are deployed and how their meaning is

negotiated in face-to-face interaction. Finally, given that the current study only focuses on one particular token, more research should be done to uncover the use of response tokens in Mandarin Chinese and, hopefully, deepen our understanding of the nature of human language and interaction.

Appendix 1. Abbreviations

ASSC	associative (<i>de</i>)
ASP	aspectual marker
BA	the <i>ba</i> marker in the <i>ba</i> construction
CSC	complex stative construction (<i>-de</i>)
LOC	locative (<i>zai</i>)
PASS	passive voice marker (<i>bei</i>)
PRT	particle

Appendix 2. Transcription convention

^	primary accent
[]	speech overlap
(H)	inhalation
@	laughter
<Eng Eng>	codeswitching to English
<MRC MRC>	marcato: each word distinct and emphasized
<p p>	piano: soft

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Graduate Institute of Linguistics
National Taiwan university
Taipei, TAIWAN
Chen-Yu Chester Hsieh: chesterhugues@gmail.com

從資訊接收標記到人際互動調節：

「這樣子」在中文會話做為回應標記之用法探究

謝承諭

國立臺灣大學

本文旨在研究「這樣子」在臺灣中文對話中，作為資訊接收標記之功能與用法。基於口語語料庫的資料與互動語言學的方法，筆者指出常與「這樣子」在同一話輪共現之前後標記，以及如此的回應標記對於下一話輪設計與構成上的影響。除此之外，本研究也發現「這樣子」除了作為資訊接收的回應標記之外，在不同的語境中，另外具有三大互動功能，包含鼓勵聽話者延續其言談，標記話題或行動上的改變，以及暗示對話者修正其言談。而聽話者如何理解與反應「這樣子」這個回應標記，則深深受到上文語境的影響。由此可知，「這樣子」作為資訊接收標記的功能與意義是在互動當中，不斷協商、共建而成。

關鍵詞：這樣子、回應標記、資訊接受、上下語境