

**Epistemic stance marker as a disagreement preface:  
*Wo juede* ‘I feel/think’ in Mandarin conversation in response to  
assessments**

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**1. Introduction**

In everyday interaction, people constantly express various kinds of stance – attitudes toward the topics, contents, and addressee(s) of their utterance. Stance-taking in discourse has lately been attracting increasing attention from scholars because it is ubiquitous in interaction and is crucial for social coordination (see studies collected in Englebretson 2007 and Jaffe 2009). Epistemic stance, which is defined as the speaker’s indication of his or her position with respect to what he or she is saying, especially regarding how he or she comes to have the idea or how committed he or she is regarding the factuality of the idea that he or she is conveying, is one type of stance often displayed in conversation (Du Bois 2007; Goodwin 2007). This study examines the function of an epistemic stance marker *wo juede* ‘I feel/think’ in Mandarin conversation.<sup>1</sup> *Wo juede* ‘I feel/think’ is analogous to *I think* in English conversation in terms of its overwhelmingly high frequency compared to other similar expressions in the language. While studies such as Huang (2003) and Fang (2005) have revealed that in Mandarin conversation *wo juede* ‘I feel/think’ is getting conventionalized as a pragmatic marker, its particular functions still need to be further investigated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Lü (1980), *juede* is described to have two senses: (i) ‘to have some feeling’ and (ii) ‘to have some opinion’. As the tokens of *juede* in my examples are used in the second sense, *juede* is translated as ‘think’ in their English translations.

<sup>2</sup> Lim (2009) has conducted a study of *wo juede* in the Conversational Analytic framework. Focusing on the occurrences in first assessments, he characterized *wo juede* as a “pre-emptive hedging of potential disalignment/disagreement.” His claim can supplement my argument, as I analyzed *wo juede* in second assessments in this study.

As Schegloff notes, what people do using language “can be grounded in its *position*, not just its *composition* – not just the words that compose it, but its placement (Schegloff 2007: 20-21).” This suggests that, in order to understand the function of a linguistic item, it is necessary to examine how the item is used in actual interaction, paying close attention to its position in conversational sequence. This study focuses on uses of *wo juede* in response to assessments or judgments. This sequential position is chosen because the preference of the response has a clear preference. That is, when one participant makes an assessment or a judgment, the relevant next turn is an agreement or disagreement to the opinion being expressed. Generally speaking, the preferred response to an assessment or judgment is an agreement, and the dispreferred response is a disagreement (Pomerantz 1984; Levinson 1983: 338). Through the analysis of my data, I found that *wo juede* generally frames an alternative, conflicting opinion when it is used in a response to an assessment or judgment. *Wo juede* in such cases works to mitigate the conflict in opinion between the participants by making the assessment seem less a matter of objective statement and more a matter of the speaker’s own personal opinion.

The organization of this study is as follows: The methodology and the data are described in section 2; In sections 3 to 5, three subtypes of the use of *wo juede* in response to an assessment or judgment are discussed: starting a disagreement, maintaining a conflicting opinion, and elaborating a flat disagreement; Finally, a summary of my results are presented in Section 6.

## **2. Methodology and Data**

The research framework I adopt here is Interactional Linguistics (see studies collected in Ochs et al. 1996; Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Ford et al. 2002; Hakulinen and Selting 2005). Interactional Linguistics is generally characterized as the intersection of linguistics, Conversation Analysis and anthropology. It aims to understand the process and mechanism in which language is shaped by interaction, as well as the constraints that languages may pose on the interaction of their speakers. Interactional Linguistics differs from other approaches to language in that it adopts from Conversation Analysis a methodology for micro-analysis of conversation sequence while focusing on the actions performed by the participants in the ongoing activity rather than the meanings of linguistic expressions.

The data for this study come from two corpora. One is the CALPER corpus (Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research) compiled by Prof.

Hongyin Tao at UCLA, recoded in Los Angeles. 27 groups (a single group consisted of 2 to 6 participants) participated, and the transcript amounts to approximately 909,000 characters. The other is the BEIF corpus (BEijing Interaction between Friends), which was collected by the author and videotaped in Beijing, Los Angeles and Tokyo. 20 groups participated and the total length of recorded material is about 15 hours. In both corpora, the participants were asked to come to the recording site and to talk freely. For the most part the participants were familiar with each other. Even when they were not, they became quite friendly during the recording. A total of 1,163 tokens of *wo jue de* were found in the CALPER corpus.

### 3. Starting a disagreement

As is often pointed out in studies conducted in the framework of Conversation Analysis, items in the turn-initial position often plays a significant role in shaping the unfolding turn. At this position, a speaker may project the shape or the type of a turn that he or she is producing (Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff 1987; Lerner 1996; Heritage 1984, 2002). With such projection, the recipient can anticipate what kind of action is going to be achieved by the speaker's utterance. Items at the beginning of a turn are thus critically important for understanding what the turn is going to be like. In turns that are produced as a response to assessment or judgment, I found recurrent patterns of *wo jue de* framing a disagreement. A speaker uses *wo jue de* when her evaluative stance toward the topic conflicts with the other participants', and the use of *wo jue de* works to mitigate the disaffiliation between participants.

In the example below, participants are talking about people in their school. In line 3, M1 makes a positive assessment of people in the English department, and compares them with people in the chemistry department in line 4. In line 6, F disagrees with the negative assessment of the people in the chemistry department, starting with *wo jue de*.

(1) [CALPER 817 H2]

- 1 M1:        然后就^选他那个课上.
- 2 F:        ...现在[都分]-
- 3 M1:                [不过]英语系的人给我感觉^挺有意思的.
- 4                不像化学系人那么无^趣.
- 5 M2:        哎, [^他们一天-]
- 6 F:    →        [我觉得化学系]的女生挺有趣的.

- 7 M2: hen, 整天没事干当然- hen, 那当然-
- 8 M1: en 化学系- 化学系的人就是太- .h 比较-[^沉闷].
- 9 F: [你看那个]张丽.
- 10 M2: 她- 她是- 她也化学的啊.
- 11 F: 对啊, 她多活泼.
- 
- 1 M1: ranhou jiu ^xuan ta na ge ke shang.
- 2 F: ... xianzai [dou fen]-
- 3 M1: [buguo yingyu xi de ren gei wo ganjue ^ting you yisi de.
- 4 bu xiang huaxue xi ren namme wu^qu.
- 5 M2: ai, [^tamen yi tian-]
- 6 F: → [wo **juede** huaxue xi] de nüsheng ting youqu de.
- 7 M2: hen, zhengtian mei shi gan dangran- hen, na dangran-
- 8 M1: en huaxue xi- huaxue xi de ren jiushi tai- .h bijiao- [^chenmen].
- 9 [ni kan neige] zhang li.
- 10 M2: ta- ta shi- ta ye huaxue de a.
- 11 F: dui a, ta duo huopo.
- 
- 1 M1: then (I'll) ^choose his class.
- 2 F: ... Now [(they are) all divided into-
- 3 M1: [But people in the English department are very interesting.
- 4 not as boring as people in the chemistry department.
- 5 M2: Hey, [^they once-
- 6 F: → [I **think** women in the chemistry department are very interesting.
- 7 M2: having nothing to do for a whole day, naturally-
- 8 M1: People in the chemistry department are just too- .h comparatively- [^dull].
- 9 F: [look at] Zhang Li.
- 10 M2: She- she is- she is also in the chemistry department.
- 11 F: Right, she is very engaging.

F's turn in line 6, *wo juede huaxuexi de nusheng ting youqu de* "I think women in the chemistry department are very interesting," is a disagreement with the preceding assessment made by M1, *yinyuxi de ren gei wo ganjue ting youyisi de. bu xiang huaxuexi ren name wuqu* "people in the English department are very interesting, not boring as people in chemistry department."

After receiving F's disagreement, M1 re-formulates his assessment in line 8: He downgrades the assessment from *wuqu* "boring" to *chenmen* "dull." The adverb modifying *chenmen* "dull" is also downgraded from *tai* "too" to *bijiao* "comparatively" within this turn. Overlapping with *chenmen*, F gives a counterexample – Zhang Li, a mutual friend in the chemistry department who is very engaging. These modifications and the provision of evidence suggest that it was clear to the participants that they have conflicting opinions about the topic.

*Wo juede* in this example frames the speaker's opinion that contrast with her co-participant's opinion. The use of *wo juede* seems to be interactionally motivated; it is used to mitigate a disagreement between participants. Two features can be argued as supporting this claim. First, the predicate in the complement clause, *youqu* "interesting," is a subjective evaluation that does not require special knowledge about the topic. It is also modified by a degree adverb *ting* "very," which amplify the evaluation. Together the adjectival phrase has a high degree of subjectivity (Song and Tao 2009: 75). Secondly, the production of the turn of disagreement is smooth. The speaker does not seem to be hesitant in producing her utterance, as there is no hedge, pause, or expression of uncertainty such as *keneng* "possibly." These features suggest that the use of *wo juede* does not mark the speaker's uncertainty about the factuality of the claim, but is motivated by the interactional consideration that the participants have conflicting ideas about the same topic.

The next example illustrates that speakers are responsive to the existence of a conflict in opinion, as they only start to use *wo juede* after a conflict in opinion becomes clear. The topic of this conversation is frozen dumplings sold in supermarkets. While one participant (Tao) dislikes the dumplings, the other two participants (Mei and Ying) like the dumplings.

(2) BEIF01 [44:39-45:28]

- 1 Tao: 你吃过超- 超市里卖的那种- 速冻水饺
- 2 Ying: 吃过.
- 3 Mei: 吃过. 有的挺好吃.
- 4 Tao: 它那个馅儿, 不多嘛?
- 5 Mei: 嗯: [嗯
- 6 Tao: [做特别小啊.
- 7 Mei: → 不是. 有的挺多的. XXX 跟那个湾仔, 挺好的。我觉得。
- 8 (0.8)

- 9 Ying: → 我吃过湾仔. **我觉得**那挺好吃.
- 10 Mei: 我湾仔 XXX
- 11 Tao: 我感觉是[X
- 12 Mei: [湾仔 XXX 挺好吃的.
- 13 我, 我以前挺[[喜欢吃.
- 14 Ying: [[我- 我不知道贵不贵.
- 15 Tao: 我就感觉超市里面卖的那个饺子特别特别小.
- 16 然後馅儿^特少.
- 17 (0.6)
- 18 Ying: [^那个^饺子**我觉得**^不小.]
- 19 Mei: [eh::: 跟那个是不一样的.]
- 20 有的是, [[有的是那种很小的就是-
- 21 Tao: [[是吗?
- 22 Mei: 比你们家包的饺子大一点儿, 比我们家包的饺子小一点儿,
- 23 有那种饺子.
- 24 =那种饺子的, 我觉得皮儿厚.挺不好吃的.
- 25 =也他那个边儿嘛, 捏的是花的, 你知道吧.
- 26 Ying: → =**我觉得**超市里的饺子(1.2)不算小.
- 27 跟我们家的(0.5)有的比我们家的大.
- 28 Mei: n
- 29 Tao: a
- 
- 1 Tao: ni chi guo chao- chaoshi li mai de na zhong- sudong shuijiao
- 2 Ying: chi guo.
- 3 Mei: chi guo. you de hen haochi.
- 4 Tao: ta neige xianr, bu duo ma?
- 5 Mei: n: [n
- 6 Tao: [zuo tebie xiao a.
- 7 Mei: → bu shi. youde ting duo de. XXX gen neige wanzai, ting hao de °**wo juede**°.
- 8 (0.8)
- 9 Ying: → wo chi guo wanzai. **wo juede** na ting haochi.
- 10 Mei: wo wanzai XXX
- 11 Tao: wo ganjue shi [X
- 12 Ying: [wanzai XXX ting haochi de.
- 13 wo, wo yiqian ting [[xihuan chi.

- 14 Ying:                               [[wo- wo bu zhidao gui bu gui.  
 15 Tao:       wo ganjue chaoshi limian mai de neige jiaozi tebie tebie xiao.  
 16               ranhou xianr ^te shao.  
 17               (0.6)  
 18 Ying: → [^neige ^jiaozi **wo jue**de ^bu xiao. ]  
 19 Mei:       [eh::: gen neige shi bu yiyang de. ]  
 20               youde shi, [[youde shi na zhong hen xiao de jiushi-  
 21 Tao:                               [[shi ma?  
 22 Mei:       bi nimen jia bao de jiaozi da yidianr, bi women jia bao de jiaozi xiao yi dianr,  
 23               you na zhong jiaozi.  
 24               =na zhong jiaozi de, wo jue de pir hou. ting bu haochi de.  
 25               =ye ta neige bianr ma, nie de shi hua de, ni zhidao ba.  
 26 Ying: → =**wo jue**de chaoshi li de jiaozi (1.2) bu suan xiao.  
 27               gen women jia de (0.5) youde bi women jia de da.  
 28 Mei:       n  
 29 Tao:       a

- 1 Tao:       Have you eaten frozen dumplings sold in supermarkets?  
 2 Ying:       I have.  
 3 Mei:       I have. Some are very delicious.  
 4 Tao:       They don't have a lot of filling, right?  
 5 Mei:       n: uh  
 6 Tao:       They are very small.  
 7 Mei: → No. Some have a lot of filling. XXX and Wanzai are very good, °**I think**°.  
 8               (0.8)  
 9 Ying: → I have eaten Wanzai. **I thought** it was very delicious.  
 10 Mei:       I, Wanzai XX  
 11 Tao:       My feeling is [X  
 12 Mei:                               [Wanzai is pretty good.  
 13               Before I [[liked it very much.  
 14 Ying:                               [[I don't know if they are expensive or not.  
 15 Tao:       I just feel the dumplings sold in the supermarkets are terribly small.  
 16               and they have only ^little filling inside.  
 17               (0.6)  
 18 Ying: → [^Those ^dumplings, **I think**, are ^ not small. ]

- 19 Mei: [eh:::: It's different. ]  
 20 Some, [[ Some are quite small.  
 21 Tao: [[Really?  
 22 Mei: Bigger than your home's dumplings, smaller than my home's dumplings.  
 23 Some dumplings are.  
 24 → =That kind of dumplings, **I think**, their skin is too thick. Quite bad to eat.  
 25 =Also, the edge of the dough is folded, you know.  
 26 Ying: → =**I think** the dumplings in supermarkets (1.2) are not small.  
 27 as my home's (0.5) Some of them are bigger than my home's.  
 28 Mei: n  
 29 Tao: a

In line 1, Tao asks whether the other participants have eaten frozen dumplings sold in supermarkets. Ying and Mei both give an affirmative answer. Mei's turn in line 3 consists of two units, *chi guo* "have eaten" working as the answer to the question in line 1, and *you de ting haochi* "some are very delicious," a positive assessment of the dumplings. This assessment is not framed by *wo jue de*. Then Tao in lines 4 and 6 asks another, negatively polarized question "They don't have a lot of filling, right?" This question indicates that she is taking a negative stance toward the dumplings and that she believes the dumplings are very small. Mei denies this in line 7 and continues by making a positive assessment ("very good") of the dumplings that she has had in line 7. After 0.8 second's pause, Ying also makes a positive assessment ("very delicious") of the dumplings in line 9. Their positive assessments about the dumplings, after Tao's negative evaluative stance toward them is revealed, are framed by *wo jue de*.

Tao, in line 15, re-introduces her negative evaluative stance toward dumplings sold in supermarkets, this time emphasizing the smallness of the dumplings by saying *tebie tebie xiao* "terribly small" Responding to this, in lines 18 and 26, Ying states her opinion that the dumplings sold in supermarkets are not small, both times framing the opinion with *wo jue de*.

This example is thus an illustration that the presence of a conflict of opinion may trigger uses of *wo jue de*. As they say in the excerpt, all the participants have had access to the dumplings prior to this conversation, in which case it is hard to assume that they are marking uncertainty about the taste or size of the dumplings. Rather, they are using *wo jue de* to mark that their assessments are personal ones, thereby making their disagreement less serious.

In the example below, another pair of participants has conflicting opinions about how rare the heavy snow fall in the previous year was.

(3) BEIF13 [38:00-38:40]

- 1 Li: 所以- ...特别大的雪的时候我- 我- 我没有看见过.
- 2 Ming: .h 哎呀太遗憾了.
- 3 Li: 对呀. 但是我相信 [今年
- 4 Ming: [^五十年一遇的大雪你都没看上.
- 5 Li: → 但是**我觉得**这个不是..五十年一遇的问题.
- 6 Ming: 什么<@>问题? </@>
- 7 Li: 是气球.
- 8 Ming: 啊:
- 9 Li: 气温的[变化
- 10 Ming: [不是气球问题@
- 11 Li: 地[[球:
- 12 Ming: [[地球:
- 13 @@@@
- 14 Li: 所以我相信..今年还是会<@>这么样的</@>.
- 15 Ming: 是吗
- 16 Li: n:
- 17 Ming: 应该没那么容易的吧.
- 18 Li: → **我觉得**应该还是这样子的. @@@
- 19 Ming: .h 我相信...二零零八年肯定不会再有那种雪了
- 20 (0.5)
- 21 Li: 我相信..会的.
- 22 Ming: °哎呀算了吧°
- 23 Li: [@@
- 24 Ming: [@@
- 
- 1 Li: suoyi- ... tebie da de xue de shihou wo- wo- wo meiyou kanjian guo.
- 2 Ming: .h aiya tai yihan le.
- 3 Li: dui ya. danshi wo xiangxin [jinnian
- 4 Ming: [^wushi nian yi yu de daxue ni dou mei kan shang.
- 5 Li: → danshi **wo juede** zhe ge bu shi .. wushi nian yi yu de wenti.
- 6 Ming: shenme wenti? @

- 7 Li: shi qiqiu.  
 8 Ming: a:  
 9 Li: qiwen de [bianhua  
 10 Ming: [bu shi qiqiu wenti@  
 11 Li: di[[qiu:  
 12 Ming: [[diqiu:  
 13 Ming: @@@  
 14 Li: suoyi wo xiangxin .. jinnian haishi hui <@>zhemeyang de </@>.  
 15 Ming: shi ma  
 16 Li: n:  
 17 Ming: yinggai mei name rongyi de ba.  
 18 Li: → **wo jue**de yinggai haishi zheyangzi de. @@@  
 19 Ming: .h wo xiangxin ... er ling ling ba nian kending bu hui zai you na zhong xue le.  
 20 (0.5)  
 21 Li: wo xiangxin .. hui de.  
 22 Ming: °aiya suan le ba°  
 23 Li: [@@  
 24 Ming: [@@
- 1 Li: So- ... when it snowed especially heavily, I did not see (the snow).  
 2 Ming: Oh, that's a pity.  
 3 Li: Yeah. But I believe [this year  
 4 Ming: [^You didn't see the once-in-50-years snowfall.  
 5 Li: → But **I think** this is not an issue of once in 50 years.  
 6 Ming: (Then) what kind of <@> issue(is it)? </@>  
 7 Li: It's balloon ('qiqiu')  
 8 Ming: Oh.  
 9 Li: Temperature [change  
 10 Ming: [Not balloon.@  
 11 Li: Ear[th. ('diqiu')  
 12 Ming: [Earth.  
 13 (laughter)  
 14 Li: So I believe .. this year will be <@>like this</@>.  
 15 Ming: Really?  
 16 Li: n

- 17 Ming: (It) shouldn't be that easy.  
 18 Li: → **I think** (it) should still be the same. @@@  
 19 Ming: I believe ... the year of 2008 definitely won't see that much snow.  
 20 (0.5)  
 21 Li: I believe .. (it) can.  
 22 Ming: °Ah, okay whatever. °  
 23 Li: [@@  
 24 Ming: [@@

*Wo juede* is again used to frame the expressions of disagreement. In line 2, Ming expresses her sympathy for Li's failure to experience the snow, and says that Li missed *wushi nian yi yu de daxue* "a once-in-50-years big snowfall." Li disagrees with this by saying *danshi wo juede zhege bushi..wushi nian yi yu de wenti* "but I think this is not an issue of once in 50 years." In lines 7 to 11, prompted by Ming's *shenme wenti* "what kind of issue," Li gives a supplementary explanation that the amount of snowfall is a matter of global climate change. Ming displays doubt about Li's opinion in line 15 with *shi ma* "really?" After receiving Li's confirmation *n*: in line 16, Ming plainly disagrees by saying *yinggai mei name rongyi de ba* "(it) shouldn't be that easy." To Ming's opinion that conflicts with Li's, Li maintains her claim in line 18, again framing with *wo juede*: *wo juede yinggai haishi zheyangzi de* "I think (it) should still be the same." Neither of them yielding, they have one more exchange in lines 19 and 21, *wo xiangxin...erlinglingba nian kending bu hui zai you na zhong xue le* "I believe...the year of 2008 definitely won't see that much snow," and *wo xiangxin..hui de* "I believe...(it) will." Ming then gives up, saying *aiya suan le ba* "Ah, okay whatever." Their conflict of opinions thus comes to an end without a resolution.

Most of Li's turns (and one of Ming's) have the sentence structure of complementation. The object of *xiangxin* "believe" in line 3 is not fully produced because of the overlap with Ming, but judging from what follows, it is highly likely that the object was designed to be a clause that meant "I find this year is likely to have heavy snow again" as in line 14.

(3')

- 1.3 但是**我相信**今年  
 danshi **wo xiangxin** jinnian  
 but 1sg believe this year  
 “But I believe (that) this year”
- 1.5 但是**我觉得**这个不是..五十年一遇的问题.  
 danshi **wo juede** zhe ge bu shi .. wushi nian yi yu de wenti.  
 but 1sg JUEDE this CL NEG COP 50 year one meet POSS matter.  
 “But **I think** this is not .. an issue of once in 50 years”
- 1.14 所以**我相信**..今年还是会这么样的.  
 suoyi **wo xiangxin** .. jintian haishi hui zhemeyang de.  
 therefore 1sg believe this.year still ill this.way PCL  
 “Therefore **I believe** .. this year will be like this.”
- 1.18 **我觉得**应该还是这样子的.  
**wo juede** yinggai haishi zheyangzi de.  
 1sg JUEDE should still this.way PCL  
 “**I think** (it) should still be like this.”
- 1.19 **我相信**...二零零八年肯定不会再有那种雪了.  
**wo xiangxin** ... erlinglingba nian kending bu hui zai you na zhong xue le.  
 1sg believe 2008 year definitely NEG will again have this kind snow PFV  
 “**I believe** ... the year of 2008 definitely won’t have that kind of snow.”
- 1.21 **我相信**..会的.  
**wo xiangxin** .. hui de  
 1sg believe will PCL  
 “**I believe** .. (it) will.”

Two predicates, *juede* “think” and *xiangxin* “believe,” are used with complement clauses. Note that *wo juede* is used when the disagreement is most strongly recognizable. When *juede* is used in lines 5 and 18, the turns are made in direct response to their preceding lines, and the contents of these lines are contrastive; line 5 “But I think this is

not an issue of once in 50 years” explicitly denies an assumption made in the prior turn in line 4 “You didn’t see the heavy snowfall once in 50 years.” Line 18, “I think (it) should be the same” contrasts with line 17 “(It) shouldn’t be that easy” (“easy” referring to having heavy snow fall). Also, in these lines, the speaker recycles a word that is used in the preceding lines; in line 5, Li recycles *wushi nian yi yu* “once in 50 years” in Ming’s line 4. Line 18 also recycles *yinggai* “should” in line 17, which emphasizes the contrast between Li and Ming.

By contrast, three of the four tokens of *xiangxin* “believe” are not used in direct response to their prior turns. In line 3, *xiangxin* “believe” is used after an agreement token *dui ya* “right.” Li was going to shift the conversation’s topic from the snow in the previous year to the snow expected this year, as she says *jinnian* “this year,” but was interrupted before she could complete this shift. In line 14, *xiangxin* “believe” is used after a post-expansion (lines 6 to 9) of the exchange in lines 4 and 5, which is also followed by an expansion for error-correction (lines 10 to 12). After these expansions, Li goes back to the original topic in line 14, thus *wo xiangxin* “I believe” is not directly responding to its prior turn. Similarly, Ming’s turn in line 19 is better understood as re-stating her opinion, rather than responding to line 18, considering the fact that she reformulates her opinion by making clearer references to the elements in the complement clause: the year of 2008 “definitely won’t have that kind of snow.” This formulation is much more specific than its preceding turns in lines 17 and 18, which only have deictic expressions such as *jinnian* “this year” and *zhemeyang/zheyangzi* “like this.” Thus, the function of mitigating a disagreement is not as strong in *wo xiangxin* “I believe” as in *wo juede* “I feel/think.”

In sum, the above is an example of how *wo juede* is selected over other predicates in a context of disagreement, even after switching to another predicate. As the participants are talking about snowfall in the future, *wo juede* is able to mark uncertainty. However, considering the context that they are having conflicting opinions, *wo juede* in this example seems to be used to mitigate their disagreement, not merely to mark the speaker’s uncertainty about her claim.

The function of *wo juede* as mitigating disagreement becomes clear when it is compared with examples in which disagreement is not prefaced with *wo juede*. In the example below, the participants are talking about their favorite fillings for dumplings. When Tao names leek and shrimp as her favorite, Ying immediately says leek is disgusting, though in a joking tone, without prefacing it with *wo juede*.

## (4) BEIF01

- 1 Mei: 哎说到饺子，说饺子你觉得什么馅儿的最好吃啊。  
 2 Ying: ...猪肉白菜的@[@@@  
 3 Mei: [@@@  
 4 Mei: [[你呢？  
 5 Tao: [[n: 韭菜..虾仁儿的。  
 6 Ying: (反正)韭菜真恶心@@  
 7 Tao: ^什么呀？韭菜和虾仁儿放一起[不是  
 8 Mei: [好吃，是吧  
 9 Tao: n
- 1 Mei: ai shuodao jiaozi, shuo jiaozi ni juede shenme xianr de zui haochi a.  
 2 Ying: ... zhurou baicai de @[@@@  
 3 Mei: [@@@  
 4 Mei: [[ni ne?  
 5 Tao: [[n: jiucail .. xiarenr de.  
 6 Ying: (fanzheng) jiucail zhen exin@@  
 7 Tao: ^shenme ya? jiucail xiarenr fang yiqi [bushi  
 8 Mei: [haochi, shi ba  
 9 Tao: n
- 1 Mei: Hey speaking of dumplings, which filling do you think is the most tasty?  
 2 Ying: ... Pork and napa cabbage @[@@@  
 3 Mei: [@@@  
 4 Mei: [[how about you?  
 5 Tao: [[n: leek .. and shrimp.  
 6 Ying: (anyway) leek is disgusting  
 7 Tao: ^What? Having leek and shrimp together, [isn't (it)  
 8 Mei: [Tasty, right?  
 9 Tao: n

In line 6, Ying says (*fanzheng*) *jiucail hen exin* “(anyway) leek is disgusting,” which runs counter to what Tao has just said in line 6. Then Tao reacts strongly, *^shenme ya?* “what?” with stress (indicated by ^) and starts to defend her favorite kind of filling. At this point, it is clear that Tao and Ying have conflicting opinions. The conflict between

them is mitigated by another participant Mei, who shows understanding of Tao; Mei completes Tao's turn by saying *haochi, shi ba* "tasty, right?" This example shows that the absence of *wo juede* in disagreement may cause a strong reaction by the recipient of an opinion contrasting to her own.

In this section, I examined cases in which a speaker starts responding to an assessment with *wo juede*. When a conflict of opinions is obvious to the participants, they use *wo juede* to frame their opinions. By marking that the opinions are based on their own perspective and not objective facts, the participants buffer the disagreement between them. Considering the content of the complement clause and how the utterance is produced, the participants using *wo juede* do not seem to be feeling uncertainty or hesitation toward their claims. Rather, the use is driven by the need to modify their claims so that they will be received by their co-participant with less negative impact.

#### 4. Maintaining a conflicting opinion

Sometimes a conflict of opinions between participants is not resolved immediately. Participants maintain their claims even after the conflict is made prominent. In some cases, *wo juede* is repeatedly used until the conflict is resolved or their argument comes to an end.

In the following examples, *wo juede* is used repeatedly until the conflict between the participants is resolved. In the example below, the participants are talking about their mutual friend Cai, whose name is not referred to in the excerpt. Fei and Jia disagree as to whether Cai's suitcase was too heavy.

##### (5) BEIF 14 [16:06-17:04]

- 1 Fei: 而且她想带东西实在太多了。  
 2 (3.0)  
 3 Fei: [我  
 4 Jia: [被子最后..带去了。  
 5 Fei: x:::- 想带吧。  
 6 (3.0)  
 7 Jia: ((nods)) 我觉得他一个人那个箱子够呛。  
 8 而她箱子我觉得质量不太好。  
 9 =那天李欢过来,  
 10 ..摸了一把, 也觉得, TSK, 而且[X  
 11 Fei: ((with gesture)) [就那个大箱子?

- 12 Jia: ((nods)) 她的一百多. 一百三? (0.8)一百三[十五.  
 13 Fei: [在那个哪儿? XX  
 14 Jia: zh- 质量不太好. 然后就是太大, 不知道, 到时候, 是不是,  
 15 Fei: → =我觉得还行嘛, [还  
 16 Jia: [超大.  
 17 (1.0)  
 18 就-你知道是那个大小超过吧.  
 19 Fei: → 她那个尺寸**我觉得**应该没问题.  
 20 (0.4)  
 21 Jia: 是吗?  
 22 Fei: → 嗯. **我觉得**没问题.  
 23 Jia: ((nods))  
 24 Fei: 那个王华什么, 那箱子比她还大呢.  
 25 Jia: =^真的啊:  
 26 Fei: 而且大那个一号. (0.8)疯了.  
 27 她说要不然那个我的重量跟她重量合在一起.  
 28 那个呢. 我的东西多少啊. 后来她还超重呢.  
 29 Jia: ((nods)) hm
- 1 Fei: erqie ta xiang dai dongxi shizai tai duo le.  
 2 (3.0)  
 3 [wo  
 4 Jia: [beizi zuihu .. dai qu le.  
 5 Fei: x:: xiang dai ba.  
 6 (3.0)  
 7 Jia: ((nods)) wo juede ta yi ge ren na ge xiangzi gouqiang.  
 8 er ta xiangzi wo juede zhiliang bu tai hao.  
 9 =na tian Li Huan guolai,  
 10 .. mo le yi ba, ye juede, TSK, erqie [X  
 11 Fei: ((with gesture)) [jiu na ge da xiangzi?  
 12 Jia: ((nods)) ta de yi bai duo. yibai san? (0.8) yi bai san[[shi wu.  
 13 Fei: [[zai neige nar? XX  
 14 Jia: zh- zhiliang bu tai hao. ranhou jiushi tai da, bu zhidao, dao shihou, shi bu shi,  
 15 Fei: → =**wo juede** hai xing ma, [hai  
 16 Jia: [chaoda.

- 17 (1.0)
- 18 jiu- ni zhidao shi na ge daxiao chaoguo ba.
- 19 Fei: → ta na ge chicun **wo juede** yinggai mei wenti.
- 20 (0.4)
- 21 Jia: shi ma?
- 22 Fei: → n. **wo juede** mei wenti.
- 23 Jia: ((nods))
- 24 Fei: na ge wang hua shenme, na xiangzi bi ta hai da ne.
- 25 Jia: =^zhen de a:
- 26 Fei: erqie da neige yi hao. (0.8) feng le.
- 27 ta shuo yaoburan neige wo de zhongliang gen ta zhongliang he zai yiqi.
- 28 neige ne. wo de dongxi duoshao a. houlai ta hai chaozhong ne.
- 29 Jia: ((nods)) hm
- 1 Fei: and she really wanted to bring too much stuff.
- 2 (3.0)
- 3 [I
- 4 Jia: [The comforter, (she) finally brought it (with her).
- 5 Fei: (she) wanted to bring.
- 6 (3.0)
- 7 Jia: I think her suitcase was too much for one person.
- 8 and her suitcase, I think the quality is not so good.
- 9 =That day Li Huan came over,
- 10 .. (and she) touched it, (and she) also thought, TSK, and [X
- 11 Fei: ((with gesture)) [was it that big suitcase?
- 12 Jia: ((nods)) Hers is over 100. 130? 1[[35?
- 13 Fei: [[Where?
- 14 Jia: The quality was not so good. And it was too big. I don't know, whether eventually,
- 15 Fei: → =**I think** it's fine, [still
- 16 Jia: [oversized.
- 17 (1.0)
- 18 Jia: You know that size was too big.
- 19 Fei: → The size of hers, **I think**, should be no problem.
- 20 (0.4)
- 21 Jia: Is it?

- 22 Fei: → Yeah. **I think** it's no problem.  
 23 Jia: ((nods))  
 24 That Wang Hua, her suitcase was even bigger.  
 25 Jia: =^Really!  
 26 Fei: It was a whole size bigger. (0.8) (Just) crazy.  
 27 She wanted to put mine and hers together for weighing.  
 28 Well. Mine was much less. Then hers was still overweight.  
 29 Jia: ((nods)) hm

In lines 7 and 8, Jia expresses her views that Cai's suitcase was too big and also that it was not of good quality. Fei seems to know the suitcase, as she responds by saying *jiu na ge da xiangzi?* "that big suitcase?," which is accompanied by a gesture that conveys the size of the suitcase in question. Acknowledging that Fei's understanding is correct by nodding, Jia goes on to express her suspicion that the suitcase was overweight. While Jia is formulating this suspicion in lines 14 and 16, Fei delivers her opinion about Cai's suitcase, which conflicts with Jia's opinion: *wo juede hai xing ma* "I think it's fine" in line 15.

Jia is not convinced at first, but as Fei repeats that the weight of the suitcase is not a problem in line 19 and line 22, Jia nods in line 23, which seems to indicate her accepting Fei's view of the suitcase. When Fei refers to Wang Hua, another friend whose suitcase was even heavier, Jia shows her surprise with *zhende a*: "Really!" in a latching and stressed manner. Apparently this development is a surprise for her, and the topic shifts to Wang Hua. Here, the conflict of opinions between Fei and Jia seems to be resolved. While the conflict was present, Fei used *wo juede* to express her opinion.

While a token of *wo juede* is used every time Fei expresses her opinion, the structure and/or word choice is slightly different in each case. Below are the lines by Fei extracted from the excerpt above.

(5')

- 1.15 我觉得还行嘛  
**wo juede** hai xing ma.  
 1sg JUEDE still okay PCL  
 “**I think** (it’s) okay.”
- 1.19 她那个尺寸我觉得应该没问题。  
 ta na ge chicun **wo juede** yinggai mei wenti.  
 3sgf that CL size 1sg JUEDE should NEG problem  
 “The size of hers, **I think**, should be no problem.”
- 1.22 我觉得没问题。  
**wo juede** mei wenti.  
 1sg JUEDE NEG problem  
 “**I think** (it’s) no problem.”

In line 15, *wo juede* is used at the very beginning of the utterance, and is followed by the predicate *hai xing* “okay” In line 19, the predicate in the complement clause is changed from *xing* “okay” to *mei wenti* “no problem,” and is modified with *yinggai* “should”. In addition, the subject *ta na ge chicun* “the size of her suitcase” is overtly expressed before *wo juede*. In line 22, the structure of the utterance is the same as the one in line 15, while the predicate is the same as the one used in line 19.

These alternations are motivated by the recipient’s reaction. After line 13, Jia is still expressing a suspicion that the suitcase is overweight (line 18). The most elaborated form, line 19, is uttered as a response to this suspicion. Jia becomes inclined to believe Fei, as she says *shi ma* “Is it?” requesting confirmation in line 21. Fei then switches back to a simpler structure. This example therefore suggests that a marking of uncertainty is not the reason for the use of *wo juede*. Rather, *wo juede* is used to buffer disagreements and works during the negotiation to reach an agreement.

A conflict of opinion can also be seen in the example below, in which the participants are discussing possible causes of disease in rural China. Prior to the excerpt, the participants were talking about problems with food safety in China. Especially in urban areas, many people have developed a sensitivity regarding whether the food they eat is organic or not. In line 1, Tao points out that in spite of the fact that all the food in the rural areas is basically organic, many people in those areas nevertheless get sick.

Mei and Ying then try to offer an explanation for this apparently perplexing situation, but they have opposing ideas about the causes of the disease in question: While Mei thinks the disease (in her hometown, brain thrombosis) is caused by a recent change in the local population's eating habits, Ying thinks the disease (in her hometown, cancer) is caused by the use of agricultural chemicals.

(6) BEIF01 [9:20-11:07]

- 1 Tao: 那你说农村的东西基本上都是绿色的,  
2 那么农村人还- 得病的 XX (0.8)也挺多的@  
3 (0.4)  
4 Mei: 可能是因为...n:: 从改革开放以后差不多二十年了这些人  
5 → **我觉得**..n::, 从我小时候开始吧, 我们家那边得-  
6 就说[脑血- 脑血栓的人比较多  
7 Ying: [X 癌症  
8 Ying: 我们那边[[X  
9 Mei: [[我们那儿得癌症的..不多, 有几个.  
10 但是, ..因为我们- 我们村子比较大嘛,  
11 但是我们那边得脑血栓的 ((clears throat)) 特别多.  
12 一般都是有的人..就是说, 栓住那个嗓子了以后不能吃饭.  
13 最多还能活半个月, 然后就去世了.  
14 Ying: 我们那儿就是, 很多得癌症的.  
15 → **我觉得** yi:就是因为..n..农作物[什么的. 使用农药的  
16 Mei: [我-  
17 Mei: → 是有一定原因. 但是**我觉得**关键的. 这个是有一定原因,  
18 → 但是其他的>**我觉得**最关键是<, 他可能是  
19 ...不知道那种合理的搭配.  
20 因为现在人- 不像在以前生活条件越来越好嘛,  
21 然后人们就想吃..就觉得吃这东西好吃那东西好,  
22 比如说尤其是猪肉.  
23 Tao: °n n°  
24 Mei: 肉类食品吃得多了. 肉类食品吃的多了含那个胆固醇多,  
25 然后对血液造成一定影响.  
26 (0.6)  
27 Mei: 一样了, 就是那些农药是一方面,  
28 → 但是>关键的**我觉得**<.. 是不-不符合这种合理搭配.

- 29 如果你- 你知道, 就是说, 不要什么,  
 30 ..这东西就好吃啊, 一个劲儿的吃, 这样是..很不好的.  
 31 (1.0)  
 32 Ying: → 但**我觉得**就是这癌症的主要原因还是农药的问题.  
 33 以前, [X  
 34 Tao: [那个东北人得癌症的挺多.  
 35 但是不是那个什么来着那个  
 36 ..主要好像是 XX 那个..腌的那个酸菜.  
 37 (0.4)  
 38 Mei: 腌的酸菜?  
 39 Tao: 对, 导致癌症, 还有那个腌的那个咸猪肉.
- 1 Tao: na ni shuo nongcun de dongxi jibenshang dou shi lüse de,  
 2 name nongcun ren hai- de bing de XX (0.8) ye ting duo de @  
 3 (0.4)  
 4 Mei: keneng shi yinwei ... n:: .. cong gaige kaifang yihou chabuduo ershi nian le zhe xie ren  
 5 → **wo juede** .. n::: cong wo xiaoshihou kaishi ba, women jia nabian de-  
 6 jiushuo [naoxue- naoxueshuan de ren bijiao duo  
 7 Ying: [X aizheng  
 8 Ying: women nabian [[X  
 9 Mei: [[women nar de aizheng de .. bu duo, you ji ge.  
 10 danshi, .. yinwei women- women cunzi bijiao da ma,  
 11 danshi women nabian de naoxueshuan de ((clears throat)) tebie duo.  
 12 yiban dou shi youde ren .. jiushishuo, shuan zhu na ge sangzi le yihou bu neng chi fan.  
 13 zui duo hai neng huo ban ge yue, ranhou jiu qushi le.  
 14 Ying: women nar jiushi, hen duo de aizheng de.  
 15 → **wo juede** yi: jiushi yinwei .. n .. nongzuowu [shenme de. shiyong nongyao de.  
 16 Mei: [wo-  
 17 Mei: → shi you yiding yuanyin. danshi **wo juede** guanjian de. zhe ge shi you yiding yuanyin,  
 18 → danshi qita de >**wo juede** zui guanjian shi<, ta keneng shi ..  
 19 ... bu zhidao na zhong heli de dapei.  
 20 yinwei xianzai ren- bu xiang zai yiqian shenghuo tiaojian yue lai yue hao ma,  
 21 ranhou renmen jiu xiang chi .. jiu juede chi zhe dongxi haochi na dongxi hao,  
 22 birushuo youqi shi zhurou.  
 23 Tao: °n n°

- 24 Mei: rou lei shipin chi de duo le. rou lei shipin chi de duo le han na ge dangchun duo,  
 25 ranhou dui xueye zaocheng yiding yingxiang.  
 26 (0.6)
- 27 Mei: yiyang le, jiushi na xie nongyao shi yi fangmian,  
 28 → danshi >guanjian de **wo jude**< .. shi bu- bu fuhe zhe zhong heli dapei.  
 29 ruguo ni- ni zhidao, jiushishuo, bu yao shenme,  
 30 .. zhe dongxi jiu haochi a, yigejinr de chi, zheyang shi .. hen bu hao de.  
 31 (1.0)
- 32 Ying: → dan **wo jude** jiushi zhe ge aizheng de zhuyao yuanyin haishi nongyao de wenti.  
 33 yiqian, [X
- 34 Tao: [neige dongbei ren de aizheng de ting duo.  
 35 danshi bu shi neige shenme laizhe neige  
 36 .. zhuyao haoxiang shi XX neige.. yan de neige suancai.  
 37 (0.4)
- 38 Mei: yan de suancai?
- 39 Tao: dui, daozhi aizheng, haiyou neige yan de neige xian zhurou.
- 1 Tao: Then you say things in rural areas are basically all organic,  
 2 then (but) people in rural area are still- there are a lot of (0.8) sick people @  
 3 (0.4)
- 4 Mei: Maybe it's because ... n:: .. it has been almost twenty years since the Chinese economic  
 reforms, these people  
 5 → **I think** .. n::: Starting from when I was a kid,  
 6 my hometown, [relatively many people got brain thrombosis  
 7 Ying: [cancer  
 8 Ying: in my hometown-  
 9 Mei: In my hometown not so many people get cancer. (Just) a few.  
 10 But, because my village is relatively big,  
 11 but in my hometown so many people get brain thrombosis. Generally, someone said,  
 12 once your throat gets closed up you can't eat.  
 13 Most cases you can still live for half a month, and then you are dead.  
 14 Ying In my hometown, many people get cancer.  
 15 → **I think** this is because .. n.. crops [or something, (people) use agricultural chemicals.  
 16 Mei: [I-  
 17 Mei: → (There's) particular cause. But **I think** the key is, there's particular cause for this,

- 18       →    but other, >**I think** the biggest key is<, that they  
 19            ... do not know which combination (of food) is good.  
 20            Because now people, unlike before, their living conditions are getting better and better,  
 21            and people eat whatever they want to eat,  
 22            (thinking) this one is delicious, that one is good. For example especially pork,  
 23 Tao:       °n n°  
 24 Mei:        (they are) eating too much meat. Meat has a lot of cholesterol (in it),  
 25            so it will affect the blood.  
 26            (0.6)  
 27 Mei:        It's the same, so agricultural chemicals is one aspect,  
 28        →    but >the key is **I think**< .. the bad combination of food.  
 29            If you-, you know, that is, you must not,  
 30            .. eat one thing all the time because it is delicious... to do so is very bad.  
 31            (1.0)  
 32 Ying: →    But **I think** the major cause for cancer is the agricultural chemicals.  
 33            Before, [X  
 34 Tao:                 [There are many people getting cancer in the Northeast.  
 35            But it's not that, what was that,  
 36            .. mainly it seems that the fermented vegetables  
 37            (0.4)  
 38 Mei:        Fermented vegetables?  
 39 Tao:        Right. (It) causes cancer, and salted pork.

In line 15, Ying presents her opinion that the disease is caused by the use of agricultural chemicals. Mei, admitting that the use of the agricultural chemicals is one of the causes, claims that the problem is that people do not know the right combinations of food to eat. Their conflict of opinion is not resolved even after Mei gives a long explanation from lines 17 to 30. Ying repeats her point in line 32, but is interrupted by Tao. The topic then shifts to pickles.

It is apparent that Mei and Ying are expressing conflicting views concerning the causes of disease in rural areas. Though, technically, they are discussing different diseases, as Mei is talking about brain thrombosis and Ying is talking about cancer in their respective towns, they seem to be arguing with each other. The contrast between their opinions is marked by several linguistic factors. First, the participants use *dan(shi)* “but,” a contrastive conjunction. After their conflict of opinion is made prominent,

tokens of *wo juede* in Mei's and Ying's turns are preceded by *dan(shi)*, as in lines 17, 18, 28 and 32. Secondly, in lines 17 and 27, Mei's turns start with a concession. She first accepts there is particular cause of diseases. The agricultural chemicals, however, are not what Mei thinks is the primary cause of diseases in rural areas. Concession like this is a way to delay a response, which is frequently observed in dispreferred responses. Thirdly, in line 20, Mei provides an elaboration of her view using a causal clause starting with *yinwei* "because." As is argued by Ford (1994) for English and Song and Tao (2009) for Mandarin, post-posed causal clauses are often used as a remedy to potential troubles during conversation. In this example, the disagreement between Mei and Ying is the motivation for Mei's use of *yinwei*-framed elaboration. These factors indicate that the participants believe that they have conflicting opinions. When they state opinions that they believe conflict with each other, they frame their opinions with *wo juede*.

Using *wo juede* for interactional purposes does not preclude using *wo juede* for epistemic downgrading. As the participants talk about causes of disease, which requires a special knowledge of medicine, the tokens of *wo juede* can be marking their uncertainty about the proposition. Tokens of *wo juede* in this example seem to be working for marking uncertainty as well as for mitigating the conflict between participants.

### **5. Elaborating a flat disagreement**

In the examples in the previous two sections, disagreement is prefaced with *wo juede*. In those cases, the recipient hears *wo juede* before the opinion. By contrast, in the examples in this section, *wo juede*-framed utterances are produced after a disagreement. They appear as a post-expansion, or elaboration after a dispreferred response (Sacks 1987[1973], Schegloff 2007).

In the example below, a token of *wo juede* is used after a participant disagrees with her co-participant. The participants Rui and An are talking about what their classmates will do after they graduate from college.

(7) BEIF 11[10:55-11:00]

- 1 Rui: 那咱们班怎么这样  
 2 An: 可能都想考研吧  
 3 Rui: =不至[于吧:.  
 4 An: @@  
 5 Rui: → **我觉得** 考研的到最后没几个.  
 6 An: n:那个张五不是也:想考公务员
- 1 Rui: na zanmen ban zenme zheyang  
 2 An: keneng dou xiang kao yan ba  
 3 Rui: =bu zhi[yu ba:.  
 4 An: @@  
 5 Rui: → **wo juede** kao yan de dao zuihou mei ji ge.  
 6 An: n: neige zhang wu bu shi ye: xiang kao gongwuyuan
- 1 Rui: Then how come our class is like this  
 2 An: Probably everyone wants to test into grad school.  
 3 Rui: =No [way (it is everyone)  
 4 An: @@  
 5 Rui: → **I think** there won't be so many people taking a grad school exam  
 when it comes down to it.  
 6 An: n: that Zhang Wu also wants to take the civil service test.

An's guess in line 2 ends with a sentence-final particle *ba*, which works to solicit an agreement (Li and Thompson 1981: 307). Thus, an agreement is expected, such as an agreement token *dui* "right," repetition of the judgment *keneng shi* "(they) probably are," or upgrading of the judgment *yinggai shi* "(they) must be." However, Rui gives a short disagreeing response: *bu zhiyu ba* "No way (it is everyone)" After putting forth her disagreement, Rui adds in line 5 that she thinks there won't be quite so many people taking graduate school entrance examinations, starting with *wo juede*. Here, a *wo juede*-framed utterance is added after a dispreferred response. Note that the content of the complement clause of *wo juede* is in reality the same as the dispreferred response, as both express her guess that the number of the people who take the exam will be small. The difference is that the utterance in line 5 is longer and is epistemically qualified with

a token of *wo juede*, thus it is heard as the speaker's personal opinion rather than an objective fact.

The next example also contains a token of *wo juede* in an answer to a confirmation-seeking question. The participants, who are college students, are talking about reunions.

(8) BEIF13 [42:17-42:49]

- 1 Ming: 我们高中还好了.  
 2 [但是我们初中啊: 什么的, 都没有办过同学会.  
 3 Li: [n:  
 4 Li: 没有我们也没有.  
 5 Ming: @@但是初中同学肯定已经  
 6 Li: eh:  
 7 Ming: 挺- 挺感情已经挺远的了.  
 8 Li: 大学同学会应该很- n 不大可能吧.  
 9 Ming: =<@>大学同学会啊</@>  
 10 (0.8)  
 11 ↑也有可能啊..  
 12 → ..我觉得:, 好像..还- t- 经常听说有..大学班同学会.  
 13 Li: 但是, 那个时候大家都分散在五湖四海,  
 14 Ming: 嗯- [所以  
 15 Li: [那组织个大学同[[学会  
 16 Ming: [[ti:- 挺困难的.  
 17 Li: 太困难了.  
 18 Ming: @@@

- 1 Ming: women gaozhong hai hao le.  
 2 [danshi women chuzhong a: shenmede, dou meiyou ban guo tongxuehui.  
 3 [n:  
 4 Li: meiyou women ye meiyou.  
 5 Ming: @@ danshi chuzhong tongxue kending yijing  
 6 Li: eh:  
 7 Ming: ting- ting ganqing yijing ting yuan de le.  
 8 Li: daxue tongxuehui yinggai hen- n bu da keneng ba.  
 9 Ming: =<@>daxue tongxuehui a</@>

- 10 (0.8)  
 11 ↑ye you keneng a:.  
 12 → ...**wo juede**:, haoxiang .. hai- t- jingchang tingshuo you .. daxue ban tongxuehui.  
 13 Li: danshi, neige shihou dajia dou fensan zai wuhusihai,  
 14 Ming: n- [suoyi  
 15 Li: [na zuzhi ge daxue tong[[xuehui  
 16 Ming: [[ti:- ting kunnan de.  
 17 Li: tai kunnan le.  
 18 Ming: @@@
- 1 Ming: my high school was okay.  
 2 [But my junior-high school etc., have not had a reunion.  
 3 Li: [n:  
 4 Li: Mine hasn't either.  
 5 Ming: @@ but former classmates in junior-high school have already  
 6 Li: eh:  
 7 Ming: my feeling is, they have already grown very far apart.  
 8 Li: There won't be so much in the way of college reunions, right?  
 9 Ming: =<@>College reunion</@>  
 10 (0.8)  
 11 ↑It's also possible,  
 12 → ...**I think**:, like... (I) often hear (people) having college reunions.  
 13 Li: But, everyone (from college) is probably scattered all over the place,  
 14 Ming: yeah, [so  
 15 Li: [Then organizing a college re[[union  
 16 Ming: [[pre- pretty hard  
 17 Li: too hard.  
 18 Ming: @@@

Li's turn in line 8, *daxue tongxuehui yinggai hen- bu da keneng ba* "There won't be so much college reunions, right?" has a sentence-final particle *ba*, which solicits a confirmation. Thus, an agreement such as *dui* "right," *bu da keneng* "not that likely," *bu keneng* "impossible," etc., is explicitly expected. However, Ming does not agree with Li. Ming's first reaction to this question is *daxue tongxuehui a* "College reunion?" which consists of partial repetition of Li's turn and a sentence-final particle *a*. According to

Wu (2004: 235), the sentence-final particle *a* is a marker of a pre-misalignment or pre-disagreement. Then, after 0.8 seconds of silence, Ming continues to say *ye you keneng a* “(it) is also possible.” This opinion contrasts with the opinion Li expressed in the prior turn. By saying this, Ming explicitly disagrees with Li. After the disagreement, Ming adds a *wo juede*-framed utterance in line 12. The content of the complement clause of *wo juede*, “(I) often hear (people) having college reunions,” serves as an account for the disagreement.

Note that there is an intonation break after *wo juede* and a short pause after *haoxiang*. The complement clause of *wo juede* is not articulated immediately after the production of *wo juede*. This seems to indicate that the speaker starts the post-expansion before the content is ready to be articulated. The function of *wo juede* in this example seems to be similar to that of a “filler” (Brown 1977), because the speaker succeeds in keeping the speakership by producing *wo juede*.

The example below has the same structure as the examples above, except that the first speaker is not explicitly soliciting a response with *ba*. The second speaker disagrees with the first speaker and adds a justification for the disagreement, framing it with *wo juede*. The participants, who are graduate students at the time of the recording, are talking about the date of their graduation ceremony.

(9) BEIF 14 [1019-1033]

1 Fei: <@>本科的时候就是二十八号 .h 毕业典礼的</@>.

2 Jia: 啊我们比你早诶.

3 [我们

4 Fei: [那今年应该六月..五月中旬(1.0)差不多

5 Jia: 不能那么早啊::

6 **我觉得-** ..北京这边还是挺能...挺能拖的.

7 Fei: 你今年要提前吗?

1 Fei: <@>benke de shihou jiushi ershiba hao .h biye dianli de</@>.

2 Jia: a women bi ni zao ei

3 [women

4 Fei: [na jinnian yinggai liuyue .. wuyue zhongxun (1.0) chabuduo

5 Jia: bu neng name zao a::

6 **wo juede-** .. Beijing zhebian haishi ting neng ... ting neng tuo de.

7 Fei: ni jinnian yao tiqian ma?

- 1 Fei: <@>When in undergraduate (on) twenty-eighth .h (we had) graduation ceremony</@>.  
 2 Jia: Oh we were earlier than you.  
 3 [We  
 4 Fei: [Then this year it should be June .. mid-May (1.0) something like that  
 5 Jia: (It) can't be that early.  
 6 **I think-** .. over here in Beijing (it) may be very ... may be very delayed.  
 7 Fei: Will you guys be earlier this year?

At the end of line 4, *chabuduo* “almost, approximately” works as post-completion epistemic downgrading to solicit an affiliating response (Ford and Thompson 1996; Kärkkäinen et al. 2007). Fei does not receive a response from Jia until Fei adds *chabuduo*, and in spite of the epistemic downgrading by *chabuduo*, the response she receives is one of disagreement, *bu neng name zao a*: “(It) can't be that early.”

In this case, again, *wo juede* is used as a remedy for a disagreement that is already in progress. This example shares two features with the previous example. First, by adding the *wo juede*-framed utterance, the speaker attenuates the disagreement made in the prior utterance. Framing with *wo juede*, Jia makes a more generalized statement that graduation ceremonies around the Beijing area may be delayed. This general statement serves as the account for the simple and flat disagreement *bu neng name zao a* “(It) can't be that early.” Secondly, the token of *wo juede* is followed by a short pause. While *wo juede* is produced right after a disagreement, the complement clause of *wo juede* is not articulated immediately.

These features seem to suggest that *wo juede* in this kind of context is used for a special purpose of filling a gap after a disagreement. As a response is already made, the turn comes to a transition relevance place (Sacks et al. 1974), a position at which the other participant can start talking and becomes the next speaker. By producing *wo juede*, which is generally followed by a complement clause, the current speaker may indicate that she has more to say. Thus the speaker succeeds in keeping the speakership, not ending her turn with a flat disagreement. *Wo juede* functions as bridging and remedying a disagreement.

In the examples above, *wo juede* is used to introduce an account or paraphrase after a flat disagreement. By so doing, the speakers are able to reduce the negative effect that their responses may have on their interlocutors. Thus, as in the cases examined in

the previous two sections, *wo juede* works to mitigate the conflict between conversation participants.

## 6. Conclusion

In this study, I examined cases of *wo juede* used in responses to assessments or judgments. It was observed that when *wo juede* is used in such an environment, the response tends to be a dispreferred one: using *wo juede*, speakers may start a disagreement, maintain a conflicting opinion, or elaborate on a flat disagreement. Uses of *wo juede* thus seem to be triggered by the need to mitigate disagreement between participants. That is, a speaker who frames his or her assessment with *wo juede* is aware that he or she has an opinion conflicting with his or her co-participant's, and *wo juede* is used to buffer the conflict between them. By prefacing a disagreement with *wo juede*, an opinion is presented not as an objective fact but as the speaker's personal opinion. In this way, the coexistence of conflicting opinions becomes possible.

Response to an assessment or judgment is not the only possible environment for *wo juede*. *Wo juede* can also be used in responses to an informing or questions, in the middle of a multiple-unit turn, or at the end of a turn, and the function of *wo juede* may vary accordingly. What is intriguing is that in each environment, the use of *wo juede* is in some sense motivated by interactional considerations (Endo 2010, 2011). It is my hope that this study, focusing on the position of responses to assessments/judgments, captures one of the most critical aspects in interaction and show that an epistemic stance marker can be used with interactional function.

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**Appendix: Symbols used in transcript and interlinear gloss**

,	continuing intonation
.	terminal intonation
[ ]	overlapping speech
X	uncertain hearing
^	stressed syllable
:	lengthening
..	short pause
(2.1)	long pause and its length in seconds
=	latching (no gap after the previous utterance)
@	laughter
<@> </@>	laughter during speech
> <	quickenened speech
-	truncated speech
°	soft voice
↑	sudden rise of pitch
.h	hearable inspiration
TSK	tongue clicking
1sg	first person singular
CL	classifier
NEG	negation
COP	copula
PCL	particle

## 不同意の前置きとしての認識的スタンス標識： 中国語会話の評価応答における“我覺得”

遠藤智子

### 要旨

本研究は現代標準中国語の日常会話において最も高頻度で用いられる認識的スタンス標識“我覺得”「私は思う」の機能を分析する。特に、評価や判断的発話に対する応答で用いられる場合を対象とする。

会話の相手が既に何らかの評価的もしくは判断的発話をしている際、その評価や判断に対する選好的応答(*preferred response*)は一般的には同意であるとされる。会話データを分析した結果、評価や判断への応答に“我覺得”が含まれている場合には、その応答は先行する評価や判断に対する不同意、すなわち非選好的応答であることが多いことがわかった。“我覺得”は不同意の応答を開始する位置や、対立する意見を維持する際に意見を再度提示する位置で用いられる。また、不同意が前置きなしになされた直後に“我覺得”が用いられて不同意に対する付加的説明を導く例も観察された。

“我覺得”を用いることで、話し手はその後に続く意見を客観的な事実ではなく話し手の個人的な見解として提示する。これにより、対立する複数の意見は共存可能になるため、話し手と聞き手の意見の対立が緩和される。認識的スタンス標識“我覺得”は会話参加者間の対人的な問題を調整する機能を持つと考えられる。

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