

## **ACOUSTICS2008/949 Contrastive Focus in Taiwan Mandarin**

Ho-Hsien Pan, Hui-Ying Tsou and Wan-Ting Huang

Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Chiao Tung University, 1001 TA Hsueh Road, 300  
Hsinchu, Taiwan

This study investigated the production and perception of given, new, and contrastive information in Taiwan Mandarin. Spontaneous dialogues elicited through a game were analyzed to access the acoustical parameters marking different information structures. In perceptual studies, two perceptual experiments, (1) a dialogue history experiment, of which listeners identified the questions preceding the sentences, and (2) a pair comparison experiment, of which subject compared sentence with same wording but different information structures were used. The stimuli were either natural utterances from elicited spontaneous dialogues or resynthesized utterances with conflicting duration and f<sub>0</sub> cues swapped from utterances of different information structures. Preliminary results of production experiments showed that duration elongation is a more consistent cue for marking narrow and contrastive foci than f<sub>0</sub> range expansion. Listeners performed better in the pair comparison experiments than in the dialogue history experiment. For nature utterances, listeners were able to identify sentences with given information, given versus new information, and given versus contrastive information, but were not able to identify utterances with more than two contrastive foci. Listeners' performances declined when resynthesized utterances with conflicting duration and f<sub>0</sub> cues were presented. When presented with conflicting cues, listeners relied more on durational than f<sub>0</sub> cues.