

Martin Warren
English Department
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
e-mail: egwarren@polyu.edu.hk

// ∽ **OH** // ∽ **WOW** //: **The intonation of listenership in an intercultural corpus**

In multi-party spoken discourse, it is common practice for a speaker to begin her/his turn with a brief response to what the previous speaker has said that goes beyond a minimal response. McCarthy (2002) has studied this behaviour in British and American English and terms it ‘listenership’ and argues that it functions to acknowledge or confirm and also demonstrates engagement and bonding between listener and speaker (ibid: 49). This paper examines at the forms and functions of listenership in an intercultural corpus. It also looks in more detail at this phenomenon by describing and discussing patterns of intonation to determine the additional communicative role of intonation choices found in manifestations of listenership. The study is a corpus-driven analysis based on the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (prosodic) that has been prosodically transcribed using Brazil’s (1997) discourse intonation system. The findings suggest that the manifestations of listenership might in part be determined by cultural preferences such as self-orientation or other-orientation in talk.

References

- Brazil, D. 1997. *The Communicative Role of Intonation in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, M. 2002. Good listenership made plain: British and American non-minimal response tokens in everyday conversation. In R. Reppen, S.M. Fitzmaurice and D. Biber (eds.) *Using Corpora to Explore Linguistic Variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 49-71.