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# Expressing contrast in Mandarin Chinese: A pragmatic account of three contrastive Discourse Markers

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## Abstract

The present study investigates experimentally the meaning nuances between Mandarin Chinese dan(shi) ‘but’, ke(shi) ‘but/conversely’, and que ‘conversely’. Two experiments were conducted: 1) a fill-in-the-blank task; 2) a context reconstruction task. Meaning differences between the three Discourse Markers in terms of affect as posited by previous studies were not sufficiently supported by task 1, so we explore other possible dimensions of meaning along which the three words may differ using task 2. We will discuss the findings from both tasks and present a preliminary analysis of meaning nuances between the three DMs building on these findings.

**Keywords:** contrastive discourse markers, affect, Mandarin Chinese

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