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THE FUNCTIONS AND OCCURRENCE PATTERNS OF ASPECT MARKERS JO, GWO, GAN, JYUH IN CANTONESE NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This dissertation is a discourse-based study of Cantonese aspect in narratives. It aims at investigating the discourse functions and occurrence patterns of situation types and aspectual viewpoint markers *jo*, *gwo*, *gan* and *jyuh* in relation to the foregrounding-backgrounding information structure. Four pieces of narrative scripts are recorded from a local television program series. They are reproduced in written form, transcribed and analysed.

The analytic tool is developed from the two-component theory of Smith (1991,1994). All clauses are categorized as foregrounding or backgrounding, and examined with reference to temporal elements that may contribute to the progression of narrative time, such as situation type, aspect marker, resultative verb complement, clause linking words etc. The results are then analysed by frequency distribution of occurrence and content analysis.

The results show that: (1) The endpoint notion in the temporal frame of situations is relevant to time progression and foregrounding-backgrounding information structure in Cantonese narrative discourse. (2) Perfective *gwo*, imperfectives *gan* and *jyuh* can be treated as backgrounding devices. (3) Perfective *jo* has greater tendency to occur in foregrounding. In addition to its basic use as a perfective marker, perfective *jo* has some other discourse functions. One of the discourse functions is to mark an event as cohesive to another previously mentioned event, especially when there is an intervention of some backgrounding or foregrounding materials between them.

摘 要

本論文研究廣東話的體在敘事文 (Narrative) 的功能和出現的規律。本文根據 Smith (1991, 1994) 的“二元理論”(Two-component Theory)，分析：(1)各種情狀類別 (Situation types) 在敘事文的前景－背景結構中出現的規律；(2) 體標記“咗”“過”“緊”“住”在敘事文的前景－背景結構中出現的規律和功能。

研究的結果反映了：(1) 情狀的時間架構的起點和終點，與敘事的時間推進以及前景－背景結構有關；(2) 經歷體“過”、進行體“緊”和存續體“住”具有標示背景結構的功能；(3) 完成體“咗”較傾向出現在前景結構。“咗”除了具有完成體標記的基本功能，它在篇章中還起著其他作用。其中一個作用，是聯繫該情狀和前文某情狀，表示該情狀是前文某情狀的接續和完成。而這兩個情狀之間，可能加插有一些描述性的背景資料。

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