

MASTER'S THESIS

The utterance particle "ja" in spoken and written Cantonese

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THE UTTERANCE PARTICLE "JA"
IN
SPOKEN AND WRITTEN CANTONESE

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Abstract

The present study provides a description of the Cantonese utterance particle “*ja*” (佢) (mid-level tone). Traditionally, it is believed that utterance particles are “helping” or “empty” words. In this study, the attempt is made to provide a comprehensive view on the Cantonese utterance particle “*ja*”. Data was collected from everyday conversation, magazines, newspapers, TV programs, and films. Analysis of the use and the functions of this utterance particle are based on the perspectives of speech act theory and conversational analysis. It is found that utterances with the utterance particle “*ja*” belong to the representative (assertive) speech act category, they are either assertive or contrary assertive utterances and can be explained by the views of “assessments” and “criticisms”. In addition, the utterance particle “*ja*” possesses “tracking” and “accounting” qualities in conversations. The above mentioned perspectives of study shed new lights on the utterance particle “*ja*” and pinpoint a full picture of its functions, and indicates that the term “sentence final particle” is inadequate to express all the functions of this particle. Finally, it is hoped that this study can offer contributions to the discussion on Chinese grammar, especially to the Cantonese utterance particles.

論廣東話語氣詞"咋"

本文旨在研究廣東話語氣詞"咋"在說話和書寫中的特性及工用。作者以言語行為理論和話語理論的角度出發,對日常生活中出現"咋"字的對話及語句作出分析。研究結果證明運用了"咋"字的話句屬於肯定式語句,並帶有評估的成分。此外,語氣詞"咋"在對話中顯示了話者互相希望延續對話"tracking"及改正對方錯誤資料"accounting"的特質。這樣的研 究結表達了語氣詞更多方面的工用。

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