

## MASTER'S THESIS

### The English spoken and written narratives of Cantonese speakers

Ho, Wai Ching

*Date of Award:*  
1996

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<i>M.A. in Language Studies</i>

**THE ENGLISH SPOKEN AND WRITTEN  
NARRATIVES OF CANTONESE SPEAKERS**

**BY**

**HO, WAI CHING  
STUDENT NO. 93400020**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE**

**MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES**

**HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

**MAY 1996**

## **ABSTRACT**

**Abstract of thesis entitled "The English Oral Narratives  
and Written Narratives of the Cantonese Speakers"**

**Submitted by Ho, Wai Ching**

**for the degree of Master of Arts in Language Studies**

**at the Hong Kong Baptist University**

Since Labov (1972) posits that a fully-formed oral narrative has six organizational components, it has been widely believed that the six elements are the basic organizational structures of the oral narratives. In my dissertation I attempt to see whether Labov's six organizational components can be found in the English oral and written narratives produced by Cantonese speakers; and to see whether the evaluative comments play an important role in both narratives. At the same time, Chafe (1981) suggests that there are differences in syntactic and linguistic structures between spoken and written narratives produced by the same individuals about the same events. I also try to explore the different linguistic features that could be identified in the English spoken and written narratives.

In the first two chapters are a theoretical exposition of Labov's concept of six organizational components and Chafe's ideas of the distinguished syntactic and linguistic features found in the spoken and written narratives. In the third chapter the subjects, methods and

procedures of collecting data are introduced. In the fourth and fifth chapters the results of the finding are discussed and analyzed.

And in the fourth and fifth chapters it can be concluded that the organizational elements of the English oral and written narratives of Cantonese speakers are basically consistent with those identified by Labov (1972). However, the precluding component -- Abstract does not frequently occur in both oral and written narratives. The evaluative comments can be found and are the essential elements in both narratives. It is also found that the oral narratives do exhibit the syntactic and linguistic features of 'fragmentation' whereas the written narratives do not foster the features of 'integration' identified by Chafe (1981).

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