

MASTER'S THESIS

Language acquisition of Cantonese sentence final particles by a bilingual child

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**LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
OF
CANTONESE SENTENCE FINAL PARTICLES
BY
A BILINGUAL CHILD**

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Abstract

This paper discusses the acquisition of Cantonese sentence final particles (SFPs) by an English-Cantonese bilingual child. It focuses on this acquisition process and the use of Cantonese SFPs when the subject is during the period of 1;08 and 2;07. This child is a simultaneous bilingual from one-parent-one-language family. Data were collected from a longitudinal project (RGC HKU 336/94H). Conversations between the subject and investigators were tape-recorded and transcribed. This study has investigated the acquisition order of particles by the subject, the types of SFPs that he uses and his strategies for choosing and using these particles. Besides, we have compared acquisition of SFPs between our bilingual subject and monolingual children. We have found that there is initial delay in the first emergence of SFPs for the bilingual subject but he progresses speedily soon afterwards. Moreover, "non-native" SFPs seem to be a special feature of bilingual subject's speech which cannot be found in monolingual's data. Apart from these differences, some similarities between the acquisition of SFPs by bilingual and monolingual children can be identified. Both of the parties acquired non-interrogative SFPs as the first SFPs. Besides, in the early stage of acquisition, the SFP *aa3* is excessively used by both parties. The construction of sentence final particle clusters is the same, i.e. *lei4* combining with another SFP. What is more, the use of SFPs is by no means a result of imitation. We find that there is only a small number of adult-child SFP match and these matching cases are mostly found in the upper tonal register, i.e. tone 1, 2 and 3. These are valid in both the cases of bilingual and monolingual children. The findings of this study can bring additional insights into our understanding of the bilingual first language acquisition.

摘 要

本論文是研究一名雙語(同時能說廣州話及英語)兒童學習廣州話語末助詞的情況。研究中的對象兒童，其父母各自運用一種語言，因而形成該兒童具有雙語家庭的背景。本文的資料乃據香港大學語文研究計劃(RGC HKU 336/94H)搜集而得，以對象兒童一歲零八月至兩歲零七月為研究觀察期；研究員將與對象兒童之間的對話用錄音及拼音形式紀錄，然後從學習的層次、語末助詞的類別和選用語末助詞的策略三方面，加以分析研究。

此外，本文又將雙語兒童的學習情況與單語兒童作比較研究，發現雙語兒童在學習運用語末助詞初期，掌握第一個語末助詞的時間較單語兒童為遲，但當一旦掌握後，進展便頗為迅速。至於雙語兒童說話上的最大特徵，則是運用非慣常的自創性(non-native)語末助詞，而此種語末助詞在單語兒童的研究資料中，卻從未出現。

事實上，雙語兒童與單語兒童在學習運用語末助詞的過程中，除了上述相異之處外，亦有不少相同的地方。首先，雙語兒童與單語兒童，均以掌握非問題性(non-interrogative)語末助詞作為起步初階。其次，兩者在學習初期，均大量使用“呀”(aa3)一詞。再者，雙語兒童與單語兒童同樣經常以“㗎黎”(lei4)一詞，聯同其他語氣詞構組成語末助詞。此外，一如其他學者所指，不論雙語或單語兒童皆不是以模仿作為學習運用語末助詞的主要途徑，即使偶有仿效，亦主要局限於陰聲(Tone 1, 2, 3)語末助詞。

本文所論，以雙語兒童為主體，輔以與單語兒童的比較研究，俾能對雙語學習有更深入的了解。

Contents

Page of Acceptance

Acknowledgments

Abstract

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Increasing significance of study on bilingual first language acquisition	1
1.2	Aims of study	4
2.	Literature background	5
2.1	Theoretical issues	5
2.1.1	The differentiation of bilingual child's two languages	6
2.1.2	The similarities and differences of the bilingual and monolingual children's speech production	8
2.1.3	The influence of exposure pattern on bilingual children's language acquisition	10
2.2	Methodological issues	11
2.3	Conclusion	13
3.	Cantonese sentence final particles (SFPs)	14
3.1	The definition of Chinese SFPs	14
3.2	The functions of Chinese SFPs	16
3.3	The significance of Cantonese SFPs	17
3.4	Literature review	18
3.4.1	Review on the studies of Mandarin SFPs	19
3.4.2	Review on the studies of Cantonese SFPs	21
3.4.3	Review on the studies of child acquisition of Mandarin SFPs	24
3.4.4	Review on the studies of child acquisition of Cantonese SFPs	25
4.	A case study of a bilingual child	33
4.1	Subjects and data collection	33
4.2	Method of analysis	37
4.3	Transcription method	38
5.	General findings of the case study	40
5.1	An overview of the acquisition order of SFPs	40
5.2	Types of SFPs used according to their functions in speech acts	45
6.	Discussions of major findings	47
6.1	Differences of the findings on bilingual and monolingual	

children's acquisition	47
6.1.1 The bilingual child's initial delay in the acquisition of SFPs	47
6.1.2 Rapid catch-up of bilingual children's acquisition of SFPs	48
6.1.3 The occurrence of "non-native" SFPs/SFP clusters	49
6.2 Similarities of the findings on bilingual and monolingual children's acquisition	51
6.2.1 The excessive use of aa3 at 1;10	51
6.2.2 The same type of SFP clusters (lei4+SFP)	53
6.2.3 The use of SFP is not a result of imitation	56
7. Conclusion and suggestions for future studies	61
Appendix I --- Comparison of Cantonese romanization systems	63
Appendix II --- Romanization of Cantonese SFPs	64
Appendix III--- Functions of some common SFPs	65
Appendix IV--- The coding conventions for prosodic features and the special coding conventions in the CHILDES format	69
Appendix V --- Rules for calculation mean length of utterance and upper bound	71
Appendix VI--- Lee et al's findings on the acquisition of SFPs by monolingual children	72
Appendix V --- Data	
Reference	