

MASTER'S THESIS

The use of English 'be' and 'have' in the interlanguage of Hong Kong primary school students

Tam, Yuen Pik Vyonne

Date of Award:
2004

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

**THE USE OF ENGLISH 'BE' AND 'HAVE' IN THE
INTERLANGUAGE OF HONG KONG PRIMARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**TAM YUEN PIK, VYONNE
STUDENT NO. 02402572**

**A Dissertation Submitted In Partial Fulfillment
Of The
MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES**

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2004

Abstract

This study sets out to investigate the general interlanguage natures on English 'be' and 'have' of Cantonese speaking primary students in Hong Kong. The data was collected from a fill-in-the-blanks test, a Cantonese to English translation and a free writing across P.2 to P.5 students. The results reveal a systematic and variable interlanguage development in 'be' and 'have'. The systematic interlanguage developmental patterns of using the two verbs applies to L1 and L2 universal template in terms of the sequential attainment of the two verbs and using the two verbs with the close-class and lexical NP subjects. Variations are exhibited across the students when using 'be' and 'have' in declarative, negative, interrogative, past tense, progressive and tense perfect aspect. Developmental errors emerge during interlanguage development on acquiring 'be' and 'have' that manifest the transitional process and L1 influence from their mother tongue, Cantonese to their target language, English. Both external and internal factors are attributable to the interlanguage of 'be' and 'have' of Hong Kong students. The external factor includes the way of input to the learners whereas the internal factor is related to the language transfer and acquisition process of the individuals.

摘要

本論文是研究以廣東話為母語的小學生在英文 Be 和 Have「中介詞」(interlanguage)的發展情況。研究員透過填充、句子翻譯(把廣東話翻譯成英文)及短文寫作三種方法收集二至五年級小學生運用 Be 和 Have「中介詞」的資料。研究結果顯示小學生在學習英文 Be 和 Have 的過程中會出現有規律性(systematic)及差異(variable)兩項「中介詞」的特性。研究發現,小學生即第二語言(L2)學習者的「中介詞」規律特性跟第一語言(L1)學習者在學習英文 Be 和 Have 的過程中均會出現相類似的進展階段;這種相似的學習進展階段亦可在他們運用 Be 和 Have 與代名詞主語(close-class subjects)或專門名詞主語(lexical NP subjects)的句子時候出現。當學生在不同句型或時態運用 Be 和 Have 時均顯示出很大的差異。這些句型包括陳述句、否定句、反問句;時態方面也包括過去式、進行式和過去分詞。另一方面,學生運用 Be 和 Have 所犯的錯誤正好反映他們「中介詞」的發展過程。學生的「中介詞」發展初期會受到廣東話的語言性質影響,然後才逐步符合英語的語法。除了這種內在因素,教學模式和語言輸入方法亦是影響 Be 和 Have 使用的重要外在因素。

Table of Contents

Page of Acceptance		i
Acknowledgments		ii
Abstract		iii
List of abbreviations		v
Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	Literature Review	
	2.1. Interlanguage	5
	2.2. Error analysis	14
	2.3. Factors affecting interlanguage	26
	2.4. Previous studies on the use of 'be' and 'have' in interlanguage	35
	2.5. English 'be' and 'have' and Cantonese <i>hai</i> 係 and <i>jau</i> 有	41
	2.5.1. English 'be' and 'have'	41
	2.5.2. Cantonese <i>hai</i> 係 and <i>jau</i> 有	47
	2.5.3. Comparison of 'be' and 'have' in Cantonese and English	54
Chapter 3	Methodology	
	3.1. Subjects	62
	3.2. Research data	63
	3.3. Data analysis	67
Chapter 4	Findings	69
	4.1. Findings on the use of 'be'	70
	4.2. Findings on the use of 'have'	86

Chapter 5	Discussion	
	5.1. The developmental patterns in acquisition of 'be' and 'have'	104
	5.2. Interlanguage development on 'be' and 'have' in language acquisition	109
	5.2.1. Developmental influence	109
	5.2.2. The role of L1	120
Chapter 6	Conclusion	131
References		133
Appendices		
	Appendix 1	141
	Appendix 2	143
	Appendix 3	145
	Appendix 4	148
	Appendix 5	151
	Appendix 6	154
	Appendix 7	156
	Appendix 8	157
	Appendix 9	158
	Appendix 10	161
	Appendix 11	162
	Appendix 12	163
	Appendix 13	164