

MASTER'S THESIS

Functions of cheng-yu in newspaper's special columns

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FUNCTIONS OF CHENG-YU IN
NEWSPAPER'S SPECIAL COLUMNS

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Abstract

Cheng-yu are frequently used in both oral and writing, but few people can tell what they are. Since the functions of *cheng-yu* were rarely discussed in literature, this dissertation tries to examine the use of *cheng-yu* from the pragmatic point of view.

In cross-cultural linguistics, *cheng-yu* are sometimes referred to in the literature as idioms. Because of the slight difference between *cheng-yu* and idioms, however, it is found that the functional categorization of idioms does not apply to *cheng-yu*. On the other hand, the similar nature of proverbs and *cheng-yu* makes their functions more comparable.

This paper seeks to study the functions of *cheng-yu* in Hong Kong Chinese newspaper's special columns, where *cheng-yu* can easily be found. The analysis of the functions of *cheng-yu* will be based primarily on the functions of proverbs suggested by Wolfgang Meider (1977). Difficulties in adapting the functions of proverbs to classify the functions of *cheng-yu* will also be discussed.

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