

MASTER'S THESIS

The use of the utterance particle *ne* in Cantonese speech: quantitative, positional and functional considerations

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**THE USE OF THE UTTERANCE PARTICLE NE
IN CANTONESE SPEECH**

**- QUANTITATIVE, POSITIONAL
AND FUNCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

NE is an utterance particle commonly found in Cantonese speech. In this study, an attempt is made to study its pervasiveness in the daily Cantonese speech in Hong Kong, its distributional characteristics at the sentence level and the functions meant to be achieved by the speaker and recognized by the hearer with the use of NE in Cantonese speech. It is found that NE is the most frequently used utterance particle in the daily speech of Cantonese speakers. It can be suffixed to almost every syntactic segment of an utterance except to compound words and phrases of "the modifier + the modified" constructions. Based on the corpus under study, it can be shown that NE plays a role in creating a speaker-hearer participation framework, in establishing textual links, and in the cognitive process of information.

論廣東話語氣詞「呢」

摘 要

在廣東話談話中，語氣詞「呢」的使用非常普遍。本論文旨在研究香港人日常用廣東話談話時，使用「呢」的普遍程度、在句子結構中「呢」的分布情況、說話者使用「呢」的時候所期望實現的語言功能，以及聽者可從「呢」所得到的語言功能啓示。研究結果顯示，在廣東話談話中，「呢」是最普遍使用的語氣詞。它可附於話語中絕大部分的組成部分之後，只有複合詞和偏正結構的短語例外。本論文所研究的談話範本顯示，「呢」能發揮多面功能。它不但有助確立說話者和聽者在對話中的參與依據，並且有助加強上下文的連貫性，在信息的確認過程中也發揮作用。

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