

MASTER'S THESIS

The similarities and differences between semantic and syntactic features of Mandarin perfective aspect marker *le* and Cantonese perfective aspect marker *jo*

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**THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN
SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC FEATURES
OF
MANDARIN PERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKER **LE**
AND
CANTONESE PERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKER **JO****

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Abstract

This dissertation is a contrastive analysis of certain semantic and syntactic properties between the Mandarin perfective aspect marker *le* and the Cantonese perfective aspect marker *jo*. It is hypothesized that there are the differences between the semantic and syntactic properties of Mandarin verbal-*le* and Cantonese verbal-*jo*, as well as Mandarin sentential *le* and sentential *jo*, but the differences are not very significant.

The study is developed in the framework of Smith's two-component theory (1991/1994). The corresponding perfective viewpoints, that is the Mandarin perfective aspect presented by *le* and the Cantonese perfective aspect presented by *jo* are compared and contrasted by looking at the interaction of the semantic and syntactic properties of the two perfective aspect markers and different aspectual situation types.

Both secondary and primary research methods are used to collect data. A comprehensive and critical review of the relevant literature illustrates the semantic and syntactic properties of Mandarin verbal-*le* and sentential *le*. On the other hand, a judgement test and one interview are carried out to collect data for the semantic and syntactic properties of Cantonese verbal-*jo* and sentential *jo*. Then all the data are analyzed by mathematical inference and regression to investigate the similarities and differences between the semantic and syntactic properties of Mandarin verbal-*le* and Cantonese verbal-*jo*, as well as Mandarin sentential *le* and Cantonese sentential *jo*.

The research results show that the semantic and syntactic properties of Cantonese verbal-*jo* and sentential *jo* basically correspond to those of Mandarin verbal-*le* and sentential *le*. However, there are also differences in certain semantic and syntactic properties, particularly in those of sentential *le* and sentential *jo*.

摘要

本論文是用「對比分析法」去分析現代漢語中表達完成時態助詞“了”（分爲動詞“了”和句尾“了”）和廣東話中表達完成時態的時態助詞“㗎左”（分爲動詞“㗎左”和句尾“㗎左”）在語意及語法性質上的異同。要有效地分析兩者的異同，本文作出現下的假設：（一）動詞“了”及動詞“㗎左”在語意及語法性質上有分別，但這些分別並不明顯；（二）句尾“了”及句尾“㗎左”在語意及語法性質上有分別，但這些分別並不明顯。

爲了去驗證以上的兩個假設，本文會採用 SMITH (1991 / 1994) 的「兩個要素理論」(Two-Component Theory) 去分析在各情狀類形下，“了”和“㗎左”在性質上的異同。

本文一方面從文獻中收集有關“了”的資料，另一方面從問卷及訪問中收集有關“㗎左”的資料。然後再用「數據推理」及「統計回歸法」去分析“了”和“㗎左”在性質上的異同。

分析結果顯示，“了”和“㗎左”在語法和語意性質上大致相同，但他們之間亦有一些不顯眼的差異存在。

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