

MASTER'S THESIS

The acquisition of aspect markers by Cantonese speaking children in Hong Kong

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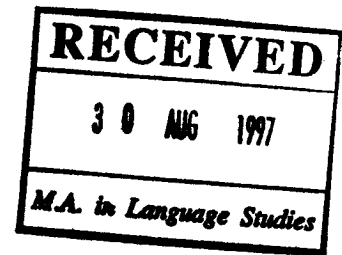
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**The Acquisition of Aspect Markers by Cantonese
Speaking Children in Hong Kong**

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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of the aspect acquisition of Cantonese speaking children. It aims at investigating the acquisition order of the aspect markers of young children and the influence of lexical aspect on aspect marking. It is an experimental study with 15 subjects ranging from 3 to 5 years old. Comprehension task and imitation task were employed in the present study. All findings were recorded and transcribed. The findings in the comprehension task fail to indicate the sequential acquisition pattern of aspect markers acquired by children. Instead, findings indicate that children acquired the functions of perfective aspect markers, "jo" and "gwo" more complete than those of the imperfective aspect marker, "gan" at 5 years old. And the development pattern of aspect morphology of children is consistent to the Aspect hypothesis: Early aspect markings are restricted to certain situation types and they extend to other situation types with age increase. This phenomena is explained by the prototype theory. Apart from that, findings from the imitation task indicate that children show sensitivity to the relationship of inherent lexical meaning of the verb and the aspect marking. It is hoped that the present study would shed a light on the acquisition of Cantonese aspect markers in linguistic.

摘要

本論文研究兒童學習廣東話動詞的體的情況。主要目的是：(1) 幼兒習得體的先後次序及 (2) 情狀體 (lexical aspect) 對語法體 (grammatical aspect) 的影響。本論文的研究對象是十五名年齡由三歲至五歲的兒童。測試方法是：看圖說話及模擬跟讀句子。研究員將與對象兒童的對話用錄音及拼音形成紀錄。研究結果雖然未顯示出兒童學習體的先後次序，但反映了兒童在五歲時運用完成體比持續體更為豐富及廣泛。而兒童體的發展模式基本上証實了體假設 (Aspect Hypothesis)。在早期學習中，體的使用局限在某幾種情狀詞上，隨著年歲的增長，體的使用擴散至其他情狀詞。此現象可引用 the prototype theory 來解釋。此外，句子模讀結果反映了兒童意識到情狀詞對體標記 (aspect markers) 的影響。盼望本論文能在語言學對廣東話動詞的體研究上有貢獻。

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