RGC Ref. No.:
UGC/FDS16/H07/14
(please insert ref. above)

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

Submission Deadlines:	1. *Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within __six__ months of the approved project completion date.*
	2. *Completion report: within __12__ months of the approved project completion date.*

Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. **Project Title**

   Epistemic modulation and speaker attitude in Cantonese: A discourse-pragmatic perspective

2. **Investigator(s) And Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved**

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	CHOR Winnie Oi-wan /Assistant Professor	School of Arts and Social Sciences/ Open University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigator(s)	N.A.	N.A.
Others	N.A.	N.A.

3. **Project Duration**

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval *(must be quoted)*
Project Start Date	1 December 2014	N.A.	N.A.
Project Completion Date	30 November 2016	N.A.	N.A.
Duration *(in month)*	24 months	N.A.	N.A.
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	30 November 2017	N.A.	N.A.

Part B: The Final Report

5.   Project Objectives

5.1   Objectives as per original application

1. To formulate more precise claims about the nature of epistemicity in Cantonese – what it is, and is not, and how it is relevant to other grammatical systems in the language
2. To identify the range of grammatical strategies (e.g. grammaticalized evidential markers, stance particles, etc.) that go hand in hand to externalize the speaker's subjective attitudes and to calibrate (i.e. to upgrade/downgrade) his or her epistemic claims in conversations
3. To delineate the precise paths (i.e. actual steps and their motivation(s)) in the grammaticalization of the identified grammatical strategies
4. To account for the roles of the identified grammaticalized markers in natural, everyday Cantonese conversations from a functional, discourse-pragmatic perspective
5. To identify the trends, if any, in the use of different types of grammatical strategies in different interactional contexts, so as to shed light on similar phenomena in other languages cross-linguistically

5.2   Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: N.A.

Reasons for the change:

1.

2.

3. ....

5.3   Realisation of the objectives
(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Objective (1) concerns the exploration of the nature of epistemicity in Cantonese. Epistemicity and evidentiality are related yet distinct grammatical categories. By identifying the various lexical and grammatical means responsible for epistemic modulations, we know more about the nature of epistemicity in Cantonese, as part of the larger context of stance marking. We understand that epistemic marking is dynamic and emerging, rather than static and fixed with a certain speaker. Epistemic marking signals the speaker's commitment to the proposition concerned, thus is found to be related to evidentiality as the more reliable the information source is, the higher the degree of epistemic commitment it should be.

Objective (2) is about the identification of the range of strategies that are responsible of externalizing the speaker's subjective stance. This objective has been fully achieved as our analysis reveals that speakers make use of four categories of strategies to modulate

their assertions, including i) epistemic modals (e.g. *jing1goi1* 'should', *ho2nang4* 'might'), and adverbials (e.g. *kei4sat6* 'in fact', *si6sat6soeng6* 'in fact', *tung1soeng4* 'usually'), ii) evidentials which are explicit (e.g. *ngo5 gu2* 'I guess') or implicit (e.g. *hou2ci3* 'seems', *jau5 ho2nang4* 'likely'), iii) sentence final particles with weak epistemic strength (e.g. *ge2*, *gwaa3*, *za1maa3*) or strong epistemic strength (e.g. *wo3*, *gaa3*), iv) discourse-pragmatic strategies (e.g. to keep silent, to provide a reason, as well as the use of redressive language).

Objective (3) elaborates on the delineation of the precise evolutionary pathways of the identified grammatical strategies. This objective has been achieved by spelling out the grammaticalization and subjectification pathways of the perception verb *tai2* and the sentence final particle *ho2*, both are considered playing a very important role in the expression of the speaker's epistemic stance.

Objective (4) rests on the investigation of the roles played by the identified grammaticalized markers in natural, everyday Cantonese conversations from a functional perspective. This objective has also been duly achieved; with the data that our analysis has drawn upon is all genuine and naturally-occurring.

Objective (5) concerns the identification of the trends in using different strategy in different contexts (if any). This objective has also been satisfactorily achieved. Our study has revealed that the use of epistemic strategies is mostly motivated by politeness considerations. Thus, it is expected that speakers with lower social status and with less power tend to use more epistemic downgrading strategies. Informal interactional contexts will also trigger the use of more epistemic modulation strategies.

5.4   Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives (as per 5.1/5.2 above)	Addressed (please tick)	Percentage Achieved (please estimate)
1. To formulate more precise claims about the nature of epistemicity in Cantonese – what it is, and is not, and how it is relevant to other grammatical systems in the language	√	100%
2. To identify the range of grammatical strategies (e.g. grammaticalized evidential markers, stance particles, etc.) that go hand in hand to externalize the speaker's subjective attitudes and to calibrate (i.e. to upgrade/downgrade) his or her epistemic claims in conversations	√	100%
3. To delineate the precise paths (i.e. actual steps and their motivation(s)) in the grammaticalization of the identified grammatical strategies	√	100%
4. To account for the roles of the identified grammaticalized markers in natural, everyday Cantonese conversations from a functional, discourse-pragmatic perspective	√	100%
5. To identify the trends, if any, in the use of different types of grammatical strategies in different interactional contexts, so as to shed light on similar phenomena in other languages cross-linguistically	√	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome
(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

A major achievement of this project is the identification of the range of resources that can be used to do epistemic modulation, in particularly how this *whole range* of grammatical strategies, such as evidential markers, particles (clause-medial and sentence-final), discourse markers, and grammaticalized epistemic phrases, can work together to externalize the speaker's subjective mood and to calibrate his epistemic claims in natural, interactional contexts. The ALS presentation in 2014 (which findings were reported later in the proceeding paper written in 2015) has detailed how each strategy works, as well as how the strategies can work together to calibrate the speaker's changes in epistemic strength.

Other than identifying the range of strategies and looking into how and in what ways they help modulating the speaker's epistemic strength in general, some individual strategies have been delved into more deeply. For instance, the presentation made at the Yue conference in 2015 has spelt out how *ho2* as an interrogative particle can be used to signal the speaker's epistemic stance. It is found that *ho2* not only is subjective in nature, expressing the speaker's apparent doubt towards the proposition; as a confirmation-seeking particle it is also intersubjective in nature, requiring a biased response from the addressee. This conference presentation has led to the writing of a journal article entitled "Chinese Interrogative Particles as Talk Coordinators at the Right-Periphery – A Discourse-Pragmatic Perspective", published by *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* in 2016. Besides *ho2*, classifiers and sentence final particles are two other areas that have been examined in detail. It is found that when demonstratives co-occur with the plural classifier *di1* to form a determiner or a pronoun, a negative attitude is always expressed. The findings have been reported in the paper presented at SEALS-26 in 2016. Findings on how sentence final particles are employed as epistemic markers have been reported in HAAL-2016 and IPrA-15. The paper presented at HAAL-2016 has focused on how SFPs in general are utilized by speakers as a valuable resource to perform epistemic modulations (i.e. to calibrate, in particular, to upgrade or downgrade, their epistemic claims), while the paper presented at IPrA-15 has paid more attention to the subjective and intersubjective functions of interrogative particles, a subset of SFPs. Taking into account comments and feedback from the conference audience, a paper on "Sentence final particles as epistemic modulators in Cantonese conversations – a discourse -pragmatic perspective" has been submitted to *Journal of Pragmatics* and it is now under review.

Another crucial finding resulting from this research project would definitely be the investigation of the grammaticalization pathways of some of the identified epistemic strategies. Other than looking into how precisely *ho2* and *di1* work to signal the speaker's epistemic stance in an interactional context, their grammaticalization pathways have also been examined. It is found that *ho2* is a result of the phonetic fusion of two sentence final particles *aa3+o2ˊ* , in which the rising tone should be responsible for the confirmation seeking property of *ho2*. While in the case of *di1*, the definiteness should be the source for its pejorative sense. In addition, the interaction between the perception domain and the epistemic/evidential domain has also been explored in two conference presentations (namely IcSTLL-48 and NACCL-28), in which the grammaticalization and subjectification of the perception verb *tai2* is discussed in detail. A manuscript detailing how the speaker's stance and attitude can be expressed by the verb *tai2* has been prepared, and will be submitted to *Lingua*.

6.2   Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action
(Maximum half a page)

With the identification of the range of strategies responsible for epistemic modulations and their functions revealed, findings from this research project will shed light on a number of areas in evidentiality studies and discourse-pragmatics. One very promising topic being the investigation of the pathways from which discourse markers have come about diachronically, and how these markers are used in different contexts of Cantonese conversations.

Discourse is often viewed as a kind of social practice, particularly within the field of interactional social linguistics and ethnomethodology with discourse markers seen to play an important interactional or interpersonal function. Based on Deborah Schiffrin's pioneering and very inspiring work on discourse markers in 1987, I would like to work on the grammaticalization and subjectification of Cantonese discourse markers in Cantonese, as a follow-up project and an extended arm of the current project on epistemic modulations. Discourse markers account for a grammatical strategy that is found to be important in calibrating the speaker's epistemic claim. While the whole range of strategies has been investigated in this current project, the findings on discourse markers can definitely serve as the foundation of the proposed project on discourse markers in Cantonese – a topic that is definitely worth pursuing.

The proposed study will expand on the scope of previous studies on discourse markers, to identify the types of resources that are particularly recruited as discourse markers, and to explore the evolutionary pathways that will normally lead to a discourse marker. A pilot study has been carried out this summer, with funding support from the Faculty. The research assistant has identified several discourse markers in Cantonese, and their functions preliminarily analyzed. Findings from the pilot study will contribute to the proposal writing of this proposed larger-scale study on Cantonese discourse markers, to be submitted to RGC in fall 2017.

7.   Layman's Summary
(Describe <u>in layman's language</u> the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

All languages have their own means to convey meanings of various kinds, indicating different shades of the speaker's moods and perspectives (e.g. how the speaker evaluates a certain situation, how evident the speaker's conclusion of a situation is, etc.). Knowing how to interpret a speaker's subjective stance is vital in human communication. When we interact with other people, we need to understand not only the word meaning, but also what the speaker is *trying to say* – we constantly need to recognize a speaker's intention, attitude, and state of mind. Based on data from historical and contemporary corpora, natural conversations and interviews, this study has uncovered the wide range of strategies that Cantonese speakers employ to indicate their attitude, including various lexical and grammatical means. These findings from the current study not only have complemented prior studies which have been predominantly done in relation to the evidential system, but also have important implications for cross-linguistic comparisons. This project's findings also have clear social, political and economic value, for they will indicate to us how speakers might make use of different strategies to position themselves in a range of discourses, including political debates, workplace conversations, or daily interactions which include negotiations.

(199 words)

Part C: Research Output

8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project
(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) *(denote the correspond-ing author with an asterisk*)*	Title and Journal / Book *(with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)*	Submitted to RGC *(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)*	Attached to this Report *(Yes or No)*	Acknowledged the Support of RGC *(Yes or No)*	Accessible from the institutional repository *(Yes or No)*
Year of Publication	**Year of Acceptance** *(For paper accepted but not yet published)*	**Under Review**	**Under Preparation** *(optional)*						
			2017	CHOR Winnie	Expressing stance and speaker's attitude in Cantonese – on the grammaticalization and subjectification of the perception verb tai2 "see" in Cantonese. To be submitted to *Lingua*.	No	No	Yes	Yes
		2017		CHOR Winnie	Sentence final particles as epistemic modulators in Cantonese conversations – a discourse-pragmatic perspective. Submitted to *Journal of Pragmatics*.	No	Yes [Attachment 1]	Yes	Yes
2016				*CHOR Winnie, YAP Foong-ha, and WONG Tak-sum	Chinese Interrogative Particles as Talk Coordinators at the Right-Periphery – A Discourse-Pragmatic Perspective. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 17(2).178-207	Yes 2015	No	Yes	Yes

| 2015 | | | | CHOR Winnie | Epistemic modulations and speakers stance in Cantonese conversations. In M. Harvey and A. Antonia (eds.) *The 45th Australian Linguistic Society Conference Proceedings - 2014*. Published by the University of Newcastle. Distributed by the Australian Linguistic Society (ALS). p.104–130 | Yes 2015 | No | Yes | Yes |

9. **Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered**
   (Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC *(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)*	Attached to this Report *(Yes or No)*	Acknowledged the Support of RGC *(Yes or No)*	Accessible from the institutional repository *(Yes or No)*
July 2017 Belfast	Cantonese interrogative particles as (inter)subjective stance markers: a discourse-pragmatic perspective	the 15th International Pragmatics Conference (IPrA)	No	Yes [Attachment 2]	Yes	Yes
June 2016 The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong	Sentence final particles as epistemic modulators in Cantonese conversations – a discourse-pragmatic perspective	the annual conference of the Hong Kong Association for Applied Linguistics (HAAL)	No	Yes [Attachment 3]	Yes	Yes
May 2016 Manila, the Philippines	Implicit deicticity and negative attitudinal marking: The case of *nei di* and *go di* [Demonstrative + Classifier] constructions in Cantonese discourse	the 26th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society (SEALS-26)	No	Yes [Attachment 4]	Yes	Yes

May 2016 Brigham Young University, Utah, US	Knowing is seeing – on the grammaticalization and subjectification of tai2 "see" in Cantonese	the 28th North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics (NACCL-28)	No	Yes [Attachment 5]	Yes	Yes
Dec 2015 Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong	Ho^2 as a talk coordinator in Cantonese conversations - a discourse-pragmatic perspective	the 20th International Conference on Yue Dialects	No	Yes [Attachment 6]	Yes	Yes
Aug 2015 University of California, Santa Barbara, US	Expressing epistemic and evidential meanings in Cantonese: Subjectification of the perception verb tai2 'see' and related constructions	the 48th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics (IcSTLL-48)	Yes 2015	No	Yes	Yes
Dec 2014 Western Sydney University, Australia	Epistemic modulations and speaker stance in Cantonese conversations	the annual meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society (ALS)	Yes 2015	No	Yes	Yes

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning
(Please elaborate)

The PI has integrated the research findings and outputs from this project into her two courses

ENGL 3305 Studying Meaning and *ENGL 3007 Discourse Studies*.

Moreover, more than 60 undergraduate students were involved in data collection. By

participating in the interviews and group discussions, students could have a taste of how an

authentic research is done.

11. Student(s) Trained
(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)
N.A.

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation

12. Other Impact
(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

A joint paper with Yap Foongha (from CUHK) has emerged from this project. The PI and her collaborator have been invited to contribute a chapter to *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Discourse Analysis* by Routledge:

Yap, Foongha and Chor, Winnie. The grammaticalization of stance markers in Chinese. In Chris Shei (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Discourse Analysis*. Routledge. (expected date of publication: April 2018)

13. Public Access Of Completion Report
(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.) N.A.

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons