

Parts of Speech

Unit 1	List of Parts of Speech	2
Unit 2	Nouns	4
Unit 3	Adjectives	7
Unit 4	Numerals	13
Unit 5	Pronouns	17
Unit 6	Verbs	23
Unit 7	Adverbs	33
Unit 8	Preposition	38
Unit 9	Conjunctions	41
Unit 10	Interjection & Onomatopoeias	49
Unit 11	Measure Words	51
Unit 12	Particles	61
Unit 13	Glossary: English to Cantonese	67
	The end of the book	74

Unit 1 List of Parts of Speech

1. Comparing the parts of speech

	Cantonese	English Counterparts
1.	Nouns	Nouns
2.	Adjectives	Adjectives
3.	Numbers	Numerals
4.	Pronouns	Pronouns
5.	Verbs	Verbs
6.	Adverbs	Adverbs
7.	Prepositions	Prepositions
8.	Conjunctions	Conjunctions
9.	Interjections	Interjections
10.	Onomatopoeias	Onomatopoeias
11.	Measure Words	
12.	Particles	
		Article- a, an, the

2. Notes

From No. 1-No. 10, there are English counterparts. The definitions of them are not the exactly the same but are similar.

Besides, all the parts of speech mentioned in this book are according to the classification of Cantonese and may not be the same as that in English.

3. Cantonese doesn't have Articles

There is no articles - a, an & the in Cantonese.

Therefore in Cantonese, for “a” or “an”, people say “one: yāt”. For definite referring - the, people use measure word.

4. English doesn't have Measure Words and Particles

Measure Word and Particles are two most difficult parts of speech to most learners as there is no counterparts in English.

Unit 2 Nouns

1. Definition

Nouns are the words that denote people, things, or place and time.

2. Measure Word has to be used

A numeral does not modify a noun directly. It must have a measure word between it and the noun it modifies.

Details of measure words will be talked in the later chapter

3. Singular & Plural

Nouns in singular or plural are the same in form. The context can usually tell the mentioned nouns are in singular or plural.

1) *a person*

yāt go yàhn

1 MW person

2) *a friend*

yāt go pàhng yáuh

1 MW friend

3) *many people*

hóu dō yàhn

many person

4. Nouns of locality

1) *east*

dūng

2) *left*

jó bihn

- 3) *right*
yauh bihn
- 4) *outside*
chēut bihn
- 5) *inside*
yahp bihn / néuih bihn

📖 They can work as subject or object.

- 6) *There are cars at the back*
hauh bihn yáuh chē
back side has cars

📖 They can form with other words to form position phrase.

- 7) *the right of the MTR station*
deih tit jaahm yauh bihn
MTR station 's right side

- 8) *There are lots of people at the right of the MTR station*
deih tit jaahm yauh bihn yáuh hóu dō yàhn
MTR station 's right side has many people

5. Exercise

(1) Singular & Plural

- 1) *a friend*
MW for friend (people related) go
friend pàhng yáuh

yāt go pàhng yáuh

- 2) *two friends*

léuhng go pàhng yáuh

- 3) *many friends*

hóu dō pàhng yáuh

(2) Nouns of locality

- 1) *The toilet is on the right*
toilet sái sáu gāan

sái sáu gāan hái yauh bihn

- 2) *The back of the taxi stand*
taxi stand dīk sí jaahm

dīk sí jaahm hauh bihn

- 3) *opposite to my house*
opposite deui mihn
my house ngóh ūk kái (usually house is: ūk, home is: ūk kái)

ngóh ūk kái deui mihn

- 4) *I will wait for you at the left of the bank*
bank ngàhn hòhng
wait dǎng

ngóh hái ngàhn hòhng jó bihn dǎng néih

Unit 3 Adjectives

1. Definition:

Adjectives are words that describe the shape, quality or state of a person or a thing.

As in English, people may distinguish predicative and attributive uses of adjectives. Predicative adjectives behave very much like verbs, following the subject. Attributive adjectives always precede the noun, which they modify.

2. Predicative adjectives

(1) Most common modifier - hóu

A predicative adjective is usually preceded by a modifier.

When people want to say “very”, of course they will say “very: hóu”. However even if they don’t really mean “very”, if no other modifier is used, they will add “very: hóu” before the adjective.

hóu in this function may be regarded as merely an adjective marker, its meaning being much weaker than English ‘very’.

1) *She is beautiful*

kéuih hóu leng

she very beautiful



Used as predicates, adjectives may take aspect markers and complements

2) *You have got much taller.*

néih gōu jó hóu dō

you tall FPV(ed) much

(2) Other modifiers

Usually, “so: gam” has to be used under a certain situation but no just used as a replacement of “very” as that is used in English.

1) *You are so late!*

néih gam chih!

2) *She is so rich!*

kéuih hóu yáuh chín

(In English, “so” can be replaced by “very” here, Cantonese use “very: hóu” but not “so”)

3) *She is so rich! I can’t tell*

kéuih gam yáuh chín, tái m̀h chēut wo!

she so have money (rich) see can’t out PRT!

(In English, “so” can’t be replaced by “very” here, Cantonese use “so: gam”)

4) *She is so pretty!*

kéuih hóu leng

(In English, “so” can be replaced by “very” here, Cantonese use “very: hóu” but not “so”)

5) *She is so pretty, of course many people chase after her*

kéuih gam leng, gáng haih hóu dō yáhn jēui lā

she so pretty, of-course many people chase after PRT

(In English, “so” can’t be replaced by “very” here, Cantonese use “so: gam”)

3. Attributive adjectives

Between the attributive adjective and the noun it modifies, linking particle “ge” is used

1) *big apple*

daaih pihng gwó

big apple

However, if the “whole set” of the modifier, eg. here is “daaih” is monosyllabic, the linking particle is skipped.

2) *very big apple*

hóu daaih ge pihng gwó

very big LP apple

The “whole set” of the modifier is “hóu daaih” here is not monosyllabic, the linking particle is used.

3) very delicious food

hóu hóu sihk ge yéh

very good eat LP things

4) my pen / my pens

ngóh ge bāt

my LP pen

5) my pen (can use MW to replace the “ge”)

ngóh jī bāt

my MW pen

6) my pens (can use MW to replace the “ge”)

“dī” is a MW used for all different plural objects when the number is no specified. “dī” is also a MW for all uncountable objects

ngóh dī bāt

my MW pen

7) my mother (“ge” is skipped in kinship)

ngóh mā mih

8) my company (“ge” is usually skipped for organization that one belongs to)

ngóh gūng sī

4. Comparison of Adjectives

(1) **dī**

1) more expensive

gwai dī

expensive more

2) cheaper

pèhng dī

cheap more

3) It's hotter today.

gām yaht yiht dī

today hot more

(2) **Superlatives**

Superlative constructions are formed with “most: jeui” preceding the adjective:

1) He is the tallest

kéuih jeui gōu

He most tall

2) They are the richest

kéuih deih jeui yáuh chín

they most have money (rich)

5. Exercise

(1) **Predicative adjectives**

1) You are smart!

hints: add a modifier before the adjective “smart”

néih hóu lēk

2) This table is expensive

hints: add a modifier before the adjective “smart”

MW of table jēung

nī jēung tóih hóu gwai

3) I am getting fatter

ngóh fèih jó

4) You are getting much prettier

néih leng-jó hóu dō

5) He is so early

kéuih gam jóu

6) *She is so thin!*

kéuih hóu sau

7) *You are so thin, you still eat so less?*

still *juhng*
eat *sihk*
so less *gam síu yéh*

néih gam sau, juhng sihk gam síu yéh

(2) Attributive adjectives

1) *a hardworking student*

hardworking, diligent *kàhn lihk*

kàhn-lihk ge hohk-sāang

2) *a big orange*

MW for orange *go*
orange *cháang*

yāt go daaih cháang

(single syllable for the modifier, no need to add “ge”)

3) *a very big orange*

yāt go hóu daaih ge cháang

4) *my watch / my watches*

MW for watch *jek*
watch *bīu / sáu bīu*

ngóh ge sáu-bīu

5) *my watch*

ngóh jek sáu-bīu

6) *my watches*

ngóh dī sáu-bīu

7) *my money(uncountable)*

ngóh dī chín / ngóh ge chín

8) *your company*

néih gūng-sī

(3) Comparison of Adjectives

1) *He is taller*

tall *gōu*

kéuih gōu-dī

2) *This table is better*

tall *gōu*

nī-jēung tóh hóu-dī

3) *My wife is the best*

ngóh taai-tái jeui-hóu

4) *You are the laziest student*

lazy *láahn*

néih haih jeui-láahn ge hohk-sāang

Unit 4 Numerals

1. Definition

Numerals are words that express numbers.

Numerals and measure words are often used together.

2. Ordinal Numbers

Placing the prefix “daih” before numerals can form ordinal numbers.

- 1) *1st*
daih yāt
- 2) *2nd*
daih yih
- 3) *1000th*
daih yāt chīn

📖 Sometimes cardinal numbers are used even they are actually in the sense of ordinal numbers

- 4) *80 Nathan Road*
Nèih Dēung Douh baat sahp houh
Nathan Road 80 number
- 5) *I live on the 11th floor*
ngóh jyuh hái sahp yāt láu
I live on 11 floor

3. Special numerals

(1) 2

📖 Both “yih” and “léuhng” means 2. When one says “two of something”, “léuhng” is used instead of “yih”.

One can also say that, before MW or nouns take no MW, “léuhng” is used instead of “yih”

- 1) *two pens*
léuhng jī bāt
 - 2) *twenty-two pens (not two of something)*
yih sahp yih jī bāt
 - 3) *two days (day takes no MW)*
léuhng yaht
 - 4) *two dollars (two of sth.)*
léuhng mǎn
 - 5) *twenty dollars (not two of sth.)*
yih-sahp mǎn
 - 6) *\$0.2 (20 cents)(two of “a-ten-cent”)*
léuhng hòuh-(jí)
hòuh-jí is a measuring unit that is equal to ten cents
 - 7) *\$2.2*
léuhng go yih
“go” is the measure word for coins, means dollars here. “léuhng” is usually used before a MW.
 - 8) *2 dozen*
léuhng dā
- (2) **half**
- 📖 half can't be used by itself
- 1) *half an apple*
bun go pìhng gwó
 - 2) *one and a half apple*
go bun pìhng gwó
 - 3) *two and a half apple*
léuhng go bun pìhng gwó

Unit 5 Pronouns

1. Definition:

Pronouns are words that stand for nouns, verbs and adjectives.

2. Personal Pronouns

(1) Subjective & Objective cases

	Subjective Case	Objective Case	Cantonese
1	I	me	ngóh
2	You	you	néih
3	He, She, It	him, her, it	kéuih
4	We	us	ngóh deih
5	You	you	néih deih
6	They	them	kéuih deih

(2) Possessive case

	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Cantonese
1	my	mine	ngóh ge
2	your	yours	néih ge
3	his, her, its	his, hers, its	kéuih ge
4	our	ours	ngóh deih ge
5	your	yours	néih deih ge
6	their	theirs	kéuih deih ge

Usually in possessive case, the MW is used instead of the “ge”

“ge” or the MW is usually skipped in kinship, closed object or the organization that one belongs to.

Examples

- 1) *My wallet* (“ge” can be skipped for wallet)
ngóh ge ngàhn-bāau
ngóh go ngàhn-bāau
ngóh ngàhn bāau
- 2) *My husband* (ge is usually skipped)
ngóh sīn-sāang
- 3) *My home* (ge is usually skipped)
ngóh ūk-kéi
- 4) *My company* (ge is usually skipped)
ngóh gūng-sī

(3) Reflexive pronouns

	Reflexive Pronoun	Cantonese
1	myself	ngóh jih géi
2	yourself	néih jih géi
3	himself, herself, itself	kéuih jih géi
4	ourselves	ngóh deih jih géi
5	yourselves	néih deih jih géi
6	themselves	kéuih deih jih géi

3. Demonstrative Pronouns

	English	Cantonese
1	This	nī go (MW)
2	That	gó go (MW)
3	These	nī dī
4	Those	gó dī
5	Here	nī douh
6	There	gó douh

This is “nī go” where the go is the MW only. When different object is referred, different MW has to be used.

“go” is the most common MW and therefore is used here.

4. Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns take the place wither of the subject or of the object in a sentence.

	English	Cantonese
1	Who	bīn go
2	What	māt yéh, mē↗(short form)
3	Which	bīn go (MW)
4	Where	bīn douh
5	How long	géi noi (refer to time, not length)
6	How many	géi dō

Who must refer to people, therefore the MW must be “go”. For “Which”, it may refer different object; therefore the corresponding MW has to be used.

5. Exercise

(1) Personal Pronouns

- 1) *I am/haih/ Hong Kong people*
people yàhn

ngóh haih Hēung-Góng yàhn

- 2) *You (plural) are not Hong Kong people*

néih-deih m̀h-haih Hēung-Góng yàhn

- 3) *Are they are foreigners*
(they be not be foreigners)
foreigners ngoih gwok yàhn

kéuih-deih haih-m̀h-haih ngoih-gwok yàhn a?

(2) Possessive Pronouns

- 1) *Your (singular) dress is very beautiful*
dress kwàhn

néih t̀uh kwàhn hóu leng

- 2) *Your (plural) dresses are very beautiful*

néih-deih dī kwàhn hóu leng

- 3) *Her wallet is lost*
lost m̀h gin jó

kéuih go ngàhn-bāau m̀h-gin-jó

kéuih ngàhn-bāau m̀h-gin-jó

- 4) *You husband is very nice*
nice hóu yàhn

néih sīn-sāang hóu hóu-(yàhn)

Cantonese won't say "I like your husband". Like is "jūng yi" which is the same as "love".

- 5) *Your home is very big*
home ūk kái
big daaih

néih ūk-kái hóu daaih

(3) Reflexive Pronouns

- 1) *You yourselves make the mistake*
make the mistake jough cho (do wrong)

néih jih-géi jough cho

- 2) *They themselves are careless*
careless m̀h síu sām (not careful)

Unit 6 Verbs

1. Definition

Verbs are the words that express the action, behaviour or change of a person or a thing.

2. A sentence may take no verbs

In English, a sentence must take a verb, however in Cantonese, a complete may take no verb

- 1) *The baby is very cute*
go bīh bī hóu dāk yi
MW(the) baby very cute
- 2) *I am sick / I feel sick*
ngóh m̀h syū fuhk
I not comfortable

3. No Variation in form

Cantonese verbs do not vary in form according to number, person or tense.

- 1) *I like eating beef*
ngóh jūng yi sihk ngàuh yuhk
- 2) *She likes eating fish*
kéuih jūng yi sihk yú
- 3) *I am going to Tsim Sha Tsui / I went to Tsim Sha Tsui*
ngóh heui Jīm Sā Jéui

4. Tense - Time

 Tenses compose of “time” and “aspect”.

Examples of time: yesterday, now, tomorrow, now, ...

In Cantonese, the time of an action is mainly expressed by time words instead of the verb itself

- 1) *I always go to Central*
ngóh sìhng yaht heui Jūng-Wàahn
I always go Central
- 2) *Yesterday, I went to Central*
chàhm yaht, ngóh heui Jūng-Wàahn
yesterday, I go Central
“chàhm yaht” shows the action was in the past
- 3) *Tomorrow, I will go to Central*
tīng-yaht, ngóh heui Jūng Wàahn
tomorrow, I go Central
“tīng yaht” shows the action is in the future
- 4) *Tomorrow, I will go to Central*
tīng-yaht, ngóh wúih heui Jūng Wàahn
tomorrow, I will go Central

 wúih can be added before the verb to shows the willingness of the action rather than show it's a future tense.

wúih helps with the “modal” rather than the “tense” of a sentence.

wúih is somehow similar to “would” in “I would”

Actually people use tīng yaht to show its future tense instead.

5. Tense - Aspect

An action may be in stage of progression, continuation or completion, and these different stages of an action are known as aspects.

The aspect and the time of an action are separately shown.

Cantonese add an additional “aspect particle” to show the aspect – the state of the action.

 There are 4 aspect particles.

Name	Abbr.	Indicate	Eng	Cant
Perfective	PFV	the completion of an action	ed	jó
Experiential	EXP	a certain experience in the past	ed	gwo
Progressive	PROG	the progressive aspect	ing	gán
Continuous	CONT	the continuous aspect	ing	jyuh

(1) Perfective Aspect

When people just state an action happen in the past, don't use "jó".
When people want to indicate the completion of an action, "jó" is used. Usually it is used to emphasis of the action or the effects of the action still there. Moreover, in English, if it will use perfect tense usually in Cantonese, people use the aspect particle "jó" as well. Sometimes in English, people used simple past tense, Cantonese still use the "jó".

- 1) *I've bought a pen*
ngóh máaih jó jī bāt
I bought PFV(ed) MW coat
- 2) *He died*
kéuih séi jó
he die PFV(ed)

Negative form:

- 3) *He hasn't died yet*
kéuih meih séi
he not yet die

Question form:

- 4) *Have you bought it?*
néih máaih jó meih a?
he buy ed not yet PRT

Again, it is in A-not-A format: bought not yet?

(2) Experiential Aspect

It's used to express a certain experience in the past.

- 1) *I have been to England*
ngóh heui gwo Yīng Gwok
I go EXP England

Negative form:

- 2) *I have never been to England.*
ngóh meih heui gwo Yīng Gwok
I not yet go EXP England
ngóh móuh heui gwo Yīng Gwok
I not have go EXP England

Question form:

- 3) *Have you been to England?*
néih heui gwo Yīng Gwok meih a?
you go EXP England not yet PRT
néih yáuh móuh heui gwo Yīng Gwok a?
you have not have go EXP England PRT

(3) Progressive Aspect

It's very similar to the continuous tense in English.

- 1) *I am walking*
ngóh hàahng gán
I walk ing
- 2) *I am watching TV*
ngóh tái gán dihn sih
I watch ing TV

Negative form:

- 3) *I am not watching TV*
ngóh m̀h haih tái gán dihn sih
I not be watch ing TV

Question form:

- 4) *Are you watching TV?*
néih haih m̀h haih tái gán dihn sih a?
I be not be watch ing TV PRT?

(4) Continuous Aspect

It help to indicate the continuation either of an action or of a state as the result of an action.

- 1) *Please help me to hold the bag*
m̀h-gōi bōng ngóh līng jyuh go dói
please help me hold CONT(ing) MW(the) bag

The action is continuous, but no progression. Actually you are asking people to “holding” the bag instead of just “hold” and then “drop” it.

- 2) *I am looking at the TV*
ngóh mohng jyuh go dihn sih
I look CONT(ing) the TV

The action is continuous, but no progression.

The action of watching has progression as the person watch some programs and get some information etc.

The action of looking has no progression as the TV is turn off and the person just look at a stand still object.

- 3) *They tie the cow.*
kéuih deih bóng jyuh jek ngàuh
they tie CONT(ing) MW(the) cow

The action of “tie” has been completed but the state of the result of “tie” continues

- 4) *Watch out!*
tái jyuh a!
watch CONT(ing) PRT

The action of “watch” is continuous

Negative forms:

- 5) *They don't tie the cow.*
kéuih deih m̀h haih bóng jyuh jek ngàuh
they not be tie CONT(ing) MW(the) cow
- 6) *They haven't tied the cow.*
kéuih deih móuh bóng jyuh jek ngàuh
they not have tie CONT(ing) MW(the) cow

Question forms:

- 7) *Do they tie the cow?.*
kéuih deih haih m̀h haih bóng jyuh jek ngàuh a?
they be not be tie CONT MW(the) cow PRT?
- 8) *Have they tied the cow?*
kéuih deih yáuh móuh bóng jyuh jek ngàuh a?
they have not have tie CONT MW(the) cow PRT?

6. Verb-Object compounds

Many “verb” are actually verb object compound, aspect particle has to be place between them, just after the verb.

- 1) *have meal*
sihk faahn
eat rice
- 2) *I am having meal*
ngóh sihk gán faahn
I eat PROG(ing) rice
- 3) *I have eaten my meal*
ngóh sihk jó faahn
I eat PFV(ed) rice
- 4) *drive*
jā chē
drive car

5) *sleep*
fan **gaau**
sleep(verb) the noun of a sleep

6) *bath*
chūng **lèuhng**
bath(verb) a bath

7. Exercise

(1) Perfective Aspect

1) *Yesterday, I bought a pen.*

kàhm yaht, ngóh máaih jó yāt jī bāt

2) *The reporters has gone there*

dī gei jé dōu heui jó gó douh

3) *I've eaten a lot and so I'm very full*

a lot *hóu dō yéh*
so *só yíh*
full *báau*

ngóh sihk-jó hóu-dō yéh, só-yíh ngóh hóu báau

4) *He hasn't taken any medicine.*

kéuih móuh sihk yeuk

5) *Last week, I haven't bought any pens.*

last week *seuhng go láih baai*

seuhng go láih-baai, ngóh móuh máaih bāt

6) *She hasn't cook the dinner yet*

cook the dinner **gyú faahn**

kéuih meih jyú faahn

7) *Has he take any medicine?*

kéuih yáuh móuh sihk yeuk a?

8) *Have you taken the medicine yet?*

néih sihk-jó yeuhk meih a?

(2) Experiential Aspect

1) *I have been to China*

China *Jūng-Gwok*

ngóh heui gwo Jūng-Gwok

2) *I have never been to Europe*

Europe *Āu Jāu*

ngóh meih heui-gwo Āu Jāu

ngóh móuh heui-gwo Āu Jāu

3) *Have you been to Lan Kwai Fong?*

Lan Kwai Fong *Làahn Gwai Fōng*

néih yáuh móuh heui gwo Làahn Gwai Fōng a?

néih heui gwo Làahn Gwai Fōng meih a?

(3) Progressive Aspect

1) *I am writing.*

ngóh sé gán jih

2) *Yesterday 3:00, I was watching TV.*

kàhm yaht sām dím, ngóh tái gán dihn sih

3) *I am not writing.*

ngóh m̀h haih sé gán jih

4) *Are you writing.*

néih haih m̀h haih sé gán jih a?

- 5) *Now I am singing*
sing *cheung gō (lit.: sing song)*

yìh-gā, ngóh cheung gán gō

- 6) *He is not doing homework, he is playing the toy car*

kéuih m̀h-haih jòuh-gán gūng-fo,
kéuih haih wáan-gán ga wuhn-geuih chē

When one wants to emphasis, "haih" can be added before the verb, play: wáan

(4) Continuous Aspect

- 1) *The student is carrying his schoolbag*
schoolbag *syū bāau*

go hohk-sāang līng-jyuh go syū-bāau

- 2) *Have they tied the cat?*

kéuih-deih yáuh móuh bóng-jyuh jek māau a?

- 3) *No, they haven't tied the cat*

móuh, kéuih-deih móuh bóng-jyuh jek māau

- 4) *Does Peter look at Mary?*

Peter haih-m̀h-haih mohng-jyuh Mary a?

- 5) *No, Peter doesn't look at Mary, he looks at Kitty.*

m̀h haih, Peter m̀h-haih mohng-jyuh Mary, kéuih haih mohng-jyuh Kitty

(5) Verb-Object compound

- 1) *She is driving*

kéuih jā gán chē

- 2) *The baby is sleeping*
baby *bìh-bī*

go bìh-bī fan gán gaau

- 3) *He has slept*

kéuih fan jó gaau

- 4) *The child is bathing*
child *sai mán jái*

go sai mán jái chūng gán lèuhng

Unit 7 Adverbs

1. Definition

They modify verbs or adjectives by expressing time, scope, quality, state or degree.

Adverbs have to be come before the verbs they modify

2. Degree

- 1) *very beautiful*
hóu leng
- 2) *quite beautiful*
géi leng
- 3) *most beautiful*
jeui leng

3. Time

- 1) *now*
yìh gā
- 2) *What are you doing now?*
néih yìh gā jòuh gán māt yéh a?
you now do ing what PRT?
- 3) *just before, a minute ago*
jing wah
- 4) *Someone looked for you a minute ago.*
jing wah yáuh yàhn wán néih
just before have person look for you
- 5) *always*
sìhng yaht
whole day

- 6) *always go to play*
sìhng yaht heui wáan
whole day go play
 - 7) *sometimes*
yáuh sìh
have time
 - 8) *sometimes not free*
yáuh sìh m̀h dāk hàahn
have time not can free
 - 9) *soon, then*
jauh
 - 10) *go straight, then you will see it (soon)*
jìhk heui, jauh wúih gin dóu
straight go, soon, then will see can
- ### 4. State
- 1) *suddenly*
dahk yìhn
 - 2) *suddenly fell down*
dahk yìhn dit dāi
suddenly, fell down
 - 3) *fortunately*
hóu chóih
good fate
 - 4) *fortunately, I haven't been late.*
hóu chóih, ngóh móuh ch̀h dou
fortunately, I not have late arrive
 - 5) *still, even*
juhng
 - 6) *It's still very cold now.*
yìh gā juhng haih hóu dung
now, still be very cold

7) *Peter is even naughtier than David*
Peter juhng yáih gwo David
Peter even naughtier than David

8) *both ...and ...*
yauh ... yauh ...

(can repeat more than two times)

9) *He is foolish and lazy*
kéuih yauh chéun yauh láahn
he and foolish and lazy

10) *He is fail again!*
kéuih yauh m̀h hahp gaak la !
he again not pass PRT

11) *again*
joi

12) *see you again*
joi gin

5. Scope

1) *also, too*
dōu

2) *He is also very fat*
kéuih dōu hóu fèih

3) *only*
jihng haih
only be

4) *He always only plays but not doing homework*
kéuih jihng haih wáan, m̀h jough gūng fo
he only play, not do homework

6. Exercise

(1) Degree

1) *You are very silly*
silly sòh

néih hóu sòh

2) *He is the worst*
bad chā

kéuih jwei chā

(2) Time

1) *Where have you gone just before?*

jing-wah néih heui-jó bīn-(dough) a?

2) *You always shopping around*
shopping around hàahng-gāai máaih-yéh (walk streets buy things)

néih sìhng-yaht hàahng-gāai máaih-yéh

3) *I'm sorry, I'm not free now*
not free m̀h dāk-hàahn

m̀h-hóu yi-si, ngóh yìh-gā m̀h dāk-hàahn

(3) State

1) *I am sick suddenly*

ngóh dahk-yìhn m̀h syū fuhk

2) *fortunately, I didn't lost my wallet*

hóu-chóih, ngóh móuh m̀h-gin go ngàahn bāau

3) *It's still very hot yesterday*

- chàhm-yaht juhng-haih hóu yiht
- 4) *He is lazy, you are even more lazy*
-
- kéuih láahn, néih juhng láahn
- 5) *She is both pretty and smart, of course she won't love you*
-
- kéuih yauh leng yauh lēk, gáng-haih m̀h-wúih jūng-yi néih lā
- 6) *Yesterday he came, today he came again*
-
- chàhm-yaht kéuih làih, gām yaht, kéuih yauh làih
- 7) *Yesterday he came, today he will come again*
-
- chàhm-yaht kéuih làih, gām yaht, kéuih wúih joi làih
- 8) *see you next time*
(next time again see)
-
- hah-chi joi gin

(4) Scope

- 1) *I am also very tired*
tired *guih*
-
- ngóh dōu hóu gúih
- 2) *He has only eaten a bit*
a bit *súu súu*
-
- kéuih jihng-haih sihk-jó súu súu

Unit 8 Preposition

1. Introduction

Prepositions are words that are placed before nouns, pronouns or phrase to form a prepositional phrase and are used together to express the direction, object, time, place, etc. of an action.

Prepositions must be used together with nouns, noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases etc. to form prepositional phrases. The words after the preposition are the objects of the preposition.

Because prepositional phrase is used as an adverbial modifier to modifies the verb, most of the time it comes before the verb.

The following are some examples of prepositions.

2. hái

hái = at, in, on

hái combines with a noun or pronoun denoting time, place or direction to form a prepositional phrase which is used as an adverbial modifier to express the time or place of an action.

Negation is achieved by adding m̀h before hái.

- 1) *She works in Central*

kéuih hái Jūng Wàahn fāan gūng
she in Central back work

- 2) *She does not work in .Central.*

kéuih m̀h haih hái Jūng Wàahn fāan gūng
she not be in Central back work

3. yàuh

yàuh indicating a starting point. It is used as an adverbial modifier modifying a verb by telling when or where the action starts.

- 1) *She comes from England*

kéuih yàuh Yīng Gwok làih
she from England come

- 2) *He start to do his homework from 3:00*

kéuih yàuh sāam dím hōi chí jough gūng fo
he from 3:00 start do homework

4. tùhng

tùhng combine with a noun or pronoun to modify verbs as adverbial modifiers. It is used to indicate the object of an action

- 1) *I told her*

ngóh tùhng kéuih góng
I with she tell

- 2) *I went with my friends*

ngóh tùhng pàhng yáuh heui
I with friend go

5. Exercise

(1) hái

- 1) *I live in TST*

ngóh jyuh hái Jīm-Sā-Jéui

- 2) *He works in Wanchai*

kéuih hái Wāan-Jái fāan-gūng

- 3) *I do my homework at school*

school hohk haauh

ngóh hái hohk-haauh jough gūng-fo

(2) yàuh

- 1) *I come from China*

ngóh yàuh Jūng-Gwok làih

- 2) *She is from England to go to France*

France Faat Gwok

kéuih yàuh Yīng-Gwok heui Faat-Gwok

- 3) *I go to Causeway Bay from North Point*

*Causeway Bay Tùhng Lòh Wàahn(Wāan)
North Point Bāk Gok*

ngóh yàuh Bāk-Gok heui Tùhng-Lòh-Wàahn

(3) tùhng

- 1) *He told his mother he wanted to buy that toy bear*

(he with mother speak he want buy that toy bear)

toy wuhn geuih

bear hùhng (M: jek)

kéuih tùhng mā-mìh góng kéuih séung máaih gó-jek wuhn-geuih

hùhng

- 2) *Mum always plays with us together*

(Mum always with us together play)

mā-mìh sìhng-yaht tùhng ngóh-deih yāt-chàih wáan

Unit 9 Conjunctions

1. Definition

Conjunctions are used to connect words, phrases or clauses.

2. Common Conjunctions

- 1) *and*
tùhng / tùhng màaih
and and with
- 2) *or*
waahk jé / dihng
maybe or probably are also: waahk-jé
- 3) *because*
yān waih
- 4) *therefore, so*
só yíh
- 5) *although, though*
sēui yìhn
- 6) *but, however*
daahng haih
- 7) *moreover*
yìh ché
- 8) *then, and then*
gān jyuh
- 9) *not only*
m̀h dāan jí
- 10) *otherwise*
ỳh gwó m̀h haih (more casual)
if not
fáu jāk (more formal)

- 11) *if*
ỳh gwó
- 12) *even if*
jauh syun

3. tùhng / tùhng màaih

- 1) *This one and that one*
nī go tùhng gó go
this one and that MW
 - 2) *I have bought books and pens*
ngóh máaih jó syū tùhng bāt
I buy ed books and pen
-  Notice that when the subject phrase contains two or more nouns joined together by **tùhng**, the predicate is usually preceded by the adverb **dōu** marking the plurality.
- 3) *This one and that one are both expensive*
nī go tùhng gó go dōu hóu gwai
this one and that one both very expensive
 - 4) *Father, mother, and younger brother are here.*
bàh bā, màh mǎ, tùhng sai lóu dōu hái douh
father, mother, and younger brother all at here
-  Unlike 'and' in English, however, **tùhng** is never used to join clauses; nor is it normally used to join verbs or adjectives.
- The correct linking of the clauses is simple juxtaposition.
- 5) *I buy books and he buys pens*
ngóh máaih syū, kéuih máaih bāt
I buy pens he buy pens
 - 6) *One hamburger and one coke please (food ordering)*
m̀h gōi yāt go hó lohk, yāt go hon bóu bāau
please I MW coke, I MW hamburger

4. or = waahk jé / dihng

(1) For a statement

In a statement, the usage of “waahk-jé” is more than “dihng”

(1.1) or = waahk-jé

waahk jé indicates an alternative relationship between two or more items.

- 1) *This one or that one is okay.*

nī go waahk jé gó go dōu hó yíh
this one or that MW also can

- 2) *I guess he is either a Chinese or Japanese*

ngóh gú kéuih haih Jūng Gwok yàhn
I guess he is Chinese
waahk jé haih Yaht Bún yàhn
or is Japanese

(1.2) or = dihng

dihng used for uncertainty. Usually the sentence is start with “I don’t know ...”

- 1) *I don’t know this one or that one is better*

ngóh m̀h jī nī go dihng gó go hóu dī
I not know this one or that MW better

- 2) *I don’t know he is a Chinese or Japanese*

ngóh m̀h jī kéuih haih Jūng Gwok yàhn
I don’t know he is Chinese
dihng haih Yahp Bún yàhn
or is Japanese

(2) For a Question

In a question, the usage of “dihng” is more than “waahk-jé”

(2.1) dihng: the answer is one and only one

Expect the answer is either this one or that one

- 1) *Hot or cold? (ordering drinks, the waiter asks the customer)*

yiht dihng(haih) dung a?
hot or cold PRT?

- 2) *This one or that one ?*

nī go dihng(haih) gó go a?
this one or that MW PRT?

- 3) *You have a red one or a yellow one?*

néih yáuh hùhng-sīk dihng wòhng-sīk a?
you have red color or yellow color PRT?
(expect either one)

(2.2) waahk jé: the answer may be none or both

- 1) *Do you have mobile phone or pager?*

néih yáuh móuh sáu tàih waahk jé call gēi a?
you have not have mobile or call machine(pager) PRT

The person may have both mobile and pager or none of them.

Therefore “dihng” has to be used instead of “waahk jé”

- 2) *Do you have a red one or a yellow one?*

néih yáuh móuh hùhng-sīk waahk-jé wòhng-sīk a?
(expect none or both)

5. yān waih ... só yíh

It’s very common for both “yān waih” and “só yíh” are used in the same sentence. “só yíh” can also be used alone. However it’s not so common for “yān wai” be used alone.

- 1) *Because there is traffic jam, therefore I’m late*

yān waih sāk chē, só yíh ngóh ch̀h dou
because blocked car therefore I late

- 2) *There is traffic jam, therefore I'm late*
sāk chē, só yíh ngóh chih dou
blocked car, therefore I late

6. sēui yìhn ... daahn haih

It's very common for both “sēui yìhn” and “daahng haih” are used in the same sentence. “daahng haih” can also be used alone. However it's not very common for “sēui yìhn” be used alone.

- 1) *Although it rains, he doesn't bring umbrella*
sēui yìhn lohk yúh, daahng haih kéuih m̀h daai jē
although rain, but he not bring umbrella
- 2) *It rains, however he doesn't bring umbrella*
lohk yúh, daahng haih kéuih m̀h daai jē
rain, but he not bring umbrella

7. Exercise

(1) Common conjunctions

- 1) *Peter is so good to you, moreover he is so rich. Of course you should choose him but not David*
so good to you deui néih gam hóu
rich yáuh chín (have money)
choose gáan

Peter deui néih gam hóu, yìh-ché yauh gam yáuh-chín.
 néih gáng-haih yīng-gōi gáan kéuih m̀h gáan David lā.
 (yauh means “also” here)

- 2) *How about having meal, and then go to watch a movie?*
(eat finish rice, then watch movie, good not good?)
finish yùhn
movie hei

sìhk-yùhn faahn, gān-jyuh tái hei, hóu m̀h hó a?

- 3) *If this is \$60, I will then buy*

yùh gwó luhk-sahp mǎn, ngóh jauh (wúih) máaih

- 4) *Even if you gives her flowers, it's useless*
(even if you give flowers to her also no use)

jauh-syun néih sung fā béi kéuih dōu móuh yuhng

(2) and = t̀hng (m̀aih)

- 1) *I take MTR and bus*
take (for transportation) daap
MTR deih tit
bus bā-sí

ngóh daap deih-tit t̀hng bā-sí

- 2) *The yellow one and the green one are very expensive*
yellow wòhng sīk
green luhk sīk

wòhng-sīk t̀hng luhk-sīk dōu hóu gwai

(dōu has to be used here)

- 3) *Peter and David are late*

Peter t̀hng David dōu chih (dou)

(dōu has to be used here)

- 4) *I like eating apple and he likes eating oranges*

ngóh jūng-yi sìhk p̀hng-gwó, kéuih jūng yi sìhk cháang

(no “and” should be used)

- 5) *I have one elder brother and one younger sister*
elder brother gòh gō
younger sister sai múi

ngóh yáuh yāt-go gòh-gō t̀hng yāt-go sai-múi

(3) or = waahk jé / dihng

- 1) I can take the MTR or bus
can hó yíh

ngóh hó-yíh daap deih tit waahk-jé bā sí

- 2) I don't know I should take MTR or bus.
should yīng gōi

ngóh m̀h-jī ngóh yīng-gōi daap deih-tit dihng bā-sí

- 3) I will go in June or July

ngóh luhk-yuht waahk-jé chāt-yuht wúih heui
(indicating an alternative)

- 4) I don't know I will go in June or July

ngóh m̀h jī luhk-yuht dihng chāt-yuht heui
(uncertainty)

- 5) Peter or David will come later

chìh-dī, Peter waahk-jé David wúih làih
(indicating an alternative)

- 6) I don't know Peter or David will come

ngóh m̀h jī Peter dihng David wúih làih
(uncertainty)

- 7) You take MTR or bus?
(I guess you either take the MTR or the bus)

néih daap deih-tit dihng (haih) bā-sí a?

- 8) Do you have a pager or mobile phone?

néih yáuh móuh call gēi waahk jé sáu-tàih a?

- 9) Hot or cold?

yíht dihng (haih) dung ga?

- 10) He is tall or short?
short ái

kéuih gōu dihng ái ga?

- 11) He is a Hong Kong people or a foreigner?
foreigner ngoih gwok yàhn

kéuih haih Hēung-Góng yàhn dihng haih ngoih gwok yàhn a?

- 12) Do you have a blue one or a black one?
blue làahm sīk
black hāak sīk

néih yáuh-móuh làahm sīk waahk-jé hāak sīk a?

- 13) You have a blue one or a black one?

néih yáuh làahm sīk dihng hāak sīk a?

(4) Because & Although

- 1) Because the watch is second hand, therefore it's very cheap.
watch sáu bīu
second hand yih sáu

yān-waih jek sáu-bīu haih yih-sáu, só-yíh hóu pèhng

- 2) Although the chicken wings are delicious, they are very greasy
greasy fèih (lit.: fat)

sēui-yìhn dī gāi-yihk hóu hóu-sihk, daahn haih hóu fèih

Unit 10 Interjection & Onomatopoeias

1. Interjection

An interjection is an exclamation, a crying out or a response.

(1) gám = 'well'

It may serve to fill a pause or transition, often together with a particle.

- 1) *Well... let me think about it*

gám , dáng ngóh nám nám sīn
well , let me think think first
Here "nám nám" means "think a while"

(2) āi ya! = 'oh'

It is a negatively charged exclamation, expressing shock or disapproval.

- 1) *Oh no, I've forgotten to bring my key!*

āi ya! ngóh m̀h gei dāk daai só s̀h a !
oh dear ! I forget bring key PRT!

(3) séi la!

Expresses panic or despair in an emergency.

- 1) *I'm dead! I forgot to tell him*

séi la! ngóh m̀h gei dāk t̀hng kéuih góng
dead PRT, I not remember with him speak

2. Onomatopoeias

An onomatopoeic word is one that imitates the sound of a thing or an action.

- 1) *He laughs in the sound 'ha ha'.*

kéuih hā hā gám daaih siu
he so great laugh

- 2) *The chair down in the sound 'pak'*

jēung dang 'pàahk' yāt sēng dit dāi jó
MW chair 'pak' one sound fall down ed

3. Exercise

(1) Interjections

- 1) *Well... it's OK*

gám àh, hóu lā

- 2) *Oh no, I've forgotten to bring my wallet!*

āi ya! ngóh m̀h-gei-dāk daai ngàhn-bāau a !

- 3) *Oh I'm dead, I lost the money.*

séi la, ngóh m̀h-gin-jó dī chín a!

Unit 11 Measure Words

1. Definition

Measure words are words that express a unit of things or action. They come before nouns for measuring purposes.

It is similar to the function of “piece” in “a piece of paper.”

Different groups of objects take different measure words. Usually, some shapes of object share the same MWs.

Measure Word (MW) is also called Noun Classifier.

2. When to use measure words

(1) Specific referring

- 1) *I like reading books (general referring, no MW)*

ngóh hóu jūng yi tái syū
I very like read books

- 2) *Do you have any pens? (general referring, no MW)*

néih yáuh móuh bāt a?
you have not have pen PRT?

- 3) *The book is very expensive (specific)*

bún syū hóu gwai
MW(the) book very expensive

- 4) *Have you seen the pen? (specific)*

néih yáuh móuh gin-gwo jēung jí a?
you have not have seen EXP MW(the) paper PRT?

- 5) *this person (specific)*

nī go yàhn

- 6) *next week (specific)*

hah go láih-baai

(2) Follows a numeral or quantifier

- 1) *two MW dogs*

léuhng jek gáu

- 2) *each MW car*

múih ga chē

- 3) *Which pen is better?*

bīn jī bāt hóu dī a?

which MW pen better PRT?

- 4) *Which is better? (the context is understood to talk about pen)*

bīn jī hóu dī a?

which MW better PRT?

- 5) *One please (buying things, the context is understood to talk about pen)*

nh-gōi yāt jī

please 1 MW

When the noun is understood, it will be skipped, however the MW must be kept.

(3) Relative quantifiers

For relative quantifiers, usually the MW is skipped. However, sometimes, people will still keep it,

- 1) *I have many books*

ngóh yáuh hóu-dō syū

- 2) *I only have a few stamps*

ngóh dāk hóu-sú yàuh-piu

I only have a few stamps

3. Exceptions for no MWs

Basically, all countable nouns, even abstract nouns, such as wish, also take measure word. However there are some exceptions which don't take MW.

Usually exceptions are those nouns which themselves are somehow have the measuring sense.

(1) Some Time Expressions

yaht 'day', nìhn 'year', fān 'minute' and míu 'second'

1) *three days*

sāam yaht

2) *three years*

sāam nìhn

3) *three minutes*

sāam fān (jūng)

4) *three second*

sāam míu (jūng)

Other time expression still take measure words

5) *three MW 'a five minutes'*

sāam go jih

6) *three MW hour*

sāam go jūng

7) *three MW months*

sāam go yuht

8) *three MW weeks*

sāam go láih baai

(2) Others

1) *2 lessons*

léuhng tòhng

4. Confusion between “a” and “the”

When people say “the” for something, they say:

the ... MW + noun

When people say “a” or “an” for something, they say:

a / an ... yāt + MW + noun

However quite often, people skip the “one: yāt” when people speak that in a whole sentence.

Therefore people say:

a / an ... ~~yāt~~(skipped) + MW + noun

1) *I want to buy a pen / I want to buy the pen*

ngóh séung máaih jī bāt

I want buy MW(a/the) pen

“jī” is the MW for pens

This sentence will not be used in ordering in a shop. Because people don't say “want” in ordering. “want: séung” in Cantonese is just a modal verb which show the intention.

People will just say “ngóh séung máaih jī-bāt” to their friends or tell a shop assistant to let he/she show where the pens are located etc.

If you want to order a pen, you have to say something like “One please: m̀h-gōi yāt-jī” or “This one please: m̀h-gōi nī-jī”.

2) *I've bought a pen / I've bought the pen*

ngóh máaih jó jī bāt

I buy ed MW(a/the) pen

“yāt” can be skipped, however the MW “jī” can't be skipped.

Therefore when people say “MW + a noun”, people don't know it's definite or indefinite referring by itself. However usually by the context, people will know that. If somebody just say “jī-bāt”, usually it means “the pen” rather than “a pen”.

3) *The pen is very expensive*

jī bat hóu gwai

MW(the) pen very expensive

4) *The apple is very sour*

go p̀hng gwó hóu syūn

5. Measure word: “go”

“go” is the most general MW, if you don’t know which MW has to be used, you can use “go”. Even though it may be wrong, people are easier to understand your sentence rather than you just skip the MW.

Moreover “go” is used with all words denoting people.

- 1) *three students*
sāam go hohk sāang
- 2) *a chef*
yāt go chyùh sī

📖 “go” is also used with round objects

- 3) *an apple*
yāt go pihng-gwó

📖 It is also used for individual items that do not call for a more specific classifier.

Thus abstract nouns that refer to non-concrete entities lacking physical features, general take go:

- 4) *a wish*
yāt go yuhn-mohng

6. Measure Word : dī

dī is a measure word used for all nouns showing plural without definite quantity or uncountable nouns

- 1) *the chair*
jēung dang
MW(the) chair
- 2) *the chairs*
dī dang

- 3) *That mango*
gó go mōng-gwó
that MW mango
- 4) *Those mango*
gó dī mōng-gwó
those MW(plural) mango
- 5) *The orange juice*
dī cháang jāp
MW(the) orange juice

📖 **dī** has the meaning of some. When refer to “some”, it can be “dī” or “yāt dī”

- 6) *There are some water*
gó douh yáuh (yāt) dī séui
there have MW(some) water
- 7) *There are some people*
gó douh yáuh (yāt) dī yàhn
there have MW(some) people

7. Container Measure Word

- 1) *a glass of water*
yāt bī séui
a glass water

Where “bī” is the container MW

- 2) *two cups of coffee*
léuhng bī ga fē
2 cup coffèe
- 3) *a bottle of coke*
yāt jēun hó lohk
1 bottle coke

8. Sortal Measure Words

Define nouns in terms of shape

Cantonese	Shape	Examples
faai	flat surfaced object,	glass (vertical)
buhng	flat surface	wall
jêung	flat objects	table (horizontal)
fûk	rectangular items	photograph
gauh	irregular, lump-like	stone
gihn	piece	cake
	abstract nouns	matter
	commodities	jewellery
go	round	apple
	relate to people	son, friend, child, student
	abstract nouns	wish, challenge
jek	animal	dog
	round object	egg, watch
	one of a pair	one earring
jî	cylindrical items	pen
joh	large item	building
lâp	small objects	marble
tîuh	long, thin object	road
	animals	fish, snake

Define nouns in terms of functional features

Cantonese	Function	Examples
bá	tools and instruments	umbrella, knife, lock
ga	vehicles	car, aeroplane
	large machine	sewing machine
fahn	a 'copy' or 'part'	newspaper
gihn	clothing	shirt, overcoat, T-shirt

More specific sortal measure word

Cantonese	Used for / Meaning	Examples
bouh	machine	camera
	volume	novel
bún	volume	book
châhng	storey	flat
dâan	bill	item of business

douh	place	place
dán/duhng	pillar	building
fûng	message	letter
gâan	block, building	house
geui	phrase	phrase
gyún	roll	film
jahm	smell	smell
pâaih	bar	chocolate
pô	stem, truck	tree
pîn	text	article
sáu	music	song

Alternative classifiers

eg. a ship
yât ga syùhn (large vehicle)

eg. a boat
yât jek syùhn (small object)

9. Exercise

(1) When to use measure words

1) *that person is very tall*

gó go yàhn hóu gōu

specific referring

2) *I have ten friends*

ngóh yáuh sahng go pàhng-yáuh

3) *Do you have any paper?*

néih yáuh móuh jí a?

4) *The paper is lost*

lost *mh gin jó*

jēung jí m̀h gin jó

MW(the) paper not see ed (lost)

5) *I have some pens*

ngóh yáuh (yāt) dī bāt
I have some pen

6) *I've bought some apple juice*

ngóh máaih-jó dī pihng-gwó jāp
I buy ed some apple juice

(2) Exceptions for no MWs

1) *I've come to Hong Kong for four years*

ngóh làih-jó Hēung-Gōng sei nìhn
"nìhn" doesn't take MW

2) *She has gone to Italy for four weeks*

kéuih heui-jó Yi-Daaih-Leih sei-go láih-baai
"láih baai" takes MW

(3) Measure word: "go"

1) *I have a son and a daughter*

ngóh yáuh yāt-go jái tùhng-(màaih) yāt-go néui

2) *The doctor is very nice*
doctor yī sāng

go yī-sāng hóu hóu

3) *I have two wishes*

ngóh yáuh léuhng-go yuhn-mohng

4) *People have many wishes*

yáhn dōu yáuh hóu-dō yuhn-mohng
people also have many wishes

(general refer, the noun doesn't take MW)

(4) Measure Word : dī

1) *This bottle is very heavy*
heavy chúhng

nī go jēun

2) *These bottles are very light*
light hēng

nī dī jēun

3) *I want to drink coffee*

ngóh séung yám ga-fē

4) *I want to drink some coffee*

ngóh séung yám dī ga-fē
"dī" here means "some"

5) *The coffee is very sour*

dī ga-fē hóu syūn
"dī" here means "the"

(5) Container Measure Word

1) *One coke , two Sprite please*

mh-gōi yāt-būi hó-lohk, léuhng-būi syut-bīk

2) *How much for a bottle of San Miguel*

sāng-lihk géi chín yāt-jēun a?

3) *San Miguel cost \$18 a bottle*

sāng-lihk sah-p-baat mán yāt-jēun

Unit 12 Particles

1. Introduction

Particles are words that are added to words, phrases or sentences to express some additional meanings.

2. Kinds of Particles

- 1) *Linking Particles*
- 2) *Aspect Particles*
- 3) *Modal Particles*

3. Linking Particles

(1) Introduction

Linking particles are words that connect words and make them into phrases with certain syntactic construction.

The main linking particles are: *ge*, *gám*, and *dāk*

It is also called as structural particles.

(2) *ge* : Used in Attributive modifier

'*ge*' is also called as possessive particle when it is used in possessive case

- 1) *My book/books*
ngóh ge syū
my LP book
- 2) *very expensive pen/pens*
hóu gwai ge bāt
very expensive LP pen

- 3) *big apple/apples*
hóu daaih ge pìhng gwó
very big LP apple

However, '*ge*' does not indicate the noun is singular or plural. If you wish to specify that the noun is singular, definite number or plural etc, use the measure word instead of the possessive particle.

- 4) *My book*
ngóh bún syū
my MW book
- 5) *My two books are both lost*
ngóh léuhng bún syū dōu m̀h gin jó
my 2 MW book also lost
- 6) *My books*
ngóh dī syū
my MW(plural) book

(3) *gám* : Used when the Adverbial modifier is adjective

- 1) *study quietly*
hóu jihng gám wān jaahp
very quiet LP(ly) study
- 2) *eating happily*
hóu hōi sām gám sihk yéh
very happy LP(ly) eating matter
- 3) *run quickly*
hóu faai gám jáu
very quick LP(ly) ran

(4) **dāk**

(4.1) **Degree complement**

A degree complement indicates the degree or extent of an action or a thing.

- 1) *sang very well*
cheung dāk hóu hóu
sing LP very well
- 2) *drew poorly*
waahk dāk hóu chā
draw LP very poor

(4.2) **Potential complement**

A potential complement tells the possibility of an action taking place or being realized.

- 1) *can listen clearly*
tēng dāk chīng chó
listen LP(can, possible) clear
- 2) *can read and understand*
tái dāk mīhng
read LP(can, possible) understand

4. **Aspect Particles**

Refer to this book, the chapter about Verbs

5. **Modal Particles**

Modal particles are attached to a sentence to show various moods such as imperative, exclamatory or declarative.

Sometimes they are inserted where there is a pause in a sentence.

There are more than forty different modal particles. Besides, different modal particles may be used at the same time, therefore the possible set of modal particles are numerous.

Here we talk about two of the common modal particle ‘a’ and ‘ā’

(1) **a**

Soften the force of statements or confirmations

- 1) *Yes*
haih a
be PRT

Making a question

- 2) *Do you go?*
néih heui m̀h heui a?
you go not go PRT?

(2) **ā**

A more tentative form of a, typically used in request

- 1) *Please give me one. (In a shop)*
(m̀h gōi) yāt gihn ā
please I MW PRT
Quite often, “please: m̀h gōi” is skipped by Hong Kong people, however usually people keep the request particle “ā” and it shows politeness.

6. **Exercise**

(1) **Linking particle - ge**

- 1) *He is a hardworking student*

kéuih haih yāt-go kahn-lihk ge hohk-sāang

- 2) *His pen(s)*

kéuih ge bāt

3) *His pen costs \$10*

kéuih jī bāt sahp mǎn

4) *His pens are very new*

kéuih dī bāt hóu sǎn

5) *Their money is lost*

kéuih-deih ge/dī chíh m̀h-gin-gó

(2) Linking particle - gám

1) *The child eat quietly*

go sai-mǎn-jái hóu jihng gám sihk-yéh

2) *The old lady walks carefully*

old lady *pòh pó*
carefully *síu sām*

go pòh-pó hóu síu-sām gám hàahng

(3) Linking particle - dāk

1) *He walked very fast, I can't follow him*

fast *faai*
can't follow *gǎn m̀h dóu (follow not successfully)*

kéuih hàahng dāk hóu faai, ngóh gǎn m̀h dóu kéuih

2) *The child can read (and understand) this letter*

letter *seun (MW: fūng)*

go sai-mǎn-jái tái dāk m̀hng nī fūng seun

(4) Modal Particles

1) *Where do you go?*

néih heui bīn-(doh) a?

2) *How much is this dress?*

nī-tùh kwàhn géi chíh a?

3) *Two blue ball pen. (In a shop)*

blue *làahm sīk*
ball pen *yùhn-jí bāt*

léuhng-jī làahm-sīk yùhn-jí bāt ā

Unit 13 Glossary: English to Cantonese

<i>about</i>	daaih koi
<i>after</i>	hauh, jī hauh
<i>again</i>	joi, yauh
<i>ago</i>	jī chihh
<i>also</i>	dōu
<i>although</i>	sēui yihh
<i>always</i>	sìhng yaht
<i>am</i>	haih
<i>and</i>	tùhng, tùhng màaih
<i>apple</i>	pìhng gwó
<i>around</i>	jāu wàih
<i>arrive</i>	dou
<i>ask</i>	mahn
<i>at</i>	háí
<i>baby</i>	bìh bī
<i>back</i>	verb: fāan, noun: bui, behind: hauh bihn
<i>bad</i>	waaih, inferior: chā
<i>bag</i>	dóí
<i>bank</i>	ngàhn hòhng
<i>bath</i>	chūng lèuhng
<i>bear</i>	animal: hùhng, give birth: sāang
<i>beautiful</i>	leng
<i>because</i>	yān waih
<i>beef</i>	ngàuh yuhk
<i>before</i>	jī chihh
<i>belong</i>	suhk yū

<i>big</i>	daaih
<i>black</i>	hāak sīk
<i>blue</i>	làahm, làahm sīk
<i>book</i>	syū
<i>bottle</i>	jēun
<i>bring</i>	daai
<i>bus</i>	bā sí
<i>but</i>	daahn haih
<i>buy</i>	máaih
<i>buying</i>	máaih
<i>by</i>	sign of passive: béi
<i>can</i>	capable of doing sth: sīk, permitted to: hó yíh
<i>Cantonese</i>	Gwóng Dūng Wá
<i>car</i>	chē
<i>careful</i>	sú sām
<i>Central</i>	Jūng Wàahn
<i>chair</i>	dang
<i>chase after</i>	jēui
<i>cheap</i>	pèhng
<i>chef</i>	chyùh sī
<i>chicken wing</i>	gāi yihk
<i>child</i>	sai mǎn jái
<i>Chinese</i>	style: jūng sīk, language: jūng mán, people: jūng gwok yàhn

<i>choose</i>	gáan
<i>clear</i>	chīng chó
<i>coffee</i>	ga fē
<i>coin</i>	ngaahng baih, daaih béng, seui án
<i>coke</i>	hó lohk
<i>cold</i>	dung
<i>come</i>	laih
<i>comfortable</i>	syū fuhk
<i>company</i>	gūng sī
<i>cook</i>	jyú, jyún faahn, a cook: chyùh sī
<i>cost</i>	capital: sìhng bún
<i>course</i>	fo chihng (M: go)
<i>cow</i>	ngàuh
<i>cup</i>	būi
<i>cute</i>	dāk yi
<i>daughter</i>	néui
<i>day</i>	yaht
<i>delicious</i>	hóu sihk, hóu meih
<i>die</i>	séi
<i>diligent</i>	kàhn lihk
<i>dinner</i>	máahn faahn
<i>do</i>	jouh
<i>doctor</i>	yī sāng
<i>dog</i>	gáu
<i>dollar</i>	mǎn
<i>don't</i>	m̀h
<i>down</i>	dāi
<i>dozen</i>	dā
<i>draw</i>	waahk, draw money:

	tàih chín
<i>dress</i>	noun: kwàhn, verb: jeuk
<i>drink</i>	yám
<i>drive</i>	drive car: jā chē
<i>each</i>	múih
<i>early</i>	jóu
<i>east</i>	dūng
<i>eat</i>	sihk
<i>either</i>	or: waahk jé, one of them: kèih jūng yāt go, any one of them: sih daahn yāt go
<i>elder brother</i>	gòh gò
<i>England</i>	Yīng Gwok
<i>Europe</i>	Āu Jāu
<i>even</i>	juhng
<i>even more</i>	juhng, gang gā
<i>expensive</i>	gwai
<i>fall</i>	dit
<i>fast</i>	faai
<i>fat</i>	fèih
<i>father</i>	bàh bā / dē dīh
<i>fee</i>	fai
<i>feel</i>	gok dāk
<i>few</i>	sú
<i>first</i>	1 st : daih yāt, sīn
<i>fish</i>	yú
<i>five</i>	ńgh
<i>floor</i>	ground: deih há, level: láu

<i>flower</i>	fā
<i>food</i>	yéh sihk
<i>foolish</i>	chéun
<i>foreigner</i>	ngoih gwok yàhn
<i>forget</i>	m̀h gei dāk
<i>fortunate</i>	hóu chói
<i>four</i>	sei
<i>free</i>	time: dāk hàahn, money: míhn fai
<i>friend</i>	pàhng yáuh
<i>from</i>	yàuh
<i>full</i>	múhn, opp. to hungry: báau
<i>get</i>	ló, nīng
<i>give</i>	béi
<i>glass</i>	cup: būi, glass material: bō lēi
<i>go</i>	heui
<i>good</i>	hóu
<i>goods</i>	fo (maht)
<i>greasy</i>	fèih
<i>green</i>	luhk sīk
<i>guess</i>	gú
<i>half</i>	bun
<i>hamburger</i>	hon bóu bāau
<i>hand</i>	sáu
<i>happy</i>	hōi sām
<i>hardworking</i>	kàhn lihk
<i>have</i>	yáuh
<i>have to</i>	yiuh
<i>he</i>	kéuih

<i>heavy</i>	chúhng
<i>help</i>	bōng
<i>her</i>	kéuih
<i>here</i>	nī douh
<i>him</i>	kéuih
<i>his</i>	kéuih ge
<i>hold</i>	nīng
<i>home</i>	ūk kái
<i>homework</i>	gūng fo
<i>Hong Kong</i>	Hēung Góng
<i>hot</i>	yiht
<i>hour</i>	jūng (tòuh)
<i>house</i>	ūk
<i>how many?</i>	géi dō
<i>how much?</i>	géi dō
<i>how?</i>	qty: géi, the way: díng (yéung)
<i>however</i>	daahn haih
<i>hundred</i>	baak
<i>husband</i>	sīn sāang(polite), lóuh gūng(casual)
<i>I</i>	ngóh
<i>if</i>	yùh gwó
<i>in</i>	at: hái, enter: yahp
<i>inside</i>	yahp bihn
<i>it</i>	kéuih
<i>Italy</i>	Yi Daaih Leih
<i>Japanese</i>	people: yaht bún yàhn, language: yaht mán
<i>juice</i>	jāp
<i>July</i>	chāt yuht

<i>June</i>	luhk yuht
<i>just</i>	just before: āam āmm / jing wah, just only: jihng haih
<i>know</i>	jī dou
<i>Kowloon</i>	Gáu Lùhng
<i>lady</i>	girl: néuih jái, address her: síu jé
<i>Lan Kwai Fong</i>	Làahn Gwai Fōng
<i>last</i>	previous: seuhng, the end: jeui méih
<i>last week</i>	seuhng-go láih-baai
<i>late</i>	chìh, not punctual: chìh dou
<i>laugh</i>	siu
<i>lazy</i>	lāahn
<i>left</i>	left side: jó bihn, verb: lèih hōi / jáu
<i>lessons</i>	tòhng (no M)
<i>let</i>	dáng
<i>letter</i>	seun (M: fūng)
<i>light</i>	hēng
<i>like</i>	jūng yi
<i>listen</i>	tēng
<i>live</i>	jyuh
<i>look</i>	mohng
<i>look for</i>	wán
<i>lost</i>	m̀h gin jó
<i>lots</i>	dō
<i>love</i>	jūng yi (coll.)

	oi(formal)
<i>mainland</i>	daaih luhk
<i>make</i>	jíng, jouh (different usage), in a slang way: gáau
<i>mango</i>	mōng gwó
<i>many</i>	dō
<i>matter</i>	sih (M: gihn)
<i>me</i>	ngóh
<i>meal</i>	chāan
<i>medicine</i>	yeuhk
<i>minute</i>	fān (jūng)
<i>minutes</i>	meeting minutes: wuih-yíh gei-luhk, time: fān (jūng)
<i>mistake</i>	cho
<i>mobile phone</i>	sáu tàih dihn wá
<i>money</i>	chín
<i>month</i>	yuht
<i>more</i>	dō dī
<i>most</i>	jeui
<i>mother</i>	mā mīh
<i>movie</i>	hei
<i>MTR</i>	deih tit
<i>must</i>	yāt-dihng
<i>my</i>	ngóh ge
<i>Mum</i>	mā mīh
<i>Nathan Road</i>	Nèih Dēun Douh
<i>naughty</i>	yáih
<i>never</i>	chùhng lòih m̀h

<i>next</i>	gaak lèih
<i>next week</i>	hah-go láih-baai
<i>nice</i>	personality: hóu, hóu yàhn, look nice: leng
<i>not</i>	nh
<i>not yet</i>	meih
<i>now</i>	yìh gā
<i>number</i>	houh máh, transliteration: nām bá
<i>o'clock</i>	dím
<i>often</i>	sìhng yaht
<i>old</i>	old things: gauh, age: lóuh
<i>one</i>	yāt
<i>only</i>	jìhng haih
<i>opposite</i>	deui mihn
<i>or</i>	dihng, waahk jé
<i>orange</i>	fruit: cháang, colour: cháang sīk
<i>orange juice</i>	cháang jāp
<i>order</i>	command: mihng lihng, order food in a restaurant: giu
<i>out</i>	chēut
<i>outside</i>	chēut bihn
<i>pager</i>	call gēi
<i>paper</i>	jí
<i>pay</i>	béi
<i>pen</i>	bāt
<i>people</i>	yàhn
<i>person</i>	yàhn, yán

<i>play</i>	wáan
<i>please</i>	m̀h gōi
<i>poor</i>	inferior: chā, no money: k̀hng
<i>pretty</i>	leng
<i>quick</i>	faai
<i>quiet</i>	jìhng
<i>quite</i>	géi
<i>rain</i>	lohk yúh
<i>read</i>	tái
<i>red</i>	h̀hng sīk
<i>reporter</i>	gei jé
<i>rice</i>	cooked rice: faahn, uncooked rice: máih
<i>rich</i>	yáuh chín
<i>right</i>	opposite to left: yauh, correct: āam
<i>road</i>	louh
<i>run</i>	jáu
<i>San Miguel</i>	sāang lihk
<i>say</i>	wah, góng
<i>school</i>	hohk haauh
<i>schoolbag</i>	syū bāau
<i>second</i>	2nd daih yih, time: míuh
<i>see</i>	gin
<i>she</i>	kéuih
<i>shop</i>	pou táu
<i>shopping</i>	máaih yéh
<i>short</i>	in height: aí, in length: dyún
<i>should</i>	yīng gōi

<i>sick</i>	behng, m̀h syū fuhk
<i>side view</i>	jāk mihn
<i>silly</i>	sòh
<i>sing</i>	cheung (gō)
<i>sleep</i>	fan gaau
<i>sleeping</i>	fan
<i>smart</i>	lēk
<i>so</i>	gam
<i>some</i>	yāt dī
<i>someone</i>	yáuh yàhn
<i>sometimes</i>	yáuh s̀h
<i>son</i>	jái
<i>song</i>	gō
<i>soon</i>	yāt jahn gāan
<i>sorry</i>	m̀h-hóu yi-si
<i>sound</i>	sēng
<i>sour</i>	syūn
<i>Sprite</i>	syut bīk
<i>stamp</i>	yàuh piu
<i>start</i>	hōi chí
<i>station</i>	jaahm
<i>still</i>	juhng
<i>straight</i>	jìhk
<i>street</i>	gāai
<i>student</i>	hohk sāang
<i>study</i>	wān syū
<i>sudden</i>	dahk yìhn
<i>table</i>	tóí
<i>take</i>	carry: ló, transport: daap
<i>tall</i>	gōu

<i>taxi</i>	dīk sí
<i>taxi stand</i>	dīk sí jaahm
<i>tell</i>	góng
<i>ten</i>	sahp
<i>that</i>	gó + MW
<i>themselves</i>	kéuih deih jih géi
<i>then</i>	gān jjuh
<i>there</i>	gó douh
<i>therefore</i>	só yíh
<i>they</i>	kéuih deih
<i>thin</i>	sau
<i>thing</i>	yéh
<i>think</i>	nám
<i>this</i>	nī + MW
<i>three</i>	sāam
<i>tie</i>	verb: bóng, noun: tāai
<i>time</i>	sìh gaan, freq.: chi
<i>tired</i>	guih
<i>to</i>	heui
<i>today</i>	gām yaht
<i>together</i>	yāt chàih
<i>toilet</i>	wash room: sái sáu gāan (elegant, used with strangers), toilet: chi só (casual, used at home)
<i>tomorrow</i>	tīng yaht
<i>too</i>	taai
<i>toy</i>	wuhn geuih
<i>traffic</i>	gāau tūng
<i>traffic jam</i>	sāk chē

