

Chinese Sentence-Final Particles and Utterance-Final Intonation

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Abstract

Chinese sentence-final particles are a peculiar form in spoken language. In syntax, semantics and language usage, it has a large influence on a sentence. This article, by comparing the intonation of the Chinese sentence-final particles "a, ba" with that of the Japanese sentence-final particles "yo, ne," discovers two kinds of intonation forms of expression that make known a source of information.

Japanese belongs to a non-intonation language. Its F0's change of curve can indicate a different source of information. If the F0's curve rises, it expresses that the information source is on the side of the speaker. If the F0's curve comes down, it expresses that the information source is on the side of the listener. However, Chinese is an intonation language; there is inherent intonation in each syllable, so it is hard to differentiate the two kinds of information source by way of F0's change of curve. Chinese indicates different sources of information by way of a width of a fundamental frequency band.