

Questioning Speech Acts

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<http://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/003895>

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Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Place: 2 Arrow St, Room 420

We investigate the Cantonese sentence-final particle *ho*, which can stack on top of other sentence-final particles indicating various types of speech acts. We argue that *ho* is a higher level question operator that operates only at the level of speech acts. More concretely, it takes a speech act (assertion or question or imperative) and returns a new interrogative speech act asking whether the input speech act can be felicitously performed by the addressee. We take the presence of this kind of higher level question operator in natural language as novel evidence that a mechanism for operating on speech acts is needed. Building on Farkas and Bruce (2009), Rawlins (2010), Bledin and Rawlins (2017), we develop a mechanism in the framework of Update Semantics for operating on and directly manipulating speech acts.