ABSTRACT

Code-mixing is a common sociolinguistic phenomenon in most multi-lingual societies. In Singapore, such a phenomenon is especially prevailing. Though much attention has been given to code-mixing in Singapore English, little has been done on Singapore Mandarin. This academic exercise aims to provide an insight into this much neglected area.

For the purpose of this study, both oral and written data are collected through the mass media, local Chinese literature and conversations among University students. The approach of this study is mainly sociolinguistics. I first survey the social and personal factors contributing to code-mixing in Singapore Mandarin. Then, a detailed analysis on the linguistic phenomena involving Chinese dialects, English and Malay is carried out. This is followed by examining the social functions and stylistic effects of code-mixing.

The result of such a study points to the fact that code-mixing is not only deeply integrated into the linguistic system among Mandarin speakers in Singapore, more often than not, it also fulfills both social and stylistic functions. Thus, the controversial issue of ‘purifying’ Singapore Mandarin from an educationist’s point of view remains to be ‘ideal’ rather than practical.