ABSTRACT

The concept of grammatical subject is indispensable in the theory of languages. However, simple as it may seem to be, this concept is certainly controversial. This is especially distinct in the Chinese language with some properties that are absent in the English language, for instance the notions on “subjectless sentences”, “double-subject sentences” and “multi-subject sentences”.

This thesis does a contrastive study of the grammatical subject in the English and Chinese languages, in order to determine some of their major similarities and differences. From this, we would be able to identify the nature and characteristics of the grammatical subject in the English and Chinese languages.

Through such an analysis, this dissertation discovers that the major factor that influence the nature and characteristics of the grammatical subject is the principles of the language. English, which is stricter, for instance in its subject-verb agreement, gives rise to a restricted and confined grammatical subject. On the other hand, Chinese, being loosely organized, results in a grammatical subject of more freedom and flexibility. Thus, we can conclude that the grammatical subjects in both languages have different nature and characteristics, and are unique in their own ways.

It is most desired if the findings in this academic exercise make a contribution to the teaching and learning of English and Chinese, as well as the field of translation.