ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the word formation (构词法) of word (词汇) in current Singapore Mandarin. Most of the research done on Singapore Mandarin word were general, as they mainly focused on the “borrowed” words (借词) from English, Malay and other Chinese Dialects. This study was prompted by the little research done in the distinctive features of the word formation in Singapore Mandarin word. In so doing, this dissertation intends to provide further insight by investigating the word formation patterns of Singapore Mandarin word and the difference with those of Standard Mandarin.

Materials for this study are mainly from the Chinese newspapers published in Singapore, and supplemented by published texts by local writers, magazines published in Singapore, as well as interviews with speakers from China and personal observation.

This study shows that the word formations in Singapore Mandarin include “Derivation” (附加法), “Reduplication” (重叠法) and “Compounding” (复合法). Although these three types of word formations are also found in Standard Mandarin, many of the components of the words formed in Singapore are different from those of the Standard Mandarin. Such phenomenon is due to the great influence of the Southern dialects such as Cantonese, Teochew and Hokkein in Singapore Mandarin. This reflects the interaction between Chinese Southern dialects and Singapore Mandarin.

Finally, this study concludes that not only the words in Singapore Mandarin, but the word formations too exude different societal and cultural values peculiar to the Singapore social context. Thus the word formations should deserve more attention in the research on Singapore Mandarin word.