ABSTRACT

Code switching, the switch of language (code) from one to another within a sentence, is fast gaining ground in a multilingual society like Singapore. Past research in this increasingly popular sociolinguistic topic has emphasized the spoken language, little research has been done on code switching of the written language. Hence, this academic exercise aims to investigate into this area.

All data are collected from three main Chinese newspapers published in Singapore, namely Lianhe Zaobao, Lianhe Wanbao and Xinmin Ribao. In just three months, there are nearly a thousand code switching instances in these 273 newspaper issues. These data are listed under 16 categories in chapter 3. Two tables revealing the number of code-switched instances for each category are also provided for reference. In chapter 4, social motivations and suggestions underlying some of these code-switched data will be discussed in depth.

The results of the study show that nouns are most often code-switched. In some cases, they can be considered as borrowings. A new Chinese-English column provided by Lianhe Zaobao in mid October 1996 has considerably reduced the number of code-switching instances. It is suggested that articles in Chinese newspapers should be written in Mandarin, unless there is no translation equivalent for a particular term. In the long run, this might help to raise the standard of spoken as well as written Mandarin in Singapore.