ABSTRACT

This honours thesis looks at the usage of Liu-Xing-Yu (流行语), or Fashionable Phrases in the current Singapore Mandarin. This study was prompted by the need to recognise the importance of Liu-Xing-Yu as a dynamic part of Singapore Mandarin. In so doing, the study intends to clear the confusions in terminology and differing concepts of this kind of catchy phrases. In addition, the study provides further insight by investigating the various distinctive features of these fashionable expressions.

The phenomenon of the massive use of Liu-Xing-Yu in Singapore Mandarin is widespread. Materials for this study are drawn primarily from the media, including newspapers, television and radio broadcasting. Personal observation and published texts are also used as secondary sources.

The results of this study are diverse. The study indicates that Liu-Xing-Yu is very active and colourful in Singapore Mandarin, both colloquially and literally. Rhetorically, Liu-Xing-Yu produces ironical and sarcastic effects with rich and accurate contents condensed in the least number of characters. From the sociolinguistic point of view, it has also been found that Liu-Xing-Yu exudes different societal and cultural values.

Finally, the study concludes that the traits of Liu-Xing-Yu, to a certain extent, have also been its restriction, that is its nature of fashion. Nevertheless, being so vivid, useful and efficient in expressing meanings, Liu-Xing-Yu unquestionably is an important part of Singapore Mandarin which deserves more attention.