ABSTRACT

The concept of lexical categories (also known as "word classes" or "parts of speech") which is indispensable in the learning of English is less significant in the acquiring of Chinese. For instance, one would have noticed that "word classes" of lexical entries are always clearly stated in all English dictionaries, but this is not the case in Chinese dictionaries. In order to explore some of the properties of English and Chinese with respect to word categorization, this thesis embarks on a contrastive study of two important lexical categories: verbs and adjectives.

Verbs and adjectives are regarded as two distinct lexical categories in English; but it is often rather difficult to draw a clear line between them in Chinese. In fact, some Chinese grammarians believe that verbs and adjectives in Chinese could be classified under a single category called WeiCi (谓词). However, no systematic research on this issue has been done to date.

This thesis performs a contrastive study of the verbs and adjectives in the English and Chinese languages, both from the morphological aspect and the syntactical aspect, in order to determine some of their major similarities and differences.

Through analysis of the above, this dissertation discovers that the verbs and adjectives in English are clearly distinct morphologically and syntactically, but the verbs and adjectives in Chinese share many important features in the morphological and syntactical aspects. Hence, it might be justifiable to support the claim for the merging of the two word classes in Chinese.

It is most desired if the results obtained in this academic exercise makes a contribution to the teaching and acquiring of the English and Chinese languages, and also to the field of computer-based human language translation.