Abstract

This thesis is based on fieldwork data. It aims to investigate the lexical and syntactic features of Malaysian Mandarin, as spoken by Malaysian Chinese from different southern Chinese dialect backgrounds. This survey was carried out mainly in, Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia and its closer neighboring state, Selangor; also included are Kedah (northern Malaysia) and Johor Bharu and Kluang (southern Malaysia).

The five main dialect groups of Malaysian Chinese are: Hokkien (Southern Min), Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew and Hainanese, all from Southern China. Most of the Malaysian Chinese are residing in Peninsula Malaysia (rather than eastern Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak) and know at least one or two Southern China dialects. In Malaysia, there is no clear-cut division of dialect groups in term of residence locations. Big cities, such as Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bharu, Penang and Seremban are known to have higher concentrations of Chinese.

The corpus in this study is based on data field-collected which include spoken materials from conversation, talk-shows, radio programmes, and written materials from newspaper, magazines, advertisements, etc. The result shows that the lexicon has been greatly influenced by Cantonese, whereas the syntactic structure has been influenced by Cantonese and Southern Min. Traces of Hakka are also found, but is often heavily influenced by Cantonese and Southern Min in the first place,

Features shared by Malaysian Mandarin and Singapore Mandarin are discussed in separate chapters.