CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

The Chinese Language (汉语/华语) is a member of Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Chinese is a tonal language, meaning that pitch is used to distinguish words. About one-fifth of the world speaks some form of Chinese as its native language, making it the most common language in the world. The Chinese language (spoken in its Standard Chinese is called Mandarin Chinese form) is the official language of the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan), one of four official languages of Singapore, and one of six official languages of the United Nations.

Scholars think Chinese writing originated almost four thousand years ago and that spoken language goes back to remote antiquity, making it one of the world’s oldest languages. The language is spoken in many dialects within China, as well as in many overseas Chinese communities, especially in Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas. And there are more than a billion native speakers of Chinese worldwide.
Chinese is considered by many to be a language that is difficult to learn, mainly because its grammar operates along very different principles compared to European languages (for example, we will see no tenses, plurals, or subject-verb agreement, we will see counter words, reduplication rules, and verb completion/direction suffixes). In addition, Chinese is one of the few languages in the world that does not use an alphabet or a syllabary; instead, thousands of characters are used, each representing a word or part of a word.

The government of China has developed a system of writing Chinese in the Roman alphabet, known as Hanyu Pinyin (汉语拼音), ‘spelling according to sounds’. Hanyu Pinyin is used to write out Chinese names in English (for example, ‘Beijing’, ‘Shanghai’, etc) and helps learners of Chinese with their pronunciation. Hanyu, literally ‘language of the Han’, refers to the standard Chinese language, and is spoken by the Han, Hui, Manchu, and other ethnic groups that constitute 94% of the population of China. There are fifty-six recognized ethnic groups in China, using as many as eighty different languages.

North Sumatra (Indonesian: Sumatera Utara) is a province of Indonesia on Sumatra Island. Its capital is Medan, on the northeast coast. It is the most populous Indonesian province outside of Java. It is slightly larger than Sri Lanka in area. A highly visible component of Medan's population is the large number of Chinese, who are very active in the business sector, and unlike the ethnic Chinese in many other parts of Indonesia, they continue speaking Hokkien and Mandarin.
Speaking of Mandarin, people in Medan speak this language as well. However, there are some similarities and dissimilarities in certain linguistic cases, especially in the morphological case of the language.

One of the unique traits in Medan Mandarin Chinese is the compounding with the word-formation rules. The word-formation rules are definitely different from the standard Mandarin in China, for example: adjective + noun becomes noun; lěng 冷 ‘cold’ + qì 气 ‘gas’ ——> lěngqì 气冷 ‘air-conditioning’ or verb + noun becomes adjective; chī 吃 ‘to eat’ + cù 醋 ‘vinegar’ ——> chīcù 吃醋 ‘jealous’ are well-accepted for Medan Mandarin speakers instead of using noun + verb becomes noun in kōng 空 ‘air’ + tiáo 调 ‘to set’ ——> kōng tiáo 空调 ‘air-conditioning’ or adjective + adjective becomes adjective in ‘dù 妒 ‘jealous’ + jí 急 ‘jealous’——> dùjí 妒急 ‘jealous’ in the Standard Mandarin in China.

The similar morphological case for reduplication takes place as well to Medanese Mandarin speakers. For instance, the reduplication zǒu 走 ‘to walk’ + zǒu 走 ‘to walk’——> zōuzōu 走走 ‘to take a stroll’ is a well-known reduplication used among Medan Mandarin Chinese speakers instead of the word guàngguàng 拉 ‘to take a stroll’ in the standard Mandarin in China.

In addition to the loanwords, 巴刹 bāshā ‘market and ’沙腊 shālè ‘snakeskin fruit’ (they come from the words ‘pasar’ and ‘salak’ in Bahasa Indonesia). The

This thesis does not talk over the comparative study between the Standard Mandarin in China with Medan Mandarin Chinese, yet this thesis will reveal to other readers that there are some similarities and dissimilarities between them in certain linguistic cases.

Based on the above-mentioned statements, Mandarin spoken in Medan is very worth investigating for this exclusive and unique phenomena can enrich the output of word-formation rules.

In order to elaborate the morphological processes in Medan Mandarin Chinese for readers in details, HanyuPinyin (汉语拼音) and simplified Chinese Characters are used in this thesis as well.
As at the first paragraph above has been mentioned that the Chinese language is a tonal language, thus in the structuralist approach, especially in the Nida’s principles, the identification of morphemes will be applied and described in a clear way in terms of common semantic distinctiveness and homophonous forms in this thesis.

Based on the above-mentioned statements, the title of ‘Morphological Processes in Medan Mandarin Chinese (Structuralist Approach)’ is picked out.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Consequently, problems are formulated as the following:

1. How are the words formed by suffixation in Medan Mandarin Chinese?
2. How are the words formed by compounding in Medan Mandarin Chinese?
3. How are the words formed by reduplication in Medan Mandarin Chinese?

At length, the problems of the study will be brushed-up in details by providing an analysis of morphological processes in Medan Mandarin Chinese.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In line with the problems, the objectives of the study are:
1. to describe how words are formed by means of suffixation in Medan Mandarin Chinese,

2. To describe how compound words are formed in Medan Mandarin Chinese and

3. to describe how reduplication are formed in Medan Mandarin Chinese.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

Like other languages, Medan Mandarin Chinese has a fairly great number of linguistic cases. Suffixation, compounding, and reduplication will be only focused in this study. They are all worth discussing and each of them should prove stimulating especially for those interested in the language.

In addition, should there be any special morphological processes in Medan Mandarin Chinese, this kind of problem will certainly be paid close attention.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to be relevant for theoretical and practical applications.

1. Practically the findings can
a. help people who have a desire to study and research this Medan Mandarin Chinese deeply, especially in the word-formation and

b. provide materials for drawing up the morphological rules of Medan Mandarin Chinese.

2. Theoretically the findings can be useful to

a. give contribution to the theory of morphology and

b. give contribution to the teaching method of Medan Mandarin Chinese.