

*The Discourse Strategy of Code Switching on SNS texts:
Focusing on the Case of L1 Chinese-Korean and Chinese*

Boyeong Kim, Yonsei University, South Korea

The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This study aims to figure out the discourse functions of code switching which occurs in SNS chats, 'Kakaotalk' (Korean Mobile Messenger) and 'Wechat' (Chinese Mobile Messenger). This study observed and analyzed several dialogues of 10 Chinese Koreans and 10 Chinese living in Korea. The findings represent Chinese Koreans and Chinese students use a lot of code switching strategies in the observed texts. Chinese Koreans generally used Korean when saying official things or objective information. In daily conversation, on the other hand, there was no obvious consistent tendency. This shows that the preceding languages affect language selection of the following person. It is also shown that Chinese uses L1 in daily conversation but they use Korean when asking for official or personal help. In SNS group chats, Chinese Korean and Chinese use code switching depending on formality of information, for instance, a notice for formal and a request for personal help or personal question for informal. This paper suggests such discourse strategies are adopted to make successful and effective communication in the given context.

Keywords: SNS, Code switching, Discourse Strategy, Language Selection

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is code switching?

Bokamba (1987)'s study found "code switching is the mixing of words, sentences across sentence boundaries and code mixing with the embedding of various linguistic units, such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical (sub-) systems within the same sentence and speech events" (p. 36). According to Auer (1995), code switching is different from insertion. Code-alternation, he suggests, emphasizes on discourse pragmatic approach as a super ordinate concept (Auer, 1995, p.116). Hamers & Blanc (1987) defines code switching as a concept including code mixing and code changing. Code mixing involves change in constituents of a sentence and code changing involves changes across sentences or turn taking. Also, there are researches in the discourse level like Gumperz (1972), which code switching can be used as a strategy of communication. In this study, the terminology "code switching" is used in a broad sense, including code mixing and discourse strategy for effective communication.

1.2 Why Korean-Chinese bilingualism?

This study focuses on two Korean-Chinese bilingual groups; one is Chaoxian people(朝^ㅁ族) who live in northeastern China, the other is Chinese learners of Korean. In the case of Chaoxian people, they not only acquire Chinese as a formal language of the society to which they belong, but also do speak Korean as a heritage language from their parents or grandparents. There is little research on advanced Chinese learners of Korean, even though the number of them has been increasing. A few studies dealing with code switching, yet, focus on code itself such as code types, instead of communication strategies (Lee, 2004; Lim, 2006).

1.3 Why Korean-Chinese code switching?

There are a few studies that focus on the Huaqiao (Overseas Chinese in Korea) from Taiwan living in Korea (Son & Seo, 2008; Kang 2011, Kang, 2012) and researches on Chaoxian people generally concentrate on Korean-Chinese grammar errors. Code switching has been considered as a matter of error in inter-language studies, most of which were not based on discourse approach. Neither was in the case for Chinese learners of Korean. However, they often use code switching in their everyday lives and that so frequently. This study aims to investigate code switching in the discourse of Chaoxian and Han people in everyday lives and figure out the discourse strategies of code switching in both groups. Research questions are as follows: is there difference between code switching of Chaoxian people and that of Han people?; do they use discourse strategies? If they do, which discourse strategies do they use?; is there any difference in the discourse strategies they use?

2. Methodology

The participants of this study consist of 10 Chaoxian people and 10 Chinese learners of Korean. This study collected the twenty participant's group chatting dialogue in SNS, "Wechat" and "Kakao talk". Following Table 1 is for participant information.

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Ethnic</u>	<u>L1</u>	<u>L2</u>	<u>Frequency of utterances</u>
JH	Chaoxian	K	C	7
JY	Chaoxian	K	C	43
LSH	Chaoxian	C	K	21
WTL	Chaoxian	C	K	29
JGH	Chaoxian	K	C	48
CYS	Chaoxian	K	C	43
QX	Chaoxian	K	C	19
CMZ	Chaoxian	K	C	33
JX	Chaoxian	C	K	47
KJZ	Chaoxian	K	C	12
HJT	Han	C	K	52
FYL	Han	C	K	25
ZJH	Han	C	K	25
ZY	Han	C	K	9
WSH	Han	C	K	15
YFC	Han	C	K	3
ZYH	Han	C	K	16
BZD	Han	C	K	11
FBP	Han	C	K	20
PY	Han	C	K	8
Totals				486

Table 1: Participants' information

The participants are assigned to each of the 6 group chatting rooms. In the group 1 and 2, Chaoxian and Han people are blended, while only Chaoxian people in the group 3 and 4, and only Han people in the group 5 and 6.

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Group 4</u>	<u>Group 5</u>	<u>Group 6</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Chaoxian	3	2	3	2	-	-	10
Han	1	2	-	-	5	2	10
Total	4	4	3	2	5	2	20

Table 2: Participants' distribution in the SNS group

This study proceeds in three steps. The first step is to let the 20 participants judge their L1 and L2 by self-checks and set participants' marked or unmarked codes based on the judgment. For example, if participants check Korean as their mother tongue, Chinese should be unmarked code. The second is to use descriptive statistics, comparing the occurrence frequency rate¹ between the Chaoxian and the Han people. The third is conversation analysis as a qualitative approach, establishing a category with a peer review², and then, presenting the types of discourse strategies of code

¹ The ratio of marked frequency means "a marked code frequency/the number of utterances *100"

² As a Peer review, I received a review from two Chinese-Korean bilingual colleagues; there is a close

switching based on Gumperz (1982) and Song (2012). Some previous types are slightly changed (Table 3).

<i>Discourse Strategy</i>
Addressee specifications
Affective expression
Confirmation/ focus
Emphasis by repetition
Lexical/idiomatic expression
Personalization versus objectification
Face-threatening acts mitigation
Opinion expression

Table 3: The type of discourse strategy

3. Findings

3.1 Discourse strategy comparison between Chaoxian and Han people

This study found 8 discourse strategies between Chaoxian people and Han people. These discourse strategies are: addressee specifications, affective expression, confirmation/ focus, emphasis by repetition, lexical/idiomatic expression, personalization versus objectification, face-threatening acts mitigation, and opinion expression.

1. The code of addressee specification switch serves to direct the message to a certain listener.
2. The code switch revealing affective expression serves to express emotional things with interjection, filler or agreements.
3. The discourse strategy of confirmation/ focus clarifies what is said.
4. The fourth strategy is an emphasis by repetition. This is speakers' message in L1 code repeated in L2 code, and this repetition serves to emphasize a message.
5. The code switch functioning lexical/idiomatic expression keeps original lexical and idiomatic expressions in L1 or L2.
6. The code of personalization versus objectification serves to distinct the degree of speakers' involvement or distance.
7. The discourse strategy of face-threatening acts mitigation mitigates speakers' face-threatening acts.
8. The last one is an opinion expression, which serves to express speaker's opinion, insistence, or argument.

Chaoxian people do not use the emphasis by repetition strategy and opinion expression; while Han people do not use lexical/idiomatic expression.

3.2 A frequency analysis of code switching

Regarding a frequency analysis in each utterance, the number of inter code switching which occurs in sentences is higher than that of intra code switching including words or sentence constituent.

<u>Participants</u>	<u>The number of utterances</u>	<u>Intra code switching</u>	<u>Inter code switching</u>
JH	7	-	1
JY	43	-	15
LSH	21	-	1
WTL	29	-	-
JGH	48	-	5
CYS	43	-	-
QX	19	1	-
CMZ	33	1	1
JX	47	-	17
KJZ	12	-	2
Totals	302	2	42

Table 4: The code switching frequency of Chaoxian participants

<u>Participants</u>	<u>The number of utterances</u>	<u>Intra code switching</u>	<u>Inter code switching</u>
HJT	52	-	29
FYL	25	-	10
ZJH	25	-	13
ZY	9	1	1
WSH	15	-	5
YFC	3	1	1
ZYH	16	-	14
BZD	11	2	1
FBP	20	1	4
PY	8	1	2
Totals	184	6	80

Table 5: The code switching frequency of Han participants

Frequency does not mean normalized number representation, thus, information of frequency ratio is required. Following table shows the ratio of marked code frequency between Chaoxian and Han people, and code switching by Han people is shown to be more frequent than that of Chaoxian people.

The ratio of marked frequency

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Intra code switching (%)</u>	<u>Inter code switching (%)</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Chaoxian	0.66	13.91	14.57
Han	3.26	43.48	46.74

Note. The ratio of marked frequency = the marked code frequency/ the number of utterance frequency *100

Table 6: The ratio of marked code frequency

4. Discourse strategies in Korean-Chinese code switching.

Now, 8 discourse strategies I mentioned before will be analyzed in this Chapter. The italicized part of the sentences is Korean language; the non-italicized is Chinese. The underlined parts refer to the code switching.

4.1 Addressee specifications

(1) Chinese to Korean (Chaoxian, L1 Chinese)

1 A: Jintian juhui zanmei. Yihui jian. (This is for today's gospel song. See you later.)

2 B: Ni zai nar? (Where are you?)

3 C: *Oneul-do jiha-eseo hasilga-yo. Jigeum iban-e gongbuha-go gyesi-neun bun-i itgeodeun-yo.* (Today's meeting is going to be in the basement? Some people are using this room now.)

4 A: [speaking to B] Mian gago itda. (Sorry, I'm coming.)

5 B: Eng, women zai dixia. (Yes, we are in the basement.)

(2) Korean to Chinese (Han, L1 Chinese)

1 A: [speaking to B] B, *aidirang bibeon jwo.* (B, can you tell me your ID and password?)

2 B: [speaking to A] k***** 2*****

3 A: [speaking to B] *butak butak* (Help me, please.)

4 A: [speaking to All] You ren bang wo shenqing le ma? (Can anyone help me get to apply dorm?)

This strategy serves to direct the message to a particular listener. A in the example (1) speaks in his L1 Chinese to deliver the notice for their prayer meeting. When speaking to B, a particular person, however, he switches L1 Chinese to L2 Korean. A's request for B to ask for B's ID and password in the line 1 and 3 is written in Korean; All of the A's requests about applying to school dorm in the line 4 is written in Chinese. This shows that code switching occurs for Addressee specifications.

4.2 Affective expression

(3) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 is Korean)

1 T: Zenme yang shangbanr (How is your new job going?)

2 J: *Sagi hoesa-ya. nawat-seo.* (A fraudulent company, I've quit my job)

- 3 T: A, zenme le? (What happen to you?)
 4 J: *Don-do an ju-gu, sagichi-neun hoesa-ya.* (The company did not pay me, the fraudulent company.)
 5 T: Gongzi ma? (Do you mean raise?)
 6 J: *Eong* (Yes.)
 7 T: Ting zhiqian zai nar gan guo de ren shuo de ma? (Did you hear from the person working in the company?)
 8 J: Eng eng jiushi jiushi a. (You are right!! right!!)
 9 T: Hao bu rongyi zhaodao yi ge bucuo de gongsi. (How hard you worked to find this job.)
 10 J: (crying emoticon)
 11 J: Jiushi jiushi. (That's what I am saying.)
 12 T: Zai zhaozhao ba. Maoyi gongsi ting bucuo de. (Search for a job again. A trading company is great.)

(4) Chinese to Korean (Chaoxian, L1 is Chinese)

- 1 A: Ni xuan yi ge huozhe gen bie renheyan yeoksi (Please choose one, or you can do a combined concert, that's great that's great, as expected.)
 2 B: Ni gen shei peiyin de (whom do you dub with?)
 3 A: Bu renshi geshou (I don't know singer.)

This code switching serves to express emotional things with interjection, filler or agreements. J in (3) barely found the job, but did not receive the pay raise. J is expressing strong agreements in the switched code, Chinese, for T's empathetic question and caring. In the example (4), A was delightful for B's great achievement as A expected and praised B. Code switching here functions to reveal A's affective feeling.

4.3 Clarification/focus

(5) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Korean)

- 1 CYS: *Imo* (Aunt)
 2 CYS: *Hangju-ro ga-neun bihaenggi maja-yo?* (Is the airplane going to Hangju, right?)
 3 Aunt: *Geurae Hangju Shousan jichang* (Yes, Hangju Shousan airport.)
 4 CYS: *Ne* (Yeah)
 5 Aunt: Shousan jichang (Shousan airport)

(6) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Chinese)

- 1 A: *Kimssiga Park moksanimkke jeonhuahaesseo jigeum* (Mr. Kim have just phoned Pastor Park.)
 2 B: *Gisuksabi sam wol sam ile gaseo naeya duae.* (It is 1st, March that you are going to pay dormitory fee)
 3 A: Women mushi bu jin bu man a. (The paster couldn't help meeting a deadline)
 4 B: Shi a, haishi deng ni lai zai shuo ba. (Yeah, we'd rather talk later)
 5 A: Keyi teng pangzi jiu chulai ba. Bu keyi dehua, jiu suan le. (If I could live in a dorm, I will live dorm, or anyone cannot help.)

The aunt in the line 3 in (5) emphasizes in Chinese where their arrival airport is by switching the code from Korean to Chinese. B's utterance in the line 2 in (6) is spoken in Korean. She is writing all her utterances in Chinese, except in this case.

Thus, we could assume why she switched Chinese to Korean anomalously, because she would tell A the due date (1st, March) for paying dormitory fee.

4.4 Emphasis by repetition

(7) Chinese to Korean (Han, L1 Chinese)

- 1 A: *Wo dao jichang le xiaowu lai wo jia wanr ba.* (I've arrived by airplane and came to the house in the afternoon.)
- 2 B: (smile emoticon)
- 3 A: *Ohue wulijibe nolleo wa.* (Come to my house in the afternoon.)
- 4 B: *KKK C-lang gachi gamyeon joeunde.* (Kiki It's good to come to your house with C.)

A's message in the line 4 of (7) is repeated in the line 3. The structural repetition serves to emphasize speaker's message. Han people only use this strategy in this study.

4.5 Lexical/idiomatic expression

(8) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Korean)

- 1 A: *Eonni imo bihaeggi sigan han beon deo allyeojuyo.* (Sister, please tell me aunt's flight schedule again.)
- 2 B: *chimdae waseo anjanghaejuneun salamdeul....diban liu heanwaseo eotteoke suli anduaena damju munuiheabwayaget-ta. jom neutge yaegihaeseo doelleoneunji moluigejjiman.* (The staffs installing beds scratched the floor; I want to ask the company for repairs.)

B in (8) starts to speak in Korean, but switched Korean to Chinese in lexical expressions to keep the meaning of original expression caused by language itself, not only by social and cultural factors.

4.6 Personalization versus objectivization

(9) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Chinese)

- 1 A: *Huanyeonghamnida! ~^^* (Welcome!)
- 2 A: *You xianzai yiqi qu chi fan de ren me?* (Is there anyone eat together?)
- 3 A: *Wo qin de dou zai jianfei ne.* (My roommates all are on a diet.)
- 4 B: (No replies)

A in the line 1 expresses his welcome for a new member officially in the chatting room for offline prayer meeting, while he switched the code to Chinese when requiring a personal help to seek a lunch mate.

4.7 Face-threatening acts mitigation

(10) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Korean)

- 1 A: *Jeonhua han tong eopsseot-neunde seolsuigijeon-e jeonhuawatdela. Jungguk chuljang ganenghanga jeonhuawatdela.* (I got called before New Year's Day. They wanted to know whether it is possible to go on a business trip to China.)
- 2 B: *O, ting hao. haohaor gan ha.* (Oh, good job. Work hard)

3 A: *Alseok kkkkk na jalleogo. Ni ye zao dianr shui ba.* Mingtian hai dei shangban ne.
(I got it. kikikikiki I'm to bed. I have to go to bed now. You go to bed early, too.
Tomorrow you have to go to work.)

A would like to stop the conversation because it was getting late in the line 3 of (10), however, A does not want to lose B's face. The code switching of Korean to Chinese serves to mitigate A's face-threatening utterances.

4.8 Opinion expression

(12) Chinese to Korean (Han, L1 Chinese)

1 A: B

2 A: *Zhe shi wo renshi de xuejie xie lunwen de zhuti bijiao chaoxianzu he hanzuren liaotian yuyan.* (I know a senior student. This is her thesis. The topic of the thesis is a conversation comparison between the Chaoxian people and the Han people.)

3 A: *Jeamiisseulge gatji?* (Would it be interesting?)

4 B: (No replies)

A in (12) talks about a thesis whose topic is a conversation comparison between the Chaoxian and the Han people. This is objective explanation. The last sentence is speaker A's evaluation for the thesis. She differentiates her opinion from explanation by switching the code in the parts of this evaluation.

5. Conclusion

So far, I have been discussing the discourse strategy of code switching on SNS texts between Chinese-Korean and Chinese. This study has two main parts. First, discourse strategy between Chaoxian and Han people is compared. Second, the specific conversation on SNS texts such as 'Wechat' and 'Kakaotalk' is analyzed by the method of discourse analysis. This analysis has led to the following general observations: First, both the Chaoxian people and Chinese learners of Korean often use code switching strategically in the observed texts. Second, the twenty Korean-Chinese bilinguals use eight discourse strategies: Addressee specification, affective expression, confirmation/focus, emphasis by repetition, lexical/idiomatic expression, personalization versus objectification, face-threatening acts mitigation, and opinion expression. Three, Chaoxian people did not use the strategies of "emphasis by repetition" or "opinion expression." Chinese learners did not use the "confirmation/focus" strategy. Fourth, the texts show that the preceding languages affect the language selection of the subsequent person. Finally, the most salient point is that code switching is used by both groups as a discourse marker to distinguish public utterances (e.g., notifications, official requests) and private utterances (e.g., expressions of emotion or opinion). Coupled with evidence that Korean-Chinese and Chinese are using code switching as a discourse strategy, the results of this study also provide supports for the view that the discourse strategy is largely involved in objectification.

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