



On Code-Switching Between Chinese and English

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Abstract. Language is variable, negotiable and adaptive. In sociolinguistics, code-switching is the simultaneous use of one or more languages or language variants in a communicative conversation. With the increasing frequency of foreign communication, the use of English in China is becoming more and more frequent. The phenomenon of code-switching often occurs in the use of language or in the process of language communication. The formation of code-switching phenomenon is influenced by objective factors (including language users, physical world and social world), namely social factors, and subjective factors (mental world), namely psychological factors. A clear understanding of code-switching between Chinese and English can help language users or learners to avoid wrong language expressions and make their expressions more native and authentic.

Keywords: Code-switching, the Chinese and English, motivation

1 Introduction

1.1 The Definition

In linguistics, Code-Switching (CS) is the concurrent use of more than one language, or language variety, in conversation. Multi-linguals sometimes use elements of multiple languages in conversing with each other. Thus, code-switching is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the syntax and phonology of each variety (Wikipedia). Bilingual or multilingual people will choose codes according to their own needs or the language needs of the community in communication.

Code switching can be defined as the appearance of speech fragments belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems in a language communication^[1] (Gumperz, 1982). Code Switching is the practice of moving back and forth between two languages or between two dialects or registers of the same language at one time. Code switching occurs far more often in conversation than in writing. It is also called code-mixing and style-shifting^[2].

Actually, the switching of languages can happen within the sentence or at its boundary. The switching within the sentence is referred to as the intra-sentential code-

switching and the one happening at the sentence boundary is referred to as the inter-sentential code-switching^[3].

1.2 Theory

Carol Myers-Scotton developed a Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model (1993), a theoretical model and the Matrix Language framework model actually provides an explanation for code-switching. CS can be structurally divided into inter-sentential CS and intra-sentential CS. The inter-sentential CS has been broadly studied in the socio-linguistic field but grammatical constraints are not a major focus there. With the intra-sentential CS, grammatical constraints directly affect the behaviour of two, or more participating languages. The MLF model is devised to explain intra-sentential CS^[4].

Myers-Scotton (1995:36) believed that inter-sentence code-switching and inter-sentence code-mixing do involve different grammatical restrictions, but they have similar social functions, so they belong to the same framework. Language users choose between Matrix Language (ML) and Embedded Language (EL). The subject language is the morpheme language that is used more and more actively in the sentence paragraph, and the remaining morpheme language is the embedding language. The principal language can limit the use of the embedded language.

2 The cs form between chinese and english

English and Chinese belong to different language families and have formed their own different characteristics after long-term evolution. Chomsky's transformational generative grammar divides languages into surface structure and deep structure, believing that the surface structure of the two languages is different, but the deep structure is indeed the same. English mainly expresses grammatical meaning through the morphological changes of the words themselves, such as the plural and possessive of nouns, tenses and voices of verbs, etc. However, Chinese language is not mainly expressed through the morphological changes of the vocabulary itself, but through function words, word order and other means. English emphasizes hypotaxis while Chinese emphasizes parataxis.

The phenomenon of Chinese-English code switching can be seen everywhere, in the written language, People's Daily oral communication, literary works, Internet and advertising language, and also in the classroom teaching of English as a second language. CS in news and advertising texts is the most complex, which includes replacing letters or taboo words with symbols. For example, red represents love and warm emotions; Use X to represent unknown or inconvenient people or things, or swear words; The purpose of highlighting important words and contents with changes in font, colour and style is to realize the discrimination function in language selection and use, so as to attract people's attention. In the early days, the mixed use of code mainly appeared in written language, especially in professional terms. With the development of science and technology and the progress of the times, it gradually penetrated into the Internet, television, radio, newspapers and other media. Hoffman^[5]

divided Code mixing into six types, that is, Emblematic code mixing; Intra-sentential code mixing; Inter-sentential code mixing; Intra-lexical code mixing; establishing continuity with the previous speaker; involving a change of pronunciation. According to the structure of Chinese and English code conversion, with the reference of the types of code switching that Hoffman classified, three main types of CS are listed here.

2.1 Emblematic CS

Emblematic CS means in language transformation, markers and specific phrases in one language are embedded in another. In Chinese and English, Chinese markers and specific phrases are embedded in English or English markers are embedded in Chinese. e.g.

- It's a nice day, Xiao wang(小王)? (Xiao wang is equivalent to isn't it).
- It is often used in end-of-sentence questions. Some typical markers or symbols in English are even more popular in Chinese than Chinese itself.
- 我今天头痛得要命, 有没有aspirin? (I have a terrible headache today, do you have aspirin?)
- A: It's a nice day, 不是吗?
- B: Oh, 是的。
- (A: It's a nice day, isn't it? B: Oh, yes)
- A: 我和小张下午想去逛街, and you?
- B: Sorry, 我下午有事。
- (A: Xiao zhang and I feel like going shopping, and you? B: Sorry, I will be occupied.)
- A: Hello, Xiao Hui, 去网吧玩啊?
- B: Ok, 还有谁啊?
- A: Nobody, 就我们俩儿。
- B: Ok...
- (A: Hello, Xiao Hui, go the Internet café? B: Ok, anyone else? A: Nobody, just we two. B: Ok...)
- Emblematic CS can also appear in literary compositions.
- 张乔治: "Please, Please, excuse me, my dear Lulu." 顾八奶奶: "你们两个不要这么叽哩呱啦翻洋话, 好不好^[6]?"
- "结果我这一上楼, 距离拉开了, 美没了! 天天吃饭啥的也不正经叫我了, 打电话, 还说外语: Hello哇, 饭已OK了, 下来米西吧!" (Sketch lines from a famous actor Zhao benshan)

From above, we can see, CS exists in some certain style, such as in colloquial style, informal talking or chatting and sometimes in literary works, which has obvious markers.

There are also some symbolic words embedded in Chinese sentences, such as, Hello(你好), Ok(好吧), Byebye(再见), Yes(是), No(不是), pose(姿势, 摆), show(秀),

happy(高兴的), copy(复制), DIY(do it by yourself, 自己动手做_), etc.

2.2 Inter(intra)-lexical CS

Vocabulary is the most active and flexible component of language and it is also the component with the largest cultural carrying capacity. A nation's unique material environment, social structure, spiritual beliefs and so on are often expressed through the nation's unique vocabulary firstly. CS often occurs within words.

e.g. 减肥-ing, 幸福-ing, 快乐-ing.

It is a combination of Chinese verbs and English present participle affixes. The Chinese characters with English suffix denoting the tense. There is also some mixing of English and Chinese words, such as the English word “high”, which originally means “height”, but in colloquial expression has the meaning of “heartily, unrestrainedly, wildly, and cheerfully”.

e.g. “high吃, high喝, high唱,, high脑细胞”.

In the Example, “high吃、high喝、high唱、high脑细胞” can be interpreted as high eat, high drink, and high sing. The combination of Chinese and English words such as high eating is a popular trend in the current network and social language, and it is all the rage for a while.

2.3 (Inter) Intra-sentential CS

Chinese and English belong to different language families, and it is difficult to distinguish between sentences or intra-sentence conversion in structure, so there is no distinction here. In English-Chinese translation, some names of people and places cannot be translated with appropriate words, so the method of transliteration is usually adopted. Such as: morphine(吗啡), coffee(咖啡), aspirin(阿司匹林), Vaseline(凡士林), radar(雷达), Shangri-La(香格里拉), Coca Cola(可口可乐), Pepsi Cola(百事可乐), D.D.T.(滴滴涕) and similar words are commonly code-switched in everyday communication.

- “给我来两罐 Coco-Cola.”

We often encounter such situations in supermarkets. If someone needs Coca-Cola, it is natural to say: “给我来两罐Coco-Cola.”Coca-Cola is widely known in China for its vivid and catchy translation, so many people unconsciously and subconsciously use CS. CS exists not only in every day communication, but also in some literary works or lyrics.

In a song The dedication of love, composed by Huang Qishi and Liu Shizhao, there are some lyrics like this:爱是love,爱是amour,爱是rak,爱是爱心,爱是love...

There are also some words, especially some English acronyms, which are easier to use than translate into Chinese. Such as “TOFEL”, “SARS”, “MTV”, “T”, “VCD”, etc. It is also difficult to find the exact Chinese to replace these popular words, or the word “NBA” can be explained in Chinese, “American Basketball Association” or “American Basketball Major League”, but it is still not as concise and clear as NBA

said. Some English words, as the most popular words nowadays, are difficult to accurately replace with which Chinese words. So CS occurs.

Actually, in the mixture of Chinese and English codes, the English words embedded in the subject language are mostly noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective (ADJ.), etc. In terms of syntactic structure, they follow the syntactic structure and grammatical rules of the subject language Chinese. Take a famous novel for example, *Fortress Besieged*^[7], written by Qian Zhongshu, is a satirical novel with unique style in the history of modern Chinese literature. There are sentences like this:

- 你在bully她, 我不答应的 (I won't allow you to bully her again).
- 这种同情比笑骂还难受, 客人一转背, 鸿渐咬牙来个中西合璧的咒骂: “To Hell 滚你妈的蛋!” (This kind of sympathy was worse than laughing and scolding. As soon as the guest turned his back, HongJian let out a mixture of Chinese and Western curses: “To Hell!”)

The novel *Besieged City* appears in various mixed forms of CS, the frequencies of words, phrases and sentences are also different. For details, see Table 1 for the frequency distribution of English code switching in the novel *Besieged City*.

Table 1. Distribution of Inserted CS in *Fortress Besieged*

CS / frequency	case NO.	Percentage
Lexical and Phrase	118	91.47
Noun Phrase	91	70.54
Verb Phrase	13	10.08
Prep phrase	1	0.78
Adverb Phrase	4	3.10
Adjective Phrase	5	38.76
Complementary Phrase	4	3.10
Sentence & Discourse	11	8.53
Total	129	100

By analysing these sentences, we find that all the appearance forms of mixed Chinese and English codes follow the Myers-Scotton (1993) corpus language framework structure theory. That is, in a sentence or discourse containing a mixture of codes, one active code is the subject language, and the other is the embed language. In the novel, Chinese is the main language and English is the embedded language. It can be seen in Table 1 that the main grammatical components of Chinese and English codes mixed in *Fortress Besieged* are noun phrases and verb phrases. Since the main language in *Fortress Besieged* is Chinese, the author pays more attention to the parataxis of Chinese. The author mainly uses linguistic forms to connect words or clauses, and the grammatical meaning and logical relations in sentences are expressed through the meaning of words or clauses, so that code-switching can be realized. Code switching here is not chaotic, but follows obvious grammatical rules. The syntactic structure of sentences is determined by the subject language Chinese, English as the embedded-language in *Besieged City*, is restricted by the subject language Chinese in terms of vocabulary, morphology and syntax.

3 The motivation

Verschueren (1987) believes that context is created by a dynamic process, which is an interactive dynamic process between the speaker and the hearer and is connected with the reality of objective existence. The relationship of adaptation context is that the choice of language in the process of language use must adapt to the communicative context, which is influenced by objective factors (including language users, physical world and social world), namely social factors, and subjective factors (mental world), namely psychological factors^[8].

3.1 Social factors

Code-switching is greatly influenced by social fields, when the social relationship changes, the speech form will also change. When the speaker gets rid of the social status at the collective level or in the group, the individual differences in speaking can be valued. When the individual's internal intention and experience become the main focus of speech, the collective shared experience recedes, the range and level of choice of the whole grammar and words become wide, and the sentence organization and arrangement become delicate and complex, so as to fully express the individual's inner thoughts, the meaning will no longer be understood from the collective context, but must be understood from the speaker himself. It can be divided into three aspects as in the Figure.1

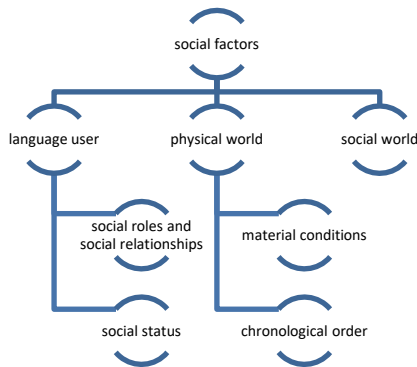


Fig. 1. Social Factors of CS

It can be seen from Figure 1, three factors language users, physical world, and social world are the most important factors. CS is closely related to the language user, including his or her social role, status, age, experience and the relationship between participants, meanwhile it also related to the communicator's personal and community views on a certain language, and the communicator's psychological state at that time. In communication, the choice of code also needs to follow the corresponding behaviour pattern and social norms of the social role of the communicator, so as to select the appropriate language for normal communication. It is the social roles that com-

municators play in different scenes that determine their choice of codes in communication, and the changes in the role relationships that people play in communication lead to the code-switching and mixing of communicators in the process of communicative behaviour.

The most important factors in the physical world are time and space. Social material condition refers to the basic condition for communication participants to use English in group or inter-individual communication. CS can be realized only in a certain number of language groups that master both Chinese and English codes. China has been teaching English for more than 150 years, and according to a recent report by the Global Language Monitor, about 250 million people in China are learning English. The expansion of English and the demand for cross-cultural communication provide social material conditions for the emergence of CS. The production and understanding of language varies over time. The phenomenon of code-switching has a long development process and a profound brand of The Times. Various phenomena of code switching are the concrete manifestations of social, political, economic and cultural development in different periods, and also the reflection of people's cognition, attitude, psychology and thinking mode in different times.

Social world refers to social situation, social culture and cultural background. Social world includes rules and norms that restrict people's speech performance. These speech rules and norms are called social conventions. In the social world, cultural traditions have a normative effect on the speech acts of communicators. Adapting to social conventions means that communicators use CS to avoid social embarrassment due to consideration and respect for the culture, customs and conventions of a particular society can through code switching. Yang Fang ^[9] quoted an example from the City Express in "*A Study on Compliance of code-switching in News Media*" to help us better understand this point.

"I bought a banned book called *Shanghai Baby*, which was pirated... reading it secretly, blush with shame and thinking Wei Hui, Mian Mian such Shanghai women are really **open(open)**". Works involving the theme of 'sex' are very obscure in traditional Chinese culture and cannot be recognized and adopted by mainstream culture. Here, the communicator avoids social embarrassment by mixing the English code "open", which not only expresses his inner thoughts but also conforms to the social conventions.

Social factors restrict the norms of speech behaviour. In the social world, in order to communicate smoothly, people in a certain community or association will use appropriate language in a specific situation to avoid impolite words, so as to avoid unnecessary unhappiness and misunderstanding in communication.

3.2 Psychological factors

In addition to external or social factors, the speaker's choice of language is also affected by internal or psychological factors. Many cognitive and emotional factors are involved in code-switching when speakers communicate. Howard Giles (1979) believes that when people communicate, they will adjust their intonation, voice and posture to adapt to other people. The core of speech adaptation theory is a process of

convergence and divergence ^[10]. The word convergence means the convergence of different ideas, groups, or societies is the process by which they stop being different and become more similar; a divergence is a difference between two or more things, attitudes, or opinions (Collins English-Chinese Dictionary). On the whole, people's motivation to use code-switching is to negotiate interpersonal relationships. Whether it is language convergence or language deviation, it is a means for the speaker to seek a favourable position for himself and get what he ultimately wants.

In Chinese-English CS, we can find the subjective motive of language users is firstly, to do it on purpose, and it is a purposeful and conscious code-switching, whose purpose is to emphasize, highlight or explain something. For example, if a teacher who uses Mandarin in class suddenly speaks in Cantonese, or speaks in English, it will definitely attract students' attention. The same information is elaborated in two languages successively, which plays an important role in terms of communication effect. Secondly, people use CS out of conformity and convergence; thirdly it is a kind of elusion tactics; the fourthly it is a principle of least, in order to express clearly, people might use the original language in the text. This is a typical pragmatic strategy that communicators consciously use CS. There is also the difference in cultural background, which leads to the difference in language view under cultural background.

4 Conclusion

Through analysis, we can see that the speaker's use of one code rather than another in a particular situation is affected by the above social factors and psychological motivation. It should be pointed out that these socio-psychological motivations reflected in code-switching do not mean that these psychological motivations determine the speaker to conduct code-switching activities. The emergence of language acts is usually caused by many different motives, but some of them are more prominent. There are some other factors that affect the mixing of Chinese and English codes. Such as some pragmatic principles, the principle of cooperation, the principle of self-protection. In the social world, people usually adopt the principle of cooperation without hurting their self-esteem, or adapt to the social world out of politeness. They will use appropriate and appropriate language in specific situations to avoid impolite words in order to smooth communication, so as to avoid causing unnecessary unhappiness and misunderstanding in communication. However, once there is something or speech act that violates or damages one's feelings or face, the principle of cooperation is out of the question. At this time, the principle of self-protection will come into play. Therefore, there will be corresponding language selection strategies. Social factors restrict the norms of speech behaviour.

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