

オンライン談話の中のコードスイッチング —日英バイリンガルの PC・携帯での言語使用— Written Codeswitching in Electronic Discourse: Texting in Japanese-English Bilinguals

中邑 啓子 NAKAMURA, Keiko

- 明海大学外国語学部, 国際基督教大学教育研究所
Faculty of Languages and Cultures, Meikai University / Institute for Educational Research and Service,
International Christian University

Keywords コードスイッチング, オンライン談話, 日英, バイリンガル, テキストメッセージ
codeswitching, electronic discourse, Japanese-English, bilinguals, texting

ABSTRACT

最近オンライン談話は我々の日常生活の大切な一部になっている。この研究では日英バイリンガルのオンライン談話でのコードスイッチング（メール・テキストメッセージ等）に焦点を当てる。二つのグループの日英バイリンガル（1）大人20名と（2）高校生・大学生20名から1000以上のメール・テキストメッセージを収集した。統語論的分析では様々な種類のコードスイッチング（タグ付き, 間文, 文内, レキシカル・スイッチ等）が確認された。機能的分析では, 様々な語用論的機能（謝罪, 感謝, ユーモア, 協調など）のためにコードスイッチが使用されることが明らかになった。さらに個人差や年齢差なども見られた。

Electronic discourse has become an increasingly important part of our everyday lives. This study explores codeswitching among Japanese-English bilinguals in their electronic discourse, such as emails and text messaging. Over 1000+ emails/text messages were collected from two groups of Japanese-English bilinguals, namely 20 adults and 20 teenagers. Syntactic analyses showed different types of codeswitches: tagging, intrasentential, intersentential, and lexical switches. Functional analyses revealed a strong tendency to switch for different pragmatic functions, such as speech acts, including apologies and expressions of thanks, as well as humor and emphasis. Furthermore, individual differences and age differences were also observed.

1. Introduction

There is a substantial body of literature on codeswitching (CS), or the “juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to different grammatical systems or subsystems” (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59). In the early years of CS research, the focus was mainly on typologically similar language pairs, such as Poplack (1980) and her classic work on Spanish-English Puerto Ricans in New York, and numerous studies from bilingual Spanish-English and French-English bilingual communities (e.g., Pfaff, 1979; Toribio, 2002). Eventually, researchers started to examine CS in pairs of languages which were typologically different, such as Wei’s (1994) work on Chinese-English and Nishimura’s (1997) work on Japanese-English. Since then, we have seen an increasing amount of studies on spoken CS in a wide range of typologically different language pairs. For example, there is a considerable body of work on Japanese-English spoken codeswitching, such as Azuma (1993, 1996, 1997), Fotos (1995, 2001), Kite (2001), Nakamura (2003), Namba (2009, 2012), and Nishimura (1985, 1989, 1997) looking at Japanese-English bilingual communities both in Japan and overseas.

As most of the earlier research on CS has focused predominantly on casual conversation, it has only been recently that researchers have started to examine the phenomenon of written CS. Initially, the assumption was that written language was not suitable for CS research, as written text tends to be more formal and standardized, as well as overwhelmingly monolingual, unlike spoken language, which is viewed as being more casual, natural, and spontaneous (e.g., Sebba, 2002, 2012). Sebba (2002) describes this as the “tyranny of written monolingualism” which reflects the tendency for written CS to be found mainly in so-called unregulated peripheral genres of writing, such as graffiti, advertisements, and computer-mediated communication. However, a growing number of

studies have recently focused on written CS (e.g., Callahan, 2004; Sebba, Mahootian & Jonsson, 2012).

With a steadily increasing proportion of our daily lives spent engaging in computer-mediated communication (CMC) via the internet (e.g., email, instant messaging (IM), and social networking services (SNS) such as LINE), electronic discourse has become a major form of communication in everyday life. Most forms of CMC exist on a continuum between face-to-face oral communication and conventional formal writing (Foertsch, 1995). As CMC has many of the features of spoken language, such as informality, immediacy, reduced planning and editing, as well as rapid feedback, it is a rich source of bilingual CS (e.g., Georgakopoulou, 1997). At the same time, CMC has some of the features of written language, such as lack of visual, prosodic, and paralinguistic cues, physical absence of the addressee, and a written mode of delivery.¹ Having features of spoken language, an increasing number of research studies have focused specifically on written CS in electronic discourse (e.g., Androutsopoulos, 2012 on Persian/German; Angermeyer, 2005 on Russian/English; Dorleijn and Nortier, 2009 on Dutch/Turkish and Dutch/Moroccan Arabic/Berber; Hinrichs, 2006 on English/Jamaican creole; Montes-Alcalá, 2007 on Spanish/English; Tsiplakou, 2009 on Greek/English). However, thus far, there have been no studies on Japanese-English CS in electronic discourse.²

This study uses a database of CS collected from email and text messages written by Japanese-English bilinguals to explore the nature of Japanese-English CS in electronic discourse by examining two research questions:

- (1) What kinds of syntactic types appear in the CS?
(syntactic analysis)
- (2) What pragmatic functions emerge in the CS?
(functional analysis)

2. Methodology

Data in the form of email and text messages (including instant messaging, LINE, and Facebook messages) were collected from 20 adults (ages 40+) and 20 teenagers (ages 16-20).³ All participants had high levels of proficiency in both English and Japanese. The teenagers were all high school students or recent graduates of international schools in Tokyo and the adults were all affiliated with the international schools (e.g., either alumni or parents of current or previous students). Emails or text messages exchanged with bilingual family members and friends were examined; of these, emails or text messages with CS were selected for coding and analysis. The data yielded 1000+ emails or text messages with CS, approximately 25 per participant. Syntactic, and functional/pragmatic coding and analyses were conducted.

In addition, follow-up face-to-face interviews were conducted with a subset of the participants to ask about behaviors and attitudes pertaining to CS and electronic discourse.

3. Results

3.1 Syntactic Analysis

The results of the syntactic analyses showed that the CS fell into four categories (adapted from Poplack's (1980) coding categories). Tagging (insertion/addition of a tag in one language into an utterance which is entirely in the other language) accounted for 8.0% of the teenage CS and 3.8% of the adult CS, as in:⁴

(1) Yo *soo ieba sa*, which would be better, sunrise or sunset?

Yo, by the way, which would be better, sunrise or sunset? (TC, 19)

(2) *Tie yuu ka* everyone's going.

I mean, everyone's going. (KS, 17)

(3) Okay, *wakarimashita*.

Okay, (I) understand. (WY, adult)

Intersentential switches (occurring at clause or sentence boundaries) accounted for 33.6% of the teenage CS and 35.5% of the adult CS, as in:

(4) The test was really hard though, *dakara doo naruka wakaranai*.

The test was really hard though, so (I) don't know what will happen. (HM, 19)

(5) *Gomen* I need to go *mata atode hanasoo*.

Sorry, I need to go let's talk later. (MN, 18)

(6) I want to have it at Shakey's! :) *Tanoshimi!* (discussing a birthday party)

I want to have it at Shakey's! :) Looking forward to it! (MN, adult)

Intrasentential switches (occurring within the clause/sentence boundary) added up to 29.2% of the teenage CS and 13.1% of the adult CS as in:

(7) Do you wanna just *交互にやる (koogo ni yaru)* assignments?

Do you wanna just do assignments alternately? (LC, 18)

(8) yehh *ore mo* missed 2 years in a row cuz of stupid reasons haha

yehh I also missed 2 years in a row cuz of stupid reasons haha (TK, 17)

Lexical switches for words which could not be found in the other language (e.g., cultural terms such as food terms) appeared the most frequently. Such switches mainly involved nouns, such as food terms like *moyashi* 'bean sprouts' and school terms such as 'recommendation letter.' Noun switches were the simplest to conduct, as they do not involve

morphosyntactic changes in order to be grammatical. Some lexical switches had lexical equivalents in the other language:

(9) Lunch was not impressive- *yasai itame teishoku*.
Mostly *moyashi*.

Lunch was not impressive- stir-fry veggie set.
Mostly bean sprouts. (KN, adult)

(10) H の (*no*) recommendation letter 書いてくれた
一人 (*kaitekureta hitori*).⁵

One of the people who wrote H's recommendation letter. (TR, adult)

(11) またいつもの (*mata itsumo no*) head cold やん
なっちゃうよ (*yannatchau yo*).

(It's) the same old head cold, (I) hate (this). (TR, adult)

Other lexical switches involved words without cultural equivalents in the other language, such as cultural terms such as *meiwaku* 'grief/pain' and *gaman* 'perseverance':

(12) I know she feels really bad for all the *MEIWAKU*,
but I think she's more relaxed now.

I know she feels really bad for all the grief/pain (she's caused), but I think she's more related now. (RY, adult)

(13) Okay. *Gambare!* Focus!

Okay. Try hard! Focus! (MN, adult)

(14) Dude, Japan is the nation of *gaman*, we can do it.

Dude, Japan is the nation of perseverance, we can do it. (TC, 19)

(15) ダウンタウンなので、場所は渋谷辺りで12
時頃だったら、大丈夫みたいです。(dauntoun
nanode, basho wa shibuya atari de 12 ji goro dattara, daijoobu mitai desu.)

(I'll be) downtown, so if the location were around Shibuya about 12, it would be fine. (KO, adult)

Lexical switches accounted for 29.2% of the teenage CS, while accounting for 47.6% of the adult CS. In terms of frequency, for the adults, the lexical switches were followed by intersentential CS switches which involve a simple switch at the clause/sentence boundary, without any grammatical or morphosyntactic adjustments. Almost half of the time, the adults used their CS for lexical switches. Regarding the teenagers, the lexical switches and intersentential CS were exactly the same in number. Intrasentential CS came in third, but with more than double the percentage (29.2%) for the teenagers as compared to the adults (13.1%). Similarly, tagging occurred more than twice as often for the teenagers (8.0%) as compared to the adults (3.8%).

Table 1 Syntactic types of codeswitches by age group (teenagers & adults)

	Teenagers	Adults
Tagging	8.0%	3.8%
Intersentential	33.6%	35.5%
Intrasentential	29.2%	13.1%
Lexical switches	29.2%	47.6%

3.2 Functional Analysis

The results of the functional analyses illustrated that CS were often triggered by speech acts, such as greetings, expressions of thanks, and apologies (5). Expressions of thanks appeared in both English and Japanese:

(16) ah *azaas* dude I'm so worried about this. (giving a friend notes for a test)

Ahh thank you dude I'm so worried about this. (AC, 16)

(17) Thanks for the reply, *wakarimashita*.

Thanks for the reply, (I) understand. (KY, 19)

(18) No, I'm fine. *Domo*.
No, I'm fine. Thanks. (WY, adult)

However, most apologies appeared in Japanese:

(19) *gomen* I slept at 7:30 *dakara henji shinakatta*.
Sorry I slept at 7:30 so (I) didn't reply. (HH, 16)

(20) *Sumimasen ga*, I need to ask you a big favor again.
Sorry, but I need to ask you a big favor again. (KN, adult)

(21) *Gomen* if I'm a bit late.
Sorry if I'm a bit late. (AC, 16)

Many CS also occurred with greetings, during openings and closings, such as:

(22) Going to bed shortly. *oyasuminasai!*
Going to bed shortly. Good night! (MN, adult)

Other functions of CS included marking emotion/feeling, such as surprise (23), frustration (24), sadness/empathy (26)

(23) I can't believe that they got drunk! *Bikkuri!*
I can't believe they got drunk! (I'm) surprised!
(KY, adult)

(24) I can't move the file *nanda kore*
I can't move the file what in the world. (MN, 17)

(25) omg, *majide* that's really sad
OMG, seriously that's really sad. (LK, 16)

Other CS performed different functions such as marking humor (26, 27), emphasis (28), quoting others (29, 30), and changing topic (31).

(26) Ah, the perils of old age! *nanchatte...* (talking

about getting old)
Ah, the perils of old age! Just kidding... (KN, adult)

(27) *bahahahaha nani sore* is that u? (looking at a childhood photo)
Hahahaha, what is that is that you? (LK, 16)

(28) *ya zettai ni* that's the best
ya definitely that's the best (AC, 16)

(29) *yeah 明日大雨だって (ashita oo-ame datte)* and it's senior walk lol (talking about an outside event)
yeah (they say) it's heavy rain tomorrow and it's senior walk lol. (LC, 19)

(30) *楽しそう。10個メッセージしても返事はYa だけどね。(tanoshisoo. jukko messeeji shitemo hennji wa Ya dakedo ne.)*
Looks like (he's having) fun. Though even if (I send him) 10 texts, the only reply is "Ya." (TR, adult)

(31) Oh, by the way... *土曜日に土地の契約にたどり着きました。(...doyoobi ni tochi no keiyaku ni tadoritsukimashita.)*
Oh, by the way... on Saturday, (we) finally signed the contract for the property. (NY, adult)

4. Discussion

Individual differences did appear in syntactic types and functional patterns of CS. For example, some participants mainly used CS in the form of lexical CS for culture-specific terms, without using any of the other syntactic types of CS. For example, many of the adult participants relied heavily on lexical CS and were hesitant to use other syntactic forms. Also, some participants relied heavily on CS for specific pragmatic functions, such as apologies and thanks.

Another interesting finding was age-related differences in CS behavior and attitudes. In general, the teenagers felt mostly positive about their CS, viewing it as a sign of identity and solidarity as a member of a bilingual/bicultural community, while the adults tended to view their CS negatively, as a behavior to be avoided if possible. In particular, adults tended to think that their CS was a sign of laziness or lack of proficiency in one or both languages. This was reflected in the CS patterns, as intrasentential CS was much more common in teenagers (29.2%), as compared to adults (13.1%), while lexical switches were more common in adults (47.6%), as compared to teenagers (29.2%). Teenagers were more likely to see their CS as a marker of identity or even as a third language variety (in addition to Japanese & English), and used their CS much more freely and creatively. On the other hand, adults felt that they needed to restrict their CS use, and made conscious efforts to limit their CS to lexical switches. In addition, generational differences were observed in the tendency of many adults to treat electronic discourse as a form of written language (e.g., more formal and structured), and that of the teenagers to view it more as a form of spoken language (e.g., more casual and unstructured), with nonconventional spelling and grammar.

It is important to note that the findings in this study are from two specific Japanese-English bilingual groups within the international community in Tokyo. Even within these groups, clear individual differences and generational differences were noticeable. For example, the majority of the teenage group CS data was taken from texting, in the form of instant messaging, LINE messages, and Facebook messages. However, regarding the adult group, a larger proportion of the CS data came from email extracts, in addition to instant messaging (LINE, Facebook). This may have accounted for some of the differences between the two generational groups, such as the tendency for the adult participants to be more formal in their language use.

Therefore, even within the context of electronic discourse, studies on other groups of Japanese-English bilinguals may reveal different patterns of usage. In the near future, we hope to investigate script choice and the alternation of written scripts as well as the use of emoticons and *emoji or kaomaji*, as well as stamps and stickers, which are used commonly in LINE and IM, often making up for the lack of prosodic and paralinguistic cues in computer-mediated discourse. Furthermore, we hope to compare CS in different genres of CMC (e.g., LINE, Facebook, email).

5. Conclusion

Japanese-English CS in electronic discourse involves a variety of syntactic types (i.e., tagging, intersentential, intrasentential, lexical switches), similar to what is seen in spoken discourse. In addition, it seems to be triggered by numerous pragmatic functions (e.g., expressions of gratitude, apologies, emphasis, emotion, quoting). The results show that electronic discourse is a rich source of CS data which needs to be explored further.

Acknowledgments

This research has been made possible by two Miyata Research Grants (2017-8 & 2018-9) from Meikai University and the support of the Institute for Educational Research and Service (IERS) at the International Christian University (ICU). I also would like to thank Kai Yasutomi and Riku Yasutomi for invaluable assistance with the data collection. Preliminary findings from this study were presented at The 18th Research Roundtable for Bilingualism as a First Language (BiL1) in Tokyo in October, 2018 (Nakamura, 2018) and the 17th Annual International Conference of the Japanese Society for Language Sciences (JLS2015) in Beppu, Japan in July, 2015 (Nakamura & Yasutomi, 2015)

Notes

- ¹ The balance of spoken and language features depends on the genre of CMC (e.g., chat, email, texting, blogs) (Crystal, 2001).
- ² Although there are a handful of studies on Japanese monolingual electronic discourse (e.g., Katsuno & Yano, 2007- chat rooms; Matsuda, 2002- email; Nishimura, 2007- electronic bulletin boards; Sakai, 2013- email), there are no studies on CS in Japanese-English electronic discourse.
- ³ The methodology for this study was developed in Nakamura & Yasutomi (2014) and Nakamura & Yasutomi (2015).
- ⁴ Regarding the examples, the top line is the CS example, written as in the electronic discourse text, while the bottom line is the translation in English. Italics are used for the parts of the sentence in Japanese in the CS examples; underlining is used for the parts of the sentence translated into English.
- ⁵ The reading of the parts written in Japanese hiragana, katakana and kanji have been provided in parentheses after the Japanese text; please note that they are not part of the original text.

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