Code Switching
in the Mexican American Community[*]

Man-Ki Lee

Seoul National University

Lee, Man-Ki (2009), Code Switching in the Mexican American Community.

The most distinctive characteristics of Mexican American language is in the sustained usage of Spanish and English in a single sentence or discourse: *code switching*. Here in this paper, I will focus on the language situation of Mexican Americans: the bilingualism of the community that has persisted for more than 150 years. Specifically, I will be concerned entirely with Spanish/English code switching among Mexican American bilinguals. This paper will be composed as follows. In Chapter 2, I will briefly introduce the general aspects of Mexican Spanish in the United States. Chapter 3 deals with forms and meanings of code switching: I will clearly distinguish *code switching* from the other terms such as *borrowing* and *interference* (i.e. *Calque*). In this chapter, I will also consider some functional types of code switching found in Mexican American speech. In chapter 4, I will describe a general and simple syntactic constraint on code switching in the research literature: code switching is possible only when it does not violate a syntactic rule of either language. In chapter 5, the conclusion of this paper will be presented.

[Code Switching / Bilingual / Borrowing / Interference / Syntactic Constraint; 코드스위칭 / 이중언어 / 차용어 / 간섭 / 통사제약]

Ⅰ. Introduction

As widely known, after English, Spanish is the most commonly spoken language in the United States, and the Spanish speakers represent the fastest-growing language minority in America. As a result of this, Spanish in U.S. (above all, Spanish of Mexican origin) is now the focus of a major research and teaching paradigm. The language of the Mexican American minority presents unique characteristics in both Spanish and English. The most distinctive characteristics of Mexican American language is in the sustained usage of both languages in a single sentence or discourse: code switching. Here in this paper, I will focus on the language situation of Mexican Americans; that is, the bilingualism of the community that has persisted for more than 150 years. (Throughout this paper, I will use the term Mexican American to refer to Mexican-origin residents in U.S., who have undergone significant amounts of socialization within the United States.) Specifically, I will be concerned entirely with Spanish/English code switching among Mexican American bilinguals.

This paper will be composed as follows. In Chapter 2, I will briefly introduce the general aspects of Mexican Spanish in the United States. Chapter 3 deals with forms and meanings of code switching: I will clearly distinguish 'code switching' from the other terms such as 'borrowing' and 'interference' (i.e. Calque). I will also briefly show some functional types of code switching found in Mexican American speech. In chapter 4, I will describe a general and simple syntactic constraint on code switching in the research literature: code switching is possible only when it does not violate a syntactic rule of either language. In chapter 5, the conclusion of this paper will be presented.

II. Mexican Spanish in the United States

For many Americans of all ages, terms such as "Hispanic", "Latino", "Latin American", and even "Spanish" are implicitly considered as "Mexican", because Mexicans and Mexican Americans are the largest Latino group in the United States. In the Southwest of America, like California, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, the term "Mexican" is often used as a synonym for the Spanish language itself. The Spanish of Mexican Americans covers a broad range of social and regional variants and reflects the immense linguistic diversity of Mexico itself.

As pointed out in Lipski (2008), Mexican American Spanish comes from the following different ways. First, after the Texas war of independence (1836) and the Mexican-American War (1848), many Spanish-speaking Mexicans changed countries without ever moving an inch. The Mexican-American War resulted in the loss of nearly half of Mexico's territory, including the states of California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico Nevada, and parts of Wyoming and Utah. This is the original source of Mexican Spanish in the United States. Second, the Mexican Revolution brought thousands of Mexicans to the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century. Third, labor shortage in the United States prompted the recruitment of thousands of Mexican laborers in Mexico's poorest states. Finally, Mexican immigration continues along the U.S.-Mexican border, all of which places contemporary Mexican American Spanish in the linguistic spotlight throughout the United States.

Mexican American Spanish diverges from mainstream dialects of Mexico and this is true of the Mexican Americans who live away from Mexican immigrant communities.[1] One of the syntactic characteristics of

---

1) According to Silva-Corvalán (1997), one gradual shift is the increasing use of the indicative for the subjunctive in some constructions. There are subtle changes in the

Mexican American Spanish is the code switching. Code switching, between Spanish and English within a single sentence or conversation, is common in Mexican American Spanish. It is worthwhile that code switching only takes place among fluent bilinguals, and a code switched conversation is abruptly settled down in a single language when there arrives a monolingual speaker. This provides clear evidence that code switching is not a confusion of two languages, but rather a deliberately chosen discourse strategy. Code switching is therefore not an anomaly, but rather a natural result of fluent bilingualism.

III. Mexican American Code Switching

In this chapter, I will describe the various forms of code switching in Mexican American speech in order to shed light on the unique bilingual competence in Spanish and English. That is, they command the two languages perfectly and may choose to switch between languages within each language. I will also consider the functions of code switching from a sociolinguistic view of the Mexican American language experience.

1. The forms of Code Switching

When bilingual speakers in the Mexican American community code switch, they have a variety of options. A speaker may decide to include a single Spanish word with Spanish pronunciation within an English discourse. A speaker may instead decide to include an entire Spanish phrase within an English sentence or to produce one sentence in Spanish

---

use of some prepositions, as well as past tense forms. There are so many loan translations among Spanish-English bilinguals. This topic is treated in more detail in the next chapter.

and the other in English. Intersentential code switching occurs when the language switch happens at a sentence boundary, as in the following example.

(1) Anyway, I was in and he was, you know, the one that would let you out. And he was laughing cause he saw me coming in. *Se estaba riendo de mí* (Martínez, 2006).

Intrasentential code switching occurs when the speaker switches languages within the boundary of a single sentence, as shown in the following examples.

(2) a. *Todos los amigos* had to go home.
 b. Mañana voy a *bring her some flowers.*
 c. El hombre *who saw the accident* es cubano.
 d. I put the forks *en las mesas.*

We can also find extrasentential code switching which occurs outside of a sentence, like 'tag question marker':

(3) a. If you are happy, nothing is more important than that, *sí?*
 b. You don't know how to speak Spanish, *verdad?*

Code switching discourse often consists of a matrix language and an embedded language. The matrix language is the predominant language within a conversation and the embedded language is the inserted language. We can tell that a bilingual is inserting Spanish into English discourse in the following example:

(4) The mailman delivered the letter to the *viejito* who sits on the *terraza.*

In this sentence, the predominant language is obviously English and the Spanish words like *viejito* and *terraza* are inserted within English sentence, because the structure of the sentence creates an English grammatical frame.[2]

2. Definition of Code Switching

1) Code Switching vs. Borrowing

There has been a considerable degree of confusion among scholars as to what constitutes instances of code switching. The main confusion has centered around how code switching can be distinguished from other linguistic phenomena, especially from 'borrowing'. Pfaff (1979) distinguishes between the two in terms of the degree of competence in the two languages concerned. According to Pfaff, borrowing needs only monolingual competence, whereas in code switching, the speaker should have bilingual competence. I agree with Pfaff's opinion in that code switching is produced between bilinguals who command the two languages perfectly and switching must be distinguished from borrowing.

Reyes (1982) distinguishes between the two by classifying all single words as borrowing rather than switching. He further divides borrowing into two according to the degree of morphological adaptation: spontaneous borrowing and incorporated borrowing. According to Reyes, no morphological adaptation occurs in spontaneous borrowing, while incorporated borrowing

---

2) One of the major linguistic issues that have dominated recent studies of code switching is whether it is possible and necessary to determine a matrix or base language in intrasentential code switching. Researchers, like Poplack (1980), dealing with code-switching between structurally similar language pairs (e.g. Spanish and English) tended to reject the notion of matrix language assignment, arguing that the determining procedures are in many cases arbitrary. On the other hand, researchers, such as Nishimura (1986) and Park (1990), working on code switching between structurally divergent language pairs (e.g. Japanese and English, Korean and English) argue that matrix language assignment can be made by certain linguistic principles.

is accompanied by morphological integration. In this paper, however, if a certain switched word has not been integrated into the other language, maintaining the original language's phonetic and morphological rule, I will consider it as a simple case of code switching. So, only the incorporated borrowing will be considered a real case of borrowing because it has been integrated into the other language's linguistic system. The following examples reflect my distinction between borrowing and switching.

> (5) a. El [estándar] de vida es mejor allí.   (borrowing)
>   b. El [stændərd] de vida es mejor allí.   (code switching)

In (5a), *estándar* is a borrowed word from English, to which Spanish phonetic and morphological rules have been applied. By contrast, (5b) is a case of code switching because the English word *standard* maintains its English pronunciation.

In this respect, I am following Poplack(1980)'s distinction between code switching and borrowing. Poplack relies on the degree of integration of items in distinguishing between switching and borrowing. According to her distinction, an item, whether a single word, or phrase, or clause, is regarded as a borrowing when it is phonologically, morphologically, and syntactically integrated into the other language.

Here I present a series of borrowing examples, given by Reyes (1982) as a case of incorporated borrowing to the Mexican American Spanish lexicon. Rightly, they all follow Spanish morphological rules such as verb's conjugation as in (6) and noun's gender or plural system as we observe in (7):

> (6) a. type → taipear, check → chequear, flunk → flanquear

    b. push → puchar, catch → cachar

    c. miss → mistir

(7) a. truck → la troca, las trocas, la troquita

    b. ride → el raite, los raites, el raitecito

Likewise, the following example with a borrowing noun *biles* is not a case of switching because the word forms a part of Spanish lexicon and follows Spanish morphological rules such as gender and plural.

(8) Tengo que pagar los [biles]. (borrowing)

The more borrowing examples in Mexican American Spanish can be found in the following table.

(9) Borrowing words in Mexican American Spanish

English	Borrowing	General Spanish
to pitch	pichar	lanzar
truck	troca	camión
to watch	guachar	observar
to spell	espeliar	deletrear
lunch	lonche	almuerzo
taxes	taxas	impuestos
busdriver	bosero	conductor

2) Interference (Calque)

Before finishing this section, I will briefly mention another term called 'interference'. Interference, called *Calco* in Spanish, has nothing to do with switching. It is just the appearance of a bad or deviated form of one language through the influence of another language. In this respect, Weinreich (1953) calls them "those instances of deviation from the

norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact." For example, according to Martínez (2006), the Spanish word *carpeta* had an original meaning of 'notebook'. In contact with English, however, the word *carpeta* has been assigned the new meaning 'rug' based on the phonetic similarity with the English word *carpet*. As in the case of the Mexican American speakers studied by Elías-Olivares (1995), there are other cases of semantic extension such as *forma* 'form' (Gen. Spanish *formulario*), and *aplicación* 'application' (Gen. Spanish *solicitud*).

Most of the English interference in Spanish words is generated due to the direct translation of English into Spanish.[3] A Mexican American Spanish word *viaje redondo*, which means 'viaje de ida y vuelta' in Spanish, is a case of interference of English *round trip*. In the reverse case, we can also find an English expression as a case of interference of Spanish:

(10) I am going to *make the bed*.[4]

(Interference of Spanish 'hacer la cama')

Here I present another table, in which some expressions of Mexican American Spanish are shown as examples of interference of English.

---

3) Here is an example of direct translation of English into Spanish, which is taken from a Chicano newspaper (*Voz Fronteriza November '77*):
   (i) a. Two officers were found guilty ...   (English)
      b. Dos policías fueron encontrados culpables ...   (Chicano Spanish).
   The above English sentence would be normally expressed in Spanish as follows:
   (ii) Dos policías se declararon culpables ...   (General Spanish)
4) This example is taken from the Juan Sempere's class given in the Fall 2008 at UC Berkeley. According to my interviewees, however, if this means 'to neaten the sheets and blankets', it is not from interference with Spanish. It is a very common expression among non-Spanish speaking English speakers.

(11) Interference of English in Mexican American Spanish

English	Interference	General Spanish
It's important to go.	Es importante a ir.	Es importante ir.
My hands are dirty.	Mis manos están sucias.	Tengo las manos sucias.
To come back	Venir para atrás	Regresar
To figure the problems out	Figurar los problemas	Resolver los problemas

According to Lipski (2008), combinations involving *para atrás* (*patrás*) to translate the English particle "back" are frequent, as in other varieties of Spanish in the United States: *llamar patrás* (to call back, return a call; *volver a llamar*), *dar patrás* (to give back, return a borrowed item; *devolver*), *pagar patrás* (to pay back [a loan]; *pagar la deuda*), *pensar patrás* (to think back, reflect; *recordar*), and so on.

3. The Functions of Mexican American Code Switching

As many linguists have found, bilingual speakers choose to switch between languages in order to carry out a specific social function. In other words, they do not switch from one language to another because of their inability to use either language. (As I have mentioned in the previous section, the Mexican American communication reflects a very keen command of both languages.) In this section, I will shed light on some social functions of code switching in the Mexican American language experience.

In a sociolinguistic study of code switching, Blom & Gumperz (1986) identified two different functional types of code switching: situational one and metaphorical one. Situational code switching refers to a language switch that is motivated by the setting of a conversation. For example, if

I am speaking with a bilingual friend and suddenly a monolingual friend joins the conversation, it is likely that I may switch languages in order to accommodate the monolingual. As Elías-Olivares (1995) has stated, when members of various ethnic groups use different types of discourse models, problems of communication may occur. These problems may in turn cause negative linguistic attitudes which can even lead to discrimination toward speakers who utilize models of discourse that are not considered socially prestigious in a given society.[5]

However, it is also possible to switch within the same conversational setting. For example, I may be having a conversation in one language and want to refer to something that I normally associate with another language. This is metaphorical code switching because even though the conversation itself does not change, the choice of language reflects another setting. According to Martínez (2006), metaphorical code switching adds new semantic dimensions to discourse. Here are two examples to demonstrate how codeswitching offers new ways of making meaning for Mexican American speakers:

(12) a. Mi papá es un *bartender*.
     b. Mi papá es un cantinero.

Although the English word *bartender* is semantically equivalent to the Spanish word *cantinero*, the two sentences have entirely different meanings. Sánchez (1994) explains that the word *bartender* is associated with upper strata in the social hierarchy and thus conveys upward social mobility and a high social standing in the community. The word

---

5) I think that the situational code switching can be also applied to the switching of dialects of one language within a specific situation. We know that those Koreans, who dominate the Seoul dialect and Cholla or Kyungsang dialects at the same time, can easily change their dialect code depending on which situation they are encountered.

cantinero, on the other hand, is associated with the lower strata restricted to the barrio. Therefore, the first sentence expresses "My father has a well-paying and well respected job", but the second one implies the following meaning: "my father has a job in the local bar."

Here I present another example of metaphorical code switching, which is based on a interviewee in the Mexican American community.[6] That is, the Mexican American bilinguals make the switch in a specific linguistic environment in which the code switching is manifested in the form of a critic. Concretely, Mexican Americans have a tendency of change the Spanish into English when they criticize another person, like the following phrase:

(13) a. Eres una *stupid*.
　　 b. Eres una estúpida.

They use the English word *stupid* instead of the Spanish expression *estúpida* because the Spanish word has a more offensive and strong meaning as an insult, whereas the English word has a ludicrous meaning. The ultimate function of this switching is to make the critical expression more soft and tolerable, and the actual effect is that the conversation dissolves tension and helps people relax with an expression of humor, not a form of underestimation.

In sum, we can notice that Mexican American speakers use code switching in order to fulfill certain linguistic (and social) functions that are part of the reality of living in a bilingual community. In other words, code switching is a normal linguistic form in conversational settings among Mexican American bilinguals.

IV. Syntactic approach to Mexican American Code Switching

1. Code Switching based on syntactic property

As I have mentioned before, intrasentential code switching occurs when the speaker switches languages within the boundary of a single sentence. It is well known that most of the intrasentential code switching happens at phrasal level, as in the following examples given by Pfaff (1979), Gingràs (1974), Poplack (1980) and McClure (1977):

(14) a. [NP Todos los amigos] had to go home.
    b. [NP Todos los Mexicanos] were riled up.
(15) a. Maana voy a [VP bring her some flowers].
    b. No van a [VP bring it up in the meeting].
(16) a. El hombre [S' who saw the accident] es cubano.
    b. Tell Larry [S' que se calle la boca].
(17) a. Yo coseché café [PP in a little village] en Nicaragua.
    b. I put the forks [PP en las mesas].

Although language switches at the single word level are not so frequent and usual according to the bilingual opinion, in the previous studies like Timm (1975), Pfaff (1979), Sankoff and Poplack (1981), Reyes (1982), Woolford (1983), D'Introno (1996) and Martínez (2006), we can find code switching examples at the word level such as verb, adjective, noun, determiner, preposition and complementizer.

(18) a. Estaba [V training] para pelear.
    b. Ayer yo hice [V improve]
    c. Los están [V busing] para otra escuela.
(19) a. Se compró un vestido muy [Adj pretty].

b. I want a motorcycle [Adj verde].

(20) a. the white [N casa]

b. big red [N sombrero]

(21) a. El hijo de Juan gave me [Det este] book.

b. [Det Su] favorite spot

(22) a. [P en] wintertime

b. [P por] thirty

(23) I could understand [COMP que] you don't know how to speak Spanish.

That intrasentential Code Switching is made at the phrasal level or word level is based on the idea that a sentence is derived from syntactic structural rules. That is, a code switching is closely related to constituent structure of a sentence. For example, the ambiguity of the following example (24) can be explained by assigning two different phrasal structures to the sentence, as shown in (25):

(24) Mi hermano vio a un niño con un telescopio.

(25) a. [S Mi hermano [VP vio [NP a un niño [PP con un telescopio]]]]. → Mi hermano lo vio.

b. [S Mi hermano [VP vio [NP a un niño] [PP con un telescopio]]]. → Mi hermano lo vio con un telescopio.

Interestingly, when the code switching occurs in this sentence as in (26) and (27), the structural ambiguity is significantly reduced. That is, when we substitute the NP with a Spanish pronoun *lo*, the two alternative interpretations in (25) are not probable in the code switched examples, as shown in the following examples:

(26) Mi hermano vio [NP a boy with a telescope].

→ Mi hermano lo vio.

→ ??Mi hermano lo vio with a telescope.

(27) Mi hermano vio [NP a un niño] [PP with a telescope].

→ ??Mi hermano lo vio.

→ Mi hermano lo vio with a telescope.

This means that the code switching occurs at the phrasal level, not at the any random level: in the above sentences, code switching is applied at each noun phrase.

2. Syntactic constraints on Code Switching[7]

Code switching is governed by a complex set of syntactic and pragmatic restrictions. The literature on the syntactic constraints that govern code switching is vast and still growing.[8] Among the syntactic factors, the most compelling ones are that no grammatical rule in either

---

7) This paper does not aim to propose a specific syntactic constraint, but is limited to describing a general syntactic phenomena found in the Spanish/English code switching in the research literature in order to emphasize the syntactic role in the process of code switching among bilingual speakers in the Mexican American community.

8) Most of the linguistic studies on intrasentential code switching have focused on testing the universality of the following two constraints proposed by Poplack (1980) and Sankoff & Poplack (1981).

(i) The free morpheme constraint
    Codes may be switched after any constituent in discourse provided that
    constituent is not a bound morpheme.

(ii) The equivalence constraint
    Codes will tend to be switched at points where the surface structures of the
    languages map onto each other.

According to the free morpheme constraint, a code switch may not occur at the boundary of a bound morpheme. The idea in the equivalence constraint is that code switches are allowed within constituents so long as the word order requirements of both languages are met at S-structure. This paper will not go deeply into the equivalence constraint which has been long disproved in the research literature. For example, Lee (2009) proposes that the equivalence constraint cannot be a code-switching restriction on "word order mapping" between the two languages, because there are counterexamples in which, even if the word order is different between L1 and L2, the code-switching is possible.

language be violated. In this section, I will present a series of examples which are disallowed since they violate a syntactic rule of either language. In other words, the code switches are not possible if they violate either of the two languages' grammatical rules.

First, as many linguists like Timm (1975) and Poplack (1980) have pointed out, since the word order (more specifically, the syntactic rule) between verb and object pronominal is different in Spanish and English, switches are not possible between the two words, as shown in (28).

(28) a. *told *le*, le *told*, him *dije*, dije *him*
     b. *Yo lo *bought*.

Second, as Gingràs (1974) points out, switching is not possible in (29) because Spanish and English have different syntactic rules with respect to the embedded clause as shown in (30).

(29) *El *man* que *came* ayer *wants* [*John* comprar *a car* nuevo].
(30) a. The man who came yesterday wants John to buy a new car.
     b. El hombre que vino ayer quiere que Juan compre un coche nuevo.

In the above sentences, the main verb belongs to a class which in English requires that an infinitive complementizer rule apply to the verb phrase complement, while Spanish makes use of a subjunctive complementizer in this same construction.

Third, Spanish negations cannot be switched with English ones because the English negation 'not' requires '*do*-support' (e.g. *I do not want*) and cannot precede the main verb, which clearly contrasts with the Spanish negation 'no' (e.g. *Yo no quiero*).

(31) a. *I *no* want.

   b. *I do not *quiero*.

Forth, in contrast with English, Spanish does not show Preposition stranding, as shown in (32). So a switch will not be possible in this context, as (33) shows.

(32) a. Este es el hombre [*de* que estaba hablando].   (Spanish)

   b. That's the guy [I was talking *about*].   (English)

(33) *That's the guy [que estaba hablando *de*].

Fifth, as D'Introno (1996) points out, Spanish infinitives must be adjoined to the main verb, while English infinitives do not raise, as shown in the following examples.

(34) a. Él dejó caer la silla en el suelo.   (Spanish)

   b. He let the chair fall on the floor.   (English)

This grammatical difference would account for the ungrammaticality of (35), in which code switching has occurred to the infinitives.

(35) a. *He let la silla [*caer* en el suelo].

   b. *Dejó [*fall* the chair on the floor].

Sixth, another interesting case of impossible code switching is derived from Case Theory. Following Plann (1986), let's assume that Spanish subordinate clauses have to be Case marked, but that English clauses are not. As we can observe in the following examples, the 'expletive' preposition *de* must be inserted before the Spanish subordinate clause, but not before the English clause.

(36) a. Estoy contento *(de) [ir a la escuela].

     b. I am happy (*of) [to go to school].

Because of this difference, we can explain the contrasting examples in (37).

(37) a. *I am happy [*ir a la escuela*].

     b. *Estoy contento [*of to go to school*].

The above sentences are ungrammatical, because the Spanish subordinate clause in (37a) is not Case marked by the preposition *de* as required, and the English subordinate clause in (37b) does not require Case marking by the preposition *of*.

Seventh, English allows an empty complementizer in some cases, but Spanish generally does not. In particular, a Spanish relative clause does not allow the deletion of a relative complementizer *que*, while an English relative clause does, as shown in (38).

(38) a. Este es el carro [*(que) quiero].

     b. This is the car [(that) I want].

This explains why (39a) is not grammatical- Spanish relative clause has to be introduced by the relative complementizer *que*- while (39b) is grammatical: the English relative clause does not have to be introduced by a relative complementizer.

(39) a. *This is the car [ɸ *quiero*].

     b. Este es el carro [ɸ *I want*].

Eighth, the following examples can be explained by the different linking systems of negative polarity item in Spanish and English. That

is, Spanish negative quantifiers in postverbal position, for example *nada*, must be linked to the negative particle *no*, and vice versa. Thus, the following sentences are ungrammatical because *nada* is not linked to *no* and *no* is not linked to a Spanish negative quantifier *nada*.

(40) a. *You have seen *nada*.

　　 b. *Tú *no* has visto *anything*.

In other words, Spanish negation *no* cannot legitimate English negative polarity item *anything* in (40b).[9]

Ninth, I would like to illustrate code switching in a noun phrase modified by an adjective. The word order in this context is different between English and Spanish, as shown in (41):

(41) a. The big house　　(English: adjective + noun)

　　 b. La casa grande　　(Spanish: noun + adjective)

The code switching between the noun and (postnominal) adjective is not possible because Spanish does not share the English grammatical rule with respect to the word order of noun and adjective.[10]

---

9) The following sentence can be considered as a case of Spanish interference in English, because Spanish NPI *nada* can be directly translated into English *nothing*.
　(i) You have not seen nothing.

10) If the adjectives appear prenominally, the code switching is possible as follows:
　(i) a. The big *casa*
　　 b. *El siguiente* play
　Woolford (1983) proposes that, if the pharse structure rules are common to both languages, lexical items can be freely drawn from either language to fill terminal nodes. Although there are lexical restrictions in Spanish as to which adjectives can appear prenominally, the rule expanding N' into an adjective followed by a noun is common to both languages. Thus, these nodes may be filled in either Spanish or English, subject to the restriction on prenominal adjectives in Spanish, as shown in (i). However, only Spanish has a phrase structure rule expanding N' into a noun followed by an adjective. For this reason, the nodes it creates can only be filled from the

(42) a. *the *casa* big   (Woolford, 1983)

　　　b. *the house *chiquita*   (Pfaff, 1979)[11]

In other words, code switching in the above examples can not be produced since it violates the grammatical rule of English noun phrase: NP → Adj + N.

Tenth, as pointed out in Woolford (1983), the ungrammaticality of the following code switched sentences appears to be related to the differences in Spanish and English grammars with respect to inversion in matrix questions.

(43) a. *How *lo hizo*? / *When *vino*?   (Peñalosa, 1980)

　　　b. *Cómo* did he do it?   (Woolford, 1983)

In the Wh-question, English requires '*do*-support' where Spanish allows main verb inversion, as shown in (44).

(44) a. [CP What did [IP John buy]]

　　　b. [CP Qué comprói [IP Juan Vi]]

This hypothesis is supported by the fact that switching between a *wh* in Comp and the rest of the clause is allowed in the following sentences where English does not require '*do*-support'.

(45) a. Which of these men *es tu padre*?

　　　b. *Cuál de esos hombres* is your father?

Spanish lexicon.

11) In Sempere(1997)'s study on the code switching in Spanish and Arab (on the base of the *jarcha*), it is claimed that, as Arabic adjectives are always postnominal, the nodes in (42) can be filled with either Arabic or Spanish words. (cf. la boca *h amrã, al-fam* roja)

Finally, unlike English, Spanish is a 'pro-drop' language in which sentences may have no visible subject. Code switching sentences may occur without a subject, but only if the first verbal element is Spanish, as (46) shows.

(46) a. *He comprado* this jacket at Macy's.
 b. **Was training* para pelear.

In addition, Spanish has a construction involving postposed subjects that is not shared with English. In such constructions, it is also the case that the verb must be Spanish.

(47) a. **Arrived* the gran jefe.
 b. **Arrived* yesterday la mamá mía. (Sankoff and Poplack, 1980)

The above code switched sentences, (46b), (47a) and (47b), are not accepted among the Mexican American bilinguals because the examples are not in accordance with the Spanish grammatical rule: only Spanish inflected verbs (not English ones) permit the omission of subject and the postposed subject.[12]

To sum up what I have shown until now, the code switches are not possible if they violate either of the two languages' grammatical rules.

---

12) As Timm (1975) points out, we cannot have code switching between a pronominal subject and a predicate:
 (i) a. **Él* is coming tomorrow.
  b. **He* viene mañana.

I will assume that this restriction arises from the pronominal property in Spanish *Agr*(Infl) which licenses the 'pro-drop': Spanish *Agr* is a type of pronoun, but not the English *Agr*. (Spanish can drop the full pronoun whenever it can be recovered by the verb inflection.) So, according to D'Introno (1996), Spanish full pronoun is not equal to English pronoun due to its focalized nature. Anyway, the above code switched sentences are not good because they violate the grammatical rule of either language.

In other words, this means that the syntactic properties play a crucial role on the process of code switching among bilingual speakers.

V. Conclusion

Here in this paper, I have focused on the language situation of Mexican Americans: the bilingualism of the community that has persisted for more than 150 years. Specifically, I have been concerned entirely with the Spanish/English code switching among Mexican American bilinguals. I clearly distinguished *code switching* from the other terms such as *borrowing* and *interference* (i.e. *Calque*). And I also considered some functional types of code switching found in Mexican American speech. As a syntactic view on the code switching, I described a general and simple syntactic constraint on code switching in the research literature: code switching is possible only when they do not violate a syntactic rule of either language.[13]

---

13) As an anonymous reviewer pointed me out, it would be worthful to study a code switching pattern between structurally divergent language pairs: Korean and Spanish.

Bibliography

Blom, J-P. and J. Gumperz. 1986. "Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code-Switching in Norway", in J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.), *Directions in Sociolinguistics*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

D'Introno, F. 1996. "Spanish-English Code-Switching: Conditions on Movement", in Ana Roca & John B. Jensen (eds.), *Spanish in Contact,* Somerville: Cascadilla Press.

Elas-Olivares, L. 1995. "Discourse Strategies of Mexican American Spanish", in C. Silva-Corvaln (ed.), *Spanish in Four Continents,* Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.

Gingràs, R. 1974. "Problems in the Description of Spanish-English Intrasentential Code-Switching", in G. Bills (ed.), *Southwest Areal Linguistics*, San Diego: University of California, 167-174.

Lee, M.-K. 2009. "Head Constraint on Spanish/English and Korean/English Code-Switching", *Korean Journal of Linguistics,* 34(2): 335-356.

Lipski, J. 2008. *Varieties of Spanish in the United States,* Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.

Martínez, G. 2006. *Mexican Americans and Language,* Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

McClure, E. 1977. "Aspects of Code-Switching in the Discourse of Bilingual Mexican-American Children", in Saville-Troike, M (Ed.), *Georgetown University Round Table,* 93-115.

Nishimura, M. 1986. "Intrasentential code-switching: the case of language assignment", *Language in Society,* 15: 123-143.

Park, J.-E. 1990. *Korean/English Intrasentential Code-Switching: Matrix Language Assignment and Linguistic Constraints*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Peñalosa, F. 1980. *Chicano Sociolinguistics,* MA: Newbury House.

Pfaff, C. 1979. "Constraints on Language Mixing", *Language,* 55: 291-318.

Plann, S. 1986. "On case-marking clauses in Spanish: Evidence against the Case Resistance Principle", *Linguistic Inquiry*, 17(2): 336-345.

Poplack, S. 1980. "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish Y TERMINO EN ESPAÑOL: toward a typology of code-switching", *Linguistics*, 18: 581-618.

Reyes, R. 1982. "Language mixing in Chicano Spanish", in Jon Amastae & Lucía Elías-Olivares (eds.), *Spanish in the United States*, London: Cambridge University Press.

Sánchez, R. 1994. *Chicano Discourse*, Houston: Arte Público Press.

Sankoff, D. and S. Poplack. 1981. "A Formal Grammar for Code-Switching", *Working Papers in the Center for Puerto Rican Studies*, 8, New York: CUNY.

Sempere Martínez, J. 1997. "Agramaticalidad e improbabilidad de alternancia de códigos en las jarchas", *Actas del IV congreso internacional de historia de la lengua española*, La Rioja.

Silva-Corvalán, C. 1997. "El español hablado en Los Angeles: aspectos sociolingüísticos", in Colombi & Alarcón (ed.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: praxis y teoría*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Timm, L. A. 1975. "Spanish-English Code-Switching: El porqué y How-Not-To", *Romance Philology*, XXVIII: 473-482.

Weinreich, U. 1953. *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, The Hague: Mouton.

Woolford, E. 1983. "Bilingual Code-switching and Syntactic Theory", *Linguistic Inquiry*, 14: 520-536.

Man-Ki Lee
Seoul National University
E-mail: mankilee@snu.ac.kr