CHINESE/ENGLISH BILITERACY: A STUDY OF WRITTEN CODESWITCHING BEHAVIOR AMONG THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN U.S. UNIVERSITIES

DONGYING WU
University of Florida

This study includes a sociolinguistic survey on the patterns of Chinese/English biliteracy in writing and a detailed observation on selected Chinese to English codeswitching behavior. With a sample of 96 subjects, the survey reveals the existence of a diglossia situation in different writing activities in the Chinese community (with English in the high domains of education and employment, and Chinese in the low domains of family and friendship). Codeswitching in writing was also found to occur in informal and casual interaction. Further case study of letters and notes investigated both stylistic functions and linguistic constraints on the individuals’ Chinese to English codeswitching behavior. It disclosed that switches take place to serve different stylistic functions, among which the most salient are contextual switches and linguistic routines. With regard to linguistic constraints, the present data of Chinese to English codeswitching supports the hypothesis of the free morpheme constraint but challenges the universality of two other prevalent hypotheses; the equivalence of structure constraint and the size of constituent constraint.

Introduction

In U.S. universities, there are large groups of people who use both English and Chinese daily. This is due to increased contacts between the United States and countries in the Pacific Rim in recent years. Those who speak and write Chinese and English daily appear to represent a stable bilingual population. However, most of the studies that have been made on the patterns bilingualism and codeswitching place emphasis on speaking activities rather than on writing, and on the behavior of Spanish/English and other bilinguals rather than on the behavior of Chinese/English bilinguals (Berk-Seligson 1986; Lipski 1978; McClure 1981; Poplack 1980; Timm 1975; Valdes-Fallas 1976). In this paper, the place of two divergent languages, Chinese and English, among the writing activities of the Chinese community in U.S. universities is investigated. It is examined through both a survey of their distribution in the daily life of the community on the University of Florida campus, Gainesville, and an analysis of the functional and linguistic features of selected Chinese to English
codeswitching behavior.

One approach to study bilingualism is the sociological concept of domain analysis. Fishman (1972) proposes that there are certain institutional contexts, called domains, in which one language variety is likely to be more appropriate than another. While domain analysis explains language choice in terms of social constructs, in spheres of activity and institutions, the anthropologists Blom and Gumperz (1972) are interested in how the individual chooses among alternative modes of behavior in accordance with linguistic and social constraints. In this project, both approaches have been integrated to obtain a more comprehensive picture of bilingual use among the Chinese community. Techniques of participant observation as well as a large-scale sociolinguistic survey are used.

**Sociolinguistic Survey of Bilingual Use**

Research design

The sample for this study is taken from the Chinese community around the University of Florida campus. A sociolinguistic questionnaire was designed to examine patterns of bilingual usage of Chinese and English in different writing activities in various domains in the community. The writing activities examined include letters, notes, homework, and lists or plans of things to do. The domains involved are family, friendship, employment and education.

Results

A total of 133 questionnaires were distributed and 96 were returned. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample. As shown in Table 1, 68 percent are from the People’s Republic of China, 26 percent are from the Republic of China (Taiwan), and the rest are from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia. The majority (85 percent) have been in the United States for less than five years. There are 60 men and 36 women, and their ages range from 13 to 55.

Most of the respondents (85 percent) are attending school, while the rest either work or stay at home. Occupations include students (75 percent), research fellows (10 percent), and teachers/professors, and engineer, a chemist and a secretary (5 percent). In terms of areas of study or specialization, 37 percent are in liberal arts and sciences, 32 percent in engineering, 19 percent in agriculture, 4 percent in business administration, 4 percent in medicine, 3 percent in education, 1 percent in law and 1 percent in health related professions.
When asked about their Chinese proficiency, 99 percent report that they speak well and 91 percent indicate they write well. But when asked how well they use English, only 64 indicate that they speak well and 61 percent indicate that they write well. A certain number report that they have only fair or poor proficiency in English, oral English 36 percent and written English 33 percent (see Table 2).

It is important to note that a higher percentage of the respondents indicate that they speak Chinese better than they write it, whereas a higher percentage indicate that they write English better than they speak it. A subsequent interview discloses that their problems with English are mostly related to speaking and listening, and that in the past, they have geared their efforts towards reading and writing especially in order to survive in their academic and intellectual fields, and have largely ignored the acculturation and socialization process into the larger U.S. language and social community.

Table 3 indicates language use by different interlocutors related to the community. As shown in Table 3, the professors they are in contact with mostly use English (98 percent), while only a small number (2 percent) use Chinese or a mixture of both Chinese and English. A majority of their classmates and co-workers also use English. Nevertheless, a certain percentage of them are Chinese, and they sometimes use Chinese or a mixture of both Chinese and English at other times.

In terms of their personal relationships, most of their acquaintances, friends, spouses and parents are Chinese. Their parents and spouses are mostly monolingual and speak only Chinese. However, many of their Chinese friends use both Chinese and English and often like to code-mix or code-switch between Chinese and English (see Table 3).

As shown in Table 4, English dominates within the domains of education and employment. English is used in school homework, in class or reading notes, in study or teaching plans, in business correspondence, and in notes to professors, classmates and co-workers. The use of English is determined by the social situation, by the persons they are interacting with, and by the topic such as the subjects of study or specialization. Although a few of the respondents use English with a little mixture of Chinese in note-taking and in writing plans for study, the majority report that they prefer to use English because the concepts and meanings they are learning are linked to English and to western sciences.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample (n=96, in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National origin:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.R. China</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of China</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Linguistic proficiency by community (n=96, in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral</th>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Oral</th>
<th>Written</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, within the domains of friendship and family, Chinese is most often used. The use of Chinese is dominant in writing letters to friends, spouses and parents. But it is interesting to note that in leaving notes to friends, English is much more often used. One reason for this is that they have some friends who do not know Chinese and have to speak English as the common language. Moreover, many of them said that they try to improve English through more frequent use of it with their friends. With regard to making shopping lists and lists for things to do, the choice of either language varies from individual to individual and from time to time.
Table 3: Language use by different interlocutors related to the community (n=96, in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese dominant</th>
<th>English dominant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintances</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese dominant: A mixture of Chinese and English with more Chinese
English dominant: A mixture of Chinese and English with more English

Chinese to English Codeswitching

As has been demonstrated earlier, in writing letters or notes to friends, the Chinese bilinguals (56 percent) tend to use Chinese with a little mixture of English. In this section, a selected sample of these letters and notes are analyzed. Both the functions and linguistic constraints on Chinese to English codeswitching are investigated. With respect to function, attention is focused on alternation of codes within speech acts, i.e., stylistic or metaphorical codeswitching.

Before proceeding to the findings and discussion, a definition of codeswitching is presented. Codeswitching refers to the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent. This alternation includes code-changing, switch to another language at the level of major constituents (for example noun phrase, verb phrase, clause or sentence), or codemixing, the use of small constituents or elements of the opposite language (for example a word). Usually, codeswitching could operate at three levels of production: phonological morphological and syntactic, but for the purpose of this study on writing, only the morphological and syntactic levels are discussed.

The methodology used here is natural and participant observation. The data are collected through two sources. One source is from a collection of 36 letters or notes that my friends and I have written among ourselves during the past year. We are all from the People’s Republic of China and are presently either studying or working in the United States. Another source is comprised of eight notes from the Chinese bilinguals at the University of Florida campus. Some of these notes were deliberately collected, that is, I intentionally asked some friends to leave notes in my mailbox.
Stylistic code-switching

In discussing the conversational functions of codeswitching, Gumperz (1976) introduces a preliminary typology which includes the following six main headings: quotation, addressee specification, interjection, repetition, message qualification, and personalization vs. objectivization. Valdes-Fallis (1976) and McClure (1981) discover patterns which overlap to a great extent those just cited. Unlike Gumperz, Valdes-Fallis does not mention addressee specification, but does list emphasis or contrast, narration, and formulation (linguistic routines) as factors which affect codeswitching.

In this data on Chinese to English codeswitching in writing, the behavior also overlaps functionally to some extent with that reported by Gumperz, Valdes-Fallis and McClure. Chinese to English codeswitching in writing also appears to take place in quotation and emphasis. But as it is written communication, there is no need for switching in addressee specification, repetition, paraphrase or message qualification. Interjections and formulations as defined by Gumperz and McClure are also not found in this sample of Chinese to English codeswitching. The contact outcome of these two divergent languages and cultures – Chinese and English – appear in some other functions: contextual switches, forms of address and linguistic routines. In the two Appendices, a number of transcribed samples are presented which have been labeled according to the scheme presented in Table 5. A discussion of them is as follows.

The first section of the samples are drawn from notes and postcards. Segment 1 is a note responding to the request of a friend who wanted to spend the evening together. Segment 2 tells a friend of one’s exciting news of obtaining an assistantship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at New York. Segment 3 is note of congratulations. Segment 4 says hello and tells a friend that he/she would write more after the final was over.

In this section, we can find many incidences of contextual switches from Chinese to English because the situation or topic is linked to English. The connotations of “dinner”, “shopping”, “call”, “project” and “due” are specifically related to the U.S. way of life. The initial lexical switches often trigger a preceding or following phrase: “Call me at home”; and “Every project is due.” Switching in linguistic routines is also characteristic of Chinese to English codeswitching, for example, “Sorry” in Segment 1; “Congratulations” in Segment 3; “How are you?” in Segment 4; and “Thanks!” in Segment 9. Using the correlates of the linguistic routines in Chinese would have different emphases or implications and are used for a different context or purpose other than the one in the sample.
Table 4: Language use in different writing activities in various domains (n=96, in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Chinese dominant</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English dominant</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing plans for study</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing plans for teaching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing school homework</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes in self-reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing to acquaintances</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing to friends</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing to one’s spouse</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing to one’s parents</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving notes to professors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving notes to classmates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving notes to co-workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving notes to acquaintances</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving notes to friends</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making shopping lists</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making lists of things to do</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing plans for weekends or holidays</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese dominant: A mixture of Chinese and English with more Chinese
English dominant: A mixture of Chinese and English with more English

Another contextual switch in this section is: “Isn’t it nice?” This expression is typical of English-speaking Americans in this context and is not readily accessible in Chinese. More examples of this kind of expression are also seen in Section II.

Samples in Section II are selected from letters. In segment 5, the writer informs a friend of their academic plans. Segment 10 is similar in informing a friend of academic plans and also contains a request for further information on the faculty in a marketing department. Segment 6 describes the characteristic traits of an employer. Segment 7 gives advice to a friend who is applying for scholarship. Segment 8 recounts a birthday event at school. Segment 9 and Segments 11 to 14 are all letters saying hello to friends and recounting what is happening in the writers’ everyday lives.

Everyone working with code-switching has noted that proper nouns are seldom translated into another language. Examples of Chinese to English codeswitching in proper nouns abound in the data: “New York”, “CBEST (California Basic Educational Skills Test)”, “Italian”, “Marketing”, and “International Business”, etc.

Quotation is another reason marking a code change, e.g., “Happy Birthday to
You” in Segment 8; “All work and no play”, “all thumbs” in Segment 7; and “live happily hereafter” in Segment 12. Note also that the subjects are not quoting only for quotations’ sake, but also for attracting attention, emphasis or contrast, an/or humor, etc. Other patterns of codeswitching with stylistic device for emphasis can also be found in Segment 10: “Last but not least”; Segment 11: “Move Out!”; Segment 12: “THE BEACH!” and Segment 13: “historical moment”.

**Table 5: Principle Chinese-English codeswitching patterns**

1. Proper nouns – Names of places, institutions, or one’s subjects or areas of specialization
2. Quotations
3. Contextual switches  
   a. Situations or topics that are linked to the other language  
   b. Words or expressions that are not available or easily accessible in Chinese
4. Switching of isolated items – For economy or facility
5. Triggered switches – Switches due to preceding or following items
6. stylistic device – For emphasis or contrast
7. Forms of address
8. Linguistic routines – Highly recurrent and routinized speech acts

A further interview with the informants reveals that economy and/or facility of expressions is a major factor determining code-switching. It may also constitute another reason in addition to all the reasons that underlie the data discussed previously and below (see Appendix for detailed examples).

In Section II, contextual switches appear in almost all the segments. Switches of simple lexical items include “resume”, “chocolate cake”, “spring break”, “live-in”, “check”, “cleared”, and “challenging”, etc. Switches to English expressions in terms of larger constituents include “Take good care of yourself!”, “isn’t that wonderful!”, and “With lots of love”, etc. As already mentioned a little earlier, reasons for these switches are that the topics or situations discussed are related to English or to the U.S. way of life, and the expression is typical of U.S. Americans and cannot be readily accessible in Chinese or in a Chinese cultural context. While the Chinese cultural traditions value reserve in emotions, attitudes and behavior, the English-speaking Americans value spontaneity and expressive behavior.

Those who study codeswitching or codemixing (e.g., McClure 1981) have suggested that the switching behavior occurs “when a person is momentarily unable to
access a term for a concept in the language which he is using but can access it in another code” or “when he lacks a term in the code he is using which exactly expresses the concept he wishes to convey” (McClure 1981:86). In the data on Chinese to English codeswitching in writing activities, there is more evidence of the latter.

Table 6: Syntactic categories of Chinese – English codeswitching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intersentential:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclamation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>idiom, quotation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrasentential:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single noun</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun phrase</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb phrase</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Examples of Chinese to English codeswitching which violate Chinese grammatical structure

晚上 7:00 去一個教授家 dinner
(I) am going to a professor’s home for dinner at 7:00 this evening.
The codeswitch dinner replaces 吃飯, literally “eat rice”. The simple noun dinner replaces the Chinese verb with noun complement.

上次的照片早已 ready
The pictures (we took) last time are already ready.

The codeswitch ready replaces 洗好了, literally “develop done (completed)”. Chinese action verbs only indicate activity and often take verb complements to express result. The verb with verbal complement is replaced by a simple adjective.
Moreover, at times the subjects switch to another language not only to seek the concept or meaning from another language, but to express a new meaning out of a mixture of the two. For example, the salutation form “Dear” may not indicate or express very special feelings to a native-speaker of English as it is customarily used in beginning a letter in English, and is often used in formal and business letters like “Dear Sir:”. But the literary address form of “Dear” in Chinese is very special and can be used only when addressing one’s elders or lover and never to a friend. So the subject resorts to using the English “Dear” o indicate “You are my special friend”. The special meaning of “Dear” here has emerged through a mixture and a shared understanding of both languages and cultures.

Appendix: Examples of Chinese to English codeswitching:
In these samples, the original text is on the top line. The line directly underneath contains glosses for the Chinese with the English indicated by italics. The bottom line is an English translation of the entire segment. The numbers in parentheses directly before each codeswitch refer to the varieties of codeswitching listed in Table 5. Since the glosses and translations are longer than the original text, at the end of some segments there will be more than one line of glosses followed by one or more lines of translation. The labeling of grammatical elements is slightly modified from Tinee (1986).

I. Letters and Postcards
Segment 1.

晚上 7:00 去一個教授家 (3)dinner, (3)shopping 也只好 (3)give up. (8)Sorry.

Evening – 7:00 – go – one professor – house dinner – shopping – PART (resignation) – have-to – give up. sorry
I’m going to a professor’s home for dinner at 7:00 this evening. Have to give up shopping.

來我這兒吃點東西嗎? 6:50 左右我才會離開. (3)Call (5)me at home.

What about coming to my place for something to eat? I won’t leave until about 6:50. Call me at home.

Segment 2.

我六月 13 日至 8月 22 日將在 (1) New York. 最近得到通知被錄取為 (3) graduate

From June 13 to August 22, I will be at New York. Recently obtained notice (I have been) admitted as
Segment 3.
(8) Congratulations! 聽到你的好消息。真為你高興。
Congratulations! Hearing your good news, (I) am really happy for you.

Segment 4.
(8) How are you? 最近我很緊張。(5) Every (3) project (5) is due. 要過段時間才能給你寫
How are you? Recently – I – very – busy Every project is due. Will – past – a period – time – only – be able to – to – you
How are you? Recently I am very busy. Every project is due. (I) will not be able to write you a longer

封長點的信.
Write – PART (measure) – long – a – little – PART (modifier) – letter
Letter until after this period of time.

II. Letters

Segment 5.
在(1) Hayward 時，您多次勸我報考教師當然我都未能決定下來。現在也想好
When at Hayward, you advised me many times to work for the teaching certificate. Of course I wasn’t

了。還是先考(1) Teaching Credential Program 讀一下為好。但得先考(1) CBEST
able to decide then. Now I have thought it through. It is still better to get into the Teaching Credential
(California Basic Education Skill Test).
into – Teaching Credential program – study – sometime – be better – but must – first – exam – (CBEST…)
Program before anything else. But I have to pass CBEST (California Basic Education Skills Test) first.

Segment 6.
這位仁兄用英文來形容似乎攻簡單明瞭(2) “all work and no play” (2) “all thumbs”.
this – benevolent brother (sarcastic) – use – English – to describe – seem – more – simple – and – clear “all work
and no play” “all thumbs”

Using English expressions to describe this guy seems (even) more simple and clear. “all work and no play” “all thumbs”

Segment 7.
在(3)resume 中詳細寫上已做過的事. 廣大的(3)Background 相當有用的. 還要
at – resume – in – detail – write – Complement (directional) already – do – Aspect (Experiential) – PART
(modifier)
In the resume, describe in detail what you have done. Your background at Guangzhou University

寫上你在老張手下當(3)assistant 之類嘛! 我(4)envy 你的(3)Backgr.
thing – Guang – university – PART (modifier) – background – rather – useful – PART (modifier) – Also – must –
type PART (modifier) – I – envy – your – Backgr.
should be rather useful. Also write down your experiences as assistant under (the direction of) Lao Zhang and
things like that! I envy your background.

Segment 8.
全系只有兩個外國研究生. 另一是(1)Italian, 上學期已走. 現我是(6)the only
whole – department – only – have – two – foreign – graduate student – another – one – is – Italian – last –
semester
The whole department only has two foreign graduate students. The other one is Italian and already
one. 加上(1)UCF 有濃厚的南部傳統. 系裡全部老師同學及學生對我都很好.
already – go – now – I – am – the only one – add up – UCF – have – strong – PART (modifier) – southern –
tradition
left last semester. Now I am the only one. In addition, UCF has a strong Southern tradition. All the

比如一月三十一日是我的(3)Birthday (三十三歲月!!) 系裡秘書從我的檔案中
31
teachers, classmates and students in the department are very nice to me. For example, January 31 was

得知, 第二天(二月一日, (4)Monday)在家特意做了一個大(3)Chocolate Cake
date be – my – Birthday – 33 years (old) – department – within – secretary – from – my – file – in – obtain –
information
my birthday (33 years old!). The secretary in the department got the information from my file. The next
到系裡，賽唱“Happy Birthday to You”，使我感到很 touch.

next day two month 1 Monday at home specially make Aspect (perfective) one big Chocolate Cake bring Complement (directional) department in together sing Happy Birthday to You cause me feel very touched
day (February 1, Monday) the secretary brought to the department a big chocolate cake that she had specially made (for me) at home. … (Everyone) together sang “Happy Birthday to You.” I felt very touched.

Segment 9.
(8) Dear Xiaohong, Xmas card早已收到了，很中意。我是貓迷。(8)Thanks!
dear Xiaohong Xmas card early receive Complement (directional) Aspect (perfective) very much like
Dear Xiaohong, Have had (your) X-mas card for quite a while, and like it very much. I love cats.

上次的照片早已 ready. 此寄去 Enjoy!我們 Spring Break 時給你打電話.
I am cat fan thanks last time PART (modifier) picture early already ready now send
Thanks! The pictures (we took) are already ready, now sending them to you, Enjoy! We will call you

這個月打了兩個國際長途，打給我的父母。不敢再打別的長途。否則
Complement (directional) enjoy we Spring Break time to you make telephone this month make during Spring Break. This month (we) made two international long distance calls to our parents. Dare

monthly budget 是 next month 24 to 29 date. We'll call you then. We'll call you then. Take good care of yourself! With lots of love,
Aspect (perfective) two international long distance make to our parents not dare again make other
not make any other long-distance calls, or (it will be) difficult to maintain the monthly budget. Spring Break.

then. Take good care of yourself! With lots of love,
long distance or monthly budget difficult maintain Spring Break is next month 24 to 29 date

We'll call you then. Take good care of yourself! With lots of love,
is next month from the 24 th to the 29 th. We’ll call you then. Take good care of yourself! With lots of love,

Segment 10.
我基本上已定了明年專(1)international business 及 (1)marketing (marketing research)
I basically already decide Aspect (perfective) next year specialize international business or marketing
I have pretty much decided to specialize in international business and marketing (marketing research)

或(1)marketing management (general). 有空請去 business school 找找有什麼介紹
(marketing research – or – marketing management (general) – have – time please – go – business school – look
look
or marketing management (general) next year. (If you) have time, please go to see if there is any

(3/4) faculty (特別是 marketing) 的東西. … (6) Last but not least, 美國 marketing
have – any – introduction – faculty – especially – marketing – PART (modifier) – thing – last but not least – U.S.
information on the faculty, especially in marketing. … Last but not least, U.S. marketing has already

已形成一整套的方法, 有統計學, 決策論等招數.
strategies
established a complete set of methods, with statistics, decision theory and other strategies.

Segment 11
不是去陳處, 而是 move out. (6) Move out! (6) Did you hear that? 今天在朋友的
not-go-Chen-place-but-move-out, move out. did you hear that-today-at-friend-PART (modifier)-help-under…not to
go to Chen’s place, but move out, Move out! Did you hear that? Today with friend’s help. (I)

幫助下, 找到了一戶美國人家, 一位七十左右的老太太, 去 live in (3) free room.
find-Complement(directional)-one-U.S.-home-70-about-PART(modifier)-lady-go- live in, free room
found an American home, an about 70-year old lady. (I am) going to live in, with a free room.

Segment 12
你估我現在在那裡, (6) THE BEACH!... 我準備 live happily hereafter…相片
you-guess-I-now be at-what place-the beach-I-prepare-live happily hereafter-film- -already-send
You guess where I am now, THE BEACH! I am planning to “live happily hereafter”…The film has

已送去晒, 而且那張 check 已 cleared, 估計不日即可收到相片. 我還 order
Complement (Directional)-develop-moreover-that check-already-PART(passive)-cleared-guess-soon
already been sent to be developed. Moreover, that check has already been cleared. Guess soon will

了一些膠卷。
immediately-can-receive-Complement(directional)-picture-I-also-order-Aspect(perfective)-some-film receive  the
pictures. I have also ordered some films.

Segment 13
我們又快可以見面了, 三個多月. (3) Isn’t that wonderful…你 Daddy 及小林
We again-soon-see-face-PART-3-more-month-isn’t that wonderful- your-daddy-with-Xiaoning-also
We will soon see each other again, more than three months. Isn’t that wonderful!...Your daddy met

見了面，還照了兩三張相，計錄一下這個 (6)historical moment.
take-Aspect(perfective)-2 to 3-picture-record-a little-this-historical moment
with Xiaoning. Also took a couple of pictures to record a little of this historical moment.

Segment 14
新到一個地方，許多 (3)challenging 的東西，我真是很擔心你的.要多些保重.
newly-arrive-one-place-many-challenging-PART(modifier)-thing-I-really-very-much-worry-you-must-more
Being new to a place, (there are) many challenging things. I am really very concerned about you. You must

過得 (3)Happy 些 (4)Mon.-Thur.你可 11 點打來.可打 (3)collect.
Take care-live-happy-a little-Mon.-Thur.-you-can-11-o’clock-call-Complement(directional)-can-call-collect.
Take better care of yourself, and live happily. Mon.-Thur. You can call around 11:00, (you) can call collect.

Linguistic constraints on codeswitching

In recent years, research has increasingly pointed towards the universality of three linguistic constraints on code-switching: the equivalence of structure constraint, according to which codeswitching will tend to occur at points in discourse where the juxtaposition of L1 and L2 elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language (Poplack 1980; Berk-Seligson 1986); the size-of-constituent constraint, major constituents (for example sentences, clauses) tend to be switched more frequently than smaller constituents such as one-word nouns, determiners, verbs, adverbs, adjectives (Timm 1975; Poplack 1980; Berk-Seligson 1986); and the free morpheme constraint, i.e., codeswitching can occur after any constituent is not a bound morpheme (McClure 1981; Poplack 1980, 1981).

The data on Chinese to English codeswitching support the hypothesis of free morpheme constraint. No switches have been found at a point of morpheme binding. However, the other two hypotheses are questionable. There are codeswitchers which are “ungrammatical” — do not conform to the syntactic rule of either language, two examples of which are shown in Table 7.

In the first example, there should be a verb ‘have/eat’ before dinner but it is omitted in the switching. In the second example ready replaces a combination of an action verb with a verbal complement expressing result. These examples contradict the hypothesis of equivalence of structure constraint by Poplack (1980) and Lipski (1978).

Chinese to English codeswitching may occur at points where juxtaposition of the
two languages violates a syntactic rule of either language. One reason for this might be that unlike Spanish and English which share many similarities in terms of structure, Chinese and English follow divergent syntactic patterns, and thus are sometimes difficult to blend well syntactically in codeswitches. Another reason could be that codeswitching behavior usually takes place in informal and casual interaction, the individuals may not consciously monitor their accuracy in speech.

Table 6 shows that the frequencies with which the syntactic categories under investigation have been produced in English. Proper nouns are excluded from this analysis. Repeated switches of the same constituent within one letter are calculated as a single incidence.

Among the most salient findings is the fact that the single most often switched constituent is the noun (comprising 39 percent of all the codeswitches). This stands in marked contrast to the findings of Gumperz (1976) and Poplack (1980), who found the sentence to be the most highly switched constituent, but corroborates the findings of McClure (1977) and Berk-Seligson (1986). The next most frequently switched constituents are noun phrases, exclamations, idioms, quotations and interjections.

The Chinese to English codeswitching in writing has disclosed some syntactic patterns that are very different from those found in conversational codeswitching by Spanish/English or Spanish/Hebrew bilinguals (e.g., Poplack 1980; Berk-Seligson 1986). The syntactic categories of Chinese to English switching only involve, intersententially, sentence and exclamation, idiom, quotation or interjection, and intrasententially, single noun, noun phrase, and adjective. Negative and affirmative articles, adverbs, adverbial phrases, conjunctions, prepositional phrases, interrogatives, clauses and clause markers, as found in Spanish/English or Spanish/Hebrew codeswitches, are excluded.

In the present data, intersential code-switching plays a less important role (only 25 percent of the switches); the bulk of the data is made up intrasentential switches, 79 percent are exclamations, idioms, quotations or interjections. The reasons and functions of this syntactic category have been discussed in detail in the last section on stylistic codeswitching.

Furthermore, large-sized constituents make up only 36 percent of all intrasentential codeswitches, whereas small-sized constituents comprise reversal 63 percent. These findings are an almost complete reversal of Poplack’s (1980) results and of the hypothesis of size-of-constituent constraint.

Conclusion

By integrating both a survey and a detailed case-study, this study has
investigated patterns of Chinese/English bilingual use in writing in the U.S., an area that has been largely neglected. A diglossic situation is discovered, with English in the high domains of education and employment, and Chinese in the low domains of family and friendship. Moreover, further observation of Chinese to English codeswitching behavior reveals certain unique characteristics when these two divergent languages and cultures interact. Unlike what has been found about Spanish to English codeswitching, the most salient stylistic functions in Chinese to English codeswitching are contextual switches and linguistic routines. Besides, switches take place not only to seek the concept or meaning from another language as illustrated by other scholars in the field, but also to express a new meaning out of a mixture and shared understanding of both languages and cultures.

With regard to linguistic constraints, the present study supports only the hypothesis of free morpheme constraint, and challenges the universality of the other two prevalent hypotheses the equivalence of structure constraint and the size-of-constituent constraint. Similar observation is also found in Berk-Seligson (1986) who studies oral interaction of another pair of divergent languages, Spanish and Hebrew. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research which draws more representative samples of divergent languages in intimate contact. Future efforts may be directed towards verifying the findings of this study and examining whether and how the hypotheses in question should be restricted or modified to a weaker formulation.

Finally, ever since Bloomfield (1948) took on the view that linguistic study is primarily concerned with speech and that writing is secondary, most linguists have been consciously or subconsciously preoccupied with the study of speech activities and ignored writing is just as important a means of communication as speech. This study gives a preliminary exploration of use of writing in a bilingual community. It is hoped that the study will stimulate further research in this vast field of which little has been explored or cultivated.

Notes

1 According to statistics from the U.S. government, in 1988, there were 4,417,560 Asians (including immigrants, non-immigrants and refugees) in the U.S.

2 In accordance with the wishes of the authors of the samples, all proper names have been changed.

References cited
Berk-Seligson, Susan. 1986. Linguistic Constraints on Intrasentential Codeswitching:


Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Michael A. Farris, Stephen S. Krzyston and Jirimutu for their assistance in preparing the Chinese portion of the codeswitching texts for publication.