# SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE-MIXING A STUDY OF KOREAN ADVERTISIING IN KOREAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Changyong Yang University of Florida

### **1** Introduction

Previous studies on the English influence on Korean have mainly been concerned with the influence of English loanwords to Korean in Korea (Shim 1982, Baik 1994) This seems to be due to the fact that among Western languages, English vocabulary is by far the largest in many areas Like many other bilingual studies which were conducted in bilingual communities (Roca & Jensen 1996), bilingualism in Korean-American community (KAC, henceforth) is, at least linguistically, worthy of attention with relation to the quick adoption and use of English however, not much attention has been paid to the Korean bilingual community. To the best of my knowledge, there seems to have been no study which has explored the influence of English from sociolinguistic perspectives to this date

This paper investigates the socio-cultural factors which function as main elements that determine language-mixing in a Korean newspaper circulated in the KAC. The structure of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 overviews previous studies, pointing out that they are limited in scope and domain Section 3 deals with language-mixing phenomena with a brief summary. The methodology and data collection are provided in section 4. Section 5 provides the basic patterns of language-mixing in advertising and its analysis from a sociolinguistic perspective.

# 2 Previous studies

In recent bilingual studies, written advertising has attracted a lot of attention from researchers whose main interests are in the influence of English on the advertising of other language (Bhatia (1987) in Indian, Takashi (1990) in Japanese, and Martin (1998) in French) These studies show that one of the main factors which exert an influence on the use of English would be ascribed primarily to sociocultural patterns and variables Takashi (1990 327) attributes the use of English in Japanese advertisements to 'different socio-cultural backgrounds' Another study carried out by Martin (1998) shows that motivational and attitudinal factors are the main reasons for the adoption of English in French advertisements in print. She concludes that, like Takashi's study, targeted audience's social variants such as age, sex, socio-economic status serve as the key elements influencing language-choice and code-mixing

The similar conclusions drawn from the prior studies seem due to the fact that commercial language is characterized by the social interactions between advertising and the intended audience. Therefore, it is essential to take into account the social factors with relation to the language-choice and language-mixing in advertising<sup>1</sup> In the same vein, this study is mainly concerned with sociolinguistic factors which have a strong influence on language-choice and language-mixing in advertising in the Korean newspaper of KAC

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> According to a recent study (Martin 1998 160), written advertisements become a good source for the study of languagemixing for the following reasons 1) easy manipulation of the data, 2) effective marketing strategies for communicative purpose, 3) it is one of the neglected area in the study of language-mixing In addition to a number of advantageous implications, we can add one more factor drawn from the bilingual environment to the above list That is, advertisements reflect the ongoing interactions between bilingual community and their targeted audience. It is expected that various communicative strategies will be used to convey the intended meanings effectively to their audience by means of advertising

On the other hand, the previous studies were conducted to see to what extent English is adopted in advertising both grammatically and sociolinguistically in other tongue-based countries (e.g. India, Japan, and France) They focused on the use or choice of English in native newspapers with respect to borrowing or code-switching The frequency of the appearance of English is very small compared to their native tongue As a result, their scope and domain need to be expanded That is, limited to the study on the influence of English on advertising in the other tongue, the previous studies fail to consider a mixing phenomenon of English with other languages in bilingual society

Unlike the previous studies, the advertising data for this study were drawn from a newspaper which is circulated among bilingual communities in the US in which Korean is widely used and English is also dominant. It is natural that under such conditions the English-mixed rate in advertisements in the newspaper be high, even though the amount of English in advertising varies with social factors or for some other reasons, as will be seen below, from the entirely English advertising to Korean-only advertising. Therefore, an attempt has been made to see to what extent English is used in a bilingual community of an English-based country in terms of sociolinguistic factors. In doing so, it is expected that this study will serve a complementary function to previous studies.

# 3 Language-mixing

In this section, the main focus is on the language-mixing phenomenon which is most interesting but recalcitrant issue in bilingual study The problem is perhaps related to the definition of terminology such as code-switching (CS) and code-mixing (CM) Then, difficulty of this kind, not surprisingly, leads different scholars to draw on different concepts of CS or CM which are expected to fit their studies. In spite of this difficulty, CS and CM are the most attractive topics to a large and diverse groups of researchers. Bokamba (1989 277) summarizes why code-switching is a popular topic among scholars for the following reasons 1) it is a newly (re-) discovered phenomenon, 2) thus far, it remains an elusive area, and 3) it brings about a new challenge to monolingual-based linguistic theories

To avoid some confusion, this paper uses the term language-mixing, in a broad sense, to refer not only to the traditional terms such as CS and CM, but also to varieties of one language within the other language Thus, language-mixing, literally and broadly, is used as a cover term to indicate the mixture of two languages in various ways and contexts. In this way, it is expected that language choices in bilingual community can be better accounted for in terms of social relation for communicative purposes

In previous studies, two major types of language-mixing have been identified grammatical /syntactic or discourse/pragmatic, constraint-based approaches and pragmatic approaches (Myers-Scotton 1993, Romaine 1995 121) The former is mainly concerned with grammatical constraints such as phonological, morphological and syntactic conditions Consequently, it is expected that language-mixing is mainly accounted for by the grammatical perspective i e internal structure. On the other hand, the latter has assumed that language-mixing can be better understood as the aspects of social functions which represent attitudes and value patterns of two separate groups. Here, the focus is more on the sociolinguistic factors which are related to the interactional social meaning accomplished by different types of language-mixing in advertising. That is, it seems that these social factors can describe how and why language-mixing take place, in Scotton and Ury's sense (1977 5), in the advertisements

# 4. Data & Methodology

The data examined in this study are drawn from one Korean newspaper - Hankuk Ilbo This newspaper, one of the four major daily newspapers in Korea, is released to Korean-American societies

in the States Even though the newspaper is circulated daily in two societies (Korea and Korean-American), there are lots of differences in its content While the newspaper released in Korea is limited to news and events occurring around Korea, the American-version of the newspaper consists of Korean news plus KAC-related news To gather news and events which take place centering around Korean-American communities, *Hankuk-IIbo* Co operates several major branches across the States These branches also take care of advertisements from and for KAC The American version of the newspaper has only KAC-related advertising Given that KAC is characterized by bilingual society, it is reasonably assumed that advertising based on bilingual communities reflects its socio-cultural backgrounds

Furthermore, considering the characteristics of written advertisements, it is consequent that language-choice strategies mirror the interactions of linguistic and social norms or conventions in the communities. For this purpose, the present study analyzes the advertisements in the newspapers which were released between Feb 1, 1999 and Feb 10, 1999, focusing on a relationship between language-mixing in advertising and social factors

Let us turn now to the analytical framework utilized in this study Since the introduction by Goffman (1974), the notion of 'frame' has been widely used by many researchers interested in sociolinguistic study Especially with relation to bilingual study, it is of use to explain an activity or event which characterizes the members of a group speaking different languages. A frame is organized by a set of rules or connections shared by the entire group. From a dinner conversation in large, smaller talk (eg jokes), pragmatic or linguistic feature such as tones of voices to discourse markers are such examples found in many studies (Nishimura 1995 169). Romaine (1995) also points out that a change of frame is a good paralinguistic or linguistic tool for code-switching or style shifting which takes place in conversation for interpersonal negotiation.

In the same context, this study chooses the term 'frame' to refer to various socio-cultural factors which characterize language-mixing in KAC Several frames are examined in the analysis of language-mixing, since no single specific framework can offer a satisfactory explanation for the multifunctional language-mixing (Nishimura 1995, Romaine 1995) Topic, politeness, commercial language, socio-economic status and generation constitute frames which can be construed as having an major influence on the decision of language-mixing in this study

### 5 Analysis and discussion

In order to see the socio-cultural impact on advertising language in bilingual communities, a first attempt has been made to analyze the types of advertising according to the language patterns employed in the Korean newspaper released in KAC. They are broadly put into three categories Korean only, English only, and a mixture of English and Korean After the identification of the type of advertising, socio-cultural frames are taken into consideration to offer some explanations for language-mixing. In the first part of this section, a preliminary analysis is in order. Here, the basic patterns of English-mixing in Korean advertising (what I call 'unmarked code-switching') are investigated. Then, in the second part of this section, several sociolinguistic frames are considered in the analysis of language-mixing in advertising of Korean newspaper in KAC.

#### 51 Preliminary analysis

Before looking at the social-cultural frames and, if possible, their effects on language-mixing in advertising, some general remarks are in order First of all, advertisements in the newspaper reflect the bilingual characteristics of KAC directly For example, almost all *wanted* advertisements contain

phrases like this *looking for someone who has a good command of both English and Korean* The fact that there are lots of advertisements looking for bilinguals can naturally be understood as strong evidence that KAC itself constitutes a bilingual society (i e Korean- and English-speaking community)

With relation to bilingual study, another obvious characteristic noticed is that there are several basic patterns in which English is used instead of Korean. These patterns comprise several types of language-mixing served in the Korean newspaper. They are a necessary part, but do not constitute the main content in advertising. They can be understood as 'unmarked code-switching' in that they have no specific effects in their uses in advertising. One of them is found in writing 'address'. Not surprisingly, all addresses which appear in advertisements investigated are written in English. Let's consider the following.

 42-22 27th Street, Long Island City, NY 11101 (Hankuk ilbo NY branch address) 8719 E Dry Creek Rd, #A Englewood, CO 80112 (Hankuk ilbo Denver address)

The use of English address is understandable if KAC is geographically located at the States By using English address system, Koreans also get a benefit, for example, when finding some destinations In addition, there are lots of English-preferable wordings (including most of the abbreviations) for phone number, pager number, fax, etc

(2) Tel(ephone), Off(ice), Bus(iness), Fax (facsimile), Pag(e), Home, etc

These words, as a necessary part of advertising, have already been widely accepted in KAC Like other formulaic expressions (e g how are you<sup>2</sup>), they are also used as an 'unmarked code-switching' as a part of address system in written advertising. In other words, they have no other specific functions These types of unmarked usage of English-mixing in advertising are not counted for consideration as language-mixing in this study.

### 52 Language-Choice

It might seem strange that Korean-only advertising in a Korean newspaper should be an object of explanation in terms of language-mixing. To answer this question, in part, provides us with a direct clue to a better understanding of the language situation in KAC. This understanding is based on the assumption that advertising is a direct reflection of social interactions of KAC. As for the relationship between advertising and social interactions, Martin's remarks (1998–180) deserve our attention "language-mixed advertisements are essentially a mirror of society, enabling the observer to gain a clearer understanding of attitudes toward language and culture"

Interestingly enough, almost all advertisements consist of a mixture of Korean and English in KAC<sup>2</sup> Based on Martin's remarks, chances are that the high frequency of language-mixing in advertising constitutes substantial evidence that KAC forms a bilingual society. Therefore, it can be assumed that the choice of Korean or English-only advertising against language-mixing has its specific purpose. To see some purpose, an attempt has been made to account for the language choice Korean only and English-only. More specifically, what kinds of socio-cultural factors are involved in the choice of Korean or English-only advertisements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Statistically, a language-mixed advertisements account for more than 70% per newspaper, regardless of the size of advertising. If we look at the advertisements with 5 (cm)  $\times$  7 (cm) in size, more than 95% consists of language-mixed advertisements

#### 5 2.1 Korean-only advertising

Compared to other language-mixing phenomenon we are going to see in section 5 3 below, this type of advertising is rather simple in terms of sociolinguistic analysis. As far as Korean-only advertising is concerned, it is of use to take into account, in general outlines, what kind of topic is employed in advertising. As shown in previous studies, topic is one of the main factors which have influence on language-mixing (Romaine 1995 163) The Korean-only advertising is also considerably dependent on what advertising is about

### (3) A brief list of topics

New year's Greetings, Invitations, Oriental Medicine, Funeral Notice, (Korean -based schools) Alumni Meeting, Festivals, Phone Card (to call to Korea), etc

As shown in the brief list of topics above, our investigation of the advertising suggests that topics preferring to use Korean-only are closely related to the Korean emotional appeal Most of the topics have, at an underlying level, some Korean connections which render readers to evoke Korean things such as Korean culture, Korean customs, Korean traditions, etc For example, new year's greetings are given only in Korean It is customary for Koreans to give and take a new year's greeting toward the end of the year New year's greetings by sending a card or a calendar are one of the Korean customs by which Koreans show their gratitude or respect to those who take care of them or are elderly Among them are parents and school teachers Most companies, whether small or large, put some advertisements in the newspapers to show their courtesy and express their gratitude toward customers In a broad sense, the Korean-only advertising can be associated with deep-rooted Korean tradition Earlier studies also showed the same implication carried out by a native tongue For example, Bhatia (1987 36) suggests that deep-rooted Indian tradition is marked by Sanskrit in Hindi advertising

In recent work, Gumperz (1982) has posited a distinction between a 'we' code and a 'they' code This distinction corresponds roughly to the 'minority' vs 'majority' language distinction. In switch functions the former implies subjectivity and intimacy, while the latter carries the opposite implications such as objectivity and authority. In Gumperz's sense, Korean-only advertising can be categorized into 'we' code in that it typically represent 'in-group activities' generally based on Korean connections

### 522 English-only advertising

Even though English-only advertisements exist in the Korean newspapers, they are very rare in number (average 2-3 of the whole advertising per day) First of all, the appearance of English advertising in the Korean newspaper feels strange or looks outside<sup>3</sup>, though acceptable at least geographically This kind of advertising can be regarded as 'they'-code in Gumperz's terms, as a counterpart of 'we'-code and thus it carries the implication related to 'outside group activity' and 'objectivity' In fact, a single frame might fall short of providing a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon Most of them target the educated and young audience who are interested in investment or looking for a working position in the inside or outside KAC

#### 53 Language-mixing

So far we have observed language-choice between Korean-only and English-only in newspaper advertising circulated among KAC The findings suggest that Korean-only advertising has something to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Matin (1998) points out that the mixture of English in French advertising looks strange But in advertising in KAC, English-only advertisement looks strange It seems to me that a mixture of English and Korean, at least appearance, looks normal under a bilingual situation

do with, in a broad sense, the Korean connections related to 'we'-code, while English-only one, even though hard to pin down, is generally related to the multi-frames which are better understood as 'they'-code In this section, we are going to look at the language-mixing between Korean and English in advertising In doing so, we will see what social frames operate in the mixing of two languages Korean and English. Some of them account for the preference of Korean over English and vice versa

### **5 3.1 Politeness frame**

As is often found in the literature, one way of interpreting a specific aspect of the interaction between language and society is to consider the use of politeness. There are various devices (by words or actions) to express politeness in Korean Linguistically, as many previous studies point out, polite expressions are to a considerable degree conditioned by socio-cultural backgrounds (Suh 1984, Sohn 1986) To list a few for Koreans *be polite to an older person, be polite in a formal setting, be polite not by using arrogant words when talking*, etc In Gumperz's sense, politeness can be construed as some sharing of code and principles of communicative interpretation, in that people can better understand each other on what is being accomplished in particular settings through them

Politeness consists of one of the frames which provides the basic motivations to trigger the use of Korean in advertising with reference to language-mixing There are various social factors involved in the use of politeness such as social position, power, age, formality, etc The misuse of social factors creates a violation of politeness, leading one to *lose one's face*<sup>4</sup> (Sohn 1986) For instance, all advertisements exploited in this study use the Korean wording *Kamsahapnita*, instead of English counterpart 'Thank you' to express gratitude Even though the English expression 'Thank you' shows high frequency rate in everyday conversation, the use of this expression is rarely allowed in written advertisements which are geared towards all age groups and unfamiliar groups<sup>5</sup> This is because the use of English expression for gratitude gives the impression of shallowness to the intended audience and the targeted audiences does not take this advertising seriously As a result, the advertisements fails to achieve their interactions with the audience

#### 5.3 2. Socio-economic frame

In language-mixing, English carries out an overwhelmingly important function in the following position in rank and English name First of all, advertising prefers to use English to indicate the positions To illustrate, consider the following

(4) agent, coordinator, office representative, (Assistant, Branch, Executive ) manager, Dr, etc

In addition to the position marked by English, it is also noticed that those who take sales positions or occupy expert positions such as a physician, lawyer, or CPA prefer to use the English name or the Korean plus English name in parenthesis

Located as a part of an English-speaking community, KAC is under the control of that community system (e g legally or commercially) which operates under the use of English Therefore,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> To lose one's face brings about considerable restrictions on social interactions (Sohn 1986) Politeness, as a social norm, applies to all social areas including spoken and written forms <sup>5</sup> In Korean tradition, English expression intuitively seems to lack 'politeness' and is regarded as just 'plain' style. So if the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In Korean tradition, English expression intuitively seems to lack 'politeness' and is regarded as just 'plain' style. So if the young use this expression like foreign expressions like 'thank you' to the elderly, it will lead to a violation of politeness. In Korean tradition, age and familiarity are some of the most important elements determining the use of politeness markers ( Sohn 1986 403)

the educated experts who engage in the areas of legal or commercial matter are naturally expected to be bilingual to connect each community In this regard, with relation to socio-economic status, the use/choice of English in name and position gives the targeted audience prestige, authority and reliability as a connection to outside world in which English is dominant<sup>6</sup>

# 5 3 3 Commercial frame

One of the more direct factors which determine the use of English in advertising in Korean newspaper is found in the influence of American commercial language. Even though linguistically KAC is a Korean-dominant bilingual community, geographically, it constitutes a part of the whole American community in the English-speaking society of the US. The understanding of this kind of social arena, in Scotton and Ury's sense, is essential in the sense that language-mixing is a kind of direct reflection of social situation. In addition, most Korean-Americans engage in business inside or outside KAC. As a result, we can attribute the most important source of influence from English to the way they live in American society. For expository convenience, two types (I and II) will be considered Type I includes the high frequency commercial language for communicative purposes. For example

(5) customer service, sale, credit, interest rate, realty, insurance, savings or checking account, return or refund policy, etc

The preference of English over Korean might be in part explained in terms of some of the motivations for mixing of languages summarized in Martin (1998 161) "To appropriately obey rules governing interactional norms and communicative domain" or "To communicate effectively in certain multilingual speech communities" That is, these terms are encountered in everyday lives and will be widely used among people with frequent contacts directly (e g dealing or shopping) or indirectly (e g the influence of mass media) Next, let's look at the type II of commercial frame This type includes, for example, various products of the following categories

(6) clothes (e g Jeans, drizzle coat, sweater, etc) sports (e g golf, basketball, glove, etc) products (e g shampoo, towel, soap, etc)

Many studies on the influence of English show that the categories in type II appear with ease in the form of English in other tongues (Karchu 1986, Bhatia 1987, Romaine 1995) This trend has something to do with "stereotypical attitudes regarding the English language" in other tongues (Martin 1998 163) For instance modernization, efficiency, reliability, etc

But interestingly enough, the effects of English in an English-based bilingual community are likely to be different from the influences of English in other tongues done in the previous studies. The fact that the frequency of English in other tongue basis is relatively smaller than in English basis must be pointed out. The high frequency of English words in an English-speaking bilingual community does not give people in KAC some impression that the use of English feels strange, as shown in the previous studies on advertising (Bhatia 1987, Kakashi 1989)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Interestingly enough, Chinese started being used in Korea long before the invention of Korean alphabet Historically speaking, Chinese, as a medium carrying the Chinese advanced culture and technology, has been considered a prestigious language which is generally used by those who get a higher socio-economic position and by the educated person. In this regard, the person name and the indication of position in hierarchical system are marked in Chinese characters in Korea. In recent study, Shim (1982) and Baik (1994) point out that English, as an international language, replaces the old role played by Chinese and starts taking an influential position in Korea.

# 5 3.4 Technology frame

As many studies on language-mixing (especially with English) point out, one of the most obvious areas influenced by English is found in the direct adoption of terminology for newly advanced technology. The use of new terms is basically explained in terms of grammatical constraints to fill a lexical gap. On top of this, some attention has been drawn to the sociolinguistic analysis (e.g. motivation attitude) for a more expanded borrowed terminology (Kachru 1986, Romaine 1985). To list a few authority, modernization, prestigiousness, reliability, etc

Like other communities, KAC is not immune to the intrusion of newly introduced terminology for advanced technology Terms for new technology are written mostly in English, English plus Korean pronunciation in parenthesis or, rarely, only written in Korean pronunciation, as in

(7) windows, word, internet, e-mail, computer, computer (컴퓨터),어드 [Korean pronunciation for 'word']

### 535 Generation frame

Next, we have to talk about the generation as one of the main reasons which are responsible for language-mixing in advertising. In spite of the fact that the previous materials available are considerably limited, it is not impossible to come up with some statistics. The origin of Korean immigration into America traces back to the early 20th century, but the history of mass immigration into the States is found after the Korean civil war. Based on this observation, it can be easily inferred that KAC consists of the first and the second generation in general terms. This is supported by the following US census data

[Table I] Koleali-American Topulation				
1980	1990			
80502	141100			
59958	137603			
63212	136032			
75531	150705			
44752	112883			
30638	120526			
354593	798849			
	1980 80502 59958 63212 75531 44752 30638			

[Table 1] Korean-American Population

(Sources United States Census 1980 & 1990)

Table (1) obviously shows us that the population of KAC is still increasing in number. It also suggests that different generations exist at the same time in KAC. In her study on Japanese code-switching between Japanese *Nesis* (the second Japanese generation), Nishimura (1995) investigated the many ethnographic studies on immigrations. She came to a conclusion that different immigrant groups (Germans, Italians, Japanese, and Ukrains) share basically the same patterns of language retention and ethnic identity. That is, "the first generation is monolingual speakers of their ethnic language, the second generation are bilingual." (Nishimura 1995 161) Based on these general observations, it can be assumed that KAC can be best characterized by a mixture of monolingual speakers from a linguistic point of view. In other words, that generation is taken into account, in part, provides a clue to the question why there exist both English and Korean pronunciation of English at the same time.

(8)	computer	[컴퓨터)	tutor [튜터)
	Internet	[인터넷]	graphic [그래픽]

The introduction of English and Korean at the same time into advertising can maximize the effect of advertising in KAC By using Korean, it can appeal to old generations and furthermore to Korean emotional root By using English, it can also attract younger generations and give them an impression of modernity or sophistication. In a similar context, Bhatia (1987 39) shows that the use of English is associated with the feeling of 'modernity' in Indian newspapers or magazines

## 6 Conclusion

In conclusion, we have shown that socio-cultural factors serve as the key elements in determining language-mixing in the advertising of a newspaper in KAC. For this purpose, three types of advertising are identified Korean-only, English-only, and a mixture of Korean and English. After the identification, we have examined social frames such as, topic, politeness, socio-economic status, commercial language, and generation to offer better insight into the language-mixing in advertising of the Korean newspaper circulated in KAC.

As a pilot study, the main focus of this study has been concerned with the socio-cultural factors which play an important role in determining language-mixing in KAC Concluding this study, it is expected that the focus of the future study will be given to areas ignored in this study. They include 1) grammatical-constrained approaches to language-mixing, 2) more pragmatic considerations on why language-mixing is widely prevailing in KAC.

## Notes

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