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A Study of Chinese-English Code-switching in Chinese Sports News Reports

ETUDE SUR L'ALTERNANCE DE CODES DU CHINOIS EN ANGLAIS DANS LES RAPPORTS ET LES NOUVELLES SPORTIFS CHINOIS

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Abstract: This paper reports a study of Chinese-English code-switching in Chinese sports news reports with an aim to provide a better understanding of the linguistic features of Chinese-English code-switching. Based on the data collected from *Titan Sports*–the most influential comprehensive sports newspaper in China, the study finds that the switched constituents vary from singly occurring letters and lexemes to embedded phrases and sentences, with each carrying its own features. Adopting Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model to the discussion of code-switching occurrences, this study relates the linguistic features observed to the sense of markedness which can account for the features found in the study.
Key words: Chinese-English code-switching; Matrix language; Embedded constituent; Markedness

Resumé: Cet article présente une étude sur l'alternance de codes du chinois en anglais dans les nouvelles sportives chinoises dans le but de fournir une meilleure compréhension des caractéristiques linguistiques de l'alternance de codes du chinois en anglais. Basée sur des données recueillies auprès de Titan Sports, le plus influent journal de sport en Chine, l'étude constate que les constituants alternés varient des lettres et des lexèmes qui apparaissent seul à des phrases intégrées, et que chacun porte ses propres caractéristiques. En adoptant le modèle de caractère marqué de Myers-Scotton, cette étude relie les caractéristiques linguistiques observés au sens du marquage, qui peut expliquer les caractéristiques trouvées dans l'étude.
Mots-clés: alternance de codes du chinois en anglais; matrice de langue; constituants intégrés; caractère marqué

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1. INTRODUCTION

Code-switching, a well-researched topic in the field of sociolinguistics, has attracted considerable attention in the past few decades. Well discussed as a language contact phenomenon, code-switching is traditionally studied in typical bilingual speech communities, where two or even more languages are used alternatively and almost equally. Few scholars have ever considered the code-switching phenomenon in countries of the "expanding circle" (Kachru, 1988: 208), like China, Japan, South Korea and so on, where English is used only as a foreign language and their native language is used dominantly. In the recent decade, however, the ever-increasing use of English has promoted the code-switching phenomenon in these countries. China, for instance, provides a varied stock of Chinese-English code-switching data for serious attention and further investigation. Myers-Scotton (2006) has taken the code-switching phenomenon in China seriously and discussed at length a Chinese businessman's code-switching in her monograph. This is a fresh start for the Western world to discover the value of code-switching study in China.

Code-switching is commonly seen as more typical of the spoken language and more studies in the past were conducted in the spoken language than in the written language. In the countries of the "expanding circle" like China, however, there are some areas of language use, like newspapers, advertisements, lyrics, on-line literary works and so on, where English proper names, common nouns and sometimes even whole phrases and sentences are imported into the written native language, which constitute a more stable variety of code-switching than the spontaneous and unpredictable code-switching in the spoken language in these countries. The present study is, therefore, intended to explore the code-switching phenomenon in Chinese sports newspapers and to find out the linguistic features and distribution patterns of code-switching in Chinese sports news reports. In addition, code-switching in Chinese sports news reports is a linguistic phenomenon that remains unexplored which might be one of the quite interesting characteristics of sports writing in China.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past few decades, with the ever-increasing recognition of the importance of code-switching in the study of language contact in the field of sociolinguistics, researches have generally been conducted on the following aspects of code-switching: the linguistic constraints that govern the form or structure taken by code-switching and its structural patterns (Di Sciullo, Muysken and Singh, 1986; Poplack, 1980; Joshi, 1985; Myers-Scotton, 1993b); the social correlates of language choice, which determine when, where, with whom, and to what end code-switching is employed (Appeal and Muysken, 1987; Gumperz, 1971, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993a); and the dynamics of code-switching in interaction with respect to the functions of code-switching in turns taking and sequencing of conversation (Auer, 1998).

Though the above-mentioned studies investigate the code-switching phenomenon from the aspects of structural, sociolinguistic, socio-psychological and conversational analysis, grammatical constraints on code-switching or the structural dimension of code-switching is always the starting point in that research on a linguistic phenomenon generally begins with the language itself and then extends to other factors influencing the use of language.

The copious researches conducted previously by Western scholars and researchers on the structural aspect of code-switching demonstrate that code-switching is a highly systematic and rule-governed linguistic phenomenon in terms of structure and call the academic attention to grammatical constraints on code-switching. Many researchers have aimed for universal grammatical constraints on code-switching between any two languages. Poplack has proposed two constraints (Poplack, 1980; Sankoff, 1981): Free Morpheme Constraint and Equivalence Constraint, the weakness of which lies in failure to recognize asymmetry regarding the participation of the languages involved. Sridhar and Sridhar (1980) point out that the participating languages in code-switching play asymmetric roles, one being the host language and the other the guest language, which is known as Duel Structure Principle, with code-switching between Kannada and English as its database. Joshi (1985) inherits their ideas and further develops the "asymmetry rule". Joshi's notion of the matrix language (equals to the host language), the embedded language (equals to

the guest language) and Closed-Class Constraint has a remarkable impact on Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame Model. This model is developed more elaborately (Myers-Scotton, 1993b) and, together with the Markedness Model for social motivations for code-switching (Myers-Scotton, 1993a), forms a whole theory of code-switching, the two being complementary to each other.

Since Blom and Gumperz's (1972) sociolinguistic study of code-switching in Hemnesberget, Norway, it has been widely accepted that alternation between codes is not only syntactically rule-governed, but is also socially motivated. His typology of metaphorical code-switching and situational code-switching suggests that code-switching is motivated by "a shift in topic and in other extra-linguistic context markers that characterize the situation" (Blom and Gumperz, 1972: 98). This sociolinguistic approach is further elaborated by Myers-Scotton (1993a) in her Markedness Model for code-switching with an emphasis on speaker rather than on the topic or situation. The basic premise of this model is that code-switching is employed by speakers as a communicative strategy to accomplish a goal in conversations (Myers-Scotton, 1993a).

In their quest either for the grammatical constraints on code-switching or for social correlates of code-switching, most of these Western researchers focus on the verbal code-switching, that is, code-switching in bilingual speakers' daily conversation. Only a few are found to make an attempt to probe into code-switching in the written language. Code-switching in such written language discourse as essays, poems, advertisements, lyrics and commercial signs is seldom touched upon until the recent decade (Banu and Sussex, 2001; Lee, 2004; Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 1995; Shahrzad, 2005, Myers-Scotton; 1998) when consensus has been generally reached with the efforts and devotion of researchers represented by Myers-Scotton (1989, 1993a, 1993b; 1998 and 2006) that code-switching is a communicative strategy and skilled performance not only in conversation but also in literary works and other written forms.

Compared with verbal code-switching which are mostly spontaneous and unconscious, code-switching in written language is usually conscious, prepared and repeatedly rehearsed before it is released to the public, such as code-switching in poems, advertisements and newspapers, showing the writers' skills and strategies for appealing to readers. The employment of code-switching in these areas of language use constitutes a stable and interesting variety of code-switching available for research (Banu and Sussex, 2001; Lee, 2004; Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 1995; Shahrzad, 2005). In addition, the recording and transcribing of naturally occurring conversation inevitably carry the disadvantages of Observer's Paradox proposed by Labov, which can be easily circumvented by studies of code-switching in written language. Given the advantage of code-switching study in written language, there is still a lack of systematic and prolific studies of code-switching in various written genres.

Studies of code-switching in China appear much later than those conducted in the West and, to date, there are only a small number of studies concerning code-switching in China. A review of the literature on these studies of code-switching in China reveals mainly the following two issues of code-switching in China. First, Chinese researchers focus on two forms of code-switching: Chinese-English code-switching and switches between Putonghua—standard Chinese—and the speaker's dialect with the former largely in written forms and the latter mainly in spoken language.

Second, there is a growing interest in the code-switching phenomenon in such written discourses as news, novels and advertisements in recent years. Since China is not a typical bilingual country, code-switching between Chinese and other foreign languages in spoken language is still not common except in EFL classrooms and joint ventures in China. Instead, such written discourses as news, novels and advertisements constitute a more stable variety of Chinese-English code-switching for research. These researches report the increasing use of code-switching from the 1980s to the beginning of this century, but have not predicated its trend in future. They give simple descriptions of linguistic features as well as the distribution of code-switching in a specific type of discourse, but fail to provide in-depth discussions on why this specific type of discourse manifests such linguistic features and distribution patterns.

Against the backdrop of the previous code-switching studies both at home and abroad, the present research intends to devote itself to the study of Chinese-English code-switching in Chinese sports news reports. It attempts to address the following research question-What are the linguistic features of Chinese-English code-switching in Chinese sports news reports. More specifically, what is the structure of Chinese-English code-switching? What English constituents are often involved in Chinese-English code-switching? How is the switched constituent integrated into the matrix language Chinese? The answers

to the research question will offer important insights into Chinese-English code-switching in Chinese sports news reports and provide implications for code-switching study in China.

3. DATA SOURCE

The data for the present study are news reports collected from *Titan Sports* –the most influential comprehensive sports newspaper in China with a large weekly circulation of more than 2 millions. Regarding news coverage, *Titan Sports* covers nearly all kinds of popular sports nowadays as well as large sports competitions. Hence, it can be the best representative of written sports news in China.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A close investigation into the data reveals the linguistic features in the following aspects. First, the switched constituents vary from singly occurring letters and lexemes in ML(Matrix Language) + EL(Embedded Language) constituents to embedded phrases and sentences which form EL islands, among which English lexemes are found to be the most frequently embedded constituent in Chinese sports news reports. The English lexemes observed in the present study fall into six lexical categories—nouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives, conjunctions and interjections, among which nouns take up the majority.

4.1 Analysis of Embedded Letter

A very common occurrence of English letters observed is the first few letters—A, B, C, D and so on—in alphabetic order to indicate different levels, for example, 國際 A 級賽事, A 級教練證書, 甲 A 聯賽, 甲 B 聯賽, A 計畫, B 計畫 and different teams or groups, for example, A 組, B 組, C 組, A 隊, B 隊 and a well-known Italian football team AC 米蘭. Nearly One third of the English letters are the initials of the names of foreign athletes or competitions, for example, 大 O (Oscar Robertson—a NBA player), 大 Z (Zydrunas Ilgauskas—a NBA player), C. 羅納爾多 (a football player), P.J. 布朗(a basketball player), J 聯賽(a football match in Japan), K 聯賽(a football match in South Korea), F1 and A1 (car racing games). Sometimes, a single English letter functions as an indefinite reference, such as 最不穩定的 X 因素, 6 星級 W 賓館, Q 球管, 第 N 次, T 先生, in which “X”, “W”, “Q”, “N”, “T” are used to designate indefinite persons or things. Such English letters as “T”, “S” and “V” are often cited to describe the shape of objects, for example, T 型台, S 形路面 and V 形手勢. The above cases show that English letters embedded in Chinese carry different meanings and are inserted into Chinese language as part of the Chinese noun or noun phrase without disturbing its phrase or sentence structure.

4.2 Analysis of Embedded Lexeme

Lexeme is the most frequently switched constituent among the four types of EL constituent. The embedded English lexemes fall into six lexical categories of nouns, verbs, adjectives, interjections, prepositions and conjunctions in the present study, among which nouns appear most, which includes acronyms, proper nouns and common nouns. The acronyms observed in the research are usually the condensed forms of lengthy names of sports events, titles or sports programs, for example, NBA (National Basketball Association), CBA (Chinese Basketball Association), WGC (World Golf Championship), CCTV (China Central Television), LG (Lucky Goldstar), WTA (Women’s Tennis Association), ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals), ESPN (Entertainment and Sport Program Network), OT (over time), MVP (Most Valuable Player) and MOP (Most outstanding Player). These acronyms stand out, for they are concise and time-saving while their full forms have almost been forgotten. The English proper nouns spotted in the data are the names of athletes, places and sports brands. Common nouns fall into two types, one being sports terminology like “par” in golf, “ace” in tennis, “shoot” and “slam dunk” in basketball, “goal” in football

and the other being colloquial words like “pose”, “shit”, “fan”, “party”, “show”, “pub”, “tip” and so on. Look at the following examples:

[1] 已經退休兩年的坎普曾在 NBA 征戰過 14 載, 並於 1996 年幫助超音速殺入總決賽, 被稱為“reignman (統治者)”, 由於同美國上演影片《雨人 (rain man)》發音相近, 坎普得了“雨人”的綽號。2002-03 賽季為魔術效力後, 就沒有在 NBA 打過球。

[2] 比利時 RSscan 公司總裁 Jempi Wilssens 介紹, 芯技術是 CBA 帶給我們的高科技成果…

“PK” is a brandnew and special acronym found in the research. There are different versions of what PK stands for in English, namely “punch & kick”, “player killing”, “player killer”, or “personal killing” from computer games and “penalty kick” or “point kick” from soccer games, on which no consensus has been reached, but it is generally agreed that PK is used in two ways in Chinese, one as a noun meaning “one-to-one competition” and the other as a verb meaning “defeat or eliminate”. Two examples are singled out here for a detailed analysis.

[3] 換句話說,聯城隊中的大連籍隊員曾經在當年的競爭中被同齡的實德隊員 PK 掉了。

[4] 這樣, 無論在一對一的 PK 還是全域性的 VS, 聯城這個上海足球的小阿弟全面壓倒了同城老大申花。

The use of PK as a verb or as a noun is determined by its position in the ML sentence structure. In [3], “被 PK 掉了” shows the type of ML+EL constituents, ML providing a sentence structure and morpheme order for passive voice and the EL constituent “PK” standing in the place of a verb in the sentence structure, meaning “defeat”. In [4], PK is used as a noun meaning “one-to-one competition”, because it serves as the object of the preposition “在” and in Chinese “的” is always followed by a noun.

Prepositions also make their way into the Chinese sports news reports. All the prepositions observed are “vs” –the abbreviation of the English preposition “versus”. It is found that it crops up in both headlines and body of the report. Headlines of two reports with “vs” in them are picked out here as examples.

[5] 《打破 vs 延續》

[6] 《王治郅 vs CBA 總決賽》

According to Myers-Scotton’s criterion for distinguishing content and system morphemes, some prepositions belong to content morphemes and some system morphemes, which should be analyzed respectively. The preposition “vs” detected in the present research are content morphemes because they have both features〔-Quantification〕and〔+Thematic Role-Assigner〕.

The English adjectives embedded in Chinese language are all descriptive adjectives which are prototypically categorized into content morphemes in MLF model, for example, “high” and “great” in the following two examples.

[7] 有感覺的人這時候根本不用思考自己在說什麼, 就像被通電了一樣,用白岩松的話說叫高峰體驗, 用時下流行的話叫 high 了, 那種自如的狀態就是 high 了。

[8] 我們的合作就是 GREAT!

The English verbs embedded are verb stems without inflectional affixation with only one exception. In Chinese, verbs do not have inflectional affixations as English verbs do. English verb stems, therefore, show better integration into the matrix language—Chinese than infected verb forms and thus have a higher frequency. For example, “stop” in [9] and copy in [10] are better integrated into the Chinese language than “fighting” in [11]. Verb stems “stop” and “copy” are inserted directly into the Chinese sentence or headline in place of the predicate, but “fighting” is bracketed and placed after the Chinese predicate “战斗”.

[9] 《红人“STOP”!》

[10] 但输球就拿球员开刀, 赢球就 COPY 上一场的一切, 这已经是吴金贵的定式。

[11] 他也提醒球员们: “现在我们必须为每一分钟而战斗 (fighting)!”

In accordance with Myers-Scotton's MLF, the embedded interjections and conjunctions also function as content morphemes. The English conjunctions are all detected in the headlines of the reports, which are the same word "or" shown in [12]. The embedded interjections are "yes" or "no", as is used in [13].

[12] 《冠军告别 or 金杯贺寿》

[13] 刚来的时候别人问我饿了没有, 我说 YES 就吃, 别的都不能交流.

As illustrated above, all the embedded English lexemes in Chinese-English code-switching are content morphemes, which only play a "contributing" or "participating" role in a Chinese syntactic frame (Myers-Scotton, 1993b: 47). The morpheme order and the sentence structure are still entirely determined by the matrix language—Chinese.

4.3 Analysis of Embedded Phrase

It is observed in the present study that English noun phrases (NP) account for the majority of all the English phrases embedded in the Chinese sports news reports. Two kinds of switched English NP are observed in the present study. The first is full NP composed of a determiner and a head, such as "The doctor" in [14], or with an attributive between them like "a 10-out-of-10 star man" in [15]. The second is intermediate NP such as "Sportsmanship Award" in [16], which is part of the full NP "The Sportsmanship Award".

[14] 上周轉戰杜哈, "ROSSI"變成了 "THE DOCTOR" 。

[15] 而在場上, 亨利果然靈動無比,泰晤士報因此說他是"a 10-out-of-10 star man (滿分男人)".

[16] 在 NBA, 與 MVP, 最佳防守球員等獎項相比, 運動員精神獎 (Sportsmanship Award) 這個名字似乎有點陌生。

Intermediate NPs are observed to occur more than full NPs. A much lower frequency of full NP may be attributed to the fact that determiners in full NP showing the feature〔+Quantification〕are system morphemes in English. In Chinese, there are no such articles as "a (n)" and "the" which can play the role of a determiner. Thus, intermediate NPs without determiners can be better integrated into the Chinese language system. Full NPs are usually observed in direct quotations.

4.4 Analysis of Embedded Sentence

One notable feature of embedded English sentence observed in the data is "structural flagging", which is detected in all sentence-level code-switching. English sentence, the largest EL island observed in the present research, consists of both content and system morphemes from English and consequently commands higher English language competence from readers than embedded letter, lexeme and phrase. The present research, however, finds that the embedded English sentence is either a repetition of the previous Chinese sentence in meaning and placed in a bracket as in [17] or is followed by a Chinese translation placed in a bracket as in [18] so as to make it understood to all Chinese readers.

[17] "我認為說他在泥地上比我強是不對的。"(I think it's wrong to say he's better than me on clay.)

[18] 我們的理念是'Good Hosting, Fewer Problems (當好東道主, 麻煩就會少)'。

This kind of repetition or translation is labeled as "structural flagging" in Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model for code-switching (Myers-Scotton, 1993a: 141). Structural flagging is also detected in some embedded English phrases and lexemes. The small amount of English lexemes followed by Chinese translation are mainly terminologies, part of acronyms and adjectives which might be, in general, unfamiliar to readers and deemed necessary to explain in Chinese.

The distribution patterns of Chinese-English code-switching in Chinese sports news reports can be summarized as follows. First, code-switching occurs more in foreign sports news reports than in domestic sports news reports. Second, while the majority of code-switching is spotted in lead and body of the reports, some do crop up in headlines, making themselves more prominent. Finally, all the English sentences and nearly half of the English phrases are observed in direct quotations.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

This part discusses the above findings by adopting Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model of code-switching and incorporating the language style of sports writing. A major theme of her model is that code-switching is a type of skilled performance with communicative intent (Myers-Scotton, 1993a). Transplanting this perspective to the discussion of code-switching in sports news reports, we can state that code-switching investigated in the present study is skilled performance of the sports news writers and editors who assess the potential costs and rewards of choosing the codes and finally make their decisions before the newspaper is printed out. The use of English in sports news report, therefore, is not accidental improvisation, but preplanned and intentional code-switching with specific goals to accomplish in the minds of the sports writers and editors. The discussion of the research findings may offer insightful implications for sports writers and editors, for EFL teachers and for language policy makers.

Code-switching observed in the data for the present research can be interpreted as either unmarked code choices, which are familiar to the sports fans or readers in sports news and thus are expected by them, or marked ones, which are just the opposite.

5.1 Code-switching as an Unmarked Choice

Unmarked code choice is a safe choice which is expected by and familiar to the participants in the communication, hence, this choice is most frequently made and generally accepted (Myers-Scotton, 1993a).

5.1.1 Lexeme

English lexeme embedded in a Chinese sentence is found to be the most frequently embedded constituent in Chinese sports news reports and embedded nouns take up the majortiy among all the lexical categories, which accords with the findings of many previous researches (Azuma, 1997; Myers-Scotton, 1993b, etc.).

According to the above research results, most embedded nouns are English acronyms which are usually the condensed forms of lengthy names of sports events, titles or sports programs, such as NBA, CBA, MVP and ESPN. They are often employed in sports news and whose appearance, in general, conveys no surprise to the sports readers or fans in the context of sports. There are also such English acronyms as LG, CCTV, DVD, CD, VIP, CEO and so on, which are even familiar to most Chinese people in daily communication and are gaining popularity among Chinese people due to its simplicity and convenience. Repeated use of these acronyms in sports news reports, therefore, is unmarked code-switching, representing the most widely accepted and natural choice for the sports writers or editors. However, not all the English acronyms found are unmarked. A tiny proportion of the acronyms that are structurally flagged constitute marked code-switching, because the accompaniment of Chinese repetition or translation suggests that the acronym is less frequent and might be unfamiliar to many readers, such as IMG (國際管理集團), NCAA (美國全國大學體育協會), MOP (最傑出球員) and so on.

Besides acronyms, English interjections like "yes" and "no", verbs like "pass", "copy" and "stop", common nouns like "pose", "e-mail" and "party", adjectives like "ok", "good" and "great" also belong to umarked code choice. The insertion of these English lexemes into the Chinese sentence does not change radically the whole sentence meaning and to comprehend such inserted English constituents does not require high English proficiency but a small stock of knowledge about some content lexemes (Myers-Scotton, 1993a). Sports newspapers in China are targeted for sports fans, the majority of whom are students and young employees in company whose English level is, in general, high enough for these quite colloquial English words. Besides, code-switching usually occurs on informal occasions, hence, the employment of Chinese-English code-switching, especially switching to colloquial English words implies that the sports writers or editors wish to have in place an informal or friendship-type relationship with readers through shifting codes.

5.1.2 Letter

It is found that English letters, which are not detected and thus not defined as an EL constituent by Myers-Scotton's (1993b), are second only to embedded English lexemes in the present study, which deserves notice. The use of English letters in alphabetic order to indicate different levels and groups as well as the employment of such English letters as X, Y and N to designate something unknown or uncertain are now common practice in China. "AC 米蘭" is a famous Italian football team which is known to all that have ever cared about football or the World Cup. The use of "T", "S" or "V" to represent the shape of objects can be easily understood from the shape of these letters. Their occurrence in Chinese sports news reports, therefore, is unmarked code choice, which means that they enjoy greater freedom of occurrence than their Chinese counterparts due to its simplicity and represent the most expected linguistic code in the context of sports news (Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 1995). However, not all the twenty six English letters can be used in the above-mentioned ways and unlike lexemes, these English letters are restricted in their usage and meaning.

1.3 Code-switching in Quotations

Code-switching in quotations also exemplify unmarked code choice. The English lexeme, phrase or sentence quoted from the original foreign expert or athlete is unmarked code choice for the original speech event, while the Chinese language preceding and following the quotation is unmarked code choice for the present news context. This type of code-switching is labeled as sequential unmarked code-switching in Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993a). Switching to the original codes in the cited remarks can make the narration "more vivid" and "closer to the real thing" (Myers-Scotton, 1993a: 117); they can directly reveal the source's opinions or feelings such as [19]; they quote something interesting and informative such as [20]; and they express strong emotions or reactions of the source such as [21].

[19] 這也是驗證了記者在採訪多位元國際級教練時他們所說的一句話,就是"Bob is for football (博比·霍頓是在為足球而工作）。"

[20] 對江蘇隊的半決賽之前, 一次訓練, 積臣嘴裡的"PIG"投籃未中, 趁著短暫的休息, 積臣追著朱芳雨的屁股, 怪叫著問, "我的 SUPER PIG 怎麼不行啦? 是不是又受傷了?"

[21] 圖拔也走過來, 康夢君跟他也來了一次熱烈擁抱, "Very good!" 康夢君幾乎是沖圖拔喊了。

Good quotations let the reader hear the speaker and make the report vivid and interesting, hence, they are generally accepted or even expected (Bagnall, 1993). Example one also shows structural flagging which is characteristic of marked code-switching, as illustrated in the following section of code-switching as a marked choice, but their occurrence in quotations render them unmarked for the above reasons.

To summarize, most embedded English letters and lexemes as well as the use of code-switching for quotations are unmarked code choices which, on the one hand, offer a safe way to maintain the current communication with readers, and on the other hand, enrich the linguistic expressions available in sports writing. Making an unmarked choice implies following societal norms and taking the "safe" course to successful communication in a given interaction type (Myers-Scotton, 1993a). That is the reason why unmarked choices are made more than the marked choice illustrated below.

6. CODE-SWITCHING AS A MARKED CHOICE

In contrast to unmarked code choice stands the marked code choice. While unmarked code choice is always an expected and safe choice, marked choice is a gamble taken by the speaker (equals sports writers or editors in the present research) to initiate a change in the status quo of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee or a readjustment of the expected social distance between them, therefore, it is less frequently made (Myers-Scotton, 1989). The small occurrence of "PK", sports terminology, and code-switching with structural flagging can be attributed to their markedness.

6.1 The Use of "PK"

"PK", which is a new and fashionable expression used in sports and entertainment media nowadays in China, differs from other acronyms in the following aspects. Although there are several versions of what is the full form of PK in English, its various usage and exact meaning in Chinese media are defined neither by English nor Chinese dictionaries, which means PK has not reached general acceptability. Besides, it has already lost the original meaning of its full form, either "punch & kick", "player killing", "player killer" and "personal killing" from computer games or "penalty kick" and "point kick" from soccer games, but has derived new meanings from the essence of computer games or soccer games, specifically referring to "one-to-one competition", "defeat" or "eliminate". Finally, unlike other acronyms, PK can be used not only as a noun but also as a verb.

The above three aspects make PK distinct from other acronyms, which assigns it markedness. The marked code choice of PK indicates the sports writers' or editors' negotiation for a move away from the expected and normal choice of the Chinese equivalent "单挑" or "淘汰", because PK makes the reporting more vivid than "单挑" or "淘汰" in that it can evoke associations of the fierce competition in the computer games and soccer games which are familiar to young people and sports fans whom the sports newspapers are targeted for. Further, the employment of PK also represents the sports writers' or editors' quest for fashion and new writing style in order to attract readers. They wish to establish, thereby, a closer relationship with readers.

6.2 Sports Terminology

Although only a fraction of English sports terminologies show up in the Chinese sports news reports, they are not less significant. Practically, the utilization of English sport terminology rather than its corresponding Chinese translation can make the report sound more professional and leave an impression of meeting the international standards for the sports games. Theoretically, English sports terminology spotted in the present research, such as "par" in golf, "ace" in tennis, "shoot" and "slam dunk" in basketball and "goal" in football, also count as marked code-switching. Their markedness value lies in the social distance they negotiate between the sports writers or editors and the readers.

The use of such terminology serves as "identity or solidarity markers", calling forth the readers' "identity and solidarity" as sports fans or supporters for a specific sport, which results in a decrease in the social distance between sports writers and readers (Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 1995: 566). The shorter social distance means engaging readers in the report in a more intimate way (Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 1995). On the contrary, an increase in the expected distance towards readers who are non-sports fans will result from their unfamiliarity with the sport and its terminology. The single general motivation for making marked choices is "to negotiate a change in the expected social distance holding between participants, either increasing it or decreasing it" (Myers-Scotton, 1993a: 132). The use of English sports terminology is, therefore, two-fold. On the one hand, the sports writers or editors draw on the sports terminology to create powerful identity and assert membership in the group of sports fans. On the other hand, the English sports terminology can not be overused out of consideration for readers who are non-sports fans or non-bilingual.

6.3 Code-switching with Structural Flagging

The aforementioned research findings reveal the structural flagging of some Chinese-English code-switching in the present research, which is typically marked code-switching. In structural flagging, the referential content of the embedded English constituents is understood through the preceding or following unmarked medium–Chinese, so the content of the embedded constituents is, in fact, redundant, but the real message lies with the change in social distance which the alternation of the two codes is negotiating rather than with the referential content (Myers-Scotton, 1993a).

[22] 作為中國唯一的平面媒體代表，記者上周參加了在首爾召開的一年一度的 Sport Accord（國際體育大會）會議。

[23] 92%的 NBA 冠軍球隊都有一名球員在之前賽季躋身效率榜（Efficiency）前八位。

For instance, by resorting to the marked code choice "Sport Accord" in [22] and "Efficiency" in [23], the sports writer points directly to the original thing or event, indicating it is at an international and professional level, which will inevitably increase the social distance towards readers. The employment of Chinese repetition or translation, however, helps to decrease the social distance between the sports writers and readers by raising readers' familiarity with what is being talked about and diminishing their surprise at an unfamiliar code. Sometimes the referential message of the marked code does not have to be understood for its communicative effect or intent to succeed. For example, in [24], it is difficult to figure out the meaning of "The Purgatory of Prague", which actually does not matter, because readers can still understand the title from the Chinese repetition following it, but the unfamiliar codes –"The Purgatory of Prague" –add some foreignness and mystery to the title, offering hints to the bitter and mysterious journey in a foreign country depicted in the news story.

[24] 《The Purgatory of Prague 布拉格之煉》

Some structural flagging of code-switching is found in quotations as well. Those English constituents that occur in quotations, however, still belong to the unmarked code choice for the reasons mentioned previously in the section of code-switching in quotations.

To summarize, although marked code choices are less frequently made than unmarked code choices, they are not less significant, because they are made out of special consideration, such as calling for readers' identity, negotiating social distance toward readers or achieving artistic effects to deeply impress readers. The actual readings of markedness in reference to code choices on part of the participants in communication (specifically, the sports writers and readers in the present discussion) are developed through their experience with language use in a specific community (Myers-Scotton, 1993a).

7. CONCLUSION

From the above research results and discussions, some implications can be derived for sports writers and editors, for EFL teachers and for language policy makers in China. The present study is expected to offer some insights into how sports events can be vividly delivered to readers and sports fans, how readers and sports fans can better decipher the sports news through the analysis of Chinese-English code-switching in Chinese sports news reports. However, it is worth mentioning that the overuse of Chinese-English code-switching in newspapers may hinder the standardization of Chinese writing system. Hence, it is essential for the language policy makers to take a cautious stance toward the use of English in news reports and properly guide the spread of English in news media.

The present research just delves into the linguistic features of code-switching as well as the social motivations implied in it. To obtain a full understanding of Chinese-English in Chinese sports news reports, more researches need to be conducted on many other facets of code-switching, such as the various functions of code-switching in sports news discourse, the factors that influence the occurrence of embedded English constituents in different news reports or components and the impact of code-switching on the standardization of written Chinese language so that more interesting findings will be yielded and more implications will be provided.

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