English as Fashion : English Mixing in Women's Fashion Magazines

Hyunju Park

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide discursive interpretation of mixed languages in women's magazines. More specifically, this study concerns how English mixing contributes to self-distinction through fashion. The total number of 260 headlines and sub-headlines of three Korean women's magazines are selected for this study. The result of this study clearly shows the total tokens of English mixing depend on the fashion-related quality of the selected magazines. The findings of this study imply that English is regarded as a 'stylish language' and that this general recognition leads to acknowledgement of prestigious status of English in South Korea.

1. Introduction

There is little debate with the view that English is the most widely used language in international economic, scientific, political and educational fields. Even though the exact figure of English users in the world is not clearly known, the conservative estimation is that approximately 2 billion people out of 5 billion world population are exposed to the English-used environment (Crystal, 1985). It means that every third person in the world is using English as a native language or an additional language (Kachru, 1992). Due to the rapidity of English spread, this figure cannot be confirmed, but it is beyond a doubt that the number is increasing. The global spread of English has drastically changed the language situation in South Korea, one of the East Asian countries which belong to the expanding circle of World Englishes according to Kachru's categorization (Kachru, 1982;1986;1992). Among various changes, which Korean has underwent so far, one of the most noticeable shifts is growing use of English Mixing (hereafter EM) in the Korean linguistic community.

Owing to the ample amount of English words in Korean daily discourse, EM is increasingly the object of numerous linguistic research and cultural analysis (Kim, 1998; Baik, 2001; Lee, 2003). Most of these studies on Korean-English Mixing focus on the structural or the functional analysis of these mixed behaviors. However, recalling that code-alternation is the psychological product of a speaker's response to social order and cultural context (Gal, 1988; Blommaert, 1992; Canagarajah, 1995; Heller, 1995), EM in Korean discourse should be analyzed in the socio-political context. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate how EM contributes to the endowment of symbolic power in South Korea. More specifically, this study concerns how fashion system is related to the notion of power and class through EM. For this purpose, I will focus on index headlines and sub-headlines of Korean women's magazines as research subjects.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Symbolic Power, Language and Fashion

The most important assumption of this study is that symbolic power in Korean society is constructed through English as 'global language' and fashion as 'a semiotic symbol'. This basic assumption is based on the ideas presented in the seminal works of two French scholars, Bourdieu (1984; 1991) and Barthes (1970; 1983). Even though English and fashion are different in forms - verbal and image, they are in common in that both are easily utilized as forms of symbols to distinguish one from others (Bourdieu, 1984;1986 Barthes, 1970a;1970b). English as symbolic capital is stereotypically equated with 'high quality', 'internationalism', 'sophistication' and 'modernity.' (Haarmann,1984,Takashi, 199; Lee,2003). The fine fashion also endows symbol capital to the person who owns it. By origin, fashion is the product for self-representation to assure one's own distinctiveness. From this perspective, this study investigates a possible synergistic effect of English and fashion.

The form of fashion this study focuses on is the text in the fashion magazine as a written garment. In his book *The Fashion System* (1983), Barthes takes descriptive texts of women's clothing photographed as his research subject. He argues that the described garments in linguistic forms by principle refer to the same reality shown in fashion photographs. Here, language is equated with fashion images by mediation of real garments. I highlight this property of 'a written garment' and assume that the functions of fashion are transformed as verbal forms in the discourse of fashion magazines. Even though the subjects of this study are headlines and sub-headlines listed in the index pages of women's fashion magazines, these headlines also play a role of 'written garments' in that they are reiterated in the corresponding fashion articles with photographs. In these cases, the headlines describe the photographs in linguistic forms. Here, a point of contact where language and fashion come across is made. This is also the point where language and fashion are synthesized as symbolic capital. They are both viewed as the media of representing social identity to make their users distinctive and exclusive to others. Based on these literatures, English use in Korean fashion magazine will be critically viewed as the exercise of symbolic power in this context. From this point of view, this study shows how the prestigious status of English in Asian countries is formed as the 'linguistic' fashion.

2.2. Definition of Code-Mixing

English code mixing (hereafter CM) is an easily observed linguistic behavior in Korean discourse across all over the social fields including mass media. Traditionally in sociolinguistics, CM refers to "the intrarsentential mixing of various linguistic units (morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses, and sentences) primarily from two participating grammatical system." which is distinguished from code switching (hereafter CS) defined as the intersentential mixing (Bhatia & Rithchie, 1996; p. 629). On the basis of this distinction, the blending of the local language and the

global language found in Korean magazines is viewed as CM rather than CS even though the differentiation between CM and CS is rather unnecessary. In many cases, CM and CS are produced by the same socio-psychological motivation and the labels of 'intersentential' and 'intrasentential' are not so clear-cut in most cases (Myer-Scotton, 1993a, 1993b). Despite this unclear distinction of CM and CS in sociolinguistic literatures, I refer to the alternation of codes found in Korean fashion magazines as English CM not as CS, simply focusing on the feature of intrasentential blending of linguistic units (Kachru 1978, Kamwangamalu 1989). The functional analysis of CM and CS also supports that English-Korean alternation is viewed as CM not CS because CS is a more psychological process "entailing the ability to switch from code A to code B according to the function, the situation, and the participants of the discourses" but CM is considered as a result of that psychological processes (Kachru 1978). That is, CS presupposes speakers' bilingual ability to access to each lexicon of two languages according to appropriate linguistic situations but CM seems to highlight the linguistic behavior of code alternation itself. As in the current Korean linguistic situation, it is hard to view that English verbal repertoire is fully activated in most Korean discourses. Based on the examination of these linguistic situations, CM is considered as the moregeneral term for referring to English blending in Korean sentences in this paper.

3. Methodology

3.1 Subjects

The research subjects of this study are three issues of women's magazines published in South Korea in November and December in 2003 - the November issues of *Sure* and *Haute Jeune* and the December issue of *Yeseng* Cwungang (Women Center). The corpus of this study includes a total of 260 index headlines and subsequent descriptive texts (sub-headlines) of these magazines.

These three magazines commonly target Korean women, but expected reading populations are slightly different from one another. The former two magazines - *Sure* and *Haute Jeune* target 20s women who are engaged in professional jobs and office works. Especially *Haute Jeune* attracts high-class, cosmopolitan and high-educated women readers. Originally, *Haute Jeune* is a sister brand of *Haute*, which had been exclusively distributed to selected members. *Haute* only deals with luxurious items only for the top-class of Korean society as we can assume from its title, which means 'high' in English. Even though *Haute Jeune* targets younger readership, but it still inherits the concept of exclusiveness from its sister (or mother). The editing direction of *Sure* is very similar to that of *Haute Jeune*. Both are categorized as fashion magazines in that their articles focus on fashion, beauty, and life styles. In contrast, *Yeseng Cwunang* mostly target over 30s, mothers and house keepers. Most of its articles deal with gossip, child raising, investment and home maintenance as well as fashion and beauty. The proportion of the magazine sections is shown in table 1, 2, and 3.

Section	Fashion	Article	Personal Style	Beauty	Love	Total
Number of Articles	27	9	6	17	5	64
Percent	42%	14%	9 %	27%	8%	100%

Table 1. The section distribution of *Sure* magazine

Section	Fashion	Beauty	Feature	Total
Number of Articles	19	14	25	58
Percent	33%	24%	43%	100%

Table 2. The section distribution of *Haute Jeune* magazine

Section	People	Entertainment	Shopping	Trend	Economy	Child
Number of Articles	49	12	11	6	8	13
Percent	33%	8%	7%	4%	5%	9%

Well-Being	Fashion&Beauty	Culture	Cooking & Interior	Total
12	20	7	9	147
8%	14%	5%	6%	100%

Table 3. The section distribution of *Yeseng Cwungang* magazine

The section distributions in table 1,2 and 3 are categorized following the original sectioning of each magazine. Delving into the details, we can characterize each magazine according to the distribution of articles. The rates of fashion and beauty articles in *Sure* and *Haute Jeune* are over 50% of the whole number of articles.[1] Contrastively, the rate of fashion & beauty articles of *Yeseng Cwungang* is only 14% compared to the other two magazines. Thus, the first two magazines can be labeled as fashion magazines but *Yeseng Cwungang* is a general magazine rather than a specialized magazine for fashion even though it also includes fashion & beauty articles. It will be argued more in the later section how this fashion-related property of magazines relates to the rate of EM in texts.

3.2. Procedures

At first, English uses of 260 index headlines are analyzed. More specifically, I focus on how

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[1] Barthes (1983) does not count the beauty sections as a part of 'fashion' discourses in his structural-semiotic analysis. The structures of discourse are not identical between fashion and beauty texts. However, in this study beauty is regarded as a part of fashion in terms of ideology of symbols. Beauty products also have symbolic power structured by fashion industry.

many index headlines are printed in English. Here, we mainly concentrate on the orthographical aspects. That is, we do not count some index headlines including English in Korean orthography "Hangul." However, I will briefly mention English words written in Hangul presented in the index headlines. Secondly, I count the total tokens of English words (the total number of occurrence of English words) included in sub-headlines of the index pages. Unlike the analysis of index headlines, this part of analysis is more concerned with English words presented in Hangul. Thus, I calculate the rate of total numbers of English words out of the total meaningful units such as content words and pronouns. Conjunctions and prepositions are excluded from the word count. The compound nouns such as 'mini look' and 'living shop' are counted as one unit. This research is rather complicated because there is no clear boarder between 'English words' and "phonetically Koreanized English Loanwords'. Here, English words used as proper names such as person and place names, lexical-gap fillers and brand names are identified as loanwords (Takashi, 1992). The less frequently used technical terms, euphemistic words, special-effect givers are not identified as loanwords but as EM because those types of borrowing are not fully entrenched in Korean lexicon, and their Korean counterparts are mostly listed in Korean dictionaries. The selected examples of loanwords excluded from the word count are as follows.

Functional Category	*Examples*
Lexical-gap filler	coat, boots, model, idea, designer, diamond, schedule, jacket, scarf, fashion, diet
Proper names	New York, London, Milano, Asia, Jerry Springer
Brand Names	Elle Comme, HR Colagenist

Table 4. The examples of English words not identified as EM

Despites these criteria, some examples are ambiguous and unclear. In this case, the "Englishness" of the word is defined from the context where it is used.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of index headlines reveals the interesting relation between fashion and EM. Almost all the index headlines of fashion sections in three magazines are English sentences or phrases only written in Roman alphabet. In contrast, the feature and other sections show less EM occurrences. The beauty sections come between but it includes relatively many English index headlines, too. Table 5, 6 and 7 show the number and percentage of English index headlines (E.I.H) in each magazine.

Section	Fashion	Article	Personal Style	Beauty	Love	Total
Number of E. I. H.	26 (/27)	6(/9)	3 (/6)	11 (/17)	1 (/5)	47 (/64)
Percent	96%	66%	50%	65%	20%	73%

Table 5. The number and percentage of English index headlines in *Sure*

Section	Fashion	Beauty	Feature	Total
Number of E.I.H	17 (/19)	12 (/14)	15 (/25)	41 (/58)
Percent	89%	85 %	60%	71%

Table 6. The number and percentage of English index headlines in *Haute Jeune*

Section	People	Entertainment	Shopping	Trend	Economy	Child
Number of E.I.H.	1 (/49)	0 (/12)	1 (/11)	0 (/6)	0 (/8)	1 (/13)
Percent	2%	0%	9%	0%	0%	8%

Well-Being	Fashion&Beauty	Culture	Cooking & Interior	Total
1 (/12)	20 (/20)	7 (/7)	9 (/9)	40 (/147)
8%	100%	100%	100%	27%

Table 7. The number and percentage of English index headlines in *Yeseng Cwungang*

The proportion of English index headlines in *Sure* (73%) and *Haute Jeune* (71%) are over 70% while that in *Yeseng Cwungang* is only 27%. These figures simply do not assure us that fashion magazines exploit the symbolic image of English more than general women's magazine but also indicate conceptually clear relation between fashion and English. It is noticeable that even in *Yeseng Cwungang* targeting married and elder women, all of the index headlines in the fashion section are printed in English. Thus, it leads to us assume that 'fashionableness' is a more critical variable than 'age' for EM. As 'fashionableness' is involved in linguistic representation, English words are favored regardless of target audiences. The interesting fact is that the index headlines of culture and home keeping section in *Yeseng Cwungang* are also all represented in English. Here, it is assumed that culture and home keeping, especially cooking and interior are related to styling oneself in a more fashionable way for housewives. The examples of the index headlines in these sections such as 'new style', 'good choice', and 'scenery of winter' support this assumption. These index headlines are rather abstract and imagistic than concrete and informative. They emphasize the outlook of an object as well as fashion. In this case, culture and home keeping belongs to a part of fashion and subject to

EM.

Besides this surprising rate of English index headlines, it is observed that some Korean headlines are not purely written in Hangul. They also include Koreanized Englilsh words or Sino-Korean (Hanja, Chinese orthography). Only one non-English index headline found in the fashion section of *Sure* is written in Sino-Chinese '花樣年華 (*Hwayangyenhwa* - a homophonic word for a well-known Hong Kong movie 'In the Mood for Love'). That is, there is no 'genuine' Korean index headline found in the fashion section of *Sure*. Similarly, one of two non-English headlines found in *Haute Jeune* include a Sino-Chinese Letter and the other index headline is English phrases in Hangul. Look at the following examples.

(1) a. 新 디자이너 新 오리지낼리티[2]

"New Designer   New Originality"   (extracted from the fashion section of *Haute Jeune*)

 b. 모닝 마스크 & 파우더리스 파운데이션 & 스마트 립밤

"Morning Mask & Powederless Foundation & Smart Lipbalm"

 (extracted from the beauty section of *Sure*)

It is found that Korean is practically excluded from the index headlines of the fashion sections. All the headlines in the fashion sections I have analyzed are in English or Sino-Korean except only one headline, which also contains one English loanword 'shopping'. This result evidences our assumption that fashion is closely related to EM.

The analysis of sub-headlines also supports this assumption. The tokens of EM in the fashion section are much more than those of other sections. Excluding English loanwords, a large numbers of English words are mixed in Korean sub-headlines. Interestingly, in case of *Yeseng Cwungang* the other sections except fashion-related sections English words are rarely found. Only one token found in the other sections is the word, "well-being", which is related with organic food, fitness, beauty salon and travel abroad by Korean. In this social context, the word well-being can be replaced with the word 'stylish life', which also entails the concept of fashion. Despite the less frequents use of EM in sub-headlines compared to *Sure* and *Haute Jeune*, the fashion section of *Yeseng Cwungang* also includes many tokens of EM. Table 8, 9 and 10 show the tokens and percentage found in each magazine. In case of *Yeseng Cwungang*, I just count the tokens found in fashion-related sections because no occurrence is found in the other sections.

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[2] Loanwords and Koreanized English words are bolded.

Section	Fashion	Article	Personal Style	Beauty	Love	Total
Tokens of EM	77 (/213)	0 (/42)	1 (/47)	19 (/139)	13 (/51)	110 (/492)
Percent	36%	0%	2%	13.6%	25%	22%

Table 8. The tokens and percentage of English Words in sub-headlines of *Sure*

Section	Fashion	Beauty	Feature	Total
Tokens of EM	42 (/143)	23(/104)	22 (/228)	87 (/475)
Percent	29%	22%	10%	18%

Table 9. The tokens and percentage of English Words in sub-headlines of *Haute Jeune*

Section	Well-Being	Fashion&Beauty	Culture[3]	Cooking & Interior	Total
Tokens of EM.	0 (/0)	21 (107)	0 (/0)	5 (/54)	26 (/161)
Percent	N/A	20%	N/A	10%	16%

Table 10. The tokens and percentage of English Words in sub-headlines of *Yeseng Cwungang*

The relation between English and fashion becomes more obvious in the analysis of sub-headlines. About one third of meaningful units in the fashion sections of two fashion magazines are Koreanized English words. If we counted loanwords, the rate would go drastically higher up to 50%. Even in the fashion section of the non-fashion magazine, English words accounts for one fifth of meaningful units. In other words, EM is found in almost every sub-headline of the fashion sections. Thus, it is assumed that images of English as fashion is clearly entrenched in Koreans' consciousness.

The fashionableness of English in Korean society can be confirmed in various ways. Firstly, it can be conveyed by the messages embedded in these English-mixed sub-headlines. The most frequent words found in English-mixed sub-headlines are the descriptive adjectives such as 'romantic', 'dramatic', 'fantastic', 'classic' and 'chic' The most frequent nouns are 'luxury' and 'well-being'. The phrases presented example (2) clearly show this trend.

(2)　a.벌키한 니트와 클래식한 모직 소재의 바리에이션을 영화 <The Others>의 모티브와 믹스한 꿈같은 스토리

　　Bulky-ha-n　　Knit-wa　　Classic-ha-n　　mocik socay-uy　　variation-ul　　Yenghwa <The Others>-uy　　motive-wa　　mix-ha-n　　kkwum-kath-un　　story

　　'A dreamy story mixing bulky knit and wool variation with the motive of the movie <The

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[3] The Well-Being and the Culture section of Yeseng Cwungang have no subheadline..

Others>'   (extracted from the fashion section in *Sure*)

b. 작지만 예쁜 Luxury Mini Bag

   cak-chiman   yeyppun Luxury Mini Bag

   'Small but pretty luxury mini bag'

     (extracted from the fashion section in *Yeseng Cwungang*)

c. 당신의 다리를 로맨틱하게 혹은 시크하게 스타일링해줄 부츠 컬렉션

   tangsin-uy tari-lul   Romantic-hakey   hokun Chic-hakey   Styling-haycwul Boot Collection

"The Collection of boots making your legs in a romantic or chic style."

   (extracted from the fashion section of *Haute Jeune*)

The characteristic of these messages is that they are not informative and do not give the concrete meanings to the readers. Here, the readers face two layers of vagueness - one is the vague nature of the adjective as fashion terms and the other is the difficulty in translating English words into intelligible Korean words. Definitely, the vague messages conveyed by these sub-headlines mostly rely on the images these English words invoke. These images are not related to the referential meanings of these adjectives. They just borrow the symbolic power English has so as to transmit it to the fashion items. The more abstract the meaning of English words is, the stronger its symbolic power gets. By keeping other from accessing the information these messages have, the interpreters of these massages dominate the symbolic power embedded in these sentences as the possible consumer of the items. The fashion discourse is elegantly designed for giving this fantasy of distinctiveness to the readers through English uses.

Another evidence for 'fashionableness' of English is the fact that almost every index headline is printed in alphabet but sub-headlines are rarely in English. The fashion editors want to send some meaningful messages to readers with sub-headlines in order to intrigue them and to make them purchase their products. However, intelligibility and interpretability of messages are not important to index headlines whose foremost purpose is just to catch people's eyes. English is viewed as having typographically aesthetic values like graphic icons. This typographical value may come from the simple fact that English writing system is different from Hangul but the amazing rate of English index headlines implies more than typographical differences- the prestige of English.

This close bond of English and fashion can be interpreted in two ways. The first interpretation is that the prestigious status of English in Asian culture adds symbolic capital to fashion discourse. The second interpretation is that English can solidify its high status 'because' one of the main conduit through which English is infused into Asian culture is fashion discourse. However, it is obvious that English and fashion satisfy the symbolic needs of the readers (consumers) of the fashion magazine reciprocally.

5. Conclusion

As this study mainly concerns the quantitative aspects of English Mixing in Korean women's fashion magazine, the qualitative analysis is insufficient. Moreover, a statistical analysis is needed to support the relation between English and fashion more strongly. Actually, As EM is so widely spread in every field of Korean society, it is not so simple a matter to identify EM in the actual discourses. In addition, the corpus of this study is rather small to support the main argument of this paper.

However, this study implies a lot of potentials in various areas. It mainly sheds insight on how symbolic power is gained through fashion and English. From another perspective, it is a matter of gender research. As women's fashion magazines have a critical role in the maintenance of cultural value and representation of gender identity (Caldas-Couthard 1996), we will be also be able to investigate how English relates to gender identity through fashion in Asian countries. Even though synergistic effect of fashion and English as symbolic capital is a very interesting subject to study, this hybridization of two is so naturalized as to create mythology of the modern society, which is hard to deconstruct. To demythologize the fusion of English and fashion, the more profound research will be needed.

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