

11.30 – 12.00

Hyunhwa Lee: *A Study on Code Switching in Korean Sign Language*

The act of a speaker to rotate two or more languages or dialects is called code switching (So Young Kang, 2007). According to "the study on use of language of hearing-impaired" conducted by the National Institute of the Korean Language and the Korea Association of the Deaf, there are approximately 45,000 Deaf people who use Korean Sign Language as their first language in South Korea. These Deaf people meet hearing people, whose first language is Korean. When speakers who are bilingual in Korean Sign Language and Korean meet each other code switching occurs due to reasons like the hearing status of the speaker, their language attitude etc.

In my study I presented the picture story 'Frog, Where Are you? (Mayer, 1969)' to three deaf participants. The story and also the drawing style of 'Frog, Where Are you?' is unknown to Korean people. The reason to choose an unfamiliar story is to raise the chance of interaction between the signer and listener. The deaf participants were asked to tell the picture story to a deaf and to a hearing person separately. After the retelling the participants of the study had a free dialogue about the picture story. Each retelling plus free conversation afterwards took 20 minutes. The retelling to the deaf person and hearing person were seen as one set. All together there were three sets that means 120 minutes of signing. The participants were a 20-year-old woman, a 30-year-old woman, a 40-year-old man. Their first language is Korean Sign Language and they all attended deaf school. The deaf and hearing people to whom the picture story was signed, were all in the 20s. In order to favor the chance of code switching the hearing people were all unexperienced sign language interpreter.

The whole process was recorded and analyzed. The parts where code switching occurred were transcribed in ELAN, a transcription program developed by the Max-Planck-Institute or Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen.

The results of the study confirm that code switching phenomena occur among the retelling and free dialogue between deaf and hearing people. Through the analysis of the data it was also possible to find out that there are code switching phenomenon within units of vocabulary as well as changes in word order. For instance, some informants fingerspelled an expression instead of using the sign when they signed the story to a hearing person. And in cases of wh-questions they used the Korean sign QUESTION instead of the conventional non manual features which are normally used in wh-questions.

References

So Young Kang(2007), Type and cause analysis of code switching by bilingual speakers, Education of Korean Language and Literature, 209.

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Jaeil Kwon, Byeongcheon Yoon, Eungbeom Kim , Mihye Lee(2009), A study on language usage by Deaf, The National Institute Of The Korean Language,, Korea Association of the Deaf.

Jeonghyeon Park(2012), A study on interpersonal relationship formation process by the young deaf, A master's thesis in Graduate School of Seoul University.