



# Enhancing Linguistic Communication through Code-Switching: Language Usages of Bilingual Korean and Thai Students in Higher Education Contexts

## การส่งเสริมการสื่อสารทางภาษาผ่านการสลับภาษา: การใช้ภาษาของนักเรียนสองภาษาชาวเกาหลีและชาวไทย ในบริบทอุดมศึกษา

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### Abstract

This study investigates bilingual Korean and Thai students' usage of code-switching in higher education contexts and explores whether or not it has any effects on their linguistic performance. Comprehensive understanding on the functions of code-switching and reasons of switching between languages are crucial in grasping the uniqueness of bilinguals' discourses. In order to explore bilingual students' linguistic behaviors, this study focuses on the topic and/or content of dialogs as the main factors influencing their communication. The study employed qualitative method to collect and analyze the data. Based on the notion that code-switching affects linguistic performance, twenty-two undergraduate bilingual students' code-switching practices are discussed. The data reveal that there are three positive effects bilingual students experience due to code-switching; they, 1) display

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proficiency and confidence, 2) deliver information clearly and effectively without avoiding specific information, and 3) recognize the smoothness of the discourse. Furthermore, the data suggest that the code-switching practices are largely driven by socio-cultural norms of the society regardless of their cultural background. The participants perceive that code-switching enriches their dialog most of the time though certain societal factors may put pressure on them to resist from doing so. By encapsulating the participants' perceptions, this study provides insights into pragmatic and pedagogical repercussions in understanding bilingual students' use of code-switching in Thai and Korean higher education contexts.

**Keywords:** *Code-switching, bilinguals, linguistic communication, socio-cultural norms*

## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการใช้การสลับภาษาของนักเรียนสองภาษา ชาวกาฬลีและชาวไทยในบริบทอุดมศึกษาเพื่อศึกษาว่าการสลับภาษามีผลต่อสมรรถนะทางภาษาหรือไม่ โดยความเข้าใจอันดีเกี่ยวกับหน้าที่ของการสลับภาษาและเหตุผลในการสลับระหว่างภาษา มีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งต่อการทำความเข้าใจเอกลักษณ์ของวัฒนธรรมต่างๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความเป็นสองภาษา ดังนั้น การวิจัยนี้จึงมุ่งศึกษาหัวข้อและ/หรือเนื้อหาของบทสนทนาในฐานะปัจจัยหลักที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการสื่อสารเพื่อศึกษาค้นคว้าเกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรมของผู้เรียนสองภาษา โดยใช้การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพในการเก็บและวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล การอภิปรายการฝึกปฏิบัติการสลับภาษาของนักเรียนสองภาษาในระดับปริญญาตรีจำนวน 22 คน ภายใต้ความเชื่อที่ว่าการสลับภาษาส่งผลต่อสมรรถนะทางภาษา ซึ่งพบปัจจัยที่ส่งผลในทางบวกต่อประสบการณ์ของนักเรียนสองภาษาอันเนื่องมาจากการสลับภาษาสามประเทศ ได้แก่ นักเรียน 1) แสดงออกถึงสมรรถนะและความมั่นใจ 2) ส่งสารได้อย่างชัดเจน และมีประสิทธิภาพโดยไม่หลีกเลี่ยงข้อมูลจำเพาะ และ 3) รับรู้ถึงความราบรื่นของ

ราทกรรม ยิ่งไปกว่านั้น ผลการศึกษา�ังแสดงให้เห็นว่าการฝึกปฏิบัติการสลับภาษา ส่วนมากมีที่มาจากการทัศนคติทางสังคมวัฒนธรรมในสังคมไม่ว่าบุคคลเรียนจะมีภูมิหลัง ทางวัฒนธรรมแบบใดก็ตาม นอกจากนี้ ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยยังได้รับรู้ว่า หลายครั้ง การสลับภาษา ช่วยทำให้บทสนทนาก้าดขึ้น แม้ว่าปัจจัยทางสังคมบางประการอาจกดดันให้เกิดการต้านทาน การกระทำดังกล่าว การสรุปผลการรับรู้ของผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยในการศึกษาครั้งนี้จึงทำให้พบ มุมมองในเชิงลึกของผลลัพธ์ทั่วไปในทางปฏิบัติและทางการสอนที่มีต่อความเข้าใจในการใช้การสลับภาษาของผู้เรียนชาวเกาหลีและชาวไทยในบริบทอุดมศึกษา

**คำสำคัญ:** การสลับภาษา, ผู้เรียนสองภาษา, การสื่อสารทางภาษา, บรรทัดฐานทางสังคม และวัฒนธรรม

## 1. Introduction

Globalization has rapidly and continuously driven mobility of people with multidimensional shifts in various socio-cultural practices causing the world to become a small village (Appadurai, 1996). Naturally, it has played a crucial role in every aspect of human life including the way people communicate. It has also contributed to the soaring number of bilinguals and multilinguals. Bilingualism and multilingualism have become a social phenomenon in various societies and the growing number of people who speak several different languages demonstrate the needs of those who can fluently communicate in different languages in countless fields; numerous studies claim that this is governed by globalization and cultural openness (Bailey & Peoples, 2013). This social phenomenon is currently a common trait throughout the world.

In milieu of hyper globalization and rising number of global citizens speaking more than one language to communicate, this study sets to explore how bilingual college students from two Asian countries code-switch in

certain contexts to enhance linguistic performance to communicate effectively. The contexts of this study are set in Thailand and South Korea where the people speak Thai and Korean as their mother tongue and study and acquire English as their second language.

Due to the famous tourist industry and educational policy focusing on the importance of English as a global language, it is witnessed that Thai people are keen to learn and improve their English language skills (Baker, 2008). Growing number of citizens who speak both Thai and English is a good evidence of these people practicing code-switching when conversing.

Though a technologically advanced westernized society with numerous international companies conducting business in it, South Korea is a monolingual nation where “majority of [South] Koreans are rarely in contact with speakers of languages other than Korean, and virtually all aspects of their lives are conducted in Korean” (Park, 2009, p. 30). Nevertheless, South Koreans have been experiencing a socio-educational phenomenon called ‘English fever’. The whole nation is driven to learn and master the language due to the importance this global language holds in society. English is the dominant second language that is deemed as a basic requirement to succeed driving the people to study and master it. Due to this English feverish society governing one’s success, those who can command this language in advanced level are rapidly growing (McKay, 2002). It is not difficult to witness South Koreans, especially the younger generation, code-switching in Korean and English whilst conversing.

Code-switching habitually happens due to an interlocutor being fluent in speaking and understanding more than one language. Generally, it is observed that bilinguals and multilinguals tend to frequently switch languages within the same utterance due to various factors (Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Fromkin, 2000). This linguistic change happens in different

forms — it can be seen happening from one language to another, from one dialect to another, or from one style to another for multiple functions and reasons. This is proved to enrich speakers' linguistic performance as well as improve cognitive dissonance (Heredia & Altarriba, 2001). Code-switching takes various forms such as completely switching from one language to another or 'sprinkling' just a few words in another language during a dialog. Skiba's (1997) study claims that more than 80% of the words are switched in normal conversations between two bilinguals and they tend to continuously do so for better communication. They build up richer expressions by sharing conversations filled with different languages. It is therefore not surprising that a speaker who code-switches has a wider variety of lexical terms and phrases that enable them to shift codes freely in different circumstances for better communication.

In milieu of rapid globalization affecting daily lives of people in every aspect, the world is witnessing soaring number of bilinguals and multilinguals. This study aims to contribute to knowledge by adding perceptions of the bilingual students themselves rather than researcher just observing their conversations. Comprehensive understanding on the functions and motives of these people's linguistic behaviors are needed in order to grasp the uniqueness of bilinguals' and/or multi-linguals' discourses. Studies such as Liu's (2010) and Ayeomoni's (2006) have supported the use of code-switching in classroom settings since it is seen as an effective way to develop communication skills for bilingual learners. Liu's (2010) study claims that the majority of the participants experienced no negative effects on students' L1 (mother tongue) and L2 (second language) caused by code-switching, rather it helped them communicate effectively. Ayeomoni (2006) also sides with Liu (2010) asserting that code-switching has a positive effect on students' educational achievement assisting them to think more critically whether the students are bilingual or not.

Based on the notion that code-switching affects linguistic performance, this study aims to explore bilingual undergraduate students' code-switching patterns at higher education institutions in two Asian countries. University students in Thailand and South Korea were chosen and invited to participate in this study. To understand the phenomenon of code-switching practiced by university students who speak two or more than two languages fluently, purposive sampling was employed. These students were deliberately chosen on the basis of their claim that they considered themselves as bilinguals or multi-linguals. By using qualitative methods to gather data, this research aspires to deeply understand bilingual speakers' code-switching according to the topic/content of speeches. Code-switching is a significant phenomenon to understand, particularly in this increasingly connected global environment since it is deemed as a dynamic way of communicating effectively amongst bilinguals and multilinguals.

## 2. Literature Review

Linguistic performance is an interaction between one's knowledge of language and non-linguistic information embedded in one's system. Linguistic performance is influenced by various factors including short-term memory, psychological processes, and pragmatic knowledge and habits. Simply put, linguistic performance means the usage of linguistic knowledge that includes speaking and comprehending; this comprehension of language is a complex mixture of non-linguistic figures (Fromkin, 2000). In this study, code-switching is perceived as one of the major factors that affects one's linguistic performance.

Studies have claimed that one of the major reasons of code-switching is caused by the situation or the topic of the communication (Baker, 2006;

Fishman, 2000). It can be easily witness in many cultures that when it comes to discussing certain topics people intentionally or unintentionally code-switch and use a different language due to cultural practices (Kim, 2006). Words and topics that are considered as offensive and or sensitive also drive people to code-switch depending on the culture. Socio-cultural conditions and societal atmosphere heavily influence people's linguistic behaviors (Aimin, 2013; Wray & Grace, 2007).

In classroom settings, teachers' code-switching can contribute to a more effective understanding of a specific topic to enhance L2 learning (Cook, 2001). Bista (2010) claims that conversation filled by speakers who use frequent code-switching strategy goes smoother and speakers' vocabulary pool become richer which also allows them to interact more lively and build up knowledge of the language being used. Auer (2013) also supports this notion by stating that code-switching is able to function as a self-repair technique that improves one's speech not only in classroom settings. When bilinguals constantly code-switch, they concentrate on factors such as the topic of conversation, the participants, the setting, and the affective aspect of the message (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). By bringing in an operative socio-linguistic approach utilizing code-switching as a tool, bilinguals situate themselves in a unique position when conversing.

Smooth discourse can be achieved with the help of code-switching since code-switching is a 'reparation tool' for those who speak more than one language (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Code-switching as an attempt to keep the conversation flowing without having to pause or abandon the message (Chan, 2018; Song & Andrews, 2009) which also directs to more effective understanding of the listener (Cook, 2001). Code-switching, therefore, not only assists the speaker to smoothly and efficiently transmit his/her message to the listener, but it also improves the effective understanding of the listener.

Kim (2006) asserts that code-switching practices are most commonly witnessed amongst bilinguals and multilinguals but it is something everyone does to emphasize his/her point and deliver the message clearly in a practical manner. Code-switching happens in order to ensure that the speakers convey or deliver a message to be correctly received and is meaningful to the listeners. Through code-switching techniques, messages can be delivered without difficulty and may also sound clearer to listeners, not to mention interpreted better by duplicating rich meanings using the method of repetition with two or more different languages. Luna & Peracchio (2005) claim that it is used as a strategy to communicate more efficaciously. They state that to communicate more effectively in certain linguistic contexts, one needs to relay information more visually by using various techniques that stand out such as code-switching which adds value to the whole conversation.

Strategic competence is the capability to arrange a message efficiently and to compensate for any difficulties (Moore, 2006). When using second language, speakers face moments when they feel there is a gap between communicative meaning and their ability to express that meaning in a certain language, especially when it comes to the denotative implication. Some learners use code-switching tactically as a communication strategy to express themselves to overcome problems they might face while interacting (Yule, 1996). This happens commonly when interacting within certain cultural contexts where particular topics or contents of conversation are seen as sensitive (Kim, 2006).

Code-switching happens as a strategy in order to be clearly understood, focusing on the fact that some ideas are better communicated in one language than another (Heredia & Altarriba, 2001). By using a different language to describe a word or a phrase, higher level of understanding

may be achieved. Due to their ability to speak more than one language, bilinguals can code-switch and utilize their knowledge of those two languages as resources to find better ways to convey their meanings and stand out from the crowd.

Code-switching is a strategic instrument used by speakers to effectively communicate their intent and express social and rhetorical meanings in their conversation (Gafaranga, 2007). This wide-spread strategy assists interlocutors not only to navigate conversations smoothly but also helps them to recognize and maximize their confidence. It is natural to perceive code-switching as an effective communicative tool especially for bilinguals and multilinguals.

Based on the notions discussed in the literature, this study intends to examine bilingual university students on their behaviors and perception of code-switching. It also explores code-switching behaviors based on certain contexts and situations such as topics and content.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Method

This qualitative study employed the focus group method to collect data. Focus group interview is an effective method to synergize participants' stories and experiences and extend their thoughts by discussing and sharing their views (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013).

Four focus group interviews were conducted throughout a period of thirty days and each focus group interview was held for two hours. The first focus group had six Thai participants and the second group consisted of four Thai participants. Each group was asked to discuss their perceptions towards code-switching by sharing their own behaviors and

experiences in different situations. The third group with seven South Korean participants and the forth group with five conversed about the same topic.

### 3.2 Participants

Ten Thai students, and twelve South Korean students from various universities in Thailand and South Korea were recruited for this study. Purposive sampling was used in order to recruit participants who considered themselves as bilinguals or multi-linguals. The twenty-two participants spoke their mother tongue, Thai or Korean, as their first language and also spoke English at advanced level with near native skills. Their English test scores according to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and TOEFL validated their claims.

The majority of the participants named their mother tongue as their national languages, however, there were seven out of twenty-two students who said they were not sure which was their first language. Two South Korean and five Thai students identified themselves as holding two languages as their mother tongue since they could speak and write both English and their national language at the same level.

Data were coded and interpreted according to the research questions. This research was set to answer the following questions:

1. What are bilingual university students' perceptions on their usage of code-switching?
2. How does the topic or content of a conversation affect Asian university students' code-switching in HE context?

Data were examined using the content analysis method. Rich interview data were organized by labels. By systematically labelling the recorded documents the researcher looked for similar patterns and word frequencies to analyze meanings of content within the text. Content analysis method

assisted the study effectively by adding useful, detailed opinions of the participants (Neale & Nichols, 2001).

## 4. Results and Discussion

Since the focus of this study is on code-switching behaviors of students according to the topic and content of conversations, the interview questions were geared towards understanding their perceptions of code-switching. The data suggest that students indeed practiced code-switching in different levels driven by the two variables: topic and content. The practice of code-switching with these two factors were largely driven by socio-cultural norms and practices of their societies. It was clear that the participants' personal and socio-cultural attitudes governed their code-switching practices in the given contexts. Code-switching happened quite often when it came to topics/content that were culturally sensitive or when they talked about current topics affecting their society. The participants agreed that many times their code-switching were largely drawn upon the societal norms and practices. The data also displayed that students code-switched more often when the content of the conversation was complex which brought momentary memory lapses meaning they momentarily forgot the word or phrases they were supposed to use. Participants from both countries gave similar answers with similar experiences according to their cultures.

Tables 1 and 2 present parts of the participants' responses on when they thought they usually practiced code-switching when conversing at university with fellow students and/or professors. Majority of the participants stated that the first reason they code-switch is due to momentary memory lapses. However, more than half of the participants confirmed that though they sometimes face momentary memory lapses, depending on the situation or the persons they are talking to, their code-switching behavior varied.

**Table 1:** Memory Lapses

Quotes from the participants (T: Thai / K: Korean)	Participants
<i>“Yes, sometimes, I just can’t think of the word I want to use in English. In that case, I immediately change to speaking Thai and use the word I couldn’t recall in English and vice versa.”</i>	T7
<i>“Umm, I change the language when I can’t explain things well in one language. It’s easier that way. Depends though. Uh, I mean, it depends on who I’m talking with.”</i>	T4
<i>“When I am talking to someone and I’m nervous, I tend to forget what I want to say ... I think I switch to the language I feel a bit more comfortable when that happens. But I’d make sure it’s ok to do so.”</i>	T3
<i>“I once code-switch in class taught by a foreign teacher whose first language was English. I was discussing something with him and one of my friend joined the discussion and started talking to me in Thai because she couldn’t come up with the right phrase. So...I talked in Thai and umm, kept code-switching but I saw that the teacher was not really happy that me and my friend used Thai. After that, I try not to code-switch in class.”</i>	T6
<i>“I don’t think my memory limitation affects the way I switch to another language. I just go with the flow. I don’t think it depends so much on who I’m talking to.”</i>	T1
<i>“Oh, of course! I mean, isn’t it natural to just change the language when you can’t think of the right word in one language? I mean, I do that when I’m talking with someone who speaks both English and Korean like me, like who is a bilingual.”</i>	K12
<i>“I think, definitely. I code-switch if I can’t think of the word I really want to say and that happens often... haha... If I can come up with the right version in Korean or English, I go ahead and code-switch. Ah, if there’s someone who can’t speak English joining our conversation...then, yeah, then I think I try not to code-switch too much.”</i>	K8

**Table 2:** Situation and Context

Quotes from the participants (T: Thai / K: Korean)	Participants
“Oh...ummm, with the professors, I am extra careful, though. I mean, even if my professor is a bilingual, I’d still not code-switch when I’m talking to her. I will speak the language the professor uses in class... because code-switching does not look so respectful.”	K12
“...because it’s easier that way to carry out the conversation in or outside the classroom. It’s much better than just quit talking just because you’re experiencing memory curb.”	K9
“Ah, when talking to the professors? Hmm, I’ve never thought about it, but come to think about it, I think I never code-switched when I was talking to my professors.”	
“Sometimes our professor encourages us to discuss or participate in English...once I participated and as soon as I answered in English, I could feel that other students were giving me this sarcastic eye.”	K10
“I’m always careful when code-switching. You know, people judge you. They eye you when you start speaking in another language. I don’t know, it could mean ‘why can’t you just speak Korean?’ or it could mean they’re jealous. Who knows...either way, I’m not so comfortable when people look at me when I’m speaking another language.”	K1
“I definitely code-switch a lot when I’m talking to my friends who are also bilinguals. But when it comes to professors, I try not to code-switch. Um, yeah, I don’t know why but it’s like that. Oh, I guess because when talking to professors I get a bit nervous and so I sometimes forget the right word...”	T10

Quotes from the participants (T: Thai / K: Korean)	Participants
<i>"It depends on who I'm talking to. If that person is ok with me code-switching, then I do but if I feel like the other person is uncomfortable then I try to hold from code-switching and try my best to explain the lost word."</i>	K4
<i>"... I code switch when I don't want someone else to understand what I'm saying ... I'll have to admit that sometimes I code switch when I want to look cool. So, sometimes I code-switch intentionally even when I know the exact word or vocab."</i>	K2

From these responses, it is clear that bilingual students tend to code-switch often when they face momentary memory lapses. It happens when these students cannot think of the exact term they want to use, do not know how to explain certain things, when the meaning is blurry, have memory block, the topic or the content is complex, and when they are nervous.

Momentary memory lapses sometimes prevent people from remembering words or phrases causing them to hold back and/or hesitate when conversing. When faced with momentary memory lapses, bilinguals who have a deeper pool of linguistic repertoires naturally compensate for a word or phrase they cannot easily bring up by code-switching (Green & Wei, 2014) which was presented in the data.

The participants believed that when they faced momentary memory lapses, they instantly brought in the other language; the majority said that it "happens immediately". They were content that this ability to naturally code-switch helped them immensely when communicating still they did face some negative effects. They also elaborated that by code-switching, the conversation could continue on smoothly without being stopped.

The interesting fact was that the participants largely agreed that they generally code-switched when they conversed with friends and/or their classmates, it was quite the opposite when they spoke with their professors—both Thai and Korean students said they refrained from code-switching when talking to their teachers. Even when they knew that the professors could speak both languages, students would still hold from code-switching in front of them. The Thai participants did not elaborate on the reasons why they refrained from code-switching when talking to their teachers, but when it came to the Korean participants, the reason was clear; they perceived code-switching as not being ‘respectful’ towards their professors. Cultural aspect largely governed these bilingual speakers when it came to using this linguistic approach. Teachers are respected and are held in high esteem in this strict Confucian society and the linguistic habits displayed by the students clearly demonstrate this cultural practice. By using Korean language that reflects the relationship of interlocutors due to the intense system of honorifics, Koreans show their respect towards others (Sohn, 2006). This strongly affected Korean students when communicating with their professors whom the students paid the highest respect to. When it came to bilingual students, there was no difference. They agreed that even when they knew their professors were bilingual, they would still stick to one language, largely Korean, due to the socio-cultural and environmental contexts they were in.

The next tables present participants’ perceptions on the conversation topics and contents and how these variables affect their code-switching behaviors. The majority of the participants answered “Yes” when asked if the topic/content of a dialog caused them to code-switch.

**Table 3:** Extracts from the Thai Focus Groups

Answer	Quotes from the participants	Participants
Yes	<i>"I think topic matters. If it's a difficult topic, I change the language I feel more comfortable speaking."</i>	T10
	<i>"If I'm not familiar with a give topic or if the topic includes sensitive issues...then yes. It helps a lot to explain the story clearly."</i>	T2
	<i>"I don't even have to think...I unconsciously use the language I am better at when the content is complex."</i>	T8
	<i>"Some topics require switching of language."</i> <i>"There are topics we need to be careful about... culturally sensitive issues, I mean."</i>	T1, T3
Not sure	<i>"I'm not sure. English or Thai just comes out without me even noticing."</i>	T9

**Table 4:** Extracts from the South Korean Focus Groups

Answer	Quotes from the participants	Participants
Yes	<i>"I believe it does. I haven't thought about this though...coz it comes naturally. But I think if the topic is difficult, I code-switch more often."</i>	K1
	<i>"Ummmm, I'm not so sure if I code-switch based on topics. Oh wait, if I think the topic is hard and the jargons are difficult, then I think I switch the language."</i>	K7
	<i>"Sensitive topics...when it comes to sensitive topics, I think I code-switch more."</i> <i>"It's better this way for both me and my listener."</i>	K9
	<i>"I don't know if I do. I mean, I don't know if I code-switch depending on the topic. But I'd say I might be doing it without even realizing I'm doing it."</i>	K12

Answer	Quotes from the participants	Participants
No	<i>"I don't think topic affects code-switching. Isn't it the language not topic? It's just...ummm...mixing [languages] is easier regardless of the topic."</i>	K5

Based on the data displayed at Tables 3 and 4, eighteen out of twenty-two interviewees agreed that topic and/or content of the conversations do affect them in their code-switching behavior. Only four respondents disagreed with this idea. This finding is in line with Baker's (2006) and Fishman's (2000) statement that one of the major reasons to code-switching depend on the situation or the topic during the communication. Cook's (2001) and Hamers & Blanc's (2000) claims also were demonstrated by the participants' common perception that code-switching can contribute to a more effective understanding of a specific topic.

These responses demonstrate that certain situations, certain topics, complicated content, topics related to culture differences and sensitive issues require these participants to code-switch to another language. Certain topics in a conversation may have caused the speakers to code-switch depending on the contextual circumstances including cultural practices and situational norms. Topic or content of a conversation is a worthy reason for the speakers to switch code.

Communication competence is vital to speakers to arrive at a shared meaning and understanding that can result in a sense of belonging (Idrus, 2016). Code-switching can be interpreted as a collective behavior of interlocutors to engage in social interaction. Thus, speakers carefully utilize their language skills in various ways to strategically place selves in conversations. Code-switching is one way of displaying social behavior

to the other that can show one's membership and reveal collective identity of self.

While discussing momentary memory lapses and topic/content of dialogs that affect code-switching, participants unconsciously kept mentioning societal beliefs and norms of switching codes, especially in English. Participants were mainly practicing their code-switching based on the socio-cultural attitudes governing the society. The majority of the participants agreed that the topic/content of a dialog affecting their code-switching behavior largely relied on societal values rather than the difficulty or complexity of the topic/content. Participants' thoughts on this matter are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Socio-cultural Attitudes

Quotes from the participants	Participants
<p><i>“...because...ummmm...that’s how people usually do it, right? We need to think about where we are and what we’re talking about... I think the environment the conversation happens is really important.”</i></p>	T1
<p><i>“Yeah, I might code-switch differently if I was in a different country. I change the language constantly when I speak cos that’s the way my friends also...you know...change language.”</i></p>	K4
<p><i>“Different cultures have difference practices when they talk. Code-switching can be a part of that cultural difference...”</i></p>	K11
<p><i>“Depending on the situation, the way we switch languages must be...uh...I think...different. I think I often switch my Korean to English or vice versa when I’m with people my age but with people older than me, I refrain from doing so.”</i></p>	K9

Quotes from the participants	Participants
“... not so sure...but I believe my behavior of changing language varies depending on to whom I'm talking to...yeah, I guess it happens due to different societal practices.”	T5
“...environment matters when code-switching.”	T8
“I'm always conscious when I code-switch...especially at uni. Some people think I'm showing off my linguistic ability, I mean, my English skills in front of people. I think in Korea, we have to be careful because others will definitely judge you when you speak another language.”	K2
“Culturally, people think...those who speak fluent English and can code-switch easily... are seen as someone belonging to the upper-middle class of the society. We are perceived as rich people.”	T7
“...sometimes...I'm not comfortable code-switching...I'm worried about how others will view me...you know, when I code-switch in America, no one really cares but when I do it in Korea, I'm quite conscious of people around me.”	K5

Participants of this study have clearly elaborated that the macro environment—the society they are in—and how the society view their linguistic behaviors, greatly affect their code-switching practices. It is evident that the difference in socio-cultural sensitiveness and norms are naturally embedded in the students' linguistic performance governing their linguistic competence.

Table 6 displays part of participants' thoughts on the benefits of code-switching revealing three positive effects; by code-switching, the participants claimed that they, 1) displayed proficiency and confidence, 2) delivered information clearly and effectively without avoiding specific information, and 3) recognized the smoothness of the discourse.

Another interesting point observed from the data is the fact that these students have mixed feelings about their code-switching ability. They first elaborated on their frustration that they try to hold from code-switching in certain cases since they felt like they were being judged by others. However, they also said that they were quite proud of their capability to code-switch instantly and naturally. These mixed feelings were due to the cultural contexts they were in; living in high cultural context societies where communication is more indirect, implicit, and geared towards saving face and being graceful (Hall, 1976), they tend to mellow down their abilities. Yet these societies are highly globalized and westernized with fierce competition driving one's success and one's abilities must be displayed and assessed by others. Consequentially, it is natural for these students to have mixed feelings towards their linguistic abilities.

**Table 6:** Benefits of Code-switching

Quotes from the participants	Participants
<p><i>“I code-switch because it’s easy and convenient. I think my message becomes more clear. And, though I know some people judge me, I am proud of speaking both Korean and English fluently. I think those being skeptical are just jealous.”</i></p>	K12
<p><i>“...sounds more natural. Yes, smoother conversation! Umm, flows naturally.”</i></p>	T9
<p><i>“I feel more confident when I code-switch coz sometimes I don’t know certain words or phrases but I want to carry on the conversation...code-switching allows me to continue the conversation giving me confidence.”</i></p>	T4

Quotes from the participants	Participants
"I think it makes the conversation more interesting. Sometimes I learn a new word while talking to friends who code-switch as well."	T1
"Yeah, the ability to code-switch in different languages is a plus, definitely. If I'm not allowed to code-switch, then in certain situation, I have to quit the conversation due to my lack of vocab pool in one language. But code-switching let me carry on and I think that's a plus to both me and the person talking with me."	K10
"It may seem like a broken conversation to some people, but to me and my friends, it's much easier this way. I am glad that I can speak two languages as my first language."	K7

The data are in line with Bista's (2010) claim that code-switching is a great strategy to enrich the dialog while assisting it to go smoother. Indeed, smooth and naturally flowing discourse can be achieved by code-switching efficiently since it is a great 'reparation tool' for the interlocutors (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). The data also suggest that Song & Andrews' (2009) assertion on keeping the message without abandoning any parts is common amongst bilingual speakers when they code-switch. This is also in line with Chan's (2018) claim that speaking one language sometimes hinders rich communication in certain contexts.

This study aimed to deliver the voices of bilingual students in sharing their perceptions of their code-switching practices in Asian HE settings. They largely agreed that consciously or unconsciously they strategically utilize code-switching as a way of delivering their messages clearly and effectively (Heredia & Altarriba, 2001) but at the same time tried their best to conform to the societal norms when doing so. They recognized that the

benefits of code-switching were much larger than the negativities. It enhances their linguistic trajectories and also gave them a sense of pride yet they did agree that there were certain factors that negatively affect their code-switching practices.

## 5. Conclusion

There are many factors that affect bilinguals to switch code while conversing. The study discussed Asian bilingual students' code-switching behaviors in the HE contexts in two different countries and witnessed that their linguistic performances were largely governed by the contextual (socio-cultural) attitudes.

This research adds to the current studies on code-switching that explain the reasons and causes contributing to language switching in selected contexts. For these particular bilingual students, the usage of code-switching was a natural process of effectively and efficiently delivering their message conforming to the cultural norm. They displayed different conducts in switching code according to the complexity and sensitivity of the topics or contents of the speech.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that conversation topics and contents hold significant correlations with the socio-cultural norms and values playing crucial roles in students' code-switching. It can also be suggested that fluency and smoothness of the discourse, along with clear delivery of information can be obtained through effective code-switching. As cultures become more connected in this globalizing world, differences in behaviors, practices, and norms are respected. This includes different languages and their usages, therefore, it is necessary to reassess the value and the effects of code-switching in linguistic communication. Many factors

can cause code-switching in people's discourse depending on different customs of various cultures. It is suggested that studies be carried out in different contexts such as in multi-cultural work environment to understand different reasons or effects of code-switching to gain insights from the dynamics of this linguistic approach.

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