

Code-Switching in English-Mandarin Pop Songs

Hawaii Pacific University

Abstract

This research paper analyzes code-switching in popular Mandarin songs in contemporary China. It describes code-switching patterns and investigates the functions of code-switching in the lyrics. It concludes with a discussion and implications for language teaching.

Introduction

The rise of the multilingual population is significantly influenced by international business communication and immigration. Numerous countries and regions in Asia including Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore officially or unofficially embrace multilingualism. Today there are more individuals who are bilingual or multilingual than those who speak only one language, displaying the linguistic diversity worldwide (Kirkpatrick et al., 2001). Code-switching is a common linguistic practice among multilingual speakers.

Code-switching occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more language varieties in a single conversation (Gumperz, 1981). This phenomenon manifests itself in diverse ways and to achieve a variety of goals. It may occur within or between sentences; it may signify social aspects such as identity or solidarity among people who share values; and, as this paper demonstrates, it may serve the author's personal ideas (Kirkpatrick et al., 2001).

This paper analyzed the English-Chinese code-switching by American-born Chinese (ABC) singers in their songs. ABCs grew up in America because of family immigration (Jones & Themistocleous, 2001). The majority of them are from Hong Kong and Taiwan. During their childhood, they used English in their daily life but they spoke Mandarin or Cantonese at home. They acquired multilingual language ability and can now switch back and forth freely. With their music intelligence and multilingual capacity, their songs are composed of a mix of Chinese and English which interests the young generation from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Songs that incorporate code-switching provide listeners with a multicultural and multilingual experience. It can also serve as a form of cultural expression, reflecting the artists' background and the interconnectedness of different linguistic and musical traditions. Overall, code-switching in music contributes to the dynamic and evolving nature of musical expression in a globalized world.

In this paper, I will first demonstrate the ways in which ABC singers code-switch in their songs and discuss the potential reasons behind these lyric choices. Next, I will explore the

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Website: Hawaii Pacific University <http://www.hpu.edu>

Email: ydu+Hmy.hpu.edu. Address: 1010 Kalia Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2001.

message is well understood. Meanwhile, it is important to inform other observers or participants about the language background of the people involved. This can help them understand why code-switching is occurring and facilitates effective communication.

- Code-switching with " " involves interjections or fillers. It is a natural way for individuals who can understand both of the languages to convey their emotions or reactions which are felt appropriate or suitable at that moment.
- Switching for # is very useful and common when the multilingual speakers believe that a particular term or concept may not be well understood by the audience in the original language.
- Code-switching for \$ # occurs when the speaker introduces the topic in one language and elaborates on it in another language. It can be employed to emphasize or amplify the content of the message. The message may be more vivid and expressive if the

Code-Switching in Songs by C Singers

Research by Moody et al. shows that while English functions differently from industry to industry and in different cultures, each industry demonstrates bilingual creativity and linguistic innovation that has developed from the spread of English into Asia. Among many bilingual communities, code-switching is thought to imply that a speaker lacks the capacity to use a certain word in one language and can only express it in another language. Some people have labeled this behavior as lazy, careless, and demonstrating an inability to form correct sentences (Jones & Themistocleous, 2002). However, over time, sociolinguists are beginning to acknowledge that this hybridity is not a fault, but rather serves a purpose (Jones & Themistocleous, 2002).

There are numerous instances illustrating the sophisticated utilization of code-switching to heighten the rhetorical and aesthetic impact of lyrics. These examples show that code-switching patterns can interact with elements of lyrical structure, including rhyme, line segmentation, and chorus, and reinforce connections and distinctions in order to enrich various forms of artistic expression. Furthermore, code-switching can contribute semantically to the message conveyed by the lyrics. This occurs when it is employed to incorporate specific lexis or diction typical of the genre, emphasizing specific lexical elements, drawing attention to semantic comparison or parallels, or achieving patterns of parallelism, repetition, or rephrasing (Jones & Themistocleous, 2002, 1a). For example, in Checco Zalone's song "Miri Liya Confance" almost all the lines in the chorus rhyme with the repeated refrain phrase from the song's title (p. C). Another example is the song "Se me uitate pas": "Don't give up on me, my Checco *amin." The refrain line which also constitutes the title of the song is repeated 8 times among the chorus lyrics (p. D). Also, in the song "Kani mura" sung by Checco Hasni, the (key lines "Cait longtemps") it's been a long time, and "Pour me dire oui") to say yes to me, are both repeated many times in the refrain in a song otherwise dominated by the chorus (p. 1).

According to Chan's (2000) research on songs in Hong Kong, code-switching from Cantonese to English has been primarily considered as quoting Western concepts and ideas, conveying referential and connotative meanings absent in Cantonese. This, on the other hand, paper examines the functions of English lyrics in Mandarin songs, finding they are more varied beyond a symbol of Western culture. Particularly, code-switching fits into the rhyming, pointing out the theme, marking a transition, and other functions (p. 1).

Methodology

This research paper analyzes eleven Mandarin popular songs by singers who are originally from English-speaking countries. Table 1.

Table 1

Singer	Song title(s)	Code-switching frequency	Artist's background
&halil Long	-. M% song I wrote to youN	B times	born in -01B and raised in Hawaii by Hong &ong parents ² performed mainly in Hong &ong then mainland China. %ctive years from +, , 1 to now) # &halil Long# +, +B.
< ill Pan	-. MUUUN +. M: o not wanna wa(e upN	0 times 1 times	born in < est Pirginia in -01, to Taiwanese parents ² grew up in ' an I rancisco ² active from +, , + to now)M # < ill Pan#N +, +B.
5dison Chen	-. MThe love I owe youN	0 times	born in Pancouver# Canada in -01, 2 grew up in *.%2 his family is from Hong &ong)M # 5dison Chen#N +, +B.
*eehom < ang	-. MIn the remote placeN +. M? pen your heartN B. MTa(e your timeN	0 times -- times -, times	born in -0D4 and raised in \$ew Aor(2 graduated from 6er(lee College of Music with a doctorate degree ² his family is from Taiwan. He has been performing since -001)M # *eehom < ang#N +, +B.
77 *in	-. M%lways onlineN +. M? nly told youN	++ times -, times	born in -01- and raised in ' ingapore ² his family is from I u9ian Province# China ² with his traditional musical family ac(ground# he started learning to play piano in his childhood and received many awards for singing and composing songs e!ore he was -1. I rom +, , B onward# he has always been ran(ed as a top popular singer)M # 77 *in#N +, +B.
%le= To	-. M/ood ye *ouisN +. MI never meant to hurt youN	0 times C times	born in Hong &ong in -04+ ut moved to Canada a!terwards ² spent his youth in oth Canada and the United ' tates of %merica. He has been acting on the stage and singing from the late -00, s until now)M # %le= To#N

%ll o! the selected

5=cerpt BE ' ong 1# MIn that remote place#N y *eehom < ang)+, , C.

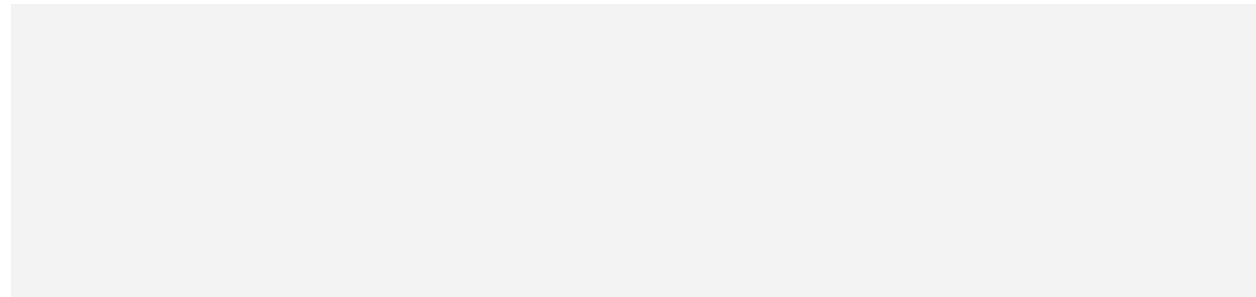
P)A@in\$•

Original lyrics	Pinyin	English translation
- : a (aepwts hwe hq/Be W(ahpok CbP (aGpPaHu		/
+ Come on and dance with me		!!
B K L M N O P Q R S	zhU sh^u de 9iW zSu yX [!]ng z]i di]n hu] ti	/ -)/
Q ' lide with me# slide with me		/ /
C Come on and slide with me		/ /
4 T . UV ,	gZn w^ y_ ; X ch]ng	
D W X Y E Z [' ing	9ib lf 9In le 9b lc sing	

In 5=cerpt B# the singer also uses inter-sentential code-switching. 6y choosing the last Chinese character M S N in line B and M [N in line D# which are pronounced as RIXT and RlCT respectively# < ang creates a rhyme with the last word in the 5nglish lineE Mme.N

5=cerpt Q is an e=ample o! oth inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching. In lines C# D# O and --# intra-sentential code-switching is employed to complete the clause.

5=cerpt QE ' ong C# M%lways onli\$ b' o o€ wllXcpothe.



1. r s t E u v # a b w x oh	w^ mWn li`n 9iW le chufn yuU# tifn ([ng ycn hW	2')) !
0 no y z # three two one	(fi shX d\o shb# three two one	. - !
-, { . } ~	shfn che w^ de ga dān)
-- More and more# • €•	more and more# 9In shV shZn (U	2 ! !
+: , E#: f E]i li]ng le#]i =i]o le	5nEITyP%PhyloB"oho" 00nTM0Pmyfza]b
-B Ixm always online		+1)

%s in 5=cerpt + a ove# not only does *in rhyme the Mandarin lyrics together ut he also ma(es the 5nglish line rhyme with the Mandarin lyric lines a ove and elow it. In line C and line 4# the last sylla les o! the 5nglish words MoneN and MonlineN !orm a close rhyme with each other and with the last Chinese character Mq N Rs\ nT in line D. %Iso# in line 0# the 5nglish word MoneN is rhymed with the Chinese character M ~ N RdfnT. In weaving oth languages together in interlacing rhymes li(e this# the songwriter and singer can appeal to his Mandarin-5nglish ilingual audience as well as e=pressing his own competent ilingualism and "uid Chinese %merican identity.

5cerpt CE ' ong +# M: o not wanna wa(e upN y < ill Pan)+, -+.

Original lyrics	Pinyin	English Translation
' o a y tonight tonight		W-) 0B4 T!#3E! B
+ „ ...† ‡ B ^ %o	tfo cha nUi =_n r]ng nX mcng ái	3))
B Š< Œ•	nX de ;_d]i y_ lài	4 ! !)
0 Ž B• • ' ' "	nWng r]ng =_n (d i]n ye uài	! !#) 00 & 7B0 !#

his love. Then except for line D all the last Chinese characters of the remaining lines rhyme together and form a slant rhyme with the last syllable of the English word Mtonight.

Excerpt 4 is from another classic song by Li Yizhi.

Excerpt 4 (Song by Li Yizhi)

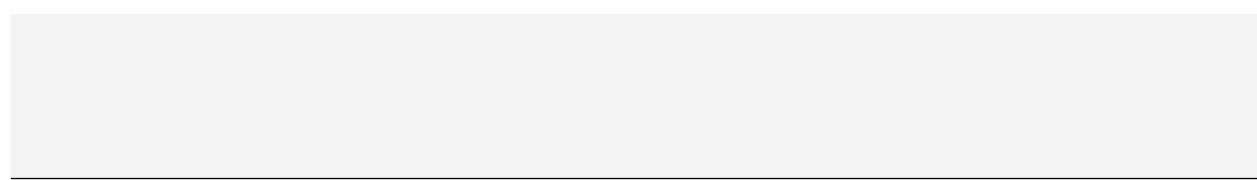
Original lyrics	Pinyin	English Translation
- Tell me a y# I love u love u love u# ǎi yī wǒ ài nǐ wǒ ài nǐ	Tell me a y# I love u love u love u# =i]n rb mlng hu]n cu_ mi`n de mg shù	- -) + / / / /))
+ 'o a y a y# tell me a y# I love u love u love u		- -) - -) - -) + / / /
B: 80¥ \$ " ©]i ; cng z]i ; i`n y] shc Ui zhZng fú	/ \$! -
Q I'm crazy over u u u u u		+ / ! ! ! ! / ! !
C a ← → ← 2 3 E 3 ~ p O , a @ re B Q / a 3 ö ð 1 > b O M		

line 4# Mu#N is rhymed with the pronunciation o! the last character o! line D# M , #N again pronounced as R!eT. Kepeatedly# the rhyme occurs in the ne=t pair se; uence o! line 1 8 0. This song applied oth intra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching.

5=cerpt D is a song y 77 *in that contains Mandarin# &orean# and 5nglish in inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching)lines + and B# respectively..

5=cerpt DE ' ong 4#M?nly told youN y 77 *in)+, , 4..

Original lyrics	Pinyin and &orean
- 1 9	zh_duW nX shu[7 /) 8)))



5=cerpt OE 'ong -#M/ood ye *ouis#N y %le= To)+, -1.

? riginal lyrics	5nglish Translation
- Ö¿ ^ %à á f Đ	*) ! !)
+ â ã . Uä å I J	+ ') ')
B ¼à æç . r èç é	+ !) !)
Q. êë ; âO. ‡ì í	+) / ! ')
C , î #ï ð#2Ýñ	! /) + -
4 B. ònóô	/)
D ð • Èö " ÷	(
1 ø. É FØù á •))
0 Oúûüý þÿ	+ 4 !)
-, 7 [fÿ	- ") /
-- . #à ç	2) !' ! - ' /
-+ ~ È # W3 ^a ï	!' / - ")
-B Oü ß W	/ !) /
-Q : onǎ wanna let you go	/)
-C : onǎ wanna let you go	/)
-4 : onǎ wanna let you go	/)
-D IǎI never let you go	+ /)
-1 < hy did you have to go)!!!) /

In this song# To uses Mandarin to recount his memories and feelings toward *ouis# an old friend that he has not seen for many years)lines ---B.. \$ear the end# he code-switches to English. The English line# M: on3t wanna let you go#N is a direct request to his friend# in contrast to the self-reflection in the Mandarin lines above it.

5=cerpt -, is from the song MTa(e your time#N composed by *eehom < ang in +, , -. This is a light# pleasant song with inter-sentential code-switching.

5=cerpts -B and -Q are e=amples o! code-switching !or simple e=pressions.

5=cerpt -Bē ' ong B#MUUUN !rom < ill Pan)+, -, .

Original lyrics	English translation
-W e f g æ h . ™ T 3 i j k	/ + ') '-
+ s b l 2 m n h why why I love you so	/ 0))+ /)
B ¼&opq†r h s t ā r u	, /) !+ ' !)
Q v w 3 love love h I want you girl	\$ / / +)
C Tell me a y I love u love u love u # ž Ÿ i € £ ¤ .	! - -) + / / /)
4 ' o a y a y tell me a y I love u love u love u	- -) - -) - -) + / / /
D: 8 0 ¥ † § ¨ © ×	/ \$! -
1 l3m crazy over u u u u u	+, %) / 90 @ R? # B 0 4 5 9 Q -) - -) - -) + /
0 ^a « ¬ - ® E - - - - -	5 ! %)

5=cerpt -QE ' ong D#M?pen your heartN y *eehom < ang)+, , C.

Original lyrics	English translation
- a y# . : # " ÷] + ñ y	3 -) + /) ' /
+ so come on now and P n ‡	!)
B a y# . : # " ÷] + ñ y	3 -) + /) / # !

The common expressions are integrated into the clausal frames in intra-sentential code-switching e.g. # M a y . : # " ÷] + ã y N) lines -# B# -4.. %nother example is the lyrics in lines +# Q# -D# -O# where the singer starts a line with the a common English expression # M come on now # N and completes it in Mandarin # M P n ‡ . N The use of the common English phrase in an imperative that is the central message of the song might add emphasis and draw attention to the message.

As seen in excerpts -B# -O# and the other excerpts above a large number of simple expressions of English are used by %6C singers to make their songs catchy and easy to follow while also expressing their bilingual identity.

Code-Switching for the Chorus

Choruses are usually used to highlight the main melody and the meaning of songs. In the Mandarin songs I examined many of the chorus lyrics are in English. Table 4 shows these examples.

Table 4

Song number	Song title	Chorus lines	Singer name
1	Mood ye *ouisN	M: on't wanna let you go N)B times.	%le= To

