

# A NEW INSIGHT ON THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF CODE-SWITCHING AS A POLITENESS STRATEGY IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION<sup>1[\*]</sup>

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*Abstract.* This paper addresses the issues of intercultural communication by focusing upon a function of code-switching as a politeness strategy. Conventionally, the notion of code-switching has been viewed as a representation of intercultural conflict, or linguistic difficulty. However, O'Driscoll (2001) identified that the language choice in plural-lingual settings is also triggered by face-work (Goffman, 1967). Based on this claim, this study attempts to explore the pragmatic function of code-switching, which is the contingent manifestation of language choice, not only as a compensation strategy (Tarone, 1977), but also as a politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In doing so, this study employs conversational analysis as its study basis, which has been conventionally regarded as the most suitable approach in politeness studies. Lastly, the shortcomings of the sole reliance on conversation analysis will be clarified, and finally, an implication for an alternative research methodology on politeness studies will be presented as a concluding remark.

## 1. Introduction

Recently, intercultural communication has become a very big issue. Quite a few foreign language conversational schools have advertised the importance of understanding different cultures through the use of foreign language learning. As a premise to this social paradigm shift, it should be noted that Japan, which used to be a nation of relative homogeneity, has gradually become more multicultural due to a number of immigrant groups coming to work in Japan. One of the biggest immigrant ethnic groups in Japan is Chinese. Zhang (2008) suggested that the day will soon come when the Japanese people constantly encounter intercultural communication in their daily lives even in domestic settings, particularly with the Chinese that have made a great deal of social translocation in various aspects of lives in Japan.

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There have been many studies on intercultural communication conducted so far in the field of sociolinguistics, one of these concerns “code-switching” (e.g. Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974; Li, 2005; Milroy & Muysken, 1995; Saviile-Troike, 1982; Tarone, 1977; Tasaki, 2006; Tokita, 2006), or the alternative use of two or more languages. However, most of these studies tend to view the phenomenon as the representation of intercultural conflict. For example, Tarone (1977) claimed that code-switching functions are a compensation strategy to make up for the lack of competence in communicating in foreign languages. Firth and Wagner (1997), on the other hand, saw problems in this view of intercultural communication, indicating the necessity of some reconsideration and reassessment.

Inspired by this, for example, Li’s (2005) investigation on English-Chinese bilingual children, residing in the United Kingdom, suggested that code-switching is frequently motivated by the rationality of conversation, including the language accommodation to your counterparts’. Furthermore, O’Driscoll (2001) discovered that the choice of language in plural-lingual settings is often triggered by face issues, which will be illustrated in the following section. Thus, code-switching not only merely signals the communication breakdown, but also helps the speakers establish rapport in communication, and thus has something to do with politeness theory.

Based on this social-cultural background, this study attempts to address issues of intercultural communication in Japan’s domestic setting; particularly, between Japanese and Chinese, which would most probably occur in recent Japanese society due to the increase in the total number of immigrants from China. The focus of this study is not upon linguistic deficiency, but upon face and politeness issues, which will be illustrated below.

## 2. Overview of Politeness Research

Erving Goffman, an American sociologist, suggested that communication consists not only of pure linguistic resources, but also other social skills. According to Goffman (1967), one of the constituents of communication is face. The idea of face is originated in Hu’s (1944) assertion based on the traditional Chinese concept of “*mianzi*” and “*lian*”. *Mianzi* is a social image of self that you accumulated throughout your social life, such as success, achievement, and accomplishment. On the other hand, *lian* is internal, and frequently related to the moral regard, including niceness (a want to be well-liked) and integrity (a want to do something right). Goffman (1967) found that this is seen not only in Chinese, but also western settings, discovering some universality of this discussion.

For further discussion, he also referred to the study of a French anthropologist of religion, Emile Durkheim. Durkheim (1915) investigated how people behave toward deities. There, she discovered some ritual behavior on human attitudes and named it “ritual order”. She also distinguished two different rituals: 1) positive rites and 2) negative rites. The former refers to the ritual attitudes toward deities to get close to the sacred; meanwhile the latter is an attitude to keep the deity intact from something filthy. This ritual attitude, as Goffman insisted in 1967, can be transformed into interpersonal communication and labeled them as “positive face” and “negative face”. The former is related to positive rites, and it is people’s want to be liked by other people. On the other hand, the latter one, relating to negative rites, is people’s need to keep themselves away from being impeded or in-

tervened by others. Goffman (1967) further argued that any kind of human communication contains some degree of face threatening acts (FTA), and he named the appropriate volition to such face issues as face-work.

In 1987, Brown and Levinson developed the notion of face-work and proposed the idea of politeness as a part of it. While face-work deals with ego's own face, politeness is concerned with the protection of alter's face. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987) dichotomized two distinctive ways of predicating politeness based on Goffman's (1967) argument: one is positive politeness, and the other negative politeness. The former one refers to some friendliness and closeness between two individuals to emphasize their positive face; whereas the latter one refers to the volition to your counterparts' negative face by means of either deference or demeanor. Brown and Levinson (1987) also postulated that the predication of politeness is a goal-oriented strategy so as not to threaten the face to realize harmonious interaction.

Moreover, as the title of their seminal work indicates, "*Politeness: Some universals in language usage*" (Brown & Levinson, 1987), the notion of politeness is universal although its cultural variation should be acknowledged. This has led to the production of many other relevant works on culture-specific politeness norms (e.g. Gu, 1995; Ide, 1989; Ide, 1998; Matsumoto, 1988; Mills, 2003; Pan, 2008; Sato, 2009; Scollon & Scollon, 2001; Tanaka, 2008; Usami, 2002; Zhang, 2008).

As studies of politeness continued, some micro-level approach to the linguistic etiquette was required. For example, Usami (2002) insisted that the politeness norm should be, unlike the argument of universality by Brown and Levinson, always context-dependent. Watts (2003) also claimed that any kind of lingual expressions themselves are potentially neither polite nor impolite: it is our afterward-evaluation that judges whether the expressions are polite or not along with the culture-specific politeness norms. Moreover, Watts (1992, 2003) distinguished the notion of politeness into 1) first-order politeness and 2) second-order politeness. The first one refers to pragmatic politeness, or so-called "polite expressions", perceived by socio-cultural group members; whereas, the second one is the use of the word of "polite" and "politeness" as theoretical concepts to refer to forms of social behavior. In other words, the latter one refers to some discourse-specificity of politeness: and some expressions that sound polite at first impression, including "would you mind if I ask you to do...", are not always polite as social behaviors, which can even lead to an FTA in some discourse. This distinction has suggested us "politeness researchers" that the context-dependency of politeness norms should be taken into account as its study-basis.

Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2005) argued that politeness strategies are implemented not only as a part of "face-work" to mitigate FTA in interaction as Brown and Levinson (1987) insisted, but also as a "relational-work" (Locher & Watts, 2005) to realize harmonious human interaction. Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) also indicated that politeness plays a significant role in the studies of business communication to realize harmonious business interaction. Koester (2001) claimed that the sequential code-switching between relational talk and transactional talk functions as politeness in business settings. Locher (2004) further explored the well-balanced between power and politeness, which he defines to be in the *yin-yang*<sup>2</sup> relations, essential in realizing the smooth and harmonious of business negotiation.

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<sup>2</sup> *yin-yang* is a Chinese expression literally meaning "shadow and sun". This metaphorically refers to mutual and interchangeable interrelations inseparable from each other.

Particularly in international business settings where native speakers of a language naturally gain power over his/her non-native counterparts. This occasionally leads to a conflict in establishing rapport due to the difference of positionality. In which case, politeness implementation leads to realizing the mitigation of the disequilibrium along with power relations. Thus, politeness plays a significant role in considering what communication consists of.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study was conducted as one of the research topics in relation to the continuous development of Meisei Summer School Project (MSSP), which is a summer intensive foreign language teaching project (English and Chinese) held at Meisei University, Tokyo, Japan every summer (2002–2008). Other than this paper, many other various kinds of research projects on foreign language teaching/learning have been on-going in this research site (e.g. Fukada, 2004; Kawamata, 2005; Sato, 2007; Sugiyama, 2006, 2009; Tanaka, 2006, 2007; Tanaka & Fukada, 2004; Tanaka & Ogane, in press).

Beginning in 2005, the MSSP was expanded to be integrated as an international project presented by the Council of International Educational Exchange (CIEE). As a result, it began to invite several international volunteers from all over the world every year, which made the MSSP a multicultural/multilingual environment. In 2007, when this research project was conducted, there were eleven international volunteers invited from various countries all over the world (e.g. American, Chinese, Irish, Hungarian, Korean, etc.), and they co-worked with other Meisei students to set up the curricula of the MSSP 2007. In addition, 2007 was the first year for the Chinese course. According to Tanaka (2007), the background of the introduction of this one-week intensive Chinese course is that student teachers of Chinese are now available, and the need for developing a teaching methodology of Chinese is increasing as the demand for learning the language increases (p.8). Thus, great expectations were poured into the establishment of this Chinese course as well as its success.

Thus, all the data analyzed in this study was obtained in the Chinese course of the MSSP 2007 for the purpose of continuous development of the project. This study employs CA as its study basis. Brown and Levinson (1987), in their seminal works on politeness, argued that no other research methodology could make more contribution to the studies on politeness than conversation analysis (p. 41), or CA. In CA, communication is viewed as a joint activity of talk-based interactions (e.g. Firth, 1990; Huchby & Woofit, 1988; Sacks & Shegloff, 1979; Sacks, 1972; Sacks, Shegloff, & Jefferson, 1989). This micro and localized perspective enables the researchers to capture the constant moment of communication in which politeness implementation resides. Hence, the actual recording of the participants' interactions were recorded to be transcribed. Utilizing this method, the empirical qualitative data analysis will be presented in the section below.

Lastly, this study was conducted based upon strict research ethics: all the participants in this study were required to fill in the consent form in advance to guarantee privacy protection. All the names of the participants will be presented as pseudonym so the general readers cannot identify them.

## 4. Data analysis

In this section, four cases of data analyses will be presented: 1) intercultural conflict caused by language choice; 2) code-switching as intercultural competence; 3) transactional talk on classroom management; and 4) Nobita's code-mixture to fulfill accountability. The data analysis will be conducted in the following way: first, the CA transcription will be presented along with its English translation; then, the analysis will be presented based upon qualitative interpretation.

### 4.1. Intercultural conflict caused by language choice

This is where Shun was talking with Fang, an international volunteer invited from China. Shun has majored in Chinese for two years at the time of this study. Hence, as a Chinese-speaking practice, he attempted to use Chinese to talk with her. Then Hina, an English major student, came in and interrupted their Chinese conversation by compiling it into Japanese. The actual discourse is presented as follows. To ease reference, the line numbers and the speakers' names are included. In addition Chinese is shown in regular font, **English** in bold, and *Japanese* in italics.

#### Transcription Convention:

(1.0)	pause	(.)	pause shorter than 0.2 seconds
a:	extension of vowels	.	falling intonation
?	raising intonation		

#### Excerpt 1 (2007/8/3):

1. Shun zhe shi nide zhaopian ma?
2. Fang shi a. Shi wo chuan hefu de zhaopian.
3. Shun hefu?
4. Fang **uh... Japanese traditional cloth.**
5. Shun ah, mingbai mingbai.
6. Hina *chugokugo tsukawanai deyo! Wakaranai n dakara!*
7. Shun ni shang Huang laoshi de zhongwenke, shiba!
8. Na, dagai meiwenti
9. Hina **Don't speak Chinese! I don't understand.**
10. Wo buzhidao!
11. Fang **Oh, you can speak Chinese!** ((laughter))

#### English Translation:

1. Shun Is this your picture?
2. Fang Yeah. It's a picture of my wearing Hefu.
3. Shun What is "Hefu"?
4. Fang **uh... Japanese traditional cloth.**
5. Shun Ah, ok ok.
6. Hina *Don't speak Chinese! I don't understand!*
7. Shun You take Prof.Hunag's Chinese course, right? So, it
8. must be no problem!

9. Shun **Don't speak Chinese! I don't understand.**  
 10. I don't know!  
 11. Fang **Oh, you can speak Chinese!** ((laughter))

To begin with, they talked about Fang's picture in which she wears Japanese traditional clothes (line #1). Then, on the second line, Fang happened to use a word HEFU (Japanese traditional clothes), which Shun could not understand as shown in the next line, so he repeats the word with raising intonation. (line #3) to ask for paraphrasing. Recognizing Shun's calling for help, Fang switched her code into English, as a "compensation strategy" (Tarone, 1977) on the fourth line. Up to this point, they had harmonious interaction.

Suddenly, Hina, who was an outsider of this discourse, interrupted them (line #6) by using her mother tongue, Japanese, and she complained about their using Chinese, of which she did not have a good command. Shun, meanwhile, stayed in Chinese language shown in the line #7 and encouraged her to use Chinese there. To Hina, however, Shun's code-switching into Chinese triggered further frustration, and so as to intervene, she deliberately employed English and then Chinese, which are accessible languages in this discourse, (line #9 and #10) to further complaint about his use of Chinese. Through these series of reciprocal conflicts whose overwhelming intonations are marked by "!" (Line #6, #7, and #8), their relationship as well as face seemed to be quite threatened.

Lastly, worrying about their face, Fang also switched to English, the neutral language among them, and mitigated the tension between by highly evaluating Hina's effort to speak Chinese in front of them. Without this code-switching by Fang, further conflict might have occurred. Hence, Fang's careful observation and sensitivity stopped their conflicts and harmonious interaction between them resumed. Thus, her code-switching into English by accommodating Hina's language choice on the previous line functioned as a positive politeness strategy as a second-order politeness, and thus the FTA in this situation was mitigated.

#### 4.2. Code-Switching as an Intercultural Competence

Converse to the use of code-switching described in the previous excerpt, Fang employed code-switching as an intercultural competence. The following Excerpt 2 depicts a situation where Fang asked Shun about the gift-giving to a supervisor of MSSP, which is the cultural norm of the Chinese.

##### Excerpt 2 (2007/7/23)

1. Fang wo wen ni (.) nei ge li wu?  
 2. Shun ah nei ge (.) **present** ma?  
 3. Fang dui  
 4. Shun wo yi jing gei (0.5) gei ta  
 5. Fang gei ta le?  
 6. Shun un  
 7. Fang hao  
 8. Shun (1.0)  
 9. Fang **thank you**  
 10. Shun (1.0)  
 11. Fang wo zenme xie ni a?

**English Translation**

- |     |      |                                  |
|-----|------|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | Fang | May I ask (.) about the present? |
| 2.  | Shun | Oh the (.) <b>present</b> right? |
| 3.  | Fang | Yes                              |
| 4.  | Shun | I already gave (.) gave him      |
| 5.  | Fang | You gave him?                    |
| 6.  | Shun | Yes                              |
| 7.  | Fang | Nice                             |
| 8.  | Shun | (1.0)                            |
| 9.  | Fang | <b>Thank you</b>                 |
| 10. | Shun | (1.0)                            |
| 11. | Fang | How can I thank you?             |

On the line # 1, Fang started talking to Shun only in Chinese, since she knew Shun was eager to practice speaking Chinese with her. Hence, the language choice at this moment was triggered by her concern for Shun's ethno-linguistic face (O'Driscoll, 2001) in addition to her polite face (O'Driscoll, 2001) predicating to him. On the line #2, however, he happened to code-switch in the middle of the sentence: "ah nei ge, **present** ma?". Since "neige" in Chinese language represents some kind of hedging, the function of this code-switch was to confirm the meaning of "liwu". To that, Fang said "dui (yes)" to indicate that his understanding was correct.

However, on line #11, another code-switching technique was observed, whose function should be differentiated from Shun's obtained on the line #2. Her redundant use of confirmation expressions checking (e.g. "gei ta le? [you already gave him?]" and "hao [I see]") reflects her conception of discomfort in communicating with Shun in Chinese at that moment. Moreover, Fang's production of several incomplete fragmental sentences along with two hedges: 1) wo wen ni (Could I ask you) and 2) nei ge (Well) also represents her discomfort in communicating. Shun, meanwhile, also had some difficulty in communicating with Fang at that moment as is represented in his frequent silence in between conversation. Therefore, she decided to code-switch to English in order to mitigate the communication breakdown like the one observed in the previous Excerpt 1. In so doing, she retrieved the equilibrium of the discourse by eliminating conversational suffocation through the predication of the cosmopolitan face (O'Driscoll, 2001). Therefore, the code-switching obtained in this excerpt eventually functioned as a means of politeness strategy to realize harmonious intercultural communication.

#### 4.3. Transactional talk on the classroom management

The next excerpt was obtained while observing the interaction between Yu and Fang. Yu was a postgraduate student at Meisei learning Chinese for three years during this study. Moreover, he was one of the leading students of the Chinese course. Here, they were talking about some issues regarding their classroom management, including what and how to teach.

**Excerpt 3 (2007/7/25):**

1. Yu **What you are supposed to do during this session is the**
2. **introduction of your culture (.) I mean (.) Chinese culture**
3. Fang **uh-huh**
4. Yu **You are going to show some cultural things to the students and**
5. **(.) maybe (.) give them some kind of quiz**
6. Fang **Ah ok (.) Actually (.) I've brought some material for the class**
7. Yu **uh-huh**
8. Fang **Not only me (.) but also all the international volunteers**
9. Yu **Okay (.) That's nice (.) It makes it easier for you to conduct the**
10. **class and for the students to understand you**
11. Fang **Yeah (2.0) Zhege shi hou ni dang fanyi ma?**
12. Yu **Dangran keyi (1.0) Meiyou de hua (.) xueshengmen dou**
13. **tingbudong ba**
14. Fang **[[((laughter))]]**
15. Yu **[[((laughter))]] Yeah (1.0) Okay So (.) do you have any other**
16. **questions?**
17. Fang **No not really (.) Uh, do you have any other things to tell me?**
18. Yu **No not really (.) Now (0.5) that's all**

**English Translation:**

1. Yu **What you are supposed to do during this session is the**
2. **introduction of your culture (.) I mean (.) Chinese culture**
3. Fang **uh-huh**
4. Yu **You are going to show some cultural things to the students and**
5. **(.) maybe (.) give them some kind of quiz**
6. Fang **Ah ok (.) Actually (.) I've brought some material for the class**
7. Yu **uh-huh**
8. Fang **Not only me (.) but also all the international volunteers**
9. Yu **Okay (.) That's nice (.) It makes it easier for you to conduct the**
10. **class and for the students to understand you**
11. Fang **Yeah (2.0) Are you going to translate then?**
12. Yu **Of course (1.0) If no translation (.) our students cannot**
13. **understand right?**
14. Fang **[[((laughter))]]**
15. Yu **[[((laughter))]] Yeah (1.0) Okay So (.) do you have any other**
16. **questions?**
17. Fang **No not really (.) Uh, do you have any other things to tell me?**
18. Yu **No not really (.) Now (0.5) that's all**

On the first line, Yu described what he wants her to do in the Chinese class in English. Then, on the line #3, she made a back-channel in English by accommodating her language with Yu's. Then, on the line #4, he continued to explain what he wanted her to do in English. On the following line #6, she comments to show agreement. In response, Yu back-channeled in English, just like Fang did on the line #3. Then, on line #8, Fang further commented, which signaled her proper understanding of the conversation, and then Yu also comments as to the efficacy of their decision.

Then, on line # 11, after Fang's back-channeling in English and 2.0 silence, she suddenly switched her code into Chinese to ask Yu to be a translator in one of her classes. As Brown and Levinson explained, any kind of "inquiry" contains some degrees of face-threatening act (FTA). Likewise, her inquiry for Yu to be a translator was an FTA in that it somehow imposes some mental burden. However, considering the classroom situation where all the participants are beginners in learning Chinese and it was rather tough for them to listen to Chinese at that stage, it was unnecessary for her to employ a translator in her classroom. Therefore, she conducted this inquiry out of necessity. Then, it should be noted, she deliberately switched back to Chinese, her mother tongue at this point. Considering her proficiency in English, shown above, she must have been able to convey the same message to him in English.

This could be motivated not by the linguistic difficulty, but by the face-work (Goffman, 1967). What counted in this situation was the issue of ethno-linguistic face (O'Driscoll, 2001). Since Chinese is her mother tongue, and another common language for them other than English, she deliberately switched into Chinese to emphasize their ethno-linguistic face as a means of positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Moreover, for the purpose of translation, those who are in charge of it should know a lot about both languages: language to translate, and language to be translated. Therefore, the acceptance of the inquiry also leads to the promotion of his ethno-linguistic face, and its refutation would mean the lowering of it.

In line #12, Yu accommodated his language to hers and pleasantly accepted it. His accommodation also functioned as a positive politeness strategy to emphasize their ethno-linguistic face. Moreover, the following simultaneous laughter between Yu and Fang further emphasized their closeness and friendliness leading to the mitigation of FTA accompanied by the inquiry.

Another thing to be noted here is, after their accommodating code-switching into Chinese, Yu suddenly switched back to English, their first language choice, to make a concluding remark in this meeting. In response, Fang also accommodated to Yu by switching her code into English to represent her satisfaction. In addition, she asked back to Yu whether there are any other things that she should do. Then, on the final line, he stayed in English and repeated the very same phrase that Fang employed in the previous line to show that he was as much satisfied with the result of this talk as she was. Thus, by means of code-switching as a positive politeness strategy, and the co-constructive meaning accompanied by this, they conducted some meaningful relational work, leading to the establishment of rapport.

#### 4.4. Nobita's Code-Mixture to Fulfill Accountability

The previous excerpt dictated cases of intercultural communication by relatively proficient language users. However, the data of a similar phenomenon was also obtained in another discourse by a student of Chinese with relatively low proficiency. Nobita, who was a second year student and had been learning Chinese for two years, had a chance to talk with Fang in Chinese. However, as it is his first attempt to use the language in a practical situation, he sometimes had difficulty in using the language and expressing himself clearly. The following Excerpt 4 clearly shows his struggles.

**Excerpt 4 (2007/8/3):**

1. Nobita Xia xingqi wo you(.) wo you *Kokusai*
2. *Kankei Ron de fabiao.*
3. Fang Shi ma? You shenme fabiao?
4. Nobita *Etto(.) Chugokugo de ienai.*
5. Fang Yingwen Riwen ye keyi.
6. Nobita **(0.5) about diamond or (.) diamond of**
7. (.) *Funso (.) tte nante iunda?*

**English translation**

1. Nobita Next week we will (.) we will discuss
2. *international relations*
3. Fang Oh really? What is that?
4. Nobita *Well (.) I cannot say it in Chinese.*
5. Fang English or Japanese is also fine
6. Nobita **(0.5) about diamond or (.) diamond of**
7. (.) *Funso (.) how can I say that?*

By code-switching using compensation strategy, he tried frequently to convey what he really wants to say from line #s 1 through 4. Particularly on line # 4, he proclaims “*chugokugo de ienai* (I cannot say it in Chinese)”, which represents that he had some trouble in using Chinese. However, as an illocutionary force, he attempted to express his will to fulfill his own communicative responsibility. On line # 5, Fang sensed his discomfort in expressing himself only in Chinese, she offered him, in Chinese, an alternative language choice (i.e. English and Japanese). To this, he reacted by choosing English, representing that the use of English was his “negative politeness strategy” (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and, in doing so, he attempted not to impose a further burden on Fang by using Japanese, which she was not used to using. Since English is another foreign language to him, rather than using Japanese (his mother tongue, where he can manage interactional issues comfortably), he deliberately chose English to present “situated appropriateness”.

Furthermore, this language choice also represents his willingness to fulfill the communicative responsibility assigned to him. Thus, his code-switching was not only employed as a means of compensation strategy, but also functioned as a means of face-work (Goffman, 1967). In other words, by using code-switching, he tried to maintain a cosmopolitan face, which enabled Nobita to implement some positive politeness strategy toward Fang by hindering her from making trajectory to the periphery of this discourse.

## 5. Summary

This study attempts to make a contribution to further explore the issue of code-switching (Gumperz, 1982). So far, Li (2005) discovered that the motivation of language choice via code-switching was concerned with the contextual rationality of the chosen code. However, the assessment of rationality is highly dependent on the context. O’Driscoll (2001) provided some insight regarding this point by alluding to face issues. Nevertheless, few studies have extended the discussion to include more spontaneous and contingent manifes-

tation of language choice, or code-switching. Henceforth, this study attempted to explore the applicability of employing face-work as the harness of assessing rationality.

The data analyses of this study indicates that the conversational code-switching in intercultural communication not only represents the intercultural conflict, including the lack of competence and communication breakdown, which is the conventional view of it, but also functions as face-work (Goffman, 1967) and, to some extent, a politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987) to enhance harmonious human relationships. However, one of the shortcomings of this study is its relatively small size. Therefore, further studies, on a much larger scale, need to be conducted to enhance the validity and credibility of the hypothetical discoveries included in this research.

## 6. Methodological Implication

This paper, based on the CA approach, addresses the issue of intercultural communication in relation to code-switching, tries to conclude that the choice of language in multilingual situation, not only is triggered by the linguistic difficulty as Tarone (1977) pointed out, but also functions as a politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, some new questions arose: Is the Fang's last phrase in Excerpt #1 really face-work? If so, how can you tell? It is appropriate to conclude that Fang highly evaluated Hina's effort to speak Chinese. However, is the last illocution, "Oh, you can speak Chinese!", done to protect Hina's face, or was it just Fang's sarcasm toward Hina? Similar things can be said to Excerpt #2 as well. In order to answer those kinds of questions properly, relying solely on CA is not valid. Thus, it is vital to propose an alternative research methodology to answer these questions properly.

However, there has been no proper way discovered to justify and legitimize the validity of the author's interpretation on these issues. This is, therefore an example of the shortcomings in relying solely on the CA approach in doing the empirical qualitative data analysis.

Regarding this, Roberts (2001) pointed out that in the studies in which the notion of language use is viewed as a co-construction activity rather than just a message conveyance, the investment of ethnographic data, or further information to deepen our understanding of the research context, helps by way of supplementation, which is being employed more frequently (e.g. Nakane, 2007; Samra-Fredericks, 2004; Sato, 2009). Samra-Fredericks (2004) further emphasized the practicality of combining these two research methodologies. She pointed out that the ethnographic approach should be expanded to include talk-based routines. Although ethnography and conversation analysis have been traditionally regarded as mutually exclusive due to their difference in philosophical basis, Samra-Fredericks (2004) innovatively claims that the combination of ethnography with CA helps to achieve "thick description". She claims that:

[W]hile numerous insightful analytical points can easily be derived from remaining transcript-intrinsic, given the researcher's specific interest and to discern the full import of what they accomplished, careful consideration and inclusion of 'transcript-extrinsic data' (Nelson, 1994) arising from the ethnographic component was also deemed necessary. ..., efforts to

trace and understand both density and constant moment necessitated the inclusion of the ethnographic component.’ (Samra-Fredericks, 2004, p. 129)

She also pointed out that “the traditional ethnographic approach needed to be extended to include actual recordings of natural occurring talk-based routines” (Samra-Fredericks, 2004, p.139). She explains that the inclusion of “transcription-extrinsic data, or ethnographic components” into the CA approaches is necessary “to trace and understand both density and constant moment” (Samra-Fredericks, 2004, p.139). Moreover, Bargiela-Chiappini et al. (2007) also pointed out that combination of multiple data collection methods is useful in dealing with the multinational discourse just like what this study focused upon as its area of interests.

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