Code-switching: A Korean Case Study

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Abstract

The push to learn English in Korea has led many families to send their older children to western countries in order to increase their speaking abilities. Code-switching is one strategy that English Second Language students use to combat the difficulties encountered while learning the Second Language. This paper examines an instance of code-switching between two Korean women who are discussing a Korean political topic. Conversation Analysis and ethnographic interviews were used to review the data. It was found that one of the participants used code-switching to establish intersubjectivity, however the recipient rejects this attempt at social identity agreement. This non-alignment is analysed, and implications of the results for the English Second Language classroom are examined.

1. Introduction

Korean nationals living abroad face a multitude of difficulties. Both language and cultural barriers must be bridged in order for them to adjust or assimilate into western cultures. Korean learners of English must negotiate this second language in line with their traditional culture, which can clearly be seen in interactions spoken in English. Korean culture is both hierarchical and paternalistic, with age and sex predating the manner in which people address each other. These cultural mores are fully expressible in Korean, but do not always translate into English. Although some cultural constructs and ideas can be expressed in English, at times it is impossible to transfer language paradigms. In these cases, Koreans may produce a phenomenon called code-switching, which can be broadly defined as instances where speakers shift from one language to another, either in one or several turns of talk in general interaction.

Informed by conversation analytic and ethnographic approaches, this paper will examined code-switching in an English speaking Korean community. Using Conversation Analysis (CA), an actual interaction between two Korean women who are discussing a current Korean news topic will be examined. Subsequently, some ethnographic information about the women’s backgrounds and their expressed views will be collected, through face-to-face interviews with the author. Also, implications of code-switching will be examined in the context of English Second Language (ESL)/English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Code-switching

English is widely considered the international language. Spoken by innumerable people and being studied every day, English has become the primary communication tool for many purposes. However, this is not necessarily considered productive by all people. Research has shown that there is a certain level of discontent from those who have experienced an invasion of English into their cultures (Sasaki, Suzuki et al., 2006). Nevertheless, as globalisation has increased, so has the spread of English. Yet, although English is the language of education, politics and business, other language communities exist and even flourish in western society. Ethnic and speech communities find ways in which to express their culture despite the English medium.

People who live in and use different languages other than their mother tongue can switch from one language to another during interaction creating code-switching. Crystal (1987) says that code-switching is where one individual, who is bilingual, interacts with another bilingual individual, in more than one language, where bilingualism is roughly defined as having a “proficient” use of or familiarity with both languages (as cited in Skiba, 1997).

Several reasons for code-switching have been suggested by research. Adrienne Lo found that code-switching was done in order to establish ethnic identity between Asian-Americans (Lo, 1999). Bilingual Chinese and Korean interaction was analysed and it was found that code-switching served as a marker of intersubjectivity between the Asian men. In a study done on code-switching and the use of English in Korean television commercials, it was found that switching from Korean into English demonstrated social status as well as freedom from prescribed cultural norms (Lee, 2006). It was also found that in groups of bilinguals, that code-switching is done to express concepts that can only be culturally identified through the appropriate language (Chung, 2006). Unamuno (2008) analysed Catalan and English code-switching by children, and found that it was done most often as a tool for contextualising and learning English. Immigrant children were found to code-switch in order to communicate and to illicit the appropriate vocabulary from their instructors. Further, in classroom and non-classroom settings code-switching findings mirror each other (Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain, 2005). Researchers found that students code-switch when knowledge of the target language was insufficient, or when they needed their mother tongue to address a discourse related issue.
2.2 Korean Culture

As previously mentioned, code-switching occurs when there is a communication breakdown, to establish intersubjectivity or because the pragmatic meaning of a word cannot be translated into the second language. This is especially relevant to Asian learners of English, as their social structure and culture differs greatly from that in the west. Within Asia there are many ethnicities and cultures: Korea standing alone as one of the most insular and homogenous. Korean culture is based on the philosophy of Confucius whose tenets include ancestor veneration, deference to age and responsibility for family (Lee, 2006). Education is also a major factor shaping Korean society. The constant and almost obsessive push towards creating an English proficient public has been demonstrated thoroughly in literature (Choi, 1997; Li, 1998; 2001; Lee, 2006a, 2006b). This has led many parents to send their children abroad to learn English in immersion settings.

In both the language classroom and in general society, Korean interaction and conversation is based on the hierarchical system mentioned before. The Korean language, Han-gul, has many different rules to be used in different social settings. These rules apply to the status and level of intimacy that exists between two parties. Additionally, the context can change the way in which Koreans must produce utterances (Chun, 1982; Coulmas, 2005). Yum (2000) described three main levels of speech namely plain, polite and honorific (as cited in Lee, 2006). Lee (2006) also discovered that Korean students studying in the United States found it difficult to disengage themselves from the strict linguistic norms of their mother tongue and speak in the more casual American dialect.

2.3 Implications in the Classroom

Teaching pedagogy has been rapidly evolving in recent years, due both to the aforementioned need for English proficiency as well as the inadequacy of the current educational system. Difficulties both culturally and linguistically make teaching Korean students very difficult (Li, 2001). Knowledge of Korean culture and its application to the learning of English should be considered very important for the ESL/EFL classroom. Choi (1997) studied the difficulties Korean students face in adjusting to the school system. Among the top three most discussed problems in the student poll was the lack of teachers’ cultural and education knowledge in regard to Korea, difficulties adjusting to the culture of the Australian school system, and discrimination. Lee (2006) additionally found that students perceive a difficulty in communicating in English due to cultural differences apparent in their language.
Many research projects have focused on increasing English language learning in Asian students. Savignon (2002) argued that teachers and students must use socio-cultural strategies when in the classroom. This includes educating teachers about their student’s culture. Currently, the communicative approach in teaching methodology is most commonly used in Korea (Li, 2001), however it has proven incredibly difficult to establish (Li, 1998). According to both of Li’s papers, Korean students were apprehensive to speak out and embrace English linguistic structure. Finally, Unamuno (2008) found that code-switching could be used to increase sociolinguistic competence among those studying English. This idea stands in contrast to the concept of language immersion, which is a popular practice in English language schools in Korea (Li, 1998).

3. Methodology

In order to examine the actual interaction of the participants, Conversation Analysis (CA) was used. CA’s analytic method enables the researcher to empirically examine the characteristics of recorded “talk-in-interaction” (Schegloff, 1987: 207). Inspired by the work of Sacks, Schegloff et al., (1974) CA research has been concerned with turn-taking (Demosthenous, 2008; McHoul, 1978; Perykyla, 1995). In this case, CA will be used to examine the actual talk-in-interaction produced by the participants. The turn-taking rules for conversation developed by Sacks, Schegloff et al., (1974) connect turn construction with turn allocation to coordinate speaker change with minimal gap and overlap (see Appendix 1). Specifically, this paper will focus on how turn-allocation occurs either by the use of a current speaker selecting a next speaker or by self-selection.

In addition to looking at how turns at talk are allocated, the researcher will attempt to ascertain why they were produced. As CA is a data driven method of investigation, there is no way to determine the cultural connection between what was said and why the participant has said it. Rather, ethnography provides for collecting and using background data (Laihonen, 2008). In order to obtain personal and cultural information about the participants, and find out individual rationales for produced speech, ethnographic interviews will be held with each participant subsequent to their discussion. Ethnographic analysts can compare dialect, register, politeness formulas, and indirectness of speech in terms of ethnicity or race, social class, geographic region, gender, age, and professional or workplace specialisation, as well as the relative superordination and subordination of the conversationalists (Erickson, 1995). In order to determine which of these characteristics influenced the participants’ speech, the researcher will question them with these in mind.
4. Research Design

4.1 Participants

Kate is a 26 year old ethnic Korean woman from Busan, South Korean. She has been living in Australia for over two years, and has completed several Cambridge and International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) preparation courses, although she is yet to sit for either exam. At her last language school, she studied at an upper-intermediate level, and is considering undertaking a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) in the future. Additionally, she states that she is “tri-lingual”, as she speaks Korean, English and Mandarin. She learned Mandarin as a child in Beijing. She currently works on a part-time basis in a retail setting, where she is surrounded by Korean co-workers, and the lingua franca of the workplace is Korean. For the past two years, she has been dating an Indonesian-Australian, who identifies as a native-English speaker, and English is their primary language for communication. Kate is an English name that was chosen for her by her mother in childhood. She introduces herself using this name, and rarely uses her Korean birth name.

Mi Yun is a 24 year old Korean woman hailing from a small city outside of Seoul, South Korea. She has been living and studying in Australia for over 10 months. She is currently unemployed and considers herself a full-time student. She is supported by her parents, who sent her to Australia to improve her English skills in hopes of increasing her chances of obtaining a high-profile company position upon return to Korea. Mi Yun has been classified by her language school as an upper-intermediate student, and she is currently studying for the Cambridge Academic Exam. She does not have many Korean friends in Australia, and speaks Korean only on the phone to her parents or friends back home in Korea. In hopes of improving her language skills, Mi Yun makes a concerted effort to make international friends and attempts to assimilate into Australian culture as best she can. She has been given an English name by one of her teachers; however she prefers to use her birth name. When asked about her cultural identity, Mi Yun replied, “I’m typical Korean. I cannot be anybody else.”

4.2 Data Collection

The data were made up of three recordings. One recording was made of a conversation between Kate and Mi Yun, in which they discussed a recent English newspaper article concerning the suicide of the former South Korean President Roh
Moo-hyun (see Appendix 2). The two other recordings were made of ethnographic interviews with the participants.

After informing Kate and Mi Yun about their rights to withdraw from the study, the author turned on the recording device and exited the room. The author reviewed the discussion before interviewing the participants. Participants were asked about their cultural and social background, and the things that they had talked about in their earlier conversation.

4.3 Data Transcription

Both the conversation and the interviews were listened to and transcribed using the Jeffersonian transcription notation, which is commonly used in CA work. These notations are based on those in Demosthenous (2008) and presented in Table 1, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simultaneous, overlapping, and latched utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ Left-hand square brackets are used to indicate the point of overlap onset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>] Right-hand square brackets are used to indicate the point of overlap stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= Equal signs, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no ‘gap’ between the two lines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervals within and between utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0.0) Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds, so (0.3) is a pause of three tenths of a second.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>() A dot in parentheses indicates a tiny ‘pause’ within or ‘gap’ between utterances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of speech delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. A full-stop is used to indicate a falling or stopping intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>, Punctuation marks are used to indicate characteristics of speech production, especially intonation; they are not referring to grammatical units; e.g., a comma indicates a continuing intonation, such as when reading items from a list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? An upright question mark is used to indicate a strongly rising intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:: Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A single dash is used to indicate an abrupt cut-off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh A row of h’s is used to indicate audible out-breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ( )) Doubled curved brackets contain the transcriptionist’s descriptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text ellipsis
A spaced series of three horizontal dots is used to indicate that a portion of the turn at talk is not included.
A spaced series of three vertical dots is used to indicate that a portion of the turn at talk is not included.

As indicated by these notations, CA transcripts aim to represent the talk as it is spoken, with any naturally occurring grammatical errors, self-repairs, and so forth.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis focused on a controversial topic of everyday conversation in both foreign and domestic Korean communities: the recent suicide of the former South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun (see Appendix 2). The conversational data were analysed using CA, the results of which served as a basis for the ethnographic interviews that followed.

5.1 The Data

The example of talk from the conversational data presented below follows an initial exchange of pleasantries between Kate and and Mi Yun. Mi Yun has been reading the news article to Kate about their ex-president, Roh Moo-hyun. The example below begins as Mi Yun reads the article out loud.

Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mi Yun</td>
<td>(… continues reading news article, Former South Korean President…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, embroiled in a broadening…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>corruption scandal, died Saturday after jumping from a mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>cliff behind his rural southern home. He left behind a suicide note,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>his lawyer said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>(57 lines removed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roh’s public approval ratings fell amid widespread criticism of his economic policies. His security policies, seen by conservatives as too pro-North Korean, also contributed to the bad ratings.

In lines 1-67, Mi Yun is reading a news article about the state of affairs surrounding Roh Moo-hyun’s recent suicide. A 0.5 second silence occurs in the talk (line 68) before Kate, the older of the two women, takes the turn at talk with a sigh (hhh), and states “I’m not sure about this things= [I:- ]” (line 69). Although a possible transition-relevance place occurs after “things” (line 69), Kate quickly self-selects and constructs a new turn at talk, with “=he (.) he: - (0.3) [I’ m ] not sure if it’s= [I:- ]” (line 70). Kate’s repeated use of the pronoun “he” suggests that she is preparing to say something about their former president. However, Kate cuts herself off abruptly (“-”), and pauses for a few tenths of a second (“(0.3)”).

It seems that Mi Yun has assumed that Kate was finished speaking during the pause because she self-selects just as Kate continues to speak, which caused an unproblematic overlap in lines 70 and 71. In fact, Kate proceeds to self-repair the pronoun use in her own original statement by partially repeating her prior utterance (from line 69) with “I’m not sure …” (line 70) and adding “if it’s true:::” (at line 70) and “Maybe it’s like uh controversy or something” (lines 72-73).

At the completion of Kate’s extended turn, and at a valid transition-relevance place, Mi Yun quickly latches onto the prior turn with the prolonged, “Uhnsee” (line 74) (or “older sister”) (at line 75) before adding the dispreferred response “you don’t...
know these things” (line 76). In line 77, Kate produces the response token “Mmm” in overlap with Mi Yun’s “these” (line 76) before adding the tag question “can you?” (line 78). This requires an answer. However, a fairly long 0.6 silence develops in the talk. Mi Yun then self-selects and continues speaking on her original topic clarifying, “I mean:: I mean it’s uh very mysterious” (line 80). Kate responds with the acknowledgement; “maybe” (line 81), and in so doing, neither agrees nor disagrees with Mi Yun.

Additionally, the instance of code-switching that occurs, in line 74, where Mi Yun addresses Kate as “Uhnee::” (line 74) presents an interesting case study. As mentioned above, the Korean term “uhnee” roughly translates into English as “older sister” and is a formal term that a woman uses when addressing an older woman. “Uhnee” is typically used by younger women to refer to their older female friends or co-workers. They also may use the term to refer to their older sisters, but that occurs on a case-by-case basis. It is more formal than a first name or a nickname; however it is not classified as an honorific utterance. This term is only used when there is a relatively high level of solidarity, but still a difference in age between the two parties. When asked about the difference in age between herself and Kate, Mi Yun responded:

*Yes, the age is very important. We know it always. Sometimes we-I...Korean ask this question first, ‘How old are you?’ Or with some friends or young boys you can ask, ‘What year is your birthday?’ Because the age is the most important things. If I don’t know the age I can’t speak right way.*

Mi Yun’s answer reveals that she was very aware that she was the younger party in the conversation, and that she had to behave accordingly. Korean respect for the older party typically allows for the older person to speak first. This is clearly evidenced, in line 71, where Mi Yun elects to stop speaking, as soon as she realises that Kate is going to continue speaking. It is also evidenced in the talk where Mi Yun listens quietly to Kate’s extended turn without competing for the floor at a number of possible transition-relevance places, following “sure” and “things” (line 69), “sure” (line 70), “true::” (line 72), and “controberisy” and “something” (line 73). Further, where Mi Yun latches her speech onto Kate’s, after “something” (line 73), she code-switches from English to Korean, with the utterance “Uhnee::” (line 74). Mi Yun’s utterance acts as an announcement that marks Kate’s higher age status. When asked why she chose to use the term “uhnee” Mi Yun responded:

*Uhnee is like, I can’t explain this things. It’s Korean things because she is older than me.*
At first, it seems that Mi Yun may have code-switched as a demonstration of intersubjectivity, perhaps in the context of this South Korean national tragedy. However, when pressed further, Mi Yun expands on why she said “uhnee::” (line 74):

*I can’t explain this, but I was going to speak out. Because she hasn’t read any newspapers or things. And I thought she didn’t know. I didn’t want to be rude. So I said “big sister” in English because it was better and nicer.*

Here, Mi Yun is explaining that she code-switched in order to soften the impact of telling Kate that she did not have much knowledge about the topic of Roh Moo-hyun’s suicide (“you don’t know these things” in line 76). Due to the fact that Mi Yun produced a dispreferred response (“you don’t know ...” in line 76) to Kate’s prior talk (“I’m not sure if it’s true::: Maybe it’s like uh controversy or something” in lines 70-73), Mi Yun felt that she had to use a culturally respectful phrase to offset her negative response.

Further, immediately following Mi Yun’s part-utterance “Uhnee:: you don’t know” (line 76), Kate produces the response token “Mmm” (line 77). Although this is a possible transition-relevance place, it is not an actual transition-relevance place as Mi Yun quickly (“=”) continues her turn with, “these things ...” (line 76), and therefore Kate’s “Mmm” (line 77) could have been a response to the negative nature of Mi Yun’s statement. However, when questioning Kate, she did not have an answer as to why she responded in this way.

After Mi Yun finishes speaking in line 79, there is a 0.6 second pause during which Kate does not start speaking, despite being selected to do so with the tag question “can you?” (line 78). Following this silence, Mi Yun retakes the talk with “I mean:: I mean it’s ...” in line 80.

*Yeah. Yes, I remember, because she didn’t speak so I spoke again-spoke again. And if she was angry or something I didn’t know it. So I just did it again.*

Mi Yun explains that she choose to speak because she felt that the silence was problematic. When asked about this matter, Kate revealed that she did not respond right after Mi Yun finished speaking because she disapproved of Mi Yun’s code-switching:

*So I was like, why is she speaking the Korean. We are not in Korea. And then I knew she didn’t think I know enough about Korea. I felt that but she spoke Korean strangely.*
When asked to clarify what she meant by “she spoke Korean strangely” Kate clarified:

Well I was thinking she was strange for speaking Korean because you are American and this is English university project. So I was thinking, and she pissed me off because she called me ‘uhnee’ but here is not appropriate thing. I don’t know my feelings really. She is a little strange.

Kate clearly rejects Mi Yun’s attempt at establishing intersubjectivity during this conversation. In fact, she finds it odd that Mi Yun would attempt to do this by using Korean in the context of a research project in an English speaking country.

6. Discussion

6.1 Code-switching

The code-switching that occurred in this case study substantiated Difeng Lo’s (1999) findings that code-switching is used as a method of intersubjectivity. However, this method of establishing intersubjectivity was rejected by Kate who chose not to align with Mi Yun. Her attitude differed from Mi Yun’s in that she did not want to use Korean to share a cultural identity, despite the subject matter. For her, the context of living and being in an English speaking country as well as participating in a research project with a native speaker of English meant that only English should be spoken. This is reflected in her insistence on using an English name instead of her Korean birth name. If there was a spectrum of how close one was to their national culture, it seems that Mi Yun would place higher on the scale than Kate. Kate’s dislike of the use of speaking Korean, in this English speaking context, could also have been a demonstration of her perceived superior class and English level (Lee 2006). Additionally, Mi Yun expressed that she used “uhnee” because it is a “Korean thing,” which is parallel to Chung’s (2006) idea that code-switching is done primarily as a manner of communicating.

Mi Yun and Kate are both Korean women of a similar age and level, yet their attitudes are vastly different. Mi Yun is taking a traditional approach, using formal speech in order to behave correctly in a Korean context even while speaking English. On the other hand, Kate rejects the use of Korean culture and language when speaking English. When their language levels are examined, they are seemingly on equal footing. However, it was noticed that Kate had a markedly better grasp on grammar than Mi Yun. Additionally, as presented above, Kate made use of colloquialisms such “pissed off.” Although no conclusion can be drawn due to
limited data, it is noteworthy that in this case the participant with the more native sounding English did not code-switch. Perhaps this could be a line of future investigation.

6.2 Implications in the Language Classroom

So how does this apply to the language classroom? It was found that code-switching was used as both a measure of intersubjectivity and for communication purposes, though one of the participants rejects the use of the mother tongue in favour of using English exclusively. Unamuno (2008) and Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain (2005) found that code-switching could be advantageous to learning environments. Teachers and faculty need to be made aware of the fact that code-switching is a natural part of language learning. If students choose to use code-switching as a language learning strategy, then it should be supported in the classroom. Unamuno (2008) also reported that in a highly communicative classroom with a comfortable learning environment where code-switching is accepted as an appropriate method of study, student satisfaction increases.

These two participants represent two different categories of students: one rejects Korean culture when producing English, while the other continues to express inherent cultural norms regardless of language context. Both categories of students need to be accounted for in language teaching pedagogy. Code-switching should be viewed a communicative strategy, as some people cannot separate their culture from produced second language utterances. In order to promote learning, this should be accepted and embraced in the classroom.

6.3 Limitations

This paper has discussed a small amount of data from the two participants. It is unknown whether similar behaviours or emotions would be displayed in different contexts or different participants. Additionally, there is a possibility of researcher bias, as the researcher has lived and worked in Korea for several years and speaks Korean at a beginner level. Additionally, the research pool consisted of young women, neither of whom is fluent in English. Results may vary for interaction between those of different age, sex, context and level of English fluency.
6.4 Future Research

As this paper has found that Korean’s both accept and reject cultural markers of Korean when producing English, there is a lot of room for further research. Korean code-switching needs to be examined in professional, educational and social settings. Although research has been done on Korean nationals code-switching from Korean into English, the converse has not been readily addressed in the literature. Furthermore, the impact of socio-economic status of code-switching in Koreans could be a topic for additional discussion, as financial and social status plays a role in interaction.

7. Conclusion

This paper has explored the role of, and reasons for, code-switching in the interaction between two young Korean women. It has demonstrated that the English speaking Korean community is not completely homogenous in attitudes about speaking English. For example, Mi Yun chose to use Korean at a critical point in the conversation. This demonstrates her intense personification of her Korean identity. However, Kate did not. Further, Kate did not approve of the use of Korean in an English context.

These findings are pertinent to today’s ESL classrooms because teachers need to create an environment where code-switching is accepted. Teachers must recognise that code-switching is a communicative strategy. Additionally, further research needs to be done on code-switching in this linguistic community in order to develop ESL pedagogy that accounts for this phenomenon.

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Appendix 1 Turn-taking rules for conversation

From Sacks, Schegloff et al. (1974: 704)

1. For any turn, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial turn constructional unit:
   (a) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as to involve the use of a “current speaker selects next” technique, then the party so selected has the right and is obliged to take next turn to speak; no others have such rights or obligations, and transfer occurs at that place.
   (b) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a “current speaker selects next” technique, then self-selection for next speakership may, but need not, be instituted; first starter acquires rights to a turn, and transfer occurs at that place.
   (c) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a “current speaker selects next” technique, then current speaker may, but need not continue, unless another self-selects.

2. If, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial turn constructional unit, neither 1(a) nor 1(b) has operated, and following the provision of 1(c), current speaker has continued, then the rule-set (a)-(c) re-applies at the next transition-relevance place, and recursively at each next transition-relevance place, until transfer is effected.

Appendix 2 Article for discussion

From: The Huffington Post
Accessed: 23 May 2009
Roh Moo-hyun, Former South Korean President, Kills Himself
KWANG-TAE KIM | May 22, 2009 11:59 PM EST |
In this picture taken Thursday, April 30, 2009, former South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun apologizes to the nation before leaving to the Supreme Prosecutor's Office in Seoul for questioning over allegations of bribery, in front of his house in Bongha, South Korea. A news report says that former South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun appears to have died after a fall while mountain climbing. (AP Photo/Yonhap, Lee Sang-hack)

SEOUL, South Korea — Former South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, embroiled in a broadening corruption scandal, died Saturday after jumping from a mountain cliff behind his rural southern home. He left behind a suicide note, his lawyer said.

Roh, 62, had been hiking in the village of Bongha Saturday morning when he threw himself off the mountainside, lawyer Moon Jae-in told reporters.

He was rushed to Busan National University Hospital in the nearby port city of Busan around 8:15 a.m. (2315 GMT) and died around 9:30 a.m. (0030 GMT) from head injuries, hospital officials said.

The former president left a "brief" suicide note for his family, Moon told reporters at a news conference at the hospital.

MBC television reported that Roh said in the note that things have been "difficult" and he felt he had made "too many people suffer." The note also said Roh wanted his body cremated, according to the report. It did not say how it obtained the note.

Investigators have not seen the suicide note, a Busan police official said. He did not give his name, citing department policy.

President Lee Myung-bak said Saturday that the news was "truly hard to believe" and called Roh's death "sad and tragic," presidential spokesman Lee Dong-kwan said.

Roh, a former human rights lawyer, served as president from 2003 to 2008 campaigning as a "clean" politician in a country with a long history of corruption.

Story continues below ↓
But he and his family have been ensnared in recent weeks in a burgeoning bribery scandal.
Last month, state prosecutors questioned Roh for some 13 hours about allegations that he accepted more than $6 million in bribes from a South Korean businessman while president - accusations that deeply shamed Roh.

"I have no face to show to the people. I am sorry for disappointing you," an emotional-looking Roh told reporters April 30 before departing for questioning in Seoul.

Roh took power after a surprise 2002 election win on a campaign pledge not to "kowtow" to the United States, a pledge that resonated with young voters. He maintained predecessor President Kim Dae-jung’s "sunshine policy" of offering North Korea aid as way to facilitate reconciliation, holding a summit in Pyongyang with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in 2007, the second such meeting between leaders of the wartime rivals.

Roh came from a poor farming family, went to a commercial high school and never received a college education. He studied on his own to pass the difficult bar exam and built a reputation as a lawyer defending students accused of sedition under past military rule. He once was arrested and had his law license suspended for supporting an outlawed labor protest.

Roh was impeached in 2004 for calling on the public to vote for candidates from his Uri Party in parliamentary elections, a violation of the president's political neutrality. He was the first South Korean president to be impeached. He was reinstated after two months of suspension after a court ruled against the impeachment.

Roh's public approval ratings fell amid widespread criticism of his economic policies. His security policies, seen by conservatives as too pro-North Korean, also contributed to the bad ratings.