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## **The Use of Code-Switching as a Symbol of Status in South Korean TV Dramas**

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The Use of Code-Switching as a Symbol of Status in South  
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## Introduction

For the past few decades, South Korean dramas have been gaining popularity both in Korea itself, and in other countries in Asia, as well as Europe and the United States in more recent years. This rising trend began in China from 1998 to 1999, and as a result of the unexpected popularity of these Korean dramas, the term “Hallyu” or Korean Wave was dubbed here.<sup>1</sup> After the release of the Korean drama *Winter Sonata* in 2003, the popularity of Korean dramas started spreading to Japan and Taiwan as well. Since then, both countries have become big importers of Korean dramas.<sup>2</sup> While in the mid-2000’s Korean dramas reached a peak in popularity in Asia, for people in the Middle East, North and South America, and Europe, Korean pop music, also known as K-pop, became the main reason to be attracted to Korean popular culture.<sup>3</sup> This popularity then spread to Korean dramas as well.

Even without a high level of fluency in the Korean language, there are numerous words and phrases that one would be able to understand when watching these dramas. Korean dramas tend to use many English words and phrases mixed within the Korean dialogue. This is partially done to suit an international audience, as stated by Kayoun Chung. Chung looks at the use of English in Korean media from a different angle. Chung argues that the reason the amount of English in Korean dramas is growing can be accredited to the increasingly cosmopolitan setting of these dramas.<sup>4</sup> This can mainly be seen from the increasing amount of dramas which (partially) take place in foreign countries, and the inclusion of an increasing

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<sup>1</sup> Hyejung Ju, “The Korean Wave and Korean Dramas,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, September (2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.715>.

<sup>2</sup> Ju, “The Korean Wave,” 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ju, “The Korean Wave,” 2.

<sup>4</sup> Kayoun Chung, “Korean English fever in the US: Temporary migrant parents' evolving beliefs about normal parenting practices and children's natural language learning,” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008), 9.

amount of English-speaking foreigners in these dramas. Chung adds that another possible explanation of such English use is to signify to the viewers that the character is ‘trendy’.<sup>5</sup>

Another big reason for it is the growing influence that the English language has on the daily lives of people. In South Korea, English is considered to be a valuable form of capital, as well as a vital skill to have for entry into its very competitive job market.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this, having acquired good English skill has the underlying connotation of a person being able to participate in communications on a global level, and having the ability to keep up with the demands placed on them by neoliberal logistics.<sup>78</sup> According to the State Statistics Agency, South Koreans spent over 19 billion U.S. dollars on English education in 2009 alone.<sup>9</sup> This includes expenses such as attending private education and language schools, both in and outside of the country.<sup>10</sup>

This importance that is placed on English can be traced back to the so-called ‘education fever’ (known in Korean as *Kyoyukpyōl*) that is prevalent in South Korean society.<sup>11</sup> According to Michael J. Seth, “This preoccupation with the pursuit of formal schooling was the product of the diffusion of traditional Confucian attitudes toward learning and status, new egalitarian ideas introduced from the West, and the complex, often contradictory ways in which new and old ideas and formulations interacted”<sup>12</sup> Although this explanation does offer a certain understanding of the origins of such an importance, it is certainly not the only influential factor at play. Jin Kyu Park for example, notes that these

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<sup>5</sup> Chung, “Korean English fever,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Sung-Yul Park and Adrienne Lo, “Transnational South Korea as a Site for a Sociolinguistics of Globalization: Markets, Timescales, Neoliberalism,” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16, no. 2 (2012): 156.

<sup>7</sup> Park and Lo, “Transnational South Korea,” 156.

<sup>8</sup> Lee Jin Choi, “Performing ‘Authentic’ Bilingualism: Authenticity, Novel Respelling Forms, and Language Ideology in South Korea,” *Multilingua* 36, no. 2 (2017): 126.

<sup>9</sup> Hawon Jung, “Private Education Fervor Continues,” JoongAng Daily, Accessed 20 March 2021, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2010/02/23/economy/Private-education-fervor-continues/2917010.html>

<sup>10</sup> Jung, “Private Education.”

<sup>11</sup> Michael J. Seth, *Education Fever : Society, Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in South Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Seth, *Education*, 6.

Confucian attitudes are not the only thing that has led to such a high importance being placed on education. Park discusses how certain modern egalitarian ideas that were introduced to Korea by Western countries played a large role, in addition to the collapse of social classes as Korean society had known them previously. This collapse was a result of the Japanese occupation and led to an increased importance that was being placed on education.<sup>13</sup> Park mainly attributes this shift to the fact that the lack of traditional social classes that remained after the Japanese occupation had ended led to the belief that one could advance in society through his or her own efforts, which had not been the case within the earlier strict social class system.<sup>14</sup>

English was not only used as a means for individuals to better their positions in society, however. It was also seen as a way for South Korea as a whole to strengthen their position on the world stage. An example of this is the English Immersion Education' policy (*Yōng-ō Mol-Ip Kyo-Yuk*) which was first introduced during the presidency of Myung-Bak Lee. The policy proposed to implement English content courses, starting with classes in math, science, and other subjects for which a difference in fluency level among the students would have a less significant impact on their comprehension.<sup>15</sup> The policy was based on the beliefs that English was a necessary means for success if Korea were to join the global world stage.<sup>16</sup> The policy was not implemented, but it did highlight the importance that was placed on English as a means to succeed in a global era.

The high importance of English in South Korean society has led to the widespread introduction of English into the daily lives of many Koreans. As a result, English has made

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<sup>13</sup> Jin Kyu Park, "'English Fever' in South Korea: Its History and Symptoms," *English Today* 25, no. 1 (2009): 50.

<sup>14</sup> Park, "English Fever," 50.

<sup>15</sup> Josephine Lee, "Ideologies of English in the South Korean "English immersion" debate," In *Selected proceedings of the 2008 second language research forum* ed. Matthew T. Prior et al., (Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2010): 247.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, Han, and McKerrow, "English or Perish," 338.

its way into Korean speech patterns, and the use of English words is prevalent Korean dramas as well. This insertion of one language into another is a phenomenon called code-switching, and it is often used by people who have a certain level of fluency over more than one language.<sup>17</sup> Many researches have been done examining the use of code-switching, both, in a linguistic context, as well as a socio-linguistic context. As a result, there are many slightly varying definitions of the term. After further exploration, however, these definitions have been found to share the same base characteristics.

One definition of code-switching that has been used as a basis for a multitude of studies, is that formulated by François Grosjean. Grosjean refers to code-switching as the insertion of certain linguistic elements of one language into another.<sup>18</sup> Although this definition describes the basis of what code-switching can entail, it is too broad to be used on its own. Shahrzad Mahootian refers to code-switching in a similar fashion, yet adds another level of nuance to the term, defining it as “the alternation between two languages at the utterance level”.<sup>19</sup> Pratapa et al. refer to code-switching in a similarly broad manner, defining it as the contrast that exists between the use of different languages within a single conversation or utterance.<sup>20</sup> Ahn et al. share a similar definition of code-switching, namely that of the insertion of parts of one language into a sentence that is made up of another language.<sup>21</sup>

Although it is important to define that which the code-switching encompasses, it is equally important to define what it does not include. One of these things is the phenomenon

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<sup>17</sup> Alex Baratta, “The Use of English in Korean TV Drama to Signal a Modern Identity,” *English Today* 30, no. 3 (2014): 54.

<sup>18</sup> François Grosjean, *Life with Two Languages : An Introduction to Bilingualism*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 151.

<sup>19</sup> Shahrzad Mahootian, “Linguistic Change and Social Meaning: Codeswitching in the Media,” *International Journal of Bilingualism* 9, no. 3–4 (2005): 363.

<sup>20</sup> Adithya Pratapa and Monojit Choudhury, “Quantitative Characterization of Code Switching Patterns in Complex Multi-Party Conversations: A Case Study on Hindi Movie Scripts,” *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Natural Language Processing* (2017): 75.

<sup>21</sup> Jungsun Ahn, Carrie La Ferle, and Doohwang Lee, “Language and Advertising Effectiveness: Code-Switching in the Korean Marketplace,” *International Journal of Advertising* 36, no. 3 (2017): 478.

*Konglish*. According to Hyunjeong Nam, *Konglish* is an interlanguage unique to Koreans learning English as a second language. This interlanguage is a result of the speakers' poor knowledge of English.<sup>22</sup> *Konglish* can, therefore be defined as a form of borrowing, rather than code-switching, as the words used are often derived from English, but would not be recognizable for any native English speaker.

Past studies have explored the use of code-switching in modern media such as movies and TV series. Although some studies have been done on the use of code-switching in Korean media, there are very few studies linking code-switching to the identity of the speaker. As such, this thesis will attempt to fill this gap in the existing field and analyze the use of code-switching as a signifier for social status in Korean dramas. As such the research question is as follows : In what ways does code-switching act as a signifier for social status? In order to do so, this thesis will be analyzing the use of code-switching in South Korean dramas, in addition to analyzing the backgrounds of the characters alternating between languages.

There is a multitude of ways in which code-switching can be used, depending on the approach one takes. The first way of using code-switching takes a socio-linguistic approach, and not only looks at code-switching in a linguistic setting, but also pays attention to the social environment it is used in. This method has been used by many scholars such as Gumperz and Auer, and is rather prevalent in the field. The second method, used by scholars such as Poplack and Meyers-Scotton, looks at code-switching from a purely linguistic perspective. Here, code-switching is approached from a structural perspective, and the focus lies on analyzing grammatical patterns within mixed speech. The last approach to code-switching is from a pragmatic perspective, although this method can also be ascribed to the

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<sup>22</sup> Hyunjeong Nam, "Konglish, Korean L2 Learners' Unique Interlanguage: Its Definition, Categories and Lexical Entries," *Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics* 26, no. 4 (2010): 276.

socio-linguistic approach to code-switching. Here code-switching serves as a tool to accomplish specific functions, such as emphasizing certain parts of speech by switching languages.<sup>23</sup> The present thesis will adhere to a combination of the socio-linguistic and the pragmatic approaches to code-switching, as code-switching in movies is oftentimes used as a tool for the delivery of dialogue. As such, it will attempt to further examine the relationship between the use of code-switching in Korean dramas. It will do so by examining the social status of the characters who use this linguistic tool, keeping in mind the background of the characters, as well as the circumstances of the scene in which the code-switching takes place.

### **Literature Review**

As code-switching is a topic that has been studied in a number of different fields, there are quite a number of studies exploring the use of code-switching. Although this is the case, code-switching in South Korean media is a topic that has yet to be thoroughly researched. There is quite an extensive amount of research in the present field that explores this phenomenon of code-switching in different types of media. A good foundation of research exists on the topic of code-switching in Bollywood films, such as the study done by Si, that by Richardson, and that by Sultana.<sup>24</sup> These studies share similarities with this thesis in the sense that they approach code-switching from a socio-linguistic perspective. Most of the studies done on the topic of South Korean media, however, are done in a purely linguistic setting. The majority of the research that has been done on this subject has pertained to code-switching within (television) advertisements. Examples of this are the studies done by Jamie Shinhee Lee, who analyzed the use of English mixing in South Korean television

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<sup>23</sup> Audrey Richardson, "Code-Switching in Modern Indian Cinema," (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2014), 15.

<sup>24</sup> Aung Si, "A Diachronic Investigation of Hindi-English Code-Switching, Using Bollywood Film Scripts," *International Journal of Bilingualism* 15, no. 4 (2011): 388–407; Richardson, "Code-Switching in Modern Indian Cinema."; Nasreen Sultana, "Bangla to English Code Switching in Bangladeshi Commercial Cinema," *Stamford Journal of English* 7, no. 1993 (2013): 263–85.

commercials<sup>25</sup>, and that by Jungsun Ahn, et al, who analysed code-switching in the Korean marketplace.<sup>26</sup> There are also studies done on code-switching in magazines, such as the one done by Hyunju Park, who analyzed the use of code-switching in Korean women's fashion magazines.<sup>27</sup>

One person who has contributed to the field on the subject of code-switching in Korean dramas is Alex Baratta. In his study, Baratta explored the use of code-switching between Korean and English in three Korean dramas as a way to signal an identity of modernity and power.<sup>28</sup> Here, he found that the use of English reflects the high status that the language holds in Korean society, and because of this status, certain connotations such as power and modernity are indeed associated with the use of English.<sup>29</sup> For his research, he chose three dramas that contained Korean to English code-switching at random, and concluded that there was indeed an influence of their speaking English on the formation of their social identities.

Although Barrata's research is similar to the current thesis, there are some key differences. Barratta looks at the use of English as a signifier for a modern identity, and as such, pays little attention to the background of the characters, as well as the context of the scene in which the code-switching is located. This thesis, however, looks pays significantly more attention to the context of both the scene, as well as information concerning the character's background given throughout the series. As such, it takes a more sociological approach to this topic than Barrata's study. Additionally, this thesis pays attention to a character's use of English as a symbol for both a high social status, as well as a low social status, whereas Barrata's study focused solely on English as a signifier for modernity. Hyunju

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<sup>25</sup> Jamie Shinhee Lee, "Linguistic Constructions of Modernity: English Mixing in Korean Television Commercials," *Language in Society* 35, no. 1 (2006): 59–91.

<sup>26</sup> Ahn, La Ferle, and Lee, "Language and Advertising Effectiveness," 477-95.

<sup>27</sup> Park, "English as Fashion: English Mixing in Women's Fashion Magazines." 246-257.

<sup>28</sup> Baratta, "The Use of English in Korean TV Drama," 54.

<sup>29</sup> Baratta, "The Use of English in Korean TV Drama," 59.

Park makes a similar argument for the use of English as a signifier of modernity, stating that the use of English as symbolic capital can be associated with high quality, internationalism, sophistication, and modernity.<sup>30</sup>

A study done by Jamie Shinhee Lee approached the topic from a different angle. In her study, instead of looking at English as a symbol of power or status, Lee explored the use of English as a form of verbal humor, and researched how Korean media depict the language anxiety that many Koreans feel when they face situations that requires them to speak English.<sup>31</sup> Her study showed that many Koreans can identify with situations which show a lack of fluency leading to uncomfortable situations. Joseph Park examined a similar topic, and noted that the anxiety surrounding English is mainly caused by a lack of fluency in combination with a perceived need for fluency. Many Koreans view themselves as lacking, even though this might not necessarily be the case.<sup>32</sup> As such, in scenes containing poor English ability used as a means of humor, it is often suggested that something embarrassing is about to happen, and that this event is therefore humorous. Viewers of the series might recognize the situations in which the characters find themselves, and know that they too would not be able to manage the situation properly, and therefore recognize themselves in this embarrassment. As such, the dialogues shown in these scenes can be considered a form of self-deprecating humor. This is an interesting additional angle to explore this topic from as it shows the duality of the status English has in South Korean society, as English is a language that is held in high regard in Korean society, yet is feared at the same time.<sup>33</sup>

Lee's research does not only contrast that done by Barrata, but also adds to Berrata's in the sense that it displays a juxtaposition in the use of English in Korean media. According

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<sup>30</sup> Hyunju Park, "English as Fashion: English Mixing in Women's Fashion Magazines," *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics (PAAL)* 8, no. 1 (2004): 247.

<sup>31</sup> Jamie Shinhee Lee, "English on Korean Television," *World Englishes* 33, no. 1 (2014): 33.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Sung-Yul Park, "'Baby, Darling, Honey!'" Constructing a Competence of English in South Korean TV Shows," *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Symposium about Language and Society* (2003): 151

<sup>33</sup> Lee, "English on Korean Television," 33.

to Berrata's study, good English skill is used as a symbol of power and modernity, which are both terms which carry a positive connotation, whereas the demonstration of poor English skill is used as a self-derogatory means.<sup>34</sup> Although this contrast between the two sides is noteworthy, no studies have been done as of yet that pay attention to both uses of code-switching within the same source of media. Therefore, the current thesis will attempt to further analyze this juxtaposition between Korean-English code-switching used as a signifier for a character's high or low social status.

## Methodology

In order to analyze code-switching between Korean and English, it is important to find a medium which provides enough data containing code-switching. One medium that permits us to do so are South Korean dramas, otherwise known as K-dramas. By analyzing the dialogue spoken in these dramas, we can further explore the use of code-switching in Korean dialogue. This thesis takes data from three different South Korean dramas, which were selected by top viewer ratings as reported by Nielsen Korea.<sup>35</sup> These ratings were based on the sum of both the average and the peak nationwide tv ratings, and is therefore an accurate representation of the popularity of the shows during the time they were broadcasted. The selected dramas for this thesis are therefore as follows:

1. Sky Castle (SKY 캐슬)
2. Crash Landing on You (사랑의 불시착)
3. Reply 1988 (응답하라 1988)

Although the drama World of the Married had the highest viewer ratings, it was not possible to access both the transcript, as well as the drama itself from the Netherlands. As such, it was

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<sup>34</sup> Park, "Baby, Darling, Honey!" 144.

<sup>35</sup> "TV Ranking," Nielsen Korea, accessed May 3 2021, [https://www.nielsenkorea.co.kr/tv\\_terrestrial\\_day.asp?menu=Tit\\_1&sub\\_menu=1\\_1&area=01](https://www.nielsenkorea.co.kr/tv_terrestrial_day.asp?menu=Tit_1&sub_menu=1_1&area=01)

omitted from analysis. The selection is therefore based on the second highest rated drama and onwards.

The episodes of the selected dramas are all roughly one hour in duration, with the exception of the episodes in the drama Reply 1988. The episodes of this drama all have a running time of at least an hour and thirty minutes. This thesis selected those scenes from the dramas that contain Korean to English code-switching, and further analyses the dialogue in which these alternations were found. These scenes were found through an analysis of the transcripts of the episodes. Although the series have been watched in their entirety, special attention was given to the scenes found to contain code-switching. As this study focusses on code-switching only, all other instances of language-borrowing in these scenes, such as the use of *Konglish*, or scenes spoken fully in English, were be disregarded from analysis.

This thesis analyses the way in which the characters using the code-switching are portrayed, and will therefore be analyze to the dialogue spoken by the characters using code-switching, as well as the ways in which these characters are portrayed throughout the series. By doing so it will attempt to explore the correlation between a character's use of English and their social status.

## **Analysis**

### **Code-switching in Sky Castle / SKY 캐슬**

The drama *Sky Castle*, known in Korean as *SKY 캐슬*, revolves around a number of families who all reside in the luxury residential complex that is called, like the title of the drama, the 'Sky Castle'. The word Sky in this case is an acronym for the three topmost prestigious universities in Korea, namely Söul National University, Korea University, and Yöonse University. Admission into these universities is many Korean parents' goal for their children. The drama follows the families who live in this castle as they attempt to secure their children's admission into one of these universities and thus set up the path to a successful

future for them. The series itself is a satirical drama, and critiques the behavior of upper-class parents towards their children, and their heavy involvement in their children's academic careers.<sup>36</sup>

Out of the three analyzed dramas, this drama showed by far the most scenes containing Korean to English code-switching. These alternations were not limited to one character, but were found in the dialogues spoken by a variety of different characters. Most cases of code-switching in this drama consisted of the insertion of one English word into an otherwise Korean sentence, but there were also a few scenes that contained alternations of larger stretches of speech between the two languages. Episode one contained many scenes showing instances of code-switching, spoken by different characters. As the frequency with which this occurred lessened as the episodes went on, it is possible that the strong use of English alternations here was used as a method to accentuate the character's social statuses and construct 'high class' characters.

One example of insertion in the drama Sky Castle can be found in the dialogue between the characters Min Hyök and his wife Sŭng Hye in episode one. In this scene, the two characters are talking about a dinner party that Sŏ Jin is hosting as a celebration for Myöng Chu's son's admission to Söul National University. The dinner party was hosted both as a celebratory event, as well as an opportunity for Sŏ Jin to obtain the portfolio created by Myöng Chu, which contains all the information on her son's education. This portfolio is something that could help Sŏ Jin's daughter with her future admission to Seoul National University's Medical School. Min Hyök has just learned of the party and also realizes the importance of this portfolio. As he wishes to obtain it for his children too, he is shown cancelling his previous plans in order to attend the dinner party.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 1.**

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<sup>36</sup> "SKY Castle (TV Series 2018–2019)," IMDb, accessed May 1 2021, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9151274/>

**민혁:** 아! 김변! 어떡하지? 내 갑자기 일이 생겨서. 하~ 오늘 라운딩 어렵겠는데? 다음 번

*Caddy Fee* 는 내가 쓸께. 하하. 그래그래. *Thank you*. 어. 당신 문제가 뭔지 알아. 그 얘기를 오늘 닥쳐서 알렸단 사실이야.

**Min Hyök:** A! kimbyön! öttök'aji? nae kapchagi iri saenggyösö. ha~ onül raunding öryöpkenünde? taüm pön *Caddy Fee* naega ssolkke. haha. kuraegürae. *Thank you*. ö. tangshin munjega mwönji ara. kü yaegirül onül takch'yösö allyöttan sashiriya.

**Min Hyök:** Yes, lawyer Kim. What should I do? I have something urgent to take care of. I don't think I would be able to make it to golf today. The *caddy fee* is on me next time. Haha yes, yes. *Thank you*. All right.

In the above sentence, we can see that Min Hyök is using the English phrases *Caddy fee* and *Thank you* in an otherwise Korean sentence. This insertion of English in this case has been used as a means of emphasizing Min Hyök's social status. Although golf is a sport that is theoretically accessible to everyone in South Korea, reality shows that this is not the case. Memberships at golf courses can cost up to \$200,000, and playing half a day of golf can cost up to \$300.<sup>37</sup> These high prices show that playing golf is certainly not something that can be done on a worker's wage, and Min Hyök's easy attitude towards taking the caddy fee upon himself the next time he and his acquaintance go out to play golf together only further emphasizes his high socio-economic status. His second alternation in this dialogue, namely his use of the English words *Thank you* does not indicate any correlation with his status. The English phrase *Thank you* is an utterance oftentimes said by South Korean people of all levels of society, and as such is not used to emphasize Min Hyök's status in this scene.

Min Hyök was found alternating to English once again in a sentence later on in the same scene. He is talking to his wife Sŭng Hye about her habitual tardiness regarding news or the announcements of events in the castle. Min Hyök is under the impression that she is

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<sup>37</sup> Minseok An and George H. Sage, "The Golf Boom in South Korea: Serving Hegemonic Interests," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 9, No. 4 (1992): 381.

always one step behind the other mothers living in the castle, and is afraid that this is implicating his son's futures. He points out to her that the other mothers in the castle are not hosting such events out of kindness, but that everyone is striving to obtain every possible chance for their children's future success.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 1.**

**민혁:** 요점 흐리지마. 당신이 생각이 없다는 게 아니라, 그 생각이라는 게 언제나 *all the time!* 예서 엄마보다 한 발짝 느리다는 잠을 지적하는 거니까.

**Minhyök:** Yojöm hürijima. tangshini saenggagi öptanün ke anira, kü saenggagiranün ke önjena *all the time!* Yesö ömmaboda han paltchang nüridanün chamül chijök'anün kõnikka.

**Minhyök:** Don't change the subject. I'm not saying that you don't think. But I'm just saying that you're doing it *all the time!* A step behind Ye Sö's mom. I'm just pointing that out!

As can be seen from the above dialogue, Min Hyök's utterance of the phrase *all the time* is used as an alternation within the sentence. His use of English here does not indicate any further correlation with his social status. The alternation with English words is instead used to emphasize the anger shown by Min Hyök towards his wife's constant faltering. His anger is caused by a continuing lack of timely action on the part of his wife, and as such the phrase *all the time* is meant to stress this continued failure.

The following scene shows the residents of the Sky Castle attending a dinner party hosted by Sö Jin in celebration of the admission of Myöng Chu's son into Seoul National University's Medical School. Like mentioned in a previous paragraph, the dinner party was hosted by Sö Jin both as a celebratory event, as well as an opportunity to obtain the portfolio created by Myöng Chu. All the parents are aware of the importance of this portfolio, and are trying to obtain it for their own children.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 1.**

**이명주:** 그럼! 주남대에서도 *best over best.* 정교수들만 누릴 수 있는 특혜잖아.

**Myōng Chu:** Kūrōm! chunamdaeesōdo *best over best*. chōnggyosudŭlman nuril su innŭn  
t'ŭk'yejana

**Myōng Chu:** Of course! Even at Chunam University it's *best over best*. It's a privilege that  
only professors can enjoy.

The use of English in this particular scene can be found in the sentence spoken by Myōng Chu, who uses the phrase *best over best* when speaking about the privilege that the residents of the SKY Castle share. Here, Myōng Chu describes how even among doctors working at Chunam University Medical School, which is a prestigious hospital, only professors are given the opportunity to live at the Sky castle. Her switching between Korean and English in this instance is used to emphasize the fact that all parties present did get this opportunity, and as such, belong to the category of 'best over best', or rather, the best of the best. Her sentence here is used to respond to the flattery she has received all night, but also to refuse any advances that are for the sake of obtaining her portfolio. By stating that all Sky Castle residents are included in the category 'best of the best', she is effectively refusing their flatteries.

A prime example where code-switching was used to further highlight the 'high class' status of these characters can still be found in the same episode of this drama. This scene takes place during one of the monthly book club meetings that is hosted by the residents of the Sky Castle. Prior to this scene, the episode mentions how these meetings were established. SKY University admissions require an essay on the most impactful books that students have read, and as a result, the book club was established in order to prepare for this admission. The book club also serves the purpose of imparting the leader's ideology onto the students, which justifies the tyrannical ways in which the parents treat their children, all under the justification that it is for their own futures and wellbeing.

From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 1.

**예서:** *Organisms are nothing but robot vehicles, and it must stay as selfish to preserve their genes and pass them on to future generations. I actually....* 전 정말 인간에 대한 저자의 통찰력에 너무너무 깊은 감명을 받았습니다. 항상 1 등 아니면 의미가 없다고 생각했었는데, 이 책을 읽고 제 생각이 옳다는 걸 알게 되었습니다. 저 역시 제 부모님으로부터 아주아주 훌륭한 유전자를 물려받았습니다. 빠른 두뇌 회전, 뚜렷한 목표 의식, 절대 지지 않는 승부욕 앞으로는 저는 제 유전자의 본능, 다시 말해 1 등을 하기 위해 사력을 다하는 이기적인 본능에 충실하기 위해 최선을 다 할 것입니다.

**Yesō:** *Organisms are nothing but robot vehicles, and it must stay as selfish to preserve their genes and pass them on to future generations. I actually....* Chŏn chŏngmal in'gane tae han chŏjaūi t'ongch'allyōge nŏmunŏmu kip'ūn kammyōngŭl padatsŭmnida. hangsang ltŭng animyŏn ūimiga ōptago saenggak'aessŏnnunde, i ch'aekŭl ikko che saenggagi olt'anŭn kŏl alge toeŏtsŭmnida. chŏ yŏkshi che pumonimŭrobot'ŏ ajuaju hullyunghan yujŏnjarŭl mullyŏbadatsŭmnida. Pparŭn tu noe hoejŏn, tturyŏt'an mokp'yo ūishik, chŏltae chiji annŭn sŭngbuyong ap'ūrodo chŏnŭn che yujŏnjaūi ponnŭng, tashi marhae ltŭngŭl hagi wihae saryŏkŭl tahanŭn igijŏgin ponnŭnge ch'ungshirhagi wihae ch'oesŏnŭl ta hal kŏshimnida.

**Yesō:** *Organisms are nothing but robot vehicles, and it must stay as selfish to preserve their genes and pass them on to future generations. I actually....* I was greatly impressed by the author's insight into mankind. I always thought that being the number one was the most important thing, and anything else was meaningless. After reading this book, I realized I was right. I, too, got these extraordinary genes from my parents. I'm quick-witted, goal-oriented, and so competitive that I'll never lose. So, from now on, I will continue to focus on my gene's instinct. In other words, I will focus on the selfish instinct to become number one. I will do my best.

Yesö is considered to be a smart high school student who is always top of her class. She wishes to get into Seoul National University's Medical School, and as such works hard at all her courses, as well as the monthly book club meetings. In this scene, she is shown reciting the paper she wrote about the book that was prepared for that month's meeting. She starts reciting the paper in English but when she realizes none of the other students present are understanding what she is saying because of their lack of knowledge of the language, she looks irritated and switches back to Korean to finish her report. This switch from English back to Korean is used as a demonstration of Yesö's superior English skills as compared to her peers. This superiority is once again emphasized in a later episode, when her English teacher expressed the level of perfection that Yesö's fluency has reached.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 6.**

**Coach:** 워낙 영어실력이 탁월해 절대평가인 게 아쉬울 정도로 *perfect* 합니다.

**Coach:** wŏnak yŏngŏshillyŏgi t'agwŏrhae chŏltaep'yŏnggain ke ashwiul chŏngdoro *perfect* hamnida.

**Coach:** Her English skills are excellent. It's so *perfect* that it's a shame that they use absolute grading.

Yesö's high English skill, combined with the frequent mention of her status as top of the class at a prestigious high school can be seen as a means of further establishing this status through her use of English in these scenes.

Episode 2 of the drama contained far fewer instances of code-switching than episode 1 did. The first scene containing dialogue in which code-switching was used appeared roughly halfway through the episode. During this scene, the Medical Director of the hospital a number of residents of the Sky castle are employed at is giving a speech in honor of the recruitment of Doctor Hwang Chi Yŏng, who is also the newest resident of the Sky castle. He was hired in the stead of Pak Su Ch'ang and is being named director of the newly founded Spine and Joint Centre, a position that Kang Chun Sang was striving to obtain.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 2.**

**원장님:** 게다가 세계 최소 침습 척추학회에서 *Best Paper Award* 를 받으신 척추 수술의 권위자라니. 장차 오픈할 척추관절 센터를 위해서도 꼬옥 필요한 인재란 생각에 내가 이렇게 모시게 됐습니다.

**Medical Director:** Kedaga segye ch'oeso ch'imsŭm ch'ökch'uhak'oesö ch'yonjŭm hajanrch'yöngshyödrül padŭshin ch'ökch'u susurŭi kwönwijarani. changch'a op'ünhal ch'ökch'ugwanjöl sent'örül wihaesödo kkoong p'iryohaninjaeran saenggage naega irök'e moshige twaetsŭmnida.

**Medical Director:** Also, he's an expert in spine surgery who received the *Best Paper Award* from the World Association of Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery. I believe that our future Spine and Joint Center surely needs a talent like him.

The Medical Director's use of English in this dialogue is not used to establish or highlight his own status, but rather that of the *Best Paper Award* he is talking about. This *Best Paper Award* is an internationally recognized award, and yet the fact that Korean subtitles appear during the Medical Director's speech stating the Korean name for the Best Paper Award, shows us that the English term *Best Paper Award* is not a commonly used term in Korea, and people are more familiar with its Korean title instead. The use of its English name by the Medical Director is, therefore, used to emphasize its global status.

The scene in episode three in which English use made an appearance showed an argument between Ye Sö and her mother. Sö Jin has fired Ye Sö's coach due to her involvement in the tragedy that surrounded the Pak family. As such, Sö Jin no longer feels that it is safe for her to be in control of Ye Sö's education, and has confronted coach Kim Ju Yöng about the methods she used to get Yöng Chae admitted to Söul National University. Coach Kim Ju Yöng has admitted to using Yöng Chae's resentment against his parents as his main motivator for studying hard enough to get this admission. The use of these methods worries Sö Jin, and she is afraid the same thing will happen to Ye Sö if she were to continue

her tutoring. Ye Sŏ herself, however, does not care about the circumstances surrounding Yŏng Chae's acceptance, and is angry at her mother for obstructing her best chance of admission to Sŏul National University.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 3.**

서진: 하지만 우리 딸이 누구야? 김주영 쌤 없어도 충분히 합격할 수 있다고 봐, 엄만. 2,3  
일 내로 엄마가 김주영 쌤보다 더 *perfect* 하게, 선생님들 세팅해 놓을게. 나  
중간고사 코앞인 거 알지?

**Sŏ Jin:** Hajiman uri ttari nuguya? kimjuyŏngssaem ōpshido ch'ungbunhi hapkyŏk'al su ittago  
pwa, ōmman. 2,3 il naero ōmmaga Kim Ju Yŏng ssaemboda tŏ *perfect* hage  
sŏnsaengnimdŭl set'inghae noŭlge. na chunggan'gosa k'oap'in kŏ alchi?

**Sŏ Jin:** Of course, your possibility of acceptance will be higher. But who is my daughter? No  
matter what, I still know that you'll get accepted without coach Kim Ju Yŏng.

Sŏ Jin's use of the word *perfect* in this sentence bears no relation to herself or her social status, but is rather used to refer to the status of coach Kim Ju Yŏng, who is recognized as having a 100% chance of getting her students admitted to Sŏul National University. Sŏ Jin's combination of the English word *perfect* with the Korean verb conjugator -하게 (*-hage*), instead of using the Korean word for perfect 완벽하게 (*Wanbyŏk'age*) is an interesting choice on her part however, it does not seem to bear any purpose other than highlighting the required competence of coach Kim Ju Yŏng's future replacement.

Episode 4 contained one instance of code-switching within its dialogue. In this scene, Min Hyŏk is overseeing one of his sons' study sessions. One of the sons has not managed to solve the mathematical problem Min Hyŏk has given them within the allotted time. Min Hyŏk is giving him a lecture, and is recounting his own past efforts at studying, even though he came from a poor family. He believes that since his sons have been born into a well-off family, they will fulfill the dream that he himself could not.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 4.**

**민혁:** 아빠가 말했지. 니 할아버진 초등학교도 겨우 나온, 세탁소 주인이었다고. 아빤

그런 환경에서도 대통령이 되겠다 꿈을 꿨어. 평생 남의 옷이나 빨다 간 니

할아버지는 바로 여기. 피라미드 맨 밑바닥이었는데도. 아빤 사법시험을

수석합격하고, 검사가 됐지. 그렇게 여기까지 올라왔어! 부장검사, 차장검사 거쳐

검사장, 국회의원, 당대표, 그리고... *Blue House!* 그렇게 꼭대기로, 꼭대기로

올라가고 싶었는데, 니 외할아버지 도와주다, 아빠 꿈이 좌절됐다고!

**Min Hyök:** I told you. Your grandfather barely graduated from elementary school. He used to be a laundromat owner. Even living in such an environment, I had a dream of becoming the president. Your grandfather who spent his entire life washing someone else's clothes is right here. At the very bottom of the pyramid. But still, I got the highest score on the bar exam and became a prosecutor. Like that I was able to climb up to here. A chief public persecutor. A deputy prosecutor and then a superintendent prosecutor. A congressman. A representative of the party and... *Blue House!* Like that, I wanted to climb up to the peak of the pyramid. While helping your maternal grandfather, my dream went in vain.

Min Hyök use of the English words *Blue House*, rather than its Korean name 청와대 (Ch'öngwadae) are used to emphasize that the Blue House was Min Hyök's final goal in life. One that he himself notes that he will never reach because of the misfortune that befell his father in law. During this scene, Min Hyök is pointing at the levels of a pyramid, showing his sons how he climbed up to his current position throughout all level of society. He lands at the top of the pyramid when he utters the phrase *Blue House*, showing that he considers this the most prestigious position one could reach in society. As such his use of English in this scene is not used to emphasize his own social status, but it is used to emphasize that of the Blue House, to which he is referring as the topmost step of the pyramid.

In this scene, all residents of the Sky castle are gathered together to protest against Su Im's plan to write a book about the tragedy surrounding the Pak family. The residents, however, feel that the efforts they have put into their children's academic careers should not be made known to the world, and therefore do not want her to publish this book.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 6.**

**진희:** 우리 캐슬에 사는 사람들이야 모두 가족이죠, 가족! 이 공동체적 연대의식으로  
끈끈하게 묶인 *family*!

**Chin Hŭi:** Uri k'aesŭre sanŭn saramdŭriya modu kajogijyo, kajong! i kongdongch'ejŏng  
yŏndaeŭishikŭro kkŭnkkŭnhage mukkin *family*!

**Chin Hŭi:** All of us who are in this castle are families. The *family* that we're tied with sticks  
together with the same community spirit.

In this sentence, Chin Hŭi uses code-switching as a way of emphasizing her statement. By switching to English when saying the word *family*, Chin Hŭi is stressing the bond between the residents of the Sky Castle, as well as their shared opinion on the topic of Su Im's book. Su Im is not considered to be part of this 'family', as she has only just arrived and seems to be doing the opposite of everything that is regarded as correct in the Sky Castle. She herself does not interfere much in her son's education, nor does she hire any tutors for him. This is regarded as improper by the other residents of the Castle. Therefore, Chin Hŭi's use of the word *family* here can also be considered to place emphasis on the fact that Su Im is not considered part of this family.

Lastly, episode 10 contained one instance of code-switching, which was found in the dialogue spoken by Sŏ Jin. In this scene, Sŏ Jin is speaking to her mother in law, who has just found out that Sŏ Jin lied about her family's wealth and status. Sŏ Jin is the daughter of a market salesman who sells tripe and leftover meat, rather than the daughter of a bank owner like she has told everyone around her. Sŏ Jin is berating her mother in law, stating that if she had not lied about her background, her mother in law would have forced her to abort Ye Sŏ.

**From the drama SKY Castle, Episode 10.**

서진: 집안이 한미하다고 은혜씨한테 어떻게 하셨는지 기억안 나세요? 뻔히 보고도 사실대로 이실직고 할 만큼 바보 아니에요, 저. 예서 서울의대 보낼 테니까 걱정하지 마세요. 그게 어머니와 저 사이에, *give and take* 아니겠어요? 그래서 CME 는 상관하지 말라, 이거니? 그래 주시면 감사하죠.

**Sō Jin:** Chibani hanmihadago Ŭn Hye ssihant'e öttök'e hasyönnünji kiögan naseyo? Ppönhi pogodo sashiltaero ishilchikko hal mank'üm pabo anieyo, chö. yesö söürüidae ponael t'enikka kökchöng haji maseyo. küge ömöniwa chö saie, *give and take* anigessöyo? Kūraesö nün sanggwanhaji malla, igöni? kūrae chushimyön kamsahajyo.

**Sō Jin:** Do you not remember what you did to Ŭn Hye because she was from a low class? I was not stupid enough to tell you the truth after witnessing that. Don't worry, I'll send Ye Sö to Söul National University's Medical School. Isn't that the *give and take* between us, mother in law?

Sō Jin's use of the English phrase *give and take* here refers to and places emphasis on a prior agreement that the two women have. By saying phrase in English Sō Jin is reminding her mother in law of the fact that the only requirement her mother in law has for her is that she sends her children to one of the SKY universities.

The use of English in the drama Sky Castle verifies that code-switching is indeed used in some cases to emphasize one's (social) status. There are scenes in which a correlation was found between the character's high status and their use of English in the dialogue spoken by them. A prime example of this is Ye Sö's presentation at the monthly Sky castle book club. The disdain she shows in regards to the other member's lack of knowledge of the subjects discussed, as well as their lacking mastery over the English language shows that she regards herself as superior to them. Her status as a smart, hardworking girl who is always top of her class even in the most prestigious middle school in Söul is emphasized throughout the drama and her use of English in the scene perfectly illustrates her perceived superiority over

the others. Additionally, Myōng Chu's use of the English phrase *best over best* also demonstrates the connection between status and English use. She is describing that only the most fortunate could find themselves in the position that they are in while living in the Sky castle, and as such her use of this phrase is used to highlight that the members attending the dinner party are the most fortunate out of all members of society.

Contrasting this clear correlation found between the characters' use of English and the high status that is given to them is the series' lack of English use by characters who do not have a high social or socio-economic status. None of the dialogues involving characters who are portrayed in this series as having a lower socio-economic status, or do not belong to the 'best of the best' have any instances of code-switching. A possible explanation for this could be that the characters with lower social status are all side characters, and as such do not have the same amount of dialogue as the main characters do. Additionally, there are not as many characters shown with low social status as there are with high social status, as the series does revolve around these several high class families. The only character who makes a frequent appearance, but also has a relatively low social status is Kim Hyena. However, despite her relatively large amount of screen time as a side character, none of the dialogue spoken by her contains any instances of code-switching.

### **Code-switching in Crash Landing on You / 사랑의 불시착**

The drama *Crash Landing on You* (사랑의 불시착 / *Sarangŭi Pulshich'ak*) follows the developing love story between the daughter of a South Korean Chaebōl, who also owns her own highly successful fashion business, and the son of a high ranking North Korean military officer. When the daughter, Seri, lands on North Korean territory after a paragliding accident, she meets the North Korean special officer Chōng Hyōk for the first time. He fails to capture her initially and after her escape into a nearby village, he ends up protecting her

instead. These events marks the beginning of a blossoming romance between the two.<sup>38</sup> Like the drama *SKY Castle*, which has been discussed in the previous section of this thesis, this drama contained quite a few instances of code-switching. Most of these were found in sentences spoken by the main character Seri, but there were also quite a few cases of alternations found in dialogue spoken by Myŏng Ŭn, who is a rich woman living in North Korea, and is the future mother in law of Chŏng Hyŏk. Most alternations between languages took place in the epilogues of each episode. These were often flashbacks to a period where both main characters were residing in Switzerland.

Like the main characters in the drama *SKY Castle*, the two main characters in this drama have a very high socio-economic status, and can be considered to be part of the top 1% of their respective countries. Although the main characters could be considered part of the high society, unlike in the drama *Sky Castle*, there is quite a number of frequently recurring side characters who have a lower social status. These are all North Korean characters, and are usually portrayed as not knowing anything about South Korean or American popular culture. The exception exists for one of these characters, who is shown to have a strong interest in South Korean dramas. However, there are no appearances of code-switching in the dialogue spoken by any of these characters.

The first use of code-switching in the drama can be found relatively soon in the first episode. Here, Seri has just made a crash landing on North Korean territory after a tornado appeared. This happened while she was testing out the new paragliding gear that her company is in the process of developing. Seri is unaware that she has landed in North Korea,

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<sup>38</sup> “Crash Landing on You (TV Series 2019–2020),” IMDb, accessed May 12, 2021, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10850932/>.

rather than in her home country of South Korea. This leads her to believe that Chŏng Hyŏk is a North Korean defector when she sees his North Korean army gear. It is not until Chŏng Hyŏk corrects her that she realizes that she has not in fact landed on South Korean territory, but has instead landed on North Korean land.

From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 1.

**세리:** 북... 북한? *North Korea*? 아유, 무슨 그런 얼토당토 하는 말을... 아, 여기가

어떻게... 정말이에요? 아 농담하지 말고 진짜로~ 하 대애박!

**Seri:** Puk... puk'an? Ayu, musŭn kŭrŏn ōlt'odangt'o hanŭn marŭl... a, yŏgiga ōttŏk'e...

Chŏngmarieyo? A nongdamhaji malgo chintcharo ha taeaebak!

**Seri:** North... North Korea? *North Korea*? Come on. Don't be ridiculous... How is this place... Seriously? Come on, stop kidding me. No way.

The dialogue shows that Seri is very surprised by the realization that she is in North Korea, instead of Chŏng Hyŏk having defected to South Korea like she initially assumed. She repeats the words North Korea, first in Korean when she says *Puk'an*, and then in English saying *North Korea*. She continues to speak half sentences about how the location they are currently in could never be North Korea. Her use of English here does not seem to hold any correlation between her status as the daughter of a Chaebŏl and her use of code-switching in this scene. Paying attention to the contents of the scene, it is more probable that Seri's use of English here is used to emphasize her disbelief, as well as a means of clarification for Seri that she is indeed in North Korea, and has not simply misheard Chŏng Hyŏk.

The second appearance of code-switching takes place in episode two. In this scene, Seri is trying to convince Chŏng Hyŏk to help her return to South Korea. She tells him about her background as the daughter of a rich family. She also raises the point that because of her status, her continued absence might possibly lead to an increased amount of conflict between the two countries once it becomes known that she is being held captive in North Korea. Chŏng Hyŏk does not seem to be impressed by her background and is reluctant to help her.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 2.**

**세리:** 나는요. 나만의 0.001% *High class!* 재벌 딸! 코스닥 상장 패션회사 오너.

**Seri:** Nanūnyo. namanūi 0.001% *High class!* chaebōl ttal! k'osūdang sangjang p'aesyōnhoesa onō.

Here, Seri is seen using her status as the daughter of a chaebōl as a means of negotiation. She wants Chōng Hyōk to help her escape back to South Korea and hopes that offering him a grand financial compensation will convince him to do so. Her use of the English words *High class* are used to emphasize her status as the daughter of a rich family even further. Seri ends up explaining in Korean what the words mean, as Chōng Hyōk has no reaction to her elaborating on her family's background. This lack of reaction leaves Seri under the impression that he does not understand what she is saying, and therefore repeats herself in Korean. However, Chōng Hyōk does not have any reaction to this either, which indicates that he simply does not care about her social status in South Korea. He is not pleased with the fact that she is trying to negotiate with him about the terms of her return to South Korea.

The same episode contained another instance of code-switching in its dialogue. In the epilogue of this episode, a flashback is shown of Seri visiting an institution in Switzerland to request the administration of euthanasia. She elaborates to the healthcare professional that although she is not in physical pain, nor does she have any physical illnesses, the emotional pain that she goes through on a daily basis is enough for her to wish to end her life.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 2.**

**상담사:** *It's in violation of our institute's regulations. I'm sorry, but we can't administer the euthenasia you requested.*

**Seri:** *But why not? I heard I can end my life here. Sure I have no physical pain that makes it difficult to sustain life, but I feel extraordinary pain in my mind. Depression, panic disorder, eating disorder, insomnia... do you need more?*

**상담사:** *We always recommend the sightseeing of Switzerland to all visitors.*

**세리:** 흠 관광 좀 한다고 좋아질 마음이였으면 여기까지 오지도 않았지.

**Seri:** Hüm kwan'gwang chom handago choajil maümiyössümyön yögikkaji ojido anatchi.

**Seri:** If some sightseeing would have helped me feel better, I wouldn't have come all the way here.

**상담사:** *70% of the people go back home after they've seen the beautiful sceneries*

**세리:** 난 돌아갈 집이 없어

**Seri:** Nan toragal chibi öpsö

**Seri:** I have no home to go back to.

**상담사:** *I don't know why you want to be killed... but you will be like them anyhow.*

**세리:** 난 그럴리가 없다구.

**Seri:** Nan kürölliga öptagu.

**Seri:** This isn't going to work on me.

The use of code-switching in this dialogue is slightly different from that in previously discussed cases. Where either insertions of English words or alternations between short utterances have been most often used in Korean dramas, this scene shows Seri speaking full English sentences, after which she switches back to speaking Korean sentences. Seri's fluency in the English language here is used to emphasize to the audience that Seri is indeed in a different country, which is Switzerland in this case. According to Lim international tourism can be considered a luxury good, rather than a normal good.<sup>39</sup> This indicates that Seri's decision to fly to Switzerland to end her life, rather than to commit suicide in South Korea is used to further emphasize the ease with which she purchases such a luxury good, and thus emphasize her socio-economic status.

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<sup>39</sup> Christine Lim, "Review of international tourism demand models," *Annals of tourism research* 24, no. 4 (1997): 842.

In the epilogue to the fourth episode, a flashback is seen from Chŏng Hyök's perspective. He was studying piano at an institution in Switzerland at the same time Seri was there for her appointment with the healthcare professional. He was visited here by the woman his parents arranged for him to marry. While out on a trip with to get to know each other better, he asks a passerby on a bridge to take a picture of them. This passerby turns out to be Seri, who is terrified to stand on top of the bridge, and seems to be recording her last words before committing suicide.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 4.**

**정혁:** *Excuse me.*

**세리:** 엄마야!

**Seri:** Ömmaya!

**Seri:** What?

**정혁:** *Could you take a picture of us?*

**세리:** *Okay, give me the camera. But it is too scary here... Does it need to be here now? 벌써 갔어? 어우 놀래라... 어우...*

**Seri:** *Okay, give me the camera. But it is too scary here... Does it need to be here now? Pöllssö kassö? öu nollaera... öu...*

**Seri:** *Okay, give me the camera. But it is too scary here... Does it need to be here now?*

*They're gone already? My goodness.*

Although most sentences in this exchange are spoken in English, Seri sometimes switches back to Korean. The sentences Seri speaks are uttered solely to herself, and as a result, Chŏng Hyök is not aware of the fact that she is Korean. The two characters are both on a trip in Switzerland and neither party knows the other. They are also unaware of the fact that they are from North and South Korea respectively, and would therefore be able to communicate in Korean rather than in English. As such, the dialogue in this scene does not seem to bear any relation between the social statuses of the two characters. Additionally, when looking at the

scenes in this episode outside of the flashback, neither Seri nor Chǒng Hyōk seem to be aware of the fact that they have previously met in Switzerland.

Besides Seri, one other character that has many instances of code-switching in their dialogue is Chǒng Hyōk's future mother in law, Myōng Ŭn. She is a rich lady living in North Korea. There are a couple of instances during this episode in which she inserts one English word into an otherwise Korean sentence. In a previous episode, Tan is surprised by her mother's ability to speak English since it is 'the language of the United States'. Her mother has a dislike for the country, which led to her not having learnt it before, but as the director of a department store she has needed the language in order to do global business. Myōng Ŭn, however, responds that she would not be a true citizen of North Korea if she did not know the language of the enemy.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 5.**

**명은:** 너는 *shut up* 하고 앞에 나가 대기하고 있으라

**Myōng Ŭn:** *Nŏnŭn hago ap'e naga taegihago issŭra*

**Myōng Ŭn:** *Shut up* and go wait outside.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 5.**

**명은:** 편하게 먹으라 편하게~ 들어! 우리 단아 러시아서 공부 마치고 들어온 걸 어케들

알구 중매재이들이 한번만 보자구 아이 임자가 있대두 어찌나 졸라대던지 나 요새

피곤해! *Very tired.*

**Myōng Ŭn::** *P'yŏnhage mŏkŭra p'yŏnhage~ tŭrŏ! uri tana rŏshiasŏ kongbu mach'igo tŭrŏon kŏl*

*ŏk'edŭl algu chungmaejaidŭri hanbŏnman pojagu ai imjaga ittaedu ŏtchina*

*cholladaedŏnji na yosae p'igonhae! Very tired.*

**Myōng Ŭn:** Make yourself comfortable and help yourself. Eat up. All the matchmakers

somehow figured out that Dan came back from Russia and begged me that they would

like to see her just once. I told them she's already engaged but they were so persistent.

They're really bugging me these days. I'm very tired. *Very tired.*

The insertions made by Myōng Ŭn here emphasize her high social status perfectly. There is a clear juxtaposition between the North Korean soldiers, who do not know anything about the English language or popular culture, and Myōng Ŭn, who has taught herself English to enable herself to do business on a global scale.

Episode 6 contained only one instance of code switching, which was spoken by Seri. In this scene, Seri is saying goodbye to the friends she has made during her stay in North Korea. She has said goodbye to them multiple times already, as she has made multiple attempts at returning to South Korea. She feels that this is her final attempt at escaping, wants to give a farewell speech. In order to do so, she is trying to get all people present to pay attention to her by tapping her knife to her glass.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 6.**

**세리:** *Attention please~* 애기 들어서 알겠지만 나 이번에 진짜로 돌아가게 됐어요.

**Seri:** *Attention please~* Yaegi tūrōsō algetchiman na ibōne chintcharo toragage twaessōyo.

**Seri:** *Attention please~* I'm sure you all heard, this time I'll really be going back home

Here, Seri is trying to get all present members of the party to pay attention to her by starting her speech saying the English phrase '*Attention please*'. Seri's use of English in this scene is used to further emphasize her high status. None of the other parties present, with the exception of Chōng Hyōk speak English, and as such, her switching is not meant for them. It is more likely that here use of English here is implemented in order to make her look 'high class', as she has emphasized many times throughout the series.

After Episode 6, there were quite a few episodes that did not contain any use of code-switching. Although English was used in this scenes, they were scenes spoken solely in English, and as such did not qualify to be used in this analysis. The next episode containing any instance of code-switching was episode 12. Here, Seri is talking to Chōng Hyōk, who has

come to visit South Korea after her return to the country, and has gotten addicted to an online video game.

**From the drama 사랑의 불시착 / Crash Landing on You, Episode 12.**

**세리:** 응, 외투 벗어요. 앉구. *Log out.*

**Seri:** Ŭng, oet'u pösöyo. anku. *Log out.*

**Seri:** Yes, take off your coat. Sit down. *Log out.*

**적형:** 지금 기다리고 있을텐데...

**Chöng Hyök:** Chigŭm kidarigo issŭlt'endet't

**Chöng Hyök:** I'm sure he's waiting for me now...

**세리:** 씩... *Log out!*

**Seri:** Ssŭp... *Log out!*

**Seri:** Tsss... *Log out!*

Seri's use of the phrase *Log out* here is not used in relation to her social status. It is rather used to emphasize her commanding Chöng Hyök to stop playing the game he is addicted to in the preceding sentence. In this way, the use of English in the dialogue is used as a means of adding humor to the scene, as Seri is forced to repeat her command multiple times. Her switch to English here highlights the demanding tone in which she tells Chöng Hyök to stop playing his game.

Like the code-switching used in the drama *Sky Castle*, the use of English in this drama supports the hypothesis that code-switching can be used to emphasize one's status. The same obstruction took place for this drama as it did for the drama *Sky Castle*. As the main characters in this drama were both characters with high social status, it is not possible to use the data taken from the episodes to draw any conclusions regarding the use of English as a means of emphasizing a character's low (social) status. There were no instances of English use found in the parts of dialogue spoken by side characters who had a relatively low social status.

There were multiple scenes in which the use of code-switching supported the assumption that a character's use of code-switching holds a correlation to their social status. One example of this is Seri's use of the English words *High class* in the first episode when referring to her family background. The use of English here is used to emphasize that she, like her family, is part of the top 0.01% in South Korean society. Besides this first example, her use of English sentences, alternated with Korean sentences in her conversation with the Swiss Healthcare Professional also demonstrate her high socio-economic status. The fact that Seri chose to travel to Switzerland to request the administration of euthanasia, rather than commit suicide in Seoul shows that she does not regard such a trip as extravagant. This seems to correlate with her status as member of South Korea's 'high society', as well as the emphasis she has placed on the fact that she has never been shy for money throughout the series. Lastly, the insertion of various English words by the character Myōng Ŭn also demonstrate her high social status in North Korea. Both her access to materials for English with, as well as her necessity for a certain level of fluency in order to do global business emphasize her high social and socio-economic status.

## Code-switching in Reply 1988 / 응답하라 1988

The drama *Reply 1988*, or known by its Korean title as *응답하라 1988* (*Ŭngdap'ara 1988*), looks back at the events of the year 1988 while following the daily lives of five families who live on the same block in a neighborhood in Seoul.<sup>40</sup> The drama is told from the perspective of Sōng Dōk Sōn years later, who was one of the children living in the area. This drama contained significantly fewer instances of code-switching than the other two dramas selected for analysis. The story takes place in a neighborhood mainly inhabited by families with a relatively low socio-economic status. As such, the analysis of the use of code-switching in this particular drama enables this thesis to analyze both dramas with protagonists who have a high socio-economic status, as well as protagonists with a low socio-economic status. This allows for contrast to be shown between the selected dramas. As a result of the protagonists in *Reply 1988* having a lower socio-economic status, the instances of English use that do take place are presumably not as often used as a status symbol for the characters. They are more likely to be used as a means of entertainment by showing a character's lack of language fluency, and as such are using viewers' own language anxiety as a means of entertainment. Jamie Shinhee Lee has previously discussed this phenomenon in her 2014 article.<sup>41</sup>

The first scene in this drama that contained an alternation between Korean and English took place in the first episode of the drama. In this scene Dōk Sōn is attending her training as a picket girl for the Olympic games, which were held in Sōul in 1988. All residents of this block are looking forward to the event and as such, Dōk Sōn is feeling proud of her selection as one of three high schoolers who are offered the opportunity to represent the country during this event. As she is not very gifted in the academic field, she feels that she has achieved

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<sup>40</sup> "Reply 1988 (2015) (TV Series)," IMDb, accessed May 9, 2021, [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5182866/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5182866/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1)

<sup>41</sup> Jamie Shinhee Lee, "English on Korean Television," *World Englishes* 33, no. 1 (2014).

something by being chosen as a representative, just like her older sister Po Ra, who attends Söul National University. The sentence containing the alternation is spoken by Dök Sön's coach, who is teaching Dök Sön how to hold up the sign correctly and is keeping count for her in English.

**From the drama Reply 1988 / 응답하라 1988 episode 1**

**코치:** *Five six seven eight. One two three...* 팔 떨어진다. 팔 올리라고. 그렇지, 그렇지. *One, two, three, four...* 팔 떨어지면 안 된다고! 올려. 그렇지. *One, two, three, four, five, six...* 이 쪽 팔도 떨어지잖니, 팔 올리고!

**Coach:** *Five six seven eight. One two three...* P'al ttöröjjinda. p'al ollirago. *One, two, three, four...* Küröch'i, küröch'i. *One, two, three, four, five, six...* P'al ttöröjimyön an toendago! Ollyö. küröch'i. I tchong p'alto ttöröjjanni, p'al olligo!

**Coach:** *Five six seven eight. One two three...* Your arm is falling. Raise your arms. That's right, there you go. *One, two, three, four...* Don't let your arm fall! Put it up. There you go. *One, two, three, four, five, six...* This arm is falling, too. Raise your arm!

Instead of keeping count in English, as is the case in other scenes where the neighborhood children are dancing for example, Dök Sön's coach is keeping count in English. In this case, the method of code-switching that is being used is an alternation between Korean and English. The alternation does not serve any connective purposes between the two sentences in the dialogue. It is difficult to make any conclusions regarding the use of code-switching to emphasize the coach's social status from this dialogue. There is no background information available prior to this scene regarding the coach who is speaking to Dök Sön, nor does the alternation take place in a conversation. It is an isolated occurrence, and as such does not seem to bear any relation to the status of the character.

The second appearance of code-switching is shown in episode three. Here, Dök Sön is talking to her friend Tong Yul about a bottle of liquor that she is hiding for one of her other friends Jöng Hwan. She is asking Tong Yul and Jöng Hwan to participate in her school's

talent show so she can win a cassette player. The friends she was intending to participate in the talent show with were both injured prior to the event, and as such she quickly needs to find replacement in order to compete in the show.

**From the drama Reply 1988 / 응답하라 1988 episode 3**

**덕선:** 그리고 정팔이한테는, 딱 한 마디만 해. *Something special*. 이따 봐, 9 시, 김유신 유스호스텔 철문 앞에서.

**Döksön:** Kŭrigo chŏngp'arihant'enŭn, ttang han madiman hae. *Something special*. itta pwa, 9 shi, kimyushin yusŭhosŭt'el ch'ŏlmun ap'esŏ.

**Döksön:** And to Jŏngp'al, just say one word. *Something special*. See you later, at 9 PM. In front of Kim Yushin Youth Hostel's iron gate.

In saying the phrase *Something special*, Dök Sön is referring to the bottle of liquor that she is hiding for her friend Jŏng Hwan, who gave it to her for safekeeping in an earlier scene.

Something Special is the name of an English liquor brand. Dök Sön does not use the Korean pronunciation of the brand here, which would be *Ssŏmshing sŭp'esyŏl* (썸싱 스페셜). Instead she uses the English pronunciation for the words. This insertion of English is not used in order to establish a high social status, nor is it portraying a lack of English fluency on Dök Sön's part. The insertion does, however, serve a humorous purpose in the sense that Dök Sön is referring to the bottle of liquor. This is not obvious to Tong Yul, however, hence it sounds like she is being purposefully mysterious about what knowledge or item she is using to convince Jŏng Hwan to join her school's talent show in her stead. As such, this insertion is mainly used to add dramatic effect to the scene, and to the relationship between Dök Sön and Jŏng Hwan. Dök Sön's English pronunciation of the brand is also contrasted by that used by Tong Yul, who uses the Korean pronunciation of the brand in a later scene of the same episode.

This same episode contained another instance of code-switching, this time spoken by Jǒng Hwan, Jǒng Hwan's father offers him a ride to school with the family car, as Jǒng Hwan, is leaving the house late for school. Jǒng Hwan, however, states that he does not need a ride since he has his own car. This statement confuses his parents. Jǒng Hwan, however, is referring to his new pair of sneakers and not an actual car.

**From the drama Reply 1988 / 응답하라 1988 episode 3**

**정환:** 됐어요. 저도 차 있어요. *Hi, air Jordan.*

**Jǒng Hwan:** Twaessōyo. chōdo ch'a issōyo. *Hi, air Jordan.*

**Jǒng Hwan:** It's fine. I have a car as well. *Hi, air Jordan.*

In the second half of this dialogue, namely the sentence spoken in English, Jǒnghwan is not speaking to another person but rather to his newly bought shoes. As such it is unlikely that his use of English is used as a status symbol. The short sentence that is spoken does not show a particularly high or low level of fluency in English, nor is it used to impress another character. As such, no conclusions regarding the use of code-switching as a positive or negative status symbol can be made solely from this sentence.

There are scenes in this drama which do allow for such a conclusion, as the English used in the dialogue is clearly used in a humorous way. Episode four contains such a scene. Here, Dōk Sōn is talking to Sōn U, whom she has a crush on. Dōk Sōn is known not to study for her exams, but has recently been making an effort. She has asked her parents to pay for a tutor but as they were unable to pay for this, they asked Dōk Sōn's older sister to tutor her. In this scene she is shown trying to impress Sōn U by showing him that she studied hard for her English exam, and has learnt how to say certain phrases in English.

**From the drama Reply 1988 / 응답하라 1988 episode 4**

**덕선:** 선우야! 밖에 비 온다. *I am raining.*

**Dōk Sōn:** Sōn Uya! pakke pi onda. *I am raining.*

**Dők Sön:** Sönu! It's raining outside. *I am raining.*

**Sön U:** *It's raining.*

Although Dők Sön tries to speak English here, she mistakenly states that she is raining, instead of saying that it's raining outside like she wanted to. Sön U corrects her and tells her that she should say "it's raining" instead. Dők Sön feels embarrassed by this and does not continue to speak to him in English. Here, Dők Sön's lack of fluency is used in a humorous way. She tries to impress the boy she likes but fails to do so and feels embarrassed as a result. This embarrassment can easily be recognized by the viewers, who may have found themselves in similar situations in the past, or can envision themselves being in a similar situation.

There are quite a few episodes without any instances of code-switching. As such, the next episode in which the use of English appears is episode 8. Here, Dők Sön is talking with two of her friends whilst eating in a restaurant. They are talking about dyeing their hair. One of Dők Sön's friends suggests going to the salon instead of dyeing their hair at home using hydrogen peroxide. To this, Dők Sön remarks that she and the other friend are not rich like her.

**From the drama Reply 1988 / 응답하라 1988 episode 8**

**덕선:** 야, 부잣집 딸내미는 좀 빠지지. 지금 가난한 집 애들끼리 *talking* 중이거든.

**Dők Sön:** Ya, pujatchim ttallaeminün chom ppajiji. chigŭm kananhan chim aedŭlkkiri  
labamdyölgchungigödün.

**Dők Sön:** Hey, get the rich girl out of here. The poor kids are *talking* to each other.

**미옥,** 성덕선. 너 *talking* 도 알아?

**Mi Ok:** o, Söng Dők Sön. nõ *talking* to ara?

**Mi Ik:** Oh, Dők Sön, do you know *talking* too?

Döksön's friend who suggested going to the salon to dye their hair is the only one who has enough money for such an outing, as she is from a richer family. The other two girls grew up

poor, and as such, have to resort to home treatments to dye their hair. Although this is the case, it is Dők Sön, one of the poorer girls, who is alternating between languages. In this case, however, Dők Sön's alternation between languages is not used as a symbol for either high or low status.

As previously stated, the drama *Reply 1988* does not contain many instances of code-switching between English and Korean. Most of the English utterances that appeared in the episodes were spoken by the character Dők Sön. This is not surprising, as the story is told from her memory, hence she is one of the characters with the most screen time. The most noteworthy instance of code-switching for this thesis is presented in the dialogue spoken between Dők Sön and Sön U. In this case, Dők Sön's previous lack of success in regards to her academic career is shown when she is trying to speak English in order to impress Sön U. This is partially caused by her parents' inability to pay for a tutor, which once again emphasizes their low socio-economic status. Sön U corrects her mistake, however, and Dők Sön ends up feeling embarrassed as a result of her failed attempt at speaking English to Sön U.

For the majority of the other uses of code-switching, although they are sometimes used as a means of entertainment, it is not possible to conclude any definite relationship between the use of code-switching and the social statuses of the characters speaking partaking in the dialogue. Especially when this linguistic phenomenon is used by characters who do not make an appearance as frequently as the main characters, there seems to be no indication of a relation between their use of code-switching and their social status. There is often little information available regarding the (social) background of these characters, and as such, it is not possible here to examine any relation between this and their use of code-switching.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the relationship between code-switching and the portrayed status of characters in South Korean dramas. From the analyzed data one can conclude that there is indeed a relation between the use of code-switching in K-drama dialogues and the (social) status of the character using the code-switching in their dialogue. However, this research has also shown that this is certainly not the only purpose for which code-switching is used. The analysis in this thesis has shown that code-switching is used in most cases to place emphasis upon a certain word or phrase, which is often used to highlight an important part about the conversation that the character is having. Regarding the relation between the use of code-switching and a character's status, multiple instances of code-switching have shown that the use of English by a character can be used to emphasize both a high, as well as a low status.

In the drama *Sky Castle*, There are scenes in which a correlation was found between the character's high status and their use of Korean to English code-switching. Examples that were given for this were the scene containing Ye Sŏ's presentation at the monthly Sky castle book club, in which she shows that she feels superior to the other members participating since they do not understand her English presentation, and therefore switches back to Korean. Additionally, Myŏng Chu's use of the English phrase *best over best* also demonstrates the connection between status and English use, and her use of this phrase is meant to highlight that the members attending the dinner party are the most fortunate out of all members of society.

Like the drama *Sky Castle*, the drama *Crash Landing on You* also supported the hypothesis that code-switching is used to emphasize a character's status. One example in this drama is Seri's use of the English words *High class* in the first episode when referring to her family background. The use of English here is used to emphasize that she, like her family, is

part of the top 0.01% in South Korean society. Besides this first example, her use of English sentences, alternated with Korean sentences in her conversation with the Swiss Healthcare Professional also demonstrate her high socio-economic status. The fact that Seri chose to travel to Switzerland to request the administration of euthanasia, rather than commit suicide in Seoul shows that she does not regard such a trip as extravagant. This seems to correlate with her status as member of South Korea's 'high society', as well as the emphasis she has placed on the fact that she has never been shy for money throughout the series.

The drama *Reply 1988* is the only drama in which are any signs of a relation between code-switching and a low status. The most noteworthy instance of code-switching that supports this relation can be found in the dialogue spoken between Dök Sön and Sön U. Dök Sön's previous lack of success in regards to her academic career is shown when she is trying to speak English in order to impress Sön U. This is partially caused by her parents' inability to pay for a tutor, which once again emphasizes their low socio-economic status. Sön U corrects her mistake, however, and Dök Sön ends up feeling embarrassed as a result of her failed attempt at speaking English to Sön U.

As such, this thesis concludes that code-switching is indeed used in South Korean dramas to signify both a high and a low social status. Depending on the context of the scene, A character's use of English can be a method to emphasize information that has previously been given to the viewer. Code-switching can, therefore, not be considered a status symbol by itself, but rather a method of placing emphasis on information that is given the viewer through other streams of information.

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