

MALAYSIAN PREMIER POLYTECHNICS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LECTURERS' BELIEFS ON CODE-SWITCHING AND THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

This research reports on lecturers' beliefs on effective teaching and learning, as well as whether they coincide with their daily teaching practices or not. The focus will be the belief on the use of code-switching in the English Language classrooms. At the same time, it is useful to see whether there are differences in the beliefs between the lecturers and the students. Therefore, nine (9) lecturers from Malaysian Premier Polytechnics were chosen as well as the students in the class that these lecturers were observed. The methods used were classroom observations, interviews with the lecturers (after the classroom observations), and questionnaires (for both the lecturers and students). In this qualitative enquiry, the data that has been collected are relatively 'naturalistic', where it is not put in a pre-existing categories or being pre-coded (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Using a 'thematic analysis', it will provide a detailed analysis of the data that has been collected. Findings show that the lecturers did code-switch during their lessons and they used it to translate, check understanding in order to speed things up because of time pressures and used it when telling jokes. These are some of the areas listed in Macaro's (2005) areas of teachers' code-switch. The lecturers claimed that it was mainly to enhance their students' understanding and to save their time from lengthy explanation whenever the students are in doubt. This was agreeable by most students where they believe that code-switching could help them understand the lessons better. Thus, code-switching may not be considered as a countenance of language interference as being put to belief conventionally. It may actually enhance the teaching and learning process instead.

Key Words: Code-switching, Malaysian Premier Polytechnics, ETeMS (English in the Teaching of Mathematics and Science), SLA (Second Language Acquisition)

INTRODUCTION

Research on code-switching in language classrooms is an inevitably known subject and related to the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) area. It began in the 1970s with bilingual students in the US and moved to other countries like Canada, Europe and Asia where bilinguals or even multilinguals are normally found. From the research (Cummins, 2000; Littlewood, 2001; Swain, 2000; Van de Craen & Perez-Vidal, 2003) carried out in those countries, code-switching seemed to be prevalent when classroom interactions were observed. Some of the discourse functions used by the students and teachers in the classrooms were linked to the needs for the students to fulfil the communicative requirements and “language values transmitted through communicative decisions” (Martin-Jones, 1995, p. 93).

The use of code-switching in language classrooms is a contentious issue among researchers of SLA as well as the education policy makers. Some see code-switching as threatening and detrimental to the language that the students were expected to acquire (Boztepe, 2005; Muysken, 2000; Wei & Martin, 2009). In current research focused on code-switching and SLA, these negative opinions still exist and influence the beliefs and attitudes of ELT researchers (Gándara & Rumberger, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2012; Warhol & Mayer, 2012) who prefer an English-only approach. Even the school governance has emphasised the sole use of target language (TL) in the classroom, for example the American Indians in the United States, were asked to move to an English-only education where the use of the L1 (first language) was banned during the mid-19th century policy (Crawford, 2004). For the case in the Malaysian Polytechnic system, lecturers’ marks will be deducted during their performance appraisal if there is evidence that lecturers are using language other than English in their lessons.

Apart from the negative stigma that L1 would interfere with the SLA of students, it was found that using both the English language and L1 have brought positive impacts on the students performance as Rumbaut (2014) identified in his research that by acquiring two languages, it helped to increase a person’s occupation standard including a raised in their salary. There are a few states in the U.S. for examples, California, Texas, Chicago and New Mexico have accepted the use of other languages like Mandarin and Spanish in their classrooms as they found it beneficial for the students’ learning and at the same time it would give the students the benefits of improving both their English language and their L1 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2015).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to find out how code-switching could help in the learning of the English language among the bilingual students of Premier Polytechnics in

Malaysia. A number of studies have been carried out throughout universities in Asian countries, where code-switching has taken a different perspective in the classrooms (Barnard & McLellan, 2014). For example in Taiwan, “English only” belief as MOI (medium of instruction) during English lessons without the use of any L1 or mother tongue, is still prevalent by the policymakers and regarded as an important pedagogical approach in the teaching of English (Tien, 2014). However, she found that code-switching in her lessons actually helped in explaining linguistics terms, lexical items and building rapport with the students. Code-switching enhanced communication between teacher and students in the classrooms. Exclusive use of L2 (second language) as the TL in the foreign or L2 is debatable (Macaro, 2001).

Macaro (2014) has mentioned that code-switching in the language classroom is to promote communication skills. There are still gaps in the code-switching research and he recommends further research is needed in the case of code-switching in the classroom where further exploration is needed in terms of whether the teachers’ beliefs on code-switching is relatively the same as the students’ beliefs, what actually play on the teachers’ minds during the teaching and learning process and whether the teachers have achieved the outcomes that they set earlier. This research will help in exploring the gap of code-switching research and can contribute a better understanding on the issue. There will also be a focus on the teachers’ beliefs of code-switching in the classrooms and beliefs from the students too. Below are the areas that have been investigated in the research and therefore, the objectives of this research are:

- i) To categorise the frequency and functions of code-switching in the Malaysian Premier Polytechnics English Language classroom.
- ii) To identify the lecturers’ and students’ beliefs about code-switching in the Malaysia Premier Polytechnics English Language classroom, in particular, their beliefs about how code-switching helps in the teaching and learning process, and their differences if any.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Code-switching has been one of the interesting subjects in linguistics studies (Wei & Martin, 2009), although sometimes the speakers do not actually realise that they are practising it (Gafaranga, 2007). Codeswitching "is systematic and, specifically, conforms to the grammatical constraints of the two participating languages" (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011, p. 103) and are bound by specific grammar and sociocultural aspects, for example code-switching between Spanish and English languages. The ability to speak more than one language is a normal practice and not considered as an unusual thing (Milroy & Musyken, 1995), and with regards to the present days social and economic sectors, bilingualism has changed the linguistics abilities of the speakers (Shin, 2012).

Code-switching is using more than one linguistic variety within the same dialogue, conversation or interaction and it may be anything from genetically unrelated languages to two styles of the same language, as mentioned by Myers-

Scotton and Ury (1977). There is a similar definition by Di Pietro (1977), which is using more than one language by the communicators in a conversation. Both of these definitions look at using more than one language in a conversation, communication or interaction without them coming from the same ethnics or origin of languages. Studies done by Valdes-Fallis (1978) reveal that the term “code-switching” is also known as “code alternation” where there will be a switch or alternate use of different languages in a conversation. Other terms that were found in different studies are “the use of [the] mother tongue” (Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989) and “code choice” (Levine, 2011, as cited in Macaro, 2014). Regardless of the different terms that were used by different researchers, for this research, the term “code-switching” will be used to refer to the change and switch between the two languages, English and Malay Language also known as *Bahasa Melayu*.

The reason code-switching exists is because language development is orderly, systematic and complete yet not totally complete (Duran, 1994), as language evolves every day and new words and usage become known. Language development is subjected to addition (a new word is created), elaboration (additional affixes from an existing word), refinement (to improve or clarify words or phrases better), reapplication (different usage of words in different context) and reorganisation (repositioning of the words, phrases or sentences) (Durkin, 1986). As such, the development of language occurs as both a synchronic process, where language develops and evolves at one point in time; and a diachronic process, where language development occurs through time.

Recently in November 2015, there was an announcement made by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia regarding the new programme called the Dual Language Programme (DLP). The introduction of this programme is aimed at allowing the schools and parents to have a choice of whether to have the lessons in English or Malay. Based on the *The Malaysia Insider* dated 24th January 2016, the Education Minister said that about 12,000 out of 70,000 teachers are ready as they have shown improvement in their English performance by getting at least “one band under the Common European Framework of Reference English proficiency benchmark” (p. 1). The introduction of DLP, signals the government’s concern about the level of English in Malaysia and by giving options schools and parents have more opportunity to choose what is best for their students and children.

There are several changes to the transformational plan called “Enculturation of Life-Long Learning 2011-2020”. The Polytechnic Transformation Plan is set to make polytechnics the preferred choice for students in the field of TVET, where it would be the main TVET institution at the regional level. The employability rate would increase at least 85% and it would be able to attract 50% of school leavers, that is the Malaysian Certificate Examination holders, to join the polytechnics (Mohamad Sattar, Zool Hilmi, Norzaini, & Rose Amnah, 2015, p. 7). There are 34 polytechnics in Malaysia altogether, comprising of three Premier, 26 Conventional and five Metro polytechnics. The three polytechnics that were selected as *Premier Polytechnics* are Politeknik Ungku Omar (PUO) in Perak, Politeknik Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah (PSA) in Selangor and Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan (PIS) in Johor. In line with the

Malaysian Education Plan 2015-2025, these polytechnics were expected to increase the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) skills worker supply which is much needed in Malaysia soon (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). In order to achieve this, preparing the students with proper English Language acquisition will help them to be successful TVET skills worker.

English is indeed an important language to communicate and interact with. Undeniably, the demand for English nowadays is greater now than ever before. Most of any company's employers require their workers to be fluent in the language, as it has become the international language of trade and business. English is also needed to deal with the advancement in technology, as most of the information stored in computers is in this particular language. Present trends in the demand for industrial manpower indicate the need for a labour force with broad-based education emphasising Mathematics, Science and communicative abilities as well as proficiency in English as the L2. Therefore, in order to accomplish this, most courses in polytechnics are currently taught in English. This is to expose students to the importance of English in the real world after all most references are written in English. The courses have changed from Malay language as the instructional language to English. These engineering lecturers may be proficient in English when it comes to writing, but may be less confident in speaking since they are not used to teaching in English (Mazlin, 2011). To overcome this problem they may code-switch quite frequently between Malay and English. Such code-switching practices could also indicate that the person did so to fill a linguistic gap (Valdes-Fallis, 1978) or maybe he or she was not competent in the L2 (Crystal, 1987). However, code-switching did not necessarily pose negative impacts as it could somehow be used as a part of teaching and learning strategies such as clarification purposes, for example (Mattson & Mattson, 1999). This happened in the subject content classes, but it may exist in an English Language classroom too.

Bokamba (1988) defines code-switching as "the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within a speech event" (p. 279). While code-mixing is "the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from two grammatical (sub) systems within the same utterance and speech event" (p. 279). These types of language choices may be most likely to be used by the polytechnic lecturers in Malaysia teaching the subject content as well as the English language subject. The reasons for these choices were identified through this research and how it helped in learning the L2.

In regards to the L2 motivation, especially the one related to the development of the socio-educational model, the study of motivation has given an insight as to how students' interest and other related factors could affect their learnings (Gardner, 1985). Dörnyei (2009) has proposed another framework on motivation especially for L2 research and it is called the L2 motivational self system. This system is based on Markus and Nurius (1986) possible self theory and Higgins (1987) self-discrepancy theory. Dörnyei (2009) argues that "motivation involves the desire to reduce the

discrepancy between one's actual self and the projected behavioural standards of the ideal/ought-to selves" (p. 215).

As experienced teachers know, those students who were able to progress well in learning the L2 are usually the ones with positive attitudes. In regards to Dörnyei (2009) ideal L2 system, having a positive attitude on learning the L2 will enable the students to believe in themselves that they can acquire it. The positive attitudes they have enable them to set their own goals to achieve what they want in acquiring the language. When students have a positive attitude, it acts as a motivational drive to enable a greater effort to achieve the goal of learning the language. It is hoped that although there is always a change in the language policy especially in schools and higher institutions, students' attitudes and motivation will remain positive towards learning the English language.

Overall, teachers' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and classroom practices are interrelated and these experiences would likely to portray how they came to the decision of carrying out their lessons which may not appear to be spontaneous as it is more of the experience and cognition that they have gathered throughout their teachings. Although there are cases where teachers' beliefs do not go hand-in-hand with their practices, it could be due to various reasons that might interfere with their beliefs. A research on teacher's beliefs on language learners of reading skills (Collie, 1996) where the teachers believed the use of TL throughout the teaching and provide a lot of opportunities for students to practice on reading. However, they deviated from those beliefs as throughout the lesson they noticed that the students were gradually not interested with their lessons and feeling unmotivated. This has changes the course of their lessons and whereby they came out with different activities as to attract the students' attention again. Based on this example above, the relationship between cognition and practices would be influenced by the contextual factors. It is also not a linear process of teaching because teachers will keep on changing and revised their lessons depending on the context they are in - the students' motivation, timing and teacher talk.

Basically, there are two major types of switching: intra-sentential and inter-sentential (Asmah, 1982). Intra-sentential occurs within a clause or sentence margin whereas inter-sentential is when language change occurs at a clause or sentence margin, where each clause or sentence uses one language at a time (Asmah, 1982). An example taken from Mazlin (2011) is shown below:

T: Please make sure you write your name and matrix no. ye (Yes)! Ok Guys, time's up! Pass it over. Hurry up. Cepat sikit. Jangan tengok jawapan kawan (Don't look at your friend's answer).

Ss: Susahlah puan (It's difficult, madam).

T: Just follow the cara kerja (working scheme) that I show you just now. Ok thank you class!

Ss: Thank you puan (madam).

(p. 45-46)

This type of dialogues are normally heard and used by many Malaysians. But, do they actually show that those who do that are incompetent in English? Or, would it be like showing off to other people that they are able to speak two languages? Or, is it a deliberate strategy for communicative purposes (for example, words in another language provide a better nuance of what the speaker means)?

Over the years there have been arguments about code-switching among researchers (Crystal, 1987; Gysels, 1992; Jenkins, 2010; Macaro, 2009; Stroupe, 2014; Tien, 2014). From the negative point of view, it was long-established that code-switching was seen as an intervention process in language acquisition and usually had negative perceptions (Tien, 2014). Even though code-switching seemed to serve important communicative and cognitive functions, some negative perceptions had labelled this type of speaking adversely. There are claims that speakers who use mixing and switching speak neither language well or they were not even “fluent in both languages” (Macaro, 2014). It was just a “code-choice” they made in order to communicate with other bilinguals.

On the other hand, from the positive point of view, in another research study by Dewaele and Wei (2012), it was found that the participants in their research who scored higher on cognitive empathy “tend to be more skillful in conversation” (p. 363). They indicated that bilinguals who used more than one language would not be hindered from being competent communicators. Nowadays, some consider code-switching as a communication strategy for effective communication (Jenkins, 2010) and meaningful communication (Stroupe, 2014).

Speakers who successfully code-switch show a higher level of linguistic sophistication since it necessitated simultaneous processing of the rules of both languages and it was also indicating not only proficiency in both languages, but often to a high level (Bokamba, 1988). The speakers would definitely need a good grasp of both languages to be able to code-switch smoothly in a conversation. The switching between two languages was not brought about by laziness (Ong & Zhang, 2014) or insufficient language proficiency but would be because speakers had a sophisticated knowledge of both languages and were aware of community norms. Sometimes the speakers were not sure of the term or it might not be appropriate to use the term in the TL (Chan, 2005). Macaro (2005; 2006; 2009; 2014) has frequently mentioned that code-switching is indeed one of the communication strategies that would be useful for bilinguals. He found that it would benefit the L2 learner as it kept “the interaction going and attract greater quality input” (2005, p. 64).

Based on several reports from teachers across different learning contexts that were gathered by Macaro (2005) on areas in which they use L1 in the L2 classes, he has come up with the list of areas of teachers’ code-switching:

- i) Building personal relationships with learners (the pastoral role that teachers take on requires high levels of discourse sophistication).
- ii) Giving complex procedural instructions for carrying out an activity.
- iii) Controlling pupils' behaviour.

- iv) Translating and checking understanding in order to speed things up because of time pressures (e.g., exams).
- v) Teaching grammar explicitly.

(p. 69)

Thus in this research, the reasons for code-switching as mentioned above, are analysed to see how far it is applicable in the context that has been chosen or could there be other possible reasons for code-switching in the Polytechnics' Premier English Language classrooms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To understand the occurrence of code-switching throughout the teaching and learning process, audio-recording techniques during classroom observation were used as the main method of investigation. The teachings of English Language subjects by nine lecturers from three Premier Polytechnics in Malaysia were audio-recorded. Students who were involved in the observations will also be given a set of questionnaire in order to get students' perception and identify their beliefs on code-switching. Later, the lecturers involved will be attending interview sessions to investigate their classroom practices and beliefs regarding code-switching usage in the classrooms.

Participants

There were two groups of participants, the lecturers and students (lecturers: $n = 9$; students: $n = 183$). Participants in the study were recruited from three Malaysian Premier Polytechnics located in Perak, Selangor and Johor. Three lecturers from Politeknik Ungku Omar (PUO) in Perak, two lecturers from Politeknik Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah (PSA) in Selangor and four lecturers from Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan (PIS) in Johor. The proportions of males ($n = 3$) and females ($n = 6$) lecturers were not similar ($\chi^2 = 0.667$, $df = 1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.508$). These lecturers were selected through purposive sampling where any English Lecturers teaching the final year students at the Malaysian Premier Polytechnics with different teaching experiences and gender were allowed to participate in this research. Yin (2011) defines purposive sampling as "The selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions" (p. 311). Stake (2006) also suggested that between 4-10 case studies would be an acceptable number for case studies sample.

The other group of participants was the students who were recruited from the classes in which their lecturers were observed for the purpose of this research as they would be able to comment on their lecturers teaching styles as well as being able to inform their beliefs from a student's point of view. There were a total of 183 students from the three premier polytechnics in the Civil, Mechanical, Electrical or Commerce Department who had agreed to participate. They were in their final English course (Communicative English 3, AE501) since they were the earlier batch of ETeMS (English in the Teaching of Mathematics and Science) previously from school and the

first few batches of TLSMTE (Teaching and Learning of Science, Mathematics and Technical in English) in the polytechnics. The age range is between 19 and 21 years old.

Research Design

The mixed methods convergent parallel design (Creswell, 2009) was used in this research. In this design, firstly the qualitative (text) data was collected and analysed. Secondly, the quantitative (numeric) data was also collected and analysed, which helped to explain or elaborate further on the qualitative results obtained earlier. After that, the two results were then connected and triangulated in the next stage of the research. Data was collected in sequence, one after another on the same day or perhaps a day after, particularly the interview sessions. They were compared to see whether there were any merging patterns, variances or certain mixtures (Creswell, 2009). The rationale for this approach is that the qualitative data and its subsequent analysis would provide more thorough understanding of the nuances of some of the research questions. On the other hand, the quantitative data and its analysis were used to explain those results from another research question by using a larger sample of different group of participants, which can be used to quantify and verify the data. This would be useful as the results generated from the quantitative method are used to support the results gathered from the other method (Bryman, 2006).

A case study method with the main method of qualitative analysis was chosen. An explanatory type of case study was chosen. This type of case study was chosen in order to seek answers that may be able to explain the causal links (Yin, 2011), for example between a new teaching strategy with the beliefs that the participants have in accomplishing the outcome of the lesson. According to Yin (2011), a detailed study of the participants and its evidence will be based on professional applications. The case study design needs to have five components, which are: the “research question(s), its propositions, its unit(s) of analysis, a determination of how the data are linked to the propositions and criteria to interpret the findings” (p. 59). This method is beneficial in terms of testing the theoretical models in different samples and situations as well as to see how far the model is applicable in the real world. There is a quantitative aspect with the qualitative method in this design. It would also be more valid when the analysis is synthesised and compared between the qualitative data and statistical results (Creswell, 2009).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done earlier to determine the development of the questionnaire and interview questions and their adequacy. It was conducted in PUO and 2 lecturers were involved during the observations and interview; five students were involved during the pilot study. By carrying out the pilot study, it has helped to improve on the questions for the interviews and questionnaire where they were edited based on the feedback received.

Ethical Considerations

Before conducting a field study, an appropriate ethical arrangement was made by submitting an Ethics Application to the Ethics committee members of the University

of Auckland, New Zealand. The research tools of the study which are the observation sheet, interview questions and questionnaires were checked by the ethics committee from which approval has been granted. Applications were also sent to the Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD) of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department to get their permission to conduct this research at the three Malaysian Premier Polytechnics.

Research Validity and Reliability

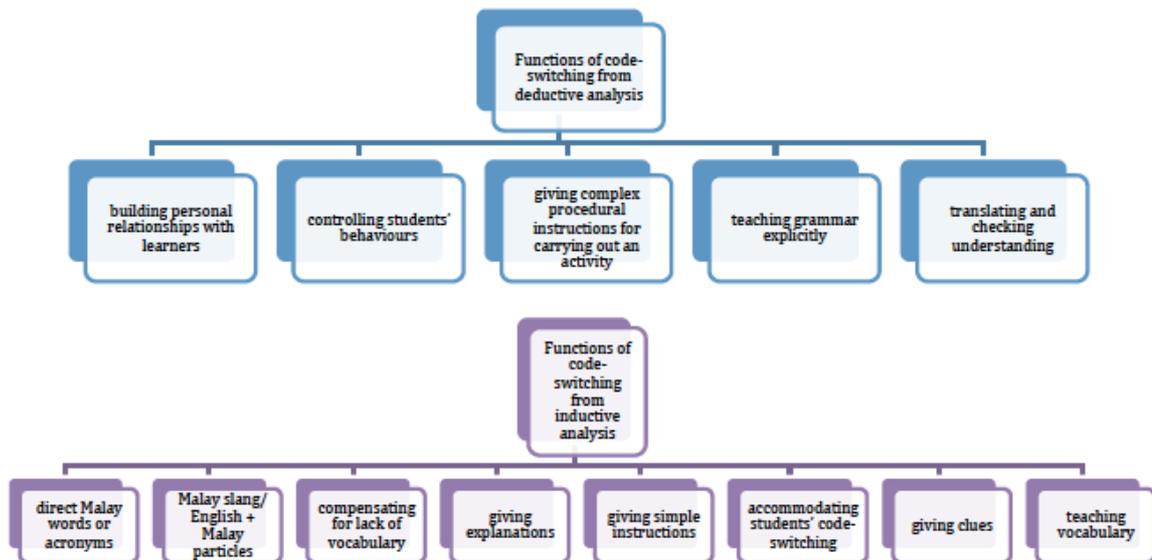
The validity of the questionnaire was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlations in the SPSS v.23. Based on the significant value obtained by the Sig. (2-tailed) of $0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that all the items were valid. Based on the count value obtained, $r_{xy} 0.305$ to $0.643 > r$ table product moment 0.149 ($N=183$), it can be concluded that the items were valid. Next is the reliability test of the questionnaire. Reliability Statistics obtained Cronbach's Alpha value of $0.692 > 0.600$, based on the basis of decision-making in the reliability test, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable, with quite a high level of reliability.

Data Analysis

In a full grounded analysis, there were several analyses involved in this research. The analysis can be within and across case analysis. Cohen et al. (2007) pointed out that there are four stages which are data preparation, developing codes, developing categories/concepts and interpreting themes. For the occurrence of code-switching in the English language classroom, a frequency analysis using a frequency table was used where the number of code-switching occurrences were recorded. The next analysis was to distinguish the different type of code-switching and its patterns, which included samples from the transcriptions during the classroom observations. Another analysis for the reasons and justifications of code-switching were gathered from the interview sessions. Questionnaires were also analysed to add more information about both lecturers' and students' beliefs of code-switching.

Data from the observations and interviews were coded using the Nvivo11. Once the transcriptions were ready, two coders would subsequently coded the transcripts together, and later coded separately. The inter-rater reliability of the Kappa coefficient was 0.74 , which was in the good agreement category. It was calculated basically as follows: the probability of two coders agreeing on the coding minus the probability of randomly agreeing on the coding divided by one minus the probability of random agreement (Robinson & Lai, 2006; Run a Coding Comparison Enquiry, 2015). Later on, only one coder carried on with the coding of other transcripts.

The coding was a mixture of deductive (derived from an existing theory) and inductive (derived from the data) analysis. The coding was first done based on the deductive analysis first and later using the inductive analysis when there were other functions of code-switching that emerged from the data collected. The functions can be seen in the diagram below:



Overview of code-switching functions identified

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency of Code-switching and Most Used Functions

The results were taken from the classroom observations analysis using the Nvivo11 software. The unit of analysis for counting the number of code-switching is every change in topic by the lecturers or students within an hour of the English language lesson. One of the examples is shown below:

**Note: Malay word/s, (translated into English word/s), [Function of code-switching]*

T: Yes, you are in the formal condition, ok? Sometimes your: shoes come with variety colours of erm:

Ss: *Tali (rope)*

T: What is it called?

Ss: *Macam: (like) rope--rope*

T: *Rope? Tali kasut tu? (that shoes lace)* [Translating]

Ss: *Shoes--shoes lace*

T: Ah: *Shoes lace. Perhaps it comes: with lots of colours, right?*

Ss: *Shoes lace tali kasut (shoes lace)*

The example above is considered as one example of code-switching occurrence in the classroom. Although some of the Malay words were being repeated, to count each Malay word/phrase as one code-switching is unnecessary. It was counted as one code-switching per each change of topic, which functioned in translating and checking understanding regardless of the number of Malay words/phrases in the dialogue. There were also other sets of data with the change of topic that have more than one function of code-switching. For example:

T: Among the requirements, *di antara keperluan*, (**among the requirements**), so all the requirements.

[Translating]

Ok, we come back to--when these requirements or among the--these requirements are stated, some of these will be stated in your CV, Resume. Some of them may not (0.2) be there in the Resume. But most have *lah*.

[Malay slang]

The change of topic above will be counted as two code-switchings as there were two different functions that were identified here.

There were also other phrases that were not labelled as code-switching, for example, the phrase "*baju kurung*". It was not counted as code-switching here because there was no other English word that can replace it and to use the Malay term here was adequate and understood by the speakers.

The table below shows the frequency of code-switching that was identified from the classroom observations that were transcribed and coded using Nvivo11. Lecturers code-switched more than students as the lecturers talked more than the students in the classrooms. The lecturers code-switched 101 times and the students code-switched only 30 times during the nine classroom observations. Looking at each of the polytechnics, PIS Lecturers (n = 4) had a total of 56 code-switching utterances, followed by PSA (n = 2) of 23 times and PUO (n = 3) of 22 times. If compared to the number of lecturers that took part in this research according to their polytechnics, it would somehow affect the total number of code-switching. Therefore, by looking at the mean (M) of each polytechnic, the result would be justified. The highest mean of code-switching frequency was by the PIS Lecturers (M = 14), followed by PSA Lecturers (M = 11.5) and PUO Lecturers (M = 7.3).

Frequency of code-switching

Participants	PUO			PSA		PIS				TOTAL
	A	B	C	A	*B	A	B	*C	*D	
Lecturers	11	3	8	2	21	6	10	8	32	101
Students	2	5	4	0	1	9	5	3	1	30

Note: * = Male lecturers

With regards to the highest frequency of code-switching amongst the individual lecturers, PIS Lecturer D showed the highest frequency of code-switching in his classroom (32 times), followed by PSA Lecturer B who code-switched 21 times. The other lecturers code-switched less frequently, only about 3-11 times. Based on the highest frequency between genders, the highest number of code-switching was both male lecturers. The male lecturers code-switched more than the female lecturers, 61 code-switching out of 101, although there were only three male lecturers out of

nine total lecturers involved in this research. Sixty per cent ($n = 9$) code-switching in the English language classroom were from the male lecturers.

A t-Test was carried out to see whether there was a significant difference between the female and male lecturers' code-switching. The coefficient for lecturers' code-switching is -4.500. Hence, for every unit increase in lecturers' code-switching, we expect a -4.500 point decrease in female lecturer. This is statically significant at $t = -3.178$, $p < 0.05$.

Looking from a different point of view, it would also be interesting to look at the rate that a teacher talked in the lessons observed to see whether it actually affected the number of code-switching occurrences. PIS Lecturer D did the most lecturer talk of 95.3% in his class with the highest of code-switching occurrence too, 9.4%. It seemed like those who talked a lot in the class would be likely to code-switch more, but this was not true in this research based on the sample of the nine lecturers who taught the Communicative English 3. For an example, PSA Lecturer A had 93.2% of lecturer talk but only has 0.7% of code-switching in the classroom. Another example is PUO Lecturer B with one of the highest lecturer talk among the other lecturers but only has 0.1% of code-switching occurrence in the classroom. Therefore, it is not likely that if a lecturer who has a high frequency of lecturer talk would also has a high frequency of code-switching in the classroom when teaching the English Language subject in the Malaysian Premier Polytechnics.

A similar finding can also be seen from Tayjasant's (2014) research in Thailand where although there was 74.4% of lecturer talk, the teacher only had 32.6% of code-switching. However, in comparing to another teacher who had quite a similar frequency of lecturer talk of 74.6%, but she had a higher percentage of code-switching, 80.3%. Thus, in this study too, since both lecturers reveal a different result, there is no relation between higher lecturer talk and higher frequency of code-switching in the classroom.

A Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient between the total of code-switching and lecturer talk was then carried out to see whether more lecturer talk meant a higher frequency of code-switching occurrence in the lessons. However, the test produced insignificant results as there was a negative relationship between the code-switching and lecturer talk ($r = .098$, $p = .801$). Code-switching was only 0.96% of its variability with lecturer talk. It can be seen clearly with PUO Lecturer B and PSA Lecturer A where both of them had the highest total number of lecturer talk, but among the lowest in code-switching. It could be that these lecturers used a lot of explanation in English to ensure that students understood without having to use the Malay language during the explanation. As mentioned by PSA Lecturer B, he usually code-switched because whenever he noticed his students' faces looking puzzled, he would use the code-switching strategy to ensure that the students would understand his lesson.

Functions of Code-switching Analysis

A total of 158 functions the highest frequency of code-switching functions were *accommodating students' code-switching* (26 times), *Malay slang/English + Malay*

particles (24 times), followed by *building personal relationship with the learners* (22 times) and *translating and checking understanding* (21 times). The least functions were the *compensating for lack of vocabulary* (1 time), *giving clues* and *controlling pupils' behaviour* (6 times). An example for the most code-switching function is:

**Note: Malay word/s, (translated into English word/s), [Function of code-switching]*

Example 1 (PIS Lecturer C):

T: So, first we answer the questions post by the interviewer, so we need to answer the questions by the interviewer in order to impress the interviewer.

Impress means?

Ss: *Menarik*--wow, impress (*impress*)

T: Yeah impress **[Accommodating students' code-switching]**

Ss: To make it wow

From this example the lecturer understood when the students said "*menarik*" to answer what was the meaning of the word *impress*. The lecturer accepted the answer although it was stated in the Malay language and not explained in the English language. He did not correct the students to use only English when giving the definition since it was an English language lesson, but he accommodated the students' code-switching to L2 when giving the meaning.

In *building personal relationships with the learners*, one of the ways that the lecturers achieved this was through telling jokes in the classroom. These are some examples of code-switching that occurred during the classroom observations when the lecturers made jokes:

Example 2 (PIS Lecturer D):

T: Height and weight? *Ada? (Any?)* Oh, because yours is the Flight Steward *ye. (yes)* Alright. ((T wrote on the board)) Height: weight. *Dia nak yang berat-berat ke? Itulah kapal terbang banyak jatuh ye. (They need heavy ones? That's why many planes crashed, yeah)*

((Laughing)). **[Building personal relationship with the learners]**

Berat-berat dia pilih. (They chose the heavy ones) Yeah, you see *ah* certain cases *ah*, because we're talking about flight attendant. (*yeah*)

For Example 2 above, in 2014, there were a few cases of Malaysia aeroplanes crashing that made the headlines all over the world. As the cases were quite recent, the lecturer was linking the advertisement on flight attendants with the plane crashes, saying that they could be caused by heavy weight, which the students understood as only a joke since they are restrictions on height and weight to become a flight attendant.

From the total of 158 functions found in the code-switching occurrence of this research, two of the highest frequency functions found were not listed in the Macaro's

2005 areas of code-switching. It may be because this research had a different setting where the English was the L2 and most of the participants had a common L1, which was the Malay language, although they came from different races and background. The students were found to be using quite a high number of code-switching in the classroom, in terms of *accommodating students' code-switching* whenever the lecturers asked them to explain the meaning of certain words.

Code-switching in this study was also found to be used for communicative purposes (Gysels, 1992; Jenkins, 2010; Stroupe, 2014; Tien, 2014), for example, when the lecturers were making jokes, which is to build personal relationship with the students. On the other hand, there were also reasons when only either English or Malay language was used to tell the jokes. One of the lecturers stated in the questionnaire that “it depends on the person I am with. I only use Malay if the joke sounds better if it is told in Malay and I can't translate it into English.” This was agreeable by another lecturer that “certain jokes are hard to tell in either language so it depends on the jokes itself.” PIS Lecturer A specifically said that, “before class start, I use Malay to have small chat with the students. Just to create the mood.” There are also lecturers who prefer to tell jokes in English and the reason is “I try to get the students to understand the joke in English.”

From the motivation point of view, L2 learning experience concerns “situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei, 2009: 29). When the students are enjoying the lesson and have positive relationship with the lecturers, it will influence the motivation to learn. The pleasure of learning the L2 makes the students want to improve on their studies.

In a similar finding that was identified in Indonesia during English lessons, Mujiono et al., (2013) found that code-switching was apparent in some of the English lessons to “create humorous situations in order to reduce students' tension” (p. 58). In a study on code-switching carried out in Japan, Stroupe (2014) had also identified that there were a number of jokes that were told in L1 by many of the instructors. He added that it was “to lighten the atmosphere level of students through joking or other methods in order to build rapport” (p. 82). Tayjasant (2014) did find a similar result in Thailand, Thai in ESP classrooms was used to change the atmosphere in the classrooms because it was noted that the students would not laugh if the jokes were told in English. English was taken seriously as the language to impart knowledge and only when the lecturers talked in Thai, the students would understand that the lecturers were making jokes, as mentioned “Thai is good for joking” (p. 102).

In reference to the status of English in Malaysia, ELT is taken seriously by the government and its policy is to provide high quality teaching of English in the “English Only classrooms” (Badrul Hisham & Kamaruzaman, 2009). It is believed that in ESL classrooms, only high quality variety should be used to ensure a better language acquisition. However, this has neglected some of the advantages that Badrul Hisham and Kamaruzaman (2009) have identified is by code-switching, the flow of the classroom instructions is smoother where lecturers spend less time explaining to students when they can just do it by using the simplest words in L1 to clarify any doubt. Other than that, they also found that it benefited the low proficiency students

who found that code-switching gave a better understanding especially when it comes to giving instructions and explaining procedures (Tien & Liu, 2006 cited in Badrul Hisham & Kamaruzaman, 2009).

Thus, code-switching should be considered as one of the classroom strategies that can be used as fulfilling the communicative aspects of the learning aim as “way of achieving the transfer of meaning as desired by the teaching” (Cook, 2001; Sert, 2005; Skiba, 1997 as cited in Badrul Hisham & Kamaruzaman, 2009, p. 52). It is also agreeable in this research with the other research like Younas et al. (2014), that code-switching would benefit students with low proficiency in the English language as the results show that the students from these groups found that code-switching helped them in their learning.

Lecturers’ Beliefs about Code-switching

In the lecturers’ questionnaire, they were asked about their preferences to teach English subject either by using only English or using both languages. A total of 44.4% (n=9) agreed to use only English and 55.6% (n = 9) of the lecturers preferred using both languages instead when teaching the English language. The percentages indicated that lecturers have conflicting opinions about the use of L1 and L2 in the ESL classroom.

While lecturers generally had positive views about code-switching and its significance in the teaching and learning process as discussed in the earlier section, their responses seemed to indicate that they may have some reservations because of its negative impact on the language learning process. Only lecturers from PSA and PIS stated that they use both languages when teaching. The reasons for their choices of using both English and Malay languages were that PSA Lecturer A and PIS Lecturer D were “comfortable and have no problem using both languages...fluent in both.” They would not feel awkward when using both languages, as PIS Lecturer C stated, “teaching English in both languages can help my students to learn because they have different proficiency in English.” PSA Lecturer B mentioned that “sometimes students’ level of English language competency is below par, so I need to explain in the native language so that they understand better.” The same reason had also been mentioned during the interview sessions, that code-switching happened in order to ensure that the students would understand the lesson being taught. One way of doing it was mentioned by PIS Lecturer B, she would “try to speak only in English, repeat words in Malay after it is mentioned by the students.”

The intention of code-switching is to explain the words that the students might not understand and making sure that the students have understood the meaning of the word through explanation and translation. This strategy was supported by some lecturers based on the interview sessions where most of them gave similar reasons for the code-switching used in their lessons and one of them was that code-switching was used as a strategy in the lessons to ensure understanding of the lessons taught. PIS Lecturer C believed that it would “help students to understand certain terms or instructions” because at times PSA Lecturer B and PIS Lecturer D did realise that their students “were a bit blur” and it could be seen from the “students face--the look

that that they don't understand." PUO Lecturer A used code-switching in her lesson since "mostly the classroom comprises of Chinese, Malay and Indian, and they'll be able to understand example in *Bahasa Malaysia--Bahasa Melayu*." This was also agreeable by PUO Lecturer B because she code-switched since the students "didn't understand...they couldn't give the right meaning...best way is to tell them in Malay so that they can get it." PUO Lecturer C also thought that code-switching was used "for them to understand...in order for them to get the information."

There were quite a number of similar opinions of code-switching to be used as a teaching strategy in the classrooms. Most of them do believe that code-switching helped to make students understand the lesson better; it was not because of being lazy or the lecturers were incompetent with the TL, but because the lecturers did it believing that the students will learn better. Such findings corroborate with what was reported in Ong and Zhang (2014).

In reference to the motivation self system, the ought-to L2 self on these lecturers was related to the reasons for feeling guilty when the L1 was used in L2 classrooms. It was related to "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2009: 29). There is the need of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as lecturers and to follow the institutions' expectations of using English only.

A response made by PUO Lecturer A also highlighted the reason for code-switching and not feeling guilty about it. She said, "... when we become a teacher, our focus our aim is to let the students learn. So if we fail to make them learn, I think I will feel much guilty on that." She also added, "... I'm using the code-switch approach, don't say that I'll feel totally guilty of what I have done, because I wanted them especially those we called as a weak students, we also need to tackle this--this level students, so therefore I don't feel 100% guilty but nevertheless, I will try to make sure that my--you know it doesn't happen most of the time."

Most of the lecturers who would not mind using both English and Malay languages have a common opinion that it was acceptable to code-switch but not over-do it. Selamat (2014) also highlighted that the overusing of code-switching "may lead to over-reliance on the L1 which is believed to hinder the acquisition of target language forms" (p. 9).

Students' Beliefs on Code-switching

Majority of the students, which was 89.6% (n = 183) of the total, had positive opinions about the teacher using both languages in the classroom. There were only 8.2% (n = 183) students who expressed preferences for minimal use of other languages but more of the English language during the lessons. Some of the common reasons that were expressed by the students for indicating their preferences of having both English and Malay languages were related to understanding of the lessons, especially so "weak students could follow easily or understand better." They also mentioned that by using both languages, it would "avoid misunderstanding." "Both languages will be used for communication in the future" and thus, by using both languages, students could still "improve their skills and language."

The 8.3% (n = 183) of students who preferred to be taught in English only stated that if only English was used during the lessons, it “can help to improve grammar” as well as “for examination purposes.” These students were more concerned about passing their examinations, which was the utmost important for the students at the time. This is coincided with the motivation of ought-to self where students were more concern on the expectation that they need to achieve and the reward they would get in achieving it later (Dörnyei, 2009). Since “English is an international language,” practising it in the classroom would be an advantage to them.

The students believed the importance of understanding the lessons in order for them to acquire the skills and language. It would also be important for them to improve their English language, which they hoped to achieve from the English Language lessons. And therefore, code-switching could be used as one of the teaching and learning strategies in the English Language classrooms.

It was clear that the majority of the lecturers believe that code-switching has positive impacts on the language learning process. The students also had similar beliefs with an average of 82.3% (n = 183) believing that code-switching would be beneficial when used as one of the teaching and learning strategies. Ninety four per cent (n = 183) of the students also chose that code-switching would be able to show “respects to others who are not fluent in either languages.”

Without a doubt, these students knew the importance of the English language in today’s world and they would learn best if only English was used in the lessons. The belief of learning only in English in order to be proficient in it was still prevalent with some of the students and even lecturers. By using L1 in an English language class, it would somehow compromise the standard of English to a certain extent. Relatively, code-switching, if it is used properly, would help to facilitate and support the learning process as well as promoting the educational aims in content knowledge delivery (Ain & Chan, 2014; Martin, 2014). Thus, code-switching could then be one of the strategies for the improvement of the language acquisition.

CONCLUSION

There are some who may view code-switching in English Language lessons as intruding for students’ L2 acquisition, rather than helping them to learn it. It is still a stigma to some researchers to the extent that code-switching could interfere with language acquisition, as there were claims that speakers who code-switch speak neither language well. However nowadays, code-switching is considered as an ordinary behaviour and as a communication strategy. For example, Then and Ting (2009) suggest that in circumstances where students’ proficiency in the instructional language is lacking, code-switching is a necessary tool for teachers to make their messages more comprehensible to students.

There are some useful findings in this research, for example, apart from the functions identified by Macaro's (2005), there were other functions too (*accommodating students’ code-switching* and *Malay slang/English + Malay particles*) that were identified in this research that can also be one of the useful

teaching and learning strategies. Its findings have added more insight into what can further be done to assist lecturers who are teaching the English Language subject. These functions are some of the highest frequency functions that were identified in this research, which aimed to support lecturer explanations of the subject content for the students' benefit. Students who had similar beliefs to those of lecturers' also agreed that code-switching would enhance the process of the teaching and learning in the Malaysian Premier Polytechnics English Language classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a need to establish which is the best model of code-switching to use first before carrying it out. There are many different things to be considered, as the context that was chosen has not been explored to a great extent. It is better to establish and gather more data in this context first before recommending a model or treatment that is suitable if there is a need to do experimental research in the future.

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