





ESL LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM



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ABSTRACT

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Code-switching refers to the change that takes place when a speaker switches from one language to another. Many factors contribute to the occurrence of code-switching, especially in an ESL classroom. In the context of global transitions, code-switching is becoming significant in an ESL classroom. This paper highlights the learners' perceptions of the use of code-switching and its functions in speaking skills in the English classroom. A quantitative method study using a questionnaires as instruments was conducted among 80 learners and aimed at investigating their perceptions of the use of code-switching and its functions for ESL learners in the English classroom. From the survey, it was found that 68.8% agreed that code-switching helps them to understand English better. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the learners have positive perceptions of code-switching in the English classroom. Additionally, the study presents other implications and future work in a multilingual classroom.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is expected to assist ESL teachers in the usage of code-switching in an ESL classroom. Teachers who had doubts of using code-switching in their teaching will be at ease now as 70 per cent of respondents of this study felt that it was helpful in their learning process.

1. INTRODUCTION

Code-switching refers to the change that takes place when a speaker switches from one language to another. Many factors contribute to the occurrence of code-switching, especially in an ESL classroom. In the context of global transitions, code-switching is becoming significant in an ESL classroom. Within the word code-switching, 'code' alludes to dialect. According to Wardhaugh (1986) code is "a technique used for communication between two or more persons on any occasion," as described by El-Saghir (2010). The term "code flipping" has been defined in a variety of ways over the years. Code-switching is an interchange utilize of phonetic wording such as bilinguals or more dialects, sorts of dialects, or indeed discourse fashion within the same talk. Agreeing to Myers (2008) a

phonetic term is utilized when learners of a moment dialect (L2) join bits of their mother tongue into their discourse. The various types of code-switching have also been examined, in addition to the definitions and interpretations given to the phrase. Gumperz (1982) distinguished types of code-switching: situational and conversational. 'Conversational code-switching is prompted by circumstances inside the discourse itself, whereas situational code-switching is prompted by differences in language choice,' (Gardner-Chloros, 1997) noted. According to Hoffmann (1991) as cited by Wibowo, Yuniashih, and Nelfianti (2017) there are three sorts of code-switching: inter-sentential, emblematic, and maintaining continuity with the previous speaker.

There was a substantial amount of classroom-based research on bilingual education programmes for linguistic minority pupils in the United States in the 1970s and early 1980s on the subject of second language acquisition (SLA). The growing attention on classroom discourse functions has raised awareness of how multilingual teachers and students use languages to carry out certain communicative actions, as well as the language values conveyed through communicative choices. Code-switching is usually viewed with suspicion and contempt by educators and students, which can be attributed to the widespread monolingual fallacy that combining languages is a sign of linguistic incompetence. Despite recent findings to the contrary, unfavorable attitudes regarding classroom code-switching exist, and its influence can be seen in the attitudes and teaching practices of ELT practitioners, in addition to the tight teaching restrictions enforced by language education policy.

1.1. Research Background

One's ability to communicate in multiple languages has a huge impact on one's chances of success. Concurring to Asmah (1982) English was still broadly utilized by the government and other learning institutions all through the nation, and each official report and report had to have an English form in expansion to the ace duplicate in Bahasa Malaysia. Concurring to the Sukatan Pelajaran, English is instructed in all Malaysian schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003). It is a subject that is necessary at all stages of school, from elementary to post-secondary.

Due to constrained introduction to the dialect and a need for natural support, English may be regarded as an alien language in rural locations. Moreover, numerous instructive teaching and institutions of higher learning require undergraduates to be familiar with a moment or outside dialect. In this consider the words "mother tongue" and "to begin with dialect" as it alluded to Bahasa Malaysia. Mother tongue, concurring with Nesamalar, Saratha, and Teh (1995) alludes to a child's parents' local dialect. The mother tongue isn't usually the first language. Even if a second language was not mastered initially, it may be called the first language in Malaysia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Malaysian speech styles are characterized by the use of numerous languages or dialects in rapid succession. Many linguists feel that code-switching can result in a range of issues, including negative impacts on language learning. Purists also regard code switchers as slackers, which may impede their language's progress. In a similar vein, code-switching is frequently linked to linguistic ineptness (Dewaele & Wei, 2014). It may cause confusion, fossilization, and internalization of errors in learners. There are times, however, when code-switching is seen as a better option in language learning and as 'linguistic resourcefulness.' Indeed, when profoundly talented bilinguals have idealized control over how they use the two dialects, exchanging is more cognitively burdening or expensive than remaining in one (e.g., (Fricke & Kootstra, 2016; Gollan & Ferreira, 2009; Gollan & Goldrick, 2016; Johns & Steuck, 2018)).

According to Nurul, Anuar, Khazin, and Tengku (2015) code-switching revolutionizes and fosters creativity in emotional expression. Code-switchers, according to Baker (2007) have exceptional cognitive, linguistic, and social talents. Code-switchers, he believes, may be retaining the meaning of their initial comment by overcoming the lack of an adequate phrase in the second language. Earlier research looked examined the challenges of code-switching by

instructors and the linguistic effects. Lee (2016) conducted a survey of 44 English language teachers in Malaysia's Sandakan district to learn more about code-switching and the roles it plays, and other research has looked into why students code-switch. However, few types of research on students' perceptions of code-switching and thus its value in their daily lives have been conducted. As a result, the present research attempts to overcome these issues.

1.3. Purpose and Aim

The purpose of the study is to learn how students feel about code-switching in an English classroom context. Learners consider code-switching to be one of the most practical teaching and learning approaches. Learners request that their native language be used in the classroom to explain learning, clarify difficult concepts, introduce new material, define new terminology, and clarify difficult concepts. The study also focuses on the role of code-switching for ESL students in the English classroom. Learners may code switch for a variety of reasons, including the desire to fill a gap in their speech, a shortage of related words in English, or the fact that speaking in their mother tongue is more convenient. A questionnaire based on the learner's views and the function of code-switching was devised to further the study's goal.

1.4. Research Objectives

The objectives to be achieved in the study are:

- 1) To investigate the ESL learner's point of view on code-switching in the English classroom.
- 2) To examine the functions of code-switching for ESL learners in the English classroom.

1.5. Research Questions

The study is carried out to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the ESL learners' perceptions of code-switching in the English classroom?
- 2) What are the functions of code-switching for ESL learners in the English classroom?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Bilingualism Model

Bilingualism can be thought of as either a subtractive or additive linguistic process. The process of learning words and fluency in a second language while maintaining skills in the first is known as additive bilingualism (Lambert, 1975). This study used additive bilingualism, which is thought to be a benefit for non-minority, middle-class Malay-speaking students. Students who are additive bilingual have a strong foundation in their first language, and the second language broadens their linguistic possibilities. As a result, code-switching becomes a social, cultural, and linguistic tool that allows people to combine their dual-language and dual-culture experiences into a single whole.

By examining code swapping, it may be able to discern the intricacy and sophistication of language usage—usage that might be suggestive of high-level linguistic activity. Types of code-switching and their functions, as well as their relationship to intellectual aptitude, must be examined in order to determine additive bilingualism. Additive Bilingualism fosters the development of both the L1 and L2 languages, as well as the flexibility of their users (Baker, 2006). As a result, code-switching evolves into a social, cultural, and linguistic tool that aids in the integration of dual-language and dual-culture experiences.

2.2. Code-Switching in Classroom

Code-switching appears to be a common occurrence in ESL classrooms in Malaysian education, and it appears to be used by both students and teachers. In a conventional Malaysian ESL classroom, multilingual students from various linguistic origins talk in two or more languages to convey personal experiences, overcome obstacles, and

engage in meaningful dialogues with their classmates and instructor. On the one hand, instructors tend to be successful in incorporating code-switching into their EFL curriculum for a range of language learning tasks (Bhatti, Shamsudin, & Said, 2018). To guarantee that students grasp instructions and information, code-switching might occur during the instruction and training sessions. Willis (1996) also alleges that some teachers only allow kids to talk in their native language if they are accompanied by a parent, if:

- a. They have a query for the instructor that they are unable to answer in English.
- b. The instructor invites the students to utter a word or sentence in their native tongue.
- c. The teacher must swiftly explain things.
- d. The students are analyzing target-language usage to their native tongue usage.
- e. Students are engaged in tasks that promote them to paraphrase or summarise material in a chosen language.

The findings of Shafi, Kazmi, and Asif (2020) show that the data consistently supports the teachers' positive attitudes toward code-switching. Knowing L1 makes learning L2 easier, according to the majority of teachers. Transitioning from L2 to L1 has no negative impact on pupils' L2 learning, according to the findings. Code-switching is a language technique used in language classes to help facilitate discourse and maintain communication. During their studies, students at the beginner and intermediate levels usually struggle to understand sentences and words. It's worth emphasizing that until now, the focus of code-switching research has been on the use of the linguistic shift, as effected through speaker-listener word-level manipulation (Fricke & Kootstra, 2016). Bilingual speakers' articulatory demeanors have been seen to impact word choices and change phonological characteristics (Shen, Gahl, & Johnson, 2020; Tamargo, Kroff, & Dussias, 2016).

2.3. Student Perceptions for Code-Switching

According to Nursanti (2016), Mussen (1973) defined perception as the act of obtaining reports through characteristics that have been identified (e.g., eyes, ears, nose, and skin) and converting them into a representation of what we perceive, see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. The researchers seek to assess students' perspectives about code-switching in the English classroom, as well as students' attitudes toward professors who employ code-switching in English classes, and whether or not it makes easier English, based on the events and scenarios stated above. According to Putri, different people can have varied reactions to the same stimuli (Putri, 2020). According to Putri (2020), Perceptual learning, mental frame, motives and wants, and cognitive styles are four factors that shape people's perspectives. According to Putri (2020), perception can be classified into different categories, such as the ability to sense depth. Deep spatial awareness includes the ability to identify distances in the real world and the ability to see moving highways.

2.4. The function of Code-Switching to ESL Learners

Learners utilize their L1 for a number of objectives, according to studies, including as a communication method to overcome communicative hurdles and as a mediational device to aid the language acquisition process (Ellis & Shintani, 2013). According to Lin (2013), the dramatization of a speech can be conveyed by the speakers' inventive expressions or the use of words. Engku, Mohamed, and Najwa (2013) (20definesfine code-switching as a conversational approach that bilinguals to effectively transmit social meanings impacted by social factors and morph grammatical structures in one or more languages. According to Engku, Mohamed, and Najwa (2013), the teachers had a good attitude toward code-switching and did so for pedagogical purposes while saying that they did not code-switch. Azlan and Narasuman (2013) improved the systematic and predictive reasons for code-switching in classrooms by examining how code-switching operates as a medium of communication in English as a second language teacher education in a Malaysian tertiary institution.

Code-switching is a stimulating method for students, according to Malik (2014), since it generates a "care-free classroom atmosphere" and increases understanding. He also claims that Code-switching is beneficial to pupils.

According to Bashir and Author (2015), code-switching may be used for a number of reasons, including content transfer, disciplinary control, humour, and mood alteration. Meanwhile, according to Jumal, AlSaqqaf, and Mohamed (2019), students use native lexical items due to their floor holding, in which students use L1 to fill a stopgap, reiteration, in which students repeat the L2 term into their L1 to reinforce their knowledge, and conflict control, in which students use CS to avoid any lexical item in L2 misunderstanding. Gulzar (2014) investigated the socializing effects of code-switching in classrooms with different language lessons rather than bilinguals, which differs from code-switching in regular discourse. In his investigation, he discovered instances of code-switching that were associated with linguistic insecurity.

2.5. Current Related Research

Yana and Nugraha (2019) conducted a qualitative study in Cimahi, Indonesia, on students' perceptions of the use of code-switching in English classes. Her participants perceive code-switching as a useful technique in the classroom for learning English, according to the results of the questionnaire study. Catabay (2016) and Nursanti (2016) both came up with comparable findings. According to the data, students with the highest ratings believe that using L1 assists in learning English by providing a means for them to grasp the information and the meaning of each phrase offered by the teacher. Students agreed that using L1 in the classroom makes learning new English vocabularies easier, helps students become more fluent and accurate in their English speaking and writing skills, and helps students understand things faster while also allowing the teacher to manage the amount of time spent explaining things.

Wijaya, Mety, and Bram (2020) also did a qualitative study in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to investigate some of the factors that impact master students' use of code-switching in EFL learning processes. The findings suggest two key reasons why English master students appreciate greater code-switching implementations in both formal and informal conversational contexts. First, a greater understanding of how to use informal communication to implement code-switching. It includes ensuring messaging accuracy, completing language learning tasks quickly, avoiding communication breakdowns, having a meaningful conversation, and avoiding a humiliating conversational experience. Second, code-switching should be used in a learning environment that includes active learning participation through bilingualism, balanced use of L1 and L2, equal preservation of L1 and L2, optimal use of L1, and acquisition of L2 through L1.

Alang and Idris (2018) conducted research to assess students' attitudes toward code-switching. The report indicates that code-switching is done because lecturers care about their students' efficiency rather than for personal gain, that students have positive conceptions of their lecturers' code-switching practice, that students agree with lecturers' code-switching subsequent development of their insight of the lessons, and that teaching and learning process lecturers only code-switch for educational reasons. According to Nur and Fitriyani (2015), code-switching is one approach for making language learning simpler, thus it would be helpful for instructors to employ it as a listening and speaking exercise in the teaching-learning process for transferring content and communicating with their students. As a result, code-switching is used not just because it is necessary, but also because it helps pupils learn English (Fathimah, 2016)

3. METHODOLOGY

The data in this study comprised 80 students' questionnaires that have been administered and gathered. The deductive technique was used to examine structured data from the questionnaire. The Likert scale's coding system was employed, with numerical values provided to each code. The first component of the students' questionnaire's coding system pertains to the participants' self-reported frequency of learners' perceptions of code-switching in the ESL classroom. Section two of the student questionnaire uses the same coding method. The codes were placed in numerical order from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=occasionally, 4=frequently, and 5=always).

Manual calculations were used to examine the questions, and percentages for each code were determined and tallied. As shown in the table below, the questions for each component of the questionnaires were then divided into wider categories to find and investigate pertinent connections and contradictions in the data. In order to offer a general overview of the data, a summary of the findings for each portion of the questionnaires was tabulated.

Table 1, presents the learner's perceptions of code-switching toward English classrooms.

Table 1. The learner's perceptions of code-switching toward English classrooms.

Code	Item	Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always	O+A
1a	Code-switching should be used in the classroom. F %	0 0	8 10.0	38 47.5	26 32.5	8 10.0	34 42.5
1b	The use of code-switching in the classroom helps me understand English lessons better. F %	1 1.3	5 6.3	19 23.8	31 38.8	24 30.0	55 68.8
1c	The use of code-switching helps me enjoy my lesson. F %	0	8 10.0	20 25.0	27 33.8	25 31.3	52 65.1
1d	The use of code-switching makes me feel more confident and motivated in learning English. F %	0	5 6.3	21 26.3	26 32.5	28 35.0	54 67.5
1e	The use of code-switching enables me to focus on the lesson without worrying about unfamiliar words and sentences. F %	2 2.5	3 3.8	33 41.3	15 18.8	27 33.8	42 52.6
1f	The use of code-switching encourages me to actively participate in classroom activities F %	2 2.5	5 6.3	26 32.5	28 35.0	19 23.8	47 58.8
1g	I would prefer the learning to be in English only without code-switching. F %	11 13.8	25 31.3	29 36.3	12 15.0	3 3.8	15 18.8
1h	I would prefer minimizing the use of code-switching in learning. F %	6 7.5	21 26.3	29 36.3	17 21.3	7 8.8	24 30.1
1i	I would prefer the teacher to use both English and my first language in classroom learning. F %	1 1.3	10 12.5	21 26.3	26 32.5	22 27.5	48 60.0
1j	I don't like it when the teacher code-switching during English lessons. F %	28 35.0	26 32.5	16 20.0	8 10.0	2 2.5	10 12.5
1k	I find it difficult to learn when the teacher does not code-switching to explain new words/topics/concepts. F %	4 5.0	23 28.7	28 35.0	14 17.5	11 13.8	26 31.3
Average of O+A					508.0		

3.1. Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the learner's perceptions of code-switching in the English classroom?

The first research question concerns the learner's perceptions of code-switching in a lesson. The data were obtained through a questionnaire in the google form and presented in the table.

Table 2. The functions of code-switching among ESL learners in the English language classroom.

Code	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	O+A
2a	I use code-switching when I was unable to express myself in English. F %	0 0	6 7.5	36 45.0	25 31.3	13 16.3	38 47.6
2b	I use code-switching to help me maintain the flow of the conversation. F %	0 0	12 15.0	31 38.8	23 28.7	14 17.5	37 46.2
2c	I use code-switching with my teacher to ask for clarification in the classroom. F %	2 2.5	10 12.5	36 45.0	17 21.3	15 18.8	32 40.1
2d	I use code-switching with my teacher to ask a question in the classroom. F %	1 1.3	17 21.3	35 43.8	14 17.5	13 16.3	27 33.8
2e	I use code-switching with my teacher to give me feedback in the classroom. F %	2 2.5	17 21.3	35 43.8	14 17.5	12 15.0	26 32.5
2f	I use code-switching when I communicate with my peers who share the same language. F %	0 0	7 8.8	38 47.5	22 27.5	13 16.3	35 43.8
2g	I use code-switching with my classmate to discuss the instructions. F %	1 1.3	8 10.0	35 43.8	23 28.7	13 16.3	36 45.0
2h	I use code-switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers. F %	0 0	5 6.3	31 38.8	25 31.3	19 23.8	44 55.1
2i	I use code-switching with my classmates within the classroom activities. F %	0 0	6 7.5	40 50.0	20 25.0	14 17.5	34 42.5
2j	I use code-switching with my partner or groups after we have finished a classroom activity. F %	1 1.3	11 13.8	31 38.8	21 26.3	16 20.0	37 46.3
Average of O+A					432.9		

Based on the Table 1, it can be deduced that all respondents have relatively almost similar opinions and perceptions about code-switching in English classrooms. The students agreed that code-switching should be used in English classrooms. They believe that there are many advantages to using code-switching during English classes. For example, item 1b in the table stated that “the use of code-switching in the classroom helps me understand English lessons better” has recorded that 68.8% of the respondents agreed with the statements. From the data, students would prefer code-switching in English classrooms because they need a better understanding of certain words or sentences. This happened because English is not their native language, especially for the students in rural area. The problem with students’ lack of English language proficiency is most prominent among rural students in Malaysia (Farah & Abu Bakar, 2019).

The lowest percentage for RQ1 is item 1j where the statement is “I don’t like it when the teacher code-switches during English lessons”. Only 12.5% out of 80 students agree with this statement. This statement stated that students do not prefer the teacher to use code-switching during learning sessions. From the data recorded, only a few students agreed with this statement because students would prefer code-switching in their native language for the lesson because they want to get a better understanding of the topic that teachers teach.

Research Question 2: What are the functions of code-switching for ESL learners in the English classroom?

The second research question in this study presents the function of code-switching for ESL learners. The data were obtained through a questionnaire in the google form and the data are presented in the Table 2.

The Table 2 shows the data recorded about the functions of code-switching for ESL learners in the English classroom. Based on the table above, the respondents rate the functions of the code-switching listed from “Never” to “always”. From the data recorded, we can see that item 2h stated “I use code-switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers” which has been strongly agreed. There are 55.1% agreed with this statement. Students tend to use code-switching when explaining complex words or sentences because the students lack proficiency in the English language. The students will use their native language, which is the Bahasa Malayu when they need to explain words or sentences that they do not know the meaning of in English.

The lowest percentage for RQ2 is item 2e where the statement is “I use code-switching with my teacher to give me feedback in the classroom”. Only 32.5% out of 80 students agree with the statement. The students would prefer not to use code-switching often because most of them prefer to use code-switching with the teacher when giving feedback rarely. The data stated that 43.8% of students rated for sometimes and 21.3% of students rated for rarely.

This chapter has elaborated the findings of the first research question 1 (The learner’s perception of code-switching in the English classroom) and research question 2 (The function of code-switching to ESL learners in the English classroom). The data from the questionnaire were analysed and tabulated in this section. For the RQ1, the findings of the questionnaire stated that learners have a better perception of the use of code-switching in the classroom. The higher-rated item is “the use of code-switching in the classroom helps me understand English lessons better” where 68.8% of students agree with the statement. It shows that the learner would prefer code-switching when learning English. For RQ2, the findings of the questionnaire for the functions of code-switching show that most of the learners agree with the item listed. The higher item voted for RQ2 is “I use code-switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers”. It shows that students tend to use code-switching when communicating or discussing with their friends in the English language. Overall, the students would prefer code-switching to get a better understanding in the English language.

4. CONCLUSION

The current study focuses on students' attitudes regarding code-switching in the English classroom at the secondary level. Because it has been noted in the writings that code-switching based on learners' perceptions has not been extensively studied among high school students, we would like to draw attention to our study of a few

selected high schools in Kelantan, which addresses some of the gaps that have yet to be addressed in the existing literature.

According to the findings of this study, 68.8% of participants felt that code-switching improves their understanding of English and that learners had good attitudes about code-switching in the English classroom. The results of this study are quite similar to Yana and Nugraha (2019). According to the findings, students showed a good attitude toward code-switching in the English classroom. They felt that code-switching allows students better grasp the topics, uncover new knowledge, and enhance their vocabularies by allowing them to understand the professors effectively and avoiding misunderstanding, allowing them to feel more at ease and confident when learning English.

To conclude, according to the overall perceptions of learners, we can sum up that code-switching is highly preferred by the learners and can be helpful in making teaching and learning successful and quality-based. It is hoped that future research perhaps includes qualitative views from both teachers and learners to truly grasp the understanding and perhaps possible issues of using code-switching in the ESL classroom.

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