Code-switching in Malaysian Classroom as the Microcosm of Society in Socio-cultural Context

Caesar DeAlwis
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia, Kampus Samarahan

cjerdealwis@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a second language is distinctive because of its specific needs. Facing a competitive market, students from young need to acquire communicative skills in English for future studies and employment. However, outside the classroom, it is no longer just a norm for multilingual societies to code- switch but rather code–switching has become a part of their unique speech style. As such in the teaching service, ESL teachers may not be able to isolate themselves from such a social norm. The question of whether English language teachers should code-switch in the classrooms has been much debated with most researchers maintained that teachers who code-switch, may end up invalidating the second language of students. Cases of students having low level of English proficiency to understand a teacher's input or students too reluctant to participate in learning because they feel incompetent in the English language classrooms are common concerns to all ESL teachers. Therefore, should the ESL teachers code-switch to make them understood? Or should the English only policy be used and different from the wider multi-cultural linguistic environment? The data collection technique used in this study was audio recording and unstructured interview with 10 TESL teachers, teaching in Sarawak, Malaysia. The perceptions of ESL teachers who generally suggest that code-switching is a common phenomenon and not interference in ELT are pertinent issues to be discussed.

Keywords: *Code-switching; ESL classroom; multilingualism*

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia and many other parts of the world, bilingualism and code-switching appears to be a norm since most people speak two or more languages at home. A bilingual is a person who is capable of at least communicating in both the first language and a second language to a certain extent (Davies, 2014). This includes people who are able to use a second language but have not done so for quite some time creating what is called a dormant language phenomenon who makes irregular use of the second language, and those who have considerable skills and proficiency in the second language (Crystal, 1987). Code-switching is thus long dominant in both formal and informal settings by professionals, young adults and even children at the very young age. It is no longer just a norm for most Asians who have been colonised to code-switch but rather code-switching itself has become a part of the Asian unique speech style. In these countries in Asia where English is taught as a second language, code- switching is a common social phenomenon among students (Jerome, 2006) and such Asian classrooms as the microcosm of the society, are no exception. As such, teaching and learning English in this context, English language teachers or TESL teachers and pupils may encounter experiences of code switching. Cases of students having low level of English proficiency to comprehend a teacher's input or students being too reluctant to participate in learning because they feel incompetent in the English language learning environment are common to almost all English language teachers. Should the teachers code-switch to make themselves understood? Or should the language classroom be an English-only environment and different from the wider socio-cultural context? After all the teachers are doing a service to the students, too.

Objectives of The Study

This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of code-switching in English language lessons taught by trained and experienced TESL teachers in 10 rural primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia. The specific research questions for this study are:
1. What is the extent of code-switching in English language lessons in terms of ratio of code-switched words to English words?
2. What are the teachers' perception towards the permissibility for English language teachers to code-switch and how their perceptions

match the extent of their use of code-switching while teaching?
3.   What are the functions of teachers' code switching within the class?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Myers-Scotton ((1998), a definition for code-switching for socio cultural linguistics analysis should recognise it as an alternation in the form of communication that signals a context in which the linguistic contribution can be understood. The 'context' so signalled may be very local (such as the end of a turn at talk), very general (such as positioning vis-a-vis some macro sociological category), or anywhere in between. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that this signalling is accomplished by the action of participants in a particular interaction. That is to say, it is not necessary or desirable to spell out the meaning of particular a code-switching behaviour when it becomes a *priori*. Rather, code switching is accomplished by parties in interaction, and the meaning of their behaviour emerges from the interaction. This is not to say that the use of particular linguistic forms has no meaning, and that speakers "make it up as they go." Code- switch in this context is a practice of parties in discourse to signal changes in context by using alternate grammatical systems or subsystems, or codes. The mental representation of these codes cannot be directly observed, either by analysts or by parties in interaction. Rather, the analyst must observe discourse itself, and recover the salience of a linguistic form as code form its effect on discourse interaction. The approach described here understands code-switching as the practice of individuals in particular discourse settings. Therefore, it cannot specify broad functions of language alternation, nor define the exact nature of any code prior to interaction. Codes emerge from interaction and become relevant when parties to discourse treat them as such.

Code-switching within socio-cultural context is also referred to code choice which is based on conversation analysis in the classroom. In socio- cultural context code choice tends to be viewed as a code- switching behaviour both as a method of organising conversational exchange and as a way to make knowledge of the wider context in which conversation takes place relevant to an ongoing interaction in the classroom (Li Wei, 2005).

Code-switching in classrooms serves basic functions which are useful for language learning. Studies have shown various functions of code- switching (Merritt et al., 2002; Canagarajah, 2005; Martin-Jones, 2014; Macaro, 2001; Soderberg Arnfast & Jorgenson, 2003). Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (2000) and Eldidge (2006) suggest several functions of code- switching in the classroom. They claim that teacher's code switching involves topic switch, affective functions, repetitive functions and students' conflict control. Merrit (2012) study on the use of English, Swahili and the mother tongue in three Kenyan primary schools found that code-switching occurs for a number of reasons. It is used to reformulate information across codes, bring new content information, translate or substitute words, and as attention focussing device. Canagarajah (2005) suggests that the functions can be categorised into micro and macro functions. The micro-functions deal with issues in the classroom. These include classroom management and content transmission. Under classroom management, code-switching facilitates the teacher and students to regulate classroom interactions systemically and efficiently. These include opening the class, negotiating directions, requesting help, managing discipline, teacher encouragement, compliments commands admonitions and mitigations. As for the content transmission, code-switching helps in the effective communication of the lesson content and language skills which have been specified in the curriculum. These include reviewing, giving definition and explanation, negotiating cultural relevance, parallel translation and unofficial student collaboration. The macro-function, on the other hand, is connected to socio-educational implications, i.e. issues outside the classroom such as bilingualism and language attitudes (Canagarajah, 2005).

In the case study of Brunei (Clemencia, 2006), code-switching in the classroom is a strategy to "alleviate the pressure of linguistic environment in the country". The study reported that a shift from mother tongue to the second language instruction can be "psychologically stressful"(p.146). Thus, Brunei teachers tend to "cushion" this by code-switching between Brunei Malay, Bahasa Melayu and English. It lowers the psychological load of both the teachers and the students by exploring all the linguistic resources available for both the teachers and the students.

Choi and Kuipers (2003) suggested that code switching is beneficial as it serves as a tool to fulfill discursive functions such as calling attention, revoicing, clarification, objectivization and personalization. Calling attention happens when the teacher code switches to gain the attention of students. Revoicing happens when the teacher repeats the information for more than one time but in different language. Clarification refers to code-switching to another language to ensure the comprehension of the listeners. Choi and Kuipers (2003) further explain that 'objectivization' refers to code-switching to make a piece of information more objective or less personalized. Personalization, on the other hand, refers to the use of code switching to personalize a piece of information.

Innovative teaching service for learners aims at improving students' engagement in the classroom. In education student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education (edglossary.org). Code-switching is an innovative teaching strategy used by the teacher which can take students to a higher level of learning. Therefore, there must a delicate ration of code-switched words when the teacher uses code-switching in the classroom especially more so when the teacher tries to teach a specific language.

Qian, Tian and Wang (2009) presents the results of a small scale study of code-switching between Chinese and English as an innovative teaching and learning service, which adopts a holistic approach to innovation and implementation of curriculum. The conclusions are: 1) code switching is a discourse strategy that teachers use for promoting classroom interaction and ensuring efficient classroom management. (2) A suitable quantity of code switching use helps cultivate and reinforce good habits of learning and foster a close student teacher relationship, (3) Teachers have the ability to instruct in the target language; only when occasions call for efficient instructions do they turn to Language 1 (4) The decrease of code switching over the years proves the efficiency of a holistic approach to curriculum innovations in the fulfilment of education objectives at the time of curriculum change. Thus, code switching is regarded as an innovative skill used by teachers to maximise instruction and students' learning. It can be a powerful teaching strategy in the

classroom where students have limited vocabulary in English.

In arguing that code-switching does lead to innovative teaching and learning service for learners, Yamat et al. (2011) states that the socio-cultural theory propagates that teacher's innovation and scaffolding comes in various forms and at various points of learning. The study presents findings on the teaching and learning of content area subjects –science and mathematics in English that illuminated the role of code-switching as a form of teacher's scaffolding which is innovative in teaching. The study involved secondary school children and teachers in eight schools from four zones in Peninsular Malaysia. The data findings illustrate the problems students and teachers face in the teaching and learning process of these subjects; and that teachers had to code-switch as the interchange of language by teachers was necessary to scaffold students' learning of these subjects.

Mira (2017) opines that innovative teaching equates effective learning as it maximises students' engagement. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, the teacher's main task is to engage with students with a limited proficiency in the target language rather than to stress on an Only English classroom language, which could discourage learning. Therefore, code switching becomes a tool to trigger and sustain students' engagement in learning and contributes to successful innovation diffusion in English language teaching (ELT).

Past studies have revealed the effectiveness of using code-switching as an effective tool to engage and maximize students learning in the ESL and EFL classrooms. This study seeks to delve deeper to accentuate the effectiveness of such a linguistic creative and innovative skill to provide better service to the clients in the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

The respondents for this study were 10 TESL teachers, teaching in Sarawak, Malaysia. Five of them had five years and less of experience teaching English and referred to as Junior Teachers (JT) while the other five had twenty years and more of experience teaching English in their various schools and referred to as Senior Teachers (ST). The data

collection techniques used in this study was audio-recording and unstructured interview. In the first stage, audio-recording was done during the participants' teaching in their respective classrooms in order to gather the instances of code-switching while teaching in class. Then, follow-up semi structured interviews were conducted to gauge the participants' perceptions of code-switching, the code-switching functions they had in mind when they code-switched in their respective English lessons and reasons for code switching. The interviews were conducted one week after the lessons and the participants were allowed to listen to their lessons during their teaching as well as refer to the transcription of their English lessons. This enabled them to recall their experiences and situations of the particular lesson. The audio-recordings from both the participants' lessons during their teaching practice and the interview were transcribed and analysed to address the objectives of this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Code-switching in English Language Lessons in Terms of Ratio of Code-switched Words to English Words

In addressing the first objective i.e. the extent of code-switching in English language lessons in terms of ratio of code-switched words to English words, all the ten TESL teachers studied were found to have code-switched in their English lessons in Primary Six. Code-switching was a common practice among these teachers with varying extent of it used in their English lessons. Table 1 illustrates the ratio of total number of code-switched words to total number of English words used by each teacher in the lesson observed in this study. The ten TESL teachers are referred as Teacher A to J in this paper.

The TESL teachers A to J varied in their extent of code-switching. The highest incidence of code-switching was shown by Teacher F with a ratio of 1 code-switching to 32 English words in a 60 minutes lesson. Both, Teacher F and H showed high usage of code-switching in their lessons. Both of them were found to have used 52 code-switched words in a lesson using 1673 words in English and 47 code-switched words in a lesson using 1753 respectively. Such number of code-switching was high considering both teachers were engaged in a double period lesson that

lasted about 60 minutes.

Table 1: Ratio of Code-switched Words to the Number of English Words Used in Lesson

Teacher	Lesson length (min)	Total Number of Words Used in English	Total Number of Code-switched words	Ratio of code-switched words: English words
A	60	2237	4	1:559
B	60	2167	7	1:310
C	60	2007	9	1:223
D	60	2335	4	1:583
E	60	2005	7	1:286
F	60	1673	52	1:32
G	60	1965	30	1:66
H	60	1753	47	1:38
I	60	1887	40	1:47
J	60	1901	32	1:59

When asked if they code-switched in their lessons, Teacher J replied" code-switching is done in all my English classes, while Teacher F replied "code-switching is a must for me during English lessons and it is important" Both of them viewed that the important thing was for "our pupils to understand what we are trying to impart... otherwise they can't do the activities given". Therefore, both teachers regarded code-switching was their means of accomplishing understanding.

The least frequency of code-switching was shown by Teacher A who had a ratio of 1 code-switched word to 559 words English words for a 60-minute lesson. Therefore, the junior teachers showed a high incidence of code-switching when compared to the senior teachers teaching Year six pupils. Generally, all the junior teachers, the median is 1: 40 which shows a rather frequent use of code-switching in an English lesson. On the other hand, the median for the senor teachers is 1: 312.

Teacher's Perceptions towards the Permissibility of Code-Switching in English Lesson

This section addresses the second objective of the study which investigates the perceptions of the TESL teachers towards the permissibility of code-switching among the teachers in the English lesson. Information in

Table 2 illustrates the frequency of code-switching instances and followed by the teachers' perceptions of code-switching in the lessons.

It was found that Teacher F showed the highest occurrences of code- switching instances with a total of 52 instances in a double period lesson focussing on reading comprehension. Such finding was not surprising, however, because the interview revealed that Teacher F fully supported code- switching in his lesson. He admitted that "every lesson that I have I will code- switch". He believed code switching helped his students to understand better and saved time".

Similarly, Teacher H also had a positive view towards code-switching. Teacher H made a total of 47 instances of code- switching in a double period lesson focussing on corrections for the test paper. When asked as to why he had such a view, he replied "I always start with the language that they (students) are familiar with". His perception of code-switching was supported by Tyronne M. (2016) who mentioned the use of students' first language helped students in learning the target second language, which was English. The other junior teachers did not highlight that, although their students also used *Bahasa Melayu* as their first language.

A teacher who was at first reluctant to code- switch in class, later used it as a strategy to help students to overcome communication barriers. In this case, Teacher J made 32 instances of code-switching in a double period lesson focussing on short story. His explanation was that students who were allowed to code- switch in the classroom were better able to convey their knowledge of subject matter to their classmates and teachers. Previously, in his classroom when code-switching was not allowed or understood, children often stopped themselves mid-sentence or declared that they did not know the answer (when perhaps they did know the answer but lacked the vocabulary in English).

The other junior teachers also expressed positive views on code-switching and this was supported by their frequent use of it in their lessons. They maintained that code-switching should be used alongside other methods such as demonstration, pictures and examples to make slow learners understand better. Teachers F, H and I made and 52, 47 and 40 instances of code switching in their double periods respectively. They

adhered to the fact that children in multilingual classroom did not hesitate in their conversations or became blocked due to language barriers. Pupils were interested in the lesson and did not detach themselves; rather become active participants. They were also able to convey an accurate picture of the subject matter when called upon.

Table 2: Frequency of Code-switching Instances and TESL teachers' Perceptions of the Permissibility of Code-switching in an English Lesson

Teacher	Number of code	Perceptions on code-switch
A	4	Discouraged code-switching because the important thing is for students to understand in English
B	30	Approved of code-switching because aim of the lesson is for students to understand
C	7	Discouraged the use of code-switching because the more code-switching does not help students to pick up the second language. Nevertheless, code- switch only after all other methods like the use of demonstration and examples fail
D	9	Discouraged use of code-switching because it does not promote English language learning
E	52	Encouraged the use of code-switching because the exposure of students to English is limited and should be utilised by learning the language through effective strategy such as code-switching
F	47	Teacher observes how effective code switching (when students are able to communicate effectively by switching between languages) and non- effective code-switching (when students cannot communicate because code-switching is not allowed or understood) after the students' acquisition and display of subject matter knowledge.
G	4	Does not encourage the use of code-switch for from beginner learners to build up their vocabulary in English. Discouraged the use of code-switch for intermediate and advance learners because students end up with tendency to use other languages.
H	40	Teacher feels that code-switching serves to not only enhance communication in teaching/learning process but can also help to maintain and develop the languages of a bilingual.
I	32	Teachers do not view code-switching negatively; rather see it as a means to relaying information more effectively.
J	7	The bilingual proficiency of the second language within a classroom may be incomplete if code switching is allowed/permissible.

For the purpose of comparing between the senior and junior teachers, it was clearly noted that the former was less prone to code switch in class. Teacher A (4 instances of code-switching) illustrates the case of a teachers who disapproved of code-switching and yet, used it to reprimand her students for not bringing the textbook. Her code-switching in the classroom was culturally based. She believed that sometimes there were no right phrases or words in English to explain a concept, so code- switching to *Bahasa Melayu* was the only option. However, she would try not to code- switch when explaining grammatical structures. She argued that if the student wanted to learn a language, they must also understand certain technical terms of the language,

Teachers B and C both taught classes consisting of majority students with average level of English proficiency. While Teacher B made 7 instances of code-switching in her lesson, Teacher C code-switched nine instances.   While Teacher B disapproved the use of code-switching, she had to give allowance when explaining difficult vocabulary for the slower students in order to save time. Teacher C made a restriction that code-switching was used for social and cultural reasons. The teachers encouraged the use of English-only in the class. However, at times she inserted the particle *lah* in her speech. When she was asked about this, she asserted that the insertion of the particle was meant to indicate how easy for local speakers to indicate such particle to show friendliness and to show their identity as Malaysian English speakers. She claimed that by inserting the particle, she wanted to teach her students to be aware that usage of particle *lah* was not right and was substandard English. When learning English the students needed not to sound like a European or American in speaking it, but as a Malaysian acrolectal speaker of English. However, she further argued that the insertion of the particle *lah* was not good as it is not globally recognised.

Teacher E who made 7 instances of code-switching was of the opinion that the bilingual proficiency of the second language within a classroom may be incomplete if code- switching was permissible. Code-switching for her should be the last option especially in teaching English to students whose level of English proficiency still needed to be polished. She mentioned that she would normally do her best without resorting to code-switching. Even when meeting her Malay pupils after class hours, she would not encourage her pupils to code- switch as she believed that

pupils needed to be encouraged to practice their English outside the classroom environment. She would code- switch to Bahasa Melayu when they were equal comparisons to the language. If no equivalents were found, she would try to make the pupils understood using the English language.

The Functions of Teachers' Code-switching within the Class

This section addresses the third objective of the study and Table 3 illustrates the functions of teachers' code-switching within the class.

Gumperz (1982) presents six functions of conversational code-switching. Yet, the most common features of code-switching displayed by the Malaysian English speakers is the transfer of sub-conscious marker (Soon, 2002). Markers like *lah, kan* and *tu* are frequently used in the Malay syntactical pattern to emphasise, to seek confirmation and to enquire. Furthermore, Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (2005) defines the use of the marker such as *lah* as a communicative strategy of Malaysian English speakers. However, in addition to this McCarthy (2001) argues that language teachers' discourse in the classroom has its own functions.

In this study, the teachers mainly used code-switching to fulfill the function of teacher as a resource (Richard & Rodgers, 2006). All of them code-switched to fulfil this function, giving a total of 43 out of 232 instances of code-switching accumulated by the junior and senior teachers. It was observed that the senior teachers (Teacher A to E) had 1 instance of code-switching as resource function each while the majority were accumulated by the junior teachers (Teacher F to J) This was probably due to the fact that all lessons have the aim of teaching certain content knowledge to students by nature. Thus, it is not unusual for code-switching to happen to fulfil such a function. The following are some of the examples that illustrate this function:

Table 3: Functions of Teachers' Code switching

Teacher	Number of Code	Functions of code switching
A	4	Revoicing (1) Calling attention (1) Personalisation (1) Resource (1)
B	7	Revoicing (3) Calling attention (2) Personalisation (1)

		Resource (1)
C	9	Personalisation (8)
		Resource (1)
D	4	Revoicing (1))
		Calling attention (1)
		Personalisation (1)
		Resource (1)
E	7	Revoicing (2)
		Calling attention (2)
		Personalisation (2)
		Resource (1)
F	52	Revoicing (20)
		Calling attention (5)
		Personalisation (10)
		Resource (9)
		Need analyst (4)
		Communication facilitator (4)
G	30	Revoicing (8)
		Calling attention (1)
		Personalisation (3)
		Resource (8)
		Need analyst (3)
		Communication facilitator (7)
H	47	Revoicing (9)
		Calling attention (3)
		Personalisation (10)
		Resource (8)
		Need analyst (5)
		Communication facilitator (12)
I	40	Revoicing (10)
		Calling attention (7)
		Personalisation (6)
		Resource (6)
		Need analyst (4)
		Communication facilitator (7)
J	32	Revoicing (5)
		Calling attention (8)
		Personalisation (1)
		Resource (7)
		Need analyst (5)
		Communication facilitator (6)

Example 1

Teacher F: Right, let's stop here. Can anyone tell me the meaning of the word in this sentence as used in the passage ... **redundant ...**   The pupils think that copying the same sentence one thousand times is really **redundant** ... it means wasting time...**sia-sia**   ...   do you understand?

Example 2
Teacher G: noun means *kata nama*

Example 3:
Teacher J: **Recalcitran**t means stubborn, *degil*

Examples 1 to 3 show of how Teachers F, G and J taught certain content knowledge to their pupils. Example 1 suggests how Teacher F taught the meaning of the word **redundant** by code- switching to the BM word **sia-sia.** Example 2 demonstrates Teacher G's effort to teach the meaning of "noun" by code -switching to *kata nama.* In addition, example 3 shows how Teacher J taught the vocabulary "**redundant**" to students by code- switching to the BM equivalent **degil.** Whatever it involved teaching a word, meaning concept or even literary element, they were all meant to teach specific content knowledge. This suggests that teachers use code-switching mainly to act as a resource to help students understand certain words and concepts related to the lesson.

A further study of data from the interviews suggested that while the teachers shared similar perceptions towards code-switching, their reasons behind their perceptions were different. While Teacher G encouraged the use of code-switching in the English lesson because he believed that "more code-switching from English to Bahasa Melayu, vice versa, could actually helped his pupils picked up more English", Teacher B did not disagree totally:

Interview Except: In *my opinion, the teachers' use of code-switching is not always a conscious choice, and the teachers are therefore not always aware of the functions and outcome of the code switching process. When teaching grammar, teachers tend to shift from his language to the mother tongue. When the teacher shifts to the mother tongue, the pupils' attention is directed at the new knowledge that is being taught. This way the teacher builds a bridge from the known (native language) to the unknown (new language).*

Thus, Teacher B believed that English lessons although should be fully taught in English and fully utilised to expose pupils to English, in some cases it was unavoidable. He did not suggest a case of allowing pupils to pick up English anymore, but rather a case of forcefully

maximising learning to the pupils. This perception would suggest the low count of code- switching among senior teachers.

The interview with Teacher F summed up that the teachers used code- switching in order to transfer necessary knowledge to the pupils for clarity. Teacher F also pointed out, of the most important things of the instructions, given in English and Bahasa Melayu. Teacher F realised that code -switching for clarification could have negative outcomes such as undesired pupil behaviours; pupils who were sure that he followed in Bahasa Melayu would not listen to the instruction in English. Teacher F suggested that code -switching in his classroom was not always a blockage or deficiency in learning English but could be considered as a useful strategy in his classroom interaction.

Senior Teacher A pointed out that it should be kept in mind that in the long term, when the pupils experienced interaction with the native speakers of English, code-switching maybe a barrier which could prevent mutual intelligibility. Teacher J said that he was initially reluctant to use Bahasa Melayu in class during lesson but had to do so when a pupil needed more instructions and did not understand the given task. Other responses from the interviews concluded that teachers stated that their main reason for switching codes when teaching English/ was explaining English grammar rules. Although the senior teachers generally felt that code switching was unacceptable during lessons, they also admitted to its necessity in order to save time.

Scotton (1993) comments that until fairly recently, while it was known bilingual speakers make choices between different languages, they used one language on certain occasions and another language on others. Therefore, code-switching was not recognised as an object of serious study, and may even have been ignored by observers (Mesthire, Swann Deument & Leap, 2000 p.164). In 1972 John Gumperz and Jan –Peter Blom published their study regarding the use of Ranamal and Bokmal in a bilingual community in Norway. In their study, the two languages varieties in the village of Hemnesberget were used depending on the social context. The researchers came to understand that "Ranamal symbolised local cultural identity; it was associated with home, family and friends and even more generally with locally based activities and relationships. Bokmal, on the other hand, was associated with formal education and with "official

transactions, religion and the mass media" (Mesthire et al., 2000 p.165).

If we were to compare their study to the present study, it might be possible to identify this study's social setting to have been the L2 classroom and the language closest to be connected to local identity was Bahasa Melayu. In addition, the use of the English language among teachers in the classroom settings could have the same formal functions as the use of Bokmal in the village Hemnesberget. The use of code switching for a communicative purpose showed us how different factors affected our use of one different factor affected our use of one language over another. One of these factors was when code- switching when one language was used to convey emphasis on for example an argument.

This is a well- known phenomenon among bilingual speakers. Living in a multicultural society, it is not uncommon to hear emotional conversations when the participants suddenly switch from one language to another in a second's notice. This is also something we can relate to since we are both bilingual and use code-switching, consciously and unconsciously, when speaking to our family and friends. Another factor that might affect the choice of language use is if we would like to converge or diverge from the social setting that we find ourselves in. Giles (2011) is interested in how people change their way of speaking depending on to whom they are speaking, to and in which occasions the change of speech occurs. Mesthire et al referred to Giles' research in the quote below:

"Giles argued that speakers would tend to converge (adopt similar styles of speaking) when they wish to reduce the social distance between one another, and diverge (speak differently) when they wished to emphasise their distinctiveness or increase their social distance" (Mesthire et al., 2000, p.151).

This is also something that could be connected to code-switching between L1 and L2 although Giles focussed on speech accommodation while code-switching referred to the use of two different languages. The L2 which is English was used as a formal language in the classroom and the use of it in certain social interaction between teachers and pupils appeared to either increase the social distance and/ or decrease the social gap between formal and informal language. For example in Teacher J's classroom setting, the teacher switched to Bahasa Melayu during and

English lesson either intentionally or unintentionally to put emphasis in the given instructions. This was done when she detected that the instruction given in English were not received with enough emphasis as expected. Another example was when the pupils in Teacher B's class did not respond to the instruction from the teacher, in Bahasa Melayu in order to mark out that there was a social distance between the teacher' aims and the students.

Furthermore, there is also a need to bring out something what Susan Gal and other researchers, call marked and unmarked language choice (Mesthire et al, 2000, p.167). According to Gal et al, the choice between marked and unmarked speech had to do with what kind of context it was used in. Furthermore, the status of the relationship between the speakers also affected the code switching between languages.

"other code-switching researchers, including Susan Gal, have distinguished between unmarked and language choices, in which the language used in one what would be expected in that context, and marked choices , in which the languages used would not normally be expected . Marked choices may function as attempts to redefine aspects of the context, or the relationship between speakers (Mesthire et al, 2000 p.167).

An example of a marked speech could be when pupils in Teachers A, C, D and F classes responded to how instructions given in English by talking in Bahasa Melayu. In the use of unmarked speech, the focus was on the meaningfulness of what kind of message the teachers wanted to converge.

"In this case, no meaning needed to be attached to any particularly switch. It is the use of both languages that is meaningful, drawing on the associations of both language and indexing dual identities "(Mesthire et. al., 2000, p.168).

One might suggest based on the quote above that the unmarked speech in comparison to the marked speech, has a goal to convey the right message between two speakers while the latter express some kind of power struggle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Code-switching may be used as an effective L2 teaching strategy as students obtain equal amounts of input in their L1 and L2 hence, establishing equal prestige for both languages. This will, to a certain extent, assist in preventing the problem of semi-lingualism. This concurs with McLaughlin, Gesi Blanchard and Osanai (2005) who supported code-switching in classrooms and pointed out that it would be a mistake to stick to the one language rule. Educators value mixing as a sophisticated linguistic device and effective communication should be a major goal in an environment of teaching and learning. Teachers who code-switch do so because they are adjusting their speech to the level of proficiency in the L2 of their students.

At primary level, students need the security of a nurturing environment and they need their filters, as defined in McLellan (2005) affective filter hypothesis, to be down. Once they reach upper secondary level, the teacher can expect them to rely less on the code-switching strategy, as at this point, they would have a better command of their L2 and a greater store of vocabulary in their repertoire.

IMPLICATIONS

There is thus tension between classroom practice and language policy where the speaking rights of the pupils are unclear. As noted by Martin (2005), whilst code-switching is widespread, it is nevertheless "lambasted as bad practice, blamed on teachers' lack of English-language competence..." (p.88). Therefore, in Malaysia, the English Only Policy in the classroom might not be the best tool for language teaching. Instead, the use of code-switching as a teaching and learning strategy to cope with the demands of the curriculum, given the fact that code switching is widespread and cuts across various domains of the both teacher and pupil.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that the perceptions of these teachers towards code-switching in the English lesson generally influence the frequency of code switch they made in their lessons. Positive perceptions towards code switching would result in more code switching instances while negative perceptions towards code switching would result in less code switching instances in the English lesson. There were six code-switching functions in the English lesson. They include revoicing, calling intention, personalisation (Choui & Kuipers, 2003) with the teacher as resource, need analyst and communication facilitator (Richard & Rodgers, 2006). The most prominent function of code-switching in the English lesson is to act as resource where teachers teach specific knowledge within the lesson. This is found to be pertinent as the majority of the pupils in primary schools speak Bahasa Melayu as their first language. As it is the medium of instruction in primary schools, most pupils have poor English proficiency. Therefore, it may be necessary to disregard the monolingual principle of language teaching.

In light of this, the use of code-switching in the English lesson should not be viewed as interference in the English lesson. Instead, it should be viewed as an alternative approach or technique that could be used to improvise the teaching of English in certain relevant contexts. Code-switching is a widely observed phenomenon especially seen in multilingual and multicultural communities. In ELT classrooms, code-switching comes into use either in the teachers' or the students' discourse. Although it is not favoured by many educators, one should have at least an understanding of the functions of switching between the native language and the foreign language and its underlying reasons. This understanding will provide language teachers with a heightened awareness of its use in classroom discourse and will obviously lead to better of instruction by either eliminating it or dominating its use during the foreign language instruction.

REFERENCES

Canagarajah, A. S. (2005). Functions of codeswitching in ESL classrooms: Socialising bilingualism in Jaffna. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development.* Routledge, *6*(2), 131-154.

Choi, P.L. & Kuipers, P. (2003). *Code mixing as Discourse Strategies*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.

Clemencia, M. (2006). A cross-linguistic study of speech modulation spectra. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, *2*, 17-36.

Crystal, D. (1987). *English as a global language*. London: Oxford Press.

Davies, S. (2014). Language teaching across borders. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 2*(1), 147-165.

Eldidge, J. (2006). *Studies of Transfer in Second Language Acquisition.* New York Press.

Flyman-Mattson, & Burenhult (2000). *Code-switching for ESL pedagogy*. Melbourne: Language Australia.

Gumperz1, J. (1972). *Discourse strategie*s. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, J. (1982). *Language and social identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hamidah Yamat, Norareiny Maarof, TNTM Massum, Effendi Zakaria, & E. Zainuddin (2011). Teacher's code-switching as scaffolding in teaching content area subjects. *World Applied Sciences Journal, 15*(1), 37-46.

Harper, & Row (2002). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Howard Giles (2011). *Language: Contexts and consequences*. London: Oxford University Press.

Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (2005). The language teacher and exposure to

language teaching. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences,* 5, 121-137.

Jerome, P. (2006). *Discourse analysis in the ESL classroom.* Elmsford, NY: Pergamon.

Li Wei (2005). How can you tell? Toward a common sense explanation of conversational code switching. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 375-385.

Macaro, C. (2001). *Codes switching and language proficiency* (2nd ed.). Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall Europe.

Martin, J. (2005). Safe language practices in two rural schools in Malaysia. In A.M.Y. Lin & P.W. Martin (Eds.), *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy and Practice*, Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 171-201.

Martin, J. (2014). *Code-switching in Brunei*. University of Brunei Press.

McCarthy (2001). *Code switching strategies in middle and secondary schools*. Reading Mass: Addison Wesley.

McLaughlin, Gesi Blanchard, & Osanai (2005). *Assessing language development in bilingual preschool children*. NCBE program information guide series, no. 22.

McLellan, J., (2005). *Malay-English language alternation in two Brunei Darussalam online discussion forums*. (Unpublished PhD thesis), Curtin University of Technology.

Merritt, L. (2002). *Consciousness-raising about the speaking process*. New York: Longman.

Merritt, L., James, P., & Sinclair, W. (2012). Introducing Applied Linguistics. *TESOL Quarterly, 17*(4), 67-75.

Mesthire, J., & Larry (2000). *Innovations to modern day approaches to teaching and learning*. Pittsburgh University Press.

Mira, J. (2017). Diffusions of innovations in English language teaching.

Journal of Innovations in Teaching. Bracken Press, Yorkshire, pp.165-187.

Myers Scotton, C. (1993). *Code-switching as a natural phenomenon*. New York: Blackmore.

Myers Scotton, C. (1998). *Codes and consequences: Choosing linguistic varieties.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Qian, X., Tian, G., & Wang, Q. (2009). Code switching in the primary EFL classroom in China – Two case studies. *System*, 37, 719-730.

Richard, S., & Rodgers D. (2006) Effects of code-switching in teacher talk. *Journal of Education Research, 89*(2), 212-234.

Soderberg Arnfast, & Jorgenson (2003). Code-switching and language usage. *Studies in Foreign Language Education, 18*(3), 37-53.

Soon, L. W. (2002). Factors Affecting Language Proficiency in the Language Classroom. Unpublished Master Dissertation. Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

The Glossary of Education Reform (@ edglossary.org.) doi: https://twitter.com.edglossary.

Tyronne, M. (2016). *A teacher's language choice in five English language classes in UAE.* (Unpublished M. ED dissertation). Durban College, Creekstone, U.S.

Xiofang Qian, Guisen Tian, & Qiang Wang (2009) Codeswitching in the primary EFL classroom in China – Two case studies. *System, 37*(4). Retrieved from *www.sciencedirect.com* on 17.10.2019

Yamat, H., Maarof, N., Tg Mohd Maasum, T. N., Zakaria, E., & Zainuddin, E. (2011). Teacher's Code-switching as Scaffolding in Teaching Content Area Subjects. *World Applied Science,* 15 (Innovation and Pedagogy for Lifelong Learning), 18-22.