

THE COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION AND THE BENEFIT OF CODE SWITCHING WITHIN BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OR MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Though code switching research may vary from context to context and situation to situation, the common factors for code switching will be threefold. That is, code switching deals with languages in contact. In interactive social situations code switching will be the use of more than one language. For example the interaction during various social events involving interlocutors who know more than one language. Gumperz (1982) while discussing the communicative function of code switching, claims that the speaker plays upon the connection of the we-code to create conversational effect. Thus code switching is seen as fulfilling the relational and referential functions of language that amounts to effective communication and interlingua unity. As an increasing number of children enter the school, districts are faced with meeting their academic needs. These children enter into the classroom with varying language (mother tongue). Some schools have adopted bilingual education programs, teaching subject matter in Indonesian and English. Others believe in immersion, or placing the students in mainstream classrooms in which they are expected to learn the English language and subject matter taught in English simultaneously. Still other schools hover somewhere in between, striving to find the best way to reach these children/students. *What factors can affect/force students to use code switching in their discourse? What are the benefits of code switching for L2 children/student? What are the communicative functions of codes switching?* These questions are the debate of bilingual education throughout the country. In this study, explore the effects of difference types of education such as bilingual education. Specifically, this paper discuss of the role of code switching (the use of both Indonesia/Sasak and English within the same discourse) in bilingual settings.

Key words: Communicative function, Code switching, bilingual and multilingual.

INTRODUCTION

People who have learned two languages demonstrate an interesting phenomenon known as “code switching” by mixing words or phrases from the two tongues together during the course of speech or writing. A ‘code’ is defined as a language or a dialect. Code switching (CS) is an alternation of words and phrases between two languages or dialects. This usually occurs between people who share those particular languages. Code switching is determined by a number of social and linguistic factors. It is a widely used in multilingual and multicultural communities.

Code switching is an everyday reality in every place where more than one language is spoken in everyday communications. Many scholars have studied extensively about the patterns of code switching and the reasons for code switching.

As schools have been faced with teaching these growing number students, different educational programs have emerged. In this paper discuss the effective and non-effective code switching that takes place by the students in a bilingual classroom. Colin Baker writes that the intended outcomes of placing students in such a classroom "often include monolingualism in the majority language of the country (or limited bilingualism) and assimilation into the mainstream culture, values and attitudes." Students within a bilingual classroom are not only expected to learn the English language, but also to simultaneously learn subject matter in the foreign language (English).

Language behaviors are influenced by cultural aspects; thus, the function of code choices and CS varies in different cultures or language communities, and by different social situations. With linguistic globalization as a growing trend in the modern world, most of the world's speech communities are multilingual, which makes contact between languages an important force in the every day lives of most people. In a multilingual society, each language uniquely fulfills certain roles and represents distinct identities, and all of them complement one another to serve “the complex communicative demands of a pluralistic society” (Sridhar, 1996, p. 53). Moreover, in order to meet “the

complex communicative demands,” speakers who live in a community and household where two or more languages coexist frequently switch from one language to another, either between or within utterances. In his general characterization of CS, Crystal (1987) presents a number of possible reasons for switching from one language to another. One reason presented by Crystal for the switching behavior is the notion that when speakers may not be able to express themselves in one language, they switch to the other to compensate for the deficiency. Adendorff's (1966) view is contrary to the notion that CS is a compensation for a linguistic deficit in bilingual speakers; he sees CS as “functionally motivated” (p. 389) behavior. The analysis also posited that CS functions as a communicative strategy for facilitating family or class room communication by lowering language barriers as well as by consolidating cultural identity.

1. Code Switching

Code-switching is distinct from other language contact phenomena, such as borrowing, pidgins and creoles, loan translation (calques), and language transfer (language interference). Borrowing affects the lexicon, the words that make up a language, while code-switching takes place in individual utterances. Speakers form and establish a pidgin language when two or more speakers who do not speak a common language form an intermediate, third language. On the other hand, speakers practice code-switching when they are each fluent in both languages. Code mixing is a thematically related term, but the usage of the terms *code-switching* and *code-mixing* varies. Some scholars use either term to denote the same practice, while others apply *code-mixing* to denote the formal linguistic properties of said language-contact phenomena, and *code-switching* to denote the actual, spoken usages by multilingual persons. In the 1940s and 1950s, many scholars considered code-switching to be a sub-standard use of language. *Since the 1980s, however, most scholars have recognised it is a normal, natural product of bilingual and multilingual language use.*

2. The Function of Code Switching

Communicative functions and Reasons for Codeswitching / Code-switching perform several functions (Zentella, 1985).

- *First*, people may use code-switching to hide fluency or memory problems in the second language (but this accounts for about only 10 percent of code switches).
- *Second*, code-switching is used to mark switching from informal situations (using native languages) to formal situations (using second language).
- *Third*, code-switching is used to exert control, especially between parents and children.
- *Fourth*, code-switching is used to align speakers with others in specific situations (e.g., defining oneself as a member of an ethnic group). Code-switching also 'functions to announce specific identities, create certain meanings, and facilitate particular interpersonal relationships' (Johnson, 2000, p.184)." (William B. Gudykunst, *Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication*, 4th ed. Sage, 2004)

3. Factors of Code Switching among Bilingual or multilingual Students

As revealed that the primary factor of code switching is incompetence in the second language. Other noted factors were: to maintain privacy; to make it easier to speak in their own language than to speak in English; to avoid misunderstanding; being unfamiliar with similar words in English. However, code switching can be a useful strategy in classroom interaction if the aim is to make meaning clear and to transfer the knowledge to students in an efficient way.

Factors that Influence Code Switching:

- a) No similar words in English
- b) Did not know the English word
- c) To fill the gap in speaking
- d) Easier to speak in own language
- e) To avoid misunderstanding
- f) To convey intimacy
- g) So others would not understand (Privacy)

h) To add emphasis

i) Other reasons

4. Types of Switching

Scholars use different names for various types of code-switching.

- **Inter sentential switching** occurs *outside* the sentence or the clause level (i.e. at sentence or clause boundaries). It is sometimes called "extra sentential" switching.
- **Intra-sentential switching** occurs *within* a sentence or a clause.
- **Tag-switching** is the switching of either a tag phrase or a word, or both, from language-B to language-A, (common *intra-sentential switches*).
- **Intra-word switching** occurs *within* a word, itself, such as at a morpheme boundary.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method applied in this study was qualitative descriptive which aim to describing the function of code switching among students in learning English language. The main data obtained were in the form of utterances, sentences, words and phrases. The data were collected from the conversation between teacher and students in teaching and learning process.

There are three ways in collecting data:

1. Recording

The data were collected through recording to the broadcasters that program. The broadcasters' speech was recorded used an application phone recorder.

2. Note Taking

The writer tries to write some of linguistic phenomena in daily communication of the students.

3. Interview

The writer interview teacher and some of the students why they use code switching in learning English language.

DISCUSSION

Skiba (1997) suggests that code switching is used in language classrooms because of an inability of expression and it provides continuity in speech rather than interference in the flow of linguistic expression. In this respect code switching can be seen as a supporting element in

communication of information and in social interaction. Thus it enhances communication and is used as a tool for transference of meaning. Many teachers, who are in favors of the applications of communicative techniques in the language teaching environment, oppose any form of native language use during classroom instruction. Contrary to this, supporters of the use of native language in the form of code switching, suggest that it may be an effective strategy in various aspects. Following the ideas of these two parties, some weak and strong sides of the use of code switching in foreign language classroom settings will be mentioned with a critical perspective.

Cook (2002:333) handles the subject matter considering multilingual classrooms in saying that the application of code switching in classes which do not share the same native language may create problems, as some of the students (though few in number) will somehow be neglected. So, at this point it may be suggested that the students should share the same native language, if code switching will be applied in instruction. Another point to consider in this respect is that the competence of the teacher in mother tongue of students also plays a vital role, if positive contributions of code switching are expected. A further discussion is put forward by Eldridge, as he suggests "the learners have no guarantee that their audience will share knowledge of their mother tongue" (1996:309). This perspective concerns the interaction of students with native speakers of the target language, as mutual intelligibility may not be possible if the learner switches his language during communication.

In supporting the existence of code switching in language classrooms, Skiba (1997) suggests that in the circumstances where code switching is used due to an inability of expression, it serves for continuity in speech instead of presenting interference in language. In this respect, code switching stands to be a supporting element in communication of information and in social interaction; therefore serves for communicative purposes in the way that it is used as a tool for transference of meaning. Additionally, the functions of the teacher's code switching as mentioned in III stand as supportive explanations for the strong sides

of the phenomenon. All these in general lead to the idea that the use of code switching somehow builds a bridge from known to unknown and may be considered as an important element in language teaching when used efficiently.

1. Why do we Use Code-Switching?

People who bilinguals have so many linguistic resources to choose from and yet, they are ashamed when they find that they need to resort to code-switching to keep the communication process uninterrupted. They are persuaded by traditional upbringing, education, and common beliefs that code-switching is a sign of defective language skills. But trying to avoid it at any cost can create even worse perception of our abilities. Code-switching is meaningful in the same way that choice of style in a short story is meaningful, and it is quite natural in many multicultural communities, where it becomes a register in its own right, a mode of expression in many informal situations, applied to avoid defining the social situation in terms of either language and culture. Some reasons for code-switching listed by Francois Grosjean (*Life with two languages: an introduction to bilingualism*, 1982).

a. *Fill a linguistic need for lexical item, set phrase, discourse marker, or sentence filler*

Exactly the situation described above. have not mastered Italian at a level that would allow me to comfortably discuss in this language Mao's Cultural Revolution. Switching may also occur as a result of a linguistic habit - we all have our favorite fixed phrases and discourse markers, e.g. *you know, whatever, dai!* (come on!), *absolutnie!* (definitely!).

b. *Continue the last language used (triggering)*

The conversational topic and setting may increase the level of activation of particular lexical items to such an extent that they become more available in one language than in the other. I have studied linguistics in English, I have read scientific literature in English, I have written about it in English, so do

- not ask me to discuss linguistics in Polish, I would be at a loss!
- c. *Quote someone*
About translations? They are rarely faithful, so why translate if we can quote the original?
 - d. *Specify addressee*
Most useful in multilingual groups. You can regulate turn-taking and avoid the infamous question: *Are you talking to me?*
 - e. *Qualify message: amplify or emphasize ('topper' in argument)*
Have you noticed how your message gets better heard when you strengthen its effect by stating it in two languages? An angry bilingual mother may say to her crying child: *Enough already! Smettila!* You may also use switches to draw attention to a particular part of the message, to mark 'asides' from ongoing discourse, to terminate an argument.
 - f. *Specify speaker involvement (personalize message)*
Some notions may be simply better expressed in one language than another. Is it easier for you to talk about your emotions and feelings in Language A or Language B?
 - g. *Mark and emphasize group identity (solidarity)*
Most common in immigrant and ethnic minority groups.
 - h. *Convey confidentiality, anger, annoyance* Listeners interpret code-switching as indicator of the speaker's attitudes, communicative intentions, and emotions at a given moment, which is conveyed by monolinguals by way of using different levels of formality in language.
 - i. *Exclude someone from conversation*
This is what monolinguals hate and the main reason why they are so against code-switching. The scene can describing the use of accommodation and divergence strategy.
 - j. *Change role of a speaker: raise status, add authority, show expertise*

For instance, someone in his/her work he/she often talk to Italian travel arrangers who know very well that they could easily place their orders with him/her in Italian. Instead they choose to speak with he/she in English, because their job description states that they should be performing their duties in English, and their resumes assert that they are qualified to do so.

2. Analysis the Benefit of Code Switching

Code switching was a common occurrence within the bilingual classroom. Children/students often switched freely between English, Indonesian or sasak language during class and play in order to communicate with teachers, peers or family. Code switching, in the bilingual classroom, can motivate students accurately conveyed meaning and were able to be understood by the listener. Students who were able to code switch freely within the classroom were faced with fewer language barriers when discussing subject matter. Thus, they were better able to relay the information that they had learned to teachers or peers because of the language freedom code switching provides. Conversations of students who were not allowed to code switch or code switched non-effectively were often choppy and came to an end prematurely. These students were not able to accurately convey their knowledge of subject matter to teachers or peers due to Language barriers.

3. The Functions of Teachers' Code Switching

The teachers' use of code switching is not always performed consciously; which means that the teacher is not always aware of the functions and outcomes of the code switching process. Therefore, in some cases it may be regarded as an automatic and unconscious behavior. Nevertheless, either conscious or not, it necessarily serves some basic functions which may be beneficial in language learning environments. These functions are listed as topic switch, affective functions, and repetitive functions by Mattson and Burenhult (1999:61). In order to have a general idea about these, it will be

appropriate to give a brief explanation about each function. In topic switch cases, the teacher alters his/her language according to the topic that is under discussion. This is mostly observed in grammar instruction, that the teacher shifts his language to the mother tongue of his students in dealing with particular grammar points, which are taught at that moment. In these cases, the students' attention is directed to the new knowledge by making use of code switching and accordingly making use of native tongue. At this point it may be suggested that a bridge from known (native language) to unknown (new foreign language content) is constructed in order to transfer the new content and meaning is made clear in this way as it is also suggested by Cole (1998): "a teacher can exploit students' previous L1 learning experience to increase their understanding of L2".

In addition to *the function of code switching named as topic switch, the phenomenon also carries affective functions that serve for expression of emotions*. In this respect, code switching is used by the teacher in order to build solidarity and intimate relations with the students. In this sense, one may speak off the contribution of code switching for creating a supportive language environment in the classroom. As mentioned before, this is not always a conscious process on the part of the teacher. However, one may also infer the same thing for the natural occurrence of code switching as one cannot take into guarantee its conscious application if the Maori example given in section II is considered. Another explanation for the functionality of code switching in classroom settings is its repetitive function. In this case, the teacher uses code switching in order to transfer the necessary knowledge for the students for clarity. Following the instruction in target language, the teacher code switches to native language in order to clarify meaning, and in this way stresses importance on the foreign language content for efficient comprehension. However, the tendency to repeat the instruction in native language may lead to

some undesired student behaviors. A learner who is sure that the instruction in foreign language will be followed by a native language translation may lose interest in listening to the former instruction which will have negative academic consequences; as the student is exposed to foreign language discourse limitedly.

4. The Functions of Students' Code Switching

As it is the case for teachers' code switching, the students also are not always aware of the reasons for code switching as well as its functions and outcomes. Although they may unconsciously perform code switching, it clearly serves some functions either beneficial or not. Eldridge names *these functions as: equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control (1996:305-307)*. *The first function of student code switch is equivalence*. In this case, the student makes use of the native equivalent of a certain lexical item in target language and therefore code switches to his/her native tongue. This process may be correlated with the deficiency in linguistic competence of target language, which makes the student use the native lexical item when he/she has not the competence for using the target language explanation for a particular lexical item. So "equivalence" functions as a defensive mechanism for students as it gives the student the opportunity to continue communication by bridging the gaps resulting from foreign language incompetence.

The next function to be introduced is floor-holding. During a conversation in the target language, the students fill the stopgap with native language use. It may be suggested that this is a mechanism used by the students in order to avoid gaps in communication, which may result from the lack of fluency in target language. The learners performing code switching for floor holding generally have the same problem: they cannot recall the appropriate target language structure or lexicon. It may be claimed that this type of language alternation may have negative effects on learning a foreign language;

since it may result in loss of fluency in long term.

The third consideration in students' code switching **is reiteration**, which is pointed by Eldridge as: "messages are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood" (1996:306). In this case, the message in target language is repeated by the student in native tongue through which the learner tries to give the meaning by making use of a repetition technique. The reason for this specific language alternation case may be two-folds: first, he/she may not have transferred the meaning exactly in target language. Second, the student may think that it is more appropriate to code switch in order to indicate the teacher that the content is clearly understood by him/her.

The last function of students' code switching to be introduced here is conflict control. For the potentially conflictive language use of a student (meaning that the student tends to avoid a misunderstanding or tends to utter words indirectly for specific purposes), the code switching is a strategy to transfer the intended meaning. The underlying reasons for the tendency to use this type of code switching may vary according to students' needs, intentions or purposes. Additionally, the lack of some culturally equivalent lexis among the native language and target language--which may lead to violation of the transference of intended meaning--may result in code switching for conflict control; therefore possible misunderstandings are avoided.

CONCLUSSION

Students who are allowed to code switch in the classroom are better able to convey their knowledge of subject matter to their classmates and teachers. In the immersion classroom where code switching was not allowed or understood, children often stopped themselves mid-sentence or declared that they did not know the answer to a question (when perhaps they did know the answer but lacked the vocabulary in English). For these children, enrolling in English-speaking schools did not only mean that they would have to learn an entirely new

language, but that their acquisition of subject matter would also suffer because of language barriers

Code switching is a widely observed phenomenon especially seen in multilingual and multicultural communities. The primary factor of code switching is incompetence in the second language. Other noted factors were: to maintain privacy so that others would not understand; to easiness of communication; to avoid misunderstanding; to share informational; being unfamiliar with similar words in English; to put emphasis being stylist or to be thought clever.

In their teaching philosophy, language instructors should be aware that codes emerge from bilingual interaction and they are very useful for conveying the message of the lesson if correctly used in the discourse. In many circumstances, a teacher may encourage students to exchange codes seeing it as an advantage for learning the target language. Its appearance and the form depend on the demographics, the age and background of learners and psychodynamic modality of the class itself. In some cases, code exchange may bring a unharmonious relationship between speakers and language community, because in their respective cultures the words may not carry same value, status and functions.

Another implication of code switching is to serve better in English immersion setting where they provide clarification when a word or phrase is not known. The code exchange occurrences are welcomed in the class and may increase English competency if the frequency is not excessive. In addition, if the language teacher has some knowledge of students' first language, the lessons can be better dealt with. In short, code switching can be a useful strategy in classroom interaction if the aim is to make meaning clear and to transfer the knowledge to students in an efficient way.

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