

PEDAGOGIC FUNCTIONS OF TEACHERS' CODE-SWITCHING IN GARUDA BILINGUAL KINDERGARTEN

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Abstract

Even though code-switching has become a natural phenomenon and occurred in regular basis during the teaching and learning process in bilingual classroom, the pedagogic analysis of the occurring switches should be taken into account to figure out whether the switches are indeed a pedagogic tool used by bilingual teachers for the comprehension and achievement of the lesson content. Therefore, the objective of this study is to figure out the functions of teachers' code-switching during classroom teaching and learning process in Garuda Bilingual Kindergarten. This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative design. The data were collected through classroom observation and recordings. The obtained data were analyzed based on the coding categories of pedagogic function theory. The findings indicate that the functions of the occurring code-switching are: 1) instructional for content acquisition, 2) reformulation of content, 3) facilitation, and 4) habitual. The result of this study is expected to be useful especially for teachers to know the role of code-switching in supporting the emergent bilinguals during classroom teaching and learning process as well as to help teachers plan a more effective language strategy.

Keywords: Code-switching, translanguaging, bilingual education, emergent bilingual.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, bilingual education programs suggest the practice of language separation. In language separation practice, the languages are instructed in turn and strictly separated. This practice includes using one language exclusively on alternate day, one teacher-one language policy, using one language exclusively to teach one subject, and determining language based on the place (García & Kleifgen, 2018). However, recent studies argued that this separation is more like a monolingual learning strategy. Therefore, an innovative approach known as translanguaging in which the students' home or first language (L1) and second language (L2) are used concurrently inside the same lesson was

suggested. It embraces flexible and dynamic bilingual practice during the classroom learning.

In the implementation of using the students' L1 and L2 simultaneously during the teaching and learning process in bilingual classroom, the switch from one language to another cannot be avoided. Moreover, the switch occurs when teaching emergent bilingual students who are in the process of developing their new language for academic purposes (Gracia & Kleighfen, 2018). In some situations, teachers as bilingual speakers may need to switch or mix their language when communicating with their students. This practice of switching language is called code-switching. Code-switching itself is not a new phenomenon. It has been widely observed especially in bilingual communities. This term is

commonly used as an umbrella term for the practices of alternating languages. It is simply defined as the shift between two languages in context (Garcia and Sylvan, 2011). It includes inter-sentential code-switching in which the switch occurs within a sentence or a clause, and intra-sentential code-switching in which the switch occurs outside a sentence or a clause (Jones, 2017).

The practice of code-switching is often perceived negatively as a lack of linguistic competence. People who code-switch when speaking are assumed having lack of fluency in their target language. In school settings, it is even prohibited by some educational policies (Blackburn, 2018). Switching to the mother language is considered damaging the process of learning (Tariq, A., Bilal, H., Abbas, N., and Mahmood, A., 2013)

Despite the negative view, code-switching is also strategically used by teachers in the classroom. It is suggested that code-switching can be used to make the target language more accessible (Fennema, 2010). In addition, teachers may use it to facilitate content learning (Ferguson, 2009). In translanguaging approach practiced by teachers in dual language classroom, code-switching is considered as a part of the meaning making process of bilinguals (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011).

Over the years, there has been a growing number of studies examining the functions of code-switching. Guthrie (1984) classified code-switching functions into five categories: translation, inclusion, procedures and directions, clarifications, and checking for comprehension. Meanwhile, Mattson and Burrenhult (1999) categorized the functions of code-switching into topic switch, affective, and repetitive function.

Putting more concern on the pedagogical practice, Fennema (2009) adapts the category of functional level of code-switching into five types. The first function of code-switching based on Fennema is instructional for content

acquisition. The intent of switching here is to progress through content where one language mode is employed depending on the target vocabulary, use of instructional material and/or the setup of the instructional activity. This content instruction progresses across the codes without interruption or repetition. The second function is reformulation in which a content is reformulated or translated with no new information and no new instruction to make content comprehensible by asking for or offering concurrent translations of text or speech. The third is instructional for language acquisition. In this case, code-switching occurs to develop metalinguistic abilities (semantic, syntactic, phonemic and morphological) which are beyond the normal scope of the content subject. The fourth function is facilitation. Code-switching here is considered as a facilitation device. It is to facilitate the classroom management that maintains the next learning objectives such as routines, behavioral management, and expressive language that creates group solidarity, and instructions. The fifth function is called a habitual function. This function does not have direct pedagogical aims as it is considered as a habit of the teacher.

Although many studies have found the positive roles of code-switching, the fact also revealed that teachers are not always aware of the functions and outcomes of their code-switching. Consequently, code-switching remains controversial for it is sometimes performed subconsciously. This is also what makes code-switching a topic of interest for the researcher. Even though it is a natural occurrence in bilingual classroom, the pedagogic functions of the occurring switches should be analyzed. Therefore, the objective of this study is to figure out the functions of teachers' code-switching during classroom teaching and learning process in Garuda Bilingual Kindergarten. The functions of teachers' code-switching in this study were analyzed using the coding categories of pedagogic function theory by Fennema (2009).

METHOD

This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative design. The setting of this study was at a bilingual kindergarten located in Jimbaran, Bali. It is a National Plus school which employs a dual language program (Indonesian and English) in the learning process.

The subjects of this study were 21 students and 2 classroom teachers in academic year 2018/2019. The total 21 students of Kiddy 2 class were emergent bilinguals consisting of 20 students who speak Indonesian as a home language and 1 student who is an English native speaker. Meanwhile, the two classroom teachers taken as the main source of data were both native Indonesian speakers. Even though this study focused on the teachers' code-switching functions, the students were also included as dialogic participants.

In collecting the data, observations and recordings were carried out during the classroom teaching and learning process. The observation in this study had been conducted for 9 times in a span of two months. In this study, the researcher acted as a non-participant observer who did not actively participate while observing the participants. Observation sheet and digital devices such as video camera and recorder were used as the instruments by the researcher to collect the data in this study. The observation sheet was used to record the students' behavior when translanguaging occurred. In addition, observation sheet recorded other information such as the time and date of the observation, and the lesson

material given by the teacher during the observation. Video camera and recorder were used to record the classroom conversations in which translanguaging occurred.

The analysis of data was done by first reviewing the recordings of the linguistic data gained during the observation. The researcher then transcribed the selected recording data of the observation. The researcher identified and tabulated the frequency of the occurring code-switching done by the teachers.

In analyzing the functions of teachers' code-switching, coding categories of pedagogic functions proposed by Fennema (2009) was used. The five functions of teachers' code-switching are based on the conversational analysis framework.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis shows that there were four functions of teachers' code-switching identified. The types of teachers' code-switching functions could be seen in Table 1. Out of 140 code-switches observed, 19.3 % functioned as instructional for content acquisition during learning session. The intention of code-switch in this category is to scaffold content acquisition where one language mode or another is employed without any disruption or repetition of the content in the second code. The use of code-switching to scaffold the content within a lesson was found when the teacher was explaining the colors of rainbow as presented in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

S4: *Nila itu apa?*
(What is Nila?)

T1: *Nila itu warna. Warna between blue ultramarine and purple.*
(Nila is a color. The color between ultramarine blue and purple.)

S2: That's mixed color.
(That's a mixed color)

T1: *Ya.* Because we don't have this crayon.
(Yes. Because we don't have the crayon)

In excerpt 1, the teacher (T1) was not able to show which color is called *nila* or indigo as she could not find any crayon with that color. One student asked again what *nila* is. When answering this question, the teacher switched to English when saying “Warna between blue ultramarine and purple”. The teacher tried to explain that *nila* is the color between ultramarine blue and purple. This switch to English was not without a reason. As we know that colors in English seemed to be more

specific than in Indonesian. To most people, both ‘purple’ and ‘violet’ are perceived as *ungu* in Indonesian although they actually have different terms. To avoid students from misunderstanding, the teacher mentioned the colors in English. Thus, in this case, the teacher’s code-switching served as a scaffold to content acquisition. This finding justifies what is suggested by Ferguson (2009) that is teachers may use code-switching to facilitate content learning.

Table 1. Coding Categories of Pedagogic Functions

Categories	Codes	Total Switches	Percentage (%)
Instructional for Content Acquisition	ICA	27	19.3
Reformulation	R	39	27.9
Instructional for Language Acquisition	ILA	0	0
Facilitation	F	16	11.4
Habitual	H	58	41.4
Total Switches		140	

The second category of the code-switching identified in this study is reformulation. It was found that 27.9 % out of 140 switches in this study were utilized to reformulate the content. One of the motives of reformulation in this study was to restate a question in another language when the students did not give any responses to the teacher as presented in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2

T1: *Ada apa di newspaper? Can you tell me about that?*
(What’s in the newspaper? Can you tell me about that?)

S8: News.
(News)

T1: What news? News *apa? Berita apa yang ada?*
(What news? What news? What kinds of news are there?)

S21: Like somebody trouble.
(Like somebody got troubles)

T1: Yes. Somebody trouble.
(Yes. Somebody got troubles)

S5: Somebody get lost.
(Somebody got lost)

T1: Ya, get lost.
(Yes, got lost)

S21: Like somebody get bitten by big snake.
(Like somebody got bitten by a big snake)

The teacher and students in Excerpt 2 were discussing about newspaper. In the first line, the teacher asked “*Ada apa di newspaper?*” (*What’s in the newspaper?*). After a while, one student responded “news”. The teacher asked the second question “What news?” but no students answered. The teacher reformulated the question into “*News apa?*”. The question word *what* was switched to Indonesian *apa* but the word *news* remained in English. Still, there was no response from the students. At last, the teacher restated the question fully in Indonesian “*Berita apa yang ada?*” and the students began to respond one by one. In this case, the teacher needed to switch to Indonesian as she noticed that not all the students knew the meaning of the word *news*, thus they stayed quiet. The word *news* itself was a new vocabulary given earlier that day but it seemed to be unfamiliar to most students. Hence, the teacher’s code-switch here was used to sustain students’ comprehension and to motivate students’ discursive participation.

Another code-switch found in translanguaging practice in Garuda Bilingual School was a facilitation device to maintain daily routines, behavioral management, and instructions. Such function of the code-switching corroborates a study conducted by Sapitri, Batan, & Myartawan (2018). The code-switches in this category were observed when the teacher asked the students to do exercises in their activity book as presented in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3

- T1: OK. Take your crayon, please! *Cari yang green. Circle with green untuk alat komunikasi. Circle yang red untuk yang tidak alat komunikasi.*
(OK. Take your crayon, please! Find the green one. Circle the communication tools with green crayon. Circle the non-communication tools with red)
- T2: Circle green *alat komunikasi*. And then,

circle red *yang not alat komunikasi*.
(Circle the communication tools with green crayon. And then, circle the non-communication tools with red)

- Ss: Ready.
(Ready)
- T2: Take your crayon please. Circle green *alat komunikasi*. Green.
(Take your crayon please. Circle the communication tools with green crayon. Green)

If we observe, the content word ‘*alat komunikasi*’ was repeated 5 times in Indonesian. Meanwhile, the instructions given by teacher were stated in English such as ‘take your crayon’ and ‘circle with green’. Colors were also all stated in English. Code-switches in this event were used as a way of inserting more English in the instructional time. Simple instructions like ‘take’ and ‘circle’ were repetitive in students’ classroom routines. So did the use of crayon in various colors. Moreover, the use of English for simple instructions and daily routines are also encouraged by the school. It is part of language policy in this school.

The other function of code-switching found in this study was habitual. Compared to all types of the occurring code-switches, the habitual function was the highest. Code-switches in this category do not have direct pedagogic purposes as found in the other categories. It is considered as a habit of the teacher as a bilingual speaker. The example is represented by the following excerpt:

Excerpt 4

- T2: *Radio juga*. OK. And then *ada apalagi?*
(Radio too. OK. And then what else?)
- Ss: *Telepon*.
(Telephone)
- Ss: *Koran*.
(Newspaper)

- T2: *Ya ada Koran. Koran.*
(Yes, there is newspaper. Newspaper)
- Ss: Checklist.
(Tick)
- T2: *Ya. Checklist. Sudah? And then?*
(Yes. Tick. Finished? And then?)
- Ss: A bell.
(A bell)
- T2: *Ya. Bell. Centang. Checklist. Sekarang,*
next balik lagi. Sekarang kita mewarnai.
(Yes. Bell. Tick it. Next, turn the page.
Now we do coloring)

The excerpt 4 describes the event when the students were asked to identify traditional and modern communication tools in their activity book. To do this task, the students had to cross the pictures which belonged to traditional communication tools, and tick the pictures of modern communication tools. The instruction and the content words were delivered in Indonesian. In the beginning, the teacher (T2) spoke in Indonesian language but later the teacher began to code-switch such as in the utterance “*And then jaman dulu ada apa lagi?*”. During this event, the English words ‘and then’ were stated several times while the teacher was speaking in Indonesian. This code-switch could be considered as the teacher’s habit as a bilingual speaker, and it did not have a direct pedagogic function. The other instances found in this study were the word ‘OK’ and ‘next’.

The above findings showed that code-switching is not damaging the process of learning like stated by (Tariq, et.al, 2013) but it is used by teachers to facilitate the learning. Other than the habitual function, the writer can say that the identified code-switching practices done by teachers were used to give a deeper understanding on the lesson content which also included the acquisition of the targeted English vocabulary and to encourage students’ discursive participation.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that only four out of five code-switching functions were identified: instructional for content acquisition, reformulation, facilitation, and habitual. The researcher found that the majority of teachers’ code-switches were habitual with the percentage of 41.4% from the total switches. As described earlier, habitual function has no direct pedagogic aims. Therefore, the occurrence of this habitual code-switching should be minimized if the teachers expect their code-switching to facilitate better learning.

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