

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CODE SWITCHING: AN EMERGING ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the occurrence of code switching in interracial couples' communication in the home domain. The analysis further explains the findings discussed in chapter 6 that Filipino-Malaysian couples chose English with some switching in Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Filipino. The analysis is based on the data collected in interviews and actual recorded conversations of Filipino-Malaysian couples. The analysis and discussion of code switching is divided into three sections. The first section examines the occurrence of code switching as convergence, the second section examines the occurrence of code switching as divergence and the third section discusses the functions of code switching.

The functions of code switching are identified by examining the occurrence of code switching in conversation and analyzing the sequential order of code switching in conversation.

#### **8.2 Code Switching Across Ethnicity**

The occurrence of code switching is prevalent in all Filipino-Malaysian couples regardless of the spouses' ethnic affiliation. All couples; Filipino-Malay, Filipino-Chinese and Filipino- Indian switch to Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Filipino in English dominated discourse.

From the interviews conducted, it is clear that Filipino-Malaysian couples speak at least two languages. As a result, they mix two or more languages. However English remains dominant.

In the interviews and recordings conducted of home based conversations (see Appendix B), the multilingualism of Filipino-Malaysian couples helps them to code switch. The findings of the study show that code switching emerges as the new language variety used by Filipino-Malaysian couples.

**Responses from the interviews:-**

*“FCMB: at home we mix English and Bahasa Malaysia”*

*“FCMB: It’s mixed; we speak Bahasa Malaysia, English, Chinese sometimes Arabic and Filipino”*

*“FCMB: I speak Malay and English at home. If I cannot express in Malay I speak in English”*

*“FCMB: Most of the time we mix different languages like English, Bahasa Malaysia and Filipino”*

*“FCMB: We speak English and Bisaya at home”*

*FCMB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

In the case of Filipino-Malay couples, it is evident that English and Bahasa Malaysia are prevalent. In the interviews conducted, couples said *“at home we mix English and Bahasa Malaysia”* and *“Most of the time we mix different languages like English, Bahasa Malaysia and Filipino.”* It shows that code mixing has become a common feature in interracial couples’ interaction.

Although Filipino-Malay couples have developed a certain level of proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia, English remains dominant. This is because the national language policy was implemented much later in East Malaysia. (See Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2)

Besides Bahasa Malaysia and English, couples sometimes switch to Tagalog. Filipino spouses taught their Malay partners to speak Filipino because it helped them to converse with other Filipinos when they visited the Philippines or when other Filipinos visited them in Malaysia. However, in the interviews conducted, five of the ten husbands are not willing to learn the Filipino language. The other five Malay husbands do not have any resistance because for them learning the language gives them the chance and opportunity to interact with their in-laws in the Philippines and Filipino friends in Malaysia.

The occurrence of code switching is evident in the recorded conversation of Filipino-Malaysian couples. Below is an example of a conversation:-

### **Conversation 8.1**

A conversation between a Filipino wife (W), a Malay husband (H) and a member of the household (A).

- 1. W:** Say **terima kasih** (*thank you*). **Nangutana pa gyud ko terima kasih?** (*Then I asked, thank you?*)
- 2. A:** Did you experience dreaming that you're running and then you try to run fast but you cannot run fast it's like someone is running after you.
- 3. H:** Oh yeah
- 4. A:** You want to run faster but you cannot do anything.
- 5. H:** Yeah, I was sitting in a taxi, bus or LRT then one guy who looked like a thief lah looking for money or anything. I wanted to punch him you know but my hand was so slow (ahhh..) (( )) you know (cell phone ringing) very **gigil** (*giggling*) lah because you want to punch him.

- 6. W:** My experience when I was young with Aries and Archel (laugh).  
**7. A:** Sleep walk **ya** (*brother*) (.). I even tried to put my blanket inside the refrigerator  
**8. H: Gago.** (*Crazy*)  
**9. W:** He went to Aries, then mama said “Arlyn ah (.) wake up ah.” wake your brother up because he is sleeping in the living room. I woke him up, I said, Aries **balhin na daw ingon mama** (*Aries you transfer, mama said*) so he's like that (uh uh) with the blanket and the pillow because he always sleeps in the living room with the blanket and pillow. He’s still young that time.

(See Appendix B)

Conversation 8.1 shows how code switching occurs in verbal communication between Filipino and Malay spouses in the home domain. English is the dominant language but other languages like Bahasa Malaysia and Filipino function as embedded languages.

Similarly, code switching also occurs in interactions between Filipino and Malaysian Chinese couples. They also code switch from English to Chinese, Bahasa Malaysia, and Filipino. Although Malaysian Chinese speak local Chinese dialects like Hokkien, Cantonese, etc. and Filipinos speak Filipino, couples still prefer English as the medium of communication. Those Filipino spouses who can converse in Chinese become more confident and eventually also use Chinese as the medium of communication with in-laws.

In the interviews conducted some Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples said;-

*“FCCB: We speak three languages (laugh) we normally communicate when we first married we used English after a few months like two or three months then we speak Hokkien and now because of our children we have to mix up with Hokkien and English”*

*“FCCB: I have to mix it Bahasa, Hokkien and English so that he can understand”*

*“FCCB: We speak English but mixed with Chinese and Filipino”*

*“FCCA: At home we commonly speak in English and sometimes in Chinese”*

*“FCCA: Predominantly, we speak in English with some Bahasa Malaysia”*

*FCCA: Malaysian Chinese spouse; FCCB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

Switching from English to Chinese, Bahasa Malaysia, and Filipino results better communication between Filipino and Malaysian couples. Code switching helps them to transmit a message clearly. This is evident when participants mentioned that mixing Bahasa Malaysia, Hokkien and English facilitates better understanding.

Filipino spouses who were married to Malaysian Chinese can converse in different Chinese dialects like Hokkien and Cantonese etc. In contrast, Malaysian Chinese spouses (husbands) are not proficient in Filipino. When Malaysian Chinese spouses were asked if they wanted to learn Filipino, they said.

*“FCCA: Well I would say, it’s not easy to say. I’m not interested to learn Filipino (laugh) but sometimes it just comes. It’s not easy to say, I don’t know.”*

*“FCCA: I’m not interested to learn the language”*

*FCCA: Malaysian Chinese spouse (See Appendix A)*

The responses reveal that Malaysian-Chinese spouses do not find the Filipino language useful because of its limited function. Direct answers like *“I’m not interested to learn*

*Filipino (laugh) and I'm not interested to learn the language*” can be interpreted as strongly worded statements which mean that the Filipino language is not essential. Malaysian spouses could have not seen the usefulness of Filipino language. However, despite their lack of interest in learning the Filipino language, Filipino wives continue to teach their Malaysian husbands and children Filipino phrases because they believe that if their Malaysian spouses can speak Filipino they can communicate better with their family, relatives, and friends in the Philippines.

The occurrence of code switching is also prevalent among Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples. Of the three groups of couples, Filipino-Malaysian Indians use English the most as their medium of communication at home as compared to Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. However, despite this code switching at home has become a common feature in most interactions because of the couples’ proficiency in English and Bahasa Malaysia. Although they are not proficient in Filipino they can understand some Filipino words like “**mahal kita** (*I love you*), **saan** (*where*), **bakit** (*why*), etc.

The use of Tamil is very limited at home because Filipino spouses have difficulty in learning the language. In the interviews conducted with Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples, they said:-

*“FCIB: **English jud minsan Malay depende sa sitwasyun**” (It’s really English sometimes Malay it depends on the situation)*

*“FCIB: **Hindi, pero yung husband ko nagtatagalog ng konti pero pagnaguusap kami most of the time English**” (No but my husband speaks also a bit of Filipino but when we communicate we speak English most of the time)*

*“FCIB: Yes, he knows how to speak Tagalog. He can communicate because we frequently go back to the Philippines”*

*FCIB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

From the interviews conducted it is clear that English is the preferred language of Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples and their first language is no longer used as the matrix language in their interactions at home. The first language of both spouses particularly Filipino is used only when the need for such language arises. The possibility of losing the couple's ethnic language of couples is of higher risk because there is a tendency of not passing their ethnic languages to the next generations. Code alternation can perhaps be considered as a form of accommodation and this is now discussed.

### **8.3 Code Switching as Accommodation Strategy**

Code switching is sometimes used to accommodate another speaker, establish solidarity or to create social distance (Holmes, 2008). Solidarity is built and maintained when speakers converge in interactions while social distance occurs when speakers diverge by showing difference to other speakers. Therefore in every interaction speakers can be expected either to converge or diverge in interactions.

#### **8.3.1 Convergence in Code Switching**

Convergence can be evident when speakers show likeness or similarities with other speakers which can be through similar language, speech style or speech rate. However, it is explicit that convergence occurs when a speaker uses the language that other speakers are using. Such patterns of interactions sometimes results in code switching where speakers alter their code choice to accommodate others.

Form the data collected, it shows that when couples interact with each other they converge by switching from English to Malay, Chinese, or Filipino. The occurrence of convergence is evident in the conversations of couples.

**Conversation 8.2** Interaction between a Filipino wife (W) and a Chinese husband (H)

1. W- Mei Mei is the champion.
  2. H- What type?
  3. W- She was dancing. **Makulit din** (*also naughty*)
  4. H- [What?]
  5. W- **Makulit din parang Kingkoy. Tapos nag join kami for one game. Nag join kami ng contest.** It's game contest. (*Naughty also like Kingkoy. Then we joined for one game. We joined the contest*)
  6. H- With whom? With Mei Mei?
  7. W- Yeah, **sya nga nag invite at sa akin, join lang.** (*She was the one who invited me, join only*)
  8. H- [uhm]
  9. W- **Si Mei Mei gusto nya sports.** (*Mei Mei likes sports*)
  10. H- **Karamihan mga bata?** (*Majority are children*)
  11. W- Yeah, **kaya nga group nila**(*their group can do it*). **Sila yung smallest group sila pa ang nag first** (*they are the smallest group yet they rank first*). **Three lang yung team nila** (*they have only three teams*) Yellow, Red, Blue
  12. H- Mei Mei knows the game lah.
  13. W- Oo, **alam nya yung game. Alam nya**(*she knows the game. She knows*)
  14. H- [**First siya**] (*she is the first*)
  15. W- **Hindi yung group nila** (*No, their group*).
  16. H- Do you think she can follow?
  17. W- **Oo, syimpre** (*yes, of course*) she can follow the game
  18. H- They win
- (See Appendix B)

**Conversation 8.3** Interaction between a Filipino wife and a Malay husband

A Filipino wife (W) and a Malay husband (H) talking about the wife's trip to the Philippines.

1. **W:** I'm planning to visit my family in the Philippines in December. What do you think? **Ada** suggestion? (*do you have a suggestion?*)
2. **H:** **Ta ada suggestion** (I don't have any suggestion), my question is **ada budget ah?** (*is there a budget?*)
3. **W:** **Saya punya tabungan tapi tidak terlalu besar** (*I have some savings but not really big*)



- 4. H:** Yah, itu bergantung kepada anda jika anda pikir itu cukup untuk anda, maka anda boleh memutuskan. (*Well, it's up to you if you think it's enough for you then you may decide*).
- 5. W:** That's why I'm telling to you.
- 6. H:** Apa? (*what?*) Sometimes you make decision by yourself. I know you.
- 7. W:** I don't, Aku hanya ingin kau tahu (*I just want you to know*).
- 8. H:** Then, if you go, berapa hari kau akan di sana (*how many days will you be there?*)
- 9. W:** Maybe lima belas hari (fifteen days).

**Conversation 8.4** Conversation between a Filipino wife (W) and a Malay husband (H)

- 1. H:** One time we were in Armada Hotel ,I think that was almost 3 o'clock in the morning I was really listening to the song for a practice the next day. He woke up, I thought he woke up and then I asked him it's only 3 o'clock in the morning lah where are you going I said. He just kept quite, he was really serious you know, with the hair long but he didn't let go his hair you must have target you must have target, (laugh) **buang siya** (*he is crazy*). (( ))
- 2. W:** - **Si boyeng gyud, ris** (laugh) **kami ni Love Love chismis pa kaayo mi ato ba permanenti man ko matulog ato sa ilahang balay pasa pasa diri ris** (*Boyeng ris (laugh) we had a chat with Love Love, I always sleep in their house...pass here and there*)
- 3. H:** What is that **pasa?** (*pass*)
- 4. W:** **Pugak, pina ana pa gyud** (*Pugak was really like this*), he has a best friend three of them Mar Mar, Aries, Boyeng. Three of them had the same dream, (( )) **sa kakapoy siguro na ris kataw-anan man mo uy.** (...) (*Out of tiredness maybe ris, you were really funny*)
- 5. H:** He walks sleep.
- 6. W:** **Ang dilikado diha,**(*The danger there*) is that if he walks outside the door.
- 7. H:** I don't know with Alang huh, I forgot maybe he walked into the window. (...)

(See Appendix B)

**Conversation 8.5** Interactions between Filipino wife and a Malaysian Indian husband

Filipino wife (W) and Indian husband (H) talking while cleaning the car

1. H- So we buy the house or not?
2. W- What you think?
3. H- I think we should buy, I think me and my mother would [buy].
4. W- [yeah], yeah
5. H- **Bukas** (*tomorrow*) we possibly see.
6. W- **Totoo** (*true*) So, how's the room?
7. H – Later we can fix lah.
8. W- You don't want to look for another house.
9. H- Not necessarily.
10. W- You said already. Final decision lah. Hmmm. What are you doing? Don't make me wet lah. What are you doing?

(See Appendix B)

In conversations 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5, couples across ethnic groups accommodate their spouses through code switching. Accommodation in interactions is evident in four different conversations. Couples alter their code choices when the previous speakers shift from English to other languages. Such a pattern of language choice suggests that couples converge when they switch from English to Bahasa Malaysia and Filipino. When a spouse speaks in Malay or Filipino, the other partner may respond in the same language. For instance in conversation 8.2, when the Filipino spouse code switch in Filipino “**Si Mei Mei gusto nya sports** (*Mei Mei likes sports*)” the Malaysian husband also replied in Filipino “**Karamihan mga bata?** (*Majority are children*).” Such alternation of code from English to Filipino shows that the husband may have accommodated the wife by switching from English to Filipino.

Similarly, in the second conversation (conversation 8.3), spouses converge by switching from English to Bahasa Malaysia in an English dominated interaction. When the wife said “*I’m planning to visit my family in the Philippines in December. What do you think? Ada suggestion?* (Do you have a suggestion?)” the Malay spouse responds by saying “**Ta ada suggestion** (I don’t have any suggestion), *my question is ada budget ah?* (Is there a budget?)” which is uttered in Malay. Then the Filipino spouse continues in Malay by saying; “**Saya punya tabungan tapi tidak terlalu besar** (*I have some savings but not really big*).” The utterance imitates and follows the code choice of the husband’s utterance. Such a pattern of code switching shows a convergent form of accommodation.

In conversation 7.5, the occurrence of code switching in the couple’s interaction also occurs. For example when the Indian husband said “**Bukas** (tomorrow) *we possibly see*”, the use of Filipino is evident in the first part of the utterance. Consequently, the wife

responds in English and Filipino and says “**Totoo** (true) *so, how’s the room?*” The wife responds in both English and Filipino as the husband had used both languages in the previous utterance. Such occurrence of code switching shows language convergence among the couples.

### 8.3.2 Divergence in Code Switching

Divergence in communication occurs when speakers try to accentuate their verbal and non-verbal differences so as to differentiate themselves from other speakers. In interactions between Filipino and Malaysian spouses’ divergence in communication is also seen.

**Conversation 8.6** A conversation between a Filipino wife (W) and Malaysian Chinese husband (H).

1. W- It will also enlighten and help your data collection
  2. H [better] result. (( )). What’s the paper?
  3. R- It’s about language choice of interracial marriages.
  4. H- Maybe you can include cross cultural communication.
  5. W- [There] you go.
  6. H- I’ve encountered several cross cultural communication.
  7. W- The expert is Francis (( ))
  8. H- We deal more on foreign relations and some international students.
  9. W- **sigē na, sigē na** (*ok, ok*)
  10. H- Yeah, they conduct also research.
  11. R- My research is a bit related to cross cultural communication
  12. W- Yeah, cultural understanding is necessary
  13. R- I first thought of inter-ethnic marriages in Sarawak but I don’t know the various ethnic languages.
  14. H and W- [Sabah and Sarawak]
  15. R- It’s quite difficult because I don’t know the language.
  16. W- Oh yeah. **Kaon sa saging Dong**. (*eat the banana Dong*)
  17. H- You’re going to Taman Connaught?
  18. R- No, I’m going to my friend’s house in Taman Putra.
  19. H- I see.
- (See Appendix B)

**Conversation 8.7** A conversation between a Filipino wife (W) and a Malaysian Indian husband (H).

1. W- What did mother say about the **rumah** (*house*).
  2. H- [It's nice]. Put the cover there.
  3. W- **Di mana** (*where*)?
  4. H- There?
  5. W- No. hmm. The house. hmm, the area, how? **Sa labas**(*outside*) you can see.
  6. H- [Not everything when you go up]
  7. W- **Ano?** (*what*)
  8. H- [How many] times there you go up. Yeah, if you are staying the house more. I think it's peaceful and not tight like that. All the the house are very far far, ok? It looks like ahhh.
  9. W- Yeah, **sigé** (*ok*) .
  10. H- [Then] security also.
  11. W- So lah, **tawagan ko si Philip** (*I will call Philip*).
  12. H – Call him now lah
  13. W- You call him now?
  14. H- [I'm doing] the car wash
- (See Appendix B)

In conversations 8.6 and 8.7, it is evident that Malaysian spouses diverge in interactions. In both conversations Filipino spouses frequently switch from English to Filipino or Malay however the Malaysian spouses continue to speak in English. In such interactions, it can be said that Malaysian spouses may have diverged by not switching to the language used by the spouse in the previous utterance.

Conversation 8.6 shows that the Malaysian spouse speaks in English with no switching to either Chinese, or Bahasa Malaysia. In contrast, the Filipino spouse keeps on switching from English to Cebuano, one of the languages in the Southern part of the Philippines. Although the husband could only understand a bit of Cebuano the wife continues the switching. In this context, the wife perhaps presumes that even if she switches in Cebuano her husband could still follow and understand her message. The husband did not show any sign that he misunderstood the message because he responded in the

conversation correctly. The non-cooperative behavior of the husband by not switching from English to Filipino can be interpreted as divergence in interactions.

Similarly, in conversation 8.7, the Filipino wife made at least six attempts to switch from English to Filipino and Bahasa Malaysia but the Malaysian spouse did not make an attempt to switch from English to Filipino or Bahasa Malaysia.

In conversations 8.6 and 8.7, divergence occurs when a speaker maintains his or her own language despite the attempts made by the other interlocutor who switches from one language to the other. Divergent behavior can perhaps be attributed to the speaker's intention. In some cases when a speaker would like to construct his or her identity differently from other speakers, it is possible for him or her to diverge in communication.

#### **8.4 Functions of Code Switching**

In analyzing the functions of code switching in interactions, conversation analysis (CA) approach was used. The CA approach can be effective if the focus of the analysis is on conversational code switching.

Interactions between Filipino and Malaysian spouses reveal that code switching occurs for different reasons. The findings of the study reveal that Filipino-Malaysian couples code switch from English to Bahasa Malaysia and Filipino to show politeness, solidarity, social distance and confirmation.

#### 8.4.1 Code Switching as Politeness Strategy

Politeness is a social variable that determines the choice of a register or style (Coulmas, 2005). Speakers are sometimes careful in using the lexicon of another language in order to minimize a face-threatening act (Holmes, 2008). In cultures that consider directness as impolite motivates speakers to carefully choose appropriate lexical items so as not to be perceived as impolite. It is evident in the conversations between Filipino-Malaysian couples, politeness manifests through code switching.

**Conversation 8.8** Conversation of a Filipino wife (W) and a Malay husband (H) during a meal

**1 W:** This one is nice  
**2 H:** No **lah**, the curry (...)  
**3 W:** You want water? (...) **wala na ba?** (*nothing?*)  
**4 H:** A little bit only (...)  
**5 W:** **Wala pa wala pa ta naka booking hon, sa hospital ba wala pa ang booking.** (*No, no, we haven't booked honey; the booking is not in the hospital yet*)  
**6 H:** If not today tomorrow morning I will get.

(See Appendix B)

Conversation 8.8 shows the interaction between a Filipino wife (W) and a Malaysian husband (H). The conversation took place at home during lunch. While having their meal, the husband pointed at something which suggested that the wife had to get something for him. The wife got the fish and said “*This one is nice.*” The wife’s utterance in turn 1 can be considered as invitation or suggestion to try the fish. In turn 2 the husband refused the offer and softened it by using the Malaysian particle “lah” in the sentence “*No lah, the curry*”. The wife in turn 3 offered water to compensate the mistake she made for giving the fish instead of curry. In turn 4 the husband accepted the wife’s offer by saying “*A little bit only*”. In turn 5 the wife suddenly changed the topic by asking the husband “**Wala pa wala**

*pa ta naka booking hon, sa hospital ba wala pa ang booking* (no, no, we haven't booked honey, the booking for the hospital).” The husband replied that “*If not today tomorrow morning I will get.*”

The switching from English to Filipino in line 3 was initiated by the wife. It is evident that the husband did not alter his code choice despite the wife's continuous switching from English to Filipino. In turn 3 switching from English to Filipino is an utterance with the intention to compensate and soften the previous utterance because the husband may not have been satisfied with the offer (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). The intention to compensate and to soften the previous utterance can be interpreted as politeness strategy to minimize the impact of the other speakers' dissatisfaction.

In the conversation, the occurrence of “with-in turn” code switching between Filipino and Malaysian spouses is evident (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4). Such occurrence of code switching can be analyzed in terms of language negotiation and the preferred conversational organization of speakers.

The occurrence of politeness in conversation 8.8 is not explicitly uttered by the wife (W). In the Philippine context, doing something to compensate any mistake is interpreted as polite behavior (Dumanig, Manuelli, 2009). The use of appropriate language and discourse organization in conversation has played an important role in maintaining a polite manner of making a request. In fact, the wife's request in turn 5 occurs only after four turns in conversation. In turn 3, the wife had a long pause then she started switching from English to Filipino so as to make the interaction informal thus making a request less intimidating (Bautista, 2004). The wife's initiative of offering something to drink is a form of

compensation, which can be interpreted as polite way of accommodating the spouse. It is also evident when the offer was made the wife switched from English to Filipino to mitigate a face threatening act. The switching in turn 3 may signal a transition that the wife would utter her request soon. In turn 5, the wife switches to Filipino instead of English to make the request more polite.

Schematically, the relationship between conversational structure and code choice follows a sequential order:-

- |   |
|---|
| 1 A: <i>offer (English)</i>                           |
| 2 H: <i>refusal (English)</i>                         |
| 3 A: <i>offer (English) – confirmation (Filipino)</i> |
| 4 H: <i>acceptance (English)</i>                      |
| 5 A: <i>request (Filipino)</i>                        |
| 6 H: <i>approval (English)</i>                        |

The sequential order in conversation has helped to organize the interaction so as to achieve approval on the request in turn 5. In turn 1, the wife used English in giving an offer which was accommodated by the husband (H) in turn 2 by using a similar language. When the wife attempted another offer in turn 3, code switching in Filipino occurred to show confirmation. The confirmation in Filipino may signal the wife's intention to make a request in the next turn. In turn 5, the request was made by switching from English to Filipino thus making a request polite.

### Conversation 8.9

Interaction between a Filipino wife (W) and a Malaysian husband (H).
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- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>H:</b> His place <b>belakang</b> (<i>behind</i>) Giant?</li><li>2. <b>W:</b> Yeah, <b>Alam mo ba yan?</b> (<i>Do you know it?</i>)</li></ol> |
|--|



- 3. H: Alam ko** (*I know*) before reaching the place **ada** (*there is*) McDonalds, right?  
**4. W: Yeah lah. Pwede?** you drive him later. (*can*)  
**5. H:** No problem.  
**6. W:** Remember, we passed by several times in that area.

(See Appendix B)

Conversation 8.9 occurs in the home domain. In turn 1, the husband asked his wife “*His place belakang (behind) Giant?*” where he switches from English to Bahasa Malaysia. The wife responded in turn 2 in Filipino “*Yeah, alam mo ba yun? (Do you know it?)*”. The husband accommodated the wife by answering in Filipino in turn 3 as “**Alam ko** (*I know*)”. In turn 4 the wife agreed with her husband but it was accompanied by a request “*Yeah lah. Pwede? (can) you drive him later?.*” In turn 5, the husband agreed to drive the visitor home.

The conversation can be analyzed by examining the discourse pattern and the code choice of the speaker in the interaction. Code switching with-in turns from English to Filipino in turns 1 to 6 is prevalent in the conversation. It is also evident that politeness is uttered by the wife in turn 4 by using a polite word “**pwede**” (*can*). The request which is the main focus of the conversation did not occur in turn 1 but it was uttered in Filipino in turn 4. Such a pattern of discourse and code choice is similar in example 8.8 where switching from English to Filipino in making a request is seen as a polite act. Making a request in the latter part of the conversation can be considered as indirect request and such indirectness is deemed to be polite in some cultures (David, 2008).

The sequential order of conversation in relation to the speaker’s code choices is represented as follows:-

1. H: *Question (English and Bahasa Malaysia)*
2. W: *Confirmation (Filipino)*
3. H: *Answer (Filipino, English and Bahasa Malaysia)*
4. W: *Agreement (Filipino)*
5. H: *Comment (English).*
6. W: *Reminder (English)*

The sequential order in conversation shows the occurrence of code switching from turn 1 to turn 6. In turn 1, the husband asked a question in English and Bahasa Malaysia where the switching signals that the husband would like to establish solidarity in conversation. In turn 2 the wife answered the question in Filipino. The use of Filipino in turn 2 is a marked choice (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4) because such use of code is unexpected. The wife's marked choice can also be interpreted as a signal for a favor that she would ask in the next turns. In turn 3, the husband answered and accommodated the wife by using Filipino but later switched to English and Bahasa Malaysia. The switching in Filipino by the husband signals his accommodative behavior thus creating solidarity in interaction. Consequently, the wife made a request in turn 4 in Filipino. Using the Filipino language in turn 4 can be interpreted as a face saving strategy to show politeness in making a request.

**Conversation 8.10** A conversation between a Malaysian husband (H) and a Filipino wife (W) after dinner.

1. H: Then, if you go, **berapa hari kau akan di sana?** (*How many days will you be there?*)
2. W: Maybe **lima blas hari** (*fifteen days*).
3. H: Huh, **lima blas hari** (*fifteen days*)? Quite long ah.
4. W: I seldom see them.
5. H: Yeah, I know but what about our child?
6. W: I will bring him.

Note: The Malay husband can understand Filipino. (See Appendix B)

Conversation 8.10 shows the interaction between a Filipino wife and a Malay husband. In turn 1 the husband asked his wife “*Then, if you go, **berapa hari kau akan di sana** (how many days will you be there?).*” The husband switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia when asking the question. In turn 2, W responded by switching code (English and Bahasa Malaysia) “*Maybe **lima blas hari** (fifteen days).*” H answered in turn 3 in Bahasa Malaysia then switched to English “*Huh, **lima blas hari** (fifteen days)? Quite long ah*”. The conversation continues in turns 4, 5, and 6 where English was used.

Conversation 8.10 reveals the switching from English to Bahasa Malaysia in an interaction between a Filipino wife and a Malaysian husband in the home domain. When H asked his wife the number of days that W would stay in the Philippines, he switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia. The switching can be interpreted as a strategy to initiate a casual conversation so as to mitigate a face-threatening if he would refuse the wife’s request. In turn 2, the wife responded in English then switched to Bahasa Malaysia to convince her husband to agree with her plan to stay in the Philippines for fifteen days. Switching to Bahasa Malaysia is considered an unmarked choice because H is a Malay and using Bahasa Malaysia would make the utterance more convincing. In turn 3, H responded in Bahasa Malaysia then switched to English to show his indirect disapproval of the request. There is a sign of disapproval in turn 3 because the utterance in English appeared to be a complaint “*Quite long ah.*”

In the conversation, it is evident that the use of Bahasa Malaysia has helped to establish solidarity in the interaction and maintain politeness even when showing disapproval (see turns 1-3). On the other hand, English is used to create social distance and to reinforce the disapproval.

In conversation 8.10, the relationship between conversational structure and code choice follows a sequential order:-

1. **H:** *Question (English and Malay)*
2. **W:** *Answer (English and Malay)*
3. **H:** *Objection (Malay and English)*
4. **W:** *Reason (English)*
5. **H:** *Question (English)*
6. **W:** *Answer (English)*

The sequential order in conversation shows that code switching occurs with-in turns which is evident in turns 1 to 3. This question-answer sequence in conversation provides an idea that the conversational structure and the code choice of the speaker are interrelated. This is evident in turns 1 to 3 and turns 4 to 6. The choice of a mixed code for instance occurs because one speaker who initiated it in turn 1. Then the following turns in the conversation used a similar pattern of code choice (see Chapter 2, Sec. 2.5). Similarly, the use of English from turns 4 to 6 occurs because it is initiated by W in turn 3 and in the next turns English was used.

The sequential order in conversation has influenced the speaker's language choice and the flow of the entire discourse. For instance, the choice of two languages (English and Filipino) can be used to show politeness in interactions (see Conversations 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10). In addition, politeness is not only shown in the language used by the speaker but it can be evident in the order of conversation how both interlocutors take turns. For example in a situation where the speaker controls the conversation and does not allow other interlocutor to speak signals impoliteness.

#### 8.4.2 Code Switching to Show Solidarity

Code switching may function to show solidarity. The languages selected consciously or unconsciously establish closer relationship among the speakers.

Conversation 8.11 shows an interaction between Filipino wives and Malaysian husbands.

#### Conversation 8.11

A conversation between a Filipino wife (W) and a Malay husband (H).

**1 W:** Let's go to the hospital hon, check up **lang ba** (*just for a check up*).

**2 H:** Is that Bandar Baru or Taman Putra?

**3 W:** **Pa scan daw ta hon** (*hon can we go for scanning*).

**4 H:** Can, can

**5 W:** In Taman Putra **ada** (*There is in Taman Putra*)

**6 H:** **Wala** (*none*)

(See Appendix B)

In turn 1, the wife (W) told the husband (H) to have a check up. However, in turn 2 instead of answering the request, H asked the location of the hospital “*Is that Bandar Baru or Taman Putra?*” In turn 3, W made a request “*Pa scan daw ta hon. (hon can we go for scanning).*” H responded in turn 4 by agreeing to W’s request. In turn 5, W suggested “*In Taman Putra ada (There is in Taman Putra)*” but in turn 6, H rejected the suggestion by saying “*wala*” (*none*).

In turn 1, the wife’s request was uttered in English and Filipino. The switching from English to Filipino can help the requestee to get what she wanted because it builds solidarity between the speakers. In the conversation, code switching is used to obtain a

positive response from the other speaker. W repeated the request and switched again to Filipino to pursue her goal to get H's approval. The switch from English to Filipino in the second and third turns signals a collaborative interaction to establish solidarity between two interlocutors. The use of the ethnic language appears to have helped in establishing solidarity between speakers. In turn 4, H's reply was in basilectal Malaysian English which can be interpreted as a positive response. Code switching between Filipino and Malaysian English in turns 3 and 4 signals solidarity. As a result, W got H's approval.

Solidarity was built through code switching from English to Bahasa Malaysia. Such switching can also be interpreted as way of showing gratitude for the approval of W's request. Turn 6 shows H's answer in Filipino to show solidarity. Eventhough he replied negatively, he softened it by using the wife's language and thus minimized a face-threatening act (FTA). It can be said that the use of the partner's language neutralizes a negative response.

The conversation follows a sequential order:-

<p><i>1 A: request (English and Filipino)</i> <i>2 H: clarification (English)</i> <i>3 A: request (Filipino)</i> <i>4 H: approval (English)</i> <i>5 A: clarification (Malay)</i> <i>6 H: answer (Filipino)</i></p>
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The request-approval sequence reveals that establishing solidarity in conversation can be used as a strategy in mitigating a face-threatening act.

**Conversation 8.12** Conversation between a Filipino wife (W) and a Malaysian Chinese husband (H).

1. **W:** He wants to buy.
  2. **H:** Underwear?
  3. **W:** **Oo, at saka** (*yes, and also*) stocking, black. Later you bring them.
  4. **H:** Office one.
  5. **W:** **Oo, at saka** (*Yes, and*)
  6. **H:** **yung maganda** (*the good ones*)
  7. **W:** **Uhm yung magandang quality at saka yung underwear yung magandang quality, adiddas** (*the one with good quality and the underwear must be of good quality, addidas*)
  8. **H:** [Addidas?]
  9. **W:** **Ano bang magandang quality doon?** (*What's the good quality there?*)
  10. **H:** Lee Cooper
  11. **W:** **Ayun, Lee Cooper. Large lang yata sya. Kapag malaki big size. Nakita mo na sya. Baka medium ok na kaysa large.** (*That's it, Lee Cooper. It's only large. You saw him. Maybe medium is ok for him*)
  12. **H:** **Magandang quality.** (*Good quality*)
- (See Appendix B)

Conversation 8.12 shows how a Filipino and Malay couple establishes solidarity in interactions through code switching. In turns 1 and 2, English is used by both speakers. However, in turn 3 the wife (W) switched to Filipino and English. In turns 5 to 12, it is evident that Filipino has become prevalent. This shows that both husband and wife show cooperation in switching from English to Filipino.

The conversation follows the following order of languages used:-

1. *W: request (English)*
2. *H: clarification (English)*
3. *W: request (Filipino and English)*
4. *H: suggestion (English)*
5. *W: acceptance (Filipino)*
6. *H: suggestion (Filipino)*
7. *W: confirmation and suggestion (Filipino)*
8. *H: confirmation*
9. *W: question (Filipino)*
10. *H: reply*
11. *W: suggestion (Filipino)*
12. *H: confirmation (Filipino)*

The switching from English to Filipino shows that both spouses cooperate with each other and when one spouse speaks in Filipino the other spouse uses the same language. A similar pattern occurred when English was used. Such convergence in conversation through code switching and code shifting indicate solidarity.

### 8.4.3 Code Switching to Show Confirmation

Code switching can be used to grant a request or to show confirmation. In Filipino-Malaysian couples' interactions request is granted and indicated by a switch from one language to another as shown in Conversation 8.13.

**Conversation 8.13** A conversation between a Filipino wife and Malaysian Indian husband  
D (Filipino wife) and J (Malaysian Indian husband)

**1 D:** My husband also speaks Filipino.  
**2 J:** Yeah, **kumain ka na, halika na.** (*Have you eaten? Come*).  
**3 D:** You sometimes talk to me in Tagalog, **di ba?** (*Don't you?*)  
**4 J:** Yeah, because we often use it, it's like getting married daily with the Filipino language (()).  
  
(See Appendix B)

In the conversation, the Filipino spouse uttered a statement in turn 1 to motivate the Malaysian Indian spouse to speak in Filipino by saying “*My husband also speaks Filipino.*” The utterance in turn 1 can be interpreted as a request to prove that the Malaysian spouse can speak Filipino. In turn 2, the husband replied by saying “**Yeah, kumain ka na? halika na**” (*Have you eaten? come*) which proves that he can speak Filipino. The utterance in turn 2 is a switch from English to Filipino and shows that the request made by the Filipino spouse has been granted. In turn 3, the Filipino spouse said, “*You sometimes talk to me in Tagalog, di ba* (*Don't you?*)” which is a request for him to



confirm. It is evident that the tag phrase “**di ba?** (*Don’t you?*)” is used to show confirmation.

Code switching in the conversation is evident in turns 2 and 3. The switching in turn 2 is an answer to the wife’s utterance in turn 1 which initiates the Malaysian spouse to speak in Filipino (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). The switching can be interpreted as a grant to the wife’s request. Conversation 8.6 reveals that code switching in turns 2 and 3 occur in between turns and within turns. Turns 1 it shows the switching between turns and in turn 2 and turn 3 code switching occur within turns like saying the statement in English with a Filipino tag phrase (*You sometimes talk to me in Tagalog, **di ba?***) (*Don’t you?*) indicates confirmation.

The conversation follows a sequential order.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | <i>D: request (English)</i>                            |
| 2 | <i>J: grant (English; Filipino)</i>                    |
| 3 | <i>D: request for confirmation (English; Filipino)</i> |
| 4 | <i>J: confirmation (English)</i>                       |

The request-confirmation sequence shows that switching from English to Filipino has helped in granting a request (see Conversation 8.13). The switching of codes with-in turns are evident in turns 2 and 3 where J granted the request and requested a confirmation.

The next example in Conversation 8.14 is a conversation between a Filipino wife and a Malaysian husband. The conversation took place in the couples’ house while having a coffee with the researcher in the presence of their two young children aged 9 and 4. The

conversation was centered on the researchers' research which encouraged the couples to discuss and shares the names of possible participants the researcher could interview.

Below is the excerpt of the conversation where only the couples exchange their messages.

### Conversation 8.14

L (Filipino wife) and F (Malaysian Chinese husband)

- |  |
|--|
| <p><b>1 L: Si koan hon yung Eurasian.</b> (<i>The Eurasian hon.</i>)<br/><b>2 F:</b> I think, Jeffrey.<br/><b>3 L:</b> yeah<br/><b>4 F:</b> Mixed <b>ma.</b> (<i>“ma” particle</i>)<br/><b>5 L: Filipino iyang wife</b> (<i>His wife is a Filipino</i>)<br/><b>6 F:</b> Yeah, Jo<br/><b>7 L:</b> Yeah lah (<i>“lah” particle</i>)<br/><b>8 F:</b> What is the title of his paper?<br/><b>9 L:</b> Interracial communication.<br/><b>10 F:</b> Oh, is it about interethnic communication.<br/><b>11L:</b> Yeah, there you go (( )).</p> |
|--|

(See Appendix B)

Conversation 8.14 reveals that code switching occurs from English to Filipino. In turn 1, the wife (L) made an inquiry by saying in Filipino, “**Si koan hon yung Eurasian.** (*The Eurasian hon.*” which impliedly asked the name of the Eurasian who married the Filipino. The inquiry in Filipino was answered in turn 2 by the Malaysian husband (F) in English “*I think, Jeffrey* “ and is confirmed by L in turn 3. The utterance in turn 3 is a confirmation which is an agreement of F’s answer. H made an assertion in turn 4 that the couple is mixed “*Mixed ma.* (*“ma” particle*).” The particle “*ma*” is common among Malaysians which appears to be frequent in Malaysian English. The assertion made in turn 4 is agreed

by L by giving more information about the couple. In turn 5 L uttered in Filipino “**Filipino iyang wife** (*His wife is a Filipino*)” which is an agreement to H. In turn 7 L said “**yeah lah**” to show an agreement.

In the conversation it is clear that in turn 5, L confirmed F’s request in turn 4. Such confirmation was made by switching from English to Filipino. Such occurrence of confirmation is similar to Conversation 8.13. However, it is noticeable in the conversation that most switching in Filipino is done by the Filipino wife. However, it appears that the Malaysian husband comprehends the Filipino language because he answered all the queries. The conversation shows that the husband did not attempt to speak any word of Filipino even when the wife asked the questions in Filipino. Instead the husband used the Malaysian English variety.

The conversation between the Filipino spouse and the Malaysian Chinese spouse can be arranged in the following sequential order.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | <i>L: inquiry (Filipino)</i>            |
| 2 | <i>F: answer (English)</i>              |
| 3 | <i>L: agreement (English)</i>           |
| 4 | <i>F: assertion (Malaysian English)</i> |
| 5 | <i>L: confirmation (Filipino)</i>       |
| 6 | <i>F: agreement (English)</i>           |
| 7 | <i>L: agreement (Malaysian English)</i> |

The sequential order reveals that code switching in conversation occurs between turns from English to Filipino. However, the occurrence of confirmation in turn 5 is uttered in Filipino.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

The occurrence of code switching in interracial couples' interaction has become an emerging language variety. It reveals that such communication provides speakers the chance and opportunity to interact with others effectively. When couples converge, solidarity in interactions is evident.

In addition code switching from one language to another is used to compensate and soften the previous utterance, minimize a face threatening act, signal a change of topic, establish an impact to get what the speaker wants, create a positive response from the other speaker, create social distance and disapproval, signal a collaborative interaction (establish solidarity), accommodate other speaker, grant a request and show confirmation. These reasons are seen in actual conversations of couples in different turns. Moreover, the occurrence of code switching appears between turns and with-in turns which signal the intention of an interlocutor for switching from one language to the other.

Code switching is inevitable for multilingual speakers (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4). In such case, English is used as the matrix language while Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Filipino function as embedded language.