

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses and summarises the findings presented in chapter four. Several conclusions will be made based on the findings in relations to the research questions in the study. In the study, there are three research questions that need to be answered. The first is regarding the linguistic patterns of the teacher's code-switching in the English as a second language class, the second is the functions of the teacher's code-switching and the third is the student perceptions toward the teacher's code-switching behaviour in the classroom. This chapter will also discuss several limitations that are faced by the researcher while conducting the study. The last part of the chapter will consider the implications of the study and some suggested recommendations for those who intend to carry out a similar research in the future.

5.1 Summary of the study

This study is carried out to answer three research questions regarding the teacher's code-switching discourse in an ESL classroom. The findings gathered from the study have provided a clearer insight about this phenomenon.

5.1.1 RQ 1: What are the linguistic patterns of the teacher's code-switching in an ESL classroom?

From the data collected, it can be clearly seen that the teacher follows certain linguistic patterns when she code-switches from English language to Malay during the English lesson. The linguistic patterns involve two types of code-switching proposed by Scotton in her Matrix Language Frame model (1993). These two types of switches are the intra-sentential code-switching and the inter-sentential code-switching. The intra-sentential code-switching involves two levels of code-switching, word level and phrase level. In this study code-switching at word level is described by looking at various word classes such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb and function words. Meanwhile code-switching at phrase level includes code-switching of noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase.

Another type of code-switching is the inter-sentential code-switching which involves code-switching at sentence level or sentence boundary. Code-switching at sentence level is observed by looking at various structures of sentences that include simple sentence, compound sentence and complex sentence.

From the teacher's classroom discourse, it can be concluded that the teacher employs code-switching at both intra and inter-sentential level. At word level, the teacher code-switches most of the word classes which involved noun, verb, adjective and function words. She does this mostly with unfamiliar words which she thinks might be difficult for the students to understand.

In addition, it can be proven that the teacher also code-switches various types of phrases such as noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase and prepositional phrase in her discourse. In addition code-switching occurs at sentence level whereby the teacher moderately code-switches her English sentences to Malay. These switches could be

clearly detected from the instances drawn from her discourse while teaching the target language to the students.

From the above descriptions, it can be summarized that the teacher employs code-switching following the intra-sentential and the inter-sentential code switching as being suggested in the framework introduced earlier by Scotton (1993). At intra-sentential level, code switching happens at two levels of code-switching, word level and phrase level whereby at inter-sentential level, code switching occur at sentence level or sentence boundary. The linguistic patterns also support the notion on the Asian language having the ability to be code-switched at any levels as mentioned earlier by Southworth (1980:140).

5.1.2 RQ 2: What are the functions of the teacher's code-switching in the classroom?

From the data analyzed, it can be concluded that the teacher's code-switching during the English lesson serves both pedagogical and social purposes. There are 6 functions of the teacher's code-switching that fits into Gumperz Conversational Functions (1982). In addition, there are 6 other functions which have been added to the Gumperz's lists. These 12 functions are strongly supported with instances of code-switching extracted from the teacher's classroom discourse.

The first function of the teacher's code-switching is to reiterate the topics discussed during the lesson. According to Gumperz (1982), this function serves to translate or to repeat words, phrases or sentences for better understanding of the listener. The reason for this is clear as in a language class, the teacher has to reemphasis a lot of items to the students to make them understand the lesson better. Thus, it is

common for her to code-switch to Malay, the language that her students are familiar and comfortable with, in ensuring her students' understanding of the lesson.

The findings also indicate that the other function of the teacher's code-switching is to ensure students' understanding or knowledge on certain topics discussed in the class. When asked during the interview, the teacher stated that it is better to check her students' understanding and knowledge about certain topics by using Malay instead of English as she will get the feedback faster from the students. She admits that if she asks them in English, she will have to wait longer for the students' response and sometimes they will not respond at all. If this happens, she will not be sure whether the students understand or have enough knowledge about the issue that she is discussing in the class.

Message qualification is another function for the teacher to code-switch in the class. This function is used to elaborate or qualify the message that the teacher tries to deliver in the lesson as suggested by Gumperz in his conversational function list. This function is different from reiteration whereby the code-switched messages are used to elaborate more on the issue during a lesson. In the language class, it is common for the teacher to elaborate on the issues discussed in the class. A teacher uses a lot of illustrations and examples to elaborate on certain topics and issues to enhance students' understanding and to give a clearer picture of the lesson. In this study, the teacher did the illustrations and the elaboration in Malay for the reason stated earlier.

The other reasons why the teacher code-switched during the lessons were to give instruction for specific tasks, to interject, to state opinion, to foster a better relationship with students, to scold students, to instil humour, to quote, to elicit answers and to address students specifically. The teacher tended to code-switch to Malay when she gave instruction for the specific task to be completed by the students. She did this so that her students would not misunderstand the instruction and can complete the task

assigned correctly. She also inserted Malay interjections like ‘**eh**’ and ‘**kan**’ to portray stronger feelings about the issues discussed in the lesson. In some instance, the teacher code-switched to Malay when voicing out her opinion to ensure that her views got across to her students effectively. To establish a better relationship with her students, she also code-switched to Malay to make her students feel more comfortable with her. In addition, she scolded the students and instilled humour in the lesson in their mother tongue so that the scolding and the humour become more meaningful to them. She also quoted somebody’s speech in Malay to retain the authenticity of the speech and to make it sound more acceptable and reliable. In a couple of instances, the teacher uses Malay to elicit answers and to address her students. These are done to ensure faster response from the students as they will be able to understand her effectively.

Many of these functions are pedagogical and the rest are social functions like stating an opinion, to foster a better relationship with students and to instil humour. Thus it can be concluded that the main intention of the teacher’s code-switching in the class was to facilitate the learning process. Nevertheless the teacher also tries to build a better rapport with the students through code-switching so that they will feel more comfortable being in her class and be more interested to learn the language

5.1.3 RQ 3: What are the student perceptions towards the teacher’s code-switching behaviour in the classroom?

From the questionnaires distributed to the students, it is found that the students give positive responses towards the teacher’s code-switching behaviour during the English lesson. The answers from the questionnaire show that the students have positive views about English lesson at school whereby 58% state that they are interested with the lesson. In addition, they agree that code-switching is one of the ways to make them

understand the lesson better. According to them, code-switching also helps them to learn the language faster and effectively. Most of them also think that code-switching can make the lesson more interesting. From all the above responses, it can be concluded that the students have very positive attitudes towards the teacher's code-switching behaviour during the English lesson and agree that code-switching could act as a tool to facilitate a better and more effective language learning environment.

5.2 Implication of the findings

The findings from the study prove that code-switching does not occur at random and is meaningful as suggested by almost all previous researchers in similar field. Similar to other settings, code-switching in an ESL classroom could also be investigated based on linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. From the linguistic perspective, it can be concluded that the teacher's code-switching is governed by certain rules which involves specific categories as suggested by Scotton (1993) namely the intra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching. A more meaningful study on code-switching which is based on the sociolinguistic perspective reveals some important conclusion about the teacher's code-switching in ESL classroom. The 6 functions of code-switching detected from the teacher's discourse during the lesson fits the lists of conversational functions as suggested by Gumperz (1982). In addition to that, there are other 6 motivations of code-switching which are also successfully noticed from her discourse. It can be concluded that these 12 functions serve two important functions namely the pedagogical and social purposes. But most importantly, the students in this study are of the opinion that the teacher's code-switching in English class is a very useful and effective tool in helping them to improve their language. Thus code-switching to a certain extent can be an aid to

improve students proficiency in an English language class especially among weaker students even though some may disagree.

5.3 Limitation of the research

There are several limitations that the researcher faces in conducting the study. The first is regarding the sample of the research whereby the study involves only one teacher teaching an ESL classroom. Thus the researcher does not try to over generalize the results to all teachers who are teaching English in Malaysia

The second limitation is regarding the time frame to collect data. As there are a lot of school programmes especially examinations, tests and motivational courses for students, the opportunity for the researcher to collect data is limited. The researcher however tries her best to get all the data needed by setting the appointment earlier with the teacher in selecting the most suitable time for her to go to school to record the lesson.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

This study attempts to describe the linguistic patterns and the functions of the teacher's code-switching in the English as a second language classroom and student perceptions of the teacher's code-switching behaviour in the classroom. As these students look at code-switching positively one can suggest that other researchers should take initiative to investigate the impact of code-switching in relation to the achievements of students in ESL classroom. By investigating deeper into the impact of code-switching, the researchers might be able to understand better on the benefit of code-switching in the classroom and the effectiveness of code-switching when used as

one of the tools to facilitate the process of learning the second language. Other than that, researches could also be conducted with more samples in ESL classrooms from various learning institutions instead of schools for a better understanding and reliable results on this linguistic phenomenon