

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

One of the features of bilingualism is code switching. When two codes (dialects and/or languages) are used alternately between people who share these codes it is called code switching. The reasons of code-switching has been studied by various scholars. In multilingual societies, code switching is widespread and extends to both formal and informal situations. This chapter looks at the previous studies conducted on code switching and covers various areas like functions of code switching, reasons of code switching and code switching at work place.

2.1 Definition of Code Switching

It is a typical practice in many societies throughout the globe for the populace, in specific social circumstances, to use one dialect rather than another although they speak in two or more different dialects. This is commonly called as code-switching and may function between two specific languages (e.g. English and Malay among Malaysians) as well as between two dialects of the same language.

Gumperz, (1982 : 59) in his definition of code-switching, defines conversational code switching as “a juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”.

Mesthrie, Swann, Deumart & Leap (2000) as cited in Farchlexis (2009) define code switching as the “switching back and forth of languages on varieties of the same language, sometimes within the same utterance.” (Farchlexis, 2009 : 14). Wong (1979 : 7) notes that code switching is “the alternate use of two or more distinct languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles, within the same speech situation by the same individual”. She broadens the meaning of code switching to include not only language, but speech styles also. Strictly speaking however, style shifting is a feature of

intralinguistic or monolingual variation. Marasigan (1983), states that code switching or code choice refers to the use of two languages in the same sentence or discourse.

Gross (2006) states that :

“Code switching is a complex skilled linguistic strategy used by bilingual speakers to convey important social meanings above and beyond the referential content of an utterance. This occurs in order to conform to the interlocutor or deviate from him/her. The interlocutor usually determines the speaker’s choice of language variety i.e. either to gain a sense of belonging or to create a clear boundary between the parties involved. In other words, code switching is a result of language adaptation in different situations.” (cited in Farchlexis, 2009 : 144).

A recent definition of code switching is “the use of two languages in the same clause” (Myers-Scotton, 2002, p : 3).

Bell (1976 : 17) looks at code switching as a relationship between role and code which “leads to a redefinition of language as some kind of bundle of codes, from which the role player chooses”. He sees switching as some kind of a choice between codes.

Romaine (1986) observes that code switching is using an item from a language to form a part of the same speech act in another. She also points out that :

“There is an almost one-to-one relationship between language choice and social context, so that each variety can be seen having a distinct place or function within the local speech repertoire.” (p. 111)

McKay and Hornberger (1996) note that speakers frequently switch from one language to another when two or more languages exist in a community. They add that code switching is not random but functionally motivated.

Asmah (1982 : 45), however defines code switching merely as “a phenomenon which reflects the change from one code to another in the speech of a particular speaker in a particular situation”. Unlike Wong, her definition refers to the codes only. This is because she sees codes as inclusive of language varieties and dialects.

Kuo (1985), as cited in Soon (1987) says “code switching can only exist in societies which are at least bilingual. Such societies must be linguistically, if not

ethnically, heterogeneous and the members of these societies be multilingual in a variety of languages or dialects that are functionally differentiated". (Soon,1987 : 2)

Rustow (1968) as cited by Soon (1987 : 2) states that languages or dialects that are functionally differentiated "describe a language pattern involving a variety of unrelated languages each with its own literary tradition". Malaysia and Singapore are good examples of this as Bahasa Malaysia, English, Tamil, Mandarin and Hokkien are commonly used.

According to Soo (1987 : 46) :

"Code switching works by increasing or decreasing the social distance between speaker and listener. These adjustment in themselves are not meaningful until interpreted in the context of the discourse. Therefore, it can be postulated that speakers have a certain perlocutionary intention in mind, take into account the topic, the listener and what has been said so far (among other things) and attempt to create the perlocutionary effects through a code switch."

Richards et al (1985) in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics define code switching as a change by a speaker from one language or language variety to another. This phenomenon can occur in the middle of the speech, or in the middle of a sentence. It can also occur in a discussion when one interlocutor utilises one language and the other responds in another.

Code switching occurs at both interlingual and intralingual levels. There are also monolinguals who code switch depending on the social situation they are in that time (Asmah, 1982). The intralingual codes being switched are mainly dialects, which are not considered in the present study.

Wong (1979) too stresses that code switching is "not restricted to the uneducated or those with only a low level of proficiency in the language concerned". It is common among competent bilinguals as well.

A differentiation is made between the matrix and embedded languages in code switching. The language that is mainly used during a conversation and whose grammar is – in most cases – applied to the overall sentence structure is called the matrix

language. The embedded language is one from which switches may originate. Myers. Scotton (1993 : 20) states that :

“the participating languages are labeled in the following way. The ‘base’ language is called the matrix language (ML) and the contributing language (or languages) is called the embedded language (EL).”

2.2 Other Related Terms

Although code switching is commonly used to describe the switch between languages in the course of a single conversation, other terms have also been used. These include code mixing, borrowing and extended borrowing.

Borrowing is seen by Gumperz (1982 : 66) as “the introduction of single words or short frozen idiomatic phrases from one variety into the other. The linguistic items are incorporated into the grammatical system” and are treated as part of the language.

Romaine (1986 : 111) says that borrowing generally refers to “factors such as prestige and need” and very frequently involves “culture-specific items, like food, dress, cultural institution and activities”.

Apart from code switching and borrowing, there is also code mixing.

Holmes, considers switching and mixing the same phenomenon, preferring code switching :

“Code mixing suggests the speaker is mixing up codes indiscriminately or because of incompetence, whereas the switches are very well motivated. Switching is a distinctive conversational style used among bilinguals and multilinguals – a rich linguistic resource available to them.” (Holmes 2008 : 43)

Wardhaugh (1988 : 1) suggests that code mixing occurs “when conversants use both languages together to the extent that they change from one language to the other in the course of a single utterance.”

Kachru (1978 : 28) suggests that code switching is the ability to switch from one code to another. He adds that it is the alternation (of codes) determined by functions, situations and participants. Code mixing, which he investigated as a communicative strategy in India is described as “transferring linguistic units from one code to another

which results in developing a new restricted or not so restricted code of linguistic interaction”. He states that the code mixing is in fact extended borrowing.

In this study, code-switching is used as generic term to include code mixing and borrowing. Therefore, the distinction between code mixing and borrowing, which is not very clear cut, will not be given priority in the analysis.

2.3 Studies on Code Switching

Over the ages, various linguists have carried out extensive research on code switching and a lot of documentation exist in this field. These studies cover code switching in formal and informal situations. Ana Celia Zentella, an anthropological linguist, made an important contribution to code switching. She studied Puerto Rican children in New York (1997). Over a period of fourteen years she observed the lives of five Puerto Rican girls from childhood to adulthood to identify the basis for the utilisation of various language variations found in their intricate speech community. This research was carried out by means of observation and supported by audio and video recordings. The code-switching styles of the five participants were recounted along with the elements that precipitate them. According to Zentella (1997 : 92-93) :

“Code switching performed important conversational work as evidenced by her discovery of the use of code switching to accomplish 22 conversational strategies which she classifies under three major categories. These include footing, clarification and/or emphasis and crutch-like code mixes.”

One of the major categories under the communicative functions of code switching is “footing” and this grouping include quotations, topic shift, rhetorical ask and answer, future referent check, checking, narrative frame break, mitigating requests, attention attraction, declarative/question shift, role shift and aggravating requests. The clarification and/or emphasis category include appositions, double subjects, accounting for requests and translations. The third category in the communicative function is the crutch-like code mixing and involves taboos, parallelism (parroting), filling in, recycling, triggers and crutching (Zentella, 1997).

According to Zentella (1997), when a speaker cannot recall a word, the strategy employed is called “crutching”. For example, when an English word is used by an English interlocutor at the end of the Malay sentence. She observed that this strategy was the second most favoured kind of switch and was utilised when the interlocutor is unable to use the appropriate word and desires to hide his linguistic shortcomings. Zentella called it “crutching” because she likens it to a disabled individual utilising crutches as a walking support. Likewise, an interlocutor who is a bilingual utilises a word from a different language as a substitute to converse when he is unable to utilise a particular word in a language, the same way the disabled person uses the crutch to walk.

Zentella also maintains that when a speech of another person is reproduced, the code switching strategy of “parallelism” (parroting) is employed. She provides an example where a speaker marks the switch when he copies a Spanish phrase from the preceding interlocutor in a primarily English sentence. Zentella (1977 : 97) states that :

“Quotations, be it direct or indirect quotations, was the strategy used by the Spanish children to highlight their message; switches that are signaled by a change in the speaker’s role such as when the speaker is quoting the speech of another speaker, from a narrator to the listener of the narration, from friend to protector and so forth. Depending on what role the children were assuming, the choice of code changed.”

Zentella also indicated that when the children needed the listener’s views or acceptance, they usually used a tag question and the role of switching for checking occurred. A tag question “is a constituent that is added after a statement in order to request confirmation or disconfirmation of the statement from the addressee.” (Sadock and Zwicky, 1985:183).

Taking a Malaysian perspective, Kow’s research (Kow, 2003) on code-switching among pre-school children showed that code-switching was used imaginatively by the children. To offset their limited vocabulary, the children used code switching as a vehicle to help them to get the meaning across effectively. Ten conditions identified by Kow (2003) as promoting code switching among her subjects were : the reality that some occurrences have only been encountered in one of the languages, the absence of a

particular word in any one language, it is less complicated to use certain words in one of the languages, a clarification of a misunderstanding, one desires to generate a particular communication effect, certain ideas are better expressed in one of the languages, as an expression of group solidarity, when a trigger effect causes one to continue in a language last spoken, when there is a desire to exclude a particular individual and ultimately when a point is to be made. As stated by Kow earlier, the function the strategy served was influenced by the ten identified circumstances that promoted switches from one language to another. For example, when a speaker code switches to another language to “fill in” the words when he is unable to utilize the appropriate words during a conversation, the function of this strategy, at that moment is to overcome the linguistic shortcoming and ensure successful communication.

Gumperz (1977) affirms :

“code switching is a conversational strategy, the function of which is to express social meanings. The six functions (called conversational/ discourse functions) are – quotation, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectification.” (cited in Ong, 2008 : 20)

When a person reports the speech of another in a conversation a different language will be employed in a quotation. An addressee is defined as the recipient of a message by code switches. In this situation, it is quite common to see that a speaker will switch to a particular language the interactant knows, especially if the interactant is not an immediate participant in the discussion. This is to encourage the interactant to engage in the conversation.

Besides this, code switching is utilized as sentence fillers and is also utilized to interject as indicated in this example from Gumperz (1982:77) where he cites the case of two Chicano professionals who were parting and one interlocutor says, “Well, I’m glad to meet you” and the other responds, “Andlae Pues (meaning-OK. Swell) and do come again. Mm?”

Gumperz (1977) states :

“Words are sometimes repeated in another language and this usually functions to clarify or even emphasize the meaning of a message. Another use of code switching is message qualification where a topic is introduced in one language and clarified or commented upon in another. The last function is called personalisation versus objectification where the choice of code marks contrasts such as the degree of speaker involvement – whether it’s personalised or to show distance, or whether a statement reflects personal opinion or facts.” (cited in Ong, 2008 : 20)

This is clearly seen in the example cited by Eastman (1992 : 91) where a shopper provides a ‘double’ code switch while shopping in a European styled supermarket in Dakar. While he used the conventional French to ask the cashier the amount he needed to pay, he switches to Wolof when he requested the cashier for additional bags. This switch in language not only brings out the practice of assisting a co-ethnic but moves the conversation to a more informal nature instead of a formal conversation.

A : “*C’est combien ? Vous cuez dit ? ... **May ma ay mbuus waay !***”

(How much is it ? What did you say ? **Give me some bags would you?**)”

Here the speaker plays upon the connotations of a “we code” (vs a ‘they code’) to create a conversational effect.

Gumperz’s categorization will be helpful in the analysis of this study which is associated with the social aspects of English – Malay code switching in a formal meeting setting. Gumperz’s framework is used as a basis in this research because Gumperz, who studied code switching for years, is able to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the topic to the readers. The linguistic community considers Gumperz’s work authoritative and outstanding, though dated. Gumperz undertook practical work on code switching in different settings (Norwegian post office (1971), North Indian village (1971), Austrian village (1971), Yugoslavia, United States (1971), just to name a few) and includes various languages such as Tok Pisin-English, Spanish-English, Hindi-Punjabi (1964), Bokmal-Ranamal and Slovenian-German. As Gumperz collected data

from various environments and in languages other than English, the data is representative. During the research period, Gumperz's undertook his studies both in formal and informal settings and he personally participated in the conversations he analysed. According to Ong (2008 : 21), "his close interactions with his subjects gave him first hand experience and led to what could possibly be an authentic interpretation of the code switched data produced". Further more, Gumperz (1982 : 64) predicts that the code switching as a phenomenon is on the increase,

"With the increasing displacement of formerly stable populations and the growing ethnic diversification of metropolitan centres, the communicative uses of code switching are more likely to increase than decrease."

It was felt that Noor Azlina's observations on code switching will be an excellent basis for the present study as her study specifically focused on Malay-English bilinguals.

Noor Azlina (1979) made some observations on code switching, specifically among Malay-English bilinguals. She found that there are two sociolinguistic variables for code switching. One is the motivational variable, that is, to emphasise social distance, to convey nuances of meaning (insult or humour), and to reflect intimacy of friendship or ethnicity. Secondly, there is the situational variable in which the formality of the topic or setting, the participants' individual personalities and their relationship, or degree of acquaintance is of importance.

In addition to that, Noor Azlina also came up with ten contextual factors in code switching :

- a) Certain words are used because they have no Malay equivalents.
- b) Some have Malay equivalents but are basically English loan words adapted to Malay phonological and morphological patterns.
- c) Some also have Malay equivalents but the Malay equivalents are not commonly used, like "*musim sejuk*" for "winter".

- d) Some words are used because they represent concepts that are Western rather than Malay.
- e) Code switching also occurs when the speaker uses certain idioms which express the meaning more accurately, or which demonstrate intimacy through shared knowledge between speakers.
- f) Speakers also switch code from English to Malay because sometimes it is more economical – a small number of Malay words is sufficient to communicate many English words.
- g) Economy of articulation – speaker uses shorter English words in place of longer Malay words, like “law” for “*undang-undang*”.
- h) There is no English equivalent to a Malay word or concept, like “*canai*”.
- i) Speakers may also wish to avoid ‘taboo’ words in Malay, and English offer more polite ones.
- j) Speakers use pronouns “I” and “You” at all times, probably to symbolize equalitarian status between interlocutors.

According to Noor Azlina, there are also another six Rhetorical Stylistic Switching, which serve to “add colour to speech” or to emphasise a statement :

- a) Repeating a statement in another language for emphasis.
- b) Expressing contrast in the other language for better emphasis.
- c) Expressing surprise in the other code for better effect.
- d) Making parenthetical remark in the other code to soften the effect.
- e) Switching codes on taboo topics to soften the effect or to distract listeners from the speaker’s remarks.
- f) Direct quotations are always in the other language.

2.4 Reasons for Code Switching

The reasons people code switch has been of great interest to sociolinguists. Code switching can have various functions or reasons and they are discussed below.

Romaine (1986 : 111) states that :

“Although it is popularly believed by bilingual speakers themselves that they mix or borrow because they don’t know the term in one language or another, it is often the case that switching occurs most often for items which people know and use in both languages.”

and this is undeniably true. There could be 1001 possible reasons for code switching as discovered by various linguists, ranging from the speaker and the topic to the situation. Some people code switch for persona or identity. Therefore, most of the time, as stated by Fishman (1986), one identifies himself with a different speech network to which he belongs, wants to belong, and from which he seeks acceptance. Wong (1979) is of an almost similar opinion. She holds that speakers may code switch to mark their unique linguistic and cultural heritage, “As more and more Malaysians begin to take pride in their own distinctive national identity, they begin to feel that code switching is one good expression of their multilingual character.” (Wong, 1979 : 4)

Gumperz (1982) makes a list of the conversational functions of code switching. Firstly, code switching occurs in quotations direct or repeated speech. Secondly, it is governed by addressee specification – a different code for different addressee. The third function is as a mark of interjection or sentence filler, a term also used by Tongue (1974) as quoted in Wong (1979). Next is for reiteration, meaning to repeat an expression in another code either to clarify or emphasise a message. Code switching also functions to qualify a message, and finally it functions in personalization vs objectivation which refers to the change of codes when talking about oneself as opposed to talking about other people.

Wong (1979) looking into the phenomenon of code switching from a Malaysian perspective, suggests that the code switchers are bilinguals with at least partial command over the spoken forms of languages. She holds that the degree of proficiency over the languages concerned does not determine their code switching habits. Code-switching is a common occurrence among Malaysians, from the poorly educated to the

highly educated people, most of whom are fluent bilinguals. This indicates the code switching takes place at all levels of society regardless of educational level. Wong also claims that code switching occurs mainly in speech, especially in informal situations among bilinguals and multilinguals across the country. It is no longer regarded as a sign of inferiority or incompetence of the speaker. Wong argues that people can switch either “deliberately” or “involuntarily”. They switch “deliberately” because of need, for instance to fill in gaps caused by insufficient command of the language used. The speaker also switches “deliberately” when he intentionally switches codes to establish rapport with his bilingual audience. These reasons may coincide with the findings in the present study.

“Involuntary” code switching, she suggests, is when “it is forced upon one by circumstances of familiarity” (Wong, 1979 : 4), like being familiar with a topic in a particular language only. Apart from that there are many other reasons for involuntary code switching which are difficult to justify. Usually it is because of speakers’ own personal reasons.

Wong (1979 : 4) also mentions that there are five situational variables for code switching among bilinguals :

- a) The extent of their personal repertoires, whether or not they are equal.
- b) Certain personal characteristic which lead to forming a homogeneous group in terms of age, educational background and socio economic status, whether or not they are shared.
- c) The degrees of intimacy or friendship, in showing which, the participants use not only language alternation, but colloquial Malay as well.
- d) The setting or locale, as more often than not, most informal situations encourage more extensive code switching.
- e) The topic, whether or not a certain topic is handled better in one language or another.

Wong (1979 : 5) also points out there are cases where the entire utterance is in one code, but “tagged on” at the end is a “marker” from another, which has little lexical function of its own. One of the examples illustrated by Wong is :

I can slide backwards, *tahu?* (translated into “you know”

Or just “know” in English)

The phenomenon is very common among Malaysian.

According to Scotton and Ceri (1975) as cited in Malaevizzhi (2006:32-33), “situational code switching is also know as diaglosia. Different types of situations are home, office and school”. In a diglossic situation, some subjects and circumstances are more appropriate for one language over another. Depending on what is discussed and the location, the speakers choose the code to speak in. For example, a child who is a bilingual English - Tamil might speak Tamil at home and English in class, but Tamil during school recess with his/her Indian friends.

2.5 Code Switching at the Work Place

Much research has been conducted on code-switching at the workplace. Jariah’s (2003) study centered on the usage of code switching as a device to wield power. She concentrated on linguistic power wielding among female and male participants during office meetings. Her study put forward the idea that participants developed a strategy of code switching to exert power in a particular context and to negotiate a language choice. Jariah also provides an example of how a Head of a Department exerts power on her Non Malay staff by using Malay which is her mother tongue..

Other studies also analysed code switching in workplaces where the setting is formal and one such study was carried out by David (2003). Her study focused on role and functions of code switching in the Malaysian courtrooms. Her aim was to study the reasons for code switching by legal witnesses and officers. She identified twelve reasons for code switching in a courtroom:

- Habitual use of code switching.
- Language choice with different interlocutors.
- Code switching for technical terms.
- Code switching for culturally alien terms.
- Code switching due to limited proficiency.
- Code switching for emphasis.
- Code switching to coerce witness.
- Code switching for sarcasm.
- Code switching to quote.
- Non-reciprocal language choice.
- Code switching to drive home a point.
- Code switching as a strategy to attain professional goals.

David (2010) cited Nambiar (1999) whose data in her study of the strategies of negotiation between bankers and loan application in Malaysia revealed that the choices of codes used by both parties reflected accommodation. The selection of code that is likely to be perceived as distancing could be detrimental to a bank's corporate targets.

In addition David (2010) also cited Chu (2005), who showed that Medical Doctors (MDs) at a private clinic for children used code switches to build rapport and kinship with their patients and to create solidarity.

According to Damken – Brown and Nelson (2009), men and women act in a firmly established manner that was acquired from birth and deeply implanted in the office organization. Code switching provides an avenue for the men and women to communicate and assists both men and women overcome the gender barrier and work effectively together.

In addition, Nor Azni (2004) quotes Morais (1995) who in a study of a Malaysian multilingual workplace, discovered that code choice was related to position with the organizational structure, to purpose (e.g. English was used in technical

interactions), and to group identification (e.g. Malay, Tamil, and Chinese dialects were used among groups of native speakers). Nair – Venogopal (2000) as cited in Nor Azni (2004) studied two Malaysian business organizations where code-switching was prevalent :

“Although English was the ‘normative’ oral code, employees at all levels of employment were able to draw upon other codes, most commonly resulting in English-Malay code-switching. The researcher concluded that much of the code-switching behaviour signaled conscious acts of group identification.” (Nor Azni, 2004 : 2).

2.6 Conclusion

Various aspects related with the code-switching phenomenon have been highlighted in this chapter. Code-switching is made out to be a meaningful activity, that is, there are functions and intentions assigned to this behaviour (Gumperz, 1971 ; Myers – Scotton 1989; Hoffman, 1991). Based on this assumption, this study investigates how code switching serves certain functions during meetings. It is hoped that the literature review of earlier studies by local and international researchers will contribute to the present study. Work done by Gumperz (1982), Zentella (1997), Wong (1979) and Noor Azlina (1979) on conversational functions of code switching will form the basis of this research. The methodology employed in the present study will be discussed in the following chapter.