CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

The empirical study carried out here mainly attempts to identify the frequency of code switching, discover what functions are fulfilled when Malaysian professionals of Company X code switched and whether the code switching occurred deliberately or involuntarily.

The data gathered indicated that there were instances of code switching throughout the meetings. The participants, being bilinguals or multilinguals (except two who are foreigners) use English as the matrix language and Malay as the embedded language.

4.1   Profile of the Participants

Three meetings were recorded and fourteen staff members attended the meetings. The number of participants who attended each meeting and their racial/nationality breakdown is shown in Fig 4.1. Only the Malaysians are further sub divided into race.
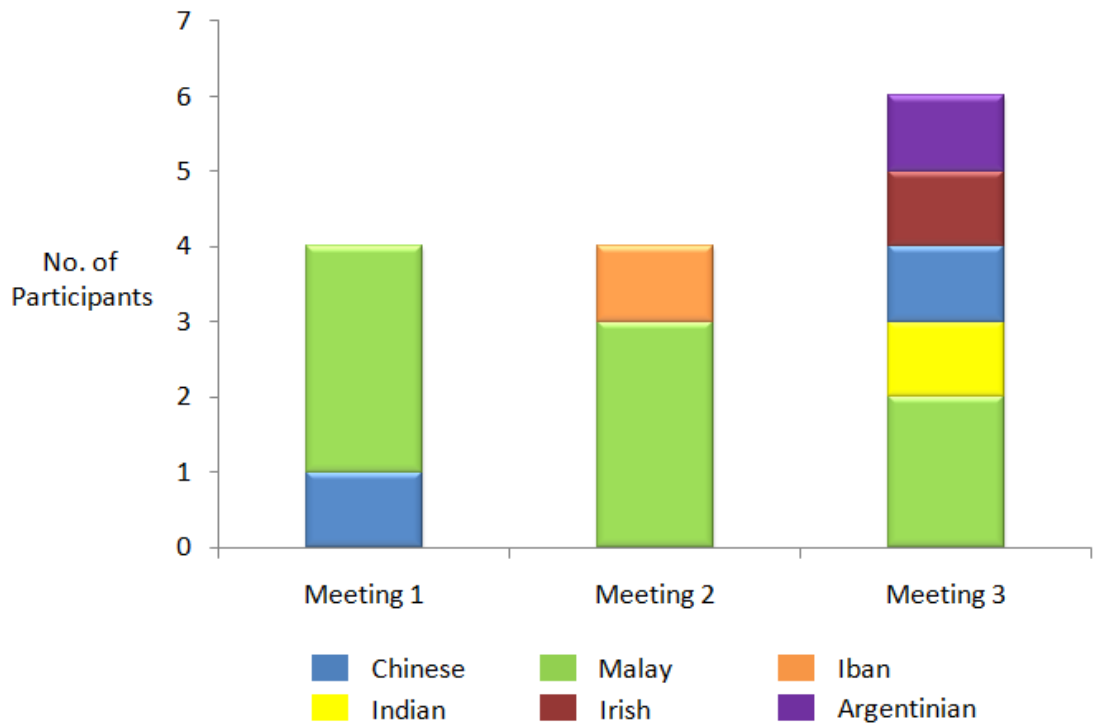
Figure 4.1
Number of Participants at Meetings and
the racial/nationality breakdown.

As shown by Fig 4.1, four staff members attended the first meeting and they were identified as A, B, C, and D. A is a Chinese while the other three are Malays (B, C, D). As gathered from the questionnaire, Fig 4.2 indicates the language choice of these participants for speaking, thinking and work. It can be gathered that while the two Malay staff members (C and D) are comfortable using Malay and English in the situations indicated, the third Malay staff member (B) uses English only for work and is more comfortable using Malay for thinking and speaking. The Chinese staff member (A) is comfortable using English and Chinese but for work he uses only English.
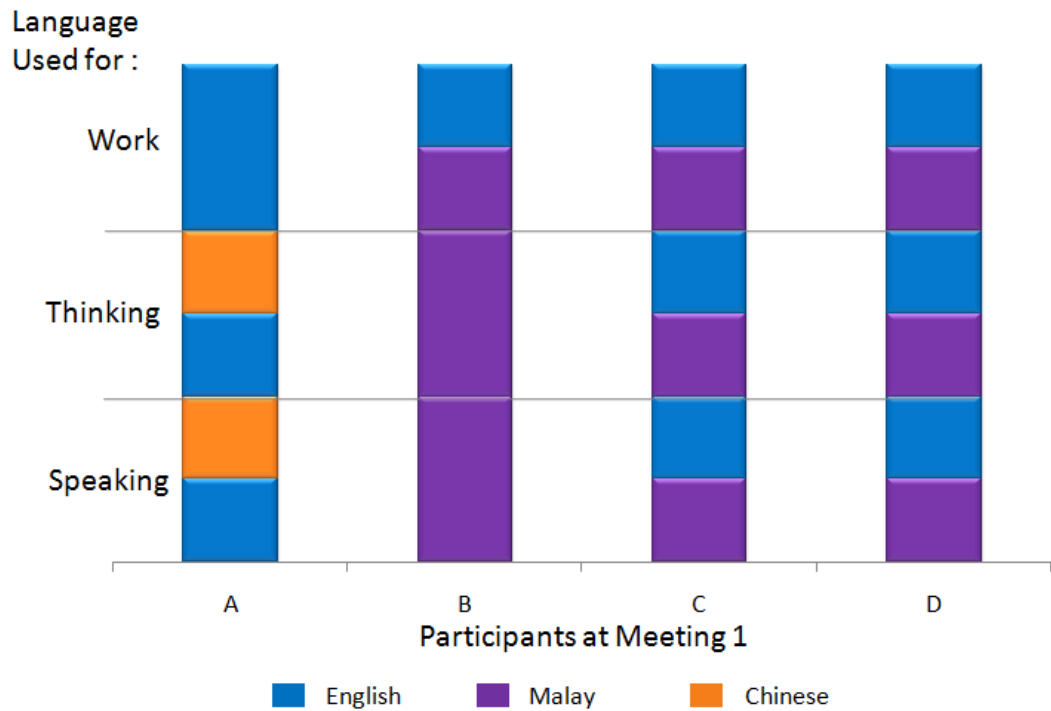
Figure 4.2
Language Choice of Subjects who
Participated in Meeting 1.

Another four staff members attended the second meeting (Fig 4.1) and were identified as E, F, G and H. E, F and G are Malays and H is an Iban. Fig 4.3 shows the language choice of these participants for speaking, thinking and work. While the Malay staff member identified as E prefers English for all identified activities, two Malay staff members (F & G) are comfortable using English and Malay. The fourth staff member (H) who is an Ibanese prefers English for work, Malay/English for thinking and Ibanese/Malay/English for speaking.
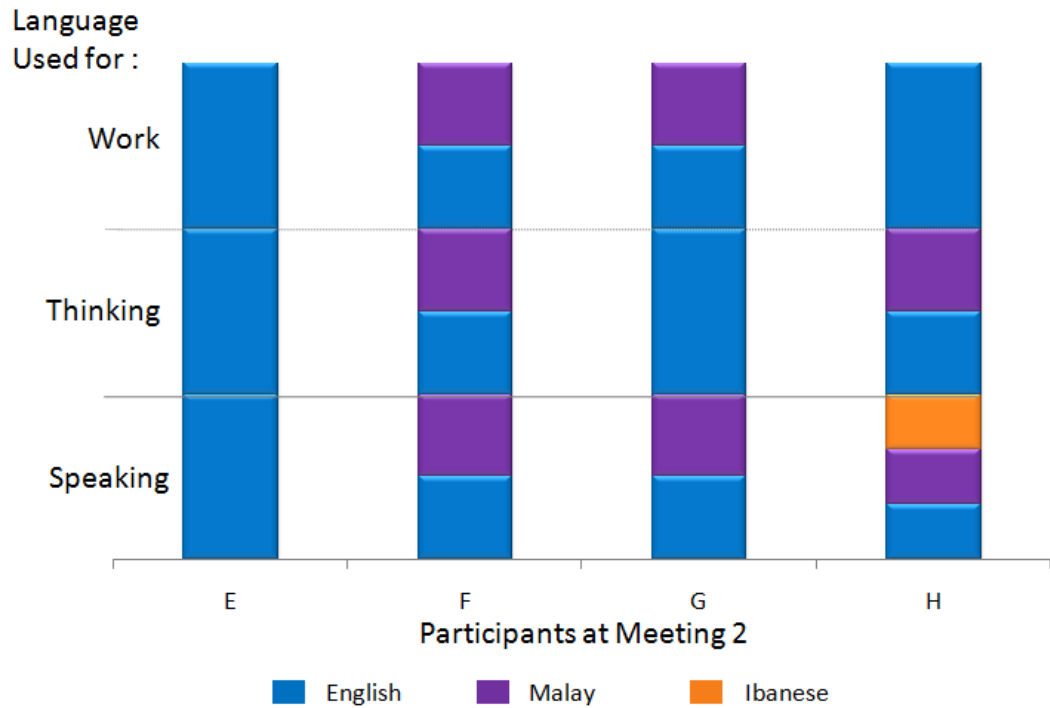
Figure 4.3
Language Choice of Subjects who
Participated in Meeting 2

The third meeting was attended by six staff members (Fig 4.1) and they were

identified as I, J, K, L, M and N. This group included two foreigners who are Irish (M)

and Argentinean (N). The rest were made up of two Malays (I & J), one Indian (K) and

one Chinese (L). Fig 4.4 indicates language choice of these participants for speaking,

thinking and work. As expected for such a cosmopolitan group, six language were

preferred. All preferred to use English for work except staff member I (Malay) who

preferred English/Malay. For speaking, all preferred to use English and their mother

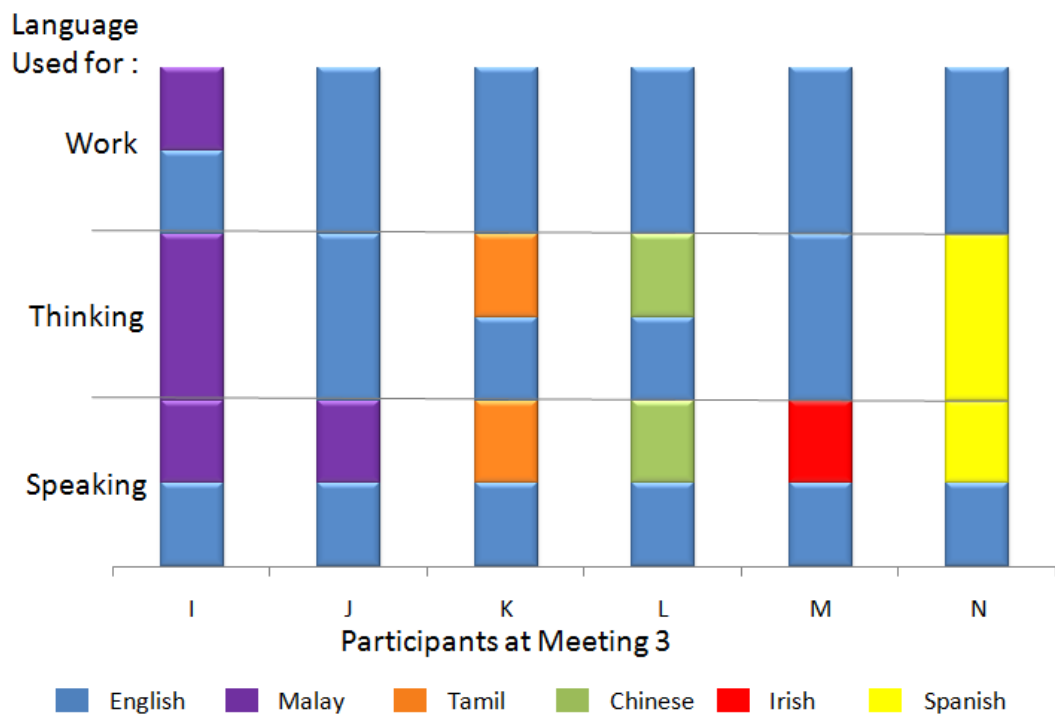tongue.

Figure 4.4
Language Choice of Subjects who
Participated in Meeting 3

Table 4.1 below indicates the profile of all the participants. It indicates the age, nationality, race and position in the organisation of the participants.

Table 4.1
Profile of the Participants

Participants	Age	Nationality	Race	Position
A	43	Malaysian	Chinese	Manager
B	27	Malaysian	Malay	Executive
C	42	Malaysian	Malay	Senior Executive
D	39	Malaysian	Malay	Manager
E	49	Malaysian	Malay	General Manager
F	35	Malaysian	Malay	Senior Executive
G	25	Malaysian	Malay	Executive
H	37	Malaysian	Iban	Senior Executive
I	25	Malaysian	Malay	Executive
J	48	Malaysian	Malay	Senior Manager
K	53	Malaysian	Indian	General Manager
L	41	Malaysian	Chinese	Senior Manager
M	52	Irish	Irish	Senior Manager
N	37	Argentinian	Argentinian	Senior Executive

4.2 Frequency of Code Switching by Participants.

The transcripts of the recordings of meetings 1, 2, 3 provided data to determine the frequency and types of code switching by participants. The other two instruments, questionnaire and interview, were used to gather personal information about the participants, deduce the participants' reasons for code switching and get a better understanding of the participants' reasons for code switching.

The duration of each meeting was approximately one hour. Meeting 1 took place in Room 5 on the 9th floor at the Corporate office. Speakers A, B, C and D were discussing about a survey to be conducted in Company X. The survey is to assess how effective improvement initiatives have been and how they have been accepted by the

masses. Information is put on the board and discussions are centered around it. Meeting 2 took place in the General Manager's meeting room. Speakers E, F, G and H were reviewing a report submitted by another company to Company X and identifying areas of improvement. Meeting 3 took place in Level 52 meeting room at the Corporate office. Speakers I, J, K, L, M and N were discussing about projects being under taken in the company. The status of the various projects and the value creation (VC) for each project was discussed prior to the Management Committee meeting. The project were being reviewed department by department.

Code switching does take place during all three meetings, but to varying degree. It can be observed that most of the code switching occurred in Meeting 1. In Meeting 1, thirty seven words or 4.9% of words were code switched by three out of four participants. In Meeting 2, it was fifteen words or 1.8% by two out of four participants and in Meeting 3, it was two words or 0.1% by one out of six participants. In total, fifty four words or 1.8% of words were code switched.

Although fourteen members participated in the meetings, only six participants code switched (B, C, D, F, G, & I). All of them were Malays and their medium of instruction in schools was Malay. Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 indicate the participants' language choices for speaking, thinking and work. The data from Table 4.2 indicates that the Senior Executives (C & F) and the Manager (D), who were middle management, code switched the most. The exception was executive B.

Table 4.2
Number and Percentage of Code Switches made
during the three meetings.

	Participants	No. of words spoken	No. of words code switched	% of code switches
Meeting 1	A	75	-	-
	B	348	20	5.7
	C	200	8	4.0
	D	127	9	7.1
	Total	750	37	4.9
Meeting 2	E	168	-	-
	F	158	7	4.4
	G	291	8	2.7
	H	225	-	-
	Total	842	15	1.8
Meeting 3	I	481	2	0.4
	J	293	-	-
	K	231	-	-
	L	170	-	-
	M	93	-	-
	N	180	-	-
	Total	1448	2	0.1
	Grand Total	3040	54	1.8

4.3   Inference Dimension of the Data

This section deals with the inference dimension of the data analysis. As stated in Chapter 3, this study adopted the ethnographical approach where the data collected primarily consisted of recorded natural conversation by the subjects. Then in an attempt at triangulation, questionnaires were administered and brief post meeting interviews were conducted mainly to confirm the findings obtained through the primary data. The findings obtained through the questionnaire and interview are discussed next.

4.4   The Questionnaire

The questionnaire helped confirm the findings by providing the personal information about the participants. To a certain extent, this information helped to infer the participants' reasons for code switching. The participants' responses in the questionnaire indicated their background, for instance where they came from and whether they were from an urban or rural area, their medium of instruction in school and university and the language they spoke with their parents and other family members. From this information, it was possible to infer the extent to which Malay and other languages are dominant in the particular participant's life.

Question 1 helped the researcher identify the age of the participants and this is represented in Fig 4.5
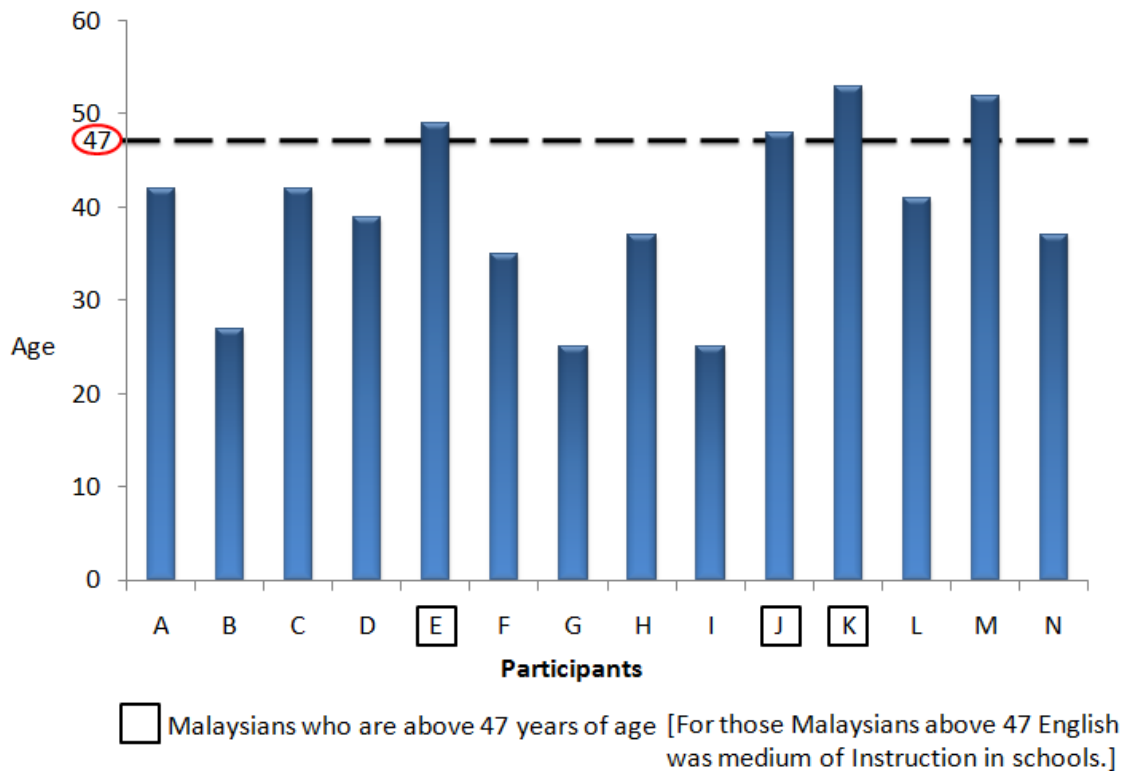

☐ Malaysians who are above 47 years of age [For those Malaysians above 47 English was medium of Instruction in schools.]

Fig 4.5
Age Profile of Participants.

This is helpful to identify the Malaysian participants whose medium of instruction in schools was English. As the Malaysian Government switched to using Malay as the medium of instruction in schools in 1970, all Malaysians who are above 47 years of age would have been educated in English. From Fig 4.5 we can gather that three participants, E (Malay), J (Malay) and K (Indian) whose age is above 47 would have been educated in English. The other participant, M, is an Irish and as such provides no input to this question.

Question 2 enables the participants to be categorized according to their positions in the organization. This is represented graphically in Figure 4.6 below.
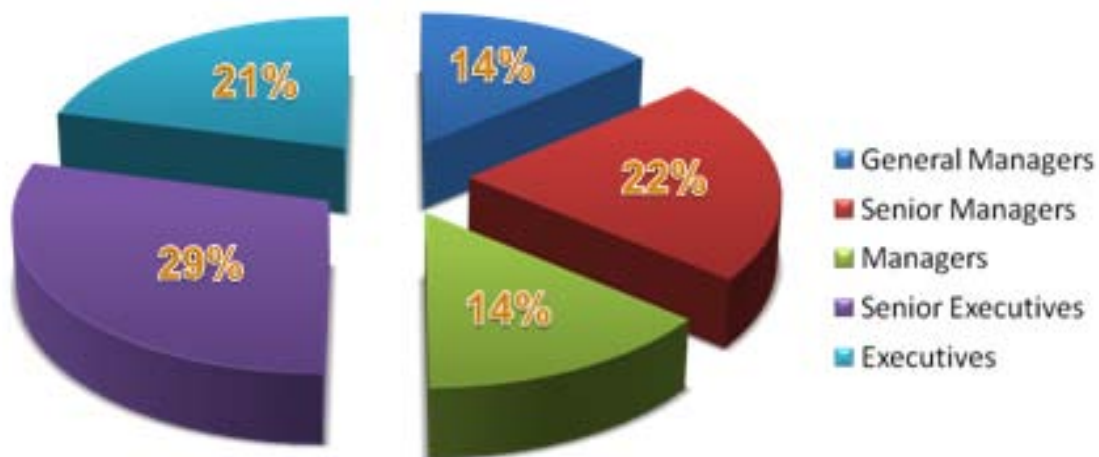

Fig 4.6
Distribution by Position (n = 14)

It can be seen that 50% (7) of the participants are Junior Management Executives i.e. 21% (3) are Executives and 29% (4) are Senior Executives. Another 36% (5) are Middle Management staff, made up 14% (2) who are Managers and 22%s (3) who are Senior Managers. The remaining 14% (2) of them are General Managers who are considered Top Management.

Thirdly, the information from the questionnaire provided information about the participants' language preference in reading, writing and speaking which has been mentioned earlier (Section 4.1). The findings showed that the participants mostly prefer English and Malay. This information is especially useful because it indicates that the

participants could have code switched because they feel comfortable using English as much as Malay,

The questionnaire and interview also indicated the participants' personal assessments regarding their ability in reading, writing, speaking and understanding English, Malay and other languages. All the Malaysian participants considered themselves fairly fluent in English and Malay, which makes them effective or balanced bilinguals. In addition, some of the participants were found to be multilinguals.

From Figure 4.7, it can be gathered that 50% (seven) of the participants are bilinguals and the remaining 50% (seven) are multilinguals. The two most commonly used languages by the participants are English and Malay. Thus code switching is restricted to these two languages during meetings. In addition, most, if not all, Malaysians have some level of proficiency in both these languages and feel comfortable in switching between Malay and English.
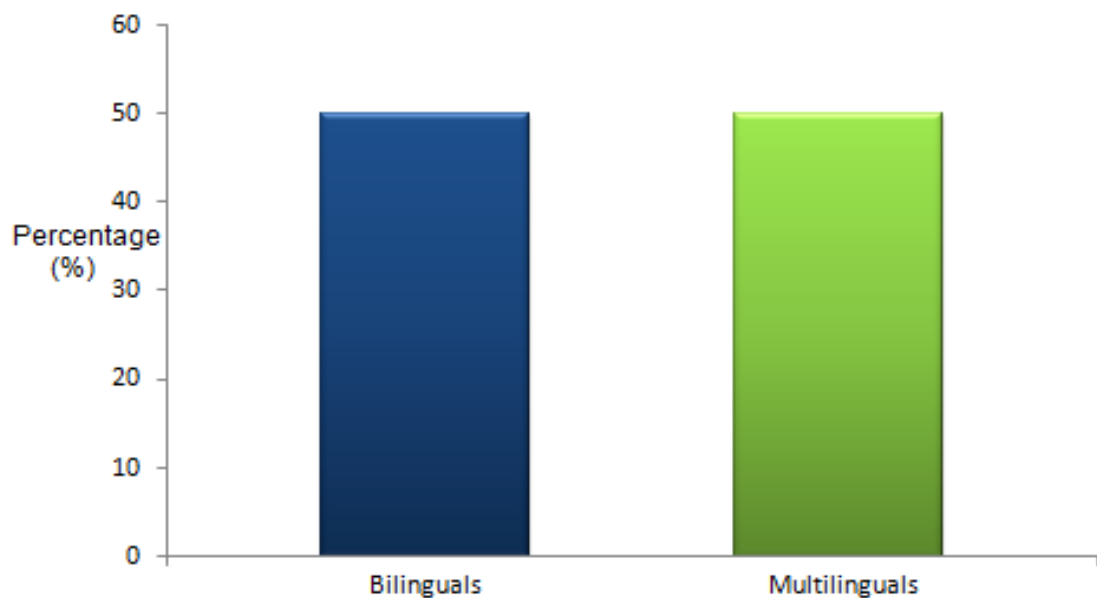

Fig 4.7
Distribution of Bilingual and Multilingual
Participants (n = 14)

It is quite normal for one to speak in a language one thinks in and the language preferred for speaking is the language most often used to discuss work, unless company policy dictates otherwise. Based on the questionnaire, the language used to think,

preferred for speaking and used to discuss work are analyzed further to substantiate the conclusions drawn from the recording.

From Table 4.3, it can be gathered that 93% (thirteen) of the participants generally preferred to speak in English, while 7% (one) preferred to speak in Malay alone. The thirteen participants who prefer to speak in English were also comfortable using a second language : seven use Malay, one uses Tamil, two use Chinese, one uses Ibanese, one uses Irish and one uses Spanish as well.

Table 4.3
Language Preferred for Speaking

Participant	Language				
	Malay	English	Tamil	Chinese	Others
A		X		X	
B	X				
C	X	X			
D	X	X			
E		X			
F	X	X			
G	X	X			
H	X	X			X (Ibanese)
I	X	X			
J	X	X			
K		X	X		
L		X		X	
M		X			X (Irish)
N		X			X (Spanish)
Total	8	13	1	2	3

Table 4.4 indicates the language used for thinking by the participants. It is noted that 78% (eleven) think in English and 14% (two) think in Malay alone. Out of the eleven participants who think in English, four also prefer in Malay for thinking in.

Table 4.4
Language Used for Thinking

Participant	Language				
	Malay	English	Tamil	Chinese	Others
A		X		X	
B	X				
C	X	X			
D	X	X			
E		X			
F	X	X			
G		X			
H	X	X			
I	X				
J		X			
K		X	X		
L		X		X	
M		X			
N					X (Spanish)
Total	6	11	1	1	1

Interestingly, it can be seen from Table 4.5 that 100% of the participants use English to discuss work. Out of these, 43% (six) also use Malay to discuss work.

Table 4.5
Language Used to Discuss Work

Participant	Language				
	Malay	English	Tamil	Chinese	Others
A		X			
B	X	X			
C	X	X			
D	X	X			
E		X			
F	X	X			
G	X	X			
H		X			
I		X			
J	X	X			
K		X			
L		X			
M		X			
N		X			
Total	6	14	-	-	-

From the above analysis of data collected from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that English is the predominant language, be it for thinking, speaking and to discuss work, by the participants who are Malaysian professionals. Malay is also the preferred language of about 50% of the participants. These findings support the finding gathered from the recordings – that meetings are conducted in English and there is switching to Malay.

4.5   The Post Meeting Interviews

Post meeting interviews were undertaken to obtain the participants' responses to their code switching during meetings. They were questioned to ascertain whether they were aware that they code switched during meetings and the possible reasons for their switches. In addition, the researcher tried to determine whether the reasons she assumed

for the participants' switches were valid. During the interview, further questions related to the questionnaire were raised to clarify the participants' responses.

The participants' responses to the interview questions are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6
Summary of Participants' Response
to Interview Questions.

Participants	Q1 : Are you aware of the fact that you code switch when you speak?	Q2 : Do you agree that code switching is an unconscious process? Why?	Q3 : Why do you code switch? State the reasons that you are aware of.	Q4 : How do you feel on occasions during which you are only to speak Malay or English?	Q5 : Why do you code switch at this particular time?
A	-	Yes	unable to	no problem	
B	No	Yes	provide	no issue	unable
C	No	Yes	response	nothing	to
D	No	Yes	as they	nothing	provide
E	-	Yes	are not	no problem	reasons
F	No	Yes	aware	no problem	
G	No	Yes	that	no problem	
H	-	Yes	they	no issue	
I	No	Yes	code	no issue	
J	-	Yes	switch	nothing	
K	-	Yes		no problem	
L	-	Yes		no problem	
M	-	Yes		no problem	
N	-	Yes		no problem	

From the above, it can be gathered that they were not aware that they code switched and that their code switching was involuntary.

4.6   Code Switching Functions Performed During Meetings

The second objective of the study was to identify the functions of code switching and their frequency of occurrence during meetings. Based on Noor Azlina's framework, as explained in Chapter 2, section 2.3, seven functions of code switching were identified during the three meetings.

In the examples indicated below, the transcripts of recording one, two and three are abbreviated as Rec 1, Rec 2 and Rec 3 respectively (see Appendices C – E). The relevant lines in the transcript are indicated as L1, L2, etc.

4.6.1   For Economy of Articulation.

Example 1 : (Rec 1 / L20)

The speakers are discussing about the Hit index which will form the basis of a survey being planned.

A : So 134 is the whole population?

B : The whole population.

A : 134 includes what? Execs and non-execs?

B : Yes. After this *kita nak* go through *inikah*?

 [Yes. After this <u>*are we going to*</u> go through <u>*this*</u>?]

C : We have got 26 Hits. Active Hits. The definition of Active Hits is?

In **Example** 1, the switch is for the economy of articulation, which is similar to the one suggested by Noor Azlina (1979). The speaker could have used the English equivalent of the word, which is "do we have to", an expression two syllables longer than "*kita nak*".

Example 2 : (Rec 2 / L89)

The speakers are reviewing a report submitted by another company and identifying areas of improvement :

F : Out.

G : Out. And then under the schedule box. You have roll out right?

 And then they have question mark. Suggest remove that one.

F: Which one? Sheet *berapa ini*?

 [Which one? <u>*Which sheet are you referring to*</u>?]

G : Sheet 3. Then you have NA for feedback, also remove.

In this instance, Speaker B starts off with English and goes on to using Malay, "*berapa ini*?" probably because it is an expression she is familiar with. This time she may be doing so because it is more economical to say "*berapa ini*" in Malay rather

than in English which is "which sheet are you referring to", three syllables longer than the Malay equivalent.

4.6.2 Used to Express Colloquial Malaysian English.

A speaker may switch because he is familiar with a colloquial Malaysian English expression which to him, best expresses the meaning he is trying to convey.

Example 3 : (Rec 1 / L26)

C : We have got 26 Hits. Active Hits. The definition of Active Hits is?

A : On going, under planning, roll out or pilot.

D : PDCA.

B : *Mana ada* PDCA?

    [*Where got* PDCA].

In **Example 3**, "Where got" is a common colloquial expression to mean disagreement with the opinion, and the speaker may find it difficult to say it in English because it is an official meeting. Hence she has resorted to directly translating the English expression to the Malay 'mana ada'. This is quite common among Malaysian bilinguals.

Example 4 : (Rec 2 / L82)

The speakers are discussing about the need to retain the name of the resource person in the document. Normally this name is omitted in the report.

F : why resource person also got time allocation – eh?

E : Which one?

F : FWY.

E : He is resource person during the period-lah.

G : *Potong saja*lah. Resource person we said not included what. . .?

    [*Just cut*. Resource person we said not included what. . .?]

"Just cut" is also a colloquial expression commonly used in Malaysian English to denote "delete". Even when the participant is speaking English, he switches to Malay for that particular expression which also best suits his meaning. This is also similar to Noor Azlina's findings (1979). Besides expressing meaning more accurately, this switch also demonstrates intimacy – via common verbal repertoire (of the colloquial expression) – between interlocutors. All speakers understand the expression, and using it in speech facilitates communication.

4.6.3   As a Sentence filler

Example 5 : (Rec1 / L2)

The speakers are discussing about the results of a survey undertaken recently.

A : What are we here for?

B : O.K. This is just a . . . *apa ini* some rough statistics lah for the DICE

punya survey. I'll put it on board *dulu* and then we'll discuss it.

   [O.K. This is just a . . . *you know* some rough statistics lah for the

    DICE survey. I'll put it on board *first* and then we'll discuss it].

 C : This includes fabrication staff eh?

The switch 'apa ini' is a sentence filler or hesitation signal which helps him to "buy time" to compose his thoughts.

The example below is another illustration of a filler :

Example 6 : (Rec 1 / L36)

Speaker B is trying to confirm whether the name index includes all the relevant names.

B : The number should be reduced because there might be some duplication

    because certain Hits have the same number of people. But I have not really

    checked. I just asked Rosie to count for me on the highlights of the active

    Hits. That's all.

A : The highlights is as at what?

B : As at what you created for the last COC. As at 1st December.

D : Are you sure that the name index as listed are the *apa...* the active

  members?

 [Are you sure that the name index as listed are the <u>*you know*</u>… the

 active members?].

In this example, Speaker D does not seem to be able to find the word to express his ideas, and in the process of finding the exact word, he does his thinking out loud. He fills the gaps with a filler in Malay but it is not clear why he does so unless he uses it as a stock expression.

4.6.4   To Maintain a Particular Concept

Another function of code switching is to maintain a particular concept or significance that a certain word or expression represents in a particular language. The following example best illustrates this point.

Example 7 : (Rec 2 / L21)

The speakers are discussing the number of reviews of a report submitted to them. Speaker H has confused the report they are reviewing with another report reviewed a few days ago. Speaker G cautions him albeit light-heartedly.

E & G : Yes

 H   : Sorry, confused with the drilling.

 G   : Better not. You *puasa* eh today?

  [Better not. You <u>*are fasting*</u> today?]

 H   : You have the HPD?

In this example, "puasa" is a totally Malay and Islamic concept of indicating fasting during the month of Ramadhan. Saying "fasting" in English would alter the cultural significance altogether. Therefore the expression retains its form in Malay even through the discourse is in English such as in the example above. This is in line with Noor Azlina's (1969) views, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, that particular

words are used to reflect the habitual relationship between certain concepts and the language. This example illustrates how the cultural significance of a word or expression can cause a switch to occur into the language that carries it.

Example 8 : (Rec 2 / L37)

The speakers are discussing about the need to include position titles. They are worried it could be used to identify people. They are speculating about identifying their Managing Director, who happens to be a Dato.

H : For the COO we should leave it blank or what?

F : Which one? I think we should leave it blank.

H : No! No! For the approval.

G : I think should, should leave blank.

F : Could be *Dato* – eh?

    [Could be *Dato*].

G : Yep.

H : Could be anybody.

In this example, "*Dato*" the title that precedes a person's name causes the speaker to switch language. This is an example of some words existing in one language only. The interlocutor has no choice but to switch language when he wants to communicate fruitfully and this makes the switch mandatory (Barnstone, 1993).

4.6.5 Triggering

Clyne (1967 : 22) uses this term to describe the expressions which are determined by a previous utterance or by anticipation of what is to follow. He distinguished four types of "triggering", one of which is anticipational triggering. He suggests that "the anticipation of that word may cause the speaker to transfer several words immediately before the uttering of the actual trigger word". Below is an example of an anticipational triggering from the data.

Example 9 : (Rec 2 / L171)

The speakers are discussing the attachments to the report. As the attachments are not available in soft copies, Speaker F is worried that once some team members are transferred, the other members will have difficulty in following up on recommendations if the hard copy is lost.

E : But first you must look at it, what is it inside. It is their work sheets.

H : No, I am talking about the……..

F : Guidelines.

H : Mentoring system.

F : That's right. *Siapa tinggal ….. susah*lah"

   [That's right. *Who is left ….. difficult*].

H : The guidelines, procedures should be in the system.

E : Then I need to ask them, because they told me that this is the one they have.

   The copies that they have.

The speaker switches not only a word "*susah*" but also the whole sentence "*siapa tinggal ….. susah*lah". This happens when a speaker code switches with one word in mind and ends up switching the whole utterance as well. The word "*susah*" triggers the speaker into uttering the whole sentence in Malay when in fact the conversation is in English.

4.6.6   As a Strategy of Neutrality

According to Myers Scotton (1979), the speakers may turn to the other language to neutralize certain words or utterance which are potentially harsh. The example below may shed some light on this point.

Example 10 : (Rec 2 / L72)

The speakers are discussing about the contents of the report. Speaker G is questioning the need for including the position titles after the names. He feels that it is not necessary to put the titles, and his response is interesting.

G : They forgot – eh. O.K. Next. Confirmation. Do you want to put the title

after the names?

H : Titles? what do you mean?

G : Like, Mr. X, Result Manager, Mr. Y ….. Whatever.

F : Why is it on sheet 4?

G : O.K. No. *Tak payah*lah

[O.K. No. *No need*].

The speaker avoids using English equivalent of the word "*Tak payah*" which is "no need" probably because these words sound harsh and domineering. Saying it in Malay somehow neutralises the effect and the speaker feels more comfortable and free rejecting the proposal to include the position titles after the names.

Example 11 (Rec 1 / L137)

The speakers are discussing the merits of breaking down the initiatives into active and non active ones. Speaker C apparently is not keen on doing extra work, so she tries to dissuade the others.

C : But…..I can know from the Hits. I know which Hit is very strong. Which

Hit project is not strong…..that I want to know. So the members will be

looked together.

A : So the Hits we break down into active and non active.

B : That is right.

C : *Tak guna.*

[Useless].

A : Once you do that I can provide that advice.

The speaker steers clear of the English equivalent of the word "*Tak guna*" which is "useless". The word "useless" has a strong negative connotation and cannot be said gently. "*Tak guna*" was said in a pleasant tone and were not meant to offend.

4.6.7   To Emphasise a Point

To emphasise a point is to repeat a statement in the other language. People sometimes repeat themselves when emphasising a point and bilinguals sometimes do so in the other language. Gumperz (1982 : 77), says that "in some cases, such repetition may serve to clarify what is said, but often they simply amplify or emphasise a message.". Noor Azlina's (1979) study had similar findings. She says this type of switch is used to emphasise a statement or add colour to speech. Below is an example of repetition

Example 12 : (Rec 1 / L111)

Speaker D is telling the others that their roles will be greater during the data analysis, that is after the survey results have come back.

C : Actually the context of the survey is not to pin-point the fault but it is to find out the culture of the organization and the organization is broken down to all these divisions.

D : I think our involvement will be heavy on data analysis. Just after.

B : Just after?

D : Just after this ……. *Iya* ……*ini*.

[Just after this ……. *yes* ……*this]*.

In this example Speaker D says that their involvement will be greater after the survey results have come back. He is questioned by Speaker B and to stress his point, Speaker D uses the Malay word "*iya*" in an emphatic tone. This switch could be motivated by his need to amplify his point to show the addressee that he really means it. Below is another example of this type of switch.

Example 13 L (Rec 1 / L138, 142)

The discussion is centered on the need to breakdown the survey into various categories. Speaker C is satisfied with the number of categories and is not interested in increasing it.

A : This is not for …..

C : *Tak mahu.*

    [*Do not want*].

B : No….no….

C : No need.

A : We got to!

C : *Tak payah*

    [*No need*].

The repeated response in this case may have occurred because the speaker wants to emphasise the response. After the first response which is in Malay, the others do not seem to hear her, and without hesitation she repeats the answer, this time in English, perhaps to tell the others that she is serious and wants immediate compliance. Thereafter, Speaker C's switch in repeating her response is motivated by her need to ensure that her message gets across.

4.7　Random Switches

Finally, there seem to be a few instances of switches, the reasons for which cannot be determined. Sometimes the speakers do not seem to have any purpose for code switching. It proved difficult to attempt providing reasons for these random switches. When the speakers were consulted they admitted that they themselves could not think of specific reasons for the switches. Therefore it can be concluded that being bilinguals, code switching is a normal sociolinguistic and communication behaviour for them.

Wong (1979 : 4) suggests that people in general code switch to establish rapport with the audience, and Noor Azlina (1979 : 7) suggests that it is to reflect intimacy between the speakers. This also seems to be the intention of the participants of the present study who code switch to demonstrate that they share a considerable degree of friendship and intimacy.

4.8 Frequency of Code Switching Functions by Participants

An attempt is made here to identify the frequency of code switching functions by participants at the three meetings and to identify the most utilised function for code switching.

Table 4.7 shows the frequency of code switching functions performed during the three meetings.

Table 4.7
The Frequency of Code Switching Functions Performed by
Participants During Meetings

Funtions	Meeting 1				Meeting 2				Meeting 3						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	
Economy of articulation		1				1	1								3
Used to express colloquial Malaysian English		4				1	1								6
As a sentence filler		2		2											4
To maintain a particular concept						1	1								2
Triggering						1									1
As a strategy of neutrolity		1	1				1		1						4
To emphasize a point		1	2	1		1	1		1						7
TOTAL		9	3	3		5	5		2						27

From Table 4.7 it becomes obvious that "to emphasise a point" was the most common code switching function and "triggering" was the least used function in the three meetings.

Fig 4.8 indicates the code switching functions used during Meeting 1 and their frequency. Out of the seven functions identified, only five functions were utilized during Meeting 1. "To emphasise a point", "To maintain a particular concept" and "As a sentence filler" were the dominant functions employed during Meeting 1. These were employed by Participants B, C and D.
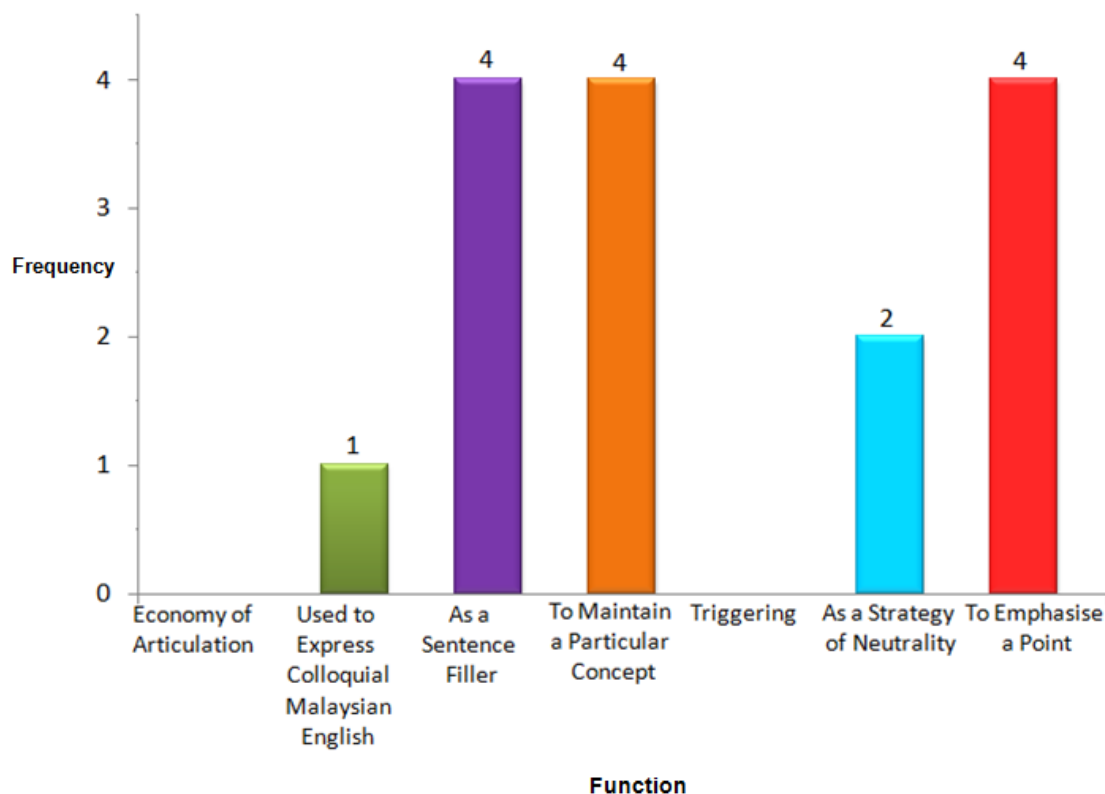

Fig 4.8
The frequency of code switching functions
Performed during meeting 1

The code switching functions applied during Meeting 2 is represented in Fig 4.9. While six code switching functions were employed, no predominant function was identified during Meeting 2. Participants F and G were the main contributors to the code switching during Meeting 2.
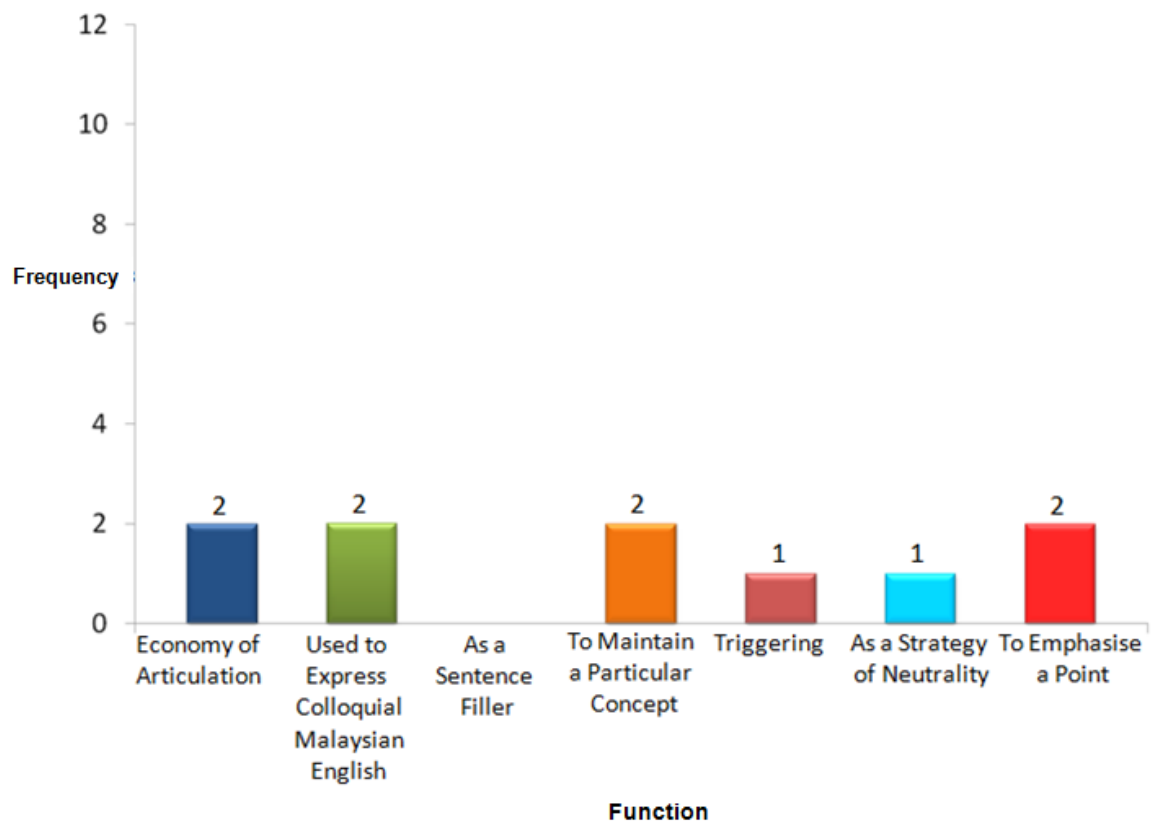

Fig 4.9
The frequency of code switching functions
performed during meeting 2

Fig 4.10 represents the code switching functions resorted to during Meeting 3. Code switching was the least during Meeting 3 and it only served the functions of "A strategy of neutrality" and "To emphasise a point". Only participant I code switched during Meeting 3.
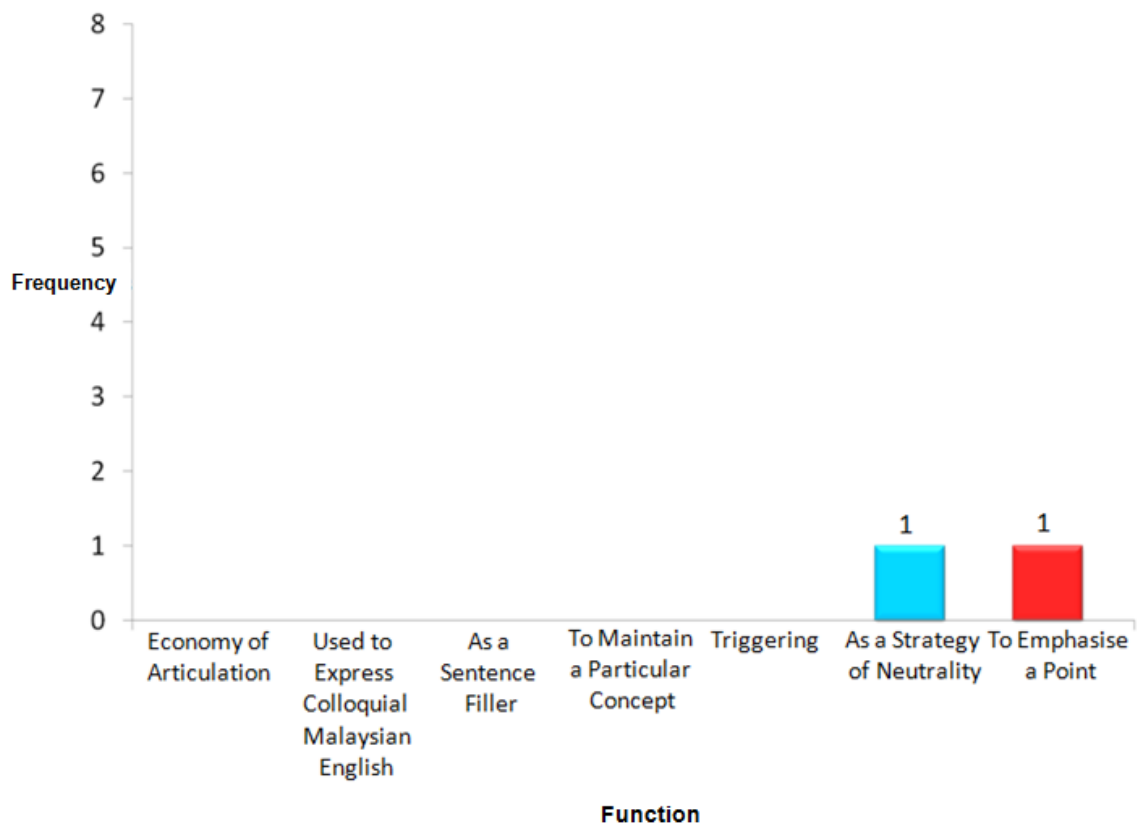
Fig 4.10
The frequency of code switching functions
Performed during meeting 3

From the table and figures above, it was noticed that " To emphasize a point" was the main code switching function employed (seven times) during the three meetings. Six out of fourteen participants demonstrated this behaviour. This is to be expected in meetings where people want to get their points of view across. The other main reason for code switching was "To express colloquial Malaysian English". This was seen in six situations and three out of fourteen participants indicated this behaviour. As noted in the previous section, this switch was made because the participants felt that the Malay word best expressed the meaning they were trying to convey and the English phrase was not appropriate for a formal meeting.

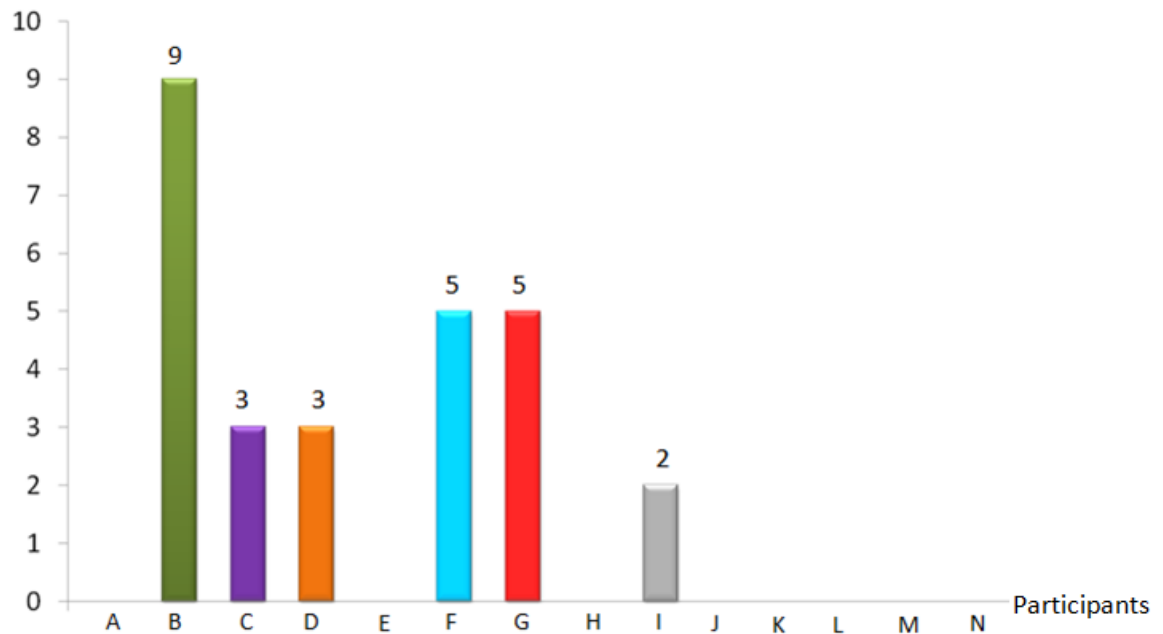Figure 4.11 is a bar chart showing the number of code switching functions performed by participants.

Fig 4.11
Breakdown of Code Switching Functions
According to Participants.

From Figure 4.11 it can be noted that participant B engaged in the highest number of code switches. Out of the total of nine switches identified, he code switched for five different reasons. B who is in his late twenties has worked in the firm for three years and is holding a junior position and his language of choice is Malay. This is attributed to the fact that he received his formal education in Malay. He speaks in Malay in informal settings. However he attempts to fit into the organization where English is used in official written and verbal communication. This has apparently resulted in him code switching.

Participants A, E, H, J, L, M and N did not engage in any code switching. As participants M and N are non-Malaysians, it is only expected that they did not code switch between English and Malay. Participants A and L are Chinese and speak more English at work and even at home. Their proficiency in this language could be due to

the fact that their tertiary education was in English as they studied overseas. E is a Malay and K is an Indian, and both are General Managers. Both being older (above 47 years), they received their entire education in English and display a good command of the language in conversation. They are considered to be seniors at the workplace. This could be seen as another reason they did not code switch.

J is a Malay who also received his entire education in English and is very proud of his proficiency in English and always makes it a point to converse with everyone in English. H is an Iban and he was in a private school and has not been frequent user of Malay since his school days. He eventually reverted to speaking English to everyone, including to those at his workplace.

4.9   Does Code Switching Occur Deliberately or Involuntarily?

The third objective of the study was to identify whether code switching occurred deliberately or involuntarily during meetings. The participants were asked their opinion during the interview regarding the code switching phenomenon in relation to their own strategies in doing it. The information gathered, as indicated in Table 4.6, showed that the participants take their bilingualism or multilingualism for granted, and that they code switch without being aware of it irrespective of whether the domain is a formal one or not.

Many languages are spoken in Malaysia as it is a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic country. It is quite common for bilinguals or multilinguals to use more than one language in a conversation as mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.1. According to Maya Khemlani, "It is seen as a habitual reason to code switch between a word or phrase level not because of the lack of vocabulary by the interlocutors but accustomed and a habitual reason" (Maya Khemlani : 2003 : 19). The participants of this present study code switch occasionally and in most cases they are not even aware of their behaviour. Switching from one language to another and back again seems to be a natural thing to do for them. They understand both languages and they know that their addressees do

too. Therefore they can alternate between the use of the English and Malay as they please with the comforting thought that they will be understood equally because they share the same linguistic repertoire, which means "the totality of linguistic resources available to members of a particular community" (Gumperz, 1986 : 20).

The results from the interview as tabulated in Table 4.6 enabled the researcher to conclude that code switching by the participants occurred involuntarily during meetings.

4.10   Conclusion

The data in this study indicates that code switching occurs not only in informal situations but formal ones such as in meetings. The frequency of code switching depends on the participants' position, language preference, and company policy on using English in official communication.

The researcher was able to identify seven types of code switches of which "To emphasise a point" formed the highest and most substantial function as performed by the participants.

The questionnaire and interview have proved to be useful in helping confirm some of the code switching functions. The information from these sources were compared to the findings derived from the primary data, and served to help validate these findings.

There are instance, in which the participants could have used the English equivalent of the word, but they resorted to Malay. There are also instances in which the speakers continue their English sentences in Malay for no apparent reason.

Psycholinguistically conditioned code switching or non functional code switch is non-intentional and it just "happens" in the conversation of bilinguals (Clyne 1991: 193). The speakers code switch because they feel more comfortable doing so in the company of members of the same bilingual group and for establishing solidarity and intimacy.