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English Education Master's Program Students' Perceptions on the Use of Code-Switching in EFL Classroom Context

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Abstract

Code-switching is related to the shift between the first and second languages done by the speakers in conversational contexts. Based on the theories of code-switching, second language learners frequently apply their first language when communicating with others to deliver the messages clearly, maintain group solidarity, and avoid unintended misunderstandings. This paper investigated some factors influencing the use of code-switching in foreign/second language learning processes. Data were collected through a classroom survey and interviews with 12 English Education Master's Program students of Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta. Qualitative content analysis was applied to obtain clearer interpretations. The results showed the lecturers and students utilized code-switching more sensibly in the second language classroom context. Further, code-switching will be better to be implemented in informal social interactions rather than foreign/second language classroom settings since it will hamper EFL learners' success in attaining more fruitful target language competencies.

Keywords: *code-switching, EFL classroom context, qualitative content analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Generally, code-switching is a term used by the speakers to shift from one language to another language to convey the messages forming in their discourse. In line with the above definition, Ayeomoni (2006) states that code-switching is used as a communication alternative between two or more languages Seen from this perspective, code-switching is one of the pervasive phenomena existing in our global communication since the speakers will be able to convey their messages deliverance more clearly to their interlocutors.

Barredo (1997) reasons that code-switching is utilized as one of the meaningful means of communication functioned to transform the rigid conversational encounters to become more flexible. Furthermore, it is interesting to briefly note here that code-switching will enable EFL learners to obtain their target language skills successfully since they will be able to mold meaningful social interactions with their peers while discussing particular language learning tasks given by the teachers. Ferguson (2009) instigates that the sensible use of code-switching will empower second language learning processes for the particular teaching-learning deliverance is conceived fully by the learners. Skiba (1997) argues the use of code-switching will make the learners able to participate more actively in English language learning processes for they will be able to enrich each other understanding through effective interaction. Taken this perspective into our account, language teachers need to be more supportive of the subsequent implementations of code-switching in their classroom settings to make the learners experience confidence when communicating with interlocutors, maintaining the positive learning atmosphere, creating more meaningful social interactions with others, and accomplishing particular learning tasks. Martin (2005) asserts that code-switching will enable the learners to be more autonomous and enjoyable in language learning processes since they can compensate for their learning deficiencies through the utilization of the first language. In teaching-learning practices, the use of code-switching will also lead the learners to develop their communicative competencies into its utmost since they have already discovered their communicative objectives although they are still struggling to improve their target language skills.

Concerning EFL learners' use of code-switching, Eldridge (1996) mentioned four paramount benefits of the use of code-switching namely equivalence, floor – holding, reiteration, and conflict control. The first process deals mostly with learners' target language communicative competencies since they are forced to harness the first language to make the messages more understandable for their peers. Further, the second cycle refers to the learners' attempts to create a smooth conversation with their peers by making use of the first language. This matter occurs since they are not able to remember any exact expressions dealing with the target language. Therefore, they determine to use their first language to avoid the breakdown in their communication. Regarding the reiteration, EFL learners should be allowed to implement code-switching in language classroom contexts, particularly when they are assigned to accomplish certain language tasks since the precise explanation given by their teachers is still vague.

Despite its rich advantages, language teachers tend to discourage further use of code-switching in their language learning contexts since the learners will not be able to develop their target language skills in such a better purpose if they rely on their first language. This major reason makes language teachers become stronger dissidents toward the use of code-switching since it indicates the learners' incapability to maximize their capacities to bring the target language into a lively situation; communication encounters. Cheng and Butler (1989) state code-switching represents the learners' incompetency to use the target language optimally. The last factor which makes the teachers feel reluctant to incorporate code-switching in their classroom settings is they experience discomfort and culpability while delivering the materials for the learners since all of the teaching instructions demand more for the cultivation of the target language. Kirkpatrick (2014) reasons as English skills have been the major competencies that should be attained fully by the learners, all instructional matters should be delivered by using the target language.

By contrast, code-switching is still valuable to be implemented in second language classroom contexts since the teachers can create a supportive learning environment in

which all the instructional deliverance is understandable for the learners. In other words, the learners will eventually able to attain various new concepts of the target language by making use of their first language. As a result, second language learning processes will run more smoothly since the learners have already grasped the main objectives in their learning and appreciated an intimate relationship established by their teachers. Sert (2005) clarifies that the optimal implementations of code-switching will promote some significant benefits not only for English learning dynamics but also conducive classroom circumstances. In concert with all of these tangible facts, Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2005) reported that there were no prior studies of code-switching conducting in advanced language learning classroom contexts. Although some previous studies also reported that continuous implementations of code-switching will promote meaningful impacts for EFL learning dynamics since the transmission of learning materials will be fully attained by second language learners. In response to the tangible absence of aforementioned studies, this study is extremely pivotal to be delved by future EFL educators and lecturers for it generates some new findings regarding the use of code-switching in EFL learning contexts. All of these renewable perspectives are yielded by utilizing English Education Master Students' perceptions on the utilization of code-switching in EFL learning dynamics, particularly in Indonesian learning contexts. Specifically, there are two research problems proposed in this study. First, how did code-switching improve Sanata Dharma University English Education Master's Program students' target language competencies in the second language classroom context? Second, to what extent did the English Education Master's Program students implement code-switching while communicating with their peers in language classroom settings?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Ching and Lin (2018) argue bilingualism is a term refers to the implementations of two languages applied by the speakers. Relatedly, the successful use of bilingualism depends severely on language learning exposure and tangible experiences while interacting with other people by using those languages. Genesee and Nicoladis (2007) argue qualified bilingual communicators know the exact situations and interrelated interlocutors when they are able to make use of their two distinct languages in daily communication practices

As already addressed in the Introduction section, code-switching is closely related to the speakers' intentions to shift their existing language to another one to nourish the fluency of the conversation. Wang and Liu (2016) conducted an exhaustive study about code-switching regarding the use of English and Chinese languages. He discovered that Chinese learners studying English often encountered chronic difficulties when interacting with their peers to accomplish assigned language tasks by using the target language as a means of communication. Consequently, the teachers need to utilize their mother tongue while delivering the target language materials to make the teaching-learning processes run more smoothly. Sardar, Keong, Mahdi, and Husham (2016) reported that Iraqi students studying English in Malaysia can achieve their learning objectives and enrich their vocabulary of the target language while availing code-switching. Besides the constructs presented above, proper use of code-switching will also enable low proficient EFL learners to bravely communicate with their teachers and peers. Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) state that code-switching will allow the learners to understand the learning materials in such a better purpose and interact actively with others. Also, the exact implementations of code-switching will enable anxious learners to gain more confidence over their learning experiences since they have already experienced a positive learning

atmosphere created by their teachers. Moghadam, Samad, and Shahraki (2012) reason the learners will experience a higher degree of enjoyment in their second language learning dynamics if the teachers allow them to flexibly shift from the target language into their first language.

It is interesting to briefly note here that there are three main purposes why EFL learners need to incorporate code-switching when engaging in second language learning processes namely facilitating interlocutors to understand the intended messages clearly, maintaining the solidarity between the speakers, and conveying particular feelings, emotions, and expressions of a person. The first reason is influenced by the obstruction of the communication involving two speakers possessing different proficiency in the target language. As a consequence, one proficient speaker has to switch the target language into their first language to address the messages clearly for another speaker. This kind of communication awareness will maintain positive relationships between two speakers since they have successfully understood particular messages delivered to each other. Skiba (1997) reasons a good relationship will be ingrained between two speakers who are willing to avail one particular language understandable for them. Consistent with this theory, Adendorff (1993) reports that African English teachers frequently shift from Zulu to [the] English language when delivering the learning materials for their learners ~~in order~~ to bridge social boundaries between them, maintain the solidarity, and create an effective means of communication during the teaching-learning processes.

Translanguaging plays an important role in determining the equitability of EFL learners' communication since it requires them to utilize their first and second languages equally. Heugh (2015) asserts translanguaging is an effective implementation derived from code-switching for learners' cognitive domains will be enriched by a wide variety of languages correspondingly. Notably, translanguaging will not only lead the learners to grasp the target language learning outcomes but also the intense practices of bilingual or multilingual languages. In line with this fact, language teachers should integrate this kind of language learning approach in their classroom contexts to assist the learners to foster their multitude capabilities of first together with the second language. Baker, Lewis, and Jones (2012) mention four major benefits of further implementations of translanguaging in second language learning processes namely the learners will be able to possess a profound understanding of the particular lessons, improve particular shortcoming while using both languages, work more collaboratively with others to accomplish some language learning tasks, and enhance their second language competencies through existing learning situations. In accord with four aforementioned benefits, language teachers are prompted to incorporate translanguaging practices in their classroom learning circumstances since the learners will be able to obtain the fruitful learning outcomes and foster their second language skills simultaneously. Creese and Blackledge (2010) believe translanguaging does not only aim to lead the learners to engage more cooperatively in the teaching-learning processes but also possess a complete set of linguistics skills.

METHOD

To yield renewable perspectives after collecting all of the intended data, the researchers planned to make use of qualitative content analysis. Therefore, careful analysis regarding the obtained data needs to be done successfully by the researchers to maintain the credibility and reliability of the data. Elo and Kyngas (2008) argue that content analysis can yield proper and reliable inferences from the data, which have been analyzed to give knowledge, some new perspectives, appropriate representatives of the facts, and simple

guidance relevant to the real actions. Additionally, the researchers conducted this study in the English Education Master's Study Program of Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta. The participants consisted of 14 Master's Program students of batch 2019. The researchers distributed the questionnaire on 7 November 2019 and conducted interviews with 3 participants on the same occasion. There were only 12 research participants who were able to fill out the questionnaire on the D-day of the data gathering since the other two were absent due to personal reasons.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1) English Education Master Students' Perceptions on the use of Code-Switching in Second Language Classroom Contexts

As will be demonstrated, this chapter is aimed to generate some specific explanatory answers for the first research problem, namely: How did code-switching improve English Education Master students' target language competencies in second language classroom contexts? The obtained data had been garnered by utilizing a classroom survey. In conformance with the results of the data, the findings yield two major reasons why English Education Master Students completely value further implementations of code-switching in both formal and informal conversational contexts namely: a) a higher degree of awareness in Implementing code-switching through informal communication, and b) the urgent need to apply code-switching in an appropriate learning situation.
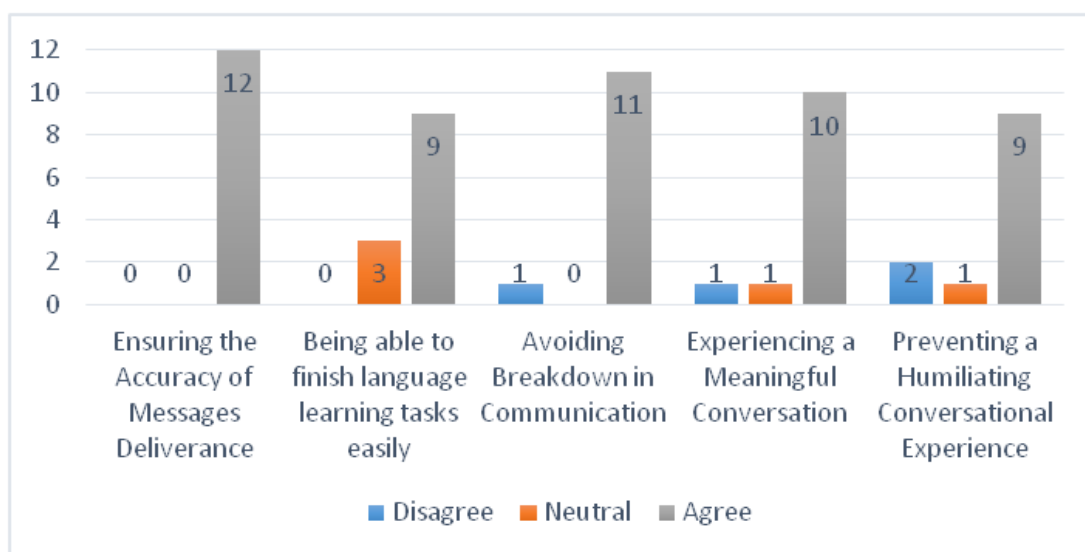

Figure 1. Awareness to implement code-switching in informal communication

To summarize, English Education Master Students frequently implemented code-switching while accomplishing the target language learning tasks with their learning companions in informal situations. The first main reason why they often applied their native language was they attempted to deliver the intended messages clearly to their learning peers. This first notion of the use of code-switching is extremely pivotal since there will be no misunderstanding occurred between two interlocutors. Amorim (2017) argues that EFL learners utilize their native language in order to obtain the main objectives of their communication encounters with their interlocutors. In accordance with this theory, Halliday (1975) states the flow of communication will run more smoothly if

there is an existence of code-switching. Furthermore, the learners will also be able to accomplish their language learning tasks easily if they utilize their first language accurately. This second matter is also important for the learners are able to attain the second language with the assistance of their mother tongue. Macaro (2014) reasons the learners will be able to obtain a profound understanding of the second language when they have intentions to apply an adequate use of code-switching in their conversational encounters. This exhaustive explanation is supported by the second finding in this study since 9 out of 12 participants agree with this second statement. Moreover, the learners are able to experience more enjoyable conversational events with their interlocutors since there is a robust group solidarity established between them. This positive conversational event can only be embodied if the speakers are willing to make use of their first language in some conversational contexts. Sert (2005) states that code-switching allows all speakers to participate more actively in their conversational events. Additionally, the learners are also able to create more positive social relationships with interlocutors while utilizing their first language since the flow of communication goes more smoothly. Skiba (1997) states that learners will experience a higher degree of meaningful social interactions with others when making use of their first language adequately. Ultimately, code-switching needs to be applied more frequently by novice language learners in their communicative encounters to prevent them from being humiliated by other learning members. On the one hand, advanced learners need to hone the second language skills intensely by not relying too extensively on their native language. Tang (2001) believes novice learners' learning intentions in the target language will not wane drastically if they can utilize their first language efficiently.
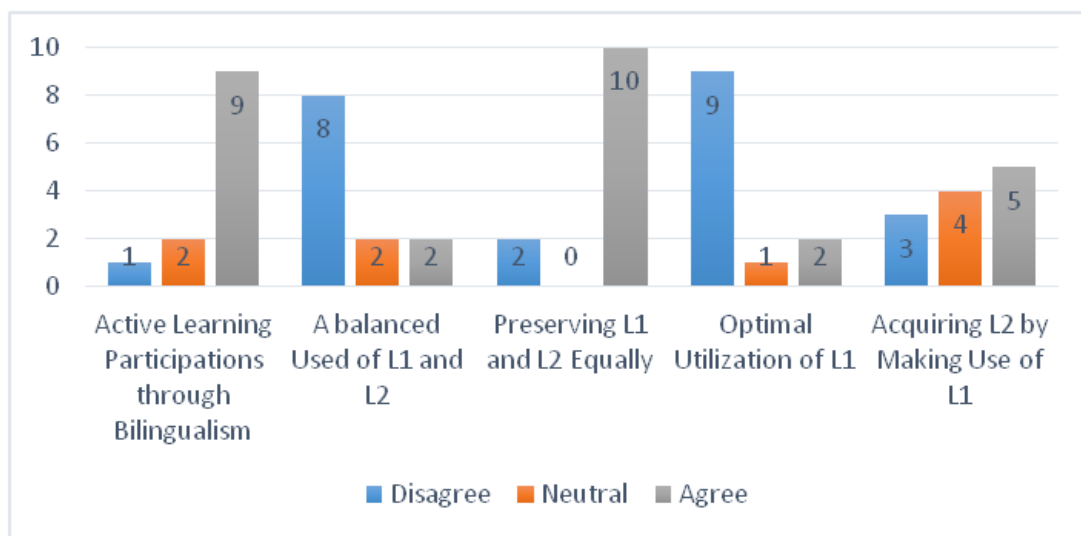

Figure 2. Urgency to apply code-switching

Generally speaking, qualified language teachers need to integrate meaningful language learning activities in which the learners are able to hone their second language competencies with the minimum use of the first language. This matter is crucial since the learners will be able to experience more enjoyable teaching-learning processes where their native and target language coexist. Sampson (2011) and Eldridge (1996) argue that the teachers need to design appropriate learning activities where the learners are able to rehearse their continuous utilization of their first and target language to navigate these learners to acquire second language competencies through the sufficient assistance of

their mother tongue. In contrast, the participants of this study disagreed with the balanced utilization of the first and second language while engaging in formal teaching-learning processes. Since they believe that the use of their first language will obstruct their advanced language learning processes. This argument is reinforced by a recent study conducted by Momerian and Samar (2011). This study reported that EFL teachers need to make use of code-switching extensively while delivering teaching-learning materials for novice learners since they need to understand the materials clearly. In contrast, this study also discouraged the implementations of code-switching for advanced EFL learners since they are perceived as qualified academicians in the target language. In spite of this disagreement, the learners are still prompted to utilize their first and second language equally in order to achieve more fruitful learning outcomes. Kirkpatrick (2014) believes the optimal use of the first and second languages will lead the learners to the successful completion of the target language learning. Dealing with this theory, EFL learners need to nurture the combinations of their first and target language while participating in second language learning processes in order to make them become more proficient learners. Schwarzer (2004) argues if the learners can harness their first language skills meaningfully, the target language competencies will be obtained successfully by them.

2) Three New Insights to Use Code-Switching in Both EFL Classroom Contexts and Informal Social Interactions

To reinforce the prior major findings, the researchers had conducted an exhaustive interview with three research participants regarding the appropriate use of code-switching in second language classroom circumstances and informal conversational contexts. In line with this main objective, there are three supplementary findings generated in this section namely: a) Code-switching should be utilized in informal social contexts rather than in a formal language classroom, b) Code-switching will be the ultimate option to deliver the teaching-learning materials if EFL learners fail to obtain fruitful learning outcomes in their language learning, and c) Code-switching will create a meaningful conversational experience if it is implied outside of second language classrooms. Furthermore, these three supplementary findings were availed to answer the second research problem namely: To what extent did English Education Master Students implement code-switching while communicating with their peers in language classroom settings?

a) Code-Switching Should be utilized in Informal Social Contexts Rather than in Formal Language Classrooms

Advanced EFL learners, particularly, English Education Master Students participating in this study mostly devote to the extensive use of code-switching. On the other hand, they suggest that code-switching needs to be harnessed in informal social contexts such as a relaxed conversation with some friends in public places, discussing the learning projects given by the lecturers in some interesting places, and making funny jokes with our friends. Carless (2007) reports that EFL teachers teaching in Hongkong Secondary School assert their learners frequently implement code-switching in informal conversational contexts to ensure the clarity of the communication, maintain solidarity, and promote a good sense of humor. Therefore, the learners involving in social communities need to preserve the solidarity towards their interlocutors, bridge a wide gap in their communication due to the social and cultural diversity to maintain the flow of the communication smoothly. Sampson (2011) reasons that EFL learners prone to harness their native language when communicating with their intimate interlocutors rather than with the teachers since they require clearer explanations on consecutive learning

procedures from their learning companions. As the researchers noted in previous chapters, a breakdown of communication will exist continuously in informal conversational interactions if the speakers persist to exert the target language. As a result, the speakers engaging in this kind of communication will experience a vicious communicative experience which leads them to create an unintended misunderstanding. Wei, Milroy, and Ching (1992) state that code-switching is used to nurture the solidarity between the speakers participating in similar conversational groups. However, code-switching should be used minimally when the learners are engaging in second language classroom contexts in order not to hamper their target language attainment. Horasan (2014) believes the teachers can implement code-switching for beginner EFL learners, but the successive use of it should be delimited for Advanced EFL learners. In spite of all of these strengths and weaknesses forming in code-switching, code-switching plays a paramount role in ascertaining the flow of conversation between two or more speakers since it also provides a strong emphasis on the discourse contexts significantly.

b) Code-switching will be the ultimate option to deliver the teaching-learning materials if EFL learners fail to obtain the tangible learning outcomes in their language learning

In alignment with the first supplementary finding, it is essential to keep in mind that as future language teachers, we need to be more sensible when making use of the first and second language in our classroom circumstances. For instance, when the learners have been able to grasp the main objectives of the teaching-learning processes, the teachers do not have to implement code-switching. Rather, the exposure to the target language needs to be maximized more intensely to make the learners are capable of communicating their ideas by using the second language through spoken and written forms. However, if the learners are still not able to attain the essence of the lessons, the teachers can harness code-switching to deliver the materials successfully for the learners. Bista (2010) reasons that the implementations of code-switching are not intended to obstruct EFL learning processes as long as the teachers and learners can wisely maximize the use of the target language while utilizing the first language minimally. Furthermore, Jingxia (2010) states an accurate use of code-switching in EFL classroom contexts will enable the learners to understand the teaching-learning materials.

c) Code-switching will create a meaningful conversational experience if it is implied outside of second language classrooms.

Coupled with two prior supplementary findings, code-switching will be more useful for further informal communication encounters rather than second language learning contexts since the speakers can experience a higher degree of enjoyment in their discourses. Undeniably, this positive communication event occurs since the outsider speakers are accepted sincerely by particular members of social communities when conversing with each other. Therefore, it is advisable for the speakers engaging in particular social groups to utilize code-switching maximally when talking with other people coming from different social communities to promote some positive impacts on our communication encounters with all of these people. Again, all people are born with uniqueness in terms of language mastery, abilities, and perspectives. Regarding this concern, qualified speakers mastering two different languages are demanded to know the exact situations where they can apply first or second language towards innumerable interlocutors. Additionally, there are two significant studies emphasize the importance of code-switching in various social communities. The first study was initiated by Bautista (2004). He found out that the Philippines frequently use the Tagalog language in the daily

conversations since they are not masters in the target language, English, and the speakers aim to deliver the messages accurately for the interlocutors. Another relevant study was also conducted by David (2003). This study was completely interesting since he uncovered that code-switching between Malay and English does not only occur between similar ethnic groups but also different groups, particularly when they bargain with the sellers in the market.

CONCLUSION

Given these results, code-switching has been proved as an effective means of communication worthwhile to be implemented in both EFL classroom contexts and informal social interactions. Dealing with EFL classroom contexts, the teachers should be able to minimally utilize the first language of advanced EFL learners since they are expected to be educational experts and proficient language academicians in future events. On the one hand, adequate utilization of code-switching needs to be availed appropriately while teaching novice EFL learners in order not to hamper their second language learning attainment and enrich their existing knowledge towards the second language acquisition. Moreover, a different story is yielded regarding the use of code-switching in informal social interactions since the speakers derive from various social and cultural backgrounds need to make use of their first language extensively to maintain the solidarity, ascertain the flow of the communication, and address the messages clearly to the interlocutors. Again, code-switching can promote positive impacts for our communication encounters both in formal and informal ways if the speakers possess adequate knowledge regarding the exact utilization of it. However, code-switching can also be a detrimental tool for our means of communication if we rely intensely on it until the development of the target language becomes wane and perished by the excessive use of the native language.

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