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بِوَسِيْلَةِ سُنَّتِيْ اِسْلَامِيَّةٍ اِنْجَارًا يَجْتَنِبُ مَلِيْسِيَا

CODE-SWITCHING AMONG ESL TEACHERS
(A CASE STUDY OF IfLA AT THE
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY)

BY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Human
Sciences (English Language Studies)

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ABSTRACT

This study was a case study of English teachers' attitudes toward code-switching and the functions of code-switching used by the teachers within the classroom. Two English teachers at the Institute for Language Advancement (IfLA) at IIUM were the subjects of this study. The subjects were teaching Communicative English Class and the majority of students were Malay ethnic. Two theoretical concerns have been used for this particular study. The first theory concern is the one proposed by Gumperz (1982) on six conversational functions of code-switching. The functions are: quotations, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization. The second one is from Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (2000) who has categorized the communication strategies among Malaysians in speaking English pertaining to the insertion of certain sentence filler like *lah*. In collecting the data, observations, interviews and questionnaires were used as the instruments. Each subject was observed, their language used were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed using the functions proposed by Gumperz (1982) as the pattern. The findings showed that the English teachers displayed positive attitudes toward code-switching. Each subject performed almost different functions of code-switching. Altogether, there are seven functions of code-switching used in the classroom by the subjects of this study. The functions are: message reiteration, message qualification, interjection or sentence filler, personalization versus objectivization, quotation, specific features of Islamic English, and the transfer of subconscious markers.

ملخص البحث

هذه دراسة وضعية تعنى بإستقراء مواقف مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية لتحويلات الرموز اللغوية وفوائد استخدامها لهم فى الفصول الدراسية. أتخذت مدرستان فى معهد تحسين اللغة التابع للجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا موضوعتين للبحث. تدرس كل من المدرستين مادة فنون الاتصالات و يكون أغلبية الطلاب الدارسين من جنس الملايو. و فى هذا البحث استخدمت نظريتان متعلقتان بالموضوع. النظرية الأولى اقترحها جومبيرز (1982م) فى ست فوائد لتحويلات الرموز اللغوية فى أساليب المحادثة وهى إقتباس، و تشخيص، و ملاحظة تعجبية، و تكرار الرسالة، و تقييدها، و توضيح التعارض بين التشخيص، و الموضوعية. و ثانيها اقتراح جمالية محمد علي (2000م) التي جاءت بتصنيف سياسات الاتصالات المنتشرة بين الماليزيين فى حديثهم باللغة الإنجليزية حسب إدخالهم الإضافات التتمية الشعبية مثل "لاه" و أمثالها. استخدمت طريقة الاستقراء، و مقابلات الشخصية، و الإستبيان فى جمع المعلومات لهذا البحث. كما تمت مراقبة كل مدرسة ثلاث مرات من أجل التحقق من صحة النتيجة. سجلت الكلمات المستخدمة و نسخت و حلت حسب القواعد المقترحة من قبل جومبيرز (1982م). وفي النهاية أكدت نتائج البحث على إيجابية موقف المدرستين لتحويلات الرموز اللغوية. وتحصلت الباحثة على أن هناك سبع فوائد لاستخدام تحويلات الرموز اللغوية فى الفصول الدراسية و هي: تكرار الرسالة، و تقييدها، و ملاحظات إعتراضية، و توضيح تعارض بين التشخيص و الموضوعية، و إقتباس النصوص وإظهار بعض العناصر الخاصة فى اللغة الإنجليزية الإسلامية و تحويل الكلمات بغير قصد.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (English Language Studies).

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Human Sciences

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Najwa Tgk. Armia

Signature.....

Date.....

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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**CODE-SWITCHING AMONG ESL TEACHERS (A CASE STUDY OF IFLA
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In honour of my beloved parents:
(Allahyarham) Tgk. H. Armia bin Tgk. H. Moh. Ali and Hj. Anisah Binti H. Abdullah
Badal

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual country with at least a hundred languages spoken nationwide (David, 2003a). It is therefore very common for Malaysians to be bilingual or even multilingual particularly in educational context. Malaysians are made up of variety of ethnic groups; Malay, Chinese and Indian are the majority groups. Thus, these people of different ethnic backgrounds need to socialize using a language or languages they are competent at. Bahasa Melayu (BM), the national language, is the first most important language of the country and together with English they play role of official languages. In other words, most formal or informal transactions in every aspect of life are carried out utilizing either Bahasa Melayu or English. Research has shown that in cases where there is multilingualism in a context, as in the case of Malaysia, code-switching is most likely to occur between languages.

Long before Bahasa Melayu was declared as the national language of the country, English played an important role. English was first introduced in Malaysia through the trading process by the English East India Company which then spread into religious and educational activities from the early nineteenth century (Jamaliah Mohd. Ali, 2000). English-medium schools were famous particularly among wealthy Malaysians at that time. There was a popular belief that sending their children to English-medium school will result in brighter future as they were learning modern western culture. There was a significant gap between those educated in English medium schools and those in Malay medium schools.

Bahasa Melayu was declared the national language after independence from the British colony. When the new education policy was implemented, English became the second most important language next to Bahasa Melayu, as stated in the report of the education planning committee known as the *Razak Report 1956* (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). In the field of education, with the implementation of the new education policy in 1971, all former English schools in Malaysia were gradually transformed into national schools which used Bahasa Melayu as the main medium of instruction. All school subjects which were previously taught in English like mathematics, science, geography, history and other subjects, had to be taught using Bahasa Melayu as the language of instruction. The whole process of changing over the medium of instruction was completed in 1980 (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). Despite all these changes, English was a compulsory subject to be taught at the school level.

However, in 2003 the Malaysian government made drastic changes by implementing the teaching of mathematics and science in English at the primary school level. This idea sparked a continuous debate over the effectiveness of using English instead of Bahasa Melayu. In general, the changes were made to achieve the Malaysian Vision 2020, which aims at developing Malaysia into an industrialized country. To achieve the goal, higher competency in English is needed as English is a global language unifying people from different language backgrounds. As the English language has a “symbolic value” in the world today, lack of mastery of the language can disenfranchise some communities or ethnic groups (David, 2004).

Malaysians regard English as a second language, though some still regard it as a foreign language. Some Malaysians are very fluent in English. Some even created their own English variety which is totally different from the original British dialect

once introduced in Malaysia. This is known as Malaysian English. Knowles (2004) stated that:

...but Malaysians do not sound remotely like English people when they speak English, and there is no obvious evidence to suggest that they are trying to sound like Americans. What does seem to be the case is that Malaysians are using English for practical reasons, and assimilating it into Malaysian culture. When Malaysians speak English, they do not in general try to copy foreigners, but sound like Malaysians speaking English, which is surely entirely appropriate...

In speaking English, Malaysians mix their English with some Malay words for various reasons and functions. The particle like “lah”, for instance, is a very common feature inserted into Malaysian English. It is also common for Malaysians to code-switch when they speak either Bahasa Melayu or English. This is not something extraordinary happening in multilingual country like Malaysia, especially in metropolitan city Kuala Lumpur where people from different parts of the world mingle. As Gumperz (1982) stated, with the increasing displacement of formerly stable populations and the growing ethnic diversification of metropolitan centers, the communicative uses of code-switching are more likely to increase than to decrease.

1.1.1 Definition of code-switching

In order to obtain a broader understanding of the topic discussed in this study, it is important to know the definition of the term code-switching. The term *code* itself refers to a language or a variety of a language (Wardhaugh, 1993). Ever since the 1950s, code-switching has become an interesting area of discussion in relation to bilingual or multilingual speech communities.

In general, some experts agree on defining code-switching as the alternating use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation (Milroy and

Musyken, 1995; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Faldes-vallis, 1978; Gardner-Chloros, 1997). This general definition is basically a point of departure before expanding the term further. Though those above-mentioned experts agreed on the definition, they have added some specific conditions under which a particular behavior can be classified as code-switching.

Milroy and Musyken (1995) further argued that sometimes code-switching occurs between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, or sometimes between utterances within a single turn. It can even occur within a single utterance. In order for the readers to identify the reasons or functions of the switching, the approaches taken by the experts in studying code-switching are very important.

In addition, utterances containing code-switching are similar to those of one linguistic variety alone in terms of *discourse unity*. In other words, when the switching occurs within a single sentence, the elements from the two different languages generally are joined together prosodically. The linguistic variety in code-switching may be different languages, dialects or style of the same language (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

She further adds that code-switching is either intersentential or intrasentential. While intersentential code-switching involves switches from one language to the other between sentences, intrasentential switching occurs within the same sentence, from single-morpheme to clause level. She then introduces the terms matrix language and embedded language. In code-switching, the matrix language is the most dominant language used and the embedded language is the language that roles the lesser. For instance, when two native Malay speakers have a conversation in Bahasa Melayu and then they switch to English in between, Bahasa Melayu is considered as the matrix language and English is the embedded language.

Perhaps the most concrete and in depth study over code-switching was done by Gumperz (1982) where he sub-categorizes code switching into conversational code-switching and situational code switching. He defines conversational code-switching as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical system or subsystems. Conversational code-switching tends to occur subconsciously as the speakers are motivated by the factors within the conversation itself when the conversation takes place. Meanwhile, situational code-switching can be considered as changes in language choice due to the situation where the speakers exist. Situational switching might take place at school, work, or public gathering where the situation demands for formality of language use.

This particular study observes classroom code-switching. Lin (2007) in her study, defines classroom code-switching as the alternating use of more than one linguistic code in the classroom by any of the classroom participants such as teacher and students. If we are to refer to the concept of conversational and situational switching proposed by Gumperz (1982), classroom code-switching would be considered as a form of situational code-switching. However, in the real situation within the class, conversational code-switching might take place in classroom situations. Martin-Jones (1995) quotes Merrit *et al.* (1992) argue that in determining the choice of language to be used in classrooms is necessarily more complex than can be legislated by language policy on medium of instruction in classrooms.

Based on the situation mentioned above, this study looks at classroom code-switching conducted by teachers in the ESL classroom. Though the policy demands that English teachers use only English in teaching, the real situation might be different. Teachers might code-switch to other languages for various reasons and functions. Conversational code-switching is most likely to occur compared to

situational code-switching as the choice of other languages used in teaching English exists due to specific factors in the class. Hence, code-switching in this particular study is the alternating use of English and Bahasa Melayu within English classes by the teachers.

1.1.2 Communicative English class of IfLA

This study was conducted in IfLA of CELPAD (Centre for Languages and Pre-University Academic Development) at the IIUM (International Islamic University Malaysia). IfLA stands for the Institute for Language Advancement. It was established with the objectives of providing the full spectrum of language courses and services to the university community, the public and private sector and the public at large. Functioning as a one-stop commercial language teaching institution under the CELPAD, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), IfLA serves the university community, the public and private sectors, the general public and muslims overseas (<http://www.iiu.edu.my/ifla>).

IfLA's vision is to develop a language institute which is able to offer reasonably priced, high quality language courses, conducted by experienced and dedicated teachers in an Islamic environment. Most of the teachers are of Malay nationality, however, there are also teachers from other different races like, America, Canada, Philippines, Sudan, Turkey, Tanzania, Singapore, etc. The students themselves come from all over the world.

IfLA offers courses of many different languages like: English, Arabic, Mandarin, and French for the public, tilawah Al-Quran for the public, Language Courses for the corporate sector, and many others. In particular, there are two main English courses offered at IfLA: Pre-University English and English for the public.

Pre-University English course is a six-levels-English, which is specially designed for International students. While English for Public course consists of classes like: General English, English for the workplace, and Communicative English. Sometimes, public speaking courses are offered also.

The Communicative English class is one of the courses offered under the Public courses and it concerns more with communication skills. The course comprises of 60-70% percent oral communication skills and the rest is for written language, which are included under the skills of grammar, reading. Basically those who join communicative English classes are adult professionals wanting to improve their English. Their level of proficiency is ranging from lower intermediate to intermediate. Prior to joining the class, they have to sit for an English placement test and must score above 50%. Altogether, the course consist of 40 hours of study spreading over three months of courses.

The teachers teaching communicative English classes are of different nationalities. However, most of the teachers are also CELPAD teachers. Basically there are two requirements that a teachers must fulfill in order to be able to teach the communicative English class. First, the teacher has to be very flexible. Although, IfLA has provided text books for its classes, sometimes the teacher has to mix and match with other materials, depending on the needs of the students. Second, Bahasa Melayu is not allowed to be used inside the class in order to promote faster English mastery.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Though a number of studies have been conducted on code-switching and most of the results positively approved it, the general perception toward code-switching is still negative, particularly those of non-native English teachers in teaching the target language. Valdes-Fallis (1978), argued that code-switching had been negatively understood by some foreign language teachers. He claimed that many teachers or researchers in education still perceive code-switching in a negative way and disapprove its use in the language classroom. Though this theory has been revealed decades ago, the issues remain debatable. The attitude of the teachers in Valdes-Fallis' statement may direct the teachers toward prescriptivism and semilingualism (Boztepe, n.d). Boztepe (n.d) later quoted Crystal (1997) saying that prescriptivism is the belief that one language owns a higher value and should be imposed over certain speech communities. While semilingualism is the belief that bilingual speakers who code-switch, do so because of their lack of linguistic repertoire (Boztepe (n.d.) quoted in Edelsky, et.al, 1983). He further added that in the case of a bilingual classroom, teachers' negative attitudes toward students who code-switch indicate the notion of semilingualism.

As an English teacher, the writer, at first, discouraged the use of mother tongue in the teaching of English. She thought, learners of a foreign language should totally immerse themselves in the target language in order to achieve the maximum level of foreign language proficiency. The writer's experience while working as an English teacher at a renowned English school in her hometown, Banda Aceh, was to teach using English only as stipulated by the institution. However, the real situation turned out to be different. The writer had to code-switch once in a while for various reasons

and purposes. The writer believes the situation is the same with other language instructors.

In case of this study, the writer sees that language institution such as IfLA also applies English only policy in their classes. However, the real classroom situation might be the opposite. Teachers in IfLA might code switch as the students attending IfLA, particularly in communicative English class, have no specific backgrounds of academic English. Especially for teachers teaching English at classes provided for the public. There is a big possibility that teachers will code-switch for various reasons and functions. In general, the main questions of this study are:

- Whether English teachers at IfLA code-switch in teaching English;
- If they code-switch, what are the functions of their switching?
- How do English teachers at IfLA perceive code-switching; negatively or positively.

Moreover, English in Malaysia has specific features of its own which is interesting to be studied. Malaysian English is seen as an independent variety of English (Zaidan, 1994). The most common features mixed into Malaysian English is the insertion of particle “lah”, “ah”, and “ya”. The use of these Malay words in Malaysian English is quite frequent and they have become subconscious markers of the Malaysian English speakers (Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf ,2006). This can be categorized as code-switching.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study generally contributes to the field of Sociolinguistics, bilingual education and ESL teaching. It especially contributes to the understanding of bilingual classroom situations, code-switching, and the functions it plays in teaching and learning processes.

Within the Malaysian context, this study contributes to the diversity of languages spoken in this country. Both Bahasa Malaysia and English play a very important role within this country's language system. Particularly, as Malaysians have creatively invented their own variety of English known as Manglish or Malaysian-English (Crystal, 1997), this study helps further discussion over the topic. In English teaching and learning process, this study enriches the knowledge on code-switching among Malaysian English teachers in the teaching of English.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To unveil the teachers' attitude and tendency toward code-switching.
2. To discover the functions of teachers' code-switching in teaching English

1.5 Research Questions

Following are research questions of the study:

1. What are the English teachers' attitudes toward code-switching?
2. What are the functions of the teachers' code-switching within the class?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical concerns have been used for this particular study. The first theory concern is the one proposed by Gumperz (1982) on conversational code-switching. It is defined as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems. The two possible different languages involve in this study are Bahasa Melayu and English. He further added that based on his studies in three different language situation settings, Austrian-Yugoslavian border villagers, Indian college students of Urban Delhi, and members of a group of Chicano college students and urban professional from an economically deprive backgrounds who were born in the United States, there are six conversational functions of code-switching. The functions can be categorised as quotations, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization.

The second relates to the specific features of the Malaysian English language. Pertaining to the insertion of some Malay particle, such as “lah”, “ah”, and “ya” into English sentence when Malaysians speak, Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (2000) has categorized the situation as part of communication strategies of Malaysians in speaking English. The particle like “lah” itself does not indicate a specific meaning; it indicates the speakers’ emotional and affective attitude. This particle has different functions within the context, such as: for supporting and agreeing, for appealing strategies, for emphasizing, and disagreeing and repair.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Code-switching can be studied from different approaches. In general, Lin (2007) argues that there are two aspects which have been looked at when studying code-