CODE SWITCHING IN EFL CLASSROOM
(A CASE STUDY AT A STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN KUPANG)

Naniana N. Benu

English Education Study Program,
Artha Wacana Christian University
nanibenuukaw@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper is dealing with the issue of code switching in English classrooms and to investigate when and why teachers in ELT class code-switch when teaching English as a foreign language. Beside observing teaching and learning process in classroom, two EFL teachers were interviewed and responded to questionnaire. The results showed, as observed, code-switching occurred during the whole process of class by both teacher and students. Based on the interview and respond to the questionnaire, teachers generally tried to code-switch as little as possible but that they did code-switch in some of those situations where the students preferred either a combination of Bahasa Indonesia and English. Teachers' perception on the students language competence influence the strategy used in teaching English to the class. The teachers code-switched during the class process for different purposes and they all believed that it was an effective tool to enhance learning when employed carefully.

Keywords*: code-switching; English as a foreign language; classroom*

INTRODUCTION

A person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of their speech, or sometimes even in the middle of a sentence. According to Bullock Toribio, (2009:2), the use of code switching by all speakers is directed by their intentions and by the needs of the speech participants and the environment where the conversation take place. The use of code switching, according to Gardner-Chloros (2009:4-5), is showing a behavior of bilingualism that can only be understood clearly with some insider knowledge of the community and where it take place. It can be mean that a speaker's language competence is not a guarantee that she/he cannot switch.

In the context of foreign language classroom, code switching refers to alternate use of the first language and the target language as means of communication by language teachers (Bailey, 2011; Üstünel, 2016:29). Refer to Gardner-Chloros (2009:4-5), it can be said that the use of code switching in classroom must not be considered as the lack of teacher and students' language

competence but a strategy to enhance learning. Many factors contribute to the occurrence of code switching or in other words, there must have been certain communication purposes related which cause code switching to occur.

Many researchers (Jingxia, 2010; Bailey, 2011; Rose & Dulm. 2006;; Yulyana, 2012; Rathert, 2012; Johanson, 2014; Horasan, 2014; Fathimah, 2016; Bhatti, et.al, 2018) have found that code-switching plays an important role in contributing English language teaching and learning process. It also proved that low proficiency students considered code switching in their EFL classes as beneficial towards gaining better comprehension, especially when providing equivalent comprehension, as well as giving classroom procedures. It means that it can be used as a teaching method for teaching English as a foreign language.

In EFL classes, the choice of code by the teachers is an important thing that affects students' understanding towards the materials. Therefore, the teachers need to implement code switching when they teach the student. It is because for some students, English is one of difficult subject because of the complexity of grammatical sentences, vocabularies, and pronunciation. It can be understood because English is not the students' first language, which means that they have limited exposure to English.

Theoretically, relating the new lesson to their previous knowledge as well as their first language can contribute to their comprehension of the materials. Therefore, sometimes teachers need to shift from target language to first language when teaching the students. Avoiding the use of students' first language will lost them because when it is used appropriately; students' first language can be very beneficial.

In Kupang, EFL classes consist of bilingual and multilingual students and other factors influence the EFL class process. So, if they have to learn English and learn in English is a problem for them. In this situation, the role of EFL teachers in using code switching as a strategy are very crucial in developing students English language competence. This study is aimed at identifying the situations and the purposes of code switching used by the teachers in a state senior high school in Kupang. The result of this study will be a useful information for EFL

teachers that code switching is a strategy or technique to promote and create a good environmental of learning. This information will also be useful for teachers to develop and build students' confidence in learning English.

RESEARCH METHODS

This case study was used to investigate and reveal the usage of code switching by teachers within EFL classrooms at one of State Senior High School (SMA Negeri) in Kupang. The classes were observed four times during the class process in order to record the real situation. Following these observations and recordings, teachers were interviewed individually dealing with the use of code-switching in their classrooms in order to know their purposes of using this strategy as well as whether they were using it as a conscious strategy or not.

There were two English teachers were being observed during their teaching process. One of the teachers has been teaching for more the seven years and another one is four years. Students being observed and interviewed were the class where the two teachers are teaching. They are grade eleven of social class. Students in the English class were mostly bilingual (Kupang Malay and Bahasa Indonesia) and some were multilingual (native language such as Dawan, Rote, Sabu, etc, Kupang Malay, and Bahasa Indonesia).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The use of Code-Switching in EFL Class

Based on the observation, EFL teachers code switch between English and Indonesian and sometimes Kupang Malay in different parts of the session. For example, teachers code switch when explaining new lessons, giving instructions, or just for socializing. The two teachers involved in this research used code switch differently according to their own discretion. There is no particular pattern of the point where teachers code switch. Therefore, the functions of their code switch may be different from each other.

For this situation, teachers have their reason. According to the teachers, the use of code switching is necessary for those students with low-level language competence to build up confidence or clarifying meaning. As they added, code

switching may not good for students with high-level English language competences. For this reason, code switching should not be used with high-level students because they have better competence in the target language. In other words, high-level students are able to understand the simple use of English as the target language. Thus, they do not need to refer back to Bahasa Indonesia or students' native language to clarify meaning or understand instructions.

Based on the explanation of teacher about code switching, it seems that it is consciously used; they have had a clear purpose with their code switching. They also said that sometimes is too tired and then switch, or it will depend on the situation of the class. In the following dialog, teacher mostly use Bahasa Indonesia since greeting because of the situation of the students.

T	: How are you today class?
S	: *Capek*
T	: Tired? *Capek ya*?
	………………………………….
T	: *Apa* text *yang kita nanti diskusi?*
S	: *Belum tahu pak.*
T	: *Kalo begitu* look *buku halaman empat puluh.*
S	: *Iya. Pak.*
T	: *Pembaca menggunakan* reading text *yah.*
S	: *Iya. Pak.*
T	: *Dalam* text discussion *ada yang setuju dan tidak setuju.*
T	: For example*, information* about *kelas XI IPS I yang sangat rajin dan pintar.*
S	: *Itu sudah pasti, pak.*
	………………………………

The teachers' perceptions on students' language competence influence the use of code switching. The dialogue above showed that the teacher have had in mind that in such situation (students are tired), students will not be able to follow the class in English. Therefore, he decided to switch his English to Bahasa Indonesia following the students. Then, in the next conversation, teacher used Bahasa Indonesia mixed with English. Students seemed to enjoy the class.

Teachers' responses toward the use of more Bahasa Indonesia in EFL class, was that less switching will lost students in understanding material. He argued that most students only have a limited amount of exposure to English.

Therefore, the best way to make them understand material easily is that use Bahasa Indonesia. The situation of using Bahasa Indonesia and Kupang Malay in EFL class is when the teacher giving motivation.

The teachers argued that this kind of talk is better in students' native language, so that there will be no misunderstanding. The teachers also explained that she often switched to Bahasa Indonesia or Kupang Malay when talking about sensitive subjects. Teacher added that using only English does not help students in clarifying the rules of grammar because of difference with Kupang Malay or Bahasa Indonesia. This argument seemed to base on the situation those students were not correctly explain the tenses.

According to the teacher, students of this class that he teaches are at very low level of language competence. He based his argument on some situation that students seemed to not follow and not understand the material. The situation as shown in the following dialogue.

> T: Ok. This is verb one. *Beta mangarti separuh ujian pasti ada yang salah.*
> ………………………………………………..
> T   : Andri, any question.
> S   : No.
> T   : Any question, Rinto?
> S   : No
> T   : *Adoh lu mulai mangantok ee*. Stand up Rinto. Wash your face.
> ………………………………………..
> T   : *Dalam bacaan ini dia memprestasikan* reasons and opinion.
> S   : *Di bacaan ini. Pak?*
> T   : *Iya.*

Based on the observation and interview, it can be inferred that teachers have had negative perception on students' language competence. What happen in the classroom was that teacher is teaching English using Bahasa Indonesia during the interaction. It is mostly used and only inserted one or two English word into Bahasa Indonesia sentences. The teachers' opinion on the use of code switching showed that it is related to what is being taught. It is dealing with efficiency in their teaching and to make it easier for the students to understand what they are teaching. According to the teachers, students will get a low mark if they do not

understand what is being taught; therefore, in order to improve students' grades code switching is necessary. When preparing students for the real world, only English is better but in terms of our aim and syllabus requirements code switching enhances learning.

Function of code switching

The study showed that the use of code switching in EFL classroom in SMA Negeri 7 Kupang has three functions. The first function is aimed at checking students understanding. This function is done by translating the word, phrase, or sentence. The second is aimed at clarifying the meaning. It is to avoid students misunderstanding on the instruction given. The third is function to give motivation to students. This function, according to teachers, it is better to be delivered in Bahasa Indonesia so that students can comprehend in well. The third is socializing to make close relation with students. Detailed explanation of these three function of code switching are provided bellow.

1. **Checking students' understanding by translation**

   Translating the SL language TL seem to be a big problem for teachers in conveying new meanings of English to students, whether for words, sentences or language functions. As the teachers said, switching to Bahasa Indonesia to convey meanings is not to say that teaching should relate all kinds of meaning to Bahasa Indonesia but it extended to check students' comprehension. It is mean that, for the teacher, to convey the meaning of foreign language through translation may be an efficient way of helping the learner feel natural in an EFL classroom.

   Translating is found to be the most occurred during the class interaction. Teachers were trying to provide English words, phrases and even sentences to students' native language, Bahasa Indonesia or Kupang Malay, and partly provides English explanation of comprehension by Bahasa Indonesia or Kupang Malay repetition.

   The teacher always asked the students about the Indonesian word when he/she felt that it is a difficult word for students. As in the example bellow.

T : Do you understand?
S : Yes
T : Understand, *artinya apa*?
S : *Mengerti.*

T : Advantage *artinya apa Andri*?
S : *Keuntungan. Pak.*
T : Ok. Good.

Teacher based their argument on the fact, according to teachers, that students are very poor in English vocabulary and sometimes this situation leads to the frustration of teachers. As seen in the following example the teacher did not want to give the answer of the word examination but asked students to find it out by themselves.

T : Examination *artinya*?
S : *Tidak tahu pak*
T : *Belajar to supaya tahu, artinya.*

The usage of translation as a strategy in EFL classroom had made students to feel that they have not understood or sure about English word very well until it has been translated into the native language. It can be seen in the following example.

T : When we go to a party *kita menghargai* invitation.
S : Undangan yah. Pak.
T : Ya.
……………………………….
T : What does cell phone?
S : *Sama dengan* hand phone *yah pak?*
T : *Iya. Sama dengan* hand phone *yang kamu pegang*.

Repeating English word by translation to students' language as shown in the example seems to have bed effect. Students get used to instructions that always translated into their native language; they may lose interest in paying attention to the former instruction. This situation will have negative academic consequences because the students will have limited exposure to the foreign language that being taught.

2. **Clarifying meaning**

Teacher perceptions toward students' English competence lead to the feeling that students will not understand English word until it has been translated into students' native language. So, without asking students

understanding, teacher always clarifying the meaning by translating words the is considered difficult for students by translating it.

T : Pro and agree *sama artinya yah*.
…………………………………
T : Write you meaning on a small paper. *Berarti kalian menulis di kertas kecil, nanti di lipat-lipat.*

Translation of words and phrases occurred during the interaction between the teacher and students. The teachers were found to switch to Bahasa Indonesia or Kupang Malay when the students seemed not to understand their questions, meaning, or instruction. In the example above, teacher were not asking the students responses or understanding but realized the words might not be in the students' lexicon. So, the equivalents of word is provided for them. As the teacher argued that this way might be the efficiency of comprehension, and the mother tongue is efficient when teaching English or any other foreign language.

3. Motivating Students

In following dialogue, teacher switch to Bahasa Indonesia not aimed to translate the meaning but giving motivation to students.

T : *Banyak teman-teman yang* open minded.
S : *Iya. Pak.*
T : *Jadi jangan malu untuk bertanya.*
……………………………….
T : Study group *untuk apa anak-anak?*
S : *Untuk belajar bersama*
T : To help each other

The teacher used these functions to clarify understanding and instruction as well as to create a supportive classroom atmosphere for the students. According to the teacher, it is best to use students' language, so that they can fully accepted.

4. Socializing

Teachers use code switching in some situation only to become close with students. They believed that it is closer to deliver the aim in language that students familiar with and easily comprehend the content of the message.

The following dialogue is an example of the use of code switching to build close relationship with the students.

T   : *Jadi lima bulan lagi kalian sudah* welcome to university.
S   : *Amin. Pak.*
T   : *Mungkin* after graduate *di tahun 2022 kalian langsung* welcome to wedding party.
T   : *Jadi kalo sudah* graduation *di tahun 2022 kamu* don't forget *kelas XI IPS II yah.*
S   : *Iya pak*

During the class, this function occurred only once but as it gave a big impact and value on the effectiveness of communication between the students and teachers. The teacher argued that teacher should behave as a friend, parents, brother or sister in some situation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This paper is a result of study on a situation of code switching in EFL classroom in senior high schools in Kupang. It provides an analysis on teachers' code switching and function of using it. It is found that code switching plays an important role because of the perception that the teachers have about students' language competence. Code switching is considered as a strategy in EFL classroom to promote learning. Factors like teachers' perception or attitudes towards code-switching, methods of teaching, and situational factors contribute to the occurrence of the code switching.

The study provides a detailed description and analysis on the general situation and positive role of code switching in EFL classroom. However, there are admittedly still some limitations, which may give some directions for further studies.

The limitation relates to the data source. Therefore, it could not fully represent the whole population of EFL teachers in Kupang. In addition, the analysis only focused on teachers' use. Further research needs to involve students to know their perception on the use of code switching in classroom.

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