TEACHER’S CODE SWITCHING IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Code switching is one of techniques that can be used by teacher during classroom interaction to make students easier to understand the teaching and also to make the classroom interaction more active. Furthermore, some of teachers are not always aware in using code switching in their teaching and learning process. This research is conducted to find out (1) the teachers’ perspective (2) the teachers put code switching into their classroom teaching practices (3) the students’ response to the code switching in their EFL classroom interaction.

The researcher applied descriptive qualitative research method. This research was carried out at State Vocational High School 1 of Makassar (SMKN 1). The subjects of this research were two teachers and ten students. The data of this research were collected by using observation checklist, recording, interviewing and also five meeting during teaching and learning process in EFL classroom interaction. This research employed discourse analysis to describe the data that writer found during classroom interaction. The data could be indentified, classified and analyzed descriptively.

The result of this research showed that (1) the teachers’ perspective toward using of code switching in their EFL classroom were mostly positive. (2) there were several function of code switching discovered during the teaching and learning process in classroom interaction namely checking for understanding, grammar explanation, pronunciation practice, explaining the meaning of vocabulary, reiteration, topic switch, polite command, speech connectivity, interjection to get students’ attention, emphasis certain word or a point in the conversation, floor-holding and requesting a help. (3) the students response that code switching considered as useful and good instructional strategy in classroom interaction. Code switching also effective in understanding the material has given, enlarging the students’ vocabulary, translation practice, motivated them to learn English comprehension, and also influenced them to fluency in speaking English.

Key word: Code Switching, perspective, response, interaction.

1. Introduction

Language in human life has a very important function, both for humans as individuals and human beings as citizens. All kinds of human activities carried out by language. Without language, human life will be empty and meaningless. Through language that is able to realize a virtuous person as a creature that distinguishes the other creatures on earth.

By using the language, humans can communicate with other human beings. Language is a tool to formulate what he has in mind, what is perceived, and what he wants. What he thinks can be communicated to others through language so as to create an interaction among humans. With language, human can precisely regulate activities relating to the social life, for instance in a family, a market, an office, society, a hospital, school, mosque and still many others. In these places people interact using languages in order to reach an understanding one another. For instance in an office an interaction between a boss and his/her subordinates, like his or her secretary or staffs, secretary and the staffs, among the staff and so on. This kind of interaction is also occur at school. For instance the interaction between the head master and the teachers, among the
teachers, the teacher and the students, and amongst the students. The interaction among this people of course is meant to reach mutual understanding among them. Indonesia is a country which consists of a huge number of different ethnics group with their different local languages and therefore switching from one language to other language and in their interaction commonly accured. As a country that has many local languages, Indonesia has national language that is “Bahasa Indonesia”. This language is used widely among Indonesian people in daily activities including at school (Lingual franca), while English is as a foreign Language (Lauder, 2008). This language is a compulsory subject to be taught from junior to senior high school (Matrima, 2007; Lauder, 2008). Whereas in tertiary education, it is taught as a general subject and as a subject of specific expertise like in English department, English education department and letters department.

Having English proficiency is very important in this era. As English is the language used in the international relationship, such as science, technology, politics, education and work, and even art and culture in order to be able to participate in the wider word or work people need to master English well. It is necessary to well prepared students to learn English at school. In learning English at Indonesian school, student often find difficulties to understand the meaning, the structure, pronunciation, spelling, and to communicate in English. These difficulties are due to many factors. One of it is the status of English in Indonesia as a foreign language. This status make English is only learned and used at schools and colleges when the English lesson taking place or going on. While outside school English is very rarely used. Though having ability to speak English is one’s skill. If it is not or rarely used, language capability will certainly lost.

In learning skill, the students often find some problems. The problem frequently found is that their native language causes them difficult to use the foreign language. The other reason is because the lack of motivation to students practices the foreign language in daily conversation. They are also too shy and afraid to take part in the conversation. Many factors can cause the problem of the students in learning English, among other the students’ interest, the material, and the media as well as the technique in teaching English at classroom.

There are some strategies that can be used by the teacher in teaching and learning process. One of them is the use of code switching. Code switching is commonly used by the teacher during teaching and learning in classroom interaction. This means that the teacher switches his/her language weather from English to Indonesia or Indonesia to English and also English to Mother Tongue or Mother Tongue to English. Sometimes the teachers are not always consciously in using code switching in their learning and teaching process. This means that they do not understand about the functions and outcome in using code switching in their classroom interaction.

Code switching is one of the techniques that can be used by a teacher to motivate students to be more interactive in using and understanding English in learning process. Sert (2005) suggested that code switching can be used for self-expression and as a way of modifying language for the sake of personal intentions. He further asserts that code switching may have a vital and positive effect on foreign language learning. When we code-switch, we build a bridge from the unknown, our native language to the known target language. Code switching could be allowed and used in such way to enrich the skill of communication. The bilingual society generally practices code switching to conceal their second language deficiency and express their attitude and feeling toward the interlocutor. These intention could be appeared in the
language classroom too. 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-Scotto, 1993; Faldes-vallis, 1978; Gardner-Chloros, 1997).

In relation to the notion above, Grosjean (1982) declared that there are some reasons for conducting code-switching. For example, some bilinguals mix two languages when they cannot find proper words or expressions or when there is no appropriate translation for the language being used. Code-switching should not be considered as a sign of defect in the teacher. Instead, it is a careful strategy employed by the teachers. Code-switching should be allowed whenever necessary with some learners in specific situations (Schweers, 1999; Chick & McKay, 1999; Burden, 2001; Dash, 2002; Tang, 2002). The literature review has indicated the functions of code-switching that is approved by both the teachers and learners, these functions such as explaining new vocabulary, relaxing the learners, explaining grammar, talking about class tasks and assessments and establishing contact with learners.

A number of researchers (Lai, 1996; Cole, 1998; Critchley, 1999; Schweers, 1999; Burden, 2001; Tang, 2002; Greggio & Gil, 2007) had argued that code switching can be a useful tool in assisting English language teaching and learning process. Other (Skiba, 1997) sees an opportunity for language development because code switching allows the effective transfer of information from the senders to the receivers. Though the development what is minimal and slow, it is still a positive indication of the learning progress. Tien and Liu (2006) stated that low proficiency students considered code-switching in their EFL classes as helpful towards gaining better comprehension especially when providing equivalent comprehension as well as giving classroom procedures.

Also, reviews their interlocutors, situations, messages, attitudes, and emotions generate code-mixing and also code switching can be used for many others good, such as quoting what someone has said (and thereby emphasizing one’s group identity), specifying the addressee (switching to the usual language of a particular person in a group will show that one is addressing that person), qualifying that has been said, or talking about past events.

In connection with that, the writer conducted a research at one of vocational school in Makassar (SMKN 1 Makassar). Many English teachers at SMKN 1 of Makassar faced difficulties when they are teaching and in the learning process in classroom interaction. They faced new vocabularies that are difficult for the students to comprehend. It may occur in SMKN 1 where English is studied for work not to continue study in University like general High School. So that, the teachers need strategies to make students understand the materials easily. Therefore, it is worth doing investigation about the accuracy of code switching in the school especially in the process of English instruction in the classroom. The usage of code-switching by teacher to get details information above and the teacher can get the information about the teaching learning process. Thus, the writer was interested in investigating this common phenomenon by proposing the research under the title “Teacher’s Code Switching in Classroom Interaction at SMKN 1 Makassar)”.

2. Research Method

The method used in this research was a qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative descriptive research was referred to a survey research, determines and describes the way things were. Qualitative descriptive research was aimed to comprehend and enlighten the existing phenomena experienced by the subject of the research such as attitude, perception, motivation, action, etc, in holistic way, and by describe it in words and language on
expected particular context and by using such kinds of accepted method (Moleong, 2004).
According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2), qualitative research was multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative research in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case research, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moment and meaning in individuals’ lives. The researcher collected the data by using observation in order to see affect of anxiety in gender and used interview as well to reveal the factor which influences anxiety in gender differences. In Seminar Presentation. This research apilied the purposive sampling in getting data Given (2008), assumes that purposive sampling was virtually synonymous with qualitative research. It means that purposive sampling is technique of choosing sampling of source data with specific considerations. The subjects of this research were students at Graduate English Programe State University of Makassar. The research focused on Seminar presentation students garduate English programe 2015/2016 Academic year. The researcher took all of the participants from September until November, the researcher observed all of the students presentation to know wether the gender differences of anxiety in Seminar Presentation. After presenting the researcher chose 2 males and 2 females’ student by some consideration such as: (1) the students look unwell in presentation, (2) the students look anxious in presentation, (3) the students speak too fast or too slow in presentation. They are determined based on purposive technique, a choice particular subject as they were belived to facilitate the provision of maximum information for complete data collection.
3. Result and Discussion
3.1 The teachers’ perspective on code switching in their EFL classroom interaction.
In the following, the writer presents the result of interview to the teachers by answered all of question that being asked. The writer interviewed the teachers to know their perspective or perception related to the use of code switching in their EFL classroom interaction. These result findings described EFL teachers’ perspective or perception toward to use code switching in their EFL classroom during teaching and learning process. They considered that using code switching as the important and influential part of English teaching and learning process. In addition, teaching and learning that students using code switching help students to study which is aimed to facilitate in their classroom interaction. After analyzing the teachers’ interviewed carefully, the writer found out that there were several factors that the teachers and students used code switching during in their EFL classroom interaction. These factors will be discussed in following expiations.
The first questions (1st) that the writer asked to the teachers were about their opinion on the use of code switching in their EFL classroom interaction. They said that using code switching is one of methodology to facilitate to the students in understanding the material that being studied. Moreover, there was statement below of teacher’s interviewed that being asked by the writer: “In my opinion, code switching should being thought in EFL classroom because it can be to facilitate to the students in understanding the materials that its being studied in the classroom,... (Teacher: January 17th, 2017)
“Menurut saya, pengalihan bahasa sebaiknya harus ada dalam di dalam pengajaran karena hal ini dapat di gunakan untuk menfasilitasi siswa dalam memahami materi yang di ajarkan,...
(Guru: 17 Januari 2017)

The second question (2nd) was asked to the teacher is about the choices of using code switching to switch between code switching used in Indonesia to English or English to Indonesia. The teacher responded that he tended to switch from English to Indonesia by considering the students’ English proficiency. Moreover, some students were still low to understanding materials in English subject, only several of them in his class that could response when he spoke English. There was reviewed by teacher statement in the interviewed section, as the teacher said:

“Well..., I prefered using code switching from English to ‘bahasa’ because its seen the students’s English proficiency is still low and only several of them could response when I talked to students using English,...(Teacher: January 17th, 2017)

3.2 How do the teachers put the code switching (performs/practices) into their classroom teaching practices.

a. The types of code switching used by the teachers in their classroom practises

Based on the observation the teachers put the code switching in their classroom, there were three different types of code switching found in this observation: they are tag switching, intra-sentential code switching and inter-sentential code switching. These types of code switching above could be presented below:

a. Tag Switching

Tag switching was the first types of code switching found by the writer in the presented data. It was mentioned in chapter two that tag switching was code switching which involves inserting a tag in one language to an utterance, which is otherwise in another language. For example when the teacher explain about the material and then in the whilst explanation the teacher insertion of tag in his/her utterance.

**Background setting of extracts**
The conversations were taken when he intended to explain in his teaching and he use tag switching in his language infront of classroom.

**Extract 1.1**

T : Why we write like that, in Indonesia should write this girl is beatiful *yah*, in English we have a formula okay. *Dalam bahasa inggris kita punya rumusnya yah.* the formula is,, we must put adjective *yah* before noun, okay. *(Why do we write like that, in Indonesia we should write the girl is beautiful? In English we have a formula. The formula is, we must put the adjective before noun)*

**Extract 1.2**

T : Okay… listen, listen, listen Okay dengar ya, listen, listen. Okay, okay, all the word before before ya before on the table must be adjective ya sebelum kata mejja sebelum kata mejja itu harus semua adjective ya. Nah, tadi kana da java nah disini jawa kan, nah jawa Bahasa inggrisnya java tapi itu bendanya kata bendanya itu java, java tapi itu semua harus adjective nah. Kalau dikamus itu kita liat ada tambahan ese, nah itu sudah termasuk adjective jadi yang bagus java, Javanese. And then wood, wood *yang kita hapal itu kata bendanya, makanya tadi lagi.* This must be adjective *nah*. Nah, intinya harus ditambahkan en, jadi supaya menjadi adjective.
The extract (1.1) shows that the teacher used code switching. He switched his language from the target language to the first language. He starts with explanation material and he repeats his explanation again to ensure the students’ understanding. In this case, the types of code switching is used by the teacher is “tag switching”. It is called tag switching because the teacher inserted tag in Indonesian by saying “why we write like that, in indonesia should write this girl is beatiful yah.” He inserted word yah in his sentence.

3.3 Students’ response to the code switching in their EFL classroom interaction.

These kinds of question consists of seven question that being asked about general response from students in used code switching in their classroom interaction. The analyses of these questions are talked in following description:

The first question (1st) deals with the teachers’ choice of use code switching during teaching in their EFL classroom according to the students response. Based on the data interviewed, teachers used English, bahasa, and its sometimes local phrases or dialect which is makassaress. Their teachers were not fully used English and bahasa. It can be reviewed by the students’ statement in interview section as they stated:

“...biasanya guru Cuma berbahasa Inggris sewaktu pertama kali masuk kelas kak, selanjutnya di pertengahan dan di akhiran pelajaran guru lebih banyak menggunakan bahasa Indonesia,...(Siswa: 10 Januari 2017)

The second question (2nd) deals with students’ response of when their teacher switch from target language to bahasa or other way around. There were a situation in which the teachers switch their code, their switched code when they explaining something that students did not understand such as giving command, explaining difficult grammar and fixing students pronunciation. It can be proved by the result of interview as the students stated:

“...when he is explaining about something that we really do not understand or when he wants to give us a command, follow her pronounciation and etc... (Student: January 17th, 2017)

“...usually when she is giving us example and explaining a difficult grammar or how to read properly dan clearly,...(Student: January 10th, 2017)

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and the discussion in previous chapter, the writer concludes that:

1. Code switching is a play of complimentary roles of two or more languages because it facilitates the breaking down of difficult or complicated texts in English to make input comprehensible to the students. In EFL teaching and learning, code switching is particularly helpful in simplifying meaning of difficult words or abstract concepts to the level of
competence and experience of the students. The teaching and learning process has also been shown to create a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Furthermore, code switching aids the teachers in keeping the students focused in the lesson and maintaining order in the classroom. Finally, code switching is time efficient in content subjects, thus providing the teachers with more opportunities to use class time for meaningful activities to supplement teaching. Hence, the findings support that code switching in the EFL classroom interaction has beneficial effects to learning;

2. Code switching is rule-governed. It requires competence in two languages. It is not an indication of lack of linguistic control or low proficiency in two languages. The data have established that both teachers are not only competent in their respective fields of specialization but competent bilinguals as well. Moreover in a school setting where the language of instruction in their EFL classroom interaction is bahasa and English, teachers codeswitch purposefully to achieve instructional goals and without prejudice to English as the mandated language of instruction. This is an indication of their awareness of how, when and to what extent they codeswitch. Hence, this study has shown that code switching is a bilingual skill, not a detriment; and,

3. Code switching is a convenient to use in teaching learning method for the ease and naturalness in expression it provides the speakers.

On the other hand, while it recognizes the benefits of code switching in the teaching-learning process, this study emphasizes that this mode could remain in the English Foreign Language classes in this vocational high school but only likely at low frequency and as a complement of English. The insights gathered from the participants point out the repercussions of frequent code switching in teaching learning in EFL classroom showed was suitable in teaching and learning process.

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