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TEACHERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE USE OF CODE SWITCHING IN EFL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY IN ENGLISH INTENSIVE PROGRAM AT STATE ISLAMIC INSTITUTE IN CIREBON

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ABSTRACT

The present study is descriptive qualitative research. The study aims to investigate and show the teachers perceptions toward the use of code-switching (CS) used by teachers in EFL classroom, especially in English intensive program at a State Islamic Institute. A four-section 20-item questionnaire was developed and distributed to the teachers. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed. The results display that teachers' perceptions are positive towards the use of code-switching code-switching in EFL classroom. Teachers believe that the use of code switching could help them in eliciting content, manage classroom, and show interpersonal relation in classroom. However, the use if code switching is beneficial for learners but it also need limitation because it could damage the process of language acquisition as learners do not get comprehensive input.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English. In Indonesia, teaching English as a foreign language is taught from elementary school until college. The goals of teaching EFL in Indonesia are to increase students' knowledge of foreign languages, make students use English in society, and students can make English as a skill when applying job because English as an international language. Gradually, English has become a part of every aspect of life todays. It exists in workplace, business, even in education. Thus, it is added in core courses in every school and is taught from elementary until the university level.

Nevertheless, most Indonesian students still have problems with the language because of many factors, such as the method, the facilities and even the teacher competency. As a result, many Indonesian students are unable to comprehend English fully or speak the language fluently even after learning the language for a long time. The decline in the level of the English language proficiency among students has brought about the need to solve the issue. Consequently, teachers began to implement code-switching as their way of providing students with the opportunities to communicate in the language apart from enhancing their understanding.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Code switching occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages, or language varieties, in the context of a single conversation. According Iqbal (2011) in classrooms, code-switching as a learning resource occurs at different levels. If on one hand there is a switch of grammatical items i.e. verbs, adjectives, and linkers etc., in addition this switch involves registers and technical language. Muysken (2000) used the term code switching to refer to "all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence". Wardhaugh (2000) believed that code is a natural term as compared to terms such as style, creole and pidgin in a language. Besides, it can also be referred to any kind of system where two or more persons comply for communication. Currently, the term code-switching is most commonly used to describe the use of two languages within one conversation or a text (Benson, 2001). Cook (2008) defined code-switching as the process of "going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers knew the same language". Metila (2009) explained that the pedagogical and communicative functions of classroom code-switching justify its use in teaching and learning contexts.

Bhatti et.al (2018) confirmed that code-switching is an important phenomenon, and it is regarded as a meaningful speech style used to pull off interactional effects and attain communicative goals. From the sociolinguistics point of view, it is regarded as a special feature that bilingual and multilingual individual are endowed with. Conclusively, Code-switching, the use of two languages in a single discussion, is not a random phenomenon. In fact, it is rather an effective tool. Code-switching serves many functions; for example, it is used to emphasize some points, express empathy and solidarity with students and facilitate understanding by quoting others words (Gulzar, 2010). According to Bashir (2015), code-switching has a variety of purposes in various forms: content delivery, managing discipline, humor and turn the mood.

There has been a debate in literature worldwide on the use of the mother tongue (L1) in a second (L2) or foreign language classroom. In other words, teachers applied one of strategies of communication named code switching. Yao (2011) argued that teachers and

researchers in English as a second or foreign language have, on the whole, been concerned to minimize code-switching in the classroom because it can indicate a failure to learn the target language or an unwillingness to do so. The use of first language can indicate that there is something wrong in the teaching and learning process (Willis, 1981).

Additionally, Cummins and Swain (1986) confirm that the progress in the second language is facilitated if only the target language is used in the classroom, asserting that the teachers exclusive use of the target code will counteract the pull towards the first language. In English teaching methodology and teacher training, it had been assumed that code-switching in the classroom was a counter-productive behavior, and the whole focus of discussion centered on ways of preventing it, with almost no consideration of what caused it in the first place (Yao, 2011).

Even though, there are scholars that support the careful and limited used of first language. Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) stated that students first language is one of the most important factors in learning second or foreign language vocabulary. Cole (1998) argues for selective, principled use of the L1 due to its practicality and efficiency. Cook (2001) referred to code switching in the classroom as a natural response in a bilingual situation. It is argued that language alternation in the classroom is not self-evidently counter-productive, that there is a paramount need for the subject to be researched further, and that the issue is alive with serious pedagogical implications for the practicing language teacher.

There are several studies investigating perception and attitudes towards the use of code-switching in EFL classroom. Hussein (1999, in Yao 2011) investigates Jordanian University students attitudes toward code-switching and code-mixing to find out when and why they switch codes and the most frequent English expressions that they use in Arabic discourse. Greggio (2007) described and illustrated the use of code switching in interactive exchanges between the teacher and the learners in two EFL classrooms. Further, Yao (2011) investigated the in-service teachers and their student's attitudes to code-switching. Finally, Puspawati (2018) investigated the use of code switching done by Indonesian teachers in university context and explored the functions of those CS in teaching and learning process. Therefore, this study investigated and showed the teachers perception towards the use code-

switching (CS) in classroom to find out how teachers view the use of code-switching with Indonesian in EFL classroom.

3. METHODOLOGY

The design of this research was descriptive qualitative research that describes teacher's perception towards the use of code switching in EFL classroom. The participants of the study are 32 English teachers of English Intensive program at a state Islamic institute in Cirebon, they have taught English at least for 4 years in the program.

A questionnaire is administered to investigate attitudes to teachers code-switching in EFL classroom, to find out how teachers switch codes and when and why they code-switch and the most frequent use of Indonesian language for what functions. The questionnaire consists of four sections and twenty items. The first five—item section elicits some information on teachers' persona according to their use of code-switching in classrooms. The rest elicit data on attitudes to functions of teachers code-switching in subject access, classroom management and interpersonal relations respectively: Section two elicits participants' attitudes to code-switching used for subject access. Section three elicits data as to whether teachers' code-switching was used for classroom management and the last section elicits attitudes towards teachers' code-switching for interpersonal relations. There are five choices to each question item using a Likert-type scale and choices are given marks from 5 to 1. Teachers were asked to tick one of the five boxes by each statement, as appropriate. The percentages of the result are then explained descriptively.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, teachers' responses to all the questions of the questionnaire will be discussed and analyzed. Perception towards the use of CS in EFL classrooms will be analyzed under four subheadings: Perception towards teachers' persona in using CS (questions 1 to 5); Perception towards CS in subject access (questions 6 5to 10); Perception towards CS in classroom management (questions 11 to 15); and Perception towards CS for interpersonal relations (questions 16 to 20).

1. Perception towards Code-Switching in Relation to Teachers Persona

The first question concerns the teachers' perception towards the language proficiency of those who switch codes in EFL classroom. The table 1 shows that 56.3 % of the teachers agree and 21.9 % strongly agree that teachers who code-switch can express themselves freely and clearly in both first and second language. 6.3% of the teachers disagree with the opinion on this question. About 15.6 % of the teachers are not sure about this opinion on the question. This positive interrelationship is unquestionably confirmed by most of the teachers in the sample, because code-switching is accessible only to those who have had sufficient English schooling to enable them to alternate codes in their verbal behavior.

The Question 2 is about teachers' perception towards whether the use of code switching will cause any difficulty in understanding what the teacher speaks. Contrary to the first question, the table displays that most of the participants (53.1%) disagree and (12.5%) strongly disagree with this opinion on the question. Around 12.5 % of the participants think they agree with this opinion, and 15.6 % of the teachers take no side. The result also demonstrates that in EFL classrooms, teachers' switches may not cause students misunderstanding to the teachers' utterances.

Question 3 elicits opinions from teachers varying on whether teachers' switches will pollute the languages. The result showed that 37.5% of the teachers disagree and 21.9 % of them strongly disagree with the opinion on the question. About 15% of the teachers agree about this question, however, up to quarter of the participants or 25 % are not sure of it.

The Question 4 concerns teachers' perceptions towards the nature of the link between switches and bilingual's proficiency in languages. Contrary to the common view, the result displays that almost 70% of the teachers contradict the opinion on the question. It also shows that, far from being an indicator of deficiency in the use of one or both languages, there is sample evidence that code-switching or mixing requires high levels of bilingual proficiency. That is, switches do not necessarily represent the deficiency in languages. Only about 12 % of the teachers agree with it and 18.8% of them do not decide. Opinions to Question 5 vary from those of Question 4. Question 5, from the other side, asks about the same opinion on the proficiency of the teachers who code-switch. Table1 shows a different result. Almost a half of the participants (50%) agree or "strongly agree" with the opinion on

the question. Anyway, from the results of the five questions, it is concluded that most of teachers admit the relationship between code-switching and proficiency. Generally speaking, as Ferguson (2003) pointed, far from being an indicator of deficiency in the use of one or both languages, switching codes requires high levels of bilingual proficiency. However, more than a half of the participants or more than 30% are not sure about the perception and 15.6% disagree about the question. Based on the percentage, it can be said that the use of code switching does not guarantee the proficiency of the teachers.

2. Perception towards Code-Switching in Relation to Subject Access

This part elaborates teachers' views on whether the use of code-switching in class will help students understand the subject matter of their lessons or not. Lin, 1996, Martin, 1999, Pennington, 1995, etc. cited by Yao (2011) in their studies showed that code-switching plays an important role in talk around written text and annotation of the meanings of these texts. The purpose clearly is to mediate textual meanings for students, who have limited control over the language of those texts. Their study provides a good example of the bilingual negotiation of the meaning of classroom texts. There are five questions on different aspects of code-switching used for text explanations.

The result displays an unexpected result of Question 6. More than half of the teachers (62.5%) agree and 3.1 % strongly agree with the opinion on the question. Only less than 10% of the teachers disagree with the opinion on the question and 25% of the participants are uncertain. This code switching may happen when teachers want to explain some of the points in particular topics, they switch codes according to which topic is under discussion. It might be suggested, for instance, that certain aspects of language teaching such as grammar instruction and new lexical items are preferably expressed in the mother tongue of the students. Since the students are mostly not English majors they seemingly prefer taught in Indonesian.

As to the perception towards teachers code-switching used in explaining the grammatical points or lexical items in Question 7. The results showed that more than a half (53.1%) of the sample either agree and 18.8% strongly agree with the opinion on the statement; whereas 12.5% disagree or with it and 15.6% of the teachers are not certain. This result confirms the

hypothesis that when teaching grammatical points and lexical items, teachers often choose students native language. The result is also in accordance with that of Question 6.

In the same way, it is assumed that, when encountering the cultural points in texts, teachers prefer to use L1 in order to illustrate them better. The opinions to the Question 8 confirm the assumption. Most of the teachers (65.6%) in the sample agree and 12.5% strongly agree with the point in the question; only 3.1% of the teachers disagree with the statement on the question and 18.8 % of the participants are uncertain. This is again in line with the idea that teachers can switch to Indonesian to explain some of the points in particular topics.

Responses to Question 9 were similar to those offered in Question 8 in that teachers sometimes use students L1 for both eliciting answers to the teachers question and attracting their attentions. The result displays that more than a half of participants (50%) of the teachers agree and 21.9 % strongly agree with the opinion on the question, while 6.3 % disagreed and 15.6% are not sure. This means that the use of code switching in classroom activity is believed could help students perceived the teacher's ideas. When it came to Question 10 about whether teachers, using code-switching, would better clarify the lesson content they taught, 68.8 % of the participants agree and 15.6% strongly agree with this opinion on the question, whereas only 3.1 % disagree and 12% are uncertain. Accordingly, those five questions concerning code-switching in subject access above, four of them are supported by most of the teachers. It seems that code-switching is considered to be a useful strategy in teaching text contents.

3. Perception towards Code Switching in Relation to Classroom Management

Code-switching also functions as a resource for the management of classroom discourse. Particularly, code contrast often contextualizes a change of frame (Goffman, 1974 in Yao 2011) away from lesson content and toward some off-record concern— to discipline students, to attend to latecomers, to gain and focus students' attentions. It may also demarcate talk about the lesson content from what we may refer to as the management of pupil learning; that is, negotiating task instructions, eliciting students' responses, disciplining them, specifying a particular addressee, and so on. With regard to the following

five question items in relation to classroom management, five aspects of use of code-switching are presented to the teachers.

In response to Question 11 which states that "Teachers who switch codes from English to Indonesian can better clarify task instruction", the result demonstrates that responses to the opinion tilted toward agreement, 62.5 % of the participants agree and 15.6 % strongly agree whereas only 6.3 % disagreed. It is believed that code-switching can help teachers better clarify classroom task instruction. However, with the opinions to the statement of "teachers who switch codes from English to Indonesian can better discipline the students", teachers have different perception. The result displays that almost a half of the participants (43.8%) expressed disagreement, whereas 40.6 % expressed agreement and 15.6 % are uncertain. This means some teachers are well aware that using code-switching to discipline a pupil is not the best way but the others still believed that code switching could have good effect to discipline the students.

To question 13, which states that "teachers who code-switch from English to Indonesian can better engage student's attention", 46.9 % agree and 18.8 % strongly agree, while 15.6% disagree and 3.1 % strongly disagree and 15.6 % are not sure about the statement. Even though code-switching is perhaps not the best way for engaging students' attention in classroom teaching some of the teachers reported that the use of code switching can engage student's attention when some of students are absent-minded.

Responses to the statement of "teachers who switch codes from English to Indonesian can better request quiet", indicate that almost a half of participants or 37.5% agree and 15.6% strongly agree about the statement in question 14, whereas 31.3% disagreed and 15.6% of the teachers are uncertain. It seems that code-switching for requesting the students to be quiet is not really agreed by many of the teachers. To the statement of "teachers who switch codes from English to Indonesian can better direct (call on) students, 62.5% of the participants agreed and 9.4% strongly agreed with it, whereas only 15.6% disagreed and 3.1% strongly disagree with it and 9.4% who are uncertain. This is in line with Arthur (1994 in Yao 2011) who has argued that code-switching may be used for addressee specification.

4. Perception towards Code Switching in relation to Interpersonal Relations

This category of perception towards code switching for interpersonal relations highlights the fact that the classroom is not only a place of formal learning but also a social and affective environment in its own right, one where teachers and learners negotiate relationships and identities. To build rapport with individual students, create greater personal warmth and encourage greater learner involvement, a teacher may, therefore, when the occasion is appropriate, switch to the students' native language. The following sections pursue the question about teachers' perception towards the use of code switching in relation to interpersonal relation from different aspects.

With the statement in Question 16 in which whether code switching can help teacher encourage students, the result shows that 43.8% of participants agree and 21.9% strongly agree, so that more than a half of the participants expressed the agreement towards the statement, whereas, only 21.9% of the sample expressed disagreement and 12.5% are uncertain, so the majority approve of this statement. This ties in well with the fact that in EFL classroom teachers are aware that it is necessary to encourage students when appropriate. Moreover, the opinions to question 17, almost 80% of the teachers show agreement (59.4% agree and 12.5% strongly agree), while 21.9% show disagreement (18.8% disagree and 3.1% strongly disagree) and 18.8% are uncertain. These two questions investigate the same thing about how the use of code switching stimulates students' interests in English learning.

In responding to question 18, higher percentage of the participants 81.3% agreed (59.4% agree and 21.9% strongly agree) with the statement, and 18.8% of teachers are uncertain to the statement. Surprisingly there is no teacher expressed disagreement about the statement; this means most participant teachers reported that they would switch to Indonesian to tell a joke or short story to enliven the atmosphere of their classes. Responses to question 19 show that 71.9% agreed and 6.3% strongly agreed compared to 12.5 % who disagreed and 9.4% who are unsure. It contradicts our expectation that a higher percentage would consent to the opinion of the statement. To the last question item, whereas 78.1% of the participants agreed, compared to 12.5% disagreed and 12.5% expressed uncertainty. In parallel with its role in the management of the affective climate (encouragement and praise), Code Switching is also a resource for better negotiating with students or learner.

5. CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the teacher's perceptions towards the use of code-switching in EFL classroom in English intensive program at a state institute, as perceived by the participants of 32 teachers. It aims at finding out their opinions on the use of code-switch in EFL classroom. With regard to teachers' perceptions, teachers' responses are first discussed and analyzed and their perceptions towards CS are elicited. Most of the results showed that teachers support the use of code switching in EFL classroom. Some of the results obtained are contrary to expectations, especially the ones related to Question 2, Question 3, Question 4, and Question 12. No more than half of the sample "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with these statements. They rarely switch to Indonesian to discipline students. They also believed that the use of code switching did not cause misunderstanding and pollute the language. Moreover, it did not indicate that the teachers are deficient in target language.

The use of code switching sometimes is necessary, especially when the students are considered low to middle level. They would face difficulty in comprehending the lesson if teachers use full English in the class, especially when they learn grammar and lexical items. Code switching also could give benefit as teacher explain cultural topic, give comment to students' response and clarify content. Furthermore, in relation to interpersonal terms, code switching is also beneficial as teacher wants to encourage students, praise them, and tell jokes to make a good environment in classroom. Conclusively, the use if code switching is beneficial for learners but it also need limitation because it could damage the process of language acquisition as learners do not get comprehensive input.

SUGGESTION

The teachers in EFL classroom should know about the advantage and disadvantages of code switching so that they can use the right way in teaching English in EFL classroom in order to get the best result of the student's English competence. This study may be far from being perfect. It is hoped that there will be further researchers who conduct the research on the

phenomenon of code switching by teachers in the classroom for more detail data/explanation and from many points of view.

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