Identifying The Use Of Code Switching In Malaysian Educational Comedy Series Titled Oh My English!

Mengenalpasti Penggunaan Penukaran Kod Dalam Siri Komedi Pendidikan Malaysia Bertajuk Oh My English!

Nur Adilah Mohd Subkhi
[1]Azianura Hani Shaari

Pusat Kajian Bahasa dan Linguistik
Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Correspondence e-mel: [1]azianura@ukm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Code-switching normally takes place amongst bilingual or multilingual speakers. This is because both bilingual and multilingual speakers have a high tendency to alternate between two or more languages, or language varieties, in any context of a single conversation or situation. Other than that, code-switching is also one of the important aspects of sociolinguistic studies. The use of code-switching in the Malaysian Educational Comedy Series entitled Oh My English! has therefore been investigated for this research. This research aims to identify the types of code-switching that the actors and actresses used in the Oh My English! series and the functions or reasons for each code-switching activity. To achieve this aim, a qualitative method was used to obtain data. Several videos from Oh My English! YouTube channels were identified and selected. Based on the findings, there are different types of code-switching activities used by the actors and actresses in the comedy series. They are, (1) Tag switching, (2) Inter-sentential, and (3) Intra-sentential code switching. Apart from that, 6 different functions of code-switching were found in the analysis. In conclusion, the findings of this study indicated that code switching in Malaysian English comedy is not just an unplanned linguistic strategy, but carries certain purposes that emphasize on the establishment of people's solidarity and cultural identity.

Keywords: code-switching, Oh My English!, types, functions, Malay-English

ABSTRAK

Penukaran kod biasanya berlaku dalam kalangan penutur dwibahasa atau berbilang bahasa. Ini kerana kedua-dua penutur dwibahasa dan berbilang bahasa mempunyai kecenderungan yang tinggi untuk berselang-seli antara dua atau lebih bahasa, atau ragam bahasa, dalam sebarang konteks perbualan atau situasi tunggal. Selain daripada itu, penukaran kod juga merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam kajian sosiolinguistik. Penggunaan penukaran kod dalam Siri Komedi Pendidikan Malaysia bertajuk Oh My English! telah dikaji untuk penyelidikan ini. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti jenis penukaran kod yang digunakan oleh

pelakon dalam rancangan Oh My English! iaitu dari sudut siri dan fungsi atau sebab bagi setiap aktiviti penukaran kod. Untuk mencapai matlamat ini, kaedah kualitatif telah digunakan untuk mendapatkan data. Beberapa video daripada Oh My English! Saluran YouTube telah dikenal pasti dan dipilih. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, terdapat pelbagai jenis aktiviti penukaran kod yang digunakan oleh pelakon dan pelakon dalam siri komedi tersebut. Ia adalah, (1) Penukaran tag, (2) Antara ayat, dan (3) Penukaran kod intra-ayat. Selain itu, 6 fungsi penukaran kod yang berbeza ditemui dalam analisis. Kesimpulannya, dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa penukaran kod dalam komedi Inggeris Malaysia bukan sekadar strategi linguistik yang tidak terancang, tetapi membawa tujuan tertentu yang menekankan kepada pembentukan perpaduan rakyat dan identiti budaya.

Kata kunci*: penukaran kod, Oh My English!, jenis, fungsi, Bahasa Melayu-Inggeris*

1.   Introduction

Malaysia is a multiracial country with many of its citizens able to speak more than one language. Languages that are commonly used in Malaysia such as Malay, English, Tamil and Chinese. There are citizens who can speak only two languages, for example, Malay and English or Chinese and English. Other than that, there are also citizens who can speak more than two languages. It really depends on each person what languages they want to master in their life. Languages are important in life because it shows our identity. For example, Malaysians must know Malay language because the language shows the identity of being a citizen of Malaysia. In this chapter, the background of the study, statement of the problem, research aim and objectives, research questions, significance of the study and limitations of the study will be discussed.

1.1   *Background of the study*

People or speakers who can speak more than one language, (or commonly known as bilinguals), typically have the ability to code-switch or mix their languages together when they communicate with people in their surroundings. Bilingual or multilingual speakers tend to use more than one language simultaneously or switch the languages from one language to another language effortlessly (Das, 2012). This is such a normal phenomenon in Malaysia where people speak more than one language (known as bilinguals) in one sentence and it is called code-switching. Most of the time, people code-switch when they are in informal situations. Code-switching usually takes place when speakers have conversations with their family, friends, or someone that they are close with. However, code-switching has been used in various contexts including in educational contexts. This shows that even in teaching a language or any subjects, most of the instructors used code-switching to help the students or learners to manage the class and improve their comprehension in teaching the subject (Mahadhir & Then, 2007).

Other than that, code-switching has also been used in television such as in dramas, movies, talk shows and so on. According to Prabaningtyas (2016) in her research, the difference between code-switching in movies and other code-switching studies is that code-switching in movies is usually used according to the script that the writer has made and not natural by the actor and actresses itself. This shows that the code-switching that they used in dramas, movies or in any television series are not natural that came out of themselves. This study will identify the

use of code-switching in a Malaysian Educational Comedy Series titled *Oh My English!*. This TV series is a Malaysian comedy but at the same time is an educational television series. The TV series was aired on Astro TVIQ starting with the first season on 20th of May 2012 until the sixth season that ended on 17th of December 2017. The series was produced by Red Communication and Astro Entertainment and the series also became one of the collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Education of Malaysia and Astro in order to improve Malaysian's English knowledge in an interesting and fun way. *Oh My English!* displays an array of code-switching – both from English to Malay or from Malay to English in order to make the viewers understand what they wanted to show in the TV series.

1.2   *Statement of the problem*

The Malaysian Educational Comedy Series entitled *Oh My English!* was aired with the purpose of improving Malaysian's proficiency in the English language. However, the actors and actresses do not use English fully; they most of the time code-switch from English to Malay or from Malay to English in the TV series. However, Oh *My English!* series does not help Malaysians to improve their proficiency in the English language. I personally think that the TV series does not help me in making my English better. So in this study, I am going to conduct a research on the kinds of code-switching they use and the functions of each code-switching they use in the TV series that make *Oh My English!* do not help Malaysian in increasing their English knowledge.

1.3   *Significance of study*

The main purpose of the research is to find out the types and the functions of code-switching used in *Oh My English!*.Hence, the research is significant for students or learners who are struggling with the use of code-switching in the TV series so they can understand more about each code-switching that can be found in the *Oh My English!* series. This is because some of the learners are using fully Malay and some are using fully English on a daily basis so this research would be helpful for them to overcome the struggle.

Next, this research is significant for English teachers or educators who always use code-switching in their classrooms. Through this research, the teachers or educators will know when to code-switch, and that code-switching is a possible strategy to help learners learn English more effectively.

Lastly, this research is significant to the future researchers who find this topic interesting. Hopefully this research is able to give the future researchers some sufficient information and some guidance in finding out about other code-switching cases.

2.   Literature Review

Code-switching is a common thing among bilingual and multilingual speakers. According to Hymes (1974), code-switching has become a common term or an alternative to show its meaning for bilingual or multilingual speakers, eve speech styles, or varieties of language. However, code-switching has undergone so many terms or definitions by many researchers over the years. Code-switching was defined as a linguistic process where two or more languages are used for strategic or communicative purposes (Fasold and Connor-Linton, 2006). Other than that, Myer-Scotton(2002) defines code-switching as a situation where people use two or more languages in

the same clause of the sentence. So, in other words, the possibility of code-switching happens when the speakers are using two or more languages whenever they are having communication with people in their surroundings. According to Nguyen (2014), in Sociolinguistics, code-switching has 3 main types; (1) tag-switching or extra sentential, (2) inter-sentential code switching, and (3) intra-sentential code switching. In each main code switching listed, they have their own subsection of code switching such as situational code switching, conversational code switching, metaphoric code switching, integrated loanword, single-word code switching, tag or emblematic switching etc.

Research on code switching in a Malaysian' movie entitled *Ola Bola* was conducted by Zakaria, Noorizan, and Maros (2016). By using the qualitative method in data collection, the researchers observed the language that the actors used in the movie. The process was done by analysing every scene they chose and observing them thoroughly. Through observation, transcription, and summarizing the movie, the researchers found different kinds of code switching that the actors used. The main types of code switching the researchers found in the movie are (1) tag switching, (2) inter-sentential, and (3) intra-sentential.

Fauziyah (2017), on the other hand, analyses code-switching used by Captain Yoo in Korean Drama *Descendant of the Sun*. Using a descriptive qualitative method, she found that there are many types of code-switching and reasons behind every code-switching that was used by the actor in the drama. Her findings also showed that inter-sentential code switching, intra-sentential code switching, establishing continuity switches and tag switching were found in the dialogues that were used by Captain Yoo in the Korean Drama. It was found that (1) expressing group identity, (2) wants to gain attention, (3) talking about particular topic, (4) wants other people understand them, (5) clarifying the speech content for interlocutor, (6) exclude other people, (7) being empathic, and (8) interjection were the reason why code-switching took place in the Korean drama.

Prabaningtyas (2016) conducted research on code-switching in the sequel of *99 Cahaya Di LangitEropa* movie. Using content or document analysis, a type of qualitative method, she found six types of code-switching used in the movies; (1) tag or emblematic switching, (2) single-word code switching, (3) conversational code switching, (4) metaphoric code switching, (5) integrated loanword, and (6) situational code switching. She also mentioned there are about 10 possible reasons for code switching in the movies; (1) talking about particular topic, (2) quoting someone's word, (3) expressing emphatic, (4) interjection, (5) repetition use for clarification, (6) intention of clarifying the speech content for interlocutor, (7) expressing group identity, (8) mood of the speaker, (9) habitual expressions, and (10) emphasize a point switching. A study by Nyavor (2017) also focused on code-switching on Ghanaian TV talk show entitled *The Delay Show* using a qualitative method. She also found some types of code-switching in the TV talk show which are intra-sentential, extra-sentential, and inter-sentential. In her research, other than focusing on looking at the types of code switching, she also focused on finding the conversational uses of Akan-English code switching and social motivations for Akan-English code switching in the selected TV talk show.

Rianda (2017) did a research on code-switching and code-mixing used by Boy William in Breakout Music Program at Net TV using a qualitative method to collect the data where she focused on analysing the actual content to look for the types and the reasons of code-switching and code-mixing. She found that there are 3 types of code-mixing; (1) insertion, (2) alternation, and (3) congruent lexicalization and 2 types of code-switching which are situational code switching and metaphorical code switching based on every minute that she chose in the video.

Other than that, it was found that (1) talking about a particular topic, (2) interjection, (3) express solidarity, (4) quoting somebody else, (5) repetition, (6) expressing group identity, (7) intention of clarifying the speech content for interlocutor, and (8) lexical need were the reasons why code-mixing and code-switching were used in the video.

Based on each past study, it shows that most of them are mutual to the topic that the researcher wanted to do. There are different types of code switching and the reasons for every code switching used in the content. Other than that, it shows that all the past studies used qualitative methods since it was appropriate for this kind of research. In this study, the researcher also will be using a qualitative method to collect the data from the *Oh My English!* series. The past studies are useful for the researcher to use them as references in completing this study.

3.   Methodology

3.1   *Research Design*

Qualitative method is used in this research since the data are collected from the *Oh My English!* series via content analysis or document analysis. According to Rianda (2017), content or document analysis is a tool for research that focuses only on the media and the genuine content of texts. According to Rianda (2017), texts refers to books, essays, discussions, conversations and any kind of materials that involve texts. Using qualitative content analysis, all the data will be organized according to the categories that are suitable for the research (Morgan, 1993).

This research proposes to observe and analyse the conversation between the actors and actresses in the *Oh My English!* series and the researcher will download the videos of the TV series that are available in *Oh My English!*'s official Youtube channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/OhMyEnglishTV/videos). The content analysis design is appropriate for this research because the main aim of this study is to identify the types of code switching and the functions of each code switching that were used by the actors and actresses in the TV series.

3.2   *Data Collection Procedure*

The researcher will be going through some procedures in order to collect the data that are appropriate and suitable for this research. As mentioned earlier, the sample for this research is the conversations or dialogues between the actors and actresses in the *Oh My English!* series. First thing the researcher does is choose about 6 videos from After School and Class of 2015 seasons that are available on the Youtube channel and watches all of them. As mentioned earlier, the videos will be downloaded from the Youtube channel to obtain sufficient data. The researcher needs to watch all the videos that have been chosen which involve code switching between the actors and actresses because that is the only source of data that the researcher could obtain. Second, the conversation will be transcribed where the researcher observes by listening to every code switching used by the actors and actresses in the video and transcribing them into words. According to Forman and Damschroder (2008), transcription is an important thing to do in qualitative research as it focuses on verbatim representation of the content for the data such as audio-recording, videos, interview tapes etc. Once all the data are collected and transcribed, the researcher will proceed with taking notes of the conversations which contain the types of code-switching and the functions of code-switching that were used by the actors and actresses of the

TV series. Last but not least, the researcher classifies the data collected according to the groups of types and the functions of code-switching.

3.3   *Data Analysis Procedure*

After the data collection process, the researcher moves on with the next one which is data analysis. By using all the data gathered, the researcher starts to analyse every data. In order to analyse the data, the researcher organizes the data according to the types and the functions of code switching. This is an important step because the researcher depends on the transcription of the dialogues from the *Oh My English!* series and the utterances can be highlighted to identify the code-switching that happened in that particular scene. In order to make sure the data are sufficient for the study, the researcher will watch the videos several times and make a list of the code switching that has been found in the video. Then, the categorization will be done by referring to the example of past studies in order to make sure the code switching that has been found will be in the correct category. The next one is integrating and summarizing the data. For this procedure, the researcher needs to integrate then summarize all the data obtained in *Oh My English!* series. The data will be integrated in tables according to the types of code switching and the functions of code switching and proceed to summarize all the data. Based on that, the researcher will be discussing the data findings according to the data analysis procedure made.

4.   Findings and Discussion

The research was conducted in the Malaysian Educational Comedy Series titled *Oh My English!* to identify the use of code-switching. The analysis of the findings is based on After School season and Class of 2015 season episodes. Furthermore, the findings obtained in the *Oh My English!* series will be discussed in this chapter. The chapter sections are separated into two parts. The first of them would be the types of code-switching used by actresses and actors and the second one is the functions of code-switching used in the Oh My English! series.

4.1   *The Types and Functions of Code-Switching Used in Oh My English! series*

The code-switching that occurred and was employed by the actors and actresses of the *Oh My English!* series has been documented in this research, and a discussion about the code-switching will take place. Three different types of code-switching were identified in *Oh My English!* The actors and actresses in *Oh My English!* series used tag switching, inter-sentential, and intra-sentential code-switching. Other than that, the actors and actresses in the television series mainly spoke English and Malay. As a result, it was easy to determine the types of code-switching they employed. Moreover, based on the conversations in the *Oh My English!* series, the functions or reasons for code-switching they used also can be identified easily. There are (1) talking about a particular topic, (2) interjection, (3) express solidarity, (4) repetition, (5) intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor, and (6) lexical need.

4.2   Tag Switching

The first type of code-switching used in the *Oh My English!* series was tag-switching. Tag switching is usually used when someone is speaking in one language and suddenly he or she inserts another language in his or her sentences. For example, "I am eating right now, *awaknampakkan?*". Other than that, tag-switching is widely used in countries that speak more than 2 languages. These are some examples that show tag-switching:

Oh My English! After School Episode 1

[4:11 - 4:15]	BS: *Eleh*, action. Z: It's not action, it's show off. *Dah pergisekolah!*
[6:51 - 6:57]	R: Huh metaphorically speaking. J: Me- metapho- metaphoric *apadiacakap?*

Oh My English! Class of 2015 (Strange Beginnings)

[5:24 - 5:33]	N: *Lain kali bawabotol air sendiri.* J: Sorry *lah*Nisha, *akupenat ah tadilari.* M: Sorry sorry, *naiklorilah!*

Based on these findings, it shows that tag-switching happened among the actors and actresses. The way they used the English words or sentences while conversing in Malay or vice versa was noticeable and it could be said that it was a tag-switching type in code-switching. The ones in underline were the tag-switching, such as, "*eleh*, action", "me- metapho- metaphoric *apadiacakap*?" and "sorry sorry, *naiklorilah!*" and the actors and actresses spontaneously insert another language in their sentences. It was unnatural as it was scripted, however, it shows the example of how Malaysians always tag-switch in their conversation.

4.3   Talking about a particular topic

The first function of code-switching that the actors and actresses used is talking about a particular topic. This is because when they were talking with each other, they would have a particular topic that they wanted to talk about. It is a normal thing for people to talk about one particular topic and use code-switching in their conversation. In *Oh My English!*, the actors and actresses always have so many things to talk about or discuss.

5.   Conclusion and Suggestion

The research on identifying the use of code-switching in Malaysian Educational Comedy Series titled Oh My English! shows how the actors and actresses used each type of code-switching that the researcher found. The actors and actresses employ various types of code-switching in the Oh My English! series and every code-switching have its own function. Other than that, the research also found the functions for every code-switching. The functions of code-switching used by the actors and actresses show how each of them differs from each other. Every function of code-switching that was used by them has its explanation. There were some parts that the researcher could not differentiate especially when it was about the types of code-switching.

The researcher wants to suggest that researchers in Malaysia could produce more articles or researches about code-switching in television series. Code-switching is a fun topic to learn as it happens in people's lives on a daily basis. Other than that, code-switching is a part of the sociolinguistic element, hence, it is better for researchers to publish more articles about code-switching so that people and other researchers can benefit from it.

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