UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

INVESTIGATING GENDER-BASED CODE-MIXING IN CORE AVIATION CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the differences in gender-based code-mixing in an aviation classroom setting. It specifically focuses on examining the patterns of code-mixing employed and identifying the reasons for code-mixing based on gender in three different aviation modules' sessions. Three male and three female students who had enrolled in the Aircraft Maintenance Program (AMP) at Allied Aeronautics Training Centre (AATC) were selected based on a preliminary observation. This research employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches in analysing the collected data. The quantitative method was utilised in analysing the frequency of patterns employed by the participants while the qualitative method was employed to analyse participants' reasons for code-mixing. Data on code-mixing were collected through a series of observations and semi-structured interviews. Nine observations on code-mixing practices were audio-recorded with the aid of an observation schedule. A one-to-one interview session was also conducted with each participant to elicit reasons for code-mixing using an interview protocol. The research revealed that there were variations in code-mixing patterns by gender. In terms of patterns, male participants did not show any preferred pattern of code-mixing as compared to female participants who most of the time produced utterances that reflected the insertion pattern. With respect to reasons for code-mixing, both genders showed differences. Male participants code-mixed to ensure the effectiveness of communication and to enable listeners to follow. However, female participants code-mixed due to their fear of fully conversing in English and because of cultural influences, especially concerning the acceptance of English. This research has provided insights into gender-based code-mixing specifically in terms of patterns and reasons which have implications for TVET and ESL teaching and learning. The research, in fact, has helped justify the relevance of code-mixing practices in the classroom for both teachers and students, and, therefore, the Ministry of Higher Education consider the prevalence of this practice. Besides, the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) could make the necessary adjustments to the language policy related to the medium of instruction.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter establishes the context of the research by outlining the current situation in which code-mixing is being practised in the local setting, followed by the role of the English language in the aviation field and the position of the study of aviation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The rest of this chapter comprises the research objectives, the problem statement, the significance and the scope of the study. This chapter also includes the definition of terms that are used throughout the research.

1.2   Background of the Study

In general, Malaysian students spend 14 to 15 years learning English specifically from kindergarten to college or university level of education. According to Hazita (2016), English is one of the mandatory subjects at all levels of education, based on the national education curriculum of Malaysia, as regulated by the education policy. She also states that the education policy does not necessitate students to pass English for them to complete their education at both primary and secondary levels of education, thus, contributing to the issue of low English competency among Malaysian students. Hazita (2016) provides statistics from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of Malaysia showing that not more than half of students who completed their primary school years were proficient in English for the year 2013. She also states that based on JobStreet.Com, more than half of the number of graduates in Malaysia suffer from low English proficiency, making it one of the main causes of unemployment. Due to the rapid technological advancements nowadays, proficiency in the English language is crucial for Malaysia, a developing country, as most information or knowledge, is made available in English.

In multilingual countries, varieties of languages are involved in the communication process and the two most common practices are code-switching and code-mixing where the easier practice is code-mixing, specifically in terms of conveying and receiving messages. Much research on code-mixing has been conducted