

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**CODE-SWITCHING PRACTICES
AMONG THE MULTILINGUAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS IN SABAH**

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of combining and shifting between languages among multilingual ESL learners in the second language classroom has become one of the main concerns of sociolinguistics in the multilingual classroom. The situation happens in most multilingual classrooms, including ESL classrooms in Sabah. Although much research has been done on code-switching in ESL classrooms, there is inadequate research on the code-switching practises among the multilingual community college students in Sabah. Thus, this study aims to address this gap. It aims to investigate the event of code-switching in classroom interaction among community college students in Sabah. The quantitative data were obtained by distributing a questionnaire to 125 students in semester one from a community college in Sabah. The classroom observation and semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using the statistical software SPSS 24.0 and presented in frequency and percentages. Qualitative data were analysed using Atlas. ti. The findings revealed that the Sabah Malay dialect (SMD) was the domain language used in interactions with classmates and instructors. The students also responded positively to using code-switching to facilitate their English learning pace. These findings implicated that code-switching was a functional language tool for interaction among the multilingual community college students in Sabah.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Code-switching (CS) is a common occurrence in second or foreign language classrooms, particularly in multilingual communities. According to Nurhamidah, Fauziati & Supriyadi (2018), Fachriyah (2017) and Bhatti, Shamsudin & Said (2018), code-switching is a social and cognitive behaviour that is common in multilingual communication. Under certain conditions, the multilingual speaker employs CS as a tool for interaction strategy. CS in multilingual speakers typically generates and executes various interaction functions.

Over the last few decades, researchers' interest in code-switching has grown, particularly as it relates to multilingual students' languages and their use of code-switching in second or foreign language classrooms. Linguists, educators, and policymakers are constantly debating code-switching, a linguistic phenomenon associated with bilingual and multilingual learners. Code-switching is defined by Myers-Scotton (2017) as "a linguistic term commonly used when second-language learners include elements of their mother tongue in their speech" (p. 43). Milroy and Muysken (1995) defined code-switching as the use of two or more languages in the same conversation in an alternate bilingual manner. Gumperz (1982) defines code-switching as the juxtaposition of speech passages belonging to different grammatical systems or subsystems within the same speech exchange. Terminological ambiguity is a persistent problem in code-switching research. There is no agreement among researchers regarding the use of various language contact terminology Cahyani et al. (2018). Various researchers employ terms like code-switching, code-mixing, code alternation, and borrowing in a variety of contexts (Puspawati, 2018).

These linguistic phenomena are defined subjectively and based on personal preferences. However, the inconsistent explanation of related terminology has caused unnecessary confusion Shafi, Kazmi & Asif (2020). Scholars have engaged in numerous pedagogical and theoretical debates on the subject. A fundamental debate is whether code-switching benefits second language learners (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021); Auer, 2020). According to Simasiku (2016), learning L2 through exposure to the target language (TL) is best. He bases his argument on Krashen's theory of a natural approach to language acquisition. However, from a pedagogical standpoint, limiting the