

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**CODESWITCHING AS A SCAFFOLDING
TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE
CASE OF RAFFLES INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
(RIC)**

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Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This topic has not been submitted to any academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the perspectives of teachers and students on codeswitching as a teaching-learning technique outside of classroom contexts in Raffles International College (RIC), a private college in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Despite having English as its medium of instruction, the teachers and students, especially those with spoken ability in English, Malay and Chinese, often practice codeswitching, which serves many functions in conversations (Auer, 1998; as cited in Riehl, 2005). This paper examines the attitudes of teachers and students to codeswitching in RIC, and the teachers' and students' perceptions of codeswitching as a teaching and learning strategy. Data was collected through non-participant observation, likert-type questionnaire, and short interview sessions. The participants of the study were 28 teachers and 85 students. In addition to that, three teachers were purposively selected for conversation observations and interview sessions. It was found that codeswitching is natural, acceptable and inevitable in the context of RIC, that the teachers and students generally have positive attitudes to codeswitching, and the teachers and students have mixed perception of codeswitching as teaching and learning strategy, as well as a gap of expectation towards the practice of codeswitching in the contexts of the college. From the findings of this research, the researcher identified that codeswitching is used as a technique to scaffold the teaching-learning of teachers and students of RIC. In conclusion, despite previous researches' findings on codeswitching as a speech style, it is still considered as a strategy for the teachers and students of RIC outside of classroom contexts to communicate and achieve their teaching-learning goals.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Language and society can never fail to be a topic of discussion amongst sociolinguists. The way we talk can reveal our social identity like who we are, where we come from and life experiences we have had. Languages that we use provide us with the different ways of saying the same thing. For a multiracial country like Malaysia, so many languages and dialects are spoken and at times mixed and switched with the English Language.

In all bilingual zones, the act of switching and mixing between two codes are found to be quite common. However, one has to know when it is suitable to do so and when it is inappropriate. Living in a country like Malaysia, a multilingual country where the main races are Malay, Chinese and Indian, interacting effectively with one another is very much needed. Malaysia has a sole official national language which is Bahasa Malaysia, with English as its second language, and a variety of cultural languages like the different Malay dialects, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien, and Tamil (Soo, 1987). In everyday life, especially in a school setting, these races interact with each other continuously. Being linguistically diversified, such societies are “multilingual in a variety of languages or dialects that are functionally differentiated...” (Kuo, 1985; as cited in Soo, 1987).

Although the official language of the country is Bahasa Malaysia (BM), most private tertiary institutions use English as their medium of instruction, as it is a universal language and it prepares the students for the global world as our Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak stated in the Star newspaper on 7th November 2006, during his closing speech at the Johor UMNO Convention, that if Malaysians do not master the English language, therefore we would just be considered as “jaguh kampung” and do not have a place in the international arena. However, as the majority of the Malaysian population are at least a bilingual, therefore the possibility of codeswitching is much greater (Soo, 1987). It is assumed that when these people enter such institutions, they would also carry their vernacular language with them and later