Code-switching in teaching English subject for EFL students

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Abstract - This study aims to find the types of code-switching employed by the lecturers in the teaching-learning process of EFL students and also to find the functions of the use of code-switching employed by the lecturers for teaching EFL students in ITB STIKOM Bali. The data source of this study was the interview transcribes of the lecturers who teach English subjects in ITB STIKOM Bali. They were interviewed regarding the use of code-switching in teaching EFL students. The theory of code-switching was used in this study and the results of the previous researches in the same areas were also used as the literature review. The finding shows that the situational and metaphorical types of code-switching were employed by the lecturer in the teaching-learning process. However, the situational type of code-switching was dominantly employed by the lecturers in the teaching-learning process. Another result was regarding the function of the code-switching that employed by the lecturer. It was found that the function of code-switching as a translation frequently employed by the lecturer. It is hoped this study can give information to the lecturer and teacher regarding the topic of code-switching.

Keywords: code-switching, situational code-switching, metaphorical code-switching

1. Introduction

Language is important to be learned to be able to create good communication. Language is a community system consisting of integrated units of form through a joint process (Bonvillain, 1997; Jufrizal, 2018). English is one of the important languages to be mastered by the people as it is an international language. Therefore, it is learned by all students in the world, including Indonesia. They are called the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students since this language is a foreign language. This language is learned from elementary to university students. The general purpose of learning this international language is to be able to go internationally. Since language is a habit, therefore, the learners must speak it every day to master it. There are many factors affected the use of English in everyday lives. One of those is the environment of the learners. It plays an important role in this case.

The fact is, almost all learners or students only use this language when they get an English subject since their environment not supported. Moreover, most of the teachers usually use code-switching in teaching this language. Code-switching is the situation when the speakers use their target language and their first language back and forth. Lin (2013) defines code-switching as the use of two languages code by either teachers or students in the classroom setting.

Code-switching as a debatable phenomenon can be viewed based on pro and cons side. Code-switching, viewed by affirmatives, it is believed to bridge the teaching and learning process (Üstunel, 2016). However, since the 1980s, code-switching is a normal used by most scholars and they have come to regard it as a natural product of bilingual and multilingual use of language. The use of code-switching in the teaching-learning process is a normal phenomenon. The code-switching overuse may affect the students' optimization of using English compared to the class which uses English all the time (Jingxia, 2010). However, it can help the students in learning English, since they still have a few vocabularies. Besides that, the other reason is, the students are not familiar yet with the type of sentence in their target language, and therefore, in explaining the target language, it is important to use two languages, to get the students' understanding. On the other hand, it is afraid that code-switching distributes more disadvantages and may affect the way students communicate later (Zhu, 2008).

Referring to the above phenomenon, this study was focused on the type of code-switching used by the teacher in the teaching-learning process and also to find the function in employing the code-switching in teaching and learning process of English subjects was also analyzed as well. The findings of this study are expected to be used as a reference for the other researchers who are interested in the same area.

Types of code-switching vary from a linguist to another. Thus, this study employed types of code-switching proposed by Blom and Gumperz (1972) and Wardhaugh (2006).

Situational code-switching occurs when situations, particularly participants, settings and activity types change speakers' language choices (Blom & Gumperz, 1972). Situational code-switching occurs when the languages used to change according to the social situations in which the conversant find themselves; they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one. No topic change is involved (Wardhaugh, 2006). Situational code-switching can also be used to change the situation (Blom & Gumperz, 1972).

Metaphorical Code-switching, as Blom and Gumperz (1972) stated that metaphorical code-switching is the language switch related to particular kinds of topics or subject matter rather than to change the social situation. Similarly, Wardhaugh (2006) states that the metaphorical code-switching happens in a situation when a change of topic in the conversation requires a change in the languages used. Some topics may be discussed in either code, but the choice of code adds a distinct flavor to what is said about the topic.

There are some functions of using code-switching in the class of English for EFL students. The first function was stated by Uys & Van Dulm (2011), they propose that the function of code-switching is as **translation**. Since English is not the EFL students' first language, it must be difficult to teach the whole materials in English. Hence, using code-switching is one of the alternatives to make the EFL students understand the idea of the materials. The lecturer can use L1 then L2 to explain the material. Another function of code-switching is as **checking comprehension** (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009;

Nordin, Ali, Zubir & Sadjirin, 2012). It is usually easy to see when the students have not understood yet the materials that have explained. Then, checking their understanding or comprehension by switching the code is important.

According to Grant & Nguyen (2017), in managing the classroom is very vital for the teachers in order to keep the class in order and to save more time in explaining the material. Uys & Van Dulm (2011) also give more function on use**.** The last function of code-switching is as **learning strategy** stated by Usy & Van Dulm (2011) that this role is very significant because, in the classroom, a teacher may find students do not understand the material so to smoothen the teaching and learning process, a teacher can use code-switching as a tool to ease the material delivery.

2. Method

Since the data source of this study was gathered from observation and interview then the type of data was qualitative data. Qualitative data was chosen to explore the phenomenon that was happened in the process of teaching and learning English, particularly into the EFL students.

2.1 Technique of Collecting Data
The technique of collecting data plays an important role in this study. This study employed a qualitative approach particularly basic interpretative study to understand the experience of the research participants who employed code-switching in their instructional languages (Ary & Razavieh, 2010: 29). The interview was conducted with four English lecturers after doing some observations during the class and recorded as well to study the types of code-switching employed by the lecturers and the reason for employing it. The lecturers' names were symbolized with 'L1-L4'.

2.2 Technique of Analyzing Data
In analyzing the data, a descriptive qualitative analysis technique was used. The procedures are as follows:
   (a) Collecting data
The data was collected through interview, then, the interview transcribed into textual data.
   (a) Analyzing the data
The transcribe textual data was analyzed to find the types, and reasons for code-switching that employs in the teaching and learning process in STIKOM Bali. Besides that, the data was used to find the function of using code-switching in teaching English to EFL students, particularly in STIKOM Bali.

3. Results and Discussion

This study was focused on finding the types of code-switching and the function of code-switching employed by the English lecturers in the teaching-learning process. The data of this research was the transcribe of the lecturers' interview.

3.1 Types of Code-switching Employed by Lecturers

Referring to the result of the interview that has been done with the lecturers and transferred in the form of transcribing**,** in sociolinguistic aspects, there are two types of code-switching were employed by the lecturers in teaching the EFL students. They were situational code-switching and metaphorical code-switching.

Situational code-switching occurs when the languages used to change according to the social situations in which the conversant find themselves; they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one. No topic change is involved (Wardhaugh, 2006). Wardhaugh (2006) also states that metaphorical code-switching happens in a situation when a change of topic in the conversation requires a change in language use. The types of code-switching were presented as follows.

I normally use code-switching in teaching when I tried to explain something which is difficult to explain in English (L1)

The above utterance shows that the lecturer usually uses code-switching for a particular situation. He explains in students' first language, in this case, is the Indonesian language for some particular materials, because it is difficult to use the target language. Principally the sentence structure of the Indonesian language is just the same as the English language. The students need to understand the similarities and the difference between the principal rules before they started learning English. The way to make them understand the rule is by explaining it in their first language.

I use code-switching when I want to explain something that I believe would be too hard for the students if I explain it in English. And also when I want to say jokes. (L2)

The above utterance shows that the lecturer usually switches to L1 when he explains something that is a principle and has a different concept with the students' first language. Besides that, he also uses code-switching in making a joke, because if he uses full English, it will not be understood by the students, since they are not familiar yet with it. Sometimes, making a joke regarding the material is important to make students have such a particular memory towards the lecturer's explanation. On the other hand, the most important thing is how to make the students understand it. Therefore, this can be said as an example of code-switching based on the situation.

I use code-switching when introducing the first materials at the beginning of class. I usually use this sentence to the student "We use 'he', 'she', 'it' as pronoun atau disebut dengan kata ganti orang dalam Bahasa Indonesia" (L3).

The above utterance shows that the use of code-switching is important for the lecturer at the beginning of the class while explaining the first materials. Some lecturers start the class by greeting the students in the English language since the greeting is familiar to them. Then, they usually ask the students in English, for example asking their names and their favorite activities. From here, the lecturers usually know the ability of the students. Mostly, since English is the students' foreign language, although they have learned it for more than ten years, they still cannot speak in this language properly. Therefore, the lecturer believes that the material can be delivered well to the students if he uses the situational code-switching.

As the above example that was mentioned by the lecturer, in explaining the

material of pronoun, he better uses the students' first language because this material is different from what they already understood in the Indonesian structure. Another type of code-switching in the above utterance was also when the lecturer explained the topic and he needed to change the language to Indonesian to make sure that the students get the idea of the materials.

> *I cannot be specific on the use of code-switching, because normally I have combined some techniques when teaching students. It depends on the situation, condition, as well as the ability of each student in acquiring knowledge if it is based on the technique used. But if it is based on the material given to students, normally I used it when to teach related to cultures, traditions, and when giving examples related to daily life, sometimes used when delivering jokes to students. (L4)*

The above utterance shows that the lecturer employs the situational code-switching. He usually uses code-switching depends on the situation, conditions, and ability of the students. If the situation and the conditions were not supported using English, then he switches into students' first language. Another type of code-switching that was also usually used by the above lecturer is giving examples of the materials to the students. Particularly for the materials that are related to social, culture, and daily life. Moreover, he uses code-switching as well when he makes jokes to students. Inserting jokes in teaching-learning activities are useful to make students feel more relax, therefore, they will be able to remember the materials.

> *I sometimes use code-switching in teaching beginners. When the students have some difficulties in understanding the sense of English. (L5)*

From the above utterance, there can be seen that code-switching is used when the lecturer teaches beginners because they are just started learning English. Therefore, the situational code-switching was used in here. Beginners mean that the students have no idea yet regarding this language. They even do not know the principle rules between their first language and their target language. Lecturers must explain it in Indonesian for the difficult materials then continue using English. Another thing is, the lecturer has to check and ensure that the students understand his explanation clearly, therefore, using Indonesian language at first then switch into English must be very useful.

From all the above interviews, it is proved that code-switching usually used by the lecturers to help them to manage the EFL classroom. According to the interview, both sociolinguistics aspects were found, there were situational code-switching and metaphorical code-switching. However, the type of situational code-switching dominantly used by the lecturer in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, code-switching can be used as a means in teaching EFL students, to ensure the students' understanding of the materials that the lecturers have explained.

3.2 The Functions of Code-switching Employed by Lecturers

There are some functions in employing code-switching by the lecturers in teaching EFL students. In this study, there were also functions of code-switching found from the interview as shown as follows.

> *Using code-switching in teaching English as a foreign language is very useful because the students, don't really understand all of the words in English so we must explain them in Indonesian in order to make them really understand what had been mentioned. It is important to make sure that the students really understand what the teachers mean so they don't have a different interpretation regarding the words which had been explained during the lesson. It is very useful to make students understand what the teacher said because not all of the students understand English and many of them have a different level or different English capabilities in which the teacher must explain both languages (L1).*

From the above utterance, it shows that the function of code-switching is to check the comprehension of the students. The lecturer uses the Indonesian language to check the students' understanding of the topic or the idea that the lecturer already explained. The students were given a chance in understanding the materials in the Indonesian language at first before continuing it into the context of English. The other function of code-switching based on the above interview is as a translation since, for him, students have different abilities in learning English. Some of the students might be almost familiar in using English, but the rest of them are not familiar yet with this language.

Considering this difference in knowledge of the students, then it is important to explain the materials in the Indonesian language and in English to see their understanding. Sometimes, students will not ask the lecturer when they do not understand the topic. They would rather keep it in their minds, so it seems like they got nothing along the teaching-learning process. Sometimes they do not feel comfortable asking the lecturer if the lecturer uses English fully along the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the lecturer can give a chance to their students in understanding the materials by using code-switching.

> *Considering English is not their first language, I think it's better to explain some things in students' first language or translate English into their first language. Probably when they want to say something, and they can't remember or don't know a word or two (L2).*

From the above utterance, it is clearly mentioned that the function of code-switching is as a translation. The lecturer usually translates words that unfamiliar to the students. They must help the students understand the words that they never heard before. This is also very useful to get the students' interest, attention, and motivation as well. Moreover, by translating the words into their first language, they will be able to understand the material and more comfortable following the class. Uys & Van Dulm (2011) state that a teacher can employ code-switching for translation's sake. Lecturer helps the students understanding the idea of what he has already explained by translating the words into the students' first language.

> *It is important to use code-switching because the students who learn English are the students whose first and second languages are not English language. Students usually need to be taught how to use certain rules in English grammar and I usually explain to them that using code-switching as there are some English words that they are not familiar with and when explaining I will use code-switching when reaching those certain words. Their vocabularies are limited in*

understanding the English language. That is when code-switching comes in handy, to make them easier to understand the explanation of certain materials in the subject and when it is time to practice, they have to use full English (L3).

The above utterance shows that the lecturer uses code-switching as a translation. Students should be able to get the point of the materials delivered by the lecturers, therefore, the lecturer translates the difficult words into their first language, since they still have limited knowledge of English vocabulary. Since there are so many vocabularies and types of verbs that are different from the used the Indonesian verbs, then, this is normal for them to get confused. By translating into the Indonesian language, they are expected to have a piece of adequate information regarding the materials and rules of the target language during the process of teaching and learning. Another function of code-switching, as shown above, is also the checking comprehension of the students. This is a task of the lecturer to see and check their students understanding, therefore, code-switching is a bridge to find out their understanding.

There are so many techniques that can be used by a teacher to teach their students. Code-switching is one of many options that teachers can use to teach English as a foreign language in a class. By using code-switching in teaching English as a foreign language, the teacher will be able to combine some terms in English with terms in the local language. Sometimes, it will help the student to acquire knowledge faster (L4).

The above lecturers' statement shows that code-switch can be used as a learning strategy in teaching EFL classroom. He has some techniques in teaching the EFL students, and one of them is using code-switching. Teaching techniques are very needed to make students interested in learning English.

This is to build a sense of language and helps beginners to build their basic English by comparing the two different languages as well as helps the teachers explains sometimes of when the students get confused (L5).

The above utterance shows that the function of code-switching is to check students' comprehension regarding the materials. Sometimes students got confused with the material delivered by the lecturer if it was explained in English. This is because they do not know the meaning then they would not get the idea. To avoid the students' confusion, code-switching can be used as a bridge in checking the comprehension of the EFL students.

This is positive to build a basic understanding of English for beginners, especially in building a sense of language. The students can feel the meaning of English by comparing it with the meaning of their first or second language (L5).

The above statement clearly mentions that code-switching is very beneficial as a translation. According to the above interview, few college students can be said as a beginner. It is because of his students have not understood the basic rules of their target language. Therefore, the lecturer must explain from the basic rules to build their sense

of language. The lecturer gives the meaning in students' first language then the students will be able to understand the meaning in both languages.

From all the above findings, it is confirmed that code-switching is intensively used by the lecturer in EFL classrooms. From the lecturers' interview, it was found that there were three functions of code-switching used in the teaching-learning process. They are; function as a translation, as the checking comprehension, and as the learning strategy. It was found that the function of code-switching as the translation frequently used by the lecturer in teaching the EFL students, then followed by the function of code-switching as the learning strategy and the checking comprehension. This is proof that the use of code-switching can help the lecturer in teaching English as a foreign language. This is also can be used to ease the difficult materials to be easily understood by the EFL students.

4. Conclusion

In conformity with the aims of this study, there are two problems that had been discussed. The first problem is to find the type of code-switching that is dominantly used by the lecturer in the teaching-learning process for the EFL students, and also to find the function of the code-switching in teaching the EFL classroom.

Based on the result, it was found that both the situational type of code-switching and metaphorical code-switching were employed by the lecturer. However, the type of situational code-switching was dominantly used by the lecturer in teaching EFL classroom. Lecturers usually employed this type of code-switching to help the students easier in understanding the materials.

In terms of the function of the code-switching, it was also found three functions of code-switching that usually used by the lecturers in teaching the EFL students. The functions are as the translation, learning strategy, and also as the checking comprehension. However, the function of code-switching as the translation mostly employed by the lecturer in teaching-learning English as a foreign language. This is clearly seen that the code-switching is a useful asset as a bridge to communicate the materials to get a better understanding of the teaching-learning process of English subject.

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