Functions and Application of Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in a Second/Foreign Language Classroom

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ABSTRACT. There is Increasing Number of People to Speak English to Communicate. There Are Many Places, Like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Learning English as a Second or Foreign Language. However, While Local People Speak Chinese or Cantonese in Their Daily Life, They Express Their Own Ideas with Some Words of English in a Sentence. This is a Phenomenon of Code-Mixing and Code-Switching. Can They Be Used to Teach to Make Knowledge More Clear in a Second/Foreign Language Classroom? What's the Function and Implement of Code-Mixing and Code-Switching? Therefore, Several Parts Including Definitions, Functions and Usage of Pedagogy Perspective Will Be Presented within This Paper.

KEY WORD: Code; code-mixing; Code-switching; Second/foreign language; Teaching; Function; Implement

1. Introduction

Having a one year study life in Hong Kong, code-mixing and code-switching is the common phenomenon in the daily life in this society. On one hand, the Hong Kong local speak Chinese or Cantonese with their friends or parents with some words of English within a sentence. One the other hand, they speak English with teachers, the superiors or the fellows and sometimes talk in English but in Chinese at the next sentences. With the development of the language teaching, English is one of the most important languages in the world and most of the educated people will be taught and learned as a foreign language, let alone those places or countries such as Malaysia using English as second language. Therefore, code-mixing and code-switching are becoming more and more normal in daily life. However, can they be used to teach? How to use them at pedagogy? What are the functions of code-mixing and code-switching in second or foreign language classroom? How can they use in the teaching? Definitions, several functions of them and the usage from the pedagogy perspective will be presented within this paper.

2. Literature review

Before discussing the implement of code-switching and code-mixing, definitions of "code", "code-switching" and "code-mixing" are needed to be discussed and defined first and they will be presented at the following.

As for codes, they can be simply explained as languages or language varieties (Musk, 2010). They also have the concrete meanings and it can be used for the purpose of communicating by people in daily life. A language belongs to a kind of code (Younas, Arshad, Akram, Faisal, Akhtar, Sarfraz, & Umar, 2014). Therefore, when two or above codes are utilized at the same conversations, mixing and shifting from time to time, and this kind of phenomenon is call code-mixing or code-switching.

Musk (2010) claimed that code-mixing and code-switching are subject to code-alternation. However, they are still different. Muysken (2000) divided them through various levels, code-switching referring to happen in the speech situation by using two or more languages, whereas code-mixing is related to the lexical level as well as the grammar features within a single sentence. When it comes to code switching, according to Weinreich (1968), it refers to the combination of two different languages at the sentential level or the same content while communicating, and this is the standard explanation of code switching in sociolinguistics. In addition, Gardner-Chloros (2009) holds the view that code-switching is the usage of two or more than two languages including dialects communicating by bilinguals at the same sentences or conversation. Schendl (2015) pointed out that code switching is a kind of strategy to make a mixture between different languages in a single context. From Lin (2013), "code-meshing" and "translanguageing" are mentioned and these are the traditional way to call "code-switching". Similarly, Younas, Arshad, Akram, Faisal, Akhtar, Sarfraz, & Umar (2014) have mentioned, "When people shift from one language code to another during a conversation, this phenomenon is termed as

code-mixing or code-switching." Musk (2010) said that code-switching required two languages as the conversation mediums, which can create the language boundary. From the above explanation, code switching typically appears with two conditions. One is the speakers get good command of two or more languages and the other is speakers are transferring the languages at the same conversation.

When referring to code mixing, although it also connects to the two or more languages while talking, it still differs from code-switching because the former is reflected in intra-sentences but the latter is in inter-sentences. Offiong & Okon (2013) pointed out that code-mixing is a phenomenon that speakers copy the original items of another different language including vocabularies and phrases to express their own meaning within a single sentence, especially for those who share bilingual background. What is more, Cao (2011) defined that code-mixing is two languages switching inside of the sentence, which is common in the bilingual societies such as Hong Kong. Briefly, there are two common characters of code switching and code mixing. First is that they are all shared with or more languages, particular in bilingual societies. Second is that they mix two languages while speakers who get command of two languages or dialects are talking. On the other hand, the difference is mainly at the sentential level. Code mixing is appeared at the intra-sentence while code switching is at the inter-sentence.

3. Implement

Unlike code-mixing which is borrow the new words form second language and keep the original sound in the first language expression, code-switching carries the social significance when switches codes . Thus, there are three functions of code-switching, according to Crystal (1997), which is similar to be used in the foreign or second language classroom. First of all, the speakers may feel difficult to express clearly in one language and switch codes to make him/her understood. Take this situation into the classroom teaching, some lacks of equivalent words in that second language. For the sake of understanding, teachers may not interpret in English clearly and using Chinese or other first language with one word or one sentence to make things more clear, which is a best way to improve the understanding to the contents for students as well as teachers. Secondly, switching codes occurs when the speakers want to show the harmony to the society he or she belongs to. In that case, the speakers and listener can get along well and make respond with the same switching. Similarly, put it into the second or foreign classroom teaching, students grow up with the first language environment and are familiar to the mother tongue. Teachers use code-switching or code-mixing to reflect his or her belonged community to draw attention from students. There is one of non-linguistic reasons drawn from Dambrowska (2013) that is a method to state the intention of the conversation on the class. Last one is for conveying the attitudes and feelings to the listeners. Showing positive or negative attitudes to the listeners and embodying the willingness to participate one certain conversation are also the non-linguistic reasons of code-switching. From my aspect of understanding this in the classroom, teachers lead the students to understand the attitude towards the world, the events, etc. In brief, the three functions of code-switching make motivation for teachers to use, which are for the purpose of the clarification and interpretation, for the register identification, and for the attitude presentation.

Three functions of code-switching are clearly described above. Because it is normal to find this phenomenon in second or foreign language classroom nowadays, it is necessary to make good use of it into teaching but not ignore it. How can these functions be applied in the real classroom? Kirkpatrick & Sussex (2012) claimed that the content of curriculum is needed to be suitable for the users' situations. The overall goal of the curriculum is to develop the intercultural knowledge for the students and the method to use the second language as a medium of instruction. On the basis of the summary from Lin (2013), it is a good sense and the local functions to use code-switching. It can be an abundant resource of communication and there are three purposes that are ideational functions, textual functions and interpersonal functions for the learner in second language classroom. In the beginning, code-switching have the ideational functions, which reflect on the contents of translation, explain, elaborate and etc. More specifically, in regard of teaching reading, teachers can explain and translate the passage from the first language to the second language as well as teaching listening and writing by the means of let students find their familiar life experiences to not only make deep impression of the knowledge but also the usage of the daily life. And this is a definitely significant meaning to teach writing with an unfamiliar or second language for learners. In addition, code-switching have the textual functions. Textual functions are for highlighting the important points for the learners. For example, topic transferring, activities marking, focuses making. Make more concrete, while teachers need to teach the speaking and changing a topic, students will get a quick attention to the speakers and follow up the class content easily. From my perspective, using this way can let students quickly draw into the thinking of their daily to make them have real experience to speak and to learn to use the second language to express. What is more, it is also helpful for the students to focus on technical definitions of words, comparing to the terms of students' using in daily life. Last purpose but not least,

code-switching have the interpersonal functions. Using code switching in negotiation to change the social distance which may increase or decrease the closeness is essential. In this case, it is convenient for the speakers to share the cultural values and some thoughts from each others. This function can apply to the group discussion in the classroom. Students can switch codes to share opinions effectively and conveniently.

Take a concrete example of teaching reading as an example of applying the code-switching into the second language classroom, a short English story is the main content to teach in a reading curriculum. The teaching processes will be shown at the following. The first part of the teaching is the overall acquaintance of the story, reading the whole story for the students, asking some relative questions about the story and waiting for the responses from the students, and at the end of the first part is the feedback from the teachers to students and find out where is the main problem to stick to understand. The second part of the reading teaching is using code-switching to interpret the main points and the knowledge points that make troubles to the students. At the same time, teachers have to use first language as well as second language. This is for the sake of deep understanding to students who do not fully understand the contents. Then do some practices about the story to check the level. The final part of the reading class is the reviewing. Take the situation of second part into consideration, if the students have no problem of the story in the second or foreign language, then reviewing with the second/foreign language. If no, teachers have to use language switching to leave deep impression of the story to the students until they have no problem in using second language to the story. In general, this kind of teaching including presentation, practice and production allows making a close connection between language focus. What is more, this code switching not only can be applied in the language class but also use it at mathematics, which is a real example in South Africa. The differences are that only use in the group work, students-and-teachers talking, and so on (Lin, 2013). In this way, students can enjoy the class more than one language teaching classroom.

4. Conclusion

Taking the above several parts described into consideration, we can make a brief conclusion of the definitions, the similarity and differences of codes, code-mixing and code-switching, the functions and the purposes of them using in the classroom and the examples of using them in the real classroom. Code can be similarly explained as language or language variety. Code-mixing is using second or foreign language words within a single sentence. Code-switching is using second or foreign language words within a single conversation. Therefore, although both of code-mixing and code-switching are referring to two or more languages, the difference is that the former is at the intra-sentential level while the latter is at the inter-sentential level. After seizing their characteristics, there are three functions concluded above. They are to convey the attitudes, to express in a more specific way, to show the belonged community. Thus, there are ideational functions, textual functions and interpersonal functions as the purposes respectively. Applying these kinds of functions and purposes into the second or foreign language classroom teaching, looking for some previous researches, is approved that they are definitely useful in helpful students to understand at the class.

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