

**The Code-Switching Phenomenon during Oral Presentations  
among the Business Programme Students**

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### Abstract

In Malaysia, English as a second language is used as a medium of instruction in most institutions of higher learning. Although it is compulsory to use English as a medium of instruction for all academic programmes, code-switching is still prevalent in the classroom for instance during an oral presentation. This phenomenon is also common among the students in the bachelor's degree in International Business (BIB) at a private university in Selangor, Malaysia that became the context of this study. Hence, this research aimed to explore the BIB students' perceptions on the utilisation of code-switching during oral presentations, and to identify the frequency of its usage in their speech. The participants of this study were 203 students from the Faculty of Business Management and Professional Studies (FBMP) of a private university in Selangor, Malaysia, who are currently doing their bachelor's degree in International Business. The research instrument employed was a questionnaire that was accessible through a google form link by all the 203 students. Descriptive statistics were run to analyse the data collected. The findings of this study revealed that the students perceived positively the use of code-switching during oral presentations. Majority of them agreed that they code-switched to overcome their lack of proficiency in English such as limited vocabulary, and to ease their oral presentations. Most of the students admitted they frequently code-switched during oral presentations. From these findings, important implications and recommendations for future research were elucidated.

*Keywords:* code, code-switching, language alternation, oral presentation, second language acquisition

A code denotes a language or a variation of language or rather any kind of system applied for communication (Wardhaugh, 2006). When people choose to communicate, he believes that a specific code (a particular language, dialect, register, style, or variety) must be opted. In speech, more than one code may be used, especially by individuals who have expertise or skills in more than one language. People can and will change from one code to another, as the need arises. This practice is known as code switching. Meyerhoff (2006, p. 116) simplifies the definition by claiming that “code switching is the alteration across sentences or clause boundaries between varieties or codes.” Rodman (2011, p. 461) notes that “code switching is a bilingual-like speech style in which fluent speakers switch languages between or within phrases. As quoted by Alang and Idris (2018), in classrooms around the world, code-switching is still widely practised, particularly where a second language such as English is used as a medium of instruction in the classroom. Similarly, it is a common phenomenon in multilingual communities including Malaysia, which extends from everyday life and work environments to classrooms where a particular language has been developed as the language of instruction (Ting, 2002). Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and a variety of languages spoken by indigenous groups are among the native languages spoken in Malaysia. Code switching is typical among teachers and learners in the Malaysian ESL classroom because of its usefulness in resolving the potential communication and understanding issues that may arise from the limited language abilities of the learner and the linguistic context of the individual learner (e.g., Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Carless, 2007; Ellis & Shintani, 2013; Macaro, 2005). Although it works for several purposes in the language classroom, when students use L1 or the native language some teachers or lecturers also feel uneasy or guilty (Butzkamm, 2003).

In higher education institutions, communication in the classroom usually takes place through an oral presentation, which is either between students and students or between a lecturer and students. Educators or lecturers utilise almost entirely oral presentations when giving their lessons in front of the class. An oral presentation has also become a part of the assessment for students as they are required to present their work. In oral presentations, the students occasionally switch their language when delivering information about their assignments and projects. Past research showed that code-switching is perceived as a natural learning process especially in a bilingual academic setting (Cook, 2001). He also recognises that “bilingual or trilingual learners prefer this mode of discussion as they are at ease as they code-switch as they need”.

The role of code-switching in education has been discussed in a growing number of research papers. Nevertheless, students’ and educators’ perceptions towards code-switching are important factors that must be thoroughly considered before using code-switching as a medium of communication as well as an instructional tool. Recently, Alang and Idris (2018) claim that there is a lack of studies looking at university students’ perceptions towards their lecturers’ code-switching practice, particularly in institutions where English is used as the medium of instruction. Moreover, in the current literature, these perceptions are not adequately discussed especially during oral presentation (Selamat, 2014). In the context of the present study, code-switching is also practised among the Faculty of Business Management and Professional Studies (FBMP) students especially during oral presentation. Most subjects at the FBMP require the students to do oral presentation as part of the class learning activities and one important component of their assignment and project. Karimah (2019) denotes that oral presentation in tertiary level education could not be separated from the students. The oral presentations can either be individual or group presentations and the students are expected to clarify the subject-matter during the presentation. This activity is usually followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session. No studies on code-switching related to oral presentations

involving students from a business programme have been conducted so far in Malaysia. Therefore, this present study aims at exploring the Bachelor in International Business (BIB) students' perceptions on the use of code-switching during oral presentations. There are two research questions in this study: (1) What are the perceptions of BIB students on using code-switching during oral presentations? and (2) How frequently do BIB students code-switch in their speech?

### Literature Review

Code-switching is a common phenomenon in the classroom especially in Malaysia educational setting. Both students and lecturers typically switch from English to their first language (L1) when the needs arise for them to do so. According to Mokhtar (2015), one of the beliefs is that the use of code-switching in a classroom serves as a method for teaching and learning. He also contends that since 2008, the medium of instruction for Mathematics, Science and technical subjects in university level has changed from Malay to English. In terms of writing, these university lecturers, especially those who are non-English major, may be proficient in English, however they are not used to teaching in English. Thus, they may be less proficient in speaking skill. Therefore, they prefer to code-switch between Malay and English most of the time to solve this problem. However, students are also having a hard time to speak fully in English, hence, they code-switch as well. As this study focuses on Malaysian higher education institution students, it is best to use the word code-switching to refer to the shift and transition, between two languages of English and Malay or Bahasa Melayu as mentioned by Mokhtar (2015).

The phenomenon of language alternation is very much debatable and can be seen based on its pros and cons. According to Üstunel (2016), from affirmatives' point of view, it is agreeable that code-switching helps to integrate the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the notion is viewed as a chance to integrate the right purpose of code-switching rather than the barrier it gives. This is supported by Enama (2016) where she believes that the presence of L1 should be there during language learning as in one framework to avoid problem in utilising L1 because it acts as the right purpose in classroom to students. Moreover, some researchers believe that by having language alternation in interaction would give a great impact to the students in terms of self-efficacy such as their confidence level as well as motivation. As explained by Perego and Boyle (2013), confidence, security, motivation, and friendship are all aided by L1 in the teaching and learning process. L1 use in the EFL classroom finally allows students to be in a relaxed environment where they are free to share their minds without having to adhere to a rigid policy of only speaking English. This environment has prompted the affirmative to have confidence that code-switching is very beneficial for both ends, teachers and students in the classroom.

On the contrary, Sridhar (1996) states that the negative views in the use of code-switching as an act of laziness, sloppiness as well as any other weaknesses during the process of teaching and learning or as mentioned by Brown (2006), lack competency. This conception appears due to the lack of confidence on the use of L1 as the cost it may take. The presence of the L1 would, sadly, shade the goal of language teaching. When compared to a class that utilises English most of the time, the misuse of code-switching will eventually have an impact on students' ability to optimise their use of the English language (Jingxia, 2010). Long-term language alternation often allows errors to be mistaken for normal types of language without the person understanding it. There are always two sides of the coin, and past studies revealed disparities in their findings depending on the contexts and participants of their studies. Hence,

more research especially in the Malaysian educational contexts are beneficial to clear doubts on the need to utilise code-switching in the classroom.

In Malaysia, past literature on code-switching revealed that researchers employed various research designs in their studies – quantitative (e.g., Nordin, Ali, Zubir & Sadjirin, 2013; Alang & Idris, 2018)), qualitative (e.g., Arumugam, Kaur, Supramaniam, & Thayalan, 2017), and mixed method (Mokhtar, 2015; Sardar, Ali Mahdi & Subakir Mohd, 2015; Ariffin & Husin, 2011). Apparently, regardless of the research contexts and participants involved, most of these studies showed that educators and learners have positive attitudes and perceptions on the use of code-switching in the classroom although they may have different motives. Ariffin and Husin (2011) who conducted a study in Malaysian public university where English is used as the medium of instruction for all courses taught, discovered that the presence of code-switching phenomena was connected to the linguistic skills of the educators as well as the students' own, and with the aim of fostering positive learning environment. On the other hand, Sardar, Ali Mahdi, and Subakir Mohd (2015) who utilised questionnaire survey and audio tape recording in their case study, disclosed that Iraqi students in Malaysia primarily used different types of code-switching to claim the identity of the group and because of a lack of English vocabulary. On the other hand, Mokhtar (2015) conducted a study among lecturers and students from an engineering department of polytechnic to discover whether the lecturers' beliefs align with their practices in their daily teaching. He discovered that reiteration and message qualification mechanisms were often used by the lecturers when code-switching and intended mainly to increase their students' comprehension and save time from a long explanation whenever the students are doubtful. The students also viewed that the use of code-switching helped them to understand the lesson better.

Further research that employs quantitative design also supports earlier findings that students have positive attitudes towards the utilization of code-switching in the classroom. For example, Nordin, Ali, Zubir and Sadjirin (2013) performed a survey to identify ESL learner's attitudes on the use of code-switching by English language educators at the university level. The researchers discovered that majority ESL learners have positive attitude towards code-switching, and they also claimed that codeswitching helps them to understand the target language. This is apparently useful for students who do not take English as their major and some of them are prone to code-switching due to their lack of English language (L2) fluency. When they communicate, they tend to alternate from L2 to L1 to convey messages understandably. Nordin et al. (2013) also quoted that when the situation needs the use of the first language in the classroom to encourage students to feel more secure in mastering English, the use of code-switching is appropriate.

Similarly, studies also ascertain students have positive attitudes towards the utilisation of code-switching by their lecturers. A survey conducted by Alang and Idris (2018) involving 45 respondents consisting of diploma students from three different faculties found that lecturers occasionally code-switched for several academic purposes particularly involving difficult words, struggling students, assessment matters and class assignments. The students also perceived positively their lecturers' code-switching practice as they like the class better, they feel more relaxed, and they believe that they obtain more input regarding the subject and improve their achievement. Moreover, the students believe code-switching is necessary to ensure their comprehension of the lesson and to clarify explanation. Hence, they have never misjudged their lecturers' code-switching practice as a sign of language incompetence.

This sense of upstanding feeling towards their lecturers' code-switching practice supports

Krashen's (1982) claim that educators presume students' level of anxiety is lowered if they are allowed to switch to their native language throughout the learning process which indirectly produce stress-free environment. This finding is also supported by Argellan's, Mohammed's and Krishnansamy's (2019) study that involved both 40 international and local students in a class. The results showed that code switching is employed by both teachers and students to function various purposes in ESL classroom. It was found that code exchanging is normally utilised by the educators to encourage and enhance learners' understanding of the target language and to create a more relaxed learning environment. Similarly, code exchanging is utilised by learners as a learning technique to gain clarity of the information conveyed by their lecturers.

The above past studies have revealed that code-switching is an effective classroom instructional and learning approach. This is also supported by Manty and Shah (2017) who conducted a study among 85 TESL undergraduate students, discovered that students have mixed perception towards the use of L1 in English classroom settings. While TESL students tended to use English in English classes, they also realised the value of L1 as a facilitative method to clarify new points, to verify the meanings of words or definitions, and to complete their tasks faster. In addition, due to the belief that the English language is a predominantly educational endeavour, they also recognised the inclination to use L1 as a way of socialising in the English classrooms. Using different participants, Arumugam et. al, (2017) conducted a study among 33 Diploma in Engineering major students. The study employed a qualitative method by conducting a group interview and they discovered that code-switching increased academic discussion in group conversation and provided room for restricted proficient students to achieve a greater understanding of the L2 discussion. Structured interview responses also indicated that their academic discussion and speaking skills were sharpened by the leeway to use L1 in the ESL classroom.

Although many research of code-switching phenomenon share many features, the frequency of code switching is remarkably different (Bakaeva, 2010). This is most likely due to the different contexts where the studies are conducted, and the participants involved. Surprisingly, limited studies have been conducted on the frequency of code-switching among university students especially in the Malaysian context. Some studies anticipate that code-switching is frequently utilised by bilingual speakers in a conversation with other speakers for certain interactional purposes (Shin, 2010; Eldin, 2014; Toribio & Bullock, 2012). In Malaysia, code-switching is also frequently practised by both educators and learners. Ariffin and Husin. (2011) state that the language policy (English as a medium of instruction) at tertiary level was not completely adhered to as code-switching and code-mixing of Bahasa Melayu (L1) and English (L2) are frequently practised by both the educators and learners in the classroom. However, Yazdi and Bakar (2014) who conducted a comparative study on code-switching and willingness to communicate among four pairs of female Iranian and Malaysian students at a private university in Kuala Lumpur found that the Iranians had higher tendency to code-switch to their own language. Thus, there are variations in the code-switching frequency depending on the research contexts and the participants involved.

Evidently, code-switching phenomenon frequently happens among educators and students at both private and public universities. Argellan, Mohammed & Krishnansamy (2019) who conducted a study on code switching phenomenon in English Language classrooms at a private university found that most of their respondents strongly agreed and preferred frequent code switching for communicating knowledge. A qualitative study by Ariffin and Husin (2011) at a public university in Malaysia also revealed that the mixture of Malay (Bahasa

Melayu) and English was a very common practice in most of the lectures. Quite a recent finding by Arumugam, Kaur, Supramaniam and Thayalan's (2017) qualitative study on code switching in ESL speaking class of a public university found that code switching from L2 to L1 was very frequent among the learners and less with the instructor although they have similar L1. Apparently, codeswitching occurs frequently because the learners are not fluent in the target language especially when they feel incompetent or lack confidence in conveying information in the target language (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005). The findings by Barbu, Gillet and Poncet (2020) indicated that the language-switching frequency is directly linked to interlocutors' cognitive flexibility skills.

Although there are many advantages of code-switching as revealed in past studies, there are also some conflicting views on the need to code-switch. For example, Fareed et al. (2016) claim that some students lamented that the educators' code-switching limits their exposure to English. Regardless of its pros and cons, it is proven by Sardar et al. (2015) that the lack of English vocabulary can lead to code-switching. There are no definite findings on learners' attitudes and perceptions towards the employment of code-switching in the classroom. There is still a lack of research in this field of research (Alang & Idris, 2018) especially in Malaysian contexts. In view of this gap and the urge to find answers for why the BIB students utilise code-switching in the classroom especially during oral presentations even though English is implemented as the medium of instruction, have led to this present research. Therefore, identifying the BIB students' perceptions on code-switching during oral presentations could provide answers for why they code switch; is it due to their lack of English proficiency? Or is it due to their low self-confidence, high anxiety level, and so on?

## **Research Methods**

### **Research Design**

This is a descriptive research design that employs the quantitative research method to gather data and generate analyses of results. The main rationale of employing this design is a large and representative number of samples can be employed to participate in the study. Furthermore, the quantitative research approach applies statistics for the precise measurement of the numeric data (Marczyk, DeMatto, & Festinger, 2005, p. 17) that can positively determine the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

### **Participants**

This study employed convenience sampling method. There were two main justifications for employing this type of non-probability sampling method in this study. First, it was convenient to use during the current Covid-19 pandemic as it enabled the sample to be taken from a group of people who were easy to contact or to reach. Hence, any participants of the targeted population who were available could participate in the study voluntarily. Secondly, this study did not take the respondents' demographic information as its variables, therefore any respondents could participate in the study. The population of this research study comprised of 425 Bachelor in International Business (BIB) students from the Faculty of Business Management and Professional Studies (FBMP) of a private university in Selangor, Malaysia. By applying the precise procedures of Solvin's formula, at 95% of confidence level and considering the margin of error of 5%, the calculation resulted in 203 students were required as the participants for the actual study.

### **Research Instrument**

This study utilised a questionnaire as instrument which was adapted from Al-Qaysi (2016). The questionnaire consisted of three parts: Section A is a demographic of the respondents' details such as gender, age and years of study, Section B (9 items) is about the respondents' perceptions on the use of code-switching during oral presentations and Section C (6 items) is focusing on the frequency of respondents' usage of code-switching in their speech. The 15 items were in Likert-scale format. For Section B, the participants were required to specify their best option from the scale of 1 - 5 (1- Strongly Disagree, 5- Strongly Agree) based on their perceptions regarding code-switching usage in oral presentations and Section C, they were required to state from a scale of 1 - 5 (1- Never, 5- always) for how frequent they code-switch in their speech. A pilot study was conducted using 30 respondents of the actual sample of the study. The result of pilot study revealed that the instrument acquired a good reliability with the Cronbach Alpha of 0.86. Therefore, instrument is reckoned reliable and valid to be employed for the main study's research instrument.

### **Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

Due to the implementation of Movement Control Order (MCO) by the Malaysian government during the current pandemic, the questionnaire was generated using Google Form and its online link was distributed to the participants through WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Telegram. This was to ensure that the students could gain access to it. As part of the research ethics, the participants were also required to sign the consent letter that was created together with the questionnaire on google form. The data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 22.0 software, and the descriptive statistics namely frequency and percentage were employed to identify the perceptions of the BIB students as well as their frequency of code-switching usage during oral presentations in the classroom.

## **Findings**

### **Students' Perceptions towards Code-switching during Oral Presentations**

All the 203 BIB students responded to the questionnaire. There are 9 items in section B that were meant to identify the respondents' perceptions on the use of code-switching during oral presentations. The data was computed using SPSS version 22.0 and analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) to generate the results of the study. Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of the BIB students' perceptions on the use of code-switching during oral presentations.



**Table 1**  
*Students' Perceptions Towards Code-Switching During Oral Presentations*

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1) I believe that code-switching enhances my communication skills in oral presentations.	7 (3.4%)	24 (11.8%)	38 (18.7%)	82 (40.4%)	52 (25.6%)
2) I believe code-switching helps me to develop my language skills in oral presentations.	5 (2.5%)	21 (10.3%)	41 (20.2%)	81 (39.9%)	55 (27.1%)
3) I believe that using code-switching shows that I'm well-educated especially in oral presentations.	41 (20.2%)	58 (28.6%)	30 (14.8%)	50 (24.6%)	24 (11.8%)
4) I code-switch because I do not know the word in English (L2)	8 (3.9%)	16 (7.9%)	30 (14.8%)	63 (31%)	86 (42.4%)
5) I found code-switching helps me to convey new words easily.	5 (2.5%)	21 (10.3%)	35 (17.2%)	93 (45.8%)	49 (24.1%)
6) I believe that code-switching makes me feel more comfortable and confident in oral presentations.	7 (3.4%)	23 (11.3%)	33 (16.3%)	89 (43.8%)	51 (25.1%)
7) I found that code-switching allows me to express the ideas that I can't express in other language.	4 (2%)	17 (8.4%)	24 (11.8%)	68 (33.5%)	90 (44.3%)
8) I believe code-switching from the mother tongue (L1) in oral presentations helps me practise the second language that I use.	4 (2%)	25 (12.3%)	43 (21.2%)	83 (40.9%)	48 (23.6%)
9) I believe code-switching allows me to understand better of the content I am presenting.	8 (3.9%)	19 (9.4%)	44 (21.7%)	82 (40.4%)	50 (24.6%)

Based on the results of the analysis above, majority of the BIB students had positive perceptions towards code-switching during oral presentations. A majority agreed that code-switching helped them to convey new words easily (93/45.8%), made them feel more comfortable and confident (89/43.8%), helped them to practise the second language (83/40.9%), allowed them to understand better the content they were presenting (82/40.4%), enhanced their communication skills (82/40.4%), and helped them to develop their language skills in oral presentations (81/39.9%). In addition, a majority strongly agreed that code-switching allowed them to express the ideas that they could not express in other language (90/44.3%), and they code-switched because they did not know the word in English (86/42.4%). However, 41 students (20.2%) strongly disagreed and 58 (28.6%) disagreed that code-switching showed that they were well-educated especially in oral presentations.

### Students' Frequency Rate of Code-switching in a Speech

There are only six items in section C that concerned students' frequency rate of code-switching in a speech. They were required to rate their frequency use of code-switching based 5 scales: 1- Never, 5- Always. The data was computed using SPSS version 22.0 and analysed using

descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) to generate the results of the study. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the BIB students' frequency rate of code-switching during oral presentations.

**Table 2**  
*Students' Frequency Rate of Code-switching in a Speech*

Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1) I use code-switching in my daily conversation.	3 (1.5%)	22 (10.8%)	28 (13.8%)	90 (44.3%)	60 (29.6%)
2) I code-switch from English (L2) to my mother tongue (L1) in oral presentations to simplify a theory or concept.	9 (4.4%)	21 (10.3%)	34 (16.7%)	88 (43.3%)	51 (25.1%)
3) I prefer to use more L1 in oral presentations when I do not know the word in English	12 (5.9%)	13 (6.4%)	28 (13.8%)	63 (31%)	87 (42.9%)
4) I use my mother tongue (L1) more in a speech to ensure a smooth presentation.	6 (3%)	25 (12.3%)	32 (15.8%)	93 (45.8%)	47 (23.2%)
5) I code-switch when I am around my friends.	8 (3.9%)	19 (9.4%)	40 (19.7%)	59 (29.1%)	77 (37.9%)
6) I tend to code-switch when I am nervous during oral presentations.	8 (3.9%)	28 (13.8%)	42 (20.7%)	78 (38.4%)	47 (23.2%)

The result of the analysis above shows that majority of the BIB students frequently code-switched during oral presentations. They often code-switched to their mother tongue (L1) in a speech to ensure a smooth presentation (93/45.8%), in their daily conversation (90/44.3%), to simplify a theory or concept (88/43.3%), and when they were feeling nervous or anxious during oral presentations (78/38.4%). Besides that, majority of them always code-switched to L1 during oral presentations when they did not know the word in English (87/42.9%) and when they were around their friends (77/37.9%). Only a small number of between 3 (1.5%) to 12 (5.9%) and between 19 (9.4%) to 28 (13.8%) BIB students had never and rarely code-switched respectively in all the 6 items.

## Discussion

The present study's findings validate the findings of some past studies. Majority of the BIB students perceived positively towards the practice of code-switching during oral presentations. These perceptions can be classified into two categories in terms of the benefits gained when employing code-switching during oral presentations. First, code-switching can overcome students' second language limitations. They approved that code-switching helped them to convey new words easily. Furthermore, majority of the participants strongly agreed that code-switching allowed them to express their ideas that they could not express in other language. These findings align with Argellan et al. (2019) that the absence of at least one word in either dialect can trigger code-switching in a variety of contexts. Thus, the inability to express themselves in English has triggered the students to revert to their L1 during their oral presentation. The inability to express themselves is also associated with the learners' lack of academic vocabulary. This is expressed by Sardar, et. al. (2015) that code-switching often

occurs among students due to having limited vocabulary range. Hence, code-switching has eliminated the learners' language flaws in their oral presentations. They agreed that code-switching from the mother tongue (L1) in oral presentations helped them to practise the second language. Therefore, it helped them to develop their language skills, enabled them to understand better the content they were presenting. It can be concluded from the present study that students can gain many positive benefits from code-switching during oral presentations. Among others, code-switching practice can assist them in developing new vocabulary (Yana & Nugraha, 2019).

Second, utilising code-switching can boost learners' self-esteem. A majority of the students agreed that it made them feel more comfortable and confident in oral presentations and enhanced their communication skills. This reaffirms the finding by Hakim, Arflida, & Satriani, (2019) that code-switching boosts the learners' confidence. Using the first language aids both processes, teaching and learning such as confidence, security, motivation, and friendship (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Thus, L1 use in the classroom especially during oral presentations eventually allows students to be in a more relaxed environment (e.g., Ariffin & Husin, 2011; Argellan, Mohammed & Krishnansamy, 2019) where they are free to share their thoughts without having to adhere to a rigid rule of only-speaking-English. In other words, language alternation can intervene in the process of speaking English during oral presentations with conscious intention to ease communication. This finding has led to the affirmative belief that code-switching is beneficial to students especially during oral presentations because of the many advantageous it offered.

This present study's findings also reveal that a majority of the participants frequently code-switched during oral presentations. They always code-switched to L1 i.e., Bahasa Melayu when they did not know the word in English. In addition, they frequently used it to simplify a theory or concept. It can be deduced from these findings that the students resorted to their L1 when they encountered problems in expressing their ideas in English. For example, students may be unable to recall relevant phrases or sentences in the target language, and talk in the target language incorrectly, resulting in communication misunderstandings. Thus, to avoid these mistakes, students frequently code-switch when they do not know certain words when they are doing oral presentations. Hence, this is clear evidence for their deficiency in the second language as Tabassum, Rafique, Akram and Khan (2020) also found that majority of students alter their language code to overcome their incompetency in English language. As explained by Eldridge (1996:305-307), students often have difficulty communicating due to a lack of proficiency in the target language. Besides, according to him, the students switch languages because they feel that they are more comfortable to use one language than the other, thus, they usually shift into the language that they are more proficient in especially when they are anxious. This statement supports the present finding that the respondents frequently code-switched when they were nervous during oral presentations.

A majority of the respondents utilised their first language in a speech most of the time to ensure a smooth presentation. According to Mokhtar (2015), students often take a long time to think about the things they want to say, hence code-switching could save time in oral presentations as well. This denotes that student code-switch to ensure an effective presentation and avoid stuttering in a speech. It enables them to understand the material provided, expand their vocabulary, and make them more interested in interaction in the classroom (Harmilawati, 2018). Although English is the medium of the instruction in the university, the respondents would feel more at ease if they could code-switch when doing a presentation in front of an audience and, at the same time deliver a better presentation without stuttering in a speech due

to limited vocabulary. This is because the way in which one expresses something is equally important although not more essential than the content of one's speech. For instance, if one presented a topic with enthusiasm and clarity, the audience would be more likely to like it than if someone covered more topics but murmured monotonously without clarity from their notes. Thus, the respondents could have frequently code-switched to avoid such circumstances.

However, the high frequency rate of code-switching phenomenon among the respondents is not only prevalent in oral presentations but also in their daily routine. This implies that code-switching has become a habitual phenomenon among these respondents as they also frequently code-switched in their daily conversation and when they were around their friends. This raises a dilemma on whether this strategy should be approved, stopped, or ignored completely by educators in the classroom? The findings of this present study have evoked important implications especially for educators and students in higher learning institutions.

Educators and students alike must be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of employing code-switching in the classroom. It is a beneficial strategy that can be employed in the classroom to ease the learning process. Instead of seeing code-switching as an interfering factor in acquiring a second or perhaps any foreign language, Skiba (1997) proposed that educators regard it as “a system of interconnected languages that students are acquiring.” It is a vital approach for an educational setting as well as for the “communicative competence strategy” (Van Dulm, 2007, p. 15) especially for interpersonal interactions (Faltis, 1989, as quoted by Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001). Whereas the researcher has noted with this assertion to a large extent, it does not apply to those in other second language classrooms. The present research study had used BIB students who are bilingual and able to speak both languages, Bahasa Melayu (Malay), and English comprehensively. Nevertheless, considering that English will be the most important language in their future field of employment once they graduate, there would be a significant expectation that they should be able to speak fluently in English. Most of this sample will certainly be venturing into professional business-related fields. They will be most likely to face and engage in meetings with more experienced professionals in their workplace and sometimes will be dealing with international clients. Thus, it is imperative that they need to improve their English as well as participate in any related professional development programmes to boost their confidence and communication skills in English.

Another important implication of the present findings is the need for educators and students to practise moderation when employing code-switching in the classroom. The present study indicates that the respondents practised code-switching frequently during formal oral presentations in the classroom. If this habit is not corrected, they may become worse and an irreversible phenomenon. The process of self-correction will be impeded if they continue to seek shortcuts by shifting the second language to the first language rather than making positive efforts to mastering proper English grammar and enhancing their vocabulary. This has raised concern on whether code-switching is really a useful communication technique that students should use in the classroom. This also raises the question of whether permitting the students to freely alternate between their second language and targeted language especially in oral presentation will improve their learning process” (Tiemer, 2004, p. 69). This entails the need for future studies to explore more into this phenomenon. Although there are disadvantages in employing this strategy in the classroom at times, the present study has revealed that it could help the students to ease their communication and boost their self-esteem to convey their message successfully so that the audience could comprehend the contents of their presentations clearly. Besides, code-switching practice can be beneficial to the student's learning and should be employed in the classroom when teaching students with low proficiency in a second

language. However, educators and students must exercise control and it must not be permitted to overwhelm the importance of using the target language especially during oral presentations. Without any form of restraints, this code-switching phenomenon can become an ingrained habit among students that will be difficult to get rid of in the long run.

### **Limitations**

Like any other studies, the present study also has its own limitations. The main limitation is it only involved students from one programme of study that is, the bachelor's in International Business. Thus, the findings may not be generalised to students of other programmes and discourse contexts. Secondly, it only explores about students' perceptions on the use of code-switching in oral presentations in classroom context. Nevertheless, it is envisaged that the findings of the current study would give a meaningful foundation for future researchers to investigate more in-depth studies, perhaps on other aspects of code-switching in other fields too.

### **Recommendations**

Future researchers are recommended to employ a mixed methods research design so that qualitative data can be used to support quantitative data. For example, interviews can be conducted to obtain rich and authentic data from the respondents. Besides, they also can explore into the employment of code-switching in other non-English programmes in their universities with different demographic backgrounds. Apart from exploring code-switching in classroom contexts, we are also passionate to investigate about the utilisation of code-switching in text messages and postings on platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, etc. There are many exciting research areas related to code-switching that future research can execute to conduct a more in-depth investigation particularly in the scope of Malaysian contexts.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the participants of the present study perceive positively towards the use of code-switching during oral presentations. They strongly approve that employing code-switching enhances their oral presentations. However, the high frequency of use in code-switching among these bachelor's degree in Internal Business students is mainly due to their second language deficiencies. This has raised a cause of concern on the long-term impact of this phenomenon on their English proficiency. Hence, it is implicated that educators and students alike need to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy and it is imperative for them to exercise control and moderation when employing this strategy in the classroom. Even though Malaysians are required to study English for at least eleven years as a part of their formal education, language alternation or code-switching still occurs among tertiary students in the classroom especially during oral presentations. On that note, future researchers in the same discourse community are encouraged to use the findings obtained as a guideline for more impactful future studies.

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