

Code-switching

Code-switching refers to the alternative use of two languages in an oral or written discourse and the alternation occurs either within sentences or between sentences (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 153).

Previous literature reveals two contradicting views towards code-switching. Its proponents take it as strategies employed in everyday discourses and classroom discourses, while its opponents attribute switching between languages to low language competence in one or both languages (Park, 2013). The opposition seems to originate from a non-panoramic perspective of language, neglecting its social and communicative aspects by decontextualize language out of its situations and contexts. Besides, even if taking only the language aspect into consideration, more researchers have confirmed there is no causal relationship between code-switching and language proficiency (Yow et al., 2017). Therefore, it is not reasonable to despise code-switching and code-switchers since code-switches are rule-governed language use with literal meanings, communicative meanings, and social values (Baker & Wright, 2017, p.153-224). In other words, it is advisable to continue exploring the codes of code-switching but at the same time expand beyond them by taking bilinguals' two or more languages resources as their language repertoire and thoroughly researching why and how bilinguals code-switch, and abundant meanings made, and possible consequences brought to language learning (Garcie & Li, 2014, quoted in Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 154-155). In order to delve well into code-switching, this paper begins with the 4 benefits of code-switching, then elaborates on how teachers perceive code-switching, and the final part illustrates 3 specific benefits by reference to specific research.

Benefits of code-switching

The first part devotes to 4 benefits associated with code-switching: code-switching has communicative purposes or functions, code-switching realizes interpersonal functions, code-switching plays a major part in language development, and code-switching facilitates learning in classrooms.

Code-switching is a boon for communication. Code-switching is a prevalent linguistic practice between people who can speak more than two languages, and it is often intertwined with

versatile functions taking place in different communicative contexts. As illustrated in previous literature, the use of code-switching in real environments is associated with purposes and functions. Baker and Wright enumerate fourteen communicative purposes of code-switching, such as for solving problems, for expressing identity, for changing attitudinal and social relations, for including or excluding interlocutors, and for imitating other speakers and so on (Baker & Wright, 2017, p.157-158). Besides, scholars within different disciplines such as sociolinguistics and pragmatics categorize functions of code-switching into different activities to explore its multi-purposes in different contexts. Ervin-Tripp and Reyes classified different code-switching functions into four different activities: discourse-relevant switching, lexical insertion, situational switching, and conversational switching (Ervin-Tripp & Reyes, 2005). In category one, code-switching is seen as markers in discourses, being exploited for functions such as quoting, interjecting, reiterating, clarifying and emphasizing (Ervin-Tripp & Reyes, 2005). In the second category, code-switching is prompted by borrowing from other languages, thus bringing about heterogeneous components in code-switches (Zentella, 1990, quoted in Ervin-Tripp & Reyes, 2005). In the third category, the use of code-switching is sparked and regulated by situational factors such as addressee, locus, themes, and genres (Gumperz 1982, quoted in Ervin-Tripp & Reyes, 2005). In category four, code-switching is used to generate implied meanings, hence serving as a contextualization prompt (Gumperz 1982, quoted in Ervin-Tripp & Reyes, 2005).

The ability to operate functions mentioned above is not an inborn ability, but rather a learned edge for people with two or more languages. Iliana Reyes perceived code-switching from a development perspective and investigated how code-switching functions related to children's competence for bilingual communication. According to Iliana Reyes, communicative competence means a speaker's ability to adjust what to talk and how to talk according to interlocutor, theme, time, and place of a conversation (Reyes, 2004). After analyzing code-switches produced by Spanish-English bilingual children from two age groups in three different contexts, Iliana Reyes found that children from 10 years old group code-switched more frequently than those from 7 years old group, and in their conversations, the older children displayed five code-switching functions on average while the younger ones showed averagely three functions, and within the older group, children who are exposed to English for three or more years displayed 33% of conversation switches while children who are exposed to English for two or less than two years

displayed 15% of conversation switches (Reyes, 2004). By further exploration, Iliana Reyes concluded that code-switching indicates children's development of bilingual competence, and code-switching is a strategy children will exploit in their conversations in order to achieve their communicative purpose (Reyes, 2004). Besides, children and adults differ in patterns of code-switches and functions of code-switching. Adults excel in the use of two or more language resources to convey different nuanced different types of meanings in specific contexts to realize multiple functions (Ervin-Tripp & Reyes, 2005). Compared with monolinguals, they both possess one language to switch from one register to another, but bilinguals win over monolinguals since they have two languages to switch.

The second advantage associated with code-switching is the complex interpersonal relationships enacted in communications. According to Halliday, people use language to enact personal and social relationships (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.30), and Kress and Van Leeuwen have extended this notion to any other mode such as image and noted that it is any other mode that presents social relation between an addresser and an addressee (Kress & Van Leewen, 2006, p.42). In view of Kress and Van Leeuwen, the interaction between people involves three types of relations: social relations, being emotionally or attitudinally involved and detached, and power relations (Kress & Van Leewen, 2006, p.133-143). Moreover, different status of languages and their users from different speech communities complicated interpersonal relationships, and on the other side, it made code-switching be valuable language resource to realize complex interpersonal meanings to be negotiated in different contexts. Song observed a 5-year-old boy's voice tones with which he switched between English and Korean in different speech acts when talking with his parents at home, and Song discovered that when expressing disagreements and complaints in English, the child took an assertive, aggressive, and controlling tones, positioning himself in an authoritative stance and distancing himself from his parents, while when expressing requests and begging in Korean, the child took gentle, pleading and sweet tones, lowering his stance and asking for an intimate interpersonal relationship with his parents (Song, 2019) . In Song's viewpoint, code-switching serves as an indicator, showing how certain linguistic expressions are associated with social meanings, and the practice of code-switching helps the child to acquire social norms and ideological knowledge entwined with different languages (Song, 2019). Besides, languages embody hierarchical relations. According to language function and its

distribution area, De Swaan categorized languages into 4 groups and labeled them as the most central, the more central, the central and the local respectively (De Swaan, 2001, quoted in Cook, 2014, p.126-127). Code-switching from a hierarchical language to a low-status language will decrease the power gap between speakers and at the same time stimulates a rapport relationship or an attitudinal involvement among them. Likewise, when the direction of code-switching reverses, a rising power from low-status side and a solidarity between two sides are also witnessed. All in all, to enact social and personal relations is one of the three metafunctions of language, and people who can code-switch have the edge over people who can not, since extra language resources are available for them to make meaning.

Code-switching plays a major part in learners' language development. There were once two contrasting views towards two languages code-switchers possess. Language subtracts mean that fluency and vocabulary in the second language grow at the cost of those in the first language, but language adds means that vocabulary learning and being fluent in the second language do not interfere with those in the first language (Hughes et al., 2006). When code-switchers are judged from a language subtraction perspective, code-switching will be seen as an indicator of low language competence, since in this process, code-switchers borrowed words and expressions from their first languages for the purpose of fulfilling communicative gaps (Hughes et al., 2006). Partially due to the apparently sound explanation, code-switching was not supported in educational contexts for a long time and code-switchers were labeled as ones with language incompetency.

However, more and more research nowadays has confirmed that code-switching has no significant relationship with low language competency, and conversely, code-switching can be seen as a language competence marker (Yow et al., 2017). In order to explore the effect of code-switching on language competence, Yow, Tan and Flynn investigated relations among the following variables including code-switches produced by 55 English-Mandarin children aging from 5 to 6 in terms of NDWR and MLU, and the receptive competence of English language, and another expressive and receptive competence of English and Mandarin reported by Kindergarten teachers half year after this experiment, and their findings statistically proved that the number of code-switches has no significant relation to the three measures of two modes of English competence but it positively and significantly relates to the two measures of expressive

Mandarin competence, which indicates that the more code-switches, the higher expressive Mandarin competence (Yow et al., 2017). What is essential is that their statistical analysis refuted ideas that language incompetence is the causal factor of code-switching and code-switching is detrimental to language competence (Yow, et al., 2017). On the contrary, their findings point out that code-switching probably serves as scaffolding for improving a weaker language, around which a child's future language repertoire is built and this proposition has been echoed and elaborated by researchers on translanguaging as pedagogy (Yow et al., 2017).

Another research done by Ribot and Hoff provides further insights into the relations between code-switching directions and language receptive and expressive skills. Ribot and Hoff (2014) investigated modes of code-switching and language competence possessed by 115 Spanish-English speaking children about 2.5 years old and then discovered that children who never switch and who sometimes switch bidirectionally have a significantly good command of expressive words in English rather than in Spanish, however, their receptive skills in both languages show no significant relations. According to Ribot and Hoff (2014), children who only switched to English have significantly good expressive ability in English instead of in Spanish, but their receptive skills in both languages did not show any significant difference. Meanwhile, they discovered that children who only spoken Spanish when being addressed in English or in Spanish have a similar number of expressive words in both languages, but their receptive skills in Spanish significantly differed from those in the English language, and this finding challenged the idea that code-switchers shifted to one language for insufficient expressive abilities in another language (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). Seen the other way round, Ribot and Hoff's discovery resonated with the critical ideas revealed by Yow et al. that code-switching output plays a major part in code-switchers language development.

As valuable input, code-switching will not hinder word recognition. In order to test the effect of code-switching on word recognition, Morini and Newman tested words English-Spanish speaking toddlers aging from 18 months to 24 months could recognize (Morini & Newman, 2019). They discovered that children recognized words best when words are presented in the same language sentence, and children did not show any significant difference when they are given words in isolation or code-switches (Morini & Newman, 2019). It seems that learning words in code-switches counteracts the benefits of the same sentence context provided, but just as learning

words in isolate, learning words in code-switches really facilitates word learning.

The fourth benefit is that code-switching functions in classrooms. Ferguson posited three broad functions of classroom code-switching. Teachers' switching between codes to deconstruct meanings of texts in terms of orthography, lexico-grammar, and discourse patterns available to students falls in to course access function (Ferguson, 2003 & 2009). Secondly, code-switching for class discipline, for drawing attention, for activity involvement, for task or assignment instructions, and so on, belongs to classroom management function (Ferguson, 2003 & 2009). Thirdly, when code-switching is employed to create close personal relations and to strengthen solidarity and engagement, it is categorized into personal interaction function (Ferguson, 2003 & 2009)

Besides the three functions, Yoa divided the first function into 4 sub-functions: shifting codes for explaining grammar and vocabulary, for prompting responses, for repeating, and for content clarification, and he added function 5 - code-switching for communicative strategies (Yao, 2012, p. 178-213).

In Hong Kong, teachers who taught writing course in secondary school are observed to switch to Cantonese for a personal talk, for providing word definition, for delivering instructions, for elaborating concepts, for quickening lessons, for reading in L1, for tagging and discussing and for expressing belongings, for discipline and motivation (Pennington, 1995, quoted in Hughes et al., 2006). According to Li, teachers in Hong Kong alternate between Cantonese and English to make notions clarified and strengthen words in two languages (Li, 2008).

Since code-switching will take place in different types of classes in different regions and countries, it is expected there are more diverse and overlapping functions of classroom code-switches.

Teachers' perceptions of code-switching in bilingual classrooms

The application of code-switching in education contexts is always a contentious issue. Reviewing these debates is not the focus of this paper but the arguments, facts, and evidences from both sides provide abundant and helpful information to investigate teachers' responses to the use of code-switching in educational contexts.

Some previous researches illustrated that code-switching evidently facilitates communication and instruction in classrooms (Ferguson, 2009). Stein illustrated how her students' main languages facilitated them in telling a story and writing a story, and with the help of main languages and its

English translations, learners successfully took on their roles in classroom interaction and learned to built fields of oral story and written story (Stein, 1994, quoted in Setati et al., 2002). Besides, Hinton observed different modes of instruction in some schools in Hong Kong and discovered two modes - textbooks in English with Cantonese and English code-switches, and textbooks in Chinese and instruction in Chinese outperformed the other two modes - textbooks and instructions both in English and textbooks in English and instructions in Chinese (Hinton, 1976, quoted in Boyle, 1997). Also, in Hong Kong, an announcement of a language policy in the 4th and 5th Education Commission reports that mixed-code is not used in school provoked protests from some teachers and educators, and teachers complained that their students could not understand their Chinese or English - instruction, and educators emphasized mixed-code boosts classroom learning (Hinton, 1976, quoted in Boyle, 1997) . Furthermore, teacher participants in a research done by Stein et al., commented that code-switching made them more confident, and they witnessed the benefits of code-switching both in improving students' comprehension of course contents and in empowering learners with the English language (Stein, 1994, quoted in Setati et al., 2002). Additionally, in Mainland China, the acceptance of code-switching in language teaching classrooms seems reluctant to some teachers, but it is already ubiquitous in aspects of class instructions, ranging from textbooks to teachers' oral and written instructions. The observation that new teachers who support students' total exposure to English language or who were once taught in English-only classes may initially be likely to exclude code-switching or use the first language in classrooms and experienced teachers would incorporate code-switches in their classes justifies the communicative and pedagogical functions of code-switching.

Up to now, researches on code-switching are not abundant enough to transform code-switching from a beneficial strategy or very practical pedagogy in language teaching classes (Lee, 2012) into a legitimate instruction medium. A research on teachers' attitudes toward code-switching done by Yao sheds lights on the the special language mode's affordance. Yao administered questionnaires and interviews to investigate 55 teachers' attitudes towards the use of code-switching in EFL classes within three themes: code-switching and teachers' language proficiency, code-switching and course contents, and code-switching, and class management (Yao, 2012, p.78-91). Of the teachers investigated, 70%-81% of them agree that code-switching contributes to clear self-expression and task instructions, and is appropriate for grammar,

vocabulary, and cultural content teaching, and is a boon for eliciting response, but they disagree that code-switching from English to Chinese illustrates teachers' language deficiency (Yao, 2012, p.78-91). 60-69% disagree that code-switching causes understanding difficulty or language population, but they agree that code-switching can clarify course content and call on students (Yao, 2012, p.78-91). 50%-56% of them agree that code-switching is not applicable for all classroom topics, but they agree that code-switching can discipline students, involve them in classroom activities and get them to keep quiet (Yao, 2012, p.78-91). The aforementioned figures revealed that a great majority of teachers recognize the benefits of the use of code-switching in content instruction and classroom communication but doubt or are not sure of its effectiveness on class management, which gets people to reflect on the conditions and necessities of using code-switching.

Just as some teachers advocate using code-switching in classrooms, some other teachers show their opposition or reluctance. In Mainland China, some teachers worry that code-switching in the classroom will probably hinder students from acquiring Standard English and this worry is echoed by the criticism put forward by education experts in Hong Kong that mixed-code teaching method causes the inappropriate use of Chinese language and English language (Boyle, 1997). Besides, teachers who are greatly influenced by theories such as monolingualism, naturalism, native-speakerism and absolutism may be likely to exclude languages other than English as medium of instruction for reasons that more input leads to more output, and second language learners will acquire their L2s just like they acquire their mother tongues if they are positioned in natural environments (Lee, 2013). Additionally, some English-only policies prevent teachers from adopting code-switching in classrooms, making teachers feel improper to code-switch in classrooms. Besides, the lack of teaching experiments proving the significant effect of code-switching on language learning makes some centrists rethink the rationality of English-only policy in classrooms. Finally, teachers who integrated code-switching in their teaching experienced a dilemma of "access English and access meaning" (Setati, 2002).

From my perspective, these two contrasting views, except their different political, ideological, cultural connotations, probably have one final goal - to cultivate learners with language competence and with competent disciplinary knowledge. Influenced by Vygotsky's ZPD and Krashen's input+i hypothesis, Halliday's 3 metafunctions of language, I appreciate the value of

code-switching in aspects of facilitating knowledge comprehension and strengthening teacher-students solidarity, and I will possibly code-switch in classes whenever and wherever to improve knowledge teaching. Meanwhile, I will encourage students to code-switch and formulate their ideas in the target language since access to knowledge and access to target language are of equal importance.

Three benefits of code-switching in specific researches

The acceptance of code-switching in classrooms either as communicative strategies or as pedagogical means needs abundant research to confirm its effectiveness on second language teaching. Up to now, there are an only limited number of relevant studies experimenting with the use of code-switching in classrooms (Lee, 2012), but the following researches are represented to glimpse how code-switching benefits second language learning.

Code-switching plays a part in learning receptive vocabulary. Tian and Macaco did an experiment with 117 first-year L2 English learners in particular University in China to test how Focus-on-Form vocabulary teaching method with different instruction languages in listening comprehension activities correlate to the acquisition of receptive vocabulary (Tian & Macaco, 2012). Based on the figures obtained from tests held before, immediately after, and long after the experiment, they detected that scores of experiment groups with Focus-on-Form vocabulary teaching method are significantly better than those of the control group in the long term although scores of the experiment group drop significantly in the delayed test (Tian & Macaco, 2012). Within in the experiment groups, the group given English instruction with Chinese code-switches edged out the experiment group with English-only instruction in all the post-tests, but the difference is not statistically significant (Tian & Macaco, 2012). Although the experiment did not confirm a significantly different effect of code-switching on vocabulary learning, the research in discussion provides insights into code-switching research in terms of its pragmatic functions and application rules (Tian & Macaco, 2012). On the one hand, optimal code-switching in this experiment taking place in a communicative-oriented teaching context, and following rules set for natural code-switching meets the requirements set by researchers; on the other hand, it is clearly observed that in this experiment, English instruction with Chinese code-switches takes less time compared with English-only instruction, and due to tight time in classes, time advantage would be a great benefit, which may result from clarification function of code-switching (Tian & Macaco,

2012).

Code-switching helps to enhance ELF students' reading comprehension. Based on the assumption that switching codes helps students solve comprehension difficulties encountered in Reading Course, Yeganepoor and Seifoori conducted a teaching experiment to test the effect of code-switching on reading comprehension. They controlled other variables such as teachers' teaching methods, student's reading abilities, coursebooks, pair-work activities and made code-switching the only different variable, that is, it is only in experiment group that students exploit code-switching for the purpose of removing their puzzles during pair-work activities (Yeganepoor & Seifoori, 2013). During the experiment, which proceeds for 10 weeks, with two sessions each week, students in the experiment group are provided chances to code-switch in pair-work activities such as topic exploration, question-answer, vocabulary identification, and meaning guessing, idea finding, and text discussing activities while students in the control group are not permitted to code-switch (Yeganepoor & Seifoori, 2013). At last, in the post-test, students in the experiment group significantly outperformed those in control group, which justifies that code-switching plays a major part in improving reading comprehension (Yeganepoor & Seifoori, 2013). The finding contributes to justifying the use of code-switching in classrooms, which then highlights the positive roles students' mother tongue plays during target learning processes. Besides, the research on students' code-switching focalizes a heavy difference in learning processes between first language learning and second language learning, and then refutes absolutists' indiscrimination of the two learning processes.

Code-switching will assist learners in associating L2 word form with its L2 word meaning by channeling L2 word form to learners' L1 Knowledge, which is believed to contribute to a more appropriate use of L2 words. A group of researchers from the University of Oxford wants to investigate how classroom code-switching affects vocabulary learning, and then they did a lot of kinds of researches to examine this assumption. However, although these researches have not led to a summative conclusion that code-switching makes statistical difference to word learning, they actually reveal that code-switching actually helps learners associate word form with word meanings (Macaro et al., 2009). When teaching words, teachers are likely to provide different types of information closely related to the words taught for scaffolding students. Macaro et al. (2009) presented 7 ways teachers exploit when delivering vocabulary, such as giving definition,

paraphrasing, giving roundabout or expository expressions, explaining words in context, listing words with similar or opposite meanings, and listing super-ordinates or subordinates, which correspond with 7 types of information respectively. When a Non-native English teacher shifts from English to Chinese to teach the words “assemble”, he attaches this word to a Chinese equivalent, “ju ji”, successfully planting “assemble” into the soil of students’ L1 knowledge (Macaro et al., 2009). When the word “ordeal” is taught, the teacher paraphrases “ordeal” in L1 and then shifts code to provide an L1 version of the L2 paraphrase (Macaro et al., 2009). The word “collective” with different connotative meanings in L2 and L1, is explained from a cultural perspective of an L2 in L1 and then is provided with a L2 equivalent “ji ti”, which is the appropriate contextual meaning (Macaro et al., 2009). The three code-switches may illustrate two types of information but share one common function - to improve appropriate use of vocabulary by positioning L2 word form into L1 learners’ knowledge, which is supposed to improve vocabulary learning. Besides, comments such as “he is certain about word meaning when L1 explanation is provided”, “he translates what the teacher said into L1 for comprehension”, given by students in stimulated talk echoed the proposition made in previous sentences (Macaro et al., 2009). Finally, my humble understanding is provided to respond to the temporary conclusion some research done by University of Oxford to examine the effects of code-switching on word acquisition reached, which did not confirm a statistical effect (Macaro et al., 2009). From my perspective, it might be the measures used in previous research seemed not to test the affordance of code-switching or code-switching is not a causal factor of vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, more future researches are called on to tackle this problem and make code-switching a sound pedagogy.

To conclude, this paper presents almost a panoramic of code-switching by revolving around its 4 benefits such as communicative functions, interpersonal functions, pushing force for language development, and functions in classrooms, by elaborating on teachers’ viewpoints on code-switching and by specifying beneficial findings revealed in 3 kinds of specific researches. This exploring journal widens my horizon on code-switching and provides me valuable information for further research. As an SLA learner influenced by monolingual concepts and sharing L1 with my students, I am open to the advantages associated with bilingualism and code-switching and eager to research code-switching under the constraints and the rudimentary

model proposed by researchers from Oxford University (Macaro et al., 2009), hoping for a new stage of code-switching research.

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