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THE EFFECT OF CODE SWITCHING ON ENGAGING NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

Fransisca Endang Lestariningsih
Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana
endang@staff.ukdw.ac.id
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Abstract
When speakers share two or more languages in common, they often switch their languages in a conversation. It is true in the classes where both teachers and students must use a certain language as the language of instructions, as happening in the English classes of Computer Science students in Indonesia. Some teachers tend to always use English all the time with some considerations, whereas others often practice code-switching in the instructional process with other reasons, as well. This study is an observation of the effect of code switching to engage students in two English for computer science classes, in which the teacher in one class used code-switching and the other did not.

Keywords: code-switching, English for Computer Science classes, student's engagement

Introduction

As one of the international languages, English keeps on leading the language of almost every aspects of life such as business, media, technology, education, and research (McKay, 2012). Therefore English has been a compulsory subject in every major of higher education in Indonesia; students of computer science major are no exception. As a compulsory subject, these non-English major students musttake the subject upon their graduation. This condition, generally, creates disadvantages towards the teaching and learning process since the students will feel unmotivated. This is acknowledged by an empirical study conducted earlier towards some students of computer science major in some universities who had totake English subject. Even though some said that English was very important for them, others did not think they need to depend on English in their life. This fact brings about different motivation of the students to learn English voluntarily, meaning that they have intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, no doubt, playsa very important role in engaging the students to learn something, as Mangunwijaya (2004) argued that wherever heart is placed, the process of learning and growing begins (di mana hati diletakkan, di situ proses belajar dan maju dimulai) .

The various motivations in a class certainly require English teachers to be more creative in assisting their students, as Rahmat, Sainu and Weda (2016)

concluded, based on their research towards non-English students, that in order to maintain and improve students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language, teachers/lecturers should set the instructional process using simple language, making classroom situation comfortable, communicative, creative, patient, enthusiastic, relax and friendly.

Since teachers' roles in building students' enthusiasm are exceptionally needed, Nurkamto (2004) argues that in the teaching process it has two implications. The first implication is the main role of a teacher, who has a central responsibility to help his/her students to learn. The teacher is also expected to be able to provide some learning tools and aids as the facilities of learning, as their main job. Motivating and guiding the students could be some of the aids that a teacher could perform as a teacher.

Giving the students motivation could be through making they realize about their motivation, whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic. Guiding the student, which can be in the form of explaining the goals of the subject, the nature of the tasks, and the strategies used to do the tasks, means helping them to find the fine waysin learning. Providing the facilities to learn indicates that the teacher should be able to facilitate the learning, to make it easy to learn. This can be broadly interpreted as designing and creating good condition in order to learn and providing learning facilities.

The second implication deals with who become the most responsible persons in the learning process. In the disruptive era nowadays it is clearly indicates that the learners are the most responsible persons in the development of their learning. As Nurkamto (2004) explains that the learners should be the most responsible towards the process of learning. Students become the subject of autonomous learners. "An autonomous learner will take more responsibility for learning and is likely to be more effective than a learner who is reliant on the teacher." (www.teachingenglish.org.uk). Therefore learner training in the classroom encourages autonomy and is an important element of language teaching. Five principles to achieve autonomous learning are proposed by Richard (2019). He claims that teachers who are active involved in student learning, provide options and resources, offer choices and decision-making opportunities, support learners, and encourage reflection are highly likely to achieve autonomous learning. Consequently teachers should facilitate the learners to be autonomous.

This paper is aimed at finding out whether switching to bahasa Indonesia in an English class could have an effect in the students' motivation and autonomy in the instructional process through increasing their engagement.

This study is a report of an observation of the class engagement and participation among the students of two English for Computer Science classes, in which the teacher in one class used code-switching and the other did not. This is the writer's concern when she was conducting another study that needed to observe two English for Computer Science classes. Although the inputs (language competence) between the two were almost similar, proven by the almost similar result of IELTS test, as seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2, she found out that there was obvious dissimilarity between the two. One teacher (teacher A) tended to always use English all the time with some considerations, whereas the other (teacher B)

often practiced code-switching in the instructional process with other reasons, as well. Teacher A believed that using all English as the medium of instruction during the classroom activity was the right choice, which is acceptable for those who believe in Direct Method. Teacher B, on the other hand, used mix-languages. She often applied code-switching during the teaching and learning process. Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation. She usually switched the language from English to the students' mother tongue, Bahasa Indonesia, when she wanted to cheer up the class or break the ice, or when she found out that the students looked confused.

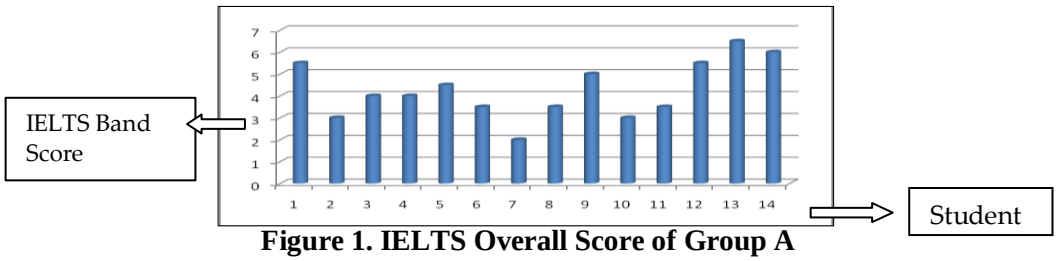


Figure 1. IELTS Overall Score of Group A

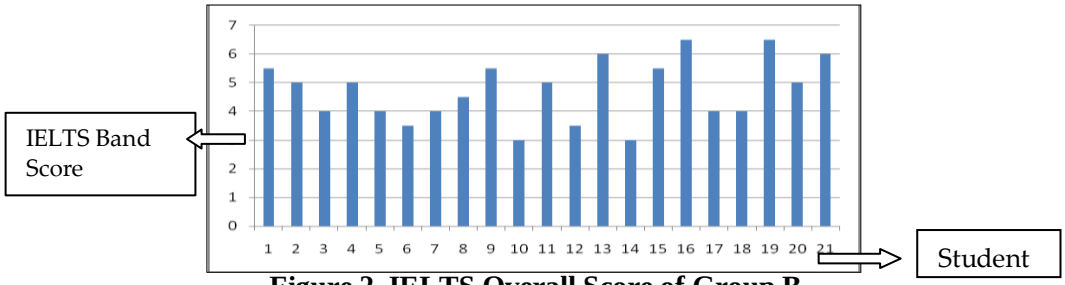


Figure 2. IELTS Overall Score of Group B

The introduction section on the very first meeting was used by both teachers to have a quick look the oral ability of the students to use spoken English. On this meeting, both of them used English as the means of communication. Code switching was almost always used by the students as a weapon if they could not find the English words. Teacher A maintained his medium of instruction, which is using English during the class activities; while teacher B applied code switchingin the next meetings.

The observation led to an initial assumption that code switching did influence the students' willingness to be active in the class activities. It means that one of the ways to engage the students is by applying code switching. Engagement, according to Skinner and Belmont (1993), includes components of behavioral and emotional. They explained that students who are engaged show sustained behavioral involvement in learning activities accompanied by positive emotional manner. They select tasks at the border of their competencies, initiate action when given the opportunity, and exert intense effort and concentration in the implementation of the learning tasks; they show generally positive emotions during ongoing action, including enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, and interest" (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Engagement is clearly an essential part of effective instructional process. If students are not engaged, there is not much possibility

that they will learn something in the class. Thus students' engagement is the central emphasis of this class observation.

Findings and Discussion

Code-switching Effect towards Non-English Major Students' Class Participation

Ibrahim, Syah and Armia (2013) acknowledged that teachers of English as a foreign language very frequently claim that they did not like to code-switch in using classroom language for a variety of reasons. The majority argued that only the target language, which is English, should always be used in the classroom, as practiced by teacher A in this study. Their study, however, results that some respondents, English teachers, demonstrated positive attitudes toward code- switching, even though they obviously disapproved the practice of switching languages in their English as a foreign language classrooms.

Based on the initial findings, the writer intended to find out the trend on students' willingness to respond to any questions or to ask questions during the teaching and learning process. The writer assigned an assistant to record the frequencies of students asking questions and responding to any questions addressed by either the teacher or other students in three consecutive meetings. In class A with teacher A, who always used English as the language of instruction, there was almost no student, among 30 students, active asking question when he wanted them to do so. In fact there was only one or two students who were voluntarily ask questions or respond to questions addressed by the teacher. According to the assistant, which is acknowledged by the writer when she was observing the previous meetings, the three-credit class ran in a boring atmosphere.The phenomenon after the class was not less appealing. Some students approached the teacher and asked several questions connected to the class activities that day, and the questions were, for sure, addressed in Bahasa Indonesia, their native language. The fact that some students were approaching theteacher after class shows that they did not really get anything during the class activities. The writer assumes what made them silent was because they were too shy or they did not have courage to say it in English.

A reverse condition was seen in class B, with teacher B, who applied code-switching as the language of instruction. By using this technique, it seemed that she could engage the students quite successfully. It could be obviously seen from the questions addressed to teachers and from the answers the teachers got when she asked some questions to the students. The three meetings observed show increasing trend in the voluntary participation among the students.

After some discussions among the writer and the two teachers, teacher A agreed to try code-switching in his instructional process in the class. This change was accompanied by trying another technique in teaching, i.e. quiz game that needed students to competitively answer some questions. In explaining the instruction, teacher A always asked whether the students understood or not. He would switch the language into bahasa Indonesia when he found out that they were confused. During the game, the number of students answering questions and asking questions significantly augmented. Almost 50% of them were active. The

rest of the class activities were quite engaging because the students seemed keen on being active using mix-languages, English and bahasa Indonesia.

The study did not end at that stage. To ensure that the students were not only parroting or trying to make the teacher happy, the next observation was to see the quality of the questions or answers. The writer wanted to see whether the students have practiced higher order thinking skill (HOT) as Miri, David and Uri (2007) acknowledge that "Our ever-changing and challenging world requires students, our future citizens, to go beyond the building of their knowledge capacity...".They argue that students need to develop their HOT skills such as critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving.

The questions below were the examples of students' questions that show they tried to inquire and relate more information. These questions were asked when some groups of students were presenting reading passages related to computer science articles. Additional score would be granted to the students who ask questions or comment on the presentation.

1. *Does it mean that wireless will affect security? How does it work?*
2. *What's your prediction of ICT in the future?*
3. *Is it available for every device?*
4. *Let's assume we belong to 30% of the people who play the game alone; what if we play with a stranger, and we often blame him or her. Does it make social benefit to us? I experienced some players tend to be "toxic" than friendly to strangers.*

The above examples are questions addressed by some active students who were attentive from the beginning of the class. Other questions were also produced by other students who "only" asked questions because they wanted toget extra point. Such questions are, for example:

1. *What's the benefit for students using augmented reality?*
2. *What's the negative effect of ICT?*

The answer to the questions had actually been presented before.

From the findings of the observation, some conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, students' reluctance to ask and answer questions decrease when the teacher applied code-switching during the activities. The writer assumes that the increase in the willingness is because of students' greater understanding toward the instruction. This understanding reduces their tense of digesting English when they listen to the teacher. The second conclusion is code-switching combined with various teaching techniques may improve students' enthusiasm to be more engaged with the class activities. This assumption is drawn because the teachernot only changed the way he delivered the language of instruction, but also at the same time, he applied different approach of teaching which is not teacher-centered(classical lecture), but more student-centered by practicing more various activities that include students. The last is the willingness of the teacher to switch their paradigm. This is considered as the most crucial since teacher is the most important in becoming the agents of change. They can start to make changing from changing themselves first.

Conclusion

This study reveals that code-switching is not solely the one factor that increases students' engagement in learning English. Engagement is defined as students' activeness and participation in practicing English during the class activities. Many other aspects should be taken into consideration to boost their willingness to use English actively in the teaching and learning process. Such aspects are teachers' knowledge on various teaching techniques that can engage students, and their eagerness to be the agent of change. Thus being reflective is the key to improve teachers' skills, as well as to achieve learning autonomy.

Although this study reveals that code switching did increase students' engagement in learning English in the observed class (Class A), the effect towards the other class (Class B) in the condition that the teacher did not apply code switching should have been observed, as well. Thus, next study, showing the switch between using English all the time to applying code switching, should be conducted in order to balance and strengthen the findings.

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