

Broadening Language Use Options in Formal Discourse: The Malaysian Experience

Rodolfo Jacobson

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Abstract

The present paper will report on the ongoing research on “codeswitched speech in formal settings in Malaysia”, a project funded by the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* of Kuala Lumpur, and argue in particular on: 1. the settings where Bahasa alone is the appropriate choice; 2. the settings where codeswitched speech is an acceptable medium of communication; 3. the kind of nativization of English that can be detected in the stretches of English within the code-switched variety. The rationales why monolingual or bilingual discourse is chosen will be examined and the reasons will be explored why a form of English could survive in Malaysia in spite of the official pressure that Bahasa be the only means of communication at the official level.

1. Introduction

A project designed to chart codeswitching practices in Malaysia has just been completed under the auspices of that country’s Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and is described in a yet unpublished manuscript entitled *The broadening spectrum of a Malaysian experience: From codemixing to codeswitching*. Some of the features identified there are worthwhile reporting as they mark Malaysian codeswitching as a unique language mixing technique, quite different from similar language use patterns elsewhere. Some of these unique traits are as follow:

- Codeswitched discourse – whether Malay or English functioning as matrix language – is not restricted to the informal medium of communication and

- occurs, more often than not, in a series of formal settings;
- Formal settings, such as departmental or faculty meetings at selected universities, corporate meetings, court hearings at the Higher Court are characterized by the joint presence of the English and the Malay language, although the modes of language mixing may differ depending on a variety of factors;
 - The cited modes extend from the insertion of individual words to the incorporation of entire other-language blocks (long quotations), such that both, intrasentential and intersentential switches do occur in formal events;
 - The feasibility of language switching in formal deliberations is a function of the attitudes of the participating individuals like the meeting facilitators, the staff members and the higher authority to whom they all obey as well as the subject areas covered in a given meeting.

It is the purpose of this paper to elaborate on these traits and show that codeswitching is not necessarily a language behavior restricted to communication between and among family members, friends and peers.

2. The Continuum of Code Alternation

The speaker has recently suggested (DBP report, unpublished) that the entire embedding process may be best considered as a continuum stretching from the use of loan words at one end to the incorporation of entire sentence-blocks (language choice) at the other end with several kinds of codeswitching modes in its midst. This is not an entirely new concept as Grosjean (1992) and Muysken (1995) have expressed similar notions,– only that the continuum is here viewed in its relevance to the embedding process alone. The following figure illustrates how the embedding process starts off where the borrowing process ends and ultimately turns into language choice:

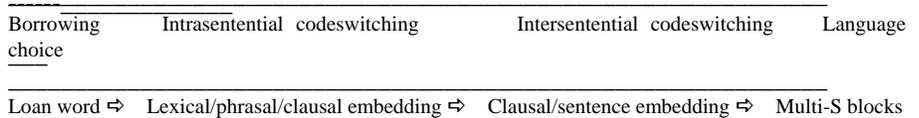


Fig. 1 Continuum of other-language insertions

Loanwords may be adapted phonologically, integrated morphologically or remain virtually identical to their original form (in the guest language). Malay kopi, borrowed from English coffee is phonologically adapted, Malay mendefinisikan from English to define is morphologically integrated and Malay kategori from English category shows neither adaptation nor integration. Loanwords like these are of no concern to us here but represent the starting point of the continuum. It is the

embedding of single lexical items (words) that represents the initial phase of the codeswitching process. Obviously, some single lexical items tend to hide their actual status, that is to say, one cannot determine whether they are borrowings or code switches. Their true status can only be determined as we consider the entry in the mental lexicon, that is at the level of lemmas. To give an example, if rice appears in Malay context, it is a borrowing when it refers to the grain in any of its shapes (seed, uncooked grain or cooked food item) but a code switch, if it only refers to the edible version of it. The mentioned difficulty to distinguish between words as borrowings and words as code switches has induced scholars to de-emphasize the importance for codeswitching of this distinction and merely refer to the presence of words from another language as Insertional codeswitching. (Backus in Jacobson, 2001)

The embeddings of single lexical items, phrases and some clauses may all be subsumed under the broader category of intrasentential (within the sentence) codeswitching. These types of embedding, however, require a keen understanding of what is – grammatically speaking – a word, a phrase, a clause. Where the speaker lacks this notion of grammaticality, he/she may just opt for combining elements of one language with elements of the other, a language use pattern that is often referred to as codemixing. (For examples of these types of switching, see below). Some clauses, in particular, independent clauses resemble full sentences, so that we may consider both, certain clauses and free-standing sentences, as instances of intersentential (between sentences) codeswitching. The study of this latter category has been neglected during the last two decades when all emphasis was placed on the switching of words and smaller-than-word morphemes, characteristic of many African and Pacific basin languages. The return to intersentential codeswitching in the speaker's Malay corpus is a welcome development in codeswitching research. (See, the UUM data, below). When many sentences in a guest language make up a multi-sentence block, as this occurs in certain court hearings in Malaysia, where attorneys and judges refer to English language sources without offering translations, one may speak of language choice rather than codeswitching. Obviously, an officer of the court or a defendant in a trial may opt for using the English language as an appropriate medium of communication, if he/she believes that this would avoid the potential shortcomings of translated opinions. (See, below)

In short, there is a clear transition from the insertion of single words, when they are code switches, to the embedding of various grammatical units or the merger of the two languages and on to the incorporation of sentence blocks, showing the intimate interrelationship of the various code alternation practices. In other words, the suggested continuum emphasizes the close relationship that there is between the different codeswitching modes. A more detailed discussion of these modes is designed to clarify further the exact nature of each mode.

3. Some Thoughts on the Objective of Codeswitching research

One can think of two major schools in codeswitching research, one with psycholinguistic and the other with theoretical linguistic criteria in mind. The former is documented by such scholars as Giles, Taylor, Bourhis, Johnson, Sachdev and is usually known as language convergence or communication accommodation theories (Giles and Johnson, 1981, Giles and Coupland, 1991). Maya K. David, who bases her study of *Trading in an intercultural context* (1999:2.1) on the cited approach explains that

language convergence refers to speakers becoming more similar to their listeners in terms of the language(s) that they use, while language divergence refers to interlocutors maintaining their own languages [regardless of the language or languages used by the listener(s), the author].

She elaborates further on the Communication accommodation theory that Giles and Johnson (1981) and Sachdev and Bourhis (1990) have developed and in regard to which they have argued that

in multilingual settings language may become one of the most salient dimensions of group identity and as such can be used to reduce, create or maintain intergroup boundaries. In fact, divergence is a function of a speaker's desire for a distinct self-image, to disassociate from the interlocutor and to define the encounter in intergroup terms. The choice of a language has many implications as it connotes and signifies in-group solidarity or can be used as a distancing strategy and/or to signify status and power. The emphasis here on the interlocutors and their language-attitudinal concerns identifies the theory as psycholinguistic in essence.

The theoretical linguistic school of codeswitching research is represented by linguists like Poplack, Myers-Scotton, Jake and others at its forefront. It has been mainly Myers-Scotton who during the last decade has advanced a research model that reveals how she conceives of codeswitching research. Her numerous publications discuss the Matrix language frame model, that has been adopted by most of the more linguistically oriented researchers on the subject. Her two crucial oppositions matrix language vs. embedded language and content vs. system morphemes show how her emphasis is not on the attitudinal concerns of the speakers but on the linguistic properties of the mixed discourse. Distinctions made between classical codeswitching and (actual) codeswitching, between embedded language islands and bare forms, between system order principle and morpheme order principle all point toward the direction that Myers-Scotton has taken to come to grips – linguistically – with what constitutes a code switch and how the process can be described in such a way as to reveal it, not only in terms of a specific language but also by means of a universally valid statement. Two other notions are noteworthy, the projection of complementizer (CP), not the sentence, as basis for her analysis and the breakdown of the system morpheme into four different subcategories early system morphemes, late system morphemes, bridges and late

system morphemes: outsiders. None of the categories or subcategories refer to the speaker or his languages attitudes but only to the language mixing product being investigated. This is not the place to elaborate in detail on Myers-Scotton's approach but the preceding comments should suffice identifying her model as a straight linguistic approach, quite different from the psycholinguistic focus imposed by Giles and his associates.

This speaker has incorporated into his own approach many of the notions that Giles or Myers-Scotton have advanced but he cannot identify with either of them completely. Therefore, let us here suggest that there may be a third way to approach codeswitching research, namely, not on the basis of how the interlocutor may accommodate or converge, not on the basis of how a linguist is able to analyze the elements that constitute the code switch, but on the basis of how the researcher can describe the language performance in a given sociocultural setting. If Giles' approach is defined as a PSYCHO-linguistic task and Myers-Scotton's a socio-LINGUISTIC endeavor, the speaker's approach may qualify as having a SOCIO-linguistic goal where the social or societal involvement plays the foremost role. More than being an analysis of the code switch as a linguistic unit or a means of interpersonal relationship, it is the description of a language use pattern in a given society. This is what the DBP project was all about, to describe the codeswitching techniques in specific settings and to come to grips with the modes of switching depending on a multiplicity of factors. Situations do of course arise where the SOCIO-linguist must perform socio-LINGUISTICALLY or even PSYCHO-linguistically, so that it is not an either-or situation but one of emphasis. The description of language mixing events in a nation has important political implications because it allows to determine what the feasible language behavior ought to be. Countries with language planning agencies like Malaysia do well to first explore what the actual language use situation is before deciding which kind of performance to discourage and which one to encourage.

In sum, the speaker wishes to acknowledge three trends to investigate code alternations, one, with a psycholinguistic objective in mind as promoted by Giles and his associates, another, with linguistic goals in mind as implemented by Myers-Scotton and her associates and a third one, as proposed by the speaker who attempts to describe objectively the various codeswitching modes as they relate to individuals, organizations and other social entities in a given country. Having said this, the speaker may now proceed to describe in greater detail the Government-funded project on codeswitching in Malaysia.

The DBP Project

The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Institute of Language and Literature) is a multi-functional Government institution that oversees all matters pertaining to the

implementation, growth and development of the national language, Bahasa Melayu or Bahasa Malaysia, the name to use depending on whether to stress the language's ethnic roots or its unifying function. The responsibilities of the DBP include, but are not limited to, the development of Malay terminology – especially in the fields of science, mathematics and jurisprudence, – the publication of Malay language textbooks for elementary and middle schools, the publication of Malay language magazines and journals, the compilation of entries and their inclusions in monolingual (Malay) and bilingual (Malay English/English-Malay) dictionaries and finally the selection, editing and printing of Malay literary works. It is thus much broader in its commitments than that of comparable language academies like Académie de la langue française, Academia de la lengua española, Academia de la lingua italiana and other such institutions. The speaker has been in continued contact with this organization during almost ten years lecturing to its staff in several occasions and contributing research studies for the publication in its linguistic journal, *Jurnal Dewan Bahasa*.

To this very institution the speaker submitted a proposal to investigate and describe the Malay-English codeswitching practices as he believed – and still does – that the awareness of and knowledge about this kind of language behavior would assist the agency in maintaining a healthy attitude toward what to discourage and what to encourage in local communication events. In his proposal, the speaker stated that he wished to carry out in Malaysia

research on Malay-English codeswitching as it occurs in a number of professional fields, such as, language studies, science education, law, business and analyze the codeswitching events on the basis of three techniques (a) dominance of Malay with insertions from English, (b) dominance of English with insertions from Malay and (c) balanced performance in Malay and English with neither language dominating the other. Subsequently [he would] try to assess which of these techniques, if any, would be more appropriate for Malaysia, keeping in mind that no presence of another language must endanger the language status of Bahasa Malaysia. In other words, [he] intended to perform a study that [was] not only descriptive of language behavior but also socio-politically sound.

The proposal to conduct such an investigation was eventually approved and the speaker was awarded the Tabung Derma Cipta Dewan for the year 2001. Four months of the current year (February to May) were devoted to the collection of data and the preparation of the above mentioned manuscript.

The data collection at a large number of institutions covering the whole of Malaysia met with some difficulties because of the time needed to establish the necessary contacts. Some permissions to record, for example, were obtained when the speaker was preparing to leave the region such that areas like Pulau Pinang and the East-Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah could not be included in the study. In other words, this study is only based on data from the capital city of Kuala

Lumpur and nearby areas (Serdang, Bangi) and one set of data from the state of Kedah (Sintok) that is close to the Thailand-Malaysia border. This limitation of data makes it difficult to argue that whatever is described in the study is truly representative of the entire country. A follow-up study would have to determine whether the findings are truly national in scope. However, early indicators of what can be found in regions not yet covered seem to suggest that the practice of Malay-English codeswitching is equally witnessed in the areas yet to explore.

4. Settings and Domains

Let us, first of all, make a distinction between settings that are formal and others that are informal. The latter are basically encounters between family members, close friends and peers as they chitchat with one another about trivial matters. Such informal events lend themselves well for codeswitching when the interlocutors are bilinguals. The literature has given ample evidence of such practices which have been identified in all corners of the globe, i.e.

1. I lose my temper porque a m me da mucho coraje. (South Central Texas, USA, Jacobson data base) because it makes me so mad
2. On va avoir une d pression l que we'll be rationed if we don't all die. (Canada, Poplack data base)
One will have a depression there that
3. Enfin coute, vous dire, le journal, sse wenne de jetzt hesch de Express, de Point, odder so dings eso hesch, Well, you know, to be honest, newspapers, unless you have the express, the point, or something like that gell. (Alsace, France, Gardner-Chloros data base)
you see.
4. Yo ma ana empiezo...me levanto a las siete de la ma ana. J'suis malade rien que de le savoir. I begin tomorrow...I get up at 7 in the morning. I'm sick just thinking of it. (So. France, Dab ne data base)
5. To ghari l i enjoyed the ice-cream.
He came home and (India, Pandharipande data base)

These informal switchings, however, do not concern us here as the Project intended to focus on the switching in formal events. Let us therefore suggest, at this point, a working definition for a formal setting. It is the encounter of professionals who conduct their affairs or debate their views without any reference to matters pertaining to family, friends, peers or other personal aspects of their lives. Codeswitching in such a setting has not been documented in the professional literature as a typical language use pattern in codeswitching nations except for the work now being done in some Malay-speaking regions (Malaysia, Brunei). It is therefore that the DBP Project becomes important in its effort to document systematically the presence of a mixed language in different formal domains.

Three such domains have been the object of this investigation, Formal meetings at Malaysian universities, Corporate meetings of a private business organization and Hearings at Lower and Higher Kuala Lumpur Courts. Although it is clear to the speaker that these are not all the formal domains that can be tapped, the limitation of time and resources did not allow him to extend the study any further. A brief summary of the selected events may shed some further light on this project.

4.1 Universities

The Universiti Putra Malaysia of Serdang located at a short distance from the capital city agreed to making available to the speaker the recordings of several departmental meetings conducted at the Department of Modern Languages. The meetings were chaired by the head of the department and included among its participants instructors with different language expertises, so as to make the meeting a most valuable exchange of professional views. The Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, also located at short distance from Kuala Lumpur, made available to the speaker the recordings of two meetings, one, of the Department of Linguistics, and the other, of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. It turned out to be interesting to study two meetings of different hierarchical status and to assess the impact that a higher university official may have on the language switching during a more formal professional encounter. The Universiti Utara Malaysia, located in the northern state of Kedah (close to the Thai-Malaysian border) let the speaker use a recent recording of a faculty meeting with members of several modern languages instructors attending the meeting. This second faculty meeting differed substantially from the previous one (UKM) as the equally high hierarchical status of the UUM meeting did not impede but rather encourage the mixing of the two languages.

4.2 Private Business Sector

All requests to record private business meetings were initially rejected. The usual response was that the recording of meetings by outsiders was disallowed in principle and that it was useless to contact any other company officials to reconsider such a request. The speaker interpreted this rejection, not as fear to uncover their language use patterns, but rather as a way to prevent outsiders from gaining insights into the company's internal policies or future planning, a protection from commercial/industrial spying, so to say. Fortunately, a new contact with an individual whose sibling was working for a private company opened the desired road for retrieving data from the business sector. A one-hour corporate meeting was recorded and later transcribed. The speaker had thus managed to obtain the information that allowed him to investigate how corporate partners switch between the two languages, creating hereby a language use pattern quite of their own (see below).

4.3 Legal Settings

It was no secret that the Malay and the English language could both be heard in a court hearing in Malaysia. After all, English had been the official language of the Courts prior to independence (1957) and had been allowed to continue there for a number of years. Furthermore, Malay law is based on British Law and references to the laws, rendered in English, had to be made in the arguments of plaintiffs and defendants. As anywhere else, recordings cannot be made in a trial hearing. So, it was a puzzle to the speaker how he could obtain the data showing that both languages were indeed permissible at a hearing. The speaker's compromise solution was as follows:

1. A law journal published by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka by the name of *Kanun* contained the descriptions of scores of trial hearings and, if properly scrutinized, would reveal the extent to which Malay and English would both be heard at court. The issues of 1989 (year it was first published) and 1990 were found in DBP's library and the most recent issue (1997) was purchased, so that these published volumes would be useful to chart the language use patterns at courts;
2. Court hearings were open to the public. Visits to the Higher and Lower Courts of Kuala Lumpur were allowed; so, it was possible to verify, by means of trial visitations, that what was found in journal entries did actually represent the state of affairs at Malaysian courts.

These two sets of data provided the speaker with a valid information on the language distribution in local courts. Again, the patterns identified there revealed still another kind of codeswitching, one that is more properly called language choice, as the insertion of other-language material usually reflected, not words, phrases, clauses or individual sentences but multi-sentence blocks.

4.4 Other Selectable Events

As already mentioned, not enough events have been included in the present data base. With additional time and resources available to the speaker, he will attempt in a later project to examine the codeswitching practice at other universities, like Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Unimas, Universiti Malaysia Sabah as well as some smaller educational institutions (Johor, Kelantan). As for the business sector, not only more private institutions should be visited but also public businesses should be explored. A series of other domains would prove to be fruitful. Industries, governmental agencies, entities of religious denominations and a variety of different legal settings (offices of attorneys, prosecutors, judges) and some other more specialized courts may all shed lights how Malay and English co-exist in a nation that emphasizes her allegiance to East-Asian cultural beliefs, to the Malay language and to the Islamic tradition.

5. Mixing modes

5.1 *Lexical Insertions*

The heading chosen for this section suggests that one cannot limit himself to the issue of whether or not codeswitching occurs but what kind of switching predominates in a particular encounter and whether the dominant language is Malay with English embeddings or the reverse. Although various switching modes may indeed occur in all events, it is usually one such mode that predominates. In the meeting of the UKM Linguistics Department, Malay was chosen as matrix language and a preference for lexical insertions from English was documented in that meeting. A reason for this preference cannot be given but the insertion of single English words may have been found least offensive to the tacit understanding that Malay should be the means of communication at a Malaysian university. Some of the instances of lexical insertions were as follow:

1. Itu saya cakap, kita dapat mileage saja.
That I [can] say, we get ...only
2. Itulah agaknya bayaran untuk consolation.
That is, as far as I can guess, the pay for
3. Itu masalahnya, supervise 10 dengan supervise 3.
That is his problem by...
4. Lain game mungkin banyak centre pula.
Further Have perhaps many too.
5. Dia roughly tiga bulan sekali.
He [does it] once every three months.

Some phrasal and clausal insertions did occur but they were rare:

6. ...jadi ini boleh save you money and time also.
...so this can
7. Yang full time, I'm not talking about part timelah.
The one [that is]

This overall preference of lexical insertions characterized the meeting, suggesting hereby that there is a consensus among the meeting facilitator and the attending instructional staff that this mixing mode promotes the most effective exchange of ideas as well as an atmosphere where business can be conducted effectively.

5.2 *Phrasal-clausal Insertions*

The departmental meeting recorded at UPM showed a quite different picture. First of all, English was the dominant language at the Modern Languages departmental meeting and Malay phrases and clauses were inserted in English discourse. There were probably more English phrases than English clauses

embedded but not enough of the latter to suggest that there was an overriding preference of phrasal embeddings. Being Foreign Language Department members, the participants seemed to feel comfortable with English as the dominant language, as this language projects the kind of international, multilingual atmosphere that goes with the nature of such a department. Why the preference of Malay phrases and clauses for the embedding process is a question that is more difficult to answer. In any event, the chair and the departmental staff felt comfortable with the insertion of these grammatically more structured elements. Examples of such embeddings were:

8. *Kita perlukan* diagnosis test that is needed as soon as possible.
(We need)
9. Nicelah, *Bukit Tinggi*, nice. Beautiful place.
10. But, in our meeting, in fact, there another meeting after this at 10 o'clock, *tidak pula* they mention about his.
(not at all)
11. I will clarify, *kalau betul-betul*.
(if truly correct)
12. *Bolehlah* and also the opening will be by the Indonesian attach.
(That is possible)

What is obvious here, however, is the fact that the type of embedding used is indicative of Malay language proficiency and this show of proficiency may have been the motivating factor, one that condones the use of a language other than Malay in a formal meeting.

Some phrasal-clausal insertions also appear in some of the court hearings, although such embeddings are rare in legal proceedings.

13. ...and consequently the question of dismissal
dengan tidak diberi peluang yang munasabah untuk
([with] not to give the probable opportunity to be heard)
didengar does not arise.
14. Hanafiah bin Zakaria, SP2, *menyatakan*: Generally accepted, it
(Hanafiah bin Zakaria, SP2, clarifies)
is the same. No difference.

The only explanation that can here be given is that the judge (or attorney) wanted to cite an earlier comment or deposition exactly as it had been rendered before, that is, in English, and not translate it to Malay on his own. (For a different mode of switching in court hearings, see below).

5.3 Phrasal-clausal-sentence Insertions

The codeswitching routines implemented in the faculty meeting of Modern Languages at UUM were the most versatile of all. There were many phrasal and clausal embeddings comparable to those of the UPM meeting but, surprisingly, there was also a large number of full sentences, particularly in the performance of the Dean who served as chair of the meeting. In other words, one does not only find

there intrasentential mixes but also intersentential ones, and this places the performance somewhere between the mixed language choices of UKM and UPM on one hand and the language choice at legal settings on the other. Please, note the following examples:

15. Jadi passengers kita adalah client kita, iaitu pelajar-pelajar kita...[Lexical]

(So) (our are) (our, that is, our students)

16tapi just as a reminder kita nak memantapkan kaedah pengurusan
(but) (we want to be consistent about the management
peringkat sekolah kita,... [Clausal]
system at the level of our school)

17. Yang lagi satu perkaitan dengan kenyataan. You put up notices on
(One more thing in connection with notices)
the notice board, make sure you put your signature and your cop,
otherwise it's not going to be considered. [Sentence]

This alternation between structural units permeates the entire performance and nullifies all arguments that codeswitching was implemented because the speaker showed a lack of proficiency in one of the languages. Also observe that, even though this was a meeting of the Foreign Languages faculty, it was conducted in Malay, and not in English, as dominant language. The argument of multilinguality does not hold here. It seems to be more a matter of balanced bilinguality that, in the eyes of the chair, was the desired language expertise for her staff.

5.4 *Language Choice*

As one moves to the end of the continuum, the student of codeswitching encounters even more intersententiality as can be shown in some of the excerpts from the law journal *Kanun*. The term language choice reflects the practice of judges or attorney to insert long quotations, here referred to as sentence blocks in order to give evidence verbatim what arguments had been rendered in English. By shunning the translation of these quotes in some trials, the journal editor – and obviously the acting court official as well – takes it for granted that Malaysians are equally proficient in both languages and need no translation of such quotes. Although the language of the Malaysian Court System has been Malay for some time now, it is not always easy to determine from the proceedings what was said in one language and what in the other. There is still much English spoken in the Higher Courts. The Lower Courts, in turn, show their preference for the national language, mainly because the criminal offenders on trial there have little, if any, knowledge of English.

To return to the *Kanun* (1989-90; 1997) proceedings, one witnesses interesting English insertions except when quotes stem from the Federal Constitution or from

legal studies published in the Malay language. Note the following examples:

18. Rujukan telah juga dibuat kepada petikan dalam Rayden On Divorce (References had also made to the quotation in)

been (Edisi ke-14), di muka surat 56 yang berbunyi: The burden of

(on page) (which reads)

proving that a domisil has been chosen in substitution for the domicil of origin is on the person who asserts that a domisil of choice has been acquired in place of the domisil of origin: the intention must be proved with perfect clearness. [William Tan Guan Hock lwn Khor Chai Heah & Khor A Cin]
19. Dalam kes kita ini, kata-kata yang dikatakan sebagai menyakitkan hati

(In this our case, the words which are said to annoy that plaintiff are) plaintiff itu ada dinyatakan dalam perenggan 3 ekshibit D5 yang (clarified in paragraph 3, exhibit D5 that reads as follows:) berbunyi seperti yang berikut: I am surprised that a Chinese surveyor has charged \$ 1,450, whereas a Bumiputra asks for \$ 4,480 which is daylight robbery. [Ayob bin Saud lwn TS Sambanthamurthi]
20. *Peruntukan yang terpakai dalam Loh Wai Lian ialah*

(The allotment that is used in Loh Wai Lian is [based on] the rules of)

Peraturan-Peraturan Pemaju Perumahan [Kawalan dan Pelesenan] (Housing Development [Control and Licensing])

1970 (Peraturan 1970, Peraturan 12 (1) yang memperuntukkan:

(Regulation Regulation which determines:)

Every contract of sale shall be in writing and shall contain within its terms and conditions provisions to the following effect, namely:...

Selanjutnya, ditetapkan dua puluh satu perkara yang perlu (In the following, [there are] specified 21 matters that need to be) *dimasukkan dalam kontrak jualan, yang perkara- perkara yang* (entered in the sale contract with the following [being]) *berikut adalah relevan bagi tujuan kes ini...* (relevant for the purpose of this case:...)

These are not instances of codeswitching in a narrow sense – therefore, they are renamed here language choice – but insertions of quotes stemming from prior English language versions. Since these insertions involve at least one sentence, they can be considered intersentential switches. Intrasentential switches in legal proceedings, in turn, are extremely rare and have already been discussed in section 5.2. One can detect from the nature of these proceedings that they are not criminal but civic, so that they corroborate what was witnessed when the speaker visited

Higher Court trials in Kuala Lumpur. This brings us to the end of the suggested continuum but we must now retrace our steps in order to discuss the kind of codeswitching that characterizes the business meeting and show why these mixed language practices do not match any of the previously discussed manifestations.

5.5 *Message-focusing Switches*

The recording of a corporate meeting gave the speaker access to the codeswitching practices in the (private) business world. The mode implemented at the meeting did rarely match any of the categories above. Rather, the utterances generated seemed to reveal a random merger of the two languages as can be witnessed below:

21. O.K. *soal untuk* coming NCB, so I think for some international work,
(the question of)
some debris that we may want to do that world involvement on
kita punya sidelah. [English matrix]
(our)
22. *..tapi dalam* letter that was given *dulu itu*, there was no mention about
(but in the) (earlier)
the admin part...[English matrix]
23. O.K., I think, let she go to your floor, *Ambil* will *ambil bilik Ken* because
(take Ken's room)
will be on the same side of itlah. [English matrix]
24. *Kita ada* issue authorization letter to Al-Falah. [Malay matrix]
(We have [issued])
23. *Kita pun dah* get the schedule...*kalau you* punya group...three year
(We even [got]) (if your)
or four year... [Malay matrix]

First of all, there is no consistency in terms of whether English or Malay should serve as matrix language. In 21 - 23, English dominates Malay; in 24 - 25, Malay dominates English. Secondly, *soal untuk* (21), *tapi dalam* (22), *ambil bilik Ken* (23), *issue authorization letter* (24) and *get the schedule* (25) do not qualify as structural units; that is, they are neither single lexical items nor full phrasal constructs. As a matter of fact, in 23, 24, and 25 the verbal element is half-English/half-Malay or the reverse (*will + ambil*, *ada + issue[d]*, *dah + get*). The presence of such merging instances does however not preclude that, at times, isolated words, phrases or clauses are inserted. Note:

26. Dia orang buat *transfer*. [Malay matrix/single word insertion]
(This person handles)
27. Isha doing *apa ini*. [English matrix/noun phrase insertion]
(whatever)
28. Your new office *kat mana nanti?* [English matrix/prepositional

- insertion] (close to where later?)
29. O.K., we just run through the minutes. I think
 kita pun dah berzaman tak duduk serta(?)...
 (we did not even have time to sit down together)
 [English matrix/noun clause]

They do however not occur with sufficient frequency to argue that they are characteristic for this particular encounter. Random mixing is what sets the language performance apart from all the others. Business partners, unlike university instructors and law officials, seem to ignore language etiquette and focus on the message to convey alone. As long as the interlocutors comprehend the message, they are satisfied with the product. Items from either language are selected depending on which such item is more readily available. The merger, on the other hand, does not require that a third grammar be set up because there is no clear pattern that emerges when the two languages are brought together. It is an arbitrary performance that comes closest to what one might call broken language or what many Malay critics of codeswitching refer to as *bahasa rojak*.

6. Some Final Thoughts on Codeswitching in Formal Settings

6.1 *Administrative Bias*

Codeswitching in formal settings seems to vary from setting to setting. The facilitator of meeting may or may not encourage by means of his/her own performance that the two languages be used jointly. Whether he/she will encourage language mixing is not only the result of his/her personal preferences but also of those of his/her immediate superiors. Malaysia is a highly hierarchically-sensitive country to the effect that a lower official will abide by the rules imposed by his/her superior. To be more specific, if codeswitched discourse is frowned at by higher administrators, the lower administrator will refrain from the mixing of languages in a formal administrative encounter; hence, one finds such a discrepancy between the dean's performance at one institution (UKM) and that of the dean at another institution (UUM).

6.2 *Ethnicity Factor*

The staff members attending a formal meeting may also vary in terms of their ethnic make-up. Some departmental meetings may be attended by Malaysians of different ethnic heritages (Malay, Indian, Chinese), whereas others are attended by Malays primarily. The foreign languages departments visited and their meetings recorded and transcribed revealed a much greater tendency to function bilingually (UPM, UUM) than did the linguistics department visited at another institution (UKM). The corporate meeting recorded, on the other hand, showed a great preference for intrasentential switches – actually, language mergers – and this may contradict the previous generalization. Unfortunately, the ethnic composition of the members at that meeting was not available to the speaker. The kind of language

use found there may be more a function of business language intercourse than of multi-ethnicity.

6.3 Fields

The fields of interest also seem to have a bearing on whether language mixing is permissible. The speaker has found, as documented above, a strong tendency to switch between languages among language and language education professionals as well as among partners at a business meeting. It is improbable, however, that codeswitching can be found among members of Malay language and literature professionals or staff members of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka language academy. As a matter of fact, the speaker's request to record a departmental meeting at UKM's Malay Studies, which had initially been approved, was suddenly canceled, thus suggesting that such a recording would be meaningless because no switching occurs at such a meeting. Meetings at Mathematics and Science faculties have not yet been recorded. Since many recent accomplishments in science have been achieved in English-speaking countries and the English language terminology is wide-spread over the globe, it is very likely that codeswitching can be found especially among the science professionals. There are certainly many more such

sources that can be tapped in our quest to identify all occurrences of codeswitching in the formal arena. This shall be the objective of future projects.

Conclusion

The findings in the cited project reveal the uniqueness of Malay-English (or English-Malay) codeswitching. The presence of multiple switching modes gives credence to the fact that one must look at code alternations as being best represented by a continuum that starts with the insertion of individual words and ends with the presence of language choice. Furthermore, it has been noted that language switching only occurs in formal events when certain conditions are present, that is, when the players agree that switching is appropriate, that multi-ethnic participants are involved or when the fields of interest lend themselves to such language performance. The tendency of mixing the English and Malay languages does not appear to present a risk to the national language, as there is ample evidence that speakers can produce, together with their mixed language performance, sufficient monolingual utterances that reveal their proficiency in both languages. More studies of this nature must be conducted in order to determine whether what has been found in this limited set of data also carries for a larger and more comprehensive set. It is hoped that the follow-up analysis here suggested can be conducted in the years to come.

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