

THE BENEFIT OF USING CODE-SWITCHING IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR LAO STUDENTS DOING A COURSE IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Thanks to ASIAN integration trend, many students come from other countries to Vietnam for pursuing their studies. The demand to use one efficient language for teaching is very essential. In practice, English is likened to a global language or in other word it can be thought as “lingua franca” now, so it is employed as a medium of instructions in these classrooms where foreign students, who have enrolled without sitting for the English placement test, are doing their courses in Vietnam. In order to make up for the deficiency in level of English proficiency, code switching is considered as one best solution to this problem. In this limited view of the paper, it will pay special attention to the benefits of allowing code switching in the classrooms where Lao students study English in Vietnam university. It is found out that code switching plays an important role in the teaching of language on the onset to attract the attention of the learners, however, it should be gradually reduced according to the learners’ advancement in English proficiency level. It can be concluded that code switching among English, Vietnamese and Lao is an effective approach to improve the English proficiency of Lao students.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Bilingualism, Second Language Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Different species have their own ways of communication. For human beings, people have a variety of methods of exchanging information. Language, however, is the most effective and popular ways of conveying thought between people. Many notions about language have been mentioned up to now. OALD (2015) defines that “the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country or area”. Dictionary.com gives out another definition “a body of words and the systems for their use common to people who are of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition”. Trevor A. Harley (2014) states that “a system of symbols and rules that enable us to communicate”. In short, language comprises of verbal and non-verbal communication, which is employed to convey the meaning of what is expected to denote.

The role of second language acquisition (SLA) has attracted great attention until now. Basically, SLA can be regarded as learning a second language out of the first language (L1) – mother tongue. As mentioned earlier, language is thought as the way of combining ideas and emotions in the form of symbols and signs which are used to encode and decode some kinds of information. Since a baby, s/he is able to use the first language (mother tongue), s/he later learns the second one - any languages which are acquired in addition to L1 are considered as the second language acquisition, no matter how many languages one person can use.

Noam Chomsky (1965) coined the term “linguistic competence” and “linguistic performance”, which seems to start the ball rolling for further discussions on SLA.

Obviously, SLA is often characterized by a phase or phases of silent periods when few productions are offered despite obvious development of comprehension. So, classroom teaching methods which require students to speak in these silent periods might result in more harm than good. Newmark (1966) argued that this has the effect of forcing the speaker back onto the rules of the first language.

According to Krashen (1982), he believed that it is better for the learners to acquire SLA more like first language acquisition by supplying them with sufficient comprehensible input. Kersten and Earles (2001) discovered the fact that adults acquired an artificial language better when at first they were provided with only small segments of the language than when they were given to the full complexity of the language from the beginning. Therefore, this finding should apply to the children. Sharpe (1992) pointed out what he called the “four Cs” of successful modern language teaching, namely communication, culture, context and giving the learners confidence. These points may seem clear from the context, but they are often neglected in traditional, grammar-based methods of teaching foreign languages. Ellis and Beaton (1993) paid attention to learning foreign language vocabulary, and the technique is used rote repetition.

Rod Ellis (2003) states that “L2 acquisition, then, can be defined as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom”. He also pointed out that SLA has not laid much concentration on communicative aspects of language development but on the formal features of language that linguists have focused on.

Code switching is very common and popular not only in school setting but also outside school environment. Code switching can be recognized as borrowing meanings or shorter expression of words. In fact, code switching can be thought as the way people shift from one language to another one for clear understanding of one message. It is especially a useful tool for learners who are on the onset of acquiring a new language. There are many arguments on the ways of using code switching in language acquisition. Some are against the allowance of using code switching in language learning as it deters the advancement of learners. On the other hand, many people find it useful to let learners and teachers use code switching at the early phase of language acquisition, gradually code switching should be less employed in order for the target language to become dominant in the process of language acquisition.

Teaching English in Vietnam has a short history. According to Van’s study, it can be divided into two remarkable periods – before 1986 and after 1986. Before 1986, English was mostly taught in the south of Vietnam as it was invaded and affected by American war, while in the north Soviet Union backed up and Soviet was taught widely in the school system. After 1986, English has turned a new leaf in the whole nation of Vietnam. Since Vietnam has implemented open door policy, many people enjoy a good chance to turn around their lives thanks to English capacity. For the time being, English is one compulsory subject at almost school system in Vietnam. Many workshops and national projects for teaching and learning English in Vietnam have been carried out with the aim of turning English from a foreign language to a second language. In order to achieve this target “by the year 2020 most Vietnamese youth who graduate from vocational schools, colleges and universities gain the capacity to use a foreign language independently... to be more confident in communication, further their chance to study and work in an integrated and multicultural environment with a variety of languages... serving the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country. (Article 1:1).”, this is inked by Nguyen Thien Nhan – Vice Chancellor on behalf of Prime Minister.

In recent years many students have come from different countries in the world to Vietnam for pursuing a degree here. In this paper, two universities have been taken into account for the observation and research, namely participants from Hanoi university of Business and Technology and Thai Nguyen University – Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry. In implementation, the questionnaire will be floated among randomly chosen participants of 46 Lao students and 14 teachers who are involved in teaching English for Lao students. Lao students are chosen to answer questionnaire no matter what majors they are in as long as they are doing a course here. The reason why they are chosen to elicit the outcome is that they have learnt Vietnamese and can communicate in Vietnamese well. Besides, Lao English proficiency is not very high, so during the course of lessons, they need to convert one English word into Vietnamese meaning then from Vietnamese meaning to Lao meaning. This brings about a low but interesting process of learning English among Lao students.

The paper significantly seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What is the attitude of teachers using code switching in teaching English to Lao students studying at universities in Vietnam?
2. What are the reasons why Lao students have to use code switching in learning English in the classrooms?
3. What are solutions to the implementation of code switching in teaching and learning English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the code switching, it is best to go over how second language (L2) is acquired. In fact, L2 is quite different from foreign language. Foreign language, defined by dictionary.com, is a language that is studied mostly for cultural insight. To a certain extent, second language acquisition (SLA) refers to any language that is learnt out of the mother tongue. Rod Ellis (2003) states that “the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom”. He also points out that SLA has two goals; the first aim is the description of L2 acquisition. The second one is explanation, identifying the external and internal factors that explain why learners acquire an L2 in the way they do. Bill Vanpatten and Jessica Williams (2015) say that SLA was divided into two basic periods prior to the 1990s. The first period highlighted the use of behaviorism and structural linguistics. The second one is accounted for the Monitor Theory of Stephen Krashen. Actually both theories have had long lasting impact on SLA, particularly for classroom instruction. Bill Vanpatten & Alessandro G. Benati (2015) has another description of SLA, that is, “SLA is a research field that focusses on learners and learning rather than teachers and teaching”. Gass, Behney, and Plonsky (2013) define SLA as “the study of how learners create a new language system.” Before this time, Rosamond Mitchell & Florence Myles (2004) stated that “some second language researchers have proposed a principled distinction between formal, conscious learning and informal, unconscious acquisition” Stephen D. Krashen (1981) mentioned the “Monitor Theory” of adult second language acquisition. He claimed that “Monitor Theory hypothesizes that adults have two independent system for developing ability in second languages, subconscious language acquisition and conscious language learning, and that these systems are interrelated in a definite way; subconscious acquisition appears to be far more important.

To understand better SLA, it is advisable to have a quick look at some ideas relating to the definition of broad term “bilingualism” then narrower field code switching. The definition “bilingual”, according to Macnamara (1967), can mean control of one’s native language and minimal control of one the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of the

second language. Grosjean (2010) comes up with a definition of bilingualism that places on the regular use of languages rather than fluency. He states that ‘bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives’.

Until now we should go to the point about code switching. To make it easy to understand this paper, it should do research on some literatures outside the territory of Vietnam first, then come back to see what Vietnamese researchers say ‘what’ relating to the code switching. Cheng and Butller (1989) states that code switching is a natural phenomenon and a worth – noticing aspect of bilingualism. It can be concluded that bilingualism involves the use of at least two languages with the aim to understand excitingly better the content of something such as conversations or poems.

Another researcher – Myers Scotton (1998) proposed that different communities apply code switching differently while participating in conversations, this is to be determined by socio-political factors and attitudes found in the given community. In some communities, languages can be constrained by the political views so that communities may be encouraged or discouraged to implement code switching. In some circumstances, one language becomes a dominant language compared with others. This idea is reflected in the study of Myers-Scotton (1990), she proposed the Markedness Model – the matrix language frame model in which one language will be employed more frequently than the others. However, Jacobson (2001) suggested one type of code switching, language alternation, which means the first language and the second one can be used equally in discourse. From these two researchers, it is clear that they have different views in code switching. As mentioned above, Cheng & Butler (1989) believed that code switching had important social functions because there were pragmatic meanings under the code switching. On the same boat, Ben Rafael (2001) contended that ‘code switching structures the conversation through discursive markers; it signals ends of sequences, subordinate topics, or the boosting of new subjects. It allows reformulation and is a means of insistences. It also opens the way to instructions into a discussion and interruption of its flow... Code switching is often a form of subjective support. It may convey personal assertions and feelings and signify a turn toward the speaker him/herself or toward the other. (p. 306).’

On the same track, Gacia (2001) mentioned code switching in in educational setting, the author concludes that code switching plays a vital role as a pedagogical tool for teachers to effectively convey information and knowledge and other role as a motivation for second language acquisition and the use of that L2. To some extent, code switching is likened to a bridge that overlaps the misunderstanding of the knowledge of both teachers and students in an attempt to conquer the L2. Following this move, Macaro (2005), through classroom observations, found out that teachers’ and students’ code switching in the language classrooms can be considered to be a helpful strategy. This is also reflected clearly in the study carried by Harmer (2007) on the lower-level students, in an effort to master the L2, the lower-level students seem to use the L1 as a medium to understand the L2. According to Harmer, the author states that ‘discuss making a learning contract with their students, or to ask what they want or need’.

For Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigol (2008), they acknowledged that the L2 is used as a medium of instructions and learning for specialized subjects. Yet, in order to achieve the knowledge of that specialized subjects, the role of the L1 is an aid to enter the world of these subjects. This notion is in line with that of Dailey-Ocain and Liebscher (2009) who drew their conclusion on the observation of many EFL students in the CLT classes using their L1 as a

resource for more understanding. Similarly, Ahmad (2009) did a research on how low proficiency learners are influenced by the L1, the author could not deny the important role of the L1 to the acquisition of the L2. During 2010, three studies mentioned by Wright, Kamwangamula, & Wardhaugh recognized the great influence of code switching on the SLA. They did their researches independently, but had the same thought to highlight the role of the L1 to the L2.

Grainger (1997, 2010, 2012, 2013) has devoted much time and effort to explore communication strategies employed by Japanese learners in foreign language learning environments. The result comes out that the learners' code switching is a spoken communication strategy related to the clarification of meaning to the compensation for their low levels of Japanese proficiency. Code switching, however, is still received some disagreements. Remarkably, Xiaol (2013), through his questionnaire and interviews, gave a mind warning that frequent teachers' application of code switching in the classroom can lead to the situations in which learners do not want to expose to the L2. Different from Xiaol (2013), Newman (2014) and Samar and Moradkhanis (2014) did researches separately but they are on the same boat, that is, they are in favour of code switching. One recent study carried out by Ahmar Mahboob & Rashi Jain (2016) did researches in both countries; India and Pakistan. They state that 'both India and Pakistan proceeded to adopt versions of a tripartite language formula, in which a dominant/ national language, along with a regional language and English would be taught as language subjects in primary and secondary schools while the actual medium of instruction would vary.

As mentioned in the introduction, in Vietnam many projects, remarkably national foreign languages 2020 project, have been introduced and implemented so as to improve the proficiency level of learners. The fact is that English is still taught as a foreign language in Vietnam, thus, not many researches have been done on code switching. According to Hiep (2004, 2007), he pointed out a mismatch between CLT tenets and the local classroom cultures. He thought that English classes operate "on the principle of immersing learners in Anglosaxon society". Together with Hiep (2007), Huong (2006) emphasized the importance of using the L1 which helps students feel it easy to study English. In the same year, Oanh (2006) pointed out that EFL students use the L1 frequently during the lessons to enable them to understand better what they are expected to do. Nhan & Lai (2012) believed that code switching can help learners to be more cheerful in comprehending jokes and small talks. Through the observation of Anh (2009), the author stated that most of the participants held a supportive view on code switching.

In practice, over the past decade, some Vietnamese universities have been implemented to use English as a medium of instruction programs, which results in many difficulties for not only Vietnamese learners but also their teachers (Vu & Burn, 2014). Canh (2014) also thought that code switching help the process of acquiring SLA better. He also believed that code switching ensure the low-level students' sufficient understanding of metal language. Furthermore, Nguyen Thanh Phuong (2012), Le Huong Thao (2012), Tran Thanh Phuc (2013) Nguyen Thi Hang (2013) show their supportive views on the application of code switching.

One of the most interesting researches was conducted by Tien (2012) to recognize factors affecting code switching in tertiary English classrooms. In his research, he carried out a case study on one teacher teaching two different general English classes at two universities in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. He concluded that code switching was influenced by contextual

factors such as the class timetabling, the learners' English proficiency levels and cultural values, teacher evaluation systems and teacher recognition.

On the right track, many researchers have discussed the types of code switching. Brice & Brice (2000); Hanmink (2000); Poplack (1980) introduced 3 types of code switching, namely borrowing, calque, and intersentential. Borrowing is the way to use a single word that can borrow from one language to make up for the lack from another one. Borrowing words take place when the primary language cannot have equivalent meanings or even the word meaning is not so clear from the context. Calque – loan translation – can understand that it literally translate an expression from another language without the use of appropriate syntax. Intersentential is the way to interject an entire sentence or phrase from one language into the primary language.

Seckin Esen (2014) classified code switching into three types; Inter-Sentential, Intra-Sentential, and Extra-Sentential. Specifically, in inter-sentential code switching, the language switch is done at sentence boundaries, it means that it can be placed at the beginning or the ending of the sentence, which often takes place between fluent bilingual speakers. In intra-sentential code switching, the shift is implemented in the middle of a sentence, with no interruptions, hesitations or pauses indicating a shift. The speaker is usually unaware of the shift. Different types of switch happen within the clause level including within the word level. Some researchers call it also code mixing. In Extra-Sentential, there is an insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance that is in another language.

Whether or not code switching is chosen in the classroom draws much consideration. Firstly, many ELT practitioners, educational experts and policy makers are not in favour of applying code switching in the classroom settings. Cumins (2005) states that 'the two languages should be kept strictly separated', this idea is in line with Wei & Martin (2009) who thought that code switching is 'inappropriate and unacceptable' and associated with a 'deficit and dysfunctional mode of interaction'. Cook (2001) advised to avoid the L1 in the classrooms because of 'doubtful analogy of L1 acquisition'. He convinced that 'most descriptions of teaching method portray the ideal classroom as having as little of the L1 as possible, essentially by omitting any reference to it'. Cook (2001) also refers to the separation of the L2 from the L1 as 'language compartmentalisation', that is the L1 and L2 systems are represented as distinct entities in the bilingual's cognition.. This idea was followed by Faltis (1990) who said 'By strictly separating the languages, the teacher avoids, it is argued, cross-contamination, making it easier for a child to acquire a new linguistic system as he/she internalizes a given lesson.' (Setati, Adler, Reed, & Bapoo, 2002; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002) defended their notions that the teacher is the only source of the target language input for learners. Littlewood and Yu (2009) claim that many studies have found that learners 'resort to their L1 as soon as they can and they rarely initiate exchanges in the target language'. Secondly, although there are many authors protesting against the use of code switching in the classrooms, code switching is still an effective tool for the 'management of learning' (Ferguson, 2003). Many researchers have argued that it will be impractical to proscribe the use of the learner's L1 in classroom contexts because judicious use of the learners' L1 can be used to achieve the pedagogic aims of the L2 classroom and the communicative goals of language learners (Atkinson, 1987; Macaro, 2001). Upton & Lee-Thompson (2001) believed that L2 learners often use their expertise and knowledge of the L1 to 'mediate comprehension'. Macaro (2005) suggests that teacher code switching can be used to relieve the 'cognitive constraints imposed by working memory limitations'. In short, code switching

is regarded as a medium to mitigate the negative effects which may arise from variables such as the learners' inhibitions and their unfamiliarity with the L2.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study is to utilize the descriptive method using survey and correlation technique to see the benefit of using code switching in teaching and learning English for Lao students doing a university course in Vietnam. In this study, the combination of method, namely quantitative and qualitative approach, was employed to achieve a better understanding of code switching practices in ESL classroom and to highlight the different ways of SLA in the classrooms where Lao, Vietnamese and English take place. According to Ranjit Kumar (2011), he emphasizes the difference between two approaches that 'one of the most distinguishing features of qualitative research is the adherence to the concept of respondent concordance whereby you as a researcher make every effort to seek agreement of your respondents with your interpretation, presentation of the situations, experiences, perceptions and conclusions. In quantitative research respondent concordance does not occupy an important place. Sometimes it is assumed to be achieved by circulating or sharing the findings with those who participated in the study.'

Locale of the study

In order to clarify the transparency and accuracy of the study, it was carried out at two different universities independently; Hanoi University of Business and Technology (HUBT) and Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAF). The total participants were 60 in which 46 were students – 30 belonged to HUBT, 16 at TUAF and 14 participants are teachers – 8 came from HUBT and 6 from TUAF. Both authors had to collaborate to work through February 2017 for the data collection process.

Data collection

In this study, questionnaires were carefully constructed by two researchers together basing on the ideas introduced by Ranjit Kumar (2011), and the scale 5 developed by Likert (1932). The questionnaires had two parts, the first part consisted of the exploring questions in order to get to know the background of the participants. The second part of the questionnaires sought for their opinions about the use of code switching in the classrooms from which the researchers came to conclusion on whether code switching was good for SLA to Lao students studying at universities in Vietnam. In practice, prior to the actual implementation of the questionnaire stage, a pilot study was conducted for both groups of participants to determine the validity of the questions and also to identify any definitions that needed to adjust/adapt. One teacher and two students at each university took part in the pilot study, after that two researchers collected the constructive feedback for the reference. Some of the ambiguous terms and definitions in the questions had to be changed to make it easier for participants to comprehend. Then the final questionnaires were floated to the actual participants to get the output.

Data analysis

The questionnaires for both teachers and students were analyzed using the deductive approach. They were followed standard steps for analyzing qualitative and quantitative data

suggested by Holliday (2009). Furthermore, the process of data analysis also complied with several principles described by Dornyei (2007). In this study, using data analysis tool was IBM SPSS Statistics 22 – Cronbach Alpha to measure the reliability based on the ideas of Nunnally, J. (1978), Peterson, R. (1994), and Slatter, S. (1995) for the certainty and suitability of the questionnaires. Frequencies command was employed to analyze the first part of the questionnaires and descriptive command to explore the overall weighted mean to determine the final decision of the participants whether support or reject the application of code switching based on the interval scale; 1-1.8 disagree totally, 1.9-2.6 disagree a little, 2.7-3.4 neutral, 3.5-4.2 agree a little, 4.3-5.0 Totally agree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test the reliability of the questionnaires set for both teachers and Lao students, Cronbach's Alpha in IBM SPSS statistics 22 was employed to ensure the reliability of these questions. Therefore, any items that had low results had to be adapted. According to Nunnally, J. (1978), Peterson, R. (1994), and Slater, S. (1995), the reliability statistics of 25 items in the questionnaires for teachers is 0.871. From this figures, the conclusion was quite good to apply. Together with that, questions that would be applied for students were tested with the Cronbach's Alpha, the result was 0.723 out of 20 items, this index was acceptable for the researchers to float the questionnaires to students.

At first, the following results have been collected from the questionnaires filled out by the teachers between two universities.

The table 1.1 presents the sex involving in this study. Out of 14 teachers, male teachers account for only 4, equivalent to 28.6% while the number of female teachers is 2.5 times bigger than male teachers, particularly 10 female teachers, up to 71.4%. It can be concluded that male teachers are fewer than female teachers in teaching English in proportion.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 4 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 28.6 |
| | Female | 10 | 71.4 | 71.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 14 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1.1. The difference of between sex

Table 1.2 below describes the qualifications with five levels mentioned; doctor, master, bachelor, college bachelor, and other qualification. The outcome of the study, however, reveals that among 14 teachers involved, only two levels are present, namely bachelor – 4 teachers accounting for 28.6%, and 10 masters – equivalent to 71.4%. From this figure, it should be further recommended that to improve the quality of teaching, a standardized level of teacher qualification has to be implemented.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Bachelor | 4 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 28.6 |
| | Master | 10 | 71.4 | 71.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 14 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1.2. The qualification of teachers

Table 1.3 reveals the teaching experience of teachers participating in the study. The fact goes that two universities have a good background of experienced teachers. Out of 14 teachers are questioned, only one teacher has less than 1 year of teaching. The rest is very experienced in teaching, which can give a good outcome in the second part of questionnaires.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Less than 1 year | 1 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.1 |
| | Less than 10 years to 1 year | 4 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 35.7 |
| | From 10 years to above | 9 | 64.3 | 64.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 14 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1.3. The teaching experience of teachers at two universities

In the first part of the main questionnaires, it is designed and constructed by 14 questions as described in details as in the table 1.4 below and they are classified into 3 categories as proposed by Ferguson, G. (2009), such as Curriculum access for items 2,3,4,6,10,11 and 12, and Interpersonal relations for items 5,7,9 and 13, and Classroom management for items 1 and 14. These items are scaled as 1. Never, 2. Hardly ever, 3. Often, 4. Usually and 5. Always. According to Ferguson, items to explore the curriculum access are those ideas that concentrate on conveying the lesson content, especially the linguistic knowledge about the target language. In addition, items seeking for interpersonal relations are concerned with the social aspects of the language classroom and learning environment. Finally, items for classroom management are considered as a means to control students' behavior in the classroom. After calculating the overall weighted mean of the 14 items, the result is 3.77, compared with the interval scale set in advance, it comes to the conclusion that the teachers prefers using code switching in teaching English to Lao students.

| In classroom, I switch from English to the students' first language | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| 1. To maintain classroom rules and structure of the lesson. | 3.86 | 0.95 |
| 2. To make a clear distinction between the students' L1 and English. | 3.71 | 0.73 |
| 3. To draw students' attention to the correct pronunciation of sounds in English. | 4.21 | 0.80 |
| 4. To make the meaning of words and sentences clear. | 4.00 | 0.78 |
| 5. To give out praise/feedback/personal remarks about students' performance. | 3.86 | 1.03 |
| 6. To help students understand grammar explicitly. | 3.64 | 0.93 |
| 7. To enhance students' motivation and confidence in learning English. | 3.64 | 0.84 |
| 8. To establish/strengthen interpersonal relationships between the teacher and students. | 3.86 | 1.03 |
| 9. To relieve students' anxiety in learning English. | 3.86 | 0.95 |
| 10. To elicit the students' comprehension. | 3.50 | 1.02 |
| 11. To launch unfamiliar materials/ topics. | 3.36 | 0.84 |
| 12. To explain the meaning of difficult concepts. | 4.21 | 0.80 |
| 13. To promote students' participation in classroom activities. | 4.00 | 0.78 |
| 14. To control classroom tasks. | 3.07 | 0.92 |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 3.77 | |

Table 1.4. The use of teacher code switching

The second part is designed to see the teachers' perceptions and beliefs about code switching and the principles of ELT. The 10 items, as described in the table 1.5, consist of two broad categories namely positive and negative views of the effects of code switching on the language learning process and positive and negative views of code switching in the ESL classroom. The items are measured 5 rankings; 1. Disagree totally, 2. Disagree a little, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree a little, and 5. Totally agree. Based on the result of the overall weighted mean, it is 3.46, compared with the preceded interval scale, the result is supportive to apply code switching in the ESL classroom.

| I believe that | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 15. The use of other languages in the ESL classroom will lead to a deficiency in the standards of English. | 3.79 | 0.97 |
| 16. In the ESL classroom, it is advisable to maintain a strict separation of the mother tongue and English. | 3.79 | 0.97 |
| 17. No mother tongue is used in English classrooms. | 3.93 | 0.92 |
| 18. English should be practiced by learners in the ESL as much as possible. | 2.86 | 0.86 |
| 19. It is best to for learner to study English as young as possible. | 3.29 | 0.91 |
| 20. The language learning process will be facilitated by code switching. | 2.86 | 0.86 |
| 21. Ideally only native speakers should deliver lessons in the classrooms. | 3.79 | 0.97 |
| 22. It is important to remember that code switching should only be chosen as a final option when all other choices are not effective. | 3.50 | 1.02 |
| 23. Code switching is an effective, time-saving technique. | 3.71 | 0.99 |
| 24. The students' reliance and dependency on the teacher will be improved | 3.29 | 0.91 |

| | | |
|--|-------------|------|
| by the practice of code switching | | |
| 25. It is better to treat code switching as an integral part of the ESL lessons. | 3.29 | 0.91 |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 3.46 | |

Table 1.5. The teachers' perceptions and beliefs about code switching

Secondly, the following results have been collected from the questionnaires filled out by the students between two universities.

The table 1.6 shows the distribution of questionnaires for Lao students in two different universities. From this table, the result describes that there is only a little difference in the gender. Males students are 24, equivalent to 52.2% while female are 22, accounting for 47.8%. These figure deductively reveals that not much gender bias exists among Lao students doing a course in Vietnam.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 24 | 52.2 | 52.2 | 52.2 |
| | Female | 22 | 47.8 | 47.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 46 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1.6. The population of Lao students in two universities in Vietnam

The table 1.7 gets to know the language ability of Lao students in order to check their experience in the language acquisition. The intended scales are four, namely two, three, four and more than five languages. In this survey, 44 students are able to use three languages Lao-Vietnamese-English. This is the majority in comparison with others because it accounts for 4 95.7%. Remarkably, two students can speak 4 languages. From this figure, it is accepted that these students do not have much difficulties in acquiring English when studying in Vietnam.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Three | 44 | 95.7 | 95.7 | 95.7 |
| | Four | 2 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 46 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1.7. The language ability of Lao students

The table 1.8 reveals the school years that the participants are in. From the figure, it is shown that the majority of students is in the second year, 33 sophomores, equivalent to 71.7%, these students will give better views in comparison with freshmen who have only 5 students. Besides, 8 juniors also contribute fairly too the outcome as they have a longer time living in Vietnam. Clearly, neither senior nor post graduate take part in the survey. It is better to get them involved as they may have more experienced in the language acquisition.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Freshman | 5 | 10.9 | 10.9 | 10.9 |
| | Sophomore | 33 | 71.7 | 71.7 | 82.6 |
| | Junior | 8 | 17.4 | 17.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 46 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1.8. The school year of Lao students

The main part of the questionnaires seeks for the students' preferences and beliefs about the code switching of Lao students in the ESL classes in Vietnam. The items in the questionnaires are carefully constructed and administer well in order to get the fairest results. The items were built on three criteria; curriculum access, interpersonal relations, and classroom management. In this table, when compared with the preset interval scale, 4 items such as 7, 9, 14 and 20 are not received the agreement from Lao students. Of the four items, items 7, 9 and 14 belong to the teaching methodology, item 20 is based on the interpersonal relations. From this disagreement, it turns out to be that Lao students prefer code switching to be used as often as possible. For neutral items, particularly items 1, 4 and 18, they are classified into the linguistic knowledge. This can be deduced that Lao students are doubtful about whether they can understand lessons without the involvement of code switching. Besides, the majority of the items, 10 items, are gained the preference of Lao students. The rest items, 6, 10, and 13 get the total agreement in which the item 6 belongs to the

interpersonal relations, and two other items are of the teaching methodology. Generally speaking, the overall weighted mean, 3.59, agrees that code switching is in favour of the Lao students in this study.

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| 1. I think teachers should avoid using L1 language in the classroom. English is used only. | 3.02 | 1.06 |
| 2. I use code switching in case I try to explain technical terms or difficult sentences to my classmates. | 3.87 | 0.83 |
| 3. During the lesson, the teacher using L1 language helps me enjoy the lesson. | 3.98 | 1.02 |
| 4. I pay attention to the lesson better without any worrying about unfamiliar words and sentences because teachers use L1 to explain the lesson. | 3.46 | 0.59 |
| 5. Teachers using only English to deliver the English lessons make me difficult to concentrate and understand. | 3.74 | 0.74 |
| 6. I use code switching when I talk to my classmates whose mother tongue is as same as mine. | 4.43 | 0.62 |
| 7. I think English and L1 language should be used fifty-fifty during lessons. | 2.61 | 0.71 |
| 8. I feel more confident and motivated in learning English thanks to teacher's using L1 language in the classroom. | 3.83 | 0.77 |
| 9. I find no interest when the teacher uses other languages during English lessons. | 2.70 | 0.89 |
| 10. I think I can understand the lesson better if the teacher uses L1 language to deliver the lesson. | 4.43 | 0.62 |
| 11. I feel more active and motivated to join classroom activities when teachers use L1 to assign tasks and assist me. | 3.89 | 0.71 |
| 12. I have difficulties in understanding the lessons when the teacher does not use L1 language to explain new words/topics/concepts. | 3.78 | 0.89 |
| 13. It is convenient for me to take advantage of code switching when I cannot express myself in English | 4.43 | 0.62 |
| 14. If possible, I would like the teacher to minimize the use of L1 language during lessons. | 2.57 | 0.81 |
| 15. I use code switching to exchange conversations. | 3.46 | 0.96 |
| 16. I would like the teachers to let me translate English into Lao meanings. | 3.85 | 0.84 |
| 17. If I cannot understand the L1, Lao language may be exchanged between us. | 4.00 | 1.03 |
| 18. If possible, the teachers should translate directly from English into Lao meaning. | 3.02 | 1.06 |
| 19. I think there should be Lao teachers to assist our understanding the lesson | 3.72 | 0.91 |
| 20. There should be some Vietnamese students in the classrooms if I need them to explain the meaning for me. | 2.98 | 0.91 |
| Overall weighted mean | 3.59 | |

Table 1.9. The Students' preferences and beliefs about code switching

CONCLUSION

In the introduction, three questions are set out to look into. They focus the researchers on what the researchers have to find out the final choice on whether code switching is beneficial to Lao students studying English at universities in Vietnam.

Concerning the attitude of the teachers applying code switching in teaching English to Lao students, they all show their agreement on the notion that code switching is an integral curriculum and if it is separated from teaching process, the outcome of their teaching is not

really successful. The previous part has been investigated in details about the benefits of code switching and finally come to the conclusion that all teachers acknowledged how important code switching is in their teaching careers to Lao students, who have a low proficiency of English and Vietnamese. Besides, many other studies have been conducted in Vietnam as mentioned in the literature review also acknowledged that the teachers would encounter many difficulties if they are now allowed to implement code switching in teaching English.

As far as Lao students concerned, even though they can speak at least two other languages, namely Vietnamese and English, they seem to acquire English through the following process; English → Vietnamese → Lao. They need to use this process because most of the teachers in Vietnam cannot help them understand the meaning of English in their mother tongue. That is why this process is useful for them.

According to Cook (2001), code switching is an important tool for both teachers and students when teaching and learning a second language. This is highlighted in the educational situations of Vietnam now, the concept of using English as a medium of instructions will not work in Vietnam, especially with Lao students because of Lao students' low levels of English competence, cultures, lifestyles,...

This study contributes a perspective view on code switching between students coming from one country to another one to study English, where the country is also treated English as a foreign language. To the future studies on the same settings, this study may be considered as a springboard for further discussion and findings.

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