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COMPARISON OF CODE-MIXING BETWEEN ENGLISH AND MANDARIN SPEAKING YOUNG CHINESE ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

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By

NG MAN LING

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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COMPARISON OF CODE-MIXING BETWEEN ENGLISH AND MANDARIN SPEAKING YOUNG CHINESE ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

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July 2018

Chair **: Associate Professor Ang Lay Hoon, PhD**
Faculty **: Modern Languages and Communication**

Code-mixing is a sociolinguistic phenomenon in Malaysia where people integrate words of other languages into their dominant language. Chinese Malaysians can be generally divided into two sub-groups: English and Mandarin speaking Chinese. Previous studies mostly have focused on code-mixing between different ethnic groups and generations, as well as in second language situations. However, there is a lack of information on code-mixing among Chinese Malaysians with different language dominance.

This study aimed to compare the occurrence of code-mixing in informal conversations among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia. These were the objectives in this case study. First, to identify the patterns of code-mixing occurring in informal conversations among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia. Second, to analyze the syntactic elements in mixed phrases found in their conversations. Third, to investigate the reasons for code-mixing in informal conversations among them.

To obtain more accurate results, four English and four Mandarin speakers were selected as the sample population for this study. To identify the language dominance of the participants, a questionnaire was given to each of them to be categorized into two groups of English speaking and two groups of Mandarin speaking participants. Their conversations were audio recorded and transcribed to answer the first and second research questions. Interviews were also conducted to identify the reasons for code-mixing to answer research question 3.

Muysken's (2000) code-mixing typology consisting of insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization was used as the theoretical framework to identify the

patterns of code-mixing in the conversations. Furthermore, the framework of Callahan's (2004) tabulation of code-mixed syntactic categories was used to categorize the syntactic elements consisting of single lexical items, phrases, and clauses. Lastly, the framework outlined by Bhatia and Ritchie (2004), Grosjean (1982), and Hoffman (1991) was employed to analyze the reasons for code-mixing in the conversations.

The results showed that insertional code-mixing was the most frequently used in the English and Mandarin conversations. Congruent lexicalization code-mixing was only found in the English conversations. Noun phrases were the most frequently used in the English conversations, followed by adjective phrases and verb phrases. However, the syntactic elements most frequently mixed in the Mandarin conversations were single nouns, followed by noun phrases and single verbs. There were eight reasons discovered for code-mixing in the English informal conversations: lack of equivalent and appropriate translation, participants' roles and relationships, talking about a particular topic, quoting someone else, being emphasize about something, expressing emotions, using repetition for clarification, and expressing group identity. Only six reasons were found for code-mixing in the Mandarin informal conversations: lack of equivalent and appropriate translation, participants' roles and relationships, talking about a particular topic, using repetition for clarification, habitual expressions, and expressing group identity. The results showed that although there were differences between English and Mandarin code-mixing in the informal conversations, there were also similarities. The findings in this study revealed that the English and Mandarin young Chinese adults code-mixed to a different extent.

Keywords: code-mixing, Chinese Malaysian, informal conversation, patterns of code-mixing, syntactic elements, reasons for code-mixing

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

PERBANDINGAN PERCAMPURAN KOD DI ANTARA PENUTUR DEWASA CINA MUDA BERBAHASA INGGERIS DENGAN PERBAHASA MANDARIN DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

NG MAN LING

Julai 2018

Pengerusi   **: Profesor Madya Ang Lay Hoon, PhD**
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Percampuran kod merupakan fenomena sosiolinguistik di Malaysia, iaitu seseorang mengintegrasikan kata-kata daripada bahasa lain ke dalam bahasa dominannya. Bangsa Cina di Malaysia secara amnya boleh dibahagikan kepada dua subkumpulan: berbahasa Inggeris and berbahasa Mandarin. Kebanyakan kajian sebelum ini memberikan tumpuan kepada percampuran kod antara pelbagai kumpulan etnik dan generasi, serta dalam situasi bahasa kedua. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat kekurangan maklumat mengenai percampuran kod dalam kalangan bangsa Cina di Malaysia yang berlainan bahasa.

Objektif kajian ini adalah, pertama, untuk mengenal pasti corak percampuran kod yang berlaku dalam perbualan tidak rasmi dalam kalangan orang dewasa Cina muda berbahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin di Malaysia. Kedua, untuk menganalisis unsur sintaksis dalam frasa percampuran yang didapati dalam perbualan orang dewasa muda Cina muda berbahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin. Ketiga, kajian ini juga berfungsi untuk meneliti faktor percampuran kod dalam perbualan tidak rasmi dalam kalangan orang dewasa Cina muda berbahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin.

Bagi mendapatkan hasil yang lebih tepat, dua kumpulan perbualan berbahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin dipilih sebagai sampel untuk kajian ini. Untuk mengenal pasti penguasaan bahasa penutur, satu soal selidik diberikan kepada responden, untuk mengkategorikan responden kepada dua kumpulan, iaitu dua kumpulan responden berbahasa Inggeris dan dua kumpulan responden berbahasa Mandarin. Perbualan mereka telah direkod secara audio dan ditranskripsikan untuk menjawab soalan penyelidikan 1 dan 2. Temu bual

dilakukan untuk mengenal pasti faktor percampuran kod untuk menjawab soalan penyelidikan 3.

Model tipologi percampuran kod Muysken (2000) yang terdiri daripada penyisipan, penggantian dan leksikalisasi kongruen telah digunakan sebagai kerangka teoretikal bagi mengenal pasti corak percampuran kod dalam perbualan. Kerangka Callahan's (2004) mengenai penjadualan kategori sintaktik percampuran kod digunakan untuk mengkategorikan unsur sintaksis yang terdiri daripada item leksikal tunggal, frasa and klausa. Akhir sekali, kerangka yang digariskan oleh Bhatie dan Ritchie (2004), Grosjean (1982), dan Hoffman (1991) digunakan untuk menganalisis faktor percampuran kod dalam perbualan penutur bahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin.

Hasil menunjukkan bahawa percampuran kod penyisipan merupakan paling kerap digunakan dalam perbualan penutur bahasa Inggeris and Mandarin. Leksikalisasi kongruen hanya dijumpai dalam perbualan penutur bahasa Inggeris. Frasa nama paling sering dicampurkan ke dalam perbualan penutur bahasa Inggeris, diikuti dengan frasa adjektif dan frasa kerja. Bagaimanapun, unsur sintaktik paling sering dicampurkan ke dalam perbualan penutur bahasa Mandarin ialah kata nama, diikuti oleh frasa nama dan kata kerja. Lapan faktor dikenal pasti untuk mencampurkan kod dalam perbualan tidak rasmi penutur bahasa Inggeris, iaitu: kekurangan terjemahan setara dan sesuai, peranan dan hubungan penutur, perbualan tentang topik tertentu, kutipan percakapan orang lain, penegasan tentang sesuatu, penglahiran emosi, penggunaan pengulangan bagi penjelasan, dan pernyataan identiti kumpulan. Enam faktor yang dikenal pasti dalam perbualan tidak rasmi penutur bahasa Mandarin ialah kekurangan terjemahan setara dan sesuai, peranan dan perhubungan penutur, perbualan tentang topik tertentu, penggunaan pengulangan untuk penjelasan, penggunaan ungkapan biasa, dan pernyataan identiti kumpulan. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa walaupun terdapat perbezaan antara penutur bahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin mencampurkan kod ke dalam perbualan, namun, terdapat juga persamaan. Penemuan kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa penutur bahasa Inggeris dan Mandarin dewasa muda Cina mencampurkan kod dalam perbualan tidak rasmi mereka pada tahap yang berbeza.

Kata kunci: percampuran kod, Cina Malaysia, perbualan tidak rasmi, corak percampuran kod, unsur sintaktik, faktor percampuran kod

iv

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v

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 13 July 2018 to conduct the final examination of Ng Man Ling on her thesis entitled "Comparison of Code-Mixing between English and Mandarin Speaking Young Chinese Adults in Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

xi

LIST OF TABLES

xiii

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations

F.E.C.T.	First English conversation turn
S.E.C.T.	Second English conversation turn
F.M.C.T.	First Mandarin conversation turn
S.M.C.T.	Second Mandarin conversation turn
F.R.C.T. no.1	First English conversation turn number 1

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background of the study, code-mixing in multilingualism, problem statement, objectives and research questions. The significance of the study is also explained here. This chapter further provides the definition of the terms used in this study.

1.1   Background of the Study

Code-mixing in multilingualism happens when the lexical items and grammatical features from two or more languages appear in one sentence (Muysken, 2000). According to Bokamba (1989), code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units, for example, affixes, words, phrases, and clauses. In general, the phenomenon of people mixing elements from two or more languages is called code-mixing (as cited in Scotton, 2006).

In this era of globalization, people can interact, share their thoughts, and experience with one another in more than one language. Code-mixing has become a phenomenon of everyday communication. In a western country like Finland, Finish is the first language and English is used as a communicative resource for various purposes (Pahta, 2004). Another example is in the island of Tanna; Kwamera is the first language and Bislama is used as a communicative language (Lindstrom, 2007). Mixed languages are found in other western countries, for example, Spanish-English in the United States, German-Italian and French-Italian in Switzerland and Hebrew-English in Israel (Auer, 1998). In Asian countries, for example, in Hong Kong, the people speak Cantonese, English, and Mandarin (Alam Suraiya, 2006). In Taiwan, they speak Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, English, and Japanese (Liao & Yu, 2013). The same goes for Malaysia. As a multi-ethnic country, Malaysians are able to speak Malay, English, Mandarin, or other languages to communicate with one another. In this multilingual country, the people mix two or more languages in their daily conversations. Therefore, the phenomenon of code-mixing has been present in bilingual and multilingual countries where languages, dialects, and different varieties of the same language are used (Hoffman, 1991).

Besides the geographic issue, code-mixing also occurs in professional settings, especially for radio and television broadcasters. For example, the broadcasters in Indonesian radio stations code-mix Indonesian words, phrases, and sentences with English, whereas the broadcasters in Hong Kong radio stations code-mix Cantonese words, phrases, and sentences with English (Farikhah Nailil, 2005; Lam, 2013). Broadcasters normally mix the languages when

having interactions with the listeners and reading aloud short message services (sms) from them (Farikhah Nailil, 2005). Code-mixing is actually the most creative aspects of bilingual and multilingual speech (Hoffman, 1991). A study in Thailand points out that English phrases and sentences are found in the lyrics of Thai pop songs (Likhitphongsathorn & Pattama, 2013). Code-mixing used in social media for different purpose.

The code-mixing phenomenon does not occur only in verbal communication, but also in written form. It has been happening since the 20th century. Weinreich (1953) is of the view that there is an emergence of a new form of language that uses the Roman script to suit the communicate purpose. It is interesting to know that the interaction of two languages most of the time triggers a linguistic mixing of the contents. This mixing can give rise to a new language. Code-mixing can take place in text messages (Deumert & Masinyana, 2008), as in the Pakistani society where English is mixed with Urdu to make messages easier to comprehend (Ahmed Khalid, Ihsan Ali, & Hua, 2015).

There are many reasons people code-mix in their conversations. For example in Tanna, their code-mix is influenced by siblings and peers. Code-mix can also influenced by the western culture in multiple aspects as in Hong Kong. Generally, young people in different countries can easily have access to English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and other languages through television, radio, and the Internet. They can easily learn the languages through such media. In addition, they have various social and cultural connections which provide them with resources available globally compared to the older generation (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2003). These resources can then be exploited and contextualized at the local level in their interaction. Therefore, the languages that they have in their linguistic repertoire are drawn on different global, subcultural, and identity-related meanings (Leppänen, 2007; Preisler, 1999). They then display their linguistic ability in spoken or written form using a mixing of different languages. However, people usually use the mixed languages during informal conversation and written form (Sri Utari Subyakto-Nababan, 1992, as cited in Daulay & Somarsih, 2012).

In Malaysia, the various racial and language connections have led Malaysians to employ different languages to communicate. Malaysians mix words, phrases, and sentences from other languages in their conversations (Alam Suraiya, 2006). A comparison of code-mixing among Malaysians can reveal the cultural aspect in Malaysia. Informal conversation is the context to be investigated and the young generation is the target for research in this study.

Other reasons are known for people to resort to mixing languages. Code-mixing is considered as an easy and effective way to convey ideas. However, some words are untranslatable or cannot give the proper sense when translated (Malik, 2009). Regarding the purpose behind code-mixing, there may be various reasons. A reason can be the lack of complete access to the user's

2

non-native language. In this study, the reasons for code-mixing were investigated.

Among the bilingual and multilingual countries, Malaysia with its social environment has a situation where various languages are used in daily communication (Asmah Haji Omar, 1982, as cited in Lim, 2008). For Malaysians, code-mixing happens in the communication among the inter or intra ethnic groups. They seldom speak in only one language. It is very common for Malaysians of the same linguistic background to mix other languages in their conversations. They mix with English, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, or other vernacular languages (Maya Khemlani, 1999a; Lim, 2008). In general, English is frequently used among English speaking young Chinese adults whereas Mandarin is frequently used among Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults. The choice of the language varies for young Chinese adults to use in their daily life as it depends on the sociolinguistics situations (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). Code-mixing can be considered as a pattern of speaking when it is in contrast with other ways of speaking in a system which is meaningful to the speakers. The contrast becomes meaningful when it helps the speakers to identify their group identity, distinct from other language group speakers who code-mix differently or who do not code-mix at all (Chen, 2005). However, the patterns of code-mixing are unique in their own ways due to language background and situational attestation (Muthusamy, 2010). In conclusion, the various languages spoken by people from different education backgrounds have influenced the patterns of interaction and language use. This study focused on the comparison of code-mixing between English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults who had the different dominant languages, and are from different education backgrounds where they were exposed to their dominant languages and other languages.

1.2 Multilingualism

Developments in the modern society have increased the rates of integration and globalization. It is difficult to find a society that is genuinely monolingual (Grosjean, 2001). According to Canagarajah and Wurr (2011), people negotiate using diverse languages in their public life. They may not meet others who speak the same language most of the time. They have to negotiate in different languages as a fact of life. Bilingualism and multilingualism are said to occur when people are able to speak in two or more languages.

According to Fabbro (1999) and McArthur (1998), the term "bilingual" refers to the speakers who speak two languages and "bilingualism" means the ability to speak two languages. The term "multilingual" refers to the speakers who speak three or more languages and "multilingualism" means the ability to speak three or more languages. "Bilingual" and "multilingual" both refer to the contact and interaction of different languages in the society (Shay, 2015).

According to Grosjean (2001), bilingualisms and multilingualism are a phenomenon that has happened since a very early stage of human history. The history of languages is full of examples of language contact leading to some form of multilingualism. The expansions of educational provision to more levels of the society and the process of migration have prompted a great interest in the issue of code-mixing (Milroy & Muysken, 1995, as cited in Shay, 2015).

Code-mixing is a widespread phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual speech. According to Muysken (1995), this phenomenon is a normal form of bilingual and multilingual interaction. Code-mixing has been in the center of many heated debates in the field of multilingual communication, leading to theoretical and practical investigations. The different aspects of code-mixing phenomenon whether linguistic (Muysken, 2000; Poplack, 1980; Scotton, 1993), sociolinguistic (Gumperz, 1976; Zentella, 1997; Zhu & Li, 2005), and psycholinguistic (Becker, 1999; Grosjean, 1982; Lipski, 1978) have been explored by many scholars.

From the linguistic aspect, the mixing of elements from two or more languages in one utterance is the basis of developing linguistic representation of multilingual structures (Paradis, Nicoladis, & Genesee, 2000). Language mixing can take place at any level of linguistic structure. The structural condition is in the center of conversations and written study of code-mixing. According to Ayeomoni (2006), the pattern of code-mixing is a popular feature in bilingual and multilingual studies. The pattern of code-mixing has also been investigated by grammatical linguistics.

From the sociolinguistic aspect, code-mixing has become an interesting phenomenon to study in terms of language usage in the society (Sumarsih, Masitowarni Siregar, Syamsul Bahri, & Dedi Sanjay, 2014). Code-mixing is part of the development process involving bilingual and multilingual speakers in daily conversations. According to Cantone (2007), the sociolinguistic aspect can account for code-mixing and factors like language choice and language proficiency.

From the psycholinguistic aspect, bilingualism and multilingualism are widespread. Both bilingualism and multilingualism are complex because they can occur simultaneously or successively, formally or naturally. They can happen in childhood or adulthood. However, multilingualism can characterize individuals or whole societies. It implicates the factors and processes associated with second language acquisition (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998).

1.3   Problem Statement

Among the Asian countries, Malaysia is one of the multilingual, multiracial, and multicultural countries. The population of Malaysia consists of three main ethnic

groups of Malay, Chinese, and Indian, and other ethnic groups like Iban, Kadazan, Orang Asli (Hirschman, 1986). There are at least 139 languages spoken in Malaysia (Maya Khemlani & McLellan, 2011). In each ethnic group, a variety of languages are used and maintained. The Malay community speaks Malay, Aslian languages, Kelantan-Pattani Malay, Perak Malay, and other languages (Collins, 1989). The Chinese community speaks several mutually unintelligible languages that linguists consider as different dialects: Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, Kwongsai, Hokchiu, Henghua, and other languages. Similarly, the Indians speak at least nine different languages including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, and Sinhalese (Srivastava & Bhat, 2013). Malaysians find the need to learn and speak their languages for cultural reasons and to preserve their identity.

Malay and English have acquired a different status and value in Malaysia. Malay is a dominant language which is the national language whereas English is the second language in Malaysia and is considered as one of the most widely used languages in the region (Melor Md Yunus, Ainil Sulaiman, Mohd Hasrul Kamarulzaman, & Norial Mohd Ishak, 2013). English is viewed as an asset to achieve development and acquire knowledge (Thirusanku & Melor Md Yunus, 2014). In Malaysia, Malay and English are taught in schools (Ramiza Darmi & Albion, 2013; Darus Saadiyah, 2010). Hence, education in Malaysia has always been bilingual and multilingual (Darus Saadiyah, 2010). Malays, Chinese, and Indians tend to use a mixed language with the ethnic language being dominant (Maya Khemlani, Kuang, McLellan, & Fatimah Hashim, 2009). The various languages spoken by people from different education backgrounds have influenced the patterns of interaction and languages use. Among the different ethnic groups in Malaysia, Chinese Malaysians are the most complex ethnic group with different identities. They can be divided into different Chinese dialect groups.

However, one of the major issues in communication by Chinese Malaysians is that they can be divided into two language groups: English speaking and Mandarin speaking (Lee, Ting, & Lo, 2017). Most of the Chinese Malaysians are not only dominant in one language such as Mandarin or English, but they are also able to speak a second language.

The majority of Chinese Malaysians has Mandarin-medium education whereas the minority of them has Malay-medium education (Lee et al., 2017). Although English is taught as a second language in Malaysian schools (Thirusanku & Melor Md Yunus, 2014), it is the first language of some Chinese students who speak English at home. They are proficient in English and have acquired it as a first language at home. English is their dominant language when they interact with friends and family member. For the Chinese Malaysians proficient in Mandarin, they have acquired Mandarin as a first language at home.

The unique language phenomenon in Malaysia makes the country one that is worthy of research in the field of language. The cultural mix in Malaysia has

produced complexities in language use and raises the question of how Malaysians use languages to communicate. For this study, Chinese Malaysians are considered as one ethnic group in Malaysia although they belong to different dialect groups. Some of them can speak more than one or two Chinese dialects, but others cannot speak Mandarin or any dialect. However, due to the complexity of the language situation in Malaysia, a sizable number of Chinese Malaysians are able to speak at least three or more languages (Asmah Haji Omar, 1982). This shows that Chinese Malaysians are multilingual.

In recent years, studies have been done to explain the code-mixing phenomenon among the ethnic groups in Malaysia. Muthusamy (2010) investigated the phenomenon of code-switching between Malay, Chinese, and Indian secondary school students. The results showed that the Malay students mixed English in their Malay conversations. The Chinese students mixed English in their Mandarin conversations and the same was found for Indian students who mixed English in their Tamil conversations. For these three ethnic groups, their first languages became the domain languages, with English as the embedded language. The speaker's family background influenced his or her choice of the spoken languages. The mixed language phenomenon happened because of the need for family members to create an identity and rapport between their first language and English.

Another researcher, Yusof Najeemah Mohd (2006) discussed the patterns of social interaction among students of different ethnic groups in secondary schools in Malaysia. The results showed that the students preferred to mix languages in their own ethnic group conversations. The three ethnic groups could communicate well in their conversations of mixed languages.

Other researchers examined language mixing in the family. Maya Khemlani (2001) revealed the preferred languages within Sindhi families in Malaysia. The first generation maintained Sindhi in peer interaction. The second and third generations moved away from their ethnic languages by speaking English with their peers. They tended to code-switch between English and Malay. English was dominant in the life of Sindhi Malaysians because of the association of English with upward economic and social mobility. Another scholar, Ang (2007), investigated language mixing by three generations in 285 selected Chinese families. The results showed that the younger generation mixed English more frequently in their conversations when they spoke in Malay and Mandarin. The older generation mixed with Chinese dialects when they spoke in Malay and Mandarin. The study revealed that the younger generation was more frequently code-mixed compared to the older generation. The younger generation had complete training in Malay, English, and Mandarin during their school time. The languages used in the family, medium of instruction, and social life led the young Chinese adults in Malaysia to be exposed to different languages. As the language used in the family and medium of instruction in school among English speaking and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults were different, the

6

phenomenon of code-mixing between two different language groups needed to be identified in this study.

However, this study found that there was a lack of information about the patterns of code-mixing and syntactic elements of mixed languages in English and Mandarin informal conversations among Chinese Malaysians. Therefore, this study addressed the issues of mixed languages and patterns of code-mixing of Chinese Malaysians with special focus on English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adult speakers in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study aims to compare the occurrence of mixing languages in informal conversations. Observations were made whether Chinese Malaysians freely mixed the languages when communicating in informal conversations. The underlying hypothesis is that Chinese Malaysian speakers use English and Mandarin in their informal conversations, mixing the languages to a certain extent. The specific objectives of the study are:
i.   To identify the patterns of code-mixing in informal conversations between English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia.
ii.   To analyze the syntactic elements of the mixed phrases found in informal conversations of English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults.
iii.   To investigate the reasons for code-mixing in informal conversations among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults.

1.5 Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to provide answers to the following research questions:
i.   How do English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia code-mix in informal conversations based on patterns of code-mixing?
ii.   Which syntactic elements of mixed phrases exist in informal conversations of English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults?
iii.   What are the reasons for code-mixing in informal conversations among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults?

The first and second research questions focus on the grammatical aspect which is the pattern of code-mixing and syntactic elements of mixed words and phrases in informal conversations. The third research question focuses on the sociolinguistic aspect what reflects the reasons for code-mixing in informal conversation among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia.

The first research question seeks to identify the patterns of code-mixing in informal conversations among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults. This research question is based on Muysken's (2000) code-mixing typology which consists of insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization to identify the patterns of code-mixing among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia. The similarities and differences of code-mixing between them were analyzed.

The second research question analyzed the syntactic elements in the mixed sentences of English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in informal conversations. This research question is based on Callahan's (2004) tabulation of code-mixed syntactic category to analyze the syntactic elements of the mixed languages. Callahan's tabulation of code-mixed syntactic category consists of single lexical items, phrases, and clauses. The answers to this research question can enlarge the database of the syntactic elements of mixed phrases which are used in the informal conversations of Chinese Malaysians. The results also can reveal the way the mixed languages normally take place in the informal conversations. Subsequently, the syntactic elements of the mixed languages spoken by English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults were compared.

The third research question identified and compared the reasons for code-mixing in informal conversation among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults. This research question investigated the reasons for code-mixing as outlined by Bhatia and Ritchie (2004), Grosjean (1982), and Hoffman (1991) for code-mixing. The reasons can shed light on Chinese people and culture in Malaysia.

1.6   Significance of Study

Malaysia has a mixed community formed by people of different cultures, suitable for studying issues on social, cultural, and linguistic interaction. According to Nordby (2008), the problem of communication and poor dialogue arise because people from different social and cultural backgrounds fail to understand one another properly. Studies on code-mixing not only can enhance the understanding of the nature, processes, and constraints of language (Azuma, 1998; Boeschoten, 1998; Scotton, 1993a), but also connections among language used, individual values, communicative strategies, and functions within particular socio-cultural contexts (Auer, 1998; Lüdi, 2003; Scotton, 1993b). Chinese language contexts can then be understood by studying the patterns of code-mixing and mixed languages that usually take place in the conversations of English and Mandarin speakers of young Chinese adults in Malaysia. The similarities and differences of the syntactic elements in the mixed languages can contribute knowledge on Chinese Malaysians culture.

Code-mixing is no longer considered as a compensation of linguistic deficiency among bilingual and multilingual speakers (Adendorff, 1996), but as a natural phenomenon. One cannot understand another culture without having direct access to its language, especially for Chinese Malaysians who are born in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multilingual country (Boas, 1940). The code-mixing patterns and mixed languages of Chinese Malaysians are different compared to the speakers in China and Taiwan, due to the different social, family, and education background. The knowledge of languages is different between Chinese in Malaysia, and Chinese in China and Taiwan, as English is not a native language in China and Taiwan (Gao & Cohen, 2005). In China, Mandarin is the national language but other Chinese dialects are used in different states in China to varying degrees of mutual intelligibility (Chen, 2006). In Taiwan, Mandarin is the national language but Taiwanese dialect (Hokkien) is also commonly used (Hsieh, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the code-mixing phenomenon among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese Malaysian adults to reveal another scenario. In addition, as the language used in communication is linked to culture in multiple and complex ways (Kramsch, 1998), the mixed languages in informal conversations used by English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults can represent the cultures in Malaysia, to be appreciated by all Malaysians.

Some scholars (Claros & Isharyanti, 2009; Kim, 2006) suggest that code-mixing is seen as an innovation and reflects human creativity when expressing feelings and thoughts. Code-mixing is not done consciously as people are not always aware of the outcomes of the process. It is an important topic for research as it is useful to understand the patterns of code-mixing in Chinese Malaysian communication because code-mixing is common among Chinese Malaysians. Code-mixing has become a unity feature of a Malaysian language. By finding out the implications of code-mixing for communication among Chinese Malaysians, this study can collect and analyze crucial data revealing insights into the use of code-mixing. The findings of this study can be useful to enlarge the database of knowledge about code-mixing in Chinese Malaysian conversations. Furthermore, the result of this study can be used as reference and comparison with other studies for further in code-mixing analysis.

As the research on the issue of code-mixing is a global phenomenon, many studies have been conducted around the world. Examples of recent studies done on code-mixing are on entertainment (Nil Zurina Mohamed & Shamala Paramasivam, 2012), Facebook chatting (Halim Huzaina Abdul, 2015; Latisha Asmaak Shafie & Surina Nayan, 2013; Nurul Iman, Azur Farahan Anuar, Khairunnisa Mohad Khazin, & Tengku Mohd Farid, 2015), newspaper (Lau et al., 2011), and second language teaching in Malaysia (Ariffin Kamisha & Misyana Susanti Husin, 2011; Noli Maishara Nordin et al., 2013; Selamat, 2014). However, scarcely any study has been conducted on code-mixing in Chinese Malaysian conversations, especially among Chinese speakers in Malaysian, is scarce to the best of the writer's knowledge. This study will fill the gap of the code-mixing phenomenon that happens in informal conversations among English and Mandarin speaking young Chinese adults in Malaysia.

9

1.7   Definition of Key Terms

There are a few terms used in this study that need to be defined further.
i   Young Chinese adults
Chinese Malaysians in this study refer to those who are born in Malaysia and have Malaysia nationality. They are from different dialect groups, for example, Hokkien, Hakka, Teochew, Hainanese, and Hokchiu. Chinese Malaysians have a complex language background, with Mandarin and their own Chinese dialects, for example, Hokkien, Hakka, Teochew, and Hokchiu. Some of them are able to speak their own Chinese dialect and other Chinese dialects. Some of them cannot speak their own Chinese dialect but can speak other Chinese dialects. However, some of them cannot even speak Mandarin or any dialect.

Chinese Malaysians in this study refer to those who undergo their primary and secondary education in Chinese medium schools or Malay medium schools (Ting, 2013). They learn Malay and English in primary and secondary schools. Some Chinese Malaysians learn Mandarin in primary schools and continue the study of Mandarin as a subject in secondary schools. However, some of them from Chinese primary schools discontinue the study of Mandarin in secondary schools. Chinese Malaysians in this study do not include the Chinese from China or other countries.

A young adult is defined as being between the ages of 18 and 24 (Jekielek & Brown, 2005), or between the ages of 18 and 35 (Benetsky & Burd, 2015; Wallman, 2014). Young adults include people who seek full time employment, working part time, married or not married yet or are parents (Benetsky & Burd, 2015). Young Chinese adults in this study refer to Chinese Malaysian between the ages of 18 and 35.

ii.   Informal conversation
An informal conversation refers to a casual and unofficial form of speaking. The information typically shared in a personal conversation includes chit-chatting with friends. The informal conversation is unscheduled, with the participants out of their usual roles, has a rich content, and uses informal language and speech register (Kraut, Fish, Root, & Chalfonte, 2002). According to Subramanian (2006), an informal conversation happens due to friendship, close relationship and trust, with reliable perceptions among the speakers. Informal conversations in this study refer to the conversations among friends or peers in casual setting.

iii.   Code-mixing
Code-mixing refers to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages occur in one sentence (Muysken, 2000). Code-mixing in this study refers to expressions in which a mixture of the grammar of one language and another language is used without altering the grammar of the first language used.

10

iv. Alternation

This pattern of code-mixing describes occurrences when both languages remain relatively separate. For between clauses, alternation is used when the speaker mixes his or her language with a phrase in another language (Yuliana Nana, Luziana, & Sarwendah, 2015). Alternation means the alternation between structures from different languages (Muysken, 2000). Alternation in this study refers to the speaker mixed language with a clause or sentence into the dominant language.

v. Insertion

Insertion means an insertion of a constituent from the second language into the first language. Insertional code-mixing is the insertion of material, for example, a lexical item or the entire constituents from one language into a structure of another language (Muysken, 2000). Another example is the insertion of a lexical or phrase was category into a given structure. Insertion in this study refers to the speaker mixed a word or phrase into the dominant language.

vi. Congruent lexicalization

Congruent lexicalization refers to the situation where two languages share grammatical structures which can be filled lexically with elements from either of the languages. This pattern of code-mixing is to use materials from different lexical inventories in a shared grammatical structure (Muysken, 2000). In this study, congruent lexicalization refers to the insertion and alternation occurs in the same conversation turn.

vii. Syntactic elements

Syntactic elements are the words and phrases in a language which share a significant number of common characteristics. According to Muysken (2000), code-mixing occurs when lexical items and grammatical features of two languages that exist in the same sentence. The syntactic elements in this study refer to the grammatical features of the mixed items.

viii. Reasons for code-mixing

Code-mixing can be due to various reasons. Multilinguals usually explain the reasons for code-mixing on the basis that they do not know the terms in a particular language. Code-mixing occurs most often for items which people know and use in both languages (Romaine, 1986). Grosjean (1982) states that code-mixing is a communicative resource that builds on the speakers' awareness of two contrasting languages. A combination of studies by Bhatia and Ritchie (2004), Grosjean (1982), and Hoffman (1991) concerning the reasons for code-mixing, this study only limited to nine reasons: lack of equivalent or appropriate translation, participants' roles and relationships, talking about a particular topic, quoting someone else, being emphasize about something, expressing emotions, repetition used for clarification, habitual expressions, and expressing group identity.

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

Code-mixing happens in the communication among Chinese Malaysians when the social environment in Malaysia has led them to use various languages in their daily communication (Asmah Haji Omar, 1982, as cited in Lim, 2008). The language used among Chinese Malaysian has demonstrated a colorful language phenomenon in Malaysia. This has become an interesting area in this study and needs further attention. This chapter contained the overall focus of this study: background of the study, multilingualism, and problem statement. It further presented the research objectives and research questions which were outlined. It also examined the significance of conducting this study. Lastly, the definitions of the key terms used in this study were given.

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104

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