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Abstract
Code-switching has been used by the language learners since primary school to communicate among themselves and comprehend their first and second language grammatical rules. It demonstrated that code-switching is a genuine occurrence that could be difficult to hinder. Hence, this study investigates the learners' reactions towards their teachers' code-switching practice in ESL classrooms and the functions of their code-switching. Data were collected from fifty-two ESL learners in a suburban school in Serian district. The findings showed that learners have mixed reactions towards teachers' code-switching. Although they have inconclusive opinion on the benefits of code-switching, they still prefer the teachers to use code-switching in the classroom. Code-switching among learners is mostly use to communicate with classmates who speak similar first language. The results are hoped to assist teachers in practicing code-switching purposefully and judiciously while making policy makers see code-switching in a positive light.
Keywords: Code-switching, ESL Classrooms, Second Language Learning, ESL Learners

Introduction
Malaysia is a multicultural and multilingual country where learners often have a varied experience to more than one language. Hence, when they enter school, each of them has a different exposure time to English. There are learners who speak English as their first language while some others have been exposed to a high frequency of English. These learners may be doing well in their English lessons at school. Meanwhile, there is another group of learners who viewed English as foreign language due to their location, socio-economic status, or poor experience in school. English is learned not as a second language but might be a third or fourth language which can become an obstacle to them to achieve good proficiency in English language. Iber (2016) noted that learners who are efficacious in English obtained extra practice from their homes or from the neighbourhood they live in.

Many language learners are usually monolingual before they enter a formal education because they are only subjected to their own mother tongue or the first language. Ayeomoni (2006) reported that language learners in Yoruba speech community used code-switching and code-mixing since the elementary school to communicate among themselves and comprehend their Yoruba and English language grammatical rules. It proved that code-

switching is a genuine occurrence that may be difficult to hinder. When code-switching is being discussed, it is crucial to mention bilingualism or even multilingualism as they are interrelated. The situation where people communicate with each other using more than one language is natural and along the way, they would change from one language to another. They used these languages in numerous places for different purposes as a way to relate with the world outside. Consequently, these bilingual people adjust and select the language they need to communicate with others based on the various situations they are in.

Code-switching has been researched for decades and many definitions came about. Gumperz (1982) declared that code switching is "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different language/grammatical systems or sub-systems". Bautista (1999) considered code-switching as ""the fastest, easiest, most effective way of saying something" whereas Schendl and Wright (2011) acknowledged that code-switching is the ability to "alternate between languages in an unchanged setting, often within the same utterance". Code-switching is a natural occurrence around bilingual learners and happens spontaneously to act as a basis of accomplishment in learning a second language. Furthermore, bilinguals and multilinguals who wished to be better comprehended by the people around them are inclined towards code-switching in their interactions. Code-switching practice in a language classroom usually occurs between the learners' first language and the target language they are learning.

As code-switching has been one of the many issues related to English as Second Language (ESL) learning, people from different backgrounds are divided between its advantages and disadvantages. Some educators believed that the learners' first language interference can be beneficial while others wish it to be barred completely because it created hindrances to second language learning. Nevertheless, code-switching has become a common practice in bilingual or multilingual classrooms including Malaysia. Officers from the Ministry of Education and schools' principals or headmasters usually refuse the use of code-switching from English to Malay in the ESL classrooms because they believed that the practice would not help the learners to achieve significant proficiency in the English language. However, many researchers who investigated classroom practices found that ESL teachers and learners code-switched in class for a variety of reasons and functions (DeAlwis, 2020; Tiffany, 2014; Lee, 2010; Samihah & Parilah, 2020; Sarasvathy, 2014; Tandoc, 2016). The fact that teachers still practice code-switching as an approach to teach English means that there must be solid reasons behind it.

As a common occurrence among bilinguals and multilingual, code-switching is used to communicate and convey their intentions more clearly. Sert (2005) also reported that code-switching is important to build interpersonal relationships within a community. People from the same ethnics and cultures can create linguistic harmony using code-switching. In Malaysian ESL classrooms, code-switching is done for a number of purposes especially academic but there are instances where teachers use code-switching subconsciously. The teachers usually use code-switching to explain difficult words, concepts, and grammars so that the learners can grasp them better because they are learning in a language that they could understand. Additionally, code-switching is important to lower the learners' affective filters such as anxiety, angst and demotivation since lowering these filters can help the success in language acquisition as stated by Krashen (1982) when compared to the taxing environment learners experienced in "English Only" lesson as required by the school authority.

Code-switching in ESL classrooms are also done by repeating words and instructions using the learners' first language which could become a downfall for teachers because their

learners would always expect translation. This would reduce the learners' motivations to learn English which lead to negative effects on their proficiency level. However, there are learners who benefited from code-switching practice as it helped them understand the lesson better, filling their linguistic gaps so that they could learn successfully. These learners make full use of their L1 acquisition and prior knowledge to help them in English learning. They also code-switch among their peers because it feels more comfortable in using a language that they both know. All in all, the reliance on L1 should be controlled and monitored because it would eventually affect their performance in English for the future endeavour.

There are studies which found that code-switching could negatively affect the learners' English proficiency and their confidence to speak English because they have relied overly on their L1. Thus, research on the learners' beliefs and reactions toward code-switching is important so that the teachers are aware of the learners' perspectives on English language learning. This study aims to investigate the learners' reaction towards their teachers' code-switching practice in ESL classrooms and the functions of their code-switching. This study answers the following research question:

1) What are the learners' reactions towards teachers' use of code-switching?
2) What are the learners' perception of code-switching functions?

Literature Review

Cook (2000) argued that code-switching practice is a humanistic method for the learners to learn a second language. The learners could express their opinions and thoughts without feeling deficient nor fearful due to their lack of proficiency. Hence, it is important to see code-switching as an approach to enhance and facilitate the language learning process.

Code-switching Functions

Five reasons for code-switching in the classroom were proposed by (Flyman-Mattsson & Burenhult, 1999). When speakers switch to the language in which they are most at ease, they seek linguistic security. Teachers teach the rules and structure of the target language using the topic switch function. In affective functions, teachers use the learners' primary language to express feelings and form positive relationships with them. Next, teachers employ the listeners' first language to demonstrate unity and compassion, especially when the listeners' second language skill is minimal. Repetitive functions are the repetition of prior utterances that are frequently extended with additional information in order to clarify teachings for better understanding. These functions are also explained by (Fachriyah, 2017; Ferguson, 2003; Sert, 2005). Not only is code-switching a linguistic phenomenon, but it also denotes key power and social ties. The reputation of the listeners, their relationship with them, the situation in which the discussion takes place, and the language abilities of the listeners are all elements that influence code-switching.

Learners' Reactions from Past studies

The learners in Malaysian ESL classes generally speak the similar L1 (national language). The learners feel that it is much easier and more effective to discuss and communicate using Malay language whenever teachers prepare assignments that should be done in English such as group discussion, role play or writing. Code-switching practice becomes especially useful for shy and low proficient learners who are afraid and ashamed to use English in the classroom (Sherralyn & Evelyn 2014).

In terms of topic access, classroom management, and interpersonal interactions, it was observed that students greatly preferred code-switching by their teachers (Yao, 2011). They wanted their teachers to practice code-switching while presenting grammar lessons or introducing culture-related themes so that they could comprehend the material better. They also preferred that their teachers encourage and advise them in their own language. This will result in a more engaging learning environment in which students may more readily connect with and connect with their teachers. Tibategeza & Du Plessis (2018) also reported similar finding by showing that when the learners utilize the language that is understandable to them, they could learn more easily.

It is hoped that teachers and policymakers could respond and react accordingly once they discover the learners' opinions towards their teachers' code-switching practice. Samihah and Parilah (2020) reported positive opinions among learners towards code-switching in ESL classrooms. The learners feel that teachers' code-switching keeps students engaged and attentive while making lessons more entertaining and simpler to follow. Learners are also more confident and driven when they aren't concerned about their lack of English competence, which makes studying more natural and stress-free. They could also be able to assist their peers who are having trouble understanding particular English terms. Nonetheless, learners believe that teachers must be cautious when using code-switching in the classroom because there is a risk that the learners become heavily dependent on their first language. Learners are not only learning English but they should also learn in English (Samihah & Parilah 2020).

Meanwhile, contradicting reactions and mixed responses from the learners are reported in their studies by Azlan and Narasuman (2013); Nordin et al (2013) on the purposes of code-switching as a communicative mechanism. Code-switching has adverse effects on the learners' ability to communicate in the target language, since their shortage of language knowledge causes them to regularly translate from Malay to English. As a direct result of code-switching, they also have problems in their sentence construction. They encouraged the use of English only in their ESL classroom for the reason that it gives them more opportunities to practice and correctly use the language. As a result, they would like their teachers to be harder with their learners so that they would use English all the time. Learners who feel that code-switching is a successful classroom approach, on the other hand, consider that if teachers are excessively strict, low proficiency students may suffer the loss of their self-confidence to speak during the lesson. The learners said that their teachers' code-switching assisted them in developing close relationships with them and connecting with them more easily, as well as aiding them in better understanding the lesson. Although learners perceive that the teachers' code-switching practice helps with their learning and they can code-switch when they feel the need to do so, they also admit that the teachers must minimize the use of code-switching to certain functions. Code-switching should not be practice widely and the use of the target language must be increased especially when learners show improvement in their language proficiency. Based on these opposing viewpoints, it is reasonable to propose that sufficient practice and input in the target language is required by the ESL learners before they become fluent in the language. Code-switching also acts as a scaffolding in the second language learning. Without a doubt, code-switching exercise is more appropriate for low-level learners, but the usage of the first language should not exceed the target language.

In another study by Simasiku et al (2015), it was reported that learners tend to be silent or return to rote learning when they are forced to use English only in the classroom despite their lack of proficiency. They could not understand the lesson, and this is portrayed in their

examination results. Hence, code-switching can be used transitionally until the learners achieve moderate comprehension of the language. Code-switching increased learners' English language acquisition, improved how they answered questions, and improved teaching and learning of the English language. Teachers should select when to practice code-switching in order to facilitate comprehension and meaningful participation among learners, which leads to improved academic accomplishment.

Learners support teachers' code-switching during English lessons and they do not think that it affects their language learning process negatively (Abbas & Sajjad, 2016). Code-switching practice also helps the learner to learn grammar and reiterate any instructions that the learners failed to comprehend earlier. Additionally, teachers are obliged to use the learners' L1 because it benefits low proficiency learners who have hard time to understand lesson and instruction in English. Nevertheless, teachers could come up with better solution and find strategy to encourage the learners to use more English. Hence, when the learners improved their proficiency, the teachers could decrease or completely stop their code-switching. Rather than supressing the learners to English-only lessons, learners should be encouraged to code-switch so that they could expressed themselves better. This could increase their participation in the ESL classrooms, and they would not feel embarrassed when they code-switch (Mareva, 2016).

Aoyama (2020) posited that the use of code-switching among learners does not necessarily means linguistic resources insufficiency. Some learners, especially those who possess high proficiency in English, use code-switching to clarify words and phrases that might be difficult for their peers. This proves that the learners are aware of their listeners and able to consider their peers' linguistic resources. Other than that, the learners use code-switching among themselves to lower their affective filters, as mentioned by Krashen (1982) thus increasing their confident and motivation to learn and communicate in English language.

Methodology
The data for this study is collected through a survey questionnaire. A total of fifty-two Year 5 learners currently studying in a suburban school in Serian district were chosen as the participants. This school which can be considered a suburban area is situated not far from Serian town, but many of the learners come from small villages around the area whose language proficiency may be comparable to those learners in rural area. The learners studying here have different exposure time to and experience with English language because they come from diverse races and social backgrounds. These learners have mixed proficiency level, and their proficiency levels are determined through classroom-based assessment done by their teachers. The learners refer to their teacher about their level of mastery which are stated as Tahap Penguasaan 1 being the lowest level to Tahap Penguasaan 6 being the highest. The learners' demographic profile is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Learners' Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	22	42.3
Female	30	57.7
	52	**100**
Proficiency Level		
Tahap Penguasaan 1	6	11.5
Tahap Penguasaan 2	5	9.6
Tahap Penguasaan 3	14	26.9
Tahap Penguasaan 4	11	21.2
Tahap Penguasaan 5	16	30.8
Tahap Penguasaan 6	0	0.0
	52	**100**

The questionnaire is designed from Joanna Tiffany Selamat (2014)with sixteen items to evaluate the learners' preferences and beliefs in the practice of code-switching during English lessons. There are two sections in the questionnaire where the first section requires the learners to complete their demographic profile such as gender and level of proficiency. Meanwhile the second section of the questionnaires consisted of 16 close-ended questions with five-point Likert scale between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) that determine the learners' reactions towards their teachers' code-switching practice in the ESL classroom. The questionnaire was prepared in Malay language so that they could better understand the questions. It was then self-administered via Google forms and completed by the pupils with teachers' and parents' guidance.

Results
The learners' reactions towards teachers' code-switching practice in ESL classrooms could be divided into 4 constructs which are code-switching benefits, negative reactions, positive reactions and the learners' code-switching functions.

Code-switching Benefits
The code-switching benefits stated in the questionnaire are code-switching helps the learners to enjoy the lesson, to understand the lesson better, making them feel more motivated and confident in learning English, allows them to pay attention to the lesson without perturbing about unfamiliar words and sentences and encourages the learners to vigorously contribute to classroom activities.

Table 2
Code-switching Benefits

Code-switching benefits					
Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean, x̄
13.5	34.6	18.3	18.9	14.8	2.87

Based on Table 2, an average of 48.1% of the learners disagree while 33.7% agree to the benefits of code-switching in their ESL classrooms. The cumulative mean value is 2.87.

Code-switching does help the learners to comprehend the lesson better, making them feel more motivated and confident in learning English. It also allows them to pay attention to the lesson without worrying about unfamiliar words and sentences. However, code-switching is not a way to make the learners enjoy the lesson.

Negative Reactions

Negative reactions from the learners can be taken from the statements that oppose code-switching which are teachers to use English only during lessons, minimizing the use of code-switching and the learners dislike the use of code-switching.

Table 3
Negative Reactions

Negative reactions					
Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean, x̄
40.4	24.3	15.4	10.9	9.0	2.24

Table 3 shows an average 64.7% of the learners disagree to the statements that oppose code-switching with cumulative mean 2.24. This shows that the learners support the use of code-switching in their ESL classrooms. They do not desire the teacher to use English only nor they wish the teachers to minimize the use of code-switching which indicates that the amount of code-switching that the teachers use is adequate for them. They like the use of code-switching.

Positive Reactions

The statements that support code-switching could show positive reactions from the learners towards the teachers' code-switching which are the learners prefer code-switching during lessons, finding it difficult to learn without code-switching and hardly concentrate when teacher uses English only during English lessons.

Table 4
Positive Reactions

Positive reactions					
Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean, x̄
15.3	36.4	19.8	14.4	14.1	2.75

Based on Table 4, an average of 51.7% of the learners disagree to the statements supporting code-switching with average mean of 2.75. When comparing means between statements that oppose code-switching (2.24) with statements that support code-switching (2.75), there is a significant difference which shows that more learners agree to the use of code-switching by their teachers.

Learners' Functions of Code-switching

There are four learners' code-switching functions mentioned in the questionnaire items. Code-switching by learners is either done when they are unable to express themselves in English, to make sure the conversation runs smoothly, to connect with classmates who speak similar first language and to help classmates understand tough words and sentences.

Table 5
Learners' Functions of Code-switching

Learners' functions of code-switching	Mean, $\bar{x}$	Rank
To express themselves in English	2.88	3
To help maintain the flow of conversation	2.75	4
To communicate with peers who share the same language	3.13	1
To explain difficult words and sentences to their peers	2.96	2

Based on Table 5, most learners use code-switching to connect with classmates who speak similar first language. Learners also use code-switching to help classmates understand tough words and sentences. Meanwhile, the least used function of code-switching is making sure the conversation runs smoothly.

Mean Comparison between learners based on their level of proficiency

Paired samples T test was conducted to determine the difference between learners' reactions based on their level of proficiency.

Table 6
Paired Samples Statistics

Paired Samples Statistics				
	Mean	Items	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tahap Penguasaan 1,2,3	2.7650	16	0.29678	0.07420
Tahap Penguasaan 4 & 5	2.7250	16	0.33267	0.08317

Based on Table 6, the mean for learners' reaction among learners who possess mastery level of 1,2 and 3 is 2.7650 while the mean value for learners who possess mastery level of 4 and 5 is 2.7250. After paired samples test is conducted (Table 7), it was found that the p value is 0.529 which is bigger than 0.05. Hence, there is no significant difference between mean for learners with mastery levels 1, 2 and 3 with learners with mastery levels 4 and 5.

Table 7
Paired Samples Test

Paired Samples Test							
Paired Differences (TP 1,2,3 – TP 4&5)							
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Degree of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
0.04	0.24803	0.06201	-0.09217	0.17217	0.645	15	0.529

Discussion

Based on the findings, it was discovered that the learners show mixed reactions towards teachers' code-switching. Although they may disagree to the benefits of code-switching, they still prefer the teachers to practice code-switching in the classroom. First, the learners acknowledge that they could better comprehend the lesson when their teachers practice code-switching because they are learning using a language that is familiar to them (Tibategeza & Du Plessis, 2018). Moreover, the teachers' code-switching practice makes them more motivated and confident in learning English mostly because their affective filter has been reduced (Krashen, 1982). When teachers code-switch, the learners feel less anxious and more comfortable which makes the learning easier. However, the learners do not think that code-switching is a way for them to enjoy the lesson.

There is a significant difference between learners who oppose code-switching with learners who support code-switching with more learners supporting code-switching which means that the learners prefer their teachers to code-switch in the classroom. This finding replicates the findings by (Lee, 2010; Razak & Shah, 2020; Yao, 2011). The learners consider that the teachers' code-switching practice is ESL classroom is required to enhance their language education experiences. The learners feel more confident and motivated to learn the language because they feel that the teachers could relate to them through the use of code-switching. They also agree that they could focus on the lesson better which leads to better understanding of the lesson.

Other than that, the learners also use code-switching for a number of reasons and functions. As shown in the results, the learners code-switch because they see the need to connect with their classmates who speak similar first language. Sarasvathy (2014) posited that the learners would be less active and remain silent in the ESL classroom if they feel that they are unable to express themselves in English. Therefore, to avoid this negative situation, the learners must be given a chance to speak even if they have to code-switch. Moreover, code-switching is also a chance for high proficiency learners to help their lower proficient classmates by explaining words and sentences that their classmates could not understand. Thus, they could connect and relate with one another and making ESL classrooms more interesting and friendlier. The low proficient learners would feel more comfortable and motivated to learn English.

Implication and Recommendation

The use of code-switching does not imply learners' reluctance but rather their need to use the target language more. Therefore, teachers must accept the learners' occasional, impulsive code-switching practice while reflecting on how to design suitable approach in second language learning (Aoyama, 2020). Code-switching in second language acquisition and development is automatic and unavoidable while useful for learners because it enables their understanding more smoothly. Teachers are using the learners' first language to scaffold the learners' second language learning until they reach an acceptable proficiency. Code-switching can make the learners' feel more comfortable and less stressful when learning English which leads to a higher motivation to succeed.

Although there are no written policies on the use of code-switching in ESL classroom, the learners are often prohibited to use it. Hence, they often use code-switching surreptitiously and try their best not to get caught by the teachers. When they are being observed by the education officers, they would work extra hard to avoid code-switching, but not much actual learning happens because everything is done in false pretense. It is about time that language education policy makers consider the prospect of accepting the insertion of code-switching as a practical teaching and learning strategy in ESL classroom. The acceptance of code-switching by learners should be a strong sign that the policy makers should reevaluate the use of code-switching in ESL classroom. Language education policy makers must join force with the language teachers and ELT specialists to create a language curriculum that focuses on fulfilling the needs of the learners and not having prejudice towards classroom code-switching.

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