

FUNCTIONS AND REASONS OF CODE SWITCHING
AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the functions and reasons of code switching among Malaysian university students in their daily interaction. The data were collected by recording the actual conversation among university students in informal domains of communication. There were seven students from University College Sedaya International participated in the study. A total of 3-hour conversation was recorded. The conversation was transcribed for a detailed line-by-line analysis. The analysis focuses on the function and reasons of code switching in communicative events. By examining the functions, it is found out that code switching occurs for various reasons such as to accommodate, emphasize, quote, create dramatic effect, express special feelings, crutch, verify, conjoin, for ease of expression and untranslatability. To validate the findings an interview with participants was done. The findings yield 10 functions with 2 new functions that were not mentioned in previous studies in code switching emerged from this study. The results also contradict with the notion that code switching of interlocutors who alternate between two languages is caused by the lack of language proficiency. Instead, code switching is used by participants in this study as a strategy to improve their communication. It is recommended in this research to further study the occurrence of particles “la”, “mah” and “gua” which commonly occur in many interactions among Malaysian students.