Exploring the Functions of Code-Switching in a Zhuhai's Middle School

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the use and functions of code-switching in a Zhuhai's middle school. By means of class recording and class observance, the paper finds out that teachers mainly speak Putonghua and English in the English classrooms, though Zhuhai is a city in China, close to Macau and Hong Kong and its main dialect is Cantonese. Additionally, totally six functions of code-switching are discovered in the English class, they are, translating, economizing, maintaining class discipline, affective functions, checking understanding, and topic switch, all of which are helpful to English teaching.

Key words: Zhuhai; Code-switching; Function; English; Putonghua

INTRODUCTION

"Code-switching, one of the unavoidable consequences of communication between different language varieties, has long existed as a result of language contact widely observed especially in multilingual and multicultural communities" (Liu, 2010, p.10). The occurrence of code-switching serves some functions in the discourse. A great many researchers have focused on the functions of code-switching in classroom discourse.

Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999) study three second language teachers' code-switching between Swedish and French in a Swedish senior high school, claiming that teachers' switching is used for topic switch, affective functions (showing anger or sympathy by switching codes), socializing functions (expressing solidarity and friendship via code-switching), as well as repetitive functions. Ariffin (2009) adds one more purpose of instructors' code-switching in the classroom, i.e., explaining and clarifying. In addition, Merritt et al. (1992) discover three functions of code-switching in three Kenyan primary schools which are respectively the English medium, the Swahili medium and the mother tongue medium. The three functions of code-switching by teachers are: a) to reformulate information or instructions, b) to move the class activity or instruction forward, and c) to translate or substitute words. Pui (2009) analyzes code-switching in a Form 1 English classroom of Macau, pointing out that the use of code-switching by teachers is to help students understand the teaching content, to add more knowledge about the second language, to make sure that students understand the content, and to discipline students when the class is out of control.

Baker (2006) lists 12 reasons for bilingual code-switching:

a) to emphasize a particular point in a conversation; b) to substitute a word in another language since the speaker has no idea of voicing it from the language he has just used; c) to express a concept that has no equivalent in the culture of the other language; d) to reinforce a request; e) to clarify a point; f) to express identity, communicate friendship or family bonding; g) to ease tension and inject humor; h) to exclude people from a conversation; i) for interjection; j) for discussion on certain topics; k) for changing attitude or relationship; l) for quotation. (pp.111-113)

Some of these functions could be observed in the classroom conversation. Additionally, Li (2000) summarizes four motivations of code-switching in Hong Kong, namely, euphemism, specificity, bilingual punning, and the principle of economy.

So far, there have been plenty of studies on classroom code-switching in China (Li & Tse, 2002; Chen, 2004; Yao & Zeng, 2006; Chan, 2007; Pui, 2009; Young, 2009; Liu, 2010; Gong, 2011; Liu, 2011; Tian, 2011). However, almost all of them involve inner areas of China or Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions. Few studies of classroom code-switching have been done in the Cantonese-speaking areas in Mainland China. This study fills in the gap by analyzing the situation of code-switching in an English classroom of Zhuhai's middle school. The research questions are formulated as below:

a) What is the language practice in the English classroom of Zhuhai's middle school?

b) What are the functions of classroom code-switching in the English classroom of Zhuhai's middle school?

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF ZHUHAI

Zhuhai, one of the Chinese special economic zones, is settled in the southern part of the Pearl River Delta by bordering Macau to the south, Zhongshan to the north and Jiangmen to the northwest (Zhuhai Government, 2013). According to the statistics in 2015, the total population of Zhuhai is 1,634,121, including 509,581 non-resident workers. That is to say, almost one third of the population comes from outside. Located in Guangdong Province, Zhuhai is a typical city like Guangzhou and Zhongshan where the residents' main dialect is Cantonese.

Since Putonghua was established as the official language of China in 1956 (Chu, 2012), a great many measures have been taken to promote it throughout the country, including Zhuhai. According to the provisions of Article 19 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, "the state promotes the nationwide use of Putonghua", which is specified by Article 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 19 and 20 of Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language of the People's Republic of China (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2001). Additionally, a Putonghua Proficiency Test has been promoted all over China since Year 2003 (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2003). Nowadays, in addition to Cantonese, Putonghua is also a common language in Zhuhai.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study focuses on the English classroom code-switching in a Zhuhai's middle school. The target is a monolingual public school where the medium of instruction is Putonghua. Nevertheless, no explicit provisions have ruled the medium of instruction in English classes of this school. Totally, there are five English lessons per week, with each 45 minutes every day, in classes of each grade. As no specific English topics have been set for each English lesson, the teachers usually follow the format of the official textbooks in the lessons. The textbook involves 12 units, in which speaking, listening, reading, grammar and exercises are all embraced. Based on the teachers' free will, two English classes from each grade attended this research.

In order to achieve a specific and objective characterization of the classroom code-switching behavior, classroom recordings and classroom observation were adopted. Classroom recordings were designed to collect audio recorded data, from which the functions of classroom code-switching would be explored. As each lesson lasts 45 minutes, 4 consecutive English lessons from each class, i.e. totally 1080 minutes, were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Classroom observation progressed simultaneously during the recording for the purpose of a) better understanding the recorded class content and b) more extensively analyzing the collected data.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Data from the recorded English classes show multiple functions of code-switching, namely, a) translating, b) economizing, c) maintaining class discipline, d) affective functions, and e) checking understanding, f) topic switch. Generally, the analysis indicates that code-switching in the class under investigation is primarily for pedagogical, social, or communicative motivations.

3.1 Translating

The most obvious function of code-switching is translating as instances of translating have occurred at a high frequency (roughly 21 times per class) in the collected data.

Code-switching for translating has occurred totally 5 times in Example 1. The background of this example is that the English teacher asks students to look at eight actions listed on the textbook before listening to a story about a cat, and then to pick up the actions they hear from the recorder. This conversation begins in an imperative mood of the teacher, "now please open your books. Turn to page 21", which is followed by a translated version in Putonghua "翻到21页", with a repetition of part of the translated content, "21页" (Page 21). The next instance of code-switching in Line 3 presents another case of translating as the teacher translates what she says in English, "pick the, the six things you are going to hear", into Putonghua again. One more instance of translating from English to Putonghua occurs in Line 4 where the teacher translates "let's look at the eight actions" into "看一下这八个行动是什么" (let's see what the eight actions are) with slight rephrasing. As it is weird to collocate "八个" (eight) with "行动" (actions) in Putonghua, the teacher immediately repairs it, restating "八个动作" (eight actions). All the three occurrences of code-switching for

translating are within the same turn by the English teacher, whose primary purpose in code-switching here is to help students understand what she has expressed in English. Likewise, the fourth code-switching for translating that occurs in Line 7 functions analogously to the three ones mentioned above since the teacher reformulates "underline" into Chinese "划下来", a way to help students catch the meaning of "underline".

Nevertheless, throughout the four occurrence of code-switching, it is fairly visible that the teacher rarely translates the English phrases into exact corresponding Chinese counterparts since the Chinese version of "turn to page 21" is just "翻到21页", while the teacher repeats "21页" (Page 21) in the conversation. In this instance of code-switching, the teacher may make use of translating and repetition to emphasize the point she wants to convey to students, i.e. the page number is 21, but not others. This is in accord with what Walsh (2013) has said. It is the teachers' responsibility to make sure that students understand the meaning of words from the target language. Therefore, teachers will modify their speech in such ways as translating and repeating in the native language to reinforce their points.

Different from the aforementioned instances of code-switching for translating, which are within the same turn by the English teacher, the next instance of code-switching for translating is between two turns. In Line 5, the teacher starts to explain the meaning of the eight actions in English, and when she reads the first action "saw a cat in a tree", Student A takes the turn (in Line 6), translating the phrase into Chinese without any hint or request for translation from Line 5. As Myers-Scotton (1993) states, code-switching is speaker-motivated. The student selects himself to be the next speaker, reformulating the sentence in Putonghua without any request or hint, a way to indicate to the instructor that he himself has known the Chinese meaning, or even more, that he has mastered this English phrase.

Example 1
[Setting: Before listening to a story about a cat, the teacher asks students to first have a look at a task relevant to this story. There are eight actions like "saw a cat in a tree" listed in the task, and students are required to match the persons that perform these actions with the eight actions respectively. After explaining the task, the teacher talks about the grammar and the meaning of the phrase "in a tree". (T = the English Teacher, SS=some students, All= all the students)]

T: Now, please open your books. Turn to page 21. 翻到21页, 21页. Now we are going to do some reading: A story about a cat. A story about a cat. Please look at Activity 2a,Listen. The first task. Pick the— the six things you are going to hear. 听到的六样东西打 "√". Now, let's look at the eight actions. 看一下这八个行动是什么. 八个动作. Now, No.1, saw a cat in a tree. =

<Now, please open your books. Turn to page 21. Turn to page 21, page 21. Now we are going to do some reading: A story about a cat. A story about a cat. Please look at Activity 2a, Listen. The first task. Pick the—the six things you are going to hear. Pick the six things you are going to hear with "√". Now, let's look at the eight actions. Let's see what the eight actions are. Eight actions. Now, No.1, saw a cat in a tree. >

Student A: =在树上看到一只猫.

<saw a cat in a tree.>

T: In a tree. Underline "in a tree". Underline "in a tree". 划下来 "in a tree". Now we have another phrase , "on a tree".

<In a tree. Underline "in a tree". Underline "in a tree". Underline "in a tree". Now we have another phrase, "on a tree". >

SS: 一个是长的.

<one is growing on the tree.>

T: 长在树上的用on, 那么后来上去的呢?

<"On" is used for something originally grows on the tree, then which one is used to describe something that is put onto the tree?>

SS: in.

Example 2 presents a contrary translating sequence as the speaker reformulated the Chinese sentence "黑人和白人是平等的" (black people and white people are equal) into English. Possible reasons of such code-switching may be that the Chinese information "黑人和白人是平等的" (black people and white people are equal) first comes to the teacher's mind, hence she speaks out her idea in Putonghua first, while later, in order to let students know the corresponding English expression, she switches to English and repeats it again in the target language.

Example 2
[Setting: The teacher is introducing Martin Luther King on the screen.]
T: ((Pointing to the picture of Martin Luther King on the screen)) Look at this. He is very famous for a famous speech: I have a dream. I have a dream, 黑人和白人是平等的, the black and the white are equal. Do you know him?

<((Pointing to the picture of Martin Luther King)) Look at this. He is very famous for a famous speech: I have a dream. I have a dream, black people and white people are equal, the black and the white are equal. Do you know him? >

Information can be translated completely as shown by Example 2 or partially as identified in Line 3 and 4 of Example 1. In the second instance of code-switching for translating in Example 1, the complete Chinese version of this English sentence "pick the, the six things you are going to hear" is supposed to be "将你听到

的六样东西打 '√'". However, the teacher's version is "听到的六样东西打'√'", which means that "you" in the original sentence is omitted. As Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai (2001) suggest, speakers are rational actors that will pursue the most rewards and minimize the costs, in this English classroom, for economy, the teacher omits the "you" in her translated version as both her and the students know consciously that the "you" in English directs to the latter. Consequently, to achieve the objective of getting the students' understanding as well as saving time, the teacher just provides the important information in Chinese again without "你" (you).

In the collected data, only few examples of code-switching for translating are complete like Example 2, while most others are partial translation. It is observable that the teacher in English classroom uses the spoken language predominantly, thus in such situations, she usually makes use of translating to reach her emphasis and assist students' comprehension by pointing out the chief translated parts, but no complete translation can be guaranteed.

3.2 Economizing

Sometimes code-switching is used because it is economical. For instance, in a dictation activity shown in Example 3, since the students are required to translate the Chinese sentences into English, the instructor is supposed to present a sentence solely in Chinese. However, she reads "dear dad" and "UFO" in English with the rest in Chinese. As Li (2000) announces, "an English expression may be preferred because it is shorter and thus requires less linguistic effort compared with its Chinese equivalent" (p.317), it is quite possible that the Chinese counterparts of the two phrases, "亲爱的爸爸" (dear dad) and "不明飞行物" (UFO), are longer, hence more time and linguistic efforts in articulation are required than their English phrases. Consequently, when reading the two phrases, the English teacher switches to English for economy.

Example 3
[Setting: The English teacher asks students to translate the sentences she is going to speak out and to write them on the dictation book. In this example, the teacher is reading several sentences that are required to be translated by students.]

T: 好, 默写. Dear dad, 我有一个不同寻常的经历. 这是一天中一个非常不同寻 常的经历. 在早上的大约十点，我正沿着街道走. 当一个UFO正好在我面前, 在我面前着陆的时候, 你可以想象, 他有多么奇怪.

<OK. Dictation. Dear dad, I had a very unusual experience. This was an unusual experience in one day. At about 10 o'clock in the morning, a UFO landed before me when I was walking along the street. You can imagine how curious he was. >

3.3 Maintaining Class Discipline

Code-switching could also be employed to maintain class discipline. Example 4 describes the beginning of an English class. After the formulaic greetings in an adjacency pair between the teacher and the class from Line 1 to Line 2, the teacher switches codes to Chinese in Line 3, requesting students to keep quiet when it is a little noisy in the class. As can be tracked in this excerpt with some Chinese clauses such as "好啦! 安静! 别说话！" (OK！ Be quiet! Stop talking!) in Line 3 and "听到没有?" (Haven't you heard me, have you?) in Line 7, the instructor becomes a little bit angry because of the noisy atmosphere and the violation of class rules by some students since they had lunch break in the classroom without registration. Here in Line 3, when the teacher switches to Putonghua, for one thing, it is easier for the teacher herself to convey her anger because she is quite proficient in Putonghua; for the other thing, as all the students in this class speak and understand Putonghua, they could feel the anger of the teacher and would stop talking immediately. That is to say, code-switching from English to Chinese in Line 3 indicates the power as well as anger of the instructor, which hints to the students that they should listen to the instructor and stop talking. In this way, the instructor maintains the class discipline.

Example 4
[Setting: It is the beginning of an English class. The English teacher, also the one that is in charge of the class, mainly talks about two important things irrelevant to the English class.]

T: Class begins. Good morning, class.

All: Good morning, Miss He.

T: Sit down please. ((It is quite noisy in class)) 好啦! 安静! 别说话! 那个上课之前说两 件事情啊！ 第一个, 午休的, 前一天午休的, 很多没有登记午休的同学回来教室了, 是吧? 好, 我说过了啊, 你中午不在这里午休的, 不要在这里.

<Sit down please. ((It is quite noisy in class)) OK！ Be quite! Stop talking! Before the lesson, I want to talk about two things. The first one is about lunch break. Yesterday, many students who had not registered to have lunch break in the classroom came to the classroom to rest, didn't you? OK, I have claimed before that if you haven't registered to rest in the classroom, please do not stay in the classroom. >

Student B: 早来了呢？
<What if we have come earlier? >

T: 听到没有！
<Haven't you heard me, have you?>

Student B: Oh.

3.4 Affective Functions

A number of studies on code-switching (Flyman-Mattsson & Burenhult, 1999; Ariffin, 2009; Gulzar, 2010) have claimed the affective functions in teachers'

code-switching.For instance, Ariffin (2009) finds that the English teacher tries to express sympathy for students' working experience by switching the code to their first language Bahasa Malaysia (BM). By analogy, the data collected in this study do display a similar instance (Example 5) of the teacher's affective code-switching.

Example 5 indicates how the teacher shows her sympathy to students by code-switching. Beginning with assigning the homework in English at the end of a lesson, the teacher then switches to Putonghua, "我知道你们其他作业都很多，今天就少布置点了" (I know you have lots of homework, so today I assign less English homework to you), showing her sympathy to students who have considerable homework to do every school day, and resulting from her sympathy, she decides to assign less homework to students.

Example 5
[Setting: At the end of class, the teacher is assigning homework to student.]
T: OK. Today's homework. Finish Task 2a and 2b in your textbook. 我知道你们其他作业都很多，今天就少布置点了，但是你们得给我认真完成啊！再说一遍今天的作业，完成课本上的2a和2b. OK. Class, class is over!
< OK. Today's homework. Finish Task 2a and 2b in your textbook. I know you have lots of homework, so today I assign less English homework to you. But you guys should do it seriously! Once again, today's homework is finishing Task 2a and 2b in your textbook. OK. Class, class is over!>

Besides the English teacher's affective code-switching, students' affective code-switching is also found in the present data. Example 6 is a typical example of students' attempt to show appreciation, respect, and excitement towards the teacher. In this instance, the English teacher starts with an invitation of describing a story in one sentence, "now can you give us one sentence to describe the story?", followed by a reformulated version in Putonghua, "用一句话来描述一下这个故事" (describe this story in one sentence). Then code-switching occurs again as the teacher switches back to English, "can you?", a way to politely invite Student C to answer her question. After Student C concludes the story in one sentence, the instructor takes the turn, switching to Putonghua in Line 4 and reacting "都有没有找到？就这样啊？还有没有其他的 (Everyone, have you found the main idea? Is that all? Anything else?)", which indicates that Student C has given a dispreferred response. By the time the instructor reads a conclusive sentence made by herself in English, Student D suddenly reacts, "哦! 太强了! 太强了! (Oh! What a great sentence! What a great sentence!)". The interjection "哦 (oh)" with a rising intonation is a marker of information management, and the repetition of the exclamatory sentences "太强了 (what a great

sentence)" in Putonghua emphasizes Student D's respect, appreciation and excitement to the teacher after he heard this great sentence. As Putonghua is a common spoken language in this classroom, to Student D whose English level is relatively lower, the use of Putonghua facilitates his expression of appreciation, respect, and excitement towards the teacher, while to the teacher, she could truly sense Student D's emotion via Putonghua, a language she is quite proficient in.

Example 6
[Setting: After reading a story on the textbook, the teacher asks students to describe the story in one sentence.]
T: Now can you give us one sentence to describe the story? 用一句话来描述一下这个故事. Can you? ((inviting Student C))
<Now can you give us one sentence to describe the story. Describe this story in one sentence. Can you? ((inviting Student C))>
Student C: Linda:: Linda::Linda lost her dog and finally find her dog.
T: Er, ((大家))都有没有找到？就这样啊？还有没有其他的？你讲的是这个故事的—我的是这样子的，你看下跟你们的有什么区别啊？ The story is about how Linda lost her dog and how she found it.
< Er, ((everyone)) have you found the main idea? Is that all? Anything else? You are telling the story's—here is my version. You could listen to it and think about the differences between yours and mine: The story is about how Linda lost her dog and how she found it.>
Student D: 哦! 太强了! 太强了!
<Wow, what a great sentence! What a great sentence!>

3.5 Checking Understanding
Some functions of code-switching observed in this English class like translating are chiefly for pedagogical reasons. Checking understanding is another pedagogical function that code-switching may perform. Example 7, a short excerpt, shows how the teacher checks students' understanding through code-switching. In the first place, she gives instructions to students in English, "Read it, read it as quickly as you can. Read it. If you finish reading, please put up your hands", followed by "understand?" in a rising intonation to firstly check whether students have got her meaning. And then in Example 7, the code is immediately switched to Putonghua for double checking by the teacher, "我说什么啦？如果你读完啦:?" (What did I say just now? If you finish reading, then?). When asked in English "understand?", the students might reply, "Yes". However, the teacher will not be sure whether students have really comprehended what she mentioned, because everyone is able to say the word "Yes". The Chinese question, "我说什么啦？如果你读完啦?" (What did I say just now? If you finish reading, then?), is more effective since only the students that have caught

the teacher's meaning can answer this question, thus here code-switching to the Chinese question, "我说什么啦？如果你读完啦？" (What did I say just now? If you finish reading, then?), is a better way to double check students' understanding. The instant answer from some students, "读完啦就举手 (put up your hands after reading)", in the same code as the one used by the teacher, manifests that they have understood it.

Example 7
[Setting: the teacher asks students to turn to Page 24 of the textbook and read an article on it.]

T: Could you please turn to Page 24, 24? Read it, read it as quickly as you can. Read it. If you finish reading, please put up your hands. Understand? 我说什么啦？如果你读完啦？=
<Could you please turn to Page 24, 24? Read it, read it as quickly as you can. Read it. If you finish reading, please put up your hands. Understand? What did I say just now? If you finish reading, then?>

SS: =读完啦就举手.
<Then put up your hands.>

3.6 Topic Switch

Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999) have found that topic switch is one of the functions in teachers' code-switching in a Swedish senior high school. By analogy, the function of topic switch is apparent during the teacher's code-switching between Putonghua and English in this English class of the study.

Example 8 presents a situation of the teacher talking about an exercise on the simple future tense on the PowerPoint. The exercise discussed by the instructor at the beginning of this instance is a multiple choice. Students are requested to pick one out of the three choices: A. *be, will rain*, B. *have, will rain*, C. *be, rains*, and then to fill it in the blank of the sentence, "There is going to _____ a sports meeting next week. If it _____, we'll have to cancel it.". Code-switching for topic change has occurred three times in this excerpt. Beginning with reading the first sentence in this exercise, "There is going to be a meeting next week.", the instructor expounds the use of the phrase, "next time", in this sentence in English, and briefly interprets its use in Putonghua. Then she switches back to English to continue to read the rest of the sentence in this exercise, "If it rains, we'll have to cancel it.", followed by a further explanation in Putonghua. By the time the instructor finishes this exercise, she carries on using Putonghua, "行" (OK), but suddenly switches to English, asking students to do Exercise Two, another exercise. In this code-switching from Putonghua to English, the topic is changed from explaining Exercise One to do Exercise Two.

The second topic switch occurs soon after the teacher has had a look at Exercise Two in Example 8, as she switches from English, "Do it quickly, as quickly as possible", to Putonghua, "各位，'just now' 什么意思？

'just now'". (Class, what is the meaning of "just now"? "just now".) The previous topic of doing Exercise Two is changed to be a discussion of the meaning of "just now". After getting a response from some students in Example 8, "刚刚" (just now), the instructor confirms the answer by repeating it in Putonghua and adds the phrase's use "过去式" (the past tense) via following students' code. Then she finds that the class will be over soon, so she turns to talk about students' homework in English. In Example 8, the code-switching from Putonghua to English indicates topic switching from discussing the meaning of "just now" to talk about students' homework.

Example 8
[Setting: The teacher is talking about an exercise on the simple future tense on the PowerPoint.]

T: "There is going to be a meeting next week." "Next week" is a time in the future, 将来时. ((The teacher continues to read the next English sentence in the first exercise.))

"If it rains, we'll have to cancel it." 好, 状语从句中, 将来时用现在进行时. 行,look at your paper again. Look at the back. Let's do the Exercise Two. Do it quickly,as quickly as possible ((The teacher is looking at Exercise Two)) 各位, "just now"什么意思？ "just now".

<There is going to be a meeting next week. "Next week" is a time in the future, a time in the future. ((The teacher continues to read the next English sentence in the first exercise.)) If it rains, we'll have to cancel it. OK, in the adverbial clauses, the future tense is displayed in the form of the present continuous tense. OK, look at your paper again. Look at the back. Let's do the Exercise Two. Do it quickly, as quickly as possible. ((The teacher is looking at Exercise Two)) Class, what is the meaning of "just now"? "just now".>

SS: 刚刚.
< just now.>

T: 刚刚，过去式. OK, class, I'll leave the exercise for today's homework.
< just now, the past tense. OK, class, I'll leave the exercise for today's homework.

Example 9 shows a short conversation between a student and the English teacher. The student is reading out the answer in English, which is followed by the teacher's confirmation in a way of repeating the answer, "has. She has many friends now". Next, the teacher states "sit down" in English, but then switches to Chinese to talk about the last blank that needs filling in, "好，最后一道" (OK, the last one). During the code-switching from English to Putonghua, the topic has changed from the previous exercise to the next exercise, hence the code-switching here indicates a topic change.

Example 9
[Setting: the teacher asks students to fill in the blanks with the right forms of verbs in a paragraph named "Jenny"

and read it out for the class. A student is reading the sentence, "But now she _____(have) many friends now."]

Student E: But now she has many friends.=

T: =Has. She has many friends now. Sit down. 好, 最后一道.

< Has. She has many friends now. Sit down. OK, the last one. >

In brief, as shown in the examples, code-switching has six functions in English classes. Some of the functions such as translation, checking understanding, maintaining class discipline and topic switch are closely related to pedagogy, as they focus on the delivery of English knowledge to students. The affective functions are based on the social motivations where certain emotion is expressed. The last function, economizing, is mainly for communicative purposes because certain points are easier to be conveyed through another language.

DISCUSSION

Almost all of the functions of code-switching, a) translating; b) economizing; c) maintaining class discipline; d) affective functions; e) checking understanding, and f) topic switch, which are discovered in the English class of the study, have been found in previous studies. Pui (2009) points out three functions of code-switching, i.e., to help students better understand the English content, to make sure that students understand the content, and to discipline students when students are out of control. The present study shows that code-switching can serve several functions: a) for translation whose primary purpose is also to make the teaching content much more comprehensible to students, b) for checking students' understanding, and c) for maintaining class discipline when the class is noisy. Nevertheless, an investigation of partial and complete translation in the current study further indicates that the English teacher's code-switching is not carried out randomly or in a mess. Rather, it is a purposeful behavior that aims to save the class time for more teaching content, on the condition that both the teacher and the students understand the partial and simple translation.

Two functions of teachers' code-switching claimed by Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999) are topic switch and the affective functions, both of which are also obvious in the English classroom in this study. However, the present study also finds students' code-switching for affective functions, that is, code-switching to deliver the student's appreciation, respect and excitement towards the teacher.

Li (2000) puts forward the application of principle of economy to code-switching in Hong Kong, while in Mainland China, where the phenomenon of code-switching is not as widespread as that in Hong Kong,

few studies from Mainland China have found this code-switching function in English classes. Through investigation, the present study confirms the function of economizing by code-switching in the English classroom in Mainland China.

CONCLUSION

On the whole, though almost all the functions have been mentioned in previous studies, this study has presented differences from previous ones. Firstly, the current study has further explored the function of partial and complete translation, demonstrating that teachers' code-switching is purposeful and helpful to English teaching. In addition, since few previous studies have focused on classroom code-switching in Zhuhai, the current one fills in this gap. Zhuhai is a Cantonese speaking city in China. It is in the vicinity of Macau and Hong Kong where Cantonese is primarily the medium of instruction in the Chinese-medium schools, and this study is supposed to find the use of Cantonese in the English classroom in the Zhuhai's middle school. However, no Cantonese was traced from the English class. Instead, Putonghua and English were used. The teacher's language use in class indicates that the Chinese government has popularized Putonghua in Mainland China to a great extent. Lastly, besides the teacher's affective function which is usually the focus of previous studies, students' affective function has also been observed.

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APPENDIX A

Glossary of transcript symbols (adapted from Jefferson, 2004)

(   ) *Empty parentheses* indicate inaudible speech.

((   ))Double parentheses contain the contextual information or description of the transcriber.

=   An equal sign indicates no break between speeches.

——   A dash indicates that a sound is cut off.

::   Colons indicate the prolonging of a speech sound. The longer the colon row, the longer the speech sound.