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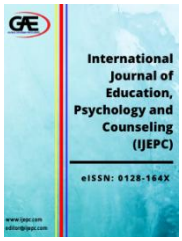

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INTRA-SENTENTIAL CODE-SWITCHING IN YEAR 5 ENGLISH CLASSROOM: A STUDY ACROSS FIVE SELECTED NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Vijaya A/P Mohan [1*], Rita Abdul Rahman Ramakrishna [2]

[1] School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800, Gelugor, Pulau Pinang,Malaysia
Email: vijaya@student.usm.my
[2] School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800, Gelugor, Pulau Pinang,Malaysia
Email: rita@usm.my
[3] Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

This study explores the types of intra-sentential code-switching (CS) used by Year 5 pupils during English lessons in five selected national primary schools on Penang Island, Malaysia. The purpose of the study is to examine how bilingual pupils employ different types of CS to navigate linguistic challenges and enhance classroom communication. The study is based on Muysken's (2000) typology of intra-sentential CS, which includes alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicalization. A qualitative research design was used. Data were collected through classroom observations involving audio recordings of 160 English lessons. All the recordings were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. The findings reveal that insertion was the most frequently used form of CS. Pupils used it to fill lexical gaps and maintain fluency. Alternation occurred at clause boundaries to facilitate clarification. Congruent lexicalization was observed when pupils blended elements from different languages using compatible grammatical structures. Pupils used CS to support vocabulary, clarify meaning, and assist peers during lessons. The study concludes that intra-sentential CS serves several communicative purposes among bilingual pupils. These findings provide valuable insights for English language teachers working in multilingual classrooms. Understanding the types and functions of CS may help teachers design instructional strategies that accommodate pupils' bilingual capabilities while supporting their English language development. The study also contributes to the growing body of knowledge on bilingual speech in Malaysian primary schools and reinforces the significance of code-switching as a pedagogical resource rather than an obstacle in language learning.

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Keywords:

Alternation, Congruent Lexicalization, Insertion, Intra-Sentential Code-Switching, Multilingual Classrooms, Pupils

Introduction

Malaysia is recognised as one of the most linguistically diverse nations in Southeast Asia. This diversity is shaped by its multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious composition (Jacobson, 2004; Nan, Yanan, & York, 2018). The national language, Bahasa Malaysia, coexists with English, Chinese dialects, Indian vernaculars, and numerous indigenous languages. Alinda (2019) identified at least one 139 languages and dialects that are actively used across the country. The three largest ethnic groups, namely Malay, Chinese and Indian, maintain distinct linguistic repertoires, and many Malaysians are bilingual or multilingual (Tawos, Yaqoob, Hairunnisa, & Nurul Farhanah, 2019). This linguistic variety encourages regular language switching during interactions in both formal and informal contexts. In linguistics, this phenomenon is referred to as code-switching (CS), which is defined as the alternating use of two or more languages within the same discourse by bilingual speakers (Milroy & Muysken, 1995). Lin (2007) describes classroom CS as the use of multiple linguistic codes by teachers and students during lessons. Neo (2011) views it as a communicative strategy that allows speakers to accommodate interlocutors from different linguistic backgrounds. Kamisah and Misyana (2011) explain that in multilingual classrooms it is uncommon for lessons to be conducted entirely in one language, while Rajoo (2011) emphasises its prevalence in Malaysia as a result of its multilingual and multicultural composition.

Although some scholars consider CS as a potential barrier to language development, recent studies demonstrate its pedagogical value. Low and Abdul Aziz (2020) found that teachers in Chinese vernacular primary schools employed CS to facilitate access to the curriculum, manage classroom interactions and build rapport with pupils. Elias, Norzaidi, Sabri, Singh, Ramanlingam, and Maniam (2022) reported that a majority of Malaysian ESL learners, specifically 68.8 percent, believed that CS enhanced their comprehension of English lessons. Similarly, Ng and Singh (2024) observed that TESL undergraduates perceived CS as beneficial, particularly in improving understanding, motivation, engagement and focus during lessons.

Intra-sentential CS, where elements from two languages are used within a single sentence, is of particular significance because it requires a high level of linguistic competence to operate across different grammatical systems (Poplack, 2000). Despite its frequent occurrence in everyday communication, relatively few Malaysian studies have specifically examined intra-sentential CS among primary school pupils. To highlight this gap, Table 1 presents a summary of selected findings from previous research which illustrate the frequency of CS in Malaysian classrooms.

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Table 1 : Frequency of Code-Switching in Malaysian Classrooms

Observation	Frequency of Code-switching (CS)	Source
Mathematics in primary national schools	42.46 percent of teacher talk includes CS	Neo (2011)
English lessons in secondary schools	Frequent intra-sentential switching observed	Then & Ting (2011)
ESL classrooms in Chinese vernacular schools	Teachers used CS strategically for teaching, management and rapport	Low & Abdul Aziz (2020)
ESL learners in Malaysian universities	68.8 percent reported that CS improved comprehension	Elias et al. (2022)
TESL undergraduates in a private university	Students viewed CS as enhancing understanding, motivation and engagement	Ng & Singh (2024)

Source: Adapted from Neo (2011); Then & Ting (2011); Low & Abdul Aziz (2020); Elias et al. (2022); Ng & Singh (2024).

Table 1 illustrates the frequent occurrence of CS across various educational contexts, from primary schools to universities, indicating its widespread role in Malaysian classrooms. However, fewer studies have focused on intra-sentential CS among younger learners in national primary schools. However, fewer studies have focused on intra-sentential CS among younger learners in national primary schools. The present study addresses this gap by examining the types of intra-sentential CS used by Year Five pupils during English lessons in five selected national primary schools on Penang Island. The analysis is guided by Muysken's (2000) typology of alternation, insertion and congruent lexicalization. The scope of this study is limited to pupil discourse in classroom interactions, excluding teacher talk and non-verbal communication. The objectives are to identify the types of intra-sentential CS used by Year Five pupils during English lessons and to investigate variations in its use across the five participating schools. By presenting empirical evidence from authentic classroom settings, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of intra-sentential code-switching and offers practical implications for bilingual education in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Definition of Code-switching

The term code-switching (CS) is interpreted differently by scholars across various disciplines, leading to a lack of a universally accepted definition. Generally, "code" encompasses any linguistic system employed for communication, ranging from small units like morphemes to entire languages (Ayeomoni, 2006; Wardhaugh, 2006). Early definitions by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1973) characterise CS as the alternation between languages influenced by context or within spoken discourse. Later researchers, including Valdes-Fallis (1978), Zentella (1981), and Gumperz (1982), focused on the phenomenon of switching languages at various linguistic levels, such as words, clauses, or within sentences. Recent definitions from scholars such as Milroy and Muysken (1995), Poplack (2000), and Cook (2008) emphasise that CS takes place in conversations among bilingual speakers, who alternate between or within utterances. Similarly, Al-Qaysi (2019) and Basabrin (2019) describe CS as the integration of terms or phrases from two different languages during communication. In conclusion, most definitions emphasise the alternating use of two languages. This study adopts Muysken's (2000) intra-

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sentential CS, occurring within or between sentences among Year 5 pupils during English lessons.

Types of Code-Switching

Scholars categorise code-switching (CS) into various types according to their functions, including conversational, situational, intra-sentential, inter-sentential, emblematic or tag-switching, and intra-word CS. Gumperz (1982) identifies two primary categories: conversational and situational CS. He defines conversational CS as the blending of speech segments from different grammatical systems within the same conversation, whereas situational CS involves changes in language choice influenced by the context or setting, such as at school, work, or public events. In contrast to Gumperz, researchers such as Myers-Scotton (1993), Poplack (1995), and Muysken (2000) delve into additional categories, particularly emphasising intra-sentential CS. Muysken (2000) further categorises intra-sentential CS into three distinct forms that are alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicalization.

Intra-sentential Code-Switching

Myers-Scotton (1993) defines intra-sentential code-switching (CS) as occurring "within the same sentence or sentence fragment" (p. 4). This perspective is echoed by Poplack (1995), who notes that intra-sentential CS occurs smoothly within a sentence, without hesitation, pauses, or interruptions. Poplack (1995) emphasises that this type of CS demands a high level of fluency, as speakers must navigate the syntactic rules of another language mid-sentence. In a similar vein, Muysken (2000) asserts that intra-sentential CS can manifest at various levels within a sentence, ranging from a single morpheme to an entire clause. Like Poplack (1995), he agrees that these switches generally happen without noticeable pauses or breaks. Muysken (2000) also points out that this form of CS is quite common, with speakers often unaware of when or where they alternate languages during conversation. He further classifies intra-sentential CS into three categories that are alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicalization. Each of Muysken's (2000) types of intra-sentential CS is discussed in the following sections.

Muysken Alternation Code-switching

Muysken (2000) defines alternation code-switching (CS) as switches between two languages at the boundaries of sentences or clauses within a conversation. Unlike other forms of CS that blend elements from both languages within a single sentence, alternation occurs only after a complete thought has been expressed in one language, followed by a new thought in another. In this type of switching, each language keeps its distinct grammatical and syntactic rules, allowing for a clear separation between the two. This practice is common among highly proficient bilinguals, as it involves being able to express an idea clearly in one language before switching to another. This language switching often mirrors the sociolinguistic environment, enabling speakers to switch languages depending on the topic, audience, or social situation, all while keeping grammatical accuracy in both languages.

Muysken Insertion Code-switching

Muysken (2000) states that insertion code-switching (CS) occurs when words or phrases from one language that is the embedded language are added into the sentence structure of another language, which is the base language. In this type of CS, the structure of the base language remains unchanged while elements like nouns, verbs, or short phrases from the embedded language are inserted. Muysken (2000) highlights that insertion CS is often used to fill lexical

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gaps or to express ideas that are more easily conveyed in the embedded language rather than the base language.

Muysken Congruent lexicalization Code-switching

Muysken (2000) defines congruent lexicalization code-switching (CS) as the switching that occurs when lexical items from two languages are inserted within the same sentence, where both languages share a similar grammatical structure. This means the grammatical framework is compatible across both languages, allowing for the smooth integration of vocabulary from each language. The speaker tends to switch between languages without altering the sentence structure.

Recent studies reaffirm the pedagogical role of CS. Wu, Dameaty, and Fong (2020) found that Chinese EFL teachers used CS to scaffold explanations, while Masna (2020) showed Indonesian learners employed it to clarify meaning and maintain fluency. More recently, Sasongko (2023) demonstrated that Asian teachers relied on inter-sentential CS for classroom management and tag-switching for rapport-building. Erdem (2024) confirmed positive teacher and learner attitudes toward CS in Turkish universities, and Zatalini (2024) reported that intra-sentential CS enhanced comprehension and attention in Indonesian online classrooms. These findings highlight the continuing relevance of CS in multilingual education.

Table 2: Summary of Past Findings

Author(s)	Year	Context	Type(s) of CS	Key Findings	Relevance to Present Study
Weinreich	1953	Sociolinguistics	General alternation	Early description of bilingual interference	Foundational concept
Haugen	1973	Sociolinguistics	General alternation	Defined borrowing and mixing	Basis for structural analysis
Gumperz	1982	Sociolinguistics	Conversational, situational	Distinguished conversational vs. situational CS	Framework for interactional analysis
Myers-Scotton	1993	Theoretical model	Intra-, inter-, tag	Matrix Language Frame	Explains CS structure
Poplack	2000	Sociolinguistics	Intra-, inter-, tag, intra-word	Identified structural forms	Influential in classification
Muysken	2000	Typology	Intra-sentential	Alternation, insertion, congruent lexicalization	Main framework of present study
Wu, Dameaty & Fong	2020	Chinese university EFL	Intra-sentential	Teachers' CS supports scaffolding	Relevant to classroom pedagogy

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Masna	2020	Indonesian EFL learners	Intra-sentential	Learners switch for comprehension	Relevant to pupils' communication
Sasongko	2023	Asian EFL classrooms	Inter-sentential, tag	Teachers use CS for instruction and rapport	Relevant to teacher–student interaction
Erdem	2024	Turkish higher education EFL	Multiple	Positive teacher/learner attitudes to CS	Supports across proficiency levels
Zatalini	2024	Indonesian online EFL	Intra-sentential	CS enhances comprehension and engagement	Relevant to digital classrooms

Source: Compiled and adapted from Weinreich (1953); Haugen (1973); Gumperz (1982); Myers-Scotton (1993); Poplack (2000); Muysken (2000); Wu, Dameaty, & Fong (2020); Masna (2020); Sasongko (2023); Erdem (2024); Zatalini (2024).

Methodology

Study Design

This study explores the types of intra-sentential code-switching (CS) used by Year 5 pupils during English lessons. As noted by Creswell (2012), research methods must align with the objectives and questions of the study. Accordingly, this research employs qualitative methods, gathering data through classroom observations. This chosen approach allows the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the various types of intra-sentential CS among Year 5 pupils. The classroom observations specifically focus on identifying these types of intra-sentential CS.

Duration and Location of the Study

This study was conducted from January to April in five national primary schools on Penang Island, Malaysia, with each school observed for one month. The selected schools had multiethnic enrolment, bilingual or multilingual pupils, a shared Malay school language, and mixed-ability classes. The observations focused only on English lessons, as English is taught and used exclusively during these periods, while other subjects are taught in Malay. Although some schools implement the Dual Language Programme for Science and Mathematics, not all are involved in this initiative. Malay language classes, communication language subjects such as Chinese and Tamil, and other academic subjects were not included in the study.

Participants of the Study

The sample for this study consists of Year 5 pupils, aged 11, from five national primary schools on Penang Island. The pupils were selected purposefully to help the researcher understand how and why they code-switch during English lessons. Year 5 pupils, having been exposed to English for five to six years, are considered appropriate for this study due to their age, maturity, and linguistic experience. Sample sizes were established in accordance with the recommendations of Sekaran (2003) and Creswell (2012), with the study exceeding the recommended number of participants to minimize potential sampling errors. Pupils were selected from two classes per school, with class sizes ranging from 25 to 35 pupils. Schools A, B, and C each contributed 35 pupils per class, while School D provided 35 and 29 pupils from

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two classes, and School E contributed 33 pupils per class. For the interview, five pupils were selected from each class. Informed consent was secured through information sheets provided to parents in both English and Bahasa Malaysia, outlining the study's details. Parents were given two to three days to review the materials and return signed consent forms, allowing their children to participate. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no risk of harm, and pupils could withdraw at any point. Data were collected respectfully and in a supportive environment.

Research Instruments

Kumar (2011) defines a research tool or instrument as any means employed to gather information in a study, including observation forms, interview schedules, questionnaires, and interview guides (p. 42). Creswell (2012) emphasises that the instruments selected for data collection must be appropriate, aligned with the research objectives, and capable of addressing the research questions. Accordingly, this study employs classroom observations and questionnaires as its primary data collection tools. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies on CS in educational settings (Soma, Zana, Hassan, & Bekhal, 2019; Noor Jasmin, 2016; Muhammad Malek, 2015; Tiffany Selamat, 2014;). To ensure contextual relevance, minor modifications were made while preserving the essential focus of the original instruments.

Classroom Observations

Matthews and Ross (2010) describe observation as the act of watching social phenomena in the real world and documenting events as they unfold. Kumar (2011) adds that observation is a method of collecting primary data that is purposeful, systematic, and selective, allowing researchers to watch and listen to interactions or phenomena as they occur (p.134). He further identifies two types of observation, which are known as participant observation and non-participant observation. Thus, in this study the role of the researcher is non-participatory, where the researcher remains a passive observer, watching and listening to activities without direct involvement and drawing conclusions from their observations. This is also in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD) and the Penang State Education Department, which is known as Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Pulau Pinang (JPNPP) in Malay. The researcher must avoid direct involvement in observations and data collection, ensuring that the teaching and learning process in the classroom remains undisturbed. The main focus of classroom observation in this study is to examine the year 5 pupils' CS during English lessons. However, due to COVID-19 SOP implementation in schools, the researcher is restricted from entering the classrooms for observations during lessons.

Therefore, the researcher employs English teachers as proxies for collecting classroom observation data, as only these teachers can effectively conduct observations during English lessons. Briefings are provided to the teachers from five schools regarding the study's objectives, emphasising the importance of focusing solely on pupils' interactions during English lessons. Additionally, the teachers are instructed to inform the pupils about the purpose of the observations, ensuring that the pupils feel comfortable with the recording process. This approach allows the researcher to gather relevant data on code-switching (CS). Furthermore, since the pupils are already familiar with their English teachers, the dynamics of the classroom remain unchanged during the recording. The researcher provides two sets of Sony ICD-UX570F Voice Recorders to the English teachers for the purpose of recording. The researcher also guides the teachers on how to operate the gadget for recording. Alongside this, the

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researcher offers guidance on how to operate the devices effectively. Teachers also receive a manual for the Sony Voice Recorder for additional reference. The study exclusively utilises audio recording to comply with the requirements set by the Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD) and the Penang State Education Department, known in Malay as Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Pulau Pinang (JPNPP), concerning classroom observations. Audio recording suffices for this study, as its primary focus is to analyse the language usage of Year 5 pupils during English lessons, specifically examining their communicative skills. Consequently, behavioural studies are not part of this research, making non-verbal visual data unnecessary.

Data Recording

Audio recording is a technique used in qualitative research to capture, in detail, the natural interactions of participants within the research environment (Silverman, 2005). This method serves as a valuable tool, allowing researchers to replay verbal exchanges for transcription and analysis. Each school is observed for a month, with two classes from each school monitored throughout the observation period, which resulted in a total of 32 recorded lessons per school, with each class contributing 16 recorded lessons. Across all five schools, this amounts to a total of 160 recordings. The length of each recording varies according to the duration of the classroom sessions. Table 1 presents the distribution of English lesson recordings from each school over the one-month observation period.

Table 3: Distribution Of Recording During English Lessons

School	Topic	Months	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Language Arts	Total
A	Wild life	2 weeks of January and 2 weeks of February	8	6	6	6	6	32
B	Free time	April	6	6	8	6	6	32
C	Days	3 weeks of January and 1 week of February	8	6	6	6	6	32
D	Free time / Cities and Town	April	8	6	6	6	6	32
E	Free time	2 weeks of March and 2	8	6	6	6	6	32

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		weeks of April						
Total	Total	Total	38	30	32	30	30	160

Source: Data Collected and Analysed in This Study

Table 3 indicates that the observation period varies for each school due to factors such as term breaks, public holidays, and occasional leaves specific to each institution. Additionally, the readiness of teachers and students, as well as parents' willingness to allow their children to participate in the study, were also considered. The study commenced only after obtaining parental consent. The topics addressed by the teachers were aligned with the school's annual scheme of work and the textbooks and workbooks supplied by the Ministry of Education

Data Analysis

Qualitative data for this study were gathered through classroom observations. The analysis employed inductive coding, which involves a comprehensive review of detailed data, including transcriptions of classroom observations, followed by the identification of broader codes and themes (Creswell, 2012). This study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, which comprise familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. All classroom observations were transcribed verbatim to facilitate the extraction of detailed excerpts. Thematic analysis was subsequently applied to interpret the findings, with various types of CS categorised into themes based on Muysken's (2000) model.

Research Procedure

The research process followed a systematic sequence to ensure that the study objectives were addressed effectively. It began with determining the study design, followed by the selection of the study location and participants. The instruments were then prepared, and data were collected through classroom observations and audio recordings. These data were subsequently transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically to identify the types of intra-sentential CS used by Year 5 pupils. The overall research process is illustrated in Figure 1.

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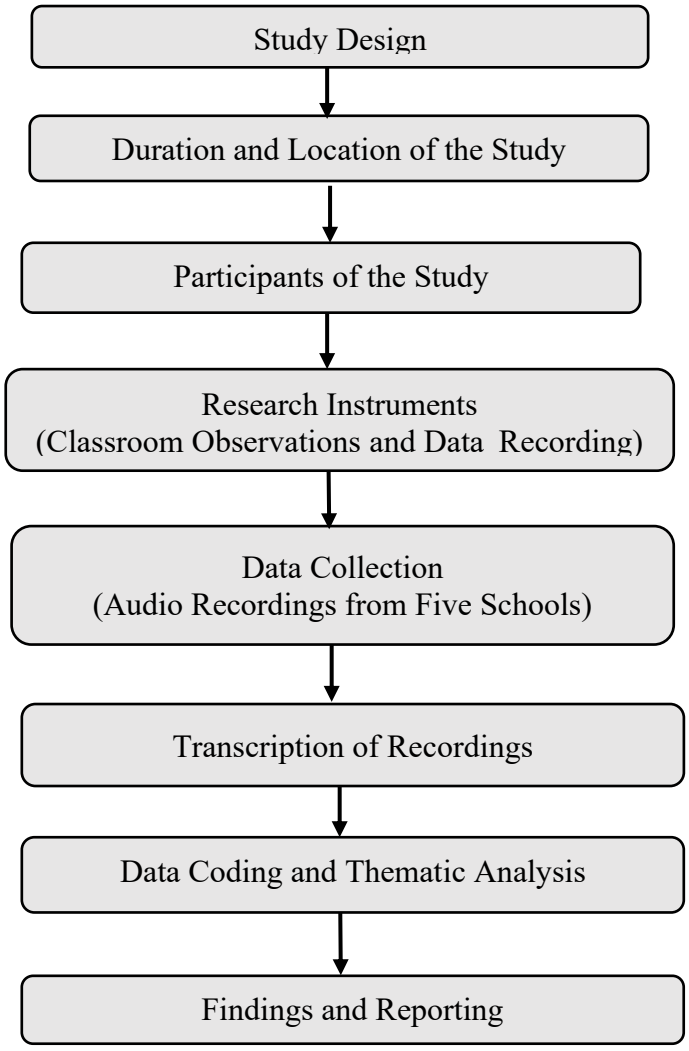

Figure 1: Flowchart of the Study

(Source: Adapted from the Researcher's Study Process).

Figure 1 presents the systematic approach employed in this study to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection and analysis.

Data Management and Challenges

Managing the data for this study posed several methodological challenges. A primary issue was the large number of audio recordings, amounting to 160 across five schools, each of which required verbatim transcription. This process was time-consuming and demanding in terms of accuracy. Ensuring consistency in transcription presented further difficulty, particularly with overlapping voices, background noise and unclear speech. To minimise errors, each recording was reviewed multiple times, and transcripts were cross-checked to capture pupils' utterances faithfully. Data storage and organisation also required systematic labelling, with recordings and transcripts arranged by schools, classes and lesson topics to facilitate retrieval during analysis. Finally, coding the transcribed data into categories and themes necessitated meticulous attention, as the size of the dataset increased the risk of oversight. These challenges were addressed through careful planning, repeated verification and organised file management,

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thereby ensuring the integrity of the data throughout the study in line with recommendations by Creswell (2012) and Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017).

The Findings and Discussion

These findings are based on the analysis of classroom observations on code-switching (CS) among year 5 pupils during English lessons conducted in five national primary schools. The data were analysed and categorised into themes based on Musykes' (2000) classification of intra-sentential CS, which includes alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicalization. A verbatim transcription of all classroom observations was carried out to enable the extraction of detailed excerpts. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants involved in this research, codes were assigned to represent both the schools, classes, and the participants. Each school's code begins with "S," followed by letters "A," "B," "C," "D," or "E," where SA denotes School A, SB indicates School B, SC refers to School C, SD signifies School D, and SE represents School E. Classes are coded as C1 for Class 1 and C2 for Class 2, and participants are labelled as "P," followed by a number representing their order of participation. For example, "SAC1P1" stands for School A, Class 1, Participant 1. Figure 1 presents the distribution of intra-sentential CS types, indicating that insertion occurred most frequently, followed by alternation and congruent lexicalization.

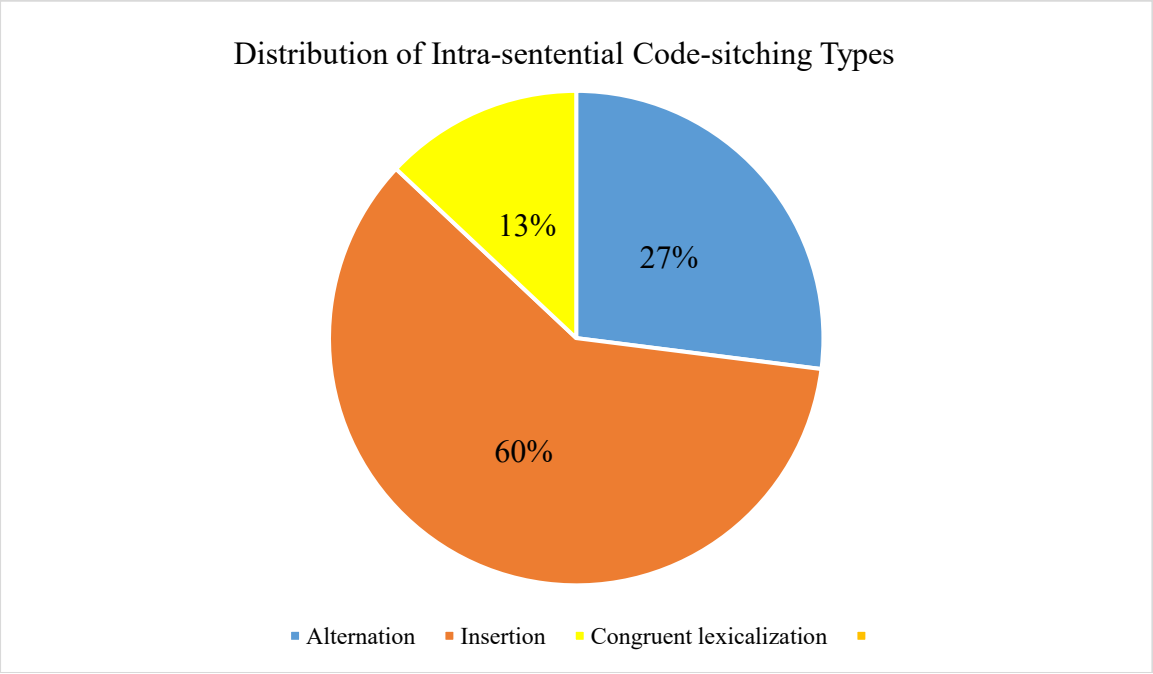

Figure1 : Distribution of Intra-sentential CS Types Among Year 5 Pupils

Source : Data collected and analysed in this study.

This finding indicates that pupils predominantly relied on insertion strategies, suggesting that inserting words or phrases from another language into English sentences was the most accessible and frequent form of CS.

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To further explore how intra-sentential CS occurred across the five schools, Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of these CS types in each school.

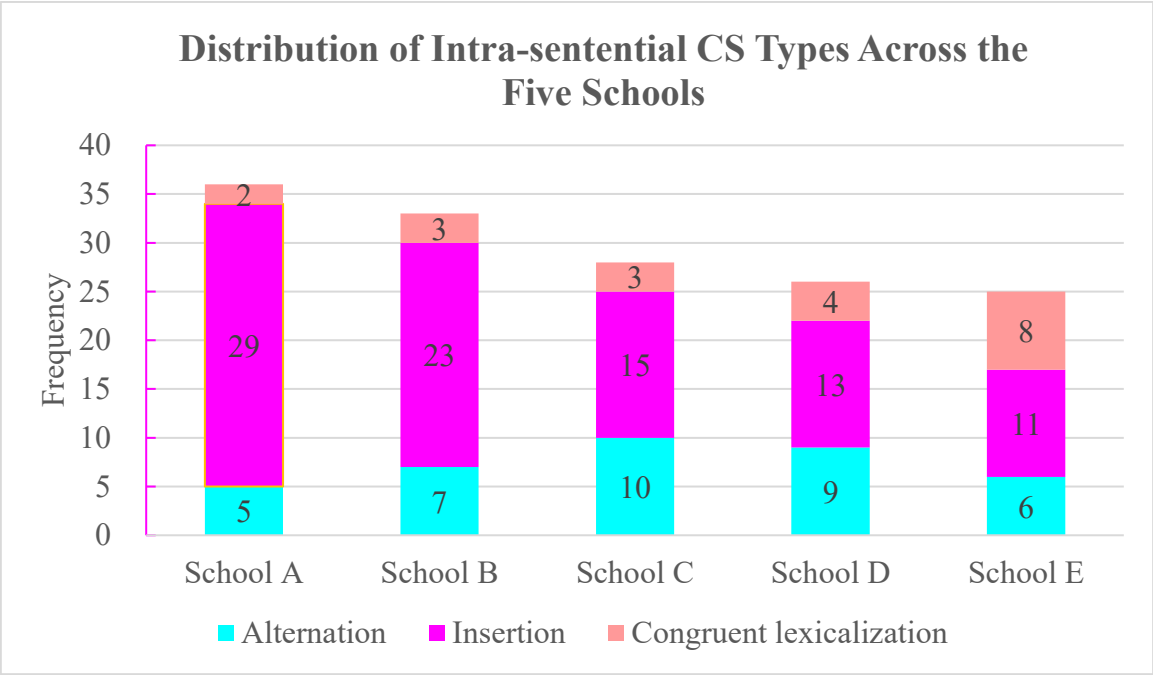

Figure 2: Distribution of Intra-sentential CS Types Across the Five Schools

Source: Data Collected and Analysed in This Study

Figure 2 shows that while insertion remained the most frequent across all schools, there were variations in the extent of alternation and congruent lexicalisation. For example, School C demonstrated a relatively higher proportion of alternation (10 instances) compared to the other schools, whereas School A recorded the lowest use of congruent lexicalisation (5 instances). These differences suggest that pupils' CS practices may be influenced by school-specific factors such as classroom language culture, pupils' level of comfort with the language, and peer interactions.

Alternation Code-switching

Muysken (2000) defines alternation code-switching (CS) as a switch that occurs between both the grammar and vocabulary of two languages within a sentence. In this form of CS, there is no dominant or main language, and the sentence is constructed using the grammatical rules of both languages. In this study, alternation was observed when Year 5 pupils started a sentence in English and then switched to Malay, or vice versa. The pupils' use of alternation CS during the lessons is evident in the following examples. Table 4 presents the findings of alternation CS.

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Table 4: Instances of Alternation Code-Switching in Year 5 Classrooms

Example	Content	Dialogue	Remark
1	Pupils listen to three interviews and identify the animals.	*SAC1P2 : Pelik punya fish (weird fish) let's continue.* *SAC1P3 : dog, frog, elephant.* *SAC1P5 : Saat… (wait)fast sangat (too fast).* *SAC1P6 : Okay, dog…. gambar 3 frog, lima elephant. (picture 3 frog, five elephant).*	Code-switched to fill in lexical gap.
2	Pupils states the places in their town.	*SBC1P1 : There are …are LRT in my town.* *SBC1P2 : Ah! Not there are …you must say there isn't…none right? Kalau tak ade guna (if none use (in Malay) isn't.* *SBC1P3 : Okay, my turn now. There's a clock tower in my town.* *SBC1P4 : Clock tower?...* *SBC1P3 : Yes, Menara jam (clock tower in Malay) in town.* *SBC1P4 : Okay.*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.
3	Pupils discuss their daily routine.	*SCC2P1: Okay, tell me what do you do?* *SCC2P2 : Kena buat ape (What should be done? in Malay).* *SCC2P3 : List your friend's daily routine…rutin harian (daily routine).* *SCC2P4 : Hang (You in Malay) start dulu (first in Malay).* *SCC2P1 :Okay, …morning I go to school…errr…afternoon I go to kelas KAFA…KAFA panggil ape? (called what? in Malay).* *SCC2P3 : Just say religious class.* *SCC2P1 : Okay,…then …then petang (evening) tuition.*	Code-switched for clarification.
4	Pupils read the dialogue and choose the correct answers.	*SDC1P1 : Charlie's mother is…is at home.* *SDC1P2:Mana di rumah…(Where at at home in Malay) kerja lah (work in Malay with filler lah in* *Malay) read the dialogue properly.* *SDC1P3 : Laptop is in the drawer betul kan? (Correct, right? in Malay)* *SDC1P4 : Yes, you are right.* *SDC1P5 : I, I …the speaker di bilik dia (in his or her room in Malay).*	Code-switched for clarification.

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5	Pupils watch the video and discuss the corresponding images.	*SEC1P1 : Guess this image is the poet.* *SEC1P2 : Poet itu sape? (Who is? in Malay).* *SEC1P3 : Poet itu penyair (is a poet in Malay).* *SEC1P4 : The poet is…is John Kitching.* *SEC1P5 : So, kena bincang semua image (must discuss all in Malay).* *SEC1P6 : Discuss only the image yang kite tengok di video (the one we see in the video in Malay).*	Code-switched for clarification.

Source: Data Collected and Analysed in This Study

Table 4 illustrates the findings on alternation code-switching (CS) among Year 5 pupils based on Muysken's (2000) typology, which occurs at clause or sentence boundaries, with each language maintaining its own grammatical structure. In the classroom data, alternation CS typically occurred between English and to fill lexical gaps, for clarification, and to assist peers with the lesson. For instance, in Example 1, pupils were identifying animals after listening to interviews. SAC1P2 said, "pelik punya fish" (weird fish), while SAC1P6 described images using the phrase "gambar 3 frog, lima elephant" (picture 3 frog, five elephant). In both instances, the pupils alternated from English to Malay to express concepts for which they lacked the English equivalent, while still maintaining correct usage of the English animal names. These switches, occurring at phrase boundaries, demonstrate clear grammatical separation between the two languages, characteristic of alternation code-switching.On the other hand, in Example 2, the pupils switched languages to assist peers in using the correct grammatical structure. For instance, SBC1P2 corrected a peer by saying, "Kalau tak ade guna 'isn't'" (if there is none, use 'isn't'). Here, Malay was employed to elucidate the correct usage of English negation, illustrating how alternation facilitated peer learning. This instance also reflects Gumperz's (1982) theory of situational CS, where the switch is triggered by the immediate communicative needs of the context. Examples 3, 4, and 5 further illustrate how pupils used alternation CS for clarification purposes. In Example 3, when discussing daily routines, SCC2P1 asked, "KAFA panggil ape?" (KAFA is called what?), prompting SCC2P3 to clarify, "Just say religious class." In Example 4, SDC1P5 explained the speaker's location by saying, "the speaker di bilik dia" (in his/her room). Similarly, in Example 5, pupils used Malay phrases such as "Poet itu sape?" (Who is the poet?) and "kena bincang semua image" (must discuss all the images) to better understand task instructions and vocabulary. These examples align with Myers-Scotton's (1993) view of conversational CS, where switching serves to maintain communication flow, enhance mutual understanding, and manage interaction dynamics. Overall, the pupils' use of alternation CS demonstrates strategic language choices in response to task demands and peer interaction. Thus, the findings discovered that by alternating between English and Malay, the pupils were able to effectively manage lexical limitations, support each other's learning, and clarify meaning while maintaining the grammatical boundaries of both languages. These findings support the applicability of Muysken's (2000) typology while also illustrating the relevance of Gumperz's (1982) and Myers-Scotton's (1993) perspectives in understanding the sociolinguistic functions of CS in multilingual classrooms.

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Insertion Code-switching

Insertion code-switching (CS) occurs when words or phrases from one language are inserted or embedded into the base structure of the other language. This type of CS involves two languages, which are known as the matrix and the embedded language. The elements from the embedded language are seamlessly integrated into the matrix language (Muysken, 2000). In this study, Year 5 pupils demonstrated a greater frequency of insertional CS compared to other switching types. Examples from each lesson at the participating schools illustrate how the pupils employed this switching method throughout their classes.

Table 5: Instances of Insertion Code-Switching in Year 5 Classrooms

Example	Content	Dialogue	Remark
1	Pupils listen to the audio and complete the sentences.	*SAC2P1 : How do blue whales err…cakap (talk in Malay).* *SAC2P2:Wrong…communicate because blue whale can't talk.* *SAC2P3: Jawapannya (answer is in Malay)… communicate.* *SAC2P4 : How long can a scorpion …tak sempat nak siap (unable to finish it in Malay).*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.
2	Pupils think and talk about places in their town.	*SBC1P1: I like … err…I like the shopping center because it is clean and nice.* *SBC1P2 : Hmmm….nak cakap ape? (What to talk? in Malay).* *SBC1P3: I don't like zoo…because busuk (smelly in Malay) and sunyi (silent in Malay).* *SBC1P4 : I don't like café because it's noisy and dirty.*	Code-switched to fill in lexical gap.
3	Pupils read and match the sentences to the spelling rules.	*SCC1P1 : The first sentence…I study a lot so match with minus 's'.* *SCC1P2 : Minus…tolak ke ? (subtract is it? in Malay).* *SCC1P1: Maksudnya tak perlu (Means no need in Malay) 's'.* *SCC1P3 : He…he go to work…so must match dengan (with in Malay) 'es'.* *SCC1P1 : Yes, betul. (Yes, correct in Malay).* *SCC1P4 : Number three also match with 'es'sebab (because in Malay) go…is goes.* *SCC1P3 : Sama macam nombor dua ke? (Is it same as number two? in Malay).* *SCC1P4 : Yes.*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.
4	Pupils read the poem and identify the food from the poem.	*SDC1P1 : The first word is tea.* *SDC1P2 : Tea is not food look for makanan (food in Malay).* *SDC1P3 : I got it…turnip.*	Code-switched for clarification.

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		SDC1P1 : Turnip itu ape? (What is it? in Malay). *SDC1P2 : Turnip is lobak putih (turnip in Malay).* *SDC1 P3 : Thank you.* *SDC1P4 : Next one…onion.* *SDC1P5 : Got some more…ice, ketchup…prune and pickle.* *SDC1P3 : Pickle ah! (expression in Malay)* *SDC1P5 : Yes, is jeruk (pickle in Malay).*	
5	Pupils read and state whether the statements are "true " or "false.	*SEC2P1 : Let's check these statements about hobbies. The first one is: "I like to play football and draw.* *SEC2P2 : That's true. Draw means melukis (drawing in Malay), and it matches with playing football.* *SEC2P3 : Okay, the next one: Hobbies like reading dan playing video games are tak menarik (not interesting in Malay).* *SEC2P4 : The answer is false see third perenggan (paragraph in Malay).* *SEC2P3: Perenggan…(paragraph in Malay) err…three where?* *SEC2P4 : Second line ada (got in Malay).* *SEC2P3 : Okay, dah jumpa (I got it in Malay). Thank you.*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.

Source: Data Collected and Analysed in This Study

Table 5 outlines the findings on insertion code-switching (CS) among Year 5 pupils.This aligns with Muysken's (2000) typology, where elements from one language are inserted into the structure of another. In the classroom data, CS commonly occurred between English and Malay and served a variety of purposes, such as lexical gap-filling, clarification, and peer assistance. For instance, in Examples 1, 3, and 5, pupils were observed using CS to assist their peers with lesson content. In Example 1, SAC2P2 assisted SAC2P1 by correcting the Malay word "cakap" with the English equivalent communicate. In Example 3, SCC1P1 was seen explaining grammar rules to SCC1P2 in response to a query about the use of the plural *-s* by saying "maksudnya tak perlu" (meaning "no need" in Malay). Similarly, SCC1P4 supported SCC1P3's question, "Sama macam nombor dua ke?" by affirming it in Malay. In Example 5, insertional CS was used extensively to navigate comprehension tasks. SEC2P4 was observed correcting SEC2P3's mistake and guiding them on where to find the answer, stating, "The answer is false, see third perenggan (paragraph)" and "Second line ada (got)." These instances suggest that pupils drew on their full linguistic repertoire to express incomplete thoughts, which parallels Poplack's (2000) findings. In contrast, Example 2 illustrates CS used for lexical gap-filling. SBC1P3 switched to Malay terms when struggling to express their thoughts in English, saying, "I don't like zoo… because busuk (smelly) and sunyi (silent)." Additionally, CS was used for vocabulary clarification. In Example 4, SDC1P1 sought clarification for the word *turnip*, and SDC1P2 explained that it means "lobak putih" in Malay. SDC1P5 further clarified

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vocabulary by affirming the word *pickle* for SDC1P3's expression "jeruk." These examples reflect Zentella's (1997) sociolinguistic findings, which show that bilingual children often insert familiar words to help others access unfamiliar academic terms.

Congruent Lexicalization

Congruent lexicalization code-switching (CS) occurs when two languages share similarities in their grammatical structures, either partially or fully. These similarities allow words and phrases from both languages to be mixed more easily within a sentence (Muysken, 2000). The pupils' use of congruent lexicalization CS during lessons across the schools is illustrated in the examples provided below.

Table 6: Instances of Congruent lexicalization Code-Switching in Year 5 Classrooms

Example	Content	Dialogue	Remark
1	Pupils ask and answer questions based on the pictures.	*SBC1P1 : Is there a…square?* *SBC1P2 : Yes, there is. Eh, Eh silap (Oops,mistake in Malay) Tak, (No in Malay) there isn't.* *SBC1P3 : Now, giliran kamu (your turn in Malay).* *SBC1P4 : Ada (Got in Malay) library tak? (not in Malay).* *SBC1P5 : Maksud kamu (you mean) is there a library?* *SBC1P6 : Yes, ade (got in Malay).* *SBC1P7 : Are there markets?* *SBC1P5 : Yes, there are. Bila (When in Malay) you jawab kena cakap (answer must say in Malay) aren't kalau (if in Malay) answer is no.*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.
2	Pupils write five sentences about their weekend activity.	*SCC1P1 : Weekend itu maksudnya hujung minggu ke? (Does it mean weekend ? in Malay).* *SCC1P2 : Yes. I help my mother to wash the dishes.* *SCC1P3 : I help to…, to… lap (wipe in Malay) the tingkap (window in Malay).* *SCC1P4 : I help my mother to menyiang fish (clean the fish in Malay).* *SCC1P5 : Kite tolong (I help in Malay) to wash car.* *SCC1P6 : I pun sama (also same in Malay) wash car.*	Code-switched for clarification and to fill in lexical gap.
3	Pupils read and arrange the story in sequence.	*SCC1P1 : On Saturday, Natalie, her mom and I went to the library is nombor satu (number one).*	Code-switched to exhibit feelings.

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		SCC1P2 : No lah (filler in Malay) ayat dengan (sentence with in Malay) my teacher number one. Teacher tanya baru dia (asked then only she in Malay) imagine pi (going in Malay) library. *SCC1P3 : Yes, she's right. Then only ayat yang mula … (sentence that begins with in Malay) on Saturday.* *SCC1P4 : Susahva (Dificult in Malay with filler in Tamil)* *irukku. (It is in Tamil). Don't understand.* *SCC1P5 : Just why we are discussing.* *SCC1P4 :Okay. Hey, hey, nalaki English illai (tomorrow there is no English in Tamil).*	
4	Pupils read and match the sentence parts to form sentences.	*SDC2P1 : So, kena (must in Malay) match the sentence parts.* *SDC2P2 : Yes, you must padankan (match it in Malay) them.* *SDC2P3 : You dah habis reading ke? (Have you finished reading? in Malay).* *SDC2P4 : Jangan (Don't in Malay) get confused between the sentence parts.* *SDC2P5 : Maksudnya kena suaikan (Means must match* *in Malay) column A and B.* *SDC2P4 : Yes, you betul kena (correct must in Malay) match both columns.*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.
5	Pupils listen to the audio and complete the sentences with demonstrative pronouns.	*SEC1P1 : So, we must listen first and lengkapkan (complete in Malay) sentences.* *SEC1P2 : You complete the sentences dengan (with in Malay) demonstrative pronouns.* *SEC1P3 : I don't really understand so tak siap (didn't complete in Malay).* *SEC1P4 : I pening juga (confused also in Malay) but just…just write the answers.* *SEC1P5 : Kalau you pening (confused in Malay), sure…sure salah (wrong in Malay).*	Code-switched to assist peer with the lesson.

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		SEC1P6 : You kena (must in Malay) pay attention.	

Source: Data Collected and Analysed in This Study

Table 6 highlights the findings on congruent lexicalization code-switching (CS) among Year 5 pupils. This corresponds to Muysken's (2000) typology, in which CS occurs when speakers alternate between languages without modifying the grammatical structure of the sentence. This type of switching is facilitated when both languages share similar syntactic patterns, allowing for smooth integration of vocabulary across languages. It also reflects Gumperz's (1982) concept of conversational CS, where segments of speech from different grammatical systems are blended within a single discourse. In this study, the year 5 pupils are observed blending Malay or Tamil elements into English sentences without altering the overall grammatical structure for various reasons, such as to assist peers, clarify meaning and express feelings. Pupils were observed using CS to assist peers in Examples 1, 4, and 5. In Example 1, pupils provided help with the usage of the verb *to be*. For instance, SBC1P2 responded to SBC1P1's inquiry by saying, "Yes, there is. Eh, eh *silap* (Oops). *Tak*, (No) there isn't," correcting both content and language choice mid-utterance. Similarly, SBC1P5 guided SBC1P7 by explaining, "Yes, there are. *Bila* (When) you *jawab kena cakap* (answer must say) aren't *kalau* (if) the answer is no," blending Malay expressions into an English syntactic frame to support grammar clarification. Likewise, in Example 4, SDC2P2 explained the task to SDC2P1 by saying, "Yes, you must *padankan* (match) them." SDC2P4 further assisted SDC2P5 by affirming and advising, "*Jangan* (Don't) get confused between the sentence parts," and "Yes, you *betul kena* (correct must) match both columns," in response to SDC2P5's query, "*Maksudnya kena suaikan* (Means must match) column A and B." In Example 5, SEC1P2 supported peers by stating, "You complete the sentences *dengan* (with) demonstrative pronouns," although others appeared unsure of the task and struggled with comprehension. In other instances, congruent lexicalization was used for clarification and to address lexical gaps. In Example 2, SCC1P1 sought clarification for the word *weekend* by asking, "*Weekend itu maksudnya hujung minggu ke?*" (Does it mean weekend?). SCC1P3 and SCC1P4 also inserted Malay terms when they were uncertain of the English words. For instance, SCC1P3 switched to Malay for the words *lap* and *window*, and SCC1P4 used the word *siang* when unsure of the term *clean*, all without altering the syntactic flow of the sentence. In contrast, Example 3 demonstrates how pupils employed congruent lexicalization to express feelings. SCC1P4 conveyed frustration by saying, "*Susahva* (Difficult) *irukku* (it is)," blending Malay with a Tamil suffix, followed by "Don't understand." The same pupil later expressed relief with, "Okay. Hey, hey, *nalaki English illai*" (Tomorrow, there is no English), mixing Tamil and English to reflect emotional anticipation. Other pupils were also seen switching between English and Malay during discussion, often to negotiate understanding and express reactions to task demands. This behaviour reflects Myers-Scotton's (1993) concept of intra-sentential CS, where speakers opt for the language choice that feels most natural and requires minimal effort in a given social context. In cases of congruent lexicalization, the decision to insert Malay or Tamil terms into English discourse likely stems from perceived ease and linguistic familiarity. Pupils were able to navigate between languages without syntactic disruption, thereby facilitating smooth and effective communication during classroom interactions.

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Conclusion

This study examined intra-sentential code-switching among Year 5 pupils in five national primary schools in Penang Island using Muysken's (2000) typology. The findings showed that alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicalization were all present, with alternation being the most frequent. The objectives of the study were therefore achieved, as it successfully identified and described pupils' code-switching practices. The study contributes by extending the application of Muysken's framework to young learners in Malaysia and by demonstrating the pedagogical role of code-switching in supporting comprehension and classroom interaction.

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