Title	English teachers using Singapore colloquial English in the classroom: An examination of two secondary school teachers' lessons
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English Teachers Using Singapore Colloquial English In The Classroom – An Examination Of Two Secondary School Teachers' Lessons

INTRODUCTION

A) Background and Aims

It is often pointed out that Singapore is successful because of trade, and the language of that trade is English. The use of English in Singapore aids the attraction of overseas capital, trade and industrial investment tremendously (Kuo, 1977:19).

The import of English into Singapore is precisely where the problem begins: language is never static in that how it is used and what it means to the speakers, is different in different contexts. As Kandiah (1998) elaborates, as English is used in different environments, it develops distinct new features that enables it to meet with the unfamiliar demands of communication, expression, action and interaction unique to each context. Thus, new varieties of the language begin to emerge.

As with the case of Singapore, two varieties have since materialized – Singapore Standard English (SSE) and Singapore Colloquial English (SCE), or popularly known as Singlish. SSE is the formal variety used by educated Singaporeans and thus, the only difference it has with British Standard English is that it is spoken with a Singaporean accent (Low and Brown 2005:11). SCE on the other hand, is the informal local variety that has developed through the influence of other languages and dialects. This colloquial variety has evolved over the years so much so that many Singaporeans feel attached to the language and even view it as a source of national pride and identity. To the users of SCE, it is more than just a language; it is a sense of belonging.

However, its use has been a controversial issue of debate in Singapore, and even more so in recent years. While some contend that 'Singlish is a mark of how we have evolved as a nation

and should surely have a place in our culture' (Straits Times 3 Nov 1998), others, especially the government, maintain that the use of Singlish hinders effective communication with the rest of the world. Quoting Senior Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew in an article where he spoke against the use of Singlish,

> 'Each family can create its own coded language; nothing wrong with that except that no one outside the family can understand you. We are learning English so that we can understand the world and the world can understand us. It is therefore important to speak and write Standard English'.

(Straits Times, 15 Aug 1999)

This same idea was reinforced by the then-Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, where he emphasized the need for good English for economic reasons,

> 'The ability to speak good English is a distinctive advantage in terms of doing business and communicating with the world… If we speak a corrupted form of English that is not understood by others, we will lose a key competitive advantage… All this will affect our aim to be a first-world economy'.

(Goh Chok Tong, 2000)

With the importance of SSE so strongly put across by the leaders of Singapore, such a stand must have an impact on education. Schools, which are the government's advocates, are thus expected to model and teach Standard English. This is translated in the education syllabus where the main aim states that pupils will be able to speak and write grammatically and fluently in internationally acceptable English at the end of both primary and secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2001).

In the classrooms, English teachers are inevitably expected to be the role models of SSE so as to bring about a generation of intelligible Singaporeans. However, through our observation and personal experience, it appears that many English teachers do not only use SSE in the classroom; instead, they often code-switch between SSE and SCE. Therefore, what we attempt to do, is to find out, through an examination of the teacher talk of the lessons of two secondary school

English teachers, the type of situations in which they commonly code-switch to SCE, and from there, to suggest some possible reasons why they do so.

More specifically, we seek to find an answer to this research question:

- Does the current framework, that is, the Diglossia Model, correctly predict the patterns of use of SSE and SCE in English lessons?

We hope that the findings will not only shed some light on the current situation of the English classrooms, but also, to show how the local variety of English can be an effective tool in the classroom, when used judiciously.
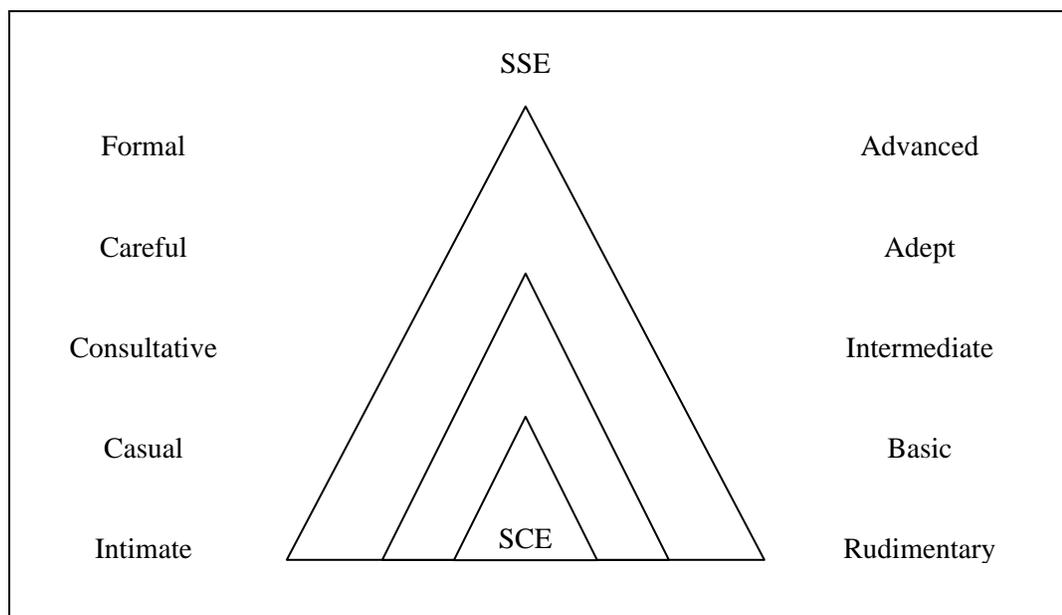
B) Diglossia

The Diglossia Model was first applied by Gupta (1986) to explain the English situation in Singapore. In simple terms, diglossia refers to the existence of two varieties of the same language, namely, the high (H) and the low (L) varieties, which are functionally distinct. In formal circumstances like education and writing, diglossia predicts that the H variety, or SSE, is used, while the L variety, or SCE, is used in informal, casual situation.

Unlike the continuum-based analysis suggested by Platt and Weber (1980), this Diglossia Model is a polar approach. According to Gupta (2001:122), although features of both H and L are often present in the verbal repertoire of proficient speakers, most utterances are identifiable as one or the other variety, making the analysis relatively clear cut; that is, speakers point either to the H or the L.

Besides the range of situations that determine the variety of English one chooses to use, Pakir (1991), through the Expanding Triangles Model, added that education too, was an important factor in determining one's proficiency in shifting between the H and L varieties. She attributed

this to the changing phase of the English Language in Singapore, recognising that English no longer was only accessible to the rich and powerful; it had become the language for everyone, at every social level.

SSE

Formal   Advanced

Careful   Adept

Consultative   Intermediate

Casual   Basic

Intimate   SCE   Rudimentary

(Pakir 1991:144)

The first dimension, along the cline of formality, ranges from SSE (H) at the upper end to SCE (L) at the lower end. Its formality cline is graded into five series, beginning with 'formal' at the highest end and 'intimate' at the lowest end. The second dimension, along the cline of proficiency, has its range also divided into five graded series. The highest is termed as 'advanced', which refers to highly educated speakers, and the lowest termed as 'rudimentary', which refers to uneducated speakers. These levels as defined by Pakir (1991) are said to be to be closely associated with the number of years of exposure to the language in an institutional setting.

The most advanced English speakers have the largest triangles – armed with a high level of proficiency in the standard variety, they can shift up and down the formality cline without any difficulty and more importantly, both subvarieties SSE and SCE are easily accessible to them. This also means that rudimentary English speakers are confined to the smallest triangles –

equipped with a low level of proficiency, they only have access to SCE as their working language.

Contrary to the predictions made by diglossia, while SCE is considered the L variety and thus, should not to be used in the Singapore classroom being of a formal setting, through informal observation, personal experience and teacher-talk analysis of two secondary school English teachers (as you will see in the later part of the paper), reality is that it is, in fact, commonly used.

Interestingly, Pakir (1995) also found SCE in her transcripts of teacher talk in the classroom, thus suggesting that although SCE is said used only in informal settings, in the classroom, teachers do use SCE for the purposes of establishing solidarity, rapport and familiarity (Pakir, 1995:6).

It is also important to bear in mind that many of these teachers who code-switch between the varieties in the classroom, are not only highly educated; they are the 'advanced' speakers of SSE, according to Pakir's (1995) definition. Therefore, their use of SCE in the classroom is certainly not due to an imperfect mastery of the standard variety, as many would have assumed.

Our hypothesis, based on the diglossia, is that although SCE is not encouraged in the classroom, it is often used when the teacher tries to establish solidarity, create rapport and a sense of camaraderie with the pupils, in non-content oriented or less formal aspects of lessons.

C) Selection of Data

From the original corpus of eight teachers, five were English teachers. Out of these five, two were selected for this study. These two subjects were selected because they clearly possessed a good command of English and demonstrated code-switching of SSE and SCE.

The reason for such criteria is because if we are to examine where and why teachers code-switch, it is imperative that the subjects command SSE so that their use of SCE cannot be attributed to the imperfect mastery of SSE. From the corpus of five English teachers, the first did not possess the SCE variety required for code-switching, and the next two, unfortunately, were not highly proficient in SSE.

The two English teachers selected for the study have been assigned pseudonyms, Flora (FL) and Lisa (LL). Both Flora and Lisa were English teachers from the same neighbourhood secondary school and were teaching secondary two English classes. The two classes taught by Flora and Lisa were similar in terms of ability in that both classes belonged to the normal (academic) stream.

From a pool of four lessons per teacher, two lessons from each of them were selected for the analysis. These two lessons were chosen because they differed in the role that the teachers adopted in the classroom.

D) Singlish Features

Illustrated below, are the types of SCE features that are commonly used by Flora and/or Lisa. Certainly other SCE features can be found in FL and LL, however, they are not discussed here because they are less frequent in both.

Some features listed are frequently used by one and not the other and are also worth explaining because such a difference is interesting, since these eight features, namely, use of pragmatic particles such as *'ah'*, *'lah'*, and *'what'*, conditional clauses without a subordinating conjunction and absence of past tense marking and copula 'be' deletion, as discussed in Gupta (1994:10) use

of borrowings as discussed in Platt and Weber (1980:82), use of particle *'one'* as identified by

Brown (1999:152), use of '*already*' and wh- in situ questions as discussed in Alsagoff and Ho

(1998:139), are supposedly typical in Singapore speakers' speech.

a) Use of '*already*'

1)   T: That means you are one step behind. You got to take the mahjong
            paper now *already*.
            (Line 233-234, FL2, Appendix A2. Kwek (2005))

b) Wh- in situ questions

2)   T: Same ok. Dusk, dawn is *when*? Early morning before the sun rises.
            (Line 129, FL1, Appendix A1. Kwek (2005))

c) Conditional Clauses without a Subordinating Conjunction

3)   T: Yep. You're supposed to come up with the story plots. ^ you wish to
            use this as part of your props, you may.
            (Line 80-81, FL2, Appendix A2. Kwek (2005))

d) Absence of past tense marking

4)   T: Why. Because they saw misery, hatred. They saw rage in his eyes.
            He *has* something. We don't know who he was. He *stomp* in
            because he was able to make a presence as he *enter*. You know he's
            not like some small person here for fashion show.
            (Line 149-152, LL2, Appendix A4. Kwek (2005))

e) Copula 'be' deletion

5)   T: Yes, build on a…this ^ only a draft what, right?
            (Line 144, FL2, Appendix A2. Kwek (2005))

f) Use of borrowings

6)   T: imagine that…and everybody is like..ok? He held it up right in his
            hand, he point it lazily to the floor. Remember Ms Lim today said
            the *daogay* hand?You know what's a daogay hand right? Yesterday when we saw
            dancing it was all the… that's your *daogay* hand ok? (Line 175-179, LL2,
            Appendix A4. Kwek (2005))

Although the above feature is not very frequent in LL in that it only occurs thrice, it is worth

mentioning because the use of borrowings does not occur at all in Flora's lessons.

g) Use of *'this one'* and *'that one'*

7)   T: Ok, for those who have finished listing the features, go in to look at questions in green, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, setting, characters, complications, climax, resolution. It will vary by group; *that one* is quite standard; there is a model answer because you align it, you fix it. *This one* will vary depending on readers ok. Get it done.
(Line 579-584, LL2, Appendix A3. Kwek (2005))

h) Use of particles like *'ah'*, ' *'lah'* and *'what'*.

8)   T: Peh Shin is still absent *ah*.
(Line 7, LL1, Appendix A1. Kwek (2005))

As in many Singapore English speakers' speech, in FL and LL, the use of particles, more specifically, '*ah*', is by far the most frequent feature.

E i) Tools of Analysis: Pedagogical Role of Teacher

Tan (2000:31) states that teachers basically undertake four teacher roles in the classroom, namely, creator, leader, mentor and facilitator. In Flora's first lesson (FL1) and Lisa's second lesson (LL2), they took on a mentor role, where they note only were role models, they also delivered clear instructions and often evaluated pupils' outcomes. The information flow between them and the pupils was hierarchical, and to the pupils, they were the senior masters.

On the contrary, in Flora's second lesson (FL2) and Lisa's first lesson (LL1), they took on a facilitator role, where they often posed questions, guided the leaders of the different groups when needed, and encouraged discussion and sharing. The information flow between them and the pupils was lateral, and to the pupils, they were seen as a discussant and friend; one they could easily approach.

The reason for such a selection is because if we want to determine the environment teachers often code-switch, we first need to ensure that the lessons under study contain a variety of situations the teachers are involved in, and the type of teacher roles they take on determines this. Also, selecting the lessons where both teachers play the same role allows for the comparison of both teachers' use of SCE in similar environments.

E ii) Analysis of Discourse: Sinclair's Frameworks

Sinclair and Brazil (1982:22) state that every lesson can be divided into three distinct parts. They are classified as Content, Organization and Discipline.

According to Sinclair and Brazil (1982:22), **Content** refers to the subject matter of the lesson, more specifically; it is the agenda of the lesson. They go on to explain that every lesson of every subject typically has a kind of agenda. For instance, in Excerpt (9), the agenda of the lesson is to go through a passage with the pupils, thus, the talk is **on** the passage. The teacher describes what is happening in the passage, about how everyone reacted when the protagonist, who was dressed in the wrong attire, walked in to a room. This talk is analysed as Content.

9)

Part of lesson		LL2 Appendix A4 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Content	T:	Everyone turned and looked at the stranger when he walked in. see ah. Here you have don't know what's happening. The first line says 'Everyone turned and looked at the stranger when he walked in. he was significantly more than slightly underdressed for the occasion at hand, wearing a pair of rugged sandals, denim shorts and a plain grey t-shirt.	61-66

Another part of the lesson is classified as **Organization.** Sinclair and Brazil (1982:22) say that it is the talk about the lesson, about individual activities within the lesson, organization of lessons in the course, the syllabus, curriculum, assessment and homework. For example, in Excerpt (10), the teacher is organizing the activities in the classroom so that the lesson can begin, more specifically, she is getting the pupils to sit down and asking them to hand in work. It is in this part of the lesson that administrative matters of the class, such as collecting forms, marking attendance and returning work are handled. According to Sinclair and Brazil (1982), the

difference between Content and Organization is that for Content, the talk is **on** the lesson, while

for Organization, the talk is **about** the lesson.

10)

Part of lesson		LL2 Appendix A4 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Organization	T:	ok erm…xxx Ok guys, come. Sit down. Sit down please. Ok some housekeeping ah. Can I have your all work ah. Remember I asked for your work? Guys, I ask for your work. Deadline is today. Yes, you're supposed to bring.	10-13

The third part is **Discipline**, and Sinclair and Brazil (1982:22) define it as 'the talk for managing

behaviour, conforming to conventions and treating each other along established lines of

conduct'. This aspect, according to them, relates to both the Content and Organization aspects as

it is what is required for creating and maintaining a suitable working environment for all. For

instance, in Excerpt (11), the teacher is scolding them for their copying and also, handing in late

work. It is therefore analysed as Discipline while it is related to Organization.

11)

Part of lesson		FL1 Appendix A1 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Discipline	T:	Alright, class I am not happy with your work. No.1, I know some of you have been copying each other. I know, and you know who you are. You hand me late work. Many of you didn't finish all the questions either. What is this ah? What are you up to?	34-38

It is based on the fundamental framework as seen above, that the commonly used Initiation

Response and Follow-up (IRF) structure is developed. IRF is a framework that has been

maximally utilized and elaborated on by many researchers in the area of classroom discourse; for

instance, in Tsui (1994). As its name clearly shows, the IRF sifts out the pattern(s) of exchange

between the teacher and pupils.

Initiation, according to Sinclair and Brazil (1982:36), is 'the main instrument of education' – it involves the teacher asking questions or giving instructions so as to guide and control the pupils. Certainly pupils can be the ones initiating questions as well, but how much of each is present depends on the nature of the lesson as well as the teaching style of the teacher. A typical lesson consists of both.

Response refers to what follows after a question (from Initiation). It can come in the form of an answer that fits in with the question, a diversion or anything else. Responses are forward looking in that the type of response that is chosen, has a considerable effect on what follows (Sinclair and Brazil, 1982:40). It is important to note that it is possible for a 'missing' or non-verbal Response from the pupils, which is rather typical in the lessons analysed in this paper. In other words, there are occasions where the teacher poses a question fully expecting pupils not to answer, thus evaluating her own Initiation immediately.

What comes after Response is the Follow-up of what is been previously said, or as mentioned, occasionally, a non-verbal Response. Sinclair and Brazil (1982:45) reveals that this aspect of teacher talk is especially important with regard to learning because it is only when a pupil, is shown or told of how he is learning, can he be reaping the most out of it. It is precisely where errors are corrected, bad habits stopped and problems faced by pupils, identified. Unquestionably, it is also where fine work is praised and good habits encouraged. Because of its purpose, we can be sure to say that teacher talk in a classroom is largely made up of Follow-up.

Having said that, Excerpt (12) is an illustration of how talk is analysed with IRF.

12)

IRF		LL2 Appendix A4 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Initiation	T:	What about the complication? With the character. What was his first major complication? David. David.	436-437
Response	S:	Maybe he's a victim	438
Follow-up	T:	Victim. Right. The moment he walked in, he was out to do something	439-440

Based on Sinclair's lesson division, that is, the organization, discipline and content, together with the use of IRF in the content aspect of the lesson for a micro perspective, the teacher talk in the lesson discourses were analysed and discussed.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A)   Lesson Structures

According to Tan (2000:28), every lesson can be divided into three sections, namely, the pre-instructional, the instructional and the post-instructional. Because this division allows us to look at each lesson in smaller units, which supports a more focused discussion, Flora and Lisa's lessons will be divided accordingly. For the ease of labelling, in this paper, they will be called the introduction, the body, and the conclusion respectively.

Based on this three-section division, the lesson structures of FL1, FL2, LL1 and LL2 are summarized in the table on the following page.

Table 2: Summary of Lesson Structures of FL1, FL2, LL1 and LL2

	FL1	FL2	LL1	LL2
Teacher's Role	Mentor (A Typical Lesson)	Facilitator	Facilitator	Mentor
Lesson Structure	<u>Introduction</u> Administrative matters and outline of lesson **(Organization)** and managing	<u>Introduction</u> Give instructions to entire class about group work **(Content)**	<u>Introduction</u> Outline of lesson and activities of the day, **(Organization)** managing	<u>Introduction</u> Administrative matters and outline of lesson **(Organization)** and managing

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	behaviour **(Discipline)**		behaviour **(Discipline)** And recapitulate content of previous lesson **(Content)**	behaviour **(Discipline)**
	Body	Body	Body	Body
	Activity: Go through comprehension corrections **(Content)**	Activity: Group work. Flora gives instructions and provide suggestions to small groups or individual pupils **(Content)**	Activity: Individual and Group work. Lisa goes through answers on the work done. **(Content)** When switching from one activity to another, instructions are given about the next activity **(Organization)**	Activity: Go through a particular text based on a list of questions **(Content)**
	Conclusion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Conclusion
	Collect corrections **(Organization)**	Give instructions to entire class about the group work as homework **(Content)**	A large part of this section is spent on summarizing the activities done during the lesson **(Content)** and collecting work **(Organization)**	Give homework and instructions on how it should be done **(Organization)**

B) FL1 and LL2

For a typical textbook lessons like FL1 and LL2 where the teacher takes on the role of a mentor, the introduction and the conclusion sections are made up of largely Organizational and Disciplinary discourses, and the body section is made up of almost entirely Content-oriented discourse. The hypothesis work we are investigating is that teachers use SSE in content-centred discourse, and SCE in audience-centred discourse (or Organizational and Disciplinary discourse). Thus, we would expect to see teachers shifting to a lower position in their expanding triangles into a lower level on the diglossic cline in both the Organizational and Disciplinary aspects while maintaining a higher position in their triangle in the Content aspect of the lesson.

Indeed, through the analysis, we see SCE frequently used in the Organizational and Disciplinary discourses. Excerpt (13) to Excerpt (16) illustrate the use of SCE in Organizational and Disciplinary discourses in FL1 and LL2 respectively.

13)

Aspect of Teacher Talk		FL1 Appendix A1 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Organization	T:	Listen up, homework *ah*, English workbook, Unit 10.8 and 10.9, which is on grammar; go home, finish it, bring it back tomorrow.	451-454

14)

Aspect of Teacher Talk		FL1 Appendix A1 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Discipline	T:	You hand me late work. Many of you didn't finish all the questions either. What is this *ah*? What are you up to? Guys, if you are not serious with work, I cannot guarantee you will stay in NA. It is not a guarantee that you are in NA means you are always going to be in NA. You may fall to normal technical. I say this with all seriousness; you better wake up. If you don't wake up, especially for English, it's one of the very important subjects, too bad *ah*, next year, I see you in Sec 3I; 3, yes 3I; you go to normal technical. ^ you fail NA requirements, you go normal technical. You know who you are *ah*, first report all ^ U grad.	40-49

15)

Aspect of Teacher Talk		LL2 Appendix A4 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Organization	T:	ok erm…xxx Ok guys, come. Sit down. Sit down please. Ok some housekeeping *ah*. Can I have your all work *ah*. Remember I asked for your work?	10-13

16)

Aspect of Teacher Talk		LL2 Appendix A4 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Disciplinary	T:	Ziming put that away ok. You know if I *confiscate* ^ you'll cry.	6-7

Because these teacher talk (Excerpt (13-16)) are audience-centred, Flora shifts to a lower position of her triangle to use SCE, the particle *'ah'* in particular, to create a more casual environment so as to establish solidarity and rapport with her pupils.

Then one might wonder; Flora uses SCE in negative disciplinary discourse as well, that is, when she is scolding her pupils. How then, can she be trying to establish solidarity or friendliness with her pupils when she is precisely showing her authority as a teacher? Excerpt (14) shows Flora scolding her pupils for their bad behaviour, and she uses SCE, more specifically, the particle *'ah'*, which is thought to 'convey friendliness or politeness' (Brown, 1999:5), three times within nine lines.

A possible explanation is this: perhaps using SCE for building rapport, as the current framework suggests, is not merely used to 'convey friendliness', it could include the meaning of drawing the distance between the parties, in this case, the teacher and pupils closer. This closer distance does not imply any sense of casualness or friendliness, but rather, it is used to establish common understanding between the parties involved. As seen in Excerpt (14), Flora may be scolding her pupils, but in that scolding, she is trying to use an appropriate variety, more specifically, to shift to a lower position of her triangle to match theirs so that they can understand and relate better to what she is saying.

Based on the diglossia prediction, SCE was not expected to appear in the Content aspect of the lesson. However, interestingly, we found several instances of SCE being used. Using the IRF to study this aspect of the lesson, we found that within the Content aspect, SCE was found largely in the Follow-up moves. Excerpts (17) and (18) taken from FL1 and LL2 respectively, illustrate this.

17)

IRF		FL1 Appendix A1 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
I	T:	How is Auntie Lou related to Mr Evans?	253
R	SS:	Sister. Sister.	254
F	T:	Yes, his sister ok. Mr Evans is a very fierce man ok. She is also afraid of Mr Evans, understand. Auntie Lou is afraid of everything *ah*, anything and everything.	255-257

18)

IRF		Appendix A4	Line number
I	T:	Who were scared? Who were scared?	139
R	S:	Everyone.	140
F	T:	Everyone. Everyone who *were* in the ballroom. the 'everyone'. That group of everyone. That group of everyone was scared.	141-143
I		What did they do when they were scared? What did they do when they were scared? They…(pause) What did they do?	143-144
F		They *back* away	144
I		Did they back away and cover or what did they do? They *back* away and…(pause)? What did they do?	144-146
F		They *back*. ^ They *gaze*. They still *want* to know. It's that *kaypo* thing in everybody. Correct? They backed, ^ they ^ scared.	146-147
I		Why?	148
F		Because they saw misery, hatred. They saw rage in his eyes.	148

With reference to Excerpt (18), in the 4 occurrences of Initiation, only 1 contains SCE, and in the 4 occurrences of Follow-up, 3 of them contain SCE. This is a common sight in the Content aspect of the lesson where we see both Flora and Lisa shifting up and down their triangle very

frequently. While it was thought that SCE would be very infrequent in Content, it is certainly not the case for these two lessons.

A possible explanation for such a pattern could be that while this section is no doubt the most formal part of the lesson, the teacher shifts to a lower position of her triangle when she is explaining Content so that pupils can understand the subject matter better, and shifts back to a higher position, and that is, to the formal code, when the explanation process is done.

Gupta (1998:122) explains that although at times, the distinction between the use of H and L variety is not that clear, 'most utterances will be identifiable as one or the other variety'. In the case of the Content aspect of FL1 and LL2, we can see that Flora and Lisa point towards the SSE, although SCE is occasionally used.

This code-switching pattern of SSE and SCE is prevalent throughout the entire section, thus, with the possible explanations supported by the pattern of how SCE is used in the Organizational, Disciplinary and the Follow-up moves of the Content aspects, SCE is certainly not randomly used, neither can it be attributed to the teachers' 'lapse in the standard variety'.

C) FL2 and LL1

Both FL2 and LL1 are pupil-centred lessons where the pupils did group work. Thus, the teachers, instead of being mentors as they were in FL1 and LL2, took on a new role, one of a facilitator. The relationship between the teacher and the learners in this kind of teaching approach, is lateral in that the teacher becomes a discussant and friend. This is reflected in the teachers' use of English within the lesson – they used SCE throughout their lesson.

For instance, in Excerpt (19) Flora is giving instructions (which is analysed as Content discourse in this type of teaching approach) to the whole class about what they are required to do in their

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groups. She tells them to think of the props they will need for the presentation, be it clothing or equipment, and to bring them to class the following Tuesday. In this short excerpt of 10 lines, two types of the most frequent SCE features used by her are present; that is, the use of particle '*ah*' and the lack of a subordinating conjunction within conditional clauses.

19)

Aspect of Teacher Talk	FL2 Appendix A2 (Kwek, 2005)		Line number
Content	T:	Next thing to prepare is this: You must think of whatever props you need to use. Props means your logistics *ah*, whatever you think you need to bring to class next Tuesday, be it your special type of clothing you want to wear, k ^ you want to bring whatever equipment along, bring it along. Things you require, things you want to consider.	22-27

Also, in Excerpt (20), Lisa tells her pupils how the setting in the story is created and more importantly, how their groups need to progress to a higher level in their writing, to create a setting like the one they just read. In this short excerpt of just 5 lines, at least 4 types of SCE features can be found.

20)

Aspect of Teacher Talk		LL1 Appendix A3 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
Content	T:	One of the highest challenge eh, of writing eh is how can you create a setting like this one; just an empty ballroom and yet there is tension subtly inside it. At your level *ah*, ^ should be this *already*. I don't need things like eh, 'oh, as the wind blow, there was an eerie creak'. It doesn't work *already*. *That one* is not pitched at the level.	763-768

Unlike in FL1 and LL2, IRF is also unable to pick out a code-switching pattern in the Content aspect of the lesson. Excerpts (21) and (22) show that SCE can occur in Initiation moves as well as Follow-up moves. In Excerpt (21), the SCE feature '*ah*' is used in the Initiation in line 222, where Flora asks a particular group of pupils the number of them in their group.

21)

IRF		FL2 Appendix A2 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
I	T:	Your group only consists of 3 of you *ah*	222
R	SS:	Ya	223

In Excerpt (21), Flora begins by asking a particular group of pupils if they have any questions for her (Initiation). They reply her (Response); she evaluates that response and goes on to evaluate their work (Follow-up). Within the Follow-up, there are two occurrence of the SCE particle. Another SCE feature, though not that frequently used by her, is incorporated in her speech; she uses '*got*' instead of 'have' as would have been 'you have the potential to bring in further' in SSE.

22)

IRF		FL2 Appendix A2 (Kwek, 2005)	Line number
I	T:	Alright, How? Any questions?	206-207
R	SS:	No…	208
F	T:	No question, ok let me see your story *ah*. Ya, give me some beef *ah*, beef it up. *Got* potential to bring it further, one step further.	209-300

The excerpts above show that discourse frameworks (i.e., what teachers do and the IRF) are not able to indicate where SCE might or might not occur. However, this does not mean that the use of this variety is random. A likely explanation for such a liberal use of SCE is this: as opposed to FL1 and LL2 where the lessons are teacher-centred, the environment for FL2 and LL1, pupil-centred lessons are supposed to be a less formal and more personal one as Flora takes on the role of a facilitator, where the relationship with the pupils is more like a friend and discussant. SCE is likely to be used to indicate the informality of the lesson. As the agenda of the lesson is to allow pupils time to discuss in groups, it implies a necessity for an environment conducive for pupils to speak up freely, and what better way to do that than to speak it so as to imply the allowance of the colloquial variety in this less formal classroom context.

As the Diglossia Model predicts that SCE is used in informal, casual and intimate situations, lessons where group work and active interaction between teacher and pupils are involved, seem to support the use of SCE. Therefore, while we find the use of SCE rather liberal in FL2 and LL1, it is not random.

CONCLUSION

A) Findings

Does the current framework, that is, the Diglossia Model, correctly predict the patterns of use of SSE and SCE in the classroom? In general, the findings show that they do. The framework predicts that in situations that are formal, the standard variety will be used, and in situations that are less formal, casual and intimate, the colloquial variety is used. In lessons where the teacher becomes the facilitator, and in the Organizational and Disciplinary aspects of lessons where the teacher is the authoritative mentor figure, we do see that occurring.

As teachers take on the role of facilitators in pupil-centred lessons, SCE is used to create the informal and non-threatening environment suitable for such discussions to take place, as well as to build that kind of relationship of solidarity and rapport between the teacher and the pupils. In the Organizational and Disciplinary discourses of teacher-centred lessons, because talk is focused on the pupils, teachers use SCE in these sections of the lessons so as to build strong rapport with them. Rapport in this sense does not merely mean being friendly; in these sections, we do see the negative Disciplinary discourse containing SCE features as well. Certainly the teacher is not being friendly with the pupils; but rather, using SCE to draw the distance between her and the pupils closer in the effort of achieving common understanding. Accommodation theory accounts for such a pattern as well as it suggests that speakers often move towards the variety they expect their listeners to speak in the hope of establishing solidarity and decreasing social distance (Swann, 1995:323).

In the Content discourses of the teacher-centred lessons, while it was hypothesized that SSE would be used primarily because of the formality of the situation; the results reject such a hypothesis. Teachers in this study still continued to use SCE in this section of the lesson. In view of this, the formality cline is unable to explain for its use.

However, with the pattern deciphered through the IRF, where the teachers used SSE in Initiation moves and SCE in Follow-up moves, the Diglossia model is able to justify its use. According to the Diglossia Model, sometimes, utterances may not simply be either SSE or SCE, and this is especially so in the classrooms as teachers code-switch between the two varieties (Gupta, 2001). Nevertheless, speakers will point towards one variety, either the H or the L variety, making the analysis reasonably clear-cut.

Therefore, while the use of SCE in the classroom is often frowned upon, as it serves several purposes in the classroom, its use is certainly not random. For one, teachers in this study use SCE to build rapport, establish solidarity, create a sense of camaraderie with the pupils, and to achieve common understandings between them and the pupils.

B) Pedagogical Implications

From this study, we observed that while the government keeps emphasizing the need for teachers to use SSE in the classroom, SCE is still used, at least in these two classrooms.

As the then-Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Goh Chok Tong commented in the launch of the 'Speak Good English Movement', the reason for teachers to speak good English:

> 'Sixty percent of our children start school with little exposure to English at home. This suggests that if Singlish becomes more widely used, it could hinder our children's competence in English…. Parents, older siblings, grassroots leaders, supervisors and teachers must not only encourage those under their influence to speak good English but must lead by example. In this way, even Singlish speakers will make the effort to learn to speak good English and be understood.'
>
> (Mr. Goh Chok Tong, 2000)

Many members of the public have also expressed strong disapproval of teachers using the L variety, and one even wrote in to the local newspaper expressing his disappointment when he heard teachers speaking in SCE to their pupils,

> 'I was, however, quite disappointed when, on two occasions at a big shopping centre, I met some school teachers taking their Primary 3 and 4 pupils out on an excursion – the teachers were not speaking to the kids in complete sentences. The impression left is a seeming disregard of the use of proper spoken English.'
>
> (Straits Times, 16 Jan 2005)

His opinion was supported by other members of the public as replies against the use of SCE continued to pour in.

> 'I agree with Mr. Richard Teo's comments on Singaporean's zero effort to speak good English. The group of people is not limited to retail staff, taxi drivers and schools teachers, but also extends to college-going students and customer service staff.'
>
> (Straits Times, 22 Jan 2005)

Certainly, as educators, we understand the government and the public's point of view and recognize that SCE does have its disadvantages such as intelligibility and economical issues. However, it is also important to realise that many teachers use SCE in classroom for at least two reasons, firstly, as predicted by the Diglossia Model, to establish solidarity, create rapport and convey a sense of friendliness in a less formal aspect of a lesson, and secondly, to bridge the understanding gap between the teacher and the pupils in the formal, content aspect of the lesson. Its use is, without a doubt, not due to the lack of proficiency in the standard variety.

Therefore, if the government decides that SCE must be eradicated from the classrooms and teachers must lead by example, it will be necessary to consider some of the issues as discussed in this paper; more specifically, how and why while teachers know that the use of SCE is discouraged in the classroom, we still do.

It is hoped that this study has raised the awareness of readers with regard to why and how SCE is used by teachers in the classrooms, and more importantly, initiated reflection of English teachers on their language choices. When teachers have a better understanding of their language use, they are equipped to make informed decisions on the employment of SSE or SCE in particular classroom situations to benefit the pupils in the learning of SSE.

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