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MA Education TEFL dissertation prize winner 2011

Lina Hu

A case study of teachers' code-switching behaviour in college English teaching in Mainland China

'I am very happy about finishing my programme with theTEFL Dissertation Prize! And I would like to thank most sincerely to the many people who have offered me generous help with the dissertation, especially my supervisor. I am looking forward to using the knowledge gained through my dissertation research in my job in China.'

Abstract

This study puts the focus on teachers' code-switching behaviour in college English classrooms in Mainland China. The aims of this study are to explore the reasons why teachers code-switch and the functions of teachers' code-switching in L2 classrooms, the patterns of teachers' code-switching and teachers' perspectives on code-switching and the factors influencing teachers' code-switching behaviour. The first reason for choosing this topic is my increasing interest in code-switching, as all of my family members are code-switchers. The second reason is to answer the questions about code-switching in L2 classroom which have remained in my mind for a long time. The case study approach was chosen to apply to the current study as it best suited the objectives. Two college English language teachers who are native Chinese speakers were the participants of this study. The research data was elicited from classroom observation, audio-recording of teachers' code-switching and teachers' reflective narratives. The findings show that code-switching can be used to explain L2 knowledge, build up relationship, criticize students in a humorous way and attract students' attention. Moreover, L2 teachers often use intra-sentential code-switching to emphasize and explain significant language points, and use inter-sentential code-switching to explain the L2 grammar and facilitate students' L2 production by using the appropriate grammar. It is also found that students' low L2 proficiency and passive reaction can prompt teachers to switch to L1. In addition, L2 teacher seems to feel guilty while using L1, but this feeling may not directly impact on teachers' code-switching behaviour.

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