LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN SHOP ATTENDANTS AND CUSTOMERS AT A PHOTO SHOP

KIMBERLEY LAU YIH LONG
(14291)

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (Teaching English as Second Language)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2009
The project entitled ‘Language Use Between Shop Attendants And Customers At A Photo Shop’ was prepared by Kimberley Lau Yih Long and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (Teaching English as Second Language).

It is hereby confirmed that the student has done all necessary amendments of the project for acceptance:

____________________
(Dr. Ting Su Hie)

Date: _________________

ii
ABSTRACT

LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN SHOP ATTENDANTS AND CUSTOMERS AT A PHOTO SHOP

KIMBERLEY LAU YIH LONG

This study investigated language use between shop attendants and customers at a photo shop. The objectives were to identify languages commonly used for interaction in a smaller provision shop, to examine the responses to the uncommon language choice including how inappropriate language choices are repaired, to identify the generic structure of the photo transactions and analyze the language features in the transactions. This is a case study which was carried out at a photo shop in Sibu. The techniques used for data collection were participant observation, video recording and semi-structured interview. The participants involved were the shop attendants, the researcher and customers. A total number of 150 transactions were recorded. The results showed that Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Pasar, Foochow, Mandarin, Hokkien and English were the common languages used in the photo transaction. There were two uncommon language choices which occurred because of the wrong judgment of the customers’ ethnicity and the responses were pausing for a while, without giving any response, shaking her head and looked at her husband and responding to the question in Bahasa Pasar. The repair made were code switching to the language preferred by the customer - Bahasa Pasar. The generic structure of the photo transactions were analyzed based on the generic structure of service encounters found by Hasan (1985). The transactions were divided into four categories: Wait, Pick up, Drop off and no transactions and the stages identified were Sale Initiation (SI), Sale Request (SR), Sale Compliance (SC), Sale Enquiry (SE), Sale Confirmation (SC), Sale (S), Purchase (P), Purchase Closure (PC) and Finis (F). The results showed that the generic structure of photo transaction resembled Hasan’s (1985), except the additional of the Sale Confirmation (SF) stage, the Purchase (P) stage was done non-verbally and Purchase Closure (PC) was optional in the transactions. The findings have implications on cross-cultural communication and English for Specific Purposes courses and are applicable to the transactions in Asian context.
ABSTRAK

PENGUNNAN BAHASA DI ANTARA PEKERJA KEDAI DENGAN PELANGGAN DI KEDAI FOTOGRAFI

KIMBERLEY LAU YIH LONG

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Ting Su Hie for her valuable guidance, supervision, encouragement and constructive comments throughout the process of completing this study. It is a great privilege to work under your supervision.

My warm thanks dedicated to my parents, Mr Lau Chin Lai and Mdm Ting Sii Hea and my siblings for their support and prayers. I would also like to thank them for giving me the permission to conduct this study at their shop and assisted me in collecting the data.

My special thank to Mr Michael Tiong Hock Bing for always being by my side in all the good and bad moments throughout the study, giving me support and strength to carry on.

My sincere thanks are also addressed to all the participants in the study. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Almighty God. All the praises and glory are dedicated to Him.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstrak</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Introduction 
1.2 Sociocultural background of Sarawak 
1.3 Purpose of the study 
1.4 Significance of the study 
1.5 Operation definition of terms 
  1.5.1 Domain 
  1.5.2 Smaller provision shop 
  1.5.3 Code switching 
  1.5.4 Generic structure 
  1.5.5 Halliday & Hasan’s (1985) generic structure of service encounter 
1.6 Scope of study 

2. **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Language and communication 
2.2 Monolingualism, bilingualism and multilingualism 
2.3 Diglossia and polyglossia 
2.4 Language use in different domains 
  2.4.1 Language use in public domain 
  2.4.2 Language use in private domain 
2.5 Language use in transaction domain 
2.6 Generic structure of transaction domain 
2.7 Summary 

3. **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Research design 
3.2 Population and sampling
3.3 Research instruments
3.4 Data collection
   3.4.1 Observation
   3.4.2 Video recording
   3.4.3 Semi-structured interview
3.5 Data analysis
3.6 Limitations of the study

4. CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Language used for transaction
   4.1.1 Bahasa Melayu
   4.1.2 Bahasa Pasar
   4.1.3 Foochow
   4.1.4 Mandarin
   4.1.5 Foochow and Mandarin
   4.1.6 Bahasa Melayu and Mandarin
   4.1.7 Hokkien
   4.1.8 English
   4.1.9 Non-verbal communication
   4.1.10 Wrong language choice
4.2 General pattern of 4 categories
   4.2.1 Wait
      4.2.1.1 Stages with Sales Initiation (SI)
      4.2.1.2 Stages with Sales Request (SR)
      4.2.1.3 Stages with Sales Enquires (SE)
   4.2.2 Drop off
   4.2.3 Pick up
   4.2.4 No transaction
4.3 Stages of a photo transaction
   4.3.1 Sale Initiation (SI)
   4.3.2 Sale Request (SR)
   4.3.3 Sale Compliance (SC)
   4.3.4 Sale Enquiry (SE)
   4.3.5 Sale Confirmation (SF)
   4.3.6 Sale (S)
   4.3.7 Purchase (P)
   4.3.8 Purchase Closure (PC)
   4.3.9 Finish (F)
4.4 Discussion
4.5 Summary

5. CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary
5.2 Implications of the findings
5.3 Recommendation for future research 136
5.4 Conclusion 137

REFERENCES 139

APPENDICES 145
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Checklist for observation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Common language used for interaction in a transactional domain</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Uncommon and inappropriate language choice for interaction in a transactional domain</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Transcription key</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Frequency of types of language used in photo transaction</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Common patterns of stages in the category of wait</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Common patterns of stages in the category of drop off</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Common patterns of stages in the category of pick up</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Common patterns of stages in the category of no transaction</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>