

AN ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN – ENGLISH CODE SWITCHING IN ELECTRONIC MAILS

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Abstract: This paper attempts to analyze and describe the Indonesian – English code switching in electronic mails using Gumperz and Romaine's classifications of code switching. The results showed that the Indonesian – English code switching tend to take place within sentence boundary rather than between sentence boundary. The findings also reveal that some words or phrases undergo morphological adaptation such as affixation and reduplication. With regard to the function of code switching, the Indonesian – English code switching are employed as interjections/sentence fillers, message qualification, personalization, and lexical gap-filling

Key words: code switching, lexical gap-filling, electronic mail

INTRODUCTION

In a bilingual community, code switching is a common phenomenon. Crystal (1987) suggests that code switching is likely to happen when a bilingual person uses two codes alternatively. Furthermore, he points out that code switching can be in the form of switching codes in sentences or phrases. Romaine (2000) suggests that code switching is a “communicative option” of a bilingual community and is similar to styles or dialects code switching in a monolingual community. Gumperz (1982:59) defines code switching as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”. This means there is a change of codes within or between utterances or sentences. Speakers who are fluent in two codes use both naturally in an exchange, so naturally that they do not hesitate or pause when they engage in the conversation.

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Some studies attempt to examine the nature of code switching. Crystal (1987) suggests that code switching takes place when a person cannot express himself/herself in a certain code and then switch to another code to avoid his/her lack of knowledge. On the other hand, Gumperz (1982) mentions that in code switching, the speaker is sometimes unaware which code is employed. He states " ...code alternation as highly salient, participants immersed in the interaction itself are often quite unaware which code is used at any one time." (ibid, 1982:61). Furthermore, he describes the functions of conversational code switching. He posits that there is a variety of rhetorical and stylistic functions in code switching. The functions range from message qualification to direct or reported speech, from quotation to reiteration and so forth (ibid, 1982).

In Indonesia, most people are bilingual. They speak the regional language and the official language. In addition, English is taught in secondary schools through universities. As a result, more people speak at least three languages. Upper middle class teenagers are already familiar with the use of English in their daily life given that they are also exposed to Western movies and films and the high competition to enter the most prestigious schools in Indonesia and abroad. Sometimes, code switching is viewed as a prestige marker of upper class society. Code switching, therefore, is a common phenomenon in Indonesia.

This paper intends to examine and describe the nature of code switching of Indonesian and English. How does it happen and why? This paper is descriptive and does not attempt to account for and explain all the examples of code switching in detail.

METHOD

The samples for this paper were collected from 36 e-mails ranging from half a page to two pages long. There are three sets of data. The first set is made up of e-mails sent by the researcher's friends, colleagues and bother. All of them are university graduates and speak English well. They are about 24 to 33 years of age. The second set is made up of the e-mails from a mailing list of Indonesian Student Association in Athens. The students are in undergraduate and graduate programs in Ohio University. They are about 18 to 45 years of age. The mailing list serves as the media of communication and information. The last set is made up of e-mails from a mailing list of the 2000 Indonesian Fulbrighters in the US. All subscribers

were Indonesian graduate students studying in the US. Their ages range from 22 to 40. The emails were sent between January to May 2001.

E-mail is a relatively new form of discourse. Although it is written, in some ways it is similar to spoken discourse. Davis and Brewer (1997) state that electronic discourse “presents a number of performance features generally characteristic of in process or ‘*in situ*’ communicative events and behaviors, such as repetition, direct address, disfluencies, and markers of personal involvement.” On the other hand, other characteristics of spoken discourse such as interruptions and overlap are not found. Absence of fillers is also common (Brown and Yule, 1983). Wilkins (1991) uses the term “computer talk” to refer to electronic discourse due to some similarities of the electronic discourse to spoken discourse. Given these characteristics, e-mails present fascinating data for this study.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

A. The formal use of Indonesian and English code switching

Romaine (2000) mentions the formal use of code switching. Code switching that occurs within a sentence is known as intra-sentential whereas code switching that occurs between sentences is called inter-sentential. This paper will look at both terms and examine the boundaries in which they occur.

The researcher will first examine where code switching is likely to occur and then categorize the code switches to examine the tendency. Table 1 shows the frequency of sentences with code switching and which boundaries they occur.

Table 1. Intra-sentential and Inter-sentential code switching

Type of code switching	Frequency	Percentage
Intra-sentential	92	82%
Inter-sentential	20	18%
Total	112	100%

The table shows that the code switching occurs within sentences. This can be in the form of words or phrases borrowing, code switching that involves morphological adaptation, and so forth. These forms will be discussed later.

Some examples of inter-sentential code switching are:

- (1) *Gimana ya?* ANY SUGGESTIONS OR IDEAS FOR ME, DEAR?
What do you think? ANY SUGGESTIONS OR IDEAS FOR ME, DEAR?
- (2) IT'S REALLY GREAT NEWS THAT ALL OF YOU CAN BE TOGETHER NOW. IT'S REALLY GREAT. *Piye, Mas Bambang sekolah di situ atau???*
IT'S REALLY GREAT NEWS THAT ALL OF YOU CAN BE TOGETHER NOW. IT'S REALLY GREAT. Well, is Mas Bambang studying there or???

Some instances of intra-sentential code switching are:

- (3) YOU ARE WELCOME ANYTIME *kalau mau ke sini.*
YOU ARE WELCOME ANYTIME if you want to come here.
- (4) *Suasana di kantor agak semrawut...seperti biasa ...karena masalah*
TEACHING LOAD.
The situation in the office is chaotic...as usual...because of the TEACHING LOAD.

The intra-sentential is later categorized into single word or phrases borrowing and morphological adaptation.

1. Single word or phrases borrowing

In most intra-sentential instances, the single word or phrases borrowing occurs most frequently. The words or phrases borrowed mainly refer to nouns rather than other parts of speech. The table below shows the frequency of single word or phrases borrowing.

Table 2. The frequency of single word or phrases borrowing.

Parts of speech	Frequency	Percentage
Verbs	12	7%
Nouns	151	84%
Adjective	6	3%
Others	10	6%
Total	179	100%

In the above table, 'others' refers to parts of speech other than verbs, nouns, and adjective. The result indicates that most words borrowed are nouns. A closer examination reveals that those nouns are related to technology and words that are not commonly expressed in Indonesian such as

'networking', 'browsers', 'tuition waiver', 'spring break' and so forth. It is very common among Indonesians to maintain the English words rather than translating them into Indonesian. It does not mean that there are no Indonesian equivalents for those words. It seems that people are more accustomed to using the English words. Some examples of single word or phrases borrowing are:

- (5) *Kamu SCAN dulu baru kamu ATTACH ya.*
You SCAN first and then you ATTACH.
- (6) *...aku kalau BROWSING bisa sampe berjam-jam.*
...I spend hours for BROWSING.

2. Morphological adaptation

The English words or phrases borrowed undergo morphological adaptation and are treated like most Indonesian words. The most common example is the attachment of suffixes and reduplication. Table 3 shows the suffixes which are commonly attached to the words or phrases.

Table 3. The most common suffixes attached to English words and phrases.

Suffixes	Frequency	Percentage
- nya	14	63%
di -	2	9%
Others	6	28%
Total	22	100%

Suffix *-nya* is the most common suffix attached to the words or phrases given that it has many meanings, such as possession or 'the' (definite article). The next suffix that is generally attached is the prefix *di-*. The prefix denotes the passive meaning when attached to a word. 'Others' refers to prefixes and suffixes such as *-an*, *-in*, *mem-*, and so forth. More samples are needed to further decide whether prefix *di-* occurs more frequently than others. It is interesting to note that some suffixes are Javanese suffixes

(*-an*, *ng-*). Thus, a person can use any suffix, in Indonesian or Javanese, and attach it to the English words or phrases. Below are some examples:

- (7) *Aku beli HP pavilion mx50, walau PROCESSORnya celeron 766 tapi spesifikasinya bagus...*

I bought HP pavilion mx50, although the PROCESSOR is celeron 766, its specification is good...

- (8) *Ntar kalo semua sudah pada ada IDnya, baru coba di ADJUST harganya.*
Later on, when every body has brought the ID, the price can be ADJUSTed.

Another interesting morphological adaptation is the adjective reduplication. Although there are only two instances taken from the samples, this morphological adaptation is interesting in the sense that it is taken from the Javanese language.

- (9) *Cowoknya CUTE-CUTE nggak?*
Are the boys CUTE?
- (10) *Ike sih pengennya nulis surat yang HAPPY-HAPPY aja.*
Ike just wants to write HAPPY letters.

In Javanese, it is acceptable to use double adjective to refer to the properties of plural nouns. When saying 'beautiful girls', for example, a Javanese will say '*cah wedok ayu-ayu*' (girls beautiful-beautiful). This construction is not allowed in Indonesian. Thus, the double adjective in the two examples is clearly influenced by the Javanese construction.

The data indicates that there is no fixed rule as to when a person has to switch from Indonesian to English. A person can switch in any sentence or any parts of the sentence. The samples also indicate that the matrix language or the base language can be English, Indonesian, or even Javanese. In other words, no fixed matrix language is employed. Below are some examples using those three languages as a base:

- (11) *I sering telpon-telponan karo Rofik, Wis, Babah...AND Para.*
I often talk to Rofik, Wis, Babah...AND Para on the phone.
- (12) *THANKS yach buat ATTENTIONnya, CARDnya bagus lho.*
THANKS for the ATTENTION, the CARD is really nice.
- (13) *Dr Flanigan yang ngasih tahu bahwa saya dapet TUITION WAIVER (karena saya Fulbrighter) dan cuman bayar \$405 tiap QUARTER.*
Dr Flanigan informed me that I receive TUITION WAIVER (because I'm a Fulbrighter) dan pay only \$405 per QUARTER.

In (11), the person uses the Javanese sentence pattern which, in this example, is characterized by the double verb '*telpon*' (talk on the phone)

and the suffix *-an*. In Javanese, double verb denotes habitual actions. In (12), the English construction is clearly used. The Indonesian word '*buat*' is the direct translation of 'for'. The Indonesian sentence pattern uses different preposition for the word 'thank you'. The last example, shows the Indonesian sentence pattern.

A person can use any matrix language he/she is most convenient with and switch code anytime he/she wants. Some people would probably feel that they are more comfortable expressing their feelings in Indonesian, but they switch to English when they feel that some words are better expressed in English, and vice versa. The choice of matrix language is, therefore, is random.

B. The functional use of the Indonesian and English code switching.

Gumperz (1982) proposes some functions of code switching: quotation, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization. This paper will examine the Indonesian and English code switching using Gumperz' model.

The data samples show some major functions of the code switching.

1. Interjection or sentence filler.

Interjection or sentence filler is quite common in the data samples. There are some instances using English as a sentence filler. Words like *by the way*, *anyway*, *well*, *like*, are actually common in spoken conversation. Given that electronic discourse is quite similar to spoken discourse, these sentence fillers are also prevalent. Below are some examples of sentences using English sentence filler.

- (14) *ANYWAY, berapa lama lagi kamu di US.....*
ANYWAY, how long will you be in the US.....
- (15) *BY THE WAY, anakmu umurnya berapa sih?*
BY THE WAY, how old is your son?

2. Message qualification

Another function that is quite frequent is message qualification. The main message is sometimes in Indonesian and sometimes in English. When

it is in Indonesian, the English phrases or sentences are used to qualify messages or vice versa.

- (16) *...dia sedang menyusun disertasi untuk PhD tentang DISABILITY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.*
...she is writing her dissertation for the PhD about DISABILITY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.
- (17) PLEASE CONTACT HER DIRECTLY *kalau ada yang punya barang-barang.*
PLEASE CONTACT HER DIRECTLY if you have some stuff.

In (16), the main message is in Indonesian, while the English phrase serves to give more information to the reader what the dissertation is about. On the other hand, in (17), the main message is the request to anyone in the mailing list to contact the person who needs some stuff and the next clause in English explain which people who should make the contact.

3. Personalization

Personalization is also frequently found in some instances.

- (18) *Kalo keadaan di kantor masih juga seperti dulu, BUT I CAN SEE EVERYTHING BETTER AND I ALWAYS TRY TO ENJOY IT...*
The situation in the office is as it used to be.... BUT I CAN SEE EVERYTHING BETTER AND I ALWAYS TRY TO ENJOY IT...
- (19) *Sun chayang buat kamoe...I MISS YOU...*
Kisses for all of you...I MISS YOU

In (18), the person is trying to express her own feeling in English. She is talking about the situation in the office in Indonesian. She is giving an actual information and later she is expressing how she deals with such situation in English. She might feel that English is more personal when talking about a difficult situation and therefore it describes her feeling better. In (19), the sentences such as 'I miss you', 'I love you' are commonly found. It is true that Indonesian or Javanese hardly say these expressions to other people. People find it strange and awkward to say 'Aku rindu kamu' or 'Aku cinta kamu'. These expressions are only found in poems, love songs, or stories, but never in real life. Therefore, when people have to say all these expressions, it is more convenient for them to use the English expressions. At least, people do not find it strange to say 'I Love you' or 'I miss you'.

4. Lexical gap filling

By the lexical gap filling, the researcher is referring to the lack of Indonesian equivalence for certain words in English. When talking about computer, situation in America, or school, people sometimes automatically use the English words without bothering to translate them into Indonesian given that there have been no standardized lexical items for those words. In most intra-sentential code switching, there are many instances of single word or phrases borrowing. Words or phrases such as 'browser', 'server', 'networking', 'have fun', 'have a wonderful summer', and so forth do not have the exact equivalent in Indonesian, and thus people just use the original English words.

CONCLUSION

Code switching is a very common phenomenon in Indonesia where some people are able to speak more than two languages. The Electronic mail, which is one of the means of communication, present some fascinating examples of how Indonesians use code switching to express their ideas, feeling, and exchange experience and stories. Indonesians will switch codes when they feel that a certain code might express their feelings better. They, at least from the data sample, do not have fixed rules as to when they have to switch code.

In addition, the code switching reveals some functions and intentions of the people when using a certain code. It is commonly used to message qualification, as interjection or sentence filler, personalization, and lexical gap filling.

More detailed examination and more samples are needed however, to describe and justify the phenomenon in a more detailed and thorough manner.

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