

FUNCTION OF CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Tulisan ini mencoba melihat proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di dalam ruangan kelas dengan menggunakan alih kode, (code switching) atau campur code (*Code mixing*). Kedua istilah ini merupakan gelajah bahasa yang terjadi dalam process berinteraksi dalam ruangan kelas. Code switching dan code mixing mempunyai peranan sangat strategis dalam berkomunikasi. Fungsi utamanya untuk memperjelas makna sebuah istilah, atau untuk mengulangi informasi yang kurang jelas atau agar supaya komunikasi tetap berlanjut. Ada dua alasan mendasar kenapa guru/dosen melakukan alih kode atau campur kode. Pertama, karena mereka tidak mampu mengekspresikan dalam bahasa target, akhirnya beralih kode. Kedua, karena mereka ingin menunjukkan variasi bahasa yang mereka miliki, dengan kata lain, karena mereka bilingualism atau multilingualism.

Key words: Code-switching, mixing and classroom.

I. Introduction

In teaching learning process, the teachers sometimes find some difficult words to be expressed. Therefore, they switch to other languages. In this writing, the writer tries to show alternative way to overcome that problem. Code-switching is one of alternative ways can be used in teaching English vocabulary.

Crystal (2000) noted that a significant increase in code-switching is one of the signs that a minority language is coming under pressure from a majority language. It has been claimed that code-switching has become more significant in recent years among Indonesian teachers, but to do this has rested mainly on anecdotal accounts. In generally language is used in Indonesia but, when the English teachers teach English vocabulary, they must use English.¹

David states that "Code-switching and medium of learning and teaching are traditionally seen as distinct research areas. Current models of code-switching suggest that it is a commonly used discourse strategy to index

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bilingual interact in the social and/or ethno linguistic identity (e.g., Myers-Scotton 1988, 1993, 1998; Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai 2001), or to signal various conversational meanings in ongoing discourse, such as selecting addressee(s), changing the topic, and signaling differences (e.g. Auer 1984, 1988, 1995; Gumperz 1982; W. Li 1994, 1998, 2002). In this case, referential meanings involved in switches are generally regarded with constant of code-switching being attributed to the medium of learning and teaching in the classroom².

Based on, David's statement above indicates that code switching is not only as a communication strategy, but also is a teaching strategy in the classroom, in order to the selecting addresses, changing the topic and signaling the differences.

English in Indonesia was used until recently almost exclusively for academic subjects and not for communicative purposes, except for people in a few professional fields. In other words, English is as a foreign language. English words, phrases, and sentences are used as the 'embedded language'.³ Indonesian is dominant language' then, involving intra- and extra-sentential code-switching, both in oral and written, occurs in many formal as well as informal situations. Recently, English has been functioning as part of the communicative repertoire among professionals, young adults, students, and educated people in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, some of the English teachers believe that they should teach the students to write and speak correctly by taking every opportunity to eliminate all of them incorrect features from written and oral language. Teachers who take this strategy run of a high risk eliminating not only language, they view as incorrect but also value culture linguistic variety.⁴

The writer is interested in investigating code switching and code mixing in educational setting, because most of the lecturers sometimes use other languages, such as English into Indonesian or Arabic, even local languages when they teach English in the classroom. These issues are very interesting to be observed in order to see whether code switching and mixing are as communication strategy of as teaching strategy or even as disability to explain in one language, so that the lecturers use another language.

II. Discussion

1. Concept of Code Switching

To make clearer the concept of code switching, it is necessary to show the definition given by Luisa Duran, (1994:1) that code-switching and its related concepts such as language transferring and language borrowing. Furthermore, he explains that developing bilinguals, and code switching (including mixing, transferring, and borrowing) with the middle and later phases of bilingual acquisition. However, while inter language is the language constructed before arriving at more ideal forms of the target language, code switching may occur during and after the inter language phase. It may be that with children who are simultaneously developing two (or three) languages from infancy that inter language and code-switching may be less distinguishable or less discernible one from the other. In any case, both seem to be a natural cross linguistic outgrowth of becoming or having become bilingual. In the bilingual interaction, it is needed language alternation.

Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event... code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand.⁵

In general terms, code-switching introduces socio-cultural information in context, which is retrievable through conversational inference (Gumperz 1972). Unlike, Gumperz, Olcay, Sert divides code switching into two broad categories, formal situation and informal one. The first function of code switching is in the classroom interaction which will help the listener to reduce ideas about its possible application in formal context. The second function of code switching is used a communication strategy in the social interaction or informal context, its respect as; topic switch, solidarity or intimate function.⁶ It is similar opinion given by Turner, (2009) states there are some steps should be done by English teachers. The first step is to distinguish the students' language between *informal* and *formal* patterns of language they use. Secondly, is to ask students to identify settings in which they communicate (e.g., school, church, playground) or individuals with whom they converse (e.g., parents, friends, teachers). After the class has created a comprehensive list

of these settings, the teacher, with students input, selects four distinct communication situations. The four categories might include classroom with teacher, the space with friends, lunchroom with friends, and at home with parents. But in this writing is focused on classroom interaction only.

2. *Function of code switching*

The code switching has strong function in the social interaction. One of the important functions is communication strategy. When the teachers use code switching in the classroom, for the teachers, the code switching has play important role in order to communicate with the students. On the other hand, code switching functions can give better understanding of the subject and the students are easy to communicate to their teacher if they get difficult terms. The other advantages of code switching is when the teachers or students do not know how to talk, what is the names of the object, they may switch to other languages in order to continue their communication block. (Hymes, 1974). Based on previous research, we know that bilingual speakers have the capacity to switch between a variety of linguistic registers (e.g., Gumperz, 1967; Ervin-Tripp, 1964, 2001). Similarly, bilinguals also have these communicative registers that monolinguals have, but in addition they have two linguistic codes that they can alternate as a resource for sociolinguistic strategies during conversation.⁷

It is the same statement expressed by Sert (2004) that “the phenomenon of code switching in classroom context; the functions of code switching will be introduced in various aspects. Firstly, its function in bilingual community settings will briefly be explained by giving a sample authentic conversation which will help the reader deduce ideas about its possible applications in educational contexts. Secondly, the functionality of code switching in teachers’ classroom discourse will be introduced with its aspects as: topic switch, affective functions, and repetitive functions. Thirdly, the focus will shift to students’ code switching by introducing some basic functional perspectives as: equivalence, floor holding, reiteration, and conflict control. Lastly, weak and strong sides of code switching in foreign language classrooms will be discussed with a critical approach”.

The Sert’s statement above indicates that code switching is needed not only in social interaction but also in the teaching learning process. Therefore, she divides into two category functions of code switching as follows:

3. *The function of code switching in the classroom*

Code switching is a widely observed phenomenon especially seen in multilingual and multicultural communities. In the English language teaching classroom, code switching comes into use either in the teachers' or the students' discourse. Although it is not favored by many educators, one should have at least an understanding of the functions of code switching between the native language and the foreign language and its underlying reasons.⁸

Unlike Olcay Sert, Cook (1989) in Richards Skiba, 1997) provides another method of using code switching as a second language teaching tool through reciprocal language teaching. This method requires students to switch languages at determined points pairing students who want to learn each other's languages. Thus the students alternate between the two languages and exchange the roles of student and teacher. A similar system may also used whereby the teacher uses code switching by starting the lesson in the first language and then moving into second and back.⁹

It is similar study done by Liu, et, al, (2004) describe classroom code switching practices in South Korean high school after the South Korean Ministry Education requested that English teacher maximize their English use. The data comprised the recoded language from 13 high school English teachers' classroom and teachers' and students' responses to surveys asking about their reactions to the call for maximal use of English in class and the challenging they are facing. The data analysis indicates that (a) the teacher used on average rather low amount of English (32 %). Lower that what they and their students considered appropriate (53 %-58 %). (b). the teachers' code switching followed a certain patters and principle, although it was often not principle governed and their use of Korean (L1) was very effective for several function; (c). Teachers' beliefs tended to affect their code switching practices; (d) the teachers' language use appeared to affect students' language behavior in class, although students' decision on what language to use often depended on the question's complexity and level of difficulty, and (e). curriculum guidelines seemed to affect the teachers' language use, but factor like teachers beliefs and teaching context might severely mitigate their impact.¹⁰

This study is concerned with the use of the mother tongue in bilingual content teaching as well as in conventional foreign language classes. The controversy over the mother tongue as a help or a hindrance is examined by the way of an analysis of a history lesson taught in English as a foreign language.

Furthermore, he explains that this study makes the point that brief episodes of switching to the mother tongue can function as a learning aid to enhance communicative competence in the foreign language.¹¹

The three functions are going to be discussed in this part. First function is **topic switch**, in the case; the teacher alters his/her language according to the topic that is under discussion. This is mostly observed in grammar instruction, that the teacher shifts his language to the mother tongue of his students in dealing with particular grammar points, which are taught at that moment. On the other hand, the students' attention is directed to the new knowledge by making use of code switching and accordingly making use of native tongue. At this point it may be suggested that a bridge from known (native language) to unknown (new foreign language content) is constructed in order to transfer the new content and meaning is made clear in this way as it is also suggested by Cole (1998): "a teacher can exploit students' previous L1 learning experience to increase their understanding of L2".

Another function of code switching named as topic switch, the phenomenon also carries affective functions that serve for expression of emotions. In this respect, code switching is used by the teacher in order to build *solidarity* and *intimate* relations with the students. In this sense, one may speak of the contribution of code switching for creating a supportive language environment in the classroom. As mentioned before, this is not always a conscious process on the part of the teacher. However, one may also infer the same thing for the natural occurrence of code switching as one cannot take into guarantee its conscious application.

Furthermore, she explains that the functionality of code switching in classroom settings is its *repetitive* function. In this case, the teacher uses code switching in order to transfer the necessary knowledge for the students for clarity. Following the instruction in target language, the teacher code switches to native language in order to *clarify meaning*, and in this way stresses importance on the foreign language content for efficient comprehension. However, the tendency to repeat the instruction in native language may lead to some undesired student behaviors. A learner who is sure that the instruction in foreign language will be followed by a native language translation may lose interest in listening to the former instruction which will have negative academic consequences; as the student is exposed to foreign language discourse limitedly.¹²

“There are four major types of switching: (1) Tag-switching, in which tags and certain set phrases in one language are inserted into an utterance otherwise in another, as when a Panjabi/English bilingual says: *It's a nice day, hana? (hai nā isn't it)*. (2) Intra-sentential switching, in which switches occur within a clause or sentence boundary, as when a Yoruba/English bilingual says: *Won o arrest a single person (won o they did not)*. (3) Intersentential switching, in which a change of language occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or the other, as when a Spanish/English bilingual says: *Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English y termino en español (and finish it in Spanish)*. This last may also occur as speakers take turns. (4) Intra-word switching, in which a change occurs within a word boundary, such as in *shoppā* (English *shop* with the Panjabi plural ending) or *kuenjoy* (English *enjoy* with the Swahili prefix *ku*, meaning ‘to’).¹³

From the explanation above, it can be transferred to English and Indonesia, there are three major strands in the study of Code Switching. The structural approach is concerned with what Code Switching can reveal about language structure at all levels (lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics); the psycholinguistics approach investigates Code Switching to better understand the cognitive mechanisms that underlie bilingual production, perception, and acquisition; and the sociolinguistic approach attends to the social factors that promote or inhibit Code Switching and views Code Switching as affording insights into social constructs such as power and prestige. Although, in principle, a full account of Code Switching cannot be achieved without the integration of findings from each of these strands, in practice, such an all-encompassing task would be unwieldy. The methodologies employed within these various approaches are often incompatible, and the frameworks into which findings are couched can be diametrically opposed. For example, psycholinguistic studies are most often conducted within laboratory settings, using controlled stimuli, a methodology foreign to ethnographic studies, where language behavior must be observed in its natural context. Likewise, while some researchers would argue that there are no structural restrictions on Code Switching, others build full-scale models based on structural considerations. In brief, because there is a lot of latitude in what comprises the study of Code Switching, it is not surprising to find disagreements in the literature.

The importance of code switching and mixing in the study of language contact has long been recognized. Up till now, the data on code switching and mixing have generally been analyzed in terms of one of the following approaches: (a) the linguistic constraints that determine the form of code switching and mixing, and (b) the sociolinguistic functions which determine when, with whom and why code switching and mixing take place.

Despite the large body of literature already available on code switching and mixing, however, relatively little is known about how they are used as a communicative strategy in multilingual communities among proficient bilingual speakers. This paper is an attempt at filling this gap. Using spontaneous conversations which involve code switching and mixing between some of the major languages in Indonesia, such as English, and Indonesian. I shall try to demonstrate the inadequacies of current approaches to code switching and mixing, suggest some categories for describing the total communicative effect created by code switching and mixing, and discuss some of the implications of code switching and mixing for the study of bilingualism and the indigenized varieties of English such as Singaporean English.

All speakers selectively draw on the language varieties in their linguistic repertoire, as dictated by their intentions and by the needs of the speech participants and the conversational setting. Even monolinguals are capable of shifting between the linguistic registers and the dialects they command and, as such, there are parallels that can be drawn between monolingual and bilingual language use. For convenience, we can refer to such monolingual behavior as *style shifting*. In turn, bilinguals have available not only different registers and dialects of one language, but of two. As is true of monolingual style shifting, it is not uncommon for bilinguals to segregate their languages, speaking exclusively in one language in certain domains (e.g. at home, with friends) while shifting to another in other contexts (e.g. school, work), a bilingual behavior commonly referred to as *language shifting*. Given the appropriate circumstances, many bilinguals will exploit this ability and alternate between languages in an unchanged setting, often within the same utterance; this is the phenomenon understood as *Code Switching*".

Code Switching comprises a broad range of contact phenomena and is difficult to characterize definitively. First, its linguistic manifestation may extend from the insertion of single words to the alternation of languages for larger segments of discourse. Second, it is produced by bilinguals of differing degrees of proficiency who reside in various types of language contact

settings, and as a consequence their Code Switching patterns may not be uniform. Finally, it may be deployed for a number of reasons: filling linguistic gaps, expressing ethnic identity, and achieving particular discursive

The function of Code-switching works is contextualizing sign because it has the capacity to establish distinction between two languages. In code-switching the teachers develop their ability to alternate between the two codes in order to signal contrast between what has been said and what they are about to say. On the other hand, there exists a 'sequential implication of code choice: code choice is "an interactional issue, related not only to the further development of the conversation but also to its preceding sequential context whose [code] bears on the present speaker's choice" (Auer, 1984: 30 in Dimitrijević, 2003:1).

Furthermore, he explains that by creating contrast, speakers are able to construe the conversational context in two ways: (1) they are able to display, as well as ascribe to other students, language competence and preference; and (2) they are able to accomplish conversational tasks, e.g. indicate side remarks, introduce new topics, set off reported speech, and mark responses. which these choices contextualize conversational activities, bilingual speakers reveal to each other (and the interested analyst) locally established conversational functions or meanings of code-switching. It is therefore within the framework of the sequential organization of contrasting code choices that the meaning of a code-switch needs to be interpreted.

If code-switching derives its signaling value from the capacity to set off stretches of talk against their environment by a contrasting 'other-code' choice, an issue of immediate concern (not only for the analyst, but more importantly, for conversational participants) becomes the communicative code (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 1998), that is the base code of the interaction, the code switched-from and eventually switched-back to. It is against the backdrop of a base code that the choice of a code other than that already in use in the on-going interaction stands out as a contextualization strategy.

III. Conclusion

After reading the content of this paper, it can be concluded that code switching and code mixing have important role in teaching-learning process, because they not only function as communication strategy but also as teaching

strategy. They teachers who want to communicate with the learners, but they cannot express in foreign language they may use another language, such Indonesian or local language.

The teachers sometimes use code switching or code mixing in order to repeat the important terms, besides that, they use them in order to give the students better understanding of the material.

Endnotes

¹Hickey, Tina. *Code-switching and borrowing in Irish* (Journal of Sociolinguistics 2009), p. 1

²David, Li, C.S. 2007. *Medium-of-instruction-induced code-switching: Evidence from Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan* (Article, Vienna, 6 to 9 December 2007), p. 1

³Chen Su-Chiao, 1996. Code-switching as a verbal strategy among Chinese in a campus setting in Taiwan (World English Vol. 15 No.3), p. 1

⁴Robecca, Wheeler, W. 2005. *Code Switching to Teach Standard English* (Edited by Kenneth Lindblom, 2005. Teaching English in the World. (English Journal Vol.94. No.5. May, 2005), p. 1

⁵Ayeomoni, M.O, 2006. *Code-Switching and Code-Mixing: Style of Language Use in Childhood in Yoruba Speech Community: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria* (Nordic Journal of African Studies 15(1): 90–99 (2006) p. 2

⁶Sert, Olcay, 2004. *The Functions of Code Switching in ELT Classrooms*. Ankara, Turkey The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. XI, No. 8, August 2005) p. 1.

⁷Reyes, Iliana, 2004. *Functions of Code Switching in Bilingual Research*. (Arizona. Journal, 28: 1 Spring 2004) p. 78

⁸Oclay, *loc. cit.*

⁹Sebba, Mark, *On the Notions of Congruence and Convergence in Code-switching* (Article 1997). p. 4

¹⁰Liu, Dilin, et al. *TESOL Quarterly*. (Journal Vol.38. No.4 2004), p. 4

¹¹Butzkam, W. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Vol.1. No.2. 1998., p. 4

¹²Sert, *op. cit.*, p. 2-4

¹³<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1o29-codemixingandcodeswitchng.html>

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