Reasons for Students' Code-Switching
Between Informal Indonesian and English in ELT Contexts

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Abstract: This descriptive and analytical study aimed at exploring the phenomenon of code-switching between Informal Indonesian (INF-I) and English exhibited in the classroom speech of the students at English Education Department of Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University in Pekanbaru-Riau. The main discussion of code-switching (CS hereafter) is the students' reasons for employing CS. The data was collected by recording the students' speech which was then transcribed as conversational data and by conducting unstructured interview. The research was conducted particularly in formal situations; in Speaking I classes involving sixty students of the first year. This study found that in formal situations such as in ELT contexts, the students' reasons for CS were as compensatory strategy for the deficiency, as a language negotiation, as extended explanation, as an expression of solidarity, as flexibility of expression and as translation. These all reasons were primarily pertinent to fulfill communicative needs and communicative strategies.

Key words: Code-switching, informal Indonesian

1. Introduction

Code-switching is a widely observed phenomenon especially seen in bilingual or multilingual communities. Indonesia is a country with a multilingual population numbering over 200 million people. As multilingual speakers, most Indonesians employ Code-Switching (hereafter CS) in daily social interactions. Formal Indonesian as the language of unity is actually not a mother tongue of the great majority of the Indonesian people, who normally speak regional languages such as Minangnese, Malay, Javanese, Bataknese, Sundanese, and Bugis in their everyday life. However, most Indonesians speak Formal Indonesian and regional languages depend on the social contexts for example, Formal Indonesian is used if a person communicates to another person in a meeting for the first time, then as the speakers get to know each other better, they switch to a dialect they are comfortable with.

Before further discussing the phenomena of CS in Indonesian language, perhaps it is wise to distinguish between Formal Indonesian (hereafter FML-I) and Informal Indonesian (hereafter INF-I). The difference between the two can be described as a diglossia, where FML-I is the High variety (standard) and INF-I is the Low variety (vernacular).

The FML-I is the language of government, administration and of formal situations such as speeches, lectures, and writing. It is the language which is used in the mass media such as television and radio, newspaper and magazines and of most novels. It is also used as the medium of education at all levels and expected to be mastered by educated Indonesians.

FML-I is learnt at school, most children having little or no contact with it until they begin their education. So, proficiency in it is thus a mark of a person's level of education.

On the other hand, INF-I is the language of everyday communication between Indonesians in all but formal situations. The INF-I is also called as 'Bahasa Gaul' and has been significantly influenced by the Jakartan variety as one of regional Malay varieties of Indonesian. For an ever-growing percentage of the population it is the language of the home, their natural 'mother tongue', and thus accords with Ferguson's (1957) definition of L (low variety) in a diglossic society. For many Indonesians, particularly in rural areas, the language of home is one of the many regional languages of Indonesia. Interestingly, almost all university students tend to use INF-I with frequent CS in their daily conversation. Perhaps these students employ CS for self-expression and for the sake of personal intention such as to compensate for the deficiency when a student is not able to express himself or herself in one language and thus switches to the other languages or dialects[16].

This study focuses on the INF-I employed by the first year students at English Education Department Faculty of Education and Teachers Training (EED FKIP hereafter) in Lancang Kuning University, most of whom come from different regions of Riau province such as from Bengkalis, Bangkinang, Dumai, Siak, Rokan Hulu, Rokan Hilir and Kuantan Singingi. Further, some of the students come from other provinces such as North Sumatra, West Java and West Sumatra. In short, these students have different dialects

and cultural backgrounds, and INF-I is very favored by most university students because of its flexibility to be mixed with expressions borrowed from other languages such as English and local dialects. Moreover, INF-I, intertwined with CS may be employed in order to build intimate interpersonal relationships among these students. In this case, it may be claimed that it is a tool for creating linguistic solidarity. Moreover, the use of INF-I is discerned as an effective way for ordinary conversation among these students, and has become an accepted norm for most students at EED FKIP Lancang Kuning University.

Lancang Kuning University is one of formal institutions where students engage in academic environment in order to pursue their academic goals. Usually, students communicate in formal language as they interact in their formal settings such as classroom and seminar. In academic settings, the use of INF-I is discouraged because one of the roles of the educational institution is to promote and disseminate FML-I. And it is expected that all teachers or lecturers can be good role models for students. FML-I is the only language to be used as the medium of instruction in educational, scientific and cultural fields as indicated in a circular issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture in April 1956, with regard to the use and dissemination of the national language: "The government appeals to every official in all government departments, the press as well as to linguistic scholars to cooperate in the effort to promote the use of a perfect general Indonesian". [2]

In addition, Indonesian serves many different functions. As a 'national language' indicates that Indonesian is used as an instrument to express a national identity. As a 'state language', it symbolizes an independent nation that has its own government [16]. Also, Indonesian is used as a 'unification language' that signifies the unification of geographical regions into one country. Thus, Indonesian has been used as a medium of communication in political affairs, education (Indonesia, 1989:29). In addition, it is used in economic activities, religious affairs, media and journalism [21]

In fact, though students are expected to master FML-I well and use it in everyday life but INF-I is increasingly being used in daily interaction even in formal settings such as classroom. Based on the observation of the researcher who lives in Pekanbaru-Riau (a province of Indonesia), almost all university students in this city have the tendency to use INF-I instead of using FML-I. Moreover, CS also happens as the students communicate in INF-I. Perhaps, many students have certain reasons or social motivations to switch between INF-I and English, or mix the two.

2. The Studies of Code-Switching: Patterns, Functions and Reasons in ELT Contexts

Looking at the context of CS in English Language Teaching (ELT), the switching between languages has been a widely observed phenomenon in foreign language classrooms. [18]. This term seen as a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse. "*Discourse*" in this case, will be defined as the students and teachers naturally occurring language use in classroom settings. Additionally, the languages between which alternation is performed are the native language of the students, and the foreign language that students are expected to gain competence in.[17]

The use of CS by the teachers is not always employed consciously; teachers sometimes are not aware of the functions and outcomes of the CS as it occurs in the classroom. Therefore, in some cases it may be regarded as an automatic and unconscious behavior. Nevertheless, either conscious or not, CS in the classroom contexts necessarily serves some basic functions which may be beneficial in language learning environments.[18]

Further, some functions of teachers' CS in ELT context which include topic switch, affective functions, and repetitive functions. In terms of topic switch, the teacher alters his/her language according to the topic that is under discussion. This kind of function occurs in grammar instruction when the teacher shifts his language to the mother tongue of his students in the classroom dealing with particular grammar points, which are taught at that moment. The next function of teachers' CS deals with 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 the classroom environment. Finally, the repetitive function is also taken into account. In this case, the teacher uses CS in order to transfer the necessary knowledge for the students for clarity. The teacher code switches to native language in order to clarify meaning.[11]

Moreover, the functions of CS can be categorized as equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control. The terms "equivalence" is used to refer to instances where the student makes use of the native equivalent of a certain lexical item in target language and therefore code switches to his/her native tongue because of his/her deficiency in the target language. This is in accordance with what Brown (2000:129-130) states that CS is not usually seen as compensatory strategy, learners might code switch; use their native language to fill in missing knowledge whether the hearers knows that native language or not.[6]

The next function of the students' CS is floor-holding function. It means that during the conversation, the students fill the stopgap with native language use in the target language. It is aimed in order to avoid gaps in communication due to lack of fluency in target language. Moreover, Elridge (1996:306) uses the terms "reiteration" as the messages that are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood. In this case, the message in target language is repeated by the student in native tongue by making use of a repetition technique. The last function is conflict control. Here, CS is used as a strategy to transfer the intended meaning. It deals with the meaning that the student tends to avoid a misunderstanding or tends to utter words indirectly for specific purposes

3. Research Context and Methodology

This research was conducted in the setting of English Language Teaching situations of the first year students involving the 3 classes of the Speaking I Course at English Education Department Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University in 2010. The researcher collects the data by observing the students' conversations (by recording) and carrying out unstructured interviews. Data from the students' conversations are transcribed to be conversational data. Data from unstructured interviews are used to provide more detailed information pertaining to students' reasons for CS.

Data was collected by recording the students' speech during lessons. Although students were made aware of the project, they were not prepared in anyway. The researcher told them what was actually expected of them or what the focus of the research was. The students were debriefed and the purpose of the research was explained to them. No-one objected to the data being analyzed further, provided that the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed. All the information gathered was later transcribed, translated into English and analyzed. The record of natural conversations was transcribed using the regular English orthography and analyzed in the same way as the written texts.

In this study, a qualitative approach was adopted for the analysis of the transcribed conversations. In this research, the analysis of the transcribed conversations collected from the 60 students are partly based on Gumperz's (1982) conversational functions in CS Crystals' (1987) presented in Skiba (1997) CS motivations, Myers-Scotton's (1993), Dayang Hajjah Fatimah's (2007) and Abdul Hakim's (2001) types of CS, Auer's (1998) patterns of CS.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Reasons for CS in the Classroom: Formal Situations

When CS occurs in the classroom situation, it appeared to play a specific role, such as deficiency or solidarity. Crystal (1987) asserts that deficiency possibly occurs when a speaker may not be able to express him or herself in one language so he or she switches to the other to compensate for the deficiency. In the classroom context, deficiency most frequently occurs when the students can not use one language well due to their lack of language skills [19]. Further, multi-functional CS such as phatic and solidarity can occur when a speaker tries to change the tone of the conversation. In this case CS has a phatic function, which can be positive or negative. It is positive if it serves to narrow social distance, or if it is indicative of a relationship of solidarity. It is negative if it serves to increase social distance. In short, this kind of switching can also function to include or exclude other speakers who do or do not speak the second language from a conversation. The following data analyses are pertaining to some reasons for the students' CS between INF-I and English in the classroom.

4.1.1 CS as an Expression of Solidarity

Example 1 (students' conversation in the classroom)

S1: Assalamu'alikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatu:
"Peace be upon to you".

Class: Wa'alaikum Sala:m Warahmatullahi Wabaraka:tu:h
"And peace be upon to you too".

S1: Bentar ya teman-teman.. Zal, kok gak balas SMS aku kemarin?
"Wait for a moment my friends.. Zal, why did not you reply my text message yesterday?"

S2: **Sorry**la:h gak da pulsa. Lagi bokek ni:h.
"I am sorry, I did not have any credit left. I am still broke".

S1: Jadi, gimana dengan tugas makalah kita? Kita mulai hari ini
"So, how about doing our paper? Let us start ngerjainnya?
doing it today"

S2: eh jangan hari ini, masih **next week** kan!
"Eeh, please don't do it today, we still have time a week right!
Don't [worry la:h=
So, don't worry"

S1: [iya::] tapi kita-
"Yes, but we masih punya banyak tugas yang lain next week.=
still have some other assignments to be submitted next week"

S2: =santailah frend, serius amat si:h.=

"Please, take it easy my friend. Don't take it
seriously"

S1: It's up to you lah. Kalo kamu gak mau, biar aku dan
teman-teman
"It's up to you. If you do not want to do it together,
my friends and I
aja yang ngerjain.
will do it"

S2: oke lah, ntar biar aku yang ngenet. Aku akan nyari
bahan. Oke!
"O.K, I will go to internet. I will find the
references. O.K!"

S1: **that's a good idea**. Dari tadi ngapa!
"That's a good idea. Why did not you say it earlier"

The above conversation started in INF-I. S2 responded negatively by refusing what S1 suggested to do their paper. S2 started employing intra-sentential CS by saying "next week" and inter-sentential CS in an imperative sentence "Don't worry" in INF-I. A decided to repeat his suggestion in INF-I and started employing intra-sentential CS by saying "next week" on the basis of drawing on the principle solidarity. S1 hoped this would make S2 reconsider his suggestion. S2 rejected the bid for solidarity by not giving his serious attention toward S1. Then, S1 switched to English mixed INF-I. At the end of the conversation S1 and S2 switched back to INF-I and got an appointment to start doing the paper. The students who were part of this study employed this type of CS relatively frequently. Referring to this reason, it can be related to Crystal's idea (1987) that "CS possibly occurs when a speaker wants to express solidarity with a particular social group". In this case, the students feel more confident when they code switch between INF-I and English [19].

It is known that INF-I is greatly influenced by Jakartan dialect and English words. To speak like a Jakartan implies that one is up-to-date, prosperous and sophisticated [20] It may be suggested that the students use the language because the language sounds interesting. In short, communicating in INF-I might be a way to maintain social interaction with others. It is strongly related to social motivation factor that is relationship building or solidarity.

4.1.2 CS as Compensatory Strategy

Example 2 (a student's presentation)

L: Widia, **ple:ase!**
Widia, please!

S3: **Okay cla:ss, in this opportunity: I wi::ll**
mempromosikan
"Okay class, in this opportunity I will promote
**a product that i::s "Citra Hand and Body
Lotion".**
a product that is "Citra Hand and Body Lotion".
It is good fo:r our ski:n becau:se it ca:n
melembutkan

"It is good for our skin because it can soften
an:d mencerahkan **color ski:n.**
and brighten our complexion".
**I am sure that you: will like it beca:use it
is very:** harum lo:h.
"I am sure that you will like it because it smells
nice".

The example above is an intra-sentential CS as the student inserts some INF-I word in English sentences. The student started in English. She is presenting a product in her English class. As she can not find English equivalents for the words "promote", "soften", "brighten" and "smells nice", she switches them into her native language. Here, deficiency occurs because she is not able to express herself in English. So, she switches to other language to compensate for the language deficiency. If we look at the original transcript of the student 3, we may find out some signs indicate prolonged lengthening of sound uttered by her.

Example 3 (a student asks the lecturer)

S4: **Si:r, I still don't understand abou:t your
explanation.**
"Sir, I still don't understand about your explanation.
The word 'they' ini: sebenernya menunjuk
[apa sih?]
Actually, what does the word 'they' refer to?"

The same case is also found in example 3, when a student started his utterance in English by saying "**Sir, I still don't understand about your explanation. The word 'they'…** but, in the next sentence he switches from nglish to INF-I sentence "*ini sebenernya menunjuk apa sih?*" because he can not complete his question in English. This example still shows deficiency as a reason for CS.

Example 4 (students' conversation in a classroom discussion)

S6: **I wi:ll** mengklarifikasi **my: explanatio:n**
yang barusa:n**. Eee ya:**
"I will clarify my last explanation. Really,
**I am sorry if you are not satisfied. After
reading this bo:ok,**
"I am sorry if you are not satisfied". Only after
reading this book,
barulah **aa I get information that there
are seven**
I came know that there are seven
types of 'adverb'.
types of 'adverb' ".
Untunglah, **you ask me tha:t. For other
frie:nds, aa you boleh**
"Good thing you asked. For the rest of you feel
free
ngriti:k kalo: aa we make mistake:s.
to criticize us if we ever make mistakes again".

From example 4, it can be seen that S6 employed CS because of his lack of language skill in English. There are some English words that can not be uttered by the student such as 'mengklarifikasi', 'yang barusan', 'barulah', 'untunglah', and 'boleh ngritik kalo'. In this case, deficiency as one of the students' reason for CS occurs when he can not provide some English equivalents in his utterances then he switched back into INF-I as to compensate a deficiency.

Example 5 (a student's presentation)

S14: **I have experience** yang ngeri: banget**. It was**
 "... I have a gruesome experience. It was
about me a:nd a do:g.. When I wa:s 10 years, a dog ngejar **I.**
about me and a dog. When I was ten years old, I was chased by a dog".
I cr:y.
"I just cried at the time".
No:w I am still afraid with dog.
"Now, I am still afraid of dogs".

There are some words such as "gruesome" (ngeri banget) and "chase" (ngejar) can not be provided by S14 when she is telling her story to the class. It is still the same case as the previous examples of the reasons for employing CS, that is, deficiency. In example 5, S14 tries to compensate her disability of some English words that she does not know by switching them to INF-I.

4.1.3   CS as Language negotiation

Example 6 (a student makes a negotiation with a lecturer)

S5: Buk, **is it okay my assignment**   dikumpul [**tomorrow** aja?=
"Madam, is it okay if I submit my assignment tomorrow?"
L: [**No: you must submit it today**.
"No, you must submit it today".
S5: =**Please** deh buk! Jangan hari ini ya.   Susah banget nih.
"Please Madam! Not today please. It is very difficult to do".
L: [**Do it fi:rst.**]
"Do it first".
S5: [**Please** deh buk!]
"Please Madam".

In example 6, it is found that the pattern of CS pertaining to a language negotiation of interaction. In example 6, S5 tries to negotiate about the due date of his assignment with the lecturer. He uses English which then mixed into INF-I in his utterances. The lecturer responded him negatively by refusing what he suggested. He decided to repeat his suggestion in INF-I.

He hoped this would make the lecturer reconsiders his suggestion. The lecturer rejected by not giving him any extension. Even though he employed CS in English and then used INF-I, the lecturer still did not give him any extension. Here, it can be assumed that CS which was employed by S5 has a phatic function that he aimed to narrow social distance. Even though he finally did not get what he hoped.

4.1.4   Inclusive CS

Example 7 (a conversation of two students in a discussion on one text)

S7   Jadi, **can you find the main idea of the first paragraph?**
"Can you find the main idea of the first paragraph?"
S8:   Apa?
"What?"
S7:   Dah dapet **main idea** nya?
"Have you found its main idea?"
S8:   Ooo. Ini tentang **"global warming"**   [ka:n?
Ooo. It is about "global warming", isn't it?"
S7:   [Ya ya betul sih.
"Yes, that's true".

The above conversation started in English. As S7 responded in INF-I 'apa?', S7 switched back to INF-I in her next utterance though she still used an English phrase **"main idea"**. Then, the conversation continued in the same case as the previous sentence which is an intra-sentential CS as the English phrase 'global warming' inserted into INF-I. In this case, CS has a solidarity function because S7, who firstly conversed in English, decided to switch into INF-I as she got a response in INF-I. This way serves to narrow social distance between S7 and S8 by sharing INF-I. Here, S7 tried to include S8 who seemed unable to speak or understand English well.

4.1.5 CS as Extended Explanation

At times CS can be used to reinforce, emphasize, amplify or even clarify the message that has already been transmitted in one code but which may not have been understood.

Example 8 (students' conversation in the classroom)

S9:   do you know "death penalty"? Amrozi, Ali Gufron,
"Do you know "death penalty"? Amrozi, Ali Gufron
Imam Samudra mati karena hal itu.
Imam Samudra died because of it".
S10:   Ooo, maksudnya "hukuman mati".
"You mean "hukuman mati".

In example 7, S9 employed CS by giving an extended explanation to S10. Dayang Hajjah Fatimah (2007) states that extended explanation is another pattern of CS in which the previous

sentence, phrase or word is followed by detailed description or explanation. Example 7 displays that the pattern of switching occurs from English which is initiated by an interrogative sentence "do you know "death penalty" to INF-I as the speaker S9 continiues his explanation in a positive statement *"Amrozi, Ali Gufron, Imam Samudra mati karena hal itu"* which is aimed to clarify his previous utterances. Here, the purpose of CS is to provide detailed information and clarification of the preceding statement.

4.1.6 CS as Translation

Example 9 (students' conversation in the classroom)

S11: **"Public order and security"** apa sih artinya?
"What is the meaning of "public order and security"?"

S12: **"Public order and security"** i:**s** "keamanan dan ketertiban umum"
"Public order and security" is "keamanan dan ketertiban umum*".*

S11: **thanks ya.**
"Thanks"

Dayang Hajjah Fatimah (2007) claims that translation CS may occur at phrase level as it is found in example 9. In this case, the translation occurs from English to INF-I as S12 gave the translation of "public order and security" while S11 firstly initiated to use English phrase which then switched into INF-I. This translation CS is classified as intra-sentential CS. From the above example, the translation CS from English to INF-I is aimed to transfer the knowledge, to initiate a response and to elicit information.

Example 10 (a conversation when a lecturer asks a student)

L: **What's** "pengeluaran bulanan" **in English?**

"What's "pengeluaran bulanan" in English?"

S13: Eeeh **it is "monthly expenses".** Bener gak Buk?

"it is "monthly expenses." Isn't it?"

L: **Go:od!**
"Good!"

The same case occurs in example 10 when a lecturer asks a student for the English translation "pengeluaran bulanan". In this case, the translation occurs from INF-I to English. From the above example, translation CS from INF-I to English is aimed to search information or the student's knowledge about English equivalent.

With regard to many reasons for CS employed by the students in formal situations particularly in ELT contexts, it is important to sum up what the study has investigated. It is found that 12 or 30% of students' conversations employ CS as compensatory strategy for the deficiency. 3 or 7.5% of students' conversations use CS as a language negotiation. 6 or 15% of them employ CS as extended explanation. CS as reiterative occurs in 4 or 10% of students' conversations. CS as an expression of solidarity is found in 4 or 10% of students' conversations. 3 or 7.5% of conversations employ CS as flexibility of expression. Finally, 8 or 20% of conversations employ CS as translation. From this analysis, it can be concluded that CS as compensatory strategy for deficiency (30%) is frequently used in ELT contexts.

5. Implications

This research highlights the issue that emerges as two languages INF-I and English have contact. It results in such language phenomenon that is CS exhibited by the speech of many students of Lancang Kuning University. There are many reasons that trigger the students to employ CS. In formal situations such as classroom, the needs of CS here are to fill lexical gaps or to compensate the language difficulty, to respond, to clarify, to reiterate or to emphasize and to negotiate. In short, all reasons of the students' CS imply the communicative functions as they engage in their social interactions.

However, too much switching, especially at the intra-sentential level, will affect their language competence. It will automatically impede the students' potential for wider accomplishment of English. It means that the students' habit language finally will affect them in learning English. As such, such a relative high frequency of intra-sentential CS between English and INF-I employment in has formed an internal habit for them and this will eventually form an automatic use of English but only at smaller constituents: words level. Otherwise, what is expected from learning a target language is the speaker's ability which more likely occur at major constituents such as full sentence, tag, idiomatic expressions, rather than at smaller constituent as it is found in intra-sentential CS.

Referring to the benefits of students' CS in the classroom; these include helping weak learners and motivating them to speak English although by employing CS. The most important function of CS is maintaining communication during the lesson: the students' interaction in the class. In addition, lecturers as the only English role models in ELT contexts must be able to use CS proportionally; intra-sential CS can be employed in order to help weak learners in learning their target language (English). Besides, they must also

consider that the use of major constituents such as full sentence, tag, idiomatic expressions in English is very important to help the students gain competence in English. So, the students are not only able to use English words/expressions but also English full sentences.

Finally, the researcher arrives at the interest of cultivation of FML-I. Based on the research findings, it is not always true that the status of formal language has absolutely given the guarantee toward its existence. In fact, though FML-I holds its formal status, its informal variety that is INF-I has been so popular and it is spoken in the classroom. Tentatively, it is proven that almost sixty subjects of this study have tendency to communicate in INF-I in a formal situation such as in classroom.

6. Suggestions for Future Research

With regard to the findings of the present study, it is encouraged to other investigators to explore more aspects than have been done by this research. Thus, for the educators who are interested in linguistics, they could look for the more benefits of using CS in the ELT contexts. Since the present study is conducted in only one program of study; English Education Department in Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University which involves only sixty students, it is suggested to other educators to do their research on the wider population in many different of studies. It is expected that such investigation is beyond the scope of the present study.

To conclude, whatever aspect of this rich field is studied, it will prove valuable and useful, not only to sociolinguists, linguists, teachers, educators and other people in this country but also to other investigators in the wider bilingual or multilingual research community. It is hoped that this modest study serves to make a contribution to the participants of CS in education or in social life.

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