



Code-Switching by Postgraduate Students in Online Classes

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Abstract. Code-switching is the use of more than one language in one conversation. This phenomenon is not only happening in the bilingual or multilingual family but also in a society where two or more languages are used functionally. This case was found in students' postgraduate online class of the English department at FKIP, University of Mataram. This study aimed to identify types of code-switching those postgraduate students used and how they used them. It employed a descriptive qualitative method and used observation, recording, and note-taking as instruments to collect the data. The findings show that there are three types of code-switching used by communicators: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag code-switching which belong to Poplack theory. Students switch the languages between the English-Indonesian language and Indonesian-Sasak Language. And the type which is most widely used is intra-sentential code-switching.

Keywords: Codeswitching · Bilingual · Multilingual · Language Choice

1 Introduction

As human beings, one needs a tool to interact with one another. Language is a tool to communicate. Language is used to express our feelings, to ask about/for something, to get information, and many more. Communication occurs when two people or more interact with one another. According to Heritage stated that basically through interaction that context is constructed, invoked, and controlled and that through the interaction, the institutional obligations that come from outside the interaction are shown and become realistic and enforceable for the participants [1]. Moreover, when interacting requires a speaker and a listener, both have contributed to the creation of the communication. In case the information is conveyed properly.

There are many languages in this world. Every country has its language. Especially in Indonesia. Indonesia consists of many provinces that have their language or as mother tongue for their people. However, Indonesia has Bahasa Indonesia as a national language to unite the existing differences that occur because of different social, cultures, islands, and of course languages. In addition, this difference also occurs on an international scale. As English has become a global language, it brings together the differences among people from different countries and cultures. These are among the reasons why people need to speak more than one language.

One of the factors affecting how we communicate is context. This refers to whom we communicate with, where the place that communication takes place, or where the language is used functionally. Because of varied contexts, we sometimes need to switch from one language to another when speaking. This phenomenon is what is termed code-switching. According to Syahdan, code-switching is “a natural phenomenon which occurs in bilingual or multilingual communities where two or more languages come into contact” [2].

This phenomenon is familiar with bilingual and multilingual families where they are able to communicate in more than one language. In the Merriam Webster Online Dictionary (2012), bilingualism is defined as “the ability to speak two languages or frequent use of two languages” [3]. The concept of bilingualism is particularly informally abused as when a person speaks multiple languages, they are still called bilingualism [4]. Due to current developments, this phenomenon also occurs outside bilingual and multilingual families such as in the contexts of business, politics, and education.

This study was conducted in the classroom of postgraduate students of the English department. Students participating in the class are Indonesian who master more than one language. They speak Bahasa Indonesia (or their mother tongue) at home or outside the classroom but will have to speak English during their lessons as English is used as a medium of instruction (EMI). Skiba (1997) suggests that code-switching is not language interference, as there are situations where meaning cannot be expressed in one language and the speaker chooses to express it in another language [5]. So, here we can see that rather than being an interference, code-switching functions as a way of smoothening speech continuity.

Regarding classroom interactions, during classroom discussions among Indonesian speakers in an English subject where EMI is applied, usually after a student has given his/her presentation, we often hear students code-switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia. This is understandable as “the discussion is at times more focused on meaning (ideas) and in situations where they feel easier to use Bahasa Indonesia to express their ‘meaning, they will use this language’”. This is then the intent of this study to see the patterns used by the students in this course.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Language and Society

Language is used in social interaction as a tool to communicate with one another. The use of language in communication facilitates people to interact with society. According to Wardhaugh (2006), “society is any group of individuals who are drawn collectively for a certain purpose or functions. And language is what the participants of unique society communicate” [6]. Society is the user of the language to interact, to share what needs, to inform something, and so on. Thus, language and society cannot be separated. Without society, the language would not exist, and neither does society.

2.2 Bilingual and Multilingual

According to Edwards (2004), Bilingualism means that everyone is considered bilingual if they have more or less two words or utterances in another language that is flexible,

easy, and easy to specify [7]. In order to be called a bilingual and multilingual family, members of the family, especially the parents, should come from different backgrounds. For instance, the mother comes from Indonesia and the father comes from Yemen. They have kids and use both Bahasa Indonesia and English language in interaction with their family.

2.3 Code Switching

Code-switching is the use of multiple languages in conversation. People who speak more than one language often switch from one language to another when speaking with people sharing the same languages. According to Meisel (1994), code-switching is the ability to choose the language according to the interlocutor, context of the situation, communication topic, and so on [8]. The use of code-switching does not break the meaning of the speaker's utterances.

With regard to this term, Myers-Scotton (in [4]) proposed that selection by bilingual or multilingual people from embedded languages (or multiple languages) in the utterances of the dominant language in the same conversation. The speaker switches from one language to another language. For instance, a speaker speaks English and Japanese at the same time or in one conversation.

Heather defines code-switching as the exercise of transferring among variations of languages in distinctive contexts [9]. Every bilingual or multilingual has learned to code-switch depending on the situation and setting. This is the reason why code-switching is said to be used functionally as people will code-switch whenever necessary. This phenomenon is also evident in a bilingual or multilingual family. In terms of setting, code-switching can happen in different contexts of situations such as in the workplace, in university, and so on. Mattson and Burenhult (1999) list some situations when code-switching takes place: subject change, emotional function, and repetitive function [10].

2.4 Types of Code Switching

Experts have different classifications of code-switching. According to Bloom and Gumperz (1972), there are two types of code-switching: situational code-switching and metaphorical [11]. Situational code-switching is defined as code-switching which takes place when there is a change of situations during the conversation. Metaphorical code-switching, on the other hand, occurs when there is a change of topic during a communication process. Here, the speaker has a preference to change the codes to redefine the situation, which includes formal to informal, professional to non-public, or critical to humorous.

According to Myers-Scotton (1990), there are two types of code-switching. Those are intra-sentential code-switching and inter-sentential code-switching [12]. Intra-sentential code-switching occurs within one sentence or one clause. While inter-sentential code-switching occurs at the boundary of a clause or sentence.

The other classification comes Poplack (1980). According to him, there are three types of code-switching. They are intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag switching [13]. Intra-sentential of code-switching takes place when the speaker switches from one language to another within the same sentence. The speaker uses more than one language

in one sentence. For instance: in Sunday morning *saya akan pergi ke CFD besok*. Inter-sentential of code-switching, occurs when a speaker switches from one language to another between different sentences. For example, no matter what people say, *saya akan tetap bertahan*. Code-switching happens when involves inserting a tag in one language into a sentence or utterance in another language. For example: *saya akan berusaha*. Right?

3 Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data collected from exchanges of conversations in an online class. According to Moleong (2017), a descriptive study is collecting data in form of words or phrases, pictures, but not numbers [14]. The data in the study were collected using video recording and note-taking and analyzed using Poplack's (1980) theory of code-switching. Based on the data analysis there were 80 utterances found to contain code-switching.

The setting of the study was an online class of postgraduate students. The students come from various backgrounds of ethnicity, place, work, and so on. All of them are able to speak more than one language. They speak their mother tongue, Bahasa Indonesia, and surely English as they are students majoring in English education. These usually use English during classroom interactions. The fact that students can speak more than one language opens the possibility that they will switch-code from one language to another, consciously or unconsciously.

4 Result and Discussion

Data analyses of 80 clauses containing code-switching indicated that 44 clauses display intra-sentential code-switching, 30 clauses inter-sentential code-switching, and the remaining 6 clauses are identified as containing tag code-switching. The following section illustrates in more detail how each type of code-switching is used.

4.1 Intra-sentential Code Switching

As previously presented, intra-sentential code-switching is the use of more than one code in one sentence. This type of code-switching was found throughout the lesson stages. And the following is examples of code-switching during a discussion after the presentation of a topic by a student.

Student 1: It will also occur in Indonesia we want to say *Kita pergi makan*. we have two verbs here.

Student 2: *Pokoknya* I just read whatever in ppt *soalnya gak ngerti*.

Student 3: ...because that is Noam Chomsky's example of grammar. So, I have no, I mean *enggak berani ngomen ya*, Noam Chomsky *gitu*.

Student 4: and sometimes like there are rules. Means like *something yang kita pelajarin*.

Student 5: Can you divide the text, hmm *lupa*, to understand the kind of text. So many kinds of text, *gitu*. Jadi in SMK we only teach 4 kinds of text. Narrative, *apa satu lupa*. Procedure.

Student 6: You can't divide that ooh *misalnya separo ini bagian* recount text. It has its pattern. I believe like that, so kalau *misalnya* you have another explanation, you can share with me.

Student 7: Okay then, di *stop aja*. Thank you, Mr for your presentation

Student 8: Alright, *mba mau jawab?*

Those are a few examples of intra-sentential code-switching. The italicized words are Bahasa Indonesia, and the others are English. Those sentences above use more than one language. As Student 2 utterances that *Pokoknya* I just read whatever in ppt *soalnya gak ngerti*. The word "*pokoknya* and *soalnya gak ngerti*" is Bahasa Indonesia, "while I just read whatever in ppt" belongs to the English language. Those words are in one sentence that has the characteristic of intra-sentential of code-switching.

Different kind of data is in the conversation of Student 4, he said "and sometimes like there are rules. Means like *something yang kita pelajarin*." The first sentence contains full English. And the second contains two languages Bahasa Indonesia and English. The second sentence indicates the characteristic of Intra-sentential of code-switching. Where "means like something" in English and *Kita pelajarin* is Bahasa Indonesia. Another piece of data is an utterance by Student 6, "You can't divide that, ooh *misalnya separo ini bagian* recount text. It has its pattern. I believe like that. So kalau *misalnya* you have another explanation you can share with me." This conversation has 4 sentences. There are some which are fully in English and the last is to switch the language Bahasa Indonesia to English. This sentence is a type of intra-sentential.

4.2 Inter-sentential Code Switching

Different from intra-sentential code-switching, inter-sentential code-switching is when a speaker changes code in different sentences. Here are examples of this code-switching among the 30 found during the online class.

Student 8: *Ibu winda dan Ibu Tirta, kami persilahkan*. Time is yours.

Student 9: *Gimana dong ya ampun. Apa sih yang kamu bicarakan*. What do you mean huh?

Student 10: I think we should stop the class now. Because no one to present. *Sampai ini aja kelasnya. Saya berenti merekam dulu*

Student 11: Alright. *Mba mau jawab*

Those are the few of the utterances that belong to the types of inter-sentential code-switching. As Student 8 utterances reads "*Ibu Winda dan Ibu Tirta, kami persilahkan*. Time is yours." This conversation contains two sentences. The first sentence is in Bahasa Indonesia and the second is in English. Because the inter-sentential occurs when switching language in different sentences, so this conversation is belonging the characteristic of inter-sentential code-switching.

Another example of inter-sentential code-switching is the utterance by Student 9, “*gimana dong ya ampun. Apa sih yang kamu bicarakan. What do you mean huh?*”. This utterance contains three sentences. The first sentence and the second is Bahasa Indonesia and the third is English. Because this is an indifferent sentence that one of the characteristics of inter-sentential of code-switching.

4.3 Tag Code-Switching

Student 12: Thank you, *Mbak*.

Student 13: So, this can only about the generic structure of pattern, how is it about? The text is about something or what, *kan?*

These are examples of Tag code-switching. It is rarely found. Thus, from the two utterances above, one can see that the use of different languages is at the end of the sentence which use the tag word in another language.

5 Conclusion

This study found that the use of intra-sentential code-switching is more frequent than inter-sentential code-switching, with tag code-switching being used the least. The data show 55% is intra-sentential code-switching, 37.5% is inter-sentential code-switching, and 7.5% is tag-code switching.

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