INTERSENTENTIAL CODESWITCHING AMONG INDONESIAN-ENGLISH BILINGUALS

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Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating how the English-Indonesian bilingual speakers use language codes in their interaction through internet. The data for this study comprised a linguistic corpus made up from postings sent to a newsgroup by its members. The findings showed that codeswitching accured in this forum was similar to that in the face to face interaction. The code choice may be either marked or unmarked. The unmarked switching occured during informal and relax interaction. While the marked switching occured when the speakers wanted to negotiate a new right and obligation, specifically when they wanted to show anger, attract attention, make correction or invite another speaker to join.

Key words: Codeswiting, bilingualism, interaction.

A. INTRODUCTION

The present study examines the way group members’ codeswitch and the underlying reasons for codeswitching. The newsgroup selected for this study is an unmoderated newsgroup that specifies its discussion on culture and social matters in Indonesia. Unmoderated discussion is different from the moderated one in the way that the latter can be categorised as orchestrated encounter where, according to Dingwal (1988) the order is maintained by the action of one party who is recognised as arbiter. In the unmoderated discussion, the participants are supposed to keep each other in order like in casual conversation. The participants are using Indonesian and English in their communication. In this newsgroup code selection varies as the speakers may use both spoken and written mode of these languages in their communication. Therefore, there are four possible codes that can be chosen, namely: Formal Indonesian, Informal Indonesian, Spoken English and Written English. For communication purposes, the participants make use of these languages and their variants in such a way to maximise their functions not only as a medium for conveying the transactional meaning, but also to encode the rights and obligations between the participants. Their attempts to make the maximum benefits from the codes they have in their language repertoire result in the mixture of the different codes in their speech so called codeswitching.

This study is different from the previous ones in that the nature of the computer mediated communication eliminates the participant factors from the discussion. The participants are regarded as equals since there is no pre-determined social distance and power in their interaction. The participants are known only by their users’ name without any attribute denoting their social position or other personal information. The other difference is the type of data for study. The data used in the present study is written speech, while the other pieces of research normally used recorded data from spoken conversations. The data from written speech is supposed to differ in that the reasons for code switching could be limited because the speaker or writer can edit what he said before sending it to the Audience.
Codeswitching is an integral part of the bilingual communication. It is the phenomena where the speaker uses two languages or language varieties alternatively within the same utterance or the same course of conversation. Researchers produce various definitions that may differ from one researcher to another. This variations is resulted from different views on the language mixing phenomena.. Gumperz (1982) defines codeswitching as ‘juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical system or sub-system. Hoffman (1991) suggested that the codeswitching is not the monopoly of bilinguals, the monolinguals do codeswitching by changing their language style.

Researchers have made some attempts to divide codeswitching into subcategories. Some of them separate from the beginning between language choice and codeswitching. Grosjen (1982), for instance, suggested that the bilingual speakers will make two stage decision process on the language they choose to use among them. The first stage is to decide which language to be used more appropriately. This choice is motivated by the socio-psychological factors, such as the participants, situation, content of discourse and the function of interaction. In the second stage, the speakers will decide whether they will codeswitch in their utterance.

The motives behind codeswitching have been an interesting area of studies. The current issue is the influence of socio-psychological factors on the production of switching. Ervin-Tripp in Grosjean (1982) suggested that “a speaker in any language community who enters diverse social situations normally has a repertoire of speech alternatives which shift with situation”. In bilingual settings, the bilinguals not only can choose between varieties but also between languages. These code choices are affected by four major factors, namely: setting and situation, participants, topic and function of interaction. Many studies of codeswitching evolve around the bilingual performance the language choice and code mixing under the influence of the fore-mentioned parameters.

Participants factors receive a great attention from investigators. Sgall and Hronek (1994) discussed the differences between standard and non standard Czech and described the factors affecting Czech speakers’ choice of which code to use. They identified that code selection was affected by the personal factors, such as: the speakers’ region of origin, profession and age. Wei (1995) studied the codeswitching in the Chinese society in Britain involving 58 subjects and the results showed that there is a generational difference in the pattern of language choice and codeswitching strategies they used. In the other study Sounkalo (1995) found that the younger subjects codeswitch more than the older ones in Mauritania between native languages and French. He attributed these phenomena to the fact that French has been a used as an instructional language in last twelve years. Meisel (1994) studied about the acquisition of grammatical constraints of codeswitching among children and found that the subjects do not violate the constraints in their earliest uses of mixing.

The codeswitching performance of subjects under the influence of role relation has also been studied. Pan (1995) studied the switching behavior of ten families whose primary home language were Mandarin Chinese. She found that the children codeswitch more often than their parents and they tend comply more when the switch is from Chinese to English and less from English to Chinese. The use of codeswitching in the classroom has a pedagogical function. Merritt et al(1992) found that the teacher in Kenyan primary school classroom codeswitch between languages to focus or regain students’ attention, and to clarify, enhance or reinforce lesson materials. While a study conducted by Canagarajah (1995) in SriLankan secondary school ESL classrooms showed that the teacher codeswitched between languages for classroom
management and transmission of lesson content.

Study on codeswitching committed by host of radio talk show and caller in Jamaica reveal that the host who are supposed to use formal English switch to Jamaican creole that is regarded as a street language in favour to his/her caller as an attempt to support or chastise the callers, dissuade callers from continuing in a particular vein, reinforce the point being made and encourage cooperation from the callers (Shield-Brodber, 1992). Burt (1992) observed the conversation between bilingual, each of whom is a learner of the other’s language and she studied the difference between convergence or complementary schismo-genesis where each speaker attempted to speak in the interlocutor native language and compliance where each speaker agrees with and complies with the interlocutor code choice. She argued that the pattern of compliance is more accommodating that convergence. Besides the participants factors, the influence of settings and situation on codeswitching has been explored. Mustafa & Al-khatib (1994) studied the grammatical constraints of codeswitching between English and Arabic in science lecture by bilingual English-Arabic professors in the University of Science and Technology Jordan. They found that mixed sentences dominate the text. Unfortunately, they did not study the socio-psychological factors influencing the switching.

Pennington et al (1993) studied the code choice in tertiary students in Hong Kong involving ninety-one undergraduate students. She found that the mix Cantonese-English code was widely used in the high proportion of encounters inside the academic contexts and pure Cantonese in the other contexts. The participants prefer to used English when the interact with non Chinese.

The presence of monolingual style switching is found by Fuller (1993) in the courtroom settings. The lawyers use style shifting when they want to imply something that they are not allowed to say directly. She said that they did it by using metaphors to “make characterizations and to create changes in the alignments”.

Pakir (1990) analysed the codeswitching by Baba Malays who speak Malay, Hokkian and English. She found that the code choice reflected a speaker’s attempt to negotiate a collective social identity and accommodate fellow speakers and hearers. The sequential use of the three languages functions as reiteration - repetition, clarification, emphasis or modification of the massage or utterance.

B. METHODS

The population of this study was Indonesian subscribing the newsgroup. Most of them are Indonesian students studying in various countries like Australia, European countries, USA, and Singapore and Hong Kong. The additional participants are Indonesian staying in Indonesia but have an access to newsgroup from the local internet providers. The data for this study are corpora comprising the postings sent by the participants to the newsgroup. The postings can be categorised into two groups; main postings, the posting intended to be read by the users participating in he newsgroup and the crossposting sent by the outsiders in the form of messages that they want the people to know. In this study, the crossposting were excluded from data for two main reasons. Firstly, those posting is not initiated by the members of the newsgroup. Secondly, the topics are not followed up by the members.

The data collected were analysed in the following steps: First, the interactions between participants were rearranged from the message they posted in order to get the conversational exchange structures like the texts from on-going conversation. Then, the conversational exchanges were used as data for the study and further analysis was made: The texts containing codeswitching were identified and tabulated. The codeswitching were grouped on the basis of their types.
Finally, the factors influencing the switching were identified.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Verbal repertoire

The data showed that the verbal repertoire of the interlocutors participating in the newsgroup comprised Informal Indonesian, Formal Indonesian, Informal (spoken) English and Formal (written) English. Formal and informal Indonesian are diglossic where Formal Indonesian is the code used in formal communication, instruction and in literature, while informal one is used in informal contact within the community. Informal Indonesian dialect is different from one place to another place. The people recognised Medan, Padang, Betawi (Jakarta), and other dialects. Since they are diglossia, they are intelligible to each other. The informal Indonesian used in the newsgroup is Betawi (Jakarta) dialect. This dialect is more widely used in other places because it may create an impression of higher status that the speakers are from Jakarta or have been in Jakarta, the capital city and the symbol of modernisation in the country.

Formal English is the language studied by Indonesian as the first foreign language at school. This language is based on the written form. Indonesians who studied abroad are supposed to have been proficient in this language since they have passed the proficiency test as a requirement for University acceptance. Informal (spoken) English code is acquired gradually from the first day of arrival in English speaking countries where spoken English is used as a code in daily interaction.

On the basis of the varieties of language used for communication in the newsgroup, the members can be regarded as bilingual speakers. In the bilingual community there is a tendency that one code could be assigned for doing a certain communication task. Gumperz (1982), for instance, notes that distinct varieties are employed in certain settings or performing certain activities. Scotton (1993) claimed that the multilingual society tend to assign different tasks to different languages. This idea implies that the speaker selects a certain code on the basis of the conscious reasons. The code selection may be triggered by three factors, namely: The subjects being discussed, the nature of discussion (logical or emotional) and power that is being negotiated.

The previous studies proved that the tendency of assigning a certain code on the specific task is quite clear. Abdullah (1979) found that in the bilingual malays, the speakers tended to use Malay for interactional activities and English for transactional ones, especially in communicating the concept that are specifically western.

The pattern of code selection that is indexical for a specific exchange is difficult to find in the data obtained for several reasons. Firstly, the nature of interaction does not allow the social distance and relative power the participants have to interfere the interaction. It is caused by the fact the participants are anonymous where the identity of the speaker is only the users’ name that does not reveal anything more than the registration number. Secondly, the setting is not as rich as natural conversation where the interaction may occur in various places and time and under different circumstances. The only features that can be taken into considerations are the subject discussed, the mode of interaction and the socio-psychological factors influencing the code selection.

The activity types in this newsgroup are very limited to discussion and casual conversation. The distribution of the codes in these activities is obvious. The unmarked codes for discussion are Formal Indonesian or Formal English, while the unmarked codes for casual conversation are Informal Indonesian or Spoken English

2. Code choice

Code choice is a kind of language behaviour where the choice of code in the language repertoire is influenced by the
social or situational factors, such as the participant, subject being discussed and the balance of right and obligation between the participants. The interaction among participants proceeds in a single code until one factor is changed. When the factors change the speakers may change the code for a full turn or within a single turn or inter-sentential. Scotton (1983) in his markedness model classified the codeswitching into marked choice where the new right and obligation between speaker and interlocutor are negotiated and unmarked choice where the speaker turns to new code without any attention to change the existing roles.

When the attempt is made for analysing the code selection, we should firstly see whether the exchange is conventionalised or not. In conventionalised exchange the relative markedness of linguistic code is predetermined by the socio-psychological factors of the participants. Otherwise, the linguistic choice is exploratory where the first speaker nominates the code that may become the index of mutually acceptable relationship. In other words, they agree on the code that may become unmarked in their interaction.

The data showed that the markedness of the code is determined by the mode of interaction. Formal Indonesian and Written English are unmarked codes for conducting the more formal discussion. But, their position is in complementary distribution in that when Formal Indonesian is nominated as the code, the switching to written English is marked. While, for casual conversation Informal Indonesian and Spoken English are unmarked codes, but the distribution is supplementary in that changing from one to another is unmarked- does not change the balance of rights and obligations between participants.

On the basis of the markedness of codes in the specific exchange, the code choice in the newsgroup was analysed on the basis of the procedures proposed by Scotton (1983) in his Markedness theory.

a. Unmarked Choice

The socio-psychological approach to code choice emphasises that the motivation for switching from one code to another in the course of interaction is the change in the situation, such as: the participants, subject, mode or the balance between rights and obligation between participants. However, data from various places showed that there instances that the speaker switch to another code without any change in the situation. Treffers-Daller (1992) pointed out that the disadvantage of the situational approach to codeswitching is that it fails to account the data in which switching occurs frequently without any clear change in the social parameters. As a plausible explanation for this, Scotton (1988) argued that when there are some varieties of code that are unmarked for some exchange, the bilingual peers may sometimes be switching without any change in the situation.

This phenomenon is found in many instances during the exchange between users in the data. There are two main reasons for this to happen. Firstly, for the casual conversation in the newsgroup, there are two codes that are indexical - unmarked for the exchange, namely Informal Indonesian and English. Secondly, as the maxim of exploratory choice suggested that in the less conventionalised exchanges where the unmarked is not obvious, the speakers use codeswitching to explore the possible unmarked code for that exchange.

In the following is the example of the unmarked choice when there are two codes are unmarked for a certain exchange:

Nya: *Hallo...hallo ‘pa kabar yang di Pittsburg??* **Mutah-mudahan Steelers taun ini masuk deh ke Superbowl. Supaya 49ers dapet lawan yang beneran dikit dibandingin dengan San diego chargers. *...*

Hes: *49ers nggak bakalan masuk superbowl tahun ini, karena bakalan dikalahkan Cowboys dalam NFC final.*

aaa: *Viking...viking....will go to super Bowl !!!*
Ber: viking will beg cowboy to help them to go to superbowl may be it’s just a dream for warren moon and pals airbone attack, rushing forget this terms, get 1st down than talk superbowl later.

Wel: Haha... never say never mam Hes. Have heard of what Harry Rice’s said to a bunch of press? Do you really think the Deion Sanders will help the Cowboys to get into the Superbowl? They might get into SB but watch-out for the Dolphins and the Steelers!

Inc: Apa bener Cowboys nggak punya pemain yang bagus? Jerry Jones sign DS cuma karena DS yang cover Michael Irvin kok.

In the data above Nya introduce the topic in Informal Indonesian signalling that he invited the casual conversation with the other users. In the course of the conversation, aaa switch to English followed by Ber and wel. Their switching does not mean as an attempt to negotiate the right and obligation balance from the initial one.

In the following is the example of the codeswitching when the exploratory attempt is made to find the unmarked choice for the exchange:

Gra: Here is the list of the best (members):

Ton: Nama gue kok kagak ada. Tapi sekedar pingin tahu aja. kriteria dan jurinya itu apa dan siapa sih? Terus Endi itu siapa? Tuh nama-nama lainnya tau semua.

Gra: Sebetulnya saya mempertimbangkan anda untuk no.10 tetapi adik saya memaksanya untuk menempatkan si Pino di sana. Marahin deh si Alvin tuh.

Alv: Enaknya, kok malah aku yang dimarahin. Napa sih setiap ada apa aku aja yang kena. Marahin adekmu sana kok milih aku.


Gra: Ton, kamu itu orangnya Gran (gederasaan). Siapa sih kamu ini sampe-sampe orang ngasingin kamu.

From the data provided above, it can be seen that unmarked code choice functions as a single code where the two varieties where the switching does not have a special significance in the negotiation of rights and obligation. In the first place Gra started the exchange in English and Formal Indonesian because the assertion she made probably may invite the discussion where the indexical codes for discussion mode is Formal Indonesian or Standard English. While the reader saw that the topic is not worth putting into argumentation discussion, so Pin make his comment in Informal Indonesia. Finally, Gra turn to Informal Indonesian in the next turn. The mode of interaction is casual conversation.

b. Codeswitching as a marked choice

The first attempt of studying the code choice and the socio-psychological factors influencing it occurrence ended up with the explanation that it happens to signal the new balance of right and obligation. In this section the marked choice where the speaker selects different code as an attempt to negotiate the new rights and obligation between the speaker and hearer will be discussed.

1). Codeswitching to show anger

The code choice can be used as a tool to convey emotional response during the discussion in THE NEWSGROUP. Actually, Gal (1979) had identified the use of codeswitching in expressing anger and escalating an argument. The data from bilingual German-Hungarian in Austria show the context where the mother switch to German when she angry and rise and
argument with her spouse. Scotton (1993) classified the expression of anger as deference strategy to put more power to the expression. This phenomenon also occurs in the newsgroup though the context is different.

In the following example J4S000 express his anger in English:

Setting: There is a user sent a posting to the newsgroup discussing about His religion and How it is different from other religion in the favour of his. In Indonesia Religion is one of sensitive topic when the speaker comes to comparison.

J4S: ... Apa iktikad anda sebenarnya? Apa maksud anda membandingkan (Religion A) dengan (Religion B)? Ini saya tanyakan sebab-sebabnya, karena sebagaimana anda garuk-garuk kepala karena kebingungan masyarakat akan uaraian anda, sayapun tak melihat alasan yang masuk akal dan juntungan anda membuat semua ini. maaf. I really wish the net was equipped with speaker mesjid. I really wanna put that p.a speaker right at your ears and amplify my questions right into your mind. Maaf, Bung xxx, saya cuma bercanda.

In the first part of his response, his attitude toward the previous posting showed that he really does not like to discuss the topic logically so that the reason why he asked the intention of the writer instead of challenging him by asking the discussion questions. In the second part, tit is very clear that he really was annoyed with the posting and angry with the one who sent it.

2). Codeswitching to attract attention

McClure (1981) identified a bilingual speaker used codeswitching to attract attention from his peers. A Spanish-English speaker turns to Spanish when he wants to focus his playmate’s attention on his instruction. In the data this phenomenon was found. The purpose of switching is probably to signal the interruption. In the following example, Gayatri used Informal Indonesian when she firstly joins the conversation.

Part 1: So, Ton. Have you decided what you want to do for a living? Have you ever considered writing comic books?

Part 2: No, I haven’t decided yet. Why, yes, I have considered writing comic books and in fact, I’m still considering it. Unfortunately, both my writing and drawing talent were discovered late, and thus need a lot of polishing. Therefore I’m still not sure if I can be a good artist or writer. Actually, I have no talent. I’m just stubborn and kept trying.

Part 3: Part 2, mbakyu mu dapat ekstra Adobi Photoshop program for PC dari teman. Kalau mau eh siapa tahu bisa ngebantu bikin komiknya...itu kalau Part 2 belum punya. Kalau sudah yah biar buat hadiah kalau nanti kita adakan kontes seperti tahun lalu. Terus terang semula saya mau bikin kontes lagi hadiahnya Adobi Photoshop sama Illustrator packages. What do you think?


Part 1 and Part 2 are discussing about what are they going to do in the future in English. It means that the indexical code for the interaction is English, and Part 3 interrupt to join the conversation. To attract the other’s attention she opted to use Indonesian and she successfully obtain the attention from Part 2 and they continue the conversation in that code.
3). Switching to make a correction

There is an occasion when the third party wants to interrupt the conversation to correct and emphasise some pieces of information that he thought not correct. His attempt to correct his peers, the speaker use different code from the one that has been indexed for that conversation.

Part 1: Albert Einstein memberikan sumbangan yang cukup besar pada (Religion A) seperti yang diungkapkan dalam autobiographinya: “Jika terdapat agama yang dapat mengatasi kebutuhan ilmiah maka agama itu adalah (Religion A)”.

Part 2: Jika saja dari dulu Eistein mengagumi (Religion A), tentulah ia tidak lagi seorang (Religion B). Pada akhir hidupnya bahkan ia ditemui sebagai seorang (Religion C).

Part 3: In fact, Einstein was an atheist. He did not have any religion. He only believe in rational fact.

This example showed that Part 3 tried to correct the previous senders about the truthfulness of the information they were talking about.

4). Switching to exclude

Scotton (1988) discussed the possibility of making a switch from one code to another in order to exclude one of the interlocutors from the conversation. Her observation reveals that this strategy was frequently used when there is a different power between participants, for example between parents and children. It shows the speakers share an identity that others do not have. In case the power is less great, she said, this strategy is considered rude and the speakers may be accused of back-biting - speaking behind the other party’s back.

The data showed that this strategy is often used by the participants when there are outsiders who are considered do not understand Indonesian post challenging postings to this newsgroup and some members made the inappropriate responses. As an attempt to remind or suggest the members what should be done, the other members tend to switch to Indonesian.

Example:

P 1: This massage to all (Country 1) Men and women: The (Country 2) people hate the (Country 1). We think that you are ugly and filthy animals who kill and punish. You don’t respect human right and for that reason, the (Country 2) people shouldn’t respect you as well....

P 2: I’m pretty much surprise: How can such civilized (that’s what its people claimed) country like (Country 2) which has a long history and tradition unable to educate one of its big mouth citizen like you. .... Ha ha ha. You guys just make me laugh. Look back at your history book (if you have any). FIND: HOW MANY PEOPLE IN MY COUNTRY HAD BEEN KILLED BY YOUR OLD PEOPLE? If you still have a feeling, just shut up. One more thing. ....

P 3: Jadi, bung P2, tertib logikanya bagaimana? Apakah karena sebuah regim di (Country 2) (atau negara manapun) melakukan praktek kolonialisme, ...Tuan P1 jelas telah memamerkan kebodohannya. Tapi Anda sesungguhnya tidak berhasil menunjukkan dimana letak kebodohannya tuan satu ini, seperti yang dengan cerdas dilakukan ...

In the above exchanges P 1 open the discussion by sending the emotional message addressed to All Indonesian and Some Indonesian responded diplomatically but one responded with the same emotional. His response is regarded as thoughtless and probably could be the stepping stone for the further flames. One user anticipated this and decided to remind him what he was doing and what the users were supposed to do with such message. In doing so he chose to be in-group discussion by speaking in
Indonesian since both of them share the identity as Indonesian citizens.

Li Wei (1995) suggested the division between we-code and they-code among bilinguals- we-code is the language use in-group between the same ethnic origin and they-code used with the outsiders. In the case of Indonesian speakers, we-code is Indonesian. However, this code represents two variants formal and informal. In the data presented above Part1 used formal variant that has a value for distancing. It means that he did not show solidarity, instead the switch convey his indifferent feeling toward Part2.

D. CONCLUSION, SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has several limitations that may prevent the generalisation of the findings to the wider Indonesian-English bilingual communities. These limitation are related to the small amount of data, the absent of several relevant and salient factors influencing the codeswitching behaviour like the participants’ relative power, social position, age, gender and the relationship between the participants and also the limited settings where the interaction occurs like time, place, and the topic discussed.

The code choice in this newsgroup proved that the change in code used in the course of interaction does not necessarily mean the change in the balance of rights and obligations between participants. Many instance the code code-shifting is unmarked. Probably, it is caused by the egalitarian nature of the relationship between the participants. The function of code choice as marked the new rights and obligation when the participants used it for expressing anger, attracting attention or excluding an interlocutor.

This study need to be replicated for wider population in order to provide the more valid generalisation of the codeswitching pattern and function for bilingual Indonesian-English speakers in the newsgroup. The other researchers are also suggested to conduct the same study to the natural communication like face to face interaction in natural settings involving Indonesian immigrants who have stayed in English speaking countries for a long time.

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