

## CODE-SWITCHING PRACTICES AT ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN MULTILINGUAL INDONESIAN SOCIETY

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### Abstract

*Code-switching is becoming a common phenomenon which occur extensively in English teachers' speech in the classrooms where English is not the first language of both teachers and students. In the Indonesian context, particularly where a regional language is used along with the national language (Bahasa Indonesia) both teachers and students are able to speak more than one language. However, many second and foreign-language educators and researchers have developed strong beliefs about using code-switching in teaching English is not an effective way to help students mastering English language. One of the views claims that code switching is a sign of an inability to express oneself, and it reduces the opportunity of using English completely. For this reason, English teachers use of code-switching is regarded as a factor leading to the decline of English language proficiency, despite of the fact that these beliefs may not always grounded in theory or research. This project has aim to describe the application of code-switching practices among the English teachers at English education program in West Sumatra Indonesia where people commonly used Bahasa Indonesia and their regional language i.e. Minangkabau language in communication. The findings of the study show that both intrasentential and intersentential switching are applied by those English teachers.*

**Keywords:** *code-switching, English teachers, English education program*

### INTRODUCTION

Code-switching appears to be used both by students and teachers in the classroom context (Borlongan, 2009). It is becoming a common phenomenon which occur extensively in English teachers' speech in the classrooms where English is not the first language of both teachers and students. According to Kasperczyk, (2005), it has been effectively employed by teachers of English in their EFL (English Foreign Language) curriculum as a tool in various language learning activities. In the

Indonesian context, these practices have also been conducted by Indonesian teachers who teach English, particularly in which a regional language is used along with the national language (*Bahasa Indonesia*), thus both teachers and students are able to speak more than one language.

On one hand, it is unavoidable that many second and foreign-language educators and researchers have developed strong beliefs about using code-switching in teaching English is not an effective way to help students'

master English language. They even believe that code switching is a sign of an inability to express oneself, and it reduces the opportunity of using English completely. The perspective claiming that second or target language should be the only language present during the acquisition process of second or additional language is derived from the L1 = L2 learning hypothesis (Ellis, 1986; Krashen, 1981). Furthermore, Wei and Martin (2009, p. 117) assert that code-switching is often regarded as inappropriate behaviour in educational settings, while in social contexts, it is seen as something natural and a part of bilingual or multilingual speech. For this reason, it becomes a common assumption that English teachers use of code-switching is one of the factors leading to the decline of English language proficiency, despite of the fact that these beliefs may not always grounded in theory or research.

A huge number of studies and articles have examined the issues relating to code-switching. Upon reviewing studies of English language teaching in Indonesia, there is a noticeable dearth of literature on English teacher trainers' code-switching practices in the local context where the speakers are able to speak more than one language.

The general aim of this project is to describe the application of code-switching practices among the English teachers at English education program in West Sumatra Indonesia where people commonly used *Bahasa Indonesia* and their regional language *Minangkabau* language in communication. The findings of this

study could inform English language teaching pedagogy in the Indonesian context.

## METHOD

This study is a classroom research in which 12 English teachers were purposefully observed and videotaped during their classroom practices. Their utterances were transcribed and analysed inductively. Multimodal Analysis Video Software that developed by O'Halloran (2013) was used to retrieve the data, code, organise and visualise the salient points in the video footage. The type of the English teachers' code-switching practices and the type of language they used were then classified.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the transcribed data shows that the teachers used either Indonesian or English, or a switch of Indonesian and English, or this switch including a local dialect (Minangkabau) in their teaching practices.

The structure of language used by some of the teacher trainers are both intrasentential and intersentential switching (Saville-Troike, 2003). Intersentential switching occurs at phrasal, sentence, or discourse boundaries:

Teacher: *Only four things that are available in the health club. Do you understand? Not yet? It means you have to*

*circle, you harus mencari empat hal atau empat servis yang disediakan klub kesehatan tersebut...*  
Extract from Dirato's classroom [Listening]  
Minute: 1:32

Interestingly, however, while intersentential code-switching is occurring, the prescribed exonormative structures of English are being maintained.

Teacher: ...atau kamu kasih dia satu paragraph, *you get or give your students a paragraph in Indonesia or in English then you ask your students to retell what is the paragraph talk about. What is the meaning of the paragraph? It means that your students act as interpreter.* Jadi sama seperti *interpreter* atau *translator*. Jadi dia menjelaskan, ah itu tadi pertanyaan yang berkaitan dengan parafrase... Extract from Herawati's classroom [Language assessment] Minute: 42.02

Teacher: ...kalau *three minutes* anda muka dimahaja, orang ndak akan tertarik untuk mendengarkannya [unintelligible] makanya *that's the*

*point, just go to the first part of outline that talking about introduction.*

*Introduction-nya kayak gini ya hanya pertama langsung kita...* Extract from Burhan's classroom [Speech] Minute: 59.30

Teacher: *Anything you can explain about adverb of clause? Anyone of you? Klausanya adverb.* Kalau ditanya *adverb* apa?

Students: Keterangan  
Teacher: Keterangan apa? Extract from Maimun's classroom [English Grammar unit] Minute: 3:46

Intrasentential switching occurs in the middle of an utterance, usually without pause, interruption or hesitation.

Teacher: *Adverb.* *Adverb* tadi keterangan ada untuk waktu, tempat, [unintelligible] *effect* dan *conditional*. Kalau untuk *present* ada '*now*', '*at the time*', ada '*right now*' ... Extract from Maimun's classroom [English Grammar class] Minute: 10.35

This type of code-switching does not provide an opportunity for modeling exonormative forms of English.

Teacher: Nah yang nomer dua [pointing to

the example of sentences on the whiteboard] ini ini yang disebut dengan *adverb clause*. Karena apa? Dia dalam bentuk klausa. Klausa yang bagaimana?

*Dependent*. Kenapa dia dinyatakan sebagai *dependent*? Karena berdiri sendiri.

(Teacher: Number two (pointing to the example of sentences on the whiteboard) is called *adverb clause*. Why? It is in the form of clause. How is the clause? It is *dependent*. Why is it *dependent*? Because it doesn't stand on its own)

Extract from Maimun's classroom [English Grammar unit] Minute: 17.23

Teacher: Kriteria terdapat pada saat yang sama dengan prediktornya. Jadi kriterianya sama dengan prediktor. Kalau kita ambil contoh di TOEFL ya yang paling mudah. TOEFL mau dia dalam *paper-based* mau dia dalam *computer-based* dia tetap dibilang TOEFL kan. Maka hasil di *computer-based* tidak akan beda dengan di *paper-based*. Soal di *paper-based* sama dengan di *computer-based*. Yang

membedakan apa, kriterianya cuma, yang satu lewat komputer yang satu lewat *paper*.

(Teacher: Criteria are in the predictor. So criteria are similar to predictor. Let's take an easy example on TOEFL. Paper-based and computer-based TOEFL are similar. The results will be the same. The items are similar. The different is in the criteria, one by using computer and the other using paper) Extract from Widya's classroom [Research unit] Minute: 29:56

The teachers also conducted code-switching with the local dialect (Minangkabau):

Teacher: Kata kerja [unintelligible] adadua kata kerja, ada yang *transitive* dan *intransitive*, ada yang memerlukan *object* namanya *transitive verb*. Kalau yang ndak memerlukan *object* namanya *intransitive verb*, tanpa perlu *object* ndak ditambah *object*. *Lai jalehdek you tu* [mixing Minangkabau and English].

(Teacher: There are two types of verbs, *transitive* and *intransitive verb*.

*Transitive verb needs object and intransitive does not need object. Do you understand it?*  
Extract from Burhan's classroom [Speech unit] Minute: 43:30

Teacher: ...kita menyuruh orang berpakaian apa pakai sarawa bantuak ka mandi pai ka pasa [Minangkabau dialect]. Makanya apa saya bilang dulu, jangan you [English] urus orang lain, urus dulu diri sendiri. Makanya kita harus menghargai privacy [English].  
Extract from Yusman's classroom [Cross cultural understanding] Minute: 38.04

The above examples show that the teachers are exercising three different type of languages in their code-switching practices. The analysis results suggest that the teacher-trainers exercised communicative principles such as a focus on the meaning instead of form in spoken discourse. Code switching in Indonesian, English and regional language was used to maintain the flow of communication. This indicated efforts to make the content of their classes intelligible.

In teacher trainers' classroom practice, they employed code switching as a teaching strategy for achieving communicative purposes. As explained by Modupeola (2013, p. 1), teachers in multilingual societies employ code switching strategies as a means of providing

students with opportunities to communicate and enhance understanding.

Mujiono, Poedjosoedarmo, Subroto and Wiranto (2013) studied code switching by English lecturers in Indonesian universities from a functional perspective, they proposed fifteen reasons for this compromise (1) linguistic factors such as using loanwords to explain a term that did not have a counterpart in English, (2) to continue speaker's pronouncement, (3) to involve the addressee, (4) for information clarification, (5) for intimacy, (6) affect with the addressee, (7) unpleasant feelings, (8) to create humour, (9) to repeat for the clarification or reiteration of a message, (10) to strengthen a request or command, (11) to ask questions, (12) to give advice, (13) to balance the addressee's language competence, (14) to make it easier to convey a message, and (15) as a discourse marker to convey the current topic. It is most likely that code switching might also be employed by these teacher-trainers for similar reasons.

The teacher-trainers' own language performance was also constrained by the teaching environment. Concerns about intelligibility dominated their practice. The teacher-trainers were likely to be aware of varying levels of English among their students and they would not want to risk miscommunication or misunderstanding. In addition, rather than code switching, the participants choose either English or Indonesian as a means to achieve the objectives of their class. This equates to a condition explained by Bailey (1996) whereby teachers' assumptions about

the current classroom situation influence them to change their actions to “serve the common good” (p. 26).

Using English for all classroom discourse would be a challenge for both teacher-trainers and their students. In this respect, the value in teaching exonormative forms (Kirkpatrick, 2007) i.e. English from the dominant varieties- British, American, Canadian, Australian or New Zealand English by using code switching, as is the common practice, needs to be assessed, particularly for academic contexts, because in the Indonesian context, English for academic contexts legitimately adheres to the norms of Standard English stipulated by education policy.

There is as yet no evidence to suggest that not providing the ‘expected’ English models is detrimental to students. If the goal is for students to master exonormative forms of English and the most effective way to achieve this is proven to be by code switching, then teacher-trainers need to be encouraged to use this strategy, but they need to inform their students about the use of this strategy, as their students will most likely teach as they were taught.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown code switching to be extensively used as a practical communicative strategy amongst teachers of English and their students. Instead of adhering to the exonormative forms of English, they used code switching. It is possible that this practice might

evolve into a variety used in spoken discourse by Indonesians in educational institutions and more broadly in Indonesia business and commerce, etc. By code switching as a ‘regular behaviour’ (Abbot, 2004) the possibility of its continuity increases.

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