

THE USE OF CODE-SWITCHING IN ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA (LINE) BY SENIOR-HIGH-SCHOOL ALUMNI IN SOUTH SUMATRA

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Abstract: Code-switching is an important issue in bilingual education. Many researchers have investigated its value in classroom teaching and learning process. However, this paper focuses on code-switching of English and Indonesian which happens in online social media. This paper identifies the types, topics, and factors motivating code switching in the online chatroom (LINE) among 80 bilingual young adults, the alumni of a senior high school in South Sumatra. Cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. The data were collected through documenting, questionnaire, and interview. Later, the data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that the senior-high-school alumni mostly used intra-sentential code-switching (67%). The topics in the chatroom included social issues, technology, education, politics, health, economics, and faith; the reasons why they used code-switching were avoiding misunderstanding (75%), being easier to speak in one's own language (52.5%), not knowing the English words (28.7%), no similar words in L1/L2 (27.5%), filling the stopgap (25%), giving emphasis (25%), conveying intimacy (18.8%), and having privacy (18.8%). In addition, the statistics showed that the topics and factors had a significant relationship. Code switching can be a useful strategy in online interaction to serve many purposes.

Keywords: *code switching, bilingual, social media*

Sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society. Multicultural society tends to use more than one language, which creates multilingual society. Bilingual speakers often demonstrate a phenomenon defined as code-switching. [Hymes](#)

[\(1986\)](#) argues that code switching has become a common term for alternate use of two or more languages, or varieties of language, or even speech styles. [Nordquist \(2016\)](#) defines code-switching as a practice of moving back and forth between two languages, or

between two dialects or registers of the same language. Furthermore, [Suganda \(2012\)](#) finds that code switching contributes to the smooth flow of interaction and communication.

[Pollard \(2002\)](#) finds that code switching can break language barriers during conversation. It implies that code switching is a valuable strategy for speakers to convey information. There are four benefits of using code-switching : (1) it opens up many opportunities for the code-switcher to expand relationships-- personal, professional, or even romantic, (2) it allows the code-switcher to become a cultural connector, (3) it gives its users a more nuanced and tolerant view of world cultures, as their lives are spent jumping between different context--each one containing different cultural assumptions and expectations, and (4) it can help the code-switcher to be fluent in multiple cultures/languages, so that s/he can access each of those environments without imposing a foreign culture/language.

[Wardhaugh \(2006\)](#) states that there are two kinds of code-switching: situational and metaphorical. Situational code-switching occurs when the languages used change according to the situations in which the conversants find themselves: they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one. No topic change is involved. However, when a change of topic requires a change in the language used, it is metaphorical code-switching. Holmes (2013) classifies four kinds of code-switching: (1) situational code-switching, (2) metaphorical code-switching, (3) intra-sentential code-switching, and (4) inter-sentential code-switching. Intra-sentential code-switching occurs within a clause or sentence boundary; inter-sentential

code-switching however, occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or the other. [Holmes \(2013\)](#) argues that in multilingual contexts, code-switching may serve as a strategy or contextualisation cue for conveying meaning at a covert, taken-for-granted level (p.381).

The growth of English use as a universal second/foreign language along with technology development leads to a massive increase of bi/multilingual speakers. Nowadays conversation happens not only face-to-face, but also in cyber world. This results in the use of code-switching on online media. People in multilingual and multicultural communities are widely using this strategy of communication in daily life. Speakers from Asian countries usually have English as their second language (L2) and their mother tongue or dialect as their first language (L1). Similarly, speakers from Europe may alternatively use French, German, Spanish or Italian as the second language .

Code-switching on online social media is a widely observed phenomenon currently. There have been some studies on this topic. The first is [Tajudin \(2013\)](#) which investigated the languages used in code-switching on personal message of Blackberry messenger, the types of code-switching, and the reasons of using code-switching. The subjects were 25 university students in Bandung. The results revealed that the users tended to use switched-languages (Indonesian-English) in code-switching (80%); the type of code-switching dominantly used was intersentential switching (40.63%), and 24% of respondents stated that they did switching for real lexical need due

to the lack of equivalent lexicon. The second is [Halim and Maros \(2014\)](#) which examined the code-switching functions performed by five Malay-English bilingual users in Facebook interaction. The results indicated that code-switching in the online interaction served as quotation, addressee specification, reiteration, message qualification, clarification, emphasis, checking, emotion indication, availability, principle of economy and free switching functions. The third is [Fauzi \(2015\)](#) which investigated the code switching in Whatsapp group. The subjects were 25 male Android users in Cirebon, Kuningan, Majalengka and Indramayu. The results showed that the users used intra-sentential switching (86%), tag switching (12%), and inter-sentential switching (2%). They used code switching because of discussion topics (68%), solidarity factor and affective function (28%), and quoting a person (4%).

This paper explores the most used types of code-switching, the topics discussed, and the factors that lead to code-switching among non-native speakers of English in the online chatroom (LINE), as well as to investigate whether the three variables are related or not.

Sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society. Multicultural society tends to use more than one language, which creates multilingual society. Bilingual speakers often demonstrate a phenomenon defined as code-switching. [Hymes \(1986\)](#) argues that code switching has become a common term for alternate use of two or more languages, or varieties of language, or even speech styles. [Nordquist \(2016\)](#) defines code-switching as a practice of moving back and forth between two

languages, or between two dialects or registers of the same language. Furthermore, [Suganda \(2012\)](#) finds that code switching contributes to the smooth flow of interaction and communication. [Pollard \(2002\)](#) finds that code switching can break language barriers during conversation. It implies that code switching is a valuable strategy for speakers to convey information. There are four benefits of using code-switching : (1) it opens up many opportunities for the code-switcher to expand relationships--personal, professional, or even romantic, (2) it allows the code-switcher to become a cultural connector, (3) it gives its users a more nuanced and tolerant view of world cultures, as their lives are spent jumping between different context-- each one containing different cultural assumptions and expectations, and (4) it can help the code-switcher to be fluent in multiple cultures/languages, so that s/he can access each of those environments without imposing a foreign culture/language.

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METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey design was applied in this study where data were collected at one point in time. The purpose of this method was to describe “what is”, dealing with the prevailing conditions of objects, people, and events. The data were collected by documenting the chats on LINE , distributing a questionnaire (Creswell 2012, Gulzar 2010, and Bista 2010) to all the respondents, and conducting interview with 6 respondents. Chat

record sheet was the main source of obtaining the data. The questionnaire and interview were used to assure the consistency of results and help understand the respondents' view towards the phenomenon. Then, the data were analyzed and categorized based on the types (intra-sentential and inter-sentential), the topics, and the reasons of using code switching. To see whether the variables had any significant relationships, the Pearson chi-square test was used.

There were 80 respondents aged 21-23 in this study. They were the alumni of a senior high school in South Sumatra. All of them were still continuing their study in higher education and working part-time jobs. Their first languages (L1) were their dialects and/or Indonesian, and the second or foreign language was English (L2).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings include the types of code switching, the topics that encourage code switching, and the reasons of using code switching.

Types of Code Switching

The results showed that code-switching occurred dominantly within sentence (intra-sentential) (67%). However, inter-sentential code-switching was also documented on the conversation in the chatroom (33%). Most of the respondents inserted some translated words into a sentence, whether it was in Indonesian or English. For example:

(1) *http://www.instagram.com/p/BcPXa-gAUI2/ Hi my beloved colleagues, bantu untuk view and like yow. Thank you.*

In (1), the respondent used English words and sentence structure in

greeting. The respondent inserted Indonesian words "*bantu untuk*" or in English it means "need help for". The speaker also put "yow" which is considered Indonesian that functions as "please".

(2) *minat jilbab rawis saudi ansania? Only 17k per pcs. Bisa langsung japri ya. Pre order.*

In (2), the respondent inserted the word 'only' and 'pre order' which are English words. Meanwhile, the sentence structure was in Indonesia.

(3) *Bukanny udah solved ya? Di jawaban kak Fina dan post-an Yunus."*

In (3), the respondent used Indonesian sentence structure, but with the influence of English. The word 'udah' indicates past time, so the respondent used the past form 'solved'. The other is the word 'post'. Instead of using the term 'kiriman', the respondent used an Indonesian suffix '-an' after the word 'post' in order to adapt the word to Indonesian language and sentence structure.

Next are the examples of inter-sentential code switching, which are seldom found in the study

R1 : (posting picture)

R2 : *"Wah, keren sekali! Selamat ahyah! Smoga berkah @Achyar Ulul Amri"*

R3 : *"Awh congrats Achyarrrrrr! Can't be more proud of youuu"*

R4 : *"Cepet banget. Congrats achyar!"*

R5 : *"Well, congratulations achyar,. Hope you get what you need. Cayo!"*

- R6 : *“Barakallah... selamat untuk achyar... semoga makin dekat dengan cita2”*
- R7 : *“Semoga sukses yar!”*
- R8 : *“Huaaaa cepetnyo. Congrats ayarr! @Achyar Ulul Amri”*
- R9 : *“Daaaaammmmn keren! Congraaaatttzzzzz”*
- R10: *“Selamat @Achyar”*
- R11: *“3.5 tahun... Woww... Selamat ya my buddy.. Dak sio2 bolak balik lab terus wlau liburan.. @Achyar Ulul Amri barakaahh ilmunyaa..”*
- R12: *“Makasih dulur2 3rd intake 😊😊, Aamiin untuk doa2nyo, semoga doa yg terbaik untuk kito galo2 e 😊”*

In the conversation above, inter-sentential code-switching happened between the sentences of respondents 2 to 3 (Indonesian to English), 3 to 4 (English to Indonesian), 4 to 5 (Indonesian to English), 5 to 6 (English to Indonesian), 7 (Indonesian) to 8 and 9 (English), 9 to 10 (English to Indonesian). However, intra-sentential was also existed in almost every sentence of each respondent.

Later, respondent 9 continued the conversation with Indonesian sentence structure and then respondent 3 responded in English. Then, respondent 9 responded in English. Respondent 10 responded in Indonesian, but respondent 3 kept using English in responding to respondent 10. Respondents 13 and 14 then joined the chat using intra-sentential code-switching to comment on what respondent 1 had shared (photo) in the group chatroom.

The results showed that most respondents (67%) used intra-sentential code switching. The results were in agreement with what Holmes (2013) states that only proficient bilinguals who will switch within sentences. Most of the respondents in this study were good at English as showed by the fact that 47.5% of them had TOEFL score of 457-597 and 40% had the score of 500-603. It is understood that proficiency in intra-sentential code-switching requires good control of both codes

- R9: *“Ya Allah, masalah dlu sma tuh Cuma math samo kimia. Ngapo sekarang cak masalah galo yoooo. Ahahahahaaaaaaa”*
- R3: *“Overthinking ruins everything Nabsky”*
- R9: *“-----sending virtual hugs to all of youuuuu-----“*
- R10: *“Doa kan kami bae yang masih lamo nii”*
- R3: *“Wkwkwkwk dpp Uncleee. Same here!”*
- R13: *“Amazing, banggaaaa”*
- R14: *“Wahhh Alhamdulillah broo @Achyar Ulul Amri, akhirnya ! Selamat berjuang for next step. Doakan kita2 smoga cepet nyusul jugo haha”*

In this study the respondents were considered as having good proficiency of both Indonesian and English. However, it does not mean that those using inter-sentential code switching had low proficiency of both languages. Since this phenomenon is a rule-governed, which means the respondents were aware of using this strategy, they had to have certain reasons of using inter-sentential instead of intra-sentential.

Topics that Encourage Code Switching

Table 1 lists the topics that encourage code-switching in the study. These seven topics were determined from the chats in the chat record sheet, and several subtopics were gathered from the questionnaire. Social issues had the biggest percentage (74,2%), followed by technology (35,5), and education (22.6%). Table 2 shows the crosstabulation of types and topics.

Table 1
Topics in Code Switching

No	Topics	Including	%
1	Social Issues	Hobbies, jokes/comedy, assignments/projects, culture	74.2
2	Technology	Games, updates	35.5
3	Education	Study plans	22.6
4	Politics	Governmental issues, new policies	6.5
5	Health	Food, lifestyle, personality, medicine	3.2
6	Economics	Finance	3.2
7	Faith	Phenomena of LGBT, islamic history	3.2

Table 2
Types-topics crosstabulation count

		Topics						Total	
		Social Issues	Technology	Education	Politics	Health	Economics		Faith
Types	Intra-sentential	118	89	29	7	27	5	27	302
	Inter-sentential	77	39	22	3	11	4	11	167
Total		195	128	51	10	38	9	38	469

The results of the Pearson Chi-Square test showed that the significance value was 0.431, greater than 0.05. It means that there was no significant relationship between types

and topics. Therefore, in this study the types of code-switching being used did not depend on the topics being discussed.

Table 3
Chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.929 ^a	6	.431
Likelihood Ratio	5.956	6	.428
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.288	1	.256
N of Valid Cases	469		

a. 2 cells (14.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.20.

Factors that Influence Code Switching

Most of the respondents (75%) used code-switching in order to avoid misunderstanding. 42 respondents (52.5%) chose easier to speak in one's own language; 23 respondents (28.7%) chose not knowing the English words;

22 respondents (27.5%) chose no similar words in L1/L2; 20 respondents (25%) chose adding emphasis and filling the stopgap; and 15 respondents (18.8%) chose privacy and intimacy. Figure 1 shows the reasons of using code switching.

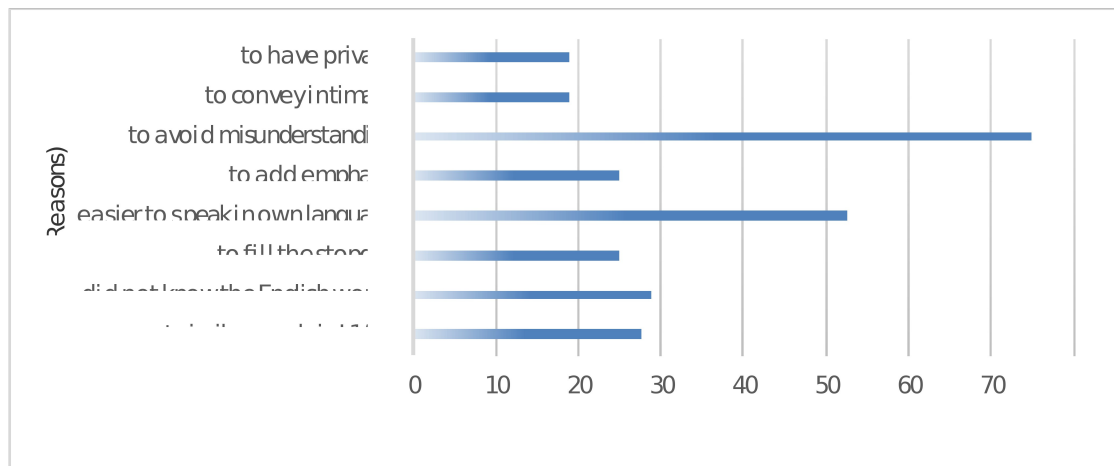


Figure 1. Reasons of Using Code Switching

In addition, the results of chat record sheet showed that in every chat there were specific factors motivating the use of code-switching. The factors were based on the questionnaire by Bista (2010); however, two factors

were excluded from the test: ‘to have privacy’ and ‘not know the English words’ since they scored zero in every topic. Table 4 shows the crosstabulation of topics and factors.

Table 4
Topic-factors crosstabulation count

	Topics							Total
	Social issues	Technology	Eeducation	Politics	Health	Economics	Faith	
Factors								
to convey intimacy	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	15
to avoid misunderstanding	1	8	1	0	0	1	0	11
to add emphasis	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	6
easier to speak in own language	4	2	4	1	0	1	0	12
to fill the stopgap	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	5
No similar words in L1/L2	5	9	2	0	1	1	1	19
Total	30	19	13	1	1	3	1	68

The results of the Pearson Chi-Square test showed that the significance value was 0.009, smaller than 0.05. It means that there was a significant relationship between topics and factors. Therefore, the reasons or factors in using code-switching in this study depended on the topics. For

instance, the respondents code-switched in social issues to convey intimacy. In the topic of technology, they code-switched to avoid misunderstanding and/or because there were no equivalent words in either language.

Table 5. Chi-square tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.480 ^a	30	.009
Likelihood Ratio	54.578	30	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.846	1	.028
N of Valid Cases	68		

a. 38 cells (90.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Avoiding misunderstanding was the main factor motivating the respondents to code-switch (75%). Next was being easier to speak in one's own language (52.5%). It is true that most of the respondents used their own language, especially the language structure. They admitted that code-switching gave benefits for them personally. The factors motivating code switching could be categorized as internal and external motivation of doing code-switching. For example, not knowing the English words was internal motivation which showed the respondent's lack of vocabulary mastery. However, giving emphasis was external motivation to code-switch. This might happen if only the listener or reader seemed to be confused of what the speaker said, so the speaker code-switched to make sure that the listener or reader got the point. Those eight reasons were actually derived from three basic aspects for choosing a code that Holmes (2013) suggests, which were the participants, the social setting and the topic or purpose of the interaction.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of bilingualism and its implication (code-switching) happen in human language interaction. Code-switching does its role as a communication strategy, which can make communication easier. It is understood that some topics might trigger the occurrence of code-

switching, such as social issues, technology, education, health, politics, economics, and even faith. However, these topics did not necessarily rule whether the respondents code-switched intra or inter-sententially.

The results of this study showed that code-switching could cater for the needs of the respondents. It is recommended that use of code-switching as a strategy of communication should be introduced and hopefully be applied in other contexts besides face-to-face interaction and online social media. However, the users need to be aware of the functions of code switching because the insensible use can be harmful, i.e. misinterpretation.

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