

CODE SWITCHING IN INDONESIA BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Nala Sita Rukmi; Nurul Khasanah

Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (STKIP) PGRI Jombang
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ponorogo

Abstracts

Indonesian government policy supports the international of education at the secondary level, consequently more institutions have commenced bilingual programs. Content is taught both in Bahasa Indonesia and English, making code-switching in classroom discourse. The study was conducted at a single International school in Semarang, East Java, Indonesia. This case study explored in what ways and under what circumstances Indonesian teachers and learners use code-switching in the selected bilingual classroom and semi structured interviews with six-bilingual class students and teachers at an International secondary school in Semarang, East Java in Indonesia are used to get the data. The finding shows Teachers' and students' code-switching demonstrated collectivist phatic functions – for example, teachers code-switched to build rapport, remind students and reduce students' anxiety, and students code-switched to show their solidarity and concern for their peers. Thus, interconnectedness was a key characteristic of code-switching by both teachers and students. This study argues that code-switching is not just about language deficiency, but involves intentional communicative purposes which support teaching and learning. It can be concluded that code-switching can be a useful tool to bring about understanding of unfamiliar concepts and processes as well as the language associated with them.

Keywords: Code switching, Bilingual Education, International Secondary school

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the bilingual education in Indonesia started in 2004 and gained its popularity for about 8 years establishing 1300 schools categorized as international standardized schools in 2012. English has become the language of choice in the current globalization era, and thus individuals around the world are striving to learn it. There is a rapid increase in the number of people who need to learn English because of employment and further education opportunities, socio-economic growth, or keeping up with the advance of science and technology. In Southeast Asia, English is widely used as an international language, and in 2009 was officially chosen as the working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Kirkpatrick, 2012b). Indonesia as one of the ASEAN countries has taken English as its most important foreign language. Seen from the concentric circles model of the spread of English (Kachru, 1988), it belongs to the expanding

circle of countries where English traditionally has the status of a foreign language. The teaching of English has been implemented over time from the level of primary (not compulsory) up to higher degree levels.

A trend in Indonesia has been to establish educational institutions, either pre-university schools or higher education institutions, with a bilingual program, meaning the use of two languages in teaching a content subject. At the school level, for example, a bilingual education policy was introduced in 2003, Law No 20, for the National Education System (Act of The Republic of Indonesia, 2003) which required the central government and/or local government to establish one International Standard School (ISS), or commonly known as RSBI (the Pilot International Standard School) at each educational level (i.e. primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and senior vocational) in each of the approximately 450 districts of the country (Coleman, 2009). However the RSBI policy was disbanded following The Constitutional Court in 2013. The reason for the termination was that it did not provide equal access to quality education (Aritonang, 2013). Nevertheless, the practice of using bilingual or English medium of instruction (EMI) is still pervasive (Zacharias, 2013). However, the crucial issue is that the teaching of English in Indonesia has not been a success (Cahyono & Widiati, 2004) and it has been reported that many high school graduates have very low English proficiency (Kirkpatrick, 2012a). In spite of this, schools and education institutions are still vigorously opening up programs offering English as the medium of instruction because it attracts applicants and is seen as raising the prestige of the school. The secondary school where this study took place began implementing a bilingual program in 2019 in two departments – Accounting and Business Administration at vocational high school in Semarang . The opening of this bilingual program was in line with the Higher Education Act No. 12 on internationalization of education (Act of The Republic of Indonesia, 2012).

I became aware that the bilingual program at this institution had attracted many students and considerable attention, but it had been executed without sufficient preparation. For example, Bahasa Indonesia and English were to be used as the medium of instruction but there was no clear policy about the proportion of each language during instruction. Also, teachers in this program were not ready to teach bilingually because they had low English proficiency. To solve this problem, the teachers were sent to undertake English courses. Some teachers told me informally that they felt burdened and under pressure but they took it as a challenge. I noticed that teachers had another challenge, which was to provide their own materials for teaching in this program due to the lack of suitable textbooks. Several teachers used monolingual textbooks in Bahasa Indonesia while some of them used English references to support their teaching

I also noticed that students in this program found it hard to follow the classroom instruction, and sometimes did not understand the teachers' explanations. Nevertheless they still expected their teachers to use English so that they could gain more language exposure. These informal observations initiated my interest in code-switching in the bilingual program. Code-switching is the systematic alternate use of two or more languages in a single utterance or conversational exchange by bilinguals for communicative purposes (Levine, 2011). In the multilingual environment of this program, the students and teachers shared a local vernacular language, Javanese, and a national language, Bahasa Indonesia. English is used for particular instrumental functions but it is hardly ever used for naturalistic communication outside the classroom.

Bilingual education in Indonesia was firstly in the educational system when the vernacular languages (such as: Javanese, Sundanese, Batak) were taught as a subject from elementary school to the end of junior secondary school. As the popularity of English increased, the teaching of a local language at some schools has been replaced by English, and since 1994 the teaching of English in primary school has been popular, even though not as a compulsory subject. It is compulsory in junior and secondary schools. Among the ASEAN countries, Indonesia is the only country which does not require English as a compulsory subject in the primary education curriculum. This relates to the need to promote use of the national language as well as maintain local.

Generally in Indonesia, it is very tough to make students use English outside classrooms. Seen from sociolinguistic perspectives, the institutional language or the academic discourse is only happening in the classrooms via teachers. Students will choose their first language or vernacular language for social discourse (Tarone & Swain, 1995, p. 170). It is therefore crucial to consider, with the popularity of English, the complex situations in the classroom involving teachers and students. The use of English as the medium of instruction should be followed up by teachers' competencies and skills, the context of teaching and their aspiration and perception about their learners. In line with this argument, Baker claimed:

Decisions about how to teach [second language learners]....do not just reflect curriculum decisions...they are surrounded and underpinned by basic beliefs. about...[the learners' main languages] and equality of opportunity (Baker, 1993, p. 247).

Thus, bilingual education in Indonesia is related to the use of English in schools and tertiary education, which in turn involves the central issue of this study, classroom code switching.

The practice of code---switching is often perceived negatively as a lack of linguistic competence. People who code---switch when speaking are assumed

having lack of fluency in their target language. In school settings, it is even prohibited by some educational policies (Blackburn, 2018). In the implementation of using the students' L1 and L2 simultaneously during the teaching and learning process in bilingual classroom, the switch from one language to another cannot be avoided. Moreover, the switch occurs when teaching emergent bilingual students who are in the process of developing their new language for academic purposes (Gracia & Kleighfen, 2018). In some situations, teachers as bilingual speakers may need to switch or mix their language when communicating with their students. This practice of switching language is called code switching.

Code-switching has attracted considerable research over the last few decades and has become a response towards addressing the needs of local classroom contexts when it is used (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). It has been the focus of study in Africa (Arthur, 1996, 1997; Setati et al., 2002; Probyn, 2009; Moodley, 2007; Andersson & Rusanganwa, 2011), in the Middle East (Rezvani & Rasekh, 2011), in America (Seidlitz, 2003; Palmer, 2009), and in Asia (Lin, 2006; Martin, 2005; Then & Ting, 2011). Among these diverse classroom code-switching studies, the often-quoted studies have been conducted in two main areas of context i.e. second language classrooms (ESL/EFL classrooms) and bilingual education classrooms.

METHOD

This case study explored the usage of code switching and also the features of code-switching for both teachers and students. Using a case study approach, it involved semi structured interviews with a bilingual class over one semester at an International secondary school in East Java in Indonesia. This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm, namely interpretivism, which seeks an understanding towards a subjective world of human experience (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2011). The ontological characteristics can be interpreted from realities which are captured from collective or multiple evidence which is commonly experientially and socially based. The selection of research methodology needs to be guided by the purpose of the research and the intended research questions. The overarching research question of the study is:

In what ways and under what circumstances do Indonesian teachers and learners use code-switching in the selected bilingual classrooms?

The study was conducted at a single International school in Semarang, Middle Java, Indonesia. This was a secondary bilingual school in Semarang, International bilingual Secondary School. The choice of the research site is influenced by Merriam (1998) who noted that qualitative research most often comes from the personal interest of the researcher. I chose this particular school

because I had been a teacher there for about nine years and had a personal interest to investigate the bilingual program after noticing some issues within it. The research participants were (a) Indonesian teachers teaching content subjects through English and (b) Indonesian students undertaking a bilingual program in the secondary bilingual education.

I visited the site one week earlier to adjust to the environment during a break period and talked to some teachers who had started their routine work before their teaching activities began. In fact not many teachers were on campus since it was just after a major Islamic feast, therefore calls were made to the potential teacher participants' and appointments made with them directly. Culturally speaking, people prefer being approached in person so initial discussion with teachers was held at their most convenient places. By meeting them in person, it was easy to inform them about the research and obtain their agreement. The study involved detailed interviews with teachers and students.

Semi-structured Interview with some stimulated recall Interviewing participants is the most common data collection method in a qualitative study (Cassell & Symon, 2004, p. 11). The interviews were done to explore participants' experiences in their code-switching practice. Six teachers and six students were interviewed. Prior to collecting the data, I came to the classes and informed the students about the research. I invited the students who were willing to participate in semi-structured interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with some of the participants before conducting the observation with a purpose to gain more background knowledge of the participants and the classroom situations.

FINDING

Teachers' interview :

Teachers stated their views about the concept of the establishment of the bilingual program, for example T1 revealed his opinion for opening the bilingual program:

I hope that this program is not merely a trend but it has a good mission, for global market perhaps (T1, interview).

T1 mentioned that the reason for opening the program should not have been just a trend but it should have a clear target. In fact some teachers blamed the students for having low English proficiency; therefore teachers thought that using English was not a good idea, which made them not use English at all.

Another concern is that the program should have recruited teachers who have sufficient English, and also the ability to teach in a bilingual program. According to T5, teachers knew how to teach the content subject, but not through English:

Teachers should have sufficient proficiency in English. Sometimes they are just good at teaching the content subjects but they don't want to use

English. They are more comfortable to use Bahasa Indonesia (T5, interview).

Teachers' level of comfort in using English is thus clearly a factor in the degree to which the program was in fact bilingual.

The concept of code-switching for transmitting knowledge refers to code-switching as a strategy or an approach to bridge the knowledge gap of the students. These two examples which occurred in different sessions show the use of code-switching to transfer knowledge by using Indonesian words in English sentences:

T4: Today we'll talk about general journal. Bagaimana cara pendebitan dan pengkreditan (how to put the account into debit or credit) then coding, kode 1, 2, 3, 4 (how to give code 1,2,3,4)

T4: Some of you using dollar, some of you using Rupiah [Indonesian currency]. Even some of you using tanda tanya (question mark).

The examples above demonstrate teachers' switching out of English into Bahasa Indonesia to bridge students' understanding by using Indonesian words and phrases in an English sentence. In the first example, the teacher switched into Bahasa Indonesia to tell students about the topic how to put an account into debit or credit and also to determine the coding in Computer Accounting. Meanwhile the second example showed that the teacher used Indonesian words tanda tanya instead of the English words question mark. The teacher switched into Bahasa Indonesia to help students understand the explanation better. The teacher stated in detail her reason for code-switching in the following interview:

I used English when talking about something general, then moving into Bahasa Indonesia when explaining how to put the accounts into debit or credit. That was the main knowledge the students had to keep in their mind. I was afraid if they did not understand my explanation; therefore I moved into Bahasa Indonesia (T4, stimulated recall)

The second strategy of code-switching for constructing and transmitting knowledge is to bridge the students' understanding by reiterating information. The excerpt below is one example of how a teacher repeated information when she explained the topic historical balancing account which should have zero value:

T4: The historical balancing account should be zero. Anda tidak boleh mengisi historical balancing account itu karena di account itu adalah semacam account yang digunakan untuk mengecek (you cannot fill out historical balancing account because this account has a function to check your work) if you've already finished entry all of this account, dilihat nilainya nol atau tidak (you need to see the value, zero or not).

The excerpt above reveals that the teacher is repeating the information which she stated at the beginning of her talk. Even though the repeated information is not directly following on from the original sentence, it seems clear that this type of code-switching is for restating the message or emphasising the information.

Connecting to students' local understanding can sometimes best be done by using an Indonesian word in an English sentence where there is no direct translation that reflects the local context. In other words, single-word code-switching may happen when the teacher uses an Indonesian word as a special term in her explanation, for example in the following case:

T5: ...modal asing itu adalah modal yang diperoleh (foreign capital is the capital you get) from external. It can be from bank, it can be from investors, it can be from 'rentenir' (a loan shark) ((giving funny expression))... whatever.

The teacher above switched out of English and used Bahasa Indonesia's locally meaningful word *rentenir* with the reason that she stated as follows:

No, I cannot find the English word for 'rentenir' so that I just said 'rentenir' because they do understand in Indonesian context... I just could not find the translation of this word in English and there is no terminology 'rentenir' in Accounting (T5, stimulated recall).

From the above statement, the word *rentenir* (a loan shark) best describes the context the teacher's explanation. This word refers to a person commonly found in a village who makes money by lending cash with an extreme interest rate. Therefore *rentenir* can also be called *lintah darat* (a blood sucker). The teacher found it convenient to use such a local word since the English term may not be semantically equal and also because of the familiarity of this word.

T5: Okay, well done! And I like your slides it's very interesting slides and I hope eeh the next group will have a slide like these slides ((smiling and pointing her finger towards the PowerPoint slides)). Saya harapkan kalian bisa membuat slide seperti ini (I hope you can make the slide like this), It's very nice slide. Slidenya itu bagus Eeh siapa yang bikin (the slide is good..who made it)? You ((talking to a student))?

T5 began to deliver her feedback in students' presentation by conveying praise in English. She said that she liked the PowerPoint slides. She switched out of English into Bahasa Indonesia to state her expectation for other groups that they should make good PowerPoint slides as well for their own presentation.

Code-switching is the systematic alternate use of two or more languages in a single utterance or conversational exchange by bilinguals for communicative purposes (Levine, 2011). In the multilingual environment of this program, the students and teachers shared a local vernacular language, Javanese, and a national language,

Bahasa Indonesia. English is used for particular instrumental functions but it is hardly ever used for naturalistic communication outside the classroom

Students' interview:

Students of this program stated their views about the concept of the bilingual program and what they felt and experienced. S1 revealed that not many teachers used English:

The bilingual program and the regular ones are almost the same. Not many teachers can use English in class; we can count how many teachers who use English and those who don't (S1, interview).

S1 who was a 'first generation' student, enrolled in the first bilingual program offered by the institution, stated that how much English was used in each subject varied and it depended on the teacher. S2 added further information about the bilingual program:

This program is open just for following the trend. We are not ready with the facility, human resources are not 100% available. So in my opinion.. like.. we are the first victims, poor us. I compared it with my high school in Blitar (a rural area in East Java). The bilingual program there was not that bad. So it [this program] should have been much better than high school level (S2, interview).

It seemed that students had high expectations for this program. They felt disappointed after knowing they had been treated similarly to other students in the regular programs. S2 also made a point that the program should have been better than the bilingual program she took in her high school.

The students generally expected that the teaching and learning activities should have been fully done in English and they actually wanted to limit the use of first language in the classrooms. S3 reported her opinion that she expected to use English only:

I prefer full English in the class, not bilingual. It will force the students to read and do the activities in English. They will understand more English terminologies. On the other hand, if the teachers used bilingual, the students would use Bahasa Indonesia more and ignore English (S3, interview)

The interview above indicates that using full English could give students more opportunities to get in touch with English. Conversely, some students thought that using bilingual pedagogy was a good strategy to learn English gradually as stated by S2:

I think as a start we need to use bilingual. Even we can use three languages before full English. If we force ourselves to use English it can make us lost (S2, interview).

Moreover, S6 stated that teachers should employ the first language in order to enforce the students' understanding towards the explanations that they made:

Teachers' explanation should be delivered bilingually, first should be in English then repeated again in Bahasa Indonesia as reinforcement (S6, FGD).

The interview above implies that first language still needs to be used in the bilingual class. However, Some students, on the other hand, were cautious that using first language or codeswitching in the classrooms has some drawbacks; for example S5 admitted that it could slow the progress to learn the target language:

Too much Bahasa Indonesia can make us hard to use English because we are not familiar to use full English (S5, interview).

Moreover, S4 added that code-switching makes the languages less structured and confusing:

When we switch languages, sometimes our talk gets more confusing and not well structured because we do not realise of what we said (S4, interview).

S4 made a point that switching languages might make the speaker have less control of what he/she says which can cause confusion for the interlocutor or the listener. also found that using the first language made them spoiled and less attentive to the English explanation as stated by S3:

We like listening to Bahasa Indonesia more than English. When the teacher explains in English, we do not give a full attention or force ourselves to think in English, we wait until the teacher explains in Bahasa Indonesia (S3, interview).

DISCUSSION

In short, students had different perceptions on the use of the first language in the classroom; some believed that using full English was best for gaining target language exposure; while others still believed that using bilingual was more reasonable to gain gradual improvement in learning the target language. In fact, most of the students expected to have more English exposure in their classroom learning, the excerpt above made an important point, that if students knew an explanation was coming in their first language, they did not listen as attentively to the English explanation. Students will choose their first language or vernacular language for social discourse (Tarone & Swain, 1995, p. 170). It is therefore crucial to consider, with the popularity of English, the complex situations in the classroom involving teachers and students. The use of English as the medium of instruction should be followed up by teachers' competencies and skills, the context of teaching and their aspiration and perception about their learners .

Ensuring the students' understanding is the main goal why the teacher switched into Bahasa Indonesia in this situation. The teacher inserted the Indonesian words and phrases into her English explanation since she considered the information as the main knowledge that students have to keep in their minds. Apparently, the teacher was aware that using English explanation in this segment might not achieve students' understanding therefore she decided to switch into Bahasa Indonesia. Bilingual persons use their two languages as opposed to their abstract ability in them is called functional bilingualism (Baker, 2001). It implies that function and context are two factors which vary widely depending on how much an individual speaker can maintain the use of the two languages over time

In classroom discourse in bilingual education programs, switching and mixing between languages are common practices (see Arthur & Martin, 2006; Ariffin & Husin, 2011). Lin (2008) defines classroom code-switching as the alternating use of more than one language by any of the classroom participants. Levine (2011, p. 65) prefers the term code choice to code-switching since what he means by code is referring to ways of making meaning or semiotic systems in both linguistic and non-linguistic situations.

In short, classroom code-switching refers to systematic use of two or more language alternations within one speech event occurring in the classroom discourse. Code-switching as it was explored pedagogically, also carried socio cultural, interpersonal and affective functions. However, the primacy of L1 was clearly apparent, especially for students for whom the classroom was an arena for the required use of English as a part of the mandated bilingual medium of instruction. Meanwhile, teachers used code-switching as a support to enact their classroom tasks including transferring knowledge, managing the classroom and building interpersonal relations with the students.

CONCLUSION

This conclusion chapter articulates the interpretation of the major findings to explain how the practice of code-switching is shaped by the issues of a bilingual program . To answer the overarching research question, the way teachers and students codeswitched in the classroom demonstrated their multilingual competence in an educational setting where the bilingual policy had not been fully elaborated and the environment. was also not supportive of bilingual learning. (Macaro, 2014, p. 15).

Students on the other hand used code-switching for communicating their thoughts in a meaningful way. Although their interactions were limited to their classroom presentations, the way they code-switched was for building connection

with the audience. Their TL limitation could sometimes impede the message but then code switching became the bridge to make sense of their language.

Further research should investigate trans language practice in the similar context of this study i.e. where English is taken as a foreign language. It will be important to show how and why participants used multiple languages in the process of making sense of their bilingualism. This field of study can also explain how bilingual teachers and students gain experience and understanding of the content subject as well as the TL teaching and learning.

References

- Act of The Republic of Indonesia. (2013). Number 32 Year 2013 about the changes of The Government Policy Number 19 Year 2005 on the Standard of National Education. Retrieved 20/05/2013 from <http://sipuu.setkab.go.id/PUUdoc/173768/PP0322013.pdf>.
- Arthur, J. & Martin, P. (2006). Accomplishing lessons in postcolonial classrooms: Comparative perspectives from Botswana and Brunei Darussalam. *Comparative Education*, 42(2), 177-202.
- Andersson, I. & Rusanganwa, J. (2011). Language and space in a multilingual undergraduate physics classroom in Rwanda. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14(6), 751-764.
- Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters Limited.
- Blackburn, A.M. (2018). Cognitive Impact of Bilingualism and Language Habits at the Borders of Cultures and Nations. In: *Inquiries into Literacy Learning and Cultural Competencies in a World of Borders* (ed. T. Huber and P.S. Roberson), 141---166. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Creese, A. & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(1), 103- 115.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th Edn.). London: Routledge Falmer.

- Cahyono, B. & Widiati, U. (2004). The tapestry of English language teaching and learning in Indonesia. Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- Ferguson, G. (2003). Classroom code-switching in post-colonial contexts: Functions, attitudes and policies. *AILA review*, 16(1), 38-51.
- Ferguson, G. (2009). What next? Towards an agenda for classroom code-switching research. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 12(2), 231-241.
- García, O., & Kleifgen, J. (2018). *Educating Emergent Bilinguals: Policies, programs and Practices for English Learners*. (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2014a). Afterword. In R. Barnard, & J. McLellan (Eds.), *Code switching in university English-medium classes: Asian perspectives* (pp. 214-221). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Lin, A. (2008). Code-switching in the classroom: Research paradigms and approaches. In K. A. King & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 273-286). Boston: Springer US.
- Levine, G.S. (2011). *Code choice in the language classroom*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Martin, N. (2011). *Code-switching in Indonesian as a second language classrooms: Code-switching between Indonesian and English*. Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert.
- Moodley, V. (2007). Code-switching in the multilingual English first language classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(6), 707-722.
- Macaro, E. (2014). Where should we be going with classroom code switching research? In R. Barnard & J. McLellan (Eds.), *Code-switching in university English-medium classes: Asian perspectives* (pp. 10-23). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Palmer, D.K. (2009). Code-switching and symbolic power in a second-grade two-way classroom: A teacher's motivation system gone awry. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 32(1), 42-59.

- Rezvani, E. & Rasekh, A. (2011). Code-switching in Iranian elementary EFL classrooms: An exploratory investigation. *English Language Teaching*, 4(1), 18- 25.
- Tien, C. & Li, D.C.S. (2014). Code-switching in a university in Taiwan. In R. Barnard & J. McLellan (Eds.), *Code-switching in university English-medium classes Asian perspectives* (pp. 92-104). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Truckenbrodt, A. & De Courcy, M. (2002). *Implementing a bilingual program*. Melbourne: Association of Independent Schools of Victoria.