

English Indonesian Bilingual Attitudes Toward Codeswitching In Classroom Communication

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the attitudes of English teachers and first grade students toward code-switching in classroom communication at junior high schools in Yogyakarta. It aims to describe their attitudes towards CS and to seek out practical implications for English language teaching and learning in Indonesia. To achieve the objectives, 240 first grade students and 60 English teachers from selected junior high schools volunteered to participate in this study. They were selected by a purposive sampling technique. Data was gathered thorough questionnaires and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using the statistical software of SPSS. The results revealed that (1) CS was positively perceived by participants, and (2) no significant difference in participant attitudes toward CS was found, in terms of gender, age, onset of English study, and teaching experience.

Keywords: Bilinguals' attitude, Code-switching, Classroom Communication,

A. Introduction

One of the objectives of second language or foreign language teaching and learning is to facilitate students' acquisition of and communication in the target language. To achieve this goal, many SL/FL teachers, including English teachers in Indonesia, believe that the target language should be the only medium of instruction during classroom communication since the use of the target language can develop students' own in-built language scheme (Chambers, 1991; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Macdonald, 1993). This claim is supported by Krashen's (1981) hypothesis, stating 'a language acquirer who is at "level 1" must receive

comprehensive input that is at "level $i+1$ " (Wilson, 2004:3). This hypothesis implies that in the teaching of a target language, for example English, teachers of English must provide comprehensive input in the target language, on the grounds that it would accelerate students to acquire English language proficiency. Further, as suggested in the natural approach by Krashen and Terrell (1983), English teachers are stimulated to create communicative situations in English without recourse to L1, since the inclusion of L1 would only hinder the process of English language teaching and learning. The use of L1 only creates classroom communication dynamic, which leads to students concentrating less on the target language.

In support of the above statements, the exclusive use of English without recourse to the first language (L1) in the English teaching and learning process is believed to provide students with real communication in the target language, enabling them to achieve maximum proficiency. This belief is based solely on the basic assumptions that spoken language is more important than written language; explicit explanation of grammar must be minimized; and the target language must be learned as a whole, rather than in separate parts (Cook, 2001). Therefore, the inclusion of L1 in learning a target language must be at best minimized, or at worst avoided totally (Atkinson, 1987; Franklin, 1990; Auerbach, 1993; Nizergorodcew, 1996; Nation, 1997; and Belz, 2003).

In response to the above statements, Dickson (1992) questions whether the quantity of L2 input would be as beneficial as the quality of L2 input. In addition, Guthrie (1984) claims that the use of L2 in second language teaching and learning would not guarantee greater L2 intake by students. This claim is supported by Skinner (1985), who states that the exclusive use of L2 is believed only to hinder the process of developing concepts and to block students' thoughts and ideas which have been developed in L1. In support of these arguments, Phillipson (1992) strongly urges that the exclusive use of L2 exemplifies linguistic colonization when it is imposed on second language teaching and learning all around the world. Other scholars (Atkinson, 1993; Chambers, 1992; Coste, 1998; Macaro, 1995, 2001; Simon, 1998; Levine, 2003) also claim that the exclusion of L1 in second/foreign language teaching is likely to be unreasonable, since it may only deprive students' strategies to learn the target language.

In support of the above arguments, Faltis (1989) states that alternating two languages (L2 and L1), which is called code-switching (CS), can be employed as a bridge between the two languages in teaching a second language. Cook (1989, 1991) highlights that CS can be used as a communication strategy in English language teaching and learning in order to sustain the continuity of communication between English teachers and their students. To some extent, the use of the first language in second/foreign language teaching is beneficial since it can serve a number of functions which include to clarify grammars, arrange tasks, give instructions, to check comprehension, to sustain discipline, and to conduct classroom activities (Cook, 1999; 2001).

With regard to the inclusion of L1, it is obvious that switching from one language to another language is effective in continuously establishing classroom communication. Whether teachers of English practise CS often depends on how well students comprehend the lessons of the target language, how well they are participating in class, and how well they are paying attention to the lessons (Faltis, 1996). In addition, the level of student English proficiency and English teacher and student perceptions of CS are other circumstances that affect CS practices in classroom communication.

In relation to the two last circumstances, this paper attempts to describe three main issues, namely (1) the attitudes toward CS held by English teachers and their first grade students, (2) whether there is a significant difference in attitudes by first grade students in terms of gender, age, and onset of English study, and (3) whether there is a significant difference in English teacher attitudes toward CS practices in classroom communication in terms of age, gender, and teaching experience. These issues are interesting to be explored since the results of the study would be of great use in seeking out practical implications for English language teaching and learning at junior high schools in Yogyakarta, in particular, and for many junior high schools in other Indonesian regions, in general.

B. Definitions Of Codeswitching

Many terms have been proposed to define the interchangeable use of two or more languages. The commonly used terms include code-mixing, language alternation, and code-switching. According to David (2003), code-mixing refers to

the employment of two languages in turn, but it is only concerned with the limited token use of the target language. Code alternation is defined as when the same person code-switches between turns. Code-switching deals with the use of more than one code by a bilingual, which can appear within a turn or within utterances.

Another definition of code-switching is offered by Richards et al. (1992), who state that it is a switch by a bilingual from one language to another language. The term *bilingual*, in the broader sense, is defined as a speaker who uses two or more languages, which may or may not be equal in terms of proficiency (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982). This definition is applicable to developing bilinguals (second language learners) who compensate for their insufficient proficiency in the target language and advanced bilinguals who are able to code-switch at will from one language to another language, depending on communication circumstances including context, situation, and audience (May et al., 2004). In line with the last definition, as proposed by Richards et al. (1992), the term *code-switching* refers to the use of words, phrases, or sentences from more than one language in the same sentences or between sentences within one conversational turn practised by English teachers during classroom communication.

The following data exemplifies code-switching practices in English language teaching and learning as gathered through classroom observation.

- (01) T: Please collect your letter. *Disobek apa adanya aja*. ('Tear your paper as it would be/'Hand your paper in as it is.') Put on my table. I give you two minutes to collect your homework. *Apa adanya saja, nanti dikumpulkan*. ('Don't add anything, it should then be submitted.')
- (02) T: Very good. *Jadi how many menanyakan berapa banyak benda tetapi bendanya dapat dihitung*. ('So how many is used to ask for nouns which can be counted.')
- (03) T: You don't need to boil water. Only *masukkan teh celup* ('put into the dipped tea') in the cup.
- (04) T: He works until one o'clock *bekerja sampai* ('work until') one o'clock and then have a half of an hour, *setengah jam* ('a half hour') for lunch. Number five Randy.

C. Related Studies

A great number of scholars have been interested in exploring CS analysed from linguistic aspects (Gingrás 1974; Pfaff 1979; Poplack 1980; Sankoff & Poplack 1980; Zentella 1981; Woolford 1982; Di Sciullo, Muysken & Singh 1986; Berk-Seligson 1986; MacSwan 1997, 1999). Poplack (1980), for example, revealed two grammatical constraints of CS, namely free morpheme and equivalence rules. The first constraint explains that CS do not occur between lexical form and bound morpheme, while the other constraint suggests that alternating language within a sentence is only positively conducted if the linearity of sentence order in both codes is maintained. Other research conducted by Berk-Seligson (1986) reveals possible linguistic items in Hebrew/Spanish switches, which include nouns, noun phrases, verbs, verb phrases, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, adverbial phrases, subordinate conjunctions, coordinate conjunctions, prepositional phrases, interrogatives, subordinate clauses, coordinate clauses, and clause markers.

A few scholars have investigated bilingual attitudes toward CS practices. The results of their studies vary since they have different research frameworks and language variables. For example, Chana and Romaine (1984) conducted research on Panjabi English bilingual attitudes toward CS. The results of their study demonstrated that if someone alternated Panjabi with English or vice versa, he/she was perceived less fluent, less intelligent, and less expressive compared to someone who only spoke Panjabi or English. They noted a remark uttered by one of the Panjabi-English bilinguals in relation to his attitudes toward CS as follows.

I mean ... I'm guilty as well in the sense that we speak English more and more and then what happens is that when you speak your own language you get two or three English words in each sentence... but I think that's wrong I mean, I myself would like to speak pure Panjabi whenever I speak Panjabi. We keep mixing I mean unconsciously, subconsciously we keep doing it, but I wish you know that I could speak pure Panjabi. (Cited in Romaine 1995:294).

The above comment shows that the bilingual regretted his/her CS actions based on the societal attitudes toward CS. In fact, he/she would prefer to use pure Panjabi rather than mixed it with English, but this was difficult to do since unconsciously or subconsciously mixing occurred. Gibbons (1987) also investigated language attitude and code switching between Cantonese and English

bilinguals in Hong Kong. The results of his study revealed that respondents of the study viewed CS from Cantonese to English negatively. According to Cantonese-English bilinguals, CS only constituted being ill-mannered, show-off, ignorant, aggressive, and proud. Other studies also revealed negative attitudes toward CS such as English to French (Poplack et al., 1989); Tok Pisin to English (Romaine, 1959); etc.

In contrast to the above findings, Poplack (1985) documents that Puerto Rican bilinguals in New York City valued CS positively. He adds that the bilinguals practised code-switching 97% of time. Another study is conducted by Grosjean (1982) for multi-linguals French-Arabic-English in Lebanon. His findings reveal that the respondents perceived CS positively since it reflects cultural or social identity.

Current research on CS in classroom communication was conducted by Hammink (2000). She investigated a group of 21 adults and 32 fourth-grade students dealing with attitudes and a grammaticality judgment test developed on the basis of linguistic constraints. In terms of bilingual attitudes toward CS, her results documented that the respondents had positive attitudes toward CS practices from English to Spanish or vice versa. She states that bilingual attitudes may affect the intensity of CS practices. When bilinguals disagree with CS, the intensity of CS practices may be much less; when bilinguals agree with CS, this may influence the intensity of CS practices.

In relation to the issue of bilingual attitudes toward CS, many scholars use two contrastive judgments, namely positive or negative, good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable, legitimate or illegitimate (Gibbons, 1987; Cook, 1991, Romaine, 1995; Hammink, 2000). For the purpose of this study, positive or negative judgment is preferably used to explore bilingual attitudes towards CS in English language teaching. Negative attitude refers to bilingual disagreement with the practice of CS based on the belief that it can lead to language decay, eliminate the purity of languages, reflects the bilingual inability in the activated languages. Positive attitude, in turn, refers to bilingual agreement with practices based on the belief that CS is not simply a matter of language purity or a lack of linguistic rules, but rather than an adequate strategy to maintain the continuity of communication events, and serves other social and functional purposes.

D. Research Methods

1. Participants

This study involved 240 first grade students selected from 5 junior high schools in Yogyakarta and 60 English teachers who taught first grade classes selected from 49 junior high schools. This number of participants was decided on the basis that the sample represented more than 10% of the total population in Yogyakarta for each cohort, which enabled the researcher to generalize to the whole population but still made the study reasonable to conduct. To select the participants, a purposive sampling technique was applied with the intention of selecting an equal number of female and male participants and only first grade students and English teachers who taught first grade classes. The 240 first grade students were categorized in terms of *gender*, *age*, and *onset of English study*. The 60 English teachers were also classified into *gender*, *age*, and *teaching experience*. This categorization was aimed at exploring whether there was a significant difference in attitudes toward code-switching in relation to each category.

By selecting first grade students of junior high schools, who are regarded as having low proficiency due to their beginner status, it is presumed that switching from English to other languages (Indonesian or English) or vice versa will occur during classroom communication. This presumption is based on the fact that English in Indonesia has twin functions, namely as subject content and the medium of instruction in English language teaching and learning. Indonesian as the national language, on the other hand, is officially employed as the medium of instruction at all education levels including at junior high school level as Indonesian government policy. In addition, Javanese as the participant native language is used in daily communication. This regular use of more than one language seems to influence the speakers to switch from one language to another language. Another reason for the choice of the study sample is that switching from English to another language consciously or unconsciously is a reasonable expectation for beginning learners and English teachers when they are involved in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

2. Instruments

Two sets of questionnaire were utilized in this study to collect data. They consisted of a set of questionnaire to the first grade student cohort and another set to the English teacher cohort. The questionnaires, which consisted of 31 valid items

for the student cohort and 30 valid items for the English teacher cohort, were aimed to explore their attitudes toward CS. The items were designed to elicit one of the following responses, namely *Agree (A)*, *Do not know (DK)*, and *Disagree (D)*. Time required to complete the questionnaire was approximately 30 minutes. Each item was scored by assigning weights for response alternatives to positive items: 3-2-1 and negative: 1-2-3.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

To gather data from participants, 300 copies of questionnaire were given to the first grade student cohort in five selected junior high schools and 80 copies of the questionnaire were sent to the English teacher cohort in 49 junior high schools. The 240 out of 300 copies of questionnaire and 60 out of 80 copies of questionnaires were randomly selected and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively with SPSS. The quantitative analysis aimed to examine whether there was any significant difference in terms of *gender*, *age*, *onset of English* and *teaching experience* in relation to participant attitudes towards CS practices in classroom communication

E. Results

The following section discusses the results of the data analysis in relation to participant attitudes toward CS practices during classroom communication. It begins with exploration of the student attitudes toward CS, followed by the English teacher attitudes.

1. First Grade Student Attitudes toward Code-switching

In an attempt to explore student attitudes toward CS practices during classroom communication, 30 valid items were distributed to the student cohort. Based on the data analysis, the results reveal that most students held positive attitudes toward code-switching since the mean value of responses by the students reached 82.00. To further investigate the student cohort in relation to their attitudes toward CS practices, categorization of the student cohort was conducted. They were categorized into three categories, namely, gender (female and male), age (old and young), and onset of English study (early and late). The description of the three categories is described in the following table.

Table. 1 The Mean Value of First Grade Student Attitudes toward CS according to their Gender, Age, and Onset of English Study

No.	Category	Sub -category	Mean value
01.	Gender	Female	83.25
		Male	83.22
02.	Age	Old	82.56
		Young	83.61
03	Study	Early	83.78
		Late	82.73

As displayed in Table 1, the mean value of the male student cohort is 83.22, while the female student cohort is 83.25. In terms of age, the mean value of the old student cohort is 82.56 while the young student cohort is 83.61. In terms of onset of English study, the results of the data analysis reveal that the mean value of the student cohort with early onset of English study is 83.78, while the mean value of the students with late onset of English study is 82.73. Those findings indicate that there is only a slight difference in each category.

To further investigate whether there is a significant difference in each category, ANOVA test was utilized. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Summary of the ANOVA Test

Variable	Value of F observed	Degree of Significance (0.05)
Gender (Male/Female)	.000	1.000
Age (Old/Young)	1.485	0.224
Onset of English Study (Early/Late)	1.209	0.273

Theoretically, if the degree of significance is less than 0.05, there is a significant difference of the observed variable. In terms of gender, the value of the degree of significance (see Table 2) is 1.000, which suggests that there is no significant difference between the female and male student cohorts in relation to attitudes toward CS practices in classroom communication. In terms of age, the value of the degree of significance is 0.224. This means that the difference between the old and young student attitudes toward CS practices is not significant. In terms of the onset of English study, the value of the degree of significance on the variable is 0.273. Therefore, there is no significant difference between early onset of English study and late onset of English study in the student cohort in relation to their attitudes toward code-switching practices in classroom communication.

In reference to the above three findings, it is obvious that there is no significant difference in the student cohort in terms of gender, age and onset of English study. This indicates that the three variables: gender, age, and onset of English study, do not significantly determine attitudes toward code-switching practices in classroom communication.

2. English Teacher Attitudes toward Code-switching

To address English teacher attitudes toward code-switching, 31 valid items of questionnaire were distributed to the teacher cohort. Based on the data analysis, the results reveal that most English teachers also held positive attitudes toward code-switching since the mean value of responses by the teacher cohort was 82.00. To further explore the teacher attitudes toward CS practices in classroom communication, categorization of the teacher cohort was conducted. They were categorized into three categories, namely, gender (male and female), age (old and young), and teaching experience (long and short). The descriptive analysis was employed. The results are shown in the following table.

Table. 3 The Mean Value of English Teacher Attitudes toward CS according to their Gender, Age, and Teaching Experience

No.	Category	Category	Mean value
01.	Gender	Female	81.43
		Male	82.57
02.	Age	Old	81.77
		Young	82.23
03.	Teaching Experience	Long	80.19
		Short	84.07

As displayed in Table 3, the mean value of the male teacher cohort is 82.57 while the female teacher cohort is 81.43. In terms of age, the mean value of the old teacher cohort is 81.77 while the young teacher cohort is 82.23. In terms of teaching experience, the results of the data analysis reveal that the mean value of the teacher cohort with longer teaching experience is 80.19, while the mean value of the teacher cohort with shorter teaching experience is 84.07. The last category indicates that the teacher cohort with longer teaching experience holds more positive attitudes toward code-switching practices compared to the teacher cohort with shorter teaching experience.

To further explore whether there is a significant difference in each category, the test of ANOVA was utilized. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table. 4 The Summary of the ANOVA Test of English Teacher Attitudes toward CS according to their Gender, Age, and Teaching Experience

Variable	the value of F observed	Degree of Significance (0.05)
Gender (Male/Female)	1.501	0.226
Age (Old/Young)	0.199	0.657
Teaching Experience (Long/New)	1.180	0.282

As Table 4 shows, the degree of significance of the gender variable is 0.226. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the female and male cohorts in relation to their attitudes toward CS practices in classroom communication. In terms of age, the degree of significance is 0.657, which suggests that no significant difference is found between the old teacher and young teacher cohorts. Table 4 also reveals that the degree of the significance for teaching experience variable is 0.282, also indicating that there is no significant difference between teachers with longer teaching experience and with shorter teaching experience. Based on these three findings, it is evident that there is no significant difference in the teacher cohort in terms of gender, age, and teaching experience in relation to their attitudes toward CS practices in classroom communication. This finding indicates that the three variables: gender, age, and teaching experience do not significantly influence their perceptions of code-switching practices in classroom communication in the degree of 5% significance.

F. Conclusions

With reference to the results above, some conclusions are presented as follows. First, English teachers and first grade students perceive CS practices positively. The practical implication of this finding suggests that the utilization of CS during classroom communication is still applicable since it is believed to stimulate students to learn English. Forcing English as the only medium of instruction in classroom communication would only undermine the process of English teaching and learning and create stress for students, on the grounds that this exclusive use of English contradicts student perceptions of CS. The application of CS in classroom communication is beneficial for English teachers since they will psychologically feel more comfortable in their teaching. Another implication in relation to the above finding also suggests that the application of CS in English language teaching and learning in Indonesia should not be banned since no empirical evidence has been found that CS may undermine the process of English language teaching and learning.

Second, with the employment of the ANOVA test, the results revealed no significant difference in attitudes by first grade students in terms of gender, age, and onset of English study. This implies that the three categories do not influence the attitudes toward code-switching practices. Similarly, no significant difference

is found in English teacher attitudes toward CS practices in classroom communication in terms of age, gender, and teaching experience. This suggests that those three categories do not significantly determine English teacher perceptions of CS. These findings imply that first grade students and English teachers do not need to be concerned about the use of CS in English language teaching and learning since its application is not randomly conducted. Added to this, the junior high school students are believed to have low English proficiency to actively communicate in English. Therefore, the application of CS in English language teaching and learning is still tolerated since CS can be utilized to explain new concepts and maintain students' concentration & interest levels, which in turn encourages them to learn more, lowers stress levels, and provides an atmosphere more conducive to language acquisition. English as the only medium of foreign language communication is likely to only create stress in students of junior high schools, raising their unwillingness to learn English, and creating the impression that English is a difficult subject to learn.

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