

INVESTIGATING THE USE OF CODE SWITCHING BY UPB STUDENTS IN SPEAKING CLASS

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Abstract

The mastery of speaking proficiency remains a fundamental objective within English as a Foreign Language (EFL), demanding learners to articulate complex cognitive processes in real-time. However, EFL learners frequently encounter linguistic barriers that prompt the phenomenon of code switching. This study aims to identify the types of code switching utilized by UPB students of IAI Darul Ulum during speaking classes and to investigate the underlying factors that influence this linguistic behavior. Employing a qualitative descriptive research design, data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and the documentation of audio-visual recordings. The findings reveal that students predominantly utilize intra-sentential switching, followed by inter-sentential and tag switching. Furthermore, the primary factors driving this practice include a deficiency in target language vocabulary, episodes of nervousness, the necessity for semantic clarification, and entrenched bilingual habits. The study concludes that code switching functions as a cognitive and communicative scaffold rather than a mere linguistic deficit.

Keywords : Code Switching, EFL, Speaking Class

INTRODUCTION

The cultivation of speaking proficiency stands as a highly demanding endeavor within English as a Foreign Language tertiary education, requiring learners to articulate complex cognitive processes under severe temporal constraints. As a productive skill, speaking necessitates the instantaneous retrieval of lexical items, the application of intricate syntactic rules, and the appropriate deployment of pragmatic conventions, all of which impose substantial cognitive burdens on second language (L2) learners. Within the Indonesian higher education landscape, students consistently encounter profound difficulties in sustaining continuous English discourse due to these inherent linguistic demands. Consequently, a natural sociolinguistic phenomenon emerges within the classroom ecology or code switching. This practice, characterized by the alternation between two or more languages within a single

communicative exchange, is highly prevalent among bilingual students. At Unit Pengembangan Bahasa (UPB) of IAI Darul Ulum Kandangan, students enrolled in speaking classes systematically demonstrate a propensity to shift from English to Indonesian. While traditional pedagogical paradigms might interpret this alternation as a deficiency in target language mastery, contemporary sociolinguistics recognizes it as a complex, rule-based communication approach. Investigating this phenomenon at UPB speaking class is critically important to convert the localized linguistic dynamics, thereby allowing educators to construct pedagogical frameworks that Recognize bilingual realities instead of imposing monolingual rules on a communicative strategy that is controlled by a single language.

Despite the institutional focus on preserving an atmosphere where English is the prevailing language, students systematically alternate their linguistic repertoire from the target language to their native tongue during task-based interactions and spontaneous discourses. This bilingual shift persists as an unanalyzed norm. The critical gap in the current academic understanding lies in the precise typological nature of these switches and the psychological or sociolinguistic catalysts that provoke them. It remains unclear whether these alternations are merely symptomatic of linguistic incompetence or if they represent deliberate, cognitively motivated strategies employed by UPB students of speaking class to negotiate meaning and maintain conversational fluency. Therefore, this study is guided by two primary research inquiries. First is the types of code switching are used by UPB students in speaking class, and the factors influence UPB students to use code switching in speaking class. The objectives are to identify the structural typologies of code switching utilized by the students and to investigate the factors influencing their linguistic choices.

From a theoretical view, this research contributes specific, practical examples of how bilingual students in speaking class switch between languages in sociolinguistic literature. Practically, the findings offer critical insights for EFL lecturers, enabling them to differentiate between pathological language interference and strategic code switching, ultimately fostering more tolerant and effective speaking class methodologies. Furthermore, the study benefits students by validating their bilingual practices as functional communicative tools, thereby potentially reducing language anxiety and promoting a more inclusive learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking is fundamentally defined as the vocalized manifestation of human thought, operating as an interactive process where the speakers construct and negotiate meaning through the exchange of verbal symbols. Within the taxonomy of language acquisition, it is categorized as a productive skill because it requires the active, spontaneous generation of linguistic output. In the EFL classroom, speaking difficulties frequently manifest as lexical retrieval failure, mother-tongue interference, and elevated levels of communicative apprehension, all of which delay the smooth execution of L2 discourse and require learners to seek alternative communicative pathways (Cahyani, Pastika, and Artawa 2018). Code switching emerges as a primary pathway in these scenarios. Theoretically conceptualized as the collocation of passages of speech fit in to two different grammatical systems within the same speech exchange, code switching in the bilingual classroom is viewed not as a random linguistic flaw, but as a highly structured phenomenon that reflects a speaker's sophisticated communicative competence across multiple linguistic boundaries (Al-Qatawneh and Al-Barakat, 2015).

Contemporary sociolinguistic literature, synthesizing decades of structural analysis, systematically categorizes code switching into three distinct typologies. Tag switching involves the insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance that is otherwise entirely framed by the grammar of the second language, typically occurring at clause boundaries without disrupting syntactic rules. Inter-sentential switching occurs at the boundary between sentences, where a complete clause in one language is immediately followed by a complete clause in another, requiring the speaker to possess advanced pragmatic competence to manage the discourse shift. Intra-sentential switching represents the most complex form, characterized by the alternation of languages occurring within a single clause or phrase boundary, demanding intimate syntactic knowledge of both linguistic systems to prevent structural violation (Jusoh, Yusof, and Mustapha 2018).

The utilization of these typologies in educational settings is driven by a multifaceted array of determinants. A primary cognitive factor is a lack of vocabulary in the target language, which forces learners to borrow lexical items from their first language (L1) to sustain communicative flow. Additionally, code switching serves as a vital mechanism for clarification, ensuring that interlocutors achieve mutual understanding when complex concepts are involved. Affective variables also play a profound role; confidence issues and

habitual use rooted in the speakers' daily sociolinguistic environment heavily precipitate the reliance on the mother tongue as a psycholinguistic safety controller (Marzuki, 2016).

Extensive prior research conducted within the last decade has explored the nuances of classroom code switching. Bista (2015) investigated university students across Asia, finding that code switching functioned primarily as an expressive tool to emphasize specific points and manage classroom dynamics. Similarly, Suganthi (2021) highlighted that tertiary EFL learners frequently employed intra-sentential switching to compensate for syntactic deficits during spontaneous speech. Hamied (2018) further noted that in the Indonesian context, teachers and students alike utilized switching to lower affective filters. While these studies establish a robust foundation, the present study distinguishes itself by isolating the specific demographic of UPB students, analyzing peer-to-peer interactions within the highly specific, affectively demanding environment of a dedicated speaking class. The conceptual framework of this study posits a direct correlational relationship between the cognitive and affective demands of an EFL speaking class and the emergence of code switching, where linguistic and affective frictions act as catalysts triggering specific types of switching as compensatory mechanisms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This investigation employed a qualitative research design. This method approach was deliberately selected because it facilitates the holistic, in-depth description of linguistic phenomena within their naturally occurring contexts, allowing for the extraction of nuanced meanings behind human communication without the artificial manipulation of variables inherent in experimental paradigms. The research was situated in speaking classes of UPB IAI Darul Ulum Kandungan.

The participants of this study were UPB students actively enrolled in advanced speaking courses. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select individuals who demonstrated frequent and observable instances of code switching during preliminary observations. This non-probability sampling strategy ensured that the data collected were rich, highly relevant, and concentrated specifically on the phenomenon under investigation. The primary data sources consisted of the naturally occurring oral utterances produced by the students during pair-work, group discussions, and individual presentations. Secondary data

sources were derived from the transcriptions of semi-structured interviews conducted with the selected participants to explain their introspective motivations for linguistic alternation.

Data collection was completed through three techniques: non-participant observation to systematically record the naturalistic occurrence of code switching; semi-structured interviews to capture the cognitive and psychological rationales behind the students' linguistic choices and documentation, specifically through audio-visual recordings, to ensure the accurate capture and subsequent exact transcription of all spoken interactions. The instruments utilized to facilitate this collection included a structured observation checklist formatted to identify the specific typologies of code switching in real-time, a comprehensive interview guide containing open-ended questions designed to probe psychological states, and the recording devices to archive the empirical spoken data.

The accumulated data were analyzed utilizing the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman. This involved data reduction, where irrelevant verbalizations were eliminated and the core code-switching instances were codified according to their structural typologies; data display, where the categorized transcripts and interview passages were organized into thematic matrixes to allow for visual cross-referencing and conclusion drawing, where the displayed data were subjected to continuous iterative analysis to synthesize the overarching factors driving the phenomenon. To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was rigorously applied, cross-verifying the observational data with the interview data and the documentary transcripts to mitigate researcher bias and enhance confirmability (Fitriani and Marlina 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The systematic analysis of the classroom observations and transcribed recordings revealed a distinct classified distribution of code-switching typologies among UPB students. Intra-sentential switching emerged as the most frequently observed modality, manifesting when students embedded Indonesian lexical items seamlessly into English syntactic frames. Instances of this were highly recurrent, such as students stating, "We need to discuss the tema before we start the percakapan," where the noun phrases are substituted while the surrounding grammar remains strictly English. Inter-sentential switching occurred at moderate frequencies, typically observed when students completed a complex thought in English before transitioning entirely to Indonesian for the subsequent thought, exemplified by utterances

such as, "I totally agree with your argument. Tapi menurut saya, ada satu hal yang kurang." Tag switching was the least prevalent, primarily surfacing as discourse markers or conversational fillers, such as inserting "kan" or "memang" at the tail end of English declarative sentences to seek affirmation from interlocutors.

The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews exposed four primary catalysts influencing these structural choices. The most prominent factor was a lack of vocabulary, where the students explicitly articulated that the cognitive effort required to retrieve unclear English terminology disrupted their fluency, making L1 borrowing a highly efficient alternative. Nervousness and elevated affective filters also played a critical role; numerous participants reported that under the pressure of peer evaluation and formal grading, their L2 access temporarily collapsed, prompting an natural psychological retreat to Indonesian. Furthermore, clarification was identified as a strategic factor, utilized deliberately to ensure that group members with lower L2 proficiency remained integrated in the task execution. Finally, habitual use was strongly evident, as participants admitted that alternating between languages is their default sociolinguistic mode outside the academic domain, a deeply ingrained habit that unconsciously filled the speaking class environment.

The empirical results strongly verify contemporary theoretical statements regarding the structural distribution and functional utility of code switching. The dominance of intra-sentential switching among UPB students suggests a deeper, more integrated bilingual competence than traditional pedagogies assume; speakers are not merely translating at sentence boundaries, but are actively operating within dual syntactic systems simultaneously. This finding directly aligns with Suganthi (2021), who noted that intra-sentential switches serve as vital compensatory strategies in tertiary EFL environments. When compared with Bista's (2015) findings on Asian university students, the data from UPB demonstrate a shared primary trigger: lexical deficiency.

However, this study expands on recent literature by highlighting the profound impact of affective variables, specifically nervousness, within the localized context of a speaking class. Unlike general reading or writing courses, speaking classes fundamentally subject students to intense performative analysis. The resulting code switching, therefore, must be re-evaluated not as a pedagogical failure, but as a psycholinguistic safety mechanism. By switching to Indonesian, UPB students effectively lower their affective filter, sustaining the interaction that would otherwise terminate due to cognitive overload or anxiety. This dynamic

strongly supports the assertions of Hamied (2018) regarding Indonesian EFL contexts, confirming that controlled L1 use can facilitate, rather than hinder, L2 cognitive processing and classroom cohesion.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that UPB students utilize all three structural typologies of code-switching tag, inter-sentential, and intra-sentential during speaking classes, with intra-sentential switching functioning as the dominant modality. The primary factors driving this linguistic alternation are fundamentally rooted in cognitive lexical deficits and the affective pressures inherent to oral performance, specifically nervousness and the fear of negative evaluation. Secondary factors include the strategic need for peer clarification and the deeply ingrained habitual nature of bilingualism in the students' broader sociolinguistic environment. Ultimately, code switching operates as a vital communicative support that enables students to sustain discourse under pressure, transforming a perceived deficit into a functional bilingual strategy.

For EFL lecturers, it is imperative to readjust pedagogical perspectives by recognizing code switching as a genuine bilingual strategy rather than a punitive offense. Instructors should design translanguaging-informed activities that systematically leverage students' L1 to bridge complex conceptual gaps before transitioning back to the L2, thereby reducing speaking anxiety. For UPB students, conscious efforts to expand active vocabulary through spaced repetition and immersive English media consumption are necessary to reduce cognitive reliance on the mother tongue. Additionally, students should actively engage in affective regulation strategies to mitigate performance anxiety. For subsequent researchers, other studies are highly recommended to observe whether the frequency and typologies of code switching diminish as student's progress through advanced speaking levels, and further investigations could explore the potential impact of specific task types on the variation of these switching behaviors within the same classroom setting.

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