SOCIAL FACTORS PROMPTING ADULT BILINGUAL SPEAKERS TO CODE SWITCH

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ABSTRACT

It has been long known that bilinguals can switch their speeches from one language to another when interacting within their own community. Some experts argue that code switch occurs due to the lack of proficiency in languages, lazy choices and easy solutions in communicating, and impact of linguistic dominance. This paper describes the social factors which promote adult bilinguals in code switching. The paper focuses on three types of the social factors contributing to code switching.The first type deals with factors independent of specific speakers and circumstances such as prestige, cover prestige, and power relation. The second one is related to speakers' competence both as individuals and members of a sub group. The last category refers to factors within the conversation where code switching emerges. To conclude, these social factors are highly relevant in prompting adult bilinguals to code switch.

Keywords: *social factors; code switch; bilinguals; speakers; adults*

INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that bilingual speakers switch from one language to other languages when they are interacting in bilingual environment. Gardner–Chloros (2009, p. 4) called this situation as code switching which simply refers to "the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people".There are a lot of reasons of switching languages. These reasons certainly depend on several pointsof views such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, grammar, acquisition process, and pragmatics perspectives both in adult as well as in children. Nevertheless, this essay is focusing on the explanation of why adult

bilingual speakers engage in code switching looking from a sociolinguistics point of view.

DISCUSSION

Some scholars argue that code switching often emerges as inadequate language proficiency, an easy solution or a lazy option in communication, and the impact of linguistics dominance. This essay is going to discuss that there are other social factors beyond those factors which prompt the adult bilingual speakers to code switch. The discussion that follows will look at three types of social factor which contribute to code switching. First, it will begin by elaborating factors independent of particular speakers and particular circumstances, such as prestige, cover prestige and power relation. Second, it will explain factors relating to speaker's competence both as individual and members of a sub group. Third, the explanation will be given to the factors within the conversation where code switching emerges. This writing argues that social factors are highly relevant and prompting to the emergence of adult bilingual code switching.

Some scholars argue that inadequate language proficiency is one of the main causes of code switching. Herredia and Altarriba (2001, p. 165) claim that bilingual speakers who do not know the language completely often code switch to their dominant languages in the conversation. This case often happens to less proficient second language learners. For example, an Indonesian speaker, who is in the process of learning English for six months, tries to communicate with an Australian who is fluent in Indonesian. The Indonesian speaker might code switch to Indonesian if the speaker does not know some correct English words, such as *perspectives*, *properly*, *explore*, *etc*. This effort is merely done to compensate the insufficient knowledge of a language and maintain the flow of conversation.

However, the inadequate language proficiency is not equivalent to the failure of retrieving correct words. Inadequate language proficiency basically deals with insufficient linguistic knowledge of a language. Failure of retrieving correct words, on the other hand, can be caused by the lack frequency of using words or a matter of incompetent linguistics performance. For example, an Indonesian speaker tries to recall English word "rationalization". The speaker will prefer to switch into Indonesian because it is faster and easier (Herredia & Altarriba, 2001, p.165). This

striking reason is in line with the result of ethnographic research which claims that code-switchers confessed code-switching as laziness or an easy solution to compensate the failure of finding a word required in certain language.

The other claim about code switching cause is the influence of linguistics dominance. Kroll and Stewart (1994, as cited in Herredia & Altarriba, 2001) argued that the dominance of first language lexicons and information prompts the lexicons to be accessed faster than the lexicons of second language. This situation takes place out of speakers' full awareness. An ethnographic research on code-switching proves that people living in the bilingual community were surprised when listening to an interview recording. The recording shows that the people produced enormous number of code swicthing then they predicted (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). It is obvious in the proof that the linguistics dominance of first language can influence the existence of code-switching.

In spite of these factors, there are other social factors that really prompt the emergence of adult bilingual code switching. These factors are prestige, cover prestige and power relation. The clear cut example of prestige and cover prestige's influence in the code switching is the case of North African code switching. Code switching is seen as symbol of education and social status. In other words, it is compulsory for literate speakers to code switch from Arabic into French; and it is notthe case with the illiterate ones. The educated speakers always code switch in the fields such as education, administration, mass media, and tech-related professions because of the strong presence of French (Sayahi, 2007). Furthermore, Meyerhoff (2011, p. 91) explains power relation as"a vertical relationship between speaker and hearer in Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. Along with distance and cost of imposition, power determines how much and what kind of redressive action the speaker might take with a face-threatening act."

The example of power relation's impact on code switching is seen in the code switching used for directness.

Example 14

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M1  : All right
F1  : Stop, how many days is the conference?
M1  : Guys, I wanna finish at seven o'clock
F1  : I'm asking! How many days in the conference?
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M1  : ??? It's half past six
F1  : KirieMeniko, poses imeresine?
      MrMeniko, how many days is it?
M1  : It will be around four days, I imagine
F1  : Ok, four days, good….and what time?
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(Gardner-Chloros & Finnis, 2004 as cited in Gardner-Chloros, 2009, p. 86)

The example shows that the failure to answer F1 speaker's question made the speaker code switch into Greek to avoid face threatening act which occurs in the repeated questions. Code switching helps to constitute directness. In this example, code switch is mixed with humorous language because the speaker F1 perceived speaker M1 in the horizontal relationship rather than vertical one. However, the language of code switching is maybe a bit formal and less humorous if the speaker is in the vertical relationship. For example, code switching to a teacher, a boss, or older person. The examples of prestige, cover prestige and power relation have illustrated that such social factors are essential to be considered in accounting for the emergence of code switching.

In addition, factors relating to speaker's competence both as individual and members of a sub group really determine the existence of code switching. Milroy and Gordon (2003 as cited in Gardner-Chloros, 2009) claim that these factors are speaker's competence in each variety, their social network and relationship, attitudes and ideologies. Duran (1994) explains that speaker's competence alludes to the degree of language competence in two languages. This competence serves to fill the linguistics gap and various communicative purposes. Code switching, thus, plays pivotal role to maintain the flow of conversation and provide a word required in a language which becomes a gap between speakers of two languages.

Furthermore, Milroy and Wei (1995, as cited in Milroy & Musyken, 1995) point out that social network can create the patterns of code switching and language choice. The reason for this isthat social network is in the interaction with social variables such as gender, age, and occupations, so it is likely that the community member of the social network produces more than one variable. For instance, Gumperz's work on Hindi and its range of dialect explains that the social network

and speaker relationship have an effect on the language variety selection. It is proven in his work that most male speakers who travel significantly use village dialect to speak with local residents but employ regional dialect to talk with outsiders (Nilep, 2006). In addition to that, Nilep also maintain that code switching can also be affected by social events in which participants, setting and topics have an important role to determine situational code switching. For example, when a lecture of standard Bokmål was delivered, a regional Ranamål was employed to encourage the debate among the participants.

Another factor relating to speaker's competence as an individual or member of a sub group is called attitude and ideologies. Attitudes and ideologies are rarely found in the study of code switching. In fact, attitudes and ideologies can contribute to positive and negative attitudes toward code switching. For example, the study conducted by Bentahila (1983) in 109 Arabic-French bilinguals in Morocco shows that most of the participants have negative attitudes towards code switching which vary from pity to antipathy. In addition, Lawson-Sako and Sachdev (1996) also found similar attitudes in 169 Tunnisian. Code switching has lowest number compare to other language variations which were used in this community. It is argued that the reasons of gaining negative attitudes are likely to be insecure feeling about language use, imposition of doctrine about code switching in one's linguistics culture, and threat of code switching towards someone's main language. However, a study conducted in London Greek Cypriots community (Gardner-Chloros, 2009) presents positive attitudes toward code switching. This study was conducted under three variations, such as occupation, age and education. The result confirms that lower occupational groups like to code switch more than educated participants of the study. Interestingly, younger participants viewed that code switching brought more benefits in conversation, while the older participants perceived it on the other way round (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). These positive and negative attitudes as well as ideologies about code switching have clearly figured out that people cannot merely claim that code switching is an easy or lazy option. Adult bilingual speakers are categorized as mature speakers who have already had decision to value the benefits and drawbacks of code switching.

Moreover, the factors within the conversation also affect the emergence of code switching.Such factors are, first, markedness model proposed by Myers-Scotton (1983). In this model, she emphasizes that each language of multilingual community has social roles, which are named rights and obligations (RO) by her (Nilep, 2006). It is believed that speaking one language within a context implies that the speaker understands his role within the context. This same assumption also applies when the speaker speaks more than one language. It is undeniable that the speaker is attached to several related social roles within the conversation. Due to the reasons, Myers-Scotton (1983) claims that an understanding of social meanings in each available code should be given to provide the basic understanding of using a particular code within the context to other interlocutors. Based on the claim, the speakers can choose a form which implies the set of rights and obligations between speakers and addressees or this is called negotiation principle. This principle has unmarked choice maxim, marked choice maxim, and the *exploratorychoice* maxim. Myers-Scotton (1983, as cited in Nilep, 2006, p. 11) defined these three terms as follows:

"The *unmarked choice maxim* directs, "Make your code choice the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in talk exchanges when you wish to establish or affirm that RO set" (114). The *markedchoice maxim* directs, "Make a marked code choice…when you wish to establish a new RO set as unmarked for the current exchange" (131). The *exploratorychoice* maxim states, "When an unmarked choice is not clear, use CS [code switching] to make alternate exploratory choices as candidates for an unmarkedchoice and thereby as an index of an RO set which you favor."

This model helps to make an assumption about the knowledge and understanding of interlocutors within the speech situation. Although some claim that this model hinges much on the external knowledge, such as speakers' understanding and belief, it is still argued that markedness model mostly influences the motivation of code switching.

Another factor that encourages adult bilingual speakers to code switch within the conversation are accommodation and audience design. Meyerhoff (2011) states that accommodation theory refers to the process of adapting linguistics behavior

and attitudes based on the interlocutors' behavior by convergence or divergence strategy. Convergence is basically the process of shifting manner of speaking to the custom of interlocutor for bringing out a similarity between the speakers and interlocutors. On the other hand, divergence means the process of preserving a distinction between the speakers and interlocutors. These two strategies are highly relevant to the theory of audience design because speaker can do convergence or divergence based on the addresses or listeners within the conversation (Meyerhoff, 2011). The example to highlight the relationship of the discussed theory and code switching is the broad use of Hindi-English code switching in Asian television channel (Gardner-Choloros, 2011). In this television channel, code switching is used in several shows to include the largest potential audiences such as Asian young second generation who speaks English as the main language, and parents and grandparents who use Indian languages as main language but Hindi as literacy language. It is evident that code switching is done in the television channel by convergence strategy, in which includes audiences who only speak English to understand the television program. Thus, code switching can alsobe triggered by audience design and accommodation theory.

The last factor emerged within conversation that causes code switching is gender differences. This factor happens in the Greek Cypriot community in which men and women code switch for different purposes (Gardner-Choloros, 2009). Code switching is conducted for the reasons of humor, bonding and dampening directness. In addition, the women of Greek Cypriot are more encouraged to switch into Greek because it is more polite and indirect than men. The following example of code switching used for bonding shows how women switch to maintain the positive politeness and solidarity.

> Example 13
>
> 1.   F1 : Am I the only person that gets???by their
>   parents already?
> 2.   M1 : What, about getting married?
> 3.   F1 : Yeah, she started today.
> 4.   F2 : ???**manasou**?
>   *your mother*?

(Gardner-Chloros & Finnis, 2004 as cited in Gardner-Chloros, 2009, p. 86)

The example discusses about a female speaker sharing her mother's anxiety to find a husband and getting married. As the realization of positive politeness and solidarity another female speaker switches to Greek which is illustrated in sentence 4. The reason for maintaining solidarity and positive politeness in this conversation is the greater impact of marriage topic towards women than men. Gender can be concluded as one of the factors that produces code switching among adult bilingual speakers. Regarding the three factors within the conversation, it is argued by Nilep (2006) that the conversational analysis views code switching as a technique of managing conversational interaction and an approach to relate broader knowledge to continuing conversation. Thus, it is clear that factors within conversation and code switching are interrelated.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the pros and cons arguments about the emergence of code switching have been proposed by various scholars. Although many studies have been conducted from speakers' insights about reasons of engaging in code switching, a sociolinguists approach is also crucial to describe this linguistics phenomenon. Some scholars might argue that code switching often emerges as an inadequate language proficiency, an easy solution or a lazy option in communication, and the impact of linguistics dominance.In line with the arguments, code switching is merely done to compensate the insufficient knowledge of a language, maintain the flow of conversation and compensate the failure of finding a word required in certain language. Besides that, the faster accessed of first language lexicon also determines code switching existence in adult bilingual speakers. However, these arguments cannot be used as a simple answer because the factshows that competent language speakers also code switch. Some scholarsadditionally argue that it is not always easy to switch rather than not to switch.

Responding to the arguments, this essay has elaborated three social factors beyond those factors which prompt the adult bilingual speakers to code switch. The discussion has looked at factors independent of particular speakers and particular circumstances, such as prestige, cover prestige and power relation. This paper has

also explicated factors relating to speaker's competence both as individual and members of a sub group. The last factor that is important to be considered is the factors within the conversation which affect the emergence of code switching.

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