

## THE OCCURRENCE OF CODE SWITCHING ON PERSONAL MESSAGE OF BLACKBERRY MESSENGER

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**Abstract:** The study aims to investigate languages used in code switching on personal message of BlackBerry messenger (PM of BBM), the types of code switching, and the reasons of BBM users in using code switching. This research involved 25 university students in Bandung as samples. The data were gathered through compiling the PM of BBM and distributing questionnaires. Several theories were applied to analyze the data, namely theory of switching types proposed by Poplack (1980), and theory of reasons of switching investigated by Hoffman (1991, in Tiana, 2009), and Savile-Troike (1986). The findings revealed that the users tended to use group of switched-languages (*Indonesian-English*) in code switching (80%). On the other hand, dealing with types of code switching appeared on PM of BBM, *intersentential switching* is the most dominant switching type (40.63%). Furthermore, the data analysis result from questionnaires indicated that most of the respondents (24%) stated that they did switching for real lexical need, which is the BBM users mostly used code switching on their PM because lack of equivalent lexicon.

**Keywords:** *Code switching, personal message, BlackBerry messenger, types, reasons.*

### Introduction

The use of various languages has increased along with the ability of people to speak different languages interchangeably. The ability of people to use more than one language (bilingual) often occurs in today's society where many members come from different background and they are in contact with others (Holmes, 2001). They have contact with others using direct communication or even facilitated by a media, namely communication tool. From many different media to facilitate communication, BlackBerry is one of the most popular communication tools recently (Rao, 2012: 13). Beside its main function as communication tool, BlackBerry also enables the users to share their words through personal message of BlackBerry messenger (PM of BBM) feature. People tend to express their words on PM of BBM using particular patterns of language use. BBM users seem to use code switching on their PM of BBM.

Interestingly, they use code switching in limited 160 characters of BBM's Personal Message. They switch codes on PM of BBM by using some languages in certain pattern of switching types. Moreover, they have different reasons why they switch codes on their PM of BBM. The phenomenon of switching codes in social network (i.e. BlackBerry Messenger®) relates closely to the bilingualism (Suryahutami, 2011).

Within a bilingual society, there is a tendency for people to accommodate the situation by switching the language, particularly when a new member arrives in the community (Holmes, 2001). Code switching occurs in many different speech communities, and it might be influenced by domains of language use. Holmes (2001: 21) mentions five possible domains which can be identified in many communities; they are family, friendship, religion, education, and employment. Moreover, the discussion about relationship between domains and code switching will not only focus on the real fields where two speakers or more are involved in a direct conversation orally, but also it will be associated to the indirect conversation using media. From many different tools that provide feature to connect people and enable them communicating, BlackBerry is one of the most popular communication tools in this past few years, particularly in Indonesia (Rao, 2012: 13).

BlackBerry, which is considered as one of the most popular smart phones, has several features that facilitate the users to send and receive messages and other types of data such as picture, audio file, document, in real-time (Martin, n.d.). This service is facilitated by BlackBerry through the existence of push email and BlackBerry Messenger® applications. BlackBerry Messenger® or BBM is an application of instant messaging that is developed by Research In Motion, and exclusively created for BlackBerry smart phone (Martin, n.d.). This application provides a feature to post a short status update of users in 160 characters or less, namely Personal Message. A Personal Message or often shortened to PM, is similar to an e-mail sent between the users of Internet forum, bulletin board system, social networking site (such as Facebook), or chat room (Wikipedia, 2012).

Pertaining to the foregoing statements, it is interesting to relate the language use in people's BBM Personal Message with several linguistic issues. The existence of linguistic phenomena in BBM setting can be investigated through the appearance of code switching on Personal Messages posted by the users. Thus, the present study is conducted to investigate the appearance of code switching on Personal Message of BBM. The study covers the languages used in code switching, the types of code switching that occur on Personal Message of BBM, and the reason of BBM users to use code switching on their Personal Message. The result of the present study is hopefully beneficial to enrich the previous research conducted on code switching.

## **Literature Review**

- **Code Switching**

It is common for people who live in bilingual societies to use a language and switch to others within conversation or sentence (Kim, 2006). One of common terms in linguistics which refers to the way of alternation language use is code switching. "Switching" appears transparent enough, in that it refers to alternation between the different varieties which people speak (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 11). Code switching is a direct result from the interaction of people in bilingual communities (Wardaugh, 1986 in Cakrawarti, 2011).

An important issue is that code switching occurs in every same utterance where the use of certain language changes to another. It is in line with Spolsky (1998 in Pratiwi, 2009: 1) who defines code switching as changing from one language to another in the middle of utterance. In addition, Valdes-Fallis (1977, in Duran, 1994: 4) defines "code switching as the use of two languages simultaneously or interchangeably".

However there is still a debatable issue of distinction between code switching and another term in sociolinguistics, code mixing. Some researchers distinguish code switching and code mixing based on the place where the changing occurs. For instance, Bhatia and Ritchie (2004 in Kim, 2006: 45) define code mixing as the combination of different linguistic units (morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses and sentences) particularly from two grammatical

systems within a sentence (intrasentential). While other researchers maintain that code switching appears only at or above clause level, Romaine (1995 in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, 2009: 68) views code switching as a phenomenon that takes place in a continuum where both intersentential and intrasentential code alternation take place. The present study adopts those studies that define code switching as the alternation language both intersentential and intrasentential.

Poplack (1980) categorizes code switching into three types: tag switching, intersentential code switching, and intrasentential code switching. Tag switching involves the insertion of tag in one language into sentence or utterance in another language (Poplack, 1980: 589). The tag can be inserted anywhere which do not have too many syntactic limits (Romaine, 1989: 122). Intersentential switching is a switching at level of clause or sentence, that each clause or sentence is conveyed in one or another language (Romaine, 1989: 122). Intrasentential switching refers to switching within the sentence (Boztepe, n.d.). It involves a switch within the clause or sentence boundary and it may also include mixing within word boundaries (e.g. switching of: NP, VP, PP, N, ADJ, etc) (Romaine, 1989).

People may have different reasons why they use code switching in their conversation. The occurrence of code switching as a result of interaction within bilingual communities is considered as an effective way to facilitate communication (Khner, Yim, Nett, Kan, and Duran, 2005, in Kim, 2006: 44). Covering the theories of reason in code switching, Hoffman (1991:116) mentions seven reasons of switching. The reasons are the need to talk about a particular topic, the necessity of quoting somebody else, being emphatic about something, the essential of using interjection, the need to use repetition for clarification, the necessity of intention in clarifying the speech context for interlocutor, and the need to express group identity. To support Hoffman's theory, this study also adapts Savile-Troike's theory (1986:69) who claims people's reasons to switch are softening or strengthening request or command, and the necessity of real lexical need. In addition, Bautista (1999, in Bautista, 2004:230) mentions communicative efficiency as an additional reason to switch language.

## **Methodology**

The study was conducted in a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative study that was utilized in this study involved description and analysis rather than the counting features related to the issue (Alwasilah, 2006). This present study investigated the appearance of code switching on Personal Message of BlackBerry Messenger. Moreover, the study explored the languages used in code switching, the types of code switching, and the reason of BBM user to switch language on PM of BBM.

The data were gathered from Personal Messages of Blackberry Messenger that belonged to 25 BBM users who were chosen randomly from the researcher's contact list of BBM. One Personal Message from each user was chosen to be utilized as a data of this study. The Personal Messages of BBM were collected from May to November 2012. Moreover, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents (i.e. BBM users) as another instrument to gather the actual reason of BBM users to switch the languages on their Personal Message of BBM. Closed ended-statements were chosen to provide the questions in this questionnaire. Closed ended-statements have advantages to enhance consistency across respondents, easier and faster to tabulate, and be more popular with respondents (Fraenkel and Norman, 1993: 351 in Suryahutami, 2011: 35).

## **Data Presentation and Discussion**

- **Languages used in code switching on personal message of BlackBerry Messenger®**

The study revealed five groups of switched-languages used by BBM users. The categories of switched-language groups that occurred in this study are presented in the following discussion. Table 1 presents the evidence that a number of code switching appeared in several groups of switched-languages.

Table 1: Table of groups of switched-languages

| No           | Group of switched-languages                       | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1            | Indonesian – English                              | 20                    | 80%         |
| 2            | Indonesian – Sundanese                            | 2                     | 8%          |
| 3            | English - Sundanese                               | 1                     | 4%          |
| 4            | Javanese – Cirebonese – Sundanese<br>– Indonesian | 1                     | 4%          |
| 5            | English – Arabic                                  | 1                     | 4%          |
| <b>Total</b> |   | <b>25</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

Based on the table above, the study found that groups of switched-languages occurred were *Indonesian-English (80%)*, *Indonesian-Sundanese (8%)*, *English-Sundanese (4%)*, *Javanese-Cirebonese-Sundanese-Indonesian (4%)*, and *English-Arabic (4%)*

*Indonesian-English* appeared as the most frequent switched-languages group in this study (80%). It was related to the use of Indonesian as national language and most of Indonesians used it as their second language (Sandjaja, n.d.). It is illustrated by the User FR 2 who wrote “*Senangdan cape. See you next time hkbppurwakartasunday school.*” Sheswitched her language from Indonesian to English on her PM. The second most frequent group of switched-language occurred in this present study was *Indonesian andSundanese (8%)*. The appearance of switched-language group in this research is represented by User FR 10 who wrote “*Bapak2 dosenkuyg ganteng2, mugi sing kaanggenyaahadiahtipribados.*” This user switched from Indonesian to Sundanese. Furthermore, in precise similar percentage (1%), the rest of respondents switched languages on their Personal Message of BlackBerry Messenger® by using these three switched-languages groups: *English – Sundanese(1%)*, *Javanese–Cirebonese–Sundanese–Indonesian(1%)*, and *English–Arabic (1%)*. Those different languages found in this study indicate that code switching in all languages did not only occur naturally, but also commonly as a result of language contact (Vogt, 1954 in Nilep, 2006: 5).

### • The Occurrences of Code Switching Types

There are three types of code switching found in this study, namely *tag switching*, *intersentential switching*, and *intrasentential switching* (Poplack, 1980). The appearance of various code switching types is presented in the following table.

Table 2: Table of the occurrences of code switching types

| No           | Type of code switching    | Frequency | Percentage  |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1            | Intersentential switching | 13        | 40.63%      |
| 2            | Intrasentential switching | 9         | 28.12%      |
| 3            | Tag switching             | 10        | 31.25%      |
| <b>Total</b> |                           | <b>32</b> | <b>100%</b> |

As presented in the table 4.2 above, *intersentential switching* was the most frequent type of code switching that occurred on Personal Message of BBM (40.63%). The occurrence of this type is shown by User FR 17 who wrote “*Orabener! Belibener! Teubener! Gabener!*” She switched her language from Javanese to three different languages (Cirebonese, Sundanese, and Indonesian) at level of clause or sentence. Meanwhile, other 31.25% of code switching type appearance was *tag switching*. It is illustrated by User FR 3 who wrote “*Ada yang punyakoperkecil, please?*” She inserted interjection or tag “please” into sentence might to show surprise, her strong emotion, or to gain attention, without adding any grammatical value on her sentence itself (Sinulingga, 2009). On the other hand, *intrasentential switching* was the least type of code switching that used on Personal Message of BBM (28.12%). It is represented by User FR14 who wrote “*Sorrybaru on abis ngiklan ponds barengka BCL, chatulangnya.*” She preferred to write “sorry” instead of “*maaf*” within the sentence that she wrote in Indonesian base language. She also aimed to write “*nyala*” and “*ngobrol*” by choosing English words “on” and “chat”.

- **The reasons for BBM users in using code switching**

Based on the responses of questionnaires, there were nine reasons from the respondents to use code switching out of ten reasons provided. The 25 respondents of this study chose certain reasons to use code switching on their Personal Message of BlackBerry Messenger®, except repetition used for clarification. The following table shows the recap of the number of BBM users' reasons in using code switching.

Table 3: Table of reasons of code switching occurrence

| No           | Reason of code switching occurrence                            | Number of respondent | Percentage  |
|--------------|--|----------------------|-------------|
| 1            | Talking about a particular topic                               | 4                    | 16%         |
| 2            | Quoting somebody else  | 2                    | 8%          |
| 3            | Being emphatic about something                                 | 2                    | 8%          |
| 4            | Interjection (inserting sentence filler or sentence connector) | 2                    | 8%          |
| 5            | Repetition used for clarification                              | 0                    | 0           |
| 6            | Intention of clarifying the speech content for interlocutor    | 1                    | 4%          |
| 7            | Expressing group identity                                      | 2                    | 8%          |
| 8            | Softening or strengthening request or command                  | 2                    | 8%          |
| 9            | Real lexical need  | 6                    | 24%         |
| 10           | Communicative efficiency                                       | 4                    | 16%         |
| <b>Total</b> |  | <b>25</b>            | <b>100%</b> |

According to the Table 4.3 above, it figures out that *real lexical need* tends to be the most dominant reason given by BBM users in their questionnaire (24%). It was followed by the need *to talk about a particular topic* with 16%, which was equal to the number of respondents who switched language on PM of BlackBerry Messenger® *for communicative efficiency* (see: Bautista, 1999 in Bautista, 2004: 230) with 16%. The same pattern of percentages (8%) also occurs in the number of respondents who answered their reasons to switch their language were for *quoting somebody else, being emphatic about something, interjection (inserting*



*sentence filler or sentence connector*), *expressing group identity*(see:Hoffman, 1991: 116),and *softening or strengthening request or command*(see: Savile-Troike, 1986: 69). However, *intention of clarifying the speech content for interlocutor* (Hoffman, 1991: 116)was the least reason of BBM users to switch their language, it was only 4%. Meanwhile, it had been mentioned previouslythat *repetition used for clarification*(Savile-Troike, 1986: 69)was not chosen by any respondent as their reason to use code switching on Personal Message of BlackBerry Messenger®.

### Conclusions

Based on findings of the study, *Indonesian-English*was found as the most frequent group of switched-languages used by BBM users on their Personal Message(80%).The use of different languages in code switching (among BBM users) was identified as a result of language contact phenomenon which is indicated by the natural occurrence of code switching, as suggested by Vogt (1954 in Nilep, 2006: 5). Moreover, the study revealed that *intersentential switching*tended to be the most frequent type of code switching (40.63%).This view indicates that BBM users dominantly have a good fluency in different languages since they applied proper rule of those languages, particularly in forming the structure in *intersentential switching*. Meanwhile, the study also showed thatreal lexical need (Savile-Troike, 1986: 69)was the most dominant reason of BBM users to switch language on Personal Message of BBM (24%).It can be concluded that most of BBM users switched their languages due to the lack of equivalent lexicon in the languages(Savile-Troike, 1986: 69).

In order to extend the study for further research, it is strongly recommended to elaborate more various theories on code switching to be used as the framework of next studies. In addition, it is also suggested for further researcher to use the setting which is applied in the present study (i.e. Blackberry Messenger) as the data source for study in other linguistic issues. Due to the trend of BBM as a popular messenger application recently, it is assumed that several linguistic phenomena occur in this setting.For instance, the tendency of BBM users to use particular *symbols* or *auto text* could be utilized as a source for the next research.

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