



## “So, what’s this *cerita* all about?” Functions of Indonesian-English code switching in a novel

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### Abstract

This qualitative research intends to examine the functions of code switching of Indonesian to English employed in an Indonesian novel, *Antalogi Rasa* (The Anthology of Taste). The code switching identified in the novel was categorized, analyzed and described accordingly. The function of code-switching is coded based on experts in the field provided in the literature. The findings of the research revealed that the three most used functions are talking about a particular topic, interjection and quotation. Since the novel presents the main character to be a fluent speaker in both Indonesian and English, therefore to converse with her friends and family who may not be as fluent as her in the foreign language would need these three functions most to have her utterances clearly understood by her interlocutors. Meanwhile, the three least used functions are expressing group identity, repetition and excluding other people. Likewise, the group identity of the characters is narrated throughout the story so it is not indispensable for her to point it out too much in the novel. Then, the function of excluding other people from conversations also appeared least because most of the conversations in the novel only involved two people. Hence, the form of language being investigated is the written form in a novel, therefore, the writer does try to be sparing with its length, and this also affects her choices of code switching in this fictional work. Moreover, the paper further discusses the description for each of these functions in the novel.

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### Introduction

With the rapid growth of cross cultural communication, the exchange between language varieties is becoming more common (Wang, 2015). Code-switching has become a linguistic phenomenon with the presence of increasing bilingual and multilingual communities. Code switching is a switch conducted by speakers or writers from one language to another

in the midst of their speech, or even in the midst of producing sentences (Abalhassan & Alshalawi 2000). It can also happen in a conversation when one speaker speaks one language and the interlocutor responds in a different language (Woolard, 2004). In addition to occurring in the real life daily communication, code switching can also be found in various parts of the media that exemplifies and reflects real life situations such as works of literature (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015), movies (Mukenge & Chimbarange, 2012), and songs (Davies & Bentahila, 2008).

In literature, novel refers to an extended fictional narrative prose that focuses on different characters. Besides that, it also involves events and the voices and actions of the characters (Abrams, 2008; Kuiper, 2011). Because novels represent characters and their stories, code-switching is commonly

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depicted by writers (Yusuf, Fata, & Chyntia, 2018). Code-switching can be found in various parts of works, such as in the titles, dialogues, or narrations. Today, with English gaining wider attention among Indonesian people, especially those living in metropolitan areas where English is also incorporated into informal daily conversations, it is not surprising to find Indonesian popular fiction novels with a great deal of English being utilized (Yusuf et al., 2018). English is globally seen as an “essential to any country wishing to retain, or boost, its competitive edge in international affairs, whether in business or culture” (Ohlander, 2009). Hence, English has prestige among Indonesians (Achmad & Yusuf, 2016) and so its use in Indonesian novels can entice readers, especially those who live in metropolitan areas in the country. Well known writers today who employ code switches between Indonesian and English in their works are Alia Zalea, Dewi Lestari, Ika Natassa, and Ilana Tan, among many others.

From literature, we were interested to study the code switching phenomenon in Indonesian novels, especially in the use of switches between Indonesian and English, written by Indonesian writers. Our preliminary study found that among all of the Indonesian writers of fiction novels, Ika Natassa employed most code switching in her narratives. Our focus was on her well-known novel, *Antologi Rasa* (literally translated as “The Anthology of Taste”), that was published in 2011, and which has also been adapted into a movie by Soraya Intercine Films released in February 2019 in Indonesia with the same title. In the novel, we find consistencies in the use of code switching from the first until the last chapters. This led us to conduct this study to find the functions of the code switching. A study by Yusuf et al., (2018) focused on the types of code-switching in this novel. Type here refers to a particular kind, class or group of code-switching recognized in a work of fiction. Most recent studies on code switching in novels also basically address the type of code switching found in the narrative texts, for instance Siregar, Pardi, and Hariani (2018) and Adi (2018). Meanwhile, in this study, we intended to complement the first study on the types of code switching in *Antologi Rasa* by focusing on the functions of code-switching in this novel. Function here refers to the purpose or operation in a particular way of conducting code-switching penned by the authors in their novels.

The result of this study is expected to add knowledge and provide better understanding on the phenomenon of code switching the written form of Indonesian-English. We also hope that the results can also be used as additional references to enrich theoretical aspects of code switching in the field of sociolinguistic studies. As for English teachers, the knowledge about code switching in daily communications and also in the media, which represent real-life situations, can benefit their knowledge and instructions in teaching the language, either as a second or foreign language.

## Literature Review

When code switching occurs, the functions of each switch as employed by the speaker are an important consideration in the process. According to experts, there are a number of

functions of code switching as conducted by a bilingual or multilingual speaker. The first function is to talk about a particular topic (Hoffmann, 2014). People switch codes within a speech event because they are discussing a particular topic (Holmes, 2008). Studies have shown that Arabs tend to discuss sexual topics and emotional topics in English (Abalhassan & Alshalawi, 2000) and Lebanese would discuss them in French (Eldin, 2014). The switch makes the speakers more comfortable to discuss those issues which are considered as off-limits to be conversed in public in their social community zone.

The second function is quotation. In quotation, code switching is related to direct and reported speech (Gumperz, 1982). The speech of another person is quoted in a conversation by a speaker in a different language. Yletyinen (2004) illustrates this situation as when a speaker X (who speaks English) wants to report something Y (who speaks German) has said; X is talking in English but inserts the reported words Y in German. This is done to maintain the authenticity of the message (Halim & Maros, 2014). Then, for the third function, there is being emphatic about something (express solidarity). According to Pardede and Kisno (2012), this is when someone is talking using a language and suddenly wants to be emphatic about something so he switches to another language. This is because it feels more convenient to be emphatic in a certain language compared to another.

The fourth function is interjection; it is words or expressions inserted into a sentence to express strong emotions or to gain attention. Interjection occurs when code switching serves to mark an interjection or sentence fillers (Gumperz, 1982). Interjection can be short exclamations such as “Darn!”, “Hey!”, “Look!”, “Oh, no!”, etc. They carry no grammatical value, but speakers usually use them more in speaking than in writing. In terms of types of code-switching, this function is similar to tag switching (Romaine, 1995). For the fifth function, repetition occurs when a message is repeated in another language. It serves as a clarification of what has just been said but often it also carries additional meanings in that it amplifies or emphasizes the message (Yletyinen, 2004).

The sixth function is the intention of clarifying the speech content of a speaker to make the content of their speech run smoothly and be understood by the interlocutors (Pardede & Kisno, 2012). In this function, a message in one code is repeated in modified forms in the other code to qualify something that has been previously said (Gumperz, 1982). Afterward, the seventh function is expressing group identity. Pardede and Kisno (2012) suggest that the way of communication of a group of speakers in their disciplines is apparently different from other groups. In other words, the way of communication of one community is different from the people who are out of the community.

In the eighth function, speakers can also use code switching to get other people to do things by softening or strengthening requests or commands (Holmes, 2008). Malik (1994) adds code-switching appears in phrases such as commands, requests, greetings, and also farewells to put across a certain level of significance or force. The speech act which expresses directive force may vary in strength. For

instance, an attempt to get people to shut a door is by inviting or suggesting them to do so or by commanding them to do so. In addition, orders and commands are speech acts that are generally expressed in imperative forms. The decision to use an appropriate form of directive is according to the social factor in the speaking situation.

The ninth function includes lexical needs; where a most common function for a bilingual or multilingual person to switch or mix their languages is due to lexical needs. This is done due to the lack of equivalent lexicon in the languages. Malik (1994) says speakers commonly code switch when they cannot find an appropriate expression or vocabulary item needed to endure a smooth conversation. Finally, the last function is excluding other people. Code switching can be used to exclude other members of a group who are not as familiar with the language (Cook, 2002). It happens when a statement or utterance in a conversation is meant for only a certain audience. Sometimes people want to communicate only to certain people or community they belong to, and so to avoid interference by other people they attempt to exclude those people by using the language that not everybody knows (Baker, 2001).

## Methodology

In this qualitative study, the data were collected from the novel, *Antalangi Rasa* (The Anthology of Taste) by Ika Natassa. The novel tells the story about the friendship of four bankers named Harris, Keara, Ruly, and Denise, who secretly love each other. The unrequited love story between the four main characters is packed attractively since every character tells the story from their own perspective. The story is situated in the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta. The data of this study show every code switching between Indonesian to English or vice versa appearing in the novel, be it in words, phrases, sentences or expressions.

The data were analyzed based on the stages proposed by Creswell (2014). First is to organize and prepare the data for analysis, second is to read through all the data, and third is coding the data. In this study, the first stage involved reading the novel intensively, and the code-switches were identified and noted. The second stage involved writing additional information that reflects the overall meaning of every code-switching identified in the novel. Finally, in the third stage, each code-switching was coded based on the functions provided by experts as discussed and explained in the previous section (i.e. Baker, 2001; Cook, 2002; Gumperz, 1982; Hoffmann, 2014; Holmes, 2008; Romaine, 1995), which talk about particular topics, quotation, being emphatic about something, interjection, repetition used for clarification, intention of clarifying the speech content, expressing group identity, softening or strengthening request or command, lexical need and excluding other people.

## Results and Discussion

A total of 1.116 switches were identified in the novel. From this number, the results showed that all of the functions

of code switching proposed by experts were found in the novel. It should be noted that some code switching detected in the words, phrases, sentences, and expressions in the novel may have contained more than one function. Hence, in this section, words in languages other than English were italicized, translations were provided in square brackets and excerpts from data were provided within quotations marks.

The most used function found in data is talking about particular topics (67.2%). An example from data is, "*Aku?* [Me?] No, I'm nowhere near workaholic. This is just something I have to do to put those Kate Spades in my closet and Leica in my camera bag". In this example, it can be seen that the characters in the novel do most switches from Indonesian to English due to the topic of their discussion. Here, the character started her talk in Indonesian (i.e. *Aku?*) but then switched to English in her next sentence because she is talking about international and expensive brands such as Kate Spade and Leica. Discussing these brands goes further than simply borrowing a couple of words from English. Therefore, she stretches her speech considerably to make her point. The technical issues are inflexibly related to a particular code and a topic itself can trigger a switch to the appropriate code. Accordingly, the characters of the story can be said to be a fluent bilingual in Indonesian and English. It is now common to hear people who reside in metropolitan areas in Indonesia, especially Jakarta, to incorporate English into their daily conversations (Yusuf et al., 2018). For many bilinguals, certain kinds of referential content are more appropriate or more easily expressed in one language than the other (Holmes, 2008).

The second most used function of code switching in the novel is interjection (13.1 percent). Interjection occurs when code-switching is used to mark an interjection or serve as sentence fillers. An example from data is, "Oh great. *Ternyata selain menjurus* [It turns out besides leading (it to)] ...". In this expression "Oh great" is used to express annoyance. Other interjections found in the novel are "God!" to express astonishment, "shit" and "what the fuck?" as curses due to disappointment or anger, and "whoops" to express an unintentional act and mild embarrassment. Here, most of the interjections are words designed to convey emotions and do not relate grammatically to the other parts of the sentence. It conveys to the readers better understanding, expression or clarification about the speaker's feeling. Ace and Subbotin (2014) notes that due to its nature, "interjections are rarely used in academic or formal writing, but are common in fiction or artistic writing".

Quotation as the third most used function of code-switching in the data is found in the novel (8.9%). An example from data is, "*Saat bicara tentang memutuskan sesuatu*, Dr. Seuss bilang, [When talking about making decisions, Dr. Seuss says] You're on your own. And you know what you know. And you are the guy who'll decide where to go". The code switch here shows that the writer quotes directly from Dr. Seuss, one of America's well known children's authors. In this case, the writer was motivated to quote because she wanted to be accurate and so the exact words are important to emphasize the precise message content. Akin to Gumperz (1982), code

switching has relevance in terms of direct and reported speech, and this is the function of quotations. The switches are used to preserve the precise information of the original source.

The next most used code-switching is for softening or strengthening request or command (3.2%). When conducting this code switching, Holmes (2008) informs that speakers can decide which appropriate form to use based on the social factor of the speaker and interlocutor, such as the social distance of participant, their relative status, and the formality of the context. This function takes a part as to get people to do things. An example from data is, “You be nice, and shut up”. People who are close friends or intimate tend to use more imperatives such as in this example. Meanwhile, this example from data, “Can I have some water please?” shows the social distance of participant, in this case between a passenger and a flight attendant. This situation made the speaker choose words that reflect politeness and formality. Request sentences in Indonesian generally reflect similar level of politeness, but in English there are ways to make sentences more polite, that is, by inserting “please”. In English, “please” is used in requests and bears some functions, such as to soften the speech act of request (in the case of E5), to mark an utterance as a directive, to ask for cooperative behaviour from the listener and to emphasize and utterance (Martinez-Flor, 2009).

Following the function above is lexical need (2.6%). In this case, the most common reason for a bilingual or multilingual person to switch or mix their languages is due to the lack of equivalent lexicon in the languages they speak (Malik, 1994). An example from data is “... *melihat* [to see] a hot guy with books”. The words “hot guy” cannot be translated literally into Indonesian as words in this language do not convey the same meaning as expressed in English. A “handsome man” in Indonesian is *pria ganteng*, however, “hot” is more than just a handsome appearance, having other qualities such as physical body, personality, and the aura emanating from him, perception of which may vary from one woman to another. Therefore, the writer sticks to the English term to make it clear to the readers. Similar to Kang (2008), characters can code switch when a suitable expression in a language is not found in the other. On the other hand, another example in data “Trick or treating *itu* [that]...” infer that this function can also be culturally conditioned. David (2003) says that an unfamiliar concept often has a speaker switch to another language from which the concept is borrowed. Therefore, the lexical item “trick or treating” in English is not a common phrase in Indonesian because the Indonesian culture does not celebrate Halloween. Hence, the phrase “trick or treating” is directly borrowed and used as an instance of phrase level. In view of that, Mazumdar (2015) remarks that code switching also provides the social image and culture of the speakers.

The sixth function is intention of clarifying the speech content (2.5%). The function of this code switching is to better interpret the content of speech so that the interlocutor can understand better (Pardede & Kisno, 2012) or increase the utterance’s perlocutionary effect. A message in one code is repeated in the other code in a slightly altered form and clarifies what has been said. An example from data is, “*Aku*

*sempat tersenyum saat melihat sekelompok bule bahkan mengenakan kilt* [I even smiled when I saw a group of foreigners (i.e. Westerners) wearing kilts]. Yes, the tartan Scottish kilts”. In this sentence, the character, Keara, clarified her first sentence to the word “kilt” by repeating it in her next sentence and providing further information on the word she meant, “Yes, the tartan Scottish kilts”.

Empathy or being emphatic about something is also used very little in the novel (1.4%). This is the ability to acknowledge how someone else is feeling and to share his or her emotion (Brown & Nelson, 2009). In the example from data, “... *dan Harris tiba-tiba menangkap lenganku dan berkata pelan dengan nada khawatir*; [...] and Harris suddenly took my arm and said quietly in a worried tone.] Are you okay?”, the character, Harris, is being empathic to Keara. He asks Keara, “Are you okay?” because he was worried about her and her feelings. Perhaps, the writer used this question in English rather than the Indonesian version, *Apakah kamu baik-baik saja?* because this question in Indonesian lack an expression that conveys the same emphatic strength as the one used in English.

Among the least used code switching is for expressing group identity (1.0%). The way of communication of a group of people in their disciplinary groupings is different from other groups (Pardede & Kisno, 2012). The use of code-switching can also mark their identity. Examples from data are, “Business or pleasure?” *Laki-laki berseragam biru imigrasi* [A man in a blue immigration uniform] ...”, and “Hi, can I get you anything?” *Seorang pramugari menghampiri kursiku* [A flight attendant approached my chair] ...”. In these excerpts, the situation is in an international airport. And thus, to use English to greet the passengers would be a common practice. Here, the writer shows the group identity of an immigration officer in the first example, and the cabin crew in the following example. The use of word choices in these examples draws the formal situation and social context of an airport. In line with Wang (2015), the situation of the speakers can also trigger them to code switch in their speech.

Repetition used for clarification was used least in the novel (0.1%). An example from the data is, “There was this saying in Latin: *nemo in amore videt*. No one in love sees”. Here, the utterance is previously written in Latin and then repeated once again in English. As the character, Keara, is able to speak English, and so the writer repeated the Latin code into English to better clarify the meaning to the readers. Typically, a message in one code is repeated in the other code literally to clarify what has just been said, but often it also carries additional meanings to amplify the message (Gumperz, 1982) and promote better understanding (Yletyinen, 2004). Many Latin phrases are better translated into English compared to Indonesian because Latin has been influential not only on the romance languages (i.e. French, Spanish, and Italian), but also on English. And so, to repeat the Latin phrase into English would be more appropriate compared to Indonesian.

Finally, the last least used function of code switching in the novel is excluding other people (0.1%). This is when the characters want to communicate only to certain people or community they belong to. An example from data is, “So,

what's this *kecak* dance all about? tanya [asks] Jack". The character, Jack, asked Keara about *kecak* dance. *Kecak* is a form of Balinese dance and music drama where dancers fall into a trance. In this scenario, Jack seems to be excluding Ruly, another character in the scene, from the conversation, although Ruly was sitting next to them. Here, Jack was trying to engage Keara about the dance that they were watching at that moment. He used English to make the conversation to be exclusively between him and Keara. In theory, it is the decision of bilingual speakers to include or exclude a person from their communication by using a language that the person knows or does not know (Skiba, 1997).

## Conclusions

It can be concluded that there are ten functions of code switching found and applied in Ika Natassa's novel *Antologi Rasa*. They are talking about a particular topic, interjection, quotation, softening or strengthening request or command, lexical need, intention of clarifying the speech content, being emphatic about something, expressing group identity, repetition used for clarification and excluding other people. The three most used functions are talking about a particular topic, interjection and quotation. Since the novel presents the main character, Keara, as a fluent speaker in both Indonesian and English, conversing with her other friends who may not be as fluent as her in the foreign language would need these three functions most to have her utterances clearly understood by her interlocutors.

Furthermore, the three least used functions are expressing group identity, repetition and excluding other people. Since the form of language being investigated is a novel and in the written form, it could be assumed that the writer is trying to be sparing with the length of the novel. Length is an important quality of a novel and a typical novel is about 70,000 to 120,000 words. In some cases, it would not be necessary to repeat words or be redundant if the writer feels that her readers can grasp the meaning of her writing, unless she adds it in the conversations between characters to trigger some expressive effect on the readers. Likewise, the group identity of the characters is narrated throughout the story so it is not indispensable for her to point it out too much in the novel. Then, the function of excluding other people from conversations also appeared least because most of the conversations in the novel only involved two people. So, there is not much code switching used to exclude other people.

Despite that this paper answered the research question in focus; there are some limitations that need to be highlighted. This study only focused on one novel from one writer; therefore, future studies are expected to focus on more writers and novels to study the phenomena of code switching in Indonesian-English that are employed in these works of fiction. The functions of code switching being investigated are also limited to a number of experts. With the vast knowledge available today, other researchers are hoped to look into other functions of code switching by other experts to add more information and to complement the findings of this study.

## Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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