# การวิเคราะห์การสลับภาษาในเฟสบุ๊ค

# An Analysis of Code-Switching on Facebook

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## บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ที่จะศึกษาหน้าที่และรูปแบบของการสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทยในเครือข่ายสังคมออนไลน์ เฟสบุ๊ค การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลดำเนินการโดยใช้กรอบการแบ่งประเภทการสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทย ของ ป๊อบเลค (1980) และของแอบเพียวและเมยสเกิ้ล (2006) กรอบการแบ่งประเภทการสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทยของ ป๊อบเลค ประกอบด้วย การสลับแบบวลีที่ขึ้นต้นหรือลงท้ายประโยค แบบระหว่างคำ และแบบระหว่างสารประโยค ส่วนกรอบการแบ่งหน้าที่การสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทยของ แอบเพียวและเมยสเกิ้ล ประกอบด้วยการไม่สามารถหาคำที่เหมาะสมมาใช้แทนได้ การสื่อสารทางตรง การบรรยายความรู้สึก การเปลี่ยนเสียงโดยการเน้นย้ำ การใช้คำพูดโดยอ้อม และการใช้สำหรับเรื่องตลก ผลการศึกษาโดยการวิเคราะห์การสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทย ด้วยกรอบการแบ่งประเภทของป๊อบเลค (1980) จากจำนวนการสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทย ที่พบทั้งหมด 803 รายการ พบว่าการปนภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทยระดับคำอยู่ในระดับสูงสุด (86.43%) รองลงมาคือระดับวลี (9.83%) และระดับประโยคอยู่ในระดับต่ำที่สุด (3.74%) ตามลำดับ ส่วนผลการศึกษาโดยการวิเคราะห์การสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทย ด้วยกรอบการแบ่งประเภทของ แอบเพียวและเมยสเกิ้ล (2006) จากจำนวนการสลับภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทย ที่พบทั้งหมด 803 รายการเช่นกัน พบว่าการปนภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทยในระดับการไม่สามารถหาคำที่เหมาะสมมาใช้แทนได้ อยู่ในระดับสูงสุด (61.64%) รองลงมาคือการบรรยายความรู้สึก (19.43%) การสื่อสารทางตรง (13.20%) และการเปลี่ยนเสียงโดยการเน้นย้ำ อยู่ในระดับต่ำที่สุด (5.73%) ในขณะที่การใช้คำพูดโดยอ้อม และการใช้สำหรับเรื่องตลก ไม่พบในการศึกษาในครั้งนี้ การศึกษาครั้งนี้ นอกจากจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อครูผู้สอนและนักเรียนให้มีความรู้เกี่ยวกับภาษาที่ใช้ และยังช่วยผลักดัน และสร้างความตระหนักให้นักเรียนเกิดการเรียนรู้เพื่อพัฒนาความสามารถ พัฒนาทักษะทางภาษาเพื่อให้ประสบความสำเร็จการศึกษาในระดับที่สูงขึ้นต่อไป

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## Abstract

This study aimed to analyze patterns and functions of code-switching on Facebook found in Thai Facebook users. The analysis was based on two classification frameworks applied by Poplack (1980), Appel and Muysken (2006). Poplack's classification framework comprised tag-switching, intersentential, and intrasentential. Meanwhile, Appel and Muysken's classification framework consisted of referential function, directive function, expressive function, phatic function, metalinguistic function and poetic function. Based on Poplack's classification framework, the findings showed that the highest occurrence of linguistic pattern of code-switching was intrasentential switching (86.43%), followed by tag Switching (9.83%) and intersential switching (3.74%) respectively. Meanwhile, based on Appel and Muysken (2006) classification framework, referential function (61.64%), follow by expressive (19.43%) and directive functions (13.20%). However, phatic function was found for the least, approximately 5.73% but matalinguistics and poetic function were not found in this study. These reveal will be beneficial for teachers and students to improving and understanding, encourage their awareness and ascertain their competence. They will improvement of English skills achieving higher levels of their study.

**Keywords:** Code-switching, Facebook, Function

## Introduction

Facebook is a social networking website that friends can share ideas or experiences with their friends. Currently, there are 17,600,660 facebook users in the Thailand. This ranks Thailand in the top 14 countries of all facebook users while Bangkok ranks as number one city. There are 12,797,500 facebook users in Bangkok (Social barker, November 2012). Additional statistics show that facebook penetration in Thailand is 26.51% compared to the country's population and 100.65% in relation to the number of Internet users. With the total number of Facebook users in Thailand reaching 17,600,660 and increasing by more than 3,388,240 in the last six months, we can conclude that facebook has become very popular among Thai people. We are able to observe just how popular Facebook has become in Thai society through Thai TV programs. Even the Thai news chooses the facebook site for sharing ideas to people viewing the channel. Other statistics that are posted on the Social barker website. Give more interesting demographic information about the use of social networking by Thai people. The largest user age group is currently 18-24 years old, with a total of 5,808,218 users. They are followed by users in the age group of 25-34 years. (Social barker, November 2012). These statistics show the most Facebook users are in the student age grouping. The influence of

English is being used as a symbol of modernization. Opportunity to get jobs and social status are being determined by the level of English education and English communication skills have an economic reason with students having to learn the English language through formal education (Ghazali, 2010). An indication of the importance of the English language has been shown by the inclusion of English subjects in the Thai curriculum but this studied was shown the lack of English communicative skill by language use in facebook of Thai participants. Therefore, code-switching is more likely to occur in order for communication to be successful among speakers of different social backgrounds. In addition, this analysis has shown that using only single English words and losing subjects or verbs in real English communication situation may not be successful. They may misunderstand or lose the opportunity to get a good job. Code-switching as explained by (Myers-Scotton and Ury, 1977) is the "use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction." Thus, code-switching may be defined as the use of two or more languages used alternatively in a conversation. There is a 'switch' from one language to another. Code switching occurs from a speaker having different conditions in non-verbal communication. The mediated nature of online conversation available to the speaker at the time and opportunity to modify the content before being sent to another party, a feature that is not allowed in verbal interaction as conversation is spontaneous. In other words, the growing use of various communication tools for electronic devices such as computers and mobile phones has brought about various communicative functions and reasons for code-switching. While mostly linguistic researchers are interested in code-switching that focuses on verbal communication, the emergence of various non-verbal communication devices, due to rapid technology developments over the past decades have resulted in an increased amount of computer-mediated exchanges. These include instant messaging, e-mail and social networking websites. Facebook, social network website allows users to connect with other people, share information and communicate online, is one of new media where code-switching often happens.

## Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study was to analyze code-switching used in communications on the social networkingsite, Facebook, as it is occurring within the Thai community.

## Methodology

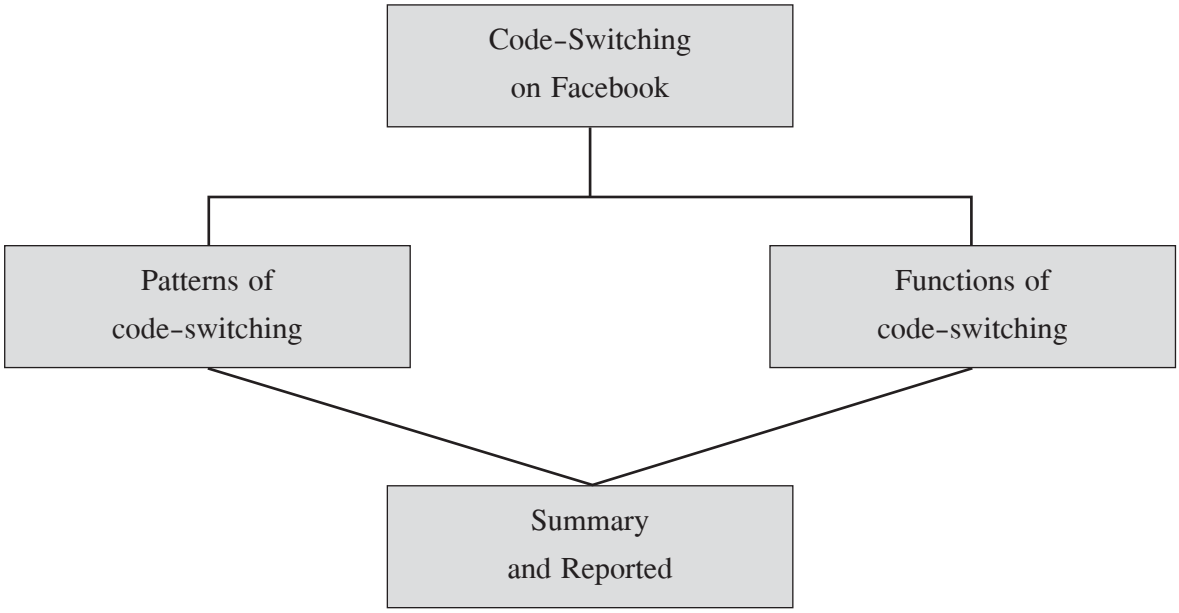


**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of Analyze code-switching on Facebook

*Accidental sampling* was a sampling methods used in a qualitative research. The data were gained from status of Thai participant on their profile in facebook during they create their profile until the September 2011. Initially, all the English codes from the friend of friend on the participant wall post. Then, they were classified into three patterns: tag-switching, intersentential, and intrasentential based on Poplack (1980)'s classification framework to observe the linguistic patterns. After that, the researcher classified the data into six function, referential function, directive function, expressive function, phatic function, metalinguistic function, poetic function based on the classification framework applied by Appel and Muysken (2006) in order to study how the English code-switching was formed.

## Results

The data were analyzed based on two classification frameworks applied by two researchers: Poplack (1980) and Appel and Muysken (2006). The procedures were as follows:

**1. The English codes found in the massages of Thai facebook user were listed and classified based on classification framework used by Poplack (1980) as follows:**

**1.1 Intrasentential**: mixing of two or more languages, usually occur at the word level, in one conversation. For example,

(1) ต้องทำ **presentation** มั้ยคะ

(May I have to do a presentation?)

(2) ส่งไปให้แล้วน้า ใน**อีเมลล์**จ้า

(I have just sent it to your e-mail.)

(3) แอร๊ย!! ขอ**เซ็นเซอร์**นิสนึง

(Ah!! Let's censor some part of it.)

From the sample above the purpose emphasizes intrasentential switching. The users switched some words within the sentences. For example, the user borrowed the English word presentation in (1) and also switched at word level in the Thai context. However, examples (2) and (3) also show the word อีเมลล์ (E-mail) and เซนเซอร์ (censor) these were transliterations as well.

1.2 **Tag-switching:** use short phrase in another language in one conversation such as

(4) **Hello**.....แวะมาทักทาย เงียบกันจัง 5555555555555

(Hello. I come to greet everybody. It's so quiet.)

(5) **Yes, I did it.** ส่งไปแล้วเมื่อกี้ เกือบไม่รอด ปวดหลังมากๆ เลยค่ะ 55555555

Yes, I did it. I have just sent it. I was nearly dead of it and I have got a backache now.)

(6) **Oh noooo!!** ทำไปได้ กระซิกๆ

(Oh! No. I did it. I'm sorry. (crying))

From the samples above were tag switching, the users switched some words in the begining or final sentences. For example, users borrowed the word Hello instant the word สวัสดี in (4) Yes, I did it instant the word ใช่ ฉันส่งแล้ว in (5) and the word Oh! No in (6) instant the word ไม่ were also switch in the begun of the sentences as the English tag switching in the Thai context as habitual expressions.

1.3 **Intersentential:** use of two or more languages, usually occur at the sentence level, in one conversation such as

(7) **Chopping my hair off** มาหั่นผม ไม่เสียดายแระ

(I am having my hair cut now. It's not too bad for me.)

(8) ถึงบ้านซะที **finally am home sweet home.** ♥♥♥

(Finally, I am arriving at my home sweet home now.)

(9) **Help me please** T^T ตอนนี้กำลังมีปัญหากับการบวกคะแนน ไม่เข้าใจบวกยังไงก็ไม่เท่ากัน

(Help me please. I have a problem with the addition these points. The result is not the same. I don't understand how to do this.)

The samples above show intersentential switching where the users switched English and Thai between sentences. In example (7) the user used English and then switch into Thai of the same meaning while in example (8) Thai was used before switching into

English of the same meaning. These show the reasons to address the different audience. In the other example (9) the user used English then switched into Thai.

The results of the analysis based on Poplack (1980) classification framework, as earlier mentioned, were statistically calculated in terms of frequency and percentage and were presented in the form of tables. The extent of the linguistic patterns of code-switching used in the facebook was demonstrated as shown in Appendix A.

From the analysis, it was confirmed that many types of code-switching occur in the use of facebook language. The following table presents these details.

**Table 1** The results of code-switching type in Facebook

| No | Type of code switching | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intrasentential Switching | 694 | 86.43 |
| 2 | Tag Switching | 79 | 9.83 |
| 3 | Intersentential Switching | 30 | 3.74 |
| | **Total** | **803** | **100** |

Form table 1 it appears that intrasentential code-switching is used the most, and achieved 86.43% of the samples collected. This was followed by intersentential switching and tag switching at 3.74% and 9.83% respectively.

**2. The data were later classified based on the functions of code-switching classification framework applied by Appel and Muysken (2006) as follows:**

**2.1 Referential function:** code-switch when lack of knowledge of one language or facility in that language on a certain subject; for example,

(10) long time no hear **na ka**
(It's long time that we have heard from each other.)

(11) กล้วย **โพส**งานลง**กรุ๊ป**หน่อย
(Klauy (a name of a person), please post the assignment on our group.)

(12) อยากบริจาคเลือด แต่ในตัวก็ดันมีแต่**แอลกอฮอล์** - -"
(I would like to donate my blood, but my body is full of alcohol.)

As shown in the example above, the sample represents referential function. For example, the Thai word naka in (10) shows the degree of politeness in Thai culture and used in the English context. It possibly used because the Thai cultural has a higher degree of politeness then English culture. Therefore, the user could not find suitable words in English and switched to their mother tongue language. Others example were transliteration of English sounds into the Thai alphabet as seen the sample โพส (post) and กรุ๊ป (group) in (11) and The word แอลกอฮอล์ (alcohol) in (12) because when the user could not use the second language as

their first language, when they could not find the word in the second language they might switch into their mother tongue language as the example above.

**2.2 Expressive function**: use more than one language to stress their selfidentity or feelings to others in the conversation. For example,

(13) **Oh noooo!!** ทำไปได้ กระซิกๆ
(Oh! No. I did it. I'm sorry. (crying))

(14) งานชอบเข้าวันจันทร์ เซ็งโคตร.....**Monday F**king+++**
(Too much work always comes on Monday. So bored! Monday F**king.)

(15) เป็นอะไรไม่เข้าใจตัวเองเลยยยย **I'm so sad.**
(I don't understand what I am right now. I'm so sad.)

As shown in example above, the words Oh no in (13), was shown the sound that express the emotion of the speaker when they want to emphasize parts of a conversation that are of importance. Participants might use words like Monday F**king in (14) and I'm so sad in (15) to accurately express their emotions as these words are more commonly used among participant to tell of their feelings. Thus, the emotions and feelings are intensified and put across more precisely.

**2.3 Directive function**: code-switching either habitual or include or exclude a person from a part of a conversation such as by using a familiar or foreign language to that person such as

(16) เจอกันที่แพร่บ่ดีก๊ะเจ้า **มายเฟรนที่เลิฟ** — กับ Hanam Supitchaya และ กัน ใจร้ายเอา
(Shall we meet each other at Phrae, **my love friend**..with Hanam Supitchaya and Kan Jai Rai Aao)

(17) มันส์จริงแต่ไม่ครบ**แก้ง** รอพวกเทออยู่นะจ๊ะ อิอิ — กับ Phoon Phutthamas และ 5 อื่นๆ ที่ Bangkalo Bar I บังกะโล บาร์
(I have fun here, but not having fun with all of our **gangsters**. We are still waiting for you.---with Phoon Phutthamas and the other 5 at Bangkalo Bar)

(18) ทยอยทำอีกหลายคนเลย แต่อุบไว้ใน**กรุ๊ป**เอก 555
(There are many people going to do it, but it is a secret for a major **group**.)

As shown in example above, the examples presented directive function. For example, the user transliteration the word my love friend in (16), แก๊ง (gangster) in (17) and กรุ๊ป (group) in (18) in order to include or exclude a person from communication by using a language that the person know or doesn't know. Specified the addressee of her message by adding an addressee line in the end of her post by using the word with mom and with my family in order to group her friend understand the massage. Therefore, readers who read her post would be understand that the message was written for the participant's particular group of friend.

**2.4 Phatic function**: code-switching when change tone of the conversation to emphasize that part was important; for example,

(19) พูดตรงปัยคนเค้ากัหมั่นใส้ แต่ไม่เปนไร **ไม่แคร์!!**
(I am one of these people who speaks frankly. Nobody likes this kind of people. Anyway, I **don't care** about it.)

(20) เชียร์แบดฯ คู่ผสมกัน สุดเขต & สราลีย์ ช่อง 11 **now!!**
(Let's cheer badminton doubles: Sudkhet & Saralee on Channel 11 **now!!**)

(21) ขอเสนอชื่อเพจ "แด่**ไอดอล** เพื่อ**ไอดอล** โดย**ไอดอล**" โปรดรับไว้พิจารณา –กับ Attawit D Loki Bom Moo Taweesak Bank
(I'd like to propose the page name "To my **idol**, For my **idol**, By my **idol**." Please consider it. –with Attawit D Loki Bom Moo Taweesak Bank)

The participant transliteration many word such as ไม่แคร์ (I don't care) in (19) similarly with the borrowing word as now in (20) probably switched and change tone in the end of the conversation to emphasize the point of the message. However, the users code switched the significant word by add more time significant word in sentences such as the transliteration word ไอดอล (idol) in (21).

Functions of the language used Facebook, appeared in differing amounts as listed in the following table.

**Table 2** The results of code-switching function on Facebook

| No | Function and Reason of Code-Switching | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Referential Function | 495 | 61.64 |
| 2 | Expressive Function | 156 | 19.43 |
| 3 | Directive Function | 106 | 13.20 |
| 4 | Phatic Function | 46 | 5.73 |
| 5 | Metalinguistic Function | - | - |
| 6 | Poetic Function | - | - |
| | **Total** | **803** | **100** |

Table 2 presents the most found function in Facebook language usage and this was the referential function (61.64%), while expressive and directive functions were placed second and third (19.43% and 13.20% respectively). However, phatic function was found the least, approximately 5.73% but metalinguistic and poetic functions were not found in the samples of this research.

## Conclusions and Discussion

The results showed that based on Poplack (1980) classification framework, the highest frequency of the English code-mixing words fell on intrasentential switching (86.43%), followed by tag Switching (9.83%) and intersential switching (3.74%) respectively while presented the most found function of Facebook language into referential function (61.64%), follow by expressive (19.43%) and directive functions (13.20%). However, phatic function was found for the least, approximately 5.73% but matalinguistics and poetic function were not found in this study. Furthermore, the ten reasons for code-switching based on Malik's (1994) was shown the highest frequency of the reason found was lack of registral competence (42.47%) and lack of facility (19.17%) followed by mood of speaker (10.21%), to show identity with a group (5.98%), and to attract attention (3.24%) while habituial expression and to address the different audience were rarely found (9.71%, 3.49%) respectively. There were also other reasons including to emphasize a point (5.73%) while semantic significant and pragmatic reason were not found in this study.

***Patterns of code switching found on Thai participant Facebook users***

The results showed the highest used of code-switching for the Thai participant Facebook users was intrasentential following by tag and intersentential levels as the least. Statistics showed that most of age group number Facebook users were from the student age group. Therefore, it was clearly shown that the participants' switched codes at the word level more than phrase and sentence levels, It may be concluded that Thai students are lacking in English communicative skills. With Thailand being a member of the AEC (Asian economic community), this is a significant conclusion and needs to be further addressed. The importance of English language in creating an advantage for employment opportunity in the ASEAN regions is increasing. In addition, this analysis has shown that using only single English words and losing subjects or verbs in real English communication situation may not be successful. They may misunderstand or lose the opportunity to get a good job. This result supported the study of Chaiwichian (2007) studying "Thai-English code switching in the Mini English Program (MEP)" they found that most of the English intrasentential were used in sentences, possibly because they mostly spoke and wrote in Thai in their daily lives. The results might be assumed that this was because the participants might not yet be fluent in English and also relate to the competence levels of the present Thai curriculum.

Similarly, with tag switching, the second highest frequency found in this study, the participants switched English code at phrase level, therefore; it also supported the conclusion that participants could not use full sentences but in fact usually switched code at word or phrase level. This highlighted the need to use the complete English sentences in order to make the communication more successful.

***Function for code switching found on Thai participant Facebook users***

For the function of code-switching on Facebook, it was found that the ***referential function*** was used mostly in sentences. In this reason, transliteration, the highest linguistics device was found.

Most of the participants in this study were in their teenager years and even though the Thai government were supportive of English education, with English teaching being started from kindergarten age, one hour per day or a week. Studying English was not able to make them fluent in English. This is because they have other subjects to study and use Thai language in their daily life. Other aspects such as the power of media, T.V. programs and music influence them and the Thai news also uses code switching when delivered. This means that Thai young people are learning many English words through listening and they are therefore learning the meaning of those words without any writing practice. Thai young people are therefore becoming weak in writing skills. So, when they write in Facebook, code switching is being used in order to serve their lack of skill by writing in Thai but pronouncing in English as a transliteration. These results are supported in the study of Suttira (1997) in studying "The code-mixing English-Thai of Radio program F.M. in Bangkok" and Nareerat (2002) "The study of code-mixing in Thai Daily Entertainment News." They found that most of the English words or transliterations were used in sentences. In addition Borrowing, the linguistics device was found the second in this function. It is plausible to explain that Thai people tend to mix the English language with the Thai context because it is a trendy style of communication. People tend to mix English in their conversation and writing, possibly to show that they have English knowledge, they belong to an educated class or they use English automatically with no special intention. In other situations, they may not have found the proper word to use in that Thai language and they switch to English as the word ATM (automatic teller machine) was translated as เครื่องรับ จ่ายเงินอัตโนมัติ. It is too long to pronounce in Thai and difficult to understand. Therefore people use the abbreviation as ATM or the English word Computer was translated to Thai as คณิตกร but no one noticed this, not even Thai people. They are usually called computer as well. Therefore there were no changes of transferable words. They could speak English instead of the Thai language.

The second function found the most in this study was the ***expressive functions.*** The *paralanguage* was the linguistics found in this function. It is plausible to explain that in sense of writing there was no tone to express the emotions of the writer. In sense of Thai, what was more interesting was the repetition of the number 5 for laughter in Thai pronunciation to sound like haha in English, which was obviously unknown to the English native speakers. This indicated transference of elements of one language to another (Berthold, Mangubhai, and Batorowicz, 1997, cited in Yiamkhamnuan, 2010) at phonological, lexical, grammatical level. Similarly with politeness terms such as *Kha, Krub, naka* without these particles were "not beautiful". Other than that, they put more letters into the final of the word to make reduplications

as, *"thanxxxxx khaaa"*. This also helped to compensate for a lack of English proficiency in some situations.

The third function, ***directive function*** as Gumperz (1982) called as addressee specification, the participant used code-switching as a strategy to direct a message to a specific a person in a conversation by switching language. For example, แก๊ง (gangster), ดาร์ลิงค์ (Darling) and ฮันนี่ (honey) in order to include or exclude a person from communication by using a language that the person know or doesn't know. Therefore, readers who read that post would be understood that the message was written for the participant's particular group of friend.

The last function was found in the study, ***Phatic function.*** It is plausible to explain that in spoken word that people can present feelings or emotions by changing the tone. In written text, people usually use more plausible characteristics to change the tone when pronouncing or using code switching to emphasize the part that was important.

## Recommendations

Another recommended research topic is to conduct a comparative study of English-code switching found in other languages, especially the languages used in the Asian countries.

In terms of business arena, it is also interesting to focus on research topics on English code-switching in business such as to study the English codes applied in business communication, either in emails, formal written documents such as terms of reference (TOR), contracts or even meeting minutes as well as oral communication such as business dialogs, business meetings or speeches.

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