

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Language is an important tool to convey messages in a conversation. Finochiaro (1974 in Alwasilah 1993) defines language as the system and rules of one culture. It is also stated that the function of language is to assist people in their everyday communication. Nowadays, people tend to speak more than one language in their daily life. For example, the use of the English language becomes familiar in daily conversations (see Crystal 1998). In the Indonesian context, the use of the Indonesian and English languages becomes increasingly familiar in every day life. This situation leads to the occurrence of code switching.

Code switching is a changing process from one language to another language in the middle of utterance (Spolsky 1998). Code switching can take place between or within sentence involved in phrase, words, or part of words. Similarly, Wardhaugh (1992) states that code switching is a shifting process from one language to another that is used to establish, cross, or destroy group boundaries.

Code switching appears in various contexts, such as in language classroom where teachers or lecturers often switch between languages to deliver the information to the student (Sert, retrieved in 2006). Code switching also occurs in radio broadcast (Indharyanti, 2005) and television broadcast (Apriani, 2006).

The present study focuses on code switching because it appears to be used widely in Indonesia, involving the Indonesian language, regional languages, and foreign languages. In the vicinity of research, for example, code switching may occur involving Sundanese (a regional language), Indonesian (the national language), and perhaps a foreign language.

This study focuses on code switching that occurs in a trade setting (i.e. Electronic City, an electronic store) in the city of Bandung, the capital city of West Java province. An electronic store setting appears to stimulate switching, most likely due to the presence of technical terms, which are mostly in English, and the commercial transactions between a variety of people.

1.2 Statements of the problem

The present study examines the phenomenon of code switching in electronic store conversations. The research problems are formulated in the following research questions:

- a. What languages are involved in the code switching in Electronic City?
- b. What types of code switching occur in the conversations?
- c. What are the potential reasons for the occurrences of the switching?

1.3 Aims of the study

Based on the background and the research problems, the present study attempts to:

- a. reveal the languages involved in the code switching in Electronic City
- b. find the types of code switching which occur in the conversations
- c. identify the potential reasons for the occurrences of the switching.

1.4 Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) state that a descriptive method is used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques, i.e. survey, interview, questionnaire, observation, and test. Thus, this method is considered relevant with this study since it involves the collection of data describing an existing phenomenon.

This study is largely qualitative, although some quantification is also used in analyzing the data. Matveev (2002) defines qualitative research as the study of symbolic discourse that consists of the study of text and conversation. The data in qualitative research are commonly in the form of narrations or pictures (Kountur 2000).

The data were collected through tape recording and interviews, methods that may be used by qualitative researchers (see Silverman 2001). The respondents are customer care staff, sales promotion staff, store officers, and customers of Electronic City. The data were recorded on 14 through 17 October 2006.

The data in the forms of transcription of the recorded data and results from the interviews were analyzed through the stages of identification, classification, and descriptive quantification.

1.5 Organization of the Paper

This paper is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the present study. Chapter 2 presents theories relevant to the present study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the present study. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and discussion of its findings. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and offers suggestions.

