

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The great advancement in science and technology has touched many aspects of human life. Almost all people of different age groups are aware of the presence and influence of technology in the process of communication. One of the man gadgets is the mobile or cellular phone. Therefore, in the process of communication the different languages are used when they use that cellular phone. At least one can use the local (native) language plus the national (*Bahasa Indonesia*), and English as the international one.

Indonesia is a multicultural country and the emergence of local languages is inevitable among tribes. Consequently, Indonesians are at least bilingual since they master two languages, vernacular and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Moreover, it is not surprising if some Indonesians are bilingual and/or multilingual at the same time because of the foreign language learning. The more people master languages, the more their ability to switch codes from one language into another language because of the repertoire in their minds. Therefore, the phenomenon of code switching happens not only between local languages and *Bahasa Indonesia*, but also among local languages, *Bahasa Indonesia* and English.

Some previous studies have indicated that bilingual speakers continue their code switching behavior when sending text messages (Deumert and Masinyana, 2008; Haggan, 2007). Then, it is suggested that bilinguals could use

code switching to maximize their communication efficiency (i.e., using the fewest possible characters or keystrokes to convey a message) in the domain of text messages (Bautista, 2004). These studies have indicated that the combination of technology and multilingualism may produce a new function for code switching. In essence, multilingual texters should be able to choose the shortest words and phrases from each language, perhaps mixed together, to reduce the number of characters or amount of key pressing required to deliver a message due to the limited sign of the screen.

Since the message sent through SMS is basically a medium of verbal communication, but can also portrays non-verbal through use of punctuation marks, for example ..-,??..!!!, it is certainly opened for linguistic analysis. The most obvious linguistic features found in SMS language is the use of language switching. Of course, it is commonly done by those who are bilingual or multilingual. It seems that people who often send messages through the SMS of their cellular phones are fond of mixing their *Bahasa Indonesia* with vernacular language or even English. Furthermore, the definition of a bilingual itself is given by Spolsky (1998) namely a person who has some functional ability in the second language.

Referring to the definition of bilingual given by Spolsky (1998), those people who use both English and *Bahasa Indonesia* in their SMS messages cannot be considered bilinguals because English has not been the second language in Indonesia. However, by switching the languages in their messages, they have acted as if they were bilinguals. In addition, language switching is also closely

related to the phenomenon of diglossia, in which one language is considered higher than another (Fishman, 1972). Above all, there are still some factors that can motivate people in switching their languages when they are writing messages through their mobile phone.

The condition of Indonesia with most of the people live in a bilingual or multilingual community will encourage the people to be able to speak with at least two different languages. In other words, the people can use even alternate more than one language. In this case, it is often known as code switching. As stated by Grosjean (1982) that code switching as the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation. Then, Holmes (1992) argues that the feature of bilingual speech such as interference, code mixing and code switching are normal phenomenon because bilinguals often find it easier to discuss a particular topic in one language rather than another. It means that the occurrence of code switching cannot be avoided among bilingual and/or multilingual people.

The phenomenon of code switching does not only occur orally in daily life situation through conversation but also in written through text. One of the many reasons is due to the presence of the product of technology like mobile phone, which is also widely known as cellular phone. Therefore, the most popular feature offered by cellular phone is Short Message Service (SMS) since the mobile technology has spread rapidly throughout the world faster than any other communication technologies and is now widely used everywhere. There are some reasons for this feature. First of all, it is mainly because of the cost that is much lower than the cost of calling. Secondly, this SMS normally allows the sender to

write up to 160 characters per message. It is sufficient for a short greeting, content, and closing. Third, the message is sent instantly to the receiver much faster than the fastest means of sending a letter. Consequently, the phenomenon of sending messages through SMS is becoming more and more popular until the present time.

SMS, as defined within the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) as digital mobile phone standard, is a service which enables its users to send short text messages from one mobile phone to another, or to a mobile phone via the Internet (Segerstad, 2002). The widespread use of cellular phones has led to the proliferation of messages sent using the SMS. The 160-character limit on text messages encourages the use of shortenings and other shortcuts of language in use. When bilingual or multilingual speakers use SMS, their access to multiple sources of vocabulary, sentence structure, and other language devices would appear to provide additional resources for addressing the character limits imposed in SMS, perhaps by increasing the available pool of short phrases and words.

Once, it should be noted that the normal capacity of the SMS is only 160 characters. There is one possibility that people may switch their languages for keeping the efficiency. It means that the senders want to save the charge by keeping the space so that it can contain a longer message. For example, the word 'kamu' needs four characters while 'u' will only spend one character. However, beside of keeping efficiency, there are the other factors behind the occurrence of code switching.

According to Hoffmann (1991), there are seven reasons for bilinguals to switch their languages. The seven reasons are: (1) talking about a particular topic, (2) quoting somebody else, (3) being emphatic about something, (4) interjection, (5) repetition used for clarification, (6) intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor, and (7) expressing group identity. Besides the reasons suggested by Hoffman, Saville and Troike (1986) gives additional reasons: (1) softening and strengthening request or command, (2) because of real lexical need, either if the speaker knows the desired expression in one language cannot be satisfactorily translated into second, and (3) to exclude other people when a comment is intended for only a limited audience. However, In SMS messages, one reason of language switching that cannot be excluded is for the sake of efficiency. This reason is in line with Bautista (2004) who asserts that bilinguals could use code switching to maximize their communication efficiency (i.e., using the fewest possible characters or keystrokes to convey a message) in the domain of text messages.

In line with the descriptions above, i.e. the advancement and innovation of science and technology has been able to touch the human life in term of communication process by creating a mobile phone as one means to communicate that most of the people have had it and they tend to send message than calling with various reasons whose messages contain code switching because of the bilingual and/or diglossia situation they have, the present study was very much concentrated on exploring the using of code switching in mobile text messages. In

this case, the researcher focused on the types and processes of code switching used in SMS.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The problems of the study are formulated as the followings.

1. What types of code switching are found in SMS through mobile phone?
2. How is code switching used in SMS through mobile phone?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the problems, this study is intended to discover:

1. the types of code switching used in SMS through mobile phone,
2. the processes of using code switching in SMS through mobile phone, and

1.4 Scope of the Study

The process of communication is conducted in many ways depending on the sender and receiver of the message. One of the latest means of communication that most of the people have done is through the use of mobile phone with the term SMS. Due to the limited space on the mobile screen and regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the sending of messages and in term of the money spent, people use technology to simplify the process of communication. Moreover, there are varieties of language being used in this feature like abbreviation, deletion of any vowel or consonant, emotion, even code switching. The present study was limited to address the use of code switching in SMS

through mobile phone. In this case, the study was focused on the types and processes of using code switching

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is expected that the findings of the study are useful and relevant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for the readers especially for the college students who want to study more about sociolinguistics related to code switching. They can enrich their insight about the types and processes of code switching because this research provides the different phenomenon of code switching. It is code switching in SMS which most of people do it. Furthermore, it is estimated that the results of the study can practically make a significant contribution to assert the importance way of using code switching in the written text particularly in SMS. It is considered that the main feature of SMS that is limited on 160 characters per message can encourage the people to do code switching in their texting in order to save the space.