

Bricolage of English in Indonesian Workplaces

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Abstract

'Bricolage' can be seen as a qualitative research approach as discussed by Kincheloe et al. (2012). Literally, on the other hand, it can be used in the original sense of the French word meaning 'bits and pieces' or 'something that is made or put together with whatever materials happen to be available' (Encarta, 2013).

A bricolage of English is an emerging concept that encourages the use of mixed English with the mother tongue in order to communicate. It is called as such as it espouses bits and pieces of English in a form of words, phrases or sentences inserted into a complete utterance of Indonesian in any event.

The English bricolage in Indonesian language is used for a number of reasons, one of which is its solution to complexity to translate English words into Indonesian. It takes a number of words to transfer the concepts or to explain the meanings of certain pieces of bricolage into Indonesian. They are found in any situation when communication takes place although their existence is not recognized in the Indonesian official dictionary called Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Bahasa, 2012).

The use of bricolage may not be as abundant as hybridization exemplified by McArthur (1998) but it is considerably noticeable in many speech events. It comprises use of words, phrases or sentences as well as English terminology in their original forms the locals communicate in their own language in both written and spoken forms.

The existence of bricolage will have to impact on language learning materials. The paper will discuss what the bricolage of English is about and how it is used in Indonesian workplaces. It will also discuss how to put it in its appropriate place so that it does not interfere with the standard form of the language taught. The data for this article are taken from the language of interviews which we have made recently incorporated with other resources such as online and printed documents used in workplaces as well as discussions with alumni workers which were contacted through e-mails and social network.

Keywords: *bricolage, bricolage of English, code switching, hybridisation, loan words, speech event, workplaces.*

1. Introduction

Recently, there have been slogans, sayings or terminologies which are very popular along with the situation happening in Indonesia such as *Save KPK, Save Indonesia, mark up, brand, distributor, offline, online, flashback, No comment*, etc. Those words are not Indonesian but they are found in newspaper articles or formal speeches made by Indonesian government high ranking officials. Other words or abbreviations like *toilet, male, female*, and *HRD* (for Human Resource Development) are not novel to Indonesian people. They are all written as placards, signs or labels which stick to doors, desks or places in need of identification in Indonesian public buildings or areas.

Those words or phrases are 'bits and pieces' of English, now known as a bricolage of English, which are taken as independent words, phrases, clauses or even sentences inserted, in this case, into the language discourse of Indonesian speakers or writers for their fellows. The bricolage of English discussed in this paper comes from different resources, although many derive from interview data which the writer conducted for research on workplace English in Indonesia.

Bricolage is usually seen as a qualitative research approach as mentioned by Kincheloe et al. (2012). Literally, on the other hand, we see it as its own concept of 'bits and pieces', the original meaning of bricolage as a French word. 'Bricolage' in this paper is simply the use of foreign words or phrases in their original forms inserted by native language users when they communicate. In this sense, it is different from hybridization, as suggested by McArthur (1998), which includes loan words, interference, and code switching. Thus, 'the bricolage' provides a new approach to the learning of English as a foreign language as it does not require a complexity of learning; nevertheless, it is acquirable and applicable anywhere.

The bricolage is used for a number of reasons: in this research, it is found to reduce the complexity of translating English word or terminologies into Indonesian. They are 'bits and pieces' because they do not come as a whole, complete utterance. They may be found in any situation when communication takes place although their existence is not recognized in the Indonesian official dictionary called Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Bahasa, 2012).

The idea of raising the bricolage of English arises from the result of research in a multi-case study on workplace English in Indonesia which, among others, found that English was not used as full utterances or in a form of complete sentences in written or spoken communication. The following is further discussion regarding the use of bricolage in Indonesian workplaces.

2. What type of bricolage is used?

There are many different types of bricolage of English inserted in daily communication by Indonesians. The types range from the bricolage in formal speech through to informal chats. In a written format, the bricolage can be found anywhere from short messages (SMS) through to a newspaper or magazine article. If we have a look through the social media, for example, some of the words written as 'status' or 'news feed' are in English. Street protesters use bricolage of English because it is short and does not require a large space to write their messages, and more importantly, their voice can be understood worldwide because they are written in English. In particular, we observed this phenomenon in many Indonesian workplace communications: in written or spoken forms as in formal meetings, informal lunch conversations, in formal business letters, instructions, placards or written announcements.

The following table shows the types of bricolage which was detected from a multi-case research of workplace English in Indonesia. The theme bricolage derives from the comments developed into constructs, concepts and topical areas. The data on this table is summarized from the main data that was analysed using an Inductive Data Reduction (IDR) approach (Ling, 2012).

As can be seen from Table1, the use of bricolage as 'code switching' dominated the use of bricolage for other purposes in the four case studies; it was especially noticeable in a private and a state owned company

Table 1

Occurrences of bricolage in four types of Indonesian organisation

Types of companies/bricolage	Code switching	English terminology	Others (Japanese bricolage)	Total
Foreign company		4	1	5
State Owned company	6	1		7
Private company	15	5		20
Multinational company	2			2
Total				34

The use of bricolage in the private company under investigation was to compensate for infrequent deployment of English as complete utterances within the company. It differed from the use of English in the multinational company in which English is used as the business *lingua franca*; as a consequence, only a few examples of the bricolage were detected in the multinational company case study. From informal chats with alumni workers, using the social media, a similar pattern emerged. In their companies, English is used only to identify positions or particular terminologies. Here are but a few words used by workers in an insurance company: *auto debit*, *board of director*, *dealer/showroom reward*, *early termination*, *history payment*, *joint finance*, *refinancing*, *semi lease back*, *take over*, and *waive penalty*. In the Quality Control Department of one company, the words used were: *activity plan*, *annual report*, *date of hire*, *due date*, *follow up*, *job evaluation*, *manpower requisition*, *master data*, *pending job*, and *quality control*.

From these two lists, we can see that the words used are terminologies commonly found in the business world. They are used because those terminologies are already familiar to users and it is hard for them to translate the words and to find the equivalent words in the local language.

3. Why is it used?

The slogan 'Save KPK and Save Indonesia' is a mixture of Indonesian and English words. The word 'save' which translates as '*selamatkan*' is obviously shorter consisting of four letters which is half the size of the corresponding translated word. The same can be said about the word *flashback* (*kilas balik*) or *mark up* (*menaikkan harga*) or *No comment* (*tidak ada komentar*). They are much shorter than their translated words.

The word '*mark up*' cannot be just translated as '*menaikkan harga*' per se. There is a sense of manipulation which connotes negative meaning which is often associated with *KKN* (another terminology bricolage deriving from *Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism*). Other words like *brand image*, *CR* or *Cargo Ready*, *due date*, *follow up*, etc., take several words each to explain or translate the concept properly into Indonesian words. The use of bricolage is a 'short cut' for the speaker to avoid a time-consuming description of the concept.

English is used as a foreign language in Indonesia or in Kachru's category (Kachru et al., 2006) as an expanding circle. It is different from English in India or Singapore which treats English as a second language. In a country like Indonesia where illiteracy is still an issue, English is considered as an elite language, the language which can only be understood by educated people graduating from tertiary education which constitute only about 8 per cent (Mangkuprawira, 2012). Those who speak the English language have a sense of pride in their ability to use it: they are admired by most other Indonesian people. This is another reason why the bricolage of English is inserted when Indonesians communicate among themselves in either their local or national language.

In one of the comments regarding the use of English in a workplace in Indonesia, a respondent stated that:

Although we cannot communicate or just struggle [in English], at least he can understand, even just saying "yes" or "no" [it] doesn't matter (SOwb.32.2)

This indicates that the workers are encouraged to use English, but their English competency is insufficient to communicate completely in the language. Accordingly, they use a mixture of English and Indonesian which can also be considered as a starter – 'a bridge' for them to communicate with a complete utterance of English.

From the accounts above, we can sum up some reasons why bricolage of English is used in Indonesia. First, it is used as it is more compact. Second, it is more precise, and it is also more prestigious. Finally, for some, it is a starter or a stepping stone for a fuller use of the language.

4. How is it used?

The bricolage of English is used both in written and oral utterances. In written communication, the bricolage can be found in all kinds of Indonesian articles from a short form of job advertisement through to a long article or written speech. It is used in titles or headings and in the contents. It is used in a word, a phrase or a sentence as a part of a complete utterance.

In a short form, the bricolage can be found in any (job) ads, presentation slides and other printed form materials. The following is an analysis of the bricolage used in a copy of Minutes of a meeting to which we had access:

- Of around 300 words used, 30 words (10 per cent) were written in English.
- Most of the headings and sub headings such as date, venue, time and purpose of meeting were written in English.
- All job positions were written in English.
- Some words and terminologies in the main contents were written in English.
- Some abbreviations such as PIC (Person in Charge) and DP (Down Payment) came from English.

Another analysis, from a job advertisement which can be found online (administration, 2013) is as follows:

- Of around 138 words used in the advertisement, 40 of them were written in English.
- All the headings and sub headings were written in English.
- Names of occupations were given in English.
- Some words and terminologies in the main contents were written in English.

The Bricolage is also used in the titles or newspaper headlines or titles of the online news. In a day, for example, we found more than ten news headlines which were posted through the website (yahoo, 2013) as in the following:

- **Freestyle** Indonesia Punya Potensi Atraksi **Drifting Bike**

- BNI Susun Peraturan **Haircut** Atas Putusan MK
- Mahfud dan Muzadi Hadiri **Launching** Ensiklopedia Gus Dur
- Radiohead Menginspirasi Trend Reznor Kembali Ke **Major Label**

In spoken communication, the bricolage is used widely – from informal lunch conversations to formal presidential speeches. Data from the interviews undertaken as part of this research –which was similar to an informal conversation – records that the bricolage was used now and then. The following are examples of how the bricolage was used in the interview taken from the main data of the IDR analysis.

Even orang produksi mungkin kita ngomong **PDS** yah, istilah istilah yang dipakai pun eh apa istilah nya campur baur yah; kayak **production design sheet**. **It's common thing** yah, jadi **PDS** nya mana? (FCmn.20.1& FCmn.20.2)

Jadi biasanya kami melakukan **training** dalam satu bulan ada presentasi baik itu **product** ataupun **marketing** gitu yah **market share** semuanya ada dan itu sekaligus untuk sosialisasi dan mudah mudahan juga proses pembelajaran istilah istilah dalam bahasa Inggris. Begitu. (PCmn.25.1 & PCmn.25.2)

From the data above, we note that the bricolage was used by most respondents who were interviewed in Indonesian. The bricolage was used in the business terminology: *market share*, *career path*, *confirmation letter* and *production design sheet (PDS)*; it was used in ordinary words or phrases: *objective*, *requirement*, *recruiter* and *even*.

5. Conclusion

The bricolage of English is any part of English utterances, written or spoken, inserted into the local language (in this research, in Indonesian) when people communicate with one another. The bricolage of English – which includes words, phrases or sentences – is a multipurpose language application that demonstrates the ability of communicators to express a concept in English rather than in their own language.

We have discovered that the bricolage is more frequently found in workplaces, such as local private companies, where workers admit not to using English very often. Unavoidably, however, they have to use some terminologies in English as slogans to motivate and energise their workers, and to identify particular concepts which are difficult to be translated into the local language. Foreign companies that happen to be affiliated with a Japanese company use English to communicate with foreigners working in, or visiting the company; in this case, some bricolage of Japanese was also used as both English and Japanese bricolage were found to be more concise than using the local language.

A different situation was found in the multinational company; use of the bricolage is less frequent as complete utterances in English were used for business purposes. On casual occasions, such as during lunch time, local workers speak both the local language as well as using the the bricolage of English.

Bricolage is used as a stepping stone to the complete use of the language. It is 'bits and pieces of English' which anybody can acquire to enrich their language repertoire. It is undemanding to learn and it can be found anytime, anywhere and anyhow. It is a stress-free approach to learning the language; it may initially even come from a pop song with mixed language. Later, the bricolage becomes the words or phrases that are familiar and which are fixed in our memory ready for use anytime.

In short, the 'bricolage of English' is a phenomenon of the English language use which is inserted in any *communicative event* at any time when communication happens in Indonesia.

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