

## UPON THE PREVALENCE OF ENGLISH ON BILLBOARD ADVERTISEMENTS: ANALYZING THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN INDONESIAN CONTEXTS<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Looking at the frequently used English words on billboard ads in Jakarta main streets, one may have a presumptive thought that English will dominate Indonesian language. The assumption, though, has led to the analysis of the role of both languages on billboard ads and the possibility of English control over Indonesian. The study presented purposive language uses. English, regardless of its incorrect use, was associated with the Indonesian modern, urban and youth's lifestyle, hence the prestigious status of English. On the other hand, Indonesian and its dialects, particularly the Betawi-Indonesian, are employed to cover wider and broader range of audience. Indonesian language is a national identity of Indonesians, and has historically gained highest status among hundreds of local languages in Indonesia. Thus, in spite of the presence of English in Indonesian language use, the former will not diminish the latter. As a matter of fact, the two languages serve different types of readers.

**Keywords:** language choice, bilingualism, billboard ads

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For more than a century English has been used as a medium to advertise products of the industrialized countries, particularly USA (Crystal, 2006; Piller, 2003). Being the most economically and politically powerful country in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is the most determined country marketing their products all over the world post World War 2 (Romaine, 2006); hence the full or ‘dominant’ use of English in their advertisements. Even Indonesia, a country of 237,641,326 inhabitants (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, 2010) and over 700 local languages (SIL International Indonesian Branch, 2006), seems to be unable to avoid the great use of English through the medium of printed, electronic and virtual media, and in communications among the middle class in urban cities, and the effect it produces regardless of the linguistic fact that most Indonesians do not speak English (Sneddon, 2003), hence the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 2005). Such situation seems to create a paradox: on the one hand, English has no official status, but on the other hand English is used widely in public areas and for public consumption, e.g. in the press and advertisements (Sneddon, 2003, p. 179).

Consequently, English borrowing and code-switching has become common linguistic phenomena among Indonesian speakers. Sneddon (2003) notes that the incidents of English borrowing and code-switching take place as a result of the increasing contact with English due to the raising number of Indonesian scholars especially those from the University of Indonesia and Bandung Institute of Technology who were sent to study in English speaking countries such as the USA and UK. In addition, since 1966 there has been an increase in international communication between the Indonesian officials and elites via international seminars, conferences and meetings abroad or in Indonesia where English is used as a means of communication. Besides, as Indonesian government has promoted foreign business investment as part of the nation’s economic development program, Indonesians had more contact with English through business cooperation with multinational companies, predominantly USA. It is not surprising to find more and more English words used in printed media, including in leading Indonesian newspaper like *Kompas*, as well as other newspapers and magazines that belong to many other newspapers and magazines in the country. Thus, in the context of Indonesian language, English has several functions, i.e. gaining prestige, raising one’s social status, and getting future jobs. Hence, Indonesian has borrowed many English words in various fields, e.g. in sport, culture, science, politics, technology, and medical.

Borrowing involves the use of lexical item(s) of one language in the utterance or sentence of another language (Romaine, 1995, p. 56). She further points out that borrowing may be done by even a monolingual because of the absence of certain words or phrases in one language, e.g. cultural activities, food, dress, institutions, and concept. Nevertheless, the idea cannot always apply to all occurrences because in many cases monolingual or bilingual speakers still do borrowing or code-switching despite knowing the equivalent words or phrases in their language. Therefore, they may borrow or code-switch for prestige or serving particular needs. Hence, there are some categories of borrowing (Romaine, 1995): (1) loanwords, or the original form of words in one language that are used in another language, e.g. English lexical items *chatting*, *e-mail*, and *hand phone* used heavily by Indonesians; (2) loanblends which shows that there is a part of the words in one language used with another part another language, e.g. Indonesian-English loanblends *di emailkan saja*, *diattach*, and *cocok dimix match*; (3) loanshift, which means “... taking a word in the base language and extending its meaning so that it corresponds to that of a word in the other language”, e.g. Portuguese *grosseria*, meaning ‘rude remark,’ was taken from English *grocery store*, or German *magasin*, whose definition is storeroom, turns into English *magazine*; (4) coinage of new terms consisting of units in one language combined with another units in another language, e.g. Yiddish-English *mitkind* (pp. 56-58).

Code switching is a language behavior, a characteristic of a bilingual, in which the bilingual inserts words, phrases or sentences of one language to another language (Attarriba & Morier, 2006; Edwards, 2006; MacSwan, 2006). In that case, one language is primarily used and another language is inserted to the previous one; hence the primary language is the matrix or base language (Grosjean, 2006; Meisel, 2006). Although it may not always be simple to discover and explain reasons for bilinguals to code switch, it is not a random bilingual behavior. In other words, there are certain patterns of code-switching (Attarriba&Morrier, 2006; MacSwan, 2006). Hence, Poplack (1980), as cited in Romaine (1995, pp. 122-123), classified code-switching into tag-switching, inter-sentential, and intra-sentential switching. While tag-switching “involves the insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance in the other language,” in the intra-sentential switching the bilingual inserts a words, phrase, or clause in one language to a clause or sentence in another language, while the inter-sentential switching implies that there is a switch from one sentence in one language to another sentence in another language (cf. MacSwan, 2006, p. 283). In-

tra-sentential code-switching “may also include mixing within word boundaries” (Romaine, 1995, p. 123). To put it differently, embedding one or several phonemes of one language into a word in another language is also code-switching.

Advertisement, particularly the billboard advertisement, can provide a clear example on the use of the English borrowing and Indonesian-English code-switching with regard to business affairs. Advertising has been employed to serve various purposes from marketing products and services to people and campaigning solutions to the society’s social and health problems (Belch & Belch, 2003). Thus, advertising is closely related to the economic growth of one society; the higher the purchasing power, the more goods manufactured and marketed (Hashim, 2010). Advertising, including billboard ads together with posters, pamphlets, brochures, then is seen as a very effective medium to market a product (Crystal, 2003; Hashim, 2010). Brands and the images created are therefore so important for both producers and advertisers that it must be formulated very carefully to avoid customers’ rejection of the brand (de Asis, 2012), and can take priority over the product specification or qualification (Piller, 2003, p. 176). Only the brand that has unique images that will win the heart of the audience who are faced with so many options but “less time” to choose (Wirjan & Surya, 2012).

Research by Taylor, Franke and Bang (2006) showed that billboard ads, classified as outdoor advertising, were favored because they are easily seen and cost effective. Billboard could provide a very strong visual impression, and might lead to instant recall of the products’ names. In addition, the ads might remain at the same places for days, weeks or even months so that it was very possible for the audience to have repetitive contacts with the brands and slogan that would lead them to finally purchase the products advertised. In addition, billboard ads were preferable media of advertising since they were appropriate for an audience who were always on the move. Thus, despite the fact that they were static, billboard ads actually were able to ‘catch’ people’s attention as long as they were designed based on the principle attention, interest, desire and action. A study by Balkafl, Akbulut, and Kartopu (2005) revealed that the success of billboard ads would be highly dependent upon the clear and easy-to-understand message.

Other studies, which will be presented below, have shown that English and other languages code-switching in advertisements have been proved to achieve some contextual economic goals. One of the reasons is the positive at-

titudes shared by the audience towards English (Chen, 2006; Hsu, 2008; Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2010). Chen (2006) studied Chinese-English code mixing in magazine ads in Taiwan, specifically in terms of morphology and syntax, and the readers' attitude towards the use of English words on the ads. She found that Taiwanese commonly shared positive attitudes towards English embedded into Chinese. The ads containing English was seen as a medium to learn the language, and created a more attractive impression so that the readers would feel less distant with English in their daily lives. English was also a sign of popularity, attraction, creativity, and internalization. Ads using English were considered able to evoke a strong impression and an easy recall. Her research also showed that the most frequently used English words in the ads were *Spa, e, easy, No. 1, VIP, DIY, M, bye (bye-bye), fun, and ok*, and that English noun-phrases were mostly employed in the ads (48,5%). The study was supported by Hsu's (2008) research on the impact of the use of English in printed and electronic advertisements in Taiwan. She found that English was used because it created positive impressions. English was associated with globalization, good quality, middle-class life style, urban experience and modernity of the younger generation. The result was similar to Krishna and Ahluwalia's (2008) study. They studied the role of language choice: English, Hindi, or the mix of English and Hindi in advertising either necessities or luxury products. Their survey on the language attitude and preference indicated that the subjects shared positive attitudes both towards English and Hindi. While the former was associated with globalism, exclusivity, cosmopolitan, professionalism, prestige, and upper-class society, the later was related to family, closeness, sense of belonging, politeness, personal relationship, and middle-class society, but not upper-class society. The study suggested that the use of English and local language should consider the targeted market and product (cf. Hsu, 2008).

The other reason for using English frequently can be the global and cultural role of English (Martin, 2006). Studying various ads in France, she found out that French had both global and cultural perspectives towards global products advertised using English. Her study showed that the creative mix of French and English presented in product names, slogans, and signature lines in addition to borrowings and coinages led to the nativized and adjusted English to French. All of which reflected the fact that the combination of globalization and localization of both the products and languages could effectively create particular effects on the advertisements.

From the point of view of the advertisers, their choice of using English can be due to the production of modernity in the mind of the ads readers (Permanadeli & Tadié, 2012). The two researchers studied 100 ads of real-estate projects in the Indonesian printed media published from 2001 to 2011. The purpose of their research, framed within social representations and social geography, was to analyze the growth of Jakarta, presumably represented among others in media ads, and to determine whether the concept of modernity introduced by President Soekarno more than five decades ago still was still retained through the media ads. One of the symbolic features of modernity marked by the researchers was the intense use of English in the ads, as was proven by the study. Despite the fact that most of the ads' audience and market was Indonesians, 87% of the ads used English. Another interesting finding was that the more increasing use of English in ads started from President Soeharto's era when the President switched from the Dutch to the American for financial aid to develop Indonesia. Most importantly though, the researchers noted the advertisers made use of English to produce certain images and impressions within the mind of the so-called modern people, who would then share collective thoughts of being modern.

However, research also suggested that the non-native English audience preferred easy-to-understand English (Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010; Hsu, 2008). Studying the Dutch preference for English over Dutch ads of cars, Hornikx et al. (2010) highlighted that the Dutch preferred easy-to-understand English slogans to the Dutch. The difficult-to-understand English slogans were equally appreciated as those in Dutch. The study implied the choice of English words advertisers have to take into account when they wanted to advertise a product in a non-English speaking community (see also Hsu, 2008).

In Indonesian context, English is learned as a foreign language. It is therefore necessary to include the notion of 'learner language' when analyzing the English uttered by Indonesian speakers. Learner language is the language of those who learn another language beside their mother tongues (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 4). One of the focuses of learner language study is errors (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, pp. 15-30). Thus, learner language should be seen from the learners' not the native speakers' context (Corder, 1978, pp. 71-72). It is challenging to see whether or not errors occur in texts for public readership like billboard ads.

Billboard ads are classified into public signs as well as street signs, names of building, street direction, and names of shops (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

Language appearing on public texts have been received much attention (Gorter, 2006). Studies on language used in public texts are known as linguistic landscape (Spolsky, 2009). In other words, linguistic landscape also indicates language used on texts in public areas where the texts are easily seen by public audience (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Earlier research in linguistic landscape has presented the important role of English as a lingua franca among its native speakers and non-native speakers, as an international language, and as a status symbol (Backhaus, 2006; Ben-Rafael, et al., 2006; Huebner, 2006).

Of the above-mentioned earlier studies, there has been scarce research on the presence of English in Indonesian public spaces, particularly the billboard advertisements that advertise various products and services. Thus, in this study I investigate the use of English on billboard ads by: (1) comparing the number of billboard ads using English and Indonesian, and the number of English and Indonesian words employed; (2) recording any incidents of borrowings or code-switching; (3) presenting types of products that used English and those that preferred Indonesian; (4) surveying people's preference between the Indonesian and English slogans; (5) describing the main goals of using English, the errors in English being made; and the features of Indonesian language appeared on billboard ads. The purpose of the study is to analyze the reasons of the very frequent use of English in advertisements against the issue of preserving the Indonesian language; hence the competition between Indonesian and English, and the role of English in Indonesian context.

## **METHOD**

The study adopts sociolinguistics approach, in particular the linguistic landscape (Backhaus, 2006; Huebner, 2006), and second language approach, specifically the learner language (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The following variables are used to analyze the data, i.e. type of language, prevalence of language in order of word number, type of products advertised, borrowings, code-switching and errors. The data for the research are 114 billboard ads collected in Jakarta and Greater Jakarta from November 2012 to January 2013, opened questionnaires to 90 respondents, and interviews with copy-writers of local and multinational advertising agencies. Convenient sampling is employed for practicality reasons, and descriptive statistical analysis is used for the questionnaires. After taking pictures of the billboard ads, I record and count all words used, and classify them into ads using English, Indonesian, and those

that mixed English with Indonesian. To find out the audience's preference between English and Indonesian, I give open-ended questions, which is a simplification of Hornikx et al.'s (2010) questionnaire on the ads preference. The questionnaires consist of four brands and their English slogans together with the Indonesian versions of the slogans for which the respondents have to select their preference and write the reasons briefly (Appendix 1). The brands chosen are those having short slogans and do not contain metaphors that would possibly lead to ambiguous Indonesian translation. Consequently, to verify the motives of employing English on the billboard ads, I interview four copy-writers who will be referred to as CW1, CW2, CW3, and CW4 in the presentation of the findings. Billboard ads are preferred than other media of ads as the former are assumed to be one of the most effective and efficient media to campaign a product (Taylor et al., 2006), hence their impact to the audience.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

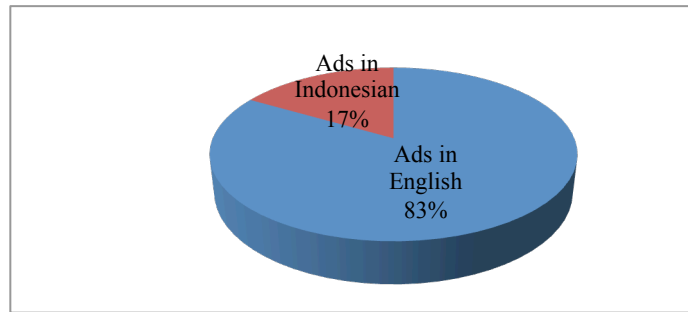
The one hundred-fourteen billboard ads campaigned various products which I classified based on the OED 8<sup>th</sup> Edition List of Topic (Table 1). Fifty percent of the whole ads were about business, which included manufactured products such as cars and cigarettes; services like banks and insurance companies; property such as houses and apartments; minimarket; and business expo. Meanwhile, another 18% marketed goods related to body and appearance; 12% advertised products and or services with regards to science and technology; and 10% were ads about food and drink. Out of the ads collected, 83% (95 ads) were in English, in which 33% (38 ads) were in English and 50% (57 ads) mixed Indonesian with English (Figure 1). However, out of 1,402 words used in the ads, in which proper names were excluded, 821 words or 59% were in English (Figure 2), and 581 words or 41% were in Indonesian. The figures showed the collected billboard ads were dominated by English words.

**Table 1. Classification of the Billboard Ads**

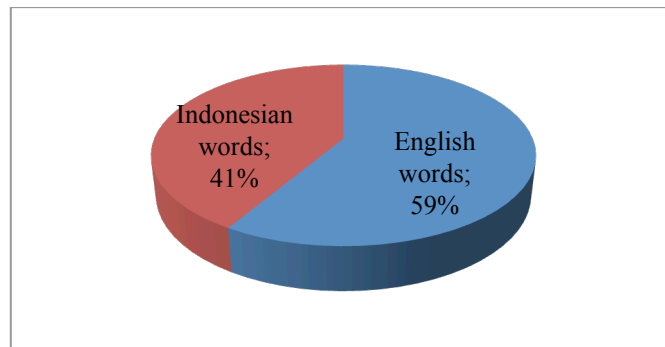
No.	Products / Services	No of ads	%
1	Body and appearance	20	18%
2	Business	57	50%



No.	Products / Services	No of ads	%
3	Food and drink	11	10%
4	Health	2	2%
5	Science and technology	14	12%
6	Society	4	4%
7	Sports	3	3%
8	Travel and tourism	3	3%
Total ads		114	100%



**Figure 1. Comparison between Ads that Used English and Those that Used Indonesian**



**Figure 2. Comparison between the Number of English and Indonesian Words on the Ads**

English was mostly used on the advertisements for product's names, slogans, and specification. Besides, English was employed for informing the audience about the types of products and services offered and any special programs as part of the propaganda or product promotion. On the other hand, Indonesian words were used for highlighting the advantages of the products or services advertised, or promoting any prizes provided by the producers. In addition, Indonesian words usually appeared in the end, informing about the available terms and conditions. Only few ads used Indonesians for slogans. In addition, most products that were related to body and appearance, business: banks and property, cars, and cigarettes, and science and technology employed English.

Interestingly, English was employed for products or services that are related to urban lifestyle, modernity, or youth's lifestyle. English appeared heavily if not wholly, in the ads that marketed products or services on body and appearance, e.g. beauty centers and fitness centers, business, e.g. restaurants, automobiles, banks, and science and technology, e.g. gadgets and electronic devices (Table 2). It is worth noting that the products or services mentioned in Table 2 are those that are not considered primary. In other words, they can be classified into luxuries, which are usually created after the basic needs have been fulfilled. It is a common knowledge that luxuries are meant to satisfy human's desires on things beyond the basics. Note that banks that advertised themselves in English are those whose segmented market is the upper-class society, e.g. *ANZ Bank*, *HSBC Bank*, and *BII* or *Bank International Indonesia* (as there are also banks that used Indonesian language). *Mandiri Bank*, though segmented for lower-class society, also advertised its product, i.e. *Mandiri Prioritas*, aimed at the upper-class, in English.

**Table 2. Products/services that are Advertised in English Only**

<b>Products/services</b>	<b>Specification</b>
Body & appearance	beauty centers
	sports center
Business	apartments
	banks
	cars
	cigarettes
	English courses

<b>Products/services</b>	<b>Specification</b>
	food
	furnitures
	hotels
	office buildings
	minimarket
	motorcycles
	restaurant
	recreational sites
	shopping centers
	water
Science & technology	gadgets
	electronic devices

Although Indonesian language was regularly used for products that are also related to body and appearance, business, society and science and technology, there were very obvious differences with regard to the types of products in comparison with those listed in Table 2 (see Table 3). For modern society nowadays cosmetic, sanitary napkin and shampoo are now categorized into primary needs. Compare those products with beauty centers and sports centers in the previous table which are not urgently needed. Also compare the banks advertising themselves in Indonesian language: *BRI* and *BTN*, whose target market is generally laymen; hence different language for different audience. Besides, advertisers frequently employed Indonesian language for food, e.g. *Sari Roti*, *KFC* or *Kentucky Fried Chicken*, and beverages such as *Coca Cola*, *Frestea*, *JasJus*, *Mizone* and *Pocari Sweat*. All of the ads had Indonesian slogans though not all products had Indonesian names. Moreover, big-chained hypermarkets like *Carrefour* and *Giant* also used Indonesian language, perhaps because most of their customers are Indonesian housewives. Probably English will be used for supermarkets or hypermarkets whose main customers are foreigners like *Kemchik* and *Sogo*. Indonesian was also used for advertising a political party and several public campaigns from an official institution like *Polda Metro Jaya* (Greater Jakarta Metropolitan Regional Police), *Kementerian In-*

*formasi* (Ministry of Information), *Kementerian Perhubungan* (Ministry of Transportation), and *Kementerian Energi dan Sumber Daya Manusia* (Ministry of Energy and Human Resources). Contrary to other gadgets like *Samsung*, and *Nokia*, and telecommunication providers like *Indosat*, and *Telkomsel* that commonly used English, *AXIS* used Indonesian.

**Table 3. Products/services that are Advertised in Indonesian Only**

Products/services	Specification
Body & appearance	cosmetic
	sanitary napkin
	shampoo
Business	banks
	beverage
	food
	supermarkets
	TV station
Society	sports event
	political party
	public warnings

Code mixing between Indonesian and English has not been a new phenomenon in Indonesian popular texts such as magazines and novels (see for example Rafiani, 2009; Amelia, 2012; Siregar, 2012), and certainly billboard advertisements. As I have previously pointed out in the first paragraph of this section, 50% of the ads contained either English borrowings, Indonesian-English or English-Indonesian code-switchings. As many as 29 ads (61%) had English borrowings, 15 (31%) used the inter-sentential code-switching, and only 4 (8%) employed the intra-sentential code-switchings (vide Figure 3). Sentences (1), (2), (3), and (4) showed the English borrowings; sentences (5), (6), (7) are examples of the inter-sentential code switching; and sentences (8), (9), and (10) the intra-sentential code switching. The borrowings and code-switchings are in in bold type face.

*Bank BRI Untung Beliung Britama ads*

(1) *Tingkatkan saldo dan perbanyak transaksi **e-banking***

*AIA Insurance ads*

- (2) **Family first protection**, asuransi jiwa yang berkembang sesuai tahapan hidup Anda

*Entrust Popok Dewasa ads*

- (3) **Absolute comfort**, saatnya memberi yang terbaik untukmu mama dan papa

*Samsung TV ads*

- (4) Jadi lebih seru dengan **motion control**

*Erha Skin Center ads*

- (5) Kulit kembali bersih bukan hanya bebas jerawat. **Meet your personal dermatologist.**

*Taman sari Semanggi Apartment ads*

- (6) Time to live in the heart of the city. **Dipasarkan area komersial**

*QNB ads*

- (7) QNB premium saving account tabungan yang banyak memberi keuntungan untuk Anda. **Call ...**

*Manulife ads*

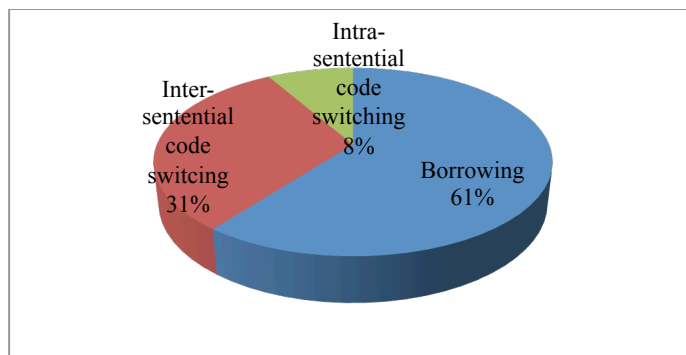
- (8) Untuk segala transaksi keuangan terpenting Anda percayakanlah pada Manulife **for your future investment, insurance, retirement.**

*Mizone ads*

- (9) Semangat lagi **k.o.**? Bantu semangat **o.k.** lagi

*Mustika Putri Kiss Spray Rose ads*

- (10) Kemanapun kamu pergi dengan Mustika Putri Kiss Spray Rose, **it is always a flower journey.**

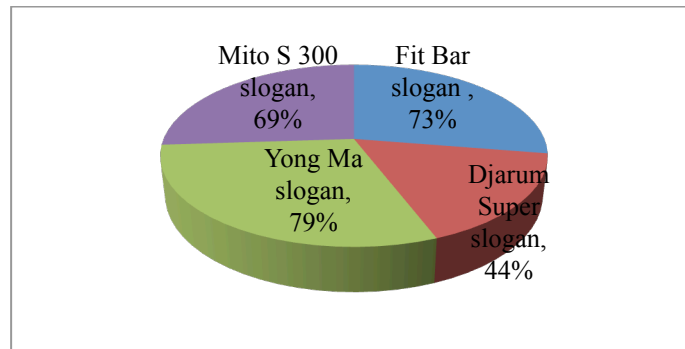


**Figure 3. Percentage of English Borrowings and English-Indonesian or Indonesian-English Code-switchings on the Billboard Ads**

**Table 4. Products/services that are Advertised in Indonesian and English**

Products/services	Specification
Body & appearance	cosmetic
	adult diaper
	sanitary napkin
	shampoo
	beauty center
Business	apartment
	bank
	beverage
	cars
	cigarettes
	food
	insurance
	minimarket& restaurant
Science & technology	TV
	cellular phone

With regard to the open-ended survey, out of 90 respondents, 59% were female. Their educational backgrounds varied: from primary to undergraduates. Their ages were in a range of 15 to 60 years old. In general, the respondents preferred English to Indonesian slogans. The respondents liked English better for slogans of *Fit Bar* (73%), *Yong Ma The Magic Blender* (79%), and *Mito S 300*(69%), but not *Djarum Super* (Figure 4). English was considered to be more attractive, marketable, convincing and simpler than the Indonesian slogans. In addition, the English slogans were considered to be more unique, stylish, classy, suitable to the product advertised, and had an easy recall. It is interesting to note, though, that Indonesian was more favorable for *Djarum Super* slogan as the respondents thought that the Indonesian slogan was more understandable, meaningful, suitable for Indonesian product, and gave an easy recall.



**Figure 4. Percentage of the English Preference for the Four Ads Slogans**

The interviews presented some facts about the use of English words in billboard ads. The use of English taglines on billboard ads in Indonesia depends on several factors (CW1; CW2; CW3). The first aspect is whether the product advertised is a multinational brand, or not. English is the medium to advertise a multinational brand (CW3; CW4). Another issue is about the segmented market. Products for urban young people, for example, generally use English because the internal research conducted by the advertisers showed that the urban youths viewed English as something ‘cool’, ‘better’ and ‘idolized;’ see for instance the ads of *7 to 11*™ (Figure 5); hence the target market and the image of a brand or product (CW1). Those youths identified themselves with modernity, the Western culture, the English culture. English then has been

part of the youths' personal and cultural identification preference (CW2). Other examples are products for affluent people, who are highly educated, thus are competent in English, frequently travel abroad and communicate with foreigners in English (based on the internal survey of the ads agencies). So, the use of English clearly signifies that the brand or product advertised is for the higher class society, for instance the ads of *ANZ Bank*, a multinational bank, in comparison to *Bank Tabungan Negara (BTN)*, a local bank, whose customers can be those of the middle to lower class society (Figure 6). Another example can be products related to information and technology whose technical terms are in English. Yet, the nature of billboard ads: their placement in highways and main streets in the heart of a city, and their readership: travelers, commuters, or passers-by passing the ads in merely seconds often motivates the producers and advertisers to use English, which is considered to be more efficient than Indonesian or both English and Indonesian. On the other hand, Indonesian language is used for products that are related to daily needs or gadgets whose price is affordable for middle to lower social class, and it should be the colloquial Indonesian so that the message would be easily and directly understood by the segmented market (CW1; CW4).







**Figure 5. Sample of Billboard Ads for Young People**



**Figure 6. ANZ and BTN Billboard Ads**

Despite the frequent use of English, errors cannot be avoided. Errors can be an indication of lack of knowledge or competence of a target language or the language learned in comparison with the native speakers (James, 1998, p. 63).

There are two types of errors: performance and competence errors. While the former happens because a speaker is fatigued or in a rush, the latter is due to “... inadequate learning” (Touchie, 1986, p. 76), which result in a gap of knowledge (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, pp. 64-65). In that regard, Touchie also notes that performance errors may not be different from mistakes, which can be the result of the speaker’s forgetfulness or carelessness. As a matter of fact, distinguishing errors from mistakes may not always be simple because both may overlap and even native speakers produce both of them (Ellis, 1997, pp. 17-18). In this study, the inappropriate usages of English lexemes and syntax are treated as errors instead of mistakes because presumptively texts and images for public consumption like billboard ads have undergone the process of editing done by the advertisers and/or the advertising agencies. Hence, there are chances to avoid carelessness, and forgetfulness.

The errors on the ads are exemplified below, and written in bolded face. They are classified into errors related to slips or typographic errors as in (11), (12), and (13); addition as in (14); collocations as in (15), omissions as in (16), (17), (18), (19), (20), (21) and (22); misordering (James, 1998, pp. 83, 106, 110, 131, 152) as in (23), (24), and (25). The classified errors are listed on Table 5, and the correct forms are given in brackets directly after the erroneous words. Note that the misordering may be caused by interference from Indonesian language (Touchie, 1986, p. 77).

*Nano Philosophy ads*

- (11) [. . .] *now available pre-paid or via monthly **installments*** [. . .]  
 (12) *Natural Wellness and **Aesthetics** Enhancements for Face and Body*

*XL ads*

- (13) *Paket internet hot rod 3G+ triple **kuota***

*Fitness First ads*

- (14) \****Let’s us** help you reach your fitness goal.*

*Nano Philosophy ads*

- (15) \* [. . .] *via monthly **installment*** [. . .]

*The Albergo Tower ads*

- (16) \* [. . .] *Rental Guarantee **Fix Income** 20% (2 years)*

Plaza Semanggi Card ads

(17) \***Spend and gifte**veryday

Dufan Ancol ads

(18) \***Bikers do fun**.

Garuda Indonesia Travel Fair ads

(19) [. . .] **Double\*power points** [. . .]

Smartfren ads

(20) \***Live smart**.

Sampoerna Avolution Cigarette ads

(21) \***Reform attitude** (slogan)

Permata Bank ads

(22) \***Simple pay0%** 24 bulan

Smartfrenads

(23) [. . .] *browsing in high definition* [. . .] \***Processor Cortex**

The Albergo Tower ads

(24) Fully Furnished (1<sup>st</sup> quality \***design interior**)

Plaza Semanggi Card ads

(25) \***Earn point rewards** and extra benefits

**Table 5. Classification of the Errors Found in the Use of English on the Billboard Ads, and the Correct Forms**

Slips/ Typographic errors	Addition	Collocational errors	Omission	Misordering
<i>installment</i> ( <i>instalment</i> )	* <i>Let's us . . .</i> ( <i>Let us . . .</i> )	* <i>via installment</i> ( <i>by instalment</i> )	* <i>Bikers do</i> <i>fun.</i>	* <i>processor</i> <i>cortex</i>

Slips/ Typographic errors	Addition	Collocational errors	Omission	Misordering
			(Bikers do have fun.) *spend and gift (spend your money and get your) gift	(cortex processor)
aesthetics enhancement (aesthetic enhancement)			*double power points (double powerful points)	*design interior (interior design)
triple kuota (triple quota)			*fix income (fixed income) *live smart (live smartly)	*point rewards (reward-point)
			*simple pay (simple payment) *reform attitude (reformed attitude)	

Besides the formal standard Indonesian found on the billboard ads such as the following sentence *Merokok dapat menyebabkan kanker, serangan jantung, impotensi, dan gangguan kehamilan dan janin* in every cigarette ads, *Kami hadirkan investasi dan informasi lengkap untuk Anda* by Mandiri Prioritas, *Dapatkan fasilitas cicilan of Garuda Indonesia Travel Fairor Miliki rumah idaman sekarang juga* by CIMB Niaga, there were also Indonesian colloquial style: the Betawi-Indonesian, such as the ones (written in bold-type face) in

sentences (26) until (35). Notice that the products that employed the dialect are not luxurious products whose segmented market does not belong to the high-social class. Food and beverage, telecommunication provider, and saving are considered to be part of the urban people's daily needs or life-styles.

*BII Maybank ads*

(26) *Ayo segera **nabung** dan menangkan uang tunai seberat emas.*

*Indosat ads*

(27) *Bonus **nelpon**, sms dan internetan mulai dari Rp.5.000*

*Kentucky Fried Chicken ads*

(28) ***Goceng**, praktis, special*

*McDonald's ads*

(29) *Ada yang **gakbiasa** di McDonald's.*

*Frestea ads*

(30) *Kalem **aja**, lanjut terus*

*Nokia Asha ads*

(31) ***Bebas in** gaya lo*

*XL ads*

(32) *Tetap **ngebut** dan murah, kuota 3 kali lipat di 3G*

*Laurier ads*

(33) ***Ga** tembus, **ga** tebal*

*Pocari Sweat ads*

(34) *Bikin gugup saya berkurang **loh***

*Axis ads*

(35) ***Pake** internet gratis*

## **Discussion**

The study shows that English is used more frequently than Indonesian on billboard ads in Jakarta, which supports previous research conducted by Permadeli and Tadié (2012). Basically, the phenomenon occurs as a result of the status of English as a global language (Martin, 2006). English was found in product names and categories, slogans, and description, which confirmed Martin's (2006) research on the use of English in advertising in French, and Bhatia and Baumgardner's (2008) study on English in South Asia. Another reason was the positive attitude of the audience toward English, which was in line with studies conducted by Chen (2006), Hsu (2008), and Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008). Obviously, English has functioned as an attention getter, evoked an easy recall. The language has also been a symbol of modernity, urban life-style, young generation, luxury, and good quality. Therefore, the choice of English was related to the audience to whom the products are marketed: products for young people and high-class society used English.

As English is a language accepted worldwide, it is preferable to sell a global product: a product that is sold for global market. Consequently, English has enjoyed the privilege over other languages (cf. Bordieu, 2000; Martin, 2006). English, including the culture that it represents, has been treated as more prestigious compared to Indonesian and other local languages in Indonesia (Kachru, 2000; Martin, 2006). English has also become the aspirational language: a language that creates a positive image towards the brand. Using English, the producers and the advertisers wanted to attract the attention of as many audience as possible, make them part of the good image, or raise the social status of the people (de Saussure, 2000; Vygotsky, 2000; Sneddon, 2003).

Nevertheless, the incidents of English borrowing and code-switching (be they Indonesian-English or English-Indonesian) have signified an undoubtedly clear and crucial role of Indonesian language in marketing products to a huge market that speaks one national language: Indonesian, in addition to their local languages. Therefore, Indonesian language is used for advertising products that are for people of middle to low social class, products which are not luxurious in general (CW1; cf. Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). In addition, the use of colloquial Betawi-Indonesian, which is also considered to be more prestigious than other dialects of Indonesian language (Sneddon, 2003), seems to balance the prestigious status of English. Products for young customers and middle to low social class used the colloquial Betawi-Indonesian. The fact confirms that the

prevalence of English will not weaken Indonesian language, its dialects, and the vernacular languages in Indonesia. English has even enriched the Indonesian language vocabulary. More importantly, both languages have their own audience or readership.

However, because English is only a language without an official status, there has been little attention on the early and well-prepared curriculum and human resources for teaching English to Indonesian learners. As a result, errors with regards to the use of English are still produced on texts for public consumption like billboard advertisements which actually should exemplify the correct use of English for a large audience. The errors may indicate several points: lack of English competence, and ignorance of the use of correct English (James, 1998). Other possible reasons can be hasty generalization that readers are not competent in English, and poor assumption that readers would not care about the errors, though for the last two reasons further research projects should be conducted.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Up to this point, I have exemplified how English became the world's lingua franca, the application of advertisements as a means of selling products, and current research on the employment of English on billboard ads in non-English speaking countries including Indonesia. The research that I conducted presents an important sociolinguistic fact about the role of English in Indonesia. The common use of English, which was associated with modernity, youth, urban life-style, and wealth, represented a piece of evidence about how Indonesia, a country with a very big population and a very great number of local languages, cannot resist the influence of the globalization movement by the superpowers like USA and Britain in the fields of economy, politics, education and culture. In addition, it is seems that a foreign culture is apparently more valued by Indonesians, a condition which has been taken advantage of by producers and advertisers. However, English is not the only means of message carrier; the Indonesian and the Betawi-Indonesian are of the same important means of communication between the producers and the customers because the Indonesian language has a special status: a prestigious language, a lingua franca of millions of Indonesians. Therefore, any manufacturers, business people and advertisers who want the huge potential market to consume the products or services advertised have to employ Indonesian. Those parties that I have just men-

tioned have smartly turned Indonesian (and its dialects) and English into a 'message carrier' or an instrument by which particular message or meaning is conveyed for one final purpose: to make a very profitable business. It is true then that the choice of language has become an effective means of communicating specific meanings and sending particular messages to the audience (cf. de Saussure, 2000; Seliger, 2008). Probably, in rural areas where the Indonesian language or local languages are preferable, English may not be used as frequent as that on Jakarta's billboard ads, but further research on linguistic landscape should be conducted to prove that, as well as ethnographic research on how and to what extent English on billboard ads has assimilated the Western culture into local cultures in Indonesia.

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**Appendix 1. The Open-ended Questionnaire on the Preference of the Ads Slogans**

Silanglah huruf di depan **slogan iklan** yang **lebih Anda sukai**.

1. A. Fit Bar – Menyenangkan, Enak

B. Fit Bar – Happy, Tasty

Alasan Anda:

.....

2. A. Djarum Super Mild – Kenikmatan, Gaya, Kepercayaan Diri

B. Djarum Super Mild – Pleasure, Style, Confidence

Alasan Anda:

.....

3. A. Yong Ma – Keajaiban dalam Hidup

B. Yong Ma – The Magic in Life

Alasan Anda:

.....

4. A. Mito S 300 – Lihat Gayaku

B. Mito S 300 – Watch My Style

Alasan Anda:

.....

Nama : ..... Jenis kelamin : .....

Umur : ..... Pendidikan Terakhir : .....

Pekerjaan : ..... Tanggal : .....