

**An Analysis of English Borrowing Words in  
Indonesian Language Used by Graduate Students in  
Seminar Presentations  
(A Case Study at Graduate Study Program of Disaster Science of  
Syiah Kuala University)**

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**Abstract**

This research aimed to identify reasons of borrowing words used by graduate students of Disaster Science Study Program in their seminar presentations, and there were three students as the participants. This is a qualitative research where the data were collected through interviews. The researcher applied a main theory for this analysis; the reasons of borrowing words proposed by Field (2002). The research findings showed that there were three reasons why the students used English borrowing words when they delivered presentations in Indonesian. Those reasons were the principle of saving and efficiency, the scarcity of original form of a word, and the prestige of foreign languages. In conclusion, this research showed that English borrowing words have become part of the standard Indonesian vocabulary so that speakers of Indonesian are definitely bound by the use of borrowing words.

**Keywords:** *borrowing words, seminar, presentation*

## Sari

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi alasan penggunaan kata pinjaman atau kata serapan oleh mahasiswa pascasarjana Program Studi Ilmu Kebencanaan dalam presentasi seminar mereka, dan terdapat tiga mahasiswa sebagai responden. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dimana data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara. Peneliti menerapkan teori utama untuk analisis ini yaitu teori alasan-alasan dari terjadinya penggunaan kata serapan yang dikemukakan oleh Field (2002). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada tiga alasan mengapa siswa menggunakan kata serapan bahasa Inggris ketika mereka menyampaikan presentasi dalam bahasa Indonesia. Alasan tersebut adalah prinsip penghematan dan efisiensi, kelangkaan bentuk asli kata, dan prestise akan bahasa asing. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah kata serapan bahasa Inggris telah menjadi bagian dari kosakata baku bahasa Indonesia sehingga penutur bahasa Indonesia pasti terikat dengan penggunaan kata serapan.

**kata kunci:** *kata serapan, seminar, presentasi*

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## Introduction

There are many things that occurred in the term of cultural contacts, including language and words formation. It is essential to know that many Indonesian words actually absorb or adapt the linguistic elements from other languages. It is convinced by Salih (2006) who says that million words of a language in a region or a country are divided into two components; some of the words are originally exist and others are borrowed. Borrowing word, according to Darwish (2015), is the acquirement of new vocabulary or lexical objects which are needed for new places, things and concepts. Indonesia, whose language was born in 1928 and formalized in 1945, has also borrowed many vocabularies. Therefore, the Indonesian language did not just appear without the influence of several factors.

Indonesian language has been gradually developed along with the great influence and contribution of regional and foreign languages which were then adapted to the Indonesian spelling (Sneddon, 2003). In fact, the Indonesian language itself comes from many other languages which are based on several factors, for instance, Malay language as geographic

factor, Dutch language as colonization factor, and so on. Martius (2012) reveals that Indonesian is a language derived from the Malay language, especially Riau Malay. The choice of Malay language originating from Kepulauan Riau region as the official language of Indonesia was in accordance with the policy of the previous government of the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) which assessed that the Malay language from the Kepulauan Riau had the purest pronunciation and the best grammar and spelling. Besides, the colonial factor also influenced the formation of Indonesian vocabularies due to the long period of Dutch colonial rule over Indonesia. Consequently, there are words with the same notion expressed in Indonesian by borrowing Dutch words, for instance, suitcase as koper (koffer in Dutch) and ticket as karcis (kaartjes in Dutch) (Sneddon, 2003).

In addition, English also takes role in influencing the formation of Indonesian language. There are so many Indonesian words which are the outcomes of English borrowing words due to the power of the language as the global language. It is mentioned by Guo and Beckett (2007) that English has become the most dominant language of communication, business, entertainment and internet. Therefore, borrowing words need to be learned because it is not new that English, as an international language, also colors many vocabularies in other languages, including Indonesian language. Hassall et al. (2008) summarizes several Indonesian vocabularies which are borrowed from English, even though these vocabularies already have their own original form. They are kultur from culture (budaya, original form), aktivitas from activity (kegiatan, original form), and evaluasi from evaluation (penilaian, original form). Those borrowing words are needed because they can be the synonym words supply that will meet the demands of globalization life. The two Indonesian vocabularies will still overlap substantially in scope so that the speaker can choose between the two because in certain contexts one will be more suitable than the other. As a result, indirectly with the borrowing of words, Indonesian language will be increasingly rich in vocabularies.

A few studies have been done related to the use of borrowing words. Some of them are the studies about borrowing words used on written materials. Sagimin and Anggraeni (2017) identified the types of borrowing words in housing and property advertisement in Podomoro Magazine and identified the sociolinguistic aspects as the reasons why they retained the borrowing words. Then, they found out some types of borrowing words such

as loanword, loan-shift, and loan-blend. While the sociolinguistic aspects that influence the use of those borrowing words were to make it seemed more sophisticated, had practical use, high quality, and got international appreciation. Then, another study of Supeni and Fauziah (2018) discussed about borrowing words used in Indonesian health articles of online news pages such as detik.com, kompas.com and viva.com. They analyzed four word forms namely noun, verb, adjective and adverb; then it was found that it was the noun that was used the highest frequency in the online health articles.

By reviewing what are already available in the literature, instead of looking at written materials, the researcher is interested in examining the use of English borrowing words used in oral communicative events, especially in formal contexts. Then, the research was focused on disaster science's topic because it was found that there were many borrowing words used by the students of Disaster Science Study Program as Indonesian language speakers. This was evidenced from the preliminary study carried out by researcher in March 2020 at Syiah Kuala University. Borrowing words are really used by student of graduate study program of Disaster Science who conducted seminar presentation. It was found that the speaker used borrowing words, including mitigasi from mitigation, geografis from geographical, eksperimen from experiment, and valid from valid. Those words are really needed to avoid language limitations so that every explanation will be clear to the desired points according to the scientific context.

In connection with the formal situation, some Indonesian people usually think of the proper words that they will use when they deliver it to audiences. Although the original ones are still existent, there are many Indonesian words which are the results of English borrowing words. Bin Tahir (2015) noted that people who made in accuracy in word choice are caused by the lack of vocabulary and the non-mastery of word usage. Hence, many Indonesian people choose to use borrowing words in delivering speech to make their words become more accepted in formal and global context and to make it seems more scientific. However, many people do not realize that the spoken words are borrowed from other languages that have become Indonesian. Therefore, the writer took this problem to study about borrowing words and the writer wanted to find out the reasons why the students retain English borrowing words while they speaking Indonesian language in their seminar presentations.

## Methods

A qualitative approach is considered appropriate to be applied in this research because it thoroughly focuses on social phenomena in a particular field. In this research, the researcher employed interviews steps to collect data. The researcher interviewed three respondents with the help of interview guide adapted from Field (2002). The respondents were the graduate students of Disaster Science Study Program of Syiah Kuala University who conducted seminar presentations.

## Results and Discussion

The researcher found that there were more than 50 borrowing words spoken by each student related to their presentation in the field of disaster science. In analyzing the reasons that made them use borrowing words, the researcher also included excerpts from the sentences students gave when they answered questions during the interview that were coded as (I) and all of them totaled 33 or (I-33). This study sought to find out which of the six reasons of borrowing words by Field (2002) that trigger the students to tend to use borrowing words. Those six reasons were then made into 12 questions of an interview. The interviews revealed that each respondent had their own opinion about how they constructed the words they spoke during seminar presentations. The result was that not all students used borrowing words based on these six reasons. Thus, the explanations of each reason for using borrowing words are described below.

### 1. The Principle of Saving and Efficiency

This principle is an example of trying to find borrowing words because the words absorbed are more efficient than Indonesian words. Choosing words from foreign languages that are ready to use is a simple matter. This is an economical way when compared to providing new concepts in Indonesian, such as technology, linguistics, and many others. For example, in this research, the researcher found that the students mentioned the word “data” in their presentation. Data means information or real material that can be used as the basis for a study. According to KBBI, data is the same as *bahan* (material). However, the word

*bahan* is too general to be used in an academic context, especially on the research presentations. Therefore, the word “data” already has the right concept for this.

In addition, the word “data” also sounds more formal than *bahan*. The three students said that they used formal Indonesian when making presentations. Below are their responses;

Student A:

I-1: “The concept of language that I used was a clear and formal language, to explain general things to details related to the content of the proposal.”

Student B:

I-2: “Due to academic presentation, the language style I used was formal language and for the words chosen were words that matched the objects in the research on disaster.”

Student C:

I-3: “I used formal language because I was in a formal forum. It was also because I was facing five lecturers so this affected my language.”

The responses above showed that the theme of their research truly affected the word choices in their seminar presentation. This means they automatically used lots of terminology related to the disaster studies, including the use of English or its borrowing words as they said below;

Student A:

I-4: “I used borrowing words. The words like “*perubahan stress*” may be more familiar in this field of science or in seismologist people. I could have used simple language like “*perubahan tekanan*” to make it more understandable. However,

when writing my thesis, I still wrote “*perubahan stres*” because it has been integrated into the language of the disaster field.”

Student B:

I-5: “Disaster science is still relatively new in Indonesia, so I look for material from foreign journals. My background was also studying in the English department, so I prefer to look for sources in English journals. It made me take many words from English. For certain words that are technical in nature, for example, there is hazard which means *bahaya* in Indonesia. Sometimes I say hazard, sometimes *bahaya*, it can be reversed.”

Student C:

I-6: “There are many abbreviations that come from English, so I will explain what the abbreviations stand for. For example, InaTEWS, which means Indonesia's tsunami early warning system, must be explained in both languages.”

Based on the responses of the three students, it showed that they were quite related to English because of the topic of their research so that inevitably borrowing words also need to be used during their seminar presentations. It can also be concluded that the reason of "the principles of saving and efficiency" is TRUE experienced by them.

## 2. The Scarcity of Original Form of A Word

The scarcity of the original form is also a factor causing the borrowing of foreign words or elements into Indonesian. This occurs when there is an original lexical element that does not become a productive vocabulary. Thus, it is unfamiliar to the speaker. This was confirmed by Student B that the use of

borrowing words was felt to be more appropriate than looking for the original word in Indonesian which then became unfamiliar, as he said below;

Student B:

I-7: “Actually, whatever the English language is, it usually already has a meaning in Indonesian, but maybe if we force to find the original meaning in Indonesian, it will sound a bit odd in our circle.”

In addition, the response from Student C said that it was not possible to find the original Indonesian language in the names of the tools designed for this field of disaster, as she said below;

Student C:

I-8: “Maybe, the names of the equipment/tool. My research is about tsunami detection devices, so most of the names of the tools were originally in English.”

It is different with Student A. He felt that there are words that are not included in the rare category in Indonesian. However, he still had to use borrowing words because that was a thesis writing rule set by the campus, as he said below;

Student A:

I-9: “Yes, I even said the word desain which is borrowed from English “design”. I used it because it was a must because it referred to the guide for making a thesis from the campus.”



Moreover, the three students also confirmed that they were already familiar with English terms and the English borrowing words related to their study field. This means that they all gave the positive responses toward this point of reason for choosing borrowing words, as they said below;

Student A:

I-10: “Yes, for scientific explanations, there are some foreign words that are absorbed by Indonesian. That is because people are familiar with it, so maybe there are some words related to disaster that are commonly used in English borrowing words.”

Student B:

I-11: “Yes, there are many, even if in disaster science in particular we have a guidebook which contains about 70 words of terminology issued by the UN's version of Badan Penanggulangan Bencana called UNISDR terminology in 2009.”

Student C:

I-12: “Yes, because disasters don't just happen in Indonesia. For example, the tsunami, which is an international disaster, so that some words are in English and some words have been adapted into Indonesian. Why should it be adapted? It is because disaster information must also be conveyed to the public. Then, because some people do not understand when using English words, a simpler word is used, which is absorbed and integrated into Indonesian.”

From the responses above, it can be concluded that Student A, Student B and Student C agreed that words in certain fields, especially in the field of disaster science, were indeed English-oriented, so that because Indonesian did not have the original lexical elements in that field, borrowing words were formed. Then,

the conclusion is the reason of “the scarcity of original form of a word ” is TRUE experienced by the students.

### 3. The Need for Synonyms

Synonyms are used to enrich the disclosure of stories, facts, and ideas, both in writing and orally, so that the language becomes more interesting and not rigid. Then, the researcher identified whether the respondents showed a tendency to use borrowing words because of the need for synonyms or not.

In this research, the researcher found that the students did not change their words during the presentation, which aimed to make the speech interesting and varied, because they felt they had chosen the right words. Here are the responses of Student A, Student B and Student C:

Student A:

I-13: “I think the words I used were appropriate enough.”

Student B:

I-14: “The words that I prepared during the presentation had indeed been adjusted. Even before the presentation, the slides were checked by the supervisor.”

Student C:

I-15: “Yes, I have chosen the right words because I was tested.”

Furthermore, they confirmed that there was indeed a spontaneous change in the words they spoke during the presentation. However, at the time, judging by the reasons, they did not intend to find synonyms for word variations to make their delivery interesting. Here are the responses;

Student A:

I-16: “There was a change but it did not change the meaning of the initial concept that I explained.”

Student B:

I-17: “There is, for example, my research is about ancient tsunamis, so there is an equivalent term for ancient tsunamis called paleo-tsunamis. I often get confused in calling it. Well, that's a synonym, but the term paleo-tsunamis are often misunderstood based on which expert's source. In Indonesia, the tsunamis that occurred 50 years ago are considered paleo-tsunamis. While paleo-tsunamis for geologists in general are those that occurred 10,000 years ago. So in the end this can lead to a different understanding.”

Student C:

I-18: “I had planned it from the start. Then, because during the presentation there was a feeling of nervousness, so some of the word preparations that I had prepared changed but the changes were not too drastic.”

From the responses above, Student A felt that his words were quite as planned and he did not look for synonyms to add word variations. Then, Student B also responded that he did change some of the words that were still synonyms, but it was also not with the intention of looking for synonyms as a stylistic consideration. Then, Student C also changed her words spontaneously due to the nervousness. Therefore, it can be concluded that it was NOT TRUE that the borrowing words they spoke were influenced by “the need for synonyms”.

#### 4. The Differentiation of Meaning

There is a word in English which sometimes if we look for the equivalent in the original Indonesian, it actually has a different meaning and looks a bit inaccurate. Then, this is one of the reasons why borrowing words occur.

However, in this research, Students A, B and C did not find words that had inaccurate meanings so that during seminar presentations they did not need other words to make their meanings more accurate, as they said below;

Student A:

I-19: "In my opinion, there were no changes or interruptions in the use of words during my presentation."

Student B:

I-20: "There wasn't any. But before this presentation I was commented on by my lecturer for writing the word "atensi", it is an English borrowing word but according to my lecturer it is not suitable to be used in the context of my thesis."

Student C:

I-21: "I don't think so."

From the responses above, the Student A and Student B really felt the words they had chosen were correct because the examiners gave no warning regarding the choice of words during the presentation. Whereas Student B received criticism regarding word choice but that happened long before the presentation took place, so this was not included in the focus of this study.

In addition, Student A also admitted that it was true that there were some words in the field of disaster science which if used in different contexts would

cause a shift in meaning, but it was solidly confirmed that at the time of presentation, Student A did not mention such words, as he said below;

Student A:

I-22: “So far, there have been several shifts in meaning that have occurred in the field of disaster, for example tsunami. Tsunami is actually disaster which is large waves that hit the coast or land, but many people associate it with other events such as using the tsunami in an inappropriate way. For example, tsunami gadget or anything related to something that comes massively.”

Therefore, based on what students had experienced, the statement that stated borrowing words caused by “the differentiation of meanings” was NOT TRUE.

#### 5. The Prestige of Foreign Languages

This prestige occurs when a language is associated with a high civilization. Sometimes it is thought that speakers of the language will increase their social position in society. In educational life, this is also very possible when language speakers want to show their competencies in mastering the learning material.

Based on the interviews, the researcher found that Student A and Student B confidently admitted that they were quite proficient in English. Meanwhile, Student C said that she had reading comprehension in English, but she seemed to have basic speaking skills because she rarely spoke in English. Here are the responses;

Student A:

I-23: “For the use of English, I am an active speaker for my daily activities but it depends on the person I am talking to as well.”

Student B:

I-24: “So, my background is an English student, so even though I went to the disaster department, I still looked for reading materials from English sources and often used English both oral and written.”

Student C:

I-25: “I rarely speak English. But I understand English writing. I also introduce my little child to English vocabulary frequently.”

Moreover, it was quite surprising that Student B is a bachelor of English education who was continuing his master's degree in disaster science, so he was better at speaking English than his friends in his faculty, as he added that;

Student B:

I-26: “Sometimes the disaster department is often visited by guests from Japan or from other countries, so I greet them in English. Actually there are many students who can speak English in that department, but because they know that I studied in the English department before, so I was always asked to interact with the foreign guests. Then I also speak English with some friends.”

Just like Student B, Student A's English proficiency was also recognized from his active speaking with fellow English speakers, as stated below;

Student A:

I-27: “To friends, especially non-Indonesian citizens, I use English as my means of communication, and I use it at certain times when I meet them. For reading and writing comprehension I think I'm good.”

Despite the somewhat varied responses of the respondents on this point, their answers were sufficiently dominant in thinking that in order to appear well in the eyes of others in lectures, they must have a good understanding of English. Therefore, the researcher concluded that it was TRUE that “the prestige of a foreign language” was relatively influential in their language and word choices.

#### 6. The Low Language Proficiency of Speakers

There are many people whose level of understanding of foreign languages, especially English, is higher than their level of understanding of Indonesian. This is greatly influenced by the degree of the role of English as a lingua franca. Then, the researcher investigated the habits of the students in speaking to measure their proficiency.

In this context, the researcher asked whether they had a time where they know more terms in English than in Indonesian, and below are the answers;

Student A:

I-28: “For me no, because my work environment at BMKG uses Indonesian or Indonesian words that are the results of absorption of English, which we all know.”

Student B:

I-29: “That's quite often. Starting from the language settings on my cell phone, I use English. Maybe there is an influence from there. Then from social media or from Youtube, I prefer to look for English-language content, so the input is always in English. So when I want to speak Indonesian, sometimes the first thing that comes to my mind is English. For example, such as sediment, sometimes I forget that the original word is *endapan*. In the disaster faculty, the lecturers are from various disciplines, some are from engineering, and there is even a lecturer from the health sector who is a doctor at the Zainal Abidin hospital. That's why there

are lecturers who don't understand what sediment is because it's not their field of discipline.”

Student C:

I-30: “I don't think I've ever experienced it.”

From the comments above, it can be assumed that most of the respondents had good language proficiency in Indonesian, except Student B who had more language input to English. Especially in terms of his lectures in the disaster science field, he is more familiar with the objects in his research with the English version. While Student A and Student C felt able to speak Indonesian properly and correctly. In addition, the Student A, B and C added that they were confidently able to do presentations in standard and original Indonesian, but to speak without using borrowed English words at the seminar on Disaster Science presentations was deemed impossible, as they said below;

Student A:

I-31: “I can, as long as I have a concept for the original and standard Indonesian language, I will do it. However, when I was presenting the seminar, I could not help but take English borrowing words that I had to say to make it easier for me to explain, because of the demands of the conditions when I delivered them. So there are some words that we have learned in lectures, and we are all familiar with the words that I use.”

Student B:

I-32: “Yes, because the words that have been absorbed can already be said to be part of the Indonesian language. Except for specific words like instruments' names. And actually there are benefits from knowing English terms. It becomes easier for us to find information from journals. So the students who don't know



English will have limited, not good, and not up-to-date material, and their thesis will end up being not good.”

Student C:

I-33: “It could be because on average the words in the field of disaster science have been made in Indonesian versions. However, it should be noted that there will still be instruments’ names or disaster names taken directly from the original language, so they will not be translated into Indonesian.”

They had never experienced times when they knew English words better than Indonesian, but in terms of lectures they were really tied to English words and its borrowing words because of their research topics. Therefore, it can be concluded from the dominant answers that it did mean that they have low proficiency in Indonesian, and it was NOT TRUE that “the low language proficiency of speakers” was the factor or reason of this research targets to use borrowing words.

To sum it up, the researcher found that of the six reasons people use borrowing words, during the interview the respondents gave positive responses to the only three reasons, namely the “principle of saving and efficiency”, “scarcity of original form of a word”, and “prestige of foreign languages.”

### **Conclusion & recommendation**

The results of the analysis of the reasons that underlie students' use of borrowing words during seminar presentations, the researcher found three reasons. Those are principle of saving and efficiency, scarcity of original form of a word, and prestige of foreign languages. Those were revealed from the interview session, which was conducted after the presentation of each student was carried out.

Moreover, further studies on the borrowing words topics are recommended. The researcher hopes that this borrowing words subject can open up chance for other researchers to conduct similar studies concerning borrowing words, as it is not limited only in the analysis of reasons but also covers other sub-topics that are interested to be

studied. Then, because there are many studies that examine borrowing words using data from written materials, there are still very few studies on borrowing words resulting from people's words orally. Therefore, the researcher hopes that further research will be able to analyze borrowing words from someone's speech, from podcasts in online media, or television advertisements.

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