

BEYOND THE CODE SWITCHING IN *WHATSAPP* CHATS OF JAVANESE ENGLISH TEACHERS FORUM IN TULUNGAGUNG

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Abstract:

(Title: *Beyond the Code Switching in Whatsapp Chats of Javanese English Teachers Forum in Tulungagung*). Code-switching, the alternate use of more than one language in a discourse, is one of the language phenomena that commonly happens in a communication among bilingual or multilingual people. Recently, the rapid development of technology gives significance effects to the way people communicate such as the blurring of the spoken and written distinction happening in *whatsapp* chats. Although *whatsapp* chats use the written medium, the language used is less correct and less coherent than standard written language, making it closer to speech. It also creates code-switching phenomena among English teachers chat. This study aims to seek the teachers' motives of producing code-switching in their utterances. 30 *whatsapp* chat screenshots were collected to be analyzed. Furthermore, interviews were conducted to obtain more comprehensive motives from the the *Javanese* English Teacher Forum members. The results show that most of the teachers intentionally and consciously made code-switching for the sake of poetic (joke) and phatic functions. None of them employs code-switching for directive function. In addition, from the perspective of psycholinguistics, this phenomenon could be the result of the LTM (Long Term Memory) subconscious effect of the speakers' cultural background.

Keywords: Code switching, *Whatsapps* chats, *Javanese* English teacher, poetic function

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and technology, such as internet and mobile Smartphone, gives significant effect on the way people communicate. People do not only communicate face to face, but they can communicate each other without having direct physical contact. Online media is widely used to have a real-time communication among people who are not in the same place at the same time. 'There has been rapid increase in online communication in the last 7-8 years, especially in mobile communication' (Mahajan, Dahiya, & Sanghvi, 2013, p. 38). This mobile communication, which is mostly supported by Smartphone, has become very popular and widely used because of its portability and convenience. 'Everybody now can interact, socialize, and can share ideas and information sitting at any corner in the world' (Mahajan et al., 2013, p. 38). One of favorite Smartphone's applications used for online communication is *whatsapp*.

The way people communicate in an online media, especially in a *whatsapp* group chat of English teacher in Indonesia, is a unique phenomenon since all of the members of that group are multilingual people. They can at least speak three languages that are Javanese, Indonesian and English. This phenomenon affect the way they use their languages interchangeably, so that *code switching* happen in almost of their group conversation. Furthermore, the language used in online media is 'less correct and less coherent' than standard written language, making it closer to speech (Danet & Hering, 2007). Thus, these uniqueness are worth and interesting to be explored further.

There have been some previous studies concerning with *code-switching* and online media communication. An example of study about *code-switching* was done by Yletyinen (2004) who explored the functions of *code-switching* in EFL classroom discourse. Similar study was also conducted by Fong (2011)

who discussed the functions and reasons for code-switching on Facebook by Utar English-Mandarin Chinese bilingual undergraduates. Those previous studies had tried to investigate the functions and reasons of *code-switching* happened in classroom and also in Facebook, but the subjects are bilingual. Thus, the interesting point of this study is going to be the subjects who are multilingual. Moreover, the online communication happen in different social media, which is whatsapp group chat, is also the other interesting point to investigate. This study aims to investigate the motives of *code-switching* uttered by the member of the *Javanese English Teacher Forum* from *Tulungagung* in their group chats. The motives are related to which *code-switching* functions contribute to the purpose of the communication among that particular group of multilingual teacher. So that, this study aims to answer this question: “What are the motives of code-switching beyond the whatsapp group chat of the Javanese English Teacher Forum from Tulungagung?”

Some researchers have defined some different terms related to *code-switching*, such as *inter-sentential* code-alternation and *intra-sentential* code-alternation. *Inter-sentential* code-alternation is usually called code switching while *intra-sentential* code-alternation is called code mixing. The distinction between those two terms is based on the structural feature of the sentence or utterance, where the alternation takes place. ‘Code switching occurs when a bilingual or multilingual speaker uses more than one language in a single utterance above the clause level to appropriately convey his/her intents’ (Cárdenas-Claros & Isharyanti, 2009, p. 68). On the other hand, “Code mixing occurs when speakers use two or more languages below clause level within one social situation” (Cárdenas-Claros & Isharyanti, 2009, p. 69).

Code-switching has been defined in a number of ways by different researchers over time, depending on the point of view of their study (Yletyinen, 2004). Although there are various definitions of the terms, this study will consider code-switching and code-mixing as the same phenomena that will be represented by a single term “code-switching”.

In other word, *Code-switching* is simply defined as the use of two languages varieties in the same conversation. It is in line with Clyne (1991) who argues that code switching and code mixing refer to the same phenomena in “which the speaker stops using language ‘A’ and employs language ‘B’” (p. 161). Since this study do not focus on the structural feature of the sentence, a single term “code-switching” is used to represent code-switching and code-mixing at once.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the function and reason of *code-switching*. For instance, Ahmad and Jusoff (2009, p. 49) note that “teachers’ code-switching is an effective teaching strategy when dealing with low English proficient learners”. In addition, Yletyinen (2004) found that there were some reasons of code-switching happened in EFL classroom, such as: clearing misunderstanding, self-correction, counter parting of unknown English vocabulary.

Furthermore, Appel and Muysken (2006) listed more comprehensible functions of code-switching in six classifications that are *referential*, *directive*, *expressive*, *phatic*, *metalinguistic* and *poetic*. Those six classifications will be used to analyze the data in this study. The six main functions of code-switching proposed by Appel and Muysken (2006) are defined below. First, *Referential*: Code-switching involves lack of knowledge or facility in a language. Hence, bilingual or multilingual speakers switch code when they do not know the word or when a certain concept is not available in that language. Language is chosen also because it is more appropriate or suitable to be used for a particular topic. *Second, directive*: This participant-related function of code-switching aims to include or exclude a person from a part of a conversation such as by using a familiar or foreign language to that person. *Third, expressive*: speakers use more than one language to stress their self-identity or feelings to others in the conversation. *Fourth, phatic*: code-switching is used to show a change in tone and emphasize important parts of a conversation. *Fifth, metalinguistic*: to provide quotation or report speech that is made by another person and to impress others with

language skills. Sixth, *poetic*: Words, puns and jokes in one language are switched to another language for the purpose of amusement or entertainment.

Whatsapp is a name of Smartphone application which functions as one of social media. It is an application available on the new generation of smart phones that 'allows users to send text messages to each other for free' (Alsalem, 2014, p. 34). It is not only able to send and receive text messages but it is able to send and receive audio, picture, video and audio call through internet connection.

Whatsapp becomes one of favorite Smartphone's applications used for online communication because of its benefits such as 'low cost, immediacy and sense of community' (Church & Oliveira, 2013, p. 352). In term of low cost, whatsapp is a light application which consumes few amount of internet data usage. Besides, it provides immediate information toward people we are interacting, such as who is online and who is typing. In addition, immediacy of whatsapp gives effect to the blurring of the spoken and written distinction in the communication. Although the communication happen in form of text or written but the sense is like a spoken communication. Moreover, 'one the of the application's unique features is the option to create a group and to communicate within its boundaries'. (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014, p. 218). It can give sense of community because of its ability to have multi-participants chats in a group.

Communication among members of group or community via whatsapp can be categorized as Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). It is in line with Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti (2009, p. 71) who define CMC as a communication among people 'via the instrumentality of computers'. Whatsapp can be categorized as part of computers instrument because the technology of Smartphone is close to computers technology in general.

WhatsApp can be viewed as a social network that allows people to access a great deal of information rapidly (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014, p. 218). Having capability of providing information rapidly makes whatsapp

become a favorite chatting application that can also be categorized as synchronous type of CMC. It means that whatsapp allow user to have 'interaction that takes place in *real time* via relay chats, chat rooms, instant messaging, and twits' (Cárdenas-Claros & Isharyanti, 2009, p. 71). In other words, whatsapp can give opportunity for the user to communicate with other people without any delayed time.

People who are able to communicate using more than one languages can be bilingual (2 languages) or multilingual (more than two languages). Although they have ability of using some languages, it does not mean that they master all the languages in the same level of proficiency. Most people who are bilinguals do not regularly use two or more languages or speak them all fluently (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 38). The un-balanced of proficiency and fluency in using more than one language is one of the factor that promote code-switching phenomena in a communication.

Another factor promoting *code-switching* is cultural effects within the languages mastered by bilingual or multilingual people. Duranti (1997, p. 2) argues that 'language is a cultural resource'. Moreover, 'language simultaneously reflects and encodes social and cultural patterns' (Carter, 1997, p. 6). It means that *code-switching* produced by multilingual people is the reflections of cultural patterns which have exposed them. When they master more than languages, subconsciously they are also exposed to the different cultures within the languages they are mastering. Thus, *code-switching* has connection to the identity, ethnicity and solidarity associated with each language and it functions similarly throughout the world (Myers-Scotton, 2006)

METHOD

This study aims to investigate the teachers' motives of producing *code-switching* in their utterances by applying qualitative research method. The subjects of this study are the group members of whatsapp chat which consists of 58 Junior High School English teacher. They are all Javanese people who live in Tulungagung Regency, East Java, and teach in some different places of schools

around Tulungagung Regency. They created a whatsapp chatroom group named “English Teacher Forum”. The data were collected by capturing and saving 30 *whatsapp* chat screenshots during June 2018 in form of image or jpeg file. Then, the screenshots were classified, selected and eliminated in order to be easier to be analyzed. Furthermore, online interviews were conducted by having personal chats (PM / Personal Messages) to each group members who had produced *code-switching* during their conversation in group chat. The personal interview is considered to be significant to understand more comprehensive motives from the members of the *Javanese English Teacher Forum*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collection analyzed using ‘six main functions of code-switching’ proposed by Appel and Muysken (2006), this study find five functions of code-switching intended by the speakers in the group chat. These five functions are then considered as the motives of code-switching phenomenon which are referential, expressive, phatic, metalinguistic and poetic function. There are two motives, phatic and poetic, that are more dominant than the other motives. Only one function or motive, directive function, is not intended by the speakers in that group chat.

Referential Motive of Code-Switching

Referential motive arise when bilingual or multilingual speakers switch code when they do not know the word or when a certain concept is not available in that language. It happens in one of conversations analyzed when a speaker mixed her Indonesian utterance with Javanese word “keculek”.

<p>Leny : Be Carefull sir, keculek.....apa bhs inggrisnya keculek? Zainul : Put the finger into eyes accidentally.</p>

In the conversation depicted above, the speakers try to use English in their chat since it is their consensus as English teachers to practice English in their chat forum. However, when a

speaker (Leny) is trying to comment to a topic (about eyes) being discussed, she encounters a difficulty of conveying an occurrence so that she switches English into Javanese. She chooses Javanese “keculek’ instead of using English or Indonesia because she cannot find an appropriate term for substituting the word “keculek” in English or Indonesian Language. Language is chosen because it is more appropriate or suitable to be used for a particular topic (Appel & Muysken, 2006). In this case, although the next speaker (Zainul) suggests translation in form of a description in English which has the same meaning literally, still it cannot totally 100% substitute the term “keculek” because it does not make Javanese cultural sense since the speakers involved in that conversation are all Javanese people who share the same ‘cultural schemata’ (Yule, 1996, p. 87). In addition, the Javanese word “keculek” is the reflections of cultural patterns which have exposed the speaker that can drive the speaker produce that *code-switching*. It is in line with Carter (1997, p. 6) who state that ‘language simultaneously reflects and encodes social and cultural patterns’.

Expressive Motives of Code-Switching

Expressive motive occurs when a speaker uses more than one language to stress his/her self-identity or feelings to others in a conversation. This conversation below shows how an expressive motive of *code-switching* works.

<p>Elvi : Thursday night.... mom Leny....I remind U ...! Leny : Sure..... have you prepared well mom Elvy? Zainul : Not prepare bu Leny but take a rest for a while, qiqiqi... Elvi : OK, wait a minute. I will prepare them Ida : Hadeeeh..... not nail, I am. Gak kuku.....!! Zainul : Wkwkwwk..... Bu Ida is also taking a rest, take a breath to run the next round.</p>

A speaker (Elvi) pragmatically leads an adult topic by reminding her friend (Leny) that that day (when the conversation happens) is Thursday night which means that it is a good time for making love or sexual intercourse for a husband-wife couple. Then, Leny responds it using expression of certainty and asking about Elvi's preparation of welcoming Thursday night but another group member (Zainul) reject the term 'preparation' because he thinks that Leny should take a rest for a while to save her energy instead of preparing something. Another group member (Ida) expresses her feeling concerning with the topic being discussed (saving energy for Thursday night activity). She says "**not nail, I am. Gak kuku....!**" which actually "Gak kuku" is the Indonesian translation for previous *Javanese-English* expression "not nail, I am" that has conceptual meaning concerning with unbearable energy and desire. The speaker (Ida) stresses her feeling by saying that Indonesian expression "gak kuku". While her *Javanese-English* expression "not nail, I am" is only for the purpose of making joke using that *slang* translation instead of using appropriate English expression "I can stand on it".

Phatic and Poetic Motives of Code-Switching

When a *code-switching* is used to show a change in tone and emphasize important parts of a conversation, its motive is categorized as 'phatic function' (Appel & Muysken, 2006). Based on the data collected in this study, this phatic function of *code-switching* is detected in the chat depicted by this figure below.

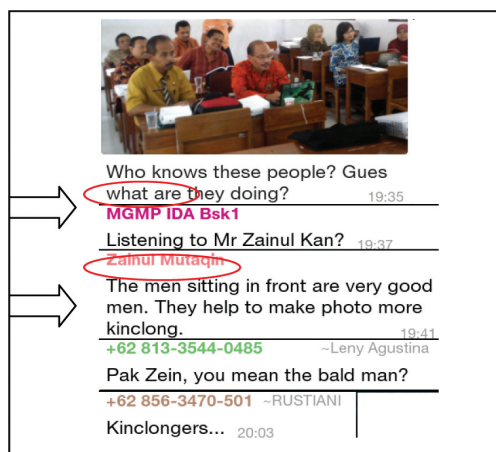


Figure 1

First of all, a speaker (Zainul) posts a photograph of people having English Teacher Forum seminar. The picture may show a serious situation of seminar participant listening to an explanation or lecturing. Zainul's post is followed by a question "Guess what are they doing?" to stimulate responds or comments from other group chat members. Then, a group member (Ida) responds to Zainul's post by delivering serious rhetoric question "Listening to Mr. Zainul Kan?". She actually intends to make a serious topic discussion based on the picture, but then Zainul changes the serious topic to funny or joking topic by switching his English respond to Javanese language "kinlong" at a part of his sentences. He also want to emphasize important part of the conversation about the bold men sitting in front who become the trending topic by using Javanese term "kinlong" instead of using English word "shiny".

Second, a poetic motive of *code-switching* is also found in the chat above. Poetic motive is expressed by presenting words, puns and jokes in one language which are switched to another language 'for the purpose of amusement or entertainment' (Appel & Muysken, 2006). Zainul uses Javanese term "kinlong" instead of using English word "shiny" in order that he can amuse and entertain other group members by using that Javanese funny word. Besides, he chose Javanese word to emphasize cultural sense of humor since all members of the group chat are Javanese. When telling a joke, a group of people will say the pun word in their own language to express that they belong to the same ethnic group with shared values and experience. It means that within a Javanese community, using Javanese words in making a joke will be the best way to create suitable sense of humor since the community has same shared values and experiences. In addition, in the conversation shown in figure.1, another group member (Rustiani) comments about the topic using the word "kinclongers" which is the combination of Javanese and English suffix -er+s indicating the doers are plural (two in the picture). This comment increases the sense of humor's level in that chat.

Metalinguistics Motive of Code-Switching

When code-switching is uttered for the purpose of providing quotation or report speech that is made by another person, the motive is called ‘metalinguistic’ motive (Appel & Muysken, 2006). There are some chats found in this study that explicitly represent metalinguistic motive as it is presented in the figure below.

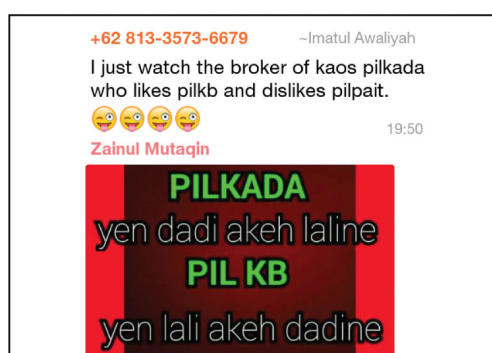


Figure. 2

A speaker (Imatul) talks about recent social phenomena related to “pilkada” (Pemilihan Kepala Daerah/Governor Elections). She said that she just watched the broker of pilkada shirts who liked pil KB (contraceptive medicine) and disliked pil pait (bitter medicine). Responding to Imatul’s statement, Zainul posts a quotation “*Pilkada, yen dadi akeh laline, Pil KB yen lali akeh dadine*” taken from another people post. He posts the original phrase (instead of translating it into English) in order that he keeps the originality and authenticity of the quotation. He considered that his quotation will be able to convey the message effectively and appropriately since the speakers in the chat are from the same cultural background, Javanese. The quotation can be translated as follow: *in the election, for those who succeed to be the governor/leader, he/she will tends to forget to the people who have elected him / her, while in case of consuming contraceptive medicine, someone who forgets of consuming the medicine before having sexual intercourse, she will easily get pregnant*. The English translation will be longer than the original one, so that using the original quotation is considered to be more effective since the interlocutor still understand it.

Cultural Effect and Other Factors on the Code-Switching Motives

Theoretically, someone subconsciously do code-switching because of the un-balanced of proficiency and fluency in using more than one language. It is in line with Myers-Scotton (2006, p. 38) who state that most people who are bilinguals do not regularly use two or more languages or speak them all fluently. On contrary to the hypothesis, based on the online interview done to some speakers in the chats, this study finds that most members of the group chat do *code-switching* on a conscious purpose. It means that the un-balance of proficiency and fluency of the languages (Javanese, Indonesian, English) mastered do not play significant role in driving the speakers do *code-switching*. They tend do *code-switching* for the sake of a conscious purposes rather than do it sub-consciously. The most influential factor that drive *code-switching* phenomenon is cultural factors.

The cultural factor that stimulates the code-switching phenomenon is that the members of the chatting group have same cultural schemata. Based on the interview and the analysis on the chats, the results show that most members’ purpose of doing code-switching is for the sake of having fun and making jokes using their native or first language. They think that making jokes by switching to native language will make sense since the members of the group who have same cultural schemata will understand better the local jokes. It is in line with Carter (1997, p. 6) who states that ‘language simultaneously reflects and encodes social and cultural patterns. Moreover, sharing same cultural background influences the production of *slang code-switching vocabularies /expressions consensus* within that group, as shown in the table below.

Some *slang vocabularies and expressions consensus* shown above are the result of acculturation process among the three languages and cultures (Javanese, Indonesian, English). It is in line with Basir and Ro’ifah (2015) who state that interaction between the members of community, tribe, and nation that

<i>Slang Code-Switching Vocabularies / Expressions Consensus</i>	Meaning
“begithat”	Begitu = like that
“ya iyes lah”	Ya iya lah = Yes, certainly
“mother-mother”	Ibu-ibu = mothers
“don’t clear-clear to”	Ojo digenah-genahne to = don’t be too vulgar
“wkwkww / he...he...he...”	LOL = Loud Out Laugh
“can-can only”	Iso – iso wae = bisa aja = you can

are more massive causing contact between cultures and languages. In addition, the ages of the members of the group have reached the adult and mature level. ‘Adolescent is the richest imagination in developing new vocabularies, terminology and expressions that are developed in various ways and taken from various sources’ (Basir & Ro’ifah, 2015)

The motive of creating *slang code-switching vocabularies /expressions consensus* is that the members of the chatting group wants to build closeness among the members when they have informal daily chats. People who speak together with the close friend tend to speak freely, openly and often very vulgar (Basir & Ro’ifah, 2015). When they feel free to speak, they will not pay attention to the grammatical mistakes and code-switching that they are producing. The main goal is that they want to run the conversation smoothly. It is in line with Basir and Ro’ifah (2015) who argue that ‘the reason someone mixes several different elements of the language code in an speak act is to create a relaxed so that conversation take place without load’.

In addition, since the speakers’ cultural background is Javanese, they have experienced and exposed to the Javanese and Indonesian language much through their live. Thus, psycholinguists believe that those Javanese and Indonesian language exposure and experience have been stored to the speakers’ Long Term Memory (LTM). LTM “contains information about the world, from experiences about language and shapes (the Semantic Memory), the cumulative experiences which they have had in life (the Episodic Memory) and the automatic procedures involved in skilled behaviors (the Procedural Memory)” (Randall, 2007, p. 14).

In this case, Indonesian and Javanese culture subconsciously affect the way the speakers use language interchangeably, even when they do the code switching for a joke consciously, there is a subconscious process of LTM effect beyond.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there are five motives of the code-switching; referential, expressive, phatic, metalinguistic and poetic motives. Phatic and poetic motives are more dominant than the other motives since the purposes of the whatsapp chat are having fun and running relaxed-entertaining informal online chats smoothly. Code-switching can help build relationship between speakers in a particular conversation’ (Fong, 2011). Directive motive of code-switching are not found in this study since the group members are all in a same society, culture, and community which is “Javanese English Teacher Forum”. In addition, *slang code-switching vocabularies /expressions consensus* were found in the study as the result of three different language acculturation which is affected by the dominant motive of code-switching, phatic and poetic motives, in order that the conversation run smoothly in relax situation. In addition, from the perspective of psycholinguistics, this phenomenon could be the result of the LTM (Long Term Memory) subconscious effect of the speakers’ cultural background.

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