

# A REFLECTION STUDY ON LANGUAGE CHOICES AMONG MULTILINGUAL

Baiq Raudatul Jannah, Institut Agama Islam Nurul Hakim, Lombok, NTB

## Abstract

*Multilingual community is commonly found in Asian countries. Since people are able to communicate using more than one language, some factors may influence them in their language choices. This research was a reflection study in which the researcher herself became the participant of this research. Some factors that might influence the language choice was the interlocutors, the setting, and the language that the participant grew up with. During the conversation code-switching and code-mixing were also found since the speakers in the setting of research were also bilingual or multilingual.*

**Keywords:** reflection study, language choices, multilingual

## INTRODUCTION

This research will assume bilingualism and multilingualism become one terms, ability to use more than one language. Bilingualism occurs in most all countries, in all class of society, and in all ages. People may speak more than one language or even more than two language. Having that kind of ability may be defined as Bilingualism. However, not all people who speak more than one language have native like control of all their languages. That condition is in contrary with Bloomfield (1933) statement that defines bilingualism as a native like control of two languages. In reality, there are many people who begin to understand utterances in second language yet they cannot produce utterances and speak in that language. Diebold (1961) suggested that phenomenon as the definition of bilingualism.

Multilingual is the ability to communicate in more than one language. I means people with this ability possibly use more than one language to communicate. This kind of ability will raise a question what lead a person choose a certain language rather than other languages when communicating to others. The domains of language which are participant, setting or topic are the general area that may influence the language choices.

## METHOD

### Code-switching and Code-mixing

Code-switching and code-mixing are phenomena that usually occur among multilingual people. These two are phenomena where two languages are used and mixed in the conversation. Code-switching and code-mixing are usually used interchangeably, some others define these two terms differently. There are two types of code-

switching; internal and external code-switching. Internal code-switching can be found among regional languages within one nation, it includes also dialect changes. While, external code-switching occurs among native and foreign language. Miccio, Hammer, and Rodriguez (2009) also define code switching into two kinds; intra-sentential code switching and inter-sentential code-switching. Intra-sentential code-switching can be found when there is a language mixing within a single sentence or utterance. While, inter-sentential code-switching refers to the switch of languages between sentences or utterances. This paper will adopt the term intra-sentential code-switching as **code-mixing** and inter-sentential code-switching refers to the term **code-switching**.

These two phenomena might be assumed harmful by the parents if it happens with their children. It can be considered as children's failure in understanding the differences of two languages. The appearance of code-switching and code-mixing might be viewed as children's linguistic confusion or lack of language proficiency. In fact, it is not a problem, it is a part of children bilingual development. King and Mackey (2007) in their book entitled *The Bilingual Edge* propose five points about bilingualism; two of them are language mixing is a common stage of bilingual development and it a proof that children have two linguistic systems. This shows that

either code-mixing or code-switching is not a big issue among the bilingual children. King and Mackey (2007) consider code-mixing as a bilingual phase description of how children mix the language due to the lack of language knowledge, while code-switching is considered as phase where the bilingual children can be indicated as proficient bilingualism with mastery of both languages.

### **Research Question**

For this reflection study, there are two main research questions.

1. What language do I use to communicate to a certain person?
2. Why do I choose a certain language to a certain person?
3. When do I use a certain language in my communication with a certain person?

### **Participant**

This research was a reflection study in which I myself became a participant of this research. I reflected my daily conversation with people around me by observing and recording my daily conversation and seeking the factors that resulted in certain language choice used to a particular person. I, participant of this research, was multilingual. I have an ability to speak in Indonesia and Sasak language as my first language and Arabic and English as my foreign language. My interlocutors in this research were also either bilingual or multilingual.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

## A Reflection Study on Language Choices among Multilingual

The language choice firstly is determined by to whom I talk. I will use different language to different people. I prefer to speak in Sasak language to my mother or to my sister when we also share the ability to speak in Indonesia. In contrast, I speak in Indonesia language to my nephews or my nieces in my house. While I speak in Arabic language to my junior in junior and senior high school even we are also able to communicate either in Sasak or Indonesian language.

Sasak Language

S: hallo assalamualaikum

I : waalaikumsalam

S : mbe taokm tie nani? (*where are you now?*)

I : niki kos mbok, kek berejap yak lampak **kuliah**. Arak napi? (*I am in my boarding house, I am preparing for going to campus. What's going on?*).

S: Meni nok ne arik, masalah ruanm sak mele lalok lalo **kursus** bahase inggris jok pare. Brembe menurut side? (*your niece really wants to take an English course in Pare, what do you think?*)

The reason why I choose Sasak language when talking to my mother or sister, or Arabic language when talking to my junior is because I grow up with those people with that language. My mother, my sister, and I are also able to speak in Indonesia language, however, we prefer to speak in Sasak language because this is our mother tongue which we acquired first before acquiring Indonesia language. And we grow up together with Sasak language.

In this conversation, my sister and I produce the code-mixing. The underlined words “kuliah and kursus” are not sasak words. These are Indonesian words which are adopted and adapted from Arabic and english words. Because those words are not found in Sasak language, there for we use Indonesian language word to represent the meaning that we want to convey to make us understand to each other

Indonesia Language

N: minggu ndak masuk? (*is Sunday holiday?*)

I : libur. Bisa dah tu buat jalan-jalan. Mau liburan ke mana? (*it is holiday. You can go for vacation. Where do you want to go?*)

N : ke cangar,, heheh, nggak tahu dah, besok kita lihat. (*I want to go to cangar, heheh,, I do not exactly, let's see later.*)

My niece is a bilingual. She can speak in Indonesia and Sasak language. However, during her growth, Indonesia is the most common language that we use for our daily conversation. While, sasak language is used only for certain occasion.

Arabic Language

I : aina makanuki al'an? (*where are you now?*)

J : fi makani u'allim haza. Limaza ukh? (*in the school, why?*)

I : mata ila huna? (*when will you come here?*)

J : godan insyaa Allah ukh, kaifa? (*how about tomorrow*)

I : ohhh,, na'am kholas, laa ba'sa. (*ok, fine. It's ok*)

In the case of my junior, we prefer to speak in Arabic language even our mother tongue is Sasak language, and also we share the same ability to speak in Indonesia language as our first language. Similarly, it is caused by the language that we grow up with. I met my junior when we were still in boarding school, and we lived together for four years. In our boarding school we were obliged to speak in Arabic language. Therefore, even we have the same mother or first language, but I prefer to speak in Arabic language with her.

Location can be the next consideration in language choice among multilingualism. Some may use Indonesia language when they are in formal setting where there are many people with different language background, while they usually do not speak with it. However, what I reflect here is not in that situation. I observed my language choice when I was in a restaurant with my juniors. I did not speak in Indonesia language only, but I switched the language. When I ordered the food, I talked in Indonesia language to the waitress, then I switched the language to Arabic language when talking to my juniors to asked them what they want.

W : mau pesan apa mbak? (*What do you want to order?*)

I : apa aja menunya mbk? (*what are the menu*)

She showed me the menu, then I switched the language when I asked my juniors the menu that they want to eat.

I : maza turidin? (*what do you want?*)

J : maza kana kholas ukh, antum takhtar, kan antum tadfa', hahaha (*it is up to you sis, because you are the one who are to pay,, hahah*)

I : hahah,,, na'am kholas izan kazalik. (*hahah,, ok,,*)

I did not use Indonesia language to my juniors because I think it will not break the conversation among us, as long as I can transfer the message what the waitress want to know, and the waitress will not fell offended even I talk in Arabic language to my juniors.

Differently, if my juniors and I were in the position where we have a parallel position like a formal discussion, I think I will use Indonesia language. But, I did not find this kind of situation during my observation for this research.

Since Arabic grammar is absolutely more difficult than Indonesia as our first language, therefore, the Arabic language that we commonly use when we talk to each other with my juniors is not fully grammatically correct. We just translate it word by word from Indonesia to Arabic language. From that conversation, it is proven that our Arabic language production is also influenced by Indonesia language. The underline word "kan" is Indonesian word. Actually, this is not the word, this is like

## A Reflection Study on Language Choices among Multilingual

a stressing sign to show that I who will pay the bill for dinner in that restaurant.

One reason that I reflect in my daily conversation for my language choice is the topic. Even I could not show the evidence because I could not get the time to record it, the topic really influence my language choice, especially when I talk to my juniors in Arabic language. Not many people can speak Arabic, therefore, if the topic is a secret topic that I do not want other people know about it. I will speak in Arabic.

### CONCLUSION

The ability to use more than one language remains a question what language that will be used. The interlocutor or participant, setting, and topic that are bound in it influence the language choices. What language that we grow up with, or will the language choice break the conversation are some consideration for language choice. The secret topic also lead the language choice, and we will choose the language that others do not understand.

### REFERENCES

- Bloomfield, L. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt
- Diebold, A. Richard. 1961. Incipient bilingualism. *Language*.

- Ellis Rod. (1985). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- King, K. and Mackey, A. (2007). *The Bilingual Edge. Why, When, and How to Teach Your Child a Second Language*. HarperCollins
- Muslim, A. (2022). Pendidikan Spiritualitas Keagamaan Generasi Alfa pada Sekolah Dasar. *MODELING: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI*, 9(3), 519-535.
- Muslim, A. (2015). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dan Sikap Para Guru terhadap Kepuasan Kerja (Studi Kasus di Ma Palapa Nusantara NW Selebung). *CENDEKIA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 1(2), 113-141.
- Nisa, K. (2019). Mengembangkan Keativitas Anak Melalui kegiatan Menggambar Bebas pada Anak Usia Dini di TK Tunas Harapan 1 Tanjung Sari Nastar Lampung Selatan. Skripsi Sarjana: Tarbiyah dan Keguruan. 18
- Muslim, A., & Rasyidi, A. H. (2020). Filsafat Pendidikan Islam (Sejarah dan Pemikiran). *PENERBIT*.
- Siyoto, S., & Sodik, M. A. (2015). *Dasar metodologi penelitian*. literasi media publishing.