

Code-Mixing in WhatsApp Group Discussions of Online English Classes

Lina Rahmawati^{1*}
Mar'atus Sholeha²
Haira Rizka³

¹English Language Teaching Department, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia

²English Language Teaching Department, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia

³English Language Teaching Department, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: linarahmawati9992@gmail.com

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the educational world to switch from offline classes to online classes. Limited access to the internet has encouraged many people to use WhatsApp to teach instead of academic platforms. Although WhatsApp is not designed for educational purposes, many teachers prefer using it to conduct online discussions, including in English classes. This new model of communication using WhatsApp for English classes has resulted in the interesting phenomenon of code-mixing. This paper aims to investigate the types and functions of code-mixing used in WhatsApp groups of online English classes. This study employed a qualitative method. The sample of this research was conversations between the lecturers and students in WhatsApp group chats of online English classes during the pandemic. The data were collected through observation. The collected data were then analyzed by using textual analysis. This study revealed three types of code-mixing used in online English classes on WhatsApp group chats: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Next, this study found five functions of code-mixing in online English classes on WhatsApp group chats: quotation, address specification, interjection, message qualification, personalization, and objectification. Address specification, personalization, and objection were dominantly found because specific sentences frequently refer to people, things, or arguments during discussions on WhatsApp group chats.

Keywords: *code-mixing, online class discussion, WhatsApp*

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the whole world experienced a very severe COVID-19 pandemic. All aspects have undergone very drastic changes, one of which is education. All schools and universities no longer carry out the learning process as usual. Several universities in Indonesia conduct the learning process by implementing technological sophistication, namely by conducting online learning ([Bahasoan et al., 2020](#)) or online learning that applies technology-based learning media. Some platforms for online learning are Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp group chats. WhatsApp is one of the most frequently used media in the online learning process because teachers and students can discuss learning materials without consuming much internet data usage. Although WhatsApp is not designed for academic purposes, this media is preferred because it is user-friendly and cheap. WhatsApp is also used in English classes and enables students and lecturers to discuss the materials and conduct classes frequently. This written communication brings up interesting linguistic phenomena, one of which is code-mixing.

Code-mixing is frequently found in the Indonesian language learning process ([Siboro & Agung, 2022](#)). Code-mixing refers to the use of combining two languages into a conversation, and it reveals the social identity of a community ([Hall & Nilep, 2015](#)). Similarly, [Yuliana et al. \(2015\)](#) proposed that code-mixing occurs in communication between people by mixing two languages. In English classes, the phenomenon of code-mixing occurs between the class participants' mother tongue and English. Code-mixing occurs when people communicate with others in any place and on any topic. Such a condition occurs because humans were born to interact with others, share problems, and express their feelings in both small and large communities ([Haryati & Prayuwana, 2020](#)). The online learning process boosts the use of code-mixing in education in a new learning media, namely WhatsApp.

Code-mixing and code-switching are two different terms. Code-mixing refers to combining words from two languages in a sentence ([Dirgeyasa, 2020](#)). In other words, code-mixing is the use of a variety of languages because they are simultaneously combined at once. For example, it occurs when a speaker whose mother tongue is Indonesian speaks this language and inserts a word or some words from another language, such as English, in his/her sentences. It seems that the use of code-mixing is rarely realized by users ([Muttaqien et al., 2022](#)). Nowadays, inserting English into Indonesian conversation is considered very common.

[Muysken \(2000, as cited in Putri et al., 2021\)](#) proposed three types of code mixing: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Insertion refers to the use of two or more languages mixed with other language structures, such as words and phrases ([Muysken, 2000 as cited in Putri et al., 2021](#)). For example, an English word is inserted in an Indonesian sentence "*Aku sudah nge-follow akun Instagrammu ya*". This sentence means "I have followed your Instagram account". The word 'follow' is an English word incorporated into Indonesian speech. The second type is alternation, which refers to a change of structure between the two combined languages in the code-mixing ([Muysken, 2000 as cited in Putri et al., 2021](#)). For example, an English word is inserted in an Indonesian sentence "*kamu boleh datang anytime*". This sentence means "you can come anytime". The underlined word indicates a syntactic structure. The last type is congruent lexicalization by putting words from several lexical inventories into a common and similar grammatical structure ([Muysken as cited in Putri et al., 2021](#)). For example, an English word is inserted in an Indonesian sentence "*online shopping digemari oleh banyak masyarakat*". This sentence means "online shopping is now preferred by society".

Language is important to understand to create connections and interact with others ([Melysa et al., 2022](#)). Therefore, linguistic phenomena, including the use of code-mixing, have several functions. Basically, people mix their language for several reasons, such as: citing another person's words, qualifying a message, highlighting a point, expressing emotions, emphasizing collective identity, excluding others from a conversation, changing a speaker's role, advancing in status, adding authority, showing expertise, and maintaining a language ([Yuliana et al., 2015](#)). Meanwhile, [Marasigan \(1983, as cited in Putri et al., 2021\)](#) explains that functions in code-mixing include quotation, address specification, repetition, interjection, message qualification, personalization and objectivization, and expression facility. The quotation aims to maintain the authenticity of the conveyed true message. Next, address specification clarifies a speech event that engages participants and acknowledges other influential linguistic factors, such as role relationships. Address specification aims to deliver messages to listeners. Then, repetition refers to repeating a message in another code to clarify what has been mentioned; thus, listeners understand the message. The interjection is used to change the interaction from the "we" to the "they" code or from the "they" to the "we" code. The interjection enables the user to alter and combine codes through interjection to express strong feelings and emotions and create a more understandable conversation. Message qualification is used to express concepts and qualify constructions, such as clauses, sentences, and phrases. Next, personalization and objectification relate to students' involvement in the form of distance, messages, or addresses. Finally, facility expressions aim to provide familiar alternatives when the speaker considers that the original language has difficult words to use.

The phenomenon of code-mixing in WhatsApp groups has been investigated by several previous studies. [Haryati and Prayuana \(2020\)](#) investigate types of code-mixing used by lecturers from several majors and examine factors of this use. The authors have revealed three types of code-mixing, namely congruent lexicalization, insertion, and alternation; and five factors initiating the use of this code-mixing, namely bilingualism, speakers and interlocutors, situations, vocabulary, and prestige. Meanwhile, [Setiawati and Farahsani \(2021\)](#) identified types, factors, and functions of code-switching and code-mixing in an Indonesian university. They have discovered two types of code-switching: internal and external code-switching. Factors of using these types are speakers, speech partners, and changing topics of conversation. They also found that the types of code-mixing found in WhatsApp groups are insertion (word phrases), alternation, and congruent lexicalization. The factors of using these types are limited use of codes, the use of popular terms, speech partners, topics of humor generation, and prestige. Finally, they have revealed three social functions of using code-switching and code-mixing: to effectively convey meaningful information, assert power, and express solidarity. Another study is conducted [Idris and Shabri \(2017\)](#) who identified the most common code-mixing style used by students in face-to-face classes and WhatsApp groups and the reason for using the style. The result showed that students frequently use code-mixing and code-switching. He/she discovered that difficulties in explaining a topic using a certain language trigger students to combine with words or phrases from another language; such a condition refers to code-mixing and code-switching. The three previous studies (i.e., [Haryati & Prayuana, 2020](#); [Setiawati & Farahsani, 2021](#); [Idris and Shabri, 2017](#)) have investigated the use of code-mixing in Whatsapp groups between students and lecturers. However, the focus of their observation is on code-mixing used by lecturers. Therefore, this research proposes to observe a different focus, which is the code-mixing used by students majoring in English Education.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, this study aims to (1) examine the use of code-mixing in WhatsApp groups of online English classes at an Indonesian university, and (2) describe the functions of using code-mixing. To answer the first research question, this study employed the theory of types of code-mixing by [Muysken \(2000, as cited in Putri et al., 2021\)](#).

Then, to answer the second research question, this study employed the theory of functions of using code-mixing by Marasigan (1983, as cited in Putri et al., 2021). The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical benefits to enrich the knowledge of sociolinguistics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The research object was code-mixing, and the research sample was the code-mixing in a conversation from a WhatsApp group chat of online English classes at a university in one semester. The data were collected by using a non-participatory observation method by observing conversations in a WhatsApp group chat. The collected data were then analyzed using textual analysis. The results of the data analysis are presented descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed three types of code-mixing used in online English classes on a WhatsApp group chat and five functions of using code-mixing in the WhatsApp group chat of online English classes.

Types of code-mixing in WhatsApp Group chats of online English classes at a university

This study revealed that there are three types of code-mixing used in WhatsApp group chats of online English classes. The findings of the first research question are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Code-Mixing in WhatsApp Group Chats of Online English Classes

No	Types	Data	Frequency of Occurrence
1	Insertion	<p>[26/05 10:39 am] Student1: <i>Prtanyaan yg indah ini buat quali ga si? Nanya research kan ya</i></p> <hr/> <p>[26/05 10:50 am] Student2: <i>Seminarnya make up tah ini ganti jadwal Miss Memey</i></p> <hr/> <p>[18/04 8:36 am] Lecturer1: <i>karena biasanya perempuan punya preference sendiri</i></p>	12
2	Alternation	<p>[28/05 11:09 am] Student3: <i>nanti menyusul, lagi cross check dulu</i></p> <hr/> <p>[04/04 8:08 am] Lecturer 2: <i>second, this is our seventh meeting. Next week, there won't be any presentation because we will be serious in conducting the research. untuk membuat mini research tidak bisa simsalabim jadi. perlu proses yang panjang. jadi harus dipersiapkan dari sekarang. sudah dari 4 minggu yang lalu saya minta kalian mengisi form tema penelitian apa, namun blm diisi. Baru Riskha & Sinta.</i></p> <hr/> <p>[04/04 8:02 am] Lecturer: <i>We will start in 5 minutes. Silakan wudu atau cuci muka dulu in case you just woke.</i></p>	16
3	Congruent Lexicalizati	[10/6 12:47 pm] Student4: <i>Teman2 yg berkendala waktu upload file UAS boleh langsung di list aja ya di group</i>	3

on	sebelah
[11/10/2021 8:33 am] Student5: <i>Penyelenggaranya suruh mute aja</i>	
[15/06 11:15 am] Lecturer: <i>datanya cuma segini?</i>	

Table 1 shows 31 data on the types of code-mixing used in WhatsApp group chats of English classes at one a university in Indonesia. Three data 12 belong to the insertion type, 16 data belong to the alternation type, and three belong to the congruent lexicalization type.

The first type is insertion. It is one of the types of code-mixing which is used by inserting another language into the core language in the form of a word or clause, or phrase. In the table above, there is an example "*Pertanyaan yg indah ini buat quali ga si? Nanya research kan ya*" From the sentence, it can be seen that there is an insertion of the word 'research' which comes from English and is used in the main language, that is Indonesian. Another example is "*Seminarnya make up tah ini ganti jadwal Miss Memey*". In that sentence there is an insertion of a phrase in the form of 'make-up'. In the last example that is "*karena biasanya perempuan punya preference sendiri*" in the sentence, there is an insertion of the word 'preference' in the main language.

The second type is alternation. It is the use of one language between the structures of another language in terms of clauses. In the table above, we can see that in the sentence "*nanti menyusul, lagi cross-check dulu*". There is the word *crosscheck* which is English in the use of the main language, that is Indonesian. In the sentence, there is a clause that is still contained in one phrase. The second example is in the sentence "*second, this is our seventh meeting. Next week there won't be any presentation because we will be serious about conducting the research. untuk membuat mini research tidak bisa simsalabim jadi. perlu proses yang panjang. jadi harus dipersiapkan dari sekarang. Sudah dari 4 minggu yang lalu saya minta kalian mengisi form tema penelitian apa, namun blm diisi. Baru Riskha & Sintia.*" In this sentence, there are phrases in English that are used in the core language, that is Indonesian.

The third type is congruent lexicalization, It is a code-mixing that mixes other languages where the language is commonplace or is included in the absorption language of the main language, for example, "*Temen2 yg berkendala waktu upload file UAS boleh langsung di list aja ya di group sebelah*". In this example, it can be seen that the words 'file', 'list', and 'group' are included in the lexicalization because the words are commonly used in the main language, Indonesian. The second example is "*datanya Cuma segini?*" The word *data* is included in congruent lexicalization because the word *data* is an absorption word.

Functions of code-mixing in WhatsApp Group chats of online English classes

This study revealed that there are five functions of code-mixing used in WhatsApp group chats of online English classes. The findings of the second research question are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Functions of Code-Mixing in WhatsApp Group Chats of Online English Classes

No	Data	Functions
1	[18/04 8:20 am] Student6: Sure miss, <i>sepertinya lihat Qori begitu</i>	Address

	excited, <i>jadi pengen coba baca juga.</i>	Specification
2	[18/04 8:21 am] Lecturer: <i>sangat relate.</i>	Personalization and Objectification
3	[18/04 8:28 am] Lecturer: after this, Agus Agung Zouhal Rojer <i>akan lebih banyak komen</i>	Address Specification
4	[18/04 8:36 am] Lecturer: <i>karena biasanya perempuan punya preference sendiri</i>	Personalization and Objectification
5	[04/04 8:02 am] Lecturer: We will start in 5 minutes. <i>Silakan wudu atau cuci muka dulu</i> in case you just woke.	Interjection
6	[04/04 8:08 am] Lecturer : second, this is our seventh meeting. next week there won't be any presentation because we will be serious in conducting the research. <i>untuk membuat mini research tidak bisa simsalabim jadi. perlu proses yang panjang. jadi harus dipersiapkan dari sekarang. sudah dari 4 minggu yang lalu saya minta kalian mengisi form tema penelitian apa, namun blm diisi. Baru Riskha & Sinta.</i>	Message Qualification
7	[04/04 9:24 am] Lecturer: time is up everyone. I'll be away. <i>sekali lagi ambil topik dan konsep yang simple saja ya untuk mini research ini. silakan jika ada pertanyaan ketik di grup agar yg lain ikut membaca. nanti saya jawab agak lambat</i>	Message Qualification
8	[18/04 8:08 am] Student7: <i>Mahasiswa of ICT in Thailand, male dan female memiliki learning strategies dan learning styles yang berbeda. Then, ada bbrp kata yg dpt menjadi contoh dlm fenomena "language creating gender stereotypes"</i>	Quotation
9	[18/04 8:22 am] Lecturer: <i>contoh bagaimana pria berkomunikasi, wanita berkomunikasi. then you guys will learn that both genders have different psychology, have different ways of communication, and use different language to express.</i>	Address Specification
10	[18/04 8:29 am] Student8: <i>Ini lbh ke arah speak up di public si.</i>	Personalization and Objectification
11	[13/06 1:44 pm] Lecturer: <i>tapi jika menjelaskan --> This research has found sixteen data. The teacher frequently combine two languages.</i>	Personalization and Objectification
12	[18/06 5: 38] Student 9: <i>Temen2 yg berkendala waktu upload file UAS boleh langsung di list aja ya di group sebelah.</i>	Address Specification

Of the seven types of functions using code-mixing, five functions are in line with those from [Marasigan \(1983, as cited in Putri et al., 2021\)](#). They were (1) quotation, (2) address specification, (3) interjection, (4) message qualification, (5) personalization, and objectification.

From the data, two belong to the quotation function, one example is “Mahasiswa of ICT in Thailand, male dan female memiliki learning strategies dan learning styles yang berbeda. Then, ada bbrp kata yg dpt menjadi contoh dlm fenomena ‘language creating gender stereotypes’”. In this example, there was a quote which is an example of the phenomenon. Quotations used in a conversation included in the quotation function.

The second function of using code-mixing revealed in the study is address specification, the function which is used to convey messages to more specific people. Four data were found to belong to this function, the following is one example: “contoh bagaimana pria berkomunikasi, wanita berkomunikasi. Then you guys will learn that both genders have different psychology, have different ways of communication, and use different language to express.” In this example, some questions were directed? to students.

The third identified function is interjection. Interjection is a function where the use of the word “we” changes to the word “they” or vice versa. From the data in the table, there was one that belonged to interjection: “We will start in 5 minutes. Silakan wudu atau cuci muka dulu in case you just woke”.

The fourth identified function is message qualification. There are 11 data that fall under the message qualification with one example being “second, this is our seventh meeting. Next week there won't be any presentation because we will be serious about conducting the research. Untuk membuat mini research tidak bisa simsalabim jadi. Perlu proses yang 79anjang. Jadi harus dipersiapkan dari sekarang. Sudah dari 4 minggu yang lalu saya minta kalian mengisi form tema penelitian apa, namun blm diisi. Baru Riskha & Sinta”. Message qualification is a function that involves the use of time in code-mixing.

The last function that the study found is personalization and objectification. Personalization and objectification is a function of code-mixing which contains an argument from the speaker. There were eight data classified under personalization and objectification with one example being: “karena biasanya perempuan punya preference sendiri”.

CONCLUSIONS

In conducting online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most frequently used media is the WhatsApp application. In WhatsApp group chats, there is the use of code-mixing. Several types of code-mixing were found in communication in WhatsApp group chats, namely insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. In the use of code-mixing, seven functions of using code-mixing were found, namely quotation, address specification, repetition, interjection, message qualification, personalization, objectification, and facility expression. From the analysis conducted on the WhatsApp group chats for English classes in this study, it was found that there are three types of code-mixing (i.e., insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization) and there are also five out of the seven functions of using code-mixing. The identified functions are quotation, address specification, interjection, message qualification, personalization and objectification. This study only investigated code-mixing in WhatsApp group chats of online English classes at one university. Therefore, further research is suggested to investigate the phenomenon of code-mixing in online English classes using more data from several universities to obtain a more extensive? phenomenon.

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