

# **Emotional Switching in Children’s Speech: A Case Study of Emotion Change Causing a Code-Switching in Education Domain**

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**Abstract:** Children have started experiencing and expressing emotion at home, whereas it is a different way in Kindergarten. A certain situation and circumstance in Kindergarten evoke children undergoing and presenting emotion differently. The emotion stimulation influences children to choose different codes, and switching is a useable way of conveying emotion that reflects their emotion change. Therefore, this present study is conducted with purposive sampling to highlight 52 children’s switching intensively through classes in a Kindergarten domain. The observation and analysis concern on children’s language choice, switching, suprasegmental, and physical reaction by social constructivist approach. This present study summarizes that children tend to switch codes when experiencing anger to peers due to their contradiction perspective, and fear of teacher due to a conflict made by them. Their emotion changes as well when the topic is related to family background, especially mothers. In brief, their opposite points of view with the interlocutor and a certain topic cause emotional switching.

**Keywords:** *code-switching, children emotion, emotional switching, language choice, education domain*

## **Introduction**

The way to express emotion at home and kindergarten is different due to the exposure of public dominance language in each domain. The situation in Kindergarten stimulates a certain expression of emotion, and a home language is frequently utilized to present intense emotion in school (Pavlenko, 2012), or their first language is more preferred to convey emotion (Harris, Gleason, & Aycicegi, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study is (1) to reveal in what situation children experiencing emotional switching in Kindergarten domain; (2) to disclose children’s language choice in emotional switching in Kindergarten domain; and (3) to figure out factors triggering children’s emotion change that cause a code-switching in Kindergarten domain. The term emotion is defined into varied approaches, such as psychological, biological, neurological, and social. Rosaldo’s definition of emotion is more reasonable. He states that “emotions are both feeling and cognitive constructions, linking person, action, and sociological milieu” (Shweder & LeVine, 1984: 304). Language mediates those aspects to express emotion because in any condition, language becomes a tool which can precisely recognize what emotion is experienced by the speaker (Wierzbicka and Harkins, 2001: 2-3). In other words, language constructs emotion culturally (Panayiotou, 2004: 125) and “language use is emotionally charged and switching code does something to the speaker” (Ladegaard, 2018: 711). By language, a listener is accurately able to recognize the speaker’s emotion change, and by switching, a speaker presents his emotion expression, including emotional language or language dominant. For instance, someone utilizes his second language (hereafter L2) to communicate but using his first language (hereafter L1) to express an emotion, while someone applies L1 in any communication and any emotion. Emotions of human beings are varied, and each has a different level of feeling. Parrot (2001) classifies human emotion into sadness, happiness, surprise, anger,

and fear. This classification can be categorized into positive emotion (happiness and surprise) and negative emotion (sadness, anger, fear, and surprise). Surprise emotion is possibly in both depending on a reaction of surprise effect. These emotions are part of daily communication from birth, and for bilinguals, switching is a strategy to convey their expression of emotion. Besides, by using different words in switching, the interlocutor will notice that the change of the language use by the speaker means something changes into his emotion.

## **Methodology**

As an Indonesian minority ethnic, Chinese-Indonesia is the biggest group of foreign ethnic. Thus, a purposive sampling was applied to recruit millennial Chinese-Indonesian children as the sample of the research, and the main reason involving them is they are a minority who has a bigger linguistic repertoire, such as Heritage language like Hokkien, Hakka, etcetera, (hereafter HL), Mandarin language as the national language of China (hereafter ML), Bahasa Indonesia language as the national language of Indonesia (hereafter BL), Baso Palembang Sari-sari as a daily language of Palembang people (hereafter BPS), and even English language as a part of curriculum of international language (hereafter EL). This language circumstance stimulates Chinese-Indonesian children to become bilingual or trilingual. Palembang city has the biggest population of Chinese-Indonesian, and therefore Chinese Kindergarten was chosen as a criterion of a group of Chinese-Indonesian children. The selected kindergarten is a middle social class of school, and the reasons for choosing Chinese Kindergarten in Palembang city are, first, it is a kindergarten school hosted by most Chinese-Indonesian generation (pure or mix blooded); second, the age of 4 to 6 years old has reached the ability of reflecting his own emotion (Santrock, 2007: 17); third, children are the second or above generation of millennial Chinese-Indonesian; and fourth, the school can be attended by high, middle, or low socioeconomic class of family.

A total sample in a Chinese Kindergarten is 262 children divided into A and B levels. The total sample consists of 63.9 % of BL as the mother tongue, 26.4 % of BPS as the mother tongue, and 9.7 % of HL as the mother tongue. These percentages denote that the dominance languages in that Chinese Kindergarten domain are BL and BPS. An intense observation was employed to two B classes consisted of 26 children of each as subsample. The B level classes were chosen considering children's communicative competence and social intimate between peers as well as student and teacher. Children's communication in both classes was observed and recorded 12 days and 3 hours per day as well as interviewing several related parents concerning their children's language background at home and elsewhere. The observation and analysis considerations in children's speeches are language choice, language switching, suprasegmental, and physical reaction of emotion such as facial reaction and/or hands reaction. In analyzing children's emotional switching, Averill's social constructivist approach was applied. It is an emotion analysis correlating to social, psychology, and biology system (Averill, 1982: 19).

## **Result**

### Example 1

- (1) Sa: *Buk, cak ini ye?*  
(Mam, is this like this?)
- (2) Sa: *Ibuk, boleh libur abang bosen?*  
(Madam, may I have a day off? I am bored)
- (3) T: *Nanti kalo SD mana ada libur lagi.*

- (4) Sa: (There is no more days off if you are in Elementary School)  
*Kenapa?*  
(Why?)
- (5) T: *Iyalah.*  
(Yes, definitely)
- (6) Sa: *Eh. SD itu liburnyo lebih banyak lho.*  
(Eh. Elementary School has indeed more days off)  
(berbicara dengan suara yang lebih keras yang mengundang teman-temannya untuk merespon)
- (7) Si: *Engga. Liburnya paling dikit.*  
(No, it has not. The day off is the least)
- (8) Sa: *Woo... (sneering).*  
(sneering)
- (9) Si: ***Kau dak tau.***  
**(You do not know)**

The main speaker is Sa whom interlocutor is T (his teacher) and Si (his classmate), while the main topic is “day off school”. The first utterance of Sa (1) was in BPS and about a class task. He then switched into BL in his second utterance (2), but with a normal emotion. He switched because he changed the topic. The short conversation continued between Sa and T in BL. The third participant (Si) existed to interrupt the conversation. She joined the conversation because she had an opposite perception with Sa’s previous utterance (6). Her speech (7) was in a normal sense of the informative sentence, but a response given by Sa to Si’s utterance was a sneering. As she got a negative response, she experienced an emotion change due to a contradiction of opinion. She turned to an anger emotion. Therefore, she gave feedback utterance with emotional switching by utilizing BPS (9). Her emotional switching was uttered with high tone, rising-falling intonation, and word stress, that is *kau* “you” stressed to affirm contextual meaning. She chose BPS in her emotional switching as it is her language use with peers. She chose BPS in her emotional switching to express emotion change to the interlocutor, her classmate. Despite, Si’s parents reported that her L1 and dominant language in daily are BL. Thus, the use of BPS in Si’s emotional switching is highly related to her interlocutor.

#### Example 2

- (10) T: *Abang.* (calling)
- (11) *Abang di rumah ga pernah ngomong, ya?*  
(Have you ever no talking at home, haven’t you?)
- (12) Sa: *Ga.*  
(No, I have not)
- (13) T: *Jadi di rumah ngapain?*  
(Then, what do you do at home?)
- (14) Sa: *Di rumah aja. Main.*  
(Just stay at home. Playing)
- (15) T: *Diem aja?*  
(No voicing?)
- (16) *Jadi kalo misalnya suaranya besar Mama marah?*  
(If you speak aloud, will your mom get mad?)
- (17) Sa: ***Iyo.***  
(Yes, she will)
- (18) T: *Jadi suaranya di rumah gimana?*  
(So, how is your voice?)
- (19) Sa: ***Katek suaro. Diem bae. Main, nonton, makan.***

- (No voice. Just be quiet. Playing. Watching. Eating)
- (20) T: *Dak pernah ngomong?*  
(Are you never speaking up?)
- (21) Sa: ***Dak.***  
(No, I am not)

That is a long conversation between Sa and T in the class. It occurred in class activity and was started by the T's question. The question emerged as Sa is the most communicative person in the class. He almost exclusively makes noises in the class. As a result, T investigated Sa's attitude at home for comparison. The question caused an emotional switching in Sa's speech. He felt an emotion change as a question was related to his mother, especially the mother's anger (16), which made him feel a fear. The emotional switching was emphasized by a low pitch voice in his utterances (17 to 21). It means that the topic pressed his emergence of negative emotion. Sa's L1 is BL, whereas he utilized BPS in his emotional switching. However, the only reason for using BPS in his emotional switching is to express his unordinary emotion, in spite of the competency and frequency of his BL and BPS use.

#### Example 3

- (22) Sa : *Ibuk botol minum Vanny tumpah.*  
(Madam, Vanny's drink bottle is spilled out)
- (23) T : *Dari kemarin, ya. Kemarin sini siapa yang numpahin?*  
(It happens since yesterday. Who spilled out here yesterday?)
- (24) Si : *Bukan ditumpahin ibuk. Tadi jatuh botol minum Fani.*  
(It was not spilled out, mam. My bottle was felt down)  
(T was walking away from Si's seat taking something to wipe)
- (25) Si : ***Keluari dulu. Keluari dulu bangkunyo***  
(Take it out first. Take the chair out first.)  
(Talking to his friend)

The conversation occurred in a break of having meal time and an accident was happening. A friend of Si was reporting that accident to the teacher (22). By that report, the situation was turning to stressful for Si due to her involvement. That accident was raising a conflict for her, and the conflict of spilling water out was generating a fear emotion toward her teacher. The teacher's anger response or reaction that referred to a vexation feeling raised her fear of emotion. The fear of emotion can be observed from the tone of her voice in her confirmation utterance (24). It was a low pitch utterance with falling intonation. After the left of the teacher, she felt normal emotion again and then switched her language into BPS to talk to her friend. Her facial expression represented her returning emotion. In that phenomenon, Si produced an out-emotional switching. It means that her switching from BL to BPS is a returning emotion into a normal or positive emotion. She utilized BL in her emotional speech (24), and then switched to BPS as a returning emotion. She chose BL in her emotional speech due to the interlocutor, her teacher, and she switched to BPS as there was no more psychological pressure, and it is her convenient language to communicate with peers, which fortunately belongs to her first language besides her competency of Hokkien, her HL. A language that exposes her more at home is BPS. The majority of students in that Kindergarten utilize BPS to peers as well. Therefore, her out-emotional switching appeared in BPS.

## **Discussion**

Kindergarten is a formal education in Indonesia, but the formality is laxer. It tends to be an informal situation. As a result, any student, as well as a teacher, can speak any language in the Kindergarten domain. There is no (social) obligation for all students to use BL as a language of instruction of learning context in the class or this domain. However, BL and BPS frequently expose children to that Chinese kindergarten in Palembang city. It creates patterns of students' language use. First, BL is used to the teacher, and second, BPS is uttered to peer, but these patterns are not absolute. It means that different choice of code indicates different emotion (Wierzbicka, 2004; Dewaele, 2006) as it reflects the speaker's expression, especially feeling (Wilson, 2008 in Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016: 89). That informal situation and the exposure of both BL and BPS raise students to talk about any topic with any language as well as teachers and students to talk about an emotional topic. Teachers of Kindergarten are a well-known interlocutor for students so that an emotional topic is possibly discussed. It is also supported by teachers' habits as the Indonesian culture of questioning about students themselves or their family recent condition. As a result, the emotional topics can trigger children to switch language to another. Nevertheless, it still depends on the participants.

Participants in the Kindergarten domain, especially in the class activity are limited to teachers and peers. However, any utterance of them may contain a "referential content" of emotion change (Pavlenko, 2012: 409). It means that by a certain form of language and words, someone's utterance can affect other's feelings becoming a negative emotion. Thus, interlocutor becomes one of several factors that set emotional switching. As the impact, the emotional switching can happen in two ways, they are in-emotional switching and out-emotional switching. In-emotional switching refers to a change from positive or normal emotion to negative emotion. In contrast, out-emotional switching is the reverse of in-emotional switching. A formal education language (BL) is usually applied by teacher-student pair, whereas an informal language (BPS) is frequently employed by student to student. Therefore, it possibly produces out-emotional switching. Children choose a code in emotional switching depending on their language convenience. When children experience an emotion change, they will choose a psychologically or linguistically comfortable language. It does not mean that the convenient language is his mother tongue or first language but it more refers to his dominance language in daily. Pavlenko (Dewaele, 2010: 192-193) shows that "language dominance is the key factor affecting language choices, overall and in emotional expression". Language dominance refers to a proficient language as a speaker needs a language that can facilitate him to express his condition of emotion change. Besides, children manifest their emotion change and emotional expression meaning by adding a tone, intonation, pitch, or even word stress in switching. As a result, the addition of these suprasegmental variables in children's utterance constructs an interlocutor's knowledge in understanding the speaker's emotion change.

## **Conclusion**

The use of different codes in different emotions depends on children's intentionality, and the choice of language in emotional switching relates to the speaker's language dominance or proficient language. Children may apply their dominance language to a certain interlocutor unless that is not their convenient and proficient language to use. It is the aspects of language background that affect children's language choices in their emotional switching. On the other side, factors triggering the emergence of children's emotional switching in the Kindergarten domain are interlocutors and topics supported by the informal situations. Both can cause a

switching if it touches the children's negative feeling like an opposite opinion or response, and/or question, which impacts to a negative emotion that tends to result in fear or anger. Accordingly, such a situation and factors result in two ways of emotional switching: in-emotional switching and out-emotional switching.

### **Acknowledgments**

The present study is a part of the author's dissertation in the Doctoral Study Program of Humanities Science, Faculty of Cultural Science, Gadjah Mada University. The author would like to thank his team promotor, Prof. Dr. I Dewa Putu Wijana and Dr. Sajarwa, M.Hum, for supporting and mentoring his dissertation as well as developing this present study topic.

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