

# *Code Mixing as Woman Identity:*

## *A Case on Captions of Hijab Online Shop in Instagram*

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**Abstract**—This paper deals with the fact that special code-mixing is used by a seller in *Hijab Princess* online to write captions for promoting her woman products on Instagram. The code mixing, which is employed in this case involve words or phrases identified as woman language. The data were taken from documented captions, which accompany the product of *Hijab Princess* online from Indonesia. The data focus on Indonesian clauses or sentences mixed by English language. The result of study demonstrates that code mixing in the captions is the woman language features; empty adjective, special color terms, super polite form generally and special addressee used by women but commonly avoided by men. In this case, those features as a marker are used to identify the seller and the buyer as a certain group with distinctive language features. Internal and external factors determine the process of certain language features to be a marker of the group as well.

**Keywords**—code mixing; instagram; woman language; identity

### I. INTRODUCTION

Code Mixing is one of phenomena in language contact, which is inevitable when the society speaks more than language. Many scholars have dedicated their work in this area especially in the basis oral production [1]–[5]. After social media widely spread all over the world, code mixing can be found in written texts. In social media, people can create conversation as what they do in a real spoken activity in the written form. Halim and Maros [6] said that code-switching is a natural phenomenon, which is in the form of not in bilingual speech. He confirms that this kind of speech is electronic discourse which should be accepted as functional sociolinguistics as well as communicative tool.

One of the popular social media, Instagram is used by more 800 millions being Instagram active user. Instagram is a photo and video sharing application letting users take videos and photos, apply digital filters, and share them with various social networking services [7]. As the advent of the internet goes by, this application is also used as an online media promotion through video or picture. One of the business that uses Instagram as a media promotion online is *Hijab Princess* online shop. *Hijab Princess* online shop sells many kinds of *hijab* or veil products for the women. In Instagram the seller tells the information about the specification of products in the captions placed below the

picture. In the caption, the seller promotes her products using such an attractive language that it can attract reader attention on Instagram.

The way people use the language is different. Every person has his/her own way in using language. It can be seen between the women and men. Men have their own way in promoting their products on Instagram. The language used by men is shorter and simpler than women. Most of women sellers, whether they sell *hijab* or other things, they often use code mixing in their language use. Recent studies on women language clearly pointed out that females use code-mixing more than males [8]. Based on the language phenomenon found in the caption accompanying the product of *Hijab Princess* on Instagram, this study has an aim to discuss code mixing as a women identity.

Code mixing is a term which is used by bilingual people. Poplack and Walker [9] stated that code mixing is all cases where grammatical features and lexical item from two languages appear together in a sentence. He divides code mixing into three types; insertion, alternation and lexical congruent. He also said that insertion is the process of code-mixing that is grasped as something which is similar to borrowing: the insertion of an alien lexical or phrasal category into a given structure. This type occurs within a word, abbreviation and phrase.

Rohardiyanto [10] mentions that the factors influencing people on using code mixing are divided into two factors. Those are attitudinal and non-linguistic factors which attitudinal factor deals with role, variety and the will to explain and to interpret and non-linguistic factor include social degree, education level, age and the situation. While the other study by Nuzula [11] analyzes the factors of code mixing as internal and external factors, which internal factor means getting impulse from her/himself and external factor means people get impulse from their environment. Internal factor indicates that someone borrows a word from another language because of the impulse from herself/himself. This factor is caused by low frequency words, pernicious homonym, and synonym. The other is external factor including the development of knowledge and new culture, social value, and oversight [11], [12]. This theory explains why people must borrow words from other language.

The use of code mixing may show individual or group identity. Every human being has a personal identity related to oneself as an individual and simultaneously become a part of group identities. One can belong to several social groupings at the same time such as family group, gender group, region group, educational group, etc. Thomas, et.al. [13] states that social groups and communities use language as a means of identifying their members', a concept which of course works both ways, showing to the construction of the in- and out-groups by the use of language, as a consequence including members and excluding outsiders. Tabouret and Keller [14] give an example of relationship between personal identity and social identity. In this case, language features are the link, which unites individual and social identities all together. The features refer to the entire part of language use, from phonetic features to lexical units, syntactic structures, and personal names. Social identity embodies developing histories over time and become associated with particular of linguistics actions to realize the activities.

In society, women can place themselves within social groups using certain language as a marker of membership because linguistics choices of an individual make shape their identity and inclusion in a social group. As part of gender group, women have special features, which distinguish them with men.

According to Lakof [15], women language has ten language features: lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjective, special terms (precise color terms), intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super-polite form, avoidance of strong swear word, and emphatic stress. Hedges expressed by women can be in the form of the modal (e.g.: could, might, etc), lexical (e.g.: perhaps, maybe, etc) or such particle pragmatics (e.g.: well, I think you know, like, etc). He also said that there is typical sentence intonation pattern among women that is adding question intonation in various statements context. He also stated that women prefer to ask questions and also often use rising intonation on declarative sentence to show feelings, emotions, or his empathy toward something when they avoid saying something surely.

Empty adjective, furthermore, shows an approval or admiration about something which tends to be an emotional reaction rather than special information, such as: sweet, cute, lovely, etc. Women also use special terms especially in giving detail color name. Nude, lavender, beige, and maroon are the examples of color term, which are popular used by women. In contrary, men prefer using the basic color terms, such as purple, brown, and red.

Women often use polite language which shows respect to the tradition. Holmes [16] said that question tag, apology and praise as the characteristic of politeness. This discovery shows that women more often use polite strategy than men because women are more aware of their statues than men. She said that women use cursing word more polite, smooth, and painless version, such as: goodness, dear, honey and

good heavens and women also tend to use stressful word to reinforce the meaning of speech. In short; women like to emphasize the meaning of speech, such as: "It was *amazing* performance"

From the explanation above, individual or group identity can be identified based on language features used by someone as individual or someone as a part of group. Code mixing is linguistic behavior of bilingual speaker to insert words or phrases from other languages because the words of phrases from different language are special terms. It is needed to recognize particular individual as a member of group.

## II. METHOD

This study examines how code mixing is identified as woman identity in captions of *Hijab Princess* online shop. The research uses descriptive method to identify, describe and generate explanation of the captions. The data were collected from the captions accompanying the product of *Hijab Princess online shop* with documentation technique. The data in the form of word, abbreviation, and phrase are then collected by logging in Instagram application. All sentences with code mixing were documented and then put in to a table. Then, the types of code-mixing was classified based on the type of code mixing and analyzed referring to [9] and [15].

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Code mixing is a phenomenon that happens to bilingual or multilingual community. In this case, the seller mixes Indonesian language with English. English is international language where in Indonesia it is used as second language. The exposure of foreign language especially English from any media makes everyone easier to acquire English words or phrases. They just imitate them first and the use those in everyday; even though only a single English word in Indonesian sentence.

In *Hijab Princess* online, sellers prefer to write captions which show femininity or feminine side using diction/ language characteristics that are dominated by 'empty adjective, precise color term, and polite form because the products they are selling are especially for women. In addition, women sellers like to use rambling structure of language. Therefore, it is not directly on points. Sometimes, emoticon to express the feeling is used following the captions. They are all language features used by women sellers which are much more than used by men sellers.

Uniquely, the woman sellers apply English words to show the woman language features; not in Bahasa or Indonesian language. The English words are inserted into Bahasa and mix them.

The following is the examples of code mixing with women language features.

#### A. 'Empty' Adjective

In the caption accompanying *Hijab Princess* online shop is found several 'empty' adjective words which are used by the woman as the seller, such as: exclusive, chic, elegant, phenomenal, fav, and fresh. These lexical items are used several times in different captions. The seller inserts English word in the middle and in the end of Indonesia language sentence. Those are the adjective words, which are usually used by the woman. The words "chic and classy" have the same meaning. It means *a condition where a woman looks stylish* and exclusive means *limited*, those words are almost never used by the male especially when the buyer of online shop is a man. The following is the example of empty adjective used in one of the captions

*"Inovasi jahitan berbentuk zigzag nan **chic** lagi elegan yang membuat penampilanmu semakin **classy** dan **exclusive**."*

Basically, adjective can be interpreted as a word used to describe a noun or pronoun. In language and gender studies, there are several adjective terms which are termed by Lakoff as 'empty' adjectives. These terms are used to express an admiration of a person or an object. Adjective words that give a limited impression to woman only are *adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine, cute, gorgeous, etc.* Then finally those words are regarded as the words, which characterize as language used by female groups. The choice of empty adjective in captions shows the special women personality. It allures the woman buyers with capturing the view of high level women characters.

#### B. Precise color terms

Women are more precisely in determining color names than men, for example: maroon, nude, lavender, gray yellowish, smoke green and golden gold. Those words are often used by the women. On the other hand, men almost never use those words. The word "Nude and golden gold" are the names of color, but these color names only used by the women. Women are very detail in determining color names. Men will ignore the differences of those colors. It is because the women are more details in determining or naming something. It can be said that woman is more expert in making special terms. The following is examples of the use of precise color terms in the caption

*"**NUDE!** Warna yang selalu best selling di type hijab apapun yg *Hijab Princess* produksi dan selalu wajib direstock."*

*"Warna **Golden Gold** ini juga warna baru yang belum pernah ada sebelumnya lho"*

#### C. Super polite form

In the captions there are several polite form expressions that are found in the caption accompanying product of *Hijab Princess* online shop by using word "please" and thanks emoticon. The word "please" is usually used by people to request something politely.

*"Dan **please** jangan gusar, cemas, panic, dan minta2 nomor resi ke admin."*

Polite attitude deals with women. Women tend to use the most polite form (like the word above) when interact with others. The use of polite form speech is regarded as a speech that should be attached by women. According to [15] women also have to use the expression like *please and thank yes* often to maintain social conventions.

#### D. Special Addressee

Princess is referential lexical item used in *Hijab Princess* online to address the customers. The lexical choice refers to only special gender, female and the admiration of the seller to the customers because actually the reference of Princess goes to a noble woman. The buyers would like to make the customers feel in the highest position. She identifies the group by labeling and appreciating the customer as if they all come from the high class level.

The use of woman English language features is not merely without reason but some internal and external factors make the features employed in code mixing. First, someone plays code because the words which often used are easy to remember and the meanings are more stable. The use of words from other language, in this case English, which have the same meaning as Bahasa, makes the reader easy to remember the speakers' meanings. Even though, the words come from foreign language. In this case, the low frequency word is considered as internal factor, for example, the word "**please**" in Indonesia language means "**tolong**". The word "**tolong**" is often used when people get serious problem or in the dangerous situation, than the word "**please**" in the sentence above is as request mark only. So from this contexts the word "**tolong**" is less appropriate to be used in that sentence. The word "**please**" in the sentence is used to say polite form in order to deliver the request to the customer by using the word "**please**".

Second, social value is the next concern to use English word in captions. It will exalt the product in higher-level prestige. The seller uses foreign language such as **classy, exclusive, and chic** to show her social status. Mostly, this term is known by educated people. There is an interesting thing in this case, the seller admits all her customers are educated people or from high class level. In Indonesia, the stereotypes as educated people are given to them who understand foreign language. Foreign language is practically considered in this culture to express an identity of membership of elite and educated woman [17]. In this case, the seller tries to identify and specialized the position of her online shop as distinguished online shop with special woman market.

Third, oversight makes the speaker take words from other languages because many limitation of words the speakers have in their own language (Bahasa). Those factors cause sellers to use certain women English language features as a marker of women identity in *Hijab Princess* online. For example **Nude** in Bahasa means *warna kulit* (complexion or skin tone). However, it is not elegant to use

the term of *warna kulit* to refer the color. **Nude** is a lexical choice to show precise color elegantly. Furthermore, the membership of the group in *Hijab Princess* online is not mutually exclusive. It means that one can and does belong to several groups at a time, even though she is a member of *Hijab Princess* online. Using precise color terms in English is important to identify this group which is probably not similar to how other woman *hijab* online shop labels the color terms.

Therefore, code mixing is used in *Hijab Princess* online shop because it is needed to enhance interaction between the seller and customers. Moreover, it is used to determine the social function as explained before.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The finding of this study proves that code-mixing strategy using woman language features can be the marker of women identity. The sellers express the femininity using code mixing. The code mixing involves woman language features such as, polite-form, 'empty' adjective, and precise color terms used to express woman identity, which is not employed by men. Low frequency, social value and also oversight are the essential factors to determine the features as the marker of group identity. In this case, the use of femininity in code mixing help the seller to identify that the products she offers is for special women from a distinguish class.

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