

# ***Student's Perception on The Use of Code-Crossing in The Online Classroom Interaction (Zoom Cloud Meetings)***

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**Abstract.** This research aims to explore the phenomena of code-crossing in the teaching of English as a foreign language. It cannot be denied that in the classroom interaction, there are many aspects influencing the success of the communication between the lecturers/teachers and the students. One of the interesting aspects is the influence of social status differences which lead to the occurrence of code-crossing in the class. For that purpose, the study in this paper is directed to explore the perspectives on the use of code-crossing in the class, focusing on the online classroom interactions via Zoom Cloud Meetings. This research applied a qualitative research design taking one English class and their students at Universitas Negeri Makassar as the subject. The data of this paper were collected by employing a semi-structured interview by focusing on the students taken purposively among 40 students of the English class. The interview was also conducted through the online communication (WhatsApp chats). The data were analyzed descriptively by using qualitative model analysis ([Miles, et al 2014](#)). The result of the research shows that from the student's point of view, most students did code-crossing in the online classes because they wanted to respect and speak formally to the older people (lecturers and seniors). In addition, for some students interviewed by the researchers, they thought that the use of code-crossing could show politeness. Findings from this study are worthy of reading for English language teaching practitioners in their effort to create effective classroom interaction both in the face-to-face interaction and online interaction.

**Keywords:** Code-Crossing; Language And Power; Social Status; Students' Perception; Online Classes

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication as an important factor of human interaction is still an important discussion in research in today's society. Studies in terms of communication strategies have been conducted in different settings of communication and it was found that communication strategies are needed to create effective interaction and to solve the problems in communication (Lenhart, et al 2010; Somsai & Intaraprasert 2011; Aladdin 2012; Hua et al. 2012; Golob et al 2013; Floreddu & Cabiddu 2016; Mahmud 2017; Pavón Vázquez & Ramos Ordóñez 2019). All of these studies confirm that effective communication strategies are needed in order to find effective ways of communication so that ideas in communication can be transferred correctly.

Communication itself can be in the form of face-to-face communication and online communication. Nowadays, online communication has also become the focus of investigation in some areas of studies (Baruah 2012; Rodriguez et al 2012; Stapa & Shaari 2012; Zena et al 2012; Jiao et al 2015). It was, in fact, proved that online communication has influenced the human's activity and therefore, people can take advantage of it.

Studies have also shown the important roles of online communication in the field of education (Blattner & Fiori 2009; Grosseck 2009; DiVall & Kirwin 2012; Al-Ali 2014). One of the effects can be seen in the application of Zoom Cloud Meetings as media for English language teaching. In fact, the use of the Zoom Cloud Meetings as media for teaching has been observed recently (Nadezhda 2020; Sabaruddin et al 2020; Rosyid 2020). Zoom is a cloud based service which offers Meetings and Webinars and provides content sharing and video conferencing capability. It helps, for example English teachers bring their students together in a frictionless environment to get more done (Nadezhda, 2020). Therefore, it can be seen that the Zoom Cloud Meetings provide good opportunity for interactions for online classes. Through Zoom Cloud Meetings, teachers may explain the materials online and the students are listening through the online meetings. Feedbacks can also be directed online during the meeting or through the zoom chats.

For this purpose, this paper is directed to explore the phenomena of language use in the online classroom interactions conducted via Zoom Cloud Meetings. It cannot be denied that the languages used in these online classroom interactions can also become interesting focus of investigation. Sociolinguistic factors such as differences in age, sex, social status, intimacy, and context of the situation can become important factors that influence the effectiveness and efficiency of communication in these online interactions.

The influence of these sociolinguistic factors may exercise the practice of power and dominance which had been investigated for some cases and in fact, lead to the emergence of code-crossing, in which people who are communicating will choose certain code to speak to different interlocutors (Slavit 1997; Morand 2000; Milal 2011; Inan & Fidan 2012; Miller 2015). Recent studies in term of code-crossing had been conducted in many different contexts of communities (Dovchin 2019; Makoni 2019; Masters & Makoni 2019; Sultana 2019). Specific study on this area had been conducted in Javanese society (Wajdi 2009; Wajdi 2011). In terms of teacher and

student interaction, a study has been conducted in student consultation ([Ahmed & Maros 2017](#)) and in terms of face-to-face interaction in the class ([Simpuruh et al 2020](#)).

This study then focused on the use of code-crossing focusing on the online classes which had been conducted by the teacher and the students through Zoom Cloud Meetings. The focus is on revealing the perception on the use of code-crossing in the online class based on the students' perspectives. Findings from this study contribute significantly on the literature of sociolinguistics in educational contexts. It also becomes a reference for English teaching practitioners in order to create effective classroom interaction either in face-to-face interaction or in online interaction of the class.

## **RELATED LITERATURE**

The use of language to communicate is influenced by many factors. Age and social status are two things that are very important in forming communication patterns ([Kim 2003](#); [Saville-Troike 2003](#); [Haryono 2011](#); [Khasinah 2014](#)). It is confirmed that "individual personal attributes are intricately enmeshed into a complex scenario with other dimensions: one's own cultural values, the sociocultural context, language ideology, power relations, and the politics of language ([Kim, 2003](#)). It is also stated that individual differences such as social status, motivation, attitude, age, intelligence, aptitude, cognitive style, and personality are considered as factors that greatly influence someone in the process of his or her use of language ([Khasinah, 2014](#)). Therefore, those factors need to be taken into account in examining the use of language to communicate in one particular community.

In sociolinguistic and socio-pragmatic studies the term or theory of "code-crossing" has not been much talked about. Based on the findings of researchers, terms or theories of "language crossing" (code-crossing) has used to describe the use of a language that index groups to which the speaker does not claim membership ([Rampton, 1995](#)). Crossing is fundamentally a strategy speakers use to navigate between the twin injustices of over-emphasizing differences and ignoring them ([Rampton, 1998](#)). Language crossing involves "code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language that they are using (code switching into varieties that are not generally thought to belong to them)" ([Rampton, 1995](#)). Language crossing involves "a sense of movement across quite sharply felt social or ethnic boundaries, and it raises issues of legitimacy that participants need to reckon with in the course of their encounter". Language crossing is defined as "the use of language that is not normally thought to belong to the speaker" ([Rampton 2001](#); [Rampton 2014](#)).

To get clear understanding of code-crossing, the researcher starts this review of related literature by explaining about definition of code crossing from some sociolinguistics. Code-crossing, in a society with social stratification, is a social contract made and agreed by the members of society as an acknowledgment of the existence of two social groups or classes: superior and inferior. As part of society members and as social human beings, they could not get rid of communicating to each other. Communication behavior using speech levels in Javanese is well patterned. In asymmetrical communication, the participants use low and high code utterances to each other. It could be said that communication behavior in Javanese

speech community is a stable not temporary phenomenon. Once two participants use two different codes, the first participant uses low code (*ngoko*) and the second one employs high code (*krama*), they will maintain it forever as far as they communicate using Javanese. Once the participants build an asymmetrical communication, they will treat themselves as an inferior and superior. Once they agree to be superior and the other participant is inferior, they will build an asymmetrical communication: a superior uses low code and an inferior employs high code every time they communicate (wajdi, 2009).

In code-crossing, it is agreed that a superior has rights as well as obligations to use low code or *ngoko* and the inferior's rights and obligations is to use high code or *krama*. Seen from the communication point of view, code-crossing could be stated as communication contract between superior (who has rights and obligation to use low code) and inferior (has rights and obligation to employ high code). By having code-crossing, inferior group is allowed to trespass the border of superior's territory. In order to cross the border and great wall, the inferior has to possess and fulfill a certain qualification approved by the territory's owner or superior. The requirements which is both agreed is the use of *krama* as inferior's rights and obligation, and superior's rights and obligation is the use of *ngoko*. The use of *krama*, for inferior, is a kind of "driving license" in order to be able to enter an exclusive territory of superior. *Krama* utterance, when it is used by inferior before superior, is a kind of "password" which could be employed to open and access superior's territory. The use of *ngoko* and *krama* codes when they are used in code-crossing communication is a kind of "personal identification code", who the participants are and what roles of social class they perform (wajdi, 2009).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design. Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative research involves interpretive and naturalistic approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this study, the researchers described naturalistic settings as classroom interactions involving the teachers and students during the teaching and learning process. Due to pandemic situation in Indonesian society, the teaching activities have been organized to online teaching activities. This study was then conducted by observing some online teaching activities in order to get the description about the students' perception on the use of code-crossing in online classroom interactions.

This qualitative research was conducted at Universitas Negeri Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia in 2020. The subject of the research is one English class of students of English Department. It consists of forty students from undergraduate program of Universitas Negeri Makassar. To obtain the data, the researchers interviewed some of the students who joined online classes conducted via Zoom Cloud Meetings. The students, chosen purposively, were interviewed by using WhatsApp Chats. In analyzing the data, the researchers used interactive models, which include transcribing, analyzing, categorizing or classifying and interpreting data (Miles, et al 2014). After collecting the chats, the researchers then transcribed those chats. By observing the transcriptions, the researchers reduced the data by summarizing and choosing specific things referring to the research question. In this step, the data were

described and analyzed qualitatively concerning with the student's perception on the use of code crossing in the online class. The researchers then displayed the data and verified the research by making conclusion of data findings.

## FINDINGS

In the following, the researchers present the result of interview answered by the students through WhatsApp Chats. The researchers interviewed the students to know their perception on the use of code-crossing in online classroom interactions. These findings describe EFL students' perception toward the use of code-crossing in the EFL online classroom interaction. The extracts below demonstrate the chat between the interviewer and the participants. "I" is symbolized as interviewer and "P" is symbolized as a participant or student.

### 1.1. Extract 1: Using low and high code properly

I: Do you find any code-crossing in your online classroom interaction?

P: Yes, there is the use of code-crossing. **When I talk to my lecturer I used high code, but when I talk to my friend that younger than me I used low code.**

In extract 1 above, the lecturer and the students applied code-crossing to know their own high and low speech in the class. When interviewed, one of the students said, **"When I talk to my lecturer I used high code, but when I talk to my friends that younger than me I used low code"**. It implies that when using code-crossing in the online class, the speakers were allowed to use low or high code depending on whom they are talking to. In other words, when talking to older people, they can use high code, but when talking to the friend or people younger than they are, they can use low code. So, based on the student's perception, code-crossing was useful to be applied in the online class since it can be reference for students to communicate properly. Another reason is in the following extract:

### 1.2. Extract 2: Feeling comfortable in the class

I: In your opinion, is there any effect from using code-crossing in your online communication?

P: Emm... I think yes [there is] any effect.

I: What kind of effects?

P: If I am using code-crossing in the classroom ee.. **I could be more comfortable to have conversation with friends or with lecturer**

Based on extract 2 above, it shows that the students got the effect from the use of code-crossing in the online class. Through the interview, the student's response: **"I could be more comfortable to have conversations with friends or with lecturer"**. It means that by using code-crossing in the online classroom interaction, they can feel more comfortable when communicating with their lecturer and their friends. The use of code-crossing enables them to communicate properly so that they can feel comfortable in communicating. This reason is consistent with the following extract:

### 1.3. Extract 3: Creating good communication

I: How does the effect of code-crossing influence you?

P: I am using code-crossing because **I can create a good communication with someone. My parent teaches me to use high code for older people. We need to be polite as we polite our own parent, older brother or sister and older friends.**

In extract 3 above, the student also preferred using code-crossing as the way to create good communication in the online class. The student responded: **"I can create a good communication with someone. My parent teaches me to use high code for older people, we need to be polite as we polite our own parent, older brother or sister and older friends"**. In this sentence, the students expressed the reason for using code-crossing as the way to create good communication. Beside that we need to be polite. Again, the reason is that creating good communication is by the use of high code and low code properly depending on the persons they are talking to. In this case, code-crossing is one way for that purpose. A rather different reason can be seen in the following extract:

### 1.4. Extract 4: Keeping the solidarity

I: What kind of effect?

P: When I am using this low and high code **I can keep solidarity.**

In extract 4 above, it shows that one of the students got another effect from the use of code-crossing in the online class. As seen in the extract above, one of the reasons was to keep the solidarity among them. In the online class, communication with the lecturer and the other students may also subject to some potential effects such as the differences among them. By using code-crossing in the online class, the students were able to choose appropriate ways in communicating since code-crossing give the hints of communicating among differences in the online class. Communication in that online class with the application of code-crossing enables them to keep solidarity among differences in the class. A rather similar reason can be seen in the following extract:

### 1.5. Extract 5: Showing politeness

I: How does the effect of code-crossing influence you?

P: If someone using code-crossing in their interaction it is more like they have valuable like a value someone so if I use code-crossing I think **I could be more polite** to someone that older than me.

Based on extract 5 above, it shows that the students preferred using code-crossing when talking in the online classroom interaction. One of the reasons is that the code-crossing can make them more polite in the interaction. The student said **"I could be more polite to someone"**. This means that the use of code-crossing is more polite to be used in interaction in the classroom. Hence, one of the factors influencing the students to use code-crossing in online classroom interaction is because it indicates hierarchical politeness in speaking. The situation in the online class which indicates hierarchical position between the lecturer and the student encourage them to apply politeness by the use of code-crossing. As explained in the

extract 1 previously, the use of code-crossing enables them to choose the high and low code in conversation so that they can communicate properly. The similar reason can be seen in the following extract:

*1.6. Extract 6: Showing respect*

- I: Why code-crossing important?  
 P: Because if I am not using code-crossing when I am talk to the one that older than me that someone could be misunderstood **or could be feel that I am not respecting them**. It is more refers to impolite.

In extract 6 above, the student was asked the reason why code-crossing is so important for them. It can be seen that the student said that it was important to use code-crossing in the online class. The reason why the student used code-crossing in the online classroom interaction is because he/she needs to show respects the lecturer or someone that is older. The student said, **“Could be feel that I am not respecting them”** which means that the use of code crossing made them respect the older one whom they were talking to. That is because they might do something which was misunderstood to each other. The use of code-crossing can eliminate that possibility. The same case can also be seen in the following extract:

*1.7. Extract 7: Showing respect*

- I: Why the use of code-crossing is important?  
 P: I use code-crossing to address a lecturer because I want to respect older people although sometimes there are several lecturers who are younger, and using code crossing is more polite

Based on extract 7 above, it shows that one of the reasons why the use of code-crossing is important in classroom interaction is because of respect. The student decided to use code-crossing because it is important as the way to show respect. The student said **“I use code-crossing to address a lecturer because I want to respect older people”**. This means that the student felt it was important to use code-crossing to the lecturer as the way of respecting older people. This reason can also be seen in the following extract:

*1.8. Extract 8: Showing respect*

- I: What is your reason using code-crossing?  
 P: **My reason is just to respect the person that I talk to**

Based on extract 8 above, it shows the students used code-crossing because appreciation when talking to other. It can be seen from the expression: **“My reason is just to respect the person that I talk to”**. From the sentence, it can be seen that the reason why student uses code-crossing in online classroom interaction is also due to the need to show respect. The following extracts show different reasons for using code-crossing in the online class:



## 1.9. Extract 9: Showing formal ways

I: When do you use code-crossing?

P: Sometimes **when I have to discuss with lecturer or senior or we have to discuss some topics in formal topics**

Extract 9 above shows that the students used code-crossing as the way to create formal situation, especially in the online discussion. The student justified the use of code-crossing in the classroom context will be very useful when discussing something about the formal topics in the classroom. It can be seen when the student answered the interviewer **“when I have to discuss with lecturer or senior or we have to discuss the some topics in formal topics”**. In this case, it can be seen that the use of code-crossing is useful in discussing the formal topics, which may usually happen in the class as a setting of formal situation. The same case can be seen in the following extract:

## 1.10. Extract 10: Showing formal situation

I: When do you use code-crossing?

P: **I use high code to address a lecturer it is more formal according to social norms in educational environment and I am using high code to the lecturer to indicate politeness and appropriate than using low code**

Based on extract 9 above, the student considered to use code-crossing because it is more formal. The student said, **“I use high code to address a lecturer it is more formal according to social norms in educational environment”**. It means that during the classroom interaction process, the student decided to use the high code as the way to be formal. The student decided to use high code because the online classroom interaction is a formal situation that should apply the use of code-crossing. The language should be adjusted to the situation which means that the students should use code-crossing as one of the alternatives. Therefore, the student enhanced that the presence of lecturer in the class encourages them to apply code-crossing because it is formal and therefore, it can create polite interaction. It can be seen in the next utterance, **“I am using high code to the lecturer to indicate politeness and appropriate than using low code”**. It indicates that the student uses high code because it was more polite. A rather similar case can be seen in the following extract:

## 1.11. Extract 11: Academic purposes

I: What is your reason using code-crossing?

P: **I use high code to a teacher or lecturer because it is in educational environment in which we have to speak formally**

Based on extract 11 above, it shows the student use code-crossing because they realized that they were in educational area which was supposed to be academic and therefore, need formality in the interaction. The student thought that as students, they were in an academic field, so that their language should be adjusted with the context where they speak, although it was carried out online. It can be seen by the sentence, **“I used high code to a teacher or lecturer because it is in educational**



**environment in which we have to speak formally".** From this sentence, it can be determined that the reason for using code-crossing in the online classroom interaction is due to academic reasons.

## DISCUSSION

This paper had addressed some of the perceptions from the students in terms of the use of code-crossing in the online classes. All of the extracts above show the reasons of the students in using the code-crossing in the online classes.

The first reason is related to the reason of using the low and the high code in the conversation. Based on extract 1, the student applying high and low code in the online classes can create good interaction. As stated also in extract 2, the use of high and low code enables them to create comfortable situation in the interaction and therefore can create good communication (extract 3). The reasons are due to the presence of older people in the communicative situation in the online class, that is the lecturer, and therefore, the students who are younger than the lecturer will need to choose high and low code properly in communication in order to create good interaction. Code choices lead them to build good communication ([Ahmed & Maros, 2017](#)). It was found also that "low and high speech levels of the language of Bali are language codes that could be used to show and express social relationship between or among its speakers" ([Wajdi & Subiyanto 2018](#); [Wajdi et al 2010](#)). Code crossing is more likely to occur when the speaker is more powerful than the addressee. In this study, the social status of the lecturer was used to give instruction to students directly ([Wajdi 2009](#); [Wajdi 2011](#)). This can also be observed in the study about the influence of social status in the ways teachers and students interact in the face-to-face interaction ([Simpuruh et al, 2020](#)).

Another reason can be seen in extract 4. In this case, the reason for choosing the code-crossing was to keep the solidarity among them. Although the online classes consist of high and low status people, they need to maintain the solidarity among them by the use of code-crossing. In addition, in extract 5, 6, 7, and 8, the students show their reasons for using code-crossing in the online classes. The reasons are mainly because of the need to show respects and politeness in the interaction. According to the students, the use of code-crossing allows them to show respect and be polite. Using code-crossing allows them to choose the high and low code in conversation depending on the speakers they are talking to. This enables them to maintain the solidarity and therefore can encode their respect and politeness. Through the use of code-crossing, they can create politeness which contributes to the effective communication in the online classes. Many studies had been conducted in terms of politeness in the class and all of them confirm the important roles of politeness in the class ([Jiang 2010](#); [Senowarsito 2013](#); [Najeeb et al 2012](#); [Sulu 2015](#); [Mahmud 2018](#); [Mahmud 2019](#)). Politeness contributes to the effective interaction and friendly atmosphere in learning and teaching process. Teacher's politeness helps students to have positive feelings towards the lesson and motivates them to participate more in classes ([Sulu, 2015](#)).

Another reason can be seen in extract 9, 10, and 11 in which the use of code crossing enables the students to maintain the formality in the online interaction. The students have realized that the class is the formal context of communication in which

they need to speak properly. The students also realized that they are in the academic setting which requires them to speak formally in the interaction, although it was conducted online. In this case, the use of code-crossing focusing on the use of high and low code in the interaction enables them to maintain the formality in the academic setting of communication. Interactions through the use of spoken language in formal settings and understanding the cultural background of participants also contribute to the effectiveness of communicating in a social relationship (Mashudi et al, 2017). The teacher-student relationship and the context of the conversation can create communication formalities (Haryono, 2018).

These facts show that in the conversations between the lecturers and students and among the students themselves, different code choices are applied due to the influence of power differences and social distance, which caused the emergence of code-crossing. These phenomena remarked the existence of “dyadic asymmetric communication” by of the two different codes, low and high codes by two unequal speakers (teachers and students) (Brown & Gilman, 1960). It is proved that the emergence of those different codes was in line with the speaker's background, the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor and the situation” (Rampton 1995; Rampton 1998; Rampton 2001; Rampton 2014)

This study also shows that there is a significant correlation between language and power in a community through the application of code-crossing. In fact, the relation of language and power resulted in the use of code-crossing has become an important topic of discussion especially in the area of sociolinguistics. Online classroom interactions via Zoom Clouds Meetings, the area where people are interacting to each other especially between teachers and students, also become the place to exercise power. These issues had also been observed by many scholars (Milal 2011; Inan & Fidan 2012). It was shown that there are “positive relations between the activities in the lesson, the types of communicative acts performed the power exercised in the class, and the effective achievement of the pedagogical objectives” (Milal, 2011). Language has power and dominating power especially in learning and therefore teachers use dominating power through language as a strategy to transfer the learning materials and to encourage students to understand the learning materials delivered through teaching and learning activities (Hikmah, 2019). These studies show that lecturer and student communication in the online classes will automatically also be influenced by the strength and dominance of the lecturer and the cultural context of the classes.

## CONCLUSION

This paper explored the students' perception of the use of code-crossing in online classroom interactions. From the student's point of view, most students did code-crossing in these online classes because they wanted to show respect and be polite. The use of high code and low code as the effect of code-crossing allows the students to maintain the formality of the interaction and therefore can create good and comfortable communication. This study shows that the influence of power in the class still becomes the important issue in dealing with the efforts of creating effective classroom interaction. The online classes which may have limited interaction and different from the face-to-face interaction in the class also

need to consider the influence of power dominance between the teachers and the students in the class.

Findings from this study have contributed significantly on the literature of sociolinguistics in educational contexts. It is important to note that the language aspect in terms of code-crossing in the classroom interaction is an important area of study in sociolinguistics. This study has also shown that language aspect in terms of sociolinguistics needs to be explored in other contexts of communication, including in the online classroom interaction. Therefore, findings from this study have contributed significantly on the use of code-crossing in other educational contexts and this is worthy of reading for English language teaching practitioners in their effort to create effective classroom interaction.

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