

Code Switching in the Movie *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola

Gede Nyoman Adhitya Putra

English Department, Faculty of Arts, Udayana University
[adhityaputra94@gmail.com]

Abstract

*The study entitled **Code Switching in the Movie The Godfather by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola** is aimed at identifying and analyzing types and reasons for code switching which are found in the trilogy movie 'The Godfather'. The data of this study are the trilogy movie adapted from novels by Mario Puzo; *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather II* (1974), and *The Godfather III* (1990), as long as the transcript of each movie transcribed Malta. Data of this study are in the form of utterances spoken by the characters found within the transcript and the movies. The is analyzed using the theory of types of code switching proposed by Poplack (Romaine, 1995), theory of reasons for code switching proposed Grosjean (1982), and theory of four factors which cause the change of codes and varieties proposed by Tripp (Grosjean, 1982). The data were collected by doing observation and documentation. The result of this study shows that three types of code switching, and nine out of ten reasons for code switching are found within the data; as well as four other reasons are found in the data using the theory of four factors which cause the change of code and varieties, they are (1) show close relationship between participants, (2) to convince or persuade other participants, (3) habit of using more than one language in conversation, and (4) show-off.*

Keywords: Code switching, types of code switching, reasons for code switching, "The Godfather" movie.

Abstrak

*Penelitian ini berjudul **Code Switching in the Movie The Godfather by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola** yang bertujuan untuk menemukan dan menganalisis jenis dan alasan dari alih kode (code switching) yang terdapat di trilogi film 'The Godfather'. Sumber data dari penelitian ini adalah trilogi dari film yang diangkat dari novel karangan Mario Puzo; *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather II* (1974), dan *The Godfather III* (1990), beserta transkrip dari masing-masing film yang ditranskrip oleh Malta. Data dalam penelitian ini dalam bentuk ujaran-ujaran yang diucapkan oleh tokoh-tokoh yang ditemukan di dalam transkrip dan film tersebut. Data dianalisis menggunakan teori jenis-jenis alih kode yang diusulkan oleh Poplack (Romaine, 1995), teori alasan dari alih kode yang diusulkan oleh Grosjean (1982), dan teori empat faktor yang menyebabkan perubahan pada kode dan varietas yang diusulkan oleh Tripp (Grosjean, 1982). Data dikumpulkan dengan metode pengamatan dan dokumentasi. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga jenis alih kode, dan sembilan dari sepuluh alasan untuk alih kode ditemukan pada data; begitu pula empat alasan lain ditemukan pada data tersebut menggunakan teori empat faktor terjadinya alih kode, yaitu (1) menandakan hubungan dekat antara partisipan, (2) meyakinkan atau membujuk partisipan lain, (3) kebiasaan menggunakan lebih dari satu bahasa dalam percakapan, dan (4) pamer.*

Kata Kunci: Alih kode, jenis-jenis alih kode, alasan alih kode, film "The Godfather"

1. Background of the Study

Nowadays, English language is one of the major languages people mostly

use to communicate with others from around the globe. In this globalization era, English language plays a lot of roles

in societies, even when the societies themselves are not all using English as their mother language. By communicating, people will be able to express ideas and feelings through words. But when people cannot communicate with words in their own language, people use symbols, signs, and behaviors as the substitutes for the words, or they use code switching.

Due to the importance of using more than one language in societies, code switching becomes an interesting and avoidable way to communicate with others. There are many reasons and functions for a bilingual to adopt particular code switching. Other than to express ideas in another language, they also show the social status as the speakers, even to hide something considered confidential.

There is no exception in the language use in the movies, since movies are one of the major entertainments in this globalization era, distributed around the world. The movie trilogy *The Godfather* written by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola, is one of the most famous movies in the '70s in which code switching can be found within the dialogues, which show unique story of Italian-American mafia family in America in the 1940s which tell the story of family, respect, friendship, betrayal, war, and love within the Corleone Family. These movies tells the story of big and famous mafia families in America, which then focused on the House of Corleone, run by the don of Corleone.

The dialogues in the movie are rich in code switching, such as Italian-American, in many contexts of situation, and psychological expression of the characters, in which the situation is based on the scenes in the movies. Unlike real conversation or written such as in literary work which describes the situation of the

conversation verbally, the situation of the scenes in the movie needs to be analyzed visually in order to identify code switching and the reasons behind it. Therefore, this study will identify both code switching and the reasons for such code switching within the movie according to the situation and other factors.

2. Problems of the Study

The problems highlighted in this study are formulated as follows:

- a. What types of code switching occur in the movie *The Godfather* trilogy?
- b. Why code switching is applied in the movie *The Godfather* trilogy?

3. Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are to answer the question concerning code switching mentioned in the problems above and to find and analyze the types, and as well as to find the reasons of the use of code switching in the trilogy movies of *The Godfather*.

4. Research Method

The source of data in this study are the trilogy movies of *The Godfather* by Puzo and Coppola, and also each movie's transcript transcribed by Malta in www.thegodfathertrilogy.com, and as well as various internet discussions regarding to the bilingual dialogues of the transcript.

Observation was used as the method of collecting the data. The first step was examining the data by watching the movies and reading the scripts. The seconds step was note-taking, in order to find out every code switching within the utterances in the movie. The third step was editing process in order to correct any mistyped utterances which contain code switching with the help of digital translation.

The data in this study are analyzed descriptively. The data which contain code switching were then classified in accordance with their types using the theory proposed by Poplack, and the reasons for code switching were identified using the theory proposed by Grosjean, and the theory of four factors which cause the change of codes or varieties proposed by Tripp.

5. Result and Discussion

The result and discussion of the analysis of code switching found in the movie *The Godfather* by Puzo and Coppola are as follows:

5.1 The Types of Code Switching

The code switching found in the movies as well as in the transcripts were analyzed through grammatical perspective; tag switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. Three types were found within the transcripts and the movies.

5.1.1 Tag Switching

Tag switching occurs when a tag from different language is inserted in an utterance. One of the examples of tag switching found in the data is presented in conversation (01):

- (01) Santino: You've gotta get up close like this and **bada-bing!** You blow their brains all over your nice Ivy League suit. (The Godfather part 1, 1:15:03)

Data in conversation (01) is categorized as tag switching in the form of exclamation (expression of short sound expressing sudden surprise, pain, etc.) which is tagged in the conversation to imitate the sound of gunshot.

5.1.2 Inter-Sentential Switching

Inter-sentential switching occurs in a clause or sentence boundary where

one clause is in one language and the rest is in another or different language. An example of this type of switching can be found in data (02) as follows:

- (02) Michael: *Buon giorno, Signora.*
At your service. (The Godfather part 3, 1:53:12)

Data (02) is an inter-sentential switching in which the first sentence in the utterance is spoken in Italian and switches into English in the following utterance by Michael.

5.1.3 Intra-Sentential Switching

Intra-sentential switching occurs within the sentence or clause boundary, which involves the greatest syntactic risk. Data (03) shows the occurrence of this switch within the utterance:

- (03) Paulie: Not to our *paisan*. Give it to a Jew congressman, in another district. (The Godfather part 1, 0:12:38)

Data (03) is an intra-sentential switching in which code switching occurs in the first utterance in the conversation. The utterance is spoken in English, but switches to Italian "*paisan*" ("brother/fellow countryman" in English) within the sentence boundary.

5.2 Reason for Code Switching

Through the theory of reasons for code switching proposed by Grosjean (1982: 152), there are nine out of ten reasons found within the transcripts. Those reasons are presented as follows:

- a. Fill Linguistic Need for Lexical Item, Set Phrase, Discourse Marker, or Sentence Filler

One of the reasons for doing code switching is the lack of appropriate words to express the speaker's or writer's idea or it is hard to find the translation in their native language. Data (04) shows the example of this reason for code switching within the movies:

- (04) Michael: The Church owns 25% of a large corporation – *Immobiliare*. You know the one I mean. (The Godfather part 3, 0:40:38)

In data (04), “*immobiliare*” has the meaning of “property” or “wealth” in English, but the term “*immobiliare*” in the movies is more specific. In the third part of the movies, “*immobiliare*” is mentioned many times. According to the utterance in this data, it refers to property owned by the Church (Vatican) which comes from a large corporation. The writer of the story differentiates the use of the word “*immobiliare*” and “property” or “wealth” in the movies to show the specific meaning and purpose of the word.

b. Quote Someone

The bilingual’s reason to switch is not for violating the actual meaning of other’s utterance when it is translated, or because the original utterance cannot be translated. Data (05) shows the example of this switching:

- (05) Abbandando: They just had a press conference. They said the Pope’s condition was grave. “*Gravisimo* (very serious)”, they said. (The Godfather part 3, 0:50:05)

The switching in data (05) is in Italian word spoken and quoted by Abbandando to Michael which is taken from a press conference from an Italian radio announcement they hear in the radio. In this utterance, Abbandando tells that the information of the Pope’s condition is real and quotes the announcement as the proof of the information about the Pope, which becomes a code switching.

c. Continue Last Language Used

Bilingual’s reason to switch is to continue the language being used in the

previous utterance. A single word may trigger the continuation whether the bilinguals are aware or unaware of the switching. Data (06) shows the example of this reason for code switching within the movies:

- (06) Michael: (Speaks in Italian) *Prepara la macchina* (prepare the car/get the car).
Fabrizio: Are you driving yourself, Boss?
Michael: (Switches from Italian in the previous utterance to English) **Yes...** (The Godfather part 1, 2:05:25)

The code switching in data (06) does not occur in single utterance, but in the form of dialogue. The first speaker in the dialogues speaks one language at the first time, but the second speaker responds in other language which triggers the first speaker to continue the language used by the second speaker. The first speaker does code switching after the second speaker’s turn to speak with other language and the first speaker continues the dialogue with that language.

d. Specify Addressee

The bilingual’s reason to code switch is to address someone who is directly or indirectly involved in an interaction. Data (07) shows the example of this reason within the movies:

- (07) Vito: But, anyway, *Signor* Sollozzo, my no is final, and I wish to congratulate you on your new business, and I know you'll do very well; and good luck to you -- as best as your interests don't conflict with my interests. (The Godfather part 1, 0:38:32)

“*Signor*” in data (07) is an Italian word which refers to an adult male human. Vito addresses Sollozzo directly in this utterance due to Sollozzo is an Italian, the same as him other than the other

participants in this scene who are probably not Italians.

e. Qualify Message: Amplify or Emphasize

When the message of an utterance is important, bilingual tends to switch the language in order to emphasize it, in which the switching has the function to qualify the message. Data (08) shows the example of this reason within the movies:

(08) Petangeli: Now I want to run my family without you on my back, and I want those Rosato brothers dead!

Michael: No!

Petangeli: *Mort'*.

(The Godfather part 2, 0:31:47)

In data (08), Petangeli code switches after Michael's turn to talk to him. "*Mort'*" or "*Morte*" is an Italian word which has the meaning of the adjective "dead". He switches to emphasize his first utterance to Michael that he wants the Rosato brothers dead.

f. Convey Confidentially, Anger, Annoyance

Bilinguals tend to do code switching to express their anger, annoyance, or to convey confidential information. Data (09) shows the example of this reason within the movies:

(09) Clemenza: Hey, what are you a dance judge or something? *Fatt' i cazzi tuoi* (Mind your own damn business). Go take a walk around the neighborhood – do your job. (The Godfather part 1, 0:09:28)

In data (09), Clemenza shows his annoyance to his subordinate, Paulie, after he is complimented due to his dance which, according to him, is "terrific". He code switches from English to Italian, and switches back to English. He code switches with "*fatt' I cazzi tuoi*" or "mind your own business" to tell Paulie that he

does not want to be bothered by his judgment.

g. Specify Speaker's Involvement

Bilingual's reason to do code switching in an utterance or conversation is to show, symbolize or emphasize their involvement in it. Data (10) shows the example of this reason for code switching:

(10) Michael: (Speaks to Connie) I saw him with you.

Merle: (Speaks to Michael) Could I have a drink or something?

Michael: *Que voi?*

Connie: (Speaks to Al Neri) Al, would you please get him a drink! (The Godfather part 2, 0:25:22)

In data (10), Merle, Michael, and Connie speak English in this scene, but Michael switches in the middle of this dialogue into Italian. "*Que voi?*" or "should I?" in English indicates Michael's involvement in the interaction that he indirectly refuses to get Merle a drink.

h. Mark and Emphasize Group Identity (Solidarity)

Bilinguals tend to do code switching to mark or signal their identity as a group. This signal is emphasized by ethnic identity markers of their certain languages or group. Data (11) shows the example of this reason within the movies:

(11) Vincent: Nothing's gonna happen to me, *cugina* – I'll take care of you. (The Godfather part 3, 1:14:31)

In English, "*Cugina*" has the equal meaning as "cousin" in English. Vincent speaks to Mary, Michael's daughter, who is also Vincent's cousin. Vincent code switches to Italian rather than using the English "cousin" in the utterance to show their solidarity as a family of Italian decent.

i. Change the Role of the Speaker, Raise Status, Add Authority and Show Expertise

Bilingual's reason to code switch is to show their status and role in certain situation. By doing so, they change their status; higher or lower, and their role to differentiate their status from the others. Data (12) shows the example of this reason of code switching:

(12) Michael: *Buon giorno, Signora.*
At your service. (The Godfather part 3, 1:53:12)

In data (12), Michael does role playing in this scene as chauffeur for his ex-wife, Kay. He changes his role from a don of crime organization to a chauffeur; lower his status in order to get Kay's attention. He even code switches to change his way of speaking to imitate a person who offers a service. The Italian can be translated as "good morning, Madam."

The reasons mentioned above were analyzed using the theory proposed by Grosjean. However, there are still other utterances which contain code switching that could not be categorized as one of those reasons since they do not match the requirements of each reason proposed by Grosjean. In order to identify their reasons, these utterances were analyzed using the theory of four factors causing the change of code proposed by Tripp (Grosjean, 1982:127) in order to identify the reason behind the switching in the utterance. Therefore, there were three other reasons found, they are:

a. Show Close Relationship between the Participants

People tend to code switch when they are in close relationship with the other participants they already know whether it is to show that they are close to each other or to show that they are friendly toward others in order to fit in

the situation. This reason occurs when both of the participants already know their origin or ethnicity, but also influenced by the setting of the interaction. Data (13) shows the example of this other reason for code switching:

(13) Santino: Tom-*anuch!* Hey, a hundred button men on the street twenty-four hours a day; that Turk shows one hair on his ass, he's dead – (The Godfather part 1, 1:11:17)

In data (13), "*anuch*" is an Italian word which is tagged on *Tom*, the first name of Tom Hagen. It can be loosely translated to "Tom, you bastard" in English. Although the word "bastard" is an English swearing word to express anger, this utterance by Santino does not show this expression, instead shows the close relationship between them. According to Michael in the first movie, Santino and Tom are close to each other since they were kid and become a family.

b. To Convince or Persuade Other Participants

During social communication, people sometimes switch their language to other language to convince or persuade other participants to follow their needs. The language mostly switches to the language spoken by the other participants; whether it is their native language or in another language known to them. Data (14) shows the example of this reason:

(14) Roberto: (In Italian) *Your kindness to that widow made me ashamed of myself.* (Then in English) **The rent stays like before.** (The Godfather part 2, 2:18:57)

Data (14) shows the use of this reason for code switching. At this scene, Roberto is afraid of Vito's power when he, without knowing who Vito is, refuses his offer to let a certain lady to live in her

house which is owned by Roberto as the landlord. After he finds out, Roberto switches from Italian to English to convince Vito that “the rent stays like before,” despite of what he says in their previous meeting.

c. The Habit of Using More Than One Language in Conversation

Bilinguals sometimes have the habit of using more than one language when they are in certain conversation; that they are unaware of the switching, and may also not understand what code switching theoretically is. They do not have any specific reasons on why he/she switches code in conversation. It is whether they find it easier or are more familiar to say a certain lexical item in another language in than his/her first language. Data (15) shows the example of this reason:

- (15) Buttonman: Hey, Paulie! I got two gobbagool... *gabagol* an' a *prosciutto*! (The Godfather part 1, 10:20)

In data (15), the Buttonman talks shouts to Paulie while throwing two gobbagool, a *gabagol* (cappicola), and *prosciutto* (ham) to him. The speaker may be more familiar and easier to say the Italian word “*gabagol*” and “*prosciutto*” in his daily conversation among Italian-American than in English “cappicola” and “ham”, since both the Buttonman and Paulie are Italian descents in a scene where Italian families gather in a party.

d. Show-Off

Bilingual speakers tend to do code-switching, not only to show expertise or higher status, but also to show their skill in using other language to other participants. They are fully aware of the occurrence of code-switching that they use and the purpose might be to charm the other participants

with their skill; or just to fully show-off. Data (16) shows the example of this other reason for code switching:

- (16) Apollonia: (In Italian) *I know English...* (Then in English) **Monday – Tuesday – Thursday – Wednesday – Friday – Sunday – Saturday...** (Then in Italian) *Andiamo! Andiamo!* (The Godfather part 1, 2:03:42)

Data (16) shows the speaker switches from Italian to English and back to Italian to show-off her English. Apollonia switches to English after Michael, his husband, tells her that it is easier to teach her English rather than driving after she recklessly drove the car. She shows off her English speaking to him, although the only English word she says is the name of days, and indicates that she wants Michael to focus on teaching her how to drive with “*andiamo*” or “let’s go.”

6. Conclusion

The findings in this study led to several conclusions. The movie trilogy of The Godfather consists of all the types of code switching proposed by Poplack; (1) tag switching which involves tag, exclamation, and parenthesis, (2) inter-sentential, and (3) intra-sentential, and nine out of ten reasons for code switching proposed by Grosjean are found in the movies to identify the code switching. However, there are also three other reasons found to identify the other utterances which contain code switching in the movies which does not match the requirements of 10 reasons proposed by Grosjean,. Three other reasons are found by using the theory of four factors of reasons for code switching proposed by Tripp, they are: (1) show close relationship between participants. (2) to convince or persuade other participants,

(3) habit of using more than one language in conversation, and (4) show-off.

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