

**CODE-MIXING AND CODE-SWITCHING IN MALAY MUSLIM MULTILINGUALS’  
PERSONAL *DU’A***

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**ABSTRACT**

Malay Muslims in Malaysia are mostly bilingual or multilingual individuals; Bahasa Malaysia is their first language, English is the Second language, and some may also have Arabic in their language repertoire. Classical Arabic is the medium language of the Quran and Hadith, as well as for the Muslims’ daily obligatory prayers and supplication. Even though if a Muslim does not understand the semantic notation of the religious recitations in Arabic, it is compulsory for a Muslim to memorise and to be able to recite the Arabic characters since all the religious obligatory practices are in Arabic. In their supplication or *du’a* which has its particular steps and moves, Classical Arabic is applied in the vital steps of this speech act. However, in this ritual practice of communication of a believer to his/her god, other languages are in addition permissible. In this sense, code-mixing and code-switching exist within multilingual Muslims, even though it seems to be a one-way communication that requires no physical receiver, but god who the Muslims believe that is all knowing and all powerful. What is/are the medium language/s used by the bilingual or multilingual Malay Muslim individuals, in this form of emotional and spiritual form of communication? Do they code-switch or code-mix in their personal *du’a*? What are the factors that lead to the language/code choices made? What is the significance to the choice or pattern of this linguistic behaviour? In answering these questions, linguistic ethnography approach and analysis of the *du’a* recalled by the participants in written form are included in the methodology. The findings of this particular study are significant in the area of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse studies, and in addition psycholinguistics.

**Keywords:** Speech acts, pragmatics, code-mix, code-switch, Language/code choice, multilingual

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The common language varieties of Malay Muslim individuals in Malaysia are usually Bahasa Malaysia or any other Malay dialects as the native language, English as the Second Language, and at least some basics in Arabic language. Bilingual/multilingual individuals or speech communities respectively use their language and variety depending on the domain or the social context. As studies have proven, code-switching and code-mixing are common in multilingual communities in most of their speech events. *Du'a* is an important spiritual medium in the Muslim's emotional and spiritual needs. It is a form of communication that probably one expresses him/herself in the most utmost personal and casual manner. Studying the linguistic patterns of this form of communication may lead to the reflection of one's social and emotional traits. This area of study leads to significant fields; in social and psychological sciences, communication, politics and education within a multicultural society.

Classical Arabic is the main medium in all obligatory Islamic religious rituals. However, not all religious acts are to be performed in the Arabic medium, *Du'a* or a type of prayer or supplication for example might be in Arabic or in any other languages that the individual opt for. The Muslims believe that god is all understanding, no matter whatever race you are or language you speak. In this case it is not a community or any societal context that we are dealing with. Nonetheless, in order to understand this we cannot put aside the individual's ethnological background and other related social variables.

Spiritual aspects have mostly been covered in areas of studies in religion, health communication and sociology. On the other hand, studies in language choice, language mixing and code-switching mainly focus on social domains. In another sense, this area requires focus on another perspective in the case of spiritual communication directed to the "intangible" receiver. In determining one's language or code choice in *du'a*, the topic, function, formality, distance, and linguistic competence are the credible factors to be examined thoroughly.

The aims of studying the Malay Muslim individuals' personal *du'a* are to identify the language or specifically the code choice and patterns in their *du'a*; and to determine the factors of the language or code choice made in this personal form of spiritual communication. The objectives of analysing this discourse of individuals' *du'a* to the "intangible" receiver without

the expectation to accommodate to the social context relate to examining the steps and stages in their choice of code. Within the moves, the function of each part is to be categorised. This paper aims to answer: What is/are the medium language/s used by the bilingual or multilingual Malay Muslim individuals, in this form of emotional and spiritual form of communication? Do they code-switch or code-mix in their personal *du'a*? What are the factors that lead to the language/code choices made? What is the significance to the choice or pattern of this linguistic behaviour?

## 2.0 INTRAPERSONAL OR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION?

Olayiwola (1993) stated that in the Islamic scope, Islam is regarded as a communicative religion, Allah communicates to His creations through the medium of the Prophets. Islam regards the importance of interpersonal communication, relating it to human interaction and societal relationships. The Muslims believe that Allah is the All-Knowing and the All-Powerful Entity. This integrity element of the believers is part of the Islamic belief system that is core to the Islamic *aqidah* or the belief in Allah. It is highlighted that four of the five 'pillars' of Islam: prayer, fasting, *zakah* (almsgiving), and the *hajj* (pilgrimage); are interrelated to the implementation of interpersonal communication between the individual and the society. The first pillar of Islam: the testimony to the unity of God and the messenger-ship of Muhammad is actually the form of intrapersonal communication. Taken as a whole, the *du'a* is related to all the mentioned pillars and predominantly relates to the first pillar when the receiver is Allah.

In Islam, the form of spiritual communication between the believer and his God, is actually in the form of both intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. Vocate (1994), defined intrapersonal level as basically communication setting that involves the individual being the sender and the receiver of the message intended. In the context of the *du'a*, the interlocutor is the receiver of the message, but simultaneously the existence of the intangible receiver categorises it as interpersonal communication as well. This form of spiritual communication integrates the cognitive process of what Honeycutt (1987), termed as "imagined interactions". The sender is expressing the message to the intangible receiver who is believed by the Muslims as the All-Knowing force. The *du'a* is practiced in the sense that the interlocutor has a strong sense of belief in the existence of God or specifically in the Islamic context the *aqidah* and the Muslim's *iman*. The act of *du'a* is also regarded as the act of one's contemplation, in which

Bruneau (1997), stated as an act of intrapersonal communication involving inner speech and neuronal aesthetics.

### **Spiritual Communication in Islam**

From the cognitive science perspective, the aspect of reflecting the divinity elements considers the factors of the memory and time measures. In addition to the specified factors; verbal reports or protocols, requirement on cognitive processing, and production errors are observed in cognitive science analysis (Gauthreaux, 1997). Forms of spiritual communication that have been studied include the Islamic sermons and specifically the *khutbah*. Werbner (1996), observed British Pakistanis' radical rhetoric; Soepriatmadji (2009), analysed English Friday sermons prepared by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore using Eggins and Slade's genre analysis approach (1997, as cited in Soepriatmadji, 2009) and Tayob (1999), explored the South African Muslim discourse community's mosques, imams and their communicative or speech event.

Marranci (2007), in her study on the language and identity aspects of Muslim migrants in Scotland and Northern Ireland claimed that it is acknowledged by the community that Arabic is the language of the *ummah* (the Muslim nation), despite the fact that not all the Muslims are from Arabic background. In the observation of the *khutbahs* (the Friday sermons), this study provided the structure of the standard *khutbah* which is divided into four parts: first, the introduction praising Allah and Muhammad the Messenger by the *imam* (or the person leading the congregational prayer); after that, while standing up, he delivers the first section of the *khutbah* which contains specific Islamic topic or a current issue relating to the community or the Islamic world. At the end of the first sermon, the *imam* sits down for the silent *du'a* supplicating to Allah. Following this, the second part of the *khutbah*: is delivered by the *imam* again while standing up, this part is a shorter sermon summarising the first one. Finally, the *imam* recites two supplications, one standardised (a prayer asking Allah for forgiveness for all believers) and a second one of his choice. The medium of the Friday *khutbah* is conducted in Arabic for the Quranic verses and the supplications. In Scotland, some mosques preferred inclusively just Arabic as the *khutbah* medium, while in some mosques they adopted a bilingual approach in using Arabic and English. In Northern Ireland, because the Muslim community is less multicultural and multiethnic than the Scottish central mosque, English seems to be the only language used within the Northern Ireland central mosque.

Conducting research on the personal *du'a* that is practiced or performed from time to time in the Muslims' daily life is quite a challenge. This is due to the fact that the *du'a* specifically communicates the believers' appeals, repentance, pleadings, contemplations, seeking for right guidance, and other emotional expressions. In relation to the Speech Act Theory; in a situation where actions are executed via words, Searle (1979), categorised speech acts into five general classifications: declaratives, representatives, expressive, directives, and commissives. Speech acts are minute forms of communicative functions that serve their purpose and meanings via the utterance of the interlocutor. The *du'a* is best categorised as expressive and also directive in the sense that the interlocutor is emotionally expressing the utmost personal reflection, and at the same time begging and pleading from the intangible receiver.

### **Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in the *Du'a***

Research on information processing from the socio-cultural approach attempted to explore the roles of thought, language and culture in combination. They claimed that in language acquisition; differences are present between different-context and same-context background of their subjects (Allen; David and Kung, 1997). In this relation, further research on the spiritual communication *du'a* requires the exploration of language and thought of the individuals with multilingual background, and their socio-cultural background.

Multilingual settings and multilingual participants generate the notion of code-switching; in which change in the variety of language use occurs in the participants' communication. Gumperz (1977), described that code-switching may depend on the situation and domain factors as in situational code-switching. However, when ideas are expressed in a certain variety based on the topic of the conversation, this is referred as referential code-switching. Code-switching reflects the sign of affective functions, and also a sign for rhetorical function as in metaphorical code-switching. As Edwards, Honeycutt and Zagacki (1988) claimed, in imagined interactions, the interactors may have full control over the conversation. In the case of the *du'a*, the interlocutor is the subordinate of God; however, if code-mixing or code-switching exists in the multilingual's personal *du'a*, what are the reasons for the choice of code?

### 3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Analysis of the multilingual individuals' *du'a* will be based on the theory of code-switch and code-mix (Gumperz, 1977), steps and moves (Swales, 1990), and speech acts (Searle, 1979). The following diagram represents the theoretical framework of the *du'a* analysis:

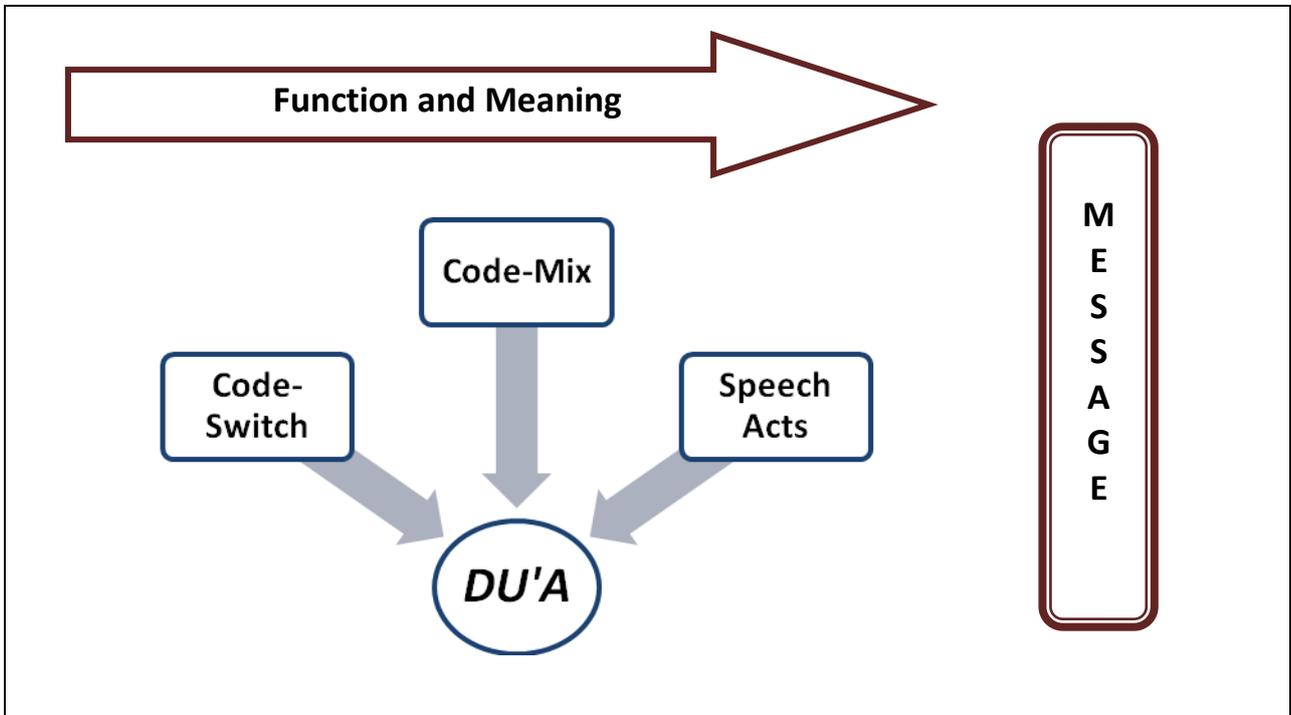


Diagram 1: Theoretical framework in analysing the personal *du'a*

The theory of code-switching and code-mixing will be covering the structural linguistic aspect. The framework of steps and moves will be applied in categorising the function and meaning aspect. As in analysing the utterances per se, the theory of speech acts will be utilised.

### 4.0 METHODOLOGY

The linguistic ethnography approach will be opted in answering the research questions of this qualitative based research design. This approach conjoins studies in ethnography and linguistics. According to Rampton (2007), technical analysis in linguistics enhanced by focus on context augments ethnography vindications. Linguistics provides ethnography scopes of ascertained procedures in determining discursive structures, while ethnography presents linguistics non-

deterministic viewpoint of data. The drawback of this approach is the exposure to re-brand or re-launch existing theories (Hammersley, 2007). In addition to this, without linguistic data or electronically produced transcripts, ethnographic accounts and fieldnotes tend to be speculative and low in authority.

This linguistic ethnography approach is selected to study a social phenomenon among bi/multi-lingual Muslims in their personal *du'a*. *Du'a* or supplication is a type of Speech Act that is personal in nature. It combines the elements of human behaviour, emotion and communication with the foundation of the human's belief. The *du'a* is performed personally by reciting it out loud, or in the heart. In identifying the patterns of language use, it is best to record the *du'a*, however authenticity and genuineness of the act is an outstanding issue. To see the consistency, recordings of the same individual must be done more than once at different times (within one week for instance). To record one's personal *du'a*, even though with the individual's consent is somehow questioned in terms of the Islamic ethics and the fatwa of the Muslim scholars. Hence for the alternative option, the data of the *du'a* will be in written form acquired from the participants' recollection of their personal *du'a*.

To reinforce the study of the *du'a*, interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes will also be the main resources for data and analysis alongside with the written recollections of the *du'a* and transcribed recordings of the participants' *du'a* (if possible). To strengthen the authority of the fieldnotes, a combination of fieldnotes from different researchers will be taken into account.

### **Demographics and Sampling**

To analyse the personal *du'a* of the participants, demographic data are necessary. Particular details in the demographic survey will include the participant's age, sex, race, language repertoire and language ability and educational background.

The type of sampling will be Non-probability Sampling. Purposive Sampling will be implemented; the participants will be specifically determined by the researcher according to the ethnographic requirements relating to the subject matter of the study. In this case bi/multi-lingual Malay Muslims aged 18-40 will be the studied samples. To justify this, Glaser and Strauss' theoretical sampling approach, argued that the total of participants studied is not the main

significance, but the prospective of each participant or case study to support and provide information in developing the theatrical insights for the particular study (1967, as cited in Bodgan & Taylor, 1998).

Participants will be selected based on their Malay background with multilingual repertoire of at least 2 languages. Having Arabic language background is an advantage, and a different category of analysis will be done to differentiate the code-choice patterns involving non-native Arabic speakers who are proficient and less proficient.

## **Procedures**

Participants will be on voluntary basis. They will be informed on the general nature of the current study. Participants will be instructed to record their personal *du'a* via voice-recording gadgets or Smartphones, the recordings will be transcribed. The following alternative data collection procedure is; participants will be instructed to write down their personal *du'a*, after their prayers. The challenge here is to obtain their most personal *du'a* that no other human being could hear. The drawback of this recalled written *du'a* is that the other emotional cues and intonation cannot be analysed. Since we are focusing on code-choice and functional analysis, the matter of paralinguistic parameters may be set aside. Should there be any additional information on this, if the participants tend to include it in their *du'a* recollection, it will be an advantage for the analysis. The main reason of resorting to the written recollection of the personal *du'a* is because the personal *du'a* is commonly practiced in the heart or in silent mode and if verbalised it will be in whispers.

Another process of collecting data for this particular Field Research will be conducting questionnaires on demography and language use in the *du'a*, conducting semi structured interviews relating to the participants' account on their *du'a*, and collecting fieldnotes of the participants on their *du'a*. The questionnaires, interviews, fieldnotes, written recollection of the *du'a* and transcribed recordings will be overall analysed to ensure coherence and consistency.

The data of the participants' *du'a*, will be analysed according to the code choice and Speech Acts used. The analysis will attempt to relate the structure of language choice and use of

Speech Acts to the functions and meaning of utterances produced in the *du'a*. In analysing the structure and functions of the *du'a*, Swales' steps and moves framework will be adapted (Swales, 1990).

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Given the challenge of determining whether the personal *du'a* is intrapersonal or interpersonal in nature, general conclusions of explaining this speech event may seem indistinct, as most previous empirical attempts in explaining human thought and imagination. The breach in describing and explicating the multilinguals' personal supplication in both communication and language studies highlights the importance of looking at language choice of the individuals without any external influencing factors. Since, no human element or non-divine being is expected to receive and understand the *du'a*, we can regard that the code choice opted by the interlocutor is the most apt preference for the specific message and function delivered.

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