

CODE SWITCHING BETWEEN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE IN SONG LYRICS OF THE ALBUM “AMBITION” BY ONE OK ROCK

Kadek Ayu Kartika Septiana¹, Ni Putu Ayu Kartika Sari Dewi^{2*}, Ngurah Artha Yoga Pratama³, I Wayan Mawa⁴, I Made Suamba⁵, Kadek Agung Sanjaya⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni IKIP Saraswati

⁶SD Saraswati Tabanan⁶

Email: [*ayukartikasari21@gmail.com](mailto:ayukartikasari21@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the use of code-switching in the song lyrics from the album *Ambition* by the Japanese band One Ok Rock. Adopting a qualitative research method, this study describes and interprets the data comprehensively. Sociolinguistics serves as the theoretical framework to investigate the meanings, types, and functions of code-switching present in the lyrics. The analysis identifies three types of code-switching in the album: tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. Furthermore, four functions of code-switching are observed: expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic functions. The findings reveal a total of 34 occurrences of code-switching, consisting of 18 instances categorized by type and 16 instances by function. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of the linguistic strategies employed in the album and their sociolinguistic implications.

Keywords: code switching, sosiolinguistik, lyrics, song

ALIH KODE ANTARA BAHASA INGGRIS DAN BAHASA JEPANG DALAM LIRIK LAGU “AMBITION” OLEH ONE OK ROCK

ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan alih kode dalam lirik lagu dari album *Ambition* oleh band Jepang One Ok Rock. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, penelitian ini mendeskripsikan dan menginterpretasikan data secara komprehensif. Sosiolinguistik digunakan sebagai kerangka teori untuk menyelidiki makna, jenis, dan fungsi alih kode yang terdapat dalam lirik lagu. Analisis mengidentifikasi tiga jenis alih kode dalam album tersebut: tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, dan inter-sentential switching. Selain itu, terdapat empat fungsi alih kode yang diamati, yaitu: fungsi ekspresif, fungsi phatic, fungsi metalinguistik, dan fungsi puitis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan total 34 kejadian alih kode, yang terdiri dari 18 kejadian berdasarkan jenis dan 16 kejadian berdasarkan fungsi. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang strategi linguistik yang digunakan dalam album tersebut serta implikasi sosiolinguistiknya.*

Kata Kunci: alih kode, sosiolinguistik, lirik, lagu

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a work that emerges from the thoughts and feelings of an author, poured onto paper to create what is known as a literary work. Literature is also interpreted as a record of life, reflecting the human journey. J. Long

(2004:10) defines literature as “the expression of life in words of truth and beauty: it is the written record of man’s spirit, of his thoughts, emotions, aspirations; it is the history, and the only history, of the human soul.” Literary works continue to evolve alongside technological developments,

including poetry, which has transitioned from being read to being sung, thereby transforming into songs. Salcedo (2002:6) in Ain (2013:9) noted that songs mirror the daily activities of society, integrating music as a vital part of culture.

A song cannot be separated from its lyrics, which are a set of words making up the song, typically consisting of verses and choruses (Ain, 2013:23). Lyrics are written expressions of imagination, often combining beautiful and meaningful words. In today's globalized world, song lyrics are no longer confined to a single language; many songs incorporate two or more languages. This linguistic phenomenon is known as code-switching. Waris (2012) describes code-switching as the use of more than one language or variety within a conversation. In the context of music, code-switching allows artists to convey diverse cultural, emotional, and linguistic expressions, enriching their lyrics.

Various songs exemplify the application of code-switching, including those from the album *Ambition*. *Ambition* is the eighth album by the Japanese band One Ok Rock and was chosen for this study due to its relevance to the phenomenon of Japanese youth facing challenges such as disappointment, diminished self-confidence, and the rise of the hikikomori phenomenon. Hikikomori refers to a social phenomenon where individuals, often adolescents, isolate themselves and avoid external contact, reflecting broader psychological and societal issues.

Given this background, the researcher is particularly interested in identifying the use of code-switching within the lyrics of songs from the *Ambition* album. This interest stems from the recognition that issues affecting teenagers, such as identity and self-expression, transcend geographical boundaries. This study employs a qualitative method to describe and present

the data accurately. Observation techniques, including careful listening to the *Ambition* album, were used to collect data. Accordingly, this research focuses on analyzing the types, meanings, and functions of code-switching in the song lyrics of the *Ambition* album by One Ok Rock.

RESEARCH METHOD

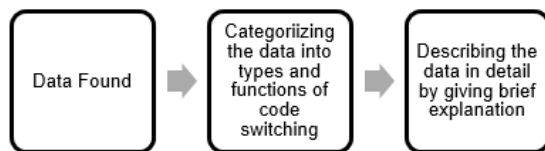
This study adopts a qualitative research design. According to Cropley (2021:5), the essence of qualitative research lies in its ability to explore how individuals interpret their real-life experiences in their own minds and words. A descriptive analysis approach was employed to examine the subject of this research, which is the album *Ambition* by One Ok Rock, a Japanese rock band formed in Tokyo, Japan, in 2005. On January 13, 2017, under the American label Ramen, the band released their eighth album, *Ambition* (International Version).

Data collection for this research was conducted using observation techniques. The researcher utilized various tools, including a smartphone to listen to the songs, a personal computer to watch the music videos, and written transcripts of the lyrics. A notebook was also used to document relevant data systematically.

The process of data collection involved several steps. First, the 13 songs from the album *Ambition* were examined by listening to the songs, watching the music videos, and analyzing the transcriptions of the lyrics using electronic media such as a smartphone and a PC. Sentences containing instances of code-switching were identified and marked. Second, the researcher categorized the identified instances based on the types of code-switching present in the song

lyrics. These initial data were collected and documented. Third, the researcher analyzed the meaning and functions of the identified code-switching instances within the album's context, collecting and noting the secondary data. Finally, the results were presented in detail to provide a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

This systematic approach ensured a thorough investigation of the use of code-switching in the album *Ambition*, providing insights into its linguistic and cultural significance.



Picture 1: The Procedure of Data Analyzing Technique

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the song lyrics in the album *Ambition* by One Ok Rock revealed a significant use of code-switching between English and Japanese. Three types of code-switching were identified: tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. Among these, intra-sentential switching was the most prevalent, highlighting the seamless integration of both languages within single sentences. Additionally, four primary functions of code-switching were observed: expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic. The expressive function was most prominent, indicating that code-switching served as a means to convey emotions and emphasize key themes within the lyrics. A total of 34 instances of code-switching were recorded, comprising 18 related to types and 16 related to functions, showcasing the deliberate and meaningful use of language alternation.

In the discussion, it was observed that code-switching in *Ambition* serves both artistic and communicative purposes, enhancing the lyrical content while also broadening its appeal to a global audience. The integration of English and Japanese reflects the band's intent to engage listeners across cultural boundaries, using code-switching as a tool for emotional expression and thematic exploration. The frequent use of intra-sentential switching suggests a natural and fluid merging of the two languages, highlighting the band's bilingual capabilities and their effort to reach diverse audiences. Furthermore, the expressive and poetic functions of code-switching emphasize the emotional depth and creative versatility of the lyrics. These findings illustrate the significance of code-switching in contemporary music, demonstrating its role as an effective linguistic strategy in a globalized cultural context.

1. Types of Code Switching

After analyzed the song lyrics from the album "*Ambition*" by One Ok Rock, the researcher found that there are three types of code switching that appears in album "*Ambition*". The data will be explained in more detail below.

1.1 Intra-sentential Switching

Intra-sentential switching refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a single sentence or clause. This type of code-switching occurs when a speaker or writer shifts languages mid-sentence, often seamlessly integrating elements of both languages in a way that maintains the grammatical structure of the sentence. In song lyrics, intra-sentential switching is particularly effective for creating

a fluid and dynamic expression, as it allows the artist to blend the nuances and emotional tones of multiple languages within a single thought or idea. This type of switching is often used in music to appeal to a bilingual audience or to enhance the thematic depth of the song by incorporating cultural references from both languages.

In the context of song lyrics, intra-sentential switching serves not only as a linguistic tool but also as a stylistic and artistic choice. It enables the songwriter to capture the essence of two cultures and languages, conveying emotions and meanings that might be lost in a single language. For example, in bilingual songs, certain words or phrases may have a stronger emotional impact in one language, while others may carry specific cultural connotations in another. Intra-sentential switching, therefore, can be used to emphasize particular themes, such as identity, resilience, or personal struggle, by tapping into the linguistic resources of both languages. This seamless blending often adds a layer of complexity to the lyrics, enriching the listener's experience and connecting them to the song on a deeper level.

Data 1

つけいる術なくただ立ち尽くした
(Tsuke iru jutsu naku tada tachitsukushi ta)
叫ぶ声むなしく to fade to black
(Sakebu koe munashiku to fade to black)
(Song: Bombs Away)

Translate:

I just stood unable to take advantage
I'm screaming, but it's vain, because to
fade to black

Data showed the lyrics part of the song bombs away, there is a code switching from Japanese into English. This is indicated by the appearance of the phrase "to fade to black" in the lyrics using Japanese at the beginning. This is categorized in type of code switching, namely intra-sentential switching.

1.2 Inter-sentential switching

Inter-sentential switching refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages at the sentence level, where a switch occurs between whole sentences or clauses. Unlike intra-sentential switching, which happens within a single sentence, inter-sentential switching involves transitioning from one sentence in one language to another sentence in a different language. This type of code-switching is often used to signal a shift in context, emphasis, or audience, and can reflect a deliberate change in tone or focus. In songs, inter-sentential switching can serve to create contrast or highlight a shift in meaning, with each language used to express different ideas or emotional states.

In music, inter-sentential switching can be particularly effective in conveying a bilingual or multicultural identity. By switching languages between sentences, artists can create a sense of dynamic movement between ideas or emotions, allowing for the exploration of different perspectives or cultural identities. This type of code-switching may also serve as a way to engage a wider audience, with the use of multiple languages making the song more relatable to diverse listeners. In some cases, inter-sentential switching can emphasize key thematic elements, such as personal conflict, transformation, or the blending of cultural influences, enriching the overall meaning of the song.

Data 2

音もたてず崩れ落ちた
 (Oto mo tate zu, kuzureochi ta)
 視界から消える
 (Shikai kara kieru)
 狂う秒針巻き戻す
 (Kuruu byōshin, makimodosu)
 取り戻せない何かがある
 (Torimodose nai nani ka ga aru)
 Realizing, everything I love is slowly
 killing me
 (Song: Taking Off)

Translate:

Without making noise, it collapse
 Disappeared from my sight
 The hands of the second clock rewind
 violently
 But there is something that cannot be
 recovered
 Realizing, everything I love is slowly
 killing me

Data showed code switching which is can be seen in part “Torimodose nai nani ka ga aru” (取り戻せない何かがある) from Japanese into English in part “Realizing, everything I love is slowly killing me”. This is categorized in type of code switching, namely inter-sentential switching because code switching occurs between sentences in the lyrics of the song.

1.3 Tag-switching

Tag-switching refers to the practice of inserting a tag phrase or short expression from one language into a sentence that is primarily in another language. This type of code-switching often involves using common interjections, greetings, or conversational tags such as “you know,” “right?” or “okay” in a

language different from the main sentence. In song lyrics, tag-switching can serve to create a casual or conversational tone, making the lyrics feel more relatable and engaging. It is a less disruptive form of code-switching compared to intra-sentential or inter-sentential switching, as it typically involves adding a small, familiar element to the sentence without altering its overall structure. Tag-switching can also emphasize emotional intensity or signal a shift in focus, adding depth and resonance to the song’s message.

Data 3

Listen, listen 一つだけ
 (Listen, listen hitotsudake)
 Listen, listen 信じよう
 (Listen, listen shinjiyou)
 (Song: Listen ft. Avril Lavigne)

Translate:

Listen, listen only one thing
 Listen, listen let’s believe

Above data used code switching with tag switching category. The switching occurs because the existence of the word “listen” which is a word came from English. This is the first tag switching found from the album “Ambition”.

2. Function of Code Switching

This research also explores the functions of code-switching used by One Ok Rock in their eighth album, *Ambition*. The study found that the album incorporates four distinct functions of code-switching, each contributing to the lyrics in unique ways. These functions serve to enhance the emotional depth, convey specific messages, and connect with a broader audience by seamlessly blending English

and Japanese. By analyzing the lyrics, the researcher was able to identify how the use of multiple languages not only supports the thematic elements of the songs but also enriches the overall narrative. The findings suggest that code-switching is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a creative tool used to express the band's artistic vision and resonate with listeners on a deeper level.

In the upcoming sections, a more detailed explanation of these four functions will be provided, with specific examples from the album *Ambition* to illustrate how code-switching is strategically employed. Each function—expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic—serves a different purpose in the context of the songs, contributing to the multifaceted nature of the lyrics. Whether to emphasize emotional intensity, create a conversational tone, clarify meaning, or enhance the artistic and poetic qualities of the lyrics, code-switching is a powerful mechanism used by One Ok Rock to engage with their audience. This deeper understanding of the functions of code-switching will further highlight the innovative ways in which language can be used in modern music to reflect cultural and emotional complexity.

2.1 Expressive Function

The expressive function of code-switching refers to the use of language alternation to convey emotions, personal feelings, and subjective experiences. In song lyrics, this function is often employed to intensify the emotional impact of the message being communicated, allowing the artist to express a wide range of sentiments such as joy, anger, sadness, or frustration. By switching between languages, the artist can tap into the unique emotional resonance of

each language, creating a more dynamic and authentic portrayal of their feelings. This form of code-switching enables the songwriters to communicate deeper emotions that might not be fully captured in one language alone, thus enhancing the emotional connection between the music and the audience. In *Ambition*, One Ok Rock uses the expressive function of code-switching to evoke a stronger emotional response from listeners, making the themes of the songs more relatable and impactful.

Data 4

つけない術なくただ立ち尽くした
(Tsukenai jutsu naku tada tachitsukushi ta)
叫ぶ声むなしく to fade to black
(Sakebu koe munashiku to fade to black)
エグられた感情に 痛みも 涙も
(Egu rare ta kanjō ni itami mo namida mo)
Burning out, burning out
This is confirmation
(Song: Bombs Away)

Translate:

I just stood unable to take advantage
I'm screaming, but it's vain, because to
fade to black
My broken feelings cause as much pain
as tears
Burning out, burning out
This is confirmation

Code switching used in data above found in the song entitled "Bombs Away". The use of code switching in the song is used to tell the feelings of being devastated by a breakup. The effort that was put in ended in vain. This can be seen from the Japanese part which when it translated into English will become

“I just stood unable to take advantage I’m screaming, but it’s vain, because to fade to black My broken feelings cause as much pain as tears”. This is included in the code switching function namely expressive function.

2.2 Phatic Function

The phatic function of code-switching refers to the use of language alternation to maintain social relationships and establish or reinforce connections between the speaker and the audience. In song lyrics, this function is often used to create a sense of familiarity or solidarity, signaling to the listener that they are part of a shared experience or cultural context. Through code-switching, the artist can use phrases, greetings, or conversational expressions in one language to engage with listeners in a way that feels direct and personal, while the rest of the song may remain in another language. This helps to build rapport with the audience and can foster a sense of inclusivity, making the song more approachable and relatable.

In *Ambition*, One Ok Rock utilizes the phatic function of code-switching to bridge cultural and linguistic divides, particularly by incorporating familiar English expressions within predominantly Japanese lyrics. By doing so, they can communicate with both their Japanese-speaking fans and their international audience. This form of code-switching helps create a sense of shared understanding, making the songs feel more accessible across linguistic boundaries. The phatic function, therefore, not only maintains a connection between the artist and their listeners but also facilitates a collective experience, ensuring that the music resonates with a diverse group of fans while keeping the emotional tone consistent throughout the

album.
Data 5

[Pre-Chorus 1]

夢は終わり 目を覚ます時

(Yume wa owari me o samasu toki)

絶望や希望も同時に目を覚ました

(zetsubo ya kibo mo dojini me o samashi ta)

鏡に映った 僕が問いかける

(kagami ni utsutta boku ga toikakeru)

自分を誤魔化し 生きることに意味はあるか

(jibun o gomakashiikiru koto ni imi wa aru ka)

[Chorus]

When you’re standing on the edge

So young and hopeless

Got demons in your head

We are, we are

No ground beneath your feet

Now here to hold you

‘Cause we are, we are

The colors in the dark

(Song: We are)

Translate:

When I woke up, my dream came to an end

Despair and hope also woke up at the same time

I asked my reflection in the mirror

“Whenever I deceive myself, is there a reason for living?”

When you’re standing on the edge

So young and hopeless

Got demons in your head

We are, we are

No ground beneath your feet

Now here to hold you
 ‘Cause we are, we are
 The colors in the dark

(Ori yamanaiame nado nai)
 And all I can tell you is the best thing to
 do

(Song: Listen ft. Avril Lavigne)

Data showed the function of code switching which is categorized into phatic function. This is because in the song there is a change in tone from the vocalist when moving from the pre-chorus to the chorus. This shows that the vocalist wants to emphasize that we are not all weak people or nothing and conversely we are people who have something precious, that can be seen from the part “‘cause we are, we are the colors in the dark”.

2.3 Poetic Function

The poetic function of code-switching refers to the use of language alternation to enhance the aesthetic quality and artistic expression of the song lyrics. In this function, switching between languages can create rhythm, rhyme, and sound patterns that contribute to the musical and lyrical flow of the song. It allows the artist to play with language in a way that adds depth and beauty, often emphasizing particular words or phrases to evoke specific feelings or images. In the context of *Ambition*, One Ok Rock uses code-switching to enrich the poetic quality of their lyrics, crafting a more dynamic and expressive sound. This type of switching enhances the overall artistic experience by adding layers of meaning, texture, and emotional resonance, which makes the song more engaging and memorable for the listener.

Data 6

Listen, listen 一つだけ
 (Listen, listen hitotsudake)
 Listen, listen 信じよう
 (Listen, listen shinjiyou)
 降り止まない雨などない

Translate:

Listen, listen only one thing
 Listen, listen let's believe
 No such rain that doesn't stop
 And all I can tell you is the best thing to
 do

Another poetic function also found in song “Listen”. In this song, One Ok Rock used sentence “hitotsudake” (一つだけ) and “shinjiyou” (信じよう) to makes the song lyric more poetic. The next part also used Japanese from part “Ori yamanaiame nado nai” (降り止まない雨などない) if translated into English it will become “No such rain doesn't stop” and this part has a meaning there is no problems in life that can't be solved, everything has a way to solve it. This part of songs still can be sung using code switching in there.

2.4 Metalinguistic Function

The metalinguistic function of code-switching refers to the use of language alternation to clarify, explain, or comment on the language itself or its usage. In song lyrics, this function can involve shifting languages to provide a deeper understanding of a concept, emphasize a specific idea, or highlight cultural nuances that might be better expressed in one language over another. By switching between languages, the artist may draw attention to the differences in meaning, context, or interpretation, offering the listener additional insight into the song's message. In *Ambition*, One Ok Rock employs the metalinguistic function of code-switching to create a more complex layer of meaning in their lyrics,

enabling them to communicate ideas that resonate on both a linguistic and cultural level. This allows for a deeper connection with the audience, as the listener is invited to reflect on the nuances of language and meaning within the context of the song.

Data 7

(Pre-chorus)

溶けていった

(tokete itta)

あの蒼い日々の

(ano aoi hibi no)

しなやかな

(shinayakana)

曲線をなぞっていった

(kyokusen o nazotteitta)

砕け散った

(kudakechitta)

その奥に見えた

(sono oku ni mieta)

光が暗闇を

(hikari ga kurayami o)

殺していった

(koroshiteitta)

(Chorus)

Let's get lost in tonight

(Forget about today)

Let's get lost in tonight

(No there's no other way)

The night is young and we've

Got everything that we could ever need

Don't give up on tonight

(Song: Lost in Tonight)

Translate:

(Pre-chorus)

It faded away

Those melancholy days

I drew a flexible curve

It broke apart

And it could be seen deep within

That the light

Killed the night

(Chorus)

Let's get lost in tonight

(Forget about today)

Let's get lost in tonight

(No there's no other way)

The night is young and we've

Got everything that we could ever need

Don't give up on tonight

The metalinguistic function it was found again in song entitled "Lost in Tonight". In this song, this is can be seen from pre-chorus part which uses Japanese is connected to the chorus part which uses English in order to impress the listeners of the song.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of code-switching in the 13 songs from One Ok Rock's *Ambition* album has provided valuable insights into the ways in which language alternation is used in music to enhance expression and meaning. The research revealed three types of code-switching—inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and tag-switching—along with four primary functions: expressive, phatic, poetic, and metalinguistic. Among these, inter-sentential switching was the most prominent, highlighting its importance in conveying the thematic shifts and emotional dynamics in the lyrics. The poetic function also emerged as a key feature, underscoring the role of code-switching in enhancing the aesthetic and artistic quality of the songs.

These findings suggest that code-switching is not merely a linguistic

phenomenon but a deliberate artistic tool that serves multiple purposes in the context of songwriting. By incorporating code-switching, One Ok Rock effectively communicates complex emotions, builds connections with their audience, and adds layers of meaning to their lyrics. This study contributes to our understanding of how language can be creatively used in music to reflect cultural and emotional diversity, offering a deeper appreciation of the interplay between language and music in modern songwriting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors extend their sincere gratitude to the Rector of IKIP Saraswati for providing an invaluable opportunity for young lecturers to actively engage in fulfilling the Tridarma Perguruan Tinggi. A heartfelt appreciation is also directed to LPPM (Research and Community Service Department) for serving as a vital platform and bridge in facilitating and supporting this research endeavor. Additionally, special thanks are given to our esteemed colleagues for their unwavering support, insightful advice, and meaningful contributions. Their invaluable feedback and encouragement have been instrumental in enriching the quality and depth of this work.

REFERENCES

- Appel, Rene and Muysken. 2006. *Language Contact and Bilingualism*. Amsterdam. Amsterdam University Press.
- Collins English Dictionary. 2012. "Definition of Literature". HarperCollins. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/literature>
- Cropley, Arthur. 2021. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Method*. Hamburg. University of

Hamburg.

- Holmes, Janet. 2013. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics Fourth Edition*. New York. Routledge.
- Sari, I Gusti Ayu Putu Indah Ratna. 2021. "An Analysis of Types and Functions of Slang Words in "Pitch Perfect 3" Movie". Thesis Proposal. IKIP Saraswati.
- Ufi Susanti, Esa. 2017. "Alih Kode dalam Lirik Lagu Band Vamps (Kajian Sociolinguistik)". Thesis. Diponegoro University.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald and Fuller. 2015. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics Seventh Edition*. United Kingdom. Wiley Blackwell.
- Waris, AM. (2012). Code Switching and Mixing (Communication in Learning Language). *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, (13)1, 125.
- William, J.Long 2004. *English Literature Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*. 10.