

**Indonesians, Not Using Indonesian:  
Indonesian Students' at The University of Nottingham's Preference to Use English  
and/or Chinese on WeChat Moments**

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**Abstract**

WeChat is one of the world's leading mobile application that has over one billion users inside and outside of China. WeChat is actively used by a group of approximately one hundred Indonesian students studying in the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China due to its convenience as a communication platform while studying in China. This study focuses on how language users accommodate each other, while showing identities and language attitudes through their choice of language in their digital practices on WeChat. The investigation has shown how Indonesian students in UNNC likely prefer to post on WeChat Moments using English and/or Chinese instead of Indonesia. It has pointed out how the participants have created a pattern of language preferences used on WeChat Moments to accommodate their contacts by converging with them and also diverging from them creating a unique identity as Indonesian students in UNNC. Their language preferences result from their attitudes of the English, Chinese and Indonesian language individually affected by social and political factors in their community.

**Keywords:** communication accommodation theory, Indonesian students, language attitudes, language and identity, English language, Chinese Mandarin.

**Introduction**

WeChat is a text and voice messaging application developed by Tencent in China, first launched in January 2011 (*TechRice* 2011). WeChat has a platform called Moments where users can post images, music, texts and videos publicly to their WeChat contacts. WeChat is one of the world's leading mobile independent applications, having over one billion created accounts with 600 million monthly active users; 70 million located outside of China (*Techinasia* 2014, *Tencent* 2015). In light of WeChat, there are currently more than one hundred Indonesian students studying in the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China (UNNC) who actively use WeChat for communication. They use WeChat since it

is the most convenient platform to communicate with others while studying in China.

This essay will focus on how language users communicate and accommodate each other, as well as showing identities and language attitudes through their choice of language in their digital practices on WeChat, specifically in the case of Indonesian students in UNNC. The following literature review will provide research from previous studies to provide a background of the theories that will be used as the main frameworks of this study, which are the communication accommodation theory, language attitudes, and linguistic capitalism as the key elements of the

research. The methodology section will discuss the research design and methods used in the study. The findings and discussions section will analyze how the participants accommodate their WeChat contacts, present language attitudes towards their choice of language and construct their

identity as UNNC students through their posts on WeChat Moments. Finally, a summary of the findings together with further research suggestions as well as the limitations of the investigation will be provided in the conclusion.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Language and identity**

According to Sapir (1921) in Edwards (2009), 'language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.' Language is a system, implying regularity and rules of order, used for communicative purposes by a group of people who constitute the speech or language community. Within certain cultures, and styles of communications, language is used as an emblem of groupness, a symbol, moreover, a psychosocial rallying-point (Edwards, 2009). To add, languages are generally considered to be separate and mutually unintelligible (Edwards, 2009). Each language has a certain sentiment about it (Edwards, 1995), e.g. French is synonymous with clarity, and English, Greek, Latin and Italian were mediums of ambiguity (Wardhaugh, 1987). The following section is going to talk about how language users accommodate each other by giving a brief explanation on the Communication Accommodation Theory.

#### **Communication accommodation theory**

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) developed by Giles (1971) argues when people interact with each other, they make conscious and/or subconscious choices of which communication system to use and how it is used to accommodate each other. This theory explores the various reasons behind the emphasis or

minimization of social differences made by individuals through verbal and/or nonverbal communication between them and their interlocutors. It focuses on social factors that lead interlocutors to accommodate each other. It also helps connect the relationship that exists between language, context and identity (Gallois, Ogay and Giles, 2005). According to Giles (1971), there are two main communication tendencies made by individuals to accommodate each other, which are convergence and divergence.

Convergence refers to the strategies used by individuals to adjust to the communication behaviors of others by reducing the social differences between them (Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991). Individuals shift their speech patterns during interaction to resemble the speech patterns of their audience. Convergence could be achieved through communication features such as 'pronunciation, pause and utterance lengths, vocal intensities, non-verbal behaviors, and intimacy of self-disclosures' (Giles and Smith, 1979). However, individuals do not necessarily have to utilize all of those characteristics in a simultaneous manner in order to converge. There are several reasons why individuals converge with others, which are based on factors of attraction, charisma, credibility as well as motive. Convergence is used during interaction for the purpose of maintaining a positive self-identity and receiving social approval (Giles, Coupland and Coupland,

1991). It also improves the effectiveness of communication in which usually results in the participants' confidence and willingness to respond (Turner and West, 2010).

Divergence, on the contrary, refers to a linguistic strategy used by individuals to accentuate the differences in verbal and/or non-verbal between themselves and their audience (Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991). Divergence helps reflect the need to highlight a distinct identity in a positive manner. It is achieved by presenting certain characteristics of a social group, which can be regarded as an approach of showing an appreciated uniqueness from others (Giles and Ogay, 2007). It also helps sustain a positive image, strengthen social identity, and maintain cultural identity of an individual to contrast a self-image, as well as to indicate power or status differences (Turner and West, 2010).

### **Language Attitudes and Linguistic Capitalism**

Languages attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others (Crystal, 1992). Attitudes of language vary according to attitudes towards certain groups of people (Preston, 2010), as well as the contexts and

functions in which certain languages are associated with (Holmes, 2013). Language attitudes are strongly influenced by social and political factors (Holmes, 2013). Language attitudes reflect a particular linguistic capitalism. Bourdieu (1977) introduced linguistic capitalism as the respect or authority enjoyed by a speaker. Those who speak with high linguistic capital are able to give the power to influence a listener towards the desired meaning. Bourdieu (1990) defines linguistic capital as the mastery of and relation to language. It is a form of embodiment of cultural capital that it represents, which acts as a means of communication and self-presentation acquired from the surrounding culture of an individual. Bourdieu (1992) also states linguistic capital as the capacity to produce expressions for a particular market, given that 'all speech is produced for and through the market to which it owes its existence and its most specific properties.' A speaker who possesses more linguistic capital is able to exert more symbolic power through his/her linguistic production (Thompson 1992). Generally speaking, both attitudes of language and linguistic capitalism have the ability to affect speech accommodation.

### **Method**

#### **Data collection**

This research used both primary and secondary research. Primary research was conducted via data collected and the drawing some generalizations from it (Dornyei, 2007). Apart from primary research, this research also carried out secondary research, which involved at looking at what influential researchers had said about particular theories, which had been mentioned in the introduction and literature review. The secondary data used in this research is to be utilized to strengthen the information and data in association with

this research. This research will also conduct a validation test from all interviews, which is done by using triangulation and coding process with deductive approach. Result from the research suggests that research from past studies are applicable within this case study in UNNC.

#### **Participants**

In this research, the data were collected from a criterion sample that consisted of ten participants who were selected due to the fact that they met some specific predetermined criteria (Dornyei, 2007). The

participants were Indonesian students in UNNC who had posted at least ten posts on WeChat Moments. All of them were multilinguals, meaning that they are able to communicate in English, Chinese and/or Indonesian, and received education of which English is used as the medium of instruction. To increase the validity of the research, the participants had been chosen based on different genders and majors. There were five male and five female participants. Their university courses vary from business, engineering, and politics. The data collected for the research were the ten most recent postings on WeChat Moments showing the participants' language choice and how it affects their strategy of accommodating others as well as representing their online identity. A content analysis of these postings had been conducted, as well as informal interviews with the participants, which had been recorded and transcribed to cross-examine why they likely prefer to use Chinese and/or English instead of Bahasa Indonesia on WeChat Moments, and their attitudes towards each of these languages.

#### **Ethical approval**

Ensuring the respondents' identity and privacy to have given information to be used for the dissertation is vital in

conducting a research. This way, respondents are ensured that their personal data will not be viewed by any third party that may affect them in a positive or negative way. Ethics and confidentiality of data received are integral processes in a research (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

The researcher must be careful to keep confidentiality of the data such that the students will not be harmed by any third party. Therefore, the beginning of the questionnaire was the objectives of the study and a consent whether or not the participants were willing to participate in the research, which was voluntary. All in all, the researcher must protect the confidentiality of the responses in order to conduct an ethical research.

#### **Data analysis**

The following table is about the languages used by the participants to post on WeChat Moments. From one hundred WeChat Moments posts collected from the participants, it is found that most of the posts were written in either English (67%) or written by using different linguistic varieties in the same post (Myers-Scotton and Ury, 1977) such as intra-sentential code-switching, which in this case is English and Chinese (18%).

**Table 1**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of occurrences</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	67	67%
Chinese	6	6%
Indonesian	2	2%
English and Chinese	18	18%
English and Indonesian	7	7%
Chinese and Indonesian	0	0%

During the interview, the participants were asked whether most of their WeChat contacts are Chinese, English and/or Indonesian speakers. According to the

participants' answers, most of their contacts on WeChat consisted of local Chinese students, Indonesian students as well as a mixture of different nationalities all of

which are studying in UNNC. Considering that English is the medium of instruction used to teach in the university, it can be concluded that all of the participants'

### **Factors of Language Preference**

In relation to CAT, Indonesian students in UNNC likely prefer to use English and/or Chinese instead of Indonesian to accommodate their contacts on WeChat, achieved through convergence

contacts on WeChat are able to communicate in the English language. Therefore, most of the participants' friends on WeChat are English speakers.

and/or divergence. Each of the data has been analyzed to acknowledge the reasons behind the participants' choice of language to converge and/or diverge with their audience on WeChat Moments.

### **Minimize social differences**

(1) I guess it's only fair if I use Chinese and/or English so that all of my contacts can understand. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 1)

(2) If I use Indonesian then only my Indonesian contacts understand me but I also want my Chinese classmates to understand me, you know. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2)

(3) I will just use English because majority of people in my contact can understand English. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 3)

(4) I want people who do not speak Indonesian to be able to understand my posts as well. That's why I use English in my posts and sometimes I mix them with Chinese as well. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 4)

(5) I use English because it's a universal language. Chinese people can understand it, Indonesians can also understand it. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 5)

(6) My Indonesian friends can understand English quite well, same goes to my Chinese friends. By using English on my WeChat moments, it won't feel like I abandon any of them. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 6)

(7) Everyone in my contacts can read English so they know what I mean and can understand my posts. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 7)

(8) Even though I also have a lot of Indonesian friends on WeChat, using English when posting a moment on WeChat makes my international and Chinese friends understand it. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 8)

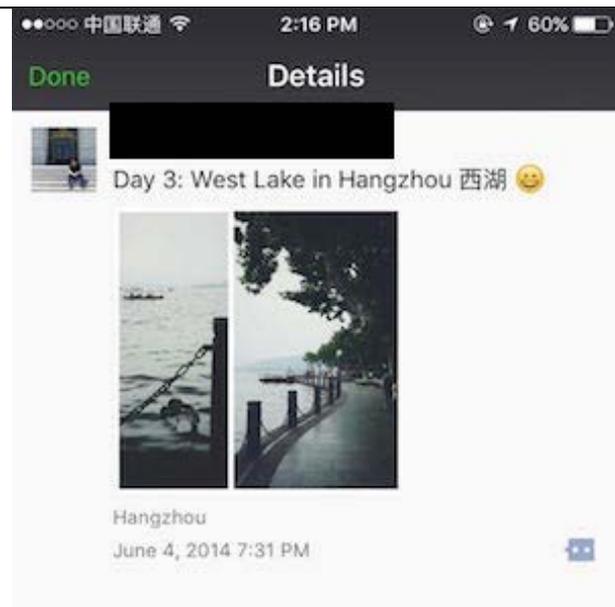
Eight participants stated they use English and/or Chinese to converge and make their posts understandable to their WeChat contacts since most of them are a mixture of different nationalities of fellow friends who are also studying in UNNC. By using those languages, they are able to

converge with their WeChat contacts and accommodate them with the information they have provided in their posts. One example can be seen in the case of one of the participants joining a homestay program with a local Chinese student,



(Thank you for all Chinese students having been such a great companions when I did my homestay program in Linhai (Linhai) and Hangzhou (Hangzhou) . It was an unforgettable experience and you guys were very kind and friendly. I hope we can do all these things over again somebody and lastly, good luck for your future studies! [emoticon] [emoticon] [emoticon])

(This is Linhai Old Town (Linhai Old Town), this picture was taken when I was in Linhai to do the homestay program with a Chinese student. It was such a precious experience! [emoticon])

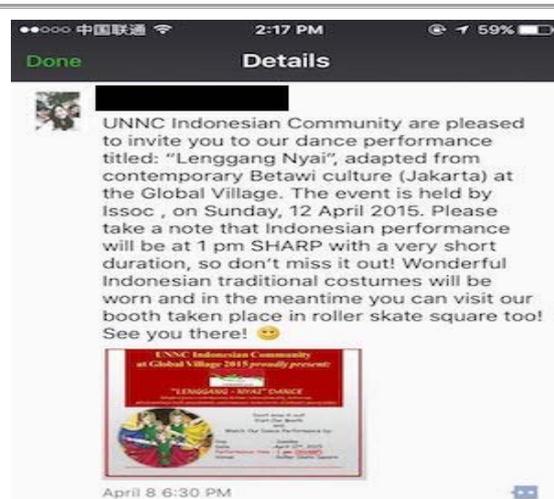


As can be seen in the above data, the participant uses English to minimize the possible cultural and social background differences between him and the addressee, a local Chinese student. By writing a post in a language that both the addressor and addressee are able to communicate in, the addressor is able to express his gratitude towards the addressee while bridging a gap between the differences that may occur between them. Also, the participant is able to ratify this matter to auditors who may not have been directly involved in his homestay activity and inform as well as encourage them to join the activity by giving the knowledge through a comprehensible language in his post (Bell, 1984).

### Attraction

(1) To attract others to read my posts. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2).

During the interview, one of the participants stated that her choice of language used to write a WeChat Moment determines how successful her convergence with her audience by the attraction that she receives from its audience. Choosing to write using in English and/or Chinese helps the participant to reach a wider audience and get more attention from the readers. For example,





(Really miss Indonesian food [emoticon] hope there is Indonesian restaurant in Ningbo [emoticon])



(INDONESIAN FOOD-INDONESIAN FOOD Limited stock! Grab it fast! Order now. Delivery on Wednesday)

The data above show that the participant chooses to write in English and/or Chinese to promote the Indonesian culture and to attract the audience to come to Indonesian events, as well as to approach a wider audience to sell them Indonesian food. The participant's approach is in line with Byrne's (1971) theory of how

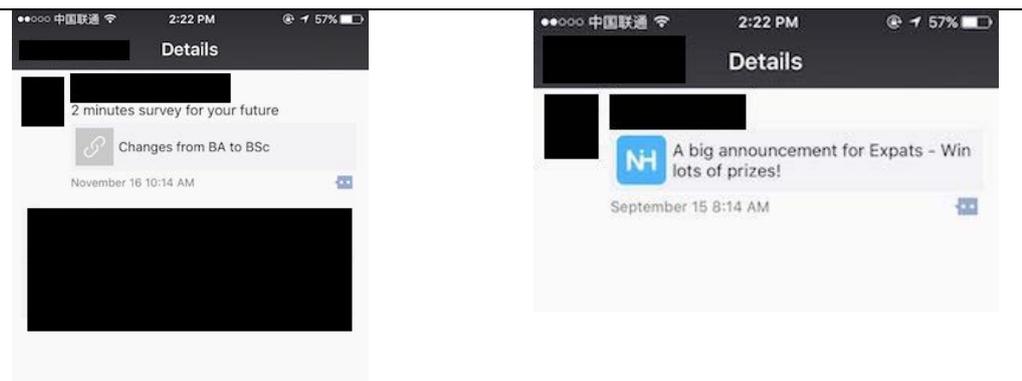
individuals try to in-group herself by making themselves similar with a particular social group to gain attraction from them. Writing a post using similar speech characteristics will not only accommodate the interlocutors, but also gives the participant an opportunity to converge with the audience (Holtgraves, 2002).

### Credibility

(1)When I use Bahasa Indonesia to post some articles, only my Indonesian friends could understand the language. This could also make some negative interpretation that the post only goes toward fellow Indonesians. So the best way to communicate and to bridge the gap is by using English (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 6).

The participants use English and/or Chinese on WeChat to converge with their contacts. By converging with their friends on WeChat, the participants are enabled to have the opportunity to give a sense of quality of being trusted and believed in

due to their ability of accommodating others and making them understand the information they intend to provide on WeChat Moments. An example can be taken from the data,



One of the participants shares a link of a survey that he/she posts in regard of his research, '2 minutes survey for your future' (Appendix 2, Participant 4) and also an announcement about a lottery for expats living in China, 'A big announce-

ment for Expats – Win lots of prizes' (Appendix 2, Participant 4). By using English in his posts, the participant is able to give credible information towards his contacts on WeChat.

### Motive

1. I want to reach a wider audience (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 10).

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2. To practice my Chinese and hopefully improve it. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 7).
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Certain languages are used in certain communities not only with the aim to accommodate others by converging with them, but also to achieve certain implied motives. By using English, the participants are able to reach a wider audience and thus

receive more responds from their contacts on WeChat. In this research, several participants attempt to promote the Indonesian culture to their WeChat friends by posting in English and/or Chinese, such as,



(Indonesia [emoticon] Indonesia)

The data 'Indonesia 印度尼西亚' (Appendix 2, Participant 7) shows how the participant reiterates her speech by using two different languages in one post to emphasize and clarify her message towards her audience (Gumperz, 1982). Apart from wanting to reach more audience, the participants also mention in the interview that they are also able to practice their ability to communicate in English and/or Chinese, considering the fact that both languages are still considered to be foreign languages by Indonesians. The Indonesian Education Ministry established a language

policy that foreign languages, such as English and Chinese should be formally taught in the Indonesian education system to anticipate the fast-moving globalization and also to establish relationships with other nations whose languages hold more linguistic capitalism compared to Bahasa Indonesia, such as the United States of America and China (Nur, 2004; Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, learning and practicing foreign languages such as Chinese and/or English is beneficial for Indonesians to cope up with globalization (Zacharias, 2003) as well as the global environment in UNNC.

### **Maintaining positive self-identity and receiving social approval**

(1)When I use Bahasa Indonesia to post some articles, only my Indonesian friends could understand the language. This could also make some negative interpretation that the post only

goes toward fellow Indonesians. So the best way to communicate and to bridge the gap is by using English (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 6).

(2)Because if I use Indonesian it would sound so weird and cheesy. But not with the two other languages. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 9).

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Languages used in the participants' WeChat Moments are utilized to maintain their positive self-identity and to receive social approval from their fellow WeChat friends as a part of their strategy to converge with their audience. Firstly, through the use of English and/or Chinese, they attempt to maintain their identity as UNNCers, 'I'm a UNNCer so I'll just use Chinese and/or English. I don't feel that I need to use Indonesian when I can use other languages' (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2). Secondly, the participants' choice of language reflect their desire to be accepted within the Indonesian community in UNNC, '[A] lot of Indonesians in UNNC also post in Chinese and/or English so I just follow the trend' (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2). The participants' maintenance of their identity and desire to be socially accepted can be supposed as an intersubjective achievement of their identity as Indonesians, as well as UNNCers (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). Through the use of English and/or Chinese on their WeChat

Moments, the participants produce their identities as Indonesian students and/or UNNCers. It is achieved through indexing broader cultural categories and local groups, emerging their identity through the choice of language in the discourse of WeChat Moments posts, positioning their identity as UNNCers through the way they interact on WeChat, as well as producing identity as UNNCers to relate to their friends on WeChat most of whom are also UNNC students (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). To add, by using other languages of which are not Indonesian, these Indonesian students will be accepted within their own group of Indonesian students in UNNC due to the possibility that other Indonesians do not consider their posts as 'cheesy' or exaggerated and likely to be insincere, and 'weird' due to the fact that many Indonesians often use English and/or other languages as medium of self-expression due to the consideration that those languages are regarded as more empathetic (Apriana, 2006).

### **Effectiveness of communication**

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(1)It depends on the context of the post. If it is something that isn't related to anything in particular, I will just use English because of people in my contact can understand English. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 3)

(2)I think because I am studying in an international university, using English is the most effective way to expression my idea and moments. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 4)

(3)Most of the time I use Chinese to interact with my Chinese friends. Since they respond better when I use Chinese. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 10)

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The choice of language made by the participants in their WeChat posts affects the effectiveness of their communication

when they converge with their interlocutors. By converging with the audience with choosing a language that is comprehensible

by both the addressor and addressee, the participants are able to reduce interpersonal differences that may occur between them, such as cultural background differences (Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991). The participants also stated in the interview that they use a language is related to the context of their posts to effectively accommodate and get better response from the audience (Appendix 2). The effectiveness of communication can also be related with the fact that WeChat the most popular mobile communication application in China, relating to a study by Yum (1988) arguing that East Asian communication concentrates more on the receiver rather than the sender. Therefore, the language chosen by the participants to write on WeChat will be able to break barriers between them and the audience, considering that most of their WeChat contacts are local Chinese students

(Appendix 1). Converging with the audience through the language not only creates an effectiveness of communication, but also proves that the participants are aware of the social sensitivity, which helps provide positive relationships between the participants and their interlocutors (Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991).

#### **Emphasize distinct identity in a positive manner**

The participants attempt to diverge from their WeChat contacts by emphasizing their distinct identity as Indonesian students in UNNC in a positive manner. The participants diverge by accentuating the differences in speech and language used between themselves and others. Such example could be seen in one of the participants attempt to promote his identity as an Indonesian who is studying abroad in UNNC,



(Permit Ningbo (the name of Indonesian students' organization in Ningbo) congratulates the National Heroes Day 2015/Happy National Heroes day 2015. Follow our Instagram: @permitningbo and like our facebook page: Permit Ningbo to get the latest updates.)

(Permit Ningbo delegates in Indonesian Students Association Leadership Camp in China East Region! #leadershipcamp #indostudentsassociate#inpeople'srepublicof china#eastregion)



The examples above show that the participant's post on WeChat Moments places a strong value on his national group

membership and the language of his nation in a positive manner.

#### **Attitudes of languages of the participants towards English, Chinese and Indonesian**

(1) I think the English language is cool. And it's internationally known. Even if I am in Indo, all of my friends who use social media sites or apps like Facebook, Twitter, Path, Instagram – whatever they are – they'll prefer to use English because it's cool. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 1)

(2) I think English is very important considering that it is a global language. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2)

(3) English is important because it's globally known. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 3)

(4) For me, English is important because it's an international language. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 4)

(5) The best way to communicate and to bridge the gap is by using English. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 6)

(6) English is a global language and I think almost everyone in this world knows English. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 7)

(7) I think because I am studying in an international university, using English is the most effective way to express my idea and moments. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 8)

(8) English is important and it's useful since it is used to teach students here in the university. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 9)

(9) I like English because it's the most spoken language, probably in the world. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 10).

During the interview, nine of ten participants gave positive responses when questioned whether or not they had a certain attitudes towards the English language. They described English as 'cool', 'effective', 'expressive', 'global', 'important', 'international', and

'prestigious'. They also stated that using English enables them to connect with most of their WeChat contacts considering that most of them attend UNNC and are able to communicate in English. From the interview, it can be concluded that English possesses a higher prestige within the

Indonesian community. Firstly, English is the most important foreign language in Indonesia (Hasan, 1998) due to the advantages that it possesses as a language that can be used as vehicle of international communication (Paauw, 2009). Secondly, English is only used in certain domains in Indonesia, such as international schools that

use English as the medium of instruction (EMI) or non-international school that uses English only to teach mathematics and science subjects (Hashim, 2009). EMI aims to give students content subjects and linguistic competitiveness due to the fact that English has a higher linguistic capitalism compared to Bahasa Indonesia.

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(1) I think Chinese is important especially I go to university in China so I guess using Chinese on WeChat says “Hey, at least I got something out of living in China – speaking Mandarin.” It also makes me look cool if I can write Chinese on WeChat. I mean Chinese looks difficult with all of those Hanzi writings. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 1)

(2) And I think Chinese is also important but not as important as English so I’ll practice it every once in a while so that I don’t forget the language. Plus, I think people will consider me to be smart if I can speak and write in Chinese. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2)

(3) Chinese has been a key language in the world as well. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 3)

(4) I learn Chinese to use it to do business with the Chinese, let’s just put it that way. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 4)

(5) I feel like my Chinese friends would appreciate it more if I use Chinese when posting some articles and/or photos. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 6)

(6) Chinese is a rather difficult language. It has many characters and different tones. If one can master Chinese, it’s amazing. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 7)

(7) If I could master Chinese, I guess it would be cool to post moments in Chinese. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 8)

(8) I don’t really like Chinese because it’s hard to learn but still – it might be useful in the future. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 9)

(9) I really enjoy learning Chinese as I find it very very useful. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 10).

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In a similar fashion, the participants also presented positive responses towards the Chinese language as shown above. They regard Chinese as ‘difficult’ due to the many different characters and tones that it has, however writing a WeChat Moments post in Chinese will let others to think of them as ‘cool’ and having more ‘prestige’ than others due to their ability to communicate in Chinese. Also, writing Chinese on WeChat will let them be appreciated by their contacts supposing that most of their WeChat friends are local Chinese students in UNNC due to their willingness to immerse themselves within the Chinese community in UNNC. In

addition, several participants mentioned in the interview that Chinese is an important language and it is necessary for them to learn how to communicate in it considering that it is a useful tool for doing business in relation to China’s growing economy. Their attitudes towards the Chinese language are developed and affected by China’s rapid economic growth in recent years. With prospects that are available in China, Indonesia hopes to ‘speed up its economic integration and connectivity to grasp market opportunities in China’ (*The Jakarta Post* 2014). To due China’s growing economy, Chinese has more linguistic capitalism compared to Indonesian, which has led the

number of Indonesian students in China to increase from 1,000 students in 1998 to 9,535 in 2012 pursuing higher education in China (*Antara News* 2012).

With higher linguistic capital positions both English and Chinese hold in the Indonesian community, this has led Indonesians to have less positive responses towards their mother tongue. For example,

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(1) I think that Indonesian is better used when you're speaking to one another but when you want to write something down and post it online – Indonesian will definitely sound so weird and informal. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 1)

(2) I think Indonesian – hmm even when I am in Indonesia I'll also post in English – so I guess the Indonesian language can be considered as neglected. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 2)

(3) Bahasa Indonesia is not that important because you can only use it in Indonesia. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 3)

(4) I don't think Indonesian has the same level of prestige as English and Chinese. I don't think my mother tongue really matters in the world, just to people in my country or perhaps Malaysia because our languages come from the same root. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 7)

(5) I like using Indonesian only when I speak but not when I write because it sounds cheesy and weird. (Appendix 1, Interview with Participant 9)

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Several of the participants has stated in the interview that they consider the Indonesian language to be informal, not as important or prestige as English and Chinese and weird. One of the participants

even stated that Bahasa Indonesia could be considered to be a neglected language considering it is useful only within the Indonesian community.

### **How language users communicate, change their identity and showing attitudes**

The study's findings and discussions have shown that there are several factors showing how language users communicate with one another, whether it is to accommodate others by converging or diverging, as well as showing language attitudes and changing their identities (as explained in the literature review). Language users can converge by minimizing social differences between them and those who are engaged with them. By minimizing these social differences between two parties, they are able to attract and receive more attention from another party. In addition, having both parties communicate in a certain style of

communication, they are showing a particular identity, e.g. a certain cultural group, in the attempt of showing that they belong or fit in in the same social group. Converging is also meant to give credibility for people who communicate with each other, showing positive attitudes towards one another, and identifying themselves thus they can fit in together by maintain positive self-identity and receive social approval from others. All in all, when language users accommodate each other, they have certain motives behind the accommodation, which is either to converge or diverge from one another, with the intention to create effective communication.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, this research has shown why Indonesian students in UNNC likely prefer to post on WeChat Moments using English

and/or Chinese instead of Indonesian. It has pointed out how the participants have created a pattern of language preferences

used on WeChat Moments to accommodate their contacts by converging with them and also diverging from them creating a unique identity as Indonesian students in UNNC. Their language preferences result from their attitudes of the English, Chinese and Indonesian language individually affected by social and political factors in their community.

This research has several weaknesses. First, the research covers only one particular sample out of all the university population, which are Indonesian students in UNNC. In

addition, only 10% of the sample are chosen to be the participants of the research. This limits the research, as it is unable to give an overall generalization of the sample. Second, other features of the posts have not been covered in this research, such as hashtags, emoticons, comments, and multi-modality of the posts. In the future, it is possible to include other features of WeChat Moments mentioned previously and also more participants in the research to draw an overall generalization of the sample.

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**Nadia Nathania, B.A. (Hons), MSc.** studied English Language and Literature from the University of Nottingham at Ningbo. She then continued her postgraduate studies, also in the University of Nottingham, majoring in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management. Passionate about researching language, culture, and identity, as well as the emerging economy that is seen on social media, her goal is to pursue a PhD in the area of social media, and women empowerment as a new way to market products to the female market.

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