

**Code- switching on WeChat
among Arab International
Students at UPM University.**

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Abstract

Language contact is a common phenomenon associated with language and management of language. Code-Switching is a phenomenon came as a result of multilingualism and bilingualism. Code-switching thus a common use. that could be seen among bilingual and multilingual speakers. It's essential to study this phenomenon in Malaysia to provide recommendations for future researchers a guide for their studies and a study which could provide in-depth insights. It has been further observed that students who study at UPM tend to switch more frequently from English to Arabic and Arabic to English based on different reasons. In this regard, Gumperz (1982) stated that “code-switching could not be a random phenomenon and possesses several reasons and purposes in different communication channels”. Thus, the reasons for code-switching and recognizing the different types of code-switching among bilinguals. The case study will further examine the social media discourses namely We Chat which will provide useful information to understand the reasons and types of code-switching among the bilingual postgraduate Arab students in Malaysia. Sampling was designed as a homogeneous sampling as they all share the same characteristic based on the research aim. The findings crystalizes that there are four reasons that make people use Code switching.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of electronic communication, there are various ways of communication in written expressions. SNS is a platform to build a social network among people. SNS such as WeChat, gives people a social platform to interact and correspond with each other. They can share their feelings and thoughts in WeChat. WeChat is one of the most widely used social networking service in Malaysia and has become an important social media platform for computer-mediated communication (Gao& Zhang, 2013). This study tended to assume the reasons that motivate bilinguals to switch code in electronic writing. This has also led to identifying why bilingual users switch codes in their WeChat interaction. This study provides new insights into code-switching in the online community to understand that code-switching does not only take place in oral communication, but also the written interactions. Hence this present study is conducted to examine such practice in Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) like WeChat status updates. For many years, lots of studies Bullock & Toribio (2009) have done on the phenomenon of code-switching from bilingual speakers in different contexts. Though a considerable amount of literature has been published on code-switching such as (Shin, 2010), these studies mostly have been descriptive in oral production instead of written production up to now. The past studies have not addressed the written production of code-switching. It also does not consider the reasons and types of code-switching phenomenon in the CMC area. This study aimed at identifying the types of code-switching patterns among Arab students in WeChat written

production. Thusly, the question raised is what are the types of code-switching patterns among Arab students in WeChat written production?

Based on the researcher's knowledge, there is no study, which has investigated code-switching into WeChat in the CMC area. Hence, the researcher has intended to fill the gap that exists in the literature by researching the code-switching phenomenon in WeChat in asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Meanwhile, this study is important for linguists to focus on written production because social media sites are commonly used among people.

2. Literature Review

Over the last three decades, the concept of code-switching has been put forward as one of the most dynamic areas in the area of linguistics. The notion of code was advanced by Bernstein (1971). Recently surveys such as that conducted by Montes-Alala's (2007), Hsi-Yao Su (2009), U. Dagmar Scheu (2000), and Montes-Alcala', (2001), have shown how energetic code-switching studies are.

2.1 Past Studies on Accommodation Theory and Code-switching

As defined by Swann & Sinka, (2007) "Code-switching is a conversational strategy used to establish, cross, or destroy group boundaries and to create, evoke, or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligation.". The awareness of code-switching is not recent, having been described for decades.

Different kinds of accommodation theory are a good illustration of why speakers need to shift and switch codes sometimes. In other words, speakers try to accommodate others' expectations or hopes when they can speak more than one language. Accommodation is one way to explain how an individual relates to others when they

are code-switching. Thus, to reduce individuals' differences, one will use code-switching to reach purposes. Under theory is that individuals will sacrifice themselves to have better communication. According to the accommodation theory, there are two opposite behaviors involved: convergence behavior and diversity behavior. Convergence behavior usually happens when a speaker tries to nominate the accent or dialect or even the language of the listener, while the diversity behavior normally happens to overelaborate difference. (Ronald Wardhaugh, 2010).

Yau (1997), this study investigated an accommodation theory in the prospectuses of the strength of language use in the Hong Kong Legislative Council between 1991 and 1995. The Council was set for electing members. The working languages were English and Cantonese at that time. Yau's hypothesis in this study is that, after so many years of electing, English was only used when they need to speak to foreigners. It was focused that code-switching takes place consecutively. That is, individuals were accommodating to shift power when people used code-switching. Another example was found in New York and Pennsylvania (Johnson-Weiner, 1998). They found that accommodation theory can be used to demonstrate the choice of language between German language and English. The basic difference is that the Old Order communities in these two places were using German and English based on situations. The use of English is to accommodate the outer world (Johnson-Weiner, 1998). After this study, there are supporters to give force to Johnson-Weiner's study. For instance, BurrIDGE (2002) also discussed code-switching in the Old Order communities is for the avoidance of isolation from the world.

It is well-known examples in a code-switching case study is used to relate to drug dealers. The researchers clarified that this switching process as a special genre that can serve as "to give dialect, to register." The results show that this unexpected code-

switching process is used to make conversation when they are talking about class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity issues as well as identifying the drug dealers' loyalties and so on. (Atkinson & Kelly-Holmes, 2011)

2.2 Written Production of Code-switching

In order to develop a new area on the written form of code-switching, this present part is going to research more on the written production of code-switching. This is in response to the same idea with, "The particular focus on written plays makes it possible for this study to contribute to the relatively undeveloped area of research on written code-switching" (Montes-Alcala', 2001). Even though the phenomenon of written production of code-switching is not a new study after all, it still has essential meaning because of the code-switching phenomenon that occurs as a spoken in the first place. Therefore, it is compulsory and needful for code-switching researches to be complemented by the written production of code-switching.

In light of recent events in code-switching, it is becoming extremely interesting to investigate the existence of the written production of code-switching. The first outstanding code-switching study was conducted by Montes-Alcala' (2001). Montes-Alcala' studied Spanish-English bilingual users on the basis of the different type's functions and syntactic constraints in the entry of the journal. The author noticed that it is not common to see code-switching happens in the individual's typescripts. Hence, this leads us to think about on what reasons that individuals are not commonly code-switching in the written form while they are using the Internet.

2.3 Types of Code-switching

There are different types of code-switching. Poplack (1988) has established a topological framework which is one of the most frequently discussed on the code-

switching. She identified three different types of switching in her data, which are, “tag switching, inter-sentential, and intra-sentential switching”.

Tag-switching refers to a tag phrase from one language to another language in an insertional utterance. In this particular utterance, a tag phrase will be used to switch on the basis of greeting or parting. Since tags are subject to minimal syntactic restrictions, they may take place commonly in a monolingual situation instead of against by syntactic rules.

The second type of code-switching is Inter-sentential switching. Inter-sentential switching may happen between a clause or a sentence when the clause is using one language, while the sentence is using another language. “Inter-sentential switching could be taken as requiring a greater fluency in both languages than tag-switching since major portions of the utterance must conform to the rules of both languages”. (Atkinson & Kelly-Holmes, 2011).

The third type of code-switching is Intra-sentential switching. It may take place within a clause or a sentence that occurs to be the most complex switching type. Although Intra-sentential switching involves the greatest syntactic risk since the switching between languages occurs within the clause or sentence boundaries, Intra-sentential switching seems to be the most commonly found in the utterance. According to Poplack (1980), intra-sentential switching may be avoided by bilinguals who are mostly fluent in their languages

2.4 Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

One of the notable case studies was done on computer-mediated communication synchronous text-based computer-mediated communication. The aim of this study to ascertain the remarkable features of synchronous text-based computer-mediated

communication (SCMC) from 12 individuals in an international group. The background of this study is that SCMC is not as common as spoken interactions in real life. The result shows that SCMC takes place not only in spoken production but also in written production. With the exception of English language proficiency, there are many other complex factors such as individual factors in chat rooms and users' language. Some of these independent factors include attitude towards chatting, keyboard control, the context of the discussion, and previous experiences in chat rooms. The findings of the study also show that when study individuals communicated in a chat room, they usually relied on their own perceptions about the communication area individually in their discourse (Savas, 2011).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative design has been used in this research. This study has attempted to investigate the types of code-switching in written production and to explore reasons for switch codes in WeChat written production from English to Arabic.

3.2 Participant

In order to identify the types of the code-switching as well as to explore reasons of code switch, the researcher collected the data from 5 international Arab students from the Middle East, studying at UPM University, their major is Master of Applied Linguistics, all of them are studying at ELS Institute now.

3.3 Instrument

Specifically, WeChat group conversation is the instrument for the current study. The condition of the WeChat group is allowed to speak only in English. As one of the

dominant applications in the mobile social medium in Malaysia, WeChat provided a new way to connect people within this popular platform. The present study used WeChat as an instrument to illustrate research aims. Then the data from WeChat have been gathered in self-designed protocols, which are two tables that would be able to help the researcher to organize the data information collected from the participants.

3.4 Data Collection

The researchers had to get permission from those five international Arab students from the Middle East, study at UPM University to access their WeChat group. Therefore, when the researcher requests from the participants to access their group on WeChat group conversation, the sampling was designed as a homogeneous sampling as they all share the same characteristic based on the research objectives.

Followed by, the researcher prepared the instrument, which is WeChat for data collection. The time for data collected is one week from five International Arab Students Studying at UPM. Among them, the researcher collected fourteen conversations from WeChat Group. The 14 conversations contained 249 words. Moreover, the data from everyone were presented originally in order to avoid ambiguity. In the last step, examine and check the collected data. In this case, the document represented good sentences in the data collection.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis in the present study was conducted and preceded through several steps. Firstly, the researcher will explore the data in order to obtain a general sense of the data. Such as, whether there was a need for more data to be collected. Then, the collected data were coded. In this study, the researcher then used the coding process to analyze

and label each type of themes in code-switching. That is being so the coding process would narrow research data into a few main themes.

The third step for research data analysis is to use codes to shape themes in the study. In this study, the first main question and objective are to, “identify the types of code-switching in WeChat group conversation.” Thus, the researcher firstly analyzed each data and labeled them into different types of themes. [(Sorry guys, really اسف) Intra-code-switching sentence], [(Hi, I miss you. ممكن tell us the time?) Tag code switching sentence] and [(Sorry guys, really اسف. ه سوف اذهب معكم الحديقه but what is the time of the trip?) Inter-code-switching sentence]. After having similar kind of this data, the researcher firstly needed to examine whether they belong to code-switching on WeChat written interactions. Then, the translation part was indicated by putting in square brackets in order to differentiate from original data. Then code this data into its types of theme.

The last two steps are interpreting the findings and validating the accuracy of the findings. In interpreting the findings, the researcher reviewed the major findings from the study and examine how each research questions were answered as well as giving a personal reflection of the data or suggestions for the research. The last step in the data analysis was to check data sources provided by the researcher.

4. Findings

The Three tables provide a clarification about the types of code switching that happened during the Group Conversation. The code switch from English to Arabic that happens in the conversations of WeChat group divided into three types of code switch as well as each type wrote in the individual table.

	Intra-code-switching sentence	
N	Conversation	English sentence in the English language
1	Actually, I do not احدد the time	Boos: Actually, I do not decide the time
2	Sorry guys, really اسف .	Sorry guys really sorry .
	Hi. nice to لرئيتك	Hi. nice to see you
3	Guys, Guys. I have not see الرسائل . First, this is a great فكره . Thanks for the leader of the group for your idea. I am طعام and I will bring with me some معكم	Guys, Guys. I have not seen your messages . First, this is a great idea. Thanks for the leader of the group for your idea. I am with you and I will bring with me some food
4	Hi, Suad. We اشتقنا اليك .	Mohammad. Hi, Suad. We miss you
5	Hi I have lots of العمل and today I meet my الرئيس as well as he said to الي to take ريست .	Hi, I have lots of work and today I meet my manager as well as he said to me to take rest .
6	Do you know this is good فكره from the leader of the group to نتقابل at park.	Do you know, this is good idea from the leader of the group to meet at park
7	Now 3 members with us and الوقت at 7 PM.	Now 3 members with us and the time at 7 PM.
8	I will come بنفسي and I will bring with me some food?	I will come by myself and I will bring with me some food.
9	I will اتي with the boss.	I will come with the boss.

	Tag code switching sentence	
N	Conversation	English sentence in the English language
1	Hi, I miss you. هل ممكن tell us the time?	Hi, I miss you. Could you please tell us the time?
2	اقصد , where you have been ?	I mean , where you have been.
3	أوه Good. I wish the best for you	Oh , I wish the best for you
4	اورايت , the leader of the group makes new idea by invite us to go to park	alright , the leader of the group makes new idea by invite us to go to park
5	هل معكم car ?	Do you have a car?

	Inter-code-switching sentence	
	Conversation	English sentence in the English language
1	Boos: Actually, I do not احدد the time. سوف اسال الشباب الشباب عن الوقت المناسب . Guys do not bring with you any things.	Boos: Actually, I do not decide the time. I will ask the guys about the suitable time. Guys do not bring with you any things.
2	Sorry guys, really اسف . سوف اذهب معكم الحديقه , but what is the time of the trip?	Sorryguys really sorry. I will go with you to park but what is the time of the trip

3	Hi. nice to لربيتك Frankly, I think at 7 Pm is good. إذا احد معه مقترح للوقت يقوله	Hi. Nice to see you. Frankly, I think at 7 Pm is good. If anyone have suggestions about the time please say to us.
4	أوه . Good. I wish the best for you. اليوم راح نتقابل . Do you know this is good فكره from the leader of the group to نتقابل at park.	Oh, I wish the best for you. Today will meet. Do you know, this is good idea from the leader of the group to meet at park

5. Discussion

Each table in the finding section contains a type of code switch. The first table contain Sentra-code switch, the second table contains tag code switch and the third table contains the inter-code switch. As we see, the participants used intra-code switch more than another type when they write to clarify the meaning their messages. In addition, intra-code switch happened in 16 positions among all conversations while tag code switch happened in 5 positions among all conversations as well as the inter- code switch happened in 4 positions among all conversations.

The first reason for happening code-switch among all conversations is a lack of the L2 proficiency. In other words, the students they still study at ELS institute so their level in the English language are not high so they will use some are words of Arabic to deliver the meaning to the member of the group. As we see from all conversations most students face difficulties in the middle of the sentence and they replace the words of English by Arabic and these clarify for us why intra-code switch happened more in all conversations. For example, /I will اتي with the boss / in English mean / I will **come** with my friend. The student used the word / **Atat** / instead of /**come**/ because he does not know the word **come** and he used the word /Atat/ in Arabic instead of /**come**/. Furthermore, the students used the full sentence in Arabic. In another word, the inter-

code switch appeared in the conversation messages when the students used full sentence by moving from English sentence to Arabic sentence and this explains for us as strong evidence their level in the English language were weak and do not have enough budget of vocabulary for communication in written production.

The second reason for happening code switch is unconsciously from the students when they speak with other people. In other words, some people when they speak with other people, they used some words from their first language unconsciously. One a clear example, Tag code switch, one student says that / **aksed**/, where have you been? he used the words / **asked** / instead of /**mean**/ and this happen unconsciously from him because some people who are non-native speaker use words from mother tongue without any sense.

The third reason for happening code switch is to express their feeling and attitude. In other words, some people who are non-nativeEnglish speaker, they sometimes during they speak English express their feeling in their first language directly.

For example, from the conversations, I Suad. We / **ashtakna Alik**/. The students used the word / **ashtakna alike** / instead of / **miss you** / because the condition of the group is to speak only in English, the student switch from Arabic to English to express his feeling. This is another reason can play for switching from English to Arabic.

The fourth reason for happening code switch is to discuss a certain topic. That mean, when the person speaks in English and discusses with another person a topic, suddenly switch from English to Arabic to emphasize and discuss the topic in Arabic. For instance, from the conversations that we collected, Sorry guys, Really sorry. /**Swfaadhaphmakamalhadica**/ but what is the time for the trip? The students used this sentence in Arabic /**Swfaadhaphmakamalhadica**/ between two English sentences

instead used / **I will come with you to the park**/. The students used Arabic sentence instead used English sentence / I will come with you to the park / because he wants to emphasize that he will come to the trip and at the sametime he discusses his coming to the park in Arabic during he discusses with his friends about the trip.

6.0 Conclusion

In Conclusion, the current study focused on code switching from English into Arabic Languages. In addition, it has investigated the types of Code Switching which are Tag Questions Switching, Intra Code Switching and Inter Code Switching. In Fact, there are four reasons that make people use Code switching. Firstly, there is a lack of L2 proficiency. In other words, the students' levels in English language who are studying at ELS institute are not high so they will use some words of Arabic to deliver the meaning to the members of the group. Secondly, some students speak with the others unconsciously. In other words, some people when they speak with other people, they use some words from their first language unconsciously. Thirdly, expressing their feeling and attitude. In other words, some people who are non-native English speaker, they sometimes during they speak English express their feeling in their first language directly. Finally, discussing a certain topic. That means, when the person speaks in English and discusses with another person a topic, suddenly he switches from English into Arabic in order to emphasize and discuss the topic in Arabic.

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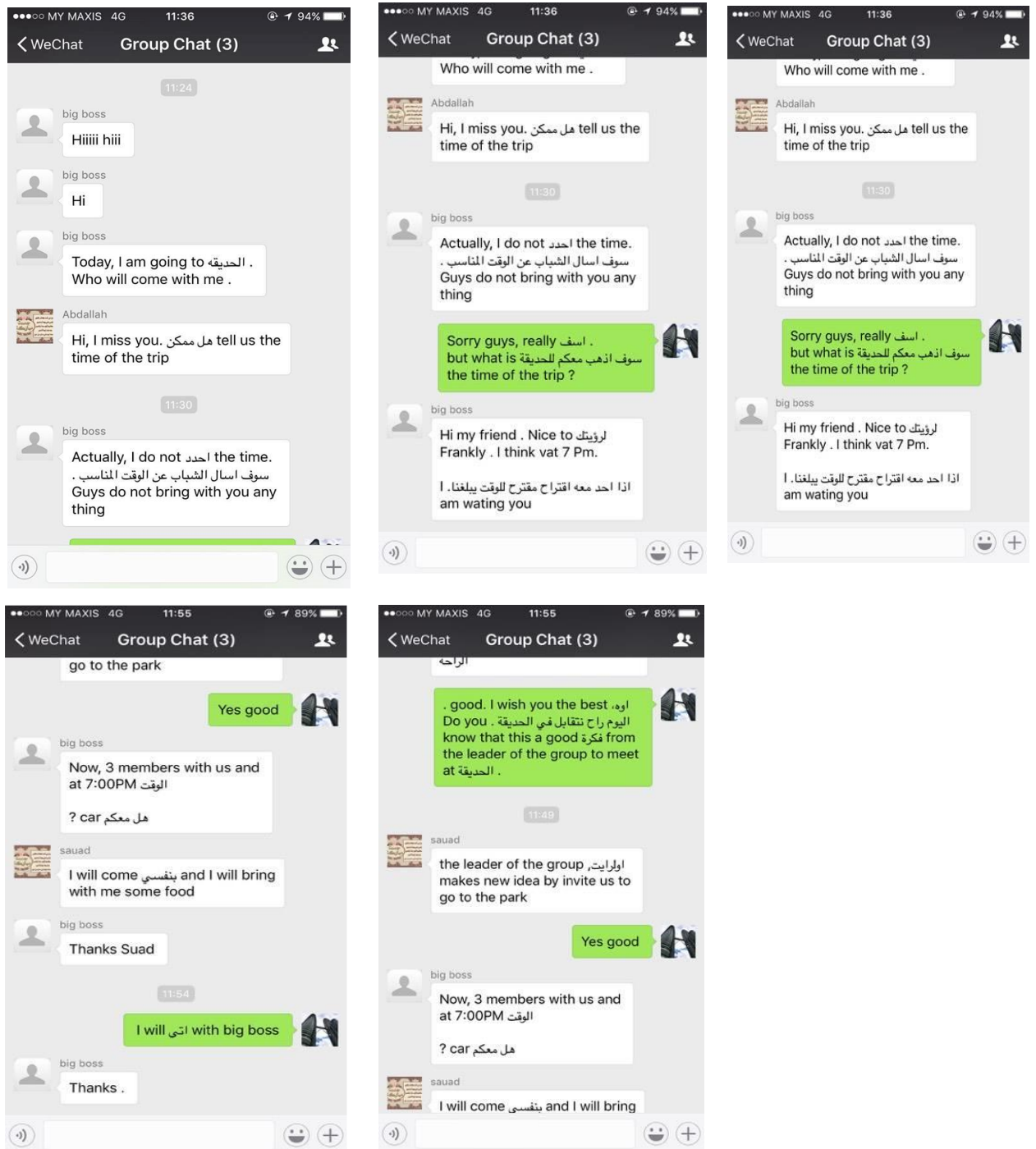
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Appendix One



Extracted Data

This table will contain the messages of five students' study at <u>UPM</u> .	
Number of conversations	Conversation group
1	Boos: Hi HiHi. Today I am going to الحديقة, who will come with me? {Today. I am going to park, who will come with me}
2	Abdullah: Hi, I miss you. هل ممكن tell us the time? {Hi, I miss you. Could you please tell us the time?}
3	Boos: Actually, I do not احدد the time. سوف اسأل الشباب الشباب عن الوقت المناسب. .Guys do not bring with you any things. {Actually, I do not decide the time. I will ask the guys about the suitable time. Guys do not bring with you any things}.
4	Mohammed: sorry guys, really اسف. سوف اذهب معكم الحديقة, but what is the time of the trip? {Sorry guys really sorry. I will go with you to park but what is the time of the trip}
5	Boos: Hi. nice to لرنيتك Frankly, I think at 7 Pm is good. اذا احد معه مقترح للوقت يقوله. {Hi. nice to see you. Frankly, I think at 7 Pm is good. If anyone have suggestions about the time please say to us. }
6	Suad: Guys, guys. I have not see الرسائل. First, this is a great فكره. Thanks for the leader of the group for your idea. I am معكم and I will bring with me some طعام

	{Guys, Guys. I have not seen your messages . First, this is a great idea . Thanks for the leader of the group for your idea. I am with you and I will bring with me some food .}
7	Mohammad: Hi, Suad. We اشتقنا اليك. اقصد, where you have been ? {Hi, Suad. We miss you . I mean , where you have been.
8	Suad: Hi, I have lots of العمل and today I meet my الرئيس as well as he said to الي to take ريسيت . {Hi, I have lots of work and today I meet my manager as well as he said to me to take rest }
9	Mohmmad: أهو good. I wish the best for you . اليوم راح نتقابل . Do you know this is good فكره from the leader of the group to نتقابل at park . { Oh , I wish the best for you. Today will meet . Do you know, this is good idea from the leader of the group to meet at park.}
10	Suad: اورايت, the leader of the group makes new idea by invite us to go to park. { alright , the leader of the group makes new idea by invite us to go to park }
11	Mohmmad: yes good
12	Boss: Now 3 members with us and الوقت at 7 PM. هل معكم car ? {Now 3 members with us and the time at 7 PM. Do you have a car?}
13	Suad: I will come بنفسني and I will bring with me some food? {I will come by myself and I will bring with me some food.
14	Mohamad: I will اتي with my boss. { I will come with the boss}