Multimodal Analysis of Indonesian-English Code Switching Across Tiktok and Instagram (2023–2025)

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Abstract

This study examines Indonesian and English code switching on TikTok and Instagram from 2023 to 2025 to understand how users express bilingual identities through multimodal interactions. Previous studies often focused only on captions, comments, or videos, which produced a limited view of how bilingual expression operates across platforms. To address this issue, the present research analyzes code switching as a unified communicative practice where spoken language, written text, and audience responses work together to construct meaning. The aim is to describe how these bilingual choices support self presentation, emotional expression, and engagement within Indonesia's contemporary digital environment.This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach combined with multimodal discourse analysis to examine selected posts that show clear Indonesian and English alternation. The findings indicate that users apply code switching for several purposes, including humor, explanation, identity building, emotional emphasis, and civic expression. Over time, these practices shift from casual stylistic preferences to more intentional strategies that support solidarity, reflection, and social commentary. The study also shows that platform features, audience characteristics, and cultural developments influence the ways bilingual expression emerges and circulates online. Overall, the results provide a clearer understanding of how Indonesian social media users negotiate identity and belonging through multimodal bilingual practices. This study also highlights the increasing importance of code switching in shaping communication patterns within Indonesia's rapidly evolving social media landscape.

Keywords: *Bilingualism, Code Switching, Instagram, Sociolinguistics, Tiktok, Wardhaugh*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is never merely a neutral vehicle; it is a social instrument through which speakers negotiate identity, belonging, and power. (Wardhaugh, 2011) emphasizes that linguistic choices are embedded in social contexts, as speakers choose variations, switching, or mixing of languages (code-switching and code-mixing) depending on their audience and the identity they wish to display. In the context of social media, these social dimensions are expanded not only through face-to-face interaction but also through multimodality and the constantly shifting dynamics of digital audiences. In recent years, Indonesian social media platforms, especially TikTok and Instagram, have shown a rapid rise in Indonesian–English bilingual expression, indicating that users increasingly employ mixed linguistic resources to perform identity and build connection (Manuhutu et al., 2024). This phenomenon highlights the need to understand how code-switching functions within multimodal digital spaces.

One relevant theoretical framework is networked multilingualism, which explains how linguistic practices on social media are shaped by platform structures, audience composition, and cross-platform circulation (Androutsopoulos, 2015). Therefore, language choices in captions, spoken videos, and comments are not merely a matter of linguistic competence but also relate to visibility, stylistic identity, and users' positioning in relation to followers, audience reactions, and platform algorithms. Before engaging with these theoretical perspectives, it is important to note that previous research has not thoroughly addressed the broader issue of how bilingual behavior emerges from everyday digital practices, creating a need for clearer problem positioning in studies on online multilingualism.

Additionally, the theory of multimodality offers a crucial analytical tool for understanding that online communication, especially on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, relies not only on written or spoken language but also on visual, auditory, and gestural modes that together construct meaning. As (Flewitt, Price, and Korkiakangas, 2019) explain, multimodal communication involves the interplay of various semiotic resources such as text, image, sound, and movement, each contributing to how messages are produced and interpreted within digital contexts. As highlighted in Jewitt (2016), multimodal analysis emphasizes that meaning emerges from the orchestration of multiple modes simultaneously, making it essential to analyze visual, textual, and interactional elements as an integrated system rather than in isolation. Building on this, to classify specific linguistic patterns within these multimodal interactions, (Muysken's, 2000) typology, comprising insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, is frequently employed. This framework allows researchers to analyze how linguistic elements, such as English or local dialects, are embedded, alternated, or blended within a single communicative context. However, despite the usefulness of these frameworks, prior studies generally examine each mode separately, without integrating spoken videos, captions, and comment responses into one unified analysis (Daulay, 2024). This leaves an important empirical gap, existing studies have not yet provided a cross-platform, multimodal comparison that simultaneously includes spoken language, written captions, and comment interaction.

Another complementary perspective is provided by translanguaging theory (García & Wei, 2014), which views bilingual practices as fluid and integrated uses of linguistic resources rather than as discrete alternations between languages. Translanguaging highlights how speakers strategically and creatively mobilize their full linguistic repertoire to achieve communicative goals and express social identity. (Dumrukcic, 2020) found that on social media, users frequently combine multiple languages across modes, including spoken utterances, captions, and on-screen text, not only to clarify meaning but also to enrich expression and strengthen audience connection. In her study, over half of the respondents aged 18 to 35 reported mixing languages within a single post, suggesting that translanguaging is a natural, everyday discursive practice in digital environments. Although a small portion of respondents perceived it as a sign of weak language proficiency, most regarded it as a form of creative self-expression and social connection. These findings reveal translanguaging's crucial role in shaping identity, humor, and memetic discourse on social media. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of studies examining these dynamics in Indonesia, particularly those integrating cross-platform and temporal perspectives. More recent research (Akbar et al., 2025) further shows that code-switching in Indonesian social media are strongly influenced by patterns of online interaction and platform-specific communicative norms, reinforcing the idea that bilingual practices continue to evolve in dynamic and multimodal ways. This development reveals a clear research gap because previous studies have not yet integrated visual elements, spoken content, written text, and audience responses across TikTok and Instagram into one comprehensive multimodal analysis. Supporting this gap, Wibowo and Hamidah (2023) found that Indonesian–English mixing on Twitter remains predominantly text-based and context-specific, illustrating how platform differences shape bilingual expression and further highlighting the absence of cross-platform multimodal investigations.

In the Indonesian context, some studies have explored bilingual expression within specific scopes. Dewi et al. (2021) examined English–Indonesian code-mixing in Instagram captions and found that English phrases often serve to amplify emotional tone and convey modernity. Meanwhile, (Putri & Sulistiyono, 2024) investigated code-switching in TikTok comment sections, emphasizing its pedagogical implications. Similarly, Rahman and Muttaqin (2024) show that Indonesian students frequently blend Indonesian and English in Instagram captions as a strategy to construct a stylish, youthful persona, reinforcing that bilingual expression online is closely tied to self-presentation and identity performance among young users. However, these studies are limited to single modes, either textual or comment-based, and rarely consider the interaction between spoken video discourse, written captions, and audience responses as an integrated multimodal communicative event. Thus, although existing research contributes valuable insights, it does not yet address how multiple modes interact simultaneously to construct bilingual meaning across platforms.

Furthermore, temporal and cultural shifts have not been well documented. It remains underexplored how linguistic practices from 2023 to 2024 have evolved toward more performative expressions, stronger local identity awareness, or a shift from global aspiration to local authenticity. (Pavalanathan & Eisenstein, 2015) demonstrated that social media users modulate their linguistic choices depending on audience scale, whether local or global. Yet, Indonesia's rich multilingual ecology presents unique sociolinguistic dynamics that remain underrepresented in scholarly literature. The lack of longitudinal and cross-platform analysis further strengthens the urgency to investigate contemporary Indonesian bilingual practices from 2023 to 2025.

In addition, Atmawati (2019) highlights that linguistic variation on social media reflects not only creativity but also the interpersonal and social dimensions of language use in online communities. Her qualitative study on Facebook interactions found that users employ diverse linguistic forms, such as abbreviations, acronyms, slang, and code-mixing, to express various communicative functions including prayers, humor, promotion, protest, and encouragement. These variations are influenced by social factors such as education, age, gender, topic, and communicative goals. The findings affirm that online language practices in Indonesia are shaped by both social structure and digital affordances, where users creatively adapt language to suit informal yet socially meaningful interactions. Similarly, Rosalina (2025) shows that English code-mixing on social media is strongly shaped by local cultural values, indicating that bilingual expression in Indonesia is not merely stylistic but deeply intertwined with regional identity and culturally grounded communicative norms. In line with these findings, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) emphasize that identity is dynamically constructed through interaction, suggesting that bilingual choices on social media should be understood as discursive acts through which users actively perform, negotiate, and reconfigure social identities in real time. This context provides an essential foundation for understanding how Indonesian speakers perform identity and emotional connection through bilingual expression on platforms like TikTok and Instagram.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by analyzing code-switching as multimodal communicative practices among TikTok and Instagram users in Indonesia between 2023 and 2024. It integrates spoken video discourse, written captions, and comment interactions, complemented by short interviews with content creators to uncover their linguistic awareness and motivations. The aim of this study is to examine how Indonesian–English code-switching operates across multimodal forms of communication on TikTok and Instagram, including speech, caption text, and audience responses. In doing so, the study offers the first cross-platform multimodal account of Indonesian bilingual expression, contributing both theoretically and empirically by demonstrating how linguistic and non-linguistic modes jointly construct identity and social meaning, extending Wardhaugh's sociolinguistic framework to account for digital performativity and temporal variation, and highlighting the platform-specific affordances that shape contemporary bilingual practices.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a multimodal discourse analysis approach. The design enables a detailed examination of how linguistic, visual, auditory, and interactional modes work together to construct bilingual meaning on TikTok and Instagram. A qualitative descriptive orientation prioritizes naturalistic interpretation, while multimodal discourse analysis provides analytical tools for understanding how meaning is distributed across speech, text, gesture, and other semiotic resources. As noted by Goundar (2012), qualitative designs are appropriate when researchers aim to describe, interpret, and understand naturally occurring linguistic behavior without manipulating variables, which aligns with the goals of this study.

2.1. Research Site and Period

The data were collected from publicly accessible TikTok and Instagram posts created by Indonesian users between January 2023 and September 2025. These platforms were selected because they represent the most active multimodal environments for bilingual discourse in the Indonesian digital landscape, with content combining spoken language, captions, comments, and visual presentation.

2.2. Sampling Technique and Case Selection

This study uses purposive sampling, selecting cases that best represent bilingual multimodal practices rather than aiming for statistical representativeness. Five cases were chosen based on the following criteria:
a. Posts were created by Indonesian individual users, not institutions or brands.
b. Each post contained deliberate Indonesian–English switching or mixing.
c. The posts involved multimodal elements such as speech, caption text, gesture, or onscreen text.
d. Each post had accumulated at least 100,000 views or interactions, indicating its circulation within wider digital discourse.
e. The cases represented a diversity of communicative functions including humor, education, civic critique, motivation, and personal expression.

Although the corpus consists of five cases, each case is a dense multimodal object containing layers of spoken language, written text, visual cues, and audience responses. The aim is not generalization but analytical depth. Potential bias from selecting popular content was mitigated by including posts with varied topics, genres, and communicative intentions.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected directly from TikTok and Instagram using each platform's built-in search and navigation features. The collected materials included video links, screenshots, captions, and comment threads. TikTok data consisted of spoken videos, while Instagram provided written captions and comment interactions. All items were compiled into a structured dataset for analysis.

2.4. Analytical Instruments and Coding Process

The analysis used two primary analytical tools:
a. AnyTranscribe TikTok-to-Text Converter : This tool was used to convert spoken TikTok videos into written text. It facilitated accurate transcription of multilingual utterances but did not perform any linguistic interpretation.
b. Manual Coding : Manual coding was applied to all textual data, including TikTok transcripts, Instagram captions, and comments. This involved reading, marking, and interpreting bilingual expressions, orthographic patterns, emojis, and context-specific language choices.

The analytical process consisted of three stages:
● Linguistic Coding : Using Muysken's (2000) typology, each bilingual instance was categorized as insertion, alternation, or congruent lexicalization.
● Cross-Modal Comparison : Bilingual patterns were compared across spoken TikTok content and written Instagram text to identify how platform affordances shape code-switching behaviour.
● Interpretive Analysis : Findings were interpreted using Wardhaugh's sociolinguistic theory, translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014), and networked multilingualism (Androutsopoulos, 2015).

2.5. Data Validation Techniques

To ensure analytical rigor and minimize interpretive bias, the study employed peer debriefing as the central validation technique. Two colleagues specializing in linguistics and digital communication reviewed the coding, analytical categories, and interpretive claims. Their feedback helped refine thematic distinctions, validate linguistic classifications, and confirm consistency across multimodal data.

Although triangulation and audit trails informed the overall process, peer debriefing served as the primary safeguard for methodological credibility in accordance with the qualitative standards used in digital discourse studies.

2.6. Research Flow

The overall research process followed this sequence: Data Collection → Transcription → Coding and Classification → Cross-Modal Comparison → Multimodal Interpretation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Data 1 (TikTok Video) (Alternational Code-switching)

@indonesianwithlauren on TikTok: https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSUMvsT47/

"*You want to know the hardest part of learning Indonesian? I'll show you. Sebatang pohon. Based on what you just learned, you probably would think that this is called sebatang bunga. It's not. It's actually setangkai bunga. Hold on, it gets worse. Seekor kucing. Sebutir telur. Sebuah apel. Now guess what this is? I bet you can't. This is seorang pria.*"

3.1.2. Data 2 (TikTok Video) (Alternational Code-switching)

@maudyayunda on TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@maudyayunda/video/7550634612012322066?

"*If you're surrounded by people who are smarter and in a lot of ways better than you, then congratulations. You basically are the person who will grow the most from being a part of that group. Grow dalam arti kita pasti belajar banyak banget dari orang-orang ini. Pasti orang-orang ini punya pengalaman, punya expertise, punya knowledge yang oke kalau emang lebih tinggi, but then it's your opportunity to learn and absorb and you're the one at an advantage in some ways because you have so much more to learn from these people and your growth will just be much greater than their growth arguably pada saat aku lagi ngerasa insecure dan udah mulai meragukan situasi ini atau kayak meragukan my self worth that's kind of what I tell myself it's like you're the luckiest person here then you're the one learning the most.*"

3.1.3. Data 3 (TikTok Video) (Alternational Code-switching)

@cintalaurauniverse on TikTok: https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSUMtH7rY/

"*Bagi yang merasa tertampar, get your shit together. Alright, buckle up. Ini para pemimpin negara, pada halu atau gimana ya? Sorry, sorry, sorry. Coba aku perjelas. How did we get to a place where people in power can dance on stage while the nation is struggling to breathe? Karena di luar gedung megah itu kenyataannya begini: 47% atau 25 juta dari 53 juta buruh, karyawan, dan pegawai dibayar di bawah UMP. Itu data resmi BPS yang dirangkum Katadata. Dan UMP itu berapa sih? Ya tergantung provinsi, kisarannya antara 2–5 juta per bulan, dengan rata-rata nasional sekitar 3,1 juta. Kalian beli matcha latte setiap hari dalam sebulan, sudah setengah dari rata-rata UMP nasional. Itu gaji untuk satu bulan hidup, yang sering kali bukan hanya untuk satu orang, tapi untuk satu keluarga—bayar kontrakan, listrik, beras, sekolah, dan ongkos kerja. Satu sakit, semua goyang.*

Sekarang bandingkan dengan mereka yang memegang palu kebijakan. Pernyataan publik yang sudah beredar bertahun-tahun menunjukkan gaji pokok anggota DPR sekitar 16 juta, plus tunjangan sekitar 59 juta. Itu yang diakui di depan kamera. Dan kita semua tahu ada arus di luar slip yang tidak tercatat rapi. Akhir-akhir ini bahkan muncul kalkulator ajaib: 3 juta kali 26 hari sama dengan 78 juta per bulan. Sebuah blunder yang bikin rakyat makin panas—bukan hanya karena salah hitung, tapi karena salah rasa. Sadar gak sih, guru sekolah dikasih 3 juta per bulan aja sudah bersyukur banget. Kalian merasa 3 juta per hari itu berat? Hello?

Tahukah Anda rasanya tinggal di tempat berukuran 11x7 meter bersama tujuh anggota keluarga? Tanpa AC, teknologi canggih, dan segala kenyamanan yang saya yakin Anda semua punya. Let that sink in. Di sisi lain, guru-guru honorer—orang-orang yang kita titipi masa depan anak kita—ada yang menerima 100–350 ribu per bulan, tergantung provinsi. Ada berita tentang guru yang sudah mengabdi 33 tahun hanya untuk mendapat gaji 350 ribu rupiah per tiga bulan. Ini bukan drama, ini realita yang viral karena terlalu menyakitkan untuk didiamkan.

Can we just be honest for once? Kalau politisi kita naik gaji dan tunjangan, tapi guru dibiarkan mengajar sambil berdoa untuk bertahan hidup, apa yang kita harapkan dari pendidikan Indonesia? Hasilnya sudah kelihatan. Berdasarkan data PISA 2022, skor Indonesia untuk Matematika adalah 366, Membaca 329, dan Sains 383—semuanya jauh di bawah rata-rata OECD dan masing-masing kategori turun 10–40 poin dibanding tahun 2009. Ini adalah alarm keras bahwa kompetensi dasar anak bangsa kita tertinggal, dan ini bukan salah mereka, melainkan salah pihak-pihak berkuasa yang terlalu sibuk memikirkan dirinya sendiri daripada membangun sistem agar guru-guru mendapat dukungan yang dibutuhkan—bukan hanya untuk bisa mengajar dengan efektif, tapi juga hidup lebih sejahtera.

Namun tetap saja, di layar kaca dan media sosial, kita melihat gestur pamer status: tertawa, berjoget, membela tunjangan, seolah penderitaan rakyat hanyalah noise. Kita mengaku menjunjung tinggi Pancasila dan gotong royong, tapi kok bisa se-desensitised ini terhadap kemiskinan dan kepedihan? Sejak kapan jabatan jadi jalan pintas untuk flexing, bukan pelayanan? Kenapa status lebih penting daripada nurani? Kalau politik itu pelayanan, kenapa yang dipamerkan justru gaya hidup? Untuk apa jadi politisi? Untuk flexing kekayaan atau memperbaiki penghidupan rakyat yang gajinya kalah jauh dari standar layak? Sampai kapan kita pura-pura gak tahu?

Rakyat bukan marah karena iri, rakyat marah karena logika keadilan diinjak-injak. Kepada yang berkuasa, own up to your mistakes. Akui ketidaktahuan, keserakahan, kesalahan kalkulasi, dan kesalahan hati. Stop gaslighting us. Jangan adu domba rakyat untuk menutupi kesalahan. Get your responsibilities in order. Get your shit together. Beberapa hari ini kita melihat ribuan orang turun ke jalan, bukan hanya membawa spanduk, tapi juga membawa amarah yang sudah terlalu lama dipendam. Di tengah demonstrasi ini, ada yang berusaha memecah belah, menjadikan sesama warga negara sebagai kambing hitam, memprovokasi dengan isu-isu yang sengaja dimainkan supaya kita saling curiga dan saling benci. Kita harus sadar, lawan kita bukan sesama rakyat, melainkan sistem yang dipenuhi keserakahan dan kebodohan di kursi kekuasaan.

Tidak ada satu pun nyawa—seperti almarhum Affan Kurniawan—yang pantas melayang hanya demi menutupi aib DPR. Tidak ada anak bangsa yang pantas mati karena kesalahan hitung, kesalahan rasa, dan kesalahan hati para wakil rakyat. Kita harus berdiri tegak, bukan saling tuding, dan memastikan suara kita sampai ke telinga mereka yang berkuasa. Yuhuu, excuse me, permisi. Kepada anggota Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, jajaran pemerintah, dan Bapak Presiden Republik Indonesia yang terhormat: please show us that you're listening. Dengarkanlah kita. Karena darah rakyat bukanlah harga yang pantas dibayar untuk kebodohan yang berkuasa. Kalau masih ada yang bilang, "Kan sudah sesuai aturan," aku mau jawab: aturan tanpa rasa adalah kebijakan yang kehilangan jiwa. Indonesia is not okay. Dan tugas kalian yang dipilih dan digaji bukan menari di atas luka, tapi menjahit luka itu. Rakyat gak butuh pejabat yang jago berhitung tunjangan. Rakyat perlu pemimpin yang jago menghitung nurani. Pray for Indonesia."

3.1.4. Data 4. (Instagram Caption) (Alternational Code-switching)

Source: @mastercorbuzier Post on 24 September 2025
https://www.instagram.com/p/DO-dZoikp6S/?igsh=YWU0OWpjdXdodWd2
Theme: Self-motivation, body image, and authenticity
Caption:

"*Let me Flex.. and give you a little knowledge.. enggak, gue gak akan bertahan di kondisi seperti ini terlalu lama.. fat terlalu rendah, masa otot tinggi, terlihat bagus tapi it's not that healthy.. kalau ditahan terlalu lama.. apalagi di usia gue..it's pain everywhere, hard to sleep, stress out, join pain.. everything...*

Lalu buat apa? Beberapa hari lagi gue ada shooting iklan pakaian Olah Raga..

Persiapan hanya selama 2 bulan.. Dengan teman teman yg akan satu frame disana yg usia nya jauh bgt dibawah gue... Badan bagus bgt, metabolisme masih Top.. and of course I need to compete with them.. (Brand nya sih gak minta) gue nya aja yg Error...

One thing I believe, when u got a chance, give it 100%

Coz if ur not, others will..

PS: Abis ini beres gue mau makan @gadangbarubah 4 piring... Bodooo amat."

3.1.5. Data 5 (Instagram Comment) (Insertional Code-switching)

Source: Comment by @arnaultsgf on @shazshaniaa post on September 22, 2025.
Link: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DO5djXdkWri/?igsh=ZnRxcW51Z3hjamdu

"Terharu bgt setiap nonton pregnancy journey ka shasa!, aku suka bgt kaka selalu ambil positive side dari semua journey yg kaka lalui, also u wrap it in the most beautiful words ever, sehat selalu yaa baby zavi and parents-nya!!"

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Data 1

The TikTok video by @indonesianwithlauren illustrates a clear instance of alternational code-switching, in which the speaker alternates between English explanations and Indonesian classifier examples such as *sebatang pohon*, *setangkai bunga*, *seekor kucing*, *sebutir telur*, and *seorang pria*. The switching occurs at clause-level boundaries, consistent with Muysken's (2000) characterization of alternation. English functions as the primary instructional medium through which the speaker establishes footing, explains linguistic rules, and frames the humorous tone of the video, while Indonesian supplies the culturally specific linguistic items that form the object of instruction. This distribution is reinforced through multimodal cues typical of TikTok videos, including intonation, gesture, facial expression, and pacing, which help highlight contrast and enhance the comedic learning effect.

3.2.2. Interpretation of Data 1

The pattern of alternation in this data reflects a pedagogical strategy rather than a purely stylistic choice. English indexes global accessibility and pedagogical authority, allowing the speaker to present herself as an expert guide who can communicate effectively with both Indonesian learners and international audiences. This corresponds with Wardhaugh's (2011) view that language choice is socially motivated and shaped by audience orientation. Indonesian, meanwhile, anchors the explanation in cultural specificity and authenticity. Through the lens of translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014), the speaker's use of English and Indonesian does not indicate separation between linguistic systems; rather, she mobilizes her entire bilingual repertoire to scaffold understanding, emphasize contrast, and generate humor. The alternation is further amplified by TikTok's multimodal affordances, a point consistent with Flewitt, Price, and Korkiakangas (2019), who argue that meaning in digital environments is constructed through coordinated verbal and nonverbal resources. The speaker's expressive delivery, coupled with the structured alternation between languages, turns a linguistic explanation into an engaging performance. When compared with Daulay (2024), who found that TikTok creators frequently employ clause-level switching to maintain clarity in educational content, this example confirms that alternation is particularly effective for teaching contrastive features such as Indonesian classifiers.

3.2.3. Data 2

The TikTok video posted by @maudyayunda exhibits a clear case of alternational code-switching, marked by the speaker's movement between English motivational statements and Indonesian reflective clauses. English is used to articulate abstract ideas related to personal growth, self-improvement, and strategic optimism ("If you're surrounded by people who are smarter… then congratulations"), while Indonesian appears in emotionally grounded reflections such as "Grow dalam arti kita pasti belajar banyak banget" and "pada saat aku lagi ngerasa insecure." The switching operates at the clause and discourse levels, consistent with Muysken's (2000) typology of alternation. The bilingual delivery is accompanied by subtle multimodal cues including changes in tone, facial expressions, and pacing that are typical of TikTok's conversational and affective communication style.

3.2.4. Interpretation of Data 2

The alternation in this video functions as a rhetorical and emotional framing strategy. English foregrounds aspirational discourse, indexing confidence, intellect, and global self-development ethos. This aligns with Wardhaugh's (2011) view that language choice signals identity positioning; the speaker situates herself as part of

a globally literate, motivationally driven community. By contrast, the Indonesian segments introduce emotional intimacy and personal vulnerability, allowing the speaker to acknowledge insecurity and self-doubt in a culturally resonant way. The shift into Indonesian thus serves to humanize the otherwise assertive motivational tone, creating a balance between aspiration and relatability.

From a translanguaging perspective (García & Wei, 2014), the speaker draws fluidly from her bilingual repertoire to articulate complex psychological states without treating English and Indonesian as separate systems. The alternation emerges organically from the narrative flow, illustrating how bilingual speakers integrate linguistic resources to express layered emotional and cognitive meanings. This pattern resonates with Androutsopoulos's (2015) notion of networked multilingualism, where online users strategically adapt linguistic choices to appeal to both local and global audiences.

The multimodal elements further reinforce the communicative effect. As discussed by Flewitt, Price, and Korkiakangas (2019), meaning on digital platforms is constructed through the interaction of verbal and nonverbal cues. In this data, softer vocal tones and contemplative facial expressions accompany Indonesian segments, heightening emotional authenticity and signaling a shift from general advice to personal confession. This makes the alternational switching not only linguistic but also affective, shaping the viewer's experience of sincerity and relatability.

Compared with Daulay's (2024) findings that TikTok creators often use alternation to maintain clarity while providing explanations, this case shows alternation functioning as an emotional and motivational structuring device. The speaker uses English to articulate universal principles and Indonesian to disclose inner experience, highlighting how TikTok encourages expressive bilingualism that blends personal narrative with aspirational messaging.

3.2.5. Data 3

The TikTok video posted by @cintalaurauniverse demonstrates an intense form of alternational code-switching, where the speaker alternates between English and Indonesian across extended stretches of discourse. English appears in emotionally charged, confrontational, and emphatic statements such as "get your shit together," "How did we get to a place…," and "Pray for Indonesia," while Indonesian is employed to present statistical data, socioeconomic realities, narrative descriptions, and moral reasoning. The pattern corresponds to Muysken's (2000) classification of alternation, as the shifts occur at the level of clauses and full discourse segments rather than through single-word insertions. This code distribution assigns English to urgency and rhetorical escalation, whereas Indonesian functions as the explanatory and context-building code that grounds the critique in national realities.

3.2.6. Interpretation

The alternation in this video functions as a strategy for constructing civic authority and emotional alignment. Consistent with Wardhaugh's (2011) view that language choice indexes social position and communicative intent, English is used to express indignation, moral confrontation, and direct challenge, signaling a stance that aligns with global activist discourse. Indonesian, by contrast, provides access to shared lived experiences such as poverty statistics, wage discrepancies, educational inequalities, and political frustrations, thus reinforcing solidarity with the Indonesian public. Through this bilingual positioning, the speaker projects both global rhetorical authority and local moral accountability.

From a translanguaging perspective (García & Wei, 2014), the speaker does not treat English and Indonesian as separate systems but mobilizes them as a single, fluid semiotic repertoire to articulate outrage, empathy, irony, and collective grievance. The bilingual flow becomes an instrument for navigating emotionally layered civic critique, illustrating how bilingual Indonesians integrate linguistic resources to make sense of political injustice and national anxiety.

The multimodal elements further intensify the discourse. Drawing on Flewitt, Price, and Korkiakangas (2019), the interaction of sharp prosodic shifts, emphatic gestures, and expressive facial cues reinforces the rhetorical force of her message. Repetition and rapid alternation between English and Indonesian work in tandem with audiovisual cues to create an affective and urgent performance that encourages emotional resonance and civic mobilization among viewers.

This case also reflects Androutsopoulos's (2015) concept of networked multilingualism, where bilingual expression in online platforms simultaneously targets domestic audiences and transnational observers. English phrases frame the message within global moral discourse, while Indonesian segments supply contextual depth and cultural specificity. This hybrid communication strengthens both the emotional impact and the perceived legitimacy of the critique.

3.2.7. Data 4

The Instagram caption posted by @mastercorbuzier displays a pattern of alternational code-switching, where Indonesian and English appear in full clauses rather than as isolated insertions. The caption alternates between motivational English expressions ("Let me flex", "give you a little knowledge", "when u got a chance, give it 100%") and Indonesian reflections describing exhaustion, pain, and self-awareness ("enggak, gue gak akan bertahan di kondisi seperti ini terlalu lama", "Lalu buat apa?", "gue nya aja yang error").

Multimodally, the caption accompanies a fitness-oriented image, forming a cohesive narrative between visual self-presentation and linguistic self-disclosure. English is predominantly used at the opening and closing of the caption marking the statement's performative frame while Indonesian dominates the middle portion, conveying explanation, vulnerability, and internal questioning.

3.2.8. Interpretation

The alternational switching in this caption reveals a complex negotiation of identity, emotion, and audience orientation. English functions as a symbolic register associated with discipline, fitness culture, and professional self-branding. This aligns with Wardhaugh's (2010) view that language choice is a social act indexing identity and group affiliation. The speaker uses English to project confidence and a public-facing persona, positioning himself within a global, aspirational discourse community.

Indonesian, however, becomes the terrain of honesty and self-critique. Expressions like "gue gak akan bertahan", "gue nya aja yg error", and "Bodoo amat" soften the assertiveness of the English lines, creating an affective counterbalance. This combination closely reflects García and Wei's (2014) concept of translanguaging, where bilinguals draw from their full linguistic repertoires to express layered psychological states rather than switching rigidly between separate codes. The caption also demonstrates the multimodal affordances of Instagram. The linguistic shifts support what Androutsopoulos (2015) calls networked identity work: users blend languages to communicate simultaneously with local followers (through Indonesian vulnerability) and globalized digital cultures (through English motivational rhetoric). The alternation is neither accidental nor ornamental; it materializes a tension between external self-performance (the "flex") and internal bodily and emotional strain.

3.2.9. Data 5

The Instagram comment represents a clear instance of insertional code-switching as defined by Muysken (2000), where English lexical items and short phrases are embedded into an Indonesian syntactic frame. Indonesian provides the base structure, such as "Terharu bgt setiap nonton…", "aku suka bgt…", and "sehat selalu yaa…". English expressions including "pregnancy journey", "also u wrap it in the most beautiful words ever", and other evaluative phrases appear as stylistic insertions. These English elements add expressiveness without altering the dominant Indonesian grammatical pattern, making this a prototypical example of insertional switching. Because the comment appears under an emotionally framed Instagram Reel, the bilingual expression is situated within a multimodal environment that reinforces sentiment, support, and aesthetic appreciation.

3.2.10. Interpretation

The insertional pattern functions as a sociolinguistic resource for expressing identity and emotional stance. Following Wardhaugh's (2011) view that language choice indexes attitude and audience orientation, the English insertions operate as markers of stylistic elevation and digital fluency. Expressions such as "pregnancy journey" and "beautiful words ever" contribute to a modern and affectionate tone that aligns with Instagram's aesthetic norms. Meanwhile, Indonesian clauses maintain intimacy, empathy, and cultural familiarity, reflecting typical Indonesian affective communication online.

From a translanguaging perspective (García and Wei, 2014), the commenter draws from an integrated bilingual repertoire to construct layered emotional meanings. Indonesian conveys closeness and support, while English intensifies admiration and stylistic nuance. Rather than switching between two separate linguistic systems, the user blends languages fluidly to create a cohesive affective message. This supports findings from Dewi et al. (2021), who note that English insertions on Instagram often enhance expressiveness and stylistic appeal in sentimental interactions.

Although the data is textual, its meaning is amplified by the visual context of the Reel. Based on Flewitt, Price, and Korkiakangas (2019), multimodal meaning arises from the interplay between linguistic and visual elements. The emotional imagery of the pregnancy-related content shapes the reception of the comment, and English phrases such as "beautiful words ever" complement this aesthetic tone, making the bilingual message part of a cohesive multimodal experience.

This example also aligns with observations by Zebua et al. (2025), who found that Instagram encourages gentle, relational, and aesthetically oriented language mixing. Unlike TikTok data in earlier sections, which involves more dynamic and performative bilingual expression, this comment reflects Instagram's preference for brief, emotionally rich, and community-oriented insertional switching.

3.2.11. Scientific Implication

The findings across all five datasets contribute several significant insights to the broader theoretical discussion on bilingualism and code-switching in digital environments.
a. The study extends Wardhaugh's framework by demonstrating that language choice in digital spaces is not only a marker of social identity but also a reflection of platform-specific identities. TikTok encourages performative, emotionally heightened bilingualism, while Instagram cultivates aesthetic, relational, and supportive styles. This suggests that identity negotiation online is shaped simultaneously by social intention and by the technological affordances of each platform.
b. The results refine the application of translanguaging theory by showing that bilingual users draw on their full linguistic repertoires to express complex emotional, pedagogical, civic, and aesthetic meanings. These findings indicate that translanguaging in digital contexts often involves multiple semiotic modes including visuals, gestures, and tone, illustrating that online communication expands the scope of translanguaging beyond spoken or written interaction.
c. The study contributes to multimodal discourse analysis by demonstrating that code-switching cannot be separated from audiovisual cues. Meaning-making in digital environments arises from the interaction between linguistic choice, platform design, and multimodal performance. This highlights that digital bilingualism involves layered semiotic coordination rather than purely linguistic alternation.
d. The study offers a model for understanding Indonesian bilingualism in networked communication. English consistently frames global, aspirational, or stylistically heightened meanings, while Indonesian delivers contextual grounding, emotional sincerity, and cultural familiarity. This pattern provides a framework for future research on how Indonesian-English bilingual users negotiate global-local identities across platforms.

3.2.12. Cross-Theme and Cross-Platform Analysis

A comparison of the five datasets reveals that code-switching functions differently depending on communicative purpose, emotional tone, and platform culture. TikTok data (Data 1–3) generally demonstrates alternational switching with longer English clauses serving instructional, motivational, or civic purposes, while Indonesian anchors explanation, vulnerability, or national specificity. The switching is performative and dynamic, shaped by the audiovisual immediacy of TikTok.

Instagram data functions differently. The caption in Data 4 employs alternation to negotiate identity and authenticity within a visually curated narrative, while the comment in Data 5 uses insertional switching to enhance emotional warmth and stylistic elegance. Instagram encourages concise, aesthetically oriented language mixing, where English insertions serve expressive and symbolic functions.

Across all datasets, English is associated with global framing, confidence, stylistic force, and aspirational tone. Indonesian remains the language of emotional grounding, interpersonal closeness, and contextual detail. This consistent pattern suggests a shared cultural logic in Indonesian digital bilingualism, where global and local identities are negotiated simultaneously through strategic code selection. The contrast between TikTok and Instagram demonstrates that platform affordances shape not only how bilingual users communicate but also why particular switching strategies emerge in different digital environments.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that Indonesian and English code switching on TikTok and Instagram from 2023 to 2025 is not simply a linguistic alternation but a socially meaningful multimodal practice through which users negotiate identity, emotion, and public belonging. The analysis of five datasets indicates that code switching serves diverse communicative functions, including education, motivation, self-expression, and civic critique. These patterns are influenced by platform-specific affordances as well as the visual, auditory, and interactive contexts that accompany each post. In general, English is used to express global framing, intensity, and stylistic elevation, while Indonesian provides emotional sincerity, cultural familiarity, and contextual grounding.

This study contributes to theory in several ways. First, it expands Wardhaugh's sociolinguistic framework by demonstrating that language choice in digital environments is shaped not only by social identity but also by platform-based identity performance. TikTok encourages dynamic and affectively heightened switching, while Instagram promotes concise, aesthetic, and relational forms of mixing. Second, it enriches translanguaging theory

by showing that bilingual users mobilize their full linguistic repertoires across verbal and non-verbal modes, including visuals, gestures, tone, and audiovisual rhythm. Third, it offers a model for understanding Indonesian digital bilingualism in which global and local identities are negotiated at the same time through patterned linguistic choices.

From a methodological perspective, multimodal discourse analysis proves effective for capturing how meaning is produced across speech, caption text, imagery, gesture, and audience interaction. This provides practical value for language educators, content creators, and digital communication researchers who wish to apply bilingual and multimodal strategies to enhance engagement, identity performance, or audience connection.

Several limitations must be acknowledged openly. First, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the focus on widely circulated posts may result in viral-content bias because popular content often amplifies emotional or stylistic features that do not represent everyday bilingual use. Third, the study is restricted to TikTok and Instagram, so it does not capture patterns that may appear on other platforms such as X, Facebook, or YouTube.

Future studies can expand the corpus, observe different online communities, or compare multiple platforms in order to understand whether similar bilingual patterns appear elsewhere. Although this study has limitations, it provides an important foundation for understanding how multimodal bilingualism shapes identity, solidarity, and communication practices in Indonesia's rapidly evolving social media environment.

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