

Code-Switching as Cultural Expression among Indonesian Social Media Users through Social Media Data

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Abstract:

In Indonesia, code-switching is commonly used, especially in a phenomenon known as Jaksel language, a mix of Indonesian and English that people use in everyday communication. Most studies on code switching have looked at how it works and why people do it. Not many have thought about how it helps people show their culture. This study wants to see how people in Indonesia who use social media use code switching to show who they are and what they believe in when they are online. Data were collected from posts on Instagram and TikTok to analyze how they use language and what that says about what they think and where they fit in. What we found out is that code switching is not only a way to communicate, but it is also a way for people to express their feelings, show who they are, and fit in with what is cool online. When people use English, it can sound calmer and not as emotional, whereas when they use Indonesian, it keeps them connected to their culture. This study shows that the Jaksel language is a way that young people in Indonesia express themselves and their culture, and it is shaped by the world getting smaller and social media. So this study helps us better understand code-switching, especially how young people use it to express who they are and how they communicate online. The Jaksel language is a part of this, and code switching is a key aspect of the Jaksel language.

Keywords: code-switching, Jaksel language, social media, Cultural expression, Online communication.

Abstrak:

Di Indonesia, alih kode memang umum digunakan, terutama dalam fenomena yang dikenal sebagai bahasa Jaksel, yaitu perpaduan antara bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa Inggris yang digunakan dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Sebagian besar penelitian tentang alih kode berfokus pada bagaimana alih kode bekerja dan mengapa orang menggunakannya. Namun, masih sedikit penelitian yang membahas perannya dalam mengekspresikan budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana pengguna media sosial di Indonesia menggunakan alih kode untuk mengekspresikan identitas dan nilai-nilai budaya mereka dalam konteks daring. Data dikumpulkan dari unggahan di Instagram dan TikTok untuk menganalisis penggunaan bahasa serta bagaimana hal tersebut mencerminkan cara pandang dan posisi sosial pengguna. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa alih kode tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai cara untuk mengekspresikan emosi, membangun

identitas, dan menyesuaikan diri dengan tren yang berkembang di media sosial. Penggunaan bahasa Inggris cenderung memberikan kesan lebih netral atau kurang emosional sedangkan penggunaan bahasa Indonesia mempertahankan keterhubungan dengan identitas budaya. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa bahasa Jaksel merupakan bentuk ekspresi budaya kaum muda di Indonesia yang dipengaruhi oleh globalisasi dan media sosial. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menegaskan peran penting alih kode dalam cara generasi muda mengekspresikan diri dan mengomunikasikan identitas mereka di ruang digital.

Kata kunci: alih kode, bahasa Jaksel, media sosial, ekspresi budaya, komunikasi daring.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has been a significant influence on how people communicate and express themselves in online communication. The researchers decided to discuss "*Code-Switching as Cultural Expression among Indonesian Social Media Users through Social Media Data*" Because the phenomenon of code-switching has increased in social media such as Instagram and TikTok. Several studies have discussed about code switching phenomenon, for example, like (Salman & Akhiroh, 2025), they explain about Jaksel language is commonly used in daily activities on social media. However, this research only focuses on their studies is mainly focus on the linguistic phenomenon and language pattern. In contrast, this research not only analyzes the use of code-switching linguistically but also examines how code-switching functions as a form of cultural expression among Indonesian social media users. In the digital era, language is an important part of communication, while also being a social identity in society. In the digital era, including the fact that Indonesia has so much cultural diversity across the country, makes most Indonesians already born bilingual in their local language and Indonesian language itself. But in this case, this research discusses the bilingual side of Indonesian and English through the phenomenon of Jaksel Language on digital platforms. But before continuing to further steps, let's know what Jaksel Language is.

Jaksel language is a slang language often used by people in South Jakarta (Jaksel). This language is synonymous with a mix of Indonesian and English, also known as code switching. Based on (Salman & Akhiroh, 2025), Jaksel language is a popular daily communication style among people that combines Indonesian and English in South Jakarta (Jaksel). Aside from the phenomenon of the Jaksel language, many Indonesian social media users use more than one language in their daily communication, especially Indonesian and English. This phenomenon of using two different languages in one conversation is known as code-switching. One example of code-switching in Indonesia can be seen in the phenomenon known as Jaksel language.

Jaksel language refers to the mixing of Indonesian and English in daily conversations, especially among users on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. This language style has become popular because it reflects a modern lifestyle, online trends, and global influences. In contrast to previous research, this study analyzes the phenomenon of code-switching within Indonesian digital culture, particularly through the phenomenon of Jaksel language used on social media. Most previous studies have focused on linguistic and communicative aspects of code-switching, and this study looks at how code-switching serves as a cultural expression and identity construction, as well as a means of creating a digital lifestyle among Indonesian social media users. This research offers a more focused view of the relationships between language, social media and digital culture in Indonesia.

This research aims to analyze how Indonesian social media users use code switching in social media as a form of cultural expression. This Research is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies, especially in understanding the relationship between language and digital culture.

Based on the background above, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Indonesian social media users use code switching on social media?
2. What types of code switching are commonly used in social media communication?
3. How does code switching function as a form of cultural expression among Indonesian social media users?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study applies sociolinguistic theories of code-switching proposed by Holmes (2013) and Gumperz (1977). Holmes explains that code-switching is affected by social factors such as identity, social relationships, and communicative context. Meanwhile, Gumperz defines code-switching as the alternation between languages within a conversation, which is shaped by situational context and interaction meaning. These two perspectives are used to analyze how code-switching functions both as a social practice and as a communicative strategy in digital interaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach by applying the theories of code-switching proposed by Holmes (2013) and Gumperz (1977). Janet Holmes observes code-switching as the change from one language to another within the same discussion or social situation, often influenced by changes in participants, setting, or topic. Meanwhile, John J. Gumperz

defines code-switching as the utilization of two grammatical systems within the same conversation or interaction (Gumperz, 1977). Both perspectives are closely related and appropriate for interpreting language use in digital communication. This method is appropriate for the research because it focuses on analyzing and interpreting the meaning, expression, and use of code-switching in online communication.

The data are collected from social media platforms, especially Instagram as the main source, with TikTok as a supporting data source. The data consists of 3 short videos on Instagram, 3 Instagram captions, and 1 short video on TikTok. Instagram and TikTok are chosen because these platforms contain active digital communication and are widely used for everyday interaction. Due to the limited availability of relevant code-switching content that fits the research criteria, this study only uses 10 videos as the main data source.

Purposive sampling is used to select social media content containing Indonesian-English code-switching. The selected data are chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives and the occurrence of code-switching in digital communication. The study focuses primarily on video content because the context of interaction helps the researcher interpret the meaning and function of language use more clearly. Captions and comments are used as supporting data to strengthen the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

The analysis process begins by collecting social media content containing code-switching from Instagram and TikTok. After the data are collected, the researcher identifies and classifies the types of code-switching based on the theories proposed by Holmes and Gumperz. The researcher then interprets the functions and meanings of the code-switching expressions within their social and digital contexts. Finally, the findings are analyzed to understand how code-switching is used as a form of cultural expression in digital communication.

DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the research regarding the use of code-switching among Indonesian young social media users. The data we collected on May 11, 2026, at approximately 9:00 PM WIB from selected Instagram and TikTok content. The links and social media posts used in this research were accessible during the data collection process. Any future deletion, modification, or restriction of the content is beyond the researcher's control.

1. First Finding (attalabelard - Instagram)

The first example we will use came from Attalabelard, or with the name Attala Rafid Abelard (<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DXToPlxiX0Q/?igsh=eXF4cjF3Y3IINWlr>). In the video he uploaded on April 19, 2026. Shows a video of him giving an opinion of

[0:20:12] "Gue ngerasa kita gak bisa ngontrol pikiran negatif yang ada di kepala kita."
[0:30:00] "We can't. Sometimes the negative thoughts just pop in our head, and I believe that there's nothing wrong with that."

From the transcribed monologue above, code-switching works as an emotional awareness and negative thoughts from the user. The use of the English language helps the user to explain the idea in a more detailed and expressive way. This context shows how the user expresses his complaints through code-switching.

2. Second Finding (poppin.class - Instagram)

Another clip found from @poppin.class (<https://www.instagram.com/reels/DXJrPpgAcgQ/>) it shows 3 teenagers who are doing an interview, mixing Indonesian-English within the same sentence. The speaker switches language to express emotion more naturally in casual digital communication. Based on John J. Gumper's perspective, this type of code-switching functions as a communicative strategy to create emphasis and shared understanding among social media users.

[0:00:03] "Who are you guys' top 3 artists?"
[0:00:05] "Kalo aku, The Marias, Frank Ocean, and Concert."
[0:00:21] "Lagu favorit kalian, from your favorite artist siapa?"

This dialogue from the transcript shows the use of code-switching inside a casual podcast. The users combine Indonesian and English naturally while discussing music preferences and favorite artists, which shows that code-switching can happen because of the user's habit. The switching of language creates a more informal and expressive communication style among young social media users. Based on John J. Gumperz's perspective, this type of code-switching functions as a communicative strategy to create shared understanding and social closeness in conversation.

3. Third Finding (agengcarlitos - Instagram)

In this finding, we will have an example from Marvelino Carlito Sitorus or known as Ageng Carlitos, in his uploaded interview on March 17, 2026 (https://www.instagram.com/p/DV-__4RiTnI/). His personality is known to be a guy who uses hood language, or we know it as a new-york accent. But in this interview, he uses code-switching to show his gratitude to the others who made him join the movie project.

[0:00:19] "Dan gak nyangka adalah satu-satunya kata yang bisa aku terus-terusan ucapin kalau ditanya sih."
[0:00:27] "And of course shout-out to all the cast-out here. And shoutout to the crew out here."

[0:00:31] "They all kind, man."
[00:33] And yeah, I think that's all."

In this finding, the user uses code-switching to express gratitude and appreciation toward other people involved in the project. Although the speaker is known for using informal digital language styles, the use of English expressions such as "shout-out" and "they all kind, man" creates a more casual conversation and engaging interaction.

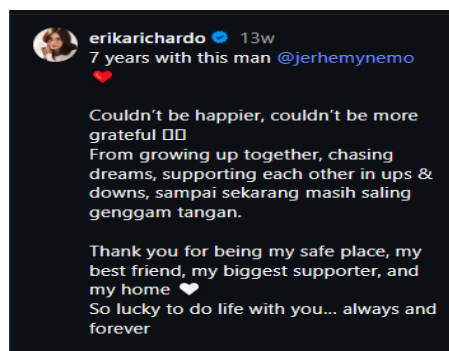
4. Fourth Finding (bund.lifetainment - TikTok)

This finding is an example from bund.lifetainment with a clip from their podcast, uploaded January 3, 2024-1-3 (<https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS93KAgBM/>). The video talks about how hyper-independent women are considered a bad thing or a good thing. And then the guest mentioned it could be a bad thing in the long run.

[00:00] "Kenapa kamu bisa merasa kamu hyper independence?"
[00:03] "Apa menurut kamu it's a good thing atau sebenarnya enggak?"
[00:06] "It's kind of bad thing, soalnya once you're over independent kan gak mau dependen sama orang lain."

This finding explains how code-switching is used to emphasize opinions and emotional expression in conversation. The user applies code-switching when explaining personal views about independence. And the use of English phrases such as "It's kind of bad thing" emphasizes the statement while maintaining the informal communication style.

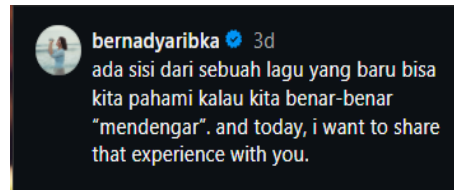
5. Fifth Finding (@erikarichardo - Instagram)



From this finding, as a caption from @erikarichardo on February 11, 2026 (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DUUndxPIEpDP/?igsh=bTQzMGF4NzFpb3E0>). This caption above shows how code-switching can be functional as a form of gratitude and emotional expression in digital communication. The code-switching in this context creates a more personal and meaningful tone toward the audience. According to Janet Holmes, language choice may reflect emotional meaning and social relationships in

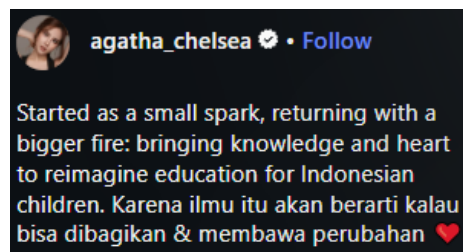
communication. In this context, code-switching helps the user express appreciation in a relatable and modern digital style.

6. Sixth Finding



This caption from @bernadyaribka on May 10, 2026 (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DYJ7O37kyLG/?igsh=MTRsc212bzh3NTk1bQ==>), proves the use of code-switching as a way to express feelings and personal emotions through the audience or other users. This specific use of code-switching creates a meaningful and emotionally connected interaction with the audience. The use of bilingual language also reflects the communication style commonly used among Indonesian social media users.

7. Seventh Finding (@agatha_chelsea - Instagram)



The last finding from @agatha_chelsea on August 19, 2025. (<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DNi392vgro/?igsh=MXRhM2V5M3MzNnV2Yg==>) can be interpreted as a shape of code-switching used to express gratefulness effectively while creating emotional and social connections with the audience. The code-switching helps the user deliver messages in a better way in digital communication.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research paper has explored and analyzed various aspects of code-switching: what Indonesian social media users do is not just mixing languages at random, but code-switching itself also works as a cultural expression for the Indonesian social media users. Through the data collection, careful analysis, and critical interpretation, we have provided valuable insight into code-switching as cultural expression among Indonesian social media users. This phenomenon shows that language on social media is very flexible and is influenced by the development of digital culture. Our study has confirmed the significance of how Indonesian social media users use code switching on social media, the types of code switching, and how code-switching is commonly used in social media communication. And also explain how code switching functions as a form of cultural expression among Indonesian social media users. This study has presented compelling evidence to support our claims.

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