

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF CODEMIXING IN
THE INSTAGRAM CAPTION OF GRADE XI STUDENTS AT SMA NEGERI
14 MEDAN**

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the types of code mixing and to determine the dominant type used in students' Instagram captions. This research is based on the phenomenon of bilingual language use in social media, especially the combination of Indonesian and English in students' daily communication. This research applied a descriptive qualitative method. The subjects of this research were 50 eleventhgrade students of SMA Negeri 14 Medan, selected from a population of 240 students. The data consisted of 50 Instagram captions and were supported by written interviews conducted through Instagram direct messages. The data were analyzed using the theory proposed by Pieter Muysken, which classifies code mixing into three types: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. The results of this research show that all three types of code mixing were found in the students' captions, with alternation identified as the most dominant type. This indicates that students tend to switch between Indonesian and English within sentences or clauses. Furthermore, code mixing reflects students' flexibility in digital communication and serves as a means of expressing identity, style, and creativity in social media.

Keywords: code mixing; Instagram captions; social media; bilingual communication

1. PENDAHULUAN

Background of the Study The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the communication patterns of society, especially among teenagers. Currently, social media platforms not only serve as a means of sharing information, but also as the main space for expressing one's identity through the use of language. Instagram is one of the most widely used platforms by teenagers, integrating visual elements with text captions. Instagram captions serve as a crucial linguistic instrument, as they reflect the conscious language preferences of their creators. In this case, the choice of language in these captions illustrates linguistic norms, social contexts, and the impact of linguistic globalization. Thus, Instagram offers an ideal environment for studying the dynamics of youth language authentically.

One of the most prominent linguistic phenomena in Instagram captions is code-mixing, particularly between Indonesian and English. Code-mixing occurs when foreign language elements are inserted into the main language without changing the context of communication. This phenomenon is often seen in posts by high school students, who are actively exposed to English through the education system, mass media, and popular culture. In the Instagram environment, the use of code-mixing is not a random occurrence, but rather part of a language pattern that is considered contemporary and in tune with the times. This indicates the existence of strong language interaction in the digital space of teenagers.

Based on the researcher's initial observations, 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 14 Medan often use code-mixing in their Instagram captions. Examples of this can be seen in captions such as “Next event dikembangkan lagi”, “Day two performance, lagunya cukup menarik dan menantang”, and “Halo semuanya, let me introduce myself!”. In these examples, English elements are included in the Indonesian language framework without changing the communication situation. These examples show that English functions as a component of students' identity expression on social media platforms.

The application of code-mixing reflects real and authentic linguistic practices. Therefore, this phenomenon deserves to be the subject of academic study. The phenomenon of language use on social media serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of self-expression and identity formation. A study shows that interactions on Instagram tend to be emotional and expressive, with users employing language to convey feelings, strengthen social bonds, and build a self-image in the eyes of their audience

This study views code-mixing not as a language error, but as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of codemixing is related to social aspects such as identity, group solidarity, prestige, and lifestyle (Neulektüre & Gumperz, 2023; Wardhaugh, 1986). In the context of Instagram, the language chosen by students reflects their social position and cultural orientation. Thus, the analysis of the function of code-mixing in this study focuses on its sociolinguistic function, not merely its

pragmatic function. This approach allows researchers to understand the relationship between language and society in the digital space. Therefore, this study is relevant to the development of contemporary sociolinguistic studies.

2. KAJIAN TEORI

Theoretical Framework This chapter presents a review of relevant code mixing and various perspectives that elaborate on related material to provide clearer concepts and ideas in this study. These ideas will facilitate the analysis process of the variables selected by the author, thereby avoiding confusion. To prevent misunderstandings between the author and the reader, it is necessary to explain the terms used in this study.

2.2 Language Language is fundamentally defined as an arbitrary system of sound symbols used by communities to collaborate, interact, and determine self-identity, as stated by Kridalaksana (2008) in the Linguistic Dictionary. This concept highlights that language is not merely a random collection of words, but rather an organized system in which the relationship between sound symbols (phonemes) and the meanings they represent is not natural or universal, but is determined by the social agreement of the group of users. As an illustration, the word “air” in Indonesian has no intrinsic connection to the liquid substance we consume; it is an arbitrary convention that differs from the word ‘water’ in English or “eau” in French. Kridalaksana (2008) further explains that language acts as an instrument for building social solidarity, where individuals can

convey ideas, feelings, and identities through verbal interaction.

Deeply, language encompasses two main interrelated aspects: the linguistic system aspect and the social function aspect. The linguistic system aspect includes phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, which form the framework of language as a means of communication. On the other hand, the social function aspect makes language a tool for uniting society and passing on culture, where language is not only used for practical information exchange but also for maintaining norms, values, and shared identities. This makes it a reflection of the social structure itself, where variations in dialect or slang can describe social hierarchies, such as the use of polite language (*krama*) in Java, which shows respect for elders or superiors (Suratminto, 2009). To deepen understanding, this concept can be linked to Ferdinand de Saussure's (1916) theory of language as a system of signs, which emphasizes the arbitrary and social nature of language, although Saussure focuses more on structural linguistics. In the contemporary global context, the function of language has expanded far beyond local boundaries.

Proficiency in a second language, especially English, has become an important social asset and skill in the era of globalization. This has led to intense language contact, where individuals often have to adapt to international languages to access education, employment, and technology. For example, in Indonesia, English language proficiency is often a key requirement for working in multinational

companies or participating in international student exchange programs. This phenomenon not only increases linguistic competence but also influences social dynamics, where English is often considered a symbol of status and modernity (Crystal, 2004). Crystal (2004) states in English as a Global

Furthermore, from a sociolinguistic perspective as proposed by Wardhaugh (2002), language is both a result and a driver of social change, meaning that a person's language variation and choice are always closely related to their social background, status, and communication context. The emergence of English as a global lingua franca (Crystal, 2004) has significantly influenced the language repertoire of speakers in Indonesia, encouraging the integration of international languages into the national language. Therefore, this study views Indonesian and English in the context of dynamic contact, where their selection reflects speakers' adaptation to the demands of global and local interactions. An Introduction to Sociolinguistics provides empirical examples from Labov's research on language variation in New York, which shows how social factors such as class influence phoneme usage (Wardhaugh, 1986).

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is a field of study that examines the reciprocal relationship between language and society, with an emphasis on the practical use of language in various social situations, a perspective introduced by Fishman (1972). Its main focus is to reveal the reasons behind the choice of certain language variants by speakers in specific contexts, as well as how

non-linguistic elements such as social strata, age, gender, and regional origin influence linguistic forms and preferences. This sociolinguistic framework is an essential foundation for research on codemixing, as it provides analytical tools for uncovering the social and pragmatic motivations underlying language mixing practices. In his work *The Sociology of Language* (Fishman, 1972) asserts that language functions not only as a means of communication, but also as an indicator of ethnic and national identity.

3. METODOLOGI PENELITIAN

Research Design This study used a Qualitative Research Design with a Descriptive Sociolinguistic approach, designed to conduct an in-depth exploration of language phenomena in an authentic social environment. This design was chosen based on the study's emphasis on the interpretation of social meaning and the motivation (reasons) behind the practice of code-mixing (Indonesian-English) by teenagers on social media platforms. The qualitative approach is particularly appropriate for exploratory and interpretive research, as emphasized by Sugiyono (2013), in social studies. This method explicitly ensures that linguistic phenomena are evaluated in a complex sociocultural context, rather than solely through statistical measurement.

The main objective of this study is to go beyond surface descriptions, not merely counting frequencies, but interpreting the sociolinguistic role of codemixing. This is achieved through the systematic identification and classification of linguistic types and functions of code-mixing, which

is in line with the requirements of descriptive qualitative analysis. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research is indeed optimal when researchers seek to build a deep and comprehensive understanding of a social issue. Therefore, this methodology requires detailed narrative descriptions and contextual interpretations of the data obtained. This research applied a descriptive qualitative method using documentation and written interviews as data collection techniques.

The research data were presented in an organized and systematic textual description format, based on the classification of types and functions that have been analyzed. This presentation aims to comprehensively address questions about the primary patterns and factors that influence language choice among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 14 Medan in the digital environment. Thus, this qualitative framework enables researchers to gain a broad understanding of the interaction between language, identity formation, and cultural adaptation among adolescents. Overall, this study aims to produce an accurate and meaningful sociological analysis of the dynamics of code-mixing in the context of digital education.

3.2 Data and Data Source

This study selected 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 14 Medan as the main subjects, reflecting a group of teenagers who actively use social media and are susceptible to digital linguistic developments. The researcher selected participants using qualitative purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely students who consistently shared captions containing

code-mixing between Indonesian and English. The research focuses exclusively on the phenomenon of code-mixing, particularly in their digital interactions. The selection of subjects outside the academic context is intended to ensure that the observed code-mixing practices are driven more by social and digital cultural identity factors rather than curricular requirements. The data obtained was categorized into primary data and supporting data. The primary data in this study consisted of code-mixing linguistic units taken directly from the source, which showed authentic use of informal language.

3.3 Subject and Object of the Research

The subject of this research is the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 14 Medan. The total number of eleventh-grade students consists of 8 classes with approximately 240 students in total. From this population, the researcher selected 50 students as the sample, which represents about 10% of the total population. The number of samples is considered sufficient to represent the population in this descriptive qualitative research.

The sampling technique used in this research is random sampling. This technique was chosen because the researcher selected the sample randomly from the eleventh-grade students who are active users of Instagram. Therefore, each student who meets the criteria has an equal opportunity to be selected as a participant in this research. The object of this study was the phenomenon of code-mixing between Indonesian and English in Instagram captions written by 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 14 Medan. The focus of this

research object includes the types of codemixing based on Muysken's (2000) classification and the function of code-mixing referring to Gumperz and Hoffmann's theory. Thus, the research object does not focus on individual students but on the form and function of code-mixing that appears in Instagram caption texts as a linguistic product.

3.4 The Techniques of Collecting Data

In this study, data collection was carried out using a qualitative approach, utilizing documentation techniques as the main method and written interviews through Instagram Direct Message as additional data sources. The primary data for this study consisted of Instagram captions created by 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 14 Medan, which showed the phenomenon of code-mixing between Indonesian and English. This approach was designed to obtain authentic linguistic data and ensure that the analysis of the types and functions of code-mixing was in line with the research objectives.

The data collection process began with obtaining official approval from SMA Negeri 14 Medan and permission from the students participating in the study. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria being 11th grade students who were active on Instagram and regularly used code-mixing in their captions. Once the participants were determined, the researcher observed their Instagram accounts and selected captions that displayed code-mixing within a specified time period. The selected captions were then documented by taking screenshots and converting them into

written text. Each piece of data was given a unique code (such as CM-01, CM-02, and so on) to facilitate organization and analysis. To deepen the interpretation of code-mixing functions, researchers also conducted semi-structured interviews with a number of students to verify the motives and purposes of using English elements in their captions. The data collection procedure in this study included the following stages:

4. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Discussion Based on data analysis, this study identified three patterns of code-mixing found in students' Instagram captions, that is insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Among these three patterns, alternation was the most dominant. This indicates that it can be inferred that the combine between Indonesian and English, both within a sentence and between clauses when composing captions. This finding is in line with Muysken's (2000) perspective, which defines alternation as the phenomenon of combining elements from different languages within a single utterance structure.

The dominance of alternation in this research can be further explained through several sociolinguistic factors supported by relevant theories. First, in terms of digital communication, social media platforms such as Instagram provide a space where bilingual language use is commonly practiced. However, these platforms do not directly expose students to bilingual content; rather, students actively engage with and adopt language patterns through interaction in online environments. This 55

is supported by Crystal (2004), who states that language in digital communication is dynamic and shaped by users' interactions. Therefore, students tend to adapt their language use, including mixing elements from different languages, based on common practices in social media. Second, bilingual competence also contributes to the dominance of alternation. According to Grosjean (2010), bilingual individuals naturally use two languages depending on context and communicative needs. In this case, students demonstrate their ability to combine Indonesian and English at the clause level, which reflects a higher level of bilingual proficiency compared to simple word insertion. Third, the use of alternation is related to identity construction.

As explained by Eckert (2000), language is an important resource for constructing social identity. By alternating between languages, students are able to present themselves as modern, expressive, and globally connected individuals. This aligns with the function of language in social media as a tool for self-representation. Therefore, the dominance of alternation is not only a result of linguistic preference, but also influenced by students' interaction with digital communication practices, their bilingual competence, and their efforts to construct identity in social contexts.

4.4.1 The Types Dominant of Code-Mixing
Based on the analysis, three types of code mixing were found in the students' Instagram captions, that is insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. These types are classified based on the

theory proposed by Pieter Muysken. Among the three types, alternation was found to be the most dominant type used by the 56 students. The dominance of alternation indicates that students tend to switch between Indonesian and English within a sentence or between clauses when writing captions. This finding shows that students are not only inserting single words, but also combining two languages at the sentence level. This reflects a higher level of bilingual language use in social media communication. This finding is in line with previous studies conducted by Sari (2021) and Nissa (2021), which found that alternation is frequently used in social media contexts. It suggests that social media encourages users to use language more flexibly, allowing them to switch between languages naturally. Therefore, the use of alternation as the dominant type shows that students actively use both Indonesian and English as part of their communication style in digital platforms, especially in expressing ideas, emotions, and experiences.

4.4.2 Functions of Code-Mixing
In terms of function, the use of code mixing in students' Instagram captions reflects various communicative purposes. Based on the analysis and supported by written interviews, several functions were identified, including lexical need, an indicator of social identity, manifestation of prestige, affirmation, and style of language, and adaptation to the digital communication environment. The findings show that students use code mixing not only to convey meaning but also to create a certain impression. For example, many students

stated in the interview that using English makes their captions look more modern, attractive, and expressive. This supports the function of the manifestation of prestige and style of language.

In addition, some students mentioned that certain expressions are easier to convey in English, which indicates the function of lexical need. Meanwhile, the use of code mixing as part of social media communication also reflects adaptation to the digital communication environment, where bilingual expressions are commonly used.

These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Ilmiana (2022) and Prabandari (2020), which revealed that code mixing in social media is closely related to identity, style, and modern communication trends. Therefore, the use of code mixing in this study can be understood as a strategy used by students to express themselves more effectively in the digital era. However, this research has several limitations. First, the data of this research are limited to 50 Instagram captions from a specific group of students, which may not fully represent the broader use of code mixing among students in different contexts. Second, the data were collected only from one school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the analysis focuses only on the types and functions of code mixing, without exploring other aspects such as grammatical structure or deeper sociolinguistic factors. Furthermore, the use of written interviews through Instagram direct messages may not capture more indepth responses compared to face-to-face interviews. Therefore, future

researchers are encouraged to conduct studies with larger data, more diverse participants, and deeper analytical approaches.

5. KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

Conclusions

This research entitled “Code Mixing in Students’ Instagram Captions” aimed to identify the types of code mixing and to determine the dominant type used by students in their Instagram captions. The background of this research is based on the phenomenon of bilingual language use in social media, especially the use of Indonesian and English in students’ daily communication. This research focused on eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 14 Medan, with 50 students selected as the sample.

The data were collected from Instagram captions and supported by written interviews, and were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method. Based on the findings presented in Chapter IV, this research found three types of code mixing, that is insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, as proposed by Pieter Muysken. Among these types, alternation was identified as the most dominant type used in students’ Instagram captions. The results showed that students frequently switch between Indonesian and English within a sentence or between clauses when expressing their ideas, feelings, and experiences in social media.

Furthermore, the use of code mixing in Instagram captions reflects the flexibility of language use in digital communication. Students use both languages not only as a

means of communication but also as a way to express identity, style, and creativity. Therefore, code mixing can be understood as a natural and common 58 59 phenomenon in students' communication in the digital era, especially on social media platforms such as Instagram.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the phenomenon of codemixing is not limited to spoken communication, but also extends to written communication on social media platforms, particularly Instagram. Therefore, the practice of code-mixing in Instagram captions can be categorized as a form of linguistic adaptation to advances in communication technology, as well as a means for students to represent their identity and communication style in the digital space.

Suggestions

Based on the results of the research and considering the previous conclusion, the researcher would like to provide some suggestions. Some suggestions are pointed to:

1. Teacher Based on the results of this study, it was identified that the practice of mixing Indonesian and English has become a common phenomenon among students, especially in interactions through social media. In line with this, teachers are advised to adopt this phenomenon as an effective language learning strategy in order to enrich students' understanding of the variations in language use in various communication contexts. In

- addition, teachers also need to equip students with an awareness of the appropriate use of language according to the situation and communicative purpose. Thus, students are expected to be able to optimize their language skills more
2. effectively, both in academic environments and in everyday social interactions. 2. Students This study is expected to enrich students' understanding of code-mixing as a manifestation of language dynamics in everyday life, especially on social media. In addition, students are also expected to be able to use language wisely by adapting it to the relevant context. Although in informal settings code-mixing can be used to express oneself and develop a distinctive communication style, in formal academic environments, the application of applicable rules remains a top priority. 3. Other researchers There are several limitations inherent in this study, mainly stemming from the limited volume of data and the focus of analysis being solely on students' Instagram captions. In line with this, it is recommended that future researchers optimize the quantity of data or expand the object of study to alternative social media platforms. Not only that, exploration of other variables in the phenomenon of code-mixing, such as determinants of use or audience perception, also presents relevant research opportunities. Thus, the

development of this study is expected to contribute more comprehensively to the development of sociolinguistics.

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