

CODE-SWITCHING AS A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PRACTICE IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ‘A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN PODCAST’

I Komang Sulatra¹⁾, Desak Putu Eka Pratiwi²⁾

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar 1,2)

Denpasar, Indonesia 1,2)

komang_sulatra@unmas.ac.id 1), desakekapratiwi@unmas.ac.id 2)

Abstract

Code-switching is a common linguistic phenomenon in multilingual communities and has become increasingly visible in digital communication. Podcasts as one product of digital media shows the use code-switching to negotiate meaning, identity, and audience engagement. This study investigates code-switching as a strategic communication practice in an Indonesian podcast. The number of podcast is taken randomly from YouTube platform. This research adopts a qualitative approach by analyzing selected podcast episodes. The data were collected by applying observation method through watching, transcribing, note-taking techniques. The analysis was done by applying the theories of code-switching proposed by Poplack (1980) and Audience Design Theory by Bell (1984) to identify the types and functions of code-switching. The findings show that code-switching is used strategically to emphasize important information, express identity and solidarity, clarify meaning, and index modernity and expertise. English–Indonesian code-switching frequently occurs in discussions of technology, popular culture, and professional topics, reflecting globalization and digital discourse practices. The study concludes that code-switching in podcasts is not random but functions as a communicative resource to enhance interaction and audience engagement. his research contributes to sociolinguistic studies of digital discourse by demonstrating how code-switching operates as a strategic communicative practice in Indonesian media.

Keywords – *code-switching, digital communication, podcast discourse, sociolinguistics, Indonesian media*

Introduction

Multilingual communities are characterised by the use of language which is dynamic and flexible. The speakers may shift from one language to another depending on context and the purpose of communication. The ability to speak more than one language make the shifting become common. This shifting phenomenon, commonly referred to as code-switching. Code-switching in communication is not random but a strategic and meaningful practice because it has many functions. According to MyersScotton (1993), code-switching can be used to negotiate relations of power and solidarity in social interactions. In addition, Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) added that code-switching is often used to fill lexical gaps, emphasize a point, or manage social identity. Code-switching is therefore a practice rich in meaning and full of nuance, reflecting the speaker's skill in navigating diverse language environments. Moreover, Baker and Jones (1998) contend that code-switching can aid learners in negotiating meaning, disentangling misapprehensions, and establishing cordial relations with their conversational partners.

The use of language has developed related to development of technology. In the past, before digital era, communication was largely limited to face-to-face interaction, besides it was done also by letters, and traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television. Communication in this era were limited, generally formal with limited opportunities for immediate feedback. In contrast, communication in the digital era is more interactive, less formal, and global. The platforms provided by digital media, like social media has risen various communication products, one of them is podcast. In podcast, individuals can communicate instantly across distances. Furthermore, the digital era enables the blending of multiple languages and cultures, especially in multilingual communities, where speakers fluidly shift between languages depending on context, audience, and communicative goals.

The use of code-switching in Indonesian podcasts has become a prominent feature of digital communication, reflecting the multilingual competence of speakers and the evolving nature of media discourse. There are many previous researches has taken code-switching phenomenon in digital communication. Sarofa, et al (2026) explored the use of code-switching in in Maudy Ayunda's podcast episode "Dating Tips: Jangan Dikit-Dikit Putus" by employing a qualitative descriptive approach. That research used Poplack's (1980) typology to identify occurrences of inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching within the transcribed data. Sarofa, et al (2026) found the most frequently used of code-switching was intra-sentential switching. This study contributes to the broader understanding of bilingual communication in Indonesian digital media by providing a detailed account of code-switching patterns in an unscripted podcast. Another research of code-switching was done by Adnyana Putra and Sulatra (2025). The study was focused on exploring code-switching in BestieSeries Season 1. That study used descriptive qualitative approach by applying Poplack's (2001) code-switching classification. The research' finding shows intra-sentential code-switching as frequently used (58.75%), followed by inter-sentential (30%) and tag-switching (11.25%). The code-switching was used strategically use not only to express emotions and reinforce identity, but also to increase clarity and engagement. Priskawati and Sulatra (2024) explored the types of code switching foundin Naura Ayu utterances in TS Media Podcasts. That research used one video entitled *Naura Ayu Trauma dan Geram dengan Hujatan Haters*. Poplack' s theory (1980) was applied in analysing the data.. That study reveals that all kinds of code-switching were found, including inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching and tag switching. Sekar Langit et al (2022) had done research related to the types and the reasons behind the use of code switching and code mixing on "Ngobrol Sore Semaunya" podcast. That study applied qualitative approach through document analysis to analyze the data. The speakers in "Ngobrol Sore Semaunya" podcast mainly used inter-sentential code switching. Those previous studies explored the code-switching phenomenon, those mainly discussed the types and function of code switching but this study tries to explore code switching as a strategic communication tool.

The research on code-switching in Indonesian podcasts lies in its focus on a relatively underexplored yet rapidly growing form of digital communication that combines spoken discourse, media production, and sociolinguistic practice. Indonesian podcasts, in particular, offer rich data due to the country's highly multilingual context and the strong influence of global languages such as English. This research emphasizes on code-switching as a strategic communicative practice rather than merely a linguistic phenomenon. It examines how podcast hosts intentionally switch codes to construct identity, build rapport with listeners, and position themselves within global and local cultural flows. This study tries to apply Allan Bell's Audience Design theory (1984). Bell (1984) proposes that speakers adjust their language style primarily in response to their audience, rather than just the topic or setting. It is a sociolinguistic framework emphasizing that style-shifting is a form of accommodation to the listener, ranging

from addressees to eavesdroppers. Related to the use of multilanguages in digital discourse, therefore this research tries to investigate the code-switching which is occurred in Indonesian Podcast. Based on the background, this study mainly aims to:

1. find out type of code switching found in Indonesian podcast
2. to investigate how code-switching is used as strategic communication practice in Indonesian podcasts.

Methodology

This research applied qualitative approach. The data are in the form of verbal data which were taken from Indonesian podcasts. This study aims to explore the use of code-switching as a strategic communication tool in digital era. Therefore the Indonesian Podcast was taken randomly. This research took the data from one selected podcast entitled “VIDI: OM BOTAK, AGNEZ MO LOE CELINGKUHIN!?DAH G11L444 YA LOE OM.” This podcast was broadcasted in Deddy Corbuzier YouTube channel which was viewed more than 5.3 million. The method of collecting data was observation method by watching the podcasts, listening, transcribing the utterances which contains code-switching, note taking, and classifying data. The analyses were done by applying descriptive qualitative method. The data were analysed by using code-switching theory proposed by Poplack (1980) and audience design theory by Bell (1984). The finding of this research were presented through formal and informal method. Formal method was applied by presenting the finding in the table, meanwhile informal method was applied by narrating the analyses.

Finding and Discussion

Finding

The finding of code-switching found in the podcast were presented formally in the table. The types of code switching were categorised using the theory of Poplack (1980). Based on Poplack (1980), there are three types of code switching, such as; tag switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. There are three main participants in the data source, such as; Deddy Corbuzier as the host, Vidi as the co host and Agnes Monica as the guest but this study is mainly focused on the utterances spoken by the guest “Agnes Monica”. Agnes Monica is a bilingual person, she speaks fluently both in Indonesian English. In this podcast, she did many switches from Indonesian into English language. The table below shows the example of code-switching done by Agnes Monica.

Table 1. Examples of Code-Switching in Indonesian Podcast Discourse

No.	Podcast (Transcribed)	Excerpt	Type of Code-Switching	Function
1	"Gua belajar untuk jangan gua doang dong harus balance with our colleague and situation " (18:39)		intra-sentential	referential
2	"Gua jadi love myself more ".(20:54)		intra-sentential	expressive
3	"Dokter bilang you must maintain your stress level " (31:23)		inter-sentential	referential
4	" I'm very grateful for everything that happened. Makanya aku tetap rendah hati." (13:47)		intra-sentential	expressive
5	" This is very important. Kalian harus dengerin ini baik-baik."(24:11)		intra-sentential	expressive
6	Agnez Mo : " <i>Aku capek banget waktu itu, you know lah.</i> " (14:19)		tag switching	phatic
7	Agnez Mo : " <i>Situasi itu bikin gua kesel, oh my God.</i> " (20:48)		tag switching	expressive
8	" <i>Semua ini tentang konsistensi, basically.</i> " (24:29)		tag switching	emphasize
9	" <i>Semua keputusan itu gua ambil dengan hati-hati. It's about self respect.</i> "(16:42)		inter-sentential	- referential - expressive
10	" I worked really hard for this opportunity. Jadi aku gak mau menya-nyiakannya." (09:19)		inter-sentential	referential

The table above shows that all types of code-switching occurred in the podcast. Agnes Monica did the switch in purpose, this is not a random phenomenon. The speaker mainly switched the code from Indonesian into English. Besides the types, the use of code-switching shows many functions. The functions of code-switching which appeared in the podcast, such as; referential, expressive, and phatic which are dependent on the context of speaking.

Discussion

The analysis of code-switching focuses on types of code-switching and how it becomes a strategic communication practice in digital communication. The type code-switching occurred in the podcast shows that the participant mastered Indonesian and English. Living

in multilingual community, the host and the guest in the podcast use their ability in both languages to attract the audience to watch their program. Nowadays, the strategy of communication by shifting languages becomes trend in digital communication. Below are some examples of code-switching and their analysis based on Poplack (1980) theory and Bell (1984) theory.

Data 1. Agnes Monica: “*Gua belajar untuk jangan gua doang dong harus* **balance with our colleague and situation** (18:39)

The data of code-switching above is categorised into intra-sentential code switching. The speaker switched from Indonesian into English in a single clause. The Indonesian utterance ‘*Gua belajar untuk jangan gua doang dong harus* / I’m learning not to be just me, I have to’ shows that the speaker speaks in informal tone. The word ‘*gua*’ is Indonesian slang which means ‘I’. The use of slang words shows that the speaker is familiar with the use of Indonesian slang. It is also related to the context of speaking. The speaker knows that she speaks in front of many audiences. She tries to get engaged with the audience by using informal word, besides she also wants to give identity marker. The word ‘*gua*’ represents Jakarta slang word which is spread out among youngster in Indonesia. After speaking in Bahasa, agnes monica continued her speech using English ‘*balance with our colleague and situation*’. Here, the speaker switched as style-shifting in response to audience and context. She shift from informal language to more formal. The use of English ‘*balance with our colleague and situation*’ give the message that she is professional.

Based on Bell’s (1984). This code-switching functions to signal competence, modernity as a way to design speech for social alignment. The switch is socially motivated. Agnes Monica applied this strategy to gain attention and engagement from the audience. She used informal language style in Indonesian to get closer with local audience and continued into formal English to gain attention from global audience because she was aware that the podcast would be watched by global audience.

Data 2. “*Dokter bilang* **you must maintain your stress level**” (31:23)

Code-switching also occurred in the data above. The speaker in data 2 switched from Indonesian ‘*dokter bilang* / The doctor says’ into English ‘you must maintain your stress level’. The switched happened in one clause, therefore this is an intra-sentential code-switching. Based on audience design theory by Bell (1984), this code-switching can be seen as style-shifting based on audience and context. Agnes Monica as the speaker thinks that the podcast’s audiences understand English. She combines Indonesian and English to show that she speak in professional way. She used English to deliver message with authoritative tone associated with medical expertise ‘*dokter/ doctor*’. This is a communicative strategy, to gain attention from the audience by delivering credible message. It enhances credibility which is aligned the speaker with educated audience.

Data 3. “*Aku capek banget waktu itu,* **you know lah.**” (14:19)

Based on Poplack (1980) the category of code-switching in the utterance above is tag-switching. The utterance is mainly in Indonesian ‘*Aku capek banget waktu itu* / I was tired that time’ which is embedded with English tag ‘you know’ and ended with particle ‘*lah*’ as Indonesian pragmatic marker. The tag in the form of phrase ‘you know’ is uttered to maintain interaction. Agnes Monica as the speaker tried to check shared understanding with the listener. The switch functions to make the situation more relaxed, it has expressive

function. Agnes Monica shows emotion of being fatigue but she softened her expression by switching with English tag 'You know'. Based on Bell's (1984) theory, Agnes Monica as the speaker design the speech in bilingual context. The speaker has assumption that the audience understand English. The use of English tag 'you know' make the speech nuance become relax. It shows closeness between the speaker with the audience. This switch became a strategy to create close relationship and solidarity oriented. It creates informal and engaging tone.

Data 4. Agnez Mo: "*Situasi itu bikin gua kesel, oh my God.*" (20:48)

The type of code-switching in data 4 is tag-switching. Based on poplack (1980) tag-switching refers to insertion of phrase in the form of tag from one language into another. The speaker uttered '*situasi itu bikin gua kesel*/ that situation makes me annoyed' then continued with English tag 'oh my God'. The tag 'oh my God' functioned to show emotion or expressive feeling. Agnes Monica wanted to share her feeling toward the situation. She felt annoyed or frustrated with the situation, therefore she intensified her feeling by inserting English tag. The English tag 'Oh my God' becomes an interjection. It is part of spontaneous emotional reaction. The tag-switching becomes a communicative strategy. The speaker switched from Indonesian into English to align with a modern audience. Agnes Monica knows that the audience familiar with English tag 'Oh My God' because it is very common expression. Based on Bell (1984), the speaker used interjection 'oh my God' to rise expressive to and give dramatic nuance which is very suitable in storytelling. By this switch the speaker success to get engaged with the audience of the podcast.

Data 5 Agnes Monica: "*Semua keputusan itu gua ambil dengan hati-hati. It's about self-respect.*"

Data 5 above is categorized into inter-sentential code-switching, following Poplack's theory (1980). The switch occurs between clauses. The Indonesian clause. '*Semua keputusan itu gua ambil dengan hati-hati*/ I took all these decisions carefully' is continued with English clause '*It's about self-respect*'. The code-switching has referential function. The use of English phrase '*self-respect*' conveys a psychological concept. It has related to deep understanding about cause and effect to self. That expression is very common expressed in English discourse. By saying 'self-respect' the tone of the expression feels more serious. This also conveys expressive function in which the speaker wants to highlight that she is serious in her decisions. She is respectful about herself. Using Allan Bell's framework (1984), Agnes Monica switched from Indonesian into English to create advanced and serious topic. It is related to positioning the audience as a professional and educated. This inter-sentential switching creates a reflective tone. The speaker tried to get attention from the audience. This often associated with motivational statements to lead the audience that every decision we made must be taken seriously because result will come to ourselves.

Data 6. Agnes Monica: "**I worked really hard for this opportunity.** *Jadi aku gak mau menyia-nyiakannya.*" (09:19)

Data 6 also shows the inter-sentential code-switching. The speaker switched two languages across sentences boundaries. Agnes Monica started her speech in English then continued with Indonesian. This inter-sentential switching has referential function. The utterances conveys objective information. It also emphasises the information is factual in general context. The English sentence 'I worked really hard for this opportunity' expresses effort and achievement. This expression is very common in professional narratives. Agnes Monica

is one of professional singers, beside she is also famous actress in Indonesia. She informs the audience that she has done hard effort. The shift into Indonesian '*jadi aku gak mau menyia-nyiakannya*/ so I don't want to waste it' adds emotional effect. This utterance shows personal commitment. The inter-sentential switching "I worked really hard for this opportunity. *Jadi aku gak mau menyia-nyiakannya*" has expressive function. Agnes Monica started the utterance with Indonesian, it creates serious tone, then she continued with English which feels more intimate and personal. It also shows sincerity and determination. Based on Bell's Audience Design theory (1984). The speaker used English to get attention from global or professional audience. She then switched into Indonesian to get closer with the local audience. It can be concluded that the speaker applied style-shifting to accommodate multiple targeted audience, local and global. This inter-sentential switching was done to balance identity between global and local. The speaker tries to show professional side with personal sincerity. Enhance audience engagement across different linguistic groups.

Conclusions

The research shows that code-switching becomes one of strategic communication practices in digital era. Podcast as one digital products shows the phenomenon of the use of languages in multilingual community. The combination of many languages in podcast discourse become common. The research finding shows that all types of code-switching proposed by Poplack (1980) including tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. The function of code switching occurred in the podcast are referential, phatic, and expressive. The most common function is expressive. Based on the audience design theory by Bell (1984) the speaker 'Agnes Monica' accommodates both local and global audience by using Indonesian and English. She did many style-shifting such as formal to informal, serious to relax. Code-switching and style-shifting occurred simultaneously in the discourse which become strategic communication practice in digital era.

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