



The Communicative Function of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in a Bilingual Digital Narrative

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Abstract

This study explores the communicative functions of code-switching in the digital discourse of Maudy Ayunda, an Indonesian public figure, through a qualitative analysis of a single YouTube video entitled Thoughts on the Power of Language. Data were collected from the video and analyzed through transcription, identification of code-switching instances, and systematic coding based on the frameworks of Gumperz (1977) and Marasigan (1983). The findings reveal that Maudy strategically employs code-switching to enhance audience engagement, emphasize key points, and navigate between personal experiences and global perspectives. Metaphorical switching emerged as the dominant type of code-switching (85%), while facility of expression was identified as the most frequent communicative function (45%), followed by personalization (20%), addressee specification (17,5%), message qualification (12,5%), and quotation (5%). The findings highlight the role of bilingual discourse as a resource for identity construction and audience engagement in digital communication. Furthermore, English functions as a marker of educational and professional identity within the discourse of a highly educated bilingual speaker. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how bilingual individuals strategically utilize multiple languages to achieve various communicative purposes in digital interactions.

1. Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for communication; it embodies the very essence of human expression and interaction. As Williams (1977) eloquently articulates, language defines human existence by encapsulating the myriad facets of life, both implicitly and explicitly. Through language, we shape and reflect our experiences, making it an indispensable part of our lives. Furthermore, language is intricately woven into the fabric of culture, serving as a vessel for traditions, beliefs, and worldviews that are passed down through generations (Tektigul et al., 2023). Without language, the rich tapestry of culture and knowledge would be nearly impossible to preserve and transmit.

The symbiotic relationship between language and society is undeniable. As inherently social beings, humans rely on language to interact, exchange information, share thoughts, express emotions, and expand their knowledge (Shodieva, 2024). Sociolinguistics, a captivating branch of linguistics, delves into this relationship, offering insights into how language operates within various social contexts. It examines the interplay between language use and social structures, enhancing our understanding of how language facilitates communication (Risdianto, 2013; Wardhaugh, 2006).

In multilingual societies, a “code” in linguistic terms refers to a language or a variety of a language used as a system for communication between individuals. As Wardhaugh (2006) elucidates, speakers often face the necessity of selecting a specific code when they communicate. This selection process can involve switching from one code to another or mixing codes within a brief utterance. This phenomenon of switching between languages occurs frequently in bilingual or multilingual communities. Code-switching involves alternating between languages in different sentences or utterances, while code-mixing blends elements of different languages within a single utterance (Holmes, 2013).

As a hallmark of bilingualism, code-switching enables speakers to navigate flexibly between linguistic codes and fulfill various communicative purposes in multilingual interactions (Muysken, 2000; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Rosyidha et al., 2025), 1993; Muysken, 2000; Rosyidha et al., 2025). They serve various communicative functions, such as emphasizing key points, expressing emotions, or appealing to specific audiences. It serves various communicative functions, such as emphasizing key points, expressing emotions, or appealing to specific audiences.

Supporting the idea of code-switching, Gumperz (1977) framework on code-switching distinguishes between situational and metaphorical code-switching. Situational code-switching occurs when language choice changes based on the context, participants, or formality, reflecting the speaker’s awareness of social expectations. In contrast, metaphorical code-switching is used to convey specific meanings, emphasize points, or express identity, enhancing communication beyond the immediate context.

Gumperz's framework illustrates how code-switching and code-mixing are strategic tools for effective communication, reflecting both bilingualism and social dynamics.

Gumperz (1977) viewed code-switching as a conversational strategy used to express social meanings, with functions including quotation, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization. Marasigan (1983) expanded on this by adding the function of facility of expression. Quotation strengthens a message by quoting oneself or others for credibility.

Addressee specification involves switching codes to address specific individuals or highlight relationships. Repetition emphasizes or clarifies a message, while interjection expresses emotions or reactions. Message qualification elaborates or clarifies an initial message for better understanding. Personalization versus objectivization contrasts personal involvement with objective statements. Finally, facility of expression occurs when speakers switch codes due to difficulty in finding appropriate words.

Indonesia, with its rich linguistic diversity, provides a compelling backdrop for studying code-switching and code-mixing. The country's linguistic landscape comprises regional languages like Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese, alongside Bahasa Indonesia as the national language, and international languages such as English, which are prevalent in education, business, and media. The forces of globalization and digital media have amplified the use of English alongside Bahasa Indonesia, particularly among younger generations and public figures.

Recent studies have demonstrated that code-switching is a common feature of digital communication, particularly on social media platforms where bilingual speakers interact with diverse audiences. Research has explored code-switching in online discourse, influencer communication, and public figures' social media content, highlighting its role in identity construction, audience engagement, and self-presentation.

However, most previous studies have focused on conversational interactions, interviews, or written social media texts. Comparatively less attention has been given to bilingual monologic narratives on YouTube, where speakers strategically employ code-switching to discuss language, identity, and multilingual experiences. Furthermore, studies examining the communicative functions of code-switching in Indonesian public figures' self-presentational discourse remain limited.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the communicative functions of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's YouTube video "Thoughts on the Power of Language." Unlike previous studies that primarily examine interactional exchanges, this research focuses on a bilingual digital narrative delivered by a highly educated public figure discussing multilingualism itself. Consequently, the study provides

insights into how code-switching functions as a communicative resource for meaning-making, identity construction, and audience engagement in contemporary digital discourse.

The rise of social media and digital platforms has made code-switching and code-mixing more visible in online discourse. Platforms like YouTube offer a stage for individuals to express their thoughts, engage with audiences, and navigate multilingual communication. A prominent figure in this space is Maudy Ayunda, an Indonesian actress, singer, and graduate of both Oxford and Stanford, renowned for her fluency in multiple languages. She represents a particularly relevant case for sociolinguistic investigation because she occupies a unique position as a bilingual public intellectual whose discourse reaches both national and international audiences.

Her frequent discussions of education, multilingualism, and global citizenship make her language choices especially significant for understanding how bilingual speakers negotiate identity and engage audiences in digitally mediated communication. In her YouTube video “Thoughts on the Power of Language,” Maudy seamlessly switches between English and Bahasa Indonesia, reflecting on the importance of language learning and multilingualism.

This study aims to explore the functions of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda’s “Thoughts on the Power of Language.” Through discourse analysis, this research investigates how Maudy employs these linguistic strategies and their communicative purposes. By examining this case, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how bilingual individuals leverage multiple languages to enhance their expression, engage with diverse audiences, and construct multilingual identities.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the assumption that code-switching functions as a communicative resource in bilingual discourse. Drawing on Gumperz’s (1977) classification of code-switching types and Marasigan’s (1983) framework of communicative functions, the study examines how language alternation contributes to the construction of bilingual identity and facilitates audience engagement in digital communication. Through this framework, code-switching is viewed not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a strategic discourse practice that shapes meaning and interaction in online environments.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What types of code-switching are employed in Maudy Ayunda’s Thoughts on the Power of Language? (2) What communicative functions do these code-switching

instances serve in the discourse?

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative discourse analysis approach to investigate the communicative functions of code-switching in bilingual digital discourse. Qualitative discourse analysis was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore the contextual meanings and communicative purposes of language alternation in naturally occurring speech. The analysis was guided by Gumperz's (1977) classification of code-switching types and Marasigan's (1983) framework of communicative functions. This research aims to offer insights into how code-switching serves various communicative functions in social media platforms.

The data were obtained from a YouTube video entitled *Thoughts on the Power of Language* uploaded by Maudy Ayunda on 8 March 2023. The video has a duration of 10 minutes and 37 seconds and was selected because it explicitly discusses multilingualism, language learning, and communication, making it particularly relevant to the objectives of this study. A total of 40 utterances containing instances of code-switching were identified and analyzed.

The data collection and analysis consisted of five stages. First, the selected video was transcribed verbatim to capture all spoken utterances. Second, instances of code-switching between Indonesian and English were identified throughout the transcript. Third, each instance was coded according to Gumperz's (1977) categories of situational and metaphorical code-switching. Fourth, the identified instances were classified based on Marasigan's (1983) communicative functions, including quotation, addressee specification, message qualification, personalization, and facility of expression. Finally, the coded data were analyzed and interpreted to identify patterns of language use and their communicative significance within the discourse.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, theoretical triangulation was employed by comparing the identified patterns with established sociolinguistic theories. In addition, an audit trail was maintained throughout the transcription, coding, and categorization processes to ensure consistency and transparency in data analysis. The coding decisions were reviewed repeatedly to minimize subjective interpretation and strengthen analytical rigor (Arikunto, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Moleong, 2012; Willis & Willis, 2013).

3. Results

This section presents the occurrences of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's speech, categorized according to the frameworks of Gumperz (1977) and Marasigan (1983), offering a detailed analysis of how language switching serves both social and communicative purposes.

A total of 40 code-switching instances were identified in the selected video. Each instance was classified according to Gumperz's (1977) categories of situational and metaphorical code-switching. Gumperz's (1977) divided code-switching into two types; Situational Switching and Metaphorical Switching. The following figure shows the appearance of types of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's Youtube video.

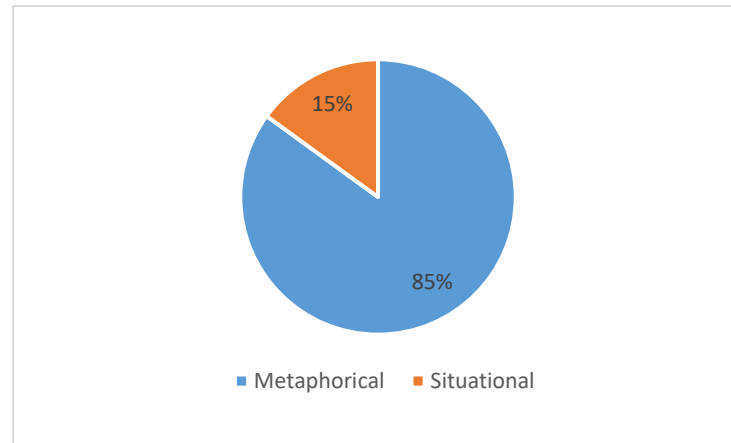


Figure 2. Types of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's video

As shown in Figure 1, metaphorical switching accounts for 34 occurrences (85%), whereas situational switching represents only 6 occurrences (15%). Percentages were calculated based on the total number of code-switching instances identified in the dataset ($N = 40$). This pattern is consistent with Gumperz's (1977) theory regarding the social significance of language choice. Metaphorical code-switching transpires within a stable conversational context and serves to enhance meaning, convey emotion, or reflect the speaker's identity and intent. In Maudy's monologue, English is frequently employed to underscore key points, articulate personal reflections, quote public inquiries, or naturally convey professional and academic terms—functions that underscore its rhetorical and stylistic utility.

The predominance of metaphorical switching also mirrors her audience's bilingual expectations and the thematic emphasis on language itself, rendering English both a subject and a communicative instrument. Conversely, situational switching is infrequent, primarily occurring when referencing real-life contexts or language-specific practices, such as describing her partner's language abilities or referencing English use in professional settings. The prevalent use of metaphorical switching highlights the speaker's deliberate use of language to construct a bilingual, global identity while engaging her audience with authenticity and clarity.

This finding not only corroborates Gumperz's assertion that code-switching possesses symbolic meaning but also illustrates its role as a strategic and expressive resource in digital self-presentation.

To further understand the communicative purposes of these code-switching instances, each occurrence was classified according to Marasigan's (1983) framework of communicative functions. The frequency and percentage distribution of the identified functions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The communicative functions of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's video

Functions	Frequency	Percentage
Facility of Expression	18	45,0%
Personalization	8	20,0%
Addressee Specification	7	17,5%
Message Qualification	5	12,5%
Quotation	2	5,0%
Total	40	100%

The analysis of the communicative functions of code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's monologue reveals that the most dominant function is facility of expression (45%), indicating that code-switching is frequently employed to express ideas more efficiently or naturally when Indonesian may lack equivalent precision or stylistic nuance. This reflects Maudy's bilingual fluency and her preference for concise, commonly accepted English terms—particularly when discussing professional, educational, or technical topics.

Personalization accounts for 20%, showing how code-switching is also used to convey emotional involvement, intimacy, or personal stance, allowing her to connect more deeply with the audience through expressive language. Addressee specification follows at 17,5%, highlighting the role of code-switching in directly engaging listeners, drawing attention, or tailoring speech to a specific audience. Message qualification (12,5%) shows how Maudy uses code-switching to elaborate or clarify points introduced in one language using the other, often to ensure understanding or add emphasis.

Finally, quotation makes up 5% of the cases, where she reproduces questions or expressions in their original form to maintain authenticity and credibility. Overall, the data suggest that Maudy's code-switching serves not only as a practical linguistic tool but also as a purposeful strategy for effective communication, emotional expression, and audience engagement in a bilingual, digital environment.

4. Discussion

The following discussion interprets the findings on the types and communicative functions of code-switching observed in Maudy Ayunda's bilingual monologue. Framed by relevant sociolinguistic theories, each subsection explores

how her strategic language choices serve not only to enhance clarity and persuasion but also to construct identity and reflect broader linguistic trends in Indonesian society. These insights shed light on the complex and purposeful role of code-switching in contemporary bilingual discourse.

Code-Switching as a Strategic Communicative Tool

The digital nature of YouTube also shapes the communicative functions of code-switching observed in this study. Unlike face-to-face interactions, YouTube allows speakers to address geographically dispersed and linguistically diverse audiences simultaneously. In this context, code-switching functions not only as a linguistic strategy but also as a means of positioning oneself within global digital networks. The ability to alternate between Indonesian and English enables speakers such as Maudy Ayunda to maintain local relevance while appealing to broader international audiences.

The findings suggest that Maudy Ayunda's code-switching is not random but strategically employed to enhance communication. Gumperz (1977) argues that code-switching serves as a discourse strategy to signal role shifts, changes in discourse topic, or emphasis. In Maudy's case, the switch from Indonesian to English occurs when she wishes to highlight international perspectives, academic insights, or engage a global audience.

The shift from Indonesian to English also aligns with studies on code-switching in bilingual discourse (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Poplack, 1980), which emphasize that speakers consciously switch languages to signal topic shifts or to achieve specific rhetorical effects. For instance, when Maudy states:

- "And that's really powerful."
- "Imagine being able to connect with more people than just people in your country, right?"

The use of English in these moments serves to emphasize key arguments, making them more memorable and impactful. Studies on bilingual speech (Muysken, 2000; Auer, 1998) highlight that speakers often employ metaphorical code-switching for emphasis, which is evident in Maudy's speech.

Moreover, the situational and metaphorical aspects of code-switching (Gumperz, 1977) illustrate that Maudy is not merely alternating between languages but strategically using bilingual discourse to shape meaning. This aligns with research on code-switching in multilingual societies, which shows that speakers leverage language shifts to mediate between different linguistic communities and enhance discourse coherence (Canagarajah, 2013).

This finding is also supported by recent empirical research on Indonesian YouTube discourse. Yusuf et al. (2025) found that young Indonesian YouTubers strategically employed code-switching to emphasize meaning, maintain audience interest, and facilitate communication with multilingual viewers. This suggests that code-switching functions not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a

purposeful communicative strategy in digital environments.

Although many instances of code-switching appear to serve identifiable communicative purposes, alternative interpretations should also be considered. Some language switches may reflect habitual bilingual language practices rather than deliberate rhetorical strategies. As a highly proficient bilingual speaker, Maudy Ayunda may naturally alternate between Indonesian and English without consciously intending every switch to fulfill a specific communicative function. Nevertheless, the recurring patterns identified in this study suggest that many instances of code-switching are closely associated with particular communicative purposes within the discourse.

Identity Construction through Bilingualism

Maudy's bilingualism reflects a broader sociolinguistic phenomenon in Indonesia, where English is increasingly used as a symbol of global identity and prestige (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Lauder, 2008). Kachru (1992) model of World Englishes explains how English functions as a second language in outer-circle countries like Indonesia, where it is associated with education, international mobility, and social status.

The way Maudy shifts between languages illustrates dual identity negotiation—she maintains her Indonesian cultural roots while embracing a globalized linguistic identity. This is consistent with previous studies on bilingual identity, which argue that language alternation allows speakers to assert multiple facets of their persona in different contexts (Grosjean, 2015; Nortier, 2008). Similar findings have been reported in recent studies of Indonesian digital content creators. Lestari et al. (2025), for example, found that code-switching in Maudy Ayunda's YouTube content contributed to the construction of a bilingual and globally oriented identity. These findings reinforce the argument that language choice functions as an important resource for self-presentation and identity negotiation in online spaces.

Additionally, her use of English to discuss universal concepts and Indonesian to express personal narratives aligns with theories of personalization vs. objectification in code-switching (Marasigan, 1983). This suggests that English serves as a language of authority and generalization, while Indonesian remains the medium for self-expression and emotional connection (Pavlenko, 2006). The broader implications of this finding resonate with the idea that English, as a global lingua franca, enables bilingual speakers to navigate transnational discourse spaces. The ability to switch between languages seamlessly suggests linguistic hybridity, which is a key feature of postmodern multilingual communication.

At the same time, the use of English in digital discourse may also reflect issues of linguistic prestige and social capital. In many contexts, English proficiency is associated with educational attainment, professional opportunities, and global mobility. Consequently, while code-switching may facilitate communication and identity expression, it may also reinforce linguistic hierarchies that privilege speakers with greater access to English-language education.

Code-Switching as a Persuasive Strategy

Another critical function of Maudy's code-switching is its rhetorical and persuasive power. Previous studies on bilingual communication (Romaine, 1999; Zentella, 1997) highlight that switching to a second language can create emphasis, credibility, and emotional resonance. In Maudy's speech, English is used strategically to highlight important points and may facilitate audience engagement on both cognitive and emotional levels. However, because the present study does not examine audience responses directly, the findings suggest the potential for audience engagement rather than providing evidence of actual audience reception.

For example, when she states:

- "Imagine being able to connect with more people than just people in your country, right?"

The switch to English reinforces the universality of the statement and aligns with studies suggesting that English is often used in multilingual settings to evoke authority and legitimacy. Research on persuasion in bilingual speech Dornyei & Ushioda (2009) also suggests that language choice affects audience reception. In Maudy's case, her English utterances carry a sense of intellectual authority, making her arguments more compelling, especially in an Indonesian context where English proficiency is associated with higher education and international exposure.

This rhetorical function aligns with Myers-Scotton (1993) Markedness Model, which argues that language choices reflect a speaker's intent to project a particular identity or align with a certain social group. Maudy's strategic switches between Indonesian and English indicate an awareness of both her local and global audience, allowing her to bridge linguistic and cultural boundaries effectively.

Code-Switching as a Reflection of Linguistic Trends in Indonesia

While the findings provide insights into bilingual discourse in Indonesia, they should not be generalized to all Indonesian bilingual speakers. The present study is based on a single speaker and a single YouTube video, and therefore the findings are more appropriately interpreted as an illustration of how a highly educated bilingual public figure employs code-switching in digital communication.

As Guilherme (2007) notes, English has become increasingly prominent among educated urban speakers, functioning as a marker of modernity and global connectedness. Nababan (1991) similarly identifies a gradual language shift toward English in professional, academic, and digital settings. The narrative

analyzed in this study exemplifies this phenomenon, showcasing how bilingual individuals integrate English into Indonesian discourse as part of their everyday linguistic repertoire.

This hybrid linguistic practice aligns with Gutiérrez et al. (1999) concept in which multilingual and multicultural learning environments is best understood through the idea of hybrid language practices—that is, the fluid use of multiple languages and discourses that draw from participants' diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires. This hybridity enables participants to co-construct meaning, negotiate identities, and transform learning spaces into inclusive, participatory communities. Nuri (2024) argue that bilingual discourse should be viewed as an empowering tool that enables speakers to navigate complex social and cultural realities.

It is said that bilingualism confers improved cognitive skills—such as enhanced executive function, cognitive flexibility, and problem-solving—because managing two languages exercises the brain and can even help delay cognitive decline. Tungkup et al. (2026) argues that bilingual language practices on YouTube reflect broader processes of identity negotiation and audience positioning within contemporary online culture. At the same time, it points out that bilinguals often face identity tensions, cultural duality, and the stigmatization of minority or heritage languages, which can complicate social belonging and psychological wellbeing.

From all the discussion above, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is based on a single YouTube video and therefore represents a limited dataset. Second, the study focuses exclusively on one speaker, making it difficult to generalize the findings to broader Indonesian bilingual communities. Third, the study examines the speaker's discourse without incorporating audience responses, comments, or reception data. Future studies may expand the dataset by analyzing multiple videos, comparing different public figures, and investigating audience perceptions of bilingual communication in digital environments.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of Maudy Ayunda's speech demonstrates that code-switching and code-mixing are not merely random linguistic phenomena but serve specific communicative, rhetorical, and identity-related functions. By applying Gumperz's (1982) and Marasigan's (1983) frameworks, this study finds that Maudy strategically switches between Indonesian and English to emphasize key points, potentially engage with a diverse audience, and navigate between personal experiences and global perspectives.

Her use of English often signals authority, credibility, and international relevance, while Indonesian remains the primary medium for self-expression and emotional connection. This aligns with previous research suggesting that bilingual

speakers consciously alternate languages to achieve discourse coherence, highlight important arguments, and address both local and global listeners.

The findings suggest that Maudy's bilingual discourse exemplifies the dynamic and strategic nature of code-switching in multilingual settings, reinforcing its role as a resource for persuasion, identity negotiation, and digital self-presentation. Furthermore, her speech illustrates how English can function as a marker of educational, professional, and global identity within the discourse of a highly educated bilingual speaker. Ultimately, her ability to fluidly transition between languages highlights how bilingualism can serve as a means of bridging cultural and linguistic boundaries in an increasingly interconnected world.

While the findings provide valuable insights into the communicative functions of code-switching in digital discourse, they should be interpreted in light of the study's limitations. Since the analysis was based on a single YouTube video and one speaker, the findings cannot be generalized to all Indonesian bilingual speakers. Future research may expand the scope by examining multiple digital content creators, comparing different discourse contexts, and incorporating audience responses to further explore the role of code-switching in online communication.

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