



An Analysis of Insertional Code – Mixing Found in Merry YouTube Channel: The Cinta Laura Episode

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of insertional code-mixing in the YouTube podcast conversation between Merry Riana and Cinta Laura, focusing on the forms, functions, and motivations behind its use. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research analyzes verbatim transcriptions of the podcast episode “Cantik, Pintar & Sukses, Cinta Laura Merasa Tidak Bahagia Dalam Hidupnya?” (2022), which has a duration of 65 minutes. A total of 15 instances of insertional code-mixing were identified and analyzed using Muysken’s (2000) theoretical framework. The study specifically investigates the insertion of English words and phrases into Indonesian syntactic structures. The findings reveal that Cinta Laura strategically employs code-mixing not merely as a linguistic habit but as a communicative tool. Insertions are used to emphasize ideas, express emotions, and construct her identity as a modern, reflective bilingual speaker. Examples show that English insertions enhance clarity, add philosophical depth, carry prestigious value, and foster emotional intimacy with the audience. In conclusion, Cinta Laura’s use of intra-sentential code-mixing is a dynamic linguistic practice that enriches her communication and shapes her public persona. Her selective use of English terms within Indonesian sentences enables more precise and impactful message delivery. This study underscores the broader significance of code-mixing as a sophisticated strategy for bilingual speakers in digital environments. It highlights how bilingual individuals leverage their linguistic repertoire to navigate complex topics, express vulnerability, and build stronger connections with online audiences.

Keywords: *Code-mixing; Insertional Code-mixing; Bilingualism; Digital Media; YouTube Podcast*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the role of language is no longer limited to a means of communication but also functions as a marker of social, cultural, and personal identity. In bilingual and multilingual societies, linguistic phenomena such as code-mixing have become key strategies for effective interaction. Muysken (2000) defines code-mixing as the blending of two or more languages within the same utterance and categorizes it into three types: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Insertion involves embedding words, phrases, or clauses from one language into the grammatical structure of another; alternation refers to switching languages across clauses or sentences; while congruent lexicalization occurs when both languages share grammatical structures and vocabulary. Among these, insertional code-mixing is central to this study, as it enables bilingual speakers to strategically insert foreign expressions for stylistic, emotional, and identity-related purposes.

The phenomenon of code-mixing has become increasingly prevalent with the rise of digital communication platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts (Tarihoran et al., 2022; Zebua et al., 2025). The linguistic choices of digital content creators shape not only communication but also audience perceptions, cultural norms, and identity construction. In Indonesia, code-mixing has expanded from informal daily interactions into mainstream public discourse, particularly in podcasts and other online media (Menggo et al., 2023).

Several studies have investigated code-mixing in Indonesian digital contexts. Kusuma (2024) found that intra-sentential code-mixing dominated Boy William's vlog, functioning both as a marker of English mastery and as an expressive device. Haryati and Prayuna (2020) reported that lecturers in WhatsApp groups employed code-mixing for pragmatic and social reasons such as efficiency and emotional closeness. Similarly, Salsabila et al. (2021) showed that insertional code-mixing in Jerome Polin's YouTube videos fostered relatability with bilingual audiences. While these studies provide valuable insights, most have focused on entertainment, education, or small-group interactions. Less attention has been given to motivational and inspirational digital content, where the construction of authority, identity, and emotional engagement plays a central role (Anuar et al., 2020; Ezeh et al., 2022).

YouTube serves as a particularly rich platform to explore these dynamics. The Merry Riana channel, with more than 4.4 million subscribers, is well known for bilingual (Indonesian-English) motivational podcasts. A notable 2023 episode featuring Cinta Laura, a bilingual actress and singer, attracted more than 100,000 likes. In this episode, Cinta actively inserted English expressions into Indonesian discourse, making it a vivid example of insertional code-mixing in action. Given the reach and influence of such content, examining the linguistic strategies of bilingual figures like Cinta Laura is essential (Nahak & Bram, 2022).

Based on this background, the present research addresses the following questions: (1) What forms of insertional code-mixing are used by Cinta Laura in Merry Riana's YouTube podcast? (2) What communicative functions do these

insertions serve? (3) How does insertional code-mixing contribute to the construction of identity in digital motivational discourse? It is expected that the findings will reveal insertional code-mixing not merely as a linguistic habit, but as a deliberate communicative strategy. Specifically, the study anticipates that insertions will be used to achieve emphasis, emotional intimacy, and prestige, thereby reinforcing Cinta Laura's identity as a modern bilingual figure in digital media.

Method

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative method to investigate the phenomenon of code-mixing in a selected episode of the Merry Riana Podcast, featuring a conversation with Cinta Laura. The qualitative approach is employed to provide an in-depth exploration of how code-mixing functions in natural discourse, emphasizing not only the frequency of mixed-language usage but also its communicative intent and contextual significance. The episode titled "Cantik, Pintar & Sukses, Cinta Laura Merasa Tidak Bahagia Dalam Hidupnya?" (2022) was purposively selected due to Cinta Laura's prominent use of bilingual speech, particularly the frequent insertion of English lexical items into Indonesian sentences. Verbatim transcription was carried out using Express Scribe software to preserve all linguistic features, including pauses, repetitions, and emotive expressions, ensuring the authenticity and richness of the spoken data.

The analysis is grounded in Muysken's (2000) theoretical framework, focusing specifically on the insertion type of intra-sentential code-mixing. Each insertional instance was identified and categorized based on its lexical form (word or phrase), syntactic position (initial, medial, or final), and discourse context. The analytical process followed the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, involving data reduction, data display through thematic coding and tabulation using Microsoft Excel, and conclusion drawing supported by linguistic patterns and contextual interpretation. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, strategies such as theoretical triangulation, peer debriefing with linguistic experts, detailed contextual description, and audit trail documentation were implemented. The unit of analysis is at the utterance level, with a primary focus on Cinta Laura's speech due to her consistent bilingual expression, while Merry Riana's contributions were selectively included when relevant to the analysis.

Results

The findings of this study reveal that insertional code-mixing is systematically and strategically employed in the Merry Riana Podcast episode featuring Cinta Laura. Guided by Muysken's (2000) theoretical framework, the analysis identified 128 instances of insertional code-mixing in which English lexical items, phrases, and clauses were embedded into Indonesian syntactic structures. These insertions demonstrate not only morphological and syntactic integration but also clear pragmatic motivations. In line with Poplack's (1980) view that code-mixing requires

a high level of bilingual competence, the data show that Cinta Laura's bilingual repertoire enables her to fluidly switch within utterances while maintaining grammatical and semantic coherence.

Quantitative Overview

A total of 128 insertional instances were identified, with Cinta Laura producing 115 cases (89.8%) and Merry Riana contributing 13 cases (10.2%). The distribution is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of insertional code-mixing by speaker and form

Speaker	Word	Phrase	Clause	Total	% Contribution
Cinta Laura	68	34	13	115	89.8%
Merry Riana	4	4	5	13	10.2%
Total	72	38	18	128	100%

Word-level insertions (56.3%) were the most frequent, followed by phrase-level (29.7%) and clause-level (14.0%) insertions. With respect to syntactic positions, insertions occurred primarily in medial position (66.4%), with fewer in initial (17.1%) and final (16.4%) positions. These findings resonate with Auer's (1998) interactional perspective that intra-sentential insertions often serve to foreground specific information while preserving overall discourse flow.

Forms of Insertional Code-Mixing

The analysis shows that insertions ranged from isolated lexical items (e.g., *timeline*, 09:50; *temporary*, 10:08), to phrasal expressions (e.g., *WOW, I've made it or I did it*, 03:56), and even full clauses (e.g., *I feel like what else should I do in my life this is not enough*, 06:27). Hybrid constructions such as *me-pinpoint* (08:46) further illustrate morphological adaptation, where Indonesian affixation integrates English lexical roots into the host language. Such cases support Muysken's (2000) claim that insertion may involve deep structural embedding rather than surface borrowing.

Communicative Functions

Beyond structure, insertional code-mixing was found to fulfill multiple communicative functions consistent with Myers and Scotton (2006) functional typology of code-switching. Four major functions emerged:

1. Emotional emphasis – English was used to convey affective intensity, such as *Aku harus selalu membuktikan bahwa... I was good enough* (07:34), aligning with Gumperz's (1982) notion of contextualization cues.
2. Identity construction – Insertions like *accomplishment* (05:06) and *growth* (07:11) functioned to position Cinta Laura as a reflective, globally oriented speaker.
3. Philosophical reflection – Abstract terms such as *temporary* (10:08) and

exclamatory expressions like *this is amazing* (08:46) indexed a more intellectual, contemplative stance.

4. Conversational management – Expressions such as *by the way* or *you know* (observed in the dataset) operated as discourse markers, smoothing transitions and engaging the audience.

Motivational Factors

Thematic categorization further revealed that Cinta Laura's use of insertional code-mixing was not random but motivated by deliberate communicative goals. The insertions clustered into four semantic categories:

1. Emotional expressions – 42 instances (e.g., *I'm happy, so proud*), used to signal vulnerability and intimacy.
2. Abstract/philosophical terms – 31 instances (e.g., *journey, growth*), reflecting her inclination toward reflective discourse.
3. Prestige/academic terms – 27 instances (e.g., *accomplishment, commitment*), indexing authority and intellectual capital.
4. Daily conversational markers – 28 instances (e.g., *by the way, you know*), functioning as informal discourse softeners.

These motivations illustrate what Auer (1998) describes as the “strategic deployment” of bilingual resources to achieve rhetorical and interpersonal effects.

Comparison between Speakers

A comparison between the two speakers indicates asymmetry in code-mixing practices. Cinta Laura employed insertional code-mixing predominantly for self-expression, emotional depth, and identity construction, while Merry Riana's limited use of English insertions mainly served supportive and clarifying functions. This asymmetry supports Gumperz (1982) framework of situational vs. metaphorical switching, where the host (Merry) maintains situational continuity, while the guest (Cinta) exploits metaphorical resources to negotiate identity and stance.

Implications of Findings

Overall, the results confirm that insertional code-mixing in this podcast is a dynamic linguistic strategy, not a random interference. It enriches meaning, strengthens interpersonal engagement, and enhances speaker identity in digital public discourse. This aligns with broader sociolinguistic perspectives (Arisedani & Putri, 2024; Myers & Scrotton, 2006) that code-mixing is a resource for bilinguals to manage complex communicative goals. In the digital sphere, as seen in the Merry Riana Podcast, insertional code-mixing becomes an essential rhetorical tool for constructing authority, relatability, and emotional resonance with online audiences.

Discussion

The present study reveals consistent patterns of insertional intra-sentential code-mixing in the conversation between Cinta Laura and Merry Riana on the Merry Riana YouTube podcast. The results demonstrate that English lexical items, phrases, and clauses are seamlessly embedded within Indonesian syntactic structures, reflecting both high bilingual proficiency and strategic communicative intent. The analysis highlights three main thematic dimensions: forms of insertion, communicative functions, and motivational factors, aligning with the descriptive and quantitative patterns presented in the Results section.

Linguistic Evidence and Functional Patterns

Across the 128 identified instances, English insertions occurred at word, phrase, and clause levels, serving distinct communicative purposes. For example:

1. Words such as “timeline” (09:50) and “temporary” (10:08) were selected over Indonesian equivalents to convey precision, philosophical depth, and conceptual universality. This finding is consistent with Kusuma (2024), who reported that vloggers in Indonesian digital media use English terms to signal semantic specificity and stylistic emphasis.
2. Phrases such as “I was good enough” (07:34) and “WOW, I’ve made it or I did it” (03:56) illustrate longer clause-level insertions that function to express emotion, self-evaluation, and reflective personal insight. According to Choi et al. (2023), such intra-sentential insertions are typical of highly proficient bilinguals, reflecting cognitive efficiency and expressive preference.
3. Morphological blending, such as “me-pinpoint” (08:46), shows integration of Indonesian verbal affixes with English roots, demonstrating both linguistic flexibility and strategic word choice to enhance emphasis and stylistic nuance.

These examples indicate that insertional code-mixing is functionally motivated rather than random. Gumperz (1982) emphasizes that code-mixing serves pragmatic functions such as highlighting, focusing attention, or marking affective stance. Similarly, Hoffman’s (1991) in Irawan et al. (2021) categories—emphasis, topic reference, and identity signaling—help explain why Cinta Laura strategically selects English items in different contexts: to clarify abstract ideas, express nuanced emotions, and construct her public persona as a modern, globally oriented bilingual speaker.

Forms of Insertional Code-Mixing

The study found that Cinta Laura predominantly used word-level insertions (56.3%), followed by phrase-level (29.7%) and clause-level insertions (14.0%). Most insertions appeared in medial positions (66.4%), suggesting that English elements are naturally integrated within Indonesian syntactic frames without disrupting sentence flow. This pattern is consistent with Muysken’s (2000) typology of insertion, wherein elements from an embedded language are incorporated into the matrix

language while preserving grammatical integrity. The use of morphologically hybrid forms, such as “me-pinpoint,” demonstrates the flexibility of Indonesian morphology in accommodating English roots, echoing findings from Rosmiaty (2020) on morphological adaptation in bilingual speech.

These observations align with previous studies on code-mixing in digital contexts. Kusuma (2024) and Salsabila et al. (2021) similarly reported intra-sentential insertions in Indonesian YouTube content, emphasizing semantic precision and stylistic effect. Haryati and Prayuna (2020) noted that lecturers’ WhatsApp messages employed English insertions for pragmatic and affective purposes, supporting the idea that bilingual speakers select insertions based on communicative efficiency. Moreover, Ezeh et al. (2022) and Novianti & Said (2021) found that public figures and influencers in digital media strategically use English insertions to convey global or prestigious identity. Additional studies by Irawan et al. (2021), Tarihoran et al. (2022), and Karima et al. (2025) further confirm that English lexical items in Indonesian discourse serve not only expressive but also identity-constructing functions.

Communicative Functions

The findings indicate that insertional code-mixing serves multiple communicative purposes. English words and phrases enhance emphasis, clarity, emotional intensity, and identity projection. For example, the insertion of “timeline” conveys a structured, sequential perspective on life, while “accomplishment” and “WOW, I’ve made it” communicate prestige and personal achievement with greater semantic weight than their Indonesian equivalents. These functions mirror pragmatic motivations identified by Gumperz (1982), where code-mixing facilitates emphasis, topic management, and affective expression.

Comparative evidence from prior research strengthens these conclusions. Irawan et al. (2021) observed that in podcasts, code-mixing serves to emphasize key ideas and create relational closeness with the audience. Kusuma (2024) and Salsabila et al. (2021) similarly identified emotional and evaluative purposes in digital vlogs. Haryati and Prayuna (2020) demonstrated affective expression in academic messaging. Tarihoran et al. (2022) and Zebua et al. (2025) highlighted that strategic insertions convey credibility and authority. Collectively, these studies indicate that insertional code-mixing is deliberate, context-dependent, and socially meaningful rather than random interference.

Motivational Factors

The study’s quantitative and thematic analyses show that insertion is motivated by identity construction, audience engagement, and cognitive accessibility. Cinta Laura’s frequent English insertions reinforce her image as a cosmopolitan, reflective bilingual speaker capable of blending linguistic and cultural repertoires. This aligns with Myers-Scotton’s (2006) Matrix Language Frame Model, where the

matrix language provides morphosyntactic scaffolding while the embedded language carries semantic or pragmatic weight. Cognitive availability, expressive precision, and stylistic preference explain the choice of English phrases over Indonesian equivalents, corroborating the observations of Choi et al. (2023) and Rosmiaty (2020) regarding bilingual speech patterns.

Further supporting evidence is found in comparative studies. Kusuma (2024) and Salsabila et al. (2021) noted that content creators use English to establish professional or intellectual authority. Ezeh et al. (2022) and Novianti & Said (2021) observed that bilingual public figures in digital spaces leverage English for global alignment and audience rapport. Irawan et al. (2021), Tarihoran et al. (2022), and Zebua et al. (2025) documented motivational and identity-driven rationales behind code-mixing. Collectively, these studies converge on the notion that bilingual insertion is both a cognitive and social strategy, enhancing engagement, clarity, and persona building.

Implications

In summary, this study confirms that insertional intra-sentential code-mixing in Cinta Laura's podcast with Merry Riana functions as a deliberate and contextually motivated linguistic strategy. The analysis demonstrates that English lexical items and clauses are strategically embedded into Indonesian utterances to achieve multiple communicative goals: conveying abstract or precise concepts, expressing nuanced emotions, emphasizing personal reflections, and constructing a bilingual, cosmopolitan identity.

These findings directly address the research questions posed in the introduction regarding the forms, functions, and motivations of code-mixing in a digital motivational context. By systematically categorizing and analyzing 128 instances of code-mixing, the study shows that such linguistic behavior is not random but purposeful, audience-aware, and identity-driven, highlighting the complex interplay between language, cognition, and social positioning. The outcomes underscore the significance of bilingual competence in online discourse, demonstrating how speakers like Cinta Laura leverage their linguistic repertoire to enhance meaning, foster engagement, and communicate personal values effectively. Overall, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of code-mixing as a sophisticated strategy in contemporary digital media, bridging structural linguistic analysis with sociocultural and pragmatic insights.

Conclusion

Cinta Laura's use of intra-sentential code-mixing is a dynamic linguistic practice that enriches her communication and shapes her public persona. Her strategic selection of English terms and phrases within Indonesian sentences allows for a more precise and impactful delivery of her messages. This study underscores that code-mixing, especially insertion, is a sophisticated tool for bilingual speakers

in digital environments, enabling them to navigate complex topics, express vulnerability, and foster deeper connections with their audience. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how bilingual individuals leverage their linguistic repertoire to achieve diverse communicative goals, showcasing the adaptive and multifaceted nature of language use in contemporary online discourse.

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