



The construction of Indonesian adolescents' identity through code-switching: a discourse analysis of TikTok content

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Abstract

Background: The increasing prominence of social media has reshaped how adolescents construct and display social identities through language practices in digital spaces. TikTok, as a highly performative and audience-oriented platform, provides a context in which linguistic choices are central to identity construction, particularly in multilingual societies such as Indonesia. Among these practices, code-switching has emerged as a salient feature of adolescent digital discourse.

Aim: This study aims to examine how code-switching functions as a discursive strategy in the construction of Indonesian adolescents' digital identities on TikTok, with particular attention to its performative, audience-oriented, and identity-related meanings.

Method: Employing a qualitative approach, this study adopts sociolinguistic discourse analysis to analyze publicly available TikTok content produced by Indonesian adolescents. The data consist of spoken utterances in videos, written captions, and selected audience comments that contain instances of code-switching. Data were collected through non-participant observation, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed iteratively to identify patterns and discursive functions of code-switching in relation to identity construction.

Result: The findings demonstrate that code-switching in TikTok discourse is not random or merely a result of language contact, but a deliberate and strategic practice. Adolescents use code-switching to perform identities associated with modernity, global orientation, peer solidarity, and emotional expressiveness, while simultaneously maintaining local affiliation through the use of Indonesian. The analysis also reveals that digital identity construction through code-switching is dialogic, as audience responses actively contribute to the validation and negotiation of the identities performed by content creators.

Conclusion: This study concludes that code-switching serves as a key discursive resource in the performative construction of Indonesian adolescents' digital identities on TikTok. By highlighting the strategic and audience-oriented nature of code-switching, the study contributes to sociolinguistic and digital discourse research, particularly by expanding understanding of identity construction in multilingual, non-Western digital contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of social media in recent years has transformed the ways individuals particularly adolescents construct and display their social identities through linguistic practices that are performative, multimodal, and oriented toward broad digital audiences (Abidin, 2021; [Zulli & Zulli, 2022](#)). Social media is no longer understood merely as a channel of communication, but rather as a discursive space in which language functions as a primary symbolic resource in the negotiation of identity and social affiliation ([Androutsopoulos, 2015](#); [Page et al., 2022](#); [Tagg & Seargent, 2021](#)).

Among various social media platforms, TikTok occupies a strategic position as a space for adolescent self-expression due to its short-video format, participatory nature, and strong emphasis on visibility and audience engagement ([Kaye et al., 2022](#); [Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2021](#)). Within this context, linguistic

practices on TikTok do not occur neutrally; rather, they are shaped by demands of performativity, self-presentation, and orientation toward continuously evolving global trends (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022).

One prominent linguistic practice in adolescents' TikTok discourse is code-switching, defined as the use of more than one language or language variety within a single communicative event. Recent studies suggest that code-switching in digital spaces should not be understood solely as a consequence of language contact, but as a strategic choice imbued with identity-related meanings, ideological positioning, and speakers' social orientations (Androutsopoulos, 2015; Wei et al., 2023). In social media discourse, code-switching is frequently employed to index global identities, digital competence, emotional proximity, and membership in particular communities (Bolander & Locher, 2020; Sharma, 2025; Tagg & Seargent, 2021).

Meskipun kajian internasional mengenai bahasa dan identitas di media sosial terus berkembang, Despite the growing body of international research on language and identity in social media contexts, studies on code-switching in Indonesia remain largely concentrated on face-to-face or institutional settings, such as classrooms and formal educational environments. Research that specifically examines code-switching practices in platform-based digital discourse particularly on TikTok remains relatively limited. At the same time, existing studies on TikTok in Indonesia tend to focus on content characteristics, popularity, and social impact, while the linguistic dimension as a central mechanism of identity construction has received little systematic attention (Putri & Sulistiyyono, 2023).

This gap highlights the need for research that positions code-switching as a deliberate discursive strategy in the construction of Indonesian adolescents' identities in digital spaces. By examining code-switching practices in TikTok discourse, this study aims to contribute empirically and theoretically to the development of digital sociolinguistics, particularly within the context of multilingual, non-Western societies that remain underrepresented in the global literature (Buckingham, 2007; Darvin, 2016; De Costa et al., 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Identity as a Discursive Construction in Contemporary Scholarship

In contemporary linguistic and social science scholarship, identity is no longer understood as an essential attribute that is stably inherent in individuals, but rather as a social process that is continuously constructed, negotiated, and reconfigured through discursive practices in social interaction (Block & Corona, 2022; Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2023; Joseph, 2022). This perspective rejects the view of identity as a fixed category (such as age, gender, or ethnicity alone) and instead positions it as the outcome of contextual and relational linguistic action.

A discursive approach to identity emphasizes that identity is *performed* through language rather than simply possessed. Individuals construct identity through lexical choices, speech styles, discourse structures, and the use of other semiotic resources that enable them to position themselves within particular social relations, such as expressing intimacy, authority, solidarity, or social differentiation (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2023). In other words, identity emerges as an effect of communicative practices, rather than as a prerequisite for communication itself.

Within this framework, interactional context and audience orientation become key determinants of identity construction. Identity is neither singular nor consistent; instead, it may shift depending on interlocutors, communicative situations, and interactional goals. This highlights the situational and multiple nature of identity, whereby individuals activate different aspects of identity in different contexts through specific discursive strategies.

The development of digital communication further extends and complicates these processes of identity construction. In digital spaces, linguistic practices take place in highly visible public arenas, are permanently documented, and often reach broad and heterogeneous audiences. These conditions render identity construction not only interactional but also performative and reflexive, as each utterance may be observed, evaluated, and responded to by audiences that are not always predictable (Georgakopoulou, 2025; Locher et al., 2023).

Recent studies demonstrate that digital identities are constructed through repeated and strategic linguistic performativity, whereby users consciously select particular linguistic resources to manage self-presentation and social legitimacy (Georgakopoulou, 2025). Such practices include the choice of language or language variety, the regulation of speech style, and the use of semiotic elements such as humor, irony, or popular cultural codes to shape a desired persona.

Accordingly, language in digital contexts functions as a strategic tool for negotiating three core dimensions of identity: (1) who the speaker is, that is, how individuals represent themselves; (2) to whom the speaker is speaking, namely orientation toward actual or imagined audiences; and (3) how the speaker wishes to be perceived, including social image, group affiliation, and symbolic positioning. Identity, in this sense, is the outcome of an ongoing discursive process that remains open to reinterpretation.

This conception of identity as a discursive construction is particularly relevant for examining linguistic practices on social media, including code-switching. Code-switching does not merely reflect multilingual competence; it also functions as a discursive strategy for constructing, asserting, or negotiating identity within specific social

contexts. Understanding identity as a discursive construct therefore provides a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing how adolescents shape their identities through linguistic practices in digital spaces such as TikTok.

Code-Switching as an Identity Strategy in Contemporary Studies

In contemporary sociolinguistic research, code-switching has undergone a significant conceptual shift. While earlier studies primarily analyzed code-switching through structural approaches such as classifying types of language alternation based on syntactic boundaries or linguistic units research over the past five years has increasingly focused on its social, ideological, and discursive functions (Gardner-Chloros, 2025; I Almusallam, 2024). This shift marks a transformation in how code-switching is understood, from a technical linguistic phenomenon to a meaningful social practice.

Within this framework, code-switching is conceptualized as a deliberate communicative act rather than a spontaneous reflection of speakers' bilingual competence. Speakers choose to switch languages or language varieties as part of an interactional strategy to position themselves within particular social relations. Consequently, code-switching functions as a mechanism for negotiating identity, constructing group affiliation, and displaying desired social positions in multilingual settings.

Strategic approaches to code-switching emphasize its strong dependence on social context and audience orientation. The identities constructed through code-switching are not universal but contextual and situational. In one context, code-switching may be employed to express solidarity and intimacy, while in another it may serve to mark social distance, authority, or symbolic superiority (Gardner-Chloros, 2025). This demonstrates that code-switching constitutes a flexible discursive resource that allows speakers to selectively activate different aspects of identity.

Contemporary studies also indicate that code-switching is often used consciously and reflexively to construct particular self-images. For example, switching to global languages such as English is frequently associated with representations of modern, cosmopolitan, and globally oriented identities, whereas the use of local languages or informal varieties may index intimacy, authenticity, or group solidarity (Lee, 2016; Mendoza & Walker, 2024). In this sense, language carries not only semantic meaning but also symbolic value that contributes to the construction of social identity.

Moreover, code-switching has an ideological dimension. Language choices may reflect speakers' stances toward power, prestige, and the social hierarchies attached to particular languages. Code-switching practices are embedded in prevailing language ideologies, including relationships between dominant and minority languages. As such, code-switching can function as a means of reproducing, negotiating, or even challenging existing social structures.

In public, audience-oriented communicative spaces such as social media, the strategic function of code-switching becomes even more salient. Because interactions take place before broad and heterogeneous audiences, speakers tend to use code-switching to manage public perceptions of themselves. In this context, code-switching serves as a performative tool for displaying social personas that are perceived as relevant, appealing, or symbolically valuable in the eyes of audiences (Lee, 2016; Mendoza & Walker, 2024). The identities constructed through code-switching are directed not only toward immediate interlocutors but also toward wider imagined audiences.

Thus, contemporary scholarship views code-switching not as random "language mixing" or a deviation from linguistic norms, but as a discursive practice rich in identity-related meaning. Code-switching constitutes a semiotic resource that enables speakers to display, assert, and negotiate social identities dynamically. This perspective provides a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing how code-switching particularly in digital spaces functions as a central strategy in identity construction, including among adolescents and within social media platforms such as TikTok.

Multilingual Practices and Code-Switching on Social Media

Recent digital linguistics research indicates that social media has fundamentally transformed how language is used and perceived in social interaction. In digital spaces, multilingual practices no longer adhere to rigid linguistic boundaries; instead, they are fluid, dynamic, and highly contextual, allowing speakers to freely combine diverse linguistic resources within a single discourse (Eckert, 2025; Zhu & Li, 2025). This flexibility reflects a shift from viewing language as a closed system to understanding it as an adaptive social practice.

Multilingual practices often manifest through code-switching, translanguaging, and creative language play. These practices do not arise solely from users' bilingual or multilingual backgrounds, but also as responses to the audience-oriented and performative characteristics of digital spaces. Social media users actively select and combine languages to align with particular online communities, prevailing communicative trends, and desired self-representational goals.

Code-switching on social media should therefore be understood as part of stylistic practice, namely the ways in which users construct social meaning and identity through particular language choices and speech styles (Coupland, 2022). From this perspective, language not only conveys messages but also functions as a stylistic marker carrying symbolic values such as intimacy, modernity, uniqueness, or cultural affiliation. Code-

switching becomes a key component of such stylistic strategies, as it allows users to exploit the social associations attached to specific languages.

The highly visible and competitive nature of social media further amplifies the strategic role of code-switching. Every post, comment, or interaction occurs before a broad and heterogeneous audience, prompting users to differentiate themselves from others. In this context, code-switching may be employed as a means of standing out, creating creative impressions, or displaying linguistic and cultural competence that is valued within particular digital communities (Eckert, 2025). Language choice thus becomes part of broader efforts to construct appealing and relevant digital personas.

In addition, multilingual practices on social media often reflect negotiations between local identities and global orientations. The use of global languages such as English is frequently associated with cosmopolitanism, modernity, and connection to global popular culture, while local or national languages are employed to maintain social closeness and authenticity. Code-switching enables users to combine these orientations simultaneously, resulting in hybrid and situationally constructed identities.

Furthermore, code-switching practices on social media demonstrate that the social meanings of language are highly dependent on targeted online audiences. Because social media audiences are rarely homogeneous and encompass diverse social and cultural backgrounds, users must anticipate how their language choices will be interpreted. In this sense, code-switching functions as a tool for bridging audience differences and creating symbolic connections with multiple groups at once (STH & Palupi, 2022).

Accordingly, multilingual practices and code-switching on social media cannot be understood as random linguistic phenomena or merely as reflections of multilingual competence. Rather, they constitute complex discursive strategies through which language is used creatively and reflexively to construct style, negotiate identity, and manage social relations in digital spaces. This perspective provides a robust theoretical basis for analyzing how code-switching operates within social media discourse including on platforms such as TikTok as an integral component of digital identity construction.

Code-Switching, Adolescents, and TikTok Discourse

In recent scholarship, TikTok has increasingly been understood not merely as an entertainment platform, but as a digital discursive space in which adolescents construct, display, and negotiate their social personas. While early studies of TikTok primarily focused on popular culture, algorithms, and the attention economy, more recent research has begun to foreground linguistic practices as central elements in the formation of adolescent identity and digital personae (Montag et al., 2024). This perspective opens avenues for more in-depth linguistic analyses of how adolescents use language to manage self-presentation in digital public spaces.

Adolescence represents a developmental stage characterized by intense identity exploration, during which self-concept is shaped through experimentation with style, social affiliation, and self-representation. TikTok provides a particularly conducive context for this process due to its performative, multimodal, and audience-oriented nature. Within this space, language becomes a key resource through which adolescents display identities that are perceived as relevant, appealing, and aligned with platform norms and trends. Language choices, speech styles, and expressive varieties not only convey messages but also shape the digital personas presented to audiences.

In multilingual societies, code-switching emerges as a particularly salient strategy in adolescents' TikTok discourse. Several studies indicate that adolescents employ code-switching to negotiate local-global identities by combining local or national languages with global languages such as English (Huong et al., 2024). This strategy allows adolescents to simultaneously affirm attachment to local identities while projecting global orientations associated with modernity, digital competence, and engagement with international popular culture.

Beyond local-global functions, code-switching on TikTok also plays a crucial role in fostering social proximity with peer audiences. The use of mixed languages, slang, or particular multilingual expressions is often interpreted as indexing familiarity, shared experience, and membership within the same youth community. In this context, code-switching serves as a tool for creating symbolic solidarity between content creators and audiences, while reinforcing a sense of belonging within competitive digital spaces.

Nevertheless, although several studies have identified the presence of code-switching in adolescent TikTok content, such research often remains descriptive and focused on mapping surface forms or functions. The integration of code-switching analysis with discursive identity construction frameworks remains relatively limited. Many studies have yet to systematically explain how code-switching operates as a discursive practice that shapes digital personae, or how identity meanings are negotiated through repeated interactions among creators, audiences, and platform norms.

Accordingly, there is a need for more integrative approaches to understanding code-switching in adolescent TikTok discourse. Such approaches should position code-switching not merely as a linguistic phenomenon, but as a discursive strategy through which adolescents manage identity, social affiliation, and symbolic positioning in digital spaces. This understanding is essential for explaining how language contributes to the formation of adolescents' digital personae and how linguistic practices reflect broader identity dynamics in the age of social media.

METHODS

Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach employing a sociolinguistic discourse analysis design to examine code-switching practices as an identity-construction strategy in Indonesian adolescents' TikTok discourse. A qualitative approach is selected because it enables contextual, interpretive, and meaning-oriented analysis of language practices, particularly in understanding how identity is constructed through linguistic choices in digital interaction (Poth, 2023).

Specifically, the study integrates principles of digital discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics, conceptualizing language as a social practice that is intrinsically shaped by platform affordances, audience orientation, and communicative goals. Code-switching is therefore analyzed not merely as a linguistic phenomenon, but as a discursive action through which speakers construct digital personae and enact particular identity positions.

Data Source and Corpus

The data are drawn from TikTok content produced by Indonesian adolescents, including:

1. spoken utterances in videos,
2. written text in captions, and
3. user comments that are relevant to the context of the posts.

TikTok is selected due to its multimodal, performative, and audience-oriented features, which make it a particularly suitable site for investigating adolescents' language practices and identity work. Data are collected exclusively from public accounts to avoid privacy violations, with an analytical focus on content that displays the use of more than one language or language variety within a single communicative event.

The corpus consists of 60 TikTok videos produced by approximately 25 Indonesian adolescent creators aged 15–19, selected through purposive sampling. Videos were chosen based on the presence of Indonesian–English code-switching and high audience interaction (likes, comments, or shares).

The corpus is limited to posts that explicitly demonstrate Indonesian–English code-switching or other language combinations commonly used by Indonesian adolescents. This delimitation is intended to maintain analytical focus on multilingual practices that are directly relevant to digital identity construction.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is conducted through non-participant observation of TikTok content within a specified time period. Relevant videos, captions, and comments are documented via screenshots and manual transcription. Spoken utterances in videos are transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity of the linguistic data, including language shifts, intonation, and other relevant expressive cues.

Each data unit is subsequently coded by recording the posting context, the type of code-switching, the position of the switch within the discourse, and audience responses. This procedure is designed to ensure that code-switching is consistently analyzed in relation to its discursive context and the surrounding social interaction.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is conducted in a staged and iterative manner. The first stage involves identifying and classifying instances of code-switching, including the languages involved and the placement of the switch within the discourse. The second stage focuses on the discursive functions of code-switching, examining how language alternation is used to construct identity meanings such as modernity, solidarity, intimacy, or global orientation.

In the third stage, the analysis addresses discursive identity construction by linking code-switching practices to the posting context, intended audiences, and TikTok platform norms. This stage attends to how identity is performed and negotiated through recurring interactions between content creators and audiences. The analytical approach is interpretive and reflexive, with findings examined contextually through theoretical lenses of discursive identity and digital sociolinguistics.

To enhance the credibility of the study, data triangulation is employed by comparing code-switching practices across video speech, captions, and comments. In addition, repeated checks of transcription and coding are conducted to minimize interpretive bias. Researcher reflexivity is maintained by documenting the researcher's position as an observer within digital spaces and acknowledging that identity interpretations are contextual and open to alternative readings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

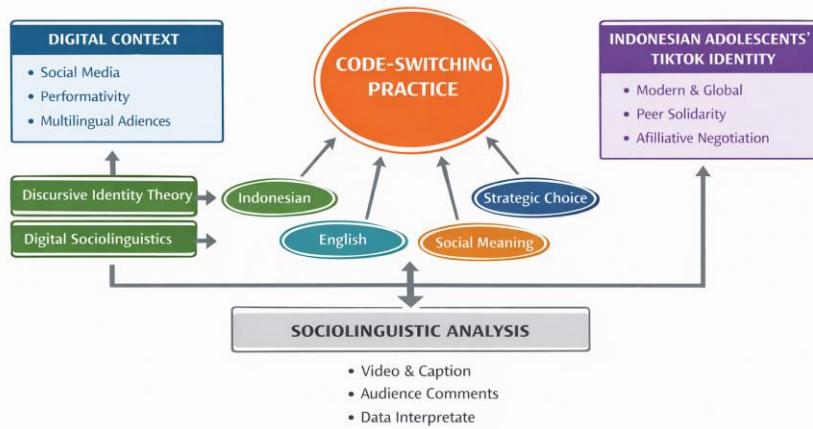


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings indicate that code-switching on TikTok does not occur randomly; rather, it functions as a planned, audience-oriented linguistic strategy that plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' digital personae.

Patterns of Code-Switching in Indonesian Adolescents' TikTok Discourse

Analysis of the data corpus reveals that code-switching constitutes a consistent and recurring practice in Indonesian adolescents' TikTok content. Adolescents actively combine Indonesian and English, and in some cases informal varieties and digital slang, within a single communicative event. This practice is evident not only in spoken utterances within videos, but also in captions and user comments, resulting in a coherent multilingual discourse across all elements of a post.

Code-switching most frequently appears in the form of intra-sentential switching, where English lexical items or phrases are embedded within Indonesian sentence structures. This pattern suggests that English is employed as a symbolic resource that complements rather than replaces Indonesian as the primary linguistic base of the discourse. Inter-sentential switching is also observed, particularly in evaluative or expressive segments of discourse, such as emotional emphasis, personal opinions, or video closings.

Table 1. Patterns of Code-Switching in Indonesian Adolescents' TikTok Discourse

Code-Switching Pattern	Discursive Characteristics	Contexts of Occurrence
Intra-sentential	Insertion of English lexicon/phrases into Indonesian sentences	Personal narratives, emotional expression
Inter-sentential	Language alternation across utterance units	Meaning reinforcement, discourse climax
Emblematic	Recurrent symbolic words or expressions	Style and persona markers
Stylized	Code-switching with specific intonation or accent	Performativity and entertainment

These patterns indicate that code-switching does not merely reflect bilingual competence, but functions as a discursive choice closely linked to self-representation goals and the management of social meaning.

Discursive Functions of Code-Switching in Identity Construction

The analysis demonstrates that code-switching serves as a primary strategy in adolescents' digital identity construction. Language alternation is used to generate identity meanings that are aligned with TikTok's status as a competitive, visibility-oriented digital public space. Through code-switching, adolescents are able to present identities that are flexible, situational, and layered.

The use of English is consistently associated with representations of modernity and global orientation. English tends to appear in discourse segments expressing opinions, self-evaluations, or personal experience narratives, thereby conveying impressions of cosmopolitanism and digital competence. In contrast, Indonesian particularly in informal varieties is employed to maintain social proximity and authenticity as local adolescents.

Table 2. Discursive Functions of Code-Switching and Constructed Identities

Discursive Function	Analytical Description	Constructed Identity
Marker of modernity	English as a global symbol	Cosmopolitan adolescent

Social solidarity	Language mixing + slang	Peer-oriented adolescent
Emotional emphasis	Switching in affective expressions	Authentic, expressive
Self-differentiation	Distinctive linguistic style	Creative, unique

These findings suggest that identities constructed through code-switching are relational, emerging in connection with both imagined and actual audiences.

Code-Switching as a Performative Linguistic Practice on TikTok

Code-switching in TikTok content cannot be separated from the platform's performative and multimodal nature. Language is used not only to convey messages, but also to construct personas that are appealing, relevant, and aligned with platform norms. In this context, code-switching functions as part of a linguistic performance designed to enhance discursive appeal and audience engagement.

Adolescents consciously adjust their language choices to meet digital audience expectations, including prevailing linguistic trends. Code-switching becomes a means of signaling familiarity with digital culture and active participation in dynamic online communicative practices. The identities constructed through this practice are performative, as language production is shaped by awareness of visibility and potential public evaluation.

Audience Responses and the Negotiation of Identity Meaning

Analysis of audience comments indicates that code-switching operates not only as an identity production strategy, but also as a starting point for the negotiation of meaning between content creators and audiences. Audiences actively interpret and respond to code-switching practices through praise, imitation of linguistic style, or reflective commentary on language use.

Table 3. Patterns of Audience Responses to Code-Switching

Type of Response	Discursive Meaning
Praise for language style	Validation of the creator's identity
Imitation of code-switching	Affiliation and solidarity
Linguistic humor	Metalinguistic awareness
Mild criticism	Negotiation of linguistic norms

These responses demonstrate that identities constructed through code-switching are dialogic and not entirely controlled by content creators. Rather, such identities are shaped through ongoing interactions between linguistic production and audience interpretation.

Discussion

Code-Switching as a Discursive Practice in Digital Identity Construction

The findings of this study reinforce the discursive approach to identity, which conceptualizes language as a social practice rather than as a reflection of a fixed and essential identity. In line with Joseph (2022) and Block (2022), identity in contemporary communicative contexts is understood as a process that is continuously negotiated through contextual and relational linguistic actions. The consistent patterns of code-switching observed in Indonesian adolescents' TikTok discourse indicate that language is used reflexively to construct particular digital personae, rather than merely as an outcome of bilingual competence.

These findings support Androutsopoulos's (2015) argument that code-switching in digital public spaces should be understood as a socially and ideologically meaningful discursive practice. On TikTok, code-switching does not function neutrally; instead, it operates as a means of symbolic positioning within specific social relations, including the projection of identities associated with modernity, creativity, and global orientation.

Audience Orientation and Linguistic Performativity on Social Media

The results of this study further strengthen the concepts of audience design and linguistic performativity in digital communication. In highly visible social media environments, linguistic practices are produced with a heightened awareness of broad and heterogeneous audiences (Bell, 2001; Georgakopoulou, 2025). The code-switching practices employed by adolescents on TikTok demonstrate a clear orientation toward audience perception, whereby language choices are strategically made to generate effects of intimacy, appeal, and social legitimacy.

This finding aligns with Tagg and Sargeant (2021) and Zulli and Zulli (2022), who argue that social media encourages performative language practices in which identity is constructed as a public spectacle. Within this context, English functions as a symbol of cosmopolitanism and digital competence, while Indonesian serves to maintain social affiliation and local authenticity (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015).

Hybrid Identity and Local–Global Negotiation

This study extends discussions of hybrid identity within multilingual, non-Western contexts. Consistent with Darvin (2016) and De Costa et al. (2021), Indonesian adolescents' digital identities are formed through negotiations between local and global semiotic resources. Code-switching enables adolescents to combine global symbols associated with English with the intimacy and authenticity attributed to the national language.

The findings also support Pennycook and Otsuji's (2022) assertion that multilingual practices in digital spaces do not operate through a binary opposition between the local and the global, but rather function

simultaneously and situationally. Consequently, identities constructed through code-switching on TikTok are hybrid and flexible, contingent upon discursive context and audience orientation.

The study further demonstrates that audiences play an active role in identity construction rather than functioning merely as passive recipients. This observation is consistent with dialogic approaches to identity construction, which emphasize that identity is shaped through repeated social interaction (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2023; Locher et al., 2023). Audience responses to code-switching ranging from validation and imitation to reflective commentary indicate that identity meanings are collectively negotiated.

Implication. This study offers important theoretical and methodological implications for the development of digital sociolinguistics and contemporary identity studies. The findings demonstrate that code-switching in Indonesian adolescents' TikTok discourse functions as a deliberate discursive strategy in the construction of performative, audience-oriented digital identities, rather than merely as a form of linguistic variation resulting from language contact. This reinforces the discursive identity framework by positioning code-switching as a key semiotic resource in self-representation within highly visible and competitive digital spaces. Moreover, the study contributes to digital identity research by foregrounding a multilingual, non-Western context and by underscoring the importance of discourse-analytic approaches that are sensitive to platform affordances, multimodality, and the role of audiences in negotiating identity meanings.

Future Research. Future studies may build on these findings by conducting cross-platform comparative analyses to examine how platform-specific characteristics shape code-switching practices and digital identity construction. Longitudinal approaches could also be employed to trace changes in adolescents' linguistic strategies over time. In addition, further research may deepen the analysis by explicitly incorporating ideological and power dimensions of language, as well as by integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the relationships between linguistic practices, audience engagement, and algorithmic visibility. Extending this line of inquiry to other social groups would also be valuable for broadening theoretical generalization and enriching our understanding of the dynamics of code-switching and identity in digital spaces.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that code-switching in Indonesian adolescents' TikTok discourse constitutes a socially meaningful discursive practice that plays a central role in the construction of digital identity. Rather than functioning merely as a form of linguistic variation or as a by-product of language contact, code-switching operates as a deliberate, audience-oriented linguistic strategy through which adolescents construct performative, hybrid, and situational digital personae. By combining Indonesian and English, adolescents simultaneously negotiate local and global identities and project self-images that are perceived as relevant and valuable within digital public spaces.

The findings further underscore that digital identity is not static, but is produced through repeated and dialogic language practices in interactions between content creators and audiences. Code-switching emerges as a key semiotic resource that enables adolescents to manage identity meanings, social affiliations, and symbolic positioning amid the demands of visibility and performativity inherent in social media environments. In this respect, the study reinforces the discursive identity approach and extends the field of digital sociolinguistics by foregrounding a multilingual, non-Western context that remains underrepresented in the global literature.

Overall, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language, identity, and social media in the digital era. By positioning code-switching as a discursive strategy in Indonesian adolescents' TikTok discourse, the study opens avenues for future research that examines digital identity dynamics across platforms, social groups, and cultural contexts.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

R.W.Y.P. conceptualized and designed the study, conducted data collection and qualitative discourse analysis, interpreted the findings, and drafted the initial manuscript. R.A. contributed to the development of the theoretical framework, provided critical revisions for important intellectual content, and supervised the overall research process. Both authors reviewed, edited, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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