

Functions and Patterns of Code-Switching in Social Media: A Study on Audreyfannyau's Instagram Captions.

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Abstract

This study explores the patterns and functions of code-switching in Instagram captions by Audrey Fanny Aulia, an Indonesian beauty influencer. As social media increasingly reflects the everyday language practices of bilingual users, code-switching has become a key strategy in digital communication. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research analyzes 30 captions posted between September 2024 and June 2025. The analysis applied Poplack's typology of code-switching—*intra-sentential*, *inter-sentential*, and *tag-switching* and the communicative function framework of Appel and Muysken, which includes expressive, referential, directive, phatic, and metalinguistic functions. The findings reveal that *inter-sentential* code-switching appears most frequently, followed by *intra-sentential* and *tag-switching*. Regarding functions, the *expressive* and *referential* functions were found to be the most common, indicating that the influencer often switches languages to express emotions and connect more closely with her audience. These results suggest that code-switching on social media serves not only as a linguistic feature but also as a communicative strategy to enhance engagement and personal expression. The study highlights how bilingual influencers like Audrey use language performatively to construct and negotiate identity in digital spaces. It contributes to a broader understanding of multilingual discourse in informal online contexts and offers insight into language use in today's influencer culture.

Keywords: *Bilingualism, Code-switching, Digital communication, Influencer, Instagram*

INTRODUCTION

In this digital age, social media has become a very important part of people's lives (Zhang, 2024). Various social media platforms are widely offered for free download on each individual's device. This includes the famous Instagram platform, which is hosted by Meta Platforms, Inc. company. This platform is used not only as a place to share personal moments, but also as a tool for building personal branding, marketing, and social interaction between communities (Nursyamsi et al., 2023) as well as Audrey Fanny Aulia in using her Instagram account. Along with increasing globalization and wider access to information, the use of more than one language in daily communication is increasingly common, especially among bilingual

and multilingual social media users. Fan et al., (2024) found that multilingual users have more diverse sharing characteristics and are more actively engaged on social media. One of the linguistic phenomena that often appears in digital communication is code-switching, which is the transition from one language to another in one discourse or text, which is easily found in communication through digital media (Androutsopoulos, 2013).

According to Poplack (2001) in his research, code-switching (CS) refers to the mixing of two or more languages in discourse that can occur at all levels of language structure, with its occurrence within the limits of a sentence or even a word without changing the interlocutor. This mixing can occur at different levels of linguistic structure, but most often occurs within a single sentence, constituent, or even word. This phenomenon has gained scientific attention in recent decades, with researchers recognizing that it is limited by grammar and is not random or perverse behavior (Poplack, 2001). In the neutral processing of languages by bilinguals, we are told that code-mixing is clinically defined as mixing words between two or more languages within a single utterance (Bullock & Toribio, 2009). Code-switching is when multilingual speakers mix their languages as they talk. Some code-switching research involves a purely formal linguistic description of the ways in which the two languages intertwine structurally (Bell, 2013). However, Code-switching can be categorized into several types, primarily based on the context and linguistic structure involved: Intersentential Code-switching, Intrasentential Code-switching, Tag Switching, Situational Code-switching, Metaphorical Code-switching. These categories highlight the complexity and systematic nature of code-switching in bilingual and multilingual communication. Also, it can be found in various contexts, including bilingual communities, social media and online communication, literature and media, educational settings, and cultural events. These instances highlight the dynamic nature of language use in multilingual environments.

Code-switching has long been a concern in linguistic studies, especially in sociolinguistics. This phenomenon does not only occur in spoken communication but also in written communication, including in social media such as Instagram. It is very likely to occur among bilingual or multilingual individuals. This phenomenon can be found in Instagram captions, comments, and other digital interactions, where users switch from one language to another for various reasons. For example, the use of English in a caption can give a modern and global impression, while Indonesian is still used to reach a local audience.

In Indonesia itself, many social media influencers use code-switching in their content, whether to attract audience attention, build an image, or adapt to global trends. One influencer who is interesting to be studied in this context is Audrey Fanny Aulia who is active as a beauty content creator and also as a K-pop enthusiast. She is very active in using a combination of English and Indonesian in every caption on her Instagram posts. As can be seen in the caption she wrote on her Instagram post on March 12, 2025, she wrote “Alpacas are paid actors ((*sebelum akhirnya yang ngasih makan nyaris ditendang*)) BTW kenapa si hobi banget foto merem @/dirisendiri.” The use of code-switching in this context can serve various purposes, such as increasing engagement, showing social identity, or strengthening emotional expression.

Although code-switching has been widely studied in the context of spoken conversations, research on the patterns and functions of code-switching in Instagram captions of Indonesian influencers is still minimal. Most of the existing studies focus more on the use of code-switching in formal verbal or written communication. In contrast, its use in social media

platforms—which have unique and flexible language characteristics—still receives less attention. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the functions and patterns of code-switching in Audrey Fanny Aulia's Instagram captions, focusing on how sociopragmatic factors influence them. Despite these insights, there remains a research gap in understanding the broader cultural and social implications of code-switching across various demographic groups and platforms.

Additionally, there is a limited exploration of how code-switching influences identity formation, community building, and user engagement. This study aims to address these gaps by analyzing how code-switching functions within Instagram captions, focusing on its sociopragmatic role in shaping bilingual identity and digital communication patterns. By understanding how an influencer uses language in social media, this research is expected to provide new insights in the field of sociolinguistics, especially in the context of digital communication in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze code-switching practices in Instagram captions. A total of 85 captions posted by Audrey Fanny Aulia were collected between September 2024 and June 2025. From these, 30 captions containing both English and Indonesian were purposively selected as they reached thematic saturation and adequately represented the frequency of code-switching patterns, specifically the use of English and Indonesian in a single post. The data collection method used was documentation. Screenshots of the captions were taken and compiled in a document along with the posting date and caption text (Medica et al., 2020). Only captions that clearly demonstrated a switch between English and Indonesian were included for analysis. The analysis framework consisted of two main theories: Poplack's (2001) typology of code-switching and Appel & Muysken's (2006) functions of code-switching. Each caption was first categorized by pattern type: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, or tag-switching. Then, the function of each code-switching instance was identified and classified into expressive, referential, directive, phatic, or metalinguistic categories. Each caption was examined and categorized using two theoretical frameworks. Poplack's (2001) typology was first applied to identify the types of code-switching appearing in the data, which include inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching. Following that, Appel and Muysken's (2006) framework was employed to analyze the communicative functions of each instance, namely referential, expressive, directive, phatic, and metalinguistic. Each example of switching was coded according to these categories to determine both its structural pattern and communicative purpose within the caption context. The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis by identifying recurring patterns and interpreting the communicative intent behind each switch. The findings were summarized in tables to highlight the frequency and distribution of code-switching types and functions across the sample.

RESULTS

This section presents findings from the analysis of 30 Instagram captions written by Audrey Fanny Aulia. The main focus of this analysis is on two key aspects: the code-switching patterns used in each caption and the communicative function of these code-switches. The

classification of code-switching patterns is based on the typology proposed by Poplack (2001), which includes intra-sentence, inter-sentence, and tag-switching code-switching. Meanwhile, the analysis of code-switching functions refers to the theoretical framework offered by Appel and Muysken (2006), which identifies various linguistic functions, such as the expressive function, the referential function, the directive function, the phatic function, and the metalinguistic functions. The findings reveal that code-switching in Audrey Fanny's captions performs various functions, such as expressive, referential, directive, and phatic. For instance, the caption "BUT I DON'T REGRET IT *SAMSEKKK WKWK*" reflects the expressive function as it conveys strong personal emotion, while "Save video *ini biar gak lupa!*" represents the directive function since it aims to influence the audience's action. These examples demonstrate how bilingual expressions are used strategically to enhance emotional tone and engagement in social media contexts. In the findings and discussion, this study examines how linguistic strategies are applied in the digital communication practices of influencers and how code-switching shapes communication styles on social media.

Types and Patterns of Code-switching.

Three types of code-switching were identified in the data: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching. One of the three types, inter-sentential code-switching, appeared to be the most dominant, becoming the most frequently used type of code-switching. This type of code-switching occurs within a single sentence or clause, reflecting a high level of proficiency and comfort in using two languages interchangeably. This phenomenon aligns with linguistic trends among Indonesian Gen Z, who often mix languages as a practicality, an expression of identity, and an effort to build connections in their digital communication. (Kandiawan, 2022).

In the case of the caption written by Audrey Fanny Aulia on her Instagram, flexible code-switching are used in various captions on her Instagram posts. This style of language reflects a relaxed and personal approach to communicating with her audience. Specific examples can be seen in captions such as "Yes, I did, I did *tolongin* did" (May 1, 2025) and "*Judul doang* HAPPY, *isinya* umm no no" (May 6, 2025), where Indonesian and English are naturally combined within the same sentence structure. This blend of sentences suggests that code-switching is employed with mature linguistic awareness, serving as a strategy to convey messages more expressively and engagingly. Therefore, Audrey's use of code-switching is not only grammatically valid but also reflects a meaningful stylistic choice within the context of contemporary digital communication.

Meanwhile, code-switching in sentences tends to focus more on specific fields, such as beauty terms, product descriptions, and emotional expressions. In practice, English words are often inserted into Indonesian sentence structures to highlight the main features of a product or express emotional attitudes. Expressions such as "Color test *kalem*," "eyelook *yang natural*," and "glow up *parah*" are representative examples of this linguistic strategy. The selection of such vocabulary is very familiar to bilingual audiences, especially younger audiences who often use mixed forms of communication with expressive and modern language. Additionally, the use of English terms in this context also reflects the influence of globalization in the beauty industry, where English is often associated with modernity and higher commercial value.

Code-switching within a single sentence also plays an aesthetic role in the composition of the caption. The combination of two languages in one sentence often creates a unique communicative tone that enhances the performative aspect of the message being delivered. This is particularly significant in the digital world of Instagram, where how someone presents their personality and the tone of communication are just as important as the content itself. Captions like “*gak bohong kalau gue bilang ‘my fancams are clearer than my eyesight’*” or “*Yes i did i did tolongin did*” combine elements of humor while also expressing the identity. Intra-sentence code-switching not only serves a communicative function but also acts as a tool for self-identity and linguistic ability in relation to communication styles relevant to social and cultural contexts. As a function of code-switching in multilingual communities, it serves as a tool for identity negotiation, reflecting speakers' alignment with cultural norms, power structures, and individual self-concepts. (Rojas, 2025).

Inter-sentence code-switching is the second most common type of code-switching in Audrey Fanny Aulia’s Instagram captions. This type of code-switching occurs when there is a change in language between grammatically independent sentences or clauses. One example can be seen in the caption “*Alpacas are paid actors. ((sebelum akhirnya yang ngasih makan nyaris ditendang))*” (March 12, 2025). In this pattern, the English part is often used to express the main idea, punchline, or thematic statement, while the Indonesian part serves as a narrative continuation or additional commentary. This structure demonstrates a more separate use of code-switching, where each language plays a different role in forming the message being conveyed.

In the context of digital communication, inter-sentential code-switching provides users with the flexibility to separate statements they wish to highlight, create a comedic rhythm effect, or present stylistic contrasts between languages. For example, English sentences often contain ironic, straightforward, or provocative tones, while Indonesian sentences continue with contextual explanations or cultural responses. This pattern creates an engaging and effective rhetorical effect, reaching the audience while also strengthening the influencer's personal image. The clear boundaries between sentences also make it easier for followers who may only be fluent in one language to read. Therefore, inter-sentential code-switching serves not only as a linguistic tool but also as a communication strategy that carefully considers audience dynamics and personal style.

The use of inter-sentential code-switching is particularly noticeable in captions containing comments about events, travel experiences, or personal stories. In these contexts, language switching is often used to mark a shift in tone or focus of meaning. For example, a caption begins with a sentence in English expressing enthusiasm or sarcasm, followed by an explanation or response in Indonesian: “*It’s THAT TIME of the year for YDDA (Yang Ditinggal Ditinggal Aja).*” Here, the use of acronyms and punchlines in English aims to instantly grab attention, while the elaboration in Indonesian builds a sense of closeness and humor with the local audience. This pattern shows a strategic communication approach designed to reach and engage bilingual audiences more effectively.

On the other hand, tag-switching is the type of code-switching that is least frequently found in the data. Tag-switching involves the insertion of a short discourse mark or phrase from one language into a sentence that mainly uses another language. Examples of its use can be seen in captions such as “*BTW kenapa si hobi banget foto merem*” (March 12, 2025) or “*Psstt*

jangan lupa pantau terus yah” (May 15, 2025). In these cases, words like “BTW” or “Psstt” serve to emphasize the information being shared while creating a more casual and relaxed conversational tone. This form of code-switching reflects a stylistic preference for informal language commonly used by online person who are friendly and close to their followers. Furthermore, tag-switching has a rhetorical function as a tool to attract attention and build engagement. Placing short phrases such as “BTW,” “Psstt,” or “Yes” at the beginning of a sentence can set the tone of communication to be more personal, lighthearted, or even teasing. This choice also mimics spoken communication patterns, making the caption text feel like everyday conversation. In the context of social media, this strategy is highly effective because it helps maintain an emotional connection with the audience and creates an impression of spontaneity. In Audrey's captions, tag-switching often appears before humorous statements or statements that “reveal” something. For example, in the sentence “BTW *GEMES BGTTT* finally Derma Angel has playful acne patches!!”, the use of “BTW” not only serves as an introduction to the topic, but also builds enthusiasm and invites readers to feel as if they are part of exclusive information.

Overall, the code-switching patterns in Audrey Fanny Aulia's Instagram captions demonstrate a careful and deliberate use of bilingualism, aligned with the characteristics of digital media and the linguistic diversity of her audience. The dominance of inter-sentential code-switching reflects flexibility in seamlessly blending languages to express creativity and personal style. Meanwhile, intra-sentential code-switching plays a role in structuring messages thematically. Tag-switching, though rare, adds a friendly conversational tone. These three patterns have distinct communicative and performative functions, yet collectively form a unique linguistic style that supports personal branding and enhances audience engagement with the influencer’s content. This reflects what Gumperz (1982) Metaphorical code-switching identifies language alternation as a means of performing identity and social meaning within the same context, such as switching to English for emphasis, humor, or prestige in digital interactions.

Summary Table: Code-Switching Patterns and Type

Table 1. Types of Code Switching

No	Types of Code-Switching	Frequency	Example
1	Inter-Sentential switching	18	“I did <i>tolongin</i> did” “ <i>judul doang</i> HAPPY, <i>isinya</i> umm no no”
2	Intra-Sentential switching	7	“Alpacas are paid actors...” “ <i>Gak bohong pas bilang</i> my fancams are clearer than my eyesight”
3	Tag switching	5	“BTW...”, “Psstt...”

Function of Code-Switching

The expressive function is the most common code-switching function found in the data. This function enables speakers to convey emotions, attitudes, and identities through their language choices. In the context of social media, particularly Instagram, which combines visual and verbal elements to form personal narratives, the expressive function plays a crucial role. This finding aligns with the results of a study by Haryanto and Mahendra (2021), which revealed that one of the primary motivations for Instagram users to engage in code-switching is to convey emotional emphasis through the use of interjections and repetition. For example, in the caption “BUT I DON'T REGRET IT SAMSEKKK WKKWKWW because it's really THAT COOL” (January 26, 2025), Audrey Fanny Aulia uses capital letters, word repetition, and emotional reinforcement with a mix of languages to express enthusiasm to the max. This expressive style creates a strong sense of emotional intimacy because it feels like the intensity of spoken language, and it builds a personal and authentic connection with the audience.

Further analysis shows that expressive functions often appear in contexts involving personal opinions, excitement, humor, or aesthetic judgments. Captions such as “Save video *ini biar kalian ga lupa!*” (April 29, 2025) and “...my fancams are clearer than my eyesight” (May 9, 2025) reflect the hyperbole and linguistic with characteristics of expressive code-switching. In this context, bilingualism is not only used for clarifying messages but also as a creative resource for building mood and personal character. The choice of words and language style used reflect the personality and intonation that the speaker wants to convey. In many cases, Audrey's use of code-switching helps build her image as someone who is approachable, funny, and emotionally entertaining.

This function also acts as a bridge between written and spoken language norms. By using informal sentence structures, slang, and everyday speech expressions, the captions read like casual conversation. The mix of Indonesian and English in a single caption creates multiple entry points for audiences with different linguistic backgrounds, while maintaining a consistent personal tone. Therefore, the expressive code-switching in Audrey's captions is not random; rather, it is a strategic approach that purposefully designed to build emotional engagement and entertain the audience. Research by Rezeki & Sagala (2021) also found a similar pattern in the Instagram captions of Indonesian celebrities, where the use of insertion code-mixing and external code-switching reflects their ability to blend languages in informal, personal digital communication naturally.

The referential function of code-switching was also prominently observed. This function is typically used when a particular term or expression is more accurately or efficiently conveyed in one language. In Audrey's captions, English is often used for product names, beauty terminology, or pop culture references that do not have a direct equivalent in Indonesian. This is consistent with the findings of Fisal Bilillah & Arkan (2022), who note that users often switch languages to express ideas more effectively when discussing new topics or facing vocabulary limitations. Additionally, they highlight that bilingual users may engage in code-switching as a stylistic choice to project prestige and trendiness. Phrases like “Indomie FIERY CHIKIN NYA !!” (23 January 2025) or “Color test *kalem*” and “Eyelook *yang natural*” (2 September 2024) show the influence of English on lifestyle and beauty discourse in Indonesia.

Referential code-switching plays a dual role, both linguistically and strategically. From a linguistic perspective, the use of foreign terms—particularly English—enables more accurate

communication, especially when explaining concepts or terms that have become part of global discourse. Strategically, this type of code-switching demonstrates that Audrey has a high level of cultural literacy and is in sync with international trends. This supports the view of Mewengkang and Fansury (2021), who note that code-mixing and code-switching are widespread in informal digital spaces and often reflect the natural integration of English into Indonesian online discourse. For her followers, this pattern encourages the use of English in everyday conversations about beauty, while also reflecting the practice of bilingualism that has become a common part of their lives. As such, the referential function reflects a broader shift in language ideology, where English terms are often seen as more modern, efficient, or stylish.

Furthermore, this function also shows how code-switching can be a marker of social and cultural status. When Audrey chooses to use terms like “eyelook” instead of “eye appearance,” she is using language not only as a descriptive tool but also as a symbol of affiliation with global beauty standards and the professional community in that field. This type of deliberate word choice not only clarifies the message but also enhances her image as a public figure who is well-versed in contemporary beauty trends. Therefore, referential code-switching not only serves a practical function in communication but also carries symbolic meaning that reinforces her identity as a credible and relevant influencer.

Meanwhile, the directive function of code-switching involves using language to convey commands, invitations, or instructions. In practice, this function is commonly used by influencers as a way to build direct interaction with their followers. In the context of Audrey's captions, the use of invitations such as “*AYO NONTON FULL UNBOXING VIDEO... (linknya ada di bio)*” (January 21, 2025) or “*Save video ini biar gak lupa!*” (April 29, 2025) shows how imperative sentences in Indonesian are often combined with English phrases to create an energetic yet familiar persuasive impression. This language mix serves to soften the appearance of overly strict commands, making them sound more friendly and relaxed. Furthermore, the directive function through code-switching creates a more natural interaction. It facilitates active audience participation without sacrificing the personal tone that has become a signature of Audrey's communication style.

Code-mixing in social media is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a marketing strategy to connect with bilingual audiences in a more natural and persuasive way (Damaryanan & Subekti, 2024). This form of switching enhances the effectiveness of digital marketing and audience mobilization. Using English expressions in calls to action (e.g., “save,” “click,” “watch”) aligns the message with familiar digital behavior cues. The audience, accustomed to such phrases from app interfaces and online culture, may find these commands more intuitive and less intrusive than formal instructions in Indonesian. The blend increases engagement by mirroring the users' linguistic landscape.

Directive code-switching also reflects the hybrid nature of digital attention economies. Influencers must constantly balance authenticity with influence, and language plays a central role. Audrey's tone in these captions is assertive yet playful. This supports Wardhaugh's (2006) perspective that language choices are influenced by various social factors such as audience age, purpose, and context—especially in digital communication environments where identity and persuasion intersect. The mix of English and Indonesian mitigates the authoritarian nature of directives, transforming them into suggestions from a friend. This strategy keeps the influencer's authority intact while maintaining a sense of intimacy and informality.

The phatic function of code-switching, though less frequent, plays a key role in maintaining social interaction and digital presence. This function is concerned with language used to establish or maintain relationships, rather than to convey information. Captions such as “*TEBAK ENDING*” (30 March 2025) and “*Psstt jangan lupa pantau terus yah*” (15 May 2025) reflect this purpose. These expressions, while not information-heavy, are instrumental in keeping communication flowing and in reminding followers of the influencer’s online presence.

Code-switching that serves a functional purpose usually appears in the form of greetings, reminders, or phrases intended to attract attention. The use of elements such as “Psstt,” “BTW,” or combinations of emojis with bilingual expressions creates a sense of togetherness between influencers and their audiences. This type of code-switching serves as part of the interactive framework that supports engagement on social media. Although it does not always convey new information, this form of communication serves to maintain the flow of interaction and social warmth. This finding is in line with the conclusion of Kamariah & Ambalegin (2019), who state that code-switching enriches communication between bilingual and multilingual speakers, while also reflecting social and cultural influences in the digital environment. In the context of Audrey's captions, phatic code-switching reinforces micro-interactions—brief interactions that are not always substantive but strengthen follower loyalty. These short phrases mimic everyday speech patterns and are easily recognizable by the audience, contributing to the formation of a friendly digital personality and establishing a continuous conversation rhythm—a crucial aspect in building communities and maintaining engagement on platforms like Instagram.

On the other hand, metalinguistic functions, although rarely found in the data, introduce a reflective dimension and a playfulness in Audrey’s use of language. Metalinguistic code-switching occurs when language is used to comment on itself, usually through a humorous or ironic approach. A noticeable example is the caption “*Judul doang HAPPY, isinya umm no no*” (May 6, 2025), where the contrast between English and Indonesian terms creates a comedic effect by reversing expectations, while also commenting on the disconnect between appearance and reality. This type of code-switching requires high linguistic competence and cultural sensitivity from the audience, as meaning does not only depend on the literal text but also on implicit contextual understanding. As such, the metalinguistic function also serves as a marker of social closeness and shared knowledge, where bilingual humor acts as a bridge connecting content creators and their followers.

Furthermore, this function highlights the creative and performative potential of code-switching. It goes beyond the functions of clarification or emotional expression, entering the artistic domain of language—where form, expectations, and the play of meaning interact. Although not often found, examples of metalinguistic code-switching enrich an influencer's expressive range and strengthen their image as intelligent, funny, and linguistically sensitive. In the midst of the rapid flow of content, the use of metalinguistic code-switching offers moments of cultural connection and linguistic proficiency that leave a lasting impression. However, this aligns with what Panjaitan and Cristina (2025) stated in their article that the learners’ linguistic preferences are often influenced by their cultural identity, which aligns with how social media users employ language mixing as a form of self-expression and identity construction.

Overall, the various functions of code-switching in Audrey Fanny Aulia's captions demonstrate how language choice is deeply rooted in the social, stylistic, and strategic dimensions of online communication. Each function—whether expressive, referential, directive, phatic, or metalinguistic—highlights the complex role of bilingualism in influencer discourse. In this context, code-switching is not an indication of deficiency or confusion but a strategic tool for enhancing narrative efficiency and audience appeal in digital and conversational media (Tarigan & Girsang, 2025). This study has several limitations. First, the data were limited to one influencer's captions during a specific period, which may not represent all social media users. Second, the manual coding process may lead to subjective interpretation. Third, engagement metrics such as likes or comments were not analyzed, which might provide a deeper understanding of audience response

Summary Table: Code-Switching Functions.

Table 2. Functions of Code-Switching

No	Function of Code-Switching	Percentage	Used for	Example
1	Expressive	40%	Emotion, humor, exaggeration.	"But I don't regret it <i>samsek wkwk</i> "
2	Referential	27%	Brand/product terms.	"Eyelook <i>yang natural</i> "
3	Directive	20%	Calss to action.	" <i>AYO NONTON</i> FULL UNBOXING VIDEO... (<i>linknya ada di bio</i>)"
4	Phatic	10%	Interaction maintenance.	"Psstt <i>jangan lupa pantau terus yah</i> "
5	Metalinguistic	3%	Language play.	" <i>Judul doang</i> HAPPY, <i>isinya umm no no</i> "

DISCUSSION

The analysis results show that inter-sentential code-switching is the most common pattern used in Audrey's captions, indicating a high level of fluency in Indonesian and English. The dominance of inter-sentential code-switching indicates that Audrey prefers to separate her English and Indonesian expressions across sentences rather than mixing them within a single clause. The use of both languages in one sentence demonstrates that Audrey can combine the linguistic structures of the two language systems fluently and naturally. As Appel and Muysken (2006) classify code-switching functions such as referential, expressive, and phatic, similar communicative purposes are reflected in social media language use. Alifia et al. (2025) found that Instagram captions employ assertive and directive acts to inform, motivate, and engage

audiences, indicating overlapping pragmatic intentions. This phenomenon reflects a common trend among bilingual individuals, especially in the context of informal communication in digital spaces, where switching between languages is done without significant barriers. The way Audrey combines two languages in a single sentence not only reflects good grammatical competence, but also demonstrates a high level of pragmatic awareness of the communication situation and audience expectations.

The dominance of the expressive function reveals how emotional tone and personality are central to the influencer's branding. Audrey often exaggerates, jokes, or dramatizes her content through linguistic strategies that resonate with followers. The insertion of English phrases and structures enhances this expressiveness and allows for a broader range of emotional cues. The consistent use of informal language, slang, and emphatic elements shows a deliberate crafting of a relatable and humorous digital identity. English is commonly employed for punchlines, pop culture references, and trendy phrases (Febrianti et al., 2022), while Indonesian grounds the message in cultural familiarity and authenticity.

These findings support previous research indicating that code-switching in social media is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a cultural and identity-driven act. According to Androutsopoulos (2010), digital media allow users to perform identity through language. The deliberate selection of language choices—when and how to switch—becomes a resource for signaling membership, irony, attitude, or social stance. Audrey's frequent intra-sentential switching highlights how code-switching enables self-expression that is both personal and socially meaningful.

The data also shows that although the frequency of code-switching between sentences and tag-switching is lower than code-switching within sentences, both types still contribute to the text produced by Audrey. Code-switching between sentences is often used to mark contrast in meaning or create a humorous tone. On the other hand, tag-switching serves to add emphasis, a sense of spontaneity, and a much more familiar informal tone. The use of various types of code-switching allows Audrey to switch topics smoothly, regulate the rhythm and tone of communication, and maintain the audience's attention. This strategy introduces different rhythms in the text, avoiding boredom while increasing the audience's interest in reading.

In addition, each type of code-switching has a different communicative function. Intra-sentential code-switching is often used to express emotions and convey information more clearly. Meanwhile, inter-sentential switching is more often used to build the storyline and create dramatic effects within it. Tag-switching typically appears in brief interactions aimed at maintaining connection with the audience, such as greeting or adding a casual touch. The use of all three types in one sentence demonstrates high linguistic creativity and sensitivity to the communication style preferred by social media users (Khoumssi, 2020).

Another important finding of this study is the role this switching strategy plays in reaching audiences. By combining Indonesian and English, Audrey can communicate with followers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. English is often used to attract younger audiences who are familiar with the global world, while Indonesian keeps the message easy to understand and relatable. This bilingual strategy reflects an effort to appear trendy while maintaining high cultural values. This shows that, in reality, sociolinguistics in Indonesian digital society is becoming more complex, with bilingualism becoming a strategy rather than just a habit (Aditiawarman et al., 2025).

This finding also shows that language use on social media is performative. Influencers like Audrey don't just convey information, but also shape identities, share experiences, and even entertain. Code-mixing is part of storytelling—used to add dramatic flair to everyday experiences, construct narratives, and form unique online identities. This aligns with Anjarani's (2021) findings, which state that code-switching reflects the linguistic reality and social context of social media users. In other words, this phenomenon is not just about language, but also about identity and social relationships.

The strategy for using code-switching is also influenced by the characteristics of social media itself, particularly Instagram. Given its focus on visuals and captions that tend to be short and casual, this platform offers ample space for linguistic experimentation. Spontaneous, humorous, and informal captions make code-switching an efficient and expressive way to convey messages. As explained by Kamayana (2019), such language practices not only make communication more effective but also increase the chances of engagement, especially when promoting products or sharing information.

Additionally, the strategic use of code-switching is influenced by the technical and social characteristics of platforms like Instagram. As a visually-based medium that encourages short, casual posts, Instagram creates space for linguistic experimentation. Captions tend to be spontaneous, humorous, and informal, encouraging the use of creative and concise language. In this limited text space, code-switching becomes a means of conveying messages in a more expressive, efficient, and communicative way. As noted by Kamayana (2019), such linguistic practices not only enhance communication effectiveness but also contribute to increased audience engagement, particularly in the context of product promotion or information dissemination.

Audrey's switching style shows a mix of local and global elements. Her captions show that she's not only fluent in language, but also represents modern Indonesian women who are aware of global culture. In this context, code-switching serves as a means to convey social identity, cultural sensitivity, and connection to trends. As Chyntia (2020) notes, globalization has a significant impact on digital language practices, and the increasing use of code-switching could pose a challenge to the sustainability of the Indonesian language in informal communication spaces.

Overall, this discussion shows that Audrey's code-switching style is not random. She chooses her words carefully, influenced by social context, communication needs, and the dynamics of the digital world. Her language strategy helps her build her identity, reach diverse audiences—both young and old, local and global—by creating a mixed communication space. Code-switching is not a sign of confusion in language; rather, it reflects a person's depth of communication and awareness of current styles and trends. As stated by Clara & Inggitajna (2021), code-switching can enrich communication, represent social identity, and reach diverse audiences, and all of this is evident in the bilingual strategy used by Audrey on Instagram. Future studies could include engagement analytics to explore the relationship between code-switching and audience interaction. Comparative research across influencers or platforms such as YouTube and TikTok is also recommended. Further, applying other frameworks like Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model could deepen understanding of sociolinguistic motivations behind bilingual language use.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that code-switching is a common linguistic strategy employed by bilingual influencers, such as Audrey Fanny Aulia, in their communication on Instagram. Of the three types of code-switching identified, inter-sentential code-switching was the most dominant pattern, reflecting Audrey's fluency in naturally combining Indonesian and English in a single sentence. This pattern is part of a strategy to build engagement and a modern self-image. The expressive function is the most noticeable, as it utilizes language to convey emotions, humor, and identity. Audrey's captions reflect a casual style of speech that is relevant to her followers. The reference function is also important, especially when she uses English terms related to beauty to align herself with global trends. In addition, directive code-switching is found in captions that persuade the audience to take action in a friendly manner. Although less common, phatic and metalinguistic functions are also identified, indicating an awareness of interaction and language play. Overall, code-switching in Audrey's captions is not accidental, but rather a communicative strategy that supports digital image, interaction, and relevance. These findings enhance our understanding of bilingual practices in informal digital spaces and provide opportunities for further study across various platforms and social contexts.

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