

Code-Switching Practices in Digital Communication: A Case Study of EFL Learners in Southwest Papua, Indonesia

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Abstract—This study investigates the digital code-switching practices of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, Indonesia, across three prominent social media platforms: WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research draws on naturally occurring digital interactions and semi-structured interviews with eight purposively selected participants. Through an interactive analytical framework, the study identifies systematic patterns of inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching that function as intentional communicative strategies rather than indicators of linguistic inadequacy. The students employ code-switching to convey emotions, construct personal and social identities, enhance narrative expression, and manage audience relationships within digital environments. English commonly indexes prestige, global orientation, and emotional emphasis, whereas Indonesian maintains cultural resonance and interpersonal closeness. These practices reflect a translanguaging process shaped by the affordances of social media platforms and the multilingual ecology of Eastern Indonesia. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on digital multilingualism by emphasizing code-switching as an essential element of digital literacy and intercultural communicative competence.

Index Terms—code-switching, digital multilingualism, translanguaging, social media communication

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed communicative behavior across the globe, with pronounced effects in multilingual settings (Wang et al., 2025). A salient characteristic of these online interactions is code-switching, understood as the alternation between languages within a single communicative exchange. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Indonesia, this linguistic alternation functions not only as a habitual practice but also as a socio-cultural and cognitive resource that reflects their multilingual realities (Lundtofte & Grønning, 2025).

Indonesia is widely recognized for its extensive linguistic diversity, comprising more than 700 local languages coexisting alongside Bahasa Indonesia as the national language and English as an increasingly prominent language in both academic and digital domains (Riyanto et al., 2023). Within such a sociolinguistic landscape, university students frequently alternate between languages, particularly on digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram (Ro, 2025). These platforms facilitate informal, fluid interactions, making them conducive environments for natural and spontaneous occurrences of code-switching.

An expanding body of research highlights the central role of social media in shaping multilingual practices. Chakrani et al. (2025) conceptualize social media as a site of “networked multilingualism,” where language choices are strategically made to align with identity, audience orientation, and interactional goals. Similarly, Gan (2024) observes that youth engagement in online code-switching reflects creativity rather than linguistic deficiency. Empirical studies involving Indonesian learners parallel these broader trends. Pratginestós and Masats (2024) found that EFL learners employed code-switching in WhatsApp group conversations for purposes such as clarification, emphasis, and humor. Comparable findings were reported by Namaziandost et al. (2025), who noted that students alternated languages to

negotiate meaning and sustain group cohesion. Research by Anggraini and Cahyono (2022) on Instagram interactions further demonstrated that code-switching supports expressive and social functions, enabling students to navigate both local and global identities. Elhambakhsh (2025) adds that language alternation remains highly sensitive to context, shaped by interlocutors, topics, and communicative objectives.

Learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong represent a linguistically and culturally diverse population, including speakers of various Papuan languages, making multilingual interactions part of everyday communication. On WhatsApp, students typically engage in discussions related to coursework, personal matters, or campus activities, while Facebook and Instagram serve as platforms for broader self-expression (Rustan & Ajiegoena, 2023). These digital spaces provide rich opportunities for examining authentic code-switching behavior.

Although previous studies have contributed valuable insights into digital code-switching among Indonesian learners, most have concentrated on Java and other urban regions (Du et al., 2025). Research exploring digital multilingual practices in Eastern Indonesia remains limited, despite the region's complex interplay between local, national, and global languages. This imbalance highlights a critical research gap. Drawing on the translanguaging perspective proposed by Wang and Patterson (2025), multilingual speakers are understood to utilize their full linguistic repertoire flexibly, challenging rigid separations between languages. Complementing this, Fetahi et al. (2025) argue that the low-stakes environment of social media enables linguistic experimentation, providing a fertile context for observing real-time meaning negotiation. Smith et al. (2025) also emphasize that digital code-switching showcases learner agency and intercultural competence.

Addressing this gap, the present study explores the code-switching practices of EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong across WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. It focuses on the patterns, communicative functions, and sociolinguistic motivations underlying their language alternation in digital spaces (Ibrahim et al., 2024). By centering on student practices in an underrepresented region and employing authentic digital data, the study not only broadens current understandings of multilingualism in online contexts but also offers implications for educators, researchers, and policymakers concerned with language use in the digital era.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Foundation of Code-Switching

Code-switching in digital contexts has emerged as a prominent focus of recent linguistic research, as online interaction increasingly shapes language use across various communities (Gross et al., 2022). Han et al. (2022) note that digital communication alters conversational norms because messages are exchanged rapidly and through multimodal formats that promote linguistic fluidity. Such environments enable users to shift between languages with greater ease, partly due to the reduced expectation to maintain formal, standardized forms on social media (Daoud et al., 2024). As a result, digital platforms serve as productive sites for examining authentic and spontaneous code-switching practices.

Existing research shows that platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram facilitate hybrid linguistic behavior due to their informal and dialogue-oriented nature (Hiaeshutter & Hawkins, 2022). Users alternate languages to increase communicative efficiency, articulate identity, or align with specific online communities. Digital interactions often incorporate multimodal resources—such as images, emojis, and abbreviations—that intersect with code-switching to create layered semiotic expressions (Song & Xiong, 2023). Consequently, online linguistic behavior becomes an integrated system of linguistic codes, visual signs, and cultural references.

Lappeman et al. (2024) demonstrate that multilingual users employ code-switching to signal solidarity and maintain rapport with interlocutors. Scholars further highlight the affordances of asynchronous digital communication, which allow users to deliberately shape tone, identity, and stance in their messages. Even brief or highly compressed utterances can reflect strategic language choice, underscoring code-switching as a purposeful communicative resource rather than a mere linguistic side effect (Treffers et al., 2022).

Digital environments also facilitate audience-oriented code-switching, where language choice is adjusted based on anticipated readership (Muftah, 2024). Observations indicate that users often expect multilingual audiences and therefore alternate languages to promote inclusivity or highlight shared cultural backgrounds. These practices reflect not only linguistic competence but also awareness of social network dynamics and collective expectations (Sablina, 2023). Accordingly, code-switching becomes a means of negotiating group affiliation and interpersonal alignment.

Further research suggests that digital platforms encourage linguistic experimentation to a degree uncommon in face-to-face communication (Didi, 2020). Users may switch codes to test unfamiliar expressions, imitate peer usage, or connect with global popular culture. Such experimentation is especially widespread among young people, who regard digital spaces as low-stakes environments conducive to play and creativity in language use. This pattern highlights the role of code-switching as a vehicle for innovation and self-expression in online contexts (Yousif, 2025).

Digital literacy has also been identified as a key factor shaping online code-switching patterns (Mustafayeva et al., 2025). Individuals with higher levels of digital competence tend to switch between linguistic forms more seamlessly, often integrating multiple codes within a single message. Rosyidha et al. (2025) contend that digital literacy influences how users conceptualize and manipulate linguistic boundaries during online interaction. Thus, effective participation in digital communication relies on both linguistic proficiency and technological adaptability.

Kakati and Dandotiya (2024) emphasize that local sociolinguistic conditions significantly shape online code-switching practices. In multilingual settings such as Indonesia, digital environments mirror broader community language practices rather than functioning as isolated communicative spaces. Online interactions reflect the intricate dynamics of national, regional, and global languages that characterize local linguistic ecologies (Wang, 2025). This alignment reinforces the need to consider both digital and offline contexts when examining multilingual behavior.

Utegenova et al. (2024) argue that code-switching in digital environments follows discernible patterns shaped by social conventions, technological features, and individual communicative aims. Across the literature, scholars show that digital interaction provides valuable insight into how multilingual users navigate identity, construct meaning, and manage social relationships through language choice (Dux, 2020). This body of work offers an essential foundation for analyzing code-switching among EFL learners in contemporary Indonesian contexts.

B. Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Code-Switching in Multilingual Societies, Globalization and Indigenous Languages

Sociolinguistic scholarship has long identified code-switching as a key characteristic of multilingual settings, illustrating the fluid relationship between language use, identity construction, and social environment (Dean & Porter, 2025). In many multilingual contexts, shifting between languages is viewed not as a deficit but as an indicator of communicative sophistication. Scholars argue that multilingual individuals draw on their full linguistic repertoires to navigate complex social interactions, positioning code-switching as an intentional and socially grounded practice (Althobaiti & Alsaawi, 2025).

A central sociolinguistic perspective considers code-switching an important resource for negotiating identity and social positioning (Martinez & Guinot, 2025). Research suggests that speakers strategically alternate languages to signal specific identity dimensions—such as ethnicity, educational background, or group membership. These linguistic choices communicate nuanced messages about how individuals wish to present themselves within an interaction. In multilingual communities, such shifts may reinforce alignment with certain groups or serve to create social distance (Nistor & Zadobrischi, 2022).

Code-switching is also shaped by community norms and communicative expectations (Hiaeshutter & Hawkins, 2022). In linguistically diverse regions, language choice often reflects established conventions relating to politeness, contextual appropriateness, or solidarity. Researchers have found that speakers frequently switch languages to maintain interpersonal harmony or strengthen social bonds. This underscores the intentional and culturally embedded nature of code-switching, distinguishing it from random linguistic shifts (Alazemi et al., 2023).

Another significant sociolinguistic dimension concerns the role of power in influencing language alternation (Wang, 2024). Nejadghanbar et al. (2024) highlight how dominant and minority languages interact within social hierarchies, shaping when and why speakers choose to switch codes. Language choices may be used to assert authority, display competence, or challenge dominant linguistic norms enforced by institutions. Consequently, code-switching becomes entangled with issues of power, linguistic inequality, and social stratification (Tjaden et al., 2024).

In many multilingual societies, code-switching also serves as a pragmatic mechanism for facilitating communication across diverse linguistic groups (Zhang et al., 2025). Switching languages can enhance mutual understanding, demonstrate respect, or accommodate interlocutors with different linguistic backgrounds. Scholars note that such adaptability fosters cohesion by bridging language gaps. These practices illustrate the responsiveness and flexibility of multilingual speakers in managing communication (Mahalingappa, 2023).

Zhong and Fan (2023) emphasize the cultural dimensions of code-switching, particularly its role in maintaining or reshaping local identity. Through alternating languages, speakers incorporate cultural idioms, humor, and references that resonate with shared heritage (Syam et al., 2023). This blending enriches interaction by drawing on multiple cultural resources, contributing to the continuous reshaping of cultural identity in multilingual contexts.

Sociolinguists also examine the effects of globalization on language alternation, especially in societies undergoing rapid social and technological transformation (Blyth & Thoms, 2021). Increased exposure to global media, transnational communication, and international education encourages the integration of global languages into local linguistic practices. These influences generate hybrid communicative forms that reshape established linguistic norms, reflecting the fluid boundaries of contemporary language use (Brdarević et al., 2024).

Research further indicates that patterns of code-switching differ across generations within multilingual communities (Sahib et al., 2021). Younger speakers may adopt distinct switching behaviors influenced by schooling, peer interaction, and digital media. Utegenova et al. (2024) suggest that such generational variations can signal shifting language ideologies and emerging linguistic identities. Collectively, these perspectives illuminate the complexity of code-switching as a multifaceted sociolinguistic phenomenon.

C. Code-Switching Among EFL Learners in Indonesian Contexts

Research on EFL learners in Indonesia consistently shows that code-switching is an integral part of their communication patterns (Riyanto et al., 2023). Chakrani et al. (2025) report that EFL learners rely on both English and Indonesian to express ideas, manage comprehension, and maintain conversational flow. Scholars note that this reliance stems from Indonesia's deeply multilingual environment, where linguistic diversity shapes everyday communication. Consequently, EFL learners naturally integrate code-switching into their linguistic repertoire.

One of the main reasons EFL learners switch codes is to compensate for limited vocabulary or grammatical uncertainty. When learners struggle to retrieve suitable English expressions, they often shift to Indonesian to maintain message clarity (Gross et al., 2022). This strategic switching allows communication to continue smoothly without interrupting interaction. Researchers interpret this behavior as a pragmatic adaptation rather than a failure in language learning (Rustan & Ajiegoena, 2023).

Zhong and Fan (2023) have also observed that EFL learners switch codes to express cultural concepts that may not translate easily into English. Indonesian cultural references, idioms, or humor can lose meaning when converted into English, leading learners to revert to their first language. This switching helps maintain the richness of communication and ensures that cultural nuance is preserved. Such patterns highlight the interplay between language proficiency and cultural identity.

Classroom studies show that Indonesian EFL learners frequently use code-switching to negotiate meaning during group discussions (Syam et al., 2023). Learners mix languages to clarify instructions, check understanding, or support peers with weaker English skills. These collaborative exchanges demonstrate the social function of code-switching in facilitating cooperative learning. Researchers argue that this practice can enhance participation and reduce anxiety among learners.

Another factor influencing code-switching is the instructional style of teachers in Indonesian EFL classrooms (Sahib et al., 2021). Teachers may switch codes to simplify explanations, reinforce key concepts, or ensure that students grasp difficult grammar points. This pedagogical switching models acceptable bilingual behavior for students and may encourage further switching in peer interaction. Studies suggest that such instructional practices help learners manage cognitive load during complex tasks (Alazemi et al., 2023).

Beyond classroom environments, Indonesian EFL learners engage in code-switching within digital communication, such as messaging, social media, and online forums (Song & Xiong, 2023). These platforms provide informal spaces where learners experiment with English while relying on Indonesian for emotional expression or humor. Scholars note that digital environments reduce linguistic pressure and promote linguistic playfulness among learners. This behavior reflects broader digital communication trends observed worldwide.

Sociolinguistic factors also shape code-switching among Indonesian EFL learners. Learners may switch languages to align themselves with perceived social prestige associated with English or to signal educational background (Sablina, 2023). At the same time, shifts back to Indonesian help maintain solidarity with peers and affirm local identity. These dual motivations illustrate how language choice serves both symbolic and practical functions in Indonesian contexts.

Research indicates that code-switching can support language development if used strategically. When learners alternate between English and Indonesian to compare structures or clarify meanings, the process can deepen their linguistic awareness (Treffers et al., 2022). Educators who encourage reflective use of code-switching can help students develop metalinguistic insight and confidence. This perspective positions code-switching as a valuable learning resource rather than an obstacle to proficiency (Didi, 2020).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the ways in which EFL learners engage in code-switching during digital communication. The qualitative approach was selected for its capacity to capture the complexity of naturally occurring linguistic behavior, while the case study design enabled an in-depth examination of learners' language practices across authentic digital environments, specifically WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. This design facilitated a contextualized understanding of the functions and motivations underlying language alternation in online interactions.

The research population comprised EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong. Purposive sampling was applied using predefined criteria: participants were required to be active users of particular social media platforms, demonstrate multilingual practices, and consent to providing communication samples, such as screenshots. Eight learners from the 3rd, 5th, and 7th semesters met these criteria. The sample size was considered adequate to achieve data saturation and ensure analytical comprehensiveness without compromising depth.

Data collection was conducted through two primary techniques: documentation of social media communication and semi-structured interviews. Documented data included archived and recent digital interactions from 2023 to 2025, while the formal process of requesting and verifying screenshots occurred between 6 and 13 January 2025. This procedure ensured the usability of earlier digital records as long as they remained accessible. Semi-structured interviews, conducted face-to-face, were used to elicit participants' motivations, functional uses, and perceptions of code-switching. All English excerpts have been linguistically refined for grammatical accuracy while preserving their original communicative intent. The combination of both sources allowed for the integration of contextual digital evidence with deeper interpretive insights.

Data analysis followed a structured qualitative procedure comprising data organization, reduction, categorization, and interpretation. Patterns, themes, and instances of language alternation were identified and presented in descriptive narrative form according to functional and contextual classifications. Coding and thematic development were performed to refine the interpretive process. Additionally, simple descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant

characteristics, including semester level and platform usage, which were presented in tabular form to support the qualitative interpretation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Code-Switching in WhatsApp

The findings indicate that EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong routinely engage in code-switching as an integral component of their daily communication. This linguistic practice is particularly prominent in their interactions on the WhatsApp platform. Code-switching was observed both in students' WhatsApp story posts and in their exchanges within group chats. Rather than occurring as a deliberate or consciously controlled act, the language alternation emerged naturally and spontaneously, reflecting the students' adaptation to conversational flow, topic relevance, and interlocutor identity. Social factors and communicative intentions—such as expressing solidarity, emphasizing particular points, or enhancing conversational clarity—were found to play a significant role in shaping these practices. Overall, the results demonstrate that code-switching functions as a practical and socially meaningful communicative strategy through which EFL learners navigate bilingual interaction in digital environments.

TABLE 1
CODE-SWITCHING IN WHATSAPP

No	Semester	Participant	Time	Code-Switching Excerpt
1.	7 th	TW	20/12/2024	English: <i>"And to the greatest father in my life, I love you eternally."</i> Indonesian: "Iseng coba, tiba-tiba air mata netes ga berhenti-berhenti sambil ngetik."
2.	7 th	YW	29/12/2024	English: <i>"The ages of 25 to 30 are not easy. You lose friends, make mistakes, fall, and face reality."</i> Indonesian: "Gapapa kehilangan teman asal jangan kehilangan diri sendiri."
3.	7 th	IM	22/02/2024	English: <i>"Just a memory I hold quietly, a name I no longer speak, yet one that still lingers in my heart."</i> Indonesian: "Namun pada akhirnya, dia hanyalah sosok yang akan kukenang dalam kesunyian."
4.	7 th	PY	23/11/2024	English: <i>"As a former student and student council secretary of SMP Quba (2017–2018), I would like to sincerely express my gratitude."</i> Indonesian: "Saya yakin bahwa saya tidak akan berada di tempat sekarang murni usaha saya sendiri."
5.	7 th	IN	15/12/2024	English: <i>"Debate has become one of the ways to improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills."</i> Indonesian: "Setidaknya masih ada harapan emas."
6.	5 th	LS	22/11/2024	English: <i>"One of my best and most meaningful experiences of the past year."</i> Indonesian: "Yuk bisa yuk semakin menyala lagi diriku."
7.	3 rd	DW	26/08/2024	English: <i>"Hello, I came back to this village again."</i> Indonesian: "Berbagi ilmu, maju bersama, tidak ada yang tertinggal"
8.	3 rd	AA	10/12/2024	English: <i>"The best place I have ever been."</i> Indonesian: "Khususnya bagian timur selalu punya cerita atau mitos tersendiri di balik nama dan tempatnya."

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the analysis shows that EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong frequently employ code-switching in their digital communication, particularly on WhatsApp. This linguistic practice involves alternating between Indonesian and English in both public posts, such as WhatsApp Stories, and semi-private exchanges, such as group chats. The findings suggest that code-switching is not an occasional or peripheral behavior; rather, it constitutes a central component of students' online interactional practices. Language in these contexts serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as a resource for expressing identity, emotions, and personal reflections.

These observations correspond with Gan's (2024) theory of networked multilingualism, which posits that social media platforms promote diverse and flexible language practices, especially among young people in multilingual environments. Through platforms like WhatsApp, students are provided with both technological affordances and sociocultural spaces that support the construction of identity through hybrid linguistic choices. Similarly, Namaziandost et al. (2025) argue that bilingual individuals do not conceptualize their languages as distinct systems; instead, they draw on a unified linguistic repertoire to generate meaning, particularly in informal digital settings. From this perspective, the students' interchangeable use of Indonesian and English represents a natural and strategic process rooted in their complex sociolinguistic realities.

With regard to structural patterns, intra-sentential switching emerged as the most prevalent form, characterized by shifts occurring within a single sentence or clause. The example *"Debate has become one of the ways to improve*

critical thinking and problem-solving skills, setidaknya masih ada harapan emas?” illustrates how academic English terminology is interwoven with Indonesian evaluative commentary. Another instance is “*As a former student and student council secretary of SMP Quba (2017–2018), I would like to sincerely express my gratitude. Saya yakin bahwa saya tidak akan berada di tempat sekarang...*”, demonstrating language alternation within a continuous narrative. Inter-sentential switching was also observed, where the shift occurs between sentences, as exemplified in “*Iseng coba, tiba-tiba air mata netes... And to the greatest father in my life, I love you eternally.*” These patterns reflect students’ sensitivity to the emotional and communicative functions each language may serve.

The functional dimensions of code-switching among students are similarly diverse. One prominent function is emotional expression, as seen in “*Just a memory I hold quietly, a name I no longer speak, yet one that still lingers in my heart,*” where English is used to convey nostalgia or sadness, often perceived as more stylistic or symbolic than expressions in the native language. Code-switching also functions as a tool for identity affirmation and self-reflection, illustrated in expressions such as “*...The ages of 25 to 30 are not easy...*” and “*the best place I have ever been,*” which reflect students’ awareness of personal milestones and challenges. In other cases, code-switching is used to highlight academic orientation, as seen in the phrase “*improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills,*” indicating the influence of English-language academic discourse on their communicative behavior.

From a motivational standpoint, several factors contribute to students’ code-switching practices. A key motivation is the desire to produce discourse that is more expressive, aesthetically appealing, and emotionally resonant, with English perceived as adding stylistic refinement or communicative impact. Phrases such as “*my best and most meaningful experiences of the past year*” exemplify this perception. Code-switching also signals academic competence and social identity, enabling students to showcase their bilingual proficiency and position themselves as globally oriented individuals. This corresponds with Pratginestós and Masats’s (2024) emphasis on the affective dimensions of translanguaging, which highlight how bilinguals use language shifts to manage emotional expression and interpersonal relationships.

However, scholarly perspectives on code-switching are not uniformly positive. Smith et al. (2025) caution that the dominant status of English in digital and global communication may reinforce linguistic hierarchies and contribute to the marginalization of local or indigenous languages. In this context, frequent use of English may indicate not only linguistic ability but also the internalization of prestige associated with the language, potentially diminishing regional linguistic identities. Pedagogical concerns have also been raised by researchers such as Fetahi et al. (2025), who argue that while code-switching has communicative and expressive value, excessive reliance on English in informal contexts may hinder optimal development in either the native or target language if not complemented by structured learning practices.

Overall, the evidence indicates that code-switching among these students is not merely a linguistic mechanism but reflects broader social, emotional, and cultural realities of EFL learners in digital environments. Supported by recent theoretical perspectives, this practice is increasingly viewed as a manifestation of linguistic resourcefulness and identity negotiation rather than a sign of confusion or deficiency. For EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, code-switching represents a deliberate strategy to articulate personal identity, maintain social connections, and navigate multilingual communicative landscapes. These findings underscore the importance of situating digital language practices within the broader framework of intercultural communicative competence and the evolving multilingual literacies of contemporary youth.

B. Code-Switching in Instagram

The researcher observed that code-switching is highly prevalent in students’ interactions on Instagram, especially within captions and comments on public Stories. These instances typically involve the combination of Indonesian and English, and at times regional languages, often accompanied by emoticons that serve to convey emotion, humor, or a personalized tone. Such patterns align with what Han et al. (2022) conceptualize as translanguaging, in which bilingual speakers draw fluidly on their entire linguistic repertoire to construct meaning, rather than viewing languages as discrete systems.

Given that Instagram is a visually driven platform centered on images and short videos, it facilitates expressive and timely modes of communication. Students employ it not only to participate in contemporary digital trends but also to cultivate a bilingual or multilingual identity consistent with global online culture. This observation resonates with Lappeman et al.’s (2024) theory of Multilingualism in the Media, which posits that digital platforms significantly shape language practices for purposes of identity construction and social engagement. Moreover, Smith et al. (2025) underscore the affective dimension of code-switching in online environments, highlighting how linguistic choices enable users to articulate emotions and foster interpersonal connections. Accordingly, code-switching on Instagram functions not merely as a linguistic mechanism but also as a social, stylistic, and affective strategy that enriches students’ digital self-presentation.

TABLE 2
CODE-SWITCHING IN INSTAGRAM

No	Semester	Participant	Time	Code-Switching Excerpt
1.	7 th	TW	05/08/2024	English: <i>"I am beyond proud that these generations are becoming more and more remarkable through their talents."</i> Indonesian: "Alhamdulillah banget, diberi kesempatan lagi untuk ngejuriin adik-adik keren."
2.	7 th	YW	25/11/2024	English: <i>"So proud of myself."</i> Indonesian: "Bertahan sejauh ini dengan segala kepercayaan diri dan ambisi yang kuat untuk meraih mimpi."
3.	7 th	IM	16/01/2025	English: <i>"Was it the way my heart raced every time I saw you?"</i> Indonesian: "Aku tidak tahu dengan pasti apakah ini disebut cinta pertama."
4.	7 th	PY	25/07/2024	English: <i>"I will wait for that moment, and let's meet again."</i> Indonesian: "Bakalan rindu dengan mereka semua."
5.	7 th	IN	16/11/2024	English: <i>"Proud of you, sister. Keep it up—I know you will have a bright future."</i> Indonesian: "Kalau ini partner saya selama di kampus."
6.	5 th	LS	15/01/2025	English: <i>"My best first experience in the last year."</i> Indonesian: "Yuk bisa yuk semakin menyala lagi diriku"
7.	5 th	DW	14/10/2024	English: <i>"We are truly grateful and thankful for all the kindness and hospitality we received."</i> Indonesian: "Semoga kita bisa bertemu lagi di lain waktu."

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong employ code-switching on Instagram in dynamic and purposeful ways. Rather than occurring incidentally, the observed shifts among Indonesian, English, and occasionally local languages illustrate deliberate and strategic linguistic choices. The most salient pattern identified is inter-sentential code-switching, in which students alternate between languages across complete sentences. This tendency reflects an intentional differentiation of linguistic codes to fulfill distinct communicative functions within a single post. For instance, a student may describe an everyday activity in Indonesian and then shift to English to express pride, affection, or reflection, as in: *"Alhamdulillah banget, diberi kesempatan lagi untuk ngejuriin adik-adik keren. I am beyond proud that these generations are becoming more and more remarkable through their talents."* Here, the English segment amplifies emotional tone and imparts a sense of formality or universality that may not be conveyed as effectively through the local language. A similar effect is evident in the romantic reflection: *"Aku tidak tahu dengan pasti apakah ini disebut cinta pertama. Was it the way my heart raced every time I saw you?"* where English functions as a poetic device to heighten emotional resonance.

A secondary but notable pattern is intra-sentential code-switching, which reflects a more fluid integration of bilingual resources. This occurs when English expressions are embedded within predominantly Indonesian utterances, such as in: *"Kalau ini partner saya selama di kampus, proud of you sister keep it up know you'll have bright future."* In such instances, linguistic blending serves not to distinguish communicative functions but to produce a seamless, expressive statement. Drawing on Rosyidha et al.'s (2025) translanguaging framework, these instances demonstrate not merely code alternation but the mobilization of the speaker's full linguistic repertoire to convey nuanced meanings unattainable through either language alone. This practice also illustrates bilingual students' negotiation of both local and global identities.

The functional dimensions of the students' code-switching practices on Instagram are similarly multifaceted. One prominent function is emotional expression, with English frequently used to articulate intimate, reflective, or affectively charged sentiments. Phrases such as *"so proud of myself"* and *"my best first experience in the last year"* illustrate how English enhances the perceived emotional or symbolic value of personal experiences possibly due to its associations with modernity, global orientation, or perceived sophistication. Identity performance is another significant function, as students construct digital personas that are confident, expressive, and globally attuned. Instagram's emphasis on aesthetics and self-presentation reinforces this role; students do not simply share information but curate a particular image, with code-switching serving as part of that curation. Relational and social bonding further emerges in supportive comments such as *"proud of you sister, keep it up,"* which signal solidarity, encouragement, and communal affirmation. In such cases, code-switching functions as both an expressive and a connective strategy, bridging emotional distance and reinforcing social ties.

The motivations underlying these linguistic choices appear to be shaped by aesthetic, cultural, and affective considerations. Instagram's visual and performative environment encourages users to craft content that is not only communicative but also stylistically appealing and emotionally resonant. Many students perceive English as adding elegance, depth, or sophistication to their posts, reflecting both their linguistic competencies and their orientation toward global youth discourse. This is consistent with Kakati and Dandotiya's (2024) notion of networked multilingualism, wherein users adjust their language practices in response to digital contexts and imagined audiences. Additionally, an academic or intellectual motivation is evident: some students subtly deploy English to index educational attainment or cultural capital, particularly when reflecting on learning experiences or expressing gratitude in formal English. Kakati and Dandotiya's (2024) emphasis on the emotional facets of translanguaging further illuminates

how students employ English to process or articulate feelings that may feel more intimate or authentic in online contexts.

At the same time, a critical perspective is warranted. While code-switching can empower students and validate bilingual identity, Utegenova et al. (2024) caution that the growing dominance of English in digital environments may inadvertently marginalize local languages, particularly when English becomes the preferred medium for expressing intellect, achievement, or positive self-regard. Nevertheless, the data in this study suggest that students are not abandoning their native languages; instead, they use English in complementary and intentional ways.

Overall, the students' code-switching practices on Instagram reveal more than linguistic flexibility—they illuminate how young bilinguals navigate emotion, identity, and social belonging in digital spaces. Through both inter- and intra-sentential switching, students transform Instagram into a site for self-expression, cultural alignment, and relational engagement. These findings reinforce the view that code-switching constitutes a dynamic communicative resource for digitally literate EFL learners, with significance extending beyond linguistic choices to the broader shaping of contemporary youth culture and language use.

C. Code-Switching in Facebook

Students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong demonstrate an active use of code-switching on the social media platform Facebook as a deliberate strategy to support interpersonal communication within linguistically diverse networks. Code-switching commonly appears in status updates, public posts, and comment threads, where students shift between Bahasa Indonesia and English. This multilingual practice allows them to communicate with greater clarity and inclusivity, particularly when engaging with peers who possess different linguistic backgrounds. The use of both languages not only highlights their bilingual proficiency but also functions as a communicative mechanism that fosters connection and understanding in a digitally mediated, multicultural environment.

TABLE 3
CODE-SWITCHING IN FACEBOOK

No	Semester	Participant	Time	Code-Switching Excerpt
1.	7 th	TW	10/09/2024	English: "Fafanlap in Love in UNAMIN Cycle 2024." Indonesian: "Biasanya pengabdian dicemplungin sendiri, tapi kali ini dibarengi dosen-dosen andalan."
2.	7 th	YW	12/11/2023	English: "Finally, my dream comes true." Indonesian: "Masih terasa mimpi bisa menginjakkan kaki di danau Toba intinya seseorang tidak berhak meremehkan mimpi."
3.	7 th	IM	31/12/2024	English: "My biggest fear, my biggest struggle, and also biggest achievement that I have experienced throughout half of my life." Indonesian: "Ternyata 2024 tidak seburuk itu, namun bisa dibilang sebaik itu."
4.	7 th	PY	3/12/2023	English: "If you like going to places we can't even pronounce, then baby, I'm perfect for you." Indonesian: "Jadi ceritanya dibalik foto aesthetic ini yakni dari ajakan para bocil-bocil untuk main ke Tengah laut."
5.	7 th	IN	21/10/2023	English: "Thank you for having us an adjudicator; it was an honour and a great opportunity for me truly enjoyed the competition, and all teams were excellent". Indonesian: "Berkorban untuk tanah Papua demi mencerdaskan pemudanya."
6.	7 th	LS	15/11/2024	English: "Every difference was blended into harmony, every challenge faced together. Our laughter; tears, and dreams carved unforgettable memories." Indonesian: "Terima kasih kesempatannya yang selalu diberikan di setiap waktu ini."
7.	7 th	DW	25/06/2024	English: "A little glimpse of my life—I still can't believe this happened. Such a beautiful moment for my first journey." Indonesian: "Persiapan yang singkat tapi cukup memuaskan."
8.	7 TH	AA	10/12/2024	English: "The power of now faith is substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" Indonesian: "Terima kasih banyak untuk semua orang yang terlibat atas pencapaian ini."

The findings presented in Table 3 regarding EFL learners' code-switching practices on Facebook indicate that the phenomenon extends far beyond mere alternation between two languages. Instead, it is embedded within complex social, emotional, and cultural dynamics characteristic of contemporary digital communication. The instances of code-switching observed are not arbitrary, but reflect purposeful and contextually informed linguistic choices that articulate the multilayered identities of students navigating increasingly globalized and digitized environments. This observation

resonates with Zhong and Fan (2023), who argue that code-switching in online spaces is a performative act through which users negotiate power, articulate affect, and construct translocal identities across fluid digital discourses.

From a pattern-based perspective, two principal forms of code-switching emerged in students' Facebook interactions: inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching. Inter-sentential switching occurs when users alternate languages between separate sentences, as illustrated by posts such as: *"Thank you for having me as an adjudicator; it was an honour and a great opportunity for me..."*, followed by *"Berkorban untuk tanah Papua demi mencerdaskan pemudanya."* In this example, the English sentence conveys formality and gratitude, whereas the Indonesian sentence situates the message within a familiar socio-cultural context, demonstrating students' ability to traverse distinct social registers. In contrast, intra-sentential switching occurs within a single sentence, such as: *"My biggest fear; my biggest struggle, ternyata 2024 tidak seseram itu."* Here, English is employed to express reflective or emotionally charged discourse, while the shift to Indonesian adds culturally grounded nuance. These patterns illustrate the students' capacity for linguistic flexibility and contextual adaptation, a point reinforced by Utegenova et al. (2024), who conceptualize digital code-switching as an expression of translanguaging competence that enables individuals to creatively mobilize linguistic resources to construct meaning, identity, and solidarity in diverse online settings.

Regarding function, the use of code-switching on Facebook serves more than the transmission of information; it constitutes a multifaceted mechanism for self-expression. One salient function is emotional articulation. Students frequently draw on English to express complex thoughts, spiritual insights, or introspective reflections, as in the post: *"The power of now faith is substance of things hoped..."*, where English imbues the message with a philosophical tone. Another function pertains to the performance of personal achievement or motivation, evident in expressions such as: *"My biggest fear; my biggest struggle, and my biggest achievement..."*, which use English to frame personal narratives within aspirational or globally oriented discourses. Additionally, code-switching enhances the aesthetic and stylistic features of posts. Statements like *"If you like going to places we can't even pronounce..."* reflect humor and lifestyle orientation, positioning English as a marker of cosmopolitan youth culture. These functions align with Lappeman et al. (2024), who argue that code-switching in digital narratives serves as a stylistic resource for constructing online personas shaped by global cultural flows, and with Elhambakhsh (2025), who describes the phenomenon as "aesthetic code-switching" employed to project authenticity, creativity, and alignment with transnational youth identities.

Motivationally, students' language choices appear influenced by both internal aspirations and external social conditions. A key motivation is the performance of a globalized, educated identity. Integrating English into Facebook posts allows students to present themselves as academically capable, culturally aware, and linguistically competent, consistent with Anggraini and Cahyono's (2022) notion of networked multilingualism, where digital platforms enable individuals to negotiate multilingual identities across diverse audiences. Emotional resonance also plays an important role. Following Gan's (2024) translanguaging framework, bilingual speakers use their entire linguistic repertoire as an integrated semiotic resource to produce meaning that is both socially and affectively appropriate. In this sense, switching languages enables students to communicate emotional complexity, identity positioning, and desired self-presentation. This is further supported by Utegenova et al. (2024), who argue that language choice in digital discourse reflects strategic alignment with aspirational identities shaped by global linguistic capital. Similarly, Zhong and Fan (2023) highlight that digital code-switching functions as symbolic capital, enabling users to signal upward mobility and social distinction within peer networks.

The students' behavior is also shaped by socio-cultural and technological affordances. Facebook's multimodal and interactive nature encourages linguistically adaptive communication tailored to different audiences and purposes. The narrative style of Facebook posts, often accompanied by visual elements, facilitates fluid linguistic blending. Language selection is calibrated according to audience design: English is used for broader or more formal audiences, whereas Indonesian is deployed to express intimacy, humor, or shared cultural experience. Mahalingappa (2023) argues that such practices constitute "platformed performances," wherein linguistic, visual, and contextual choices are strategically crafted for dynamic audience configurations. Likewise, Blyth and Thoms (2021) describe this phenomenon as "polylingual languaging," reflecting fluid mobilization of linguistic resources in response to the multimodal demands of digital interaction and audience diversity.

The code-switching practices of EFL learners on Facebook reveal sophisticated, socially attuned, and context-sensitive linguistic behavior. These students function not merely as bilingual speakers, but as digital narrators who craft personal and social narratives through complex interplays of language. Their integration of Indonesian and English is indicative of both linguistic proficiency and strategic communicative intent, allowing them to curate identity, perform social engagement, and negotiate intercultural connection in online spaces. These findings underscore the need to understand code-switching as an essential component of intercultural communication competence and emerging digital literacies. This aligns with Nistor and Zadobrischi (2022), who conceptualize digital multilingualism as a form of translanguaging capital through which young people claim discursive space, express hybrid identities, and participate in global digital cultures. Nonetheless, Wang (2025) cautions that such practices may inadvertently reproduce linguistic hierarchies, privileging English as a symbol of prestige while relegating local languages to informal or subordinate domains, potentially reinforcing symbolic power asymmetries in online communication.

V. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the code-switching practices of EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong in digital communication are intentional, contextually informed communicative strategies rather than spontaneous or incidental shifts between languages. Students employ code-switching to align their discourse with situational context, communicative intent, and audience characteristics, thereby using it as a resource for identity construction, social connection, and the enhancement of intercultural communication competence within digital environments.

The findings extend language education theory by framing code-switching as both a digital literacy skill and a translanguaging practice that contributes to the development of multilingual communicative competence. From a pedagogical standpoint, the results underscore the importance of incorporating multilingual awareness and strategic code-switching practices into EFL instruction to reflect authentic digital communication patterns. At the policy level, the study highlights the need to promote balanced multilingual practices to ensure that the increasing use of English does not undermine the vitality and functional domains of local languages.

Future research could investigate cross-platform variations in code-switching behavior, broaden participant representation, and adopt longitudinal designs to trace evolving multilingual practices over time. Overall, this study successfully meets its research objectives by identifying the forms, functions, and sociocultural implications of digital code-switching, while also contributing to theoretical, pedagogical, and policy-oriented discussions in the field of language education.

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