

When Sadness Speaks in Two Tongues: English Code-Switching in Indonesian TikTok Sad Post Captions

Fahri Afandi

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan

Email: fahriafandi@students.usu.ac.id

Kanaya Nur Nabila

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan

Email: kanyanur@students.usu.ac.id

Shalsa Billa Meisya

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan

Email: salsabillameisya70@gmail.com

Rahmadsyah Rangkuti

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan

Email: rangkuti@usu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomenon of code-switching in sad post captions on TikTok, focusing on its types, contexts, and communicative functions. Although code switching on digital platforms has been widely studied, the switching context remains underexplored. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis, this study examines 29 sad-related TikTok captions collected between 2022 and 2025. The analysis is guided by Muysken's typology, Blom and Gumperz's contextual categorization, and the functional frameworks of Gumperz and Wardhaugh. The findings show that alternation is the most frequent type of code-switching, indicating frequent shifts between Indonesian and English across clauses. Contextually, metaphorical switching predominates, suggesting that code switching is strongly driven by emotional emphasis. Functionally, message qualification and affective expression dominate, indicating that code switching primarily serves to intensify emotional meaning rather than to convey informational content. This study contributes to sociolinguistics, highlighting how Indonesian bilingual users perform code-switching on TikTok as a strategic medium for emotional expression, identity performance, and digital self-representation.

Keywords: code switching, sad posts, emotional, captions, TikTok

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena pergantian kode dalam keterangan postingan sedih di TikTok, dengan fokus pada jenis, konteks, dan fungsi komunikatifnya. Meskipun pergantian kode di platform digital telah banyak diteliti, konteks pergantian kode masih kurang dieksplorasi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan analisis konten, penelitian ini menganalisis 29 keterangan pada postingan sedih di TikTok yang dikumpulkan antara tahun 2022 dan 2025. Analisis ini didasarkan pada tipologi Muysken, kategorisasi konteks Blom dan Gumperz, serta kerangka fungsional Gumperz dan Wardhaugh. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa alternasi adalah jenis peralihan kode yang paling sering terjadi, menunjukkan perpindahan yang sering antara bahasa Indonesia dan Inggris di antara klausa. Secara kontekstual, peralihan metaforis mendominasi, menunjukkan bahwa peralihan kode sangat dipengaruhi oleh penekanan emosional. Secara fungsional, kualifikasi pesan dan ekspresi emosional mendominasi, menunjukkan bahwa peralihan kode terutama berfungsi untuk memperkuat makna emosional daripada

menyampaikan konten informasional. Studi ini berkontribusi pada sosiolinguistik, menyoroti bagaimana pengguna bilingual Indonesia melakukan peralihan kode di TikTok sebagai media strategis untuk ekspresi emosional, penampilan identitas, dan representasi diri digital.

Kata kunci: alih kode, postingan sedih, emosional, keterangan, TikTok

A. Introduction

Language is a sophisticated, structured system that utilizes syntax and vocabulary to convey concepts, emotions, and objectives. As an essential means of communication, language is used by every individual to convey messages to others, both verbally and in writing, while simultaneously reflecting cultural variations (Oviogun & Veerdee, 2020). The use of language involves selecting words, symbols, and grammar to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings (Ita et al., 2025). In today's digital era, social media has become a platform for many Indonesians to express their emotions and thoughts through language. Social media is one of the emerging platforms nowadays that is used by a lot of people, including people who are essentially bilingual or multilingual or people who unintentionally use and learn another code on social media (Nurchurifiani et al., 2025).

Among the various social media platforms available today, TikTok has emerged as one of the most popular and widely used platforms worldwide, including in Indonesia. According to the latest report from We Are Social and Meltwater, as reported by Dataloka (2024), the number of TikTok users in Indonesia reached 194.37 million people as of July 2025. On the TikTok platform, all forms of emotional expression and experiences are well accepted, not just the positive ones (Barta & Andalibi, 2021). Through interactive and easy-to-use features, TikTok provides a space for individuals to share their emotions, experiences, and personal views in the form of interesting and entertaining videos.

Typically, users create videos by combining various elements such as background music, visual effects, filters, and captions that serve to reinforce the meaning or mood they want to convey. These captions not only serve as complements but also often

become tools for emotional expression and linguistic identity for content creators. By using this social media platform, content creators can enhance their imagination, creativity, and freedom of expression by communicating their thoughts, feelings, and events that occur in users' lives through writing, songs, videos, and simple symbols, among others (Wea et al., 2023).

Interestingly, many TikTok users in Indonesia write captions in a mixed language, Indonesian and English, especially on sad posts. The phenomenon of using two languages is well known in linguistic studies, specifically sociolinguistics, as code switching. Wardhaugh (2006) explains that code switching transpires when speakers elect to alternate between different codes or combine codes during speech, even within brief utterances.

These phenomena show how social media users, especially TikTok users, creatively use more than one language to express their feelings, such as sadness or sorrow, thoughts, and identities. The platform users can use code-switching to express emphasis on something by switching the codes or languages (Nurchurifiani et al., 2025). While, according to Alhourani (2018), in the context of bilingual and multilingual communication, code-switching is quite common in both formal and informal communicative events.

In many cases, language switching or mixing is done naturally to reinforce the meaning of a message, create a certain emotional effect, or adapt to the broader and more diverse social context of the audience. Moreover, code-switching is also a strategic tactic used by users to ensure that the message is successfully conveyed. Based on the study conducted by Ma (2020), the reader or message recipient, also known as the interlocutor, is an important component in cooperative interaction that directly

influences and validates the choice of code used.

Based on a sociolinguistic perspective, this phenomenon can be analyzed through code-switching theories. According to Muysken (2000), he classifies the phenomenon of code switching into three overlapping categories, which are insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Blom & Gumperz (1972), in their contextual categorization theory, primarily focus the discussion on code switching context: situational and metaphorical. Also, Gumperz's (1982) and Wardhaugh's (2010) theories provide a classification of code-switching functions. Utilizing these theories allows the researcher to uncover how the code-switching phenomenon occurred within online platforms, particularly on TikTok.

Some previous studies have analyzed the types of code-switching on TikTok (Ita et al., 2025; Wardhani & Arifin, 2025), showing that code-switching is an unavoidable phenomenon and has several types on a social media platform. Another research study conducted by Jofita (2025) analyzed the types and patterns and as the communicative functions of code-switching in Instagram captions. While Daulay et al. (2024) analyzed types of code-switching in comments on both Instagram and TikTok.

Another study has addressed the types as well as the functions of code switching and code mixing on YouTube content (Nungki et al., 2025). Studies conducted by (Nordin (2023; Halim & Maros (2014) explore the function of code switching and code mixing on Facebook. Mewengkang (2021) analyzes the use of code mixing and code switching, specifically found in social media, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook daily status. On the other hand, Wijaya & Floris (2022) focus on examining the various types of code mixing in films. Meanwhile, (Aziz et al., 2019; Febiyaska & Ardi, 2019; Rosnaningsih, 2019) study the types of code switching and code mixing that appeared in the physical reading media.

Previous linguistic studies have intensely studied code switching in online and offline mediums. However, studies focusing on post captions expressing sadness

are still very limited, specifically on TikTok. Previous studies have merely identified the types and functions of code-switching. The main limitation is the lack of in-depth exploration of the contexts of code-switching in these sad posts. There has been no comprehensive discussion regarding the underlying causes or reasons why speakers switch languages when expressing vulnerability or sadness. Therefore, there is a crucial need to explicitly investigate the triggering factors, emotional communication goals, and the internal dynamics of users that drive the use of code-switching as a linguistic strategy to convey sad content on TikTok.

To address this gap, this study focuses on three dimensions of data analysis. Firstly, this study tried to identify and classify the types of code-switching from the data collected. Moreover, this study explores the context as the reason why code switching occurred. Furthermore, this study also tried to figure out the function of code-switching, which can be a reason why code-switching occurred. By employing a sociolinguistic perspective, this study seeks to reveal the reason or the cause is why Indonesian people tend to perform code switching through TikTok sad post captions. This study provides an in-depth analysis of the use of code-switching on social media platforms by finding out the types, contexts, and functions of its use.

This study hypothesizes that code-switching merges linguistic attributes and emotional performance through specific lexical and syntactic patterns to communicate speakers' feelings and emotions. This framework appears in the shape of TikTok post captions that use code-switching that systematically co-occur with the emotional message behind them. This hypothesis is based on the theoretical premise that the strategic use of code-switching can reflect the speaker's emotional state. The study contributes to sociolinguistics and offers practical insights to raise awareness of the content circulated on digital platforms as well as to develop an understanding of the use of code-switching based on the interpretation of this sociolinguistic structure. Specifically, this research addresses the following

questions: What types of code-switching will be found in the collected data? What are the contexts behind the occurrence of code-switching? What is the function of code switching for TikTok users?

To examine these questions, this study employs the sociolinguistic framework proposed by Muysken (2000), which outlines the classification of three types of code switching. Another theoretical foundation of this research is Blom and Gumperz's (1972) framework, which examines the contextual motivations behind code-switching. Additionally, this study is supported by the theories advanced by Gumperz (1982) and Wardhaugh (2010), which explain the communicative and affective functions of code switching. The relevance of sociolinguistics as an analytical framework lies in its ability to identify the meanings embedded in specific lexical and syntactic patterns, particularly those related to the speakers' emotional states.

B. Research Method

1. Research Design

The methodology used in this study is qualitative research. The qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from a human perspective in a natural context, with the aim of exploring the meanings, experiences, and interpretations that arise from social interactions (Ary et al., 2009). In the context of this study, the authors analyzed captions on TikTok content to understand how messages, symbols, and meanings are conveyed through this medium. Therefore, the type of methodology used is content analysis. According to Ary et al. (2009), content analysis is a systematic approach used to identify, interpret, and draw conclusions from various forms of recorded material, whether in the form of text, images, or videos. This method allows authors to understand patterns of communication, social representation, and human behavior reflected in digital media content.

2. Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to analyze the captions on TikTok videos, particularly posts that express sadness or emotional distress, which are currently popular and have

become a social phenomenon among the public. This phenomenon is interesting to study because it reflects how individuals express their emotions and identities through language in the digital space, as well as how this form of communication creates broader social meaning. The TikTok platform was chosen as the data collection medium because it displays relevant phenomena and can serve as a valuable data source for research. Selected videos must contain captions that employ code switching and explore themes of sadness and emotional distress. Videos that do not meet these criteria will not be selected as research objects.

A total of 29 videos containing captions with elements of sadness or emotional distress were collected by searching for videos using keyword-based selection such as "sad quotes," "sad posts," and "heartbreak quotes." The number of 29 videos was not chosen randomly but was based on predetermined criteria. In qualitative research, the purpose of analysis is to analyze meaning, not the amount of data. Additionally, the analyzed videos were limited to those from public accounts; videos from private accounts were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, the authors considered 29 videos to be an appropriate number for analysis. Data collection began on September 29, 2025, and ended on October 5, 2025.

3. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, this study uses several sociolinguistic theoretical frameworks. The analysis focuses on captions in TikTok videos that contain elements of sadness and emotional distress and involve code-switching through several stages. The content was collected and used as a data source. Then, the parts containing code-switching are classified into existing types of code-switching. This analysis is in line with Muysken's (2000) concept, which states that theory is used to classify the types of code-switching that appear in captions. After identifying these types, the analysis continues with understanding the contexts in which code-switching can occur. This analysis is in line with the concept of Bloom and Gumperz (1972), which states that theory

is applied to understand the social context in which code switching occurs. The next step is in line with the theoretical concept of Gumperz's (1982) approach in Interactional Sociolinguistics on Discourse Strategies, which is used to explore the conversational function and interactional meaning behind the use of two languages.

The analysis was conducted by attempting to reveal the function of code-switching that occurs in the digital space. Similar to Wardhaugh's theory (2010), which states that analysis is conducted to highlight the affective function of code-switching, namely how the use of two languages can reflect emotional expression, attitude, closeness, and interpersonal distance between users on social media, this analysis was conducted to determine the affective function, namely the function related to emotions and feelings of code-switching in video descriptions on the TikTok platform.

By conducting an analysis in accordance with these theories, this study not only reveals the types of code-switching but also uncovers the reasons for code-switching and its functions.

4. Researcher's Positionality

In conducting this research, the authors are aware that positionality can influence data interpretation. The authors are active users of social media, particularly TikTok, which is the source of the data to be analyzed. This supports the authors in easily understanding how emotions and code-switching practices occur naturally in the digital space. However, this condition can also lead to subjectivity in interpreting language.

Therefore, the authors maintain objectivity by positioning themselves as observers who are not directly involved with the owners or creators of the content and analyzing the data in accordance with established linguistic and sociolinguistic theories. Thus, although the authors' backgrounds help them understand the dynamics of language in the digital space, this research is also based on theory and methodology, ensuring that it is a scientific analysis and not merely a personal opinion.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result

1.1 Code Switching Trend

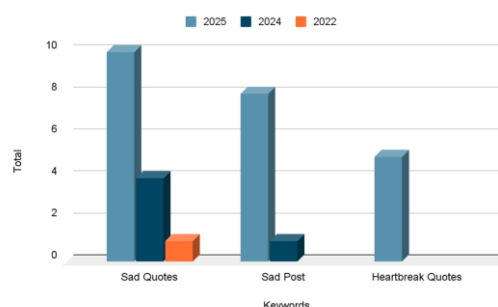


Figure 1. Distribution of TikTok Sad-Related Posts Based on Keywords (2022–2025)

Figure 1 shows the caption in a TikTok post that depicts sad emotions collected using three keywords: sad quotes, sad posts, and heartbreak quotes between 2022 and 2025, with a total of 29 posts. However, no data were retrieved for 2023 because no posts met the selection criteria during the sampling process. The figure shows that sad quotes consistently dominate the types of posts made on TikTok throughout the observed year, and this number sharply increased in 2025.

The significant increase in 2025 indicates a rise among TikTok users in openly expressing negative emotions through short captions written in two languages. This trend reflects TikTok's growing role as both an outlet for emotional release and a space for identity representation, where emotions such as sadness, disappointment, and heartbreak are not only experienced personally but also presented socially. Sad quotes may also suggest that users tend to prefer emotional expressions that use additional metaphors rather than purely narrative confessions.

1.2 Types of Code Switching

This section focuses on the analysis results of several posts that were used as the data sources taken from TikTok. Firstly, the data were analyzed and then classified using Muysken (2000) proposed types of code-switching. The data analysis reveals three types of code-switching: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. The details of the analysis result can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Types of Code Switching Based on Muysken (2000)

No	Types of Code Switching	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
1.	Insertion	10	34%
2.	Alternation	13	45%
3.	Congruent Lexicalization	6	21%
	Total	29	100%

Table 1 shows the number of occurrences and percentage of several types of code-switching in post captions found on TikTok. The data consists of a total of 29 videos, which are then grouped into 3 types of code-switching. From the data presented, it can be concluded that alternation is the most common type of code-switching that occurred in sad posts on TikTok, with a total of 13 occurrences (45%), followed by insertion with 10 occurrences (34%) and congruent lexicalization as the least common type with 6 occurrences (21%). To explain each type of code-switching found in the data, these are the examples of the captions:

Insertion

Insertion occurs when lexical elements from one language are embedded into the grammatical structure of another language. According to Muysken (2000), this type of code-switching involves the integration of words or short phrases from a second language into the base language structure. In the present study, insertion appears in a considerable number of TikTok sad post captions, indicating that English is frequently used as a supplementary expressive resource within Indonesian sentence structures.

Caption 1 (Insertion): “When I talk, gapapa, emang udh tau dari awal pasti ujungnya gini lagi.”

Caption 2 (Insertion): “when lu mulai suka lagi sama seseorang setelah sekian lama sendirian, tapi di sisi lain lu juga ngerasa orang kaya lu ga bakal pernah menang di hati seseorang.”

In both captions, English appears at the beginning of the sentence and functions as an emotional framing, while Indonesian carries

the main narrative content. Rather than replacing Indonesian, English serves to introduce a reflective or introspective tone at the emotional opening of the message. This pattern implies that insertion is used strategically to signal emotional stance without completely shifting the discourse into another language.

Alternation

Alternation was the most dominant type of code switching that occurred in the sad post caption on TikTok. According to Muysken (2000), in alternation, the two languages are alternated in a complete and independent way, involving separate grammatical systems. Alternation becomes dominant because it allows users to construct a clear separation between emotional narration and emotional evaluation, with Indonesian commonly used for storytelling and English for emotional conclusion or confession. This analysis supports Muysken’s (2000) concept of alternation as a strategy for shifting discourse frames, where speakers move between languages to mark changes, in this context, emotional stance rather than grammatical necessity.

Caption 3 (Alternation): “...*kalo kamu mau kita perbaiki, aku siap mulai lagi kok, tenaga dan perasaan aku masih ada buat kamu.* if we loved again, I swear I’d love you right.”

Caption 4 (Alternation): “*Aku gak kurang, dia ga jahat.* We’re just not meant to be together.”

The English clause “We’re just not meant to be together” functions as an emotionally fatalistic conclusion that sounds more absolute and final than its Indonesian equivalent, emphasizing emotional resignation and acceptance. The switch into English typically marks moments of emotional resolution such as commitment, acceptance, resignation, or emotional surrender.

Congruent Lexicalization

Congruent lexicalization refers to a type of code switching in which two languages share a common grammatical structure and lexical items from both languages are freely combined within that structure (Muysken, 2000).

Caption 5 (Congruent lexicalization):
“*Yang nyakitin tuh bukan karena dia ninggalin...tapi karena we never even got the chance to be something real.*”

In this caption, Indonesian and English are integrated within a single syntactic frame without clear boundaries between the base and inserted language. This pattern shows a high degree of bilingual fluidity, in contrast to insertion or alternation. English is placed at the end of the phrase in order to explain the previous statement within the caption.

1.3 Contextual Categorization of Code Switching

After classifying the data into several types of code switching, the researchers tried to find out in what contexts code-switching could occur, especially in the captions of sad posts on TikTok. Blom & Gumperz's contextual categorization was used to analyze the data collected. The categorization of code-switching contexts is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Contextual Categorization Based on Blom & Gumperz (1972)

No	Contexts of Code Switching	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
1.	Situational Switching	0	0%
2.	Metaphorical Switching	29	100%
	Total	29	100%

Table 2 presents all the data that has been categorized based on the context in which code-switching can occur. Based on the table above, it is clear that metaphorical switching is the only context that occurs. However, there is no situational switching context. A clear example and further explanation of the metaphorical context of code switching is presented below:

Caption 6 (Metaphorical):
“*maaf..bukan karena kamu ga cukup. It's just..my fault, masalahnya ada di aku. maaf. i still can't feel any love for anyone, sorry...* (you deserve someone better).”

This data shows that code-switching occurs in order to emphasize emotions and feelings (metaphorical). Phrases “It’s just..my fault” and “i still can’t feel any love for anyone, sorry... (you deserve someone better).” strongly show the speaker’s personal feelings. The speaker expresses and emphasizes a deep sense of guilt through English rather than Indonesian.

It is demonstrated by the data that code switching in depressing TikTok post captions is strongly motivated by metaphorical switching. Since this study only included TikTok captions conveying sadness and emotional suffering, which inherently prioritize emotional meaning rather than situational change, it is methodologically expected that metaphorical switching context explains 100% of the data.

1.4 Gumperz’s Code Switching Function

In addition to identifying code-switching phenomena on social media, researchers also sought to uncover the reasons behind it. This study attempts to reveal the functions of code switching, which could be a strong reason why code switching occurs in sad TikTok post captions. Firstly, to strengthen the analysis results, the researcher utilized Gumperz's (1982) interactional functions of code switching. Table 3 below presents the classified data:

Table 3. Code Switching Functions Based on Gumperz (1982)

No	Functions of Code Switching	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
1.	Quotation	0	0%
2.	Addressee Specification	0	0%
3.	Interjection	7	24%
4.	Reiteration	3	10%
5.	Message Qualification	15	52%
6.	Personalization vs	4	14%

	Objectivization		
	Total	29	100%

Table 3 above displays code-switching data that has been classified based on its functional types. From the data above, it shows that message qualification is the most frequently occurring function with a total of 15 occurrences (52%), followed by interjection with 7 occurrences (24%), personalization vs. objectivization with 4 occurrences (14%), and reiteration in last place with only 3 occurrences (10%). Meanwhile, the other two functions, quotation and addressee specification were not found in any of the data due to strictly selective data, which only focuses on sad post captions. The detailed analysis of how code switching functions occurred based on Gumperz (1982) is presented below:

Interjection

Interjection is one of the code-switching functions to emphasize a speaker's feeling, emotion, or attitude. This function also shows how some expressions carry stronger emotional weight.

Caption 10 (Interjection): “*rasanya ingin hilang untuk beberapa saat, i feel tired of everything now.*”

This data shows the interjection function of code switching, where code-switching serves to emphasize the speaker's feelings or emotions. In this case, the phrase “I feel tired of everything now” is used to express the speaker's direct emotional overload and fatigue, showing that the speaker is overwhelmed. Gumperz (1982) also mentioned that interjections function to express the speaker's immediate emotional reaction, such as exhaustion, frustration, or despair.

Reiteration

Reiteration function refers to how the speaker repeats or restates the message in another language in order to strengthen or clarify the meaning. Gumperz (1982), in his study, states that reiteration consists of repeating a message in the other code, either literally or in a somewhat modified form.

Caption 7 (Reiteration): “*i told you, kamu ga akan nemuin aku di wanita lain, walaupun ga sehebat mereka, tapi mereka ga akan bisa jadi aku. mungkin buat menggantikan yg lebih dari aku mudah buat kamu, tapi percayalah, finding a vibe like mine is impossible, i promise.*”

The caption above shows the reiteration function, in which the speaker restates her main statement at the end of the sentence. The purpose is to explain and reaffirm the message of the speaker. The change to English strengthens the speaker's emotional assurance and self-assertion rather than just translating the message. The repetition functions to strengthen the emotional force of the statement and to ensure that the speaker's emotional position is clearly emphasized.

Message Qualification

Message qualification is the most dominant function. The message qualification function serves a deeper explanation of the speaker's message, especially when additional information is provided in another language to emphasize or clarify something. This function shows how an emotional narrative that is primarily Indonesian uses English as a symbolic language of emotional self-expression. It shows that Indonesian TikTok users frequently use code-switching to manage emotional conflict and identity positioning in a public digital domain, in addition to expressing emotion.

Caption 8 (Message qualification): “*sengaja ngejauh bukan berarti udah gamau, but ik he will be my biggest heartbreak (damn its hurts i need him).*”

Caption 9 (Message qualification): “*tolong gan afgan, temenku ga bisa melepaskan dia, katanya dia too perfect to forget.*”

In these captions, English is used as an assessment of the Indonesian remark. The transition to English serves to qualify the speaker's emotional attitude by escalating sentiments of loss, remorse, and emotional conflict rather than adding new propositional material. The emotional message is made clearer and intense by the English sentences

that frame the emotional impact of the circumstance as it is presented in Indonesian.

Personalization vs Objectivization

The personalization vs objectivization function appears to create a contrast between personal statements and objective information. The function of personalization versus objectivization reflects how speakers use different languages to contrast personal emotional involvement with rational or detached evaluation (Gumperz, 1982).

Caption 10 (Personalization vs Objectivization): *“terjebak di antara ‘aku harus bisa mengerti’ atau ‘what about my feelings?’.”*

This data shows the function of code switching, where code switching is used to distinguish between personal (emotional) meanings and neutral (objective) meanings that are contradictory. Indonesian “aku harus bisa mengerti”, is used to express rational self-control and social obligation, while English “what about my feelings?” conveys personal emotional protests.

1.5 Wardhaugh Code Switching Function

Therefore, in order to reinforce and support the analysis results of this study, Wardhaugh’s (2010) code-switching functions theory was also utilized. Here, Wardhaugh explains several functions of code switching:

Table 4. Code Switching Function Based on Wardhaugh (2010)

No	Functions of Code Switching	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
1.	Affective Function	29	100%
2.	Metaphorical Function	0	0%
3.	Contextual Function	0	0%
4.	Identity Function	0	0%
	Total	29	100%

Table 4 above displays data that has been analyzed using Wardhaugh's (2010) code-switching functions theory. The table

above shows that the affective function is the only function that appears in the data, with a percentage of 100%. However, no other code-switching functions were found in the data, indicating that emotional expression is the primary motivation behind bilingual language choice in sad TikTok captions. To understand the function of code switching, specifically affective function, this study provides further analysis of several data:

Affective

According to Wardhaugh (2010), affective function refers to the use of code switching to express emotions, personal attitudes, and psychological involvement. The effective function of code switching allows bilingual speakers to arrange emotional tone and interpersonal meaning by choosing a particular code.

Caption 12 (Affective): *“lahir di keluarga yang ngga pernah ngajarin buat bisa terbuka atau pun ngeluh, sampai sekarang semuanya di pendem sendiri, kadang sakit pun ngga berani ngomong is another level of pain.”*

Caption 13 (Affective): *“i’ll stop questioning everything only when i finally get the answer kenapa dia tiba-tiba ninggalin gue.”*

In both captions above, English has a role as the medium to convey feeling, emphasizing individual emotion of the speaker rather than a neutral alternative. The switch into English marks moments of emotional exposure, where pain, confusion, and emotional vulnerability are foregrounded. The first caption uses English to label emotional suffering in a more abstract and distancing manner, while the second foregrounds emotional uncertainty at the beginning of the utterance, giving it immediate emotional impact.

It is evident from the data that the effective function is present throughout the whole data set. The dominance of the affective function (100%) is directly related to the nature of the data, which were purposively sampled from emotionally expressive sad posts. This predominance of emotional orientation is consistent with Wardhaugh's affective function, which holds

that emotional expression, rather than factual content, determines language choice.

2. Discussion

In this section, the researcher focuses on the discussion of the findings in order to emphasize and clarify the research objectives. As mentioned in the previous section, this study aims to identify the types, context, and functions of code switching that may be a cause or the reason behind the performance of code switching among Indonesians on TikTok sad post captions. This study successfully visualizes the trend through the diagrams above. This diagram helps explain the development and how the code-switching trend occurred in TikTok posts that contain emotional or personal feelings.

Throughout this section, the analysis result on the findings successfully reveals the code switching type occurred on TikTok sad posts using Muysken's (2000) types of code-switching theory, inserting, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. The researcher found that the most dominant code switching type that appeared in the data is alternation. The analysis result shows that this type dominantly appeared to separate emotional content from narrative content, using different languages to carry different expressive loads. In the context of TikTok sad posts, alternation enables users to dramatize emotional shifts, intensify sadness, and construct a more expressive digital identity.

The first finding of this study is in line with the research conducted by Nungki et al., (2025) on types of code-switching. This study aligns in revealing the type of code-switching most commonly found on digital platforms, indicating that insertion is the most dominant type that appears. Rosnaningsih (2019) in her study also showed the same results, in which insertion dominates. In contrast to this study, a study conducted by Wijaya & Floris (2022) highlighted insertion and congruent lexicalization as the types of code switching occurred in films, while alternation was not found.

Another finding indicates contextual categorization of code-switching using

Bloom & Gumperz (1972), which explains that code-switching always has a context behind it, whether situational or metaphorical. This study shows that the metaphorical context is the most commonly found context in code-switching in captions of sad posts on TikTok. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Tarigan (2025) in highlighting the dominant context of code switching. Based on this finding, code-switching occurs not because of a change in the communication situation, but to add a certain social or emotional meaning. This indicates that users employ English alongside Indonesian not to adapt to different social contexts, but to create deeper nuances of meaning and emotional atmosphere. In the context of sad posts, English serves as a tool used by users to express personal feelings such as sadness, disappointment, or loneliness in a more expressive and poetic way.

Moreover, this study also succeeded in identifying the functions of code switching in the captions of sad posts on TikTok. By utilizing Gumperz's (1982) theory, the finding shows that the most frequently appearing function is message qualification. This finding aligns with a study conducted by Nungki et al. (2025) in examining the functions of code switching. Both studies show strong similarity in findings, highlighting message qualification as the most dominant function. According to Wardhaugh (2010), code switching also functions to express the speaker's feelings, attitudes, and emotions (affective function). Khairunnisa (2022) shows similar findings by determining functions of code switching, mentioning the affective function as the second dominant function.

Overall, TikTok users in Indonesia use code-switching as a way to express themselves and show emotions, as well as to form an identity both in local and global contexts, personal yet performative. English becomes a linguistic space where emotions can be filtered, adjusted, and represented, while Indonesian remains the foundation of authenticity and cultural attachment. This reflects Bloom & Gumperz's (1972) metaphorical context, Gumperz's (1982)

message qualification function and Wardhaugh's (2010) affective function, showing that Indonesian users tend to switch language to English due to emphasis on the message that contain personal emotion, feelings and attitudes.

Furthermore, this study shows that the phenomenon of code-switching between English and Indonesian in sad posts on TikTok not only demonstrates the ability to use more than one language but also reflects the process of emotion regulation and identity formation. Through code-switching, users transform personal emotional experiences into public linguistic performances that bridge personal vulnerability and social connectivity in the digital space. Additionally, speakers feel safer and believe their emotions can be expressed more clearly when using English. While in Indonesian the message sounds straightforward, direct and frontal.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study reveals that code-switching not merely substitutes linguistic attributes by creating communication patterns but also explores social implications. Utilizing Muysken (2000), Bloom and Gumperz (1972), Gumperz (1982), and Wardhaugh (2010) code-switching theory, this study affirmed that overall code-switching is not simply unconscious language changing but rather a systematic and deliberate linguistic strategy. Code-switching plays a significant role in revealing how bilingual users negotiate emotion, construct identity, and manage interpersonal meaning in digitally mediated communication. In the context of sad TikTok captions, switching between Indonesian and English enables users to intensify emotional expression, create symbolic distance from personal pain, and perform vulnerability within a public digital space.

Based on sociolinguistics framing, this study shares a contribution at the conceptual level, demonstrating that code-switching cannot be understood merely as a structural linguistic phenomenon but as an affective and identity-driven practice shaped by platform

culture. While classical theories of code-switching emphasize grammatical patterns (Muysken, 2000), contextual categorization (Bloom & Gumperz, 1982), and interactional functions (Gumperz, 1982; Wardhaugh, 2010), this study extends their reach to the realm of social media, where emotional expression is clarified, condensed, and publicly displayed.

Practically, these findings provide valuable insight for digital literacy education. This study offers an in-depth analysis of code switching as a part of the sociolinguistics phenomenon in online platforms. By revealing the types, contexts, and functions of code switching, this study provides a clear and strong analysis of the reasons and the causes of code switching. This study combines several code-switching theories and utilizes several relevant studies as guidance, as well as to achieve accuracy in the analysis of the data.

Despite these strengths, this study has several limitations. The study limits its focus by only analyzing the code-switching phenomenon in sad post captions. Moreover, this study only collected the data from TikTok. Meanwhile, related data also appeared on other social media, such as Instagram. Moreover, the study lacks relevant data, as it only acquired 29 posts that contain emotional captions on TikTok, which restricts the analysis of the data.

To address these gaps, future studies should focus on a triangulated source of data to ensure validity and reliability. Expanding research focus by analyzing the code-switching phenomenon not only on the data that contains emotional expression. Also, future studies should add the number of data points collected within a specific time frame.

In sum, this study contributes to the development in the field of sociolinguistics, specifically code switching, by demonstrating that frame-based sociolinguistics analysis offers a replicable, theory-driven model for determining the types, context, and function of code switching. Additionally, this study provides in depth analysis of code-switching, which can be used to reveal the backgrounds of

code-switching phenomena, particularly on TikTok.

E. References

- Alhourani, A. Q. (2018). Code Switching as a Communicative Strategy for the Bilingual Saudi Speakers at Jouf University. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*, 1 (4)(2617–0299). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2018.1.4.9>
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., & Razavieh, A. (2009). *Introduction to Research in Education*. 8th (Ed.), Cengage Learning.
- Aziz, Z. A., Achmad, D., & Fadlun, M. (2019). What Types of Codes are Mixed in Indonesia?: An Investigation of Code Mixing in a Magazine. *English Education Journal (EEJ)*, 10 (2)(3025–9789), 196–211. Retrieved from <https://jurnal.usk.ac.id/EEJ/article/view/13879>
- Barta, K., & Andalibi, N. (2021). Constructing Authenticity on TikTok : Social Norms and Social Support on the “ Fun ” Platform. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 5 (430)(2573–0142), 1–29. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1145/3479574>
- Blom, J. P., & Gumperz, J. J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structure: Code-switching in Norway. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics* (pp. 407–434). Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Daulay, S. H., Nst, A. H., Ningsih, F. R., Berutu, H., Irham, N. R., & Mahmudah, R. (2024). Code Switching in the Social Media Era: A Linguistic Analysis of Instagram and TikTok Users. *Humanitatis : Journal of Language and Literature*, 10(2), 373–384. <https://doi.org/10.30812/humanitatis.v10i2.3837>
- Febiyaska, A. E. (2019). Indonesian-English Code-Switching in Gogirl ! Magazine : Types and Features. *JELTL (Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics)*, 4(3), 289–303. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v4i3.307>
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Halim, N. S., & Maros, M. (2014). The Functions of Code-switching in Facebook Interactions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 118(1877–0428), 126–133. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.02.017>
- Jofita, K., & Haryanto, S. (2025). Functions and Patterns of Code-Switching in Social Media : A Study on Audreyfannyau ’ s Instagram Captions . *Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature, and Culture.*, 11 (2)(2541–0237). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.v11i2.4248>
- Khairunnisa, S. K., & Izzah, L. (2022). A teacher’s Code-Switching in English classroom. *Syntax Idea*, 4(11), 1588–1594. <https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v4i11.1992>
- Ma, J. (2020). Code-switching Analysis in TCFL Classroom from the Perspective of Sociolinguistics. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 10 (21)(1799–2591), 1551–1557. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17507/TPLS.1012.06>
- Mewengkang, C., & Fansury, A. H. (2021). Writing Daily Status on Social Media: Code-Mixing and Code-Switching Phenomena: a Literature Review. *Klasikal : Journal of Education, Language Teaching and Science*, 3(3), 80–87. <https://doi.org/10.52208/klasikal.v3i3.110>
- Muysken, P. (2000). *Bilingual speech: A typology of code-mixing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nordin, N. R. M. (2023). Code-switching and code-mixing among users of social media. *Jurnal Javanologi*, 6(2), 1267. <https://doi.org/10.20961/javanologi.v6i2.75114>

- Nouvan. (2025, November 8). Indonesia jadi negara pengguna TikTok terbanyak di dunia 2025. Dataloka.id. Retrieved from <https://dataloka.id/humaniora/4424/in-donesia-jadi-negara-pengguna-tiktok-terbanyak-di-dunia-2025/>
- Nungki, N., Hakim, M. A. R., & Febriani, H. (2025). Code Switching and Code Mixing in Sacha Stevenson 's YouTube Content: A Functional Analysis for Language Learning. *Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Instructional Media*, 5(3), 1200–1215. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jitim.v5i3.1148>
- Nurchurifiani, E., Hanum, I., Damiri, A., & Oktariyani, O. (2025). Code Mixing Usage on Social Media: a Linguistic Analysis of Video on Tiktok. *KLAUSA (Kajian Linguistik, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Dan Sastra)*, 9(1), 90–101. <https://doi.org/10.33479/klausa.v9i1.1194>
- Oviogun, P. V., & Veerdee, P. S. (2020). Definition of language and linguistics: basic competence. *Macrolinguistics and Microlinguistics*, 1(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.21744/mami.v1n1.1>
- Rosnaningsih, A. (2019). Analisis Campur Kode Dan Alih Kode Bahasa Inggris ke Dalam Indonesian pada Novel Wandu Berhentilah Menjadi Pengecut Karya Tasaro Asih. *Lingua Rima: Jurnal Pendidikan Program Studi Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 8 (2)(2621–1033). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.31000/lgrm.v8i2.1784>
- Tarigan, K. E., & Girsang, Y. T. (2025). Code Switching and Code Mixing in Denny Sumargo's Podcast on Toxic Relationships. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 7(1), 54–85. <https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v14i1.25-42>
- Wardhani, D. P., & Arifin, Y. (2025). Code Switching & Code Mixing in Ritsuki's Vlog on Digital Media Tiktok: A Study of Sociolinguistics. *ESTEEM Journal of English Study Programme*, 8 (1)(2622–2213). <https://doi.org/10.31851/esteem.v8i1.18124>
- Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (5th ed.). Blackwell Publishing.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2010). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (6th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wea, M. P. M., Letuna, M. A. N., & Leuape, E. S. (2023). Aplikasi Tiktok Sebagai Ajang Ekspresi Diri (Studi Fenomenologi Pada Dosen dan Mahasiswa Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Nusa Cendana Kupang). *Deliberatio: Jurnal Mahasiswa Komunikasi*, 2 (2)(2808–1897). <https://doi.org/10.59895/deliberatio.v2i2.43>
- Wijaya, G. Q., & Floris, F. D. (2022). Code-Mixing Types Used by Jody to Ben in Filosofi Kopi and Filosofi Kopi 2 : Ben & Jody. *Kata Kita, Journal of Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 10(2), 336–341. <https://doi.org/10.9744/katakita.10.2.336-341>