

CODE-SWITCHING AND SLANG USED BY GEN Z INDONESIANS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Aprilia Bernike Kandiawan

Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia

correspondence: apriliabernike1304@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.37147/eltr.v7i1.165>

received 22 July 2022; accepted 29 December 2022

Abstract

Most social media active users are Gen Z Indonesians Gen Z, who usually communicate with others on social media by switching their code to another code or language and using slang. The switchover from Bahasa Indonesia to other regional dialects or English and the use of slang have been dominated on social media, not limited to words but also sentences. This study observes and examines the reasons that underlying Indonesians Gen Z perform code-switching and use slang, as well as the advantages and disadvantages that will arise. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research. Data were collected from journals, reports, or books that had been written by other researchers and analyzed by content or document analysis and discourse analysis. This research found that there are some reasons, such as social reasons, convenience, referential functions like emphasizing the precise message, and affective functions, also there are three advantages and a disadvantage of code-switching and using slang in communication in social media.

Keywords: code-switching, Gen Z, slang, social media

Introduction

Currently, we live in the digital era. Along with the rapid growth of technology in recent years, the use of the internet and digital technology has become inevitable parts of everyday life (Gonulal, 2019). It has brought significant impacts on every aspect of life, especially in communication. A trend in utilizing digital technology is the use of social media. “Social media is defined as Internet-based applications that construct on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that authorize the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Rizkyna, Nisa, & Aulia, 2021). Whereas Appel, Grewal, Hadi, and Stephen (2020) defined social media as collections of software-based digital technologies and the internet which are usually displayed as apps and websites, they provided users with digital environments that could transmit and receive digital content or information through various forms of online social networks. Also, social media allow people to connect from around the world, share digital photos, and videos and leave comments without being limited by distance, space, and time (Trimastuti, 2017).



Most social media's active users are young people who were born between 1996 -2012, they've commonly known as Generation Z (a.k.a. Gen Z, iGen, or centennials). People who belong to the Generation Z group are characterized as those who are unable to live without digital technology, especially social media because they have been raised in the internet and digital era (Tarihoran et al., 2022). Gen Z enjoys utilizing and using social media to explore information, communicate with others, and upload new content. According to Insider (2021), based on the Piper Sandler survey, reported that 81% of the 1,000 teens, or Gen Z, generally preferred to use more than three social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and mostly Instagram. The social media which are widely used among Indonesians Gen Z are WhatsApp (96%), Instagram (91%), YouTube (74%), Line (58%), and Facebook (37%) respectively (Saputra, 2019). This fact indicates that Indonesians Gen Z prefer to use various social media platforms for their daily communication with friends and others.

Communication is a way of interacting, both verbal and nonverbal, between a person to another, with the purpose is conveying information or messages so that it reduces different interpretations between the interlocutors (Herman & Rajagukguk, 2019; Ulya et al., 2021). Today, communication is very easy with the existence of the internet, social media, and digital platforms. The main tool and medium of communication which has an essential part in making communication more effective is language (Hutajulu & Herman, 2019; Silaban & Mapaung, 2020). Language helps us express and convey the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of two individuals (Dewi, Savitri, & Budiasa, 2021). It can also build and maintain relationships with other people.

In this era, many people can use more than one language, it can be bilingual or multilingual. As a multilingual community, Indonesians generation Z usually communicate with others uniquely to show their existence on social media (Wijayanti & Sitohang, 2021). Most of them switch their code to another or use mixed languages and new words which are not or have never been in the Indonesian Dictionary or KBBI such as slang words (Maulidiya et al., 2021). So, it's common now that we read and listen to Indonesian Gen Z doing code-switching and using slang in any kind of situation and domain (Dewi, 2021). Switching from Bahasa Indonesia to other regional dialects or English has been dominated on social media, not limited to words but also sentences. Fact, we often found on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok that some young Indonesian public figures or celebrities code-switching when they spoke in some programs, like Maudy Ayunda, Boy William, and Agnez Monica (Dewi, 2021). Whereas, "slang refers to the informal spoken language used by the younger generation and only understood by themselves", wrote Wijayanti & Sihotang (2021). Nelissen (2018) mentioned digilect, the language variety of digital media.

By doing code-switching, mixing Bahasa Indonesia with their regional dialects or other languages, as well as using slang on social media, Indonesian Gen Z has an important role in the language development of this country's language. Therefore, this study aims to observe and examine any kinds of the reasons that underlying Indonesians Gen Z perform code-switching and use slang, as well as the advantages and disadvantages that will arise.

Code Switching

Holmes and Wilson (2017) stated that code-switching is the use of more than one language within speech or utterances. Code-switching can be defined as the change of code from one to another or a situation where speakers deliberately switch a code or language being used to another (Jendra, 2010; Silaban & Mapaung, 2020). Astuti (2020) wrote that “Code-switching is seen as an action to address certain situational changes in an utterance or discourse. Code-switching occurs mostly in bilingual communities where speakers share more than one language...”

Code-switching occurs in different situations. Holmes (2008) stated that there are three reasons for choosing codes, namely the participants, the social setting, and the topic or purpose of the interaction. Based on the reason why people switch or change their code or language, there are two main types of code-switching, namely situational and metaphorical (Gumperz, 1982, pp. 60-61; Wardhaugh, 2010; Septiani, Petrus, & Yunus, 2018).

1. Situational code-switching is caused by the situation changes.
2. Metaphorical code-switching is motivated by the communicative effect of what they are saying. It usually points to the topic and the content of the communicative process as the main reason for language choice ... (Holmes & Wilson, 2017).

Besides those two types of code-switching, there are three more types of code-switching, these types generally can be categorized based on the grammatical classification, namely, intra-sentential code-switching, inter-sentential code-switching, and tag switching.

1. Intra-sentential code-switching occurs within a clause or sentence boundary. It is mainly found in the form of a word or phrase. It often occurs when someone uses one language and suddenly switches to another language in a sentence. For example, Andri: *Aku berangkat dari sekolah ke tempat tujuan butuh piro suwe yo?*
2. Inter-sentential code-switching occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or the other (Ariasih, Jendra, & Sulatra, 2021). It involves moving from one language to another between sentences, so it may include a switch from a whole sentence, or more than one sentence produced entirely in one language. For example, “*ini lagu lama, tahun 60an. It's oldies but goodies. Tapi, masih enak kok didengerin.*” It shows Indonesian bilingual switches from Indonesian to English (Indrawan, 2010; Dewi 2021).
3. "Tag switching involves the insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance which is otherwise entirely in other languages, wrote Dewi (2021). For example, Ayu: *Rambut nya IU disemir jadi pirang, really?*

According to Finegan (2008, p. 316), “language switching can be triggered by a change in any one of several situational factors, including the setting, purpose of the communication, the person being addressed ...”.

In terms of purpose, the kind of activity and our goal are crucial and may influence our selection of the language. For the setting, switching from one language to another may occur as the location or situation changes. When you are at college or university, you might well use one language in an academic setting but, it might differ in a religious setting or at home (Wijanti, 2014). When the topic switches from one of local interest, to one of national concern, or from a personal

matter to one about your college, it might influence our language choice too. As to participants, the identity of the speaker, as well as the identity of the person being addressed, will influence language choice. Speakers typically adapt their utterances to the age, and social identity of an addressee, and their roles in the particular speech situation (Setiawan, 2016). Finegan (2008, p. 317) gave an example: “A parent who works as a teacher and has his child for a student may speak different varieties at home and school, even when the topic and the addressee are the same”.

“Code-switching is then seen as one of the ways people use their language repertoire”, wrote Astuti (2020). A lot of research works in the Outer- and Expanding-Circle countries showed that the use of code-switching in communication has become a common phenomenon which understood and accepted by people, such as in China, Israel, and Iraq (Bin & Mimi, 2014; Al-Ani & Ibrahim, 2015; Astuti, 2020).

Slang

“Slang is a part of a language that is usually outside of standard usage and may consist of both newly coined words or phrases and new or extended meanings attached to established terms” (Chen, 2006, p.260; Zhou & Fan, 2013). Slang is an informal style of speech, which may be a single word, a group of words, or a sentence. It is a kind of speech variety that refers to any distinguishable form of speech used by a speaker or a group of speakers (Dai & He, 2010, p.111; Zhou & Fan, 2013). Slang is formed and developed with a certain community's or country's history and culture. It is different from the standard language that is already known generally by people so, slang has unique and special characteristics and functions (Amir & Azisah, 2017).

Currently, one of the language variations, slang, is often used in social media. The use of slang has become more widespread and a trend among teenagers or Indonesians Gen Z. "Slang is created and used by certain social groups to interact internally so that it is not known by others", Dewi, Savitri, & Budiasa (2021). "The use of slang may signal rebellious undertones or an intentional distancing of its users from certain mainstream values", claimed Finegan (2008). Some slang changes very quickly, often temporarily, but there are still slang dictionaries so, their existence suggests that some slang expressions lead longer lives. These are examples from the dust jacket of a slang dictionary: bells and whistles, emoticon, kick-ass, pocket pool, puzzle palace, whatever! and spam (Finegan, 2008). Its effectiveness depends crucially on the circumstances of its use because slang is not usually fully understood by people outside a particular social group (Trimastuti, 2017).

Amir and Azisah (2017) stated that there are many kinds of slang that are commonly used by society, such as:

1. Public house slang is a group of words and phrases which temporarily used by the family's members, usually related to their regional dialects.
2. University slang is sometimes considerably different from school slang. So, when teenagers left school and go to the university, they might get new slang words or phrases.
3. Tradesmen's slang. Some of the words are related to "old" slang and the users are the tailors, butchers, chemists, and builders.

4. Slang of commerce is often used by businessmen or for the stock exchange and is closely related to trading words. Today, businesses are relying on commercials, advertisements on TV, and social media so firms need catchy phrases or rhymes that can impress the public.

Method

In this study, the researcher conducted qualitative descriptive research. The researcher collected secondary data. The data was carried out through a literature review, the results or findings, and discussion from journals, reports, or books that had been written by other researchers. The data analysis techniques used in this study are content or document analysis and discourse analysis were used to support the researcher in conducting this research. Content or document analysis is a research method that is applied to written or visual materials, such as textbooks, newspapers, videos from YouTube or TikTok, speeches, vlogs, or podcasts from Spotify, advertisements, and journals from other researchers, to identify specified characteristics from the materials (Ary et al., 2010; Silaban & Marpaung, 2020). Moreover, the researcher used a mixture of the domain and taxonomic coding methods from the content analysis to organize and classify the ideas related to the topic.

Findings and Discussion

In this part, the discussion aims to answer the research questions. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What are the reasons that underlying Indonesians Gen Z perform code-switching and use slang on social media?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of code-switching and using slang in communication on social media?

Reasons

Based on Holmes (2008, pp. 35-39) who managed to identify some reasons for code-switching, we can discover that Indonesians Gen Z often switch from one code to another and use slang in their communication on social media for some reasons:

1. For convenience or to emphasize their precise message content, such as we switch codes when we quote a proverb or well-known saying in another language, can be English, Korean, or Chinese so, so the message contained in the words can convey accurately to the addressee. Moreover, we often switch codes and use slang to show our emotions like anger, sympathy, joyful when texting or chatting on social media. "A language switch in the opposite direction, from the L to the H variety, is often used to express disapproval", wrote Holmes and Wilson (2017). Doing code-switching helps them clarify certain ideas or intentions, some English words or English slang sound good to express some words in Indonesian, and they feel proud (Astuti, 2020).
2. Social reasons. They switch to another language or code and use slang as a signal of group membership, as an expression of solidarity, and as a shared ethnicity with an addressee. Also, a change in the other dimensions, such as the status relationship between the interlocutors or the formality of their

interaction. For example, using tag switching. Tag switching to other languages serves as a solidarity marker between two ethnic group members. (e.g., “Tamati: Engari [so] now we turn to more important matters.” Switch between Maori and English, wrote Holmes & Wilson (2017, pp.35)).

3. For an effective function or to discuss a particular topic, such as we want to sell products or do promotions to our friends on social media so we use code-switching and slang to attract people.

Based on the study conducted by Setiawan (2016), he concluded that there are four reasons why Indonesians used English code-switching in their communication: “It is used as it is more compact; It is more precise; It is more prestigious; It is a starter or a stepping stone for a fuller use of the language”.

Furthermore, there was a result from interviews conducted by Septiani, Petrus, and Yunus (2018). It showed us that there were some reasons why the respondents did code-switching and used slang in their communication on social media:

1. They could not find any vocabulary or forgot the terms which related to specific words that they wanted to speak out (didn't know Bahasa Indonesia or English words so, they switched to their regional dialects).
2. To make them more comfortable and easier when they spoke in their regional dialects and use various slang words.
3. To deliver a sense of humor and to convey intimacy.
4. To have privacy when they don't want other people to know.

According to the study organized by Wijanti (2014), there are some reasons for Indonesians Gen Z switching languages from Bahasa Indonesia to English or any local languages or foreign language in social media.

Wijanti (2014) said that those reasons might be triggered by external factors which come from the people and the environment around them.

Those are some of the findings that we found from other researchers who have already conducted a similar study. We analyze and find out that there are some similar reasons which underlying Indonesians Gen Z perform code-switching and use slang on social media, such as:

- Social reasons. They do code-switching and use slang to signal group membership or to convey intimacy, express their solidarity with an addressee, and show their ethnicity or status.
- To have or keep their privacy, only some people understand it, they don't want other people to know.
- For convenience and to emphasize the precise message content, such as delivering the sense of humor accurately, showing our emotions like anger, sympathy, joy, and being proud of, and helping to clarify certain ideas or intentions.
- To increase the curiosity of readers or attract people to look, listen, and read.
- To be seen as up-to-date, cool, and fancy among friends. By using English or other foreign languages, they will have a good image or be famous' among their friends.

Advantages and Disadvantage

There are some advantages in doing code-switching and using slang on social media, such as:

- As one of the communication strategies so, code-switching can serve as a kind of 'way out' when the conversation between interlocutors doesn't go well smoothly or when there are words or phrases that one of them doesn't understand. Astuti (2020) stated that code-switching can be a strategy to minimize or overcome potential communication breakdowns, and code-switching between Indonesian and English is often used to foster better understanding as well as to simplify complex and new ideas.
- Increasing language awareness of language used in social media and daily conversation. Based on the study conducted by Astuti (2020), showed us that 16% of respondents claimed to use both Indonesian and a local language at home, while 10% claimed that they used both Indonesian and English at home.
- Easy to make friends. When we are hanging out with friends, or want to make a friend on social media, we often chat using slang and code-switching. So, it is very common now and with that, we can easy to communicate and feel more comfortable and not stiff.

There is a disadvantage when Indonesians Gen Z do code-switching and use slang more frequently on social media. According to Finegan (2008), words like *mob* and *pants*, which were slang at an earlier period, lose their status as slang, when become established and accepted in more formal circumstances so slang expressions often climb up the social ladder. So, the disadvantage is when slang words or expressions, as well as foreign language words or phrases, are currently used continuously in Indonesian societies, especially the next generation of this nation, gradually, these situations can make words, phrases, or expressions from the foreign language or the slang will be patent and may be included in the KBBI. This condition may lead to shifting the function of Bahasa Indonesia as our standard variety or even eliminating our regional dialects. Also, it can mix into Bahasa Indonesia so there is renewal. "That is why they choose to use slang language than the Indonesian language which is standard variety because they feel that slang is easier to use and easier to understand than standard Indonesian language" (Maulidiya, et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The findings show that there are some reasons that underlying Indonesians Gen Z perform code-switching and use slang on social media, such as for social reasons, their convenience, referential functions like emphasizing the precise message, also affective functions or to be seen as up-to-date, cool, and fancy among friends. Furthermore, there are advantages, such as increasing language awareness of language used in social media and daily conversation, code-switching as one of the communication strategies, and for ease to make a friend on social media. However, there is also a disadvantage. Most Indonesians Gen Z rarely use Bahasa Indonesia even though it's their standard variety. They feel that slang language is more comfortable and not rigid.

References

- Al-Ani, A., & Ibrahim, H.A. (2015). A study of code-switching among EFL learners. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309419008_A_Study_of_Code_Switching_among_EFL_Learners.

- Amir, K., & Azisah, S. (2017). Gender analysis on slang language in students' daily conversation. *ETERNAL (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 3(2), 229-243. <https://doi.org/10.24252/Eternal.V32.2017.A10>
- Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(1), 79-95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1>
- Ariasih, N. P. L., Jendra, I. M. I. I., & Sulatra, I. K. (2021). Types of code switching found in the twitters of the Indonesian kpop fans. *Journal of Language and Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 96-108. <https://doi.org/10.22334/traverse.v2i2.36>
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., Sorensen, C., & Razavieh, A. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (8th Ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Astuti, C. W. (2020). Language awareness: Language use and reasons for code-switching. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 23(1), 116-130. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v23i1.2477>
- Bin, X., & Mimi, L. (2014). A sociopragmatic analysis of Chinese-English codeswitching in advertising discourse. <https://doi.org/10.24308/iass-2014-156>
- Budiasa, I., Savitri, P. W., Dewi, S.S.A.A.Sg. (2021). Slang language in Indonesian social media. *Lingual: Journal Of Language And Culture*, 11(1), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.24843/LJLC.2021.v11.i01.p06>
- Chen, L. (2006). *An Introduction to Linguistics*. Jilin: Jilin University Press.
- Dai, W., & He, Z. (2010). *A new concise course in linguistics for students of English* (2nd ed.). Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Dewi, H. C. (2021). Code switching used by Indonesian celebrities in social media. *Deiksis*, 13(3), 222-230.
- Finegan, E. (2008). *Language: Its structures and use* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Gonulal, T. (2019). The use of Instagram as a mobile-assisted language learning tool. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 10(3), 309-323.
- Gumperz, J.J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herman & Rajagukguk, J. (2019). An English oblique translation analysis of "Twitter" social networking website into Indonesian: An applied linguistics study. *International and Public Affairs*, 3(1), 6-12. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ipa.20190301.12>
- Holmes, J. (2008). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (3rd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Holmes, J., & Wilson, N. (2017). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Hutajulu, L.S.F., & Herman. (2019). Analysis of illocutionary act in the movie "You are my home" English subtitle. *Journal of English Educational Study*, 2(1), 29-36.
- Jendra, I. M. I. (2010). *Sociolinguistics: The study of societies' language*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Maulidiya, R., Wijaya, S. E., Mauren, C., Adha, T. P., & Pandin, M. G. R. (2021, December 29). Language development of slang in the younger generation in the digital era. *Preprints*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/xs7kd>

- Nelissen, E. (2018, April 12). How digital media is changing the way we talk. Retrieved from <https://blog.degruyter.com/digital-media-changing-way-talk/>
- Press-Reynolds, K. (2021, November 1). Facebook wants to attract young people, but Gen Z teens say it's a 'boomer social network' made for 'old people'. Insider. Retrieved from <https://www.insider.com/facebook-gen-z-teens-boomer-social-network-leaks-2021-10>.
- Rizkyna, P. C., Nisa, M. D. K., Aulia, A. N., & Pandin, M. G. R. (2021, December 30). Analysis of mixed Indonesian language with other languages on social media. *Preprints*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/6pu35>.
- Saputra, A. (2019). Survei penggunaan media sosial di kalangan mahasiswa Kota Padang menggunakan teori uses and gratifications. *Jurnal Dokumentasi Dan Informasi*, 40(2), 207-216. <https://doi.org/10.14203/j.baca.v40i2.476>.
- Septiani, M., Petrus, I., & Yunus, M. (2018, November). The use of code-switching in social media (line) by alumni of SMAN Sumatera Selatan. *Sriwijaya University Learning and Education International Conference*, 3(1), 725-736.
- Setiawan, D. (2016). English code switching in Indonesian language. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(7), 1545-1552. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.040707>.
- Silaban, S., & Marpaung, T. I. (2020). An analysis of code-mixing and code-switching used by Indonesia Lawyers Club on TV One. *Journal of English Teaching as a Foreign Language*, 6(3), 1-17.
- Tarihoran, N., Fachriyah, E., Tressyalina, T., & Sumirat, I. R. (2022). The impact of social media on the use of code mixing by generation Z. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM)*, 16(07), 54–69. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v16i07.27659>.
- Trimastuti, W. (2017). An analysis of slang words used in social media. *Jurnal Dimensi Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 5(2), 64-68. <https://doi.org/10.24269/dpp.v5i2.497>.
- Ulya, C., Rohmadi, M., Putri, U. R., Wulansari, K., & Sudaryanto, M. (2021, May). Jawanesia and Javenglish phenomenon in tweet on twitter social media. *MICOSS 2020: Proceedings of the 1st MICOSS Mercuru Buana International Conference on Social Sciences, MICOSS 2020, September 28-29, 2020, Jakarta, Indonesia* (p. 367). European Alliance for Innovation.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2010). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell publishing.
- Wijanti, W. (2014). Bahasa Indonesia/English code switching. In *International Conference on Economics, Education and Humanities (ICEEH'14)* (pp. 101-104).
- Wijayanti, S. H., & Sihotang, K. (2021). How Indonesian millennial generations communicate on social media. *Review of International Geographical Education Online*, 11(8), 1337-1350.
- Zhou, Y., & Fan, Y. (2013). A sociolinguistic study of American slang. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3, 2209-2213.