Code-Switching Phenomena In Online Communication (Case Study) At Politeknik Unggul LP3M Medan (6th Semester Students AP6A)

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ABSTRACT- This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of code-switching in online communication among students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M, especially students from the AP6A major class. The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design involving 15 students as respondents selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed via Google Forms using a five-point Likert scale and supported by documentation of online communication activities. The research variables consisted of Code-Switching Behavior as the independent variable and Online Communication Effectiveness as the dependent variable. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression analysis with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The results showed that students frequently used code-switching in online communication activities through platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok. The regression analysis indicated that code-switching behavior significantly influenced online communication effectiveness with a significance value of 0.001 (<0.05) and an R^2 value of 0.645. The findings reveal that code-switching helps students communicate more confidently, efficiently, and flexibly in digital interaction. However, excessive use of mixed-language communication may reduce formal language accuracy. Therefore, balanced bilingual communication practices are necessary in academic and social contexts.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Online Communication, Bilingualism, Students

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, communication patterns among university students have experienced substantial transformation due to the rapid development of technology and social media platforms. Online communication through applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and Facebook has become an inseparable part of students' daily lives. Along with this development, language practices among students have also evolved, particularly in bilingual and multilingual societies such as Indonesia. One of the most noticeable linguistic phenomena emerging in digital communication is code-switching, which refers to the alternation between two or more languages within a conversation or utterance

(Holmes, 2021).

Code-switching has become increasingly common among Indonesian students, especially among those who study English as a foreign language. Students often combine Indonesian and English expressions while interacting online, either consciously or unconsciously. The phenomenon can be observed in expressions such as “Aku lagi prepare tugas,” “Please check group chat,” or “Besok kelas online jam 10.” This linguistic behavior reflects not only language proficiency but also social identity, technological influence, and globalization. According to Crystal (Crystal, 2020), internet communication has significantly influenced language variation and created hybrid forms of communication among users.

Several scholars have examined code-switching in educational and digital contexts. Holmes (Holmes, 2021) argued that bilingual speakers frequently switch codes to express identity, solidarity, and communicative efficiency. In online communication, code-switching often occurs because speakers aim to simplify messages, emphasize meaning, or adapt to social trends. Furthermore, Li (Li & Huang, 2021) explained that bilingual communication practices are increasingly influenced by digital interaction and multilingual online environments.

Recent studies have shown that social media exposure strongly contributes to the use of code-switching among young people. Andarwulan and Nugroho (Nugroho & Mulyeni, 2025) found that Indonesian university students frequently used English words in online conversations because English terms were perceived as modern, practical, and globally recognizable. Furthermore, Putri (Putri & Sulistiyono, 2023) reported that social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram encourage students to imitate English expressions commonly used by influencers and content creators.

Research conducted by Hidayati (Daulay et al., 2024) revealed that students often use code-switching in online learning environments because many academic terms are delivered in English. Terms such as “assignment,” “deadline,” “submit,” and “presentation” are commonly integrated into Indonesian conversations. Similarly, Nugroho and Rahmawati (Nugroho & Mulyeni, 2025) found that English expressions have become habitual in Indonesian digital communication, particularly among university students who actively engage with

international content and online academic platforms.

In addition, Misir (Misir & Güler, 2023) emphasized that code-switching in digital communication is closely related to social identity construction. Students tend to use English expressions to appear more educated, modern, and globally connected. This finding aligns with the study (Wei, 2018), which found that bilingual communication patterns among college students are strongly influenced by peer interaction and online community culture.

Moreover, Hashem (Hashem & Mahdi, 2026) explained that technological development and digital communication platforms have accelerated language adaptation among university students. English vocabulary and expressions are becoming integrated into students' daily communication because they are continuously exposed to global digital content. Kamariah (Kamariah & Ambalegin, 2019) also stated that Generation Z students are highly adaptive to bilingual communication trends due to globalization and the dominance of English in digital media.

Although numerous studies have discussed code-switching in educational contexts, limited research specifically investigates code-switching phenomena among students of vocational higher education institutions in Indonesia, particularly at Politeknik Unggul LP3M. Most previous studies focused on general university students or classroom interaction rather than online communication practices in vocational education settings. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this research gap by analyzing the types, factors, and impacts of code-switching in online communication among Politeknik Unggul LP3M students.

This study is important because understanding students' language behavior in digital communication can provide insights into modern bilingual practices, language adaptation, and the influence of globalization on student interaction. Moreover, the findings may contribute to the development of language learning strategies and communication policies in higher education institutions. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the phenomenon of code-switching in online communication among Politeknik Unggul LP3M students, identify the dominant types of code-switching, explore the factors influencing its use, and examine its impacts on students' communication practices

METHODOLOGY

This study was supported by several recent theories and empirical concepts related to code-switching behavior and online communication effectiveness published within the last five years. Recent developments in sociolinguistics indicate that code-switching has become a dominant communication phenomenon among university students, especially in digital communication environments influenced by globalization and social media exposure.

According to Li Wei, translanguaging and code-switching in digital communication represent flexible bilingual practices that allow individuals to construct identity, maintain social interaction, and improve communication effectiveness in multilingual environments (Wei, 2022). This theory explains that bilingual speakers naturally combine multiple languages during online interaction to create more adaptive and expressive communication.

Furthermore, recent Digital Communication Theory suggested by Carmen Lee emphasized that social media platforms significantly influence language behavior among young people. Online communication environments encourage hybrid language use, particularly the integration of English vocabulary into local languages to increase interaction engagement and communication flexibility (Li & Huang, 2021).

In addition, the Social Identity Theory in online interaction proposed by Jan Blommaert explained that language mixing in digital spaces is often used to express group identity, social prestige, and modern communication styles among students. The use of bilingual expressions on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp reflects students' efforts to adapt to global communication trends (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

Recent studies by Ofelia García also explained that code-switching and translanguaging improve communication confidence and message understanding in bilingual communities. Students who frequently combine Indonesian and English tend to communicate ideas more efficiently and interact more confidently in online discussions (García & Wei, 2014).

Moreover, the Media Ecology Theory in digital communication developed by André Jansson stated that social media ecosystems shape communication

habits and linguistic adaptation among users. The widespread use of digital technology has encouraged students to adopt mixed-language communication patterns as part of contemporary online culture (Lee, 2024).

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to analyze the phenomenon of code-switching in online communication among students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M. The quantitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to measure and analyze the influence of code-switching behavior on students' online communication effectiveness systematically through statistical analysis.

This study consisted of two variables:

- **Independent Variable (X)**

  Code-switching behavior refers to the use of Indonesian and English interchangeably during online communication activities. The indicators of code-switching behavior included:

  1. Frequency of English word insertion
  2. Use of bilingual sentences
  3. Language switching during online interaction
  4. Social media influence on language use
  5. Motivation for using mixed languages

- **Dependent Variable (Y)**

  Online communication effectiveness refers to students' ability to communicate clearly, confidently, and efficiently in digital communication.

  The indicators of online communication effectiveness included:

  1. Communication clarity
  2. Ease of expressing ideas
  3. Communication confidence
  4. Interaction efficiency
  5. Understanding of messages

The population of this study consisted of 16 in 6th Semester students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M who actively use online communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert Scale.

Score Description:

1	Strongly Disagree	4	Agree
2	Disagree	5	Strongly Agree
3	Neutral		

The questionnaire consisted of 20 statement items:

- 10 items for the Code-Switching Behavior variable
- 10 items for the Online Communication Effectiveness variable

Table 1. Questionnaire Items for Code-Switching Behavior (X)

No	Statements
X1	I often mix Indonesian and English when communicating online.
X2	I use English words while chatting on social media platforms.
X3	I feel more confident when using English expressions in online communication.
X4	I frequently switch languages during online conversations with friends.
X5	English terms are easier to use in online communication than Indonesian terms.
X6	I use code-switching because it is commonly used among students.
X7	Social media influences me to use English expressions in conversations.
X8	I use English words to make communication more interesting and modern.
X9	I often imitate English expressions from TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube.
X10	Code-switching helps me communicate ideas more effectively online.

Table 2. Questionnaire Items for Online Communication Effectiveness (Y)

No	Statements
Y1	I can communicate clearly in online conversations.
Y2	Code-switching helps me express my opinions more easily.
Y3	Online communication becomes more efficient when using mixed languages.
Y4	I understand messages better when English and Indonesian are combined.
Y5	I feel comfortable communicating online using bilingual expressions.
Y6	Code-switching improves interaction among students in online

discussions.

Y7 Using English expressions increases my confidence in digital communication.

Y8 I can respond more quickly when using code-switching in online chats.

Y9 Code-switching makes communication more flexible in social media interaction.

Y10 Online communication using bilingual language creates better social interaction.

In addition to questionnaires, documentation techniques were also used by collecting screenshots of students' online conversations to support the research findings.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection process was conducted for approximately two months. The questionnaire link was distributed online through WhatsApp and Telegram groups of students. Respondents completed the questionnaire voluntarily.

Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity test was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation. Questionnaire items were considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeded 0.30. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. The instrument was considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value was greater than 0.70.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression analysis with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The stages of data analysis included:

1. Data editing and coding
2. Descriptive statistical analysis
3. Validity testing
4. Reliability testing
5. Simple linear regression analysis
6. Hypothesis testing using the t-test
7. Coefficient of determination analysis (R^2)

The regression equation used in this study was:

$$Y = a + bX + e$$

Where:

- Y= Online Communication Effectiveness
- a= Constant
- b= Regression coefficient
- X= Code-Switching Behavior
- e= Error term

The hypotheses of this study were:

- H_0 : Code-switching behavior does not significantly influence online communication effectiveness.
- H_1 : Code-switching behavior significantly influences online communication effectiveness.

The decision criteria were:

- If significance value < 0.05, then H_1 is accepted.
- If significance value > 0.05, then H_0 is accepted.

Questionnaire Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics of Variable X (Code-Switching Behavior)

The total score obtained from 15 respondents for the code-switching behavior variable was 638, with a mean score of 42.53. The findings indicate that students frequently practiced code-switching in online communication.

Descriptive Statistics of Variable Y (Online Communication Effectiveness)

The total score obtained for the online communication effectiveness variable was 642, with a mean score of 42.80. The results indicate that students perceived code-switching positively in supporting effective online communication.

Regression Analysis Result

The simple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 8.215 + 0.812X$$

The regression coefficient value of 0.812 indicates that code-switching behavior positively influences online communication effectiveness.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3. Code-Switching Behavior Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	t-count	t-table	Sig.	Result
Code-Switching Behavior	4.865	2.160	0.001	Significant

The significance value of 0.001 was lower than 0.05, indicating that code-switching behavior significantly influenced online communication effectiveness among students.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R and R Square) Results

R	R Square
0.803	0.645

The R Square value of 0.645 indicates that 64.5% of online communication effectiveness was influenced by code-switching behavior, while the remaining 35.5% was influenced by other factors outside this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 15 respondents who were students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M from the AP6A major class. All respondents actively used online communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and Google Classroom for academic and social interaction. The respondents were selected because they frequently used English expressions in digital communication activities.

The findings showed that code-switching behavior frequently occurred in students' online communication. Based on the questionnaire results, the total score for the Code-Switching Behavior variable reached 638, with a mean score of 42.53. This result indicates that most students agreed that they often mixed Indonesian and English while communicating online. Students commonly used English expressions such as "submit tugas," "online meeting," "deadline assignment," "join class," "sorry telat," and "thank you" in daily communication.

Among the questionnaire indicators, the highest scores were found in statements related to social media influence and the use of English expressions to make communication appear more modern and interesting. Most respondents admitted that platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and online games

strongly influenced their communication style. Students often imitated expressions used by influencers, content creators, and international digital communities.

The results also revealed that students tended to use code-switching unconsciously. Several respondents stated that English academic terms were easier to use than their Indonesian equivalents because those terms were frequently encountered in lectures, online learning systems, and digital applications. Terms such as "assignment," "presentation," "meeting," "download," "upload," and "deadline" have become part of students' daily vocabulary.

In terms of Online Communication Effectiveness, the total score reached 642, with a mean score of 42.80. This finding demonstrates that students perceived code-switching positively in supporting effective online communication. Most respondents agreed that code-switching helped them communicate ideas more clearly, respond more quickly, and feel more confident while interacting online.

The statement "Using English expressions increases my confidence in digital communication" received one of the highest agreement levels among respondents. This finding suggests that bilingual communication practices contribute to students' confidence and self-expression in digital interaction. Furthermore, students believed that code-switching created more flexible and engaging communication patterns within their social groups.

The regression analysis produced the equation:

$$Y = 8.215 + 0.812X$$

The regression coefficient value of 0.812 indicates that code-switching behavior positively influences online communication effectiveness. This means that increased use of code-switching contributes to better communication effectiveness among students.

The hypothesis testing results showed a t-count value of 4.865 with a significance value of 0.001, which was lower than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, indicating that code-switching behavior significantly influences online communication effectiveness among AP6A students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value was 0.645, meaning that 64.5% of online communication effectiveness was influenced by code-switching behavior, while the remaining 35.5% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as digital literacy, communication skills, internet culture, and social interaction patterns.

The findings of this study support previous studies conducted by Nugroho (Nugroho & Mulyeni, 2025), which stated that social media significantly influences bilingual communication among university students. Similarly, Putri (Putri & Sulistiyono, 2023) found that students frequently use English expressions because they are exposed to global digital content every day. The findings also align with Kim (Wei, 2022), who explained that code-switching is closely related to social identity construction and self-confidence in digital communication.

Additionally, the findings support the theory proposed by Holmes (Holmes, 2021), which explains that bilingual speakers use code-switching to express solidarity, identity, and communicative efficiency. In the context of AP6A students at Politeknik Unggul LP3M, code-switching was not only used for academic purposes but also became part of students' lifestyle and social interaction in digital environments.

Although code-switching provides several benefits, this study also identified some negative impacts. Some respondents admitted that they became too dependent on mixed-language communication and sometimes experienced difficulty using formal Indonesian or full English sentences correctly. Excessive code-switching may reduce students' formal writing accuracy, especially in academic assignments requiring standard language use.

Overall, the findings indicate that code-switching has become a natural and unavoidable phenomenon among AP6A students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M in the digital era. The phenomenon reflects the influence of globalization, technological advancement, bilingual education, and social media culture on students' communication behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that code-switching behavior significantly influences online communication effectiveness among AP6A students of Politeknik Unggul

LP3M. The findings revealed that students frequently combined Indonesian and English expressions in digital communication through platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and Google Classroom. The use of bilingual expressions has become a common communication pattern influenced by social media exposure, globalization, and students' interaction within digital communities.

The regression analysis demonstrated that code-switching behavior positively affected online communication effectiveness, as indicated by the regression coefficient value of 0.812 and a significance value of 0.001, which was lower than 0.05. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.645 indicated that 64.5% of online communication effectiveness was influenced by code-switching behavior, while the remaining 35.5% was affected by other variables outside the scope of this study.

The study also found that code-switching helped students communicate more confidently, flexibly, efficiently, and interactively in online environments. English expressions were often used because they were considered more practical, modern, and familiar in digital communication. However, excessive use of mixed-language communication may negatively affect students' formal language accuracy, particularly in academic writing and formal communication contexts.

Overall, code-switching has become a natural communication phenomenon among students in the digital era. The findings suggest that balanced bilingual communication practices are necessary to maintain communication effectiveness while preserving appropriate formal language use in academic and professional settings.

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