THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA TIK TOK ON THE USE OF CODE MIXING BY GENERATION Z

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Abstract: . This study examines the impact of TikTok on the prevalence of code-mixing among Generation Z in Indonesia. By blending English and Indonesian, TikTok users creatively express themselves and construct their identities, influenced by the platform's global trends and interactive nature. Employing Muysken's (2000) typology of code-mixing, the research analyzes patterns of insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization observed in TikTok content. Findings reveal that factors such as globalization, identity construction, peer influence, and content adaptation contribute significantly to the phenomenon. This research underscores the dynamic role of social media in shaping linguistic behavior and its implications for sociolinguistic theory and language education

INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media has significantly influenced language use among Generation Z, particularly through platforms such as TikTok. TikTok as a Global social media platform, has become a space where users creatively express themselves through videos, often blending languages in their communication. Code mixing, defined by Muysken (2000) as the alternation of two or more languages within a single discourse, is a common phenomenon observed on this platform. As Tarihoran and Sumirat (2022) argue, Generation Z, being digital natives, utilize TikTok not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a means of identity construction, often through linguistic creativity. This study focuses on how TikTok influences the prevalence of code mixing among Generation Z, particularly in Indonesia, where bilingualism is widespread.

Exploring the relationship between TikTok and code mixing among Generation Z is crucial in understanding the sociolinguistic dynamics of digital communication. According to Husna and Mairita (2024), TikTok significantly shapes Gen Z's content consumption and linguistic behavior, making it an essential subject of study in the field of sociolinguistics. Additionally, analyzing code mixing provides insights into cultural hybridity and the evolving role of English as a global language in non-native contexts (Susanti et al., 2024). Understanding this phenomenon also contributes to broader discussions on language preservation and the impact of globalization on linguistic

identity. This study addresses two research questions: (1) How does social media TikTok affect the way Generation Z mixes languages? and (2) Why do Generation Z users mix English and Indonesian in TikTok conversations? The objectives are to investigate the patterns and motivations behind code mixing in TikTok content and to analyze its implications for language use and identity among Generation Z.

This study adopts Muysken's (2000) typology of code mixing, which categorizes code mixing into three types: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. This framework provides a comprehensive lens to examine how Indonesian and English are mixed in TikTok content. Previous studies, such as those by Aslim et al. (2024), emphasize the prevalence of insertional code mixing among influencers, which is likely to be mirrored in TikTok content by Generation Z.

The article is organized as follows: The first section reviews relevant literature, highlighting studies on code mixing and social media's impact on language use. The second section discusses the methodology, focusing on qualitative and quantitative analyses of TikTok content. The third section presents the findings, examining patterns and motivations of code mixing in Generation Z's TikTok interactions. The final section discusses the implications of these findings for sociolinguistic theory and language education.

Sometimes languages are mixed or switched from one language to another one, a phenomenon known as code-mixing. Code-mixing refers to the use of more than one language in the same utterance, where two or more languages are blended across various linguistic units. It occurs when speakers shift from one language to another within a single utterance, both in formal and informal contexts (Yelliza, 2023). This behavior is particularly common in multilingual societies, such as Indonesia, where various languages coexist and interact. In fact, code-mixing is a natural form of communication in such environments, and it is especially noticeable among young people, where the blending of English and Indonesian is widespread.

The use of code-mixing has been extensively discussed in academic literature. According to Muysken (2000), code-mixing can be defined as the phenomenon where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence. This suggests that code-mixing occurs when speakers incorporate elements from one language while primarily using another, often in informal interactions. Muysken's theory categorizes this as the blending of linguistic units within a sentence dominated by another language. Further research supports this view. Zebua et al. (2025) observe that on social media platforms, such as Instagram, code-mixing reflects broader cultural shifts, with English often used as a symbol of modernity and education. Yusuf and Gapur (2024) note that in Indonesia, media outlets, including TV shows, frequently mix English and Indonesian to appeal to a wider audience, reflecting linguistic trends among youth. Ezeh et al. (2022) argue that code-mixing can be a strategic tool for capturing attention and engaging with diverse audiences, particularly in digital spaces.

In conclusion, code-mixing enriches communication by bridging cultural and linguistic gaps. It reflects not only the linguistic flexibility of speakers but also the broader social and cultural dynamics in a multilingual society like Indonesia. The strategic use of code-mixing, particularly in digital media, highlights how language can serve as a powerful tool for identity construction and social engagement.

Generation Z (Gen Z), typically defined as individuals born between the mid- 1990s and early 2010s, is a generation that has grown up in a world shaped by rapid technological advancements and the omnipresence of the internet. According to Bratina and Faganel (2024), Gen Z is characterized by their comfort with technology and their ability to filter, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources. This generation is

particularly adept at navigating digital spaces and tends to favor platforms that offer a more authentic and relatable user experience compared to traditional forms of media. For example, they often perceive content from influencers on social media as more genuine than traditional advertising, a trend that underscores their preference for personal and relatable content. In line with this, Lim (2024) identifies transparency and authenticity as key values for Gen Z, particularly in an era where information is readily accessible and constantly changing. These values are critical when considering how Gen Z engages with content, as they prioritize honesty and openness in the media they consume.

Waworuntu et al. (2022) also highlight that Gen Z, having grown up in a highly connected, fast-paced digital world, is highly engaged with online content, particularly from influencers across various platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. This constant exposure to digital media has led to new patterns of communication, including the use of code-mixing, where Gen Z are increasingly blending languages on social media. This linguistic behavior reflects their broader approach to navigating multiple cultural and social contexts in the digital age, combining local and global influences in their daily interactions.

TikTok, a phenomenal social media platform, is rapidly dominating the Indonesian digital scene with impressive speed. Since its launch, TikTok has captured the hearts of Indonesians, particularly the younger generation, becoming one of the country's most popular apps (Kaseger, E., Worang, F. G., & Gunawan, E., 2024). As noted by Anderson (2020), Bhandari & Bimo (2020), and Zulli & Zulli (2020), TikTok stands out from other social media platforms in that it focuses more on the imitation and replication of content rather than messaging or simply following other users, which is typical of many other platforms. One of the central findings of Harahap et al. (2024) is that TikTok serves as a vital platform for self-expression and identity construction, especially when it comes to beauty. The platform's format of short videos, trends, and challenges encourages users to create and share personal content while actively engaging with ongoing trends. In this way, TikTok fosters a fluid and dynamic process of identity formation, where beauty is simultaneously individual and collective, both authentic and constructed. In addition to its role in self-expression, TikTok has also contributed to linguistic changes, particularly in terms of code-mixing. Code-mixing, the blending of two or more languages within a conversation or piece of content, is becoming increasingly common on TikTok, especially among Generation Z users. This linguistic phenomenon is closely tied to the platform's diverse, multicultural audience. As TikTok users often engage with content in multiple languages primarily Indonesian and English code-mixing becomes a natural part of their communication. Tarihoran and Sumirat (2022) explore how TikTok has become a space where users, particularly from Generation Z, blend languages in their captions, comments, and videos, reflecting the globalized and interconnected nature of their digital interactions. Furthermore, as noted by Alhusna and Febriana (2022), influencers on TikTok often use code-mixing to resonate with a wider audience, as it allows them to merge local cultural elements with global trends. This practice not only reflects a more fluid sense of identity but also serves as a strategic tool for engagement, making content more relatable and appealing to a diverse range of viewers.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach to understanding the phenomenon of code-mixing among TikTok users from Generation Z. This approach is chosen because it allows researchers to delve deeply into the experiences and language patterns used by respondents. The research utilizes a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on

narrative data analysis from the respondents, as well as data collected from comments and videos posted by Gen Z users on TikTok. With this method, it is hoped that insight can be gained into how and why Tiktok users from Generation Z perform code-mixing in their conversations on the platform (Tarihoran & Sumirat 2022; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

Respondents

The respondents in this study are TikTok users of Generation Z, ranging in age from 21 to 29. Participant selection was done using the Qualitative Descriptive Method, focusing on certain characteristics: active TikTok users who frequently interact on the platform and tend to use code-mixing in their conversations. Of twenty willing participants, twenty were selected based on these criteria to provide relevant data aligned with the research focus (Tarihoran & Sumirat, 2022; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

Instruments

The instruments used in this study included questionnaires disseminated through WhatsApp, as well as data collected from comments and videos posted by Gen Z users on TikTok. The questionnaires contained multiple questions designed to uncover habits, reasons, and contexts surrounding code mixing and switching among Generation Z on TikTok. Choosing WhatsApp as a dissemination tool aimed to simplify respondent participation efficiently while ensuring gathered data could be direct and relevant. Each question in the questionnaire focused on aspects related to the first research question—how TikTok influences code-mixing—and the second research question—why mixed-language usage occurs in TikTok conversations (Ramsden & Talbot, 2024; Lim, 2024). Additionally, data collected from comments and videos posted by Gen Z users on TikTok, which provided valuable insight into the language patterns and behaviors.

Procedures

Data collection proceeded through distributing questionnaires to selected respondents using qualitative descriptive sampling techniques. After sending out questionnaires via WhatsApp, respondents were given enough time to complete and return them. During this phase, researchers also provided additional clarification if needed of terminology or instructions within the questionnaire. Following questionnaire compilation came deep-interview stages conducted with selected responders aiming further exploration into underlying reasons behind mixed-language usage within TikTok chats—all interactions noted down analyzed comprehensively understanding broader implications behind observed phenomena therein Cheng & Li (2024); Husna & Mairita (2024). Furthermore, data was collected from comments and videos posted by Gen Z users on TikTok, which was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to code-mixing and language use.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using a qualitative approach. The main focus of this analysis was to understand how Generation Z TikTok users use code-mixing in their communication and to identify the reasons and factors that influence these habits. The analysis process involved coding the themes that emerged from the respondents' answers, which were then grouped to identify patterns of code-mixing use. In this case, the researcher will trace the contextualization of each use of code-mixing in conversations on TikTok, as well as explore how it relates to the social identity and communication style of users (Tarihoran & Sumirat, 2022; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Demographics of Respondents

The research respondents included 20 active TikTok users from Generation Z, between the ages of 21 and 29. These people were selected based on their high frequency of interaction with the platform and their reported use of code-mixing in TikTok activities. The gender composition was well balanced, with both male and female respondents actively contributing to the survey data. All of the respondents identify as bilingual, with varying levels of English language proficiency, and identify TikTok as a primary source of entertainment and self-expression. The majority of participants were college or university students and young professionals who use TikTok as a means of communication, creativity, and entertainment.

Types of Code-mixing
Insertion

English words are inserted into Indonesian sentences for stylistic or expressive purposes. For example:

"endorse luxury brand"
"fashion week"
"vibesnya mahal banget"
"premium banget"
"classy and gorgeous"

These words do not have direct translations that are often used in everyday Indonesian, so they are mostly used to give a modern or "global" impression.

Alternation

There is a change of language between clauses.
"bukan cakep biasa, cakep banget gila langsung insecure, cantiknya unreal banget"

The alternation between Indonesian
("cakep banget") and English ("unreal banget") gives a dramatic effect in expressing feelings or descriptions.

Congruent Lexicalization

The merging of Indonesian and English grammatical structures is seen in some phrases
"vibesnya mahal banget",
"manifesting punya persahabatan kaya bela dan lilie".
The user mixes English elements into grammatically complete Indonesian sentences.

Most Popular Utterances

The popular sentences in this example show the use of a mixture of languages to express admiration, aspiration and emotional connection. Some frequently used patterns:
Expressing admiration or aspiration
"vibesnya mahal banget"
"cantiknya unreal banget"
"kenapa dia berdamage sekali"
"manifesting bisa secakep ini"
Words like "vibes", "unreal", and "manifested" create the impression of a modern, luxurious lifestyle or an aspirational goal.

Social context and pop culture
Reference to *fashion week, circle Gigi Hadid*, dan *miss world* show the influence of globalization and social media trends on user thinking.

Expression of emotions
Phrases like "huhuhu", "langsung insecure", and "gila langsung insecure" demonstrate the use of mixed language to add emotional depth.

Factors Behind Code-Mixing and Code-Switching on TikTok
This study revealed several factors that encourage code-mixing and code- switching behavior among TikTok users:

1. Globalization and Language Exposure
    The global dominance of English has a significant influence on the respondents' linguistic habits. The amount of English content on TikTok, from challenges to trends, makes it a natural part of their vocabulary.
2. Identity Construction
    Respondents regularly use code-mixing as a tool to somehow project a modern, educated or trendy identity. Mixing English with Indonesian is considered a symbol of cultural hybridity and modernity.
3. Content Adaptation
    As Highlighted by Tarihoran and Sumirat (2022), TikTok's emphasis on global trends promoted language creativity. Respondents adapted their language use to suit the informal and trending characteristic of the platform. For example, using English phrases such as "Check this out!" or "Let's go!" helped involve a wider audience.
    Code-mixing can often arise from the need for efficiency or accuracy in communication. Respondents described that certain concepts or idioms are easier to convey in English than in Indonesian, mostly for technical terminology or those related to pop culture.
4. Peer Influence
    The highly interactive nature of TikTok encourages a culture of imitation and collaboration. Respondents acknowledged that they picked up mixed language trends and popular phrases after seeing them in videos made by influencers or peers.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals the significant influence of TikTok on the linguistic behavior of Generation Z, particularly in the use of code-mixing and code-switching. TikTok's global reach and interactive nature have made it a central platform where bilingual users blend Indonesian and English to convey modernity and engage with broader audiences. This phenomenon reflects the growing influence of globalization on language, with English often symbolizing sophistication, education, and a global outlook. Through TikTok, users have adopted linguistic trends that align with the informal and dynamic nature of the platform.

The practice of code-mixing is strongly tied to identity construction and social interaction. Generation Z leverages code-mixing not only as a means of communication but also as a tool to project a trendy, modern persona. The blending of languages allows users to express emotions, aspirations, and creativity more effectively. TikTok's collaborative environment further reinforces this behavior, as users adopt popular phrases and linguistic styles from influencers and peers. This interactive culture strengthens the role of code-mixing in shaping digital communication among the youth.

Linguistic analysis of TikTok content reveals three main forms of code-mixing: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. These forms enable users to merge languages creatively, producing expressions that capture admiration, emotions, and aspirations. The use of code-mixing demonstrates cultural hybridity, where traditional linguistic norms coexist with globalized expressions. This duality highlights how digital communication facilitates both linguistic innovation and cultural exchange.

While code-mixing fosters creativity and enhances communication, it also raises concerns about the preservation of native languages and linguistic identity. The dominance of English in digital spaces like TikTok may contribute to the gradual erosion of local languages and cultural uniqueness. As digital communication continues to evolve, it is essential to find a balance between embracing global trends and maintaining linguistic diversity. Future studies should investigate the long-term implications of code-mixing on language proficiency and cultural identity, especially in multilingual societies like Indonesia.

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