

The Use of Code-Mixing By Edu-Influencers in Social Media: A Communication Strategy in Sociolinguistic Perspective

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.11010088>

Received: 26 January 2026; Accepted: 31 January 2026; Published: 11 February 2026

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of code-mixing in educational content produced by edu-influencers on social media from a sociolinguistic and digital discourse perspective. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyzes ten selected utterances containing Indonesian–English code-mixing. The classification of code-mixing types is based on Muysken’s (2000) typology, namely insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. The findings reveal that insertion is the most dominant type of code-mixing, indicating that Indonesian functions as the matrix language while English elements are embedded mainly in the form of academic terms. Alternation and congruent lexicalization occur less frequently and are used primarily for emphasis and stylistic variation. Functionally, code-mixing serves not only linguistic purposes but also social and symbolic functions, such as conveying academic authority, modernity, and global orientation. In the context of social media, code-mixing functions as a digital communication strategy that helps edu-influencers construct an educative and credible online persona while enhancing audience engagement. This study highlights that code-mixing in educational social media content reflects the intersection of language practices, digital identity, and contemporary educational discourse.

Keywords: Eode-Mixing, Edu-Influencer, Social Media, Sociolinguistics, Digital Discourse

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has brought significant changes in the ways language is used, produced, and consumed. Social media functions not only as a means of interpersonal communication but also as a public space where knowledge, ideas, and values are widely disseminated. In this context, language is no longer neutral; rather, it becomes part of strategies of self-representation and identity construction in digital spaces (Sosrohadi & Wulandari, 2022; Weda et al., 2021; Sukmawaty et al., 2022).

One prominent phenomenon within the social media ecosystem is the emergence of edu-influencers, namely individuals who produce content related to education and learning. Edu-influencers act as mediators between academic knowledge and general audiences, particularly younger generations (Rifai, 2025; Aswad et al., 2019). To reach a broad and heterogeneous audience, they tend to adopt flexible, concise, and engaging language styles, which often involve the use of more than one language.

In sociolinguistic studies, the practice of using more than one language within a single utterance is known as code-mixing (Syukri et al., 2023; Adinda et al., 2025; Rahman, 2018). This phenomenon is commonly found in bilingual and multilingual societies, especially in informal and semi-formal contexts. Muysken (2000) classifies code-mixing into three main types: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, each reflecting different structural patterns and levels of linguistic integration.

Along with the rapid growth of social media, code-mixing is no longer understood merely as a result of

language contact but also as a form of digital discursive practice. Androutsopoulos (2014) emphasizes that language use in social media is performative and audience-oriented. In this context, code-mixing is often employed to construct a modern image, enhance message attractiveness, and adapt to the dynamic norms of digital communication.

In educational content, English occupies a privileged position because it is associated with science, professionalism, and globalization. The use of English terms in educational content is often perceived as enhancing academic legitimacy and intellectual appeal (Davis, 2022; Weda et al., 2022). Bourdieu (1991) refers to this phenomenon as linguistic capital, in which certain languages possess higher symbolic value within specific social contexts.

Although studies on code-mixing have been widely conducted, most research has focused on everyday conversations, formal education settings, or conventional media. Research that specifically examines code-mixing in edu-influencer content on social media—particularly by linking linguistic structural aspects with digital discursive functions—remains relatively limited. Therefore, further studies integrating linguistic analysis with social media contexts in a more in-depth manner are needed.

Based on this background, the present study focuses on the use of code-mixing in education-themed edu-influencer content on social media. This study examines the types of code-mixing employed based on Muysken's (2000) typology and discusses the social and digital functions of these practices. Accordingly, this research is expected to contribute to digital sociolinguistics and to a deeper understanding of educational communication practices in the era of social media. This study aims to: (1) identify and analyze the types of code-mixing used by edu-influencers in educational content on social media based on Muysken's (2000) typology; and (2) explain the functions of code-mixing in social media contexts, particularly in constructing an educational, modern, and credible image and enhancing the attractiveness of digital educational communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Code-Mixing in Sociolinguistic Studies

Code-mixing is a linguistic phenomenon commonly found in bilingual and multilingual societies. In general, code-mixing is understood as the use of elements from two or more languages within a single utterance or discourse without a clear shift in the communicative situation. This phenomenon differs from code-switching, which is often associated with changes in context or topic (Wardhaugh, 2006). From a sociolinguistic perspective, code-mixing is viewed as a reflection of speakers' bilingual competence as well as their strategic language choices.

Muysken (2000) proposes one of the most influential classifications of code-mixing, consisting of insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Insertion refers to the embedding of lexical elements from one language into the structure of another language that functions as the matrix language. Alternation occurs when two languages are used alternately with relatively independent grammatical structures, while congruent lexicalization arises when two languages share comparable grammatical structures, allowing lexical elements to mix flexibly. This typology enables a more systematic analysis of forms of language mixing across various contexts.

In educational discourse, code-mixing is often associated with the use of technical or academic terms derived from English. Wardhaugh (2006) emphasizes that English holds the status of a global language of science, and therefore its elements are frequently retained to maintain semantic precision and academic legitimacy.

B. Social and Ideological Functions of Code-Mixing

Beyond being a structural phenomenon, code-mixing also serves social and ideological functions. Gumperz (1982) explains that the use of more than one language in an utterance can function as contextualization cues, namely signals that help listeners interpret the speaker's intent and the emphasis of a message. In this context,

code-mixing can be used to highlight particular parts of a message, signal social affiliation, or build rapport with the audience.

Myers-Scotton (1993), through the Markedness Model, argues that language choice is not random but rather a strategic decision reflecting the speaker's identity and communicative goals. Languages perceived as "marked" are often used to assert particular identities or create symbolic effects. In educational discourse, the use of English is frequently perceived as a prestige-laden and professional choice. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1991) introduces the concept of linguistic capital, which explains that certain languages possess higher symbolic value within specific social contexts. In educational and digital media domains, English functions as symbolic capital that can enhance speakers' authority and credibility. Therefore, the use of code-mixing in educational content serves not only communicative but also ideological functions.

C. Language and Social Media as Digital Discursive Practices

The development of social media has shifted the ways language is used and understood. Herring (2007) refers to digital communication as computer-mediated communication (CMC), which is characterized by informality, linguistic creativity, and audience orientation. In this context, language practices on social media cannot be separated from visual, temporal, and interactional dimensions.

Androutsopoulos (2014) emphasizes that language use on social media is performative, whereby speakers actively construct digital identities and personas through language choices. Code-mixing becomes one of the discursive strategies used to create impressions of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and relevance within global communities. Tagg (2015) also notes that language in digital spaces tends to be concise and expressive, making language mixing a common strategy for enhancing communicative effectiveness. In the context of influencers, language not only conveys messages but also functions as part of personal branding. Language choices influence how audiences perceive an influencer's credibility, expertise, and approachability. Therefore, the analysis of influencer language must consider both linguistic dimensions and the digital platform context.

D. Code-Mixing in Educational Content on Social Media

Previous studies indicate that code-mixing is frequently found in digital educational content, particularly content targeting younger audiences. The use of English in educational content is often associated with efforts to simplify concepts, align with global trends, and enhance content appeal. However, most studies still treat social media as a background rather than as a central analytical factor. Several studies highlight that the use of English terms in digital education can enhance perceptions of professionalism, but may also risk creating exclusion for audiences with limited language proficiency. This suggests that code-mixing carries complex social implications and must be analyzed contextually.

Thus, the study of code-mixing in edu-influencer content on social media is essential for understanding how this language practice functions not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a strategic mode of educational communication in the digital era.

METHODS

A. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. This approach is chosen because the aim of the study is not to measure frequency statistically, but rather to analyze the forms and functions of code-mixing within social and digital contexts. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of linguistic phenomena as they are used in social media contexts (Creswell, 2014). This study is situated within the field of digital sociolinguistics, which views language as a social practice shaped by social media platforms, audiences, and communicative purposes.

B. Data Source

The data sources of this study consist of educational content produced by edu-influencers on social media. In this study, edu-influencers are defined as individuals who consistently present content related to education, learning, self-development, or academic literacy to the public. The data are drawn from short video posts and/or captions containing elements of code-mixing between Indonesian and English. Indonesian functions as the primary language, while English appears in the form of lexical insertions or language alternations. For research purposes, the analyzed data are written data derived from transcription, allowing the analysis to focus on linguistic aspects.

C. Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative data analysis in this study was conducted through several systematic steps. First, educational social media content produced by selected edu-influencers was observed and transcribed into written form. Second, utterances containing Indonesian–English code-mixing were identified and selected based on predefined criteria. Third, the selected utterances were categorized according to Muysken’s (2000) typology of code-mixing, namely insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization. Finally, each datum was interpreted by examining its linguistic characteristics as well as its social and digital discursive functions, drawing on sociolinguistic and digital discourse theories. This step-by-step procedure ensured analytical consistency and alignment with the research objectives.

RESULTS

A. Findings

To address the first research objective, this section presents the types of code-mixing used by edu-influencers based on Muysken’s (2000) typology. Subsequently, the findings related to the social and digital functions of code-mixing are discussed to address the second research objective.

No	Influencer	Code Mixing Code	Code-Mixing
1	A	<i>Pendidikan bukan cuma soal nilai, tapi bagaimana kita melatih critical thinking sejak dini.</i>	Insertion
2	B	<i>Kalau kamu ingin berkembang, kamu harus punya growth mindset dan disiplin belajar.</i>	Insertion
3	C	<i>Di dunia kerja sekarang, kemampuan problem solving sangat dibutuhkan.</i>	Insertion
4	D	<i>Belajar itu proses panjang, learning takes time, jadi nikmati tahapannya.</i>	Alternation
5	E	<i>Aku jelaskan pelan-pelan supaya kamu paham, so you can understand the concept better.</i>	Alternation
6	A	<i>Di era digital ini, sistem pendidikan harus lebih flexible dan student-centered.</i>	Congruent Lexicalization
7	B	<i>Mahasiswa perlu membangun self-discipline agar proses belajarnya konsisten.</i>	Insertion
8	C	<i>Kalau mau sukses akademik, kamu harus punya tujuan yang well-planned.</i>	Insertion
9	D	<i>Banyak siswa gagal bukan karena tidak pintar, they just don’t manage their time well.</i>	Alternation
10	E	<i>Metode belajar sekarang lebih interactive dan student-friendly dibandingkan dulu.</i>	Congruent Lexicalization

The insertion is the most frequently used type of code-mixing, where English academic terms are embedded into Indonesian sentence structures to convey precise and globally recognized concepts. Alternation appears when influencers switch to full English clauses to emphasize or clarify key messages and enhance persuasive impact. Congruent lexicalization, though less common, reflects bilingual flexibility and is used to present education as modern, interactive, and aligned with digital learning trends.

Data 1

*Pendidikan bukan cuma soal nilai, tapi bagaimana kita melatih **critical thinking** sejak dini.*

Based on Muysken's (2000) typology, this datum is categorized as insertion-type code-mixing, as the English phrase *critical thinking* is embedded within the Indonesian syntactic structure, which functions as the matrix language. The English element does not form an independent grammatical structure.

Linguistically, the use of *critical thinking* functions as an academic term with a specific conceptual meaning. Wardhaugh (2006) notes that code-mixing often occurs when speakers require terms that are more precise or carry higher scientific status, particularly in educational discourse. In the context of social media, this instance of code-mixing also serves as a digital persona-building strategy. Androutsopoulos (2014) explains that language use on social media is performative; thus, the use of English terminology helps influencers construct an image as educational, modern, and aligned with global educational discourse, while simultaneously increasing content appeal for younger audiences.

Data 2

*Kalau kamu ingin berkembang, kamu harus punya **growth mindset** dan disiplin belajar.*

This datum is classified as insertion according to Muysken (2000), as the phrase *growth mindset* is incorporated into an Indonesian sentence without any syntactic shift. Myers-Scotton (1993) argues that language choice reflects the speaker's identity and ideology. The term *growth mindset* represents a modern educational psychology ideology that is currently popular and conveys a scientific and progressive impression. On social media, this term also functions as an educational buzzword that is easily recognizable to audiences. Such code-mixing helps influencers adapt to algorithms and educational content trends that prioritize global terminology to enhance engagement and credibility.

Data 3

*Di dunia kerja sekarang, kemampuan **problem solving** sangat dibutuhkan.*

According to Muysken (2000), this datum belongs to the insertion type, as the English phrase *problem solving* is lexically embedded within an Indonesian structure. Wardhaugh (2006) emphasizes that technical terms are often retained in their original language due to their semantic value and professional status. *Problem solving* functions as a global concept linking education to workplace demands. In the context of social media, the use of this term indicates the influencer's orientation toward career-focused audiences. Code-mixing serves as a means to align educational content with labor-market realities, which are frequently associated with English terminology.

Data 4

*Belajar itu proses panjang, **learning takes time**, jadi nikmati tahapannya.*

It is categorized as alternation, as there is a shift from an Indonesian clause to an English clause that stands as an independent grammatical unit (Muysken, 2000). According to Gumperz (1982), alternation is often used to provide emphasis or additional explanation. The English clause in this datum reinforces the core message about the learning process. In social media contexts, alternation functions as a rhetorical highlight. Language switching captures audience attention and enhances message retention, particularly in short videos or captions

that demand communicative efficiency.

Data 5

Aku jelaskan pelan-pelan supaya kamu paham, so you can understand the concept better.

It classified as alternation, as the English clause appears as a complete syntactic structure separate from the Indonesian clause (Muysken, 2000). Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that linguistic strategies can be used to build rapport. The English clause here functions as an expression of consideration for audience comprehension. In social media contexts, this use of alternation reflects a relaxed and dialogic communication style. The influencer employs code-mixing to establish a personal connection and increase interaction with followers.

Data 6

Di era digital ini, sistem pendidikan harus lebih flexible dan student-centered.

This data falls under congruent lexicalization, as English and Indonesian elements are mixed within a shared grammatical structure (Muysken, 2000). According to Muysken (2000), this type reflects a high level of bilingual competence, allowing speakers to freely select lexical items from both languages. In social media contexts, the terms flexible and student-centered represent global educational discourse. Code-mixing functions as a means of affirming the influencer's position within contemporary digital education discourse.

Data 7

Mahasiswa perlu membangun self-discipline agar proses belajarnya konsisten.

It categorized as insertion, as self-discipline is inserted as a single lexical item into an Indonesian sentence (Muysken, 2000). Holmes (2013) states that language choice reflects social values. This term emphasizes character development as a component of academic success. On social media, the use of this English term strengthens the influencer's branding as a firm, professional, and self-development-oriented figure.

Data 8

Kalau mau sukses akademik, kamu harus punya tujuan yang well-planned.

This example is categorized as insertion, given that an English adjective is integrated into an Indonesian sentence structure (Muysken, 2000). Myers-Scotton (1993) notes that speakers tend to favor linguistic choices that maximize semantic efficiency. The adjective well-planned conveys a complex meaning in a succinct manner. In the context of social media, spatial and temporal constraints encourage the use of code-mixing as a strategic tool for delivering educational messages that are both efficient and engaging.

Data 9

Banyak siswa gagal bukan karena tidak pintar, they just don't manage their time well.

The datum falls under the alternation category because a full English clause is employed after an Indonesian clause (Muysken, 2000). Gumperz (1982) stated that alternation can be used to signal causal relationships. Here, the English clause provides a direct explanation for the prior claim. Within social media discourse, alternation contributes to persuasive effectiveness by lending the message an appearance of neutrality and global relevance, which enhances audience receptivity to motivational content.

Data 10

Metode belajar sekarang lebih interactive dan student-friendly dibandingkan dulu.

This example is identified as congruent lexicalization, as lexical mixing takes place within a single, shared grammatical construction (Muysken, 2000). Fairclough (1995) emphasizes that language functions as a marker of social change. The terms employed here signify a paradigmatic shift in education toward participatory pedagogical approaches. In social media contexts, this use of code-mixing supports influencers in representing education as contemporary, approachable, and responsive to the learning styles of digital-native audiences.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the research findings on the use of code-mixing in edu-influencer content on social media by referring to Muysken's (2000) typology as well as relevant sociolinguistic and digital discourse theories. This discussion revisits the research objectives by interpreting how the identified types of code-mixing function within edu-influencer discourse on social media. The findings are discussed in relation to sociolinguistic theory and digital discourse perspectives to demonstrate how code-mixing supports educational communication and identity construction.

A. The Dominance of Insertion and the Preference for Global Academic Terms

The results of the analysis indicate that the most dominant type of code-mixing is insertion, particularly in the form of inserting English words or phrases such as critical thinking, growth mindset, problem solving, and self-discipline. This finding is consistent with Muysken (2000), who argues that insertion frequently occurs when one language functions as the matrix language (in this case, Indonesian), while the other serves as a source of lexical elements.

The dominance of insertion suggests that edu-influencers do not intend to replace the structure of Indonesian, but rather to enrich educational discourse with global academic terminology. Wardhaugh (2006) explains that technical or conceptual terms are often retained in their original language because they offer greater semantic precision and stronger scientific legitimacy. In educational contexts, English functions as the language of science with high symbolic status. Within social media contexts, this strategy becomes increasingly relevant because audiences—particularly younger generations—are already familiar with English terms in digital educational discourse. Thus, insertion serves not only a linguistic function but also operates as a strategy for adapting to social media audience expectations.

B. Alternation as a Rhetorical Strategy and Message Emphasis

In addition to insertion, this study also identifies the use of alternation, namely the shift from Indonesian clauses to English clauses. According to Muysken (2000), alternation occurs when each language maintains its grammatical structure independently. In the analyzed data, alternation frequently appears in explanatory, emphatic, or motivational segments.

These findings support Gumperz's (1982) view that alternation functions as a contextualization cue, helping audiences identify parts of the message that are considered important. English clauses are used to highlight the core message, producing a stronger rhetorical effect than if the entire message were delivered in a single language. In social media contexts, alternation functions as a digital rhetorical strategy. Language switching attracts audience attention, increases engagement, and helps messages endure within short content formats such as short videos or captions. This aligns with Tagg's (2015) argument that language in digital spaces tends to be concise, expressive, and oriented toward immediate impact.

C. Congruent Lexicalization and the Bilingual Identity of Edu-Influencers

The third type of code-mixing identified is congruent lexicalization, although it occurs less frequently. According to Muysken (2000), this type emerges when speakers possess a bilingual repertoire that allows lexical elements from two languages to be mixed within comparable grammatical structures. The occurrence of congruent lexicalization indicates that some edu-influencers demonstrate a relatively high level of bilingual proficiency and feel comfortable using two languages flexibly. Terms such as student-centered, interactive, and student-friendly represent global educational concepts that have become integrated into local discourse.

On social media, this practice functions as a marker of digital identity. Androutsopoulos (2014) emphasizes that language on social media is used to construct online personas. Congruent lexicalization reinforces the image of edu-influencers as modern, globally oriented individuals who are relevant to international educational developments.

D. Code-Mixing as a Strategy of Persona, Branding, and Engagement

One important finding of this study is that code-mixing cannot be understood solely as a structural linguistic phenomenon, but also as a digital communication strategy. On social media, language functions not only to convey information but also to build persona, credibility, and intimacy with audiences. The use of English in educational content reflects what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as linguistic capital. English carries symbolic value associated with intelligence, professionalism, and modernity. Edu-influencers leverage this symbolic capital to strengthen their position as credible sources of knowledge. Moreover, Myers-Scotton (1993) explains that language choice is often strategic. In social media contexts, code-mixing helps influencers adapt to the logic of digital platforms, where visibility, engagement, and personal image are key factors in content success.

E. Implications for Educational Discourse on Social Media

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that code-mixing has become an integral part of educational discourse on social media. English appears not only as a communicative tool but also as a symbol of modernity, globalization, and academic authority. However, this phenomenon also opens space for critical discussion regarding language accessibility. While code-mixing may enhance content appeal and legitimacy, excessive use of English has the potential to create distance from audiences with limited language proficiency. Therefore, edu-influencers need to balance linguistic strategies with audience inclusivity. Thus, this study affirms that examining code-mixing in the context of edu-influencers on social media is not only relevant to linguistics but also contributes to a broader understanding of educational communication practices in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the use of code-mixing in edu-influencer content on social media by integrating linguistic and digital discourse perspectives. Based on Muysken's (2000) typology, the findings reveal that insertion is the most dominant type of code-mixing, followed by alternation and congruent lexicalization. The dominance of insertion indicates that Indonesian continues to function as the primary language (matrix language), while English elements are used as lexical insertions, particularly in the form of academic terms and global educational concepts.

In terms of function, code-mixing operates not only as a structural linguistic phenomenon but also serves social and discursive purposes. English is used to mark academic concepts, reinforce scientific legitimacy, and convey meaning in a more concise and precise manner. These findings support the views of Wardhaugh (2006) and Myers-Scotton (1993) that language choice is strategic and closely linked to speakers' identity, ideology, and communicative goals.

In the context of social media, code-mixing functions as a digital communication strategy that supports the construction of edu-influencers' personas as modern, global, and credible educational figures. Language switching and mixing also contribute to enhancing message appeal and aligning content with the characteristics of digital audiences. Therefore, this study confirms that code-mixing in educational content on social media represents a complex linguistic practice that reflects the interaction between language, education, and contemporary digital culture.

Financing

The authors did not receive financing for the development of this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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