

Malay–English Code Switching in Political Discourse: A Study of Keluar Sekejap Podcast

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ABSTRACT

Podcasts have become an influential tool of political communication in the modern digital age with its spontaneous and unstructured format that opposes the traditional media and its formality. This paper explores the language process of code switching in Malaysian political podcasts, *Keluar Sekejap*, hosted by Khairy Jamaluddin and Shahril Hamdan. Although code switching is a common practice in a multilingual society of Malaysia, the available literature has mostly been limited to the educational and entertainment settings and there is still a significant gap in understanding the bilingual strategies in political speech. The study applied a qualitative research design approach by conducting a word-to-word analysis of a single episode of a podcast with a former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, to reflect the natural ways of language alternation. The Structural Model of Poplack (1980) leads the analysis in the identification of types of switches, and the Functions Model of Gumperz (1982) to identify the communicative functions. The background information indicates that politicians use Malay-English code switching strategically to clarify key points and establish a relatable connection with a diverse audience. The results indicate that intra-sentential switching is dominant compared to inter-sentential (86.8% vs 13.2%), and that language alternation was strategically used for Idea Organisation (66.33%) and Turn-taking (33.67%). The study finds that code switching performed in the podcast functions to emphasize (36.94%). The study contributes to enhance the understanding of strategic language usage by showing the code-switching as an effective communicative tool in the Malaysian political discourse.

Keywords: Code-Switching, podcasts, political discourse, communicative functions, discourse management

INTRODUCTION

Background Of Study

Podcasts have gained significance in the sharing of views and ideas particularly in the field of political communication in today's world. *Keluar Sekejap*, is a political podcast in Malaysia that is hosted by two Malaysian politicians Khairy Jamaluddin and Shahril Hamdan. This podcast invites guests that have a strong political background like former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to discuss contemporary political events in an informal and conversational style. In such meetings, speakers often employ both Malay and English, indicating the multilingual political nature of Malaysia.

Code switching is simply defined as the act of alternating two or more languages during a conversation. The practice is widespread in multilingual societies, and it is not only practiced in everyday conversations, but also in media and online dialogue. Speakers can alternate between languages to deliver ideas better, highlight some points or establish a connection with their audience (Ismail & Abdullah, 2023). Past analyses on political and digital discourse reveal that code switching can be employed both voluntarily and based on communicative purpose and situational factors instead of unthoughtful usage of language (Sravani et al., 2021).

In the modern digital era, online discussions have moved out of the conventional media to interactive mode such as through social media live streams and podcasts. The podcasts have gained more popularity due to the opportunity to conduct long and unscripted conversations with each other, which seem more natural and authentic than the edited television shows or even the brief news videos. The latest research indicates that the popularity

of podcasts has increased at a high rate as one of the communication methods, particularly among young adults who enjoy on demand and conversational content (Newman et al., 2023). This format empowers speakers to hold free conversations, share personal views and participate in more in-depth conversations without any time restrictions.

The focus of this study is the analysis of the podcast discourse since the interaction is spontaneous speech. This enables the analysis of natural language like code switching to be more convenient. The podcasts enable the speakers to look more relaxed and relatable, unlike speeches or press conferences which are more formal and scripted. Political podcasts give an opportunity where political leaders can talk about national matters, policies and other developments in a casual conversational style. It has been demonstrated that political figures resort more to the podcasting platform to establish the personal bond with the audience and speak more informally (Chatpunnarangsee & Osatananda, 2023).

Code switching has been widely researched in the education, daily communication and entertainment media field. However, there is limited research in the field of political discourse especially in Malaysia. Most of the latest Malaysian research focuses on the issues of code switching among students, educators, or social media influencers (Ismail & Abdullah, 2023). Little research is conducted regarding how politicians apply the techniques of bilingualism in the context of podcasts. This creates a gap since political podcasts are becoming one of the ways to communicate with people, but the linguistic patterns of such conversations are restricted (Treffers-Daller et al., 2022).

Keluar Sekejap is an appropriate platform to analyse code switching in Malaysian political discourse, with which the use of English and Malay often interchanges. Interactions between hosts and guests can also lead to language switching as the speakers strive to explain certain political points, connect with other audiences or communicate better. Nevertheless, despite the extensive research efforts about code switching in other fields like education and entertainment, little research has been made with a specific reference to code switching in Malaysian political podcasts. Thus, to gain a better insight into the application of code switching during political language communication, this paper aims to examine the purpose and application of code switching in political podcast discourse by Malaysian politicians.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Code switching is a common occurrence practice in multilingual societies whereby speakers of two or more languages can alternate with each other according to circumstances, listeners and purpose. Code switching occurs in daily communication and in media and digital communication in Malaysia where Malay and English may be used as general languages (Ismail & Abdullah, 2023). It has been discovered that bilingual communication can be helpful to speakers to simplify complex ideas and centralise important points along with building relations with the listeners (Treffers-Daller et al., 2022).

Analysing code switching in a strictly Malaysian political podcast has not been known to be abundant. This shows a significant gap in current study as podcasts are currently on the rise, as the public has opted podcasts as their platform to consume knowledge especially the political domain (Rasul et al., 2025). The problem of how and why politicians switch languages in political speech during podcasts, is of importance to explore the question of bilingual communicative strategy use in the digital political media (Cabosky, 2022).

If this situation is not addressed, a significant relationship gap will continue between politicians and the public. Without a deep understanding of how code-switching functions as a strategic communication tool, it will remain unclear how politicians build rapport, gain public trust, and construct a positive public image among diverse audiences. This lack of understanding is particularly critical in digital platforms, where language plays an important role in shaping audience engagement and perception (Batool et al., 2025).

This paper is thus directed to analyse the patterns of code switching and communicative functions in Malaysian political podcasts by using the assistance of the Structural Model of Poplack (1980) and the Functional Model by Gumperz (1982). This will provide more insights into how bilingual strategies are being employed in Malaysian political communication and will fill the gaps that are currently present in the research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this research are:

1. Identify the structural types of Malay–English code switching in Malaysian political podcast discourse, using Structural Model of Poplack (1980).
2. Examine the communicative functions of code switching in the discourse, applying the Functional Model of Gumperz (1982).
3. Analyse how code switching organises ideas and manages turn taking in political podcast interaction (i.e., discourse management roles of switching).

Research Questions

The research questions for this research are:

1. What structural types of Malay–English code switching occur in the political podcast discourse, per Poplack (1980)?
2. What communicative functions (per Gumperz, 1982) are performed?
3. How does code switching contribute to discourse management, specifically idea organisation (e.g., topic shift, emphasis, framing) and turn taking (e.g., turn entry/exit cues, floor holding) in the podcast interaction?

Significance Of Study

This research is conducted to benefit sociolinguistic students and researchers, second language (L2) users, and media practitioners.

For sociolinguistic students and researchers, the study serves as a useful reference for future related studies, particularly in the Malaysian context where research on political podcasts remains scarce.

For L2 users, the findings offer strategies for improving conversational effectiveness through informed language use. This study highlights how code switching is being used as a communicative tool instead of portraying it as a linguistic weakness. L2 users can learn to maximise the functionality of code switching to ensure a well-structured message.

For media practitioners, the research serves as a guide to develop a more structured and audience engaging content. As media shifts to casual spaces like podcasts, producers can learn from how people mix languages, such as by using cues like “so” or “jadi” to sound natural. This helps create more relatable, engaging content for multilingual audiences.

Scope Of Study

This research analyses Malay-English code switching that occurs in Malaysian political podcast platform, *Keluar Sekejap*, with only limited to an episode that features Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed as the guest speaker. The study only analyses the natural spoken language, which is used by the hosts and the guests in their podcast conversation.

The scope is selected because the speaker is allowed to talk without a script and podcast is a suitable medium to analyse the actual interaction between bilinguals. The limitation of the data gives the study a chance to research how the process of code switching takes place not only in a sentence but also between the sentences, as well as in response to the requirements of the conversation.

There are no written materials that are covered in this study, including social media comments, subtitles, news

articles, or any other media related to the podcast. It does not also look at the other political podcasts or interviews other than the chosen episodes. The focus is exclusively about speakers' language pattern and communicative functions since it displays the process of speakers alternating between languages in a natural and spontaneous speech. Spoken discourse exposes natural language markers as opposed to written writing, which is edited and scripted.

Limitation Of Study

One limitation of this study is that it focuses on only one Keluar Sekejap podcast episode. The findings do not fully represent all forms of Malay–English code switching used across different episodes or by all Malaysian politicians.

Political discourse can change depending on the speaker, topic, audience, and setting, so the language choices seen in this episode may not appear in other contexts such as debates, formal interviews, or other podcast discussions. Therefore, the results should be understood as specific to this episode, not as a general picture of Malaysian political code switching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section is a review of theoretical frameworks and past research in respect to studying Malay English code switching in political podcasts. It starts by explaining the frameworks of Poplack (1980) and Gumperz (1982) that are used to analyse the structures and functions of code switching in a structural and functional manner, respectively. Poplack's Structural Model offers a systematic view of alternative types of language alternation, whereas the Gumperz's Functional Model offers the communicative reasons of code switching. The section then summarises the recent research in the areas of media communication, political discourse and code switching, identifying the recent trends in podcasting as a means of political communication, language strategies used by politicians, the functions of code switching in natural spoken discourse, as well as case study background of Keluar Sekejap podcast.

Therefore, this review provides both the theoretical and empirical background of the present study whereby previous research is related to the objectives of the study in analysing the process and the reason for code switching in Malaysian political podcasts.

FRAMEWORK

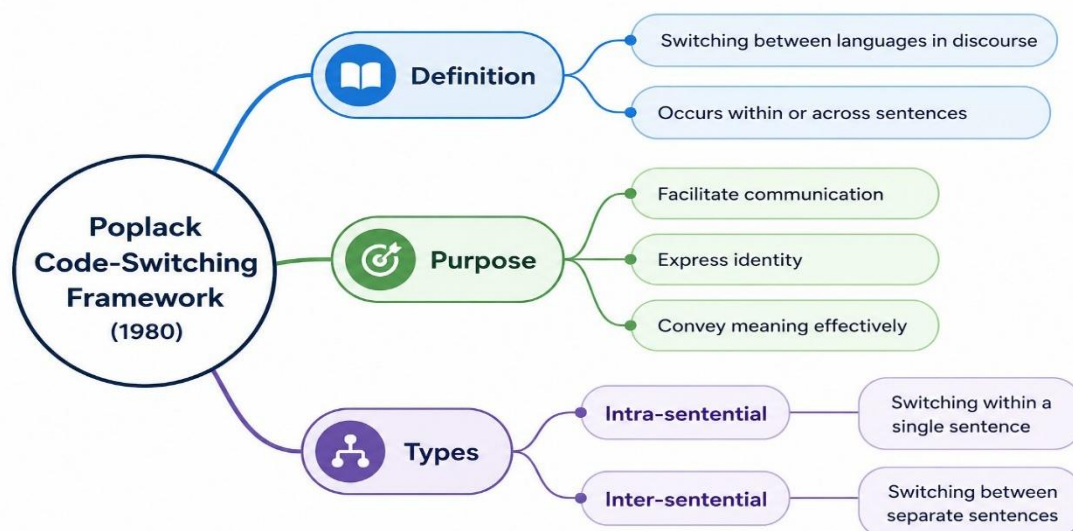


Illustration of Poplack's Structural Framework (1980)

This paper employs Structural Model of Poplack (1980) as the primary model to examine code switching in Malaysia political podcasts. Poplack (1980) is based on the process and place of language switching in speech. It is especially helpful to use when analysing bilingual conversations that happen in the natural environments, where speakers usually switch between Malay and English automatically. The framework helps to categorise each switch in a systematic manner and learn the grammatical formulas of code switching.

This study employs two primary types of structural code switching by Poplack (1980), intra-sentential and inter-sentential. Intra-sentential code switching can take place within a sentence or clause. The speaker switches language in the middle of a sentence, but the general grammatical framework is retained. For example, “She wants to make an airplane and dia ketemu seorang manusia kecil” (Suhardianto & Afriana, 2022). It demonstrates that speakers can mix two languages in a single sentence without interrupting the grammatical structure of the sentence. It is an indication of bilingual competency and adaptability because the speaker should adhere to grammar of the dominant language but does this effectively by incorporating elements of the other language.

Inter-sentential code switching is between sentences in which one sentence is completely in one language and the following sentence is in the other language. An example that can be found in Amaliah and Haryadi (2025) is “Let’s start with this example. Dan ini adalah contoh lain”. In this case, the first sentence is completely in English and the second is completely in Malay. Inter-sentential switching is frequently used to indicate a shift in the topic, stress a point or appeal to another audience. In political podcasts, it is quite typical for this type of code switching to occur as it allows speakers to clarify a point, emphasize key ideas, or appeal to the audience.

Poplack (1980) is especially effective with respect to the analysis of political podcasts since dialogues are not scripted, but rather spontaneous and adaptable. The speakers may change the language several times in the course of the discussion. Long speech turns with mixed language are commonly done between hosts and guests. With Poplack (1980), it is possible to systematically identify, classify, and discuss the nature of the examples of code switching in the podcast and get a clear picture of how Malaysian politicians plan their speech to address various audiences effectively.

Gumperz Framework

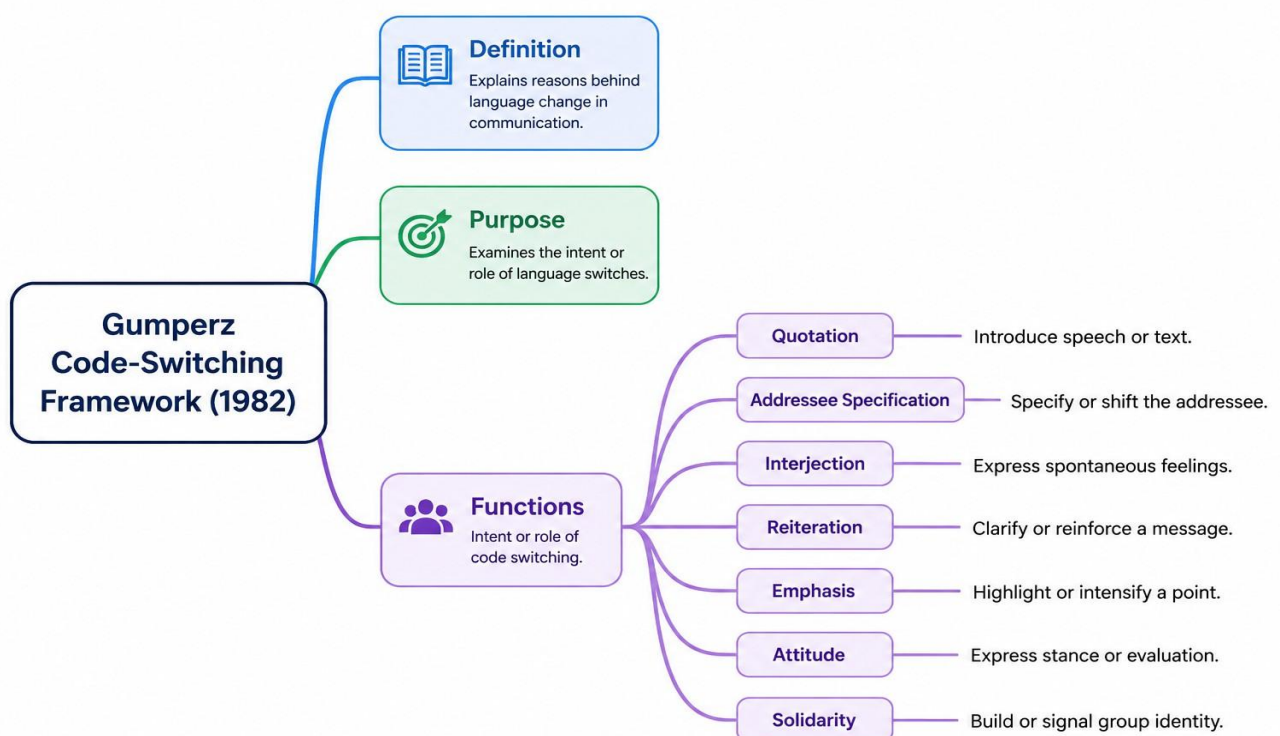


Illustration of Gumperz’s Functional Framework (1982)

In order to examine the code-switching structure, this paper employs the Functional Model of Gumperz (1982) to explain the reasons behind the change of language during communication. Gumperz (1982) looks at the intent or role of the switches. This is specifically applicable in political podcasts where the language that speakers use is well articulated to persuade, explain, or relate to the listeners. Gumperz (1982) can point out some communicative purposes of code switching through which speakers make their decisions. These include:

1. **Quotation:** Restating and using the words of somebody in a different language.
2. **Addressee Specification:** The use of address to someone or a group of people to indicate that the message has been addressed to them.
3. **Interjection:** Adding a short phrase or word in foreign language to make emphasis or a response.
4. **Reiteration:** When one repeats the same idea in the other language to explain meaning or make sure he/she understands.
5. **Emphasis:** To emphasise an important point by switching language so as to reinforce the message.
6. **Attitude:** Expression of feelings, humor, sarcasm or irony that may be more effective in one language than another.
7. **Solidarity:** To demonstrate identity, affiliation with a group, or social proximity with specific listeners, one can rely on a specific language.

These functions are extremely applicable in the context of political podcasts since politicians seek to convince their listeners, elaborate issues of political interests, and appeal to different listeners (Stănescu, 2025). Through the use of Gumperz (1982), the study goes further and not just establishes the location of language switching, but also the strategic decisions made by politicians who decide between switching between Malay and English. This gives an idea of how language affects the perception, interest and comprehension of the audience.

Applicability of the framework to the study

Poplack and Gumperz present a full system of analysing code switching in terms of its structural and functional approach. Poplack enables the study to outline the precise patterns of language alternation, whereas Gumperz describes communicative intentions of every switch. This two-sided strategy is specifically necessary with political podcasts, where the unscripted speech, spontaneity, and persuasion are joined together. Through the examination of the structure and role of the code-switching process, the research offers a better insight into how Malaysian politicians employ the code-switching tool to convey their messages more efficiently, explain the political concepts, and capture the listeners in digital political discourses. These frameworks have paved the way for this research to cover the how and the why of language switching, which is directly related to the research objectives and the research questions of the study.

Besides, the implementation of these frameworks helps make the study become relevant in a variety of ways. First, it gives a simple and systematic approach to the study of natural conversations in political podcasts, where speakers spontaneously alternate languages. Second, it satisfies a research void since there have been very little studies that have examined the structure and purpose of code switching in Malaysian digital political media. Third, the results may be used not only by researchers who investigate language and politics, but also by the politicians and communicationists interested in understanding how to use language to be able to explain the ideas and persuade people, as well as to appeal to the listeners.

Previous Studies

Media communication: The shift to podcasts

Recent studies have shown that there is a drastic change in the consumption patterns of media, especially the shift in the traditional broadcast media towards the on demand digital audio media. Newman et al. (2023) reports that the world is losing trust in mainstream news media, and it leads viewers, particularly younger groups, to

seek more genuine sources of communication, such as podcasts, as an alternative form of media. As Newman et al. (2023) points out, podcasts have ceased to be entertainment vessels but have become a critical source of information, which can define intimacy and reflexivity which are not available on the traditional radio.

Taylor and Francis (2025) also contribute to this shift and finds that podcasts create a special type of parasocial relationship between the hosts and the listeners. Contrary to the television, which tends to be on the staged side, the oral quality of podcasts gives an impression of unstaged genuineness. Podcasts have become an important arena of popular dialogue, building a reliable absence of disputes in which political matters can be debated in detail, and in most instances, they occupy the vacuum caused by the traditional media (Aufderheide et al., 2020). Therefore, media researchers agree that podcasts allow audiences to capture complicated topics due to podcasts' high demand and it is less scripted compared to conventional media like television shows.

Despite the increasing awareness of podcasts as political communication tools, the existing research has mainly focused on podcasting in educational and entertainment contexts. Therefore, there is a lack of understanding of how politicians use code switching and discourse management explicitly to manipulate power and audience response in extended political interviews.

Political discourse in digital media

Politicians have opted for digital media to directly communicate with their voters without involving traditional gatekeepers such as media, journalists and publishers. Kakungulu (2025) mentions how podcasts open up the space to shape the discourse of people and states that political podcasts have already turned out to be an effective tool in humanising politicians. When presented in the form of long form and in conversation, political leaders can step out of scripted speech and show their character traits that create a connection with the audience.

The same trends have been witnessed in the Southeast Asian setting. As an example, Habibah and Febriandy (2025) applies the Symbolic Interaction Theory to analyse the Indonesian political podcast "Unpacking Indonesia". The paper concludes that the podcast enables political leaders to dismantle official party messages and construct new political icons at the moments of ordinary communication, which is likely to have a significant impact on the opinion of voters in the 2024 elections. Chatpunnarangsee and Osatananda (2023) finds that politicians are not only sharing their policies in these digital spaces, but for strategic self presentation where they employ a sense of humor and informal language to make themselves seem more approachable and attractive to younger voters.

Although there has been an increase in literature in the neighboring countries like Indonesia and Thailand on digital political podcasts, empirical study on how digital political podcasts work in the special multilingual context of Malaysia is limited. Most of the research on code switching in Malaysia remains concentrated on educational classrooms and everyday conversation or the dominant entertainment media. Hence, there is a lack of knowledge about how political actors systematically use Malay-English code switching to negotiate turn-taking, complex ideas and assert political authority in the contemporary media in Malaysia.

The types and functions of code switching

Although the study of code switching in Malaysia has been widespread, recent research literature has moved more towards educational contexts, social media, and entertainment and fewer studies on political podcasts have been conducted.

In social media and entertainment, Esme et al. (2025) reports that code switching is an effective resource to be used by identity expression among the former Twitter users of the Malaysian X. This research identifies that the most common means which are being used by Malaysians to create relationships and project the Malaysian-ness is by use of location (insertion) (intra-sentential switching). However, in radio platforms, Mathilda and Farhana (2024) use Poplacks framework on the speech of the Malaysian radio announcers and finds that intra-sentential switching is used to fill in a cultural gap. These switches are also adopted to address specification in function and in reiteration, which assist the hosts to associate with the various ethnic groups.

Khalil and Firdaus (2021) specifically analyse inter-sentential patterns in the Malaysian Parliamentary debates. The research states that inter-sentential code switching occurs when a speaker ends a sentence in one language and begins one in another. This is a rhetorical device used consciously by Malaysian political leaders.

Political podcast discourse communicative functions of code switching

Chatpunnarangsee and Osatananda (2023) explores the code switching between Thai and English in political discourses in terms of structural description as well as communicative strategy analysis. It concludes that English nouns and noun phrases are the most switched elements and switching depends on the topic content like technology, foreign experiences, or technical terms and not only the speech setting. The authors divide switches into strategic functions, such as convenience, technical jargon, clarification through repetition, and quotations. This demonstrates that politicians actually alternate languages to convey their message to their listeners, bring out the crucial issues or explain the complex issues. In the political speech, the study highlights that code switching is tactical, perception conscious, and purpose focused to fulfill the rhetoric and persuasive roles and is not an ordinary linguistic behavior.

Lim and Mahadi (2024) analyse the linguistic strategies of Malaysian political influencers in the social media in this context in Malaysia. The paper reports that code switching has two roles which they term as authority building and relatability. It indicates that although English is a language usually employed to create a globalised, professional identity (objectivisation), the reversion to Malay, usually using particles or localised metaphors, has been used to provide an emotional connection to the grassroots voter.

Case Study Background of Keluar Sekejap Podcast



Thumbnail of Keluar Sekejap episode 65. The most watched video of the podcast channel and the main focus of the present study

Keluar Sekejap has become one of Malaysia's most popular political podcasts on YouTube. The programme is initiated and launched by former Malaysian ministers and politicians Khairy Jamaluddin and Shahril Hamdan, with the pilot episode released on 1 March 2023 and the first official episode broadcasted on 7 March 2023. The podcast is created after the hosts left active leadership positions in UMNO, and a more open space is provided for political discussion. A conversational and analytical style has been used to present complex political developments in terms understandable to the general public. The YouTube channel has garnered around 75.7 million views from over 829 videos as of 2026. The duration of individual episodes is generally substantial, with most recordings lasting between one and two hours, reflecting the podcast's emphasis on in-depth discussion rather than brief commentary.

Among its most viewed episodes is EP177, featuring Toh Puan Na'imah Abdul Khalid discussing the life and legacy of Tun Daim Zainuddin, which has attracted over 613,000 views. The channel earns its reputation by

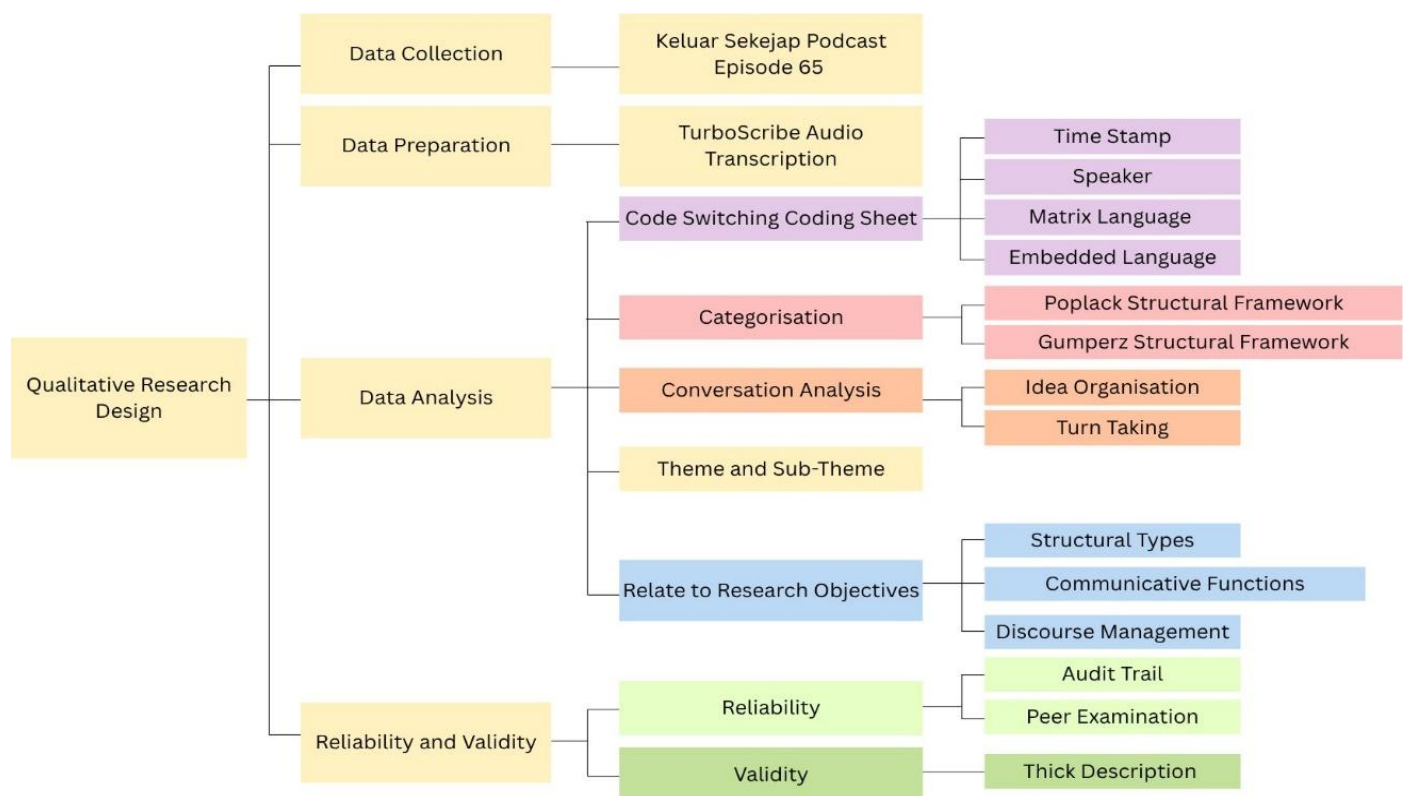
inviting other high-profile individuals to discuss current events. It has hosted interviews with former Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan, Singapore opposition leader Pritam Singh, and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Hence, *Keluar Sekejap* can be seen as a meaningful digital platform that allows for the analysis of modern political issues and encourages the participation of the public in political discussion.

Despite its widespread popularity, massive reach, and being a ground-breaking political platform for Malaysians, there is nearly no academic research on *Keluar Sekejap*. The podcast has been the subject of many discussions regarding its social contribution, but there have been no academic studies that have explored the language patterns and conversational strategies used by both the hosts and guests when they try to navigate through this complex political discourse.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology employed to investigate Malay-English code switching in the *Keluar Sekejap* political podcast. It discusses the qualitative research design that is used in the study to investigate the language patterns, the study setting and sample, the data collection and analysis tools, and the steps taken to achieve reliability and validity. Special attention is given to how Poplack's (1980) Structural Framework and Gumperz's (1982) Functional Framework help to identify, categorize, and explain code switching. This section is clear and straight forward as it explains every single step on how the research objectives are solved by systematic qualitative analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN



Methodology process chart

This study adopts a qualitative research design because it seeks to understand ways Malay-English code switching is applied in a political podcast. The research design applicable in the study is qualitative research because it involves identifying the language patterns, meanings, and functions in actual discussions as opposed to quantitative or numerical data (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). With this approach, the research analyses the podcast episode word to word and learns why the speakers alternate between languages.

Unlike quantitative research methodology, which focuses on numerical information and statistical data, a

qualitative design is meant to carry out an in depth, descriptive study of verbal communication (Silverman, 2020). This is necessary to this research, because code switching is a multifaceted social phenomenon, which cannot be entirely determined by means of the figures (Nur'aini & Fitriana, 2024). Through this design, the study is able to see beyond the words and get the intentions of the speakers and how the host and the guest interacted socially. Also, the design is directly relevant to the aims of the study to determine the types of structures and the functions of communication. As qualitative research focuses on the description and the contextualization, hence this study follows the required structure as a guide to record the spontaneity and natural discourse of the bilingual political conversation.

Setting And Sample

The research setting is the digital space of YouTube, specifically the prominent Malaysian political podcast, *Keluar Sekejap*. The choice of this platform is due to its modern change in political communication. The podcast is to offer a less formal atmosphere of discussion of political issues.

This research has a sample of one episode of *Keluar Sekejap* in which is hosted by Khairy Jamaluddin and Shahril Hamdan, and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the guest speaker. Purposive sampling is applied in the process of selecting the episode because it is selected based on its situationality to the research objectives. The episode in question has a long political speech and several Malay-English code-switching examples, which is why it fits the qualitative analysis.

In qualitative discourse analysis, the size of the sample is based on the overall length of the verbal interaction. The episode chosen is 2 hours and 20 minutes. The duration of the episode gives a significant portion of spoken material, including the discussions of Malay political conundrum, Malaysian identity and leadership related issues concerning former Prime Ministers of Malaysia. This long period of time enables a detailed analysis of the patterns of code switching and communicative functions in a single and continuous interaction on a political level.

Instrument

The current study applies Poplack's Structural Framework (1980) and Gumperz Functional Framework (1982) as the guiding tools of analysing code switching in the *Keluar Sekejap* podcast episode. The framework by Poplack concentrates on grammatical composition of language alternation that distinguishes between intra-sentential and inter-sentential. This enables a systematic way of determining the places where language shifts take place within and between sentences. This is followed by Gumperz Functional Framework (1982) which focuses on communicative intent of code switching which includes quotation, addressee specification, reiteration, emphasis, and solidarity. The application of Gumperz Functional Framework (1982) assists the study to understand why politicians alternate languages in certain situations and this indicates the strategic decisions made to clarify issues, appeal to the audience or to stress on the points. These frameworks act as a tool of analysis since they help in defining, classifying, and explaining code switching in a systematic manner.

To make them practical, a Code-Switching Analysis Coding Sheet that is self-constructed is applied, on which every case of code switching is coded on the basis Poplack's (1980) and Gumperz's (1982). This helps the analysis to be consistent, traceable, and consistent with research objectives of the study which include structural and functional perspectives of bilingual practice in political podcasts.

To address the third research objective, the tool expands into three different fields (column/row/section), to discuss two discourse management areas referred to as D1 and D2. The D1 (Discourse Management Role) area is employed to assess if a switch acts as an instrument for Idea Organisation or as a means for Turn Taking throughout the conversation. The D2 (Sub Type) field elaborates on this by offering specific labels like topic shift, emphasis, framing, summary, turn entry, turn exit, floor holding, and overlap handling for managing conversational flow. To maintain validity of these classifications, every entry includes an Evidence Snippet featuring the exact transcript of the switch along with a $\pm 2-3$ second recorded context with an accurate timestamp.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

This research paper uses the data of a single episode of the Malaysian political podcast Keluar Sekejap with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Khairy Jamaluddin. The access to the episode is provided via the official Keluar Sekejap YouTube channel to make sure that the source of audio was legitimate and full and can be accessed publicly. The podcast is chosen due to the inclusion of unplanned political conversation where Malay and English are used interchangeably, and it is appropriate to analyse the actual code-switching behaviours in real life.

Transcription uses a software called TurboScribe, an AI powered transcription tool that is a derivative of Whisper (Large-v3) of OpenAI. TurboScribe is selected because it can transcribe multilingual speech accurately and this is important in a Malaysian context whereby Malay and English are used interchangeably in the same conversation.

A self-developed code-switching analysis coding sheet is followed, and this is developed through Google Sheets. This coding sheet is a graded instrument that helps recognise and classify all the code-switching cases observed in the transcript. It includes:

1. Timestamp: Time when the switch is effected in the audio.
2. Speaker: Who is the switch producer (host or guest)
3. Matrix Language: The primary language of the adjacent sentence.
4. Embedded Language: This is the language that is placed in the switch.
5. Structural Category (Poplack, 1980): Inter-sentential, intra-sentential.
6. Communicative Function (Gumperz, 1982): reiteration, quotation, clarification or addressee specification.
7. Conversation Analysis (CA): The analysis categorizes entries into D1 (Discourse Management Role) to identify if a switch is for Idea Organisation or Turn Taking, and D2 (Sub type) for specific labels such as topic shifts, emphasis, framing, summary, turn entry, turn exit, floor handling or overlap handling. Each entry is validated by an Evidence Snippet, which includes the exact transcript and a timestamp.

After filling in the verified transcript, every case of Malay-English code switching is being analysed with the assistance of the Code-Switching Analysis Coding Sheet. The analysis starts with the identification of the matrix and embedded languages and then the categorization of each switch based on the structural categories of Poplack (1980): Intra-sentential and inter-sentential. Gumperz's Functional Model is then used to explain the communicative intent of each switch after the structural classification is done. These involve quotation, clarification, emphasis or even addressing the audience. The coding sheet makes the analysis systematic, organised and consistent with the research questions. The results describe the way in which, and the reasons why code switching took place in the political podcast.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is performed in a systematic and step wise qualitative process based on the Poplack Structural Model (1980) and the Gumperz Functional Model (1982). The same style is similar to qualitative analytical methods widely employed in discourse-oriented research, where data is coded, categorised and interpreted using predetermined theoretical frameworks.

Step 1: Perform initial coding of instances of code switching.

After finalising the transcript, the data are read several times to come up with all cases of Malay-English code switching. All are coded and logged down in a self-constructed Code-Switching Analysis Coding Sheet prepared

in Google Sheets. The current coding step aims at defining the location of the code switching and at the same time does not interpret its role.

Step 2: Structural Categorisation (Poplack, 1980)

At the second level, every case found of code switching is classified based on the structural framework suggested by Poplack (1980). Instances are identified as either intra-sentential (switches within a sentence or clause) or inter-sentential (switches between entire sentences). This helps to describe the language switching in the podcast discourse in a systematic manner.

Step 3: Functional Categorisation (Gumperz, 1982)

Gumperz Functional Model (1982) is applied to explain the communicative purpose of each code switch after structural classification. The analysed instances are evaluated to identify the presence of a role of either quotation, reiteration, clarification, emphasis, specification of addressee, or an attitude of solidarity and expression. This step aims to explain why the speakers changed the languages at specific points of the dialogue.

Step 4: Conversation Analysis (CA)

The final analysis stage focuses on code switching as a discourse management mechanism, examining how language alternation regulates the speakers' interactional flow through two primary dimensions:

8. **Idea Organisation:** Switches may signal topic opening or closing, summarising, framing, or contrastive focus (Bhattacharya et al., 2025). Speakers frequently alternate languages when marking discourse boundaries or shifting perspectives, using markers such as contrastive connectors ("but/namun") or sequence boundary markers ("so/jadi") to frame transitions and guide listener interpretation.
9. **Turn taking:** Turn taking management, including turn entry, turn allocation, and floor holding is to address specific interlocutors, maintain speaking rights through fillers or particles ("you know/kan"), or signal reclaiming the conversational floor during overlap resolution. These switches function as discourse regulatory tools that help maintain interactional coherence and participation (Ahmad et al., 2023).

Step 5: Theme and Sub theme Development.

After coding and categorization, patterns throughout the data are analysed in order to establish recurring communicative functions and structural tendencies. These patterns are combined into larger themes, such as clarification of political ideas, involvement of the audience, and focus on the main points. The sub themes illustrate the roles of the code switching. This thematic structure helps in connecting personal examples of code switching to more general communicative processes that are implemented in the political discourse of podcasts.

Step 6: Interpretation and Relating to Research Objectives.

Lastly, the identified themes and sub themes explain the research objectives and research questions of the study. The interdisciplinary approach that uses both Poplack and Gumperz frameworks enables the analysis to cover both the structural patterns and communicative motivations of code switching and give a complete picture of how the Malay English bilingualism works in Malaysian political podcasts.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability

Audit Trail: According to Nowell et al. (2020), audit trail is essential in qualitative research by allowing external reviewers to trace researcher's logic and railway from raw data to the final themes. The audit trail is kept by keeping all the records of the analysis process. It contains the original raw audio files, the original unedited transcripts produced by TurboScribe, and the versions of the coding sheets. Although the audio of the podcast is publicly available, maintaining the timestamps and coding drafts enables third parties to follow the analysis process of the researcher working with raw data to final interpretation to guarantee transparency and consistency.

Peer Examination: Vu (2021) highlights that one of the crucial quality control instruments is peer examination which questions the assumptions of the researcher. Peer checking is done to minimize the researcher bias where a qualified peer having the same bilingual proficiency reviews a sample of the coding (about 10%). This step ensures that the identification of code-switching types (e.g., the differentiation between inter-sentential and intra-sentential switches) is not arbitrary and depends on the subjective evaluation of the researcher.

Validity

The thick description is used to give a detailed background of the situation within which the code switching takes place. In the podcast episode, it has elaborate descriptions of the speakers, topics, audience, and situational conditions. This makes the interpretations more believable and reliable because by providing sufficient background information, the readers can gain a clear idea of why language switching occurs and what this phenomenon entails. The analysis also incorporates two to three interactional extracts in each category to show how code switching is actively employed to show discourse management and idea organization.

These extracts of interaction are primary evidence of the way language switching works as a strategic communicative resource. In particular, the discussion shows that code switching can:

Claim the floor- Code-switching occurs at an appropriate moment to allow a speaker to gain the right to talk at an overlapping point.

Soften disagreement- code switching can be beneficial to alleviate tension in making opposing political statements.

Pivot topics- speakers involve the use of bilingual resources to indicate a change of topic of discussion or a summary of a point.

Moreover, Alvesson (2023) states that a thick description is required to go beyond the superficial descriptions since the former permits the researcher to go deeper into the depths of meaning and webs of social relationships that inform linguistic decisions. This is because the interpretations in this study are more plausible and valid since the author has used enough contextual details, the people reading can clearly see why language switching is a strategic social device, and not a random event. Such details are necessary to make sure that the phenomenon of code switching is captured not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but as a significant act of political and social self-identification.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings derived from the qualitative discourse analysis of *Keluar Sekejap* (Episode 65), featuring former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad as the guest speaker. A total of 303 instances of Malay-English code-switching are identified, transcribed, and analysed. This section organizes these findings systematically to answer the three primary research questions:

1. What structural types of Malay–English code-switching occur in the political podcast discourse, per Poplack (1980)?
2. What communicative functions (per Gumperz, 1982) are performed?
3. How does code-switching contribute to discourse management, specifically idea organisation and turn-taking in the podcast interaction?

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The table below provides a summary of the distribution of structural types and discourse management roles in the **303** instances. However, a certain number of instances recorded at least **two (2)** communicative functions, therefore bringing their (n) to **314**.

CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FREQUENCY (n)	PERCENTAGE
Structural Type (Poplack's 1980)	Intra-sentential	263/303	86.8%
	Inter-sentential	40/303	13.20%
Communicative Function (Gumperz's 1982)	Emphasis / Clarification	116/314	36.94%
	Reiteration	78/314	24.84%
	Solidarity / Emotion	31/314	9.87%
	Attitude	28/314	8.92%
	Interjection	26/314	8.28%
	Quotation	22/314	7%
	Addressee Specification	13/314	4.14%
Discourse Management	Idea Organization	201/303	66.33%
	Turn-taking	102/303	33.67%

Table 4.1: Summary of Malay-English Code-Switching Instances

Structural Types of Code-Switching (RQ1)

Of the 303 codified instances, 86.8% was intra-sentential while the remainder 13.2% was inter-sentential. Following Poplack's (1980) structural framework, the analysis deduced that;

1. **Intra-sentential switching** - This is the most common form of code switching in the transcript. It is defined as the language switch that happens within the limits of one sentence or clause, with the main grammatical system of the base language (Malay) still being retained.

For instance, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad often uses English noun phrases to smoothly insert the concepts in Malay sentences. These can be illustrated in situations like, "**ya saya ada lihat benda-benda yang saya mempunyai certain ideas**" (Instance 7) and "**Itulah perjuangan saya sehingga saya, worldview saya**" (Instance 17).

From the examples, it shows that English words can be used within the structure of Malay without breaking any rules of the language.

2. **Inter-sentential switching** - The switching takes place only between sentences, with a complete sentence in the first language followed by a complete sentence in the second language.

A prominent example is Khairy Jamaluddin's introduction to the guest: "**Shahril, you wanna..**" (Instance 1), which is then followed by Shahril's transition into the interview. A second obvious example is the proverb which Tun Dr Mahathir uses when making a political statement: "**Apabila kita berjuang, the enemy of your enemy is your friend**" (Instance 156). In this case, the switch only occurs at the end of the first Malay clause.

Communicative Functions of Code-Switching (RQ2)

From the 303 codified instances, a total of 314 functions were identified. This is due to 11 instances possessing 2 functions while the other 292 instances only recorded 1 function each. Based on Gumperz' (1982) Functional Model, the code switching serves several strategic purposes:

1. **Quotation**: This function involves the speaker restating what someone has said or using a proverb in another language to ensure authenticity and accuracy. For instance, Khairy Jamaluddin quotes a major concession made by Yasser Arafat by using Malay within an English sentence: "**But I know that it was a big concession on his part, when he said 'saya terima Israel'** (Instance 274).
2. **Addressee Specification**: This switch is used to specify a particular message to a person or group. For example, Khairy Jamaluddin uses this to indicate a turn in the conversation to his co-host, Shahril Hamdan: "**Shahril, you wanna..**" (Instance 1). The hosts also use the English term '**sir**' (Instance 40) to convey respect and social distance to Tun Dr Mahathir when asking a question or introducing a new topic.

3. **Interjection:** These are sentences or words that are inserted into a second language to give a fast reply or give emphasis. The speakers use the English interjection '**In fact**' (**Instance 20**) to reinforce the main topic of Tun Dr Mahathir's career. Additionally, the discourse marker '**So**' is employed regularly to link ideas and segments together. For example, when Khairy shifts his discourse to Tun Dr Mahathir's childhood: '**So bolehkah kita nak start Tun...**' (**Instance 12**).
4. **Reiteration:** This occurs when a speaker is restating or rephrasing an idea in the second language to make it clearer or to reinforce a point. Shahril Hamdan employs reiteration to get the guest to understand the connotation of a question about the book on the Malay Dilemma "**...apakah yang menjadi faktor... kepada masalah itu? What was the problem, why was it like that?**" (**Instance 18**).
5. **Emphasis:** Speakers switch to English to show the importance or seriousness of an aspect of the message. For instance, Khairy calls Tun Dr Mahathir's book the "**seminal book on Malaysia, malay politics**" (**Instance 19**). He chooses to speak in English, emphasising the historical significance and making the audience aware of the significance of the book.
6. **Attitude:** This function allows speakers to convey personal feelings, humorous or sarcastic remarks that may be more appropriate in one language than the other. To express a challenging attitude towards Tun Dr Mahathir's views on the Malay DNA, Khairy resorts to a rhetorical question: "**...they are consigned to be unsuccessful to be in business forever. Isn't that unfair, Tun?**". (**Instance 22**).
7. **Solidarity:** Used to express identity, social closeness or rapport between speakers. Shahril makes a personal connection to the guest by speaking in English to say that they had a common birthday "**Sepuluh julai kan Tun? Same birthday as my daughter**" (**Instance 8**). In addition, Shahril incorporates the English expression "**same actually**" (**Instance 60**), as an indication of commonality, when Khairy mentioned his reading of Tun Dr Mahathir's book in his university days.

Discourse Management and Interactional Roles (RQ3)

This information shows that code switching is not random, but it plays an important role in the regulation of the conversational flow in a podcast context:

1. **Idea Organisation:** English markers are used effectively for framing ideas and indicating topic shifts. The English discourse marker '**So**' is used in every other segment by the speakers. In other instances, such as transitioning between the host's perspective and the guest's perspective, Khairy Jamaluddin said: "**So maybe Tun, nak start with Tun punya world view**" (**Instance 12**). This marker helps listeners to follow the conversation easily.
2. **Turn taking:** Language switches serve as turn entry and exit cues, to determine who speaks next. The host use the speaking opportunity back from the guest by efficiently giving them the floor again, such as "**Isn't that fair, Tun?**" (**Instance 22**). This switch serves as a strong signal that a response was expected from Tun Dr Mahathir.

Commentary And Interpretation of Data

One thing that is notable about the findings is that all participants in the podcast demonstrate somewhat of a high degree of bilingual competence. The frequency of **intra-sentential** switches indicates that the speakers are not simply filling gaps because they lack vocabulary. Instead, they are carefully embedding English to identify political and economic ideas that are abstract and perhaps not there naturally in the casual Malay vernacular spoken in the podcast.

Moreover, there is a clear hierarchy of interaction that is controlled by language selection. The hosts frequently use English for discourse management purposes, such as framing questions and using sequence markers. On the other hand, Tun Dr Mahathir's code switching seems to be primarily for framing ideological purposes with words such as "worldview" or "nationalists" to denote his political belief. This suggests that code switching in political

podcasts is a strategy that is used for perceptual reasons. It works to soften the politician and help keep the conversation interesting, but not melodramatic or manipulative, when discussing sensitive national issues.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This section offers a summarising integration of the results of the research conducted on the Keluar Sekejap podcast related to Malay–English code switching on the podcast. It starts with an extensive overview of the research, which summarises the goals of the study and main findings. A detailed discussion then relates these findings to the literature and theories of Poplack (1980) and Gumperz (1982). This section also provides the practical implications of the study for several stakeholders, recommendations for further research because of the limitations identified, and a summary of the research process.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This study is undertaken to fill a gap in sociolinguistic research on strategic uses of bilingualism in the Malaysian political discourse in digital space. A qualitative research design is employed to analyse a 2 hour and 20 minutes segment of Keluar Sekejap podcast featuring Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to gain insights into the way politicians code switch in spontaneous and unscripted speech. This study examines three main research questions:

1. (RQ1) What are the types of switches?
2. (RQ2) What is the communicative role of switches?
3. (RQ3) What is the discourse management role of switches?

The analysis shows 303 instances of code switching, indicating the hosts and guest to have a sophisticated linguistic performance. The major findings indicate a strong preference for intra-sentential switching, suggesting a high level of bilingual competency among the speakers. Functionally, the switches primarily serve to provide emphasis and reiteration. Interactionally, most switches are utilized for idea organization, such as framing and topic shifting in long form dialogue.

DISCUSSION

Structural Dynamics

RQ 1: What structural types of Malay-English code switching occur in political podcast discourse?

The dominance of **intra-sentential switching** in this political discourse is in line with Mathilda and Farhana (2024) who find that intra-sentential switching is common among Malaysian radio presenters who employ code switching to bridge cultural and language gaps. This high frequency suggests that politicians possess bilingual competency as described by Poplack (1980). At this competency, they can use the English technical words in the Malay grammatical structures without interrupting the flow of the conversation. Therefore, this is a tactical decision in response to the way that modern podcasts are unplanned even though in a political conversation.

Strategic Communicative Purpose

RQ 2: What communicative functions (per Gumperz,1982) are performed?

The findings regarding emphasis and reiteration as primary functions align with Chatpunnarangsee and Osatananda (2023), who state that code switching used in political speech is tactical, perception conscious, and purpose oriented. For example, when Khairy restates a question in English to make sure Tun Dr Mahathir understands the extent of the Malay Dilemma book, it serves the persuasive and rhetorical functions needed for digital media. Furthermore, the application of solidarity switches, for example, a shared birthday by Shahril, enhances the work of Lim and Mahadi (2024) that goes back to the localised metaphors or common personal data to create a feeling of intimacy with the audience.

Conversational Regulation and Discourse Management

RQ 3: How does code switching contribute to discourse management, specifically idea organisation (e.g., topic shift, emphasis, framing) and turn taking (e.g., turn entry/exit cues, floor holding) in the podcast interaction?

A high amount of switch is used for organisation of ideas, which is considered as a boundary marker in code switching. This is consistent with the finding of Ahmad and Zulkifli (2025) and Stănescu (2025), that politicians resort to language alternation to elaborate on complex interest points. The context of *Keluar Sekejap* is that the markers such as "so" or "in fact" are used as sequence boundary markers to mark the transitions between the biographical and policy heavy parts. In unscripted podcasts, this indicates that code switching is a discourse regulatory tool to preserve interactional coherence.

Implications of Study

From the perspective of sociolinguistic students and researchers, this study serves as a very important reference in the study of Malaysia's political discourse in the digital space. It supports the application of Poplack and Gumperz's frameworks in a non-educational context in today's world, establishing their relevance to modern podcasting.

For politicians and media practitioners, the study provides insights on how code switching can serve as a bilingual rhetoric tool for establishing authority and relatability simultaneously. Practitioners can learn how to use switches not as linguistic weakness but as a means of sounding natural, humanising political figures, and creating a parasocial relationship with a multilingual and diverse audience.

For second language (L2) users, these findings shift the perception of code switching from a linguistic failure to a communicative asset. The observation of leaders' use of English as objectivisation and Malay as solidarity will provide L2 users with an opportunity to learn how to best utilise their own language in producing messages that will be effective and impactful in professional contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study gives a thorough insight into a single interaction, but future studies need to be based on a larger number of interactions and political figures. This would help establish whether the patterns seen in this episode exist for other ideologies or across age groups. Additionally, future studies could incorporate quantitative measures of audience engagement, such as analysing social media comments or view counts, to measure the actual effectiveness of these bilingual strategies on the public.

Another recommendation is to explore the prosodic features of code switching, such as changes in pitch or tempo during a switch, which this study did not cover. Combining discourse analysis with phonetic analysis could provide a more holistic understanding of how "emphasis" and "emotion" are conveyed in political podcasts. Finally, a comparison with political podcasts from other multilingual countries, such as Singapore or Indonesia, would be useful as a comparative study of bilingual rhetoric in the region.

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