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Sociolinguistic Functions of Code-Switching in Multilingual Communication: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract : *This study aims to analyze the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching in multilingual communication through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). It focuses on pragmatic functions, social identity construction, interpersonal solidarity, situational adaptation, digital communication, and code-switching in educational and professional settings. The research method was designed around a search for journal articles published between 2021 and 2026 in scholarly databases, using keywords related to code-switching, sociolinguistics, social identity, and multilingual communication. Articles were to be selected according to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria and subsequently analyzed through data extraction and thematic synthesis. The conceptual synthesis identified six major themes: pragmatic functions, social identity, interpersonal solidarity, situational adaptation, digital communication, and pedagogical functions. These findings suggest that code-switching is not merely a linguistic structural phenomenon but also a communicative resource for conveying intentions, negotiating identities, building social relationships, and adapting messages to interactional contexts. This study highlights the importance of integrating linguistic analysis with social context to understand multilingual communication practices. Further research is needed to compare code-switching functions across different language communities and communication platforms, including the use of regional languages in Indonesian society.*

Keywords: **Code-Switching; Multilingual Communication; Social Identity; Pragmatic Functions; Sociolinguistics; Systematic Literature Review.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication that serves not only to convey information but also to shape social identity, express attitudes, and establish interpersonal relationships in multilingual societies. In everyday interactions, speakers who are proficient in more than one language often engage in code-switching to adapt their utterances to the situation, interlocutor, and communicative purpose. This phenomenon demonstrates that language choice is closely related to social context and interactional needs. Zhong et al. (2023) identify code-switching as an important phenomenon in the sociolinguistic study of multilingual societies.

Code-switching occurs in face-to-face conversations as well as in digital communication, including social media, educational settings, and interactions across cultural groups. Speakers may switch from one language to another to clarify meaning, emphasize information, express emotions, or adapt to the communicative practices of particular groups. In digital contexts, code-switching can also serve as a strategy for reaching audiences with different linguistic backgrounds. Atika and Ena (2024) examined code-switching on a TikTok account, highlighting the relevance of this phenomenon to contemporary social media communication. These developments indicate that code-switching should be examined not only as a linguistic practice but also as a socially situated strategy influenced by communication media, audience characteristics, and interactional purposes.

Beyond its function as a message-delivery strategy, code-switching is associated with identity construction and the management of social relationships. Language choice can signal familiarity, solidarity, group membership, and adaptation to a particular communicative environment. The social meaning of code-switching cannot always be determined solely by the linguistic forms used; it must also be interpreted in relation to the context of an utterance and the characteristics of its speakers. Therefore, sociolinguistic analysis needs to consider the relationship among language choice, interactional situations, and communicative purposes. Understanding these relationships requires an integrated analytical perspective that connects linguistic choices with pragmatic intentions, social identities, and interpersonal dynamics in multilingual interactions.

The development of digital technology has expanded the contexts in which code-switching occurs and introduced increasingly diverse forms of interaction. On social media platforms, users may combine national, regional, and foreign

languages within a single post or conversation. These practices can help users construct their online identities, create humor, express cultural affiliations, and adapt messages to their intended audiences. Atika and Ena (2024), in their study of code-switching in TikTok content, provide an empirical context for examining this phenomenon. However, findings from individual social media platforms do not fully explain whether similar sociolinguistic functions emerge in other digital environments or face-to-face interactions. This limitation highlights the importance of examining code-switching across different communication contexts and speaker groups.

Research on code-switching has also developed within the fields of bilingualism and language education. Through a systematic review, Rayo et al. (2024) examined the complexity of bilingual code-switching research and showed that the phenomenon is associated with various aspects of language use and cognitive processing. Although the cognitive perspective is important, sociolinguistic research requires particular attention to the social functions that emerge during interaction, including conversational management, identity expression, and adaptation to interlocutors. This distinction demonstrates the need to connect findings from bilingualism research with sociolinguistic interpretations, particularly in explaining how language alternation functions within different social and communicative environments.

Previous studies have established a foundation for understanding code-switching, but their scopes and research emphases vary. Zhong et al. (2023) conducted a systematic literature review of conversational code-switching in multilingual societies from a sociolinguistic perspective. Meanwhile, Rayo et al. (2024) examined the complexity of bilingual code-switching research, and Atika and Ena (2024) investigated its use on social media. Although these studies provide valuable contributions, their different analytical emphases indicate the need for a more integrated synthesis of the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching. In particular, the relationships among pragmatic functions, social identity construction, interpersonal solidarity, situational adaptation, digital communication, and pedagogical practices require further systematic examination. Furthermore, the extent to which these functions vary across communication settings and interactional contexts remains an important issue for sociolinguistic research.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching in multilingual communication through a systematic literature review. It

focuses on identifying the functions of code-switching in interpersonal interaction, social identity construction, situational adaptation, pragmatic strategies, and digital communication. Unlike studies that emphasize particular communication settings or specific dimensions of bilingual language use, this review seeks to synthesize diverse sociolinguistic functions within an integrated analytical framework. Its novelty lies in examining the interrelationships among communicative purposes, social identities, interpersonal relationships, and contextual adaptations across multilingual communication settings. Studies will be selected according to systematically established inclusion and exclusion criteria, with an emphasis on publications from 2021 to 2026. Through this synthesis, the study is expected to contribute to a broader understanding of code-switching as a socially meaningful communicative practice, identify emerging research patterns, and establish directions for future sociolinguistic investigations, particularly concerning the use of regional languages in multilingual Indonesian society.

2. METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings on the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching in multilingual communication. This method was selected because it enables findings from multiple studies to be examined systematically according to predefined research questions and selection criteria. The review focuses on interpersonal functions, social identity construction, adaptation to communicative contexts, pragmatic strategies, and code-switching in digital communication. The literature search is restricted to publications from 2021 to 2026 to capture recent developments in the field. The review is guided by the following research questions: (1) What sociolinguistic functions of code-switching are reported in recent studies? (2) How do these functions vary across interpersonal, educational, professional, and digital communication contexts? (3) What patterns and research gaps emerge from the existing literature?

The literature search covered relevant scholarly databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Crossref. Search terms included “code-switching,” “code-switching functions,” “sociolinguistic functions,” “multilingual communication,” “social identity,” “interpersonal communication,” and “digital communication.” These terms were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR to retrieve studies relevant to the research focus. The search strategy used the following search string**:** ("code-switching" OR "codeswitching") AND

(sociolinguistic OR "social identity" OR interpersonal OR pragmatic) AND (multilingual OR bilingual OR digital). Reference lists of relevant articles were also examined to identify additional studies that might not have been retrieved through database searches. The search period covered publications from January 2021 to the final search date in 2026.

Inclusion criteria were established to ensure that the selected articles were relevant to the research objectives. Studies were eligible if they were published between 2021 and 2026, appeared in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, were written in English or Indonesian, were available in full text, and examined code-switching in bilingual or multilingual contexts with a focus on social functions, identity, pragmatics, interpersonal interaction, or digital communication. Editorials, conference abstracts without full papers, duplicate publications, and studies that focused exclusively on grammatical structures or cognitive processing without relevance to the sociolinguistic focus were excluded. The criteria were applied consistently during the screening process to ensure that the selected publications addressed the research questions and provided relevant evidence for the thematic synthesis.

The article selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines. The first stage involved identifying all records retrieved from the databases and reference-list searches. The second stage involved removing duplicate records. The third stage consisted of screening titles and abstracts to assess their initial relevance to the research topic. The full texts of the remaining articles were then examined against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Records that did not meet the eligibility requirements were excluded, and the reasons for full-text exclusion were documented. The final selection process was summarized in a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram, presenting the number of records identified, duplicates removed, records screened, full-text reports assessed, excluded studies, and publications included in the final review.

Data from eligible articles were extracted using a coding sheet developed in accordance with the research objectives. The extracted information included author names, publication years, countries or research settings, study objectives, participant characteristics or data sources, research methods, language-use contexts, and reported functions of code-switching. The findings were then classified into analytical categories, including interpersonal functions, social identity

construction, situational adaptation, pragmatic strategies, and digital communication. An initial coding framework was developed from the research questions and refined according to recurring findings identified in the selected publications. Each extracted finding was compared with its original source to maintain consistency and minimize interpretation errors. The coding process also considered differences in research settings and methodological approaches to avoid treating context-specific findings as universal patterns.

The data were analyzed descriptively and thematically. Descriptive analysis summarized the studies by publication year, research context, methodology, and communication setting. Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns, similarities, and differences in the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching across the included studies. Methodological quality was assessed based on research objectives, design, data collection, analysis procedures, and the alignment between evidence and conclusions. The findings were compared, grouped into themes, and synthesized narratively to answer the research questions and identify research gaps. The review process was reported in accordance with PRISMA 2020 principles to ensure transparency and traceability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

3.1. General Characteristics of the Literature

Research on the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching in multilingual communication demonstrates that language alternation can be examined from linguistic, pragmatic, social identity, and interpersonal perspectives. Relevant studies address social media communication, bilingual conversations, professional interactions, and language-learning practices. These contexts indicate that code-switching is not limited to spoken interaction but also occurs in written and digital communication. For example, Sinclair and Fernández (2023) investigated code-switching alignment in second-language learning dialogues, whereas Daulay et al. (2024) examined code-switching on Instagram and TikTok.

According to their research contexts, the relevant literature can be organized into four main areas: interpersonal communication, digital communication, educational settings, and social and professional environments. Interpersonal communication includes code-switching in conversations involving familiarity and adaptation to interlocutors. Digital communication encompasses the use of two or more languages in posts, comments, and social media content. Educational

research examines code-switching in teacher–student interactions, whereas professional studies explore language adaptation in relation to organizational culture and workplace relationships. These contexts demonstrate that code-switching is shaped by the communicative demands and social relationships within which language choices occur. Consequently, its functions should be examined in relation to both the immediate interaction and the broader social environment.

In terms of research approaches, previous studies have employed various methods, including conversation analysis, interviews, digital content analysis, classroom research, and systematic reviews. These methodological differences produce different types of evidence. Conversation analysis enables researchers to examine the sequence of utterances and interlocutors' responses, while social media content analysis helps identify patterns of language use in published messages. Classroom studies provide insights into code-switching during instructional activities, whereas interview-based research can explore speakers' perceptions of language choice. These methodological differences are important when interpreting and comparing findings because each approach captures different dimensions of code-switching. Therefore, the synthesis should consider not only the functions reported but also the contexts, participants, and methods through which those functions are identified.

3.2. The Pragmatic Functions of Code-Switching in Multilingual Communication

One important theme in the literature is the pragmatic function of code-switching. This function concerns how speakers alternate languages to convey intentions, emphasize information, clarify messages, and adapt their utterances to interactional needs. In multilingual communication, speakers do not necessarily maintain a single language throughout a conversation. They may switch languages when encountering specific terms, emphasizing particular parts of a message, or determining that another language is more suitable for expressing their intended meaning. Wang (2025) examined insertional code-switching in Mandarin–English bilingual conversations as an interactional resource, highlighting the relationship between language alternation and communicative processes.

The pragmatic functions of code-switching indicate that its meaning must be interpreted in relation to the context in which it occurs. Language alternation may be used to reinforce a statement, modify the tone of an utterance, or distinguish information considered particularly important. However, these functions cannot be

determined solely by identifying a word or phrase from another language. Researchers need to examine the position of the switch within an utterance, the relationship between speakers and interlocutors, and the responses that follow. Accordingly, identifying pragmatic functions requires contextual interpretation supported by empirical evidence rather than assumptions about why speakers change languages.

Taken together, these perspectives position code-switching as an interactional resource rather than merely a structural feature of bilingual speech. Its pragmatic significance emerges from the relationship between linguistic choices, speakers' intentions, and the responses of interlocutors. This also indicates that the same language alternation may perform different pragmatic functions depending on the conversational situation.

3.3. Code-Switching as a Marker of Social Identity

Another major theme concerns the use of code-switching to express and negotiate social identity. In multilingual societies, language can serve as a marker of group membership, linguistic background, and cultural affiliation. Speakers may use a particular language to demonstrate shared experiences with members of their community or to adapt to a broader social environment. Nur'aini and Fitriana (2024) examined code-switching as a communicative strategy among Indonesian university students on social media. Their research context highlights the relevance of language choice in digital interactions, where users can combine languages according to their communicative needs and audience characteristics.

Social identity expressed through code-switching is not necessarily fixed. Speakers may present different aspects of their identities depending on whether they are interacting with peers, lecturers, colleagues, or unfamiliar social media users. Language choices may change according to formality, communicative purpose, and interpersonal relationships. In certain situations, regional languages may signal group affiliation, whereas national or foreign languages may help speakers communicate with broader audiences. Nevertheless, these meanings must be established through empirical evidence because the same language choice may serve different functions across communities.

The relationship between code-switching and social identity therefore involves both identity expression and identity negotiation. Speakers may use linguistic resources to establish a sense of belonging, demonstrate affiliation, or position themselves in relation to particular audiences. However, these interpretations

should not be generalized across multilingual communities without considering their specific sociolinguistic backgrounds and interactional conditions.

3.4. Solidarity and Interpersonal Closeness

The literature also highlights the relationship between code-switching, solidarity, and interpersonal closeness. Speakers who share more than one language may select a particular language to create a sense of familiarity, convey humor, or align themselves with group communication practices. Conversely, language alternation may signal a change in the relationship between speakers or a shift in conversational formality. These functions are associated with speakers' ability to interpret social situations and select forms of communication they consider appropriate. On social media, code-switching may become part of a communication style that reflects users' perceived closeness to their audiences.

However, solidarity cannot be inferred solely from the use of a shared language. The relationship between language choice and interpersonal closeness must be analyzed in relation to context, message content, and the relationships among participants. A shared language may create closeness in one situation but exclude individuals who do not understand it in another. Therefore, solidarity should be understood as a potential function that emerges under particular conditions rather than as a universal meaning of all code-switching events.

This distinction demonstrates that interpersonal solidarity is context-dependent. Code-switching may strengthen relationships when participants recognize and share the linguistic resources being used, but it may also create communicative boundaries when other participants do not share the same linguistic knowledge. Thus, interpersonal closeness and social exclusion should both be considered when examining the social consequences of language alternation.

3.5. Code-Switching in Digital Communication

Digital communication has become an important context for contemporary code-switching research. Instagram, TikTok, and other social media platforms allow users to combine languages in captions, comments, videos, and direct interactions. Daulay et al. (2024) examined code-switching on Instagram and TikTok, while Jofita and Haryanto (2025) focused on its patterns and functions in Instagram captions. Research in digital contexts is important because language choice is not limited to spontaneous conversation; it can also form part of message construction intended for specific audiences.

Code-switching in digital communication may be associated with audience adaptation, the presentation of bilingual identities, and the use of communication styles considered appropriate for a particular platform. Users may select expressions from another language to convey particular meanings or maintain communication styles commonly used within their communities. However, the characteristics of digital communication must be considered when interpreting these functions. Published messages may be edited before appearing online and therefore may not reflect the spontaneous language alternation found in face-to-face conversations.

Furthermore, each platform has distinctive communicative characteristics. Instagram captions allow users to compose written messages, whereas TikTok combines speech, on-screen text, music, and visual elements. These differences suggest that the functions of code-switching may be related to how messages are presented, not merely to language choice itself. Future research could therefore compare code-switching across platforms and investigate the relationships among language, visual context, and audience responses. Such an approach could expand our understanding of how multilingual speakers use language in evolving digital environments.

The digital context consequently broadens the analysis of code-switching beyond spoken interaction. Unlike face-to-face conversations, digital communication may involve planning, editing, and the integration of linguistic and non-linguistic elements. This difference suggests that findings from online communication should not automatically be treated as equivalent to findings from spontaneous spoken interaction. A comparative approach is therefore necessary to identify both shared functions and context-specific patterns across digital and face-to-face communication.

3.6. Code-Switching in Educational Settings

In educational settings, code-switching occurs in interactions between teachers and students, particularly in second-language and foreign-language instruction. Teachers may switch languages to explain concepts, provide instructions, clarify terminology, or ensure that students understand the material. Zainil and Arsyad (2021) examined teachers' perceptions of code-switching practices in Indonesian English-as-a-foreign-language classrooms. Research of this kind indicates that the functions of code-switching in education should be

interpreted in relation to instructional objectives, students' language proficiency, and classroom communication needs.

Nevertheless, the functions of code-switching in education differ from those in informal communication. In classrooms, language alternation may serve explicit pedagogical purposes, such as supporting comprehension or managing instructional activities. Among friends, switching languages may instead be associated with solidarity, humor, or group identity. Consequently, findings from educational research cannot be generalized directly to all multilingual communication contexts. Cross-context comparisons are needed to determine which functions occur across different settings and which are specific to particular environments.

These findings suggest that pedagogical code-switching should be understood in relation to the instructional roles of teachers and students. Its use may facilitate classroom communication when it supports explanation and comprehension, but its appropriateness depends on learning objectives and students' language development. This makes educational code-switching analytically distinct from language alternation in informal social interactions, even though both are influenced by interpersonal and contextual factors.

3.7. Code-Switching in Social and Professional Environments

Beyond social media and education, code-switching is also relevant to workplaces and professional interactions. In environments involving speakers from different linguistic backgrounds, language choice may help individuals adapt their communication to colleagues, establish professional relationships, or follow organizational norms. Lappeman et al. (2024) investigated cultural code-switching experiences among Black middle-class professionals in South Africa, highlighting the importance of cultural context and hierarchy in understanding adaptation. Although cultural code-switching is not entirely equivalent to linguistic code-switching, this research provides an additional perspective on the relationship between adaptation and social expectations.

This distinction is important to prevent conceptual confusion. Linguistic code-switching refers to alternation between languages or language varieties in communication, whereas cultural code-switching may involve changes in behavior, style, or self-presentation in response to cultural environments. The two phenomena may be related, but they should not be treated as identical without a clear conceptual explanation. In sociolinguistic research, this distinction helps

maintain definitional precision and ensures that the studies included in a review are relevant to its stated focus.

Accordingly, cultural code-switching can contribute to a broader discussion of social adaptation, but it should not be used as direct empirical evidence of linguistic alternation unless the study also examines language choice. Maintaining this distinction is essential to ensure that the scope of the review remains conceptually consistent with its focus on sociolinguistic functions of linguistic code-switching.

3.8. Summary of the Thematic Synthesis

Based on the conceptual classification above, the functions of code-switching can be summarized in six major themes. Each theme represents a different analytical focus, although a single code-switching event may serve several functions simultaneously.

Table 1. Summary of the Thematic Synthesis of Code-Switching Functions in Multilingual Communication

Theme	Analytical focus	Example context
Pragmatic functions	Emphasis, clarification, and expression of communicative intentions	Bilingual conversations
Social identity	Identity presentation and group membership	Multilingual communities
Interpersonal solidarity	Closeness, humor, and relationship management	Informal conversations
Situational adaptation	Language choice according to interlocutors and communicative purposes	Professional and educational settings
Digital communication	Message construction and self-presentation through multiple languages	Instagram and TikTok
Pedagogical functions	Explanation of content and management of classroom interaction	

The six themes are analytically interconnected rather than mutually exclusive. Pragmatic functions concern the communicative intentions underlying language alternation, while social identity and interpersonal solidarity relate to how language choices construct social relationships. Situational adaptation reflects speakers' responses to interlocutors and communicative environments. Digital communication and educational settings, meanwhile, represent specific contexts in which these functions may be observed. Therefore, the thematic classification distinguishes analytical dimensions while recognizing that several functions may occur simultaneously in a single interaction.

Overall, the relevant literature suggests that the sociolinguistic functions of code-switching should be understood through the relationships among language choice, communicative purposes, social identity, and interactional context. The synthesis also indicates that these functions are sensitive to the characteristics of communication settings, including interpersonal, digital, educational, and professional environments. However, the available conceptual classification does not establish the relative prevalence or frequency of each function.

Importantly, the themes presented in Table 1 constitute an initial conceptual synthesis rather than a frequency ranking or quantitative analysis of a completed SLR corpus. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as an analytical framework that requires verification against the studies meeting the review's inclusion criteria. To establish a publication-ready systematic review, the section must be supported by the actual number of included articles, a study-characteristics table containing authors, publication years, research contexts, methods, and principal findings, as well as a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram documenting the selection process.

DISCUSSION

3.1. Code-Switching as a Communicative Act with Social Meaning

The synthesis indicates that code-switching should be understood as a communicative act shaped by speakers' intentions and social contexts, rather than merely as a shift from one language to another. Hasan and Benny (2024), in their discussion of pragmatic functions, and Wang (2025), in their examination of interactional resources in bilingual conversations, support the view that language choice can influence how messages are conveyed and interpreted. This suggests that code-switching analysis should consider where language shifts occur in a conversation, how interlocutors respond, and what intentions can be inferred from the surrounding context.

Consequently, researchers should not limit their analysis to identifying types of code-switching, such as intra-sentential switching, inter-sentential switching, and tag-switching. Structural classifications are useful for describing the forms of language alternation, but they do not, by themselves, explain the social reasons behind its use. For example, an English expression embedded in Indonesian speech may be used to emphasize meaning, follow group conventions, or adapt a communication style to a particular audience. Sociolinguistic research should

therefore connect linguistic forms with their interactional functions using contextual evidence.

This distinction has an important theoretical implication: the structural form of code-switching and its communicative function represent related but different dimensions of analysis. A particular form of language alternation does not necessarily indicate one specific social function. The interpretation depends on the conversational sequence, participants' linguistic resources, and the communicative situation. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis should combine structural identification with pragmatic and sociolinguistic interpretation rather than treating grammatical categories as sufficient explanations of language choice.

3.2. The Relationship Between Code-Switching, Identity, and Social Solidarity

The relationship between code-switching and social identity suggests that language choice can serve as a means of expressing group membership and negotiating social positions. Nur'aini and Fitriana (2024) found that code-switching in students' social media communication may be associated with bilingual identity, humor, and social closeness. Meanwhile, Gabriella and Rengkung (2025) examined language use in relation to prestige, ethnic solidarity, and the identities of younger generations. These studies indicate that identity-related functions cannot be separated from the social environments in which languages are used.

However, code-switching does not necessarily carry the same social meaning across all groups. The use of English may be associated with a global orientation or a professional image in one context, whereas in another context, it may simply reflect the greater familiarity of certain terms. Similarly, the use of a regional language may signal group closeness, but its meaning depends on the relationships between speakers and local norms. Lappeman et al. (2024), in their study of cultural adjustment in professional environments, highlight the importance of considering social hierarchies and expectations when examining practices of adaptation. Therefore, interpretations of identity through code-switching should be grounded in empirical data rather than in assumptions that each language consistently represents a fixed social symbol.

These findings suggest that identity and solidarity are negotiated through context-dependent language practices rather than determined by the use of a particular language. A language choice may communicate belonging and interpersonal closeness among participants who share similar linguistic backgrounds, but the same choice may create distance or exclusion when other

participants do not understand it. This means that identity-related interpretations should consider both the intended social meaning and the responses of other participants.

It is also necessary to distinguish linguistic code-switching from cultural code-switching. Although both concepts may involve adaptation to social expectations, linguistic code-switching specifically concerns alternation between languages or language varieties, whereas cultural code-switching concerns adjustments in behavior, communication styles, or self-presentation across cultural environments. Lappeman et al. (2024) therefore provide a contextual perspective on social adaptation, but their findings should not be treated as direct evidence of linguistic alternation unless language switching is explicitly examined.

3.3. Digital Contexts and Changes in Multilingual Practices

The development of social media has expanded the contexts in which code-switching occurs because digital communication allows speakers to construct messages through written, visual, and audiovisual modes. Studies by Daulay et al. (2024), Akfan (2025), and Jofita and Haryanto (2025) examine social media as a setting for investigating language choices in digital content. In these contexts, code-switching may be associated with caption writing, audience adaptation, and self-presentation. Nevertheless, code-switching in edited posts cannot automatically be equated with spontaneous language alternation in face-to-face conversations.

Differences between platforms also warrant attention. Communication through private messaging applications allows users to adapt their language according to interpersonal closeness, whereas public content may be designed to reach a broader audience. Accordingly, code-switching on social media should be analyzed in terms of interactional characteristics, audience accessibility, and the extent to which messages may be edited before publication. Harianja et al.'s research on TikTok and Instagram provides an opportunity to examine multimodal elements, although further research is needed to systematically compare the functions of code-switching across different platforms and speaker groups.

The comparison between digital and face-to-face communication highlights an important contextual difference. In face-to-face interaction, language alternation occurs within an immediate exchange in which speakers can respond to one another directly. In digital communication, users may compose, revise, and publish messages for audiences that are not necessarily present during message production. Consequently, the interpretation of code-switching in digital spaces

should account for the relationship between message construction, platform characteristics, and audience expectations.

This perspective also indicates that digital code-switching should not be analyzed solely through the frequency of foreign-language expressions or the identification of linguistic forms. Researchers need to consider the communicative purpose of the content, the relationship between creators and audiences, and the multimodal features accompanying language use. However, the available studies do not yet establish whether the same functions operate consistently across different platforms. Comparative research is therefore needed before broader conclusions can be drawn about platform-specific patterns.

3.4. The Influence of Context, Language Proficiency, and Social Relationships

Research on bilingual dialogue and education suggests that code-switching can be influenced by language proficiency, communicative goals, and interactional characteristics. Sinclair and Fernández (2023) relate code-switching behavior in second-language learning dialogues to language proficiency and alignment between participants. Yim and Clément (2021) examine attitudes toward code-switching in relation to acculturation. These findings provide a basis for understanding code-switching as a practice shaped by multiple factors. However, findings from educational settings cannot be directly generalized to family conversations, workplaces, or social media without accounting for differences between these contexts.

In educational settings, Zainil and Arsyad (2021) and Luthfiyati et al. (2025) demonstrate the relevance of research on teachers' code-switching practices in English-language classrooms. Switching languages to clarify instructional content or adapt explanations to students' proficiency levels serves a different purpose from switching languages to establish solidarity in informal conversations. This distinction demonstrates that the functions of code-switching must be interpreted in relation to the social activity taking place. In sociolinguistic research, this understanding is important for avoiding the generalization that all code-switching results from limited language proficiency or, conversely, that it is always a consciously planned strategy.

The relationship between language proficiency and code-switching therefore requires careful interpretation. Limited proficiency may influence language alternation in certain situations, but it should not be assumed to explain every instance of switching. Speakers may also alternate languages to clarify meaning,

manage interaction, express identity, or accommodate interlocutors. This distinction is particularly important in educational research, where code-switching may function as an instructional resource rather than simply indicating students' or teachers' linguistic limitations.

A comparison across educational, interpersonal, and digital settings further demonstrates that code-switching is context-sensitive. In classrooms, its use may be evaluated in relation to learning objectives and comprehension; in informal interactions, it may be associated with solidarity and relationship management; and in digital communication, it may contribute to audience adaptation and self-presentation. These differences suggest that the functions of code-switching should be interpreted within the social activities in which they occur, rather than through a single explanatory factor.

3.5. Theoretical Implications and Research Gaps

Theoretically, this synthesis supports an approach that integrates linguistic form, pragmatic purpose, social identity, and interactional context. Research that focuses exclusively on structural classifications risks overlooking the social motivations that lead speakers to choose particular languages. Conversely, research that interprets every language shift as an identity marker may overlook practical factors, such as the need to explain a term or adjust the level of explanation to an interlocutor's understanding. A more comprehensive analytical framework should therefore distinguish among the form of code-switching, its communicative function, the social context, and the evidence supporting each interpretation.

The synthesis further suggests that these dimensions should be examined as interconnected analytical components. Linguistic form identifies how language alternation occurs; pragmatic analysis explains its possible communicative purposes; identity and solidarity perspectives address its social significance; and contextual analysis clarifies the conditions under which particular functions emerge. Integrating these dimensions can provide a more comprehensive understanding of code-switching without assuming that every instance performs the same function or carries an identical social meaning.

Potential research gaps include limited cross-platform comparisons, differences in how the functions of code-switching are operationalized across publications, and uneven attention to regional languages in multilingual societies. Future studies could compare digital communication with face-to-face

conversations, examine the use of regional languages alongside Indonesian and English, or investigate how code-switching functions vary according to speakers' social relationships. These gaps, however, should be treated as potential directions emerging from the preliminary synthesis rather than as definitive conclusions about the entire body of literature until the article selection and quality appraisal processes have been completed.

In addition, future research could develop more consistent operational definitions for pragmatic functions, identity expression, solidarity, and situational adaptation. Such consistency would facilitate comparisons across studies and reduce the risk of assigning different labels to similar communicative practices. Research involving regional languages is also important because multilingual practices in local communities may reflect social relationships and cultural contexts that are not adequately represented in studies focusing primarily on Indonesian and English.

Overall, the discussion emphasizes that code-switching is a context-dependent sociolinguistic practice involving linguistic choices, communicative intentions, and social relationships. Nevertheless, because the present synthesis remains preliminary, the identified theoretical implications and research gaps should be interpreted cautiously. Their strength and scope need to be reassessed after the final corpus of included studies and the results of the quality appraisal have been established.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that code-switching is a multilingual communication practice with diverse sociolinguistic functions that extend beyond the mere alternation of linguistic elements in speech. Based on the thematic synthesis, these functions include pragmatic strategies, social identity construction, interpersonal solidarity, adaptation to communicative situations, language use in digital media, and interaction management in educational and professional settings. These functions are interconnected and influenced by communicative goals, relationships between speakers, audience characteristics, and the social contexts in which interactions take place.

The findings highlight that code-switching should be analyzed through the integration of linguistic forms, pragmatic purposes, social identity, and interactional contexts. Its sociolinguistic meaning cannot be established solely by identifying the languages or linguistic structures involved; rather, interpretation requires

consideration of speakers' intentions, interlocutors' responses, and the social norms governing multilingual interactions. This integrated perspective represents the main conceptual contribution of the study because it connects the communicative and social dimensions of code-switching within a single analytical framework.

In digital communication, code-switching is associated with message construction and self-presentation, whereas in educational settings, it can support content explanation and the management of classroom interaction. In interpersonal and professional environments, language alternation may also contribute to identity negotiation, solidarity, and situational adaptation. These differences demonstrate that the functions of code-switching are context-dependent and should not be generalized across communication settings without considering their distinctive social and interactional characteristics.

This study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting its conclusions. The thematic synthesis presented here remains preliminary and requires verification against a fully documented corpus of selected articles. Consequently, the identified themes should be understood as conceptual categories rather than evidence of the frequency, prevalence, or relative importance of particular sociolinguistic functions. The absence of a fully reported article-selection process and comprehensive study-characteristics analysis also limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized across multilingual communities.

Future research should expand comparisons across languages, communities, and communication platforms, particularly by examining the use of regional languages in multilingual Indonesian society. Empirical studies are also needed to investigate how code-switching functions vary according to age, social relationships, formal and informal situations, and communication media characteristics. Further systematic reviews should apply transparent and reproducible selection procedures, report the characteristics and quality of included studies, and use clearly defined analytical categories to strengthen cross-study comparisons. Applying these procedures will strengthen the accuracy, traceability, and contribution of future research to the development of sociolinguistic scholarship.

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