

Code-Switching and Code-Mixing Strategies in Multilingual Family Communication on the Ueno Family Japan YouTube Content

Kafifah Ayu Lestari & Rosita Sofyaningrum
Universitas Ma'arif Nahdlatull Ulama Kebumen, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the forms of code-switching and code-mixing and to analyze their use as language strategies in the YouTube channel Ueno Family Japan. A qualitative descriptive method was employed through video observation and detailed utterance recording. The findings reveal that code-switching and code-mixing are consciously used to adapt language for the audience, assert the family's multicultural identity, foster emotional closeness, and enhance communication effectiveness. Code-switching mainly occurs inter-sententially and via tag insertions, while code-mixing appears as foreign words inserted into Indonesian sentences. These findings suggest that code-switching and code-mixing are not merely linguistic phenomena but functional and adaptive communicative strategies in multilingual family interactions on digital platforms..

Alamat email

kafifahayulestari@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary means of human communication, functioning not only as a tool for conveying messages but also as a marker of social and cultural identity (Apriyanto, 2020). In bilingual and multilingual societies, language use is dynamic and adaptive to social contexts and communicative purposes. This phenomenon is increasingly evident in the digital era, where social media serves as a new space for cross-cultural linguistic practices. YouTube, as a global digital media platform, enables communication interactions involving more than one language, giving rise to linguistic strategies such as code-switching and code-mixing as forms of speakers'

adaptation to diverse audiences. In this sense, language achieves its communicative goals not merely by transmitting messages, but by accommodating social meanings and cultural values embedded in interaction.

Over the past decade, studies on code-switching and code-mixing in digital media have shown significant development. Several studies reveal that language shifts frequently appear in YouTube content and podcasts, both among public figures and multicultural families. Research by Karyati (2022) and Septiaresmi et al. (2024) indicates that interactions within mixed families tend to naturally produce code-switching and code-mixing as reflections of bilingual life. Other studies by Umifa et al. (2022), Suratiningsih and Cania (2022), and Rahmadini (2024) emphasize that code-switching and code-mixing in digital media are generally analyzed in terms of their forms and triggering factors. Recent studies focusing on the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel (Putri & Aritonang, 2025; Khasanah et al., 2025) still primarily address the identification of linguistic events.

Although research on code-switching and code-mixing in digital media has grown, most previous studies treat these phenomena merely as linguistic occurrences. Research that examines code-switching and code-mixing as deliberate language strategies with social functions and communicative purposes, particularly in the context of multicultural families addressing cross-cultural YouTube audiences, is still limited. Moreover, the relationship between these language strategies and efforts to build closeness, communication effectiveness, and cross-cultural adaptation has not been deeply explored, despite evidence that code-switching plays a crucial role in identity negotiation and social positioning in multilingual communities (González Rojas, 2025).

Based on this gap, the scientific novelty of this article lies in its analytical approach, interpreting code-switching and code-mixing not merely as bilingual phenomena but as deliberate linguistic strategies used in digital communication by multicultural families. By taking the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel as the study object, this article provides a new perspective on the functions and purposes of code-switching and code-mixing in fostering cross-cultural communication in digital spaces.

Aligned with this background and theoretical framework, the purpose of this article is to describe the forms of code-switching and code-mixing used in the Ueno Family Japan YouTube videos and to analyze their roles and purposes as language strategies in multicultural family communication on digital media.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a content analysis method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to understand and describe linguistic phenomena in depth within their natural context, particularly the practices of code-switching and code-mixing in digital communication among a multicultural family. Content analysis was used to examine the meanings, forms, and functions of language in audiovisual utterances, as Krippendorff (2018) asserts that content analysis enables researchers to systematically and contextually interpret communication messages. This method is relevant because the data consisted of spoken utterances recorded in digital media that required linguistically oriented interpretations within their social context.

The research data consisted of utterances containing code-switching and code-mixing in selected videos uploaded on the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel. The data source was

purposively selected based on the intensity of code-switching and code-mixing phenomena, ensuring the analyzed data was highly relevant to the research objectives. Data collection continued until saturation was reached, meaning no significant new variations were found.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher (human instrument), supported by data recording sheets and transcription tools. Data were collected through documentation techniques, which involved repeatedly watching videos, transcribing utterances verbatim, and noting contextual information, including speakers, interlocutors, topics, and communication situations. This technique allowed the researcher to capture linguistic data accurately and comprehensively according to its context.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, transcribed data were reduced by identifying and categorizing utterances containing code-switching and code-mixing. Second, the data were classified based on the forms and types of code-switching and code-mixing, referring to sociolinguistic theories, particularly those proposed by Poplack and Muysken. Third, the data were analyzed to interpret the functions and purposes of code-switching and code-mixing as linguistic strategies in multicultural family digital communication. The analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data reduction, data display, and iterative conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, theoretical triangulation was applied by comparing the analysis results from multiple relevant theoretical perspectives. The findings were then presented in an analytical description emphasizing the relationship between linguistic forms, social context, and the communicative purposes of the speakers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the practices of code-switching and code-mixing in the video content of the Ueno Family Japan YouTube channel and analyzes the emerging linguistic functions and strategies. Data obtained from transcriptions of the primary speakers and other family members were qualitatively analyzed to identify the forms, purposes, and contexts of code-switching and code-mixing. The discussion links the findings to Poplack's (1980) theory on types of code-switching and Holmes' (2013) theory on situational and metaphorical code-switching, explaining how these linguistic phenomena function as deliberate, functional, and contextually grounded communication strategies in digital spaces. The findings are further connected to previous literature to provide a comprehensive perspective on multilingual communication practices within multicultural families on social media platforms.

1. Analysis and Discussion of Code-Switching in Ueno Family Japan YouTube Videos

This section presents the analysis and discussion of code-switching in Ueno Family Japan YouTube videos. The focus is on the types, functions, and patterns of language alternation among Indonesian, Japanese, Arabic, and English, as observed in daily family interactions. Using insights from Poplack (1980) and Holmes (2013), the analysis examines how code-switching serves not only as a communicative strategy but also as a tool to convey social meaning, express identity, and manage interpersonal relationships within the family and with the digital audience.

1.1. Findings on Code-Switching

Based on the analysis of utterances in the Ueno Family Japan YouTube video titled "*Males Masak Makan di Luar Besti!? Request Mas Nats Unagi*", 13 instances of code-switching were

identified, involving transitions between Indonesian, Japanese, Arabic, and English. All code-switching data are summarized in the Table of Code-Switching Forms, which includes a column with meanings in Indonesian to clarify the semantic and functional aspects of each utterance.

Structurally, the code-switching observed was dominated by inter-sentential switching, occurring both within a single speaker's utterances and across different speakers. In addition, dialogic code-switching was also found, where language shifts occurred within a dialogue sequence due to differences in language choice between the speaker and the interlocutor.

These findings indicate that code-switching in this content is not incidental but occurs repeatedly and consistently across various family activities, such as greeting viewers, advising children, praying, and interacting during meals, reflecting the dynamic, socially embedded nature of multilingual practices within family and community settings (Molate; Radu and Cotoc).

1.2. Code-Switching from the Perspective of Poplack's Theory (1980)

According to Poplack (1980), code-switching can be classified into tag switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. Based on the research data, the most dominant type of code-switching found in *Ueno Family Japan* content is inter-sentential switching. A representative example can be seen in the utterance: "*Oiya, maaf ya Allah. Gomenasai.*"

In this data, the speaker uses Indonesian in the first sentence and then switches completely to Japanese in the following sentence. There is no mixing of the syntactic structures of the two languages; therefore, this switch fulfills the criteria of inter-sentential switching as proposed by Poplack. Similar patterns are also evident in the utterances "*Kiwotsukete. Bisa nggak?*" and "*Itadakimasu. Bismillah Nat, Rit.*"

In addition, instances of tag switching were also identified, as in the utterance "*Assalamu'alaikum best. Happy weekend.*" The expression *Happy weekend* functions as a formulaic pragmatic insertion that can be easily transferred across languages without affecting the main structure of the utterance. Poplack emphasizes that tag switching is commonly used by bilingual speakers to accommodate a broader audience, which in this context refers to YouTube viewers who are linguistically heterogeneous.

Interestingly, intra-sentential switching is almost absent in the data, as the phenomenon of mixing linguistic elements within a single sentence structure is more appropriately categorized as code-mixing. This finding indicates that code-switching in this content is performed in a controlled and conscious manner, rather than as a result of limited language proficiency.

1.3. Code-Switching from the Perspective of Holmes's Theory (2013)

From Holmes's (2013) perspective, code-switching is understood as a sociolinguistic strategy related to changes in situation, participants, topic, or the social function of an utterance. Based on the data, code-switching in the *Ueno Family Japan* videos can be classified into situational code-switching and metaphorical code-switching. Situational code-switching is clearly evident in specific activity contexts, such as before meals. The utterance "*Itadakimasu. Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.*" demonstrates a shift from Japanese to Arabic triggered by a change in activity, from ordinary interaction to an eating activity imbued with religious values. This

language shift is not caused by a change in topic, but rather by a change in the social norms and values accompanying the activity, as explained by Holmes.

Meanwhile, metaphorical code-switching appears in the use of Japanese in relational and emotional interactions, such as “*Arigatou oniichan.*” In this context, Japanese functions as a symbol of politeness, intimacy, and family hierarchy. Holmes argues that metaphorical code-switching enables speakers to convey particular social meanings without altering the topic of conversation. These findings indicate that Japanese is used not only due to environmental factors, but also because of the social values attached to the language within the family.

The use of English in the greeting “*Happy weekend*” can also be interpreted as metaphorical code-switching aimed at constructing a modern, friendly, and inclusive image toward a social media audience.

Based on the synthesis of Poplack’s and Holmes’s theories, code-switching in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube content functions to demonstrate the speakers’ multilingual competence, to adjust language use according to communicative situations and activities, to reinforce the identity of a multicultural family, and to build emotional closeness both among family members and with the digital audience.

The inclusion of a column indicating meanings in Indonesian in the code-switching table shows that language shifts do not alter the core meaning of the utterances; instead, they enrich their pragmatic and social nuances. Therefore, code-switching in this content should not be understood as a disruption of communication, but rather as an effective and meaningful communicative strategy.

These findings extend previous studies on code-switching that have largely focused on formal or institutional domains by demonstrating that code-switching also plays an important role in family communication in digital spaces, particularly in YouTube content that is both personal and public in nature.

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the forms of code-switching in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube video content are dominated by inter-sentential switching and tag switching involving Indonesian, Japanese, Arabic, and English. This code-switching is employed consciously and functionally as a communicative strategy that reflects multilingual competence, situational adjustment, and the social identity of a multicultural family.

2. Code-Mixing in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube Video Content

This section discusses code-mixing in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube videos, where Indonesian serves as the base language with insertions from Japanese, Javanese, and English. The analysis focuses on the forms, functions, and social meanings of these insertions, highlighting how code-mixing reflects bilingual competence, cultural identity, and expressive communication within the family and toward the digital audience.

2.1. Findings on Code-Mixing

Based on the analysis of 21 utterances containing code-mixing in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube video content, all data indicate the presence of intra-sentential code-mixing. The

languages involved include Indonesian as the base language, with insertions from Japanese, Javanese, and English.

The recapitulation of code-mixing forms shows that the insertion of Japanese elements is the most dominant, followed by Javanese and English. The dominance of Japanese cannot be separated from the social context of the Ueno family living in Japan, as well as the involvement of children as bilingual speakers from an early age.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Code-Mixing Forms

No	Form of Code-Mixing	Languages Involved	Number of Data	Percentage
1	Word insertion (intra-sentential)	Indonesian–Japanese	12	57.1%
2	Word insertion (intra-sentential)	Indonesian–Javanese	5	23.8%
3	Word insertion (intra-sentential)	Indonesian–English	4	19.1%
Total			21	100%

2.2. Analysis of Code-Mixing Forms

To avoid repetitive presentation, the analysis focuses on five representative examples of code-mixing that illustrate both linguistic variation and the social functions within the Ueno Family Japan videos. In the first example, the utterance “*Tadi Pak Bambang kan sighthoto, jadi mama nggak masak*” demonstrates the insertion of the Japanese word *sighthoto* (meaning “work” or “job”) into an Indonesian sentence structure. Here, the base language is Indonesian, while the Japanese term is seamlessly integrated to convey a specific action, reflecting the speaker’s bilingual competence.

The second example, “*Tempatnya aesthetic*”, shows the use of the English word *aesthetic* within an Indonesian sentence. The insertion functions to reinforce the speaker’s evaluation of the place, adding a modern and culturally resonant nuance, which also aligns with digital media language styles and the intended audience’s familiarity with English expressions.

In the third example, “*Di Jepang iki medit tisu*”, a mixture of Javanese and Indonesian occurs within a single utterance. The word *iki* (Javanese: “this”) is combined with Indonesian grammar to describe a contextual observation in Japan. This intra-sentential mixing conveys an informal and expressive tone, highlighting the speaker’s regional identity while maintaining intelligibility for a wider audience.

The fourth example, “*Entar dua bulan lagi tambah satu personil, tambah akachan*”, features the Japanese word *akachan* (meaning “baby”) inserted into an Indonesian sentence. The term functions as a cultural marker, emphasizing family-related information and expressing affection. The bilingual insertion reflects the family’s multicultural environment and the children’s exposure to Japanese from an early age.

Finally, the fifth example, “*Ini lumayan enak, tapi sepi ra enek sing tuku soale regane larang*”, combines Javanese and Indonesian elements to describe a culinary experience. The Javanese segments *ra enek sing tuku* (meaning “no one buys it”) convey expressive and evaluative nuances, highlighting local cultural speech patterns while maintaining the overall Indonesian sentence structure. This instance demonstrates how code-mixing serves both expressive and communicative purposes, reinforcing social identity and emotional expression within family interactions.

These examples show that code-mixing in the Ueno Family Japan videos is strategically employed to integrate linguistic, cultural, and social functions, reflecting the speakers’ bilingual competence and their ability to adapt language use to different communicative and digital contexts.

2.3. Discussion Based on Poplack’s Theory

According to Poplack (1980), intra-sentential code-mixing occurs when elements from another language are inserted into a sentence without violating the syntactic structure of the main language. All data in this study meet these criteria, as the sentence structures consistently follow Indonesian grammatical rules, the foreign-language elements function solely as lexical insertions, and no overall grammatical system shift occurs. For example, in the utterance “*Tadi Pak Bambang kan sighoto*,” the word *sighoto* replaces a verb without affecting the sentence structure. This indicates that the speaker possesses sufficient bilingual competence to perform language mixing in a spontaneous and natural manner.

2.4. Discussion Based on Holmes’s Theory

From Holmes’s (2013) perspective, code-mixing is influenced by social and pragmatic factors. In the context of the Ueno family, code-mixing functions to reinforce a bilingual and multicultural identity, particularly as an Indonesian family living in Japan; to adapt to a domestic context in which Japanese has become part of everyday life; to build intimacy and expressiveness, especially through the use of Javanese, which carries emotional and informal nuances; and to attract the attention of a digital audience, particularly through the use of popular English terms. For instance, the use of the word *aesthetic* not only demonstrates language mixing but also reflects the speaker’s orientation toward digital culture and social media language styles.

Compared to previous studies that have largely examined code-mixing and code-switching in formal, educational, or public digital contexts, recent research highlights the importance of family-based multilingual practices in digital media as strategic tools for identity construction, emotional bonding, and cross-cultural negotiation (Siwi & Purwanto, 2025; Nurjaleka et al., 2025; Fatikh, 2025). Thus, these findings extend the application of Poplack’s and Holmes’s theories to the domain of digital family communication, which remains relatively underexplored.

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that code-mixing in the Ueno Family Japan YouTube content exclusively takes the form of intra-sentential code-mixing, with a dominance of Japanese insertions, followed by Javanese and English. This phenomenon is influenced by the speakers’ bilingual backgrounds, the multicultural family context, and expressive needs in digital communication.

3. The Purposes of Using Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Building Linguistic Strategies on the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube Channel

The use of code-switching and code-mixing in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube content cannot be understood merely as a linguistic phenomenon resulting from the speakers' multilingual backgrounds. Instead, it represents intentional and functional language strategies employed to express identity, enhance audience engagement, and create effective and natural communication in multicultural family interactions within digital spaces (Zebua et al.; Hendriani et al.)

3.1. Code-Switching and Code-Mixing as Audience Adaptation Strategies

One of the primary purposes of using code-switching and code-mixing is to adapt language use to a heterogeneous audience. The *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube channel attracts viewers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, particularly Indonesian audiences who are familiar with Indonesian but also have an interest in Japanese culture.

The use of Indonesian as the main language, interspersed with elements of Japanese, English, and Arabic, allows the content to remain easily comprehensible while maintaining cultural appeal. Holmes (2013) states that bilingual speakers often engage in code-switching to accommodate participants and the social context of communication. In this case, code-switching functions as a tool of social adaptation that bridges the interests of the family as speakers and the audience as indirect interlocutors.

Expressions such as “*Happy weekend*” or “*Itadakimasu*” serve to broaden the range of meaning and create an inclusive impression without reducing the intelligibility of the core message (Holmes, 2013).

3.2. Strategies for Reinforcing Multicultural Family Identity

Code-switching and code-mixing are also employed as strategies for reinforcing identity. The Ueno Family is an Indonesian–Japanese multicultural family, and this identity is consistently represented through language choices in everyday utterances.

According to Gumperz (1982), code-switching functions as a contextualization cue, namely a social marker that signals identity, social relationships, and implicit meanings in interaction. The use of Japanese in utterances such as “*arigatou oniichan*” or “*kiwotsukete*” not only conveys lexical meaning but also signals emotional closeness, family hierarchy, and politeness values characteristic of Japanese culture.

Meanwhile, the insertion of Javanese in code-mixing, such as “*wareg*” or “*iki medit*,” functions to reinforce the speakers' cultural identity as members of the Javanese community. Thus, the linguistic strategy constructed is not singular but layered, reflecting Indonesian, Japanese, and local identities simultaneously.

3.3. Strategies for Communicative Effectiveness and Naturalness in Family Interaction

Another purpose of employing code-switching and code-mixing is to enhance the naturalness and effectiveness of communication in family interactions. In a bilingual family

context, the use of more than one language is often the most efficient option for expressing certain meanings.

Poplack (1980) emphasizes that grammatically intact code-switching, such as inter-sentential switching, indicates a high level of speaker competence in the languages involved. The findings of this study show that code-switching does not hinder communication; rather, it facilitates interaction, particularly in spontaneous utterances such as warnings, prohibitions, or emotional expressions.

Code-mixing also functions as a strategy of linguistic economy, in which speakers choose words from another language that are perceived as more precise, concise, or familiar, such as “*unagi*,” “*gohan*,” or “*akachan*.” This aligns with Grosjean’s (1982) view that bilinguals select linguistic elements that best suit their cognitive and social contexts.

3.4. Strategies for Building Emotional Closeness and Personal Image in Digital Media

In the context of YouTube as a personal branding-based medium, code-switching and code-mixing also function as strategies for building emotional closeness with viewers. The language used in *Ueno Family Japan* content is casual, informal, and resembles everyday conversation, enabling viewers to feel emotionally connected.

Holmes (2013) refers to this phenomenon as metaphorical code-switching, namely the use of particular languages to create specific emotional tones or social meanings. Code-mixing with slang (e.g., *endul*) and English terms (e.g., *crispy*, *original*) reinforces an impression of friendliness, modernity, and reduced social distance between content creators and their audience.

Thus, the linguistic strategies constructed through code-switching and code-mixing contribute directly to content appeal and the sustainability of viewer engagement, which are crucial aspects of the social media ecosystem.

Based on the discussion above, the purposes of using code-switching and code-mixing on the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube channel are to adapt language to a heterogeneous audience (Holmes, 2013), to reinforce the family’s multicultural identity (Gumperz, 1982), to enhance communicative effectiveness and naturalness (Poplack, 1980), and to build emotional closeness and personal image in digital spaces (Holmes, 2013).

Therefore, code-switching and code-mixing in this content are not merely linguistic phenomena, but conscious, contextual, and communicative linguistic strategies that play an important role in shaping multilingual family interaction while simultaneously reaching a broad YouTube audience.

The use of code-switching and code-mixing in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube channel aims to build adaptive, identity-driven, and communicative linguistic strategies. These strategies enable speakers to express multicultural identity, maintain the naturalness of family interaction, and build closeness with digital audiences. Hence, code-switching and code-mixing should not be viewed as language deviations, but rather as strategic linguistic practices in family communication in the era of social media.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study of code-switching and code-mixing in the *Ueno Family Japan* YouTube content, it can be concluded that the language shifts observed constitute conscious and functional communication strategies. Code-switching and code-mixing are employed to adapt language use to a heterogeneous audience, to reinforce the family's multicultural identity, to enhance communicative effectiveness, and to build emotional closeness in digital spaces. These findings demonstrate that multilingual linguistic practices function as adaptive communicative strategies while simultaneously strengthening the speakers' social identities.

The findings also suggest several directions for further development. Future research may expand the sample to include other multilingual family channels in order to examine similar patterns of linguistic strategies. Content creators may strategically utilize code-switching and code-mixing to foster audience engagement and convey cultural values. This phenomenon can also be incorporated as instructional material in sociolinguistics for students at both secondary and tertiary levels. Further investigation into viewers' motivations and perceptions could deepen understanding of the social and emotional functions of language in digital interaction, thereby opening opportunities for more effective linguistic strategies in the era of digital communication.

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