

# The Use of Translanguaging in Social Media: A Case Study of Gen Z

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**Abstract:** This study aims at describing the components of translanguaging, the reason for using translanguaging, and the functions of translanguaging in TikTok and Instagram videos. This research used the descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected from TikTok and Instagram content creators videos that researcher follows on her social media. The object of this research is Generation Z (born between 1997-2012). First, the researcher was transcribed the utterances into written text, the process was listening and watching the videos carefully, and make transcription into words. Second, identified the transcript and classified into each components of translanguaging. Third, reduced data in the form of table, it was contained their utterances containing translanguaging. The components are divided according to the utterances. Fourth, the researcher was interpreted the reasons of translanguaging in their videos. In addition, the researcher was found the speech function of translanguaging used by them in their videos. The results of this study show there are two components of translanguaging in those videos. The translanguaging's components used in the three videos were dominated by 78% code-switching, and 22% translating and interpreting. The difference between translanguaging and code switching lies in the concept. The concept of translanguaging gives freedom for anyone to use more than two languages without any restrictions, while code-switching has its own limitations. The result of this study also finds there are six reasons why they used translanguaging. The most dominant reason used in those videos was translanguaging is talking about a particular topic with 69%. In addition, there are five speech functions that they used translanguaging. The most dominant speech function used in the three videos is 78% metalinguistic function.

**Keywords:** *Translanguaging, TikTok, Instagram, Gen Z*

## INTRODUCTION

Mastering more than one language has become a trend nowadays. To connect with people from different countries in this era of globalization, one must be able to speak at least one language. Bilingualism is a common phenomenon that is experienced to those language learners. Renanda, et.al. (2021) state that English has become a prevalent choice for daily communication worldwide. Individuals who possess fluency in English often integrate it into their daily conversations alongside their native languages. This linguistic practice is referred to as bilingualism when individuals can operate in two languages, typically their mother tongue and English, which they use with varying degrees of dominance depending on the context. Pateda (1990) introduces the term "multilingual" to describe individuals capable of communicating in three or more languages. This definition highlights a broader linguistic proficiency, encompassing people who have developed the ability to use multiple languages beyond their native tongue and English. Being multilingual implies a greater linguistic flexibility and cultural awareness, allowing for richer, more diverse modes of communication. According to Wilian (2010), in the linguistic context of Indonesia, which is multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural, with a high intensity of contact between one ethnic group and another, linguistic competition is inevitable. It means there are many regional languages in Indonesia.

Hermansyah, et.al. (2023) state that the term of translanguaging is defined as the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation. Although translanguaging is commonly associated with the linguistic behaviors of those proficient in multiple languages,

translingual communicative practices are not limited to individuals with such proficiency (Canagarajah, 2013; Jacquemet, 2005; Pennycook, 2008). Translanguaging presents a distinct perspective on language systems. Translanguaging in the context of bilingualism or multilingualism is not merely about switching languages; it is about the fluid and dynamic use of languages to construct meaning, engage with various cultural identities, and navigate different social contexts. Translanguaging presents a distinct perspective on language systems. It can be viewed as a method of modifying the way two languages are used in order to improve linguistic expression and communication. As stated by Yusra (2022), the choice of English, the most commonly used foreign language in the country, may not always be relevant to the communication context. When English is chosen, it is often associated with the speaker's assertion of superiority in terms of education, profession, or socio-economic background.

Since English is now one of many worldwide languages that are primarily used on the platform, diversity has not become a problem. According to Yusra, et.al. (2023) the vitality of English in Indonesia likewise has started since independence movement in 1940s, continued in the development discourses of the Old Order in 1960s and the New Order in 1980s and enhanced in the current Reformation era. Since English is now one of many worldwide languages that are primarily used on the platform, diversity has not become a problem. Williams (2009) has explored how online users engage in multilingual and multimodal computer mediated discourse to communicate with each other from across the globe. Translanguaging is also prevalent on TikTok

and Instagram's videos. TikTok and Instagram are the top 5 most popular Social Media Networks websites in Indonesia in March 2024 (similarweb.com). Many creators utilize multiple languages within their content to cater to a diverse audience and convey their messages effectively. Furthermore, TikTok's and Instagram's video editing features allow users to add subtitles or text overlays in different languages. This enables creators to provide translations or explanations when using words or phrases from other languages. The practice of translanguaging on these social media encourages cross-cultural exchanges and fosters connections among users with various linguistic backgrounds.

The object of this research is Generation Z. Based on Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024 data from Indonesia Research Institute Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) is currently the biggest generation group in Indonesia with 27.94% of the total population or 74.93 million people. Their significance might even be bigger than that of the millennials, which makes up the second largest generation in Indonesia with 25.87% of the total population or 69.38 million people (cdn.idntimes.com). According to Schwieger, & Ladwig, (2018), individuals belonging to Generation Z were born between the years 1997 and 2012. This generation is technology savvy and prioritizes mobiles. Generation Z also has high standards for how they spend their time online. This generation is important to study because Generation Z will soon become the most influential generation in the future of retail. Bascha (2011) highlights that this demographic has grown up in an era dominated by the internet, cellphones, laptops, readily accessible networks, and digital media. This backdrop has influenced Gen Z students to frequently employ bilingualism or multilingualism on social media platforms as a means to enhance communication and the linguistic quality of their interactions, facilitated by technological advancements.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, which falls under the broader category of qualitative research aimed at developing explanations for social phenomena. As per Creswell (1998), qualitative research is characterized by an inquiry process focused on comprehending social or human issues by constructing a comprehensive and holistic understanding using words. In this specific study, the category of case study used is an instrumental case study. An instrumental case study is undertaken to gain insights into a particular issue that might have broader applicability or generalizability. The chosen research method for this study is the case study approach, as defined by Creswell (2012). A case study involves an in-depth investigation of a bounded system, which could be an activity, event, process, or individuals. In this specific study, the category of case study used is an instrumental case study. An instrumental case study is undertaken to gain insights into a particular issue that might have broader applicability or generalizability.

In this study, the source of data is from the monologue and utterances in some videos in TikTok and Instagram's videos and this research need the transcript from the monologue and the utterances. The data has been collected through several methods. First, review the contents: the

content review method is a method of collecting data by using study, investigate, and examine the contents of TikTok and Instagram's content creator videos. Second, documentation: this method is used to find important material or sources that used as a support to identify the translanguaging TikTok and Instagram's content creator videos. The data were analysed by identified the components, the reasons, and the speech functions of translanguaging. First, the researcher was transcribed the utterances into written text. Then, identified the transcript and classified into each component of translanguaging. After that, reduced data in the form of table. The components are divided according to the utterances (sentences, clauses words). Then, the researcher was interpreted the reasons of translanguaging in TikTok and Instagram's content creator videos. In addition, the researcher was found the speech function of translanguaging used TikTok and Instagram's content creators in the three short videos.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Finding

To analyse the data gathered for this study, the researcher applied theories from Tse's theory (1966), Hoffman's theory (1991) and Muysken's theory (1987). According to Tse (1966), there are three components of translanguaging, those are codeswitching, translating and interpreting, and language brokering. The first result is the researcher found 36 total sentences, words, and clause, and phrase of translanguaging that were analysed. There are two components found in this study, those are code switching, and translating and interpreting. The frequencies of components are shown in the table below:

Table 1. Frequency of translanguaging component's

Title of The Video	Components			Cal
	CS	TI	LB	(n)
	%	%	%	%
<i>Type of friend that ur gonna need</i>	10	3	0	13
	83	23	0	100
<i>Ketika anak perkantoran Jaksel meeting PART 3</i>	12	2	0	14
	86	14	0	100
<i>Shir in Melbourne PART 2</i>	6	3	0	9
	67	33	0	100
Total	28	7	0	36
	80	20	0	100

Note: (CS) Code-Switching, (TI) Translating and Interpreting, (LB) Language Brokering

Table 1 shows that code-switching (CS) is the highest frequency that occurred in all TikTok and Instagram's content creator videos. It appeared 28 times or 80% of the total percentage of the translanguaging's components. The translating and interpreting were the second highest component which appeared 7 times or 20% of the total percentage of the translanguaging components. The second result is there were found three of six reasons of translanguaging. The reasons were found from 36 sentences, words, and clause, and phrase of translanguaging that were analysed, those are talking about a particular topic, quoting somebody else, being emphatic about something, interjection,

repetition used for clarification, and intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor. The frequencies of components are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Frequency of Reasons

Reasons							Cal (n)
Video numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	
V1	1	0	0	0	5	0	18
	72	0	0	0	28	0	100
V2	14	0	1	0	0	4	19
	74	0	0	0	0	0	100
V3	8	0	0	0	0	6	14
	57	0	0	0	0	43	100
Total	35	0	1	0	5	10	51
	69	0	2	0	10	20	100

Note :

- 1: Talking about a particular topic.
- 2: Quoting somebody else.
- 3: Being emphatic about something.
- 4: Interjection.
- 5: Repetition used for clarification.
- 6: Intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor.

Table 2 shows that talking about particular topic (1) is the highest frequency that occurred in all TikTok and Instagram’s content creator videos. It appeared 35 times or 69% of the total percentage of the translanguaging’s reasons. Intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor (6) was the second highest reason which appeared 10 times or 20% of the total percentage of the translanguaging reasons. The lowest frequency was being emphatic about something (3) which appeared 1 times or 1% of the total percentage of the translanguaging reasons. The third result is there were found 3 of six reasons of translanguaging which were found in this study. The speech functions were found from 36 sentences, words, and clause, and phrase of translanguaging that were analysed, those are referential function, expressive function, phatic function, metalinguistic function, and poetic function. The frequencies of speech functions are shown in the table below.

Table 3 Frequency of speech function

Video Numbers	Speech Function						Cal (n)
	RF	DF	EF	PF	MF	PoF	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
V1	3	0	0	0	13	0	16
	19	0	0	0	81	0	100
V2	0	0	2	0	14	0	16
	0	0	12	0	87	0	100
V3	1	0	4	0	8	0	13
	8	0	31	0	62	0	100
Total	4	0	6	0	35	0	45
	9	0	13	0	78	0	100

Note: (RF) referential function, (DF) directive function, (EF) expressive function, (PF) phatic function, (MF) metalinguistic function, and (PoF) poetic function.

Table 3 shows that (MF) metalinguistic function was the highest frequency that occurred in all YouTube videos. It was appeared 35 times or 78% of the total percentage of the translanguaging’s speech functions. (EF) expressive function was the second highest reason which appeared 6 times or 13% of the total percentage of the translanguaging speech functions. The lowest frequency was frequency was (RF) referential function which appeared 4 times or 9% of the total percentage of the translanguaging speech functions. The third result is there were found 3 of six speech functions of translanguaging which were found in this study.

**Discussion**

Translanguaging, as articulated by Canagarajah (2011) in García & Lin (2018), reflects a nuanced understanding of multilingualism that transcends traditional notions of language use. This perspective recognizes the fluid and dynamic nature of language practices among multilingual individuals, who do not necessarily switch from one discrete language system to another but rather operate within an integrated linguistic repertoire. This approach to language use is particularly relevant in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts, where the blending of languages is a natural outcome of everyday interactions. The study discovered the reasons they employed translanguaging. The primary motivation behind the translanguaging in those three videos is the discussion of a particular topic. The subjects of those three videos are discussing a topic that has recently gained popularity. As mentioned, translanguaging is typically used when discussing a particular topic. The second highest frequency is intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor. When they want to use an idiom, after that they explained it in Bahasa. It is indicated, the reason intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor is used when using an idiom in foreign language and talks with someone. The third highest frequency is repetition used for clarification which is indicated, the reason of them used translanguaging when they want to clarification about something, especially the words that rarely used. The fourth frequency is being emphatic about something. It is indicated that, all of the reason used translanguaging it depends on situation, and how does the content creators feel. The fifth and the sixth the lowest frequencies are interjection and quoting somebody else. It is indicated, the reason interjection is spontaneously when someone feel and see something. For reason quoting somebody else, when we want to explain something, sometimes we quote someone else to strengthen our explanation. In those three videos is rarely talking about something that involve interjection and quoting. Because the topic of those three videos about personal life or personal experiences of the content creators.

In addition, the researcher found there are five speech functions which have found in those three videos of by TikTok and Instagram content creators (@chericungg, @metharmelita, @shireenz). The prominence of the metalinguistic function suggests that content creators utilize translanguaging as a means to showcase their linguistic competence, particularly in English. This can serve various purposes, including asserting their bilingual or multilingual identity, appealing to a broader audience, and positioning

themselves within specific social or cultural contexts where language proficiency is valued. This practice not only highlights the creators' skills but also reflects the broader sociolinguistic landscape where English holds significant cultural and economic capital. The second highest frequency is the expressive function underscores the role of translanguaging in facilitating authentic and nuanced expression. By switching between languages, creators can convey emotions, humor, sarcasm, and other complex meanings more effectively or in ways that feel more natural to them. This flexibility enhances the relatability and impact of their content, allowing them to connect with audiences on a deeper level.

In those three videos, they sometimes spontaneously and spontaneously expressed their expression. The referential function, being the third most frequent, highlights how translanguaging serves as a compensatory strategy to overcome linguistic limitations in one language by switching to another language where the speaker feels more competent. This function is pivotal in ensuring that communication remains effective and that the speaker can express complex or specific ideas that might be difficult to articulate in their weaker language. It underscores the practical aspect of translanguaging, where the primary goal is to convey meaning accurately and comprehensively. The lowest frequency are poetic function and phatic function. The poetic function's relatively low frequency in the videos suggests that the use of translanguaging for creative expression—such as in jokes, stories, songs, and quotations—is less prevalent in this specific context. This might be attributed to the nature of the content, the goals of the communicators, or the preferences of their audience. The Phatic function aims to demonstrate a change in tone and highlight crucial portions of discourse which is indicated when someone wants to stress and emphasize the meaning of their words by translanguaging. In those three videos is rarely talking about something that involve poetic function and phatic function.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis the following conclusions can be made. There are 2 components of translanguaging on the three videos; those are code-switching and translating and interpreting the most dominant components of translanguaging is code-switching as much as 28 times or 78%, while translating and interpreting as much as 8 times or 22%. The second, conclusion is there are six reasons may underlie translanguaging's acts of TikTok and Instagram content creators' videos. Those reason analyzed use Hoffman's theory (1991), there are talking about a particular topic, quoting somebody else, being empathic about something, interjection, repetition used for clarification, intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor. The most dominant reason that may underlie they used translanguaging are talking about particular topic as much as 35 times or 69%. The third, conclusion is there are five speech functions of translanguaging performed by TikTok and Instagram content creators' videos, those are referential function, directive function, expressive function, phatic function, metalinguistic function, and poetic function. The

most dominant speech function performed by them are metalinguistic function as much as 35 times or 78%.

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