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CODE-SWITCHING IN SELECTED MALAYSIAN CELEBRITIES' INSTAGRAM POSTS

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Abstract

With the advancement of technology nowadays, social media have become common platforms among Malaysian celebrities to communicate with their fans and to reach out to more people as a self-advertisement to market themselves to be visible in the industry. Across these online platforms, distinctive speech behaviour has been observed among these celebrities in which they employ language alternation or code-switching. Numerous studies have primarily drawn emphasis on spoken communication, resulting in a scarcity in written communication. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the use of code-switching among five Malaysian celebrities in their Instagram posts. An analysis was conducted to determine the types of code-switching employed in their online written communication. The frequency was also calculated in order to look for preferences across genders. The results indicated that Malaysian female celebrities employed all the different types of code-switching as compared to the male celebrities. The differences in using code-switching between female and male celebrities illustrated the gender preferences to accommodate the communicative strategies in their written communication.

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1. Introduction

The bilingualism phenomenon has gained profound interest and worldwide attention among researchers in explicating the connection between code-mixing and code-switching and second language acquisition. Bilingualism refers to the ability to converse in two or more languages (Liddicoat, 1991). According to Haugen (1953), speakers who have the ability to switch between two languages with comprehensive sentences in their utterances are considered bilingual speakers.

Traditionally, written communication is known as a form of communication that involves speakers conveying information through written texts. Prabavathi and Nagasubramani (2018) defined written communication as a medium between sender and receiver that exchanges any written or documented form of interaction with one another. The advancement of the internet and electronic communication have transformed the regular ways of communication and written expressions (Halim & Maros, 2014) to a new platform of communication known as social media. Instagram is a social media platform celebrities use to interact with their viewers. Therefore, Instagram has produced a large set of data available for written communication in many studies.

Today, a celebrity as a person who relies on public acceptance depends on written communication in social media as a mean to engage with audiences by sharing captions, images and videos across the platform. Their   online interactions have significantly played a huge role in making sure they are able to reach and engage with their supporters and potential clients who may speak a different language than them. As the majority of Malaysians are bilingual speakers, it has been a common practice for celebrities to alternate between the Malay and English languages in their Instagram accounts.

Holmes (2018) highlighted that gender arises over time in the social interaction and gendered linguistic approaches are established to achieve pragmatic usage of the language they are using. With the differences in the linguistic variation among genders in communication, there is a need to compare the use of code-switching among Malaysian female and male celebrities in order to produce a distinctive finding in their speech. Thus, this study focuses on the types of code-switching and the comparison of code-switching used by Malaysian female and male celebrities in Instagram posts.

This study contributes to the current pool of research by providing more information and data on social and online settings within the context of Malaysian celebrity's engagement. In addition, the comparison of the use of code-switching by female and male celebrities will contribute to greater findings for future gender-based studies in the scope of linguistic variations within the Malaysian context.

1.1. Code-switching and code-mixing

Code-switching is defined as the process of alternating between languages in utterances. According to Nilep (2006), code-switching is a strategy that a speaker uses to select or alter their linguistic elements within the discourse. Bokomba (1989) stresses that code-switching involves the process of mixing words, phrases and sentences from different grammatical systems within the exchange of speech.

Poplack (1980) distinguished the act of code-switching into three categories which are tag switching, inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching. He described tag switching as a less

intimate type of code-switching where the switch involves more single noun switches and tag switches. The insertion of tag switching makes it almost impossible for the sentence to be translated as it is often loaded heavily with ethnic content. Poplack (1980) also highlighted that the switch occurs in any place in the sentence, hence the switch will leave no significant changes to the meaning and it does not violate any grammatical rule of the language used. The example below is taken from Poplack (1980):

I could understand QUE - (that) you don't know how to speak Spanish, VERDAD? (right?)

According to Poplack (1980), the insertion of the Spanish word 'que' is a subordinate conjunction that is placed with an independent clause and a subordinate clause. Other examples that makeup tag switching types are through the insertion of fillers (e.g. umm), interjections (e.g. oh my God!), tags (e.g. understand?, you know?) and many others.

In Poplack's earlier research on code-switching, switches that occur in small and large constituents are considered intra-sentential code-switching. However, her 1980s paper on Spanish-English code-switching revealed that the occurrences of code-switching in full sentences are the most frequently switched compared to smaller constituents like single-word switches. According to Poplack (1980), switches involving equivalence constraints occurred largely due to the different syntactic rules in the languages used in the discourse. To put it simply, any switches that involved complete sentence in the discourse is termed inter-sentential code-switching.

In Intra-sentential code-switching, Poplack (1980) described Intra-sentential code-switching as an intimate or more complex type of switching. This is due to the underlying syntactic rules of the two languages used that need to be confirmed by the switches. It involved bridging and linking constituents in the language grammatically. The example of Spanish-English tag switching below is listed in Malik (1994):

"Siempre esta PROMISING cosas: (He's always   promising things.)"

The switches that are categorized under Intra-Sentential code-switching are single nouns, verb, adjectives, adverbs and many   others.

2.   Research Methods

This study is quantitative research. Data were collected from five celebrities' Instagram posts and were later classified based on Poplack's (1980) types of code-switching. Frequencies between male and female employment of code-switching were later compared to see preference between gender.

2.1. Data and data collection

For this study, three Malaysian female celebrities and three male celebrities were initially selected due to their popularity in the Malaysian entertainment industry. According to Arikunto (2010), "purposive sampling is the process of deciding sample by taking a subject that is not based on the level or area, but it takes based on the specific purpose" (p. 3). Although the findings from purposive sampling are not represented statistically for the population of certain interest, it is considered that the findings are qualitatively generalizable (Alchemer, 2018). Since the study focuses on using various types of code-

switching from Malay to English, the main criterion in selecting the samples is their ethnicity. All initially selected six selected celebrities are from Malay ethnic groups.

Table 1 depicts the number of Instagram posts that contains code-switching published by the six initially selected celebrities within the period of three months from March until May 2020.

Table 1. Number of Instagram posts that contain code-switching

Gender	Celebrity	Total number of Instagram posts within three months	Number of Instagram posts that contain code- switching
Male	Celebrity A	123	77
	Celebrity B	14	4
	Celebrity C	48	47
Female	Celebrity D	47	43
	Celebrity E	68	65
	Celebrity F	68	57
	Total	368	276

Due to time limitations, this research only focused on 30 posts by each celebrity that contains code-switching. However, it can be seen that one of the male celebrities - Celebrity B has only a total number of four Instagram posts with code-switching, which does not fulfil the required number of data used in this research. Therefore, he was removed from the study.

In order to ensure the data are thoroughly gathered, the Instagram posts published by each celebrity were selected every week for each month, starting from March until May 2020. A total number of 150 Instagram posts were analyzed.

2.2. Data analysis

In this research, the data were analysed according to the steps mentioned by Creswell (2017). According to Creswell, there are several significant steps in analysing the data. This study followed the steps proposed as follows:

Firstly, five celebrities' Instagram accounts that met the set selection criteria were selected for the analysis.

The identification of the types of code-switching was done based on Poplack's (1980) categorization which are tag switching, inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching.

The occurrence and the percentage of the frequency of code-switching between female and male celebrities were calculated.

The data collected were interpreted according to the research questions presented earlier.

3. Findings

3.1. The occurrences of code-switching (CS) found in the selected Instagram posts by each celebrity

Based on the selected Instagram posts, it was found that the celebrities employed a mix of code-switching types in every post. To highlight this, every female and male celebrity employed between one to multi-types code-switching in a single post. Table 2 depicts the classification of posts that contain code-switching according to the number of code-switching types used in each of the Instagram posts published by the celebrities.

Table 2. Total number of posts with CS

Gender	One type of CS used			Two types of CS	Three types of CS	Total number of posts with CS
	Intra-sentential only	Inter-sentential only	Tag switching	Two types	All types	
Female	23	13	1	38	15	90
Male	20	11	0	26	3	60
Total						154

Referring to the Table 2 above, it can be seen that the celebrities mostly employed two types of code-switching in their Instagram posts. Significant differences can be observed that the female celebrities employed three types of code-switching types compared to the male celebrities. For male celebrities, on the other hand, the findings showed the majority use of two code-switching types. Table 3 below, presents examples of the occurrences of one to multiple code-switching types used in celebrities' Instagram posts.

Table 3. Examples of occurrence

Types of code-switching	Instances of the Celebrity Instagram Posts Malay language is in *italics*. THE LITERAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION IS IN SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS
Intra-sentential	**Celebrity X** *Salam Jumaat!Hari ni pi solat jumaat,* [HELLO FRIDAY! TODAY, (I AM) GOING FOR FRIDAY PRAYER,] *mandi sebelum Gerak masjid dan kasi* [BATHE BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE MOSQUE AND (SWITCH)] on *kahfi!* (A QURANIC VERSE)
Tag switching	**Celebrity X** *Siapa pelajar SPM* [WHO IS A STUDENT OF MALAYSIAN CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION] *Sains Tulen? Haa @xxxx nk bg* FREE online session [PURE SCIENCE? WANT TO GIVE] *dekat awak ni! Nak ke tak? Cepat cepat daftar di* www.NakSkorSPM.com okay? [TO YOU! DO YOU WANT IT? FASTER, REGISTER AT…]

	It doesn't matter what others are doing. It matters what you are doing. *Nak berjaya,* [WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL] *kena ada usaha kan? Belajar sekarang!* [HAVE TO WORK HARD, RIGHT? STUDY NOW!] Start early and you will never regret later.
Two CS types	**Celebrity X** *Akhirnya, dapat juga perform selepas berubah* [FINALLY, GOT AFTER CHANGE OF] *Tarikh*. So, save the date ladies and gentlemen. [DATE] *Kita jumpa kat* @xxxx [WE MEET AT @xxxx]
Three type	**Celebrity X** 2 *hari berturut-turut* superstar *main hantaq makanan*. [2 CONSECUTIVE DAYS SUPERSTAR DO FOOD DELIVERY] Baru tadi keluaq toilet amik ayaq semayang [JUST CAME OUT FROM TOILET PERFORMING ABLUTION] *nak solat asaq*, DS @xxxx call [WANT TO PERFORM EVENING PRAYER] *kata nak hantaq* his rissoles, x pernah makan, [SAID WANT TO SEND I HAVE NEVER EATEN] so lewat malam sat lagi nak try bila main [LATE NIGHT LATER WANT TO WHEN PLAY] call of duty Warzone. Thanks *Abe Ja.. moga murah rezeki*! p/s You guys getting used to the 'new normal'?

3.2. The types of code-switching employed by Malaysian female and male celebrities in Instagram posts

The data were categorised according to Poplack's (1980) types of code-switching which are Intra-Sentential, Inter-Sentential and Tag Switching. Table 4 below presents the frequency of each type of code-switching employed by the three female celebrities in their Instagram posts.

Table 4. Percentage of frequency for CS types employed by female celebrities

Types of code-switching	Celebrity			Total Frequency	Percentage
	D	E	F		
Intra-sentential	67	65	92	224	68.29
Inter-sentential	35	15	25	75	22.87
Tag switching	9	11	9	29	8.84
Total				328	100%

There is a total of 328 occurrences of code-switching found in the selected Instagram posts by female celebrities. It can be seen that the female celebrities employed Intra-Sentential code-switching the most in their Instagram posts, with a total of 224 occurrences. Therefore, it can be concluded that female celebrities seldom employed code-switch sentences and fillers or discourse markers in their Instagram posts, resulting in the lowest frequency of Tag Switching.

3.3. Types and frequency of code-switching employed by Malaysian male celebrities

Table 5 presents the frequency of each type of code-switching employed by the male celebrities in their Instagram posts.

Table 5. Percentage of frequency for CS types employed by male celebrities

Types of code-switching	Celebrity		Total frequency	Percentage
	A	C		
Intra-sentential	7	48	55	63.3
Inter-sentential	8	16	24	27.5
Tag switching	3	5	8	9.2
Total			87	100%

Based on the table above, male celebrities employed code-switching with a total frequency of 87 in their Instagram posts. It can be concluded that male celebrities frequently code-switch at the word, phrasal and clausal levels in their posts, resulting in the highest employment of Intra-sentential code-switching. To add, every male celebrity employed Tag Switching the least resulting in the lowest occurrences found in their Instagram posts.

3.4. Comparison of types of code-switching employed by Malaysian female and male celebrities

Table 6. Comparison of frequency of code-switching among female and male celebrities

Gender	Frequency of code-switching types			Total frequency	Percentage
	Intra-sentential	Inter-sentential	Tag switching		
Female	224	75	29	328	79
Male	55	24	8	87	21
Total				415	100%

Based on Table 6, it can be concluded that female celebrities employed code-switching the most compared to male celebrities. Both female and male celebrities employed Intra-Sentential code-switching the most in their Instagram posts. It can be concluded that both female and male celebrities employed all types of code-switching in their Instagram posts. A notable comparison of the types of code-switching employment can be seen where the most employed type is Intra-sentential code-switching while the least employed type is Tag switching.

In summary, female celebrities employed more code-switching compared to male celebrities. It can be concluded that the prominent employment of each type of code-switching in their Instagram posts with stronger usage on Intra-sentential, followed by Inter-sentential and lastly Tag Switching with the least usage.

3.5. Discussions

Based on the findings, the types of code-switching found in the celebrities' Instagram posts consist of all types mentioned by Poplack (1980) which are Intra-Sentential, Inter-Sentential and Tag Switching.

The most prominent use of code-switching is Intra-Sentential code-switching where celebrities switched single or multiple words from Malay to the English language within a sentence boundary or clause boundary. Switches that occur at a single-word level can be observed through the grammatical function in the way the words are intended to be used. Multiple-word switches, on the other hand, commonly occurred through the insertion of phrases. The occurrences of these switches can be seen through the use of nouns, verbs, adjectives and many others at the word or phrase level in either clause or sentence boundary. The occurrences of this switch are said to be employed when speakers are having trouble finding the right words in their native language and due to the lack of vocabulary as mentioned by Holmes (2013).

One of the possible factors for the frequent switch of noun words is due to the fewer syntactic restrictions as stated by Romaine (1995, as cited in Ismail, 2015). This instance may partly be due to the similarity in the word order of Malay and English languages. In addition, Muysken (2000) also mentioned that Intra- Sentential switches are possible to be used especially on function word, as long as the two languages used have similar grammatical structures. It has further justified the occurrences of Intra-Sentential code-switching found in both female and male celebrities that achieved the highest frequency. This finding is similar to Dewi (2021) where Intra-Sentential code-switching is also found to be the most dominant type employed compared to other types in the female and male celebrities' social media.

The second highest occurrence of code-switching types observed is Inter-Sentential code-switching. According to Poplack (1980), Inter-Sentential code-switching describes the occurrences through the language switch that occurs between a number of complete sentences in a single discourse. Inter- Sentential code-switching occurrences are used slightly lesser than Intra- Sentential code-switching. Based on the findings, Inter-Sentential code-switching is also seen to occur in between declarative and exclamatory sentences, Apart from that, the language switch between complete sentences is also found to involve the use of expressions like proverbs (No. 5). Hoffman (1991) highlights a number of reasons for code-switching that includes quoting or inserting famous expressions or proverbs in the discourse. Subsequently, this finding, however, contradicts Manik et al. (2020) where Inter-Sentential code-switching occurred the most in Indonesian celebrities' Instagram posts compared to Intra-Sentential and Tag Switching.

Lastly, Tag switching is the least employed type of code-switching found in the celebrities' published Instagram posts. Also known as emblematic switching, a certain tag or phrases in a different language are inserted within the utterances (Appel & Muysken, 2006) and it normally occurs in between sentence boundaries (Yusuf et al., 2018). In general, the main function of Tag switching is to direct the conversation flow and structure within the discourse. Ariffin and Rafik-Galea (2009) highlighted Tag switching as one of the conversation strategies in retaining listeners' attention, emphasizing a point as well as putting forward subsequent arguments.

Some of the switches categorized as Tag Switching are discourse markers, linking words, interjections, sentence fillers and idiomatic expressions (Poplack, 1980). Based on the findings, Tag Switching dominantly occurred on the insertion of interjections like 'so' and sentence fillers like 'okay'. The switch on the word 'so' is observed to emphasize the intention in the previous statement. Tag switching 'okay' on the other hand, functions as a meaningless particle that has no important meaning. To

add, sentence fillers are syntactically independent where any removals of such fillers will leave no implications on the meaning within the discourse.

In terms of the comparison on the types of code-switching employed by Malaysian female celebrities compared to male celebrities, generally, female celebrities' verbal performance in their Instagram posts showed overall extensive use of code-switching than male celebrities. The high occurrences in female's employment further shed some light on how women are more drawn towards adapting to communication strategies through the employment of code-switching in order to accommodate the discourse.

First and foremost, the employment of Intra-Sentential code-switching is higher for both female and male celebrities. The highest occurrences of this type of code-switching illustrate the significance of single and multiple-word switches to gender-preferential speech features for women. The significance of Intra-Sentential code-switching types to females are also seen in the findings from Ismail (2015) and Sultana et al. (2020). In conforming to code-switching as a communicative strategy, the alternation of the English language between the main language provides the form structure for switches to occur, either in single or multiple word switches that may be inserted either at the beginning, middle or end of the sentences. Greater preferences for the use of single-adjective and single-verb switches are seen in women's code-switches, while men showed less inclination to using Intra-sentential switches (Ismail, 2015). Rasdi (2016, as cited in Abdul Rashid, 2019) mentioned the conjunction between two languages provides morphosyntactic and standalone frames for the two languages used in the discourse.

Based on the referential function by Appel and Muysken (2006) and "the lack of facility" reason by Malik (1994), it can be denoted that these claims carried a negative connotation to speakers who code-switch that they are deemed as less fluent bilinguals. However, Poplack (1980) differentiates fluent and less fluent bilinguals through the observation of the types of code-switching used. According to her, Intra-Sentential code-switching is frequently employed by fluent bilingual speakers and it made Inter-Sentential to be more common among less fluent bilingual speakers. This claim further marked our findings that female celebrities are fluent bilingual speakers as compared to male celebrities since the female celebrities' code-switching has a higher frequency in Intra-Sentential code-switching. It further brings forth the opposite findings presented by Manik et al. (2020) where female celebrities employed Inter- Sentential code-switching the most among other types.

In our findings, female celebrities employed Inter-Sentential code-switching more dominantly than male celebrities. To highlight, the occurrences of Inter-Sentential code-switching are seen to be used mostly at the end of the descriptions in female celebrities' Instagram posts. One of the notable occurrences can be seen through the insertion of ubiquitous phrases that are commonly uttered since the pandemic started. Phrases like 'stay safe', 'stay home', and 'take care' are frequently seen in females' Instagram posts. Steinmetz (2020) described the phrases as well-wishing and she discussed the significance of well-wishing insertion in written communication that people are recently familiar with since the pandemic outbreak. Hoffman's (1991) classification of the reasons to code-switch, which is to emphasise certain meanings or intentions on the switches. In a study done by Zulkifli (2020), 40% of participants as social media users agreed that they use code-switch when they intend to emphasise and stress their intention to the readers. For the occurrences in male celebrities, the insertion of these phrases

is seen to occur at the end of post descriptions and there is at least one occurrence found for each celebrity. Aside from that, frequent occurrences of such phrases can also be associated with one's habitual verbal interaction (Ling et al., 2012).

Additionally, female celebrities have drawn greater preferences in using Tag switching in their social media posts compared to male celebrities. As mentioned in the first research question, the prominent frequency on the occurrences of tagging words is different for both female and male celebrities. The most prominent tagging word for female celebrities is fillers, where the word 'okay' is found with a total of 12 occurrences. To note, the word '*okay*' is equally translated to '*okey*' in the Malay language. The switch on tagging words that occurred in the celebrities' employment involves Malay grammatical markers used with English vocabulary. This is also similar in the code-switch of English interjections ('so', 'OMG') and discourse markers ('BTW') and the expressions ('LOL') in female celebrities' posts.

In comparing the employment of Tag switching between genders, Holmes (2013) presented one of the features of women's language introduced by Lakoff (1975) which is the common insertion of lexical hedging and fillers. This type of tag switch is usually added to reduce the force of an utterance so that the assertion sounds more reassuring. The tagging word 'okay' is commonly used as tag questions in one of the female celebrities' Instagram posts and it has the highest frequency among other tagging words used. The use of 'okay?' as tag questions is used to check the understanding of the other party involved in the discourse. Othman (2010) stated that the use of 'okay?' may also serve as an assurance-seeking strategy performed by the interlocutor to stress the importance of the intention conveyed in the utterances. This instance has indirectly signified a friendly manner as a strategy from the celebrity to foster engagements with their Instagram followers. Holmes (2018) describes this instance as an example of facilitative tags that serve as positive politeness devices. To add, Holmes (1995) claimed that women generally emphasize on the polite and affective tag functions more than men.

As opposed to male celebrities, Celebrity C is the male celebrity that employs tag switching the most compared to the other two male celebrities. The highest occurrences of tagging words in his Instagram posts can be seen through the switch of the word 'so'. The use of 'so' in both spoken and written discourse carries various functions and meanings and it is used differently by the interlocutors (Turiman, 2020). The most common function of 'so' observed in Celebrity C's posts is discourse marker, where it is placed in between turns or sentences to illuminate the final reasoning following the earlier utterances. Biber et al. (1999) define two roles that discourse marker carries which are "to signal transition" as well as "to signal an interactive relationship between speakers, hearers and a message".

To compare with Celebrity D's tag switching, the insertion of the discourse marker in Celebrity C's posts serves more as a declarative statement which it does not initiate a solid response from the readers. These linguistic functions in female and male celebrities' tag switching prove an extent to White (2003) that claims men focus more on information sharing where communications conducted by them are rather more direct. Women, on the other hand, emphasise more on establishing interaction, where utterances generally contain greater expressions to denote connections and sameness. It further explains how female celebrities employed more tagging questions as well as tag switching in general as compared to male celebrities.

4. Conclusions

This study has shown that Malaysian female and male celebrities used code-switching differently when communicating in social media Instagram. The patterns of employment are similar for both genders, however, each female and male celebrity possessed different linguistic variations and speech behaviours to cater to their communicative strategies. The frequencies of each type of code-switching found revealed that female and male celebrities drew greater emphasis on employing Intra- Sentential code-switching the most, followed by Inter-Sentential and Tag Switching as the least type employed. In general, female celebrities have shown higher occurrences for each type of code-switching as compared to male celebrities on their Instagram posts.

From the perspective of written communication, social media Instagram have become a common social platform for Malaysians especially celebrities in using them as the communication medium. The extensive feature that Instagram applications have has enabled celebrities to reach their audiences through discussions and the sharing of ideas which has made the online conversation distinct from verbal communication. The informalities and the large scale of rapid responses in social media platform have indirectly influenced their communicative strategies, thus reflecting their linguistic differences and gender identity.

Consequently, the employment of code-switching among the celebrities justifies the bilingualism phenomenon in Malaysia that it denotes the significance of code-switching in the utterances within the society. The presence of a diverse society in Malaysia is the primary factor in code-switching employment in reaching forward successful communication. In moving forward to Malaysia as one united nation, society must acknowledge the potential of code-switching employment as a means to accommodate a multicultural environment, in order to achieve effective and efficient multicultural communication.

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