

A Bilingual Speech Analysis in The Makna Talks Podcast Episode Featuring Nicholas Saputra

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze bilingual speech in a selected episode of the Makna Talks podcast featuring Nicholas Saputra. It focuses on identifying types of bilingualism—compound, coordinate, and subordinate—based on Weinreich and Martinet's (2010) framework and explaining how these bilingual patterns function within conversational discourse.

Methodology: This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Eighteen utterances containing Indonesian–English language alternation were collected by observing and transcribing the selected podcast episode. The utterances were identified, classified, and analyzed according to Weinreich and Martinet's typology of bilingualism. Relevant theories and previous studies were also reviewed to support interpretation.

Results: The findings show that only two types of bilingualism appear in the data: compound and coordinate bilingualism. Compound bilingualism is the dominant type, occurring in 14 utterances (77.8%), indicating an integrated use of Indonesian and English within the same units of meaning. Coordinate bilingualism appears in 4 utterances (22.2%), mainly in contexts involving quotations or discourse framing.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study contributes to sociolinguistic research by demonstrating how bilingual speech operates in informal podcast discourse. It highlights bilingualism as a communicative strategy for identity construction, audience engagement, and media performance in contemporary Indonesian digital contexts.

Introduction

In a world increasingly shaped by rapid technological and cultural exchange, language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a sociolinguistic resource through which individuals signal identity and navigate diverse interactional contexts. Communicative competence enables individuals to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meaning interpersonally within specific contexts (Patimah, Raharjo, & K. K., 2024). As a field of study, sociolinguistics examines how language is shaped by social structures and practices, providing a foundational framework for understanding bilingualism, particularly in communities where speakers alternate between two languages in response to social roles and identities.

Sociolinguistics incorporates social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions into the study and use of language (Ramadhani et al., 2023). It focuses not only on how social factors influence language use but also on how language reflects and reinforces social structures. Bilingualism is one of the phenomena examined within sociolinguistics and emerges as a result of sustained contact between language groups that do not share the same political and economic backgrounds (Mennen, 2009). In this sense, bilingualism can be understood as an individual's ability to use two languages alternately across various communicative contexts.

Bilingualism develops through dynamic interaction between language communities and is shaped by social, educational, and cultural factors. The relationship between a first language (L1) and a second language (L2) is mutually influential; frequent use of both languages strengthens reciprocal linguistic influence (Syamsul Ma'arif & Lailia, 2022). In Indonesia, bilingual practices are commonly observed through code-switching phenomena often referred to as *bahasa gado-gado*, where Indonesian and English are blended in spontaneous speech. This practice reflects how bilingualism has become an integral part of contemporary communication (Martin-Anatias, 2018).

The increasing prevalence of bilingualism is closely linked to societal development and rapid scientific and technological advancement. This bilingual phenomenon has spread widely throughout society, particularly among younger generations (Nahrudin, 2023). Jayanath (2021) defines bilingualism as the phenomenon of speaking and understanding two languages. The ability to use more than one language enables speakers to alternate between linguistic codes, making code-switching and code-mixing natural components of everyday communication. As noted by Patimah et al. (2024), multilingual and multicultural contexts provide fertile ground for the occurrence of code-switching and code-mixing, which tend to occur when two or more languages are used frequently by speakers (Humes & Koval, 1981).

Previous studies have examined bilingual language use in various contexts. Lubis et al. (2017) investigated code-switching among adolescents on Facebook, while Kristanto and Meilasari (2019) analyzed code-switching practices among Indonesian teenagers who use social media. These studies demonstrate that bilingual communication is increasingly mediated through digital platforms and informal interaction.

The era of globalization has transformed intercultural and international interaction into an essential aspect of daily life, contributing to the growth of bilingual and multilingual communities worldwide (Wardhani & Djuharie, 2025). The development of bilingualism today is inseparable from the rapid advancement of technology and digital media. Various media forms—visual, audio, and audiovisual—have become dominant platforms for entertainment, information exchange, and creative expression. Among these, podcasts have gained prominence as a medium that offers authentic, unscripted, and spontaneous conversational discourse.

Podcasts allow listeners to access content flexibly across time and place and are relatively free, making them an accessible medium for both entertainment and learning (Nurmukhamedov & Sharakhimov, 2023). In Indonesia, podcasts frequently reflect natural language use, including code-switching, code-mixing, and local pronunciation features (Hesekiel Simanungkalit & Sinaga, 2023). Popular platforms such as Spotify and YouTube have further amplified the reach of podcasts, making them familiar to younger audiences and potential tools for educational innovation (Ramadhani et al., 2023; Harianja & Fibriasari, 2019; Yaacob et al., 2021).

One prominent Indonesian podcast is *Makna Talks*, hosted by Iyas Lawrence and available on YouTube and Spotify. The podcast is recognized for its reflective and intellectual discussions with public figures. In the episode featuring actor Nicholas Saputra, bilingual speech is frequently employed to express humor, clarify ideas, and establish emotional connection with audiences. Both speakers are proficient bilinguals whose language choices reflect their cultural exposure and professional experiences in the creative and entertainment industries. Their alternation between Indonesian and English serves not only communicative purposes but also functions as a marker of identity, intellect, and social belonging.

Despite the growing visibility of bilingual speech in informal digital media, research examining bilingualism in spontaneous podcast discourse remains limited, particularly in the Indonesian context (Hermawan et al., 2025; Wijaya, 2019). This linguistic phenomenon can be analyzed using the theory of bilingualism proposed by Weinreich and Martinet (2010), which categorizes bilingual competence into compound, coordinate, and subordinate bilingualism. This framework enables analysis of how bilingual speakers negotiate language use based on context, intention, and audience.

In addition, informal digital discourse such as podcasts provides a unique sociolinguistic environment that differs significantly from formal institutional settings. Unlike classrooms, interviews, or scripted media, podcasts allow speakers to communicate with minimal linguistic monitoring, enabling spontaneous language choices to emerge naturally. This creates an ideal context for examining bilingual speech as a lived communicative practice rather than a controlled linguistic performance.

The conversational nature of podcasts also encourages speakers to negotiate meaning collaboratively with their interlocutors while remaining mindful of an unseen but imagined audience. This audience awareness influences language choice, tone, and style, particularly in bilingual interaction. Speakers may alternate between languages to emphasize certain ideas, introduce humor, display cultural capital, or establish intimacy with listeners. In this sense, bilingual speech in podcasts functions not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a strategic communicative resource.

Furthermore, bilingual practices in digital media reflect broader socio-cultural changes in Indonesian society, where English increasingly coexists with Indonesian in professional, creative, and intellectual domains. The use of English alongside Indonesian does not necessarily indicate language dominance, but rather signals flexible identity positioning and participation in global discourse. By examining bilingual utterances in podcast conversations, researchers can gain insight into how contemporary speakers manage linguistic hybridity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Therefore, the analysis of bilingual speech in podcast discourse is crucial for understanding how language users adapt communicative strategies to informal media environments. This study positions podcasts as a relevant site for sociolinguistic inquiry and contributes to ongoing discussions about bilingualism, digital communication, and identity construction in modern Indonesian society.

Language is not merely a vehicle for information transfer but also a means of expressing ideas, emotions, and social identity (Astuti, 2020). Therefore, examining bilingual speech in podcast interactions offers valuable insights into how contemporary Indonesian speakers navigate linguistic hybridity in a globalized digital environment. This study focuses on bilingual speech in the *Makna Talks* podcast episode featuring Nicholas Saputra, aiming to identify patterns of bilingual language use and to explain how these practices reflect sociolinguistic identity and media-driven communication dynamics.

Beyond its linguistic significance, the study of bilingual speech in podcast discourse also offers insight into contemporary patterns of media consumption and participation. Podcasts occupy a hybrid position between private conversation and public performance, allowing speakers to communicate casually while remaining aware of their public personas. This dual orientation influences how language is used, managed, and strategically displayed in interaction.

In bilingual contexts, this environment encourages speakers to draw flexibly from multiple linguistic resources to achieve communicative goals. Bilingual speech in podcasts may function to reduce social distance, build rapport with listeners, or position the speaker as culturally informed and globally connected. These communicative choices are particularly relevant in Indonesia, where English increasingly circulates alongside Indonesian in creative and intellectual spaces.

Examining bilingual utterances in podcasts, therefore, contributes not only to sociolinguistic analysis but also to broader discussions of how language operates within digital culture. Podcasts provide access to naturally occurring discourse that reflects everyday language practices while simultaneously shaping listener perceptions and linguistic norms. By focusing on bilingual speech in this medium, the present study situates language use within its contemporary communicative ecology and responds to the growing need for sociolinguistic research that addresses modern media contexts.

Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design to explore bilingual speech in podcast discourse (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). The data consist of spoken utterances containing Indonesian–English language alternation.

The data were taken from a single episode of Makna Talks titled “Pod. 319 Nicholas Saputra Talks About Living Life to the Fullest,” available on YouTube and Spotify. The episode was selected because it presents natural conversational interaction between proficient bilingual speakers.

A total of 18 bilingual utterances were identified and analyzed. Utterances were selected based on the presence of language alternation within a single conversational turn. Data collection involved repeated viewing of the episode, transcription of relevant utterances, and categorization based on Weinreich and Martinet’s (2010) typology: compound, coordinate, and subordinate bilingualism. To reduce subjectivity, each utterance was reviewed multiple times and carefully compared with theoretical definitions during the classification process.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach in order to capture the natural characteristics of bilingual speech as it occurs in informal conversational settings. A qualitative design was selected because it allows for in-depth examination of linguistic phenomena that cannot be adequately represented through numerical data alone. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, this approach emphasizes detailed interpretation of language use within its communicative context.

The data source was intentionally limited to a single podcast episode to enable focused and comprehensive analysis. Analyzing one episode in detail allows closer attention to linguistic patterns, interactional dynamics, and contextual factors influencing bilingual language use. The selected episode was chosen due to its extended duration, spontaneous interaction, and frequent occurrence of bilingual utterances, making it suitable for examining bilingual speech patterns in depth.

Data collection involved careful listening and transcription of the podcast episode, with particular attention given to utterances that contained elements of Indonesian and English. Only naturally occurring bilingual utterances were included, while scripted or quoted material was excluded to maintain analytical consistency. Each utterance was examined in relation to its surrounding context to ensure accurate classification.

To reduce subjectivity, the categorization of bilingual types was based strictly on predefined theoretical characteristics. Utterances were repeatedly reviewed during the analysis process to ensure consistency in classification. Although the study relied on a single analyst, repeated checking of the data and constant comparison between examples helped maintain analytical reliability. This methodological process ensured that the findings reflect systematic observation rather than impressionistic interpretation.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis reveals two types of bilingualism in the Makna Talks episode: compound and coordinate bilingualism. The distribution of bilingual types is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of bilingualism in the Makna Talks podcast episode.

Type of bilingualism	Number	Percentage
Compound bilingualism	14	77.8%
Coordinate bilingualism	4	22.2%
Subordinate bilingualism	0	0%

Percentages were calculated by dividing the frequency of each bilingual type by the total number of identified bilingual utterances (18). The distribution of bilingual types revealed clear patterns in how speakers integrate Indonesian and English during the podcast conversation. The dominance of compound bilingualism indicates that both languages are processed and

utilized as part of a unified communicative system. Rather than separating languages according to topic or situational boundaries, the speakers frequently blended lexical items and expressions from both languages within a single communicative intent.

This pattern suggests that bilingual language use in the podcast is driven by communicative efficiency and expressive flexibility. Speakers appear comfortable drawing from either language to articulate nuanced meanings, emphasize key points, or maintain conversational flow. The integrated use of languages reflects bilingual competence that has developed through frequent exposure and use of both linguistic systems in daily life.

In contrast, coordinate bilingualism appeared less frequently and was typically associated with contextual shifts, such as topic changes or shifts in conversational emphasis. These switches often served pragmatic functions, including clarification, elaboration, or alignment with perceived audience expectations. The absence of subordinate bilingualism suggests that neither language functions merely as a supporting system for the other. Instead, both languages operate as relatively equal resources within the communicative repertoire of the speakers.

Compound bilingualism

Compound bilingualism is the most dominant type in the data. For example:

Example 1

Iyas Lawrence: “We did it. The most requested of all time sampai orang berhenti nge-request. Renaissance man, the jack of all trades, Nicholas Saputra.”

In this utterance, Indonesian and English are integrated within a single semantic unit. English expressions are used to enhance emphasis and stylistic impact while remaining conceptually unified with the Indonesian structure. This pattern reflects compound bilingualism, where both languages share an integrated mental representation (Weinreich & Martinet, 2010).

The dominance of compound bilingualism supports previous research suggesting that bilingual media figures often blend languages seamlessly to construct cosmopolitan and educated identities in public discourse (Martin-Anatias, 2018).

Coordinate bilingualism

Coordinate bilingualism appears less frequently and is often associated with quotations or discourse framing.

Example 2

Iyas Lawrence: “If you trace back 23 tahun lalu, what was the most difficult thing about memerankan Rangga?”

Here, English is used to frame the question, while Indonesian provides cultural and contextual specificity. The separation of linguistic domains reflects coordinate bilingualism, where each language functions independently depending on discourse purpose. This strategy enhances clarity and professional tone, aligning with the host’s role and audience expectations.

The predominance of compound bilingualism in the podcast conversation highlights the fluid nature of bilingual speech in informal media contexts. In such settings, speakers are not constrained by strict linguistic norms or formal expectations, allowing bilingual practices to emerge organically. The integrated use of Indonesian and English reflects communicative competence rather than linguistic interference, emphasizing the speakers’ ability to navigate multiple linguistic resources seamlessly.

The findings also suggest that bilingual speech functions as a marker of identity and social positioning. By alternating between languages, speakers may index intellectual engagement, global awareness, and creative expression. In the context of a podcast featuring public figures, bilingualism becomes part of a communicative style that resonates with audiences who share similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The absence of subordinate bilingualism further indicates that English is not merely used to supplement Indonesian expression. Instead, both languages contribute meaningfully to the discourse. This challenges views that perceive bilingual language use as transitional or deficient, suggesting instead that bilingual speakers exhibit linguistic agency and control.

Moreover, the podcast format encourages audience-oriented communication, where speakers anticipate listener interpretation despite the absence of immediate feedback. Language choice, therefore, plays a strategic role in maintaining listener engagement. Bilingual speech allows speakers to manage tone, express intimacy, and maintain conversational dynamism within an informal yet intellectually oriented platform.

Another important implication of the findings concerns the relationship between bilingual speech and communicative control. The speakers in the podcast demonstrate a high degree of awareness in managing language choice, suggesting that bilingualism operates as a deliberate communicative strategy rather than a spontaneous or unstructured behavior. Language alternation appears responsive to interactional demands, conversational flow, and the anticipated reception by the audience.

This strategic use of bilingual language supports the view that bilingual speakers actively negotiate meaning through selective language use. Rather than adhering to strict boundaries between languages, speakers integrate linguistic

elements to enhance clarity, emphasis, and expressiveness. Such language practices challenge deficit-oriented views of bilingualism and instead highlight bilingual competence as an adaptive communicative resource.

In informal media settings such as podcasts, these practices become particularly visible due to the absence of rigid institutional constraints. The freedom associated with podcast discourse allows bilingual patterns to emerge in ways that reflect everyday communicative realities. As a result, the podcast medium serves as a valuable space for observing how bilingualism functions in real interaction, offering insights into evolving norms of language use in digitally mediated communication.

Conclusion

This study has shown that bilingual speech in the Makna Talks podcast episode featuring Nicholas Saputra is dominated by compound bilingualism, indicating an integrated and fluid use of Indonesian and English within single units of meaning. Coordinate bilingualism appears less frequently and is primarily used for discourse framing or the incorporation of quotations, while subordinate bilingualism does not occur in the data.

These findings suggest that bilingual language use in podcast discourse functions not only as a communicative resource but also as a strategy for constructing a public persona that aligns with educated, cosmopolitan, and media-savvy identities. The dominance of compound bilingualism reflects how proficient bilingual speakers naturally merge linguistic resources without clear boundaries, particularly in informal yet public digital settings.

Although this study provides insight into bilingual practices in Indonesian podcast discourse, it is limited by its focus on a single episode and a small set of utterances. Future research could expand the scope by examining multiple podcast episodes, comparing different podcast genres, or exploring audience perceptions of bilingual speech in digital media. Such studies would further enrich our understanding of how bilingualism operates in contemporary communication. In addition to summarizing the findings, this study highlights the importance of examining bilingualism within contemporary digital media contexts. Podcasts provide a valuable site for observing authentic language use, particularly among speakers who navigate multilingual environments in their professional and social lives.

The results demonstrate that bilingual speech in informal discourse is shaped by communicative intention, audience awareness, and contextual flexibility. The dominance of compound bilingualism reflects a communicative strategy that prioritizes meaning-making and engagement rather than strict linguistic separation.

Despite these contributions, this study is limited by its focus on a single podcast episode. Future studies may expand the scope of data by examining multiple episodes, different podcast genres, or comparative contexts to further explore bilingual practices in digital media. Nevertheless, this study contributes to a growing body of research that recognizes bilingualism as a dynamic and adaptive communicative resource in modern society.

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