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Code Mixing in the Movie Tinggal Meninggal: A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract

Language contact in multilingual urban societies often gives rise to code mixing, a phenomenon in which speakers combine elements from two or more languages within a single communicative event. This study investigates code mixing in the dialogue of the Indonesian film Tinggal Meninggal (2025) through a Sociolinguistics lens. The research aims to identify the types and functions of code mixing employed by the characters across various interaction contexts. A qualitative descriptive method is applied, with purposive sampling used to select sixteen dialogue excerpts as the data. The data are analyzed using Muysken's (2000) typology of code mixing and Hoffman's (1991) functional framework. The findings reveal that the code mixing in this film is exclusively Indonesian–English in nature and is classified into two types only: insertion, found in twelve data points, and alternation, found in four data points. Notably, congruent lexicalization does not appear in the data, as the structural divergence between Indonesian and English prevents the shared grammatical framing that this type requires. Insertion dominates the data, reflecting the tendency of urban Indonesian speakers to embed English lexical items into an Indonesian grammatical frame. Alternation, by contrast, surfaces in emotionally charged moments where speakers shift between structurally complete clauses from each language. The study concludes that code mixing in Tinggal Meninggal operates not merely as a linguistic habit but as a Sociolinguistics strategy that reflects the identity, social dynamics, and communicative needs of contemporary urban Indonesian speakers. This research contributes to the broader field of sociolinguistics by providing empirical evidence of how bilingualism is strategically utilized in modern Indonesian media, offering valuable insights into the evolving linguistic landscape and identity construction of contemporary urban societies.

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucil role in the dynamics of social life. Along with the rapid flow of globalization and urbanization, an environment is created where various languages encounter one another and evolve. In Indonesia, this phenomenon is clearly visible through the use of the Indonesian language, which intersects closely with English, particularly among urban communities with high access to global literacy and international media. In the metropolitan area of Jakarta, this condition has given rise to a hybrid speaking style widely known as “Indlish,” in which speakers actively combine Indonesian and English codes within a single speech event. Aditiawarman et al. (2025) note that this bilingual practice among Indonesian youth is no longer regarded merely as a

sign of limited language proficiency, but rather as a communication strategy and a marker of modern urban identity. The film *Tinggal Meninggal* serves as a representative case study in this research, as its dialogue represents the hybrid speaking style commonly used by office employees in the capital city.

A comparison with recent Scopus-indexed studies outside the Indonesian context further sharpens this gap. Mustafayeva et al. (2025) undertook a large-scale, cross-national investigation of code-switching in three multilingual societies India (Hindi-English), Nigeria (Yoruba-English), and the United States (Spanish-English) involving 120 participants and a methodologically rigorous mixed-methods design that combined ethnographic interviews, naturalistic audio recordings, social media discourse analysis, and chi-square-tested corpus data. Despite this methodological strength, the study's scope remains deliberately broad and society-level; code-switching is examined as a general communicative behavior spanning home, school, workplace, and digital contexts rather than being anchored in a single, bounded text or institutional relationship, and the authors themselves acknowledge that their urban-centered sample cannot be assumed representative of the wider population.

By contrast, Shajidah et al. (2025) grounded their analysis in a single Indonesian film, Belok Kanan Barcelona (2018), identifying internal and external code-switching alongside word-, phrase-, and clause-level code-mixing across Indonesian, Javanese, Makassarese, English, and Spanish dialogue. While this confirms that film dialogue offers a legitimate window into naturalistic-style code-mixing, the study's qualitative descriptive method relies solely on listening and note-taking techniques without triangulation or inter-coder reliability checks, and its dataset is limited to only sixteen instances. Its explanatory factors are also drawn eclectically from several unrelated frameworks rather than one coherent typology paired with a dedicated theory of motivation, and the relationships examined among former schoolmates and romantic partners remain peer-based rather than shaped by institutional hierarchy.

These two studies therefore represent opposite ends of a methodological trade-off: broad, statistically robust but context-thin designs on one hand, and narrow, text-grounded but methodologically underspecified and data-limited designs on the other. Neither examines code-mixing within an explicitly hierarchical, workplace-based relationship, where language choice is negotiated not only through identity or intimacy but through authority and institutional role. This study addresses that dual gap by applying Muysken's (2000) typology of code-mixing together with Hoffmann's (1991) framework of code-mixing motivations to a single, workplace-grounded filmic text, Tinggal Meninggal, combining the theoretical coherence absent from prior film-based studies with the contextual specificity missing from broader multi-society investigations.

METHOD

Research Design

This research applies a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the phenomenon of code-mixing in the film *Tinggal Meninggal*. In line with Creswell and Creswell (2018), the qualitative approach aims to explore and understand the deep meaning behind a social or cultural phenomenon through the perspective of the subjects involved. This method was chosen because the main focus of the research is to conduct content analysis on the dialogue in the film, which is then classified based on Muysken's (2000) theory and dissected for its sociolinguistic functions using Hoffmann's (1991) theory. All data findings and discussion results in this study are presented in the form of descriptive narration to provide a comprehensive and systematic overview of the language usage patterns

Data Source

The primary data source in this research is the film dialogue script, which is rich in code-mixing usage by the characters in *Tinggal Meninggal* across various interaction contexts. The data is then identified, transcribed, and categorized based on the code-mixing typology proposed by Muysken (2000). Furthermore, each classified datum will be further dissected based on its sociolinguistic functions and motivations using Hoffmann's (1991) theory. This step aims to uncover the psychological, social, and situational dimensions influencing the speakers' decision to mix Indonesian and English codes throughout the storyline.

Data Collection

Data were collected through document-based observation of the movie and its transcript, following three main procedures. First, scenes selection was carried out by reviewing the movie *Tinggal Meninggal* carefully to identify scenes that show interactions containing Indonesian-English code-mixing among the characters. Second, data compilation involved extracting the dialogues from the transcript and cross-checking them with the audiovisual material to ensure accuracy of wording, speaker identity, and contextual meaning. Third, data identification and sampling were conducted by purposively selecting dialogue segments that most clearly represent a particular type or function of code-mixing, based on the prominence of the language mixing, the clarity of the social situations involved, and the relevance of social variables such as the speaker’s background and communication purpose.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach within a sociolinguistic framework. Content analysis was employed to systematically examine linguistic forms and their social functions in context. The analysis was guided by Muysken’s (2000) theory, particularly the classification of code-mixing types into insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization ; and Hoffmann’s (1991) framework of code-mixing functions, including discussing a particular topic, expressing emphasis, interjection, and repetition for clarification.

The analytical procedure was carried out in four interrelated stages. First, contextual interpretation was conducted to examine the social context of each interaction. Second, classification was carried out by categorizing each selected dialogue according to the type and function of code-mixing it represents. Third, a sociopragmatic analysis examined the influence of situational dimensions, psychological factors, and social motivations on the speakers’ choice of language mixing. Finally, interpretation and description were carried out by interpreting the findings in relation to sociolinguistic theory and presenting them descriptively as a narration, explaining how code-mixing functions as a communication strategy within the workplace interactions represented in the film.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, this research applied data triangulation by cross-checking the dialogue transcript against the original audiovisual recording of the film, ensuring that the verbal and contextual meaning of each utterance was accurately captured. Repeated viewing of each scene was also conducted to confirm consistency in the identification and classification of code-mixing types and functions, thereby minimizing subjective bias in the interpretation of the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Due to the duration of the movie *Tinggal Meninggal*, this study does not analyze all occurrences of conversation in the film. Instead, the data were collected using purposive sampling, in which the dialogues are strictly limited to only interactions containing code-mixing between Indonesian and English.

The selection of data was based on the prominence of the code-mixing phenomenon, the clarity of the social roles involved, and the relevance of sociolinguistic dimensions such as the speakers' background, speech situation, and communication purpose. This approach allows the study to focus on qualitative depth rather than quantitative frequency, in line with the objectives of qualitative descriptive research to explore and understand the deep meaning behind a social phenomenon.

Data 1

Situation context: Gema, the main character, sees his office colleagues enjoying lunch together. He feels hesitant but wants to mingle, then approaches them and asks about their willingness to accept him joining.

Gema: "*Duh, mereka lagi pada makan siang, gimana ya cara gue ngomongnya?* (Gema talk to himself)

Gema: *"Gue boleh join gak?"* (*Tinggal Meninggal*, 2025)

The utterance above is categorized as the Insertion type. This is because Gema inserts lexical material in the form of a single verb from English, namely "join," into the Indonesian sentence structure which acts as the matrix language. This insertion does not change the basic grammatical structure of the sentence. Functionally, this code-mixing aims to express solidarity, as Gema uses a casual English term commonly associated with informal group interaction to signal his wish to be included among his colleagues.

Data 2

Kerin is supervising Ilham's performance at the office. She finds Ilham accessing an entertainment platform (YouTube) during working hours, even though there is a monthly report responsibility that must be completed.

Kerin: "*Ini Kenapa?"*

Ilham: ""Ini, si Gema ngomong sendiri lagi"

Kerin: "*Enggak, Lu kenapa malah buka youtube di laptop gue? Monthly report-nya mana?* (*Tinggal Meninggal*, 2025)

This data falls into the Insertion type. Kerin inserts the noun phrase "monthly report" into the Indonesian sentence construction. The use of the particle "*-nya*" (Indonesian) attached to the foreign phrase indicates that Indonesian dominates the sentence framework.

The function of this code-mixing is Talking about a Particular Topic. In a professional context or the office world, the term monthly report is a technical terminology that is more common and practical used to refer to *"laporan pertanggungjawaban bulanan,"* so the speaker feels more spontaneous using that term.

Data 3

After Gema's father passes away, Ilham offers condolences but with a tone Kerin considers too demanding (telling Gema to be strong). Kerin reprimands Ilham because she feels Ilham is not showing appropriate empathy for the grieving situation.

Ilham: *"Gue baru denger soal bokap lo, semangat lo harus kuat"*

Kerin: *" Orang lagi berduka malah disuruh kuat, be sensitive Ilham!"* (*Tinggal Meninggal, 2025)*

This utterance is categorized as Alternation. A code change occurs at the clause level at the end of the sentence, namely "be sensitive." This clause has a complete English grammatical structure (imperative) and appears after the Indonesian clause, indicating a clear langage path switch between two different structures.

The function of code-mixing in this data is Being Emphatic About Something. Kerin switches to English to show annoyance and provide stronger emphasis on her reprimand. The use of the foreign term here functions as a contextualization cue so that Ilham realizes his behavior is truly considered insensitive by the speaker.

Data 4

Situation Kerin tries to provide emotional support to Gema who is grieving. This is Kerin's effort to open deeper communication and show that she is ready to be a good listener for Gema.

Kerin: *"Turut berduka cita ya Gem"*

Gema: "*Makasih ya mbak Kerin"*

Kerin: *" Mungkin lu sekarang butuh waktu untuk proses semuanya, dan kalau lu butuh temen ngobrol, please let me know gue ada disana" (pointing towards her desk)* (*Tinggal Meninggal, 2025*)

The type of code-mixing found is Alternation. The phrase "please let me know" is inserted between Indonesian clauses. This phrase is a unified expression (clause) in English inserted without changing the basic language structure, yet stands independently grammatically.

The function of this utterance is Intention of Clarifying the Speech Content. Kerin uses the phrase please let me know to clarify and soften her intention in offering help. In urban speech culture, this expression is often used to give the impression of offering help sincerely without seeming forceful, so the intent of the emotional support is conveyed more clearly to Gema

Discussion

The findings of this study offer a nuanced perspective on code-switching and code-mixing, demonstrating that while certain communicative functions align with prior research, their realization is fundamentally shaped by the specific workplace hierarchy under study. By comparing the interactions in *Tinggal Meninggal* to broader sociolinguistic studies, the profound impact of professional power dynamics on linguistic choices becomes evident.

The Emphasis Function within Hierarchical Registers

The emphasis function identified in this study closely parallels the "focus and elucidation" function reported by Mustafayeva et al. (2025). However, a critical divergence emerges in the contextual application of this function. While Mustafayeva et al. situate focus and elucidation within broad, macro-level societal interactions—spanning home, school, and digital domains—the present study narrows this phenomenon to a highly specific professional register. Within the hierarchical structure of *Tinggal Meninggal*, emphasis is not merely a tool for clarity; it is a mechanism of power negotiation. A superior deploys emphasis to definitively assert directives and establish boundaries, whereas a subordinate utilizes it to underscore compliance, diligence, and professional competence. This suggests that in workplace settings, linguistic emphasis is intrinsically linked to organizational roles.

Empathy, Distance, and Institutional Authority

The empathy function observed in this study diverges even more sharply from recent literature, particularly the findings of Shajidah, Ramadhina, and Indrayanti (2025). In their analysis of *Belok Kanan Barcelona* (2018), code-switching and code-mixing predominantly signaled closeness, familiarity, and affection within informal, peer-based relationships. In contrast, the hierarchical dialogue in *Tinggal Meninggal* reveals a complex, additional layer of linguistic maneuvering largely absent from peer-driven accounts. Empathy-marking switches in this workplace context serve a dual, almost paradoxical purpose: they simultaneously soften the bluntness of institutional authority while preserving necessary professional distance. Rather than eliminating boundaries to create intimacy, superiors and subordinates use empathetic code-switching to manage "face" and maintain workplace harmony without destabilizing the chain of command.

The Appeal Function and Obligation Negotiation

Perhaps the most distinct contribution of the present study is the identification of the appeal function, which remains largely unaddressed in both comparison studies. Mustafayeva et al. (2025) frame code-switching functions at the level of general, horizontal social interaction, while Shajidah et al. (2025) attribute switching primarily to personal familiarity rather than institutional necessity. In *Tinggal Meninggal*, appeal-oriented switches are tied directly to the negotiation of workplace obligations. Subordinates utilize these switches to mitigate the risk of overstepping when making requests, while superiors use them to gently justify their authority without resorting to overt coercion. This highlights how code-switching functions as a vital politeness strategy in high-stakes professional environments.

Taken together, these comparisons indicate that while broad communicative functions—such as emphasis and relational closeness—surface in *Tinggal Meninggal*, their realization within a workplace hierarchy introduces profound relational dynamics of authority and empathy. These dynamics remain largely unaddressed in both the large-scale multilingual study of Mustafayeva et al. (2025) and the single-film, peer-based study of Shajidah et al. (2025). By highlighting how institutional power shapes bilingual practices, these findings successfully confirm the dual research gap identified in the introduction and contribute a new dimension to our understanding of workplace sociolinguistics.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that code-mixing in the dialogues of *Tinggal Meninggal* predominantly occurs through two types, insertion and alternation, and serves several communicative functions, including talking about a particular topic, being emphatic about something, and clarifying the speech content. These patterns appear most frequently in interactions between characters positioned in unequal workplace roles, particularly between a supervisor and her subordinates.

These results indicate that code-mixing is not merely a stylistic habit but a meaningful communicative resource through which Jakarta-based office workers manage professional topics, express emphasis, and soften or intensify interpersonal messages. The alternation between Indonesian and English appears to correspond closely with shifts in emotional intensity and social distance, supporting the view that language choice in bilingual workplace settings is sensitive to both topic and relationship.

This study contributes theoretically by extending Muysken’s (2000) typology and Hoffmann’s (1991) functional framework to a workplace setting that has received limited attention

in previous Indonesian code-mixing research, which has largely focused on romantic or peer-based interactions. Practically, the findings offer insight into how contemporary Indonesian professional speech continues to evolve under the influence of globalization, which may be useful for language education and media literacy in urban Indonesian contexts.

This research is limited by its focus on a single film and a small number of purposively selected dialogue excerpts, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other workplace or media contexts. In addition, the analysis relies on the researchers' interpretation of social and emotional context, which, despite triangulation with the audiovisual material, remains inherently qualitative and subjective to some degree.

Future research is recommended to expand the scope of analysis to a wider range of Indonesian workplace dramas or sitcoms to examine whether similar patterns of code-mixing recur across different professional settings. Comparative studies involving real workplace conversations, rather than scripted dialogue, may also provide a fuller picture of how code-mixing functions in authentic Indonesian professional communication.

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Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Ferdi Aditya Wardana: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing original draft, Review and Editing. **Ervina CM Simatupang**: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Writing – Review and Editing, Supervision.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors used ChatGPT to assist and support the data-coding process, and Mendeley to organize citations and references. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, verified, and revised by the authors. The authors retained full responsibility for the data analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and final content of the manuscript.

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