

## Forms And Functions Of Code-Mixing In Student Interactions During Academic Task Discussions

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### ABSTRACT

*Code-mixing is a common phenomenon among bilingual and multilingual speakers: a person inserts elements from another language into their speech, not because the situation demands it, but because it simply feels more fitting. This study examines the forms and functions of code-mixing in conversations among students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, particularly when they discuss academic assignments. Three questions guide this research: what forms of code-mixing appear, which type occurs most frequently, and what pragmatic functions it serves in informal academic discussions. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach from a sociolinguistic standpoint, with data drawn from two naturally occurring conversation sessions through audio recording, observation, and field notes. The findings show that the most dominant form is inner code-mixing the insertion of Javanese elements into Indonesian speech broken down into word insertions (63%), phrase insertions (27%), and clause insertions (10%). Four pragmatic functions were identified: facilitating informal communication, marking group solidarity and identity, providing emphatic stress, and clarifying complex arguments. The conclusion is simple but significant: code-mixing is not evidence of limited language ability. In student discussions, it is a choice deliberate, purposeful, and effective.*

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### 1. Introduction

No speaker speaks one language purely. Anyone who grows up in a multilingual society like Indonesia brings many languages at once: mother tongue, national language, slang, maybe one or two foreign languages picked up from school or the internet. When the languages meet in a conversation, a phenomenon such as code mixing arises (Sumarsih & al., 2014; Weinreich, 1952; Karubaba & Rahman, 2025; Ritonga et al., 2020).

Code-mixing is when a speaker inserts elements from another language into his speech, not because the situation is demanding, but because it feels more appropriate (Suwito, 1985) Unlike code-switching which means changing languages completely because the context changes, code mixing occurs in the same speech and has a twisted internal pattern (Muysken, 2000; Putra et al., 2023; Andini et al., 2026).

In East Java, this condition is very felt. Javanese is the first language of the majority of the population, including students, while Indonesian is present as the official language in the academic space. The two languages do not only coexist, they are mixed up in daily conversation (Saddiyah & Rokhman, 2018; Puspita et al., 2026; Anggriyani et al., 2025).

Students are in a linguistically interesting situation. In class, they are expected to speak in standard Indonesian. But once the same topic continues in the canteen or WhatsApp group, the rules are relaxed. The discussion of the lecture assignment is in the middle: the theme is academic, but the atmosphere is relaxed. It is in this gray space that the code mix thrives (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

Previous studies have recorded several patterns. Ningsih & Kurniawan (2021) found that mixing codes in students' WhatsApp chats took many words from Javanese and English. Munandar (2019) cited the closeness between speakers and the desire to avoid formality as the trigger. Wijayanti & Rohmadi (2022) add an identity dimension: language choices mark who you are and which group you belong to. Even so, research that focuses on discussion of college assignments rather than free chat, nor formal forums is still rare.

That gap is what this research wants to answer. The goal is concrete: to describe the mixed forms of code based on their linguistic units, to identify which languages are most often inserted, and to trace their pragmatic function in informal academic conversations. Not because this topic sounds important on paper, but because students are actually doing it every day and we haven't paid enough attention.

Language contact occurs when one person uses two or more languages alternately (Weinreich, 1953) this is not just an individual matter. At the community level, two language systems systematically influence each other, the result is a condition that we call bilingualism or multilingualism. (Grosjean, 1982) rejects the portrayal of bilingualism as something uniform. A person's proficiency in two languages can be very unbalanced, depending on how often each is used, in what context, and since when it was mastered. What is clear is that active bilingual speakers can access both languages simultaneously and from that capacity code mixing and code switching is born.

Suwito, (1985) classifies mixed forms of codes based on their linguistic units, namely words, phrases, basters, word repetitions, expressions or idioms, and clauses. This classification is the most widely used in Indonesian mixed code studies not because it is the most sophisticated, but because the unit is compact and can be identified consistently. Muysken (2000) proposes a more grammatical framework, insertion (inserting material from another language into the structure of the main language), alternation (alternating between two language structures), and lexical congruence (using material from two languages whose structure is quite similar at the same time). In the context of Indonesian and Javanese, the most frequent insertion occurs. The two languages are cognate, but the systems are different enough to make switching always feel like "inserting" something from the outside.

In addition to the form, code mixes can also be distinguished based on the origin of the language inserted. Suwito (1985) distinguishes the mixture of codes in between cognate languages from the mixture of codes to the outside, which involves languages from different families. The motivation and sociolinguistic impact are not the same, and these differences need to be taken into account in the analysis. Gumperz (1982) was one of the first to ask about what is the function of language change in conversation? Through the concept of conversational code-switching, he shows that language switching that has an interactive meaning is not just a habit. He identified six functions, namely quotation markers, interlocutor assignment, interpreservation, interpretation, message qualification, and personalization versus objectification. Holmes, (2013) looks at its function from two sides, namely social and referential. Socially, mixing codes can signal solidarity, distance, or group membership. Referentially, it appears because there is no sufficiently precise word design, because of stylistic choices, or because of more situational pragmatic considerations.

Boztepe (2003) summarizes a number of driving factors such as vocabulary emptiness, need for precision, desire to maintain an informal atmosphere, expression of identity, and status signals, These factors do not work one by one in one speech, some can be active at once. In the context of college assignment discussions, students are faced with two pressures that cannot always be reconciled, the topic is academic and the tone of expectation is to speak in the correct Indonesian language, but the atmosphere is a conversation between friends who already know each other. Mixing code becomes a reasonable compromise to talk about serious things without losing the tone of the conversation (Dardjowidjojo, 2003; Andini et al., 2026; Rahman, 2018; Aswad et al., 2019). Rahardi, (2010) reminded that choosing Javanese in a casual academic chat is not a neutral decision. It's an action with a social content with a sign of equality, a way of reducing distance, a signal that we're not pretending to be formal. Without reading this sociocultural dimension, the mixed analysis would lose half of its meaning.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Approaches and Types of Research**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a sociolinguistic perspective. The goal is not to measure how often code mixing appears, but to understand how and why it happens in real conversations (Creswell, 2014). Language is treated as a social practice so the analysis does not stop at the linguistic form, but also traces the context and communicative function behind it.

Operationally, it is a naturalistic field study. Data were taken from spontaneous conversations, without researcher intervention. This way of working follows the ethnography principle of communication by Hymes (1972): language can only be read in its entirety in the context of actual speech.

## 2.2 Data Sources and Participants

The participants of this study are seven students of the Language and Literature Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Surabaya. They were selected based on three criteria: native Javanese speakers, actively discussing college assignments, and willing to be recorded. The selection of participants was carried out by purposive sampling, which is based on consideration of the homogeneity of the linguistic background and relevance to the focus of the research, not statistical representation (Crewell, 2014). The number of participants and sessions is considered adequate when data saturation is achieved, which is a condition in which the resulting code is repeated and no longer produces new categories of forms or functions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014)

Data was collected from two different conversation sessions. The first: four students (Sondra, Swari, Zahra, and Farhan) had a discussion in the campus area. The second: three students (Cheryl, Safinatur, and Swari) talk in a literacy café. Both take place naturally without engineering. Two locations were deliberately chosen to see if the place also formed a pattern of code mixing that emerged.

## 2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected in three mutually supportive ways, referring to Sudaryanto (1993). The audio recording is done with a digital recording device initially without the participants' knowledge to allow the conversation to take place naturally, then after the session is over they are notified and asked for their consent. Along with the recording, observations were made to capture the situational context that was not recorded by audio. Field recording complements both: facial expressions, gestures, and relevant environmental conditions are documented manually.

The recordings are then transcribed orthographically with adjusted rules for easy reading. Each transcription includes original speech, translations into standard Indonesian, and contextual notes. The accuracy was checked by having two researchers copy the same recording separately, and then the results were compared.

## 2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis follows the model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014). From all transcripts, speech containing the insertion of language elements other than Indonesian was selected which became the corpus of analysis. The utterances are then arranged in a table detailing the form, type, and function of the code. The patterns that appear repeatedly are formulated into conclusions, then confirmed through member checking with participants.

To classify forms, Suwito's (1985) taxonomy is used: words, phrases, basters, loops, expressions, and clauses. The type of inner or outer code mix also refers to Suwito (1985). Pragmatic function analysis incorporates the frameworks of Gumperz (1982), Holmes (2013), and Boztepe (2003). The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation, researcher triangulation, and member checking.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Description of Conversation Data

The data of this study came from the recording of two conversations discussing lecture assignments that were orthographically transcribed. The full transcript and translation are presented in the following table.

**Table 1. Transcript of Conversation 1 (On-Campus Discussion – Four Students)**

Speaker	Original Speech (Mixed Language)	Translation (Indonesian)
Sondra (M1.3)	<i>Ndek upn sendiri kongkon cari seng berbeda prodi. Disarankan sih, tapi lek pengen se prodi yo gak popo.</i>	Di UPN sendiri disuruh cari yang berbeda prodi. Disarankan sih, tapi kalau mau satu prodi juga tidak apa-apa.
Swari (M2.2)	<i>Nek semisal kalah, scrol capcut dan foto di tempat ini.</i>	Kalau semisal kalah, gulir (fitur) capcut dan foto di tempat ini.
Sondra (M1.2)	<i>Nggak iso nggak iso, diratai dulu.</i>	Tidak bisa tidak bisa, diratakan dulu.
Zahra (M3.1)	<i>Sama adikmu pe tanya snbt.</i>	Sama adikmu mau tanya (tentang) SNBT.
Swari (M2.4)	<i>Han Farhan, dirimu sek.</i>	Han Farhan, (giliran) kamu dulu.

Farhan (M4.2) Opo. Apa.

The first conversation takes place on campus, covering quite a variety of topics: assignment writing requirements, app usage, and turn-to-talk settings. All participants are native Javanese speakers from East Java, it is natural that many Javanese elements appear here.

**Table 2. Transcript of Conversation 2 (Discussion at the Literacy Cafe – Three Students)**

Speaker	Original Speech (Mixed Language)	Translation (Indonesian)
Cheryl (M1.2)	<i>Misal nih, kita gangguan berbahasa terus kan nganalisis wong cadel to. Nah ngono kita dari, dapet dari artikel yang kita baca iku opo...</i>	Misal nih, kita (topik) gangguan berbahasa terus kan menganalisis orang cadel. Nah begitu, kita dari, dapat dari artikel yang kita baca itu apa...
Safinatun (M2.1)	<i>Kalau artikel berarti melu gak sih.</i>	Kalau artikel berarti ikut tidak sih.
Swari (M3)	<i>Jadi gini, aku kemarin takok gene Bintang to, lek semisal awakmu ser enek objek penelitiane gapopo, tapi scara umum gapopo. Ngono.</i>	Jadi gini, aku kemarin tanya ke Bintang, semisal kamu suka ada objek penelitiannya tidak apa-apa, tapi secara umum tidak apa-apa. Begitu.
Safinatun (M2.3)	<i>Hah maksudte?</i>	Hah maksudnya?
Swari (M3.2)	<i>Secara umum gapopo, tapi piye carane bene iso melbu ndek sinta. Lek semisal awakmu enek kyok barang seng mbok misal aku ndwe objeke kan yo iso memperkuat adwe melbu sinta kan. Nggak secara umum tok. Lek mek secara umum kan pastine angel.</i>	Secara umum tidak apa-apa, tapi bagaimana caranya biar bisa masuk ke SINTA. Kalau semisal kamu ada seperti sesuatu yang, semisal aku punya objeknya kan ya bisa memperkuat kita masuk SINTA kan. Tidak secara umum saja. Kalau cuma secara umum kan pastinya susah.

The second conversation took place in a literacy café, focusing on article writing strategies for the SINTA journal. Interestingly, different locations don't change the frequency of code mixing much. Apparently, who speaks is more decisive than where the conversation takes place.

### 3.1.1 Mixed Forms Code

Of all the speeches analyzed, 17 code mixing units were identified which were grouped based on their lingual units.

**Table 3. Complete Analysis of the Form and Function of Code Mixing**

No	Player	Speaker / CK Elements	Linguistic Units	CK Types	Pragmatic Functions
1	Sondra (M1.3)	“ndek” (di), “kongkon” (suruh), “seng” (yang)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Facilitate communication, expression of familiarity
2	Sondra (M1.3)	“lek pengen... yo gak popo”	Phrase (Javanese)	Inner CM	Facilitate communication, assert concessions
3	Swari (M2.1)	“Nek semisal” (kalau semisal)	Phrase (Javanese)	Inner CM	Facilitate communication
4	Swari (M2.1)	“scroll” (gulir)	Words (English)	Outer CM	Asserting rejection (empathetic)
5	Sondra (M1.2)	“Nggak iso nggak iso”	Rephrase (Javanese)	Inner CM	Asserting rejection (empathetic)

6	Sondra (M1.2)	“diratai” (diratakan)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Facilitate communication
7	Zahra (M3.1)	“pe” (mau/akan)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Facilitate communication
8	Swari (M2.4)	“sek” (dulu)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Assert order, manage speech turns
9	Farhan (M4.2)	“Opo” (apa)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Clarify speech objects
10	Cheryl (M1.2)	“wong cadel” (orang cadel)	Phrase (Javanese)	Inner CM	Clarify speech objects
11	Cheryl (M1.2)	“to” (kan/bukan?), “iku” (itu)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Seeking confirmation, deictic
12	Safinatun (M2.1)	“melu” (ikut/termasuk)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Facilitate communication
13	Swari (M3)	“takok gene” (tanya ke)	Phrase (Javanese)	Inner CM	Smoothing narratives, expressions of familiarity
14	Swari (M3)	“lek semisal”, “awakmu”, “ser”, “gapopo”, “ngono”	Words and Phrases (Javanese)	Inner CM	Expressions of solidarity, clarifying information
15	Safinatun (M2.3)	“maksudte” (maksudnya)	Words (Javanese)	Inner CM	Request clarification
16	Swari (M3.2)	“piye carane bene iso melbu ndek”	Clause (Javanese)	Inner CM	Clarifying arguments, persuasive strategies
17	Swari (M3.2)	“lek mek secara umum kan pastine angel”	Clause (Javanese)	Inner CM	Reinforcing arguments, stating consequences

### a. Word Insertion

Sixty-three percent of the total code mix was the insertion of the most dominant form. Javanese words such as "ndek", "kongkon", "seng", "lek", "pe", "sek", "opo", "melu", "to", "iku", "gapopo", and "ser" are scattered at various points of conversation. One English word was also invented: "scroll", for the act of scrolling the app screen.

The words that are inserted are generally high-frequency function words that don't need to be searched for, they pop up right away. Muysken (2000) explains that in fast-paced informal conversations, bilingual speakers draw from the most accessible repertoire, and that is usually the first language. More interestingly, the insertion is not limited to words content only, prepositions, conjunctions, particles are all there. Myers-Scotton (1993) notes that when insertion has already entered the grammatical lexical realm, it is a sign of deeper linguistic integration, not simply "borrowing" vocabulary.

### b. Phrase Insertion

Twenty-seven percent of the cases were in the form of inserting phrases: "yo gak popo", "nek semisal", "gak iso gak iso", "wong cadel", "takok gene", and "lek semisal". All of them are included as a unity of meaning in the flow of Indonesian speech.

The most interesting thing is "no iso no iso" in Sondra's speech. This repetition is not a habit without intent in Javanese, reduplication has an inherent intensification function. When this phrase is inserted, the speaker not only borrows the word but also carries its stylistic effect. Auer, (1998) calls this ability a synergistic use of two languages.

"Lek for example" appears repeatedly in Sondra and Swari's words as a combination of "lek" from Java and "seseal" from Indonesia, a hybrid that already feels natural for both. Giles, Coupland, & Coupland (1991) attribute this pattern to linguistic convergence: language adapts to the language of the interlocutor gradually.

### c. Insertion of Clauses

Ten percent of the cases were in the form of inserting clauses, all from Swari's words in the second conversation: "piye cara bene iso melbu ndek sinta" and "lek mek in general kan definitely difficult". Both have a complete syntactic structure in Javanese.

Swari turns to the Java clause precisely in the most technical and important part of the explanation. Grosjean (1982) calls this a *language mode* when one of the languages is activated more dominantly, usually the first language, when processing complex information. In an informal context, Javanese is the language in which Swari thinks most deeply (Dardjowidjojo, 2003).

### 3.1.2 Pragmatic Functions of Code Mixing

The analysis identified four main pragmatic functions of code mixing in this data.

**Table 4. Summary of Pragmatic Functions of Code Mix**

CK Function	Speech Examples	Explanation
Facilitate communication	"If you lose, scroll down and take a picture in this place." (Swari/M2.2/P1)	The simultaneous use of Javanese and English words to speed up the delivery of technical information in informal situations.
Expression of solidarity and identity	"Yesterday I had a chance to see Gene Pool..." (Swari/M3/P2)	The use of thick Javanese words and phrases creates a sense of familiarity and marks a common identity as fellow Javanese speakers.
Emphatic affirmation	"I can't, I can't." (Sondra/M1.2/P1)	The repetition of Javanese phrases as an intensification strategy that carries the stylistic function of firm rejection.
Clarify complex arguments	"... How to get rid of sin. Lek mek in general is definitely difficult." (Swari/M3.2/P2)	The use of Javanese clauses to express complex strategic arguments in a more natural and intuitive way.

#### a. Functions of Facilitating Communication

Words like "ndek", "pe", "seng", and "melu" appear not because speakers have run out of Indonesian vocabulary but because they are faster and more natural in casual conversations between fellow Javanese speakers. Gumperz (1982) calls this we-code switching: group language as a communication lubricant, not a barrier.

Apart from that, the word "scroll" was inserted not for social reasons, but because there is no short and common equivalent in Indonesian for the act of scrolling the screen. The motivation is lexical, not stylistic.

#### b. Function of Expression of Solidarity and Group Identity

"You" instead of "you". The "to" particle is typical of the Surabaya dialect. These small choices are not neutral, they are a sign that the speaker and the interlocutor are in the same group. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) call every act of speech an act of identity, and here the identity is: fellow East Javanese people who do not need to pretend to be formal with each other.

Students who mix codes in academic discussions are not ignoring language norms. They are building a more equal conversation space and Javanese is the tool (Holmes, 2013).

### **c. Emphatic Affirmation Function**

"I can't, I can't." If Sondra uses "can't help it" in Indonesian, the effect is a lot flatter. Javanese carries the emotional weight of the speaker's first language, and repetition adds intensity. The two work together. Auer (1998) calls this strategy emphatic code-switching: language switching as a rhetorical tool that cannot be replaced by one language alone.

### **d. Function of Clarifying Complex Arguments**

Swari turns to the Java clause precisely in the most important part of his argument. When explaining that research that is too general is difficult to enter the SINTA journal, he spoke in Javanese: "piye cara bene iso melbu ndek sinta" and "lek mek in general kan pastine difficult."

Grosjean (1982) called this language activation asymmetry the first language activated more strongly when the speaker needs to express something complex and important. But there is also an interactional dimension: by turning to Java at the most crucial point, Swari signals to his interlocutor who is also a Javanese speaker that this part needs to be taken more seriously. It is more effective than maintaining a formal Indonesian language that feels more advanced.

#### **3.1.3 Code Mixing Distribution and Pattern**

Of the 17 code mixing units, 94% were inner code-mixing (Indonesian-Javanese) and 6% were outer code-mixing (in English). This proportion is not surprising given that all participants are East Javanese speakers, and Javanese remains dominant in informal communication in this region even though Indonesian is common in the formal realm (Poedjosoedarmo, 1978; Sneddon, 2003).

The distribution of the form: 63% word, 27% phrase, 10% clause. Compared to the findings of Ningsih & Kurniawan (2021) on WhatsApp where the word reaches 78% and the clause is only 3%, the proportion in this data is larger. This makes sense: verbal conversations make room for longer and more complex structures, while text messages tend to be short.

A final note: Swari is the speaker who mixes the code the most in both conversations, followed by Sondra. Grosjean (1982) has reminded that every bilingual speaker has his own inherent linguistic mode, the tendency to mix codes not only about the situation, but also about who the person is.

## **4. Conclusion**

Three forms of code mixing were found in the data: word insertion (63%), phrase (27%), and clause (10%). The insertion of the word dominates and this is not a surprise. In any bilingual community, a word is the easiest unit to move. What is more interesting is the insertion of clauses, which only appear in speeches with high argumentative content. When Swari explained the journal's publication strategy, he switched to Javanese not because he ran out of Indonesian words but because the argument felt more complete expressed in the language in which he thought.

In terms of type, 94% is inner code-mixing (Javanese-Indonesia), the rest is outer code-mixing (English-Indonesian). The Javanese language remains strong even in academic chat, this is not an anomaly, but a reflection of the linguistic reality of East Java students. Language teaching in colleges that ignore this fact will continue to design a curriculum that does not fit who the students really are.

Four pragmatic functions are identified: facilitating informal communication, flagging solidarity and group identity, creating an emphatic emphasis effect, and elaborating complex arguments through more intuitive language. All four show the same thing: mixing code is not a mistake that escapes scrutiny, but a choice that has a purpose.

The first implication is in the classroom. If coding is a functional and deliberate linguistic strategy, then treating it simply as a "language error" is wrong. Language teachers who understand their pragmatic function have the opportunity to design a more honest approach to students' multilingual reality. The second implication is at the theoretical level: the Gumperz, Holmes, and Muysken frameworks have proven to be applicable to Indonesian-Javanese data but not without adjustments. Context remains decisive.

The study had a clear limit: seven people, two conversations. It is enough to identify patterns, but not yet enough to generalize. Follow-up studies need to expand the scope of more participants, more diverse linguistic backgrounds, and richer social variables such as gender, generation, or region of origin. One interesting direction: a longitudinal study that follows a pattern of mixing students' codes from semester one to graduation. How does academic experience shape or shift one's language habits? That's an unanswered question, and it's worth pursuing.

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