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Translanguaging and Identity Construction among Indonesian-English Bilinguals on X Social Media Platform: A Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Background: The evolution of communication in the digital era has led to increasingly flexible and dynamic language practices in everyday interactions. Social media, serving as a virtual public space, enables bilingual and multilingual users to combine multiple languages within a single utterance, a phenomenon known as translanguaging.

Aims: This study aims to identify the forms of translanguaging in posts on the X platform and analyze their role in shaping users' digital identities during institutional crises.

Methods: The research employs a qualitative approach using Susan Herring's (2004) Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) framework. The dataset consists of a small purposive corpus of seven posts discussing academic sexual harassment cases on Indonesian X, collected through documentation and analyzed through coding, categorization, and interpretative analysis.

Results: The findings revealed that code-mixing is the dominant form of translanguaging, accompanied by limited instances of hybrid language forms. These linguistic practices function to express emotions, reinforce opinions, deliver social criticism, and address systemic institutional issues. The examined cases indicate that translanguaging serves as a highly deliberate, context-sensitive discursive strategy to navigate context collapse, manage audience design, and establish positioning in digital interactions. Furthermore, language choices project fluid, multifaceted personas, shifting between intellectual, critical, and empathetic positionings.

Implications: The study demonstrates that translanguaging is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a social practice closely tied to citizen agency, self-representation, and the dynamics of digital communication during crisis situations.

Keywords: *Computer-mediated discourse analysis; digital identity; multilingual communication; social media; translanguaging*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought significant changes in the way humans communicate across different parts of the world (Thakkar & Matthews, 2012). The development of information

and communication technology has accelerated the flow of information exchange beyond geographical boundaries, making interactions among individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds increasingly intensive and complex (Han, 2024). The digitalization of communication through social media platforms enables users to connect in real time, share ideas, and express themselves in a dynamic and open virtual public space (Zaxrie et al., 2024). This transformation not only affects how messages are delivered but also shapes new communication patterns that are more flexible and interactive compared to conventional communication.

The development of social media as a digital communication space has also encouraged the emergence of increasingly complex and diverse multilingual practices (Herlina et al., 2024). Users are no longer limited to a single language in interaction but utilize multiple languages simultaneously depending on communication needs, social context, and the characteristics of the intended audience (Andini et al., 2025). This condition reflects the social reality of a more heterogeneous global society, where the ability to use more than one language has become common and even advantageous in building social relationships. Social media also accelerates the dissemination of language and culture, enriching users' linguistic repertoires (Dembe, 2024).

Multilingual practices on social media often do not occur separately between languages but are integrated within a single meaningful utterance (Shalihah, 2025). Users flexibly switch, combine, or modify languages to convey messages effectively, whether in texts, comments, or captions. This phenomenon indicates that language is no longer viewed as a rigid system with clear boundaries but as a resource that can be used dynamically. Such flexible language use also reflects users' creativity in adapting messages to continuously evolving communication situations (Asdah et al., 2025).

The concept of translanguaging emerges to challenge traditional, structural views of bilingualism that treat languages as discrete and bounded systems, a critique foundational to the field (Canagarajah, 2011). This framework explicitly rejects older models that isolate linguistic practices within rigid boundaries (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Rather than viewing bilingual communication through the lens of code-switching or code-mixing, which presupposes a mechanical alternation between two separate codes, translanguaging posits that multilingual individuals operate from a single, integrated linguistic repertoire (García & Wei, 2014). Within this paradigm, the cognitive reality of the speaker is defined by a holistic system rather than fractured, co-existing languages (Otheguy et al., 2015). In this perspective, named languages like "Indonesian" or "English" are recognized strictly as sociopolitical constructs rather than actual cognitive categories operating inside the human brain (Wei, 2018). Therefore, translanguaging on social media is not merely the mixing of two distinct languages, but the dynamic deployment of a user's full linguistic repertoire to construct richer, contextual meanings and perform digital identities.

The use of translanguaging in social media is not only related to linguistic aspects but is also closely connected to the construction of user identity in digital spaces (Menghuan et al., 2024). Identity in digital communication contexts is dynamic rather than static and can be constructed and negotiated through ongoing interactions. Language choice becomes a means of self-representation, indicating social membership and building a particular image before an audience (Ho, 2022). In this study, the discussion focuses on social media, particularly the X platform, as a digital space where translanguaging practices occur intensively and diversely.

Identity constructed through translanguaging often reflects the complexity of individuals' experiences in multilingual and multicultural environments. Language choice can symbolize membership in certain groups, such as local, global, or digital subcultures. In addition, translanguaging can be used strategically to reach broader audiences with diverse linguistic backgrounds, especially in interactions on X, which are characterized by brevity and speed. Social media provides space for users to display diverse identities,

both explicitly through direct statements and implicitly through everyday language practices.

Despite the growing recognition of translanguaging as a multilingual communicative practice, its role in digital communication and identity construction remains insufficiently understood. Although social media has become a major site where multilingual users negotiate meanings and identities, existing studies have yet to provide a comprehensive explanation of how translanguaging functions within specific online communicative contexts. Therefore, the following section identifies the existing research gaps and highlights the novelty of the present study.

The dominance of translanguaging research in educational settings indicates limited exploration in other contexts, particularly social media as a rapidly evolving communication space. Existing studies tend to position translanguaging as a consciously designed pedagogical strategy, thus overlooking naturally occurring language practices in everyday life. In fact, social media provides authentic data reflecting how users actually use language in real interactions. This condition reveals a significant research opportunity to examine translanguaging beyond formal contexts.

The limited research on social media also results in a lack of understanding regarding the relationship between translanguaging and identity construction in digital spaces. Social media is one of the primary arenas where individual identity is continuously formed, presented, and negotiated. Analyzing translanguaging practices on digital platforms can provide new insights into how language is used as a tool to construct social, cultural, and even professional identities. Therefore, research in this area is crucial to understanding the dynamics of communication in an increasingly complex digital era.

Based on the above explanation, the research problem in this study focuses on how translanguaging practices are used by multilingual users on social media and how these practices contribute to the construction of their digital identities. This study aims to identify the forms of translanguaging in digital interactions and analyze the identity construction processes within this context. The findings are expected to contribute to expanding linguistic studies, particularly regarding language practices on social media, and to enrich the understanding of the relationship between language and identity in evolving digital communication contexts.

1.1 Research Gap and Novelty

Previous studies on translanguaging have predominantly examined its role in educational contexts, particularly as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate language learning and classroom interaction. Nur (2024) highlights that translanguaging enhances students' participation and engagement in Arabic language learning while improving their comprehension through the flexible use of multiple languages. Similarly, Silalahi (2023) demonstrates that translanguaging in Mandarin instruction functions as an effective communicative resource despite often being perceived as evidence of limited language proficiency. Siregar (2025) further reports that translanguaging significantly improves conceptual understanding, confidence, and collaborative interaction in bilingual elementary education. Collectively, these studies establish the pedagogical value of translanguaging; however, they primarily conceptualize it as a consciously designed instructional strategy rather than as a naturally occurring linguistic practice in everyday communication.

Recent scholarship has gradually extended translanguaging research into digital environments and explored its relationship with identity construction. Gu et al. (2025) investigate how multilingual language practices contribute to youth well-being and self-concept in online spaces. Kusuma and Madiseh (2025) examine identity negotiation among language learners through translanguaging on digital platforms, while Ren and Tahir (2026) analyze translanguaging as a means of intercultural communication across

multiple social media platforms. Furthermore, Perez-Arredondo et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of multimodal resources in constructing identities within digital discourse. These studies demonstrate that translanguaging is increasingly recognized as a social and communicative practice beyond educational settings. Nevertheless, they generally focus on broad online interactions, multilingual learning communities, intercultural communication, or multimodal identity construction, leaving several important issues insufficiently explored.

Despite these advances, three significant research gaps remain. First, existing studies have paid relatively limited attention to translanguaging as an authentic linguistic practice emerging organically in public social media discourse, particularly on X, where communication is characterized by brevity, immediacy, and interactive public engagement. Second, previous research has rarely examined how translanguaging functions as a strategic resource for constructing, negotiating, and positioning digital identities during crisis-driven discussions involving sensitive institutional issues, such as academic sexual harassment. Third, although multimodal approaches have become increasingly dominant in digital discourse studies, relatively few investigations employ text-level computer-mediated discourse analysis to explain how bilingual language choices construct meanings, express stances, and index identity positions in online interactions.

To address these gaps, this study focuses specifically on Indonesian–English bilingual translanguaging practices on X in discussions concerning institutional academic sexual harassment. Rather than treating translanguaging merely as a pedagogical technique or an instrument of intercultural communication, this research conceptualizes it as a discursive resource through which multilingual users construct, negotiate, and perform digital identities in a highly sensitive public communication context. Employing a text-level computer-mediated discourse analysis, this study investigates how bilingual linguistic repertoires are strategically mobilized within the communicative constraints of X to express evaluation, solidarity, resistance, authority, and identity positioning. Accordingly, the novelty of this research lies in integrating translanguaging theory with digital identity construction in a crisis-driven institutional discourse on a single social media platform, thereby providing a more context-specific understanding of multilingual communication in contemporary digital society.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to identify the forms of translanguaging employed by multilingual users on X and to analyze how these linguistic practices contribute to the construction and negotiation of digital identities in discussions concerning institutional academic sexual harassment. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on translanguaging and computer-mediated discourse by demonstrating how multilingual language practices function not only as communicative resources but also as mechanisms of identity construction within contemporary digital communication.

1.2 Research Questions

To understand the phenomenon of digital language practices within this framework, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How do bilingual X users draw on translanguaging to construct and negotiate their digital identities?
2. What communicative functions do these translanguaging practices serve in online interactions regarding institutional crises?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA), as proposed by Herring (2004), as its research design to examine translanguaging practices and digital identity construction in text-based interactions on X. CMDA is particularly suitable for this study because it provides a systematic framework for analyzing linguistic features and communicative practices in computer-mediated environments. The unit of analysis consists of the micro-level textual discourse of individual posts on the X platform. The analysis follows Herring's structural and pragmatic dimensions of computer-mediated discourse, which are operationalized through three analytical stages (Herring, 2004).

2.2 Research Objects

The data source of this study comprised publicly accessible posts published on the X platform concerning institutional academic sexual harassment in Indonesian higher education between 2024 and 2025. In this study, the unit of analysis was the textual discourse contained in public posts rather than the users themselves. Therefore, the research did not treat X users as research subjects but analyzed naturally occurring bilingual discourse within a specific online communication context.

The corpus was constructed by systematically retrieving public posts using predefined keywords and hashtags, including "*ks di itb*", "*fh ui*", and "*itbfess*". All retrieved posts were then examined according to three predetermined inclusion criteria: (1) the post contained translanguaging practices involving Indonesian and English within a single discourse, (2) the post discussed institutional academic sexual harassment in higher education, and (3) the post provided sufficient contextual information to support discourse interpretation. Posts that did not satisfy all three criteria, as well as duplicate posts, reposts without additional textual content, and irrelevant discussions, were excluded.

Following this screening process, only seven posts met all inclusion criteria and therefore constituted the complete corpus for analysis. Accordingly, these seven posts were not selected as a representative sample of X users but represented the entire dataset that fulfilled the established analytical requirements during the observation period. This corpus was subsequently analyzed using Herring's (2004) Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis framework to identify translanguaging practices, examine their pragmatic functions, and interpret how bilingual linguistic resources contributed to the construction and negotiation of digital identities within crisis-driven online discourse.

2.3 Research Procedures

The research procedures for this study were conducted systematically through four sequential stages. The first stage involved data collection through digital documentation, in which text-based posts and comments were gathered from the X platform by capturing screenshots and copying the raw textual discourse related to discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment. In the second stage, the collected data were compiled into a single text repository and screened according to predetermined inclusion criteria, including Indonesian-English bilingual content, relevance to the research topic, and textual completeness. The third stage involved data organization and preparation for analysis. The selected posts were systematically arranged together with their contextual metadata, such as posting context, discussion threads, and relevant crisis-related keywords. During this stage, linguistic identification was conducted by tracking and coding the English lexical items, phrases, and expressions embedded within Indonesian discourse to identify instances of translanguaging and to prepare the data for subsequent analysis. The fourth stage consisted of qualitative analysis using Herring's (2004)

Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) framework. The analysis was conducted through three interrelated procedures. First, linguistic identification was undertaken to examine how bilingual users deployed Indonesian and English linguistic resources within individual posts. Second, functional mapping analyzed the immediate pragmatic functions of these translanguaging practices, including expressing emotions, reinforcing arguments, constructing evaluations, and articulating social criticism. Third, discursive social positioning interpreted how these linguistic and pragmatic choices interacted with the crisis discourse surrounding institutional academic sexual harassment to construct, negotiate, and perform users' digital identities. Throughout the analytical process, iterative coding and interpretive analysis were employed to produce an in-depth textual understanding of translanguaging practices and identity construction without pursuing quantitative generalization.

2.4 Research Instruments

The primary research instrument in this qualitative study is documentation, which involves the purposive gathering of text-based posts and comments from the X platform. In accordance with the interpretive qualitative paradigm, the researcher functions as the human-as-instrument who serves as the central tool for generating, managing, and compiling the discursive data. To support this human instrument, a structured conceptual codebook derived directly from Herring's (2004) computer-mediated discourse analysis framework is utilized as a specialized tool designed to capture bilingual features, pragmatic communicative functions, and potential digital identity constructions within the gathered corpus. Furthermore, to maintain the trustworthiness and transparency of the instrumentation, the researcher relies on an explicit audit trail that meticulously logs the physical status of the data at every stage. This tracking mechanism documents the complete lifecycle of the research material, starting from the raw, unedited screenshots captured from the X platform to the organized text repository, thereby ensuring a clear and auditable connection between the raw digital evidence and the final material layout while mitigating individual operational bias before any interpretive analysis takes place.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was executed through systematic stages within the Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) framework. The analysis begins with micro-level coding to identify explicit translanguaging elements embedded within the text-based corpus. These extracted elements are subsequently organized into descriptive categories focusing on specific bilingual features, immediate pragmatic communicative functions, and emerging markers of digital identity construction. In the final analytical stage, interpretive discourse analysis is applied to evaluate how these linguistic strategies function as forms of self-representation during institutional academic crises, relying on internal comparative analysis across the illustrative cases rather than statistical generalizations. To align with the qualitative design and the decision to exclude structural tables, statistical frequency diagrams, or direct image screenshots that could compromise user privacy, the findings are presented through a rich, contextual narrative format that integrates lightly paraphrased and structurally disguised text blocks directly within the interpretive discussion.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

This study aims to examine how Indonesian-English bilingual users employ translanguaging to construct and negotiate their digital identities on the X platform

during discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment. It also investigates the communicative functions served by these translanguaging practices in crisis-related online interactions. Accordingly, the findings are organized into two sections based on the research questions, followed by a discussion that interprets the findings in relation to the relevant theoretical framework.

Translanguaging in the Construction and Negotiation of Digital Identities among Bilingual X Users

This section presents the findings related to the first research question by describing how Indonesian–English bilingual users employed translanguaging in discussions concerning institutional academic sexual harassment on the X platform. The findings are based on seven publicly accessible posts that fulfilled the predetermined inclusion criteria. To protect users' privacy, the original posts are presented in a lightly paraphrased form while maintaining their linguistic characteristics and communicative meanings.

Data Excerpt 1

User Initial: U1

Date of Posting: September 2024

Context: Institutional responses to academic sexual harassment (FH UI–ITB)

The user notes that while one institution does not attempt to cover up reports of sexual misconduct and takes appropriate action, it is highly questionable why another prominent institution only issues a one-semester suspension for a severe digital voyeurism violation, framing this outcome as a significantly worse institutional response.

The post demonstrates the integration of Indonesian and English linguistic resources within a single discourse. English expressions are embedded naturally into the predominantly Indonesian sentence structure without clear boundaries between the two languages. The bilingual elements are employed continuously throughout the post while presenting the user's evaluation of institutional responses to sexual harassment cases.

Data Excerpt 2

User Initial: U2

Date of Posting: October 2024

Context: Educational quality and institutional accountability

The post argues that the recurring instances of sexual harassment involving students from top-tier national universities demonstrate a critical gap in education quality, suggesting that these institutional failures explain why domestic universities struggle to stand out internationally while capable students look for opportunities to study abroad.

The post combines Indonesian and English expressions within a unified textual discourse. English lexical items are incorporated into Indonesian sentence structures while discussing educational quality and institutional performance. Throughout the post, both languages function together as a single communicative resource without separating the discourse into distinct linguistic segments.

Data Excerpt 3

User Initial: U3

Date of Posting: November 2024

Context: Campus safety and institutional sanctions

The text expresses deep irony and emotional exhaustion regarding the perceived lack of a safe space for female students within the campus environment, concluding with a sharp rhetorical condemnation directed at the institutional decision-makers who formulated the lenient sanctions.

The discourse integrates Indonesian and English linguistic features within one coherent post. English phrases are inserted into the Indonesian narrative while maintaining the continuity of the message. The bilingual elements occur alongside emotional expressions and rhetorical statements concerning campus safety and institutional decision-making.

Data Excerpt 4

User Initial: U4

Date of Posting: November 2024

Context: Institutional sanctions for sexual harassment

The user strongly criticizes a one-semester suspension sanction as entirely inadequate, arguing that the perpetrator should face immediate expulsion because the victims could be traumatized for life, while condemning the institution's historical lack of seriousness in handling sexual violence reports.

This post demonstrates the use of Indonesian and English within the same discourse. English lexical and phrasal expressions are embedded directly into Indonesian sentence patterns without interrupting the overall flow of communication. The bilingual features appear throughout the discussion of institutional sanctions and their perceived consequences for victims.

Data Excerpt 5

User Initial: U5

Date of Posting: December 2024

Context: Public reactions on X during institutional crises

The post questions the online behavior of certain users who comfortably deploy aggressive, detached internet slang for the sake of social media performativity or digital clout amidst the intense public grief surrounding the institutional crises at both universities.

The post presents a bilingual discourse by integrating English internet-related expressions into predominantly Indonesian sentences. The linguistic resources from both languages are employed continuously while describing online interactions among social media users. The bilingual expressions remain closely connected to the broader discussion surrounding institutional crises.

Data Excerpt 6

User Initial: U6

Date of Posting: January 2025

Context: International responses to campus sexual harassment cases

The user recounts a digital interaction where an international peer reached out to express deep sympathy regarding the terrible nature of the sexual violence crises occurring in the country, before shifting the conversation toward celebrity fandom activities.

The post combines Indonesian and English within a single narrative describing an online interaction. English expressions are integrated into the Indonesian discourse while recounting communication with an international user. The bilingual elements are distributed naturally throughout the post without separating the two languages into independent communicative units.

Data Excerpt 7

User Initial: U7

Date of Posting: February 2025

Context: Public perceptions of academic achievement and ethical responsibility

The text reflects on the rising visibility of sexual harassment cases within the institution, warning the online public against over-glazing or over-praising

male students based solely on academic intelligence, which does not guarantee ethical education regarding consent.

The post demonstrates the fluid integration of Indonesian and English linguistic features within a single textual discourse. English expressions are embedded into Indonesian sentence structures while discussing public perceptions of academic excellence and ethical responsibility. The bilingual resources are employed consistently throughout the post, creating a coherent discourse without clear linguistic separation.

Overall, the seven excerpts demonstrate a consistent pattern in which Indonesian–English bilingual users integrated linguistic resources from both languages within single textual discourses on the X platform. Across the corpus, English words, phrases, and clauses were embedded into predominantly Indonesian posts discussing institutional academic sexual harassment. The bilingual expressions occurred naturally throughout the interactions and formed a unified pattern of translinguaging across the analyzed dataset.

Communicative Functions of Translinguaging in Online Interactions Regarding Institutional Crises

This section presents the findings related to the second research question by synthesizing the communicative functions of translinguaging identified across the seven analyzed posts. The analysis demonstrates that translinguaging was employed for multiple communicative purposes throughout discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment on the X platform. Rather than functioning solely as a linguistic choice, the integration of Indonesian and English enabled users to communicate evaluations, emotional responses, criticism, and broader reflections within a single discourse. These communicative functions frequently appeared simultaneously within individual posts, indicating that bilingual language resources were used flexibly to convey different meanings according to the context of the online interaction.

Across the corpus, the most frequently observed communicative function was the evaluation of institutional responses to academic sexual harassment cases. Posts 1, 2, and 4 consistently assessed university policies, disciplinary sanctions, institutional accountability, and the perceived effectiveness of actions taken by higher education institutions. The bilingual expressions embedded within predominantly Indonesian discourse were employed while presenting comparisons between institutions, expressing judgments regarding the appropriateness of sanctions, and discussing broader issues related to educational quality and institutional responsibility. These evaluative statements were often accompanied by references to the wider consequences of institutional decisions, demonstrating that translinguaging was employed throughout discussions addressing both specific incidents and their broader implications.

The findings also reveal that translinguaging functioned as an important resource for expressing emotional responses during crisis-related discussions. Posts 3 and 6 illustrate the communication of disappointment, frustration, sympathy, concern, and emotional exhaustion experienced by users while responding to reports of institutional academic sexual harassment. The bilingual expressions appeared naturally within Indonesian sentence structures and were integrated into narratives describing personal reactions, online conversations, and emotional responses toward the reported incidents. In several cases, users also described interactions with other individuals on social media, including international users, indicating that bilingual linguistic resources were employed to communicate emotions within both local and cross-cultural online interactions.

Another prominent communicative function identified across the analyzed corpus is criticism directed toward institutions, public attitudes, and online behaviors. Posts 1, 4, 5, and 7 demonstrate that users consistently employed bilingual linguistic resources when criticizing disciplinary decisions, questioning institutional commitment to addressing sexual harassment, responding to inappropriate public reactions, and

commenting on the behavior of other social media users during periods of institutional crisis. In addition to expressing criticism, several posts extended the discussion toward broader reflections concerning educational quality, ethical responsibility, and public perceptions of higher education institutions. As illustrated in Posts 2, 6, and 7, users connected individual cases of sexual harassment with wider social issues, including campus culture, moral responsibility, and the international reputation of Indonesian universities. These reflections indicate that translanguaging was employed not only to respond to immediate events but also to communicate broader observations emerging from ongoing public discussions.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that translanguaging fulfilled multiple communicative functions across the seven analyzed posts. The integration of Indonesian and English linguistic resources enabled users to evaluate institutional responses, express emotional experiences, communicate criticism, and reflect on broader educational and social issues within a unified online discourse. These findings show that bilingual language use on the X platform supported diverse communicative purposes throughout discussions concerning institutional academic sexual harassment and provided the empirical basis for the subsequent discussion of translanguaging and digital identity construction.

3.2 Discussion

Translanguaging as a Strategic Resource for Digital Identity Construction in Institutional Crisis Discourse

The findings reveal that Indonesian–English bilingual users consistently integrated linguistic resources from both languages when discussing institutional academic sexual harassment on the X platform. Rather than alternating between two separate language systems, users employed Indonesian and English as a unified communicative repertoire to express evaluations, emotional responses, criticism, and broader reflections (Sri Nugraheni & Hasan, 2026). This pattern indicates that translanguaging functioned not merely as a linguistic practice but as a strategic resource through which users positioned themselves within highly sensitive public discussions. Through the flexible deployment of bilingual expressions, users simultaneously projected concern for victims, evaluated institutional accountability, and negotiated their identities as socially aware members of the online community.

These findings reinforce the central premise of translanguaging theory that multilingual speakers do not compartmentalize their languages into isolated systems but instead draw dynamically upon their complete linguistic repertoire to achieve communicative goals (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018). In the present study, the integration of English expressions within predominantly Indonesian discourse was not incidental but reflected purposeful linguistic choices that enabled users to communicate complex meanings efficiently while maintaining coherence within a single post. Such language practices demonstrate that bilingual users strategically selected linguistic resources that best represented their intended meanings rather than adhering to rigid language boundaries (Zhu & Li, 2025).

The findings further demonstrate that digital identity construction on the X platform occurred through these translanguaging practices. During discussions of institutional crises, bilingual users positioned themselves as critical observers, empathetic supporters of victims, and participants advocating institutional accountability. The integration of Indonesian and English enabled users to balance emotional engagement with evaluative commentary, creating online identities that reflected both personal involvement and critical distance. This process illustrates that translanguaging contributes not only to linguistic flexibility but also to the continuous negotiation of identities within rapidly evolving digital communication environments (Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023).

The dynamics identified in this study are closely related to the communicative characteristics of the X platform. The limited character space encourages users to communicate ideas concisely while preserving nuanced meanings, requiring multilingual users to strategically select linguistic resources that maximize communicative effectiveness within brief textual interactions ([Zhang, 2021](#)). In this context, translanguaging becomes a practical communicative strategy through which bilingual users flexibly draw upon their complete linguistic repertoire to articulate complex meanings and participate in public discussions on social media ([Kusuma & Madiseh, 2025](#)). Consequently, English lexical items and phrases were frequently embedded within predominantly Indonesian discourse to condense evaluations, emotional responses, and critical opinions into relatively short messages. This pattern is also consistent with Bell's Audience Design framework, which proposes that speakers adjust their linguistic choices according to the audiences they anticipate addressing ([Bell, 1984, 2009](#)). During discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment, users simultaneously communicated with fellow students, university authorities, and the broader public, requiring language choices capable of accommodating multiple audiences within a single interaction.

The findings also reflect the phenomenon of context collapse commonly associated with social media communication ([Marwick & Boyd, 2011](#)). Discussions concerning institutional crises were accessible to diverse audiences occupying different social positions, resulting in a communication environment where personal expression, public criticism, and institutional scrutiny converged. Within this setting, bilingual users accommodated these overlapping audiences by maintaining the accessibility of Indonesian while incorporating English expressions that conveyed broader evaluative and social meanings. This finding further indicates that translanguaging operates as a mediated communicative practice through which multilingual users negotiate meanings, social participation, and identity within digitally networked interactions ([Sindoni et al., 2025](#)). Through this integrated linguistic repertoire, bilingual users negotiated their digital identities across multiple communicative contexts without separating their linguistic resources into distinct systems.

Communicative Functions of Translanguaging in Crisis-Driven Online Interaction

The findings also demonstrate that translanguaging fulfilled multiple communicative functions throughout discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment ([McKinney & Tyler, 2024](#)). Across the analyzed corpus, bilingual language resources were consistently employed to evaluate institutional responses, express emotional reactions, communicate criticism, and present broader reflections concerning educational quality and ethical responsibility. These communicative functions frequently overlapped within individual posts, indicating that translanguaging enabled users to convey multiple layers of meaning simultaneously rather than serving a single communicative purpose ([Ren & Tahir, 2026](#)).

The evaluative function appeared most prominently when users assessed disciplinary sanctions, institutional accountability, and university policies regarding reported cases of sexual harassment. At the same time, bilingual expressions enabled users to communicate disappointment, frustration, sympathy, and concern, demonstrating the expressive potential of translanguaging during emotionally charged public discussions. Critical functions were equally evident as users challenged institutional decisions, questioned public attitudes, and responded to online behaviors emerging throughout the crisis. In several posts, these evaluations and criticisms developed into broader reflections on educational quality, campus culture, ethical responsibility, and the international reputation of Indonesian higher education institutions ([Busch et al., 2025](#)).

These findings extend previous studies that primarily conceptualized translanguaging within educational settings as a pedagogical resource supporting language learning and classroom interaction ([Fang et al., 2022](#)). While earlier research demonstrates that

translanguaging enhances participation, comprehension, and bilingual communication in instructional contexts, the present study shows that similar linguistic flexibility also performs important communicative functions within naturally occurring digital interactions (Ngo, 2025). Rather than facilitating classroom learning, translanguaging in this context supported public engagement with institutional crises, enabling bilingual users to communicate complex social meanings within authentic online discourse (Atar & Rafi, 2024).

The findings also complement recent research examining translanguaging and identity in digital environments (Iman & Natsir, 2025). Previous studies have emphasized online identity exploration, intercultural communication, and multilingual interaction across various social media platforms (Yao, 2025). However, the present study demonstrates that translanguaging assumes additional communicative significance when employed during discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment. Within this crisis-driven context, bilingual linguistic resources facilitated not only communication but also the articulation of evaluation, emotional engagement, criticism, and collective reflection, illustrating the broader communicative potential of translanguaging in public digital discourse (Busch et al., 2025).

Theoretical Contribution and Research Implications

This study contributes to the growing body of translanguaging research by extending its analytical focus beyond formal educational environments into naturally occurring digital communication. Unlike previous studies that predominantly examined translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy or investigated identity across broad social media contexts, this research demonstrates how bilingual users strategically deploy their integrated linguistic repertoire within crisis-driven institutional discourse on a single digital platform. The use of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis further provides a detailed textual perspective on how translanguaging operates within authentic online interactions, emphasizing the relationship between linguistic choices, communicative functions, and digital identity construction.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of the research design. The analysis was conducted on a qualitative corpus consisting of seven publicly accessible posts that fulfilled strict inclusion criteria, allowing for an in-depth examination of naturally occurring bilingual discourse rather than statistical generalization. Consequently, the contribution of this study lies in providing a contextual and analytically transferable understanding of translanguaging practices in institutional crisis communication. Future studies may expand the corpus, include additional digital platforms, or compare different forms of online crisis discourse to further explore the relationship between translanguaging, communicative practices, and digital identity construction.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined translanguaging practices employed by Indonesian–English bilingual users on the X platform during discussions of institutional academic sexual harassment. The findings demonstrate that translanguaging functions as a strategic linguistic resource through which users construct and negotiate their digital identities in naturally occurring online interactions. Rather than separating Indonesian and English into distinct linguistic systems, users drew flexibly upon their integrated linguistic repertoire to communicate evaluations, express emotional engagement, deliver criticism, and articulate broader reflections concerning institutional accountability and educational ethics. These findings indicate that digital identity construction emerges through the interaction between bilingual linguistic choices and the communicative purposes embedded within crisis-driven online discourse.

The study also reveals that translanguaging fulfills multiple communicative functions beyond language alternation itself. Across the analyzed corpus, bilingual expressions simultaneously conveyed evaluative, expressive, critical, and reflective meanings, illustrating how multilingual users employed their linguistic resources to respond to institutional crises within the communicative constraints of the X platform. These findings extend existing translanguaging research by demonstrating that bilingual language practices operate not only as pedagogical resources but also as communicative strategies that facilitate public engagement and digital identity construction in authentic social media interactions.

Theoretically, this study contributes to translanguaging scholarship by applying Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) to examine bilingual discourse within a single-platform, crisis-driven digital context. The findings provide a contextual understanding of the relationship between translanguaging, communicative functions, and digital identity construction in public online communication. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of this qualitative study, which analyzed seven purposively selected posts representing illustrative cases rather than statistical patterns. Future research may expand the corpus, incorporate additional digital platforms, or examine multimodal resources to further explore how translanguaging shapes communicative practices and identity construction across diverse online environments.

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Author's Contribution

Muzakki Abdurrahman: conceptualization, development of the research framework, literature review, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, manuscript drafting, and final revision. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript and is fully responsible for the content presented in this study.

AI Generative Statement

The author declares that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were not used to generate the research findings, analyze the data, or replace the author's intellectual contributions. AI-assisted tools, where applicable, were only utilized for limited language refinement and proofreading purposes. The author remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this manuscript.

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