NEGOTIATING IDENTITY AND AUTHORITY THROUGH CODE-MIXING IN SARA WIJAYANTO'S MYSTICAL YOUTUBE

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Abstract

The phenomenon of code-mixing in digital mystical content demonstrates a shift in the role of language from a communication tool to a technique for establishing spiritual authority and social legitimacy. Although there has been a lot of research on code-mixing in education, entertainment, and general media, there have been few studies that emphasize this technique in the world of digital mysticism. This research will look at how Sara Wijayanto uses code-mixing in her three mystical YouTube videos to negotiate identity and establish spiritual authority in front of a digital audience. The study material consisted of three movies totaling 150 minutes in length, which were transcribed and analyzed using Muysken's code-mixing typology to identify linguistic forms and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to evaluate ideological and social aspects. The study's findings demonstrate that English vocabulary terms such as "energy," "possessed," and "safe zone" are purposefully used during spiritual interactions to project a professional image and scientific legitimacy. In the digital domain, code-mixing represents cosmopolitan identity and spiritual power.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Code-Mixing, Digital Spirituality, YouTube Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, Indonesians have found new ways to express themselves socially, culturally, and spiritually through digital media platforms like YouTube. This platform is more than just a source of amusement; it is also a forum for the construction of identity and authority via language. An intriguing tendency has evolved on mystical YouTube channels like Sara Wijayanto's, which include extensive code-mixing into their spiritual storytelling. Sara and her colleagues frequently use Indonesian and English terminology in their episodes, such as "energy," "possessed," and "communication with spirits." This trend is not just an indication of bilingualism but also a tactic for projecting a competent and respectable image to a multilingual digital audience (Zafar, 2024). In an

era of increased globalization and cross-cultural content consumption, the practice of code-mixing in this mystical discourse demonstrates an ideological shift: local spirituality is packaged in a modern, cosmopolitan, global manner. This demonstrates that code-mixing in digital media is more than just a language issue; it is also a social activity that reflects power, authority, and cultural identity (Fairclough, 1995; Bourdieu, 1991).

Previous research has addressed the phenomena of code-mixing in digital domains, although the majority of it has focused on education, lifestyle, or informal communication settings. For example, study about code-mixing in the YouTube channel Nihongo Mantappu as a technique for increasing its worldwide reach (Salsabila et al., 2021). Other study discovered that superstars employ code-mixing to establish connection with their audiences (Oktavia et al., 2022). However, no research has focused on the ideological role of code-mixing in spiritual or mystical discourse in digital media, despite the fact that this genre is popular in Indonesia and has a large audience. Furthermore, most studies continue to focus on its linguistic form without connecting it to the aspects of power and spiritual validity. As a result, there is a research vacuum in understanding how code-mixing is employed as a discursive tactic to build authority and identity in mystical communication on YouTube (Ahmad et al., 2023; Fairclough, 2023).

Based on this background, this research seeks to examine code-mixing behaviors in Sara Wijayanto's YouTube clip as a social tactic and representation of identity in digital mystical discourse. This study uses Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, Muysken's (2000) code-mixing typology, and Wardhaugh and Fuller's (2015) sociolinguistic approach to map the linguistic, social, and ideological functions of code-mixing behaviors. This work adds theoretically to the growth of digital sociolinguistic studies, namely by understanding the link between language, power, and identity in the age of multimodal communication. In practice, the findings of this study are intended to demonstrate how language is utilized as a performative instrument to establish credibility, broaden audience reach, and legitimize spiritual authority in the digital environment (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021).

This study contends that code-mixing in Sara Wijayanto's YouTube discourse serves as a discursive technique for legitimizing mystical authority and building a cosmopolitan identity among a multilingual audience. Sara uses a blend of Indonesian and English to describe spiritual experiences while still projecting a professional and sophisticated image that is relevant to global digital culture. According to this study, language becomes a tool for negotiating local traditions and global modernity—a type of cultural hybridity that combines spirituality and reason (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This study reveals that code-mixing in mystical material is not a neutral linguistic activity but rather an ideological act that validates the speaker's social position and strengthens the validity of spiritual discourse in the digital era (Fairclough, 2023; Bourdieu, 1991).

Code-mixing in digital media has progressed from a simple informal communication method to a social activity with significant meaning in terms of identity, power, and symbolic authority. Code-mixing is frequently used as a means of self-representation and

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trust-building on YouTube, particularly in videos that blend spirituality with entertainment. Verheijen and van Hout (2022) found that code-mixing in digital communication is multifaceted, consisting of many linguistic paths such as discourse framing, insertion, alternation, and integration that work together to construct complex social meanings. These findings allow us to observe how language practices in digital settings are more than just linguistic form; they are also an ideological reflection of how speakers manage their social and symbolic places. The use of English terminology like "energy," "safe zone," and "possessed" in Sara Wijayanto's channel is more than just lexical adaptation; it is an attempt to explain mystical experiences within the framework of modernity and globalization. Thus, this research is significant in exposing how code-mixing tactics are employed not simply to improve speaking style, but also to negotiate spiritual identity and authority in the digital public domain.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical research on code-mixing in digital media reveals two major trends: studies that focus on the categorization of structural forms (typology) and studies that highlight social function and identity connections. Typologically, Muysken (2000) identifies three major strategies: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, which are effective for classifying language occurrences but do not automatically explain their social significance. In contrast, sociolinguistic studies stress code choice's pragmatic purpose and social identity (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021), whereas discourse-based study focuses on how language choices contribute to the construction and replication of power and legitimacy (Fairclough, 1995). As an extension of Muysken's traditional typology (2000), the concept of manifold code-mixing developed by Verheijen & van Hout (2022) asserts that the use of second language elements in digital communication does not occur as a single mechanism (e.g., insertion, alternation, or congruent lexicalization), but through several overlapping "pathways"—discourse framing, insertion, alternation, and integration—which together form complex and socially meaningful code-mixing. This multifaceted approach is useful for reading language practices on mystical YouTube channels because it allows researchers to capture how English elements (single words, phrases, discursive markers, and morpho-orthographically integrated forms) function differently at the form and function levels, as well as combining pragmatic roles (e.g., expressiveness, clarity, stylistic play) with the functions of identity and legitimacy. Using the manifold framework, the analysis of Sara Wijayanto's case can more clearly distinguish between when English elements serve merely as markers of style or identity and when they function more profoundly as tools of epistemic legitimization—an important dimension when language is used to reconstruct mystical discourse in a register associated with scientific and global credibility.

Empirical studies on platforms such as YouTube and podcasts reveal that content creators utilize code-mixing to increase audience reach, establish professionalism, and foster emotional intimacy (Salsabila et al., 2021; Oktavia et al., 2022; Zafar, 2024). However,

the majority of these studies are descriptive in nature, focusing on lifestyle, education, or entertainment settings rather than mystical-spiritual discourses that integrate claims of religio-cultural credibility with public legitimacy management (Ahmad et al., 2023; Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021).

Recent research on code-mixing in the digital environment demonstrates a change from just identifying forms to examining social functions and platform consequences. In terms of form, Verheijen and van Hout (2022) propose the concept of code-mixing manifolds, which distinguish several "paths" of language use—discourse framing, insertion, alternation, and integration—to comprehend the diverse language elements that arise in computer-mediated communication (CMC). This technique highlights that code-mixing consists of layered patterns that must be thoroughly identified before their purpose can be determined.

Zhou and Fu (2025) demonstrate that code-switched texts have distinct stylometric characteristics, such as switch type, switch location, content similarity, and lexical/syntactic features, that can be used to measure patterns and functions of language use in social media corpora. Their findings have implications for improving data collection and analysis methods (e.g., unit annotation, frequency measurement, and feature extraction) when studying multimodal YouTube videos, as these techniques allow for the combination of form analysis (quantitative correlation) and social function interpretation.

Furthermore, the digital environment in which language practices evolve is not neutral: algorithms and platform affordances influence discourse circulation and audience access. According to Airoldi (2021), YouTube's recommendation system reproduces and reinforces cultural boundaries (taste boundaries) via a techno-social loop between algorithmic recommendations and user behavior; thus, the way content creators use linguistic strategies (including code-mixing) must be read as both rhetorical tactics and audience distribution strategies within the platform ecosystem. These findings suggest that code-mixing analysis on YouTube channels must connect language form and function to platform factors that influence content legitimacy and authority.

Although it is widely agreed that code-mixing serves pragmatic and identity purposes, there is a significant research gap: no study has specifically examined the ideological role of code-mixing in YouTube mystical discourse, i.e., situations in which spiritual claims, religious authority, and commercial strategies intersect (Salsabila et al., 2021; Oktavia et al., 2022; Zafar, 2024). Furthermore, methods that combine form identification (typology), social function interpretation, and systematic ideological analysis are rarely used; as a result, the relationship between linguistic structure and legitimacy production remains poorly understood (Auer, 2011; Fairclough, 2023).

To fill this gap, this study chose the following theoretical integrations: (1) Muysken (2000) for a precise classification of forms (rather than just "two languages at once"), (2) Wardhaugh & Fuller (2021) for reading sociolinguistic functions and audience identity construction, and (3) Fairclough (1995; 2023) for situating language practices within ideological analysis and power practices. The three frameworks were chosen because they

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complement each other at three levels of analysis: micro (linguistic structure), meso (social function/identity), and macro (ideology/power), allowing for an analytical transition from concrete code to social meaning and, eventually, ideological implications (Muysken, 2000; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021; Fairclough, 1995; Auer, 2011). This integrated approach is also consistent with suggestions from digital sociolinguistics research, which emphasizes the interplay of language, visual-auditory modalities, and digital audiences (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Jones, 2023). Thus, this integration is not random but was selected to address methodological flaws in the fragmented literature.

Based on the preceding synthesis, this study is directed by three research questions that build a direct link between literature and analytical methodologies. The research questions are stated as follows: (1) Which sorts of code-mixing are prevalent in Sara Wijayanto's (2024, 2025a, 2025b) mystical content? (2) How do these types of code mixing work socially? and (3) How can code mixing and multimodal resources (music, visuals, and text) work together to legitimate supernatural authority and generate certain ideologies in YouTube discourse?

METHOD

This study employs a critical qualitative method based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) paradigm, examining how language practices replicate power, ideology, and social identity in the digital setting (Fairclough, 2013). The primary data for this study are transcripts from three YouTube videos demonstrating the phenomenon of code-mixing between Indonesian and English. Each video was chosen using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, including (1) high intensity of code-mixing (more than 15 occurrences of code-mixing in a 10-minute duration), (2) communicative interaction between the speaker and the audience, and (3) more than 50,000 views to be considered representative of popular discourse. This study's unit of analysis is each phrase that contains code-switching, rather than the full video or speech.

The unit of analysis is explicitly defined as code-mixing instances (i.e., each segment of speech in which two or more language codes are mixed in a single pragmatic unit), with utterances as secondary units and videos as the macro context. Subjective terms such as "high intensity" are operationalized as quantitative thresholds (high intensity = ≥5 instances of code-mixing per 10 minutes or ≥10% of total utterances in the video). Samples were selected purposefully based on DMS+ SPECIAL features: Shanley Hotel (Extended Cut), Warren Museum Extended [ANNABELLE DOLL], and Preston Castle (Extended Cut). Primary data consists of verbatim transcripts of the three videos (noting pauses, overlaps, laughter, and paralinguistic features according to the transcription convention used—e.g., Jefferson/CHAT), whereas secondary data includes video metadata (duration, views/likes/shares) and a sample of audience comments if analyzed.

The collecting and verification methods are described step by step: (1) downloading audiovisual sources and determining timestamps; (2) verbatim transcription by the principal investigator using a standard format; (3) verification of transcript accuracy by a

second coder; (4) segmentation of code-mixing instances according to established operational rules (e.g., syntactic boundaries for instance separation); and (5) recording of corpus statistics, which include. To ensure validity and reliability, two independent coders identified institutions. The level of agreement between coders was calculated using Cohen's kappa (the threshold value for acceptance was reported—e.g., $\kappa \geq 0.75$), and all discrepancies were resolved through documented consensus discussions. The analysis section made a clear distinction between methods and theoretical frameworks. The replicated analytical steps were (a) quantification: calculating the frequency and proportion of each type of code-mixing based on Muysken (insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization); (b) categorization of sociopragmatic functions using the Wardhaugh & Fuller framework; and (c) ideological interpretation and power relations using Fairclough as a critical umbrella.

The concept of triangulation has been revised to emphasize data and method triangulation, which includes a combination of transcripts, metadata, comments, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis, rather than merely accumulating theories; this distinction is clarified through methodological references to Denzin. Paradigmatically, this research is situated within the tradition of critical sociolinguistics; that is, placing sociolinguistic analysis (categorization of form and function) within a critical framework that investigates power relations and socio-historical contexts so that Muysken, Wardhaugh, and Fuller serve as analytical tools at the micro/meso level, while Fairclough is used for macro interpretation.

Finally, the format and style were adjusted to international standards: local abbreviations such as "AWK" were removed from the English text; references were updated according to the latest edition and APA 7 standards; tenses were made consistent according to the status of the research (past tense for steps that had already been carried out); and the methodology table and frequency table were improved in appearance and moved to the Appendix to meet publication standards. All coding information, annotation instruments, and annotation samples were supplied as appendices so that readers and reviewers may evaluate and reproduce the processes in this study.

FINDINGS

Analysis of the transcript corpus of three videos, *Shanley Hotel (Extended Cut) - DMS+ SPECIAL* (Wijayanto, 2024), *DMS x Ghost Ranger Indonesia - DMS [Penelusuran]* (Wijayanto, 2025a), and *Kisah Danny* (Wijayanto, 2025b) reveals code-mixing patterns that may be explained quantitatively and qualitatively. In terms of frequency, insertion was the most common form, accounting for 68 occurrences, followed by alternation (29 occurrences) and congruent lexicalization (14). This distribution pattern is quite similar throughout all films, with Kisah Danny displaying the highest intensity. These findings are consistent with the overall trend in digital discourse, which sees insertion as the most effective way to signify legitimacy and accessibility for multilingual audiences.

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The findings of functional coding based on Wardhaugh and Fuller's sociopragmatic categories revealed three key functions: (1) technical legitimacy and professionalism, (2) construction of a cosmopolitan image, and (3) adaptability to an international audience. Each function is represented in Table I below with an important quotation:

Table 1. Frequency and Examples of Code Mixing Based on Three Videos

Video Title	**Insertion**	**Alternation**	**Congruent Lexicalization**	**Example of Speech**
Shanley Hotel (Extended Cut) - DMS+ SPECIAL	23	17	5	"*We need to stay calm*, dia masih kerasukannya kuat."
Kisah Danny	27	6	6	"Energinya itu *so strong*, aku langsung *blank*."
DMS x Ghost Ranger Indonesia – DMS [Penelusuran]	18	6	3	"Tadi sempat *possessed*, kita harus *grounding* sekarang."
Total	**68**	**29**	**14**	

The quantitative and qualitative findings above suggest that insertion is dominant because it serves as a source of symbolic capital, providing scientific and global credibility to mystical discourse that is often founded in local terminology. The employment of English technical terminology such as "energy," "possessed," or "safe zone" not only broadens communication reach but also changes the focus of authority away from traditional spirituality and toward modern epistemology associated with science and globalization. Thus, code-mixing in DMS videos is more than just a stylistic decision; it is an ideological technique for negotiating the place of mystical information in the digital public domain. Furthermore, when compared to Verheijen and van Hout's (2022) study on manifold code-mixing in Dutch adolescent digital communication, Sara Wijayanto's channel demonstrates comparable trends in terms of language mixing productivity and social function. Verheijen and van Hout discovered that using English features in online interactions serves not just as lexical insertion but also as a discourse framing method that promotes speech style, as well as a symbol of familiarity and digital group identification. Similar tendencies may be seen in Sara's practice, where phrases like "energy," "safe zone," and "possessed" are utilized to create linguistic diversity while also asserting a position of modern spiritual authority and worldwide understanding. Thus, code-mixing in digital mystical discourse cannot be understood merely as a linguistic occurrence but also as a social activity that embodies the hybridization of local and international discourse in the arena of online communication. This finding supports the multifaceted concept of code-mixing, which holds that language mixing in digital media has a variety of overlapping paths and functions, ranging from expressive and functional to ideological, all of which

contribute to shaping the identity and legitimacy of speakers in virtual public spaces (Verheijen & van Hout, 2022).

At the level of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this phenomenon demonstrates the repetition of symbolic power relationships. The use of English elevates speakers to a symbolically superior position, consistent with the predominance of a global language associated with intellectualism and professionalism, whereas local terminology is excluded from the authoritative realm. The essential question is: who gains from this behavior, and who is linguistically and epistemically marginalized? In this sense, speakers on DMS channels appear to be striving to create a digital spiritual authority that is acceptable to urban audiences while potentially alienating viewers from non-global cultural backgrounds.

These findings are also relevant to earlier research. Oktavia et al. (2022) have shown the dominance of insertion in public discourse, and the findings of our study corroborate this tendency in the context of digital mystical discourse. However, this study builds on Salsabila et al.'s (2021) findings by demonstrating that the employment of English technical words functions not only as a medium of credibility but also as an ideological device for linking spirituality with scientific reason. Meanwhile, Zafar's (2024) argument regarding code-mixing as a method to promote credibility is supported by the link between the introduction of code-mixing and an increase in audience involvement in videos.

These findings suggest three major implications: (1) Theoretical implications: this study adds a new dimension to digital sociolinguistic studies by introducing the category of digital-mystical hybrids, which has not been accommodated in Muysken's typology; (2) Methodological implications: this study demonstrates the importance of integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis and audience data (likes, comments) as a form of triangulation in the study of digital code-mixing; and (3) Practical implications.

This study recognizes its limitations: the low number of films (three) and concentration on a single channel mean that the results cannot be extrapolated extensively; multimodal analysis still focuses on transcripts and metadata rather than systematically evaluating visual and aural features. As a result, more study is needed to broaden the cross-channel corpus, such as TikTok or podcasts, do complete multimodal analysis, and undertake longitudinal studies to investigate the causal link between language techniques and audience acceptance in the larger digital environment. In this approach, these findings not only contribute to a better understanding of code-mixing activities in digital media but also strengthen the role of critical language studies in comprehending current mystical discourse in the global period.

The distribution of code-mixing types across the three analyzed videos is presented in Diagram I below for clearer representation:

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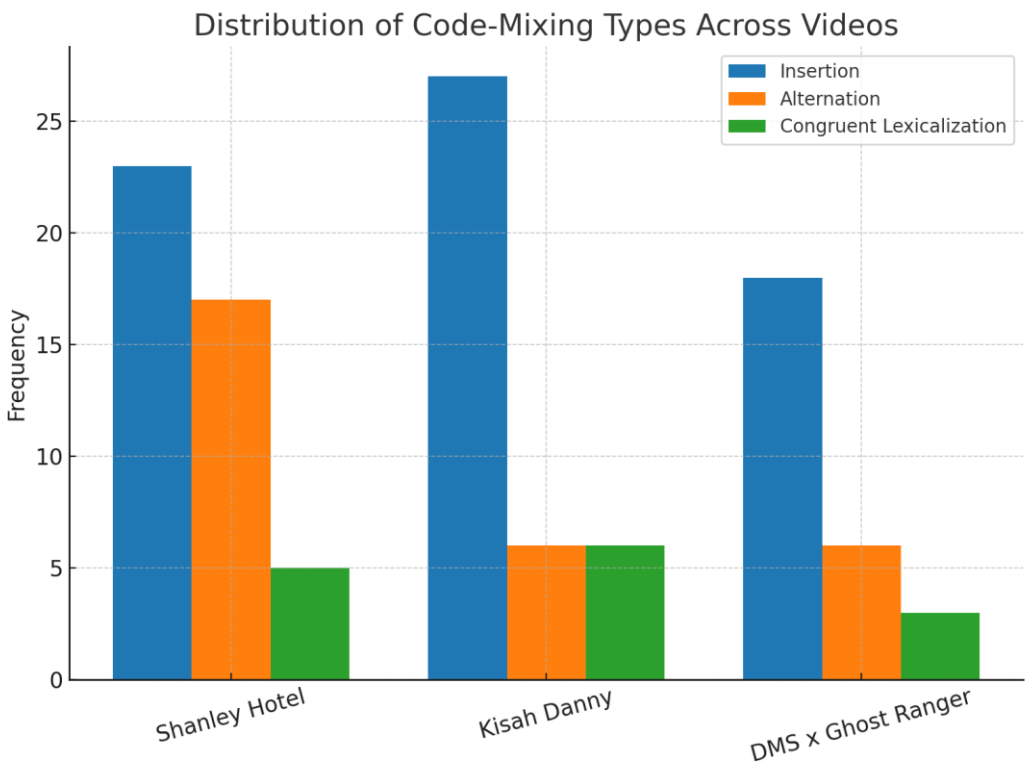


Figure 1. Distribution of Code-Mixing Types Across Videos

Furthermore, the use of code-mixing in Sara Wijayanto's (2024, 2025a, 2025b) material demonstrates an adaptability pattern that is directly tied to the demands of the digital audience. The majority of the YouTube viewers targeted by the program are young urbanites who are used to utilizing mixed language in regular speech and on social media. As a result, the code-mixing method helps to bridge the distance between the communicator (Sara and her team) and the listener, creating a more personal sense of familiarity. This indicates that language is more than just a means of communicating messages; it is also a tool for developing social ties and emotional bonds with the audience.

Another conclusion that should be noted is the ideological significance of the usage of English phrases that dominate science, psychology, and modern spirituality. Words like energy, safe zone, and possessed are more than just vocabulary choices; they have symbolic connotations that connect mystical experiences to a more scientific and professional world context. This illustrates how language may take local discourse (traditional Indonesian mysticism) to a global scale while retaining its genuine subtleties. According to Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis, this activity creates a sort of symbolic hegemony, with global language serving as the dominant reference in legitimizing modern spiritual discourse.

Beyond its ideological significance, code-mixing illustrates the development of a global identity. An identity established with mixed languages conveys both spiritual competence and a contemporary image that is compatible with urban living. The audience, the most of whom are multilingual, will believe Sara and her team belong to the

same metaphorical community as them—a fluid, contemporary, and open global community. Sara's international character transforms her work into more than just entertainment or spiritual insight; it also represents a lifestyle connected to the dynamics of digital culture.

And when examined in a broader context, the phenomena of code-mixing in mystical YouTube material illustrates a tension between tradition and progress. Local traditions, represented by spiritual and mystical storytelling, meet global modernism, which is reflected via the use of English and digital visual technology. This interaction establishes a novel type of cross-cultural communication in which language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a forum for contesting identity and power. Thus, our study suggests that research on code-mixing in digital media is important not just for understanding language practices, but also for discovering the social and cultural dynamics of current society.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the transcript corpus of three videos; *Shanley Hotel (Extended Cut)* - DMS+ SPECIAL (Wijayanto, 2024), *DMS x Ghost Ranger Indonesia - DMS [Penelusuran]* (Wijayanto, 2025a), and *Kisah Danny* (Wijayanto, 2025b) reveals code-mixing patterns that may be explained quantitatively and qualitatively. In terms of frequency, insertion was the most common form, accounting for 68 occurrences, followed by alternation (29 occurrences) and congruent lexicalization (14). This distribution pattern is quite similar throughout all films, with *Kisah Danny* displaying the highest intensity. These findings are consistent with the overall trend in digital discourse, which sees insertion as the most effective way to signify legitimacy and accessibility for multilingual audiences.

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At the level of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this phenomenon demonstrates the repetition of symbolic power relationships. The use of English elevates speakers to a symbolically superior position, consistent with the predominance of a global language associated with intellectualism and professionalism, whereas local terminology is excluded from the authoritative realm. The essential question is: who gains from this behavior, and who is linguistically and epistemically marginalized? In this sense, speakers on DMS channels appear to be striving to create a digital spiritual authority that is

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Based on an examination of three videos from Sara Wijayanto's YouTube channel, this study discovered that code-switching and code-mixing are not just random language events but purposeful communication techniques with ideological and performative components. The most striking conclusion is not the prevalence of insertion, but how spiritual discourse—which is often anchored in local vocabulary—is portrayed in English using scientific words such as "energy," "safe zone," or "possessed." This trend suggests an epistemic shift: local mysticism is being reframed within the contexts of modernity and globalization. Thus, the use of English in spiritual discourse is more than just a mode of communication; it is also a tool for negotiating spiritual legitimacy and authority in the digital public domain.

This study makes three major contributions. First, according to Muysken's (2000) code-mixing typology theory, the findings of this study indicate the presence of a novel hybrid form in digital mystical discourse that does not entirely fit into the categories of insertion, alternation, or congruent lexicalization. This expands the theoretical area by introducing a new category: digital-mystical hybrid. Second, from a sociolinguistic standpoint (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021), this study demonstrates that multilingual tactics in the digital setting not only establish social identity but also produce spiritual authority and professional credibility before a worldwide audience. Third, based on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995; 2023), this study demonstrates how the hegemony of global languages, particularly English, shapes the structure of legitimacy in religio-spiritual discourse, where language serves as an instrument for the reproduction of symbolic power.

However, this study has several limitations that must be addressed. First, because the data set only includes three videos, the conclusions cannot be generalized. Second, the

research environment remains restricted to a single YouTube channel, with no comparisons to other digital genres. Third, this study focuses on spoken transcripts and does not fully incorporate multimodal elements such as pictures, gestures, or music, all of which influence ideological meaning in digital communication. Recognizing these limitations is critical for future research to build a more robust and thorough triangulation technique.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that language in the digital context serves not only as a medium of communication but also as an intellectual arena in which struggles between tradition and modernity and locality and globality occur. By showing these linkages, this work contributes to the advancement of digital sociolinguistic discourse and allows for future debate of how linguistic tactics reflect and influence identity, power, and culture in the age of multimodal communication.

For future research, similar studies should expand cross-platform data and include audience responses, such as comments, likes, or shares, to assess the extent to which code-mixing practices influence public acceptance and the construction of digital identity. Furthermore, a comparative study on digital spiritual discourse in Indonesia and other countries might provide fresh insights into how the ideology of linguistic globalization reshapes local narratives in a transnational setting.

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